

寄居故乡 _ 尤伦斯当代艺术中心对谈记录

马海蛟、王文菲、吴建儒

王文菲：UCCA 荣幸地邀请艺术家马海蛟和《艺术界 LEAP》的资深编辑吴建儒共同围绕“寄居故乡”的主题展开探讨。“寄居故乡”或许体现了一种“矛盾修辞法”，与现代人在城市的生存体验有关系。对于那些在大都市里打拼的外乡人，故乡在记忆中或许非常温暖，但当他们回到故乡之后，或许同样会感受到一种漂泊感。今天我们要谈一谈故乡究竟是什么。马海蛟的参展作品《家庭分裂主义》讨论不同代际家庭成员之间的隔阂。这件作品源于一封信吗？

马海蛟：是的。我在二手家具市场买了一个旧家具，里面有一封信，信的言辞之间反映出孩子的父亲和他的爷爷之间的隔阂。在信的结尾，孩子告诫爷爷：“你不要搞家庭分裂主义。”对于“家庭分裂主义”，我有一些个人的体会。我离开家乡去外地读书，再回到家乡，由于时间、环境对我的影响，在心理层面上，我和家人不再能够非常默契地交谈。这就是我对“家庭分裂主义”的认知。

王文菲：如何将创作和个人情感融合在一起的？《家庭分裂主义》是三频影像作品，里面有很多故事。马海蛟将自己的主观经验融入叙事之中，缓慢而诗意的镜头尽管是非纪实性的，但或许反映了一种更真实的状态。

马海蛟：从创作的角度，每一位艺术家都有自己所偏爱的方式。我偏爱缓慢的镜头，喜欢添加一些抽象元素。这封信的内容和我本人的家庭经验互为参照。我设置了一个战争中去世的伯父的形象，他的下一代又去当兵——因为我自己的亲人有这样的经历，两个代际的人在经验上既有牵连，又有隔阂。真实的经历和虚构的经历交织在一起。

吴建儒：“家庭分裂主义”这个词可以体现不少现代社会的问题，在我看来，家庭可以作为一种方法来观察我们之间的代际关系的变化。想问一下，除了从自己个人的经历出发，为什么会提到“分裂”这样的概念？传统的家庭、宗族的观念里面，都是一种求同存异，强调血脉相连的关系。另外，在战争远去的时候，你的作品中为什么会设置一个和战争有关的伯父形象？

马海蛟：当下中国的家庭结构正在发生变化。比如，儿女一辈生活在海外，父辈生活在一、二线城市，爷爷生活在乡下，但他们又属于一个家庭。他们可能会因为一个节日聚在一起，却陷入相对无言的状态。这就是我们正在经历的当下现状，也是我的作品想要去表现的。

王文菲：马海蛟的作品涉及到城市化的问题。费孝通曾提出“差序格局”的概念——在中国的传统社会里，以宗法群体为本，家族的结构起了至关重要的作用，形成具有远近亲疏差异的关系网。在这种情况下，父辈或祖辈或许会成为羁绊，比如，他们以亲情的名义干涉子女的婚姻问题。而如今，西方的个人主义思想或许已经全面渗透到中国年轻人的心理。我们夹在两种状态之中，亲情的羁绊和个人主义。

马海蛟：在这件作品里，我把这封信中提到的三个代际抽离出来，分别去表现它们。其实，拍摄在两个地方进行，一个是杭州的弄堂里，因为这封信寄给了杭州的某个弄堂。虚构中，这封信的作者在北方当兵，所以另一个场景是在河北的一个兵团里拍摄的。

王文菲：你如何选择自己所拍摄的素材？《家庭分裂主义》的创作周期仅有两个月，由于时间的限制，你更多地采用场景重现和摆拍的手法。这件作品非常优美，表现了乡愁的韵味。乡愁或许意味着故乡已经不存在，即便人能够回归故乡，它也已经失落了。

马海蛟：我记得有一位导演说，故乡是回不去的出发之地，我围绕这种情绪进行创作。每个人都在某种程度上可以体会这种情绪。

王文菲：记忆和记录不同，是非常主观的东西，我们倾向于美化旧日的时光。现在，我们可以把两部作品放在一起看。一部是马海蛟在 2012 年创作的《如果，我把它忘记》——他作为创作者，回到自己出生的地方，用镜头寻找记忆。另一部是侯孝贤的《童年往事》。在创作《如果，我把它忘记》时，你怀着什么样的目的？为什么那个时候想去拍自己的家乡？

