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LEAP

你好, 艺术青年

HELLO, ART YOUTH

万曼/MARYN VARBANOV 政纯办

没顶/MADEIN 孙逊/SUN XUN 刘一青/LIU YIQING

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艺术家张洵
Artist Zhang Huan



佩斯画廊创办人阿恩·格里姆齐
Pace Gallery founder Arne Glimcher



佩斯北京总监冷林
Pace Beijing director Leng Lin

张洵个展“放虎归山”开幕

Zhang Huan Free Tiger Returns To Mountains

时间: 2010年5月20日 地点: 佩斯北京
Pace Beijing | 2010.5.20

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策展人顾振清
Curator Gu Zhenqing



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Critic Gao Minglu



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艺术家喻红
Artist Yu Hong



阿拉里奥的尹在甲
Arario's Yun Chea Gab



导演张元
Director Zhang Yuan

没顶公司“不要把信仰挂在墙上”开幕

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MadeIn: Don't Hang Your Faith On the Wall

时间: 2010年5月30日 地点: 长征空间, 北京
Long March Space | Beijing | 2010.5.30



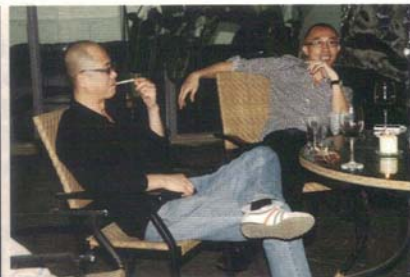
艺术家展望和刘建华
Artists Zhan Wang and Liu Jianhua



