

高磊：经纬
GAO LEI: THE PRINCIPLE



从天花板上掉落的大象，用头来钻水管的狗，栖在倒置的人腿上的鹦鹉。高磊的混合媒介作品以动物寓言集的方式探讨了人类的野心与局限。这是一场动物的狂欢，形式包括巨型如房间的装置，灯箱中的摄影，还有混合媒介油画，其画中清晰、轻盈、精确的用笔可媲美自然学家的素描本。其中一幅画，2009年的《A109》刻画了一只具有神话色彩的山羊，苍白、似人而通灵，它鞠躬，仿佛刚从一个中世纪的童话中现身。以它的角为指南，这只动物轻而易举地找到了自己的光环。这些富有宗教意味的，既神话又科学的意象与当代生活的片断发生撞击——比如一架安在天花板上的闭路电视摄像头。《A109》并未将我们送抵任何具体的历史时间或地点，而是将我们降落在艺术家想象之疆土上。

而这些想象的疆土——高磊的私人宇宙——植根于真实世界的事件。他的动物，或者偶尔出现的人物，在物理上都与机器有所关联。他想象的画面是悲剧性的，假如不说是致命的，有时候运用古典神话——比如伊卡洛斯的飞翔——作为创作的原料。混合媒介绘画《房间0901》和《房间0902》是一套组画，在《房间0901》中，一名裸体男子——用圆珠笔在画布上绘成——背过脸去没有看观众，悬浮在半空。艺术家并未借给男人一双天使之翼，而是在他的肩上用螺丝嵌入了自行车的金属刹车手柄，在将男人抬升的

《A305》(内景)
2010年
装置、综合材料
300 × 300 × 230厘米

A305 (Interior)
2010
Installation, mixed media
300 x 300 x 230 cm

瞬间又将他困在原地。《房间0902》表达了同样的主题。一只也是用圆珠笔绘就的鹤，展翅却未能高飞，至少免不了一番痛苦的挣扎，一根两头被螺丝绷紧的红绳跨过鹤的翅膀。人和鸟，虽被囚禁于不同的房间（不同的画框）中，但是他们赖以起飞的翅膀却都同样受到牵制，坠落与飞翔皆有可能。

高磊的核心问题围绕权力及其所携带的问题。是谁牵制了我们的双翼？是谁将我们困于斗室？又是谁传递着抑制我们飞翔的指令？在大型装置《A305》中，我们可以窥视一个房间大小的木箱内部——艺术家将木箱称为“超级权力结构”——从中看到一只大象。象从天花板上掉落，却依然悬在地面上。一把工业用风扇在木箱内部刮起泡沫碎屑，而大象的四条腿也同样随风摆动，可是却受到绑在象腿上的钟摆牵制。钟摆在此究竟是一个制动的装置，还是一种维持摆动的力量呢？这究竟是一种自在于宇宙本质的权力结构，还是透过某种人为中介强塞给我们的权力结构阴谋呢？究竟是神的设计，还是被现实政治中的卑鄙操盘手们设计的呢？高磊并没有替我们回答这些问题，因为它们太难被解答。解答它们，可能要面临更加严苛的刑罚。然而问题本身，不正是真正的运动天使吗？提出问题——不能公开也可以在心中默念——也许是我们唯一享有的自由。 丁丰（由梁幸仪翻译）

Elephants drop through the ceiling, dogs poke their heads through pipes, and parrots perch on upside-down human statuary. Gao Lei's mixed-media installations draw on a bestiary to examine human ambition and human limits. His art is populated by a carnival of animals that appear in room-sized installations, photographs enclosed inside lightboxes, and mixed-media oil paintings, where clean, light, precise applications of paint evoke a naturalist's sketchbook. In one such painting from 2009, titled *A109*, a goat takes on the quality of myth. Pale and white, anthropomorphic and spiritual, it bows its head as if it has just emerged from a medieval fairy tale. Using its horns as a compass, the animal effectively makes its own halo. These religious, mythical and scientific references collide with the detritus of contemporary life—a closed-circuit TV camera, for instance, is attached to the ceiling above. *A109* does not transport us to any specific historical time or place, but parachutes us down into the provinces of the artist's imagination.

These imaginary provinces—Gao Lei's own private universe—are grounded in real-world issues. His animals and, when they appear, his humans, are physically connected to machinery. His vision is tragic, if not fatalistic. He sometimes employs a repertoire of classical myth—like the flight of Icarus—as material for his artistic practice. His mixed-media drawings *Room 0901* and *Room 0902* work as a suite. In *Room 0901*, a naked man—executed in ballpoint pen on canvas—faces away from the viewer, held aloft in suspended flight. The artist has not adorned the man with angelic wings. Instead, he has screwed metallic bicycle brake-handles onto the man's shoulders, acting at once as that which elevates him through space and, as that which restrains him. *Room 0902* echoes this theme. A crane, also drawn in ballpoint pen, extends its wings, but it can't fly, at least not without a struggle. The artist has strapped a single red string, held taut by two screws, across the length of its wingspan. Man and bird are imprisoned in separate rooms (and in separate frames of the canvas), but for both, the wings that would grant them flight have been put in check, customized to fall as much as they are to fly.

Gao Lei's central questions are related

《M221-2》
2011年
布面综合材料
270 × 180厘米

M221-2
2011
Mixed media on canvas
270 x 180 cm

北京空白空间 White Space Beijing
2011.09.04~2011.10.09

to power and the information it carries. Who restrains our wings? Who places us in these rooms? Who is transmitting the messages that repress our ability to fly? In the large-scale installation *A305*, we peer into the interior of a room-sized wooden box—what the artist calls a “super power structure”—at an elephant. The elephant has fallen through the ceiling, but remains suspended above the floor. An industrial fan blows silicon fluff around the room's interior while the elephant's legs sway in the gale, movement that is restricted by a pendulum that swings from its four legs. Is the pendulum used as a monitoring device or as a restoring force? Is this power structure inherent in the nature of the universe or is some human agent shoving power-structure propaganda down our gullets? Is it designed by the gods or by the master bastards of *realpolitik*? Gao never answers these questions for us, but not because they are unanswerable. To answer them could lead to an even harsher sentence. Aren't questions, after all, the true angels of motion? To voice them—if not openly in the chamber, then at least tacitly in the heart—might be the only freedom we have. Stacey Duff

