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## LEAP

### 声音+

SOUND PLUS

季云飞/JI YUNFEI 蒋志/JIANG ZHI 石青/SHI QING  
鸟头/BIRDHEAD 楼南立/LOU NANLI

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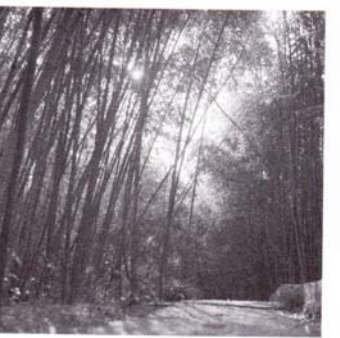
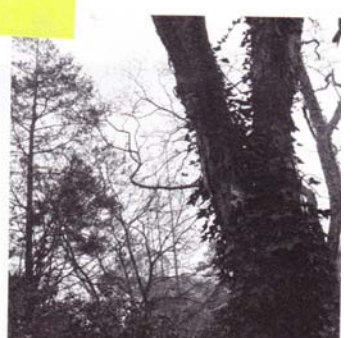
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欢迎再次来到  
鸟头的世界

WELCOME TO  
BIRDHEAD WORLD  
AGAIN

文 / TEXT: 林昱 / Aimee Lin 翻译 / TRANSLATION: 聂本洲 / Daniel Nieh



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《千秋光》，2011-2012年  
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Dimensions variable



《欢迎再次来到鸟头的世界·威尼斯》  
摄影，“ILLUMinations：第54届威尼斯双年展”，展览现场，2011年  
*Welcome To Birdhead World Again In Venice*  
Installation view, “ILLUMinations: The 54th Venice Biennale,” 2011

鸟头是谁？从“鸟头”出发，这个怪异的名字或许已经预示着一一种不一样的艺术家创作和艺术家身份的实践方式。两位艺术家从2004年就开始合作进行艺术创作，随着鸟头这个名字的建立，季炜煜和宋涛作为个体艺术家的存在渐渐隐没，其中一个表现就是，很多人在认识他们之后的很长一段时间内，也常将两人混淆。

季炜煜和宋涛曾经这样解释“鸟头”的由来：2004年，当他们有了一起拍照片的想法，第一次把各自拍摄的照片放入电脑时，他们胡乱敲打键盘，试图为新建的文件夹命名，于是就得到了从中文输入法的“联想”跳出来的“鸟头”两字。鸟头的产生是胡乱和联想的成果，而这两个词也正是理解鸟头作品的关键。

鸟头在干什么？

先提供一个典型的鸟头式的展览现场的图景。以去年在威尼斯双年展主题展上的作品为例，近200平米，高7米的展墙被呈矩阵排列、密不透风的

160张24寸的照片铺满，空间前方两根立柱上顶天立地地悬挂着镶于木框的一首宋词作品，那是辛弃疾的名作《丑奴儿·题博州道中》。

许多人在看过鸟头作品后发出这样的评论：这样的照片，我们也会拍。在往往是以大量作品的矩阵方式呈现的鸟头作品面前，胡乱拍摄经常成为观者的第一感受。这种观感基于一种对于摄影的固定理解，即单张照片必须具备色彩、光影、构图以及审美意义上的价值。而这种价值的确立和理解，源自摄影术诞生170年以来不断反复地重申和强调，以及几代摄影艺术家们不断地实践和运用。这种实践和运用从一开始就无时无刻不以绘画作为参照，并不断企图挑战绘画，甚至取代绘画。这导致摄影艺术家们在构图，取景，调焦，曝光，冲放照片时的“不胡乱”，进而导致他们在选择照片时的“不胡乱”，最终导致观者在欣赏作品时的“不胡乱”。在这种情况下，鸟头以其“胡乱”的拍摄和呈现方式，挑战了观者对摄影的理解和对摄影作品的观看，甚至于，他们曾经对“这些照片，我们也能拍”的评论做出如是回答：这是对我们的最高评价。

如何去理解鸟头的作品、理解“胡乱”背后的意义，在笔者看来，联想便是一个方便法门。如果说“胡乱”是强大理性支撑下的判断，那么联想则需要强大情感和感性参与的精神活动，是自我意识的创造性的遨游。好比人们看到落花联想到青春的短暂、看到浮云联想到人生的无常一样，情感的起伏往往是一种不可名状的存在，一件最普通的物件，一阵最绵软的风，一块味道稀

鸟头用挑战传统摄影美学的拍摄和展示所构建起来的，  
是一个连续的、生长的、不断被重新编织起来的世界。

By challenging the traditional aesthetics of photography and exhibition,  
Birdhead is constructing a continuous, expanding, and incessantly  
reimagined world of their own.

