

Tamen+ 他们 +

ARTIST PORTFOLIO



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ARTIST INTRODUCTION 艺术家简介

Tamen+ is an artist collective formed in 2003 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 and are currently based in Beijing working at Beihang University (BUAA) in the Department of New Media Art. 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 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.

Tamen+ has held numerous solo exhibitions in Beijing, New York, Seoul, and the Netherlands, and has participated in a range of art fairs including Art Cologne, Art Beijing, Art Dubai, Art HK, SH Contemporary, and the New York Asian Contemporary Art Fair. The collective has been featured in publications such as *Young Chinese Artists: The Next Generation*, and their work can be found in the collections of the Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum (Beijing), Guangdong Museum of Art (Guangzhou), White Rabbit Collection (Sydney), and Essl Museum (Vienna).

“他们”是一个艺术团体，由艺术家赖胜予和杨晓钢于2003年成立。这两位艺术家分别于1978和1979年出生于湖南省。他们同时毕业于中央美术学院版画专业，获得硕士学位。现在，他们在北京航空航天大学（BUAA）新媒体专业任职。两位艺术家云游各地，运用二人通力合作和共同绘画来反驳当代社会的个人迷恋主义。随着“同一房间”系列作品的走红，他们获得了来自国内外的称赞。在此之后，他们的作品又开始转向自然景色的室外场景，展现西方风格的绘画技巧和发人深思的构图。

赖胜予和杨晓钢的合作也是中国当代艺术的一个新趋势，他们将思想运动反应在油画中。“他们”在北京、纽约、首尔、荷兰举办过多场个展，并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。“他们”小组曾出现在多家出版物上，比如《中国年轻艺术家——新一代》。他们的作品在中央美术学院博物馆（北京）、广东美术馆（广州）、白兔中国当代艺术收藏基金会（悉尼）和埃索博物馆中均有展出（维也纳）。



ABOUT TAMEN+ 关于他们 +



Perfect Holiday 1 完美假期 1, Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯, 90 x 140 cm, 2017

Tamen's+ work has gained acclaim in China and abroad for their ability to speak about contemporary China through serene scenes of maddening juxtapositions in vibrant cityscapes (in earlier works) and vast natural landscapes of harmonious cooperation between humanity and nature (in more recent works).

Large canvases display Western-style oil painting techniques, thought-provoking conceptualizations, and complication of the past and present. Often referencing the nature and tranquility typical of traditional Chinese painting and the ink painting aesthetic, the works remain wholly in the context of the contemporary. Using an unpretentiously realistic and exquisite style, Lai and Yang impress a dramatic sense of fantasticality upon viewers, taking on characteristics of post modernism, surrealism, critical realism, and traditional ink.

Depictions of familiar yet detached scenery that include a rich array of cultural references and archetypal images allude to a deep understanding and appreciation for both Western and Eastern art. Truth and illusion, tranquility and anxiety, order and chaos are juxtaposed spatially and philosophically, while the intrinsic temporal

and spatial relationships between nature, objects, figures, and images are reconstructed.

“他们”小组的作品因为具备了为当代中国社会发声的能力，在国内外广受好评。这些作品有的将焦虑的心境与静止的场景并置在充满活力的都市景观中（早期作品），亦或是展现了丰富的自然风光，体现出人与自然的和谐共存（近期作品）。大尺幅的油画展现了他们的西方油画技巧、先锋的思想以及对于过去与现在的完美。通过参考自然景物与传统中国绘画的宁静气质与水墨美学，但是作品仍完全存在当代语境中。

通过含蓄且细腻写实的风格，以及掺杂后现代主义、超现实主义、批判现实主义和传统水墨的特色，赖圣予和杨晓钢的作品给予观众戏剧化的感官幻想。

他们的作品中刻画了常见的却又看似突兀的场景，其中大量丰富的艺术史借鉴以及原型图片，都间接表达了他们对东西方艺术的深刻理解与欣赏。真实与虚幻，宁静与焦虑，有序与混乱，这些元素都被作者分别借用空间和哲学体现在作品中；同时又将自然、物质、人像与图像中的内在时间与空间关系重建。

SELECTED WORKS 部分作品



Under the Victoria Peak 太平山下, Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯, 135 x 175 cm, 2017



The Queen and the Father 女皇和父亲 Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
135 x 180 cm, 2017

Two artists co-paint, co-operate and co-practice, placing emphasis on communication and dialogue, both in the process and results of their work. Before beginning a work, a general theme and setting may be discussed, while the rest of the conversation occurs through the painting as they alternate working on the piece, continuously adding upon the other's work, with neither having the right to erase the work of the other.

这两位艺术家共同作画，共同创作，共同练习，在作品的创作过程和成果里侧重交流与对话，在开始创作一幅画之前，大概的主题和背景是他们事先讨论确定好的，之后的讨论交流便是在共同创作的过程中，他们交替着在对方的画作上添加自己的想法，但双方都没有任何权利抹去对方的创作。

A WORD FROM TAMEN+ 来自他们+



ON CO-PAINTING:

“During our artistic production, we will discuss and decide a basic platform, such as a room or an island, and then, we will be free to draw our own interested content on the canvas. We do not interfere and change each other’s paintings, and therefore the final piece would radiate a bizarre sense of freedom and controversy. The painting process allows us to use third-person perspective to look at our subjective ideas. This is one of the reasons we name ourselves THEY.”

ON REALITY AND FICTION

“We believe that reality itself is unreal, the reality is that we are living in fiction. Our world is full of lies and harsh reality, so we often can not distinguish reality and fiction. Cruelty is real, and beauty is fictional. Compare to the absurdity and hypocrisy of the real world, perhaps only the dream is real. Our generation is being deceived and fooled, our value systems are ambiguous, we can not distinguish between beauty and ugliness of human nature. We often even do not believe the simplest love. So we can only rely on one horizon to distinguish between reality and fiction.”

