

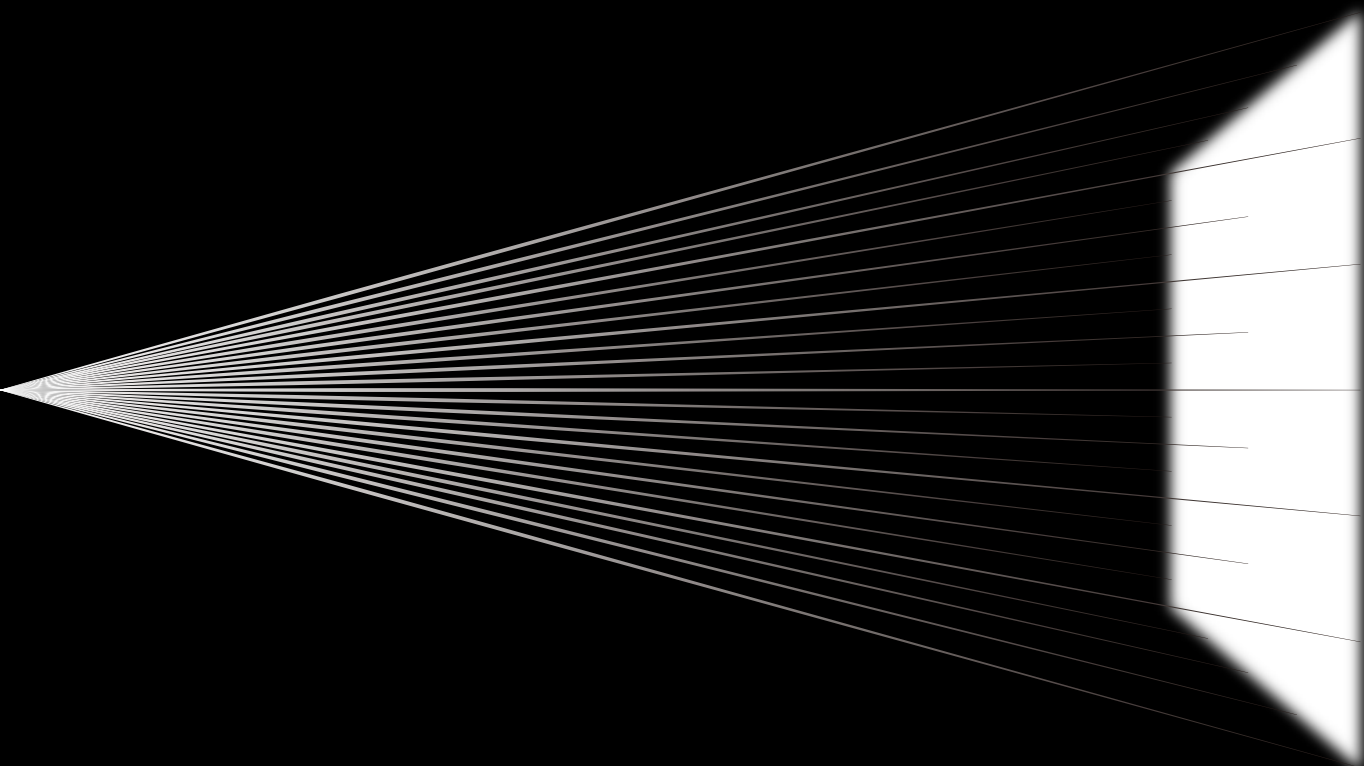
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PUBLISHED BY CHINESE INDEPENDENT FILM ARCHIVE, NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY, UK

华语独立影像资料馆出版，纽卡斯尔大学，英国



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Archive

**The Chinese Independent Documentary
Movement Revisited**
中国独立纪录片运动再叙述

Executive Editors 执行主编

WANG Xiaolu 王小鲁

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The Chinese version of this issue, entitled ‘The Chinese Independent Documentary Movement Revisited’, was originally published in *Today*, China’s first grassroots periodical, as issue 3, no. 131, 2021. *Today* was founded in December 1978, with the poet Bei Dao as editor-in-chief. Xiao Haisheng is its current executive editor. Wang Xiaolu is the guest editor-in-chief of this issue and Bao Kun is its editor.

Chinese Independent Cinema Observer has translated this issue into English and published it as a special issue.

“中国独立纪录片运动再叙述”专题中文版原刊于中国第一本民间刊物《今天》，发表于2021年第3期（总第131期）。《今天》创刊于1978年12月，主编为诗人北岛，现执行主编肖海生，本期编辑为鲍昆，特邀主编王小鲁。

《华语独立影像观察》将此期翻译为英文，做为特刊出版。

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Contemporary Chinese Documentaries: Building a New Independent Cultural Tradition

WANG Xiaolu 王小鲁 Translator: HU Longbiao 胡龙彪

1

It is my honour to edit this special issue for *Today*(今天). This issue features interviews with around twenty independent documentary filmmakers including a creative group. They have been a major force in the development of Chinese independent documentary over the past four decades. However, the list is by no means complete, as we are missing out on some important filmmakers due to limited space. It is our hope to present them in another opportunity in the future.

The texts are organised around interviews and conversations, with the interviewees inspiring the filmmakers to tell the stories about their films. The content is mostly a mix of personal and creative histories, such as how the filmmakers came to create their documentaries, how they prepared for them, how they met their subjects, how they developed their personal style, and their observation of documentaries, society and life...

This special issue is titled ‘The Chinese Independent Documentary Movement Revisited’. But how can we define the Chinese independent documentary movement? It refers to a series of grassroots documentary filmmaking initiatives that began mainly around 1990, which have a certain unity and coherence. The definition is qualified by ‘mainly’, because we have some new discoveries recently and it would be more accurate to define the movement this way. And why ‘revisit’? Originally we used ‘rediscover’, but it seemed like a lot of pressure to have to provide a full list of new discoveries, so we changed it to ‘revisit’. This put us in a more relaxed frame of mind. Revisiting will certainly lead to rediscoveries, which can only be summarised after revisiting.

The publication of this special issue has its own rationale for *Today*, and it makes sense for Chinese independent documentaries as well. In fact, not much work has been done to summarise and integrate independent documentary studies in China, and the relevant materials are often scattered everywhere, unable to be explored in depth as a whole. The research of independent documentary film has never been hugely popular. In recent years it has been in decline. I am one of a few who have been absorbed in it all along. This special

issue has come as a much-needed encouragement in the current low ebb, for me personally and for its study as a whole.

This special issue has also emerged out of another context. In recent years, independent film festivals or exhibitions are either closed down or pared down. People have been protesting it for years, but they seem to be resigned to it. The other day, when I acted as a jury member at a documentary festival and saw the global boom in documentary filmmaking. Documentaries are widely used as a tool and method by people all over the world. I was impressed by the sheer volume and the quality of the documentaries from the Third World, from South America to the Middle East, Central Africa to South Asia... I was particularly struck by the films about citizens' movements in the Congo and Ethiopia, where the dignity and creativity of people's actions were so different from what I had previously known.

This has opened my eyes. The capacity and potential of digital technology to facilitate global documentary filmmaking are immense. I felt the presence of a global documentary community. For almost twenty years, Chinese independent documentary was the most thriving and vibrant part of this community, one of the documentary movements that advocated civic awakening. Where we are today could be dubbed 'mini-ice age'.

But we still have to 'revisit' it, not just to discover something, but to 'continue to tell' is something worth keeping in itself. And it is not an artificial move, as it should be a natural cultural flow in our life in the first place. At the same time, it is not repetitive, as each narrative acquires a new historical dimension as the times move on.

2

Locating Chinese independent documentaries within the history of global documentary filmmaking, we can see that the trajectory of Chinese independent documentary film is unique in its close interaction with the development of the Chinese society. Of course, excessive international reference is unnecessary here, as our focus is on the interaction between the changes in the Chinese society, the evolution of individual subjectivity and the creation of documentaries.

Before we begin, I would like to address two controversies in documentary studies, as they are central to our understanding of the Chinese independent documentary movement. The first is the adoption and the origin of the term 'Chinese independent documentary movement'. For many years, the word 'movement' has been questioned, as people reject such sweeping collectivism and place more emphasis on individual filmmaking.

The distaste for the word ‘movement’ has to do with a temporary preference caused by the spirit of the times and with an overly oppressive historical memory. It is a lexical shift away from the old days, which I understand.

Personally I am not averse to the term, or would even favour it in its metaphorical sense or its comparison with physical movement. The term enables us to see the connections between widely occurring documentary events, as well as the relationship between documentary and the development of the Chinese society. I have previously traced the historical impetus of the Chinese independent film movement (including the documentary movement) to the quest for individualism and ‘the virtue of independence’ of the late Qing Dynasty intellectuals, right through the May Fourth Movement in 1919 to the new Enlightenment movement that gradually emerged in the 1980s—We can, of course, go further back in time. This is the cultural connection.

Editing this special issue has brought with it a surprise bonus, i.e., a new point of view for me. As a pioneer of the independent culture in China — the first unofficial literary magazine since 1949 — *Today*, along with the April Photo Society (四月影会) and the Stars Art Exhibition (星星美展) which some see as spin-offs from *Today*, initiated a long period of new culture of which independent cinema should be blood relations. They are the contemporary origins of Chinese independent documentaries. The discovery of these origins is not difficult, as anyone familiar with the history of ideas in the 1980s will know all about it, but the opportunity to edit this special issue has allowed me to observe it more closely.

The Chinese independent documentary movement has its own unique features; its production relations are more complex; it is subject to constraints of technological developments and distribution channels. To look for the origins of Chinese independent documentaries, we still need to turn to video image production. Intriguingly, my reward is not just a realisation of the origins described above, but also the documentary footage of the Stars Art Exhibition. This is an important discovery, one that made me rethink the origins of the independent documentary movement in China.

For many years, *Bumming in Beijing* (流浪北京, dir. Wu Wenguang 吴文光, 1990) was considered the starting point of the independent documentary movement in China, but recent research has established that it was actually much earlier. I myself have found a documentary that suggests that the first independent documentary in China is not *Bumming in Beijing*, but *Nujiang* (怒江, 一条丢失的峡谷, dir. Lü Le 吕乐), which was shot by Lü Le in 1986 and completed in June 1989. In *Chinese Independent Cinema Observer* (华语独立影像观察), a journal published by Chinese Independent Film Archive at Newcastle University, UK, the scholars including the author, Cui Weiping (崔卫平), Cao Kai (曹恺) and Sabrina Qiong Yu (余琼) have

recently discussed Wen Pulin's(温普林) unfinished documentary *The Great Earthquake*(大地震), which was filmed in 1988 but used such materials such as university drama rehearsals that Wen organised and filmed in 1984. The documentary was not completed, so it poses a difficult problem: How does it fit into the Chinese independent documentary movement? Where do unfinished documentaries belong in the genealogy of independent cinema?

In documentary scholarship, 'documentary movement' (纪录片运动) and 'documentation movement' (纪录运动) have been used interchangeably. In an attempt to distinguish between these two terms, I have suggested that if we use the term 'documentation movement', then there doesn't have to be an end product. The very act of independent documentation can be incorporated into the narrative. In the contemporary Chinese context, filming with a personal video camera is already very much a ground-breaking and revolutionary act in itself.

Therefore, if independent documentation is used as a marker to evaluate the development of independent documentary in China, the Chinese independent documentary movement can be traced as far back as 1984. That said, it has always been my belief that, given the size of China, there must have been other independent documentary initiatives, though many of them will probably never be verified. Fortunately, the original documentary footage of the Stars Art Exhibition has been well preserved. I heard about its existence from the assistant of Huang Rui(黄锐), who was one of the founders of the Stars Art Exhibition. Nevertheless, because I did not see the film itself, it was not mentioned in my academic writing. During this collaborative project with *Today*, it came back to my mind. When I asked Bao Kun(鲍昆) about it, he helped me locate the film, much to my surprise. I finally saw it in September.

Bao Kun was a member of the April Photo Society and is now on the editorial board of *Today*. He took me to find Ren Shulin(任曙林), who was also a member of the April Photo Society. As we were in a rush, we only managed a quick glimpse of the footage. The lead filmmaker for the documentary about the Stars Art Exhibition was Chi Xiaoning(池小宁), assisted by Ren Shulin, who provided the Red Flag 16mm camera and the film used for shooting. They share the copyright of the documentary footage.

Let us venture to call this unfinished documentary *Glimpses of the Stars Art Exhibition*(星星美展掠影), because it was literally a glimpse. It is forty-seven minutes long and covers the scenes on the day of the exhibition; how things unfolded after it was moved to a park, and, of course, the march that followed when the exhibition was interrupted, with Ma Desheng(马德升) at the front, followed by banners demanding freedom of expression and artistic freedom. Huang Rui, Wang Keping(王克平), Bei Dao(北岛), Mang Ke(芒克)

and the photographer Liu Xiangcheng(刘香成) were all in the shots. The footage is grouped together haphazardly, in no chronological order. Moreover, some of the footage is about Ren Shulin testing filmmaking in a park. Even with meticulous editing, the current amount of footage would not be enough to make a complete documentary without adding anything new.

However, this documentary is highly self-conscious and has a pioneering independent documentary concept, so it should be taken seriously. Ren Shulin recalls that Chi Xiaoning wanted more than simply documenting a painting exhibition. That was only the first part of his plan. He had intended to follow it up with further filming of the five major figures at this exhibition, such as Huang Rui and Ma Desheng. From the existing footage, the director focused on the reactions of his subjects, on capturing the relationship between the visitors and the works, and also on form, such as the abstract hands of the many visitors from the other side of the fence. Chi Xiaoning was always closely associated with the April Photo Society and *Today*, but we can see the intention and aim of the filmmaker from the images and the accounts of those in the know—this act of filming is not an add-on to the Stars Art Exhibition. Compared with Wen Pulin's filming in 1984, it is a more self-conscious effort to make an independent documentary.

In terms of production relations, the camera was able to reach an unofficial exhibition because it was stolen from Ren Shulin's workplace—stolen, not even the so-called 'borrowing' of cameras from TV stations by the directors of the New Documentary Movement. Ren worked as a cameraman at the Academy of Coal Science, and he secretly took out the camera and film from his unit. These interesting details in fact preserve the evidence for the sheer will to make independent films. That is why I see it as an important starting point for Chinese independent documentary.

It seems there is now no doubt that we can consider the filming of Chi Xiaoning and Ren Shulin as part of the Chinese independent documentary movement, or even as its starting point, a discovery that can push the beginning of independent documentary back from 1984 to early October in 1979. This is a breakthrough in the study of the Chinese independent documentary movement, and offers a new historical perspective by linking independent cinema as an artistic movement more closely to the independent art movements—including photography, painting, poetry, and so on—that began in the late 1970s. Although the term 'the democratisation of cinema' was coined within the studio system in the late 1970s, both feature films and documentaries were embedded within the state studio of the era, which means even if there had been the will, it would have been difficult to obtain the production conditions to implement them. The filming of *Glimpses of the Stars Art Exhibition* was, of course, an exception at the time, and it would be some time before the arrival of the more substantial movements on the scene (especially after 1988). Nev-

ertheless, they were inspired by the same spirit of the times. Every age has its own pioneers. We must not overlook them because they arrived too early on the scene. When people sharing the same spiritual quality and spiritual needs as the participants in the April Photo Society, *Today* and the Stars Art Exhibition felt the urge to make free films and found access to cameras, the independent film movement ‘should’ have begun.

However, due to the specific nature of film, this process lags behind for most people. Except *Nujiang*, all the early creations of the independent documentary movement—Shijian’s *Tiananmen*, Wen Pulin’s *The Great Earthquake* and Wu Wenguang’s *Bumming in Beijing*—were officially launched in 1988. In other words, it was only around 1988 that the independent mind of the image intelligentsia in general reached the level required and that the social environment and the creative system had evolved sufficiently to allow the individual will to be crystallised in film.

The dynamics of history are seething underground, with occasional small-scale eruptions and intermittent relationships with those who come after them, but in fact there is a close connection between them underneath the surface. Only a longer historical perspective can reveal the unity of the origins, the rivers and the basins. This in fact helps me to argue for the legitimacy of the concept of a ‘Chinese independent documentation movement’.

3

There is another controversy, one that seems to have escaped the notice of scholars, but which concerns the ontology of the Chinese independent documentary movement and the fate of its creators. Between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, along with related practices, the concept of contemporary documentary in China gradually took shape, and independent documentaries gradually developed. Lü Xinyu (吕新雨) once proposed the concept of a ‘New Documentary Movement’, but some people do not agree. I remember Wu Wenguang saying at a conference that there were no documentaries in China before they launched their documentary projects, so there was no such thing as old or new. That is to say, they brought Chinese documentaries into this world.

Where did the bold claims of these pioneers of documentary come from? More than one of these early filmmakers recalled that when they launched their documentary projects around 1990, there was no such thing as documentary at all and that all they could see were television features and news bulletins. Are they documentaries? Obviously not, in their eyes.

I do not think we can ignore the explorations of documentaries by our predecessors. Despite a lack of exciting works from the past, documentary has been around since the Republican era. Our discussion of documentaries mostly starts from 1949, and documentaries were made from the 1950s and 1960s to the 1980s. Perhaps it can only be understood this way: documentary in the eyes of those pioneers was an idealized form. Of course, the very notion of documentary has an ethical dimension, which distinguishes it from all the other types of art, because very often the question of ‘truth or not’ is itself a question of ‘lies or not’. Dedicated to propaganda rather than truth-seeking, the ethics of Chinese documentaries since the 1950s and 1960s have been seriously flawed. Therefore, the exclusion of those unethical, mainstream documentaries from the realm of documentaries by these independent documentary filmmakers is ruthless but definitely understandable.

However, from a rational point of view, I think it is the relations of production in television documentaries that led to lies, not their forms. So, a blanket rejection is untenable. The form and language of Television documentaries can still be considered documentary. In other words, because the form and language of Television documentaries do not necessarily lead to lies, but rather the relations of production that have gone wrong, these documentaries can still be seen as documentaries, in the same way as bad people are still human beings.

But at that time, documentarians with an independent mind had to fight against the establishment. They had to blaze a trail to give new form and appearance to contemporary Chinese documentaries. First of all, documentaries had to break away from the system. When Jiang Yue (蒋樾) spoke in interviews about how he loved the word *mangliu* (盲流) [vagrant] and prided himself on how he had never worked in a work unit ever since he left it to make documentaries in the early 1990s, the new generation was completely unable to understand what he was so proud of.

Also, at the time, when it comes to cultural and political contexts, it was the same for those within and outside the system. In the beginning, innovation did take place within the television institution. They wanted to say goodbye to the television documentaries of the past. In terms of subject matters, they called for the filming of ordinary people, not heroes or politicians. On the level of techniques, they emphasised simultaneous sound and turned away from the domination of voice-overs and soundtracks over the image, that is, over the fate of the characters.

Shi Jian (时间) from CCTV once told me about gradual going-down of the social ladder in their programmes in the 1980s, and about their fighting for the use of simultaneous sound. You need to make people talk and not shut them up. In the interview for this issue, Jiang Yue said that when filming ordinary people, what

struck him most is that his subjects were always asking; why are you filming me? What is it about me that is worth filming? ‘That is what people thought back then. Ordinary people didn’t feel that they deserved to appear on TV.’ Perhaps they even felt they didn’t deserve to live, a self-awareness that resulted from a long life of repression, which lies at the core of the problem of our people. By filming ordinary people, by using following shots and simultaneous sound, documentary filmmakers have gradually shown us what the society and ordinary people really look like in China.

In those days, therefore, documentary was not just a type of film or a new art form, but a way of facing life and society, against the backdrop of the universal demand for ‘truth-telling’ that emerged in the 1980s. Today, it may be hard for people to understand why the Pan Xiao Incident (潘晓事件), in which two young people said a few honest words about themselves and left millions of young people excited and in tears. Because telling the truth is the first step towards facing problems, otherwise it would be an endless mock of individual lives. So, the documentarians of that era were actively expanding the boundary of Chinese ‘truth-telling’ while giving the initial forms to contemporary Chinese documentary. Not only Wu Wenguang and Jiang Yue, but also Ji Dan (季丹), Hu Jie (胡杰) and Yang Lina (杨荔钠) were among those documentarians who, in the desert, gave documentaries the initial Chinese form.

Contemporary Chinese documentary, or independent documentary, has set itself a new principle, an inner prescriptiveness. Camera, having gone through a spiritual rebirth, wanders across China, in the hands of an individual who has broken away from the old establishment, which has engendered a series of questionings, analysis and multi-layered viewing. The mute and dark faces of ordinary people have lit up. With the increasing dissemination of independent films, people have become more self-conscious about their own environment and about themselves. The very act of independent filmmaking is imbued with modernity.

And this has profoundly shaped the lives of these filmmakers, because another peculiarity about the independent documentary movement in China is that if you are devoted to it, it will significantly shape your life. Some degree of passion is needed to persevere, because in China it is an action of resistance, a minefield full of collisions and dangers. That is why I always prefer to discuss independent documentaries alongside the state of the filmmakers’ life. I remember ten years ago, we curated a youth exhibition, and in my introduction to the exhibition I noted my understanding of a group of independent documentary filmmakers:

We see an enduring power. Most of these filmmakers are middle-aged with a wide age difference between them. Such a group has never been seen before. In light of China’s vast population, their numbers are actually not that large. But they serve as a role model for our society. When independent film is

incorporated into the life of a middle-aged filmmaker (from thirty to fifty plus), it represents a deep spiritual digging, a new way of being has been profoundly opened up in our accustomed mode of existence and work system.

I feel a little strange reading this passage today. The exhibition was over a decade ago. I felt at the time that they had actually pioneered a new way of living, opening up more possibilities for ordinary Chinese people in their way of life. They, as revolutionaries, certainly wanted the path they were demonstrating to become wider and wider, a path that was indeed once full of followers, but recently the situation has taken an unexpected turn.

Ji Dan has always been an important reference point for me – of course, she is not obliged to be a reference point for anyone. In her interview with *Today*, she talked about her life at the moment, how often she has to borrow money from her family to make films, how she is full of guilt towards her parents, how her sick father needs more of her care, and how often she has to rush back to Yichun (伊春) in northern Heilongjiang to look after him when she is filming in Yunnan. That is why she is very tired. She has been travelling up and down across China since she returned from a tour of Japan thirty years ago and has never had a work unit.

I've just been down there, just travelling around ... I've got myself stuck there. Where is this documentary industry? Is there one in China? What is the point of my filming? ... I complained to my father the other night, I said dad you've always been looking down on me, because I'm poor and always sponging off you and mom, but what do you think I should do? Under normal circumstances, I could make a film that TV stations would be able to use it. If that was the case, I wouldn't have been where I am now, would I?

There seem to be more and more documentaries showed in the cinema today, but overall they are far away from the spirit of documentary. This is an era that is increasingly unable to accommodate documentaries. Ten years ago, I envied the lives of those documentary filmmaking pioneers. But the road has been increasingly narrowed down. During an interview, Jiang Yue said he feels the same. He and Ji Dan belong to the older generation of the Chinese independent documentary and have a fuller historical perspective. Jiang says that he is now 'lying flat', meaning he has given up. He made money by making stuff for television, but insisted that they were not documentaries. 'Personally, I retain my respect for the word documentary.' Few people have seen his documentaries that he himself approves of, because there is nowhere to screen them.

Sadly, thirty years on, we still haven't been able to build up the soil for documentary ... At that time we

were all influenced by Shinsuke Ogawa, who screened his documentaries from one place to another, and built up in the process a large audience for documentaries in Japan. Later on, those older audience members would bring their children to see his documentaries. The Yamagata Documentary Film Festival sprang up where he made his documentaries. Our generation did not have an education in documentary, so our next generation and the generation after them will not have it either. That's why I feel I am a total failure. It's as if I was a farmer who knows how to farm and also owns a vast land. But the land is all desert and infertile. There is no soil, so sowing will bring no harvest.

Jiang felt that the situation is getting worse because Chinese people are less and less interested in telling the truth, so there are no more documentaries. It must be depressing when these independent documentary filmmakers built up ideals in the documentary field when they were young and then went to work on it, expecting to sow in spring and harvest in autumn, only to find that the field ends up barren, and worse. And this happened when they are entering the twilight of their lives which is certainly depressing. It is easy to lose faith in life when the order of values is turned upside down. During the interview that afternoon, I saw how grey the filmmaker's face looked.

In fact, what I am recounting here is not just the personal experience of the two filmmakers, but rather how the concept and spirit of contemporary Chinese documentary came into being. All is conditioned by the era – both its emergence and the obstacles that stand in its way. The concept of Chinese independent documentary determines its fate as well as that of its creators. After we have seen the vicissitude of Chinese independent documentary movement, we can better appreciate its essence.

4

In the discussion above, I have actually tried to look at our understanding of the origins, ontology and spirituality of the Chinese independent documentary movement from a different perspective. I have also attempted to analyse the devastating nature of the crisis in face of the Chinese independent documentary movement: it has not only led to the desolation of documentaries, but also the crumbling of the belief in survival and widespread depression.

We now return to this special issue and describe its structure and rationale. Our focus is on the conversations with the twenty or so independent documentary filmmakers we have selected, and on how they have enriched the independent documentary movement in China.

We worked as a small team. We had several meetings with Bao Kun, who is on the editorial board of *Today*, and Xiao Haisheng(肖海生), its executive editor. Interviewers included Huang Ying(黄英), Dong Shuai(董帅), Yu Yaqin(余雅琴), Tong Shan(佟珊), Sun Hongyun(孙红云), Xu Yaping(徐亚萍), Liu Mengyun(刘盟贇), Chen Ping(陈平), Chen Hua(陈华), and me. Each person was responsible for a few interviews. We were not able to contact a lot of people, or even though we were, they could not make it for some reasons. The interviewees we have chosen this time are mostly filmmakers with more than two documentaries. Their works are first-rate and had a wide impact.

These filmmakers come from different age groups: post-1950 directors such as Wu Wenguang, post-1960 directors such as Lin Xin(林鑫) and Li Yifan(李一凡), post-1970 directors such as Zhao Liang(赵亮) and Yang Lina, and post-1980 directors such as Wang Nanfu(王男楸) and the young directors from Caochangdi(草场地). Each age group indicates a different historical perspective. Besides, they are from all walks of life—Lin Xin works in a bank in Shaanxi; Hu Xinyu(胡新宇) is a university music teacher, Qiu Jiongjiong(邱炯炯) is an artist, while Zhang Zanbo(张赞波) is an intellectual who resigned from his job to focus on filming. Different cameras have covered different aspects of society, thus depicting a panorama of social life. Of course, the filmmakers were not satisfied with simply depicting the external world. They have also tried to use their works as a wizard's wand to conjure up more treasures.

With regard to the structure of this special issue, we had hoped to organise it chronologically, period by period. For instance, one period could be bounded by *Tie Xi Qu: West of the Tracks*(铁西区, dir. Wang Bing王兵). However, each periodisation or classification would fail to provide a precise overview of history. Therefore, the approach we have adopted in the end is to place the filmmakers' works in different sections according to their unique features, each section representing a dimension of Chinese independent documentary, which embodies the areas that the Chinese independent documentary movement has delved into.

Of course, this structure is not perfect, as no one can be completely confined to one dimension or concept, and they all have something that refuses to be defined. For example, it is impossible to fully summarise the uniqueness of Ji Dan, Yang Lina and Wang Nanfu by placing them together under the heading of 'Women and the Self'. What we have done is to highlight their most prominent features and use them to organise the interviews.

However, many important dimensions cannot be singled out. For instance, first-person documentaries could form an independent section, but no suitable combination of filmmakers can be found, although this dimension could also come under one of the existing sections. As Wu Wenguang boasts more material than anyone

else in Chinese documentary study, we focus on the collective creation he spearheaded. He later gathered around himself a number of young artists and promoted a series of collective works such as the Villager Documentary Project. We would like to introduce and present this part of his work in this special issue.

Jiang Yue is singled out as a pioneer because his involvement spanned the entire history of independent documentary filmmaking in China. He was in action the day when Wen Pulin's *The Great Earthquake* was announced, as he went to the Tangshan Earthquake Monument with the director and cinematographer. His documentary filmmaking touches upon some of the early works of the Chinese independent documentary movement, and later spans the entire process. I have also interviewed Wen Pulin before. Since the interview has been published, it is not included here. Wen's works are mostly uncompleted and has enjoyed little exposure even within the Chinese documentary circle. However, he has shot a great deal of materials on avant-garde art and Tibetan life in Beijing and Tibet respectively. He can actually be considered an important documentary filmmaker on the basis of 'documentation act'. This is just an index to his works. Jiang Yue, on the other hand, is a filmmaker who has released major works across all periods and who has a thorough and profound understanding of the art form and the spiritual values of Chinese independent documentary as well as its relationship with society and history.

Wang Libo's (王利波) major works are about the national history. Hu Jie's works are numerous, many of which capture life in the present, but his best-known documentaries are about the Cultural Revolution and the Anti-rightist Campaign. These artists are grouped under 'Memory and Politics'.

The 'Women and the Self' section consists of three female filmmakers. They could be certainly grouped elsewhere and I hope they would forgive me for putting them together solely on the basis of their gender. But women do have unique experiences and sensibilities, and all three of them have their own reflections on gender, which they have incorporated into their work. In her own filmmaking, Yang Lina discovered that she is destined to be a feminist, which is evidently a self-discovery. Ji Dan has repeatedly told me about the qualities and advantages of a female filmmaker in a filming environment, where she would be more easily accepted. The case of Wang Nanfu is also deeply revealing. Her documentary *One Child Nation* originated at the moment she became a mother. It was only then that she gained a deep sense of family planning and understood what it meant in a woman's emotional life.

When I became pregnant and became a mother, I saw the whole world in a different light. There was a big change in the first week or two. Most striking of all was a very strong urge to protect this life inside my body, who was of paramount importance. I should do everything in my power and would protect

him with all my life. At that time, whenever I saw a stranger on the street, I would wonder what kind of person they would look in the eyes of their mother. Everyone has a mother, and everyone is someone's child. What I see now is that everyone, no matter what they are like, has someone who loves them dearly, and is the most important person to someone. I was surprised that there was such a huge change in the way I looked at the world. Later on, when I discussed it with my mum, I asked her what it was like when she was pregnant with me. Naturally my mother told me about the family planning policy. I had actually heard about and witnessed all those things when I was a child. I had seen my neighbours being arrested and undergo forced sterilisation. I had heard many stories like that, growing up in those days. But never once did I think about it seriously because it was so commonplace. A common phrase I heard during my childhood was who had got sterilised again. It sounded as commonplace as going to the supermarket to do some shopping. Now, when I was pregnant myself and heard those stories again, I felt totally different. It shocked me to the core.

In fact, Wang can also be grouped under 'Intervention or Action'. In her film *Hooligan Sparrow* (海南之后, 2016), she was essentially an ally of her subject. They were a complicit existence, fleeing together in the midst of a crisis. This is also the case in *I Am Another You* (我是另一个你, 2017), where she and the American boy she was filming went out into the world to experience and develop a new life together. Unfortunately, we can't include everything. Among the filmmakers classified under 'Intervention or Action', Wang Jiuliang's (王久良) work on waste in suburban Beijing did contribute to the tackling of waste issue in Beijing suburbs. His film about foreign plastic waste, *Plastic China* (塑料王国), is said to have influenced the national policy as well. In fact, *Plastic China* is more of a direct cinematic approach, and so is Zhang Zanbo's documentary on road construction. Such an approach is characterised by minimal involvement of the filmmaker with their subject, which is a paradox. Our breakaway from tradition aims to demonstrate the complexity in terms of the creative will in documentary filmmaking. The very fact that Wang chose to film environmental issues shows his interventionist approach. The same is true with Zhang Zanbo, who is a classmate of mine. I can feel his passion for intervention. His work is not just to record the reality but also to change it, as I can feel from his interview, too.

The intervention of Wu Wenguang's team at post-Caochangdi is also evident. Their young filmmakers try to intervene in the memory of the countryside. For instance, Zou Xueping (邹雪平) has erected a monument of the Great Famine in her home village, and Zhang Mengqi (章梦奇) has built a house in her hometown in an attempt to change the cultural ecosystem there. In my view, such actions, particularly the erection of the monument, are great. Both filmmakers could also fit into the 'Expression and Creation' section.

At the moment, only Hu Xinyu and Qiu Jiongjiong are included in ‘Expression and Creation’. In documentary filmmaking, there are hard-working directors and talented directors, and I think they belong to the latter. Their documentaries don’t just follow reality, but actively construct it using the camera, showing their subjectivity in a more direct way. I would call Hu’s *The Man* (男人, 2002) a hormonal film, where he sometimes appears in front of the camera doing strange things, but whether he is on or off camera, his presence can always be felt on the screen. Qiu Jiongjiong’s documentary format is very unique. His creative approach is grand and interesting, adding imagination to the conventional narrative of Chinese independent documentary.

Fan Jian’s (范俭) work often moves from the family to a wider society. I was impressed by his documentary *My Land* (吾土, 2015) ‘The family is a creative vehicle for me,’ he said. Li Xiaofeng (黎小锋) and Jia Kai (贾恺) are a couple. Several of their early major documentaries are about the family and I wrote an introductory piece, ‘The Secrets of Families’ for them, which was published in a newspaper. Their work has since taken on a more diverse perspective.

‘Phenomenon and Observation’ seem to be rather general. However, they were key words in the early days of the independent documentary movement in China. There are many schools of phenomenology, but the part that works for us is very simple and straightforward: when we face things, we leave behind all preconceptions, which are often all a priori political ideas that mislead our examination of things in themselves. So, going back to things and things ‘in themselves’ and using our own intuition to grasp their essence is a very useful method for our documentary work. Such a method no longer resonates today, but it can actually summarise the approach employed in the majority of the works of Chinese independent documentary movement.

As another approach to documentary filmmaking, observation emphasises less intervention and highlights objectivity. Most of Li Xiaofeng’s work could be classified as such. Li Yifan, Zhao Liang, Du Haibin (杜海滨) and Liu Dedong (刘德东), all of whose work is classified under this heading, tend to have a passion for external social phenomena. Li Yifan observes the operation of the society through people and events such as demolition or migrant workers in Dongguan (东莞), which are external to his life. Hidden behind its vibrant panorama of colours and whimsical aesthetics, his recent work *We were SMART* (杀马特我爱你, 2019) is actually an incredibly sad story. Du Haibin also likes to observe the outside world or things that stumble into his field of vision—a trait that is only enhanced when his work is compared with Lin Xin’s work on coal mines and Hu Xinyu’s on men. Du Haibin’s *Umbrella* (伞, 2007) is Chinese structuralist documentary at its best. Though its structure is very much a reflection on his own subjectivity, he is still observing. Liu Dedong is an excellent documentarian who seems to keep his distance from the circle but whose observations are

very philosophical. Zhao Liang is persistent in his examination of the underclass in China. His *Petition* (上访, 2009) almost reached the pinnacle of Chinese independent documentary. At the moment, he is in a period of transition to a new direction of his images.

I would call Lin Xin and Gu Tao's documentaries 'Local video chronicles', though it might sound simplistic, especially in the case of Gu Tao. His documentaries on the Evenki could be subsumed under anthropology or ethnography, but because his filming focuses invariably on his hometown – his uncanny ability to blend things has enabled him to capture the people there and their inner world in a profound way – It might not be inaccurate to call it local chronicles after all. In addition, it would also be convenient to put him alongside Lin Xin. Lin Xin's hometown, Tongchuan (铜川) in Shaanxi, is a resource-dependent city. His father worked in coal mines during his lifetime, which had an impact on Lin's entire life. He started by filming the history of the coal mines and moved on to film the whole city. He asked me to write a foreword for his bulky monograph, *Sanlidong: A Visual History of Shanghai Miners Helping to Develop Border Areas* (三里洞: 上海支边矿工的影像史). I could see that he had actually provided a comprehensive account of the resource-dependent Tongchuan, from its topography, its vicissitudes through history to its major industries as well as the fate of its miners. That is why I think that this is a personal written 'local chronicles' that complements the official local chronicles. I think his films is video local chronicles. I also suggested that it might be even more comprehensive if he could include images of geography, mountains and landscapes. Later on, Lin Xin did go on to produce *Silent Landscape* (沉默的风景, 2020), an account of the relationship between urban spaces such as streets, squares, suburbs and civic life. He also produced *Single Women* (单身女人, 2019), a group portrait of women in Tongchuan, which I jokingly described as a biography of women modelled after ancient local chronicle writing.

Xu Tong (徐童) is grouped as 'Other', not because he is seen as residue, but because he is difficult to categorise and has established his unique place in the genealogy of Chinese independent documentary. He structures the lives of his subjects in the manner of an ancient storyteller, which is completely original. Does he assign a form to his subjects as they come along, or does he want to incorporate the lives of his subjects into his form? During his filming, Xu was inspired by the underclass struggling through extreme hardship in life, so the underclass in his writing is unlike anyone else's. 'Blood dripping like peach blossoms'—that was my observation about his depiction of suffering in his documentary during a talk with him at Danxiangjie (单向街) Bookshop.

During an earlier talk at Ullens, before going on stage, Xu Tong said that the documentaries he was making at the time were called 'the Underclass Trilogy'. I suggested that 'the underclass' had become a cliché

and it might be better to call them ‘the Drifters Trilogy’ instead, which he adopted. Despite the sociological connotations the underclass(底层) may carry, ‘drifters’(游民), coined by Wang Xuetai(王学泰), is a lively and dynamic word that can better capture the uniqueness of Xu’s work, which is by no means a report on different walks of life, but rather filming about the life force of his subjects. He made use of the vitality of his subjects and reinforced it through emotional music, agitational filming, compulsory editing or conceptual montage. As I understand it, Xu’s work lies somewhere between documentaries and feature films, as it advocates an attitude towards life. Such an approach is apt to raise ethical issues, and he has also married one of his subjects, Tang Xiaoyan(唐小雁), a most amazing romance. Xu’s work has triggered almost all awakenings and fiercest debates on the ethics of Chinese documentary. For me, Xu Tong and Tang Xiaoyan are courageous filmmakers.

The above is our taxonomy. Interestingly, the twenty or so interviews allowed these filmmakers, who are experts at visual presentation, to express themselves in words, which in turn allowed us to observe closely their rationality and the depth of their thinking. As far as I can see, these filmmakers’ observations rarely failed to make sense, which were also backed up by a wealth of details. Documentary is a prime example of positivism at work, and the filmmakers’ verbal narration carried a conviction that was only made possible with fieldwork. Fan Jian said that when he went to Wuhan during the epidemic, he had thought that in that moment of crisis, the people of Wuhan would all be in the same boat. Instead he was in for a rude awakening to the hierarchy of disease within the community and the discrimination that had developed with the help of metaphors. This is the profound insight that the real life of flesh and blood can offer at the microscopic level.

Documentary is the memory mechanism of our time; an era may be preserved in documentaries. On the other hand, documentary also offers a way of approaching the present and the future. The Chinese independent documentary movement has established a brand new independent cultural tradition in China, echoing the independent artistic trend of the late 1970s. However, it has a different medium and a different way of dissemination and interaction with the world. The beauty of documentaries is that they add a deeper experiential dimension to history. When a moment passes into history, it becomes a narrative, a theory, a vague presence. It becomes increasingly abstract and susceptible to arbitrary interpretation. It is a truism that film can stem the passage of time, but in China this takes on a greater and more special significance. With documentaries, time will not pass in vain, suffering will not be in vain, real joys will be remembered, and what people think will be recorded in detail. With such audio-visual materials and such micro-histories that can actually be seen, we stand a chance of fighting against the abstraction of the past, the present and the future.

中国当代纪录影像：建立一个新的独立文化传统

王小鲁

很荣幸为《今天》主持这期专刊，本期内容主要采访了二十位左右独立纪录片导演，其中包括一个创作群体。他们是中国独立纪录片发展近四十年来的重要力量。但这个格局并不完整，因为纸张容量有限，一些重要的创作者未能列入，希望留待未来以别种方式继续展现吧。

专刊文字的组织方式主要是采访和对话，采访者激发创作者讲述各自的电影故事。内容方面，多是个人生活史和创作史的交织，诸如导演们创作纪录片的机缘、拍纪录片之前的准备、与拍摄客体如何相遇、个人风格如何形成、对纪录片及社会人生的观察……

这期专刊名称是“**中国独立纪录片运动再叙述**”。中国独立纪录片运动如何定义？它是指主要开始于一九九〇年前后，主要于民间展开的一系列纪录片拍摄行动，它们具有某种整体性和一致性。我在上面的定义里添加了“主要”两个字，是因为最近我们有了新的发现，这样界定更准确一些。而为何叫“再叙述”呢？本来我们是命名“再发现”的，但这似乎要提供一个完整的成果列表，压力很大，就改名为“再叙述”。这让我们的工作心态更为放松。而再叙述中必然有再发现，不过那是在叙述之后才能归纳出来的。

这个专题的出现，对于《今天》杂志而言，自有其办刊的思路，于中国独立纪录片而言也别有道理。其实，就中国独立纪录片领域的归纳和整合，学界所做的工作并不多，相关材料也往往四处散落着，不能作为一个相对的整体被人深入了解。而独立纪录片的研究虽然从未形成显学的态势，近来研究的局面又格外萧条，笔者算是孜孜于此的人之一，于我个人或学术整体而言，当下正值疲倦、冷落的时日，这次工作因此成为一次重要的激励。

这个专题的产生也发生在另一个背景之上。近几年，独立影像的发展呈现了颓势，节展空间或关闭，或紧缩。人们为此已经表达了多年的意见，但目前似乎大家已经逐渐接受现实了。前些天，笔者为一个纪录片节做评审，看到世界纪录片创作的兴旺，纪录片作为工具与方法，正为各国人们广泛使用。第三世界的纪录影像数量最多，也最为精彩动人，从南美到中东、中非到南亚……尤其是刚果和埃塞俄比亚的公民运动影像最为令我感到震撼，影像中，人们的行动所展现的尊严和创造力，都与笔

者以前的知识大不相同。

这让我大受教育。数码技术对全球纪录片的促进，能力巨大，催生的图景十分可观。我感受到一个全球纪录片共同体的存在。在接近二十年的时间里，中国独立纪录片曾是这共同体当中最为繁荣和生动的部分，是携带公民意识觉醒内涵的纪录片运动之一。而如今的形势，我称其遭遇了“小冰期”。

但我们仍然要“再叙述”。不仅仅是为了发现什么，“继续讲述”本身就是一个值得保持的动作。而且它也不刻意，它本来就应该是当下生活中自然的文化流动。同时，它也不是重复，每次的讲述都因为时代的推进，而获得了一个新的历史纵深。

二

将中国独立纪录片的发展放置于世界纪录片史中来看，由于它与中国社会发展的密切互动，其具有了独一无二性。当然，在此我们无需过多参照国际，而以中国社会变迁、个人主体性的进化和纪录片创作的互动作为论述的要点。

笔者想在此先行面对纪录片研究领域的两个公案，因为这关乎如何理解中国独立纪录运动的核心问题。首先是对于“中国独立纪录片运动”这个名称的使用以及关于它的起点。很多年来，都有人对“运动”二字表示质疑，他们拒斥这类集体化的命名，更强调纪录片在个体身上的发生。对于运动这个词的反对与时代精神造成的一时喜好有关，也与过于沉重的历史记忆有关，他们是要从词汇上进行换血，远离旧时代，这一点我是理解的。

但我个人不排斥这个命名，我甚至宁愿从比喻意义上使用它，或以物理运动与之作比。这个词汇让我们看到广泛发生的纪录片事件之间的联系，也更能发现纪录片与中国社会发展的关系。笔者曾经将中国独立电影运动（包含纪录片运动）的历史动力从晚清知识分子追求个人主义和“独立之德”开始论述，再从五四一直论述到八〇年代逐渐兴起的新启蒙运动（当然还可以更往前追溯渊源），这是文化上的联系。

而在《今天》上做这个题目的意外收获则是，它给予我一个新的观察视点。《今天》作为中国独立文化的开拓者——它是一九四九年以来第一本非官方的文学杂志，它与四月影会、星星美展（有人将之看作《今天》派生出来的组织）等一起开启了漫长的新文化时期，而独立电影应该与之有血缘的联系。它们是中国独立纪录片发生的当代渊源。这个渊源的发现并不难，了解八〇年代思想史的人会知道这一切，只是因为做这个专刊的机缘，使我能更近观察这一点。

但是中国独立纪录片运动有它自己独特的形式。纪录片的生产关系更复杂，它受制于技术发展和传播通道。我们要寻找中国独立纪录片的起点和开端，仍然要在流动影像的生产领域去寻找。比较有趣的是，这次的收获不止对上面所叙述的渊源有真切的感受，我看到了另外一些实物和材料——关于星星美展的纪录片素材。这可以算是一个重要的发现，它让我重新思考中国独立纪录运动的起源。

多年来，我们以一九九〇年《流浪北京》为中国独立纪录片运动的起点，最近的研究已经将这个起点往前推了许多，笔者曾找到一个片例，认为中国第一部独立纪录片不是《流浪北京》，而是吕乐导演一九八六年开拍并于八九年六月完成的《怒江，一条被遗忘的峡谷》。最近我们（包括笔者，以及崔卫平、曹恺和余琼）还在英国纽卡斯尔大学的期刊《华语独立影像观察》上，讨论起温普林先生未竟的纪录片《大地震》，它开拍于一九八八年，但使用的素材包括了温普林于一九八四年拍摄自己所组织的大学生话剧活动。这部纪录片并未完成，所以对于它的论述就变得麻烦起来。如何看待它在中国独立纪录片运动中的存在？未完成的纪录片属于何种谱系？

其实在纪录片学术界，“纪录片运动”和“纪录运动”这两个词一直被混合使用着，笔者曾为此展开思辨，我认为若使用“纪录运动”这个概念，就不必追求成片，因此独立记录行为就可以被纳入论述之中。在当年中国的国情下面，持有摄像机进行私人的拍摄，已经是一个非常具有开创性的行为，本身已经具有革命性质。

因此，当我们以独立记录行为作为一个标志来评价中国独立纪录片的发展，中国独立纪录运动就可以推前到一九八四年。但我一直认为，以中国之大，肯定存在另外的独立记录行动，不过很多行动可能永远都无从考证了。但星星美展的纪录片原始素材却是被好好地保存着。笔者曾经从黄锐（星星美展的发起人之一）的助手处听到过它的存在，因为没有看到片子本身，所以它没有进入我的学术写作。此番与《今天》的合作，让我重新记起了这个事情。当我向鲍昆先生请教的时候，他竟然带我寻访到了相关影片资料。我在九月份的时候看到了它们。

鲍昆曾经是“四月影会”的成员，现在是《今天》的编委之一。他带我找到了同为四月影会成员的任曙林先生。在仓促的观看条件下，我们只看了一个轮廓。关于星星画展的记录拍摄，主导者是池小宁，任曙林是他的导演助理，但拍摄所用的红旗牌 16毫米摄影机和胶片，都是任曙林提供的。这些纪录片素材的版权属两人共有。

我们姑且冒昧，称此未完成的纪录片为《星星美展掠影》吧，因为的确是掠影。其素材有四十七分钟，内容包括星星美开展当天的现场、后来挪到公园展览后的状况，当然也有因为展览被干扰而游行的场面——马德升走在最前面，身后是要求言论自由和艺术自由的横幅，黄锐、王克平、北岛、芒克包括摄影家刘香成，都在镜头当中。这些素材被无序地组接在一起，并无时间的先后，加上一

部分影像还是任曙林在公园试胶片的镜头，所以就以目前的素材量，不加入新制作的素材，纵然再做精细加工，也较难构成一部完整的纪录片。

但是这次的纪录行为有很强的自觉性，其创作意识也具有先锋的独立纪录片观念，所以应该被重视。任曙林回忆说，池小宁不仅要记录一个画展，这只是拍摄的一个开端，之后他计划分别对本次展览上比较重要的五个人物，如黄锐、马德升等，继续跟踪拍摄。而从现有素材来看，导演注重拍摄对象的反应，着重抓取参观者和作品之间的关系，也比较注重形式感，比如从栅栏的另外一侧，拍摄被抽象化了的众多观者的手。池小宁和四月画会、《今天》一直有紧密的联系，但从影像和知情者的讲述中，可见创作者的立意和追求——它并非星星画展的附属品，这次拍摄行为比温普林一九八四年的拍摄更具有独立纪录片的作品自觉性。

而从生产关系上来说，这部摄影机所以能够到达一个纯粹的民间现场，则在于它是对于单位器材的偷用——甚至不是“新纪录片运动”中诸位导演对于电视台器材的所谓借用。任曙林在煤炭科学院做摄影工作，胶片和摄影机都是他偷偷从单位里“顺”出来的。这些有趣的细节其实保存了一份独立电影意志的纯粹性证明。这也是笔者将其看作中国独立纪录片一个重要起点的论据。

似乎已经没有疑问了，我们可以将池小宁、任曙林的拍摄作为中国独立记录行动的一部分，甚至起点，这个发现将独立纪录行为的时间从一九八四年推前到一九七九年十月初。这对于中国独立纪录运动的论述是一个革新，它提供了一个崭新的历史景深。它将独立电影作为一种艺术运动，与七〇年代末展开的独立艺术运动——包括摄影、绘画、诗歌等，更密切地联系在了一起。

虽然“电影民主化”这个词，是在七〇年代末期的制片厂体制内提出的，但是无论剧情片还是纪录片，都处于那个时代的生产系统里，纵然有自由意志，也难以获得生产条件将其加以实施。《星星美展掠影》的拍摄，在当时自然是个例，而且与之后更有规模的运动（尤其是一九八八年之后）有一定的时间距离，但它们却是在同样的时代精神里面。时代总会有先行者，我们不能因其走得太早而将其略去，当与四月影会、《今天》、星星美展的参与者们具有同等精神质量和精神要求的人拥有了自由电影的冲动，并获得了摄影机，独立影像的运动就“应该”开始了。

但由于电影的特殊性，对于多数人来说，这个过程要滞后一些。除了《怒江》，独立纪录片运动的早期创作——时间的《天安门》、温普林的《大地震》、吴文光的《流浪北京》都是在一九八八年正式启动的，这就是说，大约到了八八年左右，影像知识分子界的独立思想才普遍达到了一定水准，社会环境和创作体制才有了足够的进化，逐渐具备了将其个体意志凝结到电影中的条件。

历史的动力在地表之下涌动，地面上偶有隆起，规模不大，与后来者的关系若断若续，但在地下其

实有紧密的联结。我们从更深远的历史视野中，才能看到渊源、河流以及流域的统一性。这其实也帮助我论证了“中国独立纪录运动”这个概念的合法性。

三

还有另外一桩公案，这一桩似乎不为学者所注意，但关乎中国独立纪录片运动的本体论，并关乎创作者的命运。八〇年代末到九〇年代初，伴随着相关实践，中国的当代纪录片观念渐渐形成，独立纪录片也逐渐发展起来。吕新雨教授曾提出“新纪录片运动”这个概念，但有当事人并不认同。我记得吴文光导演在一次会议上说，在他们介入创作之前，中国根本就没有纪录片，所以不存在新旧之说。这就是说，中国纪录片这个事物是从他们手上诞生的。

纪录片前辈的豪言壮语从何而来？虽然不止一个早期创作者回忆，一九九〇年前后，他们介入创作的时候，是完全没有纪录片概念的，所能看到的就是电视台专题片和新闻简报。电视专题片和新闻简报是不是纪录片？他们显然认为不是。

我认为我们不能忽略前人对于纪录片的探索，虽然过去少见精彩的作品，但纪录片创作从民国时期就有了。我们关于纪录片的论述多是从一九四九年开始的，五六十年代一直到八十年代，也是有纪录片创作的。也许只能这么来分析：在这些前辈话语里的纪录片，是一个理想主义的完美形式。当然纪录片这个概念本身就具有道德属性，这使得它区别于其他一切艺术种类，因为很多时候，“真实与否”本身就是“欺骗与否”的问题，但中国五六十年代以来的纪录片伦理病得太严重了，它们是致力于宣教而非探索真实的话术系统，因此这些创作者将违背伦理的纪录片划分到纪录片之外是一个非常决绝的行动。从感情上我是非常理解的。

但若从理性来分析，我认为是专题片的生产关系导致了谎言，而专题片的形式元素却并不必然导致谎言。所以我们的反对要分开。不能将专题片的形式和语言当作非纪录片的。进一步说，由于专题片的形式和语言并不必然导致谎言，而是生产关系出了问题，所以这些纪录片仍然可以被看作是纪录片。就像坏人也是人一样。

但在当时，拥有独立意志的纪录片人要与以前的系统做斗争，他们要开天辟地地为中国当代纪录片赋予形式和面貌。首先，让纪录片脱离那套体制。当蒋樾在访谈中说到他如何喜欢盲流两个字，并骄傲地讲到当自己九〇年代初离开单位拍纪录片后，至今没有任何单位的时候，新一代人完全不能够理解他的自豪所在。

另外，在当时，体制内外共享着同一个文化政治的背景。开始的时候，革新的确发生在电视台体制内部。

他们要与过去的专题片告别，从题材上讲，呼吁拍摄普通人和小人物，不仅仅拍大人物或政治人物，从技术层面上则是特别强调同期声，摒除画外音和配乐等对于画面——也就是对于人物命运的统治。

中央电视台的时间导演曾经为我讲述八〇年代央视专题片的拍摄中，被拍摄对象身份的逐渐下沉的过程，还有为同期声而奋斗的经历。要让人说话，不能让人成为哑巴。对于拍摄小人物，蒋樾在接受《今天》的访问中说他最深的感触是被拍摄者总是在问，你为什么拍我，我有什么值得拍的呢？

“那时候的人都是这个想法，普通人都觉得自己没脸上电视。”也许他们都觉得自己没有资格活着，这是一个长期压抑生活下形成的自我认识，是国人的症结所在。纪录片导演通过拍摄小人物，跟拍和同期声，逐渐将一个真正的社会和普通民众的面貌展现出来。

因此，在那个年代，纪录片在中国不仅仅是一个片种，一个电影类型或者某种新艺术形式，纪录片是一种面对社会人生的态度，它伴随的是八〇年代兴起的“讲真话”的普遍诉求。今天的人们也许不会理解“潘晓事件”，为什么一对年轻人说出几句自己的真心话，就让千万青年们兴奋和哭泣，因为讲真话是面对问题的第一步，否则就是对个体生命无休止的戏弄。所以那个年代的纪录片人在为中国当代纪录片赋予最初形式的过程，是在积极拓展中国人“说真话”的表达形态。不仅仅是吴文光、蒋樾这些人，包括季丹、胡杰、杨荔钠这一批纪录片工作者，其实都是在荒漠中，为纪录片赋予了最初的中国形式的人。

中国当代纪录片，或者说独立纪录片为自己设定了一个新的原则，一种内在的规定性。获得新的精神的摄影机在中国大地上游走，一个脱离了旧体制的个体持有它，一系列的质询和思辨就因此展开了，多层次的观看也被激发出来，基层民众的暗哑的脸孔被激活了。加上独立影像日益传播，人们对于自己的生存环境和自我具有了更多的自觉性。独立纪录片的拍摄行为本身是一个富有现代性的行动。

而这也深刻塑造了创作者的命运。因为发生在中国的独立纪录运动还有一种特殊性，如果你有志在此，它将会深度塑造你的人生形态，你必须有一定程度的狂热，才能坚持这项事业，因为在中国，这是一种抵抗性的存在，它的过程充满了碰撞和危险。所以，我总是愿意将独立纪录片和创作者的生命状态一起加以思索。记得十年前，我们策过一个青年展，在这个展的前言上我曾经这么书写，来表达对于一群独立纪录片导演的理解：

“我们看到一种持久的力量。这些创作者多为中年人，年龄差别也比较大。这个群体在以前是不曾有过的。相对于中国的人口密度，他们的数量其实并不多。但是他们带来一种社会示范。当独立电影与一种中年人（从 30 岁到 50 岁余岁）的生活结合，那代表着一种精神的纵深掘进，一种新的生存方式就在我们固有的生存模式和工作体制中被深刻地开拓出来了。”

今天读这段文字，我都觉得有点陌生了，那是十几年前的一个展览。我当时感觉到他们其实开拓了一种新的生存方式，为一般化的中国人的生存方式开辟了更多的可能性空间。他们作为革命者，当然希望自己所示范的道路越走越宽，这条道路的确曾经充满了跟随者，但近日的局面却发生了意想不到的转弯。

季丹一直是我身边一个重要的参照——当然，她没有义务为任何人提供参照，只是这个参照仍然发生了。在接受《今天》的访谈中，她谈到了当下的生活，她为了拍片经常向家里借钱，对自己的父母充满愧疚，现在病中的父亲自然需要她更多的照顾，而她其实在云南拍片，却经常要赶往黑龙江北部伊春照顾老人，所以十分劳累。她三十年前游学日本回国后，从没有单位，一直在中国上下游历。

“我就在下面往下走，就是到处游历……我把自己困在那儿，哪儿有纪录片这个行业啊？中国有吗？你拍了干嘛呢？……那天晚上跟我爸感慨，我说爸爸你一辈子看不上我，穷困潦倒，老靠父母照顾，那你说我该怎么办呢？要是正常情况下，我能拍个片子电视台就能用，那我至于像现在这个样子吗？”

当下的院线纪录片似乎越来越多，但是整体上已远离了纪录片精神，这是一个越来越不能容纳纪录片的时代。十年前我所感慨的纪录片前辈的先锋生活，这个领域反而变得日益狭窄。在蒋樾的访谈中，他也说了相同的事情，他和季丹是中国独立纪录片领域里的年龄稍长者，有着更为完整的历史视野。他说他现在已经“躺平”。之前他也在电视台拍专题片赚钱，但他坚持那不是纪录片。“我个人对纪录片这个词保有尊重。”他自己认可的纪录片作品，看到的人寥寥无几，因为无处播放。

“令我悲哀的是，三十年过去了，我们还是没有建立起纪录片的土壤……那时我们都受过小川绅介的影响，小川绅介在日本是自己一站一站地去放映自己的纪录片，这个行为在日本积累了一大批纪录片观众，后来是老观众又带着孩子来看他的纪录片，并且在他拍摄纪录片的地方有了一个山形纪录片电影节。我们这一代人就没有受过纪录片的教育，我们的下一代再下一代，也不会有的，所以这么想，我真觉得我是一个失败者。就好像我是一个会种地的农民，看着是有大片的土地，但这土地都是沙漠，长不出粮食来，你去栽种也不会有收获和希望，没有这个土壤。”

他觉得这个状况越来越严重，是因为中国人越来越不喜欢说真话了，所以也就没了纪录片。他们年轻时在纪录片领域建立了理想，然后去努力，本来以为春种秋收，却发现最后田园荒芜，而这一切发生在自己生命的暮色来临时，这肯定是令人感到压抑的局面。价值秩序的颠覆容易让人失去对生活的信念。那个采访的下午，我看到了导演脸上的灰色。

其实笔者在这里所叙述的，不仅仅是两位导演的经验。这是中国当代纪录片观念和精神生成的过程，时代决定了它的产生，也决定了它的受阻。一切因时代而起，中国独立纪录片运动的观念决定了自己的命运，也决定了其创作主体们的命运，而当我们看到这一命运变迁的过程，我们就更能体会中国独立纪录片运动的本体之所在。

四

以上谈论，我其实是想换一个角度论述对于中国独立纪录片运动之起源、之本体论和精神性的理解，也在分析中国独立纪录片运动所遭遇的危机的破坏性——它带来的不单是事业的萧条，还带来对生存信念的瓦解，带来普遍的忧郁症。

下面且回到本期专刊，描述其结构和设定。并着重去观看我们所选择的二十多位独立纪录片导演的谈话，他们所带给中国独立纪录运动的丰富性。

我们是一个小团队工作，与今天杂志编委鲍昆、执行主编肖海生诸位同仁开过若干次会。采访者包括黄英、董帅、余雅琴、佟珊、孙红云、徐亚萍、刘盟赟、陈平、陈华，还有我。每人负责一部分，很多人未能联系，或者联系上又因为其它原因未能成行。这次我们所选择的被访人物，多是有两部以上作品的作者，他们的作品很优秀，也形成了广泛的影响力。

这些导演包括五〇后如吴文光，六〇后如林鑫、李一凡，七〇后如赵亮、杨荔钠，八〇后如王男栾和草场地的年轻导演们。每个年龄层次都意味着不同的历史纵深。而且每个人处于不同社会位置，比如林鑫在陕西银行做职员，胡新宇是大学音乐老师，邱炯炯是艺术家，张赞波是一个辞职后专事拍摄的知识分子，不同导演的摄影机接触着不同的世面，描绘出广阔的社会图画——当然他们不仅仅用纪录片来描绘外部世界，也将纪录片当作巫师的魔杖，力图从中召唤出更多的宝物来。

关于这期专刊的结构，我们也曾希望用分期的方式，按时间顺序编排。比如一个时期是以《铁西区》作为界限。但每个分期或分类都不能彻底准确地概括历史。现在我们的做法是根据导演作品的特质，将其放在不同的板块里，每个板块都代表了中国独立纪录片的不同维度。它体现了中国独立纪录片运动所开拓的各个领域。

当然，这样的安排也不完美，每个人都不可能完全限定在一个维度或者概念里，他们都有旁逸斜出不能限定的部分。比如仅仅以“女性和自我”的名目，将季丹、杨荔钠和王男栾放在一起，是不能完全归纳三位作者的特色的。但我们尽量抓取其重要的一面，进行排列组合。

但很多重要的维度未能单列，比如说私影像，本来可以成为一个分组，但没有找到合适的人物组合，不过这个维度也可以被置入现有的分组里面。吴文光的资料在中国纪录片研究领域是最多的，我们这次偏重他所带领的集体创作部分，他后来召集了不少年轻创作者，推进“村民影像计划”等一系列集体创作活动，我们希望将这个部分介绍和展现出来。

将蒋樾单列为先行者，是因为他对于中国独立纪录片的历史有完整的参与。温普林《大地震》宣布开拍的当天，他就是参与者，那天他和导演、摄影师一起去了唐山地震纪念碑。他的纪录片经验可以触及中国独立纪录片运动早期的一些创作，之后覆盖全程。笔者之前也采访了温普林，但已经发表于公共媒体，所以这里不再收录。温的作品成片不多，在中国纪录片领域的展示也很少，不过他在北京、西藏拍摄了大量关于前卫艺术和藏地生活的素材，他其实是可以以“记录行为”为指标进行考量的重要的纪录片人，但这里仅作一个索引。而蒋樾则是一位在不同时期都有自己重要作品发布的创作，他对于中国独立纪录片的艺术形式和精神价值，以及它与社会历史关系的领悟十分完整、深厚。

王利波的主要作品都是关于国家历史的，胡杰作品众多，也有很多拍摄当下生活的，但是他最为人所知的几部纪录片都是关于文革、反右历史的追溯，所以将他们列入“记忆与政治”。

“女性与自我”栏目包含三位女性导演，她们当然也可以列入其他的行列，我们单以导演性别来区分，不知道会不会为她们所诟病。但女性创作的确有她们独特的境遇和感受力，她们也都在性别方面有自己的思考，并将之融入了创作。杨荔钠在自己的拍摄行为中，发现了自己作为女性主义者的必然性，这是一个明确的自我发现；而季丹多次跟我说过女性导演和拍摄者在拍摄环境中的特质和优势，她会更容易被人所接受；王男楸的例子也有深刻的启示性，她那部拍摄独生子女的纪录片的缘起，是因为她做了母亲，她才对计划生育有了深切的感知，才明白计划生育在女人的情感世界中意味着什么。

“当我怀孕成为母亲的时候，我看待整个世界有一些新的变化。那个时候，怀孕的头一两周，有很大的改变。最明显的是，我有很强的保护欲，保护自己身体里面的这个生命，他是最最重要的。不管怎么样，我应该尽我的能力，会用我的生命去保护他。那个时候，当我看到大街上的每一个陌生人的时候，我的脑海里面就会想，这个人在他妈妈眼里是什么样的人。每个人都有一个妈妈，每个人都是某一个人的孩子。我现在看到的，每个人不管他是什么样，他都有一个很爱很爱他的人，他都是某一个人最重要的人。我也很惊讶，我看待世界的方式有了一个巨大的变化。之后跟我妈妈讨论起来，其实是问我妈妈，当时你怀我的时候是怎样的。然后我妈妈就很快地跟我讲了计划生育的事情。那些事情其实我小时候都听过也见证过。见过周围的邻居被抓呀被结扎之类的，也听过很多类似的故事，就成长在那个年代。但是从来就没有一次认真地思考过，因为它太习以为常了。小时候听过的很普遍的一句话就是谁谁谁又去结扎了。听

上去就像是去超市买了东西那样家常便饭。到现在我自己怀孕的时候，再听这些故事，会有不一样的感触，让我整个人很震惊的。”

其实王男栳也可以被列入“介入或行动”这个范畴里，她的《海南之后》的拍摄中，与被拍摄者其实是一个同盟关系，他们在危机四伏中一起逃亡，是一个共谋性的存在。其实在《我是另外一个你》中也是如此，她和被拍摄的美国男孩一起去体验世界、开拓新生活，但我们无法面面俱到。而被划入“介入或行动”的导演中，王久良关于京郊垃圾问题的作品的确促进了北京对于郊区垃圾的治理，他的关于洋垃圾的《塑料王国》据说也在影响国家政策。其实《塑料王国》更偏向于一种直接电影的手法，张赞波关于修路过程的纪录片，也更偏向于直接电影，这种创作手法的特点是尽量减少作者对于被拍摄者的介入，所以这是一个悖论，我们在这里打破这个惯例，其实是看到纪录片创作意志的复杂性，王久良去选择环保题材本身就显示了他的介入的思想，而张赞波也是如此，他是我的同学，我从他的身上能感觉到一种介入的激情，他的拍摄不仅仅是记录，而是要去改变什么，从他的访谈中也可以感受得到。

后草场地的吴文光团队创作的介入性也是明显的，他们的年轻导演去介入乡村的记忆，邹雪平在老家村子里树起了一个大饥饿纪念碑，章梦奇在老家修建了一座房子，试图改变此处的文化生态。尤其是那块纪念碑的树立，我觉得是伟大的行动。她们其实也适合放在“表现和创造”的栏目里。

目前被纳入“表现和创造”的是胡新宇和邱炯炯。纪录片领域里面，有苦干型导演，有才华型导演，我觉得两位属于后者。他们的片子不只去跟拍现实，而是在镜头前积极建造现实，更加直接地展现作者的主观性。我称胡新宇的《男人》为荷尔蒙电影，他有时候出现在镜头前做一些奇怪的事，但无论他在不在镜头里，他的气味都散发在画面上。邱炯炯的纪录片形式十分独特，其创作手法富丽堂皇，也充满了趣味性，为中国独立纪录片的常规叙事增添了想象力。

范俭的作品往往由家庭而社会，我对他的纪录片《吾土》印象深刻。“家庭是我的一个创作载体，”他说。黎小锋和贾恺是一对夫妻，他们早期的几部重要纪录片都是关于家庭的，为此我曾经写过一篇介绍性的文章《家庭的秘密》发在报纸上，后来他们的创作当然有了更多元的视角。

“现象与观察”似乎是一个泛泛的称谓，其实，现象和现象学在中国独立纪录运动的早期是一个关键词。现象学有很多流派，但能为我们所用的部分十分简单明了，就是当我们面对事物时，摒除一切先见——我们的先见往往是一切先验的政治理念，它在误导我们对于事物本身的考察。于是，回到事物和事情“本身”，利用自己的直观把握其本质，这个方法对于我们的纪录片工作十分有用。今天的人已经对此无感，但中国独立纪录运动的大部分作品的方法，都可以归纳到这里。

观察，作为纪录片的另一个方法，强调更少的介入，更凸显其客观性。其实黎小锋大多作品也可纳入其中。目前被归入这个名目下的李一凡、赵亮、杜海滨、刘德东，往往都是对于外部社会现象有自己的热情。从拆迁到东莞打工人，这些人和事都外在于李一凡的生活，他借此观察社会的运作。他最近的《杀马特我爱你》，表面充满绚烂的颜色和奇异美学，但其实是一个极其令人悲痛的故事。杜海滨也喜欢观察外部世界，或偶然进入自己视野的事物——这个特质必须将纳入和林鑫拍煤矿、胡新宇拍男人的对比中，才更加明显。杜海滨的《伞》是中国结构主义纪录片的一个典范，结构本身就很体现导演的主观，但他仍然是在观察。刘德东是一个优秀的纪录片人，他似乎与圈子保持着的距离，他的观察富于哲人气质。赵亮对于中国底层群体的考察持之以恒，《上访》几乎达到中国独立纪录片的巅峰，目前他的影像方向正在转型中。

林鑫和顾桃被我称为影像地方志。这未免简单，尤其顾桃，拍摄鄂温克，或许可纳入人类学或民族志，但因其拍摄地区执着于家乡一隅——他有非凡的融合能力，将那里的人物形象和内在领域一并深刻地拍摄了出来——称其为地方志也未尝不可，另外也方便与林鑫并列。陕西铜川是一个资源城市，是林鑫的家乡，煤矿是林鑫父亲生前工作的地方，这影响了林鑫的一生，他从拍摄煤矿历史，进而拍摄城市全景。林鑫曾出版一本很厚的专著，《三里洞：上海支边矿工的影像史》，邀我作序，我从中看到他其实对于铜川这个资源城市的各个方面都做了交代，从地形地貌、城市变迁，到其中的重要工业，以及依附于其上的矿工的命运，让我觉得这是一本个人书写的“地方志”，与官方地方志相补充，进而认为他的创作是以影像写地方志，若再添加地理和山川风物的影像，就更为全面。林鑫后来果然拍摄了《沉默的风景》，交代城市空间如街道、广场、郊区和市民生活的关系，又拍摄了铜川女性人物群像《单身女人》，我戏称其为古代地方志写作架构中的《列女传》。

徐童导演被单列为“其他”，并不是将他看作是零余，而是因为他的难以分类，他建立了自己在中国独立纪录片领域谱系中完全的独特性。他用古代说书人的方式来结构被拍摄者的生活，令人完全意想不到。他是随物赋形，还是要将被拍摄者的生活纳入到他的形式里？徐童在拍摄中，从底层人在极端困苦中完成自己的生命的过程中受到启发，所以他笔下的底层和任何人都不同。“鲜血淋漓似桃花”——这是在单向街书店一次对谈活动中我对他的纪录片呈现苦难的方式的评价。

在更早的一次对谈上，在尤伦斯，上台前，徐童说他现在正在拍的纪录片是“底层三部曲”，我说，现在底层已经满大街了，不要再叫底层，叫游民三部曲，徐童采纳了这个建议。底层也许有某种社会学意义，但并未能体现徐童纪录片的特色，“游民”（王学泰所创）这个词所呈现的活泼和动势，则更能展现他的作品的气息。徐童不是在拍社会各阶层的调查报告，他是在拍摄生命力，他借用被拍摄对象的元气，又通过情绪性很强的音乐、鼓动性拍摄手法、强制性剪辑或观念蒙太奇，来强化生命力这个东西，我觉得徐童的纪录片作品在张扬一种生命态度，所以他的作品在纪录片和剧情片之间。这种做法本身就容易导致伦理问题，他与被拍摄对象唐小雁也建立了最令人惊艳的关系，关

于中国纪录片伦理的最强烈的觉醒和讨论，几乎都是从徐童开始的。但我称徐童和唐小雁是勇敢的创作者和生活者。

以上就是我们的分类学。有趣的是，二十多个采访，让这些擅长视觉呈现的创作者用语言表达自己的观点，这让我们得以密集地观察他们的理性，他们思考问题的质量。我所能感受到的是这些导演们的谈话多不空言，而有大量的细节佐证，纪录片是实证主义哲学实践的典范，导演的语言讲述也带着田野实践后的踏实感。当范俭在疫情期间去武汉的时候，他说在那个危难的时刻，他以为武汉人都是同一条船上的人，但他发现了小区内部疾病的等级，以及借助于隐喻所形成的歧视。这是现实生活肉身所散发出来的深邃的性质，它让人从微观之处获得洞察力。

纪录片是一个时代的记忆机制，时代在纪录片里面贮存，纪录片也是面向当下和未来的方法与手段。中国独立纪录片运动在中国建立了一个崭新的独立文化传统，与七〇年代末的独立文艺思潮相呼应。但是，它的介质不同，在世间传播、与世人互动的方式也不同。纪录片的卓越之处是为历史提供了更深刻的可体验性。当历史过去，过去的一切就会变成语言、理论，变成形象模糊的存在，就越来越抽象化，有被任意阐释的可能。虽然我们知道电影对抗时间流逝的一般理论，但在中国，它在这个方面的意义更为重大，更为特殊。有了纪录片，时间不会白白过去，苦不白受，真实的欢乐也被铭记，人们的所思所想被具体而微地记录下来。有了这些感性材料，这些具有可视性的微观史，就可以与过去、现在以及未来的抽象性做斗争。

EXAMPLE OF PIONEERS 先行者举隅

Jiang Yue: Keeping Respect for the Term 'Documentary'

蒋樾：我要对“纪录片”这个词保有尊重

Interviewer: WANG Xiaolu 王小鲁 Translator: Xiang FAN 樊响

Jiang Yue: Keeping Respect for the Term ‘Documentary’

Interviewer: WANG Xiaolu 王小鲁 Translator: Xiang FAN 樊响

Jiang Yue (蒋樾) is an important pioneer and enlightener in the field of Chinese independent documentary. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, when there was a lack of understanding of documentaries and a lack of films to refer to, it was his explorations that led to the initial forms of Chinese documentaries, not simply to explore a genre, but to actively develop a form of expression for Chinese people to ‘tell the truth’

Jiang Yue found the original position for CCTV’s documentary programme *Living Space* (生活空间). He has made seven or eight independent works (not including those made for television) in a variety of styles, from *Catholics in Tibet* (天主教在西藏, 1992), *The Other Bank* (彼岸, 1995), *This Happy Life* (幸福生活, 2002), to *The Storm* (暴风骤雨, 2005). He is a typical representative of the first generation of independent documentary filmmaker in China.

Jiang Yue’s generation holds a historical perception of documentary film and a vision for predicting the future. He understands deeply what documentary means in China. He believes that an environment for documentary filmmaking in China does not currently exist and is likely to be more difficult in the future. This interview was conducted at his home in Beijing on 30 June 2021. He has no plans to continue filmmaking.

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Wang: What’s your current situation? I heard that you don’t seem to have a work unit.

Jiang: I haven’t had a work unit for a long time. When I got out of the Beijing Film Studio (北影厂) in 1994, the Beijing Talent Exchange Service Centre (北京市人才交流中心) had just been set up. I could put my file there, so I took it out of my unit. At that time, I had to get a passport in order to perform in a play with Wu Wenguang (吴文光), but I couldn’t get a passport from my unit. I had to resign in order to get a passport.

Wang: A play with Wu Wenguang? Where did you do it?

Jiang: It was a worldwide tour, mainly in Europe and America. As far as I can tell, our play was the most performed abroad, sixty performances, all of which were invitation from A-list theatre festivals. It was called *File 0* (零档案), directed by Mou Sen (牟森) and written by Yu Jian (于坚). It was just Yu's poem, very well written and short. Those thin papers, lying in a cold metal cupboard, can shackle a person's life, and that's what Yu Jian meant. There was no script for this play, though Mou Sen used theatrical form to present it. Using the poem as a backdrop, Wu Wenguang told his own story on stage, and I told mine, and Wu Wenguang's wife, Wen Hui (文慧), had no lines, but movement.

Wang: It's just narrating your own history.

Jiang: Yes, Wu Wenguang talked about his father. Wu Wenguang investigated his father very early on and wanted to write a book. During this process, Mou Sen asked me to record it, and then I carried a camera for Mou Sen to film it, which was quite interesting.

Wang: You also filmed for him?

Jiang: I went to Kunming to look at Wu Wenguang's father's file in his work unit. His father had already passed away, but even his mother didn't know what his father had told the organisation in his file.

Wang: It was made very early. But the completed film was made very late.

Jiang: It was very late. I haven't seen the completed version of *Investigating My Father* (调查父亲, 2016). I first shot it for Mou Sen, and we interviewed many people, knowing that Wu Wenguang's father was a very enlightened man, who played the guitar, spoke English, and listened to Voice of America during the Cultural Revolution. He was an interesting man, more interesting than Wu Wenguang.

Wang: What was the main part of your self-narrative when you were abroad?

Jiang: Wu Wenguang said that during the Cultural Revolution, as his father was a landlord, he couldn't hold his head up. But later he found out that his father used to be an air force pilot and had participated in the Anti-Japanese War, so he had some pride as a son. Then I just talk about the boring experience of working in a publishing house, very much like a diary. We talked about our lives on stage, but not deliberately about the archive. At the time Mou Sen was looking for actors from Beijing People's Art Theatre (北京人艺). Mou

Sen's idea was, 'I provide you with a setting and a stage, and you tell your own stories and feelings about your lives.' Professional actors cannot do this well, you can always see the acting. So then Mou Sen decided, 'Come on, you can give it a go'. I went on stage and told a story about my family, and Mou Sen thought it was quite good. Wu Wenguang was there too and he also said a few lines on the stage. Mou Sen then decided to use us as actors. It was a fun process.

Wang: What year was that?

Jiang: It was the second half of 1993. The first performance was a huge success, because the play was scheduled for the Kunstenfestivaldesarts in 1994. We didn't expect that people would understand it. At the end, the audience applauded and even stamped their feet! We were all shocked, as we had never seen that before, hundreds of people applauding there. The director of the festival and the artistic director from Hong Kong hugged each other. The play was originally scheduled for three performances at the festival, but three more were added later, and then it went to France, and the following year the major festivals were proud to be able to invite this play, so we performed it over sixty times.

Wang: How did you get a visa to go to so many countries?

Jiang: Their countries invited us directly, so it was easy to get a visa. But at that time, going abroad was like being a thief. When I went through the border control, the armed police would look at my passport, and when they looked at me, I felt I was a bad person. The first time I went abroad to perform, Mou Sen was not allowed to go. It was only after Belgium sent a direct note to the Chinese Foreign Ministry that Mou Sen was allowed to go.

Wang: Did you all make it out in the end?

Jiang: We all made it out. The next year, in 1995, we went to more places, such as Canada and all the major art festivals in Europe, but not the United States. We were just drifting around Europe. For example, if this festival was in May and the next one in June, it was too much hassle to come back and leave again.

Wang: Was the visa for long enough?

Jiang: The visas were for a long time. After the festival, they provided us half a month's accommodation

and subsistence, and then the next festival picked us up half a month in advance. So we just performed in one country after another. We spent the whole year in 1995 abroad. But I was already filming the Anyuan coal mine(安源煤矿) in 1995, and I said I couldn't continue performing, as I was a documentary filmmaker. Wu Wenguang also said that he was not going to perform either, as he wanted to make a film too.

Wang: This is a very interesting experience! You've done a lot of interviews before, but I've seldom heard this story. I'd like to start from the beginning. Your first documentary was made together with Wen Pulin(温普林) in 1988?

Jiang: Yes, in 1988, that's when we made *The Great Earthquake* (大地震).

Wang: Before that, you didn't actually envisage making a documentary or getting involved in the filmmaking field, did you?

Jiang: Actually, this had to do with the education we received. In our era, since we grew up during the Cultural Revolution, we had never seen documentaries. The only documentaries we had access to at that time were things like *Red Flag Canal*(红旗渠) and *The Medical Team in Tanzania*(医疗队员在坦桑) which were like news bulletins, so we didn't have the education for that.

Wang: You've seen Antonioni's *Chung Kuo, Cina*(中国, 1972), right?

Jiang: Yes, I've seen that one.

Wang: Have you seen any [Joris] Ivens?

Jiang: I've seen *A Tale of the Wind* (风, 1988), but I watched it after starting to make documentaries. I saw *River Elegy*(河殇, 1988) in 1989. But all the documentaries we saw were shown on television. We had never seen a documentary in a cinema, and we didn't know what a documentary was. I've known Wen Pulin since 1984 and he'd always been a very active student leader, five years older than me. Wen Pulin said his degree was in making trouble. Such a troublemaker! I'm very glad I met him when I first entered the university, and I was very lucky to have met him. He always came to the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts(中国戏曲学院) at that time.

Wang: How did you meet?

Jiang: At the university, we ate in the canteen, and the food was very bad. After class, the food was already cold. I had just joined and worked in the student union, so I organised a student strike, not eating the canteen food, and I sent out a statement from eight art schools. Wen Pulin, a student at the Central Academy of Fine Arts(中央美院), came to show his solidarity. I was impressed that the art schools were still so united and people were coming to show their solidarity.

Wang: When you went on strike, did anyone from the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts follow you?

Jiang: Most of the students responded to the call not to eat in the canteen. Then I organised students to buy buns from off campus and sell them in front of the canteen. They could be redeemed by canteen meal tickets, and none of the students went into the canteen, nor did the young teachers. Then the dean negotiated with us in the afternoon. At that time the teachers were people grew up in the Republic of China, and in those days in 1984, they were quite lenient.

Wang: Maybe they were afraid of being criticised back in the Cultural Revolution!

Jiang: Yes. They were not tough on students, just negotiated. I didn't expect it. Finally the dean promised to improve the canteen, hoping that students could still go into the canteen to eat, and then it indeed improved. That's how I met Wen Pulin. After that he went to the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts to find actors, because he liked to use theatre actors for his plays. I followed him from the time we met in 1984 until we graduated in 1988. During the university students' art festivals, I did all the stage lighting for him and for Mou Sen, just for fun. I did not have any money, so I was with Pulin and Mou Sen a lot at that time.

Zhang Mingwei(张明伟)from the Beijing Dance Academy(北京舞蹈学院), whose major was choreography directing, made a dance called *The Great Earthquake*(大地震). It was twelve years after the Tangshan earthquake, so we went there on the Qingming Festival in 1988. Pulin said that we should bring a camera to film it, as Zhang Mingwei wanted to go to the Tangshan Victims Memorial(唐山死难者纪念碑)on that day to pay tribute to the victims. We did not have much money, so I borrowed two hundred yuan and Pulin contributed another two hundred. We used the money to rent a camera, three hundred yuan a day. The rest of the money was spent on travel expenses and meals for the group. We then followed Zhang Mingwei to Tang-

shan.

It was snowing heavily that day and there was no one at the earthquake memorial. Twelve years later, an event that killed 300,000 to 400,000 people seemed to have been faded from memory. We carried a wreath that Zhang Mingwei bought. There was no elegiac couplet, so we borrowed brushes and paper to write something down. Finally, we got paper and brushes from the Xinhua Bookstore. We wrote an elegiac couplet and shot the first set of shots. Wen Pulin's documentary *The Great Earthquake* started filming during the Qingming Festival in 1988 and I participated from then on.

Wang: Later on, Wen Pulin staged a large-scale performance art project called *Binding the Great Wall* (包扎长城) in the name of *The Great Earthquake* crew. What was your role in *The Great Earthquake*?

Jiang: I was the producer. At the beginning Pulin asked me to be the scriptwriter, but I didn't know anything at the time. I thought there were a scriptwriter role for documentaries. I designed some scenes and wrote the song and lyrics for it.

Wang: The song was meant to be used in this film?

Jiang: Yes, there were songs in the original plan. I was asked by Pulin to write them, and I wrote a few lyrics, but we didn't use them in the end. I was just a fourth-year undergraduate student. I did not know much. Anyway, I did everything for this film, even the cinematography, including the gun shot scene in the modern art exhibition.

Wang: [Chinese artist] Xiao Lu (肖鲁). The gunshot part was arranged, right? You turned the camera on and then she fired, right?

Jiang: Yes, when we were shooting in the morning, there was a professional cameraman from Beijing TV who left for a while around lunchtime. At that moment Xiao Lu told Pulin that she wanted to shoot her work later to destroy it, and Pulin said, you have to let us set up the camera first before you shoot. So, the camera was set up behind the spot where she was shooting. I learned how to switch on the camera at the scene. The camera went on a few minutes before the shot. I was afraid that we were so close that the bullet might bounce backwards and hit us. She fired three times. After the shots, we started to leave. Someone carried the stand and I carried the camera, which I hadn't turned off. I kept filming a long take. At this point, the police

came in, and we stopped shooting and ran out. We were worried they might confiscate our tapes.

Wang: Did you go to the Beijing Film Academy (北影) at the end of 1988 and collaborated with Huang Jianzhong (黄健中)?

Jiang: I wouldn't say that I collaborated with him. I just worked for him as a student. He asked me to be his assistant director, as he didn't have an assistant director at that time.

Wang: During the time you worked as an assistant director for Huang Jianzhong, you two made *Spring Festival* (过年, 1991). That was one of the few good films that year!

Jiang: Yes, I thought it was a particularly good film made by Huang.

Wang: He did the best work, because all the films of the 1980s were a bit fake. Even though they tried to anti-fake, but they were still fake. In *Spring Festival*, the humanity and human emotion were very charming.

Jiang: Yes, and at that time there was a term called 'looking to money' (向钱看). In 1988, Meng Jinghui (孟京辉) played in Eugène Ionesco's play *Rhinoceros* for Mou Sen. The play was about how everyone else had turned into a rhinoceros except one person. The person shouted, 'Even if I am left alone, I will never surrender.' I was particularly touched by this, because in 1988 everyone was 'looking to money', and many people were called 'ten-thousand-yuan households' (万元户). At a time when the whole nation was looking to money, Mou Sen actually made a play like this, saying that I would never surrender, so I was greatly moved. Later, when I was working on the film *Spring Festival*, I told Huang about the play *Rhinoceros* and the line 'I will never surrender', so when Huang was working on the script of *Spring Festival*, he stressed that he would make it a story about 'everything for money'. Thirty years have passed but isn't it still the same today?

2

Wang: How did you come across television documentaries?

Jiang: In 1990, after finishing working for Huang as an assistant director on the film *Dragon Year Cops* (龙年警官, 1991), I had nothing to do. So, I worked on a short documentary for Hao Zhiqiang (郝志强). At

that time, one of the most active programmes on CCTV was *Economy 30 Minutes* (经济半小时), in which there was a ten-minute short special-theme film introducing an enterprise. As Hao Zhiqiang was quite familiar with the publicity department of the Ministry of Coal, we filmed the coal mine.

Wang: Was this a full documentary on coal mines?

Jiang: It was not a full documentary, it was just like a special topic film, but with more documentary elements. Hao Zhiqiang said he wanted to shoot a coal mine, and I was very interested in it, as I had never been to a coal mine before. At that time, I was already working in the Beijing Film Studio, so I filmed during my spare time. The first film was about a coal mine in Shanxi, with me as director and Zhao Xiaoding (赵小丁) as cinematographer. Later on, we shot from the north to the south, and at first it was like a film reporting on their political performance, but later on, it became clearer and more realistic. We filmed down to the Anyuan coal mine in Pingxiang, Jiangxi (江西萍乡). After it was finished the film did not pass censorship, so it was not broadcast.

Wang: How many films did you do for *Economy 30 Minutes*?

Jiang: At least ten of them must have been broadcast. The coal mines in the north were better, as they had integrated mining equipment, while the coal mines in the south were in poor condition. If you've never seen hell, I suggest you visit one of these coal mines and experience the oppressive darkness and the danger of the humidity and sweltering heat that can occur at any time, six hundred metres underground. Lin Xudong (林旭东) and I have been down in the Anyuan coal mine and when we came up, Lin's face was white as a sheet. But it was this kind of work environment, and many people were counting on being able to go and mine coal to earn money and support their families.

Wang: These pieces were all ten minutes each?

Jiang: Ten minutes a piece, all narrated by Zhao Zhongxiang (赵忠祥). I'm glad I went to so many coal mines. I was twenty-eight years old when I started to get in touch with this vast society, which allowed me to see one different kind of life after another. After the coal mines, I went back to work with Huang Jianzhong on the feature film *Spring Festival*. At this time, Pulin came back from Tibet and he said, let's get some money and go to Tibet to make a film. I thought that sounded interesting. I said there's really not much to do in a feature film, the cycle of work and life isn't much fun. So, when Pulin said he would go to Tibet to make

a documentary, we hit it off immediately. In the summer of 1991, we went to Garzê(甘孜), and Pulin made *The Living Buddha of Kangba*(巴伽活佛, 1991) and I made *Tibetan Theater Troupe of Lhama Priests*(喇嘛藏戏团, 1991). Then we went back to Beijing, and at that time we made *Tiananmen*(天安门), Zhang Yuan made *Mama*(妈妈, 1990) and Wu Wenguang made *Bumming in Beijing*(流浪北京, 1990) so we got together. We went to Zhang Yuan's house to watch *Mama*, and Zhang Yuan made a pot of beef for us, which was very good. Later on, there was the first documentary seminar at the Beijing Broadcasting Institute. At the seminar, we watched *Tiananmen* and *Sand and Sea*(沙与海, 1990).

Wang: Do you remember what else was shown at that seminar? *Escorting Soldiers*(押运兵, 1990)?

Jiang: Leng Yefu's(冷冶夫) *Escorting Soldiers*. At that time, I had already made my first long documentary, *Tibetan Theatre Troupe of Lhama Priests*, and had a slightly clearer idea of documentary and what kind of subject I should focus on. I remember that at the seminar, Leng Yefu also raised the question of whether documentaries should use synchronised sound. Although this should not be an issue for documentaries, for us it was only the beginning. The previous CCTV broadcast of *Story of the Yangtze River*(话说长江, 1983) was narrated from the beginning to the end, with synchronised sound becoming the background. By this year's documentary seminar, films like *Sand and Sea*, *Tiananmen*, *Bumming in Beijing*, and *Escorting Soldiers* were already using a lot of synchronised sound, and the subject matter was rich, so you could see the individual lives of Chinese people.

Wang: Did that seminar in 1991 have a big impact on you? Can you describe your feelings at that time after watching the films?

Jiang: It had an impact. When I watched these films at that time, the first thing that touched me was the filming method. I thought some of the shots were particularly good. The first shot is about replacing with a portrait of Mao Zedong on the Tiananmen Tower at night, with a huge crane slowly lifting the huge portrait. It felt surreal and shocking. The film focuses on the ordinary people living near Tiananmen, even including the eunuchs. This was a rare focus in a film with such a big title. It was the first time I had ever been to a documentary seminar with all kinds of people, and it wasn't an all-official seminar after all. I went there to watch the film and participate in the discussion, and the most discussed topic was what should be the focus of documentaries nowadays, including the acknowledgement of films like *Sand and Sea* that focus on personal life. At that time, I didn't expect that there were still so many people making such documentaries in China, which gave me hope. So, after the seminar, I went to Zhang Yuan's house and we emphasised the concept of the

New Documentary Movement(新纪录运动). At that time we explicitly called the documentary we wanted to make as ‘new documentary’(新纪录片), a break with the traditional model of documentary films broadcast on television. There were Wen Pulin, Shi Jian(时间), Wu Wenguang, Hao Zhiqiang and me at Zhang Yuan’s house that day.

Wang: The term ‘new documentary’ was first proposed at the new documentary seminar in the Beijing Broadcasting Institute in 1991, and then these people came to Zhang Yuan’s house to continue the discussion?

Jiang: Yes, because that seminar was called the First New Documentary Seminar(第一届新纪录片研讨会), but the word ‘independence’(独立) was mentioned at Zhang Yuan’s house, because most of the people who went to his house did not have a work unit.

Wang: Who came up with the concept of independence?

Jiang: I forget, it was either Wen Pulin or Zhang Yuan, because the concept of the independent producer came about after Zhang Yuan came back from an international film festival.

In fact, when I went to the seminar, I wrote down ‘independent producer’(独立制片人) in the sign-in book, and later Kang Jianning(康健宁) said, ‘Look! Jiang Yue wrote down independent producer in the unit column, what is that, haha.’ I was invited to go, but I didn’t know what I was supposed to write under the unit column, because I didn’t have a unit. I just wrote an independent producer.

How did I come about the name independent producer? In 1991, after shooting a film in Tibet, I met Christopher Doyle back in Beijing. At that time, he had just finished filming *Days of Being Wild* (阿飞正传, 1990) for Wong Kar-wai. When we were having a drink and chatting, I mentioned something. After the Vietnam War, there were full of landmines around the two countries’ border, even in the people’s crop fields. This war had a huge impact on the subsequent lives of the people on both sides. Christopher Doyle said that it was worth making a documentary, and Wen Pulin also said, ‘let’s do this’. But we did not have money for that. Christopher Doyle said that he could take his people to Vietnam and you could film it in China, and we combine the footage together into a documentary. I thought it was a great idea, and Christopher Doyle said that we should go as independent producers to find investment, as someone would invest in this subject. It didn’t work out, but we learned about the concept of ‘independent producer’.

So at that time, we found our independent identity. When we went to documentary conferences again, people would write about a certain TV station, but we wrote about independent producers.

Wang: And then you went to Tibet? Can you tell us about your relationship with *Living Space* (生活空间)?

Jiang: In 1992, Wen Pulin and I shot in Tibet again. He made *The Sacred Site of Asceticism* (青朴, 1993) and I made *Catholics in Tibet* (天主在西藏, 1992). After that we went to the Shanghai TV Festival (上海电视节). When we got there, most of the booths of various TV organizations had documentaries about Tibet, and many of them were focused on religion. I thought it was so boring. In 1990 when I was filming coal mines, I had already experienced what hell is like, and then I went to Tibet in search of heaven. But I filmed there for two years and realised that there's no heaven. I didn't know Tibetan or Buddhism, so I thought I'd better return to the life I was familiar with.

When I got back to Beijing, Shi Jian approached me. He said that CCTV was going to start a brand-new news programme and asked me to come and discuss it with them. So, I went along. The programme, called *New Sun 60 Minutes* (新太阳 60分), would be sixty-minutes long with several sections in it, and it would be the first programme in CCTV managed by the producer. Shi Jian was in charge of a character section, so we discussed which form to use. Shi Jian wanted to make it an interview programme. At that time, we had not come across the concept of documentary. When I heard it was a new programme in the news centre, I didn't think of the idea of documentary. The programme was later renamed *Oriental Horizon* (东方时空) and it was thirty-eight minutes long, broadcasting every morning. One day in June, Lu Wangping (卢望平) (the cinematographer of *Bumming in Beijing*, who went with me to shoot the coal mines in the south) called me, saying that, mate, there's an eight-minute spot now. He was working as a producer for the programme *Oriental Horizon* and *Living Space*. I asked, when did you go to *Oriental Horizon*? He said I just joined and now I have eight minutes, what shall I make? I blurted out, making short documentaries! I said, we've filmed so many coal mines. Let's make this kind of film again. He said, no one would do it. But I said, I would. That's how it started. Before Lu Wangping went there, *Living Space*'s programme were all about cooking, parenting, and clothing appreciation. Lu Wangping asked me to shoot some short demos first, so I started shooting and shot five within half a month.

At that time, Sun Yusheng (孙玉胜) was the chief producer of *Oriental Horizon*, and he was the one who reviewed the films. I remember very clearly that (he reviewed my film) on a Saturday—Saturday was still a working day at that time. My film was about three old men swimming in the Shichahai (什刹海) in Beijing. It

was just a glimpse of their lives: they had a lot of fun even in the stinky water. It was during the Gulf War and as they jumped into the water, they shouted, missiles are being launched! Beijingers always feel connected to the world. After watching the film, Sun Yusheng said, the film is very high quality, but it doesn't match the style of the previous films shown on *Living Space*. After thinking about it, he asked if there's any backup? Lu Wangping said no. Because at that time, we were always in a hurry to make the films, and the next day's film only was only reviewed the day before broadcasting. Sun Yusheng said, if there's no backup, then let's do it. That's how he made the decision. The film was broadcast on the following Sunday, and the response was so good that Sun Yusheng's classmates called him to say that *Living Space* had finally found its place. Wu Wenguang also watched it, and so did Duan Jinchuan(段锦川), and they both called me to say that the film was well made.

Wang: Was there any narration?

Jiang: No, it was all with synchronised sound, not a single line of narration. It was just a host saying a few lines before showing the film and a few lines afterwards. I made five pieces, and the subjects were ordinary people like waste collectors, theatregoers, and music enthusiasts. What struck me most was that when I filmed these people I was always asked, why are you filming us? We're not model workers and we've done nothing to boast about. At that time, people thought the same thing, that ordinary people felt they were not qualified to be on TV. I thought, do all the TV stations filming model workers? Were they all people who were given political status? Couldn't the ordinary people be filmed? So, you have to explain to them what you're filming and why you're filming them, which is actually explaining what documentary is.

Wang: All five pieces were broadcast?

Jiang: One of them didn't get approved. At that time, Mou Sen was already leading a performance training class at the Film Academy, that is, a pre-examination training class at the acting department. They were already rehearsing the play *The Other Bank*(彼岸), so I also went to make my documentary *The Other Bank* (彼岸, 1995). Later on, Lu Wangping left *Living Space*. Chen Mang(陈虬) became the producer who also asked me to make a demo film for him. I made *Going to Work*(上班) for him and then this programme developed this slogan: 'telling the stories of ordinary people'.

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Wang: What was the circumstances of shooting *The Other Bank*?

Jiang: At that time, we stressed that making documentaries was our attitude to life. Despite knowing that it was a lonely road, we still had strong convictions. At that time, I made 10,000 yuan from shooting a commercial at the Beijing Film Studio, so I bought tapes and rented a camera and then I went to the Film Academy to film Mou Sen. He was leading these kids who wanted to enter the Film Academy to rehearse the play *The Other Bank*, and the rehearsal scene was very shocking. I felt that I should make a film that I wanted to make, but after shooting many times I wanted to stop because I ran out of money. I went back to earn money and filmed again. After this on-and-off shooting, I finished the work.

Later, when I ran out of money for post-production, Wen Pulin said that we had sold the Tibetan films we made together and gave me 40,000 yuan. This was a lot of money at that time, and he also said that you should also use this editing machine to cut the film. So, I used this machine to cut *The Other Bank*. Wu Wenguang also used this machine to cut *At Home in the World* (四海为家, 1995). In fact, the process of making *The Other Bank* was also a process of conflict between ideals and reality.

Wang: Did you have this theme in mind when you started filming?

Jiang: I didn't think about it when I was filming, I just wanted to document Mou Sen's rehearsal process. But at that time the rehearsal space was really intriguing: a group of people rehearsing, eating, and sleeping there. It was very utopian.

Wang: But Mou Sen's play *The Other Bank* is about deconstructing utopia.

Jiang: Yes, it is about deconstructing utopia, but they lived there like in a utopia.

Wang: Yes, the paradox is, he wanted to deconstruct the utopia, but he built a utopia at the same time.

Jiang: Yes, he built a utopia, but not the one he wanted.

Wang: But when you filmed it, you actually wanted to film this utopia.

Jiang: At first, I wanted to film the utopia, the dream, the idealism that one would never give up.

Wang: In the performance training course, (he) made the rehearsal of the play itself into a utopia in order to do this play.

Jiang: Yes, they worked very hard every day, and every day there were people coming to see this rehearsal because of Mou Sen. The kids felt that they were being noticed; the ‘Chinese Dream’ might have started then. But Mou Sen was very clear headed and he always knew what he should do. The play was a great success and ran for seven days. The audience filled the place every day and I filmed the whole process.

But after filming, I felt that it didn’t make much sense. I had only documented the birth of a play and I felt that something was missing, so I left it there. Three months later, when I took the camera to film the kids again, they had not been admitted to university and started to drift in Beijing. The scenes of their boredom in the farmhouses they were living in touched me immediately and I felt that the film could be re-made. I found a direction, which was the conflict between ideals and reality. The lines they shouted on stage were all fulfilled: where is the other bank, there is no other bank!

As these kids didn’t get into university, they either went home or drifted around in Beijing. Society had already set this group of people up, you are what you are, and it was too difficult to change your fate. Maybe some people’s chance to be noticed in life was in the second rehearsal room of the Film Academy, when they were rehearsing and performing, and after that, it all went away. The last interview I did was with Mou Sen. He had been drinking that day and was a bit misty-eyed. He said, I never liked those kids, which quite surprised me at the time. Later on, I thought his words make sense: why should he like them? He didn’t have a responsibility to like them. As a teacher, he just needed to teach them how to perform and rehearse a play.

Wang: Did he give them money at the time, when he asked these kids to rehearse the play?

Jiang: It was a pre-examination training class, there was no money.

Wang: He was just the training class teacher, completing his own work along the way.

Jiang: He completed his work, but these kids had to complete a project to graduate from this training class as well.

Wang: I see, he did not exploit them, and it was reasonable for him to do so.

Jiang: It was a legitimate graduation piece; you can't say Mou Sen used them. It was work that had to be completed; Mou Sen just chose *The Other Bank*, written by Gao Xingjian (高行健), to do so.

Wang: Mou Sen may have felt that these kids did not understand the real purpose of the play, and for some reasons, these kids made him feel him a sense of obligation that he was not supposed to have.

Jiang: Yes, they were in a teacher-student relationship, and there was nothing more to it than that. I had a kind of friendship with these kids after I came into contact with them. They called me Brother Jiang (蒋哥) and called Mou Sen Teacher Mou (牟老师), so it was different. When (we) performed the play together, and during some seminars, Wu Wenguang said that the second rehearsal room of the Film Academy was the one he most wanted to go to in Beijing. But the past is the past, and there's no need for Wu Wenguang, Yu Jian, and Mou Sen to hang out with them anymore. They had left that rehearsal room scene, and that atmosphere was gone. *The Other Bank* was finished as a play, what's the point of hanging out together? I kept in touch with them later because the documentary *The Other Bank* was still going on. As the film was not yet finished, I followed their lives in Beijing after they did not go to university, and there was such a big difference between that life and the life they had at school. But it can't be helped, this is the reality, a reality that we all have to face.

Wang: When did the script for *The Other Bank* come about? Was it produced in the '80s?

Jiang: *The Other Bank* was written by Gao Xingjian in the '80s. In the play, he says that the dignified life of humans is on the other bank. Poet Yu Jian came to see a rehearsal of *The Other Bank* and he was so excited that he wrote *A Discussion on Chinese Syntax about The Other Bank* (关于彼岸的汉语语法讨论). Gao Xingjian originally wrote an idealistic play about 'going to the other bank', but Yu Jian deconstructed this other bank and turned it into a new vocabulary. So Mou Sen put the two plays together in a play, and as he did so, he actually slipped into that scenario. We all stayed together every day, sleeping and lying on the floor. We were always like that. Although we know that there are many things we had to oppose and get rid of, we were unconsciously caught up in it.

Wang: A kind of collectivism.

Jiang: Yes, a sense of collectivist honour, a familiar way of life for us. From childhood we are taught that the individual is small and the collective is strong. It also applies to the business model: first the state-owned,

then the collective, and then the self-employed. Once I was shooting a film for CCTV and got into an argument over something, and the CCTV people said, ‘What’s so great about you? You’re just self-employed.’ What is a television station? It’s a mouthpiece, a propaganda organisation, and not just anyone could hold a camera and shoot a film. It’s a symbol of power. It’s not like today, when anyone can use their phone to shoot something. So, in those days, when we first picked up a pen and wrote down independent producer in the column, it took a lot of courage and pride!

4

Wang: By the end of the 1990s, many of your generation of directors had worked with British television.

Jiang: Li Hong (李红) made a documentary called *Out of Phoenix Bridge* (回到凤凰桥, 1997). The BBC wanted to buy it for broadcast, and a guy called Mark, who claimed to be an editor at the BBC, asked to cut the film again in a way that British audiences would understand. And that’s how we met. During this period Mark saw my film *The Other Bank* and he was very excited. He said that the final scene of the film where the play is acted in the field reminded him of Fellini. Then he talked to us and said he wanted to ask Duan Jinchuan, Li Hong, Kang Jianning, and me to do some documentaries about China.

I said I wanted to film a train station, and they said yes. So, I went to Zhengzhou station. When I went there, I was greeted by the main character in the film, Lao Fu (老傅), who was the head of the propaganda section of the station, and he asked me a question: ‘Is your film exposing or glorifying something?’ I said, ‘Between exposure and glorification there’s another kind of film called documentary.’ He said, ‘Is it like “telling stories of the ordinary people”?’ At this point I realised that the short documentaries in *Living Space* had worked, in having developed an audience that knew what kind of film you wanted to make without you having to say anything further. I then said yes, and he said well then, I’ll help you find someone. That’s how I stayed in Zhengzhou station and started looking for characters.

Wang: Who introduced you around when you went to Zhengzhou?

Jiang: I went there on my own. At that time, the producer of *People’s Stories* (百姓故事) in *Oriental Horizon* was Chen Zhen (陈真), and we were very familiar with each other, so I took a recommendation letter from him on the condition that the film would be broadcast in *People’s Stories*. But Lao Fu was still quite wary of me.

Wang: Why was he still wary?

Jiang: He thought I didn't look like a TV station guy, and for a long time I was carrying the camera to work with them but didn't shoot anything. I didn't shoot anything for at least two or three months. I ate with them and worked with them, just to let them get familiar with the camera. People didn't think TV people would do that, as they usually shot two shots and then left. But in this way, I could build up a better filming relationship.

Of the two people I chose, one was a romantic idealist, and the other was very realistic and very comfortable in life and work. In fact, I think that as long as you are human, putting ideology aside, you will encounter all kinds of practical problems in life. Chinese people, especially in recent years, have been battered by the realities of life, including housing, cars, money, and kids, and they have to face everything with courage. That's why I made *This Happy Life* (幸福生活, 2002) and the more I made it, the more I was convinced that I was making a film about the conflict between the ideals and the reality of middle-aged people, which is another *The Other Bank*.

Wang: Your film is more like Direct Cinema in terms of form.

Jiang: Yes, I didn't interfere. Once the characters were chosen, I just followed and shot them, waiting for all kinds of life issues in life to appear. I had interviews, but they're not really interviews, because over time I became the person they confided in, speaking from the heart to me and to the camera.

Wang: Were you the only person in your crew all the time? Doing all the filming and editing all by yourself the whole time.

Jiang: There was a recording man. He held the boom to record and I filmed. The two of us.

Wang: I heard that Chen Mang cried after watching the film.

Jiang: Yes, that version was later cut for *People's Stories*, five episodes, eight minutes each, which were broadcast on five consecutive days. Chen Mang was in a leadership position at that time, and he reviewed the film. Maybe it was because they were all middle-aged, and they all felt the same way about bearing the responsibility for the whole family. After the review, not a single shot was changed for broadcast. After, *Peo-*

ple's Stories did not take long documentaries like this anymore, only shorts.

Wang: How much did you get for these five episodes?

Jiang: 10,000 yuan per episode.

Wang: The BBC should give more money, right?

Jiang: Buying in advance before shooting was how it worked. Several European TV stations paid the purchase fee, a total of 400,000 yuan. I used 200,000 yuan to buy a camera, the remaining 200,000 yuan was used for travel, food, accommodation, post-production, and staff labour over a year. The rumour later spread around that we had made a lot of money filming for the BBC, and making a documentary for big money was really the 'Chinese Dream'.

Wang: *This Happy Life* was filmed in a very poetic way, with a touch of middle age, bringing out the beauty of human feelings, especially when the two middle-aged men are together. When Fu says how he feeds his child and the other is moved to tears as he listens, that is very touching.

Jiang: It took a long time to film that one too. I used a total of three tapes, just for the dialogue between the two of them.

Wang: How long was one tape?

Jiang: One tape was forty minutes. On that day, Lao Fu helped Liu Yongli (刘永利) solve a problem, so Yongli invited Lao Fu to a small restaurant to have lamb soup. The two of them drank and chatted while I was filming. Strangely enough, there were only four of us in the restaurant that day, so the sound recorded very well. After two tapes I thought it was pointless, just a lot of small talk, but I didn't give up and carried on with a third tape. Halfway through filming, Yongli asked Lao Fu, 'How did your partner die?'. Lao Fu started to talk about how his partner died and how he became both a father and a mother when his child was one year old. In that scene, a middle-aged man narrated his happiness and sorrow as if he were telling someone else's story, and my eyes became misty as I filmed. Over the years making documentaries, I have been touched again and again by the suffering and resilience of the Chinese people. When I finished filming *This Happy Life*, I wondered, given the reality of life today, what are its causes? So, I planned to explore the jour-

ney of the older generation.

5

Wang: Let's talk about *The Storm* (暴风骤雨, 2005) which seems to be a project that CCTV commissioned you to do, right?

Jiang: Yes, Chen Xiaoqing (陈晓卿) was the producer of *Witness* (见证) for CCTV, which was thirty minutes long and could broadcast documentaries. So Chen Xiaoqing commissioned Duan Jinchuan, Kang Jian-ning, and me to make a film about the history of rural change in China, called *Our Land* (我们的土地). The content included Yan Yangchu's (晏阳初) [Y.C. Yen] Rural Reconstruction Movement, land reform, the first mutual aid group, the first people's commune, some landmark events such as the Red Flag Canal (红旗渠), the barefoot doctors, and Hao Ran's (浩然) *The Golden Road* (金光大道) and *Bright Sunny Skies* (艳阳天), all of which are closely related to the farmers of this land. When we first started our research, Sun Liping (孙立平), a professor in the sociology department at Tsinghua University, got involved by bringing us many fieldwork reports of millions of words. This were first-hand information and very valuable. He also sent two of his postgraduate students to assist me. After we had finished reading these materials, we decided to go to Yuanbao Village (元宝村) in Shangzhi, Heilongjiang (黑龙江尚志市), because it was called the first land reform village in China.

Wang: What do you mean by the first village?

Jiang: Yuanbao Village is known as the first village in China to carry out land reform. In fact, around the Anti-Japanese War, land reform was already underway in Shanxi and Hebei. After the war, when the Communist Party arrived in the northeast, it called on Party members and cadres to take off their suits and leather shoes and go to the countryside to carry out large-scale land reform in order to consolidate the northeast base. So, in 1946, a large number of Communist Party task forces went into the countryside to initiate land reform, and a large-scale land reform movement was launched in this land. Writer Zhou Libo (周立波) went to Yuanbao Village in Shangzhi as the leader of the task force, and later wrote his novel *The Storm* (暴风骤雨) about land reform. This village now has a memorial hall for Zhou Libo, with a plaque at the entrance of the village saying: The First Village of Land Reform Culture in China (中国土改文化第一村).

Wang: You also chose the village because of Zhou Libo's *The Storm*, right?

Jiang: Yes, as a documentary reflecting history, it must first have images to support it. There was a feature film based on *The Storm*, and Yu Yang (于洋) was the main actor, who was also a member of the land reform task force back then. We filmed him too, mainly about his experience of the land reform. There is also a documentary film called *Democracy in the Northeast* (民主东北, 1947) made by the staff left over from Manchu Film (满映), which also includes some footage of land reform. Zhou Libo's novel *The Storm* was a huge hit in those days, and his characters Han Fengqi (韩凤岐) and Han Laoliu (韩老六), the landlords of Yuanbao Village, were known almost in every household, on a par with the famous Chinese landlords Huang Shiren (黄世仁), Nan Batian (南霸天), Liu Wencai (刘文彩), and Zhou Baipi (周扒皮). I chose to go to Yuanbao Village to film the land reform because there were a lot of people who knew about it.

Wang: What's interesting about it is that these people in the village have prototypes in the novel *The Storm*.

Jiang: They all have prototypes, including Zhao Guangding (赵光腚), Du Shanren (杜善人), Guo Wazi (郭娃子), Han Fengqi, and the leader of the land reform task force. We filmed all of them, as long as they were still alive. The landlord Han Laoliu was not shot dead as written in the book. In the early 1950s, someone in the village even saw him setting up a fortune-teller stall in Harbin. At that time, the novel *The Storm* had already won the Stalin Award. I don't know if Han Laoliu himself had read it, or how he felt afterwards, but he became famous as a landlord, or in today's terms, he was equivalent to an internet influencer.

Wang: He didn't die, he just fled.

Jiang: He ran away, not because he was a landlord, but that he just didn't want to stay in the village anymore, he didn't want to cause any trouble. In fact, he was not a landowner either. He could only be considered a business land operator; he had no land himself and was managing it for the city businessmen. The impression of him in the village was that he was literate, low-key, polite, and liked to walk with a stick. During land reform, seventy-three people were shot dead in Yuanbao Village, but none of them was landlord.

Wang: What struck me after I watched the film was that these people were so truthful in their accounts, and did not say things according to the official narrative, which I think is very rare.

Jiang: This is the technique of oral history, the difference is that we present it via visual images. Before I shot the film, I asked my assistant to go to the village to find these old people who had experienced the land reform, to find out who could talk and who wanted to talk and dared to talk, as well as their narrative ability

and the pace of their talking. Because this is a film after all: unlike fieldwork, which can be recorded with a pen, (the interviewees) will eventually have to face the camera. Once I gathered this information, I then filmed the interviews, at which point I asked more detailed questions about what the person has said before. The first time I asked a question, they reopened their memories, and when I asked a second time, there were often more details to add. They were all old people in their eighties, who may not remember what they ate at their last meal, but still with a vivid memory of what they experienced when they were young. Judging by the details of the conversation, I believed that they were sincere, which was based on mutual trust.

Wang: So, (you gave them) guidance.

Jiang: Yes, the guidance was to guide them to talk in front of the camera about what they had casually chatted about while sitting on the bed. I could get hold of what kind of experience of land reform the interviewees could talk about.

Wang: I think they basically spoke sincerely and did not follow the direction of the political ideology of the time, which was very difficult to do.

Jiang: It was indeed difficult because we have been educated by the official narratives for so many years, and sometimes we unconsciously follow this mindset to say things. So, when we were filming, we tried to avoid this by first of all providing a conversational context. We brought in all the old furniture and objects that we could find in the village to make a filming setting, so when the old people came in they felt familiar with the environment. What I stressed to them was, let's go back fifty years ago today and talk about what you saw and heard back then. In fact, ideology is sometimes very fragile, and in the face of concrete facts, it can be shattered easily. That's why we repeatedly emphasised the details. Before that, Duan Jinchuan and I did an oral history documentary called *Er Ren Zhuan* (二人转), and the playwright Wang Ken (王肯) told us a detail which couldn't be made up. When he took part in the land reform, he saw poor peasants wearing a red stripe on their chests, middle peasants wearing pink stripes, landlords wearing white stripes, and *er-ren-zhuan* artists wearing flower stripes, so from a distance he could tell the identity of a person.

Wang: It's like the Nazi badges for Jewish people.

Jiang: Yes. It was a symbol of peasant identity during the land reform period. Later I raised this question during (the filming of) this documentary, it was confirmed. Someone added that in the later stages of the land

reform, landlords no longer wore white stripes, and whoever wore the most tattered clothes was the landlord, because anyone could take off the landlord's clothes that were a little more decent than their own. Hence, the landlord's clothes were the most tattered clothes in the whole village, or even across the town. If the person was dressed in rags, they must have been a landlord. It's a pity I didn't get to interview such a landlord, as they were all dead. I have never seen in any book or film how the landlord in the world's most ragged clothes felt at that time. So, the idea of making such a documentary was to restore a period of history told by different people who lived through that period, which also recorded the feeling of our previous generation.

Wang: What was the situation for the film on CCTV? How many episodes were broadcast?

Jiang: We did twenty-four episodes of *Our Land*, thirty minutes per episode. Duan Jinchuan and I shot in separate groups. I went to Yuanbao Village and ended up making five episodes from this part. At that time, Chen Xiaoqing, the producer of *Witness*, just briefly reviewed the film, and then he took the lead and showed all twenty-four episodes. Although *Witness* was on CCTV-1, the programme was broadcast at 12:30 am, so censorship was relatively lax, as no one watched it. Who waited until midnight to watch a documentary? This is insane.

Wang: Is the version he showed the same as your own ninety-minute version?

Jiang: Not quite. The CCTV broadcast of Yuanbao Village was mainly about how the village went from a poor village in Zhou Libo's writing to a billion-yuan village today, and a lot of the content of the land reform could not be included. We thought it was a shame that the footage was going to waste, so I went back to Yuanbao Village the year after the broadcast and did another shoot. This time it was clearer that we wanted to make a documentary that could be kept in the archives, and our inclination was to pursue the truth. So, the ninety-minute version of the documentary *The Storm* came about, in which you can see more oral history told by subjects from different classes, as well as data from the archive of Shangzhi County, as a basis for restoring this period of history. Sometimes I really feel that when we make oral history films, we also salvage (this part of the history). If all the old people who lived through that period pass away one by one, where will those vivid personal experiences be found?

Wang: What is your current situation? Are you still filming?

Jiang: This is a time of mediocrity. It's so mediocre that people have no more desire, hence the term '*tang-*

ping' [躺平, literally lying flat) has appeared. For documentaries, I'm also in a state of *tangping*. In fact, I've been shooting films about history and culture that can be broadcast on television. I don't think these films that can pass the censorship standards are the kind of documentaries I first imagined, so I'm ashamed to say that I'm still making documentaries. You can call them special topic films or TV programmes, but not documentaries. This is my respect for documentary. What is a documentary? It's called *cinéma vérité* in French, and in a country where telling lies is advocated, there's less and less room for the real. You can fill the TV programmes with animals, food, and great scenery, but that's not what a documentary is all about. A documentary should be more about the joys and sorrows of people living in these times, the same subjects that we, the first people who made the so-called new documentaries, wanted to focus on. But what saddens me is that thirty years on, we still haven't cultivated the ground for documentaries. I remember Duan Jinchuan said that his dream was to have his own cinema dedicated to documentaries. We were all influenced by the Japanese documentary filmmaker Ogawa Shinsuke, who screened his documentaries stop by stop in Japan, which built up a large audience for documentaries in Japan. Then old audiences brought their kids to see his documentaries, and the Yamagata Documentary Film Festival was established in the area where he made his documentaries. Our generation did not receive a documentary education, and our next generation and then the next generation will not either. Thinking about it that way, I really feel like I'm a failure. It's like I'm a farmer who knows how to cultivate land. It looks like there's a huge area of land to be developed, but it's all desert, no food can grow, and you can't plant it and there's no harvest or hope, there's no soil. I have been making feature documentaries since 1991, and this year marks exactly thirty years. In these thirty years, I have made hundreds of films, and I think only the above three films are worth talking about, none of which would ever be shown on television or in the cinema. Of course, there are now documentaries being shown in cinemas and there is an official call to make more documentaries to tell the Chinese story well. My understanding is that telling a Chinese story well is telling a good Chinese story. I'm not very good at this, so whoever likes to tell it should go ahead and do so.

蒋樾：我要对“纪录片”这个词保有尊重

王小鲁

蒋樾是中国独立纪录片领域重要的先行者和启蒙者，是在纪录片的荒漠里前行的人。八十年代末九十年代初，国人对于纪录片缺乏了解，也缺少可资参照的影片，就是他们的探索为中国纪录片找到了最初的形式，而当年的探索并非单纯为了一个片种，而是在积极发展中国人“说真话”的表达形态。

蒋樾曾经为央视纪录片栏目《生活空间》找到了最初的定位，他独立制作的作品（不包括为电视台定制的），从《天主在西藏》、《彼岸》一直到《幸福生活》、《暴风骤雨》，大约七八部左右，风格多样。可以说他是中国第一代独立纪录片人的典型代表。

蒋樾那一代人对于纪录片的理解具有历史的深度，也有着预测未来的眼光。他深深懂得纪录片在中国意味着什么。他认为中国并没有制作纪录片的环境，至今犹然，而且以后可能会更加艰难。这次采访是二〇二一年六月三十日，于他北京的家中完成的，他最近赋闲在家，并没有继续拍摄的打算。

王小鲁(以下简称王)：你现在是什么状态？我听说你似乎一直没有单位。

蒋樾(以下简称蒋)：我一直没单位，一九九四年我从北影厂出来，那时候刚成立北京市人才交流中心，可以搁档案，我就把档案从单位拿出来了。那时候要去跟吴文光演话剧，要办一个护照，但单位不能办护照，要办护照必须得辞职。

王：跟吴文光演话剧？在哪儿演的？

蒋：全世界巡演，主要是欧美。就目前来说，我们那个话剧应该是中国在国外演出最多的一个剧，六十场，全是A级戏剧节邀请，导演是牟森，叫《零档案》，于坚写的，其实就是他的一首诗，写得非常好，很短。那薄薄的几页纸，躺在冰冷的铁皮柜里，它就能束缚人的一生，于坚就是表达了这么个意思。这个戏没有剧本，牟森把它用戏剧的形式表达出来。以这个诗作为背景，吴文光在台上说他自己的故事，我在台上说我自己的故事，哦，是三个人，还有吴文光的夫人文慧，她没有台词，但是有动作。

王:就是自我叙述,叙述自己的历史。

蒋:对,吴文光说他爸爸。吴文光很早就调查他的父亲,想写一本书。在这个过程中,牟森就说我也记录一下,然后我就扛个机器给牟森拍,还挺有意思的。

王:你还给他拍过?

蒋:去昆明拍的,去了吴文光他父亲的单位看档案,那时他父亲已经去世了。他父亲档案里向组织交代的事情,吴文光他妈妈都不知道。

王:这很早了。但成片很晚。

蒋:成片非常晚了,《调查父亲》我没看过成片,但最早是我给牟森拍的,然后我们采访了好多人,知道吴文光他父亲是一个非常开明的人,好玩,弹吉他,说英语,文革中就听美国之音,是个有趣的人,比吴文光有趣。

王:你们那时候在国外自我叙事,主要叙述哪一块呢?

蒋:吴文光就说文革期间,他爸因为是地主,所以他一直抬不起头来,后来发现他爸当过空军飞行员,参加过抗战,于是作为儿子又有了一些自豪感,这样的叙述。然后我就是谈在出版社上班的无聊经历,很像日记一样。在舞台上讲述了我们的生活,但是没有刻意地去说档案。牟森当时找的是北京人艺的演员。牟森的意思是我给你个环境和舞台,你们就说自己的故事,人生感受。因为专业演员说的不好,他总有表演的痕迹。后来牟森就决定说,走,你去试试吧。结果我就上台说了一段我家里面的事,牟森就觉得说得挺好,那天吴文光也在,他也上台说一段,牟森就决定换成我们俩演了,是挺好玩的一个过程。

王:那是哪年的事?

蒋:那是九三年的下半年。因为排这个戏就是要参加九四年布鲁塞尔国际艺术节,结果头场演出获得巨大的成功。我们也没想到,人家也都看懂了。结束的时候,观众鼓掌,跺脚啊!我们都愣了,从来没有见过,几百人在那鼓掌。艺术节主席和香港的一个艺术总监,俩人在那拥抱。那个戏当时原定是演三场,在那个艺术节,后来加演了三场,结果又去法国演出,第二年各大艺术节,就以邀请到这出戏为荣,所以我们演了六十多场。

王:你们去那么多国家,签证怎么办呢?

蒋:都是人家国家直接邀请的,所以签证好办。但那时候出国就跟做贼一样,过海关都是武警看护照,人家看我一眼,我自己都觉得自己是坏人。第一次出国演出,牟森就没让出去,后来还是比利时给中国外交部直接照会,才让牟森出去的。

王:最后都通过了吗?

蒋:都通过了。第二年一九九五年去的地方更多了,加拿大去了,美国没去,欧洲基本上各大艺术节全都去了。到最后我们都不回来了,就在欧洲漂着,比如这个艺术节五月份,下一个六月份,那还回来再出去多麻烦。

王:那签证时间够用吗?

蒋:签证都给的时间长嘛。然后就这个艺术节完了,包半个月我们的吃住,然后再下个艺术节提前半个月把我们接过去,就这样,一个国家一个国家就这么演,九五年一年都在外边。但是我九五年已经在拍安源煤矿了,我说我不能再去演戏了,我一个拍纪录片的,一天到晚在那演话剧算什么事儿。结果吴文光说他也不演了,他也要拍片子嘛。

王:这个经历特别有趣!你以前的故事很多采访都有了,这一段很少见。我想从头聊起,你最早拍纪录片好像是跟温普林在一起是吗? 1988年。

蒋:对,八八年,那时候拍《大地震》。

王:在那之前你其实没有设想说要去拍纪录片,要介入到这样一个创作领域里吧?

蒋:其实这个跟我们所受的教育有关,像我们这个年纪和年代,尤其是我们在文革中成长起来的,没见过纪录片。我们那个时候所能够接触到的纪录片就是《红旗渠》、《医疗队员在坦桑》这种,就是像新闻简报类的,所以我们没有这方面的教育。

王:安东尼奥尼的《中国》都看了吧?

蒋:对,那个看过。

王:伊文思的你看过吗?

蒋:看过《风》,都是拍了纪录片以后看的。八九年看过《河殇》了。但是我们看过的纪录片,都是电视里放的,正儿八经在电影院里面没看过纪录片,也不知道什么叫纪录片。我和温普林是一九八四年就认识了,他一直是一个非常活跃的像学生领袖一样的人物,比我大五岁。普林说他的专业就是折腾。特别爱折腾!我非常庆幸在我刚入校的时候认识他,我觉得很幸运碰到这么一个人,那时候他老是到中国戏曲学院来。

王:你们是怎么认识的呢?

蒋:在学校,那个时候在食堂吃饭,伙食很差,到了下课以后饭菜都凉了。我刚入校进了学生会工作,就组织了学生罢饭,不吃食堂的饭,还发了一个八大艺术院校的通电声明。温普林作为中央美院的学生就来声援了,我一看说艺术院校还这么团结啊,还有人来声援,就这样认识了普林。

王:你罢饭,你们中国戏曲学院有人追随你吗?

蒋:绝大部分学生都响应号召不进食堂吃饭。然后我组织学生到校外弄来包子,在食堂门口卖包子卖汤,可用食堂的饭菜票,学生都不进食堂,青年教师也不进食堂。然后下午院长就跟我们谈判,那时候学校的老师都是民国过来的人,八四年那时候,都还是很宽容的。

王:可能文革中也被斗怕了!

蒋:也被斗怕了。对学生不狠,要谈判,我都没想到,最后校长承诺改善食堂,希望同学们还是进食堂吃饭,后来还真是改善了。就这样认识了温普林,之后他又去戏曲学院找演员,因为他做话剧喜欢用戏曲演员。我俩从八四年认识一直到八八年毕业,一直在跟着他。做大学生艺术节,我都是给他做舞台灯光,就是玩儿,包括牟森的戏也是,因为也没钱,所以那时候就经常和普林和牟森在一起了。

北京舞蹈学院的张明伟,他是编导专业的,做一个舞蹈叫“大地震”。那时候正好是唐山大地震一个轮回,十二年,所以我们就去了,是一九八八年清明节那天。去的时候普林就说,带个机器拍摄下来,因为张明伟想在这天到唐山死难者纪念碑去做个仪式,祭奠一下,我们说那就拍下来呀。也没钱,后来我就借了二百块钱,普林掏了二百块钱,我俩就租了个机器,连租机器带摄影一天三百元,其余的钱就当一行人的路费和吃饭。就跟着张明伟去了一趟唐山。

结果那天下大雪,大地震纪念碑那里一个人也没有。十二年过后对死亡三四十万人的一个事件似乎就此淡忘了。那天,我们抬着张明伟买的一个花圈,没有挽联,得现写,就到处去借毛笔和纸,抬着花圈到哪个单位哪个单位都轰我们,去去去,晦气,一早抬个花圈来。最后是在新华书店弄的纸和毛笔,写了一

付挽联去了,于是拍了第一组镜头,温普林的纪录片《大地震》是从 1988年的清明节开始拍的,那时候我就参与了。

王:后来温普林以《大地震》剧组的名义搞了一个大型行为艺术“包扎长城”你在《大地震》里是个什么角色?

蒋:我是制片主任。因为一开始普林他跟我说让我做编剧,那时候真不懂,啥也不知道,还以为纪录片也有编剧呢。因为里面有些个场景,还得设计一下,还有一些歌词,我要写。还有歌呢。

王:歌打算用在这个《大地震》里头?

蒋:对,当初设计的有歌,普林让我写歌,我写了几首歌词,结果写的都是小情小趣的歌词,后来也没用,那年我大四,还是个傻逼学生。反正拍这个片子我什么都干过,就是连摄影啊,包括现代艺术大展开枪那段也是我拍的,那个叫什么?

王:肖鲁。她开枪那段应该是先设计和商量好的吧?是先开机,再开枪吧?

蒋:是这样,上午拍的时候,有一个北京电视台的专业摄影,后来他中午有事离开了一会儿。就这时肖鲁跟普林说待会儿要开枪把她的作品破坏一下,普林说我们得架好机器你再开呀。于是摄像机支在她开枪的地点的后面,我是现学的机器怎么开,按哪个钮。提前好几分钟就开机了。完了以后还后怕了,因为很近,那个弹头往后跳别把我们打着了,她砰砰砰开了三枪。开完枪了以后,我们就往外走,有人扛着架子,我就扛着机器,没关机,就一直拍了一个长镜头。这时候武警就往里边来了,我们拍完了就往外跑,怕把我们的磁带给没收了。

王:你是八八年年底去北影了,和黄健中合作拍片?

蒋:也不能叫合作,就是给他当学生了。他就让我给他当副导演,他那时候正好没有副导演。

王:你给黄健中当副导演的那一段,有一件事我特别感兴趣,就是你们拍的《过年》那是当年少有的好片子!

蒋:对,那个时候我就觉得这是黄导做的特别棒的一个片子。

王:他做的最好的,因为一九八〇年代片子都有点虚假,哪怕当时反虚假,但做出来也都很虚假,但到了《过年》,那些人情人性就很有魅力。

蒋:对,而且那个时候中国有一个词叫“向钱看”。因为我跟牟森做话剧,在八八年的时候,孟京辉在给牟森演尤奈斯库的话剧《犀牛》。那个戏讲的是所有人都变成犀牛了,就剩下一个人了。完了这个人喊了一声,说——就是剩下我一个人,我也绝不投降。我看了特别触动,八八年那时候所有人都在向钱看,很多人被叫成了万元户。全民族都在向钱看的时候,居然牟森做了这么一个戏,我决不投降,所以我大为感动。后来做电影《过年》的时候,我和黄老师说了《犀牛》这个戏,说了“决不投降”,所以那个时候黄导弄《过年》这个剧本,强调了就把它做成一个“一切为了钱”的故事,所以就非常超前,三十年过去了,今天依然不还是这个样子吗?

二

王:你是怎么接触到电视纪录片的?

蒋:一九九〇年,我给黄老师做副导演拍完《龙年警官》这部电影后没什么事,就给郝志强拍短纪录片。那时候中央台最活跃的一个栏目是《经济半小时》,其中有十分钟的短专题片,介绍一个企业,因为郝志强与煤炭部宣传部门的挺熟悉,我们就拍了煤矿。

王:煤矿的这个是完整的纪录片还是什么?

蒋:不是完整的纪录片,就是像专题片一样。但是纪录片的意思就更多一点。当时郝志强说拍煤矿,我很感兴趣,之前也没去过煤矿,那时候我已经在北影厂上班了,就是抽空拍。第一个片子是拍的山西一个煤矿,我做导演,赵小丁摄影。后来就从北方拍到南方,一开始拍的就像政绩汇报片一样,后来越拍越清晰,越拍越真实,拍到江西萍乡的安源煤矿,片子完成后就已经通不过播出审查了,就没有播出。

王:在《经济半小时》你做了几个片子?

蒋:至少播出了得有十个吧。因为我跑了那么多煤矿,全国八十多个统配煤矿我去了三十多个,北方的煤矿还好些,有综合采掘设备,南方的煤矿条件就差了,在萍乡煤矿下井有些地方要在巷道里爬行了,工人是用一百年前就使用的洋镐刨煤。如果你没见过地狱,建议你去这种煤矿看一看,体验地下六百米深的那种漆黑的压迫感和潮湿闷热随时可能出现的危险。林旭东跟我去过安源煤矿井下,上来的时候,老林的脸都是煞白的。但就是这种工作环境,有多少人都指望着能去刨一天煤挣一天钱,养活一家老小。

王:这些片子都是十分钟一个?

蒋:十分钟一个,都是赵忠祥给解说的。我很庆幸去了那么多的煤矿,在我二十八岁的时候才开始接触这个广阔的社会,让我看到了一个又一个不同的生活。煤矿拍完了以后我又去跟黄健中老师做故事片《过年》。这时候普林就从西藏回来了,他说,咱们搞点儿钱去西藏拍片子吧。我当时一听,就觉得这事有趣。我说故事片确实没啥好拍的,循环往复的工作和生活,不好玩。所以普林说去西藏拍纪录片,我们一拍即合。一九九一年夏天,我们去了甘孜,普林拍了《巴伽活佛》,我拍了《喇嘛藏戏团》。然后回到北京,那个时候时间拍了《天安门》,张元拍了故事片《妈妈》,吴文光拍了《流浪北京》,于是我们就往一块凑了。因为那时谁要是拍了片子找人来看是要管饭的,去张元家看《妈妈》,张元给炖了一锅牛肉,非常好吃。再后来就有了广播学院的第一届的纪录片研讨会。在会上看了《天安门》,看了《沙与海》这些片子。

王:那一届研讨会还放映了什么记得吗?《押运兵》?

蒋:冷冶夫的《押运兵》。那时我的第一个长纪录片《喇嘛藏戏团》已经做出来了,对纪录片有了一个稍微清晰的认识,知道自己该去做什么内容关注什么生活。我记得在会上,冷冶夫还提出了纪录片要不要同期声的问题,虽然这对纪录片来说是一个不是问题的问题,但是对于我们来说,这才是一个开始。央视之前播的《话说长江》,那是男女解说从头说到尾,同期声成了背景声。到这届纪录片研讨会,像《沙与海》、《天安门》、《流浪北京》、《押运兵》这些片子就已经是在用大量的同期声了,并且题材也丰富,你能看到作为中国人的个体生活了。

王:一九九一年那个讨论会对你影响大吗?当时看了一些片子,你能总结一下当时的那个感受吗?

蒋:有影响。那个时候看这些片子,第一个触动的是拍摄方法,觉得有些镜头运用的特别好,时间的《天安门》,第一个镜头就是夜晚的天安门城楼换毛泽东像,巨大的吊车吊着巨大的画像在空中缓缓移动,很魔幻也很震撼,并且这个片子重点关注了在天安门附近居住的普通人,甚至还有太监,这在以往的这么大的一个片名里面是很少有关关注的。那次研讨会等于说是我接触的第一次这样一个各色人等参加的纪录片研讨会,它毕竟不是一个全官方的研讨会。我去了以后有看片子,有参与讨论,讨论最多的就是当下纪录片关注的应该是什么,包括对《沙与海》这种关注个人生活的片子的肯定。当时我就想,没想到在中国还有这么多人在拍这样的纪录片,这让我看到了希望。所以研讨会完了以后,就去了张元家,我都记得不太清楚了,就是强调了“新纪录运动”这个概念,当时我们明确要做的纪录片叫新纪录片,就是与电视台播出的那种传统模式的片子做一个决裂。那天在张元家的有温普林、时间、吴文光、郝志强和我。

王:“新纪录片”这个词的提出,最早还是北广九一年新纪录片研讨会上提的,接着这些人到了张元家,继续讨论?

蒋:对,因为那个研讨会就叫做第一届新纪录片研讨会,但是在张元家说到了“独立”这个词,因为去他家的这些人大部分没有单位,也没身份。

王:独立的概念,是谁提出来的?

蒋:我忘了,反正不是温普林就是张元,因为独立制片人这个概念应该是张元参加过国际电影节以后回来才有的。

其实我去参加这次研讨会的时候,在签到簿上就写了个“独立制片人”,后来康健宁还说,说一看蒋樾在单位那栏里面写了个独立制片人,这什么玩意儿,什么名称,哈哈。因为我被邀请去,我也不知道我该写什么,让我写单位,我哪有单位。我就写了个独立制片人。

我这个独立制片人的名称是怎么来的呢?九一年在西藏拍完片子以后,回北京见到了杜可风,那时他刚给王家卫拍完了《阿飞正传》,在一起喝酒闲聊的时候我说了一个题材,我说云南边境那边在扫地雷,越战完了以后,边境两边两国埋的全是地雷,老百姓的庄稼地里全是地雷,这个战争给两边的百姓后续生活带来了巨大的影响。杜可风就说应该拍个纪录片,温普林也说,咱就拍这个。但是没钱,杜可风说他找钱,他说他带人在越南那边拍,你们在中国这边拍,回头咱合成一个片子。我觉得这个想法特别好,杜可风说咱就作为独立制片人去找投资,这个题材会有人投资。后来此事也没成,但是知道了“独立制片人”这个概念。

所以那时候,找到独立这个定位。再参加纪录片会议的时候,人家写某某电视台,我们就写独立制片人。

王:后来你又去了西藏?能说一下之后和《生活空间》的关系?

蒋:一九九二年我和温普林又在西藏拍摄,他拍了《青朴》,我拍了《天主在西藏》。之后就去了上海电视节,到那里一看,各个电视机构的展台上,大多都是关于西藏的纪录片,好多都是关注宗教的,我就觉得太没意思了。一九九〇年我拍煤矿,感觉已经接触到了地狱,去西藏是想寻寻天堂的,但在那里拍了两年以后,才感到这世上哪有什么天堂呀!再加上不懂藏语,也不懂佛教,我想还是回到我熟悉的生活吧。

回到北京以后,时间找我说,央视要搞一个全新的新闻杂志节目,你来一起讨论讨论,于是我就去了,时间说这个节目有六十分钟,里面要设几个板块,叫《新太阳60分》,是央视第一次以制片人制来管理节目。时间说他负责一个人物板块,大家就一起讨论做成一个什么形式,时间说做成一个访谈节目。那时候确实没有提纪录片这个概念,因为我一听说是栏目,又是新闻中心的,我就没往纪录片那块去想。后来这个节目就改叫《东方时空》,时长三十八分钟,每天早晨播出。六月份的一天,卢望平(《流浪北京》的摄影,拍南方那些煤矿都是卢望平跟我去的)给我打电话,说哥们现在有一个八分钟的阵地了,我说什

么八分钟阵地?他说我在《东方时空》、《生活空间》这个栏目当制片人。我说你什么时候跑《东方时空》去了,他说我刚来,现在有八分钟,做什么?我脱口而出,做短纪录片!我说咱俩拍了那么多的煤矿,再拍这种片子啊。他说没人会拍啊,我说我拍,所以就这么着,就开始了。在卢望平去之前,《生活空间》的片子就是每天教做饭,育儿知识和服装赏鉴等等。卢望平说那你先拍短纪录片的样片吧,我就开始拍了,半个月的时间拍了五个。

第一个播出的时候,要审片,那时候孙玉胜是《东方时空》总制片人,片子都是他审看。我记得很清楚,那是个星期六——那时还没有双休日——我的片子拍的是北京什刹海三个游泳的老头,其实就是一个生活片段,那么臭的一池水,这些人玩得很开心。那时正好是海湾战争,他们往水里面跳的时候,高喊着飞毛腿导弹发射喽。北京人嘛,总感觉自己是和全世界紧密相连的。孙玉胜审看完了以后说,片子拍得很高级,很好,但是跟你们《生活空间》之前播出的片子不相符啊。他想了想说,还有备播没有?卢望平说没有,因为那时候天天都是赶着做片子,头一天审第二天的片子,一个备播都没有。孙玉胜说没有备播,那就播出吧,他就这么拍板了。结果第二天星期天就给播了,没想到反响很好,孙玉胜的同学给他打电话说,这个《生活空间》终于找到定位了。吴文光也看了,段锦川也看了,都给我打电话说,这个片子拍得好,好看。

王:有解说词吗?

蒋:没有,全是同期声,一句解说词都没有,就是有个主持人在片子播出之前说几句,播完以后再说几句。我做了五个,题材就是垃圾工、票友、音乐发烧友这样的普通小人物。那时候感触最深的就是,拍这些人时总问我,你为什么拍我们,我们又不是劳模,又没有做什么值得夸耀的事。那时候的人都是这个想法,普通人都觉得自己没脸上电视。我就想电视台难道拍的全是劳模?都是赋予了政治身份的人?普通的老百姓就不能拍吗?所以总得给他们解释,很多时候你要跟他们解释你拍的是什么,你为什么要拍他们,其实就是在解释什么叫纪录片。

王:五个全播了?

蒋:有一个没审过。那时候牟森已经在电影学院带一个表演训练班,就是表演系考前班,已经在排《彼岸》这个话剧了,我也就去拍我的纪录片《彼岸》了。再后来卢望平离开了《生活空间》,换成陈虻当制片人,他又找我做样片,我就去给他拍了《上班》,再后来这个栏目就有了“讲述老百姓自己的故事”这样一句广告语。

三

王:拍《彼岸》的时候是什么状态?

蒋:那时候我们强调做纪录片是我们的一个生活态度,知道这是一条寂寞之路,但也有那种不撞南墙不回头的信念。我那时在北影厂拍了一个广告,挣了一万块钱,就赶快去买磁带,租摄像机,到电影学院去拍牟森,他带领一波想考电影学院的孩子排练《彼岸》这个戏,那个排练的场景是很震撼的。然后我也觉得应该完成一个自己想拍的作品,但拍了多少次我都想停下来,因为没钱拍,于是又去挣钱,挣了钱再拍,就这么断断续续地拍完了。

后来做后期没有钱,温普林那时候说我们拍的西藏这一批片子卖了,给了我四万块钱。这在当时是一大笔钱呀,他还说这个大二分之一的剪接机器你也拿去剪片子吧。于是用了这个机器剪出《彼岸》。吴文光用这个机器剪了《四海为家》。其实拍《彼岸》的过程,也是理想与现实冲突的过程。

王:这个主题是拍的时候就想好的?

蒋:拍的时候没想好,只想着纪录牟森的一个排戏过程。但当时那个排练场确实很吸引人,一帮人在那里排练吃饭睡觉,很有些乌托邦的意味。

王:但是牟森《彼岸》那个戏本身是解构乌托邦的。

蒋:对,本身是解构乌托邦,但是他们又像乌托邦一样在这里生活。

王:对,它的悖论就在这里,他要解构乌托邦,那他同时建了一个乌托邦。

蒋:对,他自己建了一个乌托邦,但不是他想要的。

王:但是你拍的时候,其实你是想拍摄这个乌托邦。

蒋:最早是想拍乌托邦,拍这个梦想,拍的是剩下我一个人我也绝不投降的理想主义。

王:因为他这个演员培训班,为了做这个戏,于是将排练这个戏本身弄成了一个乌托邦。

蒋:对,排练每天都是很辛苦的,而且每天都有一些人冲着牟森来看这个排练。孩子们觉得自己被关注了,中国梦也许就在这个时候开始了。但牟森是非常清醒的,他一直都知道自己应该做什么。后来这个戏演出非常成功,连演了七天,来看的观众每天都把屋子挤得满满的,我就把这些过程都拍摄下来。

但是拍完以后我又觉得没什么意思了,我只是纪录了一部话剧的诞生,总觉得缺少些什么,所以一直就放

在那里没有剪。三个月后,我又拿着机器去拍这帮孩子的时候,那时他们没有考上大学,开始了北漂。他们百无聊赖租住在农民房里的生活场景,一下触动了我,我觉得这个片子可以重新来拍了。我找到一个方向,就是理想与现实的冲突。当时他们在舞台上嘶喊的台词都被一一应验了:彼岸在哪儿,没有彼岸!

这帮孩子没有考上大学以后,要么回家,要么在北京漂着。这个社会早给这群人设定好了,你是什么就是什么,想改变自己的命运,太难了。也许有的人一生中能被人关注的机会,就在那个电影学院的第二排练室,在他们排练和演出的时候,之后,就一切烟消云散了。我最后一个采访做的是牟森,那天他喝了酒,眼神有些迷离。他说我从来也没有喜欢过这帮孩子,我当时还挺惊讶。后来我想他这个话挺有道理,他凭什么要喜欢他们,他没有这个义务要喜欢这些人,他仅仅作为一个老师,教他们一些表演方法,排了一个戏而已。

王:他当时给他们钱吗,让这些孩子排戏的时候?

蒋:那是考前训练班,没有钱。

王:他是训练班的老师而已。就是他顺便完成了自己的作品。

蒋:他完成一个作品,但是这帮孩子在这个训练班毕业也得有一个毕业作品。

王:明白了,他并不是剥削他们,他这么做也是合理的。

蒋:这是一个合理的毕业作品,并不是说牟森利用他们,它是一个必须要完成的作品,只不过是牟森选择了高行健编剧的这个《彼岸》来完成它。

王:牟森可能会觉得这帮孩子没有理解这个戏的真正初衷,再一个当然一些世俗上的原因,这些孩子给了他一种他不应该担负的义务感。

蒋:对,其实他们在一起就是一个师生关系,除了这层就没有更多的关系了。我跟这帮孩子接触后有一种朋友的关系,他们管我叫蒋哥,管牟森叫牟老师,所以就不一样了。包括吴文光他们后来也都不愿意再搭理这帮孩子了,原来演戏的时候,包括研讨会的时候,吴文光也说北京我最想来的就是这个电影学院的第二排练室。但是事情过去了,过去就过去了,吴文光、于坚、牟森也没有必要再和他们来往了,离开了那个排练场的场景,那个氛围就没有了,作为戏剧的《彼岸》已经结束了,还凑在一起干嘛呢?后来我和他们还保持着来往,是因为纪录片的《彼岸》还在继续,因为片子还没有完成,我还在跟踪拍摄他们没有考上大学留在北京的生活,而这种生活跟他们在学校里的生活又有那么大的落差。但没办法,这就

是现实,是我们每一个人都要面对的现实。

王:《彼岸》的剧本是什么时候产生的呢?是不是八十年代产生的?

蒋:《彼岸》是高行健八十年代写的。他在剧中说,人的,有尊严的生活,它在彼岸。诗人于坚来看《彼岸》的排练,他很激动,于是写下了《关于彼岸的汉语语法讨论》。高行健原来是写理想主义的一个戏,就是“到彼岸去”,但于坚就把这个彼岸解构了,变成了一个词汇,名词也好,动词也好,彼岸就是一个词。于是牟森就把这两个剧本揉在一起排一个戏,做着做着其实也陷入那个场景里边,大家天天都在一起,睡觉躺一地,包括我也是深陷其中。我们总是这样,明明知道很多事情是我们要反对和摆脱的,但又不知不觉地深陷其中。

王:一种集体主义。

蒋:对,集体主义的荣誉感,这是我们熟悉的生活方式,从小到大我们被灌输,个人是渺小的,集体才是强大的,包括商业模式也是这样,先国营后集体再个体户。有一次我给央视拍片子,就一个问题争执起来,央视的人说,你有什么了不起,你不就是一个个体户嘛。电视台是什么?是喉舌是宣传机构,不是什么人都可以拿着机器就拍片子的,那是一种权力的象征,不像现在拿起手机就拍了。所以在那个年代,当我们最初拿起笔在身份一栏中写下独立制片人的时候,是需要多么大的勇气,同时又有着他妈的无比的自豪感!

四

王:到了一九九〇年代末,你们这一拨导演很多和英国电视台有合作。

蒋:是这样,李红拍了一个纪录片《回到凤凰桥》,BBC要购买播出,结果就来了一个号称BBC第三把剪刀的人,叫Mark。他要按着英国观众能理解的方式把这个片子再剪接一遍。于是我们就认识了。在这个期间Mark看了我的《彼岸》,他很激动,他说尤其是片子最后在田野上演戏的场景,让他想起了费里尼。完了以后就跟我们谈,就说他想请我和段锦川、李红还有康健宁做几个关于中国的纪录片。

我说我想拍一个火车站,他们说好。于是后来我就去了这个郑州车站。去的时候接待我的就是后来片子里的主人公,老傅,他那时候是车站的宣传科长,他问了我一个问题,他说你这个片子是曝光的还是歌颂的?我说在曝光和歌颂之间还有一种片子叫纪录片。他说是不是就像“讲述老百姓自己的故事”那样的?我这时就觉得《生活空间》的短纪录片起了作用,就是培养了这么一批观众,不用你再多说,他就知道你要拍这样的片子。我说是,他说那好,我帮你找人。就这样,我在郑州站就呆下来了,就开始选择人物。

王:你去郑州的时候是谁介绍你去的?

蒋:我自己去的。那时《东方时空》百姓故事的制片人已经是陈真了,我们很熟悉,我就从他那里拿了一张介绍信,条件是片子做完以后要在《百姓故事》播一下。但老傅对我还是很戒备的。

王:为什么还戒备呢?

蒋:他就认为我不像电视台的人,很长时间我是扛着机器跟他们一块儿上班,但是我不拍。我是有至少两三个月我没拍什么东西,跟他们同吃同劳动,就是想让他们熟悉机器。人家认为电视台的不这样,他们拍俩镜头就走了,但我这个方式可以建立起来比较好的拍摄关系。

我选的这两个人,一个是浪漫的理想主义,另一个很现实,在生活中和工作中都很吃得开。其实我觉得只要是人,抛开意识形态,你的生活都会碰到各种各样的实际问题。中国人,尤其是最近这些年,就是被实际的生活,房子、车子、票子、孩子打得稀里哗啦的,没有一样不是实实在在需要鼓足勇气面对的,所以你就是再意识形态,你躲不过去,你会碰到生活中最具体的事情。所以我做《幸福生活》这个片子,越拍越坚定我这个想法,我就是拍的中年人理想与现实的冲突,就是另一个《彼岸》。

王:你这部影片从形式上就比较偏直接电影了。

蒋:对,我不干预,人物选好了就是跟踪拍摄,等待生活中各种各样的问题。但是我有采访,其实也不是采访,因为时间久了,我就成了他们的倾诉对象了,心里话对我说,对着镜头说。

王:一直是你一个人在拍?全程一个人拍一个人剪。

蒋:有一个录音,他挑杆录音,我摄影。我们两个人。

王:这个片子,后来说陈虬看了之后还哭了。

蒋:对,那个是后来剪了一版给《百姓故事》。五集,8分钟一集,连续五天播出,陈虬那时当领导了,他审片。可能都是中年人的缘故吧,都是上有老下有小感同身受。审完以后一个镜头没有改,就播出了,然后《百姓故事》就不让再有这种长一点儿的纪录片了,只许播出短的。

王:这五集能给你多少钱?

蒋:一集给一万块钱。

王:BBC应该给的钱多吧?

蒋:这个操作是购买的方式,就是还没拍,欧洲几个电视台就付了购买钱,一共四十万,我用二十万买了一台摄像机,剩下二十万是差旅吃住后期制作和人员劳务,用了一年的时间。后来圈内传闻说我们给BBC拍摄挣了大钱,拍纪录片能挣大钱那真是做中国梦呢。

王:《幸福生活》拍得很诗意,中年况味,把人的感情的这种美拍出来了,尤其是两个中年男人在一起,姓傅的说他给孩子喂奶,另外一个听着感动得哭了,那个感情很动人。

蒋:那个也是拍了好长时间,一共拍了三盘带子,就是他们俩对话那段。

王:那一盘是多长?

蒋:一盘是四十分钟。那天是老傅帮助刘永利解决了一个难题,永利就请老傅去一个小饭馆喝羊汤。他俩边喝边闲扯,我就在旁边拍。很奇怪,那天那个饭馆始终就我们四个人,所以声音录得很好。拍了两盘我都觉得没啥用,都是闲扯的话,但我还是没放弃,又换上第三盘磁带。拍到一半的时候,永利问老傅你爱人是怎么死的?老傅就开始说了爱人是怎么死的,他是怎么在孩子一岁的时候既当爹又当妈了。在那个场景里,一个中年男人将自己的喜怒哀乐娓娓道来,就像在说别人的故事,我拍着拍着眼睛就湿润了。拍纪录片这么多年,一次次被中国人既苦难又顽强的生活所打动。等到《幸福生活》拍完了我就在想,既然现实生活如此,那么造成今天生活的原因是什么呢,于是我打算去探究老一辈人的心路历程。

五

王:咱们可以聊《暴风骤雨》了,它好像最早的就是中央电视台委托你做的项目是吗?

蒋:对,陈晓卿那时在央视《见证》这个栏目当制片人,三十分钟时长,可以播纪录片。于是陈晓卿就委托我和段锦川、康健宁做一个关于中国农村变迁史的片子,叫《我们的土地》。内容包括晏阳初的新农村运动、土地改革、第一个互助组、第一个人民公社,还有一些标志性的事件,比如红旗渠、赤脚医生、浩然写的《金光大道》和《艳阳天》等内容,这些都是和这块土地上的农民休戚相关的事情。我们刚开始做调研的时候,清华大学社会学系教授孙立平就参与进来了,他拿来很多的田野调查报告,有上百万字,都是第一手资料,非常珍贵。他还派来两个他的研究生协助我工作。等这些资料看完以后,我们决定去黑龙江尚志市的元宝村,因为它号称中国土改第一村。

王:你说第一村是什么意思?

蒋:元宝村号称是中国土改第一村,其实在抗战前后,山西和河北已经在进行土地改革了,抗战后,共产党到了东北,为了巩固东北根据地,就号召党员干部脱掉西装,脱掉皮鞋,到农村去进行大规模的土地改革。所以一九四六年,松江省就有大批的共产党工作队深入农村发动土改,大规模的土地改革运动就在这块黑土地上展开了。作家周立波就是作为工作队队长去的尚志元宝村,后来他写出了关于土改的小说《暴风骤雨》。这个村子现在建了周立波纪念馆,村口牌匾上书写:中国土改文化第一村。

王:你们的选择也是因为周立波的《暴风骤雨》吧?

蒋:对呀,作为一部反映历史的纪录片,你首先得有影像支撑,《暴风骤雨》拍过故事片,主演是于洋,他当年也是土改工作队的队员,于是我们也拍了他,主要是讲他的土改经历。还有当年满映留下来的工作人员,拍了一部纪录片叫《民主东北》,也有一些土改工作的影像片段。周立波的小说《暴风骤雨》,在那个年代影响是巨大的,他笔下元宝村的地主韩凤岐韩老六,那几乎是家喻户晓,是与中国著名地主黄世仁、南霸天、刘文彩、周扒皮齐名的。选择去元宝村拍土改,也是因为知道这里的人多。

王:这个比较有意思的是,这些人就是《暴风骤雨》小说里在村子里都有原型。

蒋:都有原型,包括赵光腚、杜善人、郭娃子、韩凤岐,包括土改工作队队长,都有原型,只要是活着的,我们都拍了。地主韩老六也不是像书上写的被枪毙了,五十年代初,村里有人还看见他在哈尔滨摆一个地摊给人算命。那时《暴风骤雨》这本小说已经获斯大林奖了,也不知道韩老六本人看过没有,看了之后是啥心情,反正他作为地主出名了,按现在的话说,那就是网红啊。

王:他没死,就是逃亡了。

蒋:就是跑了,也不是因为他是地主跑了,他就是不想在村里呆了,别惹事了。其实他也不是地主,按成分划分,他只能算是个经营地主,他本身没有土地,是帮城里商人管理土地。村里人对他的印象是识文断字,走路喜欢拄着一个文明棍,低调斯文。土改时元宝村枪毙了七十多个人,没有一个地主。

王:我看了那个片子之后我感到震撼的是,这些人竟然都是如此真实的去说,并没有说根据官方口径去说,我觉得这是很难得的。

蒋:这是口述历史的技巧,不同的是我们用影像呈现。我在拍摄之前,是先让助手去村里找经历过土改的这些老人,找能说的会说的想说的敢说的,还有他的叙述能力和谈话节奏,都要了解。因为这毕竟是

个影片,不像田野调查用笔记录,他最终是要面对镜头的。等我掌握了这些资料以后,再由我进行拍摄采访,那个时候我会就这个人之前说的内容进行更细致的提问。第一次提问的时候,他的记忆闸门打开了,等我第二次提问的时候,往往都会有更多的内容补充进来。都是些八十多岁的老人了,也许上顿饭吃的什么已经不记得了,但对于年轻时候经历的事情,那是记忆犹新。通过谈话的细节判断,我相信他们是真诚的,这基于彼此的互相信任。

王:就是引导。

蒋:对,这个引导是引导他们在镜头前谈出之前他们坐在炕头上闲聊出来的内容,是我掌握的这个采访对象能说出什么样的土改经历。

王:我觉得他们基本上还是真诚地说出了心里话,没有违心按照当时的政治意识形态的方向走,这很难做到。

蒋:确实比较难,因为我们受了那么多年的书本教育,有时候不自觉地就按照这种官方教育的说法说了。所以我们在拍摄的时候,要尽量避免这个现象,首先要提供一个语言环境,我们把村里能找来的老家具老物件都找来做一个拍摄环境,老人们进来以后看着都很熟悉,我跟他们强调的是,我们今天回到五十年前,说说你们当初看到的听到的事情吧。其实意识形态有时也是很脆弱的,在具体事实面前,一击即碎。所以我们反复强调的是细节,细节。在此之前,我和段锦川做了一个口述历史的纪录片《二人转》,剧作家王肯讲了一个细节,那是编不出来的。他说他参加土改的时候,看到贫农在胸前戴一个红条,中农戴粉条,地主戴白条,二人转艺人戴一个花条,离老远就能看出这人的身份。

王:跟纳粹标志犹太人似的。

蒋:对。这是土改时期农民身份的标志。后来我把这个问题在这个纪录片里提出来,得到了求证,而且有人补充说,到土改后期,地主已经不戴白条了,谁穿的最破谁就是地主,因为任何一个人都可以把地主身上那件比自家身上像样一点儿的衣服扒下来换上,换一换二换三,扒来扒去,地主身上的那件衣服就是全村甚至全乡最破的衣服。老远一看,这人穿得这么破烂,肯定是地主。只可惜这样的地主我没采访到,都已经死了。我也没有在任何的一本书中或是影像作品中看到穿着这世上最破烂衣服的地主当时是一个什么心情,作为一个人,地主已经没有说话的权利了。所以做这样一部纪录片,就是想着还原一段历史,由经历过那个时期还活着的人讲述一段多声部的历史,也是我们上一辈人的心灵史。

王:这个片子在央视是什么面貌?播了多少集?

蒋:《我们的土地》我们做了二十四集,三十分钟一集。我跟段锦川分组拍摄。我去的元宝村,最后这部分编出五集。那时《见证》栏目的制片人陈晓卿审看就行了,他作主这二十四集片子就全部播出了。当然了,《见证》栏目虽然是在中央一套,但是它是晚上十二点半播出,所以审查起来也宽松一些,也没人看,谁半夜等着看纪录片,那不是有病吗。

王:他播出的跟你后来自己的一个半小时的版本,倾向是一样的吗?

蒋:不太一样,央视播出的元宝村主要是讲这个村子是怎么从周立波笔下的光腚村到今天的亿元村,大量的土改内容是编不进去的,所以我们觉得太可惜了,这些个素材不能就这么浪费了,所以在播出的第二年我又返回去元宝村,进行了再一次拍摄,这次拍摄就更加明确了,我们要做一个可以留存为档案的影像,力求真实,这就是倾向。所以就有了九十分钟版本的纪录片《暴风骤雨》,在这个片子里,你能看到更多的各阶层的口述对象,以及尚志县县志数据作为依据,共同还原了这段历史。有时候我真是觉得我们拍口述历史的片子,那都是抢救性的,如果经历过那个时期的老人都一一逝去,那些鲜活的亲身经历将从何处寻到?

王:你现在处于一种什么状态?还在继续拍吗?

蒋:这是一个平庸的时代,平庸到人已经没有了欲望,所以有“躺平”这个词的出现。对于纪录片来说,我也是躺平吧,其实我一直在拍摄,都是在电视台能播出的关于历史文化的片子,我不认为这些能通过审查标准的片子,是我最初想象的纪录片,所以我羞于说我还在拍纪录片,你可以把它叫做专题片或是电视节目,但是别叫纪录片,这是我个人对纪录片这个词保有的尊重。纪录片是什么?它在法语里叫真实电影,在一个崇尚说假话的国度里,真实会越来越没有空间。你可以在电视里充斥着动物、美食和大好风光,但这不是纪录片的全部,纪录片更应该关注的是在这个时代生活的人们的喜怒哀乐和悲欢离合,就像当初我们这批最早做所谓新纪录片的人所要关注的题材一样。但令我悲哀的是,三十年过去了,我们还是没有建立起纪录片的土壤。我记得当初我们在一起聊天的时候,段锦川说他的理想就是能有一个自己的电影院,专门放映纪录片。因为那时我们都受过日本纪录片导演小川绅介的影响,小川绅介在日本他是自己一站一站地去放映自己的纪录片,这个行为在日本积累了一大批纪录片观众,后来是老观众又带着孩子来看他的纪录片,并且在他拍摄纪录片的地方有了一个山形纪录片电影节。我们这一代人就没有受过纪录片的教育,我们的下一代再下一代,也不会有,所以这么想,我真觉得我是一个失败者。就好像我是一个会种地的农民,看着是有大片的土地,但这土地都是沙漠,长不出粮食来,你去栽种也不会有收获和希望,没有这个土壤。我从1991年开始做长纪录片,到今年正好是三十年,在这三十年里,我做了上百部片子,我自己觉得值得说说的也就以上所说的这三部片子了,而这三部片子都不可能在电视台或院线完整播放。当然,现在也有纪录片在影院播放,并且官方也号召多拍纪录片讲好中国故事。我的理解,讲好中国故事就是讲好的中国故事,这方面我不太擅长,谁喜欢讲就去讲吧。

MEMORY AND POLITICS 记忆与政治

Sisyphus-Style Documentary Filmmaker: Interview with Hu Jie

胡杰：西西弗斯式的纪录片人

Interviewer: SUN Hongyun 孙红云 Translator: Xiang FAN 樊响

Wang Libo: Facing up to the 'Banality of Evil'

王利波：直击“平庸之恶”

Interviewer: SUN Hongyun 孙红云 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Sisyphus-Style Documentary Filmmaker: Interview with Hu Jie

Interviewer: SUN Hongyun 孙红云 Translator: Xiang FAN 樊响

Hu Jie (胡杰) graduated from the Shanghai Air Force Political Academy in 1986 and joined the oil painting class of the PLA Art Academy for two years since 1988. He had been in the army for fifteen years. In 1994, he began filming his first documentary, *Yuanmingyuan Artist Village* (圆明园的画家生活, 1995). He resigned from his post in 1999 to become an independent documentary filmmaker. His main works include *Yuanmingyuan Artist Village*, *Remote Mountain* (远山, 1996), *The Female Matchmaker* (媒婆, 1995), *On the Seaside* (在海边, 2000), *Searching for Lin Zhao's Soul* (寻找林昭的灵魂, 2005), *Spark* (星火, 2013), *Though I Am Gone* (我虽死去, 2007), *My Mother Wang Peiying* (我的母亲王佩英, 2011), *Painting for the Revolution: Peasant Paintings from Hu County* (文革宣传画, 2017), *China, Liaoxi Chronicle* (辽西纪事, 2017), *Food Ordeal* (辽阔之痛, 2019), and *Songs from Maidichong* (麦地冲的歌声, 2014), among others.

Hu Jie has been working on independent documentaries for nearly thirty years and has completed more than thirty films. The topics of his work range from independent artists, miners, matchmakers and independent-minded intellectuals, to the Cultural Revolution, the Great Famine, the rightist and faith in China. But Hu's camera does not just show the suffering of the victims, but focuses mainly on those who have the ability to resist and reflect on history. As a contemporary independent documentary filmmaker, Hu believes that ethics and morality are the bottom line for documentary filmmakers, and that documentary filmmakers should have a sense of historical responsibility, the ability to analyse society and a sense of humanitarian concern.

This interview was conducted at Hu Jie's home in Qingdao on 15 November 2020.

1

Sun: How did you start filming *Yuanmingyuan Artist Village*?

Hu: I went to the Yuanmingyuan in 1993 to paint and stayed there for two or three years until 1995 when

they expelled all the artists from the Yuanmingyuan. In 1994, Ji Dan came back from studying in Japan and we met in the Yuanmingyuan. She said to me, ‘Since you are physically strong, why don’t you make documentaries?’ Then she told me how to make a documentary, just like a preacher, and she was full of enthusiasm. After Ji Dan said this, my sister saved some money and helped me buy a Super 8. I didn’t have the camera until 1995. At that time, I didn’t know how to use it. I knew all these painters relatively well, but the most significant ones, such as Fang Lijun (方力钧), had already moved out, so some of them were not filmed. The ones I did capture thought they were innocent and did not challenge the social system, and they thought the police would not evict them. In the end, they were expelled too.

Sun: Your first film is very good, although some of the audio-visual language seemed a bit unsophisticated. How long did it take for the film to be completed?

Hu: When I was making the film, I didn’t know anything about shot and camera movement. I just shot it first. After I finished filming, I didn’t edit anything. I was expelled together with them. Then I thought of the coal miners I had seen when I was in Qinghai, but Qinghai was too far away, so I wanted to find the coal miners around here. Because I was very shocked when watching them carrying a basket and digging coals like dogs.

Sun: There was no documentary about coal miners at that time?

Hu: No, there wasn’t. I went to the small coal mine in Qinghai, where I used to paint. When I got there and started filming, I realised that I didn’t know anything about filmmaking and film language, and then I remembered the slogan of the Cultural Revolution: Eat, live and work together (同吃同住同劳动). I had to live with them, otherwise I wouldn’t have had a place to live. But the good thing was that we lived in different rooms. At that time I kept thinking about how I was going to shoot. I went through the films I had seen in my head, such as *Little Soldier Zhang Ga* (小兵张嘎, 1963) and *Fighting North and South* (南征北战, 1952), scene by scene. Sometimes when I saw the miners climbing out, I didn’t know how to shoot them. I would observe them for a long time before I got the idea of how to shoot them climbing out.

Sun: What did you think was the most important thing about filming a documentary at that time?

Hu: I think it’s the attitude, the way you treat the camera. The Japanese journalist who helped me buy the camera at that time said [translated by Ji Dan], ‘If you treat the camera well, the camera will treat you well.’ Hence, I take special care of the camera, as he said that the camera is part of your body. I think he gave a

sense of religion to the camera. With the kind of devotion, he was able to worship the camera on his knees. The relationship between the camera and him is different from all sorts of techniques we see in textbooks.

Sun: What was the name of the Japanese journalist?

Hu: Akihiro Nonaka, who teaches journalism and documentary at Waseda University. He used to work for a very big media company in Japan and he thought Super 8 (handheld camera) could change the world, so he gave up his career decisively. He trained Asian students like Ji Dan, Feng Yan and then me. He was influenced by Shinsuke Ogawa's documentaries and acknowledged the purity of documentaries.

Sun: Did the footage you shot in Qinghai later become a film?

Hu: It was called *Remote Mountain*. The miners had a very good relationship with me. I wanted to follow them home and film their wheat harvest and their pneumoconiosis. Many people had pneumoconiosis, just waiting to die at home. I wanted to film that.

Sun: You filmed pneumoconiosis so early.

Hu: I only knew it after I started filming. They told me that many miners couldn't work anymore after a few years [of working in the mines]. I didn't know that pneumoconiosis was an occupational disease, a disease that society was not allowed to talk about. One day, out of the blue, a miner said, 'Someone says they're going to kill you. Run!' That ended up forcing me to run away, which was actually halfway through the film.

Sun: When did you finish the editing of *Remote Mountain*?

Hu: After a long time, Ji Dan set up an editing machine. Feng Yan, Ji Dan and I took turns to edit. Ji Dan found a basement where she could edit and also sleep. Then each of us edited for a month. I lived there to edit. It was a linear editing machine. Ji Dan taught me how to use it, which was quite difficult to learn. No one taught me how to edit. I remember discussing it with Ji Dan. It seemed that I knew in my head how the shots should be connected. Maybe it was my mind as a painter.

2

Sun: Your films have a kind of fearlessness and purity. What do you think is the essence of a documentary?

Hu: Truth. Of course there is something else behind the truth. When I started making *Lin Zhao*, I gained a deeper understanding of the truth of documentary and slowly realised what kind of country I am living in. I can say it's still a totalitarianism system, right? Our parents fought for this system and we live in it. Now many people reflect on it and criticise it, and even give up their lives in confronting it. You find yourself wondering where China stands in the whole process of world culture or world history. I came to this point slowly. While making *Remote Mountain*, I still wanted to make more truthful things, but the pursuit of the truth ended up being closer to the essence of the social system, and it made me slowly understand that there was a term called totalitarianism.

Sun: Where did you first learn the term totalitarianism?

Hu: In an article by Lin Zhao. This was a very shocking experience for me. When I read Lin Zhao's writing, she used the term totalitarianism to summarise the social system, and I was very shocked. But I had to ask Gao Hua for advice on how to understand this word. In Lin's writings, she repeatedly uses the term totalitarianism to criticise the society and the system, and this had a great impact on me.

Sun: When you were making *Lin Zhao*, it was a documentary you made for her on the one hand, and on the other hand, it also presented your own intellectual growth.

Hu: Yes. In the process of filming *Lin Zhao*, I had to go through Lin's thoughts and the ideas she put forward, otherwise how could I grasp her spiritual trajectory? In fact, before I made *Lin Zhao*, I was very unfamiliar with the term *jiquan zhuyi* (极权主义) [totalitarianism] and thought *ji* meant concentration.

Sun: In *Lin Zhao*, you have fully expressed how dazzling Lin's thoughts and spirit were at the time. I'm curious how much time and effort you spent in researching the archival materials about her during the process of filming *Lin Zhao*?

Hu: For a long time I didn't find any information on Lin. I just interviewed some of her classmates, but I couldn't find any information, even just a few words. But once I was able to obtain a lot of information at once, namely Lin Zhao's 140,000-word writing and the appendices at the back. That was after finding Mr Gan Cui, who gave me all the information he had on Lin Zhao. The whole process was very dramatic, so I won't go into that. After giving me the original material, he said he had also made a copy by hand, and he gave me a copy of that. As some of the original version was unclear, his copy added to the original. I kept reading his copy and the original to research Lin Zhao. What was her spirit? Was she mentally ill or was she

a person with a normal mind? What stage of history could her mind fit into? I had to find out these things about her from my very poor historical knowledge, which was actually quite difficult.

Sun: I could feel from the film that you were very emotional at times during the shooting.

Hu: I was very emotional. I don't remember how many words Ganzui copied by hand, but I told him that I would return it to him in two days, and then I read it day and night. Lin Zhao's writing really moved me. Firstly, I had never thought Chinese writing could be expressed in a way she did it. Secondly, her critique of the system is very thorough and impressive. I had never seen such glare in the prisoners and death row inmates I had faced in the past, and after reading those materials, I didn't know what to say. After reading it, I quickly returned it to Gan Cui to ensure that I kept to my words so he could lend it to me again. After interviewing a lot of people, I was often in tears when editing the film, both when I was listening to the interviews and when I was narrating myself. When the first version came out, I was very excited. I tried to keep my emotions down so that I didn't get too emotional. But it was very obvious in the first version that I had too much emotion in the film, and I slowly revised it later.

Sun: I could feel the suppression of your emotions in the final film.

Hu: During this process, my understanding of Lin Zhao was growing. At first when I read some of her accounts of Christianity, I didn't understand them at all and even wanted to skip them, as I was looking for her discourse on democracy and freedom. Later on her uncle Xu Juemin had a point that Lin was not a Christian, but a democratic freedom fighter. But as I read Lin Zhao's stuff over and over again during the editing, I found that Christianity had a much greater influence on her. Although I didn't quite understand it, I hadn't been exposed to Christianity at that time, so I started reading *Bible*. But I didn't understand *Bible* at all at that time. I read it once without knowing what it was saying, but then I attended church and talked to Christian friends. Gradually I came to feel its spirit of love, which is to use great love to solve the most difficult and insoluble situation for human beings. The spirit of Christianity is not about asking others to devote, but to devote oneself. These are things that were not in my knowledge structure in the past, so I hoped to express such spirituality of Lin Zhao in the film.

Sun: In *Lin Zhao*, you have presented her spirit and made the most profound reflection on that period of history that I have seen in a documentary so far, without slipping into a story about a woman on death row during the Cultural Revolution or re-enacting the narrative of an event. I lost two days of sleep after watching this film. I was very struck by the fact that I did not expect Lin to be so forward thinking at that time. My

exposure to Christianity was a little earlier, and I could understand the nourishment it gave her and its role in the construction of her mind, and that this great love enabled her to continue fighting fearlessly.

3

Sun: How did *Spark* begin?