WHO IS BIRDHEAD? The strange name itself seems to portend a different kind of artist, a different kind of artistic practice. This name has grown in renown ever since Li Weiyu and Song Tao began using it as a label for their artistic collaborations in 2004. Birdhead has gradually come to overshadow their existence as individual artists, to the extent that people who have known the pair for quite a while still have trouble remembering who is who.

Li and Song have offered an account of the origins of the Birdhead name: in 2004, when they first had the idea of taking pictures together, they hit a series of random keys on a keyboard to name a new folder filled with their photographs. The result—produced by the associative algorithms of Chinese character prediction software—was the Chinese characters for “bird” and “head.” Thus was Birdhead born, a combination of carelessness and association, and indeed, these two concepts are crucial to understanding the duo’s photography.

So what does Birdhead do?

Consider the scene of a typical Birdhead exhibition, such as their contribution to a themed exhibition at last year’s Venice Biennale. Birdhead covered nearly 200 square meters of a seven-meter-high wall with a neat matrix of 24-inch photographs, 160 in all. Then they hung a wood-framed edition of a famous Song poem, Xin Qiji’s *Chou Nu Er*, from the two massive pillars standing in front of the wall of photos.

It is not uncommon for someone to look at Birdhead’s work and say, “Anyone can take photographs like that.” Standing in front of one of the massive matrices in which Birdhead presents photographs, many observers’ first impression is one of pictures taken carelessly. But this opinion is based on a preexisting conception of photography in which individual photographs must possess attributes of light, color, composition, and aesthetic significance. These attributes have been canonized over

the course of 170 years of reiteration: the practices of several generations of photo artists. All along, these practices have attempted not to reference drawing and painting, but to challenge or even overthrow it. Consequently, photo artists have been the opposite of careless when it comes to composition, setting, focus, exposure, and development. This diligence carries into the selection of which photographs to show, and ultimately, audiences are left appreciating only assiduous photography and nothing else. In these circumstances, Birdhead’s allegedly careless style of photography and exhibition challenges viewers’ understanding of photography. “Anyone can take photographs like that” is music to Birdhead’s ears.

The concept of association is essential to understanding Birdhead’s work and the significance that lies behind its carelessness. If carelessness is a judgment made on the mighty foundations of rationality, then association is a spiritual activity requiring even greater emotion and perceptual participation. It is the creative roam of our consciousness. Association occurs when one sees fallen flowers and passing clouds and thinks of the ephemerality of youth or the impermanence of human life. The undulation of emotions frames an ineffable cognizance in which the most ordinary of objects, the gentlest of breezes, or the blandest

《宋词》。2011年  
摄影，数码输出  
Hahnemühle 美术纸，木框  
31 × 19.2 厘米 2 根  
31 × 16.9 厘米 4 根  
“ILLUMInations:  
第 54 届威尼斯双年展”  
展览现场，2011 年  
*Poetry Of Song Dynasty*  
Photography, digital output  
on Hahnemühle, wood frames,  
31 × 19.2 cm × 2 pcs.  
31 × 16.9 cm × 4 pcs.  
Installation view  
“ILLUMInations: The 54th  
Venice Biennale,” 2011





《新村》，2010年，艺术家画册，310出版社  
*Xin Cun*, 2010, artists' book, 310 Publishing House



松的小饼干都会让人的潜意识飘向风马牛不相及的所在。在鸟头的作品呈现中，在一张紧挨一张的“胡乱”作品里，这种情感的微妙变化，就如同普鲁斯特、乔伊斯的意识流作品一样，微小的情感起点在不断的串联中被集聚、转移、强化，并最终掀起波澜壮阔的链式反应。它们可能是癫狂的、激昂的、喜悦的，也可能是消沉的、低落的、悲伤的，更多的也许是模棱两可的、淡淡的、波澜不惊的。

