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LEAP

XU ZHE: IMPROVISATION AND RESPONSE – LEAP 29

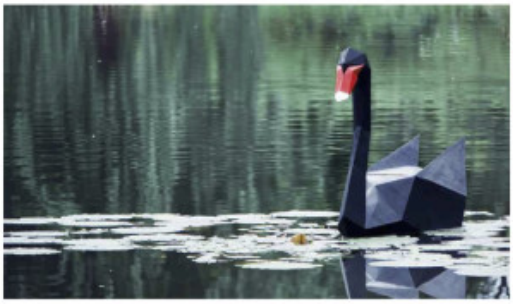
徐喆：即兴与回应
XU ZHE: IMPROVISATION AND RESPONSE

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TEXT /Lu Jing

“即兴”最近在来对徐喆而为重要和能发掘心应手的工作方式。这一似乎不在意逻辑判断的神秘力量让艺术家乐在其中，他也将其自“即兴”是潜意识的，直觉发挥自由和试验，这一点在使用乐器进行创作时体现明显。2011年，他利用手头现有的材料组合拼凑制作了一件乐器 Pianphone，然后拉着记录了愉悦时刻，一位即兴乐手朋友在上海虹口区山阴路上的一所老宅的院子里做的过程，起名为《Pianphone—逻辑的偶然》，这个行为并不是建立在测试乐器实用的目的之上的，就像的其实是乐手身体的体验，不管是生什么。其实对于乐手来说也都是非常陌生的。艺术家追求的正是乐手在即兴表演时的身体体验，现场反馈能之产生的反应。

区别于声音艺术，徐喆作品中时常出现的“乐器”或者“声音”仅仅是一种材料，与对“玩具”的兴趣和使用反馈与他在智护比斯艺术学院的“新媒体”教育背景有关。在即兴创作的乐器或玩具的过程里，艺术家也耳其实的表体来发挥创造力，艺术家自主掌了解自己的节性格，因此在即兴开始的创作过程中不断适应，不轻松感或困说出下保持对于生活中的各种“创作触发器”的高度敏锐，可随时准备着。

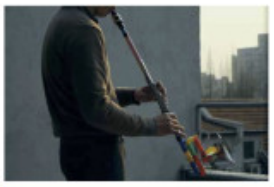
我们知道便是说实是个体成长的诗大主题，艺术家选择以趣味感的态度回对，无论是不作为个体还是作为“组织”（于2009年创立，成员有附图团、陶振、徐喆，李旭）一员的实践中，不同的实践方式刺激和推动着他的持续创作。在融洽的团体环境中获得信任感与丰富的文化材料，在伙伴和外界的态度中看见自己，在后续思考自身与对方的问题时认中获益。



左 LEFT:
《水为》，2014年，应用彩色电声装置，5分钟
Waterhead, 2014, HD color video with sound, 7 min. 9 sec.

上 TOP:
《Pianphone—逻辑的偶然》，2011年，彩色电声录像，10分钟
Pianphone—Logical Accidents, 2011, 10 min. 9 sec.

下 BOTTOM,
《风池》，2012年，彩色电声录像，11分钟
Wuhe Flow, 2012, 5 min. 11 sec.





XU ZHE HAS recently found himself in his element with improvisation, a way of working that has become extremely important to his practice. He banks happily in the mysterious power that is improvisation's surrender of logical judgment, but he also understands that it requires a foundation; the ability to express oneself spontaneously—and instantaneously—relies on experience. This becomes obvious when it comes to improvising on a new instrument. In 2011, Xu invented a musical instrument called the Pianphone, constructed with a combination of materials readily available at hand. He recorded friend and musician Jun-Y Ciao playing the Pianphone in an old house on Shanyin Road, Hongkou District, Shanghai, and titled the resulting ten-minute video *Pianphone—Logical Accidents* (2011). The action was carried out not to test out the functionality of the instrument, but rather to chronicle the physical, embodied experience of the musician. Whatever happens internally for the musician is a mystery; the artist is searching for the Pianphone player's reaction to what is happening to his body, and to the reverberations of this conceptual space in real-time.

Distancing himself from sound art, Xu Zhe considers instruments and sounds to be only the material of his work. His interest in toys may come from his new media background, dating to his days at art school in Provence. Xu uses everyday objects to inspire creativity by drawing on his own personality. After returning to China, he has constantly adapted his process with a relaxed, playful state of mind. He remains open to the creative triggers life presents him, living in a constant state of readiness.

Accepting reality is a major part of personal growth, and Xu Zhe faces this challenge both as an individual and as a member of Zuzhi, the artist group he founded in 2009 with Jun-Y Ciao, Tao Yi, and Li Ma. Different kinds of practices stimulate creative processes in different ways. In a community like Zuzhi, he finds a sense of trust and a rich abundance of cultural material with which to work. He finds his voice alongside the perspectives of his partners, allowing for reflection on their collective engagements. This is a place he can call home, a place to which he can return and rest. In his own words, "The most valuable thing is not what we create together, but the very collision between four brains in intensive exchange."