Hu: I knew about [the story of] *Spark* when I was filming the interviews for *Lin Zhao*. I wanted to extend *Lin Zhao* a bit and also to let people know that there were still people thinking about these issues in those days. It wasn't just that a rightist was arrested and then put into the camp, and then went silent - these people never spoke again. I want to say that people like Lin didn't just grow their thoughts from books, from some ideas, or from individuals, but they were actually connected to the social formations of the time. I had the idea of making *Spark* when I was working on *Lin Zhao*, but I didn't find any specific materials for *Spark*. It didn't go very well. Although everyone in the interviews mentioned this publication, I didn't see it myself, so the film couldn't go ahead. In the end Tan Chanxue found these materials so we could make the film. After the first draft of the film came out, we showed it to some of the interviewees and they made many comments. I considered those comments because everyone's memory was different. Then I made many more changes. After Gu Yan watched the film, he came up with a lot of his opinions and added some key points, such as the fact that they had two printers to print *Spark*, whereas I had always thought that there was only one. He also mimeographed *Spark* in Shanghai. *Spark* was shot earlier, but it was finished until later.

Sun: As an independent documentary filmmaker, you are very pure. What does independence mean to you?

Hu: Personally, I think the so-called independence is about presenting how much you understand a certain stage of human society by filming the social system. If you don't have an understanding of the system, then your work is not independent.

Sun: Your understanding is reflected in the film, which has a strong intellectual self-consciousness and a social analysis of the subject.

Hu: I think that the practice of following the subject without judgement is influenced by the Western concept of the 'fly on the wall'. This method depends on the context. The fly needs to have a basic judgement to feel something. In a free country, where everyone has the right to speak and not be arrested, you can be a 'fly on the wall'. But in a totalitarian state where you pretend to be a fly on the wall, you are actually trying to cater

to both sides.

I also strongly felt that I had to move forward on my own and not worry about what other people thought. One thing that alerted me to this was that when the editing of *Lin Zhao* was done, it was shown at Cui Weiping's place. Cui Weiping invited Ding Dong (丁东), Qian Liqun (钱理群), Hao Jian (郝建), Zhang Xianmin (张献民), Zhang Yaxuan (张亚璇) and a few others. After watching the film, Cui Weiping wrote an article entitled *Searching for Lin Zhao's Soul*, which was published in *South Reviews* on 28 April 2004. The article says that after the screening, there were two very different poles of thoughts: one was from documentary filmmakers, saying, 'Why did you make this film, Hu Jie? You are not even a Christian. They even said, 'Hu Jie, this film seems to be a CCTV film, you have been a paradox.'

Sun: There is no way CCTV could make a film like this.

Hu: A friend happened to have a CCTV reporter with them at the time. This reporter said that CCTV could not make such a film, as it was not in line with the style of CCTV at all. He defended me from my point of view. The debates were very interesting. Zhang Xianmin said something that stung me. He said, 'You are filming a hero.' He thought there was something wrong with my perception, saying that I was portraying a hero and it was CCTV's perception. I think if there are no more rebels nor thinkers in this country and if you don't make heroes out of the rebels and thinkers, then you have to give them a name, right? I'm not saying she was a hero, but I know her spirit was very shocking at that time. That was the alert which made me think how I face those thinkers of history who were fighting for the people.

What I wanted to say in particular is that there are people in our nation who are really fighting for the people. Whatever you call them, we must respect them, so that it is meaningful. It's like Sisyphus rolling a boulder. The boulder will fall again, but you have to keep rolling upwards, otherwise what is the meaning of your life? Our current state and so-called hope are like a set of prints I made: Sisyphus keeps rolling the boulder up the hill, rolling it up and falling down again, forever. I particularly like the Sisyphus in Camus's writing that when he's rolling that boulder, his face is covered in mud, and the mud on his face and on the boulder is so integrated that you can't tell from a distance whether it's his head or the boulder; he's always rolling up.

4

Sun: How did you contact the old man in *Though I Am Gone*? It's almost impossible to find written information about that period of history.

Hu: After *Lin Zhao* came out, an American scholar, Wang Youqin (王友琴) , contacted me and said, ‘Hu Jie, you should make some films about the Cultural Revolution.’ She also gave me a copy of the book she wrote, *Victims of the Cultural Revolution* (文革受难者) [published in 2004 by Hong Kong Open Press]. She collected information on the victims of the Cultural Revolution and wrote out their history. She also suggested which themes I could film. I did consider it after talking to her. I contacted Wang Jingyao (王晶垚, Bian Zhongyun 卞仲耘’s husband), but he rejected me immediately. It was about 2004 when he rejected the interview, but a year later he suddenly called me again and said he could meet with me. I went to Beijing from Nanjing. He was very cautious and even asked Ding Dong to come to his place to prove that I was the real Hu Jie. When I entered his house and saw Dingdong there, Dingdong confirmed with him and he believed me. From then on he said he could accept my interview.

Sun: How long did it take to make *Though I Am Gone*?

Hu: I filmed it from 2005 to 2006. I wanted to have a film that could facilitate a dialogue with history on the 40th anniversary of the Cultural Revolution. I was living in Nanjing at the time and the old man was in Beijing. He didn’t just say everything within one interview. He just said a bit at a time.

Sun: Why? Was he wary or was it something else?

Hu: There was wariness. One reason is wariness, and the other is that he probably had not found all the information. He sometimes called me, saying ‘I can think of one thing.’ Then I just quickly travelled from Nanjing to Beijing and shot him for this one thing. I thought he might be talking about several other things, but he only talked about this one thing.

Sun: At that time you didn’t know that he had a camera and so much information? When was the structure of the film formed?

Hu: I didn’t know any of that. He gave it to me bit by bit, like squeezing toothpaste. This old man had seen *Lin Zhao* and requested to make a film that would stay like *Lin Zhao*. That was his request on the first day. I later found out that he had some materials taken away by a Chinese living in Australia who never returned them, so he stopped trusting people so easily. I could understand that. Gradually I knew he had photos and hoped to publish a photography collection for him, which he didn’t agree to in the end. But this old man had a good habit of keeping all his things, even the little medicine bags, so he had everything in that little room. He had to go through it bit by bit, but he wouldn’t let you do that. Well, I would just film him going through

it. By the time he showed me those photos, I had this structure, and all of a sudden it came into my head.

Sun: He had been keeping that camera?

Hu: Yes. When he was telling me about it, I thought of using this camera and these photos as a structure. When that clock in his house rattled, I thought, this is the footsteps of the times. Then I was reading a poem by Pasternak, and a line occurred to me: ‘Though I Am Gone, I must rise after three days, like the flowing water, like the incessant caravan; generations will come out of the darkness, bear my judgment.’ His wife, Bian Zhongsheng, was killed by her students. But by the time I was filming, no one had been interviewed and none of her students had apologised. When I called them, they all said, ‘We’ve forgotten about it. It didn’t happen. We don’t have time right now.’

Sun: People were killed in the Cultural Revolution, but there was never a historical trial.

Hu: There never was. I even set something up. After a version of the film was completed, I found a teacher called Lin Mang (林莽) who was the only teacher agreeing to be interviewed. He had contact with the students. I said, if you show the film at your place, I will be there, and after the screening, I could discuss with everyone. I wanted to shoot some footage of people reminiscing, discussing, and reflecting. He made all the contacts, but he told the students that I was also going. None of them went, except that they allowed me to attend a gathering many years after this film was finished. I met Song Binbin (宋彬彬) and Liu Jin (刘进) on that occasion. I talked to them and asked for their views on the film. They all said they had no opinion. They thought the film was fairly truthful and that they could accept it. They also talked about their experiences of what they thought happened at that time, but of course, in their conclusion, they had nothing to do with this tragedy.

Sun: When he told you that he had Bian’s hair and bloody clothes, was it at the last visit?

Hu: Until the last visit, he told me that he had these relics, and he then pulled out a box. When he pulled it out, I had a feeling that the film could end, because I had travelled around numerous times and I was really tired of travelling. I kept thinking, ‘How is this going to end?’ Then he pulled out the box and opened all those things. While he was opening them, I felt like I was suffocating as I was filming, and I couldn’t go on. I asked him what kind of song Bian liked. He then said ‘The Goddess of Liberty’, which is from *On the Taihang Mountains* (在太行山上). Then I drew him into the song and asked him to sing it, so I could relax myself a bit. I thought I had shot enough stuff, it was weighing me down, and I thought the audience was

overwhelmed too, so I had to release it. The lyrics of that song are particularly apt: ‘The Goddess of Liberty is singing.’ That generation actually had the Goddess of Liberty in their minds, and they were singing on the Taihang Mountains!

Sun: When I saw the film and heard that song, it was so ironic that it even felt surreal.

Hu: I think history is that so many people, in their pursuit of freedom, end up digging an abyss or a graveyard for themselves. It is inhumane and they just died. I hadn’t read *How the Red Sun Rose* (红太阳是怎样升起的) by Gao Hua at the time, nor did I know that this had already started during the Yan’an rectification period. These people had been young and they had ideals and pursuits. They wanted to make this society a good one, but look at how they ended up. It seems like doom, and there is nothing you can do when this doom comes. But it is also strange that whenever I make a similar film, there is always a Christian presence. In fact, this old man was not a Christian, nor did he have any faith. But after this incident, he found that he had to carry this cross for the redemption.

Sun: Comparing Lin Zhao’s extraordinary resistance and sacrifice, Bian Zhongwei in *Though I Am Gone* is a victim. Filming her is an exposure of the Cultural Revolution, while her husband Wang Jingyao is the one who rolls the boulder.

Hu: In fact, during the process of filming about Bian, after I understood the whole story and read what Wang Youqin wrote about it, I felt that I definitely couldn’t film it from this angle. Because from this angle, she was just a victim. I could never finish filming the victims. I had to find something else among them. So I just shoot how her partner recorded the history.

Sun: Yes, he is a historical vigilante.

5

Sun: Can you tell us about *Food Ordeal*?

Hu: *Food Ordeal* took quite a long time to film. One reason was that the large amount of research, and the other was that it was also very difficult to find people to interview. We went to their home in Xinyang (信阳) and [the interview] was agreed, but they changed their mind, so I couldn’t get anything. This happened quite a lot, so the interviews took quite a long time. Usually a friend provided some information and I went

there, but it's hard to say whether I could get a shot or not. It was completed at the end. At first I wanted to shoot Wu Yongkuan (吴永宽) who built the first memorial for the victims of the Great Famine in Guangshan County. After him, I wanted to make it a multi-dimensional film. Since Guangshan County is close to the Chaya Mountain People's Commune, I started interviewing people there. A lot of people helped me, and a lot of the people I interviewed have passed away and they haven't seen the film.

Sun: *Food Ordeal* is a very complex film. From your research and the structure of the film, I can tell that you made a lot of effort. The film is very subjective in terms of the structure and audio-visual language. You intertwined the Henan opera *Qin Xianglian* (秦香莲), memories of the Great Famine, and scenes of the local people growing and selling food on the street. Did you have this in mind when started editing the film or it was since you started filming?

Hu: It was formed during the filming process. Regarding the use of the Henan opera *Qin Xianglian*, I think sadness is the soul of Henan opera, but nowadays people don't understand Henan opera from this perspective, which is a shame. Unlike the resounding northern Shanxi folk songs on the Loess Plateau, Henan opera is a desolate outburst of soulful repression to the extreme, which makes you feel agitated when you hear it. The storyline of *Qin Xianglian* is exactly the same as my film, with the same tone. I thought of this Henan opera during the shooting process.

Sun: Apart from interviews and archival documents, on-the-spot footage is mainly about food and some road signs.

Hu: I think these are the basic shots for a documentary. You have to shoot the life and work of the people wherever you go. These are basic shots. In fact, during the whole interview process, I tried to capture all levels: from the lowest level of the people who were starving, the village leaders, the town leaders, the county leaders, the regional leaders, the provincial leaders, to the national leaders, so that each level can show the state of each one of them. This way, you might be very sad and angry, and unable to step out of this grief and pain, but you can still somewhat objectively illustrate the state of the country at that time. I think one of the major flaws of this film is that I couldn't find out how the CPC Central Committee, especially Mao Zedong, corrected mistakes at that time. He corrected the mistakes for a period of time, but I don't know the motive of this correction and to what extent he tried to do so. I couldn't find any specific information, as they all glorified him, which is a big flaw. I know that I can only briefly mention it. This is not something that can be solved by our generation. We have to wait until the next generation or the archives to really opened up, when people can really objectively understand this person and this period of history, they might have a kind

of judgment.

Sun: The film is as logical as an expository essay, from the start of organising cooperatives, then the communist wind, the great steel-production, to the widespread starvation, plucking away layer by layer, and finally it was actually a human disaster. Two of your interviewees were particularly expressive. One was the former director of the Women's Federation called Zhang Lanying (张兰英) . Her talk was very vivid and she was able to talk frankly in front of the camera. How did you manage to get her to talk like that?

Hu: She was the director of the Gushi County Women's Federation at the time, and her husband was the secretary of the county party committee. They were all arrested during the 'democratic revolution' and were not allowed to return to their original positions. They had some reflections, despite being superficial, and wanted to express themselves. They thought they had followed the orders of their supervisors but still got arrested, so they actually had complaints. But her husband wouldn't say the way she did. After all, so many people died of starvation within her husband's jurisdiction. He still told me what was going on at the time, and I just wanted him to say what happened at the time and that's enough.

Sun: From a female point of view, she spoke of women in the People's Commune being so tired that their wombs fell off and they couldn't have children. The way she put it was very arresting. What she said also unconsciously brought out the Chinese patriarchal thinking; that she could only take care of her father and her brother, but not her sister, who was left to starve to death. As a woman, this patriarchal ideology was also very strong, and you have left historical evidence in this film. There is also a shocking narrative from an ordinary Chinese woman.

Hu: One day, a local said someone's mother was from the area, so we went to visit her. What she said was very powerful and quite a lot, some of which I didn't know how to edit into the film. Her own brother was killed and then eaten by her stepfather who later ran away. I don't know if anyone would seriously study that period of history and the state of those people at the bottom of the society.

Sun: Where did you get the footage of the extreme poverty in rural Henan?

Hu: From the documentary *Jiao Yulu* (焦裕禄) , which was shot around the 1960s when the economy had just recovered. We saw that the villages were still in a state of decay, people were wearing rags like fishing nets, many children didn't wear anything, and all the houses had earthen walls. I found out what the countryside was like at that time through a film that glorifies [the CCP].

Sun: *Liaoxi Chronicle* looks at the fate of the rightists through the family's search for their father as a clue.

Hu: My idea at the time was to tell the story of the rightist labour at that time through the perspective of an upper-class family, but in the process of filming, I found that their children or grandchildren had not studied their father's or grandfather's generation at all. It was just an emotional connection. In this process of searching, it revealed what kind of path his father had taken. In fact, at that time, there were concentrated labour camps for rightists in every province. People paid a lot of attention to them, in particular the Jibianguo Labour Camp (夹边沟劳教农场), but I have presented the situation of this labour camp in Liaoning.

Sun: When did you know that Liaoning had buried so many people under the bridge piers when they were building the bridge?

Hu: I only found it out during the interview. We just wanted to go and find the place where his father died. After we went there, we lived with the people there and they told me what they saw at that time.

Sun: In this film, I saw some of the scenes you set up, such as the archives of his father and other prisoners and the list of the dead on the snow. Then He paid tribute to his father and laid the photo of his father under the bridge pier. Did you have those scenes in mind before you went there or did you design them on site?

Hu: It was something that I thought of before I went there. I found it very interesting that the labour camp would use cartoons to draw down the stories of his father as evidence of criticism. It would be very interesting to see these cartoons presented in a documentary, because in those days they didn't take pictures of rightist labours. As there were many literary artists among these rightists, so they let them expose and criticise each other via cartoons and plays. I think these cartoons serve as a visual narrative and also give a sense that these rightist artists could also use art to serve the politics of the time, which is quite intriguing.

For the photos, I had a plan to go to that place to find out where his father died. I enlarged those photos and took them with me. When I arrived, I came up with the idea to put them on the ground in the area where his father died, and then asked his son to talk about it.

Sun: In the final scene of *Spark*, Xiang Chengjian (向承鉴) sets a fire under an open loess cliff to pay tribute to Zhang Chunyuan (张春元) who was shot dead. Did you also design that shot?

Hu: Yes. It was in the same place where Zhang Chunyuan was shot. It wasn't a cliff. It wasn't that high.

But now it's been bulldozed and there's this flat area with some camel thorns. I was supposed to go there to do an interview and get him to say what they were like at the time, from a place where his friend was shot. At dusk, I thought it would be a good time to go and pay respects to him. When the fire started, because the shape of camel thorn looked like a sphere, I suddenly thought that it was like a spark, a fire in a sphere, and that is the name of the film, *Spark*. So, I took special attention to the visual and colour during the shooting. Then, as the birds fly, the music enters. Lin Zhao's poem came to me when I was editing, which is quite lyrical.

Sun: I can see your self-consciousness in *Songs from Maidichong*. At the beginning you asked him standing there holding a photo of Wang Zhiming (王志明), and there are a few other scenes where I can see your careful design.

Hu: Because the time for filming was very limited.

Sun: I heard a man in the film say 'I'll give you a local history book' and you said back that I 'only shoot singing'. You had a very clear idea of how to shoot.

Hu: When I got there, I got into the state of filming very quickly. The workload was saturated every day, and every shot felt like it was already edited in my head. Almost every shot is good enough to be used in the film. For example, when the pastor took us to interview Wang Zhiming's brother, the grandmother started humming during the interview. I immediately panned the camera over, and after I did, I knew that this would be the opening of the film. Just two days into shooting, I already had the opening of the film. I went to Wang's grave last because I knew I couldn't shoot it first. If I went there first, I won't be able to shoot the rest.

Hu: *Songs from Maidichong* was shot within just one week.

Sun: But the content of the film is quite comprehensive and rich.

Hu: It's like God's arrangement. Why did I want to become a Christian during the filming? While I was filming them, I thought, those faces looked so modest, but they sang such wonderful songs that could move you. As I was filming, I thought I would go back and get baptized. Since *Lin Zhao*, several other films of mine consciously or unconsciously had something to do with Christianity. I didn't know that, when making the films, for example, *My Mother Wang Peiying*. Then it occurred to me that the people I filmed are people

who were very defiant and reflective. Christianity was their spiritual resource, so they could maintain a clear understanding in a chaos status.

Sun: Did you know about Wang Zhiming before you went there?

Hu: I didn't know at that time. But one thing I did know was that Burghley was a missionary and Shimenkan (石门坎) was so famous that I thought I might connect the history together. When I arrived, I realised it had such a rich history.

Sun: You only went there once, but from the multi-dimensional interviews in the film, it feels like you had done a lot of research.

Hu: It was just a week at this village in Maidichong.

Sun: In the film, you interviewed the former official Zhou Ziren (周孜仁). I was a bit resistant to him when he first appeared. But later I saw his analysis and reflections and thought he had some understanding.

Hu: He was a self-conscious researcher of the Cultural Revolution and later worked as a secretary to a leader of the Yunnan Provincial Party Committee, so he knew a lot of inside stories and had a lot of notes. He had reflections on the Cultural Revolution, so he accepted my interview and brought out his diary.

Sun: This film shows the power of religion and at the same time its crisis and destruction.

Hu: Burghley spread the Gospel to Shimenkan in Guizhou as well as the area I filmed, where a church was built. After the victory of the Anti-Japanese War, according to the government education census, it ranked in the first place in the country in terms of the level of education per capita. After the Cultural Revolution, not many people in that area could read or write. The children of those old priests were illiterate. You can see in the film that I interviewed the children of the old priest who couldn't read and write, which is very sad.

Sun: Did you arrange the scene that the grandson of Wang Zhiming's brother is standing outside the house holding up a photo of Wang?

Hu: No, it was too dark in his room and there wasn't enough light, when he brought it out for us to film. Some scenes were quite magical. You may think they were arranged, but they weren't. How magical were

they? When we were taking a break at the halfway, we saw an old man walking up the hill carrying something on his back. He was the brother of the priest we had interviewed the day before, and he used the money we gave him to buy a bag of grain which he struggled to carry back. So I think a lot of the shots in the film are divine.

Sun: The completeness and contingency of the film sometimes feels like it's not a documentary, but an organised shoot, like the scene in which they carry with the hoe while singing.

Hu: That scene was a once-in-a-century occurrence. When we got there, we came across a group of people repairing the road from the village to the church. It's quite rare to see that many people working together. She [Hu Jie's wife] helped with the cooking and I filmed them. The pastor and the villagers didn't care [about the camera]. We were not sent by the official nor came here to donate money, and we lived in a small ramshackle warehouse. The local villagers were very kind. They didn't close their doors at night. I picked someone who seemed cheerful and easy to approach. I talked to her, visited her house, and asked her to sing. Then she said she had to work on the field and I said if I could go with her. She said yes. Her skirt swayed like a little bird's tail as she walked.

Sun: Like a proud little bird.

Hu: I always felt amazed and surprised during the filming. I asked casually if you two could sing a song. They took it very seriously. They were singing in tune, one high and one low. I thought, 'Great! Thank you!' In fact, I asked them to sing a song, because I thought it would be useful in this film. When I got there, I found out that they sang day and night. I didn't expect that they would spend such a long time singing.

Sun: Between what you present in your film and their real life, do you think you romanticised their lives?

Hu: Definitely. We didn't come into contact with a lot of the villagers, and the ones we approached were the ones who were friendly and accessible. The main characters in the film were my neighbours.

6

Sun: What do you think about the ethics of documentaries?

Hu: Regarding the ethics of documentaries, an article written by a scholar said that my films focus too much

on morality. It seems that he was critical and saying that documentaries should not be too moral. I don't think morality is actually something we present intentionally; it's our bottom line. No matter you criticise the society, totalitarianism, or the ugly social phenomena, your aim is to build a virtuous and pleasant society, isn't it?

Sun: What do you think is the direction of Chinese independent documentaries?

Hu: What you focus on always has something to do with the land where you grew up, and also with the authoritarian culture and totalitarianism. To soberly reflect the stories that rooted in this culture is probably a clear direction for independent documentaries in China.

Sun: What kind of books do you tend to read?

Hu: I like contemporary poetry, both foreign and domestic. I also like history, for example, Russian history and Chinese history written by Ding Dong and Gao Hua, which can dig out the historical truth. If you don't know much about history, it will directly affect your films. When I made *The Female Matchmaker*, I went straight into how she talked about matchmaking. What was it like for rural young men and women? What was the rural culture like? What was the reality of the situation in the rural area? And then what were their financial interests in this matchmaking process? Although I did interview the matchmakers about their history, I didn't have the historical knowledge or historical judgement at the time, so I left some of the profound content out of the film. What history? Before 1949 when this matchmaker was still a young woman, she was the leader of the women's association in that village. She led the fight against the landlords, and she told me how they fought them. She said that there was a river in her village called the Qi River. When they took the landlords to the river, they thumped them on the head with a wood, so their heads broke and they fell straight into the water. This is what they did when they were criticising the landlords. Then suddenly one day a matchmaker came and her parents set her into a marriage. She was dragged to another village to get married. This is a very impressive part of her story, but at the time I had a limited understanding and I thought it had nothing to do with matchmaking, so I didn't edit it into the film.

Sun: Her fate was determined by a matchmaker, and then she became a matchmaker herself.

Hu: After the reform and opening-up, she continued matchmaking and she got involved with traffickers transporting girls from Yunnan to Shandong. The police arrested her to stop them from doing that. I interviewed these people, but I didn't use the footage. I thought this had nothing to do with matchmaking. This

is the limitation of my early films. Although *The Female Matchmaker* looks interesting, you can see that I lacked historical knowledge and judgement at that time.

Another [limitation] is the ability to analyse society. If you don't have a clear historical understanding of the subject matter, it will affect your editing. When we talk about how unbiased documentaries are, I think it reflects documentary filmmakers' effort, in other words, their perspective and analysis, in the search for truth. How are you going to make a film about the famine if you don't research the topic? You have to research it. You have to have materials. As these materials are taboos, the filming progress can be quite slow. You have to read materials by all means and then identify their authenticity. This is particularly important. Only then do you form your ideas, which should be close to the truth and at the same time reflect your humane care.

Sun: This is the core of your films.

Hu: The term 'humane care' may be a bit old. But if contemporary art doesn't reflect humane care, I would find it suspicious. I think contemporary Chinese people have no spiritual resources, and this was a problem that came to my mind during my filming process. Look at Wang Zhiming in *The Song of Maidichong* and the group of people in *Spark*, they really contemplated and they were not afraid. They felt that it was sincere and right to do that and that they could give their lives for it. I don't think there are people like that anymore. The main reason is that our society doesn't respect this spirit anymore.

西西弗斯式的纪录片人——胡杰访谈

孙红云

胡杰,一九八六年毕业于上海空军政治学院,一九八八年入解放军艺术学院油画班进修两年。从军十五年。一九九四年开始拍摄第一部纪录片《圆明园的画家生活》,一九九九年辞去公职成为独立纪录片人。主要作品有《圆明园画家村》、《远山》、《媒婆》、《在海边》、《寻找林昭的灵魂》、《星火》、《我虽死去》、《我的母亲王佩英》、《文革宣传画》、《辽西纪事》、《辽阔之痛》、《麦地冲的歌声》等。

胡杰导演从事独立纪录片创作近三十年,完成作品三十余部,拍摄的内容从独立艺术家、矿工、媒婆、独立思想的知识分子到关于“文革”、“大饥荒”、“右派”以及信仰等中国现代历史上一些隐痛和创伤,但胡杰的镜头不是展示受害者的苦难,而主要聚焦于那些有反抗和历史反思能力的人。作为当代一位独立纪录片人,胡杰认为,纪录片的伦理道德是纪录片创作者应守的底线,纪录片人要有历史责任心、社会分析的能力和人道主义关怀的境界。

本此采访时间为二〇二〇年十一月十五日,于青岛胡杰家中完成。

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孙红云(以下简称孙):你是如何开始《圆明园画家村》的拍摄?

胡杰(以下简称胡):一九九三年我就到了圆明园画画,在那一直待到九五年,两三年的样子,一九九五年他们把圆明园的所有艺术家都赶走了。九四年季丹从日本留学回来,我们在圆明园认识,她跟我说:你身体那么好不如拍纪录片。然后她就告诉我拍纪录片的方法,就像现在的传教一样,她充满了热情。季丹说了这个以后,我妹妹当时存有点钱,她帮我买的超8。到了一九九五年这个摄像机才买回来,当时我还不太会使用,这时候圆明园就开始驱赶了,我想反正是练习就去拍吧。我跟这些画家相对来讲都比较熟,但当时最主要的画家像方力钧等已经都搬走了,所以有一些人就没拍到。我拍到的那些人本来以为他们是无辜的,也不挑战社会体制的,他们认为警察是不会赶他们的,结果这些人也全都被赶走了。

孙:第一部片子你那感觉非常好,虽然有些视听语言看起来有点青涩。拍完多久片子成型的?

胡:当时拍这片子的时候,我根本不懂什么叫镜头,也不懂什么叫推拉摇移,什么都不知道。我就是先把

它拍下来再说。拍完了以后也没编,我就和他们一起全部被赶走了。赶走以后我想我上哪去,就想到了原来在青海写生时看到的那些煤矿工人,但是青海太远了,我就想找这附近的煤矿工人,因为我当时看了以后很震撼,他们都是驮一个筐像狗一样挖煤。

孙:那个时候还没有矿工题材的纪录片?

胡:没有。几经周折后我去了青海我原来画画的那个小煤窑。到那里我开始拍的时候才想我一点都不会拍电影,什么叫电影语言,根本不知道,然后我就想起文革的一句口号“同吃同住同劳动”。我必须和他们住在一起,否则的话我连住的地方都没有。但好在他们在一个小屋里住,我住在另外一间。那时我一直在想我怎么拍,什么叫镜头,然后就回想我看过的电影,比如《小兵张嘎》、《南征北战》,在脑子里就过这些电影,一个场面一个场面地慢慢地去想。有时候看着矿工们爬出来了,我却不知道该怎么拍。我就先观察好长时间,才想到我该怎么拍他们爬出来的过程。

孙:当时你觉得拍摄纪录片最重要的是什么?

胡:我觉得是态度,你对待机器的态度。当时帮我买机器的那个日本记者,他说了一句话,当然都是季丹翻译的。他说“你对机器怎么样,机器就对你怎么样”,所以我对机器特别爱护,他说机器就是你身体的一部分。我觉得他对机器赋予了一种宗教感。他是能跪着拜机器的那种虔诚,所以机器和他之间就不是我们教科书所说的各种技巧。

孙:那位日本老师叫什么名字?

胡:野中章弘,在早稻田大学教新闻和纪录片。他原来在日本一家很大的媒体公司工作,他认为超8(手持摄像机)可以改变世界,他就果断地放弃了自己的职业,他培养亚洲的学生,像季丹、冯艳,然后我,他受到小川绅介纪录片的影响,认可纪录片的纯粹性。

孙:你在青海拍的那些素材后来成片了吗?

胡:成片了叫《远山》。我拍到最后越拍越有感觉,矿工就和我关系非常好,我本来想跟着矿工回家再拍他们去麦收和他们的矽肺病,很多人都得了矽肺病,在家等死,我都想去拍。

孙:你那么早就拍尘肺病。

胡:我拍的时候才知道有这么多事,他们说很多矿工干几年就干不了活,我也不知道矽肺病是一种职业

病,是一种社会上不允许说的病,这些都不知道。有一天,突然有个矿工说:有人说要杀你,你赶快跑,最后就把我逼跑了,其实这个片子就等于拍了一半。

孙:《远山》什么时候完成剪辑的?

胡:过了很久,季丹搞了一个编辑机,冯艳、季丹、我,三个人轮流编辑。季丹找了一个地下室,既可以编辑,又可以睡觉。然后我们就分工一人一个月,我就住过去编辑。那时候是对编机,季丹教我怎样使用,挺难学的,也没人教你怎么编辑叙事,我还记得和季丹一起讨论,但我脑子里好像就知道镜头该怎么接似的,可能是画画的思维起作用吧。

二

孙:你的片子有种无畏的纯粹性,你觉得纪录片的本质是什么?

胡:真实。当然真实背后还有其他。我是从开始拍《林昭》的时候才对纪录片的真实有了一种更深的看法,其实是慢慢明白了我生活在一个什么样的国度之中。我可以说这依然是一种极权的制度,是吧?我们的父辈为了这个制度奋斗过,我们生活在这个制度中,现在很多人对这个制度进行着反思和批判,甚至为此对抗献出了生命。你会发现,在整个世界文化或者世界历史的进程中,中国所处的位置是什么?我慢慢才思考到这个程度,开始的时候就是我跟你说拍《远山》的时候还是希望拍更多真实的东西,但是追求真实,最后就更靠近了社会体制的本质,让我慢慢明白,那时候才知道有一个词叫极权主义。

孙:“极权主义”这个词你是从哪里第一次知道的?

胡:在林昭的文章中。这是令我非常震撼的一个经历,当时读到林昭写的东西,她用极权主义来概括社会的体制,我非常地震撼。但是对这个词怎么理解,我专门为这个词去请教高华。在林昭的文章中,她多次用“极权主义”来批判社会和当时的体制,这对我的影响非常大。

孙:等于你在拍《林昭》的时候,一个是你为她做的一个纪录片,另一个是你在拍的过程对你自己的思想的成长过程。

胡:是。就是在拍《林昭》的过程中,林昭的思想,她提出来的那些观点,你都要认真地去过一遍的,要不你怎么去把握住林昭精神上的脉络?其实在拍林昭之前,我对“极权主义”这个词是非常陌生的,还以为是集体的“集”。

孙:在《寻找林昭》这个片子里,你充分地表达出了林昭的思想和精神在当时是如此的耀眼。所以我好奇你在摄制《林昭》的过程中花费了多少时间和精力做资料文献的研究,然后从中提炼出来的?

胡:是这样的,在很长一段时间里,我并没有找到林昭的资料,只是采访了林昭的一些同学,但是找不到林昭的资料,甚至是只言片语都很难找到。但有一次一下子就获得了很多资料,就是林昭的十四万言书和后面的附录,那是在找到甘粹先生后,他把他手里林昭的资料都给了我。整个的过程是很戏剧性的,这就不说了。给了我原资料以后,他说他还手抄了一份,他把他抄的那份也复印给我了。因为原稿有些是不清楚的,他抄的就对原稿有补充,那么我就对着他抄的和原稿不断地进行弥补和校对,也在研究林昭,她的精神到底是什么样的?她是精神病还是一个有着正常思维的人,她的正常思维到底符合哪一个历史阶段?这些东西都是我要从我很贫乏的历史知识当中去找到林昭的那个点,其实挺难的。

孙:从片子中我能感受到你在拍摄过程中有时会非常地激动。

胡:激动得不得了。甘粹抄的多少万字我记不清了,我跟他说我看两天就还给你,然后我就夜以继日地看,林昭的文字让人非常地感动。首先,我觉得她的文字表达方式,我从没想到中国的文字可以用这样一种方式去表达。第二,她对于制度的批判是非常透彻和令人震撼的。我过去面对的那些牢狱犯乃至死刑犯,他们的生命中从没有透露出这样的光辉,那些资料看完后,我不知道说什么,那几天我不知道说什么,只是看!看完了以后赶快就还给甘粹,还给他以保证你说话有信用,他才会再次借给你看。另外,在我采访了很多后再剪辑时,经常地我真是那种泪如雨下地在剪辑,不管是在听采访别人说的,还是我自己配解说词的时候,都是在那种状态下进行的。第一版片子编出来的时候我很亢奋,使劲压自己的感情,让自己不要太激动。但第一个版本还是那种让人明显感觉到我的情绪在片子里太多,后来慢慢修改。

孙:成片里能感受到你情绪的克制。

胡:这个过程中,我对林昭的认识在不断地加深。刚开始读到一些她对基督教的叙述时,我完全不理解,甚至都想要跳过去,我在找她对民主、自由这些的论述。后来她的舅舅许觉民也有一个观点,他认为林昭不是一个基督徒的思想,她就是一个民主战士,民主的自由的战士。但是我在剪辑片子的过程中反复地读林昭的东西,我发现基督教对她的影响是更大的。虽然我不是太理解,那时候我还没有接触基督教,于是我就开始读《圣经》。但我那时读《圣经》根本不理解,读了一遍不知道《圣经》在说些什么,后来参加教会和基督教的朋友聊,逐渐才感觉到它的那种爱的精神,就是在人类最困难最无法解决的时候,用一种大爱来解决。基督教的精神不是让别人去献身,而是让自己献身。这些东西都是过去在我的知识结构中没有的,所以我希望在影片中能够把林昭这样的一种精神状态表达出来。

孙:在林昭这个片子里你表现了林昭的精神,并对那段历史做了目前我所看到纪录片中最深刻的反思,

没有滑进对一个文革中女死刑犯猎奇的故事中,或者对一个事件还原的叙事中。这个片子看了以后我失眠了两天,非常地震撼,我没有想到在那个时候林昭的思想是那么地超前。我对基督教的接触稍微早一些,我能理解基督教给她的人格的滋养和在思想建构中的作用,这种大爱使她无畏地坚持斗争下去。

三

孙:《星火》是怎么开始的?

胡:我在拍林昭的采访时就知道《星火》的事情,想把《林昭》延伸一下,同时也想让人们知道,在那个年代还是有人思考这些问题的,并不是把一个右派因为言论抓起来,然后进行改造以后就无声无息了,这些人可能永远不说话了。我是想说,林昭这些人的思想其实并不是仅仅来源于书本,来源于一些理念,也不是仅仅来源于个人,他们其实是和当时的社会形态发生了一种联系。我在拍《林昭》的时候就有了拍《星火》的想法,但一直没有找到《星火》的具体资料,所以进展不太顺利。虽然采访中大家都说有这个刊物,但是你没有看到,这个片子成立不了,最后谭蝉雪找到了这些资料,所以这个片子就可以成片了。片子初稿出来以后给一些当事人看,他们提了很多很多的意见,我就针对这些具体的意见进行思考,因为每个人的记忆是不一样的。然后,我又做了很多的修改。顾雁看了片子后又提出来很多自己的看法,他又增加了一些很关键的内容,比如说他们印刷《星火》当时是有两台印刷机,原来我一直认为就一台印刷机,而且他在上海也油印了《星火》。《星火》拍得比较早,但是一直没有完稿。

孙:你作为独立纪录片导演很纯粹,独立对你来说意味着什么?

胡:我个人认为,所谓的独立就是看你对拍摄的社会制度展现了人类社会的哪个阶段的认识程度,你不对这个制度有认识,就谈不上独立的创作。

孙:你的这个认识体现在片子里,有种强烈的知识分子的自觉和对拍摄对象的社会分析。

胡:我觉得,那种在拍摄中完全跟着拍摄对象走而不加判断的做法是受到西方什么“墙壁上的苍蝇”那种电影观念的影响。这种方法得看是在哪个国度,这个苍蝇感到了什么,它有基本的判断才能发现,在一个自由的国度,每个人都有说话的权利,并且不被抓起来,你才可以是“墙壁上的苍蝇”。但在一个极权国度,你还把自己装成墙壁上的苍蝇,实际上就是就想两方都讨好。

还有一个,我强烈地感到我必须要自己往前走,不去在意别人的看法。有件事引起了我的警觉,就是《寻找林昭》刚编好的时候,在崔卫平家放映。崔卫平找了丁东、钱理群、郝建、张献民、张亚璇,还有其他几个人。看完片子以后崔卫平写了一篇《寻找林昭的灵魂》的文章发表在《南风窗》(2004年4月28日)上,文章

说映后分成了截然不同的两派：一派就是搞纪录片的，他们说胡杰你凭什么拍这个片子，你又不是基督徒？他甚至说胡杰你这片子好像是央视的片子，你在用你的矛扎你的盾。

孙：央视不可能做出这样的片子。

胡：当时有一个朋友正好带了一个央视的记者，这记者说央视拍不出来这种片子，你完全不是央视的调子，他是站在维护我的角度上说的。当时的争论很有意思，张献民说的一句话对我是有刺痛的，他说，“你是在拍英雄”，他说我的观念有问题，说我是在塑造英雄，是央视的观念。我觉得这个民族如果没有了反抗者，没有了反思者，你不把反抗者反思者当作英雄，你必须给他们起一个名字，对吧？我也没说她是英雄，但是我知道她的精神那个时候是非常震撼的。这就是那次的警觉，我怎样面对那些为民请命的历史反思者。

我特别想表达的就是在我们这个民族里有这么一些人，他们真是叫“为民请命的人不管你称他们是什么，但这是我们要特别尊重的生命，这样才有意义。就是像西西弗斯滚石头，这个石头还会落下来，但你还要继续往上滚，要不你的生命有什么意义呢？我们现在的状态和我所谓的希望就像我做的一套版画：西西弗斯不停地向山上滚石头，滚上去掉下来再滚上去再掉下来，永远是这样。我特别喜欢加缪写的西西弗斯，他说他顶那块石头的时候，脸上全是泥巴，和石头上的泥巴都融为一体，你在远处看不出来是他的头还是石头，他一直都在往上顶。

四

孙：《我虽死去》你是怎么和这个老人联系上的？关于那段历史几乎是找不到文字资料的。

胡：《寻找林昭》出来以后，一个美国的学者王友琴，她看到后主动和我联系，她说“胡杰，你应该拍一些文革的片子。”她还给了我一本她写的《文革受难者》（香港开放出版社 2004年出版）的书。她搜集文革受难者的资料，并把他们的历史写出来。她还建议说你可以拍哪个哪个，她说了很多的题材。她说过之后我也确实是在考虑，其中就有卞仲耘，当时我和王晶珏（卞仲耘的丈夫）联系了，但是这个老人一口回绝我了，不接受采访。大概是二〇〇四年的时候不接受采访，一年以后，他突然又给我打电话说可以见一面。我就从南京去了北京，他很谨慎，为了证明我是真胡杰，他还找了丁东到他家。我进他家后看见丁东也在，丁东就跟他说，这就是胡杰，他才相信。从那开始他说可以拍，可以接受我的采访。

孙：《我虽死去》拍摄了多久？

胡：《我虽死去》是二〇〇五年开始拍的，〇六年拍完的，我希望能够在文革四十周年的时候，有一部片

子来和历史进行对话。这个片子拍了一年,我当时住在南京,老人是在北京,而且老人不是你采访一次他就会全都说出来。他每次就说一点。

孙:因为什么?他是有戒备心还是别的原因?

胡:有戒心。一个是戒心,另外一个他也可能没有找到……那些资料对他来讲也不是一下子全都能拿出来的。他有时候给我打电话说“我想起来一件事”,那我赶快就从南京跑过去,就拍他这一件事,拍完这件事以后,我肯定还要想好几件事,顺便再拍一拍,可他就说这一件事。

孙:那个时候你还不知道他有那么多资料和有相机?影片的结构什么时候形成的?

胡:这些都不知道。他是一点一点就像挤牙膏似地给你。这个老先生看过《寻找林昭》,他说他的要求是拍得跟《林昭》一样能够留下来,这是他第一天的要求。后来我才知道,他原来有一些资料被一个住在澳大利亚的中国人拿走了,再也没有还回来,然后他就不再轻易相信人了。我也能理解,他一点点地给我,后来我就知道他有照片,我希望还能给他出一个摄影集,最后他也没同意。反反复复的,但这个老人有一个好习惯,他所有的东西都留着,连吃药的小药袋都留着,所以他的那个小屋里乱七八糟什么都有,他得一点一点地翻,但他又不让你翻。我觉得也好,那我就拍你翻吧。到后来他给我看那些照片的时候,我就有了这个结构,一下子我脑子就出现了。

孙:那个相机他一直保存着?

胡:对。他给我讲的时候我就想到了以这相机和这些相机照片为结构,他家的那表嘎拉嘎拉响的时候,我就想,这就是时代的脚步。然后我在读帕斯捷尔纳克的一首诗的时候,突然想到有一句诗叫“我虽死去,三日之后必须复活,就像流水湍急,就像那络绎的商旅不断,世代代将走出黑暗,承受我的审判。”他的夫人卞仲耘被打死,那么多的学生,到我拍摄的时候没有人接受采访,没有人道歉。我给她们打电话,她们都说“我们忘了,没有这事,我们现在也没时间,我们都忘记了。”

孙:文革打死人,从来没有历史审判过。

胡:从来没有。甚至我还做了一个局,就是片子编了一个差不多的版本以后,我找到了一个老师,这也是唯一接受采访的老师,叫林莽,他和学生有联系,我说你把这个片子在你家放,我就去,放完片子以后和大家聊天,顺便我想拍一些大家回忆的镜头、讨论的镜头、反思的镜头。他都联系好了,但是他把我也去的消息透露给学生,马上学生都不去了,只是在这个片子完成了很多年以后,她们有一次聚会允许我参加。那次我见到了宋彬彬、刘进她们,我也跟她们谈了,让她们谈对这个片子的看法,她们都说没看法,认为

拍得还算属实,她们能接受,也谈了她们对那段事情的她们认为的经历,当然结论肯定是和她们没关系了。

孙:他最后一次才告诉你他存有卞老师的头发和血衣吗?

胡:最后一次他才告诉我他有这些遗物,他就拉出来一个箱子。当他拉出来箱子的时候,我就预感到这个影片可以结束了,因为也跑了无数次的,真是也跑得很疲劳。我一直在想这个结尾怎么结?后来他把箱子拉出来,把那些东西都打开,在打开的过程中,我拍着拍着就感觉快要窒息了,我不能再拍下去了,我突然问他卞老师喜欢什么歌?他就说自由女神,就是《在太行山上》里的。然后我就把他引到这歌上,让他唱歌,我也舒展一下。当时就想我拍的那些东西已经够了,沉重的都快把我压死了,我觉得观众也压得受不了,一定要释放。那首歌的歌词又特别贴切,就像神来之笔一样,“自由女神在纵情歌唱”,那一代人居然他们心目中有自由女神,而且还是纵情歌唱在太行山上!

孙:当时看片子听到那首歌,那种强烈的反讽并置感,甚至让人觉得很魔幻。

胡:我觉得历史就是这么多人在追求自由的过程中,最后给自己挖掘了一个深渊、墓地,是毫无人性的,就这么死掉了。我当时还没有看高华写的《红太阳是怎样升起的》,也不知道在延安整风时期这个基因已经开始了。这些人的牺牲,他(她)们曾经有过年轻,有过理想,有过追求,想让这个社会变成一个好的社会,但他们的结局就是这样的,好像就是一个劫数,这个劫数走不完的时候你没有办法,但也很奇怪,我在每次拍摄类似的片子的时候,总会有基督教的出现。其实这个老先生以前不是一个基督徒,也没有信仰,但是通过这件事后,他发现他必须要背这个十字架,他要用救赎来做这件事情,所以他说他自己是背着十字架的。

孙:林昭的那种抗争和牺牲精神令人夺目,但相对而言,《我虽死去》里的卞仲耘是个受害者,拍摄她的事情是对文革的一个揭露,而她的丈夫王晶垚则是这个滚石头的人。

胡:其实我在拍卞仲耘时,当我把这个故事了解完整以后,我看了王友琴写的这事,我觉得我肯定不能从这个角度去拍,从这个角度她仅仅是一个受害者,我觉得受害者你是永远拍不完的,你必须要在受害者当中提找到另外一些值得拍的东西,所以我就拍她的老伴记录历史就够了。

孙:对,他就是一个历史的守灵者。

五

孙:谈谈《辽阔之痛》?

胡:《辽阔之痛》持续了很长时间,一个是资料调查量特别大;一个也是特别难,你找这些当事人采访经常会碰钉子,我们跑到信阳到人家去,本来是说好的,到了他们就变卦了,然后你就什么都拍不到。这种情况挺多的,所以采访相对来讲就拖得时间很长。一般都是朋友提供一个信息,你就去,去了以后能拍到拍不到都不好说,但是还好终于做完了。我最初就想拍在光山县建第一个粮食关死难者纪念碑的老人叫吴永宽。拍了他以后,我就想把它拍成一个多角度的片子,加上光山县就离那个嵯峨山人民公社挺近的,都是一个地区的,所以就开始不断地采访。有很多人也在帮我,有很多我采访过的人现在都去世了,他们也没有看到这个影片。

孙:《辽阔之痛》这个片子内容特别复杂,从你的调研和影片的结构上能看出来花费的功夫特别地大。这个片子在结构上和视听语言上主观性很明显,你把豫剧《秦香莲》、当时粮食关的回忆,以及现在当地人种粮食和街上卖食物交织在一起,这个思路是你在剪辑台上形成的还是拍摄的时候就已经有想法了?

胡:是在拍摄过程中形成的,比如说用《秦香莲》那个豫剧,河南的豫剧我觉得它的灵魂就是悲凉,用灵魂在诉说,但是现在大家不会从这个角度去理解豫剧,我觉得这是挺遗憾的。豫剧不像陕北民歌,在黄土高原上高亢的那种东西,河南豫剧就是灵魂的压抑到了极致的那种苍凉地爆发,听了以后让你觉得心惊胆战。《秦香莲》里的故事情节跟现在我拍的片子完全是一回事儿,而且它的那种腔调,拍摄过程中,我很快就想到用这个豫剧很恰当。

孙:除了采访和资料片,你实拍的镜头主要是围绕粮食和一些路标性的镜头。

胡:我觉得这些都是纪录片基础性的镜头,你到了哪里都要拍那里的生活、工作劳动,这些都是基础性的镜头。其实在整个的采访过程中,我考虑尽量能够把各个层次都拍到:有最下层的挨饥饿的那些老百姓,也有村一级的领导,乡一级领导,县级领导,地区的领导,省级的领导,国家的领导,让每一个层次都展示出来各自当时的状态。我觉得这样做,可能你很悲愤,无法跳出这种悲愤和疼痛,但是毕竟还可以稍微客观地说明当时国家的那种状态。我觉得这个片子有个大缺陷是:我找不到中共中央当时尤其是毛泽东当时是怎么纠错的,他有一段时间是纠错的,到底这个纠错的动机和他努力到哪种程度,都不知道,找不到具体的资料,都还是维护他的光辉形象什么的,这是一个很大的缺陷。我也知道,只能一笔带过,没办法的,这不是我们这一代人能解决的,等着下一代人或档案真正的开放,人们真正冷静地去了解这个人和这段历史的时候,可能才会有一种判断。

孙:这片子像一篇论述文一样逻辑严谨,从开始组织合作社,然后是共产风、大炼钢铁、到大面积饿死人,一层一层地拨开,最后其实是人祸。你的采访对象中两个女的特别生动,一个是原来的妇联主任叫张兰英,她的讲述特别生动,并且能够很坦率地面对镜头,你之前怎么做她的工作的?

胡:她当时是固始县妇联主任,她的丈夫是县委书记,后来在“民主革命补课”的时候把他们全抓起来了,以后也没让他们再回到原来的职务上,所以他们会有种不好说是深刻的反思,但起码是有一种表达的愿望。他们认为自己是跟着上级工作做的,但还被抓起来挨整,他们其实是有怨言的,所以她就能说。但她的丈夫就不会像她这样说的,毕竟在她丈夫权限管辖范围之内饿死了那么多人,虽然不很理直气壮,但他会说当时是怎么回事儿,我就是想让他说当时发生了什么就够了。

孙:她的女性视点讲人民公社的女人都累得掉茄子,子宫脱落不能生育,语言很生动。她说的内容还不自觉地带出来中国人的重男轻女思想,她当时只能管她爸和她弟,管不到她姐就饿死了。她作为一个女性,这种重男轻女思想也挺重的,你这个片子留下了历史的证据。影片里还有个普通女人的讲述也令人震惊。

胡:那是一个很偶然的机会,当地人说谁谁的妈是当地人,我们就去找她,她说的内容很厉害,也说得挺多的,有一些我都不知道该怎么编辑进片子里。她的亲弟弟被她的继父打死以后吃掉了,这个继父后来贫困潦倒没有粮食吃,逃跑了。我不知道将来有没有人会去认真研究那段历史,研究那些最底层人那时的状态。

孙:影片中关于当时河南农村特别贫穷的影像资料从哪里来的?

胡:从纪录片《焦裕禄》里来的,那个片子的素材大概是六几年拍的,而且是经济已经有所恢复后拍的,我们看到村庄还都是一片凋零,穿的像渔网一样的那种破衣服,好多孩子都是光着屁股,全是土墙土房子。我通过一个歌颂的片子找到了当时农村的景象。

孙:《辽西纪事》是以一家人寻找他的父亲为线索来看右派的命运。

胡:我当时的想法是,通过一个官宦家庭的视角来讲述当时右派劳改的事情,但在拍摄过程中我发现,他们的子女或孙子辈对于他们父辈或祖父那一代人的研究完全是不够的,就是一种情感上的东西。在这个寻找的过程中,展示出他的父亲走过了一条什么样的道路。其实当时右派集中劳改在每个省都有,大家关注多的像夹边沟劳教农场,我把辽宁的这个劳改农场的情况呈现出来了。

孙:你是什么时候知道辽宁修那座大桥的时把那么多人直接填在桥墩下了?

胡:这个是当时采访的时候才知道。当时呢,我们就是想去找他爸爸死的那个地方。去了后我们就和那里的老百姓住在一起,他们就跟我讲当时他们看到的情况。

孙:这个片子里我看到有你设计的一些场景,如他父亲和其他劳改犯的档案,死者的名单放在雪地上,然后他祭奠他的父亲,还有把他父亲的照片放在桥墩下,这些设计的场景是你当时现场想到的去之前就有设计?

胡:这是在去之前想到的。我觉得一个非常有意思的事情,劳改场居然会用漫画,把他爸爸的那些故事作为批判证据都画下来了。这些漫画用纪录片表达出来会非常有意思,因为那时候不会给右派分子的劳动和生活拍照片的。他们让那些右派互相揭发、互相批判,而这些右派中有很多文艺工作者,就让他们以漫画、演戏来揭发和批判,我觉得这些漫画既起到了一个视觉叙述,又能够让人感受到这些右派的艺术工作者也可以用艺术为当时的政治服务,挺有意思的。

照片我是有计划要去那个地方寻找他爸爸死的地点。我事先把这些照片放大带上就出发了,到了以后,我灵机一动,就在他爸爸死亡的那一块儿把它摆在地上,然后让他儿子去说这些事情。

孙:《星火》最后的场景,向承鉴在一个空旷的黄土崖下燃了一堆火,祭奠被枪毙的张春元,那个镜头也是你设计吧?

胡:对他就是在枪毙张春元的那个地方那个地方被推土机推过了,原来不是个悬崖,没这么高现在被推过,有这么一块平地,正好那里有一些骆驼刺还是什么的。我本来是去那里进行采访,让他来说当时他们的情况,我觉得起码他在一个同伴被枪毙的地方去说会很有感觉。到了黄昏的时候,我觉得正好去祭祀一下他,那个火一烧起来时,因为骆驼刺是圆球形的,我突然就想起这个就像星火,一个圆球的火,就是这个名字《星火》,马上就想到把这个当成开头或者结尾,当时没有想清是开头还是结尾。所以,拍摄时的画面感或是色彩感相对来讲就很注意。然后,鸟儿在飞,音乐进入,林昭的诗是我在编辑的时候,面对屏幕时才有的这些想法,挺抒情的,我在尝试。

孙:从《麦地冲的歌声》里面我看到你拍片的自觉性,一开始你让他捧着王志明的像站在那里,还有几个场景也能看出你的精心设计。

胡:因为可以拍摄的时间很有限。

孙:我听到影片中一个人说“我给你一本地方志”,你回话说我“只拍唱歌”,从这里能看出导演的拍摄思路非常清晰。

胡:到了那里我很迅速地进入了拍摄状态。每天的工作量都很饱和,而且每拍一个镜头都感觉在大脑里已经编辑好了,几乎每次拍摄我都觉得这个镜头太好了,都是可以用的。比如那个老奶奶,牧师带我们

去说采访王志明的弟弟,我们采访的时候老奶奶就开始哼唱起来了。我马上就把镜头摇过去,摇过去以后我就想到了,这就是片子开头。刚拍了两天,我片子的开头就已经有了。王志明的墓地是最后才去的,因为我知道不能先拍,一旦你先去了那里,后面的就没法拍了。

胡:《麦地冲的歌声》就拍了一个星期。

孙:但影片的内容相当完整和丰富。

胡:我觉得这就好像是神在安排你,为什么说拍的过程中我就想成为基督徒呢,在我拍他们那些脸的时候就想,那些脸这么朴实,怎么就能唱出来这么好的歌,这些歌就能打动你。我一边拍一边想,我回去就受洗。你想我拍了林昭,还有好几个片子,有意无意地都和基督教有关系,我不知道,比如说拍《我的母亲王佩英》。后来我才想到,我拍的这些人都是一些很有反抗和反思能力的人,而这些人的精神资源就是来自基督教,所以他们可以在混乱的状态下能够有一个清醒的认识。

孙:去之前你知道王志明吗?

胡:那时候还不知道。但是有一点我是知道的,就是伯格里是传教过去的,石门坎很有名,我觉得可能会把历史串起来,所以我就过去了。到了以后才发现它有这么丰富的历史。

孙:你就去了一次,但片子中多方面的采访感觉是做过大量调研的。

胡:在麦地冲这个山寨就一个星期。

孙:影片中采访原来官方的人叫周孜仁,他刚开始出现的时候我对他是有些抵触的,但后面看到他的分析和反思,他还是有一定的认识高度。

胡:他是一个自觉的文革研究者,后来在云南省委一个领导那里当秘书,所以了解很多内情,他有大量笔记。他对文革是有反思的,所以他就能接受我的采访,并且能够把日记拿出来。

孙:这个片子让人看到宗教的力量,同时又看到它的危机和被毁灭。

胡:伯格理传教传到了贵州石门坎,还有我拍的那个地区,在那里建了一个总的教堂,抗战胜利后,国民政府在教育普查时那个地方人均受教育水平在全国是第一。而文革以后,那个地方识字的人都已经不多了。那些老牧师的孩子都是文盲。你看片子中我采访那老牧师的孩子都不识字,很让人痛心。

孙:王志明弟弟的孙子举着王志明的像站在屋外,那是你设计的场景吧?

胡:不是,他那个屋里太黑,光线不够,他就拿出来让我们拍。有些场景挺神奇的,你觉得是安排的,其实不是,神奇到什么程度,你看我们在半路休息的时候,老远就看着一个老人背着东西走上山坡,他就是我们前一天采访的那牧师的弟弟,他用我们前一天给的一点钱买了一袋粮食很吃力地背回来。所以我觉得片子里好多镜头都是神来之笔。

孙:这个片子的完整性和偶然性有时候让人觉得好像不是纪录片,感觉像是组织拍摄,譬如扛着锄头唱歌的那个场景。

胡:那个场景真是百年不遇。我们去的时候,正好遇上他们集体在修村头到教会的公路才聚在一起,平常很难遇到那么多人在一起劳动。她(胡杰的太太)帮他们做饭,我就跟他们在一起拍摄。所以那里的牧师也好,村民也好,对我们都无所谓,我们不是官方派来的或者捐款的,我们就住在一个小破仓库里。当地的村民很善良,夜不闭户。我会挑一些看起来很开朗、容易接触的人,我就和她套近乎聊天,到她家里去坐坐,让她唱唱歌,然后她说她要下地了,我就说我跟你下地行吗?她说可以。她那小裙子像个小鸟尾巴一样走起来一摆一摆的。

孙:像只骄傲的小鸟。

胡:我在拍的过程中处处感觉到新奇和惊奇,其实我是很随意地,说你们两个唱个歌,她们就非常认真,而且还是重声的,一个高一个低和得非常好,我一边拍一边内心就“感谢!太好了!”其实我让她们唱的就一首歌,我觉得肯定能在这个片子里用上。我当时就是想去冲着这歌去拍的,到了那里以后发现他们晚上唱歌,白天唱歌,用这么长的时间唱歌,这真是没有想到的。

孙:我在想,你片子中呈现的他们与现实生活之间,就说你对他们的生活有浪漫化处理,你觉得有没有?

胡:肯定有。我觉得那个村子里很多村民我们都没接触,接触的都是我觉得很友善的、能接触的。片子里的这几个主要人物,都是我住的邻居。

六

孙:你怎么看纪录片的伦理道德?

胡:对于纪录片的道德,有个学者写的文章里说,我的片子太偏重道德,大概是这个意思,好像他是用批判的态度说纪录片不应该太道德。我觉得道德其实不是我们故意呈现的,它是我们的底线。你说什么好说什么不好,你说你批判社会,你批判极权主义也好,批判社会的丑恶现象也好,不就是想建立一个良善、美好的社会形态吗?

孙:你觉得独立纪录片的方向是什么?

胡:你聚焦的什么,它总是和你生长的这片土地有关,和专制文化、极权主义有一定关系,是在这种文化下产生出来的东西,这是有一定关联的。清醒地反映这种文化形态下产生的故事,我觉得这可能是一个比较清晰的中国独立纪录片的方向。

孙:你读书大概是什么样的脉络?

胡:一个是我喜欢当代诗歌,无论是国外的还是国内的;另一个是历史,对于俄罗斯的那段历史,还有中国的像丁东、高华这些能够把历史真相挖掘出来的历史书。如果对历史不太了解,会直接影响你的片子。我拍《媒婆》的时候,直接进入她是怎么说媒的。农村男女青年是怎么样,农村的文化是什么样子,农村的现实情况是什么样子?然后这说媒的过程中,他们的经济利益是什么?虽然我也采访了媒婆的历史,但当时我没有历史知识和历史判断,所以就把一些深刻的内容没编到片子里去。什么历史呢?就是这个媒婆在一九四九年之前,她还是一个姑娘的时候就参加了妇女会,是那个村里的妇女队长。她带领大家批斗地主,她告诉我她们怎么打地主的。她说她们那里一条河叫齐河,她们把地主带到河边,就拿根棒子朝头上“砰”一下,脑袋夯碎人直接就掉进水里了。这是她们批斗地主时干的事情。然后突然有一天她就被说媒,父母给她许了一个亲,她就被拉到别的村成亲了。这是她讲的一段很精彩,但是当时我认识有局限,就觉得这个和说媒没关系,就没编辑到片子里。

孙:她的命运被媒婆主宰过,然后她自己又变成媒婆。

胡:还有一段是在改革开放以后,她继续在说媒,她和人贩子有了交往,把云南那边的女孩弄到山东,公安局就把她抓起来办学习班什么的,就是不让她们再干这些事了。这些我也采访了,但居然也没用上,我就觉得这个和说媒没关系。这就是我早期拍片的局限,虽然《媒婆》这个片子看起来也很有意思,但是你就可以看出来,我当时缺乏历史知识和历史判断。

还有一个,是对社会的分析能力,如果你对议题没有清醒的历史认识,会影响你的编辑。所以你说纪录片多么公正,我觉得它其实是一个纪录片导演在寻求真理的过程中的一种努力,就是他在寻求真理的过程中,他的视角和分析。你不研究大饥荒,你怎么拍?你要研究它,你必须要有资料,这些资料又是禁区,

所以就拍得很慢,你必须要千方百计读资料,然后还要辨别它的真伪,这是特别重要的。最后才形成你的思路,而这个思路要接近于真实,同时要体现出你的人道关怀。

孙:这是你片子的核心东西。

胡:“人道关怀”这个词可能会老了一些。但如果当代艺术不去体现人道关怀,我觉得它就很可疑。我觉得中国当代人没有精神资源,这是我拍摄的过程中想到的一个问题。你看《麦地冲的歌声》中的王志明,我拍的《星火》里有一批人,他们真是去思考,他们不害怕。他们觉得那样做是真诚的,是对的,并且他们可以为此献出生命,我觉得现在没有这样的人了。我说的没有这种人,主要是我们的社会不崇尚这个东西了。

Wang Libo: Facing up to the ‘Banality of Evil’

Interviewer: SUN Hongyun 孙红云 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Wang Libo (王利波), born in Harbin in 1973, began to make films in 1999. His works include the multi-media drama *The Wall* (墙), and political documentary films *Buried* (掩埋, 2009), *Oh! The Sanxia* (三峡啊, 2013) and *Entropy* (熵, 2016). He currently lives in New York. His three political documentaries deal, in plain cinematic language, with impactful disasters in Chinese history, namely the Tangshan earthquake (唐山大地震), the Wenchuan earthquake (汶川地震), the Three Gorges Project (三峡工程), and the Cultural Revolution. He intends to generate reflections upon how these disasters were inevitable in a seemingly well-run political system.

This is an online interview from February 16, 2021.

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Sun: Let's start with your films, as there is almost no information about yourself on the internet. Could you first introduce briefly *Buried*'s production process?

Wang: I started to film *Buried* in 2008. I read a lot of information on the internet after the Wenchuan earthquake. Shortly after that some original and unprocessed images with huge visual impact were released from the epicentre of the earthquake.

Sun: Like the scenes of school collapsing?

Wang: Yes, all kinds of scenes of school collapsing and many children being crushed underneath. At that time I thought they might have no ideas what these images would incur? Or they intended to attract more support with these heart-breaking images.

Sun: No concern for the ethics of the images?

Wang: No! They probably wanted to use the images to generate sympathy. Or from the point of view of

conspiracy theory, they meant to attract more donations. However, a social backlash was unexpectedly produced and the outcome was the reverse: people were questioning the construction quality of the school buildings; the question of why the buildings were destroyed so badly was raised. Then they started to retrieve the tragic images and post the rescue scenes. I was overwhelmed by the earlier devastating images and started to search for more information on internet, till one day I came across some information about the Tangshan earthquake.

Sun: Did you know about the Tangshan earthquake before?

Wang: Yes. But at that time I didn't know about the book *A Warning Record of the Tangshan Earthquake* (唐山警示录, 2005) . Later, I interviewed the author Zhang Qingzhou (张庆洲) in the film. I had no knowledge about earthquakes before; for me it was a natural disaster that no-one could have known about and just bad luck. I had never experienced an earthquake, neither had I thought about whether one was predictable or not. After I read this book, I came to think about whether there were similar problems of prediction regarding the Wenchuan earthquake as with the Tangshan earthquake? I started to research and found out that such voices, despite the accuracy and credibility of these sources, did emerge before the Wenchuan earthquake.

Sun: There is a film, *The Thirtieth Anniversary of the Tangshan Earthquake* (唐山大地震三十周年祭) , which I watched in 2008 and have been unable to forget since. Do you know this film?

Wang: I didn't know about it back then. When I finished my film, people told me about it. In fact, when I was filming *Buried*, Zhang Qingzhou told me that someone had asked him to participate in the production of a film on the Tangshan earthquake for an official TV station. That person was a female director and possibly for the purpose of commemorating the 'thirtieth anniversary'?

Sun: Yes! The film was not shown on TV, but finally somehow reached the public.

Wang: Right. The director showed the film by herself. I came to realize later that it was the film by the female director that Qingzhou had told me about.

Sun: Your path to filming *Buried* was circuitous. Before that you also produced some material on the Wenchuan earthquake, with the intention to make a film. But finally you decided to focus on the Tangshan earthquake. How and when did you come to change your mind?

Wang: As I mentioned earlier, after I found out about the problem of earthquake prediction related to the Tangshan earthquake, I wondered if the same occurred to the Wenchuan earthquake. Later I did discover that some scientists had sent pre-warnings and reminders of anomalies. Originally I planned to make two episodes, one on the Tangshan earthquake and the other on the Wenchuan earthquake, through which I intended to say that history was always repeating itself.

In the process of filming, it was easy to get adequate material about the Tangshan Earthquake which had been relatively well documented, but difficult in terms of the Wenchuan earthquake. I did meet some experts, such as Geng Qingguo (耿庆国), who made it very clear that there were materials he could share in private, but not on film, because otherwise either he or I would have to take on the responsibility and the risk. I started filming immediately after the Wenchuan earthquake, when all information was released only after being presented to and approved by the higher-ups. As a result, I could collect very little material on the prediction of the Wenchuan earthquake. I put the important material on the Wenchuan earthquake at the end of the final version of *Buried*, which is the version you see now.

Sun: Yes. *Buried* is quite different from other works on the same topic—setting aside the Tangshan earthquake and only talking of the Wenchuan earthquake—such as *1428* by Du Haibin (杜海滨) and *Alive* (活着) by Fan Jian (范俭). Your argument focuses on one question: could the earthquake have been predicted and could the deaths have been prevented? Did you intend to seek answers for these questions during filming, or did you later decide to highlight the questions during the process of editing? The film is grand and argumentative. When were you decide to make the documentary film in the style of an academic paper?

Wang: When I first wanted to make this film, I saw that Mr. Zhang Qingzhou had already presented comprehensive research on this topic in his book. I based my film on the structure of his book, but not completely, because some of the witnesses had passed away, some had disappeared, and some simply were not accessible. For example, Mei Shirong (梅世蓉), a seismologist from the China Seismological Bureau (中国地震局) stopped talking after the Wenchuan earthquake.

Sun: Did you try to contact her?

Wang: I contacted her through somebody else, who said he could help to coordinate instead of giving me her contact details. She was ultimately not reachable. I thought it was OK: even though she was a very important figure, the only thing I could have done if I had really had the chance to meet her was embarrass her on camera. So, I felt fine when she rejected an interview.

Sun: That means that the structure of *Buried* was set in advance?

Wang: Through producing the kind of expository documentary that you mentioned, I wanted to explore how information was buried. Regardless of the accuracy of the information, or whether it could have been used, the public should have the right to access it. That is to say, first, the information should be revealed to people, then you can say that from a scientific perspective this information would not be used because it's not solid enough as a warning ... All in all, people must have access to this information.

That is, the burial of such information could cause more severe damage and unnecessary injury and casualties. In the same way, the burial of information about the current pandemic will very likely cause more devastating secondary disasters than the pandemic itself.

This is what I wanted to explore: the institutional burial of information. I think such a big topic could not be illuminated by individual stories; in fact, it was hard to locate relevant individuals, and the result would have been very problematic if the coherence of individual stories was not established. So, I decided to explore the topic chronologically: about one or two years before the Tangshan earthquake, Geng Qingguo sent a pre-warning to the National Earthquake Administration (国家地震局). This event served as the beginning of the film: in other words, moments in time stood in for individuals and together made the whole film. This was my thinking throughout the process of making the film.

Sun: But the rhythm of the film is slow at the beginning: it takes a long time to go through the list of the names of victims of the Tangshan Earthquake, and to shift from one scene to the next. The most powerful parts appear in the later part of the film. I can see that you are not technically trained in the cinematic language. However, this is also a feature of your work.

Wang: You are right.

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Sun: Without the constraints of cinematic rules, the visual effects of your film are fresh yet quite basic. How did you first start to make films? What films have you watched and been influenced by?

Wang: I did some video art before I started to make documentaries. I like video art very much.

Sun: Video art?

Wang: Yes, making videos. It's part of contemporary art. I like it very much and have made quite a lot of videos, which were my unexpected bridge into the field of documentary films. I came to like this form of art and started to watch a great number of documentaries.

Sun: What is the documentary film that's impressed you most?

Wang: Back then, I knew nothing about documentaries, so I went online to find out which were good, and thus accessed masterpieces, such as *Shoah*, the works of Michael Moore, and those of Wiseman. Because I was not trained in this field, I had no background knowledge and had to search online. That was how I found out about these masterpieces.

Sun: Which one was your favourite? Or whose work did you like best?

Wang: I didn't like *Shoah* at the beginning. Maybe I was new to this field.

Sun: Or maybe you didn't understand the context, the historical context of the Holocaust. It is an extended interview of over nine hours.

Wang: Yes, and the way he edited that interview ... At that time, I was more attracted by Michael Moore.

Sun: Michael Moore's works are political satires and entertaining at the same time.

Wang: Yeah, his works are very relaxing, but also direct and get right to the heart of every problem. He has an easy, straightforward manner and at the same time is very pleasant to watch.

Sun: Yes.

Wang: I preferred to watch Michael Moore's works at the very beginning. But in the past two years or so, I have watched *Shoah* again and realized how good and precious it is. Now I understand it and realise how marvellous it is. I underwent the same experience with some other films like *Night and Fog*, which I did not think highly of the first time, but later came to understand deeply. I have been influenced by these various films of different genres.

Documentary film was an effective means of expressing myself back then. With my youthful courage I thought documentary film was the best way to face problems that I wanted to explore. Also DV became popular, and one of my friends, Liang Long (梁龙), a member of the rock band Second-hand Rose (二手玫瑰), had a DV camera that he seldom used. We lived together, and I often went to his performances with the DV camera and took videos. I used that DV camera as if it were mine, and I thought that I could also make films with it.

Sun: Did the filming go well at the start?

Wang: That camera was a small one for household purposes, and mostly I used it for fun. I tried to focus on some certain subjects, but frequently quit after recording something. No complete work was made until I started to film *Buried*. Then I was determined that I must finish it. I had to cover this topic, and I was in possession of a lot of material, therefore, I must complete it. About one year later, the film was finished.

Sun: How long did you spend on editing?

Wang: I edited very quickly. It was during the Chinese New Year and I was in Beijing by myself and had nothing else to do. Between New Year's Eve and the seventh day of the first lunar month in the new year, I finished the first two-hour version. Later I did minor revisions on the basis of the twenty hours of total material. In chronological order, it was easy to cut and edit the material.

Sun: Initially, it seems like you are discussing the predictability and unpredictability of earthquakes in *Buried*, but in fact you are exploring whether there is a law governing occurrence of disasters like earthquakes, and what's its inherent mechanism. The beginning of the film is slow, and in black and white. The topic was also a particular interest of me, so I kept watching the film and felt it was like you were turning the screw with gradually increasing intensity towards the later part of the story. I would also like to know how you decided on the colour of the film?

Wang: I have a personal preference for black and white images, so I like to take photographs in black and white. Originally, I intended to produce a black and white film. But when it came to the part of the Wenchuan earthquake, it became bloody: the half-mast national flag and the earthquake scenes were blood tainted, which must be highlighted visually to remind the audience. Also, it was a bloody fact: the blood-coloured half-mast flag was reminiscent of the deceased children and other victims.

Sun: Well, you can see the metaphor immediately.

Wang: Yes, the bloody reality.

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Sun: Now that you have completed three films, what do you most want to say about making documentary films?

Wang: I was not trained in this field. You can see there is a continuity, a kind of coherence, in my three films. There was a change of my own role: in *Buried*, my interviewees spoke to the audience and relayed to them what I wanted to say and to achieve in the film; while in *Oh! The Sanxia* I was the person speaking.

Sun: In *Oh! The Sanxia* you were the narrator in front of the camera?

Wang: Yes. I stood in front of the camera in the Three Gorges reservoir area (三峡库区) and by the Three Gorges Dam (三峡大坝). I wanted to see with my own eyes what it was really like instead of only listening to other people. So it was a process of change, from *Buried*, where other people talk, to *Oh! The Sanxia*, where I became the narrator, and finally *Entropy*, with a third, different style.

Sun: How did you come up with the name *Entropy*? It's a very unusual word.

Wang: 'Entropy' is first of all a physical concept, indicating inescapability in the face of destruction. I found this explanation on the Internet.

Sun: How did it become the title of your film?

Wang: Totally by chance. I saw this word and its explanation and thought it would be a perfect title for my film about the Cultural Revolution. This is also a concept from communication studies. In the film I was not simply telling a story about the process of the Cultural Revolution. Like in *Buried*, I was not just talking about how many people died in the earthquake and whether the earthquake could have been predicted, but about how the information was buried by the system. What the film really focused was the tremendous damage that was caused by the burial of important information. The way that the system runs might cause, though not directly, disasters like the Wenchuan earthquake. As long as the system functions in this way,

disaster is inevitable. Similarly, *Entropy* is not simply about what happened in the Cultural Revolution, but about its inevitability. Why was a catastrophe inevitable? It was bound to happen in such a system: when the system reaches a certain point, disaster will result. It was in the same way that when entropy accumulates to a certain level, destruction follows.

Sun: How did you discover the sources for *Entropy*? The old man's diary had been published, hadn't it?

Wang: Yes. But I did not plan to film the old man at the very beginning. At first I thought it would be a film like *Oh! The Sanxia*, very comprehensive and encompassing, covering the origin, the process, the end of and reflections on the Cultural Revolution. It was meant to be an overall representation of the Cultural Revolution. I started to prepare for this film in 2013, immediately after I finished *Oh! The Sanxia*. By then I had already interviewed some Red Guards (红卫兵) who were students at Peking University (北京大学) and Tsinghua University (清华大学), and students and workers who participated in the armed battle in Chongqing, and had filmed the red guard cemetery in Chongqing. The cemetery had been closed, and I sneaked inside to film it. I kept on collecting more materials while continuing to film till one day I came across the material about this old man. Actually the filming plan and direction had been in constant flux as I had kept asking myself if I was capable of telling why the Cultural Revolution had happened and how it was actually took place. There were already many other people who had more information and were more capable than me, so it would be pointless if I was only to repeat this. In the end I decided to focus on an individual by filming how one particular person was making choices in that particular period of history.

Sun: In my opinion you just asked the old man to read out his diary in front of the camera. There was no reflection in the film; those occasional comments are not reflections. Of all his diaries, what made you choose the pieces for him to read?

Wang: *Entropy* was filmed in only two days. I spent longer choosing the diaries, but don't remember exactly how long I had spent on that. For some time I was reading his diaries all day and picking the entries that I needed, which I thought were more important and would possibly provide some insight. I asked the old man to read out all of the diary selections and he did so in two days. Also, I did not spend much time cutting and editing. All in all, it was a precise process from choosing the diaries to the completion of the final film. But why did it only come out three years after I had finished the previous one? Because in the first two and half years I was collecting other material and filming other people, and only at the end did I decide to give up all I had made and to focus on this old man and his diaries.

Sun: He wrote over ten diaries. What considerations did you base your selections on, apart from a clear account of the timeline?

Wang: Another consideration was to include those big events, such as Wang Guangmei's (王光美) visit to Tsinghua University, the calls from the Central Government, and major armed conflicts. And the other consideration was filming him, his family, and his personal feelings, such as his mother coming home on Sundays and his own views and reflections on some issues. From these three angles he was truer to himself in the film. If I'd only selected big events, without making the personal details known to the audience, he wouldn't come across as a real person. Though he didn't make any remarks in the film, he said at the end when he finished reading all the diaries: 'This generation is so funny and absurd.'

Sun: At the end of the film, he said for some while he did not write a diary, not because he was tired, but because he was fed up with speaking against his own will.

Wang: I think this is his best reflection. Perhaps most of his generation only thought that the Cultural revolution was funny and absurd, without any real and serious reflection. They thought they were also victims. I also thought they were, in a certain sense.

Sun: They were complicit as well.

Wang: Yes. I think I am more concerned about 'the banality of evil', as Arendt said, in which evil does not necessarily mean killing people but is more an accumulation of all kinds of banal wickednesses. Though a lot of people died during the Cultural Revolution, only a small fraction of people were killers. So, I would like to film a person who didn't kill, nor beat other people, who only wrote and shouted slogans and fought in a peaceful manner. Those banal wickednesses, rather than violent fighting and killing, added fuel to the fire of the disaster. This is what I wanted to say in my film.

Sun: It's the first time I have seen a film of someone reading his diaries from the beginning to the end. The director stepped away, hardly interfering with the material or the subject. We as audience will be curious, what are his thoughts about that part of his life decades later? Did you follow up on that and why didn't you want to include in? Now it's just him reading the diaries on camera with a complete absence of the director's reflection on the Cultural Revolution, which is rather monotonous in terms of the style of the documentary film.

Wang: I think my ultimate goal is to generate reflection in the audience, to make the audience think what they can do now. The Cultural Revolution is history, the past. Whether people from that time reflect on that part of history does not really matter as time can never be turned back. I want to show through this old man how people make decisions and what people do in a particular period of history, which as a matter of fact continues to now. Currently we are still in a particular time of period, just like the old man when he was young. Therefore, I want the audience to make their own reflections, otherwise, they just watch and think it's all about history and has nothing to do with them.

By having him read out his diary, I give an account of the era and the circumstances, of the psychological state of university students at that time, what they thought and what they did. I think the process of the old man reading his diary creates a closed time and space, which is relatively complete. If the audience can enter into it, they can experience some degree of empathy, placing themselves in that particular era and thinking about how they would make decisions in this situation. I want to generate deep thinking in every audience member, rather than asking the old man questions like, 'Do you think it was right? Do you have any regrets and thoughts...?' I don't think those kinds of interviews are of any interest.

We always feel that the Cultural Revolution was a special period in history, but as I said earlier, special times never end, and to this day we still have to face the question of how to make choices. In watching this film we are habituated to think first about this old man, but could we, through him, think about ourselves? What would I do if I had been in his shoes? What would we do if our present was no different from his? This is the goal I want to achieve in my film. But I don't know how near I have come to reaching this goal and how many people will understand my intention. Anyhow, this is what I intended with my film.

Sun: There is little director's creativity in the film in terms of script, but documentary should not be constrained to one form. After watching all three of your documentaries, I feel that you have redefined the relationship between the content and style in documentary. In this media age, every year a great number of stylistically very different documentaries are produced. Do you have some concerns about your own simple filming style? Is it that you haven't found the best style yet or do you actually think this is the most suitable one?

Wang: I received a lot of photos in making this film, all taken by the old man himself. He had a camera and took photos of all that he was involved in: events happened at Tsinghua University, such as Wang Guangmei being denounced there with a ping pong ball necklace hanging round her neck. He had the copyright of all these photos.

Sun: Did you think about using some of the photos in the film?

Wang: I put these photos in the right spaces and time slots in the first edit, and later removed all of them from the final one. The reason was that I think an enclosed and independent historical time and space was formed as the old man reads his diaries, with photographs becoming redundant and being devalued as objects of consumption, which would finally destroy the integrity of the film. The current version of the film is more of what I intended, from which I also removed all colour and only retained the red, a symbol of the red culture that still exists in our life today. The red colour is a purposeful element of the film to make it more noticeable. Of course, Chinese people will understand as soon as they see it what this colour stands for.

I really didn't care too much whether this film is pleasant to watch or not. For this type of film, even it is a pleasure to watch, the audience is still limited. Those who are not interested in this topic will not come to it regardless. As far as historical materials are concerned, I would like to include those that are directly relevant and properly representative. Redundant material might make the film more enjoyable to watch, but might be harmful to the essence of the film. That is why I am very conservative in using historical materials: I hesitated for quite a few days and then finally deleted all the photos.

Sun: Did anyone else also film this old man? When were you filming? His diary was published in Hong Kong in 2008.

Wang: Yes, but his book didn't receive much attention. People may feel it was not interesting because there were no big events in that book.

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Sun: Let's talk about *Oh! The Sanxia*. What I like most is its substantial and forceful argumentation. It is like a stirring brainstorming, penetrating in its analysis and echoing in its conclusion. How did you start this film? I know the relocation and immigration of the Three Gorges Project was a popular subject of many independent documentaries. *Bing'ai* (秉爱) by director Feng Yan (冯艳) was one of them.

Wang: After *Buried*, I started to look for the subject of my next film. A producer, a lady older than me, recommended me the book *Water from Tibet Saves China* (西藏之水救中国) (Li Ling李伶, Huawen Publishing House 华文出版社). She said I should make a film on China's water problem, a very serious one.

The book describes the severity of China's water problem. How should I present it in the film? I first researched this topic on the internet, and immediately came upon the problem of the Three Gorges Dam. The more I read, the more I understood the construction process of the Three Gorges Dam, and I decided that I must film on this subject. The film *Bing'ai* you mentioned is an example of a documentary featuring the story of an individual. For me, I am more interested in tracing problems back to the political system, which might be their origin. Of course, to focus on an individual is a kind of perspective, but I think to explore from the point of the political system would be a more relevant argumentative approach. The problem of the Three Gorges has been put forward since before the founding of the People's Republic of China, which means that the Three Gorges Dam has been discussed, designed, and constructed all these years in tandem with the development of New China: the idea was first proposed in 1949, and construction work started in 1992 and continued till its completion in 2009. That is to say, the construction of the Three Gorges Dam follows the development of New China, with each key step of the dam's construction echoing an inflection point in Chinese politics. The problem of the Three Gorges Dam is also the problem of China's political system in that it reflects the outline of China's politics since 1949. This is exactly what I want to investigate in my new film.

Sun: A scholar in the film discusses the relationship between centralization of power and project construction, saying that centralisation needs major project construction, and project construction highlights political centralization. Who raised this question, you or him?

Wang: The scholar was Lu Yugang (卢跃刚) . But I am not sure who raised question.

Sun: How long did you prepare for the film?

Wang: I spent three years on that film, collecting material and revising the filming plan accordingly. I filmed the new material immediately after I received it, and then went on to look for more material and do more filming. If I found the previous information and data inadequate or inaccurate, I would revise the plan . This was my filming method during that three-year period: filming while keep collecting new materials and revising the plan at the same time.

Sun: So you have invested enormous time, energy, and money in these three years.

Wang: Yes, for more than three years I was basically only working on this film, occasionally producing some commercial work for a living.

Sun: When did you read Dai Qing's (戴晴) book *The Yangtze River* (长江长江) ? I think her book had a great influence on you.

Wang: Yes. In fact, there could not have been this film without Dai Qing. In her interview with me on *Buried*, Cui Weiping (崔卫平) asked me what would be the next film? I said I am interested in the Three Gorges Dam, and she said I should consult with Dai Qing, who had a very close connection with it and was in possession of an enormous amount of material and connections on this topic. Then I went to see Dai Qing. She asked how many people I have in my team, I said only myself; she continued to ask about the source of the funding and discovered that I had none. At this point Dai Qing said, 'Libo (利波), it's not that I don't want to help you, but this is supposed to be a project of a national team, how will you do it without money and on your own?' I couldn't reply her and just left. Later I talked to Xu Yuping (徐玉萍) about the meeting with Dai Qing. Xu said, 'Dai Qing was questioning how can you do this project only by yourself?'

Later, a friend called Dai Qing again and said that I was trustworthy and asked if she could help me as she could. Dai Qing said, 'Alright, he can film whatever he wants or interview me whenever in needs; I can give him all materials that are relevant as long as he will finish it.'

Sun: Your interview with Li Rui (李锐) is of key importance to the film.

Wang: Dai Qing had been in close contact with Li Rui and connected me with him directly. I interviewed him lots of times. Also, Dai Qing provided me with a lot of information regarding people who together with her were intimately related to the Three Gorges Dam back in the early years.

Sun: The interviews in the film are loosely connected, but the arguments of the scholars are impressively solid and all-encompassing.

Wang: Yes! Wu Jiexiang (吴稼祥), Lu Yugang, and Mao Yushi (茅于軾) were very important and influential scholars. Some other scholars spoke from their own professional points of view, like the geologist Fan Xiao(范晓) and experts from the reservoir area. Of all the experts, I knew how many I should film and who were most representative. I had read their papers and knew their opinions. I did not include all the interviews that I had shot in the film.

Sun: A different voice in your film from Dai Qing's *The Yangtze River* was *The Three Gorges Diary* (三峡

日记) by Li Peng (李鹏) .

Wang: Yes. I thought I should have an official voice. I read Li Peng's *The Three Gorges Diary* a long time ago, and I know that this diary was quite comprehensive. His purpose in publishing it was very obvious: to record everything; to show that the project was not solely his responsibility by recording other people's involvement. Of course, some special facts must have been carefully excluded from the diaries, but everything recorded in them must be true facts. Since I was not able to reach a high-level official, Li Peng's diaries were the most authoritative materials available. I present his diaries, together with the interviews and the scenes of the local places in the film, and the audience can draw their own conclusion.

Sun: The film is very substantial and encompassing with all sides of the story. The young official from the Three Gorges Group (三峡集团) spoke so ironically. How did you persuade him to speak in front of the camera?

Wang: To get to film in the reservoir area was a real story. I was short of funds when making this film. A cinema space in Chongqing invited Zhu Rikun (朱日坤) to show his films there. Knowing that I was about to film *Oh! The Sanxia* but lacked money, he asked me to screen *Buried* at that cinema. From there I could travel to the Three Gorges, expenses covered. I arrived in Chongqing, showed my film and said, 'Don't buy me the return ticket and give me the money.' Later, Chen Ping (陈平) of Sunshine TV (阳光卫视) became interested in this film and provided some investment together with an official letter saying that I was a staff member to cover the Three Gorges Dam. As a result, I managed to film and interview at the dam. I would have never been able to do so as an independent documentary filmmaker.

Sun: That letter from the Sunshine TV also enabled you to interview in the Three Gorges Group and to cross the dam lock, was that right?

Wang: With that official letter I made an appointment with the Three Gorges Group for an interview, waiting for one week at the Three Gorges Dam before it was approved. A technician was sent to me to talk about some technical issues, but he didn't know anything beyond that. The technical issues were also important, though, and after all, he was representing the Three Gorges Group. The lock exit was filmed on a cruise ship. Only with the official letter was I allowed to board the ship, which departed from Wuhan with boarding prohibited on the way. I managed to get on board on the lock and get off immediately after the ship exited the lock, using the official letter for a third time. The shots I took on board were very important for the whole film.

Sun: Those shots are quite metaphorical.

Wang: Yes, and they go through the whole film.

Sun: How many times did you interview local people?

Wang: I can't remember now. Three to four or five times? Usually I did research on the internet in advance and found serious problems, such as landslides and the resettlement of immigrants. I discovered problems of various kinds and then visited the intended locations. I did further research and filmed in those specific places. Sometimes, I just happened to come across some incidents that later appeared in the film.

Sun: The woman from the Wen Family Compound (温家大院) sang brilliantly. Did you find her or did you meet her by chance?

Wang: It was a pure coincidence. Director Chen Fu (陈富) from Chongqing was filming a drama *No Tears in the Three Gorges* (三峡别哭) and came to the Wen family compound when choosing film locations. Seeing the film crew with a camera, the old women thought they must be from the TV station and insisted they film her ancestral home and what she wanted to say. Not being able to reject her, Chen Fu had to film her story, knowing though that it won't be part of his own film. The woman presented the history of her family compound, singing and crying. Chen Fu gave me the footage as he knew that I was filming this documentary. Later I interviewed the woman a second time, but the scene of her singing in my documentary was filmed by director Chen Fu.

Sun: The tone of the film is not consistent.

Wang: Yes. The scenes which are very poor quality were made by a local video production company at the request of this old woman, who wanted to have a video recording of this old compound. She gave me a copy, from which I took some footage of this place in the past.

Sun: She said that this compound, which has been passed down for twelve generations, was owned by the Wen family (温家) during the Qing Dynasty (清代) till the Kuomintang period (国民党时期), and now it is no longer in the family's possession. This is truly poignant.

Wang: Exactly!

Sun: This documentary is a good political satire, which is rare in China, while in the West it is a popular genre, such as the works of Michael Moore. You didn't have music in your previous two films, while there is music in two scenes in this one. Could you talk about music in *Oh! The Sanxia*?

Wang: I mentioned earlier that me and Liang Long from the rock band Secondhand Rose are good friends, and I know his music very well. I decided to use his 'Jump God' (跳大神) when I was making the trailer. At the end of the film, Cui Jian's (崔健) 'The Last Shot' (最后一枪) was used. As the film ends with the Tiananmen Square Protests, what could be better than 'The Last Shot'? After all these years, I'm still quite satisfied with the selection of the music for the film.

Sun: Yes, the first piece, being satirical, playfully deconstructed the seriousness of the subject. It is a story about pretending to play God right up to the last shot.

Wang: Yes. It epitomizes China's history from 1949 to 1989. I think China's politics is all about playing God. The process of the construction of the Three Gorges Dam and China's politics are like two trend lines on the stock market charts.

Sun: The film makes the Three Gorges Dam project the symbol of China's politics.

Wang: Right. The film ends with a pitch black and a dim light in the distance, indicating the future of China and Chinese politics. What we are facing now is that you don't know what's in front of you, neither do you know what you're facing up to and where the ship is going. No one knows how bright the light could become or, on the contrary, when it's going to disappear. Everything is unknown.

Sun: *Oh! The Sanxia* is your only film made with financial support, right?

Wang: Yes. I was under little pressure when making this film.

Sun: Could I say that, according to your previous work, you have an obvious preference for certain subjects?

Wang: I think intuition plays an important role in my selection of subject matter. But definitely there is a general direction for my choice: I prefer subjects on historical catastrophes and events, and those related to politics.

Sun: What are the books that have influenced you?

Wang: *The Origins of Totalitarianism* by Hannah Arendt, from which comes the idea of the banality of evil which directly influenced *Entropy*. Also, I read books on political and historical disasters.

Sun: Have you encountered many obstacles in China?

Wang: No, not at the time of filming. But *Buried* was later banned on the internet: all its information was deleted from Douban (豆瓣) and other platforms, neither could it be posted on Baidu Netdisk (百度网盘). After *Oh! The Sanxia* won an award at the Hong Kong International Film Festival, staff from the Beijing Security Bureau (北京安全局) approached me and said their leaders wanted to find the film but none was available on the internet. I gave them a CD of *The Three Georges* and *Buried*. They kept in touch with me for over six months, meeting regularly for a coffee and a chat, asking what I was filming and which film festivals I was going to, and so on, trying to find out what I was up to. As I wasn't doing anything at that point, they stopped calling me.

王利波：直击“平庸之恶”

孙红云

王利波，一九七三年生于哈尔滨，一九九九年开始从事影像创作，作品有多媒体戏剧《荒诞的墙》。纪录片作品主要有《掩埋》(2009)、《三峡啊》(2013)、《熵》(2016)，现居纽约。王利波导演的三部政治纪录片《掩埋》、《三峡》、《熵》以质朴的电影语言处理了中国历史上发生的唐山大地震、汶川大地震、三峡工程以及文化大革命等这些灾难。由此来引人思考这些灾难是如何在看似正常的体制运作模式中必然发生的。

此次访谈为网络访谈，时间为二〇二一年二月十六日。

孙红云(以下简称孙)：咱们从你的几个片子来聊，我查网上关于你的资料几乎是缺失的。你能先稍微介绍一下《掩埋》的创作过程吗？

王利波(以下简称王)：《掩埋》是二〇〇八年开始拍摄的。汶川地震发生后，我从网络上看了很多信息，有关汶川地震的信息。有些画面在刚开始的时候，没有经过处理的画面从震中发生的地方流传出来了，那视觉冲击力时非常很大的。

孙：学校倒塌的场景？

王：对，各种学校倒塌的视频，很多孩子被压在下面的画面，当时我觉得他们可能是没有想到这些画面的影响吧，他们可能觉得这些很惨的画面可以得到更多的支持吧。

孙：没有影像伦理的概念？

王：对，所以他们可能想用这个来煽情或怎么样，我觉得从一个阴谋论的角度，他们可能为下一步的捐款来做准备。但是后来他们发现社会出现一种反弹的效应，这种煽情就走到了反面：大家都在质疑和质问工程的质量，就是学校建造的质量，或者问为什么房子塌得这么严重之类的。然后他们就开始把这些画面都消除了，再然后就开始发布各种救灾的画面了。最早看到的那些画面对我的冲击力

特别大,我当时就想做一部有关地震的片子。我就在网上不断地去搜集这些资料,有天,我突然搜索到了唐山地震。

孙:之前你知道唐山地震吗?

王:知道,但是不知道还有这么一本书。就是我的片子里采访的张庆洲(二〇〇五年出版了报告文学《唐山警示录》),还不知道有这么本书,没看过。我以前对地震真的没有任何的概念,就觉得地震就谁也不知道嘛,或者说那就是倒霉嘛,我从来没想过这个事情,也没经历过地震,就是这样。看到这本书后,我觉得这次汶川地震会不会也存在着像唐山地震这系列的问题。我就开始查找一些资料,后来发现在汶川地震之前,先不说这些预测资料的准确度和可信度,但确实有类似的声音出现。

孙:我插一句,有个片子叫《唐山大地震三十周年祭》,记着我是在〇八年左右看的,就非常地忘不掉,你当时还不知道这个片子吧?

王:我不知道,没有看过,后来我做完我的片子以后,有人跟说到这个片子。其实我在拍《掩埋》的时候,张庆洲跟我说过有个人找他拍,但是以电视台的身份来拍,好像是个女导演,“三十周年祭”?

孙:对,后来电视台也没播出,但后来这个片子还是被看到了。

王:对。导演自己拿出来了。后来我才发现这就是庆洲跟我说的那个女编导做的片子。

孙:你创作《掩埋》绕得还是蛮远的。关于汶川地震也出了一些纪录片,你本来是想做汶川地震的片子,最后把重心转移到唐山地震。这个思路的调整,你是在从什么时候做的决定?

王:刚才说到,发现唐山地震的问题后,我觉得汶川是不是也存在这个问题,后来就真的搜索到了一些科学家在汶川地震之前的一些提醒,发现的一些异常现象。我当时计划是做两个部分,想以唐山和汶川分别做上下两部,一部说唐山地震,一部汶川地震。通过这样一个对照,想说历史没有任何变化,它不是在不断地重演嘛。

起初是这个架构,但在制作过程中发现唐山的资料比较充足,相对完整。而汶川这部分,当时我找到了一些专家,如耿庆国,他跟我说得很明白,他说有些东西我可以私下告诉你,但是你拍我就不能说。那些东西说出来以后,不是你就是我要承担责任和风险的。所以汶川这部分,我拍得比较早,汶川地震后我马上开始启动拍摄,那时他们觉得可能有些话还不能说出来,要通过正常渠道反映上去以后才能说。所以当时关于汶川地震的预测资料,我能拍到的很少。后来综合一下做成一部片子,把汶川能拿到的重要

资料放到片尾,这样就成了现在看到的片子。

孙: 对。你的《掩埋》跟其他的同类的作品,我们先不说唐山大地震,就汶川地震,如杜海滨的《1428》,范俭的《活着》等来看,你的片子着眼很不同,注重论证,你就聚焦在一个问题上:地震可不可以预测,这些遇难者能不能被避免。这个过程是你在做纪录片的时候就想解决的问题,还是说在剪辑中形成的思路?片子的格局很大,是一个论证性的纪录片创作思路,这种论文体纪录片形态,你是从什么时候确定的?

王:一开始想做这个片子的时候,我看到张庆洲老师在那本书里已经把这个东西做得很完整,其实我是借他之力来做。当然我做的还没有他的调研完整,因为他调研过的有些人去世了,有些人找不到了,还有一些不愿意说了。对,像梅世蓉(中国地震局地震学家),汶川地震发生后她就完全不说话了。

孙: 你有试图联系过她吗?

王:我通过中间人联系过,中间人说可以帮我联系,但不能给我她的联系方式。后来也没有联系成功,我觉得那也就算了,虽然她是很重要的人,我当时想可能让她面对镜头尴尬一下,可能就是我能得到的,但是她不同意也就算了。

孙:那就是说《掩埋》这个架构,基本在拍之前已经有了?

王:你刚才说那种论证体的纪录片,因为我知道我想要的就是信息的被掩埋。我们先不说这个信息的准确性,它的能被采用度有多高,但是让大家知道是应该的。首先得让人知道,然后你可以说从科学的角度上我们无法采用这个信息,可以说它没那么准确,不能作为预警的依据.....但是这些信息要让人知道,这是要必须的。

就是说,整个信息的被掩埋可能会造成更大的一些伤害和不必要的伤害和伤亡,包括这次疫情信息的被掩埋,可能造成很大的次生灾害,超过了疫情本身的伤害。

这就是我想说的,而且是我想做的,针对体制对信息的掩埋。我觉得从一个个体身上很难去把它放这么大去做片子,而且这样的个体也太难找,最后如果整合不到一块去可能很麻烦。所以我最后采用这种时间的线索,其实就是说从唐山地震两年前,能公开查到最早的信息是一到两年前,耿庆国还是谁在国家地震局发布的一个信息,然后一步一步地到唐山大地震发生,我用时间来贯穿,其实这个时间本身就代替了一个个体,它作为一个个体出现,就是说整个所有的事情都靠时间来穿梭,我当时是这么个想法。

孙:不过这部影片开头的节奏慢,唐山地震的遇难者名单,时间的转换,节奏比较慢,最有力量的是到后面,前后的剪辑思路有点反差。我能看出来你是没有受过完整的电影语言的训练,这也是你作品的特征。

王:是的。

二

孙:没有这些语法规则的约束力,看的时候视觉感觉是蛮新鲜的,但也能看出来那种粗粝感。你是怎么开始纪录片创作的,受到什么电影的影响,看了什么样的片子?

王:其实我在做纪录片之前,做过一些影像艺术。我比较喜欢影像。

孙:录影艺术?

王:对,就是录像艺术,当代艺术里才会有录像艺术。我比较喜欢,那时候尝试做了一些这种作品,在这个过程中无意间接触到纪录片,挺喜欢这种形式,就开始看了很多。

孙:你印象最深的是什么片子?

王:当时不懂纪录片,就上网查哪些纪录片好,当然都是大师的片子。比如说《浩劫》、迈克尔·摩尔,还有美国直接电影大师怀斯曼。因为我没有这个基础,只能去上网查哪些人的片子好,就查到这些大师的作品。

孙:你最喜欢哪一部?或者你最喜欢谁的作品?

王:当时看《浩劫》不是很喜欢,可能我刚接触这行。

孙:可能没有理解它的语境,关于大屠杀的历史语境。九个多小时的影片完全由访谈构成。

王:对,而且他那个访谈的剪辑方式……,我当时那种心态和状态,更喜欢迈克尔·摩尔的东西。

孙:迈克尔·摩尔的作品有很强的政治讽刺和娱乐气质。

王:对,有非常强的娱乐性,还有他真的直击每个问题的痛处,而且给你一种非常放松随意的感觉。他对

素材的把握就让你看起来非常随意放松, 直击痛处, 又有非常高的可观赏性。

孙: 是。

王: 我当时看迈克尔·摩尔的多一些, 但这一两年, 又看了一遍《浩劫》, 才看出它的好和珍贵, 看懂了才知道它的好。当时陆陆续续看了不少好片子, 包括《夜与雾》, 当时也不觉得它有多好, 看《浩劫》似的, 现在反回来, 我才理解到一些。虽然当时不觉得好, 但也受了一些潜移默化的影响, 各种片子各种类型。

纪录片这个形式特别适合当时想表达的那种心情那种状态。直接面对面, 可能我当时那种冲劲或者那种年轻的状态, 纪录片是最适合我的, 就觉得想去做。正好 DV 流行起来了, 我有个朋友, 就是“二手玫瑰”(摇滚乐队)的梁龙, 我们那时候关系特别好, 住在一起, 他不知道从哪儿弄来个 DV。他也不怎么用, 就在他演出的时候, 我拿着 DV 去给他拍一拍。然后那 DV 我就可以随使用, 那时候我就想拍一些东西。

孙: 一开始的拍摄顺利么?

王: 当时那 DV 就是一个家用的, 很小, 拍着玩儿, 找感觉。也找过一些选题, 拍一点, 停下来, 拍一点, 停下来, 最后也没有完成的作品出来。到拍摄《掩埋》时, 我觉得不管怎么样, 我一定要去完成它。因为这个题材我必须要做, 也拿到那么多资料了, 我一定要完成。大概用了一年时间吧, 片子终于做完了。

孙: 《掩埋》剪辑用了多长时间?

王: 非常快。我记得是春节, 我在北京没有回老家, 一个人也没什么事可做。我从大年三十剪到初七, 整个就剪完了, 那是初剪版本, 大概是两个小时吧, 后来稍微修一修。它是按时间线索剪辑, 资料也很少, 只有二十个小时的资料, 要什么不要什么, 按照我的想法, 顺着时间往下剪就出来了。

孙: 《掩埋》看起来是围绕地震的可预测和不可预测展开的, 但其实是在讨论地震这类灾难的发生是否有规律可循, 它的机制是怎么形成的。《掩埋》前面的叙事节奏很慢, 黑白画面的。因为我特别关注这个事件我就一直看下去, 到后面的叙事就像在拧螺丝, 那个劲儿越来越大。这个片子关于色彩的选择, 你是怎么把握的?

王: 我个人比较喜欢黑白影像, 包括拍照片我也喜欢拍黑白的。当时本来想做一个纯黑白的电影。但在剪到汶川的部分时, 我觉得汶川这些资料和最后的降国旗, 那真的是血淋淋的事实, 这些是要让它跳出来做一个警醒, 让人觉得特别突然。从视觉上我需要让它跳出来, 第二个这真就是一个血淋淋的事实, 它需要有颜色, 降半旗那段就是孩子或者其他死难人的血的色彩。

孙:嗯,能一眼看出来它的隐喻性。

王:对,血淋淋的现实就是这样。

三

孙:你现在已经完成了三部片子,纪录片创作上你最深的体会是什么?

王:我没有受过专业的教育。你看我三个片子它有种延续的东西。它首先是连贯性,还有就是我个人在片子中的转变:我在拍《掩埋》的时候,我是让别人来说,每个采访对象你经历了什么,你来给我讲讲,用他们来达到我想说的和我想要的目的,但是到《三峡》就转变成我出来了,我要说。

孙:在《三峡》中你出镜是为了引导叙事?

王:对。我出镜。我走进三峡库区,走进三峡大坝,看看到底是什么样,而不是别人说这不好那不好,这好那好,我要去看看它是什么样。从《掩埋》让别人说,听别人说,到我自己说,然后到了《熵》它又是一个转变。

孙:《熵》这个名字你怎么来的?很冷僻的一个字。

王:“熵”首先是一个物理概念,有面对毁灭不可逃避的意思。这解释是我在网上查到的。

孙:这个字是怎么成为你这个片名的?

王:非常偶然,我看到这个字和它的解释,就觉得做我有关文革这部片子的名片很适合。这个字也被用在传播学上。因为我确实不是在简单地讲述文革的一个过程。就像《掩埋》,我不是在讲大地震发生中死了多少人,这个地震能不能预测,其实它背后是说这个信息体制真实的运作过程如何让信息被掩埋掉,它所造成的危害是《掩埋》真正想说的。所以说这种运作模式就可能造成了可能,也不能说直接造成,可能间接地造成了汶川地震的这种灾难。只要这种模式运转下去,灾难就是无法避免的。《熵》也不是在简单地讲述文化大革命发生了什么,而是说文化大革命说不可避免,一场灾难为什么不可避免?就是在这种体制运作模式下它必然会发生的,它积累到一定程度,就像熵积累到一定程度必然会发生毁灭。

孙:《熵》的选题是怎么发现和确定的?这老人的日记好像正式出版过,是吧?

王:是这样,最早这个老人并不是我想拍的。我一开始想它的结构和《三峡》差不多,非常庞大,从文化大革命之前,到文革的发生,发生的过程,到文革结束,到文革结束后的反思。就是对文化大革命做一个非常全面的调查也好,展现也好。拍完《三峡》后从二〇一三年就开始着手做这个片子了,那时我已经采访过一些北大或清华当年的红卫兵,以及重庆参加武斗的学生和工人,也拍摄了重庆被关闭的那个红卫兵墓园。那时墓园已经被关了,我想办法进去偷偷地拍。我是边拍边整理收集这些资料,随着资料不断地扩大。突然有一天我看到这个老人的资料,那时我一直在调整我拍摄的计划和方向,我问自己,能不能讲明白文革到底怎么发生的以及发生过程,以我个人的能力能不能讲明白?关于文革已经有那么多人做了,他们的资料比我多,能力比我强,我再去做就没有意义了。所以最后我选择了个体的反思,就是说一个独立的个体在特殊的年代中怎么做出选择的。

孙:我个人观点《熵》恰恰是以没有任何反思的方式让他面对镜头读出自己的日记,偶尔一半句小点评,并不是反思。你在他大量的日记中,依据什么来选取让他在镜头前念出来的内容?

王:《熵》其实就拍了两天。前面选日记的时间长一些,具体我记不太清了。他那一摞日记我每天都看,然后选择我需要的就整理出来。我想要的那些相对重要的并且有一个线索,然后让他读,他就读了两天,后期制作也不长,其实这个片子从选日记拍摄到剪辑时间都不长。为什么这个片子三年才出来?因为前两年半我在收集其他的资料,在拍摄其他的人,到最后了,我才决定把那两年半甚至三年所做的资料全部放弃掉,最后选择了这个。

孙:他有十多本日记,你选择的依据除了时间线交代清楚,还有什么考量?

王:就是一个所谓的大事嘛。就比如王光美到清华两次,或者中央号召他们怎么样了,发生了大的武斗,这个大事肯定是要选的;第二个是他和家人以及他个人情感的东西,比如他的妈妈周日回家了;还有就是他有时候写一写他对一些事情的看法和感慨。主要是这三个方面组织起来的。我其实是想让他这个人更立体一些,如果都选那些大事,可能会把个人情感的一些细节舍弃掉了,我觉得他不是很立体。片子里看他貌似没有任何反思,但是到片子结尾他读完全部日记,他自己苦笑了一声,说了一句“这一代人好玩又好笑”。

孙:在片子结尾的日记中,有一段他说他那些停掉一阵子写日记,实际上不是因为累,而是因为违心话说够了。

王:我觉得这就是最好的反思,就是他们这一代人可能更多的觉得好玩又好笑,没有一个真正的反思。那一代红卫兵我觉得真正能够反思的不多。他们觉得是受害者。从某种意义上,我觉得他们是受害者。

孙:他们其实也是共谋者。

王:对,我觉得可能说我更关注那种就像阿伦特说的“平庸的恶”,你不是说杀人他就是恶,那种平庸的恶可能集结起来,才促成了这种大的恶。虽然文革死了很多人,毕竟杀人的还是少数。所以我想选择一个没有杀过人,没有打过人,就是喊喊口号写写标语的个体,他就喜欢文斗。我想说没打人没杀人这种平庸的恶,可能都会为这场灾难加火加油,这是我想说的东西。

孙:我第一次看到一个片子全部让一个人来读他过去的日记。导演完全置身于外,对素材和拍摄对象的干预度都降到很低。我们会好奇几十年过去了,现在他读这些日记,他自己关于当时发生一些事情的反思,你有没有追问,为什么不想放进去?现在就是他出境读日记,从纪录片的形式来看也比较单调,导演关于文革的思考完全没有表达。

王:我想我最终目标是想把“反思”这两个字抛给观众,让观众去反思在当代社会我们能做什么,因为那个已经是历史了,过去了,这些人反不反思,说实话时间倒不回去了。我只想通过让这个人说在特定的历史年代,我们应该怎么选择、怎么做,而这个特定的历史一直延续至今,我们当今也处在某个特定的历史年代,我们就像这个当年的老人年轻时一样,我想把这个反思交给观众。否则,观众看完了就觉得跟自己没关系,认为都是历史了。

我通过让他把日记读出来,交代年代和环境,交代大学生那时的心理状态,他们怎么想的,怎么做的。我想老人读日记的过程,他本身就形成了一个封闭时空,它是相对完整的,我想观众如果能进到这种相对完整的时空里,观众能不能产生某种共鸣,觉得他自己也处在某种特殊的年代,他会思考如果是我,我怎么选择,就是我想让每一个观众自己去反思。我不想问老人说你觉得你当时这么做,现在觉得对不对?或者你有没有后悔、反思……我觉得那个真的没什么意义了。

我们总觉得那是一个特殊的历史年代,但就像我刚才说的,特殊的年代从来没有结束过,到今天我们依然要面对怎么选择这个问题。我们习惯性先反思这个老人,我觉得是不是可以通过这个老人反思自己。如果我在那个年代,我会怎么做?如果我们现在与那个年代没有任何变化和区别,我们应该怎么做呢?这是我要的效果,但是这个效果能达到多少,能有几个人明白这一点,我也不知道,但这是我想设计的一个东西。

孙:这个片子单从文本上来说,导演或者说作者的创造性很少,但纪录片不只是一个形式。看完你的三部片子,整体感觉是重新诠释了纪录片形式和内容的关系。尤其在这个媒介时代,纪录片每年产出的量那么大,大家在美学形式上可谓花样奇出,你退到这么朴素这么单调的电影语言上来,有没有担心,或

者说觉得还没有找到最合适的,或者说这就是最合适的?

王:这个片子在制作的时候我有很多照片,都是老人自己拍摄的,在那个年代他有个照相机,他把所有他参与的那些事情,清华大学发生的事情,包括王光美在清华,在清华大学被挂上乒乓球项链来批斗,他都拍照了,版权都是他的。

孙:你没有想过在影片中使用一些照片?

王:在第一版剪辑的时候,这些照片我都已经按时间和地点穿插到片子里了。但后来成片的时候我全部拿掉了,因为我觉得刚才说了老人在读日记的过程,他已经构成了一个独立的封闭的历史时空,照片在这时候出现,就从历史资料转变成了一种多余的景观消费,会打破一种纯粹性。现在这样更接近我想要的,包括你看我在那里还设置了一个色彩,就是后期剪辑的时候留色。把所有的颜色去掉,只留下了红色,其实这个红色,这也是我想说的红色文化,一直伴随着我们从头到尾,到今天它也不消失。这种东西我是想刻意地让它整个伴随着整部影片,也是为了让它多一些吸引人的注意力。当然中国人一看这个红色代表什么都明白了。

我真的不太考虑它的可看性。这种片子你做的可看性再强,也没有多少人会去看,不喜欢的人也不会看。对历史资料的采用,我喜欢用那种有直接关联的和有相对代表性的历史资料,一旦多余的历史资料放进来,可能会提高可看性,但我觉得这种可看性可能对影片本身会产生某种危害,所以我在历史资料选择上比较慎重。最后成片的时候,我把所有照片都删掉了,当时也是思想斗争了好几天吧。

孙:你拍摄的时候还有人拍过这老人吗?他的日记二〇〇八年在香港出版过。

王:对,但他那个书关注度不高,还是说可看性太低了,没有大的事件。

四

孙:我们谈谈《三峡》。这个片我最喜欢的是片子论证的丰富性,甚至有种头脑风暴的激荡性的酣畅淋漓。这个片子你是怎么开始的?三峡搬迁那阵子是独立纪录片创作的一个热门题材,如冯艳的《秉爱》等。

王:做完《掩埋》之后,我就找下一个选题,当时有个制片人,一个大姐,她给我推荐了一本书叫《西藏之水救中国》(李伶,华文出版社),她说你可以拍中国的水问题,这个问题很严重。

书中讲了中国的水问题很严重,但是怎么拍呢?我先在网上搜索这些有关中国水问题的资料。搜索中国

水问题时,三峡大坝的问题就出来了。资料越看越多,我就大概了解了三峡大坝建造过程,我就确定了这个选题。其实就像你刚才说的,大家都在选择个体来阐释三峡,因为我个人的习惯,我就是想针对这个体制。选择个体也可以去做,但是我觉得我选择这种论证式的方式更直接一些。三峡从新中国建立之前,就在说这个事情,就等于三峡大坝的讨论、论证到建设,贯穿了整个新中国。从一九四九年开始提出到一九九二年开始建设,到结束,新中国的过程跟这三峡密切相连,每次三峡大坝的决策过程都能体现出中国政治的某个拐点,或者说它背后的政治问题,这个太是我想要的东西了。一个大坝,能把整个中国从四九年到现在政治脉络梳理出来,我觉得这个选题太好了。

孙:片子中有一个学者论证了集权和工程建设的关系,这个是他先讲的,还是你问过他相关的问题?他说集权需要工程,工程体现集权,大概是这个意思。

王:卢跃刚吧。这个是我问到还他说出来的,我也想不起来了。

孙:调研用了多长时间?

王:片子一共拍了三年多,我不停地收集资料,不停地在调整方向。拿到一部分资料后,能拍就先把它拍下来,然后又拿到新的资料,再拍.....如果以前得到的信息和资料不太完整,或者不太科学客观的话,我就会把整体的方向做一些调整,不断地调整,这三年多的过程一直都是边拍边补充资料边调整方向。

孙:那这三年下来,你的时间精力和资金的投入挺大的。

王:对,三年多基本都是在做这个片子,也不做别的,偶尔出去拍点商业的活来生活。

孙:你什么时候拿到戴晴的《长江长江》那本书的?她那本书对你的改变应该是蛮大的。

王:对,其实没有戴晴就没有《三峡》这部片子。做完《掩埋》后,崔卫平给我做了一个有关《掩埋》的采访,她就问我下一步想做什么?我说想做三峡大坝,她说你要去请教戴晴,她与三峡大坝的关系太密切,而且她有很多的资料和人脉,有关三峡大坝的人脉。然后我就去找戴晴,跟戴晴见面后她问,你团队几个人啊?我说现在就我一个,然后问资金哪儿支持,我说现在我手里还没钱呢,然后戴晴就说,“利波,不是我不想帮你,但这个事是国家级别的团队来完成的,你说你现在一个人,也没有钱,你怎么完成?”我也没办法就走了,后来跟徐玉萍又说这事,我说见了戴晴了,他说,戴晴说这个东西你一个人怎么完成得了?

后来有个朋友又给戴晴打了个电话,说利波值得信赖,能帮就帮他一下。戴晴说那行,你想拍什么或者你想采访我都没问题,你想知道谁的资料我都给你,你能完成就行。

孙:李锐的采访在片子中特别有份量。

王:戴晴跟李锐一直有联系,直接就采访了,而且不止一次的采访,拍了好多次。然后戴晴又给了我很多的信息,当年跟她一起与三峡大坝有关系的人。

孙:你这个片子的采访内容很发散,论证得非常饱满,得益于几个学者。

王:对,吴稼祥、卢跃刚、茅于軾这些学者他们的份量都非常重。还有一些专家是纯从专业角度来讲的,像地质学家范晓以及库区的专家,哪些专家,我需要几个,谁更有代表性,我知道他们说过什么,他们的文章都读过,我是这么选人的,当然有一些选了后来也没有用。

孙:片子中跟戴晴的《长江长江》不同声音的,你引用了李鹏的《三峡日记》。

王:对,我觉得应该有一个官方的声音。李鹏的《三峡日记》我早就看了,我知道他的这个日记比较全的,他出版这两本日记目的应该是非常明显,他把所有的事情都记到里面,这不是我一个人的事,你们都干什么了都在这里记着呢,所以我觉得比较全面,有一些极特殊的,当然他也不会记到日记里。所以我觉得日记里边记得的事肯定是真实发生过的。我不能去采访或者拍摄一个比较高级别的官方的声音,李鹏对三峡来说那他是最权威的了。用他的日记和我的采访以及现实拍摄的景象并置在一起,让观众去判断。

孙:这个片子非常的饱满,各方面的观点都有,包括三峡集团的那个年轻官员,他讲得太讽刺了。你是怎么说服他站到那去讲的?

王:库区的拍摄其实是这样的,我拍《三峡》时,没有钱,重庆有个放映空间,他们找朱日坤几个片子来放,朱日坤他知道我要拍《三峡》但是没钱,他就说你去放《掩埋》吧,他们给你出路费,完了你去三峡。我就去重庆放《掩埋》,我说不要给我买回来的车票,你们把钱给我。后来阳光卫视陈平对这个项目感兴趣,就给了一些钱,阳光卫视还给我出了一个公函,说我是阳光卫视的工作人员来三峡大坝采访,这样才能完成坝区的拍摄和采访。如果我作为一个独立纪录片导演去,肯定是完不成拍摄的。

孙:三峡集团的采访和过闸都是公函起的作用吧?

王:三峡集团也是我拿公函去预约,约了一周,我就在三峡大坝那儿住了一周,最后才批准的可以采访。其实就是派了一个技术人员来给我说了一些技术问题,技术之外的他就知道了。但是我觉得那个也

很重要。毕竟他代表三峡集团。过闸是在游轮上拍的。我上船是用的公函, 因为那个船从武汉出来, 它中途不让上人, 我是在三峡大坝, 就是在船闸上的, 过了船闸我就下船了, 也是靠公函。上船拍了那么几个镜头, 现在看也很重要。

孙: 这个镜头的隐喻性挺强的。

王: 对, 而且它穿插整个片子。

孙: 当地居民的生活和采访, 你大概去了几次拍摄?

王: 我现在记不清了, 三四次? 四五次? 有很多我都是在网络上先查, 找到一些问题比较大的, 比如说这个地方滑坡比较严重, 某个县移民安置比较严重, 各种问题网上都有, 我就直奔这几个地儿去, 住下来慢慢地找和拍, 有的完全就是碰上了。

孙: 那个温家大院那个女的很出彩地唱起来了。那是找的还是遇到的?

王: 那个非常巧, 重庆有个导演叫陈富, 他当时是拍剧情片《三峡别哭》去选景走到那里, 老人看他们拿着摄像机, 就以为他们媒体电视台的, 一定要让他们拍她的祖传家宅和她想说的话, 陈富没有办法了, 虽然他们知道没有用, 但还是拍了, 这个女的就哭啊, 唱啊, 唱完讲了温家大院的事情。陈富知道我在拍这个纪录片, 就把这段素材给了我, 我后来也找到她进行了第二次采访, 唱歌什么的不是我拍的, 是陈富导演拍的。

孙: 色调不太一样。

王: 对, 里边那种画质非常差的资料, 是这个老人她自己找当地的影视制作公司给摄制的一个光盘, 她想给这个老院子留一个影像的记录, 她就给了我一份, 我从那里采了几个老院子过去的镜头。

孙: 她说我们十二代传的大院, 清朝时期是温家的, 国民党时期是温家的, 到现在不是温家的了……, 真是让人感慨万千。

王: 对。

孙: 你这部片子是一部不错的政治讽刺纪录片。这种类型的纪录片在中国纪录片比较缺失, 在西方比较流行, 如迈克尔·摩尔等。你前面两部片子没有用音乐, 这个片子用了两处音乐。谈谈关于《三峡》的音乐?

王:前面说过“二手玫瑰”梁龙,我们是多年的朋友,所以我对他的音乐特别熟悉,用的就是他的《跳大神》这首歌,做片花的时候我就决定用这首歌了。结尾用的崔健的《最后一枪》,这个片子的结尾就落在八九事件上,所以我觉得除了《最后一枪》好像没有别的音乐能代替它吧。这么多年过去了,我觉得这两首音乐我选得还是挺满意的。

孙:对,第一处音乐和影像之间形成讽刺叙事,戏谑解构了这个事件的严肃性,从装神弄鬼到最后一枪。

王:对,就是从装神弄鬼的《跳大神》到那个多事之秋的《最后一枪》,这就是中国从一九四九年到一九八九年的一个缩影。我觉得中国的政治就是在装神弄鬼。三峡大坝整个的建设过程和中国政治之间,就像股票分两条线一模一样。

孙:《三峡》将三峡变成一个具象化的政治。

王:对,你看影片结束在漆黑一片,远处有个小灯,那个画面就是预示中国或者中国政治,我们现在面临的就是你不知道前面是什么,你不知道你面对的是什么,你不知道这船开向哪里去,一片漆黑可能会有一点点小闪光,你不知道光有多强,它什么时候消失,一切都是未知的。

孙:你这三部片子《三峡》是唯一的有资金支持片子吧?

王:对,所以完成起来也压力小。

孙:从目前你的纪录片来看,你的选题方向还是挺明确的?

王:我觉得直觉可能对我选题还是比较重要的,但我的选题肯定是有个大的方向,譬如历史灾难的事件,和政治有关,这个是我比较感兴趣的。

孙:对你影响较大的书籍有哪些?

王:汉娜·阿伦特的《极权主义的起源》,平庸之恶的观念直接影响了我的《熵》的创作。也看一些其他的反思政治历史灾难的书籍。

孙:你在国内受到的阻挠大吗?

王:阻挠,在拍摄的时候没有,但是《掩埋》后来在网络上被禁了,豆瓣之类相关的信息全部被删除,片子在百度网盘也发不出去了。《三峡》拍完之后在香港国际电影节上得了个奖。得奖后回到北京,北京安全局找到我,说有人想看这片子,他们领导想找片子,但是网络上没有,找不到,就想管我要一张光盘。然后我就给了一张光盘,顺带我还给了《掩埋》,我说这也是我拍的。他们断断续续找我大概有半年多吧,定期约个时间见个面,喝咖啡聊一聊,问最近在拍什么,准备去哪个电影节,了解一下我的动态。后来看我也没干什么,然后他们再不找我了。

WOMEN AND THE SELF 女性和自我

Ji Dan: Every Subject That I Have Filmed Gives Me Power

季丹：每个被拍摄者都给了我力量

Interviewer: WANG Xiaolu 王小鲁 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Yang Lina: My Life Experience Made Me A Feminist

杨荔钠：是生活让我变成了女性主义者

Interviewer: WANG Xiaolu 王小鲁 Translator: WEN Hua 温华

Nanfu Wang: I Don' t Want to Accept Things Passively

王男楸：我不愿被动地接受世界上的事情

Interviewer: CHEN Ping 陈平 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Ji Dan: Every Subject That I Have Filmed Gives Me Power

Interviewer: WANG Xiaolu 王小鲁 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Ji Dan(季丹) lives alone in Duijiuyu, Changping(昌平碓臼峪), in the remote suburbs of Beijing, deep in the mountains. I have been here twice, and this time I found out that there is a Manchu village near her home, and that Ji Dan is three-eighths Manchu, so I asked her if she felt a sense of belonging living here. She said she didn't really know these villagers, and that:

One day, when they have to hand over an alien, they will definitely hand over me first. I don't have such sweet fantasies, such as the countryside is more adorable, the people are simple and honest and all that—people are all the same.

I think Ji Dan is the most articulate director in the independent documentary world in terms of her ability to put subtle and complex thinking into words. I remember the last time I watched a rough cut of *Baya*(芭雅, in production) at her place and talked about feminism, she said that male power is like a house that has been smoked in, a house that smells of smoke, but the men probably don't feel it themselves. I've always raved about that line.

Ji Dan's experience is legendary; she was born in 1963, but she says she now only feels like she's thirty. She has made some ten documentaries, with *Baya* being her latest. Her former lover Sha Qing(沙青) was also a documentary filmmaker and they used to work together. But now that they have separated, which has made Ji Dan rethink the connection between women and romantic relationships. *Baya* is a woman who has suffered a lot, and she went to film *Baya*, in fact, to see how another woman faces her own dark night.

This interview was not only about her work, but also more about the relationship between her personal life experience and documentary filmmaking. This led me to discover a more complex interaction between documentary filmmakers and their subjects and work. In film theory, documentaries are more objective than dramas, but I saw from Ji Dan how the subjectivity of documentaries is revealed, and how her filming of others is in fact a reflection of herself. Ji Dan gave me a deeper understanding of the subtle path of communication between the subject and the author/filmmaker. This conversation took place on July 10, 2021, in Duijiuyu village.

Wang: I've read other people's interviews with you before, and you're particularly expressive.

Ji: Language is in fact magical, and different scenarios have hidden purposes. The professional interviewer is particularly annoying because he has a purpose. If you have a purpose, I will be purposeful too. Because you are on the offensive, I have to defend. Then it brings out the utilitarian in people, I have to behave well, I have to talk well, which is particularly annoying.

Wang: In fact, documentary filmmaking also involves interviewing.

Ji: I never interviewed my protagonists in my early films. Later, as my father was getting old and he liked to talk, he would continue to talk for hours and continue even after his listeners fall asleep. OK, since I have to keep him company, let me film him talking. In fact, the camera is very interesting, because it gives you a sense of ritual when you pick it up, and I feel that I am watching a film instead of merely listening to my father with a camera in my hand. It occurred to me when I was filming *Baya* that I might be able to have *Baya* tell me about her life. It was the kind of interview that lasted for four hours a day for a whole week, which was very satisfying.

Wang: You said it was with *Baya* that you started to interview your protagonists, which means your previous films were Direct Cinema documentaries. Yesterday I watched two of your earlier films, *Gongbu's Happy Life* (贡布的幸福生活, 1999) and *The Elders* (老人们, 1999), and I found that both were very important examples of Direct Cinema.

Ji: Right. I did not do interviews before *Baya*. When I was filming *Baya*, I had the feeling that her past life, which was long gone, could not be represented through images, and it was only through language that her past life could be retrieved.

Wang: How did you first develop your ideas about documentary films?

Ji: To me, whether something is called a documentary or not, it is still an image. It turned out that I was in possession of a camera which recorded images. I had no idea at all what the images were going to become. When I first watched TV programmes in Japan, I had no idea what a documentary was, neither did I have any idea about a film or editing. If *Gongbu's Happy Life* is good, then it is because it's produced by an

amateur filmmaker—it's particularly straightforward. I just used the camera the way it was intended to be used, without any further thought.

Wang: How many years did you stay in Tibet?

Ji: Three years in total. These two films were made in the third year. A lot of the footage I filmed in the first two years was useless, and I didn't find real protagonists to be filmed. It was only in the third year that I came to realize that I should film these old people and the family. The theme of the old people is death and the family is about life. I thought they could be included in one film; finally, it turned out to be two.

Wang: Did you live in Gongbu's house throughout?

Ji: I lived there in the third year. In the first two years I lived in someone else's house.

Wang: It's also quite interesting the way you got along with the family: you are deeply integrated with the family.

Ji: The Gongbu household had a lot of daughters, who carried me back to my childhood. I didn't have enough fun when I was little. I was actually particularly wild and loved to run around, yet I ended up having to stay at home every day to practice the violin. Then, at the age of almost thirty, I was unexpectedly encountering young girls with whom I should have hung out in my childhood, and I had such a happy time playing with them.

Wang: One of the accounts I've seen of your time in Tibet is that you were actually influenced by Akira Nonaka(野中章宏), the Japanese scholar, and eager to make a film. Last time I saw Jiang Yue(蒋樾) we talked about him meeting you in Tibet. Jiang Yue felt at that time that life in Tibet was foreign and inaccessible to him. He admired you very much when he heard that you were there learning Tibetan, which, he said, was beyond him. So, did you go to Tibet with the intention of making a film?

Ji: When I was a child, I liked to read Soviet adventure literature about exploring the Arctic. I always yearned for remote places.

Wang: It is Romanticism. It's about being interested in natural, wild, and passionate things that are far from home.

Ji: Adventure, the frontier, things like that. Tibet had a very important relationship with university life in the 1980s. Jiang Yue and Duan Jinchuan(段锦川)were my predecessors. I also wanted to go to Tibet upon graduation but did not make it. The temptation of Japan was greater, and I had the opportunity to go, so I went.

Wang: You went to Japan right after you graduated from Beijing Normal University. What did you study?

Ji: I enrolled in an university, majoring in Sociology and taking part in some Tibetan activities. I always had a fantasy about Tibet. I went to Tibet once before my graduation from Beijing Normal University. For me, Tibet meant adventure and romanticism, just like you said.

Wang: Which year did you go to Tibet?

Ji: In 1986. Lhasa was so beautiful then.

Wang: Mou Sen (牟森) and some other people were all in Lhasa, working for the Tibetan Repertory Theatre (西藏话剧团) .

Ji: Exactly. I went there with Mou Sen for the first time. We came back and later in the winter of the same year went back to Lhasa again by way of Qinghai. The 1980s were like the endless unexploited black land of northeast China: fertile, wild, and full of vitality. The 1980s were evanescent, gone in a flash, but the root of everything that followed. Oh, this makes me cry!

Wang: After your first time visiting Tibet, you went back there for the second time after your return from Japan, inspired by Akira Nonaka, right?

Ji: Yes. The second time I were there, I wandered around Lhasa. Friends told me not to do that because the Khampa people(康巴人)might be brutal. Some of our classmates were working at the Tibetan TV station after graduation. They confined themselves indoors, cooking instant noodles for meals and playing mahjong every day after work. They had no interaction with Tibetans. But I especially liked to go out and wander around. Lhasa had a special smell. Did I have a predestined relationship with Lhasa? I don't know; I liked it so much anyway. I went up to the Potala Palace by myself, where there were very few people and almost no tourists. Many people came from far away to make pilgrimage to the Buddha, and I just followed them

and kept walking and walking until I reached the statue of Princess Wencheng. I had known a little bit about the story before, but when I saw the statue, I suddenly felt that it had something to do with me. I was full of emotions and started to cry. The statue leads to an open balcony where I had an overview of the whole city. I made a wish that that I would establish some connections with this land.

Wang: That feeling was unusual.

Ji: Yes, it was particularly wonderful. I think so many things that happen in our life are seeds planted at moments like that.

Wang: Your connection with documentary film started in Japan. At Beijing Normal University you had no plans to make documentary films, right?

Ji: Yes! What I'd always wanted to do was to write. But I didn't dare to: I had no life experience, so what would I write about? I had never been an independent person, deciding on my own life while living in this world. I didn't know how to judge my father and mother, I didn't know how to see myself: everything was unknown to me. So how could I write?

It was in that state that I went to Japan, and there I had all kinds of opportunities to pick up a camera. Suddenly I saw life from another angle. In other words, I need to put something between me and life, otherwise I wouldn't be able to face up to it. Because real life, which I was not able to accept, was totally different from the one that I encountered while reading. It's like when I ordinarily cannot bear to listen to my dad talk, but when I begin to film him talking, I am able to keep him company. The camera frames the scene and make it temporal. This is the charm of the film: it makes the happening temporal.

Wang: With a camera, you can switch perspective. You consciously look at life from a cultural rather than an everyday perspective.

Ji: Right. Besides, you are not allowed to choose in real life, while with a camera, you can choose what to film and what not to. Thus, you find a way to get along with the reality, a way to live in China.

Wang: When did you first start to use the camera? Was it the one you showed me last time the first one you used?

Ji: It was a small camera brought by Akira Nonaka, smaller than the one you saw. I don't know where it is

now. Akira Nonaka stayed at the Yuexiu Hotel(越秀宾馆)and I went to visit him from Xidan as a friend of photographer Lü Nan(吕楠). Akira Nonaka said he would teach me how to use the camera when we met. I went there wearing a blue dress, the kind of clothes you'd expect from a very artistic young woman. Upon seeing me, he said, 'Go back and change your clothes, you can't film wearing this.' Haha. I knew then an artistic dress up would never be fit for real work. I went back home and changed into jeans. He taught me to how to turn on the camera, take a picture, zoom in and zoom out. It was an automatic camera and quite easy to use. Now I knew how to use it and went to the northeast with it. I used the camera and immediately fell in love with it. Did I say that I particularly love painting exhibitions? There are a lot of impressionist paintings of being in the rain or after the snow. I'm particularly fascinated by certain landscapes, such as those of autumn and after the snow. That little camera has a finder, through which I could see the scene in special weather, namely the type of landscape that fascinates me. In fact, I was looking for beauty with that camera, the kind of beauty I had always been yearning for.

Wang: When did you first get to know Akira?

Ji: About the spring of 1991. I went to Japan in 1988 and returned to China for the first time three years later, staying at Lü Nan's home, and later went back to Japan with Lü Nan's photographic works. There was a very famous Japanese leftist photographer and social activist, Hirose Ryuichi(广河隆一), who had been focusing on photographing Palestine. He was a good friend of my friend and I brought the pictures to him. He then introduced me to some magazines and other friends, among whom was Akira Nonaka. When I met Akira, we talked about Lü Nan as well as myself. I told him I liked Tibet and then I went to Tibet to film.

Wang: Did you have much interaction with Akira Nonaka in Japan?

Ji: Yes, very frequently. There was a group of photographers reporting Asia, many young photographers majoring in reportage photographing, and some others making art photographs. They often had meetings, and I was there listening to the discussion. Nonaka said that the age of video images was coming, the distant thunder was approaching, and we must get ready to face this change.

Wang: Akira Nonaka encouraged people to use video cameras to make films and report the world.

Ji: Yes, at first it was the traditional camera. Shortly after I met him, Asahi TV showed a video programme. A small video camera was able to make a programme which in the past could only have been produced by a team. He gave me such a small video camera when I returned to China.

Wang: That machine was an Hi8 type, wasn't it?

Ji: It was! Only type 8 video cameras were used for household purposes at that time. But that Hi8 type video camera produced high quality images. And there was a matching editing machine.

Wang: Then you went to make films in Tibet for Japanese TV?

Ji: Yes. I send the films back to Japan. Those films were good. Akira had established good connections with a TV station that paid us 150,000 yen for a film of three or four minutes. Akira gave all the money to us, which was the equivalent of over 10,000 RMB, a large sum. I taught Hu Jie(胡杰) how to make films of this type. When I filmed a barber's shop, I recorded one day in the life of a barber who came from out of town. I made a lot of films of this type for Japanese TV. We made a fortune and had lots of requests for such work, but I got tired of repeating myself.

Wang: What you made at that time resembled China Central TV Station's show Living Space(生活空间).

Ji: Yes, it was like that. It was the type of programme telling the story of a man who worked every day, shopping for groceries, coming home for dinner, and taking care of his son. As the photographer, I would ask him about how his son was doing at school, and that was all. It was very superficial. Everyone is able to make a film like that. And that was the only type that we could make, that is, to make the people in the film look natural and talk about their life. When I had some money, I said I would go to Tibet, and I did not return. Akira was mad and wrote me a very long, angry letter. He needed me to provide substantial films for the TV programme, with which, as a matter of fact, he had an agreement. Yet I quit and ran away.

Wang: You thought it was pointless to repeat yourself.

Ji: Right. All of a sudden Nonaka fell ill with hepatitis A, a very dangerous disease. I wrote him a long letter, apologizing to him and explaining why I chose to stay in Tibet. I didn't like filming news stories. Instead, producing documentary films had been my childhood dream and I was asking for his understanding.

2

Wang: I know at the beginning you made some TV documentaries to be shown in Japan. *Japanese Women Left in China after the Second World War*(日本战后残留妇女在中国) won an award. *Gongbu's Happy Life*

and *The Elders* are your early independent documentary films. Can you talk more about what it was like back then?

Ji: In those days, I treated Tibetan people with respect, to me they were people in the camera, that was how I saw them. The world is a projection of your vision, and I saw them at their best and purest, so that's how they were to me. They would appear totally different seen from another angle: in fact, the village was messy and dirty, and people talked bad things about others. The film would be a totally different one if you included footage of this kind.

Wang: Yes. In *Gongbu's Happy Life* you somehow embellished the story.

Ji: Certainly there was embellishment, but not the kind of glorification found in advertising, because it was not purposeful. They are totally different. For me, I did see and feel the beauty. I presented exactly what they seemed to me in my eyes, which was beauty *per se*, not embellishments. I found the belief in life that I had never encountered in other parts of China. There was the traditional beauty of the people sitting around a fire pit, talking and laughing like a big family. I found real relationships between people in seeing a group of elderly people going together to someone's funeral. I saw and was moved by the beauty of this kind of relationship. So why shouldn't I film and present it?

Wang: In fact, *The Elders* is quite profound, showing how these old people live a communal life and how they go about running the temple. The film is profound in that it shows how people make efforts to protect their spiritual world in an era of moral and ethical decline.

Ji: Yes. I don't know what's going on in their lives now! Back then, many people in their thirties and forties would occasionally participate, saying that in another ten years they would join them, and that would be part of their life when they get old. How wonderful that village was, just imagine.

Wang: What struck me most was how capable people in that village were at facing up to death, dealing with corpses, and things of that kind. A system of life of their own was well established in that village.

Ji: I experienced the beauty of religion in life, it just came so naturally. Two young girls argued about who would go to the temple and kowtow inside: one said, 'You go and herd sheep, you've worshipped Buddha this morning, and I haven't gone round to worship Buddha yet.' That year I lived peacefully in this family, and if you didn't have to write a book or film a film, it would have been hard to bear that kind of life. But

because I was there with a camera, I was able to stay there in peace.

Wang: Did the Gongbu family really understand why you were filming?

Ji: No, they didn't. But every time I went there, I took big bags full of necessities that the family was short of.

Wang: It was so far away. How did you get there?

Ji: Later I sometimes took a plane. At first, I took the train to Xining (西宁), there I rode in a train for one day and one night to Golmud(格尔木). That train was particularly dangerous and you had to take the soft sleeper, otherwise most likely robbers would come and loot the place. On that train the feeling of being on the edge of the world and that of dark uneasiness started to set in. In Golmud, I stayed at the local hotel, with no food but only noodles. There I prepared for the next three-day-and-night trip in an almost floorless bus, waggling all the way to Lhasa. The Khampa people next to me on the bus felt so hot and opened the window to sing in the strong winter wind. The smell of ghee on their hair floated in the air, together with the odor of their toes. In Lhasa I could have a good rest, eating delicious food in Indian restaurants, and fat sausage noodles in Sichuan restaurants. I left for Shigatse(日喀则) after getting fully prepared in comfortable hotels in Lhasa. The journey was over six hours and when I arrived I met friends, drank wine, and had some fun. Finally, it was a couple of hours bus ride to Lhaz (拉孜), from there I walked three hours to Old Lhaz(老拉孜), my ultimate destination.

Wang: I remember once you said that videos made by Hi8 camera were not accepted by European TV stations because of their poor picture quality. Were they accepted by Japanese TV stations?

Ji: It was an experiment. Later TV stations found that the content was very interesting, despite the poor quality. For instance, editors and directors at NHK wondered how I could approach such in-depth family conflicts in *Japanese Women Left in China after the Second World War*? For them it was unbelievable! Of course, how could they usually approach their subjects in such depth? A big group of people rushing to film with fixed budgets and a purposeful rationale; their subject knew what the film maker wanted and acted accordingly. In two hours, how could they film something in-depth? The outcome could only be for show.

Wang: Have these two documentary films been shown anywhere since?

Ji: *The Elders* was shown at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA). There, some old people were quite moved and thankful to me for spending so much time on this topic. I made the first cut of *Gongbu* by myself and took it to NHK. Editors there watched it for three days and became extremely impatient. They thought it was a mess and impossible to cut it into a neat version. They went to their boss and showed him my version. However, their boss thought it was very interesting and quite different from the usual NHK documentary films made by their own filmmakers. We began to talk about Tibet, and their editors continued to edit on *Gongbu*, and after ten days, they became very polite and respectful to me. In the end, two separate films were produced from my original one, receiving very positive feedback and a lot of letters from the Japanese audience, for whom that might have been the first chance to get to know the life of Tibetan people so closely.

3

Wang: After filming in Tibet, you then started to make films in the north of Shaanxi (陕北) province, right?

Ji: The starting point of the long period of darkness arrived. It is still scary to talk about it even at this moment. I think it was a standstill, that kind of absolute standstill penetrating each and every aspect of my life. It was more destructive than the Cultural Revolution, or being thrown into prison. Because in prison, you are physically restrained, but your inner being is particularly active. However, for me that period was a state of complete stagnation, as if I was stuck in the slush pile, spinning in circles and unable to stand up. That period lasted for ten years.

Wang: What was the reason?

Ji: I used to live a particularly traditional life under the influence of my mother, who was a very capable woman outside the home, but in the shadow of her husband and children inside it. It was the same with me when I was in a relationship with Sha Qing; I did not move when he was lying still. It was like a dog with its master: the dog was circling around the master when he was asleep, round and round in circles, unable to awaken him. I couldn't do without him, felt like the world was gone without him. I was the dog and Sha Qing was my master: I circled around him for ten years.

Wang: Was that stagnation lasting throughout the whole period when you were in the relationship with Sha Qing?

Ji: The whole period of the ten years when I was with him. Even after 2003, with the emergence of the documentary film festivals, Sha Qing still remained inactive. Later on, he thought that I was the reason that he was unable to move forward, because at least he could develop a romantic relationship without me being around, bringing ripples to his dull life. Unfortunately, because of me, his ultimate impetus to become active, namely, to start a romance, was completely blocked. It was also true with me: I could have moved forward without circling around him like a dog.

Wang: When did you first get to know Sha Qing?

Ji: In 1997? Or 1998?

Wang: Wow, 1997 or 1998! I think Sha Qing was also producing films in Tibet in the early years.

Ji: To be frank, I think my relationship with Sha Qing was the most important and beneficial lesson for me. It was ten years of stagnation, which, in fact, was destined to be a period of dormancy. It was right that I should stay there for ten years. Later I separated from Sha Qing and broke free from the loop. A woman must at least once in her life break out of the loop with a man. Now Sha Qing and I are very good friends. Times are changing: people are moving forward with all kinds of opportunities; making films and going abroad, and so on. Those ten years was some of the best times ever, and in those good old days, we ‘lay flat’ (躺平) for ten years. That was also good!

Wang: It was from 1997 to 2007, right?

Ji: Yes, it was about that period. In 2008 I started to film *The Spiral Staircase of Harbin* (哈尔滨回旋阶梯) and came back to myself. All my work produced before 2008, such as *Dream of the Empty City* (空城一梦) and *The Flowing Clouds on the Ground* (地上流云), was sloppy and not worth mentioning. For those ten years, every day all I could think about was writing love letters to Sha Qing; I had him in my mind all the time, and wished to make a film together with him. But he couldn’t do it with me. He did a good job on *Wellspring* (在一起的时光), while I was only fooling around him during the process. That ten years was really incredible, as if being stuck in a spell.

Wang: So the only way out was to get beyond it and become independent.

Ji: Yes! You can see that whoever won or lost in that mud puddle, he or she was still in it. Even if you won,

you won in the mud. So what was the point of winning?

Wang: That is right. You have to be independent.

Ji: You're right. Without the experience of that ten years, I would not be able to live in this world as well as I do now. How does it come that one person is in such bad need of another? How good it is to be alone and autonomous! If I want to have a new table, I buy it immediately.

Wang: So you are not happy with all your work produced in that ten years?

Ji: Not at all.

Wang: This means you are completely rejecting your works produced in that ten years. But will you agree if I say in those ten years you kept reflecting on yourself?

Ji: I was too dependent on Sha Qing. First, I didn't know how to edit, and he was such a good editor that he could achieve whatever effects he desired. Then, he had a sense of judgement, and now I understand that was because he remained an observer. If you act both as athlete and referee, how can you be a good athlete? Of course, Sha Qing is sensitive and talented, which I think I am not. So, I was always there wondering whether he loved me or what was really going on between us. I had a big question mark in my mind about Sha Qing. Was there something wrong with me? A lot of people spend their whole lives wondering about their spouses.

Wang: I think I know the main problem of those ten years: you were enchanted by him.

Ji: Yeah. When he cut a film, he was subconsciously skillful, and so he was in real life: now close to you, and then indifferent, very unpredictable. He was there to tease you in such a manner, not intentionally, but instinctively.

Wang: Did he treat you in the same manner?

Ji: Exactly, like he was cutting a film. He would grab you when you were about to leave. He was like that all the time.

Wang: Actually, it was not that he wanted you to stay, it was subconscious: I don't want to let you go; even

when there is no love, there is affection. But he still wanted to have his other requirements satisfied. Thus, there was the awkward relationship between you.

Ji: He was the kind of person who wanted to be loved by his partner heart and soul but would get bored if he really had such a partner. Sha Qing is that kind of person. He also needed to have someone who could inspire him as he himself was lazy and didn't want to do things. He wanted someone who could inspire his passion and enthusiasm for life. But I am a totally different type, I get inspiration from inside. I read a book and get excited. Different people's sources [of inspiration] are different.

Wang: I understand. Was *Wellspring* both of your work?

Ji: It was filmed and edited entirely by him. He did it independently. I only helped a little in establishing social connections.

Wang: What was the situation with *Dream of the Empty City*?

Ji: As I was filming *Dream of the Empty City*, I realized that those years were too chaotic. I was not capable of facing that kind of chaos myself during that period. Now I know what to do with every film I make. At that time I was not capable of facing this wholly corrupt society: hospitals were corrupt, schools for immigrant children were corrupt, charity organizations were corrupt, the whole of society was rotten. I was not capable of dealing with such a complicated situation.

Wang: When the time came to film *The Spiral Staircase of Harbin*, and when we did that small exhibition together, I felt suddenly you broke free from your old shackles. You did not film as you had used to: though you were still a silent observer of your film, you began to get deeply involved in the material.

Ji: It was by that time that I had my own understanding of life and of Chinese society.

Wang: I remember in that film there were two main characters who had no connection with one other.

Ji: One was a classmate of mine whose husband was in prison, and the other was a scammer who later dropped to the bottom of the society. He was a character like Xiao Wu [the protagonist in Jia Zhangke's film *Xiao Wu*]. One film was about the mother-daughter conflict, and the other was about the father-son conflict. Both were actually what I should have experienced by that age, but I hadn't. It was from their lives that I

experienced such a parent-child relationship, and then I became interested in the theme of children, which led me to film *When the Bough Breaks*(危巢).

Wang: When I was selecting films for YunFest, I watched *When the Bough Breaks* at Yi Sicheng's(易思成) home in Kunming, and was extremely moved by its tremendous power. It's an important work of Chinese independent film and I wonder how its overwhelming forcefulness came about.

Ji: It was also a very special film for me. I spent much effort on it, which also has a great impact on myself. Some people joked with me: 'Why don't you stay in Japan? What a good life you will have there!' But what is the meaning of living in Japan? China is my home, I came back and travelled everywhere, getting to know people from all walks of life. I found I was not able to move upward, so I moved downward and travelled around to see how other people lived their life in the hope of escaping my own predicament. As a result, I got stuck making documentary films. Is there really such an industry? Does China have one? Then why you film documentaries?

Wang: Indeed, there is no such independent documentary film industry and currently it might be gradually taking shape.

Ji: I was talking to my dad the other night and I said, 'Dad, you've looked down on me all my life. I am always poor and rely on you and mom to take care of me. What do you think I should do? If under normal circumstances my films could be accepted by TV stations, would I still be in this situation? Do you think there are also social factors here?'

Wang: Of course you are right. What does *When the Bough Breaks* mean to you?

Ji: I think it represents a family in deadlock, and I was tied up in the deadlock of my own life at that time. *The Spiral Staircase of Harbin* was also a deadlock. Did you find out that it was also a kind of human relationship, which is again a deadlock, trapping the whole of Chinese society. The latter looks like it's flourishing and changing every day, but in fact is in the process of tying itself into a huge knot, which today finally is tied tight.

Wang: Thus everyone is finally facing reality. It's another kind of peace, and it's good that we're no longer trying to expend unfruitful effort.

Ji: Totally true.

Wang: The predicament in *When the Bough Breaks* was unresolvable. Now I begin to understand why it touched me so much: it was the determination of those two little girls to change their fate, which made me feel overwhelmed in particular. When looked at from the perspective of structure, the family structure in fact appears to be exactly the same as the broader social structure: the father is such an absurd dictator; that is also the patriarchal social structure in China.

Ji: That family, I stayed with them until last summer. Later I told them not to turn to me anymore if they had any more problems. I was not able help, as I was also getting old, like the father of their family. I had been going through every hardship and conflict in every place together with them. Then I felt deeply that there was no room or need for me to intervene in other people's destinies and life, otherwise, it would be a complete waste of time. I painstakingly immersed myself in their life, helped, and persuaded them to move to Changping; I would help to scrub the floor of their place, throw away the rubbish, buy old furniture, and pack up their things. I did everything to change the life of this family.

Wang: Did the children see the film? What did they say about it?

Ji: They have watched it and I think they just didn't care. For them it didn't matter if the film was good or bad, they just thought how overbearing their father was when watching it. When I was filming it, I said, 'Is it because I'm filming that your dad is overly excited and behaving like this?' They said, 'Auntie, thank you for coming with the camera, otherwise he would have made even bigger fuss.' I felt a little relieved hearing the answer. Compared with the intensity of the pain that they experienced in real life, what is represented in the film was a piece of cake.

Wang: What really shocked me was the strength and determination of the two sisters.

Ji: And the missing big sister of the family were actually the motivation of two younger sisters. The big sister's story is so brutal, and I suspect now that someone was on to her before her final disappearance because the years she disappeared were the peak for organ transplants in China. The school teacher introduced her to a job in far-away Inner Mongolia and she made one last phone call on the long distant bus. No news from her since. I even suspect that the school teacher knew she didn't have an ID card, and tricked her into leaving. It was a huge trauma for the younger sisters, because if they didn't improve their situation, they will repeat the fate of their eldest sister.

Wang: I understand why the girls have those kinds of strong personalities. They were struggling to save themselves.

Ji: On the day of their eldest sister's departure, they helped pack her luggage. They have been feeling guilty about that and for many years they kept trying to commit suicide. How many times they tried they don't remember. I was not doing enough either in making this film or in relation to other issues. I was far from doing well because I was neither competent nor tough. You can never imagine how hard it is to live a life in China. For me it is like a sea. Every Chinese person is a sea, and he or she is in possession of a sea of agony, self-contradiction, isolation, and loneliness, which, as a whole, is beyond expression in language. The ultimate way out for them is to be forgotten after death. This is how they have gone through life. In my other film *Baya*, I save the old grandmother Baya by saving her memory. Knowing many other people's memories are fading in vain, I felt a sense of penetrating pain. Do you understand? (Crying)

4

Wang: *Baya* is the film completed after *When the Bough Breaks*?

Ji: The only one. Of the three films, one is about the dark underbelly of the city, the urban poor; another, immigrant workers in the city, the garbage collectors; and the other was about those who were left behind in the countryside. These are the three main groups composing the bottom strata of Chinese society. Isn't that right? I always wanted in my heart to wander through China, and now I have done so. That is why I think I am only thirty years now because I have just got to know society.

Wang: I remember that you made *When the Bough Breaks* in 2011. And it has been ten years since then. Actually you haven't shown your new film these ten years.

Ji: Do you mean *Baya*? It's so interesting. but I've been living a fulfilled life all these years: every minute, every day, I was walking, feeling, and thinking, living a life of my own. I have never felt so fantastic because I have started to live independently. I separated from Sha Qing when I started to film *Baya*, and then went through what Baya was going through: her son's death, her death, and then the death of my mother. I was with my mother in her last eleven days, and I was also with Baya's grandson in the hospital in his last eleven days. It was during that period when I was with them at their death beds that I became a vegetarian. I have been a vegetarian for six years now, which completely changed my life in that I gradually develop my own

understanding of Buddhism, body and mind.

Wang: Let's talk a little about Baya. What was your motivation to film her?

Ji: In *When the Bough Breaks*, the kids do odd jobs in cities. Meanwhile, I have always been concerned about the left-behind children in the countryside, I was eager to know what their life was like. One day I attended a talk on this topic at Luoguxiang(锣鼓巷) by a doctor from China Academy of Social Sciences. It was on Du'an(都安) in Guangxi. In a book by this doctor was the story of Baya's family.

She had seven sons and one daughter. Her five sons died of pneumoconiosis, and one son and her son-in-law died in mine accidents. There was a large audience at that talk, and I stayed there till the end. Then I went to see the doctor and read his book. One week later, I was in Baya's home. I had to meet her. What was she like?

Finally I saw her place and family, which was not as primitive or visually pleasing as I had thought. It was just very ordinary. When I saw Baya's grandson lying in bed, at such a young age, I felt this is the right place I want to come.

Wang: Did you stay with them?

Ji: Yes, I lived in her home. They didn't have internet there, and then I went back to the town and rented a small flat. I stayed in the flat for three days and went back to stay with them for four or five days a week. When I was with them, I was simply hanging out with them, doing nothing, not even reading books.

Wang: Did she understand what you were doing?

Ji: Sometimes I got up very late when she had already finished cleaning the place. Once I captured her saying scornfully in the film: 'Just got up!' Going downstairs there was about going down forty to fifty steps of small rocks and mud; it was not a path, but only small rocks and mud, very dangerous. Every time I went there with two portions of food, one for the old grandma Baya, and the other for the grandson. At the beginning I stayed with her grandson because I did not dare to move into the Grandma's place. Later I dared to move to the Grandma's.

Wang: Why?

Ji: It was too scary. So many people had died in the old place where only the Grandma now lived alone.

Wang: What, according to you, was her support?

Ji: Her lovely great grandchildren! Those lively kids stayed around her; and she, in contrast, was like a big tree that kept bearing new sprouts. That is the strength of the traditional Chinese family: no matter how many people die, new members are born and the younger generation grows up. So today she still has many children with her. She said, ‘I have so many grandsons and great grandsons, what is the point of missing those dead kids?’ In the film, you don’t see her crying in front of others when both her eldest son and her eldest grandson die of pneumoconiosis. She brought up the kids of her deceased children. However, the orphans never talked to her; in fact, they looked down on her as they thought she preferred boys rather than girls, and so on.

Wang: How long did you stay there making the film?

Ji: One year and eight months. That was the period I lived with death for. During the time I separated with Sha Qing and thus lost my love. Before I would have tried to look for another lover, but then I knew I would never. I would live a lonely life from then on.

Wang: When you went to Baya, you were actually looking for a demonstration, or a way to get through this. You wanted to see how she could get through such catastrophes in life. In fact, you were dealing with your own problems. You were there with your own dilemma and confusion.

Ji: Yes, I was trying to deal with or run away from my own problems. I was stuck in my personal predicament while filming those three documentaries.

Wang: Did you feel relieved or sort out your problems?

Ji: Of course they helped a lot.

Wang: Did Baya give you strength?

Ji: Tremendously! Each film gave me huge strength, unconsciously. Look at Baya, she had a beautiful smile and was always laughing and talking; She was so happy weeding the fields. That kind of power of life, how

incredible! But what really empowered me was finally I finished this film all by myself, while at the same time chewing over my own life trauma and supporting my old parents, both in their eighties. I supported my parents as a dutiful daughter, and survived and finished the film despite not being able to earn any money. Last year, in the pandemic, I finally found the ending for *Baya*.

Wang: Was the ending the same as what I saw the year before? What is it like now?

Ji: It's different, very plain and simple. The focus is on the children. People die quietly; children come into the world and grow up. It is simple, not ambitious. I had no ambition in the process of filming, but became somehow ambitious while cutting it. Because Mr. Liao said it was good and many people saw it and thought it was good, I thought it might become a great work. But in the end, when I looked at the film, I saw the limitations that did not justify that kind of ambition. It was still the same type of film as *Gongbu's Happy Life*: no cinematic imagination, nor adequate artistic expression of talent on the part of the film. I was straightforwardly presenting Baya's life, which was not enough to support grand ambitions. So now it returned to this simple, plain state: I present what I have filmed. This was my original intention in filming Baya: life goes on continuously; people face disasters in life, one after another. At the end of the film, I revealed how many in this family had died of pneumoconiosis. Six million families in China are like this, and Baya's family is only one of them. All her sons died of pneumoconiosis, which is why I captured this old woman on film, otherwise, who would know her story?

Wang: Was how the old woman talked to the camera different from *Gongbu's Happy Life*?

Ji: Completely different! It was Baya's narration of her own life, not through my eyes, which was the most different point. Now Baya in the film had the kind of 'subjectivity' that you always mention. Now I couldn't go back and make a film like *Gongbu's Happy Life*; I couldn't do that again, that period is gone forever. I now begin to talk, to express, both me myself and my protagonists. Finally, I know how to talk. Having experienced such upheaval in Chinese society, the ups and downs, I see it clearly for what it is.

