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还在美国学习设计的时候,方璐就在纽约PSI艺术中心第一次接触到当代艺术展览。看到在黑暗的房间中放置着电视机和满地缠绕的电线,她深受震撼。在那一次的经历中,艺术的展示方式比艺术的内容更让她着迷。她那来自国画家父亲的植根于中国传统艺术实践的艺术理解,也在这次体验中得到真正的拓展。这次经历使得方璐放弃了要成为一位设计师的计划,而踏上了成为艺术家的征程。2007年她从旧金山美术学院毕业,获得新类型(录像和行为)的硕士学位,之后回到广州开始艺术创作的生涯。

方璐主要使用录像进行创作,她感兴趣于媒体与日常生活的关系,利用录像作为一种平易近人的记录手段重新排演新闻故事和日常的情境,这些重诉以微妙的幽默和带观念性的转化见长。“熊猫快递”(2007年)是根据美国关于中国为了提高熊猫的繁殖率而给熊猫播放熊猫交配的影像的新闻报道而创作的。方璐让两个女演员穿上熊猫的服装,在镜头前模仿熊猫交配的动作,以她的方式展开讲述,并将拍摄的影像上传到YouTube上。利用互联网这个民主开放的系统来传播她的作品,从而又把她自己对于这个故事的演绎和叙述重新输入大众传播之中。

再现常规的新闻报道从而质疑它们的可靠性继续成为方璐另一个作品的核心。“新闻重演”(2008)将新闻中社会板块的三个普通的故事重新进行拍摄:在商场外,一个女孩对跪倒在地的男朋友煽耳光;一个司机在路上追打一个看车的保安;一群人带着摩托车头盔在村里放鞭炮。尽管他们看起来都很真实,但这些“事故”都各从两个角度拍摄,而且并置地播放出来,从而毫不费力地将它们仿制的本质暴露无遗,消解了我们在电视上所能看到的任何新闻影像资料和报道的绝对权威性。

然而,方璐的录像作品大多是非叙事的。在“肌肤”(2010年)中,方璐在镜头前反复穿上又脱下她的衣服,直到把所有的衣服都用上。出现在录像中的方璐一如既往地显得不动声色,观众只能看到她一小部分的脸。瘦小的艺术家从头到脚都包裹着她自己的衣物,敏捷地把衣服一层一层地往上套或往下脱,有时这个动作通过艺术家后期的编辑变成反向的。她为自己发明了如此一个调皮的游戏,艺术家的动作单纯而准确。我们几乎相信,这是这个作品唯一的表演方式,而且方璐就是她的作品最好的表演者。

方璐早期的录像作品，如“无名状态”系列（艺术家自己在摄像机前表演各种状态）；“密度”（她请两个人各自坐在凳子上，不离开位置而猛烈地摔打凳子，表演者发泄着他们的情绪，直至他们非常气愤。表演者开始通过表演愤怒而逐渐地进入切身的气愤状态。）；或者是“我的同学”（表演者在一个密闭的工作室中在方璐的镜头前随着他们自选的音乐跳舞，完全沉浸在自我的动作之中），这些作品都具备了贯穿方璐创作的一个重要起点和支点。她给自己或她邀请的表演者设定一个角色、一种情感、一个动作、或者一种状态，在一个独立的空间里和一段充分的时间段中，这个“表演”或“人为的”状态通过发酵成为一种真实的存在。她的摄影机为这种转变创造了可能性，并为观众拍摄了这个过程。但方璐的摄像机远远不止是记录下所发生的一切，而是完全成为方璐的同谋者，在这个预谋中，表演的和真实的行为或状态之间的边界变得模糊起来。方璐往往通过后期制作的干扰和重设事件发生的时间次序，进一步放弃了录像作为一种忠实的、在场的记录性工具的主导作用。她选择以录像的手段执导或出演一场场戏剧。在镜头前的表演空间中，表演者逐渐进入并参与创造了一个自主的、自我的和充满真实感染力的空间。质疑这些行为或情绪的逻辑性显得毫不重要，因为它们所流露的坚定性和强度已经说服了我们。