ON CONTRASTS

“The contrast is very natural. First of all, the world is full of contrasts and sense of absurdity. The subjective and objective world can never form unity. Human beings and nature can not always be harmonious. Civilization and history are sometimes vague and contradictory. As artists, the reality and the truth we conveyed are based on our subjective perceptions, sometimes the ideologies are extreme and expressional styles are individualized. We carry out contradiction and unification through two men’s “co-painting.” At the same time, we reinforce, transform, and integrate such contrast. This is a difficult and challenging task, and it also becomes our feature and artistic concept.”

关于共同创作

画画确实通常是个人化的，我们喜欢这种挑战，这种矛盾，并且我们把个性和兴趣的不同融入到画面，这使得画面呈现出冲突和统一，主观和客观互相融合。我们会先讨论好一个基本的平台，例如一个房间或一个岛屿，然后我们会自由地在画面上画上自己感兴趣的内容，但是我们不能破坏和干涉对方的画，最后画面会呈现出一种奇异的自由和冲突。这使得我们必须站在他者的角度来观看自己的主观想法。这也是我们取名“他们”原因之一。

关于现实和虚构

“我们认为，现实本身就是不真实的，我们生活的现实就是虚构小说。谎言和残酷的现实充满了我们的生活和世界，所以我们经常分不清现实和虚构。残酷是真实的，美丽是虚构的。相对于现实世界的荒诞和虚伪，也许梦才是真实的。我们是被欺骗和愚弄的一代，我们的价值观混乱，我们不能分辨人性中的美与丑。我们甚至经常不相信最简单的爱。所以我们只能依靠一条地平线来区分真实与虚构。”

关于对比和反差

“这种反差是很自然的。首先，这个世界就充满了反差和荒诞感。主观世界和客观世界永远无法达成统一。人类与自然也总是不能和谐。文明和历史有时也是模糊和矛盾的。作为艺术家，我们所要表达的真实只能是主观的认识，甚至是极端思想和个性风格。我们通过两个艺术家一起工作这种方法，达成矛盾和统一。我们强化这种反差，同时转换和融合这种反差。这是一个很难的工作，同时也是挑战，也成为我们的特点和观念。”

NEW SERIES: 8 IMMORTALS 新作品系列：八仙过海



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



Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea 2 八仙过海 2, Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯
120 x 150 cm, 2018

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。对于杨晓钢和赖圣予来说，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家组合，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。

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 Eight Immortals Cross the Sea (八仙过海) 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” (八仙过海，各显神通). 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 Gormley, Jeff Koons and Yue Minjun.

“八仙过海”讲述了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。

ISLAND SERIES 孤岛系列



Antidote 包治百病, Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯, 90 x 120cm, 2017



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

"We use an island as a base platform, just like the common room with a window we have used in the past series. We are interested in creating a container or a platform, and being the director of the theatric stage to perform drama and dream."

"我们使用一个孤岛作为基础，就像我们过去曾今使用一间有窗户的房子一样，我们感兴趣的是创造一个容器或是舞台，在这个平台上导演戏剧和梦。"

NEW WORKS 新作品



Friend-Ship 友谊的小船, Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯, 80 x 120 cm, 2018



Youth 芳华, Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯, 80 x 100 cm, 2018

NEW WORKS 新作品



The Star and the Cloud 星云, Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯, 90 x 120 cm, 2016



Belief 信仰, Acrylic on canvas 布面丙烯, 91 x 135 cm, 2017

THE SAME ROOM SERIES 《同一间房子》系列



Tamen+ 他们+, Tibet 西藏, Oil on canvas 布面油画, 180 x 280 cm, 2006

The Same Room series that Tamen+ is most known for can be decoded like a classical still life. Each work in the series is set in the same eerily familiar setting: a stark, cafeteria-like room in a high-rise building, derived from Edward Hopper's 1958 painting *Sunlight in a Cafeteria*.

Each is populated with an assortment of figures, Western art pieces, a television screen, large picture window, and a man (representing the artists) with his back to the viewer. Through this, Tamen+ addresses the "insanity of the everyday," stressing the absurdity and theatricality of the controlled reality.

Influenced by the work of Surrealist René Magritte, Tamen's+ works resonate with reality while maintaining a sense of riddling incomprehension and ambiguity, incorporating anything and everything from landmark buildings to watermelons and Oscar statuettes. Chinese cityscapes often appear 'out' the window while figures within the room act as decorative figures taking their allotted places. This sophisticated layering and montaging of symbols engages the artifice of contemporary

society, addressing issues of urbanization, cultural identity, consumption, aestheticism, desire, and solitude.

Constructed like jigsaw puzzles where each piece is independent yet engaged, Tamen's+ work reflects the rivalry between dialectical opposites of interior versus exterior and individuality versus collective will. In these dream-like compositions, Lai and Yang offer no conclusions or defined reading. Instead, their works are provocations and challenges to the audience to go beyond conventional thinking and critically explore the social and psychological implications of today's world.

