



何翔宇  
HE Xiangyu

硬腭  
Hard Palate



失语者在言说：  
对何翔宇创作中“手语”的 3+1 次试读

文 / 沈宸

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眼前的小男孩身型匀称却仍显瘦小。他微弓着背，低沉着头。男孩的周身表面隐约可见侵蚀的斑记，就仿佛，经历了一场骇人的灼烧或是等待过久的风化。男孩的齐刘海平整而帖服，他紧闭着双唇，毫无表情的样子显得异常的庄重而平静。

仿佛为了迎接多一点自然的光亮，何翔宇在空白空间的最新个展“硬腭”给原本封闭的墙面凿开了一扇出人意料的门洞。穿过门洞，绕过通天柱体，名为“小男孩”（Asian Boy, 2020）的不锈钢雕塑正是观众透过这一新的入口能够得见的首个作品。失语，是这尊雕塑十分显见的特征；诉说，是男孩全部话语和身心凝结于双手的努力。面对这沉默的“手语”，男孩究竟想要告诉我们什么？仿佛刚刚经历了漫长的须臾，带着这样的疑问，一场与无言者的对话也由此开始。

这个如此沉默的男孩，未曾展露他具体的眼神，只是让人确信他在凝望着，并用全部的身姿将我们的注意力牵引到他的手中。那双瘦削稚嫩的手，凝固在一个似曾相识的动作、一个引人遐想的瞬间、一个仿佛永恒的虚空中。于艺术家的自述里，那是一个未曾品尝过可乐的男孩开启易拉罐的瞬间。只是这个凭空消失了的易拉罐牵连出的过分暧昧的时空，让人还来不及知晓男孩是否真的开启了这罐可乐，或者，这到底是开启前的上一秒又或开启后的下一秒，以及，他所有的期待和郁结在喉的话语能否就此得以喘息。

这一切就好像，一场混淆了无垠寂静、拉环吧嗒声与破灭的二氧化碳气泡的诡异幻听久

久不能散去。当我们再次望向那斑驳的身躯，遥想到小男孩的名字，那声响仿佛组合成的乃是 75 年前传来的历史轰鸣。一个还未释放压力却被泯灭的罐头，好似一个消散却不愿退场的幽灵，环绕在东亚地缘上空的隐喻。以至于在某个瞬间，我幻想那弯曲的手指启示的原是一条未曾显现的按钮或者引信。毁灭，还是开启？

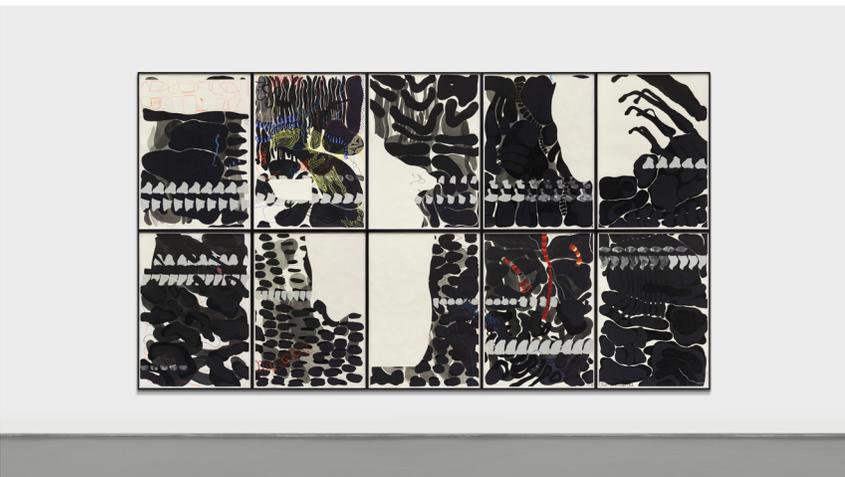
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穿过昏黄的钠光通道，开始进入另一侧由“口腔计划”所统摄的展厅。为了帮助理解，如若以某种最为简化的方式来论，“口腔计划”（2012 至今）中作品生成至少经历这样两个步骤：用舌头抵触口腔周遭以感受；将感受通过手转译至材料界面。这是种近乎对称式的感受统一和转移：以触手（舌头）和手为行动主体和施动方式/工具，以上颚和（二维或三维）材料为“界面”的正反，以对感受的理解与传递为目的与核心形成的循环往复。但倘若我们自行体会这一过程，就能够明白，具体的情况（变量）则复杂得多。舌头的力度、抵触口腔的位置、身体的状态、心情、手感、界面材料本身的材质特性、视觉或气味等的干扰等等都将影响到这一转译的过程。于是乎，这样尝试的过程越多，产生的感知越多，感性的和理性的知识也就越发丰富，引发的想象也就越发复杂，而转移至材料界面的状态就更加多变。如果我们将口腔计划理解为某种意义上的转译/翻译，这一企图理解具体事物的过程，反倒变得愈加无边无际了——如同一个约瑟夫·莱文意义上的质感 (qualia) 争论，“口腔”真的存在吗？