马海蛟：之前，我的作品很多都是“作业”的状态。2012 年暑假的时候，我觉得可以开始自己的个人创作，进入自由创作的状态，自然而然地回到家乡去拍一些片段式的影像。最初的想法是要创作非文字的家庭影像传记。当我看到厨房的器具，看到四合院没落的样子，会本真地产生一种兴趣，进入一种记录的状态。塔可夫斯基的《镜子》似乎也把童年记忆和以前生活的片段综合起来，即便观众在观看影像时不一定完全理解镜头和镜头间的具体联系，但在心中会产生一种感性的情愫。当时拍《如果，我把它忘记》的时候，我也把记忆片段化，慢慢地呈现出一种整体状态。



家庭分裂主义 _ 静帧 _2017



Family Separatism _film still_2017



童年往事 _ 剧照

The Time to Live and the Time to Die _film still



The Mirror_film still

Sojourn of Hometown_ Conversations at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art

Ma Haijiao, Wang Wenfei, Wu Jianru

Wang Wenfei: UCCA is glad to invite Ma Haijiao, the artist, and Wu Jianru, the senior editor of LEAP to talk about the subject of Sojourn of Hometown. It seems that Sojourn of Hometown represents a kind of oxymoron, which is related to the living experience of people in modern cities. For the non-natives who are working and living in the metropolis, the hometown may be very sweet in their memories, however, once physically return to their hometown, they could feel as outlanders. Today, we are going to talk about the concept of hometown. Ma Haijiao's Family Separatism explores the intergenerational gap among family members. Was this work inspired by a letter?

Ma Haijiao: Yes. I bought an old furniture from a second-hand market, in which was a letter reflecting the barrier between a young man's father and his grandfather. At the end of the letter, the young man warned his grandfather:"you should not embrace family separatism." I have some personal experiences about it. I left home and studied in another city. When I come back, because of the changes in time and in my environment, I can no longer talk with my family on the psychological level of tacit understanding. This is my interpretation of family separatism.

Wang Wenfei: How do you incorporate your practice into personal emotion? Family Separatism is a three-channel video work, telling many stories. Ma Haijiao integrates his own subjective experience into the narrative, even though the slow and poetic lens movement is non-documentary, it may reflect a truer status.

Ma Haijiao: From the perspective of creation, each artist has his own favorites. I prefer slow lens movement, and some abstract elements. The letter is a reference to my own family experience, and vice versa. I set up a role of an uncle who died in a war, and his descendant also joined the army. It is because that my own relatives have similar experiences, and two generations have both implicated and alienated. The real experiences are intertwined with fictional ones.

Wu Jianru: The phrase of family separatism may reflect a few problems of modern society. It seems to me that family can be used as methodology to observe the changes of intergenerational relations among us. May I ask, apart from one's own experience, why the concept of separatism is suggested? In our traditional family and clan relationship, there is a consideration seeking common ground while reserving differences to emphasize the blood line. In addition, we are far away from a war, why do you create a war-related role?

Ma Haijiao: Nowadays, the family structure is evolving in China. For example, children may live abroad, while their parents live in the first or second-tier cities, their grandparents in the countryside, but they all belong to the same family. They may come and sit together for a festival, but have nothing to talk with each other. It is the present we are going through, and it is exactly what I want to address through my work.

Wang Wenfei: Ma Haijiao's work involves the issue of urbanization. Fei Xiaotong put forward the concept of "the pattern of difference sequence": in the traditional Chinese society, the structure of family based on the patriarchal clan system plays a vital role, forming a network engaged with various levels of intimacy. In this case, parents or grandparents may become a hindrance, such as, interfering their children's marriage in the name of family love. Today, the Western individualism has permeated the minds of young Chinese, and we are sandwiched between the hindrance of family bonds and the embrace of individualism.

Ma Haijiao: In this work, I extracted the representations of three generations mentioned in the letter and tried to address them. It was filmed in two locations, one was in the alleys in Hangzhou. In the story, the letter was written by a soldier in the north, therefore, another scene was in a barracks in Hebei province.