季丹：每个被拍摄者都给了我力量

王小鲁

季丹一个人住在昌平碓臼峪，在北京郊区遥远的深山里。我去过这里两次，这次我发现她家附近有一个满族村，而季丹有八分之三满族血统，我问她是不是住在此地有归属感？她说她其实不了解这些村庄，“有一天要交出一个异类，他们肯定先交我。我没有那么甜美的幻想——农村怎么样，人淳朴什么的，人都是一样的。”

我认为季丹是独立纪录片界语言表达能力最强的导演，她能将微妙复杂的状态用语言呈现出来。记得上次在她家看《芭雅》的粗剪版，还谈到女性主义，她说男权就像抽过烟的屋子，一屋子的烟味，但男人可能自己并不觉得。我一直对这句话赞不绝口。

季丹的经历很传奇，她一九六三年出生，但她说她现在才活到三十岁的状态。她目前已创作十部左右纪录片，《芭雅》是她最新的作品。她以前的爱人沙青也是纪录片导演，他们曾经在一起创作，现在他们分开了，这让季丹重新去思考女性和恋爱的关系。而芭雅是一位饱经苦难的女性，她去拍摄芭雅，其实也是去看另一个女人如何去面对自己的黑夜。

这次交流除了谈她的作品，还更多地谈到她的个人生活经验和纪录片创作之间的关系。这让我发现纪录片导演和拍摄对象、作品之间更为复杂的互动。在电影理论里，无论如何纪录片都比剧情片更为客观，但我从季丹这里看到纪录片的主观是如何展现的，她拍摄别人其实也是拍摄自己。季丹让我对拍摄客体和作者微妙的交流路径有了更深的了解。此次谈话时间为二〇二一年七月十日，地点在碓臼峪。

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王小鲁（以下简称王）：之前我看过别人采访你的文章，你的表达能力特别强。

季丹（以下简称季）：语言其实是一种魔术的，不同的场景有潜在的目的。职业采访者特别讨厌，因为他有目的性。你有目的性，我也有目的性了。因为你是进攻方，我就得防守。然后就把人的功利心都激发起来了，我得表现得好，我得说得好，就特别烦人。

王：其实拍纪录片也面临采访这个问题。

季：我早期拍纪录片从来不采访。后来因为我父亲他年纪大了，然后他特别喜欢说话，拉着一个人说几个小时，把人说睡着了他还接着说。后来干脆，反正也得陪着你，拿着摄像机拍你说吧。其实摄像机特别有趣，就是拿起摄像机就有一种仪式感，你就发现是在看一个电影了，而不是单独听你父亲在唠叨了。我拍《芭雅》的时候才想起，没准可以把巴雅的一生让她讲出来。也是那种方式，就是一天四个小时，连续一星期，这种采访特别过瘾。

王：你说拍《芭雅》这个片子后才开始采访，说明你之前的片子都是直接电影。昨天又看了你早期拍西藏的《贡布的幸福生活》，还有《老人们》，我发现两部都是早期非常重要的直接电影。

季：对。我从来都没有采访过。拍巴雅的时候，就是因为我觉得影像真的无法表达她过去的的生活，因为过去已经没有了，就只有从语言里面才能找到过去的痕迹。

王：你最早的纪录片观念是怎么形成的？

季：对我来说都不叫纪录片不纪录片的，就是影像。就是突然手里就有个机器了，这个机器可以摄制影像。它要变成什么，我根本就不知道。最早在日本看电视节目，对于什么是纪录片，什么是电影，什么是剪辑，完全没有概念。所以要是《贡布的幸福生活》好看的话，就正因为这一点——它的业余性，特别直接，摄像机就是干这个用的，我就这么用了，没有任何多余的想法。

王：你在西藏几年？

季：前后三年，这俩片子是第三年拍的。前边拍了很多影像都坏了，也没找到一个真正的核心人物或者团体。第三年我才发现，这一群老人和这一家人应该是核心。这群老人是死亡，而这家人是生活，我本来想这两个主题剪在一个片子里，后来成了两个片子。

王：你那时候一直住在贡布家吗？

季：第三年住在贡布家，之前住到别人家。

王：你那种相处的方式也挺有意思的，是深度相处。

季：贡布家一大群女孩儿好玩，所以我就又回到了童年。因为小的时候我就没有玩够，我其实是特别野性的，爱玩爱跑，结果天天憋在家里让我练小提琴。那个时候我都快三十岁了，突然找到了小时候跟同龄女孩儿们一起玩的那种感觉，就过得特别愉快。

王：关于你在西藏的那段时光，我见过一个叙述是，其实你受日本野中章宏的影响，也是的确想拍一个片子出来。好像上次我见蒋樾还说到，在西藏遇到你，蒋樾当时觉得藏族是外人的生活，他介入不了，他听说你在那儿学藏语，他说这个我干不了，他很佩服你。所以你开始也是带着目的要去拍个片子出来？

季：我小时候就挺喜欢看前苏联的那些冒险文学，去北极探险啊那些，就对非常非常远的地方非常感兴趣。

王：浪漫主义。就是对远在他乡的大自然的、野性的、充满激情的东西感兴趣。

季：探险，边界啊那种……西藏它跟八十年代的大学生活有着非常重要的关系，蒋樾、段锦川他们是我的前辈。我当时也想毕业去西藏，然后没去成，日本的诱惑更大，我又有条件去日本，就去了日本了。

王：你从北师大毕业就去了日本，学什么呢？

季：重新进了个大学。学的是社会学。我在日本参加了一些西藏的活动。本来我对西藏有一种幻想，大学没毕业的时候就去做了一次西藏，那个时候的西藏对我来说有探险啊，浪漫主义，像你说的。

王：你说大学期间去西藏是哪年？

季：八六年，那时候的拉萨美极了。

王：像牟森谁的那时候都在拉萨，西藏话剧团。

季：对呀，我就跟牟森去的，完了回来了一趟，冬天的时候又要回去，我就跟着牟森一路上从青海进到拉萨去。现在想起来，八十年代就像一块沃土，东三省似的，原来没被开发出来的黑土地，特别肥沃，特别荒凉，但是特别有生命力。八十年代太短了，一下子就过去了，

你说得我都要哭了，其实一切都是从那里来的。

王：原来你之前去过一次西藏，后来再次去的时候，是从日本回来去的，那个时候是受野中章宏的启发，对吧？

季：对。那次去西藏在拉萨乱转，他们说你别出去转，康巴人挺野蛮的。我们有同学毕业后在西藏电视台里头，天天煮点方便面啊，自己在那打麻将啊，不跟藏族人接触。可是我特别喜欢出去转，拉萨有一种特别的气味。这是我前世的关系？我也不知道，反正喜欢得不得了。一个人上布达拉宫，那时布达拉宫人很少，没有游客，从很远的地方来朝佛的人特别多，我就跟着他们走，一直走，一直走到文成公主的像那个地方。过去我知道一点点那个故事，但是我看到那个像，突然就觉得跟我有关系，就特别难受，开始哭。正好出去以后是一个平台，能看到整个拉萨。我当时就发愿，我说我要跟这片土地发生一点关系。

王：这个感觉很奇怪。

季：对，特别奇妙。我觉得命运好多事情都是在那样的瞬间种下了种子。

王：你与纪录片的渊源还是从日本开始的，在北师大肯定没想到要去拍纪录片对不对？

季：对，其实我一直想的是写作。但是不敢轻易写，我的人生经历都没开始呢，我写啥？我从来没有做一个独立的人，生活在世界上决定我自己的人生，我的人生根本没有开始。我都不知道怎么去评价我父亲母亲，不知道怎么看我自己，一切对我来说就是不知道，我怎么写啊？

可能在这种情况下，去日本了以后有各种机会，能拿起摄像机来，突然我可以换另一种方式来看生活。或者说在我和生活之间隔一个东西，要不然我无法接受它。因为它跟我阅读的世界是两个世界，我不认可它。就像我和我爸平时说话，我听不下去，但当我拿起摄像机来，我突然就能听他讲了。因为有一个框在那儿了，能留下来了，有时间性了，这就是电影的魅力，就突然变成了一个有时间性的东西了。

王：拿起摄像机，你忽然就换了一个角度，你有自觉性了，你在使用文化眼光去看它，已经不再是日常生活的看了。

季：对。还有一种，就是你可以选择了。你在生活中是无法选择的，但是当你有一个框子的

时候，你可以选择他说这个不说那个，你可以选择拍这个部分，不拍那个部分。然后就找到了和现实相处的方式，在中国活下去的方式。

王：你说的最早拿起摄像机是什么时候？是上次你给我看的那个吗？

季：野中章宏拿来的一个小机器，比你看到的那个还小，早没了。他住在越秀宾馆，我当时在西单，跟摄影家吕楠是朋友。野中章宏说你过来我教你用摄像机，我就穿着一个蓝色的裙子去了，就是很文艺青年的那种。他一看见我，他说把衣服换了，这没法拍，哈哈。我就知道工作的时候不能这个样子，回到家换了一身牛仔裤。然后他就告诉我，开机，拍摄，近景，远景，很简单，那个特别容易掌握，全都是自动的，我学会了，就拿着这个去东北了。一用它，我就喜欢了。我不是说我特别爱看画展吗？印象派里有很多雨中的或者雪后的，我会特别对某一些风景着迷，比如秋天的风景，雪后的风景。那个小机器有一个寻像器，我可以在特殊的天气里看到那个东西了，就是让我着迷的风景。其实我是拿摄像机去寻找美，我一直渴望的那种美。

王：你跟野中是什么时候认识的啊？

季：差不多在一九九一年的春天。我是八八年去的日本，三年后第一次回到中国，住在吕楠家，后来拿着吕楠的摄影到日本去。我有一个朋友的好朋友叫广河隆一，他是日本非常著名的左派报道摄影家，也是社会活动家，一直拍巴勒斯坦，我就拿给他看了，他才介绍这些人和杂志给我，一个杂志又介绍野中章宏，就这样我跟野中章宏见了面聊天，聊到吕楠，又聊到我自己。我说我喜欢西藏，后来去西藏拍。

王：野中章宏在日本，你跟他交往多吗？

季：多，他们是一个亚洲报道团体。很多年轻摄影师主要以报道摄影为主，也有些人是艺术摄影。他们经常开会，我就在里面听，野中讲说，影像时代来了，这是一个遥远的雷鸣，雷声已经近了，我们要改变了。

王：野中章宏鼓励大家用摄像机去拍，去报道世界。

季：对，一开始是照相机，认识他没多久，日本朝日电视台就有一个影像的节目了。小机器可以做原来电视台或者电影一个团队才能做的东西了。后来我回国了，他才开始把这个小机器给我。

王：那个机器也是 Hi8 是吗？

季：就是 Hi8。那时候家庭录像一般都是一个 8，但是这 Hi8 影像就很不错了，当时有相应的剪辑机什么的。

王：后来你去拍西藏，然后拍完了是给日本播吗？

季：对，就拿回日本去播。当时那几个片子不错，野中那时候就跟电视台建立了关系，三四分钟能给十五万日元，野中都给我们，就很多。十五万日元相当于那时候一万多块钱。我再教胡杰，让胡杰也拍，我也拍。像街边的一个理发店，我就去拍外地来的理发师一天的生活，这就是一个片子。还拍了很多，拿到日本去，一下就赚了一大笔钱。然后就源源不断地有很多这种活儿。但是我觉得没意思了。

王：你这很像央视当时的《生活空间》啊。

季：是，就是那样。就讲一个人的故事，他天天在那儿干活，回家吃饭，去买菜。跟儿子对话，完了你问问他，儿子上学什么的，就这点东西，表面的那一层油，刮起来谁都能拍，只能那么拍。就是让你说点儿真话，自然一点儿。这个时候有点钱了，我就说到西藏去，结果我去西藏就不回来了。野中就特别生气，给我写了很长的一封信，他正需要我的时候，可以大量拍的时候，那边栏目都说好了，我就不干了，跑了。

王：你觉着重复没意思。

季：对。一下子野中就病倒了，得了甲肝，很危险的一种病。我给他写长信，向他道歉，讲我为什么要留在这儿，我不喜欢做那些新闻式的东西，还是喜欢做长一点的纪录片，能实现我从小一个梦想，请他理解。

二

王：你最早给日本拍摄了一些电视纪录片，还拍了《日本战后残留妇女在中国》，据说还获奖了。但《贡布的幸福生活》、《老人们》应该是你最早的独立作品。能否再谈一下当年的感受？

季：那个年代，我在西藏会对每一个人都怀着敬重，他们在我的眼睛里出现的时候都像镜头里的人，因为我是那样看他们的。这个世界就是你的眼光的投射，我看到的是他们最美好最纯净的一面，所以他们就是那个样子。可能换一个角度又不是那样子了，那村子里乱七八糟脏的，人说人坏话，你要把那些东西剪出来，又是另外一个样子了。

王：对。你在《贡布的幸福生活》里面还是一定程度上在美化。

季：肯定是美化。但是那个美化不是广告的美化，它不是有目的性的美化。这个不一样吧？美化和美化完全不同。我真的是看到和感受到了他们的美，那个不是美化，那个就是美。我心中没有的信仰我找到了，我在中国没有找到那种大家庭的温暖，我找到了，那些人烧着火，围着火塘坐，一家人说说笑笑的那种传统生活的美，我在那儿找到了。那种一群老年人为一个去送葬，相互之间的那种关系，人和人之间的关系我找到了。我看到的就是这些美，打动我的就是这些美，我干嘛不把它们拍出来呢？

王：其实《老人们》还蛮深刻的，拍了这群老年人如何过公共生活，如何去管理寺庙。如何在一个礼崩乐坏的时代尽量去维护精神世界，其实那个片子更深刻一些。

季：对，现在都不知道怎么样了！当年很多三四十岁的偶尔也会参加，说将来再过十年我就加入他们了，将来老了我们就来啦，那个村庄多美好，你想想。

王：打动我的在于，那些人很知道怎么处理死亡，处理尸体，各种事情，游刃有余，村庄这套生活的体系建立得很好。

季：我体验到了宗教在生活中的美好，它就那么自然而然。俩小姑娘会为要去祠庙里面磕头，俩人争执，说你去放羊，今天早上你都拜过佛了，拜佛我还没绕一圈呢。那一年我安定定地生活在这个家庭里，如果没有要写书，或者拿一个摄像机要拍，其实你是很难忍受那种生活的。但因为我拿着摄像机，我就能在那踏踏实实地待着。

王：贡布家真的理解你这个拍摄行为吗？

季：不理解。但是每一次回家去，我都大包小包的，他们家缺啥了我就拿啥，就帮着他们买。

王：好远啊，你是用什么交通工具？

季：后来有时候坐飞机了。一开始坐火车坐到西宁，西宁坐一天一夜火车到格尔木，据说那个火车特别危险，一定要坐软卧，要不然经常有强盗上来洗劫一空。世界边缘的感觉，就是那种黑暗的不安感就开始有了。到了格尔木了，就住那边的宾馆，没有吃的，饭馆里只有面条子。然后就开始准备坐三天三夜的大巴车，恨不得都没有地板的那种，咣咣当当的大巴车，旁边的康巴人怕热，大冬天把窗户一打开就唱歌。那个头发飘荡的全是酥油的味道，脚丫子的味道，三天三夜坐车到了拉萨。到了拉萨以后可以休整了，拉萨有好吃的印度菜，还有四川人开的肥肠粉店，宾馆也比较舒服，在那儿准备好了再去日喀则，日喀则就坐汽车了，六个多小时。到日喀则有朋友，喝喝酒，玩一玩啊，然后再搭车又几个小时到拉孜。到了老拉孜，还要再步行三个小时。

王：我记得有一次你说 Hi8拍的素材，去欧洲电视台，他们是觉得画质太差，他们电视台不会接受。在日本是可以的吧？

季：就是实验，后来电视台发现，这个内容好，虽然画质差一点，内容有意思。好像是我拍的那些残留妇女，据说 NHK好多编导一看，说这是不可能的，她怎么能拍到家庭矛盾这么深入的影像呢？这不可思议。他们那种拍摄方式不可能拍到这种东西，一大帮人，多少预算，去的目的很明确，要跟你谈，我要拍什么什么，然后人家就准备好，OK，下午俩小时，拍完了走了，怎么可能进入那种状态呢？都是一个秀的状态。

王：你这两部长片后来在哪儿播过吗？

季：《老人们》在阿姆斯特丹 IDFA播过。有一些老人家挺感动的，说难得陪一群老人那么久，谢谢你。贡布，我自己初剪了一个版本，然后就拿到了 NHK去了，他们的剪辑师来看我的素材，看了三天，态度极其不耐烦，这什么玩意儿啊，没法剪。然后就把他们上司找来了，把我剪辑的那个版本拿给他看以后态度就变了。上司说多有趣啊，就不是一般专业摄影师拍的一般意义上的 NHK记录片。我们俩就开始聊西藏，后来剪了十几天以后，那个剪辑师态度完全变了，对我特别客气了。最后分开剪出两个片子，反响还非常好，好多信件。可能也是很少有的片子，让日本观众那么近地看到西藏人的生活。

三

王：拍完了西藏后，接下来就去陕北拍摄了是吗？

季：那个漫长的黑暗点就来临了，想一想都可怕，我就觉得是整体的停顿。从各个方面的一

种停顿，都不如文化大革命，或者进到监狱里头了。进到监狱里头吧，身体受到约束，但是内在会特别活跃，而这个是整个陷入一种停滞状态。烂泥堆里一种停滞状态，原地打圈圈，我觉得长达十年吧。

王：为什么呢？

季：我过去的生活特别传统，因为受我妈妈的影响。我妈妈就是外面特别能干，一回家就相夫教子，就觉得自己不重要，男人重要。那我跟沙青好，他不动，我就动不了。就像主人躺在那不动，那个狗绕着他，一圈圈地转，一圈圈地转，叫也叫不醒他。我自己又离不开他，离开他我就觉得这个世界就没有了，我是他的狗啊，就转了十年。

王：就跟沙青的十年。

季：一开始的十年。到二〇〇三年有了电影节之后也是，沙青经常停在那儿不动，后来他认为他停在那儿不动是因为我在他身边。没有我，他也不会停在那儿，起码他可以去恋爱，生活就会有波澜，但是有我，他唯一的动力——就是恋爱的动力给切断了，就更动不起来了。而我，如果说没有像狗围着他，我可能还会慢慢慢慢往前走，但是整个就停在那儿。

王：你跟沙青什么时候认识的？

季：九七年？九八年？

王：都九七、九八年了。沙青早年好像也在西藏那儿拍东西。

季：但是我是觉得跟沙青这个关系，是我最重要的课程，我最受益无穷的一段经历。现在说那十年停在那儿了，但是那十年就应该停在那儿，就对了。后来才彻底让我从他那个套里面解下来，一个女人必须要和男人解过一次套。我现在跟沙青变成了一种非常好的朋友关系。时代也在变，在往上走，各种活儿可以做，可以出国，可以拍电影，好多事情都可以做的时候，我们躺平在那儿，躺平了十年，也挺好的。

王：九七年到〇七年是吧？

季：差不多吧。我觉得是从〇八年我拍《哈尔滨回旋楼梯》我才醒过来，又开始自己做东西了。那中间做的所有的东西都是心不在焉的，《空城一梦》、《地上流云》，都不值一提，

也确实不好。因为我每天想的都是给沙青写情书啊，都惦记着他呢，就希望拉着他来拍，他跟我一起又拍不了，他自己《在一起的时光》拍得很好，我自己就跟着他后边。那些年真的，不可思议，一个人就被下了咒一样的在那儿待着。

王：所以说，唯一的就超脱，独立。

季：对呀，你说你在那个泥潭里谁赢谁输都是泥潭，谁能赢呢？就是赢了以后你会发现你赢的就是这么个玩意儿啊，赢它干嘛啊，是不是？

王：是，就必须独立。

季：你说对了，所以没有那十年，我没法像现在这样利利落落活在这个世界上。人怎么会需要另外一个人呢，你就发现，一个人独裁多么好啊，我想买个桌子，立马我就买。

王：那几年的作品你都不满意？

季：不满意。

王：你等于说一下子把那十年创作基本都否定了，当然这十年肯定也是你在修炼的过程，对吧？

季：首先是我不会剪辑，我太依赖沙青的剪辑。因为沙青一剪辑，有效果，然后他看东西有判断力，现在我就发现了，因为他只旁观，所以他有判断力。你当裁判员的时候还得当运动员，那运动员你能当得好吗？当然他也是很敏感，他有他的天赋，我就觉得自己没这个部分，我就坐在那儿，就开始琢磨沙青到底爱不爱我，到底怎么回事儿。我心里有个大的问号，就是沙青咋回事儿。你说我这不有毛病吗。很多人一辈子都在琢磨配偶。

王：我发现，这十年主要是什么问题啊，你被他迷上了。

季：是呢。他剪片子的时候特别会下意识地使手腕，都不是故意的，他就会那种，时冷时热啊，不下定论啊，老是这样挑逗着你啊这种。他也不是有意识，他是下意识这样做。

王：他对你也是这样的？

季：也是这样的，就像剪片子一样。你要走了他就抓你一把，就老是这样。

王：其实不是他有意识地要抓你一把，这是人的一个潜意识，你走掉我又不舍得，没爱情也有亲情。但他又需要其他部分的满足，所以这个固定的关系就很拧巴。

季：你要全心全意对我，我又觉得无聊，我又找一个那样的人，他希望有一个能激发他热情的，因为他本来就懒洋洋不想做事情，需要有什么东西来激发他的那种热情，对生命的热望。他不像我，我从内里找，我看一本书就来劲儿了，每个人来源不一样。

王：我理解。《在一起的时光》是你们共同的作品吗？

季：《在一起的时光》都是他拍他剪的。他独立的，我只是帮他建立关系，帮帮忙。

王：你导演的《空城一梦》是什么情况？

季：《空城一梦》拍着拍着就发现那几年太混乱了。那个时期的我自己没有能力去面对那种混乱。现在我每拍一个片子，我知道该怎么办了。那个时候我没有能力去面对这种整个腐败的社会，连医院都是腐败的，打工子弟学校都是腐败的，公益机构都是腐败的，整个社会是烂的。我没有能力去处理那么复杂的情况。

王：到了《哈尔滨旋转楼梯》的时候，当时我们一起做那个小展览，就觉得你一下子跳脱出来了。你不再是以前传统的那种方式了。虽然你看着也是没说什么话，也是静静地旁观，但是你开始深度介入素材的处理。

季：就是对生活、对整个中国社会都有了我自己的认识了。

王：我记得那个片子，有两个主角，但他们彼此无关。

季：一个是我的同学，她老公进监狱了，还有一个是混混，后来没落了，家里穷的。他像《小武》里的小武一样的人。一个是母女的矛盾，一个是父子的矛盾。其实都是我生活中到那个年龄应该经历的，但我没有经历过。等于是从他们的生活中经历了这样的父子母子关系，然后对孩子感兴趣了，这样才延续了下面的《危巢》。

王：《危巢》是那年为“云之南”选片，在昆明易思成家看的，我极其震撼。影片中的力量

十分巨大。中国独立电影里面有这么大力量的，那是重要的一部，我也不知道为什么。

季：对我来说也是特别特别的一部，用了很大力气，重拳打了我自己一下的作品。有时候有人开玩笑，说你怎么不在日本留着，日本生活多好，我说我在那儿干嘛啊？这是我的地方啊，我回来中国真的在游历，上上下下，左左右右，上面我上不去，没人接受我。我就往下走，到处游历，看看别人怎么生活的，来逃避自己的困境。把自己困在那儿，哪儿有纪录片这个行业啊？中国有吗？你拍了干嘛呢？

王：真没形成，到现在试图形成。

季：那天晚上跟我爸感慨，我说爸爸你一辈子看不上我，穷困潦倒，老靠父母照顾，那你说我该怎么办呢？要是正常情况下，我能拍片子电视台能用，那我至于像现在这个样子吗？你说是不是有社会的原因？

王：当然。《危巢》对你意味着什么？

季：我觉得《危巢》是一个家庭的死结，当时我也在我的死结里头，《哈尔滨旋转楼梯》也是个死结。你发现了吗？它也是人际关系，也是个死结，你看整个中国社会就在那个死结里头。表面上看着蒸蒸日上，每天都在变化，其实我觉得就是在打一个巨大的结的过程，今天这个结，终于，死死地系紧了。

王：大家踏实了，这是另外一种平静，也不折腾了，挺好。

季：真的是。

王：《危巢》那个困境没法处理，我现在开始明白为什么那么打动我了，那两个小女孩一定要改变命运的意志，让我特别震撼。后来你把它放在一个结构里，其实家庭结构和社会结构一模一样，他父亲居然是这样的独裁，我觉得真是太荒唐了，那是中国的父权社会结构。

季：那一家人，我陪伴他们一直走到去年的夏天。后来我说再有事儿你们就不要找我了，我没有能力再帮你们了，这个家里面父亲也老了，我也老了。我一直在陪伴他们家的每一个困境，每一个矛盾，每一个地方。后来我深深地感觉到，他人的命运，他人的世界，我没有任何插手的余地和必要性，完全是浪费时间。我苦口婆心地介入，帮助，劝他们搬到昌平来，我会帮他们家擦地，扔垃圾，买旧家具，收拾东西，我就想去改变他们家的命运。

王：片子拍出来之后那些孩子看过吗？他们是怎么评价？

季：看过，我觉得他们就是无所谓吧，片子好坏无所谓，就是觉得你看我爸有多霸道。我拍的时候说，是不是因为我拍，你爸过分兴奋，就表现成这样。他说阿姨，多谢你来拿摄像机拍，要不然他会闹得更凶。我才放心了。他们真实的生活中体验的那种痛苦的强度、激烈性，我这个片子比起来简直就是小菜一碟。

王：当时挺让我震惊的就是这两姐妹，极其强大坚定。

季：还有失踪的大姐，她们的动力来源于那个大姐。大姐的故事太残忍了，而且我现在怀疑，她失踪那几年是中国内脏移植高峰期。就有人盯上她了，那个学校的老师给介绍工作，介绍到那么远去。她在去内蒙的长途车上打了最后一个电话，然后从此消失。我都怀疑是那些老师知道她没有身份证，有这种可能性，把她骗走，她再也没有音信了。这个痛苦对她们姐妹俩来说是巨大的创伤。因为她们不往上走，她们家就继续大姐的命运。

王：我明白为什么形成那一种个性，那种要强的性格，那是自救。

季：姐姐走那天，她们还帮着收拾行李，她们觉得自己有罪过，多少年她们俩的目标就是要自杀，死了多少次。我就觉得这个电影也好，什么也好，我做的太差，远远不够，我没有那个狠劲儿，没有那个能力，就是真正中国生活的那种强度，你是不可想象的。我形容它是一个大海，每个中国人都是一个大海，他的痛苦，他的自相矛盾，他的孤立性，他的寂寞感全都是一个大海。而且他没有办法用语言去表达他自己，就靠最后死亡的时候被遗忘，一个一个就这样就过去了。像我拍的那个《芭雅》的老奶奶，我救起了一个老奶奶，我救起了她的记忆，多少人的记忆就这样过去了，强大的痛苦，你知道吗？（哭）

四

王：《危巢》之后成片的就是《芭雅》了？

季：就《芭雅》了。这三个片子，一是城市黑暗的部分，城市贫民；然后是进城打工的人群，在城市里面捡垃圾的；还有留在乡下的。中国底层社会的三大块。是吧？我潜意识里面想要游历中国，所以我说我现在才三十岁，我刚刚游历完。

王：《危巢》我记得是二〇一一年左右，到现在十年了。十年你这个新的片子其实还没有真正拿出来。

季：你说《芭雅》是吗？太有意思了，可是这些年我好充实啊，每一分钟，每一天，每一个月，都在活着，都在走路，都在思考，在感受，从没有这么好，因为我变成一个人了。从《芭雅》拍的时候，我就开始变成一个人了。我跟沙青分开，然后开始经历芭雅的经历，她儿子的死，她的死，然后是我母亲的死，我母亲的最后十一天，芭雅孙子在医院也是十一天，都是我陪伴的，那两个十一天。我开始吃素，今年到六年了，吃素改变我整个生活。对佛教，对各种身心灵的那种一点儿一点儿的认识。

王：咱们说回《芭雅》，什么机缘让你去拍芭雅？

季：《危巢》这些孩子在城市里打工，乡下的留守儿童我一直挺关心的，想知道他们是什么样子的。有一次锣鼓巷有一个讲座，我就去了，讲的就是广西的都安，一个社科院的一个博士写了一本书，就讲到了这一家人。

她有七个儿子一个女儿，其中六个儿子都去世了，有一个死于矿山事故，其他死于尘肺病，女婿也死于井下事故。现场人特别多，二三百人就挤满了，我整个听下来了，听完了就去找那个博士，看完了他的书，一个星期以后我就到了那个地方了。我就觉得这个女人我一定要见见她，她什么样儿啊？

最后看到她家，她家那个村子不是我想象的那么原始，或者视觉上那么好看，特别特别普通。看到阿雅那个孙子年纪轻轻的躺在床上，一想就是它了，就是这儿了。

王：你是住在她家吗？

季：住在她家啊。他们那没有网络，然后我就回到县城，租了一个小房子。在小房子里住三天，下去待四五天，这样的一个节奏。在那儿的时候连书都不看，二十四小时跟他们待在一起。

王：老人家她能理解你的行为吗？

季：有的时候我会起得很晚，她都打扫回来了，有一次我在影像里看到她很不屑地说，才起。下楼相当于四五十阶台阶，而且没有路，都是那样的小石头或者泥什么的，还挺危险的。我每次都买两份吃的，给老奶奶一份，给她孙子家一份。我住在她孙子家，因为老奶奶家我不

敢住，后来我才敢住。

王：为什么？

季：太害怕了，死了那么多人，而老房子就老奶奶一个人。

王：是什么支撑着她呢？你后来了解到。

季：可爱的重孙。那些活生生的孩子们围着她，她真的就像大树一样，不停地滋出新芽了，这就是中国传统家族的强大，死多少人都无所谓，又长出新的了，一批就起来了。活在今天，她有这么多孩子呢，她也回答了，她说我这么多孙子呢，想他们又有什么用。片子中她的长子长孙因尘肺病去世。她从没在人前哭过，一直把死去儿子们的孩子养大。她带着那些孤儿跟她住在一起，那些孤儿从来不跟她说一句话，看不上那个奶奶，就觉得她重男轻女什么的。

王：你在那儿待了多久，拍了多长时间？

季：一年八个月。与死亡共生的一年八个月。这个过程中我经历了失恋，跟沙青分开，巨大的创伤，你就知道人生从此你就孤独了，跟以前不一样了，以前是你还会找下一个，这次从此就孤独了。

王：你去找芭雅，其实你是想找一个示范，或者找一个方法，你想看她面临如此的灾难是怎么度过的，其实你是处理自己的问题。你带着自己的困境和困惑。

季：处理自己的问题或者逃避自己的问题。这三部片子都是这样，都是在那个漩涡里面。

王：那你拍完了后，你有没有缓解或者解决这个困惑。

季：当然有了。

王：芭雅给你力量了。

季：太有了，每一部都有。那种力量我觉得是潜移默化的。看到芭雅，她每天特别爱说笑，跟大家在一起，笑得可甜美了，她在地里拔草，你能感觉到她很快乐，不可思议。生命的那种强大！但最后真正给我力量的是，我把这个片子拍出来了，剪出来了。我同时面对自己个

人生活一团糟的那种创伤，拍芭雅的时候我两个老父母都八十多岁了，几乎我一个人承担着。这边肩负着老父母，我作为一个女人来行使自己的职责。挣不着钱的情况下，我活过来了，这边还把片子拍出来了，《芭雅》尽管没有最终完成，但是在去年疫情的时候，我终于把它的结尾完成了。

王：跟我前年看的一样吗？现在是一个什么样的形式和结尾？

季：不一样了。特别淡，特别简单，结尾还是落在孩子们身上。淡淡的人就走了，孩子人就活起来，长大了。就很平淡，去掉了野心，我拍这个片子的时候也没有野心，但是在剪的时候产生过野心。因为廖老师也说这个好，很多人看过了也觉得好，我就产生了野心，觉得它可能变成一个很棒的东西。但到最后我怎么看那些素材，都是有局限性的，完成不了那样的野心，它还是一个和拍《贡布的幸福生活》一样的方式拍出来的东西。没有更多的电影的想象力，或者电影方面过多的艺术表达的才华的展现，都没有。我真的就老老实实在地拍巴雅的生活，它支撑不了那么大的一个东西。所以现在又回到这个简单的没有野心的状态，拍到了什么，我就呈现出什么。这是我拍他们的初衷，生命生生不息，他们这样面对痛苦，一点一点过去了，淡淡地把他们家尘肺病死了多少人，这些情况放在结尾。中国六百万家庭都是这样，这是其中的一个。她儿子死了，一个一个全都是尘肺病，所以才捞出来这么一个老奶奶，要不然早就淹没了，谁会记得她的故事。

王：老太太对镜头的讲述，还是和《贡布的幸福生活》不一样了？

季：完全不同了。就是芭雅自己的讲述，巴雅讲她的人生，已经不是我看他们了，这跟以前完全不同了，这个人物，你爱说的那种“主体性”有了。现在再让我回过头拍《贡布》那样的片子，我不能拍了，那个时期永远都过去了。我开始说话了，我要表达，不管拍摄对象也好，我也好，都要说话了。她知道该怎么说了。经历了中国社会这种动荡，这样起起落落，我现在很清楚地看到它是什么。

Yang Lina: My Life Experience Made Me A Feminist

Interviewer: WANG Xiaolu 王小鲁 Translator: WEN Hua 温华

The first DV production in China, *Old Man* (老头, 1999), was filmed by Yang Lina (杨荔钠). As a then actress in a drama troupe, Yang's path into documentary filmmaking was unique. Seeing from the perspective of performance and characters, she discovered the beauty of a group of elderly people chatting on the street, and then started filming. Yang's work draws heavily on the power of her intuition, and as a result is often able to break out from established film patterns. Her rich filmmaking ideas, coming out of her practice, impressed me a lot during this conversation.

Around 2001, I showed her *Home Video* (家庭录像带, 2000) and Wang Fen's (王芬) *More Than One Is Unhappy* (不快乐的不止一个, 2000) together in a film festival and called them the 'twin jades' of Chinese family private videos. I was extremely impressed by *Home Video* and the creative way in which Yang used the camera. In her early years. Many people thought that as an actress, Yang was just making films on a whim and would soon leave the field. However, Yang has persisted and had a wide range of works to her credit, with her third feature film *Song of Spring* (春歌, later changed to *Mama*, 2022) already on location search and half a dozen documentaries completed, including *Old Men*, *Home Video*, *Weeds* (野草, 2009), *My Neighbours and Their Japanese Ghosts* (我的邻居说鬼子, 2008) and *The Love Story of Mr. An* (老安, 2008).

On 18 July 2021, I met Zhu We (朱文) and others for lunch in a restaurant on the shores of Beijing's Roman Lake. By the time I talked with Yang alone after the meal, we were all a bit tired, but this conversation still outlined the contours of her filmmaking, and Yang did a good job in summarising the features of her own work.

1

Wang: In the past ten years, you have shifted your focus from documentaries to feature films. I remember we met when your *Longing for the Rain* (春梦, 2013) was screened at the Rotterdam Film Festival in 2012. When did you start making that film?

Yang: Yes. That film was started in 2010 and came out in 2013, and it took us a long time to complete it.

Wang: I remember watching your last documentary in your house called *The Temple*(寺庙), a rough-cut version, but I forget when.

Yang: In 2008, the year of the great earthquake.

Wang: After that, you shifted to make feature films, right? Did you still make documentaries after that?

Yang: All the time. One day, I might stop making feature films, but I will not stop documentary filmmaking. I've worked on many documentaries before, such as *Sorority Director*(妇女主任) in Changchun, in which the directors of four institutions—Women's Federation, Family Centre, Family Planning Centre, and Marriage Registration Office—were filmed in their daily work. However, it has never been finished. The regulations related to family planning have kept changing and I still want to pick it up.

Wang: When did that happen?

Yang: In 2004, when I just had my baby. I filmed it in Changchun.

Wang: When did you start making films?

Yang: In 1996, actually the earliest time was in 1995 when I shot *Wild Grass* in an orphanage, even before shooting *Old Men*. I did this as my homework for the acting department in my university. Wandering around in a mountain in Qingdao, I found there are the institutions such as welfare houses, mental houses, as well as nursing homes, which attracted me a lot. Those poor kids were just there as I entered. I remember in 1995, when I borrowed a video camera from the navy publicity station to shoot their daily life in that winter. For various reasons, I only shot some bits and pieces and did not use them, but I knew these were precious. After I finished making *Old Men*, I went back to continue making *Weeds*, so it has been more than twenty years since this documentary about the orphanage.

Wang: You used DV in 1996 when you made *Old Men*, didn't you? Is it Beta recorder?

Yang: Yes, big video camera. Actually, the first time I used a video camera was in 1995 to when I shoot the footage in the orphanage.

Wang: Where did you buy the DV used in 1996?

Yang: I bought it from Jiannong Co., one of a few private video equipment rental and sale companies at the time, and they did not import a lot. I also bought my editing machine later from that company. There were not many big working stations at that time, even at Central China Television Station. I regretted selling it later. I should have kept it.

Wang: A DV editing machine?

Yang: Not just DV ones. Shen Xiaomin(沈晓闽) and many others came to me for this machine, and then computers appeared, so I sold it.

Wang: We seemed to have discussed the price of this machine back then. You got it for 150,000 RMB, right?

Yang: Over 200,000 RMB. *Old Men* came out in 1999, so this machine must have been bought in 1998.

Wang: This EZ1 of yours is Panasonic, right? I can feel that the image is cooler and greener, and Sony's ISO [photosensitivity] is higher, and thus looking brighter.

Yang: Yes, it's Panasonic. That machine is very portable. The tapes were expensive, a hundred dollars per reel of sixty minutes. I have had a habit of writing diary since I was a teenager. People always say that documentary is just like a pen and the third eye. I am not that conscious. For someone like me who knew very little about it, documentary is a mirror. I just shoot what I see like a mirror, and that is the best way to do it. At that time, I did not have the ability to edit and choose, but I knew I had to film those old men, that is, to reflect them. They always call it 'reflect', 'Yang is reflecting us again; you will reflect us until we die'. Maybe the word 'reflect' is also suitable to be used in my current feature film. I am just acting like a mirror; to reflect beautiful images I see, and then I finish the initial shooting.

Wang: After you finished shooting with the camera day by day, did you have the equipment to view the footage when you got home?

Yang: I just watched it on this little machine, rewinding the tapes. Once upon a time, I was quite a crazy girl. But my mother said I got cured after I had this 'toy'. I still believe that there is just a very good seed in me, and that this seed has not well grown-up on stage, so it sprouted in this place. I could see the difference. The camera gives me comfort, and I can find the value of my own existence in it.

Wang: I remember you talked about why you decided to make *Old Men*. You found those old people around your home very interesting, so the idea of filming them emerged, right?

Yang: Yeah, I saw them every day when I passed by. At the very beginning I also asked the husband of my comrade to come and help. I hadn't decided to buy my own camera. After two days, I didn't think it would work. At that time there weren't that many films to refer to, but I knew the way I was filming was wrong. Those old men weren't comfortable when my friends intervened, and neither was I. It wouldn't work, so I decided to disband my friends and buy my own camera. After that, all of us became at ease, and the environment became more comfortable.

Wang: When you were making it, what kind of film was in your mind? Did you have the concept of documentary at that time?

Yang: I was not sure at all. I shot for over half a year. At that time, I did not go there once a month, like I do now. Instead, I was stuck with those old men every day, day and night, so I had already accumulated a lot of footage in half a year. At one time I was crying against the wall. I knew nothing about the professional way of making a film. Only CCTV showed *zhuantipian* (专题), but I did not watch its *Oriental Horizon*. I knew for sure it would not be a fictional film. I was once an actor and knew that a fictional film was meant to be performed by actors. But I could not figure out what it was exactly. Later I asked Wu Wenguang for some advice. He told me it was a very good film and worth continuing to do. That was a moment for me. At least I was not idling away the past days. I did something serious.

Wang: It was shown to Wu in 1997?

Yang: In 1998, probably. It wasn't finished in 1997.

Wang: So you showed it to him after you finished filming? If you did not know what it is and where it would be screened, how did you have the courage to start it?

Yang: I think it was just something that whispered in my ears. You know I was totally a lay person; I did not even know what a film festival was, or what TV broadcast was. There was not that much design at first. I just wanted to film it and there was an important reason. I was also an actor, but the rehearsals and performances were all related to collectivist culture, a way of acting that bored me and made me feel that my talent and

ability were restricted. Seeing old men's world made me feel real and that reality calmed me down, so I had no great plan but to document it. It was a very interesting start, without any utilitarian element. Nowadays when a film comes out, you have to consider distribution companies, film festivals, and so on. Looking back to the whole process of making *Old Men*, I miss the simplicity of myself at that time, which was very important.

Wang: Were you influenced by any underground culture at that time, such as early underground publications?

Yang: Actually, I have no idea. I was an actor in a drama troupe, inside the system, so I had no access to underground culture. I was surprised when someone later categorized *Old Men* as an independent film and said it was the earliest DV work. But such title meant nothing to me; it had nothing to do with my filmmaking. One thing was certain back then, that is, what I was making was certainly not a TV documentary, and I would not add a voice-over. I think I benefited from my stage experience. Those old men were individual theatre characters for me, living in a real space, not on a stage. I was also thinking: would not it be good to do a stage play? I even discussed it with my classmates, 'Can you play an old man well?' This also worked for filming the orphanage. I was looking at these people through the stage space, and these people are essentially different from the deliberate performance on stage. It was only after this film came out that I heard about the Practice Society. It was only when I arrived at the first screening at the Goethe Institute that I experienced the sense of achievement as well as solemnity that comes with watching your own film.

Wang: Had you seen documentaries before that? *Bumming in Beijing* (流浪北京, 1991), for example.

Yang: No, I had not.

Wang: Then how did you know about Wu Wenguang?

Yang: I can't remember who introduced him to me then. Anyway, Mr. Wu was very famous at that time. It was amazing that I could find him. I can't remember how, yet I found him in the end.

Wang: Did you ask for advice during the editing process?

Yang: I had invited a lot of people to see the film and everyone would give me advice, but I spent most of a year editing it on my own. Wu definitely gave me a lot of specific ideas and encouragement, helping me to

persist. In any interview at any time, I would always mention his guidance and help with *Old Men*.

Wang: You have almost two hundred hours of footage. Probably no one could watch everything. You still had to count on yourself.

Yang: Once on the phone, Wu said that I was now ‘weaned’. He must have been joking. Has he ever nursed me like a mother? If a young director comes to me now and asks me to view their footage, I would be happy to do so and offer some advice. It feels great.

Wang: I remember Wu Wenguang saying that it was because of your inspiration, he started to use DV to make documentary.

Yang: Yes, he did say so, and said that shooting with DV freely made him feel relaxed. He came to my house to watch *Old Men* when I was living in a big suburb, now around Wukesong. There was a show in a big tent next to it. I had already shot thirty or forty tapes in it at that time. Wu watched my tapes and the performance, and it did not take him long to make *Jianghu* (江湖, 1999). Then I thought I would not bother to film my version.

Wang: A lot of things were influenced by each other and people were learning from each other. Wu started earlier when there were few people making documentaries, so many authors would turn to him for help. For example, Wu gave some advice on Hu Xinyu’s (胡新宇) *Man* (男人, 2002), but this also stimulated Wu to make *Fuck Cinema* (操他妈的电影, 2005). The tone in this documentary belongs to a young man. In the early days of Chinese independent documentaries, the small circle learned from each other and there was a sense of mutual growth.

Yang: I’ve heard that *Fuck Cinema* may also have been influenced by Zhu Chuanming’s (朱传明) *Extras* (群众演员, 2001). But I am not sure about the detail.

Wang: When it comes to the influence of early films, I talked to Hu Jie earlier and he said that he hadn’t seen any documentaries before. When he was making the film, the one he thought about the most was *From Victory to Victory* (南征北战, 1952). At that time, the environment for documentaries had not yet been formed, and the concept of documentary films did not exist, especially among the general public.

Yang: If we talk about subtle influence, I studied stage acting and did solid job in training myself. I have a

sense of the characters, the scenes and the story. I might have some ability in those areas. I can distinguish between good and bad too. When I was shooting *Old Men*, a good friend was with me, looking at the old men from a distance. I said what a nice picture it was. I shot the poster of *Old Men* on my own. My friend, who was the director of a theatre company, said to me, ‘how wonderful it would be if you buy a camera and make a video. I said, ‘Good idea.’ I was quite rich then, so I thought, why not give it a try?

To some extent, what I could not practice or express on the stage, I could do it via filmmaking. If a countervailing force really exists, then I was pushed from false mouthpiece of the government and a propaganda background to a realistic, beautiful, humanistic field—even though I did not know much about humanism at that time. Besides, I am attracted by the elderly and have always liked them. The film I am making now, *Song of Spring*, which is also related to people in their old age. It is very much like a reincarnation. I filmed a bunch of old men when I was young, and an elderly mother and her daughter when I was old. I also plan to make some documentaries about the elderly now. I would rather look at my relationship with *Old Men* from this perspective. As for the portrait of people, I can catch its core very quickly.

Wang: How long did you shoot *Old Men* in total?

Yang: Two and a half years, and six months for the editing. I missed the acknowledge part in the end for I did not know that there was such a formality. Of course, there were many people to thank, including Mr. Wu Wenguang, Situ Zhaodun, and maybe Duan Jinchuan. I had invited a lot to view it, who all gave me valuable suggestions.

Wang: What was your state when you were editing?

Yang: I was confused and wasn’t sure how to deal with the footage. It was 200 hours in total, which is a lot even seen from today’s point of view. I picked out each old man first. I spent twelve hours on Uncle Song, twelve hours on Uncle Cao. For footage like the spring group activities and the autumn activities, I sorted them out in the same way.

Wang: And then interweaved them together?

Yang: Yes. To be honest, there were foreigners who came to me and asked, ‘Are you using direct cinema approach?’ I did not understand what direct cinema meant back then. Someone also asked, ‘Do you adopt

a female position?’ ‘What is the female position?’ I asked. I did not understand the concept. It was really beyond my range of knowledge. In fact, just like some people who are born to sing and others to dance, I probably just have an instinct for image, knowing what is good and what is not. Although I was confused, I know exactly why I picked these ten hours out of those two hundred. When I was rehearsing a play, I knew which scenes were good, which scenes were the climaxes, and which characters were important. It was not difficult for me. That’s how I filmed it and that is how I edited it. At least I had to know when the old men came out and when they went back every day. I would like to shoot them in spring, summer, autumn and winter, in old age, in sickness and in death. When I look back at these things now, I do not even feel capable of making *Old Men* again. In my current works, there is something speculative, but in *Old Men*, everything was so simple, beautiful and pure.

Wang: There was no non-linear editing at that time, so it must be hard for you. What did you learn from that process?

Yang: I have learned two things. Firstly, I started to believe that I could do this in the future, and there was a push for me to be more professional. There came *Home Video* and other documentaries. I also quit my job as an actor, which I thought was meaningless. Secondly, when seeing people pass away in front of me one by one, I could feel life pass by and had a more direct understanding of death. Years later it led to my anxiety and fear for death, but it also gave me a better understanding of what life is and what death is. These issues have actually been bothering me for many years.

2

Wang: Your quit as an actor was related to your decision to make documentaries?

Yang: I worked in the army and was not allowed go to the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival even though I won an award. Another award I won in Germany was given to me through the Goethe Institute. I was forbidden to go overseas. It would be a troublesome issue to make this kind of documentary in that place.

Wang: So, you were brave to quit your steady job when the prospect for documentary filmmaking were not particularly clear.

Yang: I expected no tangible rewards. Thanks to Jia Zhangke’s recommendation, *Old Men* could be

presented in Yamagata. When Asako's group came to Beijing to select the film, I declined the offer as I was not good at dealing with people. Jia said you should go and meet them. So, I went. Asako is still a very good friend of mine, and she is important in promoting Chinese independent documentaries.

Wang: Did you first not know that there were foreign film festivals where you could show your works? Or did you learn about it gradually?

Yang: My earliest screening was actually at the Goethe Institute. At that time, an old German professor, who was also a documentary scholar, came on exchange. I had then just half-finished the film. It was not yet finalised but enough to be reviewed. They said, 'Don't you have a film too, why don't you show it to me?' After viewing it, that professor was shocked and said that it was so well-made. He brought the film to Leipzig, and the film was circulated gradually.

Wang: Your next work was *Home Video*, right?

Yang: Yes. In *Home Video*, there is a scene in which the three of us are watching a home video.

Wang: Yes, watching film in the film. Seeing someone's narration of their own family affairs is meaningful. I remember how impressed I was when watching *Home Video* for the first time. I always think it was your best documentary. You were very brave to bring out the cruel side of the family.

Yang: In fact, *Home Video* was made at the same time as Wang Fen's *More Than One Is Unhappy*. Mr. Wu watched both and said nothing at the time. But more than a decade later, he said *Home Video* is a very good first-person documentary. I was wondering why he did not tell me this years ago. At that time, Kazuo Hara's first-person documentaries influenced many people.

Wang: I was still very impressed after watching it again this day. I went to *Douban.com* to give it a highest score.

Yang: Is *Home Video* on Douban? I guess only a few have seen it.

Wang: Yes, only few have given a score. Some of those people watched the film at Fangjia Hutong last time. *Home Video* and *More Than One Is Unhappy* were shown together, I remember. I think yours is a kind of forced therapy for the family and it works. You showed the filmed stuff to your families. You even pushed

everyone to be filmed and to watch it. I noticed your dad did not want to be filmed but your mom was very cooperative.

Yang: Yes, but my mother saw this as a revenge. I had a very tense relationship with my mother afterwards, and this is interesting. This forced therapy you're talking about works sometimes. For example, when my brother finished telling his story, he was somewhat relieved; when my father finished watching this, he was very angry, so this film is very *Rashomon*. There are three people and three positions, and who you believe depends on whose position you stand for. Young people feel that they understand my brother, and the middle-aged and older people feel sympathetic with my father. For me, I was questioned as one with no position. I don't dare to have a position and I am unwilling to totally believe any story. None of them fits me. I think at a certain point we were in harmony as a family, because we all speak out a hidden problem that had been there for so many years. There was an exhibition of my films in England and I was sitting there with my daughter. After watching *Home Video*, she touched my hand and said, 'now I know that I was from such a family.'

Wang: I remember at the screening that year, you told us that the film had contributed to the reconciliation of your family.

Yang: Yes, but that reconciliation was very short-lived. We can't say this film made the reconciliation difficult. Not really. I think life is sometimes very cruel. My father did not accept my brother back then. One year my father almost died in the hospital, but when he saw my brother, he was still criticising him. The first thing he said when he woke up was 'why did you come'. This was very cruel.

Wang: So that's where we never understood. You still avoided it when you were filming. After all, the reality was so cruel. What we did not understand after watching it was why your father always hold this attitude towards your brother. Even after your brother testifying to the father and helping him through his divorce at a young age, your father still told your mother that your brother was heartless and does not deserve being treated well. It is hard to understand.

Yang: I attribute this to the complexity of human nature, really. I do not think it is hard to understand. We see this from the perspective of a normal person with normal feelings. But the complexity of human nature cannot be ignored. If you do not become more tolerant, it would be hard to explain.

Wang: Or were there any other reasons that could explain your father's anger and disappointment towards

your brother?

Yang: That is not easy for me to answer. Perhaps it is destined. My dad treats me well. He spent a lot of money on me, but not a cent on my brother. In his eyes, my brother was a loser, far from that kind of success story for men—to be independent and to be able to support himself. My brother has achieved nothing up to now because of what he experienced around eleven. He used to say, ‘I’ll do nothing; I’ll give nothing; see if I can be loved.’ One day I told him, ‘You have won. At least you are loved by me and our mother. You are nobody, yet we still love you.’ I used to be confused by his words. ‘Why should we love you, while you are doing nothing?’ Nevertheless, now I am in my middle age and I accepted the fact that there is no reason for love. He deserves to be loved and respected. Love cannot be defined in words.

Wang: Your brother’s thoughts are deep, and this shows his personal tragedy too. He proved to your father that your mother had cheated on him, yet after the divorce, your father did not keep his promise to take the son with him. He left the boy to his ex-wife. This was a total tragedy. Actually, the brother is the one that touches the audience’s heart most. Denied by his beloved father, the boy’s world was cracked down. He lost his faith in people, which led to his endless demand for emotional compensation. He needs to pick himself up from where he fell, from his family nightmare when he was around twelve.

Yang: He is still unmarried. Some girls tried to woo him for two or three years and just asked him to take care of the family, but he still refuses marriage. He worked for me and I gave him my car so that he could become a ride-hailing driver, but he later crashed my car into pieces. He looked so frustrated. Then he worked for my mum as a courier. He worked very hard, doing heavy work that others did not want to do. I think he has a heart full of mercy. He said, ‘Although I did not enter a society with the law of jungle, I am a good person.’ I agree. I showed him all my plays as soon as I finished writing them. He is a wise man who spent most of his life fighting against his father. ‘One can’t make a mistake, and once you do, there is no going back.’ I used his words in *Song of Spring*, depicting the redemption between a daughter and her father.

Wang: It was so difficult for him to say that, because what he went through hit him so hard.

Yang: That is why he is willing to give anything he has to our mother. He is guilty of what he did to her. Yet it is our mother who provided him with a shelter. He relies on us for financial support. He called me the other day, saying that he had done enough delivery job, and I said you could come and help me sort out the documentary footage.

Wang: In fact, you are avoiding sometimes in *Home Video*, not just avoiding the audience, but also avoiding yourself. As for family affairs, it would be too cruel if you analysed them in detail. When you show your shooting to your mother and brother, as we have seen in the documentary, your mother watches it through with tears and laughter.

Yang: That was harsh on them.

Wang: Right! But I do understand why you did in this way. That wound was not stitched up properly and you had to open it up to make another stitch. If you do not force them to look, they would not have talked about that even if they want to. The other scene worth mentioning is that your mother realised one day why her son kept asking her for the bike after the divorce. The bike was always there. It was just her son had already made up his mind to go to Changchun with her father, which might make her feel more hurt.

Yang: I think this is a kind of exploitation of children by adults, and even of the whole family. When I watched that scene later in England, I found that one of my earliest interventions into female subject matters actually started here, from my mother.

Wang: Indeed, in *Home Video*, the gender difference comes out very clearly. For example, the look on the father's face and attitude inspires us to think about men. Why is he so pushy? Is it individual or universal? Of course, the younger brother is also quite special.

Yang: Later I found it strange that my mother was actually the one who struck me most. In a way she thought I had reached a kind of reconciliation with my father. When I was young, she felt that the three of us were together. But when I grow up, I love Dad a bit more in her eyes, which hurt her feelings. For a long time, she abused me emotionally. It was very complicated. It is not a one-day or two-day job to sort out all these complicated relationships. Some deep understandings of life come in exchange of accumulated experiences.

Wang: Yes, many of your later works came from what you have been through. I think *Home Video* was very distinctive and pioneering in its form at that time. Was that made in 1999?

Yang: In 2000, actually, after I shot *Platform*(站台, 2000). I agree with you on that. After I made *Old Men*, there was something in my mind. Actually, it had been there when I was an actor. I am sick of repeating myself. I try to find a way to be different. Even though it looked all the same, perhaps, and it cannot be

regarded as a breakthrough. It became fun and different when I turned the camera to my own family. After I finished this film, I found that a whole bunch of similar films started to appear on Phoenix Radio and so on, such as *My Father and Mother*, which became a TV series later.

Wang: How long did it take you to make this film?

Yang: It took me a long time, almost two years. I shot a lot of outdoor scenes, my father's life, my mother's life, and my brother's life, but I deleted all outdoor scenes and presented them directly in communication.

Wang: Have you ever seen a documentary in this way before?

Yang: No, I really hadn't. This film has a lot of footage too, close to two hundred hours.

Wang: You had some ideas about the documentary by then, right?

Yang: Yes. Once in an interview with Yu Yu, I mentioned that sometimes I expressed my opinions, and then a group of old men would say, 'Tut, Yang Lina says she has an opinion.' They did not say it to my face. I heard it from someone. They said with assertion, 'When you want to express some ideas, your film would be boring.' I wondered how they can be so confident.

Wang: After some research, I found a lot of distrust towards you from male directors. They said that this director was good-looking, and *Old Men* was well-made, but it was just by chance, and who knows whether she would insist on it or not? However, it turns out that is not the case at all. It's an arbitrary judgement.

Yang: There is no need for me to prove anything to them.

Wang: Right. *Home Video* was not shown much later, right?

Yang: It was screened in Leipzig. Still that old German professor introduced it. First-person documentaries like this have already existed in foreign countries. When it was shown in Germany, audience reactions were polarised. Some liked it very much and the other disliked it. Those who did not like it said, 'Why are you showing me your family's private life?' while others, and also the audience from China, said, 'It's not just about your family. It's universal.' I was intrigued by such controversies. By the way, I expect nothing from this film. Firstly, I was not doing it as the line of work. Secondly, I was not doing it for the film festival. I

told myself, 'I will take it back if I am not happy, and it does not really matter.'

My most widely distributed documentary is *Old Men* because it is available on Internet and many people have access to the pirated edition. In fact, many of my works have never been shown in China, such as *Weeds*, *Longing for the Rain* and *My Neighbours and Their Japanese Ghosts*. *The Love Story of Mr. An* has only been shown a few times.

I found *My Neighbours and Their Japanese Ghosts* very interesting. I only played it once in Hong Kong, exactly on the Victory Memorial Day for the War of Resistance. I almost finished *Old Men* and had just got *Schindler's List*. At the beginning of this film, I wrote, 'I had just finished watching *Schindler's List*. At the end of the film, a group of old people lay flowers to Schindler. This reminded me of my elders, so I went downstairs and listened to them talking about the past.' They looked particularly attractive to me.

Without hesitation, I went downstairs with my camera. At their leisure, old men and women stayed in the courtyard, eating noodles, chatting...on such cool night. I went to talk with them and it took me only a week to finish filming. I was particularly shocked by their calm and humour even when telling me the cruellest stories. 'Gosh, that morning, ah, a group of Japanese came by their motorbikes and set fire to our whole house. All three of my brothers lost their lives.' There would be no problem if one or two told me in that way, but it turned out that many of them told me stories like that. I saw some films about the Jews in World War II, and they were all very gloomy and contemplative. I wondered why our old people were like this. At the end of the film, an old man sits in front of a kindergarten and says, 'Japanese, ah, maybe they had come, but I can't remember. Don't ask me that. It's quite a scramble. I am deaf. You can find someone else to talk. Well, yes, it happened, probably, but forgive my poor memory!'

Such are our old people, who have gone through so many hardships that even their worst memories became vague. I can only understand it in this way.

Wang: This is an interesting point of view. These old people have suffered a lot. There is no tradition of dealing with sufferings in a proper way. This was also the case with the Cultural Revolution in China, which probably ended up creating a sense of detachment and numbness.

Yang: That is why I think our old people are very adamant. We live in a peaceful time, yet so many of us have suffered from depression. People of that generation, including the mother in *Spring Tide*, had no access to treatment or someone who listen to them. They have overcome madness and depression. They live well,

dancing happily in the square. I think that is quite good.

Wang: You've made a lot of films during that time, including *The Love Story of Mr. An*, *My Neighbours and Their Japanese Ghosts*, *Weeds*, and so on. When was *Weeds* completed?

Yang: I finished editing it in France in 2009, but I was not happy with it.

Wang: Why?

Yang: I did not edit it well, so I never showed it. It was chosen by a few film festivals abroad. The kids in it are really like weeds. In fact, some kids with families nowadays are still like floating weeds, who were born with miseries. The one who was picked up on the riverbank was named Hedong [meaning the eastern side of a river]. The other who was sent to the Public Security Bureau was named Gong'an [meaning the Public Security Bureau]. I would love to turn it into a fictional film in the future so that I can monetize it and pay these children. They always borrowed money from me during the pandemic. I showed them my bills that I had borrowed more than 300,000 RMB during that time. But usually, I would give them several thousands of Yuan. They sometimes ask my mother for money, and I understand it all very well. No one can protect them, and it is great that they have grown into what they are today. I also hope that turning into a fictional film will get well-paid and thus making their lives a little more stable. Maybe the change is minor but I wish to help overcome their hardships.

3

Wang: You have been making films all along, but later on you were less visible in the documentary world. After 2003, when film festivals were booming, you gave us the impression that you just disappeared. Has *Love Story of Mr. An* been shown at the Independent Film Festivals?

Yang: It was once shown in Amsterdam. Yes, I tried to stay away from the public eye. I am not totally immersed in my work even nowadays. After all I need to raise my child. I shoot very spontaneously. I go to work when I want. I do not have a timetable. I throw a lot of footage away after shooting, without cutting it. After I finished *Dancing Together*, I thought I would switch to fictional films, because the fictional nature makes it easy for you, while documentaries usually touch on heavy subject matters. That would exhaust you, and can become a burden over time. I thought fictional films might be appropriate for me, and then I looked for funding. With two million RMB, I started shooting it on myself. Later on, it seemed to me that even

fictional films cannot get rid of the observation of the reality.

Wang: After watching *Longing for the Rain*, I can see the huge influence documentaries have had on you. Can you comment on how documentaries have helped you?

Yang: It's the long-term self-training, self-observation, and judgement of people, all of these. Moreover, I shoot all my documentaries and hold the camera all by myself. These trainings accumulate, so when I turned to fictional films, I have my own characteristics and style. *Longing for the Rain* was also said by critics then to be very much like a documentary, but it is not a documentary. In fact, I did not combine it well enough, so half of it is like a documentary and half of it is like a fictional film. *Longing for the Rain* touches on a lot of taboos, don't you think? It is probably the last batch of independent films. Themes like eroticism, religion and ghosts that can't be expressed are just there.

If we talk about *Longing for the Rain*, *Spring Tide* and now *Song of Spring*, I think the most enjoyable one I have done would be *Longing for the Rain*. All the taboos are not taboos for me anymore. All the expressions do not need to be carefully considered, and I did not think about submitting it to the censor. The actress is great. She showed her body to me and the cinematographer with all her trust. I did not have a script, just a piece of paper and I started shooting. That was something that could only be done on the basis of full trust among us.

Wang: I did find a lot of characteristics of documentary when watching it. For example, a lot of documentary techniques are used when shooting the scenery and the outside world. Of course, I have seen your *Temple*, and I know how it relates to *Longing for the Rain*. The latter touches upon your personal disturbance, and has your personal life experiences in it, right?

Yang: Yes. In fact, this is like a writer writing novels. Many authors write about people and lives they are familiar with. In fact, I would love to put *Song of Spring* out of my own shadow, otherwise people would say that she always makes a film about her own life.

Wang: That is fine; we can see the author's own experience in many films.

Yang: In 2010, the word 'depression' was still new to people. Now depression is everywhere, and there is something prophetic in the film *Longing for the Rain*.

Wang: You have captured the state of depression quite well; falling into a kind of mental confusion and not being able to sort out the outside world clearly. After *Longing for the Rain* came *Spring Tide*, which also contains a lot of your own experiences, right? You should not think that incorporating your own experiences is a curse. I think it guarantees the truth.

Yang: Thanks. But my mum is definitely not the prototype of the one in *Spring Tide*. As our generation, I value the defamiliarization in our familiar daily lives. I have always valued that. Some old people look so average, yet I would like to find out something special in them. The mother in *Spring Tide* represents thousands of tamed mothers of that generation all over China. How can I foreground the characters' difference? The family and relationship between mother and daughter in *Spring Tide* is very typical. We have seen too many loving mothers who devote their life to their families, but the number of families in which people treat each other like enemies is not small. I think I tend to look for something like that.

A group of square dancers is no big deal, it is very mundane, but I see that beauty of love in it. There are wonderful things everywhere around me, and I just really want to train myself to have eyes to see them. In *Song of Spring*, we can see the image of an old generation of intellectuals who are often found on buses, on university campuses, in parks, but such figures are slowly disappearing. Their voices are being silenced. In fact, they are living around us. I want to focus on them. How would they spend their old age after being through so many turbulences? My understanding of politics is that it is weaved into our daily lives. It might not be grand but exists in our everyday bowl of porridge, in a cup of tea, in a bed. I want to look for it from these details.

Wang: Why is this subject matter so attractive to you? To express a female intellectual rather than a male one?

Yang: Well, I have always said it was the life experience that turned me into a feminist. After I bore a baby, the first documentary I made was *Sorority Director*, which is about housework agencies, marriage registration offices and family planning departments. Why did I run off to make *Sorority Director* as soon as I gave birth to a child? Some people would ask: were you influenced by some experience? No. It was my body telling me to look at the most important stage of a woman's journey in her life. It was the same case with *Old Men*; those people were attractive enough to me to turn their lives into a piece of work.

杨荔钠：是生活让我变成了女性主义者

王小鲁

中国第一部 DV作品《老头》就是杨荔钠拍摄的。她进入纪录片领域的路径很独特，当时她是话剧团演员，她是从表演和人物的角度发现了街头一群聊天的老人们的美，所以她开始了拍摄。杨荔钠的创作非常借重直觉的力量，往往因此能够打破固有的电影模式。而这次交谈，电影实践所给予她的丰富的电影观念，也让我印象深刻。

大概 2001年左右，我将她的《家庭录像带》和王芬的《不快乐的不止一个》拿到影展上一起展映，并称之为中国家庭私影像的“双璧”。《家庭录像带》给予我的印象极其强烈，而杨荔钠运用摄像机的方式也富有创造力。早年很多人认为作为演员的杨荔钠拍片子只是一时兴起，很快就会从电影导演领域脱离，但杨以自己的方式介入影像，到现在作品众多，目前她的第三部剧情片《春歌》已经开始勘景了，而完成的纪录片有《老头》、《家庭录像带》、《野草》、《我的邻居说鬼子》、《老安》等六七部。

2021年七月十八日，在北京罗马湖畔一个餐厅内，我们先是约了朱文等人一起吃午饭，等到饭后和杨单独对话时，大家都已经有点疲倦，但我认为本次谈话还是勾勒了她的创作的轮廓，她也对自己的创作特色做了很好的提炼。

王小鲁（以下简称王）：你最近十年从纪录片转向了剧情片，我记得你是二〇一二年去鹿特丹电影节放映《春梦》，那次我们还见过面。这部作品是从什么时候开始制作的？

杨荔钠（以下简称杨）：对，那是从二〇一〇年开机的，出来是二〇一三年，当中补拍了很长时间。

王：我记得在你家看过你最后的一个纪录片叫《寺庙》，粗剪版，我忘记是哪年了。

杨：二〇〇八年，就是大地震那一年。

王：在那之后，你就开始转型做剧情片了吧？后来还拍纪录片吗？

杨：一直在拍，纪录片在我的职业生涯里，有一天我可能不会做剧情片，但我一直会拍纪录片。纪录片之前拍过很多，比如说长春的《妇女主任》，妇联、家庭中心、计划生育中心、婚姻登记站这四个机构的主任，拍了她们的日常工作情况，但是最后也没有剪出来。现在计划生育相关规定一直在变，我还是想回去接着拍。

王：这是哪年的事情？

杨：二〇〇四年，我刚生完小孩，带着小孩在长春拍的。

王：你最早拍片子是在那一年？

杨：一九九六年，其实最早的时候是在九五年拍孤儿院的《野草》，比《老头》还早，当时是大学的表演系交表演作业，我就走到了青岛一座山上，山上装满了社会福利院、精神病院、养老院，当时那些机构特别吸引我，进去以后就看到那些孤儿院的小孩。记得九五年的时候，当时我借的海军宣传站的摄像机，抢拍了他们一个冬天的日常生活，各种原因，最后就是拍一些零星的片段。我知道这些片段是很珍贵的，拍下来，但是一直没用，之后我拍完《老头》，又接着回去拍《野草》，所以孤儿院这个纪录片到现在已经过去二十多年了。

王：九六年拍《老头》就用了 DV 了是吧，之前是用了 beta？

杨：对，大摄像机。其实按理说最早我使用摄像机来记录就是在一九九五年，孤儿院的那些素材。

王：一九九六年的 DV 是在哪里买的？

杨：健农公司，当时为数不多的一家私立影像器材租赁和销售公司，他们进口的机器也没有多少。我后来的剪辑机也是从那里买的，当时中央台也没有几个，很大的那种操控台，后来很后悔把它给卖了，应该留着。

王：DV 的剪辑机吗？

杨：不仅仅是 DV 的。当时沈晓闽还有好多人找我来问这台机器，后来出现电脑了。当时卖了。

王：当年我们好像还交流过关于这台机器的价格，似乎十五万入手的是吧？

杨：二十多万，《老头》是一九九九年出来的，这台机器应该是在九八年左右买的。

王：你这个 EZ1 是松下的吧？可以感受到影像偏冷偏绿，Sony 感光度就更加流光溢彩的。

杨：松下。那个机器拍起来很自由。带子很贵，一百块钱一盘，六十分钟。我从十几岁就有写日记的习惯，后来一直说纪录片是一支笔，是人的第三只眼，其实我都没有感觉，我觉得纪录片就是一面镜子，对于我这种傻白甜，什么都不懂的，我把我看到的东西像一面镜子一样照射下来，这是最好的方法。我那个时候还没有什么剪辑、取舍的能力，但是我知道要把我拍摄的东西，就是把那些老头照下来，那些老头也总是说“照”，“小杨子又来照我们了，你把我们照死了就不照了”，这个照字也挺适合用于我现在的剧情片里边，我就是照镜子，把我看到的美好的画面折射出来，我就完成了初期的拍摄。

王：当时每天用那个机器拍完了，回家想看一下影像，有设备来看吗？

杨：就是通过我这个小机器来看啊，倒带子看。当时我还挺疯的，我妈妈当时还说，我有了这个玩具后就不疯了，就只跟这个玩具玩了。我还是相信，就有一棵很好的种子在我心里，这颗种子在舞台上没有得到很好的满足，就会在这个地方发芽。我是有区分能力的，这个东西让我自己也很舒适，在这里能找到自我存在的价值。

王：我记得你讲过拍《老头》的缘起，是在你居住的地方发现了那些老人家，觉得他们十分有趣，就想着来拍他们。似乎是这样的吧？

杨：嗯，每天路过都能看到他们。最早也是请了我战友的一个老公，带着一批人来帮助我拍，当时还没有决定自己买机器，工作了两天后觉得不行。那个时候没有那么多的影片可以看，但是我知道当时的拍摄方法是不对的，他们介入了以后老头不自在，我也不自在，就觉得不行，就决定不用他们做了，我就自己买了机器。之后就变得很自如，起码那个环境就变得舒适了。

王：当时拍的时候，你会觉得那是一部什么样的电影吗？当时有纪录片的概念吗？

杨：不清楚，真的不清楚，当时素材我拍了大半年。当时拍这些不像现在，一个月半个月地去一次，我是每天、日日夜夜扎在老头堆里，所以半年的时候我已经积累了很多素材，之后有一次我就对着墙号啕大哭，你不清楚这是一个什么路径。那时候只有中央电视台有专题片，但我也不看《东方时空》。我知道他肯定不是剧情片。当时我是一位演员，我知道剧情片就是要演员来演出。但它到底叫什么我也搞不清楚。之后我找了吴文光来帮我看，他就告诉我是拍了一个很好的影片，让我好好做。

这对我来说是一个时间点，让我知道起码我没有白工作，我在做一个正经的东西。

王：那是九七年给吴文光看的？

杨：应该是九八年。九七年的时候还没有拍完。

王：就是说你拍完了才给他看的？如果在当时你不知道它是一个怎样的形态，在什么地方播，怎么有勇气开始的呢？

杨：我觉得这就是冥冥之中的事情，我真的不知道，根本不知道什么是电影节，什么是电视台渠道播出，最早没有那么多设计的，我只想把它拍下来。有一个很重要的原因，当时我是演员嘛，排练演出的都是很无聊的集体主义的内容，让我很厌倦的表演方式，让我觉得我的天赋、能力是受到阉割了的。看到老头的世界至少它是真实的，而且那个真实让我舒服，所以当时我没有任何想法，就想把它记录下来。这是一个很有趣的开始，没有带任何的功利色彩。现在一个电影出来，你反而要考虑发行公司，要考虑电影节，会想很多。所以《老头》的整个创作过程来说，我更怀念那个时候很单纯的自己，那个很重要。

王：你当时受到过什么地下文化比如早期地下出版物的影响吗？拍了就私下流传那样。

杨：其实没有概念。当时我在话剧团是演员，在体制内，对于这些方面是理解不到的。后来有人将《老头》归结为独立电影的时候，而且说是最早的 DV 作品，我还很惊讶。但我对这种排序无所谓，这和创作无关。当年有一点是确定的，我拍的肯定不是电视台专题片，我也不会加旁白。我觉得我还是延续了表演的舞台经验，那些老头对我来说是一个个的戏剧人物，生活在真实的空间里，不是舞台空间。我当时还想，做一个舞台戏是不是也很好？我还和同学商量，你演老头能演好吗？包括拍孤儿院，我是通过舞台空间去看这些人，这些人与我们的舞台的虚假有质的区别。这个片子出来后，我才知道实践社。到歌德学院第一次放映的时候，我才体验到观看自己影片时的成就感和庄重感。

王：在那之前看过纪录片吗？比如说《流浪北京》。

杨：没有看过。

王：那你怎么知道吴文光？

杨：当时是谁介绍的他，我有点想不起来了，反正当时吴文光很有名，至于后来我是怎么找到的也

挺迷的，想不起来了，最后是找到他了。

王：剪辑的过程会征求他们的意见吗？

杨：当时我请了很多人来观看片，每个人都会给我建议，但我用大半年时间自己完成了剪辑。吴文光肯定也给我很多具体的想法和鼓励，让我坚定不迷茫，在任何时候任何采访，我都会说到他当年对《老头》的指导和帮助。

王：你的素材接近于二百个小时，估计也不会有人都给你看完。这一点肯定还是要靠你自己。

杨：有一次电话里吴文光说你现在“断奶”了。他也许是玩笑吧，但我什么时候喝过你的奶？如果现在有年轻导演找我看素材，我会很乐意去看，去给建议。那是很幸福的事。

王：我记得吴文光说过，他的纪录片的 DV 创作部分其实受到你的很多启发。

杨：对，他后来说我给予了他启发，这种用 DV 自由的拍摄的方式让他感觉到很自在。他曾经来我家看《老头》，当时我住的是一个郊区，现在五棵松那边，旁边一个大棚在演出。我当时已经拍大棚拍了三四十盘带子了。他看了这些带子，也看了演出，没多久就做出了一个《江湖》。后来我想我的《江湖》就不用拍了。

王：很多东西都是互相影响、互相学习的气氛。吴文光创作比较早，那时候创作纪录片的人也少，所以很多人会去找他帮忙。比如说胡新宇《男人》的创作，吴文光给予了一些意见，但这也刺激吴文光创作出了《操他妈的电影》，因为这种纪录片作品里面的语气，是一个年轻男人的语气。所以中国独立纪录片早期，小圈子互相借鉴，有共同成长的意味。

杨：《操他妈的电影》我听说也可能也受朱传明《群众演员》的影响。具体不清楚。

王：说到早期电影的一些影响，我早前和胡杰聊过，他就说他最早没看过什么纪录片，拍片子时想到最多的是《南征北战》。那时候，纪录片的环境也没形成，尤其在一般大众那里也很少纪录电影的概念。

杨：如果说潜移默化的东西，我是学舞台表演的，舞台表演的训练是扎扎实实的，我对人物、对场景、对故事是有感觉的。我不排除我在这些方面的判断能力。我也能区别于好坏。拍老头时，一个好朋友和我一起，远远看着那些老头，我说这是一个多好看的画面，也是一张好看的照片。后来《老头》

的海报也都是我自己拍的。我那个朋友，她是话剧团的导演，就跟我说，那你买个摄像机拍成视频多好啊。这是当时的原话，我当时说是啊，当时也挺有钱的，就想为什么不做的呢。

从某种程度上来说，话剧团的那个舞台上实践不了的、表达不出来的，在这个场域里面我是可以做到的。如果有反作用力的话，我从一个虚假的、喉舌的、宣传的背景，被推到这么一个很现实的、很美的、很有人文色彩的——尽管当时我也不知道什么是人文色彩，一个很真实的场域。况且我对老人是有迷恋的，我一直很爱老人，包括现在拍的《春歌》，其实像一个轮回，我年轻时拍一帮老头，我年老的时候拍一对老年母女，也是人到晚年的境遇，而且我现在也在准备拍一些跟老人有关的纪录片。我宁愿从这个角度，来审视我跟《老头》的这个缘起，就人的那个肖像感对我来说，是我可以很快吸收到的。

王：《老头》你总共拍了多久？

杨：两年半，剪片子半年。那个时候片尾也不知道写感谢什么的，因为当时我不知道有感谢的这个礼数，当然要感谢的人有很多，吴文光，司徒兆敦，似乎还有段锦川，当时请了很多看，都给了我不同的意见。

王：你剪辑的时候是什么状态？

杨：当时迷茫啊，不太清楚应该怎么面对那些素材，总共有两百个小时，就现在来说也是多的。后来我就把每个老头先剪出来，老宋大爷我剪了十二个小时，曹大爷我剪了十二个小时，春天的集体活动、秋天的活动我拍了多少小时，是这样整理出来的。

王：然后穿插起来？

杨：对。说实话，当时还有老外来问我，你用的是直接电影的方式吗？当时也不明白什么叫直接电影。还有问你是以女性立场来拍的吗，我说什么是女性立场，我都不懂，真的是盲区。其实就像有的人他天生会唱歌，有的会跳舞，我对影像可能就是有一种很直觉的东西，知道什么是好的，什么是不好的。虽然我很困惑，但我很清楚为什么在二百个小时里我挑出这十个小时。排话剧的时候，我知道哪段戏排得好，哪段戏是高潮，哪段戏人物是重要的，这些我还是知道的。拍摄的时候我是这样拍的，剪辑的时候也是这样，至少我要知道每天老头们什么时候出来，什么时候回去，春夏秋冬，生老病死。现在再回头看这些东西的时候，我甚至都觉得没有拍《老头》的能力了，在我现在的作品里面，还是有些投机取巧的东西，但在《老头》的时候，一切都是那么的朴素，一切都是美的，一切都是单纯的。

王：那时候没有非线性编，所以很辛苦。你拍完了收获是什么？

杨：我的收获有两个，第一个是我觉得以后可以做这件事情，让我更职业化的推动是有的，接下来不就有了 Home Video（家庭录像带）和一些其他的纪录片嘛，我还辞掉了演员的工作，我觉得那是没意义的。另外一个收获，就是一些人在我面前一个个倒下的时候，我看到了生命流逝，真正地有了死亡的直观感受，多年后也会让我有死亡焦虑症，但也让我更加理解生命是什么，死亡是什么。这些东西其实一直困扰了我很多年。

二

王：你辞职原来和你立志做纪录片有关系。

杨：我们那是一个军队吧，山形纪录片节得奖我都没有去，在德国得奖，是在歌德学院给我颁发了一个奖杯，我都没有办法出境。我要一直在那个团队工作，拍这种纪录片是很麻烦的。

王：所以说你也很勇敢，当时纪录片前景并不是特别明朗，你就辞掉了稳定的工作。

杨：所以说我没有任何的功利思想。当时《老头》去山形，也是贾樟柯给我推荐的。Asako他们来北京选片，我当时说不去，我不愿意跟人打交道。贾樟柯说你去见一见吧。就见到了他们，她现在也是非常好的朋友，她对中国独立纪录片的推广很重要。

王：你最早不知道有国外电影节可以参展？还是慢慢了解到的？

杨：我最早的放映其实是在歌德学院。那里经常放一些片子，离我住的地方很近，我老是去看，那时候来了一个德国老教授，其实也是纪录片学者，来交流片子，我那时候刚刚剪成半成品，也还没有定稿，但是也可以看。他们就说，你不是也有一个片子嘛，为什么不拿出来交流一下？我说不行。他们说没啥不行的。就放了。这个老教授就特别震惊，说拍得这么好，就等于他把这个片子送到莱比锡去的，这样这个电影就慢慢传播出去了。

王：接下来拍的就是《家庭录像带》了对吧？

杨：对。《家庭录像带》不是也有我们一家三个人在看家庭录像带子的镜头嘛。

王：对，那个看是在片子当中的，观看家人对于自己家事的讲述，更有意义。我记得第一次看《家庭录像带》就特别震撼，我一直认为那是你最好的纪录片。你很勇敢，将家庭中鲜血淋漓的一面给展现出来了。

杨：其实《家庭录像带》和王芬的《不快乐的不止一个》一起拍出来的，当时吴文光都看了，我的这个他也看了，他当时没有说什么，但是十几年后，他说，《家庭录像带》是一部很好的家庭私影像——我当时想，你当年不说，现在跟我说这个什么意思？我不知道是不是那个阶段，原一男私影像也影响了很多人。

王：我今天又看了一遍还是很震撼，我去豆瓣补打了5分。

杨：豆瓣有《家庭录像带》吗？我估计没有什么人看过。

王：有。打分的很少。我看那些打分的，有的就是我们上次在方家胡同放映的时候看的。那次就是放映了《家庭录像带》和《不快乐的不止一个》。我觉得你这部是对于家庭的一种强行治疗，而且是有效果的。你将拍摄的东西给家人自己看，甚至是强行拍，强行让他们看，当时你爸爸不让拍，你妈妈很配合。

杨：但我妈将这当作复仇工具。后来我和我妈关系很紧张，这个很有意思。你说的这个强行治疗，我认为在某个阶段是有这样的效果的。比如说我弟弟说完这些，他是有些释怀了的；我爸爸看完这个，他是很愤怒的，所以这个电影很“罗生门”。三个人三个立场，你站在谁的立场，就会相信谁说的话。年轻人都觉得很理解我弟弟的，跟我爸爸差不多的那些中老年人，就觉得我爸爸肯定是没有问题的。然后我呢，在这个里面被质疑是没有立场的，因为我不敢有立场，哪一个结局我都不愿意相信，对我来说都是不适合的。我觉得在某一个阶段我们这个家庭是融合的，就大家把这么多年的一个隐患说出来了。有一次，我在英国他们做我的影片联展，我和我女儿坐在台下，女儿看完《家庭录像带》，她摸着我的手说，原来我是从这个家庭出来的。

王：我记得当年的放映现场，你告诉我们，这个片子对于你的家庭起到了一个正面的和解作用。

杨：有，但那个和解是很短暂的，也不能说因为这个录像带，他们又不和解了。也不是。我觉得生活是很残酷的，当年我爸不接纳我弟，甚至我爸有一年在病床上被抢救过来，看到我弟弟的那一瞬间，他还是在批评他，醒来的第一句话是“你为什么来”。这是很残忍的。

王：所以这个也是我们一直都不理解的，拍摄的时候你还是有所回避的，现实太残酷了。我们看完

有点不理解的是，你爸爸为什么对你弟弟一直是这个态度？甚至因为年幼给他作证，帮助他完成离婚之后，他还对你母亲说，他是白眼狼，不要善待他。这是很难理解的。

杨：我认为这是人性的复杂性，真的。我并不认为这个不好理解。我们理解的是一个常规的人，常规的情感。但人性的复杂，如果你不站在更包容的那个角度，很多东西是解释不了回答不了的。

王：还是说你弟弟早期是有什么原因让你父亲这么愤怒和失望呢？

杨：这个我回答不了。比如说缘分，我爸爸会对我好一点，有钱他只给我花，不给我弟花一分，到现在为止。我弟弟在他眼里不是一个成功人士，男人的那种成功学，要独立，要能赚钱养活自己。我弟弟恰恰是在十一二岁的时候，因为家庭的动荡，到现在一事无成。他曾经说，我什么都不做，什么都不付出，我看我能不能得到爱。我前两天跟他说，你已经赢了，你至少得到我和妈妈的爱了，你什么都不是，但是我们还爱你，当时他说这句话的时候我不是很懂，你为什么什么都不做，我们就要爱你呢？人到中年我明白一个事实，爱一个人就是不需要理由，他值得被爱，被尊重，爱不是要一个标准来定义。

王：你弟弟这话说得特有深度，他个人的悲剧也深刻地体现出来了。他帮助你父亲证明母亲出轨，离婚完了父亲又没有按照约定带他走，而是将他留给了母亲。这是巨大的悲剧，其实作为纪录片人物来说，弟弟这个角色最为动人。就是说弟弟在被父亲彻底否定了之后，他对这个世界的感情秩序产生了彻底的怀疑，直接把他打垮了。这种错乱发生后，他失去了信念，弟弟对于情感世界的美好一面已经没有信念了，导致了后来的这一切，他需要补偿，而且在哪里被摧毁的，他就要在哪里得到解决，就是他十二三岁的时候的家庭事件。

杨：他现在不婚，有很多女孩追他两三年，只让他照顾好家就可以，但是他还是拒绝婚姻。他在我这里工作，我把我的车给他，做滴滴司机，他把车撞得稀巴烂，整个人很颓。后来在我妈妈那里，做快递，他做得很努力，就是重活累活，别人不干的他都干。我觉得他身上也有慈悲，他说虽然我没有进入丛林法则的社会，但我还是一个好人。这话我是认同的。我所有的剧本写完之后我都会先给他看。他是一个有脑子的人，他也用大半生的时间和父亲对抗，你听他说的一句话：人不能犯错，一旦犯错了，就没有回头路了。这句话我用在《春歌》里，女儿跟父亲关系的救赎里面了。

王：他那句话说起来太悲痛了，因为他在纪录片里经历的那件事对他打击太大了。

杨：所以他现在对我妈妈的态度就是，我妈妈要他的命，他都愿意，因为他觉得那是一次背叛。后来还是我妈妈在接着他，所以说你就是吃软饭，就是吃我和我妈的软饭。前几天还给我打电话，说

做快递做够了，我说你来帮我整理纪录片素材吧。

王：其实你的《家庭录像带》有一部分是回避的，你的回避不是说你对观众的回避，是对自己的回避。关于家庭的很多事情，如果你分析得太清楚，就太残酷了。你在把你拍摄到镜头，给你妈妈和弟弟重新看的那一幕，你母亲是带着眼泪和笑看完的。

杨：已经够狠的了！

王：对！我特理解你这么做的目的，那个伤痕没有缝合好，你必须给再撕开开。你不这样强行让他们看，他们即使有心，也无法坐在一起去聊那个事。那一幕我还发现了一点，你母亲那个时候才明白，为什么离婚的时候，弟弟一直跟她要自行车，自行车一直在那里啊，你妈发现弟弟是打定主意要跟父亲去长春的，这可能让她更加难过。

杨：我觉得这就是大人对小孩的一种利用，而且是对整个家族的利用。后来我在英国看那场的时候，我发现，其实我最早对女性题材的一个介入，就是从我妈妈身上开始的。

王：的确，在《家庭录像带》里，性别的差异就非常明显地出现了，比如说父亲的那副面孔和态度，很自然地就能激发我们对于男性的思考。为什么他这么强势？是个别的还是普遍的？当然弟弟在里面也是一个特殊的存在。

杨：后来也很奇怪，我妈妈反倒是对我施暴最狠的一个人。某种程度上她认为我跟爸爸达成了一种和解。我小的时候，她觉得我们三个是一起的，长大之后觉得我更理解爸爸多一点，对她来说是一个很深的伤害，所以在很长一段时间她是虐待我的，一种情绪虐待。很复杂。说这一生，怎么能把这些复杂的事情理顺了，不是一天两天的事。很多东西，真的是靠日日夜夜对于生活的体验换来的。

王：是，你后来的很多创作是从经验和体验来的。我觉得那个片子在当年，形式上是很有特点的，很先锋了。那是在一九九九年拍的吗？

杨：二〇〇〇年，拍完了《站台》回来后。我也觉得是这样，我拍完《老头》之后，脑袋里面有东西，包括做演员的时候也是，就是不愿意重复，想办法让自己变得不一样。尽管看起来都是一样的，我也没有突破到哪儿去，但是我把镜头对向自己家里的时候是好玩的，不一样的，但我这么做了这部片子以后，我发现凤凰台等等后面也开始出现了一大堆类似的片子，比如《我的父亲母亲》，成了系列片了。

王：你拍这个片子用了多长时间？

杨：拍了很久了，差不多两年。拍了很多外景，爸爸的生活，妈妈的生活，弟弟的生活，不过后来我把外景全删了，直接用这种嘤嘤嘤嘤嘤的交流方式来呈现。

王：拍这个片子之前，你见过这种方式的纪录片吗？

杨：没见过。真没见过。这个片子素材也很多，也接近两百个小时。

王：那个时候对纪录片有观念了是吧？

杨：对。有一次和余余做访谈说过一件事，我有时候说，这是我的一个观点，然后一票老男人就说，你看杨荔钠现在知道说观点了。他们没当我面说，我是听说的。他们说，当你知道观点的时候，你的片子就不好看了。我心想，他们是哪里来的自信！

王：我以前梳理材料的时候，会发现很多男性导演对你的不信任。说这个导演长得漂亮，《老头》拍得不错，但都是偶然得来的，以后慢慢肯定就不知道去哪里干什么去了。但现在证明根本不是这么回事，太武断了。

杨：我也不需要向他们证明。

王：对。《家庭录像带》后来就没给别人放了是吧？

杨：在莱比锡看过，还是那个德国的老教授把这个片子介绍过去，当时这种私影像在国外还是有一些的吧。在德国放映的时候，反映是两极的。有一部分人非常喜欢，有一部分人就非常地不喜欢。不喜欢的人说你为什么要把你家的私生活拿来给我看，还有一部分——包括国内的观众——就说，这个不只是你家的事情，是所有家庭的事情。我一看争议这么大啊，而且到现在我的功利心都没那么大，第一，我不是为了行活做，第二，我也不是为了影展，所以当时就觉得，我不高兴我就收回来，真的很无所谓。

你看我现在几部纪录片，传播最广的就是《老头》，因为在网上有盗版嘛，很多人都在看。其实我还有好多片子在国内一次没放过，像《野草》、《春梦》，还有《我的邻居说鬼子》，都是在国内一次也没有放过，《老安》只放了几次。

我觉得《我的邻居说鬼子》很有意思，我只是在香港放过一次，正好是跟日本战争多少年的时候。那时候我拍《老头》到尾声了，刚有了录像带《辛德勒的名单》。在这部片子的开头，我写了一段：“我刚看完辛德勒的名单，片尾有一群老人在向辛德勒献花，我也想到我的长辈，我下楼去找他们，听他们讲了过去的的事情。”我觉得特别可爱。

当时我就拿着摄像机下楼了，茶余饭后，老头老太太在院子里，有吃面条的，有聊天的，晚上凉快嘛，我就去访问了一圈，也就拍一个星期吧。当时拍的时候我特别的震惊，百分之七八十的老头老太都是笑着跟你讲完最残忍的事情。“哎呀，那天早晨啊，一群日本鬼子开着摩托车就来了，一把火就把我们家全给烧了，我那三个兄弟的头就都没了。”一个人说这样无所谓，两个人这样说也无所谓，后来很多老人都这样讲述我有点震惊，我看过一些二战讲犹太人的电影，都是很凝重、很沉思的一种表达，我就想我们的老人为什么是这样。在电影的结尾一个老头坐在幼儿园门前讲，“日本鬼子啊，好像是有这么一回事啊，但是记不清了，别给我说，费劲啊，聋，你找明白人说去，你要说有没有这事，有，但是确实想不起来了。”

这就是我们的老人，经过太多的苦难，已经不记得哪一次是最让他印象深刻的了，我只能这么来理解。

王：你这观点挺有意思，这些老人经历太多苦难，另外也没有一个正儿巴经处理苦难的传统。对文革也是这样，可能最后就形成了一种奇特的隔膜和麻木感。

杨：所以说我觉得我们的长辈都很坚强，现在我们什么都没经历过，就有那么多的抑郁症，那一代人，包括《春潮》的那个母亲，谁给他们治疗呢，谁听他们倾诉，他们承受的苦难去哪里倾诉，他们不仅没疯，没有抑郁症，还活着，还能去广场跳跳舞，撒撒泼，我认为也行啊。

王：你当时拍了好多啊，《老安》、《鬼子》、《野草》，《野草》是哪年成片的？

杨：二〇〇九年我在法国剪完的，但是那个片子我不满意。

王：为什么呢？

杨：我觉得剪辑得不好，所以我一次都没放，只是在国外参加了几个影展，就收起来了。他们这帮小孩真的是野草，其实现在有家的小孩也像浮萍一样，这帮小孩他们生下来就是苦难，在河边捡到的，叫河东，送到公安局的，叫公安。我很想未来把它变成剧情片，这样也能给这些小孩报酬，他们疫情的时候总是向我借钱，我就给他们看我的账单，我疫情期间借了三十多万。但是平时几千几千的都是给的，他们有时候管我妈要，我都很好理解。没有人能保护他们，他们能长成今天的样子已经

很棒了。我也希望变成剧情片，能让他们生活稍微稳定一些，虽然解决不了什么问题，但是我有这个心愿。

三

王：这些其实你一直在做，但是后来你在纪录片界的公共视野里出现的少了，二〇〇三年之后恰恰是电影节比较兴盛的时候，但是你给我们的感觉却是消失了。《老安》在独立影展上放过吧？

杨：《老安》在阿姆斯特丹放过。对，我确实是消失了很久。我现在我也不算出来，毕竟养孩子。我是很随性地拍摄，很随性地去工作，也没有时间表，好多素材拍完了往哪里一扔，没剪。拍完《一起跳舞》以后，我就觉得要开始转剧情片了。因为剧情片的虚构性，可以让自己变得很轻松。纪录片是你拍完了那种情感很深重的题材，会疲倦，时间久了会成为负担。我觉得剧情片的虚设可能是合适的，然后就找钱，找了二百万，自己开始拍。后来发现剧情片虽然是虚设，但也摆脱不了对现实观察的影子。

王：所以看了《春梦》以后，我还是看到纪录片对你的巨大的影响。你是否能评价纪录片对你的帮助？

杨：就是长久以来的自我训练、自我观察，对人的判断，这些都有，而且我的纪录片都是自己拍，自己掌机，这些训练累积起来，当我到剧情片的时候，我会有自己的特点和特性。《春梦》当时也有影评人说也很像纪录片，但它又不是纪录片，其实是我结合得不够好，所以一半很像纪录片，一半很像剧情片。但你不觉得《春梦》它有很多的禁忌吗，可能是最后一批独立电影的尾声吧，很多不能提的情色、宗教、鬼魂那里面都有。

如果说《春梦》、《春潮》包括现在的《春歌》，我觉得我做得最过瘾的应该是《春梦》了，所有的禁忌对我来说都不算禁忌，所有的表达也不用考虑，我也没有考虑过审。演员也非常好，她很信任地把她的身体交给了我，包括摄影师。我没有剧本，就一张纸就开拍了，那是大家在很信任的基础上才能完成的东西。

王：我看的时候的确发现有很多纪录片的影子，拍摄景物，外拍的世界有很多纪录片的手法。当然因为我看过你的《寺庙》，我知道它和你《春梦》的关系，它里面也有你个人的精神困扰，以及个人生活经验在里面。

杨：对，其实和作家写小说一样，很多作家不也是在写自己熟悉的人和生活的吗？其实我很想拍《春歌》，《春歌》没有我自己的影子，不然大家会说，她总是把自己的生活拍成电影。

王：这也没有什么，很多电影都有作者自己的经验。

杨：二〇一〇年的时候，大家对抑郁症这个词还很陌生，顶多是精神病，但你看现在抑郁症遍地都是，《春梦》这个影片里多少有些个预言性的东西在里边。

王：你把抑郁症的状态拍得也挺好的，陷入了一种精神的迷乱里面，没有办法清晰地去梳理身边的世界了。《春梦》之后就是《春潮》是吧，这部片子里也有很多你的经验吧？你不要以为有自己的经验就是不好的，我觉得那保证了真情实感。

杨：有啊。但是我的妈妈绝对不是《春潮》里妈妈的那个样子。但是作为这一代，我的经验是什么？你有没有觉得，我特别喜欢在日常当中找寻那种不平常，这是我一直以来的特点，有些老人他们很平常，但他们有哪些不一样的东西，我要把它找出来。《春潮》的母亲全中国成千上万个，都是那一代人的样子，被教化训练出来的样子，那我怎样在《春潮》中提炼出这种不一样。而且《春潮》这样的家庭有很多，这样的母女关系也有很多，但之前我们看到了太多的慈母，太多的奉献型的母亲。有些家庭里相互虐待的不是少数，有的一家人就像仇人一样，我觉得我所有的创作脉络都在找寻这样的东西。

一群跳广场舞的人没有什么大不了的，很世俗，但是我在世俗里看到了那种爱情的美好的样子。身边到处都有美妙的事情，我就很想训练自己有双眼睛来挖掘这些事情。《春歌》也是老一代知识分子的身影，他们经常出现在公交车上，大学校园里，公园里，但这个身影慢慢地消失了，他们的声音慢慢地被消声，其实他们就活在我们身边，那我就想聚焦在他们身上，他们腥风血雨浓缩的人生到晚年是什么样子？我对政治的理解是，日常即政治，我不认为政治一定是多大的命题，它就是在日常的一碗粥里面，一杯茶里面，一张床上。我想从这里去找寻。

王：这个题材为什么对你这么有吸引力，表达一个女性知识分子而不是一个男性知识分子？

杨：我一直说，是生活把我变成了一位女性主义者。生完小孩后，我拍摄的第一部纪录片就是《妇女主任》，拍摄的是家政公司的，婚姻登记站的，计划生育部门的。为什么我一生完了孩子后就跑去拍《妇女主任》？有人会说，你是受到什么影响吗？不是，就是我的身体告诉我，是我的身体让我去看女人一生中最重要的阶段旅程是什么样子。《老头》当时也是，那些人在我眼里是美的，他们足以让我把他们变成一件作品。

Nanfu Wang: I Don't Want to Accept Things Passively

Interviewer: CHEN Ping 陈平 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Nanfu Wang (王男楸), born in 1985 in Jiangxi Province, China, is a documentary filmmaker, cinematographer, editor, and producer. She received three MA degrees, from Shanghai University (上海大学), Ohio University, and New York University respectively. Her first documentary film *Hooligan Sparrow* (海南之后, 2016) was selected for numerous international film festivals, including the Sundance International Film Festival and the Academy Awards in 2017, which initiated her career. In 2017, she produced the film *I Am Another You* (我是另一个你), which won the Special Jury Prize at the South by Southwest Film Festival. In 2018, Wang was chosen as a judge for the documentary section at the Academy Awards. She directed *One Child Nation* (独生之国) in 2019, which won the Grand Jury Prize in the US Documentary Category at the Sundance International Film Festival and was a finalist for the Best Documentary at the Academy Awards in 2020. Nanfu Wang received the MacArthur Genius Award in the same year. In 2021, her documentary *In the Same Breath* (我和祖国共命运) was shortlisted for the Sundance International Film Festival.

Wang's career could be regarded as a typical process of 'self-empowerment'. Starting with her involvement in public events, she sincerely expresses her desire to speak out, her encounters with and interpretations of the real world. Her creative works are intertwined with her own life experiences, and thus connect the 'motherland' with a 'foreign land'. If the land where she was brought up was seen as her 'motherland' in the broadest sense, we can safely and strongly perceive from her works the impulse to speak up loudly for, and the passion towards, it. The questioning and revelations contained therein also reveal her courageous grasp of the basic rights of 'humans', which, to some extent, is the most precious character absent in current Chinese documentary production. Nanfu Wang was interviewed online on August 23, 2021 in New Jersey, USA.

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Chen: Did you study film or documentary in China?

Wang: No, I never watched documentaries when I was in China. I was majoring in English and American

literature. I grew up in the countryside and only started to watch movies in my twenties. I went to Shanghai in 2007 to study an MA degree in literature. Before that, I had been living in Jiangxi. In 2007 I got the first computer of my own and started watching movies on it, all of which were popular drama films such as *Pulp Fiction*. Till then, I had no knowledge of documentaries. I came to study in the United States in the hope of working in journalism after graduation. To work as a writer had always been my dream. After I received an MA in literature from Shanghai University, I started to work in the administrative office there. It was considered a good job as I received benefits, including Shanghai household registration. A few months later, I came to realize that I did not like the job at all. My colleagues had been working there for five years, ten years, twenty years, doing the same thing day in day out, year after year. Three months later I was determined that it was not a job I want to continue.

I still wanted to write, yet I knew I was not able to make a living as a new college graduate merely by writing. I started to think what kind of jobs were related to writing, and wanted to become an investigative journalist for the *Southern Daily* (南方日报) or similar. However, because I had not majored in journalism and media, it was quite difficult for me to get access to the field. Over a month had passed and no feedback came for my applications. I thought it might be better to go abroad to study journalism. I had experienced unfairness myself and witnessed some unfairness to others, which made me feel distrustful of journalism in China. I started to apply for overseas MA programmes in journalism and arrived in the United States in August 2011, one year after my graduation. Of all my applications I received a full scholarship from one school in addition to a teaching assistant post with a monthly income of USD1,200. The scholarship and TA position jointly fulfilled my overseas learning plan, which otherwise would be impossible for me, a child from a very poor family. The programme was media studies, a very theoretical one. I had to write papers for every subject in each semester. What I was really interested in was practice rather than research. I went to my supervisor and asked if I could attend more practice-oriented courses such as filming, writing, television, and newspaper. The answer was that all those courses were for freshmen and sophomores rather than postgraduates. Then I wrote to the teachers of those courses and asked if I could audit. That was how I finally sat in with the freshmen and sophomores while doing my postgraduate programme at Ohio University. Of all the courses I audited, one led me into the world of documentary filmmaking. On the first lesson I watched a black and white Spanish documentary about a family's poverty and hunger, the images of which are still embedded in my mind while I have totally forgotten the title. I was overwhelmed by the film and could not fall asleep that night. It was an unprecedented experience for me: before that, I only knew the type of documentaries made by China Central Television, such as those about history, national identity, and the Forbidden City. The films and documentaries I saw in that course gave me an in-depth understanding of this subject and I wanted to do something in this field. Documentaries are like dramas in that they also tell

stories.

Completing that course, I continued with another one entitled ‘Contemporary American Documentaries’. It was in 2011 or 2012 when a lot of new documentary films with different styles were produced. Some were subjective and first-person narration, some were more political like those of Michael Moore, and some were observational documentaries. The teacher showed a new film every week, and I became assured that making documentary films was what I wanted to do: to follow and record a person or an event, and spend a long time (months or even years) on them in order to present a full story. In documentaries, there are characters and stories, and the ultimate goal is to inspire the audience to think about particular topics, or to take actions on certain causes, hence helping changing something. At that point, I realized that I could better fulfil through documentary what a journalist can do.

At the same time, I started to have some doubts about journalism. Previously, I had thought freedom of the press and seeking the truth were upheld in the United States, as I had learned from books. After I came here, I found the influence of the press could only last for five minutes, and news media like CNN, CBS, and ABC were no exception. One headline would soon be replaced by another within three days. I had already become hesitant in my determination to commit to journalism. In 2012, I finally decided what I really wanted to learn documentary filmmaking. I started from scratch. I had never touched a camera, not to mention filming or editing, so I applied for, and was admitted to, the eighteen-month MA programme in News and Documentary at New York University. It was quite an unusual department: the Dean liked to have students from different social backgrounds. The fifteen students in our class were actors, chefs, lawyers, from all sorts of professions, with all of us having no previous experience. The Dean thought that people with different social backgrounds and experiences could produce better and more in-depth documentaries. The courses of the first semester were about ‘how to use the camera’, ‘how to film’, and ‘fundamentals of editing’. We started producing three-minute-long documentaries, then five-minute-long and ten-minute-long films. One year later, our assignment for the summer holiday was to produce a thirty-minute-long documentary within two to three months. Everyone had chosen their subjects, and I wanted to film the poor sex workers back in China. I read from news reports that they were at the bottom of the society, and their patrons were from the same lowest social stratum.

Chen: So, your first film, *Hooligan Sparrow*, was your homework completed in China, right?

Wang: Yes, I was still a student at that time. My programme was one-and-a-half-years long, and I went back to China for two months during the summer vacation to make the film. I edited it during the last semester

back in the States.

2

Chen: How did you find Ye Haiyan (叶海燕) ?

Wang: I read the news on the internet. It was a report from several years earlier, in 2009 or 2010. Originally, she was not supposed to be the heroine of the film, but one of the characters. She introduced me to other sex workers. I did not know her in person. Before I went back to China, I called her to introduce myself, and asked if I could meet her for a documentary on sex workers. She did not truly trust me, and replied that we should talk later after I went back to China. We met each other in China later.

Chen: Was it because of your female identity that you chose the subject of sex workers? Or perhaps because it was related to migrant workers, China's bottom stratum (sorry for using this word)?

Wang: It wasn't mostly because I'm a woman that I was interested in this topic. In addition to the migrant workers and sex workers elements, what attracted me more was that they only charged ten *yuan* each time for their service—this was why the place was called 'Shiyuandian' [literally, the ten-*yuan* shop]. I read from some reports that a fine from the police each time would cost more than half a year of their income, which for me was a shocking fact. I started to think about what was legal, what was illegal, and what were basic human rights within a specific social and legal system. My immediate concerns were their living conditions. I felt sympathetic to them, or actually I had empathy for them: I thought they were my fellow villagers from the countryside whom I had always known about, and I also knew well how they were forced to take this path in their hopeless life. These were how I was mentally initiated to work on this film.

Chen: How long did you spend in making this film?

Wang: After two months, the content of the film totally changed and had nothing to do with sex workers. After I met with Ye Haiyan, there was the incident where the head of a Hainan primary school raped school girls in a hotel room. I wanted to record this incident in my documentary.

Chen: Then this film caused you trouble.

Wang: Yes. The Hainan Incident (海南事件) was the beginning. I somehow got involved in a public

event by interviewing a protest for the first time. My life had no interactions with the characters in the film, and I only tried to fully record the news. I didn't believe the official reports, and I wanted to see on the spot, together with the people involved. Once I was there, I knew what was being hidden. That film was a political as well as social awakening for me. Although I had wanted to work in journalism, I had no trust in the media, and knew there were lies and injustice the society. It was from that incident I came face to face with political violence and power. Two or three days after I went to that protest in Hainan, my family in Jiangxi received calls from the local police. Actually, my family did not know where I was because I hadn't told them about the filming. Also, I was on a tight schedule: I flew from the United States to Hainan without going back to my hometown first. However, my family members in Jiangxi and my former classmates in Shanghai were invited in by the police for a talk, which made them and me greatly afraid. I had not been investigated by the police in person, neither had I shown to anybody my ID card or any other personal information. That is to say, at some point, maybe just by showing up in public, all your personal information could be exposed to and collected by the authorities. The documentary recorded everything that happened during the two months: the protestors being detained, expelled afterwards, and my friends and family members being questioned at the Public Security Bureau.

Chen: This was the first time that you encountered the problem of the social system, and you got involved with the group and got in great trouble. Did you obtain a very concrete understanding and perception of the real Chinese society? Did this influence your future works?

Wang: How can I put it? I think every new work is based on previous, accumulated life experience. For example, my life of the past thirty years will definitely influence what I am doing now. What I went through in making *Hooligan Sparrow* is of course engraved in my mind and has had a profound impact on me. But I cannot say what was the percentage of the influence of this experience on me, because after all, my worldview and outlook on life from my previous experiences determine what subject matter I will be interested in and how I will tell a story. My second film was not about China; it's a story set in the United State titled *I Am Another You*.

3

Chen: How did you discover the story of *I Am Another You*?

Wang: Since my twenties, when I was still in China, I have gone to a train station or airport on my birthday to buy a ticket randomly, which will take me to an unplanned destination. On my twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth

birthday, I travelled to Dandong (丹东) , on the border with North Korea. Once my birthday was during a vacation when I was in New York, I checked at the airport where the cheapest ticket would take me to and found out that sixty dollars could allow me to get to Florida, the southern part of the United States. It was in summer and I went there with an air ticket and a bus ticket. I travelled to several cities, and arrived at Miami. I had no money, so I walked on the street and ran into a lot of homeless people. At first, I felt curious about them: why were they wandering around the streets? What were their families like? Were they still in touch with their own families? I wanted to know their stories, and I talked to several vagrants that day. A few days later, I met the man who later became the protagonist of my film in a youth hostel, where I was staying late and waiting for my laundry to get dry. He did not look like a vagrant at all and spoke in a very philosophical manner. After talking with him for a couple of hours, I found out that he had never settled down and had always been a drifter. I asked him why and he said it was about freedom. I wanted to know how wandering is associated with freedom. I asked if I could stay with him for two or three days to see what his world was really like. He said two or three days would not be enough and only with enough time could I get the real experience. On that, I sent all my luggage and backpack back to New York and started to wander the streets with him.

Chen: In your filmmaking career, what has triggered you foremost has been the pursuit of freedom; so it was in the case of *I Am Another You*. Also, you said you liked to travel alone in the past.

Wang: Yes, that is true. I may not have realized it at the beginning. Later, someone who interviewed me pointed out that in my work, ‘freedom is the eternal theme’. Perhaps that is right; and it is true that, all through my childhood to adulthood, my personality has had an instinctive desire for freedom. It is also true in my choice of career; I am not able to do what I do not love. On the contrary, I would break my shackles by any means necessary to follow what I really want, despite my immediate situation and conditions.

Chen: How long did you wander the streets with him?

Wang: We were on the streets for one month and then I put aside the footage I filmed. In the following two years, we occasionally contacted each other online. Then I needed to go on a business trip to Utah, his hometown. I had never been to that place and naturally I thought about him. He had told me that his father was a policeman and had been a local detective for decades. I was not sure what he told me was true or not. Not quite convinced, I told him that I was going to Utah and asked if I could go and visit his father and family; I also said I would like to show his family what I had filmed of him so they would know about his life. Then he introduced me to his family and his father came to pick me up in his police car. A while

later, we arrived at his home and I said, 'I have filmed your son's life on the street, would you be interested in watching it?' I showed him the sixty-minute-long rough cut; he was crying while watching it. He said, 'Many thanks to you indeed! All these years I never understood why my son chose to live an itinerant life, and I even resented him for it. Now, due to your film, I know what his life is really like, and I felt proud of his wisdom and survival skills. I am so proud of my son. You made me feel for the first time that I was with him in his life.' His father started to impart his own problems, right back to when his son decided to leave home. That afternoon when we first met, I realized that his father was a person of great charisma: humorous, real, with a lot of his own pain as well. I told him that I wanted to continue to film him so that people could know what kind of family his son was from. I filmed him, and what I got to know also upended my previous understanding of his son. This film has three chapters, with each chapter updating our understanding of the characters and their pursuit of freedom.

Chen: Can we understand that both *Hooligan Sparrow* and *I Am Another You* are a projection of yourself?

Wang: I think no matter [whether something is] fiction, another kind of literary work, or documentaries and films, all are ultimately the author's autobiography. The entire work of an author must embrace their worldview and outlook on life. What they are concerned about most and the problems that they are eager to explore are all presented in their works. Therefore, my current and future films are all my autobiography to some extent.

Everything that I have experienced, for instance, what I underwent in the pandemic last year, constantly modifies my previous understanding of the world and generates a new version of it. I think this is inevitable. For me, the ideal situation is that even at the age of sixty or seventy, I will still make new discoveries about the world and myself. When I say that my film is autobiographical, I am talking about the relationships between the individual and the society, and the individual and the world.

4

Chen: Let's talk about *One Child Nation* (独生之国), which is also autobiographical and a type of family archive. After 1949, China started to implement a very severe birth control in order to manage the size of population. Now, because of the problem of plummeting population figures, the family planning policy that had brought great agony to many families has been abolished. *One Child Nation* is a valuable documentation of how Chinese people have been affected by the family planning policy. When did you first get the idea to look at this issue?

Wang: In 2017, I got pregnant, and had the experience of becoming a mother. One year earlier, the One Child Policy had been terminated and replaced by the Two Child Policy, which was covered extensively by domestic and foreign media. I still remember that someone asked me if the family planning policy had had any impact on me. I did not think that my family had been affected. I was brought up in the countryside, and my family paid the fine to have my brother, five years younger than me. However, in 2017, when I was expecting a child, I started to look at the world from a new perspective. The most obvious change in me was that I started to look at everyone on the street and developed a strongly protective feeling for the life in my body. He was the most important and I would try my ultimate best to protect him. When my eyes fell on a passer-by, I wondered what kind of person they were in the eye of their mother. I was surprised with the huge change in my way of looking at the world. Then I started to discuss this with my mum, or to be more accurate, to ask my mother what it was like when she was expecting me. Naturally, my mother told me about the family planning policy, which in fact I had heard about and witnessed in my childhood. I saw my neighbours being taken away for a forced sterilization, yet I had never thought about it before, as it was the situation to which everybody was so accustomed. When I was a child, I frequently heard that, ‘X was taken to get sterilized again’, which sounds as normal as neighbors going shopping in the supermarket. When I was pregnant, listening to these old stories made me feel totally different. They were shocking. I was brought back to the memories of the family planning policy and then I decided to trace back how such a policy was made, and how most of the Chinese population were convinced of its benefits. Now we see it as a huge violation of basic human rights, including women’s reproductive rights, but why didn’t people think so back then? That was a question worth thinking on further, and it was why I wanted to discuss that part of history via my documentary.

Chen: In the film you did extensive fieldwork in your hometown. Do you think that they have reflected on the family planning policy?

Wang: No. Even my mum agreed that it was a fundamental national policy while at the same time saying it was evil and caused many tragedies. After watching the film, she still maintained this point of view. Then I realised that one film is not able to counterbalance decades of tradition, education, and propaganda, neither could it change the viewpoints of the people in their fifties and sixties. Are there any overseas Chinese students who get overwhelmed by this film, start to question the world, and become enlightened? There are many. Many students came to tell me that, before watching *One Child Nation* and *Hooligan Sparrow*, they had never realised what their country and government were really like. After watching them, they started to pay attention to the issues that they had never cared about before.

Chen: Did this feedback also motivate you to continue making films?

Wang: I don't need any motivation to do so; I am always full of passion for creation. I sometimes even have to pull myself back and reduce my workload. How should I put it? When you are enthusiastic about something, you need an external force to slow you down. For me, every piece of new work is natural and spontaneous, because I always have the passion to explore a thing, a person, or a subject. I am full of emotion towards them: anger, hopelessness, sadness, or curiosity.

Chen: I still want to ask this question: regarding your upbringing and experience of learning home and abroad, on what basis is your passion built? What have you gone through?

Wang: What is most influential on my character and life is the death of my father when I was not even twelve years old. That was in 1997 and he was only thirty-three. My father was my best friend in childhood and I kept no secrets from him. He guided me in reading, told me stories, and enlightened me. I was more attached to him. He died of a sudden cerebral hemorrhage in less than an hour at night. It was hard for me to accept it; I had no concept of death at the age of twelve. In the following two to three years, I thought that maybe he had gone somewhere, and I imagined coming across him on the street and asking him, 'how could you be away for so long?' He would then tell me about his adventures. That fantasy was with me for two or three years. For over a decade, from the age of twelve to twenty, I firmly believed that I would also die at the age of thirty-three. That belief that had dominated me until recently when I turned thirty-three. Now, I am not that obsessed with this idea. In the past I felt that I must make my short life worthwhile; I should live a life of two days in one day, without wasting a single minute. I should make my life meaningful, not repetitive, and bring myself to bigger places and to experience more, the good, the bad, and hardship as well. I regarded this world as unfair to my father, who died at a young age, so every day I lived, I lived for him. I see the world through his eyes and continue his life through mine.

For me, to make a documentary film is to experience different lives. In my films, I travelled with Ye Haiyan from Hainan to other places; I lived on the street with vagrants; I interviewed people trapped by the family planning policy. Every film made me to live the life of my characters, and in every new film, I live a whole life by experiencing the joys and sorrows of the characters. For me, experiencing the life of others is the way of living my own life.

Chen: I'm sorry to bring you back to this hard part of your life, which, though, is a very important chapter. From this we better understand your work and why your creativity is never exhausted; we understand further how you empathize with your characters. Could you also briefly introduce your film *In the Same Breath*?

Wang: In fact, originally this film was not on my agenda. It is about the pandemic, and what happened in China and the USA in 2020. It focuses more on the social and political problems in both countries during the pandemic rather than on the pandemic *per se*. In January 2020, I went back to China to visit my family. Wuhan was not locked down at that time, though rumours about an unknown pneumonia were circulating and quickly being quelled by the local government. Having no idea of the real situation, I left my son with my family in China for the Lunar New Year and went back to the United States by myself for work.

On 23 January, I returned to the United States and Wuhan was locked down. My hometown is 300 kilometers away from Wuhan, and my first reaction was to find out if my family was safe and whether I should get my son back. I voraciously reached out for online information, government briefings, and stories of local people in Wuhan. I think most Chinese people were shocked and heartbroken during that period. What's more, we discovered that the government was not telling the truth, and that the true information was quickly removed. Like many other Chinese people, I could not sleep during those nights. The stories I saw made me angry, and cry, yet I had no way to vent my feelings. I was under the spell of making a film about what I had discovered and seen in order to help more people to access the truth.

Chen: Before talking with you, I thought that you were a fighter, and I think most of your audience would think in the same way. But now I find that all your films are based on your personal experience and emotions, your observations of the world, and your own expression. I don't think that your original intention was to expose the problems of the social system and the country. What you present in the film is what we endure in our everyday life.

Wang: Yes. Making a film or writing is about satisfying my own desire for expression, rather than coming from a sense of mission, or the intention to discuss a topic or speak for something. The origin of each film is that I was overwhelmingly touched by something and had to find a way to express this, which in my case was via filmmaking, while in other people's cases might be through writing diaries or talking with friends. My emotions in *In the Same Breath* and *One Child Nation* are common to most people, but they might express them in a different way. I am lucky in that I am able to use films to express and reach a wider audience, that is to say, my perspectives are seen by more people.

Chen: From our conversation, some of my opinions about you are confirmed, which are also verified by evidence from your films. For example, you do not initiate a film in pursuit of artistic and stylistic achievements; instead, we see in your films unconstrained expressions of yourself through the presentation of images and characters. In other words, you have chosen to convey your own opinion via documentaries, and I don't think you make a film on the basis of an established concept of image production.

Wang: Once in Taiwan, someone asked whether I am an activist or an artist? I don't consider myself an activist, but that does also depend on how you define 'activist'. If an activist is 'someone who has witnessed something', someone dialoguing with the world actively, who then takes action either through images or words, then I am an activist. I don't want to accept things passively. On the contrary, I want to actively explore and express. It would be fantastic if my expressions could bring about change, but not all change has to be obvious.

王男楸：我不愿去被动地接受世界上的事情

陈平

王男楸，一九八五年出生于中国江西省，纪录片导演、摄影师、剪辑师、制片人，先后从上海大学、俄亥俄大学、纽约大学获得三个硕士学位。二〇一六年，执导个人首部纪录片《海南之后》（Hooligan Sparrow）入围美国圣丹斯国际电影节，从而开启职业生涯；上映后，该片相继入围诸多国际影展并获得多个奖项包括入围二〇一七年奥斯卡最佳纪录片。二〇一七年，王男楸执导纪录片《我是另一个你》（I Am Another You），该片获得西南偏南电影节评委会特别奖。二〇一八年，王男楸当选奥斯卡金像奖纪录片部门评委。二〇一九年，执导纪录片《独生之国》（One Child Nation），该片获得圣丹斯国际电影节美国纪录片单元-评委会大奖，并入围二〇二〇年奥斯卡最佳纪录片。二〇二〇年，王男楸获美国“麦克阿瑟天才”奖。二〇二一年，执导的纪录片《我和祖国共命运》（In the Same Breath）入围圣丹斯国际电影节。

我们可以把王男楸的创作看作是一个个体典型的“自我赋权”的过程。从介入社会公共事件开始，她满怀真诚地表达述说的欲望、表达对现实世界观察和遭遇的理解。她基于个体经历和经验的创作，与她的生命体验互为一体。她的创作连接了“故国”和“他乡”，如果把她成长相关联的环境、土地看作是最广泛意义上的“祖国”的话，我们十分有把握地从她的创作中强烈地感知到她对此的表达冲动与全部热情。其中所包含的质疑与揭示也显现了她对言说这一“人”的基本权力的勇敢把握；从某种程度而言，这正是当下中国纪录片创作所缺乏的最宝贵的精神。王男楸于二〇二一年八月二十三日在美国新泽西接受了此次线上采访。

陈平（以下简称陈）：你在国内学的电影或者纪录片的专业吗？

王男楸（以下简称王）：不是，我在国内是没有看过纪录片的，我在国内读的是英美文学系。我从小是在农村长大的，二十多岁才开始真正地看电影。我是二〇〇七年到的上海，读文学研究生，之前一直都在江西。我二〇〇七年第一次有自己的电脑开始看电影。但那个时候看的都是独立的剧情片，类似于美国的《低俗小说》这样的在国内流传得比较广的剧情电影。但一直对纪录片都没有什么太多的概念。当时来美国读书，我是出于一个想要做新闻的考虑。一直以来原本想要从事的职业是跟写作有关系的。我从上海大学文学硕士毕业以后，正好学校有一份工作，我就留校了。当时是在上

海大学教务处做行政老师，做一些办公室的工作。大家都觉得还挺好的，毕竟在上海有一些户口的福利啊什么的。但是几个月之后，我就很不喜欢这个工作。因为办公室的人，基本上都是在那儿工作了五年、十年、二十年。同样的工作，日复一日，年复一年地做。两三个月之后，我意识到这不是我想做的。

我还是想要从事写作相关的工作。但是我也知道，不可能一毕业就纯粹以写作为生。那个时候我就想，有什么工作是可以结合写作的。当时想的是去做新闻，想去那些《南方日报》之类的报刊杂志，去做调查新闻等等的。但是因为我不是新闻传媒专业，就比较难，挑战比较大。一个月之后，我发现自己投的所有简历都石沉大海，那个时候我就想，我就去国外读新闻就好了，因为确实看到一些不太公平的事情，有亲眼见到的，也有亲身经历的。那几年发生一些事情，让我对新闻行业有一种不信任感。开始觉得新闻报道并不是真实的。所以后来有了这个念头就出国读新闻，就申请了。二〇一〇年我毕业，二〇一一年八月我就出国了。当时我申请了好几个学校，其中一个学校给了我全额奖学金，加上一份助教的工作，每个月有一千二百美金的工资。我家庭条件特别不好，因为全额奖学金和那份工作，才得以去美国读书。我的专业是传媒研究，是非常理论的专业。每个学期、每一份作业，都是写论文。因为我想做新闻是想做实践，而不是做研究，就去找导师说，有没有更实践的课。比如说我能不能学拍摄、学写作、学电视、报纸这些的。那边的老师都说，那些都是大一大二学生的课，我基本上做为研究生是没有办法。后来我就自己写信给那些教大一大二课的老师，跟他们说我特别想学，能不能旁听。就这样，当时在俄亥俄大学，我在学习研究生的课程的同时，也在旁听大一大二的课。就在那些旁听的课程里面，我上了一堂纪录片的课。那堂课开启了我整个纪录片世界的大门。我记得上第一堂课的时候，看了一个西班牙语的黑白的片子。片子名字我不记得了，内容讲的是一户人家没有饭吃，饥饿、贫穷那些画面。那个晚上我看完就睡不着了，纪录片里的内容深深打动了我。当时其实也很奇怪，以前对于纪录片的印象就是央视的那些，讲历史、讲国家文化、故宫之类的那种。那堂课接下来放的电影和纪录片打开了我的眼界，让我意识到纪录片这种媒介，让我看完片子之后想去做一些什么事情。它也跟剧情电影一样，有起伏跌宕的情节。

上完那堂课之后，我又去旁听了另外一堂课，叫做美国当代纪录片。那个时候是二〇一一、一二一年，就可以看到很多新出的、不同风格的记录片。有个人的主观叙事，第一人称，有像迈克尔·摩尔那样更政治化一些的，也有整个的旁观记录的不带叙述的观察式的纪录片。每个星期老师都会播一部新的片子，那个时候我确定了自己想做的就是这种媒介。去“跟踪”、记录某一个人、某一件事，花很长的时间（几个月甚至是几年），把整个事件从头到尾讲清楚。并且有人物刻画，有情节描述。最终的目的就是，通过讲述整个故事，能够打动观众，唤起他们对某一个问题的思考，或者是对某一件事情有所行动，从而对世界上的某一些事情能够起到一些改变。那个时候我意识到，曾经想做的记者，在纪录片这个媒介之下，是可以更好的。

那个时候我已经开始对新闻有一些怀疑。来美国之前，我认为美国有新闻自由，有调查真相，书里读到的是这样的。但是来以后，包括 CNN，包括 CBS、ABC 这些新闻媒体，同样的它们的影响力都是五分钟，可能有一个新闻热点，可是过了三天以后，又被另外一个新闻热点给淹没了。当时对这个也有些迟疑。学习纪录片之后，二〇一二年的时候我就决定，我想要学纪录片。基本上是从零开始。我没有碰过相机，不知道怎么剪辑，也不知道怎么拍摄。所以我就申请了另外一个学校，纽约大学。他们有一个项目叫“新闻与纪录片”。那个是一年半的学制，也是一个硕士的课程。那个系很特别，系主任很喜欢不同社会背景出来的学生。后来我们班有十五个学生，有演员、有厨师、有律师，各种各样行业的。大家都没有什么摄影基础。那个系主任觉得，有不同的社会背景，包括社会人生经验来做纪录片的话，是能够把它做得更深刻的。第一学期的课就是教“怎么用相机”、“怎么拍摄”、“怎么剪辑入门”。从开始拍三分种的，到拍五分钟，然后拍十分钟。大概一年之后，我们的暑假作业就是去拍一个三十分钟的纪录片，大家花两到三个月，暑假去拍。大家那个时候都有自己的选题。那个时候我就想回国。当时吸引我的是最贫穷的性工作者。当时是看到一些报道，觉得这些人处在社会的底层。他们接待的客人，很多也是社会底层。

陈：所以第一部影片《海南之后》是为了学业的完成，回到国内来做的对吧？

王：对，当时我其实还是在校在读的。因为那个是一年半的学制。那年的夏天我回国拍了两个月。回来最后一个学期是剪辑那个片子。

二

陈：叶海燕这个题材是怎么发现的呢？

王：我在网络上看到新闻看到的。其实报道早几年就出来了，我记得可能是二〇一〇年，或者是二〇〇九年。其实当时，我回国并不是想拍她为主人公，原本想的是她是其中的一个人物，她介绍我认识那些性工作者，然后去拍摄。最开始我跟她并不认识。回国之前我给她打了一个电话自我介绍了，问可不可以去见她，去拍摄这个题材的纪录片。当时她并没有特别信任我，她只是说，你回国以后再说吧。然后我们就见了一面。

陈：关于性工作者的议题，是否是因为自己的女性的身份，所以对议题感兴趣？还是说因为它勾连了中国的底层（很抱歉我使用这个词语）？这个也跟农民工有关。

王：很大程度上并不是因为我是女性而去关注这样一个题材。吸引我更多的是，不管是农民工也好，性工作者也好，他们每次收取服务的费用是十块钱，所以才有这个名字——十元店。在一些报道里

看到，每一次警察的罚款，可能就会罚掉大半年的收入。是这一部分打动了我。在整个社会和法律的名义下，哪些是合法，哪些是不合法，哪些是合乎基本的人权。当时主要是这一点，就是关于他们的生存状况。以及我对他们的同情，或者是共情也好。我觉得这些人可能都是我熟悉的，农村里面的那些人，也知道她们是怎么被逼无奈，走上了这条道路。当时是出于这个初衷，想去拍这个电影的。

陈：这个影片持续拍摄了大概有多长时间？

王：拍了两个多月，然后整个片子变化了，变成了跟性工作者完全没有关系。当我见到了叶海燕之后，刚好赶上了“海南校长开房”的事件，所以整个片子的方向就变了。

陈：那这个影片之后也给你带来了一些麻烦。

王：对。最开始就是从海南事件开始，那时候很懵懂地去参与社会公共事件。也是第一次去采访抗议。他们的世界跟我的世界本来并没有交集，我只是一腔热血地去记录一个新闻事件。我不相信官方报道出来的事件，我想亲自和他们（当事人）一起去看一看。你一看就知道，背后隐瞒的整个的事件。那个片子对我来说，也是我的一个政治觉醒，或者是社会觉醒。虽然以前我也想做新闻，也知道媒体不可信，有很多谎言，社会上有很多不公平，但真正地看到政治暴力和强权是从那儿开始的。参与了那个抗议两三天之后，我的亲人就接到了公安局的电话。我家是江西的，当时我在海南。本来我家人并不知道我在哪儿，因为整个的拍摄过程我并没有和他们细聊。确实也是走得比较急，从美国回去后，我还没有回家。但是我家人，我在上海的同学，陆陆续续地都被公安局找去谈话。所以当时，给我家人还有同学带来了巨大的恐慌。当时我也特别地震惊。因为我并没有直接接触到任何警察，没有出示过我的身份证等等任何信息。也就是说，在某一个环节，也许仅仅是在公共场合露面，他们已经搜集了所有关于我的信息。这一个影片就记录了那一两个月，这一连串的发生的事情，包括每一个参与抗议的人，拘留的拘留，跟踪的跟踪，被驱逐的被驱逐。包括我的朋友和家人都到公安局问话。整个的都在纪录片里面。

陈：这部影片是你第一次切身经历地接触到体制的问题，在这之前是没有的。真正介入到这个群体之中，然后遇到这么多的麻烦。是不是对中国的社会有一个非常具体的认识和感知？这个是否之后影响了你的另外的创作？

王：怎么说呢。我觉得每一部新的作品都是之前的人生经历、积累来支撑的。比如说我现在拍一部片子，是我前三十多年整个的经历去影响的。所以拍《海南之后》那部片子的经历，当然是刻骨铭心的，也是一个对我影响比较深刻的经历。有多大的成分是受那件事情影响的，很难说是占了很大

的百分比，因为至少还有之前几十年的世界观和人生观，这决定了我会对什么题材感兴趣，或者说会去怎样讲述一个故事。那件事之后拍的第二个片子，其实跟中国没有特别大的关系，《我是另一个你》是一部美国的片子。

三

陈：《我是另一个你》这个题材是怎么发现的？

王：从二十几岁开始，包括从国内开始，我就比较习惯过生日的那天，跑去火车站或者是机场，买一张票，比较随意地去哪儿。有一年，可能是二十四五岁的样子，去了丹东，到了朝鲜边境。后来出国以后，到了纽约。我生日的时候正好赶上放假，我就去问，最便宜的机票可以去什么地方，他们就说六十美金可以去佛罗里达，在美国的南部，当时是夏天，我就去了。买了一张机票，买了一张公共汽车票就去了。去了好几个城市，到迈阿密的时候，我没有钱，就在大街上走，碰到了很多流浪汉。刚开始看到他们，是出于一种好奇心，他们为什么会流浪在大街上？他们家人是干什么的？他们会不会还有任何的联系？就想了解这些人背后的故事，那天就聊了好几个人。几天之后，这个故事的主人公在一个青年旅馆里面又碰到了，当时我在那个青年旅馆里等着衣服烘干，一直没睡。他的外表一点儿也不像一个流浪汉，讲的话也非常哲学。聊了几个小时之后，我才发现他是一直在流浪，就是不进任何系统。问他为什么要这样选择，他说是自由。我很好奇的一点就是，流浪有一种自由的意味？那我能不能跟你一起两三天，看一看你的世界是什么样的。他说两三天不行啊，你必须得过一段日子才能体验到。于是，我就把所有的行李背包之类的都寄回纽约，然后就跟他一起住大街了。

陈：在创作脉络里面，关于像《我是另一个你》最初能够触发你的还是你追求自由的一个状态。包括你之前说的，之前也会独自旅行。

王：是的，我觉得是的。当时可能没有意识到，但是后来，也有人采访我的时候，会去总结我所有的作品，什么“自由的是永恒的母题”。也许是对的，也许就是我这个人的个性。从小到大对自由的渴望。天性吧，包括对工作，对职业道路的选择，也是这样，我无法做我不热爱的事情。不管那个时候的处境、现状，最终我都会打破束缚去做，一直跟随着自己想要做的事情。

陈：后来这个影片是跟踪了他多长的时间？

王：那个时候我在大街上住了一个月，就先放在那儿了。然后大概有两年的时间，我们在网上偶尔联系一下。两年之后我碰巧去犹他州、也就是他的家乡出差。那是我第一次去那个州，自然而然就

想起他来了。之前在流浪的时候，他跟我说过，他爸爸是一个特警，在当地做了几十年的侦探吧。那个时候我并不确定他说的哪些是真，哪些是假。我是抱着试一试的态度跟他说：嘿，我要去犹他了，你的爸爸，你家里的亲人，有没有可能去见见他们，我也想把拍的你的素材给他们看一下，让他们看看你的生活。然后他就介绍了，他爸爸就来机场接我，真的就是开警车过来了。开了几十分钟到他爸爸的家以后，我就说：我拍了你儿子在大街上的生活，你有没有兴趣看看他的生活状态？我就把粗剪出来的大概有六十分钟的影像放给他看，结果他一边看一边哭。他说“非常非常感谢你！这些年来我一直不理解我儿子为什么要去外面流浪，甚至很怨恨他。但是从你的镜头里面看到了他真正的生活以后，我很为他骄傲。因为他的智慧和在外面的生存技能，让我特别自豪。你第一次让我感觉到，我仿佛在他身边，看着他的生活。”然后他爸爸就开始跟我敞开了说他自己的个人问题，说他儿子当时要离家等等很多问题。见面的那个下午，让我意识到他爸爸是一个非常有人格魅力的人。幽默、立体，自己也有很多痛苦的时候。我就说，我想要接着拍你的故事，让大家理解你儿子是从一个什么样的家庭成长出来的。所以我就接着拍那个片子了。然后接下来了解到的一些事情，也颠覆了我对他儿子之前的一些认识。这个片子是三个章节，每一章都是我对他、对自由的一个新的认识。

陈：从《海南之后》到《我是另一个你》，是否也可以理解为，这些影片的创作是你自己的一个投射？

王：我觉得不管是小说，其他文学作品，还是纪录片或者电影，最终都是这个作者的自传。你把一个人的全部作品看下来，它不可避免地会带有这个作者的世界观、人生观。在这个世界上他最关注的事情，最想探索的问题，都会体现在作品里面。所以从某种程度上说，我现有的加上以后会有的作品，在某种程度上来说都是一个自传。

每一件经历的事情，它都让我对这个世界有了新的认识。包括去年疫情经历的事情，每时每刻它都在不断地修正。我觉得这个是不可避免的。我心目中最理想的状态是，即使到了六十岁、七十岁，我依然对这个世界有新的发现，或者说是对我有新的发现。刚才说我的片子是自传，其实也是个人与社会、个人与世界的关系的一种探索。

四

陈：接下来我们讨论一下《独生之国》。这个片子更多地带有家庭档案性质的、自传性质。在一九四九年以后，为了控制人口的，中国实行了一个比较限制生育的计划，因为人口骤降的问题，这个对广泛的个人和家庭带来了非常多痛苦的计划现在已经被废止了。我们今天来看《独生之国》，它留下了一个非常宝贵的文献。你什么时候开始有想法来看待这个问题？

王：二〇一七年的时候，我怀孕了，有了成为母亲的那个经历。二〇一六年的时候计划生育政策改编，

改为二胎政策。那个时候，国内国外的媒体都有大量的报道。我还记得那个时候有人问我“你觉得计划生育对你有影响吗？”那个时候我都觉得计划生育对我没有影响，因为我是农村长大的，我们家交了罚款，后来家里有了弟弟，他比我小五岁。二〇一七年，当我怀孕成为母亲的时候，我看待整个世界有一些新的变化。最明显的是，我开始看街上的每一个人，我有很强的保护欲，保护自己身体里面的这个生命，他是最最重要的。不管怎么样，我应该尽我的能力，会用我的生命去保护他。那个时候，当我看到大街上的每一个陌生人的时候，我的脑海里面就会想，这个人在他妈妈眼里是什么样的人。每个人都有一个妈妈，每个人都是某一个人的孩子。我也很惊讶，我看待世界的方式有一个巨大的变化。之后跟我妈妈讨论起来，其实是问我妈妈，当时你怀我的时候是怎样的？我妈妈就很快地跟我讲了计划生育的事情。那些事情小时候都听过也见证过，见过周围的邻居被抓被结扎之类的。但是从来就没有一次认真地思考过，因为它太习以为常了。小时候听过的很普遍的一句话就是“谁谁谁又去结扎了”。听上去就像是去超市买了东西那样家常便饭。到现在我自己怀孕的时候，再听这些故事，会有不一样的感触，让我整个人很震惊的。它又唤起了我小时候的对计划生育的记忆。那个时候我就是返回去去探索计划生育是怎么被生成的，是怎么让全国的大多数人都认为，这是一件好事。但现在我们来看的话是极为侵权，包括基本人权、女性的生育权这些。但是为什么我们当时不觉得，这是值得思考的一个问题。这也是为什么想通过纪录片对那段历史展开一个探讨。

陈：我看到这部片子中，你回到你身边经历过计划生育的人群，进行了一个广泛的田野调查。你在做这个影片的时候，这些被采访对象，他们是否重新认识了这个计划生育的问题？

王：没有。包括我妈妈，在拍摄的时候，她一直说计划生育很恶啊，很多惨不忍睹的地方。但是另一方面，她也会说，计划生育是国策，看完电影以后，她还是那样认为。那个时候我就意识到一个问题就是，你面临的是几十年以来所受的教育，几十年的传统，你不可能因为一部电影，就改变他们这些五六十岁的人的看法，改变他们的价值观，你很难做到跟几十年的教育抗争。但是有没有二十来岁的在外读书的学生，看完这个纪录片以后很震惊，甚至是对世界产生疑问，产生觉悟？很多。包括《海南之后》也是一样，也有很多年轻人看完之后对我说，他从来没有意识到，这是他的国家、他的政府。看完电影以后，才思考一些他从来没有思考过的问题。

五

陈：这些是你除了自身以外，坚持创作的一个动力？

王：坚持创作其实不需要有什么动力，它是我全部的热情。我有时候都要拉我自己一把，说，你放慢一点，不要工作那么多。怎么说呢，当你热爱一样东西到一定程度的时候，你是需要别人让你停

下来的。所以每一个新的作品都是非常自然而然和自发的。因为对某一件事、某一个人、某一个话题，有着探索的热情，然后充满了强烈的情感，可能是愤怒，可能是无助，可能是悲伤，可能是好奇。

陈：我还是想问一问，包括你的成长经历，国内学习、国外学习的经历，就是你的热情建立在什么样的基础之上，又经历了怎样的过程？

王：对我的性格也好、人生也好，影响最大的一件事情就是，我爸爸是在我十二岁不到的时候去世了，他当时才三十三岁，那是一九九七年。从小到大，爸爸是我最好的朋友，无话不谈的那种。我跟爸爸更亲，他引导我读书，给我讲故事，是我的启蒙人。他的去世非常突然，脑溢血，那天晚上，一个小时不到的时间，就去世了。当时我很不能接受，十二岁不到，我对死亡没有任何概念。至少在那之后的两三年，我都觉得，他有可能只是去了某个地方，我幻想会在大街上碰见他，然后问：你这么长时间没在啊，然后他会告诉我他历险的经历。一直存在那个幻想。当然两三年之后，那个幻想不再有了。从十二岁到二十多岁的时候，我一直认为自己到三十三岁的时候，我也会死。我坚信这一点坚信了十几年，一直被这那样的想法支配着，直到最近我过了三十三岁，才好一点。十几年来我都觉得，我要在短暂的人生中，过好我的人生。一天的时间我要当两天过，我不能浪费我人生的任何一分钟，我要让它有意义、让它不重复，让它去看更大的地方，去体验更多的人生百态，不管是好的也好、坏的也好、苦难也好。当时就是觉得，这个世界对我爸爸不公平，他三十三岁就去世了。那我活下来的每一天也是替他活着，我是帮他看这个世界，帮他延续他的生命。

纪录片对我来说就是体验不同的人生。每拍一个片子，不管是跟叶海燕从海南到各个地方，还是跟流浪汉住在大街上，还是去采访关于计划生育的人，每一个片子都让我重新经历那段人生，就是那些人才会经历的人生。每一个新的片子，我觉得我都过了一生，就过了别人可能一生才体验的东西。我去体验他们的喜怒哀乐、所有的经历。对我来说，这就是我生活的一种方式。

陈：很抱歉让你回忆这一段经历。但是我觉得这个很重要，我们也能够更好地理解你在持续创作，比如说《海南之后》、《我是另一个你》这些作品，我们能够更好地理解作者的共情的能力。《我和祖国共命运》这个片子，你是不是可以简单地介绍一下？

王：那个片子我并没有计划要做。其实是它是关于疫情的，关于中国和美国二〇二〇年过去的一年发生的事情。说是关于疫情，其实更多是通过疫情体现的所有的政治和社会问题，中美两个国家都体现出来的社会问题。那个时候，一月份我回国了，去看我的家人。当时还早，武汉还没有封城，社会上已经有说谣言等等，关于不明肺炎的造谣此起彼伏，但是很快又有官方机构出来辟谣。那个时候我也不知道具体真实情况是怎样的，我把我儿子留在家里过年，然后我自己回美国工作。

就在我回来的那一天，是一月二十三号，武汉封城了。我家离武汉还有三百公里吧。然后当时的第一反应就是，想要知道我的家人是不是安全。我是不是应该要回国去把我儿子接回来，我妈妈是不是安全。那几天，大量地阅读网上的信息，政府的信息，包括听在武汉的人的倾诉。我觉得所有的中国人，很多都经历了那一段时间的震惊、心痛。更多的就是发现，政府说的不是真实的，真实的信息都在被删除、很快地被删除。那个时候根本就睡不着。很多人可能经历了那些，晚上整夜整夜睡不着，或者是看到每个故事都让你想哭，愤怒，却没有任何办法发泄。就是因为那种情绪促使我想要把我见到的、发现的，做成一个片子，让大家知道真相。

陈：如果没有经历过这次谈话，我们观看你的作品，可能大部分的观众会觉得你是一个斗士。但是经过这个谈话，我会逐渐了解，这些影片基本上都是基于你的个人经历、情感对世界的观察，或者说是一个表述。我不会认为这是非常刻意地要去揭露这些体制的问题、国家的问题，这些东西是我们每个人都在承受的。

王：是的，作为电影也好，写作也好。一直的最大的需要，就是自我表达的需要，并不是说我有一种使命感，要去讲某一个话题或要为某一件事情而发声。最开始，是我个人的情感被巨大地触动，而不得不去用一种表达方式，可能有的人是写日记，有的人是找朋友说，而我的表达方式恰好是用影像去讲述故事。我觉得我的情绪，不管是现在做的关于疫情的片子，还是关于独生的那个片子，很多人都会有体验的情绪，只是每个人的表达方式不一样。我恰巧比较幸运的是，我能够使用影像去表达，并且传播，也即是我看待世界的视角，被更多的人看到。

陈：通过这次谈话，也验证了我的某些判断。通过一些你的作品，也能够看出，没有特别艺术化地、特别风格化地为了完成一个片子而去做一个片子。我们反而更多的是看到这种行动带来的片子的不受约束，或者说我们只是用了纪录片这个方式来表达，我不认为你的作品有一个既有的从影像出发的观念去创作。

王：之前在台湾，有人曾经问过我：你到底是个活动家，还是个艺术家？我不认为自己是一个活动家，但也要看你怎么去定义“活动家”。如果“活动家”是“某一个人见证了某一件事情”，而且跟这个世界有一种更积极的对话，去采取一些行动，这种行动不管是影像，或者是语言，或者是相机等等，你能积极地去参与，那我就是活动家。我不愿意被动地接受这个世界上的事情，我愿意积极地探索和表达。甚至如果通过表达能有改变，那当然更好，但是，并不一定所有的改变都是显而易见的。

FAMILY AND SOCIETY 家庭及社会

Fan Jian: The Broken Routine

范俭：被打破的日常

Interviewer: DONG Shuai 董帅 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Li Xianfeng and Jia Kai: Back to Direct Reality and the Image

黎小锋、贾恺：回到直接的现实和影像本身

Interview: XU Yaping 徐亚萍 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Fan Jian: The Broken Routine

Interviewer: DONG Shuai 董帅 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

In the films that Fan Jian (范俭) has made over the past ten years, the daily life of the family is an inescapable theme.

In *Still Tomorrow* (摇摇晃晃的人间, 2016), the camera extends into almost every corner of Yu Xiuhua's (余秀华) life: she combs her hair, kills a fish, fights with her mother, and ends her marriage ... When it comes to an event being the theme of the film, from *The Next Life* (活着, 2011) and *After the Rain* (两个星球, 2021), to *The Lost Spring* (被遗忘的春天, 2020) and *Night of Nights* (in production), which were filmed at the same time and both featured Covid-19, Fan Jian's landing point still lies in the dense routines of ordinary people in the face of disaster. His films focus on human emotions and thus inevitably encounter death. During these years, five of his subjects have died. It was only many years later that he realized that death was also the starting point of his film production, but he was unaware of it at that moment:

It suddenly occurred to me that the starting point of my career was filming a man on death row. In 1999, when I had just graduated from university and worked at Shandong TV, I filmed a man who was sentenced to death for robbery and later decided to donate his body and organs to atone for his crime. We had a long talk with him the night before his execution; before that we filmed his family. On the day, we filmed his journey to the execution ground and then in the hospital we filmed the process of his kidney being transplanted into a patient. That was the most important chapter at the beginning of my career: I was only twenty-two years old and so close to both the peril and the continuation of life; I was thinking in depth on the good and evil of human nature and in my excitement at the time I lost sleep. The gentle tone and slightly shy expression of that man still linger in my mind. The film won a documentary award, and I got to know that I was making a documentary. Perhaps it was from then on that I was prepared to go down the road of documentary production. It was a road of no return.

Although this film gave him an initial sense of documentary, Fan Jian's real start in independent documentary making began in 2007, when he had just quit his job at a state-owned TV station and dived into the world of documentary filming. He filmed *Taxi* (的哥) in 2008 and *The Next Life* (活着) in 2010, with

his perspective increasingly focusing on the inner world of people. He also spared no efforts in presenting to the full extent the complex vicissitudes of individual destiny over a long time span. At the end of June, 2021, ten years after his production of *The Next Life* and one week before the public opening of *After the Rain*, we talked about the ideas and changes in his work over the years, his views on and withdrawal from narrative, as well as how he goes along with and calmly handles overwhelming pain.

1

Dong: Your first film was *Reflections on SARS* (反思非典) in 2003, and many years later, in 2020, you filmed *The Lost Spring*, featuring Covid-19. What do you make of the different perspectives in these two films?

Fan Jian: When I was shooting *The Lost Spring* in Wuhan last year, 2003's *Reflections on SARS* constantly came into my mind. There is connection between these two films in that both of them are about the situation of human beings trapped in a plague; but the way this is presented in each film is quite different.

Reflections on SARS is merely an exercise—I would probably call it an exercise, not a ‘work’ in the proper sense. Generally, directors only describe stuff that they feel is really good as part of their ‘collected works’. When I made *Reflections on SARS*, I was working for the TV station, but the programme did not assign me to shoot it. I made the documentary of my own free will: I simply borrowed a camera from someone and started filming. At that time, I was in Beijing, and there was not much space for me to do anything. I could not go into a hospital or anywhere if I wanted to film, so I could only look at the disaster from a sociological, political, even a legal perspective, through interviews. I interviewed many scholars and put some background shots in the film, which now seem very traditional and simple. I don't think it was a very good film, but a proof of my creative impulses at that time, which was the same as my impulse to go to Wuhan—to express something in my own way about this huge event, this huge disaster.

Dong: What was the opportunity to go to Wuhan this time to film *The Lost Spring*?

Fan: This time I was approached by *The Paper* (澎湃新闻), which wanted newsworthy kinds of scenes and asked me to film in hospitals. However, I knew very well that I did not want to film what was happening in hospitals; instead, I was interested in filming communities. Actually, I had been thinking about going to Wuhan before *The Paper* contacted me, but I had hesitated because I would have had to bring a team with me and it would have been a real issue if anyone got infected, as none of us had any professional work

affiliation. I had to be concerned for the safety of the team members.

Dong: You filmed a few families from the Danshuichi community (丹水池社区) in Wuhan, which fits with the theme of your recent films, namely family and everyday life.

Fan: Family is the vehicle for my creative ideas. Since *The Next Life*, what I have wanted to express most is emotions, nature, and relationships of human beings, and to observe what lies in the depths of the human heart. I have tried to explore these topics through families.

Dong: Since you shifted your focus to the family your films have been filled with familial fragments and daily routines. It's hard to believe there's a person sitting there filming with a camera.

Fan: It's about trusting each other. In fact, many documentary directors are able to make the protagonists forget the presence of the camera if they first have time and then are able to establish mutual trust. The establishment of trust is easier said than done, and there are some people with whom I can never achieve it. There are different ways to build trust with different people: building trust with Yu Xiuhua and with Big Sister Cai (蔡大姐) of *The Lost Spring* were different processes. After some kind of mutual trust has been established, your presence goes unnoticed.

Dong: How did you and the main character, Big Sister Cai, establish trust?

Fan: At that time, she needed to talk to people and to be trusted, because she had experienced discrimination, rejection, and fear from her neighbours. She needed to vent her feelings, and I was willing to listen. After that, she wanted people to no longer be afraid of her and I wasn't afraid at all. She thought it was strange at the time that I didn't wear protective clothing, as after all, her family was considered a high-risk family. I had thought before I went in that we should not be wrapped in protective suit. We only wore masks when we visited her place, which was quite unexpected to her, and she thought we trusted her.

I was not afraid of meeting her. But as we talked with her in her home, she would invite us to drink and eat, about which we were hesitant. We need to be more careful as a working team, and every one of us had a family, a wife and child with us. Usually, I would drink water and milk at the invitation of Big Sister Cai, but I did not insist that my colleagues do the same. Big Sister Cai then felt that as I sat next to her I was not afraid of her, which was a rare display of trust during that hard time in Wuhan, where all kinds of human relationships, whether of trust, rejection, or of suspicion, were placed under a magnifying glass.

I was also grateful to the man who grew vegetables on the top of the building: he invited us to his home and treated us to a dish of stewed pigeon that he had raised. This was also unusually trusting for that time. Before then it was normal for us to make food and drink together with the documentary characters when we were filming in their homes. However, during the pandemic, most people would not let us in to film, let alone to eat at their table.

Big Sister Cai also appreciated the trust we showed in her. Her daughter told us later she was grateful to us for easing her mother's anxiety—what I call 'psychological massage'. In fact, all we did were very simple things like comforting her, keeping her company, and sitting together with her.

Dong: There is a rather poignant scene in the film, where people are stood in the corridor talking directly in front of Big Sister Cai: 'Who gets Covid? Those who like square dancing.' Big Sister Cai is just standing there awkwardly.

Fan: Yes. And she defended herself weakly: 'We don't dance.' Three types of human nature, which we can see from history and which will extend into the future, are embodied in that scene: the sufferers—the excluded; those who join a group to exclude others; and people who are empathetic, like the girl in the middle. This also echoed what I had referred to in some of my interviews: the distinction and exploration of human nature in *Illness as Metaphor* and *AIDS and Its Metaphors* by Susan Sontag. People categorised and excluded sick people and strangely tainted disease with moral overtones, such as tuberculosis being a graceful disease for the cultured, while cancer is a punishment from God, which went beyond the true sense of disease itself. These kind of perceptions had existed throughout history, only I had not expected to encounter them in the community of Hankou (汉口) where people suffered the same plight. I felt shocked when I realized that people were suspicious of each other when they were all in the same boat.

Dong: Before you went to Wuhan, had you already thought of filming from this perspective?

Fan: I am always concerned with the daily routines of human life and interested in how these change when faced with sudden destruction. Filming in a hospital was not my intention because it was absolutely not an everyday venue and very far from family routines; it's a dramatic location where order completely breaks down. I was eager to present what life was like when the everyday life of the neighbourhood was subverted and rewritten by disaster.

Dong: Talking of the assembly of many daily routines, we have to mention *Night of Nights*, which presents

a glimpse of the countless ordinary people hurrying through the Wuhan night. I think it was about you wandering the streets of Wuhan at midnight, encountering strangers and saying goodbye to them. Was this film produced at the same time as *The Lost Spring*?

Fan: Yes. I filmed Big Sister Cai and her story in the day, and I shot *Night of Nights* at night, which was even more interesting. *The Lost Spring* was a joint program with The Paper, which was more traditional and character driven. But late at night, every day when we came back from filming in the community, we felt that the city's nights were magical, or even spooky. Especially at midnight when we were driving back from Hankou to Wuchang (武昌), the roads were empty with all the lights on, which generated the illusion that we were in another world. It was about the third night when we came across the father and son at the beginning of the film, looking for a hospital in the wheelchair at midnight. I thought it was incredible. At night there were some peculiar people going in particular directions and encountering special situations. We met them, filmed them, and then kept on filming. We couldn't film a traditional narrative, because the people we'd film would shortly disappear for ever; we couldn't follow them. Thus, we simply discarded the traditional method; we went to different places, ran into different people in different situations, and captured very peculiar things. When I couldn't sleep at night, the city of Wuhan was thus my creative stimulus. *Night of Nights* is therefore a collection of thoughts and feelings that arose when I was drifting through the night streets of Wuhan, finally drawn together through spatial connections.

Dong: A lot of the moments in this film were interesting. At first, I wondered what happened to this person, and then I realised that he just appeared for a couple of minutes and you did not follow him up.

Fan: Yeah, it's about trying to keep a sense of detachment. When I was filming I reminded myself not to think about how to narrate or how to tell a story. I didn't need to give an account of where this father and son came from and where they went, every character just appeared and disappeared. I didn't know much about them and neither did I want the audience to know much about them. Every encounter was a passing one, which was what people felt like to each other during that period. In Wuhan at that time, you met people by chance, talked with each other and departed for ever. No one would leave anyone their contact details.

What you see is actually the first half of the film. The second half, which is a contrast to the first, was shot this year and is still being edited. The tension between the two parts makes the film deviate from the standard 'Covid Narrative,' a term we can make do with for now. The way I chose to make the first part was so as to not be too narrative and too 'Covid' oriented, while the second half totally helped the film shake off that stereotype. I intend to express the character of the country and its people through the medium of the people

of Wuhan.

I always think it's important to establish a historical perspective. It would be too hasty to make your notes on history just a few months after the event. It takes time to look at what are the consequences of the pandemic. There are a huge number of topics worthy of in-depth exploration. For me, my favourite theme is the shattering of everyday routine, while some other directors like to film extreme loss. Everyone looks at this historical event, examines it, and expresses their own point of view in different ways.

2

Dong: Speaking of the time span that is necessary to look back at the historical event, I remember that *After the Rain* was filmed ten years after *The Next Life*, featuring the same family of Sister Ye (叶姐) and Brother Zhu (祝哥) and their friends. Ten years had passed since Sister Ye got pregnant and gave birth to Chuanchuan (川川) .

Fan: Yes, the filming of *After the Rain* took three years, starting less than ten years after *The Next Life* and finishing over ten years after.

Dong: I think you said somewhere before that you did not want to film anything further with a ten-year shooting span.

Fan: Right. I think it is enough to make one work that long. I had been planning to shoot it with a time span of about twenty years. But I do not want to film those families that are deprived of their members by the Covid virus. Many directors would go for that, but not me, because I did the same thing in filming the Wenchuan earthquake (汶川地震) , which was an even more extreme disaster.

Dong: We can tell that *After the Rain* is very different in narrative form from *The Next Life* of ten years earlier.

Fan: Yes. *The Next Life* was linear in narrative with a more traditional sequence. People lost their children in the earthquake and wanted to give birth to a new one, which was the topic of the film. While the first hour of *After the Rain* is narrative, its later part break up and deviate from the narrative line, due to the texture of life itself. They [the film's subjects] have lived a quiet and less dramatic life in the past few years, which needs to be respected. When life itself has no ups and downs, it should not be deliberately shaped.

After making films for decades, I have found that it is wrong to summarise life in stories. Life itself is too grand and complicated, and thus is inherently rambling and anti-narrative. To try to summarise life by means of narrative is to go astray as a film maker.

In cinema, the story is there to give the audience a hook, to draw them in, just as a means to an end, but never as an end in itself. *After the Rain* is such a film, completely freeing itself from the narrative in the last twenty minutes. This is thanks to my wife Zang Ni (臧妮), the editor of this film; the two of us had been working all along to achieve this. The biggest difference between *After the Rain* and *The Next Life* is that *The Next Life* was too true to life while *After the Rain* has some metaphorical parts, such as the scenes of fog and water, and the title itself is philosophical. The audience will have their own interpretations. As the Chinese title of *After the Rain* is literally ‘Two Planets’, they may think about what the title indicates and who is whose planet. This is the question asked by the girl, the protagonist in the film—something romantic and magical, something that comes out of nowhere but only from a girl—and I think it’s a brilliant expression that fits the film very well.

In the last twenty minutes of the film, you see a real scene the meaning of which exceeds reality. For example, Ranran (冉冉) is looking into the distance, back to back with her father; the father and daughter have a conversation with each other, with completely different representations of spatial distance. The conversation is realistic, yet also freeform, interpreting the multiplicity of space. In the next scene, Chuanchuan has a conversation with her mother about time; she wonders about why there are two words for one period of time when her mother says that fifteen minutes is also called a quarter of an hour. This endows time with a relative quality. At the end of the film, Chuanchuan and his parents are having dinner, and the father is making the seasoning over and over again. First it is not spicy, then it needs more garlic. It is actually not about the meal, but a metaphor of life: adults keeping adding spices and producing all kinds of flavours for kids to taste. It is the taste of life.

The turning point of the scene lies in the death of Ranran’s grandfather, who dies suddenly after appearing on camera in just one close up. It’s actually quite a strange edit, after which the film goes in a strange direction: the river appears; a light also; grandpa appears again in the yard at night watching TV. He is in colour; on the right are Ranran and her parents, eating hotpot in black and white. The scene of Ranran eating hotpot with her parent is realist, but with a strange ambience, as if in a parallel space. Through the panorama, we wanted to express that death and life co-exist. People die, with parts of them remaining in that space: we think the space of the dead is in colour. This understanding corresponds to the first two thirds of the film,

which tells that the deceased lives on in the family, exerting their own influences. The first two thirds of the film influences the mode of expression of the rest.

Dong: The expressions of grief in *After the Rain* and *The Next Life* are different. The grief of Zhu Xingyu's (祝星雨) father is expressed more subtly, inexplicitly, with much withheld.

Fan: In *The Next Life* Zhu's father cried, but he is more reserved in *After the Rain*. The more reserved he is, the more turbulent the audience will become. This is also true of Du Jin (杜进) in *The Lost Spring*: while her husband is lying inside the house, fatally ill, she is standing by the window, facing the peach blossoms in full bloom outside, her back to the audience, which is very emotional, much better than if she was facing the audience.

This change was also made possible thanks to editor Zang Ni, who was responsible for the choice of shots and the flow of emotions. We filmed *After the Rain* together, and she was very close to these two families. This was the first full film she cut, starting in the summer of 2019, and it was a very long and exhausting process during which the editor herself was changing. We would constantly look back and feel the need to adjust the narrative, to understand how life is related to the story, that is, to pull away from life and to create something that doesn't drift on the surface of life. I'm still grateful to the editor for her selections.

3

Dong: When did you have the idea that film making should break from life? I think you were very close to Yu Xiuhua's life when you were making *Still Tomorrow*?

Fan: I filmed Yu Xihua in 2015 at the age of thirty-eight. I think when you reach a certain age, your ideas about creative work start to change. It's precisely because I had filmed many true stories that I increasingly wanted to make a change and break from the stereotype of documentary making. I wanted to remove the shackles of documentaries, that is, the rules and regulations laid down by my predecessors, such as realist language and a clear understanding of truth and objectivity ... These are creative constraints; I want to break with them through all possible means.

The main competition segment of film festivals is in fact for both feature films and documentaries. There is no limit to the type of film in competition. For a creative, it does not matter at all whether a film is documentary or drama, or whether its fiction or non-fiction, and a creative has to break the boundaries of

different genres. This is what I have been thinking about for a few years ago now. *Night of Nights* has some fictional elements in it which you could describe as staged but that doesn't matter to me anymore. The man sitting in the wheelchair in protective clothing was me myself. It had nothing to do with any documentary techniques. This is what I have been exploring the past few years; since *Still Tomorrow* I have become more and more eager for this type of work.

Dong: Though you wanted to change direction since *Still Tomorrow*, that film was probably the most widely shown film of yours and won the Grand Jury Prize at the 29th International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam. Many people were impressed with how the film portrayed her [the subject's] life so closely and delicately. Many people had filmed her and written about her: how did *Still Tomorrow* achieve such an up-close and personal perspective?

Fan: Yu Xiuhua is a writer, and you must also approach her as a writer. If she doesn't think you're interested in her work, she won't want to talk to you. Trust with her must be based on your understanding of her work, why her emotions are so forceful, and how her feelings of repression, longing, and constraint came about early in her life. The answers to these questions should be traced in her life.

The first week I met her, she was surrounded by so many reporters, and I talked with her about her poems and works of her favourite poets to impress her. I still remember she said to me: 'You've come here fully armed.' At the same time, many other reporters did not communicate with her about her works, but nosed into her personal life like: how did you get cerebral palsy? What happened to your family? She also detested other condescending comments, such as, 'Is there a bottom-up struggle in your poems as you write from an underprivileged position?' As for me, I only thought she was a good writer and I was almost unaware of her disability. For the media she was the 'cerebral palsy poet', but for me she had a quick and wise brain and was not disabled; at most she just did not walk easily. And my perception of her was very important to how we got along with each other.

Dong: Many reviewers hold that this film is very subtle in its portrayal of women, as if it is from a female perspective.

Fan: To be frank, I started to get to know about feminism from this film. Zang Ni was thinking differently from me when we were filming Yu Xiuhua. She suggested filming Yu when she was combing her hair and looking in the mirror, truly aesthetic moments captured from a female perspective.

Also, I intentionally made a contrast between two generations of women, namely Yu Xiuhua and her mother. Her mother always said that a woman should have a family because without family, a woman will have no sense of safety. But Yu Xiuhua said, ‘Even with him, I do not have a sense of safety in the family. The saddest thing is that I don’t feel any difference about the family after the divorce.’ On hearing that I felt a spell of irrepressible sadness—you suddenly found that twenty years of family life was all for nothing.

Dong: After the film was shown, there were also a lot of discussions about Yu Xiuhua’s personal life. Did you learn about that?

Fan: There are always interpretations of and comments about any film. Yu Xihua herself thinks that she is not pretty in the film. Or in her own words: ‘In the first half of the film I look unattractive, but in the second half, I look a little bit better.’ She said so herself, and the audience could not agree more.

Dong: Does this mean that there were moments when you wanted to film and couldn’t bear to? To your camera she was extremely open and frank, but were there still times when you could not bear to film her?

Fan: Yes, I think I’m still too soft-hearted sometimes. For example, that night in a city when she was rejected by the man after her confession. You see she occasionally makes fun of other people, but she would never reveal to the world whom she really adores. That night she was in such huge agony that she coughed continuously until she coughed up blood. At that point she wanted me to be there for her, and I really couldn’t film it although I wanted to. I don’t regret it because the trust between us was more important than whether those scenes were either included or not in the film.

Dong: You have filmed huge and intense pain, particularly the enduring kind spanning over decades. You also mentioned that at least five of your characters had died over the years. Has this influenced you?

Fan: I just want to film human emotions, which is the theme of my documentary productions, so I accepted that sooner or later I would have to face up to death. The most painful experience came from the Wenchuan earthquake, which was tremendously huge and took a long time to deal with. The most excruciating part about Yu Xiuhua was her being overwhelmed by the grief upon her mother’s death, which in the end was not included in the film. We filmed the scene of the mother being sent to be cremated and the funeral. Yu Xiuhua was extremely sad. I filmed her but then decided not to include this in the film.

Many times when filming a documentary you have to face death. The critical point is the distance between

death and the filmmaker. If I can clearly perceive that distance, I can face it and accept it. But if death is very close to me, then I will also be afraid and sad; in that case I need quite some time to understand and accept it in order not to become too empathetic.

I also filmed my father's death and his life two years before that, which was unfathomably influential on me. I have not been able to edit the footage because it is too hard. Facing the pain of others, I am affected, but over time this will dissipate because there is a distance between myself and others. But when it comes to my own family, there is no way to dissipate this.

Dong: As you said earlier, you filmed some scenes but would not show them. Does that mean you deliberately exercised restraint and did not give your feelings free reign?

Fan: I don't want to be pushy, neither do I want to be sentimental anymore. Looking back on my earlier work such as *The Next Life*, I can see the sensational element in it and now I think it was naïve. I no longer like candid expression as I grow more sophisticated together with my creative process.

The interesting thing is that I now want to make something that speaks to a certain part of myself from the past. *Taxi*, for example, has always been my favourite work, with its free nature, to which I have been thinking of making something fresh in response. Hence, when I was wondering on the streets of Wuhan in 2021, filming the lives and reflections of various people in the post-epidemic era, I felt I was in reality but also in history. The time when I was filming *Taxi* in a taxi in Beijing in 2007 came to mind; it was a particularly wonderful feeling to recall people talking about how the Olympics was coming, how the construction of the Bird's Nest (鸟巢) [Olympic Stadium] was going, that kind of language and emotion ... Maybe many years in the future I will make a film in another city to echo my present self. When I was filming *Taxi*, I was thirty years old and had just quit my job at China Central Television, fully overwhelmed with my dream of becoming a free spirited, non-narrative and independent self.

范俭：被打破的日常

董帅

范俭近十年拍摄的几部片子，家庭的日常是一个绕不开的主题。

在那部《摇摇晃晃的人间》里，镜头几乎延伸到了余秀华生活中的每个角落，如何梳头发，如何杀鱼，再到如何与自己的母亲吵架，如何结束自己的婚姻……而当涉及事件时，从讲述汶川地震失去孩子家庭的《活着》和《两个星球》，到二〇二〇年在武汉拍摄的讲述新冠主题的《被遗忘的春天》和同时期拍摄的《黑夜在何处终结》，在面对汶川和新冠这两场灾难时，范俭的落脚点依然是在平凡人的绵密日常。由于冲着人的情感而去，总会触及死亡，这些年来，他接触的拍摄对象中，已有五位去世。而他后知后觉，死亡似乎也是自己的创作起点，只是那时的自己还朦朦胧胧，并不自知：

“我忽然想到我的创作起点，是拍一个注定要死亡的人。一九九九年，我刚大学毕业，在山东电视台拍了一个死刑犯。这个死刑犯因抢劫被判死刑，之后决定捐献自己的遗体器官来赎罪。我们在他行刑前一晚和他聊了很久，在那之前我们拍了他的家人，第二天我们拍了他去往刑场的过程，然后去医院拍摄了他的肾脏被移植到一个患者身上的整个过程。在我的早期职业生涯，那是最重要的一次拍摄经历。那时我才二十二岁，如此近距离地审视生命的消逝和生命的延续，如此深入地思索善与恶之间的若干人性。那几天我几乎整夜失眠，大脑异常兴奋，直到现在我清晰记得那个死刑犯轻声说话的语气和略为羞涩的表情。后来片子得了个纪录片奖，我才知道我拍的是纪录片。大概从那时起，我就准备走上拍纪录片这条不归路了。”

虽然这部片子让他对纪录片有了朦胧的意识，但范俭真正开始独立纪录片的创作却是从二〇〇七年才算正式开始，那时的他刚刚离开体制，开始对纪录片世界的探寻。从二〇〇八年的《的哥》和二〇一〇年的《活着》开始，他的视角越来越多地落在人的内心世界，并不惜用极长的时间跨度来完成个体命运复杂变化的完整呈现。二〇二一年的六月末，在《活着》拍摄完成的十年后，《两个星球》公开放映的前一周，我们谈了谈这些年创作中的想法与转变，对叙事的看法与抽离，以及面对巨大伤痛的消解与举重若轻。

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董帅（以下简称董）：你的第一部片子是二〇〇三年拍摄的《反思非典》，在十几年后，在二〇二〇年拍摄关于新冠肺炎的《被遗忘的春天》，你如何看待这两部片子创作时的不同角度？

范俭（以下简称范）：去年在武汉拍摄《被遗忘的春天》时，我确实不断想起拍摄于二〇〇三年的《反思非典》。这两部片子在创作上确实有一定的连接性，但是既有相似也有不同。相似的是，两部片子都是瘟疫的处境，但表达方式差别非常之大。

《反思非典》是一个纯粹的习作——我可能只能叫它是一个习作，不能算是一个真正意义的作品。一般作者要把自己的东西放到一个作品的序列里面，他们会觉得这个东西确实是够好，才能被称之为作品。拍《反思非典》的时候，我还在电视台工作，栏目并没有派我做什么，只是我自己拍关于非典的纪录片，跟人借了个机器就开始拍了。那时候人在北京，也没有太多可以施展的空间，想拍医院也进不去，哪里也去不了，只能是以一种访谈的方式，从社会学、政治学甚至法学的角度来去看这场灾难。那时候采访了很多的学者，穿插了一些背景的空镜，现在看来很传统，很简单，也不觉得有多好。但它留下了那个时候的一种创作冲动，这和我去武汉的冲动是一样的——就是想对这个巨大的事件、巨大的灾难，用自己的方式表达出什么。

董：这次去武汉拍摄《被遗忘的春天》的契机是什么？

范：这次是澎湃新闻找我，希望我去拍医院，它们还是想要新闻性比较强的那种现场。但我不想拍医院，我很清楚医院里发生的不是我特别想去表达的内容，我想拍社区。其实找我之前我就想去，但确实也有犹豫，毕竟我要带一个团队去，若感染了处理起来很麻烦，因为我们都是没有单位没有背景的人，有这方面的顾虑。

董：你选择了武汉丹水池社区的几个家庭来呈现，其实也是和你近些年的创作主题相契合，即家庭和日常。

范：家庭是一个我的创作载体，从《活着》开始之后，我最想要表达的是人的情感，人性，人的关系，想去观察人最内心深处的东西，只是我把这些放在家庭的层面上去探究。

董：后来你的主题转换到家庭后，片子里出现的很多家庭里的细碎和日常，很难想象旁边是

坐着一个拿着摄像机的人。

范：其实就是彼此信任。这种让你感觉不到摄影机存在的状态，其实很多纪录片创作者都能做得到。第一是需要时间，第二是建立信任。建立信任这件事，说起来简单，做起来挺麻烦的，也有一些人我就怎么也建立不起来。每个人去建立信任的方式会不太一样，比方说和余秀华建立信任、和《被遗忘的春天》的蔡大姐建立信任的方式是不一样的。建立信任之后，你再经常出现在他周围，他就不太注意你的存在了。

董：你跟主人公蔡大姐是怎么建立信任的？

范：那个时候，她需要倾诉，她需要被信任。因为她遭遇了歧视，小区里的人排斥她，害怕她，这种情绪她需要去倾诉。我当然很乐意成为这个倾听者，再之后，她希望大家不要害怕她，我一点也不怕她。她当时觉得奇怪，我进她家门没有做什么防护，毕竟她家被认为是高危家庭。但是我进去之前已经想好了，我们不能做那种严密的防护，比如穿着防护服那种。我们上门的时候就只是带了个口罩，在她看来挺意外的，她会觉得你是相信她的。

我不害怕，但是进到家里聊着聊着，她就想让我们喝水吃东西，那时候我们还是有一点顾虑。毕竟我们是一个团队，我要考虑的事情要更多一些，尤其我们团队成员都有妻子有小孩。一般蔡大姐请我们喝水喝牛奶，我就先喝，我不会强求团队成员也喝，但是希望大家不要穿防护服。蔡大姐就觉得，这个人不怕我，还和我坐这么近，这种信任感在当时是稀缺的。在当时的武汉，人与人之间的关系，不管是信任、排斥、猜疑，在那时的环境下都是被放大很多倍的。

还有那个楼顶种菜的大叔，他邀请我们去他家，把家养的鸽子炖给我们吃。这是我非常感激的一件事，因为这种情感在那个时候太稀缺了。以前我们去谁家拍摄，大家一起弄个菜喝个酒很正常，但是在当时，一多半的人都是不想让我们进门的，更别提上桌子了。

蔡大姐内心也放大了这种情感。她女儿后来和我们说，那个时候幸亏有你们，她妈妈的焦虑才得以缓解。我把它叫心理按摩，其实我们需要做的事情很简单，只要安慰她，陪伴她，和她坐在一些，其实都是很简单的一些行为。

董：那个片子里有个挺尖锐的片段，就是几个人站在走廊那很直接地评论蔡大姐，什么人得新冠？都是爱跳舞的那些人，蔡大姐就很尴尬地站在那里。

范：对，她还试图为自己弱弱地辩解：“我们没有跳舞。”其实那个场景里有三种人性。受难者——即被排斥者，建立小群体排斥他人的人，以及有同理心的人——就是站在中间的女孩。这三种人性，从历史到现在到未来是一直会延续下去的。这也是我在一些采访中会提到的苏珊·桑塔格写的《疾病的隐喻》(*Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors*)，其中对人性的区分和探讨在武汉也适用。人们会把得病的人加以归类，加以排斥，给疾病赋予奇怪的道德色彩，譬如结核病就是搞文艺的人得的一种优雅的疾病，癌症却是上帝的惩罚……这些其实都超出了疾病本身的意义。这在历史上都发生过，我只是没想到在汉口的一个同患难共呼吸的小区里，也依然如此。当时我还很惊讶，本来以为武汉人都在一条船上，但其实在所有的小区内部，都存在这种猜疑链。

董：在去武汉之前，你是否已经想到要从这个角度去切入？

范：我关心的还是人类日常的东西。日常一旦面对突然的破坏，它会出现变化。这是我觉得有意思的地方。我不想去医院也是因为那里太不日常了。它是一种绝对的非常态，是秩序完全被打破的戏剧化场景。我感兴趣的是，在灾难面前，日常的小区里陷入秩序被改写的状态，人们的生活是什么样。

董：而要说好多日常的集合，《黑夜在何处终结》（暂定名）里有无数普通人在夜晚的武汉的匆匆一瞥，好像当时你在午夜的武汉街头游荡，与不同的人相遇，道别。这部片子与《被遗忘的春天》是同一个时期拍摄的吗？

范：是的，那时白天拍蔡大姐他们，晚上回来拍《黑夜在何处终结》，这个片子就更有意思了。《被遗忘的春天》是和澎湃合作的，也是比较传统的人物驱动，但是到了武汉之后，每天拍完社区回来的深夜，就觉得这个城市的夜晚非常魔幻，甚至可以说诡异。尤其大半夜，我们从汉口开回武昌，一路上一个人都没有，但是灯都亮着，你会觉得，这是另外一个世界吗？大概到了第三天左右，就遇到了片子开头那对父子俩，在午夜推着轮椅找医院，我觉得非常不可思议，在夜晚会有一些奇特的人，去往特定的方向，发生了一些特殊的状况。我们碰到了，拍下来，就想一直拍下去。我们也不想用传统的叙事方式，反正那个人，你拍一次他就永远消失了，你也没办法跟着他，索性就把这种方法抛弃，而是去不同的空间，一定会遇到不同场景下的人物，或者奇特的东西。那时候，我的夜晚就无法入睡了，武汉这个城市在那个时间点，给了我创作上的刺激。这个片子就是在武汉的夜晚游荡的时候，忽然冒出来的想法和情绪，把他们集结在一起，再建构起空间的联结。

董：这里面的很多片段都很有意思，一开始我还会好奇这个人之后怎么样了，之后才意识到，

他就只是出现在你镜头里几分钟，你也不会再追下去了。

范：是的，就是想保持一个离间感。拍的时候就提醒自己，不要去想叙事，不要讲故事，我不需要交代这父子俩从哪里来到哪里去，每一个人物就是出现，消失，我不知道他太多，也不想让观众知道他太多，每一场相遇都是萍水相逢。因为在那个时期，这就是人与人之间的感觉。在那时武汉，你会遇到各种各样的人，和他聊上几句之后，他就消失了，大家也基本不会留联系方式。

你看到的其实还是这个片子的上半部分，下半部分是今年去拍的，目前还在剪辑中，今年新拍的东西，和去年形成了反差和张力，这个影片就会脱离“新冠叙事”，让我们暂且用这个词形容吧。黑夜的上半部分那么拍，也是因为不想太叙事，不想太“新冠”，今年新拍的部分就完全跳脱出了这个框架。我试图对这个国家和国民的性格有所表达，只是借由武汉人这个载体。

我还是觉得，历史视角的建立很重要。如果仅仅在事件发生了几个月之后，你就匆匆地对历史做出了注解，那太匆忙了。还是需要拉开一定的时间，来看由新冠分支出来的东西。可以被探讨的东西太多了，我选择了被打破的日常，也有导演喜欢拍极致的失去。每个人用不同的方式去看这个历史事件，去研究，表达各自的观点。

二

董：说到喜欢拉开一定的时间去看待事件，想起你的《两个星球》，是在《活着》拍摄完成十年之后再次回到叶姐和祝哥以及他们的朋友的家庭里拍摄的。距离叶姐再次怀孕生下川川，已经过去了十年。

范：是的，在《活着》之后的十年左一点开始拍，持续到十年右一点，拍了三年。

董：之前好像你在哪里说过，这种十年跨度的东西，除此之外就不太想拍了。

范：对的，把一个做到极致就可以了。我是打算用二十年左右的时间跨度拍它。比方说新冠的家庭，我没有去拍受难、失去亲人的家庭。很多创作者都会想去拍这个，但对我而言，不想那么拍，因为在汶川地震时候已经拍过，而且那次是更加极致的灾难。

董：能看出来《两个星球》在叙事方法上，和十年前的《活着》很不一样了。

范：是的。十年前的《活着》还是一个线性叙事的脉络，起承转合，比较传统。他们在地震中失去了孩子，想再要一个孩子，就是围绕这件事。《两个星球》它的前一个小时还是叙事，到后面慢慢就散开了，偏离了叙事轨道，这也是因为他们生活本身的质感如此。他们的生活在这几年里是平静的，不那么戏剧性，我们就要尊重生活本身。生活本身没有起承转合，就不用刻意塑造。

创作了几十年，发现用故事去总结生活是错的。生活本身太宏大太复杂，它本身是散漫的，反叙事的。若试图用叙事的手段去总结，作为创作者本身就误入歧途了。

在电影里，故事是为了给观众一个钩子，吸引观众看下去，只是一个手段，但是千万别成为目的。《两个星球》对这个思考加以了贯彻，在影片的最后二十分钟彻底超脱了叙事，这也要感谢我太太臧妮，她是这个片子的剪辑，而这也是我们俩一直在磨的事情。它和《活着》最大的区别，就是《活着》太实了，而《两个星球》里要有一些隐喻的部分，包括我们在片子里穿插的雾和水，包括“两个星球”这个名字，都有一种哲学意味的表达。观众会有自己的解读，两个星球到底意味着什么，谁是谁的星球。这也是里面的主人公女孩突然冒出来的话——这种又浪漫又神奇的东西，就是女孩子会突然冒出来的想法——我觉得这是神来之笔，非常契合这个影片的表达。

电影的后二十分钟，你看到的是一个现实的场景，同时又有超出现实的意义。比如冉冉看着远处，和爸爸背靠着背，父女俩对空间距离的表述完全不一样，这些谈话是现实的，但是却有一种写意感，阐释空间的多义性。包括下一场川川和妈妈关于时间的对话，妈妈说十五分钟又叫一刻钟，川川就在那琢磨，一个时间为什么有两个称呼，这个时间也有了相对性。还有影片结尾，川川和爸爸妈妈吃饭，爸爸就一遍遍地去调那个调料，一会儿不够辣，一会儿蒜不够，来来回回地加调料，这就是对生活的隐喻，已经不只是一场吃饭的戏了，他们的生活就是不停地要增加味道，成年人要将各种各样的味道调配出来，想让小孩子也去品尝生活的味道。

而这整个段落的转折点就是冉冉爷爷的去世。这个人是你之前没有注意到的人物，之前我们给了他一个近景，然后突然就去世了，其实是挺奇怪的剪辑。通过这场死亡，影片就去往了一个奇怪的方向，河水出现了，一束光也出现了，老爷子又出现在夜晚院子的场景里看电视，他自己是彩色的，右边是冉冉和爸爸妈妈在吃火锅，是黑白的。那是一个真实的画面，但是在那里有种奇特的氛围，像是平行空间。通过那个全景，我们想表达的是，死生同在，人死了，但是有些东西还在那个空间里，而我们认为逝者的空间是有色彩的。这和片子的前三分

之二对应，就是逝去的生命仍然存在在家庭里，影响着所有这一切，产生了前三分之二的戏。那场戏影响了整个片子后续的表达。

董：《两个星球》和《活着》中表达悲伤的方法也不一样，祝星雨的爸爸的悲伤在《两个星球》是用更加细腻的方式表达出来的，感觉很多话没有明说，更加的隐忍。

范：在《活着》里，祝爸爸有直接的哭泣，但是《两个星球》里我们做得比较内敛，越内敛，观众会更波涛汹涌。包括《被遗忘的春天》的杜进，她的丈夫在屋内躺着，病入膏肓，她面对着窗户，窗户外面是盛开的桃花，我们只拍她的背影，其实那个背影很有情绪，比正面要好很多。

这样的改变还要感谢剪辑师臧妮，这种镜头的选择和情绪的控制是她来把握的。《两个星球》拍的时候我们就在一起，她与这两家人的关系非常紧密。这是她剪的第一个长片，从二〇一九年的夏天开始，这是一个很漫长很耗人的过程，其中剪辑师自己也在发生变化。我们会不断地回看，觉得需要调整叙事的方法，要去理解生活和故事是怎样的关系，要从生活抽离出来，创作不能流于生活的表面。我还是很感谢剪辑师的选择。

三

董：这种想从生活中抽离出来的想法是从什么时候开始的？感觉在看拍余秀华的《摇摇晃晃的人间》那部时，镜头离她的生活非常之近。

范：我拍余秀华是二〇一五年，那时候我三十八岁。也是到了一定的年龄，创作观念会不断地发生变化。正因为拍过很多写实作品，就越来越不想写实，或者想从纪录片的框架中跳出来。我不要被纪录片的现实主义束缚住。其实纪录片有很多的条条框框，也就是前人给规定出来的章法，像写实的语言，对真实、对客观的固化的理解……这些东西都在影响创作。要找到打破一切创作边界的可能性。

综合电影节的主竞赛单元其实既有剧情片，也有纪录片，它是没有边界感的。什么是纪录，什么是剧情，什么是虚构，什么是非虚构，都无所谓。对于创作者来说，你要去打破这个状态。这个是我从几年前到现在一直在思考的东西。包括《黑夜在何处终结》，就是用了一些虚构的手法，你可以说是摆拍，但是对我来说已经不重要了。那个穿着防护服坐在轮椅上的人，就是我自己啊，那个已经完全和纪录片的手法没有什么关系了，这几年我就想要拍这样东西。从《摇摇晃晃的人间》后，越来越想拍这样的东西。

董：尽管是从《摇摇晃晃的人间》之后开始想要转变，但是那部片子应该算是你的片子中有过最大规模放映的一部，还获得了第二十九届阿姆斯特丹国际纪录片电影节纪录长片评委会大奖。很多人也惊异于这部片子对她的生活如此细腻的刻画，和如此贴近的注视，因为拍摄她，写过她的人很多，但为何是《摇摇晃晃的人间》做到了如此近距离的剖析？

范：余秀华是一个作者，和她的交往一定是作者和作者之间的。如果她觉得你对她的作品不感兴趣，她就不想和你聊下去了。信任必须基于你能够理解她的作品，理解她的情感为什么那么用力，早期的压抑、渴望、束缚感是怎么产生的，这些都要去她的生活里去了解。

我和她认识的第一周，她身边围着太多的记者，我必须让她记住我，就经常和她聊她的作品，和她喜欢的诗人的作品。记得她当时对我说，你是有备而来的。可能只是恰好，有很多的记者不是在从作品的角度在和她交流，而是总以一种窥视的视角向她提问，你的脑瘫是怎么得的啊？你家到底发生过什么啊？还有人对她讲，你的写作是来自底层的，是否有一种底层的抗争……这些都是自上而下的交流，她是反感的。当时我只是觉得她是一个好作者，第二是我不在意她的残疾。当时的媒体都用“脑瘫女诗人”来形容她，而当我面对这个人时，我觉得她的大脑非常清晰，根本就不是残疾人，顶多是走路不太方便。这一点对于我和她的交往很重要。

董：有很多评价说这部电影对女性的刻画非常细腻，像是从女性的视角给予的平等的注视。

范：其实我是借由这个片子开始了解女性主义的。在拍余秀华的时候，臧妮想拍的和我不一样。很多梳头发、照镜子的镜头，都是她建议拍的。这确实是从女性视角能看到的美感。

另外，我也有意从两代女性的角度去建立对比，就是余秀华和她的妈妈。她妈妈一直说，女人要有家庭，没有家庭就没有安全感。可余秀华说，即便有他，我也没有家庭的安全感。最悲伤的是，离婚了我都没有感觉。当时我听到这句话都有无法抑制的悲伤——你突然发现二十年的家庭生活是白过了。

董：片子出来后，也出现了很多关于余秀华本人生活的争议，这些你有了解吗？

范：任何片子都会有解读和评价。余秀华自己也觉得片子中的自己不够美。用她的原话说，前一半的我不好看，后一半的我稍微好看一点点。她自己都这么说，观众就更是了。

董：这意味着你有过想拍又不忍心的时刻吗？在你的镜头里，她是极度地开放且坦然，你是否依然有不忍心拍的时候？

范：有的，我觉得我还是太心软了。譬如在某一个城市的那个晚上，她对一个男人的情感表白被拒绝了。你看她经常调侃这个调侃那个，而她真正爱慕的人她不想让世人知道。那天晚上的她非常痛苦，一直咳嗽，后来都有点咳血了。那时她希望我陪伴她，虽然我想拍，但我真的不忍心。但也没关系，我和她的关系要重于那些镜头拍到或是没拍到的。

董：你拍过很痛苦、很激烈的事情，尤其是跨越超过十年的伤痛。看到你提过，这些年的拍摄对象中至少有五个人去世，你自己是否会受到影响。

范：我就想拍人的情感，冲着它去，迟早会触碰到死亡。最痛的还是汶川地震的部分。那些痛苦太大了，需要很多时间去消解。余秀华让我感觉最难过的是她和母亲那段，没有放在电影里。母亲去世以后，去出殡，火化，我们也去拍了，当时余秀华人已经不行了，非常悲伤，我拍了，但后面觉得，还是不要剪进去了。

拍纪录片很多次都要面对死亡，最核心的一点是死亡和作者的距离感。如果我能明显体察到这种距离感，那我就可以消化它，接受它。但如果死亡离我非常近，那我也会恐惧或悲伤，也需要一定的时间去理解和接受，让自己心理上不要太焦虑。

我还拍过我父亲的去世，和去世之前两年的状态。那部分对我影响是最大的，我有很多素材，但我没法剪辑，就是因为很难面对。对于其它伤痛，终究是有点距离的，我会受影响，但用一段时间是可以消解的。面对自己的家人，则无法消解。

董：也像你刚才说的，可能你拍到了，但并不想放出来。在这些议题上，是否你是选择了去克制，没有任由感情宣泄？

范：不想太用力，也越来越不喜欢煽情了。其实早年间的作品，像《活着》里面就有煽情的成分。现在看就觉得有点幼稚，不喜欢那种太过直白的表达。创作本身也是作者的成长。

有趣的是，我现在想要做一些东西，要向过去的某个自己去表达。比如说《的哥》，一直是我特别喜欢的一个自由状态的作品，一直想做点什么来回应。当我处在二〇二一年武汉的街头，拍着后疫情时代的武汉各种人的生活和反应，我感觉我既在现实中，又像在历史里，我会想到在二〇〇七年在北京的出租车里拍《的哥》的时候，那时的人们用那样的语言和情绪，

在谈论着奥运要来了，鸟巢怎么样了……特别奇妙的感觉。也许多年以后，我会再去另一个城市拍，再向现在的自己回应。拍《的哥》的时候我三十岁，那时的我刚从央视出来，就想做一个散漫的、非叙事的、自由的自己。

Li Xiaofeng and Jia Kai: Back to Direct Reality and the Image

Interviewer: XU Yaping 徐亚萍 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Li Xiaofeng (黎小锋) and Jia Kai (贾恺) have been making documentaries since 2000, producing works including *The Alley of Baibu* (百步街, 2000), *The Messenger of Spring* (打春锣的人, 2001), *Walk in the Dark* (夜行人, 2005), *Peddalling Fathers* (无定河, 2007), *My Last Secret* (我最后的秘密, 2008), *Gold Underground* (遍地乌金, 2011), *The Shoeshiner's Journey* (昨日狂想曲, 2015), and *Ballad of Roaming Spirits* (游神考, 2019). In their joint creative practice, they are husband and wife as well as critical friends; the experience of collaboration and growth lie potentially in the relationship and changes between filming and editing, between reality and image.

