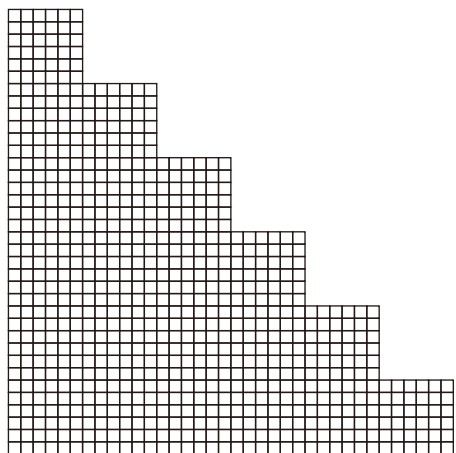
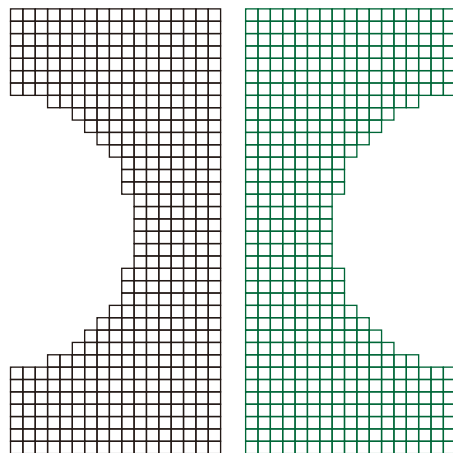
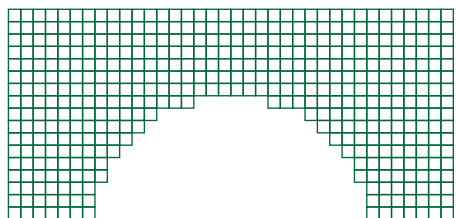
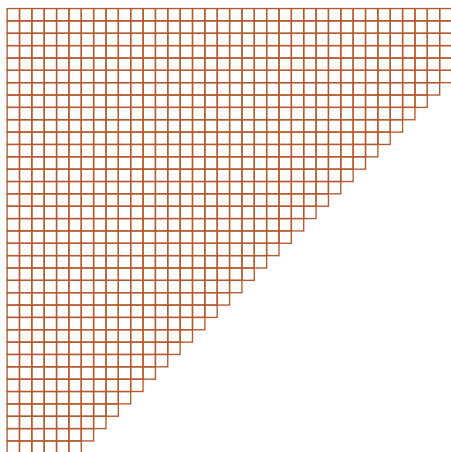
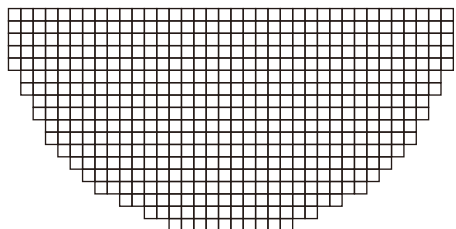
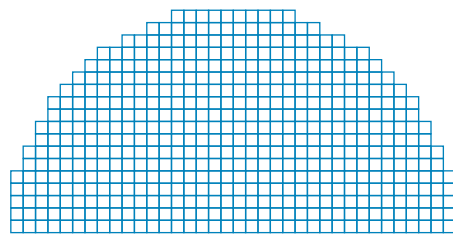


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Interview by Nie Xiaoyi

摄影：REN2

Photography by REN2



小龙花在工作室，手持一件非洲乐器
Xiao Longhua playing with an
African instrument in his studio

在上海巨鹿路上经过大大小小的咖啡厅、花店、小餐厅、买手店，对着门牌号码，拐入一条不起眼的弄堂，停在一栋水泥小楼前，按门铃，进入昏暗但干净的走廊，踩在木头楼梯上，一节一节上到二楼，忍不住眯起眼观察旁边的物什（比如放在木柜上的一整套《革命样板戏连环画》）。这时，小龙花的轻快声音传来：“来啦！这边这边。”我寻着声音走到二楼的角落，一抬头，发现小龙花在楼梯上方，正从门框里探出半个身子：“小心点儿啊，前两天刚有人从这儿滑下去”。楼梯的确又窄又陡，每层台阶上还溜边儿放着一只只鞋子，匡威帆布鞋、板鞋、皮鞋，对应着我脚下一步一步的“嘎吱嘎吱”。

登顶之后，我抬起身向左一瞥，惊呼出来：这里怎么堆满了东西！而且几乎全都是木头做的！柜子摆满了大小不一的木雕、玩具以及无法辨识的奇形怪状的物品。一进门就能看到巨大的木头人偶，它有爆炸头、深眼眶和小眼睛，身体上镶嵌着一块屏幕。工作室里有好多书架，上面紧紧排列着各种画册，日文、英文、中文都有。墙面上挂着面具，也贴满了卡片和照片。总之，这儿好像没什么空白的角落——天花板上会垂下一架鸟笼，地板上升起喷泉一般的毛毛灯。桌子上也似乎有不同的工程在进行着，一堆剪纸，一摞书，一些散落的积木。地上溜边儿站着一列矮矮的木头玩偶，各有各的模样。

