



文 / TEXT: 洪涛 / Einar Engström

在《可乐计划》中，何翔宇用一年时间煮了127吨可乐，作为制作过程中的一部分，剩余的空可乐瓶也被保留了下来。Mountains of empty bottles left over from Cola Project's 127 tons of source material were carefully documented and preserved as part of the production process.

艺术家何翔宇（生于1986年）在当代艺术界迅速走红。他的出名主要归因于其作品中表现出的与年龄不甚相符的巨大尺度与恢弘气势。他的《可乐计划》（2009年）中，后启示录式的黑色结晶构造构成的巨型山脉，是以超过一年的时间蒸掉127吨可乐而成的，该项目很能说明他创作的大胆。另一作品《无何有之乡》（2009年）也一样，26吨的朽木以巨型锁链和轴固定在今日美术馆的一角，仿佛要将画廊地板压垮。不过，对于何翔宇大部分作品来说，过程远重于结果。这种导致惊人结果的过程不仅是物理过程，也是心理过程。

《可乐计划》被一些评论家认为是批判了西方文化对中国的人侵，自由市场意志对于中国年轻一代的绝对统治。确实，一位中国艺术家对于可乐——这一高举资本主义大旗的可口代表——热气腾腾、来势汹汹的破坏让人很难抗拒这种解读。不过，批评家高名德却给出了一种更深入的见解，他认为何翔宇的作品在本质上是极多主义的，或者主要依赖于艺术家与物理对象之间所建立的私人联系。他与可口可乐的联系是从他在北京工作室的小型室内实验开始，最终超越了个人性，融入了群体性。通过在家乡辽宁省丹东市的广泛关系网，他拿到了整个伐木场，并且雇佣一批农民工来实现他的想法。与此同时，他说服当地警方和环保局对其可疑行为以及每天排放的难闻废气睁一只眼闭一只眼。用中国当代艺术的惯用辞令来说，他以无所不至的双手将《可乐计划》变成了一件社会介入的作品，一种超个人意义上的权力实施。

不过权力是一种奇怪的机制。在北京，艺术家在墙美术馆的首展开幕仅仅三天就因为死板的可乐公司反对而终止了。何翔宇却不为所动，因为他自己的介入行为已几近完成，除此以外，他还有更多的东西准备在国外展出，包括作为档案的空瓶、锅炉、熔炉和玉石制成的等大人骨模型，他善于烹煮可乐，以及用可乐制成的墨水在云南原住民东巴民族的纸张上写书法、画山水——总而言之，他的一整间美学实验工厂已经整装待发，堪与《可乐计划》的深度相比。比如他的《玉骨》，以工业生产的规模实施，并且为大众所知晓，在这里社会被潜移默化了。不过尽管这么说，他的项目肯定是未完成的，他依然不时在工作室里

煮可乐，甚至可能在未采用“山寨”可乐来做实验。唯一能结束这个项目的，注意，这不是说笑，而是现实中的现实，是支撑着他大部分创作的母题：死亡。

死亡，这个生命最大的谜，最集中地体现在何翔宇的《马拉之死》（2011年）里，该作品模拟了一具艾未未“尸体”，一个真人尺寸的树脂雕塑，狡猾地斜放在一家小型德国画廊的地板上，让世界上最有同情心的路人经过窗口时能看见。乍一看这个装置很可能会让人以为是毛里齐奥·卡特兰的作品。这并不奇怪——何翔宇仰慕卡特兰——他喜欢任何一位艺术家，就会尽力与这位艺术家的作品建立某种联系，甚至漂洋过海去看展。在形式和使人惊奇方面，《马拉之死》确实让人想起卡特兰的自杀松鼠和上吊儿童。何翔宇在此开的玩笑是同样严肃的，却缺乏幽默感；他的“艾未未”不仅是对艾未未本人形象的庄严挪用，而是提供给我这样的观察者的一种激进主义态度的挪用。他“结束”了中国最著名艺术家的生命，并将其尸体运往德国一个小画廊以震惊观众——这并非完成个人与材料的关系，而是完成了吸纳社会状况的过程。简单地在谷歌上搜索一下，我们就能看到这次介入的深度。

死亡母题同样渗透着何翔宇许多其他作品。装置《龛》（2009年）使用了云南山区东巴族的部落木头来重新制作等大的，龛毛的棺材，以高名德的原话，这是一种“人类学努力”；或者就像有人说的，这是中国“年轻一代”对于中国“原生态”的“保存”。这些结实的木棺材的毛里衬看起来柔软很舒服，可是因为迷信不吉利，没有藏家敢出手。何翔宇现在考虑将它们埋在故乡，作为一种彻底实施它们的方法。而他的装置和行为作品《椅子上的人》拆解了同样来自云南的废旧旧木沟渠，做成宝座一

