

得意忘形： 从明当代的展览实践 窥探中国的 “机构批判”

2001年3月11日下午，北京电影学院的演播棚里有场观众不能迟到的活动。在几百平米的空间里，活人头和香肠被一起端上桌、人们在蹦床上挤出红色的番茄汁、豹纹双头怪站在椅子上、裹着紧身服的女人跳着艳舞，观众在其间走动也不断被卷入应接不暇的喧闹。这是“后感性：狂欢”，按照邱志杰在《后展览时代的预感》的说法，这场活动只能说是“这件事情”，而不是“展览”——“要反对的就是‘展览’这个概念”。¹

1. 邱志杰，“后展览时代的预感”，《后感性：狂欢》，2001，自出版，无页码标注。文章也收录于artlinkart.com, (<http://www.artlinkart.com/cn/article/overview/18agzBt>)。

对大多数九零年之后出生的艺术生或从业者来说，“后感性”并不是件熟悉的事，它偶尔作为一些业内名宿的早年经历被提起，但人们很少在讨论当下受关切的议题时引用到这一段历史。两千年初，如今热议的行业“基础设施”（infrastructure）在本土无从谈起，美术馆亦是如此；“后感性”所反对的“展览”也被认为是根植在“资本主义”和“殖民主义”里——邱原本计划在2000年上海双年展期间举行“狂欢”，为的是嘲讽在“国际”到达中国之时冒出一群地下外围展。狂欢者们有意识地要悖离“展览”，因为“只要采用了展览这种形式那就还只是体制内的工作”。² 国内和国际、政治和艺术在这个句子里因“展览”而相会，被偷梁换柱，又含混为一，都成了被揶揄的对象。当年邱的策展说明当然有为了论辩而夸张的成分，时过境迁，2017年，“后感性”的回顾展“后感性：恐惧与意志”在明当代美术馆举办。中国此时不仅有了大大小小的当代艺术机构，也出现了由造纸机械厂的厂房改造、现在专攻行为、表演、剧场等现场艺术的明当代。我并不要揶揄“后感性”被回顾并写入历史，只想指出：

2. 邱志杰，“后展览时代的预感”，《后感性：狂欢》，2001，自出版，无页码标注。文章也收录于artlinkart.com, (<http://www.artlinkart.com/cn/article/overview/18agzBt>)。

“后感性：狂欢”向机构喊话时，四周没有机构的真身；而当明当代对于“后感性”进行回顾，这场持续了几年的艺术活动被放在表演艺术的框架下时，其中的自我组织和对机构的怀疑却没再被拎出来讨论。



“把一切都交给你”展览现场，明当代美术馆，2016

《后感性：狂欢》用类似沉浸式剧场的方式让观众和艺术家一起迷狂，看似是以表演反对展览，但如果把邱在论战中对抗性的路径转化为建议性的提问，去思考这样的“活动”是否也可以算作展览、这样的展览能在何种机构中发生，那么我们是否也可借此重新想象“展览”、“机构”以及二者之间的关系？什么样的机构以及何种机制（或邱所称的“体制”）可能生产像“后感性：狂欢”这样的“活动/展览”？明当代可以吗？现场艺术会引发何种艺术家、策展人、工作人员和观众之间的关系，让“狂欢”得以诞生？从“后感性：狂欢”出发去想象一个机构，类似于策展人比利安娜·思瑞克在展览“把一切都交给你”（明当代，2016）中的提问，“具有时效性的东西如何变成一个机构？或曰，机构本身如何进行表演？”³

“把一切都交给你”这个展览反思机构的运转逻辑，多数作品也都是表演和行为艺术；而自1960年代起，许多西方艺术家也常运用表演和行动让艺术系统里未言明的规则和权力显形。安德里亚·弗雷泽（Andrea Fraser）本人在录像作品《博物馆亮点：一场美术馆谈话》（Museum Highlights, 1989）中，身穿一套灰色裙，装假扮成美国费城美术馆的