关于这个项目，还有一个广为流传的十分浪漫却又酸涩的开端，使得我仍想在此赘述。大约是在2012年，彼时的何翔宇还未能流利地讲英语，却在一次前往美国参与展览的途中，遇到了现在已是妻子的韩裔女孩。两人虽未能流畅交流，却一见钟情，很快在了一起。然而在初次热闹的家庭聚会上，当亲友们热烈地用英语或韩语你一言我一语，唯有何翔宇只能无聊地坐在角落里。百无聊赖中，何翔宇用舌头舔舐口中湿润而起伏的上颌，展开了同自己的对话、游戏。对这则故事的引用并非意在提供一则供人玩味的八卦，而是提示“口腔计划”所隐含的一个绕不开的基底：即便最为亲密无间之人，仍有难以避免的无法沟通和不能理解，甚至处于孤立无援中，而这该是多么难耐的尴尬和伤痛。由此说来，这场持续如此之久的创作，或许在某个潜在的层面上，亦是一场面对语言性、社会性孤立造成失语时的（自我）沟通、抵抗、和解与疗愈？

而当我们身处本次“硬腭”展览高达7m的真实空间中，周身的墙面被四组共80幅口腔绘画所覆盖，难免不被这些绘画的尺度和

内容的复杂所震慑，仿佛它们势要将观众包容进“口腔”里。初见这些抽象画作，稚拙或某种意义上的原始感是留给人的共同第一印象，如同置身于由无数线条、色彩、形态占据的洞穴之中。显然，艺术家将过往在“口腔计划”创作中所累计、思考的有关经验进行了一次集中式的整合。倘若凑近细看，四组绘画则各有其特性，各自引人遐想。比如《硬腭 32-1》中，纸本、彩铅、蜡笔、墨水、油画棒共同作用，使得线条持续游走、打断、接续、转折，继而与色彩一同铺陈、吸纳、冲撞、覆盖，仿佛牙、舌、腭正共同经历一场有关咀嚼、舔舐、分泌、吞咽的持续过程；而在另一组名为《硬腭 20-1》的组画中，形如话语卷轴 (speech scroll) 的黑色铺陈开来，占据了画面成为最为醒目的主体，墨水本身与纸张接触，流淌、渗透、挤压并勾勒出了仅存的白，像是于唇口开合的呼吸中，光溜进口腔中与影进行着缠斗，原本光塑造影，而此时倒更像是在一场逆战中，黑暗统摄了光……这样的观看与联想大抵可以像潜入一个充满故事和谜语的洞穴般不断延续和探究下去。



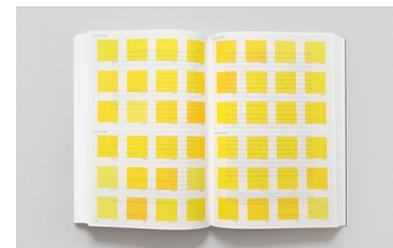
口腔计划 - 我们所创造的一切都不是我们自己 19-10-1 Everything We Create Is Not Ourselves 19-10-1, 2019  
炭笔, 铅笔, 彩铅, 油彩棒, 日本墨, C-Print, 无酸性油性笔, 无酸性胶, 纸本 charcoal, pencil, colored pencil, oil stick, Japanese ink, C-Print, acid-free oil-based marker, acid-free glue on paper  
140×100 cm×10, 装裱尺寸 framed dimension: 145×105 cm×10



我们所创造的一切都不是我们自己 Everything We Create Is Not Ourselves, 2019  
第五十八届威尼斯双年展中国馆 The 58th La Biennale di Venezia - China Pavilion, 威尼斯 Venice, 意大利 Italy

在涉及口腔计划的多次较为完整的呈现中，作品的空间化呈现均带有口腔与洞穴形象交叠的意味，如白立方 (2014) 现场的带有拱门的粉色空间以及威尼斯双年展 (2019) 现场的口腔地缘图。事实上，在英文里，洞穴 (cave) 与口腔 (oral cavity) 词出同源。“口腔计划”和洞穴形态的并置或许就是种难以避免的“巧合”。这不由地让我想起柏拉图的“洞穴寓言”。终身陷落于洞穴而不得转身的囚众，只得面对火光投射物在墙壁上变幻的影，确信这就是世界的真相；只有那被释放的囚徒，一路攀爬，历经痛苦的转变，才得以迎接一个真实的世界并直面太阳的光亮。《理想国》中的线喻 (analogy of the divided line) 常被用来解释被释放囚徒走出洞穴的经历，即从只见物影到得见物身，再从理性地认知最终抵达至善哲学的旅途。闪念至此，纵观“口腔计划”从早期以来的整体实践，艺术家的创作似乎有着颇为相似的进程：从早期相对具象地描绘和捏造器官的形态，到以某种混沌的颜色表征感觉意象，

再到愈加复杂的材料与结构进行塑造，乃至引发与“口腔计划”有着千丝万缕联系的“柠檬计划”。与其说“口腔计划”仅仅是一场由感知通往视觉的转化，倒不妨说这是一个当代艺术版本的个体“洞穴寓言”，一个失语囚徒意欲从“口腔洞穴”出走，试图理解世界和自我完善的修行。



Yellow Book: A Project by He Xiangyu, 2019, Hatje Cantz 出版社

3  
凝神、屏气，男孩开始腿部发力，奔跑，前倾，重心向下，上身坠落，两脚腾空，双手



Terminal 3, 2016-2019, 双频 4K 影像装置 (彩色, 有声) 2-channel 4K video installation [color, sound], 35'35"  
 全球都市 #2: 重新对人类进行思考 *Cosmopolis #2: Repenser l'humain*  
 2019, 蓬皮杜艺术中心 Centre Pompidou, 巴黎 Paris, 法国 France

