

8 Immortals

八仙过海



BY

他们 + Tamen+

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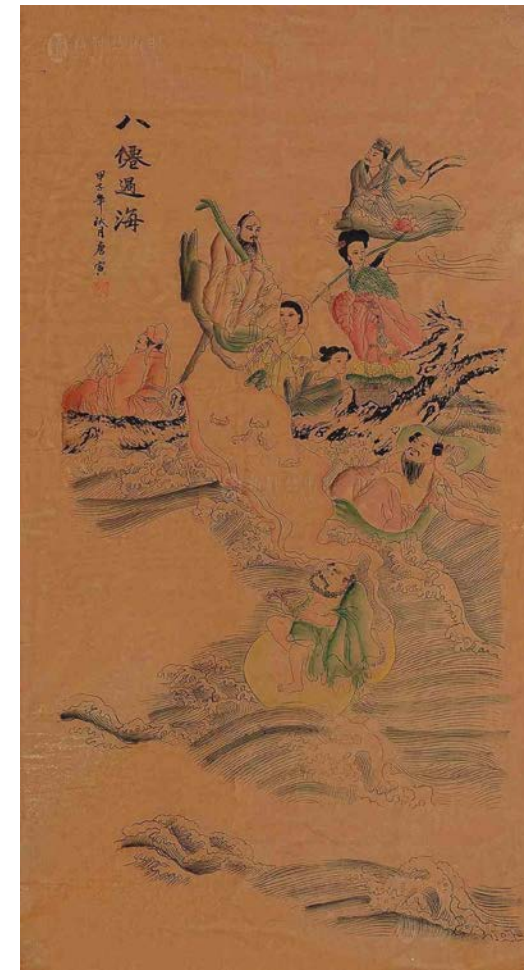


Collective Endurance: Exploring Immortality in TAMEN+'s New Painting Series

集体的耐力： 探索他们 + 新系列 绘画中的不朽性

DIANA FREUNDL
文 / 裴丹那

Eight Immortals Crossing
the Sea by Tang Yin,
Ming Dynasty painting
(明) 八仙过海 唐寅.



Popular fiction often engages directly and powerfully with the social and political issues of our age. For Lai Shengyu and Yang Xiaogang, popular legends can likewise lead us to places of respite and contemplation. In a new series of paintings presented at Art+ Shanghai Gallery, the Beijing-based creative duo, TAMEN+ borrow from rich artistic and literary renditions of the Eight Immortals to underscore the relevance of collaborative actions and intercultural communication.

The tradition of depicting humans who have become immortals is an ancient practice in Chinese literature and visual art, and the eight immortals are among the most popular figures of Chinese myths and legends. The popular narrative describes how eight ordinary individuals in ancient China attained immortality through selfless actions and good deeds. While cults dedicated to various Taoist immortals date to the Han dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE), the eight immortals that would become canonized first appeared in the Jin dynasty (265 – 420 CE). Immortals are prevalent in spiritual and secular traditions around the world and share similar status as figures of prosperity and longevity. In ancient China the eight immortals would become popular themes in decorative art. They were frequent adornments on vases and made into sculptures revered by nobility. During the Ming dynasty

(1368 – 1644 CE) numerous silk paintings, wall murals, and wood block prints of the immortals were also commonplace.

While the immortals are the subject of many bodies of literature, one of the most famous was penned by an anonymous writer during the Ming dynasty. *The Eight Immortals Cross the Sea* (八仙過海) tells of eight immortals on a mythical journey. To reach their destination they must cross the ocean. Instead of relying on their personal clouds to carry them across they collectively agree to exercise their unique powers and through collaborative means they reach their destination. Derived from the Chinese proverb “Eight Immortals cross the sea, each reveals their divine powers” (八仙過海, 各顯神通). The cooperative theme in the story provides a moral aphorism for a speculative future. Furthermore, it echoes the collaborate approach to painting that has become a defining feature of TAMEN+’s artistic practice for over a decade.

In *Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea 1* (八仙过海 1) and *Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea 2* (八仙过海2) the immortal eight have been replaced with eight iconic artworks. Drawing deliberate parallels between popular legends and legendary pop, Lai and Yang replace the revered immortals with modern and contemporary artists, among them, Edgar Degas, Antony Gromley, Jeff Koons and Yue Mingjun.

A common feature among artworks depicting the eight immortals were their hand maidens— servants to the masters. The depiction of the powerless female characters solidified the higher rank of the male deities in the past. In the works of TAMEN+ however the female characters hold their own and share the boat with their male counterparts. In *Youth* (芳华) Lai and Yang selected from the history of Euro-American and China, eight woman who have been immortalized in the cannon of popular culture.

Perhaps in a playful homage to the lunar new year, *White clouds change into grey dogs* (白云苍狗) subverts the original narrative of human immortals to occupy the boat with eight dogs. The well-known loyal human servants are all well recognized artworks belong to the “immortals” in TAMEN+’s *Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea* paintings.

TAMEN+’s new body of works takes its cues from the artists’ signature *Same Room* series of paintings. The ocean replaces the anonymous apartment suite with exterior scenes in natural landscapes or cityscapes. As a “starting place for the visual conversation” the ocean lacks formal walls and becomes a marker of the limitless possibilities in an ever-expansive world. The boat by contrast is confining, but in its role as a transporter of humanity, provides “potential and space for intercultural co-existence.” The ocean and

boat, like the “rooms” provide a “stage for the absurd reality of our time and the art of our age.”

A second series of TAMEN+ paintings being presented at Art+ Shanghai depict a painter’s studio. A slightly earlier ongoing body of work, those currently on display are framed by a background of the modern day mega-metropolis. Here the cityscapes of Hong Kong and Shanghai become the archetypal Chinese metropolis cast as a future. This relationship of modern cityscapes juxtaposed with a foreground of famous artists or public figures paints “the landscape of our time.”

Although completed a few years prior, the theme of the immortals had already begun to appear in TAMEN+’s paintings. Historical leaders and spiritual deities were frequently associated and found alongside the eight Immortals in paintings from the mid to late twentieth century. In *The Queen and the Father* (女皇和父亲), Queen Elizabeth is pictured in her royal regalia standing for a painter who depicts her as a village labourer delineated with realism and clarity. The man is the subject of a famous painting, *The Father* by Luo Zhongli. The 1970 painting has since become a milestone of contemporary Chinese portrait painting.

In *The Star and the Cloud* (星云), the female painter reappears with a spiritual leader, Pope John Paul II lying beneath a meteorite that has presumably crashed through the sky overhead. The famous image is that of Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan’s *Ninth Hour*, from 2001. While the work was a wax effigy of Pope John Paul II, photographs of it were circulated via media outlets around the world, a testament to the power of media and the ability of art to communicate globally.

In addition to the repeated painter, the motif of a potted flower appears in each canvas “as a signature of TAMEN+.” It shares a similarity to the man in leather jacket who would appear with his back turned in TAMEN+’s earlier *Same Room* series. “The flower, like the anonymous man, is a metaphor for continuity. The world is changing every single day, yet there is always something that remains unchanged.”

In a return to the Eight Immortals series, the pope appears again, this time in the middle of the ocean with seven fellow spiritual leaders. *Friend-Ship* (友谊的小船) depicts eight incarnates of religious and political leaders. Tibetan Buddhists, Catholic nuns, and Carl Marx, like their Eight Immortal predecessors must learn to coevolve. For Lai and Yang, their new series leads us beyond the unsettled present to places of respite and “illustrates that multiple perspectives and intercultural cooperation increases our capacity to overcome adversity.”

通俗小说经常会用直接有力的笔法，直击时代的社会和政治现实。对于杨晓刚和赖圣予来说，广为人知的神话故事也可以经过相似的路径带我们开始一场沉思。上海艺术+画廊呈现的他们+最新系列的画作中，两位目前工作生活于北京的艺术组合，托“八仙”之名，做出了一番关于合作行为与跨文化交流的当代阐释。“八仙过海”的意向在中国历代辗转传承，留下了丰富的艺术文学遗产，在今天也将继续其生机。

在中国古典文学和视觉艺术之中，对于凡人成仙的描述并不少见，其中“八仙”的故事在其中可谓是最广为传唱的。八仙的故事讲述了八个普通的人，通过无私的善行成为了八位永生之仙。关于“八仙”的原型最早或可追溯到汉代（公元前206年－公元220年）的道教神仙故事中，在之后的晋代（公元265-420年），“八仙”第一次被奉为神圣。在世界范围内，永生神仙的形象经常出现在各种宗教或世俗的传统之中，寓意着繁荣昌盛，长生不老。在古代中国，“八仙”是装饰艺术的常见题材，出现在花瓶上，或被做成塑像供人参想。明代（公元1368-1644年）期间，被制作流传的“八仙”题材绘画，壁画，版画等的数量十分惊人，可见其在民间的影响力之深厚。

神仙故事不可胜数，其中最耳熟能详的，当属定型于明代的八仙故事。“八仙过海”讲述了“八仙”的一场颇具神话色彩的旅行。在“八仙”需要一同渡海的时候，他们各自拿出看家本领，通力合作，最终到达终点。也留下了“八仙过海，各显神通”的佳话。而这其中关于合作的意味，也正好与他们+的两位艺术家多年来共同创作的状态暗合。

