

XIANG JING

The renowned and pivotal Chinese artist Xiang Jing speaks to CHAMP from her hometown and studio base in Beijing, both broadly and personally on her artwork, and on female marginalisation as an artist particularly in China where traditional and conventional roles in society remain commonplace.

She explains, "So, to have women's self-awareness and independence in a true sense, to think and let their voice be heard independently is a very important step to realize diversity in cultures and values in our society."



ABOVE RIGHT: Xiang Jing, *Vergin In White*, Fiber glass, paint, 2002, Courtesy of the artist.

ABOVE LEFT: Xiang Jing, *Vergin in White* (detail), Fiber glass, paint, 2002, Courtesy of the artist.

BELOW LEFT: Xiang Jing, *Rainbow*, Fiber glass, paint, 2006
BELOW RIGHT: Xiang Jing, *Bang!*, Fiber glass, paint, 2002

Next Page: Juergen Teller & Xiang Jing, *Lehmann Maupin Hong Kong* (2015)

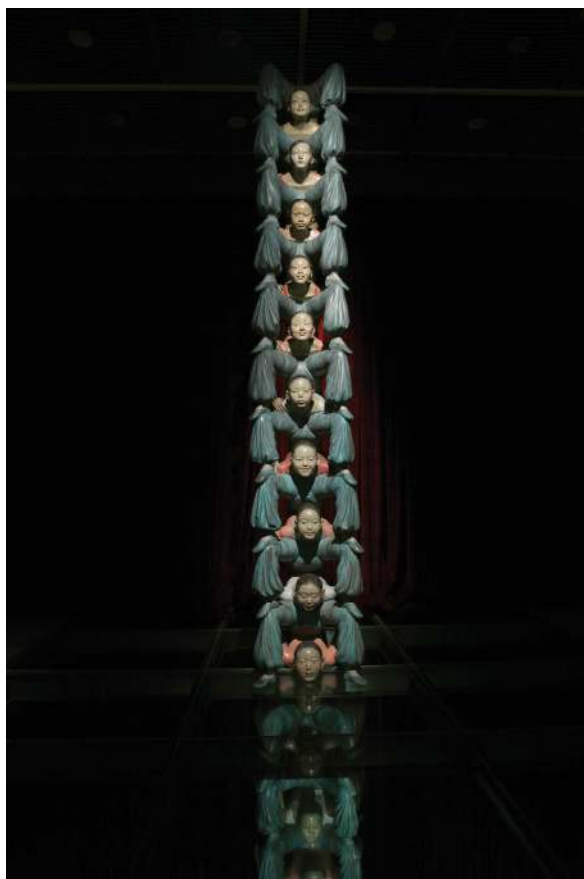


Xiang Jing Portrait Above: Fan Xi
Interview: Joanna Kawecki
Location: Beijing, China



XIANG JING

Beijing-born and based artist Xiang Jing is one of the few Chinese artists that has successfully reached global critical acclaim through her works based on human relationships and politics on a deeper level, exploring female existence. Her poignant and contemplative sculptures seek a truth and 'ongoing philosophical inquiry' that reflect women in contemporary society today, both locally and internationally, culturally.



INTERVIEW: JOANNA KAWECKI
PORTRAIT: FAN XI
WITH THANKS: LEHMANN MAUPIN

Image above: “这个世界会好吗？”——向京在台北
2013台北MoCA向京作品个展 展览现场1

JOANNA: What is a typical day for you in Beijing, at the studio or researching?

XIANG JING: My life is very easy to describe, as it almost keeps the same rhythm for as long as I can recall. My regular daily routine is to work in the studio during the day every day. There's an old Chinese saying – act consistently for several decades as if it was day 1 – that would be very precise for me. Sculpting is a very time-consuming process. On one hand, there is endless labour work; on the other hand, to cope with mundane and repetitive work, I must keep my focus sharp and physical strength strong. So since I started creating artwork 20 years ago, I chose to break from all the bad habits and live a rigid and regular life, except when there are exhibitions or travels. Again, my routine is that I work in the studio during daytime and I spending my evenings writing, reading or occasionally meeting friends.

Sculpting is a long and slow process, how do you maintain focus and direction with your pieces before final completion?