撑地。这一次，他似乎旋转得更快了。男孩 Abedukerim 来自埃塞尔比亚，在中国的吴桥，他的名字叫做艾蒙。

这是第三展厅中，何翔宇的双屏影像装置“Terminal 3”（2016-2019）中的片段。影像记录和描绘了一群未满 20 岁的非洲年轻人来到中国“杂技之乡”吴桥进修学习杂技的过程。影片的双屏，如同一个镜像，于交错变幻中映照了他们奋力张开的双臂所触及的世俗与精神的双重生活。

艾蒙和所有这些来到吴桥的年轻人一样，他们的目的很简单，学习中国杂技，有朝一日，前往欧洲马戏团或回到祖国开设杂技学校，换取梦想中的生活。在 600 平方公里的吴桥县城中，这个语言无法沟通的异国他乡，训练厅、宿舍、礼拜堂几乎涵盖了他们三点一线的全部生活。环滚、绸缎、空竹，他们从事的项目各有所属；用手机听 HipHop 流行乐，看视频剧集，吃蛋糕庆祝生日，他们的爱好却也和当下的所有年轻人一样并无不同。在这仿佛只属于无言身体的中空之地，

信仰并不相同的学生们同吃同住，共同使用这一空间作为他们的祈祷室，供奉着属于各自的神祇。而穆斯林学生也会定期乘坐当地的小三轮车，在清真寺和当地的中国穆斯林一同礼拜。而除此之外，语言的不便，文化的迥异，也唯有用无言的手传递食物、搀扶帮助、参与劳作，以此消磨时光，表达对彼此的善意。

“在这种奇特的无根的孤独中，时间和空间变得异常连续、同质而无边无际，只有日复一日的身体训练和祈祷划分出了空间与时间、身体与精神的区隔。”抛掷、跳跃、旋转、翻滚、平衡、力量，他们不停地练习。只有越发柔软的脊柱如同时空中的节拍器，镌刻下孤独和汗水遗留的痕迹。反身下腰，双手撑地，每一寸更加柔韧的身段，意味着离希望更近的间距；躬身伏地，掩面念诵，才能暂时通往脱离世俗的精神飞地。在一次次的重复中，这迥然相异的动作仿佛悄然之间转换为彼此，最终合二为一。

临近影片结尾，艾蒙和伙伴们获得了期待太

久的掌声，他们终于可以载誉而归了。身处 Terminal 3，异乡人无法在此停留，但这里才有归家最快的速度，通往梦想最近的距离。而在多年之后，当艾蒙站在蒙特卡诺那属于梦想的最高舞台，再次伏身，他是否会在某一刻意识到，东非高原、华北平原、地中海岸，他双手所触摸的本不过是彼此相连的同一块土地。

#### 4

以上文字所书写的，是有关何翔宇“硬腭”展览中的三则媒介（雕塑、绘画、影像）截然不同的作品。它们有着各自的缘起，却都通过艺术家自身或者特定的人物指向了某种意义上意欲言说却无言的状态，我将其称之为“失语者”。

对于这些“失语者”，通过“手”来表达成为了难以抑制的行动和存在，解读这些“手语”则成为了探求他们所意欲言说的关键。而纵观艺术家的整体创作，这样的“失语者”和他们的“手语”并非本次展览作品的特例，他们常以一种在场或不在场的方式临显于何翔宇的作品中。例如以艺术家家乡丹东（一个与朝鲜临河相隔的小城）的独特地缘背景创作的《黄色泳帽》（2017）与《证据》（2017）中，在不可言说的生存境遇里，一次大胆跨越敏感边界的极限行动以及低效又徒劳的模拟生产；在《正方形》（2016）中，用四肢倒立的双手所划归出的看不见的边界；在《坦克计划》（2011-2013）中，艺术家调动 35 位手工业者工作近两年时间，使用二百五十多张全尺幅牛皮、50000 米蜡线，手工缝制的重达 2 吨多却无法驾驶、偃旗息鼓的坦克等等。

由此可见，在艺术家的作品中，“失语”是一种既普遍又独特的情境和症状，而这些作为形象的手、感触的手、沟通的手、行动的手、隐喻的手则成为了艺术家的对象与主题。然而更为重要的是，他们缘何失语，而他们的“手语”又在证言什么？显而易见的是，

他们都与艺术家本人的来处以及感同身受的境遇有关，他们并非生理意义或先天性的“失语者”，而是有着各自缘由的不必说、不好说、不会说、不愿说乃至不能说。

或许我们很难用过于简便的言辞去对应艺术家广泛的创作光谱，去归拢这些“失语者”所有的言说。但一如展览标题“硬腭”所暗示的那样，在一个边界晦暗不明的混沌地带中，在一个无法用明晰的词汇、语法勾勒的世界里，即便“我们所创造的一切都不是我们自己”，但用双手去创造，却是我们存在着/过的唯一证据。



证据 Evidence, 2017  
 16 毫米胶片转数字录像 (彩色, 有声) 16mm film transferred to digital video [color, sound], 20'38"  
 证据 Evidence, 2018, 白立方  
 White Cube Bermondsey, 伦敦 London, 英国 UK



坦克计划 Tank Project, 2011-2013  
 皮、蜡线 leather, waxed thread, 600×890×150 cm  
 战火与遗忘：非暴力 *Fire and Forget: On Violence*,  
 2015, KW 当代艺术中心 KW Institute for Contemporary Art, 柏林 Berlin, 德国 Germany

## The Speechless is Speaking:

### 3+1 Attempts at interpreting the “sign language” in He Xiangyu’s practice

Text: Shen Chen

#### 1

This little boy in front of us is slender and nimble. His back is slightly hunched and his head is bowed. There are faint signs of erosion on the surface of his body, as if he’s been through a horrific fire or weathered the elements for too long. The boy’s bangs are neat and flat. With lips sealed tight, his deadpan expression seems unusually dignified and calm.