在《八仙过海之一》和《八仙过海之二》中，八位仙人被八件著名的艺术品替代。它们都出自现当代艺术家之手，其中有埃德加德加，安东尼格姆雷，杰夫昆斯，和岳敏君等。如此的选择，正是两位艺术家对于大众的神话和神化的“波普”的平行观察的结果。

在中国传统的神仙题材故事中，女性在大多数情况下作为从属的角色出现，显示了古代中国男尊女卑的情况。然而在他们+的作品中，女性角色也以独立的身姿出现在船上。在作品《芳华》中，两位艺术家从欧美和中国历史中，选择了八位在大众文化中成就不朽的女性。也许是为了迎接狗年，作品《白云苍狗》中，八只狗的形象取代了八仙，出现在船上。作为人类忠诚的伴侣，这八只狗的形象都源自著名的艺术作品，并和他们+创造的“八仙”存在于一个新的纬度。

与他们+的代表系列作品“同一个房间”系列相比，新的系列中，大海替代了那所不知名的公寓房间，室外的自然风景和城市风景成为了背景。变化的场景，正如艺术家所言，是一个“视觉对话开始的地方”。而大海不再有墙壁，充满开阔无限的可能性。而海中之舟，相比之下，是有所限定的空间，它作为人类的运输工具，提供“跨文化共存的潜力和空间”。大海和小船，就像“同一个房间”一样，是“上演这个时代的现实与艺术的荒诞现实的舞台。”

在展览中呈现的第二个系列，他们+描绘了画家的工作室。我们在展览中将看见的是一系列背景呈现为现代大都市的作品。香港和上海作为中国现代都市的代表，出现在了作品之中。现代化大都市与前景中著名的艺术家或公众人物的错综并置，恰恰一同绘制了一副“我们这个时代的风景。”

早在几年前的创作中，神仙就已经出现在他们+的作品之中。而在20世纪中后期，历史上的领袖人物和各种神仙形象经常也被描绘在八仙的旁边。在作品《女皇和父亲》中，英国女王伊丽莎白白身着象征王权的华服，却被另一边的画家描绘成一个极其写实的中国农民的样子。而这个农民形象，正是罗中立于1970年创作的《父亲》，这幅作品在中国的当代艺术史上具有里程碑式的意义。

在作品《星云》中，同一位女性画家再次出现，而她的“模特”教皇圣若望·保禄二世正被一块可能是从天而落的陨石压倒在地。这一著名的图像来自意大利艺术家莫瑞吉奥·卡特兰的作品《第九个小时》。作品中的教皇虽是一尊蜡像，但是这件作品的图像在世界范围内广泛传播，如同现代媒体力量的宣言，同时展现了艺术作为全球交流的能力。

在这些有着相同的画家出现的作品中，都会有一盆花出现在画面之中，被认为是他们+的签名。如同“同一个房间”中反复出现的穿皮衣的男子一样，“盆花，就像这个匿名的男子一样，是一种持续不断的象征。世界每天都在变化，但是我们相信总有一些东西是不变的。”

回到八仙过海的系列。教皇再次出现了，这一次他和其他七位精神领袖一起出现在大海中的一艘小船上。《友谊的小船》描绘了八位宗教和政治领袖的化身。不管是西藏活佛，天主教修女，还是马克思，也许都要像“八仙过海”的故事中的“前辈”一样，学习如何共同进化。两位艺术家杨晓刚和赖圣予，用新系列的作品引领我们暂时跨越不安的现实，到达一片可供思想的境地。毕竟“多角度的思考方式和跨文化的合作共生才能使得我们在面对困境的时候更加强大。”







Framing Consciousness – New Series by Tamen+

框架意识—— “他们+” 的新作

LIYA PRILIPKO
裴丽娅

The second exhibition by Tamen+ at Art+ Shanghai Gallery, 8 Immortals is a new series of paintings from the renowned artist duo, inviting the viewer to sail alongside peculiar passengers exploring unknown islands, marvel at the skyline of the world's busiest cosmopolites, drift in quiet bays and lagoons, and stop-over at white sandy beaches. More importantly, this exhibition teases the complexities of Tamen+'s new multilayered pictorial reality, examines the depths attainable by an inquisitive mind, and hints at themes that resonate in our patchwork, disordered modernity.

The title of the exhibition 8 Immortals is drawn from Chinese folklore, referring to the many legends surrounding the eight deities that abound in China's mythscape. Particular inspiration is drawn from The Eight Immortals Cross the Sea (八仙过海 bā xiān guò hǎi), a seminal literary work by Wu Yuntai, which brings all of the characters together on an expedition to a wondrous but fraught submarine world. Unable to ride a cloud, the usual means of celestial transportation, and pitched against a malicious sea king, the Immortals have no choice but to muster their wits and marshal their unique powers on a perilous odyssey.

The allegory is straightforward - when dangers loom on our path, we must give full play to our unique talents and capabilities. In the mundane world, however, where challenges are less stark than in myth, this lesson is subject to troubling questions and uncertainties. Should our skills be pledged to the goals of the collective? Are we left to our own devices when it comes to survival? Or should each of us be working hard to outshine each other in our highly competitive environment, despite being "in the same boat"?

When it comes to the real world, final and definitive answers are elusive. In art, such answers never existed; there are simply no absolute certainties. Doubt has always been a stimulus for creativity, just as it stimulates the interpretation of creativity's products.

Tamen+'s new works in this exhibition are equipped with a striking array of clever compositional devices, symbolic references and visual metaphors, encouraging us to see more than ordinary paintings telling ordinary stories, pushing our mind and consciousness to go beyond the sensus literalis. Grappling with the hints left by the artists, engaging with their symbolism and subtexts, elevates both the paintings, and ourselves.

A viewer familiar with the works collaboratively created by Lai Shengyu and Yang Xiaogang can't help but ponder the fantastical motivations behind Tamen+'s Immortal masquerades. How did Mueck's gargantuan Boy find himself in the same boat with the queen of polka dot avant-garde on one side, and Yue Minjun's ever-smiling sculpture on the other? What thrilling adventures led Koon's Michael Jackson and Bubbles to

revel in the company of Botero's full-figured bronze señorita, seated right behind Degas' Little Dancer and Yoshitomo's Little Wanderer?

Perhaps the impulse to seek commonalities is misleading. Perhaps it makes more sense to explore the evident differences, and how their coexistence points us towards a common goal, such as "crossing the sea," for instance, or getting along on the same shore, or living in peace with each other on neighboring islands. Tamen+ sends a message of embracing and celebrating difference, in age, in gender, in cultural, religious, political, financial or even marital peculiarities. After all, whether we find ourselves in the same boat, on a floating iceberg or in the "Same Room," we are in it together. Each vessel is a microcosm of the world, a nation, city or even small community, where individuals are encouraged to stand out, but also strive to coexist peacefully.

The Island series featured in 8 Immortals, meanwhile, adds an additional aesthetic tension, a conspicuous and out of place element – a flowerpot. As a third, neutral element needed to isolate one thing from another, it came to replace the looming vigilance of a stranger in a leather jacket from the Same Room series, and shifts the uneasy energy of constant control to a persistent energy representing the artists' presence. Yang Xiaogang says of the new element in their paintings, "Tamen+ wants to alert viewer's attention by portraying the same object over and over again. It is also related to our philosophical belief regarding change and timelessness. We think that even though the world is changing every single day, there must be something that remains constant."

This constant flowerpot appears as an indispensable item, settled interchangeably on one of two islands, separated by a narrow strait, that seem to drift further and further apart with each new iteration of their occupants. Tamen+ juxtaposes different concepts and ideas, employing interpretational and compositional framing devices in the form of a painting within a painting, already familiar to us from the Same Room series.

Tamen+'s choice to make another painting a key compositional element encourages us to guess at the relationship the artists hold towards the subject matter depicted. With this framing device, Tamen+ channels our attention towards the "model" usually portrayed on the left "island" through the painting laid on an easel in front of the "painter" on the right "island."

For instance, in *When Will You Get Married?* a Buddhist monk is contrasted with Tamen+'s representation of Gauguin's *Nafea Faa Ipoipo* or *When Will You Marry?*, the two Tahitian women depicted on the canvas

wear flowers behind their ears, which in Tahiti signifies the desire to find a husband. Tamen+ adopted Gauguin's title for their own work, altering it slightly to *When Will You Get Married?* as if questioning the man depicted on the opposite island. His clothes suggest he is a monk, raising the specter of an obstacle - celibacy.

This representation inside a representation questions the modalities of representation and what it is able to convey in critical and allegorical terms. Thus, we come full circle, because the paintings multi-layered meanings require our consciousness to contort itself into arrangements as odd as the subject pairings themselves. It brings us back to the painting and our ways of looking at it, in order to understand what it is we actually see.

The work of Tamen+, collaboratively created by Lai Shengyu and Yang Xiaogang, evinces a remarkably distinguishable style of artistic expression. In subject matter, their frank and ironically tinged observations on contemporaneity are accompanied by the artists' unique take on self-expression, identity and the human psyche in a confused and globalized world. Their realistic portrayals of surrealistic scenarios, unexpected juxtapositions, and irrational imagery provoke a long-lasting impression. Having an extraordinary knack for capturing a viewer's attention and inspiring inner dialogues, Tamen+'s carefully engineered paintings have their way with our consciousness, making us feel simultaneously erudite, silly, sophisticated, bemused and ultimately, like passengers in the same boat.