Wang Wenfei: How do you decide what to film? The production of Family Separatism only took two months, and because of the limited time, you were more likely to stage and replicate scenes. It is very beautiful, showing the charm of nostalgia. In other words, nostalgia probably means that home is no longer there, and lost even if one may return.

Ma Haijiao: I remember a director once said that home is a place of departure but no return, and I conducted my practice around this thought. Everyone can feel and relate to it in some way.

Wang Wenfei: Memory is different from documents, but it is also subjective though we intend to glorify the past. Now, we can juxtapose two works to study them. One is Ma Haijiao's If, I forget it (2012), telling that the artist went back to his birthplace and looked for memories through his lens; another is Hou Hsiao-Hsien's The Time to Live and the Time to Die. What is your purpose to make If, I forget it? Why do you want to film your hometown?

Ma Haijiao: Many of my previous works could be considered as "homework". In the summer break of 2012, I was ready to make my own art, quite freely. Then, I got an idea of filming some footages in my hometown. Initially, I wanted to make a non-verbal family video biography. When I saw the desolate courtyard house and kitchen utensils in it, I naturally had an interest to record them. Similar to Andrei Tarkovsky's Mirror, it seems to mix childhood memories with previous living fragments, viewers may not fully understand the specific

吴建儒：《家庭分裂主义》展现的是代际之间内心的冲突和矛盾，《如果，我把它忘记》似乎缺少浓烈的情绪，采取平铺直叙的手法，视角相对客观。

马海蛟：《如果，我把它忘记》与记忆相关，更多地跟侯孝贤的《童年往事》有一些联系。《家庭分裂主义》讨论的是都市对家庭状态的冲击。

王文菲：《童年往事》的叙事内容和影像风格之间具有张力，以抒情，甚至漫不经心的方式表现死亡。《如果，我把它忘记》也与记忆中的童年、家乡有关系，不过似乎更多在反映一种田园牧歌、乌托邦似的状态，你在用影像美化的记忆吗？

马海蛟：侯孝贤对死亡的表现是富有张力的，也喜欢用家庭合影的形式。我的作品也涉及对于死亡的记忆，比如妈妈带着小孩去给外祖母上坟的场景。我只记得小时候，我非常喜欢去吃墓前的祭品，当我把它呈现出来，这就是我关于父辈、祖辈死亡最真实的理解。

王文菲：参加上海双年展的作品《马国权》是一件纪录式的作品，马海蛟用了半年左右的时间创作它，这件作品也加入了马海蛟撰写的独白，其实也不完全算是写实性的。

马海蛟：这件作品跟我去年年初的状态有关。我经常看当代艺术的展览，其中的影像作品越来越多，但渐渐地，我会发现自己有点审美疲劳，打动我的地方特别少。那个时候，我在想，是不是可以创作一件作品解决自己的这种困惑？所以，我把创作的出发点设定在更为切身的经验上，关注马国权这个有血有肉的人。他是我一个亲戚，在1992年、30岁的时候，他是一位公务员，那年，他遭遇了一场车祸，之后的智商就仿佛6、7岁的孩子一样。我每年过春节回家的时候，都会遇见他，他每天会跪在床上念佛经，之后会写一段日记记录自己的生活，他的字一笔一划，特别像小学生写的。所以，我对他特别感兴趣，想围绕他创作纪录式的作品。最开始，我打算以纪录片的形式创作，大概进行了几个月之后，我发现纯纪录的方式似乎没办法满足我，所以会加入一些设计感比较强的镜头，采取相对抒情化的表达方式。

王文菲：《马国权》里存在很多纪录式的影像。拍摄对象在镜头面前，往往会不自觉地开始表演。而这件作品之所以感人，是不是因为片中的人物对你的镜头没有防御？如何做到这一点？

马海蛟：首先，他是我的亲戚，不会对我有防备；其次，纪录片的拍摄周期很长，我慢慢和被拍摄的对象之间形成互相的信任，这个问题就会解决。

王文菲：与纪录片《马国权》同时展出的东西包括一些相关物件，就像你说的，这不是一部真正意义上的纪录片。

马海蛟：有些朋友会问，这件作品是不是更偏电影化一些？一直以来，我认为自己还是更偏爱当代艺术的展示方式，并不局限在一个剧场或影院里。通过创作，我表现了某一阶段的个人思考，展出一些图片摄影或者文献。我曾经获得1989年马国权还健康的时候使用的笔记本，里面都是读书笔记，也有很多跟成功学相关的文本。我觉得很有趣。之后，我每天看到他在写日记，字迹像小孩子一样，我就想让他重新书写1989年的笔记，这种时间的变迁对我产生了一种触动。同样一个人，在相隔20年之后重新书写一样的内容，但字迹发生了很大的改变。随着社会的演变，这些文字内容也会发生某种意义上的变化。