As if to allow more natural light into the space, He Xiangyu’s new solo exhibition at WHITE SPACE BEIJING “Hard Palate” unexpectedly includes a hole cut out from the gallery’s wall. Passing through it, and

bypassing the towering pillar, “Asian Boy” (2020), a stainless steel sculpture, is the first work of art the visitor sees through the opening. Speechlessness is the most apparent feature of this sculpture; speaking, an effort that encapsulates all of the boy’s unspoken words, heart and soul in his hands. Before this silent “sign language,” what is the boy trying to tell us? As if he’s been through a lasting vertigo, and with such a question, a conversation with the speechless begins here.

In such silence, this boy has yet to reveal his lucid gaze, only assuring people his



小男孩 (局部) Asian Boy (detail), 2019-2020, 不锈钢 stainless steel, 140(H)×40×45 cm, 55(H)×45×4 cm

outlook and engages his bodily composure to draw our attention to his hands. Those lean and tender hands frozen in an uncanny gesture, a provocative moment, a seemingly eternal void. According to the artist’s statement, that’s the boy opening a can of Coke he’s never tasted. Only that this can, disappeared unexpectedly, connect to an ambiguous time and space, not giving people enough time to know whether the boy has opened the Coke can, or whether it is the second before or after he opened it, and whether all the expectations and words stuck in his throat have been alleviated.

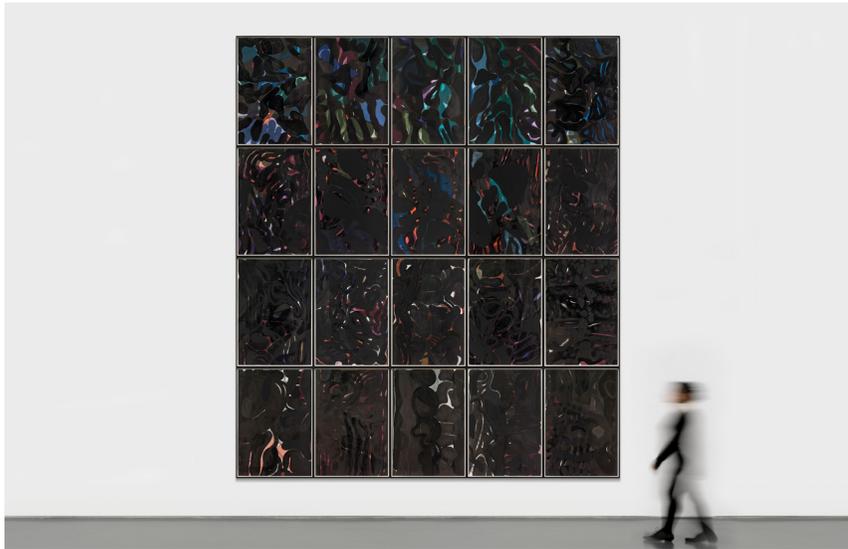
All of which is like a bizarre hallucination mixing infinite silence, the noise from pulling back the tab, and the burst of CO2 bubbles that lingers on for a long time. When we look at the eroded body again and recall the title of the little “Asian Boy,” the sound seems to piece together the rumble of history from 75 years ago. An obliterated can before its pressure was released, like a metaphor of a dispersed ghost reluctant to get off stage, hovering over the East Asian region. At a particular moment, I imagine that curled up finger pressing down on a yet to appear button or detonator. Destruction, or a new start?

#### 2

One enters into another exhibition space commanded by the “Palate Project” through a corridor dimly lit by sodium vapor lamps. To assist one’s understanding, if we were to adopt the most straightforward way to talk about it, the works of art in “Palate Project” (ongoing since 2012) underwent at least two steps: the tongue’s tactile experience of its surrounding; and the translation of this sensation from the

hand to surface. This unifies and shifts the symmetrical senses: taking the tentacle (tongue) and hand as the subject of the action and way of execution/tool, and the palate and (two-dimensional or three-dimensional) material’s front and back as “interface,” forming the cycle with the understanding and transmission of feelings as its core purpose. If we were to experience this process independently, we would understand that the specifics (variables) are a lot more complicated. The tongue’s pressing force, the position it touches in the oral cavity, the state of the body, mood, texture, the material qualities of the interface, visual or olfactory interruptions, etc, would ultimately affect this translational process. Hence, the more rounds of such experiments are done, the more sensual experiences would be drawn, that would enrich sensibilities, rationales and knowledge about the experiment, which would provoke more complex imaginations, and thus, what gets translated onto the material interface would be more multifarious. If we were to conceive the oral project as semantic translation, such impulse to understand the process of things would, in contrary, seems boundless – akin to Joseph Levine’s argument on qualia, does the “oral cavity” actually exist?