“上海当代”博览会总监秦思源
ShContemporary director
Colin Chinnery



艺术家徐震、赵要 and 胡向前
Artists Xu Zhen, Zhao Yao and
Hu Xiangqian



艺术家张慧 and 长征空间总监卢杰
Artist Zhang Hui and Long March Space
director Lu Jie



艺术家朱昱、庄辉 and 谢南星
Artists Zhu Yu, Zhuang Hui, and Xie Nanxing

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工作室
YANG ZHENZHONG
STUDIO



香格纳画廊 2.
SHANGHART GALLERY



没顶公司 3.
MADEIN'S OFFICE

杜震君工作室
DU ZHENJUN STUDIO



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石至莹工作室
SHI ZHIYING STUDIO

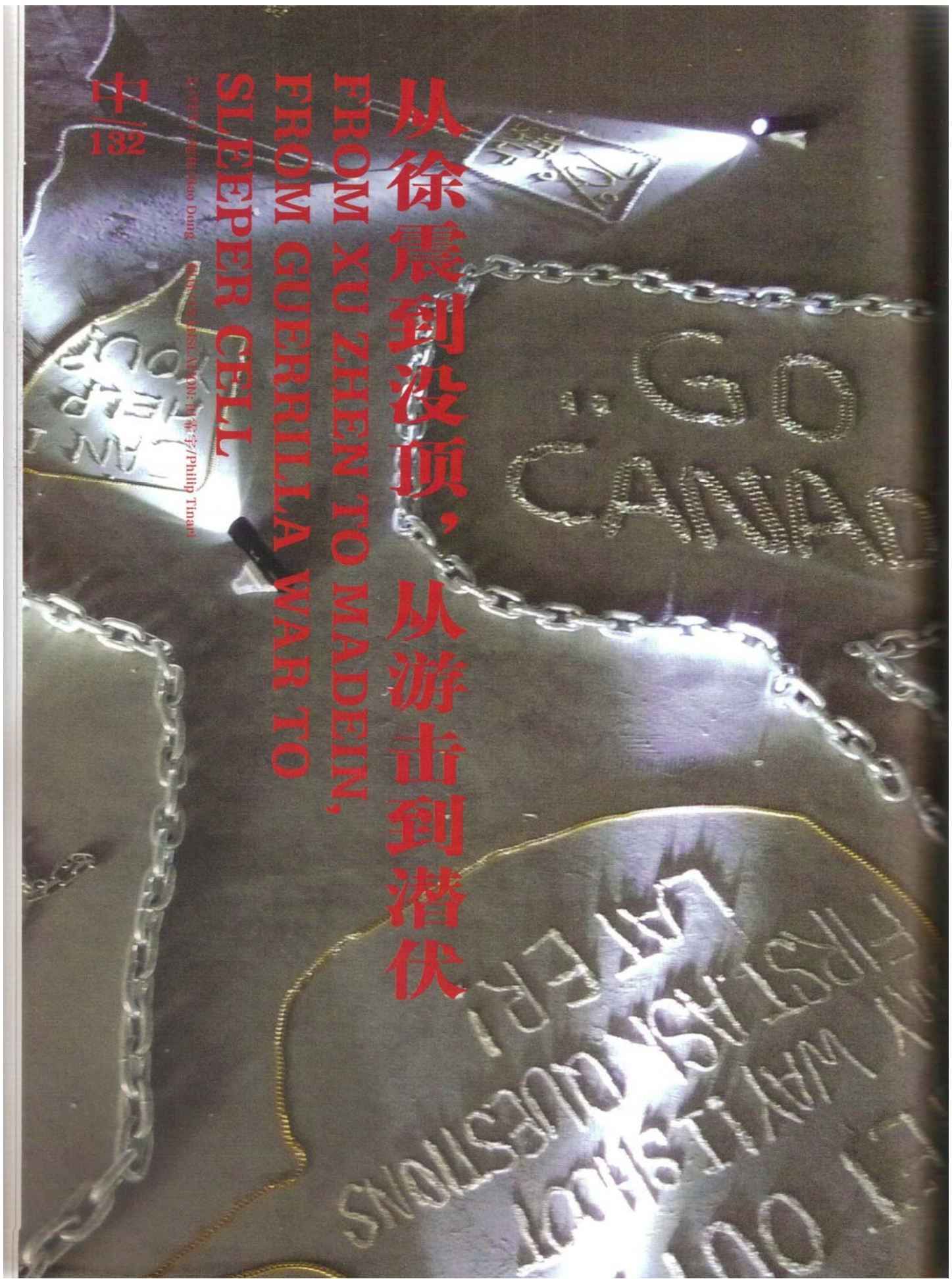


武威路
WUWEI ROAD

刘建华工作室 4.
LIU JIANHUA STUDIO

从徐震到没顶，从游击到潜伏
FROM XU ZHEN TO MADEIN,
FROM GUERRILLA WAR TO
SLEEPER CELL

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TRANSLATED BY PHILIP MAO DONG AND PHILIP TINANI



现在艺术品在我们心里所激发起来的，
除了直接享受以外，还有我们的判断，
我们把艺术品的内容和表现手段以及二者的合适和不合适都加以思考了。

黑格尔：《美学》，朱光潜译，商务印书馆，1979年版，第一卷，第15页

What is now aroused in us by works of art is not just immediate enjoyment but our judgment also, since we subject to our intellectual consideration (i) the content of art, and (ii) the work of art's means of presentation, and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of both to one another.

Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, Vol. I*, 1835 (Translation T.M. Knox, 1973)



徐震，《喊》，1998，影像，4'
Xu Zhen, *Shouting*, 1998, video, 4 min.

徐震转变为没顶之后凸显出的无名的生产特征，究竟是一种艺术创作上的策略，还是出自一种对于体制的自觉反思？或许，二者之间的关系才是那把打开没顶之门的钥匙。

最初，徐震采取的是一种本能的、即兴的、贴在日常生活皮肤上的方式，正是这类作品，比如《彩虹》和《喊》使他获得了国际声誉。这种即兴的方式很快就被徐震有意地把握了，进而发展出了一种游击策略，他自觉地——甚至有些策略化地——挑战与挑衅各种禁忌，包括艺术的、文化的、政治的、伦理的、思维的，总之，任何规则与习惯的堡垒都是他的敌人。实际上，这样的行动纲领是早已被先锋派们制定好了的，即反对一切人们习以为常而浑然不觉的东西，尤其是那些被定义好了的，极其安全的艺术观念与趣味，简言之，先锋派们反对观众，观众就是敌人。

Xu Zhen's MadeIn moniker is a hotly debated new guise for an artist who has continuously challenged his own identity. Bao Dong charts the tricks of anonymity and asks whether the pseudo-corporate name change is just a ruse, or a defense against the enemy within.

Xu Zhen's earliest works played on instinct and extemporaneity, interventions pasted onto the skin of everyday life. Think of his early videos *Shout* (1997) and *Rainbow* (1998), for which he gained international recognition. Xu very quickly came to grasp this extemporaneous style, consciously—even strategically—developing from it an entire guerrilla method. With this he challenged and provoked all sorts of taboos, artistic, cultural, political, ethical, and intellectual. Every bastion of rule or custom became his enemy. In fact, this was nothing more than the program of the old-



徐震,《彩虹》
1998, 影像, 3'50''
Xu Zhen, *Rainbow*
1998, video
3 min. 50 sec.