王文菲：马海蛟对影像素材的选择上很有趣。比如，对于马国权，最戏剧性的事件是车祸，而马海蛟没有直接用镜头去表现它，更多呈现琐碎日常生活中的细节，将情感融入其中。他没有选择去拍摄事故、激烈的场景，这跟如今很多年轻艺术家的选择不同。马海蛟返回日常生活本身，而这种日常性反而更难把握，我可以这样理解吗？

马海蛟：无论是创作者，抑或观众，都会有个人偏好。我对日常性的东西特别有感触，看到家里的书、相册或者厨具，会联想起家人曾经在其中生活的场景。这其实是一种怀旧的情绪。

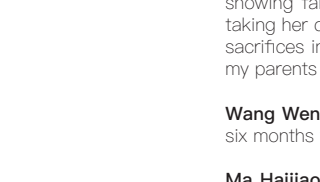
王文菲：是枝裕和的《步履不停》也是如此。

马海蛟：《步履不停》是我这两年来看到的最好的作品。它不仅是一部非常优秀的电影，其中的情绪对我触动也很深。塔可夫斯基在阐述创作时，谈到所谓的“雕刻时光”，或者说回忆性的作品，都是从自然流逝的时间中截取片段。他举了一个日本俳句的例子，以三行文字描述水滴落在湖面上产生涟漪的过程，这是非常自然、日常化的画面。作为创作者或者时光的雕刻者，我们都会把这些转瞬即逝而又带有永恒质感的片段抽离出来。是枝裕和也是如此，他的作品没有大场景，呈现一种日常性的生活，比如，在某个午后和父母谈话的片段中嵌入一种永恒性。

吴建儒：多数电影讲究叙事及其背后的社会议题，而当代艺术有更多的空间来彰显事件的不同侧面。《马国权》的呈现方式是装置，观众在黑色的箱子里面观看、体验，并直接接触马国权相关



马国权 _ 静帧 _2016



Mr.Quan_film still_2016

connection between clips, but a emotional sense grows in their mind. When I was filming If, I forget it, I also tried to fragment the memory, then slowly piecing together to achieve the integrity.

Wu Jiangu: Family Separatism presents the inner conflict and contradiction between generations. By contrast, If, I forget it seems to be lack of strong emotion but adopts a straightforward approach with relatively objective perspective.

Ma Haijiao: If, I forget it is related to memory, more likely connected to Hou Hsiao–Hsien’s The Time to Live and the Time to Die. Family Separatism is about the impact of urbanization on family life.

Wang Wenfei: The Time to Live and the Time to Die shows the dramatic tension between narrative and imagery, even presenting death in an inadvertent manner. If, I forget it is also related to the memories of childhood and hometown, however, more likely reflecting a pastoral, utopian situation, are you glorifying memories with images?

Ma Haijiao: Hou Hsiao–Hsien’s representation of death is full of tension, he prefers the narrative form of showing family photos. My work also involves the memory of death, for example, the scene of a mother taking her child to grandmother’s grave to worship. I remember that when I was a child, I really like to eat the sacrifices in front of graves. I present the scene as the most authentic understanding of the generations of my parents and grandparents to the death.

Wang Wenfei: The work Ma Guoquan showcased in Shanghai Biennale is a documentary. Ma Haijiao spent six months to produce it and wrote the monologue himself, so, it is not entirely realistic.

Ma Haijiao: The work is related to my situation at the beginning of last last year. I went to contemporary art exhibitions quite often and noticed more and more video works. Soon, aesthetic fatigue set in, because I was less and less touched. I was wondering then if it was possible to make a work to clarify my own confusion. Therefore, I used my immediate experience as the starting point, and focused on Ma Guoquan, a real person. He is one of my relatives. In 1992, he was a civil servant of 30 years old and had a car accident. After recovery, his IQ fell to that of a 6 or 7 years old child. Every year, when I go back home for the Chinese New Year, I would meet him. He started each day kneeling in bed and reciting a Buddhist sutra, and then wrote his diary. His handwriting was reduced to elementary student level. I was fascinated and got an idea to make a work about him. Initially, I wanted to film a documentary. Several months later, I realized that the form of pure documentary was inadequate, hence, I incorporated footages that were quite stylized, adopting a relatively lyrical form of expression.