Li Xiaofeng is mindful of Cong Feng's (丛峰) comments on their work: it is difficult to predict what the next film will be like. The importance that Li Xiaofeng attaches to this comment reveals two implications of their works for writing the history of independent cinema in China. First, because of the continuity of their practice and the transition of their style, their works are witness to the transformation of independent documentary from the end of China's New Documentary Movement, the rise of the personal DV era, to networked neoconservatism; they also potentially comment on the fractured experience of China in the past twenty years or so. The ambiguous relationship with Direct Cinema in their works reflects the anxiety of documentary directors trying to penetrate reality and connect their experiences by constantly adjust their own position. Second, documentary filmmakers are confronted with, as well as constrained by, an increasingly complex network of relationships in which they take part in the construction of collective ways of feeling. Therefore, to probe their style and its transition provides a gateway to understanding the context of the time and shared feelings.

1

Xu: Had you already been exposed to some independent films when you started to produce *The Alley of Baibu*?

Li: At that time I was working on educational technology in Suzhou (苏州). Before I went to Beijing, my knowledge of documentaries was just some written descriptions, so-called 'documentaries on paper'. Around 1998, I read an op-ed by Wu Wenguang (吴文光) on independent documentaries in *Wenhui Film Journal*

(文汇报电影时报)。According to him, the good point of an independent film was that ‘not a single shot was posed’, which seemed to establish an understanding, namely, only films of this kind were interesting and worthwhile. But I was working on films for the purposes of propaganda, teaching, and business, which made me so frustrated that I wanted to quit. In 2000, I went to Beijing for my graduate studies. Before I left, I wanted to make a documentary, something different from what I had done before, something really meaningful, to record the life of Baibu Alley where I had been living in. I had never identified with my work unit (单位), but when I walked on the street, I immediately merged with my neighbours. I wandered around my street carrying the professional camera belonging to my work unit, filming aimlessly. Then I saw an old lady with her caregiver: the old lady had a romance novel under her arm and was being helped into a small courtyard by the latter. I followed them and that’s how the movie started.

I shot the lives of four families on Baibu Alley in a thirty-minute short film called *The Alley of Baibu*. After arriving in Beijing, Zhang Yaxuan(张亚璇) from Practice Society (实践社) approached me and organised a screening of this film, together with Zhu Chuanming (朱传明) and Wang Fen’s (王芬) films. I still remember it was a sand-stormy day in Beijing, with the sun stuck to the sky like a yellow sheet, and I was in a very low mood. Upon entering, hearing Wu Wenguang greeting Yaxuan and Yangzi(杨子)sonorously, I immediately felt a sense of closeness and intimacy. The after-screening discussion was incentivising and made me realize that the film, influenced by my experience of making TV features, was shallow and did not touch the core of the topic. At that time, Direct Cinema, such as the Maysles Brothers’ *Grey Gardens* and *Salesman*, was held in high regard. I developed an inexplicable liking for these films, which, though I did not know what was really good about them, were a direction I wanted to try in the future.

Jia: When I first came to study at Beijing Normal University(北师大), I only had a very abstract understanding of film, thinking that only fictional films were film in the proper sense. I didn’t know anything about documentaries, and even felt that they were not art. After watching Direct Cinema films, I had a new understanding of documentary films and felt that they were artistic and worthwhile because, like fictional films, they stimulated a strong sense of excitement and experience. We were able to throw ourselves into filmmaking, because we felt that we were making a real film.

Li: We asked Jia Kai’s relatives to get us a film card from the Beijing Film Academy (北京电影学院), and we watched some unforgettable films through various channels. In early 2001, Jia Kai and I went to see Fellini’s *La Dolce Vita* at the Huang Tingzi bar(黄亭子酒吧). Inside it was smoky and full; even the floor was crowded with audience members. We also bicycled to the Central Academy of Drama(中央戏剧学院) to watch films, eager to be exposed to real cinema. There was a small shop in Xinjiekou(新街口)selling

pirated discs in kraft paper bags, from which I bought *Along the Railway* (铁路沿线, dir. Du Haibin 杜海滨, 2001) and *Old Men* (老头, dir. Yang Lina 杨荔钠, 1999).

Xu: What was your original intention in writing ‘To Film a Documentary is to Collaborate’ (记录, 是一种协作) in 2003?

Li: It was mainly about the experience we got from the process of making films. The idea, if it’s borrowed from anyone, was borrowed from Ogawa Shinsuke, who believed that documentary was a world jointly made by the director and their characters, where they were observing and responding to each other. In September 2001, we started to focus on *Walk in the Dark* and worked on it almost every day. At first, we went back and forth between Beijing Normal University and Xiangshan Mountain (香山), then we rented a room next to Bao Jiexiang’s (鲍家翔) home in Xiangshan for an entire two years in order to do our work more efficiently. At first, the blind lady Bao Jiexiang wouldn’t let us in; later we helped Zhao Ming (赵明) with her English and maths and thus were able to access the family. As time went by, they became attached to us and wanted to see us more often and to involve us in some of their family affairs; when they were fighting a lawsuit, I was asked to transcribe the material. When we were filming them, we didn’t think about them as ‘the lowest rung [of society]’, because we were already very deeply involved with her family and had a personal attachment to them. We didn’t have a clear idea of what we wanted to film, it was more like facing something unknown, and how far we would go on this unknown path depended on whether she accepted us and in what ways our relationship would develop.

Xu: Why were you interested in someone like Lao Zhu (老朱) in *The Messenger of the Spring*? Lao Zhu, Bao Jiexiang, the cart driver, and the shoeshiner that you filmed afterwards were all people who made a living via certain skills and wanted to receive recognition from other people.

Li: I filmed two people: Lao Zhu, a folk artist in his seventies, and Yong Kaiquan (雍开全), a local gong master who received government subsidies and thus was officially affiliated. Lao Zhu approached Yong Kaiquan three times in the hope of being able to play for fifteen minutes at the Pingxiang (萍乡) TV Spring Festival Gala on the recommendation of the latter, in vain every time. I still remember clearly that during my childhood, during the Spring Festival, some ‘messengers of the spring’ would play a piece of gong music for you and send you a red envelope, and then you would have to put more money into the red envelope and return it to them, which was a kind of busking. However, in the eyes of the local farmers, those people were begging in the guise of being ‘messengers of the spring’. Probably out of a childhood complex, I wanted to film these people; I contacted some of them and finally located Lao Zhu, and Yong Kaiquan as a contrast to

Lao Zhu. Jia Kai was responsible for the editing structure and making the film clearer in its presentation.

Jia: I was actually very unsure of myself at the time because I had never done anything similar before, but my earlier training in painting probably brought an intuitive feeling to it.

Li: My interest in them might come from childhood experience. As a little boy, I was always hanging out with the vagrants and scavengers in my town and felt a special sense of identification with them. I saw literature journals like *Harvest*(收获)and *October*(十月)in farmers' homes and listened to them reciting poems while building houses, which was particularly dear to me. This was probably the reason that I always paid attention to people such as subway singers and pedicab drivers. To some people, when filming *Walk in the Dark* we were postgraduate students from a prestigious university while our character was only a singer making a living on the subway. There seemed to be a huge class gap between us. But in fact we were so poor that we had to go under the bed to look for coins before taking the 331 bus from Xiangshan back to Beijing Normal University. We weren't doing anything serious and spent all our time on this 'useless' film. Aunt Bao was richer than us, and once she asked, 'Xiaofeng, do you want me to lend you some money?' People thought that she was from 'the lowest rung [of society]', but a person from the 'bottom' was richer than two postgraduate students, and felt superior to the latter. This was definitely true of the daughter, Zhao Ming, who said, 'I am a Beijing native, and you are outsiders.' So, when you were in a real situation, you would find that the differences were not quite what you thought.

2

Xu: Did you use DV when you were filming *Walk in the Dark*?

Li: We bought a SONY PD 150 in September 2001 and used it to film *Walk in the Dark*. With DV becoming popular, Beijing TV(北京电视台), Phoenix TV(凤凰电视台)and some other TV stations started to make short film programmes, a few minutes to ten minutes long. We were relatively poor at that time and started to make short films for TV stations for pocket money. I filmed a PE teacher who collected the *Beijing Evening News*(北京晚报)for Beijing TV.

Xu: What was the editing process of *Walk in the Dark*?

Jia: At the time we had just graduated from university and were preparing to come to Shanghai. We edited on somebody else's machine whenever it was available. A classmate introduced us to a director who had a

professional editing room, for whom Li Xiaofeng helped make videos and thus had the access to the editing room in return. The rental fee was very expensive and we almost couldn't afford it. As there was limited time to use the machine, we had to first prepare the edit outline on paper on the basis of time codes and then edit accordingly, which is actually against the principles of documentary editing. *Walk in the Dark* was filmed with great enthusiasm and a huge amount of effort, and we produced fantastic content that had us rolling around with laughter on the bed in our rented room when we watched it. However, because the editing was always done in such a hurry, much interesting content was not included in the film. We were more interested in people with complex personalities and experiences. Zhao Ming was simply a child with no complexity to reveal, while the experiences and reality of Bao Jiexiang were complicated enough to excite you, and thus we focused on her. Yet regretfully we were still under the influence of our previous experience of filming documentaries for TV stations; we sketched an outline first and didn't really get to play with the materials. Very interesting footage was mercilessly eliminated because it couldn't fit into a pre-established narrative structure. We were not able to control images at that time and were a bit stretched in dealing with such a complex character.

Li: Later when I showed the film to Ji Dan (季丹) and Sha Qing (沙青), Sha Qing said if he was the director, he would make Zhao Ming the main character. That's the difference between people. I majored in literature at university and was under the influence of Faulkner's work while filming. I had literary imagery in my mind: a blind person walking forward against a headwind. That was where the title *Walk in the Dark* came from. The film as a whole presents the mother's fate as repeated by her daughter, and there is a certain absurdity to it. For instance, the blind mother singing with her partner in the subway, but she cannot sing the treble part; the next scene is the daughter singing the same song in the underground, and she can. We were not very satisfied with *Walk in the Dark*, probably because it focused too much on human nature and the family, without expanding adequately on the social dimension. In fact, at that time we did film some scenes with more of a social dimension: such as the blind community in Xiangshan and the rubber factory for the blind. Bao Jiexiang's financial disputes were also related to her blind co-workers, set in the context of usurious loan practices and China's economic development. I filmed a lot of material on those topics but I couldn't get a handle on them at the time and did not include them in the film.

Xu: By the time *Walk in the Dark* was released, China Documentary Film Festival (中国纪录片交流周) already existed.

Li: *Walk in the Dark* took part in the China Documentary Film Festival in Hefei (合肥) in 2006, and for the first time I joined an unrestricted group of documentary filmmakers and had in-depth exchanges with them.

At that time there was a huge disagreement between Huang Wenhai(黄文海)and Li Wake(李娃克). I shared a room with the latter and listened to him criticizing Huang Wenhai's work all night. Later, I had arguments with Markus Nornes at YunFest(云之南记录影像展). He was very negative about Direct Cinema, I thought too much so, and thus disagreed. But it turned out that we actually had the same opinions on some points. *Walk in the Dark* was very well received at the time, but the general audience didn't care about the themes, the structure, and the presentation of the characters; they were more concerned about what the characters were doing for a living. So I was not interested in general discussion, but only valued the opinions of my colleagues.

During that festival in Hefei, we gathered together, talked with each other, and developed a sense of identity. It didn't really matter what specific point of view each of us held, what mattered was the energy we gained from the discussion, which enabled me to make the next film better. This was the great support that independent film festivals gave us—to keep pushing you forward. When communicating with other directors I was in a community of common values and felt from the bottom of my heart that I was producing something of real value. In Shanghai, I showed *Walk in the Dark* to director Peng Xiaolian(彭晓莲), who then asked me to send a version to Situ Zhaodun(司徒兆敦). Very soon Mr. Situ wrote us a letter to express his opinions, huge and timely encouragement to young people like us just starting our career.

Xu: The central character of *Pedalling Fathers* is Liu Juan (刘娟), a graduate of Renmin University (人民大学) and daughter of Lao Liu (老刘). Liu Juan's fate in the job market was a test of higher education outcomes. By that point you had been teaching at university and had your own opinions on the topic of this film.

Jia: We used a DV camera to film *Pedalling Fathers*, and carried it wherever we went. In the county town we saw pedicab driver defending themselves when the police wanted to take away their pedicabs. We filmed the whole process and were taken to the police station, and my dad found some connections to get us out. But later we completely deviated from this agenda. Two of the pedicab drivers' daughters were admitted by top universities in China: Renmin University and Xi'an Jiaotong University(西安交大), which was so impressive to us and so we followed them into their families. As a result, 'fighting for rights' looms in the background. The editing of this film was a struggle as the computer hard drive was too small to carry all the footage, and we still had to write a plan on paper in advance. However, it's starting with this film that we started to edit in real sense.

Li: One thing touched me greatly at the time: a college teacher I knew hosted the show of *Pedalling Fathers* and was very angry afterwards, saying that his students were very successfully assigned [to jobs] after

graduation, and that our film exaggerated the employment difficulties in China, and so on. In this light, the film did present the question: what were parents ultimately aiming for in exerting tremendous effort to send their children to a distant university? In the film we were kind of being negative about parents' support of their children, which, in our eyes, was an internalized instinct. They could only lower their heads, desperately pedalling their pedicabs in the hope of pushing their children towards an outside world inaccessible to themselves, a world that is in fact an imagined figment of themselves. What the fathers had failed to do in their own lives they hoped would be achieved by their children. Unfortunately, when Old Liu finally started to read newspapers and drink tea like a low rank cadre, he died of gas poisoning.

Jia: We also filmed another pedicab driver Lao Jin(老靳), who was not included in the film. His son studied at a prestigious university, went to work at Foxconn after graduation, and in the end chose to become a local civil servant in his hometown by taking and passing the civil service exam. To become an insider to the system was the dream deep in the heart of the pedicab drivers.

Xu: How was *Pedalling Fathers* seen by NHK?

Li: At that time, NHK wanted to make a series entitled 'The New Chinese' in China, and we were recommended by director Ji Dan to join. The other three groups of directors were Yang Lina, Chen Weijun(陈为军), and Guo Jing(郭静) and Ke Dingding(柯丁丁). NHK produced two series in total, allowing us unprecedented flexibility, namely, as long as the length of the film was a multiple of five and it was about ordinary Chinese people, there were no limits at all on content or subject matter. The name of the film was *Pedalling Fathers*(蹬三轮车的父亲) when it was shown on NHK. We had already filmed a lot before NHK called for proposals. We really wanted to show the changes in Lao Liu's family before and after the college entrance exam, which brought tremendous changes to the family, or at least a radical change of identity for the child.

Jia: Finally, we chose two families for the film, the child of one family went to the university and the other did not make it. The NHK people only saw the materials once in Beijing during the process of editing, and to their surprise, the finished film was very impressive, totally different from what they felt about in watching the footage.

Xu: What discussions did you have about Direct Cinema at this stage?

Li: At the end of 2006, I had almost finished my doctoral thesis on 'Direct Cinema as a Creative

Methodology' (作为一种创作方法的 直接电影). The problem with Direct Cinema was that some of its early representative figures made excessive and absolute statements, boasting about absolute truth and objectivity, and thus leaving some theoretical stigma behind. As a creative methodology, together with the attitude of observation that it contains, Direct Cinema can never be outdated. The unpredictable situation and the ambience were exactly what we have been pursuing for in a long time. In my thesis, I concluded the aesthetic characteristics of Direct Cinema were 'not to interfere and not to control, just like a fly sitting on the wall', which was later modified as 'to interfere to a limited extent...', because it was impossible for the director to remain absolutely uninvolved while shooting.

Jia: Direct Cinema implies watching your characters through your camera, which is necessary in any era and in any type of work. To watch means to explore the world with your camera, which does not necessarily mean being true and objective. One could even regard Direct Cinema as a kind of creative presentation, as you wait for the gradual development of the story over the time, together with it, recording it and presenting it in an appropriate manner. Documentary is a social text and an aesthetic text as well. The concept of documentary encompasses a lot of contradictory issues, which is the reason for us not being willing to discuss characters without taking the context of the film into consideration. We aim to produce an independent and self-contained work that draws the audience into the film itself, rather than into the current living conditions of the old woman or how much money the family finally lost. If there was a relative stability to *Walk in the Dark*, *Pedalling Fathers*, *My Last Secret*, then *Gold Underground*, *The Shoeshiner's Journey*, and *Ballad of Roaming Spirits* are more changeable in nature, partly because we increasingly feel that documentary is a mode of artistic creation.

3

Xu: You once mentioned that 2007 was a turning point, after which '[our] perspective has changed and what we are interested in has changed as well.' Also in 2007, *My Last Secret* participated in CNEX's first Call for Film Projects.

Li: After we did the first cut of *My Last Secret*, CNEX sent three people over and gave us about seven to eight suggestions, which were totally well-intended and based on their vast experience of participating in various international festivals and exhibitions and international communication. In retrospect, their suggestions were beneficial and practical, such as the opening sequence should be dark with music, and we should investigate the archives of Shanghai University of Sport(上海体育学院)and include historical backgrounds into the film. However, at that time, we were more interested in the reality that we saw with

our own eyes and not able to understand why music was needed while the bells on Baibu Street and the hustle and bustle of the town were themselves nice music already. Then they went to ask the producer, Mr Situ Zhaodun, who told them that Li Xiaofeng and Jia Kai were following their own principles. As a result, no modifications were made to the film, which was an inevitable result of our understanding and aesthetic tastes during that time. Perhaps the film would have achieved better international recognition if we had made the modifications. The film went through editing super-fast, in about seven to eight days, while the filming process was about seven to eight years. At that time, filming was the dominant process in our overall production: once filming was complete, the film was almost done. At the same time, Jia Kai, as the editor and co-director, was becoming more and more involved in the process.

Jia: In our more recent films, editing is as important as filming, while in the early works, filming was absolutely dominant because the filming locations were always so full. Compared with the earlier movies, filming in the later ones is less intensive.

Li: CNEX promoted *My Last Secret* with another well-known film of the time, feeling confident that ours would be more popular, but only to find it better received in Asia, but not elsewhere, possibly due to the lack of a prominent agenda in our film. However, since this event we started to be seen in the field. I still remember once before this, I met two directors at the Shanghai TV station and one of them held my shoulder and said, ‘Feng, since you are already a PhD, why are you taking our jobs?’ This was probably casting doubt on my abilities as a film director, but after the release of *My Last Secret*, nobody questioned me in that tone.

Jia: We did not expect much when *My Last Secret* was sent to film festivals because previously we had suffered a tremendous blow with *Walk in the Dark*(夜行者), which we considered a priceless treasure, but others, however, did not. Some documentary researchers said that the characters we were filming were not really from the lowest social strata, and thus did not fit their theories. That was why we were cautious.

Xu: In 2010, you hosted the Shanghai Youth Film Festival(海上影展)and forum, and you also hosted a seminar on ‘methodology anxiety’.

Jia: I was feeling some confusion at that time because we had expected to receive sympathetic responses to the film, only to discover that our methods had not generated that result.

Li: My anxiety was, as a filmmaker and a documentary director, what chance did I have for a breakthrough? I was being constantly stimulated and reminded from my teaching and researching not to be self-restrained

and stagnant. One year at the Jeonju International Film Festival, a director was presenting over twenty ‘essay films’ that he had produced over his life, with each nicely presenting himself at a particular time and all of them together creating an integrated collection of work. It was a very stimulating experience for me, making me feel that my understanding of documentary was too narrow. Also I saw a nine-hour long documentary about the Indonesian tsunami, shown on a loop from morning to night at an art gallery, and every time I passed by, I would stop for a while to watch it. That concept of documentary was new and unconventional, making me reflect on my own methodology, to which I was so used, and think whether it was the most adequate and relevant, or in other words, was there still a possibility for me to have a breakthrough?

Xu: *Gold Underground* is different from what you were previously interested in; it has more of an agenda and is more involving

Li: After *Pedalling Fathers*, we had a certain understanding of northern Shaanxi (陕西). We came to notice the industrial flourishing brought about by coal development and the changes in local people’s mentality. Once I transferred 1,000 yuan to a student from a bank in the north of Shaanxi and asked for the receipt from the bank teller, who said, ‘Why bother with a receipt for such a minor amount?’ Northern Shaanxi people had deep pockets and saw no reason to be cautious over 1,000 yuan. It was totally a different place from the one I knew so well. Before, it was a place that used to be a synonym for poverty; now, it felt like everyone was new money. I was so attracted to this phenomenon and felt we must pay attention to the coal industry’s chain of production. ‘The Kuwait of China’—the nickname for the north of Shaanxi—felt apt at that time. In the film, we did not focus on characters, but intended to present each link of the whole industrial chain. We started with truck drivers and followed them to Henan (河南) and Ningxia (宁夏) for more than ten days, during which we constantly encountered traffic police and road blocks, whom the drivers treated to bundles of one-hundred yuan bank notes from their bags. As a result, drivers had to ‘cheat’ and violate regulations in order to counterbalance the cost, otherwise, they would earn nothing. That was how I filmed the part ‘Heavy Trucks’. The life of truck drivers was not something that ordinary people could bear: in summer, they sat for such a long time that their lower bodies festered with sweat, and most of them were ruined physically by the age fifty.

Xu: *Gold Underground* was released against the backdrop of China’s rapid economic development, with the worth of individuals being revalued dependent on their position in an economic chain. Was it a common topic at that time to focus on the alienation of human beings in a globalised context?

Li: It was also a mindset gradually arising from previous experience, by which I wish to see my characters

in a more extensive framework. In all the previous works, we filmed a person or a family, and in this one we took more initiative by stepping outside the old methodology. After finishing the episodes of truck drivers and the information department, I wanted to trace the origin of all the links, that was, coal mines. Getting access to coal mines was extremely difficult because it involved entering a potentially shady business. I went down mine shafts three times. The first time was to look for a suitable filming location: water droplets from the dark rock crevices of the mine shaft plopped onto my face, suddenly jolting me with excitement and fear; the second time I filmed quite a lot of material, but was forced on threats to my life to format it upon climbing out of the shaft; the third time I was connected to a coal mine owner whom a relative knew was leaving to enter the real estate business, and who thus finally agreed to me filming. This became the first part in the documentary, though it was shot last.

Having more and more material, we began to think about how to construct the film. We introduced the environment and background in text in the opening sequence. At that time we were more concerned with the overlooked and unpromising dimensions of a rapidly changing society. It seemed to us that northern Shaanxi had indeed become the symbol of China in the world: backward in the past, but was undergoing rapid development and rising up later. The massive amount of coal exploitation in the north of Shaanxi led to an overnight boom, which even drove up property prices in Xi'an(西安), the capital city. Where the people of northern Shaanxi were once looked down upon, now many of them had become nouveau riche. I came across these people many times, with their wind-blown red necks and faces but wearing a nice designer suit. Their appearance was attractive, but at huge cost to what was inside. The lure of huge wealth meant the environment was severely polluted and the ground was crumbling; the changes were obvious. But the common people, though having lost their homes, still chose to believe in the myth of fortune.

Xu: The structure of *Gold Underground* highlights the subjective. At the time, the issue of ‘the subject’ was being heatedly discussed in the independent documentary field. What is your opinion on the ‘subject of contemplation?’

Li: After 2007 and 2008, we sought to break away from a linear structure, and this subject happened to consist of different parts of one whole, so we made the film that way. We were not confident about how it will be received by the audience as we had never produced anything like it, anything with a sense of fragmentation. Now I am looking at ‘contemplative subject’ more from the perspective of ‘poetic images’, which is closer in methodology to Tsai Ming-liang’s(蔡明亮) *Your Face*(你的脸) and Abbas’s [Kiarostami] *24 Frames*. It is wonderful to witness the emergence of an uncertainty that arrives if you are patient enough and that in no time attracts your attention. The truly poetic arises when characters are placed naturally in a

situation, as they are, and there is no control or interference from the director. Sometimes I will film a scene that I like for as long as an hour.

For example, I recently filmed an old person: I held my camera still and she talked away. We responded mutually during her monologue, thus she was motivated and continued with her narration, which in turn filled my heart with energy. A chance interaction, a quiet gaze, all seemed to grow by themselves, resulting in a totally different outcome from what we have first expected. In addition, each time filming in another place is a kind of redemption for me. Living in the city means doing many things you don't want to, facing tremendous complexity, compromising constantly, and trying hard to maintain your dignity and decency. Filming in Suzhou and the north of Shaanxi means you can block out and ignore the vulgar and annoying elements of daily life and be true and honest with your characters.

Jia: Maybe everyday life is all consuming and we see the world from a functional perspective. We do not see it in a serious manner and in its true sense. That is why we see documentary production as a kind of artistic creation from an aesthetic perspective and see it in its own right. The subjectivity involved in this process is not to give it meaning in my way, but to let it become my guide.

Xu: What was the socio-political environment for *Gold Underground* like?

Li: After 2008, the environment was not relaxed but film festivals still operated. I did not encounter any special pressures in the process of filming, but we actually aroused the attention of relevant government departments, which later sent people to investigate the coal mine that I filmed. The result of the investigation endorsed what I revealed in the film, otherwise, I would have been in big trouble. A few years later, we were very happy to see—I don't know whether it has anything to do with the film—that the motorway toll method changed and truck drivers were less exploited.

4

Xu: In *The Shoeshiner's Journey*, the focus shifts from the temporality of the character's destiny to the spatiality of its social contexts, revealing the conflict between different discourses in a single film.

Li: Liu Guangjian (刘光建) is a character with historical depth. This film was more challenging for us because it was difficult to dig into history when our previous movies were all about the present. So, we were selective about the locations to film him in, choosing some important places and scenes in his life.

Jia: Another point was that it was extremely difficult to approach Liu Guangjian, who was totally different from all other characters we have filmed before.

Li: He welcomed you but kept you out of his world. A man who sounded so grand and spoke so correctly, peeled away layer by layer, you still ended up with nothing. Even when you almost reached the truth, there still seemed something hidden behind his version of events. So we chose some important locations which were real and that he couldn't deny: Tiananmen Square in Beijing, where he planned with a team to provide shoe polishing service; Anshan(鞍山) in the northeast, where he was set up as a model Lei Feng(雷锋) for others, and Lhasa in Tibet, where he quit his job and left. I wanted to feel in these places what kind of person he really was, and whether his words were true or not. I thought I must place him in those locations in order to convince myself and the audience. Lao Liu(老刘) was a complicated figure in that he knew how to present himself in a perfect manner, and he also knew that 'Director Li' was resistant to that image of him. On that point we had an open and frank conversation, and that was the turning point when our relationship was on the verge of breaking down. He said, 'I know what you want, I'm just not offering it to you.'

Jia: Although the film was not made using the same method as *Gold Underground*, a lot of thought went into editing it for a better structure and more understandable character. He [Liu] had told the same thing to the media hundreds of times, which, if presented naturalistically as with other films, would be superficial and hard to structure.

Li: Jia Kai reminded me that my conflict with him should be filmed, and she 'forced' me to become a very important narrative force in the film. If I hadn't pushed myself to the fore, I wouldn't have been able to explain a lot of things. That was how my conflict with him was gradually exposed in the film.

Jia: It was not in the original plan for the film but was later felt to be a must. Li Xiaofeng was reluctant to go in front of the camera and be filmed; he prefers to keep himself hidden. But Liu Guangjian's resistance was vital to the revelation of his true character and our further understanding of him.

Xu: *The Shoeshiner's Journey* was produced at a time when nationalist sentiment was running high in China, but you didn't explore the political dimension.

Jia: Our main starting point was not political. The political dimension was only brought out in the general context of the story. We always reject describing a person using only a few key words.

Li: But we did notice one thing—the image of Lei Feng underwent great changes in China over the eight years in which this documentary was filmed. When I first met Liu in 2007, he and Lei Feng were both ridiculed; but in the later period of filming, people were no longer allowed to behave impolitely towards Lei Feng. Throughout the whole process, I discussed current affairs with Liu, which caused conflict between us. We had been trying to capture the individuality of Lao Liu as a human being, while he tried to only show his ‘divine’ features, positioning himself through references to Confucius and Jesus, and complaining that we did not see his greatness. Since I had always been critical and questioning towards so-called authority and everything stable and solid, Lao Liu thought I was a horrible person and felt uncomfortable with me, although he had always been respectful to me. He might think I was right, but for him, there were things that must never be questioned or criticised. He could not establish a balance between the two and this was painful in his heart.

5

Xu: What kind of feedback did *The Shoeshiner’s Journey* receive?

Jia: I took part in two workshops in the process of editing *The Shoeshiner’s Journey*. One was organized by CNEX with Chen Bowen(陈博文), Liao Qingsong(廖庆松) and Mary Stephen as the participants as well. It inspired me greatly in that I thought the film had already exhausted its possibilities while the other participants felt after examining the material that there might still be options. That is to say, new perspectives occurred when I looked at my own materials through the eyes of others. I became strongly aware that I was biased and because of this bias had exhausted the materials. By bias, I mean that I already had a fixed view of a shot and was thus blind to other potentialities.

Later, we went to another workshop in India organised by the Leipzig Film Festival. It was probably fate to meet people who can influence you just when you wanted to change. Before, we were reluctant to accept other people’s suggestions, and at the time of *The Shoeshiner’s Journey* we became open to feedback from outside. In that workshop, people did not ask about the meaning of the image, as we had heard before. Instead, they just commented on how the shots should be organised from a structural point of view, asked what was being expressed and whether it was expressed clearly, and suggested how to express it more forcefully. We returned to the image itself, and we were increasingly aware that our focus should be what the image revealed and expressed.

Xu: *Ballad of Roaming Spirits* has a textual complexity, which seems to be a trend in Chinese independent documentaries in general. That might be because you are trapped in a more intertwined network consisting of the general audience, film festival organizers, judges, academic circles, critical circles, and various intermediaries.

Li: When we consciously cater to a network of relationships, we sacrifice the work itself, though in fact we have constantly encountered such a network of relationships. For example, a financing forum is meaningless and makes people feel confused and split from within, because in such a meeting you talk to buyers and judges in a different way than when you are with peers from the same field. The trailer you present at the financing forum is totally different from the completed work. We have presented proposals to the Taipei (台北) and Busan (釜山) financing forums, and neither of these were the same as the final works, which speaks volumes: people create a proposal to meet the requirements of investors, a result of the industrialization of the cinema industry. At the financing forum, the proposals with public appeal, on dramatic topics, and which are more suitable for websites and TV are more likely to be funded. But the most frustrating outcome is when a proposal is shortlisted, wins an award, but receives no funding whatsoever—your idea's been exposed for nothing. Of course, people have different attitudes towards the network of relationships: some are in real need of money and needed to overcome practical difficulties, while others are trying to make a name for themselves in order to enter various film festivals and get good opportunities in the future. In recent years, there have also been some people who only presented proposals but did not make films. More capital is entering the market, but the number of good films is decreasing.

Xu: I feel that independent documentaries in China have changed a lot.

Li: I have always believed that being independent is an ideal. During the period of the Practice Society we felt a kind of utopian romanticism towards independent film. People didn't know much about it, but they knew it was something fun and interesting, and would approach it regardless of the cost and effort. Now, there has been a division in this field: some people keep going and work hard, and some others quit in no time once they feel its unprofitable. The practicing filmmakers are also divided: some are moving into some very official fields of public communication, or even the commercial field, in the hope of making a 'blockbuster'. In terms of what we're doing now, it is out of the question that we could make a profit or achieve any worldly success with our current concepts and methodology; we'd quit immediately if we wanted to make money.

Jia: We never make films for a purpose, nor do we try to circumvent or pander to anything, we just

do everything possible to make the film itself the most desirable work. We don't have any particular expectations for our documentaries, we don't think about profit, neither do we care about whether it reaches the audience or not, what we want is to produce work that will stand the test of time. As far as subject matter is concerned, we don't think too much about what kind of subject will receive more attention; in our mind, a real film is worth the effort of a lifetime because it will transcend the present era.

Xu: Have *Ballad of Roaming Spirits* and other films that you are working on been well received by your peers?

Li: They are very positively received by our peers in the field. What make me feel meaningful and worthwhile living in this world is the support and encouragement of the people who are sympathetic to me and my work and who have the same goals. In contrast, film festival awards and favourable feedback from the market are not as important. It was only after the independent film festivals were cancelled that I realized that my colleagues and peers were so important to me. Their enthusiasm was visible in the after-screening discussions in the film festivals, and their passion for documentaries, regardless of the cost, was almost a religion.

Jia: I trust their judgement because they are strict and honest in telling us their opinions. Some people write good reviews because they want to be polite or to maintain a relationship, but practising and active directors are serious, experienced, aesthetically independent and self-contained. They are capable of theoretical reflection, and so trustworthy.

黎小锋、贾恺：回到直接的现实和影像本身

徐亚萍

黎小锋和贾恺从二〇〇〇年开始持续创作纪录片，作品有《百步街》（2000）、《打春锣的人》（2001）、《夜行人》（2005）、《无定河》（2007）、《我最后的秘密》（2008）、《遍地乌金》（2011）、《昨日狂想曲》（2015）、《游神考》（2019）。在共同的创作中，他们既是夫妻也是诤友；合作与成长的经验潜在于摄影与剪辑、现实与影像的关系和变化之中。

黎小锋很在意丛峰对他们的评价：难以预测下一部片子是什么模样。对这个评价的重视，道出了他们的创作活力对于书写中国独立纪录片历史而言的两种意义：其一，由于实践的连续性和风格的转折性，见证了独立纪录片从新纪录尾声、个人 DV时代的兴起到网络化新保守主义的变迁，也潜在注解过去二十多年间中国的断裂经验；与“直接电影”的暧昧关系嵌入其中，体现出纪录片实践者不断调整姿势、穿透现实、勾连经验的焦虑。其二，纪录片作者面对着一个越来越复杂的关系网络，参与构建集体性的感受之道，也受制于此。由此，理解他们的风格及其转折，提供了一条体察时代语境和共享感受的通道。

徐亚萍（以下简称徐）：做《百步街》时，你已经接触到一些独立纪录片了么？

黎小锋（以下简称黎）：当时我在苏州从事教育技术工作。去北京之前，我对纪录片的印象只是一些文字的描述，所谓“纸上纪录片”。一九九八年左右，我通过《文汇电影时报》，看过吴文光介绍独立纪录片的专栏文章。在他的描述中，那些片子的好处，在于“没有一个镜头是摆拍的”，似乎确立了一种取向，那样的片子才有意思、有价值。但我当时做的是宣传片、教学片，甚至广告片，这让我非常沮丧，一直想要离开。二〇〇〇年，我考研到北京。离开之前，我想做一个纪录片，做一点跟以前不一样、真正有意义的东西，纪录我所生活其中的百步街生态。我一直对自己的单位身份没有认同感，到了街上，就变成那些街坊邻居的一员。我扛着公家的广播级机器，在街上到处晃荡、扫描。后来看到一个老太太跟她的保姆，老太太夹着一本言情小说，被保姆搀扶进了小院。我就跟了进去，这个片子才由此展开。

我把百步街上四户人家的日常，剪成了一个三十分钟的短片《百步街》。到北京后，“实践社”的

张亚璇找到我，把这个短片和朱传明、王芬的片子放在一起，组织了一次放映。那天北京在刮沙尘暴，太阳像张黄纸一样贴在天空，心情其实非常不好。但进去后，听到吴文光用洪亮的嗓门招呼着亚璇、杨子，立刻感觉到一种凝聚力，特别亲切。随后的讨论，有一种潜在的激励作用，让我觉得这个片子完全是浅尝辄止，没有真正展开，还是受了以前做电视专题的影响。那时整体上比较推崇“直接电影”，比如梅索斯兄弟的《灰色花园》和《推销员》。这些片子让我产生一种莫名的喜欢，觉得好，但没仔细想好在哪里，只知道这是我以后可以尝试的方向。

贾恺（以下简称贾）：我刚到北师大读研的时候，对电影只是一种很抽象的认识，以为虚构的电影才叫电影，对纪录片完全不了解，甚至感觉纪录片不是艺术。但是看了“直接电影”之后，对纪录片有了新的认知，觉得这是艺术，值得做，因为它们跟虚构电影一样，能激发强烈的兴奋感、体验感。我们那时能够不顾一切地投入其中，因为觉得是在拍电影。

黎：我们托贾恺的亲戚在北京电影学院办了张拉片子的卡。透过各种渠道，看到了一些念念不忘的电影。二〇〇一年初，我跟贾恺去黄亭子酒吧看费里尼的《甜蜜的生活》。那是个晚上，里面烟雾缭绕，地上坐满了人。我们还骑车去中央戏剧学院看片，如饥似渴地想要接触真正的电影。新街口有一个卖盗版碟的小店，牛皮纸袋里装着碟片，我买了《铁路沿线》、《老头》之类的片子。

徐：你们二〇〇三年写作《纪录，是一种协作》的初衷是什么？

黎：很大程度上来自我们拍摄中形成的体验。拍摄中的协作关系，如果说借用了谁，是小川绅介，他认为纪录片是拍摄者和人物共同打造的世界，你在观察别人，别人也在回应你。二〇〇一年九月，我们主要精力投入到《夜行人》上，几乎每天都在拍。一开始，我们在北师大和香山间往返，后来为了能天天去拍，在香山鲍家翔家旁边，租房住了整整两年。一开始，盲人阿姨不让我们进入，后来我们帮赵明补习英语和数学，才进入她们的家庭。时间长了，她们对我们有感情了，希望能够经常见到我们，甚至参与她们的一些事，比如她们打官司的时候，我能帮忙抄写。我们拍摄的时候，并没有从“底层”的角度考虑，因为我们已经非常深地进入她们的家庭，这已经是一种人与人之间的关系。我们也没有明确想要拍什么，更像面对一个未知的东西。这条未知之路可以走多远，在于她是否接纳你，关系能到哪个份上。

徐：为什么会关注《打春锣的人》里老朱这样的人？他和鲍家翔，以及之后你们关注的车夫、擦鞋匠，都是靠某种专业技能谋生、也希望获得认同的人。

黎：我当时拍了两个人，一个是老朱，是一个七十多岁的民间艺人，一个是雍开全，是当地领政府津贴的一个春锣大王，属于体制内的。老朱找了三次雍开全，想通过他的介绍，去萍乡电视台春节

联欢晚会，打十五分钟春锣，结果屡屡失落。我小时候印象特别深，过春节时，会有些“送春”的人，给你打一段春锣、送你一个红包，然后你得在红包里多加点钱再还给他，这相当于一种卖艺，但在当地农民看来，那些人就是在以“送春”的名义乞讨。大概出于童年情结，我就想拍这样的人，我找了几个人，最后选了老朱。雍开全则正好可以跟老朱形成一个对比。剪辑的时候，贾恺给了结构上的建议，让终剪版更清晰了。

贾：其实我那时很不自信，因为还从没做过这种事情，但我以前学画画的经历，也许带来了一些直觉。

黎：关注他们，可能跟我的早年经历有关。小时候在老家镇上，我老是跟流浪、拾荒的人混在一起，跟他们在一起特别有认同感。我曾经在农民家里看到《收获》、《十月》，听那些人一边造房子一边念诗，特别亲切。这可能是我老会关注地铁卖唱的、蹬三轮的这些人的原因。在别人看来，拍《夜行人》时，我们是所谓名牌大学的研究生，对方是街上卖唱的，好像存在巨大的阶层差异。但实际上我们那时非常穷，从香山回北师大坐 331路公交车，有时候还要到床底找硬币。因为没干什么正经事，时间都用来拍这些“没用”的东西了。鲍阿姨那时比我们有钱，有一次她问我：小锋，要不要我借点钱给你？说她是“底层”，“底层”的人比两个研究生更有钱，甚至有很强的优越感，赵明的地域优越感就很强，经常说：我是北京人，你们是外地人。所以真正进入一个场域后，你会发现，差异不是想象的那样。

二

徐：拍《夜行人》时，你们开始用 DV了？

黎：二〇〇一年九月份，我们买了 SONY PD 150，开始拍《夜行人》。当时 DV兴起了，北京电视台、凤凰电视台之类开办短片栏目，一般几分钟到十几分钟。我们那时比较贫困，也给电视台做点短片，补贴收入。记得我给北京电视台拍过一个收集北京晚报的体育老师。

徐：《夜行人》的剪辑过程是怎样展开的？

贾：那阵我们已经毕业，准备到上海来了，剪辑机器是蹭的。同学给我们介绍了一个导演，他有一个专业机房。黎小锋帮人家摄像，作为交换，对方借机房给我们。租用费很贵，我们承受不了。因为使用时间有限，我们根据拍摄阶段记录的时码，先在纸上大概构想好结构，然后再到机房里，按照想好的顺序剪，这其实是非常违反纪录片剪辑规律的。《夜行人》在拍摄时付出了巨大热情，耗费了大量精力，拍到的东西很精彩，我们有时在出租房里回看，笑得在床上打滚，但是剪辑特别仓促，很多都没用上。我们对性格或经历比较复杂的人更感兴趣，赵明是一个太单纯的孩子，在她身上找

不到复杂的层次，但是鲍家翔的经历和她的现实有足够的复杂性，是一个能让你兴奋的角色，所以我们一直盯着她。但是我们当时受到电视台纪录片的影响，先想好了线索，没能真正发挥素材本身的魅力。场景本身非常有意思的东西，被无情地消掉了，因为它必须纳入先定的叙事结构。我们那时缺少控制影像的经验，面对这样复杂的人物，有点捉襟见肘的感觉。

黎：后来我把这个片子放给季丹、沙青看，沙青说如果是他来拍，赵明就是主角。这就是人和人的差别。我是文学出身，当时老会想到福克纳的小说，老是有一种文学化的想象：一个在逆风中的盲人，顶着风往前走，所以片名叫《夜行人》。《夜行人》整体上是一种母女命运的重复，有一种荒诞性在里边，比如盲人跟她的搭档在地铁里唱歌，她想唱上去，却总是唱不上去，接下来的镜头就是女儿在地铁里唱同样的歌，唱上去了。《夜行人》让我们不大满意，可能是因为它过多关注人性、家庭的层面，没有适当向社会层面展开。实际上，当时我们也拍了一些社会层面的东西，比如香山的盲人社群，盲人橡胶厂。发生在鲍家翔身上的那些经济纠纷，也跟盲人工友有关，跟当时高利贷和整个中国经济发展的背景有关。我拍了很多这方面的素材，但是把握不了，觉得放不进去。

徐：《夜行人》出片的时候已经有“中国纪录片交流周”了。

黎：《夜行人》参加了二〇〇六年在合肥的中国纪录片交流周，那是我第一次进入纪录片作者构成的那种无所拘束的群体，一起碰撞、交流。当时黄文海和李娃克之间有巨大分歧，我跟李娃克住一个房间，他整晚都在讲黄文海的片子。后来我跟 Markus Nornes在“云之南”也有过争论。Markus那时对“直接电影”的评价非常负面，我觉得他说过头了，就跟他争。后来发现，我们在有些方面其实是有共识的。《夜行人》在当时的评价挺好的，但普通观众并不关心主题、结构、人物上的处理，更关心这个人现在在干啥。所以我对普通交流很消极，更重视同行的意见。

合肥那次，大家聚在一起，互相碰撞，感觉找到了一种认同感，具体什么观点其实不重要，重要的是获得的能量，支撑我要把下一个片子做得更好。这是独立影展给我们的巨大支持——推动你不断往前走。在跟这些人交流的时候，会觉得我是在做真正有价值的东西，找到了一个价值的共同体。到了上海之后，我还把《夜行人》给彭小莲导演看，她看了之后，让我寄给司徒兆敦老师，过了不长时间，司徒老师手写了一封信，告诉我们他的观感。那是一个长者对刚刚起步的年轻人的一种巨大的、及时的鼓励。

徐：《无定河》的重量，压在老刘的女儿、人大毕业生刘娟身上，她面对就业压力时的命运，检验着教育的结果。当时你们已经在大学里教书，在拍摄和剪辑上透露着态度。

贾：拍《无定河》的时候，因为有了DV，去哪都拿着。我们在县城里看见三轮车夫维权，警察要

没收他们的三轮车，我们拍到了那个过程，还被带去警察局，我爸找人把我们给弄了出来。但是后来完全离开了那个议题。这些三轮车夫中，有两个人的女儿考上了好大学，一个是人民大学，一个是西安交大，我们很震惊，就跟着进入他们的家庭，“维权”就隐到了背景。当时剪得很吃力，因为电脑硬盘容量小，素材无法全部输入，所以保留了纸上剪辑的方法。但在剪辑方面，我们已经开始下功夫了。

黎：当时有个事对我触动挺大的，我认识的一个高校老师主持了《无定河》的放映。他看完很气愤，说他们的学生们毕业分配非常好，我们的片子夸大了中国的就业难题，云云。照此说来，我们确实提出了一个疑问：父母亲付出巨大的努力，把子女送上远方的大学，到底是为了什么呢？我们对他们的供养持一种相对消极的态度。父母这一代，已经把供养子女内化成一种本能了，他们只能这样做，只能低头拼命蹬三轮，推动子女走向他们自己进入不了的一个外部世界，这个世界其实也是一种想象。这些人穷极一生没有做到的，希望子女做到。但当老刘终于能像个科级干部一样开始看报纸、喝茶的时候，却意外死于煤气中毒。

贾：其实我们还拍了三轮车夫老靳，但没有把他一家剪进去。他儿子大学上了名校，毕业去了富士康，最后还是要考公务员，回到当地，做一个体制内的人，这就是那些三轮车夫内心深处的梦想。

徐：《无定河》是怎么被 NHK 选中的？

黎：当时 NHK 想在中国做一个“新的中国人”系列，我们是通过季丹导演的推荐加入的。另外还有杨荔钠、陈为军、郭静和柯丁丁三组。NHK 总共做了两届，朝我们史无前例地放开，对方要求非常宽泛，只要片长是 5 的倍数、跟普通中国人相关就行，没有内容、主题上的干涉。播出的时候，片名叫《蹬三轮车的父亲》。他们征集提案之前，我们已经拍了很多素材。我们有个强烈的想法，要表现老刘一家在高考前后的变化，这是翻天覆地的命运的变化，一个家庭通过一次高考发生巨大的改变，起码对小孩来讲，是身份的彻底改变。

贾：我们最后选择的两家人，一家的孩子考上了，另一家没考上，有种戏剧张力。整个剪辑过程中，NHK 的人只在北京看过一次素材。制片人看完成片觉得很意外，因为他看素材时觉得没看到特别满意的东西，最后发现成片还挺让人感动。

徐：你们在这个阶段对“直接电影”有过哪些讨论？

黎：二〇〇六年底，我差不多完成了博士论文《作为一种创作方法的“直接电影”》。“直接电影”的问题，是早期一些代表人物，说了一些过头、绝对的话，标榜绝对的真实、客观，留下一些理论

上的话柄，但是作为一种创造方法，“直接电影”是永远不会过时的，那是一种观察的态度。那种扑面而来、不可预期的情境、氛围，正是我们长期孜孜以求的。我在文中将“直接电影”的美学特征概括为“不介入、不控制、如苍蝇做壁上观”，后来，又调整为“有限介入……”，因为在拍摄现场，作者是不可能绝对不介入的。

贾：“直接电影”是怀着一种凝视的目光，看到你的被摄对象。这在任何时代、任何类型的作品里都需要。我们说的观察，实际上是拿着摄影机去闯荡，跟真实或者客观没有什么必然关系。甚至可以说“直接电影”是一种创造性的表达。因为你通过观察，让事物呈现。你有一段相对长的时间，去跟它共处，收获它能呈现的东西，最后以一种合适的方式，把它传递出来。虽然纪录片也是社会文本，但我们把它当做一种审美文本。所以纪录片这个概念涵盖的，往往是很多南辕北辙的东西。这也是我们为什么不想撇开片子谈论人物的原因。我们期待的是一个独立、自足的作品，让观众的目光被文本本身吸引，而不是老太太的生活现在怎么样了，或者一家人到底赔了多少钱。如果说《夜行人》、《无定河》、《我最后的秘密》有一种相对的稳定性，到了《遍地乌金》、《昨日狂想曲》、《游神考》每一部变化越来越大的话，可能是因为我们对于纪录作为一种艺术创作的想法越来越强烈了。

三

徐：你们曾经提到，二〇〇七年是一个转折点，此后“视角改变了，感兴趣的东西已经发生了变化”。而二〇〇七年恰好是《我最后的秘密》这个片子加入 CNEX 第一届征片计划的时候。

黎：当时初剪完成后，他们派了三个人过来，提了不少意见，好像有七八条。他们是非常友好善意的，建议也是在他们参加过各种国际节展、具备国际传播经验的基础上提出来的，现在回忆起来，也有一定道理，比如片头改成黑场加音乐的方式，还建议我们我们去上海体育学院调查档案，加入历史背景资料，等等。但我们还是对直接的现实本身更感兴趣，所以当时比较难以接受，觉得百步街上那些钟声、人来人往的市声，不就是很好的音乐吗，还需要加什么音乐呢？他们就去问片子的监制司徒兆敦老师。结果司徒老师说，黎小锋、贾恺做事有自己的原则，就照他们自己的方式去做吧，所以最后啥都没改。说不定真那样改了，国际传播更好，但是按我们当时的审美和认识，肯定不会那样做。片子剪得很快，拍了七八年，剪了七八天，说明我们那时的剪辑是依赖拍摄的，拍的时候就已经完成了。但是贾恺作为一个剪辑师、联合导演，参与程度越来越高。

贾：我们后面的片子可以说剪辑基本上跟拍摄是一样的分量，但是前面的片子主要还是拍摄分量重，因为拍摄现场确实很充分。后期的片子在拍摄上相对来说没有前面那么密集。

黎：当时是跟 CNEX 另外一个知名度很高的片子同时推出的，联合制片方以为我们的片子会更受欢

迎，结果只是在亚洲反响好一点，在其他地方并不看好，可能缺乏议题性的东西吧。但是，我们作为纪录片导演，在行业里受到承认，似乎是从这个片子开始的。之前有一次，我在上海电视台遇见两个导演，一人抱着我一个肩膀说，小锋，你好好的一个博士，抢我们的饭碗干啥？这大概是对我作为一个创作者的能力的怀疑。但是这种语调，在《我最后的秘密》以后基本没有了。

贾：《我最后的秘密》参加影展的时候，我们已经没那么高的期待，因为期望最高的《夜行人》遭遇的打击也是最大的。我们把《夜行人》当宝贝一样，别人却不这样认为，研究纪录片的人似乎不知道应该怎么定位它，比如当时有人说，你们拍的好像也不是“底层”，大概没法框进她的理论，也就保持一种比较谨慎的态度。

徐：接着你们在二〇一〇年办了海上影展和论坛，尤其针对“方法的焦虑”做了研讨会。

贾：那阵真的开始觉得困惑，一个片子做出来，希望得到更多共鸣，结果发现我们的方法好像并没有起到效果。

黎：我的焦虑在于，作为电影作者、纪录片导演，还有什么突破的可能性？因为我同时从事教学和理论研究，会不断受到刺激、提醒：不能固步自封。有一年，我在全州电影节，看到一个导演一生创作的二三十部“散文电影”，他处理得非常合适，每一部都是他在某个阶段的一种影像表达，而且能够形成一个体系。这对我触发挺大的，我感觉自己对纪录片理解得过于狭窄。我还看到一个关于印尼海啸的片子，有九个小时，在一个美术馆里从早到晚循环放映，每次经过，我都会去看两眼，那是一种全新的、反常规的观念。看了这样的东西，就会反思，以往习惯的方式，虽然做起来顺手，但是不是有问题？或者说，我还有没有突破的可能性？

徐：《遍地乌金》跟你们之前关注的东西不一样了，更有介入性、议题性。

黎：做完《无定河》，对陕北已经有了一定的了解。有个现象一直进入我们的视野——煤炭开发带来的产业链兴盛，包括人的心态的改变。有一次我在陕北给一个学生汇钱，大概是一千元，我汇完以后，就问银行职员有没有凭据，她说了句：就这么点钱，要什么凭据。陕北人财大气粗，一千块钱你还这么谨小慎微。这已经跟我熟悉的那块地方很不一样了。以前是贫困的象征，现在感觉个个都是爆发户。这对我刺激很大，觉得应该关注煤炭产业链，因为一切都是因为煤炭引起的。所谓“中国的科威特”，在那时真不是徒有虚名。这个片子偏离了以人物作为核心推动力的方式，准备展现一个链条里的不同环节。我们从卡车司机找起，挑了几个师傅，在河南、宁夏跟了十多天，期间不断遭遇交警和路霸。司机书包里一扎扎百元面额的钞票，就是为了路上打点用的，这么一趟下来，不“偷奸耍滑”、不违章是不可能的，不然什么都挣不到。我就这样把“重型卡车”部分拍下来了。

卡车司机那种生存状态，不是一般人能承受的，夏天出汗，下体都溃烂了，他们也停不下来，身体到四、五十岁的时候，基本上都毁掉了。

徐：《遍地乌金》出现时，是中国高度发展主义的背景，人被放到经济链条上重新定位价值。在全球化语境里看待人的异化，是不是当时比较普遍的意识？

黎：也是潜移默化形成的一种思路，希望能够在的一个大的框架里来看这些人。我们原来一直是跟着一个人、一个家庭，现在想要主动一些，或者说跳离出来，把结构打散，从原来的方式里跳出来。卡车司机、信息部这两块完成以后，感觉煤炭是个由头，还是得去找煤矿。但进入煤矿太难了，涉及可能存在黑幕的环境。我下了三次矿井，第一次是勘点，下竖井的时候，从黑暗的岩缝中迸出的水珠溅在脸上，整个人一激灵，几分兴奋，几分害怕；第二次拍了不少素材，出井口的时候，被人家强行把素材格式化了，否则命都保不住；第三次找到一个亲戚认识的煤老板，当时正好转型搞房地产，才勉强同意拍摄。所以片子的第一部分，反倒是最后拍到的。

随着素材的不断累积，我们开始思考应该怎样结构，在片头通过文字交代环境和背景。那时我们更关心在社会急速转型的时候，一些被忽略掉的、不容乐观的层面。在我们看来，陕北确实成了中国在世界上的一种象征，以前是一个落后的形象，现在急速发展、迅速崛起。海量煤炭开发导致整个陕北一夜暴富，陕北人甚至把西安房价给炒高了。原来陕北人被人瞧不起，现在却特有钱。好几次，我看到那种暴发户，脖子、脸都是风吹日晒的红色，身上却穿着一身挺刮的名牌西装。虽然外部很乐观，但是内里却付出了巨大代价，在巨额财富的引诱下，环境污染，地面塌陷，变化是非常明显的。小老百姓其实失去了家园，但是大家仍然选择相信神话。

徐：《遍地乌金》的板块结构，主体性很强。当时独立纪录片群体对“主体”问题的讨论也很热烈。你们如何看待“静观”的主体？

黎：二〇〇七、〇八年以后，我们尝试打破以往线性结构方式。恰好这个主题又适合，是一个大的场域里的几个板块，所以就这么做出来了，其实拿出来时，心里很不踏实，因为从没做过板块式的东西，它有一种割裂感，不知道观众能不能接受。现在我更多是从“诗影像”的角度来看“静观”，更接近的是蔡明亮的《你的脸》、阿巴斯的《24帧》。不确定性出现的那种状态，我觉得是非常美好的。只要有足够的耐心，它会生生地吸引你。不受导演控制、干扰，人物和情境自然发生、自然生成，才是真正诗性的。对于我特别喜欢的场景，我会把它放得特别长，甚至会以固定镜头一拍一个小时。

就像我最近拍一个老人，我不动，她一直说，说着说着，我跟她也在发生感应：她从我的回应里，产生继续讲述的动力，我从她的讲述里，也在获得内心的能量。一个偶然的机缘，一种安静的凝视，

一切好像在自己生长出来，焕发出与最初预期迥然不同的面目。另外，我一直感觉，每次出去拍摄都是对自己的一种救赎。我们在城市里、生活中，很多事情都不是自己想干的，要面对巨大的复杂性，不断委曲求全，尽量保持尊严和体面。但是去到苏州、陕北，可以真实、诚实地面对你的被摄对象，那些庸俗、讨厌的东西，都可以忽略掉、屏蔽掉。

贾：可能日常生活让我们很累，因为我们看待世界的方式，其实是比较功能性的，并没有真正、认真地去看。所以为什么说我们更多把纪录看成一种艺术创作，是希望以审美的方式去看，以它自身去看它。这种主体性，不是说以我的方式、赋予它什么意义，而是希望当我那样去看的时候，让它来引领我。

徐：《遍地乌金》时的舆论环境有变化吗？

黎：二〇〇八年以后，已经不是很宽松了，但是当时影展还在。做《遍地乌金》时，还没觉得有什么特别的风险，但实际上引发了有关部门的关注。他们专门到我拍摄的煤矿去调查过，最后结论是情况属实。如果被发现有虚假、篡改的东西，说不定我就麻烦了。几年以后，我非常欣喜地看到——不知道跟我们有没有关系——高速公路收费方式确实改变了，卡车司机受到的剥削减少了。

四

徐：《昨日狂想曲》的关注点从时间性的人物命运转到空间性的社会场景，可以在一个切片里面看到不同话语的竞争。

黎：刘光建是一个有历史纵深感的人物。这个片子对我们来说，挑战比较大，因为很难把历史纵深开掘出来，我们以前的关注点都是当下现实的。所有我们有选择地在一些地方拍摄刘光建，选了一些比较关键的场景。

贾：还有一点，这个人物很难进去、特别难拍，对我们来说，跟以前全然不同。

黎：他很欢迎你，但是拒绝你真正进入他的世界。那么冠冕堂皇的、满嘴正确话语的一个人，一层一层剥洋葱，一样最后是一片空。即便最接近真相的时候，他提供的版本似乎还是在隐藏着什么。所以我们选择了一些重要的点，比如北京天安门——他计划组队去擦皮鞋的地方，东北鞍山——他当年被塑造为雷锋的地方，西藏拉萨——当年他离职出走的地方，因为这些“现场”是不可争议、无法否认的。我想在这些地方体会他到底是怎么回事。他说的那些话到底是不是真的？我觉得一定要拎到见证者面前才行，既给自己一个交代，也给观众一个交代。老刘有一种复杂性，他知道以怎

样的形象出现是完美的，但是他又知道，黎导演是不需要甚至抵制这个形象的。所以我们两人有过一次开诚布公的对话，那次也是我们关系濒临破裂的转折点。他说，我知道你要什么，我不提供给你。

贾：虽然这个片子没有用《遍地乌金》那样的手法，但在剪辑上花了很多心思去结构，试图用有限的素材描绘这个人物，让大家理解。因为他已经成千上百次对媒体采访做过同样的说辞，素材存在大量重复。如果按照以前那种自然主义的方式，素材很难结构，几乎流于表面。

黎：贾恺提醒我跟他的冲突应该拍下来，她“逼迫”我变成这个片子里非常重要的叙事力量。不把自己逼到前台的话，很多东西没法交代。这样才发展出我跟他对抗碰撞的那条线索。

贾：一开始没设想成这样，但是后来发现，必须这样处理。黎小锋比较抗拒，他不喜欢进入镜头，要把自己隐藏起来。但是刘光建对他的拒绝是很重要的，表达了他真实的一面，这有助于加深我们的理解。

徐：《昨日狂想曲》成片时，民族主义情绪高涨，但是你们并不想去探究政治性的层面。

贾：我们的主要出发点不是政治性的，或者说那个层面是带出来的。只用几个词概括一个人，是我们一直很排斥的。

黎：但我们确实关注了一个现象——在拍摄的八年里，“雷锋”形象在中国有比较大的改变。我在二〇〇七年最早见到老刘的时候，他和“雷锋”都是受到嘲笑的。到了拍摄后期，人们面对“雷锋”不可造次了，又必须“正确”对待了。在这个过程中，我一直都在跟老刘探讨时政，也引发了彼此的一些碰撞。我们一直想逼近老刘的人性，但老刘只想展现他的神性，他用耶稣、孔子这样的标准去定位自己，认为我们这些人看不到他伟大的地方。对所谓的权威，对一切笃定、稳固的东西，持质疑、批判的态度，这是我们一贯的立场。虽然老刘始终都很尊重我，但他觉得我这个人很可怕，老是让他觉得不舒服。他可能觉得我是对的，但对他来讲，有些东西是不能质疑和批判的，他没法在这两者之间找到平衡，所以内心就会很痛苦。

五

徐：《昨日狂想曲》经历了哪些碰撞、交流？

贾：在剪辑《昨日狂想曲》的时候，我参加过两个工作坊，一个是CNEX组织的，他们当时请了陈博文、廖庆松、Mary Stephen。那次工作坊给我启发蛮大的。本来觉得片子的可能性已经穷尽了，但是跟他

们一起看了素材之后，觉得好像还有可能性，就是说，在以别人的视点看素材的时候，出现了另外的角度。我强烈意识到，原来我们很有偏见，因为我们的偏见，限制了素材的可能性，这种偏见的意思是，你已经有固定的观点，你觉得这个镜头应该怎样，于是它失去了其他可能性。

后来，我们又去参加了莱比锡电影节在印度举办的一个工作坊。这可能是人生的机缘，恰好在你想改变的时候，碰到了能够影响你的人。此前我们是不愿意接受人家的意见的，但是到了《昨日狂想曲》，我们愿意去面对。他们不像我们以往听到的意见那样追问影像的意义，他们只是从结构上反馈镜头之间应该怎么组织，问你想要表达什么、表达清楚了吗，或者怎样表达更具有表现力。于是我们回到了影像的本身。我们越来越意识到，你要看影像本身到底展示和表达了什么。

徐：《游神考》具有文本上的复杂性，这似乎也是中国独立纪录片整体上的趋势。也许因为你们面对的目光更加复杂交织了，不止是一般观众，也有策展人、节展评审、学术圈、评论圈，各种中间人构成了复杂的关系网络。

黎：当我们有意识地要谈论关系网络的时候，可能作品就不存在了。但其实我们一直在遭遇这些东西。比如，创投是没有意义的。因为在创投会上，你首先面对的是买家和评审，而当我面对从事独立制作的朋友时，其实不需要像创投那样去表述，搞得自己很混杂、很分裂。创投时的片花，跟最后的成片是完全不相干的。我们参加过台北和釜山的提案会，没有一次提案和成片是一致的，这就很说明问题：人们往往是为了迎合投资者，去制造一个提案。我一直觉得这不是一个好现象，提案其实是电影工业化、产业化的方式。在提案会上，有公众吸引力、有戏剧性话题、适合网站和电视台的片子更容易拿到钱。但最麻烦的是提案入围了、获奖了，结果却一分钱投资也没拿到，还把核心想法提前泄露了。当然，大家的心态都不一样，有些人真的是缺钱，需要把关卡对付过去；有些人是为了混个脸熟，方便以后进入各种影展、获得好的机缘；最近几年也有些只提案不拍片的人，资金越来越多，片子越来越差。

徐：能感觉到独立纪录片发生了很大的变化。

黎：我一直觉得独立是一种理想，“实践社”那个时候，是一种乌托邦式的浪漫主义，大家不是很了解、很清楚，但知道那是一个好玩、有趣的东西，所以愿意不计成本和付出地去接近它。现在已经分流了，有些人觉得可以继续坚持、奋斗，有些人觉得无利可图、及早脱身。独立影像创作者也在分流。有些人进入了一些非常正式、公开传播的领域，甚至商业领域，期待做出“爆款”。就我们正在做的事情来说，要是想挣钱的话，就别干了，因为以我们目前这样的观念和方式去做，是不可能有票房的，在世俗层面上很可能一无所获。

贾：我们现在不会为了什么目的做片子，没有想要规避什么、迎合什么，只是竭尽所能地希望片子本身成为最理想的形态。我们对纪录片没有特别的期待，不考虑盈利，甚至可以不传播，因为我们更想做经得起时间考验的东西。我们选择题材的时候，不太考虑哪种题材更受关注。我们心目中真正的作品，值得耗费毕生精力时间，因为它可以超越时代。

徐：《游神考》和你们正在做的东西，在同温层里，是受到认可的吗？

黎：在我们所认可的那个群体里特别认可。一个人活在世上，之所以觉得有意义、有价值，是一些与你同声相应、同气相求的人，支持你继续往前走，反而电影节的奖励或者市场的反馈，已经没那么重要了。独立影展关闭之后，我才意识到原来那个群体对我这么重要。以前在影展的讨论环节，能非常强烈地感受到那种热情，那种愿意为之付出一切的激情，近乎信仰。

贾：我比较相信他们的判断，是因为他们比较严格，会诚实地把想法告诉我们。有些人说好，只是出于一种礼貌，或者维持一种关系，但是一直在创作的创作者，很认真、有经验，有自己独立的审美判断，能够自洽，能够进行理论上的反思，所以值得信任。

PHENOMENON AND OBSERVATION 现象与观察

Li Yifan: I AM Anti-Dramatic at Heart

李一凡：我骨子里是反戏剧性

Interviewer: YU Yaqin 余雅琴 Translator: Xiang FAN 樊响

Zhao Liang: I Don' t Want to Shoot at People' s Faces Anymore

赵亮：我不想再把镜头怼到人脸上

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Du Haibin: The Significance of the Documentary Emerges Slowly

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Interviewer: SUN Hongyun 孙红云 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Li Yifan: I Am Anti-Dramatic at Heart

Interviewer: YU Yaqin 余雅琴 Translator: Xiang FAN 樊响

Documentary filmmaker Li Yifan (李一凡) lives in Chongqing and is a teacher in the oil painting department of the Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts (四川美院油画系), where he teaches a course on contemporary art. As such, he is most active as an artist in various exhibitions and art projects.

Li Yifan was very busy in 2020, as his work *We Were SMART* (杀马特我爱你, 2019) was widely discussed and reported. I became aware of this work through his exhibition *Unexpected Light* (意外的光芒) at the Times Museum in Guangzhou (广州时代美术馆) at the end of 2019, and wrote a press article about Li Yifan's filming of *shamate* (杀马特) [SMART in the film] around the time of Wuhan's lockdown.

Initially, Li Yifan wanted to explore the issue of aesthetic power through *shamate*, a very popular online subculture, but as he progressed, he realised that the film was very much related to the issue of youth workers in China today. Li Yifan wanted to find out how these left-behind children, mostly from China's remote and impoverished rural areas, became *shamate* in the factories of South China, what they were trying to resist and prove through their hair, and perhaps how this related to the current situation in China.

Since his first work, *Before the Flood* (淹没, 2004), Li Yifan has never given up asking this question. In his three works, *Before the Flood*, *Village Archive* (乡村档案, 2006) and *We Were SMART*, we can clearly see how Li Yifan has, step by step, got under the skin of Chinese society, from a conscious 'non-intervention' to collaborating on an art project with his subject Luo Fuxing (罗福兴). His idea of documentary aesthetics and filmmaking approaches reflects an interesting interaction between documentary creation and social processes.

Yu: You have been active in the art scene for so many years, but I only found out recently that you are a graduate of the Central Academy of Drama (中央戏剧学院).

Li: I studied playwriting. Our class of 1986 was a comprehensive one, where playwriting, directing, and choreography were mixed together. It was probably the only experimental class in the history of the Central Academy of Drama. Before going to university, I went to the Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts and studied

art for four years. By chance, I accompanied someone to take an exam but ended up entering the Central Academy of Drama myself. I never quite got used to the Central Academy of Drama's approach to creativity, because it always emphasized collective work, which required a lot of people, a lot of money, and a lot of control over people. Art students value individual work more. The Central Academy of Drama trained me how to think and how to understand problems. But I still followed an artist's creative practice, so it was normal for me to return to the art scene later.

Yu: You were a student in the class of 1986, what was your experience in Beijing like? You were in Beijing in 1989.

Li: Yes, we were all very disappointed about the 'incident'. As the undergraduate programme was five years, I graduated in 1991 when there was a policy that students could not stay in Beijing after graduation. It was not difficult for students from the Central Academy of Drama to stay in Beijing before that, but not for our year. Then I chose to work at the Guangdong People's Art Museum (广东省群众艺术馆). I thought it would be easy as I was not required to work there.

I came back to Chongqing from Guangdong at the end of 1995 and did nothing for about four or five years, just read books at home. I always wanted to do something, like being a curator or artist. Then there was an opportunity to make a documentary and I thought I could do it.

When I was in Guangzhou, I did a modern agricultural project under the Sanjiu Group (三九集团), called the Shen Nong Project (神农计划), so I encountered a lot of agricultural issues and interviewed some agricultural social science experts. Because of the 1989 incident, I didn't think much about social politics until I did my agricultural research, and I felt that my concern for society had returned.

Around 1994 I started to pay attention to the Three Rural Issues (三农问题), and I felt it very difficult to stay in Guangzhou, as all people around me were talking about how to make money. But I felt that I had to go home and do something interesting. So, in 1995 I went back to Chongqing from Guangdong and read books to prepare myself.

I think we, the post-60s generation who went to university in the 1980s, were different from the post-50s or post-75 generations in a way that we wanted to do something creative, to invent something. None of our class went to graduate school; we were eager to do something practical. We didn't want to just do academic research, we wanted to use something new to express our views of the times, and everyone chose their own

path of expression.

Many of my classmates, including Cai Shangjun (蔡尚君) and Zhang Yang (张扬), went on to make films, but after graduating from university, I never thought of filming anything, as it was not in line with my personality. Then in 2000, one of my university classmates, Shi Runjiu(施润玖), came to Chongqing to make a film and told me that I should also make films. I said I didn't like to deal with sponsorship and control people, then he said I could make documentaries. He introduced me to digital technology and said that it was affordable for me to buy a camera for myself.

When I encountered DV, I suddenly realised that documentary filmmaking particularly suited me, with my knowledge of film and understanding of sociology and aesthetics. So, I decided to do that. But I didn't know much about specific camera techniques, so I called Yan Yu (鄢雨), who was working in Beijing at the time. His family worked at the TV station, so he had been familiar with filming since he was a child.

Yu: Yes, that was the time when the DV movement started. Did you and Yan Yu know each other from childhood?

Li: I was older. When I was in university, he was in high school, and he was always playing with me. Later he was working as a cameraman in Beijing, so I called him back to Chongqing and said we should make a documentary together. We each contributed half of the money and bought a Sony PD150 and a computer that could do non-linear editing, I remember that the camera was about 36,000 yuan and the computer was over 30,000 yuan, which was quite expensive for us at that time.

Yu: You wanted to make a film but didn't know what to make?

Li: Yes, I didn't think about what to shoot at first. I was interested in the laid-off workers in Chongqing and the graves of the Red Guards in Chongqing. The lay-offs issue in Chongqing around 2000 was very severe. I had a relative who worked in a silk factory in Shapingba (沙坪坝), Chongqing, and seven or eight members in the family were laid off at the same time.

I had just returned to Chongqing from Guangdong at that time, and I felt that everything was progressing, but along with the great development, a considerable number of people were being left behind by the times, and I felt that this was too great a price to pay. However, we could not hear such voices from mainstream channels, and I had to document this and tell everyone about it. After I got the camera, I first wanted to film

these things, but at that time I didn't know exactly how to do it, so I just took the camera and wandered around the laid-off areas, such as the heavy cotton factory, the dyeing factory, the light bulb factory, in Tuwan (土湾), Chongqing. At that time, when the factories collapsed, the workers would block the roads, so I was very concerned about that.

Yu: You just shot some clips, but you didn't end up making a film.

Li: Yes, I was not very good at filming at first, and I had been thinking about which angle to use. But one thing was clear to me: I wanted to film the cost of modernisation. At the end of 2001, Yan Yu's sister who worked for CCTV went to Fengjie (奉节) to do a report on the Three Gorges Dam. It was the live broadcast of the demolition of the first house in the Three Gorges, and they needed a small camera to assist with the filming, so they asked Yan Yu to come along. Yan Yu called me when he arrived in Fengjie. When I went there, I decided to stay in Fengjie to shoot the film. I worked as a chief editor of media in Chongqing at the time, and I quit my job without even going back. I stayed for almost a year, eleven months before and after, only occasionally going back to Chongqing to change clothes.

When I looked at the footage later, I found that the first four tapes were similar to those shot by CCTV, such as the relocation of cultural relics, and it was only in the fifth tape that there were changes. It was only in this city, which was about to be submerged, that we started to really care about the people around us and returned to the theme of what price people had to pay in the process of modernisation. The reason for this change was that almost everyone I met was telling me about their houses being submerged, and this was different from what was reported in the media.

There were all sorts of things going on in Fengjie in those days. If you were a good journalist, you could be really busy every day. At that time, our everyday routine was: going out early in the morning, coming back to our place at night, then briefly taking notes on the footage, washing up and going to bed, and then going out to shoot again when we woke up. Many people asked me later how many cameras and how many people I had when I was working on *Before the Flood*, and when I said there were two people and one camera, they were very surprised.

Yu: You had a huge amount of footage to work with.

Li: Yes, I just kept shooting. I shot 143 tapes, and in the end it was very interesting to cut exactly 143 minutes, which is about a 60:1 ratio. As filming, I felt that I didn't have to pretend to be sentimental about

local culture and history like the mainstream media, but more importantly to face up to our own situation and focus on the state of each individual. In the early days, I selected seven or eight stories and followed them every day to see what was happening on each one. In fact, we didn't shoot very much, less than half an hour of footage a day on average. But every day we talked to and observed people in various places, and we gained a lot of insight.

Before *Before the Flood*, there was no systematic coverage of demolition in China, and I wanted to express what really happens when the will of the state clashed with the will of individuals. I saw such a scene and made a very detailed record of it. I wanted to see how the will of the state deprived individual interests. At that time everyone felt that such demolitions were normal and that individuals should back down in the face of the state's interests. Fengjie's most famous slogan at the time was 'sacrificing the personal for the state', and the policy was that the Three Gorges migrants were not given *peichang* (赔偿) [trans. note: literally, compensation) but rather *buchang* (补偿) [trans. note: literally, additional compensation], making sacrifices for the country. The demolition officials even said that *peichang* meant that if I broke your bowl, I would give you a bowl back, while *buchang* meant that if I broke your bowl, I would give you a spoon back. The demolition teams at the time sometimes called on me when they went to demolish, saying that such a great moment should be recorded. For many people, this was a time when they should side with the national interest and not see ordinary people's loss. I think the central theme of *Before the Flood* is how the state and the individual should choose when faced with such a conflict.

Yu: The shoot lasted for eleven months. What made you realise that you had shot enough?

Li: I always know where to stop when making a film. I would stop once I have seen clearly what I want to see and have resolved what I want to resolve. When I was making this film, I did not shoot the actual flooding, but rather focused on how humanity was being inundated, and how individuals were being inundated by the overwhelming force of the state. When I had figured that out, I knew I could finish. I remember I got to the point where I shot a couple of explosions and I knew it was over before it reached water level, and that's when I believed that this overwhelming force had been shot.

I shot the Three Gorges project in Fengjie instead of the laid-off workers in Chongqing because I knew the subject matter was manageable. I had no experience at that time and didn't really know how long the filmmaking process would take, but I knew there would be an end to this Three Gorges thing, as there was a time point for the water storage. So, when I felt that this overwhelming force had been shot, the film was done. By October or November of that year I felt ready to go home. There were a lot of intense conflict

during the demolition, but I knew what I wanted had been captured. In the end, I went back to shoot a shot of everything torn down, and a shot of a wine vendor, whom I happened to run into, and then it ended with that, and life went on. The action tracks of the vendor showed the changes in space, so I kept this shot.

Yu: Did you encounter a lot of difficulties in the post-production, and how did you think about the structure of the film?

Li: The editing stage was very difficult. I encountered a big tech problem. As the computer did not have enough storage for all the footage, we had to buy a few 80G hard drives, 2,000 yuan each. Unlike today when all the footage can be edited together, we had to divide the footage and edit the small pieces bit by bit, and then export them to cut again. The editing took about half a year, but [the film] was still quite long. Lin Xudong (林旭东) gave us a lot of good advice and helped us to control the length of the film, and with his help we were able to get rid of some footage.

There was large amount of footage for this film, but I didn't want to do an eight-hour one. I just wanted to do a two-hour film, but when it came to the editing table, I couldn't let it go, which was difficult for me as a first-time filmmaker.

I had a principle at the time that every useful piece of footage must have at least two layers of meaning. For example, I shot the shipping agency because, firstly, it was a laid-off business, and it also showed how this group of people were connected to the street. For the old man's part, I felt that, according to policy, it was marginal whether he should or should not be compensated for his demolition; for the pier part, it was a place everyone had to pass through and where you could see the way society worked; as for the church, apart from it being a collective, a place about moral beliefs, I wanted to use it as a yardstick to measure the world.

Yu: When I looked at it, I noticed that the subjects really did not care about the camera very much, and you captured a lot of intense scenes.

Li: This place is actually a society of acquaintances, not to mention that our little camera appeared to have very little power and they didn't care much. Also, at the time a lot of recordings were shot with a boom pole, which I didn't think was right, so I removed the boom. I would rather sacrifice some of the sound to make their reactions more realistic, so a lot of people really thought we were just filming casually. I remember we ran into a guy from CCTV and he just thought we were not professionals.

Apart from not using boom poles, my approach included not using lights at night and not disturbing my subjects. I came up with these principles during the shoot. This was a reaction against the CCTV news and documentaries I saw. I especially wanted to capture the real thing, the original and objective thing, and minimise the subjective aspects.

Later on, after watching many independent documentaries, I found that everyone chose the direct cinema approach, even though not many people had seen such films and did not know who Wiseman was, which in my opinion was a reaction against the CCTV aesthetic. I actually like some modernist films, but when I made *Before the Flood* I made it clear that I didn't want to intervene, like [Joris] Ivens' way, which I couldn't accept.

Yu: So you consciously downplayed characters' stories and conflicts in your work.

Li: Yes, if it was to film specific people, their family stories would be more interesting. But I'm very anti-dramatic at heart. This is probably the problem of our generation, being anti-visual when we study art and being anti-dramatic when we study drama. I am especially afraid of too much drama, which just makes people cry and doesn't make them think.

Yu: You brought your equipment into Fengjie which was a rather sensitive area. Did you face any obstacles? And how was the screening of this film afterwards?

Li: I personally think that before 2008 there was a period of freedom in China. That is why so many independent films were quite active before 2008, as people could still pursue such freedom of expression. At that time, there were all kinds of media filming in Fengjie, from CCTV, local TV stations to foreign media. My small camera did not get much attention.

After the film was made, I sent it to the Berlinale, where it unexpectedly won an award. Afterwards it went to independent film festivals in Beijing and Nanjing and the Yunnan Multi-Culture Visual Festival (云之南纪录影像展). It was shown in art museums and grassroots screening organizations and widely circulated in art circles. I don't remember this film causing me too many problems, except for the fact that it was withdrawn from an exhibition at the Iberia Centre for Contemporary Art (伊比利亚当代艺术中心) in Beijing in 2008.

Yu: When did you decide to make *Village Archive*?

Li: After *Before the Flood*, I went to different film festivals and won eight or nine awards, and then I gradually got bored with it. In 2006, I wanted to make a new film. Because of my previous interest in agriculture, I thought that I could make a documentary about the countryside.

While making *Before the Flood*, I found that the conflict in Fengjie was particularly intense around Chinese New Year. As urbanisation expanded after the 1980s, many people came to the city from the village. Often living on the edge of the city, they got into trouble because of various land policies. There was also an urban-rural conflict going on behind this. At that time, Chongqing, where I lived, was also expanding, and people from the surrounding villages were continuously coming into the city, so I felt that the rural area was a big problem and I should look into it. At first I wanted to get into it through the angle of Christianity, mainly because when I was filming *Before the Flood*, the church I was filming moved all the furniture to a village church, so I followed the moving van to the village, which was later the place where I filmed *Village Archive*.

The man who took down the Jehovah sign in *Before the Flood* was later the most important preacher in *Village Archive*, who took me around the village all day long. I had a very good impression of Christianity at the time, and I found it interesting that it taught people to read and gave them comfort when it came to the village. I also happened to travel abroad quite a lot at that time, and I could also see that many rural societies abroad were structured around Christianity. I wondered what would happen if rural China was like that.

I didn't actually want to shoot Fengjie at first, but rather Shimenkan (石门坎) in Guizhou, a place I visited in 1985 when I was a high school student at the Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts. In the nineteenth century, the Church of England had set up a big mission centre here. Legend has it that they freed the local Miao people (苗族) from slavery to the Yi people (彝族), so I was keen to go to Shimenkan to see it. When I went there, I found it wasn't the right place for me to shoot because it was too special. The church was full of people in ethnic minority costumes singing hymns and I didn't think it had a universal meaning. I didn't want to make a film just for the sake of novelty, though something like that would be able to win awards.

I stayed in Shimenkan for a few days and went back to Chongqing, and then I wanted to film a co-operative near Chongqing. It was facilitated by Wen Tiejun (温铁军) and his group around 2000, one of the eight model co-operatives in the country, called Chongqing Qijiang Fengyan Co-operative (重庆綦江丰岩合作社), which claimed to be self-organised by villagers. It was declining when I went there, and they were still singing *Socialism is Good* (社会主义好) and *Without the Communist Party There Would Be No New*

China (没有共产党就没有新中国) every day, with Mao's portrait on the wall. But I felt that doing this was not really a villagers self-organised co-operative in the true sense, as it carried a very strong ideology. I thought it was also too special.

In the end, I came back to Fengjie because the village was very ordinary and its economic situation was still good in this poor county. The village is halfway up a mountain, which is like a terrace on the mountain, and it has water all year round. It is called Longwang Village (龙王村) because there is a large amount of water underneath. As a consequence, it is a drought-and-flood-safe place. According to the villagers, it is a place where a bowl of mud produces a bowl of rice, and I thought it fit quite well with the kind of universal thing I had in mind.

So, this is where I started filming *Village Archive*. Initially I wanted to look at it from a Christian perspective, hoping that Christianity could play a role in Chinese rural society. It was obvious to me that rural China was an idle society. Since the disappearance of the commune and production team system, all sorts of things were left unattended. The grassroots officers did nothing but impose fines, and they just focused on family planning, the poor, the disabled, water conservation ... The villagers who had some skills all went to the cities. I think that Christianity could play a role in organizing villagers to cooperate together, because it is actually very scary for villagers to face nature alone. For example, if there is a natural disaster this year, or if you fall ill when it is time to plant or harvest, you may not have any income this year, so they need to a structure to help each other.

While filming it, I felt that it wasn't the Christianity I knew, it was more like an alternative to rural superstition. But of course there were nice things, like at Christmas they would sing *The East is Red* (东方红) as *Holy Father* (圣天父), like 'Hallelujah, he is the great saviour of the people'. But I wanted to make the most unpretentious film possible, not to mention that this was not the Christian ethics and relationships that, in my understanding, Martin Luther advocated. Hence, I started to make a film about interpersonal relationships, everyday life and politics in the village, and that's how I made *Village Archive*. As mentioned earlier, I am against drama, and I am not willing to film other people's privacy and their family relationships. My films don't have any candid shots. I definitely make my subjects aware of the presence of the camera. I don't shoot private spaces neither.

Yu: I think all your works emphasize publicness.

Li: Yes, I care a lot about publicness. Although I live in an intellectual environment myself, there is a

problem with Chinese intellectuals: too many books, too little evidence. I think I should tell them that China is not what they think, that China is different.

Yu: But you don't actually have any rural experience.

Li: No, but I grew up near the Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts, which was actually a place where the urban and rural met. Chongqing is an interesting city, because it is separated by two rivers and mountains, and there were urban-rural intersections everywhere. But now that the city has developed, these intersections have become part of the city. But when I was a child, this side was the Academy of Fine Arts, next to it was the power plant and the railway bureau, and over a small hill it was countryside, so I can't say I didn't understand the countryside. In the 1980s, the Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts was famous for its rural paintings, and the school always arranged us to experience life in the countryside, and we also went to Guizhou. I've seen really poor people, like a whole family only have one pair of trousers to share. I do know how poor rural China is.

It took me almost two years to make *Village Archive*. Although the actual filming took a year, I actually spent a year on research from the end of 2005 when I started visiting Longwang Village. I went there eleven times in total. The shortest time was a week, and the longest was two months. It usually took between twenty days to a month. Filming this one was different from *Before the Flood*, as there was nothing significant and every day was the same. So, I just recorded everyday life. I always take a relatively long time from preparation to actual shooting.

Yu: Why didn't you make any more documentaries for a long time after *Village Archive*?

Li: Actually, I was filming, but I couldn't finish anything. I was filming *The Labour Law* (劳动法) with the lawyer Zhou Litai (周立太); it took me two to three years, but I still could not get the film done. At that time, I couldn't find a way through the material, as I was not able to film the court nor the litigants. I didn't want to make a documentary just about Zhou Litai himself. I wanted to film *The Labour Law*.

I gained a profound insight when I was filming in the village. Around 2006 and 2007, when the Labour Contract Law (劳动合同法) came out and China joined the WTO, the price of labour in the village rose very quickly. In 2005 the price for rice planting and threshing was twenty-five yuan a day, and in 2006 it was fifty yuan a day, and in 2007 it became a hundred yuan a day, later it went up to two hundred yuan. Then within three years, rural people all left, and there was almost no labour in the village. I think this bill must

have played some special role. In 2008, I exhibited a lot of Zhou Litai's archive in an exhibition in Iberia [Centre for Contemporary Art], mainly on his labour injury and employment contract cases, for which I had prepared a lot, but in the end it didn't happen.

Another interesting observation I made was about the price of pork. I still remember that around 2006 the cost of living rose, and the first thing that happened was that the price of pork rose. So I thought that pork was also important, and I wanted to make a film called *Pork* (猪肉). I did some research on why Sichuan used to be the centre of the pig industry but then the coast and the northeast took it over, and how one county in Jiangxi transported and monopolised the price of pork nationwide. I also went to slaughterhouses, but I hadn't expected to encounter local gangsters there and risk my life, so I couldn't film any further.

I also filmed the oral history of the Red Guards in Chongqing, which was never edited. At the same time, I also worked on art, especially social art. For example, I made the projects *Youth from Other Provinces* (外省青年) and *The Sixth Ring has One More Ring than the Fifth Ring* (六环比五环多一环). In fact, I've never stopped creating stuff.

Yu: What made you start to make *We Were SMART*?

Li: By the time I got to *We Were SMART*, I had let go of my previous approaches and aesthetics, because the failure of several attempts made me realise that this approach didn't work and that I could no longer use direct cinema or a super-objective perspective to document what was happening in China. What's happening in China is so distorted that it's impossible to film objectively. Then I have to find out why something is happening in China and why China's social structure is like this. By the time I filmed *We Were SMART*, it was already the era of Weibo, WeChat and we-media, so I didn't need to record what was happening. There was no point in capturing the on-the-spot scene anymore. It's no longer about documentary, maybe livestreaming could do it better.

Around 2012, I began to pay attention to this group, and it was also when I was working on the art project *Youth from Other Provinces* and I came up with the idea of 'aesthetic autonomy' (审美自治). A friend gave me some information about *shamate*. My first response was surprise, it was beyond my imagination. Speaking of 'the alternative' (非主流), it was not uncommon to see people with dyed hair at the Sichuan Academy of Fine Arts. But I was surprised when I suddenly saw such exaggerated hair shapes.

I thought that society had changed, that the lower strata of society had grown a kind of self-consciousness,

that it was deliberately resisting the external ‘landscape society’ (景观社会) , that it was resisting a mainstream aesthetic, which was quite impressive. It’s not easy to grow this kind of thing, discrediting oneself to resist the mainstream.

Yu: How did you find these subjects? In our lives, *shamate* are almost invisible.

Li: Yes, I made a lot of effort. During shooting, the Shenzhen Biennale (深圳双年展) commissioned me to do a production, so I wanted to take the opportunity to shoot *shamate*, and later I also found some sponsorship from the Times Museum, Tencent (腾讯) , and other institutions.

I then started to look for real *shamate*. I knew they had their own group. I searched everywhere, even QQ groups, Qzone (Q空间) , and Baidu Tieba (百度贴吧) , but I still couldn’t get in. Nobody cared at all about me. I thought that I was too old, and the way I spoke, people didn’t feel right. So, I asked some of my students to reach out to the group, but that didn’t work either.

When I met Luo Fuxing in 2016, he told me that it was impossible for an ordinary person to get into the group. There was an inspection group and they would look at your Qzone. When they saw that the person in the Qzone did not do their hair or clothes [like them], they wouldn’t give a damn. Hence, we could see *shamate* on the internet.

When I started asking around, a hairdresser said that he knew some people from Guangxi who worked in Guangdong, but he didn’t know their whereabouts, so no clue could be found. By chance, a friend in Shenzhen told me that someone knew Luo Fuxing. We drove to Pingdi (坪地) , the furthest point in Longgang (龙岗) , Shenzhen, and met him there for the first time. By that time, Luo Fuxing had stopped doing his hair for many years, which meant that he had stopped being a *shamate*, but he was still on the internet. In 2015, platforms such as Kuaishou (快手) and Douyin (抖音) gave *shamate* the opportunity to appear on the internet again, in a sort of ‘unlocked’ way. Some press also interviewed Luo Fuxing.

Yu: You later built a deep relationship with Luo Fuxing and gained his trust.

Li: Yes, but initially Luo Fuxing was still very nervous when he met us. There were three of us in the group, but Luo Fuxing only talked to me and told the others to leave. He took me to a small hourly hotel room and talked to me. I could sense that he was still wary of people with different identities. After talking to him for half a day that day, it worked out pretty well, and that’s how the shooting started. At first, I used the usual

approach to documentaries: there is a central character, and the director focuses on that character to see how he acts, who he interacts with, and what kind of relationships he has.

After a few days, it turned out that this didn't work. He didn't connect with the rest of the group in the way we thought he did. The so-called 'Godfather of *Shamate*' was just a symbol on the Internet, a 'persona', but in real life, Luo Fuxing was a fairly ordinary person. In fact, as the 'Godfather of *Shamate*', Luo Fuxing was not that influential in this group, certainly not as influential as some influencers. He told us that there used to be a lot of *shamate* in Longgang, but as some factories moved out, it was harder to find this group of people. He could only introduce us to some of his friends who used to play together online.

It was hard to find these people, and even though we got in touch with them, we didn't always have the chance to meet them. On one occasion, we almost all went to Huizhou to meet a guy, but he didn't want to come out and thought we were some kind of hatchet men sent to beat him up, as he had been quite high-profile on the internet recently. He was reluctant to meet us and sent us a list of 'Burial Love Top Ten Outstanding Youth' (葬爱十大杰出青年), saying to go beat up these people, not him ...

Later, we met a girl in Qingxi, Dongguan (东莞清溪), who also used to play *shamate*. She told us that there was an ice-skating rink in Shipai, Dongguan (东莞石排) where a lot of people gathered, so we finally met the real *shamate* in their natural state. They were all very young children. The ones introduced by Luo Fuxing were no longer dressed like that.

I thought I was familiar with Shenzhen, but what I knew of it at first was Nanshan (南山), Shekou (蛇口), Futian (福田), and some other places, which were clean, comfortable, and also very high-tech. Later on, I started to encounter some urban villages, like Baishizhou (白石洲), Caopu (草埔), and Qingshuihe (清水河), and it was then that I felt something different about Shenzhen, like having a second identity. But when we entered the industrial areas, I discovered another Shenzhen that had nothing to do with the one I previously knew.

I went through a particularly long process of discovery. Our first round of filming took about four months, with Shenzhen as the centre of the interviews, and we got to know a lot, but not enough. The reason for this was that they talked more about the factory than their hair, because that was the source of pain for them. I felt that I didn't know what it was like to be in a factory and that it wasn't easy to shoot in a factory. So, we decided to stay in the place with the most *shamate*. Me, Luo Fuxing, Crow (乌鸦), and a student stayed in Shipai.

Factories were everywhere in Shipai, to the point where every street was filled with small factories. This is why there were so many *shamate* here. The big factories had strict requirements and didn't allow such hair or tattoos. This group of kids then gathered in Shipai in Dongguan or Chenghai (澄海) in Shantou (汕头). Most of these places had small factories and the requirements were laxer.

Yu: Even factory workers have hierarchies?

Li: In fact, there are no *shamate* in big factories, like Foxconn (富士康), because they can't get in. They have to dye their hair black or shave it off before they can get into Foxconn. The *shamate* are still mainly located in small coastal factories, struggling on small assembly lines. The big factories need all kinds of supplementary parts, so there are small part factories. This end of the industry is the main environment for *shamate*.

The distribution of *shamate* has also changed. Most of them used to come from Guangxi and Henan, and there were also quite a lot in Guangdong's Hakka areas, followed by Anhui, Jiangxi, and Hunan. Now it's basically concentrated in the Yi areas of Yunnan, Guizhou, and Sichuan. In other words, the *shamate* have started to come from poorer places, which is related to the distribution of poverty in different regions. The reasons behind these changes reflect the development and changes that have taken place in China over the years.

Yu: In other words, in the process of searching for *shamate*, you have discovered a group of workers who are hidden from public view, and they are connected to rural issues, as many of the *shamate* are actually the second or third generation of migrant workers, and they were left-behind children.

Li: The *shamate* are not a product of the village. They come out of industrial areas, not even the urban-rural interface. We know a lot of *shamate* and have filmed many of them, with about seventy to eighty in-depth interviews. Most of the *shamate* we interviewed were left-behind children, or what we call the second generation of migrant workers. It is not uncommon for them to drop out of school at an early age to go out to work at the age of fourteen or fifteen. There are many reasons for dropping out of school: being poor, thinking that there is no point in going to school and that they will have to go out to work anyway. They feel that they have no other choice, so they don't care. Since going to school is still hard, they might as well earn money early.

As they started working when they were very young, they had a lot of pressure to release. Working in a factory is so intense that you can't feel the release at all if it's not a very strong thing. For example, one single piece of red hair is absolutely invisible to them. One child told me that sometimes when he came off the assembly line, he couldn't hear for a couple of hours and had to recover slowly. Their visual system needs to be stimulated very hard.

Left-behind children often feel a lack of presence. They told me they wanted to be seen and needed attention. Even if it's a kind of 'stigma', it's still attention. Many of them were two or three years old when their parents went out to work. In earlier years it was not easy to buy tickets, and for various reasons some parents did not come back for several years. When their parents started to return to their hometowns, they [the left-behind children] went out to work. They generally lack the warmth of a family and want this feeling of being noticed, which is a very important psychological need.

This kind of stimulation is attractive and some factory girls also only like this kind of boy who gets his hair done; they are not attracted to the boys who also work on the assembly line and they think they are unambitious and unromantic. When you get your hair done, you look a bit different, and it makes you feel good and exciting. Of course, there is another reason: this group of people left their hometown young and many of them were cheated and bullied when they came to Guangdong. By getting their hair done and feeling a bit mature, they would not be bullied. Similar aesthetics brought this group together through the internet. Similar backgrounds and experiences allowed them to find people with common interests, and they comforted each other and even introduced each other to jobs. In a sense, a small 'utopia' was formed, with hair as a symbol. It gives people a kind of comfort. Although they are so insignificant, a hair style can make them stand out.

They are too insignificant and need to justify their existence. What happened to them is beyond our imagination: they lost their luggage when they first arrived in Guangdong; they couldn't find the relatives who were promised to pick them up; they were penniless, and so on. After being in the city for a long time, many of them still didn't know how to take the bus, how to get to the bank, and even how to get home. They were scared of the outside world. A kid at Foxconn argued with Luo Fuxing, saying that too few tall buildings had been built in Shenzhen, not as many as in Guiyang. It turned out that he had neither been to Guiyang nor really spent time in the urban area of Shenzhen. He had seen the tall buildings in Guiyang when he passed by on the train, while in Shenzhen he had only been living in a factory. Many people are like this, the coach took them straight from their home to the factory and they had never come out again, in other words, they had been isolated.

Although I had paid attention to the factories when filming *The Labour Law*, I was still a bit shocked by the factories when I saw them. They often worked for month with only one day off, twelve hours a day, and usually finished work after 10.00pm. They didn't have the chance to come out into society at all, and the only place you could see this group of people was in the industrial area. Their working conditions, intensity, and working hours were beyond my imagination. I knew they were working overtime, but I didn't expect to work that long. Many of their working conditions were not very good and the workers were very young. That's when I realised I wasn't trying to film any aesthetic freedom, I was trying to film a group of young workers. This brought me back to the issue of the Labour Law that I was concerned about, and *We Were SMART* is a work about the thoughts and situation of young workers.

Yu: According to standard documentary filming practice, Luo Fuxing should have been the main character, but you didn't do that, instead you used a lot of footage from individual interviews.

Li: During the interviews, I often felt that *shamate* was their protective device. Whenever they encounter something that makes them feel defeated and unsure of themselves, it opens up and protects them. This documentary is perhaps not quite like a documentary in the common sense where a director's point of view can guide the audience. I didn't have a director's point of view in this one. It's basically a *shamate* story told by *shamate*. According to my usual approach, I wouldn't tell each individual's dramatic story. When I was interviewing the *shamate*, I found that almost everyone's life experiences were very similar. What I wanted to do is probably just to present their commonality.

Yu: I think *We Were SMART* is very much a reflection of your artistic concept, and the level of attention this work has received since its release also shows that *shamate* is only a symptom of the problem, it's not only a subcultural issue.

Li: When we make films today, we can't just think of ourselves as foreigners, like tourists. We have to go deeper into our own context. The reason why there are so many problems with art production today is that we imitate foreign artists and make works with the mentality of a 'tourist'. We can actually understand our own context, but it depends on whether we are willing to enter it, to treat the *shamate* like human beings, not like monsters. They have to go to work, they are ordinary workers, and when you look at things that way, a lot of things are different.

李一凡：我骨子里是反戏剧性的

余雅琴

纪录片导演李一凡生活在重庆，是四川美院油画系的老师，教授的课程是当代艺术。因此，更多的时候他是作为艺术家活跃在各种展览和艺术项目中。

二〇二〇年是李一凡十分忙碌的一年，他的作品《杀马特我爱你》经过各种方式传播之后被广泛地讨论和报道。我是借由他在二〇一九年年底于广州时代美术馆的展览“意外的光芒”了解到这部作品的，并在武汉封城前后撰写了一篇关于李一凡拍摄“杀马特”的媒体稿件。

最初，李一凡本想借助曾在网络十分流行的亚文化现象“杀马特”探讨审美权力的问题，但随着拍摄的深入，他意识到这部作品与中国当下的青年工人问题息息相关。这些普遍出生于中国偏远贫困的农村留守儿童是如何在南中国的工厂里变成“杀马特”的，李一凡想要搞清楚他们想要通过头发抵抗和证明什么，这背后或许可以找出中国现状的一些原因。

其实从李一凡的第一部作品《淹没》开始，他就没有放弃对这个问题的追问，在他面世的三部作品《淹没》《乡村档案》《杀马特我爱你》里，我们可以清晰地看到李一凡是如何一步步介入中国社会的肌理之中的，他从自觉的“不介入”，到和拍摄对象罗福兴一起做艺术项目，他对纪录片美学和拍摄方式的思考折射出纪录片创作和社会进程之间有趣的互动关系。

余雅琴（以下简称余）：这么多年你一直活跃在艺术届，我最近才意外知道你是中央戏剧学院毕业的。

李一凡（以下简称李）：我是学编剧的，我们八六级是一个综合班，编剧、导演、舞美混在一起的，这可能是中戏历史上的唯一一个实验班，我主要还是学编剧。上大学前我上的是四川美院附中，学了四年美术，偶然的机会，我陪人考试结果自己进了中戏。中戏的创作方式我不太适应，因为总是强调集体创作，需要很多人，还要弄很多钱，又要控制人。学美术的比较看重个体劳动。中戏给我更多的是思考方式的训练，告诉我如何去理解问题，但我的创作方式基本上还是一个艺术家的方式，所以我后来回到艺术圈也很正常。

余：你是八六级的学生，你在北京的经历是怎样的？一九八九年的时候你在北京。

李：对，因为这件事我们都很失望。我上的大学是五年制，一九九一年毕业，当时有政策，原则上不留京。在这之前中央戏剧学院的学生留北京不难，但我们这一个年级就不行，后来我就选择了广东省群众艺术馆，当时觉得那里不用上班，很轻松。

我是一九九五年底从广东回的重庆，大概四、五年什么都没做，就在家看看书，中间我一直想做点什么，比如策展人或者艺术家，突然有一个纪录片的事情，我觉得我也可以做。

我在广州的时候，做过一个农业项目，是三九集团下属的一个现代农业项目，叫“神农计划”，所以我当时接触到很多农业方面的事情，还采访了一些农业社科专家。因为八九年的事情，这之前我对社会政治这些就不太考虑了，直到做农业研究，我觉得自己对社会的感觉又回来了。

一九九四年前后我开始关注“三农”问题了，接触到这部分后我就觉得自己在广州很难受，周围的人谈论的都是如何挣钱，但我觉得自己得回家做点有意思的事情。所以一九九五年我就从广东回了重庆，在家看书做准备。

我觉得我们这波八〇年代上大学的六〇后和五〇后或者七五后不一样，我们就是特别想做创作或者做创造性的东西，想弄点发明，我们全年级没有一个人读研究生，都是急着去做实践，所以我们这代人做实验电影、戏剧、纪录片、音乐、绘画、当代艺术的人特别多。我们不想仅仅做学术研究，我们想用一些新的东西去表达自己对时代的看法，然后每个人都在选择自己的表达路径。

我的同学里有蔡尚君、张扬很多人后来都在拍电影，但大学毕业后，我从来没想过要拍东西什么的，我的性格不太适合做这些，直到二〇〇〇年前后我有一个大学同学叫施润玖来重庆拍片子，跟我说我也应该拍电影，我说我不喜欢拉赞助和控制人，他说可以拍纪录片啊，这下倒提醒了我。当时他就给我介绍了数码技术，说完全可以自己买一台机器，价格也能接受。

可以说等接触到了DV，我突然意识到自己是特别适合做纪录片的，我有电影知识，加上对社会学和美学的认识，纪录片是最适合我的，所以我就这么做了下来。但我对具体摄像技术也不太懂，我就打电话给鄢雨，鄢雨当时在北京工作，他家是电视台的，他从小就熟悉拍摄这些。

余：对，那会可以说是DV浪潮起来了。你和鄢雨是从小就认识？

李：我大一些，我上大学，他在中学，老跟着我玩。后来他在北京做摄影师，我就把他叫回重庆，说不如一起做纪录片，我们一人出了一半钱，买了一台索尼PD150和一台可以做非线性编的电脑，我

印象很深，摄像机大概三万六，电脑也三万多，那个时候对我们来说挺贵的。

余：你有了拍片子的想法，但并没有想好拍什么？

李：对，一开始没想具体拍什么，但我当时就对重庆的下岗工人和重庆的红卫兵墓这两个题材比较感兴趣，尤其是二〇〇〇年前后重庆的下岗很严重，有的区域是一大片一大片的下岗。我有一个亲戚在重庆沙坪坝磁器口那边的一个丝纺厂，一家七八口人同时下岗。

我那会儿刚从广东回重庆，我感觉到这个时代在不断地进步，物质也在不断地丰富，但在大发展的同时，相当一部分人被时代甩出去了，我觉得这个代价太大了。但是，主流的声音根本听不到这些，我得把这个代价记录下来，告诉大家。我拿到机器之后，最早是想拍这些东西的，当时也没想好具体怎么拍，反正就拿着机器在那些下岗区到处逛，比如说重庆土湾的重棉花一厂二厂、染厂、重庆灯泡厂等等。那会儿工厂垮了以后，工人会把公路堵了，我那会很关注这些。

余：等于你只是拍了一些片段，但没有最后做成片子。

李：对，开始不太会拍，也在想用什么角度拍，但有一点我是很清楚的，我要拍的是实现现代化的代价是什么。到了二〇〇一年年底，鄢雨在央视工作的姐姐去奉节做三峡大坝的报道。那是三峡拆迁第一次炸房子的直播，他们需要一台小机器来辅助拍摄，叫了鄢雨。鄢雨到了奉节给我打了个电话，让我去看看。我去了一看，就决定要留在奉节拍片，当时我在重庆一家媒体做主编，我都没回去就把工作辞了。一待就是差不多一年，前后十一个月的样子，中间只是偶尔换季的时候回重庆换下衣服。

后来我看素材，发现其实前面四五盘的素材和央视拍的也差不多，比如文物的搬迁之类的，差不多到第五盘带子才有变化。在这个要被淹没掉的城市，才开始真正关心周边的人，才回到现代化的过程中人需要付出什么样代价这个主题。这个变化很重要的原因是，几乎我遇到的每一个人都在和我说他们的房子要被淹没的事情，而这些和媒体报道得都不一样。

那时候的奉节每天都有各种事情要发生，如果你是一个合格的新闻记者，每天都能忙死。那会我们的状态就是一大早出门，晚上天黑了才回住处，简单做一下场记，洗了就睡，醒了就出去拍。后来好多人问我做《淹没》的时候几台机器几个人，我说有两个人一台机器，他们都很惊讶。

余：你们的素材量是很大的。

李：对啊，就是不停地拍，拍了143盘带子，最后很有意思正好剪了143分钟，大概是一个60:1的片比。

拍着拍着我觉得不用再去像主流媒体一样假惺惺地伤感当地的文化和历史，更重要的是直面我们自己的处境，关注每个人的状态。最早的时候我定了七八条线索，每天都会去跟，看看每个线索上发生了什么，其实我们开机并不多，平均每天录制的素材不到半小时，但每天都在各个地方和人聊天和观察，这中间的体会是很多的。

在《淹没》之前，中国没有系统性地报道过拆迁问题，我想表达的是在国家意志和个人意愿发生冲突的时候，到底会发生什么。我看到了这样的现场，于是做了很详细地记录，我想看看国家意志是如何剥夺个人利益的。那时候大家都觉得这种拆迁是正常的，在国家利益面前个人应该退让。奉节当时最有名的口号就是“舍小家为大家”，那时候政策是说对三峡移民不是赔偿，是补偿，要为国家做出牺牲的。拆迁官员甚至说，赔偿的意思就是我打烂你一个碗，给你一个碗，补偿意思就是我打烂你一个碗，给你一个勺就可以了。当时的强拆队去强拆有时还会叫上我，说这么伟大的时刻应该记录下来。对很多人来说这时候应该站在国家利益这边，看不到普通人的损失是天经地义的。我想《淹没》的核心主题就是这个，在面对这样的矛盾冲突的时候，国家与个人应该怎样选择。

余：你们当时拍了十一个月，你是什么意识到拍得够了，可以回家了。

李：我拍片从来都知道该在哪里停下的，我希望看清楚的事情看清了，想要解决的事情解决了就可以停。在拍这个片子的时候，我不是拍那个物理性的淹没，我想关心的是人性是如何被淹没的，个人是如何在国家意志的碾压下被淹没的，当我搞明白这个，我就知道可以结束了。我记得我就拍到几次爆炸，水位还没涨上来就结束了，那时候我觉得这个碾压已经拍到位了。

我拍现代化的代价没有拍重庆的下岗工人，而是拍了奉节的三峡工程是因为我知道这个题材是可控的，那时候没有经验，并不知道一个片子会拍多久，但我知道三峡这个事情一定会有一个结束，蓄水是有时间节点的。因此当我感觉这种碾压拍摄完成了，片子就完成了。到了那年的十月、十一月我就觉得可以回家了。那会拆得还是很火热，还发生了很多激烈的冲突，但我要的我知道都拍到了。最后去补拍了一个都拆光的镜头，还有一个卖散酒的镜头，也是正好碰上的，后来就以这个为结尾了，生活还是要继续过下去。正好这几个打酒的行动轨迹可以再次展现出空间的变化，我就把这个镜头保留了。

余：后期是遇到的困难大么，片子的结构你是怎么考虑的？

李：剪辑的时候很难，那时候技术也遇到很大问题，当时的电脑都装不下这么多素材，只能买了好几个 80G 硬盘，一个就一两千块钱，买了两三个，所以剪辑都是先一个局部，一个局部来剪的，不像今天能把所有素材存在一起，只能是一小块一小块剪辑，之后再导出来重新再剪，大概剪辑了半

年多，但还是有点长，就请林旭东来帮忙看，他给出了很多很好的意见，帮助我们控制长度，一些我们自己舍不得的素材在他的帮助下就拿掉了。

这个片子体量很大，但我不想做一个八小时那样长度的作品，我就想做一个两小时的，可真的到了剪辑台，我就舍不得了，这对我这个第一次剪片子的人其实还是很难。

我当时有一个原则，每一条有用的素材至少要有两层意思，比如我拍船运社，一方面它是个下岗的企业，是一个群体，还可以看出他们和街道是如何发生联系的。老人那部分是我觉得他的拆迁问题是在政策的边缘，可以赔，也可能不赔；码头部分是因为这里是所有人的必经之地，这里能看到社会运作的方式；至于教堂，除了它是一个集体、一个关于道德信仰的场所之外，也因为我想把它当成丈量这个世界的标尺。

余：我看的时候发现这些被拍摄的对象的确对镜头不敏感的样子，你拍到了很多激烈的现场。

李：这个地方其实就是一个熟人社会，何况我们这个小机器显得我们的权力很小，他们也不太在乎。另外当时很多拍摄录音都要用吊杆，我觉得这样不对，就把杆去了。为了让他们的状态更真实，我宁愿牺牲一些声音的部分，所以很多人真的就觉得我们就是瞎拍。我还记得我们当时碰见一个中央电视台的人，他就觉得我们没有专业态度。

我这些拍摄的想法，除了不用录音杆，还有夜晚尽量不打灯，不影响我的拍摄对象等，这些原则是在拍摄的过程里想好的。我想这恰好是对当时看到的央视新闻和纪录片的一种反动，我特别想拍到真实的东西，就是特别想把那些原汁原味的，特别客观的东西拿出来，把主观的东西降到最低。

后来看很多独立纪录片后，我发现大家都不自觉地选择了“直接电影”的方式，尽管没有多少人看过这种电影，不知道谁是怀斯曼，在我看来这就是对央视美学的反动。那时候我自己其实很喜欢一些现代主义的的电影，但我做《淹没》的时候我就很明确，不要介入，像是伊文思的方式我就很不能接受。

余：因此你在作品里有意识地淡化了人物故事和冲突。

李：对，其实如果拍具体的人，还有他们的家庭故事可能会更好看。但我骨子里是很反戏剧性的。这可能是我们这代人的毛病，学了美术就要反视觉强迫症，学了戏剧就反戏剧性，我特别怕戏剧性太强，光让人流眼泪，不让人思考。

余：你们当时带着设备进到奉节，这个地方又是一个比较敏感的地区，有没有受到阻碍，后来这个片子的放映情况如何。

李：其实当时并不敏感，我个人觉得 2008 年之前中国还是有一个非常自由的时期，所以为什么 2008 年之前那么多独立影像被激活，那时候大家还是追求这种自由表达。何况当时奉节有各种媒体，有央视的、地方卫视的也有各个国家的媒体，他们都在拍，我们这个小机器在其中特别不起眼，所以很多时候大家反而当我们不存在。

这个片子拍完后送去了柏林电影节，还意外获奖，之后在国内就去了北京和南京的独立影像展，还去了“云之南”，另外就是，美术馆和民间放映组织在放，艺术圈内流传比较多。我印象里这个片子没有给我带来太多麻烦，除了 2008 年在北京伊比利亚的一个展览上被撤掉了，还没有遇到太多问题。

余：你是什么时候决定拍《乡村档案》的？

李：《淹没》结束后我就各大电影去跑，这个片拿了八九个大奖，我也渐渐厌倦了，到了 2006 年我就想要做新的片子。因为我之前积累的对农业的兴趣，我就想能不能拍一个关于农村的纪录片。

我在拍《淹没》的时候有一个发现，在奉节冲突特别激烈，争议特别大的是 1980 年代之后城市扩大的部分，很多人都是从农村来到县城，他们往往住在城市边缘，因为各种土地政策，他们就惹上了麻烦。这个背后还有一个城乡冲突在。当时我住的重庆也在不断地扩大，周围农村的人不断地涌进城，我觉得农村是一个大问题，我应该去看看。最早我想通过基督教切入，主要是在拍《淹没》的时候，我拍的教会把所有的家具搬去了乡下的一个教会，我就跟着搬家车去了乡下，后来那里就是我拍《乡村档案》的地方。

《淹没》里拆耶和牌子的那个人就是后来《乡村档案》最重要的传道人，一天到晚带着我在村里转的长老。我当时对基督教有特别美好的印象，我发现基督教到农村以后，教人识字，给人安慰，很有意思。那时候我正好也出国比较多，也能看到国外的乡村社会，很多都是依靠基督教组织起来的结构。我就想知道中国农村如果也是这样会如何。

其实我最初并没想还拍奉节，我当时想拍的是贵州石门坎，那个地方 1985 年我在四川美院附中的时候曾经去体验生活。在 19 世纪，英国圣公会曾在这里建立一个很大的传教中心，他们把当地的苗族从彝族人的奴隶制中解放出来，曾经是一个传奇，我就很想去石门坎看看。我去了之后发现这里不适合我拍，因为太特别，教堂里都是穿着少数民族服装唱圣歌的人，我觉得这没有那种普遍性的

意义，太特殊了。我不想拍一个猎奇的东西，但这样的东西应该是可以得奖的。

我在石门坎待了几天就回重庆了，后来又想拍重庆附近的合作社，这是温铁军他们在 2000 年前后做的，是当时全国 8 个示范的合作社之一，叫重庆綦江丰岩合作社，号称是农民自发组织，我去的时候已经快不行了，他们每天还在高唱《社会主义好》，《没有共产党就没有新中国》，挂着毛主席像，但我觉得做这个事情并不是真正意义农民自发的合作社，带着很强的意识形态，我觉得这也太特殊。

我后来还是回到了奉节，因为这个村子很普通，它的经济情况在这个贫困县是好的。这个村子在一个半山的地方，相当于山上的一个台地，长年有水，之所以叫做龙王村是因为这里有一股特别大的地下水涌出，所以这里是旱涝保收的。按农民的话说，那个地方就是一碗泥土就能产一碗饭的地方，我觉得这里挺符合我心中那种平均数的东西。

于是我在这里开始了《乡村档案》的拍摄，最初我想以基督教的角度去看，希望基督教可以对农村社会起到一定的作用。因为那时候我明显感觉中国农村就是一个空转的社会，在公社和大队制度消失后，这里各式各样的事情都是没人管的，基层管理者除了罚款啥也不干，就是抓计划生育，穷人、残疾人、水利……所以的东西都不管，有点能力的农民都跑到城市里去了。我觉得是不是基督教可以起到一定的作用，把农民自发组织起来合作等等，因为农民一个家庭单独面对大自然，其实对他们是很恐怖的。因为比如今年有个天灾，比如在插秧的时候，该收割的时候你生病了，你可能今年就没有收入，所以他需要组织性互助。

拍着拍着，我觉得这里也不是我认识的那个基督教，更像是农村迷信的一种替代，当然也有好看的东西，比如圣诞节他们会把《东方红》唱成《圣天父》，唱“哈利路亚他是人民大救星”。但我想拍一个最朴实的片子，何况这些和我理解的马丁·路德倡导的基督教伦理和人际关系不是一回事，于是我开始拍村子里的人际关系，日常生活和日常政治，就有了《乡村档案》。前面说到我反对戏剧性，我也不愿意拍别的人的隐私，拍家庭恩怨情仇，我的片子，我的片子没有任何偷拍，我一定要让拍摄对象知道摄影机的在场，我不也拍私密空间。

余：我觉得你的作品都很重视公共性。

李：对，我很在意公共性，而且因为我自己是在一个知识分子的环境里生活，但我觉得中国的知识分子有问题，太多书本，实证的部分太少，我觉得我应该告诉他们中国不是他们想象的那样，中国有别的状况。

余：但你其实没有农村经验。

李：没有，但我在川美附近长大，这其实就是一个城乡交界的地方，重庆这个城市也有意思，是被两条河和山隔着，到处都是城乡交接处，现在城市发展了，这些交接被城市填上了，但我小时候这边是美院，边上电厂、铁路局，翻过一个坎儿就是农村，所以也不能说我不了解农村。80 年代的时候川美的乡土绘画很有名，学校老安排去农村体验生活，后来还去了贵州，这些都给留下很深的烙印，我见过那些真正的穷人，可能一家人就只有一条裤子，我是知道中国农村有多差多穷的。

拍摄乡村档案我前后花了差不多两年时间，虽然实际拍摄是一年，但我调研其实就花了一年，从 2005 年年底我到龙王村，我前后去过 11 次，最短时间是待一周，最长两个月，一般就是 20 天到一个月，拍摄这部和《淹没》不同，这里没有什么事情发生，天天都一样，但我就是记录，我拍片子的时间从准备到实拍都比较长。

余：《乡村档案》之后，为什么很长时间都没有再拍纪录片？

李：其实一直在拍，但是没有拍成，我一直跟着周立太律师拍《劳动法》，结果弄了两三年也没弄成。那时候我还没想到变通的办法，法庭不能拍，当事人不能拍，又不想拍周立太的人物纪录片，我想拍的就是《劳动法》。

我在农村拍片的时候有了一个深刻的体会，06、07 年前后《劳动合同法》出来以后，中国也加入世贸组织，那会农村的工价涨得特别快，2005 年插秧打谷的价格是一天 25 块，06 就是 50，07 就变 100，后来涨到 200。然后三年时间农村人就走光了，农村几乎没有劳动力了，我想这个法案一定起到了什么特别的作用。2008 年我在伊比利亚的展览展出了很多周立太的档案，主要是他打的劳动伤害和劳动合同的案件，我为这个事情做了很多准备，但最后没拍成。

另外我还有一个观察也很有意思，就是关于猪肉价格的，我还记得 2006 年前后物价上涨，最早就是猪肉涨价，我想猪肉也很重要，于是我想拍一个叫做《猪肉》的片子，我就去做了一些调查，最早四川是主要的生猪生产地，后来四川为何不是了，为什么都是沿海和东北在养猪，江西有个县是如何转运和垄断全国的猪肉价格的，我还去了屠宰场，没想到遇到了黑社会，有了生命危险，我就不能再拍了。

另外我还拍了重庆武斗红卫兵的口述史，这些没有剪辑出来。同时我也做艺术，尤其是社会性的艺术，比如我做了“外省青年”，“六环比五环多一环”这些活动，其实我的创作一直没有停。

余：是什么契机让你开始创作《杀马特我爱你》？

李：到了《杀马特我爱你》，我就放下了以前的方法和美学，因为几次尝试的失败让我意识到这套方式不成立，不能再直接用电影或者超级客观的视角来记录中国发生了什么。中国发生的事情都在被扭曲，客观性的东西不能拍，也拍不了。那我就要去找一找中国为什么会发生一些事情，中国为什么会是这样一个社会结构。到了拍《杀马特我爱你》，那时候已经是微博、微信时代、自媒体时代，无需我去记录发生了什么，第一现场的记录已经没有意义了，这已经不再是纪录片的意义，可能微博直播做得更好。

我是在 2012 年前后关注到这个群体的，也是源于我做“外省青年”这个艺术项目，当时我提出了“审美自治”这样的说法。一个朋友给了我一些“杀马特”的资料。当时的感觉首先是很吃惊，超出了我的想象。单说“非主流”，在我教学的四川美院并不少见，不过就是头发染个颜色什么的。但当我突然看见那种极其夸张的头发形状的时候，还是挺吃惊的。

我当时认为社会好像发生了变化，社会底层自己长出了一种自觉性，它很有意地抵抗外部的“景观社会”，他在抵抗一种主流审美，这点挺厉害的。生长出这种东西可不简单，糟践自己来抵抗主流。

余：你是怎么找到这些拍摄对象的？在我们的生活里，“杀马特”几乎是不可见的。

李：对，花费了很大功夫，开拍那会正好深圳双年展委托制作做一个作品，我就想借机拍“杀马特”，后来也从时代美术馆、腾讯等一些机构找了一些拍摄费用。

我开始寻找真实的杀马特，我知道他们有自己的群体，但是我到处找，甚至找到 QQ 群、空间、贴吧……都进不去，没人理我。我开始以为是我年龄太大了，说话的方式人家感觉不对。于是我请我的一些学生去接触这个群体，但也不行。

16 年我认识了罗福兴，他才告诉我，一般人根本不可能进群。他有一个审核群，审核的时候要看 QQ 空间的，一看 QQ 空间里面这个人头发没搞，服饰也没有，根本就不鸟你。于是我们只能在网上看到有“杀马特”的存在。

我开始的时候也是到处问，问到一个理发馆，理发馆的人说知道一些从广西到广东打工的人，但是不知道行踪，线索就断了。偶然的机会，深圳一个朋友告诉我，有人认识罗福兴。我们就开车跑到深圳龙岗最远的坪地，在那里第一次见到他。罗福兴那个时候已经好多年不留头发了，等于他也不玩“杀马特”了，但还出没在网络上。2015 年快手、抖音等平台让“杀马特”有机会再次出现在网络上，有种“解封”的意思。也有一些媒体采访罗福兴。

余：你后来和罗福兴建立了很深的关系，取得了他的信任。

李：对，但最初罗福兴见到我们还是很紧张，我们一行三个人，罗福兴只和我谈，让其他人离开，他带我在一个小宾馆开了钟点房谈话。我能感觉到他对不同身份的人还是很警惕的。那天和他聊了半天，效果还不错，就这么开始了拍摄。最初，我照着那种一般拍纪录片的方式拍：有个中心人物，导演的视点盯在这个人物身上，看他怎么行动，和什么人交往，有什么样的恩怨情仇……

隔了几天发现这样不行，他和这个群体的其他人并没有我们想象的联结。这个所谓的“杀马特教父”只是网络上的符号，是一个“人设”，现实生活中，罗福兴是一个挺普通的人，其实罗福兴这个“杀马特教父”在这个群体也没有那么大影响力，肯定不如一些网红。他告诉我们以前龙岗不少“杀马特”，但是随着一些工厂搬出去，也很难找到这群人。他只能把网上一些曾经玩过的朋友介绍给我们。

这些人很难找的，找到了也未必见我们。有一次，我们几乎都跑到惠州见一个人，他不愿意出来，还以为我们是那种“同城代打（打手）”，自己最近在网上比较嚣张，会有人要来收拾他。他死活不愿意意见我们，给我们发了一个“葬爱十大杰出青年”，说让我们不要打他，去打这些人……

后来，我们在东莞清溪碰见一个以前也玩“杀马特”的女孩，告诉我们东莞石排镇有一个溜冰场还聚集不少人，我们才见到自然状态下“野生”的“杀马特”，他们都是一些年纪特别小的孩子。罗福兴之前介绍的都已经不是那个打扮了。

我自以为对深圳很熟悉，我一开始所了解的深圳是南山、蛇口、福田等一些地方，这样的深圳干净也很舒服，还很高科技。后来，我开始接触一些城中村，像白石洲、草埔、清水河，这时候感觉到深圳有些不一样的东西了，像是有了第二个身份。但是当我们进入工业区，我才发现另外一个与此前毫无关系的深圳。

我经历了一个特别漫长的发现过程，我们第一轮拍摄大概经历了四个月，以深圳为中心四处做采访，知道了很多东西，但是不充分。原因是，他们的谈话里工厂的内容其实要多过于他们的头发，因为这才是他们痛苦的部分。我感到自己并不了解工厂的状况，进入工厂拍摄也不是一件容易的事。于是我们就决定到“杀马特”最多的地方待一阵子看看，我、罗福兴和乌鸦和一个学生就住进了石排镇。

石排镇可以说到处都是工厂，甚至整条街都开满小工厂，这是为何这里聚集了如此多的“杀马特”，大工厂的要求严格，不许有这样的头发，也不允许工人文身。这群孩子就聚集到了东莞石排或汕头澄海。这些地方大部分是小工厂，要求比较低。

余：其实即使是工人也有三六九等？

李：大厂其实是没有“杀马特”的，像富士康这种地方都不会有，因为他们进不去。他们要进富士康之前就得把头发染回去或者索性剃了才可以。“杀马特”主要还是分布在沿海的各种小厂，挣扎在小流水线上。大厂需要各种各样的补充，就有了小的配件厂，类似这样的产业末端是“杀马特”最主要的生存环境。

“杀马特”的分布也有变化，以前广西、河南是最多的，广东客家地区也不少，其次是安徽、江西、湖南这些地方。现在就基本集中到云南、贵州、四川的彝族地区。可以这么说，“杀马特”开始来自更加贫穷的地方，这和地区间的贫穷分布是有关系的。这些变化背后的原因折射出的就是中国这些年的发展和变化。

余：也就是说你们在寻找“杀马特”的过程里，发现了一个被遮蔽的工人群体，而且他们又连接着农村问题，很多“杀马特”其实就是农民工的二代三代，是留守儿童。

李：“杀马特”不是乡村的产物，“杀马特”是从工业区里面出来的。甚至不是城乡接合部，完全是工业区的产物。我们认识的“杀马特”很多、拍到的也很多，做了深入采访的大概有七八十个。我们采访到的“杀马特”普遍都是留守儿童，也就是我们说的打工二代。他们普遍很早就辍学了，十四五岁就外出打工很正常。辍学的原因很多，有因为穷的，觉得上学没有意义，反正都要出去打工。感觉没有别的选择，所以就无所谓，既然上学也是受苦，还不如早点挣钱。

因为很小就出来打工，他们有很多压力需要去释放，在工厂工作的那种强度，如果不是一个很强烈的东西根本就感觉不到在释放。比如我们头发里面一丝红色，对于他们是绝对看不见的。一个孩子跟我说有时候自己从流水线下来后，一两个小时耳朵是听不见的，得慢慢恢复。他们的视觉系统需要很强的刺激性。

留守儿童往往会感觉缺乏存在感。他们和我说自己想要被看见，需要被关注。只要是关注就行，哪怕这种关注是一种“鄙视”。他们不少人两岁的时候父母就出去打工了，早些年买票也不方便，种种原因有父母甚至几年都不回来。等到父母开始回乡的时候，他们又出去打工了。他们普遍缺乏家庭的温暖，想要得到这种被关注的感觉，这是一个很重要的心理上的需要。

这种强烈的东西是具有吸引力的，一些工厂女孩也只喜欢这种弄头发的男孩，她们看不上流水线上跟她一样工作的男孩，觉得没出息又不浪漫。弄了头发，就会显得有些与众不同，弄出来以后就觉

得好看、刺激。当然，还有一个原因，这群人出来之后年纪小，很多人一到广东来就受骗、受欺负。弄个头发，给人感觉有点社会，就不会受欺负。通过网络，类似的审美把这群人自然地聚集在一起。类似的身世和经历让他们找到了有共同语言的人，他们互相安慰，甚至彼此介绍工作。某个意义上，形成了一个以发型为符号的小“乌托邦”。这给人一种安慰，自己是如此渺小，但是弄个头发什么的就让人不看也不行。

他们太弱小了，太需要证明存在感。他们的遭遇是我们无法想象的：刚到广东行李就没了，说好来接的亲戚也找不到了，身无分文等等。很多人出来很久都不知道怎么坐公交车，怎么去银行，甚至不知道怎么回家，他们对外部世界是恐惧的。在富士康一个小孩跟罗福兴争论，他说深圳的高楼建得太少，还没有贵阳多。结果吵了半天，他既没有去过贵阳也没有真正在深圳市区待过。坐火车经过的时候他见过贵阳的高房子，在深圳则一直住在工厂。很多人都是这样，大巴把他们从老家直接拉到工厂门口，他们再也没出来过，等于被隔离了。

虽然，以前拍《劳动法》时关注过工厂，但我看到这些工厂的时候，还是有些被工厂震惊了。他们经常工作一个月就休息一天，一天12个小时工作，一般晚上10点之后才下班。他根本没机会出来到社会上，只有在工业区才看得到这群人。他们的工作环境、强度、工作时间，都在我想象之外。我知道他们在加班，但没想到加那么长时间。很多工作环境都不太好，而且工人的年龄非常小。这时候我意识到我不是要拍什么审美自由，我要拍的是一群青年工人，这就回到了我关注的《劳动法》问题上，《杀马特我爱你》是一部讲述青年工人思想和处境的作品。

余：按照一般的纪录片拍摄，肯定也是要罗福兴作为主角的，但你依然没有这么做，而是用了大量的群访的素材。

李：在采访的过程中我经常觉得“杀马特”是他们的保护装置。一遇到让自己感到挫败没有自信的事情，它张开就可以保护自己。这部纪录片也许不太像通常意义的纪录片，纪录片一般会有导演的视点，引导观众。我这部是没有导演视点的。基本上是“杀马特”讲“杀马特”的故事。从我的一贯观念来说，我肯定是不讲一个个体的戏剧性故事，其实我在采访杀马特的时候，我发现他们的故事其实非常趋同，几乎每个人的生命经验都很相似，我想我要做的可能就是把他们这些共性展示出来。

余：其实我觉得《杀马特我爱你》是非常能够体现你的艺术观念的，这部作品出来后受关注的程度也说明了“杀马特”只是问题的表征，它不是一个“亚文化”的问题那么简单。

李：我们今天做作品不能把自己当成外国人，像个游客。在自己的语境里就必须要做深入。今天的艺术生产为什么那么多毛病，恐怕原因就是模仿外国艺术家，以“游客”的心态做作品。我们

对自己的语境其实是可以了解的，就看我们愿不愿意进入，把“杀马特”像人一样看待，而不是把他们当成怪物。他们也要上班，是很普通的工人，当这么看待问题的时候，很多东西就会不同。

Zhao Liang: I Don't Want To Shoot People's Faces Anymore

Interviewer: WANG Xiaolu 王小鲁 Translator: Xiang FAN 樊响

Zhao Liang (赵亮) lives in the international art district at Caochangdi, and we finished this conversation on the afternoon of 22 July. I did an interview with Zhao Liang for *The Economic Observer* (经济观察报) around 2008, when his *Crime and Punishment* (罪与罚, 2007) had just won the Golden Air Balloon Award at the Three Continents Festival in Nantes, France, but his most important work had not yet been completed. Then the editing of *Petition* (上访, 2009) was completed and it became an insurmountable peak in the history of Chinese independent cinema, which shot over thirteen years and capturing various human suffering. I often think of it and Wang Bing's *Tie Xi Qu: West of the Tracks* (铁西区, 2003) as 'twin peaks' standing side by side.

Not long ago the French Cultural Centre screened Zhao Liang's *I'm So Sorry* (无去来处, 2021), which coincided with the Cannes screening. His *Petition* was also shown at Cannes. Also his *Together* (在一起, 2010) premiered at the Berlinale and *Behemoth* (悲兮魔兽, 2015) was selected for the Venice Film Festival. Zhao Liang and Wang Bing are probably the most international filmmakers in the Chinese independent documentary scene.

But international recognition has also had a profound impact on his work. Since *Behemoth*, his films have become more stylised and visually persuasive, in stark contrast to his previous works. Audiences have been puzzled by this while finding it refreshing. Zhao Liang is an important representative of the transformation of independent documentary filmmakers in a new cultural situation and political climate.

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Wang: You first studied fine art at Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts. What made you enter the documentary field? Was it by chance?

Zhao: Yes. It was really fortuitous. I was assigned to a TV station after graduation and worked as an artist. I was very interested in cinematography and went to work for them as a cameraman. After about a year, I found it no fun and decided to go to the Beijing Film Academy to further my study in feature film

cinematography. I was in my twenties, and didn't want to go back (to my previous work) after my study, so I became a Beijing drifter. In those days, young people were very idealistic and utopian, especially those artists in Yuanmingyuan. When some performance artists and artists' exhibitions needed to be filmed, they would ask me to help. The first documentary I made was about the Yuanmingyuan Artists' Village. In 1995, when the artists were about to be dispersed, I thought it was a very important moment, so I made *Farewell Yuanmingyuan* (告别圆明园, 1995) .

It was filmed in the autumn of 1995, when the World Conference on Women was to be held and the expelling began during that period. I didn't have much ambition in making films. The studio system was still very strict. Almost all of our classmates were children of film studio professionals. There was a threshold for film industry. Documentaries were relatively easier, and DV started to be available in 1996. You didn't have to go into the industry, and you could just use a small DV to film things around you and it was cool.

Wang: DV was only available in China in 1996, so what did you use to shoot in 1995?

Zhao: I used the HI8 to shoot *Farewell Yuanmingyuan*. That camera was sponsored by my classmates at Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts. It was very difficult to find equipment, except from TV stations. No one outside the system had cameras. There was no super8 film in China at that stage, only the early HI8 for home use.

Wang: I thought you were an amateur. This clarified some of my doubts. I watched your *Farewell Yuanmingyuan* at the Songzhuang Art Museum, and also Hu Jie's *Yuanmingyuan Artist Village* (圆明园画家村, 1995) , who also has a background in fine art. In terms of visual representation, *Farewell Yuanmingyuan*'s camera movement is so very natural. Now I understand that you did have some practice before.

Zhao: Yes, because I worked in television for a year and I knew how to shoot. I also studied feature film cinematography at the Film Academy.

Wang: It didn't take long to shoot *Farewell Yuanmingyuan*, right?

Zhao: Yes. I don't remember how long it took, actually. I think it was within two or three weeks, very short, and there wasn't a lot of footage. I started shooting when the expelling of the artists happened.

Wang: But the editing came out very well. I was impressed by the way you were running with the camera,

as if you were being chased, running away, and you incorporated those hastily filmed scenes, which made difference.

Zhao: It was very vivid. There was one moment during the editing stage that I thought some of the footage was too embarrassing and should be cut out. But then I thought, no, these clips are what is called real. There was fear and panic at the scene. As the police appeared on one side, people started to run, including both adults and children, and people were even laughing while running, like an absurd but serious game. I ran after the children, leaving the camera on, for a few hundred metres, and then hid in a bush. Shi Xinning, a painter from the Yuanmingyuan, was very funny. In those days artists all had long hair, so when they [the police] saw people with long hair, they'd drag them to the car. This guy just cut his hair and changed to a shirt, telling the police that he's a professional, not an artist. He then came over and kicked me in the bush where I was hiding and said, 'Dude, come out. The cops are gone.' I felt quite embarrassed by this.

Wang: Did you also have long hair?

Zhao: I think so. At the Film Academy, we all had long hair.

Wang: I saw that all the painters you filmed had long hair, so you were in a similar situation to them?

Zhao: But I didn't live there, I usually had nothing to do on weekends and often went there for fun. I was studying at the Film Academy and had a dormitory and a student card. I remember that I actually graduated in 1995, and I should have lived in the basement of the Jimenli Block opposite the Film Academy. There were many students living in that basement, and there was heating in the winter, so it was not cold.

Wang: By that time, you should have left your unit already, right?

Zhao: Yes. It was a sort of an automatic leave. Later they took my file to the talent centre and I found out that I hadn't paid anything into my social insurance. It was my younger sister who paid for my social insurance. My established post used to be cadre, but later became worker, which makes a big difference after retirement. But I don't really care about it.

Wang: This is the unique experience and persistence of that generation. I know some famous independent filmmakers who are now about sixty years old. They graduated from university but have never worked in the system. They have always found the work unit (*danwei*单位) to be a ridiculous thing. Why did you not

complete the editing of this film until 2006?

Zhao: It was just left there after it was shot. I always felt that a film needed a lot of footage, and the footage about the Yuanmingyuan is not enough, so I didn't edit it. But after a few years, I found that it was actually a complete historical story and could be made into a film.

Wang: Yes, it's perfectly fine. I remember there was a poet in it who has a really strong narrative skill.

Zhao: There's also Shi Xinning, a painter, who likes to keep a diary.

Wang: The footage looks very intact when put together. Their narratives and diaries also outline the event very clearly. Later on, when you felt it was complete, probably because you had new ideas and your concept of the documentary changed gradually.

Zhao: Yes. After about ten years, I went back and looked at it again. When I revisited it, I was able to look at it more from an objective view and see it more clearly.

Wang: Then you knew how meaningful it was! And in the early days you might have a lot of trouble with editing, because you could only use the linear editing machine, and then you got computers.

Zhao: Yes. In 2006, when editing *Farewell Yuanmingyuan*, I no longer used it [the linear editing machine]. *Paper Airplane* (纸飞机, 2001) was edited by linear editing machine. I think it was Wu Wenguang who leant me the machine. I spent a lot time on it.

Wang: In fact, after 2003, computer, premiere software and non-linear editing equipment started to emerge. It was too convenient. Equipment was updated and reduced in price very quickly every year, so it was very versatile back then.

Zhao: For *Paper Airplane* I first used linear editing machine, and then computers. I think I was one of the first in China that used Power Macintosh G3 [launched by Apple in the US in January 1999, G3-B&W for short], the earliest Apple computer, with a somewhat modern appearance. I had a friend carrying it back for me from Singapore. Before that, a friend from Harvard came to China to make a documentary and introduced me to Edit DV, one of the earliest editing software. You had to buy a card and plug it into the computer but it was extremely slow. The hard drive back then was not big, only 4G, so you needed two hard

drives combined and a case box so that the speed could come up. At that time, computer graphics cards were particularly slow and always crashed, and it was a time of transition from linear to non-linear.

Wang: I remember that you started shooting a few films in 1996, and the images were already in very good quality, so I felt that you had changed your camera. *Petition* was started in 1996, right?

Zhao: Yes, in the autumn of 1996. In 1996, DV already emerged, and we started filming when we got a DV.

Wang: Speaking of the camera, last time when we were with Yang Li, we discussed that you two were the first to have a DV camera, at about the same time. But you were probably the first to buy one. I talked to Sheng Zhimin once and he also mentioned it.

Zhao: A Japanese journalist was interested in contemporary literary trends in China and wanted to interview Meng Jinghui. Meng Jinghui was working on a play called *Comrade Ah Q* (阿 Q 同志), which was later banned. I helped him make a documentary about the play. I first knew about the camera in 1996. At that time, Marc Riboud had a photographic exhibition at the National Art Museum of China. We went to the opening ceremony and saw that there were two Frenchmen, one holding a microphone and the other holding a small DV, the Panasonic AG-EZ1. I was really envious. The shape of the DV was also nice. Our camera was called Big Eyes, and there was no LCD screen. It was very simple and light-weight, with a great zoom. I felt that the quality was too good to be true, so I was particularly envious. I approached them and ask about it. As I didn't speak English very well, I just wrote down the model number. Then I went to the Panasonic agent in China at the Saiter Centre, they said there was only one prototype and it wasn't in stock yet. But I really wanted to buy it, so I borrowed some money and bought that camera with 4,000 dollars.

Wang: The exchange rate of the US dollar was very high, so 4,000 dollars was about 40,000 yuan.

Zhao: My wages were very low. I bought this prototype. Yang Lina's was also an EZ1, but not an AG-EZ1. There's a slight difference. Because mine was a prototype.

Wang: Did Yang Lina buy it after seeing you buy it?

Zhao: No, we didn't know each other yet. I forget which year it was. We met because Wu Wenguang wrote a piece called 'Fly on the Wall' (墙上的苍蝇) in *Book Town* (书城) or *Street* (街道), introducing people like me and Yang Lina who were committed to making documentaries. We then got to know each

other. When I knew there was another girl doing the same kind of work, I was keen to get to know her.

Wang: What was it like when you used this camera to shoot?

Zhao: I just thought, this is such a great camera. When I just got it, I even held it while sleeping. Since I got such a great camera, I must shoot something. I was living in Liulitun with Rong Rong from *Three Shadows* (三影堂). He was a photographer, and Liu Zheng, a photographer from *Workers' Daily* (工人日报), used to come over and hang out with us. He said, you should go to the South Station, there are a lot of petitioners there. So, I packed my camera into a backpack and cycled there the next day. The scene there shocked me, and it seemed that there was a time and space divided by the second ring road, a parallel world twenty years apart. This is the era. Hurry up and film it. That's how my filming of *Petition* began.

Wang: That camera could be connected to the TV to watch the playback, right? It must feel awesome.

Zhao: Every day after shooting, I could watch the footage directly on the TV. The TV was not very big, but the colour reproduction was good. I basically did it manually, and the white balance could be adjusted. At that time, I thought this camera was so good, but in fact, I didn't have that much understanding about the visual quality. Now I'm shooting in 8K, and when I look at the DV footage on a 4K TV, it's as big as the palm of my hand.

Wang: Then you went to the South Station. Later Ma Li also shot *Born in Beijing* (京生, 2011) there, and I found the story of the main character Lao Hao astonishing. You shot there for so many years, but never met her?

Zhao: I did meet her. I often went to her place for a break. Her place was like a community base. If you wanted to find someone, you could just meander around there. She rented a place there and rented bunkbeds to petitioners. She was in this kind of business, and she was also a petitioner. The hutong she was in was called Gaofa Hutong, and inside it was the petition reception office of the Supreme Court.

Wang: Lao Hao sublet the place, but she doesn't appear in your film. Since the two petition films were shot at the same time, but there was no overlap, which is also very special.

Zhao: There was some overlaps. The subject I filmed went to petition from his place. But Lao Hao basically didn't appear, and I mainly shot Xiaojuan's thread. I filmed quite a lot of characters but also cut a lot of them

off. I met Ma Li twice. Once it was in the woods of a petitioner and she was with Xu Zhiyong (许志永) who had a PhD in law. He took Ma Li around there, and we had a brief greeting. The second time was when I was filming the New Year's Eve scene in *Petition*. Chinese New Year is important to me. Since I couldn't go home for it, I thought I must film the petitioner's New Year's Eve. I got on particularly well with an old lady and she refused to go home even her son came to pick her up, so she spent New Year's Eve there. She lived under a bridge and there was a waste collector living next to her. I asked them if they would watch the Spring Festival Gala on New Year's Eve. The waste collector was an interesting guy and said, 'I'll get a TV in the next couple of days.' Before the end of the year, he did get one and fixed it. It was too dark and I also brought a rechargeable lamp, which could beam very far. I covered it with a soft light paper to create an ambient light. On the New Year's Eve, Ma Li also came over to shoot a few shots, which was our second encounter.

Wang: I was particularly impressed by that scene. It was really good, especially the editing. First you see everyone watching TV happily, then suddenly the camera cuts to the TV and you can't see the people clearly on the TV! The screen becomes all blurry, but the subtitles are clear. These people are so happy that everyone is looking at the subtitles.

Zhao: But you can hear that sound.

Wang: Yeah. They just sat there listening to the sound and looking at the blurry screen. It's a really heart-breaking scene, and the editing is really good. I noticed that *Paper Airplane* and *Petition* were also filmed at the same time, weren't they?

Zhao: Yes, at the same time. Because of the time span, there was no way to keep an eye on it every day, and I couldn't contact the main character Xiaojuan as she was taken to custody from time to time. I could only wait for her to contact me when she returned to Beijing. Sometimes I couldn't even find her for six months. Meanwhile, I shot *Paper Airplane*. I had to work part-time to earn a living. Around 2000, I filmed a disabled acrobatic troupe in Shenyang, but unfortunately, I didn't have the energy to cut it, and it was a lot of footage following their lives, about two to three hundred hours of footage. Maybe I was a bit tired during the editing of *Petition*, so I didn't feel very motivated.

Wang: You can still cut it later, right?

Zhao: Maybe later. A tape was very expensive for me, sixty to seventy yuan for a DV tape. I even used

second-hand tapes from Japan. Sometimes, one tape included petitions, rock bands, and the opening of an exhibition. There was a lot going on every day. I couldn't leave a minute of a sixty-minute tape unused.

2

Wang: What year did you start filming *Paper Airplane*?

Zhao: I think it was 1997. The earliest filming was about Xie Tianxiao (谢天笑) and Long Kuan (龙宽), and then for Baihua Hutong and Pang Ke (庞克).

Wang: None of these were used in *Paper Airplane*, only a few people from Baihua Hutong, right?

Zhao: Yes, I was a bit unsure about presenting an ensemble, and I was not very good at storytelling. I felt it was difficult to link so many characters together. Tianxiao was living in Long Kuan's place in Xiaojiahe at the time, and he couldn't afford to rent an apartment and had problems supporting himself. Long Kuan was a generous person and he wouldn't kick him out anyway. Rock music then was not as hot as it is now. Once Long Kuan met a girl in a bar in Wudaokou, and since she was pregnant, Long Kuan took her back to his place and took care of her until she gave birth. The girl later sold the baby for 6,000 yuan to a couple in Wenzhou. Now that child should be over twenty years old. There were all sorts of tragic stories of youth, but I couldn't weave them together.

Wang: You studied feature film cinematography. What's your understanding of documentary?

Zhao: I had no idea at all. At the very beginning I made short films, also in 35mm, black and white, and there was no such thing as video art before 1997. When graduated, I had the idea of experimental shorts. I studied feature films, and at an earlier time I loved to read novels, such as *Harvest* (收获), but my own knowledge of storytelling was not very strong, and I did not have a real deep awareness of literature. In the end, I probably thought that the threshold for documentaries was relatively low, and that I didn't have to write a script. I could just shoot wherever, as it was more of an intuitive thing. There was a time when I didn't know how to end *Petition* until the Olympic Games. When the South Station was demolished, the petition village was demolished, and all the people were blown away, I thought this might be the end.

Wang: This is a particularly good ending. In the early days, did you watch any documentaries? Had you seen Wu Wenguang's?

Zhao: I've seen Wu Wenguang's, some of Jiang Yue's and Duan Jinchuan's.

Wang: From what sources did you watch them?

Zhao: There were also some VHS tapes from the underground, which could be shown on the VCR. I remember seeing it when Jiang Yue was making *The Other Bank* (彼岸, 1995) at the Beijing Film Academy. I really admired the work.

Wang: Did you still have some ideas of what kind of filming principles a documentary should have and what it should probably look like?

Zhao: My understanding of documentaries was more from such works as *Odyssey of the Great Wall* (望长城, 1991) and *River Elegy* (河殇, 1988), which were scripted and narrated, as well as some documentaries about the Hope Project. I had a few sessions on documentaries at the Film Academy, but I was not too impressed. There were very few sources of films, so I couldn't tell what films were available, and there were very few foreign films we could see. There were not many references.

Wang: Have you seen *Living Space* (生活空间)? It was shown on TV at the time and was very interesting.

Zhao: Of course I have seen it, it was about the lives of ordinary people. It was the era of television. Those producers, such as Chen Mang and Shi Jian, were pretty good.

Wang: Where did you get the money to make *Paper Airplane*?

Zhao: *Paper Airplane* and *Petition* were all funded by me. I was filming some commercials for TV stations.

Wang: In that case, the copyright is all in your hands.

Zhao: Yes.

Wang: The way these two films were shot is also very interesting. The young people in the films were on drugs, and there weren't so many taboos in filmmaking at the time, so you could just shoot them.

Zhao: I was lucky to meet the right people.

Wang: If you were to shoot now, it's probably different. The environment for documentaries is different now. There are certain risks for a filmmaker, including ethic risks, which have been discussed.

Zhao: Actually they didn't shy away from it, and they still have very good personalities, like Zhao MUYANG (赵牧阳), who is a very honest person. They quit drugs later.

Wang: They had a clear view of themselves; one of them said 'Why am I like this? It's because I can't find the meaning of life.' They had strong self-awareness about their own situation, and reflected on it.

Zhao: That's right, they were not in a state of confusion. They had their own self-awareness and a very clear attitude towards themselves. Forming a band early on also had something to do with it, and they had a very different way of thinking.

Wang: It is quite fascinating that they were very clear about they were doing. I see that you wrote a term 'DV Guerrilla' at the end of *Paper Airplane*. Did you have a group like that at the time?

Zhao: No, I just liked the word. It refers to the state of my filming at the time; I was like a guerrilla group, hiding and running around.

Wang: You actually did it all by yourself. Where was this film shown later?

Zhao: It was premiered in Marseille, which was the first time I went abroad and attended a film festival. For me, it was exciting to go abroad and see what other countries looked like, and then to see the festival. The organisers were very friendly. It's also an encouragement for me that my film could be selected by a film festival. It's also a blessing to see so many of my peers in the international arena.

Wang: When you first started filming, did you know about film festivals?

Zhao: I knew about them, but I had never been to one, so I wasn't sure what it's like. I had submitted my work before, and some of them were rejected. It was quite difficult to send something abroad. Once I sent my work to a film festival, and then I got a letter from them, which made me very happy. It was all in English

and I couldn't understand, so I asked Wu Wenguang to have a look. Wu said, it's a rejection letter. I was so angry and just withdrew.

Wang: Was it *Paper Airplane*?

Zhao: I think so.

Wang: This film is quite good. When did you first realise that making documentary could be a career? And when did you start thinking of this?

Zhao: I think it was after *Petition* went to Cannes. I was surprised at the time, and I didn't think I was capable of being selected by such a festival. I just thought Cannes Film Festival was a very good festival, with little deeper knowledge or understanding of it. I was just really pleased that a film festival wanted my film. For example, if the festival took place in August and you knew the outcome in May, then you didn't do anything for two months. You just waited to go and have fun. They would buy you tickets and provide accommodation and food. Haha, silly.

Wang: Which year was *Petition* selected for Cannes?

Zhao: In 2009. I'd been to quite a few festivals before that. For example, *Crime and Punishment* won a prize at the Nantes Film Festival in 2008. This award was a big encouragement for me. From this, I realised that I could find the meaning of my life through such things.

Wang: Before *Petition*, there was *Crime and Punishment*. In which year was this film made?

Zhao: I started researching for the film in 2004 and shot it in 2005.

Wang: How did you find the subject matter?

Zhao: Originally there was a collaboration with France 5. When *Paper Airplane* went to Rotterdam, I met a French producer who liked *Paper Airplane* very much. She asked me to email her when I had any subject matter and she would help me. I then wrote the film *Return to the Border* (在江边, 2005) and started my research in 2004, along the Yalu River. There were a lot of North Korean defectors, and I wanted to see if I could encounter them in the police station. So, I found some connections to enter the police station. The

Yalu River near ours is a big river, and not many people came through it. They came from the Tumen River instead. Then I found the daily routine of the police station quite interesting and started filming them.

Wang: And then you filmed *Crime and Punishment*?

Zhao: Yes. After the previous film was finished, I revisited the footage and edited it into another film.

Wang: Then you made *Petition*, which took about twelve years, from 1996 to 2008. *Petition* is more than five hours in total, right?

Zhao: Yes. The shorter version is 123 minutes long and the longer version is about 516 minutes.

Wang: The one went to the Cannes Film Festival in 2009 was the short version, right? And did you edit it yourself?

Zhao: Yes, it was rough cut in China and then refined in France. I finished the five-hour cut in Beijing, but since the TV station couldn't show it for such a long time, I cut it short after I went to France.

Wang: I think the two-hour version doesn't clearly explain certain issues, such as Qi Huaying's fate, which is not as complete as in the longer version. Her daughter forcibly became the official's goddaughter, and her wedding was under his auspices and became a political achievement for the official. The tragedy of Qi Huaying was brought about by this official and his followers, so it was twisted and horrifying. The short version doesn't make this point clear. As soon as it is simplified, it feels like it amplifies the paranoia of the protagonist. So, the presentation of the fate becomes a bit distorted. How was the reception of the film at Cannes?

Zhao: Some people left in the middle of the film, but that's normal at Cannes. The filming method is not as standardised as in the West. It's quite casual, but in the West, documentary filmmaking is already quite mature and cinematic. This film is still mainly based on what happened, and there's no sophisticated images with the DV quality, but in general the press response was good and there was a lot of coverage. Filmmakers always get too upset about the audience leaving, but my producer told me that it's normal, as the press have to catch the next scene and just needs to understand roughly what the film is about.

Wang: The filming environment between us and the West is different, especially in those days. Our

environment is not as safe as the West's, where you can just set up a camera to shoot. Sometimes we are in a dangerous situation, where we may be driven away. That's not the case in the West.

Zhao: They are very relaxed about shooting.

Wang: Yes. It's very relaxed; you sign the agreement and set up the camera. Your way of shooting would of course create different quality from that of the West. They probably couldn't understand how the roughness has formed.

Zhao: Yes, it's possible. And the suffering of a distant country doesn't have much to do with them.

Wang: Your original longer version, especially the second part, 'Mother and Daughter', is so heart-breaking. In a way Qi Huaying has been killed for a second time by her daughter. The overall structure of the film is very interesting: 'All Lives', 'Mother and Daughter' and 'Beijing South Station', where 'All Lives' looks at the ensemble, 'Mother and Daughter' focuses on the individual fate, and 'Beijing South Station' expands to the public environment of the film.

Zhao: I focused more on the changing times. Early on, the main focus was still on the mother and daughter, but it was only later on that the film began to expand the story, to increase the number of characters and to reflect the changing conditions of the times.

Wang: When it finally comes down to the scene of the fireworks at the Olympic Games, one could suddenly gain an understanding of how many ordinary people's fates and dignity were denied in front of this great scene. How should we understand this lavish scene and what is the cost behind it. I wrote a review of this film. I didn't give any critical commentary but just retold the story that was shocking enough. Qi Huaying's petition was said to result from her mental paranoid, and now her daughter was deceived by officials into becoming their evidence. That lie was made into a TV documentary, so no one would ever believe Qi Huaying again. But at this time, your camera panned over and your camera knew all about it. This film will live forever and will be seen by many people, and I think this is the greatness and sanctity of this documentary. I wonder if the film has been shown to Qi Huaying?

Zhao: I don't think she saw it. Her daughter did. In fact, it ended up to be an unamicable situation. She [Qi Huaying] kept thinking I was sent by the TV station to follow her so stopped talking to me. I didn't ask her daughter if she had told Qi about the film, but I think she did. Later on, when I wanted to film her daughter,

Qi Huaying wouldn't let me do it either, because she thought I must be from the TV station, and that I was working with Jiangsu TV.

Wang: That's sad. Even if her daughter has told her about, I'm afraid that she probably no longer believes her daughter's words. If she doesn't know what you've done, that's a shame! This film should be a huge relief to her, as there's nothing else left to comfort her. If the past was not recorded and she was old and later dead, no one would believe that she was mentally sane and the stories she told were true. How depressing it would be! How can justice be manifested? This documentary is justice itself.

Zhao: When it was shown in Hong Kong, I didn't have much to do and watched it again. Years later, I just felt being documented is a lucky thing; in the sense they could live forever in the film.

Wang: It's a kind of justice being done. The most horrifying thing is that her daughter was being used. After her story was put on TV, people all over the country saw it. Her daughter situating within that official institution couldn't say anything for her mother, which is a second murder of her mother. The spiritual value of the mother's twenty years of petition may have been erased by her daughter completely.

Zhao: Deconstructed.

Wang: Yes, deconstructed. The official can just come and dismiss you on that basis and declare her being mentally ill. This sense of inundation is completely unresolvable, which can only be solved by this film. I still feel very emotional every time I think about it.

3

Wang: What did you make after *Petition*?

Zhao: *Together*.

Wang: *Together* is a film with a dragon seal, isn't it?

Zhao: Yes, I watched this film again not long ago and I felt it was quite good. I don't think it's bad.

Wang: I saw that film at the Film Academy, I heard it was customised. Who approached you to make it?

Zhao: I was approached by Gu Changwei (顾长卫), who was going to make *Life Is A Miracle* (魔术外传), an adaptation of Yan Lianke's *Dream of Ding Village* (丁庄梦). They arranged to have dinner together at the Hong Kong Film Festival and that's how we met. Gu was particularly interested in documentaries, so I found a lot of independent documentaries for him to watch. He was making that film at that time and he asked me to shoot behind the scenes for him. I thought it was too boring to shoot behind the scenes, so I asked him if we could expand it by responding to the real situation of HIV and then developed it into a separate film. Gu agreed, and we developed the project together.

Wang: It was the film in that Zhang Ziyi (章子怡) and Aaron Kwok (郭富城) star, right?

Zhao: Yes, it was later renamed *Love For Life* (最爱, 2011).

Wang: So that's how it developed. I heard that it had something to do with the Ministry of Health.

Zhao: It had something to do with the Ministry of Health. If it was to be released, it needed the dragon seal. The Film Bureau said that you needed the Ministry of Health's approval for this, so that it could pass the censorship.

Wang: It's actually more like a public interest film, right? I remember Peng Liyuan (彭丽媛) sang the ending song.

Zhao: Yes. It was to promote the prevention and treatment of the disease. Jiang Wenli (蒋雯丽) and Peng Liyuan were both ambassadors for HIV.

Wang: Then your work started to turn to another direction, and you started to make *Behemoth*. In your previous films, *Crime and Punishment* has the trace of contemporary art, but I think your later films have become more and more related to contemporary art. I wonder if you agree with this view?

Zhao: Maybe it has something to do with my aesthetic interests. I work in art and they are connected in terms of aesthetics. I've always felt that doing video art would be more relaxed, more contemporary and more in line with my aesthetic interests. I don't really like the way of making documentaries – just following the subject with a lot of uncertainties. It's just like fishing; you can only wait for the fish to come. I am now taking the initiative to shot the footage I want in order to support my point of view, which is the way of essay

films.

Wang: You're more subjective. It's especially like Herzog's films.

Zhao: The concept comes first.

Wang: For *Petition*, you followed the subjects for over ten years and waited for events to happen, so you have reached the extreme in this kind of filming.

Zhao: After that, I thought I've made enough that type of film. It's like painting; you've gotten comfortable with figurative painting so you want to try new possibilities and explore new ways of creation that make you feel more comfortable, free and excited.

Wang: In fact, after watching your two new films, that's how I understood your creative mindset. The feeling now is that your personal [painting] professionalism has stood out even more, that is, you focus more on the visual presentation.

Zhao: Yes, the visual presentation is very important, and we probably need to use the image to tell the story more. Film is not just about putting images onto a big screen. Most films are not films and do not have the nature of films.

Wang: Was this shift made before filming *Behemoth*, or was it something that was discovered during the filming process?

Zhao: The idea was still very vague when I made it. I actually shot both ways. The first one still had a lot of interviews and talking, and it was only in post-editing stage that I decided to drop those things. I remember being in the computer room in Paris and asking myself what kind of film I really liked, so I decided to give up the oral expression and tell the story using purely visual things.

Wang: I see. You then finally found this way and thought it was more innovative.

Zhao: Yes. *Behemoth* was still in a transitional period, and now with *I'm So Sorry*, it's evolved further along the way.

Wang: But with this kind of documentary, you are getting more and more ‘distant’ compared to the previous ones in which you were close to the subject. I wrote an essay on *Behemoth* at the time, saying that there would be a sense of distance between the audience and the people in the film, but perhaps this sense of distance could have its own meaning. In the past, when you were up close and personal, you could walk into their lives and smell their sweat, but now you are filming them from a distance. Of course you can explain this sense of distance, in that we are actually disconnected from them, that there is a distance.

Zhao: Yes, I don’t really want to get that close to the subjects. They just let me see one side, and I think it’s enough to let me see one side. It’s more of an equal relationship, as little exploitation as possible.

Wang: From your point of view, or in the axis of Chinese independent documentaries, you are transforming to a new way of talking to the world. When I saw the naked person in *Behemoth*, lying in a deteriorating environment, I thought the design makes sense. Human skin is sensitive, so the way the character exists in the shot evokes a sense of pain in us.

Zhao: Yes, if you have the sensibility, it will naturally bring you an instinctive understanding of the film. That’s why I think this film goes deeper than interview-oriented ones, which could stimulate your deeper perception. After watching it, you wouldn’t forget it so easily. The words that other people said may be quickly forgotten, but this kind of images will stay in the memory.

Wang: There’s a similar set-up in *I’m So Sorry*, such as, a Noh master with a mask. I’ve seen this figure being discussed online. What did you want to express with this figure?

Zhao: She will speak in my place, like a spokesperson for me. She is a symbolic figure of knowing the past and being able to foretell the future. It’s like I’m using my double to speak for me. It’s like the shaman is speaking, and it’s been possessed; it’s not the shaman speaking, but a transference. I like this sense of formality.

Wang: The condition of the children in *I’m So Sorry* would have been explained in a conventional documentary, including the relationship of the disease and the nuclear contamination, just like when Kazuo Hara filmed Minamata disease; he was even involved in the process of medical proof. But you took those parts out on purpose.

Zhao: The film doesn’t necessarily need to have everything in it. I still use my visual language to make you

feel it, and not to illustrate it with words or language. It's not an expository essay, but more like a kind of prose, mainly about feeling. I don't use the data, as the internet has all this information now, and you can go and find all the knowledge if you're interested.

Wang: Yes, your explanation now is that the nuclear incident is a common responsibility of human kind. You are more talking about the universal human problem, that is, it is greed and restless desire that has caused the disaster of human kind. From *Behemoth* to *I'm So Sorry*, you pull the camera farther away. You also interpret the events from God's perspective, more metaphysically and poetically.

Zhao: I think it may also be a matter of age. At this age, with grey hair, I am embarrassed to carry a camera and shoot people's faces closely. I now use 85mm lenses, which are very far away, at least a metre and a half or two metres away, so it doesn't cause that sense of pressure anymore. When I was younger, I didn't have any concern. I thought it was fine, and I just did it. When filming *Paper Airplane*, I just shot at faces, with wide angle, a bit distorted, and now I keep the distance and don't want to be intrusive. I just intuitively feel that shooting in a way like this doesn't suit me anymore. So, I don't want to ask people about their privacy anymore but focus more on the emotions that we share.

Wang: Understood. Both films are coincidentally about the environment, so at first I thought you made them for some environmental organisations.

Zhao: I take the subject of the environment very seriously. It sometimes goes beyond institutional oppression, or human rights, but more of a big devastating human issue. When it comes to all kinds of climate anomalies, many people misrepresent man-made disasters as natural disasters, but this climate anomaly is certainly global. This year China and Europe were both flooded badly, and it's just the scale of the disaster a bit different.

Wang: The other day at the Goethe-Institut after the screening of *I'm So Sorry*, we discussed that the COVID-19 pandemic also provoked people to think, not in the general way they did before, but in a deeper way.

Zhao: What do you think the pandemic make people contemplate? What is the awareness that people have?

Wang: Especially at the beginning of the pandemic, I think everyone was in a state of panic and powerlessness, and human's confidence was defeated in the face of nature. The pandemic has put us all in a

philosophical situation, one that was not easily accessible before.

Zhao: Yes! During the pandemic my friend who lived next door drove to Huairou and wanted to walk in a mountain. As soon as there was a mountain, there were people blocking you from entering, so you had to drive on the road, which was ridiculous. I just wanted to walk in nature and enjoy how beautiful and comfortable it was. Europe was fine. In the West there was no delay in doing anything and people had the option to travel. Chinese are in this situation like chickens in a chicken farm. I visited Zhengda chicken farm before, all automated. There was only one person and one robot there, hundreds of thousands of millions of chickens knowing only one person. It would be impossible for me to enter, because of the concerns over [bringing] germs in and disinfecting. Also, they're afraid that the chicken might be frightened, and if I entered there, the eggs might change, including the colour and shape of the eggs. How fragile chickens are!

Wang: So the fact that you made this film before the pandemic, but showed it after the pandemic, actually contributed to the reception of the film. It became more meaningful. Your previous films are very political, so you want to do things differently now?

Zhao: In fact, the current politics is more about the bigger picture, climate politics, a concept from the French philosopher Latour. The climate issue is a political issue, and the energy becomes an issue about the system. It is the consumerist situation in the capitalist society that caused a series of environmental problems, including the consumption of energy, pollution, the waste of resources. Human race must reflect on their consumerist behaviour. Capitalism is a vicious circle in which the more one produces and the more you consume, and the more one earns. This system needs to be changed.

Wang: I understand, but the formality of your film may not be acceptable to everyone.

Zhao: There's a risky aspect in this way, and there are many people who directly resent it. I don't have to please everyone, and I can't make everyone like it. First of all, I have to work in the way I like.

Wang: Probably another upside to it is that the subject matter is more of a spectacle and more visually stunning.

Zhao: Yes, that's the basis of the visual language.

Wang: With such a huge picture, there's an intensity of expression. Such a huge grassland ends up becoming

a huge coal mine, with countless diggers and explosions. At this time you then introduce certain figures to bring the viewer in, for example, a naked male is placed between your camera and the background. It's a rhetoric, and I feel like you now theatricalise the natural landscape.

Zhao: That's a good word. It's a small stage if you view the world on the scale of generations of human being.

Wang: You then put your subjectivity into it, even with a lot of voiceover, which is also risky as you expose your thinking and subjectivity overtly to everyone.

Zhao: Maybe, there is something like that but the ambiguity of the image is very big. The indication is different when I say something and when I don't say it. When I say it, I'm telling you that I want you to look at this thing from this perspective. If I don't say it, others will interpret it as something else, and it won't have the effect I want. I am like a protester, I have to speak up and shout out my attitude!

Wang: The early days of Chinese independent documentaries were against voiceover and subjectivity, but now you are very insistent on adding your subjectivity and a lot of voiceover. This is particularly interesting.

Zhao: Right. Unless the image is completely created by me, like a constructed scene for a feature film, then there's no problem. As there's no static, I can just point to what I want and achieve the level of precision like a feature film. Whereas with documentaries, you can't change the state of reality. Everyone has a different intellectual background and life experience, and they understand the image from a different perspective. To avoid the detours of misinterpretation, I have to navigate and make you understand what I want. You might have thought of it already, and that's great, but someone might not have thought of it. If I don't say it, that deviation might be more. It is a question of balancing.

Wang: In fact, there is another paradox in your work: both *Behemoth* and *I'm So Sorry* show huge catastrophic images, but the catastrophic images manifest a kind of power of beauty from an aesthetic point of view. It implies an aestheticist attitude. But what you are actually trying to convey is something catastrophic, so the paradox arises.

Zhao: The ambiguity is here. For example, if we look at the piles of hair and shoes from those concentration camps in a museum, you must think they are big art works, which also creates an aesthetic. If there is no direction or context, you will examine the beauty, but when you understand the context, you think it is about

suffering. So, what is aesthetics? Is aesthetics limited by ethics? Aesthetics is a complex phenomenon. So, it's more important for me to navigate the perspective that I want to express. Aesthetics is a very interesting thing. People may have said before that you shoot something ugly but present it so beautifully, so I have to tell you what my attitude is. Aesthetics is actually based on your experience, so I have to tell you what my perspective is. It looks beautiful, but it's actually quite dirty.

Wang: That's the complexity of aesthetics, and it actually tests one's aesthetic discernment. Now tell us a little bit about how the productions of your later two films relate to each other. I think your films are much more international now. I may have been influenced by *Together* before and always misunderstood your later works as customised projects. How did the production of *Behemoth* begin?

Zhao: The projects were all developed by myself. I worked together with my old French producer for *Behemoth*.

Wang: Is *Behemoth* 4K?

Zhao: Yes, in RED4K. *I'm So Sorry* is in 8K. I think it's important to take the documentary footage to a higher quality level. It's good for the future.

Wang: Is it really that meaningful to increase the picture quality of documentaries to such a high level?

Zhao: Yes, especially for documentaries. For feature films, 2K is already good in cinemas, but documentaries are different. They will always have an archival function. When they all go to 8K in the future, it won't be outdated.

Wang: *Behemoth* was shot in China, right? Ordos?

Zhao: Just in Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, and the area where they border.

Wang: There is more contrast in that area. The grasslands are beautiful and the presence of the mines is shocking.

Zhao: Yes, it's very visual.

Wang: *I'm So Sorry* was filmed in Japan and Russia?

Zhao: Six countries: Ukraine, Japan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Germany and Finland. Kazakhstan has a nuclear test site of the Soviet Union. Ukraine, Belarus and Japan have problems caused by nuclear incidents. I filmed Germany mainly because of their attitude towards nuclear power, that is, abandoning nuclear power, and Finland was to solve the problem of storing nuclear waste. No filming was taking place in China.

