

查尔斯，你好！

非常感谢 Van Abbe 美术馆收藏了最后四幅画，加上 Davide 等人的支持和帮助，我可以继续进行这个项目。

我前段时间在上海和一些朋友见面，他们都在讨论我们的这个项目。他们提出几个观点，第一，知识分子回到乡村，让农民参与艺术的实验，村民成为实验的“小白鼠”，这是一种不平等的关系；第二，西方文化和价值观在中国乡村的传播和渗透，形成新的文化殖民，村民成为新的被殖民者。我觉得他们的质疑和提问很有意思，这种观点代表了中国大多数知识份子对于这种项目的态度和观点。

图书馆已经开放一个多月了，村民们从最初的好奇和新鲜已经变的习以为常，只有孩子们始终对图书馆抱着热情。一到周末，我们就打开图书馆，打开电视机，电视里播放着向孩子们介绍艺术的录像，迎接孩子们的到来。农村里，孩子们没有阅读的习惯，没有爱惜书本的习惯，没有卫生的习惯。很快，书本上满是脏兮兮的手印和折痕，一些书被损坏了。大人们过来多是聊天、抽烟并随地吐痰。图书管理员魏以明是我的小学老师，他是为数不多的理解我的工作的人。因为书很少，他的工作主要是看着孩子们不要损坏图书，并做一些清洁的工作。有一些成年人来这里聊天，他向他们介绍我的工作。

关于图书馆之下的第一个工作《仇庄志》也已经启动，我开始采访年长的人关于村庄的历史。这是一个很困难的工作，因为这个村庄的历史已经非常模糊了，很难得到民国之前的任何信息和资料。我的助手钟鸣也每天游走在村子里，拍摄很多照片。

天气略微转暖，柳树开始发芽了，灰色的村庄里能隐约感觉到绿色正悄悄到来。这里的春天风很大，空气里满是尘土和重型汽车的噪音。村子里外的木板加工作坊都已经开工，大人们都忙碌着挣钱。在村庄之外，我觉得我的这个项目非常庞大和复杂，而当我回到村子里的时候，我却觉得它非常渺小。

关于 VAN ABBE 美术馆的收藏品复制工作已经开始，从 John Kormeling 的灯光装置《HI HA》开始，很有意思的是，这里的工人从来没有见过那样的材料，所以我们不得不寻找类似的材料和方法以达到相似的效果。Sol LeWitt 的墙上雕塑已经制作完成并开始发放给一些家庭。县城里一家铝合金加工作坊的老板和工人四个人做了4天，完成了15个雕塑。也许是因为他们参与制作的原因，他们很喜欢这个雕塑，他们觉得它很漂亮。一个雕塑安装在图书馆隔壁的墙上，它和这个环境结合的很好，一点都不显得突兀。可是房子的女主人非常生气，她说她看不到艺术在哪里，她认为这个“架子”很难看。几个村民把它安装在房间的客厅里，雕塑成为他们的储物架，很多日常用品和工艺品摆在这个雕塑的空格里，真的是既实用又好看。我姐姐觉得这是艺术作品，摆上物品就破坏了作品的美感，就把它挂在二楼的墙上，作为装饰。

录像拍摄记录的工作都很顺利，大多数村民也开始适应了摄像机的存在。我们记录这些作品是如何发生并进展的，我们记录人们的态度和他们的生活状态。

很期待 4 月份你来村庄。

保重！

李牧  
2013. 3. 21

Dear Charles,

I really appreciate that the Van Abbe Museum collected my four drawings. Thanks to Davide's help, I can continue the Qiuzhuang Project.

I met some friends in Shanghai some time ago. They were all discussing my Qiuzhuang Project. Here are their views: first of all, the intellectual came back to the village and had the villagers engage in his art experiment. The villagers then became the "laboratory rat", which revealed the unequal relation between the artist and the villagers. Secondly, it formed a new culture colonialism by spreading and permeating the village with western culture. I think their questions are very interesting. Their views represent the majority of the Chinese intellectuals.

A LIBRARY has been opened for more than one month. The villagers changed from being very curious about it to getting used to it. Only the children still have enthusiasm for it. On weekends, I turned on the television and played the videos about art. The children here haven't the habit of reading, not the hygiene habit. They do not cherish the books. Soon the books were creased and stained with dirty fingerprints. Some books were even damaged. The Adults came here sometimes. But they were just talking, smoking and spitting. The librarian was my teacher in my elementary school. He is one of the few people who understand my work. Because there aren't many books, his duty is to watch the kids and prevent them from damaging the books. Besides, he also does some cleaning work. When some adults gathered here and talked, he would introduce my work.

We've started the preparation for the book *Qiuzhuang History*, which is the first program under the library project. I started interviewing the old people here. But it's a very difficult work, because the history of this village is very vague. It's barely impossible to get any documents or information about the time before the Republic of China era. My assistant Zhong Ming is walking around the village everyday and has taken many pictures.

The weather becomes warm. The willows start to bud. I can feel the spring is coming soon though the village remains grey. It's usually very windy in the spring. The air is thick with dust and noise from the heavy trucks. The wood processing workshops have begun their work. All the adults are busy making money. Before I came to the village, I thought the project was very huge and complex, but now living in the village, I find it's very small.

I've started copying the collections of Van Abbemuseum. I started with John Kormeling's light installation "HI HA". I was surprised that the workers here never saw that kind of material, so we had to find the similar material and way to make it so as to achieve a similar effect. The copies of SOL LEWITT's wall sculpture (the "turning ladder") have all been finished and given to some families.

The boss of the aluminium alloy store in the town and his staff spent four days making the 15 copies. They like it a lot and think it's beautiful. Maybe that's because they made them. One ladder was put on the wall next to A Library. It melted into the surrounding environment very well. But the hostess of the house was very angry. She said that she couldn't see any art in it and it was ugly. The other families put the ladders in the sitting room and the ladders became their storage racks. They put many daily goods and crafts on it. Now the ladders look both functional and nice. A young man even put his wedding photos into the boxes of the ladder. My sister doesn't want to put anything on it, because she thinks it's an art work and she doesn't want to destroy its original aesthetic beauty. She put it on the wall of the second floor as a kind of decoration.

Zhong Ming is recording my work here, and it goes very well. The villagers have gotten used to the existence of the camera. We record how the works are born and how they develop, at the same time we are recording the villagers' life situation and their attitudes towards the art pieces.

I'm looking forward to meet you in April 2013.

All my best.

Li Mu  
2013.3.21

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