Wang Wenfei: There are many documentary scenes in Ma Guoquan. The subject often unconsciously begins to perform in the front of camera. This work is so touching, is it because the character does not look defensive in the front of your lens? How do you achieve it?

Ma Haijiao: First of all, he is my relative and knows me; secondly, the filming process took so long that he and I slowly developed a kind of trust. The problem is solved.

Wang Wenfei: There are some objects exhibited along with Ma Guoquan. As you mentioned, it is not a documentary in fact.

Ma Haijiao: Some friends have asked if it is more like a film. I have always preferred the exhibition form of contemporary art, it is not limited to a theater or cinema. Through the creation, I can express my personal thoughts with images or documents. I have a notebook Ma Guoquan used in 1989 when he was still healthy, and it contains a lot of reading notes and texts about how to achieve success. It’s very interesting. I watched he wrote dairy everyday with his childish handwriting. I wish that he could rewrite these notes from 1989, because the changes of time would make me feel very touching. The same person rewrites the same content after 20 years but his handwriting has dramatically changed. With the development of society, the meaning of these notes is also changed on some level.

Wang Wenfei: Ma Haijiao is interested in the choice of video footages. Such as, for Ma Guoquan, although the most influencial event is the car accident, Ma Haijiao does not directly depict it, alternatively, showing the details of daily life infused with emotions. He does not film an accident or a violent scene, his choice is different from many young artists’ today. Ma Haijiao has returned to the daily life itself, even it is more hard to grasp. May I interpret in this way?

Ma Haijiao: Both artist and audience have personal preferences. I’m interested in daily life. Seeing books, albums or kitchen utensils, the family living scenes would come to my mind. Actually, it is a nostalgic mood.

Wang Wenfei: Just like Hirokazu Koreeda’s Still Walking.

Ma Haijiao: Still Walking is the best work I have seen in the past two years. It is very good, conveying emotions that really touch me. Tarkovsky ever proposed a concept of "voyage in time", or the works related to memory, the fragments sectioned from the natural passage of time. He took a Japanese haiku as an example, which in three lines describes water dropping on lake surface to set off ripples. It is a very natural common scene. As a creator or a sculptor of time, we could extract these ephemeral but timeless pieces. Hirokazu Koreeda does the same, and his work does not present grand scenes but daily life, such as reflecting a sort of eternity through a family talking in an afternoon.



步履不停 _ 剧照



Still Walking_film still

的物件。这样的感知方式和电影的叙事肯定是不一样的——当代艺术在展厅里展示有一定的原因。对于当代艺术工作者而言，创作者往往需要找到一个讨论的命题，或为特定的观众给出某种观看的角度。你的工作范畴也许不一样。

马海蛟： 我把自己定义成在当代艺术范畴里创作的影像工作者。当代艺术的影像和艺术电影、实验电影之间的边界是极其模糊的，但我会将这种情况解释为身份问题。一个艺术家即使按照电影的程序拍了一部电影，但外界或许也将其认定为一件当代艺术作品，一些电影导演也创作非常艺术化的电影。我觉得这不是一个特别重要的议题，重要的是让观众去欣赏、体验作品。

王文菲：我认为即便将《马国权》当作纪录片来看，它也是非常好的作品，并不一定要在某一个系统里面被界定。马海蛟并没有刻意为一个观众群去创作某一类作品，处于一种“自然生长”的状态。我们也可以谈一谈与风格有关的问题。马海蛟的所有作品都有一个特质——对于长镜头的运用，这和商业大片非常不同，观众需要聚精会神地观看一个缓慢的抒情性长镜头。那些将长镜头运用到极致的导演，比如塔可夫斯基和贝拉·塔尔，在他们作品中，镜头的长度很难让没有丰富观影经验的观众接受。马海蛟的作品《远了，更远》里充满了这样的镜头。