在这个行动方向上,徐震在2008年达到了顶峰或尽头,他用实物、道具与演员布置出了凯文·卡特在《饥饿的苏丹》中所拍摄到的那一幕,考虑到这张摄影曾经引发的话题,以及挪用、复制、仿造这些修辞手法早已成为俗套的现实,徐震的做法无疑能够引发一系列观看伦理上的困境——我们为什么要去观看凯文·卡特的观看,何况还是伪造的;一个中国艺术家的作品与这张照片的故事,以及非洲发生的事情难道有什么关系吗?不管引发这些疑问是徐震的主观意图,还是这件作品带来的客观结果,这都意味着,徐震开始在“游击”中躲了起来,他以前的作品几乎总是有一些明确的生效点,但是这次没有,他只是制造出了一个边界模糊的语境,或者说,他从直接的挑衅观众,转向了促使观众去自我反观。而要促使观众去反观自身的艺术家,必然要先反观自己,并把自己隐匿到了观众之中,变成观众的一部分,这意味着,作品从对趣味或意义上的惊悚效果的直接追求,转向了对某种知性价值的间接呈现。

接下来的事情就理所当然了:徐震宣布放弃“徐震”这个身份,开始使用“没顶”这个名称。他要尽可能地把自己隐藏起来,当然,不仅是抹掉一个已为艺术圈所熟知的名字,更重要的是去除“艺术家”这种身份,及其背后的神话。没顶来自MadeIn,或许可以理解为made in……一种没有主体的制造,一种无名的生产。这种取消主体的策略事实上就是把自身作为了敌人,因为敌人就在我们之间,所以必须要在我们内部潜伏下来,并在各个环节中安插卧底。

在这种潜伏策略下,首先要做的是从之外的角度观察自



徐震
《饥饿的苏丹》,2008
展览现场,长征艺术空间
Xu Zhen
The Starving of Sudan
2008, Installation view
Long March Space, Beijing

没顶来自MadeIn,
或许可以理解为made in……
一种没有主体的制造,
一种无名的生产。

As a name, MadeIn evokes a
kind of agent-less fabrication,
a nameless production.

school avant-garde, to oppose everything everyone took for granted, and nothing more so than defined, accepted artistic concepts and taste. In short, the avant-garde went against the viewer. It took the viewer as foe.

By 2008, Xu Zhen had followed this path to its summit, or perhaps to a dead end. Using objects, props, and actors, he recreated the scene captured by Kevin Carter in his Pulitzer-prize-winning photograph of a starving toddler in Sudan. The piece raised a series of questions about the ethics of viewing, drawing on the discussions raised by the original photo and the rhetorical strategies of appropriation, replication, and simulacrum with which he so painstakingly recreated it. Why should we look at what Kevin Carter looked at, and why in simulacral form? What does a Chinese artist have to do with this photograph and its story, or with what happens in Africa? Regardless of whether we see raising these questions as Xu's conscious intention, or as objective “side-effects” of the work itself, this was the point where he started to hide under the cloak of “guerrilla” strategy. His earlier works could nearly all be said to have precise effects, but this piece did not. He merely constructed a context with unclear boundaries, moving from a strategy of directly provoking viewers to one of pushing them to look back in on themselves. An artist who seeks to advance self-reflection is of course a practitioner of the same, hiding among the other viewers of his work, becoming one of them. In this moment, the work stops playing on the anxieties of taste and meaning, becoming instead an indirect inquiry into intellectual values.

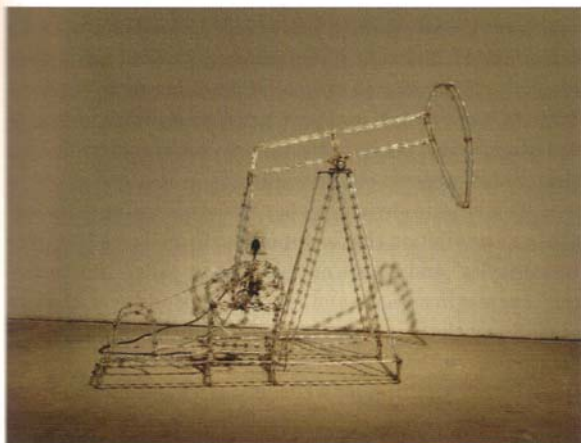
What happened next was quite natural: Xu Zhen gave up his identity as “Xu Zhen,” and began using the name “MadeIn.” He wants to hide himself as much as possible, not just because his name happens to be well known in the art world, but more as a way of eliding altogether his identity as an “art-