在这间大约 30 平方米的工作室，一些莫可名状、来自世界不同角落的物品，交杂拥攘，似乎正在交换着彼此的信息。小龙花也是一个“莫可名状”的人。他画漫画、教动画、做设计、捏泥塑、拼木偶、拍照片、自出版、淘旧货、探废墟——这些事情中有的让他成为了教师，有的让他找到了一群志同道合的伙伴，有的发展成了在美术馆里出现的“艺术作品”，有的就是因为——他喜欢！他在世界里悠游、探险，碰到的宝物也会被他带回这间工作室。到小龙花的工作室做客，最先问出的一句话常常不是“你最近怎么样”，而是忍不住拿起一件东西问，“这是什么？”这间小小的阁楼工作室是许多隐秘世界的交叉之处，它又仿佛是一个创作者完整的世界，所有的经历、喜爱和好奇心会在这里找到对应之物。在这里，小龙花一直在玩耍和创造。

LEAP 你是什么时候搬到这间工作室的？当时是什么契机呢？

小龙花 2015 年左右，当时家里东西越堆越多了，就想租一间工作室。

LEAP 这里有好几张桌子，可以说说你平常在工作室里做什么吗？

小龙花 我常常好几个项目一起做，在不同桌子之间穿梭。一进门这里的大桌子可以铺开很多大的纸张，可以摊开书看，用电脑，和朋友围着聊天，还有用来做切割。斜屋顶下面的桌子最近用来做“寻谣计划”上海部分的设计，我有很多剪纸、镂空之类的手工活都在这里进行，凌乱一点也没关系。另外还有靠窗的位置，这里有张小一点的木工桌。

LEAP 感觉这个工作室不会让人觉得要对工作严肃以待，而是会让人首先觉得“太好玩了”。这些玩具、器具有的是新做的、艺术家的作品，有的是你捡拾回来的。但它们一起放在工作室里之后，能感受到你在它们身上看到的共通的东西，它们像是一些野生的、不循规蹈矩的、奇怪的生命体。

小龙花 我很喜欢收集。这十几年上海因为拆迁、重建，变化特别大，会有很多废墟和旧货市场，我喜欢去寻宝。有时候在路上碰到了很好玩的，比如你面前的青蛙，就是一个老奶奶用那种很便宜的纸箱绑带做成的，在路边卖，我就很想带回来。你现在椅子上的橡胶垫子，像棋盘一样有很多方格，它是我在广西的时候发现的糖厂里用的模具。

LEAP 这些收集好像也让你和世界有很多真切的、通过物体的联系。你会觉得自己也是个收藏家吗？

小龙花 我算是一个“集宝者”吧哈哈！日本的《太阳》杂志你知道吗？（LEAP：没听过！）《太阳》是很有名的日本老牌出版社平凡社在 1960 年代做的月刊，后来出了很多个系列。这本的主题“集宝者”就是我们平常说的“收藏家”，但是它这里的收藏家每个人选择的线索都特别怪，比如横尾忠则收集的都是半躺着的小雕像，还有的人收集在海上和河里的漂浮物，家里还放了一条木船。这些都不算世俗意义上很贵重的东西，但是这些藏家会觉得有意思，是“宝”。

LEAP 来聊聊你的这间工作室吧。上次你说过这间阁楼是亲人的房子。我刚才还看到这条弄堂里的第一栋楼上有一个标识，写着那栋楼是你的外公、画家贺友直先生的故居。

小龙花 对，我妈妈一家以前住在前面第一栋楼。我外公从小在宁波无依无靠，是舅舅带到他上海来



“木头人”系列，2019 年
木、塑料、金属、纸、陶瓷

“Wood Man” series, 2019
Wood, plastic, metal, paper, and ceramic

的。按外公的话说，他来上海时两手空空，“无立锥之地”，什么活都干过。因为他小时候在村子里画过年画，后来就在上海进了连环画的作坊当学徒，后来才进入了上海人民美术出版社工作。巨鹿路这片区域是出版社和文艺界人士的聚集地，他在 20 世纪 50 年代的时候在这里安了家。我工作室在这栋楼其实最早是我爷爷家。我奶奶是一共有七个子女，这栋楼里长大，后来他们慢慢离开家，这间工作室是我从嬢嬢手里租下的。我爸妈算是青梅竹马，在一个弄堂长大，我也在附近不远的第一妇婴保健医院出生，从小长在这边。

LEAP 那你学艺术会不会也是受外公影响呢？

小龙花 小时候我和几个兄弟一起和外公学画。小时候培训班里还是教国画，就是“如何画牛”“如何画虎”这种系列，但是外公就让我不要看这种书。他其实管的还是比较松，因为他特别忙，没空管。但是我会去看外公画画，能直接看到一个老法师在干什么，他哪一个步骤是怎么做的，还有整个完整的过程。虽然外公原则上不允许他画画的时候别人在旁边，但我小时候比较安静一些，能看一会儿。但也只能看一会儿——勾线、白描其实非常磨人，看到我憋不住、想说话了，我就走了。

LEAP 那你自己画画会觉得磨人吗？外公会不会也教你画连环画？

小龙花 后来自己画了以后，慢慢地能体会这里边的一些乐趣。去公园的时候，外公会教我怎么写生，怎么捕捉人物，包括一些记事和记场景的口诀。

LEAP 这个方法是什么呢？

小龙花 就是把它变成关键词。比如说你们刚才来的时候进到三楼，对吧？那就是一个赤红色斑驳的门框，门上面是有这个铁护栏的。那我的记忆可能是我下雨到家的时候，最开心的就是把伞临时的挂在这个铁护栏上，然后掏出钥匙、开锁，就很舒服。把这些场景变成这种可描述的、特别直白的语言，不加形容词，就可以把它记录下来。速写的时候，因为人很快就会走掉，你必须几秒钟解决问题，只抓最狠的特征（比如说关节的几个部位），还要把握人的整体状态。