艺术二人组“他们+”创作的《同处一室》系列，与古典静物画有着相似的解读方式，这也成为了该系列最为人津津乐道的特点。系列中的作品无一例外地将场景设定在高楼里一个敞亮的餐厅式空间里，这一熟悉却又奇异的场景设置脱胎于爱德华·霍普1958年的作品——《自助餐厅的阳光》（*Sunlight in a Cafeteria*）。“他们+”在创作中将各式人物和对象融合在一起，其中不仅有西方的艺术作品，还有电视荧屏、巨大的窗

户以及一位男子的背影（这是两位艺术家自身的照）。“他们+”欲借此来表达“日常生活中的失常状态”，突显了现实被操控之后的荒诞和浮夸。

“他们+”的创作深受超现实主义画家雷内·玛格利特的影响，作品与现实呼应之余，更有着谜一样的难解和无法言传的细微。两位艺术家把各种事物融入画作之中：从地标建筑到西瓜再到奥斯卡小金人，不一而足。窗外展现的往往是中国都市风光，而屋内的特定位置则装点着陪衬式的人物。作品熟练的层次处理和象征元素的拼接无不吐露着当代社会的气息，借此对城市化、文化认同、消费、唯美主义、欲望以及孤独等问题进行探讨。

该系列的作品宛若拼图一般，既是独立成章的个体，又是密不可分整体，反映出内心与外在、个性化与集体意志间的辩证和对抗。在这些恍如梦幻般的作品中，两位艺术家并未给出结论或定义。相反，他们希望透过作品让观众跳出思维定式的窠臼，以细致的眼光探索当今世界的社会涵义和心理涵义。

THE SECRET GARDEN SERIES 秘密花园系列

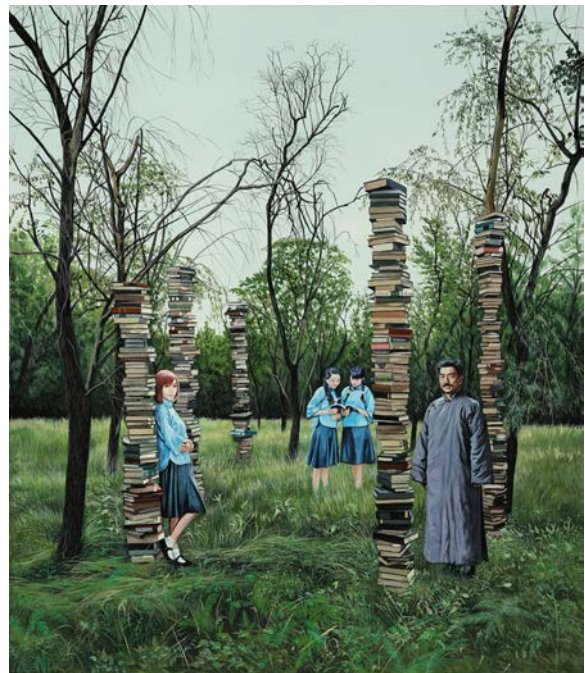


Seven Fairies 七仙女, Oil on canvas 布面油画, 100x120cm, 七仙女 2015

“We have been living in Beijing, a metropolitan city, for a long time. More and more people suffer from the “urban disease” (symptoms of urbanization) due to the high-speed economic development, and we are not exempted from that either, always thinking about escaping the city. Our bodies have yet to leave the city, but our works have reflected these thoughts by moving away from the city. From the urban sceneries in the period of “in the same house” to natural landscape, this is a natural transition, implying the changing of the society and our own experiences.”

《任何会成为历史的潮流必然会在下一代人身上留下痕迹，也许我们也会延续85新潮的思潮，这需要观者从我们的作品中寻找去感受。我们作品不会比第一代当代画家的作品保守，我们随着时代和历史的进化而改变，从而创造出新的传统。》

— Tamen+ 他们+



Secret garden - Book 秘密花园-琴, Acrylic on canvas
布面丙烯, 70 x 60 cm, 2016

VISTAS OF THE SUBLIME: EXPLORING THE UNUSUAL TERRAINS OF TAMEN'S LANDSCAPE

by Julie Chun
MA, Art History

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 other than one's self. 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. 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 in a mystifying manner. While seemingly real, the scenes on the picture plane are hardly any reflections of known reality.

The constructed landscapes and roomscape 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.



[Figure 1] CCTV 中央电视台, 180 x 280 cm, 2006

Chinese critics and art scholars generally agree 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. Many now study abroad or are able to visit world-renowned museums while taking part in international exhibitions or residency programs. Unlike the pre-modern past, post-modern conditions are decidedly 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 crosscultural context, we can gain a greater comprehensive understanding of the enigmatic vistas created by Tamen and presented before us.

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."

The second factor of originating from the same province points to the deeply ingrained Asian penchant for 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 is technically dual exhibitions, but they can insist on their singular appellation 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-imagining 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." Ironically, the communal process, which is a foundational aspect of Tamen's practice, is not a perpetuation of the exemplary socialist model but rather an intervention against the venerated and time-honored ideals of Chinese collectivity. While artists in China still elect to work interdependently to produce images exonerating the state, it is no longer 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" based on 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. One would then pick up a paint-laden brush and begin the process. 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 one left off until the process of exchange culminates to a 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*. This seemingly nonsensical

body of text became the first literary work of Surrealism and served to advance Breton's episteme which became formalized and released as the first Surrealist Manifesto in 1924. The impact of Breton's writing led to the prodigious production of unanticipated imagery in the arts drawn from the subconscious of 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 had brought about the harsh and estranged conditions of the Industrial Revolution. These artists rejected reason, order, and objectivity, and by embracing symbolism in their imagery, 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. 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. A span of almost 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 of a 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



[Figure 2] Diego Velázquez - *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*

contrast to an orderly pastoral or cosmopolitan vista that suggest pristine utopia. Effectively employing the format of a window (or 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.

