



B

E

J

I

I

N

G

R

E

A

L

S

Han Bing
Tami Xiang
Hu Xiangqian
Li Xiaofei

M

Curated by
Tami Xiang & Darren Jorgensen

Opening:
Friday 10th February 2023
Exhibition continues:
11th February - 26th March 2023

Cover Image:
Li Xiaofei, *My Locker + Sisters*,
2018. Video Still.

BEIJING

REALISM

BEIJING REALISM 北京现实主义

Tree branches wanted to pierce through the sky,
But only managed to poke a few small holes.

Gu Cheng
树枝想去撕裂天空, 但却只戳了几个微小的窟窿
——顾城

Beijing Realism surveys Chinese artists of the twenty-first century who are making portraits of the life of peasants, students and migrant workers.

《北京现实主义》展示了21世纪的中国艺术家, 他们的作品正在为农民、学生和农民工的生活画像。

The eyes of those at the bottom of the Chinese economic and social system can see only stars in the night, and little beyond the long hours they spend in factories and schools.

处于中国经济和社会体制底层的人的眼睛只能看到黑夜中的星星, 而在他们除了工厂和学校度过的漫长时间之外, 几乎看不到什么。

In the faces of the pot makers of Li Xiaofei's *Chongming Island* (2015), and in the postures of the builders and migrant workers of Han Bing's *New Culture* series, it is possible to glimpse something of the feeling of daily life in the most industrialised country in the world.

从李晓飞的《崇明岛》(2015) 中制壶人的脸, 以及韩冰的《新文化》系列中建筑工人和农民工的姿势中, 可以窥见这个世界上工业化程度最高的国家的日常生活的一些触感。

As England had Charles Dickens and France had Gustav Courbet to capture the poverty and labour amidst the industrialisation of Europe in the nineteenth century, China has artists working with photography and video.

正如英国有查尔斯·狄更斯和法国有古斯塔夫·库尔贝来捕捉十九世纪欧洲工业化进程中的贫困和劳工一样, 中国也有艺术家在用摄影和录像作为媒介记录这一切。

The difference here is that the industrial workers of twenty-first century capitalism are invisible and separated by barriers of culture, language and global politics from people outside of China. Only Chinese artists are able to negotiate their way into factories and schools, and socially engage with the poorer people of China.

区别在于, 二十一世纪资本主义的产业工人是看不见的, 他们被文化、语言和全球政治的障碍与中国以外的人隔开。只有中国的艺术家能够通过交流进入工厂和学校, 并与中国的穷人进行社会接触。

Tami Xiang commissions her elderly subjects to buy ¥ 88 worth of goods, a month's worth of their pension, from the local store (in *Lucky 88*), and Hu Xiangquian returns to his old school to give the morning motivational speech to thousands of students in the grey, polluted air.

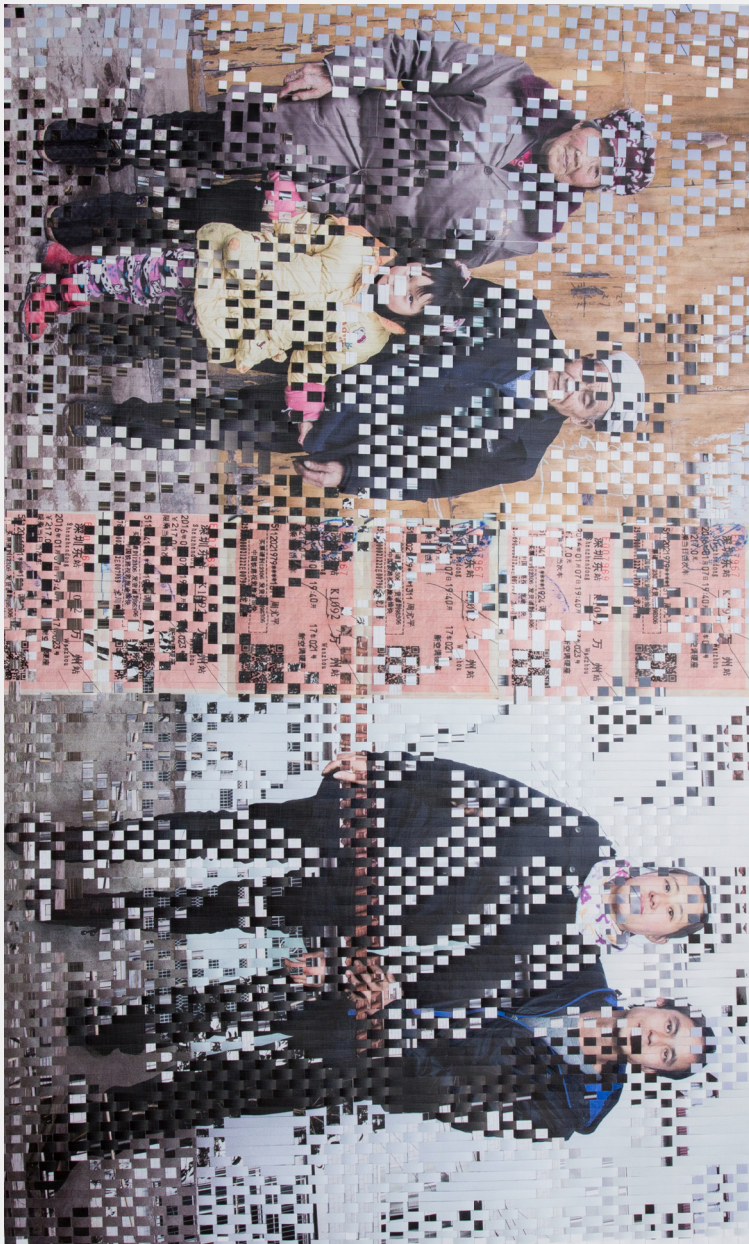
向承美给她故乡的老人每人88元到当地的商店购买价值88元的商品, 这大概是他们一个月的养老金 (2019年), 而胡向前回到他的老学校, 在灰蒙蒙的污染空气中向数千名学生做早上的激励演讲。