There is a rather romantic yet bittersweet beginning to this project that has been widely circulated and bears repeating. It was in 2012 when He Xiangyu, whose spoken English was not yet fluent, traveled to the United States to participate in an exhibition and met his now-wife, a Korean-American. Although they had some obstacles in communicating, it was love at first sight. At their first family gathering in the US, while friends and relatives



硬腭 20-1 Hard Palate 20-1, 2020,  
铅笔, 炭笔, 日本墨, 粉彩棒, 彩色铅笔, 油性彩色铅笔, 油画棒, 油画棒, 蜡笔, 无酸胶, 无酸油性笔, 纸本  
pencil, charcoal, Japanese ink, pastel, colored pencil, oil colored pencil, oil stick, oil pastel, crayon, acid-free glue,  
acid-free oil-based marker on paper, 150×104.5 cm×20, 装裱尺寸 framed dimension: 157.2×109.7 cm×20

chatted enthusiastically in English or Korean, He Xiangyu was the only one who sat in a corner and felt bored. Amid his boredom, He Xiangyu licked his tongue against his moist and uneven palate and started a conversation and game with himself. The purpose of retelling this story is not to gossip. Still, to be reminded of the underlying basis of "Palate Project" that, even between the most intimate people, the inability to communicate and comprehend are still inevitable, can even be isolating and helpless, and how intolerably awkward and painful this must be. In this sense, this lasting and ongoing work of art is perhaps, on an implicit level, a [self-]communication, resistance, reconciliation, and healing in the face of the speechless caused by linguistic and social isolation.

When we are standing in the physical

space of the exhibition with a 7m-high ceiling, the walls around us are covered by four sets of 80 oral paintings, the scale and complexity of which are awe inducing, as if they were trying to devour the audience into the "oral cavity"! The first impression of these abstract paintings is both how naive or primitive they are in some ways, like being in a cave occupied by countless lines, colors, and forms. It is apparent that the artist has compiled the experiences he has accumulated and pondered in his past "Palate Project" works. If we were to look closely, each of the four sets of paintings has its characteristics and evokes the imagination. For example, the paper, colored pencil, crayon, ink, and oil stick used in "Hard Palate 32-1" work together to allow the lines to wander continuously, interrupt, connect, and turn, and then lay out, absorb, clash, and cover with the colors, as if the

teeth, tongue, and palate underwent a continuous process of chewing, licking, secretion, and swallowing. In another set titled "Hard Palate 20-1," speech scrolls in black spread out, dominating the image as its primary subject. As the ink comes into contact with the paper, it flows, penetrates, compresses against and outlines the only remaining blank space, as if taking in a breath through the lips and mouth, the light slips in and combats the shadows, what is understood as light shapes shadow, has now turned into a counterattack where darkness has taken over the light. This kind of observation and imaginary connections continue to extend and deepen like diving into a cave full of stories and riddles.

In several of the more comprehensive representations of the "Palate Project," the works' spatial display allowed an overlap of the oral cavity and the cave, for example, the pink space with an opening arch at White Cube (2014) and the oral map at the Venice Biennale (2019). In fact, in the English language, the cave and cavity come from the same etyma. The juxtaposition of "Palate Project" and the cavernous form is perhaps an inevitable "coincidence." This reminds me of Plato's "allegory of the cave." The prisoners, trapped in the cave for life, could only face the shifting shadows projected on the walls by the fire, and were convinced that this is the truth of the world; only the freed prisoner, who climbed and underwent a painful transformation, would embrace the real world and face the light from the sun. The analogy of the divided line in The Republic is often used to explain the released prisoner's experience coming out of the cave, that is, about the journey from seeing a shadow to seeing the

physical object, and then from rational understanding of the intelligible world to the idea of goodness. Thus far, looking at the overall practice of the "Palate Project" since its early days, the artist's approach seems to have followed a similar process: from the first period of figurative depiction and creation of the forms of organs, to the representation of sensory imagery in chaotic colors, to shaping more complex materials and structures, and even to initiate the "Lemon Project" that is inextricably connected to the "Palate Project." Rather than merely conceiving the "Palate Project" as a transformation from perception to vision, it seems more fitting to think of it as an "allegory of the cave" in the context of contemporary art, where an imprisoned mute intends to emerge from the "oral cave," with an attempt to understand the world through self-actualized practice.



我们所创造的一切都不是我们自己  
Everything We Create Is Not Ourselves, 2013  
铜 Copper, 800×650×430 cm  
尺寸可变 dimensions variable  
何翔宇 He Xiangyu, 2014, 白立方 White Cube  
Bermondsey, 伦敦 London, 英国 UK



Terminal 3, 2016-2019, 双频 4K 影像 (彩色, 有声) 2-channel 4K Video (color, sound), 35'35"  
 全球都市 #2: 重新对人类进行思考 *Cosmopolis #2: Repenser l'humain*, 2019,  
 蓬皮杜艺术中心, Centre Pompidou, 巴黎 Paris, 法国 France

### 3

With an intense focus and holding back his breath, the boy launched his legs, surged forward, leaning in, his center of gravity down, his upper body falls, two feet in the air, and hands pushing the ground. This time, he seems to spin faster. The boy, Abedukerim, comes from Ethiopia, and in Wuqiao, China, his name is Ai Meng.

This is a clip from He Xiangyu's double-screen video installation "Terminal 3" (2016-2019), found in the third exhibition space. The video footage depicts a young African teen who came to Wuqiao, China, to study acrobatics. The two screens of the video, like mirror-images, their alternating transformations project the dual lives of the mundane and the spiritual touched by their striving open arms.