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, the juxtaposition of the landscape and the roomscape strongly alludes to the beauty and fears of an unknown tomorrow. Despite the 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 recent 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 recent bucolic vistas punctuated by Tamen's trademark of odd signifiers can 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 (literally meaning breath or vapor) vital for governing life and growth of nature and humans. As posited by Michael Sullivan, "It [the qi] infuses all things, for there is no distinction between the animate and the inanimate." Personal qi



[Figure 3] *Eating Snakes 吃蛇*, 180 x 280 cm, 2005

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":

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.

Written in 1803, Blake's poetry epitomizes the dual forces of the beautiful 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 *A Chance Meeting* (2014) and *To See a World in a Wild Flower*

(2014)
[Figures
4 and
5].



[Figure 4] *A Chance Meeting 萍水相逢*, 60 x 120 cm, 2014



[Figure 5] *To See a World in a Wild Flower* 一花一世界, 90 x 140 cm, 2014

Yet again, the vast and the marked distance threaten to separate the young girl from the drifting boat or the Buddhist statuary, both representing her safe haven. The innocence of humanity symbolized by the young maiden is overtaken by the deep and wide chasm of the natural cosmos, 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 an exterior or interior. 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 encased as a dark silhouette [Figure 6], serving as an obstacle in our gaze, but also standing firmly planted 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 an uncertain and impending storm. For 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 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 in their possession the real and imagined oracles which they continue to impart through their painted vistas of the beautiful and the sublime.



[Figure 6] Caspar David Friedrich, *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, 1818, oil on canvas,



[Figure 7] *A Break in the Clouds after the Rain* 雨过天青云破处, 90 x 140 cm, 2013

远眺极致之景：论“他们艺术小组”作品中不寻常的风景

文/ JULIE CHUN
艺术史硕士

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。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攀升，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。

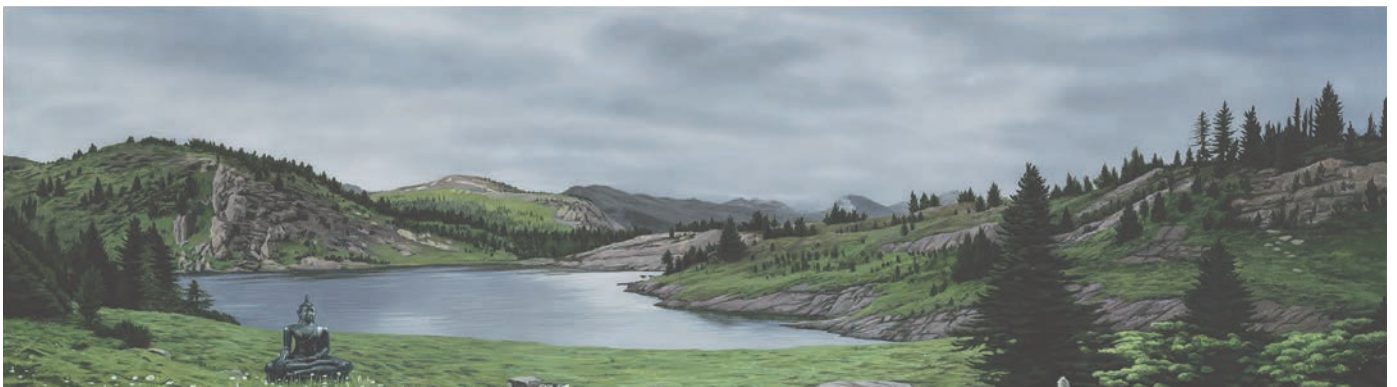
回首过去

“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，其历史可以追溯到商代（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。



“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。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。

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”。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。

道家对突显主体的戒律在许多方面与浪漫主义对内在情绪的追求有相似之处。

“他们”在最近的风景画中显示了东西方精神的协商。因此，我们能在“他们”的田园风光里察觉到威廉·布莱克的诗歌。布莱克是浪漫主义艺术和文学两方面都是位具有开创性和关键倡导者，所以这种借鉴显得更加明显。“他们”2014年的作品《一花一世界》（2014）就复述了布莱克的诗歌《天真的预言》的前两节：

