

陶辉，综合日记，“一个人物与七段素材”

文：杨紫

儿时，陶辉住在雾气缭绕的山顶上，看不见山脚下的长江。在那个时候的那个地方，因特网、克隆羊和艾滋病都是天方夜谭，人们淳朴生猛，自然生长，脑筋还没被科学和理性塑型。陶辉从小喜欢和老家的大妈聊天。不论听到的是蜚短流长，还是鬼怪奇谈，都经过口口相传，层层编译，最终呈现为神秘、怪诞、引人入胜的故事。其中一个是这样的：他们村的一个邻居出了大山打工，老婆死了，没多久就跟县城里的女人续了弦。一次，老家死了人，他就回到山里看看。刚带着在县城里找的新媳妇踏进老房子，他之前死去的老婆就一把抱住他，哭喊：“你都不要我了！”陶辉说，故乡破败得不成样子，除了暮气沉沉的老人死守着村子，就只有逝者阴魂未散，一直苦苦地留守在此，等着为世人遗忘。

现在，陶辉生活在北京，多年没回去。但他还是反复强调着在他出生的环境中，这种“阳性精神病患者”的症状（如幻觉、妄想）算不得“病”，只是稀松平常。陶辉说，山里长大的人都有一种“特异功能”，他们习惯于在混沌之中生存，把记忆、民间传说、内在的现实的和客观的现实混为一谈——一种“综合现实”。这种“综合的”的认知方式，被陶辉发展成为他的工作方法。

在北京的家里，陶辉收藏着一摞厚厚的笔记本。据他说，这只是一小部分，更多的还留在重庆。笔记本里收集着陶辉从大学开始的奇思妙想：有图有字，随性完成，而非呕心沥血的制作。事实上，笔记本上的内容是日记，既私密（陶辉几乎从未展示给任何人），又是对日常事件的记录。他将每天“看”到的和想到的“综合现实”记录下来，形成一部延续而不连贯的个人历史——这部历史的时间观与众不同，它无关乎进程或沿革。

陶辉爱国产肥皂剧，自称《新白娘子传奇》迷。这一点在他一些录像作品里——《小青记得要忘记》、《蒙古症》、《演技教程》——有所体现。与当下流行的“高级”或“不咸不淡”的录像语言不同，陶辉将主观情感强烈的大红大绿入画（在《演技教程》中，陶辉坚持让演员在灰暗的环境中穿上黑衣服，这给灯光师出了个棘手的难题），用诸多夸张的桥段推进叙事，调动气氛和情绪，几近于热闹的中国传统戏曲。即便被人批评为“做作”、“庸俗”、“狗血”，陶辉也无动于衷。他觉察到肥皂剧的叙事手法和“综合现实”经验高度契合的部分。他借此自然地跳脱出了日常逻辑。

最新展览“一个人物与七段素材”由互相交叠的两个部分构成。一部分是“七段素材”：陶辉从笔记本中不计其数的场景中挑选出七段内容，拍成每段约一分钟的录像，其中包括站在土坑中淋雨的少数民族女孩、采访死尸的记者、乘游艇徜徉在江心的神仙等等。这些作为“素材”的录像因逻辑上毫无顺序而被设置为无序播放，仅以艺术家的微妙情绪保持统一。对于陶辉来说，拍摄笔记本储存的日记，即是给回忆描眉画眼，在一番装扮后，为其招魂，令它复活。让逝去的时刻纷乱地重现，其结果之一便是，场景被重叠、并置，人们习以为常的线性时间观被干扰。

在名为“一个人物”的展览部分中，陶辉亦上演了一次“还魂”。他设置了一座电话亭大小的封闭盒子，外面写上“1 Character”（即“一个人物”），透过玻璃，里面能看到一支话筒。同期展出的一段录音揭开了缺失人物的身世之谜。这是一位已逝世的中年女性，声音黯哑、带有口音。她来自乡村，不甘平凡，来到城市后，又发现自己无法抛弃故土在心中植入的内在经验。她似乎享有自由，而当意识到这种自由的虚妄时，又要独自承受自由带来的剧痛。归属何处的焦虑转化为对“正常”生活秩序的“水土不服”，她的故事终以悲剧收场。这段声音可以和“七段素材”的影像共同欣赏。伤感、压抑、略有些“超现实”的调性将两种不同的媒介统一了起来；此外，对于陶辉来说，这段自述既也同样是经过“综合”的自传；也像是某个乡村故事的变体——若细细回味，似乎与文章开头引述的故事异曲同工。



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我们不能将陶辉的实践简单划归为反现代性议题中的一环——它没有为现代性秩序产生的危机提供解药的媚态或雄心；他的创作也与“现实批判”之类的炮制——艺术家出于不可遏制的道德感创作出的“理念先行”作品——没什么关系；相较于与依赖大量知识文本的“学术型”创作，陶辉做的作品总是透露出浓浓的“人味儿”。陶辉力求从个人经验的狭窄通道里窥看世界，避免宏大、空洞的叙事。这出于他对自己感知世界方式保持着的自信。