赵亮：我不想再把镜头怼到人脸上

王小鲁

赵亮导演住在草场地北皋1号国际艺术区，我们在7月22日下午完成了这次谈话。大约2008年左右，我曾为《经济观察报》做过一次赵亮访谈，当时他的《罪与罚》（2007）刚在法国南特三大洲电影节上获得“金气球奖”，而他的最重要的作品还没有完成。之后《上访》（2009）剪辑完毕，成为中国独立电影史上一座难以逾越的高峰，其拍摄周期达13年，拍尽了人间苦难。我经常将它和王兵的《铁西区》看作是“双峰”并峙。

不久前法国文化中心放映了赵亮的《无去来处》（2021），这次放映和戛纳放映同步，他的《上访》也曾任戛纳放映。另外他的《在一起》（2010）在柏林电影节首映，《悲兮魔兽》（2015）也曾被选入威尼斯电影节。赵亮和王兵可能是中国独立纪录片界国际化程度最高的导演。

但国际接受对他的创作也带来深刻的影响。从《悲兮魔兽》之后，他的片子就开始更为注重造型和视觉说服力，与他之前的影片截然不同。观众为此既感到疑惑，又觉得新鲜。赵亮是独立纪录片导演在新的文化境遇和政治气氛下进行转型的重要代表。

王：最早你在鲁美学美术，是因为什么进入纪录片领域的呢？是偶然吗？

赵：对。特别偶然。当时毕业以后我是工作分配到电视台，先做美工，我本身是很喜欢摄影的，也去给他们做摄像，拍了一年左右，觉得不好玩，就决定来北京电影学院进修故事片摄影。当时二十来岁，学习结束之后就不想回去了，也就加入了北漂。那个年代的年轻人都很理想主义，特别务虚，乌托邦，尤其圆明园的艺术家的这种。那时候，一些行为艺术家、艺术家展览之类的需要拍摄，就会叫我去帮忙。最早拍的纪录片是圆明园画家村，一九九五年，艺术家们马上要被驱散了，我觉得这是个很重要的时刻，所以就拍摄了《告别圆明园》。

一九九五年秋天时拍的，当时要开世界妇女大会，就在那个期间开始驱散。那时候野心其实也没有多大，也没有说一定要做电影。当时电影厂制度还十分严格，像我们同学几乎都是电影厂子弟，电影从业是有门槛的。纪录片相对简单一些，一九九六年就开始有DV了。你也不用非得进入到那个行业里去，用DV这个小机器就可以随手拍摄身边的事情，也觉得很酷。

王：一九九六年中国才有DV，那在一九九五的时候是用什么拍摄的呢？

赵：用Hi8，《告别圆明园》是用HI8拍摄的。那台机器是我鲁美的同学给我赞助的。那时候设备很难找，除了电视口的能从电视台搞到摄像机之外，体制外没有人有机器，中国没有super8胶片那个阶段，只有早期录像的家用的HI8。

王：我还以为你之前是小白，这就解释了我的一些疑惑。我看你的《告别圆明园》当时是在宋庄美术馆，同时还有胡杰的《圆明园画家村》，他也是有美术背景。但在给人的直观感受上你的《告别圆明园》推拉摇移都很自然。现在明白了，之前你还是有一定的实践。

赵：是的，因为我在电视台也工作了一年，大概知道怎么拍。在电影学院学的也是故事片摄影。

王：其实《告别圆明园》拍摄的时间并不长对吧？

赵：对。其实忘记了多长时间了。应该也就是在两三个星期之内吧，很短，素材也不是特别多。就是从遣返艺术家开始嘛。

王：但剪辑出来特别好。我印象深刻的是你拿着摄像机在那里跑，似乎被人追，落荒而逃，你把这些仓皇拍的镜头都剪进去，就很不一样。

赵：很生动，当时有一个剪辑阶段觉得有些片段剪进去，太丢分了，应该剪掉，后来一想不对，这些片段才叫做真实。当时现场的那种胆怯，那种恐慌，这边警察出现，那边人们就跑，大人小孩跑，大家还边跑边笑，像一种真诚的游戏，荒诞又严肃。我就跟着小孩跑，机器都没关，跑了几百米，往草沟里一钻躲起来。过一会儿石心宁，圆明园的一个画家，他特逗，那时候艺术家都是长头发嘛，人家见了长头发就往车上拽，那哥们赶紧把头发理了，换了一个衬衫，告诉警察我是上班的，我不是艺术家。他走过来用脚踢我趴着的草沟，说哥们儿，出来吧，警察走了。这事儿我觉得特没面子。

王：你那时候也是长头发吗？

赵：应该也是。在电影学院那会也都是长头发。

王：我看你拍摄的画家们基本都是长头发，其实你的处境和他们有点相似？

赵：但是我没住在那里，平时周末没事，常去那里玩，因为我在电影学院进修，有宿舍什么的，有学生证……我想起来了，其实我一九九五年也已经毕业，那时候应该住在电影学院对面蓟门里小区地下室。那个地下室住了好多学生，那里冬天有暖气，不冷。

王：那时候你就应该脱离单位了吧？

赵：对。算是自动脱离了。后来他们把我档案弄到人才中心，我发现社保什么都没有缴。后来都是我妹妹花钱补的社保那些乱七八糟的。以前是干部编制，后来变成工人了。这个退休后的待遇很不一样，我说算了吧。

王：这是那一代人独特的经验和坚持。我认识一些著名的独立导演，都是大学毕业，但到现在六十岁左右了，一直没有单位，他们一直觉得单位是可笑的事情。你这个片子为什么一直到二〇〇六年才剪出来？

赵：拍完了就一直扔在那里。那个时候总觉得一部片子需要有很多素材，圆明园拍摄的总感觉有些单薄了，觉得素材不够，就没剪。但是过了几年后，发现其实它就是一个完整的历史故事，也能成片。

王：对，现在看完全可以。我记得里面有一个诗人的叙述能力特别强。

赵：还有石心宁，那个画家，喜欢记日记。

王：这些素材整合起来还是很完整的。他们的讲述和日记，也将事件勾勒得很清楚。后来你觉得它很完整，应该是有了新的思路，很多年后慢慢有了对于纪录片观念的变化。

赵：对。那是过了十年左右吧，再回去看，重新审视的时候，能够更旁观，更清楚地看待这件事情。

王：才能知道它的意义何在！而且早期你要编辑的话，也很麻烦，因为你需要用到对编机，后来就有电脑了。

赵：对。二〇〇六年，《告别圆明园》剪的时候已经不用了。《纸飞机》当时还是用大二一带，然后用对编机剪。好像是吴文光还是谁，借我的对编机，来来回回弄。

王：其实到了二〇〇一年往后，大概二〇〇三年，慢慢才有电脑和premiere软件的非线编设备，那就太方便了，每年设备更新和降价都很迅速，所以那时候是很通用的。

赵：《纸飞机》最早我用过对编机，后来用电脑。这种在国内我应该是最早的吧，当时刚出蓝白G3（在美国一九九九年一月上市，简称G3—B&W，苹果公司生产），最早的苹果电脑，外表有点现代感，我还让一个朋友给我从新加坡背回来的，最早的时候有一个哈佛的朋友来中国拍纪录片，当时给我介绍了Edit DV，最早的一款剪辑软件，要买卡，插到电脑里但速度极慢，当时硬盘也不大，才4G，需要两块硬盘捆绑，加一个机箱盒这样速度才能上来。那时电脑显卡都特别慢，老死机，那时正好是线性往非线性过渡的时期。

王：我记得你有几部片子就是从九六年就开始拍了，画面当时就已经很好了，感觉你换机器了。《上访》就是从九六年开始拍的。

赵：是的，九六年的秋天。九六年当时就开始有DV了，有了那个机器就开始拍了。

王：说到机器，上次咱们和杨荔钠在一起，还说过你们两个最早有了DV机，时间差不多。但你可能是最早买的。有一次和盛志民聊天，他还说起这个事情。

赵：那个时候是有一个日本的记者关注中国当代的文艺动向，要采访孟京辉。孟京辉当时在拍一个话剧叫《阿Q同志》，后来被禁了。我那时候帮他拍话剧的纪录片。关于那个机器为什么最早我知道，因为九六年的时候马克吕布在中国美术馆做了一个摄影展览，开幕式我们去看，就有两个法国人一个举着麦克风，一个就拿着那个小机器，就是松下AG-EZ1。当时就特别羡慕，造型也好看，我们这个机器叫大眼睛，那时候还没有液晶屏幕，还是寻像器那种，很简单，轻便，变焦什么都特好，感觉质量已经好得不行了，就特别眼馋，就去问了一下，英语也不太好，就记下了那个型号，然后就去找松下在中国的代理商，那时候在赛特中心，他们说只有一台样机，还没有进货，我就非得要买，就借钱，四千美元买了那个机器。

王：那时候美元兑换比率很高，四千美元大约四万人民币吧。

赵：那时候工资很低。然后就买了这个样机，杨荔钠那个也是EZ1，但应该不是AG-EZ1。差一点。因为我这个是样机。

王：杨荔钠是看了你买的之后才买的吗？

赵：不是，当时我们还不认识。我忘记了哪一年，我们认识是因为吴文光是在《书城》还是《街道》上写了一篇《墙上的苍蝇》，介绍我和杨荔钠这种默默的做纪录片的人，然后才彼此知道，原来还有一个大闺女做一样的工作，就很想认识。

王：当时拿到这个机器拍摄时是什么感觉？

赵：那时候就觉得，这个机器太好了，刚到手都搂着睡觉，有了这么好的机器，得赶紧拍点什么。那时候住六里屯，三影堂的荣荣和我一块租住，他也是搞摄影的，摄影家刘铮也常来聊天，他是《工人日报》的，他说你应该去南站看看，那边上访的人很多。改天我就把机器装进双肩包骑着自行车去了。那里的场面把我震惊了，隔着二环路，那里面仿佛隔着一个时空，一个差着二十年的并行世界。这就是时代啊，赶紧拍吧。我的《上访》就开始了。

王：那个机器是可以接在电视上看回放的吧，那个过程是很爽的。

赵：每天拍摄完能在电视上直接看素材，那时候电视也不大，但是色彩还原度很好，我基本都手动，白平衡也可以调，那个时候就觉得这个机器太好了，其实是对画质的认识也没有那么的深，一般差不多有影就行了。现在我都拍8K了，在4K电视上看当年的DV素材，就巴掌大。

王：接着就去了南站，后来马莉也在南站拍了《京生》，那个主角老郝的故事我是觉得惊心动魄，你在那里拍了那么多年，从来没有遇到过她？

赵：老郝遇到了，我经常去她那里休息，她那里是一个据点，要找人基本就蹓跹到那里去，她在那里租的房子，然后她的房子再租给上访人，那种大通铺，她就是做这种生意的，她也是上访人。她所在的那个胡同叫高法胡同，里边就是最高法院的上访接待处。

王：老郝是做二房东的，但在你的片子中没有出现，而且两部上访的片子同时拍，但基本上没有重合，这也是很特别。

赵：也有重合，我拍的人物从他家出发去上访。但老郝基本没有出现，我主要拍摄小娟这条线的。当时拍的人物也挺多的，去掉了很多人物。当时还遇到了马莉两次，一次是在一个上访人的树林里，她和当时的法学博士许志永一起。他带着马莉在那里转。我们简单打了个招呼。第二次是我拍《上访》过年那场戏，当时我很注重逢年过节这些事情，都不能回家过，想一定要拍上访人的过年。当时我和一个老太太相处得特别好，儿子来接她也不回家，就在这里过年，她住桥底下，旁边

还有一个收破烂的，我就问他们过年看春晚吗，那大爷也很有意思，说我这两天得弄一个电视，年底前他果真就弄来一个，修了修，有影，就摆在那里。环境太黑我还拿了一个灯，充电的，照很远，前面加了一个柔光纸，就打了一个环境光，过年那会，当时马莉也过来拍了几个镜头，算第二次遇到。

王：那个场景给我印象特别深。真的特别好，尤其是剪辑，先是看到所有人都在开心地看电视，他们看电视的脸很快乐，突然镜头切到电视上，电视上看不清楚人影！全是雪花，但是字幕很清楚。这些人都快乐得不行了，所有人都看着字幕。

赵：但是能听到那个声。

王：对。他们就坐在那里听声，看着雪花屏。这一幕真的是很心酸，这个剪辑真的很不错。我发现《纸飞机》和《上访》也是同时拍的是吗？

赵：对，同时。因为时间跨度大，也没有办法天天盯，主人公隔三差五被收容走了就联系不上，只有小娟回京联系我。有时候半年也找不到人。那同时也拍了《纸飞机》。同时也还得打工挣钱，活命啊。二〇〇〇年左右，我在沈阳拍摄了一个残疾人杂技团，那个很可惜，没有精力剪，都是跟踪式的大量素材。也拍了两三百个小时了。也许因为剪《上访》弄得我有点累，就有点不想动。

王：以后还是可以剪的吧？

赵：以后再说吧，那时候一个带子对于我来说特别贵，一个DV磁带六七十块，那时候还用过日本的二手磁带，一个带子里面有的时候有上访，有摇滚乐队，还有画展开幕的。那一天的生活老丰富了。六十分钟的带子差一分钟也舍不得空着。

二

王：《纸飞机》的开始是哪一年？

赵：应该是一九九七年开始拍摄的。最早是拍谢天笑、龙宽，再到百花胡同、庞克。

王：《纸飞机》这些都没有用，只用了百花胡同那几个人的事对吧？

赵：对，那个时候对群像式这种庞杂的内容有点把控不住，也不太会讲故事，感觉很难把那么多的

人物穿插起来。天笑那时住肖家河龙宽家里，没钱租房子，吃饭都成问题，龙宽是个宽容大度的人，怎么死磕也不会赶人。那时候摇滚乐也没有现在这样火。有一次龙宽在五道口酒吧认识了一个女孩，因为她怀孕了，龙宽就把她带回自己家照顾直到生下小孩。后来那个女的把小孩卖了六千块钱，卖给温州一对夫妻。现在说，小孩也二十多了。各种青春的悲剧故事，但是没有能力编织到一起。

王：那个时候你学的是那种故事片摄影，对纪录片这个概念有怎样的理解？

赵：完全没有概念。最开始我还拍一些短片，也用35毫米，黑白的，九七年之前也没有录像艺术这种说法，刚毕业的时候，就有实验短片的概念。学的是故事片，再早的时候也爱看一些小说，《收获》这一类的，但是我自己本身对故事性的认识并不是很强，对文学也并没有一种真正深刻的意识。最后可能也是觉得纪录片的门槛相对低，也不用非得写剧本，拍到哪里算哪里，更多的是一种直觉性的东西。《上访》当时有一段时间，怎么感觉怎么不对，一直不知道怎么来结尾，一直到奥运会要拆南站，上访村全拆了，人都轰走了，我就觉得这可能就是结尾了。

王：这个结尾特别好。最早的时候，你看过什么纪录片吗？吴文光的看过吗？

赵：吴文光的看过，蒋樾、段锦川的也都看过一些。

王：是从什么途径看到的？

赵：那时候也有从地下传的一些带子吧，VHS那种，从录像机上放映的那种。我记得蒋樾那个时候在电影学院拍《彼岸》的时候，我看过。当时就觉得像神一样的存在。

王：那个时候对于纪录片应该是一个什么样的拍摄原则，大概是一个什么样的面貌，还是有些自己的认识吧？

赵：那个时候对纪录片更多的感受是，有《望长城》、《河殇》这一类文字配解说的纪录片，还有一些希望工程这样的。在电影学院也上过几堂对纪录片的介绍，印象都不太深，那个时候片源也很少，说不出来什么片子是方便可以看到的，国外的也很少能看到。可以参考的不多。

王：《生活空间》看过吗？当时电视播放的，片子也很有趣。

赵：看过，当然看过，就是小民的生活嘛。那是一个电视的时代。陈虻、时间，那些制片人还是挺

棒的。

王：当年你拍摄《纸飞机》的资金是从哪里来？

赵：《纸飞机》《上访》其实都是自己抽空弄的，那个时候给电视台拍节目，拍一些小广告之类的。

王：这样的话，版权全部都在自己这里。

赵：对。

王：像这两部片子的拍法也很有意思，片子里的年轻人是在吸毒，当时拍摄也没有那么多的禁忌，可以让你拍。

赵：还是遇到对的人吧。

王：如果现在拍，可能还是不一样。现在包括纪录片的环境都不一样，作为一个拍摄者是不是也会有某些风险，甚至道德风险，会有类似的讨论。

赵：其实他们也不避讳，他们的人格还是挺棒的，比如赵牧阳，是非常磊落的人。他们后来戒了，也都挺好。

王：他们有对自己的比较明确的看法，像其中一位说“我为什么这样，是因为我找不到生活的意义。”这一点还是很不一样的，他们对于自己的状况还有一个很强的自觉性，有一种总结。

赵：没错，他们并不是处于那种糊里糊涂的状态。他们有自己的自觉，有一种很明确的态度来面对自我。其实也和很早做乐队有关系吧，他们还是有很不一样的思考方式。

王：活得很通透，在这一点上还是蛮迷人的。我看你在《纸飞机》的最后写了一个DV Guerrilla这样的词，你在当时有这么一个团队吗？

赵：不是，就是自己喜欢这个词。是当时的拍摄状态就像是游击队一样，东躲西藏东跑西颠的那种状态。

王：其实就是在单枪匹马地在战斗。这个片子在后来是在哪里放映过？

赵：这部片子的首映是在马赛，那个时候是我第一次出国，第一次参加电影节。对于我而言，出去看看别的国家长啥样，然后看到电影节，也感到很兴奋，主办方都对你特别友好，拍片子还能参加电影节，对自己也是一个肯定吧。在国际上能够看到那么多同行，也是一种幸福。

王：最早开始拍摄的时候，知道像电影节这些事情么？

赵：也知道，但是也没去过，不清楚究竟是什么情况。原来也有投稿，也发生过别人不要的情况。那个时候想要往国外寄一个东西，特别麻烦。有一次我忘记了是给哪个电影节寄片子，然后给我来信了，我特别高兴，虽然一堆英文我也看不懂，最后找吴文光给看，吴文光说这是人家不要你的。气得我。退稿。

王：就是《纸飞机》吗？

赵：应该是吧。

王：这个片子还是蛮不错的。你是什么时候开始明确纪录片可以作为一种事业，这种思想是从什么时候开始的？

赵：应该是《上访》去了戛纳以后，当时我也觉得特别意外，也没觉得自己有能力能上这样的电影节。其实对于戛纳电影节，也没有更深的认识和理解，就觉得是一个很好的电影节吧。真的是由衷高兴，那时候如果知道一个电影节要你的片子了，比如说八月份电影节开始，你五月份就知道了，那这俩月什么也不干，就等着去玩了。他们给你买票，给你吃住。哈哈，二货。

王：《上访》入选戛纳是哪一年？

赵：二〇〇九年，在这之前其实也去了挺多的电影节了。比如说《罪与罚》是在〇八年的时候，在南特电影节得过奖，其实《罪与罚》得奖的时候，对我的鼓励是最大的，那个时候发现原来你还能通过这种事情找到存在感。

王：《上访》之前还有《罪与罚》，这部影片是在哪年拍的？

赵：〇四年考察，〇五年拍。

王：当时是怎么找到这个题材的？

赵：原本是和法国5台有一个合作，《纸飞机》去鹿特丹的时候，认识的一位法国的制片人，老太太很喜欢《纸飞机》，说我有什么题材就给她写邮件，她来帮助我。我就写了《在江边》那个片子，〇四年开始考察，就在鸭绿江沿岸，当时也是脱北的比较多吧，看看能不能在派出所里遇到这种情况，就找了关系，看派出所里面有没有。我们那边的江比较大，通过鸭绿江跑过来的人不多，都是从图们江那边跑过来的，后来就觉得派出所的日常也挺有意思的，就开始拍摄他们的日常。

王：然后就拍到了《罪与罚》？

赵：对。就把这部分素材单剪了出来，那个片子弄完了，再过来重新审视这个素材。把这个素材剪了。

王：接着是《上访》，这部片子大概拍了十二年，从一九九六年开始二〇〇八年。《上访》的这个结构，一共是有五个多小时吧？

赵：对。短的有123分钟，长的大概有516分钟。

王：二〇〇九年去戛纳电影节是短的吧，也是你自己剪的？

赵：对，都是在国内粗剪，再到法国精剪。我五个小时在北京剪完了，因为电视台不能放这么长的时间，就到那里再缩剪。

王：我觉得两个小时的版本，在某些问题的交代上没有那么清晰，比如对戚华英的命运的解释，就没有长版那么完整。她的女儿被官员强行认了干女儿，在他的主持下结婚，并且成为官员的一个政绩，而戚华英悲剧就是这个官员一干人带来的，所以说这个扭曲太恐怖了。短的版本这点就没讲清楚，而且一简化就感觉放大了当事人的偏执。所以对命运的展现就有点走样。这个片子在戛纳反应怎样？

赵：中途也有离场的，不过在戛纳倒也正常吧。拍摄方法也没有西方的那么规矩和标准，有些随意，西方的纪录片的拍摄已经相当成熟，电影化了。我这部片子主要还是靠事情为主，画面上也没有很讲究，是DV的质量，总体来说媒体反映还是不错，报道很多。导演总是为观众的离场太过于揪心，我的制片人跟我说这正常，那些媒体人要赶下一个场，他们就大概了解这部片子的意思。

王：咱们和西方纪录片的拍摄环境还是不一样的，那个年代尤其不一样，我们这边的拍摄环境上没有西方安全，给你摆好机器让你拍，有时候我们其实处于一种危险的情境下在拍摄，有可能被驱赶的情境下拍摄。西方的拍摄不是这样的。

赵：他们很从容地去拍摄。

王：对。很从容，签好协议，把机器摆好。你这样拍和西方那样拍当然在质感上会有所不一样，他们有可能不理解这种粗糙感是怎么形成的。

赵：对，有可能。而且一个遥远国度的苦难跟他们也没有多大关系。

王：我想说的是，你的原来的长版本，尤其是第二部分《母女》太揪心了，在某种程度上戚华英又被她的女儿第二次地杀死了。它整体结构很有趣，《众生》、《母女》和《北京南站》，众生是群像，母女就聚焦在个体，看她的命运的发展，《北京南站》就拓展了整部片子所存在的公共环境。

赵：是更加注重的时代变迁。早期拍摄主要的还是母女俩，后期才开始把这个事情扩大，把人物增多，把整个时代变迁的状况体现出来。

王：当最后落到奥运会放烟花的场景上时候，你就会忽然获得一种理解，在这个伟大的一幕之前，多少小人物的命运和尊严被损失掉。我们应该如何去理解眼前这豪华的一幕，它背后的代价是什么。我当时给这个片子写了一个评论，其实没有什么评述性的话语，我就是转述了这个故事，就足够震撼。戚华英的上访本来就被说成精神偏执有问题，现在她的女儿被官员所诱导，成为他们的证据，而且这个谎言被做成了电视纪录片，所以再也没有人会相信戚华英。但是这个时候，你的摄像机摇过来了，你的摄像机知道这一切，这个片子会永存，会被很多人看到，所以我觉得是这部纪录片的伟大和神圣。不知道这部片是否给戚华英本人看过。

赵：她应该没看到。她女儿看到了。其实最后这件事闹得还挺僵的，她就一直认为我是电视台派来跟踪她的，不理我了。后来我也没问她女儿这个片子有没有跟她讲，应该也讲了吧。后期我拍女儿，戚华英也不让拍了，她认为我肯定是电视台的，和江苏台是一路的。

王：这就是很可悲的事情。她女儿的转述也好，但我怕的是她不再相信女儿的话。如果她不知道你做了什么，那就太可惜了！这部片子对于她来讲应该是巨大的安慰，已经没有什么可以安慰她了。如果过去的一切都没有记录，当事人老了，去世了，没人相信她精神是正常的，也没人相信她讲的

故事。这是多绝望的事！公义如何体现？这个纪录片就是公义本身。

赵：当时在香港放映时，我没事，还看了一遍，也是过了好多年，我就觉得能被记录真的是一件幸运的事，在某种意义上她们真的能够永生，在影像里他们永远活着。

王：这就是一种伸张正义。最恐怖的是，她的女儿被利用，她的这个故事被搬上电视台之后，全国人们都看到了，而她的女儿在那个权力结构里没法再出来为母亲说什么，这就是对她母亲的第二次谋杀。母亲二十年的上访的精神价值可能一下就被女儿给抹杀了。

赵：给解构了。

王：对。解构了。官方可以据此直接来否定你，把她定义为精神病。这种淹没感，完全没法解决了，只有这部片子可以解决，每次想到这我还是非常感慨。

三

王：《上访》之后你拍了什么？

赵：《在一起》。

王：《在一起》是带龙标的对吧？

赵：是的，这部片子我前一段看了一会，感觉还挺好的。我觉得还不错。

王：那部片子我在电影学院看过，听说是定制的，是谁找到你拍的？

赵：当时是顾长卫找到我，他本来要拍《魔术外传》，阎连科《丁庄梦》改编的，在香港电影节他们安排一起吃饭，就这样认识了。顾老师对纪录片特别感兴趣，我回来就找了很多独立纪录片给他看。正好他拍那个戏，找我来给他拍花絮，拍花絮就太无聊了，后说能不能把它延伸，来结合现实，结合艾滋病的状况，就发展成了一部独立完整的片子。顾老师也认同，我们就一起来开发了个项目。

王：就是后来章子怡和郭富城主演的那个片子吧？

赵：是的，后来改名字了，叫《最爱》。

王：原来是这样发展出来的，我当时听说是和卫生部有关系。

赵：卫生部有关系，是因为后期如果要上映的话，还是需要龙标，后来广电说你这个需要卫生部下文，他们就会通过审查。

王：其实就更像是一个公益片对吧？我记得还是彭丽媛唱的片尾曲。

赵：对。那时要宣传这个病的防治。蒋雯丽和彭丽媛都是艾滋防治形象大使。

王：接下来你的创作就开始转向了，就开始拍摄《悲兮魔兽》了。以前的片子，《罪与罚》有当代艺术的影子，我觉得你后来的几部片子越来越和当代艺术有关系了，不知道这个观点是否有道理？

赵：可能是和我的审美趣味有关系吧，我从事艺术，它势必在美学上是相通的，而我一直觉得做录像艺术会更轻松，更具时代感，更符合我影片的审美趣味。我也不太喜欢靠天吃饭、死跟着主人公的那种纪录片拍摄方式，就像钓鱼一样，鱼不来你就只能死等。我现在就是主动出发，去找我想要的素材来佐证你的观点，这种就是论文电影的方式。

王：你就更主观了嘛。特别像赫尔佐格的那种电影。

赵：概念先行嘛。

王：像《上访》就是跟拍，等待事件发生，拍摄了十几年，已经做到了这类拍摄方法的极致了。

赵：我觉得那个做完，那种类型的片子就有点够了。就像画画一样，具象画得已经游刃有余了，你就想尝试新的可能性，让你觉得更舒服、更自由的方式去创作，让你自己有兴奋点。

王：其实看了你后来两个新片子后，我也是这么去理解你的创作心态的。现在的感觉就是，你的个人专业（绘画）的特点就更加地呈现出来了，就是更加注重造型。

赵：对，造型、画面是非常重要的，我们可能更需要用画面来讲故事。电影并不是把画面放进大银幕就是电影了，大多数电影都不是电影，不具备电影的性质。

王：这个转变，是在《悲兮魔兽》拍之前就有了，还是说在拍的过程中有所发现。

赵：拍的时候还很模糊，其实我两种都拍了，第一种还是有大量的采访、说话，到后期剪辑的时候才决定把这些东西放弃掉，记得当时我在巴黎的机房里追问自己，究竟喜欢一部什么样的电影，于是我决定放弃那些言语。采用纯视觉的东西来讲故事。

王：明白。是你最后才找到这种方式，觉得更有新意。

赵：对。《悲兮魔兽》还是一个过渡期，像现在的这个《无去来处》，就更加的在这条路上往前奔。

王：但这种纪录片，相比以前的近距离接触拍摄对象，你这个就越来越“远观”了。《悲兮魔兽》我当时写了一篇文章，说观众和影片中的人会有一种隔膜感，也许这种隔膜感它也可能有它的意义。以前近距离的接触，走进他的生活，能闻到他们身上的汗味，现在你是比较远地在拍他们，这种隔膜感当然你也可以解释，其实我们和他们本来就是有隔膜的，有距离的。

赵：对，我是不太想和被拍摄者走得那么近，他们只是让我看到一个侧面，我是觉得让我看一个侧面也就足够了，更是一个平等的关系，尽量少的剥削感。

王：从你的角度来说，或者从中国独立纪录片的脉络来说，你在转型在制作一种新的和世界对话的方式。当我看到《悲兮魔兽》里裸体的一个人，躺在一个正在变坏的环境里的时候，我觉得这个设计是有意义的。人的皮肤是敏感的，所以这个人物在镜头里面的存在方式，会唤起我们的一种疼痛感。

赵：对，如果你有感受力，它会很自然带给你对于影片的本能的理解。所以我觉得这部影片比那种采访式的、话语式的更加深入人心，更能激发你深层次的知觉，看了之后，你不会那么容易忘记它。别人说的话可能很快就忘了，这种图像会在记忆里。

王：《无去来处》也有类似的设置，一个带着面具的能剧大师，我看到网上有人讨论这个形象，你企图用这个形象来表达什么呢？

赵：她会代替我说话，像我的代言人一样，她是知晓过去、能预知未来的一种象征性的符号。就像是我用我的替身来替我说话，像萨满在说话，它被附体了，不是他在说话，那样的一种转嫁。我喜欢这种形式感。

王：《无去来处》当中那些孩子的病情在常规的纪录片里会有一个解释，这种病和核污染的前因后果，就像原一男拍水俣病的时候，甚至医学证明的过程他都参与了。但你把这些部分故意拿掉了。

赵：不需要什么东西都在片子里出现。我还是用我的画面语言让你去感受，并不是用文字或语言来去说明它。我不是说明文，更像是一种散文，还是以感受为主，我不用那些数据，现在互联网都有这些信息，你感兴趣可以去寻找这些知识性的东西。

王：对，你现在的解释是核事件是人类共业，你更多是讲的普遍人性问题，是贪婪和无休息的欲望造成了人类的灾难。从《悲兮魔兽》到《无去来处》，你都是将镜头拉远了，你也是在阐释事件，但是更形而上，更为上帝视角，也更有诗意。

赵：我觉得这也可能是年龄问题，到了这个时代，这个年龄，我现在都很不好意思，白着头发，扛个机器，怼到人脸上去拍，实在是不好意思。我现在都用八五这种镜头拍，都很远，至少一米五两米开外去拍，不会再造成那种压迫感。年轻的时候更多的是无知者无畏，我觉得没什么，我就这么干了。像我拍《纸飞机》的时候，都是对着脸拍，广角，有点变形，现在保持着距离感，不想侵犯式地去拍摄。就是直觉上感觉，像这样的方式拍摄，已经不适合我了。所以也不想问人家各种的隐私，还是更多人类共通的情感的东西。

王：非常理解。这两部片子不约而同的都是环境题材，所以最早我以为你是为某个环保组织制作的。

赵：我对环境的议题非常重视，它有时候超越了体制的压迫，或者人权的事情，它更是一个人类共同的大事情，是毁灭性的。你看现在各种气候异常，虽然很多人把人祸当天灾来误导，但这个气候异常是肯定是全球性的。今年中国水灾，欧洲也是淹得很厉害，但是灾难的规模不同而已。

王：那天我们在歌德学院放映《无去来处》时也说过，包括新冠疫情，都在激发人们的思考，不是以前的泛泛的思考，而是在上升和深化。

赵：你觉得疫情会让人思考什么？人们有什么醒悟？

王：尤其是疫情刚开始的时候，我觉得所有人都陷入恐慌和无力，人在自然面前的自信不复存在。疫情使得我们每个人都陷入了一个哲学情境，这是以前不容易获得的一个情境。

赵：对！疫情的时候我隔壁的朋友一个开车往怀柔去，想找个山沟走一走。只要有山沟，就有人堵着你不让进，只能在公路上开，太可笑了。那个时候就想到大自然里走一走，多美多舒服。欧洲还好。西方啥也没有耽误干，人们还可以选择出行。中国人这种状况就像养鸡场的鸡一样，我之前参观过一个养鸡场，正大的养鸡场，自动化的，那里面只有一个人和一个机器人，几十万上百万只鸡都只认识一个人，如果我进去，不可能，因为细菌问题，要消毒，再有就是怕它们受到惊吓，一旦进去产蛋就会变化，产蛋的颜色和形状都会变化，脆弱的鸡啊。

王：所以说你这个片子是在疫情前制作出来的，但是在疫情发生后播放，其实是促进了这个影片的吸收，它就变得更加有意义。你以前片子里面直接的政治浓度太高了，你现在想换一个做法？

赵：其实现在的政治更是大政治，气候政治，法国哲学家拉图尔的命题，气候问题是个政治问题，衍生到能源就是一个体制问题，整个资本主义社会这样的消费主义状况，才产生了这一系列的环境问题，对能源的消耗，污染，对资源的浪费。人类必须要反思这种这种消费行为，资本主义就是他多生产你多消费，他就赚得越多，恶性循环，这种体制是需要改变的。

王：我很理解，但你片子的形式化未必所有人能接受。

赵：这种方式，它有冒险的一面，也有很多人直接反感，当然我没有必要去讨好所有人，不能让所有人都喜欢，首先我得用自己喜欢的电影方式干活。

王：可能还有另外一个方面的好处，这个题材更景观化，更具有视觉震撼效果。

赵：对，这是视觉语言的基础。

王：这么庞大的画面，它有表达上的强度。这么巨大的草原，最后变成如此巨大的煤矿，无数的挖掘机，爆炸。这个时候你再把某些形象引进来，将观众带入，比如一个裸体的男性被你安置在后景和你的镜头之间，这是一种修辞，我感觉你现在把大自然景观给剧场化了。

赵：不错。这个词很好。如果以人类世代的尺度来观看世界的话，那就是一个小舞台。

王：你再把你的主观投入进来。甚至很多的画外音，这也是有风险的，你把你的思考和主观性过于直接地展露给大家。

赵：可能，有一些就是这样，画面的歧义性是非常大的，我说了和没说它的指向性是不一样的，我

说了之后，就是告诉你我要你看的是这个事物，这个视角。如果我不说，别人理解成别的，就不是我想要的效果。我就犹如一个游行抗议者，必须大声疾呼，喊出我的态度！

王：就等于说，中国独立纪录片早期反对画外音，反对主观性，现在你非常执着地要加入你的主观性，加了很多旁白。这一点特别有意思。

赵：对。除非是这个画面完全是我创造出来的，像剧情片人为搭建的场景那样，那没有问题，它没有杂音，我就可以直接指向我要的东西，就能达到剧情片所要的那种精确的程度。而纪录片，你无法改变现实的状态，每个人的知识背景不一样，生活阅历不一样，所理解的画面角度也是不一样的。避免误读的弯路。我必须要去引导它，我要让你理解我想什么。你可能也想到了，那很好，但有人可能想不到。我不说的话，那个偏差可能就会更多。这里当然也有拿捏的尺度的问题。

王：其实你这里面还有一个悖论，《悲兮魔兽》、《无去来处》都是表现巨大的灾难性画面，但是这个灾难性画面放到美学的角度来说，它具有有一种美的震撼力。隐约有一种唯美主义的态度。但其实你要传达的是灾难性的东西，所以悖论出现了。

赵：歧义性就在这里，比如说我们去看那些集中营堆积如山的头发，那些鞋子，放在博物馆里你一定觉得是大艺术品，也会产生一种审美。如果没有指向，没有背景，你会去审视那个美，当你了解背景之后，你就觉得这是苦难。那审美是什么，审美受道德约束吗？审美是复杂的现象。所以我更需要用指向性去引导到我想表述的角度上面。审美是一个很有意思的东西，之前也有人说你拍的是丑的东西，但呈现得那么美，所以我要告诉你我的态度是什么，审美其实是基于你的经验，所以我必须告诉你我的角度是什么。它看起来很美，但是其实它很脏。

王：这就是审美的复杂性，其实它也考验人的审美辨别力。现在讲一下你后面两个片子的生产关系如何？我觉得你的影片的状况更加国际化了。我以前可能受《在一起》的影响，总是误会你后来的创作是定制的项目。《悲兮魔兽》是怎么开始生产的？

赵：项目都是我自己定的，自己开发的，《悲兮魔兽》还是和我的法国老制片人合作。

王：《悲兮魔兽》的画质是4K的？

赵：对，用的RED4K，《无去来处》就是8K了。我觉得纪录片把素材还是要往高了拍，对将来好用。

王：纪录片画质提高到这么高，它真的那么有意义吗？

赵：有意义，尤其是纪录片更是需要，故事片差不多电影院2K也就行了，纪录片不一样，他永远有一个档案式的功能，等将来都发展成8K的时候，再拿出来也不会落后。

王：《悲兮魔兽》还是在国内拍的对吧？鄂尔多斯？

赵：就内蒙，包括宁夏，还有他们交界的那一带。

王：那个地方反差更大。草原很美，矿坑的存在显得触目惊心。

赵：是的，就很直观。

王：《无去来处》是在日本和俄罗斯拍的？

赵：六个国家，乌克兰、日本、白俄罗斯、哈萨克斯坦、德国、芬兰。这里面哈萨克斯坦就有前苏联的核试验基地。乌克兰、白俄罗斯、日本有核事故造成的问题，拍德国主要是他们对核的态度，弃核，芬兰是解决储存核废料的问题。没有在中国拍。

Du Haibin: The Significance of the Documentary Emerges Slowly

Interviewer: YU Yaqin 余雅琴 Translator: Xiang FAN 樊响

Du Haibin(杜海滨) was born in Baoji(宝鸡), Shaanxi Province, and after living in Beijing for many years, he now lives in Hangzhou as a teacher at the China Academy of Art(中国美术学院). Most of his family lives in Xi'an, and a friend of mine said that he looks like a Terracotta Warrior, but I could hardly recognise any Shaanxi accent in him. We completed this interview in a Starbucks cafe in August 2021, on the occasion of his visiting lecture in Xi'an.

Most documentary lovers are familiar with Du Haibin from his work on the Sichuan earthquake, *1428* (2009), which won the Best Documentary Award in the Orizzonti [Horizons] strand of the Venice Film Festival in 2009. A friend from Sichuan who lived through the Sichuan earthquake told me that it was this work that inspired him to take an interest in Chinese independent cinema.

Du Haibin's work dates to the late 1990s. As a student at the Beijing Film Academy (北京电影学院), he initially had an ambition of making a feature film, and by chance he filmed a close friend, which led to his debut, *Doudou* (窦豆, 1999). It is worth noting that Zhu Chuanming's (朱传明) film *Beijing Cotton-Fluffer* (北京弹匠, 1999) was also shot with the same camera. This anecdote somehow reflects the circumstance in which independent documentaries were created in the early years.

To date, Du Haibin has made ten documentaries. In one of his essays, Du divides his creative process into three stages: passionate creation, rational creation, and emotional plus rational creation. He also considers his creative process to be the interplay between intuition and self-awareness.

As he retraced his work over coffee and cigarettes, it is clear that he is thinking more deeply and in detail about his work. This interview took about three to four hours, in which Du Haibin not only recalled his filmmaking process, but also analysed and reflected on his filmmaking philosophy.

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Yu: I heard that you had a rather tortuous process of entering university. You studied fine arts before and

even took the exams at the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts (西安美院) . It took you several years to be admitted to the university. After gaining some work experience, you entered the Beijing Film Academy in 1996, majoring in cinematography, so how did you start making documentaries?

Du: I didn't know anything about documentaries when I entered the university. I just knew I wanted to make films in the future. I had worked as a graphic photographer before I entered the university, and I thought that one day I would be a cinematographer. Our major used to be called 'visual engineering' and it was mainly about dealing with the complicated techniques to develop the films after the shooting is done, but later on it became more of a still image [photography] programme. To be honest, I didn't feel very satisfied with it, because I had already accumulated a lot of knowledge about it. Several mature classmates, who were also around my age, also had dreams of making films. We found that the major was not quite what we expected, but fortunately, we shared the general [filmmaking] atmosphere in the university, and we had common classes and dormitories together [with other film students].

Soon, we also started to take the initiative to make short films. We did not have a cinematography [feature film] programme in our year, which meant that students from the directing and literature departments had to approach us as cinematographers to make their short films, and as we did so, we wanted to make our own. We also started to audit in the classes of other majors, with great interest. Gradually, the mature students in our class also organised a practice group called *Daoguan* (道光) , including Zhu Chuanming, Wang Shiqing (汪士卿) , and my current cinematographer, Liu Aiguo (刘爱国) , which was just like Jia Zhangke's Youth Experimental Film Group (青年电影实验小组) . We were enrolled in 1996, before Jia Zhangke and his group graduated, and by then they had already made *Xiao Shan Go Home* (小山回家 , 1995) and *Xiao Wu* (小武 , 1997) . Sometimes we ran each other on campus and we invited them over to exchange ideas with our members. Soon, each member of our group finished their first short film, around five minutes, around the shared topic, *Lunch* (午餐) , and we organised a small-scale internal screening, which went quite well.

Yu: What was your role in the group *Daoguang*? How did you first encounter documentaries?

Du: I was sort of an organiser of the group and I had some external contacts, so I could bring some resources to the group. Initially, I planned to get more people involved, from all walks of life, and that we would take turns to be directors, cinematographers, graphic artists, actors and so on, so that we could do everything within the group. But when we had to work together closely, we realised that we needed to be very professional and inclusive. As we all had very strong characters individually with our own ideas, it

was difficult to reach unanimous agreement, so at one point it was very chaotic, and this led to a series of problems.

In the summer of 1998, I decided to raise money to make another short film written by me, a forty-minute story about a young man who couldn't stand the restrictions of a state-owned bicycle factory and had a break-through. But after filming, I found that something had gone wrong in some seemingly trivial parts of the film. I sat at the editing table, feeling so frustrated that I even wanted to give up [filmmaking]. During this period, the university started a public course on documentary film, in which I saw many excellent documentaries from China and abroad.

I saw *Nanook of the North* for the first time in the class, and the university's lecture theatre was full of people. We watched it intently, sometimes with great joy. It really struck me, especially the part where Nanook feeds his young son meat—reflecting on my previous work, I suddenly realised that I could make a documentary with a smaller team, without having to listen to others, and without having to find actors. So, I thought I'd give it a try.

So, I thought of Doudou (窦豆), my childhood friend. I took the train from Baoji to Beijing with him, and at first we lived in a basement for almost two years. We came to Beijing as young migrants and we were full of aspirations for the city. I thought that we could only study art in Beijing. In September 1993, we both experienced the failure of Beijing's Olympic bid, when a group of us hugged and cried together in Tiananmen Square—we really grew up together and slowly began to find our own direction. Doudou liked painting and acting. In October 1994, I left the Central Academy of Arts and Design (中央工艺美院), where I studied photography, to work in Shantou (汕头) for almost two years. In 1996, I took the entrance examination again and entered the Film Academy. When I got in touch with him again, he was already rehearsing in Tian Gebing's (田戈兵) experimental theatre group. I was struggling with the editing of that short film at the time, and after seeing his state, the idea of making a film that corresponded to my study of documentaries during that period about him came to me. At that time, he was a mirror for me, allowing me to see myself in the past and to see my other potential in the present. I started filming in the winter of 1998 and continued to shoot until the following year, and in the summer of 1999 I edited it out and came up with my first documentary, *Doudou*.

Yu: What equipment did you use initially?

Du: A machine from the university and my own handheld camera, a Panasonic SVHS, which is not even a

DV. My sister brought it back to me from her work in Singapore, and it cost a few thousand yuan at the time. At first I didn't think I would use it to shoot my work. I thought it would be just for practice, but I never thought it would be very useful. One year the Asian Film Festival in Hong Kong even borrowed the camera from me for an exhibition. After *Doudou* was finished, I went to a TV station and rented an out-dated VHS editing machine, a playback machine, and a recording machine, and finished editing the film in a linear and purely manual way.

Yu: Zhu Chuanming used your camera to make *Beijing Cotton-Fluffer*, which won an award at the Yamagata Film Festival. What was the impact of this on you?

Du: After the film *Doudou* was finished in 1999, it was shown at some screening events at the Film Academy and Peking University. Zhu Chuanming used my camera to make a film about people who fluffed cotton in the neighbourhood near our university, which later became *Beijing Cotton-Fluffer*.

This camera was used by both of us, and he used it when I didn't. We made two films that year, and at that time Jia Zhangke went to Japan, and the curator of the Yamagata Film Festival, Asako Fujioka (藤冈昭子), asked him to recommend some domestic documentaries. Jia Zhangke asked me, and I said we had two documentaries, *Doudou* and *Beijing Cotton-Fluffer*, and gave them to him.

In 2000, I was about to graduate. One day I was shooting a film in Kaili (凯里), Guizhou, and I suddenly received a call from Jia Zhangke, saying, 'congratulations, Haibin, one of your films has won an award.' I didn't know exactly which film it was, but I was very happy to hear it. I didn't expect it at all, because the quality of those two films was too crude, and the tapes were used repeatedly. For Zhu Chuanming's film, the playback machine and the recording machine were even misused in post-production, so the film was shot in colour but recorded in black and white.

It really struck me. I realised that what people cared about was not the technical specifications, but what you wanted to say and how you said it. The award for *Beijing Cotton-Fluffer* was as significant to our small group as the recognition that *Xiao Shan Go Home* received at the Hong Kong International Film Festival.

Yu: *Along the Railway* (铁路沿线, 2001) was shot in your hometown Baoji, how did you find the group of children in the film?

Du: At the end of 1999, I shot stills for *Platform* (站台, 2000), and the crew was on holiday for the new

year. To prepare my graduation work, I took my handheld camera back to my hometown to shoot some scenes. In Baoji, a railway runs through the city. When I was young, a relative lived near the railway. I designed a scene by the railway. I was supposed to go there to shoot a few shots, but I happened to meet the homeless people there. I talked to them for about thirty minutes and decided to abandon my previous plans for a feature film but to make a documentary with them as the main subjects.

In fact, there were often some homeless people on a flyover near the Film Academy, who had to lie on the ground and kowtow in winter. I occasionally gave a bit of money when I passed by. I would love to have talked to them, but they just looked at you and kept saying thank you. The children I met in Baoji were different. They were very approachable and lively. They made their own fires and cooked on the side of the road, and everyone was willing to talk about their experiences.

The shooting started several days before the Chinese New Year and lasted for more than twenty days until the fifteenth day in the new year. I even went to shoot on New Year's Eve. It was like going to work every day, I got up, ate breakfast, and went to shoot all day. At that time, the footage could be linked to the television for viewing. One night I was watching the footage on the TV alone at home, and my sister saw me, and she was shocked that there were still children like that, smoking and fighting. Her daughter was only seven or eight at the time, about the same age as the Fire Fox in the film. I realised that this was quite a big difference and that I should present such a life to people.

I didn't know what it would look like, but I was determined to make it. At that time, I was in my final year and I felt a bit shameful asking money from my family. A tape cost forty to fifty yuan, which was quite expensive. I used up my new year's pocket money and asked my brother for some money every day to buy a tape at the Baoji shopping mall, and then walked to the railway. I had to count the time when I was shooting. If I shot forty-five minutes without turning off the camera, the tapes would run out very quickly, so I had to limit myself to two tapes a day at the most. The batteries also ran out very quickly in the winter in the north, and if I didn't shoot for a long time, the power would soon run out. I had this kind of anxiety of overcoming various limitations every day.

Later, when I returned to Beijing, I started editing the footage in the same way as before. By March/April 2000, I had my first draft. At that time, I shared a flat with Zuoxiao Zuzhou (左小祖咒) and showed him and another teacher from the university. After viewing it they said it was good. When the summer came, I went home and showed the film to the children, but I found that their situation had changed greatly, so I shot some more footage. After I came back to Beijing, I added this part into my film, which later became *Along*

the Railway.

Yu: How was this film screened after it was finished? Apart from Yamagata, you also participated in the first Independent Film Festival (独立映像节), and quite a few people got to know you through this work.

Du: Yes, I was living not far from Huangtingzi (黄亭子), and I took the film to Yangzi's Practice Society (实践社). Practice Society was a quite loose organisation. They also organised a DV practice group and I became a member of that group. At that time, people like Yang Chao (杨超), Zhang Yaxuan (张亚璇), and Wu Wenguang (吴文光) were all involved in the activities of the Practice Society. My film was even shown once at Wu Wenguang's place, and we discussed it together. The film later participated in the first Independent Film Festival and won the best documentary award.

Gradually, the film gained some exposure, and more grassroots filmmaking began to emerge. As Jia Zhangke's *Platform* was about to be released, we thought that we could organise an exhibition, and Du Qingchun (杜庆春), Zhang Xianmin (张献民), Yang Chao and others from the Film Academy were involved, and with the support of *Southern Weekend* (南方周末), the first Independent Film Festival was launched. *Along the Railway* was registered [in the festival]. A film called *The Box* (盒子, 2001) also attracted a lot of attention. At the end of 2001, Asako Fujioka came to China to select films, and chose *Along the Railway* for Yamagata [Film Festival], and at the end of 2001, it went to the Berlin Film Festival.

Going to Yamagata was my first time going abroad. I had to have my passport 'activated' for fear of being refused a visa by Japan, so I spent 2,000 yuan to go to South Korea for two days to see the old Olympic site at Seoul Stadium. I spent almost ten days there in Yamagata, watching a lot of films every day and taking notes, and I even met Wiseman there. That year I went to Yamagata with Wang Fen (王分) and Zhong Hua (仲华), and this had a great impact on me. I didn't expect to win a prize [the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival Special Award], and I was very encouraged. I feel film festivals are really important for young people, as I've experienced this myself. I was inspired and my eyes were opened.

2

Yu: I think you consciously started to pay attention to social issues. *Under the Skyscraper* (高楼下面, 2002) and *Along the Railway* are both concerned with the subaltern and marginal groups in the city.

Du: When I came back from Japan, I thought I should project my vision onto society and the people, such

as migrant workers, and soon afterwards I made a new work called *Under the Skyscraper*. I made this film because my high school friend worked in property management at Hua'ao Apartments (华澳公寓), one of the early high-end office buildings in Beijing. This classmate failed to get into university and had picked up some bad habits, so his family asked him to come and work in Beijing, and he worked as an electrician at Hua'ao. I used to visit him a lot and found the place where he lived very interesting. There were four floors in the basement. The ground floor was a variety of small shops where you could wash your car, the second and third floors were the car park, and the fourth floor was where the property staff lived. The air was particularly dirty, there was no phone signal, and cockroaches were rampant.

At that time, a private cultural company called Hengyi Film and Television (恒一影视) offered to sponsor Zhu Chuanming and me to make a documentary, and they provided us with a set of Sony DVCAM 100, which was quite advanced at that time, with expensive DVCAM tapes. So, I went down to the basement with my equipment and filmed for nearly a year.

The other day in my class, a student asked about the relationship between the filmmaker and the subject, and he hoped that a work would reveal the filmmaker in person. It occurred to me that I had actually attempted to do that when I made *Under the Skyscraper*, and it was the only time in all my work that I had actively turned the camera on myself. I remember it was New Year's Eve, everyone had gone home, even the basement was empty, and there was only me and one of the subjects. He was Sichuanese and did not make dumplings, so he set up a gas stove in the middle of the room to stir-fry vegetables. While heating oil and picking vegetables, with a few cloves of garlic and a mobile phone with no signal aside, neither he nor I talked. As we quietly watching the oil slowly get hot, I suddenly felt that fate had tied us together. I put the camera on the stand and went to help him peel the garlic. I was filmed just like that, peeling the garlic and then washing the vegetables with him, with a part left empty. I didn't really think about it at all, I just thought it was a coherent and natural process.

However, two years later, when I looked at the image again, I couldn't stand it anymore. I cut out the scene in which I was in. I asked myself why I couldn't keep myself under control, why I'd entered the image, with a sense of self-pity and narcissism. A few more years later, when I inadvertently watched it again, I thought it was not bad. Maybe I looked at it while in a different state. A lot of people would say that if you've done it, don't bother with it. But I can't. I'd take it out and watch it again.

Under the Skyscrapers went to the second China Independent Film Festival (中国独立影像展), but not to any international film festivals. I was not in a good state at the time, and I had made a short fiction film,

Beijing Chronicle (北京纪事, 2003) in the winter of 2002. When editing it the following year, my father suddenly passed away. I stopped filmmaking.

Yu: So you went to Chengdu to make *Beautiful Men* (人面桃花, 2005) in a very bad state, did you know anything about the gay community before that? I was very impressed that you used a split screen approach. Usually with a ‘peculiar’ subject like this, the director would like to make it more dramatic, but you went in the opposite direction.

Du: I was very upset during the whole 2003. I knew I had to get out of that mood, but it was difficult. Then a friend took on an AIDS project and had to go to Chengdu to shoot it, where there was a Sino-British care organisation for gay men. Before that I only had a vague idea of the gay community and AIDS. In 2004, I met a gay bar owner through a charity, whose boyfriend was a member of the charity, and we slowly built up trust and had a good conversation. When I got back, I wanted to make a film about it, and I wanted to get out of the negative emotions through filming.

In the summer of 2004, I went to Chengdu on my own. I found those friends and negotiated all aspects of the shooting. I stayed there for a month or so and finished the first phase of the shoot. Then I went back at the end of the year to do another shoot. In that bar, I was often moved by the performances on stage. I remember one time a guy was singing on stage and someone ordered a song—I think it was *Too Soft at Heart* (心太软). The singer said he was too tired to sing, but the waiter whispered something to him and he then sang. After the song, the girl came on stage and said that she was very grateful to the singer because she had a misunderstanding with her girlfriend, but after listening to this song, they made up. This singer listened and said, well, I’m going to do the one thing I’ve never done in my life, which is to hug a lesbian. I was sitting on the seat and my eyes were misty as I witnessed this scene.

When I told them how I felt about it, they said that sometimes actors are just putting on a show and that I should not take it too seriously. I didn’t believe it at first, but as I got to know it more, I found out that there was a lot of performing in these venues and that some people were really good at ‘making a scene’. I thought I had to find a way to reduce the theatricality and not get the audience too involved in watching the surface layer of their performance. That was an idea I had when I was shooting, but I didn’t think about how to do it at the time.

When I got to the editing desk, I saw the footage from when I started shooting there, where I just sat alone in the car and shot the city. I had been to Chengdu a few times as a teenager, but I hadn’t been there since. The

bamboo buildings on the streets were gone, and new buildings were being built everywhere, which was very incongruous. There were a lot of shots of the urban landscape, of changing public spaces, which are probably the outward expressions of the time. They were also very much in line with what I saw in the bar.

So, I got a post-production technician to come and discuss it with me. After many attempts, I finally decided to use this split screen approach. The most difficult part of the process was the combination of the screens and the images. After more than ten years, [I] screened it in a class two days ago. I felt that some parts of the film were handled quite well and I could see a lot of thought in it, but of course there were also things that were not quite right. The two screens, one dominant and the other supplementary, are relatively easy to handle, but the sound is more problematic, requiring careful selection, and is also a presentation of my subjective attitude and emotions. Coming back to the creation, I was initially impressed with *Nanook of the North* because it was easy to watch and vivid, perhaps at root because it essentially has a melodramatic core. There is not much in it that reflects the author's ideas, just focusing on showing the lives of Eskimos. On the contrary, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) has a lot of the author's thought, analysis, and structural creativity in it, including his observations of and attitudes towards the times, and his thoughts on ontology. These had a greater impact on me at that time. Later on, I realised that I had to have my own attitude and ideas in *Beautiful Men*, and that a documentary cannot just be a mere presentation of a story.

3

Yu: Meanwhile, you filmed the documentary *Film Childhood* (电影童年, 2006) for Zhang Yuan's (张元) film *Little Red Flowers* (看上去很美, 2006), and you also made *Stone Mountain* (石山, 2006). You kept making films, entering a highly productive period.

Du: Zhang Yuan called and said he wanted to make the first film in the history of cinema—a film entirely acted by children. The oldest child at the time was his daughter, about six years old, and the youngest was three years old. I really didn't recall any film acted by a group of children, so I thought it was quite interesting. I had helped him with the stills for *Seventeen Years* (过年回家, 1999), so I knew him well. When reading the script for *Little Red Flowers*, based on the novel written by Wang Shuo (王朔) and adapted by Ning Dai (宁岱), I thought it was pretty good. So, we just hit it off.

At the same time, *Beautiful Men* was selected for the Wide Angle strand at the Busan Film Festival that year. Busan started investing in a production fund that year and there were no proposal presentation or one-on-one sessions. We only needed to submit some description, photos, and visual materials. Perhaps with my

father's blessing in heaven, I won a prize from the Busan Film Festival's first documentary production fund [the Asian Network of Documentary DongSeo Asian Fund]. It was another new start. *Stone Mountain* was quickly put into production and I entered another completely strange environment. This time, I lived in the same room [with my subjects], shared a bed, and stayed for a maximum of ten days or so at a time. That was my limit. I had to have someone drive me down the mountain to take a break and go back up again, and I shot on and off for over a year.

My connection with *Stone Mountain* can be traced back to the year I graduated in 2000. My teacher took on a mineral water advertisement, and the idea was to film water coming from underground stones, so we had to find stones. I heard from the stone market that there were many stone mountains in Changping (昌平), so I made out way over there. I was shocked by the stone mountain when I found it. I still remember seeing the workers smashing the stones, which felt really surreal: such a big mountain was being destroyed by their hammers. It was shocking to see those people tanned by the sun as if they were from Africa.

When I saw the call for proposals after *Beautiful Men*, the first thing I thought of was this group of people. I made a lot of effort to find the place, but there was already a new group of people there. They had only been there for two years, still in a good state and willing to be filmed. We started shooting in October 2005 and finished in August of the following year. We spent another three months on post-production and finished editing at the end of the year.

When shooting *Stone Mountain*, I had a strong feeling. I was in the same closed space as my subjects every day, and everything was happening within this space. It felt like the space was frozen. As I was doing the same thing over and over again every day, sometimes it felt like time had stopped and I was imprisoned in a scene by some force.

When editing, I was very cautious about the footage shot outside this space. We had a few outings. One was to the boss's to settle the bills and send money from the post office. The other one was when the boss hosted a banquet for the workers at the end of the year, and another quite important one was when I followed them back to their home in the northeast before the New Year. I rented a car to send them back to their hometown in the northeast. It took a whole day and night to drive there from the snowy stone mountain. After we arrived, we then filmed the other side of these workers' lives as sons, fathers, and brothers, with many of the heart-melting parts captured on camera.

Sitting at the editing table, I realised that a lot of their work seemed repetitive and dull, but that was exactly

what should be reinforced. I wanted to present a more powerful feeling. Adding something heart-melting seemed to give the characters more dimension and richness, but inevitably weakened the effect I wanted. After consulting with a few friends, I took out all the soft content, leaving the world a more void and abstract space.

When the film came out, some of my friends felt sorry that I hadn't used the richer content, but I thought my filmmaking philosophy was slowly changing. I had doubts about this decision years later, thinking that providing more facets of the characters would give the audience a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese society. For example, why had these people left their homes to come here and smash stones day in and day out? After a year of smashing stones like this, what would they actually bring back to their families? And what other attachments had they in life besides smashing stones? But then I felt that by showing all of these things, the film would become a generic documentary. This didn't seem to be what I wanted to express back then. I wished to break through and clench my fist to hit the hardest part. That's all I wanted to do. Maybe this is an inevitable developmental stage in my filmmaking.

Yu: *Umbrella* (伞, 2007) was a very important work in this period. I found that you had your own way of structuring the footage, and since then, you have established a long-term collaboration with CNEX.

Du: Yes, *Umbrella* was an important point in my work. My previous films were relatively well-prepared, for example, I would prepare who I was going to shoot and what I was going to shoot in advance. But *Umbrella* was just an idea before shooting. It was the first time I worked with CNEX, and it was also the first time they had a creative fund conference in China. They had a fund to help directors with their work, with an annual theme, and the theme for that year was 'money'. When I found out about CNEX's call for proposals, I was at the Amsterdam Film Festival [IDFA]. Then I got back to Beijing and found out that I needed a trailer for the proposal, so I just took my camera and shot a demo, which cost about 500 yuan for different people. I shot the chefs of a canteen near where my studio was located, taxi drivers, and private owners. It was quite a nice trailer. But if it had continued that way, it would become more of a TV thing. Although I wasn't well prepared, I got a creative fund investment of 80,000 yuan that year. Then I thought I'd do what I'd always wanted to do, which was to shoot rural China. The project was not called *Umbrella* yet.

I read some research on Chinese rural society and thought about the future of young people living in the rural area today. As I drew on the paper, I was amazed to find out that the five classes which were often mentioned in propaganda slogans in the past—workers, peasants, soldiers, students, and entrepreneurs—had experienced a significant change. It might be an interesting to look at the changing fates of young people in

today's rural society from these five perspectives. I wanted to go to different parts of China to capture these scenes, which was a big challenge and could have easily ended up in a bad place. I remember my first stop was Yiwu (义乌), and I wanted to shoot the 'entrepreneur' part, the young entrepreneurs with a rural background. But I didn't know the place well and I couldn't find anything to shoot for a week. We stayed there for half a month and only in the last few days did we start to make progress and find something we wanted to shoot.

After that we went to Xiaolan County (小榄镇) in Shenzhen. Through a friend, we were able to shoot a lot of private factories, and that's how we filmed the umbrella factory. When I returned to Beijing, I shot an armed police unit in Shijingshan (石景山), which was already in the late winter of 2007. That winter was particularly cold that I couldn't even move my hands. However, the young soldiers were running on the hard concrete playground to practice their formations. I couldn't feel anything useful, so I gave up. Later on, we heard from a journalist friend in Xinxiang (新乡), Henan Province, that there was an army unit here which had a good relationship with the local community and they did a lot of good things together. We then drove over from Beijing. But we got stuck in a traffic jam and only arrived in the evening. They set up a wine reception at noon and had been waiting for us until the evening. That night I drank a lot, out of good faith. I ended up really drunk and the next day I woke up in their guest hotel. They gave us five days to shoot. I said, put away anything confidential, we won't shoot that. We only shot the lives of new soldiers, such as their morning exercises, classes, and formation training. I knew that most of the young soldiers in the army came from the rural area, so that way I could observe the parts I wanted to.

The 'student' part was filmed the next year (2007) in the district of Minhang (闵行), Shanghai, where a lot of universities were located. The concept of 'umbrella' had not yet occurred to me. But I remember that when we were filming students, it was the rainy season in Shanghai. It rained every day, and the students were all wearing umbrellas in class, and outside the classrooms there were umbrellas hanging out to dry. I suddenly came up with an idea, which echoed my previous shootings: using umbrellas as a thread running throughout the film. I was learning English at that time, so I remembered the term 'umbrella'.

After shooting in Shanghai we went straight to Huoqiu (霍邱) in Anhui, an agricultural county. I thought Anhui was a big agricultural province in China, and it was just in time for the Qingming Festival, when the farming work in the fields had finished in the spring, and most of the people working outside were going home to pay respects to their ancestors. I thought it was quite meaningful, but when I edited the film later, I felt that the symbolism was too deliberate, and that I needed a more direct and simple image to return to the original concept of 'peasant'. In 2007, there was a severe drought in the north, especially in Yichuan (伊川),

Luoyang (洛阳) , Henan Province. I went straight to that area after discussions with the team. Actually, the rough cut of the film was over by then, but I wanted to reshoot this ‘peasant’ part. That’s when I really started to have the idea of using the umbrella throughout the film.

Yichuan was quite a hilly area, so I didn’t see the great drought I had imagined. It was a bit disappointing. The driver who took us there said he had been a soldier there in the past and wanted to see a comrade. We then went to a nearby place, and it turned out to be a real blessing, as we saw large swathes of crops that were dying of drought. Just as the peasants were about to harvest the ungrown wheat, it was going to rain and everyone was rushing to harvest. I had a feeling that I would be able to shoot the umbrellas and even asked our producer to prepare some umbrellas for the occasion.

That’s why Chen Shan (陈山) from the literature department of the Film Academy told people that *Umbrella* was a ‘fiction’ and that the director would go on to make a fiction film. In fact, I don’t think we crossed the line in a documentary, because I didn’t ask them to show me something that didn’t exist, I just moved a real thing over. When you see an old peasant walking on a ridge with a broken umbrella that barely protects him from the rain, all the words I want to say are in the shot, no more embellishment is needed.

The fact that *Umbrella* was shortlisted for Venice gave me more confidence that I could grasp this kind of big theme, that I could have such a vision of the land under my feet. My previous films were still about characters, but *Umbrella* is actually about a structural thing. I also started working with Mary [Stephen]. When I came back from Venice, she happened to be in Beijing doing the editing of someone else’s film. Through a friend’s introduction, she revised a draft of my original version, which gave me a new understanding of editing. I was convinced.

From picking up the camera to shoot the people I knew best around me in *Doudou* to later making *Umbrella* in Yiwu, a situation where I was a complete stranger and didn’t know where my subjects were, I gradually established my confidence, the confidence to write personally with the camera on Chinese soil.

Yu: What provoked you to make *1428*? As far as I know, you captured a lot of footage in the earthquake zone, but you didn’t use any of it. What was the reason?

Du: *1428* was an unexpected situation. I wasn’t sure whether to do that or not at first. I watched TV at home until midnight, often in tears. It was so miserable. Then I called my cameraman Liu Aiguo and asked, where are you? Do you want to go to Sichuan with me? He agreed without hesitation. It was almost the fourteenth

of May when we arrived in Sichuan, but it was actually for something else. When we finished with that, we hired a car and went to lots of places. We met many colleagues and various members of the domestic and foreign press, and there were cameras everywhere.

There was one scene that I can tell you about. When I was there, we found a man who had been buried underground for 100 hours and was still alive. This was amazing, after all it had been almost five days. Then we rushed to the place and there was a huge crowd. It felt like all the media was there. The rescuers brought the man's wife and daughter to the scene to talk to him and keep him awake so he wouldn't fall asleep. But the rescue was slow because the pressure was so deep that they finally decided to saw off his leg that had been crushed under a stone slab. However, his daughter was needed to go and explain the situation to him. The daughter was about twenty years old, young and pretty, and when she went up to the ruins a bunch of cameras started snapping away, and when she finished her task and came down from the ruins, another bunch of cameras gathered around her. I was so close that I suddenly noticed a smile at the corner of her mouth, feeling like a star, answering questions from the press. I found it extraordinarily absurd, this girl had been so instantly changed by this scene.

It was then that I felt that my greatest value here was to make a film of the disaster area I had seen, so I returned to Chengdu and started looking for equipment. After looking around in vain, I suddenly thought of a university friend of mine who was teaching in a university. Their warden was very kind, and when he heard we were going to the disaster area, he provided us with a car and a driver. Later Zhao Liang (赵亮) came from Beijing and brought me a tripod. After another ten days or so, when the whole situation had stabilised, I went back to Beijing and got another set of equipment, so that I could shoot with the cameraman at the same time, completing the production of *1428*.

The conditions on that shoot were extremely difficult, and we often ate only one meal a day. We took steamed buns, bean curd, pickles, and water from the hotel in the morning, and shot all day long until mid-June. When I came back and talked to Ben [Tsiang (蒋显斌), CNEX Chair] about my feelings, he asked me if I was short of money. I remember that he gave us 100,000 yuan from his personal account before signing the contract, which means that we didn't have any contract for *1428* in the first place. When the film was entered into the festival, they [CNEX] added a lot more money.

When we got back, we started editing, and Mary was there, and she was willing to join in. I just sorted the footage first, processing it all and editing it section by section, and then Mary started to take over. Due to the vast amount of the footage, we had to abandon a lot in the end, but that's how editing works.

Yu: Finally, let's talk about *A Young Patriot* (少年小赵, 2015). This film is a bit different from your previous work. It spends quite a long time following the growth of one character.

Du: Here's the thing. In 2009, *1428* won an award at the Venice Film Festival, and I returned home just in time for the National Day that year. As the taxi riding from the airport to the city, it was quite astonishing to see that the roads were 'all red'. I was on my way to Pingyao (平遥) for an event, and on the first day of my visit I bumped into Xiao Zhao (小赵), who was leading a group of people of his age waving flags, shouting and marching in the old city. I thought that this young man was quite interesting, and in the evening I met and talked to the cinematographer Liu Aiguo, who was planning to make his own documentary. I told him that this person was worth filming, but he didn't seem too interested.

After November, I started to wrap up *1428* with CNEX and also talked about the plans for the next film, and I thought of Xiao Zhao. I said he could be filmable, and they were quite supportive. Introduced by a friend, we found Xiao Zhao again in Pingyao, and he was very willing to be filmed. Later on, I heard about the '69 Jihad', which was caused by the Korean popstar group Super Junior performing at the Korean Pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo. The organisers' lack of preparation led many fans to squeeze into the ticket collection area, causing some trouble. The organisers quickly mobilised the armed police who had just returned to Shanghai from the relief work in Yushu (玉树). Most of these armed police soldiers were also post-90s, and they were jeered and mobbed by those fans at the venue.

The incident quickly died down, but at night the leader of the group [Super Junior] wrote an article on the internet about their experiences, which led to a patriotic incident on the internet, with people calling for Super Junior's official website to be 'blown up'. Later, hackers intervened and post a five-star red flag on their website. I thought the film was worth making. At that time, I didn't want to make Xiao Zhao alone the sole character, but to make a film called 'Patriotic 90' (爱国九零). I still remember that in the winter of 2009, after Liu Aiguo and I had seen the film exhibition in 798 Art Zone, we took a branch in the car park and drew the structure of the film on the snow.

After *Umbrella*, I became obsessed with structure. I thought this film should be divided into three parts: the first part being people like Xiao Zhao, and we might have to find other young people in the future; another part being the overall social ecology, and I would have to organise a meeting with people from the left to the

right to sit together and discuss it—it wasn't so divided then. I had read Lü Le's (吕乐) *Novel* (小说) and found it very interesting, so I also wanted to pull a group of people to a hotel in Hebei for a meeting. I found it very interesting, so that we could express our own views.

In addition, I wanted to present some context, in terms of the shaping of patriotism among young people. For example, while running in the Bird's Nest, I found it had become a 'patriotic education base', where sports are part of the country's pride. In addition, Tiananmen Square, Yangjialing (杨家岭) in Yan'an, and many other places are such educational bases, and I even went to Yan'an and Chongqing to shoot for this purpose. I planned to draw up a thread on characters, a thread on scholars, and a thread on space. In fact, I shot all of them, but the scholar's part was the most difficult, because it required a lot of money to arrange.

By 2010, Xiao Zhao had gone on to university, and his thread became important. Once I went to see him, the first thing he said to me was, 'I'm not so patriotic now, are you going to stop filming me?' His words immediately made me feel that the character was established, as I had been afraid that he wouldn't be. As it turned out, he developed very quickly. A lot of things happened to Xiao Zhao after he went to university, including organising performances, voluntary teaching, his family home was demolished and then his grandfather died. When I got back to the editing table, I thought, I couldn't really predict this stuff, as I wouldn't know what's going on in his family. Behind the demolition and eviction is the whole urbanisation of China. Many things are slowly emerging, and you will never know about them if you don't film them.

I actually did a lot of interviews for this film. I interviewed all the people I came across at that time. Later on in 2010 I had a great opportunity. A French foundation organised an exchange project between China and the West, and eleven experts were invited from both sides, including philosophers such as Du Xiaozhen (杜小真) from Peking University on the Chinese side, and several important university wardens from the French side. We met in a villa in southern France, where everyone stayed, and we were not allowed to go out. The topic was 'Universal Values and National Culture'. I remember that China was emphasising national culture at the time and thought that it was possible to find something universal in its traditions. I interviewed everyone who was there, including the French. Later, I interviewed many others, including Ai Weiwei, who had just been released from prison.

Yu: You shot so much footage but discarded it all, then you ended up with a single main character, Xiao Zhao.

Du: Yes, I gave up on all of them, and finally chose Xiao Zhao as the main character. When we were

watching the footage, Mary thought that Xiao Zhao was lovely. I was thinking of making another one afterwards, as this was in the similar situation as the earthquake one and I didn't use a lot of the footage. I thought all this stuff was here anyway. I think it's better to respect the rules of documentary, to accept the various possibilities, and not to force it [to be a certain way]. The process of making a documentary is to meet with all kinds of contingencies and unknowns.

Yu: Your relationship with Xiao Zhao is also quite interesting, and you still maintain a very good relationship. He has been influenced by you to take up filmmaking.

Du: My relationship with him is very interesting. I think he is a very intelligent person, a completely different person from me. He was influenced by the documentary at such an important stage in his life, and it was my responsibility to offer him some help. He's getting better in every way now, and I'm quite relieved. I was a bit worried that I had influenced this kid, that maybe he could get into some mainstream media and TV, but now he might have embraced some of the ideas of independent cinema. Also, because of this film, he might be attacked and misunderstood.

He's actually been growing up and he's never complained about any pressure I've put on him by filming him, but he's definitely fighting the misconceptions that society has about him on his own. Although the film had limited distribution, I know people did find him through Weibo and he just chose to ignore it. Now, he's also making a film. He shows it to me, and I encourage him. That's the relationship we have.

I lost contact with many of the subjects after filming. I remember that during the shoot we thought that we would always be friends, but gradually I lost touch with all the subjects of *Beautiful Men*, *Below the Skyscrapers*, and *Stone Mountain*, and can no longer locate them. This is not a very good feeling. My relationship with Xiao Zhao is repairing that feeling for me, I guess. It's probably the only relationship that has lasted through all my shoots, and I hope to keep it that way in the future.

杜海滨：纪录片的意义是慢慢浮现的

余雅琴

杜海滨是陕西宝鸡人，在北京生活数年后，如今长居杭州，是中国美术学院的教师。他的家人大多生活在西安，有朋友和我说他长得像兵马俑，但我几乎听不出他有任何陕西口音。二〇二一年八月，借着他受邀来西安讲课的机会，我们在一家星巴克咖啡厅完成了这次采访。

大部分纪录片爱好者对杜海滨的熟悉来自他拍摄汶川地震的作品《1428》，这部片子在二〇〇九年获得了威尼斯电影节“地平线单元”的最佳纪录片奖，一位亲历过汶川地震的四川朋友告诉我，正是这部作品启发了他开始关注中国独立电影，可见其影响力。

杜海滨的创作可以追溯到上世纪九十年代末，作为北京电影学院的学生，他最初也有一个剧情片的梦想，偶然的原因让他将自己的摄影机对准了身边的朋友，有了第一部处女作《窠豆》，值得一提的是，朱传明后来被人所知的《北京弹匠》也是同一部摄影机拍摄的，这个故事从侧面反映出早年独立纪录片创作的氛围。

截止到目前，杜海滨已经创作了十部纪录片，他曾在一篇文章里将自己的创作分为三个阶段：激情加热情创作阶段、理性创作阶段、感性加理性创作阶段，还认为自己的创作正是直觉与自觉互相作用的结果。

如今，当他就着咖啡和香烟再次回溯自己的创作时，可以听得出他对自己创作的思考更深入和详实了。这篇采访前后大概花费了三四个小时的时间，杜海滨不但回忆了自己的创作过程，也对自己的创作理念进行了分析和反思。

余雅琴（以下简称余）：我之前听你讲你考大学的过程挺曲折的，之前是学美术的，还考过西安美院，考了好几年大学，有了一些社会经验后，才在九六年考入北京电影学院，学的是摄影专业，那后来是怎么开始拍摄纪录片的？

杜海滨（以下简称杜）：我进学校的时候完全不知道纪录片，只知道自己将来还是要拍电影。我在

入学前就做过平面摄影，进入学校就想着有天可以做电影的摄影师。我们这个专业过去叫做“影像工程”，主要是处理胶片拍摄之后的一些复杂的工艺，后来就比较偏图片（摄影）了。说实话，如果是这样，我就觉得不是很满足，因为之前已经有了不少相关知识的积累了。班上好几个同学像我一样年龄相对大一些，其实都是有电影梦的，进来之后发现专业和想象的不太一样，所幸学校的大环境差不多，公共课、宿舍也都是在一起的。

很快，我们也开始主动拍短片了，我们那一届没有开设故事片摄影专业，就等于导演系、文学系的同学拍短片就得找我们做摄影师，拍着拍着就想拍自己的了。我们也开始蹭一些别的专业的课，有时候听得不亦乐乎。慢慢地我们几个班大龄同学也组织了一个叫做“道光”的实践小组，像贾樟柯他们那个青年电影实验小组一样，朱传明、汪士卿还有我现在的摄影师刘爱国，都是我们这个小组的。我们是一九九六年入学的，当时贾樟柯他们还没毕业，那时候他们已经拍了《小山回家》和《小武》，在学校里偶尔碰到，我们还请他到我们的小组做过交流。很快，我们小组成员每个人都完成了自己人生第一部短片，五分钟，统一命题“午餐”，我们组织了一个小规模的内部放映，效果还不错。

余：你在“道光”这个小组里扮演一个什么角色？最初又是如何接触到纪录片的？

杜：我当时在创作小组里算是一个组织者，在外面也有一些交际，可以给大家带一些资源。最初我想象的是多张罗一些人进来，各行各业的，大家合作轮流当导演、摄影、美术、演员什么的，等于小组里面就把事情都做了，但真的要深度合作才发现需要很强的专业性与包容性，而我们每个人都很有个性，都有自己的主张，意见也不统一，一度就很乱，由此也引发了一系列的问题。

一九九八年的夏天，我决定筹钱拍自己写的另一部短片，四十分钟，讲述的是一个年轻人受不了国有自行车厂的限制突破自我的故事。但拍完后，我发现在一些看起来不重要的环节出了问题，坐在剪辑台前非常懊恼，一度想放弃。这个过程中，学校开了一门纪录片的公共课，我在这门课上看到了国内国际的很多优秀纪录片。

我在课上第一次看到《北方的纳努克》，学校的阶梯教室坐满了人，大家都看得很认真，偶尔也会很欢乐，也很打动我，特别是纳努克喂他的小儿子吃肉那一段——结合之前的创作，我突然意识到做纪录片可以用一个更小的团队，也不用听别人的意见，还不用找演员，就考虑试一下。

于是想到我一个发小窦豆，我和他一块从宝鸡坐火车到北京，一开始住在地下室，在那里待了将近两年时间。那时候我们作为地方青年来到北京，对这里充满了向往，我觉得学艺术只能到北京。一九九三年九月，我们俩还一起经历了当时北京“申奥”失败，一群人抱头在天安门广场痛哭——我们真的是一起成长的，慢慢也开始找到自己的方向。窦豆画画，也喜欢表演，一九九四年十月我

从当时进修摄影的中央工艺美院去汕头工作了将近两年，一九九六年又重新参加高考进了电影学院，再和他联系上的时候，他已经在田戈兵的实验戏剧团排练了，那时候我正在苦恼那个短片的剪辑，看到他的状态，就想结合那段时间对纪录片的学习，拍摄他做个片子的念头。当时他对我来说就是一面镜子，让我看到过去的自己，也看到当下我的另外一种可能。我从一九九八年冬天开始拍摄，一直拍到第二年，一九九九年的夏天我把它剪辑出来，就有了我的第一部纪录片《窦豆》。

余：最初你用什么设备呢？

杜：学校的机器和我自己的一个掌中宝，是松下 SVHS，连 DV都算不上。是我姐姐去新加坡工作带回来给我的，当时要几千块吧。最初没想着用这个机器拍作品，以为也就拍拍习作，没想到它还发挥了很大的作用。后来有一年香港的亚洲电影节还把这台机器借过去做了展览。《窦豆》拍完之后，我就去电视台租了一个淘汰的 VHS对编机，一台放机一台录机，用线性的、纯手工的方式完成了这部片子的剪辑。

余：朱传明用你的摄影机拍了《北京弹匠》，还在山形电影节拿了奖，这个事情对你的影响是什么？

杜：《窦豆》这个片子一九九九年就完成了，做完之后就放在那里了，当然在电影学院和北大的一个放映活动都放了一下。朱传明也用我的机器拍了一个片子，拍的是我们学校附近小区外弹棉花的人，成了后来的《北京弹匠》。

这个机器就是我俩换着用，我不用的时候他用。那年拍了两个片子，然后正好那时候贾樟柯去日本，山形影展的选片人藤冈昭子委托他找一些国内的纪录片。贾樟柯就问我，我说我们两部纪录片，《窦豆》和《北京弹匠》，就把片子给了他。

到了二〇〇〇年我快毕业的时候，当时在贵州凯里拍一个片子，突然接到贾樟柯的电话，他说“海滨恭喜啊，你们有一个片子获奖了。”具体也不知道是哪一部，但是我当时听到特别开心，完全没有想到，因为那两部作品的质量太粗糙了，磁带都是反复用过的，朱传明那部还在后期的时候把放机和录机搞反了，结果拍的是彩色，录出来是黑白的，我们都觉得不可能，结果还就是《北京弹匠》得奖了。

这事对我的刺激非常大，我意识到其实人家关心的不是那些技术指标，反而是你想说什么，以及怎么说的。《北京弹匠》得奖对于我们这个小群体的意义不亚于当年《小山回家》在香港国际电影节得到的肯定。

余：《铁路沿线》是在你家乡宝鸡拍摄的，你是怎么找到片子里那群孩子的？

杜：九九年末，我在《站台》剧组拍剧照，过年剧组放假，那会快毕业了，我要准备毕业作品，就把我那个掌中宝的机器也带回去采景。我家在宝鸡，一条铁路会从城中穿过，小的时候有亲戚家就住在铁路附近，我设计了一场铁路边的戏，本来就是去那边拍几个镜头，结果上天让我在那碰到了那群流浪的人，我和他们聊了三十分钟吧，就决定放弃之前的剧情片计划，拍摄以他们为主人公的纪录片。

其实在电影学院附近有一个天桥，上面也经常有一些流浪的人，冬天特别冷还要趴在地上磕头，我偶尔路过时会给一点钱，也很想和他们聊一下，但是他们也就是看看你不停地感谢。我在宝鸡遇到的这群孩子却不同，挺好接近的，一个个都活灵活现的，自己生火在路边做饭什么的，每个人都很愿意讲述自己的经历。

拍摄大概是从年前腊二十多号开始拍的，一直拍到那年的正月十五，拍了二十多天，大年三十也去拍，每天就像上班一样，起床吃了早饭就去了，一拍拍一天。当时拍出来的素材可以连在电视机上看，有天夜里我一个人在家里电视上看素材，被我姐看到，她很惊讶，说还有这样的孩子，抽烟打架，对她来说不可思议。她女儿那时候也就七八岁，和片子里的火狐狸差不多大。我意识到这个差异蛮大的，应该把这样的人生呈现给大家。

其实当时我也不知道会拍成什么样，但我就是坚定了拍摄的决心。那会大四了，也不好意思伸手问家里要钱，当时一盘磁带要四五十元，挺贵的，我是先用完了压岁钱又问我弟弟要了些钱，每天在宝鸡商场买了磁带，然后步行去铁路边，拍摄的时候我就在算时间，四十五分钟不关机的话一会儿就拍完了，一天最多两盘。还有电池，北方冬天电池用得很快，长时间待机不拍，电量很快也会消耗掉，每天都在这种焦虑里，要克服各种限制。

后来我回到北京就用之前的方法开始剪辑素材，到了二〇〇〇年的三、四月份就有一个初稿了，那会儿我和左小祖咒合租一个房子，先给他看，他看完了说不错，还有学校一位老师，也觉得很好，这些都给了我很大鼓励。夏天到了我就回家了，本来是拿着剪好的影片给那群孩子放的，结果发现他们的境遇发生了很大的变化，于是又拿起机器补拍了一部分，回到北京又把这部分也剪进了我的片子，就是后来的《铁路沿线》了。

余：这个片子完成后的放映和参展的情况是怎么样的？除了山形，还参加了第一届独立映像节，蛮多人是通过这部作品认识你的。

杜：对，我当时住的地方离黄亭子不远，拿片子去给杨子他们的实践社放映，实践社其实挺松散的，他们还弄了一个 DV 小组，我就成了这个小组的成员了。当时像是杨超、张亚璇、吴文光等人都有参与实践社的活动。我这个片子还在吴文光家里放过一次，大家就一起讨论，后来参加了第一届独立映像节，拿了最佳纪录片奖。

渐渐地，这个片子有了一些声音，民间的创作也开始多了，当时贾樟柯的《站台》也快出来；大家就觉得可以搞一个展览，那会电影学院的杜庆春、张献民、杨超什么的都参与进来，还有了《南方周末》的支持，就有了首届独立映像节，《铁路沿线》也报了名，据说后来还有一部叫做《盒子》的影片同样引起了大家的关注。到了二〇〇一年底，藤冈昭子来中国选片，把《铁路沿线》选去了山形，二〇〇一年年底还去了柏林电影节。

去参加山形是我第一次出国，当时为了怕日本拒签，我还要把护照“激活”一下，就先花了二千块去韩国玩了两天，去了汉城体育馆看奥运会旧址。在山形我简直大开眼界，在那边差不多待了十天，每天都看很多片子，还做笔记，那次我还见到了怀斯曼。那年我和王分、仲华三个一块去的山形，这个事情对我的影响很大，没想到自己会得奖（山形国际纪录片电影节特别奖），也受到了很大的鼓励。所以我觉得电影节对年轻人来说真的很重要，回想我自己也是这么过来的。被鼓舞了，眼界也被打开了。

二

余：我觉得你开始有意识关注社会问题了，《高楼下面》和《铁路沿线》都是关切社会底层的题材，处理的都是城市边缘人。

杜：从日本回来，我就觉得我应该把视野投射到社会，我力所能及接触到的人，比如进城务工的人，后来很快就拍了新的作品《高楼下面》。拍这个片子是因为我的高中同学在华澳公寓的物业工作，华澳算是北京比较早的一个高端写字楼。这个同学没有考上大学，还染上了一些恶习，他家人就让他来北京工作，他在华澳做电工。有段时间我经常找他，发现他们住的地方很有意思，地下有四层，第一层是各种小店，可以洗车什么的，地下二三层就是停车场，第四层才是物业工作人员住的地方，空气特别污浊，没有信号，蟑螂肆虐。

那时正好有一个叫做恒一影视的民间文化公司说可以资助我和朱传明拍纪录片，他们提供我们俩一人一套当时比较先进的索尼 DVCAM100，还有当时比较昂贵的 DVCAM 磁带。这样我没事就带着设备钻到地下室拍摄，拍了将近一年时间吧。

我前几天上课，有一个孩子问到拍摄者和被拍摄对象的关系，他希望作品里可以展现作者本人。我就想到拍《高楼下面》的时候其实是做过这样尝试的，也是我所有作品中唯一一次主动入镜。我记得是大年三十晚上，所有人都回家过年了，连地下室也空了，就我和一个被拍摄者，他是四川人也不包饺子，就在房子中间摆一个煤气炉炒菜，一边烧油一边摘菜，旁边扔着几瓣蒜和没有信号的手机，我和他都没有讲话，静静地看着油慢慢变热，我突然觉得命运把我俩绑在一块了，就把机器放脚架上，去帮他剥蒜。我就这样被拍下来了，剥了蒜又和他一起去水房洗菜，还有一段是空的。其实当时完全没想那么多，就觉得这是一个连贯而自然的过程。

结果过了两年我再看这个画面，突然很受不了，就把自己这块减掉了，我问自己为何要进入画面，如此不克制，甚至有自怜和自恋的嫌疑。又过了几年，无意中再看的时候，又觉得这也挺好。可能是基于不同的状态看吧。很多人都会说做过的作品就不要再理了，可我不行，我会拿出来看。

《高楼下面》应该是去了第二届中国独立影像展，但没去什么国际电影节。我当时状态也不太好，二〇〇二年冬天还拍了一部剧情短片《北京纪事》，转过年正在做剪辑，那年我的父亲突然去世了。创作就突然停止了。

余：所以你是在情绪很差的情况下去成都拍的《人面桃花》，这之前你了解同性恋群体吗？我对这个片子印象很深，因为你选择了双屏的方式，原因是什么呢？一般来说，这样有些“猎奇”的题材，导演都希望处理得更戏剧性一些，你是反其道而行之。

杜：整个二〇〇三年都特别消极，我知道自己必须从那种情绪里出来，但很难，后来有一个朋友接了一个艾滋病防治的项目，要去成都拍摄，那里有一个中英联合关爱小组的项目，是在男同性恋者之间展开的。在这之前我对同性恋群体和艾滋病只能说有点朦胧的概念。二〇〇四年，通过公益组织认识了一个同性恋酒吧的老板，他的男友就是这个公益组织的成员，慢慢大家互相建立了信任，聊得还蛮好的。回去之后，我就想自己拍一部作品，也想通过拍摄从消极的情绪中走出来。

二〇〇四年夏天我自己一个人去了成都，找到那些朋友，谈好了拍摄的方方面面，在那里住了一个多月，完成了第一期的拍摄。后来年底又去拍摄了一次。在那个酒吧里，我坐在台下经常被台上的表演感动，我记得有一次一个哥们台上唱歌，有人点歌，好像是《心太软》，那个歌手说自己太累有点唱不动了，但是底下的服务员跟他耳语了几句，他就唱了。唱完之后，女孩就上台说很感谢歌手，因为和女朋友发生一点误会，后来听了这首歌就和好了。这个歌手听了就说，那我要做这辈子从来没做过的一件事，就是拥抱拉拉。我当时在台下坐着目睹这一幕眼眶都湿了。

后来我跟他们讲这个感受，他们说演员有的时候只不过逢场作戏罢了，让我不要太当真，开始我还

不信，接触多了，发现这种场子的确有很多表演性的东西，发现有的人真的很会“兴风作浪”，我当时就想必须要找到一种方式要降低这个戏剧化的效果，不要让观众过于投入地去观看他们浮在表面的那一层。这是我拍摄的时候一个想法，具体怎么做当时没想到。

等到了剪辑台，我看到刚开始拍摄时我经常一个人坐在车上拍摄这个城市的素材，我十几岁还有高考的时候去过几次成都，之后很多年再也没有去过，这是多年后第一次回到这里，发现这个城市变得我根本就不认识了。街边的竹楼没有了，到处都在修建新的建筑，很不协调，就拍了很多城市的景观，公共空间的变化，这些可能就是那个时代当口的外在呈现，也很符合我在酒吧里看到情况。

于是我找了一位后期技术人员来跟我一起探讨，试了很多次，最终决定用这个双屏的方式。这中间最费劲的就是画面和画面之间的组合，前两天上课放映，隔了十多年，觉得有些地方处理得还不错，能够看到很多思考在里面，当然也有不尽如人意的。两个画面，有一个为主，有一个为辅，还相对好处理，但声音就比麻烦，需要仔细甄别和选择，也是我主观态度和情感的呈现。说回到创作，我最初对《北方的纳努克》印象很深，因为它很容易看，也很生动，究其根本或许因为它本质上有一个情节剧的内核。这里面体现作者思想的东西并不多，只是执着于展现爱斯基摩人的生活。相反《持摄影机的人》却有很多作者的思辨和结构性的创作在里面，包括对时代的观察和态度，以及对电影本体的思考等等，这些都对那个时候的我影响更大。后来我意识到《人面桃花》必须有我自己的态度和想法，纪录片不可能仅仅是做一个故事的展现而已。

三

余：这中间你拍了张元《看上去很美》的纪录片《电影童年》，还拍了《石山》，一直在拍片子，进入到一个高产期。

杜：张元打电话说要做一个电影史上的第一——拍一部全都是由孩子来演的电影，当时最大的孩子是他女儿好像就六岁多，最小的才三岁，一群孩子在一起演电影，我印象中还真没有，觉得还蛮有意思。另外，之前《过年回家》的时候就帮他拍过剧照，也算是熟，看了《看上去很美》的剧本觉得也还不错，王朔的小说，宁岱改的剧本，于是一拍即合。

与此同时，《人面桃花》入围了那一年的釜山电影节的“广角单元”，赶上那一年釜山开始做创作基金，现场讲述提案和后来发明的一对一环节全都没有，只交一些文字说明、照片或者视频资料就可以。可能是父亲在天保佑，我顺利拿下了釜山电影节的首届纪录片创投奖。又是一个新的开始，《石山》就很快投入了拍摄，我进入到另一个完全陌生的环境。这次是真正的同吃同住，挤一张床那种，一次最多呆个十来天吧，极限了，找人开车把我接下山休整一段时间再上去，断断续续拍了一年多。

《石山》的渊源其实可以追溯到二〇〇〇毕业那年，我的老师接了一条矿泉水广告，创意是来自地下岩石中的水，要实拍，就要去找石头，从石材市场打听到昌平有很多石山，所以就一路摸过去，找到那片石山的时候我被现场给震到了，到现在都还记得看到那些工人砸石头的场景，有种很不现实的感觉，那么大一座山，他们一锤一锤生生给砸没了。那些人在日光下晒得像是非洲来的，很让人震惊。

《人面桃花》之后，我在收到征案的时候第一时间就想到了这个地方这群人，费了九牛二虎之力找到当年那个地方，但是当年的人已经换了一拨了，他们刚来两年，状态很好，也愿意我拍摄。从二〇〇五年十月开始，差不多拍到第二年的八月拍完，又花了三个月时间做后期，年底剪辑结束。

刚说到创作观念的变化，拍《石山》的时候有一个强烈的感受，我和被拍摄对象每天都在同一个封闭的空间，所有事情都发生在这里，仿佛空间凝固了，有的时候因为每天都重复做同样的事情，好像时间也不流动了，像是被某种力量禁锢的图景。

剪辑的时候，我非常谨慎地看待所有离开这个空间的素材，这中间有几次外出的拍摄，一次是去老板那里结账然后去邮局寄钱，一次是老板一年到头了宴请这些工人，还有一次较为重要的拍摄是新年前跟随他们回了一次东北老家，当时我租了一个车，把大家送回东北老家，从那个漫天大雪的石山开了整整一天一夜，到家后又记录了这些工人作为儿子、父亲和兄弟的别样人生，其中很多柔软的部分被镜头捕捉下来。

坐在剪辑台前，我意识到他们大量的工作看起来是重复的、单一的，但却恰恰是应该被强化的，我希望可以呈现一种更为有力的感受。而加入那些看似柔软的内容似乎让人物更加立体丰富，但势必会弱化我想要的效果。究竟如何取舍，困扰了我很久，最后在征求了几个朋友的意见后，我果断拿掉了所有看起来影响那种坚硬效果的内容，一个镜头也没有用，使得那个世界更真空，甚至抽象起来。

片子出来后，一些朋友得知明明有更多丰富的内容而不去使用替我觉得遗憾，但我想我的创作观念在慢慢发生变化。多年后我曾也怀疑过这个决定，觉得多一些人物的面相，会使观众对中国社会有一个比较全面的了解，比方说这群人为什么背井离乡来这里日复一日地砸石头，比如他们这样砸一年的石头到底可以给家庭带来什么，比如他们除了砸石头之外还有什么其它的人生牵挂等等，但又觉得这些都表现了，就变成了一个一般意义上的纪录片，好像这些并不是我在那个当下最想表达的，我希望突破自己，可以把拳头攥紧了去撞击那个最坚硬的部分，就这么办吧，或许这就是创作必须要经历的成长吧。

余：《伞》算是你这个阶段很重要的作品吧，我发现你有了自己对素材的结构方式，而且从这部开始，你就建立了和 CNEX 的长期合作。

杜：对，《伞》在我的创作里是一个重要的节点，我过去的片子相对是比较稳当的，比如要拍谁拍什么我就会提前做好准备。而《伞》在出发拍摄之前就是一个概念一个想法，也是我第一次和 CNEX 合作，当时他们也是第一次在国内开办创作基金的大会，有一个资金去帮助导演创作，但是他们有一个年度主题，那一年的主题是“金钱”。我知道有 CNEX 提案这回事的时候是在阿姆斯特丹电影节上，回北京之后得知提案还需要一个片花，就临时拿机器拍了一个片花，大概就是五百块钱之于不同的人，我拍了工作室附近大学食堂里的大厨、出租车司机、私人老板什么的，还蛮好看的一个片花，但这么拍下去就变成一个比较偏电视的东西。虽然准备得并不充分，但那一年我还是拿到了八万人民币创作基金，然后就想着正好把我之前一直想拍的东西提前做了，拍中国的农村社会，那时候还不叫《伞》。

我读了一些关于中国农村社会的调查以及著作，思考今天还生活在乡村的青年人会有什么样的出路，我在纸上画着，惊异地发现就是我们过去的宣传口号中经常提起的“工农兵学商”这五个阶层，但是已经发生了很大的变化，由这五个方面来看今天乡村社会年轻人的命运变化，也许是个有趣的观察角度，所以就想去中国不同的地方捕捉这些场景，这是一个很大的挑战，很容易烂尾翻车。我还记得我的第一站是义乌，想拍“商”这部分，拍带有乡村背景的年轻商人，人生地不熟，转了一周都没找到要拍的东西。我们在那边待了半个月，后面几天才开始发力，找到了想拍的东西。

拍完这边之后我们就去了深圳的小榄镇，在一个朋友的介绍下拍了很多那边的私人加工厂，也是在这里拍摄了那个做伞的厂子，回到北京后又托关系，拍了石景山那边一个武警部队，已经是二〇〇七年深冬，那年冬天特别冷，我的印象很深，天寒地冻的，手都伸不出来，那些年轻的战士在硬梆梆的水泥操场上跑步练习队列队形，拍得一点感觉都没有，放弃了。后来又听一个河南新乡的记者朋友说这边有一个部队，和地方关系很好，军民共建做好多事情。我们当时就从北京开车过去，结果路上遇到堵车到了都晚上了，人家中午就摆了酒等我们，一直等到晚上，人家也很重视么，出于诚意，那天晚上我喝了很多，直到不省人事，第二天醒来就在人家招待所了，给了我们五天拍摄时间，我说你们把所有保密的东西都收起来，我们不拍那个，我们只拍部队里新兵的生活，他们上早操啊、上课啊、队列队形训练啊，我知道那时候当兵的大部分年轻人还是从农村过去的，这样我就可以观察到我想要的那个部分了。

“学”的部分是第二年（二〇〇七年）在上海闵行的大学城拍的，那边学校比较多，其实这时候还没有想到“伞”这个概念，但我记得拍学生去学校赶上了上海的梅雨季节，天天都是雨，学生们上课都打着伞，教室外面全是一把把晾开的伞，突然打通了我之前的拍摄，脑海里突然冒出一个想法，

用伞来串整个影片，正好当时我还在背英语单词，“umbrella”这个词就记住了。

拍完上海我们按原计划直接去了安徽的霍邱，是个农业县，当时就觉得安徽是中国的农业大省，结果那个时间刚好赶上清明节，春季田地里的农活已经结束，而最多的在外打工的人回家祭祖扫墓的镜头，人们回乡又要马上离开，当时我觉得意味还蛮深长的，但是后来剪辑的时候，又感觉这个寓意太刻意了，还是需要更为直接和朴素的影像，回到最原始意义的那个“农”的概念上。二〇〇七年整个北方大旱，河南洛阳伊川那个地方旱得尤为严重，我和团队商量了一下就直接奔那个地方去了，其实那会整个片子的粗剪都结束了，我打算重拍农这个部分。这时候我真正开始有了把“伞”做一个贯穿全片的意向了。

伊川那边是山丘地带，并没有看到我想象中一马平川大旱的场景，有点失望，正好我们拉我们去的司机说他过去在那里当过兵，想去看个战友，我们就去了附近一个地方，结果真的是上天眷顾，我们看到了大片大片快要旱死的庄稼，而且就在农民们打算把这些没长成的麦子收割的时候，老天却又要下雨，大家都在赶着抢收。这时候我就预感到我一定能拍到伞了，甚至让我们的制片也赶紧去准备一些伞来以备不时之需。

所以电影学院文学系的陈山老师跟别人说，《伞》就是一个“剧情片”，接下来导演可以去拍剧情片了。其实我觉得一部部纪录片拍下来，我们并没有越界，因为我不是让他们给我表演一个不存在的东西，只是把一个真实的东西挪过来而已。当你看到一个老农打着一把几乎不能为其遮雨的破伞走在田埂上，我所有想说的话就全在这个镜头里了，无需更多修饰。

《伞》入围了威尼斯，这让我更有信心了，觉得自己可以把握这种大格局的作品，可以具有这样一个视野去观察我脚下的土地。之前的片子还是拍人物，《伞》其实就在做一个结构性的东西。我也是这个时候开始和 Mary（雪美莲，Mary Stephen）一起合作的，从威尼斯回来，她刚好在北京做别人片子的剪辑，经友人的介绍，她在我原来版本的基础上修改了一稿，让我对剪辑有了重新的认识。不服不行。

从《窦豆》开始拿起摄影机拍我身边最熟悉的人到后来拍《伞》，在义乌那种完全陌生，不知道拍摄对象在哪里的情况下工作，我逐步逐步确立了自信，在中国土地上用摄影机进行个人书写的自信。

余：拍摄《1428》的契机是什么，据我所知，你在震区拍到了大量的素材，但是也都没用，原因是什么？

杜：《1428》是一个突发的情况，最初我没想好要不要去，就在家看电视，一直到半夜都没有关电视，经常看得以泪洗面，感觉太惨了，然后我就给我的摄影师刘爱国打电话，我问你在哪里，要不要和

我一起去四川，他没怎么考虑就同意了。我们到四川的时候差不多是五月十四日，其实是在做别的事。完了就租个车去看很多地方，还碰到很多同行，还有各种国内外的媒体，到处都是摄影机。

有一幕我觉得可以讲一下，我当时去了那边，发现一个埋在地下一百小时还活着的男人，这个很惊人，毕竟已经快五天了。然后我们就赶去那个地方，人山人海啊。感觉所有的媒体都在那了，救援人员为了不让那人睡过去，就把他的老婆和女儿接到现场和他说话，让他不要睡着。但是救援速度很慢，因为压得很深，最后决定要锯掉压在石板下的一条坏腿，但是需要他的女儿去跟他说明这个情况，那个女儿大概二十岁左右，年轻漂亮，她上到废墟上的时候一堆摄影机就开始抢拍，当她完成任务从废墟上下来的时候，又是一堆摄影机围上去，我离得很近，忽然从她的嘴角发现了一丝笑容，感觉和一个明星一样，在那儿回答媒体的问题，我觉得匪夷所思，这个女孩子被这个现场瞬间异化了，特荒诞。

这时候我才觉得我在这里最大的价值是拍一部自己看到的灾区，于是回到成都就开始各方找设备，找了一圈都没结果，突然想到我一个大学同学在一所高校里教书，结果他们学校一共两台机器，一台已经去了灾区，还有一台在。他们的校长也很好，听说我们要去灾区拍摄，还给我们配了一辆小车和司机，后来赵亮从北京来，又给我带了一个三脚架，就这样凑齐了设备开始拍了。后面又过了十多天，整个情况平稳以后，我又回趟北京，又多拿了一套设备，这样我就自己也那一套设备和摄影师同时拍摄，完成了《1428》的前期拍摄。

那次拍摄的条件异常艰苦，经常是一天只吃一餐饭。早上从酒店出发就备好馒头、豆腐乳、咸菜和水，一拍就是一天，拍到六月中。回来后和 Ben（蒋显斌）聊天，说我的感受，他就问我缺不缺钱什么的，我记得是他个人先垫了十多万吧，后来才补签的协议，等于最初《1428》是没有合作协议的。到后来这部作品参加电影节，他们（CNEX）又加了不少钱。

回来后我们就开始剪辑，正好 Mary 也在，她也很愿意加入创作，我就先收拾素材，把所有素材处理完，剪辑成一个段落一个段落那种，Mary 再开始接手，浩瀚的素材，最后不得不做了大量的放弃，但是剪辑就是这样。

四

余：最后我们来谈谈《少年小赵》吧，这部片子和你之前的作品有些不同，花了挺长时间跟拍一个人物的成长。

杜：这个事情是这样的，二〇〇九年《1428》在威尼斯电影节拿了奖，我回国的时候正好赶上快到

那年国庆，从首都机场坐出租车往城里开，一路上是“一片红”，那个冲击蛮大的。我当时正好赶去平遥参加一个活动，去的第一天就在古城里撞见了正在街上举旗游行的小赵，他带了一群同龄人，摇旗呐喊，我心想这种年轻人还挺有趣的，晚上跟摄影师刘爱国见面聊天，他当时打算做一部自己的纪录片，我还跟他说这个人值得拍一下，但他好像不太感兴趣。

到了十一月之后，我开始和 CNEX 总结《1428》，也谈到下一部的计划，我就想到小赵这个人，我说这个可以拍啊，他们也挺支持。后来在朋友的介绍下，我们在平遥再次找到了小赵，好在他也很愿意接受我们的拍摄。后来我又听说了有一个“69圣战”，那是因为韩国的组合 Super Junior 在上海世博会的韩国馆演出，主办方因为准备不足，导致很多歌迷在取票区域堆积，引发了一些事端，主办方很快调集了刚从玉树救灾现场回到上海的武警，这些武警战士中大多也是九〇后，他们遭到了现场那些粉丝的嘲笑和围攻。

事情其实很快平息了，但是晚上这个团的团长在网络上写了一篇文章讲述了他们的遭遇，结果引发了一场网络爱国事件，有人呼吁要“爆掉”Super Junior 的官网，后来黑客介入，果真在人家的官网贴上了一面五星红旗，这个事让我觉得这个片子值得做下去。当时并没有想把小赵单独做成一个人物来拍摄，那会我想做一个片子叫“爱国九〇”。我还记得二〇〇九年冬天我和刘爱国在 798 看完影展后，在停车场拿了一个树枝在雪地上画我心中这个片子的结构。

我是从《伞》开始迷上了结构。我想这个片子要分成三个部分，第一部分就是像小赵这样的人，未来我们可能还要找其他的年轻人；一个部分是当时的整体社会生态，还我要组织左中右的立场的人坐在一起开会讨论，那会还没有撕裂得这么厉害。我看过吕乐的《小说》，觉得很有趣，也想把一群人拉倒河北某个酒店开会，我觉得很有意思，大家可以各抒己见。

另外呢，我还想呈现一些景观，就是在塑造年轻人爱国这件事上，比如我在鸟巢跑步，我就发现这里成了“爱国主义教育基地”，体育是国家骄傲的一部分。另外天安门啊、延安的杨家岭啊，很多地方都是这样的教育基地，我还为此专门去延安、重庆等地拍摄。大概我当时拟定的是一条人物的线，一条学者的线，一条空间。其实都拍了，就是学者这部分最难，因为需要不少费用去组织。

到了二〇一〇年，小赵考上了大学，他这条线索就变得很重要，有次我去看他，他见我第一句话竟然是“我现在没有那么爱国了，你是不是不拍我了？”他这句话一下让我觉得这个人物立住了，我之前一直挺怕他不成立的。果真他这条线索的发展就很迅速，小赵进了大学后发生好多事，又是组织演出，又是支教，他家里还遭遇拆迁，爷爷又去世了。回到剪辑台上，我就想这个东西真的不是我能预料的，我也无法知道他家发生的那些事。但是拆迁什么的，背后就是中国整个城市化的变迁，很多事情都是慢慢浮现的，你不去拍的话永远也不会知道。

这个片子我其实有大量的采访，那几年我碰到的人我都进行了采访，后来还遇到一个特好的机会，二〇一〇年有个法国的基金会做了一个中西思想交流，两边都请了十一位专家，中国这边有北大的杜小真等哲学学者，法国那边几个比较重要的高校校长也都来了。我们在法国南部一个很大的山庄里开会，人都住在里面，不能出去。那次的议题是“普世价值与民族文化”。我还记得中国当时就是在强调民族文化，认为可以从传统里找到普世的东西，我就把当时在的人都采访了，包括法方的。后来又陆续采访了很多，包括艾未未，那会他刚从监狱出来。

余：你拍了这么多素材但是都舍弃了，最后就剩下小赵这个单一主人公了。

杜：对，就都放弃了，最后选择了以小赵为主人公，后来看素材，Mary和我说觉得小赵很可爱，我就想我要不要之后再做一个片子，这个和地震一样，其实很多素材我都没用，我想反正这些东西都在这里。我觉得还是要尊重纪录片创作的规律吧，要接受作品的各种可能性，也不能硬做，创作纪录片的过程就是与各种偶发和未知相遇。

余：你和小赵的关系也挺有意思的，你们到现在一直保持很好的关系，他受到你的影响也走上了影像创作这条路。

杜：我和他的关系很有意思，忘年交。我觉得他是一个蛮聪明的人，是和我完全不一样的人，他在生命中那么重要的阶段受到了纪录片的影响，我有责任对他提供一些帮助。他现在各方面都在变好，我还挺欣慰的，我原来有一种担心，觉得自己影响了这个孩子，也许他可以进入一些主流媒体和电视台什么的，但现在他可能接受了一些独立电影的思想。另外因为这个片子，他也会受到一些攻击和误解。

他其实一直在成长，而且他从来没有抱怨过我拍了他给他带来什么压力，但他自己一定在对抗这个社会对他的误解。虽然这个片子传播有限，可我知道的确有人通过他的微博找到他，他就选择置之不理。他现在也在拍片子，也会给我看，我就会鼓励他，我们就是这样的关系。

我和之前很多拍摄的对象在拍摄结束后就失去了联系，我还记得拍摄的时候都是拍着胸脯觉得会一直是朋友，但《人面桃花》、《高楼下面》、《石山》这些片子里面的人物走着走着就找不到了，这种感受很不好。我和小赵的关系就是在修复我的这种感受吧，这可能是我所有拍摄中唯一一个可以延续的关系，希望未来也能保持这种关系。

Liu Dedong: To Present What is Left out of the Subject Matter

Interviewer: SUN Hongyun 孙红云 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Liu Dedong (刘德东) was born in 1965 in Zigui (秭归), Hubei Province, and later moved to Yuan'an (远安) with his sent-down parents. He majored in oil painting in the Fine Arts Department of Central China Normal University (华中师范大学) in 1991, and worked as a photographer at Yichang TV Station (宜昌电视台), Hubei TV Station (湖北电视台), and Central China Television (CCTV, 中央电视台). Later he became an independent documentary film maker, producing *The Aged Spring* (老人泉), *Encountering Sorrow* (新离骚, 2015), *Endless Repetition* (无尽循环, 2015), *Encounter with Loneliness* (遭遇孤单, 2020) and *The New Songs of Chu* (新楚辞). He is also the photographer of *Ancestral House* (祖屋, dir. Sun Zengtian 孙增田, 1992), *The Boatman* (船工, dir. Yao Songping 姚松平, 2002), *Kindergarten* (幼儿园, dir. Zhang Yiqing 张以庆, 2004), and *Kids Kingdom* (小人国, dir. Zhang Yiqing 张以庆, 2009).

Liu Dedong transformed from a renowned photographer in his own field to an independent documentary film maker. He has long been gazing through his camera at traditional farming, rural areas, and the shattering, struggling, and entangling of identity, survival, socialization, and the ethics of peasants in today's Hubei. He also places his sensitive self as an object of investigation for the camera for psychological analysis and exploration of the soul. He believes that those left out of the subject matter must be preserved in the documentary film using the utmost effort.

This interview took place in a hospital ward in Yichang, Hubei, on the morning of April 25, 2021.

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Sun: We will talk about your films in reverse order. So let's start with the latest work, *Encounter with Loneliness*, which you finished last year. We can stop any time you feel tired.

Liu: *Encounter with Loneliness* is quite a complicated film in my opinion. I think it's something that is out of place in the current social environment.

Sun: The characters in this film seem to be unrelated to each other. As the director, how did you delineate

the internal logical relationships of these characters?

Liu: I think some types of relationships are not worth our attention at all. When I was young I didn't attach any importance to human relationships, because I think we are naturally set in a kind of relationship living on the earth. Relationships exist between the same species, or even between different species. But my film is still quite rigorous in its inner structure. It is an allegory: a grandmother lives in a tiny stone house on the top of a mountain and cultivates several *mu* of poor land. Her children and grandchildren live an itinerant life at the foot of the mountain and in various cities.

Sun: Is this grandmother a symbol of China's agricultural ancestry?

Liu: Yes. She is a monument. Her itinerant children live and seek their fortune in the urban civilization of modern cities and face a lot of confusion. Compared with their grandmother, they do not live an equally warm and happy life, which is, naturally, the cost of the so-called development of civilization. This was what *Encounter with Loneliness* intended to convey, and was also why, at the end of the film, a drone was raised from above the ruin of the grandmother's old stone house, all the way up till it was overlooking the huge Qinba Mountains (秦巴山系) —a long take like a satellite map. What did that shot show? It was an immense slope from the Qinba Mountains to the Jingshan Mountains (荆山山脉) where the stone house was located, and down the river was the Jiangnan Plain (江汉平原). I had the impression that in the past all kinds of families lived on the top of the Jingshan Mountains, and from my memory of the wandering days of my youth, that it was densely populated with villages, hustling and bustling with the sound of crowds and domestic animals. Smoke rose from chimneys, and the villagers were living their hearty lives. It was so admirable that their life was 'hearty', while ours today, being only clamorous, was not like theirs at all. Those families, the ones I saw decades ago at the top of the Jingshan Mountains, were all gone. They moved down this huge slope, this slanting area, one step after another: first half-way down the mountain, then on to the edge of the forest, to the side of the road, to the town, the city, and finally the provincial capital. That's the history of the family, and the family paid a heavy price in the process.

Sun: Let's put it another way, is it actually an inevitable pain in the process of China's urbanisation, namely a change in the fundamental ties between the people and the land?

Liu: Yes. It is a problem of culture. There is an old saying in the countryside, 'every time you move, you lose something, the more you move, the more you lose.' I have a particularly deep experience of that.

Sun: This is more about spiritual and psychological loss rather than material, right?

Liu: Yes, it's cultural. The material loss is less important: only some pieces of furniture. But culturally, first in terms of your language: do your children still speak your hometown dialect? Definitely not! Your habits, values, and what you've always embraced within your family slowly and imperceptibly became irrelevant and dispensable, and are finally replaced, and you started to speak another language. These are all fatal changes. I am not saying that such change is good or bad, I am just presenting this objective question, the dominant one discussed in *Encounter with Loneliness*.

Sun: The characters are Maozi (毛子) the poet, a director of the TV station, and one other ...

Liu: It's me.

Sun: What was your plan in presenting these characters?

Liu: I felt that poetry was particularly able to explain the soul of this film. Maozi recites his most famous poem, 'My Homesickness is Different from Yours' (我的乡愁和你们不同), stanza by stanza in the film. Both our families have undergone the same kind of historical transition. Maozi is well-known in China and lives a good life in the big city. Why is he sad, depressed, and why does he also suffer from insomnia? We both feel this is related to the loss of our roots. Though we do not feel that our life is deeply attached to the mountains and the lands, actually it is!

Sun: Maozi, the poet, was presented in the film as a symbol of spiritual and cultural origins.

Liu: Yes, he is. Another character is Zhang Lihong (张李红), graduate of South China University of Technology (华南科技大学) and currently the director of a TV station. Why did I film her? She was a friend and suffering from infertility and was trying in vitro fertilization and embryo transfer. She reminded me of the grandmother on the top of the mountain, who gave birth to seven or eight children in her life, but all of them died at an early age. I thought it was a problem with the 'seed', namely about giving birth to offspring, the continuation of life, and the philosophy of fertility and life. I was not able to provide a solution to this problem, neither can it be explained in one film. But I did put forward the idea that infertility and moving from one place to another were both about the difficulty of continuation, or about preserving the 'seed'. There was a tragic sense regarding the continuity of life. I used Zhang Lihong's experiment with in vitro fertilization as an allusion to the 'seed', but finally she failed at embryo transfer.

Sun: Are you trying to express that nature is fertile and tenacious? Seeds drifting with the wind and contained in the droppings of birds can grow wherever they land, while human beings, living farther away from the land, are encountering more difficulties in giving birth to new life.

Liu: Yes, that's what I meant. Nature is nature: it is not to be trampled, neither it is to be conquered. Its ability to self-reproduce and self-heal is incomparable. Meanwhile, what we do against the law of nature and the damage we have made to the environment are self-inflicted. You see, the infertility of Zhang Lihong is in fact the result of environmental damage.

Sun: Your image of self in *Encounter with Loneliness* is different from that in *Encountering Sorrow*. In the previous film, you lost your homeland and was wandering and reflective.

Liu: Yes. I do not appear much in the film *Encounter with Loneliness* and only function as a link with other characters. But I filmed myself returning to my hometown Zigui, which had already been buried in the bottom of the reservoir. I put myself in the scene to make it more psychological, reflective, and internal, for the ultimate purpose of highlighting the inner loss of human beings. To be more specific, leaving one's hometown and the loss of family ties will exert a negative psychological impact on the individual in later life. I wanted to warn adults to take into consideration how nostalgia will influence the life of children. This is also the theme implicit in Maozi and his poem and in Zhang Lihong and her infertility.

2

Sun: All your films are about the tension between recording and loss, namely the process of the vanishing of local, rural culture. After so many years of being rooted in the village in Jiuxian (旧县) county, Yuan'an, in Hubei Province, and filming how it has declined over the years, and the co-existence of, and the struggle between, the villagers and the land, what are your feelings about all these things?

Liu: This is a complicated question. Before, I filmed villages in order to reveal the vitality of life and the relationship between people and nature. Yet over the years I've experienced more and became older; I've come to feel the complexity of villages, which is not purely a question between man and nature. My attention has slowly drifted towards thinking about the problems of people themselves. So, I retreated from the hilltop down to Jiuxian Village (旧山村) in the valley, and stayed there for five years. There I closely observed how the two families moved from the top down the mountain, met each other during the process, and then

scattered to farther and unknown places. It was very interesting but also dispiriting, involving a lot of complex ethical, life, anthropological, and sociological problems. This film also alludes to the themes of the previous one, in addition to exploring language and customs. What was recorded in my film was gradually mildewing, fading away and disappearing.

Sun: Mildewing?

Liu: Yes. Things were getting rotten, to the point of annoying and even disgusting people. The original cultural advantages no longer existed and had deteriorated into cultural blemishes. This was the subversive point of my film, and that was why I named it *Encountering Sorrow*. I've been looking at this issue, to be specific, I have been filming Hubei people speaking, and how they spoke. What were the differences between today's Hubei people and those in the age of Qu Yuan (屈原), who wrote 'The Songs of Chu' (楚辞) and 'Encountering Sorrow' (离骚) over a thousand years ago, in terms of their manner of speaking, of communication, and of ethics? I was really curious but could come to no conclusion. I was very disappointed with the ways modern people communicate, speak, and observe ethics, which were not as gorgeous and romantic—not at all in the sense of being 'pure' and 'beautiful'—as their ancestors of a thousand years ago. Everything has become practical and chaotic, with no rules, regulations, or principles. For instance, in the village, people did not care at all about chaotic relationships such as incest.

Sun: There was no value system, neither were there any ethical and moral concepts.

Liu: Yes, everything is self-interested and function-oriented, with the ultimate goal of getting a mouthful of food. Being only function-oriented is quite scary, and when it gets to be out of hand you feel life is almost over.

Sun: In *Encountering Sorrow*, you were questioning the inner world of human beings, the dignity of life, death, and desire. It was about questioning the self. From the perspective of content and presentation, the vision of *The New Songs of Chu* was expanded to the relationship between life and culture in external reality.

Liu: Yes. *The New Songs of Chu* was made from the perspective of anthropology and sociology. Though I do not have adequate knowledge in these two fields, I was indeed using their methodology.

Sun: There should be no hard and fast rules in disciplines, nor should there be fixed anthropological

principles. According to Malinowski, one cycle of anthropological fieldwork should be one year, during which the researcher learns the local language. This was not a problem in your case, as you spent five years in the village and the local dialect was also your mother tongue. Therefore, yours was very solid anthropological fieldwork.

Liu: My home was at the top of the village. Through my windows you could see every detail of each household through my windows. Also, I saw clearly how plants grew on every piece of land. I perceived all the minute changes in the village. In this film I also used the camera in a revolutionary way, so I think it's my best film.

Sun: What kind of changes?

Liu: Photographic ones.

Sun: Your photography has always been beautiful and powerful, quickly capturing the attention of the audience.

Liu: I'm gradually moving towards a more pure and realistic approach to cinema, unadorned and uncomposed, without deliberately catering to the rhythm of the audience, or the kind of practical attitude of capturing the audience. I tried to give up as much pretention as possible and expose the original language and scenes as they were, that is, to present the original picture, the material itself, captured by the camera. There were only two locations in this film: the carpenter's home and the old courtyard. These two locations are combined with a large number of long and fixed shots—as long as dozens of minutes each—to produce very ordinary scenes. Ultimately, I just put together all these scenes and got a coherent and all-encompassing account of the village, even without any editing.

Sun: But your works are characterized by, and noted for, beautiful and powerful shots, immediately capturing the attention of the audience. Now you have retreated to static and objective shots of dozens of minutes—could this be categorized as 'surveillance aesthetics'? Would it be more convenient to record with two surveillance cameras? Why did you bother to film by yourself? Were you losing your edge using this method?

Liu: It was quite different from recording with surveillance cameras. In my film you have the director's inner activities rather than mere surveillance footage. The mood and emotions flowed without interference.

I also filmed the subtle nuances and the constant changes and interweaving of different situations. What happened between people was very interesting.

3

Sun: Now the film is epic in length. What do you think of that?

Liu: I am now kind of addicted to the panoramic long shot. Now I feel sympathy with the objectivity and calmness embraced in director Hou Hsiao-hsien's (侯孝贤) long shots, which I was not able to understand before. In my film, for instance, the carpenter was the main character in the scene at his home, then in the next scene at the courtyard, other characters talked about the story of the carpenter, who then became the supporting character. I thought such a change was very interesting.

Sun: Like being on a stage?

Liu: Then another group of villagers gossiped in the third house about the carpenter and the old man in the courtyard, which made me think that the filmed could be sub-titled 'a long video fiction'.

Sun: Were you pursuing a style of repeated narratives in multiple spaces?

Liu: Yes. And each narrative was natural and not monotonous. If you watch carefully, you will feel that they are full of fun and have a lot of substance. The characters are lively and rich in personality. This film is all about gossip in the village: the gossipy and meddlesome women and a couple of blathering men attacked, belittled, and insulted each other. They were fighting each other all the time. One time they blathered on about the people on one side, and soon then they shifted to talk nonsense about people on the other.

Sun: Why did they behave like that? What's your opinion on this?

Liu: The evil nature of human beings. Chinese people have been jealous for thousands of years and cannot bear to see other people getting rich, or in better conditions than themselves. For instance, if one family has sons working as strong laborers, while the other only has two girls unable to shoulder the burden of heavy physical work, then a lot of disputes will occur, followed by all possible ways of attacking and belittling each other. This is universal in China's countryside. The problem is that individuals, crowds, or human beings as a whole are not kind to each other; people do not bear good will and behave only out of pure selfishness.

Sun: Only out for profit.

Liu: People are self-interested and profit-seeking. There's also the inevitable problem of ethics, which was discussed extensively in the film. For example, people who were left behind by their spouses suffered from sexual repression. How did they deal with it? The film revealed the problem: the carpenter watched pornographic videos and talked filth. Of course, there must have been adultery, which I was not able to film; it existed as rumour. The gossip and stories of the villagers were all thematic, having been covered in feature films, but not in other documentaries. I did not expect that my film would completely exhaust the undercurrents of the village. Those were the tragedies that people did not want to touch, the ultimate sadness of the village, not ridiculous and funny, but weak and fragile and worthy of sympathy. When the carpenter was watching pornography, I choose to be together with him; I do not know why. When I was standing by him, I felt like crying, but I stood there and watched the video together with him from beginning to end.

Sun: Did you feel pity for their living conditions and their humble life?

Liu: Yes, I did have pity, and also felt helplessness. When he was watching the pornography, his wife was outside washing clothes, unaware of what he was doing because of her bad hearing. The carpenter turned up the volume and she heard nothing.

Sun: She did not join in, did she?

Liu: When she happened to come inside and saw him, she scolded her husband, 'you never learn from the good, but only learn from these disgusting things.' Actually, she was used to this, and they had been living like this for decades. I asked the carpenter, and he said that every household in the village owned a VCD or DVD machine and rented CDs from the shop in the town. This was part of their life.

Sun: Pornographic films and videos really existed in the village to satisfy the demands of the people.

Liu: It was something nobody liked to mention, but I decided to represent it in the film and had very complicated feelings about it.

4

Sun: This was different from your previous films like *The Aged Spring*, *Encountering Sorrow*, and *Endless*

Repetition (无尽循环) . From the perspective of the director, the director is different from their film characters, right? But you also made yourself a character in *Endless Repetition* and tried to be as true to yourself as possible. I think you were very sincere in doing this. Did you intend to heal yourself?

Liu: Yes. *Endless Repetition* did have a healing effect on me. I have encountered a lot of psychological problems and confusion, including an old dream that comes to me once a year, and the hard feeling of not handling relationships properly. After finishing this film, all my problems went away. It did produce a healing effect, as a matter of fact. Anyway, I finally found a solution for my own problems.

Sun: What was the old dream that came to you once a year?

Liu: About my mother. I dreamt of her once a year: we faced each other, speechless. I was filled with a tortured sense of guilt, and she looked at me, but without being able to come any closer: there was a road between us. The dream used to occur once a year; it went forever after the film was completed.

Sun: *Endless Repetition* originated from when you were filming the kindergarten kids in Beijing and you discovered their psychological problems?

Liu: Yes. When I was filming in the kindergarten in Beijing, I found that, more often than not, even the teachers were unaware of the psychological problems of the kids. If you did not stay there for a long time and were not adequately observant, you would not notice such problems either. But it was a subject that I was really interested in. After I finished the first film about this kindergarten, the principle asked me to make another one, which I understood to be a type of promotional film. I got the money from her and finally produced *Endless Repetition*. It was about her educational exploration: they did the most pioneering research in the field of child sexual problems in China; also, I filmed her own psychological problems, which originated in her childhood, carried on into adulthood, and then into her old age. As a result, my filming cruelly extended to the family of the principle Li Yue'er (李跃儿) , the funder of the film.

Sun: It also had a healing effect on her.

Liu: Yes. She watched the film after it was done, patted on my shoulder and said, 'this is your best one.' This was the only outcome. She spent a fortune on me, and in return I uncovered the skeleton in her family's closet. I think that Li Yue'er was an amazingly open-minded person.

Sun: In the film she was receiving treatment as well. In the later part she talks about her reconciliation with her parents. I think the value of this film lies in its healing effect on her. Before, she only told families of the children as a mentor that their kids needed treatment, while in this film, she had the opportunity to reflect on and to treat herself.

Liu: Yes. Because my camera was following, chasing, and filming her she could at least sort out her life and her inner self. Otherwise, she wouldn't have had the opportunity; she wouldn't have reflected on her own upbringing in great detail, neither would she have gone back to her home in Ningxia to the bedside of her fatally ill father, or cry and pour out her heart by her mother's grave. She did all this because I was filming her. As for her, she would never talk about the same thing in any other situation if she were not being filmed. I believe the film touched her, though she did not say so. We did not meet each other after the completion of the film.

Sun: Did she say whether the film could be shown or not?

Liu: No. Her husband said it should not be shown in public. On the one hand, the privacy of the children was involved; and on the other, her own children did not want to expose their own family issues. Again, this was another forbidden film.

Sun: That is the value of the film. Sometimes making documentaries is like wearing shackles, if you want to be ethically perfect, your creative process will be severely restricted.

Liu: I myself was very satisfied. I felt that presenting a film is like talking with friends: if you've five friends who understand it, and have a strong reaction to it, the film is a real success. The understanding should be a touching rather than superficial, and the reaction has to be genuinely strong, not just following suit.

Sun: In *Endless Repetition*, everyone recognised the pain in their own families but could not find a way out of it. I was particularly impressed with some parts. How did you come up with the scene in the Mu Us Desert (毛乌素沙漠) at the end of the film?

Liu: The few characters dotting the centre of the endless desert looked like a picture of solitude. We had just wanted to travel there at the beginning, and then it suddenly occurred to me that I might place the counsellor and her patient in the centre of the desert, rather than in the dark and private counselling room, and see what would be like. Then I went with both of them to the Mu Us Desert. A fierce wind was blowing through

the desert when we were filming and thus the scene you saw in the film came about. I thought it looked gorgeous.

Sun: It was very impressive. People were struggling in the gusty wind as if they were fighting against their inner will. Li Yue'er and her counsellor Carla were exerting themselves climbing up the sand dune.

Liu: The stillness was in contrast to the movement, and thus brought about another psychological feeling. When Li Yue'er was telling her own story, the wind was howling and she was crying. It was quite difficult for her; furthermore, her husband was next to her at that moment. That was the dramatic feeling I intended to create.

Sun: I think that scene also brought about an inner reconciliation between Li Yue'er and her husband.

Liu: It should have. But Lao Xu (老徐) was a little way from reaching the point of reconciliation. Li Yue'er was in fact taking the opportunity to say sorry to him.

Sun: Yes. She felt sorry towards him, and she loved him deep down in her heart.

Liu: Yes, she felt that she herself should not have made her husband the weird object of her own research, and she should have maintained a sense of purity towards him, namely, she should have loved him as he was, which was the only right thing to do. She was reflecting on herself, and I thought it was quite precious.

Sun: After filming that scene, what was Carla's, the psychotherapist from Australia, feeling about her first session of outdoor therapy?

Liu: I guess Carla didn't like it very much. I'm afraid that was also a strange experience in her career. She said herself later that it was not successful. Also, she felt her counselling with me was not successful either. I wonder if psychotherapy is more difficult for Asian people because we have more obstinate inner selves and always hide our true feelings. Carla said frankly that it was difficult with me.

Sun: We learn to hide our feelings from a very early age, and thus are wrapped in a hard shell, difficult to open.

Liu: Yes.

Sun: I myself, and some audience members, saw ourselves reflected in this film. Everyone was embracing their own darkness and trauma, but without looking at them closely. Now the darkness and trauma were brought up by the film.

Liu: It's a question of methodology. I intended to make people face up to this problem, which was the work I meant to achieve in this film.

5

Sun: At first I thought you were very bold to title the film *Encountering Sorrow*. After watching it, I agree that it was a new interpretation of Qu Yuan's bitterness and resentment. You spent over one year on it, as the director, main character, and editor of the film. How did you come up with this experimental approach?

Liu: I don't remember much about making this film. During the process of filming, I didn't even know what I was doing: I just had a camera, a wireless microphone, and I was wandering around. I would walk around in the mountains, and when I came to a place with a certain mood or atmosphere that made me feel a bit different, I would stop to film. Sometimes, I just stood in front of the camera without being aware of it. No movement of mine was acting, and yet it also was. I thought it wasn't because I did not know what my next movement would be. I filmed my true confusion, bafflement, and pretentiousness at that instant, which I thought was natural non-acting.

The experience of filming was very abstract: I was in the water, in the weeds, in an old, abandoned cottage, and in a graveyard. I preferred to place my fragile body in those exciting locations and see what would happen. Without a photographer, I set up the camera by myself, doing the framing and composition, and then I just hung around in front of it. The whole process of filming went on like this. I was very demanding of the ambience of my surroundings: often what touched me most was the kind of feeling of the 'zone' in Tarkovsky's *Stalker*, which drew me in and inspired in me strong reactions. I filmed all my responses to the environment of the western mountain areas of Hubei Province. I wandered about that area for seven months, filming a pile of material that I did not know what to do with. What I had filmed was unrelated, without a theme, not even a fragmentary story. I just accumulated the material and waded through it randomly, which, as time went by, finally pushed me to do something.

The scenes of characters speaking to the camera in *The Turin Horse* and Kim Ki-duk's *Arirang* suddenly

inspired me. I filmed myself talking a lot to the camera and then started to edit these scenes. During the process, I always felt that another person was standing behind me and talking to the person in the film. I often looked around in the middle of the night to check whether this person was still there. Then it occurred to me that I had filmed one scene a couple of times to get the most satisfactory effect, with these repetitive scenes from different standpoints and perspectives, I could make them dialogue with each other. That was why you saw in the film the two people (both played by me) were talking about the same topic, committing suicide, for instance: one said, 'I want to commit suicide almost every day,' and the other followed, 'so do I, I want to do the same even in the morning.' In this way, self-dialogue and self-confrontation were created in the film.

Sun: We communicated with each other when you were filming *Encountering Sorrow*. What impacted me most was what you told me about the local people's way of life. You said every day they drove their kids out like cattle to work in the fields, and they insulted them to the point of then hanging themselves over only a few cents. In the film, the boy committed suicide and his grave was flooded under the reservoir, leaving his wandering soul unable to rest. I think you were trying to highlight the value of the people who had chosen to keep the dignity of their life by killing themselves.

Liu: Yes. That was my thinking, but not the theme of the film. It was about the people in the western part of Hubei, who are over-self-regarding and sensitive. Why did I title it *Encountering Sorrow*? It was because the location of the film was near Zigui.

Sun: That was not the location where you filmed *The New Songs of Chu*, wasn't it?

Liu: No.

Sun: Did the people in the two places have different temperaments?

Liu: Completely different. Zigui is near the centre of the old Chu State (楚国), and the way the people of Zigui speak and sing is quite close to that in the age of *Encountering Sorrow* in their use of characters, sentence structures, rhythm and tempo, and stylistic patterns. That was why I called the film *Encountering Sorrow*: to make an allusion to Qu Yuan committing suicide. I turned his aristocratic suicide into our terribly humble one, but the causes remained the same in essence, namely, excessive self-regard and over-sensitivity. People today commit suicide over fifty cents; Qu Yuan did it for his country and his people.

Sun: *Encountering Sorrow* is also a strong reflection of your own inner self. You are also very thoughtful, with strong self-esteem, and sensitive. You went from a small TV station in Yuan'an county to Yichang, to Wuhan, to the big city, to collaborating with famous directors at CCTV. For you, I think the farther you went, the more you felt offended in your heart, and the more eager you were to go back, to be treated and healed.

Liu: Yes. You make a good point, indeed.

Sun: *Encountering Sorrow* has a very deep feeling of tragedy about it, and a mysterious sense of death, yet their origins are unknown. I remember that I told you my favourite play is John Millington Synge's *Riders to the Sea*, and the deep feeling of tragedy in your films resembles that of Synge. When did you develop this sense of tragedy?

Liu: It is a complicated topic. I think the sense of tragedy is naturally contained in the blood of the Chu people (楚人), that's it. If you will allow me to say something seemingly irrelevant, I would say just look at me now, sick in bed, taking your interview after having had a narrow escape from an operation where many things were cut out of my abdomen. I did not know about the disease during the spring festival, only I threw up whatever I ate, and fell into a death-like weakness. I had been living in that village deep in the mountains and was unable to get in touch with the outside world. I thought about giving up then.

Sun: Giving up your life?

Liu: Yes. After repeated vomiting, my body was painless, weak and soft. I felt I was a joke. Since I also felt that my life was not fulfilling, what was the difference between being alive or not alive? I just went and let nature take its course. It was not about letting myself die but merely going through it as it might be. I just wanted to know how it would feel like at that moment. Yet I ended up sleeping till the next day and woke up at dawn all the same. Then I thought I'd better get out of the village. I struggled into the car and drove to the town hospital to get an infusion. What I was saying was that at the particular moment in my sub-conscious, there was a kind of self-abuse ... or a kind of longing for death. I hadn't thought about it before, why my film was filled with something that made me value myself highly and not care about death. I used to think I'd rather die than have an operation, but of course I ended up having a major operation anyway ... This story tells that I am also in possession of the character of the people from this particular 'zone'.

Sun: It's related to your own personality, right?

Liu: It might also have something to do with my childhood experience, which goes back to the theme of growing up, family structures, parental relationships, and everything that has happened. These were all interconnected.

Sun: You exposed your self-conflict in *Sorrow*. Your self-reflection was penetrating, questioning the naked dead soul you played. Seemingly you were only hanging out in the mountains, but actually you were trapped by great anxiety. Was that also the period of your self-adjustment? You had just come back to the mountains in western Hubei after working for one year in the studio in Beijing, where you felt like a trapped animal in a cage.

Liu: That was it. In the film the two characters were having a conversation with each other, talking about committing suicide. I myself do not like cities, I am an anti-urbanist.

6

Sun: As a matter of fact, documentary film is precisely the medium to reflect urban culture and modernization, which again is an intense contradiction for your inner self.

Liu: This type of intense contradiction is ubiquitous and exerts great impact on every turning point and every decision I have made in my life. Maybe it is also the origin of tragedy in life. In this huge wave of urbanisation, it's very dangerous to choose to rush back.

Sun: Although you grew up in the small town of Yuan'an in Hubei, you've been to big cities and photographed almost all over the world, which has given you have a clearer understanding of the broken ties when you came back. On the one hand, there are beautiful things here, but on the other, you see them dying, leaving behind only that which is crude and profit-seeking, surviving via the law of the jungle, which makes you feel in your bones this kind of sadness and pain.

Liu: You are right. The five years living in Jiuxian Village were the most fundamental in leading to my ultimate disappointment.

Sun: At the beginning of filming *The Aged Spring*, you were actually still somewhat complimentary of their [Liu's subjects'] isolated life in their own 'Peach Blossom Spring' (桃花源), away from the rest of the

world; then you gradually started to dive into their life and identify with them. You spend thirty years on this film altogether?

Liu: More than thirty years. I moved from the top of the mountain in *The Aged Spring* down to the valley of Jiuxian Village, where I lived for five years and did not feel comfortable. To be frank, life in *The Aged Spring* was what I admired—the ‘warm life’ of the old couple, as Maozi said, which our life was not.

Sun: When you were filming *The Aged Spring* you planted oilseed rape in order to get beautiful pictures, out of the longing of your inner heart and your appreciation of their life. But in Jiuxian Village you did not set up any scenes.

Liu: Yes, that’s true. I don’t know if it was my prejudice, but there were more of that gloomy and rotten stuff in the material I filmed in Jiuxian Village. I was more desperate at heart, and I suspect that my illness comes from the five years of filming there. A friend in Sichuan said, ‘oh, you are finally sick after a long time feeling down.’ In this village, the relationships between people were mainly indifferent, chaotic, disordered, and people were using each other. That was a serious problem of the spiritual state of the villagers.

Sun: I have been to your village a couple of times in the past few years and found that you were there more than merely observing. You behaved differently and lived a very different way of life from the villagers; you had a different identity and were at a different stage of life from them too. While you were filming them, you were changing yourself at the same time. It was in this village you sought out some of the opposite features of human beings, namely orderliness, respect, decency, and the transcendence of the pursuit of artistic and spiritual excellence over practical benefits. There was contest and interaction between the two sides, and you more or less exerted some influence on them and changed them a bit. Do you think so?

Liu: But I don’t think I had that power, I felt particularly weak compared to their energy, the kind of power that had been in existence for a thousand years. I would often sit among them, too, but it wasn’t an intimate relationship. I was mainly making an intervention, which is to say, I wanted to show them that I was also a human being like they were and lived my own life as they did. I filmed everything with my camera and made it known to the audience what the world in front of the camera was like. It’s interesting that I still felt some affinity with them after defining our relationship in such a manner.

刘德东：呈现“被主题筛漏的”

孙红云

刘德东，一九六五年出生于湖北秭归，后随父母下放迁到远安。一九九一年毕业于华中师范大学美术系油画专业，作为摄影师先后就职于宜昌电视台、湖北电视台、中央电视台，后成为独立纪录片导演。执导的主要作品有《老人泉》、《新离骚》、《无尽循环》、《遭遇孤单》、《新楚辞》；作为摄影师的主要作品有《祖屋》、《船工》、《幼儿园》、《小人国》等。

刘德东从纪录片圈子里一著名摄影师转变为独立纪录片人。他的镜头长期凝视着荆楚一代传统的农耕、农村、农民的身份、生存、社交、伦理等在中国城市化进程中的碎裂、挣扎和纠缠，同时他把敏感的自己作为考察对象置于镜头中进行心理分析和灵魂追问。他认为所有那些被主题筛漏的东西才是纪录片最不该丢弃的。

本次访谈时间为二〇二一年四月二十五日上午，地点是湖北宜昌某医院的病房。

孙红云（以下简称孙）：我们从你去年完成的新作《遭遇孤单》谈起吧，按照你作品的倒序谈，在你觉得累的时候随时停下来。

刘德东（以下简称刘）：《遭遇孤单》对于我来说，是一个挺复杂的片子。我觉得现在拍出来，在这个环境里是不合时宜的东西。

孙：这个片子里的几个人物看似没有关系的。作为导演，这几个人物的内在逻辑关系是怎么考量的？

刘：我觉得有些关系几乎可以不考虑。我年轻的时候对人际关系就不太重视，我觉得你只要生活在地球上就是关系。只要是同一物种，甚至不同的物种都存在关系。但我的片子内在设计还是挺严谨的。它像一个寓言故事：山尖上一个祖母守着几亩干涸的土地，一个石头房子，她的子孙们漂泊在外，在山下，在不同的城市。

孙：这个祖母是中国农业祖先的一个象征？

刘：对。她就是一个纪念碑。而那些迷惘的子孙们都在都市文明、现代文明城市中奋斗，他们面临很多的困惑，生活的温度和幸福的指标，我觉得都比不上咱们的祖母。当然这也是所谓的发展，所谓的文明要付出的东西。这部《遭遇孤单》就是，为什么最后一个镜头是从祖母的老屋的废墟上用无人机慢慢上升上升，一直上升到一个巨大的秦巴山系，像卫星图这样一个长镜头？它描述了一个什么感受呢？就是说整个秦巴山系过渡到我们这个荆山山脉，这老人居住的地方，是个巨大的缓坡，沿江而下就是江汉平原。在我的印象中，历史上各种各样的家族，以前的荆山之巔，在我少年流浪的时候，印象中有很多密集的村庄，那真是热闹非凡，鸡犬相闻，炊烟缭绕，这样一种景象。人际交往频繁，就是过得很热烈。现在用热烈这个词好像挺有意思的，因为我们现在太不热烈了，只是“闹”。那些家族，就是几十年前我所见的那些荆山之巔的家族几乎没有了。一家一家沿着这个大滑坡，就是这个倾斜地带，一级一级地往下搬，搬到半山，继续搬，搬到森林以外，继续搬，搬到公路边上，继续搬，搬到县城，继续搬，搬到更大的地级市，继续搬，搬到省城。这就是整个家族，实际上要付出惨重代价的。

孙：我们换个角度说，它其实是中国城市化的过程中一个必然的阵痛？那种人和土地原本的关系发生的变化？

刘：对。而且这就涉及到一个文化问题，农村里面有一句老话就是说，搬一次家漏一东西，搬一次漏一次，我的体会特别深。

孙：这是精神上的、心理上的“漏”，对吧？不是物质上的。

刘：对，是文化上的。物质上的是次要的，漏掉一些家具嘛。但是精神上的，你的语言，你的孩子现在难道说的还是故乡话吗？肯定不是了。你的习惯，还有你的各种各样的价值观，或者你内心，你的家族体系一直坚持的东西，最后慢慢、慢慢都变得无足轻重了，可有可无，都被另外的东西代替，甚至你的语言。这都是些要命的事情。都在变化。我不是说好坏问题，这是一个客观问题。所以《遭遇孤单》无非就是说这样的问题。

孙：里面的几个人，诗人毛子，还有电视台的一个编导，还有一个是……

刘：还有一个就是我自己了。

孙：你对这几个人的设计是一种什么样的考虑？

刘：我就觉得诗是特别能直接解释这个片子的灵魂。因为毛子的诗，他最著名的就是那个“我的乡愁和你们不同”，这个片子里面，我把它——就是诗——分段地在里面让他自己朗诵，实际上他的家族的经历和我的家族也类似是这样一种过渡。毛子在国内挺高的名气，生活环境也挺好的，住在大城市，一直生活都没有问题，但是他为什么那么忧愁、抑郁、失眠？我们都有这种体会，我觉得都与这些根性的丢失有关。我们不觉得那些大山大川，我们不觉得的土地有生命的关联，实际上是与这些有关的。

孙：毛子，一个诗人，其实是作为一个精神文化原乡的象征出现在影片中的。

刘：对，就是这样。而张李红，她是华（南）科（技大学）的研究生毕业，在电视台做编导，我为什么拍她呢？也是朋友，她正好面临一个问题，就是她结婚了一直怀不上孩子，一直在做试管婴儿，胚胎移植。她的这个问题突然让我反应过来了，我拍的那个山顶上的祖母啊，她也是一生先后生了七八个孩子都夭折了，这一切让我突然反应过来是关于“种子”问题。本质就是繁衍后代，生命的延续，对生育观、对生命观这些哲学话题，虽然我说不清楚，一部电影也无法说清楚所有这些事，但我提出这样一种思路，就包括我说的这些搬迁，这都是一个延续问题，一个“种子”问题，都是对于生命延绵不绝充满悲剧感的。张李红做试管婴儿的尝试，我是把它作为“种子”的暗示，她那次胚胎移植的结果还是失败了。

孙：你是想表达大自然的这种生生不息，它这种顽强，它的种子甚至随风飘，随鸟的粪便都可以生存，而人，离土地越来越远，繁衍越来越成问题？

刘：对，就是这个意思。自然界就是自然界，它就是不可以被践踏、不可以被征服的。它的繁衍能力，它的修复能力，我们都没办法与之相比。而且随着我们所做的违背自然的事情，对环境的破坏，真的会自作自受啊。你看，她不能怀孕，这其实都与这些环境问题相关。

孙：你在《遭遇孤单》里跟你在《新离骚》里的自己是不一样的形象，一种失去了故乡，一种流浪和反思的个体。

刘：是。我在《遭遇孤单》这影片里出现得很少，相当于在这几个人中间有个衔接。但是呢，涉及了一个回秭归的镜头。因为故乡已经不在，被水淹了。为什么让自己进到镜头里去，我就想更心理化一些，更内心一些，更内一些，表达人的迷失。就是说，自幼失去一些亲情啊，家乡的感受啊，最后造成的一些不好心理，以至于影响你一生的后来的生活局面吧。实际上有一个警示的意思。大人对孩子，都要考虑这些事情，这也是乡愁的内容，是和毛子，和张李红对生育，和老人们对生活，

都是一个暗合的一个主题。

二

孙：你的几部片子其实都是关于纪录和失去的较量，或者说本土乡村文化在失落的过程。这么多年扎根在（湖北）远安旧县这个没有几户人的村子里去拍摄它的衰败，这个乡村人和土地的共存也好，互相的斗争也好，你自己是怎么想的？

刘：这个说起来就比较复杂，我以前拍摄村庄基本上还是在表达生命力，人和自然之间这样的关系。但是这些年，经历多了年纪也大了之后，切身感受到村庄的复杂性。它不是纯粹的人和自然之间的问题。我的注意力慢慢地偏向于人自身的一些问题的思考。所以我就从原来住的那个山顶撤到山谷里面，进入那个旧县村里面待了五年，我仔细地观察这两个家族的迁徙，也是从山顶往下迁徙，交合在一起，最后又四散而去的这样一个过程。很有意思，很颓废，因为涉及到相当复杂的问题：伦理问题，生命问题，还有人种学，社会学方面的这些问题。我这个片子也是跟前几个片子的问题暗合。它还有语言、风俗等，这一切都在慢慢地漏掉，慢慢地消失，慢慢在霉变。

孙：霉变？

刘：对。已经变味儿了，甚至有的东西让人觉得很反感，令人作呕的那种关系。原本的那种文化优势已不在，而是成了一种污点，这个是具有颠覆性的。所以这部新片我叫《新楚辞》。我一直在关注这些，具体来说就是湖北人在说话，是怎么说话，它与上千年前的《楚辞》和屈原《离骚》那个年代的说话方式、交际方式、伦理方式，到底有什么区别？我真的很好奇，但是无法得出结论。对现代人的交流方式，语言方式或伦理方式，我确实很失望。无法跟千年之前的进行比较，就是达不到那种“纯”、“美感”，那种华丽或浪漫，那些都找不到了。一切都变得特别实际、混乱，没有规则，没有章法，没有原则，比如说一个村庄里面，混乱的男女关系，乱伦，一切都不计较，一切都不在乎。

孙：没有价值体系，没有伦理道德观念。

刘：对，一切都是利己的，都是务实的，就是为了一口食。这个实用主义是挺恐怖的，当你无法收拾的时候你才觉得生命几乎完蛋了。

孙：你在拍那个《新离骚》的时候，更多是反向人的内心的拷问，关于生命的尊严，死亡，欲望，是自我的拷问。到这部《新楚辞》我看到你的素材和你的陈述，我觉得你开始扩大开来，以外在的

现实的来思考生命和文化的关系。

刘：对。我这影片主要从人类学、社会学这方面来进入，虽然我缺乏这方面的理论知识，但我在运用这套方法。

孙：这方面没有一成不变的规则，人类学没有一个固定的药方。人类学田野调研一般按照马林诺夫斯基的要求，一年为一个周期，学习当地的语言。这个对你来说都不是问题，你在那村里待了五年，当地语言是你的母语，所以你这个人人类学田野是非常扎实的。

刘：在那个村庄，我住的房子位置是最高的，透过我的窗户，基本上可以全局地观察到每一户人家的动静，每一户人家土地上生长的情况，足不出户我都看得清清楚楚，所以说我就是很敏感地在观察这村庄的一切变化。这次我在这个镜头语言上也进行了一个巨大的变化。我认为这会是我最好的影像。

孙：什么变化？

刘：摄影方面的。

孙：你的摄影一贯非常优美而富有张力，在视觉上很快能吸引人的注意力。

刘：我慢慢地向不加修饰、不加构图的这样一种比较纯的真实电影的方式，不刻意追求观众的阅读节奏，或者说观影者的实用主义的那种态度。我尽可能排除这些东西，而让自然的语言、自然的场景恢复它本身，就是镜头的原始状态，就素材一样的。我这片子主要就两个场景，一个木匠的家，一个老的四合院。这两个场景空间结合大量的固定长镜头，每个镜头几十分钟，特别平常。最后我把海量的素材拿来一拼接以后，我发现它特别完备，从逻辑关系上也特别完整地交代了这个村庄的情况，不需要剪辑。

孙：但是你一直以长镜头那种优美、那种张力，能够紧紧地抓住人的那种特征，现在退回到这种长镜头，就是客观的几十分钟的场景，会不会类似“监控美学”，那你有没有想安装两个监控就好了，我为什么还要在这里拍长镜头？你的优势完全就丧失？

刘：那不一样，这个里面还存在着导演的内心活动，不是简单的一个监控，它还是有一些情绪在里面，我只是不干预而已。而且我还是有细部的内容，整个事态它不断地在变化，在穿插，人与人之间变得很有意思的事。

三

孙：现在这个片子的体量是一个宏大的巨篇，你是怎么考量的？

刘：那种全景式长镜头，我现在变得特别喜欢，以前读侯孝贤的东西，不是特别理解，但现在我完全能感觉到这种全景的客观和冷静，那种包容的美感，比如在木匠家那个场景的时候，木匠就是主角，然后我切到下一个场景，四合院的那个地方的时候，他们陈述的故事里面，同样会讲到木匠的事，而木匠就成为了另外一个配角。我觉得这个特别好玩。

孙：像舞台？

刘：另外一家里一帮人在聊天，他们聊的事情又涉及到木匠、涉及到四合院的那个老人，我突然觉得可以给这个片子加个副标题——“长篇视频小说”。

孙：追求一种多重空间多重复调叙事的风格？

刘：对，而且都很自然，阅读起来又不单调，你只要认真地看，就会觉得里面妙趣横生，而且有很丰富的内涵。里面的人物都特别丰满，因为我这个片子就是说是非的片子，就是遗忘的村子里多舌的女人和个别话多的男人互相攻击对方，打击对方，贬低对方，侮辱对方，都是互相攻击，在这儿攻击那个人，到那边去他们又在攻击这边的人。

孙：你觉得他们这是为什么呢？

刘：人的劣根性啊。中国人几千年留下来的嫉妒心，见不得别人富有，别人家那边儿女成群而我们家没孩子，别人家生的全是儿子，干活儿一群孩子不得了，我们家两个姑娘，搞不成，那就各种各样的差别。他们互相攻击，互相贬低，不择手段。但这是在中国农村无处不在的一种生存境况。现在就是人，整个人，人群，善意不够，他不会带着善意去学习，不为别人着想，纯粹就是自私自利。

孙：只为逐利。

刘：务实，特别实际，就是逐利。还有一些更深层的关系：伦理问题，这就没办法了。片子里面也涉及了很多。比如说留守的人，男女性压抑的问题，他们如何解决这些问题？我从影像上来展现这些问题，譬如木匠看 A 片，说下流话。当然，还有私通啊这种关系，我没拍到，但就互相传言嘛，

这些人的是是非非里面，这都是相当主题的东西。关于这些问题我们没影像，我只是说纪录片，没有人涉及过这些问题吧？只是故事片说过这些事儿。所以说我也不知道这个片子会完全、彻底地暴露了一个村庄的这些底色。我觉得，就沉积在最底下的别人不愿提及的一种悲情。对我来说，这就是一个乡村的悲情，特别让人觉得很虚弱，很值得怜悯，而不是什么可笑的事情。比如说木匠看A片，我作为一个导演，我也就站在旁边看，我当时作出这样一个选择，我不知道是为什么。但实际上我站在一边的时候，我有点儿想流泪的感觉，但我坚持跟他站在一起看。

孙：是对他那种生存处境，活得这种卑微的悲悯？

刘：对，悲悯，还有无可奈何啊。当他看这个的时候，他的老婆就在外面洗衣服，因为她耳朵不好，她听不见，而木匠把那个电视的声音放得很大，那A片里面的声音，她也听不见。

孙：她不进来看，是吧？

刘：她进来，进来看见了，就骂几句嘛。就说，“你好的不学，就学这些坏的”，她习惯了，他们几十年都这样生活。我问了，他说我们这村子以前，VCD时代，DVD时代，每家都有这样一个机器，而且在集镇上都有出租光碟的店，所以说这些东西一直有的。

孙：影像在这个村庄它是一个具体的存在，为满足某种需求的一种存在。

刘：就像这种大家都不愿提及的事情，我想在这个影片里面把它都呈现出来吧，心理很很复杂。

四

孙：这个跟你之前的《老人泉》，还有《新离骚》和《无尽循环》，从导演层面来说，导演自我和这个影片角色它是有区别的，是吧？在《无尽循环》里你把自己放进去，更接近于你真实的自我，我觉得你还是挺真诚的，你是想尝试疗愈自己的吧？

刘：对。《无尽循环》确实对我自己有一定的疗愈效果。我有许多心理问题和解决不了的心事，包括每年一次都会出现的那个梦境啊，以及那种没有处理好关系的那种难受的感觉。那部影片《无尽循环》做完了我这些心理问题基本上就没有了，它是一个很有实际疗愈的事情，就是我觉得不管怎么说我自己找到了解决的办法。

孙：每年一次的梦境是关于？

刘：关于母亲。就是每年一次梦见母亲，面对面却无话可说。心里充满特别难受的一种愧疚心，她也是眼巴巴地看着我，但是就是不能靠近，我曾经描述过，中间隔一条马路，每年会来一次。就那片子《无尽循环》拍完以后，我就再也没做过这个梦了。

孙：你当时拍《无尽循环》的契机是你之前在北京那个幼儿园拍那些孩子的过程中，你发现了孩子的心理问题？

刘：对。以前在北京的幼儿园拍摄，更多的时候老师也不知道，她们就看不到这些东西，你不长时间待在那儿，不接近的话就意识不到，而我对这个问题挺感兴趣。在完成了那个片子的拍摄之后，我再度跟这个幼儿园的老板合作，她邀请我拍关于她的幼儿园的片子。但我估计她当初是要我拍一个宣传片，给我提供一些资金帮助，结果我拍成了这样一个片子。就是说涉及到她的教育，关于儿童性问题方面，她们在国内做的一个最前卫最先锋的探索。同时，拍摄了因为童年的问题造成了她这个人一直到成年，一直到老都存在的心理问题和这个童年问题之间的一种关联。这样以来，我这个问题就直接很残酷地延伸到了给我投资的这个幼儿园的园长李跃儿家庭的内部去了。

孙：这部影片对她也是一种疗愈。

刘：对。片子完成以后她看了影片之后，她就把我的肩拍了一下说：“这是你最好的片子。”这样就算了，实际上她花了一笔钱，我揭了她的家庭的伤疤，所以说我还是觉得，老李（跃儿）还是个很了不起的人，很大气。

孙：在片子中她自己也进行了疗愈，在影片后面讲她讲述了她跟她的父亲和母亲的和解过程。我觉得这个片子的价值在于对她的疗愈。她以前只知道去对别人孩子的家庭说孩子要治疗，她是作为一个导师，而这个片子其实是给她一个反思自己，进行一个自我疗愈的机会。

刘：是。这至少是我的镜头的跟踪和追击啊，拍摄她让她重新把自己的生活，自己的内心梳理了一遍。不然的话她也没这个机会，她不会很细致地在回访自己的成长之路，回宁夏的老家啊，去见自己的病重的父亲，去母亲的坟上，痛哭，诉说啊。她做这一切还是因为这个影片的拍摄嘛。至于她这个人，她是不爱说这些话语的。我相信这个影片对她来说是有触动的，她只是不会跟我说这个事。这个片子以后我们就没有联系了。

孙：她也没说这个片子可以放映还是不可以放？

刘：不可以放。她老公说，一方面涉及到孩子的问题，孩子的隐私嘛。再就是她这个家族，她自己的孩子也不愿意把这些事情袒露在外面。所以说这又成了一个不能公映的片子。

孙：它的价值已经在那儿。纪录片有时候就像一个脚镣一样，你要想伦理上成全的话，创作会非常受限制的。

刘：我自己很满足了。我就觉得，朋友之间，一部影片就像一个朋友之间，彼此交谈一样。假如说有五个人能读懂这个片子，而且对这个片子有强烈的反应，我就觉得很成功了。要有真正的反应，就不是瞎起哄，不是表面的理解，能触动对方。

孙：《无尽循环》里面，每个人都可以看到自己家庭的隐痛而且又找不到出路。我对影片有些片段特别的心动，影片结尾在毛乌素沙漠里那个场景你是怎么想到的？

刘：我觉得这个大旷漠上，中间几个人，本身就有一种特别孤立的感觉。本来我们就准备去那边玩，我突然想到，试着把那个咨询师和被咨询者都安置到这沙漠中心去，摆脱室内咨询的这种阴暗私密的环境，换一种环境看会是什么样的感受。就是这样想的时候，正好我们去毛乌素，我就把她们带过去了。没想到拍摄的时候现场起风了，就产生了影片中的这种效果，我觉得挺好的。

孙：那个效果非常好。在大风中，人就像跟自己的内心抗争一样，大李（跃儿）老师跟卡拉在努力挣扎着爬上沙丘。

刘：一静一动，它产生了另外一种心理感觉。李跃儿叙说的时候，狂风大作，她说得泪流满面，这对她相当不容易，而且她老公就站在她旁边。我也是有意制造这样一种戏剧的感觉。

孙：那段我觉得对他俩也是一种内心的和解。

刘：应该是，但是老徐还是没有到那个境界。其实当时李跃儿是通过这个机会，她是在表达对丈夫的一种愧疚。

孙：对，她的愧疚，在她内心深处其实是爱他的。

刘：对，她觉得她自己一直不应该把他当成一个怪物来研究，实际上她内心应该是纯一点，就是爱这个人，那才是对的。她是在反省自己，我觉得这还是很可贵的。

孙：那天拍完以后这个澳洲来的心理治疗师卡拉，她有没有这种第一次室外心理治疗的效果不一样的？

刘：卡拉我估计她还是不太喜欢。在她的专业经验里恐怕没有这样的搞法，她最后自己说，还是不太成功。另外说对我的心理咨询，也不是太成功。我就在想，进行心理咨询咱们东方人是不是更困难一些？我们的内心更顽固啊，善于掩饰自己。她觉得很艰难。卡拉她直接说过，说她在咨询我的时候比较艰难。

孙：我们从小就学会各种掩饰自己，遮盖自己，已经形成一种坚固的外壳，它包裹太厚了，不太好能打开吧？

刘：对。

孙：但这个片子，就我个人和一些观众的反馈来说，大家在这里边都能够看到自己。其实每个人都有自己心理的幽暗，或者说有创伤，只不过你去看不看，这个片子能让你开始去思考这个内心幽暗的部分和创伤。

刘：这就是一个方法论的问题。我有这个意图，要让大家有这个角度思考的意识也就算是做了一点工作了。

五

孙：《新离骚》当时起这个名字，我初知的时候觉得你真胆大，但看了片子以后，我觉得是对屈原的那种怨愤的一种新的诠释。这个片子拍摄你花了一年多的时间，自编自导自拍自剪。拍这个片子你是怎么想到要选这种实验性的方式？

刘：现在想起来拍这个《新离骚》我都没什么印象，我都不知道我在干什么，我就一台相机，一个无线话筒，一个人，到处游荡。就是在山里到处走，到某一个地方，有某种意境，或者某种氛围，让我觉得有点儿不一样，我就会在那儿仔细地拍，有的时候拍着拍着，我会下意识地走到镜头前面去，我每一个动作，都不是表演，但它又都是表演。我说它不是表演，因为我不知道这个动作下面接什么动作，我完全是一瞬间的内心的真实的那种困惑，迷惑，甚至不自然，都留在脸上，所以说我又觉得它是一种特别自然的非表演。

就在这种情况下，我觉得这次拍摄特别抽象，我一会儿在水里，一会儿在杂草丛中，一会儿在废弃

的老屋里，一会儿在坟堆里面。我好像喜欢找这种比较刺激的地方，把自己一个虚弱的身体放在里面，看看是个什么样子。没有摄影师，我都把机器架着，大致的框和构图以后，让摄影机自己录制，而我就在前面晃来晃去，就是这样的。拍这个片子的时候，我对环境的氛围要求很高。往往最先触动我的就是这一个区域里，就像塔可夫斯基的《潜行者》中那个“区”的那种气息，吸引我，刺激到我，在这个环境里我会有强烈反应。我纪录的是我在这些环境里面的反应。片子拍摄我大概在整個鄂西山区，这么晃来晃去拍了七个月，之后一堆素材累积在那里的时候，我还是不知道我在干什么。这些素材之间没有逻辑关系，也没有一个主题，甚至碎片化的故事都谈不上。我就堆在那儿，很盲目地在这些素材里面游动，这时我开始觉得这些素材在推动着我要做些事情。

我看了《都灵之马》，还有金基德的《阿里郎》，那种对着镜头说话的场景，突然对我产生了一种启发。我在拍摄的时候确实对着镜头说了很多话，然后我开始剪辑。在剪辑的时候，我总觉得我的身后站着另外一个人，也在跟这个人说话。我经常半夜回头看，这个人还在不在？这个时候我就突然想到，我在拍摄素材的时候，一个镜头经常要重复拍许多遍嘛，一遍不是很满意，我要拍第二遍，而这些重复拍摄的素材，正好给我提供了一个创作的方便，就是形成两个人的身份和视点，让他们之间生成对话。你看我片子里面有很多（我演的）那两个人都在说同一个话题，比如说自杀，一个说“我每天都想自杀”，接着另外一个说，“我每天也是啊，早晨就想自杀”。这样就达成了几个自我的对话和对峙。

孙：拍摄《新离骚》时候，咱俩还是有交流的，我印象特别深的就是你跟我讲当地人的那种民风，你说他们每天像赶牲口一样地把孩子赶到外面去干活儿，甚至为几毛钱会把孩子骂得羞辱地上吊自杀。影片中那个少年自杀后水库淹没了他的坟墓，他漂泊的灵魂一直得不到安息，我觉得你其实是在为这些选择自杀来保持生命尊严的人讨价值。

刘：对，这种想法一直有。但是它也不是我的主题。我是觉得这个东西涉及到鄂西那一带很多人，他们过度自尊呐，也极度敏感，我为什么用“新离骚”这个名呢？我所拍摄的那个地方，它正好靠近秭归。

孙：跟你现在拍这个《新楚辞》不是一个地方，是吧？

刘：不是一个地方。

孙：人的气质不一样？

刘：完全不一样，秭归那边靠近楚国的中心地带，你看他们说话、唱歌的方式特别像离骚的那种文字、

句式，那种抑扬顿挫呀，什么归去来兮呀，这样的一些词藻。所以说我就想到用“新离骚”做片名，正好暗合屈原的那种自杀。只是我把他那种贵族化的自杀变成了我们特别卑微的一种自杀。但它本质上是一样的。人就是自尊心太强了，太脆弱了，为五毛钱就可以自杀了。他不是像屈原那种，忧国忧民而自杀。

孙：《新离骚》其实里面有你自己的精神状态很强烈的投射。你自己的性格也是自尊心特强，敏感多思。那你自己从远安县小电视台走到宜昌，到武汉，到大城市，在中央电视台跟一些很大牌的导演合作。对你来说，我觉得你走得越远有时候你心里会觉得有被冒犯，然后你要回去疗愈，有这样的心理体验吧？

刘：有。你说得很有道理，确实这样。

孙：《新离骚》有着很深的悲剧意识和一种神秘的死亡感。这种感觉我说不上来到底是哪里来的，我记得你跟我说过很多次你最喜欢的是沁孤的戏剧《骑马下海的人》（爱尔兰剧作家约翰·沁孤）。你的几部影片都有这种浓浓的悲剧感，你认为你大概是什么时候形成的这种悲剧意识？

刘：这个说来就相当复杂。我觉得这种悲剧就是楚人血液里的东西，就是这样的。我说句不相关也相关的话，我这次病，你看咱们这次采访现在我躺在病床上，刚刚内脏切出来很多东西，死里逃生一次。在这个病我还不知道的时候，春节期间，我吃下去就呕吐，后来我整个人就陷入一种极度虚弱状态，就是已经差不多了。我一直住在深山那个村子里，与外界联系不上，那个时候我突然就有放弃的念头。

孙：放弃生命？

刘：对。因为只是呕吐吧，呕吐完以后，身体是没有疼痛的，就很绵软的，我就觉得自己像在开玩笑。我觉得自己的生活也不是特别充实，活着与不活着又有什么不一样？就顺其自然，就这样滑过去算了。我还不能说是死掉，觉得就这样……滑过去，溜过去，我就想试瞬间的这样一种感觉。结果睡到第二天，黎明的时候我还是照样醒来了。醒来后我就想我还是得出村去，挣扎着爬上车，还自己开车到镇医院去输液。我要说的意思是，在那一瞬间人的反应，我的这个潜意识里面，有时候有种自虐……或者对死有某种渴望在里面，我想这是存在的。在我的片子里面，以前没想过，为什么从头到尾都充斥着这样的一些东西。而且这些东西会导致你产生不在乎死的观念，导致你自己的自尊心很强。就像我以前想我宁可死，也不肯在身体上动一刀，当然结果我还是被搞了一刀（大手术）……。这个故事就说我还是这个“区”的人的特质。

孙：跟你个人的性格有关吧。

刘：另外这个估计与童年的经历有关，又回到主题，就是小时候成长经历，家庭结构，父母关系，所遭遇的事情，这一定是都有关系的。

孙：在《新离骚》里其实你把自己的矛盾性也暴露出来了，通过你對自己表演的那个裸体的死灵魂的发问，你对自己的反思还是挺激烈的。虽然说看似在山里闲晃，但其实你的精神是挺焦虑的。那段是不是你自己的一个调整期？当时你结束了在北京的那个工作室的一年的工作之后回到这鄂西的山里，你在大城市里有种困兽在笼的感觉。

刘：就是那样。就两个人在那对话，谈自杀。本身我是一个不喜欢城市的人，是反城市主义者。

六

孙：但事实上拍纪录片影像，它恰恰是城市文化，现代化的媒介表达手段，这是一个矛盾，在你身上很激烈。

刘：这种激烈无处不在啊，在我生活中的每一个拐点，每一个选择点，都起了很大都作用。也许就是因它而诞生了人生的一个悲剧。在这个巨大的城市化浪潮中，你想选择急流勇退，是一个很危险的事情。

孙：你虽然是在湖北远安这个小地方成长，但你去过大城市，你拍摄的足迹几乎遍及全世界，然后你再回来看它这撕裂看得更清楚。一方面这里有一些美好的东西，但另一方面你眼看着这些乡村美好的东西在死去，然后留下一些粗鄙逐利、丛林法则一样的存在，这个时候你可能是更切身地感受到那种悲哀和疼痛。

刘：你说得对，旧县村八组，这五年就是我最根本的走向失望的一个过程。

孙：在拍《老人泉》的时候，其实你还是有点对他们这种生活与世隔绝、对桃花源的赞许。但到后面慢慢开始真的深入进去了。这个前后你拍了三十年？

刘：三十多年了。我从《老人泉》那个山顶走到旧县存的山谷这种最根本的变化，这五年过得感觉不太好。其实《老人泉》里老人那种生活我是最向往的。用毛子的话说，那老人的生活是有温度的，而我们的生活就不行。

孙：你在拍《老人泉》的时候，你还为了拍摄种油菜，让画面美起来，你内心还是有这种渴望，对他们那种生活的赞许，到拍旧县村的时候你不再进行任何场景的布置了。

刘：对，这就是实际情况。我不知道我是不是比较主观，在这个村八组的素材里面，那种阴郁的，腐败的东西更多一些，好像我的内心更绝望一些。我怀疑我这个病都与这个村庄的这几年拍摄有直接的关系。四川一个朋友说，你这是郁结成的病。在这个村庄里，它的人际关系更多的是这种冷漠啊，混乱无序，人之间的都是这种纯粹的利用和被利用的关系，这在一个农民的精神层面已经是很严重的一个状态。

孙：这几年我去你那个村子几次，我发现你其实不仅仅是在观察，你在那里居住和拍摄的过程，在用自己完全不同的行为和生活方式，你不同的身份，不同的人生境界来审视，也许你在改变着。你在那个村里恰恰检视出来人的另一面，就是有序、尊重、体面、艺术和精神高于物质的追求。这中间其实是有一种较量，一种互动，你可能多多少少还是对他们有一点影响和改变。你觉得有吗？

刘：但是我觉得我没有力量，和他们的能量比，我觉得我特别的虚弱。他们那种上千年的东西。我也经常会坐在他们中间，但这不是一种亲近关系。我主要是一种介入。介入，就是说，我要说明的是我和他们同样也是人，也同样在生活，这些都会被我的镜头记录下来。我想要让人知道摄影机背后，到底是一个什么世界的存在。很有意思，反而这种关系建立以后，我觉得和他们还有些感情。

INTERVENTION OR ACTION 介入或行动

Wang Jiuliang: I Want to Be a Dog that Bites

王久良：我特别希望做一条咬人的狗

Interviewer: HUANG Ying 黄英 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Zhang Zanbo: One Person's Destiny Is Not Convincing Enough

张赞波：一个人的命运不够说服力

Interviewer: CHEN Ping 陈平 Translator: Xiang FAN 樊响

Community Building in the Post-Caochangdi Era—A Glimpse of Wu Wenguang and His Team

“后草场地”时代的社群创造——吴文光和他的团队略记

Author: TONG Shan 佟珊 Translator: Xiang FAN 樊响

Wang Jiuliang: I Want to Be a Dog that Bites

Interviewer: HUANG Ying 黄英 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Wang Jiuliang (王久良) is known as the director of *Beijing Besieged by Waste* (垃圾围城) and *Plastic China* (塑料王国). The former was featured in national media and pushed Beijing to treat the landfill sites in the surrounding areas of the city; the latter was an international award-winning film, but soon disappeared from domestic market and also impacted the fate of *Beijing Besieged by Waste*. Today, searching on the internet, one can barely locate *Plastic China* and find no trace of *Beijing Besieged by Waste* at all.

The turning point was in 2017, the year when the ‘new cinema law’ that Wang Jiuliang mentions several times in his interview was promulgated. Compared to the first draft of China’s Film Law enacted in 1984, the Film Industry Promotion Law of the People’s Republic of China was dubbed by the media the first Chinese cultural industry law and exerted a great impact on the fate of many Chinese documentaries, including those of Wang Jiuliang.

In July 2021, Wang Jiuliang was busy with his new film, also on an environmental subject like *Seagulls* (海鸥), the film he had just completed. The year 2017, which he often refers to in the conversation, brought many challenges to the dissemination of his work, but at the same time stimulated him to think and explore further. In the eyes of Bao Kun (鲍昆), the art critic and exhibition organizer, Wang Jiuliang in 2008 was an introverted and reticent ‘child’, but extremely serious about his work. Once, when he said he wanted to see what Wang Jiuliang had shot besides his university graduation work, the latter carried his desktop computer all the way from Beijing to Pingyao to show him the contents. For many years afterwards, Wang Jiuliang continued to film and record in his original ‘clumsy’ and ‘awkward’ manner. But now he is no longer reticent in interviews, as Bao Kun says, because he clearly knows his own artistic principles and goals. In other words, he knows what he is doing.

In May 2021 I interviewed Wang Jiuliang at a café near the Communication University of China (中国传媒大学), during which he recalled his growth from a photography-loving boy to father of two children, and the decisions he has made in this complicated world. We talked about what he wanted to do, what he should do, what he could do, what he has been doing, and what he would always do in the future. He said, ‘I like to do things quietly, as an uncultured metaphor indicates: “a dog that bites doesn’t bark”, so I work hard to become a dog that bites.’

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Huang: You will go to Qinghai and stay there for the next four months. Does this mean that you have started your new film?

Wang: Yes. I just finished research in Yunnan and Qinghai in the last month, and I chose Qinghai as the location. This is one of the series of projects commissioned by Ant Forest (蚂蚁森林) on wilderness conservancy. Participating directors include Zhou Hao (周浩), Zhao Liang (赵亮), Fan Jian (范俭), and others.

There were two reasons for taking on this project. Firstly, we feel sympathetic with the subject matter and the values it represents, which are not only about financial profit. Secondly, the budget is generous enough to satisfy our demands both for making a living and for artistic creation. I think it is an interesting project and in recent years independent film makers have been taking on a lot of quite similar projects. In accepting this, we do not take it simply as a business exercise, but aim to create an artistic work. Both Zhou Hao and Zhao Liang want to find better subjects and stories to produce an art work, rather than simply tailor-making a commissioned film.

Huang: So you are not making a promo, but a real piece of work.

Wang: Yes, we would not accept the job if it was purely about making money. Why? Time is of the essence: if you pay me to do a commercial job for one year, I have to do it at the expense of one year of producing real work.

Huang: At this stage in life, time is the biggest cost.

Wang: Yes, time is the biggest consideration. Although the film is supposed to be thirty minutes long, I will spend a whole year on it: one month of research, followed by a period of preparation, and then four months filming and three months editing, a total of one year. The most important work for me this year is this film.

Huang: Is the film you have just completed a feature film?

Wang: No, it's a documentary. I do have a plan for a feature film, with the script recently finalized. If it

wasn't for this documentary project, I would have started to make a feature film this year.

I'm basically working on several projects at the same time. Since 2020, I've been simultaneously preparing and planning a few projects. Every single project takes a long time on, so there are both obvious advantages and disadvantages to working on one project over one time period. The disadvantage lies in the amount of expression—not the amount of work—delivered. You can't just express one idea over five years. You can see that we are all in a hurry: people are in a hurry once they're over forty as they feel so many things are left undone. In our middle age, our experience and lessons, what we have undergone, and the part of our abilities that have been seen and recognized by other people, will bring us more opportunities together with more responsibilities. So, I value my time and attach great importance to it.

Huang: Let's go back to your previous work. In which year did *Plastic China* (塑料王国) win an award?

Wang: At the Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival in November, 2016.

Huang: It was at the same festival that Fan Jian's *Still Tomorrow* (摇摇晃晃的人间) also won an award.

Wang: Yes.

Huang: In those years we had the feeling that there were more documentaries reaching the public, and their subjects were becoming more extensive, but still a large number of documentaries remained inaccessible to audiences.

Wang: You are right, 2017 was the key point, because the 'new film law' promulgated in that year stipulated that films without state permits were not allowed to attend even foreign film festivals. However, the fact is, many documentary film directors had already given up on the domestic market at the beginning of their career, knowing that their work would neither to be released, nor have any commercial value. As their films might also involve some sensitive topics, the foreign market was an important outlet instead. But the 'new film law' blocked the way to foreign markets, at least for directors working and living inside China, and thus took away their opportunities both at home and abroad.

Every director wants to find a good way out for their work. Where this way exists does not matter, but it must at least exist, otherwise, the passion and motivation of the creator will be greatly impaired.

Huang: So, there should be more channels of collaboration. Are you still working with CNEX (the main producer of *Plastic China*)?