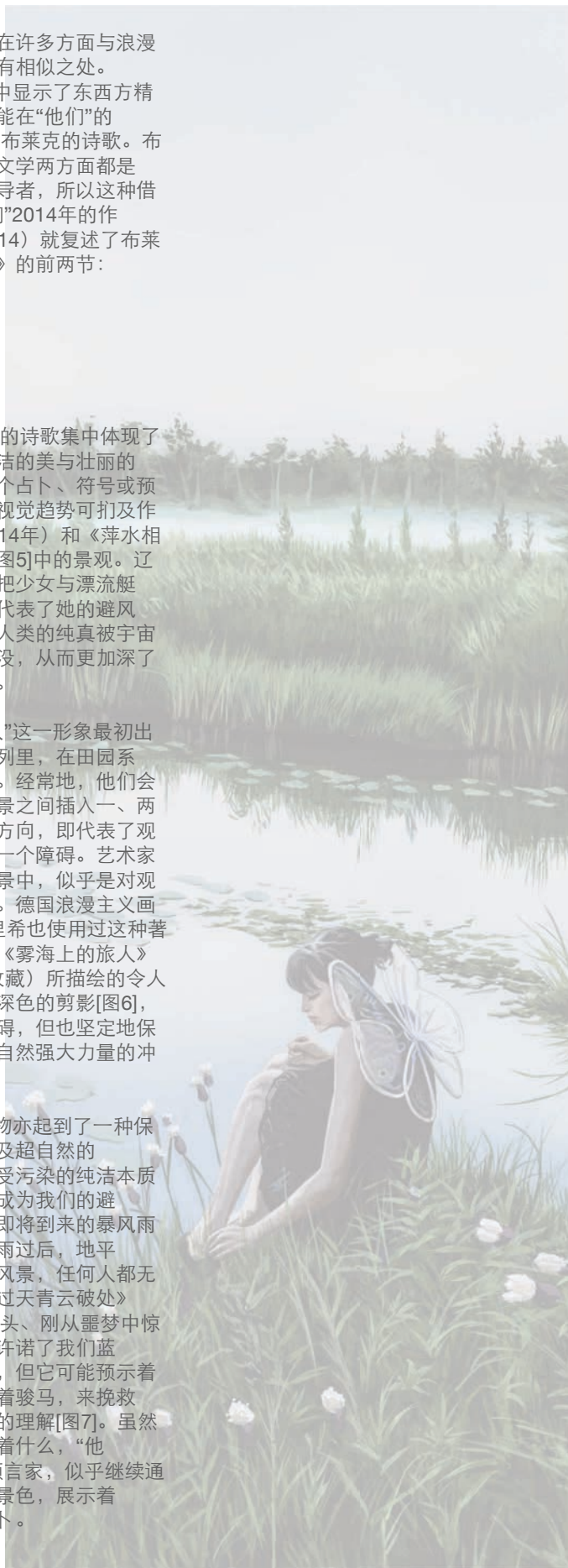
一沙一世界，
一花一天堂。
双手握无限，
刹那永恒。

这首布莱克写于1803年的诗歌集中体现了双重力量的交汇——纯洁的美与壮丽的美齐头并进，象征了一个占卜、符号或预兆。道教和佛教涅槃的视觉趋势可扣及作品《一花一世界》（2014年）和《萍水相逢》（2014年）[图4和图5]中的景观。辽阔的距离仿佛威胁着要把少女与漂流艇或佛像分开，后两者都代表了她的避风港。由年轻少女象征的人类的纯真被宇宙中不可逾越的裂口所吞没，从而更加深了观者的分离和思念之感。

此外，“对窗外凝望的人”这一形象最初出现在《同一个房子》系列里，在田园系列中被发展地更加充分。经常地，他们会有意在观者和画面的背景之间插入一、两个人影，凝视着同一个方向，即代表了观者的视角，亦是观者的一个障碍。艺术家把人物安置在画面的前景中，似乎是对观众放眼远眺的一种拒绝。德国浪漫主义画家卡斯帕·大卫·弗里德里希也使用过这种著名的标志性构图方式。《雾海上的旅人》（1818年；汉堡艺术馆收藏）所描绘的令人惊叹的主题便是主人公深色的剪影[图6]，虽然是观者视线上的障碍，但也坚定地保护着观者，使其免受大自然强大力量的冲击。

“他们”作品中的许多人物亦起到了一种保护作用，把观众和自然及超自然的未知力量隔离开来。未受污染的纯洁本质虽然是暂时的，但也能成为我们的避难所，让我们片刻享受即将到来的暴风雨之前的平静。至于暴风雨过后，地平线上出现的究竟是什么风景，任何人都无法知晓。如同作品《雨过天青云破处》

（2014年）中，抓着枕头、刚从噩梦中惊醒像的孩子，或许未来许诺了我们蓝天、净水和生命的延续，但它可能预示着救世主或征服者即将骑着骏马，来挽救或破坏我们此刻对世界的理解[图7]。虽然我们不能确定明天预示着什么，“他们”作为二十一世纪的预言家，似乎继续通过画面中美丽而壮观的景色，展示着他们真实和想象中的占卜。



THE PAST AND THE PRESENT OF TAMEN

by Wang Xiaomeng

From City to Nature

Since 2006, the city has been the focus of the Tamen (or “They”) artist collective. In their best-known series of works, the Same Room series, the collective’s members Lai Shengyu and Yang Xiaogang created a manner of “dialogue” where in the same room, a wide variety of elements from urbanized life were placed. These complexly jumbled images formed strong visual collisions, with the emotional pressure brought by urbanization becoming natural targets of the artists’ critical ire and source material for their visual depictions. Beginning in 2009, Tamen began to create another series of large works, representative of which was the piece *The Lost Heaven*. At that time, the “same room” disappeared, replaced by landmarks of major cities amid ruins and shattered walls. It seems as though the progress of urban construction has moved at such a pace that less and less space is left for individuals, leading to the collapse of their last shelter – the “same room,” amplifying the desires of the cities’ men and women while simultaneously causing feelings of insecurity among them.

Born at the beginning of China’s reforms and opening up, Lai Shengyu and Yang Xiaogang are members of a generation that has directly experienced the gradual

encroachment of urbanity’s sprawl into the individual spirit – China’s rapid economic development and the rise of the city and urban culture. The two series of works *Same Room* and *Lost Heaven* are thus expressive of their most intuitive and deepest introspections of the era. However, since 2011, Tamen has once again changed direction: urban architecture and its byproducts have all but faded from the screen, in favor of natural landscapes and cultural scenes that have become ever more vested in their works. In the words of Yang Xiaogang, “The long-shelved traditional culture of China has become Tamen’s newest outlet.”

From Critique to Construction

Lai Shengyu and Yang Xiaogang began learning Western means of expression as children, a long period of practice that has allowed them a deeper understanding of Western culture. Having explored the city theme to its limits in their previous series, a change in their work was a logical matter of course. Compared to the direct expression of Western art, Chinese traditional art forms place more emphasis on subtle, reserved expression. In Chinese traditional paintings, despite the various power shifts, dynastic coups, and countless wars and disasters of history, very rarely are themes of cruelty displayed. The literati,

Chinese scholars and men of letters, expressed their psychological turmoil during such uncertain times through landscapes, painting mountains and rivers to soothe their sufferings from reality’s sorrows. In modern society, wars still exist, and industrialization and urban expansion have intensified human alienation. Reflecting these issues, Tamen sought to find a new way to release personal anxiety and stress, making a return to Chinese tradition both fitting and imperative.

