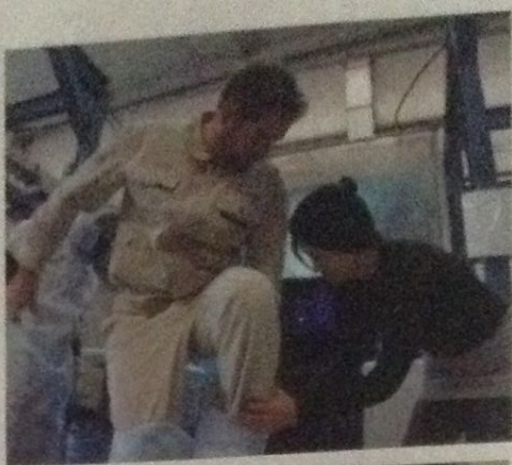
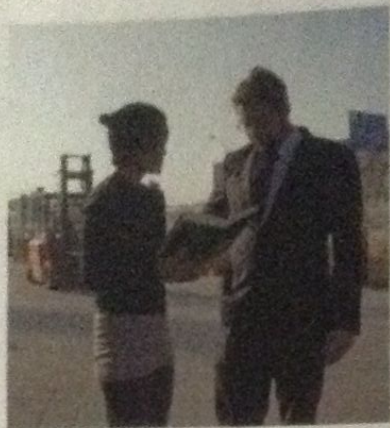


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## BORDER CROSSINGS



社会敏感性：孤岛，边缘测试  
SOCIAL SENSIBILITY: AN ISOLATED  
ISLAND, PROBING THE PERIPHERY



左: 李心路子项目“人体产品”  
Left: Lulu Li, “Human Products”

右: 荣光荣子项目“还有山吗?”  
Right: Rong Wang Rong, “Are There Any Mountains Left?”



对于什么事都爱扎堆儿的艺术圈而言, 尽管意大利艺术家李山(亚历山大·罗兰迪)在两年内每几个月都会邀请一两位艺术家, 参与他发起和策划的“社会敏感性”艺术研究项目, 该项目被提及的频率却一直不甚理想。这或许是因为, 项目远离北京东北部艺术重镇的喧嚣, 设在法国伯纳德控制设备有限公司(北京分部)亦庄偏僻的厂房里。然而, 用“独善其身”来形容此项目也不恰当。按照这家生产核电电动执行器的公司的官方说法, 项目的目的是“探索创造力、人际关系、社会发展的根源”, 以“发展公司以改革、人力和业绩为导向的血脉传统”。作为公司的一个部门, 项目在工厂的二楼设有办公室, 这也意味着, 在出纳手里领薪水的李山, 此处只享受有限的自由。

限制首先来自于工厂的实体空间——生产是企业的第一要务, 车间并非是邀请嘉宾欣赏艺术品的白盒子, 工人忙碌的身影和运转的车床总会阻隔观众的视线。工厂分为办公区(二层、三层)和厂房(一层), 厂房内又因为组装、喷漆和检验的工序分为三个不设间隔的部分。宽阔的厂房内布满有棱有角的机械, 富于工业感的视觉魅力, 常能给创作者带来灵感。但为了不干扰实际操作(这是项目开展的原则和底线), 目前已完成的十几个子项目的成果, 多在墙面上悬挂或涂抹; 甚至有些“非物质”化的子项目, 只留下了记录现场的照片和视频。

在伯纳德北京分公司这一特殊而具体的语境下, 工厂既是阶级意识萌芽的象征空间, 也是各色人群(不同国籍、学历、职位和文化背景)凑在一起赚钱养家的工

作单位。尽管如此, 在集体参与的项目中, 政治意味浓厚的作品仍不可避免。在子项目“还有山吗?”中, 艺术家荣光荣就地取材, 把三块防震泡沫塑料切割成山石的形状, 喷涂上蓝色的油漆, 放在显眼的位置, 以提醒观看者, 中国工人阶级背上隐形的“三座大山”并未随着时代的更迭而消失。这件作品直白而危险, 仿佛在蓄意挑衅这家法国公司对“煽动性”言论的容忍程度。相比之下, 其他此类主题的创作表述方式较为柔和。艺术家李心路通过工人、管理层之间的身份置换, 用恶作剧式的幽默感取代激化冲突的口号——她成功地说服公司领导换上工人的工作服, 在产品线上被工人对待产品般摆弄一番, 再“请”到产品包装箱里, 拍照留念。