样的椅子，让舞者柔韧而又疯狂地往上攀爬，千方百计避免触碰地面，仿佛地面有雷劈——如同他用来煮煮可乐的滚烫锅炉一样危险致命。与此同时，画廊的一名保洁工在行为过程中来来回回地走动，似乎对于在他身边发生的生死挣扎无动于衷，他要么是一个不受地面厄运影响的幽灵，要么单单是在提醒观众何为现实。

《椅子上的人》反响热烈，不管是对于椅子本身，还是何翔宇对于它们原本功能的转化——原本是火的树木，然后变成朽木，最后变成服务东巴人生活的沟渠——最终变成椅子，或者更准确地说，变成根本不是用来坐的椅子。他在云南的一段铁轨也许最能解释他与作品的关系；有一晚他在回家的路上遇到两名歹徒持刀袭击，假如不是因为他身上穿的美国老式空军夹克（也是在云南淘的，是二战遗物）的加厚衣领，其中一刀很有可能划破他的颈锥以致命。他逃了，只留下一个小伤疤，回到北京继续创作。

一个浅浅的硬壳揭露出艺术家是如何看重过程以及与材料的互动多于结果。艺术家公开声明“没有什么东西是不可以发生的。”任何材料都可以获得，怎样使用都可以。对他来说，没有什么项目是太吓人的，也没有任何工作室是局限的。实际上，他的目标是最终彻底摆脱工作室环境，在自己家里舒服地构思项目，有必要的话去现场实施。此刻，何翔宇正在美国准备完成一个灯箱系列“母亲”。该作品所选用的媒介以及对子宫这个母体的关注似乎与他之前的作品有所偏离，不过它们同样充满了权力的规则，以及一种危险的向死性。忠实于形式，何翔宇保证了下一个展览将会是以一种恰当的宏伟尺度呈现。具体会是怎样我们拭目以待，毕竟，任何过程的结果都只有在最后一刻才能揭晓。（由宋爽译）

何翔宇在他的家乡雇佣了一批农民工来实现《可乐计划》。He Xiangyu employed a number migrant workers in his hometown to execute his vision for Cola Project.





THE ARTIST HE XIANGYU (born 1986) has made a quick name for himself in the contemporary art world. His reputation, for the most part, owes itself to the scale and grandeur his work has taken on, both uncommon for an artist his age. The huge, post-apocalyptic landscape mountains of black crystalline residue seen in his *Cola Project* (2009), created by boiling and reducing 127 tons of Coca-Cola over the course of more than one year, is a prime example of the bravado that backs his practice, as is *Wu He You Zhi Xiang* (2009), a 26-ton pile of dead wood reigned in the corner of Today Art Museum by a massive chain and anchor that threatened to cave in the gallery floor. However, with most of He Xiangyu's work, the end result is secondary to the processes, both physical and psychological, that lead to its spectacular fruition.

*Cola Project* has been embraced by some as a critique of the invasion of Western culture into China, of the arching domination of free-market ideologies over his young generation; indeed, the seething, large-scale destruc-

tion by a Chinese artist of capitalism's tastiest flag-bearer makes such a reading difficult to resist. The critic Gao Minglu, however, offers a more insightful analysis into He Xiangyu's practice, marking He's work as essentially Maximalist, or primarily dependent on the personal relationship between the artist and the material object. He's interaction with Coca-Cola began with small-scale experimentation indoors in his Beijing studio, but eventually ballooned to transcend the individual and incorporate the public. Through an extended network of personal connections in his hometown of Dandong, Liaoning, the artist secured an entire lumber mill and employed a team of migrant workers to carry out his vision, meanwhile somehow persuading both local police and environmental authorities to turn a blind eye to his otherwise suspect activities and their daily billows of pungent, toxic smoke. In the popular parlance of Chinese contemporary art, He's long arms transformed *Cola Project* into a work of social intervention, an execution of power on supra-individual scale.

