

马海蛟：用图像作诗的艺术

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第一次看到马海蛟的作品是在 2016 年的上海双年展上，一件名为《马国权》的影像装置。我清晰记得步入影像厅内，正好放到这样一个画面：一位笨拙的中年人双膝跪坐在床上，快速但并不清晰的念叨着经文，依稀听到：“罪从心气忤，心若灭时罪亦亡”。这部 55 分钟长的黑白影像作品在形式上更贴近纪录片，主人公马国权是艺术家马海蛟的叔叔，由于年轻时的一场车祸，丧失了工作能力，智商只相当于 6 岁的孩童。马国权随后被迫离婚，他只能与年迈的父亲生活在河北的一座小县城里。

1990 年出生的马海蛟是位善于讲故事的艺术。他观察周遭的人与风景，对诗意的文字和图像保有强烈的敏感度，对眼前所见的事物有着超乎感性的阐释。虽然《马国权》记录了车祸后的日常生活，但马海蛟认为这其实是一部“伪纪录片”，因为由艺术家撰写的旁白，除了详细描述主人公的现实生活，也加入了马海蛟私密的情感，被观察者和观察者叠加呈现。影片结尾，马国权在荒无人烟的戈壁滩上行走，无疑是艺术家作为导演的刻意安排。纪录片的语言更能靠近大众熟悉的表达形式，更具备“真实”和容易观看的条件。影像厅外排列有和影片本身相关的文字、图片资料，作为注脚，也增加了作品的“真实感”。

越来越多的影像艺术更趋于宏大叙事和理性表达，情感的疏离成为常态。与之相反，马海蛟更愿从身边取材。不管是以上作品中的亲人，还是下面作品中在异国他乡的遭遇，马海蛟的作品通过与观者交流，不动声色地达到了许多深层和复杂的时代议题。

《远了，更远》源于艺术家在荷兰驻留时期。当时荷兰社会遭遇难民危机，马海蛟经常在街头遇到游行示威的人群。同时远离故乡的他，也和另外一种思乡的情绪形影不离。马海蛟喜在乡间野外徒步，用手中相机记录风景。在这部作品里，他为一位难民杜撰了一封充满乡愁的家书。随着难民念诵家书内容递进，阿姆斯特丹郊外的风景也变得越发孤寂。

有人质疑这件作品的主题是否在讨论难民问题，但我却认为作品深刻的地方正是艺术家描述的个人情感。曾有评论家说过：“当今艺术中最好的社会评论不是直接表明态度的那种。”马海蛟不愿以自上而下的方式去揭露和阐释问题，而通过一封叠加过艺术家自身理解的家书，由一位难民读给观者听。以这种方式，情绪的辨识和传达变得温和、平等、容易。只有在寻找到共同的感性认知后，才能在问题（在这里笼统指代难民）和观者建立起有效的沟通。

马海蛟是位用图像作诗的艺术，画面唯美，甚至神秘。比如《希望，希望，我快被冻僵了》，灵感来源于他在挪威的驻留。马海蛟将三首诗—狄金森的《希望》，以及安涅特·索莉的《希望》和《我快被冻僵了》—一中有意象的词语（比如“微风和翅膀”，“田野”，“树丛”）抹除，只留下平淡的框架。之后，马海蛟在奥斯陆将这些意象词语拍摄成影像，用图像去填补文字中的空白。观众只有在反复观看图像和文字后才能读懂这三首诗。

“风景计划”同样也是以影像诗歌的代表，这是马海蛟 2014 年开始的一个长期项目。艺术家将旅行中拍摄的一些即兴风景作为创作的出发点和线索，之后再进行室内剧作化的拍摄，最终叠加展示。《说谎的梦，说梦的谎》部分取景于挪威。马海蛟从小说《挪威的森林》摘选了一段与风景和记忆有关的文字，将他阅读到的风景拍摄成戏剧化的影像，与在挪威拍摄的风景片段并置，成为一个神秘的非叙事影像作品。

“风景计划”系列的第三部，《快乐区域》来自于 2015 年艺术家短暂在香港生活期间。马海蛟带着他的镜头在城市行走，拍摄了大量人物和楼宇的照片。一段时间后再次翻看这些照片，他依然对那些面孔充满好奇。他想象这些图像中的人在被捕捉到的那个时刻在经历什么，他们来自哪里，他们是否快乐。于是马海蛟邀请了几位和香港有过各种关系的人（本地人、新移民、旅居过等等）做为采访对象，让他们猜想这些图像主人公的故事。艺术家作为导演，要求受访者反复回答同一个问题，深入挖掘他认为重要的信息，有时会把他自己的想法制作成关键词提示牌来引导受访者的再次回答。这种非真实采访的形式也呼应了马海蛟一直惯用的工作方法，模糊化受访者和艺术家之间的界限，用他人之眼去观察纷杂的现实世界。