Ai Meng and all the young people who come to Wuqiao share a simple goal: to learn and practice Chinese acrobatics so that one day they might realize their

dreams of living a life in a European circus or opening an acrobatic school back in their home country. In the 600 square kilometers of Wuqiao County, a foreign country of incommunicado, the training hall, dormitory, and the ceremony hall string together nearly monotonous lives. Ring-rolling, ribbon suspension, air bamboo, each focusing on a specific project. They listen to hip hop music on their mobile phones, watch TV series, celebrate their birthdays with a cake, and their hobbies are the same as most young people today. In this place occupied by muted bodies, students of different faiths eat and live together, using the space as their prayer room to worship their gods. The Muslim students also regularly take the local three-wheel rickshaw to worship with local Chinese Muslims in the mosque. In addition, despite the inconveniences of language exchange and cultural differences, their hands continue to pass food, help and engage in labor, passing the time and showing kindness to one another.

"In this peculiar and rootless solitude, time and space become unusually continuous, homogeneous and boundless, with only the physical training and prayers day in day out to divide space and time, body and spirit." Throwing, jumping, spinning, tumbling, balancing, strength training, they practice endlessly. Only the spine becoming more flexible, like a metronome in the air, forged the traces of loneliness and sweat. As the lower back bends and they brace their hands on the ground, as every inch of the body becomes more flexible, one's hope also becomes closer; bowing down on the ground, covering their faces and chanting, allow them to temporarily escape from the mundane world and flee to a spiritual enclave. These disparate movements seem to quietly transform into one another through these repetitions and eventually merging into one.

Towards the end of the film, Ai Meng and his friends receive the applause they've been waiting for, as they finally return home with the honor of achievement. In Terminal 3, foreigners wouldn't pause here for long, but it marks the quickest way home and the closest distance to realizing this dream. After many years, when Ai Meng stands on the highest stage of his dream in Monte Carlo, bowing down on the ground, will he realize at some point that the East African plateau, the North China Plain, and the Mediterranean coast where his hands touched down, are all connected?

### 4

What the above text describes is the three artworks in rather different mediums (sculpture, painting, and video) in He Xiangyu's "Hard Palate" exhibition. Each begins with a specific origin, but through

the artist or other figures, channel a kind of incommunication, which I call "the speechless."

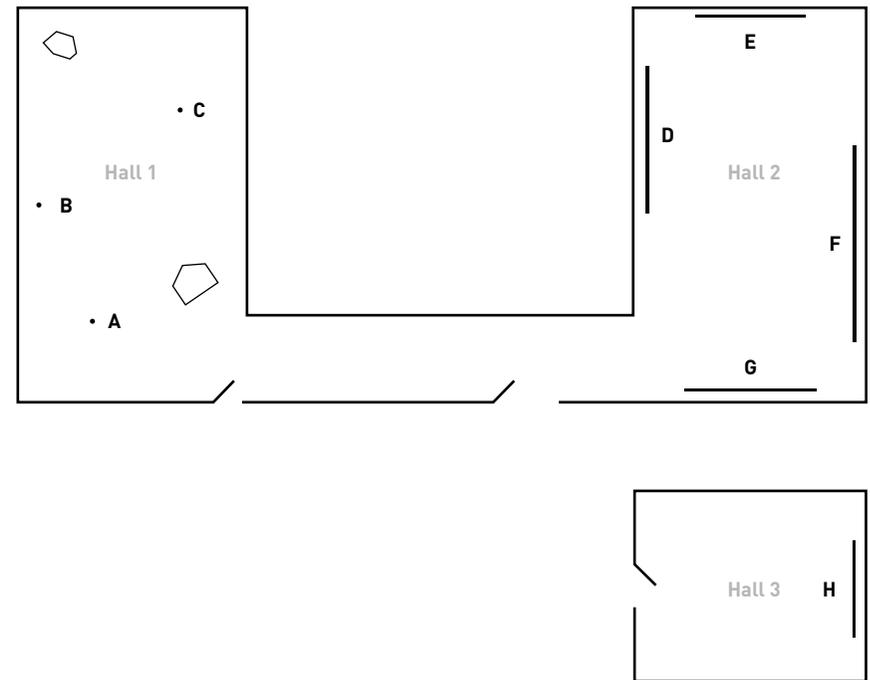
For these speechless beings, expressing themselves through their "hands" has become an uncontrollable action and presence, and interpreting these "sign language" has become the key to finding out what they want to say. Throughout the artist's practice, these "speechless beings" and their "sign language" are no exceptions to this exhibition, but often appear in He Xiangyu's works, present or absent. For example, "The Yellow Swim Caps" (2017) and "Evidence" (2017), created against the unique geographical background of the artist's hometown of Dandong (a small city separated from North Korea by a river), carry out extreme actions through the daring crossing of a sensitive border between two nations, and an inefficient and futile simulation of production in an ineffable situation for survival. Square (2016) marks the invisible boundary delineated by the hands one stand on; for "Tank Project" (2011-2013), the artist deployed 35 craftsmen to work for nearly two years, using more than 250 sheets of full-size cowhide leather, 50,000 meters of wax thread, to hand-sew a tank weighing more than two tons, undrivable and defunct.