威尼斯现场柱头上的辛弃疾的词正是呼应了整场照片的这种情绪变化。整首词用中国传统门联形式呈现，这里有必要全文引用：

少年不识愁滋味，  
 爱上层楼，爱上层楼，  
 为赋新词强说愁。

而今识得愁滋味，  
 欲说还休，欲说还休，  
 却道天凉好个秋。

从字面来看，这首词讲的是辛弃疾作为一个艺术家（诗人）的创作焦虑及其发展和超越，这首词讲的是一个人在人生不同阶段情绪的变化，而这一变化最后浓缩在上下阙的最后两个汉字中，即愁和秋。当作者识得愁滋味后，心便融入了“却道天凉好个秋”字中，作者不再写带“心”的愁，而是只感受到“好个秋”。这种有理性参与、急于表达的“为赋新诗”的创作到感性的体验、无所谓表达的“却道”，是否也是鸟头在自身创作道路上同样悟出并感受到的？

这首辛词中的44个汉字也同样出自鸟头式的摄影。他们穿梭于上海的大街小巷，在日常生活环境中寻找这些仍在使用的汉字，从招牌、黑板报、包装材料、T恤、甚至是字典和电脑屏幕上，以拍摄方式截取，再重新按照词原有的面貌排列，最终拼成这首辛词。尽管每个字的采集方式十分慎重（两人动员去到现场、寻找适合的时间、用胶片拍摄），呈现出的却是模糊的、彻底抹平了书写、印刷、电子显示等产生与传播的差别各种字型，由此，他们再次强调了单张摄影作品的无意义，不过不再是以胡乱为之的方式，而是加入了他们对于历史的理解，对于艺术传承的重视，对于自身创作环境和方式的思考。

宋涛，鸟头成员之一，曾在他们的摄影书《新村》发布活动上这样回答观众对于单张摄影作品和大量摄影作品之间关系：

“就像当人们听一首曲子，不会去关注其中某个音符，只会享受整首曲调一样，对我们而言，摄影是一样的道理。”

这句话或许是鸟头自身对于摄影艺术的完美的解释和理解。回顾他们诞



《新村》, 2006-2007年, 摄影, 尺寸可变  
*Xin Cun*, 2006-2007, photography, dimensions variable

of biscuits all have the capacity to send the subconscious to completely unrelated places. In the closely packed presentation of Bird-head's careless photographs, subtle emotional changes recall the streams of consciousness in the work of Proust and Joyce. Series of minute emotional triggers are continuously gathered, transferred, and reinforced, ultimately surging in a tidal wave of chain reactions. They may be frivolous, indignant, or joyful. They may also be abject or sorrowful. But most often, they are equivocal or indifferent, like the peaks and troughs of regular waves.

The *Xin Qiji* poem hung from the pillars in Venice echoes the overall variations in mood affected by the photographs presented on the wall. The text employs a traditional form of Chinese couplets:

*In my youth I knew little woe  
 Up to a tower I'd like to go  
 Up to a tower I'd like to go  
 For a new poem I forced sorrow*

*Which now I perfectly know  
 But hardly could it be told  
 But hardly could it be told  
 I only say I'm glad the fall is cold*

On the surface, the poem seems to describe the development of the narrator's anxiety as an artist and poet. It recounts the changes in mood endured by an individual during different stages of his life. These changes are ultimately concentrated in the words "sorrow" and "fall." Once the narrator learns the taste of sorrow, he no longer writes about the sadness in his heart. His feelings allow him only to say, "I'm glad the fall is cold" (in Chinese, the character for "fall" is only different from that of "sorrow" in its lack of the radical for "heart"). Is this rational participation—from the

生以来的创作历程,可以看到鸟头对摄影理解和实践的变迁。2005年4月,他们在上海香格纳画廊的第一次展览《欢迎来到鸟头的世界》,以中规中矩“摄影式”的方式呈现,但也开始制作装有大量照片的“旅行箱”。2007年夏,上海比翼空间的《欢迎再次来到鸟头的世界》中,鸟头将照片印制在贴纸上,邀请观众把照片随意贴满墙壁。自那以后,鸟头的所有展览都沿用了同样的标题。2010年初,东京国立美术馆的展览,鸟头正式使用满墙矩阵照片与古典诗歌的结合(2009年底连州摄影节的个展可以看作是这种形式的一次“排演”)。这种形式也继续到了2011年的威尼斯双年展,以及后来在佛罗伦萨、伦敦的个展、和今年秋天将在纽约MoMA举行的新摄影年展。

从这几年的发展可以看出鸟头对摄影从对传统语言的遵从到完全的抗拒和背叛,而后试图建立自己的语言,对传统摄影审美的进行再理解和变革。他们把摄影这项由西方发明并确立其审美标准的艺术形式结合到中国古典的文人艺术传统中,但