These works document an encounter with the lives of those left behind by the Chinese economy's race for prosperity, that has separated children from their parents, and workers from living fulfilling lives. Three generations of Chinese history, of immense change, plays itself out in the faces of these children, workers and elderly peasants.

这些作品记录了与那些被中国经济的繁荣竞赛所遗弃的人的生活境遇, 留守儿童与他们的父母分离, 工人无法过上充实的生活。中国三代人的历史, 巨大的变化, 在这些孩子、工人和老年农民的脸上上演。

Darren Jorgensen is an Associate Professor in the School of Design at the University of Western Australia. He lectures in art history.

戴伦·乔根森
戴伦·乔根森, 西澳大学设计学院
副教授, 教授艺术史。



Tami Xiang, *Family Portraits*, 2014-2018.



Li Xiaofei, *Chongming Island*, 2015. Video Still.



Hu Xiangqian, *Speech at the Edge of the World*, 2013. Video Still.



Tami Xiang, *Lucky 88*, 2019.



Tami Xiang, *Lucky 88*, 2019.



Li Xiaofei, *My Locker + Sisters*, 2018. Video Still.

PEASANTOGRAPHY: FAMILY PORTRAIT AND LUCKY 88 BY TAMI XIANG

《农民志.全家福》 和《农民志.幸福88》 ——文/向承美

Before I was born my mother had to hide from the government who wanted to force her to abort me under the one-child policy. First she hid in her sister's home in another province, but had to move to hide in the snowy forest because her mother-in-law believed that keeping a pregnant woman from another family will cause the host to be poor for a few years.

在我出生之前，我的母亲不得不躲避计划生育队伍。她先是躲在外省省的姐姐家里，但后来不得不搬到雪山森林里躲起来，因为她的婆婆认为，从留住别人家的孕妇会让主人家穷上几年。

I am a survivor of the one-child policy, but as an illegal birth was not eligible to apply for household registration (hukou). For many years, I felt I had nowhere to belong, and the neighbor always laughed at me that I was an illegal person (heihu). Hukou was always an issue in my little world. As I grew old, especially after I moved to the city for school, I found out that city people's hukou are different from people in rural area, which caused me to feel more inferior.

我是独生子女政策的幸存者，但由于是非法出生，没有资格申请户口。多年来，我觉得自己无处可归，邻居们总是嘲笑我是个黑户。在我的幼小世界里，户口一直是一个心结。随着年龄的增长，特别是在我搬到城里上学后，我发现城里人的户口与农村人的户口不同，这使我感到更加自卑。

After I moved to Australia to study photography, I realized that people have equal rights regardless of where they are from, which shocked me with the comparison to my childhood life experience. As a documentary photography student, the camera has changed my way of thinking. I started to use photography to express my feelings, my life, and the people around me, especially those people who are suffering. So I created a photography project, which features a few different series of works addressing the social issues in China caused by *hukou*.

在我到澳大利亚学习摄影后，我意识到，无论来自哪里，人们都有平等的权利，这与我童年的生活经历相比，令我震惊。作为一名纪实摄影学生，相机改变了我的思维方式。我开始用摄影来表达我的感受、我的生活和我周围的人，特别是那些正在受苦的人。所以我创作了一个摄影项目，其中有几个不同的系列作品，记录和强调了由户口引起的社会问题。

One series called *Family Portrait* documents some of the 63 million children who are left behind by their parents who travel to the cities to work. They cannot take their children with them because of the costs of housing them, and enrolling them in city schools. Instead, these children grow up with their grandparents or great-grandparents in the countryside while their parents work in the cities, and typically see their parents only once a year during the Chinese Spring Festival.