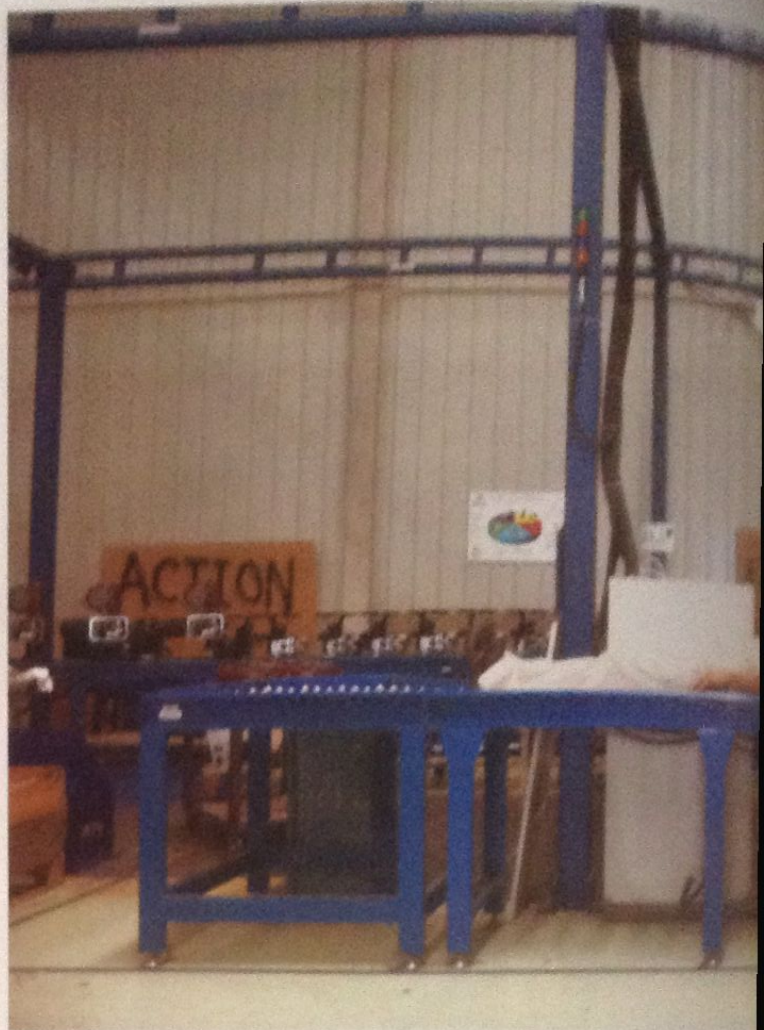
李山常会鼓励艺术家花费精力与工人沟通, 让作品与现场更紧密地结合。意大利戏剧导演丰翼在几个月的时间内, 每隔一段时间便出没在工人之间, 与他们交谈, 向他们讨教组装零件的技巧。然而, 在“汇报”表演中, 丰翼放弃了最初动员工人参演的念头。表演以多媒体的形式展开: 音箱中播放着他的独白——他娓娓道来身为工人的父母因意大利工会邂逅、相爱的故事, 以及胡同、北冰洋汽水等北京见闻给他带来的体悟; 储藏他逝去记忆的照片在投影中不停切换; 戏剧家本人则默默地“表演”他在此处学到的、工人们烂熟于心的车间劳作。他通过展演剖白心迹, 表达寻求沟通的诚意。潜藏其下的, 或许是无法融入人群的挫折感——在与工人交流时, 丰翼常碰到对方“不愿意打开自己心扉”的棘手情况。丰翼善意的介入遭遇碰壁, 具有一丝结构主义的理论意味:

占据艺术舞台中心位置的常客们, 若被置入结构牢固的现实之中, 能散发的光和热微乎其微。

鉴于在生产关系中“局外人”的身份, 很多艺术家没有“代表”他人发声, 转而尝试扮演“策展人”, 激发劳动者的表达欲望。有多年车间工作经验的艺术家李洁拍摄了工人们发表对政治热点问题看法的短片; 设计师扎拉·艾尔沙德邀请人们根据自己的审美, 用彩色胶条装饰楼道墙壁。最令人动容的, 当属在“社会敏感度”的首个子项目“随便”中出现的一幕。在这个项目中, 作为艺术家的李山与工人聊天时, 听到一位女工提出“边工作边晒太阳”的愿望。当天, 工厂里的人们合力把车床搬到厂房外的空地, 让她享受了一个上午灿烂的工作时光。在这些案例中, 艺术不是灵感、知识和经验的积累, 也不是跟系统周旋以获得个人成就的手段, 而具有某种乌托邦的性质——在这里, “人人都是艺术家”, 艺术让改善当下境遇看似充满可能。

与此类似, “社会敏感性”部门的“项目经理”李山擅长“无为而治”。他把权力松散地下放, 让艺术家与伯纳德工厂这一微观社会相遇, 做出自己的判断和选择。李山倾向于选择那些不太依赖艺术系统的艺术家, 甚至也邀请了设计师和戏剧家。通过不同个体间的交往关系, 艺术家的介入导致劳动空间中固化的思维习惯一次次地被重新检验; 艺术家也有机会暂时跳出复杂的艺术史和艺术系统, 再次审视崇尚个人主义的当代艺术和自己的位置。“社会敏感性”因而获得了良好的开放性和在地性, 它是一座地处边缘的孤岛, 却又不断测试着层层边缘的敏感程度。





AS THE ART world is so disposed to get together for any old event, the frequency with which Italian artist Alessandro Rolandi's research program "Social Sensibility R & D Department" gets mentioned is less than ideal. Perhaps the reason is that the artists he has invited to participate over the past two years, have been relatively "unknown." Or, perhaps the reason is that the program is located in a remote south Beijing, at the French company Bernard Controls S.A.'s factory in Yizhuang—far away from the cacophony of the art happenings in the northeast of the city. Yet using the term "self-containment" to describe this program is not appropriate. According to the official statement from this industrial company, a manufacturer of electric actuators for valve automation, the purpose of the program is to "explore the foundation of human relationships, creativity and social development," and

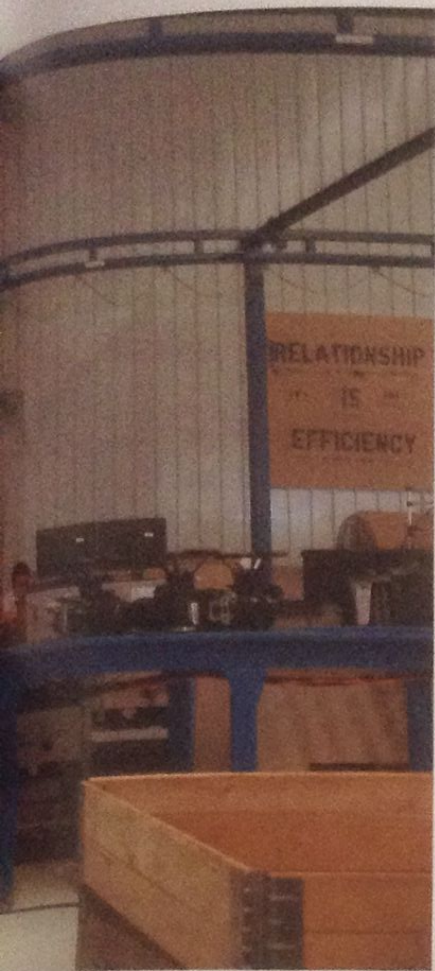
to "continue the company's tradition of innovation, human development, and performance-oriented culture." As a department within the company, the program office is on the second floor of the factory. This also means that the freedom enjoyed by Rolandi, as a salaried employee, is quite limited.

Limitation first comes in the form of physical space—production is the company's top priority. Needless to say, the factory floor is not the most inviting exhibition hall for appreciating art. The bustling workers and the roaring lathes often obstruct one's vision. The factory is separated into office areas (second and third floors) and the manufacturing area (ground floor). The latter is organized by production process into an assembly area, a spray paint area, and a testing area, with no dividers in between. This wide-open floor is filled with angular and sharp machines, rich with industrial visual

appeal, full of creative inspiration for the artists. But in order to not disrupt actual production (the underlying principle of and baseline for the program), the dozen or so completed projects are mostly hanging on the wall, or painted directly on it. Some projects are immaterial, leaving only videos and pictures as records.