LEAP 好厉害！这个居然是你小时候的游戏。

小龙花 对，就是一种训练法。外公因为没有正规学过绘画，所以他特别想我去系统学习绘画。但我高中和初中时在素描的预备班，其实有点不适应，会有时候翘课跑出来，但是外公还会来查岗。

LEAP 你大学在上海大学学了油画，这是当时最正统的艺术专业，应该也是顺应了外公的心愿？

小龙花 对，虽然我外公知道自己艺术的根源和出处（他有一本自传式的连环画就叫作《自我民间来》），但他心里一直希望自己能受过正统的训练，也希望我能如此。既然当时大家都觉得这种写实、素描是未来最好的方向，他就会让我去学，不要重复他自己野路子。这里面很矛盾，有时候他也会说，“艺术没法学出来”“学院教不出艺术家”“艺术家不一定要去学校”。

LEAP 当时你一定很难过，不过你现在的艺术创作里没有很多学院训练的影子。

小龙花 其实我一直都有自己的出口，可以给你看看！（小龙花从柜子里拿出高中时的课本，翻开、指着中间的日本动漫风格的小插画。）当时的课本上我都画满了，会编各种各样的故事，比如一些奇奇怪怪的、同学被切成两半什么的。我还会在书里画连载漫画，都用班里同学的那些素材。而且我的书永远不在我自己这儿，比如说老师点名让我起来练念一段课文，我连书都没有——因为我的书在班里传阅。所以那时候应试的痛苦，都在这里面缓解了。

LEAP 这其实是在很困难和贫乏的时刻，用想象力让自己逃脱，而且还带着大家一起逃。讲故事好像也是一直你很喜欢在创作里运用的，很多故事也来自你的生活。

小龙花 有时候同学聚会，我总会讲起来以前哪个同学做过的事儿，他们当时穿的衣服。他们都忘了，但我还记着！我从小就爱看滑稽戏和相声，比如最知名的《三毛学生意》（1958）和《七十二家房客》（1958）。我喜欢逗乐，捕捉生活中像喜剧的部分。

LEAP 你在观察生活的时候，就已经觉得很有乐趣了。

小龙花 没错，我会自然而然记下来，把它变成段子以后不断地讲，还会画出来。小时候家里还有双卡录音机，可以一边说话，一边让磁带录音。我就会把自己讲的相声录下来。

LEAP 小时候也会看奥特曼这些动画吗？

小龙花 动画是我其实从小就喜欢了，特别崇拜上海美术电影制片厂的一些动画。当时外公也推崇这些动画，但他说不要看日本的东西，他觉得手冢治虫开创那套日本的动画制作都是商业模式，只是动动胳膊、动动嘴，靠分镜去做效果。但是现在反观美术制片厂的作品，我觉得它其实是美术片，跟今天的卡通或者说动漫有距离。但是我一直很喜欢日本的动漫，小时候甚至还会做很多自己的玩具。

LEAP 做什么样的玩具？



“木头人”系列，2019年
木、塑料、金属、纸、皮革

“Wood Man” series, 2019
Wood, plastic, metal, paper, and leather

小龙花 （拿出一个纸盒子，里面是他从小学到大学画在纸片上的动画角色。）小时候刚开始看到日本的漫画书，就很想买到这些角色的玩具，买不到就只能自己做。因为漫画都是黑白的，所以在画颜色什么时候也没有什么参照，很久之后才发现自己涂错了。

LEAP 这也太好玩了，留到现在也特别珍贵。你好像在很多事情里都能找到乐趣，又做得很认真。

小龙花 的确是，如果没有乐趣，我觉得一件事情就很难坚持下来。

LEAP 那学油画的时候怎么坚持下来的？

小龙花 那时候想得很简单。我一直喜欢动画，但我觉得大学四年学油画可以打基础。我能学油画里的技术，对材料的研究，还有造型能力。有了这些能力我可以干别的事儿。所以大学一毕业，我就和油画拜拜了，直接去了北京。

LEAP 那时候是 2004 年，你去了中国传媒大学的动画系进修，但并不是作为正式学生。

小龙花 我当时就说我一定不要做研究生，我一定不要再考试了，就是想去学手艺，学动画。而且一到北京，空间就突然变大了，没人认识你，你可以做实验，尝试塑造一些和原来不同的人格。当时的北京又是打口碟和盗版 DVD 的天下，货源特别多，走私的、外贸的，一下子全都是没听说过的名字。我每个月就是生活费 200 块打到饭卡里，有饭吃了，其他的就用来买 CD、碟片、旧杂志。同学之间还互相换，我看完的片儿借给你，你借给我，大家一起看，氛围就有了。

LEAP 那时候的一些碟片和杂志你应该现在也还留着？感觉你收东西的方向也特别多。

小龙花 当然留着！那时候买碟也像打关游戏一样，不仅得摸清楚哪儿有卖的，而且还得慢慢来，和卖家有来有往几回。他下次可能就会让你去门店里再进一道门，进到另外一个房间，给你看一批不同的货。当时信息带来的震撼很巨大，人就会特别钻进去。我感觉很多 80 后都会和我一样爱囤东西，可能一方面我们在文化上是挨过饿的，另外一方面也是要面对笼罩在文化事物上的巨大的不确定性。可能哪一天，你就

再也联系不上你一直买碟的贩子了。但好处是我们会把自己锻炼得非常敏锐，能从那些蛛丝马迹里面找到一些信息管道的突破口。

LEAP 你后来回了上海，作为作者参与了漫画合集《CULT 青年的选择》（第一部和第二部分别在 2007 年和 2008 年面世）和《SC 漫画》的创作。当时你的漫画、插画都做得很不错，后来又是因为什么原因开始去这些三维的雕塑、装置的呢？可能还得先问问你，你怎么称呼或者定义它们？