“他们+”将携新作再度联手艺术+ 上海画廊推出新展——《八仙过海》。本次展览邀请您伙同素不相识的旅客扬帆起航，探索未知世界的岛屿，俯瞰繁忙都市的高空，在宁静的海湾或是湖泊中轻轻泛舟，在白色的沙滩稍作停留。但更重要的是，在他们所创造的多维艺术世界中对自己的好奇心一探究竟。

展览题目“八仙过海”从中国民间传说中汲取灵感。关于八仙有很多故事流传下来，其中明代吴元泰所作《八仙过海》是公认最著名的文学作品。它讲述了八位神仙冒险探索神奇的海底世界的故事。由于无法像往常一样腾云驾雾，又要与邪恶的海王进行斗争，神仙们必须集中智慧，贡献各自的能力，共同抵御困难。

这则故事宣扬了一个简单的道理，即当时机来临，我们必须充分发挥自己独特的才华、技术和能力。然而，在现实世界的背景下，这一道理可以有多种诠释。例如，为达集体目标，我们是否都要发挥自身独特的才能？又如，在生存问题上，我们是否还得一切靠自己？再如，在竞争激烈的环境中，我们每个人都应该努力工作，从而超越彼此吗？

一旦来到现实世界，答案就不是唯一的了。艺术更是如此，这样的答案从来就不存在，原因是艺术里根本没有绝对的确定性。怀疑总是激发创造力，并刺激着人们对这种创造力产品的解读。

在本次展览中，“他们+”的新作以巧妙的构图、符号的引用和图片的隐喻提醒着我们，这些并不是讲述着普通故事的普通作品。这些作品推动我们的思想意识超越表层，通向更深的层次。有时，读懂艺术家精心留下的暗示，才能更加彻底地理解一幅作品。这些暗示的运用不仅美化了作品，更提升了人类思想意识的高度。

一位熟悉赖圣予和杨晓钢作品的观众，肯定会想知道他们所创作的“神仙”意象背后有何真正含义。想象一下，让·穆克巨大的“男孩”发现自己和前卫的“波点女王”在同一条船上，另一边坐着岳敏君的“大笑人”，此时此刻有什么能比杰夫·昆斯的“迈克尔·杰克逊与泡泡”与费尔南多·波特罗的“丰满小姐”相伴而坐更令人兴奋？当然是他身后坐着的埃德加·德加的“小舞蹈家”和奈良美智的“小流浪者”了！

也许寻找共通之处并非行之有效，更可行的是关注彼此之间存在的明显差异，以及这些差异是如何共存的。这样一来我们就可以达成一个共同的目标，比如“过海”，或是在同一海岸以及邻近的岛屿和平共处。尽管这个世界存在着文化差异、宗教和政治信仰差异、不同的年龄和性别、财务状况和婚姻状况，“他们+”想要传达的观念是：拥抱和庆祝差异。毕竟，不管我们是在同一条船上还是在同一个房间里，我们都是在一起的。无论是一艘船还是一座漂浮的冰山，我们都应该把它看作是一小群人、一座城市、一个国家，甚至是整个世界的缩影。在这里，个人应当与众不同，并能与他人和平共处。

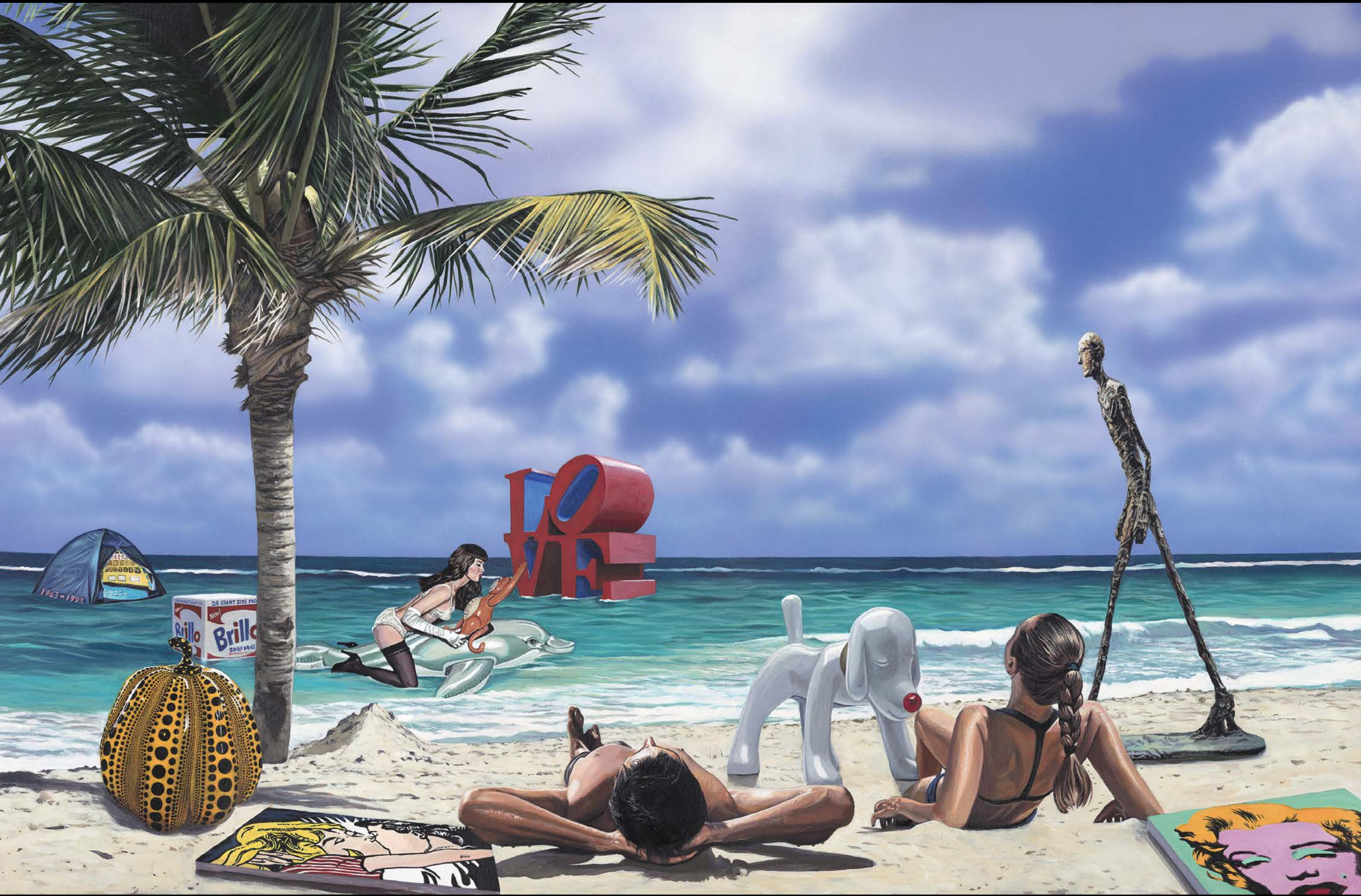
《海岛》系列是另一部以八仙为主题的作品。一个似乎不合时宜的元素——花盆，作为不可或缺的意象出现在作品中，为画面加入了审美的张力。被海峡分隔开的两座岛屿在花盆的映衬下似乎越漂越远。若要将一物与另一物分开，需要引入第三物。这第三物必须是与前两物毫不相干的，中立的。对于“他们+”来说，这样东西便是花盆。它取代了《同一房间》系列里身着皮夹克的陌生人时刻保持的警惕，将主导的负面能量转化为艺术家的持久能量。关于这一新元素的引入，杨晓钢谈道：“我们想要通过反复描绘同一件事物来引起观众的注意。这源于我们对变化和不变的哲学信仰。我们觉得，尽管世界每天都在变化，必须有保持不变的东西。”由此，我们有理由认为，不变即是创造。

“他们+”的新作《海岛》系列值得特别关注。延续了《同一房间》中的创作手法，他们将不同的概念和想法结合在一起，构建新的场景，对已有画面进行解释性、创作性再构图，最终以新的形式呈现出来。例如，在《你何时结婚》中，他们在画面里加入一名佛教僧侣，对高更的《你何时结婚》进行再创作。画布上描绘的两名塔希提女人，她们的耳后戴着鲜花，在塔希提，这象征着女人对于婚姻的期盼。“他们+”沿用高更的标题，将自己的作品命名为《你何时结婚》——仿佛在质问另一个岛上的人。他的服饰表明他是一位僧人，这使人直接联想到独身生活。

艺术家选择让另一幅画成为自己本身的主体，这是为了吸引观众的注意力，让观者得以猜测艺术家与被描绘的主体之间的关系。通过框架的设置，艺术家可以引导观众的视线并塑造出人的感知。首先艺术家把观者的注意力引向“原型”，这个原型通常被描绘在画面左边的岛屿上，再通过右边岛屿上“画家”前面的“画架”再现出来。

这种再度呈现的手法，质疑了表现的形式，并提出了一个疑问：以批评和讽喻构成的表现形式能够带来什么？在此，我们的意识形成了一个完整的循环。这样的绘画作品呈现在我们眼前，它的多层含义要求我们的意识转变成不同的模式，意识最终把我们带回了绘画本身以及我们看待绘画的方式，而我们看待绘画的方式决定着我們真正看到的是什么。