Since 2000, I began to realize that as an artist, I should not be constrained by exhibition invitations in my work. Instead, I should proactively structure my own series of artworks in a clear thread centering on the key issues, and deepen the issues as time goes on. So I gave myself one definitive plan – I would use one “series” as one unit to (each series takes about 3 years) create a group of works, to integrate one or more themes in each particular series. The past series include (the followings are names of each series): Mirror Image in 2002, Keep in Silence in 2005, Naked Beyond Skin in 2011, Will Things Ever Get Better? in 2011. I am working on my latest new series currently and am yet to finish.

Typically, when I work on the current series of artwork, I concurrently start thinking about and structuring the next series of artwork. Usually, I have the overall structure and detailed execution plan of each series of artwork in place before I start, but often, as I actually start sculpting, it's inevitable that some ideas would change. When ideas are transformed into concert artworks, I realize that some problems have occurred in the visualization process, so of course I would amend accordingly. Often I feel while

creating, the distance between the author and the artwork is far too close – they are almost merged into oneness, so it is really hard to clearly identify my own problems. Before the process of interpreting the artwork commences, I often simply depend on a very strong sense of intuition to make judgment on things relatively blurry to me. But somehow, I would feel the decisions would be right. This description sounds a little mystical, but often, these decisions turn out to be spot on. For example, while sculpting my 2011 series Will Things Ever Get Better? and the current latest series of artwork, I have suffered immensely because of the uncertainty I experience. Actually, creators cannot assume the roles of authors and interpreter simultaneously. A certain time has to pass, when one has a certain distance from the artwork, when artwork gradually is turned into text, one is then capable to tell about the artwork. So I believe that while creating, creators / authors also own an extraordinary ‘aura’ typified in Walter Benjamin's words – it is the very aura that enables them to capture the very ‘correct’ matters that belong to them.

Your most recent exhibition in Lehmann Maupin in Hong Kong, was presented with a renowned photographic artist in the West, Juergen Teller. How was your approach to coordinating your works in a collaborative exhibition alongside a photographic artist?

I have known Juergen's work for a long time, so when the Gallery told me they chose to show me together with him, I was very excited. I gave two proposals, one was about ‘desire’ and another one about ‘aesthetics’, probably everyone finds the first proposal can show a more obvious juxtaposition and clashing of the two artists. So the first theme on ‘desire’ was chosen. But it was the gallery that picked my works to be shown. Then my chosen works were sent to Juergen Teller, and he would then respond to mine and pick his works to exhibit together with my works. I used to be very controlling, but this time, I became very delighted to see how ‘other people’ would understand and regroup my works. The final choices made by Juergen and curating including artwork layout in the gallery space manifest the gallery's rich experience and also reveals a magical relationship between Juergen's and my works. It was beyond just a simple ‘conflict’ – there was an abundance of fascinating chemistry both visually and connotatively.

Did this introduce a new audience and wider understanding to your own work?

I am certain this exhibition brings new audience, but to understand my work to a greater extent, it would be insufficient through these few pieces. But it was extraordinary

small space.

As an artist born and currently located in Beijing, China - how has the area changed, and thus influenced your work?

Not only in Beijing, I believe people of my generation and age all over China would feel they have lived through many lives. In the short span of a few decades, each historical period was so distinctly different from another. This is the craziness and disruption an era brings to individuals, judging from both the intensity and speed of change. This kind of change certainly has impacts on me. For Chinese of this generation, no matter in countryside or city, they are all going through the endless pain of ‘losing their homeland’. This pattern of loss of space and loss of memory, renewal and reconstruction, almost become the basic way of thinking for us. Many generations are shaped by this pattern. Yet a culture without its root in homeland must be problematic, and I think many artists' work would touch upon this issue. For a long time to come, I attempted to locate the the internal connection between me and the culture. ‘Who am I and where do I come from’... Question like this always lingers on. Contemporary art is completely a western paradigm, so how to find contemporary art's rationale and pertinence in China's complicated culture, this, has become a natural focus of thinking for me, in a doomed way.

Do you feel that there are few female artists in China, and would you like to see more emerge?