3. 比利安娜·思瑞克，“从〈把一切都交给你〉出发，反思表演性和机构语境”，《把一切都交给你》（明当代美术馆，2020），p. 7-21。

志愿导览员，用夸张、激动的语气向镜头代表的观众颂扬着美术馆内的事物，为诸如水龙头和出口标志这样的功能性设施赋予与其本身相距甚远的意义。艺术家用这样的明褒暗贬，讽刺的是美术馆将其自身塑造成引导大众去正确理解艺术的教育者。这样的机构批判（institutional critique）不仅仅只针对博物馆的本体，也包括对策展、市场、媒体、双年展乃至整个艺术系统运转逻辑的反思，“后感性：狂欢”也可以放在这样的背景下去看待。在这种潮流中，一些机构和策展人也尝试着新的工作方式，比如把自身变成“实验室”或者让真实的社会涌入原来的白盒子空间。⁴ 思瑞克在“把一切都交给你”里也做了对既有展览机制的试验，不仅仅让作品在明当代展览，也让明当代进入作品。展览中，艺术家组合

4. 在 Hans Ulrich Obrist 对策展人 Walter Hopps 和 Pontus Hultén 的采访中，都提到了欧洲一些美术馆和文化宫在 60 年代及之后会把这些机构视作一个“实验室”（laboratory）或者是实验室和其他空间的杂糅。例如，“In terms of flexibility, in the 1960s and, above all, the 1970s, the European Kunsthalle was defined as something of a laboratory, where things could be tested [...]” Hans Ulrich Obrist, ‘Walter Hopps’, A Brief History of Curating, Documents Series (JRP / Ringier, 2008), p. 10-40.

安妮·薇吉耶 & 弗兰克·阿派特（“来自乌特潘的人”）在作品《激发》中邀请观众和主办方共同签署一式三份的“道德协议”，观众签署协议就意味着 ta 们认可：“本人在《激发》期间放弃个人自主权”，“本人接受在《激发》期间被拍照和摄影，并无偿放弃其将来的使用权……”，“本人以《激发》共同作者的身份联署本协议，并给予艺术家对其享有的独占使用权”。⁵ 艺术家在此提醒了 1800 位签署了协议的观众，你们的参观“激活”了《激发》这件作品，你们和艺术家都是作品的“共同作者”，分享着作品的所有权；但同时，你们也让渡了个人权利，允许了艺术家独自占据和使用它。其实，这些条款清晰指明的状况，在大多数展览中都发生着。在这里，正像思瑞克说的，艺术家只是以签署协议这样的方式创造了一些“情境”（situation）和“场合”（occasion），尝试“重新定义一些参数”，让“行为”“艺术”“观众”“作品”“艺术家”这些语汇模糊不明。

5. “安妮·薇吉耶 & 弗兰克·阿派特（‘来自乌特潘的人’）”，《把一切都交给你》（明当代美术馆，2020），p. 30。

“表演”、“机构”和“批判”在中国其实也有另一条线索，在中国现当代的政治动员中，表演一直都和批判相连。何若书（Denise Y. Ho）在著作《策展革命》（Curating Revolution）里以共和国早期的上海阶级教育展览和盘瓜巷社区的展示为例，说明在当时的展览里讲解员的现身说法（比如“忆苦思甜”和“自我批评”）是重要环节，观众也需要在展览现场体现出更新自我认识、批判旧社会、投身革命的觉醒。讲解



“托马斯·赫塞豪恩：重塑”展览现场，明当代美术馆，2018

员和观众的诉说交织在一起的“无产阶级”展览，提供了和西方博物馆不同的展览“传统”，也是另一种“批判”的形式，这其实可以成为当下中国美术馆在进行自我革新时的另一种参照。类似的，中国美术馆自身的情况，比如明当代身处的地产经济赞助制度，和西方的公立美术馆、私人基金会等其实无法直接对照，在中国，“对于机构的批判”和“对既有展示空间、展览机制的挑战”需要的是一种更具现实意义的解析和落地。

“我们如何才能成功地犯一点错误？”，“后感性：狂欢”这样嚣张地提问着。带着不同的语调，托马斯·赫塞豪恩在明当代的展览《重塑》中引用了葛兰西的名言“毁坏是困难的，的确，它和创造一样困难”。赫塞豪恩的展览在2018年上海双年展期间举办，并在开幕之前举办了为期3天的布展开放日活动。我和来自柏林、北京、伦敦、汉堡、伊斯坦布尔等地的策展人们钻进了赫塞豪恩和美术馆员工、志愿者一起“破坏”过的明当代。我们相聚在用黄色胶条搭起的水帘洞底下，脚边堆满了EPS塑料泡沫被割裂散开的白色碎屑，刷成了灰色的纸板堆积到了天花板、彻底塞满了原本高耸的美术馆空间。这是赫塞豪恩召唤出的“废墟”，或者叫“反转的波将金村”：