Wang: We are still working with CNEX this year, co-producing *Seagulls*, which has just been finished. CNEX has a long history in making and distributing Chinese documentaries and was the first to support independent directors and films in the country. *Seagulls* was completed last year in a joint production with CNEX, which was then responsible for all the follow-up in the production and distribution of this film.

Huang: How would you describe *Seagulls*?

Wang: It is a short film we started in 2019, commissioned by ART for The World, an NGO sponsored by the United Nations, which invites directors from all over the world to create short films on a general theme every year or every other year. Chinese directors Jia Zhangke (贾樟柯, 2006) and Ai Weiwei (艾未未, 2012) have participated in the project. The one I am taking part in is on the theme ‘Interdependence’ and consists of the work of eleven directors. Originally, I was supposed to work on marine issues, waste pollution in specific, but I had been working on waste for so many years that I kind of didn’t want to repeat myself. Under the framework of marine issues, I ended up focusing on marine ecology, namely the ocean and its ecological changes through the eyes of seagulls. The production of the film went very smoothly, and it was completed in 2019.

In the process of researching and producing *Seagulls*, I found that this was an extensive topic and worth deeper exploration. Quickly I wrote another proposal and located an investor. It took only two months from signing the contract to the start of filming. Though it was during the pandemic, our communication online was still quite efficient. On April 1, 2020, we started to film and finished on September 30. With another six months of editing, this new film was completed now.

Huang: I remember after *Plastic China* you said in an interview that you wanted to make a feature film.

Wang: I started to work on the feature film in 2017 and spent a whole year writing a script. The ‘new film law’ promulgated in 2017 was a constraint on all of us; me and other directors all started to think about how we could continue our work. If the social environment was not going to be favourable and permit us, should we find other options? I was not the only one thinking about shifting from documentary to feature film; many of my friends such as Xu Tong (徐童) and Du Haibin (杜海滨) are also trying this. Despite the fact that we don’t know whether such a change is promising or not, we cannot ignore the fact that many

people are taking this turn. Is it because the new trend more eye-catching and profitable? No, none of us care about that.

Huang: So this turn in the field is not as much about chasing capital and profit as it seems?

Wang: Mostly it's not. Some directors, such as Yang Lina (杨荔钠), made this transition even earlier. I think that 2016 to 2017 was a landmark period. I spent the two years from 2017 to 2018 working on a feature film, but felt it very hard to make any progress due to the recession in the film and television industry. In addition, the time-consuming process of script polishing made things even harder for me. In 2019 I started to work on commissioned projects while writing feature film scripts; since 2020 I've been working on *Seagulls*, and currently I am taking on a new project.

At the moment, we are trying our best to apply for the film release license (Dragon Seal) for *Seagulls*, which, if denied, would mean it couldn't screen at any film festivals even by invitation, nor could it reach an audience. If this is the situation, it would be a very sad, the saddest situation for a filmmaker.

Huang: Apart from restrictions on entering film festivals another unfavourable challenge is the loss of independent screening. If these still exist, they are underground and very marginal.

Wang: That's right. I was supposed to go to Changsha in the next few days to attend a documentary screening event, where Zhou Hao's *Cotton* (棉花), my *Plastic China* (塑料王国), and *We are Smart* (杀马特我爱你) by Li Yifan (李一凡) will be shown, together with lectures and some other academic activities. It would have been an interesting occasion, which, however, was refused permission. The whole event was cancelled.

Huang: Early on the screening environment in Beijing was very good, and then it gradually deteriorated.

Wang: That time has gone forever. I feel very sad about the current situation. A large portion of the new documentaries that come out every year represent the values of young directors, and you can tell by the choice of the topics that almost none of them are bravely facing up to social problems. You can't blame young people for being too constrained, as you have to understand how forceful and influential power is on them. Both the social constraints on and the self-protection of the young people are becoming more obvious. A young man in his twenties came to me and said: 'Sir, I want to work on this topic, but it is definitely impossible because it's too sensitive.' Upon hearing this, I said to myself, 'what then is the point of you

coming to me, just do it if you have the guts. You only have an idea for a film, you haven't made it, and you're already talking about it not being able to pass censorship.'

I look forward to embracing the determination and courage of young people, in the sense that a new-born calf is not afraid of the tiger, and yet now I hear so many voices advocating self-censorship, self -constraint, self-castration, and extreme selfishness from the field. In the past five to six years, these kinds of voices have become louder and louder.

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Huang: Let's talk about your youth. You were born in 1976 and started studying photography?

Wang: Yes, I graduated in photography from Communication University of China.

Huang: *Beijing Besieged by Waste* was originally a photographic work.

Wang: Yes, it was exhibited at the Lianzhou Photography Exhibition (连州影展) in 2009 for the first time. I started to make films after the Olympic Games in 2008; during the Olympics I was photographing a project named 'Ghost and Spirit Belief' (鬼神信仰). At that time I was more interested in so-called contemporary art.

Huang: At the beginning, you were more interested in contemporary art?

Wang: At the very beginning? I was a fancier of flowers and plants. In 1994, when I was eighteen and in the second year of high school, I was into photography, crazy about taking pictures of flowers, plants, people, cats and dogs.

A teacher at my school was a photographer. He would set up a stall after class to sell his photos for one yuan each. At that time developing a photo cost fifty cents, half the price of the picture. I bought a lot from him and thought all of them were beautiful. My previous exposure to photography was very functional family photos and group photos by professional photographers. I had narrow horizons as a child and my vision started to open up at high school. I was so attracted to those beautiful pictures and was touched by the fact that such beauty was produced by a camera. I bought many photos and sometimes even bought two of the same if the picture was really appealing. Soon I bought a camera with my own money.

Huang: What was the brand of your first camera?

Wang: Red Plum, JG, which means Jianguo (建国 , literally the establishment of the country), 304A. It cost one hundred and eighty yuan, a real asset in 1994, and I kept it in my bed at night. It was so precious to me that I was afraid it would be stolen from the dormitory when I was having evening lessons in the classroom. During mid-day break, I would quickly snatch several steamed buns and rush to take photos. I realized later how rare that enthusiasm was, with which you can accomplish everything. It was hard for me to relive that kind of craziness later in my life.

I didn't go to college after high school and did several different jobs, with my camera with me all the time. I had a photography studio of my own from 1996 to 1997, which turned out to be a failure. In 2001, after muddling through for five years, I came to realize that not going to college would be a great obstacle to my life. University was a benchmark, going to university or not made a great difference to one's life. For example, in 2000 a newspaper in Shandong was recruiting and I was eager for the position of photojournalist, being confident that I was a very good photographer and adequately qualified. However, not having college diploma stopped me from reaching my goal. I used not to care about whether I had college background at all, which, nevertheless, increasingly became a hindrance in my life: the further I wanted to go, the greater backlash I suffered until it finally ground me to a halt. Hence, I told myself that I must go to college. I passed the entrance examination and was admitted to Xi'an University (西安大学) , later renamed Xi'an University of Engineering and Technology (西安工程科技大学) . Studying photographing there for one year, and dissatisfied with my learning experience, I quit the school and took another entrance exam, for the Communication University of China.

Huang: You were kind of stubborn. But every time you succeeded at those exams.

Wang: I thought it was very easy to pass the university entrance examination. I asked myself, which was easier, making 10,000 yuan or getting into university? For me, to be admitted to a university was much easier than earning 10,000 yuan. How difficult it would be to earn 10,000 yuan!

Huang: It is quite difficult to make money. Even today, it is hard for people to earn money.

Wang: I graduated in 2007 and have been making things since then. The subjects I was working on changed with the social environment. At the beginning I liked to make documentaries, then from 2005 to 2006 my

interest was in contemporary art. In the three years from 2005 to 2007, my works were mainly based on the stories of ghosts and spirits told me by my grandmother in my childhood. I was very satisfied with ‘Ghost and Spirit Belief’ (鬼神信仰) which was shown first in Lishui (丽水), Zhejiang province. There I got to know Bao Kun as he liked my work very much and gave further suggestions. It was modified and completed later at the end of 2008 and sent to the exhibition in Pingyao.

It was at that time that I started to question my own work and artistic principles. The reason was simple: my photographs were useless; they were only meaningful to myself. I may have been immersed in the beautiful ambience that I had created, but no one other than myself was interested and thought them important. This photograph was also useless for a society undergoing turbulent change. Thinking that I had done something of no significance, I cried bitterly. Truly, my face was covered with tears.

I remember vividly that in September 2008, I had a long talk with Bao Kun in Pingyao, telling him my confusion about value judgments. I had invested all this time, yet my efforts and actions were for nothing. I had a fear of the future, which was a kind of stress reaction and a prelude to transition in my life. Realizing the uselessness of what I was doing, I started to think what would be useful and meaningful? What else could I do? How could my existence relate to myself, people around me, or people of particular groups? Mr. Bao said: ‘You’re right. You should open your eyes and look out at the world.’ This was exactly what he said, it’s of special significance for me.

Mr. Bao said that I could turn to environmental issues. We then talked about my photography of waste scattered all over my hometown and my perception of the changes in the countryside today, namely, that mainstream consumer values were penetrating every aspect of rural life. For example, by the creek where he played, swam, and caught tadpoles, a country boy suddenly found a BASF product. What was that? It was a product from the German chemical giant. I was shocked. Farmers farm laboriously on their lands: they own the land, and they use their strength, but with fertilizers from BASF, and their harvests going to Korea, Japan, and so on. They come to know that they were part of the global production chain. Mr. Bao said, ‘It’s not just your village. Beijing, the capital, is also suffering serious waste problems if you go and look around.’ I told him I saw it with my own eyes when I studied at university in Beijing. That was the origin of *Beijing Besieged by Waste*.

Mr. Bao suggested that I should do some research after return to Beijing. I went back and immediately rode my motorbike around to have a look. I visited a lot of places in the Beijing suburbs. Mr. Bao helped me throughout the whole process. At first I was thinking in terms of art work, thinking about big words such as

consumerism, but then I gradually realised that the situation was related to so many people, and was in the most urgent need of being addressed. To put it bluntly, people should know about it. In April or May 2009, I met Mr. Bao in 798 Art Zone and showed him the demo. He said, ‘Just show the situation and facts as you see them. Let’s talk about art later. The situation itself will be sure to cause a big shock to society. First off, you only need to film.’ I kept photographing for over half a year and sent the pictures to the exhibition in Lianzhou.

Huang: The problem of waste was urgent then. *Beijing Besieged by Waste* was sensational because it was a real siege.

Wang: I finally concluded that what I was doing was social work integrated with art. I did it with my own conscience as a human being. I was fully devoted at the time, and first looked for answers to my own questions: where was the problem? What were the specific locations? What was the situation like? And what were the impacts upon the environment? During the process, the more answers I found, the more doubts were generated, which in turn pushed me to look for further explanations. I felt I was really in it, devoting huge amount of time, energy, and effort.

Huang: Did you ride a motorbike to do your work?

Wang: Yes, I was using a motorbike that cost over 10,000 yuan. Later I sold it and bought another one, which was stolen in Yanjiao (燕郊) in 2017.

Huang: How did you take photos and make the film at the same time?

Huang: Mr. Bao suggested I take video at the same time, in order to make the work more influential. Indeed, after taking photos for two months, I found that still images were not adequate to express my opinions and feelings; videos were really needed. I immediately asked a classmate to help with the filming. At that time I had no idea of what a documentary was about, I was only thinking of using two media to explore the same topic, a city besieged by waste. Finally, the completed version was subtitled ‘Wang Jiuliang’s Observations’. That was true.

Huang: So your observations and narration are the clue to the film.

Wang: Yes. In the end, I found that after shooting so much footage, I had to put it together—but how? We

sent a short film to the exhibition, which has its own merits in revealing the development of the story through its own particular language: it presented content that could not be expressed in still photos. In 2010, after the exhibition, I started to make a proper documentary film. Before, I had taken a documentary course at university, but never made one.

Huang: You always thought of yourself as a photographer. And then you found that photography was not adequate to express deep meaning, and thus a new outlet was required.

Wang: Right. Two months after filming the footage we started to make the film. My good friend Fan Xuesong (樊雪松) knew what I was doing; and he was working on his graduate program at the Film Archive (电影资料馆), specialising in the French New Wave. He discussed films with me while I was taking photos and we sometimes quarrelled: I was thinking in terms of photos, and he, filmmaking. We had different opinions on the timing of filming events: me, I needed to shoot and then get out quickly; he needed to wait patiently for conflict to arise.

Huang: Which scene in the film was the outcome of him waiting?

Wang: The first scene of the garbage truck, the scavenger, and the flock of sheep. First, I took pictures of the sheep and left. Recalling the scene, the more I thought about it, and the more interested I became. Fan Xuesong said we should go back the next day; we did, and on that day we mainly shot video. The scene was a turning point of the whole work; it was filmed in January of 2009.

Before that, our working pattern was that I took the lead taking photos and he filmed me behind. He was consciously following and trying not to disturb me. He was filming as an observer: shooting the scene when appropriate or shooting me if not. He was not waiting for any particular moment. The turning point occurred half a year later. Under his influence, I discovered how wonderful images were and how fantastic documentary was. We started to simultaneously take photos and make film, attaching equal importance to both. Then he graduated and went to work, I had to work on my own, using my own DV camera and another one borrowed from the university. I also found an assistant to help. The filming was completed at the beginning of 2011, and in the period of editing following I occasionally went to the site to do some make-up filming.

Through this process I undertook a thorough study of documentary making, learning how to edit and then editing. Mr. Bao said I shouldn't waste my time on editing and should ask professional editors to do it. But

I had my own point of view: first, I didn't have money to pay an editor; second, I wanted to learn and thus to know everything about documentary making. For me, that was a process of learning. The process of editing is the process of making narratives: what to express and how to present your ideas. During that time I watched a huge number of documentaries in order to learn from others.

Huang: What documentaries were influential on you?

Wang: The works of Gu Tao (顾桃), Xu Tong, and Yu Guangyi (于广义), the 'Three Musketeers' of the field, real veteran documentary filmmakers. I also got to know of the idea of independent film, and thus was following directors like Zhou Hao; I watched his film *Cop Shop* (差馆) and Zhao Liang's *Petition* (上访). These documentaries first opened my eyes to the possibilities of independent filmmaking, which was especially important for me. Before that, I had only taken a course on documentary and watched some films, but never had the feeling that I was able to participate. After I started to make films on my own, I understood and felt totally sympathetic to other independent film directors' feelings, skills, and points of view.

Back then, many people thought that filmmaking was a huge project, especially just after graduating from the Film Academy. People were pursuing great careers, talking about casts and crews, a big, messy bunch of people. But it's not. The industry system and the culture in the field were misleading young people. I think training and enhancing consciousness of self-expression should be of the first importance. These are not necessarily fulfilled by making documentary; taking photos could do and writing articles as well.

Huang: There are lots of pathways to expression, but motivation and self-awareness are of more importance.

Wang: Right. When I was watching the films of those veteran directors while editing *Beijing Besieged by Waste*, I felt deeply how important it was for directors to establish and consolidate their own subjective status in their works.

In 2012, I started to make *Plastic China* and I knew I was an independent filmmaker. I had very clear principles for my work: first, it would be in the form of a documentary film. By then I was no longer taking photos, and due to my previous experience, I knew how to make better documentaries. For instance, I was fumbling through making *Beijing Besieged by Waste* all by myself, and I understood that the same method wouldn't do with *Plastic China*, for three reasons: first, the production period could not be too long; second, I needed funding; third, one person's effort alone cannot produce excellent work. I myself had identified the subject of the film early on, but help from others would make the work more efficient and substantial. As a

result, partners and investment were involved. Unlike *Beijing Besieged by Waste*, *Plastic China* was a joint project.

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Huang: How did you find partners for *Plastic China*?

Wang: I was very confident in this film. First, I thought this was a worthwhile subject, a valuable story to be presented. Second, I believed colleagues in the field would understand its value. A classmate of mine gave me the initial investment through his company, which we worked with for one year. Later, I reached out to CNEX, who quickly became the sole investor. CNEX had its own criteria for judging a film, namely its international market distribution potential, whether its subject matter was of international concern, and it possessing some commercial value. When they agree that a film meets these criteria, cooperation follows immediately.

Huang: This is all in line with *Beijing Besieged by Waste*.

Wang: Yes, it was a continuation, a further exploration of the same topic. The trigger was the screening at Berkeley in May 2010 of *Beijing Besieged by Waste*. There, I visited a waste sorting project in order to learn about it, knowing that they were more advanced in this field. The manager said frankly to me that the waste all went to China. He said this inadvertently, but of course, if I wasn't Chinese he wouldn't have said it. I felt uncomfortable at this information, knowing that it was a fact. Before, I had heard about foreign waste, but have not encountered it by myself; then a foreigner told me that all the waste was being sent to my homeland—a huge amount of really dirty waste!

I was fully motivated by this subject and immediately started to collect all kinds of materials. The following year, I looked for and then visited the places processing imported waste, such as metal, clothing, and plastic, and worked every day for the whole year. In addition to filming *Plastic China* in 2012, I also filmed on other subjects, which was a process of self-modification. We tend to make a film on paper, so we visited a lot of places in Hebei, Shandong, Zhejiang, and Guangdong, in order to decide on the locations and the structure.

Huang: You were not merely doing research, but also were looking for more options and ways to make a documentary.

Wang: Yes. My goal was to produce a work of art in the form of a documentary. At that time, I had some disagreements with Mr. Bao, who insisted that I should stick to my own methodology and efficiently reveal facts through photos and videos. He did encourage me to make the documentary but thought that I should look closely, constantly, and continuously at social problems and keep filming them even when the conditions were not favourable. But my aim was to make a real film, so I also spent lots of time and energy on technical and technological problems. Mr. Bao worried that I might have departed from my original intention. He suggested I finish it within six months, but I spent five years, producing huge amount of materials. Mr. Bao said, ‘Wang Jiuliang, I didn’t want to talk to you for years. You did not listen to me.’ I said, ‘Mr. Bao, I agree with your point of view, and very likely I could be more productive by following your suggestions.’ This was not a question of right or wrong. It was just a different choice.

To be honest, when it came to the fifth and the sixth year, I started to reflect on Mr. Bao’s advice and also felt that it was not worthwhile in terms of productivity and efficiency to spend such a long time on a single topic. Also, I took many detours as I was learning by doing. Now, when I am about to initiate a project, I am able to make very specific and relevant decisions, but back then, I couldn’t. Looking back to those five years, I knew I could only have worked that way. In that period it was through work that I began to make progress.

Huang: Making documentary films was also the process through which you learned further?

Wang: That’s right. I attended conferences and workshops only after I had my own plan, which served as the platform for my development. It was a process that people from outside could hardly understand. I found that was not only a process of self-learning and learning from others, but also a process of learning from the overall system. What I learned was not only about making films, but also collaborating and working with different styles. Also, I had a clearer understanding of the future possibilities for dissemination and benefits (not just financial) of the documentary film.

My ultimate goal was to tell the truth and bring it to more people. If a great number of people have heard, seen, and known about something, bad situations will definitely change for the better through mine and others’ efforts. This is the real benefit. This is not a pretentious statement, but my starting point all along. To produce the best work in the field, to win an award and receive financial returns, and to bring great changes to the world with your work, which do you think is the most significant? Definitely the last one. Of course, I don’t think it’s bad if others do not think in the same way. People have their own merits and strengths, and I insist on mine. For me, I care about which particular value of my work can be maximized. Being a good a

film director and doing my work professionally are both means to serve the ultimate goal. I have no doubt about this point.

Huang: Technology should definitely be in the service of values.

Wang: I agree. That's why I'm not obsessed with technology, though this is another question. I'm not against anything, as long as there's a means for self-expression. I'm even teaching myself to make feature films, which I think might be appropriate for some certain subjects.

Huang: What's really important is that your way of expression can achieve maximum value.

Wang: Yes, the subject and the content are the core, which determine what medium you choose for expression: photos, documentary film, or feature film, and so on. Of course, I could express myself through music even if you suggested it. So, for me, I am only able to express myself via images.

Huang: It's still about making a choice within the general framework of visual expression, but it doesn't mean that when you're obsessed with one, you discard another.

Wang: No. Many people say that I am like a blind man picking the corn in the field, picking up one and throwing away the other. I had been taking photos for many years and then gave it up after receiving an important annual award. I thought later that it would have been easier for me if I had continued in photography. I started from scratch in documentary filmmaking, a primary school student in this field with no-one to turn to. Then, in 2017 and 2018, at the point when I began to attract attention in the field of documentary, I shifted to feature films, where again I was a layman. But now I think every step is worthwhile; it's good that I am always eager to learn and to explore an unknown field.

Huang: You have learned more ways of expression and gained more options.

Wang: But that has taken a lot of time and energy and demanded patience as well. You cannot hurry to master a new tool for practical benefits. The core requirement was the intention to get the work right. It's serious, not about having a bit of fun.

Huang: Once you get into it, you'll find more important projects waiting for you. For example, your first attention to the environmental issue continuously brought you new concerns, from *Beijing Besieged by*

Waste to Plastic China.

Wang: For now, till the next step, till the future.

Huang: Will this constrain you?

Wang: It would be wrong if it becomes a constraint. The ideal state should be that you are in it with all your heart and soul. I think I'm okay at the moment, I'm still in that state. Mr. Bao said, 'Wang Jiuliang, you must not lose it, it's your very great strength, and the work you do is of eternal value.' This is me in the eyes of the other. I said, 'Mr. Bao, don't worry, I don't do my work out of worldly and practical concerns, I do it because I really like it, and also I have found from my experience that worthwhile subjects are inexhaustible.'

I thought to myself that no matter what I do in my life, even if I start to make romance films, I will never give up environmental and ecological agendas. *Seagulls* is about marine ecology, and during its production process another possible film also occurred to me, which I am about to start now. The Ant Forest project was originally a commission, and I extended it into a plan for a feature film at the same time. Besides, I have two more ecological projects as well as feature film plans...

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Huang: In your speech on 'Yixi' (一席), you quoted a sentence: 'infinite distances and numerous people are all related to me.' No matter how big the issue seems, it finally comes down to the individual.

Wang: Although this is a very literary statement, it is actually quite revealing about me. Almost all environmental and ecological issues are public issues, and you work on them for the benefits of others, and in the eyes of others, you are also the other. I'm not saying that this incident should have a close connection to me, or that it's something that must happen on my doorstep. An adult should be responsible for all that happens in this world, so the first priority I attached to my agendas are their public value, namely, they should be relevant to the majority of people and be able to promote the solution to their problems. I'm a bit idealistic and want to make my work useful. I am not interested in becoming a technological expert, I just need to know how to use a computer, how to produce documentary and feature films, and how to become a qualified director in a technical sense. All these skills serve my ultimate goal of working for the good of the majority people in the world.

We often say that documentary is the work of an artist, but that's not always the case. Of course, it is better that a documentary film is simultaneously a work of art, but don't forget there can be a trade off between the two. If we have to talk about artists, Zhao Liang is my favourite: his unique character does not only lie in his content, but also in his innovative and pioneering style. On the whole I think this field is developing well, as people are doing their work on different subjects and through different methods. Just as the saying goes, with only one tree there is no forest.

I think good documentary filmmakers and artists have a natural exclusivity, that is, they do not want to repeat the work of others and pursue uniqueness. For example, the topic of *Beijing Besieged by Waste*, having been reported by various media outlets, was not covered in any other documentaries. It was only me who took it forward on the basis of the previous information. This topic was not my discovery, I just did the work in a more laborious manner, spending more time and effort on it. And the subject of *Plastic China* had been covered by many media outlets—slapdash coverage, though, making no impact at all.

Huang: Yes, actually the problems presented in *Beijing Besieged by Waste* and *Plastic China* had been widely discussed by people.

Wang: I totally agree! Media reports were the sources of my material. Of course, I did much more than just string them together.

Huang: As a director, it is your duty and mission to dig deeper into this issue. After the screening of *Beijing Besieged by Waste*, Beijing cleaned up all the waste sites in the surrounding area. Stories were sent to administrative departments for internal reference and were also reported by national media. It indeed had a positive impact at the time.

Wang: It's true. And later we lamented how different the social environment of *Plastic China* was from that of *Beijing Besieged by Waste*. We talked about two things. Firstly, the environment for media and public opinions was comparatively relaxed. Terms like 'Beijing' and 'Waste Besieged' are both highly sensitive today, but both were covered by all kinds of media back then. Secondly, in addition to the measures taken by the environmental department, the Beijing Municipal Government also attached great importance to this problem. The then-Vice Mayor of Beijing asked me in for a chat and promised to combat the problem within a certain amount of time with an investment of 10 billion yuan. Later I revisited the sites to see if they were really doing something; they had actually expended tremendous on doing so.

I think that was a win-win outcome: I received recognition and encouragement, which stimulated me to do more work. It's like how kids are encouraged: after getting sweets for doing something good, they'll do more. I was like a child in this sense, determined to film *Plastic China* after such positive feedback on *Beijing Besieged by Waste*.

Huang: But the fates of the two films were totally different.

Wang: Yes. The two films had great social impact, and then got blocked, became invisible to the public. The good thing was that they were completed. Before disappearing, they had caused an 'earthquake'— a term used by those involved—in the entire industry. They phoned me to tell me that my film had impacted the entire industry and the government departments involved had already taken action. It was a huge business and then it was all gone!

Huang: So, the films were successful in the sense of bringing change in the world by sacrificing themselves.

Wang: Yes. The lucky aspect was that they had already been distributed. What if they'd been eliminated even before reaching a single audience member. What a pity it would have been! Of course, we were tactful and didn't make a big fuss during promotion. The ultimate fate of a film is a matter of timing and luck, which are out of my hands. What I care about very much is whether my film can reach an audience; there would be no point in making the effort if there were no possibility of screening it. Film is about communication; nobody would make a film to watch only for themselves. This generates a strong feeling of sadness. Is that because I am getting old? Perhaps.

Huang: What are your feelings at this age?

Wang: Now I can only sigh on many topics! But I always prefer to stay peaceful and do my work quietly. As an uncultured saying goes, 'a dog that bites does not bark'. I want to be a dog that bites. The reasons I take on commissions is that they are worthwhile and financially supported. Though more constraints come with a commission, at least there is a way for the work to be seen.

Huang: Is there a sense of second best?

Wang: Yes. The weakness of people is obvious, no one is eternally strong. It's not so much about bending

and scraping and currying favour, but about being constrained by some powerful force and not being able to express something adequately. Sometimes I think about the relationship between people and society as a whole: what am I supposed to do? I have not been kidnapped by others, nor become a warrior advancing into battle. We are all human beings, with our own weakness. The basic starting point is to stay alive, which is my basic right, and sometimes also an excuse.

Huang: How do you look at yourself? Do you think you are a warrior as you mentioned it just now?

Wang: I still think I'm quite brave, just that my methods keep changing. Because I still believe that tomorrow will be better, the future will be better; history proves that this society keeps moving forward. Although society is stumbling forward, I still believe it *is* currently forward. We have children and I believe children in the future will have it better.

Huang: How many children do you have?

Wang: Two daughters, eleven and two years old. A father is responsible if his children don't have a good life. This is not about how much money a father gives to his children. For instance, I feel very uncomfortable with the situation that we live in at the moment; I have the right to blame my parents for not doing enough for us. Therefore, I hope that in the future, although I cannot influence macro issues, at least my children will know that I have tried hard for them. This is very important for me.

Huang: Did you think in this way before you became a father?

Wang: No.

王久良：我特别希望做一条咬人的狗

黄英

王久良以《垃圾围城》和《塑料王国》两部纪录片立足，前者曾被国家级媒体报道，并直接影响了北京市对周边垃圾填埋场的治理工作；后者国际获奖，却很快在国内传播渠道销声匿迹，并直接影响到《垃圾围城》的命运。时至今日，在网络上搜索两部影片，依然是前者少有幸存，后者难觅踪迹。

这一命运节点出现在二〇一七年，也是我们对谈中王久良多次提及的“新电影法”颁布时期。与一九八四年诞生的中国电影法第一稿相比，《中华人民共和国电影产业促进法》的实施被媒体称作我国文化产业领域的第一部法律。不止王久良的作品，中国诸多纪录片的命运也都深受影响。

二〇二一年七月，王久良正在新的拍摄项目里忙碌，包括刚刚完成的纪录片《海鸥》，依然聚焦环境议题。在他口中时常提起的二〇一七年，给他的作品传播带来很多困难，似乎也给了他进一步思考和探索的理由。在艺术评论家、策展人鲍昆眼里，二〇〇八年前后的王久良是一个内向讷言的“孩子”，但极度认真。比如他提出想看看王久良大学毕业作品之外的拍摄内容，王久良就从北京直接搬着一部台式机去了平遥。其后的许多年，王久良一直以最初这样“笨重”和“不聪明”的方式在拍摄、记录着，但现在的他在面对采访时已经不再寡言。如鲍昆所说，他已经明确了自己的艺术理念和行动方向，简而言之，知道自己在做什么了。

二〇二一年五月，我在中国传媒大学附近一家咖啡馆见到了王久良，他回忆了自己的成长历程，从热爱摄影的少年到两个孩子的父亲，面对纷杂世界的选择。我们聊到想做的、该做的、能做的、在做的，以及将一直做下去的。他说：“我更喜欢默默做事情，用一个非常粗俗的比喻就是，咬人的狗不叫，所以我特别希望做一条咬人的狗。”

黄英（以下简称黄）：接下来要去青海四个月？所以新项目已经进入到拍摄状态了？

王久良（以下简称王）：对。前段时间我刚去做了调研，去了一个月，云南、青海，我想在青海拍摄。这个项目是委托拍摄，“蚂蚁森林”野外保护地的一个纪录片系列，导演分别有周浩、赵亮、范俭、我，还有其他人。

接这个项目有两方面的原因，第一方面，它的主题指向或者价值观我们是认可的，不光是给钱就干。第二，也恰恰是制作经费相对宽裕，无论是周浩、赵亮，还是我，都需要生活，要创作，也需要收入。我觉得这个还是挺有意思的，特别是近几年来，我们所谓的独立纪录片导演接这种案子还挺多的。既然做，我们就真的没拿它当简单的活干，大家都奔着创作作品的态度去做的，无论是周浩还是赵亮，都希望能找到更好的题材和故事，尽可能称之为作品，而不单单去量身定制给你做个什么东西就完了。

黄：不是做宣传片的概念，还是做作品。

王：是，如果纯粹是为了赚钱的话，也不一定会干。为什么呢？时间是最重要的。比如说你给我钱让我干一年的活，那此消彼长，我可能一年就做不了一个称之为作品的东西。

黄：在人生这个阶段，时间成本成了最大的成本。

王：对，最大的考虑因素。虽然说成片是一个三十分钟短片，但是我的计划整整是一年。调研一个多月，前期筹备不说了，中期拍摄四个月，后期制作三个月，今年结束了。所以我今年主要的任务就是做这个。

黄：刚刚完成的是剧情片吗？

王：也是纪录片。有一个剧情片计划，但是剧本算是刚刚完成一个基本定稿，还没有进入运作状态，要不是今年这个纪录片项目，我就做了剧情片。

我现在基本上同时进行几个项目。从二〇二〇年开始，至少在筹备和策划多个项目。一个项目的周期很长，有时候可能在一段时期内只做一件事情，它的优势很明显，但劣势也很明显，比如涉及到表达的数量——不是指作品的数量，你不可能五年时间只说一句话。你发现我们都很急了，人一过四十岁都很急了，好多事情没做完。而且到现在这个阶段，你的阅历，你的经验，你的积累，包括基于你的能力得到认可的前提下，获取的资源会更多，自然事情就更多，这也是一个过程。所以我把时间看得很紧、很重。

黄：我们回溯一下吧，关于之前的作品。《塑料王国》获奖是哪年？

王：二〇一六年底，十一月，在阿姆斯特丹纪录片电影节。

黄：和范俭《摇摇晃晃的人间》是同一届的。

王：对。

黄：那几年我们有一个感受，进入大众视野的纪录片好像多了一些，而且题材也广了一些，但是依然还有更多的没有机会被看到。

王：你说对了，二〇一七年是一个非常重要的节点，因为二〇一七年“新电影法”开始颁布实施，其中有一条规定就是，在未获得国家颁发的公共许可的情况下，连国外电影节都不可以参加。实际上很多的纪录片，我们在创作之初就放弃国内市场了，知道放不出去，也没什么商业价值，或者说可能会涉及到一些敏感问题。国外市场是一个重要的出口，但是“新电影法”颁布实施之后，至少在大陆生活和创作的导演受到非常非常严重的影响，现在基本上都会面临国内外双重没有机会的可能。

每个人做作品，都希望有一个非常好的出口，这个出口无论在哪里，一定要有。如果没有的话，它会极大影响和挫败我们创作的激情和动力，这个很重要。

黄：所以要多一些合作模式。那你现在还跟 CNEX（《塑料王国》主要出品方）有合作吗？

王：今年跟 CNEX还在合作，联合出品《海鸥》，就是刚完成的纪录片。和 CNEX合作很多年了，我觉得 CNEX在华语纪录片的创作发行领域历史是比较悠久的，如果说对独立导演和艺术类型的纪录片创作，他们应该是最早一拨提供扶持的。《海鸥》去年刚完成，他们是联合出品，以及后续制片，现在所有后期的事情都是他们在处理。

黄：《海鸥》是一部怎样的纪录片？

王：二〇一九年开始做，当时是一个受委托制作的短片。委托方是联合国赞助的一个 NGO组织 ART for The World。这个机构一般情况下每年或者隔年会在一个大的主题下邀请全球的导演去创作短片集。中国已经参加过这类短片集创作的，有贾樟柯（2006年）和艾未未（2012年）。我参与的主题叫“相互依存”，一共 11个导演的作品，我是其中一个。最初的委托是有关海洋议题，具体关于海洋垃圾污染，但是我对垃圾议题拍了这么多年了，有点不想重复了。海洋议题的大框架下，我最后选了海洋生态，模拟海鸥的视角去看待海洋以及海洋生态的变化，二〇一九年很顺利就做完了。

然而在调研和制作短片的过程中，我发现这个题真的很大，非常有必要也值得去深挖，所以我很快就写了案子，也很顺利找到资方，从确定一直到合同签订下来到再去拍摄也就两个月，当时还是疫情

期间，全都线上交流、合同往来，特别顺利。从二〇二〇年四月一日启动拍摄，一直到九月三十日，拍了六个月，后期六个月，刚刚做完。

黄：我记得在《塑料王国》之后你接受采访时说过想做剧情片。

王：本来二〇一七年就开始剧情片创作了，我花了一整年的时间写剧本。因为二〇一七年“新电影法”限制了我们。其实不是我自己，我想所有人都在思考，我们如何去继续？如果大环境不合适、不允许的话，我们是不是要考虑其他的方式方法。其中从纪实转向虚构这一条道路，不是我一个人在想，很多朋友都在想，比如说徐童、杜海滨……所以你发现没有，不管转型成功不成功，怎么忽然之间就这么多人转型了，是因为光芒更闪耀吗？不是的，我们不在乎这个。

黄：并不是像看上去那样是追逐资本和商业？

王：一般都不是，包括比较早一点的，像杨荔钠，她之前也是做纪录片，也转过来了。虽然转型也有不同类型，但是我觉得从二〇一六、一七年开始那个阶段的转向，其实是很明显的一个标志性的时期。二〇一七、一八年整整两年我都在做剧情片，那时候正好赶上了影视寒冬，进展很不顺利，而且打磨剧本又是一个非常漫长的过程，那个时候很痛苦。二〇一九年就开始做委托制作，同时我也在继续写剧本。二〇二〇年到现在一直忙着《海鸥》，现在又接上新项目。

《海鸥》现在在加紧拿龙标，如果拿不到，电影节就算有机会也不能上。如果得不到审查的通过，我也无法让它去面对观众，对于一个影视作品来讲，那是非常悲哀的事情，最悲哀的事情。

黄：除了参展受限，还有放映环境，以前还有一定的独立放映的环境，现在也没有了。即使有，也是非常地下和非常小众的。

王：没错。我本来这两天要去长沙参加一个放映交流，周浩的《棉花》，我的《塑料王国》，还有李一凡的《杀马特我爱你》……包括讲座、学术活动，挺好的。结果接到举报，就不让你弄了，论坛也不让做了，整个活动取消了。

黄：其实早年间北京放映环境也非常好，但是逐渐都消失了。

王：没了，整个哀鸿遍野。现在的情况，我个人感受，很不好。每年新出来的纪录片，其实很大一部分代表了青年导演的价值趋向，通过内容选择就可以判断出来，你发现现在直面社会问题的纪录片几乎不见了。你不能骂年轻人犬儒，但是，你要知道他背后是怎样一股强大的力量在影响。大的

压制和自我规避都越来越明显。现在听二十来岁的小伙子谈事，老师，我想做个题目，但我觉得不能做，肯定不能做，太敏感了。我想那你跟我说什么，你有种的话就做。你现在只有一个想法，还没做呢，你就讲审查不通过。

我其实特别期待年轻人的锐意和初生牛犊不怕虎的勇气，结果听到这么多声音，自我审查的，自我规避的，自我阉割的，甚至极度自私利己的……尤其最近这五六年，这种声音特别多。

二

黄：那咱们聊聊你的年轻时候，你是一九七六年出生的，最开始是学摄影？

王：对，中国传媒大学摄影毕业的。

黄：《垃圾围城》的开始其实是摄影作品。

王：是的，二〇〇九年连州影展是第一次公开传播。做创作是从二〇〇八年奥运会之后开始的。北京奥运会的时候我正在拍《鬼神信仰》，当时对所谓的当代艺术比较感兴趣。

黄：刚开始更偏爱当代艺术类？

王：最开始？最开始我对花花草草感兴趣，我是个发烧友。一九九四年我才十八岁，高二，那时候喜欢摄影，疯狂喜欢，花草人物、小猫小狗都拍。

我们学校有个老师喜欢摄影，他每到我们下课的时候，摆个摊把自己拍的照片洗出来，一块钱一张。当时洗张照片要五毛钱，他卖一块钱一张，我买了很多，我觉得很美。因为在此前我的接触里摄影就是家庭照片，合影，非常功能性，而且有专业人员职业操持。小时候我的视野比较小，上高中才开始慢慢打开视野。当时我觉得太美了，基于照相机生产出一幅美丽的照片，真的很触动我。我买了很多，有时候看到一张好的，没见过的，不错的，买两张。很快我就用自己的生活费买了个相机。

黄：你第一个相机是什么牌子的？

王：红梅牌，JG，建国的意思，304A，一百八十块人民币，那是一九九四年。那绝对是珍宝，买了之后睡觉都放在被窝里，一点都不夸张。上晚自习的时候放在宿舍里还怕丢了，中午一下课，立马买几个馒头就跑出去拍摄。我后来才体会到，那种疯狂是特别特别珍贵的。对于任何一个行当或者

一个事情，真的找不回那种疯狂的劲儿了，我觉得如果有这种劲儿，做什么都能成。

当然，后来上大学也不是很顺利，也做了其他的事情，但是照相机一直没有扔掉，一九九六、九七年我自己还开了家照相馆，也失败。二〇〇一年，混了五年之后才觉得，上不上大学很重要。大学就像是一道杠，在下面的是一种人生，在上面的是另外一种人生。举一个非常简单的例子，二〇〇〇年山东一个报社公开招聘，我特别特别想去应聘摄影记者。当时我自我感觉摄影水平很好，能力绰绰有余，结果就遇到了一道杠。一开始不在乎它，无所谓，但越到临界，发现这个点越来越大，当这个量无穷大的时候就彻底阻碍了脚步。那时候我就想，我要去上学。先考了西安大学（西安工程科技大学），考上了，上了一年摄影专业，觉得不怎么样，自己退了，然后又考传媒大学。

黄：你也挺轴的，但每次都能再考上。

王：我觉得考大学太简单了。当时我想，赚 1 万块钱简单还是考一个大学简单？还是考大学简单，赚一万块钱多难呀。

黄：赚钱是挺难的，到现在赚钱也挺难的。

王：二〇〇七年毕业，我一直在创作。喜欢的题材也随着社会的影响变化，一开始特别喜欢纪实类的，到了二〇〇五、〇六年就喜欢当代艺术类。二〇〇五到二〇〇七年这三年，我的作品主要基于小时候奶奶讲的鬼神故事，做了一个虚构的有关于中国民间的《鬼神信仰》，自我感觉良好。后来在平遥展出，在丽水展出，也就是因为那个作品认识了鲍昆老师。在浙江丽水展出时，鲍昆老师特别喜欢这个作品。后来鲍昆老师做了一些指导工作，一直到二〇〇八年彻底完成之后还在平遥做了展出。

但恰恰那个时刻，我对创作和自我的创作理念产生了深深的怀疑。很简单，我觉得我的片子没用，对你没用，也许只有对我自己有用。我可能沉浸在我所制作的美好的环境里面，但是除了我之外的任何人不感兴趣，觉得不重要。这个片子对于风起云涌的当代社会的变化来讲更没用。你想想，你做了一件没用的事情，痛哭流涕，真的，哭得眼泪稀里哗啦的。

记得特别清楚，二〇〇八年九月份，在平遥，我跟鲍昆老师彻夜长聊，表达我的困惑，其实就是价值观的判断。我所有付出的时间、我的行为、我的努力，都是没有价值的。当时对未来产生一种恐惧，可以说那是一种应激反应，是做出转向的前奏。在想自己做的东西没用的时候，就会思考哪些是有用的，我还能做什么，我的存在，我的生命，还能为我自己、为周边的人，或者为某个人做什么。关于我的困惑。鲍老师说你是对的，你应该睁开眼睛向外观看，这是他的原话，特别有意思。

鲍老师提议说你不妨向环境议题转向吧。就聊到我在家乡拍摄遍地垃圾的状态，包括我对当下农村变化的认识。主流的消费价值观影响到了每一个乡村角落里，举个例子，一个小孩经常在那玩耍游泳，捉蝌蚪，捉小鱼，某一天回去之后发现有个巴斯夫。巴斯夫是什么？世界化工巨头，总部在德国。当时我觉得特别震惊。农民种地，地是你的，体力是你的，但你用的化肥跟巴斯夫有关系，最后你的农产品可能去了韩国、日本，你发现自己是全球生产链中的一环。鲍昆老师说，别说你们村了，北京首都，你出去看看，垃圾问题也很严重。我说我上学时候出去玩看到过，到处是垃圾。《垃圾围城》的缘起就是这个。

后来鲍老师说你回北京先去做做调查。我回去立马就骑上摩托车去看了，跑了北京周边很多地方。鲍老师在整个过程中一直在帮我修正。一开始我带有一种艺术的思维，净考虑大名词，消费主义，但后来慢慢自己也发现了，跟太多太多人有关系的一个现状，最有必要被呈现。说白了，这个事应该让人知道。二〇〇九年的四、五月份，我当时记得在 798和鲍老师见面，我还拿了小样给他看。鲍老师说就把你看到的现状和事实全盘展现出来，艺术的事情再说，事件本身已经足够引起社会震动了，就先做记录。所以，我一刻不停地做了大半年，一直到年底在连州展出。

黄：那几年这个问题确实挺突出的，《垃圾围城》当时给人非常强烈的震撼，在于展现了真的围城。

王：我最终归结为它是一个参与社会工作的项目，也有一个个体最基本的良知，我们的艺术就在里面。那个时候真的是非常投入。首先是解决自我的疑问，在哪里？都在什么地方？是怎样的形态？对周边有怎样的影响？一边做着，发现知道的越多，疑惑也越多，这种疑惑就促使我去进一步寻找答案，我觉得这是一个真正进入的过程，也付出了更多的时间、精力，包括心力。

黄：那时候你都是骑摩托车去跑吗？

王：骑摩托车去跑。之前一万多块钱买的，后来我卖了那个又买了一辆，直到二〇一七年在燕郊被偷了。

黄：摄影和摄像这两条线是怎样进行的？

黄：鲍昆老师建议同时拍摄视频，可以扩大影响。确实，图片拍了两个月之后，就发现图片语言不能满足陈述和表达，需要影像语言。我立马找同学帮忙来拍，但是当时完全没有纪录片的概念，只想的是用两种语言去表达同一件事情，或者说垃圾围城这个概念。片子是后来剪辑完成的，《垃圾围城》的副标题叫做“王久良之观察”，就是我的观察。

黄：所以是以你的观察和旁白带动了这些素材。

王：对。到最后我发现拍了这么多视频素材，你得呈现，怎么呈现？我们在展览的时候做了一个短片呈现，但是纪录片语言有自我成长的魅力和长处，还有很多内容的的确是图片所不能表达的。所以，从二〇一〇年我的展览完成之后才真正开始有意识的开始纪录片的创作。虽然我在大学里面也学过纪录片课，但是没有做过。

黄：你一直想的是摄影师，就是一个图片摄影。到想要表达更多的时候，发现我现有的手段不够了，就需要更多的出口。

王：对。拍摄两个月之后很快就开始进入了视频制作，我的好朋友樊雪崧知道我在做这件事情，他当时在电影资料馆读研究生，专门研究法国新浪潮。我在拍图片，他就在那里跟我谈电影，有时候我们相互打架，我是图片思维在看待整个事情，他是电影创作的思维，包括等待一些时机或者事件发生之类的，和拍图片等待的时机不一样，就会有冲突。比如我可能需要快速拍完快速撤，但他需要等待冲突的来临。

黄：片子里面哪一块是他等过来的？

王：第一场垃圾车、拾荒者和羊群在一起的镜头就基本是等来的。当时是我们拍到了羊群，我先拍完图片就撤了，撤回去之后我们越想越可惜，那个场景太有意思了。这种情况下，樊雪崧说我们第二天再去拍，所以我们再去拍摄的时候几乎就是以视频记录为主。那是一个节点，我记得很清楚，二〇〇九年的一月份。

在那之前就是我走到哪，他就在我的后面拍，拍了很多我。他其实是有意识地在跟拍，但他没有干预我，只是观察式地跟拍，能拍他们就拍他们，不能拍他们就拍拍我，也没有专门等待时机。转变是在半年之后了，我受他的影响也意识到了影像的精彩，感觉纪录片太好了，太精彩了。那时候我们就开始有意识地，几乎是并重地去做。再后来因为他有自己的事情，要毕业，还要上班，就是我拍了。我拿了个DV，也借学校的DV，还找另外的助手帮忙去拍完，一直到二〇一一年初才彻底完成，我一边剪一边还做了补拍。

我把那个过程视为对纪录片彻底学习的过程，我都自己现学的剪辑。鲍昆老师说不应该把时间浪费在这里，让专业人士去做。但是我有一个观点，第一，我没有钱请剪辑师，第二，我想了解，我想知道。我觉得这是学习的过程，剪辑的过程就是叙事的过程，如何去叙事，如何去完成表达，其实就是一个学习的过程。那期间我大量地看纪录片，看别人怎么做，因为我自己不会啊。

黄：那个时期你能接触到的对你有影响的纪录片有哪些？

王：顾桃、徐童、于广义，“三剑客”嘛，就是那些老大哥。那时候我也是刚刚有了所谓的独立纪录片的概念，也在关注周浩这些人，《差馆》那时候已经出来了，包括赵亮的《上访》也是那时候看的。这些纪录片首先让我看到了独立创作的可能性，这个特别重要，我知道了一个人可以去做一部电影。之前就是上几天纪录片课，也看过一些电影，但是没有那种感受。当自己真正去做过，再回头去看别人的作品的时候，能够感受到作者在现场的状态以及他叙事的技巧或者表达的点，看得特别的透。

此前很多人认为电影是一个非常大的项目，特别是在电影学校毕业之后，都好大喜功，各种剧组，乱七八糟的一帮人，不是的。这种制度也罢，这种风气也罢，给年轻学生造成了很大的误解。我觉得应该是首先训练和强化自我表达意识，哪怕不能用纪录片，用图片也可以，再不行，写文章也可以。

黄：表达方式是多样的，创作冲动和自我认识更重要。

王：对。所以《垃圾围城》的剪辑过程，我看老大哥们的片子，感受特别强烈就是作者主体地位的自我确认特别重要。

到二〇一二年开始做《塑料王国》，完全就是以个体创作的概念去做的。创作意识非常明确，你想做什么，第一是语言，语言特地选了纪录片，那时候就很少拍照片了。而且在执行的过程里，基于对这个行当的了解，也知道了如何工作得更好。比如《垃圾围城》是我一个人摸索着去做的，但是到《塑料王国》，我觉得不可以了，因为我意识到，第一，它的周期；第二，钱，需要的量；第三，如果做到非常好的程度，一个人的力量是不够大的。当时创作的主体身份确认早就完成了，我自己能干这件事情，只不过有帮助的情况下，可能会更加高效，会更加充分的表达。所以有了更多的伙伴的参与，更多资本的介入，特别注重合作，这是跟《垃圾围城》的不同。

三

黄：《塑料王国》具体是怎么达成合作的？

王：我当时有非常自信，第一，我觉得这是一个值得被陈述的事实，一个值得被书写的故事，它很有价值。第二，对于这个平台上的同行来讲，是都能够感受到的。所以，拿着这个东西先去找我的同学合作，我同班同学的公司最先开始第一笔资金介入，做了将近一年，后来才找了 CNEX。基本

上很快就纳入他们独立投资的内部工作模块里面去。他们对一个影片的判断是，有国际发行潜力的价值，比如事关国际上共同关注的议题，同时也具备一定的商业价值，一般情况下这两个价值具备了就可以了。特别顺利，很快就合作了。

黄：这个议题和你的《垃圾围城》是一脉相承。

王：对，有延续，就因为对这个话题的深耕深入，才发现了更多话题。直接触发这个事情的初衷，应该是二〇一〇年五月，我去伯克利做《垃圾围城》的展览。当时我去参加他们的垃圾分类工程，他们吹牛皮说外国做得好，我也想学习学习。但去看了之后，那个经理当着我的面说这些垃圾全是去你们中国的，他无意说的，当然如果我不是中国人他就不会这样说了。当时我的心情有点复杂，第一，这是一个基本的事实。此前我也听过洋垃圾，但是没有这么明显的发现。第二，一个外国人说这些垃圾都是去你家的，而且量那么大，那么脏，那真是垃圾。

我很有感触，所以，我回来之后立马就做各种资料收集，找到了国内大规模的加工洋垃圾的地方，金属、服装、塑料……调研做了整整一年，几乎是天天在跑。二〇一二年做《塑料王国》，当然这期间也拍了别的，也是一个试错的过程，我一开始想拍纸张。后来去了很多地方，拍哪里，怎么拍，也是一个过程，河北有，山东也有，江浙也有，广东也有，我们都去了。

黄：除了调研之外，其实也是在找几个出口，找几个可能性。

王：对。因为是做一个作品，最终的呈现载体是纪录片。当时我跟鲍昆老师发生了分歧，鲍老师说可以基于你原来的方法，用图片和短视频快速呈现这个事实。他其实是鼓励我做纪录片的，但觉得不能停止社会观察，条件不足的时候也可以先拍着。我当时很想一下子做成很成熟的电影，所以在技术和设备上花了大量时间和精力，鲍老师担心我这样可能走偏了。这个片子，鲍老师本来建议我半年做完，结果我做了五年，量非常大。鲍老师曾经说我，王久良，我好几年都不想搭理你，不听话。我说鲍老师，我也认可你的观点，如果按照你的观点去做的话，也许是另外一番样子，也许我能做更多其他的事情，这不是谁对谁错的问题，只是选择不一样的表达而已。

但说实话，真正做了五六年的时候，我也反思鲍老师当初的建议，我也觉得对于一个话题的陈述费了这么长的时间，在表达的数量和效率上有点不值。因为还是一边做一边学习一边完善的过程，也走了很多弯路。现在让我做一个项目，我的选择会非常明白，非常透彻，主题表达的获取，各种的匹配，但那时候不是这样子的。所以，我觉得在那时那刻、在那种情境下只能选择那么做事情。如果不付出那五年时间，到现在，我不认为我会更进步。

黄：在纪录片领域也是你进一步深入学习的过程？

王：没错。基于这个影片我才参加了各种提案大会、工作坊，这是一种非常具体的平台化方式。不进入这个领域是没有概念的。所以发现，不单单是一个自我学习和向别人学习的过程，同时也是整个系统学习的过程。而且学习的不单单是创作，还学会了合作，如何跟不同的风格去合作。并且对整个纪录片未来传播的方向以及可能产生的效益，这个效益不单单是指所谓的金钱……会有更加明确的认识。

我的初衷就是想把这件事说出来，让更多的人听见，看到，知道。最终的结果是，基于我和那么多人的努力，不好的事情一定会有很好的改变。这是真正的效益。这一点都不是矫情的话，这是直到现在都坚持的一个出发点。你想想看，第一，一个业内认可的最牛逼的作品；第二，你获一个什么奖；第三，你可能在经济上有什么回报，这些和基于你的努力投入让外界产生了改变，哪个影响更大。这个我们要搞清楚，所以我会把这个看得特别重。当然，我这样，并不认为别人不这样就不好，我觉得每个人有每个人的长处，我就是这样子。所以，我做每一个作品，想的是它的价值最大化的点在哪里。学得多么精，做得多么好，这只是手段，你最终的目标和目的是什么，这个要搞清楚。

黄：技术最终肯定是为价值服务的。

王：对。所以我并不迷恋技术。这可能是另外一个话题了。我什么都不反对，只要有出口表达就可以了。我甚至在自学剧情片的创作，我觉得那可能适合某个议题的表达。

黄：其实重要的是你要选择一个可以达到价值最大化的表达方式。

王：对，议题、内容是核心，对于议题和内容的选择决定了选择的方法，图片报道还是纪录片或者剧情片。当然话又说回来，你让我选择音乐表达我也不会，所以，再怎么走也都是影像表达的概念。

黄：还是在影像表达的大框架里面选择一个，但是并不意味着你迷恋某一个或者扔掉哪一个。

王：对。好多人说我像瞎子掰玉米，掰一个丢一个，图片干了好多年，当时获得了一个年度大奖，干到这份上你不干了。后来我也反思过，如果在那个基础之上，在图片领域继续深耕的话，可能会更顺利一点。转去做纪录片真的是从零做起，在这个领域就是一个小学生，从没有任何人帮你关注你的状态出发。那么到了二〇一七、一八年我做剧情片，如果那时趁着那个东风继续去做纪录片，我相信我做起来会更加轻松，可能得到的帮助会更多。结果又停了两年去做剧情片，又是从零开始。但现在来讲我觉得这是值得的，我愿意学习，学习一个自己不知道的事情，挺好的。

黄：其实你掌握了更多的表达的空间和可能的方法。

王：但那确实需要大量的时间和精力，而且要沉得住气，也不能急功近利地想去学会某个工具。想把这件事情做好，这是一个核心要求，不是去玩一玩，这很严肃。

黄：而且一旦你进入，会发现更大的更多的工程在那等着呢。比如你对环境议题的关注，是最早的一个切口进入让你了解了更多，然后进行了持续的延展，从《垃圾围城》到《塑料王国》。

王：一直到现在，一直到下一步，到未来。

黄：它会框住你吗？

王：如果有被框的感觉就错了，就不舒服了，要非常发自内心的极其主观的去进入。我觉得我目前还好，还是这个状态。鲍昆老师说王久良，你这个一定不能丢，这是你非常大的优势，而且你做的这件事情是持续的价值。这是一个他者对我的观看和评价。我说鲍老师，你不用担心，我不是基于世俗的或者实用主义的想法，是我真喜欢，不但真喜欢，而且是在我这么多年创作和制作的过程里，发现值得表达的事情还有好多好多。

所以当时就在想，我这一辈子，不管做什么，甚至拍爱情片，基于环境、生态议题的表达不会断。我现在好几个案子全是关于这个话题的，《海鸥》是关于海洋生态的，在拍《海鸥》的过程中我又深挖出一个作品，现在已经在开始做准备了。“蚂蚁森林”这个项目是基于委托制作，但同时我立马变成一个长片计划。关于生态的目前还有两个比较成型的想法，还有剧情片项目……

四

黄：你在“一席”演讲里引用了一句话：无穷的远方，无数的人们，都与我有关。看上去多么大的议题，落下来都在个体身上。

王：这话虽然很文学，但从这个其实挺能看出我的。几乎所有的环境生态议题都是公共议题，你首先是为他者，因为在别人眼里，你也是他者。我不是说这个事情跟我关系多深多大，非得是发生在我家门口的事情，不见得，不是的。当一个人成年了，对这个世界发生的一切是有责任的。刚才讲到我做的所有议题，我优先考虑它的公共价值，跟大多数人有关系，能够解决大多数人的问题。我有点理想主义色彩，我希望我做的事情是有用的。所以我对各种技术探索的兴趣不大，会使用就行了，

没必要做成一个专家，电脑会用就完了，纪录片语言会用就完了，剧情片的语言、导演，我会用就完了，我也没指望做成一个伟大的导演。只是如果要做好，得有这个本事，这个手艺。

我们一般说纪录片是艺术家的工作，不全是这样，两方面结合特别好那更好，但别忘了此消彼长。如果非得谈艺术家，我特别喜欢赵亮，他不单是基于表达，同时也特别注重语言的创新和开拓性，有一种特殊的气质在里面。所以我觉得这恰恰是一个好的生态的表现，有各种各样的人在做各种各样的事情，用不同的方法，独木不成林。

我觉得一个好的纪录片导演和艺术家有天然的排它性，别人做什么，我就不做什么，特别讲究唯一性。比如《垃圾围城》，虽然好多媒体在拍垃圾，在报道，提到这个概念，但是没有人系统去做。我唯一的区别就是，可能在前人的基础上再往前走了一步而已。我一点都不认为这是我的独创，只不过我以更笨的方法，以更多的时间和精力去汇总，去做了一件事情。比如洋垃圾的话题，很多媒体也报道过，但你发现蜻蜓点水的，对当下没有什么影响的，我们也看到过。

黄：对，《垃圾围城》和《塑料王国》的议题其实都散见在民间。

王：我非常认可，为什么呢？我很多资料就是靠媒体报道找出来的，但也不单是一个简单把它串起来的过程。

黄：作为一个创作者，面对这个议题，你的职责和使命是要再往里面挖得更深。《垃圾围城》出来之后，北京对周边的垃圾场都做了清理。当时新闻做了内参，中央级媒体也都报了你的展览。当时真的是起到了正面影响。

王：是真的，后来我们就感慨，《塑料王国》和《垃圾围城》对比，太不一样了。我们谈两个方面，第一，当时的媒体环境和舆论环境相对宽松。北京，垃圾围城，现在来看是多么敏感的事情，但当时几乎所有的主流媒体全部进行报道。第二，除了主管部门动作之外，北京市政府也很重视，当时的北京市副市长还专门找我去聊了，正向表态，投一百亿，用多少年治理。后来我还专门去走访看到底做了没，真做了，大力去做了。

我觉得这是一个双赢的结果，从创作者的角度我们也获得了认可和肯定，更加鼓励我去继续。就像对小孩子一样，你做一件好事情，给你奖励一颗糖，真的能促使你去做更多的好事。我觉得我就有这种小孩的心理，做《塑料王国》就有些基于这种感受。

黄：但是命运大相径庭。

王：对，一旦形成影响力之后就全部封杀。就没有了。但好在这个事也完成了，在此之前已经在整个行业“大地震”，“大地震”是他们的词，给我打电话，王久良，你的作品引起了整个行业大地震了。很多部门已经动手了，这个产业太大了，但后来也全部没有了。

黄：所以作品促进改变的层面上是成功了，但是作品本身的传播受到了非常大的影响。

王：是，好就好在还是发出去了，要是没发出去就给你灭了，多憋屈呀。当然我们也讲究策略，没有大张旗鼓先推。这个作品最终的命运，时也，运也，无所谓。但我非常担心此时此刻的作品能否得以传播，没有传播真的没意思，因为电影就是要交流的，没有人说做一部电影就是自己关门来看。有一种强烈的悲哀感，难道我们老了吗？有这种感受。

黄：到这个年纪，你的感受是什么？

王：很多话题一声叹息了。但我还有一个观点，我更喜欢默默做事情，用一个非常粗俗的比喻就是，咬人的狗不叫，所以我特别希望做一条咬人的狗。比如为什么接了这些委托制作的案子？这些案子是值得做的，这是前提。其次也有资本支持。再然后，虽然限度可能跟自由创作不太一样，但至少还能说出去。

黄：有一点退而求其次的感觉？

王：有。人的软弱是显而易见的，没有人永远强大。卑躬屈膝倒不至于，但至少是受制于某个强大的力量，不知道该如何表达。所以有时候在探讨人与整个社会的关系，我到底该怎么做？我也没有被别人绑架，或者非得做一个勇士去战斗，不见得，都是人，都是弱者，对生命的保全都是基本出发点。当然，这是我的权利，但有时候也是自我安慰。

黄：你对自己的定位，就像刚才说的，有没有说自己是个勇士？

王：我至今认为我还算勇敢，只是方法会变。因为我还是相信明天会更好，未来会更好，历史证明，这个社会一直在前进。虽然它一直在跌跌撞撞地往前走，但我相信到此时此刻还是在往前走的。我们也有后代，我也相信未来的孩子会更好。

黄：你有几个小孩？

王：两个女儿，一个十一岁，一个两岁了。孩子过得不好，老子有责任，这个不是说老子给了他多少钱，不是这个意思。比如我们生活在此时此刻的环境，我觉得很不舒服，我有权利责怪我的父辈，你要爱我的话，你们做得不够。我希望在未来，大范围的也许不能左右，但孩子们知道，我的父亲是做了什么事情的，这点很重要。

黄：这种想法在你做父亲之前有吗？

王：没有。

Zhang Zanbo: One Person's Destiny Is Not Convincing Enough

Interviewer: CHEN Ping 陈平 Translator: Xiang FAN 樊响

Zhang Zanbo (张赞波) is an independent documentary filmmaker and non-fiction writer. His documentaries include *Falling from the Sky* (天降, 2009), *A Song of Love, Maybe* (恋曲, 2010), *The Interceptor from My Hometown* (有一种静叫庄严, 2011) and *The Road* (大路朝天, 2015); and he has published his non-fiction book, *The Road: A Low Speed Life in High Speed China* (大路朝天: 高速中国里的低速人生, 2014).

By chance, Zhang Zanbo started making independent documentaries. From *Falling from the Sky* to *The Road*, the subjects of his works have always been grounded in the complex relationship between the individual and the state, presenting human status quo and destiny under the rapidly changing Chinese social process. Zhang Zanbo's immersion in the thinking and literature of the 1980s, as well as his re-conceptualisation of his own identity, emotions and homeland, have occurred and grown in his works. His boldness and solitude, along with some ethic debates provoked by his works, reveal the undertone of his thought, as well as the risks it entails. But the undertone also reveals the sincerity of an idealistic generation. This telephone interview with Zhang Zanbo took place on 1 August 2001, in Shaoyang, Hunan Province.

1

Chen: When did you start making documentaries?

Zhang: From 2008, when I made my first documentary *Falling from the Sky*, I started to enter the so-called independent documentary filmmaking. Before that, I was an MA student in Feature Film Directing at the Department of Directing in the Beijing Film Academy, and I had never taken any courses related to documentaries. At that time, there was a trend in the Film Academy that documentary filmmaking was not important and [documentary] was not even an art. At that time, we feature film students never thought of taking a documentary course, and the university didn't offer such a course for us. We didn't think of auditing some courses or taking the initiative to receive some education in this area. We didn't have the awareness.

Chen: How did you get into documentary filmmaking? *Falling from the Sky* is about the impact and entanglement of rocket debris on the landing areas after the satellites launched. How did you come to explore

this subject matter?

Zhang: In June 2008, I saw an article published in a Hunan media, the *Morning Post Weekly* (晨报周刊), which is founded by the *Xiaoxiang Morning Post* (潇湘晨报), entitled *Such a Big Thing Falling from the Sky, Better Be Careful*. I happened to know that journalist as a poet friend when I was in Hunan. I used to study Chinese literature when I was an undergraduate. At that time forming literary societies and writing poetry were so fashionable that I joined them and wrote poems. This journalist was a member of the Hunan poetry circle, so I knew him. The content of the report really caught my attention, as it revealed that there were rocket debris falling from the sky all year round in Suining County, Hunan Province. I was surprised. My hometown, Xinshao County, is part of Shaoyang, and Suining is also part of Shaoyang, which is only about 200 kilometres away from each other. I had lived in my hometown for almost twenty years, but I had never heard of things falling from the sky. I had never heard of this in any other media or information sources.

At the time I had a very literary imagination, just feeling it like magical realism. As I studied Chinese literature and also read works by Márquez and others, I just thought of scenes like ‘a rain that has been falling for twenty years.’ I was in Beijing at the time, when the Olympics were about to start, and I remember that there were all sorts of government campaigns for the Olympics, propaganda and controls, which created a very intense atmosphere. Some of us didn’t like the atmosphere and had to find a place to ‘avoid the Olympics’. So, I decided to go to Suining County, and contacted the friend who wrote the story. He gave me more detail about the place and how to get there. I asked him if he could show me around, thinking I could take some photos and maybe catch the next ‘falling satellite’, as the locals called it. The exact term is rocket debris falling, which is what happens when a satellite is launched.

I wanted to go and film it, but I didn’t even have a camera at the time, so I bought one in hurry. I remember going to Zhongguancun (中关村), spending a little over 30,000 yuan on a set of filming equipment. Not long after I got the information from my journalist friend, I went shooting, and from then on, I cannot stop [filming]. During the process, it changed a lot of my perceptions, including my perceptions of film and reality. So, it was a very contingent and unintentional event that led to this.

Chen: After more than ten years, when we look back at this contingent opportunity, there seems to be a certain relationship between the individual and the state, such as ‘avoid the Olympics’ that you mentioned earlier. From 2008 to today, the state’s intrusion into the individual space has been gradually expanding. Can I understand that the contingency of the making of *Falling from the Sky* also foreshadowed a certain historical tendency?

Zhang: I think we were actually aware of this relationship between the state and the individual at that time, and my film also shows this part, which is a great interest to me personally. Especially in Beijing, the so-called ‘the city of the emperor’ and ‘the capital city’, I had a lot of feelings, which were definitely connected to the making of this film. In other words, it influenced the orientation and shape of this film. I now feel that, after all these years, my judgement at the time was entirely accurate, and I even feel that the situation now is even worse than before. The circumstance we found a bit repulsive and resistant back then can even be recalled as good memory. It turned out to be a relatively tolerant time, which is something we cannot imagine now. The times are developing at such an accelerated pace. On the one hand, it is absurd, but on the other hand, it may also have its inevitability, that is, the historical tendency you just mentioned.

Chen: You mentioned that this friend of yours used to write poetry, and you also studied Chinese literature as an undergraduate. Do you consider yourself to be influenced by the modernist thoughts brought about by the enlightenment movement in the 1980s? If the time before 1989 was a thawing period, and it lasted until 2008, can we see it as a relatively opening-up process, but after the Olympics, it began to gradually turn? The discussion of poetry and literature in the 1980s, including the translation of some literary theories, represented a period of greater liberalism before 2008.

Zhang: Especially for people of my age, that is, those with a literary background in the early and mid-1970s, we do feel that the literary enlightenment of the 1980s had a great influence on us, in terms of our conception of aesthetics, our focus on social reality, and our values. I think there is indeed a continuity. Sometimes I even feel that I may be more similar to the 1960s generation. I am quite different from the post-1970s or post-1980s, especially the post-1980s, which is probably related to that.

Chen: Can you talk a bit more on this? Is it about your thought?

Zhang: We are still relatively idealistic with more so-called humanistic care, which are presented in various aspects. We feel that the humanistic care is more important than other things. Compared to older generations, such as the 1950s or older, we have less sense of collectivism, and we are more individualistic and liberal. Sometimes, we can give up a lot of things for the sake of an ideal or a goal of our own. We are not stable, and this is also a trait.

2

Chen: On the subject of the entanglement between modernisation, urbanisation, and nationalism, we often

get an abstract concept of the conflict between the individual and the state, such as labour issue, which often lacks the details of the individual. Perhaps only by building on concrete events and experiences can we understand the complexities and the issues to be revealed. What observations and feelings did you have before and after the filming of *Falling from the Sky* and *The Road*?

Zhang: The focus and overall ethos of both *Falling from the Sky* and *The Road* should be the same. Although in my filmmaking spectrum, one is my first work and the other is a much later one, with two other works in between. The timelines of making *Falling from the Sky* and *The Road* were actually very close. As I did a longer preparation to get into the subject matter of *The Road*, I spent a long time on the construction site and then stuck for another year during the editing process. The completion of the film was behind schedule, but in fact the two films are in the same sequence.

One difference is the motivation the films. The production of *The Road* was triggered more by a memory that I have a personal connection to. I have a close friend who was my childhood friend and used to have the same life trajectory as mine. We grew up together, shared the same love of literature, fell in love in our adolescence, and basically followed a similar trajectory in life. But then he suddenly finished high school and went to work—his father was in the highway bureau, so he took over his father's job and went to build roads. At that time, it was very difficult to find a job and he didn't feel the need to go back to school. But I had to go to school. I was a country boy and there was no other way to change my fate. Later, when I went to university, I started a different path from his. I used to write to him when I was at university and he would write to me from the various sites where he was building roads. I probably wrote 40 to 50 letters in one semester, which was a lot. He told me a lot about what he had seen and experienced on construction sites. These letters had a big impact on me. After all those years, when I went on to make documentaries, I was already interested in what was behind the development of the country. So, when I finished making *Falling from the Sky*, I instinctively thought of going to construction sites. Unlike *Falling from the Sky*, which was motivated by reading a news story on the spur of the moment, *The Road* is linked to my personal emotional memories. Of course, another reason for making *Falling from the Sky* is that the landscape and living conditions of the people in Suining are almost the same to those in my hometown, which brought back my memories in the countryside. So, the two works probably have both commonalities and differences.

Chen: After *Falling from the Sky*, you chose to shoot a subject like *The Road*. Did you already have a more mature idea of observing the large-scale modernisation of the country?

Zhang: Yes. If it was a coincidence to make *Falling from the Sky*, it was more of a necessity to make *The*

Road, as I always felt the impulse to represent this aspect. If I hadn't made the documentary, I might not have thought of using the documentary as a form/medium to express it. I might have just expressed it in a different way. If I hadn't studied film before, or if I hadn't gone into documentary filmmaking, I would have probably used literature. But I would definitely still go into the scene, observe it, and then express it in a certain form. This has always touched me, after all these years, from my teenage years to after 2008.

Chen: Tell us more about this touch?

Zhang: I'm curious about the path my friend took in his life. If it wasn't for his own opportunity, he might have gone to university like me; but from another perspective, I might have been like him. If I hadn't gone to university, I might have become a migrant worker, entered his workplace and started a different life. I think people's destinies are intertwined. Although there is something different from my life experience that attracts me, it is also about the life of people around me, and I think this is an emotional point. On another level, from the so-called intellectual point of view, after I went to Beijing and started studying film, I became very interested in the relationship between the state and the individual destiny, especially in 2008, the Olympic year, a year of escalated nationalism. The accumulation of these different factors came together and led to this result.

Chen: Both *Falling from the Sky* and *The Road* present a conflict between the construction of the nation and the individual, such as the labour issue. Maybe there is an implicit thread in what you just talked about. Were you already clear the connection before making the films or during the production of *The Road*? Or was it gradually formed through the participatory observation of and intervention in these two groups and events?

Zhang: Before I made *The Road*, I had already a very clear thought about the direction/theme of the film. I would be criticised for making a documentary with a preconceived view. However, I didn't go into the documentary with a rigid view, just to shoot some footage to fill in my view. I definitely have some ideas. How can you create without an idea? As I have said repeatedly on many occasions, it is impossible to say that a documentary is objective, there is no such thing as 100% objectivity. When you choose a subject matter and a group of people and observe the world with your own perception, it is subjective. But when you go to the scene, you feel that many things are different from your initial preconceptions, then you have to correct them. The principle is to focus on life itself.

Regarding these two films, I can say with confidence that life is precisely the same as I had predicted. [They two films] prove that my judgement was accurate, only with a few subtle differences. My work is

not constructed by something very vague or deliberate. I use a lot of details, which means that my ideas are based on a very solid and concrete reality.

3

Chen: *Falling from the Sky* and *The Road* also present the complexity of every class group in the country. *The Interceptor from My Hometown* has not been widely circulated, and it records a grassroots civil servant whose main job is to intercept local petitioners; an individual within the state apparatus who opened up about how the system works. In the course of independent documentaries in China, there are not many films that look deeply at an individual within the system. As you mentioned before, the main character is also a childhood friend of yours?

Zhang: He used to be my classmate. I think this film was a contingency in my filmmaking genealogy, a completely unintentional film. It was shot in a very short time with high efficiency, within a few days, and basically at zero cost. It only cost some tapes and some electricity for editing. With almost no other cost, the subject just came to me. But, personally, it ranks high in my heart. It's a completely different style from *Falling from the Sky* or *The Road* which have a grand background, complex narrative structure and multiple clues and sections. I was fascinated by what I used to call 'improvisation', including how to grasp such a subject in such a short time, how to find the direction of the story, how to record it, and how to form a complete work. It came out with some impact, but it also seemed very relaxed. I put a lot of effort into *Falling from the Sky* and *The Road*, not only in terms of the long time I spent, but also in terms of my serious attitude. But I was very relaxed with this one. Usually, I consciously let myself wander through life, and in the process of wandering, I come across some subjects and record them in a very simple way with a very simple camera, or even a mobile phone, and then make a film. I've had this kind of exercise or filmmaking experience, although I haven't edited those works yet. But I've experienced it and found it quite interesting.

Chen: Can you talk more about the attraction of improvisation? What exactly triggers it?

Zhang: It's probably also related to my changing perception of documentary as a vehicle. In our education, including film education, the traditional Chinese concept of documentary involves a so-called 'research' part of documentary filmmaking, which requires solid research and analysis and some preliminary preparation work and fieldwork. This is evident in my films *Falling from the Sky* and *The Road*, especially in *The Road*. I even wrote a book in addition to the latter film, and there is indeed a lot of detailed and solid research in it. But *The Interceptor* doesn't need to employ this method. It's more about being attracted by a character or an

event that suddenly appears in front of you.

In this film, the main attraction is the charisma of the character, which comes automatically, without you having to do a lot of research. But you also had to be very acute to grasp the value of recording his words and deeds, and you have to know exactly what that value is. I've heard some criticism that the film is too rough. This is probably the opposite of my aesthetics. I think that the careless attitude and presentation is precisely its strength. Of course, it had to do with the equipment, and the picture quality was not very good, so it was considered too rough. Also, some people think it's all about the attraction of the character himself, while the director didn't do any work. I don't quite agree with this; they couldn't see the director's role in it. Although it looks like there are no traces of the director, you can still see my subjectivity, authorship, and my interest. These all required me to make agile judgments and choices on set.

Chen: Yes, I can understand that. Such judgement is related to your consistent thinking and concerns. As you mentioned earlier, in the process of growing up and forming your values, apart from the impact of the liberal enlightenment in the 1980s and onwards and the immersion in literature, did your experience in studying Chinese literature in the university affect you somehow? Can you please talk about the context behind your filmmaking?

Zhang: I think there should be some relation. I don't create for the sake of creating, and it's probably related to my life experience, my aesthetics and my values. Some people in the independent film circle think that *Falling from the Sky* is not a good film. There is a section called 'The Earth' in it, and they thought that this section was redundant and off-topic, which I disagree. I really like 'The Earth' section. If I had given the footage to someone else to edit, they wouldn't have touched on this dimension. I think this part has contributed to a better film. But in the Beijing Film Academy system and in their conception of film, film is more about storytelling, and even the highest standard of filmmaking is about storytelling. It is said that 'film is about telling a story', so you must tell a story well. Everything is for this purpose with all kinds of effort, from scriptwriting to techniques, just to tell the story well. I have resented this concept of film for a long time. I said many times that if you just want a story, you can be satisfied with a copy of *Story Collections* (故事会) or *Bosom Friend* (知音). Of course, it sounds rather arbitrary, but it is also my response to their arbitrary judgement.

I think that there is something beyond the so-called 'storytelling' level in film and literature. My friends in literature circle seemed to understand me more, while many in the film circle just don't get it. They think that *Falling from the Sky* can only tell the stories about rocket debris. As if they film road construction,

they would probably only talk about the conflict caused by the demolition. In other words, they might be able to grasp one aspect of my complex, three-dimensional representation. But there are so many Chinese documentaries on the topic of demolitions. What I would like to do is to get inside an institution—I have an inside perspective of an institution, and my point of view is through a project department to observe and present the various dimensions related to the construction of a road. Also, I want to provide some reflections or critiques on the institutional and cultural level.

4

Chen: This also leads to my next question. Large institutions may be one of the causes of power oppression, or rather, the operation of these large institutions causes various complex social issues. *Falling from the Sky* and *The Road* also deal with this. Does your focus on specific acts and manifestations of conflicts like falling rocket debris and demolition imply your discussion about institutions?

Zhang: In terms of the internal perspective of institutions, I have a bit regret when it comes *Falling from the Sky*. At that time, due to various conditions, I couldn't fully enter an official institution. What I wanted most was not only to get into the local government and the armed forces, but also into the military, the so-called Guiyang Satellite Observatory. If I could follow and film the people in the military from the time they were in Guiyang, for example, from when they received the news that the satellite was going to be launched, then how they delivered this message to the debris landing zone, to how they came to the debris landing zone, along with the local government, and observed where the debris had fallen and finally retrieved the debris. It's a bit like when I filmed Meng, the project manager, in *The Road*, who was the so-called 'fire-fighter' responsible for coordinating the work. It would have been great if I could film them in this way, but I certainly couldn't do it. For one thing, I didn't have any personal relationship with them, and for another, they were the military, so it was already good that I could capture them. That was a pity.

I have a concept that is slowly becoming clearer: to shoot a subject, no matter from which aspect, it is very important to have an inside perspective for a documentary. When making *Falling from the Sky*, I often joked that we were actually a group of 'parachutists', a group of outsiders who came from Beijing with a strong purpose of filming this subject matter and just 'parachuted' into a place to shoot. I think a documentary made by 'parachutists' is certainly not as good as one made from the inside perspective of the place. If you can capture the 'debris-falling' daily life of any local—a villager, or a person in the armed forces, or a person in the military—or how they retrieved the debris, it is definitely better than my work. The opportunity to have an inside view is rare and fascinating. Sometimes when I go to an unfamiliar place, I enjoy that feeling: when

I first arrive, my perception of the place may be very superficial, but as I observe, experience, and research, I start to build up a more comprehensive perception of the place, and the structure gradually emerges. I find this process fascinating, which is actually a sociological and anthropological task. I am probably more in tune with those sociologists and anthropologists than with the filmmakers.

Chen: Is this kind of sociological participatory observation a conscious or unconscious in your filmmaking process?

Zhang: First of all, I start from my instinct and have a certain extent of self-awareness and curiosity that leads me to make a choice. When I was filming *Falling from the Sky*, the debris landed in a very wide area. I remember that eleven towns were debris landing areas, in a rectangular shape. I wasn't like some filmmakers who just focus on a very distinct character to tell the story. I did a lot of fieldwork, trying to interview and film anyone who had experiences with the falling debris in different villages and counties. I remembered in detail their names, ages, and ethnicities. I collected interviews with seventy to eighty people who were associated with the debris—for example, the debris had smashed into their homes or they had seen the landing. As the interviews were spread out, I was quite tired at the time. I didn't just stay in one place to show one 'point', I tried to make my film to present a 'facet' as broad as possible. I also prefer a group presentation, rather than a traditional linear narrative with a single thread or a single character. I feel that when the 'facet' is presented, they are more powerful and universal. When it comes to destiny, the destiny of one person is not convincing enough. I think that it is more powerful to present the destiny of an individual as well as the destiny of a group, via the narration of a group. I decided on this approach from the very beginning, with a lot of clues, which seemed to be very messy. This is precisely what has been criticised.

Chen: You said that 'the destiny of one person is not convincing enough', but in *The Interceptor from My Hometown*, it is only about one person.

Zhang: This is a bit different. In *The Interceptor from My Hometown*, I don't present the destiny of one person entirely, but I actually bring out a group of people through his narrative and through his work. Petition or interception is a very common problem in China, but what is its internal mechanism and how does it work? We used to see it from the perspectives of the petitioners, but it is rare to see it from the perspective of the interceptors. This film has elaborated on the various levels in the system. It is not just about the interception, but also about the functioning of the whole government—the grassroots government institutions, which is quite complex.

Chen: I also think that *The Interceptor from My Hometown* is able to go deep inside a state apparatus to observe how it works, and its value lies more in its capability to reveal how an authority or a state apparatus works. The subject matter like this can exert some pressure on the people involved, and this is an ethical issue that is often discussed in documentaries. When we try to reveal an institution, due to its public nature, shooting is justified or legitimate. However, it may place some pressure on the subject. This is how ethical issues arise.

Zhang: The ethics issue in documentary filmmaking has been repeatedly discussed on *The Interceptor from My Hometown*, but sometimes I get a bit tired of the debates.

Chen: For the sake of the completeness of this conversation, I have included this topic.

Zhang: The documentary ethics, like what I just said about whether my documentary is objective or subjective, is not an issue for me now. I have already crossed the so-called ethical threshold, and I won't dwell on it anymore. I made this film, and in fact, on a personal and practical level, I am very clearly aware of ethical issues of the documentary. I even took the initiative to do something to protect my subjects. In fact, the film did not cause any damage to them, including the protagonist of *The Interceptor from My Hometown*. He remains in the government, and even got promoted. I think this is related to my conscious protection.

But the reason why I am reluctant to discuss documentary ethics too much is that as long as people live in this world, they face ethical issues. Whether you are a director or not, whether you make documentaries or not, there are ethical issues. Since you have ethics as a human being, you will definitely think about how to grasp your ethical scale when filming. If you are a bad person, what's the point of talking to you about ethics? It doesn't make any sense. If you're a kind person, you'll naturally discipline yourself and have some ethical considerations. So, I think sometimes ethical issues are talked about too much. From a theoretical, academic point of view, it is necessary; but I think from a creative point of view, it does constrain your creativity and also obscure a lot of really valuable things. With *The Interceptor from My Hometown*, the first thing that should be discussed is the issues that the film shows, and then the ethical issues, which is logical. But if we talk about ethical issues first, it will obscure the point I am trying to make: the functioning of the state mechanism at the grassroots level and the alienation of people.

Chen: When an important topic concerning the public arises, ethical issues may sometimes be relegated to a

relatively minor, or manageable, issue. Because the issue presented by this subject may concern the destiny of others besides the person himself/herself.

Zhang: I remember when J.P. Sniadecki questioned the ethics of *The Interceptor from My Hometown*, this was my response. He asked if I would mosaic the main character, and I said this was not possible. I said that would be news and not art. One of the core elements of art is the human being, and that representing the human face is actually a very crucial part of visual art, whether it's painting or film. My main character has all kinds of vivid expressions on his face when he's talking, even if he's lying, his face gives away some information. His joy, anger and sadness are all expressed through his face, and if you put a mosaic on him, is it still a film? I said I was not an undercover journalist, so I would never handle it that way.

You said just now that the film looks like a representation of an individual, but in fact it is about the general destiny of the whole group, and I think this is indeed one of my considerations for ethical issues. I treat the public and private differently. On the 'public' level, for example, are there ethical issues in *Falling from the Sky* and *The Road*? Of course there are. If I were to show the finished version of the film to Meng, or to those in the military, and ask him to sign a consent form, would it be possible? It's impossible for them to sign it, right? Then there would have been no criticism. But why did I put it out? Because I think it's a very big topic that's relevant to everyone. I think I can sacrifice the so-called ethics in order to achieve such a result. But if it's a 'private' subject, like *A Song of Love, Maybe*, it's a love story. It is a so-called 'private image'. Although its value is to present a public topic from a personal point of view, it may have an impact on people's lives if you put it out. If they are in another relationship and her later boyfriend sees it, it will definitely have a bad impact. So, from my point of view, I would definitely be more protective of private topics. Of course, you can easily do that, and it doesn't harm the quality of the film. For example, it is not difficult to conceal the names of people and places, or to restrict the dissemination of the film.

There is a clear distinction between the public and private, and I have always operated this way. Of course, this is also linked to my own experience, and my way of handling ethical issues might change. To be honest, I probably pay less attention to ethical issues now.

In *The Interceptor from My Hometown*, I thought I had done a good job. I used pseudonyms for the names of my classmates and even the names of my hometown. But I was actually still filming this classmate afterwards, not only his visit to Beijing to intercept the petitioners but also other events. I realised, perhaps more from a sociological point of view, that presenting the operation of grassroots power in China's vast political structure from a small official's interception of petition indeed had its value, but it was not yet

complete. How can it be considered complete? By going back to the scene of his work and life, that is, to my hometown. *The Interceptor from My Hometown* has a perspective of ‘meeting an old friend in a new place’. I happened to meet him. Next, I instinctively felt that I should go back to my hometown and investigate the place where he lived and worked. So, whenever I went back to my hometown, I filmed him, and it’s been so many years since I started filming him, but the film hasn’t been edited yet.

When I come to edit this film, I would adopt an approach that might be more likely to receive criticism in terms of documentary ethics. At least I wouldn’t use pseudonyms for the name of my hometown. I even felt that it was a bit unnecessary at the time; why did I try to cover up the place? I think I actually covered up bad official behaviours that are going on there. To be honest, the reason that I used a pseudonym for my hometown was out of protection for my subject. But all sorts of things happened back home over the years made me think I was too kind to them. They are not kind at all. That’s what they’ve done in official circles. Since they can still do these terrible things, especially in front of my camera, I don’t feel the need to give them protection. I might not even use the pseudonym for this classmate, but it’s just a thought. Frankly, they’re not good people, so why should I bother protecting him? If I protect him, my film won’t have any value, so I’ll probably do something that receive even more criticism next time.

Chen: Speaking of the value you just mentioned, what kind of position do you think you should take on?

Zhang: People should be responsible for what they do, right? You should be like that with anything, even you are in the officialdom. You should take responsibility for all the bad things you have done. When someone tells the truth with reason and evidence, as long as it is not a rumour, you cannot blame them. Since I have filmed them, and it was not a candid camera, then I think it should be presented [to the public]. If there is a change due to public pressure, I think this is a reasonable response, and this is one of the functions of a documentary. A documentary is not the same as a fiction. A fiction may only be an artistic expression, using a fictional event to reflect a general problem; but a good documentary should intervene and help with the reality in a practical way. When I made *The Road*, many people asked whether these corrupt people would be governed and whether they would be arrested. I said no, it’s not the way China does if they got arrested. In a normal democratic country, if such problems do arise, official authorities should at least set up an investigation team to investigate and then rectify the situation. The objective for making documentary should be to eliminate all these problems and make the society develop in a healthy way. I think by making a documentary, you not only reveal an event, but also help changing the reality. In China, documentary doesn’t seem to play such a role. Since this is the case, there is no need for me to cover up and hide something, so I might as well just let go of it.

Chen: Finally, I'd like to talk about *A Song of Love, Maybe*. It's amazing that someone as radical as Zhang Zhanbo could make such a warm film. How long did you film the couple?

Zhang: About two months. Compared to *Falling from the Sky*, it was a relatively short period, which was shot during the filming of *The Road*. I had already arrived in Changsha and was living with these construction site workers, sharing a large house with the boyfriend of the female protagonist in *A Song of Love, Maybe*. At that time, I was all about preparing for the filming of *The Road*. When the construction of the road started, I rushed to the site and concentrated on that. I always took the camera with me, sometimes inadvertently bumping into her. On the Mid-Autumn Festival, she was alone in the living room. As we shared a large living room, I asked her where her boyfriend was. She said he was missing, and then she started the conversation. I said, 'I'll put up the camera and shoot it, and then show it to your boyfriend.' I started shooting for this reason. I didn't expect to make a film at first, but once I shot it, I realised that there was a lot of drama here. In fact, it also reveals a universal state of affairs, that is, the relationship between men and women. This seems to focus on a very small aspect, compared to the *Falling from the Sky* or *The Road*, as it doesn't rise to the level of the country and our time. However, I think that what is presented is not small, and has its own value. I was doubtful of its value when I edited the film.

Chen: The couple are precisely the labourers in the midst of this rapid development of the country.

Zhang: So, there is still a very close connection to our time. At first I thought the relationship between men and women was not worth filming, but as I shot it, I realised that it was. In one scene, the protagonist sits in the car, looks at the cityscape and laments that she would love to stay. Coming from the countryside, she wants to stay in the city to escape from the pressure from her family. At such moment, the story naturally reflects our time.

张赞波：一个人的命运不够有说服力

陈平

张赞波，独立纪录片导演，非虚构作家。纪录电影作品有《天降》（Falling From the Sky , 2009）、《恋曲》（A Song of Love, Maybe, 2010）、《有一种静叫庄严》（The Interceptor from My Hometown, 2011）、《大路朝天》（The Road, 2015）等；出版非虚构著作《大路朝天：高速中国里的低速人生》（2014）。

一个“偶然”的契机，张赞波开始独立纪录片的拍摄。从《天降》到《大路朝天》，他的作品议题始终立足于个人与国家复杂关系的宏大社会背景，展现了急速变化的中国社会进程中光怪陆离的景观，书写了人的处境和命运。张赞波浸润于八〇年代的思潮与文学，以及他对自我身份、对情感、对故乡的再次体认，这些得以在他的作品中发生和生长。他的果敢和独行，与他作品所引发的一些关于伦理的讨论，都透露出他思考与思想的底色，也暗含了所带来的风险。但是，这种底色也毫无遮蔽地显示了理想主义一代的诚意。二〇二一年八月一日，张赞波在湖南省邵阳市接受了此次电话采访。

陈平（以下简称陈）：你是从什么时候开始纪录片创作？

张赞波（以下简称张）：从二〇〇八年开始，我拍了第一部纪录片《天降》，开始进入所谓的独立纪录片创作。我之前是在北京电影学院导演系上的剧情片导演专业硕士研究生，也没正式上过纪录片的相关课程。当时在电影学院有一种风气和观念，对纪录片导演专业并不是很看重，甚至觉得那好像不是艺术。当时我们这些剧情片专业的学生从来没想过要去听一门纪录片的课，学校没有给我们开设这样的课程，我们也没想过要去蹭课，或者主动接受这方面的一些教育，都没有这个意识。

陈：你是如何进入纪录片创作的？《天降》是关于卫星发射以后，火箭的残留物降落到地面，对着陆地区产生的影响以及纠葛。你是在什么样的一个契机下发现了这个题材？

张：二〇〇八年六月份的时候，我看到了湖南的一家媒体，《潇湘晨报》下属的《晨报周刊》上面发表了一篇文章，它的名字是叫“天上落下这么大的把戏，还是小心点好”。这个记者恰恰我认识，是我在湖南时的诗友。我以前读本科的时候学的是中文，那时候兴组建文学社，也兴写诗歌，我当

时参加文学社，也写诗。这个记者就是写诗的，是湖南诗歌圈里的人，所以我认识他。首先是这个报道本身的内容吸引了我，它揭示了在湖南绥宁县常年会有天上的这些火箭残骸往那儿掉。我觉得很吃惊。我的老家新邵县属于邵阳市，绥宁也属于邵阳市，两者相距大概只有二百公里，但我在老家生活了将近有二十年，从来没听说过天上会这么掉东西。这个事情在其他的媒体和信息渠道上都没有听说过。

但当时我的想象更多的是一种文学性的想象，觉得很魔幻现实主义。我们那时候学中文，读马尔克斯等人的作品，就会想到类似“一场下了二十年的雨”这样的情节。当时我在北京，刚好奥运会快开幕了，我记得当时有各种迎接奥运会的政府举措，各种宣传，各种管控，搞得气氛很浓厚。而我们有一部分人不太喜欢这样的气氛，就要去找个地方“避运”，避开奥运。所以，我当时正好想借这个机会离开北京，就决定去绥宁县实地看看，我就联系上了那位写报道的朋友。他给我说得就更详细了，关于那个地方的大致情况，怎么去那里，等等。我就问他能不能带我去看看，想着可以顺便去拍一拍，说不定能赶上下一次“落卫星”的时候——当地人都是把它叫做“落卫星”，其实准确的说法是火箭残骸坠落，卫星一发射就会有东西掉下来。

我就想顺便去拍，但是当时我连机器都没有，我还是临时去买的机器。我记得是去了中关村，七七八八地加起来，各种配套的设备花了三万多一点，买了一套机器。我在获得这个信息之后，没多久就去拍摄了，从此开始有点一发不可收拾了。在这个过程中，它也改变了我的很多观念，包括对电影的观念，对现实的观念。所以这也算是一个非常偶然、非常无意的一个事件造成的结果。

陈：从这十多年以后的今天出发，我们重新回看这个偶然的契机，似乎还存在着某种个人与国家之间的关系，比如你刚才说到的“避运”。二〇〇八年到今天，国家主义对个人空间的侵入在逐渐地扩张。我是否可以理解为，这种偶然开始拍摄《天降》也存在着某种历史的趋势？

张：我觉得我们当时其实已经意识到了国家和个体之间的这种关系，包括我的片子也表现了这部分，这是我个人非常感兴趣的一个点。尤其在北京，在所谓的“天子脚下”、“首善之区”，会有很多的感触，这跟这个片子的创作本身肯定是相通的，也就是说，它会影响到这个片子的一些面向和形态。我现在觉得，过了这么多年之后，我当初的判断是完全准确的，甚至觉得现在的状况比以前是“有过之而无不及”了。我甚至会觉得当时那种让我们觉得有点反感、有点抵触的情况，现在甚至都觉得可以带着一点美好的感觉去回忆了。当初还是一个相对比较宽松的年代，这个是我们现在完全想不到的。时代用这样的一种加速度在发展，我觉得一方面很荒谬，或者说很诡异，另外一方面可能也有它的必然性，也就是你所讲的这种历史的趋势。

陈：刚才你提到你的这个朋友曾是写诗的，你本科也是学中文的。你是否认为自己留有八十年代启

蒙运动所带来现代性思潮的影响？如果“八九”之前是一个解冻时期的话，持续到二〇〇八年，我们是否可以把它看作是一个相对开放的过程，而到了奥运之后，开始逐渐地转向。这个你现在回想起来，八零年代的诗歌和文学的讨论，包括一些文学理论的译介，代表了二〇〇八年之前是自由主义比较开放的一个时期。

张：我觉得尤其我这个年龄段的，就是七〇初、七〇中的这一部分有文学背景的人，确实是觉得八〇年代的文学启蒙运动对我们影响很大，包括我们的美学观念、我们对社会现实的一些关注点，以及一些价值观念。我觉得确实是一脉相承的。甚至有时候，我觉得我可能更倾向于六〇年代的那拨人，跟那拨人好像气质上更靠近。相反跟七〇后或八〇后，尤其是八〇后相距会比较远一点，可能跟那个是相关联的。

陈：能否具体地谈一谈是什么样的东西？观念上的也好。

张：相对地，我们还是会比较理想主义，然后有更多的所谓的人文关怀，表现在各个层面。我们会觉得人文关怀要高于其他层面的东西。相对来说，和更老的人来比的话，比如说五〇年代或者更老的一代，他们身上那种集体主义的东西在我们的身上就传承得比较少，我们更个体主义，更自由主义。有时候，为了所谓的理想也好，或者自己的一个目标也好，我们能放弃很多东西。我们不是四平八稳的，这个也是一个特质。

二

陈：关于现代化、城市化建设与国家主义之间纠葛的议题，我们往往获得的是抽象的关于个体与国家之间冲突的概念，比如劳工问题，它往往缺乏个体的细节。也许建立在具体事件和经历之上，我们才能获得可以具体考察的复杂性和可以揭示的问题。在拍摄《天降》和《大路朝天》的前后你有哪些观察和感触？

张：《天降》和《大路朝天》这两个片子，我觉得关注点和整体气质应该是一致的。虽然在我的创作谱系里，一个是第一部作品，一个是更后来的一部作品，中间还插着两部其它的作品，但《天降》和《大路朝天》的创作时间其实是挨在一起的，只不过我为了进入到《大路朝天》的题材中去，做了较长的准备，后来又在工地上待了很久，然后剪辑过程中我又停滞了一年，所以成片的时间已经靠后了，但其实两部片子是在同一序列里面的。

另外有点不一样的是，这两部片子中，《大路朝天》的创作动机更多地是由和我私人相关联的记忆

所触发的。我有一个好友，他是我的发小，以前跟我的人生轨迹是一样的。在少年之前，我们俩从小一起长大，同样地爱好文学，同样地开始早恋，基本上是差不多的人生轨迹，但是后来他突然读完高中就去“顶职”了——他爸爸是公路局的，他就子承父业去修路了。那时候找工作是很难的，他觉得没必要再去上学了。但我只能上学，我是乡下的孩子，没有其他的途径改变命运。后来我考上了大学，就跟他的人生轨迹开始不一样了。我上大学时经常跟他通信，他会在他修路的各处工地给我写信。那时候一个学期我估计都得写四十到五十封信，写信的量是很大的。他跟我讲了很多工地上他的见闻和亲身经历。这些信件对我的影响比较大。过了这么多年，当我去拍纪录片了，我已经对国家发展背后的东西感兴趣。所以当我拍完《天降》之后，我本能地就想到了再去拍一下工地。这跟《天降》的创作动机是看到一个新闻一时兴起不同，《大路朝天》是跟我个人情感记忆相关联的。当然，拍《天降》也有这方面的原因，因为绥宁那个地方的地貌、人的生活状况跟我老家几乎是一模一样的，在那里拍摄也勾起了我以前在乡村生活的记忆。所以，这两部作品可能既有共同点又有差异吧。

陈：拍摄《天降》以后，选择拍摄《大路朝天》这样的题材，你已经比较成熟地想去观察国家大规模现代化建设的问题？

张：对，可以这么说。如果说拍《天降》是一种偶然的话，拍《大路朝天》则更多的是一种必然，我内心一直有这样的冲动去表现这个层面。当时如果没拍纪录片的话，我可能并不一定想到要用纪录片这种形式、这种媒介去表现，而可能去用另一种方式。如果之前没有学电影，没有去做纪录片，有可能更多的是用文字。但我肯定也会去深入现场观察，然后通过某一种形式去表现出来。这个东西在我内心一直是个触动，一直过了这么多年，从少年时期到二〇〇八年之后。

陈：具体地谈一谈这种触动？

张：我很好奇我的发小他走的这条人生之路。如果没有他自身契机的话，他可能跟我一样会上学；但从另外一个角度考虑，我也有可能跟他一样，如果我没有考上大学，可能成为一个民工，有可能进入到他的工作场域里边，去开始另外一个不同的人生。我觉得人的命运是相通的。虽然有一些跟我既往的人生经历不一样的东西在吸引我，但这是我身边人的人生，我觉得这是一个情感点。另外一个层面，从所谓知识分子角度来说的话，去了北京之后，从事了所谓的电影工作之后，我就对国家和个体的命运之间的关系很感兴趣。尤其是在二〇〇八年，奥运年，一个国家主义意识高涨的年份。这些不同的因素累积到一块，就产生了这样的结果。

陈：我们从《天降》和《大路朝天》两部作品来看，呈现出来的更多的是一种个人和国家建设之间的冲突，譬如劳工问题。你刚才谈的这些可能是一个暗含的脉络。这样的一种勾连在创作之前就已

经非常明确，或者说在《大路朝天》创作的时候已经非常明确了，还是说通过这种参与式的观察，介入到这两个群体和事件当中逐渐形成的？

张：毫不忌讳地说，其实我在拍《大路朝天》之前，我对整个片子的走向或者大致主题，已经有了一个比较透彻的思考。这么说肯定会被人诟病，觉得我是带有先入为主的观念去创作。但是，我并不是带着一个固有的、僵死的观念去拍纪录片，只为了找一些素材来填充进这个观点。我肯定是要有观念，没有观念你怎么去创作？我在很多场合都反复提过，说纪录片是客观的那是不可能的，没有所谓百分百的客观。当你选择一个题材，选择一个群体，当你用你的想法去观察世界，它就带有主观性。但是如果你去了现场之后，觉得很多地方跟你当初预判的观念不一样的话，你是必须要修正它的。生活为大，这肯定是一个原则。

就这两部片子而言，我可以很有底气地说，生活恰恰跟我所预判的是一样的，证明了我的判断是准确的，除了在细微的层面有一些不同。我的作品并不是用一些很虚空的、或者很刻意而为之的东西去塞到里边，我会使用大量的真实的细节，也就是说，观念是建构在一个非常扎实、非常细致的现实基础之上的。

三

陈：《天降》、《大路朝天》也呈现出在这个国家的进程当中，每一个阶层群体的这种复杂性。接下来是《有一种静叫庄严》，它流传不是很广，记录了一个基层公务员，他的主要工作是拦截当地的上访者；一个在国家机器内的个体，敞开心扉地来述说这个体制是如何运作的。在中国独立纪录片的进程当中，能够深入观察一个体制中的个体，这样的片子不是很多。之前你也说过主人公是一个发小？

张：他是我以前的一个同学。这部片子我觉得在我的创作谱系里边具有更大的偶然性，可以说是完全无意得来的一部片子。拍摄时间非常短暂，非常高效，几天时间就拍完了，基本上是零成本。就花了几个磁带钱，剪辑的时候花了一点电费，几乎没有其他任何的花销，是送上门来的一个题材。对于我个人来说，它占的地位却是比较高的。它的风格跟《天降》、《大路朝天》这种有宏大叙事背景、复杂的叙事结构和板块式多线索的作品，是完全不一样的，它对我有一定的魅力。就是我以前讲过的“即兴创作”，在那么短的时间内如何去把握这样一个题材，怎么去找到这个事件的走向，怎么把它记录下来，怎么形成一个完整的作品……这种即兴创作，对于我非常有吸引力。它出来的结果又有一种四两拨千斤的效果，看起来非常放松。《天降》和《大路朝天》我使劲比较多，不光是指花时间很长，而且我的态度也很严肃，但是这个片子我非常之放松。平时，我就有意识地让自己在生活中进行所谓的游走，在游走的过程中碰到一些题材，我会用非常简单的机器，甚至是手机，

以一种很轻松的方式把它记录下来，然后做成作品。我也进行过这样的一种自我锻炼或是创作经历，不过这些作品我还没有剪出来，但我都做过，我觉得挺有意思。

陈：刚才谈到的即兴的吸引力，能否具体谈一谈到底是哪个方面触发了它？

张：这可能也是跟我对纪录片这种载体的观念变化相关。在我们受的教育里，包括电影教育里边，以及中国传统的纪录片创作观念里边，拍纪录片会有一些所谓的“调研”的部分，要做扎实的调研分析，做一些前期的准备工作以及田野调查。我的《天降》和《大路朝天》在这个特性上是比较明显的，尤其《大路朝天》，在这片子之外，我还写了一本书，确实有很多很细致扎实的调查部分在里面。但是《庄严》这部片子，它就无需用到这套。它更多的是被突然出现在你面前的一个人物或者一个事件给吸引住。

在这个片子里面，最吸引人的主要是这个人物的魅力，这光彩是自带的，不需要你去做很多调研，但是也要非常敏锐地意识到纪录他的讲述、他所从事的事情是有价值的，你要准确地知道它的价值在哪里。我听到过一些批评之声是觉得这部片子太粗糙了，这可能跟我的美学观念完全是两极的，我认为那种漫不经心的态度和呈现恰恰是它的优点。当然还有一个原因跟设备相关，我用的设备不是太好，画质也不是很好，所以被认为太粗糙。还有，有人认为这是人物本身的魅力，导演没有做任何工作，是送上门来的。他看不到导演的作用，这我不太认同，它看起来是没有导演痕迹，但其实背后还是能看到我的主观性和作者性在哪里，我的兴趣点在哪里，这都需要我在现场做出很敏锐的判断和抉择。

陈：对，我能理解。这样的判断是跟你一贯的思考和你所关注的问题有关。刚才你也谈到，一直贯穿着你成长和价值观念形成的一个过程中，除了刚才说到在八〇年代往后的这种自由主义启蒙的传播发展，还有包括文学的浸润等等，之前在中文系的一些经历是否影响了你？我还是想请你具体地谈一谈创作背后的脉络。

张：我觉得应该还是有关联的，放到文学的背景里面来讲也是。我不是为了创作而创作，这可能跟我整个人生积淀、美学观念、价值观念还是有关联的。我们所谓独立电影圈子里面的不少人，就觉得《天降》这个片子拍砸了。《天降》中间有一个章节叫“大地”，他们——甚至包括一些所谓的权威人士，觉得这个部分是多余的，是跑题的，我当时听了就觉得挺可笑的，他们看不懂我这个片子。我非常喜欢“大地”这个部分。如果把我这些素材交给其他人去剪，他不会剪到这个层面的呈现，我觉得这个部分让片子得到了提升。但在电影学院这套教育系统和电影观念里边，电影其实更多的是讲故事，甚至最高标准就是讲故事。所谓“电影是讲故事的”，一定要把一个故事讲好，所有的东西最后都指向这个目的，花各种功夫，包括从编剧开始，把一个故事讲得绘声绘色，甚至

运用各种技巧性的东西，就是为了讲好这个故事。我很反感这样的电影观念，很久以前我就比较排斥这样的观念。我甚至多次说，如果要看一个故事，你可以去买本《故事会》，或者买本《知音》，就能让你得到满足。当然这个话说得比较武断，也是针对他们的武断的判断我故意为之，以其人之道，还治其人之身。

我觉得，电影也好，文学也好，会有一些超越所谓的“讲故事”这个层面的一些东西存在。对此，我的搞文学的朋友能懂我，相反，电影圈子里的很多人就是不懂，他就是觉得《天降》只能讲跟火箭残骸有关系的故事。就好比说，他们如果来拍修路，可能更多的只会讲那条路的拆迁所造成的冲突，就是我的比较复杂、立体的呈现中间的一个面向，他们可能会把握住。但这种题材的纪录片太多了，在中国拍各种拆迁，非常普遍。但我其实更想做的是进入到一个机构的内部——我有一个机构内部的视角，我的视点在一个项目部——通过它来观察和呈现与修建一条道路有关的各个层面。另外，我会有一些对整个制度层面、文化层面的反思或者批判。

四

陈：这也是我接下来的一个问题，大型机构可能是产生权力压迫的根源之一，或者说，这些大型机构的层层运转是产生各种社会复杂问题的根源之一。在《天降》和《大路朝天》里面也涉及到了这个部分。关注具体的掉火箭残骸、拆迁这样的行为和冲突的表现，是否暗含着你关于机构的讨论？

张：如果从内部机构视角的角度来说的话，我觉得《天降》其实还有点遗憾。当时受各种条件所限，我没法完全地进入到一个官方的机构内部。我最想进入的还不只是当地政府和武装部那个层面，其实我更想进入到军方那个层面，就是所谓的贵阳卫星观测站那样的机构。如果能跟着军方的那几个人，从他们在贵阳的时候就跟拍，比如收到卫星要发射的消息，然后如何把这个消息传达给残骸落区，再来到残骸落区，和当地政府一同观察哪个地方掉落了残骸，最后开展残骸回收工作——这一系列的事情都进行跟拍，就有点像我在《大路朝天》里边拍项目部的孟总，就是负责协调工作的所谓的“救火队员”。如果能这样子去跟着他们拍摄，我会觉得非常好，但是肯定做不到。一是我跟他们没有个人的交往，另外他们是军方，你能拍到他们就算不错了。当时觉得很遗憾。

我有个观念在慢慢地变得清晰：拍一个题材，无论是从哪方面去拍，如果能有一个内部的视角，我觉得这是纪录片非常重要的一个因素。拍《天降》时我经常开玩笑，我说其实我们也是一群“空降兵”，一群外来的人，外来的创作者，从北京来，带着创作这么一个题材的目的，目的性很强，就空降到一个地方去拍摄。应该说，“空降”到一个地方做出来的纪录片肯定比不上在地的内部视角的展现。本地的任何一个人——或者是村民，或者是武装部里边的一个人，更别说军方里边的一个人，如果能把他们“天降残骸”的日常生活，或者他们回收残骸的工作，从这个角度去拍下来肯定比我

的作品要强多了。这种能具备内部视角的机会是非常难得的，也是非常迷人的。有时候，我到了一个陌生的地方，我就很享受那种感觉：刚到一个地方，我可能对那个地方的认知是非常肤浅表面的，但是随着我的观察，随着我的体验，以及做一些调查，开始逐渐建立对那个地方的全面认知，然后在我的认知里，慢慢地浮现出一种所谓的结构性。我觉得这个过程是非常迷人的，其实这是社会学、人类学层面的工作。相比于和电影工作者，我可能跟这些社会学家、人类学家更心气相通。

陈：像这种类似于社会学的参与式观察，在你创作过程当中是一个自觉的还是不自觉的过程？

张：我觉得首先应该是从本能出发，有一定的自觉性，有好奇才能导致我去做这样的一个选择。拍《天降》的时候，因为残骸降落的范围很广——我记得有十一个乡镇都是残骸落区，长方形区域——而我又不是像有些电影人就为了去讲一个故事，会选一个非常鲜明的人物拍摄，用立足于中心人物的那种讲故事的方法，我不是，我更多的像田野调查，去各个乡镇到处采访，只要有这个和残骸降落相关的经历的人，我都会有一个采访拍摄。他们的名字、年龄、民族等我都记得很详细，有名有姓的，跟残骸相关联的——或者砸到过他们的家，或者看到过降落过程的人，当时我就采集了有七八十人。我铺开了去采访，所以当时也会比较累。我不是只待在某一个地方，表现某一个“点”，我是尽量地想让我的片子形成一种“面”的宽广度。我也更喜欢群像式的呈现，不是太喜欢只是一个单线条的传统的线性叙事，也不太喜欢那种完全是单一人物的叙述。我觉得“面”的东西呈现出来时，更有力量，也更有普遍性。所谓讲命运，一个人的命运没有那么多说服力。我觉得如果通过一个群像的叙事，展现从个体命运到群体命运，这样更有力量。这个方式当初我就确定了，到最后出来的结果也是如此，很多线索，看起来很杂乱。这个也恰恰是被人诟病的地方。

陈：接着你所说的“一个人的命运不够有说服力”，那么在《有一种静叫庄严》中，它的对象反而只有一个人。

张：这个有点不一样。我在《有一种静叫庄严》中也并不是完全地去呈现一个人的命运，我其实是通过他的讲述，通过他的工作，带出一个群体。上访或者说截访在中国是一个非常普遍性的问题，但是它的内部机制是怎么样的，是怎么运转的？我们以前更多的只能看到上访者的层面，而从截访者的角度看是很难得的。这个片子有一个对体制的各个层面的阐述，它不光只是讲到截访这一件事，也会讲到整个政府——基层政府机构的运转，这也是比较复杂的表现。

五

陈：我也认为《有一种静叫庄严》得以深入一个国家机器内部去观察其如何运转，它的价值更多的在于其揭示权力机构或者一个国家机器是如何运转的。像这样的拍摄对象和题材，拍摄完以后会对

当事人产生一定的压力，这个也是经常被讨论的纪录片的伦理问题。如果我们去揭示一个跟我们有关系的机构，它又具有公共性，似乎就有了拍摄的正当性，或者说是合法性。但是，对拍摄对象来说会造成一些压力，伦理问题就随之产生了。

张：这种所谓的“纪录片伦理”问题，在《有一种静叫庄严》之后也是被反复地讨论，但有时候讨论得多了，我甚至都会有点厌烦。

陈：为了这一次对话的完整性，我还是加入了这个问题。

张：对于目前的我来说，所谓纪录片伦理问题，就像刚才我所讲到我的纪录片到底是客观的还是主观的，对于我来说，都不足以成为一个问题。所谓伦理的门槛我已经迈过去了，我不会纠结这个了。我拍这个东西，其实从我个人来讲，从实际操作层面来说，我非常清晰地意识到了纪录片伦理问题，甚至还主动地去做了一系列的事情来保护拍摄对象，以免对他们造成伤害。实际上，片子也没有对他们造成任何的伤害，包括《有一种静叫庄严》这个主角，一直还在官场里边，他的仕途还很顺畅，甚至升了官。我觉得这跟我的有意识的保护还是相关联的。

但是我之所以反感过多地来讨论纪录片伦理这个问题，是因为我觉得只要人生活在这个世界上，他就面临着伦理问题。不管你是不是一个导演，做不做纪录片，都会有伦理的问题。既然你做人都有伦理问题，你肯定就会想到怎么在拍摄时去把握你的伦理尺度。如果说你是一个坏人，你跟他谈伦理有什么用？没用的。如果你是一个善良的人，你自然会去约束自己，会有一些伦理层面的考虑。所以我觉得有时候伦理问题谈得太多了。从理论、从学术的角度来探讨，它是必须的，但是我觉得从创作上来说，它确实会约束你的创作力，还可能会遮蔽很多真正有价值的东西。我觉得对《有一种静叫庄严》，首先应该讨论的，是这个片子所表现的那些问题，而后你再来讨论伦理问题，这个才是合乎逻辑的。但如果首先就来谈伦理问题，就把我所要表述的点——讲基层的国家机制的运转也好，人的异化也好，所有的东西都被遮蔽了。

陈：当一个特别重大的关于公共性的话题产生的时候，伦理问题可能会降为相对次要的、或者说可以经过处理的问题。因为这个对象所呈现的公共性的问题，可能更多地会关乎除了他本人之外其他人的命运。

张：我记得史杰鹏对《有一种静叫庄严》的伦理问题质疑的时候，我是这么回应的。他问我会不会给主人公打马赛克，我说我不可能给他打马赛克。我说那样就是新闻，就不是艺术了。我说艺术的一个核心的要素就是人，而表现人脸其实是视觉艺术的非常关键的一部分，无论绘画还是电影。我的主人公他在说话的时候，脸上有着各种生动的表情，哪怕他在说谎，他脸上也会泄露一些信息。

喜怒哀乐都会通过这张人脸来表现,而你给他打上马赛克,那还是电影么?我说我不是在做暗访新闻,我绝对不会这么处理。

你刚刚所讲的,看起来是对一个个体的展现,其实关乎整个群体的普遍命运,我觉得这确实是我对于伦理问题的另外一个考量。我有一个公私分明的态度,就“公”的层面,比如说《天降》、《大路朝天》这样的片子,是不是有伦理问题?当然有。我拍到孟总也好,拍到那些军方的人也好,如果说要把你片子的完成版给他看,然后要他签署同意书,有这可能吗?他不可能给你签的是吧,那就没有批判的存在了。但我为什么还都把它放出来,因为我觉得它是个公共话题,是一个非常大的、跟每个人都相关联的话题。我觉得我可以牺牲所谓的伦理来换取这样的一个结果。但是如果说是“私”话题,比如说《恋曲》,它是一个爱情故事。所谓的“私影像”。虽然我觉得它的价值恰恰是从个人的视角去呈现出一个公共话题,但是在生活层面,确实可能会给人家造成影响,你把它放出来,如果人家还在恋爱中还没结婚或者怎么的,放出来她后来的男朋友要是看到,肯定会有不好的影响。所以从我的角度来说,私人话题我肯定就会更严密地来做一些保护。当然也是你轻易就能做到的保护,也并不会损这个片子的质量。比如说人名、地名的隐匿,在传播上做一些处理,其实也很简单,你可以去做的。

对公对私分明,我一直有这样的操作。当然,这个也是跟自己的现实遭遇相关联,有可能也会对伦理问题形成一个变化。说实话,我现在对伦理问题可能更加地不看重,当然我这也是一种比较极端、甚至比较叛逆的说法。

同样举《有一种静叫庄严》这个例子,在那个片子里面,我认为我做得很好,包括我同学的名字,甚至我的老家的地名我都用了化名。但是我后来其实还在拍这个同学,一直在拍,除了拍他这次来北京截访的过程外,还有其他事件。因为当时我就意识到,可能也更多地是从一个社会学的层面意识到的,我觉得通过一个小官吏的截访去表现中国的庞大的政治架构下基层权力的运转,虽然有它的价值,但是还不是太完整。怎么才能算完整?再去回到他的工作跟生活的场景,也就是说回到我的故乡。因为《有一种静叫庄严》是有一个“他乡遇故知”的这样的角度在里面,我是刚好碰到了他。下一步,我本能地觉得应该回到我的故乡去,考察一下他在那个地方——那是他真正的生活跟工作的地方,具体是怎么样的状况。所以我只要一回老家我就拍他,拍了这么多年了,但是片子还没剪出来。

我在想,如果这个片子剪出来了,在所谓的伦理方面,我会采用一种可能更会受到大家批判的方式,最起码家乡的地名我不会用化名。我甚至觉得当时这么处理是有点过度了,你为什么要去掩盖这个地方?我觉得这样做实际上是掩盖了那里发生的恶劣的行为,这些官场的习气如此之糟糕。说实话,因为是家乡,也是出于对拍摄对象的保护,所以我当时用了化名。但后面这些年家乡发生的各种事

情，让我觉得我对他们太善良了。他们倒一点都不善良。他们在官场历来就是这么干的，既然他们能做出这些糟糕的事情，尤其是在我的摄影机前还能做出那样的事情，我就觉得没必要给他们保护。我甚至有可能我连我这个同学的名字都不给他化名，但是现在只是一个想法。说得不好听点，他们不是什么好人，我何必要去保护他？保护他，我这个片子就没有产生一丁点儿价值了，所以我可能下一步会做得更被人诟病。

陈：刚才说的价值，你认为要坚持什么样的一个立场？

张：任何人都应该有一个敢作敢当的态度，是吧？你做任何的事情都应该如此，你在官场也是，你做了那么多坏事情，就应该敢承担责任。当别人把真相说出来，有理有据的真相，只要不是谣言，只要不是捕风捉影，你就不能责备他。既然我也拍到你，甚至我的拍摄都没有采取什么偷拍的手段，是完整地、很直接地去拍摄的，那我觉得就应该呈现出来。如果有舆论的压力或者有所整治，我觉得这是一个合理的反应，这也是纪录片的一个功能。纪录片跟剧情片不一样，剧情片可能只是一个艺术的表达，虚构出来一个事件反映一个普遍的问题；但是纪录片，我觉得一个好的纪录片生态，是应该让它对这个现实有切实的介入和帮助。拍《大路朝天》的时候，好多人问这些腐败的人会不会被治理，会不会把他们抓起来，我当时就预言了说不会，我说如果能抓起来那就不是中国了。在一个正常的民主的国家，如果真的出现了这样的问题，官方最起码的应该成立一个调查组去调查，然后来一个整治，把这些有问题的事情都消除掉，使整个事情朝良性的方面去发展，这个才是做纪录片的初衷。我觉得，通过拍纪录片，你除了揭示一个事件，最后还能有一个改变现实的影响，这个是纪录片应有的价值。在中国好像起不到这样的作用，所以我觉得既然是这样，我也没必要遮遮掩掩去做一些隐瞒，不如就索性放开了。

陈：最后还是想谈一谈《恋曲》，像张赞波这样相对激进的人，居然能够拍出这么温情的影片。这片子前后大概持续拍这一对恋人多久？

张：好像时间跨度就两个月。相对于《天降》来说，它是花时间比较短的，是在拍《大路朝天》的过程中拍的。我那时候已经到了长沙，跟这些工地的从业人员住在一块，其中和《恋曲》的女主人公的男朋友合租在一个大房子里头。那个时候，我一门心思都在准备拍《大路朝天》，等他们那条路开工，赶紧到工地去，一门心思扑在那个上面。我带了摄影机过去了，也习惯于把摄影机随身带着，有时候无意中碰到主人公。就在中秋节的那一天，她一个人在客厅里，因为我们共用一个大客厅，我就问她男朋友呢？她说不见了，然后她就打开了话匣子。我就说我把机器立在这里拍，拍了之后让你的男朋友看看。我是出于这样的目的拍摄的，当初没想到要做片子，结果一拍才发现这里边的戏剧性很强，但其实也是揭示了一种比较普遍性的状态，就是男女关系。这个东西看起来是在讲一个很小的层面，相比于《天降》或者《大路朝天》，很小，没有上升到国家的层面、时代的层面。

但是我觉得，看起来是很小的，其实呈现出来的东西并不小，也是有它的价值的，当时我剪片子的时候还有点怀疑做这个片子有没有价值。

陈：这两个恋爱的主人公恰恰就是在这种国家的快速进程当中的劳工群体，他们背景是这样的。

张：所以还是跟这个时代有很密切的关联，我拍着拍着就拍出了这个。我的思路也就会清晰了，刚开始是觉得男女之间的那种破事，好像不值得拍一样，拍着拍着就发现其实不是那样。当主人公在车里看着窗外的城市景观感慨，她说很想留下来，她是乡下来的，因为家里的压力所以想留到城市。这个东西自然就又呈现出了它的时代性。

Community Building in the Post-Caochangdi Era —A Glimpse of Wu Wenguang and His Team

TONG Shan 佟珊 Translator: Xiang FAN 樊响

1 After the Screening

One afternoon in late June, I met Wu Wenguang (吴文光) at the Creative Space near the National Art Museum of China, where he was invited to participate in a post-screening discussion. It was the first time that Wu's works had been screened in China after eleven years, and six of his works were shown. The day coincided with the rehearsal of the ceremony celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the CCP, and some roads were under traffic control. Wu drove into the city from the northern suburbs of the capital and wondered, 'there was red everywhere, and I thought I was going the wrong way.'

In 2014, Wu moved from Caochangdi (草场地) village to Qinjiatun (秦家屯) village on the border of Changping and Shunyi Districts. He lives in this village from spring to autumn every year, and then he returns to Kunming for the winter. Even in Beijing, he rarely leaves the house and follows a regular routine: after a simple breakfast in the morning, he sits in front of his computer and writes until eleven o'clock, followed by an hour of yoga; after lunch, he starts to deal with the daily admin of the Caochangdi Workstation (草场地工作站), including sending the daily newsletter and editing the Caochangdi WeChat account; he then spends two hours editing his new films. In addition, he also participates in various workshops and screening discussions organised by the Workstation. In April 2020, he started writing a book entitled *1990*, which is about his life in Beijing in the 1990s, and it was supposed to be completed by May 2021, with a total of 600,000 words. He told me that last year he wrote 570,000 words in the Caochangdi mailing group.

The night before he came to the screening, Wu had a torch ready. When the lights were still on at the end of the screening, he walked to the centre of the stage and stood still for a minute in the faint beam of the torch, as if he had just stepped out of the film. He said it was an improvised performance and that it was all about how he felt on the spot. The moment he stepped on stage, he decided to do nothing: 'I couldn't see your faces in the dark, but I feel like crying. I don't think any action and passion is needed, I just stand like this, and that's it.' At nearly sixty-five years old, Wu Wenguang is still in high spirits, standing on stage with a great deal of wit and infectiousness, like a stand-up comedian, often drawing laughter and applause, even

though the majority of those who came to see the film on stage were already post-1990 and post-2000. On that day, Wu wore a special Caochangdi Workstation T-shirt with ‘100% Life 0% Art’ on it.

The screenings were split in two weeks, and one week was for *Bumming in Beijing: The Last Dreamers* (流浪北京：最后的梦想家, 1990), *Jiang Hu: Life On The Road* (江湖, 1999), and *Fuck Cinema* (操他妈的电影, 2005); the other for *Bare Your Stuff* (亮出你的家伙, 2010), *Treatment* (治疗, 2010), and *Investigating My Father* (调查父亲, 2016). The two sets of screenings clearly showed the divisions and turns in Wu Wenguang’s creative trajectory. Since 2005, Wu Wenguang has been the curator and co-founder of the Village Documentary Project (村民影像计划) and Folk Memory Project (民间记忆计划), and the latter has continued from 2010 until today. His personal works are also clearly influenced by these two collective projects: *Bare Your Stuff* records the process of Wu’s interactions with the villagers of the Village Documentary Project, while from *Treatment* onwards, Wu’s works have turned to ‘personal film’ and ‘visual writing’.

‘When the Village Documentary Project began, Wu was in a crisis concerning the ethics of documentary and was disgusted by the pompous utilitarianism of the film industry. At a screening in 2010, Wu wrote in his director’s statement: ‘My confusion and doubts about the practice, function and attitude of conventional documentaries started around 2000, which have seriously affected my ability to make documentaries in the same way as before. I didn’t want to be one of the many people earning money or gaining fame from documentaries, so naturally I stopped disseminating my films. But for ten years, my camera has been still on, continuing a kind of visual diary approach.’ More than ten years later, Wu Wenguang is still on the road of ‘writing with real visual images’. On the Chinese New Year’s Eve in 2020, the COVID-19 broke out and Wu was trapped in his residence in Kunming. In the midst of the feeling of being under siege, he set up his camera on the balcony and recorded his mood every day, ‘like brushing teeth’. This ‘visual diary’ approach, says Wu, ‘is first of all to de-signify something, to give up the purpose of shooting, to forget about it, and become a habit and an action that your body has to do every day.’

Wu talked to me about his creative works in recent years, which have been produced almost as often as one per year: the *Autobiography* (自传) series is in three parts—*Pass Through* (穿过, 2017), *Struggles* (挣扎, 2018), *Evidence* (证据, 2019), followed by the *Riding Through* (度过) series, which started in 2020. All of these works are about himself, drawing from his own life or memories. From *Treating* to *Investigating My Father*, Wu feels like he has entered a ‘free kingdom’: ‘My film is actually the same thing as my writing. There’s no such thing as what I’m shooting or what subjects I have. It’s just one thing after another. People

often ask me what I'm shooting. I say I'm not shooting anything. "If you're not shooting anything, then you have nothing to do with film?" I say I'm doing it every day. They just can't understand it.' But these recent works have not yet been shown publicly. The most recent one screened was *Investigating My Father*, completed in 2016.

Towards the end of the screening, the audience asked questions about *Investigating My Fathers*. The film, about the history and memories of Wu's father, consists mainly of archival texts, narration and theatre performances. Wu recalled that when he had just cut out a twenty-eight-minute version of the film, he was excited to show the film to the students at the Li Xianting Film School, but one of the students said on the spot, 'Isn't this just PowerPoint slides?' 'I was really frustrated, but then I thought I just want to do PowerPoint slides! Why can't PowerPoint slides be a film? Why does a film have to be spectacular, with all kinds of scenes and smokes?' He referred to British director Derek Jarman's *Blue* (1993), 'This dude has done this, what's wrong about my PowerPoint slides? So, friends, PowerPoint slides can be a film; why isn't it a film? By saying this I'm advocating,' he repeats the word 'advocating' again, 'that the image belongs to everyone!' At this point, he noticed a girl in the front row filming him with a mobile phone: 'This young lady has been filming and it will be a section in a film you will make after you are sixty, entitled The Man Called Wu Went Crazy.'

The young fans applauded.

2 Crisis

Caochangdi Workstation is really appealing to young people who are eager for self-expression and creativity. At the beginning of 2012, Caochangdi held an online workshop on 'Visual Writing', and the majority of the 77 applicants were post-90s and post-2000s. Starting sixteen years ago in 2005, Wu Wenguang used the Caochangdi Workstation as a base to hold film screenings and workshops, attracting a large number of young literary-art enthusiasts. In 2010, Wu initiated the Folk Memory Project, in which young people returning to their villages to interview and collect memories of the Great Famine (1959-1962).

As a social and artistic practice that incorporates many forms, Folk Memory Project's longevity, the large number of participants, the variety of works, and the sheer volume of works have made it a significant place in the field of independent documentary and contemporary art in China. The Folk Memory Project has received a lot of attention and has become a 'star' project since it was founded, with its film and theatre productions being screened and performed at film festivals, theatre festivals and universities in China and

abroad. The media and academics have reported on and researched the Folk Memory Project, either as an attempt to reconstruct historical narratives through folk narratives or as a social intervention that reconnects the young generation (the post-1980s and 1990s as the main participants) with the rural area, but none of them can fully capture the complexity and heterogeneity of the Folk Memory Project's practice.

At least the following aspects are included in the works of the Folk Memory Project: the participants' collection of villagers' oral histories of the Great Famine, then extending to the Anti-Rightist Movement, the Land Reform, and the Cultural Revolution, and later to the collection of memories of ordinary individuals' lives; the public practices with social intervention that took place in the village, including erecting monuments for the victims of the Great Famine, collecting rubbish, establishing libraries and funds for the elderly, leading children and villagers in various artistic and educational activities; documentaries by individuals and documentary theatre performances as a collective, starting with the action of returning to the village; and the relationships and emotional exchanges with relatives and villagers as a result of the continuous 'return to the village' activities; the ongoing reflection on the self (e.g. who I am, where I came from, where I am going, and the relationship between the self and the others) that accompanies these actions. However, there is also a multifaceted tension within the practice of the Folk Memory Project: on the one hand, many studies see Folk Memory Project as a collective project, emphasising its collective nature; on the other hand, if one looks back at the origins and working methods of the project, Wu Wenguang's role as the initiator of the project and his creative philosophy becomes crucial. On the one hand, the project requires participants to return to 'my village' and collect oral histories of the villagers about the 'Great Famine' and 'Land Reform', while on the other hand, the final work is more about the participants' individual examination and questioning of their own identity (in relation to the village).

In 2014, with the dismantle of the physical space of the Workstation in Caochangdi Village, some of the core participants of Caochangdi and the Folk Memory Project such as Wen Hui (文慧), Zou Xueping (邹雪萍), Li Xinmin (李新民) and Luo Bing (罗兵) left, while Wu and other participants resettled in Qinjiatun village. The original 'eat together, leave together' approach could not be maintained and most of the participants dispersed. No longer having to pay for accommodation, food and rent undoubtedly eased the financial pressure on the Workstation, but it also posed a challenge to the creative collective. 'By 2014, the biggest problem was that we had to cultivate the auteurs, but for how long? The longest stay for an auteur was four or five years, but they would eventually ask themselves; is this life what I want for the future? Am I going to keep shooting forever and go back to the village every year? The first few years are fine, but what about when I get a bit older?' Wu paused for a moment and then continued, 'It's still a choice of lifestyle. Like Village Documentary Project, the Folk Memory Project was motivating and driving at the beginning,

but it is unable to become something that an auteur would take the initiative to learn.’

After the participants scattered, the Workstation tried to maintain contact in the same way as before: the mailing group was retained and workshops were organised from time to time, as well as some screenings and discussions at universities at home and abroad. At first, early participants such as Wang Hai'an (王海安) and Shu Qiao (舒桥) came to the events, but gradually they stopped coming. This ‘crisis’ has made Wu think a lot. He says that in his time, creating and becoming an auteur was a process of self-developing and self-discovering. ‘I knew that I could have a break-through, but I might soon be drowned out, eaten up by companies, business, the system or other black holes.’ For young people nowadays, it’s not hard to become an auteur, the hard part is how to keep doing it. ‘The environment for independent cinema is so harsh that it’s almost like planting grass on a desert; the survival rate is extremely low, and if one or two survive, they soon stop growing, not to say spreading.’

Is it a human problem or an environmental one? Wu thought about this. ‘In the end you find it’s all in one. Community then becomes something vital and has to be implemented down the line.’ In Wu’s view, community is different from partners. Partners may be able to keep each other warm, but at a certain point they have to go their separate ways, whereas what Caochangdi wants to build is a community. From 2014 to 2019, Wu believes that Caochangdi has undergone another process of ‘from individual to group’. Some old auteurs such as Shao Yuzhen, Zhang Mengqi (邵玉珍), Hu Tao (胡涛) and Zhang Huancai (张隼才) continued to work, while some new participants such as Liu Xiaolei (刘晓雷), Zhang Ping (张苹) Hao Yongbo (郝永博), Gao Ang (高昂), Yu Shuang (俞爽) and Luo Luo (洛洛) joined in and started to return to the village to shoot and complete their first works. ‘There are no more big events participated by dozens of people. The workshop was operated by five or six people, going on stage by stage, from the core of the work to the rough cut to the final cut.’ In Wu’s view, 2020 is a year of breakthrough for the Caochangdi Workstation. The isolation, the change in the political climate, and the tightening of cultural policies brought about by the pandemic did not discourage Wu; instead he saw new hope in online working approach and in many young people.

3 Online

Every Friday night at 8pm, if you search for ‘Caochangdi Workstation’ on Bilibili (B站), you can watch live stream screenings of the works from the Village Documentary Project and the Folk Memory Project at the Caochangdi Workstation. The first film I watched in this way is Shao Yuzhen’s new film, *My Village 2020* (我的村子, 2020). Shao is seventy-one years old villager from Shaziying, Shunyi District, Beijing, who joined

the Caochangdi Workstation in 2005 by being part of the Villagers Documentary Project. She is also one of Caochangdi's longest-standing participants and younger participants often call her Aunt Shao or Granma Shao. *My Village 2020* is her seventh documentary, which documents the daily life of Shao Yuzhen, her family and the villagers of Shaziying during the pandemic. Live streaming at Bilibili is a new experiment of the Caochangdi Workstation started at the end of 2020. After the screenings, the organisers would leave a pop-up comment with the address of the Tencent meeting room and invite viewers to participate in the post-screening discussion. So far, Caochangdi has organised twenty-five screenings in the form of live streaming.

Since the pandemic, most of the activities at the Caochangdi Workstation have moved online. At first it was a reluctant move, as participants who had planned to return to the village during the Chinese New Year were isolated in different areas of the country. Since filming could not go ahead and their return to Beijing was out of reach, online became the only option. Gradually, the group became accustomed to this approach and experienced the freedom it brought: no matter where they were, they could join in the discussion as long as they had internet access. Wu believes that the pandemic provided a huge opportunity and that the online approach opened up a wide possibility for the Caochangdi Workstation. This online form and way of working have also continued into 2021. 'From January to April, the visual writing workshop, ten sessions; in June, the reading material workshop started; then live streaming on Bilibili. This means that from the creation to dissemination, everything can be done online.'

The online approach has allowed the Caochangdi Workstation to break away from the trivia issues, such as 'who will come; how to eat, how to stay', and to build connections and communication while focusing more on the focal points of creation. During the pandemic in 2020, with the abundance of time available, the Caochangdi Workstation initiated a weekly workshop on reading footage. At each workshop, participants play a few minutes of unedited footage, then explain a little about the footage, share how it was shot, how they felt about it, and so on. This is followed by an open discussion session where participants are free to read and give feedback on other people's footage. In addition to the 'footage reading', in order to help first-time participants find the logic and structure in the vast amount of footage, new and old participants have formed editing teams for intensive one-on-one discussions. Without these working methods, Wu says, the eight new films that have been completed in the first half of this year would not have been possible, four of which are debuts by new participants.

The visual writing workshop at the beginning of the year was an attempt to re-open the Caochangdi Workstation after a year of relatively internal, closed-door knowledge exchanges. The online format made it possible for people from different regions and backgrounds to participate in Caochangdi's activities. Some

of them had been interested in Caochangdi before, while others were curious or had bumped into the events by chance. Zhang Mengqi says the workshop speaks of the methodology that has been accumulated over the past decade or so at the Caochangdi Workstation. ‘It’s up to you whether your creation will correspond to it or whether you want to enter into our way of creation.’

I met Wu Andi (吴安迪) at a screening event of Wu Wenguang’s work. She became interested in Caochangdi after watching a performance by Zhang Mengqi in 2015. She then graduated from the Communication University (中国传媒大学) of China and started working as a documentary filmmaker, but often felt that those films produced by TV stations or other platforms were not self-expression. When she saw the recruitment post for the visual writing workshop, she was excited, ‘I felt like I had found my organisation.’

Over fifty people came to the first workshop. Most of them, like Wu Andi, had a desire to express themselves, but had not yet developed a clear creative idea. After an introduction to Caochangdi’s working methods and related works, the participants were encouraged to choose footage or an object that was related to themselves as a grip to ‘open up the narrative’. During the ten workshops, although Wu Andi was not able to complete a single ‘opening-up of the narrative’, she felt inspired: ‘I slowly saw more and more participants taking out their own photos, or a short video, and everyone had a different way of opening-up. A lot of people went back to their villages to shoot, but I don’t have my own village, so I thought about how I could translate their return to the village into myself. I’m from Beijing and I thought maybe I could shoot the memories of hutongs.’ Some creative inspirations gradually became clear during the workshop.

As attending the workshop, Wu Andi was also involved in the creation and performance of *Reading Virus* (阅读病毒, 2021). In May 2021, *Reading Virus* premiered online at the Taiwan International Documentary Festival (台湾国际纪录片影展, TIDF), and was the third theatre production of the Caochangdi Workstation named after *Reading Hunger* (阅读饥饿, 2016) and *Reading Father* (阅读父亲, 2019). TIDF curator Wood Lin (林木材) and the Caochangdi Workstation had agreed to work together long before the pandemic, but the many uncertainties caused by the pandemic forced TIDF to be postponed for a year and the cross-border travel restrictions under the pandemic policy stopped Caochangdi members from attending the festival. A bold idea emerged: let’s just make an online theatre.

4 Theatre

When I first saw the introduction to *Reading Virus*, I was curious about the online theatre format: how

could a theatre performance premised on live space and physical presence possibly take place in an online format? Looking through Zhang Mengqi's creative notes, I could also see her reflections: 'How can a theatre performance take place without a live performance? Is a performance without a body still a live performance? The internet, Zoom, frames, people are divided into small square avatars, the body is compressed, becoming a frame in a mosaic, even though it can reach the live broadcast via the internet.' The online approach may seem to transcend the limits of physical space and bring the possibility of connection, but when the body and voice are flattened into a signal of image and sound, that connection is often accompanied by a sense of distortion and body-mind separation. It is easier to get distracted and share less empathise with others in online than face-to-face conversations. Being present in the same physical space and the body re-enactment, which triggers an emotional resonance between the performer and the viewer and thus construct a kind of 'emotional space', are the key to the power of theatre art.

At the Caochangdi Workstation, which emphasises the parallelism between film and body theatre, real theatre based on numerous interviews and fieldworks has always been at the core of its creativity. The tradition of this form at the Caochangdi Workstation is inextricably linked to theatre choreographer Wen Hui. Wen Hui founded the Living Dance Studio (生活舞蹈工作室) in 1994 and has been exploring the possibilities of body theatre interventions in society. In her early works such as *Report on Giving Birth* (生育报告, 1999), Wen collected individual bodily memories and experiences of childbirth through numerous interviews with ordinary women, and eventually presented them in the form of body theatre. At the beginning of the Folk Memory Project, after completing the first year of interviews and filming in the village, the participants collectively created the documentary theatre *Memory: Hunger* (回忆•饥饿, 2010). If the interviews and filming as individual practices are guided by a common goal and methodology, the body theatre embodies the collective nature of Caochangdi's production, although this collective nature is often led by the convergence of diverse individual experiences. In addition, the rehearsal, creation and performance of body theatre also become a process in which the participants digest and reflect on their experiences of filming in the village and the memories of hunger they have collected, and then deepen, express and transmit them, which is an important part of the reconstruction of their relationship with the village.

About half of the participants in this performance of *Reading Virus* are regular participants of Caochangdi, while the remaining half, like Wu Andi, joined the theatre rehearsals as part of their participation in the workshop. Beginning in late February, the online rehearsals took place two and a half hours a week until the performance in May 2021. Zhang Mengqi, the executive of the rehearsals, said there is not

much thought given to the format, ‘The online theatre format is very new in the world and there is nothing to learn from others. We discuss more about what the content is.’ Like Caochangdi’s previous theatre productions, *Reading Virus* continues the concept of real theatre, the core of which can perhaps be summed up as ‘I remember, I witness’: each participant tells what they see and feel from their own position. In real theatre, each performer also appears as themselves, without any established normative action, allowing for a certain amount of improvisation within the framework of the larger structure. This concept enables each participant to add their own individual experiences and use their own creativity in the space, developing their own story line around the theme of ‘how to live with a virus’. This makes *Reading Virus* an articulation and response to the pandemic, bringing together the memories and experiences of many ordinary individuals.

Reading Virus also features interesting online performances, such as a group ‘mask dance’ at the beginning of the show. Using masks as props, the crowd constantly puts on, takes off or covers the camera, creating a rhythmic and dynamic change on a screen of twenty small windows. When most of the cameras are covered, the remaining one or two windows are like performing under a spotlight, allowing the individual to stand out from the group: one performer fiddles with a lychee that looks like the shape of the Coronavirus in front of the camera, then peels off the skin and eats it in one go.

Reading Virus is roughly divided into several sections. The transitions from one section to another also imply the transitions from group to individual and then back to group. Some sections are based on group movement, others on verbal narration, and others on the sharing of film clips, making the presentation flexible and diverse. The performers come from not only different regions and provinces, but also different age groups. Their age gap is as high as fifty years, from university students in their second year to teachers, media workers, bookstore clerks, social workers, farmers and retired people. The diversity of identities and social backgrounds brings with it a diversity of individual life experiences. These real-life experiences, whether in the form of personal oral narratives or video logs, form the collective testimony and memory of the pandemic. The most powerful part of the performance is undoubtedly the ‘diary of the pandemic’ in the middle of the show, which is narrated by each performer in turn in their own dialect:

23 January. Two suspected cases in the county. I called around to borrow masks.

9 February. We finally ran out of food. I went to the supermarket alone and bought two trolleys of stuff.

30 January. I started to collect and sort out the messages of calling for help on Weibo with my friends. It

may not be useful, but it is better to do something than doing nothing.

6 February. I cried all night as I watched the news of Dr Li's death. I can't even tell why I cried. All I could do was tell myself not to be afraid and not to forget.

31 January. I went to 7-11 and bought two disposable raincoats, in yellow and grey colours, and told my parents to put them on, go to the airport and leave Beijing as soon as possible.

30 January. The sixth day of the Chinese New Year. My village was completely in lockdown and there was only one entry and exit for the formerly well-connected village.

20 January. I had just arrived at home when the COVID-19 outbreak came. Now it's a little red dot on the map of China, will it turn into a sea of red later?

...

These 'pandemic diaries' gradually speak to one another and finally feed into a narrative of 'heteroglossia' (众声喧哗) when everyone speaking at the same time. This narrative itself constitutes an action, a self-expression, a sharing of experience and a transmission of memory, from the 'I' who perform to the 'you' who watch. In this process, a new emotional space is created across the virtual/real boundary, both on and off screen, dragging the performer and the audience into the 'scene'.

If the goal of a typical theatre is to produce a performance without mistakes through rehearsal, in Caochangdi's conception of theatre, it is more important to draw on the possibility of stimulating, summoning and transforming performers and the audience in the process of the performance, through a scene constituted by the interaction between the performance space, the audience and performers. From this point of view, *Reading Virus* succeeds. A very moving part of the performance comes at the end, when all the performers appear in front of the screen in turn to talk about 'who I am, where I am and what I am going to do'. During the performance, this part of the show was triggered by the performer Liu Xiaolei's emotional 'outburst', which triggered the emotional reactions from the others, many of whom choked up as they spoke. These unexpected 'outbursts' and impromptu emotion constituted a powerful moment in the performance, which, because of its sincerity and intensity, possessed a kind of inspiration.

I found the answer to this inspiration in my conversation with Andi Wu. She told me that when someone shares their feelings, stories and secrets without reservation, you too will feel the urge to share. 'In Mr

Wu's words, you see everyone else running around naked, so how can you still bind yourself.' After the performance that night, everyone sat down again in front of their computers with their untouched dinners, sharing their unquenchable excitement in the virtual space. Over the course of the rehearsal and performance, the group built up a sense of trust. Wu Andi particularly mentioned the speech at the end of the show - from one of the youngest participants, twenty-year-old Li Tianyi (李天依), 'Tianyi said something like - "I understand the meaning of the collective." That was the feeling.'

5 Films

As one of the core participants of the Caochangdi Workstation, Zhang Mengqi delivered her tenth work in the *Self-Portrait* series, *Fairy Tale at 47KM* (47公里童话, 2021), in early 2021. Eleven years ago, in order to participate in the Folk Memory Project, Zhang found the village where her father grew up but which was unfamiliar to her—Diaoyutai Village in Suizhou, Hubei Province—and began to return to the village year after year to film and interview the elderly. Every time she returned to the village, she would get off at a signpost '47 km', and the village gained a new name in her work: '47 km'. *Fairy Tale at 47KM* was filmed in 2019, being delayed a bit, compared to the frequency of one film per year for her previous films. When we met at a cafe in 798 Art Zone, Zhang explained: '(I stayed in the village) ostensibly because of the pandemic, but also because I needed to look at the footage more closely myself. There was a change in my relationship with the village starting in 2020. I stayed there almost for most of the year, and had more footage than I had before.' The change that Zhang describes also forms the backbone of *Fairy Tale at 47KM*: using a prize from the DMZ International Documentary Film Festival in Korea (韩DMZ国际纪录片) as start-up fund, Zhang built a 'blue house' in the village. With this blue house, Zhang acquires a new identity as a villager of '47 km', transforming herself from a 'migrant' who returns to the village every year for filming into a long-term resident.

Having spent more time in the village, Zhang has gained a greater sense of village life. Previously she only knew that the villagers grew rice and mushrooms, but only when she lived there did she realise that they are busy all year round: 'When to catch centipedes and crickets, when to pick chrysanthemums, when to get artemisia stalks, every time of the year the mountain nourishes them. You realise the very close relationship between human and nature, especially after the whole world has stopped. Then you look at the people in that place very naturally enter into each year. You could say day after day, year after year, but at the same time it is a pattern that is brought about by nature and quickly restored to their lives.' This reflection will also become the direction that she wants to explore in her future works.

A certain tradition of rural life transcending the present is also present in Hu Tao's new film, *The Burrows* (地洞, 2021). Filmed around the winter and spring of 2020, this is the fourth feature film Hu has completed under the Folk Memory Project, documenting the process of building a tomb for his grandparents with the people of his village. In this small village at the southern foot of the Qin Mountains, as the village's loudspeaker playing the announcements of preventing the spread of COVID-19, the people building the tomb on the hills chat about the myths of emperors, and meanwhile the voice-over narrates rural legends—the present and the past are intriguingly intertwined, leading to an eternal time. Although the film begins with the specific family event of building a tomb, *The Burrows* ultimately points to a village, a view of life and death, and a life tradition that will eventually fade away—living on a piece of land for generations and being buried on a slope when they die, looking out over the village below the hill to their offspring.

2020 marks the ninth year that Hu returned to the village to film. Unlike Zhang Mengqi, his village—Xiangzidian Village in Shanyang, Shaanxi Province—is where he lived and grew up before high school, and where his parents, grandparents, and other relatives now reside. To build a tomb for his grandparents, Hu had to be in front of the camera instead of standing behind it. Every day he chose his camera position and placed the camera next to him, shooting for seven or eight hours a day. This explains why the vast majority of *The Burrows* is made up of medium and long shots, but after carefully editing, it implies a message: like in a stage play, various characters start appearing. Hu told me that it would not have been possible to finish the film this way without his previous works and ongoing filming in the village. 'You might have been bored of shooting for a day or two, or feeling tired from working, then why should you continue shooting?' Returning to the village year after year to film may bring confidence to the filmmaker, but probably also feeling repetition and being stuck? 'Definitely,' says Hu Tao. 'But keep shooting and you'll find this phase will pass. The village is not static either, it changes every moment. It's just a matter of whether you can see those changes and present them in your work.'

In his second year in university, Hu came across the Folk Memory Project in a documentary course at the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts (西安美术学院), after which he began to return to his village to interview the elderly and completed his first feature-length film *Mountain Village* (山脊兒) in 2013. The film was screened once at the Caochangdi Workstation, but did not become a well-known piece of the period. Compared to his contemporaries' works, *Mountain Village* has relatively elaborate shots, using an observational style; in addition to oral interviews, it also incorporates the daily lives of village elders. For Hu, this return to the village was not only the completion of a documentary, but also 'a kind of opening' that allowed him to re-examine the village he had lived in for over twenty years. After the course, Hu shot more footage and conducted more interviews in the village. The footage later formed his second work, *Legend* (古精, 2015).

In 2016, Hu quit his job at a media company and moved from Xi'an to Beijing, where he began to participate in the Caochangdi Workstation regularly.

In October 2019, Wu Wenguang, Zhang Mengqi and Hu Tao were invited to Duke University for a knowledge exchange. Yu Shuang, who was studying anthropology there at the time, got to know Caochangdi. Aiming to make documentaries, Yu Shuang joined the mailing group and kept in touch with the Workstation now and then. She could have gone to work as an editing assistant at a documentary studio in Los Angeles, but she saw a possibility of filmmaking via Caochangdi's method. In that winter, Yu applied for one-term suspension from the university and returned from the US to her father and grandfather's village, Huangpo Tan Village, Xinchang County, Zhejiang Province. The village is more than twenty kilometres from the county where she grew up, forty minutes by bus for three yuan. Every New Year Yu Shuang would return to the village with her family for a few days, but apart from her grandparents and her uncle's family, she did not know much about the village or its people. Wu Wenguang suggested she start by interviewing the elderly, but Yu wanted to find a more interesting way. In her documentary class in the US, she was taught to tell stories by capturing people in action and scenes, and compared with this, interviewing seems quite boring.

After wandering around the village with a camera for a few days, Yu realised that there was nothing else to shoot if not filming interview, 'I could only shoot the landscape because I didn't know anyone.' The communication in the mailing group continued, and Wu provided some more advice about the interviews: to be curious about the elderly; the interview is a kind of listening; to transcribe word by word after the interview ... To try out the Caochangdi approach, Yu decided to open up a bit and started with the interview on three years of the 'Great Famine'. After doing some interviews, she found that people spoke in very much the same way: 'Without anything to eat, their stomachs would swell up ... I was more interested in knowing what these people had experienced before, and how they became who they are now.' So the interviews expanded from 'hunger memories' to personal life histories.

However, her questioning of the interviews and the value of their content has continued, and in Yu's own words, 'it was teetering on the edge of a sense of meaninglessness'. Her anthropological education had accustomed her to linking local materials to a larger theoretical framework, but these fragmented interviews seemed to her to be 'floating in the air', unable to connect with the established body of knowledge. 'Ultimately I found that I had an inability to experience life.' Yu concluded, 'If I don't use the existing knowledge framework, I don't know how to relate to real life, and I don't know how to face it, although I may have an instinctive emotional reaction to it. So I was always wondering what was the point of these interviews.'

Without such questions and the continuing contemplation of them, perhaps a film like *Old Sister of Huangpo Tan* (黄婆滩的老妹妹, 2021) would not have come out. The whole film is made up of oral narratives and clips from the daily lives of the elderly, but it is very special: the narrators are all elderly women, and the narratives are not limited to the three years of hunger, but also extend to the various stages of the elderly's lives, many of which involve female experiences such as being a child bride and having children. In addition, the content of these oral histories is not structured by the grand historical events that we know so well from textbooks, such as the Land Reform, the three years of the Great Famine and the Cultural Revolution, but structured by feelings and emotions, such as 'shock', 'suffering', 'pain' and 'joy'. Yu said her perception of the interview has also changed, 'It deserves to be presented in such a pure way, and in this film, you just listen.'

Although the Folk Memory Project as a collective action has its own common goals and practices, when each individual enters their own village, even following the established methods of Caochangdi, they have also created their own practice based on their own situation, their relationship with others, and their relationship with their village. These practices are developed via their own paths within specific contexts, which is prompted by continuous interaction and collision between the filmmakers, others and the environment. Take Zhang Mengqi (who has continued to return to the village for eleven years) and her works as an example, the '47 km' series show the evolution of the filmmaker's exploration and approach: from *At 47 KM* (47公里) in 2011 to *Bridging at 47 KM* (47公里搭桥) in 2014, four works were created during the heyday of the Folk Memory Project. Although these works demonstrate a certain heterogeneity due to the personal characteristics of the filmmaker and her unique relationship with the village, the methods, such as collecting oral histories, erecting monuments and building a library, are still in line with the collective action of the time. *Dying at 47 KM* (47公里之死, 2015) in 2015 is a turning point: in the film, the relationship between Zhang and the village changed with the death of her grandfather; outside the film, the Workstation moved out of the Caochangdi space and some of the core participants who joined at the same time as Zhang left. If *Dying at 47 KM* implies a double farewell, *Born in 47 KM* (生于47公里, 2016) is a return and an opening: its distinctly female vision reminds me of her first work, *Self-portrait with Three Women* (自画像和三个女人, 2010). By the time of *Sphinx at 47 KM* (47公里斯芬克斯, 2017), *Window at 47 KM* (47公里的窗, 2019) and her new film *Fairy Tale at 47 KM*, the appearance of the girl Fang Hong (方红) and her actions allow Zhang to find a new connection between herself and the village. If her earlier works were more about bringing methods from Caochangdi, such as body theatre, or other peers' experiences back to the village, then after returning to the village year after year, a new method, derived from the village itself, is generated.

6 Methods

In 2020, eight participants of the Caochangdi Workstation completed their works, relying on methods such as ‘reading footage’ and editing groups. In addition to the four veteran auteurs, Wu Wenguang, Shao Yuzhen, Zhang Mengqi and Hu Tao, four new participants completed their first works: Yu Shuang’s *Old Sister of Huangpo Tan*, Hao Yongbo’s *Farewell My 19* (告别19岁, 2020), Luo Luo’s *Luo Luo’s Fear* (洛洛的恐惧, 2020), and Gao Ang’s *Reading Jiaoxing Village I* (焦邢庄之论 I, 2020). If the early works of the Folk Memory Project were questioned as being too homogeneous, the works of the Post-Caochangdi period show a clear heterogeneity, including the emergence of some highly experimental works, such as Zhang Ping’s *No Land* (冬天回家, 2013). One possible explanation for this change is that these filmmakers are at different stages of practice: for the new participants, returning to their villages and collecting memories of hunger are still the focus of their works, but for those who have already completed a few or even ten works, they need to explore new directions and practices in the village.

Although Zhang Mengqi and her blue house still form a certain interventional experiment, the attempt to change the reality of the village with a strong social intervention via collective actions seems to start fading at this stage of the Folk Memory Project. If, during the ‘Caochangdi’ period, the Folk Memory Project began with young people returning to the village to collect oral histories and gradually evolved into a social-intervention practice, then the ‘post-Caochangdi’ period, at least in some of the filmmakers’ works, there is a shift towards ‘private film’, ‘family ethnography’, and ‘first-person film’. This shift itself is perhaps more or less a reflection of the changed political and cultural climate in China in the last decade. In my opinion, Caochangdi’s practice has now returned to art itself, to the enlightenment of art for the individual as a creative and political subject, but still within the thread of activism and political nature.

The Caochangdi Workstation share a common creative conception. In the interviews, Wu Wenguang, Zhang Mengqi, Hu Tao and others all mentioned to me that they do not create based on a certain theme, nor around a subject matter, but in the ‘visual writing’ style of filming, the ‘core’ of creation emerges naturally. If we were to summarise Caochangdi’s working methods, the first is the combination of writing, filmmaking and theatre production; the second is high density of communication, sharing and interaction in the form of workshops, mailing groups and discussions. As the most everyday practice, writing is the basis for individual reflection and group communication. If you look at the official WeChat account of ‘Caochangdi Workstation Bilibili’, you will find that the Workstation has been maintaining an extremely efficient pace for content output. From the filmmakers’ notes, feedback on other participants’ works, transcriptions of discussions in workshops, screening sessions and reading groups, to daily email communications, these texts will first

appear in the Caochangdi mailing group's daily newsletter, and then be further collated for the publication on its WeChat account.

The mailing group was first created during the Village Images Project and has continued ever since. Caochangdi participants would send their daily reflections, filming notes, or responses to others to the Workstation's email, and then the person on duty would collate them and send them out as a daily newsletter every day. Zhang Mengqi recalled that in the first year or two of the Folk Memory Project, sometimes there were even several letters a day. 'It was a bit crazy at that time, and everyone wanted to do something as quickly as possible.' Many participants mentioned to me that the mailing group is very important in the daily communication at the Caochangdi Workstation: not only does it keep everyone writing and thinking, but it also allows these thoughts to flow, to collide and respond to each other, and to form a cohesion in the communications. But to make the mailing group communication really work, not only does it require active engagement and motivation from the participants, but it also means a very time-consuming workload. For a long time, Wu Wenguang has taken on the job of summarising and editing the mailing group – and he says he enjoys it.

During the time I observed the Caochangdi Workstation, it was relatively intensive with weekly events and discussions: reading footage workshop on Wednesday night; Bilibili screenings and discussions on Friday night; group yoga and book club on Sunday; in addition to these, someone had to collate and transcribe at the end of each online event. This also means that participating in Caochangdi activities requires a significant amount of time input. Some of the participants are villagers and retired people, such as Shao Yuzhen, Zhang Huancai, Jia Zhitan (贾之坦) and Luo Luo, while others are university students, such as Gao Ang and Zhang Dun (张盾). These two groups tend to be free of financial issues and have relatively ample time, while the latter faces the pressure of supporting themselves for a living and the expectations of their families after graduation. Hao Yongbo, who completed his first film last year, temporarily withdrew from Caochangdi's activities after graduation for various reasons. Another participant, Liu Xiaolei, whose film, *A True Believer* (狂热自白, 2017), won the 'One Position' (一种立场) award at FIRST International Film Festival (FIRST 青年电影展) in 2018, took a break from writing after starting a family. At the performance of *Reading Virus*, he said that after getting married and having children, it was difficult to have time for himself, and his occasional involvement in Caochangdi activities was the only space he had left for himself.

Hu Tao has been freelancing since he moved to Beijing in 2016, taking on projects for commercials, promos and micro-films to make a living. He told me that the intensive interaction at the Workstation is sometimes exhausting, but in the long run it has helped him immensely with his creative work: 'Shooting alone is

a one-man state, but at Caochangdi, when you see everyone shooting, there is a mutual stimulation and encouragement. There's a sense of determination that you get from shooting in that atmosphere.' Yu Shuang, who graduated from Duke University at the end of last year, is still staying in the village to shoot. Yu doesn't feel obligated to participate in all of the weekly events: 'It's still a matter of what you have in your life that you can combine with Caochangdi [events].' For her, there seems to be a more significant and deeper connection that unites the participants of Caochangdi: 'Why are we willing to spend so much time looking at each other's footage, taking notes, and spending a lot of time discussing each other's work? Creative work would usually highlight the individual, but I feel that this value has changed at Caochangdi, and the most important thing is not about what my work is like, but that we are doing something that we all agree on.'

7 Everyone Is an Artist

Within the framework of the Folk Memory Project, the return of the filmmakers to their own villages constitutes the starting point for creation and action, while new participants such as Dai Xu (戴旭) and Wu Andi do not have their own villages. Wu Andi told me that she once felt 'unconfident' when participating in Caochangdi activities because she had no village to return to. More than ten years have passed since the launch of the Project, and the continuing changes in urban-rural relations and generational changes have given the 'return to the village' initiative a different context. I wonder, when mobility has become the reality of life for most young people today, and when the experience of living in multiple places has become an inevitable part that has shaped our identity, do we still have to 'return to the village'?

Or, is 'return to the village' still an important starting point today? When I asked this question, Wu Wenguang replied, 'It is not the essential way, but it is a preferred option. The "Folk Memory Project" is a way, first by going back to the village and discovering it, which is the beginning of memory, and now it can also be transformed. "Shenzhen Memory" is a new example. Starting with "My Shenzhen Memory", it is an attempt to open up the opportunity that everyone can be a subject of creation. The Folk Memory Project continues and becomes the idea of Joseph Beuys – 'everyone is an artist'. To put it another way, everyone is a citizen and how we become citizens. We just don't say it that way, because there's no point in saying it if everyone can express themselves.'

The 'Shenzhen Memory' that Wu mentions is a workshop that the Caochangdi Workstation did at the invitation of OCAT, the Shenzhen Contemporary Art Centre (深圳当代艺术中心), in mid to late May in 2021. The workshop was open to recruit participants of any age, gender, education or occupation, and it was hoped that 'ordinary people would bring their own memories and stories to the stage'. During the

month-long, online and offline workshop, seventeen participants used their memories as the core of their work, each completing a short film as well as a collective theatre performance of their own creation. The workshop seemed to be an attempt to extend the Folk Memory Project into a new, local memory-centred creative practice to connect with more ordinary people. However, the public screening and performance was cancelled due to ‘COVID regulation’, and the fourteen short films were eventually screened online on Bilibili. To date, five of the participants of Shenzhen Memory continue to participate in online events organised by the Workstation.

In face of today’s political and cultural climate and creative environment, Wu Wenguang remains optimistic. ‘I grew up in the Red Sea, and I am not surprised at all. Facing this environment, we have to have no expectation, no waiting, no complaining, and not even resistance. To resist is to condemn and shout slogans. Put that energy into building up and doing things instead.’ He said that in the end, art is the enlightenment. ‘Probably I’m still confident about it now, I’m not frustrated and I’m not bored.’

Caochangdi online events try to open its doors and bring to young people living in different areas the possibility of connecting with film, theatre art, and even another way of life. Many new participants have a desire to learn about their family history and interview their grandparents and parents; to explore who I am and what my relationship with my family is like while making films. This seems to becoming the direct purpose of young people getting involved (in Caochangdi). As a small community, the discussion, interaction and sharing within Caochangdi not only provides its participants with experience and advice, but also emotional support and encouragement. In this sense, Caochangdi can perhaps be seen as an alternative way of film education and creative practice, providing filmmakers in China an alternative option, and practising an alternative relationship between filmmakers and film. Here, the film is seen as writing, and the filmmakers express themselves entirely from their own position. At the same time, these creative practices bring with them the possibility of transcending the mundane (especially for participants living in small towns) and connecting with the wider artistic and spiritual world.

Wu Wenguang said, ‘Whether it’s the “Folk Memory Project” or the Caochangdi, what we are actually experimenting and practising is to develop a methodology of self-reproduction and self-discovering in such a difficult environment for free creation.’ From this perspective, the village to which the filmmakers return each year is like a land that has been cleared out for them to cultivate. Shao Yuzhen, Zhang Mengqi and Hu Tao are all undoubtedly faithful practitioners of this filmmaking path. Hu Tao told me that returning to his village every year allows him to have a fixed spot when living in the big city or facing the future: ‘Your actions make you aware that there is something very certain in your life ... not in an itinerant state. At least

for a moment, I feel content and serene.’

The accumulation of continuous filming gradually shows in Zhang Mengqi’s works, such as *Dying in 47 KM*, which used footage from the previous four years. The footage accumulated over years enables her to reach more space and depth when editing new films: like a huge archive, they form an ethnography and chronicle of a village, allowing the filmmaker to keep going back to rethink the village’s past and present. However, Zhang said that the longer she does it, the more she feels that films are limited, hence the appearance of the blue house. In her vision, the blue house will become a theatre, a library, a screening room and a park for ‘47km’, open to everyone and allowing the village to see another kind of possibility. Ten years after returning to the village, with this space, Zhang felt that ‘a dream has come true’. I think it could be a promise facing another ten or twenty years. In the upcoming summer holiday, Zhang was planning to invite some Caochangdi filmmakers to the blue house: ‘Instead of coming to Qinjiatun village, why don’t you come to the blue house, and not just to do what we’re doing, but also to do something with the villagers, such as doing workshops with the children. It’s the future direction in my imagination.’

After graduating from Duke, Yu Shuang has been making ends meet by teaching English to children online while remaining in the village to film, and she says that she will continue doing this in the short term. When asked about her future plans, she replied frankly, ‘you don’t expect to become famous or win any awards in Caochangdi way of filmmaking, and it’s mostly about what it means to you. I might only be able to continue it for another one or two years, and I don’t know what will happen next. Maybe I’ll just go to work.’ However, Yu also mentioned that, while returning to the village to film, she can already see Zhang Mengqi and Hu Tao working in such a way for ten years, including their creative trajectory and the possibilities therein. ‘It’s not that I would follow their path as well, but the very fact that they live and work this way help me get away from some confusion or insecurity. It’s not always a good thing, but it is the case.’

At the moment, Wu Andi is on a reading footage workshop while accumulating footage for filming, hoping to complete a film in the future that is ‘not to serve someone else’s need but for herself’. In the past, when working on a film for a TV station or an online platform, she was required to create a plot, suspense, and links, which she found very forceful and uncomfortable. ‘Now I’m very clear that I work to make money and I don’t have to care about it so much. If you really want to express, just shoot it yourself.’ Looking back on her involvement in the Caochangdi Workstation, Wu Andi felt that the most important thing is the kind of connection she has built with others. ‘Referring to Mr Wu’s quote, “Let everyone hear my silence.” Maybe I didn’t want to express it that much before, or I wanted to express it but didn’t know what to express, but it was triggered (at Caochangdi).’

This phrase, ‘let everyone hear my silence’, was also mentioned a few times by Wu Wenguang during my interview. It comes from a public artwork by the Russian street artist Timofey Radya in 2012. Under a white wall in Moscow, he placed a row of books and set them on fire. The flames burned the books and engulfed the white wall, eventually leaving behind these words.