Yes, indeed. There are unreasonably few Chinese female artists today. The problem is that back in art schools, there are quite a lot of women studying art, sometimes even exceeding men. But in the endless journey of becoming an artist, many women get eliminated. This has to do with the current dominating value in China's culture, where a woman's definitive value is still judged by her domestic life. If one is married with children, it is deemed to bring more happiness than a successful career. Meanwhile, a woman with a successful career won't be considered as a ‘life winner’ unless she is happily married with adorable children. If one only has accomplishments career-wise, she would be deemed as incomplete by others, and she might consider her life as a regretful one too. This monotonous value judgment is becoming more diverse in the younger generation, and there are more and more younger female artists. The diversity of value system and diversity of art forms are both progress. Of course, they have to stand against the test of time. I of course hope to see more excellent female artists emerge and stay on.

In your work, you are using various local

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materials such as fibreglass, bronze, ceramics, polyurethane. Why do you gravitate towards using these certain materials?

Actually, so far most of my works are in fiberglass with acrylic paint. The technique stays quite consistent, with some variations on how I apply the paint on top of the sculpture. I have never used ceramic or polyurethane. I don't use bronze that often – sometimes it is by demand of outdoor exhibitions, sometimes it is by demand of collectors. For my artistic language, fiberglass is a very convenient material without too much character. So I can endow it with any property I wish. At the beginning, I chose fiberglass because I often created human figures, and the original colour of fiberglass tends to be a warm grey, close to the skin tone of Eastern Asian people. Hand-painting on sculpture is a key step in my artistic language. I experiment with different ways of painting for different topics and works. The material itself is simply acrylic or colour powder, to gain a better control during hand-painting. My artistic methodology differs from the Western pursuit of a realist rendering in a scientific way. My pursuit is on the psychological and symbolic subjective truth, because I want to unveil the true existential being under the skin. Traditional materials such as bronze has too strong an innate property, while fiberglass is very fitting to be endowed any character.

When creating an artwork, do you imagine the longevity or length of life that they will lead. In a museum, private home or gallery...

To be honest, when creating an artwork, each artist can only focus on his/her heart, working hard to manifest what is in his/her heart to an artwork. There has never been any art creation ‘for a certain purpose’ – if one insist, then it must be ‘for the artist herself’. The creator can only be responsible for him/herself. Of course when the artwork is completed and turns into an objective being, it will have another life and destiny. It leaves its author and enters into museum or gallery... For me, this is another stage of my work – exhibiting. Exhibition is another form of creating, at this moment, the creator is like a movie director, arranging sculptures / roles to enter a certain narration or a certain scenario. So I need to shift my focus to thinking the possibilities in this stage of expression. This stage is as interesting as creating an artwork, also because creating artworks is very secluded and can be lonely, more like a war of Don Quixote. In contrast, the process of realizing an exhibition is exciting and exhilarating, because it's an imaginary dialogue. I would think how to set up more channels for viewers to approach the works, and I would imagine their reactions. Yes, once an artwork leaves the creator, it will own a completely new ‘life’, including any viewers' comments and critical opinions or definitions...

efinitions... they all become the artwork's own life and go beyond what the original creator (artist) can give to the artwork. At this point, the artwork and the creator each has a distinct and separate path in their destiny, and they might drift further apart from each other.

What is your process of working usually like: Do you sketch out each idea on paper first, or do you re-mould and re-shape your sculptures over time?

I rarely draw very detailed sketches – but of course I need to note down some ideas. Sculpting takes a long time and my working habit (as explained in Question 2) happens to think through my work in the unit of 'one complete series of work' – composed of many related pieces. Because I feel some themes cannot be explored and examined thoroughly in one or two pieces. I am not an artist who lives for solo exhibitions; instead, I love structuring a more complete system. As mentioned above, around 2000, it daunted on me the importance for an artist to build a self-contained structured system. So I gave myself the hard demand – finish a new 'series' every few years. On one hand, this hard rule can push me to keep working hard and following the work plan; on the other hand, I also hope accomplish a bigger and more complex structure of oeuvre, rather than think through each piece of work in an isolated manner. That's why I usually spend a very long time to consider the 'structure' of each 'series'. I can't find any word other than 'structure' for this purpose. I would think through, which works are necessary in order to express the underlying themes for a certain 'structure'. Once I start sculpting the artworks, I often have to amend slightly, because certain ideas I 'planned' beforehand turn out to be problematic as my artworks take their physical forms. Of course, sometimes, I have to eliminate some original ideas as I sculpt, simply because sculpting is too slow a process. Yet in retrospect, time has always proved it right to give them up. Also, as time moves on, I usually do not go back to rework on the ideas I chose to eliminate.