小龙花 我查了一下，我做的这些可能叫“object art”，就是“物件的艺术”。大概在 2010 年前后，当时一方面是我爱人去北京学习书籍装帧，我一个人在家、空间变大了，我就可以囤更多的垃圾（笑），没人管我，我也可以让整个家变成一个工作室。我就开始用回收的废旧木材，做一些立体的东西，希望可以摆脱原来的习气。我之前画插图太多了，但我不满足于大多数时间只是重复某些技巧。

LEAP 哈哈，结果伴侣回来之后得另找地方了。

小龙花 没错，才有了这间工作室。

LEAP 当时怎么想到做“大迁徙”这个系列的？它们更像是一些不存在在这个世界上、你造出来的奇怪生命体。

小龙花 我一开始像拼积木一样把物料凑在一起，有点像凑一个造型。当时拼出一种动物、一种人形，就很得意了。但玩了一阵子就会看到这条路线的尽头，就会觉得这还不够好玩，还得设置另一个游戏的方式。“大迁徙”就是从这个里边长出来的。

LEAP 这里有一些意识，就是不让自己做得太过熟练。你的很多作品也有点像“demo”，不会追求特别漂亮的状态。

小龙花 日本有一个替代性的艺术学校叫“美学校”（Bigakko），有一位从学校毕业的学生叫南伸坊写的《我的插画史 1960-1980》，就是讲到不能太迷恋快速掌握一个技巧。他说画画的时候一定要小心：“不能进步得太快！”“要小心进步！”



漫画《龙珠》《阿拉蕾》《幽游白书》中角色的纸制玩具
由小龙花在小学和初中时制作

Paper toys based on characters from manga Dragon Ball, Ararai, and YuYu Hakusho
Handmade by Xiao Longhua during elementary and junior high school

LEAP 你好像受日本文化的影响真得很深，而且绝对不仅仅是动漫的方面。

小龙花 日本很多出版社对一些话题的研究和历史梳理做得特别好。我感觉它们像是给了我一个望远镜，能看到很远的地方，也像是一种跳岛，能跳去很多不同的地方。

LEAP 来说说你的玩具收藏吧，你收藏了很多日本昭和时代的玩具，特别是像特摄片（特殊摄影）《奥特曼》和《哥斯拉》的系列。

小龙花 对，小时候我在电视里看过播出的《奥特曼》，是从这里发展出来了对特摄片的兴趣。

LEAP 你上次提到奥特曼这个形象其实并不是完全凭空创造出来的。

小龙花 我觉得奥特曼和日本早期的绳文人身上的刺青很像！日本还有一位造像师圆空和尚（1632-1695），他一辈子雕了几千尊的佛像，但他的佛像特别野，不像那种日本传统的、文气的雕像。奥特曼的嘴巴就很像圆空佛像的嘴形。

LEAP 跟你聊天感觉你有好多线索和题目啊，好像哪一个都可以作为一个新方向聊下去。

小龙花 哈哈可能就没有所谓的“垂直领域”。我有很多触点，在这些点之组成的神经网络里不断移动是我比较舒服的状态。我喜欢有点模棱两可的事情，研究也是从兴趣还有自己的创作出发，这样能看到很多喜欢的事物之间的联系。

LEAP 我总感觉你好像在信息爆炸或者说后现代的状态里，你找到了很多自己拼贴和重组事物的线索。但你不会希望自己变成一个专家吗？或者在某个方面做得特别好，比方说在当代艺术里？

小龙花 不会。我从来没有考虑过我跟当代艺术系统的关系，因为没有选择去靠它生活。我去美术馆、画廊，关注的更多还是艺术家本人和作品。对我自己来说，我会更想让我做出来的东西跟我的生活有关系。到最后，艺术还是种生活——不是那种杂志上宣传的消费主义的生活方式，而是很简单，你还是得爽啊，对吧？你一辈子来这儿，可以创造一个非常棒的自己的生活，能在其中获得满足。有些朋友老是说我，“你怎么活的特别潇洒”，其实我的生活里也并不是





小龙花工作室里的一个书橱
第二层书架上摆放着安乐安作、本秀康、Grody Shogun、日野日出志等艺术家的玩具作品

A bookshelf in the studio, with toys by Anraku Ansaku, Hideyasu Moto, Grody Shogun, Hideshi Hino and other artists on the middle shelf

模图一雄版本的初代《奥特曼》玩具系列与逆柱意味裂的怪兽玩具系列

Toys of the first generation of *Ultraman* (Umezu Kazuo version) and monster toys designed by Imiri Sakabashira

他们形容的那样。我只是没有背负太宏大的事情，扛个大旗什么的不是我的路子。当然要有扛大旗的人，但是我绝对不是扛大旗的那一个。

LEAP 那会不会想把现在尺度比较小的东西，用更大的空间、经费去制作出来呢？

小龙花 我不觉得我东西的纯度低。我可能更想做个杂家，就像张光宇一样，可以做很实用的设计，也可以做特别自我的创作，甚至不用外界去认可。两个我都想要，但是只偏一方，我觉得也不太行。有点像那种海鬣蜥，可以在沼泽和海底出没，特别冷的时候还得晒太阳。

LEAP 这样能轮转起来，两边还可以互相参照。

小龙花 是的。我很喜欢外公画的插图，它们特别逗，虽然外公有很多大部头的作品，但是我很喜欢他给报纸画的一些小故事。那些地方我觉得它构图很实验，玩得很开，思维非常活跃。即便是他的大部头里，我也更喜欢那些偏门的小人物。我觉得那是更还原他本人质地的一个东西。

