

厉槟源：回馈

Li Binyuan: Give Back

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红树林画廊正在展出“厉槟源：回馈”，这是艺术家近三年来首次以个展方式集中呈现和梳理近期的创作线索。厉槟源选择了他在 2022 至 2023 年之间完成的部分新作，包括实验影像《追踪》（由挪威国家公共艺术委约创作）和《窗台上的表演》，以及相关行为摄影；同时展出的还有 2015 年的两部录像《上升》和《下沉》。

这些年来，厉槟源用他挑战和测试肉身限度的表演，将个体内在世界的强度袒露为一个坚实的，关于身体的意象，一个在泥浆之中不断摔向大地，以命去拷问这片土地的西西弗斯。身体是绝对的主角，它迎击，坠落，挣扎，奋起，僵持，衰竭……我们几乎无法将目光从身体塑造的这些寓言般简洁，电流般强劲的形象之流中移开，观看成为了一种持续的见证。

然而还有另一个厉槟源，他有时也会悄悄地从视线中央退出，甚至是有意将我们的目光引向别处。或许也是因为此，这样一条线索往往沉潜在那些最激荡和眩目的表演背后，但并不意味着它就是次要的。一个典型的例子，是与《自由耕种》几乎同期完成的《上升》和《下沉》。这是两组相互呼应的黑白录像，在这里，厉槟源显现为一个背影，以接近于静止，最小幅度的动作，分别面对涨潮和落潮之中的同一片海。在湍急风浪前他勉力保持站姿，手中的伞颤抖得像一片可笑的枯荷叶，然而视觉上的压倒性力量更多来自于越过他的肩膀并向我们不断升起的滔滔巨浪；在落潮的场景中，他的身体更加缩减为画面中心的一个点，随着海面的回撤而向远方慢慢移动。暮色、阴影、沙滩和海水的反光让这个小小的人形几乎不醒目。在这里，与其说厉槟源是表演的主角，不如说是风，是雨，是汹涌或平静的海，是卷云的阴影和沙滩的洄光。也许这才是他期待我们注视的东西？

之后，厉槟源开始参与电影工作，先是在睢安奇，然后是在胡波的长片中出演角色。随剧组天南海北的旅行，以及拍片过程中逐渐积累的电影经验，逐渐将他引向另一种可能性。2019 年，他第一次尝试完成了实验影片《一个人的战争》。片子的内容是他的表演：在聚光灯下的场地中央，用两只锤子相互敲击，直至将 301 把锤子渐次全部击碎；形式上则完全采用电影语言，通过运镜调度剪辑等塑造、强化和延展那些“决定性瞬间”。之后的《建造美术馆》（2020-2022）、《失语症》（2023）等电影短片也可以看作在同一方向的延伸，尤其是，在后两部片子中加入了叙事性的内容和暗示性的情节，影像开始变得松弛和开阔：如果说以前在厉槟源的艺术中身体和行动是绝对的中心，那么现在，则是关于它们的影像，以及，更多的影像，世界的影像。

2023 年的冬天，实验影片《追踪》制作完成。在最开始的设想中，厉槟源将自己作为“追踪”的对象，他的旅行将跨越欧洲地区以及中国的最北方和最南方，而他的身体将与不同的环境化合反应，融入到不同的风景之中。作为计划的第一步，《追踪》成片仅包括了在中俄边境拍摄的部分。在那里，厉槟源用各种方式——汽车、马车以及步行，从一个地方移往下一个地方：他摇落林中每一棵树上的积雪，复制微小的雪崩；他在雪地里通过自己和一棵树的力量牵制住一辆相反方向发动的汽车，制造一场接近于静止的角力；他往平静的湖面扔下一块石头，让泛起的涟漪引发一场暴雨……只是这次，它们还远远不是全



部。

在这部长达一小时的影像开始，占据镜头的是艺术家脸部的特写，他身后是苍灰色的北方天空，地平线，弯曲的河。他的双手分别捂住双眼，慢慢抬起，移开，仿佛第一次睁开眼睛看向这个世界。空气沉静，穿入窸窣的鸟声。随同厉槟源的视线，我们看向天空，萧索、枯瘦的树梢，然后，是积雪覆盖的山坡，森林，河中对称的沙洲；然后是雪，翻卷连续；然后是风，呼啸摇动树枝；是被雪覆盖的村庄，缓缓升起的丘陵。仿佛我们是跟随他来到了这里，接着被留在了这里，这是一个没有人的世界，也是所有人的世界。而艺术家的行为，不过是发生在这天地中的一件事情，它和突如其来的风，一场雪崩，时有时无的鸟鸣，并没有根本的分别。而雪将所有事物抚平，像是什么都从来不曾发生。