In some of your sculptures, the subjects can appear with hair and without. For example, in "Rainbow" the girl has an afro-like hair, and in 'Bang!' both girls are hairless. How do you characterise these?

The problem with hair is always difficult for me. I have tried many different ways to solve the subjective feelings around hair, but haven't been satisfied myself either. There are two key issues within in. The first issue is the meta-question of sculpture - the intrinsic quality of sculpture. Shall I be employing the realist sculpting technique I have learned in art school to hand-craft delicate 'sculptures'? Actually, I do not care

a great deal about the intrinsic value of sculpture as a medium, even in some ways, I am 'anti-sculpture', I hand-paint on sculptures, which is anti-sculpture. I use ready-made objects, which is also anti-sculpture. The second issue is that creating concrete and representational sculptures is very important to my artistic language, because my art is concerned with human beings, and it deals with issues of human beings, including how their details can arouse feelings on me. In my art, I am telling each meticulous details to render the human being live, from my strictly subjective point of view. It is but my subjective judgments, and this subjective language is exactly my artistic language, differing a great deal from the Western tradition of an objective realism under a scientific regime.

For 'Bang!', I was planning on using two wigs on the figures, I tried but it didn't work well. Instead, the hairless figures seem to bring more dramatic intensity to the artwork. So I went with hairless. It was rare for hairless figure to appear in my earlier works ('Bang!' is an earlier piece). 'Rainbow' belongs to Naked Beyond Skin series. In this series, in order to draw a distance from everyday experience, most of the figures were hairless. This way the identity of these human figures is even more blurry, so viewers can focus on the theme I am trying to get across. 'Rainbow' is an exception – I used wig, but it doesn't suggest real hair, it represents a 'ensemble look' that suit the delightful sentiment expressed by the work. So this wig is simply a wig, rather than the possible association of an 'African identity', it is more like a prop we use at a party.

Here I also have to say that sculpture as a medium naturally has many limitations and is conditioned on many restrictions. So I am now breaking through simply fighting against the intrinsic sculptural language (in my early career) to reach a new stage – where I return to consider, how do I work with the innate constraints of sculpture as a medium, or simply put, 'why choose sculpture'?

When sculpting a body, is there any particular consideration taken for the shape of the head or is it spontaneous? Is Phrenology considered, or perhaps a particular culture's common shape?

It is a very interesting question you asked, though I don't often think much about this. Initially I never had a sense about this – at least not a cultural sense. In my surrounding, there isn't so many races, but the human race always feels very diverse to me. Since young, I have been someone very sensitive to different appearances and characters. Since I started creating artwork, I had this habit – I never used any models. That is to say, all the figures I sculpt are

made up by me or just in my head, because for me this subjectivity has the foremost importance. It is the perspective where I tell, an intentional methodology to keep 'the wrong' and make the best of it. I can only say, when I need a certain character, I 'feel' it should look so, sometimes I can't get it right the first time, but I still choose not to use models. It seems I cannot work off an existing person, even when I manage to sculpt it, it becomes very boring for me. I guess it's due to my fascination with an internal bearing (air or existence) of a being, so it's pointless to be 'correct'; it matters more to create a spirit of being full of vigour.

For quite a few times, I cut off the face of figures that I almost finished sculpting, because I didn't feel 'right' about the face. There is a character alive in my heart, once I clearly think through it, I would just finish sculpting the face in one go. Now it turns 'right' for me, because it now carries a demeanour that I need. Similar circumstances happened for 'Your Body', 'White Virgin', 'Slipping, Ticktack Ticktack'. The demeanour of characters is a way for me to narrate, and it's a key point of entrance to read my oeuvre.