没顶公司
《看见自己的眼睛》
2009, 装置
800 x 800 x 60 cm
MadeIn
Seeing One's Own Eyes
2009, installation
800 x 800 x 60 cm



身, 正如2009年没顶公司第一个展览所做的, 首先涉及的是对当代艺术的文化身份这个问题的讨论。以一种明知故犯的方式, 这个展览伪造了一种想象中的中东当代艺术风格, 把那种“中国当代艺术”中四处可见的文化本质主义思维, 与一种模式化的“国际当代艺术”语言方式结合了起来, 于是, 观众们见到的是棕榈树、花园游泳池、阿拉伯建筑风格、废墟、战争、石油及壁毯, 以及这些元素之间的机巧组合。难道这不正是中国当代艺术中那种他者眼光下的生产方式吗? 这正是没顶这次的意图, 展览主题叫做“看见自己的眼睛”, 这个隐喻的含义可以拗口地表达为“观看自身的观看方式”, 即自我反观。

紧接着, 没顶的这种反思意识所涉及的是“国际当代艺术”, 他们在网上收集了大量的西方媒体中的讽刺漫画, 这



没顶公司,《永动机》, 2009, 铁丝, 灯泡, 87 x 120 x 42 cm
MadeIn, *Perpetual Motion Machine*
2009, mesh wire, light bulbs, 87 x 120 x 42 cm

ist,” and the mythologies that go along with that identity. As a name, MadeIn evokes a kind of agent-less fabrication, a nameless production. Such a strategy of removing one's subjectivity is actually nothing less than making an enemy of oneself, as if the enemy lies within us, taking up a position and installing its spies at every junction.

Having chosen this strategy of lying low or incubating, the most pressing task became to observe himself from the outside. MadeIn's first exhibition in 2009 was thus a meditation on the pressing question of cultural identity and its role in contemporary art. This show was a conscious transgression: MadeIn “counterfeited” a body of works by an imagined group of Middle Eastern artists, bringing to the fore the very sort of cultural essentialism that lies behind so much thinking on “contemporary Chinese art,” voiced in the stylized forms of “international contemporary art.” Here were palm trees, garden swimming pools, Arabic architecture, ruins, wars, oil wells, carpets, and deft combinations of the above. Is this not the way in which contemporary Chinese art is made for the eyes of the other? This was MadeIn's point, in an exhibition entitled “Seeing One's Own Eyes,” which might be more awkwardly restated as “looking at one's own way of looking,” i.e., looking in on oneself.

Shortly thereafter, MadeIn set its sights on “international contemporary art,” downloading massive quantities of political cartoons from Western media outlets, cutting them out, mixing them up, and arbitrarily collaging them back together. In a series of hanging tapestries, MadeIn worked in a method approaching automatic writing. Another series of floor pieces entitled “Metal Language” also incorporated language from cartoons. The cartoons are mostly in the style of R. Crumb. They touch on every topic, but gravitate mostly toward sex and politics, the sorts of stories

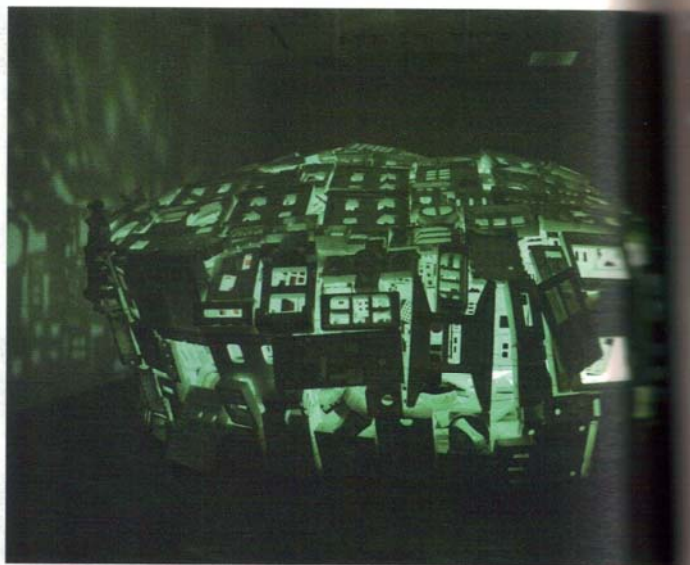
没顶呈现给观众的
只是一种西方主流当代艺术的外观，
一种极度风格化、表面化的东西。

MadeIn gives its audience nothing
less and nothing more than the
external appearance of mainstream
Western contemporary art, something
excessively stylized and superficial.