Power is a curious mechanism, though. Back in Beijing, the work's debut exhibition at Wall Art Museum was shut down after only three days, due to the opposing intervention of the muscle-bound multinational. He Xiangyu,

however, couldn't have been any more indifferent. His own intervention had already come to its initial completion, and besides, more components were and are to be exhibited abroad, including the archival empty bottles, cauldrons, smokestacks, as well as full-size human skeletons made of Chinese jade and steeped in boiling Coca-Cola and calligraphy and traditional landscape paintings rendered in Coca-Cola-based ink on indigenous Yunnanese *Dongba* paper—in short, an entire arsenal of aesthetic explorations comparable to the fundamental extent of the project. Like his jade skeletons, with the project's industrial-scale implementation and the public knowledge of its happening, society had already been quietly tainted. That being said, He's project is indefinitely unfinished; he continues to boil things in Coca-Cola in his studio from time to time, and he may even experiment with knock-off *shanzhai* versions of the soft drink in the future. The only thing that can bring an end to the project, all joking aside, is that most real of realities, which buttresses most of his practice: death.

This greatest of life's mysteries is most apparent in He Xiangyu's *The Death of Marat* (2011), a stunningly life-like resin sculpture of the corpse of Ai Weiwei, stily left prone on the floor of a small German gallery for the world's

《马拉之死》，2011年  
玻璃钢，仿真硅胶雕塑  
真人尺寸  
*The Death of Marat*, 2011  
Fiberglass, silica gel sculpture  
Life-size

most sympathetic passerby to see through the window. A cursory glance at the installation suggests it could very well have been the work of Maurizio Cattelan, which shouldn't come as a surprise—He Xiangyu, should he admire an artist like he does Cattelan, will do his utmost to form a relationship with that artist's work, even traveling abroad just to see an exhibition. In terms of form and spectacle, *The Death of Marat* truly does evoke Cattelan's suicide squirrel, or hanging children. He's joke here is equally serious, but without the humor; his Ai Weiwei is the solemn appropriation not just of Ai's visage, but of the activist attitude that circumstances in China have produced and offered to observers like He. "Ending" the life of the country's most famous artist and airdropping his body into a small German gallery to the shock and surprise of viewers—this is not the consummation of a personal relationship with his materials, but with the process of absorbing social conditions. A simple Google search reveals also, of course, its degree of social intervention.

Death permeates much of He Xiangyu's other work, as well. The installation *Xiang* (2009) saw salvaged tribal wood from the Dongba minority region of mountainous Yunnan—in the words of Gao Minglu, an "anthropological" endeavor; another critic deemed it as the "preservation" of China's "original ecology" by the "new generation"—refit to shape full-size fur-lined coffins. The interiors of these sturdy wooden sarcophagi bore the soft allure of comfort, but collectors' fear of bad luck left them unsold, and He is considering burying these in his hometown as a way of fully effectuating the work. For his installation and performance piece



*Man on the Chairs* (2011), He annexed old wooden logs from a disused aqueduct in the same area and re-arranged these into throne-like chairs on which dancers lithely but frenetically climbed, avoiding the ground as if it were a plague as scathing and deadly as one of He's bubbling cauldrons of Coca-Cola. Meanwhile, the gallery's janitor walked to and fro during the performance scrubbing the chairs, indifferent to the struggle between life and death surrounding him, either as if he were a ghost impervious to the perils of the ground below, or a simple reminder to ground the viewer in reality.

Reactions to *Man on the Chairs* were overwhelming rooted in the chairs themselves, or in He Xiangyu's transfer of their indigenous function—first as living trees, then as dead wood, and finally as aqueducts crucial to the Dongba's livelihood—to chairs, or more precisely, chairs that aren't even meant to be sat on. An anecdote of He's from his time in Yunnan perhaps best recapitulates his involvement with the ensuing artworks: walking home one night he was attacked by knife-wielding local thugs, and if it weren't for the thick collar on the vintage American Air Force bomber jacket (also acquired in Yunnan, a remnant of World War II), one of their slashes would have

sliced his cervical vertebrae and likely killed him. He escaped with only a small scar, and returned to Beijing to continue working.

With a slight smirk that belies how he privileges process and material interaction over result, the artist knowingly states that "nothing that isn't allowed in China cannot be done." With the right connections and tactic, any source material can be acquired, and deployed however one desires. For He, no project is too intimidating, no studio too restricted. In fact, He's aim is to eventually rid himself of studio space altogether, to mastermind his projects from the comfort of his own home, traveling as necessary to the nodes of their execution. Even now, He is in the US in order to complete a series of light-boxes titled "Mother." The series' medium—object-based and immediately visual-centric—and thematic preoccupation with the womb might seem a slight departure from his previous work, but they are both nonetheless suffused with the rules of power, and with our precarious proximity to death. True to form, He promises this next exhibition to be on a suitably grand scale. Exactly how this will be remains to be seen; the outcome of any process always waits until the last moment to show its face. 🍌

“可乐计划”展览现场，2010年  
北京墙美术馆  
Installation view of "Cola Project," 2010  
Wall Art Museum, Beijing