You have previously mentioned that you went through a long period of refusing to grow up, seeing the world through child's eyes which can be reflected in many of your works in 2002. In what way was this period important for you to experience, and why?

My work in each stage deals with one or several important topics. I started my earliest art making in 1995, when my age was approaching 30. But I still created a large number of works dealing with the adolescence topic. The theme of my 2002 'Mirror Image' series was 'growing up', including some works with an obvious child-like perspective. For example, After Yawn (2000) and Gift (2002) suggests distaste towards the adult body; Baby Baby (2001) makes a face to the world; Toy-Swimmer (2000) is a state of day dreaming, etc. That is to say, there is an opposing and rival world to the adult world. The name 'Mirror Image' itself has a connotation of introspective inward looking – so my life experience impacted my artwork creation, while I finished 'growing up' through my art creation. In the same series, works like Bang! (2002) and The Woman in the Mirror (2002) obviously enter into a stage of grown-up narration, breaking away from the stubborn personality refusing to grow up.

What are the strongest issues as a woman in today's society, that you feel still need addressing?

In China, the reality pressured by both the tradition and the ever-so fast-paced transformation is very complex. Although we

have long solved the problem for women's right to participate in work (by natural demand of labour), the mainstream value still holds a rigid discrimination towards women – and women are actually playing the part of the conspirator for this value. So, to have women's self-awareness and independence in a true sense, to think and let their voice be heard independently is a very important step to realize diversity in cultures and values in our society.

What are the strongest issues as a female artist, that you feel still need to be addressed?

I can only talk about China's specific situation. This world probably doesn't have a term 'male artist', so being called 'female artist' already suggests the gloom of being marginalized, and this identity is constantly reminded by others. Being a mother or wife is an ordinary thing, but in China, it always becomes a reason for female artists to stop creating art. Indeed women face many obstacles to continue their art creation, the biggest one is the non-existence of 'choice by oneself as a possibility' in China's common value system. The value of individual is not considered the most important, and a woman gains a greater sense of belonging from family life (marriage and children) than doing her own thing that she's passionate about. I think this world is full of prejudice and injustice, the best way to resist is to know oneself, and gain a true self-awareness, and thus find path to connect with the world. So in China, being a nonconformist simply means keeping one's independent judgments, seeing with one's own eyes, thinking with one's own mind, and feeling with one's own heart. This should be the pursuit by any human being, but also what a female artist shall work hard for – so let us work hard to be a nonconformist.

As an artist, do you think that a critic or writer (or even a regular visitor), can understand the works sometimes better than the artist himself/herself?

Of course, from a different perspective, critics and regular visitors can bring a life full of vigor to the artwork (Question 8 above). This could be an extremely strong counter-force to the artist her/himself. I often get a strange feeling hearing others telling my work, and at this moment, I tend to think with more clarity. Compared to my painful suffering and waiting for the artwork to unveil itself to me when sculpting, this moment brings more happiness.

Is there a particular message or feeling you'd like to encourage for a viewer through your sculptures, or is an artwork simply for interpretation by each individual?

Naming my artwork is also a very difficult thing. I have had many bad names, more than the brilliant ones. But I never liked naming my works as 'Untitled', because I am convinced that the creator is responsible for building a basic channel to facilitate understanding

for viewers. I also use 'mirror' to describe art – when the work faces the creator, it shows reflection of the creator; when the mirror is turned to face the viewer, it reflects the viewer. So an artwork has many connotations endowed by the author, but also, everyone can locate his/her understanding and point of contact unique only to him/herself.

Below: Juergen Teller & Xiang Jing, Lehmann Maupin Hong Kong (2015)



ABOVE:
XIANG
JING
Sense of
Security II,
2010
fiberglass
and
paint

LEFT:
XIANG
JING,
An
Accident
in Capital
Lane,
2005
fiberglass
and
paint

XIANG JING



Images: “这个世界会好吗？”——向京在台北 2013台北MoCA向京作品个展 展览现场1

描述一下你在北京的一天通常来说是什么样，在工作室还是在做研究？我的生活实在太容易描述了，长期一来几乎保持一个节奏，就是极其规律地每天白天都在工作室里工作，如同中国有句俗语：几十年如一日。雕塑是个非常耗时的方式，一方面总有干不完的活儿，另一方面，为了应付枯燥重复的工作，必须要保持足够好的精神状态和体力。所以自我开始做作品这二十年来，我选择戒除所有不良嗜好，过一种刻板而规律的生活，除非有展览或者要出差。白天基本都在工作室里做作品，晚上的时间写东西、看书或者偶尔会朋友。