没顶公司

《爱情其实就是脑子里产生大量多巴胺作用的结果》
2009, 泡沫板、舞厅灯光
800 x 800 x 320 cm

MadeIn, *Love in fact results
from an excess of dopamine in the brain*
2009, polystyrene board, disco light ball
800 x 800 x 320 cm



些漫画被剪碎、打乱，再随机地把这些图像与文字拼贴到一起，没顶的那些壁挂就是以这种接近于“自动书写”的方式完成的，而地上的那些“金属的语言”也是来自漫画中的文字。这些漫画大部分是罗伯特·克鲁伯（Robert Crumb）风格的，涉及各种话题，但主要是性与政治，美国人所热衷的各种段子。不过，没顶只是抽取了这类漫画的风格，尤其是其中对话框的形式，但是却把对话的内容剪辑的支离破碎，除了一些只言片语之外，观众在内容上一无所获。换句话说，没顶呈现给观众的只是一种西方主流当代艺术的外观，一种极度风格化、表面化的东西，为了强化这种“秀”感，繁乱的布条、线头与闪亮的绣片被无所顾忌地堆砌，仿佛造作而泛滥的形容词。“蔓延到北京”展览中的那个泡沫装置尤为典型地透露了作者的意图，廉价的包装材料与艳丽的旋转灯光把这种空洞的炫耀推向了极致，作品的标题“爱情其实就是脑子里产生大量多巴胺作用的结果”也是一副貌似深刻的样子，总之，一切都是装模作样地装模作样。

很显然，这是没顶的又一次的暗讽，展览故意装扮成那种“国际风格”的拼贴，充满所谓“微观政治”的当代艺术，或者说，它把那种充斥在国际展场与卖场中的东西——尤其是我们对它们的崇拜与期待——结结实实地开涮了一把。

当然，反讽并不新鲜，甚至对于徐震来说，反讽亦是他之前惯用的修辞手段，但是不同的是，没顶的反讽不再有先在的对象，更确切地说，这种反讽是在与观众的关系中发生的，这意味一种对制度的思考被引入了。对我们困于其中的艺术系统的反思，在不可见的牢笼中尝试着打破这个牢笼，这正是徐震已有所涉及，但是直到没顶才得以整体尝试的实践。

在我看来，这就是从徐震转变为没顶，从“游击”转变为“潜伏”的意义所在，即，打开了一种内部批判，并且是尽可能匿名的、非个性化的，为了使批判能够持存，或者说为

Americans hanker after. However, MadeIn extracted only the visual style of these cartoons, in particular, the forms of their signature speech bubbles. The content was reorganized with such utter fragmentation that the most a viewer could hope to grasp was a stray sentence fragment here or there. In other words, MadeIn here gave its audience nothing less and nothing more than the external appearance of mainstream Western contemporary art, something excessively stylized and superficial. To exacerbate the feeling of showmanship, MadeIn added strips of cloth, threads, and glittering embroidery, unscrupulously piled up like so many empty, flowery adjectives. The installation made entirely of Styrofoam which featured so prominently in MadeIn's exhibition "Spread" perhaps most clearly reveals the author's intentions. In this work, cheap packing materials and gaudy revolving lights pushed the empty flaunting to an extreme. Its title, *Love in fact results from an excess of dopamine in the brain*, makes similar affectations of profundity. The entire exhibition shows off, showoffishly.