“波将金村”指的是1787年沙俄时期，总督波将金在女沙皇来访之前，沿着克里米亚半岛建造了一个假的

村庄，以此来掩盖当地的真实情况。建立“波将金村”的目标就是用来展示一种比现实更好的境况，这在今时今日也是一样的。确切地说，我的作品及其“废墟形式”，是一种“反转的波将金村”。即这些作品展示的是一种最糟糕的状况，而并非最好的状况。“反转的波将金村”的目的是，通过摧毁将那些让隐匿的关系、伪装的联系和肉眼不可见的集合展现出来。⁶

6.《托马斯·赫塞豪恩：重塑》场刊，《明当代美术馆》，2018），p. 13.

赫塞豪恩反对美术馆作为文化消费的助推者，希望借这场免费入场的“展览”把美术馆变成和现实相悖的、“最糟糕的”、抵抗的空间。为了追求理念中的“真”，他坚持建造这片废墟时必须使用“假的”、临时的、破烂的材料：纸板、胶带、颜料、泡沫、纸张和木块。当时，明当代的确变成了“破·空间”，观众在这仿佛台风过境后的混乱现场中开始随手触碰材料、随地而坐、信手涂鸦，因没有具体节目或规定路线而自行探索。然而这些甄选出来的“假”材料，因为便宜、易得、容易“重塑”，在美术馆墙外的现实中正被切实使用着。对于生活在“永久的暂时性”之中的人们来说，塑料和泡沫比水泥和砖块更加日常，是ta们能够摸得到的生活的质感。赫塞豪恩在美术馆中引入这些“假”材料，恰好揭示出美术馆脚下这片土地的真相——它并非洁净之地，而是和现实一样，遍布着大张旗鼓、兴师动众、得过且过、临时招架、脏污、智慧、狂欢和毁坏。此刻，与其说我们需要批判机构，倒不如先鼓起勇气去承认这里的机构本身就是破烂的，它并不像继承下来的厂房那样构架清晰、稳定，每个人在其中都带着创造和破坏的欲望。“机构”虽然有着统一的称谓，她们的身形和处境却迥然相异、也在迅速变化。批判机构、批判自我并不是去复述某种逻辑，而是让此时此地的现实漏出更多孔洞，让人们看到艺术到底在如何发生，从而更诚实深入地描摹生产的肌理。我们也需要像赫塞豪恩所鼓励的那样，去解放自己破坏的欲望，无畏无休止的质问和协商，在现实中一同工作。持续的破坏将累积出新的地形，成为新的建筑，在这持续的劳作之中或许我们也能在某个短暂的时刻，真正的，得意忘形一会儿。