Tamen also feels that in the past ten to twenty years, a critical mode has formed in China’s art community in which critique has become shallow and easy, tending to the simplistic and lacking in polemical depth. For a certain period, critique was effective and meaningful, but in today’s extremely well-developed “Weibo era” of Internet networks and ever-present social media platforms, critique and even catharsis can occur at any time. The function of art therefore needs to evolve accordingly, making the self-discipline of art and the study of art language an urgent topic. Moreover, real critique lies not simply in showing bloody scenes of violence, conflict, and collision, but in independent thought and independent spirit. The Tamen collective constructs an ideal spiritual home on such a basis, forming associations with Chinese tradition.

From Inside Society to Outside

Although there are many differences between Tamen’s new series of works and the previous ones, in terms of the vision and emotional tone, the more recent works are not a total repudiation of the previous paintings but rather successors in the same strain. In the period of the *Same Room* series, famous Chinese masterworks often appeared on Tamen’s canvases, with bizarre urban figures also inhabiting the “same room” attesting to the conflict and cacophony of this day and age. New works by Tamen reinforce and purify elements found in Chinese traditional culture, removing most products of modern society and restoring a sound home for the heart. Chinese landscapes have kept relatively constant for thousands of years in reality, yet demonstrate endless change at the hands of artists. Tamen’s numerous experimentations in the *Same Room* series performed a similar ever-altering process.

Although the style of visual imagery between series is notably different, the creative mentality of Tamen has never changed, which has always wandered in and out of society. Tamen’s studio is located far from the city center, beyond the borders of Beijing’s 5th Ring Road.

THE PAST AND THE PRESENT OF TAMEN + (cont.)

In previous works of Tamen, many “junk images” from the Internet and magazines were present. They thus further duplicated many of these mechanically reproduced works in their own works, but have never employed assistants because the creation of their paintings itself constitutes a way of practice or training. In a process similar to chanting, stroke by stroke, they arrive at the resulting image from the sum total of strokes, achieving a true quantitative to qualitative change that also grants the artists a measure of true inner peace.

From the West to the East

Since the inception of the group, Tamen has been using the creative method of “dialogue.” Their new works differ from their previous works, which were dialogues of the enclosed space on canvas, exploring the conflicts and collisions of visual juxtapositions and

thoughts. Now, they have extended their dialogues to the natural environment, emphasizing the communication between individuals. Although the figures and general temperament of these paintings differ, the images themselves are more harmonious. Because of this, Tamen no longer relies on the junk images from the Internet. Instead they go out and regularly take photographs in exterior settings to capture the poetic context and feel of nature, aiding in their comprehension of the so-called “unity of man and nature” that is a common theme in Chinese traditional culture. Therefore, the “dialogue” they have practiced has gained the additional implication of “unity of mankind.” However, this experience is not presented directly on their canvases via oil paint, but rather is imbued in the works through their

creation and imagination, constituting a contemporary return to Eastern culture.

Chinese traditional art was not part of the education that Lai Shengyu and Yang Xiaogang received during their university art studies. However, they have studied Chinese painting and calligraphy since childhood, and in conjunction with their long use of Western painting methods, have the confidence to seek what they ideally need to express in their paintings. One of the obvious changes between their older and newer works is that the dimensions of their newer works are smaller, and the imagery is simpler and more elegant, while at the same time greater emphasis is placed on the subtle expression of lines, composition, atmosphere, brush, and pigment – more so than Western painting’s attention to shadow, color, and stroke. In this manner

Tamen emphasizes mood, sentiment, artistic conception, and inner experience, which can be described within Chinese traditional culture by the phrase “to achieve vastness through subtlety.”

Tamen’s return to tradition is not a move to copy or indiscriminately imitate ancient paintings, but rather an extension and continuation of the ancient spirit, and so does not prevent them from adding modern elements to their works. Moreover, each individual’s perception/conception of tradition is unique; this multi-perspective mode of appearance further continues the character of “dialogue” that Tamen espouses. In these new works by Tamen, the artists display a familiarity with traditional Chinese cultural heritage, its contexts and methods, which can be described in a single word: Peace.

“他们”的前世今生

文/王晓孟

从城市到自然

从2006年开始，城市主题成为了“他们”小组创作的重心，在他们最为人熟知的“同一间房”系列作品中，小组核心成员赖圣予和杨晓钢通过“对话”的创作方式，在同一个房间里植入了众多都市化衍生物，纷繁芜杂的图像构成了强烈的视觉冲突，城市化带来的情绪压力自然而然成为了他们的批判和呈现对象。自2009年之后，“他们”开始创作一系列以《失落的天堂》为代表的大幅作品，此时，“同一间房”已经消失不见，取而代之的是各大城市的地标性建筑混杂着断壁残垣，似乎都市化进程对个人的排挤已经让“同一间房”这心灵最后的容身处也毁灭殆尽，而城市男女个人欲望被放大的同时却又人人自危。

作为改革开放之初出生的一代人，赖圣予和杨晓钢亲历了中国经济发展带来的巨大变化，也目睹了城市扩张对个人心灵的不断侵占，两个系列的作品可谓凝结了他们对这个时代最直观和深刻的反思。但是自2011年开始，“他们”的创作发生了改变，城市建筑及其衍生物几乎全部从画面中隐去，自然景观和人文风景一跃成为他们作品的归属，用杨晓钢的话说，“被长期搁置的中国传统文化成为了他们最新的突破口。”