“他们+”由赖圣予和杨晓钢两位艺术家组成，二人的合作展现了一种独特的艺术表现风格。在主题方面，他们对当代的观察令人惊讶的坦率，并具有相当的讽刺意味，同时伴随着独特的自我表现、身份认同、以及人类心理在混乱的全球化世界中的映射。他们巧用意想不到的排列以及不合时宜的意象，如实地描述看似超现实的场景，使我们久久难以忘怀。经过精心构思的画面有一种独特的魅力，吸引我们注意力的同时激发我们内心的对话，令我们同时感到讽刺、









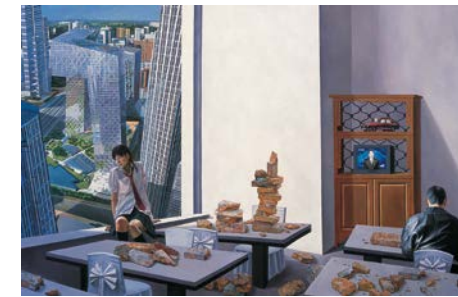


Vistas of the Sublime: Exploring the Unusual Terrains of Tamen's Landscape

远眺极致之景： 论“他们艺术小组” 作品中不寻常的风景

JULIE CHUN / ART HISTORIAN
艺术史学家

[Figure 1]
Tamen
CCTV, 2006
Oil on canvas,
280 x 180 cm



The creative duo's catchy moniker "Tamen" (pronounced ta-mun) is a common ubiquitous Chinese word. It is the third-person pronoun for "they" used in daily conversations when referring to two or more people. Just like their namesake, there are no distinct physical attributes or cultivated personae that might distinguish Lai Shengyu and Yang Xiaogang as unconventional. If anything, they appear quite ordinary. Yet, the vast artistic output collectively produced by this two-men incorporation is far from commonplace.¹ Odd, surreal, wild, incomprehensible, and contradictory are just a few words that have been used to describe their paintings and photographic works by critics and viewers alike. Many of their large-scale panels unabashedly embrace wide-open exteriors and bizarrely situated interiors that continues to mystify. While seemingly real, the scenes on the picture plane are hardly any reflections of known reality.

The constructed landscapes and rooms of Tamen transcend the realm of the seemingly familiar to an expanse of uncharted territory fraught with the paradoxical tensions of disquietude and the sublime. Perhaps it is because many of the images serve as signs, oftentimes diametrically opposed rather than in direct relation to one another that displace the novitiate. Images of young and school-uniformed adolescent girls symbolize innocence lost [Figure 1]. Food represents carnal desires and still life characterizes memento mori (Latin epitaph for "remember your mortality"). These visual signifiers are intentional provocations positioned by the artists to highlight the tensions arising from China's tempestuous and meteoric rise onto the frenetic global stage.

Chinese critics and art scholars generally contend Tamen's paintings represent modernity's discontent resultant from the explosive growth of Chinese cities, most notably Beijing and Shanghai. While this interpretation stands inarguable, the intent of this article is to offer a broader examination using the referent of Western art history, which can be distinctly traced in the artistic practices of many passport-wielding and frequently-flying Chinese artists such as Tamen. More and more Chinese contemporary artists are now studying abroad and traversing frequently to world-renowned museums while taking part in international biennales and residency programs. Due to extensive and expansive outlook such international experiences foster, post-modern conditions have been conducive for a critical inquiry of Chinese contemporary art within the framework of universal dialectics. By expanding our scope of thought and converging the Eastern and Western ideologies in a cross-cultural context, we can gain a greater comprehensive understanding of the enigmatic vistas created by Tamen that are presented before us.²

[Figure 2]
Diego Velázquez
Christ in the House of Martha and Mary, 1618
Oil on canvas
National Gallery, London



Vistas into the Past

Two prosaic facts serve to unite Tamen. One, Lai Shengyu and Yang Xiaogang were born after the Cultural Revolution (1978 and 1979 respectively). Two, they both hail from Hunan Province. The first fact, as stressed by Chinese art critics Fan Di'an and Feng Boyi among others, underscores Tamen's departure from Political Pop and Cynical Realist aesthetics to situate them in the category of the "new generation" of Chinese artists who, in the second millennium, forged a "youth sub-culture."³ The second factor of originating from the same province points to the deeply ingrained Asian penchant for appreciating the shared dialect and familiar food culture associated with hometown affinity. Consequently, the two men are in significant ways an extension of each other's own selves. Case in point: the listing of their "solo" shows are technically dual exhibitions, yet they insist on using the singular appellation precisely because each work is a product of a wholly collaborative undertaking.

Since October 2003, Lai and Yang have willingly and voluntarily grafted their individual artistic practices into a singular identity for the resolute purpose of re-constructing the paradigm of Chinese collective art. Since ancient times, reaching back to the Shang dynasty (ca. 1300-ca. 1050 BCE), China has historically promoted and upheld court and state-sanctioned art whereby groups of artists were mobilized for artistic projects. Exploiting this cultural legacy, Mao Zedong was able to effectively justify the propagation of art by the masses for the masses as stressed in his 1942 "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art."⁴ Ironically, the communal process, which is a foundational aspect of Tamen's practice, is not a perpetuation of exemplary socialist model but rather an intervention against the venerated and time-honored ideals promoting Chinese collectivity. While artists in China still elect to work interdependently to produce images exonerating the state, it is hardly a required mandate as was stringently enforced during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1979). For Tamen, their cooperation is a selectively personal and voluntary "co+operation" asserted as individual liberties for the purpose of achieving critical acclaim, global fame, and subsequently economic success.

Before they initiate a project, Lai and Yang discuss the theme and the setting of their work. One would then pick up a paint-laden brush and begin the process, and akin to a baton-passing relay, the other will pick up where the other left off until the process of exchange culminates to completion. This method of interchange can be traced back to another revolutionary duo. In search of an innovative literary technique, the French poets Andre Breton (1896-1966) and Philippe Soupault (1897- 1990) had developed a process of writing called "Exquisite Corps." Exploiting the chance effects of automatism, Breton would begin writing and then pass off a thought to be completed by Soupault until a compilation of back and forth words accumulated into the 1920 publication entitled *The Magnetic Fields*.⁵ This seemingly nonsensical body of text became the first literary

[Figure 3]
Tamen
Eating Snakes, 2005
Oil on canvas
280 x 180 cm



work of Surrealism and served to advance Breton's episteme which became formalized and released in 1924 as the first Surrealist Manifesto.⁶ The impact of Breton's writing led to the prodigious production of unanticipated imageries in the arts conceived from the subconscious exploration by many French, German, and Spanish artists as a remonstrance against social norms bound by reason and rationalism.

Artists have historically found reason and rationalism polemical. Often it was through counter movements in the arts where ideologies sustaining the status quo were ruptured and overturned. Even prior to the Surrealists, the seventeenth-century Romantic artists in Europe were highly discontent with Enlightenment's empiricism, which they believed had brought about the harsh and estranged conditions of the Industrial Revolution. These artists rejected reason, order, and objectivity, and by embracing symbolism, they appealed directly to the inner senses and emotions.

The Romantics embraced the notion of the sublime, which was formulated by the British essayist Joseph Addison (1672-1719) in the eighteenth century, as the aesthetic magnificence of rugged nature as a paradox of "an agreeable kind of horror" that fills the imagination of sight.⁷ The Irish statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke (1729-1797) advanced Addison's concept by investigating the dualism inherent in the beautiful and the sublime - the beautiful tending to the small, the smooth, the delicate, and the bright whereas the sublime tended to the great, the uniform, the powerful, the obscure, and the somber.⁸ A span of over two hundred years and the two continents of Europe and Asia separate the Romantic artists and Tamen. And yet, the allegorical landscapes conveyed on canvas by the Chinese duo through their unique painting process of "Exquisite Corps" affirm that the symbolic language of a distant artistic past can still be relevant in articulating the beauty and the trepidations that still exists in contemporary society.

Embedded Vistas

Burke described the key aspect of the sublime as the heightened and perversely exalted feeling of fear and anxiety brought on by the forces beyond our control and comprehension. Tamen's Same Room series of 2005-2008 visually exemplify the dual tensions of the beautiful and the sublime within a single frame. Inordinate lunacy is paradoxically placed in direct contrast to an orderly pastoral or cosmopolitan vista that suggest pristine utopia. Effectively employing the format of a window (or perhaps a mirror) as a framing device used masterfully by the seventeenth-century Spanish artist Diego Velázquez [Figure 2], Tamen likewise directs the viewer's gaze to an embedded vista that does not resolve but rather provokes the doubling sensation of the enigmatic and the evocative.⁹

[Figure 4]
Tamen
To See a World in a Wild Flower,
2014
Oil on canvas
90 x 140 cm



[Figure 5]
Tamen
A Chance Meeting, 2014
Oil on canvas
60 x 120 cm



The expanse of the fertile natural landscape or the systematically ordered city that lies outside is subverted by the erratic inordinacy taking place in the interior confines of a room where it remains unclear whether the viewer is glancing voyeuristically into the private space of the room or if some of the subjects are directing a voyeuristic gaze at us. The sensual aesthetics of the natural beauty is counter positioned as the visual other against the haphazard disarray of preposterous actions or perplexing inactions [Figure 3]. While we can cite cause and effect of accelerated modernization as a logical reading of the contrast posited by the painting, the juxtaposition of the landscape and the roomscape strongly alludes to the beauty and fears of an unknown tomorrow. Despite attempts at utmost careful planning, the future remains an unfamiliar terrain, and it is this sense of crisis that Tamen compellingly explores as the central motif of their art.