马海蛟：2016 年底到 2017 年 1 月初，我在荷兰驻留。这个时期，欧洲的难民问题成为一个热点，我就围绕难民的议题创作了《远了，更远》。我观察了当地难民的生活状态，政府把他们安置到一个临时居住的区域，用集装箱建起临时性的居住场所。于是，我非常自然地再次联想到家庭的元素，模拟一位难民写了一封寄给仍然生活在家乡的母亲的信，描述他在荷兰的所见所闻。其实这也反映了我个人的状态，我原本生活在北京，突然来到荷兰，面对一片森林，优美的环境，我的第一感觉是非常舒适，享受这一切，但过了一两天，我会觉得这一切都不属于我，因为这跟你的生活环境完全没有关系。我会将这种情感投射在难民的身上，那种一尘不染的优美风景反而会给我带来一种危机感，这或许也是一种“乡愁”。一直以来，我的美学训练、实践、偏好都慢慢地自然显现出来，我没有一个特别明确的方向。在自由创作的过程中，我慢慢发现自己对家庭性和情感的东西很感兴趣。个人风格的形成也是如此。我会把塔可夫斯基电影中的长镜头形容成“非炫技式的优美”。如今，长镜头变成一种所谓独立电影或者艺术电影惯用的手法，而塔可夫斯基的长镜头纯粹为其表现的内容和情感而服务。

王文菲：除了长镜头的选择，马海蛟也非常喜欢运用独白。他曾经也写过一些诗歌、散文。电影和文学属于两种艺术形式，而电影也是可以具备文学性的。你如何看待电影的文学性？

马海蛟：关键在于要恰如其分地运用旁白，比如《童年往事》或费穆《小城之春》里的旁白。我认为，中国的当代影像创作者分为两类，一类爱好文学，一类爱好哲学。哲学爱好者的作品饱含思辨精神。我一直以来偏爱文学化的创作。塔可夫斯基与侯孝贤、是枝裕和运用旁白的方式不太一样，后者采取一种非常东方式的日常化描述，而塔可夫斯基的作品更多表现了某种古典、形而上的精神。

吴建儒：关于难民的影像不在少数，乡愁和难民的情绪之间多少有些矛盾，而你把难民塑造成乡愁的主角。

马海蛟：当时创作的时候，我每天游荡在阿姆斯特丹的郊外，看当地的风景和人，这种观看状态所构成的主体和客体之间的状态，是一种“远观”的状态。

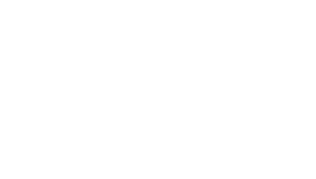
吴建儒：难民不是乡愁的问题，而是身份矛盾的问题。其实你没有真正讨论难民的问题？

马海蛟：难民问题是一个全球性的话题，大家都会从不同的方向和维度讨论这个问题，我并没有直接讨论最核心的难民问题。与这件作品同时展出的还有两件录像作品——我周末去阿姆斯特丹博物馆广场，刚好遇到集会，大家举着表达“政治正确”的牌子。有一对男女朋友，男人身上挂着一个牌子，上面写着“我的女朋友是伊斯兰人”，女孩身上也挂了一个牌子，上面写着“我的男朋友是欧洲人”，他们用这种方式去表达对难民的态度。而我的创作则更多从个人的情感出发。

王文菲：马海蛟采取了一种比较抽离的表达方式，没有直接拍摄冲突或者难民营的状况。总体而言，他在“例外状态：中国境况与艺术考察 2017”中呈现的作品非常具有个人的色彩。展览所关注的问题比较宏观，而马海蛟关注的家庭、个体与情感问题或许是更为根本的，无论在何种社会背景之中，我们终究要回到具体的人身上。



远了，更远 _ 静帧 _2017



Message to the Future_film still _2017

Wu Jianru: Most films devote particular attention to the narrative and the social issues behind it, meanwhile contemporary art offers more space to highlight the various aspects of events. Ma Guoquan is presented in the form of installation. In a dark boxy gallery, the audience can watch the video and directly touch the objects belonging to Ma Guoquan. The audience’s perception is definitely different from that through film narrative—it’s why contemporary art is exhibited in gallery. Contemporary artists usually need to find a proposition to start discussion, or provide a specific view for the given audience. However, you are different.