从批判到建构

对于“他们”小组来说，赖圣予和杨晓钢从小便开始学习西方的表现方式，长期的创作也让他们对西方语境有了更深入的了解，于是在将城市主题发挥到极致之后，这种转变也变得顺理成章。相比于西方艺术的直

接表达，中国传统艺术更强调含蓄的表现方式，即便经历了各朝各代的权力变更以及无数的战争和灾难，但中国传统绘画却很少表现残酷的主题，文人墨客们也大多寓情于山水，借此转化和消解现世的苦痛。但即使到了现代社会，战争依然存在，工业化和城市扩张对人的异化也愈演愈烈，“他们”也需要一种全新的方式去释放个人的焦虑和压力，此时回归中国传统就变得更为适合和迫切。

“他们”同样认为，最近十几二十年，中国当代艺术界已经形成了一种批判模式，即批判变得轻而易举，并且逐渐趋于单一。在一定时期内，这种批判是生效和有意义的，但在网络和媒体极度发达的“微博时代”，批判甚至宣泄可以随时发生，艺术的功能也需要进行相应的转化，艺术的自律和对艺术语言的探讨就变得更为迫切。而且，真正的批判并非一味地表现血腥、暴力、矛盾或者冲突，而是要具备独立的思考和独立的精神，“他们”小组便是在此之上建构了一个理想化的家园，并且与中国传统形成了关联。

从入世到出世

虽然“他们”的新作与之前的作品在视觉和情绪基调上反差很大，但这绝非是对前期绘画的全盘否定，二者其实构成了一脉相承的关系。早在“同一间房”时期，很多国画名作就时常出现在“他们”的画面中，它们与光怪陆离的都市男女和图景共处一室，印证了这个时代的矛盾和喧嚣。而“他们”的新作更像

是将代表中国传统文化的元素进行了强化和提纯，在去除现代社会的衍生物之后，还原了一个恬静的心灵归属地。中国山水千年未变，但在艺术家的笔下却展现出了无穷的变化，而“他们”对“同一间房”进行的大量实验也印证了一种殊途同归。

虽然画面风格有所不同，但“他们”的创作心态也从未发生改变，似乎一直在出世与入世之间自由地游走。“他们”的工作室位于北京五环之外的“蒋府庄园艺术区”，几年来他们一边像出世的隐士一般工作在这宁静的“世外桃源”中，一边又以强烈的笔触描绘着最为“入世”的城市景象。如今，在这些艺术实验进行到极致之后，“他们”的新作正好为这种“出世”的心态找到了印证的方式和接入的切口，实现了他们从想法到实践的统一。就像赖圣予所说，他们之前的创作就像是一种铺垫，现在只不过是把结局和过程进行了完善。“他们”以往的作品出现了很多来自网络、杂志上的“垃圾图像”，他们也因此重复了很多机械性的模仿工作，但他们从来没有雇佣助手，因为这已经构成了一种修炼的方式。这就像念经，在一笔一笔的描绘背后，实现了真正量变到质变的过程，艺术家也由此获得了内心真正的平静。

从西方到东方

自小组成立之初，“他们”便一直采用“对话”的创作方式，但他们的新作与之前不同，以往他们更多的是在画布这个封闭的空间里对话，通过视觉的冲突和矛盾来呈现两个对应思想的不同。现在，他们则将对话扩

展到自然的环境里，强调两个个体之间的交流，虽然他们描绘的形象、气质不尽相同，但是画面更趋和谐。也正因为如此，“他们”不再使用网络上的垃圾图像，而是定期去室外拍摄素材，感受自然的诗意和情境，体悟中国传统文化所谓的“天人合一”，而他们一直践行的“对话”也有了更多“人人合一”的意味。但这些亲历的素材也并非直接呈现在画布中，其间被赋予了更多的创造和想象，这便构成了他们对东方文化的现代回溯。

虽然传统艺术在赖圣予和杨晓钢受教育的过程中被长期搁置，但他们从小学习国画和书法的经历使得这条血脉从未被斩断，而且“他们”以西方的方式进行了长期的创作之后，本身就已经获得了自信，这为他们寻求理想中的境界创造了条件。一个明显的变化是，“他们”新作的尺幅变小了，画面也愈发淡雅，同时更加强调线条、构图、韵味以及笔与颜料之间细微的感觉，而非西方绘画对光影、色彩和笔触的追求，因为他们强调的是一种情绪、意境和内在的体会，这可谓与中国传统文化中“尽精微、致广大”的思想不谋而合。但是，回归传统并非临摹、照搬古人的绘画，而是延续祖先或古人的精神，因而这并不妨碍他们在画面中加入一些当代的元素。而且，每个人对传统的理解都不一样，这种多角度的呈现方式进一步延续了“他们”小组“对话”的特质，在这背后，他们用熟悉的方法传承的是中国传统文化中的一种情境，如果用一个词来概括，那便是：安静。

CURRICULUM VITAE 简历

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

Both currently work in the Department of New Media Art, Beihang University (BUAA), Beijing

SOLO EXHIBITION

2018 *8 Immortals: New Works by Tamen+*, Art+ Shanghai Gallery, Shanghai, China
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 Yuxiu, 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, USA 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, Spain
2012 *Rising Dragon - Contemporary Chinese Photography of Art*, Art Museum of Katonah, New York, USA
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, California, USA
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, Australia
Consumer Image, Age Gallery, Beijing
Games: Young Chinese Artists, White Box Museum of Art, 798 Art District, Beijing