雕塑是一个漫长而缓慢的过程，在作品最终完成之前，你是如何保持你作品的重点与方向的？从2000左右，我开始意识到对于艺术家来说，不被展览邀请牵制，而是自己清晰地结构自己的系列，并且尽可能通过时间把问题深化。于是我给自己一个计划，按照系列的形式一段时间（差不多是3年）做一批作品，整合一个或几个主题，过往的有2002年的“镜像”，2005年的“保持沉默”，2008年的“全裸”以及2011年的“这个世界会好吗？”，只有最近这个系列到现在还没完成。一般在做前面一个系列的时候，我已经一边工作，一边在思考、结构后面的创作了。通常都会想好大的框架、具体的方案再开始，但通常，一边在做的时候，难免一些想法会改变。当想法转换成了具体的作品，你会察觉到视觉化呈现时的一些问题，当然会修正一些东西，我常常觉得创作的时候，创作者和作品的距离太近，几乎是合体的，所以很难真正清晰的看到你自己的创作的问题，在阐释作品之前，有时常常是凭着一种非常强烈的直觉去判断一些也许对你还有点模糊的东西，但你觉得一定是对的。这听上去有点玄，可常常非常准确。2011年的一个系列和目前我正在做的新作品，不确定性都曾经把我折磨得半死，创作者其实无法同时充当作者和解释者的。只要过一段时间，你和作品产生了一段距离，当作品慢慢变成文本的时候，你才有可能清楚地讲述作品。所以我觉得创作者在创作作品的同时拥有一种非凡的本雅明形容的那种“灵光”，能够捕捉到属于你的那个“对”的东西。

在近期于香港立木画廊举办的展览中，你的作品与Juergen Teller的作品一同展出。筹备这个双个展的过程中，你是如何决定展出哪些作品与这位摄影艺术家合作呢？

我原本就知道他的作品，所以当画廊告诉我们决定选择他和我一起做展览，我非常高兴。我先出了两个方案，一个关于“欲望”，第二是关于“美学”，肯定大家都觉得第一个方案更能有显性的碰撞，最后决定前面这个主题。不过最后决定的作品是画廊选的。然后画廊把我的作品发给Juergen Teller，他再挑自己的作品和我搭配。我以前的工作控制欲非常强，但这次，我也很乐于看看“别人”是怎么理解和重新组合我的作品的。最后这个选择包括布展我想还是富有经验和神奇的关系的。它呈现的不是一种简单的“冲突”，从图像、内涵上都有奇妙的化学反应。

这个展览是否为你带来了新的观众，以及对你作品更广泛的了解呢？我相信肯定带来的新的观众，但要更多地了解我的作品，通过这几件作品肯定不够的，这只是在这个小空间里做得足够地好了。

作为一名土生土长的北京艺术家，你认为这座城市有什么变化，影响了你的创作？

不仅仅是北京，我想我这个年纪的中国人，都会感觉自己像是过了好几辈子，每个历史阶段都是那么地不同，这是一个时代带给个体的疯狂和颠覆，无论从改变的强度，还是速度。改变肯定影响了我这个人，当今的中国人，无论城乡，都在经历着“失家园”的漫长痛苦。这种丢失和失忆，

刷新和重构，几乎变成了我们思维的基本形态，几代人都是在这样的塑造里，没有故乡的文化一定是有问题的，我想很多艺术家的创作里都会涉及到这样的问题。而我在后来很长一段时间里，都试图在寻找和文化内部的联系，“我是谁？我从哪里来？”这样的问题始终在徘徊。当代艺术完全是一种西方模式，如何在中国复杂的文化里找到合理性、针对性，这已经变成一种自然产生的宿命式的思考。