《全家福》系列记录了6300万因父母在城市工作而不得不留守乡村的留守儿童。由于住房和在城市学校就读的费用，他们不能带着孩子。相反，当他们的父母在城市工作时，这些孩子与他们的祖父母或曾祖父母在农村长大，通常每年只在中国的春节期间见到他们的父母一次。

Poor-quality housing conditions are another obstacle for migrant workers bringing their children to live with them. If they bring the children to the cities, looking after them and taking them to school is another issue while high costs in the cities make it unrealistic for them to bring the parents to the cities to take care of the children.

住房条件是农民工带着孩子一起生活的另一个障碍。如果他们把孩子带到城市，照顾他们和送他们上学是另一个问题，而城市的高成本使他们把父母带到城市照顾孩子是不现实的。

The grandparents who are bringing up these left-behind children receive ¥88 a month to live on, while people working in cities can earn dozens of times as much. The *Lucky 88* series addresses the living situation of the Chinese farmers in the countryside. I invited a group of elderly farmers from one village to buy whatever they would like to buy with 88 RMB and photographed them with all the objects in front of a red background. 这些留守儿童的祖父母每月可以得到88元的生活费，而在城市工作的人可以获得几十倍的养老金。《幸运88》系列讲述了中国农民在农村的生活状况。我邀请一个村庄的农村老人用88元买他们想买的东西，并在红色背景前拍摄他们与所有物品的合影。

From the images we can see what they bought. These elderly people are aged between 65 and 90 years. Some were born before the establishment of People's Republic of China. They have lived through the Great Leap Forward (1958-1961) which

caused more than 30 million people to die from starvation, and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) which caused violent chaos across the country in a chaos and millions of people died from the ten years violence.

从图片上我们可以看到他们买了什么。这些老人的年龄在65至90岁之间。有些人是在新中国成立之前出生的。他们经历了大跃进 (1958-1961年) 和文化大革命 (1966-1976年), 前者导致3000多万人死于饥饿, 后者导致全国各地一片混乱, 数百万人在十年的暴力中丧生。

In the interview, they memorized the days of hardship when they had to eat grass, tree barks and mud to survive. The reason they praise the Elderly Insurance Policy is that nowadays they get 88RMB extra in a peace era even they still have to work until they are unable to even some of them are 90 years old, not questioning the inequality and disparity between rural and urban people.

在采访中, 他们回忆起当年靠吃草、吃树皮和吃泥巴生存的艰难日子。他们之所以赞扬养老金政策, 是因为在和平年代, 他们可以得到88元的额外收入, 即使他们仍然要工作到无法工作, 甚至有些人已经90岁了, 他们并不质疑农村和城市人之间的不平等和差距。

Living in a different country after I have learnt so much about modern civilization, I cannot do anything to help the people in my hometown, however my art is a record of their life, a kind of monument.

在我接触了更多现代文明之后, 生活在一个不同的国家, 我无法帮助我故乡的人, 然而我的艺术是他们生活的记录, 是一种纪念碑。

Tami Xiang is a Perth based Chinese-Australian artist. She received a Masters of Fine Arts from the University of Western Australia (UWA) in 2019 and is currently undertaking a PhD by research there. Her work has been exhibited in Australia, Mainland China, France, Taiwan and the U.S. 向承美, 旅澳中国艺术家。西澳大学硕士学位, 现为西澳大学博士候选人。她的作品曾在澳洲, 中国大陆, 法国, 中国台湾和美国展出。

Beijing Realism 北京现实主义

List of works

Hu Xiangqian, *Speech at the Edge of the World*, 2013, performance/video, 12:32.
胡向前, 土尾世界之演讲, 2013, 表演/录像, 12:32.

Hu Xiangqian, *The Woman in front of the camera*, 2015, video, 2:54.
胡向前, 镜头前的女人, 2015, 录像, 2:54.

Tami Xiang, *Lucky 88*, 2019, photographic print on silk, 110 x 300 cm.
向承美, 幸福88, 2019, 丝绸打印, 110 x 300 厘米。

Tami Xiang, *Family Portraits*, photographic print on silk, 110 x 300 cm.
向承美, 家庭人像, 丝绸打印, 110 x 300 厘米。

Li Xiaofei, *Chongming Island*, 2015, HD video, 17:48.
李消非, 崇明岛, 2015, 高清, 视频, 17:48.

Li Xiaofei, *My Locker + Sisters*, 2018, 2-channel HD video, 17:51.
李消非, 我的储物柜 + 姐妹, 2018, 两通道 视频, 17:51.

Han Bing, from the series *New Culture Movement* series, 2001-2006.
韩冰, 新文化运动, 2001-2006.



Goolugatup Heathcote acknowledges the Bibbulmun people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we stand and pay respect to the Whadjuk people, and Elders past and present.

58 Duncraig Road
Applecross WA 6153

Daily 10am–4pm
(08) 9364 5666
goolugatup-heathcote.com.au

ISBN:
Gallery to provide