“后草场地”时代的社群创造 ——吴文光和他的团队略记

佟珊

一 映后

六月末的一个下午，我在中国美术馆附近的文创空间见到吴文光，他应邀参加映后交流活动。这是时隔十一年后吴文光的作品在国内的一次集结展映，共放映六部作品。那天恰逢建党百年汇演彩排，部分路段交通管制。吴文光从京城北郊开车进城，“到处一片红，我说是不是走错了。”

二〇一四年，吴文光从草场地村搬到了昌平顺义交界的村子秦家屯。每年春天到秋天，他住在这个村子，之后回昆明过冬。不过即便是在北京，他也鲜少出门，每天过着极为规律的生活：早上简单吃过早餐后，就坐到电脑前写作到十一点，之后做一个小时的瑜伽；午饭后，开始处理草场地工作站的日常事务，包括收发邮件组的每日通讯和编辑草场地的微信公众号；每天还有两个多小时他会花在新片的剪辑上。此外，他还要参与工作站的各类工作坊与观影讨论。去年四月份，他开始写作一本名为《1990》的书稿，关于上世纪九〇年代他在北京的生活，到今年五月份完成，共六十万字。他告诉我，去年他在草场地邮件组里写了五十七万字。

来参加映后的前一天晚上，吴文光准备了一只手电筒。放映结束灯还未亮之时，他走到舞台中央，在电筒微亮的光束之中静静站了一分钟，仿佛刚从影片中走下来。他说这是个即兴表演，具体怎样全凭现场感受。站到台上的那一刻，他决定什么也不做：“我看不见黑暗中你们（观众）的脸，但有种想哭的感觉。我觉得所有动作、激情都不需要，我就这样站着，站得差不多了，就可以了。”年近六十五岁的吴文光依然精神饱满，站在台上妙语连珠，极富有感染力，宛如一个脱口秀明星，常常引来一片笑声加掌声，尽管台下来看片的绝大多数已经是九〇后和〇〇后。那天，吴文光身穿草场地工作站的特制T恤，上面印着“100% Life 0% Art”。

这次展映分两周进行，分别放映了《流浪北京：最后的梦想家》、《江湖》、《操他妈的电影》和《亮出你的家伙》、《治疗》、《调查父亲》。两次放映恰好清晰地展现出吴文光创作的分野与转向。二〇〇五年起，吴文光作为策划人和召集人先后发起了“村民影像计划”和“民间记忆计划”，后者从二〇一〇年持续至今。他的个人创作也明显受到这两个集体计划的影响：《亮出你的家伙》记录了吴文光与“村民影像计划”的村民作者相处、交涉的过程，而从《治疗》开始，吴文光的个

人创作转向了“私影像”与“影像写作”。

“村民影像计划”开始时，吴文光正陷入有关纪录片伦理的危机，并对电影圈的浮夸功利感到厌恶。二〇一〇年的某次展映上，吴文光在导演阐述中写道：“我从二〇〇〇年前后开始的对常规纪录片的做法、功能包括态度的困惑和质疑，严重影响了我一如既往那样做纪录片。我不想成为众多靠纪录片吃饭、挣名声或保持名气中的一个，自然就终止了不断出片子去亮相。但十年时间，我的镜头依然开着，持续着一种影像日记方式。”十多年后，吴文光依然走在“用真实影像写作”的路上。二〇二〇年春节前夕，新冠疫情爆发，吴文光被困在昆明的居所。在一种被围困的感觉中，吴文光将摄像机支在阳台上，每天记录自己的心情，一直做到了现在，“像刷牙一样”。这种“影像日记”的方式，吴文光说，“首先是去意义化，放弃掉你拍东西的目的。不管它，忘了它，成为一个习惯，变成你身体每天必须的动作。”

吴文光向我谈起他近几年的创作，几乎保持着每年一部的产出频率：“自传”系列做了三部——《穿过》、《挣扎》、《证据》，之后是去年开启的“度过”系列。这些作品都关于他自己，从他自身的生活或回忆出发。从《治疗》到《调查父亲》一路做过来，吴文光觉得像是进入到一个“自由王国”：“我的影像工作，跟我的写作实际上是一回事。不存在说我去拍什么东西、有什么题目，就是一个跟一个做起来的。经常有人问我在拍什么东西？我说没拍什么。‘不拍什么东西，你是不是跟影像工作没关系？’我说我天天都在做。他们就理解不了了。”不过这些近期的作品还未曾公开展映过。此次放映最近的一部是《调查父亲》，完成于二〇一六年。

映后临近结束时，观众提问转到《调查父亲》上。这部有关父亲历史及回忆的影片主要由档案文本、旁白注释及剧场表演构成。吴文光回忆起影片刚剪出二十八分钟段落时，兴奋地拿到他正上课的栗宪庭电影学校放给学员看，有个学员却当场说，“这不就是个PPT？”“当时我倍受重创，后来我想老子就做PPT了！为什么PPT不是电影？为什么要五光十色、各种场景、烟雾才是电影？”他举例英国导演德里克·贾曼的《蓝色》，“这哥们都这样干，我这个PPT算什么？所以朋友们，PPT它是电影，为什么它不是电影呢？我这样说就是在鼓吹，”他又重复了一遍“鼓吹”两个字，“影像属于所有人！”此时，他注意到前排一个拿着手机拍摄的女生：“这个妹妹一直在拍摄，它将是六十岁以后做的一个片子中的段落，题目就叫做《那个叫吴的人疯掉了》。”

台下年轻的影迷们鼓起了热烈的掌声。

二 危机

对渴望自我表达与创作的年轻人来说，草场地工作站的吸引力不减。二〇二一年年初，草场地以线

上的形式做了一期“影像写作”工作坊，七十七个报名者中九〇后、〇〇后占了大多数。十六年前，吴文光以草场地工作站为基地，举办影像展映与工作坊，吸引了大批青年文艺爱好者。二〇一〇年，吴文光发起了以年轻人回村采访、收集三年饥饿记忆（1959-1962）为行动起点的“民间记忆计划”。

作为一个融合了诸多形式的社会艺术实践，“民间记忆计划”的跨度之久、参与人数之多、作品样态之丰富、数量之庞大都让它成为中国独立纪录片与当代艺术领域不容被忽视的存在。几乎从诞生起，“民间记忆计划”就受到了诸多关注，称得上是“明星”项目，其影像及剧场作品在国内外多个电影节、戏剧节和高校放映及演出，媒体乃至学界亦不乏对“民间记忆计划”的报道与研究。这些论述，或将该项目作为一种以民间叙述重构历史叙事的尝试，或将其视为重新联结青年一代（八〇、九〇后作为参与主体）与乡村的社会介入性实践，但都无法完全概括“民间记忆计划”实践中所包含的复杂性、异质性。

从“民间记忆计划”的作品来看，其中至少包含了以下几个面向：参与者对村民口述历史的收集，从“三年自然灾害”扩展到“反右”、“土改”、“文革”等历史时期，再到后期发展为有关普通个体生命记忆的收集；在村子里展开的、具有社会介入性的公共实践，包括为“三年饥饿”的死难者立碑，捡垃圾，建立图书室和老人基金，带领孩童、村民进行各类具有艺术教育意义的活动等；以回村行动为起点的真实影像创作（个人）与纪录剧场表演（集体）；因持续的“返乡”行动而与亲人、村民建立的关系和情感交流；伴随着以上这些行动而产生的有关自我（我是谁，从哪里来，将到哪里去，自我与他者的关系）的持续思考。不过，“民间记忆计划”这一实践内部也始终存在着多层面的张力：一方面尽管不少评论、研究将“民间记忆计划”视为一个集体项目，强调其集体性，但另一方面，如果回溯该项目的起源和工作方法时，吴文光作为这一项目的发起人及其创作理念又显得至关重要；一方面，计划要求参与者回到“我的村子”，收集村民们关于“饥荒”、“土改”的口述史，另一方面在最终作品中我们看到的更多是参与者个体对自我身份（与村子关系）的审视与追问。

二〇一四年，随着工作站位于草场地村的实体空间解体，一些草场地和“民间记忆计划”的核心成员如文慧、邹雪萍、李新民、罗兵等人离开，吴文光则和一些成员在秦家屯重新安顿下来。原来“同吃同出”的组织方式没有再维持下去，大部分成员分散开来。不再需要提供食宿和驻站费用，无疑减轻了工作在资金上的压力，但也给这个创作集体提出了挑战。“到二〇一四年，最大的问题是作者是靠陪和养的，但能够养多长时间？待得最长的作者，拍了四、五年，最后他自己也会问，这种生活是我要的未来吗？我就永远这样创作下去、每年回村吗？头几年可以，但岁数大一点了呢？”吴文光停顿片刻，又说下去，“还是生活方式的选择。跟‘村民影像’一样，‘民间记忆计划’在开始是有激励性和推动性的，但它没办法成为一个作者内心主动去学的东西。”

成员四散开来后，工作站尽量沿用之前的方式维持着联系：邮件组保留，工作坊也不定期地做，此外还有一些国内外大学的交流、放映活动。一开始，早期成员如王海安、舒桥等还来参加活动，慢慢地不再来了。这次“危机”令吴文光思考了很多。他说在自己那个年代，创作以及成为作者是一个自我奋斗、自我寻找的过程。“我知道可以闯出来，但可能很快就被淹没掉，被公司、商业、体制或其他黑洞吃掉了。”而对现在的年轻人来说，成为一个作者并不难，难的是如何持续做下去。“独立影像的环境太恶劣了，几乎相当于在沙漠上种草，成活率极低，而且活一两个，很快就长不下去，更不可能蔓延。”

是人的问题，还是环境的问题？吴文光想过这个问题。“最后你发现都是一体的。社群就变成一个至关重要、要落实下来的东西。”在吴文光看来，社群与伙伴不同。伙伴或许可以互相取暖，但到了一定时候就要各奔东西；而草场地要建立的是一个社群。从二〇一四年到二〇一九年，吴文光认为草场地经历了又一次“从个体到群体组合”的过程。一些老作者如邵玉珍、章梦奇、胡涛、张焕才继续保持创作，一些新成员如刘晓雷、张苹、郝永博、高昂、俞爽、洛洛等加入进来，开始回村拍摄并完成第一部作品。“没有了大面积的、十几二十几个人的活动。工作坊做的是五六个人，一个阶段一个阶段进行下去，从作品核到粗剪到最后的终剪。”在吴文光看来，二〇二〇年更是草场地破局的一年。疫情带来的隔离、政治氛围的变化、文化政策的收紧都没让吴文光感到丧气，相反他在线上工作方式以及诸多年轻人身上看到了新的希望。

三 线上

每周五晚八点，如果在 Bilibili（简称 B站）搜索“草场地工作站”，就可以通过直播收看草场地的线上观影，放映片目主要为“村民影像计划”、“民间记忆计划”的作品。我第一次以这种方式观看的是邵玉珍新片《我的村子 2020》。邵玉珍今年七十一岁，是北京顺义区沙子营村民，二〇〇五年因参与“村民影像计划”而加入草场地，也是草场地最长久的参与者之一，年轻成员都管她叫“邵阿姨”、“邵奶奶”。《我的村子 2020》是她的第七部长片，记录了疫情隔离期间邵玉珍与家人及沙子营村民的生活日常。B站直播放映是草场地自去年年底开始的新尝试。放映结束后，组织者会以弹幕的形式留下腾讯会议室的地址，邀请观众参与映后讨论。至今，草场地已经以直播的形式组织了二十五场放映。

疫情爆发以来，草场地的活动大都转移到了线上。起初是无奈之举，原本计划在春节期间回村拍摄的成员们被阻隔在天南海北，拍摄无法推进，回京的日子也遥遥无期，线上成了唯一的选择。渐渐的，大家习惯了这种方式，也体会到了它带来的自由：无论身处何地，只要有网络，就可以加入讨论。吴文光认为疫情隔离构成了一个巨大契机，线上的方式为草场地打开了一片广阔天地。这种线上的组织形式与工作方式也延续到了今年。“影像写作工作坊，从一月份做到四月份，十期；六月份，

阅读素材工作坊开始；再有 B 站的直播，相当于说从创作的起端到传播的终端，一条龙做完了。”

线上的方式让草场地摆脱了过去时常陷入的“谁来了怎么吃怎么住”的琐碎，在建立联结、交流的同时，更能聚焦创作的焦点问题。去年疫情期间，由于突然有了大量时间，草场地发起了每周一次的阅读素材工作坊。每次工作坊，参与者会播放一段几分钟的、未经剪辑的素材，之后对素材稍加解释，分享这段素材的拍摄情形、自己的感受等等。如此一轮后是开放讨论环节，参与者可以自由地对其他人的素材进行读解和反馈。除“素材阅读”之外，为了帮助首次创作的成员在浩如烟海的素材中找到逻辑与结构，新老成员还结成了剪辑小分队，以一对一的方式进行密集讨论。吴文光说，没有这些工作方法，就不会有今年上半年陆续完成的八部新片，其中四部是新成员的首次创作。

年初的影像写作工作坊是草场地继去年一年相对内部、闭门的交流之后一次打开的尝试。线上的形式让来自不同地区、不同背景的人有可能参与到草场地的活动中。他们之中有人之前就关注草场地，有些则是好奇或误打误撞。章梦奇说工作坊讲的都是这十多年来草场地积累下来的一套方法论。“你的创作会不会对应上，或者是不是要进入到我们的创作方式里来，就看你自己。”

我在吴文光作品的放映活动中见到吴安迪。二〇一五年，她因观看章梦奇的演出而关注到草场地。之后她从中国传媒大学毕业，开始从事纪录片制作的工作，但常常感到那些为电视台或平台制作的片子并非自己的表达。看到影像写作工作坊的招募贴时，她很兴奋，“有种找到组织的感觉”。

第一次工作坊来了五十多人。他们大多如吴安迪一样有表达欲，但还未形成清晰的创作思路。在介绍过草场地的工作方法及相关作品后，工作坊鼓励参与者选择一个和自身有关的素材或物件作为抓手来进行“叙述的打开”。在为期十次的工作坊中，吴安迪虽然没能完成一次“叙述的打开”，却有种被激发的感觉：“慢慢看到更多参与者拿出自己的照片也好，一小段影像也好，每个人都有不同表达的打开。很多人是回村子拍，但我没有自己的村子，所以我就想怎么能把他们回村这件事落实到自己身上。我是北京人，我想也许我可以拍拍胡同里的记忆。”一些创作的灵感在工作坊中渐渐清晰起来。

由于参加工作坊的契机，吴安迪还参与到了《阅读病毒》的创作与演出中。二〇二一年五月，《阅读病毒》在台湾国际纪录片影展（TIDF）以线上的形式首演，是草场地继《阅读饥饿》、《阅读父亲》后第三个以“阅读”命名的剧场创作。早在疫情爆发前，TIDF策展人林木材就和草场地敲定了合作计划，之后因疫情带来的诸多不确定，TIDF被迫延期一年举办，但防疫政策下的跨境旅行限制让草场地的成员无法抵达电影节现场。一个大胆的想法出现了：不如做一个线上剧场。

四 剧场

最初看到《阅读病毒》的介绍时，我就对线上剧场的形式感到好奇：以现场空间与身体在场为前提的剧场表演如何可能以线上的形式进行？翻看章梦奇的创作笔记，也能看到她的思考：“一个没有现场演出的剧场表演如何进行？没有了身体的表演，还是表演的现场吗？网络、zoom、镜框，人被分割成小小方块头像，身体被压缩在上半身，成为马赛克中的一格，即便可以达到实况转播可依然隔了十万八千里和各种局域网。”线上的方式看似超越了物理空间的限制，带来了联结的可能，但当身体和声音被扁平化为图像与声音的信号，那种联结往往伴随着失真感以及身体-意识的分离感。相较于面对面的谈话，在网络视频中我们更容易走神，也更难和他人共情。对剧场形式而言，聚集在同一物理空间下的现场感、以身体再现引发表演者与观看者之间的情绪共振从而构建某种“情动空间”，是剧场艺术之感染力的关键。

在强调影像与身体剧场并行的草场地工作站，基于大量访谈、田野的真实剧场一直是其创作核心之一。这一形式在草场地的传统与舞蹈剧场艺术家文慧密不可分。文慧于一九九四年创立生活舞蹈工作室，一直致力于探索身体剧场介入社会的可能性。在其早年作品如《生育报告》中，文慧就通过对普通女性的大量访谈来收集个体有关生育的身体记忆与经验，并最终以身体的形式呈现出来。在“民间记忆计划”进行之初，参与者在完成第一年的回村采访和拍摄之后，集体创作了纪录剧场《回忆·饥饿》。如果说回村采访、拍摄是基于共同目标与方法指导的个体实践，那么身体剧场更体现了草场地创作的集体性，尽管这一集体性往往由多样化的个体经验汇聚而成。此外，身体剧场的排练、创作、演出也成为参与者消化、反刍其回村拍摄经验与收集到的饥饿记忆、并将之深化、表述、传递的过程，是重构自我与乡村关系的重要一环。

参与此次《阅读病毒》演出的约有一半是草场地的常驻成员，剩下一半，如吴安迪一样，因参加工作坊而加入剧场排练。线上排练从二月下旬开始，每周一次，一次两个半小时，一直持续到五月演出前。负责排练执行的章梦奇说并没有太多地去考虑形式，“线上剧场的形式在全世界都很新，也没什么可借鉴的，我们讨论更多的是内容是什么。”一如草场地之前的剧场作品，《阅读病毒》依然延续了真实剧场的创作理念，其核心或许可以总结为“我记得，我见证”：每个参与者都从自身的位置讲述自己的所见所感。在真实剧场中，每个演出者也都作为其自身出现，不存在任何既定的规范性动作，在大的结构框架下，允许一定的即兴。这样的理念让每个参与者都有一定空间加入个体的经验、发挥自己的创造力，围绕“如何与病毒共处”这一主题，生发出自己的故事线。这也让《阅读病毒》成为了一个汇集了诸多普通个体记忆与经验的、关于新冠疫情的表述与回应。

在线上表现形式上，《阅读病毒》亦有有趣的尝试，例如演出最开始的集体“口罩舞”。众人以口罩为道具，不断戴上、摘下或遮挡摄像头，在20个方格子屏幕上构成富有节奏的动态变化；当大部

分摄像头被遮住，余下的一两个视窗就宛如聚光灯下的表演区，让个体从群体中凸显出来：一个表演者在摄像头前摆弄着一颗状似新冠病毒毒株的毛荔枝，然后剥去外皮，一口吃掉了它。

《阅读病毒》大体分为几个段落，段落与段落之间伴随着从群体到个人再到群体的转换。有的段落以群体配合的动作表演为主，有的段落以语言讲述为主，还有的段落会结合影像片段的分享，呈现方式灵活而多元。演出者不仅来自不同的地域省份，年龄跨度也高达五十岁，有还在读大二的在校生，也有教师、传媒工作者、书店店员、社会工作者、农民以及退休人员。多元的身份、社会背景带来的是具有差异性的个体生活经验。这些真实的生活经验，无论是以个人口述或是影像日志的方式，构成了有关“疫情”的集体见证与记忆。整场演出最具能量的段落无疑是位于演出中段的、由每个演出者以方言依次讲述的“疫情日记”：

1月23号。县城两例疑似病例，我到处打电话借口罩。

2月9号。家里的东西终于都吃光了，我一个人去超市足足买了两个推车的东西。

1月30号。开始同朋友一起收集整理微博上铺天盖地的求助信息。做呢啲嘢可能都有乜用，但做啲嘢都好過唔做。

2月6号。刷着李医生去世的消息，我哭了一个晚上。我甚至说不清楚自己为什么哭。我只能告诉自己不要恐惧，也不要忘记。

1月31号。去7-11买了两件一次性雨衣，黄色灰色拼在一起的那种，让爸妈套上两件雨衣去机场，尽快离开北京。

1月30号。正月初六。我的村子全面封锁，原来四通八达的村子只能有一个路口出入。

1月20号。我刚刚到家就传来了疫情的消息。现在是中国地图上的一点红色，以后会变成一片红色的海吗？

……

这些“疫情日记”，从依次的叙述逐渐重叠、加速，最终汇成了众人同时言说的“众声喧哗”。讲述本身构成一种行动，是自我表达，也是经验的分享与记忆的传递，从表演的“我”到观看的“你”。在这个过程中，某种新的情动空间跨越了虚拟/真实的界限在屏幕内外生成，将表演者和观众拖入“现场”。

如果一般剧场演出的目标在于通过排练而完成没有失误的表演，那么在草场地的剧场观念中，更重要的是借助一种由演出空间、在场观众以及演出者之间互动而构成的现场，表演者与观看者在演出过程中被激发、被召唤、被转化的可能性。从这一点来看，《阅读病毒》是成功的。演出中另一个极为动人段落出现在结尾，所有演出者依次出现在屏幕前讲述“我是谁，在哪里，要做什么”。正式演出时，这一环节因为表演者刘晓雷情绪“失控”而激发了其他人连锁的情绪反应，不少人在讲述时声音哽咽。这些意外的“失控”与即兴的真情流露，构成了演出中极具感染力的时刻，因其真挚、

强烈，而拥有了一种感召的魔力。

关于这种感召的魔力，我在和吴安迪的交流中找到了答案。她告诉我，当有人毫无保留地把他的感受、故事、秘密分享出来时，你也会有一种分享的冲动。“用吴老师的话说，你看别人都在裸奔，你怎么还能束缚自己。”那晚演出结束后，所有人端着还未来得及吃的晚饭又坐到电脑前，在虚拟空间里分享着难以平复的激动心情。在排练和演出的过程中，一群人建立了信任感。吴安迪特别提到了演出结尾的发言——来自最年轻的参与者之一、年仅 20 岁的李天依，“天依说了一句话——‘我理解了集体的意义’。就是那个感觉。”

五 影像

作为草场地工作站的核心成员之一，今年年初章梦奇交出了“自画像系列”的第十部作品《47公里童话》。十一年前，为了参与“民间记忆计划”，章梦奇找到了父亲生长但对她而言很陌生的村子——湖北省随州市钓鱼台村，开始了年复一年的回村拍摄、采访老人。每次回村她都会在一个“47公里”的路标前下车，于是这个村子在她的作品中获得了一个新名字：“47公里”。《47公里童话》拍摄于二〇一九年，相较于之前每年一部的频率，有些延后。我们在 798 的一家咖啡馆见面时，章梦奇解释道：“表面上是因为疫情，也因为我自己需要更细致地看素材。二〇二〇年开始我和村子的关系有一个变化。我在那儿住下来，几乎大半年都呆在村子里，有了比以前还多的素材。”章梦奇所说的变化也构成了《47公里童话》的主线：以韩国 DMZ 国际纪录片节的一笔奖金作为启动资金，章梦奇在村里盖了一座“蓝房子”。蓝房子的出现让章梦奇获得了一个新的身份——“47公里”的村民，从每年回村拍摄的“候鸟族”变成了一个长居者。

在村子里待的时间长了，章梦奇对乡村生活有了更多感触。以前她只知道村民种水稻、弄香菇，住下来才发现他们一年四季都不闲着：“什么时间抓蜈蚣、蟋蟀，什么时间采菊花，什么时间搞蒿子秆，每个时段山都在补养他们。你意识到人和自然的关系非常密切，尤其是世界整个停下来之后，你再看那个地方的人以非常自然而然的方式在进入到他们的每一年，你可以说日复一日、年复一年，但同时是一种规律，这个规律是靠自然带来的，很快恢复到他们的生活当中。”这些体悟也会成为章梦奇在接下来的创作中想要探索的面向。

某种超越当下的乡村生活传统也出现在胡涛的新片《地洞》之中。这部拍摄于二〇二〇年冬春之际的作品是胡涛于“民间记忆计划”下完成的第四部长片，记录了他和村里人为外祖父母修建坟墓的过程。在这个秦岭南麓的小村庄中，村喇叭里播放着防疫广播，山丘之上的修坟人闲聊着帝王将相，画外音讲述着乡野传说——当下与过往奇异地交织在一起，通向更加绵延、永恒的时间。尽管影片由修坟这件具体的家庭事件开始，但《地洞》最终指向的是一个村庄，一种生死观，以及一种终将

消逝的生活传统——世代居住在一块土地上，死了就葬在坡上，遥望着山下村子里的子孙后代。

二〇二〇年是胡涛回村拍摄的第九年。和章梦奇不同，他的村子——陕西省山阳湘子店村——是他高中之前生活成长的地方，如今也居住着他的父母、外祖父母、祖母等亲人。这次为外祖父母建坟，胡涛不得不从摄像机背后站到镜头前。每天他选好机位，摄像机就支在旁边，一天拍个七八个小时。这解释了为什么《地洞》绝大部分由中全景的长镜头构成，但经过精心截取，具有一种内在的形式感：如一幕幕舞台剧，各色人物纷纷登场。胡涛告诉我，如果没有之前的创作和持续的回村拍摄，就不可能以这样的方式完成《地洞》。“可能拍一两天就觉得乏味了，或者干活都干累了，还拍什么。”年复一年的回村拍摄或许可以为创作者带来信心，但是否也会遭遇重复和停滞？“一定会，”胡涛说。“但持续拍下去，你会发现这个阶段会过去。村子也从来不是静止的，它每时每刻都在变化，只是你能不能洞察这些变化并把它们呈现在创作中。”

大二那年，胡涛在西安美院的纪录片课上接触到“民间记忆计划”，之后开始回村采访老人，于二〇一三年完成了第一部长片《山旌晃》。影片完成后，在草场地展映了一次，但并没有成为那一时期的代表作而被人熟知。与同时期的作品相比，《山旌晃》画面相对精致、考究，整体保持了一种静观的风格；除了口述采访之外，还融入了乡村老人的日常生活。对胡涛来说，这次回村拍摄不仅是完成了一部长片，而且是“一种打开”，让他重新审视自己生长了二十多年的村子。课程结束后，胡涛又在村子里拍摄了许多素材、做了很多采访。这些材料后来构成了他的第二部作品《古精》。二〇一六年，胡涛辞掉了传媒公司的工作，从西安搬到北京，开始持续参加草场地的活动。

二〇一九年十月，吴文光、章梦奇和胡涛一行到杜克大学交流，当时在读人类学的俞爽因此结识了草场地。因为想拍纪录片，俞爽加入了邮件组，并与草场地保持着断断续续的联系。原本可能会去洛杉矶的纪录片工作室做剪辑助理的她，在草场地的创作路径中看到了一种可能性。同年冬天，俞爽申请休学一学期，从美国回到父亲和祖父的村子——浙江省新昌县黄婆滩村。这个村子距离她长大的县城二十多公里，坐公交四十分钟，三块钱。每逢过年俞爽都会同家人一起回村住上几天，但除了祖父母和大伯一家，她对这个村子以及村里的人并不了解。吴文光建议她从采访老人开始，俞爽却觉得应该有更有趣的方式。美国的纪录片课上，她学的都是要通过捕捉人物动作、场景来讲故事，相比之下，采访很没意思。

拎着摄像机在村子里转悠了几天，俞爽发现不拍采访的话就没什么可拍的，“只能拍一些外围风景，因为也不认识什么人。”邮件组里的交流依然继续着，吴文光又发来了一些关于采访的建议：对老人要有好奇心，采访是一种倾听；采访后要逐字逐句抄录……既然是要尝试草场地的方式，俞爽决定不如开放一点，就从采访“三年饥饿”开始。做了一些访问之后，她发现大家讲得大同小异：“没东西吃，肚子会胀起来……我更想知道这些人之前经历的任何事情，他们怎么变成了现在这个样子。”

于是采访内容从“饥饿记忆”扩展到了个人生命史。

不过，对采访以及采访内容价值的质疑一直持续着，用俞爽自己的话说，“一直在一种无意义感的边缘徘徊”。人类学的教育让她习惯了将在地的材料与更大的理论框架挂钩，但这些碎片化的访谈内容，在她看来，像是“飘在半空中”，无法与既有的知识体系产生联系。“最终我发现我有一种对生活体验的无能。”俞爽总结道，“如果不借助现有的知识框架，我就不知道怎么和现实生活中的东西发生关系，不知道怎么面对它，虽然我可能对它有本能的情感反应。所以我当时一直在想，对我来说这些采访有意思的是什么？”

如果没有这样的疑问以及对这些疑问的持续思考，或许就不会有《黄婆滩的老妹妹》这样的作品出现。

《黄婆滩的老妹妹》全片由老人的口述及日常生活片段构成，但又非常特别：口述者均为老年女性，口述内容不仅局限于三年饥饿，还拓展到了老人生命的各个阶段，不少涉及做童养媳、生养儿女等女性经验。此外，结构这些口述内容的也不再是我们熟知的、教科书上的宏大历史事件，如“土改”、“三年自然灾害”、“文革”等，而是感受和情绪，如“惊”、“苦”、“痛”、“乐”等。俞爽说自己对采访的认识也变化了，“它值得被以这么纯粹的方式呈现出来，在这个片子里面你就是听。”

尽管“民间记忆计划”作为集体行动有其共同的行动目标与实践方法，但当每个个体进入自己的村子、甚至按照草场地既有的工作方法展开行动时，他们都会依据其自身的状况、自身与他人的关系、自身与所在村子的关系，创造出自己的实践脉络。这些实践本身有其特殊的生成语境与演变脉络，是创作者个体与他人、环境持续互动、碰撞的结果。以持续回村十一年之久的章梦奇及其作品为例，“47公里”系列作为一个作品群显示出创作者的探索与方法的演变：从二〇一一的《47公里》到二〇一四年的《47公里搭桥》的四部作品创作于“民间记忆计划”的鼎盛时期，尽管因创作者个人特质、个体与村子的独特关系展现出一定的异质性，但在方法上如收集口述史、立碑、建图书室等则与当时的集体行动保持一致。二〇一五年的《47公里之死》是一个转折：影片之中，随着爷爷的去世，章梦奇与村子的关系发生着变化；影片之外，工作站搬离草场地空间，一些和章梦奇同期加入的核心成员离开。如果说《47公里之死》是双重意义的告别，那么《生于47公里》则是一次回归与开启：其中鲜明的女性色彩令人想起她的第一部作品《自画像和三个女人》。到《47公里斯芬克斯》、《47公里的窗》及新作《47公里童话》，女孩方红的出现以及她的行动，让章梦奇在自己和村子之间找到了新的联结。如果早期创作更多是将来自草场地的方法如身体剧场或其他同僚的经验带回自己的村子，那么在年复一年的回村中，一种新的、源自村子本身的方法得以生成。

六 方法

二〇二〇年，依托“阅读素材”、剪辑小分队等工作方式，草场地工作站共有八名成员完成了个人创作。

除了吴文光、邵玉珍、章梦奇和胡涛四位老作者，还有四位新成员完成了他们的首部作品：包括之前提及的俞爽的《黄婆滩的老妹妹》，郝永博的《告别十九岁》，洛洛的《洛洛的恐惧》，以及高昂的《焦邢庄之论一》。如果早期“民间记忆计划”的创作还被质疑太过同质化，那么“后草场地”时期的作品则呈现出了明显的异质性，包括出现了像张莘的《冬天回家》这样极具实验气质的作品。关于这一变化，一个可能的解释是这些创作者处于不同的实践阶段：对刚开始创作的成员来说，返乡与收集饥饿记忆依然构成拍摄的重点，但对于已经完成两三部、甚至十余部作品的成员来说，则需要村子中探索新的拍摄方向和实践方式。

那种带有极为强烈的社会介入、试图改变村庄现实的集体行动似乎在现阶段的“民间记忆计划”中渐渐褪去，尽管章梦奇和她的蓝房子依然构成某种介入性的实验。如果说在“草场地”时期，“民间记忆计划”主要以年轻人回村收集口述史为起点、并逐步演变成具有介入性质的社会实践，那么“后草场地”时期的创作，至少在部分创作者的作品中，呈现出一种朝向“私影像”、“家庭民族志”、与“第一人称影像”的转向。这个转向本身或许多多少少折射出中国在过去十年时间里变化了的政治文化氛围。在我看来，草场地的实践如今更多回归到了艺术本身，回到了艺术对于个人作为创作主体与政治主体的启蒙上，依然在一种行动主义的脉络之中，有其政治性。

在创作观念上，草场地工作站分享着某种共同的取向。在采访中，吴文光、章梦奇、胡涛等人都向我提到，创作之于他们不是基于某个主题，也不围绕什么题材，而是在“影像写作”式的拍摄中，让创作的“核心”自动浮现出来。如果要对草场地的工作方法进行总结，其一是写作、影像与剧场创作并行；其二是以工作坊、邮件组、观影讨论等形式保持高密度的交流、分享与互动。其中，写作是最为日常的，是个体思考与群体交流的基础。翻看“草场地工作站 B站”的公众号，就会发现工作站一直保持着极为高效、大量的内容输出，从创作者的拍摄笔记、对其他成员创作的反馈、工作坊、观影会、读书会的讨论抄录、到日常邮件交流互动，这些文字会先在草场地邮件组的每日通讯中出现，之后再被进一步整理分类，发布在公众号上。

邮件组的工作方式最早产生于“村民影像计划”期间，之后一直延续下来。草场地成员会把自己的日常思考、拍摄笔记、或者对他人的回应发到工作站的邮箱，之后由值班人汇总、整理，以“每日通讯”的形式发出来，每日一封。章梦奇记得在“民间记忆计划”刚开始的一两年，有时一天甚至有几封。“那时候比较疯狂一点，大家都特别想要赶紧做点什么。”不少成员都向我提到，在草场地的日常交流中邮件组非常重要：不仅让大家保持日常写作、思考，也让这些思考流动起来，彼此碰撞、互相回应，并在回应中形成一种凝聚力。但想要让邮件组交流真正运转起来，不仅需要成员们活跃的参与、彼此的激励，同时也意味着非常现实的、颇为耗时的工作量。在过去很长的时间里，吴文光承担了邮件组汇总、编辑的工作——他说自己乐此不疲。

在我对草场地进行观察的那段时间里，工作站每周的活动、讨论相对密集：周三晚上的阅读素材工作坊，周五晚上的 B 站放映加讨论，周日的集体瑜伽和读书分享会；除此之外，每次线上活动结束后，都要有人主动承担整理和抄录的任务。这也意味着参与草场地活动需要投入大量的时间。草场地的成员构成中，部分为农民和退休人员如邵玉珍、张焕财、贾之坦、洛洛，还有一些是在校生如高昂、张盾等。这两个群体往往没有经济压力，时间也相对充裕，而后者一旦从学校毕业进入社会，便面临着谋生的压力以及家人的期待。去年完成首部创作的郝永博，毕业后因为种种原因暂时退出了草场地的活动。另一位成员刘晓雷，曾以《狂热自白》入围二〇一八年 FIRST 青年电影展并获得“一种立场”奖，则在组建家庭后暂停了创作。在《阅读病毒》演出中，他无不感慨地说道，结婚生子后很难再有自己的时间，偶尔参与草场地的活动便是他留给自己的唯一空间了。

胡涛自二〇一六年搬到北京后一直是自由职业，靠接一些广告片、宣传片、微电影等的项目来维持生活。他告诉我，草场地密集的交流有时也让人感到疲惫，但从长远来看则对他的创作有巨大帮助：

“一个人去拍摄是单枪匹马的状态，但在草场地，你看大家都在拍的时候，有一种互相刺激、互相鼓励、互相看见。在这个氛围里拍摄，你会有种坚定感。”去年年底从杜克大学毕业的俞爽，目前还留在村子里拍摄。对于草场地每周的各种活动，俞爽不觉得有义务全部参加：“还是看自己生活里有哪些可以和草场地（的活动）结合起来。”在俞爽看来，似乎还有一种更重要、也更深刻的联系将草场地的成员凝聚在一起：“为什么大家会愿意花这么多时间互相看对方的素材、笔记，花很多时间讨论别人的作品？本来创作会很强调作者个人，但我觉得在草场地这个价值观好像变了，最重要的不是说我的作品怎么样，而是我们在做一件我们全部都认可的事情。”

七 人人都是艺术家

在“民间记忆计划”的实践框架中，创作者返回自己的村子构成了创作和行动的起点，而新成员如戴旭、吴安迪等都没有自己的村子。吴安迪告诉我，因为没有村子可回，她一度在参与草场地活动时感到很“自卑”。自“民间记忆计划”发起已经过去了十多年，城乡关系的持续变化，代际的更迭，让“返回村子”这一行动有了不同的语境。我也不禁好奇，当流动成为当代大多数年轻人的生活现实，当多地的生活经验成为形塑我们身份认同的必然部分，是否依然还要“返回村子”？

或者说，到今天，“返回村子”是否还是一个重要的起点？当我提出这一问题，吴文光回答道：“不是必由之路，但是一个优选方案。‘民间记忆计划’是有一个道路的方式，最早是回到村子、发现村子，这是记忆的开始，现在也可以转化。‘深圳记忆’是一个新的例子。从‘我的深圳记忆’开始，试图打开，每个人都可以成为一个创作的主体。‘民间记忆计划’慢慢走下去，它就是博伊斯（Joseph Beuys）的观念——‘人人都是艺术家’。换个词就是，人人都是公民，我们如何成为公民。我们只是没有把这话挂在嘴上，因为没有必要说，如果人人都有表达的时候。”

吴文光提到的“深圳记忆”是今年五月中下旬草场地应深圳当代艺术中心 OCAT 的邀请做的一个工作坊。工作坊公开招募参与者，“年龄性别文化程度职业不限”，希望“普通人带着自己的记忆和故事走上舞台”。在长达一个月的、线上线下结合的工作坊中，十七名参与者以“记忆”为核，完成每人一部短片以及集体创作、表演的剧场演出。这个工作坊似乎也显示了草场地试图将“民间记忆计划”延展为新的、以在地记忆为核心的创作实践以联结更多普通人的尝试。不过，原本要公开进行的展映和演出环节因为“疫情防控”取消了，十四支短片最终在 B 站做了线上放映。至今，“深圳记忆”的参与者中仍有五人在继续参与草场地的线上活动。

面对如今的政治文化氛围与创作环境，吴文光依然保持着乐观。“我是从红海洋长大过来的，我一点都不吃惊。当我们面对这个环境，没有期待，没有等待，没有抱怨，最后一个连反对都没有。反对就是骂、喊口号。把这些精力用在建立上，慢慢在做事情。”他说归根到底，艺术是对观念的启迪。“可能我现在对这个事情依然信心百倍，我没有垂头丧气，也没有觉得无聊。”

如今尝试开门的草场地线上活动给生活在各地的年轻人带来了与影像、剧场艺术、乃至另一种生活方式联结的可能性。不少新加入的参与者都有了解家族历史、采访（外）祖父母与父母的欲望；在进行影像创作的同时，探索我是谁、我与家人的关系是怎样。这似乎越来越成为更多年轻人加入的直接目的。作为一个小社群，草场地内部的讨论、互动与分享不仅为其成员提供经验、建议，也给彼此以情感的支持与鼓励。在这个意义上，草场地或许可以被看作是一种另类影像教育与创作实践的方式，在当下的中国给予创作者另一种选择，实践着创作者与影像的另一种关系。在这里，影像被视为写作，创作者完全站在自身的位置进行表达。同时，这些创作实践也带来了一种超越日常庸俗（特别是对于生活在小城镇的参与者）、与更广阔的艺术、精神世界联结的可能性。

吴文光说，“‘民间记忆计划’也好，草场地也好，实际上我们在实验和践行是如何在这样一个草木都难以生长的个人创作环境里，有一个自我催生和自我寻找的方法论。”从这个角度来看，创作者每年返回的村子就像一片被拓荒出来的田地，可以让他们一直耕种下去。而邵玉珍、章梦奇、胡涛无疑都是这一创作路径的忠实践行者。胡涛告诉我，每年的回村拍摄，让他在大城市生活或面对未来时感到有一个定点：“你的行动让你知道在接下来的人生道路上有一种很确定的东西……不是一种漂泊或者流浪的状态。至少在某一时刻，我觉得我是很知足、很宁静的。”

在章梦奇的创作中，持续拍摄的累积逐渐显现出来，比如《47公里之死》就使用了之前四年的素材。年复一年积累下来的素材让她在剪辑每一年的新片时拥有了更大的空间以及可能触及的纵深：它们如一个巨大的档案库，构成一个村子的民族志与编年史，让创作者在继续拍摄的同时，可以不断回去，去重新思考、理解村子的过去与当下。不过，章梦奇说做得越久，越觉得影像的有限，于是才有了

蓝房子的出现。在她的设想中，蓝房子会成为“47公里”的剧场、图书馆、放映厅、公园，向所有人敞开，也让村里人看到另一种可能性。回村十年，有了这个空间，章梦奇觉得是“梦想变成现实”。但我想它或许也是一个承诺，朝向另一个十年、二十年。在即将到来的暑假，章梦奇打算邀请几个草场地的创作者到蓝房子去：“大家来秦家屯不如去蓝房子，不光是我们在做，还可以跟村子里的人一起做些事情，比如和小朋友一起做工作坊之类的。这是一个未来想象式的发展。”

从杜克大学毕业后，俞爽一边以线上教小朋友英语的方式维持生活，一边继续留在村子里拍摄，她说短时期内这样的生活还会继续。当问及未来打算时，她坦诚地说：“草场地这种方式做片子，你也不期待会成名或者拿什么大奖，最主要还是对自己有意义。如果你问我的话，我可能只能说一年两年，我也不知道接下来会怎么样，可能我就去工作了。”不过，俞爽也特别提到，在她回村拍摄时，已经能够看到章梦奇、胡涛以这样的方式持续十年之久，看到他们的创作脉络以及其中的可能性。“也不是说我会去走他们那条路，但他们存在在那里这个事实，就帮我挡掉了一些困惑或者不安全感。虽然也不一定是好事，但事实的确是这样。”

目前，吴安迪一边旁听阅读素材工作坊，一边积累拍摄素材，希望在未来可以完成一部“不为甲方只为自己”的片子。以前给电视台或平台做片子，被要求制造故事、悬念、起承转合，她觉得很拧巴、很难受。“现在我分得很开，工作就是为了赚钱，不用在乎那么多。如果真的想表达，自己拍就好了。”回顾参与草场地活动的经历，吴安迪觉得最重要的还是跟这些小伙伴建立的一种联系。“还是回到吴老师的那句话，‘让所有人听见我的沉默’。可能以前没那么想表达，或者想表达不知道该表达什么，但（在草场地）就被激发出来。”

在我的采访中，吴文光也曾几次提到这句话，“让所有人听见我的沉默”。它来自俄罗斯街头艺术家 Timofey Radya 于二〇一二年做的一件公共艺术作品。在莫斯科的一面白墙下，他放置了一排书籍，将其点燃。熊熊的火焰焚毁了书籍，吞噬了白墙，最终留下了这句话。

EXPRESSION AND CREATION 表现和创造

Hu Xinyu: I Want to Dig Something Out through Making Documentaries

胡新宇：我想通过纪录片去挖掘点什么

Interviewer: WANG Xiaolu 王小鲁 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Qiu Jiongjiong: Playfulness is A Serious Matter

邱炯炯：趣味性是一件很严肃的事情

Interviewer: WANG Xiaolu 王小鲁 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Hu Xinyu: I Want to Dig Something Out Through Making Documentaries

Interviewer: WANG Xiaolu 王小鲁 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

This is a conversation on Wechat with director Hu Xinyu (胡新宇) in the morning of 6 July 2021. He was in Taiyuan (太原) and I was in Beijing (北京). Hu is known in the field of Chinese independent cinema for his first-person documentaries. He would not show some of his films for the sake of privacy protection, we therefore only discussed two films, *The Man* (男人, 2004) and *Family Phobia* (家庭恐惧, 2010), which Hu regards as his most important work. His latest film is an experimental work entitled *96' House*, yet we did not discuss it this time. I jokingly said *The Man* is a hormonal production. After the talk, Hu said, 'It was very satisfying in talking with you. While in a conversation with a female, the feeling was weak. But shouldn't that be the case when talking with the opposite sex? I said that might be related to male-male complicity or same-sex complicity. Hu believes that documentary filmmaking has constantly brought the progress to his mind and broken solidification in his life. This is the background of the conversation.

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Wang: When did you first start making documentaries? Is *The Man* your first film?

Hu Xinyu: It was not. At the very beginning I bought a Sony VX2000E camera for the purpose of producing a fiction film. Song Yongping (宋永平) introduced me to an artist Lao Su (老苏), who he thought is interesting. He said the two of us could spend some time together and have some conversations. Both Lao Su and I taught at college and were idling around during summer, hence came up with an idea of making a fiction film. But we ended up making *The Man*, a documentary instead. We didn't know what was a documentary at that time. The real situation back then was that the single man Lao Su stayed in my plain dormitory and both of us felt bored. Then he was laid off and stuck in an unwell condition. I said to him, 'now you are different from what I knew before, so let me film you.'

Wang: He was not your colleague, right? What was his background?

Hu: He worked in Communication University of Shanxi (山西传媒学院), the college that Bi Gan (毕赣) graduated from.

Wang: Oh, he was a faculty there.

Hu: Yes, he worked in animation. At that point, I did not know what documentary was really about. Upon seeing his condition, I thought I could record it in the film. As a friend, I should have been an attentive listener to him, yet in fact I was only filming him impertinently and randomly. As I was unserious about the filming, it became funny in effect: what was supposed to be sad and downcast became something weird in the film. Lao Su used to be a student of Beijing Film Academy (北京电影学院) majoring in art design. I saw him drawing sketches, which was really good.

Wang: What was that fiction film you originally wanted to make about? You were the director, right?

Hu: Yes. Whenever I had an idea I filmed him, just like I was making an experimental and whimsical one. I was so free and energetic that I wanted to do something fun.

Wang: What were your inspirations at that time?

Hu: I used to have a video camera Hi8, with which I filmed a lot. Yet to my disappointment, all I had filmed were just MVs and pictures without real significance; in other words, they were only pieces of nuisance. I was complaining to myself why I was not able to make real work, and then Jia Zhangke (贾樟柯) came to school to visit Zhao Tao (赵涛) .

Wang: Which school were you in?

Hu: It was the Teacher's School of Shanxi University (山大师院) . Zhao Tao started to teach there after receiving her college degree from Beijing Dance Academy (北京舞蹈学院) . Jia Zhangke was about to make *Platform* (站台, 2000) , and he was in close contact with my good friend Kong Weimeng (孔巍蒙) who introduced me to him. Wasn't it that Jia Zhangke once performed in the 'Big Tent' [a circus tent]? As this was concerned, he was an amateur and I was professional. Jia came to me because he wanted to film a scene of performing in a big tent in *Platform*, inspired by Wu Wenguang's (吴文光) *Jianghu* (江湖, 1999) . Jia himself lived the same unrestrained and free life as the characters in *Jianghu*.

Wang: Did Jia Zhangke really wander around and perform in a big tent?

Hu: Only for fun! He was not good at singing, neither at dancing. But he had passion. I read the script and thought it was good because it was with details. I was supposed to play the third main character and took the screen test. Though I did not act in the film in the end, I seemed to understand what film was like by listening to Jia Zhangke instructing the cast and crew members. It was such a new experience to me and I felt making film was like having freedom. I saw Jia's filming was quite different from the script, which echoed my understanding about film and also was sympathetic with my personality. Other people filmed with a viewfinder that I never referred to, because I always thought my film had nothing to do with film aesthetics.

However, Jia's films, with Yu Liwei (余力为) being his cinematographer, are of much film aesthetics. I cannot bear to watch his films produced after *A Touch of Sin* (天注定, 2013). For me, those films are too melodramatic and disgusting; also they are too fast-paced, irrational, and absent of artistic flavor, like what you describe in your discussion of 'quiet observation film' (静观电影). I like the term 'quiet observation'.

Wang: Now I know you were supposed to be the third starring actor in *Platform*. I want to ask you a few more questions: Where did you get the Hi8 camera? How did you use it at that time?

Hu: I only used that Hi8 camera to entertain myself. I was engaged in vocal music and singing every day, and then I found myself not able to sing nicely. I thought that artistic achievement was not the outcome of toilsome effort, and in fact, it will amount to nothing if you always work the utmost. When I had problem with my vocal cord muscles or my mood, I diverted my attention to something else so that I would not always practice in the music room, neither would I only talk about singing even when I chatted with other people in the dormitory. By start doing something else, I could just take a break and spend some time on thinking about the new issue. That was how I started using Hi8.

Wang: You bought the camera just out of this reason?

Hu: It cost five thousand yuan. That was in 1999.

Wang: In 1999, DV had existed for a while. Why did you only buy an Hi8?

Hu: The atomic bomb had been in existence in 1999 too. Should I also have it? Haha.

Wang: Ok. You have provided a clear context. Let us talk about *The Man*. I watched it again yesterday and felt it was seemingly rough but actually with some delicacies, yet previously I only thought it was quite

coarse. What camera did you make the film?

Hu: VX2000E.

Wang: It is a digital video camera, right?

Hu: Yes. I bought it with 23,000 yuan, which were all borrowed money. My monthly salary was only 700 yuan, and I had already been in possession of a Hi8 camera. What an extravagance!

Wang: In which year did you buy this VX200E camera?

Hu: On January 3, 2001. I took a plane to Guangzhou with a friend and I said to him, ‘lend me some money, as I want to make a film.’ With the money I bought the camera. See how crazy I was! You felt that *The Man* was coarse, but you may feel differently twenty years later. I was taking a totally different approach in making the fictional film; when it came to the production of documentary, I said that I must not be pretentious. I had watched documentaries such as Yang Lina’s (杨荔钠) *Old Men* (老头, 1999) , and concluded that the good way is to make a documentary in the style of a home video. I did not care about the composition, color and the level of the lens; I used to produce works of punk and rock styles, which I regarded cool and trendy. I was not interested in the humanistic style, but keener on the rebellious one. That was why the composition of the *The Man* was diagonal, and the colors was messy.

Wang: Yes, I can see that many shots in the room are crooked.

Hu: What I wanted most was to keep the documentary away from becoming the type of ‘telling the story of the ordinary people’, because I was determined to play hard to look grandiose.

Wang: What was your experience with documentary before that?

Hu: Actually, I don’t really like documentary, neither did I like it when I was filming *The Man*. Lao Su had his own opinions about the documentary, which I did not agree at all. I fooled around like a child. I even filmed him peeing. At the beginning I only wanted to have fun, gradually I started to film seriously. It was weird to piss around in a serious manner. When I was meddling, the scenes became nasty. Lao Su made it hard for me: in fact it was not about I recording him, but about I presenting the confrontation between the two of us. This was how this film was made.

Wang: It's quite interesting. In fact, I regarded it a hormonal movie when I first watched it. At that time, films were bursting with hormones, such as *Gougan* (狗干, 1999) and *Two Guys Go Hunting* (在山上下不来, 2001) by the Taiwanese filmmaker Chen Shuoyi (陈硕仪). Another Taiwanese film *Swimming on the Highway* (在高速公路上游泳, 1998) is of the same type. These films are produced by directors of that era and generation.

Hu: *Swimming on the Highway* is the work of Wu Yaodong (吴耀东). Yes, I do want to talk about my connection with Wu Yaodong. My film was made four years later after his, and I found how my film was alluded to his when I watched his film twenty year later. Before, I had never seen this film, neither did I even see a photo of it. The only thing I knew was the title of the film. His approach and mine were basically the same, but he was more poetic in that he used foreign music, and I did not because I thought documentaries shouldn't contain anything foreign. I was not sure whether he was superior to me or he was more old-fashioned than me. We met each other the year before last year. I showed much respect to him and asked what influences was he under in producing that film. He said he was not under much influence from others. He was a photographer and was supposed to be particularly concerned about composition, which was very annoying to me. I don't think much of photographers, especially picture photographers, but he was not that way at all. He was quite close to me in that he also filmed in a free and wild manner, pursuing the hormone bursting strength. The male protagonist is a gay, and I thought it was cool. I am not interested in men, but in that film I think it embodies the aesthetics of violence.

Wang: The characteristics of young people in that era seem to be a little different from those of the current era.

Hu: When I was cutting the film, Wu Wenguang said to me, 'This is quite interesting.' He liked my style: wild, free, and always following my inner desire. In composition, I totally betrayed the traditional aesthetics. I did not see it as a film, but as a video work. I myself was the video recorder. Why should I stick to your film aesthetics, and cater to the color matter? I must violate what you people highly uphold.

Wang: That's a very good point. This film looks coarse, but I must say the editing is rather organized and tidy. The occurrence of the gun, the overall ambience and the introduction of the music are all appropriate.

Hu: I did not want the film to be dull, so I added a piece of music when the gun was fired, the only piece in the film. I thought that the documentary, resembling that of the direct cinema, had its own beauty, and

there was no need for me to play smart. I did not know where I got such an idea, as I had not watched any documentaries before.

Wang: You said you watched *Old Men* at that time.

Hu: I watched it in 2000.

Wang: *Bumming in Beijing* (流浪北京, dir. Wu Wenguang, 1991) was also released on disc at that time. Did you watch it?

Hu: No, I did not. *Old Men* was shown by Song Yongping in class. He asked me to watch it, and he said it was awesome. I thought it was smart, and being photographed on a tripod it had stable composition. Still I thought it was a work with rationale, presenting old men with rationality. But my work was different, it was aimless with only a mood running through. Though later I thought there was a problem with my film, namely it was too linear.

Wang: Your protagonist Old Su is very interesting. He was fired from his job, and he was worried about being discharged again from his new post. What was the reason? Was it because he was too rebellious, or simply because he was less competent? How to explain his fate should be of key importance to your film, yet you did not cover it.

Hu: I followed him all the way during the filming process. Yes, I also felt it would be too boring to have him talking about the reason for his redundancy, and to make it like ‘telling the story of the ordinary people’. Lao Su felt the same way as I did. At that time there was a social trend of letting go of old grudges, and I had the feeling that we should put away stories about the Cultural Revolution and look ahead. Jia Zhangke was bearing the same thought. All of us take deadly efforts to make big events, and first of all, we were very much concerned about ourselves.

Wang: You filmed a mindset of that time, pertinently and adequately, immediately making us feel sympathetic. I know that era and understand what it was like. Also, your film provides some explanations when the character keeps saying: ‘Let’s be submissive, Let’s be submissive.’

Hu: We are very submissive now, while back at that time the claim ‘Let’s be submissive’ sounded so incongruous. It sounds very comfortable now, since we feel we are going to make lots of money. But at that

time, 'being submissive' is mockery.

Wang: Yes, you are right. There are three main characters in the film, you, Lao Su, and a person named Shi Lin (史霖). What you focused from the very beginning is the relationship of the characters, right?

Hu: That was what our life was like. The three of us always got together in our spare time. We subconsciously were trying to locate the problems of our own. What was art? I did not know. They were very good oil painters, yet stuck in a rut and unable to create satisfactory art works, the same as me not being able to make progress in the vocal music. I wanted to find out where our problems lied during the process of filming. I was a new hand in filmmaking, which let me relive the feeling when I first started to practice music. It was fresh, exaggerating, and about continuous exploration. The film helped me to get out of my dilemma, and it was creative in this sense.

Wang: The three of you gave the impression that you were stuck in the same plight. Were you particularly emphasizing the fact that Shi went to shoot sparrows every day, or was it just the plain fact? You were filming him shooting birds in the spare time, without telling a bit what he was like at work. Were you highlighting a sense of decadence?

Hu: Yes, I only wanted to be trendy and cool. He taught lessons and I hated teaching lessons. I also taught at school like he did. I did not want to film teaching, which would make it a true documentary, right?

At that time, I especially resented the sense of responsibility and history, although we did have it. What I really disliked was the formality, because it seemed too serious.

Wang: I understand you very well on this point. It was the common recognition of that age, namely, the sense of responsibility. But in fact if you lived a proper life of your own and sorted out well all your problems, that is your responsibility.

Hu: Its true. It was the age that liberalism inundated, and responsibility meant enjoying freedom. In fact, freedom is everything. It was trendy then: I was not a bad child, but I pretended to be bad.

Wang: Yes. The film reflected your interest and spiritual conditions of that time, and thus very subjective. The scenes of the film are fading in and out, as if the story is repeating itself day after day. It was an interesting editing.

Hu: Yes, it's repetitive. The life I filmed was too boring. The other day I watched two clips of *Paper Airplane* (纸飞机, 2001) by Zhao Liang (赵亮). I had thought highly of this film before I watched it because I knew it was about punk, drug addiction and all other messes. Yet it turned out to be a true documentary in my opinion and thus not much up to my standard. I found out that what I made was the least documentary work in my time. My later film *Family Phobia* was a very different type; it was much more serious.

Wang: In *The Man*, you were always in front of the camera; you were filming yourself peeing and doing something else. Were there any other references in previous documentaries for the ways you present yourself? Or were those only the outcome of your own fantasy?

Hu: I also filmed myself ejaculating, but did not include it in the film as I thought it was a bit too much: it would be too conceptual to be necessary. For instance, I could let the audience understand it was about peeing without showing it. I didn't want to make it wild and cathartic like a punk show. So I removed some shots.

Wang: But was it influenced by some other sources, not necessarily a documentary, but perhaps a drama?

Hu: There were some influences from live performances of rock and punk bands, and some MVs. I thought those were cool and fabulous. 'Exposure mania? Yes, damn it, I am anti-moral!' It was my perspective at that moment. I thought many documentaries coming out afterwards were dull, not creative at all. Most of them did not have the same originality of Yan Lina and Wang Fen (王芬). Instead, they were pretentious, pretending to be artistic and awesome.

Wang: Haha. I feel you filmed a pile of ruins, and you showed the ruined state of your own.

Hu: I think you are very sensitive and accurate. The word 'ruin' came afterwards; I did not know the term when I was filming it.

Wang: It was the state at that age, that is, personalisation. Yet after personalisation, the meaning was still missing. The way you made your film was a process of seeking meaning.

Hu: Maybe that was true. I was influenced by Song Yongping and Xie Deqing (谢德庆). In *Lotus* (芙

蓉) , a lot of energy came from the response towards the performance art. I understood performance art as a condensed entity, thick and rich, providing each audience member with something, which was really good.

Wang: Of course, your film is now regarded as first-person documentary, bearing a tint of spiritual realism. Inner expression is also a kind of objectivity. It is a bit confusing to say, but it is true with many taboos or puzzles, that is, the problems are not sorted out when presented to the audience, but to present them is also a solution.

Hu: Art is not to be solved. I think it is a way of venting out.

Wang: The same. To vent out is a solution. What's more, you make a film, having a large audience who comment on it, with some being sympathetic. What I said sounds like lofty statement, but in fact it is a solution. That guy, Old Su, was filthy mouthed and vulgar, yet I did not look down upon him. His words were imprints of his time, a transitional one, with violence being embodied in the social chaos. His verbal violence, retaliating and compensational, was counter action towards real violence in life, though yielded in vain in the end. The helpless situation, after being presented in your film, became symbolic of the ontology of life.

Hu: Yes, he was an avaricious reader. He colloquialized a lot of things, because he was very good at this—or he defaced the delicate parts from the books. In fact, as a libra, he had very clear mind, and was very formal in his own artistic creation. While I am the type of person who always gives life to things from the book, I dearly hope—which I expressed to him—that he should manage to transform what he has read in books to be his own, not necessarily in painting or writing, but in any form. However, till now he still has not gotten the hang of it, as if what he had received from elite education had become a powerful beast, firmly residing in his body. He himself became a ferocious beast too, and at the same time, he was a like a floating weed; swearing was the only thing he could do.

Wang: I feel like he was going crazy with his hormones, and he could not even solve his own physical problems.

Hu: He was ambitious and had great ideals. That was the same with all of us. In the 1980s, ideal and art were important in our minds.

Wang: Lao Su was really an interesting character. I don't know what he was making a living for. In the film,

he always looked like an outsider, in his forties, being an ethnic minority, without money, bald and always longing for woman. Everything in his life seemed only half done, such as he felt he was going to be fired again before going to a new job. His image and characters were very cinematic.

Hu: Yes, that was him. I was quite like him in that both of us must be kept inside the system while we complained about it at the same time. Mentally we were of the outsiders. It is weird, but I am getting more and more closer to him now, only that ...

Wang: I think you might be more like him if you don't make documentaries. But now you are a documentary filmmaker, so you are fine. Do you agree with this point?

Hu: Yes, exactly. Documentary is an outlet for me, a mental outlet. It brings nothing practical, neither did I expect it to bring anything even from the very beginning. Only I feel that I myself was awesome, because everyone else is getting married and having children, yet I did not want to live such a family life. I had a girlfriend who asked me to marry her, and if not, she would commit suicide. I did not want to get married at all; life must not go in that way. I was very depressed. How could I live my life like this? It was in 2004, one day I was editing my film, and I turned around to see her sitting there watching TV series. 'No, it is not the life I want, never! It's unbearable!' I said to myself. If you asked me what kind of life I wanted? I did not know. I was a psycho, frightened to stay with a woman. I would rather to do something creative. At least I knew I was able to create something when I am alive. By this I felt successful at least mentally.

Wang: The teacher Shi in the film was also very interesting, He had a movie face which looked very decadent at the first glance. He was cinematic already, and did not need to act. He was on the phone all the time, murmuring something nebulous. His face was exactly the one that lost passion for and control of life.

Hu: You are right. He was once in a mental hospital. Maybe it's because his Dad was not able to manage him at home. You saw his mental state, which I, in fact, was unaware of. You pointed it out, which means you saw the fact.

Wang: He was very much like the characters in Western hippie movies, such as those in *Take Off*, a story of a marijuana society, and also those cinematic images with blank but comic faces in the movies of Jarmusch and Kaurismäki.

Hu: Oh, you have watched so many films. I know nothing about these. I only thought he looked weak and

not artistic at all.

Wang: Yeah. In him there seemed to have no warmth. To make things funnier, he was having a gun and fire it everywhere he went. I think the interesting point of this film was that it was him, teacher Shi, rather than Old Su, who was holding a gun.

Hu: Yes. You reminded me here. I did not realize the symbolic feature at first, later I thought it would be the most conceptual to call us ‘the three musketeers’: I was always holding a camera yet keep missing the scenes; Old Su was always fucking something with his swear; Shi Lin was holding the gun all the time.

Wang: In fact, the metaphorical nature was only understood and became a common sense seven or eight years later than 2000, namely, the association of the gun with male genitalia. Did you also realize the association when you were editing the film?

Hu: No, not at all. The name of *The Man* was given by Lao Wu, and ‘The Three Musketeer’ was proposed by a friend of mine in 2010s, which I could not agree more. I told him, ‘you are completely right. This should be the name in proper. It is the most expressive title of this film. *The Man* is fine, but it is still too formal.’

Wang: The three musketeers were holding their own guns that were all useless, right?

Hu: Yes! Yes! Yes! Useless guns with nowhere to place them! Thus we had to make film, hunt and swear aimlessly.

Wang: You were all with guns, but found no use with them. You were full of masculine characteristics but powerless in face of the external world. The position of your camera and the way you used it also made the audience feel you were particularly unorthodox. However, you established perfect relationship among the characters, for instance, you showed Lao Su the scene of himself in order to offend him, and he grabbed a cloth to covered the camera, which was a seamless shot by itself, yet embraced much room for further interpretation. That was the true reflection of yourself in life, right?

Hu: I was looking for fun. Being together was very boring, and I made a film by looking for something to be filmed and to last. Truly, there was no woman with me—I had one before, but it was even more boring to be with a woman. Though it was boring too to be with men, and making a film would make you less bored. It

was purely the outcome of having nothing to do.

Wang: You also filmed yourself and Lao Su discussing this film, and you said in the film that you had rectal prolapse.

Hu: About the rectal prolapse, I thought it was normal to expose my own disease. I first exposed my own privacy before I exposed others. By this I was setting an example of myself: I was not only merciless to Lao Su, I did the same to myself. The only thing I could share was my sincerity.

Wang: When did you start shooting this film? How long did it take?

Hu: It only took more than 20 days, from December 2001 to January 2002. I was filming every day before the lunar New Year.

Wang: When did you finish editing?

Hu: After the lunar New Year, I asked for two thousand US dollars from my elder brother and bought a computer. It was about twenty thousand Chinese Yuan. My elder brother was in the United States and sent me the money. I edited on the computer though I did not know much about how to use it. After finishing editing, I wanted to ask for opinion of Jia Zhangke, yet receiving no response for ten days. I turned to Song Yonghong, asking him to connect me to Wu Wenguang. I was a fan of literature from the early time, a veteran reader of literature journals such as *Lotus* and *New Tide* (新潮). Though I had never watched a documentary by then, I knew about the performance art, and I knew Wu Wenguang and his [journal] *Document* (现场). The script of *Jianghu* was first serialized in *Lotus*. In another magazine *Art World* (艺术世界), I read an article about Wu. Those are all interesting journals. I was introduced to Wu. We met each other at 2 pm, and watched my film together till evening. I was so grateful to his advice on my editing. The film would have been a scrap without his help.

Lao Wu said, 'It is cluttered, messy, but it's quite good.' He had never seen things like this. He continued, 'could you make it more imaginative, and with a bit more fun?' What he said impressed me a lot. It was in June when we met each other. I went back and worked on it for over a month until August. Subtitles popped out all over the screen when there were lots of conversations. Lao Wu said, 'awesome, that's it!' He was quite good at encouraging young people, saying, 'This is the work of your young people!' He also told me there was a film festival, for that I should trim the work a bit. Later he asked Yang Lina to come over for a

dinner together. He said, 'I met a genius who made amazing work.' He thought I was in my twentieth, after getting to know I was thirty-three, he said he felt more comfortable. If I could produce such a work in the age of twentieth, then what should he do?

2

Wang: Let's talk about *Family Phobia*. When did you start to film it?

Hu: Just after *The Man*. Old Su went back home for the lunar new year, so did I. I filmed some scenes about my family, but was not satisfied with them. I did not know what I wanted to shoot as I was too close to the characters. Making a film you need to keep distance from them in order to have proper aesthetic judgments. I was not able to judge, but I kept on filming.

Wang: Do you think you should have a clear subject for film? Or do you think that you gradually develop the subject in the process of filming?

Hu: Neither. The main issue was that I felt it was not right aesthetics. I went back home every summer and winter break, which I thought were not cinematic at all. Having in mind that they were not cinematic, I still filmed some scenes each time at home. I would like to see what it would be like, and as time went by, I found a film was coming out.

Wang: *Family Phobia* was started at the lunar new year in 2002, how many years did you spend on it in total?

Hu: The film was completed by 2009, taking seven to eight years.

Wang: The rhythm of *Family Phobia* is unique. You slowly unfolded the characters, and focused on one at each time. It started with elder sister, then her son, and your father, mother, elder brother back from the United States, elder sister from the United States, and finally your niece Yueyue (月月) who did not have a story of her own, and was silent all the time, but you showed her name with subtitle, thus highlighting her presence, making her the silent observer of the family. How did you build such a structure?

Hu: There was a problem with me, namely, the film was still rather linear. In fact, my film followed an emotional line, similar to song and poetry. I understood that song came before poetry, and I attached

particular importance to rhyme, which I employed to compose the film. I had no idea about structure, or actually in my film structure was rhyme. Neither did I know how people came to have a sense of structure, for me what I wanted was a certain kind of rhyme, or balance.

Wang: Over the course of seven to eight years, the story was presented chronologically year after year. The story of each character was also slowly unfolding, and sometimes the structure was that of life itself, only that at certain times you had to locate it, to do something about it, or to set it unconsciously.

Hu: I did all those out of unconsciousness. I watched and laughed at Cong Feng (从峰) drawing the relationship chart of the characters on a whiteboard before editing his film. In my mind film is a flowing thing, and it would be unbearable to watch it if the structure and scenes are awkwardly put together. Shamelessly I boasted that I might have the talent as I did not know why I was always able to edit. I had some experience in this aspect: I edited a film for Ai Weiwei (艾未未) and made the 250-hour footage into a twenty-minute-long film. It proved that I had the sense to tell a good story.

Maybe the narrative of mine was lyrical, with which I integrated my own feelings. I told director Gu Tao (古涛), who studied cinema in Canada, that what I used in my film was emotional logic. Women are good at using the emotional logic to connect irrelevant issues, and I also used it to compose my film.

Wang: This might come from your training in music. Now can you tell about the process of filming *Family Phobia*?

Hu: It was simply that I filmed it year after year.

Wang: Did everyone in your family agree that you could film them? Was it easy to communicate with them?

Hu: They did not notice when I was filming, as I always seemed to play there by my own, photographing something. I was able to disguise myself. Some of my family did not like to be filmed, but my parents were fine with it. I could film my parents whenever I wanted to and they did not take it seriously. I did whatever I liked and my family never objected to it. Later when I went to Wuhan to make a film, my Dad asked my elder sister to give me 10,000 yuan to work on it. He did not think that I was attending to my proper duty, but somehow, he liked me to work on the things that I was really serious about.

Wang: Did he understand what you were doing? He probably understood it when you filmed for a documentary?

Hu: He did not. In the year that my dad died, *Family Phobia* was shown in a film festival in Switzerland. They might feel I really did something by sending my work abroad, thought they still did not think it was academic.

Wang: Have you shown it to your family?

Hu: No. If they watch it, they will ask, ‘what is this for?’ For them, to survive is the goal, and pains and trauma should be concealed. Wu Wenguang proposed to make and screen films in the countryside. However, my family would never bear it to watch this film about themselves. So I do not quite agree with Wu. I think first-person documentary should be defined individually and the scope of it should also be set accordingly.

My elder brother knew about the film, but he did not watch it, neither did he want to. The little boy Zhang Chao (张超), my nephew, watched the first part after he graduated from the university. I did not know his response. I guess he had some feelings about it but only did not tell. Both he and his father did not talk much. When he was very young, he kept silent when his father got a big scolding from my elder sister. His father pulled him up and shouted, ‘Stand up! Stand up! Stand up! Stand up!’ I liked this scene now because I think it is like poetry. Poems are repeating lines.

Wang: This film did expose some weaknesses of your family members, which are very common in routine life, but will be unavoidably magnified when presented in a film. For instance, the worldly remarks of your elder brother and the political views of your elder sister are common talks in the household, but will immediately become public events if shown in public.

Hu: Right. So I don’t want it to become a public event.

Wang: That’s also very contradictory. Your brother knew you were filming him when he was giving his opinions, didn’t he? He had awareness of documentary, right?

Hu: Many times I was filming from behind and he did not know I was filming him. I did it in a playful state of mind, which helped to hook up the story of the characters because they also felt relaxed. This was the feature of my first-person documentaries: it was informal. This is the hidden nature of DV.

Wang: How do you define first-person documentary? Is it about exposing privacy or is it about filming your own life?

Hu: *The Man* was a little about exposing privacy, yet I did not feel the same with *Family Phobia*. As I filmed more, I came to realize that families were similar, so why shouldn't I film mine? There was nothing about the exposure of privacy. If there was, it was merely privacy in the legal sense. If the film would not go commercial, it could be presented as it was. From this point view, I want to say how *Four Springs* (四个春天, dir. Lu Qingyi 陆庆屹, 2019) can be comparable with my work? It was too sentimental and thus too dull.

Wang: Exactly.

Hu: I was also sentimental, and my film was more sentimental than *Four Springs*. Yet I did not pursue sensationalism for the sake of stirring up emotions, and on the contrary, it was out of hatred, about the messy state of life itself.

Wang: In fact, the structure and state of the characters in *Family Phobia* has the potential to represent the spiritual structure and social problems of China. Your father used to be 'Five Black Categories' (黑五类), and now his political opinions appear to be split from his historical background. Your elder brother came back after finishing his study overseas and now he was representative of a different group.

Hu: My elder brother embraced a particular sense of responsibility towards China. My elder sister was purely American in her outlook because her husband was American and she was practicing the traditional Chinese philosophy 'if you marry a chicken, follow the chicken'. I remained single. As I was progressing with the filming, I came to understand why I did not want to get married, that is, the trivial life of the family was unbearably complicated and boring.

Wang: The ending of the film was fantastic. You two elder sisters were discussing why you did not get married, which made the film very coherent.

Hu: I didn't know this when I was editing it. Wang Wo (王我) said that the name of the film [in Chinese it means 'fear of family'] was good because it revealed my fear of marriage and family in the traditional sense of Confucianism. I am a liberal, and definitely a white leftist at heart, so I hate the white left.

Wang: The family is a grand structure, in which people are placed in a relationship, uncontrollable and very troublesome for you. Everyone has a specific point of view, and is not bad or morally weak as other people have accused them of. But once you get into the structure, contradictions inevitably arise. That is to say, the Chinese family is a daunting structure.

Hu: My family is of this type. Every one of us thinks we are not bad, but we are not good either. Our family characters inspire us to say what we really think in our hearts, which, however, might hurt the others. I am still like this now, not willing to speak hypocritically, as it takes skills to do so.

Wang: It takes skill and asks for sacrifice. You have to sacrifice your true self, which makes you feel disgusted. It is hard to maintain one's own individuality in a family, and that is why many fly away from it. You made the film during spring festival holidays, right? How many Lunar New Years did you film?

Hu: Most of the scenes were filmed during the lunar new year, two and three of them were during summer holidays, and one scene was during the National Day.

Wang: In fact, in many families, the lunar new year holiday is not a time of peace and blessing, but a time of conflict. It is the time people look back at the past year and settle accounts.

Hu: Haha, yes. Another thing is that my elder brother and I could not stay together for long after we grew up. The year before last, shortly after we met in Qingdao (青岛), we started to fight. The males simply cannot be with each other, otherwise they will fight for more territory. I am not obedient to him, neither is he to me. However, if he offends me, I will make a scene.

Wang: You and your brother also have a structural problem in the family. He is much older than you and thinks that you are of two generations, but in fact you are brothers, hence the relationship between you is screwy. I find he is having a condescending and authoritative manner when he talks to you, don't you think so?

Hu: That's what Confucianism is about, but why should I listen to him? Although superficially he seemed to be very democratic, he was quite traditional at heart. He did not treat me as a friend, while I treated him as an equal friend. I defy authority, and do not want to be taught. I live my own life and please do not care about me even if I am not up to your expectation.

Wang: The ending was also very symbolic of the family structure problem. Your two elder sisters totally disagreed with each other. Both of them born true love and concern for you, but each of them held different values: the eldest sister thought you could only become happy after getting married, while the third elder sister thought she had no right to interfere with your choice. Unavoidably there was conflict between two of them, another problem of the family structure.

Hu: Yes. To say that they loved me, rather than saying that they loved more the way that they loved me. Everyone was expressing their own feelings. The name of the film should have been called *The Art of Lyricism*.

Wang: What was the general reaction from the audience?

Hu: It was different from the previous ones. After watching it, everyone started to talk about and criticize their own families, totally ignoring the artistic features. I think the style of this film is much old-fashioned.

Wang: According to your description, *Family Phobia* still provoked the desire from the audience to reflect on their own families.

Hu: That's it. From my first movie to *Family Phobia*, I have been under the influence of Hou Hsiao-hsien (侯孝贤) and the new wave movement in Taiwan. I filmed my immediate surroundings and myself, including my family. *The Time to Live and the Time to Die* (童年往事) was of this type, only it was a remake and mine was a documentary. When it comes to editing, I was not objective at all. Cui Weiping (崔卫平) said that, unlike Wang Bing (王兵), I edit my documentary in the manner of editing a TV series or a feature film, so somehow there is always a dramatic tint in my work. I think maybe I was from the lyrical profession, I studied vocal music and have been singing since my early childhood [he became a lead singer at the age of four or five]. It is similar to how to start, finish and turn, follow the waving trend in the process.

Wang: This is what your profession has brought to your documentaries, and what has the documentary brought to you in return?

Hu: Now, before editing a film, I will reflect on my past. I think about what I am doing and drive myself to think further. As result of filmmaking, I know what is art, what is classical art, and what is modern art. I did not know about these before when I was merely a technical worker or an artisan. Now being engaged in film

production, I care more about the society, the aesthetic tendency and the flow of ideology, which seem to be more interesting than my own profession, and help me to understand in depth about it as well. Now I analyze my major of vocal music from a historical point of view, and find out that the history of vocal music is a false one, a conclusion that I would have never reached with my previous way of thinking. I have acquired a philosophical manner of thinking and found that aesthetics is of vital importance and involves lots of rational thinking. Without rational discernment, it would only be the first shot, and it would be all over after the first one.

Wang: Let me summarize for you, that is, documentaries make you more historically and socially conscious. In fact, your documentaries are also reflecting on your own life, of which you have a deeper analysis and self-awareness. Documentary filmmaking has greatly trained and expanded your thinking.

Hu: Yes. I have also developed independent thinking in the process. We experienced decadence when we were young, and now I am not that decadent. I think it is very important to dig something out through making documentaries and to keep my mind leap forward. I believe art is part of the history of ideas.

胡新宇：我想通过纪录片去挖掘点什么东西

王小鲁

这是二〇二一年七月六日上午与胡新宇导演的对话，他在太原，我在北京，是以微信通话的方式完成的。在中国独立纪录片领域，胡新宇以私影像创作著名，但因为隐私问题，有些作品他不愿意公布，我们并不能谈他所有的作品，谈话主要集中在《男人》和《家庭恐惧》，他新近完成了一部实验片《96'House》，但胡新宇说他最主要的片子，还是这两部，因此就舍弃了其他，主要谈这两部。我戏称《男人》是荷尔蒙写作。谈后，胡新宇说，跟你聊得特嗨，跟女性对谈就弱，按说和异性聊天，应该有多巴胺分泌的吧？我说这也许有男男共谋或同性共犯的意味在里面吧。此次谈话印象最深的，是胡新宇认为纪录片带给他的思想上的不断跃进，以及打破固有生活板结的作用。以上是谈话的背景情况。

王小鲁（以下简称王）：你最早拍片子是从什么时候开始？《男人》是第一部吗？

胡新宇（以下简称胡）：最早不是这个。最早买了一个索尼 VX2000E，拍剧情片，宋永平给介绍了一个艺术家老苏，说那哥们挺有意思，你们俩搓一搓，聊一聊，我和老苏在一起，夏天，大学老师都闲得蛋疼，那就拍剧情片，剧情片没拍成。那时候也拍不成，就瞎嗨，就拍了个《男人》，《男人》算纪录片，当时也不知道纪录片。也是闲得蛋疼，老苏在我家呆着，也是光棍，宿舍筒子楼，我就挺无聊的，最后他就下岗了，下岗那个状态就不对了，我说这个和我看到的不太一样了，我就拍一拍你吧。

王：他不是你同事对吧？这个人是从哪儿来的？

胡：他是从毕赣那个学校出来的，就是现在的山西传媒。

王：明白了，他在那儿当老师。

胡：对，他做动画。那时候不知道什么叫纪录片，我一看状态，那我就拍一拍吧。他也是要下岗，就是已经下岗了，我也在那拍，我也不正经拍。本来你们是朋友，要听他诉说衷肠啊，但你不正经，就比较搞笑了，就是把悲情的东西、本来不高兴的事情，拍着拍着成了很怪的东西了。他本来是北

京电影学院学美工的，我还看过他画画，他画得还是不错的，素描，挺有功底。

王：那你们最早拍的剧情片是什么样子的？你是导演对吧？

胡：对，我就是有想法就给他拍，就跟做实验片一样，就是那种信口开河的，其实那时候拍东西就是闲得蛋疼，肾上腺素比较高，就是感觉自由了。你想玩一些东西，感觉挺有意思的，就是那种。

王：那时候，有没有受什么启发？

胡：其实启发是什么呢？我以前有个录像的，就 HI8 那种，就像录像机，拍了一堆，感觉全是他妈的 MV 啊，构图啊，乱七八糟，无聊。我说这怎么就出不来呢，然后贾樟柯就来学校找赵涛。

王：你们什么学校？

胡：就是以前山大师院，赵涛在那里头，赵涛北舞大专毕业以后来我们这当老师。贾樟柯不是要拍片子吗？我的哥们就叫孔巍蒙，也是个画家。他们关系不错，然后说贾樟柯要拍《站台》，他就介绍了我。贾樟柯不是走过大棚的吗？他是业余的，我是专业的，然后贾樟柯就找我来了。《站台》不是有走大棚的戏吗？走大棚的灵感来源于吴文光的《江湖》。因为贾樟柯也有这种经历，瞎蹦跶，也是那种在外头玩过。

王：贾樟柯真的走过大棚吗？

胡：热闹嘛！你说他跳舞又不行，唱歌更不行，但是他有激情。当时我看的剧本，我说挺好的，有细节，因为我当时也是三号演员，试了试镜，然后没拍。但是我就看贾樟柯在那讲，大概好像明白电影是什么了。这个好奇怪，我就觉得，它就是个自由嘛。他在拍的时候我就发现拍的和剧本严重不同。我说这正好符合我的想法，我的性格，拍电影不是都要弄一个取景框嘛，有时候拿手比划一个构图框弄，我从来不看这个，我觉得我的那个东西好像和胶片美学没关系。

贾樟柯的片子其实就是胶片美学的，他的美学更多来自余力为，《天注定》以后，我就真的没法看了，特别煽情，特别恶心，就不冷静，节奏都快，不艺术片儿，就像你的“静观电影”说的那样。我觉得你“静观”那个词说得挺好的。

王：我才知道你本来是《站台》的男三号。这里我想多问几句，你那个嗨 8 是哪儿来的？那时候怎么使用这个嗨 8（Hi8）？

胡：我嗨 8 那时候就是玩儿，那时候搞声乐，我天天唱，唱不动了，我觉得艺术这个东西不能死命作，死命作没用了，我觉得肌肉上有问题，思想上有问题，那我就拿个东西玩一玩，要不我永远在唱，永远在琴房，在宿舍跟别人聊天，永远是这个。这一定不对的了，那我就玩一个东西，就歇会，思考一下，那个嗨 8 是这样的。

王：你就专门买了个 Hi8？

胡：五千块钱买的。1999 年吧。

王：一九九九年 DV 早有了，你怎么才买一个嗨 8 呢？

胡：一九九九年原子弹有了，我应该有吗？哈哈。

王：你这个前史大概说清楚了，咱们开始说《男人》。这个我昨天又看了一遍，我以前的印象，就是觉得很糙，但是现在看其实粗中有细。它是用什么拍的？

胡：VX2000E。

王：那个是数码 video 了吧？

胡：是。那个两万三千块钱买的，都借的钱。我的工资七百块钱，你想想，我已经有一个嗨 8 五千块钱，那就算非常豪华了。

王：买这个 VX200E 是哪年？

胡：二〇〇一年吧，一月三号。记得我和朋友坐飞机去的广州，我说我要拍电影，借我点钱，就去买了那个 DV，你说多狂。另外你说《男人》糙，其实我们二十年后再看，就有另外一种感觉了。其实我那时候拍剧情片的时候，我都不是这样，但是我说我拍纪录片的时候，我就说咱别装逼。我那时候好像看过纪录片，看过杨荔钠的《老头》。我就觉得把自己弄个家庭录像就对了，别那么构图，那时候色彩还有什么水平仪全部打乱，因为之前我是喜欢或者拍一些朋克的，摇滚的那种，现在来说，我觉得那些东西对我来说那叫时髦。我就不想弄那种人文的，我就想弄类似于像反叛的。所以它构图就用的那种对角式的，把颜色给它调乱了。

王：是，能感觉到，房间里面拍的很多画面都是歪的。

胡：主要那时候就想打破一个东西，就是我不想纪录片成了那种“讲述老百姓自己的故事”，因为我觉得一定要装逼。

王：你这之前的纪录片经验是怎样的？

胡：其实我骨子里根本不喜欢纪录片，包括拍《男人》的时候也不喜欢，包括老苏认为纪录片应该什么样，我就偏不那样。我就在那嘻嘻哈哈的，像小孩儿一样，瞎玩闹。你说上厕所我也拍，感觉这就是瞎玩的吧，但是看着看着，就想认真地拍了，认真地嘻嘻哈哈，那感觉就怪了。因为我嘻嘻哈哈的时候它就往下流走，老苏看我在拍，他就叫我拍不成，其实这个东西不是我在记录他，而是我们俩达成的某种对抗的东西。就产生了这种歪的东西了。

王：挺有意思。其实你这个电影，我看的时候就觉得是荷尔蒙电影。那时候荷尔蒙爆棚，好多导演，就像台湾那个陈硕仪拍《狗干》，拍《在山上下不来》，还有谁拍的那个《在高速公路游泳》，都是那个年代和那个年龄的产物。

胡：吴耀东，对，我就想说和吴耀东的关系，因为我这个片子和他还差了四五年，二十年后我看吴耀东的片子我就发现，我终于找到出处了。因为吴耀东《在高速公路上游泳》，我从来没看过，我连照片也没有，就看过那个片名。但是我和他的手法基本上是相同的，但是他还有诗性，他加了外来音乐，我就不会加，因为我觉得纪录片不应该加外面的东西。他比我超越，或者他比我老土，我也搞不清。前年我们见的时候，我特别尊重他，我问他，我说你那个时候是受什么影响？他说，我也没怎么受影响。因为他是个摄影师啊，他们本来特别在意构图，就特别恶心啊，摄影师尤其图片摄影师我就觉得挺恶心，但他完全不是那一套。就和我的思维是一样的，乱拍一气，他要的就是你刚才说的那个荷尔蒙爆发那种劲儿。好像那个男主角是同性恋吧，我觉得挺好的，我不是对男的感兴趣，我是对女的感兴趣，但是好像莫名其妙就感觉它有一种暴力美学在里头。

王：那个年代的青春特点，跟现在这个年代似乎有些不一样了。

胡：剪的时候，就是老吴（吴文光）跟我说，你那个片子挺有意思的，老吴他还是喜欢我这种，乱拍，自由，你想干什么干什么。构图严重打破那种传统的美学，因为我觉得我拍的时候，没把它当电影，一定要把它当录像，我就是录像机，我何必去靠你们的胶片美学，要那种色彩什么的，我说操的就是你们这帮人。

王：说得特别好。其实你这个片子看起来糙，但剪的时候，说实话还挺有条理的，这个枪的出现，还有整个气氛的营造，有的地方还加了点音乐，但挺恰当的。

胡：那时候考虑就是太乏味了，就是打枪的时候加了一段音乐，就加了一段。……我觉得纪录片本身就有它的美，我没必要玩什么更多的智慧。这也许和直接电影有相似的地方，但我不知道受谁的影响，我也没看过什么片子啊。

王：你说你那时候看过《老头》。

胡：《老头》我二〇〇〇年我就看过。

王：《流浪北京》那时候是不是也出碟片了，你看过吧？

胡：没看过。《老头》是宋永平在课堂上放，叫我去看，他说有个牛逼的片子，你看一看。我看了觉得还是挺聪明的，构图比较稳，因为是三脚架嘛。但是我觉得还是个命题作文，老头怎样怎样，但我那个就不是命题，就瞎拍，感觉有一种情绪在走，但是后面我觉得有问题，太线性了。

王：其实你这个片子的人物，老苏很有意思。他被开除，新找了个工作也担心被开除。这是因为他反抗性强，还是他水平有问题？他的命运该怎么解释，其实这是一件很重要的事情。但你没怎么去解释。

胡：那时候我随着他走，我也觉得我们要说那个下岗的原因，但那就太无聊了，那就是“讲述老百姓自己的故事”了。他是这样的，我也是这样的，那时候还是有一种思潮吧，就是觉得还是放下抱怨吧，那时候我心里好像有种感觉，就像说文革的东西不要再提了，先放一放，我们要向前看啊。贾樟柯也这样的，我们那个时候，咱们要弄一个大的事件，要死命地作，我们更重要的是关注自己的状态。

王：你拍了当时的一个状态，这个状态呈现得特别足，马上我们就能共鸣到。我大概了解那个年代，所以知道它处于一种什么状态，其实你片子也有一些解释，比如她不停地告自己，“当个顺民吧，当个顺民吧”。

胡：我们现在就是这样，但是那时候说“当个顺民吧”，就很明显地刺耳，但是现在就全都特别顺溜滑溜，感觉能挣大钱了。那时候顺民是嘲讽。

王：是，片里三个人物，主要是你，老苏，还有一个叫史霖的。这个人物关系从一开始就是你聚焦的所在对吧？

胡：其实这就是我们的生活，因为我们三个人没事老处在一起。那时候拍，也有一种潜意识的感觉，我们在找我们的问题，艺术到底什么？我不知道。这俩画油画功底很好的，为什么画不出来。我就是感觉他们有困境，你看我声乐上有困境，所以在拍的时候我就找问题在哪里？我拍片子，对这个不太懂，新鲜的东西反而就特别表现出我那种搞音乐最初的感觉，它新鲜，它作，就是它一根筋往前一直在探讨。现在我看，因为它，我没有被束缚住，所以它（《男人》）就有些创造力。

王：你们三个人给人的感觉，就是共同处在一个困境里一样。姓史的那哥们天天拿着枪去打麻雀，这个形象是被你强化的，还是他其实就是这个样子的？因为你只拍了他业余生活提着枪对不对？他上班是什么状态你都没拍，你是不是强化了一种颓废的感觉。

胡：对，就是时髦嘛，装时髦。因为他上课，我痛恨上课，我也上课，他也上课，我不爱拍上课，你拍上课成纪录片了，哈哈哈。是吧？

那时候特别反感那种责任感和历史感，实际上都是有的，但是特别反感那种形式上的，好像特别严肃啊。

王：我明白，非常懂这一点，是这样的，那个年代的气氛是这样，或者是责任感，换了一个词，你过好你自己的生活，处理好自己的问题，这就是你的责任。

胡：现在想是这样的。那时候，自由主义泛滥，我他妈自由就是责任，自由就是那个什么，这就是感觉时髦吧。我不是个坏孩子，我要装一个坏孩子。

王：是。它体现了当时你的情趣所在，其实还是蛮主观的，表达了你当时的这样一种精神事实。这个片子的剪辑老是淡入淡出，给我感觉就是日复一日，不停地重复，这个剪辑也蛮有意思的。

胡：对，就是重复，因为我觉得实在太无聊了。前几天看了两段《纸飞机》（赵亮），我从来没有看过《纸飞机》，但我的印象特别好，因为它也是做朋克的，什么吸毒，乱七八糟。结果一看，嘿，这比我差得远了，这就正儿八经拍纪录片了。我在那个时代发现我是最不像纪录片的。后面我的《家庭恐惧》根本就是两码事，它就认真起来了。

王：《男人》里面呢，你在镜头里一直存在着，拍自己，你突然在摄像机前撒尿什么的，这些形式，

就是你在电影中的存在方式，在这之前的纪录片里有没有任何参照？还是你自己的一个突发奇想。

胡：素材中我还有拍了射精，后来没用，我觉得有点过了，因为纪录片这样观念性太强了，没必要。我说撒尿，我说清楚就行了。不然，如果真的那样的话，我就成了朋克乐队，那种乱七八糟的宣泄片了，所以还是把它拿掉了。

王：但是这个行动作为一种电影的形式，之前是否受到什么鼓励，可能不一定是纪录片，也有可能是剧情片？

胡：对，看那些摇滚啊，朋克现场，或者是看一些MV那个的影响，因为感觉就这样装逼，就觉得酷嘛。暴露狂，去你妈的，老子就反道德嘛。……我们就是这样一个态度。所以我觉得后面的纪录片很多挺无聊的了，一点创造性没有。它还不像杨荔钠或王芬那种创造性，后面的东西就在装逼，装得像艺术，装得像东北虎。

王：哈哈。其实我感觉你就拍了一堆废墟，你把自己的废墟状态也展示了出来。

胡：我觉得你的敏感度和用词挺对的，好像和这个片有关系。“废墟”这个词，是后来才有的吧，我们那时候还不知道什么叫废墟。

王：就是那个年代的一个状态，个人化了，但是个人化后也是找不到意义。其实你这么拍摄，这也是一个逼问意义的过程。我找不到，那我怎么办啊，就把它展示出来嘛。

胡：也许就是这样的。我受的影响是宋永平他们，也看过谢德庆，在《芙蓉》上，很大的能量是来自于行为艺术的那个感受，我对行为艺术的理解。行为艺术好像是一个综合体，它散发的东西比较浓，大家看的时候都能找到一些东西，那个状态特别好。

王：当然你这个片子现在来说叫私影像，其实有点精神现实主义的意味，内心表现，但这也是一种客观啊。说起来有点绕，其实很多事情是这样的，有很多禁忌或者迷惑，当你把它说出来，你也解决不了，但其实又是一种解决。

胡：艺术不是解决的，我觉得它就是用一种方式发泄，发泄出来，看它怎么去发泄就够了。

王：一样嘛，你发泄出来，也是一种解决。另一个，其实你拍出来，你放在那儿，很多人在看，然后大家一起来说，也许有共鸣——我这么说有点高大上了，这其实还是一种处理它的方法。那个老

苏这个人，虽然满嘴脏话，看起来粗俗，但我并不那么否定他。当然那种话语有着那个年代的烙印，那是一个所谓转型时代，社会的混乱中其实充满了暴力，他的语言暴力其实是应付现实暴力的，我感觉他的暴力里面有还击和补偿的成分，虽然最后徒劳无益。而且那个无奈的处境被你拍摄后，就具有某种人生本体的象征性了。

胡：对，他看的书非常多，他爱看书，很多东西他把它口语化了，因为他口语能力很强——或者是糙化了。其实他是一个很清晰的人，天平座，但是他出作品的时候就比较书面。一碰到我这种人，书里的那些东西，他给活用了，我就特别希望——我也试图跟他说过的，他到现在也没有开窍——就是怎么样把书里的东西，转码，成为自己的作品。不一定是绘画、文字，各种形式都可以，但他就是过不来，好像以前强大的精英教育给他的东西，像个猛兽，在他身体里头了。所以他就像一个猛兽，也像浮萍，他就是抱怨。

王：我感觉他快被他的荷尔蒙给逼疯了，连自己的身体问题他也都解决不掉。

胡：他是有抱负的，有理想，其实我们都是。八十年代的那种理想，艺术在自己心目中还是挺重要的。

王：这个形象的确是值得分析的形象，我不知道他现在干嘛，在你的影片中，感觉他好像是一个永远的局外人，少数民族，快四十多岁也没钱，头都秃了，形象也那样，天天渴望女性，好像什么都夹生了，找个工作还没有上班就感觉自己又要被辞掉了。这个形象和性格本身就特电影化。

胡：对，他是这样，像我也是，必需在局内养着，还说局内不好，其实思想是局外的，有点奇妙。我其实现在越来越有点像他了，就是……

王：我觉得你如果没有纪录片可能就更像他，但你有纪录片，还好。你认同吗？

胡：是是，就有一个出口了，就是精神出口。纪录片带来不了什么，因为开头也没想带来什么，就觉得只能说我牛逼啊，因为大家都在那生孩子，我就是不想生。之前，有一个女朋友，不结婚然后就自杀了那种，我就不想结婚，人不能这样过。我特别郁闷，我觉得人生就这样活了？二〇〇四年的时候也是，她在看电视剧呢，我那时候剪片，我回头一看，我这样过，不行不行，我受不了。你说我要什么生活，我也不知道，我神经病，我跟个女的在一块，我就恐惧。我还是愿意创造点东西，我觉得活着，最起码我还是能够创造点精神胜利法。

王：片子里那个史老师也很有意思，我觉得他就长着一张电影脸。一看就特颓废，不用演，还无时无刻不在那打电话，说一些虚无缥缈的东西，声音很小。他那张脸就是一种对生活丧失了热情和控

制的脸。

胡：对对，他以前去过精神病院。也许是他爸怎么觉得他不好管，不知道咋。你看他，看到他的精神特征，我都没有感觉。你刚才一说，就证明你看出这个来了。

王：他就很像西方嬉皮士电影，比如表现大麻烟会的《起飞》（*Take Off*），比如贾木许或考里斯马基电影里那种人物。面无表情还带着喜感，形象就特别电影化。

胡：这应该是你看的東西多了，我都不知道这些。我觉得他人挺弱的，长得特没有艺术细胞，哈哈。

王：是啊，我就觉得他身上似乎没有热，问题关键是，他拿着一把枪到处开枪，这就更加幽默，所以说我觉得你这个片子有意思就在于，他拿着一把枪，你明白吗？不是老苏拿一把枪。

胡：对。你又提醒了我一下，其实当时不知道有这个象征性，到了后来，我觉得叫“三个火枪手”是最有观念性的，我拿个摄像机，我经常没拍上，老苏永远嘴里拿着个鸡巴说去操这操那个，史霖永远是拿那个枪打。

王：其实枪的隐喻性也是后来咱们才理解到的，好像到了二〇〇〇年之后的七八年才成为共识，就是一说到枪就跟男性生殖器有联系，你剪的那个时候，应该也有这个意识了吧？

胡：没有，根本没有这个意识。这个《男人》是老吴给起的，“三个火枪手”，那是一几年的时候我一个朋友说，我说你说这个太对了，这才是真正的名字，最能表达出这里头的东西。《男人》嘛也行，但还是书面语。

王：三个火枪手，各自拿着自己的枪，但都没用，是吧？

胡：对对对！都是无用的，就不知道往哪放。就瞎拍，瞎打鸟，瞎鸡巴嫖。

王：是，都拿着枪，但都无处使用，男性特征十足的人，却对于外部世界无能为力。由于你摄像机的位置和存在方式，也给人感觉特别不正经。但你们的关系建立得很好，包括你拿着机器重播老苏的画面去刺激他，他拿布去遮这个机器，可以说都是浑然天成的东西。但是解读起来都特有空间。你当时应该在生活中就是那个状态，对吧？

胡：找乐子，就是在一起实在太无聊，就是拍，找点拍的东西，让它能活下来。实在是，你旁边也

没女人——前面有个女人，和女人在一起就更无聊，男人在一起也无聊，但是无聊你做个片子也许就不无聊了，就是没事找事。

王：你还在镜头前和老苏一起讨论这个片子。你还在你的片子里面，说你自己脱肛。

胡：脱肛嘛，我觉得疾病暴露这个就正常，我暴露了别人，我首先把自己暴露了，其实拍摄的时候也给一个姿态，就是我拍老苏，我对你狠吧，我对我也狠啊。那时候唯一贩卖的就是一个坦诚。

王：你这个片子什么时候拍的啊？拍了多久？

胡：就拍了二十多天，二〇〇一年底，十二月拍的，拍到一月份，天天拍，过年前。

王：什么时候剪出来的？

胡：过年后就买了个电脑，跟我哥要了两千美金，那时候等于两万块钱了，我哥在美国，我说给我点钱，我做个片子。然后给了我。那时候我就剪，电脑还不会用呢。剪完了以后找贾樟柯，在那等了十天，最后没消息了。我没办法了，找宋永红给我介绍了吴文光，因为那时候我挺文艺青年的，最早那时候就已经看《芙蓉》了，什么《新潮》啊，都看，就是没看过片子。但是行为艺术这些都有，就知道吴文光、《现场》什么，《江湖》的笔记开始在《芙蓉》的连载。还有《艺术世界》，这几个杂志还挺好玩的。那时候就介绍老吴，我下午两点去的，然后看了，快到晚上了，我特别感谢老吴，纪录片后面的剪辑呈现是一个功夫。如果没有老吴的话，我这个就是一个废品。

老吴说，这个杂乱，乱七八糟，他说挺好的。因为他也没有发现过这样的东西，所以他说，你能不能剪得再有想象力一点，再好玩一点，他说了这个话，给我印象挺深的。那是六月份，然后我回去剪了一个月，好像是八月，那时候的字幕还都是时装字幕，就是右上角啊，左上角啊，一会出来一个，一会出来一个，你说话多了，满屏都是字幕。老吴一看，说牛逼，就应该是这样！老吴还是能教育年轻人啊，他说这个才是你们年轻人。他说有个电影节，咱们再用另外一种稍微规矩一点的。完了以后，把杨荔钠叫过去，我们吃了顿饭，他跟杨荔钠说我碰见一个奇才，拍得挺牛逼挺猛的，因为他觉得我二十多岁，然后跟我一聊，我三十三岁的，他说这个我舒服一点了，二十多岁就拍这——心里肯定不舒服，那我还拍什么？

二

王：咱们接着谈《家庭恐惧》，这个是从什么时候开始的？

胡：就是拍完《男人》以后，老苏就回家过年了，我也回家，拍了一些，不满意，我也不知道我想要拍什么，因为太近了，电影要远观，要有一个美学判断。我拍了没有感觉，但是拍下去试一试吧。

王：就是拍的时候主题就是明确的？也许应该是慢慢发展出来的主题，对吧？

胡：应该也不是，主要是感觉这个美学不对，我过年暑假不是要回家吗？就觉得这很不电影，那我就是想着它不电影，顺手每次去了就拍，我看看它什么样儿，拍着拍着就发现，它是可以成片的。

王：你这个《家庭恐惧》就是从二〇〇二年过年开始拍，拍了几年？

胡：成片是到二〇〇九年，拍了七八年。

王：《家庭恐惧》的节奏很有特点，人物慢慢一点点展开，每个阶段，有一个侧重讲述的人物，开始的时候剪那个姐姐，她的儿子，然后你的父亲，母亲，从美国来的哥哥，从美国来的姐姐，最后是你外甥女月月的故事也试图展开，她好像没啥故事，她一直是沉默的，但是你用字幕将她的名字给展示出来，强调了她的存在，就能感觉到，她就是家庭里一个沉默的观察者。你的这个结构是怎么形成的？

胡：我发现我有一个问题，这个片子还是比较线性，其实我的片子构成，是按照一个情绪的东西来做，好像还是类似于诗歌。我之前了解过，歌是在诗的前面，韵律我还是挺在意的，我是用韵律来构成。对我来说好像没有结构这个概念，如果说我的结构是韵律？但不知道怎么大家有一种结构的感觉。我只不过感觉我要有一种韵律，平衡。

王：七八年的时间，总体上还是按时间顺序展开的，一年一年的。这个过程中人物的故事也慢慢展开了，有些时候这个结构是生活本身的结构，但是你要去找到它，你还是要有所作为，去设定，只是有些时候可能不是那么自觉地去做。

胡：完全无知的，我看丛峰剪片子，他在白板上画人物的关系，我一看到他就笑他，因为我觉得电影就是一种流淌的东西，如果结构和景色很生硬地在一起，是看不下去的。但我恬不知耻地说，也许我是有这个潜质的，我不知道为什么莫名其妙地就能剪在一块，我做过类似于这方面的实验，我给艾未未剪辑，250小时的素材量，我能给他剪成二十来分钟，这说明一个问题，通过我自己的感觉，我的叙事能力还是挺好的。

也许我的叙事性是一种抒情式的叙事性，因为我有情绪性在里头。我之前和在加拿大读电影的古涛导演说了一个词，我说我发现自己运用的好像是情绪逻辑，情绪逻辑就像女人一样，前后不搭界为什么能联系起来，但我觉得是情绪连接起来的。

王：这可能和你音乐的专业有关。现在谈谈《家庭恐惧》拍摄的过程？

胡：这个拍摄过程就是这样，一年一年地拍。

王：所有人都同意你拍？跟自己家人沟通起来是不是很容易？

胡：我拍的时候就像玩一样，就跟平时照相一样，他们根本就不会在意的，我有一种掩护能力。他们有的时候就不喜欢被我拍，但是我拍我爸妈，什么时候都可以的，因为好像我在那玩，一家老小，也应该说没当回事。我喜欢干的事情，就这样干下去，家人不反对的。后面我去武汉拍片的时候，我爸知道了，给我姐说，给他一万块钱，叫他去拍那个什么吧。他觉得这个是不务正业，但是莫名其妙，你是在认真做一件事情，他还是愿意的。

王：他理解你的行为吗？你要去拍了做成纪录片，他大概了解吧？

胡：不了解。我爸那一年去世，《家庭恐惧》去瑞士黑色电影节，我说我要出国参加电影节了，他们默默地感觉你能玩出国去，好像也行，但是他们也不觉得这是什么学术。

王：《家庭恐惧》，你给家人看过吗？

胡：没有，他们如果看了，这干嘛的？人能活下来就行了，不看这些伤痛的。吴文光有句话：在农村拍，在农村放。但我拍的东西叫家里人看，那绝对是很难受的。所以我觉得那种口号是不对的，私影像那个东西，每个人需要给自己一个定义，或者设定一个局部的范围，我觉得是这样的。

我哥其实知道我在拍，他没看，他也不想看；那个张超，就我家那个小男孩，他看过，他看过前面一部分，大学毕业了以后在我这看了一下，不知道他什么反应。应该是有感触，没说啥，因为他和他爸就不爱说话。他那么小的时候，他爸被我姐骂的，然后他就沉默，他爸拉着他，叫他站起来，站起来！站起来！站起来！现在我发现我喜欢这一段，这段像诗歌一样，我觉得诗歌就是一些重复的话。

王：你这个片子的确暴露了家人的一些性格弱点，这些东西在生活中存在是非常正常的，但放在电

影里，就会被放大。比如说你哥哥的那种世俗的言论，你姐姐在里头谈政治观点，在家里谈都无所谓，但是你一放出去，就是一个公共事件了。

胡：对。所以我不希望成为一个公共事件。

王：这也是很矛盾的事情。你哥哥他在谈那些话的时候，他知道你在拍他吧？他对纪录片是有自觉的吧？

胡：很多时候我放到后面，他就知道了，因为我是玩的心态，因为它不严肃，所以就特容易勾出别人的东西来。这就是我的私影像一个特征，因为它不正式。我一挑杆，纪录片就变成另外一个样子了。这就是 DV 的隐蔽性。

王：私影像，你觉得怎么定义它？就是暴露自己隐私的？或者说是拍摄自己的生活？

胡：《男人》还有一点暴露隐私，拍我家时就好像不是这个心态了。拍到后面慢慢发现就是每家都差不离，为什么不拍出来。其实没有什么隐私，说隐私是法律层面的隐私，如果真的可以不商业化，它就可以这么地表达出来。我觉得从这个方面，《四个春天》怎么能跟我比呢？你左弄右弄，煽情的东西其实挺无聊的。

王：对。

胡：我也煽情，它煽得还没有我狠。就是我的煽情不是为了煽情，其实是憎恨，乱七八糟一堆，因为生活本身就是这样。

王：其实《家庭恐惧》里面的人物结构和状态，很有展现中国精神结构和社会问题的潜力，父亲是这样的经历，当年应该也是黑五类，现在是这种思想，他跟你们谈政治，有点分裂。你哥是海归，代表另外的人群。

胡：对，他对国家是特别有责任感的，对中国是特别有感情的。我姐是纯美国人了，他丈夫就是一个美国人，中国就是嫁鸡随鸡嫁狗随狗，她观念上就是纯美国人的感觉。我又是这样的，单身。其实我拍到后面大概有点明白了，就是为什么不愿意结婚，是因为这个家庭的琐碎生活真的太乏味，太复杂了，我真的受不了。

王：你这个结尾很好，落在了你两个姐姐在讨论你为什么 not 结婚，片子的起承转合还是挺严整的。

胡：剪的时候我也不知道这个，王我说《家庭恐惧》这个名字挺好的，也是我对婚姻的恐惧嘛。说来说去这种家庭其实就是儒家那种东西。我应该属于自由主义一派吧，骨子里绝对就是白左，所以我痛恨白左。

王：家庭是一个大的结构。人都被放在一个关系里面，这个关系就非常麻烦，因为对于你来说，它不可控。每个人其实都有他的出发点，每个人可能都没有那么坏，或像别人指责的有那么大的缺点，但你一旦进入到这个结构里，这个矛盾可能就不可避免地出现了。就是说，中国家庭结构是一个很吓人的东西。

胡：我们家就是这种性格，每个人都认为自己不是坏人，其实也不是好人，就是性格使然，觉得说出心里话很重要，但是你伤了别人。我到现在也是这样，还是不愿说虚伪的话，说虚伪的话需要技术啊。

王：需要技术，需要牺牲。你要牺牲掉你的那个我，但那个时候你就会觉得很恶心，保持个性在一个家庭结构里，是很难的一个问题，所以很多人逃离了。而你这个拍摄好像都是在过年拍吧？拍了几次过年。

胡：大部分是过年，有两三段是暑假，还有国庆。

王：其实在很多家庭里面，过年不是祥和和祝福，是矛盾爆发的时候，一年过去了，大家开始总结一年，所以开始算账了。

胡：哈哈，是。再一个就是成人以后，我和我哥不能长待在一起。前年去青岛，呆一会就吵架，就是雄性不能在一起，在一起他就要争地盘，就开始吵架。我也不鸟他，他也不鸟我的。我是不爱争的，但是你要激怒我，我可是要闹翻天的。

王：你和你哥在家里，也是有结构性的问题。你哥比你大很多，他说他跟你是两代人，那两代人往往是长辈和下一辈的称呼，但其实你们是兄弟。这个关系就是拧巴的，我发现他对你的观点似乎是带着蔑视、高高在上的，是一种非常权威化的方式在跟你对话，你不觉得吗？

胡：这就是儒家的东西，但我凭什么听你的？虽然他表面上表达的好像很民主啊，实际上骨子里就是传统里出来的。他不把你当朋友的，我是把他当朋友的，但我蔑视权威，你别跟我说这个那个，我不明白，我过我自己的，过差了你别管我。

王：最后结尾也很有象征性的，是家庭结构带来的，你两个姐姐完全观点不一样，都是出于对你爱和关心，都是真爱，但是每个人的价值观不一样，大姐觉得你必须结婚才幸福，三姐觉得你凭什么干预他的选择，所以冲突在所难免。这又是一个家庭结构的东西。

胡：对，她们与其说爱我，不如说她们更爱她们爱我的那种方式。每个人都在抒他们的情。这个片子应该叫《抒情艺术》。

王：观影的时候观众对这个片子的普遍反应是什么啊？

胡：这个片和以前的不一样，一看完了以后，大家都说自己家里，对家里开始进行批判。艺术层面就不再谈了。这个片子，它的方式还是老套了很多。

王：通过你的描述，《家庭恐惧》还是激起了观众反思自己家庭的一种愿望。

胡：就是这个东西。我们再说从第一个片子说到《家庭恐惧》，其实我拍纪录片的影响某些方面应该是和侯孝贤他们有关系的，和台湾新浪潮有关系，拍摄自己的身边，家庭就是其中的一部分，《童年往事》也是这样，只不过是翻拍，而我是记录。包括剪辑，崔卫平也说，我剪片子都像电视剧一样或者都像故事片那样剪，我其实特别不客观，剪不成王兵那样，我怎么剪都莫名其妙有一种戏剧性。因为我这个专业就是抒情性的，我是研究声乐的，我从小就唱歌，四五岁就领唱，你说的那种起承转合，有一种波浪那样的东西，那样的走向。

王：这是你固有的专业给你拍纪录片带来的，反过来纪录片带给你什么？

胡：现在剪片子就是反思以前，我在干嘛，怎么叫思维给转起来，就好像什么是艺术，古典艺术是什么，现代艺术是什么，是做了电影我才明白的，以前不明白，以前就是技术工人，技术工匠。现在因为搞了电影，我愿意关注社会，关注周围的审美倾向以及意识形态的流向。这好像比我的本专业更有意思，或者说它帮助了我的专业，我会站在一个史料上来分析我这个专业。我就分析这个声乐史它就是一部假声史。按照以前的思维是分析不到这个层面的。这需要一些哲学的东西。

通过拍片子，我发现审美是特别重要的，需要很多的理性思辨在里头的。没有理性思辨的话，那只能是第一炮，就打了一炮就完了。

王：我给你总结一下，纪录片让你更有历史意识、社会意识，其实你的纪录片也是在反思自己的生活，

你对自己的生活有了更强的分析和自觉性。其实拍纪录片还是对你的思维产生了很大的一个训练和拓展。

胡：对，还有独立的思想。颓废，我们在年轻的时候就体验了，我现在不太颓废，努力通过纪录片来挖掘点东西，思想不断地跃进，我觉得非常重要，因为艺术是思想史的一部分。

Qiu Jiongjiong: Playfulness is A Serious Matter

Interviewer: WANG Xiaolu 王小鲁 Translator: Xiang FAN 樊响

I met Qiu Jiongjiong (邱炯炯) at the AT Café in the 798 Art District (798 艺术区) on 24 July 2021. The conversation lasted exactly two hours. Qiu first studied painting, then made documentaries and is now making feature films. His first feature film, *A New Old Play* (椒麻堂会, 2021), has won the Jury Prize at the Locarno Film Festival.

Qiu Jiongjiong has made around five documentaries, but it is difficult to categorise his works within the independent documentary world. His ways of representing reality in his work are varied, which is also related to his talent and his background from a theatre family. His works often start with playfulness while representing reality. They show history with playfulness and ornate style, which then has a great appeal to the viewer. In this interview, I found him very insightful in thinking theories and fully self-aware of history, the present and his own film form and language. It was very impressive that he is able to establish himself in the independent documentary world and yet shows his strong qualities as an artist.

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Wang: Your documentaries are different from the ones of many others, as you are particularly good at expressing your subjectivity. They are not conventional documentaries, and it is difficult to categorise them.

Qiu: I don't know how others are going to categorise them, but everything is natural and normal for me.

Wang: Of course, you're the auteur, and it's a natural process for you. I've also thought about your approach to documentary, and I think what you like to use most is a kind of montage of attraction, which is not often used in feature films nowadays. You put together various elements, many of which are not part of the narrative logic, such as a chicken and a sudden netting action, and you juxtapose them and then use the imagination to guide the audience to feel what you are doing.

Qiu: Yes, what you said is very systematic. I remember you mentioned this chicken scene a long time ago. In 2011, I published a picture book about the films that had been completed at that time, which included an article by you.

Wang: Right. Your form is very unique, and I think you're different from other directors. Documentaries usually emphasise the sense of seriousness, but yours do not. I feel like you prioritise playfulness.

Qiu: I think playfulness is a serious thing.

Wang: That sense of playfulness and formality are probably related to your family and your previous art education.

Qiu: I guess so. I express my soul via something lively and vigorous. If I don't use this way, my expression is meaningless. Documentation is related to film, and as an audio-visual vehicle, it definitely provides some fields for us to explore. Documentary is not just a matter of evidence or an accumulation of materials, but I also care a lot about how it is reconfigured by me in an interesting way ... I think being boring is really a big disaster. Even though it may sound provocative, I think this is my basic need, otherwise I would not have chosen film as a vehicle. It's also my attitude, grammatical benchmark, and standard. Once I've set it up, I'm definitely going to carry it out.

Wang: It's not just natural, but also about your self-awareness.

Qiu: Yes, I have to be self-aware.

Wang: We used to say that in many Chinese independent documentaries, it's hard to recognise the auteurs, as whoever makes them would be pretty similar, but your films have a very strong authorial signature, with obvious expressions of your attitude and outlook on life. In fact, the form you choose contains your evaluation of the subject matter or your outlook on life.

Qiu: That's right.

Wang: Can you talk about *The Moon Palace* (大酒楼, 2008) ? Or your grandfather's influence on you?

Qiu: My knowledge of opera, storytelling and art came from my grandfather, who brought these to me through a very humane way. I guess I 'carried it in my gene' and I spent the first ten years of my life forming a basic understanding of the world in such a special way. I always have the desire to tell and to express, and it is manifested naturally in my works, including paintings and films ... DV allowed me to finally

start creating films. In retrospect, *The Moon Palace* is like a plate of loose sand, a myriad of fragmented perceptions brought together with gusto; it is so special that it is certainly one of my bravest films.

Wang: *The Moon Palace* is a bit loose, and later your works become more narrative-focused. But that looseness is very rare and interesting. It's not a narrative-centred conventional film, and is probably one of your most experimental films.

Qiu: Yes, the first film is the most experimental in the sense that it used film to integrate a series of fragmented knowledge. My childhood coincided with the economic reform, with the lifting of the ban on a large number of domestic and foreign films. For example, I saw a series of Chaplin films for the first time in the theatre. When these films were shown to audiences at the time, my grandfather, as a famous local clown [in Chinese opera], would come on stage before the screening and give a little backstory on Chaplin ... It was a series of enlightenment like this that shaped my desire to express myself. So, I was really ambitious when I started filming *The Moon Palace*. This ambition can only appear in the first work. But the so-called experimentation was natural, not that I was going to break anything. I tried to construct something in a frenzied way.

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Wang: What was your experience like before using DV?

Qiu: Very early on, in 1997, I finished writing my second full-length screenplay, *Internal Medicine* (内科), about a child who visited his grandfather with a terminal illness, and what happens in the hospital during the ten days or so until the grandfather dies. It was also a really ambitious writing, with limited knowledge and experience, trying to express something big ... It was dull and childish, and I couldn't go back to that state. I wasn't able to reproduce the sense of unconsciousness that gets out of hand.

Wang: You were only twenty years old at the time. What was that screenplay trying to express?

Qiu: I wanted to express everything. In the 1980s, an enlightenment of a child's perception of life and death, family, friendship, love, sexual enlightenment, and at the same time, something historical, like the Cultural Revolution, like the changes in the 1980s.

Wang: And the Cultural Revolution?

Qiu: Yes. I wanted to put all in, including some of my observations about the adults, which was very ambitious and ... too unconscious. In fact, a lot of unconsciousness is conscious, and it is that the dynamic thing you can't get hold of. It's ridiculous in many places and full of words that now seem unbearable to read. I finished the script at a time when my parents' restaurant was booming [the restaurant was the model for *The Moon Palace*], and I thought I'd get my dad to pay for it and shoot it first.

Wang: With what camera?

Qiu: The idea was to use 16mm and after consulting some friends, I thought it was feasible and I really wanted to experience making films. I came to Beijing in 1994 and a friend gave me a library card for the French Cultural Centre, which at the time was showing French films every Tuesday in the French school. The first time I saw a complete film exhibition was for the French documentary filmmaker Raymond Depardon, and there were so many visual expressions in these films which enlightened me. As I fell in love with them, then I wrote some short scripts myself. *Internal Medicine* was relatively complete, and I wanted to make it, and tried and get some money from my father first.

Wang: What was your attitude towards the Cultural Revolution when you were twenty years old?

Qiu: My parents were quite disgusted by those things. When I was a kid, we watched films such as *Hibiscus Town* (芙蓉镇, dir. Xie Jin 谢晋, 1986) .

Wang: In fact, the attitude of the whole society towards the Cultural Revolution in that era was very clear.

Qiu: And it was quite strong. The victims were reflecting, and some of the perpetrators were reflecting too, because we knew that the Cultural Revolution was bad anyway. We had some comic books at home, about criticism of the Cultural Revolution. I remember one of them was called *Sticks and Hats* (棍子和帽子) , which of course used a kind of big-character poster (大字报) to defeat the Gang of Four (四人帮) . At that time, I was trying to write about several generations of people and all the things that that era brought to them, which was the aspect I wanted to cover ... I was very ambitious.

Wang: Yes, you have a huge structure, and this kind of concern has been there for a long time.

Qiu: It was huge. My dad read the script of *Internal Medicine* and thought it wasn't good enough (I really

don't think it is now). But seeing that I was really persistent, he introduced me to his hometown friend from Leshan in Beijing, Wu Ziniu (吴子牛) , and put us in touch. I then showed the script to Wu, who read it and suggested me making it in a low-budget way. He also suggested that I should go to a shopping mall in Gongzhu Fen, where the first Panasonic DV cameras was sold. It was just a small handheld for over 10,000 yuan. Anyway, I went to see it excitedly...

Wang: In 1997?

Qiu: Yes.

Qiu: I took the bus there, and then I remembered it. At that time, I started to reflect on the fact that I had been working on my art in Beijing for several years. Although my parents were sponsoring me, I should first of all do my most confident and experienced work in painting, at least to support myself with paintings, and then build up the rest slowly. After considering it carefully, I devoted myself to painting. A few years later, I was able to support myself with my paintings, and then after another few years, I started to have some savings. So, when the Sony 1080i came out, which is interlaced video quality, what I call 'HD 2', I bought one.

Wang: Which year was that?

Qiu: 2006. I didn't mean to make a documentary about a restaurant when I made *The Moon Palace* in the first place. I wrote a short script about some children with cholesterol issues, an indoor drama. Our family restaurant had a sauna that hadn't been rented out for a while, so I called my dad to ask if the sauna was still there as the setting was really interesting. My dad said that the sauna wasn't rented out and he is planning to stop doing the restaurant business, as it couldn't last any longer. I thought, why not just go back and shoot the restaurant. Then I wrote a plot outline overnight, including adding an animation. It was about a guy falling asleep inside the guest room of the restaurant, while a cartoon is playing on the TV – the story of a rabbit who loses its background [my family restaurant is called *Guang Han Gong*], with a dialectic advert in between. I don't know if you watched *The Moon Palace* on DVD or not, but there are some clips included there that didn't make into the finished film, including a short silent film about a camera that wakes up with a hangover and keeps clicking the shutter furiously in the restaurant in the morning mist, taking pictures of the cleaners, the security guards, and all corners of the restaurant ... Finally, it was so exhausted that it fell down the hillside opposite the restaurant. That's the story, very wild.

Wang: And then you decided that you would like make a documentary about the restaurant, right?

Qiu: Yes, but I planned to do a lot of re-enactments, but then there were very few re-enactments in the film. In the shot-reverse-shot part, when the question is being asked, it is a re-enactment, and when it is being answered, it is record, just like that.

Wang: You filmed around 2006 and 2007, and this form was still a relatively new thing at the time.

Qiu: The reviews were very polarised at the time.

Wang: You showed it in Nanjing [at the China Independent Film Festival 中国独立影像年度展] didn't you?

Qiu: It was quite a disaster in Nanjing, there was no Q&A and no moderator. It was in a classroom and a TV was hung there to show it. I didn't say anything after the screening. I was not familiar with that circle.

Wang: It has to do with the way Nanjing was organised back then.

Qiu: Yes, later on my films such as *My Mother's Rhapsody* (萱堂闲话录 , 2012) became were quite popular in Nanjing, but the organisers didn't arrange a moderator for me. I didn't care. Most of the audience knew me and liked the film, and the atmosphere was very lively. The discussion of *My Mother's Rhapsody* was particularly good.

Wang: There is something very romantic and relaxed in *The Moon Palace*, because the people you filmed, especially your father, has a quite complete world view. He explains what this wine is all about, saying that life can't just be about eating two tael of rice and some meat, it has to be catalysed by wine. There is an attitude he has towards life here. I always liked this film. It was your first film by DV, wasn't it?

Qiu: Right. This camera was used until the end of filming to the *My Mother's Rhapsody*. It shot five films in total.

Wang: I noticed that almost all your documentaries are in black and white.

Qiu: The image quality at that time was not good. I grew up watching silent films and the power of that kind

of film was important for me. Same as 'distancing' (间离), which is a basic technique of expression and narrative on stage. Sometimes when you turn the footage, which seems to have no cinematic quality, into black and white, it enables a creative pathway. You distance it, and then the context feels right.

Wang: Given the technical conditions back then, turning it into black and white was a very convenient way to make it more cinematic.

Qiu: Yes.

Wang: Back then, the relationship between DV and life was different from the one between film and life. It was too much like life; even if it was rough, it was the kind of roughness of life. When you turned it into black and white, it suddenly became cinematic. That's how 'distancing' worked and cinematizing itself is about 'distancing'.

Qiu: That's right.

Wang: Which film comes after *The Moon Palace*?

Qiu: *Ode to Joe* (彩排记, 2008) .

Wang: Although *Ode to Joe* is more narrative-focused, it also continues the characteristics of your last film. The film is very liberal, with a kind of crossover and a natural sense of humour. What impressed me most when I watched it was that you suddenly inserted a shot of netting during the rehearsal process, which is also your kind of unique cinematic language.

Qiu: Yes. First of all, this is certainly not pre-established. It's just an action of netting during shooting. How can I reflect its nature? It's built up in the editing, based on a limited amount of footage. It's a bit passive, but also prompting my creative idea. Speaking of 'netting', I added a shot of a fisherman casting a net into the film.

Wang: I understood this shot of netting as an expression of 'fuck it'.

Qiu: If it was all made on purpose, there wouldn't necessarily become such a thing. The footage itself brings me limitations, but I found some inspirations coming out of the limitations.

Wang: That's typical montage of attractions, that is, having nothing to do with this, and suddenly adding in.

Qiu: Montage of attractions is still an active grammar, right? So much of it is symbolic, with implications. I think it's more intuitive, and the intuition comes from a conditioned limit.

Wang: Why did you have to use it in the film?

Qiu: I just watched it over and over again ... When the presenter talks about that Director of Culture and it's then followed by a shot of a flock of sheep crossing a bridge. I think it a bit implausible saying that is a symbol. It was the repeated viewings of the limited footage that brought me some mysterious revelation.

Wang: Actually, the netting is certainly not a symbol. I think it is just a very similar gesture.

Qiu: I like the way you describe it, just 'fuck it'.

Wang: It's a very intuitive feeling, but intuition can sometimes be rationally analysed, including why we laugh and why it has a witty effect. Or, your attitude of cutting unrelated things together makes it looks like you don't care, so that's particularly funny. In tracing a family's history, you have this really unexpected way of doing it.

Qiu: In that case, there are some of the integrations. For example, the chicken scene in *My Mother's Rhapsody*, is a little more active, conscious, and explicit. But *Ode to Joe* is very ambiguous, carefree and funny.

Wang: It's just carefree. The speaker is very funny. During the rehearsal, he is joking and you suddenly add the shot, which is also completely out of order and breaking the rules. *Ode to Joe* is about a rehearsal of a performance that paid tribute to your grandfather. What is the name of the playhouse that existed since the Republic of China?

Qiu: The New and New (新又新) .

Wang: The New and New, new life, very much from back in the day. The old people in those playhouses you filmed were all really expressive. Is Sichuan opera inherently quite comedic?

Qiu: It's more grounded. The relationship between onstage and offstage is blurred, and once you're in that career, it becomes your natural state. Most of the old artists in the Republic of China were not very educated. They learned their skills from their teacher, and the skills were internalised through their memories – body memories and childhood shadows, such as being beaten and starved—and these things became fully internalised and implemented in their minds and souls. So, it's not the same as the professionals we see now. The latter may live in a different state. But for these old artists, there is basically no difference between onstage and offstage.

Wang: That means that their working state will continue in their personal life, and if they don't do that action, they might not be able to express it, so they have to use that action to let it out. After that, your next film is *A Portrait of Mr. Huang* (黄老老拍案, 2010), right?

Qiu: Right.

Wang: This one is also very distinctive. It is an oral history, but it is not social criticism or historical memory; it is just storytelling.

Qiu: Yes. I then did a trilogy of oral history, and this should be counted the first one. I shot the footage for *A Portrait of Mr. Huang* when I was filming *The Moon Palace*.

Wang: Your approach to oral history is different from others. The most peculiar thing about *A Portrait of Mr. Huang* is that the narrator is like an ancient storyteller. This film shares the sheer excitement of the barefoot doctor being killed and her flesh being sold by the murderer and given to relatives – in short, she was being shared by everyone, emphasising that thrill and the playfulness in the legend.

Qiu: Yes, only to the point, but not exploring it any deeper. *A Portrait of Mr. Huang* is not a drama, it has something to do with time. This is very much like a replica of my state as a child: I wake up from a rattan mat on a hot afternoon, the cicadas were chirping like crazy; I was eating a watermelon, listening to the adults talking about something, and from time to time, I could have some kind of momentary resonance with them at a certain point, or maybe it's also a kind of thriller. It's not a cinematic thriller, it's actually a story about time, the day, heat, death, and the universe, told in a bland, lazy, and disorienting tone. I wanted to create an atmosphere, express a state of being and consciously plot it, like a homely lunchtime show.

Wang: It conveys more of an excitement to the audience anyway, and your connotations stop there. But it might have other meanings for you personally.

Qiu: I especially wanted to be frank and boring, it's particularly sincere, but not real. That's why I quite like *A Portrait of Mr. Huang*, it's ambiguous enough. *Ode to Joe* still makes some sense, and it's easier for people to find some empathy on this topic; *A Portrait of Mr. Huang* might make people feel speechless. It's somewhat similar to some of the moments in *The Moon Palace*, but I had more self-awareness making the former, while for *The Moon Palace*, I was unconsciously greedy, too excited on my debut.

Wang: It is exciting, but after watching it, we don't know what to say.

Qiu: The mind goes blank.

Wang: I wonder what the point of it is?

Qiu: Right.

Wang: Especially given it's a documentary. How are you going to place this within the field of documentary? It's just torturous.

Qiu: Yeah, haha.

3

Wang: By the time of *Madame* (姑奶奶, 2010) and *My Mother's Rhapsody*, your works become more and more narrative-focused, especially in *Madame*, with a lot of close-ups of his face but only a few outside scenes. Did you interview him inside his home?

Qiu: Yes, the scene with the lilies and the costumes was shot at his place and the other was at mine. Just two interviews. We had known each other for two years before that and I knew all their stories. I had a special synopsis and I asked him to tell me about his story.

Wang: How did you meet him?

Qiu: In 2008, a friend brought me to a bar called Fa Yu on Sanlitun South Street, as we heard that he was a very interesting singer there. It didn't take long for us to become friends, and we went to see him perform quite often, and he would come to our place to play together, and that was it. There was actually another filmmaker filming him at the time. I didn't want to do it because I usually filmed people I knew well, whom I had at least thirty years of contact with, with a shared life history, and it was so comfortable that only I could film them. But with him, there were too many points that could be used as 'topics', and I'm against seeking out something strange or bizarre to create a heated topic.

Wang: You don't think it's superior.

Qiu: Anyway, I wasn't going to initiate that. But after two years, I was sure that he was an interesting person and that we were comfortable with each other, so I decided to start. Auteur film for me is like picking up a pen and writing. There were various platforms for independent films, and through them, the work reached the audience and I met a lot of people with shared interest. Considering it a new approach or a new ecology, as I had already started my creative trajectory through my previous works, I felt the need to...

Wang: Change independent cinema.

Qiu: It's not about changing independent cinema, just changing cinema.

Wang: You've learned from so many works, and you've developed a new idea.

Qiu: First of all, I understand the irreplaceable creativity of auteur film in using the camera as a pen as a personal approach. Going back to *Madame*, it only took two days to film his interview. Then he switched to perform in a Thai restaurant in the East Second Ring Road, and I followed him there a few times, plus two days of interviews. I edited it within a week, very quickly, because I knew him well enough.

Wang: How many days did you shoot in total?

Qiu: Two days of interviews. He played every Tuesday, so only once a week filming his live performance, for about two months on and off. We filmed eight times or so, not a lot of footage.

Wang: So the shot of him singing is indeed his live performance on stage? But we couldn't feel the audience down there.

Qiu: Yes, there were non-diegetic sounds from the audience, which was recorded at the time. Panning the camera towards the audience was not something I wanted to do, and a lot of people would probably have shot the audience back. The first time showing this film, I was asked why I didn't film the audience. I said it was like painting, to focus on the state of the person within the frame, and I put a lot of emphasis on this frame imagery, on the 'gaze' of the portrait. His portrait is expressive enough so I wouldn't try to add something else. So, I keep it pure, even in an extreme way.

Wang: It's about not diluting the strong character, so one of the strong feelings I had when I watched it was that your works were very loose before, but in this one, you seem to be forcing yourself to concentrate and the camera is placed still in that place without filming the audience. Maybe another reason is that it's a bit rude to film to the audience?

Qiu: There was nothing rude about it, most of those people were familiar faces and knew I was filming him. There was another crew filming at the time and a female cinematographer who came over every week, but the director didn't seem to be there.

Wang: You did all by yourself? And no boom pole?

Qiu: No, I just had a simple camera with a directional microphone, so from the live sound, you can tell that the distance is sometimes not very clear.

Wang: Filming is actually like this; this person is able to open up to you and agree with you, which means that they like to talk to you. But some people are like peacocks, no matter how you shoot them, they just never open their screen. I think when you shot him, he opened his screen. He was willing to open to you.

Qiu: Speaking of the metaphor of the peacock, I certainly did not induce him to express anything, using like a handkerchief or whatever. In a sense maybe I am also a kind of bird. Both parties are an animal and will give off an effective message between them.

Wang: I meant that he could open up to you, not that you tried to induce him. It's your aura as a person, your state, or your characteristics as a person, that he accepted.

Qiu: I think so, he really opened up to me. I think the way of communication may be different between

people who share a sense of trust ... For example, there is a section of the Jing Yun drum (京韵大鼓) *Tan Qing Wen* (探晴雯) , sometimes he only sang a few lines on stage without music only if I was there, or we talked about the Bai Pai drum (白派大鼓) in private, because I am a big fan of traditional performing arts.

Wang: He sang it specifically for you? Sang at your place?

Qiu: It was filmed at my place, but it wasn't specifically for me, it was for the camera. But I'm certain that I'm the only one who would make him sing the drum on camera, it's a kind of 'comfort' with mutual understanding.

Wang: Why did he commit suicide?

Qiu: Depression. He was extremely insecure and it's something you can't control, especially with depression. This upset me a lot, not only for the fact that I lost a friend but also that my film drew more attention through this event, which, given my own understanding of documentaries, is the last thing I want to see.

Wang: You are a very kind person. In fact, I think it's good that he systematically released himself to you, including his performance arts, talent, and his make-up skills, all of it. Of course, I don't know if it still meant anything to him because he passed away.

Qiu: Yeah, this is pretty vapid.

Wang: Although he went to another world, he got so high and released in your work. A lot of viewers really like him, right?

Qiu: Yes. It has been a long time and it's very complicated. My ultimate understanding of this film came after his suicide, because it was so sudden and all those processes that should have gradually developed some depths were gone. At that time, I still wanted to do another film of *Madame 2*, ten years later, when he was fifty, and then another film *Madame 3* when he was seventy ... Originally, this was the plan, and he was very happy to hear it, and I said that the next time, let's make a silent film.

Wang: He didn't see the film?

Qiu: He did, but he didn't think he was filmed beautifully.

Wang: Is that after screening it in public? Did he know about the [audience] feedback?

Qiu: Sometimes I told him the great feedback and he was happy. But he already had a relapse of depression.

Wang: Did he jump from a building?

Qiu: No, he hung himself.

Wang: In the most traditional way.

Qiu: A very traditional, resentful way.

Wang: Were you able to get into his world when you filmed him? Could you understand him?

Qiu: I definitely could. I approached him and I was impressed by him, not really from his gender practice, but that he was an interesting person. I don't look up or down to you because you're different or similar, it's about you as a person.

Wang: I'm not stressing that his gender identity is difficult to understand. You mean his life, playfulness, and the other aspects of his character.

Qiu: That's why I shot him. Interesting guy, although he's too funny for this world to understand him.

Wang: For me, gender and playfulness are less striking than his attitude towards life.

Qiu: He was frank to the extreme. If he did tell me that he wanted to kill himself, that this was something he couldn't do without, I personally felt that as a moral imperative I had to stop it, but I was faint-hearted. Do you know what I mean?

Wang: Depression is when the individual's spirit falls into a kind of side path. Everything is made out of our heart, and there can be all kinds of understandings of the world, all of which can be guided, and in fact it can be guided to an attitude of acceptance of life. Of course, there is a prerequisite: we are humanitarians, and

life is precious. In fact, there are various paths and he goes to that side path. You could drag him back. But dragging requires a very high level of skill.

Qiu: Yes, it's problematic if you don't have the skills. Can a set of sayings out of moral righteousness dismantle something deeper? He was cured once many years ago, and then it kept coming back, and he wasn't actually recovered at all. The slightest touch would trigger the mechanism in him, and he would fall into a new dilemma. If he got through this dilemma, it would pass; but if he didn't, it would be the end.

Wang: Repeatedly like this, so painful.

Qiu: He spoke so wisely, and then added such a note to his life at the end. I don't usually go to the post screening Q&A of this film. I think it's the most neat and mature film that I've made, but it has a different meaning now, and that meaning comes from Fan Qihui (樊其辉) himself. It seems that someone has put the film on the internet, but I haven't been bothered with it, as I believe he wanted more people to see it.

4

Wang: *My Mother's Rhapsody*, as I said, is all oral history, but you did it differently. There's a lot of traditional theatre stuff in your work, including something I often see in avant-garde theatre. For example, your chubby friend playing Cupid and waving an arrow of love around in a very casual way. I see this kind of thing all the time in Meng Jinghui's (孟京辉) plays. For example, in the recent *The Ballad of the Sad Café* (伤心咖啡馆之歌), a ring is made out of a tyre and everyone rolls the tyre around the stage, which implies the carelessness of love. This is very close to a certain style of yours, but I don't know if it's right or not.

Qiu: I've read the scripts by Ionesco and Beckett, but I rarely watched avant-garde plays. I remember seeing a domestic group in the late 1990s play *Waiting for Godot* (等待戈多) in a symbolic, pop way, and I was not impressed. The most fascinating character in the original script is Lucky, but they just used a mannequin, whose voices was a fast-played murmur, without any lines. Lucky has such amazing lines! I really think that a theatre of the absurd like *Waiting for Godot* has to rely on the power of the lines, so that the texture feels accurate, creating a real sense of tension. I don't have much of an idea. When I saw the Sichuan opera group in the past, they often used techniques representing some contemporary meanings, which I found very pleasant.

Wang: For example?

Qiu: For example, in a Sichuan opera highlight, a thief steals something in a shop, and the owner is sleeping upstairs. It's just these two people in the same frame, on stage together. It gradually builds connection between the two monologues, eventually becoming a dialogue. The two dimensions imbricate, which forms 'distancing'. In fact, the two characters don't even notice each other and it ended up becoming questions and answers. It's a very avant-garde technique, but it's in traditional opera. It's not that there's anything wrong with being avant-garde; it's just that I don't deliberately make the distinction.

Wang: When traditional Beijing Opera is taken to the West, they also see it very avant-garde: how could you just take a whip and imagine as riding a horse? I didn't mean that you're trying to imitate avant-garde theatre. I think there are a lot of similarities, and of course there can be such avant-garde things in traditional theatre as well. I've seen something in some places similar to your portrayal of Cupid as a fat man wandering around carelessly with a bow and arrow.

Qiu: Cupid is originally a prankster.

Wang: But your Cupid is not a prankster, your cupid is a fat man.

Qiu: Yes, fat man. It's my usual expression about body anxiety. The kid in *The Moon Palace* is played by this fat guy, who pretends to be innocent in bed, but is actually a middle-aged man, about my age.

Wang: In *The Moon Palace*, he is your representative to talk to your parents.

Qiu: Yeah, he is actually playing me. He's in all my films, and he plays Mao in *Mr. Zhang Believes* (痴, 2015) .

Wang: So the effect is particularly interesting, although it's in an oral style, you use various approaches, including the constant presence of that rooster. What did you come up with this?

Qiu: It was Chinese New Year when we were filming. Our neighbours, who had many relatives from the rural area, would bring and raise some chickens from the countryside every year to eat for the Chinese New Year. There were too many chickens and no space to raise them, so they were put in the nearby woods. Every day I saw so many vibrant chickens around. Usually, when I'm filming a character's oral narrative,

I focus on capturing some local footage, some empty shots or scenes related to the land where the main character lives. It was natural for me to shoot the chickens, just as there are a few empty scenes by the river in *Madame*, which are definitely related to the protagonist himself.

Wang: It has to do with his living environment.

Qiu: Yes, when I shot the chickens, I thought about how to use the images in the film, implicitly, developing a certain narrative rhythm, and they are always present in the film as rhythmical points.

Wang: It's the montage of attractions. In *October* (dir. Sergei Eisenstein and Grigori Aleksandrov, 1927), the peacock appears as soon as Kerensky appears, and the peacock represents his pride. You have a very similar form, but more complex.

Qiu: Mine is ambiguous.

Wang: It's more personified. That chicken gave me impression that sometimes it's very alert and sometimes it seems to be very grumpy.

Qiu: Yes. For the sequence about the Cultural Revolution, I found footage about a couple of wounded chickens after a fight. While editing, I put them in the Cultural Revolution sequence. In contrast, [the chickens] in the early days of the PRC are filmed in close-ups, with robust claws, shiny feathers, and divine crowns.

Wang: Another aspect about that film is the depth of your father's narration. He connects the characteristics of the period with marriage, pregnancy and childbirth, and the personality of the child, which also gives the audience a very special perspective. It also frequently shows the performances by the Leshan orchestra and choir.

Qiu: When I filmed my grandmother, my mother happened to be in a choir to rehearsal a performance for the Chinese New Year. After filming that day, my mother said, come and film us, take some close-ups, so we can spot if there's any issue with our voice and movement. I had the camera with me anyway, so when we went there. It felt particularly impressive; they had an enormous group. It's a simple joy for them, and some people like my mum wanted to do exercise there. There's a song in it where the Yi people sing about their new life, a very 'positive' song.

Wang: But when you use it, it feels weird.

Qiu: Well, it's weird. The footage is stunning, starting with Saint-Saëns' *The Carnival of the Animals*.

Wang: Saint-Saëns' *The Carnival of the Animals* is also a bit humorous.

Qiu: Very humorous.

Wang: I didn't feel it was very positive, but now you said that, I realised it was very positive.

Qiu: So in terms of editing, I actually took great care of the so-called rhetorical integration.

Wang: You created a certain dislocation.

Qiu: Yes, it's not about the sound and picture out of sync, but about the footage and the style of film out of sync.

Wang: The footage had a direction, but you used it in a way that it seems to be off-track. In fact, the orchestra is also something from the atmosphere and the background of his life. If you don't understand this, you will feel why all of a sudden these things appear.

Qiu: Some people thought I arranged the concert. There are a few misunderstandings in this film, for example, my grandmother was called out of the blue during the interview and her ring tone with the theme song 'Wave Running, Wave Flowing' from *The Bund* (上海滩 , 1980). Many people think I arranged it. But I didn't.

Wang: That scene was wonderful. I knew that it wasn't arranged, but it was too much of a coincidence. Your grandfather had a water burial, and your grandmother questioned the idea of water burial. And whenever she questioned it, this mobile phone rang, and then when she picked up, no one was there. It felt like your grandfather was calling. Then she questioned it again, saying that the water burial didn't seem right, and the phone came in again, with the tone 'wave running, wave flowing'. That was a very strange. But your grandmother herself is very humorous, wasn't she?

Qiu: My grandmother is humorous. She is in my narrative, with black and white, unconventional edit, making this lukewarm but raw film. I wanted to delicately portray one of the most overlooked, least-expressed, homely characters, and write a family epic about the loved ones around me. So, the first thing many people said after they watched *My Mother's Rhapsody* was, 'I'm going home to talk to my grandmother too.' The stories my father tells in the film create an intertextuality with my grandmother's narrative. I'm really obsessed with the format of *shuoshu* [说书, traditional storytelling performing arts], where the camera captures the person telling the story in their own dialect or spoken language. *My Mother's Rhapsody* is the final work in my 'chatterbox' trilogy. Many people like it and I'm also pleased with it. It's true that people may think it's a bland story; whose grandmother isn't like that? Everyone who went through that period would have a story like this. The point is: whose grandmother isn't like that? My grandmother is like your grandmother. I justify myself by this kind of storytelling and the ability to integrate materials, and see how far I can go.

Wang: Shall we talk about *Mr. Zhang Believes*? You said earlier that *My Mother's Rhapsody* is an epic, and *Mr. Zhang Believes* is an even bigger one. I didn't expect you to make it that way. How did you become interested in Zhang Xianchi?

Qiu: I have a lawyer friend who likes my films, and she is a close friend of Zhang Xianchi. She said that Hu Jie filmed Zhang Xianchi before, a short film of forty minutes.

My lawyer friend thought it must be very interesting if I could film Zhang Xianchi. As both of us are very interesting, she thought we were a good match and wanted to make it happen. Zhang Xianchi sent me an autobiography, *Gelagu Yi Shi* (格拉古轶事). I was ambitious about dealing with big history, and wanted to see how these things acted on me and how I could represent it via a film through my perceptions, so I did it. I hadn't done anything like this before and really wanted to make it big, to see how far I could go with a little bit of money, with some resources from back home, or my passion for film.

When I was making *My Mother's Rhapsody*, I understood documentaries much more vivid than fictions, but then I realised that part of my vividness actually came from the integration of the materials, and then translate this integration through the plot. Doing this was to find a certain possibility of cinematic expression.

After we started filming for a while, Zhang Xianchi was chatty with a great spirit in front of the camera, and he was eager to express himself, but occasionally we had some different understandings, for example, whether Hu Jie might be a better person to film him. Zhang is a person with a lot of topical stories and a

survivor in the storms of history, and this can work well with oral narration. However, I wanted to present him as a normal human by filming his everyday life, using the actions in his life to shape him. In *Mr. Zhang Believes*, I wanted to document more of his life, to show his character, to portray a lively human. So, our team often filmed trivial everyday life, which he might not find serious enough.

Wang: When you mentioned Hu Jie, I was thinking that you are completely different from him.

Qiu: Yes. I finished the documentary shooting in September 2012 and went back to Beijing. Within two weeks, I wrote a script of 30,000 words and fictionised it, combining documentary and fiction and intermixing the small characters and the big history. Then I went back to Zhang and read the script to him. He was almost blind at the time, and was quite pleased as I read and acted. I said, let's take a few extra shots, including those in which he sits in the mirror.

Wang: Did you interview him first and then find this form of theatrical re-enactment afterwards?

Qiu: I envisioned it long ago, but the opportunities discussed above accelerated its implement. There's no need to look for the theatrical form, as it's just inhabited by the conditions. We built a shed in a basketball court inside a friend of my dad's factory, and inside the shed, within a limited space, it definitely had to be adapted to the context through a minimalist, less realistic approach, and the sense of theatre naturally emerged.

Wang: I think the playfulness and humour you had before has been transformed here, because the subject matter changed. This man carries a kind of historical heaviness, and he was in prison for so many years. You transformed that kind of humour into a political satire here. I think it's very appropriate to make such a transformation.

Qiu: I told this story in quite a bit of details, and that time span is not very long, only twenty years from the 1930s to the 1950s. His autobiography doesn't end until the 1980s. Why did I focus on these two decades? I wrote so much about it because I wanted to give as many details as possible, so that even children could understand it.

Wang: One of the characteristics of your aesthetic style is that it quite convoluted and ornate. There are also many techniques, and you show off your skills, such as calligraphy, painting, theatre and even animation.

Qiu: But aren't these all very simple techniques?

Wang: You definitely have more than others. This film is more direct in politics than your other films.

Qiu: Right. But this wasn't my original intention. I wanted to present him as a human being, a mirror image of the audience, since we were all inhabited in the times. But I didn't miss the key events, such as the 'Crossing the River' scene, where I portrayed Mao and Chiang as characters in *er xian pan dao* (二仙盘道) [a traditional operatic form], which are still based on my system and don't betray my style. I wanted to tell people some common sense, which is my obsession.

Wang: Tell some common sense?

Qiu: Yes, for example, I wrote some of the subtitles in a quite moderate way, such as which year, which month and what happened. The five-and-a-half-hour version is particularly informative, showing the key events in the history based on archival documents.

Wang: Although you used re-enactment, the feature of documentary is still quite strong overall. But you used more fictional elements here than that in any of your previous documentaries. For example, there are three voices of Zhang Xianchi, one is your voice, one is from Zhang Laodong who played Zhang Xianchi, and there is also Zhang Xianchi's own voice.

Qiu: That's the dimensions we've been talking about: the various dimensions that shape a person, a real person. I wanted to make it a bit more multifaceted, and it's easier for the audience to understand it. Because spoken language is not the same as written language. From his own expression, other people's expression, and other people's re-enactment, you can find the contrast. This film has a lot of information in it. Sometimes I want to make a film that can generate a new understanding among the audience every time they watch it. That's probably my ambition.

邱炯炯：趣味性是一件很严肃的事情

王小鲁

与邱炯炯见面，是约在 798 艺术区 AT 咖啡馆，时间是二〇二一年的七月二十四日。谈了恰好两个小时。邱炯炯最早学习绘画，后来拍纪录片，现在拍剧情片，他的第一部剧情片《椒麻堂会》（2021）刚刚获得洛迦诺电影节的评委会大奖。

邱炯炯创作了五部左右纪录片作品，他在独立纪录片界往往难以归纳，其作品中展现出来的处理真实的手段和工具相当多，这与他的才华以及戏剧世家的渊源也有关系。同样是处理现实，他的作品往往是从趣味性入手，不仅仅展现了历史，还趣味盎然，显得繁复华丽，对观众于是有着很大的吸引力。此次访谈中，我发现他的理论思考十分周密，对于历史、当下以及自己的形式语言，都有着充分的自觉。能够在独立纪录片界立足，而又能够展现自己艺术家的强烈特质，这一点令人印象十分深刻。

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王小鲁（以下简称王）：你的纪录片跟很多人都不同，你特别擅长表达自己的主观，不是常规纪录片，怎么去归纳是有难度的。

邱炯炯（以下简称邱）：我不知道别人要怎么样归纳，一切对我来说很自然，很正常。

王：当然了，你是作者，对于你来说是一个自然而然的过程。你的纪录片的手法，我也思考过，我觉得你最喜欢使用的是一种杂耍蒙太奇，剧情片里面现在都不常用这种手法。就是你把各种元素放在一起，很多不是在这个叙事逻辑里面的画面，比如说一只鸡，忽然的一个撒网动作，你把它们穿插组合起来，然后通过联想也好，通过通感也好，来引导观众去感受你的东西。

邱：对，你说得非常系统，我记得你曾经很早就提到过鸡的这个话题，2011 年我出过一本关于当时已经完成的那些影片的“阶段性汇报”画册，上面有你的文章。

王：对。你的那个形式非常独特，我觉得你跟其他导演也不一样，作为一个纪录片，一般都是强调纪实的严肃性，但你的纪录不是，我感觉你是趣味性至上。

邱：我觉得趣味是一个特别严肃的事情，有趣是非常严肃的事情。

王：那种趣味性、形式感可能跟你的家庭和你之前的美术训练有关。

邱：应该是吧。活色生香的东西，应该就是我表达的灵魂的某种通道。我不用这种语法去做东西的话，我的表达没有意义。纪录和电影它是结合的，作为一个视听的载体的话，它肯定有它的自身提供给我们探索的一些领域，而不光是一个举证的问题，不光是材料的一个累积，我还很在乎它怎么被我反刍出来的这个过程，有趣……我觉得无趣真的是个大灾难。你说挑衅也好，或者说什么也好，反正我觉得这是我的基本需求，要不我不会选择电影这个载体。这同时也是我的态度，一个语法的基准，一个标准，这一旦我树立了，我肯定要去执行下去。

王：不仅仅是自然而然的，它还有你的一个自觉性在里面。

邱：嗯，必须自觉。

王：咱们过去常说中国独立纪录片，很多作品看不出作者，谁去拍都差不多，但是你的片子作者性很强，里面有你的明显的态度和人生观的表达。其实你选择的那些形式本身就包含了你对这个题材的评价，或者你的人生观在里面。

邱：对对。这是对的。

王：那么先谈一下《大酒楼》？或者先谈一下你爷爷对你的影响吗？

邱：本来我对戏曲、故事、艺术的认识就是来自我爷爷，通过一个特殊的充满人情味的方式给带来的，“胎里带”吧，人生的前十年就是通过如此特别的方式，形成了基本的对于世界的认识。讲述以及表达的欲望，我一直具备着，它自然地展现在作品里，绘画，电影……DV的推广让我终于开始了电影创作。回想起来，《大酒楼》如同一盘沉甸甸的散沙，无数零碎的感知被兴致勃勃地整合到一块儿，它太特别，肯定是我勇敢的一部电影。

王：《大酒楼》的确有点散，后来你的叙事就更集中了。但那个散很有味道，没见过。它不是一个常规电影，常规电影需要集中的叙事，《大酒楼》可能是你实验性最强的一个片子。

邱：对对，第一部片子的实验性最强，就是用影像整合一系列零碎的知识。我童年时赶上改革开放，大批电影解禁，国内的，国外的。当年剧团就有电影放映，比如我在剧团第一次看到了卓别林的一

系列电影。当时这些电影跟观众见面的时候，我爷爷作为当地的小丑名角，还会在映前上台，给大家普及一下卓别林的背景故事……就是类似这样一系列启蒙，形成了我的表达欲。所以，当我开始技术实操的时候，在我创作《大酒楼》的时候，我肯定是很贪婪的。这种贪婪只能出现在第一部里面。但是所谓的实验是天然的，而不是说我要去打破什么。我当时是在建构，在特别疯狂地建构。

二

王：DV创作之前你的经历是怎样的？

邱：很早的时候，九七年我就写完了我的第二个完整电影剧本，《内科》，讲一个小孩去看得了绝症的爷爷，到爷爷去世，这十来天里在医院发生的事儿。那也是一个特别贪婪的写作，有限的知识和经验，想去表达一些大东西……写得很笨拙，很幼稚，回不到那个状态了。那种无意识的失控的地方，模仿不了。

王：你那时候才二十岁。当时那个剧本是要表达什么呢？

邱：什么都想表达，表达八十年代，表达一个小朋友关于生死认知的一次启蒙，表达亲情，友谊，爱情，性启蒙，然后同时表达一些历史的东西，比如文革，比如八十年代的时局变化。

王：还有文革？

邱：有文革，我都想放进去，包括我对大人物的一些观察，就是野心不小，非常的贪婪而……太无意识。其实很多无意识它是有意识的，我觉得那个鲜活的东西你没法去掌握。它全靠一种电光火石，有的地方又很可笑，有的地方又充满了现在看来不忍直视的那些文字。我写完剧本的时候，正是我父母开的酒楼生意兴隆的时期（酒楼就是后来《大酒楼》的原型），然后我就想忽悠我爸出点钱，先把它拍了。

王：用什么拍？

邱：当时想的是用十六毫米，问过一些朋友，觉得这个事儿可行，我真的很想体验并开始电影的生产制作。我是九四年来的北京，有一次朋友给了我一张法国文化中心的借书证，当时法语学校每周二会放映法国的片子。我第一次看完整的一个影展就是法国纪录片导演德巴东的，这些片子里有很多当时让我觉得醍醐灌顶的影像表达，我真的就爱上了，然后自己也写一些小片段。《内科》是相对来说比较完整的，当时我就想拍，想先尝试从我父亲那儿忽悠点儿钱。

王：二十岁的时候对文革是什么样的态度？

邱：因为我父母都挺反感这些东西，而且小时候看电影，《芙蓉镇》那些……

王：其实那个年代社会整体对文革的反思态度是很明确的。

邱：而且蛮强烈的。当时的受害者在反思，一部分加害者也在反思，不管怎么说我们知道文革是不好的。当时家里面还有一些小人书，关于批判文革的。记忆中有一本好像叫《棍子和帽子》，当然它又是运用了一种大字报似的方式打倒四人帮。当时我是想写几代人，那个时代带给他们的种种，就是我想涵盖的面……我非常有野心。

王：对，你的架构还很庞大，这种关怀很早就有了。

邱：很庞大。我爸看了《内科》剧本，觉得写得不行（我现在觉得确实不行），但见我实在很执拗，就给我介绍了个朋友，我们乐山在北京的老乡，吴子牛，给我们联系了一下。我就把剧本给吴导看，他看了后建议我用一种低成本方式来拍。他还建议我去考察一下，在公主坟那儿有个商城，第一批松下 DV 机，就这么小的掌中宝。当时得卖一万多。反正我去看了，当时兴冲冲的……

王：一九九七年吗？

邱：九七年。

邱：我还专门坐公交过去看了，然后就记住了这个东西。当时我已经开始反省，到北京搞创作好几年了，虽然父母在资助我，我还是应该先把最有把握和经验的绘画创作给做踏实了，起码做到以画养画，其它再慢慢积累吧。仔细想了想，我便全身心地投入到绘画的创作当中去了。然后隔了几年，我就可以以画养画了，然后又隔了几年既可以养活自己，还有些余钱了，那会出了索尼的 1080i，就是隔行扫描的画质，我叫“二高清”。我买了一台。

王：那是哪一年？

邱：二〇〇六年。买了 DV 的时候，对电影也已经有些认识，拍《大酒楼》的时候我并不是说我要拍关于大酒楼的纪录片，我当时写了一个小短剧，就是关于几个胆固醇儿童的故事，一部室内剧。因为我们家酒楼有一个桑拿房，有一段时间是没有租出去的，我就打电话问我爸那桑拿房还在不在，

因为环境特别有意思，我爸说桑拿房没有租，酒楼的生意也打算不做了，坚持不下去了。我想，干脆回去拍大酒楼吧。然后我一晚上写了一篇类似于剧情大纲的东西，确实里边就编了很多，包括动画，就是一个人在大酒楼的客房里面睡着了，电视机里面播放着一个动画片——一只失去背景的兔子的故事（我家酒楼叫广寒宫），中间插播方言叫卖的广告。我不知道你看的《大酒楼》是不是 DVD，那里面还收录了一些没有剪进成片的片段，其中就有一段完整的小默片，讲的是一台成精的照相机，宿醉醒来，在晨雾中的大酒楼里不停地狂按快门，拍清洁工，拍保安，拍酒楼的各个角落……最后精疲力尽，从大酒楼对面风景如画的山坡上摔了下来。就这样一个故事，很野。

王：后来就确定要拍大酒楼的纪录片了吧？

邱：确定的，但是有搬演，当时想了很多搬演，但是后来成片搬演就是很少的一部分。反打的部分，问问题的这个部分是搬演，回答那个是记录，就这种，做了一些尝试。

王：你拍摄的时间是二〇〇六、〇七年，这种形式出现在当时，还是一个比较新颖的东西。

邱：当时评价非常两极。

王：你在南京（CIFF）放过是吗？

邱：南京放过，南京放那次挺惨的，Q&A都没有，没有主持人。我当时去的时候就在一个教室里边，挂了一个电视机在那儿放，放完以后我也没吭声就走了，我对这个圈子还很陌生。

王：这和南京当年的组织方式有关系。

邱：对，后来我的片子在南京蛮有观众缘的，包括《萱堂闲话录》，主办方也没给我安排主持人，但我无所谓了，观众大多认识我并且喜欢这片子，现场很热闹。《萱堂闲话录》那年交流效果特别好。

王：《大酒楼》里头有一种非常浪漫或者松弛的东西，因为你拍的人，尤其是你父亲，他其实是有他比较完整的世界观。他解释这个酒是咋回事，他说人生不能只是吃二两米，吃点儿肉，必须用酒来催化，这里有他对人生的一个态度。我一直挺喜欢你这个片子的，都是你第一台 DV 机拍的是吧？

邱：对。这台机子一直到拍完到《萱堂闲话录》，拍了五部。

王：我发现你所有的纪录片几乎都是用的黑白。

邱：那会儿的机子的成像成色都不好，我从小看默片，那种影像的力量对我来说是一个需求。同时，间离对我来说也是需求，它是舞台上一个基本的表达手法，一个叙事的基本手法。有时候当你把看起来影像无感的素材拉到工程里边，然后转成黑白，它就有一条创作的通途，你间离了，那个语境就对了。

王：变成黑白是当年技术条件下，让它更电影化的一个很方便的一个方法。

邱：是。

王：当年的DV摄影跟生活的这个关系，跟胶片不一样，就太像生活了，哪怕糙，它也是那种生活的糙，你把它黑白了，就一下子电影化了，就间离了，电影化其实本身也是间离。

邱：没错。

王：《大酒楼》之后是哪个片子？

邱：《彩排记》。

王：《彩排记》虽然叙事更集中了，但也是继续延续你上一部的特点，作品都很自由，还有一种跨界性，一种天然的幽默感，看的时候印象最深的是你在彩排过程中，忽然插了一个撒网的镜头，这也算是你独有的一种语法。

邱：是的。首先这个语法肯定不是一个预设的语法，拍摄的时候只是一个撒网，我要如何体现它的有机性？这是在剪辑上建立起来的，根据有限的素材建立起来的，它有一定的被动性，也很催生人的创作意念。说道“撒网”，我在影片里就插入了一个渔夫撒网的镜头。

王：这个撒网镜头当时给我的感觉就是一种“去他妈的”的感觉。

邱：如果要主动预设，不一定有这样的一个东西。素材本身带给我局限，干脆从局限中划出来的一道道灵光。

王：所以那就是杂耍蒙太奇的典型特点，跟这个毫不相关，忽然插进来。

邱：杂耍蒙太奇还是一个主动的语法吧？好多东西它是有象征意义的，有影射的东西，它有些关系。我这个我觉得更加直觉，而且直觉是来自于一个条件的限制。

王：你那段为什么非要用进去呢？

邱：我就反复观看了……影片中，当主持人说到那个文化局长，然后插入了一群羊过桥的镜头，如果非要说它那是一个象征，我觉得有点儿硬了。那还是对有限素材的反复观看带给我的一些神秘启示。

王：其实你那个撒网倒肯定不是象征，甚至我就觉得它是很相似的一个动势，跟它很近。

邱：我就喜欢你这样去形容，就是“去他妈的”。

王：就是一种很直觉性的感触，但是直觉有些时候它也可以理性化来分析的，我们为什么会笑，它为什么会产生诙谐的效果。或者说，你那种将不相关的东西剪在一起的态度，让人觉得你特别不在乎，所以说就特别有趣。同样在梳理一个家庭的历史，你的这种方式真是令人意想不到的。

邱：这么说的话，有些整合，比如在《萱堂闲话录》里面的那些鸡的镜头，就显得更加的主动点儿，更有意识，更加清晰。但是《彩排记》那个杂耍非常暧昧，非常混不吝地有趣。

王：就是混不吝，那讲话的人就是很滑稽，因为是彩排，他也在调侃，你忽然加的那个镜头，也是完全不按章法来，打破章法。《彩排记》是悼念你爷爷的一个演出的一个彩排，那个民国就有的剧社叫什么名字？

邱：新又新。

王：新又新，新生活，很有当年的气息。你拍摄的那些剧社的老人们，又都特别有表现力，那种川剧是不是本身就喜剧性比较强？

邱：更加接地气吧，台上台下是模糊的，一旦你做了这个职业，它自然而然地就变成一个天然的状态，所谓“戏剧人”不是一个职业，而是一个人的状态。那些民国时期的老艺人大多没有什么文化，学艺都是口传心授，技巧通过他们的记忆——肌肉性记忆，童年的阴影，比如挨打啊，挨饿啊，使得这些东西完全内化并落实到心智和魂魄里了。所以它跟我们现在看到的那些职业人不一样。后者也许还可以存在另外一个状态。但这些老艺人台上台下基本上没有什么区别。

王：就是说，他的工作状态会延续到生活里面去，他如果不做那个动作，他可能表达不出来，他必须借助那个动作才能把它说出来。然后下一部就是《黄老老拍案》是吧？

邱：对。

王：这一部也非常有特点，它是口述史，但它不是社会批判，也不是历史记忆，它就是故事会。

邱：对对。我后来拍口述三部曲，这个应该算是第一部。《黄老老拍案》的素材是我拍大酒楼的时候拍的。

王：你的口述史方式就跟别人不一样。《黄老老拍案》最奇特，口述者就像古代说书人似的，这部片子分享给大家的是一种纯粹的刺激，赤脚医生被杀了，她的肉被杀人犯卖了，送给亲戚，总之被大家给分享了，强调那种惊悚和传奇中的趣味性。

邱：对，而且点到为止，没有深入的。黄老老说书不是戏剧，它跟时光有关系，这个很像是我在复刻小时候的某种状态，炎热的午后，从凉席上醒来，蝉在疯叫，我吃着西瓜，听到大人有一句没一句在聊一些事情，时不时会产生某种瞬间的精神抽搐，那种应该叫共鸣吧，可能也叫惊悚。可能那些信息对我来说是没用的，那种惊悚也如是，这不是电影化的惊悚，其实它是一个跟时间有关系，白日苍苍，天气炎热，死亡的，宇宙洪荒的，用一种淡然、慵懒、近乎失神的口吻讲出来。我想营造一个氛围，表达一种状态，并有意识地去编排，这是一台家常的午间节目。

王：反正传达给观众更多的是一种刺激性，你的内涵也就停在这儿了。但是对你个人来说可能有其他的意义。

邱：我特别想坦然地去无聊，它特别真切，不是真实，是真切。所以我蛮喜欢《黄老老拍案》的，足够暧昧，《彩排记》还有些意义了，大家可能更容易找到一些共情的东西，更容易切中某些话题；《黄老老》可能会让人失语，它跟《大酒楼》的一些片段有些相似，但是《黄老老》更加有意识，《大酒楼》是贪婪的无意识，慌不择路地在做，处女之夜太兴奋了。

王：它看着很刺激，大家看了很爽，酣畅淋漓，但看完了之后，不知道说什么。

邱：脑子一片空白。

王：不知道它的意义是什么？

邱：对对对。

王：尤其是它是一个纪录片，在纪录片领域，这个片子搁在那儿，你这要干嘛？就很折磨人。

邱：对，哈哈哈。

三

王：到《姑奶奶》、《萱堂闲话录》，你的叙事越来越集中，尤其《姑奶奶》，镜头主要怼在他脸上，外边的景也有，但都很少。你是在他家里面采访的吗？

邱：对，有百合花和服装的场景是他家，另外的是在我家。就采访过两次。之前我们认识两年了，他们的故事我都知道，我有专门的提要，我说你讲讲你的这个故事吧。

王：你是怎么认识这个人的？

邱：二〇〇八年的时候一个朋友带过去的，当时三里屯南街有一个酒吧叫法雨，听说他在那里的演唱特别有意思，我们就去看了。没过多长时间大家就成为了朋友，我们也老去看他表演，他也会到我们这里来玩儿，就这样。其实当时有导演在拍他。当时我不想拍，因为我拍的人物都是我熟悉的，起码和我有三十多年的接触史，一个共同的生活史，拍起来是无比自在的，就是只能我拍。但是他呢，被作为“话题”的点可能太多了，我骨子里是反对猎奇，不爱做话题的东西。

王：你觉得那个不高级。

邱：不管怎么说，我是不会主动去那么做。但经过两年接触后，自然而然的，我确定他就是一个有趣的人，我们在一起自在且家常，我决定动笔了。作者电影于我，就像拿起一支笔写作一样。当时各种独立电影的平台也在，通过这些平台，作品抵达观众，又认识了很多志同道合的朋友。一种新的方法也好，一种新的生态也好，加上我通过前几部作品已开启了我的创作序列，我觉得有必要去……

王：改变独立电影。

邱：不是改变独立电影，我就是改变电影。

王：你对这么多的作品都有所了解，有所接触，你产生了一种新的想法。

邱：首先我是认可作者电影把摄影机当笔来用，这种低碳的个人的方式有不可替代的创造力。说回《姑奶奶》，其实拍他的访谈也就用了两天。后来他改到东二环那边的一个泰餐馆演出，也是个酒吧，然后在那儿跟了他几次现场，加上两天的访谈，一礼拜剪出来，很快，因为足够了解。

王：一共拍了几天？

邱：访谈两天。他是每周二演出，所以一周只有一次现场，断断续续加起来有两个月，八次左右，素材不多。

王：就是他唱歌的镜头的确是在舞台上，就是在现场唱的。但是下面的观众，就没感觉到他们的存在。

邱：对，现场有观众画外声音，当时录下来的，作为氛围足够了。把镜头摇向观众不是我自己想要的，很多人也许都会反打一下现场观众。这个片子第一次放映，就有人问过我，为什么不拍观众呢？我说就像绘画一样，就是把人物状态集中在边框内进行刻画，我很强调这个边框意象，强调对肖像画的“凝视”。他的肖像足够有表现力，我不会去画蛇添足，全程保持这种纯粹、甚至极端的方式。

王：就是不要分散它，那个人物的造型有冲击力，所以我看的时候一个强烈的感觉就是你之前很散，但这个你好像是在强迫自己去集中，镜头就锁在那地方，对观众也不拍。可能还有一个就是对观众拍也不太礼貌是吧？

邱：没有什么不礼貌，那些人大多是熟脸儿，并且知道我在拍他。当时还有一个剧组在拍的，每周有个摄影的姑娘过来拍，导演似乎没在场。

王：这个片子就你一个人？也没举杆？

邱：不举杆，我就一个简单机带指向性话筒，所以你听声音现场感，那个远近有时候很模糊的。

王：拍摄其实是这样的，这个人他能够向你绽放，他可能也认同你，就是说他喜欢跟你聊，有的人跟孔雀似的，你怎么拍他，他不开屏，但我觉得你拍他，他就开了屏。他愿意向你释放。

邱：你说孔雀这个比喻的时候，我肯定不是在那儿诱导的，就是他能够产生释放的东西，手绢啊或者什么在诱导他，某种意义来说可能是，可能我也是一种鸟类或者怎么样。双方之间同样都是一种

动物，会散发出一种有效的信息。

王：我是说他能向你敞开，不是说你去诱导他。就是你这个人的气场，你的状态，或者说你这个人的特点，甚至你这个人的一种气质，他接受。

邱：应该是这样，他就是对我确实没有保留。但我觉得交流途径可能也不太一样，有信任感的人……比如说里面有一段京韵大鼓《探晴雯》，有时候我去了他偶尔才会在舞台上清唱几句，或者我们会私下聊聊白派大鼓，因为我是曲艺的重度爱好者。

王：他专门给你唱的？在你家唱的？

邱：我家拍的，但不是专门给我唱，是对镜头唱。但我可以说只有我才会想到让他在镜头唱大鼓，这就是某种了解后的“自在”吧。

王：这个姑奶奶最后为什么自杀？

邱：抑郁症，他极度没有安全感，这个东西你没法去把控，尤其抑郁症这个事儿。这是让我不太愉快的地方，除了我失去了一个朋友，还有我这个片子通过这个事件引发了更多关注度，以我自己对纪录片的认识，我最不喜欢见到这种局面。

王：你是一个很善良的人。其实我觉得也很欣慰的是，他在这儿系统地把他自己释放了，包括他的曲艺他的才艺，他向你展示了他的化妆术，全展示给你了。当然，我不知道这对他还有没有意义，因为他去世了。

邱：对对，这个东西很虚无。

王：我想，如果他只是去了另外一个地方的话，他又这么嗨地在你的作品里面释放了，我觉得应该是个好事儿。很多人看片子都很喜欢他。对吧？

邱：对。这个时间过得太久了，很复杂，这个事情。我对这个片子的终极认识，是来自于他自杀以后，因为这个事件很突然，所有的那些本来应该自然而然去深度感受的过程没了。当时我还想十年后，他到五十岁时再拍一部《姑奶奶2》，他七十了再拍一部《姑奶奶3》……本来是这个计划，他听了也很高兴，我说下一次拍就不要再讲话了，咱们拍个默片。

王：他没看到这个片子？

邱：看了，他觉得没把他拍得很美嘛。

王：就是你在公共场合放映之后，他知道这个反馈吗？

邱：我有时候说别人的反馈很棒，他会很开心。但他那会儿已经有抑郁症复发了。

王：自杀了。是跳楼？

邱：不是，是上吊。

王：用了一种最传统的方式。

邱：非常传统，非常嗔怨的一种方式。

王：你拍他的时候你能进入到他的世界吗？能理解他吗？

邱：我肯定理解。我接触他，我被他感染，还真不是来自于他的性别实践这些东西，而是他是一个有趣的人。我不会因为你是同或者异，我高看你一眼或者低看你一眼，而在于你人本身。

王：我倒不是强调他的性别意识难以理解，那都是其次了。你的意思是说他的人生和趣味，他其他方面的特征。

邱：那就是我拍他的原因啊。有趣的人，尽管有趣过头了，这个世界听不懂他的这些东西。

王：其实我看的这两个方面，性别和趣味是其次了，就是他的那一种生活的态度。

邱：生活的态度坦然到极致了。如果他真告诉我，他想要自杀，这个事情他不自杀不行了，我个人觉得作为道义上，我必须阻拦，但我是心虚的。你明白我的意思吗？

王：其实抑郁症就是个人的精神陷入到一种偏门里了，万物由心造，面对世界可以有各种认识，都可以引导，其实也可以把他引导到接受生命的态度上去。当然我们有个前提，我们是人道主义者，生命是可贵的，有这个前提。其实有各种门，他就走到那个偏门里去了。你可以把他拽回来。但是，

拽需要非常高的技术。

邱：对，如果没有技巧的话就很麻烦。出于道义的一套说辞，就可以瓦解某种切肤的东西吗？因为他在很多年前，就治愈过一次，后来翻来覆去的，其实根本就没有痊愈。稍微有一个小触碰，就会引发他的这套的机制，他又会陷入新的绝境。这个绝境过得去就过，过不去就终止了，就真的就了了。

王：反复，太痛苦了。

邱：而且他说得这么通透，活得这么通透，最后自己给自己又加了这么一个注脚。这部片子映后的Q&A我一般不会去的，我觉得这是我做得非常工整和成熟的一部片子，但是它现在有另外一番意义了，这个意义就来自于樊其辉本人。这个片子好像有人把它放网上了，我也没去管过，我觉得他是愿意让更多人看到的。

四

王：接下来就是《萱堂闲话录》，我说过，都是口述史，但让你搞得不一样。你的片子里头有很多传统剧场的东西，甚至有我在先锋剧场经常看到的那些东西。比如你那个胖胖的朋友扮演的丘比特，拿个爱情之箭摇摇晃晃很不正经的样子。我在孟京辉的戏剧里老是看到这种东西。比如最近《伤心咖啡馆之歌》里面用轮胎做成戒指，每个人都滚着那个轮胎在舞台上转，就是那种爱情的漫不经心。这个跟你的某种气质很接近，当然我不知道说得对不对。

邱：尤奈斯库、贝克特那些我是看剧本，我很少看先锋话剧。我记得九十年代末看过国内的一个团体，具体哪家忘了，他们演《等待戈多》，采用的是符号化的、波普的方式，我特别无感。原剧本中的那个最出彩的人物幸运儿，居然就用了一个人体塑胶模特，声音是用的快放的杂音，根本就没有了台词。幸运儿的台词多么令人惊艳啊，我真的觉得像《等待戈多》这样的荒诞戏剧，就得靠台词功力古典地表现，质感才准确感，才真正具有形式的张力。我没有太多的概念。我当年看川剧团的演出，他们会时常采用一些充满现代意味的手法，令我回想起来很受用。

王：比如？

邱：比如有一出川剧折子戏，一个小偷去店里偷东西，店主人在楼上睡觉，画面就是这两个人，在舞台上同框。两个人都在想事儿，于是你一句我一句地独白，渐渐，这些独白对接上了，最后竟然成了对话，两个维度的东西重合在一起了，这就是间离，其实两个人根本没有发现对方，最后变成了一问一答。这手法很先锋，但这也是传统戏曲里的。不是说先锋有什么问题，只是我没有刻意去

区分。

王：中国传统京剧拿到西方，它们也很先锋，怎么还能这样，拿一个鞭子就是一匹马了。我的意思并不是说你去模仿先锋戏剧，我是觉得有很多相似相通的地方，当然可能传统戏剧里面也有这样先锋的东西。你对于丘比特的塑造，我只能说在某些地方我也看到过类似的趣味，一个胖子拿着一个弓箭漫不经心地在那里闲逛。

邱：丘比特本来就是一个爱恶作剧的人，是个顽童。

王：但你这不是一个顽童，你的丘比特是一个胖子。

邱：对，胖子。这是我一贯关于肉身焦虑的表达，《大酒楼》里面那个小孩就是这胖子演的，他在床上装天真，其实是一个浮肿的中年人，跟我年纪差不多。

王：《大酒楼》里他代替了你来跟你父母对话。

邱：对，其实演的就是我。我所有片子他都在演，《痴》里面他演的毛。

王：所以这个效果就特别有意思，虽然是一个口述式，但是你用了很多各种各样的手段，包括那公鸡的不停地出现。你是怎么想的？

邱：因为拍摄的时候是春节，我们小区里的邻居，有很多农村里的亲戚，每年春节就会带一些乡下的土鸡来，边养边吃。土鸡太多了没地儿养，就放在楼下的树林里。我每天看着这么多雄赳赳的土鸡，生机勃勃，充满人情味儿。一般在拍摄人物口述的时候，我都会着重地去采集一些在地的影像素材，就是跟这个主人公生活的土壤有关的一些空镜或场面。所以我就自然而然要去拍鸡，就跟《姑奶奶》里面有几段护城河边的空镜，肯定跟主人公本身有关的。

王：跟他的环境有关，居住环境有关。

邱：对，拍鸡的时候我就会想，如何把它们形象运用在片子里，隐隐地，某种叙事的音乐性形成了，它们作为节奏点，作为气口，一直存在于片中。

王：这就是杂耍蒙太奇，《十月》，克伦斯基一出现的时候孔雀就出现了，有点儿相似，孔雀就代表了他的骄傲。你这个形式很相似，但更复杂。

邱：我是暧昧的。

王：就更通感。那个鸡给人的感觉就是，有时候很机警，有的时候好像很暴躁。

邱：对。说到文革的时候，最后一段鸡的镜头是我专门找的，几只因为打斗而负伤的鸡。剪辑的时候，我把它们放到文革的段落里。而建国初期则是采用明亮的大特写，健硕的爪子啊，油亮的羽毛啊，神气的鸡冠啊。

王：那个片子还有一点就是你父亲的讲述很有深度，他把这个时代的特征和夫妻感情、怀孕生育、孩子的性情都联系起来了，这也给予了观众一个很特别的视角。里面还频繁展示乐山管弦乐队、合唱团的表演。

邱：拍我奶奶那会儿，我妈正好就在一个合唱团里面唱歌，春节他们要团拜，表演节目。那天拍摄结束后，我妈说，你去拍拍我们，拍几个特写，我们看一下发音和动作的问题，反正我有机子嘛。去了以后感觉特别有阵仗，这人群太庞大了。这是他们的简单的快乐，像我妈就是为了去锻炼身体的。这里面有一首，是彝族人歌颂美好新生活，是一个很所谓“正面”的歌颂，都很正。

王：但是就让你一用，就感觉到怪里怪气的。

邱：嗯，自然怪里怪气。素材是很惊艳的，开始是圣桑的《动物狂想曲》。

王：圣桑的《动物狂想曲》也有点儿幽默感。

邱：非常幽默。

王：我当时没感受到很正，你这一说我才知道很正。

邱：所以就是说，在这个剪辑，这个所谓的修辞的整合方面，我其实非常用心。

王：你制造了某种错位。

邱：对，不是声画上的错位，而是素材和影片在气质上的错位。

王：那些素材本来有一个走向，让你一用，感觉它没走正道儿。其实这个管弦乐队也是他的生活气氛和生活背景中的东西。如果不了解这一点，就会感觉，怎么忽然来了这些东西。

邱：所以有人以为这场演唱会是我安排的。本片有几个容易引起误会的地方，比如我奶奶在访谈中突然来电话，她的电话铃声是《上海滩》的“浪奔，浪流”，很多人都以为这是我安排的，真的不是。

王：那个地方特精彩，我一看就知道不是安排的，但也太巧合了。你爷爷给水葬了，你奶奶在质疑这个水葬，每当质疑的时候，这个手机的声音就响了，然后接起来的时候又没有人，感觉像你爷爷打过来的，然后又质疑，说水葬好像不太对，接着电话又进来了，又是“浪奔，浪流”，这就是很奇怪的一个东西。但是你奶奶本身也很幽默对吧？

邱：我奶奶本身就幽默。她在我的叙事通道里，黑白的，痉挛式剪辑，成就了这部平淡又生猛片子。咋说呢？我想细腻地描绘一个最容易被忽略的，最不易表现的，最家常的人物，将身边亲人的生活历程书写成一部家长里短的史诗，所以《萱堂闲话录》很多人看了第一句话就是，回家去我也要找我奶奶或姥姥聊聊。我父亲在片中讲的那些故事，和我奶奶的讲述产生互文关系。我真的很执拗于说书这种形式，把镜头对着用自己的方言或口语来讲故事的人，《萱堂》是我“话癆三部曲”的终篇，喜欢的人不少，我自己也是满意的。确实大家会觉得这是一个寡淡的故事，谁奶奶不是这样的，只要经历过那个时代都会有这样的故事。关键就是：谁的奶奶不是这样的？我奶奶就是你奶奶。这个就是我自我证明的一个东西，这种讲述，这种整合材料的能力，看我能走多远。

王：下面我们重点谈下《痴》？你刚才说《萱堂》是个史诗，《痴》是更大的一个史诗，但没想到你是这么拍的。你怎么会对张先痴感兴趣呢？

邱：我有个律师朋友很喜欢我的片子，她跟张先痴是莫逆之交。她说之前胡杰拍过张先痴，一个四十分钟左右的短片。

律师朋友觉得我拍张先痴肯定非常有意思，张先痴很有趣，我也有趣，她觉得是天作之合，想要促成这个事儿。张先痴当时寄给我一本自传，《格拉古轶事》。我对大历史的表达充满野心，这些东西作用于我身上，我怎么把它折射出来，怎么把它成像，通过我的认识，所以就做了。我之前没有做过这样的东西，真的想把它做成一个大体量的，想用一点点钱，用一些家乡的资源，或者对电影的热情，看看能走多远。

当时在拍《萱堂》的时候，我的认识就是纪录确实比剧情要鲜活多了，但后来发现，我的鲜活其实一部分来自于对素材的整合，然后我就想把这个整合通过剧情进行转化，就做了这个事情，就是寻

找电影表达某种可能性。

开始拍了一段时间，张先痴在摄影机前聊得很生动，精神也很矍铄，他很想表达，但偶尔我们有一些不太一样的理解，比如说他可能更适合胡杰去拍他。他确实是一个很话题性的人，历史风暴中的幸存者，用口述是成立的。我反而想从他身上表现活生生的人的吃喝拉撒、衣食住行，用他生活里的动作来塑造这个人。《痴》的时候我是想纪录部分更多地拍他的生活，表现这个人的性格，塑造一个肉身。所以我们团队经常拍一些他家里的生活琐事，他可能觉得不够严肃。

王：你一说胡杰，我在想，你和他完全两样。

邱：是。二〇一二年九月份纪录部分拍完了，我回了北京。可能就俩礼拜，我写了一个三万字的剧本，把它故事化，纪录和剧情结合，把小人物和大历史掰开了揉碎了地讲，然后我又去找他，把剧本念给他听，老先生那时候几乎已经失明，我边念边演，他还挺高兴，或者放心了吧。我赶紧说补拍几个镜头，包括在镜子里面坐着那些都是。

王：是你先采访了他，采访完了之后又找到了这种舞台再现的形式？

邱：之前早有设想，只是通过上述的一些契机加快了落实。舞台形式不用去寻找，它就是条件所限。我们在我爸一个朋友的工厂内的篮球场搭了一个棚，在棚里面，方寸之间怎么玩，肯定得因地制宜地通过极简的、不那么现实的方式，舞台的意味自然就出现了。

王：我觉得你之前的趣味性和幽默，转到这儿进行了转换，因为题材换了，这个人身上携带着一种历史的沉重性、厚重性，他坐了那么多年牢，你其实把那种幽默到这里转化成政治讽刺剧了。这么一转换，我觉得还是很恰当的。

邱：这个故事我讲得蛮细的，那个时间跨度不大，也就只是从三十年代到五十年代二十年。他自传里的内容一直到八十年代才结束。为什么我只集中在这二十年，我写这么多，我就是想把这个东西掰开了揉碎了，小孩儿也能看懂。

王：你的美学风格有一个特点，就是比较繁复，或者说繁丽。手段也多，你也炫技，书法、绘画、戏剧甚至动画。

邱：但这不都是很朴素的手段吗？

王：你的手段肯定比别人多。这个片子跟你的其它片子比，政治更为直接。

邱：对。但我的初衷并不是因为这些，我想把他拉回到人，和观众互为镜像，大家都被时代裹挟着。但是很多关键性的大的事件也未缺席，比如“过江”那场，我将毛和蒋刻画成了二仙盘道，还是基于我的系统，没有背叛我的语法。我确实也想告诉一些人一些常识，我有这样一个情结。

王：告诉别人一些常识？

邱：对，比如说一些插卡（字幕卡）我就写得比较中规中矩，几几年几月，发生了什么，怎样怎样，尤其五个半小时版本里面写得非常翔实，整个历史的节点上都直接展现的是文献的东西。

王：虽然使用了搬演，但是整体来看纪录性或者纪录片的性质还是蛮强烈的。不过你这里头使用了很多虚构元素，比你以往任何纪录片都多，比如说里头张先痴的声音有三个，一个是你的声音，一个是张劳动扮演的张先痴，还有张先痴本人的声音。

邱：这就是我们说的那个维度，就是塑造人的各种维度，一个真实的人。我想把它的层面做得更多一些，就是观众更容易进去理解这个事情。因为口语的东西和书面的东西不一样的，他自己的表达，然后别人的表达，别人的搬演，你能够从里面找出反差。其实这个片子的确是有点信息轰炸，有时候我希望做一部片子，观众可以常看常新，这是野心吧。

LOCAL VIDEO CHRONICLES 影像地方志

Gu Tao: Breaking Out Between 'The Missing Father' and 'The Vanishing Ethnic Group'

顾桃：在“失踪”与“消失”之间突围

Interviewer: LIU Mengyun 刘盟赞 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Lin Xin: The Local History of a Small Northwestern Town

林鑫：一个西北小城的地方志

Interviewer: CHEN Hua 陈华 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

Gu Tao: Breaking Out Between ‘The Missing Father’ and ‘The Vanishing Ethnic Group’

LIU Mengyun 刘盟赞 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

That day we waited for the bus
That day I was chopping ice while waiting for the bus
That day I fell into an ice hole
That day I strained the ligaments in my right leg
The day Yuliang found a friend to bring us down the mountain in an SUV

Today I can only huddle at home
Looking out into the grey sky in Beijing
I look to the north
Remembering the poem of Haizi

From tomorrow onwards, I will be a happy man
Feeding horses
Chopping woods
Traveling around the world
From tomorrow onwards
I will care for food and vegetables
I have a house
Facing the sea
With spring flowers blossoming

On March 1, 2009, Gu Tao (顾桃) left Aoluguya (敖鲁古雅) once again to return to Beijing, and in his diary he wrote this poem. The sharp contrast between labouring in the northern countryside and idling in urban pigeon coops was eating away at the poet's heart. He could only pull in another more isolated poet as a boost to relieve his heart-filling sorrow. But how many more contrasts have been in existence in the deep heart of Gu Tao? My account of Gu Tao begins with the contrasts.