Pastoral Vistas of the Sublime

In Tamen's paintings from 2013 and 2014, the trope of the beautiful and the sublime resurfaces but with the elimination of the framing device that had fragmented the interior from the exterior. Now, the two spaces converge as if time and space have collapsed. In many ways, the bucolic vistas punctuated by Tamen's trademark of odd signifiers in these series of paintings can even be regarded as prequels to the Same Room series. Eloquently referencing a time of purity and innocence, Tamen hearkens back to a primordial past when man and/or woman dwelt in peaceful commune with nature. As such, the pastoral series converge fluidly with the cross-currents of Eastern and Western ideals.

The essence of landscape painting in Chinese history is foregrounded in Daoist as well as Buddhist and Confucian doctrine. The qi is the cosmic spirit vital for governing life and growth of nature and humans. As noted by Michael Sullivan, "It [the qi] infuses all things, for there is no distinction between the animate and the inanimate."¹⁰ Personal qi was of paramount importance in the process of ink painting as was the practice of emulating works by the masters since each artist would add his own qi into the time-honored legacy of Chinese aesthetic tradition.

The Daoist precept of foregrounding subjectivity is similar in many regards to the Romantic striving for endorsing inner sentiments. In their recent representations of landscapes, Tamen negotiates and conflates the Eastern spirit with the West. Consequently, we can detect the strains of William Blake's poetry in Tamen's pastoral vistas. The reference is especially poignant since Blake was a seminal and pivotal advocate of Romanticism in both the arts and literature. The title of Tamen's *To See a World in a Wild Flower* (2014) paraphrases the first two stanzas of Blake's poem "Auguries of Innocence":

[Figure 6]
Caspar David Friedrich
Wanderer above the Sea of Fog,
1818
Oil on canvas, 98.4 x 74.8 cm
Kunsthalle Hamburg



[Figure 7]
Tamen
A Break in the Clouds after the Rain, 2014
Oil on canvas, 90 x 140 cm



To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heav'n in a wildflower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.¹¹

Written in 1803, Blake's poetry epitomizes the dual forces of beauty encapsulated by innocence and its juxtaposing force of the sublime symbolized as an augury, a sign or an omen.

The visual currents of Daoism and Buddhist nirvana are palpable in the vistas *To See a World in a Wild Flower* (2014) and *A Chance Meeting* (2014) [Figures 4 and 5]. Yet again, the vast and the marked distance threaten to separate the young girl from the drifting boat or the Buddhist statuery, both representing her safe haven. The innocence of humanity symbolized by the young maiden is overtaken by the deep and wide chasm of the body of water, which delights while heightening the viewer's sense of separation and longing.

Moreover, the motif of a person gazing out upon the scene, initially begun in the *Same Room* series, is developed more fully in the pastoral series. Frequently and intentionally, Tamen inserts a figure or two between the viewer and the backdrop of the exterior or interior scene. In gazing out at the same direction, this invention serves as a substitution for the viewer as well as an obstruction. With the resolute placement of the figure in the foreground of the picture plane, the viewer seems to be denied entry into the vista. Well-known iconic paintings by the German Romantic artist David Caspar Friedrich previously employed this composition. The strikingly portrayed subject of *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (1818; Kunsthalle Hamburg) is embodied as a dark silhouette [Figure 6], serving as an obstacle in our line of vision, but also stands firmly planted as if to protect us from the powerful forces of nature's impending forces.

Many of Tamen's subjects also play the protective role of insulating the viewer from the unknown forces of the natural and the supernatural. The untainted essence of purity, however momentary, becomes a site of placid sanctuary where we can take refuge in the calm before the onslaught of an uncertain and imminent catastrophe. What may appear on the horizon once the rain clears will be anyone's guess. Like the small child clutching her pillow awoken from a slumber or a nightmare in *A Break in the Clouds after the Rain* (2014), the future may hold promises of blue skies and clean water of regenerative life. Perhaps it may signal the arrival of a savior or conqueror on top of a steed, come to salvage or disrupt our current understanding of the world [Figure 7]. While we can never be certain what tomorrow may portend, Tamen, as twenty-first century soothsayers, seem to have possession inexhaustible visions of real and imagined auguries that converge in their as apparitions of the beautiful and the sublime on the surface of their painted vistas.

双人艺术家组合“他们艺术小组”的名字运用了中文里常见的双关语。“他们”即指日常对话中的第三人称。正如其名，这个组合也没有用任何刻意的角色定位来把赖圣予和杨晓钢区分开来。他们看上去极其普通，然而，两人联合起来创作的作品数量众多，而且极不寻常。¹ 古怪、超现实、狂热、不可理喻、自相矛盾——这些只是评论家和观众用来形容他们的绘画和摄影作品的词汇之一。他们许多大型作品无不包括广阔的外部天地和稀奇古怪的室内构图，这些元素组成了具有神秘气息的画面。虽然图像是具象的，但是图中之景却与现实生活差之千里。

“他们”建构的室内和室外风景超越了大众所熟知的现实，把观众带入了一场不安与极致的交锋。或许是因为作品中大多数的图像以符号的形式出现，常常南辕北辙，而不是像初学者那样以平铺的方式直接陈列。身着校服的年轻女孩象征着逝去的纯真（图1），食物代表了世俗的欲望，而静物则是对死亡的警告（拉丁语：memento mori）。这些视觉上的信号是艺术家们有意识地挑衅，突出了当今中国在狂热的世界舞台上流星般的窜升，以及这种超速发展带来的挑战。

中国的艺术评论家和学者通常认为“他们”的绘画作品代表了中国高速城市化导致的不满情绪，尤其是北京和上海。虽然这种解读无可厚非，但此文旨在为读者提供一个更宽广的视野，结合西方艺术史来阐述这些作品。这种解读尤其适用于频繁跨越东西、与国际接轨的艺术家们，比如“他们”。如今，许多中国艺术家在国外留学，并有机会参观世界知名的博物馆、参与全球性的展览和艺术家入驻项目。在这种全球语境下，后现代意识有助于为当代中国艺术提供批判性的审视。只有在拓展了我们的思维空间，结合东西方意识形态，在跨文化的条件下思考时，我们才能更深地理解“他们”为我们呈现的谜一般的境界。²

回首过去

“他们”小组成功的背后有两个重要的方面。首先，赖圣予和杨晓钢皆出生于文化³大革命之后（分别为1978和1979年）。其次，他们都来自湖南省。我提到的第一点，如艺术评论家范迪安和冯博一所言，为“他们”与政治波普和犬儒派现实主义美学的分道扬镳提供了铺垫，并将他们定位于“新一代”的中国艺术家，在千禧年之际打造了一种青年次文化。来自同一个省份的“他们”对共同的方言和共有的食文化情有独钟，从而，两位艺术家的自身也显著地映射了对方。一个很好的例子——他们简历上所列出的“个展”实际上是双人展，但是他们执意称其为“个展”，显示出他们保持了小组的个性，每一件作品都是合作的成果。

自2003年10月以来，赖圣予和杨晓钢自愿地将两个人的艺术实践融为一体，以重新定义中国的“集体艺术”。中国自古以来就推崇艺术家集体共同创作的概念，其历史可以追述到商代（公元前1300–1050年）。正如毛泽东在1942年“延安文艺座谈会”上所言，他利用了这种文化传统，有效说明了群众的艺术来自群众。⁴ 讽刺的是，这种集体性——呈现在“他们”的艺术实践中——并不是模范社会主义模式的延续，而是针对中国人对集体主义的崇拜和历史悠久的理想化的干预。在中国，虽然艺术家们目前仍然选择以相互依赖的关系来生产宣传主旋律的图像，但与文革（1966–1979）时期不同，这已不再是需要严格执行的必要条件。对于“他们”而言，合作建立在个人的选择和自愿的基础上，以得到好评、享誉全球、并在之后获得经济成功和达到个人自由为目的。

在每一个作品的创作前期，赖圣予和杨晓钢都会讨论作品的主题和场景，然后其中一人会拿起画笔开始创作，以一种接力棒的形式，直至作品达到一个完成的状态。这种交换创作的方法让人联想起另外一对革命性的艺术家。为了寻找更富有创新精神 的写作技巧，法国诗人安德烈·布勒东（1896–1966）和菲利普·苏波（1897–1990）发明了一种被他们称为“精致的尸体”（Exquisite Corps）的合作写作方式。两位作家借用机械行为论的效果，在布勒东创作到一个阶段后，苏

波接着在已有的基础上延续下去，这样几个来回，以最终完成作品。他们在1920年出版了以这种方式写成的《磁场》。⁵ 这部作品不但成为了历史上第一个超现实主义文学作品的著作，而且进一步奠定了布勒东的知识论，推动他在1924年正式发表了第一部《超现实主义宣言》。⁶ 布勒东的影响之大，导致一大批法国、德国和西班牙艺术家创作出了出乎意料之外的图像，批判当时被合理性和理性主义所禁锢的社会准则。