《追踪》中的厉槟源身着白色的连体衣，当他出现在林中被雪覆盖的空地，几乎完全融入到树丛投下的阴影中。他的“表演”——让我们姑且这样说吧——从一处向下一处转移，让影片形成自然的节奏和篇章。镜头在这些“幕间”部分又再次同厉槟源的视线重合，好像是我们自己躺在摇摆行进的板车上，看着山越来越远，而另一些山则越来越近，一只小狗兴奋地追来，被落下，又追上。《追踪》充满了空镜和类似的场景，厉槟源仿佛在说看吧，它们才是真正的主角：山的沉默的斜线，雪飘落画下不连续的虚线，森林如何在雾霭中静止，鸟如何起飞，马的眼睛如何转动。常常，我们发现自己陷入了一种长久的等待，直到光线变化，或是汽车发动机一阵有节奏的轰鸣，提示已经在不知不觉中过去了多少时间。我们想起曾经，在《直到桥梁坍塌》和《今日有雨》中，厉槟源也曾经试图用行为去度量时间，而现在，时间完全成为内在的体验。是不是可以这样猜测，当他的身影在镜头中与苍茫的白色世界融为一体，这样一个厉槟源，比起表现，更愿选择感受，比起行动，更倾向于体验。如他在影片的自述中说，追踪，是为了采集隐藏在四季和不同自然环境中的潜力，是为了让自己成为自然的一部分，从中重新获得力量。那么，他曾经的那些在激流中的角力，那些在山间的攀缘，也许不是为了角力或是证明自己的存在，而是为了成为河流，成为海，成为山吗？

《追踪》没有剪进来的部分，后来成为了一个独立的作品《窗台上的表演》，厉槟源在家乡的山脚下，田野上，在敞开的四方水泥窗棂中间伸展着身体，如果说他的身体，变化的动作是一支画笔，那么家乡的风景则是他的画布。这幅画更像是一支随口唱出的歌，驱动它的是最深沉，也是最自然的感情。厉槟源不时切换到村庄的侧写，以及动物的特写，几只鸡，一头牛，它们也是影片的主角，理所当然。在《三块面包》中，厉槟源索性将自己完全撤出，把观众交给（仿佛是从碗底）看一群鸽子啄食干净面包的过程。观众被迫学着艺术家弯折，调整，重新安放自己的身躯，在这个过程中，暂时告别那个站立的，走动的，观看和欣赏的“文明人”，也许他/她们也要学习像一块石头，一朵花，一根草一样打量这个世界吗？对厉槟源来说，这个世界是如此的重要，而他的艺术，将被用来表达这深挚的感情。他曾说过，在童年时期的乡下生活中，吸取茶花蜜的经验，那神奇的甘甜令他终生难忘。在《回馈》中他复现了这样的仪式，用一根树茎将自己同茶花相连。没有什么，比厉槟源自己的话更适合作为这篇前言的结尾：“如果山茶花曾经，甚至直到今天仍然在滋养着我，那么我会用我的情感，精神，用我的艺术来回馈它。山茶花蜜的甘甜和纯净，是土地给人的馈赠，我对它抱有最高的敬意。”

Li Binyuan: Give Back opens on Feb. 25, 2024 at MANGROVEGALLERY. This is the first time in three years that the artist has put together and presented to us his recent works in a solo exhibition. Li selects from the collection of works completed between 2022 and 2023, including experimental film *Trace*, commissioned by Public Art Norway (KORO), and *Performance on the Windowsill*, as well as accompanying photos of the performance. Also on show would be two videos made in 2015, *Rising*, and *Sinking*.



In recent years, through performances that push his body to the limit, he turns his inner endurance into physical imagery of the human body, into a Sisyphus that throws himself to the muddied ground, repeatedly, to interrogate this land with a mortal soul. The body is the absolute protagonist: it confronts. It falls. It struggles. It rises. It stagnates. And it degenerates. We can hardly remove our eyes from the flowing imagery created with a body, which is aphoristic like an aphorism, and electrifying like an electric current. Seeing becomes witnessing.

But there is another Li, who sometimes retreats from the center of our vision, or deliberately draws our attention away to somewhere else. As a result, perhaps, this plot line may often stow away behind the most scintillating and riveting performances. That does not mean it is somehow lesser. One typical example would be *Rising and Sinking*, completed around the same time as *Freedom Farming*. Two complementing monochrome videos, in which we see Li from behind facing the same patch of sea, one during the rising tide and one during ebbing. He is almost completely immobile, with movements imperceptibly slow. He strains to remain standing against waves of wind and sea, the laughable umbrella in his hand quivering like a wilted lotus leaf. Meanwhile, the overpowering visual effect comes more from the towering sea waves that keep surging up over his shoulders towards us. In the scene where the tide is receding, his body is reduced to a point at the center of the frame, moving further away into the distance as the sea retires. Twilight, shadows, beaches, and the glimmering sea obscure the tiny human figure. Here, the protagonist is not so much him as the wind, the rain, the sea, surging or calming, the shadows of the cirrus, the bouncing light on the beach. Perhaps that is what he wishes us to see?