LEAP 聊来聊去，好像总会聊回到外公。

小龙花 的确，因为我现在很多的选择也好，认知也好，其实还是跟外公有很大关系的。我觉得他给我的最好的一件事，就是他让我不在乎很多东西了。因为我已经看到过，他已经到了很高的行业和社会里的位置，我看到过他的状态了。那你说，我还会对那种位置有渴望吗？

LEAP 外公会希望你到更高的位置上吗？

小龙花 他后来就是说，你别太累了。

小龙花 1982 年出生于上海，目前在上海工作和生活。小龙花的创作主要探索打破现成品的形状、质感、空间，并借此发现其背后的联系和新的创作可能性，即捕捉带有质感的、或立体或平面的形状以及形状间即兴产生的关系和叙事。

贺友直先生（1922-2016）是浙江宁波北仑新碇人，但一生大部分时间生活在上海。作为著名的连环画家，他尤其以白描见长。终其一生，贺友直画过五个版本的《小二黑结婚》，承担了《山乡巨变》《朝阳沟》等等广为传播的宣传连环画的绘制工作，也在世纪之交时画过旧上海的《三百六十行》。他曾任中央美术学院教授、中国美术家协会第四届常务理事等职。2022 年，上海人民美术出版社出版了 26 卷的《贺友直全集》。贺友直先生也是小龙花的外公。

Passing by numerous cafés, flower shops, small restaurants, and boutique stores along Julu Road in Shanghai, I found the address and turned into an unassuming *longtang* (alleyway in Shanghai). I stopped in front of a small concrete building, rang the doorbell, and entered a dim but clean hallway. Climbing the wooden stairs step by step to the second floor, I couldn't help but squint and observe the objects nearby, such as a complete set of *Picture Story Books of Revolutionary Model Operas* placed on an old wooden cabinet. At this moment, Xiao Longhua's cheerful voice called out, "You're here! This way, this way." I followed the voice to a corner on the second floor and looked up to see Xiao Longhua halfway out of a door frame above the stairs. "Be careful, someone just slipped here a couple of days ago," he warned. Indeed, the stairs were narrow and steep, with shoes placed along the edges of each step—Converse sneakers, skate shoes, and leather shoes—accompanying the creaking sound of my every step.

After reaching the top, I glanced to the left and exclaimed in surprise, "So cluttered! And everything is made of wood!" Cabinets were filled with wooden sculptures, toys, and various unidentifiable odd objects. As soon as you enter, you see a giant wooden puppet with an afro, deep-set eyes, and small eyes, with a screen embedded in its body (the work's title is "/ \", the shape of the sculpture's two arms). The studio had many bookshelves tightly packed with books and catalogues in Japanese, English, and Chinese. Masks hung on walls, which were also covered with cards and photos. In short, there seemed to be no empty corners here—birdcages hung from the ceiling, and a fountain-like lamp rose from the floor. Different projects seemed to be in progress on the tables: a pile of paper cuttings, a stack of books, and scattered building blocks. Along the edges of the floor stood a row of short "wooden men," each with a unique appearance.

In this approximately 30-square-meter studio, a mix of indescribable items from different corners of the world seemed to be exchanging information with each other. Xiao Longhua himself is also an "indescribable" person. He draws comics, teaches animation, designs, sculpts clay, assembles puppets, takes photos, hunts for antiques, explores ruins, and creates artist books. Some of these activities have made him a teacher, some have brought him like-minded friends, some have developed

into "artworks" displayed in galleries, and some just happened because—he likes them! He roams and adventures in the world, bringing back treasures to his studio. When visiting Xiao Longhua's studio, the first question often isn't "How have you been?" but rather, as one picks up an item, "What is this?" This small attic studio is a crossroads of diverse hidden worlds, and it is also a creator's complete world, where all curiosities and explorations are met with their corresponding objects. Here, Xiao Longhua is always playing.

- LEAP** When did you move to this studio? What was the opportunity at the time?

- XL** Around 2015, when more and more things piled up at home, I wanted to rent a studio.

- LEAP** There are several desks here, what do you usually do in the studio?

- XL** I often work on several projects together, shuttling between different desks. The big desk by the front door can be used to lay out large items, so you can spread out books, use the computer, chat with friends, and do paper-cutting. The desk under the pitched roof was recently used to design the Shanghai part of the Nursery Rhyme Program initiated by the singer Xiao He, and I do a lot of paper cutting and carving here, so it doesn't matter if it's a little messy. There's also a smaller woodworking desk by the window.

- LEAP** The studio doesn't feel like one has to be serious here, it feels like it's "so much fun" in the first place. Some of the collected toys and instruments are newly made, some are the works of artists, and some are abandoned things that you have picked up. But when they are put together in the studio, one can feel the commonality you see in them. They are like some wild, non-conformist, strange life forms.

- XL** I love collecting. Over the past decade or so, Shanghai has undergone significant changes due to demolition and reconstruction, resulting in many ruins and



小花工作室一角
工作室招牌上的手写字由小花根据 20 世纪美术字设计

A corner of Xiao Longhua's studio
Xiao Longhua designed the hand-written signage for the studio based on vintage calligraphy of the 20th century.