一直以来，马海蛟尝试用理性的方式（伪纪录片或采访）去进行感性（共通的情感）的表达；他可以将日常性的影像爆发出巨大的能量以及展示更强的张力，这已成为马海蛟作品中最具标志性的特点。

Ma Haijiao: Composing Moving Image In the Sense of Composing Poems

written by Sammi Liu, translation by Yifan Zhang

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I first encountered Ma Haijiao's art during the 2016 Shanghai Biennale. It is a video installation entitled *Mr.Quan*. The first images I saw of this work, as I entered the exhibition, are still clear in my mind: A handicapped middle aged man kneeling in a bed, praying for a speedy recovery, and mumbling something about "all sins arise in the mind and must end in the mind if the mind ceases all sins will consequently cease"...

The 55-minute long black and white video looks like a documentary. Ma Guoquan is the artist's uncle who, owing to a traffic accident in his youth, ends up with the mental capacity of a six year old. After losing his job and his wife, he has been living with his old father in a rural township of Hebei.

Born in 1990, artist Ma Haijiao is a consummate storyteller thanks to his close observation of people and landscape around him. He is hypersensitive to the poetry in text as well as in imagery, and interprets what he sees with great emotional depth. Although Ma Guoquan is a record of a traffic victim's daily life, Ma Haijiao calls it a mockumentary because he wrote the audio narration himself. It covers descriptive aspects of the subject's reality but also the artist's own emotions. The observer layers on the observed. Towards the end of the video, Ma Guoquan walks alone in a barren desert, obviously directed to do so by the artist, who believes the documentary factor is familiar to the public, making his work "more realistic" and easier to take in. The video is accompanied by additional notes and images, further enhancing its "realness".

In video art, there is a trend towards grand narrative and rational expression. Emotional distance is almost required. Therefore Ma Haijiao's subjects – a family member or some strangers – may even seem parochial. However, via his understated delivery, the message Ma conveys is surprisingly political and complex.

Message to the future comes from the artist's residence in The Netherlands during the Syrian refugee crisis. Ma Haijiao encountered many public demonstrations there. Though not a refugee himself, Ma is also far from home and sympathizes with the refugees in his own way. During this period, Ma Haijiao took many walks outside Amsterdam and captured what he saw on a phone. In this work, he fictionalizes a letter home read by a refugee, against the backdrop of an increasingly desolate rural landscape.

Some may doubt if *Message to the future* is really about the refugees. To me, the depth of this work lies in this ambiguity. A critic once commented: "the best social commentary in contemporary art are the inconspicuous ones." Ma Haijiao avoids a top down exposition, choosing instead for an refugee to read a letter home written by the artist. The emotional message becomes attenuated, equalized, and more user friendly. Only when this emotional common ground is built, can the real problems (refugee crisis) be understood by the audience.

Some of Ma Haijiao's works are exquisite and even mysterious visual poems. *Hope, hope, I am almost frozen* is one of them. The idea also grew out of his residence in Norway. The artist took three poems – Dickinson's *Hope*, Anette Solli's *Hope* and *I am almost frozen* – and removed all nouns (such as breeze, wings, farm, woods) leaving behind bare scaffoldings. He then filled in the blanks with videos he made. Viewers have to combine texts and videos to complete the poems in their mind.

Since 2014, Ma Haijiao embarked on a long term visual poem project called The Lanscape Project. The method is to combine the travel photos with studio video shoots and present them together. *A dream tells a lie, a lie tells a dream* is partly from Norway. The artist took a paragraph on landscape and memory from Haruki Murakami's novel *Norwegian Wood*. Using the text as a guide, he shot some dramatic video pieces to match. They are presented alongside his travel photos from Norway to form a mysterious non-narrative video.

The third piece from *The Landscape Project* is called *Happy Valley*. It is based on the artist sojourn in Hong Kong in 2015. During his stay, Ma Haijiao took a great number of photos of people and buildings in Hong Kong. On viewing these photos back home, he became fascinated with these strangers's faces. He tried to imagine their thoughts, background and whether they are happy. So Ma Haijiao invited a number of people with various links to Hong Kong for an on camera interview, asking them to read these faces. Some of the interviewees are from Hong Kong, others perhaps visited or worked in the city in the past. As the interviewer, Ma repeatedly asked people to answer the same question and picked out what seemed to him to be noteworthy information. Sometimes, he wrote done such information on a prompt card and ask an interviewee to re-answer a question with this in mind. Staged interview is a common method in Ma's creative process. By blurring the line between the artist and the interviewees, he is able to see the complex world through many more pairs of eyes.

Achieving emotional resonance through some analytical framework (mockumentaries, staged interviews etc.) is a personal trademark of Ma Haijiao's works. In his hands, simple images are empowered to transmit complex emotional messages to the audience.