你是否觉得在中国仅有少数的女性艺术家？你是否希望看到更多？

确实，中国的女性艺术家数量少得并不合理，关键在学院学习期间，女生学习艺术的并不少，有时甚至占大多数。但在后来漫长的成长为艺术家的过程中，淘汰的女性就非常多了。这个和中国文化普遍的价值观有关，一个女人最终的价值归属还是家庭，如果你结婚生子比之于事业成功更让人有幸福感，而事业成功的女性如果婚姻幸福、并且有可爱的孩子，才会被认为是“人生赢家”。反过来说，如果你只是事业不错，不仅在别人眼里、自我认定也会觉得有些缺憾。这种单一价值在越来越年轻的一代慢慢有所改善，现在年轻的女性艺术家明显多起来，价值观的多元和创作形态的多元都是一种进步，但也需要通过时间的检验，我当然希望看到更多优秀的女性艺术家坚持下来。

你在作品中使用了各种本地材料，如纤维玻璃，青铜，陶瓷和聚氨酯。为什么你倾向于使用这些特定的材料呢？

其实我到目前为止的作品多半是玻璃钢上色的方法，比较单一，无非是上色的方法上有一些变化。从没用过陶瓷和聚氨酯，青铜材料用得不多，有时是有户外展览的需要，或者是收藏的要求，我才会选择青铜。对于我的创作语言本身，玻璃钢是一种非常方便而基本没有什么性格的材料，这样我可以赋予它任何属性，最初选择玻璃钢，是因为我做人物比较多，玻璃钢原本的颜色就是一种温暖的灰色，和东方人的皮肤颜色有一点接近，而着色是我语言中最重要的一环，不同的题材、作品我会实验不同的上色方法，用的材料都是非常普通的丙烯、色粉一类，主要是手绘时的控制，我的创作方法和西方科学性的追求逼真完全不同，更接近一种心理性和意象化的主观真实，因为我想要揭示的是表皮之下的真实存在。青铜一类的传统材料自身属性太鲜明，玻璃钢就是非常适合被赋予任何属性的一种材料。

在创作一件作品的时候，你是否有想象在博物馆、私人住宅或画廊中，作品将持续的“寿命”或生命？

诚实地说，每个艺术家在创作的时候只会专注在自己的内心，努力把内心的想法尽力呈现出来，从来没有“为了什么”的创作，一定要说为了什么，那就是为了自己，创作者只能为自己负责。当然当作品完成，物化为实体的存在，它自己就有另外的生命和命运，它离开创作者进入博物馆、画廊，对我来说，这就进入了下一个工作，就是展览，展览像另外一种创作，在这个时候，创作者像一位导演，安排雕塑/角色进入一种讲述，一种情境，这个时候我一定又把专注力集中到思考它们这部分表达的可能性上。这和创作作品是同样有趣，而且创作的时候更封闭更孤独，更像唐吉珂德的战争，而展览的呈现过程更让人兴奋刺激，因为那是一种假想的对话，你会思考怎样铺设更多的管道给予观者，并且会想象他们的反应。没错，作品离开创作者肯定是有完全不一样的“生命”，包括任何的观者对于作品的评价、定义，都属于作品本身的生命，常常已经超出了创作者所能给予的，作品和创作者这时已经在命运的不同轨迹里，甚至渐行渐远。



你的创作过程通常是怎样的：你是否先在纸上草拟勾勒出各种想法，还是你会随着时间的推移，对过去的雕塑作品进行重新建模或重新塑造？

我很少画非常具体的草图，当然也需要把一些想法记录下来，雕塑花的时间非常长，我的习惯又是喜欢以一个系列一个系列的节奏去思考，因为我觉得一些主题并不是简单一件两件作品能说清楚的，我不是个为展览而活着的艺术家，我喜欢自己结构一个更完整的形态，也是在2000年左右我突然醒悟艺术家自我系统的构建是非常重要的，于是给自己一个要求，每隔几年做一个系列，一方面给自己一个硬性