“木头人”，2020 年
木头、金属、橡胶、草、纸

“Wood Man” series, 2020
Wood, metal, rubber, grass, and paper

thrift markets, perfect for treasure hunting. Sometimes, I come across something intriguing on the road. For example, the frog in front of you was made by a granny using cheap cardboard scraps and sold by the roadside—I couldn’t resist bringing it back. The rubber mat on the chair you’re sitting on has a checkerboard pattern; it is actually a mold used in a sugar factory that I found in Guangxi.

LEAP All this collecting also seems to give you a lot of real, object-based connections to the world. Would you consider yourself a collector as well?

XL I’m kind of a “treasure hunter” haha! Do you know the Japanese magazine *Taiyo* (*The Sun*)? (LEAP: I’ve never heard of it.) *Taiyo* is a very famous monthly magazine that was published in the 1960s by Heibonsha, an old Japanese publisher, and it’s been published in many series since then. The theme of this one is “treasure hunters”, which is what we usually call “collectors,” but the clues that each of the collectors in this book chooses are particularly strange. For example, Tadanori Yokoo collects half-lying figurines, while another treasure hunter collects floating objects from the sea and river, and keeps a wooden boat in their house. These are not expensive things in the worldly sense, but these collectors find them interesting, and they are “treasures.”

LEAP Let’s talk about this studio. Last time you said this loft was part of a family house. I just saw a sign on the first building in this alley that says that building is the former residence of your grandfather, the painter He Youzhi’s former residence.

XL Yes, my mom’s family used to live in the first building in front. My mom’s dad He Youzhi grew up in Ningbo with no one to turn to and was brought to Shanghai by his uncle. According to Grandpa, he came to Shanghai empty-handed, “without a place to stand,” and did all kinds of work. Since he drew folk paintings for the

Spring Festival in his village as a child, he later apprenticed at a workshop of picture story books in Shanghai and eventually joined the Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House. The area around Julu Road was a hub for publishers and literary figures, and he settled here in the 1950s. The building where my studio is located was actually my paternal grandfather's house. My dad's mom, who had seven children, raised them all in this building. Over time, they gradually moved out, and I ended up renting this studio from my aunt. My parents grew up in the same *longtang* and knew each other from childhood, and I was born at the First Maternity and Infant Healthcare Hospital not far from here. So I grew up in this area.

LEAP And would you say your study of art was influenced by He Youzhi as well?

XL When I was young, some of my cousins and I learned painting from Grandpa. I took Chinese painting courses, which

included books like *How to Draw a Cow* and *How to Draw a Tiger*, but Grandpa told me not to read those books. He was actually quite relaxed about teaching us because he was very busy and didn't have much time. However, I would watch him paint, and I got to see firsthand what an old master was doing, how he did each step, and the entire process. Although Grandpa usually didn't allow anyone to be around while he was painting, I was quieter as a child and could watch for a while. But I could only watch for a short time—drawing the outlines was quite tedious. When I found myself getting restless and wanting to make a sound, I would leave.

LEAP Do you find it onerous to draw on your own? Did Grandpa teach you to draw picture story books too?

XL After I started to draw on my own, I slowly discovered some of the joy of drawing. When I went to the park, my grandfather would teach me how to sketch, and how to capture the characters, including some mnemonics for memorizing scenes.

LEAP What is this method?

XL It's just turning it into keywords. Let's say you guys just came in and went onto the third floor, right? That's a reddish mottled door frame, and above the door is this iron guardrail. So my memory is that when I arrived home in the rain, I was ecstatic to hang my umbrella temporarily on this iron rail, and then pull out my key, unlock the door, and that's comfortable. I can record these scenes by turning them into a describable and particularly straightforward language without adding adjectives. When sketching, because people go away very quickly, you have to react in a few seconds, catching only the most distinct features (like a few parts of the joints) and also grasping the overall state of the person.

LEAP That's awesome! This is actually a game from when you were a kid.



小龙花面前的桌子上摆着他为寻谣计划之“海上寻谣”制作的插图与绘本。

On the desk in front of Xiao Longhua are the illustrations and picture books he made for “Searching for Nursery Rhymes in Shanghai,” part of the “Nursery Rhyme Programme.”



“大迁徙”系列，2016–2019 年
“Massive Migration” series, 2016–2019

XL	Yes, it is a kind of training method. Grandpa didn't have any formal drawing lessons, so he especially wanted me to learn drawing systematically. But when I was in the preparatory class for sketching in high school and middle school, the training was a bit difficult. I would sometimes skip school and run out, but Grandpa would still come to check on me.		the pain of test-taking in those days was eased in that.
LEAP	You majored in oil painting at Shanghai University and painting was the most orthodox discipline at that time. It must have been in accordance with your grandfather's wish?	LEAP	It's really about using your imagination to let yourself escape in a very difficult moment, and taking everyone with you. Storytelling seems to be something you've always loved to use in your work, and a lot of it comes from your life.
XL	Yes, although Grandpa knew the roots and provenance of his art (he had an autobiographical picture story book just called <i>I Come from the Folk</i>), he always wished in his heart that he had been systematically trained, and he wished that I could be too. Since everyone at the time felt that this kind of realism and sketching was the best direction for the future, he would let me learn it and not repeat his own wild ways. There were a lot of contradictions here, and sometimes he would say, "There is no way to learn art," "Academies can't teach artists" and "Artists don't have to go to school."	XL	Sometimes at class reunions, I talk about what my classmates used to do and what they wore at the time. They have all forgotten, but I still remember! I grew up with Shanghainese burlesque and comedy, such as the most well-known <i>Three Hairs Learning Business</i> (1958) and <i>72 Houseguests</i> (1958). I love to tease and capture the parts of life that are comedic.
LEAP	It must have been difficult for you at the time, but you don't show a lot of art school training in your art now.	LEAP	You're already having fun observing life.
XL	Actually, I've always had my own outlet. Let me show it! (Xiao Longhua took out his high school textbook from a locker, flipped it open, and pointed to the Japanese anime-style vignette in the center.) I drew all over the textbooks at that time, and would make up all kinds of stories, such as something weird, or a classmate getting cut in half or something. I would also draw serialized comics in my books, all using my classmates' real experiences as materials. And I never had my book to myself. For example, if the teacher asked me to get up and read a passage, I didn't even have my book—because my book was being passed around the class. So all	XL	Yes, I would spontaneously write an interesting scene down, turn it into a paragraph and keep telling it, and then draw it. When I was a kid, we had a dual-cassette recorder at home, so I could talk while the tape was recording. I would record my own comedy.
		LEAP	Did you watch <i>Ultraman</i> and those animations as a kid?
		XL	Animation is something I've loved since I was a kid, and I especially admire some of the animations from Shanghai Animation Film Studio (SAFS). At that time, Grandpa also thought highly of these animations, but he said not to look at Japanese things. He felt that the Japanese animation production started by Osamu Tezuka is a business model. It just moves the arms, moves the mouth, and relies on subplot to do the effects. But now, looking back at the works of SAFS, I think they are actually art films, and different from today's cartoons or anime, just like how art films and popular TV dramas are different. But I've always loved Japanese anime, and when I was a kid, I even made a lot of my own toys.