This is quite obviously what MadeIn is trying to insinuate in an exhibition that so intentionally collages "international styles" and hinges on the same so-called "micropolitics" one sees in museum and galleries the world over. MadeIn seems to mock these styles, but is actually mocking our reverence toward them. Of course, irony is nothing fresh, particularly for Xu Zhen, for whom it was a habitual rhetorical strategy. The difference is that this irony has no present object, which is to say it exists entirely in relation to the viewer. This implies an intellectual engagement with the rules of the art system in which we are all implicated, trying to break out of its invisible cage. Xu's earlier work also dealt with the sys-



没顶公司,《金属语言》
2009, 装置(金属链条)

MadeIn, *Metal Language*
2009, installation (metal chains)



没顶公司,《蔓延B-011》, 2009, 拼贴画、辅料 550 x 350 cm
MadeIn, *Spread B-011*, 2009, collage, cloth and mixed media, 550 x 350 cm

了防止各种潜在的牢笼彻底关上。起码自杜尚以来, 艺术的动力一直来自这种制度反思, 而中国当代艺术一直无法建立真正的主体性——不管是在国际文化系统中, 还是在内部的社会文化系统中——的根本原因就是缺乏这种制度层面的思考与实践, 人们总是希望玩好别人的游戏, 而不去怀疑这个游戏本身。当然, 事情也并不是像另一些人想象的那样简单, 他们以为拒绝这个游戏就可以了, 这实际上是一种最没有难度的做法, 真正有难度的是打入游戏的内部, 以其规则来批判其规则本身。实际上, 没顶所做的, 就是那些伟大的现代主义者们曾经的所为, 只不过转移了战场, 从形式、媒介、审美的领域转移到了制度、观念与行动的场所, 从这个意义上, 没顶真正地延续了杜尚的传统。

从本文的这种思想史的角度来观察, 没顶对公司化的强调倒显得没有必要, 虽然这能够暂时地藏匿“徐震”, 虽然也可以期待它最终能够彻底地去去除所为艺术家的性, 但是, 这更应该被理解为徐震自我批判的一个阶段, 一个途径, 或者说, 一个外壳, 而其内质未必非得以此方式呈现出来。不过, 这种公司化的形象外壳确实能够回避掉不少麻烦, 使徐震能够更加无所顾忌, 在UCCA的“中坚”展览中, 我们甚至能够看到没顶戏仿当代艺术家的例子, 而公司的身份也确实能够更方便地涉入当代艺术的各个系统, 总之, 如果没顶发展成了一个包括杂志、网站、画廊、博览会、拍卖行、美术馆等等的庞大系统, 这将一点都不令人意外, 虽然现在看起来, 没顶更像是一个以徐震为核心的艺术小组。

这个小组目前酷爱研究艺术生产/接受系统, 热衷于偷偷地把观众诱捕进那些安排好的笼子, 但又向他们暗示了这个事实, 使他们不得不置身于一种无所依附的怀疑状态中。一切都在引发一种知性的活力, 而感性终于被降低到了最低限度, 没顶最近在“长征空间”的展览“不要把信仰挂在墙

tem, but only in MadeIn does it gain full expression.

Perhaps that is the true import of the transition from Xu Zhen to MadeIn, from “guerrilla warfare” to “sleeper cell”: to open an internal critique, hopefully anonymous and certainly not individualized, in order to enable critique to continue, or at the very least to prevent unseen cages from closing on us. At least since Duchamp, the impetus for art has come from metacritique, and the lack of such critique in China is precisely why contemporary art here has been unable to establish its own subjectivity, whether in the international cultural system or in the domestic socio-cultural nexus. Too often, Chinese artists have lacked this systemic consciousness, hoping only to play well at the games of others, without stopping to question the game itself. Of course things are not as simple as refusing the game, despite what some may think. Much harder is to fight one's way onto the battlefield, using the rules to critique the rules. In one sense, what MadeIn attempts is no different from what the great Modernists did. Only the content of the fight has changed—from form, medium, and aesthetics to system, concept, and practice. Seen thus, MadeIn fits squarely into the Duchampian tradition.

From the perspective of intellectual history, MadeIn's emphasis on its corporate identity seems unnecessary, even if it provides a temporarily effective hiding place for “Xu Zhen,” and even if we hope that eventually he can thoroughly do away with his own “artist-ness.” But the company might still be better understood as a stage in Xu's own self-critique, a channel, or perhaps a shell that he chooses but does not fundamentally need. That said, the company form does allow Xu to escape quite a few problems, and to be ever more unscrupulous, as in the UCCA's “Breaking Forecast” exhibition last

上 TOP

没顶公司,《理论与实际越是矛盾的群众运动,就越是热衷把自己的信仰加诸别人。》
2010,蜡、军帽,300 x 800 x 300 cm
Madeln, *In mass exercise, the greater the conflict between theory and reality, the stronger its eagerness to impose beliefs on others*
2010, wax, military caps, 300 x 800 x 300 cm