Under the specific and special setting of Bernard Controls' Beijing branch, the factory is a symbolic space for budding class-consciousness, a place where people of various backgrounds (nationality, education, cultural and job positions) make their living. Nevertheless, as a collective participatory program, artworks tinted with heavy political overtone are inevitable. In Rong Wang Rong's "Are There Any Mountains Left?" the artist uses materials at hand to sculpt three pieces of shock-proof foam into mountainous shapes, sprays these with blue paint, and posi-





tions them in an eye-catching arrangement to alert viewers that the three indivisible mountains on the back of the Chinese working class have not disappeared with the changes of time. The work is dangerously blunt, as if aimed to deliberately provoke the French company's tolerance of "sedition." By comparison, other creative expressions on similar topics are gentler. Artist Li Lulu works by switching the positions between workers and management and replaces sharp and heated slogans with mischievous humor. She successfully convinced company management to put on worker's uniforms and be placed on the production line to be handled by the workers, as if they were one of the products. They were then "invited" to step into the product packaging and take a photo in memento.

Rolandi often encourages artists to dedicate energy to communicating with the workers, so as to bestow on

their artwork closer integration with the space. For a few months, the Italian dramatist Fabrizio Massini could be seen among the workers from time to time, conversing with them, asking about assembly techniques. However, during his performance, Massini abandoned his earlier idea of encouraging worker participation. It was instead launched in multi-media format: a soliloquy broadcast on speakers (an eloquently narrated story of how his parents, who were workers, met after a union meeting and fell in love, as well as the realization brought to him by the Beijing *hutong* and the local soda Arctic Ocean); a projection of photos full of his past, of lost memories; and a performance by the artist of what he learned from the workers, what the workers knew by heart. Through the performance, he expressed his candid intentions and his sincerity in seeking to communicate these. Hidden beneath this surface is perhaps the frustration of his inability to be fully integrated into the masses—when he tried to communicate with the workers, Massini often found they were unwilling to open up to him. The artist's good intentions were rebuffed. This hints at the implications of structuralist theory: If the regulars who occupy the center of the performance stage are placed into the solid structure of reality, they will have little to no real effect.

In view of the "outsider" status in relations to factory production, many artists cannot "represent" the voice of others; instead they attempt to play the role of a "curator" to stimulate the workers' desire to express. Artist Li Jie, with many years of factory workshop experience, created a short film of workers expressing viewpoints on political hot topics. Architect Zara Arshad invited people to use colorful strips to decorate the hallways accord-

ing to their own sense of aesthetics. The most touching was undoubtedly a scene from the first project from "Social Sensibility R & D," called "SUIBIAN" (casual). In it, Alessandro Rolandi, while chatting with workers, overheard a female worker mention her desire to "work while sunbathing." That same day, workers from the factory joined together to move her workstation to the open space outside the factory buildings, letting her enjoy a splendid morning working in the sun. In these cases, art is not accumulation of inspiration, knowledge and experience, nor a manipulation of the system in order to obtain personal achievement. Rather, it is of a certain utopian nature—here, everyone is an artist, and the notion of using art to improve the status quo is pregnant with possibility.

Similarly, "Social Sensibility" department manager Alessandro Rolandi is an expert at "governing by noninterference." He delegates power effortlessly, allowing artists to encounter the micro-society of Bernard Controls in order to make their own judgments and choices. Rolandi tends to choose artists who are less reliant on the structure of the art system than others, even inviting designers and dramatists. Through various individual exchanges, the artists' interventions lead to a repeated re-examination of the habitual thinking on the workspace. They are given an opportunity to temporarily step out of the complex structures of the art world and art history and re-examine the individualist leanings of contemporary art, and their own position within. "Social Sensibility" thereby gains openness and localization. It is an isolated island on the periphery, incessantly probing the sensitivity of the periphery's many layers. (Translated by Yvette Zhu) 