LOST IN ECSTASY: GLIMPING CHINA'S “INSTITU- TIONAL CRITIQUE” THROUGH ITS EXHIBITION PRACTICE

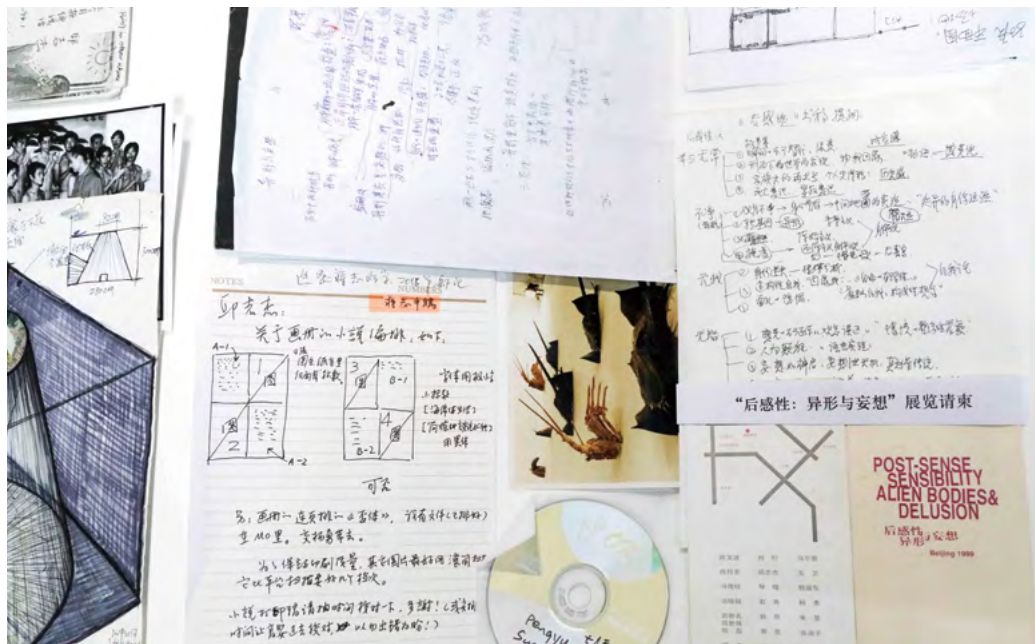
On the afternoon of March 11, 2001, Beijing Film Academy's recording studio held an event to which late arrivals were denied entry. In a space some hundred square meters large, living, human heads and sausages were both carried onto a table, people squeezed ketchup onto a trampoline, a two-headed, leopard-print-wearing monster stood on a chair, a woman in a body suit danced seductively; viewers moved among—or were overpowered by—the noise and bustle. This was “Post-sense Sensibility: Spree,” and as Qiu Zhijie says in *Premonitions of the Post-Exhibition Era*, it could only be called “an event,” not an “exhibition”: “the concept of the ‘exhibition’ was exactly what we opposed.”¹

1. Qiu Zhijie, *Premonitions of the Post-Exhibition Era*, “Post-sense Sensibility: Spree”, 2001. Self-publishing, unpaginated copy. Article also published on artlinkart.com, (<http://www.artlinkart.com/cn/article/overview/18agzBt>).

Most students and practitioners of art born in the 1990s will hardly be familiar with “Post-sense Sensibility”: occasionally mentioned as part of the formative experiences of certain industry potentates, it is a historical period rarely brought up when people discuss pressing, contemporary art world issues. At the beginning of the 2000s, the industry “infrastructure”—so urgently debated today—was nowhere to be seen in China, to say nothing of Chinese museums. The “exhibitions” that “Post-sense Sensibility” opposed were seen as rooted in “capitalism” and “colonialism”: Qiu Zhijie initially planned to debut “Spree” in the 2000 Shanghai Biennale, satirizing the peripheral, underground exhibitions that began cropping up after the concept of “the international” touched down in China. The revelers referred to in the title tried consciously to abandon exhibitions, because “by simply selecting the exhibition as form, you were working within the system.”² Here, the word “exhibition” convenes the concepts of domestic and international, politics

2. Qiu Zhijie, *Premonitions of the Post-Exhibition Era*, “Post-sense Sensibility: Spree”, 2001. Self-publishing, unpaginated copy. Article also published on artlinkart.com, (<http://www.artlinkart.com/cn/article/overview/18agzBt>).

and art; they are mistaken for each other or muddled together, and all become objects of ridicule. At the time, Qiu's curatorial text contained many claims that were exaggerated for the sake of his argument; but in



Post-sense Sensibility archival materials

2017, a retrospective show, “Post-sense Sensibility: Trepidation and Will” premiered in Ming Contemporary Art Museum, by which time not only contemporary art institutions of different scale, but Ming Contemporary, formerly a paper factory, now dedicated to live art such as performance and theater, had appeared one after the other on the scene. I do not mean to ridicule the process by which “Post-sense Sensibility” was remembered and inscribed into history, only to point out: **when “Post-sense Sensibility: Trepidation and Will” directed its battle cry at institutions, there were no real institutions to listen, but now that Ming Contemporary was looking back on “Post-sense Sensibility,” placing this years-long artistic event in the framework of “performance art,” it eschewed mentioning the aspect of self-organization and institutional critique contained within the movement.**

“Post-sense Sensibility: Spree” uses a technique similar to that of immersive theater to allow viewers and artists alike to enter a state of revelry; it seems to oppose performance to exhibition, but if we treat Qiu’s adversarial position in the debate as a kind of constructive question-posing, in order to ask whether these sorts of “events” might count as exhibitions, and what sort of institutions they can happen in, might we not then use the occasion to reimagine the concepts of