CURRICULUM VITAE 简历

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2009 | <p><i>Metropolis Now!: A Selection of Chinese Contemporary Art</i>, Meridian International Center, Washington D.C., USA</p> <p>Chengdu Biennale, Chengdu</p> <p><i>Bearing of Hunan and Hubei - Chinese Contemporary Art 1985-2009</i>, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou</p> <p>Art Beijing, Beijing</p> |
| 2008 | <p><i>China - Facing Reality</i>, National Art Museum of China, Beijing</p> <p><i>China Contemporary Art</i>, National Art Museum of Singapore, Singapore</p> <p><i>The New Interest - Chinese Contemporary Art</i>, Ho-Am Art Museum, Seoul, Korea</p> <p><i>Being Butterfly</i>, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Shanghai</p> <p>Art Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates</p> <p>Art Hong Kong, Hong Kong</p> <p>Art Cologne, Cologne, Germany</p> <p>Art Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, United States</p> <p>Shanghai Contemporary, Shanghai</p> <p><i>China Now 2</i>, Canvas International Art, Amsterdam, The Netherlands</p> |
| 2007 | <p><i>Floating: New Generation of Art in China</i>, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea</p> <p><i>Many Reality</i>, Museum of Modern Art, Salzburg, Austria</p> <p><i>Asia New Wave</i>, ZKM Museum, Karlsruhe, Germany</p> <p>The First Today's Documents 2007: Energy, Today Art Museum, Beijing</p> <p>Art Fire in Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates</p> <p>Art Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, United States</p> <p>VOLTA Art Fair, Basel, Switzerland</p> <p>Art Cologne, Cologne, Germany</p> <p>Shanghai Contemporary, Shanghai</p> |
| 2006 | <p><i>The Second Reality</i>, European Commission, around Europe</p> <p><i>Made in China: Young Art and Fresh Film Festival</i>, Berlin, Germany</p> <p><i>China Today - Images of Changing World</i>, Essl Museum, Vienna, Austria</p> <p><i>Body - Boundary</i>, Chambers Fine Arts, New York, United States</p> <p>Art Beijing, Beijing</p> <p>Art Cologne, Cologne, Germany</p> <p>KIAF (Korean International Art Fair), Seoul, Korea</p> <p>CIGE (China International Gallery Exposition), Beijing</p> |
| 2005 | <p><i>Grounding Reality: New Chinese Contemporary Art</i>, Seoul Art Center, Seoul, Korea</p> <p><i>The Second Reality: Photographs from China</i>, Piazza of Berlaymont Building, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium</p> <p>Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing</p> |

PRIVATE AND INSTITUTIONAL COLLECTIONS

Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou

Essl Museum, Vienna, Austria

White Rabbit Collection, Sydney, Australia

Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan

Tan Guobin Contemporary Art Museum, Changsha

Nokia Corporation, Finland

Samsung Group, Korea

French Ministry of Culture, France

PRIVATE AND INSTITUTIONAL COLLECTIONS

Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum, 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

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 Academy of Fine Arts (Lai Shengyu)
- 1999
- Gold Award at the Nokia Asia Pacific Region "I See the Future" Art Grand Prix (Yang Xiaogang)

CURRICULUM VITAE 简历

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 《八仙过海：他们+新作品系列》，艺术+上海画廊，上海
《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
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
《情性》，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

CURRICULUM VITAE 简历

2008	<p>《面对现实》，中国美术馆，北京</p> <p>《向上中国当代艺术展》，新加坡国家美术馆，新加坡</p> <p>《新趣味-中国当代艺术展》，湖岩美术馆，首尔，韩国</p> <p>《上海MOCA双年展-梦蝶》，上海当代艺术馆，上海</p> <p>《迪拜艺术博览会》，迪拜</p> <p>《科隆艺术博览会》，科隆</p> <p>《芝加哥艺术博览会》，芝加哥，美国</p> <p>《上海当代艺术博览》，上海</p>
2007	<p>《中国现在现在》，CANVAS 画廊，阿姆斯特丹，荷兰</p> <p>《浮游——中国艺术新一代》，国立现代美术馆，韩国</p> <p>《多种现实》，国家现代艺术博物馆，维也纳，奥地利</p> <p>《亚洲新浪潮》，ZKM博物馆，德国</p> <p>《首届今日文献展》，今日美术馆，北京</p> <p>《科隆艺术博览会》，科隆表画廊，德国</p>
2006	<p>《第二现实——中国当代摄影展欧洲巡回展》，欧盟</p> <p>《中国艺术与电影节MADE IN CHINA》，柏林，德国</p> <p>《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</p>
2005	<p>《此身界外——当代艺术展》，前波画廊，纽约，美国</p> <p>《着陆现实——中国当代艺术展》汉城艺术中心，韩国</p> <p>《第二现实——中国当代摄影展》，欧盟总部会议大厅，布鲁塞尔</p>
作品公共和机构收藏	
<p>Eskenazi 艺术博物馆，伦敦，英国</p> <p>中央美术学院陈列馆</p> <p>广东美术馆</p> <p>奥地利维也纳</p> <p>SAMMLUNG ESSL美术馆</p> <p>澳大利亚悉尼白兔美术馆</p> <p>日本福岡亚洲美术馆</p> <p>谭国斌当代艺术博物馆</p> <p>诺基亚公司</p> <p>韩国三星集团</p> <p>法国文化部</p>	
获奖	
2006	<p>年中国当代艺术文献展获得最佳新人奖</p> <p>CCAA中国当代艺术奖提名候选人</p>
2004	<p>赖圣予获中央美术学院研究生毕业创作优秀奖</p>
2001	<p>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</p>
1999	<p>杨晓钢获诺基亚亚太地区“我看未来”艺术大奖赛金奖</p>



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