艺术家在长久以来就对合理性和理性主义褒贬不一。通常，这种争论体现在艺术中的各种反社会运动，尤其当支撑社会现状的意识形态分崩瓦解之时。在超现实主义出现之前，工业革命中的艰苦卓绝的条件就引发了十七世纪欧洲的浪漫主义艺术家们对启蒙运动中出现的经验论的极度不满。这些艺术家们拒绝了理性、制度和客观性，伸开双臂接纳了他们所制造的图像中的象征性，以此直接与人的内心与情感达到交流。

浪漫主义者们推崇由英国作家约瑟夫·艾迪生（1672–1719）在十八世纪提出的“壮美”（Sublime）这个概念，不经修饰的大自然风光在美学上是一种“令人愉悦的恐怖”，填补了想象空间里的裂缝。⁷ 爱尔兰政治家和哲学家埃德蒙·伯克（1729–1797）进一步提升了艾迪生的理论高度，详细审视了优美与壮美之间所存在的双重性——优美的东西大多是小巧的、光滑的、细致的和光明的，而壮美的东西则是倾向于伟大的、统一的、有力量的、模糊不清的甚至阴郁的。⁸ “他们”小组和浪漫主义艺术家们之间有两百年的时间之隔，而且身处于欧亚两洲，但是，这两位中国艺术家笔下以“精致的尸体”的方法创作出的寓意十足的绘画则证明了一点：来自久远的过去的艺术方式仍然能够用语解说当代社会中的美与震撼。

嵌入式的远景

伯克解释道，壮美的本质是由超出了我们的控制和理解力的感受所带来的恐惧和焦虑。“他们”的《同一个房子》（2005–2008）系列就在一张图画的角度上体现了优美和壮美的双重张力。在他们的画中，有序的田园风光和大都市的远景意味着最原始的乌托邦，而不寻常的狂乱行为则与其形成差异巨大的对比。十七世纪的西班牙画家迭戈·委拉斯开兹[图2]巧妙地以窗口或镜子作为图像的框架，而“他们”也运用此方法，把观众的视线引导到嵌入式的远景。远处的景色不但没有化解张力，而是更加倍挑衅着画面中神秘和令人回味的双重感受。⁹

在“他们”的画面中，局限的室内空间是不稳定、不同寻常的。与之形成强烈对比的是室外肥沃的自然景观和系统有序的城市。这种对比让观众无法确定究竟是他们在偷窥画中的私人空间，还是被偷窥者亦正在以同样的目光注视着观众。大自然的美所带来的感性美学在这里被定位为视觉上的对立，针对的是荒谬的行为或令人费解的杂乱无章[图3]。虽然我们可以原因归结为加速的现代化建城市建设，室外和室内景观的并置则强烈暗示了一种对美丽却未知的未来的担忧。即使有再周密的计划，未来仍然是一个陌生的领域，而这种危机感正是“他们”艺术的中心主题。

眺望田园风光之壮美

在“他们”近两年（2013–2014）的作品中，“优美和壮美”的概念再次浮现，但是消除了室内和室外的区别。现在，这两个空间合二为一，仿佛时间和空间的概念都瓦解了。在许多方面，“他们”近期代表性的田园风光可被视为《同一个房子》系列的前传。“他们”优美地引用了纯洁和天真的时代，让人回想起原始时男人和女人与自然和平共处的时期。因此，田园系列流畅地结合了东西方的理想。

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在中国历史上，山水画的本质在道教、佛教和儒家学说中都被显著突出。“气”这个字的字面意思是呼吸或蒸汽，指的是宇宙的精神，对治理生命及自然和人的成长是至关重要的。迈克尔·沙利文假设道：“[气]注入万物，因为有生命的和无生命之物之间没有区别”。¹⁰ 在创作水墨画时，一个人的“气”是至关重要，所以，当以集体的形式创作时，每个艺术家都会把自己的气都会渗入这个历久弥新的中国传统审美形式中。

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1. Lai Shengyu, Yang Xiaogang, and Yuan Xin officially incorporated “Tamen Co., Ltd.” in 2003. In 2004, Yuan left the group. Many Chinese literatures on Tamen allude to inconsistent years of establishment, but the author on March 25, 2014, has validated 2003 as the year of Tamen’s formal incorporation. 赖圣予、杨晓钢和袁欣于2003年正式成立“他们有限公司”。2004年，袁欣退出小组。许多中文评论文章提到过几个不同的成立时间，但笔者在2014年3月25日得到证实：“他们”正式成立时间为2003年。

2. The difficult and problematic method of applying Western discourse to older pre-modern Eastern art has been lucidly explored by James Elkins in *Chinese Landscape Painting as Western Art History* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010). 对于如何在过去的前现代东方艺术运用西方话语的难点与问题，詹姆斯·艾尔肯（James Elkins）已在《西方美术史学中的中国山水画》中有透彻的阐述。（香港：香港大学出版社，2010年）。

3. Fan Di’an, “Postmeridian Sunlight: The Present and the Possible,” 8-9 and Feng Boyi, “They are like this or like that,” in *Tamen* (Seoul: Pyo Gallery, 2006), 21-23. 范迪安：《午后的阳光——已有的和可能有的》，第8-9页；冯博一：《这样的或那样的都是他们》，摘自《他们》（首尔：表画廊出版，2006年），第21-23页。

4. Transcription of Mao Zedong’s “Talks at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art”, (lecture, Yan’an, China, May 2, 1942), last modified 2004, accessed March 30, 2014, http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_08.htm. 转引自毛泽东“延安文艺座谈会上的讲话”（中国延安，1942年5月2日），最近修改于2004年，http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_08.htm，2014年3月30日。

5. The original French title is *Champs magnétiques*. For text in English, see Andre Breton and Philippe Soupault, *The Magnetic Field*, trans. David Gascoyne (London: Atlas Press, 1985).

原著法语标题为《Champs magnétiques》。英语译文请见安德烈·布勒东与菲利普·苏波（Andre Breton and Philippe Soupault）：

《磁场》（The Magnetic Field），译者：大卫·盖斯科因（David Gascoyne）（伦敦：地图出版社，1985年）。

7. For an English version, see Andre Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969).

英语版本请参考安德烈·布勒东（Andre Breton）：《超现实主义者的宣言》（Manifestoes of Surrealism），译者：理查德（Richard Seaver）和海伦（Helen R. Lane）（安娜堡：密歇根大学出版社，1969年）。

8. See George P. Landow’s analysis of Spectator 412 (1712) in “Joseph Addison, Material Sublimity, and the Aesthetics of Bigness,” last modified November 30, 2002, accessed March 29, 2014, http://www.victorianweb.org/philosophy/sublime/addison.html.

参考乔治·P·兰多于《观察者》第412期（1712年）的分析，最后修改于2002年11月30日“约瑟夫·艾迪生：物质之社美，与大之美学”，http://www.victorianweb.org/philosophy/sublime/addison.html，2014年3月29日。

9. For a concise explanation of Edmund Burke’s *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (published 1757/1759), see James Shelley, 18th Century British Aesthetics, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last modified July 6, 2010, accessed March 29, 2014, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aesthetics-18th-british/#ImaThe.

对于埃德蒙·伯克（Edmund Burke）：《论崇高与美丽概念起源的哲学探究》（出版于1757年及1759年）的阐释，可参考詹姆斯·雪莱（James Shelley）：18世纪英国美学，《斯坦福哲学百科全书》，最后修改于2010年7月6日，http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aesthetics-18th-british/#ImaThe，2014年3月29日。

10. While not the first, Diego Velázquez was one of the most prominent artists in Western history to employ the use of the window/mirror as the framing device to allude to an alternative narrative. Most notable examples include Kitchen Scene with *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*, 1618, National Gallery, London and *Las Meninas*, 1658, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

迭戈·委拉斯开兹（Diego Velázquez）作为西方艺术史上杰出的艺术家之一也曾运用窗户或镜子作为架构来表达画面中的另一个暗叙，其中最知名的包括《在玛莎及玛丽家的基督》（Christ in the House of Martha and Mary），1618年，伦敦国家美术馆；《侍女图》（Las Meninas），1658年，马德里普拉多博物馆。

11. Michael Sullivan, *The Arts of China* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2008 reprint), 102.

迈克尔·沙利文（Michael Sullivan）：《中国艺术》（伯克利、洛杉矶、伦敦，加利福尼亚大学出版社，2008年再版），第102页。

11. William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience with Other Poems*, (London: Basil Mantagu Pickering, 1866), 96.