LEAP	What kind of toys did you make?		smugglers and traders, all of the artists' names were unfamiliar to me. I would just save 200 Yuan from my monthly living expenses for meals, and the rest was spent on CDs, DVDs, and old magazines. Students would also swap their collections with each other. I'd lend a movie I finished watching, and they'd lend me theirs, so we could watch together. The atmosphere was very enriching.
XL	(Took out a cardboard box containing animated characters he drew on pieces of paper from elementary school through college.) When I was a kid, and first started reading Japanese comic books, I wanted to buy toy models of these characters, and if I couldn't buy them, I had to make them myself. Because the comics were all in black and white, there was little reference when it came to drawing colors, and it was a long time before I realized I had painted them wrong.	LEAP	You should still have some of the DVDs and magazines from that time? It feels like you collected things in a particular direction as well.
LEAP	It's so much fun too. It's also especially precious to keep them till now. You seem to find the fun in so many things and approach them with such seriousness.	XL	Of course I kept them! In those days, buying DVDs was like playing a game of Guess Who, not only did you have to feel out where they were sold, but you had to take your time and go back and forth with the dealer. The next time you visit the store, he might just ask you to go through another door, into another room, and show you a different batch of DVDs. At that time, I was shocked when exposed to new information, and I just dived in. I feel like a lot of people born in the 1980s love hoarding as much as I do, probably because on the one hand we're culturally starved, and on the other hand we have to deal with the huge uncertainty that hangs over cultural items. There may come a day when you can no longer contact the dealer. But the upside is that we have honed ourselves to be very sharp and able to find some clues to reconnect with the information pipeline.
XL	Indeed, I find it hard to stick with something if it's not fun.		
LEAP	So how did you stick with it when you were learning to paint?		
XL	It was a simple thought at the time. I've always loved animation, but I believed that four years of oil painting in college would provide a solid foundation. I could learn techniques in oil painting, the application of materials, and the ability to draw figures. With these skills, I could explore other areas. So, as soon as I graduated from university, I said goodbye to oil painting and went directly to Beijing.		
LEAP	It was 2004, and you went to the animation department of the Communication University of China, but not as a formal student.	LEAP	You went back to Shanghai and contributed to the comics compilations <i>CULT Youth's Choice</i> (Part 1 and Part 2 came out in 2007 and 2008 respectively) and <i>SC Comics</i> . At that time, you were doing very well in comics and illustration, what made you venture into these three-dimensional sculptures and installations? It might also be important to ask you first, how do you call or define them?
XL	At that time, I told myself that I would not pursue postgraduate or take any more exams. I just wanted to learn the craft and study animation. As soon as I arrived in Beijing, the space around me suddenly expanded. No one knew me, and I could experiment and try to shape new personalities different from my original ones. Back then, Beijing was a haven for pirated and bootleg DVDs, and there were many	XL	I looked it up, and what I'm doing might be called "object art," that is, "the art of



漫画《龙珠》《阿拉蕾》《幽游白书》中角色的纸制玩具
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Paper toys based on characters from manga Dragon Ball, Ararai, and YuYu Hakusho
Handmade by Xiao Longhua during elementary and junior high school

objects.” Around 2010, when my partner went to Beijing to study bookbinding, I was alone at home and had more space, so I could hoard more “garbage” (laughs). No one watched me, so I could turn the whole apartment into a studio. I then started to use recycled scrap wood and make three-dimensional things, hoping to get out of my old track. I had been illustrating too much, but I wasn’t content to just repeat certain techniques.

LEAP It turns out you had to find another place when your partner got back.

XL That’s right, that’s why I came to this studio.

LEAP How did you come up with the idea for the series “Massive migration”? They’re more like strange life forms you created that don’t exist in the world.

XL I started by putting the materials together like building blocks, and forming a shape. At that time, I was very proud of putting together something and making it look like an animal or a human. But after a while, I would see the end of the route, and I felt that it wasn’t fun enough. I had to set up another way of playing. “Massive migration” grew out of this.

LEAP There’s some sense of not letting yourself become too skilled. Much of your work is a bit like “demos” in that you don’t strive for a particularly beautiful state.