Proposals to Surrender installation view at McalM, 2016

“exhibition” and “institution,” as well as their relation? What kind of institution and what kind of matrix (or in Qiu’s words, what kind of “system”) can produce an event/exhibition such as “Post-sense Sensibility: Spree”? Can Ming Contemporary? What kinds of relationships between artists, exhibitions, art workers and viewers, and what sorts of “revelry” can live art engender? To proceed from “Post-sense Sensibility: Spree” into imagining an institution is much like Biljana Ciric’s question in “Proposals to Surrender” (Ming Contemporary, 2016): “how does something timely become an institution? In other words, how does an institution itself engage in performance?”³ “Proposals to Surrender” reflected on the operational logic of an exhibition; many of its artworks were also performances. Yet since 1960, many Western artists have

3. Biljana Ciric, “Some Reflections on Performativity and the Institutional Context”, *Proposals to Surrender* (Ming Contemporary Art Museum, 2020), p. 7-21.

often used performance to foreground the unspoken rules and hidden powers in the art system. In *Museum Highlights* (1989), a grey skirt-suited Andrea Fraser impersonates a volunteer tour guide at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, using an exaggerated, agitated voice, to praise the contents of the museum to viewers, represented by the camera, endowing equipment such as exit signs and water faucets, with meanings that diverge wildly from their intended functions. The artist uses this backhanded praise to satirize the museum's self-construction as a center for educating the public into a proper understanding of art. This kind of institutional critique is directed not only at the museum itself, but also curatorial practices, markets, the media, and biennials—even the operating logic of the entire art system. “Post-sense Sensibility: Spree” might also be understood in this wider context. In the same vein, other institutions and curators have tried adopting new working methods, such as turning their spaces into “laboratories” or allowing actual society to permeate the boundaries of the white cube.⁴

4. In Hans Ulrich Obrist's interview with Walter Hopps and Pontus Hultén, they mentioned that, from 1960s, some European museums and cultural palaces tended to see themselves as a laboratory or a hybrid of laboratories and other spaces. For example, “In terms of flexibility, in the 1960s and, above all, the 1970s, the European Kunsthalle was defined as something of a laboratory, where things could be tested [...]” Hans Ulrich Obrist, ‘Walter Hopps’, *A Brief History of Curating*, Documents Series (JRP / Ringier, 2008), p. 10-40.

In “Proposals to Surrender,” Ciric also experiments with the current exhibition system, not only allowing artwork to be shown in Ming Contemporary, but allowing Ming Contemporary to become part of the artwork. In the exhibition, artistic duo Annie Vigier & Franck Apertet (Les Gens d’Uterpan) presented an artwork, *Stimulation*, which invited participants to sign a “moral agreement,” or contract in triplicate, with the exhibition’s sponsors. By signing, participants agreed “to give up my individual autonomy during *Stimulation*,” to “be photographed and filmed during *Stimulation*, and give up, without compensation, the exclusive rights to their use...”, and to “sign this agreement as one of *Stimulation*’s collaborative authors, and give the artists the exclusive rights to its use.”⁵

5. Annie Vigier & Franck Apertet (Les Gens d’Uterpan), *Proposals to Surrender* (Ming Contemporary Art Museum, 2020), p. 30.

The artists thus reminded the more than 1800 viewers who signed the agreement that their participation “activated” *Stimulation*, that they were co-authors of it, alongside the artists, and thus enjoyed joint

ownership of it; but at the same time, they had ceded their individual rights, allowing the artists the exclusive rights to own and use it. In truth, the conditions that the terms of their contract allegorized obtain in most exhibitions. Here, just as Ciric points out, the artists merely use the act of contract-signing to create a certain situation and occasion; they attempt to “redefine certain parameters,” to blur the contours of words like “performance,” “art,” “visitor,” “artwork,” and “artist.”