威廉姆·布莱克（William Blake）：《天真与经验之歌》（Songs of Innocence and Experience with Other Poems），（伦敦Basil Mantagu Pickering出版社，1866），第96页。

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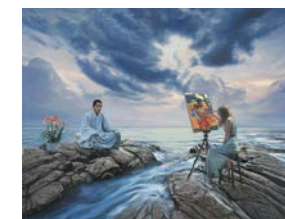
+ Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea 1 八仙过海 1
Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
120x150cm
2018



+ Antidote 包治百病
Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
90x120cm
2017



+ The Star and the Cloud 星云
Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
90x120cm
2016



+ When Will You Get Married 什么时候结婚
Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
70x90cm
2017



+ Belief 信仰
Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
91x113.5cm
2017



+ Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea 2 八仙过海 2
Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
120x150cm
2018



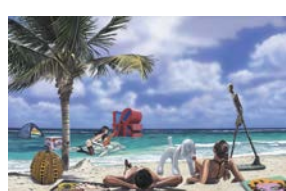
+ White Clouds Change into Grey Dogs 白云苍狗
Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
60x120cm
2018



+ Youth 芳华
Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
80x100cm
2018



+ Friend-Ship 友谊的小船
Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
80x120cm
2018



+ Perfect Holiday 2 完美假期2
Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
90x140cm
2017



+ Perfect Holiday 1 完美假期 1
Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
90x140cm
2017



+ Under the Victoria Peak 太平山下
Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
135x175cm
2017



+ Pretty Women 卿本佳人
Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
100x120cm
2017



+ The Queen and the Father 女皇和父亲
Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
135x180cm
2017

ABOUT TAMEN+



Tamen+ is an artist collective formed in 2002 by artists Lai Shengyu and Yang Xiaogang, who were born in China's Hunan Province in 1978 and 1979, respectively. Both received post-graduate degrees from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in the Department of Printmaking. The duo has traveled widely and rejects contemporary society's infatuation with the individual by seamlessly collaborating on and co-painting each work. They have gained acclaim in China and abroad for their Same Room series of paintings, and have since shifted towards exterior scenes in natural and urban landscapes, displaying Western-style painting techniques and thought-provoking conceptualizations. Lai Shengyu and Yang Xiaogang's collaborations are part of the new trend of Chinese contemporary art where thought exercises are staged on canvas.

Since 2002, Tamen+ has held 18 solo exhibitions in places such as Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Seoul, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Singapore, New York, and Brussels. The collective participated in group exhibitions internationally for more than a hundred times. The exhibitions were notably held in Katonah Museum of Art (New York), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Meridian International Center (Washington), Santa Monica Art Centre (Barcelona), White Rabbit Gallery (Sydney), Singapore Art Museum (Singapore), National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Seoul), Ho-am Art Museum, Seoul Arts Center, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (Vienna), Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (Karlsruhe), Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam), ESSL Museum (Vienna), Berlaymont Building (Brussels), Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Times Art Museum (Beijing), National Art Museum of China (Beijing), Guangdong Museum of Art, World Art Museum, YanHuang Art Museum, Today Art Museum, Embassy of Canada (Beijing), Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai among many others.

The duo has participated in a range of art fairs including Art Cologne, Art Beijing, Art Dubai, Art Hong Kong, Art Central Hong Kong and Art Stage Singapore. During Art Central 2015, their works were chosen as fair highlights on Artsy.

In 2014, Tamen+ was interviewed for a Chilean art magazine *Arte al Límite*, and selected into the catalogue *SpotLight: 100 Contemporary Artists*; in 2013, the duo was picked as one of the featured artists by Emily Leisz Carr, a renowned art critic, curator, and professor of University of California, Berkeley, for her *25 Contemporary Chinese Artists You Need to Know*. In 2010, the collective was featured by a famous art historian Lv Peng in his *Contemporary Art in 21st Century China, 2000-2010*; In 2012, Tamen+'s work appeared on the cover of the *The Next Generation: Young Chinese Artists*, published by Prestel;

Their work can be found in the collections of the Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum (Beijing), White Rabbit Collection (Sydney), and ESSL Museum (Vienna), Guangdong Museum of Art (Guangzhou), Samsung Group (Seoul) Nokia, Ministry of Culture (France), University of the Arts Helsinki, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Krannert Art Museum (University of Illinois), Chakri Kingdom (Thai) as well as JPMorgan Chase & Co.

关于艺术家：



“他们+”是一个由艺术家赖胜予和杨晓钢于2002年成立的艺术团体。两位艺术家分别于1978年和1979年出生於湖南省，均毕业于中央美术学院版画专业，获得硕士学位。多年来，二人通过绘画实现“对话”，以幽默和调侃的方式反映现实，表达当下人们的生活现状，也是一种对于当代社会个人主义迷恋的拒绝。随着“同一房间”系列作品的走红，他们+获得了来自国内外的赞誉。在此之后，他们+将作品的背景转向自然景色和室外场景，并用西方风格的绘画技巧继续描绘一幕幕引人思考的画面。

至今他们+在北京、上海、深圳、广州、香港、纽约、阿姆斯特丹、鹿特丹、首尔、布鲁塞尔、长沙、新加坡等地举办个人展览18次，参加全球范围美术馆和重要机构的群展数百次，包括：纽约Katonah艺术博物馆、旧金山亚洲艺术博物馆、美国华盛顿子午线国际空间、西班牙桑塔莫妮卡艺术中心、西班牙大使馆文化中心、澳大利亚悉尼白兔美术馆、新加坡国家美术馆、韩国国立现代美术馆、韩国首尔湖岩美术馆、韩国首尔艺术中心、首尔大学美术学院、奥地利维也纳国家现代艺术博物馆、德国ZKM博物馆、阿姆斯特丹美术馆、奥地利维也纳ESSL美术馆、布鲁塞尔欧盟总部会议大厅、日本福冈亚洲美术馆、北京时代美术馆、中国美术馆、广东美术馆、深圳关山月美术馆、北京中华世纪坛美术馆、北京国家会议中心、北京今日美术馆、北京宋庄美术馆、北京加拿大大使馆、北京炎黄美术馆、上海当代艺术馆、湖南省博物馆、湖南省画院、湖南长沙谭国斌当代艺术博物、苏州金鸡湖美术馆。

“他们+”还参加了众多艺术博览会，包括科隆艺术博览会、北京艺术博览会、迪拜艺术博览会、香港艺术博览会、上海艺术博览会、及纽约亚洲当代艺术博览会。在2015的香港艺术博览会上，他们+的作品被Artsy评选为展场中的亮点。

“他们+”的作品还广泛发表和刊登于上千种国内外专业艺术媒体和主流杂志，网站，报刊，美术馆画册等。比如：2014年，他们+接受智利著名艺术杂志《*Arte al Limite*》的采访，作品入选画册《*聚焦：100位当代艺术家*》2013年，他们+入选国际知名艺术评论家、策展人、美国加州大学伯克利分校EMILY LEISZ CARR教授的《*你必须知道的25位中国当代艺术家*》一书2012年，他们+的作品成为德国著名艺术出版社Prestel出版的《*下一代：中国青年艺术家*》一书的封面，并有专栏评论和报道2010年，他们+入选吕澎编著的《*中国当代艺术史：2000-2010*》

他们+的作品现被许多美术馆和机构收藏，包括：中央美术学院美术馆，广东美术馆，奥地利维也纳ESSL美术馆，澳大利亚悉尼白兔美术馆，日本福冈亚洲美术馆，谭国斌当代艺术博物馆，诺基亚公司，韩国三星集团，法国文化部，湖南省博物馆，芬兰赫尔辛基艺术学院，美国伊利诺伊大学克兰纳特美术馆，泰国王室，JP摩根家族。

1978 Lai Shengyu: Born in Shaoyang, Hunan Province, China
 1979 Yang Xiaogang: Born in Ningxiang, Hunan Province, China
 2001 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Printmaking Department, Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), Beijing
 2004 Lai: Master of Fine Arts, Printmaking Department, CAFA
 2005 Yang: Master of Fine Arts, Printmaking Department, CAFA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2018 Mobile Theatre: They Solo Exhibition, Yang Gallery, Singapore
 2017 One World, One Dream, Tamen+ Solo Exhibition, Rong Bao Zhai Hong Kong Exhibition Space, Hong Kong
 2016 Floating World, Yang Gallery, 798, Beijing
 2015 Micro-Thought and the Micro-Thought: TAMEN Apocalypse, Book Launch, Guangzhou Yuexiu, District Library, Guangzhou
 2014 Outside Within: New Works by Tamen, Art+ Shanghai Gallery, Shanghai
 2013 Forget Themselves, Hunan Fine Arts Museum, Changsha
 2012 Collective Memory, Canvas International Art, Amstelveen, The Netherlands
 2011 Past and Present, They Solo Exhibition, Beyond Art Space, Beijing
 2009 They, The Lost Heaven, Museum of Hunan Province
 They, Canvas International Art, Amstelveen, The Netherlands
 2008 They, New York Asian Contemporary Art Fair, New York
 Art Classroom, China Today Gallery, Brussels, Belgium
 2007 They, Pyo Gallery Beijing, Beijing
 2006 Tamen, Pyo Gallery, Seoul, Korea
 2004 Therefore It's them and Surely It's Them, The First Dashanzi Art Festival, Beijing, Long March Gallery, Beijing 798 Arts Center, Beijing