黄色泳帽 *The Yellow Swim Caps*, 2017,  
 单频视频 (彩色, 有声)  
 single channel video (color, sound), 17'23"

From these examples, we can see that among the artist's works, "speechlessness" is a common and unique situation and symptom, and these hands as form, touch, communication, action, and allegory become the object and subject of artists. More importantly, why have they become speechless, and what does their "sign language" try to prove? It is apparent that they are all related to the artist's personal contacts and experiences. They are not "speechless" in the biological or congenital sense, but are the need not to say, hard to say, cannot say, would not want to say, or even forbidden to say, for their own reasons.

Perhaps it is difficult for us to correlate the artist's broad spectrum of practices with simple rhetoric, to sum up, these "aphasic" words and phrases. But as the title of the exhibition "Hard Palate" implies, in a chaotic area where the boundaries are obscure and unclear, in a world that cannot be delineated by precise vocabulary and grammar, even though "everything we create is not ourselves," but to create with our hands would be the only evidence that we exist or have existed.



软腭 18-1 Soft Palate 18-1, 2020,  
日本墨, 粉彩棒, 石墨, 油彩棒, 炭笔, 铅笔, 彩色铅笔, 油画棒, 无酸性油性笔, 纸本  
Japanese ink, pastel, graphite, oil stick, charcoal, pencil, colored pencil, oil pastel, acid-free oil-based marker on paper  
140x100 cm x18, 装裱尺寸 framed dimension: 144.6x104.6 cm x18

**A**  
**挂得比较低的果实 Low-hanging Fruit**  
2019-2020  
木, 铁, 聚丙烯, 铜  
wood, iron, polypropylene, copper  
77.5(H)×51×50 cm, 24(H)×∅12.5 cm

**B**  
**家庭 Family**  
2020  
木, 铁, 天然橡胶, 聚丙烯,  
合成树脂漆, 丙烯酸  
wood, iron, natural rubber, PP,  
synthetic resin varnish, acrylic paint  
72(H)×74×47 cm, 12(H)×13×7.3 cm

**C**  
**小男孩 Asian Boy**  
2019-2020  
不锈钢 stainless steel  
140(H)×40×45 cm, 55(H)×45×4 cm

**D**  
**硬腭 32-1 Hard Palate 32-1**  
2020  
铅笔, 炭笔, 粉彩棒, 彩色铅笔, 油性彩色  
铅笔, 油彩棒, 油画棒, 蜡笔, 纸本  
pencil, charcoal, pastel, colored pencil,  
oil colored pencil, oil stick, oil pastel,  
crayon on paper  
140×100 cm×32  
装裱尺寸 framed dimension:  
144.6×104.6 cm×32

## E

### 软腭 18-1 Soft Palate 18-1

2020

日本墨, 粉彩棒, 石墨, 油彩棒, 炭笔, 铅笔, 彩色铅笔, 油画棒, 无酸性油性笔, 纸本  
Japanese ink, pastel, graphite, oil stick, charcoal, pencil, colored pencil, oil pastel, acid-free oil-based marker on paper

140×100 cm×18

装裱尺寸 framed dimension:

144.6×104.6 cm×18

## F

### 硬腭 20-1 Hard Palate 20-1

2020

铅笔, 炭笔, 日本墨, 粉彩棒, 彩色铅笔, 油性彩色铅笔, 油彩棒, 油画棒, 蜡笔, 无酸胶, 无酸性油性笔, 纸本

pencil, charcoal, japanese ink, pastel, colored pencil, oil colored pencil, oil stick, oil pastel, crayon, acid-free glue, acid-free oil-based marker on paper

150×104.5 cm×20

装裱尺寸 framed dimension:

157.2×109.7 cm×20

## G

### 口腔计划 - 我们所创造的一切都不是我们自己 19-10-1 Everything We Create Is Not Ourselves 19-10-1

2019

炭笔, 铅笔, 彩铅, 油彩棒, 日本墨, C-Print, 无酸性油性笔, 无酸胶, 纸本

charcoal, pencil, colored pencil, oil stick, Japanese ink, C-Print, acid-free oil-based marker, acid-free glue on paper

140×100 cm×10

装裱尺寸 framed dimension:

144.6×104.6 cm×10

## H

### Terminal 3

2016-2019

双频高清影像 (彩色, 有声)

two-channel HD video (color, sound)

35"35"

## 何翔宇

何翔宇的创作对符号政治及其背后的意识形态逻辑保持着高度敏感。他以个体经验为载体, 追踪普世认知的演化与变异, 揭示了被视为“常规”的事物与观念所具有的复杂性和模糊的本质, 并为其在当代语境下提供了全新的解读和审视方式。身体的劳作与感知, 及其作为消费的主体和客体; 个体境遇和社会体制间的相互关系; 文化在冲突与进化中所扮演的角色、以及于未来可能具有的面貌, 都是何翔宇的作品所探讨的主题。这些主题往往从艺术家的自身身份与内部冲突出发, 其展开的叙述却致力于超越个体自我的视角。自 2009 年以来, 何翔宇创作的系列项目以严谨的文本与事实研究为基础, 诉诸影像、绘画、表演与雕塑等丰富的媒介, 并对媒介之间的传统界限不断进行突破与融合, 从而揭示与强调了在日益复杂的信息背景之下认知边界的游移趋势。