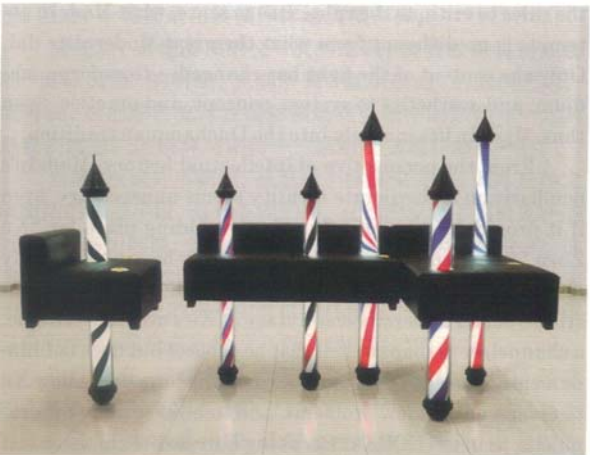
中 MIDDLE

没顶公司,《人反抗权力的斗争,就是“记忆”反抗“遗忘”的斗争。》
2010,树脂,600 x 200 x 1000 cm
Madeln, *The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting*
2010, poly, 600 x 200 x 1000 cm



下 BOTTOM

没顶公司,《诗是生活的表现,或则说得更好一点,诗就是生活本身。还不仅如此,在诗里生活比在现实本身里还显得更是生活。》
2010,黑色大理石、旋转灯、早餐
300 x 500 x 300 cm
Madeln, *Poetry is an expression of life or even better—poetry is life itself. Not only so, life in poetry expresses life better than reality does*
2010, marble, barber shop lights
sunny-side up egg, 300 x 500 x 300 cm



上”甚至完全排除了作品的物质形式,那些“作品”在拍完照片之后即被丢弃,观众能见到的只是照片,并且只有一版,而售价根据照片大小及其表现对象的重要性也有很大的差异。这些仿佛来自艺术史图册中的经典之作,搭配长长的语录式的标题,“一种虚构的关系自动地产生出一种真实的征服”、“群众不受推理的影响,他们只能理解那些拼凑起来的观念”,等等这些句子来自于一些经典的人文著作,但没顶并不关心它们到底在说什么,像之前的展览一样,没顶只是把这些当作诱饵来使用。而照片中的“作品”——它们好像陈列于某个假设的展厅之中——则是围笼,如果你是一个一听到“福柯”、“奥尔特加”、“海德格尔”就激动得不能自己的观众的话;如果花上足够的时间去翻画册,你也会找到照片中那些山寨作品的原型,如果你是一个特别在乎“美学正确”的人。

可以想象这些作品的产生过程:徐震和没顶的员工们选出了那些句子,然后把自己想象成前面例举的那类观众,接着尝试一些能够让他们觉得满意的装配组合,最后拍成照片,挂到墙上,当观众觉得读懂这些作品时,没顶的“创作”,或者说整个诱捕过程就完成了。然而作品在这里必须打上引号,不管是照片中的“作品”,还是作为“作品”的照片,如果非得用“作品”这个词的话,那么我宁愿把展览,更确切地说,把这个展览所诱发的生产/接受关系视为一种“作品”。

而事实上,这种生产/接受关系也并不是新的,它就是现实,没顶的工作只是把这种现实暴露了出来,使之成为一个反思对象,而整个过程,即没顶的实践过程又构成了现实的一部分。换句话说,我们不必期望没顶真的能够改变什么,除了一种智识上的挑战,我也并不关心没顶是否能够达到徐震自己反复强调的建立一个系统的目标,因为,敌人或许早就潜伏在了我们之间,何况,当我们必须伪装成敌人,这意味着敌人早已控制了我們。

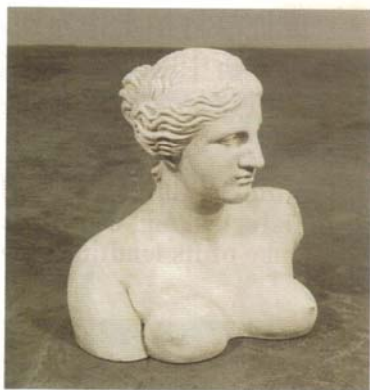
没顶公司,《一只花花绿绿的巨兽——平民。它不知道自己的力量,

只知道绝对服从。》作品1

2010,大理石,70 x 60 x 50 cm

Madeln, *The people is a beast of muddy brain. It does not know its own force; it only knows absolute obedience No. 1*