The Missing Father

Gu Tao's hometown is in Ali gul (阿里河), Hulunbuir Oroqen Banner (呼伦贝尔鄂伦春旗), Inner Mongolia (内蒙古), about eighteen hundred kilometres from Beijing. He is truly a young man from a small town. Like many young people from small towns, Gu Tao left home at the age of eighteen, travelled to Hohhot (呼和浩特) and then Beijing, going to school, taking a job, learning art, and doing photography. As is mentioned in his poem, he retreated into a mundane life in the grey city. It was not until he was thirty-one that he returned home with two thousand yuan. Having not been home for quite a few years, he felt for the first time that his father was already very old, and yet, his father, Gu Deqing (顾德清), was then only about sixty. What was the reason for Gu Tao's misperception at the moment that his father was very old? How old was 'very old'? Gu Tao was like Urashima Taro (浦岛太郎), who had just returned from the Dragon Palace, except that when he dared to open the box that the Dragon Lady had told him not to, it was his father instead of himself who aged.

The texture of time is sometimes not recognisable in terms of the age as an objective existence but lies in different spaces where the individual comes and goes, the result of urban and rural developments, like a hydroelectric waterfall. His geographic movements from Inner Mongolia (内蒙古) to Beijing and then from Beijing back home provide the original power for Gu Tao's narrative. Many years of life in the city let Gu Tao, who was tired of wandering, develop the curious perspective of an 'outsider', thus allowing him to recognise at first sight that 'father is getting old'. In fact, 'father being old' is like a mirror, reflecting his poetic sorrow over the passing of time. This also evokes his once suppressed curiosity towards father, and thus opens up the Pandora's box of his family myth. This is how the 'missing father' comes into play:

My family lived in Ali gul, Oroqen Banner in my childhood. My father, Gu Deqing, worked in the local cultural office. He was always 'missing' in my memory, and my mother seemed to know from where he 'disappeared', so she didn't look for him, but she would complain. Me and mother always bought and carried food on the bicycle and went to the vegetable fields in the autumn to buy potatoes, turnips, and cabbages for the winter; we also had to buy coal. I don't remember my father ever caught up in any of these male exertions. Once when father returned from an 'absence', we children sheepishly looked at him from the door: his hair was tousled, face covered with the stubble, his glasses' arms were wrapped with white tape, he looked gaunt, but his eyes were twinkling. Mother said that father had come back from the forest. With father was a big man in an animal-skin top and leather boots, and with a gun, which was the most impressive. He and father drank silently, one cup after another, their faces blushing and tears filling their eyes, not falling down though. Then

my father, got up, picked timid me up from behind the door and kissed me. His stubble tickled and hurt me, but I had nowhere to escape. I played with the gun of the big man in animal skin top; it was heavy and I thought it was a thing for men. (*A Diary: Life in Aoluguya* 《敖鲁古雅生活日记》)

The father Gu Deqing was so incredible in little Gu Tao's eyes: he was like a jungle adventurer in a fairy tale. 'I' could only 'timidly' peer at him while having to hold back my curiosity because he was a stranger. In addition, Gu Tao also said that as a child he was afraid of father, which was another factor that stole away his memories of his father from him:

As a child I was afraid of him in terms of my relationship with him. I was brought up to meet his requirements: despite the fact that children love to play and feel the world in their own ways he assigned me lots of tasks, both when he was missing and when he came back home to work. He always said: 'You have to draw, you have to write, you have to read as many books as you can during the holidays.' But I didn't want to read, nor did I like reading and writing characters. In the case of other parents, they would say, 'You'll grow up to beg for food if you don't draw and learn to write characters.' But my father said, 'If you don't draw and practice writing characters, people will send their dogs to bite you.' My father knew I was afraid of dogs as I was bitten by them as a little kid, therefore I would immediately start to write and draw, which made my childhood unhappy. However, today I think my childhood went by so fast and it was good to be unhappy.

A novelist once said that without the family myth, we were all orphans, in a state of uncertainty and unrest, with one end of our lives hidden in pitch darkness and the other invisible in the mist; in the midst of that darkness, there is a ray of stray light, which is the mother's family name. For Gu Tao, the construction of the family mythology and later the construction of his artistic world owed much to his father, Gu Deqing, who was this ray of stray light. This light was firmly captured in the body of the Gu Tao who returned to his hometown.

Searching for Father in the Forest

One day, he said to his father, 'I'm going there for a look.' Gu Tao's return to his hometown was not simply a matter of recognising the father who was 'missing' in his memory: once he had recognised him, he quickly took action, that was, retraced his father's footprints for the first time following the latter's diary:

My father wrote me a note with several names on it, Russian name that made you excited at first

sight, such as Gosk, Maxim. There were five of them altogether. I took a camera with me. I went there and looked for these people. ‘Oh, this man has passed away ...’ My father’s contact with them lasted till the 1980s when they were hunting together in the deep forests for months at a time. Later they lost contact and they had no phones. Then there was only one person around, Gu Xingjun (古兴军), a township mayor, who brought me to the son of the man that my father had been following.

Gu Deqing’s last contact with the mountain people was in the 1980s. More than twenty years later, his son hoped to pick up again in the place where his father stopped. And it was only by being there in person that he could really try to encounter and understand his father.

Gu Deqing was born in 1939. When he was only several years old, he saw in a magazine illustration a large red face with high cheekbones and small eyes, wearing an animal skin cap, which he later learned to be a roe deer skin cap. The man in the picture was in animal fur, carrying a cartridge bag and riding on a horse in a powerful manner. This image made an extremely deep impression on him. He learnt later when grown up that it was an Oroqen (鄂伦春) man from the northern part of China. This pictorial also motivated him to become a student of art, and later work as stage and set crew. Gu Deqing developed solid drawing skills and the ability to recreate life through painting. In the 1960s, he was sent via the programme to support the border areas to work in the Oroqen Autonomous Banner (鄂伦春自治旗), namely in Ali gul.

When the Cultural Revolution began, Gu Deqing continued painting, though he realized that time-consuming art production was no longer able to capture his vanishing world. What’s more, during the Cultural Revolution, he had to repeatedly paint huge portraits of Chairman Mao and the same images of workers, soldier, and peasants, which gave him neurasthenia. He felt that there should be distance between art and politics, that the two should not be equated with each other. Art was the self-expression in different ways of different individuals. This was why, from then on, Gu Deqing abandoned painting.

In the late 1970s, Reform and Opening led some Chinese go into business and become rich first. Gu Deqing also saw that through this process the ethnic groups in the north were changing even faster. He started to reflect deeply and went to the forest to look for the nomadic hunting minorities such as the Oroqen (鄂伦春) and Ewenki (鄂温克). Unlike the nomads who herded sheep, horses, cattle and camels on the prairie, nomadic hunting minorities exhibited a totally different way of life, hunting in the forest.

Gu Deqing quit painting and began to record and rescue with his camera. From the late 1970s onwards, he took pictures to quietly and candidly document the ethnic groups in the forest, their way of life and

production, and their living conditions. During the same period, journalists also went there to report on the hunters in the forests, though most of them were just superficially skimming things for the purposes of completing articles or funded feature reports. Gu Tao's memory of his father's disappearance was from about this time:

When he came back, his eyes were filled with fatigue yet also a kind of light, completely different from the eyes of other adults in our town. He hunted and migrated together with the people in the forest, and his eyes were telling their stories.

Life changes over time. When Gu Tao entered the home of the descendant of the hunter whom Gu Deqing was following on the hunting trips back then, it was as if the Wuling (武陵) fisherman once again found his way into the secret cave of the Peach Blossom (桃花源). The man in the cave looked at him dubiously but with déjà vu: 'Are you Gu Deqing's son? Show me your ID card.' On second thought, he said there was no need. 'Look at your face! You are definitely Gu Deqing's son.'

And Gu Tao, he said to himself excitedly, 'Finally I have found a life that I can readily accept.' Also he knew that it was geographical disparity that had enabled such access. If he hadn't left his hometown at the age of eighteen and gone to university, then left Hohhot to 'drift' in Beijing, and then finally come back north, he would have been completely oblivious to all of this. He would have only left home to go to university, and then come back to become a teacher or another job of a similar type. Life would have gone on like that. So as a matter of fact, sometimes it's better that people leave their hometown, otherwise they will never return to it in the end.

I was reading my father's diary once more: he wrote what his day was like, who left him a shotgun, etc. He was left in the camp to chop wood and to survive on his own. He must not let himself freeze or starve to death. He hunted a chicken with that shotgun, and there was a picture of him carrying that chicken in the diary. He also described how the hunters captured wild dogs. His diary awakened me: I felt that this was real life. At that time, my life was stuck as a Beijing drifter: I lived to survive and was pretentious when socializing and communicating with other people. I was trapped in a dead loop.

I felt in his diary the campfire crackling and saw him, following the wife of an Oroqen, looking for prey with binoculars in his hands. He walked the hunter's trail, the kind of trail that both wild animals and hunters took, as did the food supplier from below the mountains. I must admit that my

father's diary instantly made me think that *this* was the north, *this* was what it smelled like in the northern forests.

The Vanishing Ethnic Group: Welcome to Aoluguya!

To get to Aoluguya, Gu Tao said, first you went in a train from Beijing to Hailar (海拉尔) for no more than thirty hours. From there you took a night bus to Genhe (根河), the settlement, from twelve at night to eight o'clock in the next morning. From Genhe to the hunting spot, you still have to ...

The distance between the city and the countryside, a pair of antonyms, is becoming increasingly blurred in the current high-speed orbit of time: sometimes they seem infinitely far away, and sometimes the border between them disappears. In either case, they are indifferently identified with a cold dichotomy: the developed versus the backward, and the rich versus the poor. However, once they encounter an adventurer like Gu Tao who is entitled to enter the jungle, these two words suddenly become powerfully infectious. In fact, the country and the city, as Raymond Williams thought, are both in motion and in the present moment; they move in time, in the history of a family and a people, in emotions and concepts, and in networks of relationships and decisions.

Gu Deqing's records in his diaries and Gu Tao's tracing back to the old trail is a typical example of the family in motion in emotions and concepts. Once Gu Tao located the traces of his father's youth in the forest, he took over the banner from his father and set off on his own journey. In the forest mountains he fell in with Weijia (维佳), Liu Xia (柳霞), Yuguo (雨果), and He Xie (何协). There he also discovered Aoluguya, and the very extensive web of contrasts—from the 'missing father' to the 'vanishing ethnic group'. Many years later, Gu Tao will perhaps realize that his discovery goes far beyond that of his father, dramatically expanding the limits in terms of geography and social relations. For now let us follow Gu Tao into this Ewenki jungle.

About three hundred years ago, a group of reindeer-herding Ewenki people left the forests of the upper reaches of the Lena River in Siberia and migrated to the right bank of the Argun River (额尔古纳河) in Hulunbei (呼伦贝尔), Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (内蒙古自治区), at the north-western foot of the Daxinganling Mountains (大兴安岭), the borderlands of north-eastern China. Since then, they have lived in the mountains and forests for generations, making a living by hunting and raising reindeer, and have historically been known as the Reindeer-herding Tribe, or the Reindeer-herding Ewenkis (鄂温克).

Like the moment of seeing his father ‘getting old’, the great sensation of sadness that Gu Tao experienced and was enveloped in upon finding this ethnic group was imminently ‘disappearing’ catalysed him into making documentaries. Gu Tao’s Ewenki Trilogy (鄂温克三部曲) is, chronologically, *Aoluguya*, *Aoluguya...* (敖鲁古雅, 敖鲁古雅, 2003), *Yugo and his Mother* (雨果的假期, 2010), and *The Last Moose of Aoluguya* (犴达罕, 2013). They are like the film version of Chi Zijian’s (迟子建) novel *The Right Bank of the Argun River* (《额尔古纳河右岸》), only with a more powerful impact from the perspective of the spiritual history of the ethnic minority. With each of the three documentaries having a protagonist of its own, together they provide an unparalleled record of the vicissitudes of Aoluguya’s largest hunting site, named Maria Suo site (玛利亚·索), over the past decade. In Gu Tao’s own words, first it’s the fate of every single individual, and then it’s the fate of the whole ethnic group.

However, Gu Tao is different from Chi Zijian, who plans her novels steadily and carefully. When he was filming the Ewenki Trilogy, he was under the spell of feelings of sadness and death, and overwhelmed with the sentiment of following in his father’s footsteps from twenty-five years ago.

This fate ... I am not able to describe it. But I see that this is a disappearing ethnic group. This started to be recorded during my father’s time, or even before that. I have the impression that Germans made a film of it in the 1920s, I am doing the same. We are witnessing the dying out of the Ewenki ethnic group. They have a strong desire to preserve their culture, and to protect the old people in particular. The young people, like He Xie (何协), influenced by his family, are able to speak Mandarin, but they refuse to speak it and only communicate with the outside world in their native language.

Especially in the film *Aoluguya*, *Aoluguya...*, the sadness of this dying out has a poetic charm on screen. The sentiments that were not included in the film were recorded in Gu Tao’s own diary, which is even more valuable as first-hand material than the film. Reading it now, the loneliness and desolation still penetrates the paper. Let’s see what Maria Suo (玛利亚·索), the chief of the hunting site, and Weijia had to say:

Maria Suo: We are a weak, border-dwelling ethnic group. We hunt to live and have inhabited the forest for generations. We are guardians of the mountains. We have our own traditions, hunting rifles, and are the only reindeer raising ethnic group in China. We are unlike other ethnic groups and should protect our own possessions and traditions. We are very close to the nature and have our own way of life. We do not need much money because nature provides everything we need.

In the past, the Japanese gave us guns, the Soviets gave us guns, and Chairman Mao (毛主席) also gave us guns when the People's Republic of China was founded, but now the Communist Party has confiscated our guns! Chairman Mao did not take back the guns he gave to us. When I think of us Ewenki people without guns and without a place to raise our reindeer, I want to cry. I cry in my dreams!

Weijia: That's the confiscation of guns! Do you know what confiscation is? The young hunters handing over their guns was just like the Japanese surrendering themselves! The end of twenty-odd years of hunting life. Farewell, hunting rifles! Farewell, Daxinganling Mountains! Now we owe our thanks to the reindeer, which suffered terrible deaths after being driven down the mountains. They had to be moved back to the forest. We owe our thanks to the reindeer.

The god of the forest leaps like a shadow across the vast land
Following the surging spirits of the valley
The song of the campfire gods soars through the forest
The bells of reindeer are about to disappear in it
The bonfire whirls as it used to
The birch bark boat drifts into the museum
Where reverberates the silent waves of Aoluguya

— A poem by Weijia

Gu Tao was imperceptibly overwhelmed by his immense emotions arising from eating and living together with the Ewenki people of Aoluguya. As a result, the trilogy and some other, later works were all improvised, emotional products. In addition to the great 'sorrow over dying out', the life of individuals also overpowered Gu Tao. *Yugo and his Mother* is an obvious demonstration of this. It was not his plan to make this film, instead, his sympathy with the fate of the protagonist brought forth the documentary:

After, many people said I was ADHD, among them were my wife and friends. I paint, make photographs, and always want to try new things. In that period, I did not want to make a film because I longed for other possibilities, so *Yugo and his Mother* was not in my schedule. However, I couldn't help it; it was like you couldn't get around it: only after you finished it could you move on to something else.

At that time, I just wanted to bring Hugo back from Wuxi (无锡) to Aoluguya, to his mother.

I was staying at his mother's house in Aoluguya. His mother's name was Liu Xia (柳霞). She lived with her own mother and brother. Her brother had no wife and Liu Xia had no husband, so I had a very free life in her home. Every night, we told stories over cups of wine in candle lights. We were never short of stories. The fireplace was crackling, and the night was gnawingly cold!

When I was there, I felt the mother Liu Xia was missing her son all the time. At the same time, the mother, Yugo's mother, was amnesiac as a result of alcohol addiction. One day she got drunk again. It was in the Daxinganling summer, when the sunshine was particularly piercing, which made people feel you are standing on the top of the mountain, almost touching the sun. Liu Xia was standing inside a tent with a tiny window; she looked straight into the sun and her face seemed to be oozing oil with that exposure. When she was in the sun like this, she said: 'Yugo, when will you have wings and fly home to hug me? When? Can you come home and let mum hug you?'

I was filming at that moment. Her words sent shivers through my body; my hands trembled too. I thought what could I do? Liu Xia's legs were broken with steel plates inside, after being kicked by someone from whom she was trying to steal alcohol. Besides, she couldn't get away from the reindeer and the forest. On her own, she even did not know where to take the train. The only line she knew was from the nearby Along Mountain (阿龙山) to Genhe. So I thought I must bring Yugo (雨果) back to her, bring him back so that the mother and son could hug each other and spend the holiday together.

That's what I thought then, I simply wanted to bring him back for a reunion with his mother, and I went to pick him up without any equipment. On the way, I started to think it over and I watched Yugo eating and sleeping. He had been away from the forest for a long time, but the nearer he was to the north, the forest, then Aoluguya, and finally his mother, I felt his hunter blood awakening, coming to life. I started to envision what it would be like on his first sight of his mother. As I went along like that all the way, I was gradually convinced that I should film what the reunion between mother and son would be like. I borrowed a small camera and filmed *Yuguo and his Mother*.

In addition to this sentimentality in the face of perishing and sensation towards the condition of individual life, there is gritty power in the Trilogy, 'the breath of the north', as Gu Tao suggests. He once talked about experiencing the strongest feeling upon his return to the north, which was a sense of perception, a genuine breath of the north. Knowing that he had returned back to the life of the north, feeling the recovering of the breath of the north in his body, he started to make documentaries. That breath, for him,

was his life. When entering Aoluguya, he suddenly realized that his breath had always been with the north, and his emotions were those of the north, pure and unadorned; for him at that moment, that was the life of future. In the north, every single barrier in his life automatically vanished, which enabled Gu Tao to focus on life itself.

He was concerned with why Weijia was obsessed with alcohol, why he was still tracing along the deer tracks, and why he expressed nostalgia for the hunting days in his poems and paintings while anaesthetizing himself with alcohol. Weijia's dilemma in life was also that of Gu Tao, which was by no means an obstacle to expression. For both of them breathed more easily in the north, and their life went more smoothly. This was also how the film came to be so poetic:

In my material, I return to the mood of being in the north, where I don't use knowledge at all because I think I haven't learned anything. Back to the time when I was painting, I would naturally think of the word prairie when I arrived in Hohhot, a city in its proper sense rather than a prairie. I had never been to a pastoral area either, but it was like I would unconsciously fit into other people's habitual understanding of it. As a result, I would set prairie as the theme of my painting of Hohhot, in the same way that Xilin Gol Prairies (锡林郭勒大草原) was automatically identified with Hunlunbeier (呼伦贝尔). How many people know that Hulunbeier also has forests, lakes, and wetlands?

The reason is that we are so constrained with ourselves, with dominant and invisible presuppositions which are hard to break; or if you dare to break with them, you will be different from others and will be questioned. So I think young people may feel the same way: it is about who insists on being true to oneself and pursuing a life different from others, about changing how you breathe and looking out for one's own breath.

In this way, the inspiration Gu Tao received from his 'missing father' facilitated his discovery of the breath of the 'vanishing ethnic group'. As if supported by a divine power, jointly with his own artistic talents, Gu Tao moved forward instinctively in the sense and breath of the north, and broke free of the universal crises of real life. Ultimately, in the poetic Aoluguya, he incorporated 'ethnicity' into the network of contrasts that have developed over time, and laid the lyrical groundwork for his later ethnographic images.

Breakout: The Shaman Map

After the Ewenki Trilogy, Gu Tao made two films on the Oroqen (鄂伦春) ethnic group, namely *The*

Solitary Mountain (乌鲁布铁) and *The Heart of the Shaman* (神翳) . If the Ewenki Trilogy was the result of the fusion of coincidence and his own personal life experience, then starting with the Oroqen films, Gu Tao's artistic practice became a conscious exploration of 'dying out' and 'contrast' in social and historical development, and he was trying to develop his own methodology of documentary filmmaking.

Gu Tao himself once said that he had filmed in great detail in the past few years and was thus in possession of huge quantity of materials, so sometimes he would ask himself why he still wanted to film more. The answer was—documentation. But at that time, he did not know what documentation was, in the same way he felt about the breath and emotions of the north. It's just that documentation, as a kind of consciousness, had long been buried in Gu Tao's mind, making him feel that a film should have a documentary quality. By the time he got to film *The Solitary Mountain* and *The Heart of the Shaman*, he had already begun to consciously reflect on the logical interconnections between this material and history:

I started to plan *The Heart of the Shaman* when the filming of *The Solitary Mountain* was approaching the end and I frequently went back to my hometown Oroqen (鄂伦春) . Probably because I was still trapped in the state of being in Aoluguya, when I arrived in Oroqen, I suddenly felt that I knew too little about my hometown. Of course, that lack of understanding was also due to my feelings from the memories of my high school. It was a school with a high school section, a middle school section, and an elementary section, and there were separate ethnic group classes for the Manchu ethnic group, Mongolian ethnic group, and a joint group class for the three ethnic group of the Oroqen, the Daur (达斡尔) , and the Ewenki. I was not in this joint class, but got the impression that they got more steamed bread than we did. The national policy was that those ethnic groups with smaller populations should receive more subsidies and enjoy preferential treatment in the entrance examinations. But these students seemed not to appreciate it, and that's why I thought a little bit negatively of them.

When I finished *The Heart of the Shaman* and turned back to Aoluguya, I suddenly realised that every ethnic group was facing the same problem: cultural decline and imminent extinction, only with the difference being whether you have noticed it and felt it or not. So, I returned to Oroqen and continued with filming. Upon my return, I was just in time for that shaman (萨满) ceremony for Guankouni (关扣尼) . Administratively speaking, the place [Oroqen] was not located in Inner Mongolia (内蒙古) , but in Baiyinna (白银纳) in Huma County (呼玛县) , Heilongjiang Province (黑龙江) , at the eastern foot of the Daxinganling (大兴安岭) . My father was there in the 1980s, and I traced his footprints there through his diary. To some extent, *The Heart of the*

Shaman originated with my father.

Here it should be mentioned that Gu Tao has always had great interest in shamans. Of the people in his films, Liuxia and Weijia, and their mother Bara Jey (巴拉杰依) once recalled that her mother, Niula (纽拉), was the last Ewenki shaman:

My mother became a shaman at the age of thirteen. She was sometimes crazy as if mentally disordered. My grandfather knew that she was because he himself was a shaman too, though not of senior status. My grandfather dreamed that my mother was going to be a shaman. She slept for three days and nights, which made her parents scared. They started to make a coffin and prepared for her funeral. Then she woke up, opened her eyes and said, 'How did it come that I slept for three years? I've been living up there for three years.; Hearing this, my grandfather said to himself, "My goodness, the girl is now a shaman, she has been chosen by the shaman gods of the other world.'

People who have watched *The Heart of the Shaman* will immediately become sympathetic with Bara Jey's story. The film is about the old shaman Guankouni's (关扣尼) search in vain for a successor. The shaman is a messenger between God and man, living in an in-between world, an embodiment of the relationship between ethnic minorities and nature and the nation as a whole. Back then, Gu Tao may not have had in-depth understanding of these relationships, but he was quite sure what kind of films he was going to produce in his lifetime. When he came across the topic of the shaman, he already knew that he wanted to explore the current living conditions of ethnic minority groups in the north. If you want to detect this awareness in his film, I highly recommend you watch the last scene of *The Heart of the Shaman*, in which you can hear an earth-shattering drumbeat, banging through the otherwise disappointing ending as if it has gained a mysterious power. That sudden tremor is the divinity that characterises Gu Tao's films about ethnic groups.

This was followed by *The Solitary Mountain*, a film that was inspired by his childhood friend and is about his Oroqen homeland. This film was also a break; in it, Gu Tao seems tired. But in this film he once again presented the contrast between modernity and tradition, and between the young and the old. Gu Tao seems to have been confirming his original intentions and point of departure, as well as laying a psychological landscape for his future works.

I think my film plans are geographic in nature because I have no past experience to generate imagination. Look at Liu Xiangchen (刘湘晨), who started filming all the way down from the highest altitude, and in such a way established his own structure and unique personal style, as well

as a special perspective. About seven or eight years ago, I watched his film, which was indeed structured altitudinally from high to low, presenting the living conditions of ethnic groups at different altitudes. Liu Xiangchen's film was recorded from his own perspective which I would never be able to replicate. For me, I would start from the north and move all the way towards the north-west (I could not have moved southward) to cover all the ethnic minority areas in the north. I felt that it was the way to continue the breath of the north that I have mentioned. Later I chose to film the nomadic life and the ecological migration of Kazakh ethnic group (哈萨克族) in Xinjian (新疆) .

Following the concept of a geography of the north, I am now working on the establishment of a 'Shaman Map'. I want to explore all about ethnic minority religions in the north, namely shaman religion, primitive religions, and natural religions, and finally to establish a framework, or a map. For instance, the Kazakh ethnic group use dombra (冬不拉) to appeal to their gods—what is their history? I want to present all the features of their shaman in the film, such as their costumes and the drums they use. I don't think I have to become a scholar director, because I know I can't penetrate the subject as a scholar, but I can at least establish a framework first, which will be interesting and attract young people to continue with it.

Gu Tao says he has been breaking out and venturing into the outside world in his own way from the age of thirty-one to fifty-one. He stayed on the prairie during the pandemic, chasing and photographing horses with his phone in his spare time. At the beginning he felt it was so comfortable to breathe those huge breaths, with the hot air from his lungs colliding with the cold air, mixing and fighting each other and washed his lungs clean. That was true freedom.

But only a few days later, he went for a run and, after only a few steps, fell to the ground. With his body huge and heavy, he was unable to get up; his arms were numb and stiff. Lying there, Gu Tao now suddenly felt that he was really fifty-one, and he said to himself, 'Do you still think you can drink a litre and a half alcohol? No way! That's just the you in your imagination.' That moment was the same as it was twenty years ago when he arrived home and felt that his father was very old.

He looked at the drooping mountains and clouds in the distance and said to himself: 'You have to leave here, right now.' Another of Gu Tao's breakouts had begun.

顾桃：在“失踪”与“消失”之间突围

刘盟赞

那天我们等车
那天等车时我去砍冰
那天砍冰时我掉进了冰窟窿
那天我的右腿的膝盖韧带拉伤
那天玉良找到朋友的越野车接我们下山

今天我只能蜷缩家里
看灰蒙蒙的窗外北京的天
遥望北方
想起海子的诗

从明天起做一个幸福的人
喂马
劈柴
周游世界
从明天起
关心粮食和蔬菜
我有一所房子
面朝大海
春暖花开

二〇〇九年三月一日，顾桃又一次离开敖鲁古雅回到北京，在日记里他写下这首诗。北方乡村的劳动与城市鸽笼的慵懒，现实的强烈反差侵蚀着诗人的心。他只能拉来另一位更加孤绝的诗人，当作一剂强心针，给自己打下去，方才缓解那一怀愁绪。然而，顾桃内心的反差，又何止这一种呢？我关于顾桃的叙述，便要从反差说起。

失踪的父亲

顾桃的家乡在内蒙古呼伦贝尔鄂伦春旗的阿里河，距离北京大概一千八百多公里。用现在的话说，

他是地道的小镇青年。也和很多小镇青年一样，十八岁出门远行，顾桃先到呼和浩特再到北京，其间上学，打工，学画画，搞摄影。如同他诗中提到的，在灰蒙蒙的城市里，普普通通地蜷缩着过日子。直到三十一岁，他带着挣的两千块回老家，好几年没有回家的他，第一次觉得父亲已经很老了，而那时他的父亲顾德清，也就刚刚六十岁左右。是什么原因让顾桃的感知出现错觉，在那时竟觉得父亲很老了呢？“很老”到底是多老？顾桃像极了刚从龙宫回来的浦岛太郎，只不过，当他蓦然打开龙女嘱咐他千万莫要打开的宝盒时，他发现变老的不是自己，而是他的父亲。

时间的质感有时候不能从客观的年岁上辨认，它可能掉落在个体去而复返的空间落差里，这是城乡发展变化的结果，如同水力发电的瀑布。从内蒙到北京，再从北京回家，地理的游移为顾桃的纪录片创作，积聚了原始的叙事势能。这次回家，多年的城市生活，让疲于奔命的顾桃获得一种“外来者”的陌生眼光，从而一眼就认出“父亲的老”。其实“父亲的老”相当于一面镜子，照出的是自己对时间消逝的一种诗人般的哀伤。这唤起了顾桃曾被自己压制的，记忆中对父亲的好奇，也揭开了他家族神话的潘多拉宝盒。“失踪的父亲”便这样登场了：

小的时候，我家在鄂伦春旗阿里河，父亲顾德清在文化馆工作。记忆里他总是“失踪”，母亲好像知道他在哪里“失踪”了，所以也不找他，但却会抱怨。我经常跟着妈妈推着自行车买粮，秋天去菜地里买为冬天准备的土豆、大萝卜和白菜，还要拉煤，而这些老爷们儿的活儿父亲好像都没赶上过。有一次父亲“失踪”回来时，我们几个孩子胆怯地在门边看他：蓬乱的头发，满脸胡茬，眼镜腿缠满白胶布，表情疲惫，但眼睛里有一闪一闪的光。母亲说，父亲是从森林里回来的。父亲还带来了一个大汉，穿着兽皮做的上衣和皮靴，印象最深刻的是他挎着枪。他和父亲喝酒的时候，两人无言，一杯接一杯，脸就都红了，也有热泪在眼睛里转，不落。然后父亲就起身抱起门口怯生生的我亲，胡茬子让我疼、痒而无法躲掉。之后我就玩那个穿兽皮衣的叔叔的枪，沉甸甸的。我有一种感觉：那是男人用的东西。（摘自《敖鲁古雅生活日记》）

父亲顾德清在小时候的顾桃眼里是那么的不可思议，就像童话里的丛林冒险家。“我”只能充满好奇地“怯生生”窥探，却因为陌生而不得不压制住他的好奇。除了对父亲的陌生，顾桃也曾表示过小时候是很害怕父亲的，这也是压制他对父亲的记忆的另一股力量。

跟他（父亲）的关系，小时候其实是很害怕的。我小的时候是被要求着长大的，小孩都爱玩，都爱按自己的方式去感受。但是他给我布置很多的任务，“失踪”的时候或者在家上班的时候，他都会说，你要画画，你要写字，你要假期读多少书。但我是又不爱看，又不爱画，也不爱写。反过来，一般父母这时候就会说，要不画画，不写字，长大你会去要饭的。但是我爸会说，要不画画，不写字，人家会放狗咬你。因为我爸知道我怕狗，我小的时候就被狗咬过。于是

我就真的会赶快去写去画。所以我拥有了一个不快乐的童年，但事实上到今天，我会觉得童年过得太快了，不快乐也挺好的。

一个小说家曾说过，没有家族神话，我们都成了孤儿，恹恹惶惶，我们生命的一头隐在伸手不见五指的黑暗里，另一头隐在迷雾中。在那黑暗当中，尚有着一线游离的光明，那便是母亲的姓氏。对顾桃，家族神话的建构以及后来他的艺术世界的建构，则多益于父亲顾德清，顾德清就是那游离一线的光明。这光明在回乡的顾桃的身体里被牢牢抓住了。

寻找林中的父亲

有一天，他对父亲说：“我去那儿看看。”顾桃的这次回家，并非只是单纯的认出了那个曾在记忆中“失踪的父亲”，他一旦认出这个父亲，很快就将其转换成行动——通过父亲的日记，按图索骥地开始了自己第一次重走。

我爸给我写了个条儿，我记得写了好几个人名儿，什么果士克、马克西姆，都是俄罗斯名儿，一看这名儿你就激动。……反正写了五个。我带了一个相机去。去了呢，我就找这些人。人说，哎呀，这人都没了。我爸跟他们的联系停留在上世纪八十年代，因为这么多年跟他们在一起打猎，在深山老林里一走好几个月，所以也就失去了联络，也没有电话。后来只有一个人在，叫古兴军，那时候他已经是乡长了，他就把我领到我爸一直跟踪的那个儿子家。

顾德清最后与山里人的联系中断是在八十年代。二十多年后，他的儿子期望在父亲中断的地方再次出发。而也只有身临其境，才能真的尝试遇见和理解父亲的形象。

顾德清是一九三九生人，在才几岁的时候，他在画报上看到一个红红的大脸，颧骨很高，眼睛很小，戴着一顶野兽的帽子，后来他知道这叫狍皮帽。画上的人穿着动物皮毛，身上还有子弹袋，骑在马上，威风凛凛。这个人给他留下了极深的印象。后来他长大，知道了画报上的人是北方的鄂伦春人。也因为这张画报，他上学的时候学了美术专业，后来分配他为舞台或者电影之类的做舞美和布景。在实践中顾德清练就了扎实的画画基本功和通过绘画还原生活的能力。到了上世纪六十年代，他因为支边到了鄂伦春自治旗，也就是阿里河。

后来“文革”开始了，顾德清还是一直画画。但他觉得绘画已经不能最好的记录他的时代，因为比起消逝的东西，绘画记录得太慢。另一方面，因为“文革”要画毛主席像，特别是巨幅的毛主席像和工农兵的各种千篇一律的造型，顾德清得了神经衰弱。他隐隐觉得艺术跟政治应该不是一回事，起码不应该完全等同。艺术是自我表达，我用我的方式，你用你的方式，用相互不同的语言才能形

成每个个体的独特感受。也因此顾德清从此便放弃了绘画。

上世纪七十年代末，改革开放，让一部分人先富起来，下海经商。顾德清看到北方少数民族的变化更快了。他开始沉下去，到森林里去寻找游猎民族。鄂伦春族和鄂温克族属于游猎民族，在森林里一边狩猎一边生存的，是游猎民族。不像牧区，在草原放羊放马放牛放骆驼的，叫游牧族。游牧和游猎是不同的两种生命力的体现。

放弃了绘画的顾德清，开始用相机记录或者说拯救。从七十年代末开始，他用图片安静坦然地去把那个时期在森林里的民族——它们的生活方式、生产方式、生存状况——真实地记录下来。那时候也有很多记者去报道，但大都是浮光掠影，是为了完成一组稿件，或者一组选题。顾桃记忆中“父亲的失踪”，便经常发生在那个时期。

他一回来，眼神里头满是疲惫，但眼神里同时也是有一种光芒。和我在看我们小镇上的其他大人眼神里的那种状态是完全不一样的。他在森林里跟着他们去狩猎、去迁徙，他们的很多东西都在他的眼睛里反映了出来。

时移事往，当顾桃进入当年顾德清跟着一起去狩猎的那个猎人后代的家，好像武陵捕鱼人再次寻获进入桃花源的秘密洞穴。洞中人看他半信半疑又似曾相识。

“你是顾德清的儿子？你把身份证给我看看。”又说不用了。

“一看你这张脸就是顾德清的儿子。”

而顾桃呢，他心里激动地提醒自己，终于，“我进入了那个我特别接受的生活。”并且他也很明白这样的进入，是来自于地理空间的落差。但是如果我不是十八岁从老家出来晃荡，到大学待，从呼和浩特再到北漂，完了再回到这个北方，我可能其实对这一切都会熟视无睹。我自然的可能上学，完了出去再回来，当一个老师，或者是随便上一个班工作，就是这样。所以有时候我们离开家乡反倒好，否则最后，可能你永远也回不到故乡。

所以当我再看到父亲日记，他写道，今天他干了什么，谁谁谁给他留下了一杆猎枪，他们都去狩猎了，他在营地，要劈柴，要生活，不能让自己冻死，也别让自己饿着，于是他拿着猎枪去打了一只棒鸡，日记上还有他拎着棒鸡的照片。然后他们怎么打猎。他写的这些，在那个时候恰恰唤醒了我，我才觉得这才是实实在在的生活，我们在北漂的状态里是为了生存而生存的，去应酬，戴着面具跟人交流，不自觉陷在一个循环里面。

我从他日记里能感受到篝火火苗噼噼啪啪的响声，能看到他和鄂伦春人的妻子拿着望远镜去寻找猎物，穿过猎民小道——野兽和猎人同时走的那种小路，甚至从山下送粮食的也是走这条道。所以我说，我爸的日记一下子让我觉得这才是北方，这才是北方森林里的氣息。

消失的民族：欢迎来到敖鲁古雅！

顾桃说，要到敖鲁古雅，从北京坐火车，不到三十个小时到海拉尔；然后再从那儿坐车，坐一晚上，从晚上十二点到第二天早上八点到根河。而那仅是他们的定居点。要想到猎民点，你还要……

城市与乡村，一对反义词，在当下高速运行的时间轨道上，它们的距离变得越来越模糊不清，有时候远到无限，有时候又感觉已经消失了边界。而无论怎样，它们往往被简单粗暴地代表着发达与落后、富裕与贫穷——冷冰冰的二元对立。然而，一旦它们与如顾桃这般获准进入丛林的冒险家沾上边儿，这两个词也可以极具感染力。其实城市和乡村的生活，就像雷蒙·威廉斯所言，既是运动着的，又处在当下：在时间中运动，在一个家庭和一个民族的历史中运动，在情感与观念中运动，在关系和决策组成的网络中运动。

顾德清与顾桃的记录与重走便是典型的一个家庭在情感和观念中运动的例子。当顾桃在林中找到了父亲年轻时的踪迹后，他便接过父辈的旗帜，开始踏上自己的征程。在那里他发现了维佳、柳霞、雨果、何协，发现了敖鲁古雅，以及更大的反差之网——从“失踪的父亲”到“消失的民族”。许多年后，顾桃也许会意识到，他的这一发现远远超过了他的父亲，在地理和社会关系中做出了戏剧性地扩展。而现在就让我们先跟着顾桃进入这片鄂温克的丛林。

大概三百多年前，一支赶着驯鹿的鄂温克人告别西伯利亚勒拿河上游的森林，辗转迁徙到中国东北的边疆——大兴安岭西北麓，内蒙古自治区呼伦贝尔额尔古纳河右岸。自此，他们世代居住在山林中，靠狩猎和饲养驯鹿生活，历史上称为使鹿部落，也叫使鹿鄂温克人。

如同发现父亲的“老”，在最开始的时候，顾桃发现了一个民族的即将“消失”，这种伤逝感，让他无由地扎进最初的纪录片创作中，被巨大的情绪包裹着。顾桃的“鄂温克三部曲”如果按照顺序来看的话，分别是《敖鲁古雅，敖鲁古雅……》（2003）《雨果的假期》（2010）《犴达罕》（2013）。三部片子看完，就像是迟子建《额尔古纳河右岸》的影像版，只不过比小说更具民族心灵史的震撼效果。虽然每部片子顾桃都有一个侧重的中心人物去跟踪，但连起来却无比真实地纪录了敖鲁古雅最大的猎民点——玛利亚·索猎民点十几年的变迁与衰败。用顾桃自己的话说，先是每一个人的命运，最后是这个民族的命运。

但顾桃不同于迟子建在谋篇布局她的长篇小说时那样稳扎稳打，思虑重重，他在拍摄“鄂温克三部曲”时，更多的是被一种伤逝的情绪所控制，一种寻着二十五年前父亲的足迹所产生的感受。

这个命运……我说不清楚。但是我看到这是一个消失的民族。就从我父亲那个年代开始，或者更早就有人纪录，好像上世纪二十年代德国人就做过一个片子，到我现在做的，我知道这是鄂温克一个民族的消亡史。他们对自己的文化，尤其老人，有强烈的保护的愿望。年轻人，像何协，受家庭的影响，虽然懂汉话，也能说汉话，但是他们拒绝说，就是要用他的母语和外界交流。

特别是在《敖鲁古雅，敖鲁古雅……》这部影片中那种消亡的伤感，跃然幕前有了诗的韵味。这种消亡的伤感，没有拍成影像的，顾桃都用笔记录在了自己的日记里，这些文字有时候比影像更具一手资料的价值。现在读起来，那种孤绝与凄凉，仍然能力透纸背。以下是玛利亚·索猎民点的酋长玛利亚·索和维佳的表述，从中可窥见一斑。

玛利亚·索：我们是个弱小的边境民族，是靠打猎过来的，祖祖辈辈生活在大森林里，守着山林。我没有自己的传统，有猎枪，是中国唯一养驯鹿的民族，跟别的民族不一样，我们应该保护自己民族的东西。我们跟大自然非常亲近，过着自己的生活，我们并不需要太多的钱，大自然里什么都有。

过去，日本人给我们发枪，苏联人也给我们枪，新中国成立了，毛主席也给我们发枪，现在的共产党为什么就把我的枪没收了呢！毛主席发的枪还没收啊！想到我们鄂温克人没有枪，也没有了放鹿的地方，我就想哭，做梦都在哭！

维佳：那是收枪！收枪你知道不？猎民青年交枪，就鸡巴跟日本人投降似的！二十多年的狩猎生涯结束了，永别了，猎枪！永别了，大兴安岭！还得感谢驯鹿啊，驯鹿拿到山下死亡惨重，后来又搬回森林，还得感谢驯鹿！

林之神影子般跳跃在辽阔的大地
追随山谷中澎湃的精灵
篝火之神的歌喉在森林中飞渡
鹿铃声将要在林中消失
篝火仍然在飞转
桦皮船飘进了博物馆
那里有敖鲁古雅河沉寂的涛声

顾桃因为与敖鲁古雅的鄂温克人同吃同住，无形中被巨大的情绪所感染。三部曲的拍摄，以及后来的制作，很多时候就是这种没有计划，全凭感性而为的作品。除了大的“消失的伤感”外，具体到单一个体的生命状态，有时候也会让顾桃心惊肉跳。其中《雨果的假期》，便是一部本身不想拍，但因为某种为个体命运而感染的情绪勉力为之之作。

后来有很多人都说我是多动症，包括我媳妇、我的朋友都说我是多动症，画画、搞摄影，你总想感受更多的东西。而那时我不想拍戏，也是这个原因。所以《雨果的假期》，我其实是不想拍的，但没办法，就好像你绕不过去一样，你自己必须去做完这件事，才能再做别的。

那时候，其实我只是想把雨果从无锡带回敖鲁古雅，带回他妈妈身边。因为在敖鲁古雅，我就住在他妈妈家。他妈妈叫柳霞。她和雨果的舅舅、姥姥住在一起。他舅舅没媳妇，柳霞也没丈夫，所以我在他们家特别自由，我们每天晚上点着蜡烛喝酒讲故事，听不完的故事，完了火炉里火苗噼噼啪啪作响。到夜里那种寒冷，真是让人咬牙切齿啊！

我在那里的时候，你就感觉他的母亲（柳霞），在任何时候都在想念她的儿子。但同时呢，这个母亲，雨果的妈妈又是一个失忆的母亲，因为她酗酒成瘾。有一个白天，她喝多了，夏天的大兴安岭，阳光特别强，就像站在高山之上，离太阳非常近。而柳霞站在帐篷里，帐篷的窗户就那么大一点，非常小，她直直地看着太阳，那种照射，我感觉她的脸都在冒油，但是她就是一定要把脸对着太阳。就这样晒着她的时候，她就开始说，雨果你什么时候能长了翅膀回来和我拥抱，什么时候啊！能不能回家让妈妈抱抱你？

那时候，我本来一直在拍，但听着柳霞的话，我手都得瑟了，手都在抖。而那时我就想，我能做什么？他妈妈的腿因为喝酒也不好，里头还有钢板，据说是偷酒喝，被别人踢的。而且她也离不开驯鹿，离不开森林。让她自己去，在哪儿坐火车她都不知道，只知道从下面的阿龙山坐到做根河这趟线。所以我想，我要把雨果给她带回来，带回来让他俩拥抱，过一个假期。

我那时候就想这样的，单纯就想让他回家看他妈让他妈能看到他。所以我去接他的时候都没带设备。但后来，在路上我想，我观察他，看他怎么吃东西、怎么睡觉，他离开森林很久了，但他越接近北方，越接近大森林，越接近敖鲁古雅，越接近他母亲的时候，我感觉他好像血液里的那种猎人的基因就开始苏醒，就挥发了出来。我还设想他见到他妈第一时间会怎么样。这样一路走，一路想，我就觉得还是得拍一下一个母亲和一个孩儿子的重逢会是什么样的。于是我才借了一个小机器，才有了《雨果的假期》。

除了这种面对消亡的感伤以及对个体生命形态的震颤外，在三部影片里还有一种粗砺的力量。这种力量顾桃曾将它命名为北方的呼吸。他曾经自陈，再回到北方，他突然有一个最强烈的感受，一种感知力，一种完整的北方的气息。当他开始做纪录片时，是因为意识到他回到了这样的生活里，重获了北方的呼吸，这个呼吸，对他来说就是生命。当进入敖鲁古雅，他突然觉得他的呼吸是在北方，他的情感就是北方情感，不加修饰，好像未来的生活就是这样。在北方，顾桃自然的就没有障碍了，才能在那样的一个情绪里去关注生命本身的状况。

比如关注维佳，他为什么这么爱喝酒，又为什么还在寻找鹿的足迹；一边用酒精麻醉自己，一边用诗和画来表达他对他的狩猎年代的怀念。维佳的矛盾，就是顾桃的矛盾，但这个矛盾绝非表达的障碍，因为他们都因北方的呼吸而更顺畅，获得了一种流畅的生命状态，也因此才让这部影片显得诗意盎然。

在我的素材里，我又回到在北方的情绪里，我根本不用知识，因为我感觉我没学到过什么知识，我也像以前画画一样，到了呼和浩特，这种不是草原的城市，却被草原这个词包裹着。我也根本都没去过牧区，但我那时候好像不自觉就融入到别人的惯性认识里去，然后去画呼和浩特就一定要画草原。就像一说和呼伦贝尔，就是锡林郭勒大草原，但又有多少人知道呼伦贝尔还有森林，覆盖面很大的森林，还有湖泊，还有湿地。

原因就是我們自己被自己给包裹了，被这大的、你看不见的无形的东西给包括住了，很难有自我的突破，因为你一旦突破了，一旦跟别人不一样了，你会被质疑。所以我觉得年轻人都可能同样的这种感受，那只是谁去坚持了自己，换一种活法，换一种呼吸的方式。去找寻属于自己的呼吸。

就这样，从“失踪的父亲”那里获得的启示，让他寻获了“消失民族”的呼吸，有如神助的，顾桃在自己的艺术禀赋驱策下，在真正北方的呼吸和情绪里，混沌前行，跳出了原本困住他的现实生活中的普遍危机。最终在诗意的敖鲁古雅，他将“民族”纳入到时代发展下的反差之网中。为他后来的北方民族志影像打下抒情的地基。

突围：萨满地图

“鄂温克三部曲”之后顾桃拍摄了鄂伦春族题材的影片《乌鲁布铁》和《神翳》。如果说“鄂温克三部曲”的出现，是极大的偶然和他个人生命体验的融合，那么从鄂伦春题材开始，顾桃的创作，或者说他对于理解在社会历史的发展中出现的“消亡”与“反差”，则有了自觉的探索，并且尝试用影像摸索出一套自己的方法。

顾桃自己曾说过，他前几年巨细靡遗地拍，素材其实已经非常丰富了，但有时也会问自己，为什么还要拍呢？他的回答是——文献。但那个时候，他其实并不知道什么是文献，就像只有北方的呼吸与情绪一样。只不过，文献作为一个意识，早就埋伏在顾桃的脑海里，让他觉得一个片子应该具有一种文献性。到了《神翳》《乌鲁布铁》的拍摄，他其实就开始有了主动的逻辑反思，联系种种材料和历史，抽丝剥茧。

《神翳》是我在拍《敖鲁古雅》的后期开始构思的，那时我频繁地回自己的老家鄂伦春，可能因为在敖鲁古雅的那种状态，当你回家后，突然产生了一个感受——我以前太不了解自己的家乡鄂伦春了。当然，我在想这种不了解也和自己上高中时候的记忆有关。那时候高中我们学校也有初中、小学，学校里就有民族班，有满族、蒙族，以及北方的三少数民族（鄂伦春、达斡尔、鄂温克）。我们是和这个班分开的，所以我那时候我只有一个意识，就是他们馒头比我们多，国家发的补贴是按人数越少的少数民族，补贴越多来发。但是他们都很不珍惜，包括考学是什么也是一样。所以当时就对他们有种反感。

等我拍完再拍《敖鲁古雅》，我突然意识到，每一个民族都在当下面临着同样的问题，这种文化的没落和即将面临的消失都是一样的。不同的只是你自己是否观察到了，感受到了，所以我就开始又回鄂伦春去拍。而这时，正赶上关扣尼那个萨满仪式，其实他们是属于黑龙江的呼玛县白银纳，在大兴安岭东麓，不在内蒙。我爸爸上世纪八十年代也到过那里，我能找到那里，还是因为我爸的日记。某种程度上看，《神翳》这片子还是从我爸那儿来的。

需要补充的是对萨满的兴趣，顾桃从来自有。柳霞和维佳就生在一个萨满世家。他们的妈妈芭拉杰依曾回忆说，她的妈妈纽拉是鄂温克最后的萨满。

我妈妈当萨满，好像从十三岁开始的，有时疯疯癫癫的，像精神失常似的。我姥爷知道，因为我姥爷就是萨满，不过不是高级的萨满。当时我姥爷梦见我妈妈要当萨满了。那时她一睡睡了三天三夜，姥姥姥爷都害怕了，就准备后事，做棺材什么的。后来我妈妈醒过来了，一睁眼，说，我怎么一睡睡了三年呢？我在上面住了三年了。我姥爷一听，完了，这姑娘成萨满了，让外界的萨满神给选中了。

看过《神翳》这部影片的观众，应该立马就会对芭拉杰依的这段话产生共鸣。《神翳》的主要情节就是老萨满关扣尼找自己的传承人最终失败的故事。萨满是神与人之间使者，他活在一个中间的世界，是少数民族和自然的关系，以及和大民族关系一种体现。顾桃那时候也许对这些关系并不十分了解，但他说，那时他已经明确这辈子要拍什么了，当看到萨满这个题材之后，心里已经有了一个主题，即：

关注北方少数民族在当下社会的生存状况。如果从影像上去理解顾桃的这种自觉，我建议一定要看《神翳》最后一帧画面。因为在那里，你会听到一声惊天动地的鼓声，嘣叽一下让原本失望的结局，好像获得了一股神秘的力量。那种突然的震颤，是顾桃少数民族影片中特有的神性。

这之后拍摄的《乌鲁布铁》——一部真的根据自己发小的启发，回到自己的鄂伦春故乡拍摄的影片，似乎是一次休整，从这部片子里感知到的顾桃显得少许疲惫。但影片中又一次对传统与现代，老年和青年在当下的反差化表现，顾桃似乎是在确认自己的初心和来路，为后来的影片及拍摄计划，绘制心里版图。

我觉得我的拍摄想法是一个地理上的概念。因为我本身是没有太多基于经验的想象的东西。你看像刘湘晨老师那种，他说从最高的海拔开始一路拍摄，这样就有他自己的结构，也建立了他个人独特的风格，特别是独特的观看方法。所以差不多七八年前，我看他那个片子也确实是从高往低像海拔一样的，在不同海拔的民族的生活状态，然后以他的视角去记录。但是我怎么也不可能有他的视角。而我，我觉得是从北开始（我不可能往南走），一路往西北走，看整个北面的由少数民族的地域构成的。我觉得这个是我能延续我所说北方的呼吸的方法。所以后面我选择了新疆那边哈萨克族，他们的游牧生活，以及他们也面临的生态移民。

我现在做“萨满地图”也是沿着这样一个北方地理的概念。我想把北方的关于萨满宗教，包括原始宗教、自然宗教的东西，都了解一下，建立一个框架，像地图似的。比如，哈萨克族请神是用冬不拉，那么，他们的历史是什么样的，通过纪录呈现他们萨满的样态。包括他们的服饰，他们的鼓等等。我想我不一定是要变成学者型的导演，因为我知道我根本没办法像学者那么深入，但是我至少可以先建立一种框架，这个框架会很有意思，也才能吸引年轻人来了解甚至接着做下去。

从三十一岁到五十一岁，顾桃说自己一直在突围，用自己的方式向外冲。疫情期间他在草原上，没事就去追马，拿手机去拍马。开始的时候他觉得这种感觉特舒服，那种大口呼吸的感觉，那种从肺里发出热气与冷空气地碰撞，像战斗一样，混杂在一起，把肺都洗干净了，那是真正的自由。

但没过几天，他去跑步，没跑几步，咔嚓一下就趴在了地上，由于自己身体壮硕如熊，很难一下子起来，胳膊当时完全动不了。一躺到那儿，顾桃突然觉得自己已经五十一了，他对自己说，你还以为你能喝一斤半吗，不是了！那只是你想象中的你。这感觉如同二十年前，他回到家，一下子觉得父亲已经很老了。

他看着远处倾斜的山、倾斜的云，对自己说：你必须离开这里，现在就离开。顾桃的又一次突围开始了。

Lin Xin: The Local History of a Small Northwestern Town

Interviewer: CHEN Hua 陈华 Translator: WU Bo 吴波

It takes more than an hour to drive from Xi'an to Tongchuan (铜川). If you go there for the first time, you will be struck by the desolation of the northern part of Shaanxi Province, where the rolling loess is dry and the spring wheat thin. Hidden in the middle of the loess plateau is Tongchuan (铜川), a small, isolated town, like many other towns in China, ordinary and boring. This was how I met Lin Xin (林鑫), a warm and gregarious man who loves the art of calligraphy, classical music, and Russian literature. He painted and wrote poetry in his youth, and now he looks like a typical intellectual from the 1980s. He talked continuously for six hours in the interview and occasionally could not help shedding tears.

As the son of a Shanghai couple who came to contribute their life to the construction of the northwest, Lin Xin has lived in Tongchuan all his life, and all his documentary films are about this small city. Over the past decade, he has made nine documentaries: *Sanlidong* (三里洞) is about local miners including his father and his father's colleagues; *Classmates* (同学) is about his own generation; *Gas* (瓦斯) is about a serious mining disaster; *Preacher* (传道人) features the spiritual belief of the people of Tongchuan; *Chen Jiayong* (陈笏咏) is the life story of his teacher Chen Jiayong, who was sent down to work in Tongchuan; *Riverbed* (河床) is about his own family history; and *Silent Landscape* (沉默的风景) is an exploration of the landscape of Tongchuan. These works together present a full picture of the city, serving as its archive for the future.

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Chen: Please tell us about your family, your childhood and youth, and your experiences as a bank clerk and an amateur painter before you started to produce documentary films.

Lin: For the purpose of contributing to the construction of the great northwest, my father came from the Shanghai Construction Company (上海建筑公司) to the Sanlidong (三里洞) coal mine in Tongchuan, Shaanxi Province on November 28, 1959. My mother followed him soon after. My father was quite musical; he wrote music and dreamed of becoming a musician. He ended up in the Sanlidong coal mine in the northwest of China and worked as a coal miner for the rest of his life.

My mother left Taicang (太仓) for Tongchuan, only informing her mother and keeping her father in the dark about the situation. She got on the train and moved all the way west. As the road got more and more desolate, she soon started to regret her journey. But there was no turning back since she was already on the way. She never left this small city till her death at the age of forty-six. My father died at fifty-five. Before their death, I had been thinking that after both my parents retired, we children would each give them a little money so that they could go back home to the south and live their life raising chickens and ducks. Yet it only remained a thought in my mind.

When our siblings grew up, one by one they left Tongchuan and returned to the south. My younger sister married a husband from Taicang, Jiangsu and moved back there; she also worked in a bank. My younger brother studied at Fudan University (复旦大学) and taught there after graduation. After my younger sister was laid off, she also went back to the south, and I was the only one left behind in Tongchuan.

I was born in 1960 and received all my schooling in Sanlidong, in Sanlidong Primary School and Sanlidong Mine Middle School. I graduated from middle school in 1978 and didn't make it to the fine arts college, failing the second round of the [entrance] test. My family was not well off, I was the eldest son and had a younger brother and two younger sisters, so I choose not to study for another year for the examination. I thought that since my family had another boy, I would go to work in the mine to help my parents; even if I was killed in a mine accident, it wouldn't be a great loss to them. As a big boy, I couldn't idle away at home and consume food for nothing. I was afraid of my father, so I didn't dare to tell him what I thought, but I told my mother, and she relayed it to him. My father was strongly against the idea. Working as a miner by himself all his life, he resolutely refused to let me work in the mines, rather to keep me at home doing nothing.

Later, I worked at a temporary job in the painting and calligraphy studio of the local Cultural Department, and then was recruited to the bank and have worked there ever since. I have been teaching myself since my twenties and attended a night school run by the city government. I learned Wang Li's (王力) *Classical Chinese* (古代汉语) and studied the Open University college programme from the radio and TV. In my childhood, I was lucky to learn Chinese calligraphy and painting with Chen Jiayong, an artist sent down to work in Tongchuan during the Cultural Revolution. At the beginning of Reform and Opening at the end of the 1970s and early 1980s, modern art works such as those by Van Gogh and Picasso were introduced into China. In sharp contrast to traditional Chinese landscape painting and flower-bird painting, western art had an unprecedented and irresistible visual impact on me and made me think about art in a critical and independent way.

I started to pursue an artistic style and worked with clear concepts in my painting. After having a solo exhibition at the National Art Museum of China (中国美术馆) in 1993, I was trapped in a bottleneck period for a long time, which was hard to break through. There were no opportunities and hardly any access to new information in Tongchuan. I grew up in isolation and had to stay there to make a living. The bank I worked in was like a coffin, suffocating me for eight hours a day. I desperately bought and read books as a way out.

I started to film documentary in 2003, with *Chenlu* (陈炉) being my first work. Slowly, over the years, I made *Sanlidong*, *Classmates*, *Gas*, and *Preacher*, all featuring the stories of Tongchuan. In fact, now I am consciously recording the ‘local history’ of the city through both images and text. A friend who makes contemporary art said that my old-fashioned documentaries are worthless in the field of contemporary art. I only smiled at his comments: I don’t intend to produce contemporary art, nor do I care whether something is a documentary or a feature film, which are meaningless [categories] to me. I think and work beyond all these constraints; for me, it’s simply about recording life as faithfully as possible with images.

Chen: The first documentary of yours, *Chenlu*, was formally very impressive: it is static and compositional, a typical photographic style. At that time it was a little like you were searching for a style. How did you begin that film?

Lin: At that time I met my teacher’s son, who was the curator of the Shaanxi Art Museum (陕西美术馆). He wanted to go to Chenlu to research whether ceramics there could be exhibited in his museum. I went with him and was deeply moved by what I saw; from the bottom of my heart, I wanted to preserve the ceramics in images. I intended to make an experimental work with photographs and film, and make the film a documentary archive, which was in fact quite pretentious. I was observing the town with the eyes of an ‘artist’.

When I was filming *Chenlu*, I felt I was approaching the town as a tourist. I only visited a couple of times as an outsider without any local connections. The film was quite superficial, having one person say one sentence about their town; also, it was quite traditional, with beautiful, classic shots, and a panoramic view of the town.

But when I was on the mountain [filming *Chenlu*], I had a shot of *Sanlidong* in my mind. I said to myself that I was the son of a miner, I should make a film about the coal mine. I saw it in my mind, black and white,

all black to be specific, with only one last shot in colour, namely white clouds at the far end of a blue sky. I thought my idea was pretty awesome. However, when I finished it, I realized that even that single colour shot was superfluous: it was only an artistic affectation, not an integral part of the coal mine. The texture of the coal mine, its smell, and the gravity of the fifty years of life that it contained would never generate such a colourful shot.

Chen: *Sanlidong* was your first full-length documentary film. How did the idea come to you?

Lin: In March 2005, *Chenlu* was screened at YunFest (云之南记录影像展), and I received a lot of encouragement, which made me feel I wasn't alone, but that I belonged to a big family that embraced people like me from all over the country. That was a very inspiring event for me. I came back to start filming *Sanlidong* immediately. Since it had been planned earlier, filming went very smoothly. It was completed within three months. Because it was primarily an oral history, I started in March and finished in May. My father died at a very early age, and I felt myself heavily indebted to my parents, yet couldn't face up to them. I made this film as personal redemption. I'm a miner's son, and I should make a film for my father. If I didn't do it, no one would know of their existence.

In 2005 I went back to the *Sanlidong* mine to look for my father's co-workers. Back then I only went there with my father. I first met one or two of his colleagues, who told me where the others lived, and I went to look for them. Of the 381 miners, I finally located fewer than twenty, and I interviewed all the ones I found. Their so-called 'tragic' fate was only such observed from a distance. In fact, for them, life was merely about 'endurance': to endure and to survive. There was no deep hatred in them and talking with them about a dead person was like talking about a glass of water. They were peaceful and lived a simple life, having no complaints about their choices. They were rarely indignant, they just 'endured'.

At YunFest, I sat for the first time in front of the screen, an audience member at my own movie. I could not help bursting into tears, something I'd never done before—at such an age, and among so many people watching, I completely lost control. I was struck by the movie, having never expected that it was so deeply connected to me. There was also a lot of criticism, some about technical errors, with people asking what my intention was in keeping the camera on when the shot was done. I said that I did not do it on purpose, it was only because I wanted a long shot, and I did not know how to shoot it. Truly, I did not know how to do the technical stuff. Of course, I learned later. Technical improvements are inevitable, and come with time, but should never be at the expense of a passion for life.

The gritty images of *Sanlidong* were a perfect match for the subject matter. Yet, when Phoenix TV (凤凰卫视) reporters came to interview the miners, and lit them, the miners suddenly had the rosy cheeks and glowing faces of Li Yuhe (李玉和) [the famous anti-Japanese film hero]. Stylised like this, were they still miners? Their homes were dark, and they were still hidden in the gloom even with extra lighting. Their pale complexions and weak bodies were perfectly compatible with the nature of their life. The style of your images must match your subjects and their lives; if not, this so-called technical perfection is just bullshit, right? If style is not in harmony with content, it's not accurate. I've seen some very impressive film images that were incompatible with their subject matter.

Repetition, repetition, there's lots of repetition in the film: everybody talked about how they'd come here all the way from Shanghai. I was very careful not to present repetitive content during editing, making their narratives complementary parts of the same story, such as that of Cai Guoqi (蔡国琪), the first person in the film to die.

A critic described the narration of *Sanlidong* as 'narrative in the mode of the four gospels'. I think that was an accurate description as the four gospels are about Jesus's death from the perspectives of four narrators. The narration of one person was a story, but narration of the same fact by different people was corroboration in the legal sense, serving as evidence of the truthfulness of the event. It was about providing a witness to history, and was a visual record jointly completed by two generations of people —the elder generation with their life stories from the 1950s recorded by the younger generation, the generation of their son.

A film director always tends to be arrogant. But should you be the boss because you are the director? Then how can you be the boss if there are no characters working with you? Life itself is grand and generous, and we only need to humbly record what it gives to us. This power of life transcends the work of art, transcends documentary, transcends the concept of cinema, and I have never regarded my work as *only* a film, not even at the very beginning. *Salidong* was not accepted by any film festivals and I was fine with that, because I only cared about facing up to my father and his generation, and preserving their lives through images. *Sanlidong* was my first full-length documentary and even now I cannot watch it calmly; every time I cannot help bursting into tears.

Chen: Why did you film your high school classmates in your second movie?

Lin: After *Sanlidong*, it was natural to film the next generation of miners, that is, me and my classmates. All of us lived in the old town area of the city, which was called 'Ten Mile Avenue', even though it had only one

main street and one side street. This tiny town, with no crossroads and only one T-junction, couldn't even be detected by satellite. Astonishingly, living along the same street, most of our classmates had not seen each other for the past thirty years, as everyone was running around, desperate to make a living. In fact, the bank that I worked in was on the street, the busiest section of the small city, and I walked along it every day going to and from work, yet I never came across most of my classmates.

The first person I photographed was Liu Quan'an (刘全安), my childhood friend and soul mate. He was running a photography studio when I filmed him. I said, 'let me try my hand at [filming] you. You will be my first experiment.' However, the first day was totally frustrating. I knew everything about him: his marriage, his dramatic romantic stories, all the messy incidents in his life, just like those in his fiction. But he didn't talk about any of this. I filmed the whole day and went to his place in the evening. His baby was about to sleep in the next room with his wife; we did not dare to speak loudly. We sat in the room with the door closed, speechless: he was completely the opposite to his eloquent old self. It was the hardest time in his life; he was struggling to survive. He said he had never discussed literature with other people; no one knew he had ever written books, nor had he ever published any of them.

It proved to be the perfect time to film him: he was under the greatest mental pressure, almost to the point of aphasia. As he was suffering through the process of transforming himself into a businessman, it was no longer proper for him to talk about his literary dreams, which he had previously imparted to me without reservation. Now he's a successful businessman and is doing very well. I doubt if I had filmed at a later point whether I could have captured his toughest times, when he wanted to sell even his last pair of leather shoes. He has made his fortune, bought several apartments, and lives like a real boss. He asked me to let him know whenever I needed money and claimed that it was businessmen who contributed the most to the world. I smiled at his opinion and was happy about the successful changes in his life.

My classmates and I graduated from high school in 1978 and I started to film them in 2008. The thirty years in-between was the period when China was opening to the outside world. This brought about tremendous differences between individuals that would have been unimaginable back in our middle school days. I hadn't seen some of them since the graduation and only met them by chance. The other day, I came across a classmate who looked straight at me; no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't figure out who this age-beaten face was. I was told that she lived on the same row of the apartment building complex as me. Then she must be one of two to three female classmates, and by the shape of her face I guessed, 'you are Gao.' She said, 'well, finally you remembered me.' I did not, but I was only trying to relieve the embarrassment of not remembering an old classmate.

Several days later at night, it suddenly came to me who she was, a very delicate girl at middle school, though totally a different person now—she was selling toilet paper in the film. When I was filming her, a man walked over from the distance: it was our class teacher. I introduced him to the girl, whose name was Gao Qingfang (高清芳); the teacher looked at her, saying nothing. Gao said, sometimes she saw the teacher while selling the toilet paper and smiled at him without saying anything. She felt the teacher might be embarrassed to have educated a student living such an abject existence. Selling toilet paper every day is a hard life.

Everyone walks the path of his or her own destiny. The last classmate I filmed was a cleaner. At three o'clock in the morning I took a taxi to the foot of the mine mountain. The driver would not go up no matter how much I was willing to pay. She lived on the top of the mountain; we had to climb all the way up. She came out and we followed and filmed her in the dark for over half an hour. It was pitch black: a truck came from far behind shining a light on her back, then the vehicle passed her and left her drowned in the darkness. I used this shot at the end of *Classmates*.

For the past two years, every moment of every day has been lived with my classmates. I was overwhelmed by their lives, which then became the support for, and belief in, my own. Every time I complete a film, I fall into a vacuum, no longer being myself, until I pull myself together and devote myself to a new film. Not until that moment do I feel my life is back to normal and real again.

I rarely turn off the camera when I film. Basically, I leave it on during the whole process, otherwise I wouldn't use up that many tapes. You won't know what will happen when filming a documentary because you never know what will happen in real life. Life is always filled with contingencies and drama and can never be directed. Why do I shoot so many shots of my characters from behind? Because I'm never able to catch up with them. I could not ask them to stop to film a frontal shot. Sometimes the camera is very shaky, and I made exposure errors. *Classmates* was filmed in full auto mode. Why did it have such grand shots? I set the camera to wide-angle. It was impossible to focus manually filming a moving character other than in the interviews, so I just set the camera to wide-angle. If I had kept on adjusting the lens, the tempo of the film, that kind of flowing, real tempo, would be affected. The integrated texture, the soul-stirring tempo, and the smooth continuity must be maintained intact. So what was the point of me constantly adjusting the lens? Remember, I was not producing a feature film.

Documentary has its own logic. Sometimes people talk about technical flaws, but I do not think technique is

the core of documentary films. In feature films, we highlight characters by making them out of focus and so on, which, however, should not be a consideration in documentary. Documentary is the means to record life through images and should be judged for its accuracy and depth of content. Whether shots are skewed or not is a quite superficial criterion for [assessing] documentary films, the most important principle for which is rejecting gimmicks.

2

Chen: When did your concept of a ‘local history of Tongchuan’ first take shape? What kind of constraints did you encounter in making *Gas*?

Lin: It developed gradually over time. After *Classmates*, I started to film *Gas*, motivated by a past mining disaster. I had the desire to film it [the disaster] when it happened, but I was still filming *Sanlidong*. I did not know what I’d call it. Later, the three films were called The Survival Trilogy (生存三部曲), though my idea for them had developed earlier.

When the Chenjiashan (陈家山) mine disaster happened, I wanted to film it, but I didn’t think I could. The [disaster] location was in uproar, Premier Wen Jiabao was there, and thus it was difficult to go there to film. I thought I should wait a bit as I was not interested in filming the news: the type of ‘scene’ that journalists liked was not appealing to me, and I didn’t think I could film it even if I went there. Some of the footage shot by TV stations was chased down and retrieved by the local security people.

The mine disaster was a serious accident, but what I really wanted to focus on was the overall conditions of the mine. I waited for five years. After finishing *Sanlidong* and *Classmates*, I thought enough time had passed for memories to fade, and then I went there. The process was still hard as nobody dared to do an interview. I came across people on the way and they would not answer my questions. It was painful and we had to overcome all sorts of difficulties to get the film done. There were a lot of things you would never know about until you were inside: the life of the miners was barely describable. Why did mine disasters happen frequently? What was that all about? I provided my own interpretation and thought, if the government authorities watched the film, would they take any preventive measures? Would they reflect on why the industry was such a highly risky one?

The last shot was the fireworks going off in the city square for the seventy-fifth anniversary celebrations. The audience were prevented from going near them, and I approached the square by taking the way through

the woods. This shot of fireworks was filmed before *Gas*. Seeing the fireworks, I realized something. I took my camera and made my way to the square. When the fireworks were in full bloom, I was in the centre of the square, and pushed the camera lens right up to get a close-up. I captured a reasonable length of shot and decided it should be the ending of *Gas*. Those who had witnessed [the] real gas [explosion] were all dead and unable to describe it, and the shot of the celebratory fireworks, the equally powerful and dazzling fire that almost blinds our eyes, was the only subjective shot in the film, taking the place of the real gas explosion.

Chen: How do you do the interviews? Your interviewees look particularly relaxed and natural when they are with you.

Lin: My method is very simple, and I share it with others. I tell it to whomever asks, but not everyone wants to use it: don't ask questions about key issues. For instance, in *Gas*, questions about the mine disaster could not be asked [directly], or the interviewees would become alert and defensive. I always started by asking questions about the life of my subjects, usually from childhood. In *Gas*, I asked when they first came to work in the mine. Some of them went back even earlier, such as to how they came to the mine as teenagers. I patiently waited for them to grow up in their stories because I knew their life journey would finally arrive at this point. They could never skip it.

That's why I also produce a huge amount of text for my films, as every character has a biography of their own. I spare no effort in editing all this text as it's the films' intertexts. I have never intended to produce a film for its own sake; I also want to know the story of each character, the journey of their lives, and all the chapters of their biography. Each character is an independent individual on their own. I do not look for quick success when filming, and I never interrupt my interviewees like journalists from TV stations do. I have seen how reporters from Phoenix TV interview people, it's totally the opposite to me: I never cut in when my interviewees are talking, and I wait for them to continue when they stop. I remain silent when they pause and then they will continue to talk to avoid awkwardness. If they really have nothing to talk about, I then mention a word or a topic, but most of the time I don't say anything. Phoenix TV reporters say that the weekly programme they host are industrial products, and they could not afford to spend two years on one programme like I do with my work.

The way I make my films is completely different. I never take into consideration the cost: my time and life do not count as a cost. I fully devote myself [to it] willingly; I have devoted my life to my work because I believe it will benefit society. I think I must do my work because it's about documenting this era.

Chen: The Tongchuan Trilogy (铜川三部曲) presents a holistic historical narration. *Preacher*, which you made from 2010 to 2013, shifts [focus] from history to the present day, to the space of spirits and religious belief in small-town Tongchuan. Why did you make such a transition?

Lin: I had been waiting for a long time to start *Preacher*. Before that I filmed *Classmates* and *Gas*. With *Classmates*, I was struggling and dealing with the mundane on an entirely secular level. In such a social context, was faith becoming more important? I had been thinking about making a film of faith and belief and had been preparing for it for a long time. Preachers became my interest because they were very expressive people, and I also wanted to present the history of Christianity in Tongchuan over the past decades through the story of these preachers. By then, there were four generations of them, from the earliest founders to those born in the 1980s.

I spent a very long time on it. Usually on Sundays, when I had time, I went to film the preachers during services. I found things to be totally different from how I had imagined. Real life always exceeds one's expectations: art comes from life yet is inferior to life. How could art exceed life? Impossible! I joined them and ended up finding out that they were no different from other ordinary people: conspiracies and love triangles were also themes in their lives.

Some people said that the audience would look down upon Christians because of my film. I said we were only human beings: God is immaculate, human beings are not. I had started with the idea of filming faith, then I came in and found out it was not what I had expected. If I only produced a film to convert people, it would be meaningless because it would be a lie. I said what I filmed was the true life of Christianity in this day and age. Even if it failed to meet the expectations of the audience, over time it would gradually convince them. Only God is perfect, not preachers; otherwise, the existence of God would be meaningless. I was just recording the genuine condition of faith in the current day. Life was progressing slowly, and the audience would understand accordingly.

People convert to Christianity when their life feels hopeless: the end of secular life is the beginning of religion. A man who on several occasions ended up in the police station for street fighting and vagrancy finally became a devoted preacher and danced a street dance at the Christmas party. I shed tears every time I watch this part. How did the man save his own life? I thought, first of all, he was a human being; religious or not, he was a human being in real life, had survived all kinds of tough situations, and was going through his own life journey. How did people come to faith in real life? And how did their reality and faith change their lives? What kinds of difficulties did they come across during the process? In the film, I was again the

documenter of the life of Christians in Tongchuan.

Chen: Say something about *Chen Jiayong*. This film was very special because it was not the story of a miner, but an artist and intellectual.

Lin: In filming *Chen Jiayong* I interviewed the largest number of people, around forty. Still, the process was very difficult because Mr. Chen had died many years ago. He was sent down to work in Tongchuan, and I learned art with him for a short period. Later, he returned to Xi'an and we maintained close contact; I often visited him till both he and his wife died. I had a deep attachment to them; they also treated me as part of their family. He took me under his wing, and I made myself at home at their place. I know he had 'historical problems' but I never asked about them. He had departed the world when I started to make the film. I had to reconstruct him as a historical figure in the film.

Since I was making a documentary, I still had to interview people. I visited some of my teacher's friends in the hospital in Xi'an, bringing them food, like a carton of milk, and we'd agree on an interview when they'd get back home from the hospital, because we thought the hospital would not be a good location for the interview. However, that year after Tomb-Sweeping Day (清明节), all of the people that I had appointments with passed away. I thought I would never have the chance to make this film, because the history I wanted had disappeared. All his old connections had left this world, including his best friend. What could I do? Later, I had access to his personal archive and read many accounts of him. I had followed my teacher for so many years, and yet this was the first time I knew what his life was like. Before, I had no idea. I knew my film could be completed when I started to read those documents. It was such a contrast [to my previous understanding of his life].

He worked in the Kuomintang government for about one year before 1949, painting propaganda pictures, and then things started to go wrong. Shi Lu (石鲁) thought highly of him and secured him a place at Northwest Pictorial (西北画报社). I knew from the archive that there he was the leading artist, and Shi Lu and Zhao Wangyun (赵望云) were in charge. His past experience with the Kuomintang was later brought up as an historical error, but since he made no new mistakes, he was kept on for internal work without being sent to prison. Shi Lu and some other people protected him.

He was a careful and cautious man. In 1976, just before the Gang of Four was about to be crushed, Shi Lu went to Mr. Chen's house to write calligraphy and paint pictures, with the work being partly associative. After Shi Lu left, Mr. Chen soaked all the work in water from the brush washer. He said that he couldn't

keep a single piece of Shi Lu's work as it could be fatal for him. He had been so disturbed that his mental condition was unstable. Back in Tongchuan, when I was his student, once he wanted to burn his paintings, so I said I would get an iron barrel and did the work for him. He refused and did it all by himself, making sure everything was burned to ashes. He did not let me do it in his place.

After 1978, he went back to work at the China Artists Association (美协). I went to visit him, and he gave me one of his paintings, examining it very closely and repeatedly before handing it to me. I did not understand such caution as a young man in my twenties, but now, after making the film, I have come to understand him. He was suffering from the after-effects of that disease, and that was why he was also over-cautious, even towards me, a person so close to him. In old age he couldn't stand for long and had to squat to draw. He was not well and took medication all the time; he could not fall asleep without sleeping pills. He had been my loving and respected mentor for decades, yet I was completely unaware of his life, the part of his life long before we met. His evil fate had yet so paradoxically become my luck: had he not suffered his doom, how could I have had the opportunity to become his student? Now, so many years after his death, I returned to look for him, to make a documentary about him, and be the messenger of his life.

He was an individual intellectual living in a special historical period. He was not a heroic figure like Lin Zhao (林昭), neither was he some kind of legendary protagonist. He was very ordinary, very timid and cautious, yet was also mercilessly thrown into and ravaged by the flood of history. If he had been a hero, he would definitely have had nothing to do with me, because heroes must be exceptional and are a minority. He was like all of us: from the masses and identifying with the ordinary people. Set in that kind of time and space, and in that kind of social context, he underwent the same suffering. This was what I wanted to express in the film. Mr. Chen was my mentor in the world of art, and overwhelmingly influential on my entire life, which later turned out to exceed my imagination. He was a 'visitor' [outsider] to Tongchuan but should be part of local history as he really came and lived here.

3

Chen: How did you start filming *Riverbed*, about you and your family?

Lin: *Sanlidong* concerned a group of characters; meanwhile, I also thought about focusing on one of the families. Which family? How to approach filming? The answer was to film my father, Zhu Yongsheng (朱永生), and his descendants. I took the train back south, to the hometown of Zhu Yongsheng and Wu Yuying (吴玉英), my father and mother. I went there to search for their adolescence, their old

acquaintances, and their early life. My parents moved from Shanghai to the northwest; their children moved back to the south; and my children, their grandchildren, migrated to Shenzhen. It's a story of continuous migration.

Our parents died within ten months of each other when we were in our twenties, leaving us behind when we were still dependent on them. The pain was engraved in our hearts, and no one was willing to reveal it. My siblings knew I was a documentary-maker and of course they knew what to expect when I said I was about to film our family. They went through tremendous pain and difficulty in exploring the past; I was so indebted to them for their trust in me, their eldest brother. At my mother's funeral, I walked at the front of the procession and felt, being the eldest son, I must cry. But I had no tears and had to fake crying. I pushed myself to roar-cry and then tears streamed down my face. I was acting. Back from the funeral, I dared not stay home on my own.

Every day, in dreams, my mother blamed me for not telling her the truth about her disease. I didn't tell her in order not to crush her desire for life; I chose to shoulder all the blame and pain. I had a lifetime of guilt towards my mother, which I had nobody to confide in. I couldn't stay home alone; I would escape outside, and only return after my wife was back from work. I couldn't even tell her my inner fears. That was the weakest period in my life.

Then, looking at our next generation, each of them has a different story of their own. My two younger sisters' children were so disillusioned and desperate when their parents divorced, yet they still grew into the prime of their life after that grim period. *Riverbed* was completely chronological. From Zhu Yongsheng in *Sanlidong*, to the various generations of *Riverbed*, down to *Nuonuo* (诺诺), the story of my granddaughter: these are my three 'family history' films.

Chen: *Silent Landscape* was innovative in that it is dominated by space. Why did you put these spaces together in the film?

Lin: It was a deliberate choice. I came to realize that I have been filming this piece of land, using images and text in a modern sense to preserve the local history, which, traditionally, was preserved through text, pictures, and maps. Now with images, narration, text, and databases of all kinds, a more complete local history could be recorded. Actually, it was the contemporary life history of a small city. Since I had already filmed enough images of people, either in groups or as individuals, I needed images of topographic and geographic spaces to enrich the historical record.

The placement of the shots of spaces was carefully considered on the basis of psychological and other characteristics. It's not a story told in language, but through images. At the beginning, I thought the old language of images should be revised in terms of mood, space, and the changes in space, even at the expense of losing the audience. I would keep going resolutely even if not a single audience member could keep up with me. There was no story for the audience; the only episodes left weren't stories but landscapes. The characters' narratives were in fact the landscapes of their inner mind, of nature, and of society. That was how I constructed the film. I compressed the complicated stories, kept the characters to a minimum, and just highlighted the landscapes, the silent landscapes.

After *Silent Landscape*, my next film will be called *Landscape of Memory* (记忆的风景). In it I will practice a taxonomy of images. You know that the Bechers [German artists Hilla and Bernd Becher] filmed a huge number of cooling towers and barns? I will use my material of death and childhood to construct a film about human beings. Of my two million characters of oral history, over ninety percent is unused, and would suffice for a film of memory, completely different from the one of spatial landscapes. Such a film will take a long time to edit because there is so much material.

I already know that the film will start with childhood. Every character contributes their childhood to the large number of stories on this topic. Then there will be the taxonomies of love and death, all kinds of versions of each type, with death being the ending of the film, in other words, the taxonomy of deaths. I have never done anything similar before. Also, I am thinking of pushing my work further by producing *The Trilogy of Silence*, followed by another film, to be titled *Subjective Landscape*. I have so many dreams to fulfil, but I do not know what the future will be like for me, and when I will complete all my plans. Neither do I know if life will give me the opportunity to carry all of them out.

Chen: Have you encountered any types of 'resistance' after the screening of your films?

Lin: There was a time when I was mandated to shave the beard that I had had for more than twenty years. I became a stranger in the small city where I had been living for decades. When I came across my acquaintances and greeted them, people just looked stunned for a second, nodded, shook hands with me, and then hurried away. Nobody talked to me in the dining hall and no one responded to my conversation. I was frequently interviewed by my boss and became a stranger to all my colleagues. One of my female colleagues used to be very nice to me, but later ignored me, pretending not to see me. She thought I was an evil person. I am not afraid to be misunderstood and did not provide an explanation.

In 2012, I was fifty-two, and retired eight years before the statutory retirement age. My wife said redeeming eight years of my life was worth the financial loss. I expressed my gratitude to the leadership. I did not make money from making films, and thus was not able to pay a [production] team. I could not use any other people except for my wife, who helped me edit my two-million-plus-character texts and carried my tripod when I was filming. When she was not there, I was by myself. I spent all the money that both of us earned. She was the real boss and I credited her as the producer of my films.

I made all the previous films in my spare time. I devoted all my energy and spared no effort on each film until I fell ill. I couldn't use my work time before retirement and had to make full use of weekends and holidays. I suffered from a lumbar disc herniation and walked like a crab when filming *Preacher*. After that I retired, which was perfect timing.

Making films has changed my life. People say I have got nothing from it, making no money. But I think I have received my reward: my life has been so enriched, why should I be greedy for anything else? I am the biggest beneficiary of my own documentaries, which have changed me from an ignorant, so-called artist to the humble recorder of life. Now if you say I am an artist, I think you are just making fun of me. My documentary films have provided me with huge resources. The city that I have filmed and the huge amount of text that I have recorded may become eternal reference points for people in the future who want to understand this era. If they are useless, it doesn't matter if they disappear. That is my reward. What more could I ask for?

林鑫：一个西北小城的地方志

陈华

从西安开车到铜川要一个多小时，倘若第一次去，会触目于陕西北方的那种荒芜，连绵不断的黄土塬显得干旱少水，春天的时候长了稀薄的麦子，藏在黄土塬中间的就是铜川。一个非常偏僻的小城，和中国别的城市类似，普通而无聊。就这样见到了林鑫老师，他热情豪爽，喜欢书法艺术，热爱古典音乐，喜欢俄罗斯的文学，年轻时画画也写过诗，有着来自八十年代知识分子的气质。面对我的采访，他一气不停地说了六个小时，数次情不自禁地落泪。

作为支援大西北的上海人的后代，林鑫一直生活在这里，拍摄的纪录片作品也全部和小城铜川有关。十几年的时间竟然有九部长片：《三里洞》拍摄了他的矿工父辈、《同学》拍摄了他自己那代人，《瓦斯》拍摄了一场严重的矿难，《传道人》拍摄了铜川的精神信仰，《陈笏咏》拍摄了他下放到铜川的老师，《河床》拍摄了他的家庭史，《沉默的风景》描述了铜川的地理空间……这些作品全面纪录了这个城市的状态，给我们留下了一份证词、一个档案。

陈华（以下简称陈）：请讲讲你的家庭，你的童年时代和青年时代，拍摄纪录片之前作为上班的银行职员、一个业余画家的成长经验。

林鑫（以下简称林）：因为支援大西北，一九五年十一月二十八日，我爸爸从上海建筑公司来到陕西铜川的三里洞煤矿，我妈妈随后也来到这里。我爸爸的音乐天赋相当好，会作曲，原来理想是当音乐家。然而他最后来到了西北的三里洞煤矿，当了一辈子煤矿工人。

妈妈离开太仓来铜川是偷着来的，背着我外公不知道，只告诉了外婆。坐上火车一路往西的时候，她看到路上越来越荒凉，马上就后悔了，但是已经出来了，没有回头箭了，她的命运就从此在这片土地上，直到她最后去世。我妈去世时候46岁，我爸去世的时候五十五岁。想着等爸妈都退休了，我们儿女每人给他们一点点钱，让他们回到南方老家去生活，养个鸡养个鸭，可最终他们的梦想都没能实现。

后来我们兄弟姐妹长大了以后，陆陆续续都离开了铜川，回到了南方。我妹妹找了个对象，调回到江苏太仓，也是在银行工作，我弟弟是考上复旦大学，留校任教了。小妹妹下岗以后，也回到南

方去了，只有我还留在铜川。

我生于一九六〇年，小学、初中、高中都是在三里洞，三里洞小学、三里洞矿中，直到一九七八年高中毕业。考美院到复试了还是没考上。我家庭条件不好，我是老大，下面有一个弟弟两个妹妹，我没有复读，报名要求内招下矿井，十八岁了在家吃闲饭觉得不忍心，被我爸严厉拒绝了。我想反正我们家还有我弟弟，我去报名下矿井，去帮家里。真要是出事人没了，也无所谓，就这么回事。觉得作为一个儿子这么大了不能在家吃闲饭。我在家挺怕我爸的，不敢给我爸说，我跟我妈说了，我妈转告给我爸，我爸坚决不同意。他干了一辈子矿工，坚决不让我下矿井，宁可让我待业在家。

后来我在文化馆的书画室干临时工，后来招考到银行，就一直在银行工作到现在。从二十多岁一直自学，读市政府的夜校。学了王力的《古代汉语》，又读了广播电视大学。美协的陈笳咏老师文革被下放到铜川，小时候有幸跟着他学书法和中国画。刚开始改革开放时候，梵高毕加索这些现代艺术一下子涌进来，西方现代艺术相对传统山水花鸟画来说，带给我们的视觉冲击太巨大了，作为一个青年人是没办法拒绝的，然后慢慢地开始独立思考绘画。

那时的绘画开始追求艺术的形式感，有很强的观念性。一九九三年在中国美术馆办完我的个展以后，自己陷入一个瓶颈期，很难突破。在铜川没有任何的机会，也接触不到什么信息，完全是在一个非常孤僻的环境中独自地生长。为了生活只能在这个小地方，在银行工作，单位像棺材一样，八小时把你控制得死死的。我拼命地买书、看书。

纪录片二〇〇三年从短片《陈炉》开始，也做了很多年了。也慢慢地经历了那么长时间，《三里洞》、《同学》、《瓦斯》、《传道人》，拍摄的都是铜川。现在变得非常自觉地做类似“地方志”一样的东西。有影像还有文字。一个做当代艺术的朋友说，在当代艺术里，你的这种老套的记录式的文本是没有价值的。我笑笑，对于我来说我不追求什么当代艺术，甚至它是不是纪录片、它是不是电影，对我来说都没有意义了，我已经完全超越了，根本就不考虑这些问题。对于我来说，仅仅是尽可能忠实地将生活转化为影像。

陈：你转向纪录片创作的第一部短片作品《陈炉》形式很讲究，有摄影类型学的样式，画面很静态，很有构图，当时还是有一点形式上的追求。是怎样开始的？

林：那时遇到我老师的儿子，他是陕西美术馆馆长，他要到陈炉去，考察那里的陶瓷看看能不能在陕西美术馆做个展示，然后就跟他去了，当时看了很激动，我希望用影像把陈炉古镇保存下来，这是最朴素的愿望。当时的拍摄试图用影像进行实验。是文献档案，还要有实验性，实际上还是挺装逼的，现在看来，完全是以一个“艺术家”的眼光去看的陈炉。

拍《陈炉》时候，我觉得我是一个旅游的眼光，和那个地方挺“隔”的，我只去过几次，几乎和那里没有太大的关联，我也不是很熟悉那里的人。片子里一个人一句话说陈炉，也很表面，对摄影的认识都是挺传统的，还是要画面很漂亮，拍摄下的陈炉的整个景色，还是画面还是挺古典挺唯美的。

但是在山上就有个《三里洞》的镜头在我脑海里了。我想我是个矿工的儿子，我应该拍煤矿，我想他全部是黑白片，全部是黑的。全部黑白片里有一个彩色的镜头，白云在蓝天的尽头，我就觉得我的构思挺牛逼吧。然而真正当你拍完《三里洞》后发现，那一个彩色镜头也是多余的，是你艺术家装逼，那煤矿的东西容不下这样的唯美。生活它已经根本容不下这样一个蓝天白云的镜头，煤矿的那种质感，那种气息，五十年生命的那种重力的压力，连这样的镜头都是多余的。

陈：《三里洞》是你第一部正式的长片处女作，怎么开始想到要拍摄《三里洞》的？

林：二〇〇五年三月短片《陈炉》参加了云之南影展，给我带来更多的是精神上的鼓励，让你觉得你有家，你不是孤独的一个人，在全国有很多和你一样的人，那次展映在精神上的激励蛮强的。

《三里洞》本来就构思好了，回来后立马就拍，拍得也很快，就两三个月。因为它完全是以口述为主，春天三月份回来，五月份就拍完了。我爸爸去世非常早，对父母亲我是挺亏欠的，没办法面对。所以我觉得这也是自我的救赎，应该给我的父辈拍个片子。我是个矿工的儿子，我不去就没人去了，没有人知道他们的存在。

二〇〇五年我再一次回到煤矿，回到三里洞煤矿，去寻找他的工友们，当年都是和我爸一块来的，然后遇到一两个，他们告诉我谁在哪住谁在哪住，我再一家一家去找，三百一十八个人，后来在三里洞矿的都不到二十个人，没剩下几个。有的是找到了，有的是没找到。找到了就采访。所谓的“悲剧”命运，是你远距离观察的结果，事实上他们在这的命运只是一种“承受”，因为你要生存，你不得不承受。没有什么深仇大恨，说一个死人如同说一杯水，他们很淡定，很简单地生活，选择了这样命运也没有什么可抱怨的，他们很少有义愤填膺的，只是在“承受”。

在“云之南”放的时候，我第一回在大屏幕前自己做观众，第一次那么失声痛哭，从来没有过的，那么大把年龄了，那么多人坐那看，然后完全失控，影片把我击中了，你从来都没想到这样的东西它和你的生命那么有关联。大家有些抨击也非常强烈，技术不完美的指责也非常多，别人就问我，你的镜头到头了还拐回来是什么意思，我说拍得不够长。问你是不是故意的，我就说了其实是我技术上不会，真的是不会。后来会了，当然技术的完善是必然的，技术肯定会慢慢成长的，但绝不能以阉割生命的激情为代价。

但是《三里洞》那种粗砺的影像和题材是匹配的。凤凰卫视来，我领着他们去采访，打上灯光一弄红光满面，都快成李玉和了，那么样板戏，还是矿工吗？他们的房子里特别的灰暗，太黑了，拉一个灯还是那么暗。那种面色的苍白，那种虚弱，那个和它的本质是匹配的，你的影像风格一定和你的生活和这些人物是匹配的，你脱离了这种生活真实的所谓的技术性的完美，纯粹是扯淡，对不对？那玩意和它完全不相关，它就是不准确的。我看有些拍摄的那种影像语言是很好的，但不太匹配。

重复、重复，它里头有着大量的重复，比如从上海怎么来，每个人都在讲，实际上我剪辑的时候已经非常注意到不要重复了，剪人物的讲述是错开的，每个人讲的是不同的侧面。比如说先讲蔡国琪，这几个人一块回忆，第一个死亡的人就是他。

有个批评家把《三里洞》的叙事方法命名为“四福音书式叙事模式”，四福音书，马太福音那四本书都是在讲耶稣的死，从不同角度，所以他用词挺准的。这个事儿一个人讲是个案，不同的人分头都在讲这个事儿，从法律上来说，就是确证，可以作为证据，说明这个事儿是真实发生的，是没法否定的。它就具有见证历史的能力，这是两代人完成了这个影像记录——老一代用他五十年代的生命史，然后加上矿工之子的记录。

当导演的往往很自大，你是导演你就牛逼吗？没有这些拍摄对象你在空地方牛逼是吗？生活本身是博大的，他给予了我们。我们谦卑地俯下身去记录下来。这种生活的力量超越了艺术作品，超越了纪录片，超越了电影的概念，我从来没有把它当电影做的，一开始就没有。后来电影节不要，我也很坦然，因为我只面对我的父辈，我觉得得用影像的方式将他们的生命保存下来。《三里洞》是我的第一部长片，我到现在都不能看，每次在展映现场看都会泪流满面。

陈：为什么第二部长片拍摄了你的高中同学们？

林：拍完《三里洞》之后，再拍矿工的下一代——我和我的同学们，就是顺理成章的事情。我们生活在老城区，被称为十里长街，只有一条主马路，另外修了一条副马路，是一个没有十字路口的城市，也被认为是卫星上看不到的城市。只有一个丁字路口，这么大点地方，我和大部分同学却在三十年中竟没有见过一面。大家都为了生存奔波，很难遇见。其实我工作的银行就在街上，我上下班就是在马路边走的，在最繁华段走过的，但是大部分人是没碰到过的。

第一个拍的是写作的刘全安，我的发小，也是我精神上的同路人，他那段时间在开影楼。刘全安和我关系特别好，我说先拿你开刀，第一个试验。但是第一天我拍得特别绝望，他的事我什么都知道，他的婚姻，他那种波澜壮阔的恋爱史，那些乱七八糟的事儿，他的生活跟他的小说一样，但是他一点都没讲。我跟拍了一整天，然后晚上去他家，他的宝宝要睡觉，他老婆陪着睡觉，虽然在另

外一个房子就隔了一堵墙，也不敢大声说话，就把门关着，他完全坐在那里处于一种失语状，曾经口若悬河的人完全变掉，变成另外一个人，那是他生存压力最大的时候，就像他讲，他不跟别人谈文学，别人从来都不知道他是搞过写作，写好的书从来没出版过。

后来才明白，我那时拍的他是准确的，我拍摄到他精神压力最大的时候，几乎失语状，艰难地向商人转变的过程，各种痛苦挣扎，他这时再夸夸其谈他的文学理想也不现实，他已经被挤压到这种状况了。他原来是给我讲过文学，原来不是现在。他已经成功转型成了一个商人，而且做得很好。我说我现在重拍还能拍到当年的你吗？最困难的时候把一双皮鞋都想卖掉，拍到了他最挣扎的那一段。后来他有钱了，又买了几套房子，现在过得很好，老板一样，然后跟我说你需要钱吭声，他还说商人是对世界上贡献最大的，我默默笑笑，他成功地转型了，给他的生活带来了改变，祝福他。

我们这代人的命运，一九七八年高中毕业到二〇〇八年我拍摄，也是改革开放的三十年，和改革开放是同步的。我们都坐在一个班里时没法想象，三十年后每个人的命运落差非常大。有些完全是撞到的。那次撞到个同学看看我，我不敢吭声，完全不认识的苍老的面容。最后别人说她和你在一排住的，后来一想到我们的公房在一排住的女同学就两三个，我根据她脸型想了下，我说你姓高，她说你想起来了，我没想起来，我只是化解了我自己的尴尬——连同学都不认识了。

后来过了好几天，晚上我才想起他，我们同班时候那么清秀的女孩，完全变得面目全非——就是片子里头卖卫生纸那一个，甚至在我拍摄的时候，从远处走过来一个人，是我们班主任，我还打招呼都给他介绍，说这是我们同学高清芳，老师看了看也没说啥，后来她说，有时候卖卫生纸的时候会看到老师，就笑一笑，也不说话，可能觉得他培养出这样的学生，也不好意思了，是很落魄的生活，天天卖卫生纸，辛苦得一塌糊涂。

每个人有每个人命运的轨迹，拍到最后一个人物清洁工的时候，我打个出租车，凌晨三点打到矿上，到山脚下，她在山上住。出租车不愿意上，有路司机也不愿意上，说啥都不上，你给多少钱都不行。我们就爬上去，然后从她屋里出来，这一路跟着拍，全部是黑夜，在黑夜中走了半个多小时，马路上全是黑暗的，然后就一辆车过来，灯光打着她的背影，车过去她又湮没在黑暗中。这个镜头我用到了同学的片尾。

这两年全部的我每天每时每刻全部在他们的生活中，他们的生活压垮了我的生活，成为我生命的全部，成为我生活的支撑，和信仰差不多。每一部片子拍完了，突然就会陷入一种真空状态，人完全状态就不对了，完全是失重状，然后直到你又一次拼命地投入下一部影片，觉得你的生活才真实起来，才正常起来。

拍摄的时候很少关机。基本上我长期开着，要不也拍不了那么多带子，因为纪录片你不知道会发生啥，根本不知道。你也没办法预断，你不知道生活在发生什么。所以我一般都是跟很长时间不关机，偶然性太多了，生活的戏剧时刻在发生着，你也不能导演它。所以说我为啥拍背影多了，我有时候在撵不上他的，我只能拍背影，我不能说你停下等等，等我走到你前面拍个正面，我不能那样说的。有的时候晃得一塌糊涂了，那些都不管。曝光这种缺陷也不管，你没办法。我那个《同学》完全用的是全自动，为啥景别大？我放在最广角端，他基本上全是清晰的。手动调焦不可能。你采访我可以调好，你再跑了我跟出来怎么办？我不换镜头，转到广角就完了。我就觉得要是刻意了是伤气的，对，它浑然一体的气，必须要保留那种血脉相连、回肠荡气、一气呵成的感觉。你来回折腾？你精心地算计？你又不是剧情片。

纪录片它有它内在的逻辑，有时候他们说技术瑕疵，我说没有什么技术是纪录片必须具备的，在技术之上再来谈纪录片，你剧情片把它主人突出了，怎么虚焦什么的，我说纪录片那些东西你都不要给我谈，纪录片，从生活转化为影像，你的准确度和深度，我认为是考量纪录片和对纪录片的一个判断，你的镜头是否胡乱歪斜这仅仅是肤浅表面，重要的是你是否准确地将生活转化为影像。很重要一点：拒绝花招。

二

陈：你的“铜川地方志”的概念是从什么时候开始形成的？拍摄《瓦斯》遇到了哪些阻力？

林：刚开始没有的。后来慢慢形成的，《同学》拍完以后，接下来拍《瓦斯》——这部片子够构思还早。当时矿难刚发生的时候，我就有拍的愿望，但那个时候我《三里洞》还没拍。我不知道叫啥名字。“生存三部曲”是后来命名的。当时我想拍的三部曲在我脑海中形成了。

陈家山矿难发生时我想拍，但是觉得我没办法去拍，那次矿难整个的现场是非常轰动的，温家宝总理也去了，新闻效应非常大，那时也很难去。就觉得应该等一等，也没想拍新闻，他们喜欢拍的“现场”对我来说也不重要，再则你去了也拍不到。有的电视台拍到的素材，都被保卫科的车追回去收回来。

矿难是一个事件吧，我更想关注的是煤矿的生态。我等了五年，《三里洞》拍完，《同学》拍完，我想这个时间也很长了，大家慢慢地淡忘了。然后我才进去，但还是拍得很艰难。一般没人敢接受你采访。你就看路上的人，你一问他们都不敢说。经历了种种困难才拍成。拍得很痛苦，那个东西确实很艰难，有很多内容你是真正进去才知道的，那些矿工的生活，让人觉得没法形容。矿难为什么一直不断，这到底是怎么回事？我提供了这个文本，我想假如国家部门看到这片，他们在安全等各方面会不会采取些措施？这行业为什么如此高危能否反思下？

最后一个镜头，当时广场上在放烟花，它是七十五周年庆典，人都是拦着的，不让往跟前去的，然后我就从树林里头钻过去，钻到那广场正中间。这个烟花的镜头拍在《瓦斯》之前。当时我突然就意识到了，拿到了摄像机，我要去看一看，然后我就钻到了正中间，这些烟花放起来我刚好是在正中间，镜头全推上去给特写。我想到了瓦斯，我当时就决定这个是我的片尾，给它足够的长度，见到瓦斯的人都死掉了，没办法向我们描述，这种庆典的烟花是瓦斯里头唯一的一个主观镜头，那就是瓦斯，那种闪瞎你眼睛的那种火光。

陈：如何进行采访？采访对象面对你的时候感觉特别放松自然。

林：我的方法非常简单，我也分享给别人，谁问我都告诉他们，可不一定别人愿意采用——我从来不问关键性问题，关键性问题是不能问的。比如说在《瓦斯》当中矿难是不能问的，你问别人会很敏感，我总是从你生活讲起，我一般都是从你童年讲起，《瓦斯》就从你什么时候来矿的给我讲，但有些也会讲得很早的时候，他们怎么来矿了？十几岁怎么来，我都是让他成年，从很小的时候讲，因为我有足够的耐心，你的生命旅程会抵达到这一站，你没办法跳过去。

这也是为什么我所有的片子会留下那么多文本，每一个人物，他都有他一生的传记，他自己的自传，这也是我为啥拼命要把这些文本都整理出来，它和影片是互文的。我没有仅仅为这个片子做这个片子，再一个我还是想知道每个生命的故事，每个人生命的旅程是怎样的，它有个前因后果，一个人物他就是一个采样。拍摄时没有那么急功近利，我不像电视台那样打断你的话。当时凤凰卫视来的时候，我就想说，你们拍和我拍的方法完全是相反的，人家说话我从来不插嘴，我是停着的。等他说，我都在等，我都不吭声。他不说话我也不吭声。两个人沉默会尴尬的，他一会就得说。有时候实在没得说，我提一个词，问一个话题，我一般是不吭声的。凤凰卫视说我们是电视台我们是栏目，我们一个礼拜要播一个节目，完全是工业化，怎么可能像我两年做一部。

我一个人的影像制作方式完全不一样，因为我不考虑成本的，我的时间成本生命成本都不算的，我完全搭上我自己，我愿意去做这样一个事，把我自己生命都搁进去，觉得对社会还有点用。觉得它要是做下来，毕竟是这个时代生活的记录。

陈：铜川三部曲构成了一个完整的历史叙述，而二〇一〇年到二〇一三年你拍《传道人》，它有一个转变，就是告别了这样的一个历史叙述，转换到了现实空间，小城铜川的精神空间，精神与信仰的世界，为什么会如此选择？

林：拍《传道人》还在拍《同学》当中，等了很久。拍完《同学》拍完《瓦斯》，然后再拍这个，

我觉得，那是一个在完全社会现实世俗层面，在现实中挣扎的东西。是不是信仰在当下会变得更加重要？我想拍信仰，这已经准备很久了。选择拍传道人群体，因为我觉得一个是他们口才好能讲，再一个也希望通过这样的群体反映铜川基督教这几十年的状况，前后已经四代人了，有八十后的，也有那些创始人。

这个片子拍的时间还很长，抽空就去，反正他们一般都是礼拜天去聚会。你进入以后发现就不是那么回事，你想象的和现实完全不一样，生活永远比你高，艺术来源于生活，低于生活，怎么能高于生活，不可能的。然后你到那最后会发现三国演义、三角恋爱什么的都存在。他们也和现实生活中的人一样的情感。

有人说你这样拍下去别人会笑话我们基督教的，我说我们是人，上帝是完备的，我们人都是不完全的，我也是想着拍信仰来了，但我进来以后发现不是那么回事，如果只是光拍了大家可信主了，那个是假的，是没有意义的。我说在这个时代的这种基督教现状，他就是这样状况，这个是真实的。那么即便是跌倒，他会慢慢地再爬起来，只有上帝是完备的。假如我们每个人都是完全的，根本就不需要上帝的存在。所以说我只是记录在当下这个时代空间，这种信仰的状况。生命在慢慢地成长，后来也慢慢去说服他们。

人进入信仰都是人生走到绝路，人的尽头是上帝的开始，一个曾经在社会街头多次进派出所的小混混，打架、流浪漂泊的一个人，最后成了个基督徒，成了个虔诚的传道人，最后在圣诞节晚上跳街舞。我每次看到那段视频我都流泪，一个人，他自己如何拯救他的生命？我觉得他都是人，不管有信仰也好没信仰也好，他都是现实生活中的人，他都会有各式各样的挣扎，每个人有不同的生命旅程。他们怎么样在现实中去走向信仰，他们的现实生活和信仰是怎么样改变了他们的生命，然后他们又会遇到怎么样困境。这次我还是一个纪录者，纪录的是铜川的信仰的群体。

陈：说说《陈箴咏》吧。这片子在你的作品里显得很特别，它拍摄的不是矿工，而是一个画家、知识分子。

林：《陈箴咏》是我采访人数最多的，采访了将近四十个人，这个片子拍得非常艰难，因为这时候陈老师已经去世很多年了。当年他下放到铜川，我跟他学画画，学的时间很短，到后来他回西安一直去看望他，这种关系一直保持到他老两口去世。建立了很深的情感，陈老师和师母把我当成他家庭的一员看待，我去他家不见外的，完全和自己的家一样。他是有恩于我的老师，我知道他有“历史问题”，我从来没问过。拍这部片子的时候，他已经不在了，需要重新建构一个人物。

既然做纪录片，就还得采访。西安有一些老师的老朋友在医院，买点牛奶提上去给人家约，人家同

意拍，只是觉得在医院不好看，等出院回家拍。一个清明节过后，几个约的采访人物都没了。然后我就觉得我这个片子拍不下去了，拍啥呀？你要的历史都没有了，后来人就知道了，相关的人物都没了。它最重要的一个朋友，他一生最好的哥们也没了，这个片子怎么拍？后来我拿到档案，当我看到他的那些好多份交代材料。我老师我跟了那么多年，才第一次知道他的人生是这样的，我之前根本是不知道的。当我读到那些东西的时候，就觉得我的片子做成了。是那么大的反差。

他一九四九年以前在国民党政府里干过，干了一年多，画一些宣传画，到后来就出了问题。石鲁当时非常器重他，把他弄到西北画报社，我看档案当时画画他都是主要人物，石鲁赵望云这两个是元老，他是主力，是骨干。但后来这个历史问题被提起来了，在国民党干活的历史问题他已经交代过，没有犯新错误，就留下内部控制使用，是石鲁他们把他保护起来了，就没劳教他。

他是个谨小慎微的人。一九七六年以前快粉碎四人帮的时候，石鲁去陈老师那，在他屋里写字画画，可能有一些这样那样的寓意，最后石鲁走了，陈老师立马把石鲁画的全部拿过来，拿笔洗里的水给全部泡掉了。他说这个东西不能留，那都是很要命的事儿。他很胆小的，石鲁的画他一张都没敢留。他被整得神经也不太正常了。下放铜川我跟他学画的时候，他要烧画，我说我弄个铁桶帮你烧。他说不用，他的画全部烧掉，他亲自看着铁桶里烧成灰烬，他不让我动的。

一九七八年以后他回到美协了，我二十多岁不到，去看他，他送给我一幅画，检查来检查去，他看了非常久，说你拿走吧。当时不理解，拍完片子才理解。他那个病还是有后遗症的，我和他关系都非常近了，他还是很小心的，很谨小慎微的。他那么大年纪，站不了就只能蹲在那画画，身体老不好老吃药，倒在那睡不着，这些年一直靠安眠药入睡。我跟了几十年的恩师，我对他的生活，在我之前那么漫长的生活，我完全是不知道的。他的厄运竟然那么吊诡地成了我的幸运。假如他不倒霉的话，我哪能跟到这样的老师。在他去世那么多年以后，我重新去寻找他，做一个纪录片，做一个信使。

他是一个时代的知识分子的个案，他不是林昭式的英雄人物，也没有那么波澜壮阔，他是一个非常普通的普通人，非常胆小谨慎的一个人，历史也依然把他抛在洪流中，蹉跎一遍。我觉得他要是一个英雄，就和我没太大关联。英雄是例外，是少数，是极个别，但他是普通人，是我们大众是我们每一个人，我们每一个人被放在这样的时空中，这种环境中一样不能幸免，这可能就是这部片子的意义。陈老师是我艺术的领路人，又给我一生那么大影响，现在才明白他的影响远远超出我所想象。作为一个过客，它是存在的。他是铜川的过客，应该列入铜川方志系列。

三

陈：如何开始拍摄你和你家人的《河床》的？

林：《三里洞》、《旷工》拍了一些群像。那么我想竖着去拍其中的一个家庭，我怎样进入？拍谁？拍我的父亲朱永生和他的后人。我反向踏上南下的列车，回到朱永生的故乡，朱永生、吴玉英，我的爸爸妈妈，回到他们的故乡，寻找他们的青少年时代，他们生存的痕迹，寻找和他们相识的人。我父母从上海迁徙到西北，他的儿女们又迁徙到南方，我的孩子又迁徙到深圳，这是个不断迁徙的故事。

我们二十多岁时父母没了，当我们还在靠着父母的时候，父母十个月内相继地离开了，是我们内心永远没办法的痛，伤疤不愿意去解开。弟弟妹妹知道我是拍纪录片的，我再说拍我的家庭，他们也知道我想拍啥，那么痛苦，那么艰难地讲述，特别难以面对，真的，我很感谢他们对哥哥的信任。我妈妈葬礼的时候，我觉得我是长子，我走在前面我应该哭，但我没眼泪，我那哭是装的，我必须吼叫起来，然后眼泪流着，像演戏一样去演出来，回来一个人就不敢呆在屋里。

母亲整天在梦里谴责我，觉得我不尽孝，我没有告诉她真实的病，我告诉她会压垮她全部求生的愿望，我不告诉她，我承担起所有的责难和苦痛，我对不起妈妈，我一生的负疚、愧疚，我没办法说出来，我不敢一个人呆在屋里，我会躲到外面去，等我爱人回来了我才能回来。连我爱人也不敢告诉她，那是我人生中最软弱的时刻。

再看看下一代，他们也有他们的成长历史，每个人都不一样，我大妹妹的孩子，我小妹的孩子，在最灰暗的时候，他父母离婚，那么颓废和绝望的，然而他们都慢慢成长起来了。《河床》完全是一个纵向的线条，从《三里洞》的朱永生一直到《河床》，几代人，一直拍到孙女《诺诺》，构成了一部“家庭史”。

陈：《沉默的风景》有一些创新。为什么它会以空间为主导，把又一个的空间给剪辑在一起？

林：慢慢走向自觉，意识到我拍的都是这片土地，影像和文本加起来就是一种现代的地方志。过去的地方志是文本加图片和地图，现在我们完全拿影像来做，影像加口述文本加素材库，那么就全备。其实它是一个当代生活史的概念，是记录一座城市的生活史。既然拍了那么多的人物，群像，那么它恐怕需要有一个地形图，我们也做一个影像，完全是关于铜川的地形或者地理空间这样一个概念。

这些镜头的放置都有细心的考虑，它有心理，有各种的依托，它不是用语言在讲故事，它用影像在陈述这些。开始拍时，我就觉得陈旧的影像语言应该改一改，不管是情绪也好，空间也好，空间的转换也好。我希望往前走一步，冒着失去所有观众的风险也不在意，哪怕没一个人喜欢，我决然地往前走了。你想看的故事没了，虽然是有几个段落，我依然把它当风景对待。那些人物的口述，把

它当做内心的风景和自然的社会的风景，形成一种对位。我是这样来考虑建构的。他们的故事非常复杂，然后我会压缩得极简，人物都不再重要，重要是空间，是风景，沉默的风景。

拍完《沉默的风景》以后，我接下来一部是《记忆的风景》。我做影像分类学，你知道贝歇夫妇拍冷却塔、谷仓拍了很多。我用我的素材，比如说关于死亡，关于的童年，二百多万字的口述，素材百分之九十以上是用过的，那么我用这些素材，重新结构一部关于人类的影片，和拍空间风景不一样，它是一部完全关于记忆的影片，可能后续可能需要很漫长的时间，它文本量太大。

我已经想到了肯定是从童年开始，每个人都让他从童年讲，我有那么多童年，从里头抽样选是非常容易的，每个人大部分时候从童年讲起的，他都有童年的故事，好，这样的是一个类。还有爱情。然后影片的结尾是死亡，各式各样的关于死亡的分类学，会归类到一块。做影像分类，这个是我前面没有过的，我试图把影片再往前推一步，甚至我还想做“沉默三部曲”，最后做一波“主观的风景”，也想过很多，但还没有成型，我不知道未来是什么，也不知道何年何月能完成。生命是不是给我机会，让我去做完它我都不知道。

陈：你的片子放映之后，遇到的各种方面的“阻力”有哪些？

林：有一段时间，我留了二十多年的胡子都被单位勒令刮掉了。我在我生活了几十年的小城市，重新成为一个陌生人，没有人理我。我给我的熟人打招呼，大家就愣一下，握一下手，也不敢说不认识，就点个头就过去了。我在食堂吃饭，没有一个人敢跟我说话。我给他们打招呼，没人理我。所有人都不认识我了，你完全成为一个陌生人。因为整天被约谈。我们有一个女同事，本来见我可热情了，她后来见到我立马不理我，装没看见，觉得我是个坏人。我不怕被误解，也不做任何解释。

二〇一二年我五十二岁被退了，本应该六十退休。我老婆就说，用你的经济损失赎回你八年的生命时光，即便从做生意的角度也是划算的。我说感谢领导，谢谢他们。我做片子挣不到钱，没办法给别人付报酬，没法养团队。我也不能剥削别人，只有我老婆帮我，整理文字二百多万字，都是她帮我打的。她在就帮我拎三脚架，她不在就只有我一个人。我们俩挣的钱都是让我一个人花的，她应该是老板，片子里就署名为制片人。

之前的作品都是上班之余拍摄的，我是拼了命拍的，每部都是拍到病倒的，我工作不能耽搁的，那么要忙，全部利用周末、节假日去拍。直到我退休以后。拍《传道人》的时候，我腰椎间盘突出犯了，只能像螃蟹那样地走。拍完《传道人》以后就退休了，也刚好。

然而拍片改变了我的生命，别人说你看你钱也没有，什么都没有，我说我已经得着了——它彻底改

变了我的生命。我生命变得那么丰厚了，我还需要贪婪吗？我已经得着了。我是我的纪录片的最大受益人，它完全改变了我。你从一个自负的所谓的艺术家。变成了一个非常谦卑的生活记录者。你要再说我是艺术家，我感觉是骂我对吧。纪录片给我的已经够多了。我拍了这样的一座城市和大量的文本，成为一种参照。它有用，给未来想了解这个时代的人，会留下来。他没用，湮灭了也无所谓。它改变了我的生命，我已经得着了，还要求什么？

OTHER 其他

An Investigative Report on 'Xu Quixote Tong'

关于“徐·吉诃德·童”的考察报告

Interviewer: Mengyun LIU 刘盟赞 Translator: Yunyun ZHOU 周芸芸

An Investigative Report on ‘Xu Quixote Tong’

Mengyun Liu 刘盟赞 Translator: Yunnyun ZHOU 周芸芸

Very few people knew that Xu Tong (徐童) once wrote a novel. The novel is named after a small island located more than 1,900 kilometres away from Beijing. In Manchurian, the island’s name is Gusikuwanang, which means a military camp. The Soviets called it Damansky Island. But it is best known to the Chinese as Zhenbao Dao (珍宝岛) —treasure island. All the adventurous stories of Xu Tong, I suppose, should begin with this island.

1 An Investigation into the ‘Origin’

In the days leading up to the phone call with Xu Tong, the word ‘treasure island’ kept emerging in my mind. Through my intensive reading and viewing of Xu’s works, I started to consider this novel as his artistic ‘origin’ (if there is such a thing as an ‘artistic origin’). After all, once we talk about the origin of something, it risks of being merely an afterthought. At first glance, such origin seems chaotic and ambiguous, but it is often a sign of the artist’s potentials. In particular, when such origin appears in the form of a ‘prequel’ to the artist’s personal experience, laying out a past and looking back at their own fading childhood, we should be aware of its deceptive nature.

In 1983, Xu Tong was enrolled in the cinematography department of the Beijing Broadcasting Institute (北京广播学院) (now the Communication University of China中国传媒大学), where he excelled and his works were often used by his teachers as demonstrations. After graduating, he spent a long time in Gaobeidian (高碑店) [a city 100 kilometres south of Beijing in Heibei Province], where he rented an apartment, worked in TV stations, opened an advertising agency, painted, and did some other business for a living. Like most university graduates nowadays, he worked hard to find a way out, but also got frustrated and lost in the process. In an interview, he once described himself as follows:

Renting an apartment in the Gaobeidian marked my entrance to the society. Like those fresh university graduates who have spent their youth in **idealistic** times, I was hit hard by reality and have encountered all sorts of difficulties. I muddled through, and not until my forties did I learn how to fight back and retrieve the broken pieces of myself together. I then kneaded these pieces

back together with what was not broken in my bones, and that was the **starting point** of my artistic expression. [bold text added by the author]

The ‘starting point’ here refers to the writing of *Treasure Island* in 2007, a year ahead of his first documentary film, *Wheat Harvest* (麦收, 2008), was released. At that time, Xu was already forty-two years old, making him rather a late bloomer. It is clear from the interview that this piece of writing has a great personal significance for him. Xu saw it as a ‘hit back’ on the harsh reality that he has encountered, a reconstruction of his ideals. Just as Don Quixote’s sword-waving to the windmills on his horseback, so it seems that Xu’s desperate fightback began there. However, if we use the theory of ‘artistic origin’ to scrutinise the case of Xu Tong, there seems to be some arithmetic issues that need to be clarified beforehand.

Jia Guozhi (贾国志), the protagonist of the novel, was dismissed at the age of sixteen by the military for falling in love, and thus missed out on the Sino-Soviet battle of Zhenbao Island. This became a knot in his heart for the rest of his life. The Zhenbao Island incident took place in 1969, and Xu Tong was born in 1965, which means that the main character Jia was born in 1953 [the same age as Sun Lizhe 孙立哲, the protagonist of Xu’s later documentary *The Barefoot Doctor* 赤脚医生, 2016]. This makes the protagonist Jia somehow a whole generation older than Xu, whose father was born in the 1930s, and almost two generations younger. For Xu, then, Zhenbao Island is in fact a fictional construction based on indirect memories. In his own words, ‘every faraway place that one comes from has a Zhenbao Island’, which is not unique to him. Like the dream of being a knight to Don Quixote, it is only a heroic legend imagined by an individual with historical nostalgia.

There are no treasures on Zhenbao Island. Don Quixote was never a knight. It is no wonder then that Xu once recalled that as a child Zhenbao Island was like a poster hung in the newspaper columns. The poster was hung for a long time, and the water stained from the rain and the sun may have embedded themselves into his memory, which later became the muse’s hand that he would later caught on in Gaobeidian that granted him the title as an artist. The ‘origin’ seems to have been found, but nothing seems to have been found. The search for the ‘origin’ of Xu Tong’s art leads one into the abyss of his fiction. So, we are left with the question of motive—why use ‘Zhenbao Island’ as the starting point for his art? The only way to avoid falling further is to clarify his motive.

2 An Inquiry into ‘Motive’

What is important is the number behind it—1969. The Zhenbao Island incident, mentioned above, took place

in 1969, when Xu Tong was four years old. In the same year, Sun Lizhe went from Beijing's High School attached to Qinghua University to Guanjiazhuang in Yanchuan (延川) County, Shaanxi Province, where he became a famous barefoot doctor, along with the Shi Tiesheng (史铁生) who became a writer and wrote many articles recalling his youthful days, including 'My Distant Qingping Bay' (我的遥远的清平湾), which has become a classic in contemporary Chinese literature.

Sun Lizhe is also the subject of Xu's 2016 documentary *The Barefoot Doctor*. This film, Xu's sixth documentary, differs from all his previous films where his perspective shifts from focusing on marginalised 'nomads' to legendary 'celebrities', and from the cleavages of contemporary times to the valleys of history. Why is this so? I posed this question to Xu when I spoke to him on the phone. The following is part of his answer:

Your question felt to me like a gust of wind with a particular energy. In fact, I think it involves two generations. According to common sense, a difference of seven years makes two generations, so technically I am in a different generation from Sun Lizhe. To put it simply, they were born in the 1950s and me in 1960s. Personally, the 1950s generation were true idealists, with a pure revolutionary passion. My father was slightly older, from the 1930s, in 1937, and then my mother in 1949, who is almost of the same age as Sun Lizhe. Since I was a child, all I heard from them was the friendship between China and the Soviet Union. That was a time when a large number of Chinese went to study in the Soviet Union, where Soviet songs were popular, and Soviet literature was the hotbed of a whole generation of literary youth. All of these came together to form the idealism of their generation.

Zhenbao Island, as a metaphor for Sino-Soviet relations, also stands for the idealistic life form of the generation before his own in Xu Tong's narrative. Yet Zhenbao Island itself also represents the fractures and transitions of an era. Xu is one of those who stands on the other side of the rift:

But when I went to primary school, in 1972, I felt that this was not the case anymore. What I experienced was that we had to queue up and fight for winter cabbage, that we could only have peanuts on New Year's Eve [because peanuts and melon seeds were rationed], and that we needed cloth stamps to buy cloth, and industrial goods stamps for sewing machines and bicycles. All these were issued in rations and you were only given a certain amount a month. So compared to the 1950s generation, what we experienced was rather a **sceptical mood**.

So, could it be that the filming of *The Barefoot Doctor* was a sort of nostalgia and homage from the sceptical generation to the idealistic generation? Let us return to an account of two generations in his novel *Zhenbao Island*:

Two days later, someone came to the factory with a small white cloth bag. Inside were **two teeth and a few pieces of bone**. He said that he had found them under the mixing tank. He also said that Jia Jingren had had a clean death and that it had taken a lot of effort to find these pieces. Jia Guozhi put this small white cloth bag on the newspaper *People's Daily*. He stared at the newspaper until seeing it soaked in the red colour, with his father's flesh and blood mixed in. Of course, this was an illusion. It was also as if he could smell his father's scent. This is even more of an illusion, as nothing but the smell of ink can be detected on the paper.

The text smells like a son mourning in front of his father's body. The mix of blood and ink smell is hardly nostalgic or homage. There is even something of the disrespectful crudeness spilling out of the text. Therefore, a simple nostalgia and homage, from the perspective of scepticism to idealism, is not enough to explain the 'why'—why did the nomad-focused Xu Tong become the historically minded Xu Tong? But aren't the 'two teeth and a few bones' in the text exactly the 'broken pieces' that Xu spoke of in his previous interview? He once said that he wanted to 'retrieve the broken pieces' and 'kneaded these pieces back together with what was not broken in my bones'. This re-connection is far more contradictory and complex than simply nostalgia and homage. The question I then wanted to ask Xu was: when did his scepticism become self-consciousness? He puts it this way:

For the generation that was born in the 1960s including myself, the time when we really came of age and began to develop a sense of individual consciousness, was at the beginning of the Reform and Opening up. In the 1980s we started going to university, and I think that was a particularly fitting. It was during those years when I read Nietzsche, Sartre, Freud, Kant. All these Western ideas came in at once. So, as you said, we the 1960s generation may seem to be as old as those from the 1950s. But what is very different is that the 1950s generation believed in the revolutionary passion, as they really experienced the so-called red idealism. We, on the other hand, consciously developed a profound scepticism and were stimulated by the Western ideas and had disbelief engraved in our bones.

This passage shows even more clearly that there is no nostalgia in Xu's scepticism; the scepticism in his bones has brought to him, at best, a rationalist questioning of idealism. Gradually a clearer logic emerges

for the answers. For Xu, the important thing is to present the truth, to question it, and then to reconstruct our understanding of it, and finally to build the jigsaw puzzle of our own worldview on the basis of that knowledge. In the process of putting the puzzle together, he obstinately represents the reality he has experienced and observed, which also forms the train of thought in his documentary-making and writing. In this way, the characters and stories become more complex, and they are plunged deeper into history and reality, and cannot be uprooted easily. In this sense, *Zhenbao Island* and *The Barefoot Doctor* are two forms of the same creative motivation: idealism → scepticism → rational inquiry → creative motive.

A new question then arises: how do we understand Xu's films made between these two works, which are better known to a wider audience but are different from what is analysed above? How do they relate to these 'artistic origins' and 'motives'? To answer this question, I would like to make the following points.

3 A Note on Image and Position

The creation of *The Barefoot Doctor* is an anomaly in the current spectrum of Xu Tong's work. But as the above analysis shows, it is also both unexpected and reasonable for those who are familiar with Xu's work. In *The Barefoot Doctor*, there are two discourses that form the structural support for the whole film. Which two discourses? On the surface, they are the Mandarin spoken by Sun Lizhe (the dialect of the sent-down youth) and the northern Shaanxi dialect spoken by the villagers of Guanjiazhuang (a local pidgin). On a deeper level, it is actually an overlap between the intellectual and grassroots positions. In the case of *The Barefoot Doctor* alone, Xu has his own original interpretation of Sun Lizhe's image as an intellectual:

Sun Lizhe's charisma was the initial attraction for me to make this film. **He is full of the humanitarian sentiments, and had a very rich inner world. He empathises with others very strongly. This is what we call a good conscience. At the same time, he was intelligent enough to cope with these feelings.** But even so, when placing his humanitarianism in the framework of history, it is inseparable from the revolution. That is to say, he subscribes to a form of revolutionary humanism, which is very different from the universal humanism that we often talk about. On the surface, it is all about saving lives and healing people, and there does not seem to be a difference between revolutionary humanitarianism and humanitarianism in general. But the difference lies in that while ordinary humanitarianism means that even if you are a criminal, you have to be rescued at times of suffering, revolutionary humanitarianism is not like that. It is about treating comrades with the warmth of spring, but treating enemies with coldblooded cruelty. And then the last sentence is that class enemies should be treated as cruelly and ruthlessly as the autumn wind sweep away the

fallen leaves.

From Xu's statement, one can sense that his understanding of Sun is always permeated by a favourable sentiment towards the Soviet intellectuals, that is, a class-conscious humanitarianism. [This may have had a lot to do with Xu's family environment, as he said that his mother was always singing Soviet songs in Russian, and that he was brought up with this culture.] In fact, the word 'intelligentsia' itself was coined in the nineteenth century in Tsarist Russia, and was also associated with the terms 'going to the grassroots' and 'populism'. The writers and artists of Soviet Russia had always had the tradition of being sympathetic to the underclass, as they believed that if one did not know whether a society was just or not, one should look at the situation of the underclass.

At the same time, Xu was aware of the complexity of intellectuals such as Sun Lizhe, and he brought up the names of Lev Tolstoy and Chekhov at the other end of the phone. Although he did not elaborate on this, it was enough to alert me. Tolstoy, as we all know, was part of the landowning class, but he had a humanitarian sensibility that transcended his class background (although to what extent is doubtful). This in turn was linked to his purely Orthodox faith, which further complicated the issue. Chekhov's tearful smile, on the other hand, also contains complex middle-class contradictions. This means that, apart from the image of Sun Lizhe, if one looks at Xu Tong as an intellectual, his identification with this identity is deeply contradictory, as if there are two forces that keep pulling him – the one from the grassroots and the other from the intellectual world.

I was born in the 1960s, grew up in the 1970s and became an adult in the 1980s. The word 'struggle' is what I remembered most from my youth. It was a time when I skipped classes from school to go out and play in gangs, like **a small society of its own**. It was actually an imitation of adult society. Such gangster spirit in my bones was given by the 1960s. To think about it rationally, they might not be good for me, but forty years later it played a part in helping me to connect with the vagabond society.

If you think about it, on the other hand, it is not difficult to see that both the vagabond and gangster culture have always been there, and have always been hidden in the discourse of the revolution. This is quite abstract. More concretely, it has to do with my life later, including the places I lived. For example, when I lived near Gaobeidian and met people like Wang Jinzhi (王金枝), their tragic lives had an impact on me, which later shaped my current expression. In addition, **I was influenced by Soviet Russian literature**, the so-called **intellectual sentiment**. In fact, it was also a process of

self-selection. One push at the front, one tug at the back, and that is how I became who I am today.

The combined force of and constant struggle between ‘one pushing force and one tugging force’ has formed a unique image of Xu Tong as a filmmaker. In fact, he is the wandering knight Don Quixote with a fantasy in mind. Don Quixote is naturally equipped with two sets of discourse, communicating with his own inner medieval text on the one hand, and conversing with a servant like Sancho on the other. In my final exchange with Xu on this subject, he disclosed the following thoughts in the form of a concluding statement:

We are not just talking about this character and this story now; we have jumped to another level of communication. How shall I put it? I used a term, called the **Vagabond Intellectual** (游民知识分子). How to understand it? The vagabond intellectual is not actually something I invented, I don’t have the ability to invent. The vagabond and intellectuals have been around since ancient times. For example, the quote [from *A Tribute to Yueyang Tower* (岳阳楼记) by Fan Zhongyan (范仲淹)] ‘ancient sages worry about the ruler when they are far away from the court’ talks about vagabond intellectuals. You can see that even they have been demoted and left the imperial capital, to serve merely a minor official in the prefecture, but they are still concerned with the kingdom. What does it mean to ‘worry about the world before the world and to be happy afterwards’ [Also from *A Tribute to Yueyang Tower*]? Fan Zhongyan had fallen into exile to the grassroots, like many other scholar-officials in ancient times, most of whom lost in power struggles at court or were side-lined for various reasons, such as Song Jiang (宋江) in *Water Margin* (水浒传). So it’s true that since ancient times China has had this kind of intellectual out of power. When such people go to the Liang Shan (梁山), they become ordinary commoners and wanderers. That’s a much more extreme situation.

Wouldn’t Don Quixote, if he had been born in contemporary times, have become the kind of vagabond intellectual that Xu is talking about? The circle that Xu drew for himself became a ruler for his ‘wilful’ yet measured creations regardless of the topic or context of his films, which is manifested by the deep-seated conscience that he shared with Sun Lizhe. The next question, then, is what exactly is the vagabond and *jianghu* (江湖) of which Xu Tong speaks? While the last question is still unanswered, a new one is at hand.

4 *Jianghu* and Sancho

At this point, it seems that we are entering the crux of Xu’s artistic world: the vagabond and *jianghu*.

If Don Quixote had only a sword and a horse, and his reality-facing and fictional skills as a vagabond intellectual, he would have been still unable to move forward. At this point Sancho appears as the strongest and necessary flying line to pull his dream kite. Only with this thread, Don Quixote's actions can be appreciated by real-world readers. For Xu, a vagabond intellectual, 'vagabond' comes before 'intellectual'. For Xu, his Sancho is Gaobeidian, where he has been wandering for years after graduating from university, and Tang Xiaoyan (唐小雁), whom he encountered there by chance.

For most viewers, a first look at Xu's 'trilogy of vagabonds' (游民三部曲) (*The Wheat Harvest*, 2008; *Fortune Teller*算命, 2009; *Lao Tangtou*老唐头, 2011) will give the impression that his vision reaches out to the depressing reality of the underclass—tough forms of life situations of the urban subaltern. Such content could be a great physical offense to the comfort zone of a petty bourgeoisie audience. However, when I said the word 'the underclass' (*dicheng*底层) over the phone, Xu interrupted me for the first time, saying: 'vagabond is not the same as the underclass; it's closer to *jianghu*.' Then he explained further:

The underclass is a bigger picture, and the vagabonds exist among the underclass. But it is also mobile, and this nature leads it to be closer to *jianghu*. The underclass may be stubbornly attached to a certain place and may stay there for a lifetime. But the vagabonds are more cunning; they rely on movement to achieve a certain leap up. Because of this kind of cunningness, my films never said that the underclass is right, as there is a mixture of the good and the evil, and sometimes can be ugly.

Xu's starting point of *jianghu* was Gao Beidian, which lies at the beginning of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, on the southern bank towards Shanhaiguan on the Jingtong Highway. There is a narrow stretch there between the railway bridge and the Grand River, a hub and transit point for land and water traffic. Because it is on the border between Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei, it is a natural meeting point for people from all walks of life. Such a place is, of course, mobile and acts as a peripheral nerve for societal development, which is very sensitive and very cunning. It changes its identity as the countryside urbanises. Nowadays, Gaobeidian has become a creative industry park for film and culture, and the ugly duckling has transformed to a golden phoenix. The change in Gaobeidian itself corresponds to what Xu calls a kind of 'leap up'. The people who lived in Gaobeidian back then were literally 'vagabonds'. Their wandering-around can also be interpreted as the sociological concept of 'mobility', which turns the artistic question of an academic one. But I will try to be brief.

Around 1963, there was a series of public discussions within the state on whether and how the rural and

urban populations should mobilise. There were documents that accompanied each specific era, as well as a corresponding household registration system (*hukou* 户口). For example, in 1963, two years before Xu was born, the state strictly forbade the movement of the rural population to the towns. There was a distinction between rural and non-rural *hukou*. For those who violated this, derogatory terms such as ‘wanderer’ and ‘rovers’ were used. With the Reform and Opening up, it was only after 1983 that the movement of population was gradually permitted and the *hukou* system slowly transformed to allow for self-employed and migrant workers to enter the cities. Peasants, as shown in *Wheat Harvest*, could come to the city to work as migrant workers when it was not the busy season for farming. This is why the ‘wandering’ is also a form of ‘mobility’ within a society, which is inextricably linked to the series of changes that took place from the revolutionary era to the reform era. In turn, the ‘vagabonds’ are in fact profiling the social mobility of an era in China.

From here we see the correspondence between Xu’s conscience as a vagabond intellectual and the specific characters he talked about on the phone: Lao Tangtou, Li Baicheng (厉百程), Er Houshang (二后生), Fourth Brother (四哥), and so on.

The term ‘vagabond’ is a term I borrowed from Prof Wang Xuetai (王学泰) at the Academy of Social Sciences, who first studied the history of Chinese literature, and then started to study traditional Chinese society and discovered the phenomenon of ‘vagabond’. For example, he studied the group of people in *Water Margin* and then pointed out that *jianghu* was formed by that group of people. I learnt a lot from him over a number of phone calls, but what Prof Wang studied are the vagabonds in ancient China, what I call old vagabonds as they disappeared after the founding of People’s Republic of China. His concept of the vagabonds portrayed an anomaly in traditional Chinese clan-ruled society, which was in fact non-mobile, where a large clan lived together. Each family village has its own ancestral hall and several generations often lived together. So, it was a rather static form of society. It was only when problems such as war and famine arose that mobility occurred. So traditional forms of mobility come hand in hand with this solidified form of society.

So, what happened after 1949? For example, in 1958, when the Three Red Banners and the Great Leap Forward turned each village into a people’s commune, and everyone was fixated to this same place, which became a new form of ‘clan society’ in a socialist regime. Population movement was prohibited. Lao Tangtou became a ‘nomad’ because he was a state cadre from the automobile factory in Mudanjiang who was sent down to the village of Naozigou in Dongying County, Shandong. One of the most fundamental features of vagabonds is that they left their hometowns. The reason why I

made *Lao Tangtou* the middle chapter of the Vagabond Trilogy is because I wanted to explore the changes that have taken place in the Vagabond community since 1949.

After the beginning of the Reform and Opening up, society was loosened up, and with the economic needs and changes, some people left their families and hometowns and went out to work. The relaxation of the household registration system you mentioned earlier was also a factor. For instance, when cigarettes from Guangdong needed to be sold to Beijing, the traders had to take trains and travel back and forth between the two cities, and this naturally created a new movement among the population. These became the subject of my new vagabond films. Tang Xiaoyan, the daughter of the Lao Tangtou, who we can discuss later, was part of this new type of vagabonds. Others like Miao Miao (苗苗), Li Baicheng in *The Fortune Teller*, and Lao Tangtou were in transition, all being forced to become migrants.

Because documentaries definitely focus on the present, it is also a testimony to the current society, so I have always aimed my camera at new vagabonds. In this way I have gradually developed a genealogy of the them, including the old, mid-aged and young generations of migrants, a ‘Tang’s Universe’ represented by Old Tangtou and Tang Xiaoyan. That is why later I will film Tang Xiaobao, the grandson of Lao Tangtou, which will be the life of new vagabonds born after the 1990s and the 2000s. You see, this becomes a continuity.

The last word on the other end of the phone was ‘continuity’, which made me think that Xu’s filming over the years resembled very much Balzac’s ‘human comedy’ and that the characters in the ‘Tang’s universe’ are precisely the texture of a realistic long form novel. Yet because he talked about almost all the vagabonds in his films, it also brought up another word I was interested in before, the ‘leap up’ (as he puts it) of vagabonds resulting from their movement. But there is a paradox in his films, when his characters move with the tides of their times, they are often subjected to a strong sense of oppression from the reality. The spirit of the characters themselves struggled violently, but the more they struggle, the more fixated they become. At present, only Tang Xiaoyan can be said to have made the leap up through her mobility [Tang met Xu Tong through the film *The Fortune Teller*, and later took him deeper into ‘Tang’s universe’ and is currently the producer of all Xu’s films]. How does Xu Tong think about Tang Xiaoyan?

Xiaoyan is such a gospel to me. Tang Xiaoyan is, first of all, an odd character. But what is odd about her? Apart from the fact that she is a vagabond, she has done all sorts of things among the them, and finally she has managed to move up in the social stratification. I don’t say social class, but social

stratification, because class is too revolutionary. Her identity went from being a vagabond to being a documentary producer, and now we are now adapting *Zhenbao Island* into a film, where she is also the assistant director. So, you can see that she has completely become a filmmaker. She crossed the boundary of professions, social stratifications, geographic regions which is a very extraordinary thing in her case. What is the root of this strange thing?

He suddenly turned on me and asked me what the root cause was. I had to keep silent.

First of all, I think she does carry the genes of the Lao Tangtou. What is it? There's a saying that goes: 'Run for your life, just to stay where you are.' The old Tang family are all runners; they achieved change by running, and they were born with a form of intelligence. This enlightenment lies in the fact that they are willing to tell about their lives, and they tell them brilliantly. They are willing to share them with others.

It also gave me a sudden new insight into the concept of privacy (the eternally debated ethical taboo in documentary). There are a group of people who have a capacity for self-sampling, who are willing to sample themselves and to present themselves as a living specimen of history and to share what they have experienced with others. This does not seem to be related to our general understanding of individual rights, individual freedom, or individual privacy. But you can't say that it is not also human right. For example, a man like Lao Tangtou was willing to tell everyone about his experiences in 1958, or even earlier, and he had the right to speak about it. Miao Miao, Li Baicheng, and Shi Zhenzhu (石珍珠) (of course, she was a bit mentally challenged), they were also willing to talk and express themselves.

At the end of the phone call, Xu did not give a clear answer on how to 'leap up'. But I think this is probably an unanswerable question. How can he know? There is too much contingencies involved here, including fate. He met Tang Xiaoyan, a process that must have been a coincidence, and then later on he met Lao Tangtou, the oldest of the Tang family, and Tang Xiaobao (唐小宝). Life goes on just like that: one gives life to two, two gives life to three, and three gives life to all things.

Xu Tong and Tang Xiaoyan are perhaps Don Quixote and Sancho, the ancient knight and the modern-day vagabond intellectual.

关于“徐·吉诃德·童”的考察报告

刘盟赟

也许没有多少人会知道，徐童还写过小说。小说的名字是一个距离北京一千九百多公里的小岛，满语为古寺库瓦郎，军队营盘的意思。苏联人称之为达曼斯基岛。而它最为中国人熟知的名字则是珍宝岛。关于徐童的所有冒险故事，我想都要从“珍宝岛”上说起。

一 关于“起源”的考据

在与徐童接通电话的前面几天，“珍宝岛”这三个字一直在我脑中打转。因为集中的阅读与观影，我更愿意把这部小说看成他的创作“源起”（如果真有所谓“艺术家起源论”的话），而一旦说到起源，便有点事后诸葛亮的嫌疑。它乍看混沌一片，模糊不清，却往往预示出作者的潜在能力。特别是“起源”常常通过艺术家个人经历的“前传”方式，铺设一段过去，并回望自己消逝的童年。但要小心，这里面也埋伏着巨大的欺骗性。

一九八三年，徐童考入北京广播学院摄影系（即现在的中国传媒大学），在校成绩优异，拍摄的作品常常成为老师点评的对象。后来毕业，有很长一段时间混迹高碑店。租房子，混日子，进过电视台，开过广告公司，画过画，也下过海。像现在大多数大学毕业生一样努力折腾，找寻出路，也在折腾中受挫、迷失。他曾在一段采访中这样描述那段时间的自己：

在高碑店一带租房子，就是开始在社会上混了。大学毕业后出来经历的第一步肯定是这样的，一个在**理想主义年代**经历过青春的人走向社会，肯定会被社会打得粉碎，出现各种状况，摸爬滚打，到了四十岁之后才有还手之力，把打碎的东西重新找回来，再把它和骨子里打不碎的东西重新捏合在一起，这就是我艺术表达的**起点**。（加粗部分为笔者所加）

这里的“起点”便是指二〇〇七年《珍宝岛》的写作，比他第一部纪录片《麦收》问世还早一年。那时候的徐童四十二岁，可谓大器晚成。采访中可以看出，这部作品对他个人所具有的非凡意义。徐童将它作为一次对现实人生的“还击”，一次理想的重建。如同堂·吉诃德骑马舞剑追击风车，徐童的绝地反击似乎也于焉而起。然而，且慢，如果用“艺术家起源论”推敲起来，这里似乎有些运算问题需要事先澄清。

小说的主人公贾国志，在十六岁时因违规恋爱，被部队处分而复员，因此错过了参加中苏珍宝岛之战。

这成为他心中一辈子的结。珍宝岛事件发生在一九六九年，徐童生于一九六五年，也就是说主人公贾国志大概是一九五三年生人，（按：和后来徐的纪录片《赤脚医生》的主角孙立哲同岁。）某种程度上比徐童大了整整一代，而徐童的父亲是上世纪三十年代的人，又小了几两代。那么珍宝岛对于徐童，其实是一种基于间接记忆的虚构，用他自己的话说，“每一个人走来的远方，都有一个珍宝岛”，非他独有。如同骑士梦之于吉诃德，只是个人带着历史的怀旧而想象出的英雄传奇。

珍宝岛上本身并无珍宝。堂·吉诃德从来就不是什么骑士。这就也难怪徐童曾回忆说，小时候珍宝岛是挂在报刊栏里的海报。而海报挂得时间久了，风吹日晒，被雨水润湿又晒干的水渍，也许嵌进了他的记忆之中，成为他日后在高碑店拽住的那只穿越时空的缪斯之手，由此也成就了他的艺术家之名。“起源”看似已被寻获，但又似乎什么也没找到。对徐童艺术“起源”的探查让人掉进了他小说“虚构”的深渊。那么，接下来我们只能接着问下去，动机——为什么要以“珍宝岛”作为艺术的起点？唯有搞清楚动机，方可避免继续掉落。

二 有关“动机”的探查

珍宝岛本身已不再重要，重要的是它背后的数字——一九六九。以及数字所指涉的年代。上文提到珍宝岛事件发生在一九六九年，那年徐童四岁。同年，孙立哲从北京清华附中到陕北延川县关家庄当知青，并成为当地有名的赤脚医生，和他一路的还有日后的作家史铁生，史铁生后来写了很多回忆那段知青岁月的文章，其中《我的遥远的清平湾》已成为中国当代文学的经典之作。

孙立哲也是徐童二〇一六年的纪录片《赤脚医生》的原型人物。这部电影是徐童的第六部纪录片，却不同于他之前所有影片，他的视角从聚焦边缘“游民”转变成传奇“名人”；时空则从当代的缝隙转移到了历史的河谷。为什么会这样？与徐童电话接通后，我便向他提出了这个问题。以下是他的部分回答：

你这个问题让我感觉是呼啸而来，带着一股气场。其实我想它牵扯到的是**两代人**的问题。从常识上说一般相差七年就是一代，所以严格说来我和孙立哲他们是两代人。简单点说，他们是五〇后，我是六〇后。就我个人来说，五十年代那批人是真正的理想主义者，带有一种纯正的革命激情。我父亲稍微年长一些，他是上世纪三十年代的人，三七年的，然后我母亲是四九年的，差不多跟孙立哲同龄。我从小从他们口中听到的都是中苏友好，大量的人去苏联留学，苏联歌曲盛行，苏联的文学更是一代文青的温床，所有这些东西汇总起来，构成了他们那一代的理想主义。

珍宝岛作为中苏关系的一种隐喻，在徐童的叙述里也代指了他的上一代人的理想主义的生命形态。

然而珍宝岛本身也代表了一个时代的断裂与转折。徐童他们便是站在裂缝另一边的人。

可等我上小学，我是七二年上的小学，我就觉得好像不是这样，我体验的是冬储大白菜需要排队抢，过年到年三十晚上才能吃到花生（花生瓜子是定量供应的），买布需要布票，有工业票是专门买缝纫机自行车这类工业产品的。所有这些都是定量发的，一个月只给你这么多。因此相比于五十年代那批人，我们更多的会是一种**怀疑主义**的情绪。

那么难道《赤脚医生》的拍摄是怀疑主义的一代在向理想主义一代的某种怀旧与致敬吗？我们不妨再来看看他在小说《珍宝岛》中的一段关于两代人的叙述：

两天后，厂子里来了人，拿过一小白布包。里头裹着**两粒儿牙跟几片骨头**。说是在搅拌槽子底下找到的。还说，贾敬仁死得干净，找到这几件东西也费了不少力。贾国志把这小白布包跟那张《人民日报》搁在了一块儿。他老瞅着这张报纸发红，里头横竖都掺了他爹的血肉。当然这一准儿是错觉。又好像能闻见他爹的气味。这更是错觉了，那上头，除了股油墨味儿，什么都闻不出来。

这段文字大有儿子为父收尸的味道。那种血腥气与油墨味儿的混杂，很难说是怀旧与致敬的意思。甚至有些大不敬的粗陋气溢出文本。因此，简单如怀疑主义向理想主义的怀旧与致敬便不足以解释那个“为什么”——游民的徐童何以成为历史的徐童？然而文本中“两粒儿牙跟几片骨头”，不正是徐童在之前采访中所说的“打碎的东西”吗？他曾说要把“打碎的东西重新找回来”，并“再把它和骨子里打不碎的东西重新捏合在一起”。这种重新的捏合远比怀旧与致敬要矛盾和复杂得多。这里我要再问徐童的问题是，他的怀疑主义是什么时候开始自觉的？他如是说：

到我成年，其实我们六十年代这批人，真正成年，开始产生个人意识，差不多是改革开放初期。上世纪八十年代我们开始上大学，我觉得那是一个特别好的契合点，那时候我看到了尼采、萨特、弗洛伊德、康德的书，所有这些西方的思想一下子全都进来了。于是，就像你说的，我们六十年代的人看似现在和五十年代一样，都是五六十岁的大爷大妈的年纪，但非常不同的是五十年代是相信血色浪漫的革命激情，他们是真的经历过的，红色的理想主义。而我们呢，自觉产生了深刻的怀疑精神，又受到西方的刺激，骨子里就不信。

这段话更清晰地说明徐童的怀疑主义里没有怀旧，他骨子里的怀疑精神带给他的最多是一种理性主义对理想主义的追问。答案渐渐有了一条清晰的逻辑，对徐童来说，重要的是把真相呈现出来，怀疑然后重新认识，再在认识的基础上建立自己的世界观拼图。而他在拼的过程当中，也不断地呈现他所经历及看到的真实，这也构成了他的纪录片和写作的一个脉络，这样一来，人物、故事就都变

得更为复杂，他们在历史与现实里也陷入得更深，拔也拔不出来。《珍宝岛》和《赤脚医生》，从这个意义上说，便是一种创作动机的两种展现形式：理想主义→怀疑精神→理性追问→创作动机

那么一个新的问题出现了，在这两部作品之间，为更多观众所熟知的徐童作品，要如何理解呢，他们似乎与上面分析的内容大异其趣？他们与这些“起源”与“动机”又有怎样的关系呢？回答这个问题之前，我要先作如下的一点说明。

三 形象与立场的一点说明

《赤脚医生》的创作，在徐童目前的作品谱系里，不能不说是另类的。但如同上文的分析，对熟悉徐童的人，也是意料之外，情理之中的。在《赤脚医生》这部片子里，有两种话语，构成了全片的结构支架。哪两种话语呢？表面上看是孙立哲的普通话（知青话语）和关家庄村民的陕北方言（民间杂言）。更深一层其实是知识分子的立场和民间立场的相互重叠。如果仅就《赤脚医生》这部片子来说，徐童对孙立哲的知识分子形象是有他自己独到的解读的：

孙立哲的个人魅力是最初吸引我拍这部电影的出发点。**他是那种极具人道主义情怀的人，他内心世界非常的丰富，特别丰沛的，他会特别强烈与别人感同身受。就是我们所谓良知。同时他又有足够的聪明才智，去应对这些感受。**但即便如此，把他的人道主义放在历史的框架当中去看，还是离不开革命。也就是说，他是加上了革命的人道主义，这个是跟我们说的普世的人道主义非常不同的。就是说从表面看都是救死扶伤，给人治病，但是为什么革命的人道主义和人道主义有区别吗？普通的人道主义就是说哪怕你是一个罪犯，你这时候有痛苦也要解救，但革命的人道主义不是，它讲究对待同志要像春天般的温暖，但对待敌人要非常冷酷。然后最后一句是**对待阶级敌人要像秋风扫落叶一样残酷无情。**

从徐童的这段表述中，可以发现他对孙立哲的理解里始终透着对苏俄的知识分子形象好感，也就是具有阶级意识的人道情怀。（按：这可能和徐童的家庭环境有很大关系，据他说他母亲一张口都是俄文原文的苏联歌曲，人家从小就受到这种文化的熏陶。）其实知识分子这个词本身便是在十九世纪的沙俄时代产生的，与这个词关联的还有“到民间去”与“民粹主义”等。苏俄的文学家艺术家，一直以来都有一个民间传统，鼓励知识分子对底层人的同情，如果说一个人不知道一个社会到底是否公正，那他就应当去看看这个社会底层人的处境。

与此同时，徐童又意识到了知识分子如孙立哲这般的复杂性，他在电话的那头，还提起了列夫·托尔斯泰与契诃夫的名字。虽然他没有就此展开，但也足以让我警觉。众所周知，托尔斯泰是地主出身，但他有超越阶级（是否真的超越，存疑）的人道主义情怀，这又和他纯正的东正教信仰有关，凡此

种种便会让问题复杂化。而契诃夫呢，那含泪的微笑里也有着复杂的中产阶级的矛盾。这意味着，脱离孙立哲这个形象，如果将徐童作为一个知识分子形象看待，他对这个身份的认同是深具矛盾性的，似乎有两种力量一直拽着他——民间的与庙堂的。

我出生在上世纪六十年代，成长在七十年代，成人在八十年代。少年的记忆里最深的就是“斗争”二字。那时候旷课出去野玩，成帮结伙的，像个小江湖。它实际上就是对成人社会的模仿。这种骨子里的东西，是六十年代给我的。冷静想不是什么好东西，但是四十年后它对帮助我接通游民社会的气场发挥点作用。

仔细想，在另一方面也不难看出，**游民文化**也好江湖也好，一直都在，一直都躲藏在**革命的话语里**。这是远了说。近了说就是跟后来我的生活，包括生活过的地方都有关系。例如在高碑店附近生活过，结识过像王金枝那样的人物，他们生活的惨烈对我是有冲击的，后来才形成了我现在的表达。再加上**我个人受苏俄文学的影响比较多**，有所谓的**知识分子情怀**。其实也是一个自我选择的过程。前面一个推，后面一个拽，就成了今天的我。

“一个推，一个拽”形成的合力，在不断角力中构成了徐童这个创作者的独特形象。其实也就是那个游走在民间，心存着幻想的游侠骑士堂·吉诃德。堂·吉诃德天然的具备两套话语，一方面与自己内心的中世纪文本交流，另一方面又可以和桑丘这样的仆役对话。我就这个问题和徐童进行最后的交流中，他以总结陈词的方式吐露出如下的内容：

我们现在不仅仅是在讨论这个人物和这个故事，我们已经跳脱到另一种交流的层面，怎么说呢，我用一个词，叫**游民知识分子**。怎么理解呢？游民知识分子其实并不是我发明的，我没有本事来发明。游民，知识分子自古就有，比如说处江湖之远则忧其君，实际上这个状态就是游民知识分子。你看他已经被贬了，都已经离开了帝都，可能连个都地方的小官都不是了，但他还是忧。包括什么是先天下之忧而忧，后天下之乐而乐呢？范仲淹已经流落到民间了，包括古代很多类似的人，这些人大都在朝廷政治争斗中败北，或者是由于种种的原因被排挤，比如水浒里的宋江。所以说中国自古就有这种在野的知识分子，如果要是上了梁山，他就变成标准的草莽，就变成了游民。那是一种更加极端的处境。

堂·吉诃德如果生在当代，不就是徐童所言的游民知识分子吗？徐童为自己画下的圈，也就成为他独立于任何题材、任何处境下的一把戒尺，凭借此他的创作便可“随心所欲”而不逾矩——获得了他与孙立哲惺惺相惜的那份深藏肌底的良知。那么接下来的问题就要弄清楚，徐童口中的游民和江湖到底是怎么回事了？上一个问题还未解答，新的问题如是又摆在了眼前。

四 江湖与桑丘

行文至此，似乎才要进入徐童艺术世界的关要处：游民与江湖。

堂·吉诃德如果仅仅有剑和马，以及他作为游民知识分子的纪实与虚构技艺，那他还是寸步难行。此时桑丘的出现，便成为拉着他的那只做梦风筝的最最坚实且必须的线。有了这个线，堂·吉诃德的行为才能为现实世界的读者所欣赏。而对于徐童来说——一个游民知识分子，“游民”是在知识分子之前的，也就是说“游民”是在“我徐童”之前的。而对于他来说，那个游民桑丘，就是他大学毕业后混迹多年的高碑店以及偶然相遇的唐小雁。

对于大多数观众来说，初看徐童的“游民三部曲”（《麦收》2008；《算命》2009；《老唐头》2011）会觉得他的眼锋所及都在压抑的底层——城市边缘人的生命形态，粗砺的人生境遇——这样的内容，对舒适圈里的小资观众是极大的生理冒犯。然而就当我在电话这头说出“底层”这个词时，徐童第一次打断了我，他说：游民不等于底层，它更接近于江湖。接着他进一步解释道：

底层是一个更大的范围，游民是存在于底层当中的。但它又是**游动的**，它的这种性质导致了它其实更接近于江湖。底层可能是固化的附着在某一个地方，可能一辈子就死在那了。但游民更鸡贼，他们是靠游动来获得某种**跃升**。也因为这种鸡贼，我的影片其实从来没有说过底层是对的，底层甚至于是鱼龙混杂，甚至于丑恶不堪的。

徐童的江湖起点是高碑店，它位于京杭大运河的起点，向着京通高速山海关方向的南岸。那里有一段铁路桥和大河之间的狭长地带，是水陆交通的枢纽和转运站。因为处在京津冀的边界，便自然地成为鱼龙混杂之地。这样的地方当然是流动的，且还充当了社会发展的末梢神经，及其敏锐，也非常鸡贼。随着城乡发展而变换着自己的身份。现如今的高碑店早日成为影视文化的创意园区，丑小鸭摇身一变成为了金凤凰。高碑店的变化本身对应的就是徐童所说的某种“跃升”。而生活在高碑店的当年的人们就是名副其实的“游民”。关于“游”，换一个社会学的概念就是“流动”，如此就把艺术问题学术化了。不过我尽量点到为止。

大概在一九六三年，国家对于农村和城市人口到底应不应该流动，以及如何流动是有着一系列讨论的。伴随着每一个具体的年代，都存在着相关文件，以及相应的户籍制度。比如一九六三年，也就是徐童出生的前两年，国家是严格禁止农村人口向城镇流动的。也就是农村户口和非农村户口的区别。对于违反者，民间便有“游子”“二流子”等极具贬义的词出现。随着改革开放，直到一九八三年以后，人口流动才可以说逐步放开，户籍制度也慢慢发生转变，允许个体户，允许打工者。农民就像《麦收》里讲的，在不是农忙时节可以进城来当农民工，等等。所以“游”也就是人口的“流动”

是与从革命时代到改革开放这一系列的变化是密不可分的。关于“游民”反过来其实也是在为一个时代的社会流动做着侧写。

由此再对应到徐童在电话中谈到的具体人物——老唐头、厉百程、二后生、四哥等，不难看出他作为知识分子对游民的用心所在：

游民这个词我是从社科院的王学泰先生那里借用过来的，他最早是研究中国文学史的，后来他从这文学史的路径开始切入，研究中国传统社会，便发现了“游民”这个现象，比如说他研究水浒里那一拨人，然后由此点出那拨人所形成了江湖。我们俩通过若干次电话，我从他那学到了很多，而王学泰先生研究的游民是传统游民，古代游民，也就是我给他们命名为叫旧游民，因为到新中国成立后就停止了。他的游民概念描绘的是中国传统的宗法社会的异类，而宗法社会其实是非流动的，一个大家族生活在一起，在一个村子里面有自己家的祠堂，几代人经常齐聚一堂，所以这是一个固化形态。只有当战争、饥荒等问题出现，才出现流动。所以传统的流动是要和这个固化的社会结合在一起看的。

那么，四九年以后发生了什么呢？其实是一种新的固化形态，比如一九五八年，三面红旗、大跃进的时候变成人民公社，以村级为单位的，大家都固化在这一个地方，变成了新的一种社会体制下带引号的宗法社会，人口也因此不能随便迁移，老唐头就是这个时间节点上的游民，他是从牡丹江的汽车厂的一个国家干部，下放到东营闸子沟村。实际上也是背井离乡的。游民一个最基本的特点，就是背井离乡。而我为什么把《老唐头》作为“游民三部曲”的中篇，就是想说“游民”在一九四九年以后到底产生了哪些变化。

到了改革开放之后，社会松动，随着经济的需求，随着种种方面的变化，又有一些人离开家族，离开故乡，出外打工，再加上你刚才说的户籍制度的放松等等情况，比如说广东的烟可以卖到北京，他们背烟的人就要坐火车，就要来回跑，那自然就变成了新的流动，这些也就变成了我的新游民电影。老唐头的女儿唐小雁，咱们后面也还要提到，她其实属于这个新游民。包括苗苗，《算命》里的厉百程，老唐头属于是在之间的过渡期，由于政策原因给他下放，被迫游民了。

因为纪录片肯定对准的是当下，纪录片是对当下的社会的见证，所以说我一直对准了就是新游民。并由此渐渐排列出了一个新游民的分支谱系。包括老唐头、唐小雁所代表的“唐氏宇宙”老中青三代人，我还在继续拍，后面会拍到老唐头的孙子唐小宝，那将是九〇后、〇〇后的新游民的生命。你看，这样就形成了这么一个趋势。

电话那头的最后一个词是“趋势”，这让我觉得徐童这么多年的拍摄，大有巴尔扎克“人间喜剧”的意思，“唐氏宇宙”里的人物不就正是一种现实主义的长篇小说的肌理吗？然而因为他几乎谈到了他影片中所有的游民形象，这又勾起了我对之前一个词的兴趣，流动往往带来的是一种“跃升”（如他所言），但在他的片子里有一个很吊诡的地方，当他的人物随着这个时代的变化而流动，受到很强的现实压迫感时，人物的精神本身做着剧烈的挣扎，可越挣扎反倒是越固化。目前只有唐小雁可以说真正做到了在流动中实现跃升的人。（按：唐小雁因为《算命》这部影片与徐童结识，后来一路带着徐童深入“唐氏宇宙”，目前是徐童电影的总制片。）关于唐小雁，徐童是怎么看的呢？

小雁对我来讲就是这么一个福音。唐小雁这人物，先得说她确实太奇葩了，她奇葩在哪儿？除了她是游民，她在游民当中干过各种个样的事，最后她还成功跨了阶层。我不说跨阶级，而是跨阶层，因为阶级太革命了。她的身份从最早的游民身份，到现在的纪录片制片人，也因为我们现在在把《珍宝岛》改编成电影，她又是导演助理，所以你看她完全变成一个影视人了，跨行业、跨阶层、跨地域，在她来讲真是一个非常奇葩，而这个奇葩的根源是什么？

他突然反戈一击问我什么是根源？我只好沉默以待。

首先我觉得她确实还有老唐头的一个基因，就是什么呢？有一句话叫“拼命奔跑，只为留在原地”，老唐家都是拼命奔跑的，他们通过奔跑来改变，且有天生的悟性。他这个悟性是在于他们愿意把这些东西讲出来，且讲的很精彩。他愿意跟别人分享。

这也让我突然对这隐私（纪录片里永远争论不休的伦理大忌）有了新的认识。有这么一些人，他具备了一种自我采样的能力，他在历史当中愿意自我采样，把自己作为一个活标本，并且把我的东西把我的经历跟别人分享。这和我们泛泛理解的个人权利、个人自由、个人隐私似乎都不相关。但是你也不能说它也是人的一种权利。比如老唐头这样的人，他愿意把他五八年的事儿，甚至他更早的事儿，跟所有的人讲，他有这种讲话的权利。苗苗，厉百程，石珍珠（当然是她有点智障），但她也愿意说，也愿意表达，包括孙立哲都在内。

这个电话的最后，徐童其实还是没有明确回答如何“跃升”。但我想这也许本就是一个无解的问题，他又怎么能知道呢。这里有太多的偶然性，也就是天命的东西在。你遇到了唐小雁，这个过程肯定是个巧合，再后来认识老唐头，唐家老三，以及唐小宝。生生不息，一生二、二生三、三生无穷的意思。

徐童和唐小雁，也许就是堂吉诃德与桑丘，古代的游侠骑士与现代的游民知识分子。

APPENDIX 附录

Biographies 译者简介

Biographies 译者简介

FAN Xiang received her Ph.D. in Film Studies from Goldsmiths, University of London. Her thesis focused on the production of art cinema culture in China since the turn of the twenty-first century. Her research interests also include Chinese independent cinema and women's cinema. She is Associate Lecturer in the Department of Media Communications and Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London, and the subjects she teaches involve film theory and politics in audiovisual media.

樊响, 英国伦敦大学金史密斯学院电影学博士。她的博士论文主要关注新世纪以来中国艺术电影文化的构建。她的研究方向也包括中国独立电影及女性主义电影。作为伦敦大学金史密斯学院媒体传播与文化研究系的副讲师, 她教授的课程涉及电影理论和视听媒体中的政治研究。

HU Longbiao, has a BA and MA degree in English Literature and an MA in Translation Studies. He has taught Chinese, academic English, and MSc English-Chinese translation courses at Newcastle University, Edinburgh Napier University, and Heriot-Watt University. He is now a freelancer, working mainly in lexicography. The dictionary projects he has worked on include *Oxford Intermediate Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary*, *Oxford Chinese Dictionary*, *Oxford Pocket Chinese Dictionary*, *Xinhua Dictionary* (English-Chinese edition), *A Junior English-Chinese Dictionary* and *New English-Chinese Learner's Dictionary*.

胡龙彪, 英国文学学士、硕士, 翻译学硕士。现定居英国, 曾在纽卡斯尔大学、爱丁堡龙比亚大学和赫瑞-瓦特大学教授中文、学术英语和翻译硕士课程。目前为自由职业者, 主要从事词典编纂和修订工作。参与翻译、修订、审订或编纂的词典有《牛津中阶英汉双解词典》、《牛津-外研社英汉汉英词典》、《新华字典》(英汉双语版)、《精选英汉汉英词典》、人教社《新编英汉学习词典》以及《英汉小词典》等。

WEN Hua, PhD in Literature, Associate Professor in the School of Literature and Media of Guangzhou Southern College. Her main research areas are comparative literature and English and American literature. In recent years, she has mainly researched literary non-fiction and Chinese cinema. She has published the monographs *Appreciation of Classics of Foreign Theatre Literature* (2006) and *Transformations of Discourse in Foreign Literary Studies* (2014), and translations of *The Lost Continent* (with Zhang Yanrui, 2009, 2013), *Our Inner Conflicts* (2015), *Churchill's Classic Speeches* (2018) and *A Narco History* (with Zhang Yanrui, 2019), and has published numerous film reviews on wenhui.com.

温华，文学博士，广州南方学院文学与传媒学院副教授。主要研究领域为比较文学与英美文学。近年来主要研究非虚构文学、中国电影。出版专著《外国戏剧文学经典赏析》（2006）、《外国文学研究话语转型》（2014），译著《失落的大陆》（温华、张艳蕊,2009、2013）、《我们内心的冲突》（2015）、《丘吉尔经典演讲》（2018）、《毒品史：美国与墨西哥的百年恩怨》（温华、张艳蕊,2019），并有多篇影评在文汇网发表。

WU Bo has a PhD in Translation Studies. She was an Associate Professor In English Department at East China Normal University and currently lives in Budapest. She is the translator of over ten books on academic and cultural topics, and the author of a monograph, several textbooks, and more than ten academic papers.

吴波，翻译学博士，曾为华东师范大学英语系副教授，国际汉语教师，现居布达佩斯。出版英汉-汉英学术文化类译著多部，英文专著一部，主编和参编教材若干部，发表论文十多篇。

ZHOU Yyun is an associate professor at the University of Oslo, Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, Norway. She received her doctorate in Contemporary Chinese Studies from the University of Oxford. She is a political sociologist with a feminist analytical approach and is exploring the use of ethnographic films in her research. Her research focuses on gender and political institutions, feminism(s), affective governance in contemporary China. She is the co-founder of the Norwegian non-profit organization FRA ØST TIL NORD.

周芸芸，挪威奥斯陆大学中国政治与社会研究副教授，在英国牛津大学当代中国研究获得博士学位。她是一名从女权主义分析框架出发的政治社会学家，并实践田野中的影像创作。她的研究重点是当代中国的性别与政治制度、国家女权主义、情感治理与青年政治化。她的最新论文在《文化、传播与评论》《政治与性别》等学术刊物上发表。她创办了在北欧推广亚洲文化艺术活动的非营利组织 FRA ØST TIL NORD。

华 语 独 立 影 像 观 察

C H I N E S E

I N D E P E N D E N T

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O B S E R V E R