从“可乐计划”、“口腔计划”直至“柠檬计划”的一系列艺术实践, 何翔宇的创作始终都延续着对于事物的符号性、以及符号的网状演变形式的关注。“可乐”这一商业和文化符号折射出的, 是资本、消费、全球化和劳动力等复杂议题; 而在“口腔”这一私密、温和的意象背后所展开的, 是涉及身份、语言和文化政治的一系列尖锐冲突。较之“可乐计划”与“口腔计划”, “柠檬计划”在规模、时间和意旨上则作出了更进一步的尝试: 在近三年, 涉及艺术史、政治、历史、物质文化、医学、社会学、人类学、性别研究等领域的跨学科研究过程中, 柠檬与黄色之间跨越了各个历史时期、文化、地域的种种联系被以网状联结的形式呈现出来。围绕着这

一研究, 何翔宇完成了一系列现成品艺术试验和 5 件视频作品, 这些作品所探讨的丰富主题与文本则体现于《Yellow Book》一书中。该书由 Hatje Cantz 于 2019 年出版。

定居于北京与柏林, 何翔宇曾入围 2014 年“未来世代艺术奖”决赛, 并获得 2016 年第 10 届 CCAA“最佳年轻艺术家奖”和 2016 年“ARTNET 新锐艺术家奖”。他近期的展览包括: “The Long Term You Cannot Afford”, SAVVY Contemporary, 柏林, 2019 年; “全球都市 #2: 重新对人类进行思考”, 蓬皮杜艺术中心, 巴黎, 2019 年; 第 5 届乌拉尔当代工业艺术双年展, 叶卡捷琳堡, 2019 年; 第 58 届威尼斯双年展中国国家馆, 威尼斯, 2019 年; “故事新编”电影展映项目(放映电影作品《The Swim》), 纽约古根海姆博物馆, 纽约, 2017 年; 巡回展“土与石, 灵与歌”, 卡蒂斯特艺术基金会, 2016 - 2018 年; “Juxtapoz × Superflat”, 温哥华美术馆, 温哥华, 2016 年; “Chinese Whispers”, 保罗·克利中心, 伯尔尼美术馆, 伯尔尼, 2016 年; 第 13 届里昂双年展, 里昂, 2015 年; “战火与遗忘: 非暴力”, KW 当代艺术中心, 柏林, 2015 年; 第 10 届上海双年展, 上海, 2014 年; 第 5 届横滨三年展, 横滨, 2014 年; 第 8 届釜山双年展, 釜山, 2014 年。

## HE Xiangyu

He Xiangyu's art practice is centered on the politics of symbols and the ideological logic hidden behind. He uses the individual experience as a carrier to trace the evolution and variation of universal cognition, revealing the complexity and ambiguous nature of objects and concepts that are often considered as "ordinary", while suggesting a new way of reviewing and interpreting those ideas in a contemporary context. The labor and perception of body, as well as its roles as both subject and object of consumption; the reciprocal relationship between individual experience and social system; the roles of culture in conflicts and evolutions, and its potential forms in the future – these are the subjects investigated in He Xiangyu's works, which often root in the artist's own identity and its internal conflicts, yet aim to challenge narratives beyond a self-involved perspective. From 2009, a series of projects of He, based on a magnitude of literal and factual research, has presented in various media, including video, painting, performance, and sculpture. These artworks constantly break through and integrate conventional boundaries among different media, revealing and emphasizing the merging of perceptive confines in an increasingly complex world.

From the *Cola Project*, the *Palate Project*, to the *Lemon Project*, He Xiangyu's art practice keeps focusing on the symbolic nature of objects and the reticular evolution of symbols. In the *Cola Project*, as a commercial and cultural symbol, "Coca-Cola" reflects complex issues such as capitalism, consumption, globalization, and labor; in the *Palate Project*, what hidden behind the intimate and gentle image of the "palate" is a series of poignant cultural-political conflicts. In a consistent particular approach of the artist, the *Lemon Project* has made a further attempt. During the three-year interdisciplinary research from various perspectives, including art history, politics, history, material culture, medicine, sociology, anthropology, and gender studies, the *Lemon Project* presents reticular connections between the Lemon and the color Yellow in cultural and geographical areas across various historical periods. Based on this research, the project consists of five video works and a series of ready-made art experiments; in addition, a wide variety of the investigated subjects have been covered in the *Yellow Book: A Project by He Xiangyu*, published by Hatje Cantz in 2019.

Based in Beijing and Berlin, He Xiangyu was named as a finalist for the "Future Generation Art Prize" (2014), and won the 10th CCAA "Best Young Artist" Award (2016) and the "ARTNET Emerging Artist Prize" (2016). His recent exhibitions include: *The Long Term You Cannot Afford*, SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin (2019); *Cosmopolis #2*, Centre Pompidou, Paris (2019); *Terminal 3*, Ural Biennale (2019); *Everything We Create Is Not Ourselves*, Venice Biennale (2019); *Tales of Our Time Film Program* (Screening of the film *The Swim*), Guggenheim Museum New York, New York (2017); *Soil and Stones, Souls and Songs*, Kadist Art Foundation (2016-2018); *Juxtapoz x Superflat*, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver (2016); *Chinese Whispers*, Paul Klee Zentrum, Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern (2016); Lyon Biennale (2015); *Fire and Forget: on Violence*, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2015); Shanghai Biennale (2014); Yokohama Triennale (2014); Busan Biennale (2014).

空 | 白 | 空 | 间  
WHITE SPACE BEIJING