的规定，不松懈，一直在有计划地工作，另一方面，也希望最终能够完成一个更大更复杂的结构，而不是单件单件作品这样去思考。所以每次我也会用很长的时间构想一个结构，我只能用结构这个词来形容。在这个结构里我所表达的主题，需要哪些作品来呈现，一般来说，真正开始做的时候，多少都会有所修改，因为你的想法会随着作品的逐步呈现也显露出它们的问题。当然，有的时候，是雕塑实在太慢了，我不得不取消一些想法，而这种取舍，常常会被证明是正确的，而时过境迁，我也一般不会回头再去那些我丢弃了的想法。

你曾经提到，有很长一段时间你曾拒绝长大，试图通过孩子的眼镜看世界，这在你2002年的许多作品中都有体现。这个时期如何对你的人生体验产生重要影响？为什么？应该说说我每个阶段的作品都有一个或几个重要命题，1995年我开始最早的创作，那段时间年龄已经将近30，但还创作了数量众多的青春题材的作品，2002年“镜像”系列的主题就是“成长”，其实就包括了明显带有孩童视角的一些作品，比如对成人身体厌恶的《哈欠之后》《礼物》，对世界做鬼脸的《Baby Baby》，做着白日梦的《Toy-泳者》等等，就是说，成人世界还是个敌对的世界，“镜像”这个名字本身带有一种自我观照的含义，应该说是人生经验影响我的创作，而我在创作中完成了成长的过程，在这个系列的《砰！》《镜子里的女人》几件作品里，明显已经进入成人叙事的阶段，跳脱开了那个顽固不肯长大的人格。

你认为在当时社会作为女性，什么是仍急需解决的最重大议题？

在中国，传统文化和快速变迁夹击的现实情况确实非常复杂，虽然我们已经很早就解决了女性参加工作的问题（劳动力的需要），但主流价值观里对于女性的歧视依然顽固，甚至女性自己也是这种价值观的共谋者。所以实现女性的自觉，真正意义上的独立，独立思考，独立发声，实现文化和价值观上的多元应该还是非常重要的。

而你认为作为女性艺术家，什么是仍急需解决的最重大议题？我还是只能谈论中国的具体情况。这世界上大概没有“男艺术家”的称呼，所以被称为“女艺术家”已经感到被边缘的凉意了。这样的身份感也是时常被提醒的，为人妻为人母原本都是正常的事，但在中国，常常成为很多女艺术家终止创作的原因。确实女性坚持创作有很多难处，最重要的障碍应该还是普遍的价值观里，不存在“自己的选择”这个概念，个体的价值并不是最重要的，女人结婚生子获得的归

XIANG JING

属感，远比做一件热爱的事强烈。我想这世界其实充满偏见和成见，对抗的最好方法首先是认知自己，获得自觉，由此获得和世界的连接路径。

而异类无非就是能够保持独立判断，用自己的眼睛观看，用自己的头脑思考，用自己的心灵去感知的人，这既是一个人的应该追求的，也是一个女性艺术家特别要为之努力的——努力去做个异类吧。

作为艺术家，你是否觉得艺术评论家或作家（甚至普通的观众）有时候能够比艺术家本人更好地理解作品？

看到这个问题，我第一反应就是“这，怎么可能！！”当然，站在另外的角度，可以说，艺术评论家或者普通观众能带给作品更丰富鲜活的生命，这个对于艺术家本人会是一种非常强烈的反作用力，我经常看到我自己的作品感到非常陌生，听到别人讲述我的作品非常陌生，这个时候我会更清晰地思考，比起创作时自己痛苦煎熬等待启示的时刻要幸福很多。

是否有某个特别的信息或某种感觉，你想通过你的雕塑作品传达给观众的？还是你认为一件作品应该简单地由每个人自由地去体会？

给作品命名也是一件非常艰难的事，我有过很多烂名字，可能比精彩的要多，但我始终不愿意给作品起名（无题），因为我觉得创作者有责任搭建基本的通道给予观者，而我也常用“镜子”来形容艺术，当作品面对创作者的时候，它照见的是创作者，而当镜子面对观者的时候，它又会照见观者。于是，作品就有创作者的很多信息，同样，每个人也会在里面看到属于自己的理解和趣味。

非常感谢向京，我们非常荣幸地成为《The Champion Magazine Issue 10》的封面人物，你的作品也在本期 issue 中收录。我们非常期待你能继续参与这个重要的项目。