Then he went into films. He first appeared in Ju Anqi's work. Later, he played a part in Hu Bo's feature. He traveled extensively with the crew, and with the experience accumulated during filming, he was drawn to another possibility. In 2019, he produced the debut experimental film *One Man's War*, in which he sits in the middle of a stage in the spotlight, and smashes one hammer with another, until all three hundred and one are broken. It is done using entirely cinematographic language, with all the camera movement and editing techniques to shape, accentuate, and expand on those "Decisive Moments". His subsequent short films, *Building A Museum* (2020-2022), and *Aphasia* (2023), can also be seen as continuations in the same direction. In particular, these two films come with narratives and evocative plots: they loosen up and take off. If his body and his actions had been the absolute center of his previous art, now it is the image about the body and the actions, and some additional images: images that are universal.

In the winter of 2023, the experimental film *Trace* was completed. In the initial concept, Li himself was going to be the object of the tracing. His journey would take him across Europe, and from the northernmost to the southernmost part of China. He would physically interact with different environments and integrate into various types of scenery. The first phase involves only the footage shot in the border regions between China and Russia. There, he used multiple ways of transport — by car, by horse-drawn carriage, by foot — to move from one place to another. He shook down the snow on every tree he happened to pass by, triggering miniature avalanches. In the snow field, with only himself and the leverage of a tree, he stopped a car that moved in the opposite direction dead on its track, which was a wrestle game that was almost



stationary. He dropped a rock into a calm lake, and let the ripples set a storm. Only that this time, they are far from being all that there is.

At the start of the hour-long video, a close-up shot of the artist's face occupies the frame. Behind him is the blueish gray of the northern sky, the horizon, and a winding river. Eyes covered with both of his hands, he lifts up his face, and removes his hands, as if he is looking at this world for the very first time. The air is tranquil, interspersed with birds' chirping. Following Li's line of sight, we watch the sky, the bleak and scrawny treetop, and then, the snow-covered mountain slopes, forests, symmetrical sandbanks in the middle of the river. Then the snow, the rolling and undulating snow, and the wind, howling and ruffling the trees as it wreaks havoc, then the snow-covered villages, and the hills that slowly rise up. It is as if we are following him here, and become stranded in this no-man's land, which happens to be everyone's world. And the artist's act is but one thing that happens in this very earth and sky, in no way different to a sudden gust of wind, an avalanche, and a bird's intermittent chirping. The snow wipes everything from the surface of the earth, as if nothing has happened.

In *Trace*, Li puts on a white jumpsuit, and blends into the shade under the trees when he appears in the snow - covered clearing in the middle of the forest. His performance — let's use this word for now — moves from one place to another, creating a natural rhythm, dividing the video into fitting chapters. During these intermissions, we see from Li's sight again, as if we ourselves are the ones who lie on the wobbling trolley as it moves forward. Some mountains draw away, while some others inch closer. A little puppy catches up with the trolley, gets left behind, and then catches up again. *Trace* is filled with scenery shots and similar scenes, with which Li seems to be saying, look, they are the real protagonists — the silent slopes of mountains, the dotted lines of snow falling across the frame, the tranquility of forests immobile in the mist, the takeoff of birds, the turn of horses' eyes. We are often mesmerized, until when the lighting changes, or when a car engine comes roaring back, reminding us of the time that has passed while we are oblivious to it. We remember that Li used to mark time with performances, in *Until the Bridge Collapses*, and *It Rains Today*. Now, the notion of time has become entirely an inner experience. Would it be wrong, therefore, to suggest that Li, as he merges with the vast whiteness of the world, is more inclined to feel rather than to express, more to experience than to act? As he says in the monologue, tracing is to gather the energy hidden in four seasons, in a variety of natural environments. He wants to become part of nature, and gain strength from it. Those wrestling games he used to play against the fierce currents, the climbing he used to do up on the mountains, are perhaps not to test his strength or to prove his existence, but to become the river, to become the sea, to become the mountain. Isn't that so?

The footage that fails to make into the video later becomes a separate piece, *Performance on the Windowsill*, in which Li extends his body in his hometown, at the foot of the mountains, in the fields, and on the cement window lattice. If his body and his ever-changing movements are the brushes he paints with, the scenery of his hometown would be the canvas he paints on. This painting is more like an impromptu song, and what is driving it is the deepest, most natural emotions. Li oftentimes switches to the profile of the village, and the close-up of animals — chickens, a cow, naturally the real protagonists of the video. In *Three Pieces of Bread*, Li just pulls himself out of the picture completely, and turns the camera over to a flock of pigeons pecking at some bread, and the audience watches the whole thing as if from the bottom of a bowl.



The audience is guided to bend, adjust and reposition their bodies. For the moment, they would have to abandon their identity as civilized people — who stand, who walk, who observe, who appreciate — and attempt to look at the world like a rock, a flower, a blade of grass. For Li, the world is that important, and his art will be devoted to this deeply felt love. He once said, he would never forget the magical sweetness that filled his mouth, when as a little kid living in the countryside, he tasted the nectar from the camellia. In *Give Back*, he replicates the scene by connecting himself to the camellia with a bamboo cane. Nothing is more befitting as the conclusion of this prologue than his own words, 'If the camellia once nourished me (or still), I will give back to it with my emotions, my spirit and my art. The sweetness and purity of the camellia nectar is a gift from the land to humanity, and I cherish it with the highest respect.'