XL There is an alternative art school in Japan called Bigakko. One of the students who graduated from the school, Minami Shinbo, who wrote *My Illustration History 1960–1980* (2019), talks about not being too obsessed with mastering a skill too quickly. He said that you must be careful when drawing: “You must not progress too fast!” “Be careful of progress!”

LEAP You seem to be really influenced by Japanese culture, and definitely not just in terms of anime.



在摆放玩具的小龙花
工作室东西很多，但每件物品都有自己的位置。

Xiao Longhua arranging toys
The studio is stuffed, but each item has its own place.

XL Many Japanese publishers do a particularly good job of researching and narrating the history of specific topics. They give me telescopes to see far away, and reading them is like island-hopping. I can be shuttled to many different places.

LEAP Tell us about your toy collection. You collected a lot of toys from the Showa era in Japan, especially toys from Japanese special effects (*tokusatsu*) cinema like *Ultraman* and *Godzilla*.

XL Yes, as a kid I watched the airing of *Ultraman* on TV, and that's where I developed my interest.

LEAP You mentioned last time that the image of Ultraman wasn't created completely out of air.

XL I think that Ultraman is very similar to the tattoos on the early Japanese Jomon people! There was another Japanese statue maker, the monk Enkū (1632-1695), who carved thousands of Buddha statues in his lifetime, but his statues were particularly wild, unlike the traditional. Ultra-

man's mouth is very much like the shape of the mouth on a Buddha statue by Enkū.

LEAP There are so many threads and topics going on when chatting with you, and any one of them could be a new direction for discussion.

XL I probably don't have a so-called "specialized area." I have many points of interest, and it's comfortable for me to keep moving in the neural network formed by these points. I enjoy things that are a bit ambiguous, and my research is also based on my interests and my own creation. I can see the connections between many of my favorites.

LEAP I feel that in an information explosion or postmodern state, you have found a lot of cues to collage and reorganize. But wouldn't you want to become an expert? Or particularly good within a system, let's say in contemporary art?

XL No. I have never considered relating myself to the contemporary art system because I chose not to live by it. When I

小龙花今年开始收集的万代一番赏《七龙珠》系列手办

Toys from Bandai Ichiban's "Dragon Ball" series, which Xiao Longhua started collecting this year.



图中包含表弟小时候玩的手掌游戏机、在嘉定区的废墟捡的灵芝、柏林的车票，以及怪兽黑多拉手办受伤眼睛的替换件。

Displaying an old handheld game console once owned by Xiao Longhua's cousin, a ganoderma found in the ruins of Jiading District, tickets of Berlin's railway and a replacement for the injured eye of the Hedorah monster toy.



go to art museums and galleries, I focus more on the artists themselves and their works. For myself, I would prefer to make something related to my life. At the end of the day, art is still a part of life—not the consumerist lifestyle that magazines promote, and quite simply, you gotta have fun, right? You come to this world, you can create a really great life of your own and feel fulfilled. Some of my friends are always saying to me, “How could you live so freely?” and my life isn’t really like that. I just don’t hold onto grandiose meanings. Carrying a big flag or something grand is not my way. Of course there should be people who do that, but I am definitely not one of them.

Indeed, many of my choices and perceptions are deeply influenced by my grandfather. One of the greatest gifts he imparted me is that I am not concerned about many things. Having seen him reach a very high position in his professional field and in society, I’ve seen what it was like. So, as you can imagine, would I still desire that position?

LEAP So would you want to take something that’s smaller in scale now and reproduce it with more volume and funding?

XL I don’t think the purity of my stuff is lacking. I may prefer to be a hybrid artist, like Zhang Guangyu (1900–1965), who can do practical design as well as create for himself, even without external recognition. I want to do both, but I don’t think it’s a good idea to pick only one side. It’s kind of like the marine iguana, which can be found in swamps and under the sea, but still has to bask in the sun when it’s especially cold.

LEAP Both sides can benefit each other and be cross-referenced.

XL Yes. I love the illustrations Grandpa drew, they are particularly amusing. Although Grandpa made a lot of large works, I really liked some of the short stories he drew for the newspaper. Those were places where I thought Grandpa was very experimental with composition and he played with it with a very open mind. Even in his larger works, I prefer the offbeat little characters. I think that’s more of his own texture.

LEAP Our conversation always seems to circle back to your grandpa.

LEAP Would Grandpa have wanted you to get to a higher position?

XL Later he just said, don’t tire yourself out.

Xiao Longhua was born in 1982 in Shanghai, now working and living in Shanghai. He works in the fields of painting, comics and sculpture. Xiao Longhua explores the possibilities of new creations and interactions between materials based on their raw shapes, textures, colors and nature, seizing upon the impromptu relations and narrativity through them.

He Youzhi (1922–2016) was from Xinqi, Beilun, Ningbo, Zhejiang, but he spent most of his life in Shanghai. As a renowned artist of “lianhuanhua” (a traditional Chinese palm-sized cartoon books), he was especially known for his fine line drawing. Throughout his life, He Youzhi illustrated five versions of *Little Erhei Gets Married*, and was responsible for the widely disseminated propaganda picture story books such as *Great Changes in A Mountain Village* and *Chaoyang Valley*. At the turn of the century, he illustrated *The 360 Trades in Old Shanghai*. He served as a professor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts and an executive board member for the fourth session of the China Artists Association. In 2022, Shanghai People’s Fine Arts Publishing House published the 26-volume *Complete Works of He Youzhi*. He Youzhi is Xiaolonghua’s maternal grandfather.

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