2010, marble, 70 x 60 x 50 cm



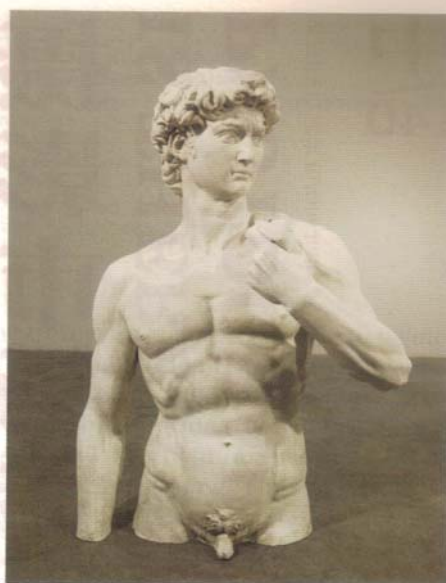
没顶公司,《一只花花绿绿的巨兽——平民。

它不知道自己的力量,只知道绝对服从。》作品3

2010,大理石,180 x 100 x 80 cm

Madeln, *The people is a beast of muddy brain. It does not know its own force; it only knows absolute obedience No. 3*

2010, marble, 180 x 100 x 80 cm



fall, where he used it as a strategem by which to mock artists of his own generation. Now incorporated, Xu can enter more conveniently into every single aspect of the contemporary art system. If one day he were to develop MadeIn into a sprawling system that encompassed a magazine, a website, a gallery, an auction house, a museum, and so on, no one would be surprised—even if for now, MadeIn looks much more like an artist collective with Xu at its center.

These days, this collective seems to love nothing more than research into systems of artistic production and reception, ever fond of stealthily luring the viewer into the traps it sets, and yet hinting as much in the process, leaving the viewer in a state of ungrounded doubt. This all seems to evoke an intellectual vitality wherein perception or sensibility has been almost completely elided, finally reduced to the smallest possible degree. MadeIn's recent exhibition "Don't Hang Your Faith on the Wall" at Long March Space in Beijing went as far as doing away with the material forms of the works themselves. The "works" that appear in the photographs that comprise this exhibition, mostly sculptures, were discarded as soon as the images were made. The viewer only sees the photographs, which are in turn sold as unique objects, with widely varying prices that correspond to the scale and importance of the object they represent. The objects depicted seem to come from the pages of an art history book, and are titled with lengthy quotes such as "A real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation" and "Crowds do not love logical argumentation, they are not to be influenced by reasoning, and can only comprehend rough-and-ready associations of ideas." These quotes come from classics of philosophy and theory, but MadeIn doesn't care about what they have to say. Just as in his earlier exhibitions, he uses these titles only as bait. The "artworks" in the photos, which appear

to be on display in imagined museums, are cages to contain those who get uncontrollably excited at the very mention of Foucault, Ortega, or Heidegger. If you spend long enough flipping through catalogues, you will also find the originals for the distinctly *shanzhai* works in the pictures, if you happen to be someone who believes in "aesthetic precision."

We can easily reconstruct the creative process behind these works: Xu Zhen and his MadeIn crew chose sentences, then imagined themselves as the aforementioned theory-happy viewer. Then they played around with objects until they found some entertaining combinations, took pictures of them, matched them with the quotes, and hung them on the wall. When the viewer imagines himself to have understood the work, MadeIn's "creation," which is to say its ruse, is complete. The word "artwork" must be put inside scare quotes, regardless of whether we mean the "work" in the photo or the photo as "work." If we must use this troubled word, I would rather see the entire exhibition, or perhaps more precisely, the relations of production and reception that it makes visible, as the "work."

In fact, there is nothing new about this line of inquiry into production and reception; all MadeIn does is bring this to light, make it into an object of reflection. In this way, MadeIn's entire creative practice becomes part of the very reality it critiques. Put another way, we don't need to hold out any hope of MadeIn actually changing anything. Aside from posing an intellectual challenge, I don't care whether MadeIn eventually lives up to Xu Zhen's repeatedly stated goal of building a system. Knowing that the enemy might have already infiltrated us, shouldn't it also stand to reason that if we are forced to oppose the enemy, that can only mean that we are already under its control? 🍅