用的不是在“画意摄影”的思路把西方绘画转换成中国画,而是以出其不意的方式将两者融合在一起,基于精神共鸣,追求一种文人式的、任性而为的艺术实践。

自主策划、编排、出版的摄影书,也是鸟头艺术创作的核心部分,其产生与深深影响了鸟头成员的日本摄影家的“写真书”有关,也反映着艺术家对创作结果作为“产品”以及“流通品”的态度和尝试。自2009年起,鸟头通过他们自己注册的310出版社所出版图书,已经出版了《新村》、《大陆之尽头》,2012年的《千秋光》也已经在编排中。

聚焦于技术,在对传统的追寻和理解中,鸟头也表现出不同寻常的固执。他们完全使用传统胶片相机进行创作,每年以近一万张的频率不断刷新他们的“作品”组合,在鸟头的工具中,从135单反机、旁轴相机到傻瓜机,从双反相机、4乘5技术相机到一次性相机,从立拍得到水下相机,甚至使用天文望远镜镜头连接普通相机机身拍摄,他们使用超过40台,差不多囊括了大半个摄影史的摄影工具,但时代的发展和科技的进步却于他们毫无差别。这个态度和他们义无反顾的影像“狂轰滥炸”间形成了强烈的反差。

是几张还是几百张,作品的数量不是鸟头创作的重点,却形成他们的工作方法,也构建了观看的重点。每次按动快门所留下的时光和记忆经过他们的“编排”(选择和排列),最终呈现出的,是一本本摄影书、满墙眼花缭乱的摄影海洋(矩阵)、以及恭恭敬敬地对于先人的敬仰和共鸣。也就是说,值得讨论





eager expression of sorrow to the indifferent observation of the seasons—not the same realization that Birdhead has achieved through their own creative journey?

The 44 Chinese characters in Xin Qiji's poem can also be found in the photographs in the matrix on the facing wall. The photographers shuttled through Shanghai's wide boulevards and narrow lanes, searching within everyday environments for contemporary uses of these characters. From signboards, blackboards, packaging materials, t-shirts, and even dictionaries and computer screens, the characters are captured with cameras and rearranged in order, piecing together Xin's poem. The characters were diligently collected—both photographers moved together from site to site, choosing the right time of day, and shot with analog film—but the result is necessarily

obscure. The photographs juxtapose characters produced and displayed in different fonts and styles, written by hand, printed, or displayed on screen. Thus Birdhead emphasizes that the individual photographs have no significance. But nor are they the results of carelessness, for they have been incorporated into the photographers' understanding of history, their emphasis on artistic lineage, and their considerations of their environment and personal creativity.

At a release party for a Birdhead photography book, *Xin Cun*, Song Tao offered his take on the relationship between individual photographs and artworks consisting of large quantities of photographs: "When people listen to a song, they do not pay attention to a single note. They enjoy the overall melody. For us, photography follows the same principles."

Perhaps these words are the perfect expression of Birdhead's unique approach to photography. Looking back on the history of the collaboration, there are changes evident in Birdhead's practice and conception of photography. In their first exhibition, "Welcome to Birdhead World," at ShanghART's Shanghai space in April 2005, they presented photographs in the conventional fashion, with the exception of a suitcase packed with a large number of photographs. In "Welcome to Birdhead World Again,"



《大陆之尽头》，2010年  
艺术家画册，310出版社  
*The End Of Mainland*, 2010  
Artists' book, 310 Publishing House

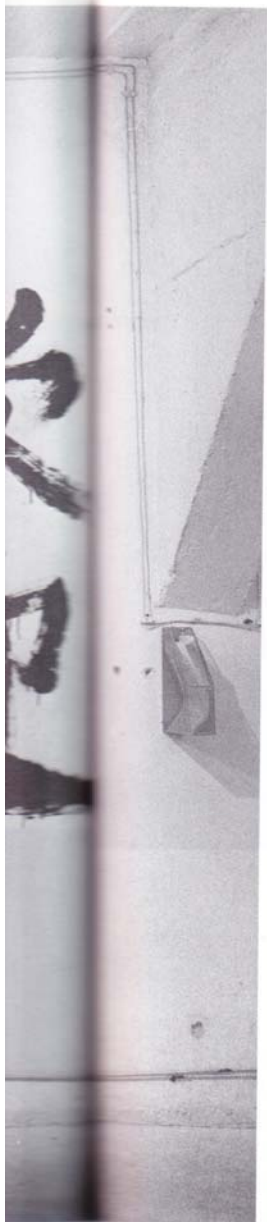


《大陆之尽头》  
2009-2010年  
摄影，尺寸可变  
*The End Of Mainland*  
2009-2010, photography  
Dimensions variable