Tao Hui: Synthesized Diaries, “1 Character & 7 Materials”

Text: Yang Zi

Tao Hui spent his childhood on the foggy top of a mountain where the Yangtze River could not be seen. It was a place in time where the Internet, Dolly the Lamb and AIDS would have been stories from the Arabian Nights. Science and Reason have yet to pave their way into the psyche of the simple, hardy folks of nature's making. The young Tao Hui loved the stories that older women in the village used to tell, gossips and mystery tales that oral retelling made into fantastical, riveting stories. One of them goes like this: a neighbor left the mountain to look for work. His wife died, and he married a girl from town. Once, the man had to visit the village for a funeral. The moment he stepped into his old house with the new wife, the dead wife grabbed him and wailed: “You abandoned me!” Tao Hui says that the village has now crumbled into ruins. All that lingers are decrepit old men and the ghosts of the dead who refuse to leave, waiting to be forgotten by the world.

Living in Beijing now, Tao Hui hasn't been back to his hometown for years, yet he insists that he grew up in an environment where positive symptoms of mental disorders, such as hallucinations and delusions, are not considered as illnesses. In his account, the mountain people are used to living in chaos and have the special power to blend memory, folklore, internal reality and objective facts into a “synthesized” reality. Their cognitive style of “synthesis” has been developed into the artist's methodology.

Tao Hui has accumulated a huge stack of notebooks in his Beijing home, and many more of them in Chongqing. Since college years, he started putting down whimsical thoughts, spontaneous sketches and scribbles on these pages, which constitute not only private diary entries (he had barely shown them to anyone) but also a recording of daily events. The act of writing creates a continuous yet incoherent personal history that synthesizes all that which he has seen and thought. Its idiosyncratic concept of time has nothing to do with linear temporal progression.

Tao Hui claims to be a fan of Chinese soap operas, especially “The New Legend of Madame White Snake”, which is manifest in his video works such as *Miss Green*, *Remember to Forget*, *Mongolism*, and *The Acting Tutorial* that demonstrate on a visual language distinct from the sophisticated, elegantly aloof style that has been trendy in video art. Despite criticisms of affectation, vulgarity or melodramaticism, Tao Hui uses powerful colors like red and green in sensational plot twists to indicate subjective emotions and perk up the narrative—a kind of boisterousness that reminds the viewer of traditional Chinese opera. (Meanwhile, in *The Acting Tutorial*, he insists that actors wear black in an under-lit scenario, which proves to be a real challenge for his lighting crew.) The artist identifies the connections between narrative strategies of soap operas and the experiences of synthesized reality, whereby he is able to escape quotidian logic.

The latest exhibition “1 Character & 7 Materials” consists of two overlapping parts. For “7 Materials”, Tao Hui films seven scenes selected from the innumerable scenarios in his notebooks, including a group of ethnic minority girls in a soil pit in the rain, a reporter interviewing a corpse, and a deity sailing on the river. Due to the lack of internal logical order, these one-minute video “materials” are not played in a fixed sequence, but are only connected through the artist's subtle, intuitive sensibilities. For Tao Hui, to film his diary is to adorn and embellish his memories before evoking and reviving their spirits. The chaotic reappearance of past moments disrupts linear temporality by juxtaposing and overlapping the scenes.



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In the second part of the exhibition titled “1 Character”, Tao Hui performs yet another act of necromancy. He sets up a sealed box the size of a phone booth with the word “1 Character” written over it and a microphone inside. An audio recording reveals the identity of the missing subject: the character is a dead woman, middle-aged, with a coarse voice and an accent. Escaping the humdrum of country life, she realizes that she is unable to abandon the internal experiences of home after coming to the city. She seems to delight in her freedom, yet suffers the pains of its deception in utter solitude. The story comes to its tragic ending as the anxiety of belonging turns her into a stranger in the normative order of her own life. Melancholic, depressive, and surrealist tonalities connect the mediums of sound and video to create a holistic audio-visual experience for the viewer. Tao Hui considers the narrative as a kind of “synthetic” autobiography or a variation of folklore—it may even remind us of the story cited in the beginning of this article.

One cannot simply place Tao Hui in the camp of anti-modernism. He doesn't purport to have the ambition to provide antidotes to the crises of modernity. Nor does his practice have much to do with social critique or certain concept-driven works born out of artists' bloated ego. Compared to highly cerebral, knowledge-based kinds of artistic production, Tao Hui's works strike us as extremely “human” inasmuch as they frame an outlook of the world within the narrow opening of individual experience and resist empty grand narratives. Such are the fruit of the artist's confidence in his own cognitive prowess.