The words “performance,” “institution,” and “critique” have another genealogy in China: in its modern political mobilizations, performance has always been linked to critique. Denise Y. Ho’s monograph, *Curating Revolution*, argues that in Shanghai’s class education exhibitions and the Panguaxiang community’s exhibitions, tour guides’ sharing of their personal thoughts (such as “remembering past sorrows and savoring present joys” and “self-criticism”) formed an important part of the total experience; viewers also had to demonstrate their [class] consciousness, criticize the Ancien Regime, and undergo a revolutionary awakening. These “proletarian” exhibitions, in which tour guides’ and viewers’ narratives mingled together, formed an exhibition tradition—and a method of critique—that differed from Western ones; this might serve as another point of reference for contemporary Chinese museums engaged in self-reform. Similarly, the state of Chinese museums, such as Ming Contemporary, which must rely on patronage from real estate corporations, makes direct comparison with public museums and private foundations in the West impossible; in China, “critiquing institutions” and “challenging existing exhibition spaces and exhibition protocols” must be a more realistic form of analysis and praxis.

“How can we successfully fuck up?” This is the question that “Post-sense Sensibility: Spree” insolently asks. In his exhibition, “Re-Sculpt,” at Ming Contemporary, Thomas Hirschhorn takes a different approach to the question, quoting Gramsci’s famous words, “destruction is difficult, indeed, it is as difficult as creation.” Hirschhorn’s exhibition was mounted during the Shanghai Biennale; for three days before the show opened, he held an “open house,” during which visitors could see the installation process. I and other curators from Berlin, Beijing, London, Hamburg and Istanbul all scurried into a Ming Contemporary that had



Thomas Hirschhorn: Re-Sculpt installation view at McaM, 2018

been “vandalized” by Hirschhorn and the museum staff and volunteers. We gathered at the mouth of a waterfall formed by yellow tape; below our feet were white shreds of cut-apart Styrofoam blocks, cardboard, painted gray—the pile crowded to the ceiling in some parts, crowding the once-towering exhibition space. This was the “ruin,” or upside-down Potemkin Village, that Hirschhorn had conjured.

“Potemkin Village” refers to the Tsarist minister, Grigory Potemkin, who, in preparation for Catherine the Great’s visit, built a fake village around the Crimean peninsula in order to conceal local realities. The goal of this Potemkin Village was to present a vision of present conditions that were better than reality; the same is true today. To speak precisely, my artworks and their “ruin form” are a kind of “upside-down Potemkin village.” Namely, these artworks present the worst, not the best, situation. The point of an “upside-down Potemkin Village” is to allow those hidden relationships, disguised connections, and gatherings the eye can’t see to reveal themselves.⁶

6. Thomas Hirschhorn: Re-Sculpt exhibition booklet, (Ming Contemporary Art Museum, 2018), p. 13.

Hirschhorn is against the model of museum as facilitator of cultural consumption. He hoped to use this free “exhibition” to transform the museum into the “worst possible” space of resistance, the furthest removed from reality. In his pursuit of an ideal “real,” he was compelled to use “fake,” temporary, broken materials: cardboard, tape, paint, Styrofoam, sheets of paper and blocks of wood. At the time, Ming Contemporary truly did become ruins and audiences, who found themselves as in the wake of a recently departed hurricane, touching materials, sitting haphazardly, scribbling on surfaces, began to explore independently in the absence of a concrete program or designated path. But because they are affordable, easily obtained, and easily re-sculpted, these “fake” materials are used in abundance in the real space outside the museum. To people who live in “perpetual temporariness,” plastic and Styrofoam are much more ready-to-hand than concrete and bricks—these are the textures that abound in their lives.

By introducing these “fake” materials into the museum, Hirschhorn revealed the truth of the soil on which the museum was built—**hardly immaculate, it was like reality itself, with all its fanfare and mobilization, its getting on and eking by, its dirtiness, wisdom, revelry and destruction. Now, rather than saying we ought to critique institutions, we might instead muster the courage to admit that institutions here are always already broken; their structures are not as clear and stable as a factory that is passed down generationally, and those who are a part of them are filled with the desire to destroy and create.** Though “institution” is a self-identical term, the shapes and surroundings of most institutions are utterly different from one another, and in flux. To critique institutions and ourselves does not mean reproducing a certain logic, but rather to allow the present reality to reveal more openings, allow people to see how art is made, and show with greater fidelity the details of its production. Hirschhorn encourages us to free our desires, to fearlessly and relentlessly interrogate and negotiate, to work together in real conditions. Sustained destruction will accumulate into new geologies, grow into new structures; amidst this continuous labor, perhaps we will find a brief, temporary respite, one in which to lose ourselves to ecstasy.