Ma Haijiao: I consider myself as a video artist in the context of contemporary art. The boundaries between the video work of contemporary art and the experimental or art films are extremely vague, I think the major difference is of the identity. Even an artist makes a film by following the standard production procedure, others may still think the resulted film as a contemporary art work. Some film directors also make very artistic films. I don’t think it is particularly important, alternatively, it is more important that the audience could appreciate and experience the work itself.

Wang Wenfei: Even if taking Ma Guoquan as a documentary, it is still a very good one and not necessarily defined in a given system. Ma Haijiao is not deliberately making a work for certain audience, his work is a fruit of "natural growth". Now, we may talk about some style–related issues. All the works of Ma Haijiao share a common feature, the application of long shot. His gentle and lyrical long shots are very different from those in commercial blockbusters, and his audience need to concentrate on them. The masters of long shot including Tarkovsky and Bella Tarr have pushed this technique to extreme, and their works may not be accepted by the audience who have no previous viewing experience. Ma Haijiao’s Far, Farther is the one full of such long shots.

Ma Haijiao: I had been taking part in a residency project in Netherlands from the end of 2016 to early January of 2017. During that period, the European refugee crisis was a hot issue, so I made Far, Farther around it. I observed the living conditions of the local refugees. The government helped them settle down in an area where temporary shelters were built with shipping containers. I remembered the elements of Family Separatism, and composed a letter that a refugee wrote to his mother living in hometown, describing what he saw and heard in Netherlands. Actually, it was a reflection of my own situation. I originally lived in Beijing and then moved to Netherlands. Facing the forest and beautiful environment, I first found myself very comfortable and enjoyed everything. However, one or two days later, I realized that all these didn’t belong to me because I had no any connections with them. I projected my own feelings on the refugees, and the spotless beautiful scenery even brought me a sense of crisis, which could be a "nostalgia." All along, my aesthetic training, practice, and preferences have been slowly and naturally manifested by themselves, and I don’t have a defined direction where I should go. Since I always make my own art quite freely, I have found myself interested in the subjects of family and emotion. My personal style has emerged in the same way. I take the long shots in Tarkovsky’s films as the representation of "non–virtuosoo beauty". Nowadays, the application of long shot has become a common practice in those so–called independent or art films, but at his time, Tarkovsky applied such a technique purely on the expression of contents and emotions.

Wang Wenfei: In addition to long shots, Ma Haijiao prefers monologue very much. He used to write some poems and essays. Although film and literature are two different art medium, film may also have the literary nature. How do you think about it?

Ma Haijiao: The key is to properly conduct the narrative, for example, The Time to Live and the Time to Die and Fei Mu’s Spring in a Small Town. I think that contemporary video makers in China can be divided into two categories, one prefers literature and another philosophy. The works of philosophy enthusiasts are full of philosophical speculations. I have always preferred literature. Tarkovsky’s narrative is different from those of Hou Hsiao–Hsien and Hirokazu Koreeda, his works emit a classical and metaphysical spirit, while Hou and Hirokazu’s show a strong oriental style to depict daily life.

Wu Jianru: There are many video works about refugees. Nostalgia is apparently contradictory to refugees’ feelings, but you make refugees as its protagonist.

Ma Haijiao: When I worked on the project, I wandered in the suburbs of Amsterdam everyday to see local landscape and people. This kind of observation representing the status between subject and object eventually results in "viewing from a distance".

Wu Jianru: Refugees are not the subject of nostalgia but the object of identity contradiction. Or, in fact, you were not discussing the refugee crisis, weren’t you?

Ma Haijiao: The refugee crisis is a global issue, we all discuss it from different aspects and dimensions, but I don’t directly address its core. There are other two video works on display. One day, I went to the Amsterdam Museum Square and encountered a rally, seeing people with all kinds of "politically correct" signs. There was a couple, the man hung a board, reading as "My girlfriend is a Muslim", and the woman held up a sign, "My boyfriend is a European". Through this way, they showed their attitude towards refugees. Similarly, my work is based on my personal feelings.

Wang Wenfei: Ma Haijiao takes a more extracted form of expression and does not directly film conflict or refugee camp. In general, the personal style of his works in the exhibition "The New Normal: China, Art, and 2017" is very pronounced. The exhibition intends to focus on the macroscopic issues, while the issues of family, individual and emotion that Ma Haijiao concerned are perhaps more fundamental. No matter social background, we all eventually need to refocus our concerns on the specific person.