的不是“极精”还是“极多”的取向，而是如何将拍摄的行为变成身体感觉与头脑知觉的表达的本能，不断去采集一颗颗形态各异、挑战既定美学的珠子（单张照片），汇聚之，打散之，混淆之，间或串成编组不一的项链——由照片矩阵、诗词对联、摄影书、或未来任何与摄影有关的东西所构成的“鸟头的世界”。这也是对他们一成不变的展览标题“欢迎再次来到鸟头的世界”的一种解读，鸟头用挑战传统摄影美学的拍摄和展示所构建起来的，是一个连续的、生长的、不断被重新编织起来的世界。

a summer 2007 exhibition at BizArt in Shanghai, Birdhead printed their photographs on adhesive paper. Viewers were invited to place the artwork on the walls as they pleased. Each Birdhead exhibition since has reused that same title. At an exhibition in early 2010 at the new National Art Center in Tokyo, Birdhead presented their first formal combination of classical poetry with a wall matrix of photographs (a “rehearsal” of this format was on view at the Lianzhou International Photo Festival in late 2009). This combination appeared again at the 2011 Venice Biennale as well as at solo shows in Florence and London, and will be on view this fall at New Photography 2012 at MoMA in New York.



《欢迎再次来到鸟头的世界》  
2010年，摄影  
尺寸可变  
*Welcome To Birdhead World Again*  
2010, photography  
Dimensions variable

These recent exhibitions reveal how Birdhead's attitude toward traditional photography has developed from deference to rebellion. By reinterpreting conventional aesthetics, they have attempted to develop their own language of photography. Though it was in the Western world that photography was invented and its aesthetic standards were established, Birdhead has combined the art form with the traditions of classical Chinese literature. Rather than drawing

“就像当人们听一首曲子，  
不会去关注其中某个音符，只会享受整首曲调一样，  
对我们而言，摄影是一样的道理。”

“When people listen to a song,  
they do not pay attention to a single note.  
They enjoy the overall melody.  
For us, photography follows the same principles.”

on Pictorialism to, say, transform Western painting into Chinese painting, Birdhead merges them together by way of spontaneity. Their artistic practice is rooted in spiritual resonance as well as the pursuit of an effect both literary and willful.

Editing and publishing photography books is another core component of Birdhead's creative work. These projects reveal the depth of the influence that Japanese photo-books have had on Li and Song. They also reflect the artists' interest in how the results of creativity become “products” that are “circulated.” Birdhead have registered their own imprint, 310 Publishing, and produced *Xin Cun* and *The End of Mainland*; a third book, *Qian Qiu Guang*, is due later this year.

Birdhead demonstrates an uncanny persistence in their focus on technique and concern with tradition. Using only analog cameras, they refresh their catalog at a rate of about 10,000 pictures per year. In this process they have employed more than 40 cameras, from 135 SLRs and Rangefinders to Instamatics, from TLRs and 4x5 Technicals to disposables, from Polaroids to underwater cameras. They have even mounted astronomical telescope lenses on ordinary cameras. They have employed tools from more than half of photographic history's scope; but the march of time and the advances of technology make no difference to Birdhead. This meticulous attitude forms a sharp contrast with their unrepentant style of image “carpet-bombing.”

Whether it is a few photos or a few hundred, quantity is not central to Birdhead's practice—but it has shaped their working methods and the way their work is viewed. Each time a camera shutter captures a moment and a memory, the image passes through their sorting and arrangement process. The end result is whole books of photographs, or dazzling seas of prints filling a wall. Through all of this, Birdhead maintains a respectful reverence of their forebears. That is to say, for Birdhead, the point is not about quantity versus quality. They are concerned with the capacity of photography to become an expression of the cerebral and the sensuous. To this end, they gather together images of various forms, challenging the aesthetic standard of singular images. Rather than present a pearl, they string together a necklace with their process of assembling, dispersing, and mixing. “Birdhead's World” is composed of these photo matrices, poetic couplets, photography books, and whatever future photography-related objects they will devise. This offers one explanation of their perennial exhibition title, “Welcome to Birdhead World Again”: by challenging the traditional aesthetics of photography and exhibition, Birdhead is constructing a continuous, expanding, and incessantly reimagined world of their own. ❸

(Poetry translation attributed to Xiao-zhen/worm)