Xu Zhe continues to refine his methods, perspectives, and materials, but his starting point always involves a response to his immediate environment, particularly urban development—halting



《等一只鸟》，2013年，录像截图
Waiting for a bird, 2013, production still

开有一个像窗一样可以通风和休憩的地方。如他自己所言："最有价值的不是在一起可以创造什么，而是四个不一样的大脑碰撞的交流所产生的能量。"

方法、态度、所用材料都随城市不断改变，其实最出发点则是为了表明艺术家对于现实事态的回应，尤其对于在城市发展中出现的各式令人作呕、不适、存疑或方家改善的现象与情境，因此在极似玩笑、娱乐的表象下，艺术家的作品有着积极介入社会、城市沟通的特质。在《Plantphone-逻辑的偶然》中，自制场景Plantphone发出的时而轻快、时而幽怨却生动像模拟的笛声，与城道调声交织混杂，艺术家希望以声音提示被这条管在中国近代史上意义非凡，有众多文学家、革命者生活过的古街巷，与今日平凡喧杂的现实感差。实际上，艺术家本人正居住在这条路上，街坊有着休闲邻、非常亲切的氛围感。周边所属空间的建筑物……对环境的感受让艺术家赋予个人化的可应，在作品《期货》(2012)中的尝试更为直接。他站在时宜家窗斗与小时的号嘴自制了一把"号号"，活跃半年的圆习，他在房间内的阳台上吹响了改编过的军队的起床号。在片中的最后一个镜头，艺术家专注地吹奏军号，身后一架飞机划过天际。

9月，徐渐东上午艺术馆展的题望"直觉不同出坠"是他在上海的第二次个展。对艺术家自己而言，但是近年来创作面貌和工作方法的一次阶段性呈现。展览空间的点状装置看的一张写字台，桌上陈列有他从2010年开始制作的成品《雕塑练习》系列。墙壁上下面则是记录了许多"一次性"特征的"雕塑"照片，右侧的录像投影幕播放着影像作品《水鸟》(2014)，记录了艺术家用塑料吸管制制作的机器鸟天鹅在游中与真实鸟天鹅的互动情景。等比例大小的假天鹅悬浮水面下优雅画游，营造台一派静谧和谐，镜头中偶尔穿过背景中，大学校园中的草坪和环境制造细微反常与荒诞。天鹅作为外来物种被点缀到国内的生态环境，艺术家默认假设性，同时暗中国大学校园中这一"制配"的景观，如此不合常理却已习以为常的虚假现实。

《等一只鸟》(2013)是一件类似的作品，徐渐设计制作了一座具有现代建筑风格的"鸟屋"，并将这座假想中的鸟类栖息地所放置在自己家附近的街上，一间镇屋地等待鸟的光临。从2013年开始用录像记录下独一年的观察过程。艺术家的好奇心支配着创作的动机，对边界的探视地介入。我觉也让徐渐明确认识到个体的短暂。

徐渐曾表示自己是在33岁有了女儿以后才重有艺术创作动力，他许最早年从事"美术教育"的背景、老师以及父亲身份角色的潜移默化，可以看到艺术家无论在个人创作或是作为"组织"成员创作中，都自觉地参与艺术教育的实践。2012年在广东时代美术馆的徐渐项目展览，徐渐制作了一份向青少年介绍当代艺术作品的手绘画册(杂绘)，或许对于艺术家而言，艺术实践如同见证孩子的成长一般，有时重要的不是立即解决问题，而是伴随解决过程中产生的观察和回应。



《雕塑练习》系列，2014年
儿童塑料玩具
"Study for Sculpture" series, 2014
Plastic toys

abruptness, discomfort, unanswered questions, straining to make things better. Beneath a seemingly free and easy appearance, Xu's work has a clear inclination toward social intervention. The sound of the homemade Plantphone—by turns profoundly brooding and ecstatically melodic, and just as suddenly acerbic and piercing—echoes against the bustle of the street where the instrumentalist stands, reflecting the artist's emotional response to what Shanyin Road once was and what it is now, from a place with special significance to modern Chinese history where many intellectuals and revolutionaries once resided to a noisy, ordinary thoroughfare. The artist currently lives on Shanyin Road, and intimately observes everything from the retired navy officer next door and the military police unit down the lane to other surrounding buildings belonging to the air force. His insight into his environment allows Xu to express uniquely personal responses. In *Wide Place* (2012) he battles with this space after six months practicing scales on a homemade bugle made of an Ikea funnel and a trumpet mouthpiece, he plays an adaptation of "Reveille" from his balcony overlooking the street. The final shot of the video shows him blowing into his bugle as a plane flies through the sky behind him. The work was exhibited at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art young Chinese artist survey "ON: OFF," bringing his call to arms full circle.

Xu Zhu's second Shanghai solo exhibition, "Extended Play," opened at AM Art Space in September, including several phases of his shifting approach over the past few years. A table on the left side of the space shows pictures of the small sculptures and readymades he began producing in 2010. On the right side the video *Waterfowl* (2014) is projected onto the floor, depicting a lake scene in which perfectly proportioned models of black swans interact with actual swans. Slow-motion footage of elegant ripples on the water's surface in the wake of fabricated swans results in a kind of rhythmic tranquility, while the manicured lawns and decorative signage of the local college campus where the work was filmed appear as vaguely absurd anomalies. The false comment on the false, responding to the misappropriation of the exotic in the local educational environment's ecological landscape—a dubious phenomenon that is nonetheless accepted as ordinary.

Waiting for a Bird (2013) tackles similar ideas. Xu Zhe builds a bird's nest with modern architectural features, places it in a natural environment, and records his observations as he waits for migratory birds to make their home there. The leisurely pace of the camerawork reflects the artist's creative philosophy. He admits the limitations of the individual's power in effect change, but insists on actively interacting in, discovering, and responding in the world around him.

Xu Zhe says that his motivation as an artist grew stronger after his daughter was born when he was 33. Perhaps qualities latent in him—formed in his early years by his own education, his teachers, his parents—consciously drive him to take on the role of an educator, both in his individual practice and as a member of Zaobi. Recently, he prepared a hand-drawn album for the Guangdong Times Museum titled *Aesthetics*, which introduces young people to contemporary art. Like witnessing a child growing up, perhaps his artistic practice is less about an immediate solution and more about the process of problem solving itself. (Translated by Katy Pinke)