展览《非记录》从方璐的创作中选择了一些作品，从最早的录像之一“无名状态”到她近期的作品“肌肤”，来提供对艺术家创作和思考体系的一个初步印象。更重要的是，艺术家希望传达她对于录像的一个重要观念，那就是录像远远不仅是一种记录的工具。即使当录像机在拍摄所发生的一切时，它所记录的也未必是真实的，更不一定是纪实的。

While studying graphic design as an undergraduate in the United States, Fang Lu saw her very first contemporary art show at PS1 in New York. She was struck by the display of TVs and sprawling cables in a darkened room, amazed by the way that art was shown more than by its actual content. The visit was inspirational for the young artist, truly expanding her understanding of art that was originally rooted in traditional Chinese art practice as exemplified by her own father, a Chinese ink wash painter. This experience was instrumental in moving Fang to a life as an artist instead of the graphic designer she had initially set out to become. She earned an MFA in new genres (video and performance) at the San Francisco Art Institute in 2007 and returned to Guangzhou subsequently to pursue her artistic career.

Working mainly in video, Fang at times infuses her art with her enthusiasm for the relationship between media and the everyday by reconstructing news stories and quotidian scenarios with subtle humor, as well as conceptual twists, playing on the status of video as a documentary tool accessible to all. *Panda Express* (2007) was based on American news reports about the Chinese practice of showing pandas videos of their species mating, with an aim to increasing the panda population. Fang dressed two female actors in panda costumes and had them perform scenes of mating, which she filmed and posted on YouTube as a video clip. By adopting the democratic and open system of the Internet to circulate her work, Fang was able to introduce her own version of the story into mass circulation.

The ability to restage the events chronicled in conventional journalistic reports, and thus challenge their accountability, was the strength of a later work. *News Reenactment* (2008) features restaging of three inconsequential public events as reported in the Chinese society pages: a girl slapping her kneeling boyfriend outside a shopping mall; a driver attacking a security guard on the street; and a group of men wearing motorbike helmets setting off fireworks in a village. Although they appear convincing, the “incidents” were all filmed from two angles and shown on two separate, juxtaposed screens, thus automatically revealing their mimetic nature and undermining the absolute authority of any news footage or reporting as we see on TV.

Yet most of Fang Lu’s video works remain non-narrative and focused. In *Skin* (2010), Fang Lu dressed and undressed herself in front of a video camera until she exhausted her closet. As always, Fang Lu revealed little through her facial expression. Only a glimpse of her face was shown. The skinny artist was almost wrapped up in her own clothes from head to toe, swiftly putting on layers and layers of clothes, an act sometimes appearing in reverse order through the artist’s editing. The artist, who invented such a mischievous game for herself, performed it with such innocence and accuracy. We are almost convinced that there wouldn’t be another way of acting it and she is the best performer for her own works.

Her earlier video works such as *Untitled Beings* series (2001) (where the artist performed various states of being in front of the video camera), *Density* (2005) (where two people were invited to vent out their anger and

frustrations by hitting an elevated platform with a chair they were assigned by the artist to sit in and not allowed to disband all through the performance, until they eventually became really mad themselves. It was a gradual transition from being invited to act madness to becoming really mad through the process of acting.), or *My Schoolmates* (2005, where volunteers danced solely in front of Fang Lu's camera in the studio to their chosen music, totally absorbed in their own movements.) revealed a central point of departure and concern of the artist.

Fang Lu has herself or invites other people to play out a certain designated role, emotion or state of being in an isolated space and for a sufficient period of time until this "acted" or "artificial" state of being becomes a genuine condition. Her camera generates this transition and captures it for the rest of us. Yet the role of Fang's camera is more than a recorder of what has happened, but a part of Fang's conspiracy in which the border between performance and real actions is blurred. To further uproot the idea of video as a faithful recording tool, Fang would usually rework the sequence of events in her videos through editing. She directs and occasionally performs one drama after another with her video camera, in front of which, the performers would progressively move into and carve out an autonomous, self-absorbed and convincingly realistic space. It's no longer important to question the legitimacy of these actions or emotions, as the solidity and density of their beings have completely won over us.

Unrecording tries to give a modest review of the artist's portfolio from one of her earliest films *Untitled Beings* (2001) to one of her latest *Skin* (2010). But more importantly, it's the artist's attempt to communicate her idea of video-making: that it is not always just about recording. Even though the camera is recording what is happening, it is not always realistic, even less documentary.