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2017 Art Central Hong Kong, Art+ Shanghai Gallery, Hong Kong
 2016 Art Central Hong Kong, Art+ Shanghai Gallery, Hong Kong
 2015 Art Central Hong Kong, Art+ Shanghai Gallery, Hong Kong
 Art Stage Singapore, Art+ Shanghai Gallery, Singapore
 2014 Mind-Painting and Memory-Recording, Gallery Beijing Space, Beijing
 2013 Remote from Streams and Mountains - Pure Views, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan
 Altered Shan Shui States, Red Gate, Beijing
 Remote from Streams and Mountains - New Painting from China, Arts Santa Monica, Barcelona
 2012 Rising Dragon - Contemporary Chinese Photography of Art, Art Museum of Katonah, New York
 We Are Asia, Art Stage Singapore, Singapore
 2011 Chengdu Biennale - Changing Vistas: Creative Duration, Chengdu
 Utopia Nowhere: Views of Progress and Nostalgia, Art+ Shanghai Gallery, Shanghai
 Pure Views: New Painting from China, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco,
 2010 First Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Art: Transformation of Chinese Art History 2000-2009, National Convention Center, Beijing
 Inertia, Consulate General of Spain, Shanghai
 The Big Bang - Contemporary Chinese Art from the White Rabbit Collection, White Rabbit Museum, Sydney
 Consumer Image, Age Gallery, Beijing
 Games: Young Chinese Artists, White Box Museum of Art, 798 Art District, Beijing
 2009 Metropolis Now!: A Selection of Chinese Contemporary Art, Meridian International Center, Washington D.C.
 Chengdu Biennale, Chengdu
 Bearing of Hunan and Hubei - Chinese Contemporary Art 1985-2009,

2008 Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou Art Beijing, Beijing
 China - Facing Reality, National Art Museum of China, Beijing
 China Contemporary Art, National Art Museum of Singapore, Singapore
 Being Butterfly, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Shanghai
 Art Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
 Art Hong Kong, Hong Kong
 Art Cologne, Cologne, Germany
 Art Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, United States
 Shanghai Contemporary, Shanghai
 China Now 2, Canvas International Art, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
 2007 Floating: New Generation of Art in China, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea
 Many Reality, Museum of Modern Art, Salzburg, Austria
 Asia New Wave, ZKM Museum, Karlsruhe, Germany
 The First Today's Documents 2007: Energy, Today Art Museum, Beijing
 Art Fire in Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
 Art Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, United States
 VOLTA Art Fair, Basel, Switzerland
 Art Cologne, Cologne, Germany
 Shanghai Contemporary, Shanghai
 2006 The Second Reality, European Commission, around Europe
 Made in China: Young Art and Fresh Film Festival, Berlin, Germany
 China Today - Images of Changing World, Essl Museum, Vienna, Austria
 Body - Boundary, Chambers Fine Arts, New York, United States
 Art Beijing, Beijing
 Art Cologne, Cologne, Germany
 KIAF (Korean International Art Fair), Seoul, Korea
 CIGE (China International Gallery Exposition), Beijing
 2005 Grounding Reality: New Chinese Contemporary Art, Seoul Art Center, Seoul, Korea
 The Second Reality: Photographs from China, Piazza of Berlaymont Building, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium

AWARDS AND PRIZES

2006 "Best New Comer Award", Critics Award at China Contemporary Art & Literature Exhibition, nominated by CCAA (Chinese Certification and Accreditation Association) Chinese Contemporary Art Award
 2004 Outstanding Post-Graduate Work Award, Central Academy of Fine Art, Beijing (Lai Shengyu)
 2001 First Prize of the Oka Matsu Family Art Fund of Japan, China Central Acadezmy of Fine Arts (Lai Shengyu)
 1999 Gold Award at the Nokia Asia Pacific Region "I See the Future" Art Grand Prix (Yang Xiaogang)

PRIVATE AND INSTITUTIONAL COLLECTIONS

+ Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing
 + Essl Art Museum, Vienna, Austria
 + Eskenazi Collection of Chinese Art, London
 + Finland Helsinki Art Institute, Finland
 + Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan
 + French Ministry of Culture, France
 + Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou
 + JPMorgan Chase & Co
 + Krannert Art Museum (University of Illinois)
 + Nokia Corporation, Finland
 + Samsung Group, Korea
 + Tan Guobin Contemporary Art Museum, Changsha
 + White Rabbit Collection, Sydney, Australia

1978 赖圣予（赖 盛）：出生于中国湖南邵阳
 1979 杨晓钢：出生于中国湖南宁乡
 2005 杨晓钢毕业于中央美术学院版画系，获硕士学位
 2004 赖圣予毕业于中央美术学院版画系，获硕士学位
 2001 赖圣予和杨晓钢毕业于中央美术学院版画系，获学士学位现居北京

个展

2018 《移动剧场，他们+ 作品展》，杨国际艺术中心，新加坡
 2017 《同一个世界，同一个梦想：他们+ 作品展》，荣宝轩，香港
 2016 《漂浮的世界》，杨艺术中心，798，北京
 2015 《微思想》暨‘微思想：他们启示录’新书发布会（广州市越秀区图书馆）
 2014 《里外：他们小组新作展》，艺术+ 上海画廊，上海
 2013 《相忘于江湖》，湖南省画院美术馆，长沙
 2012 《共同·记忆》，CANVAS 画廊，阿姆斯特丹，荷兰
 2011 《前世今生》，别处空间，北京
 2009 《失落的天堂》，湖南省博物馆，湖南长沙
 《THEY个展》，鹿特丹艺术博览会，荷兰
 2008 《THEY个展》，亚洲当代艺术博览会，纽约，美国
 《艺术教室》，今日中国画廊，比利时
 2007 《THEY 个展》，表画廊，北京
 2006 《TA MEN 个展》，首尔表画廊，韩国
 2004 《所以是他们及这就是他们》个展，798长征空间，北京

部分群展

2017 《Art Central 香港博览会》，艺术+ 上海画廊，香港
 2016 《Art Central 香港博览会》，艺术+ 上海画廊，香港
 2015 《Art Central 香港博览会》，艺术+ 上海画廊，香港
 《新加坡艺术博览会》，艺术+ 上海画廊，新加坡
 2014 《绘心撰艺》，空间画廊，北京
 2013 《溪山清远——流觞故事》，福冈亚洲美术馆，日本
 《山水异境》，红门画廊，北京
 《溪山清远——中国当代新绘画》，圣坦莫妮卡艺术中心，西班牙
 2012 《腾飞的巨龙——当代中国摄影展》，Katonah 艺术博物馆，纽约，美国
 《我们是亚洲——第二届艺术登陆新加坡博览会主题展》，新加坡国际会展中心，新加坡
 2011 成都双年展主题展——《溪山清远》，成都
 《命题乌托邦——进步与怀旧》，艺术+ 上海画廊，上海
 《溪山清远——中国新绘画》，旧金山亚洲艺术博物馆，美国
 《游戏——中国青年艺术家》，白盒子艺术馆，798，北京
 2010 《首届中国当代艺术文献展：改造历史——2000-2009的中国新艺术》，国家会议中心，北京
 《惰性》，西班牙大使馆文化中心，上海
 《大爆炸——白兔美术馆收藏展》，白兔美术馆，悉尼，澳大利亚
 《具象研究—图像消费》，时代美术馆，北京

2009 《都市中》——中国当代艺术展，子午线国际空间，华盛顿，美国
 《成都双年展》，成都国际会展中心，成都
 《两湖潮流——当代艺术1985-2009年》，广东美术馆，广州
 《艺术北京》，北京农展馆，北京
 2008 《面对现实》，中国美术馆，北京
 《向上中国当代艺术展》，新加坡国家美术馆，新加坡
 《新趣味-中国当代艺术展》，湖岩美术馆，首尔，韩国
 《上海MOCA双年展-梦蝶》，上海当代艺术馆，上海
 《迪拜艺术博览会》，迪拜
 《科隆艺术博览会》，科隆
 《芝加哥艺术博览会》，芝加哥，美国
 《上海当代艺术博览》，上海
 《中国现在现在》，CANVAS 画廊，阿姆斯特丹，荷兰
 2007 《浮游——中国艺术新一代》，国立现代美术馆，韩国
 《多种现实》，国家现代艺术博物馆，维也纳，奥地利
 《亚洲新浪潮”，ZKM博物馆，德国
 《首届今日文献展》，今日美术馆，北京
 《科隆艺术博览会》，科隆表画廊，德国
 2006 《第二现实——中国当代摄影展欧洲巡回展》，欧盟
 《中国艺术与电影节MADE IN CHINA》，柏林，德国
 《今日中国——当代艺术中的转世魅影》，SAMMLUNG ESSL美术馆，维也纳，奥地利
 《此身界外——当代艺术展》，前波画廊，纽约，美国
 2005 《着陆现实——中国当代艺术展》汉城艺术中心，韩国
 《第二现实——中国当代摄影展》，欧盟总部会议大厅，布鲁塞尔

获奖

2006 中国当代艺术文献展获得最佳新人奖
 2006 CCAA中国当代艺术奖提名候选人
 2004 赖圣予获中央美术学院研究生毕业创作优秀奖
 2001 赖圣予获日本冈松家族艺术基金一等奖中央美术学院本科毕业创作展金奖
 1999 杨晓钢获诺基亚亚太地区“我看未来”艺术大奖赛金奖

作品公共和机构收藏

+ Eskenazi 艺术博物馆，伦敦，英国
 + 中央美术学院陈列馆
 + 广东美术馆
 + 奥地利维也纳
 + SAMSUNG
 + ESSL美术馆
 + 澳大利亚悉尼白兔美术馆
 + 日本福冈亚洲美术馆
 + 谭国斌当代艺术博物馆
 + 诺基亚公司
 + 韩国三星集团
 + 法国文化部



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