



劉霞沉默的力量

The Silent Strength of Liu Xia

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Liu Xia is the most significant photographer working in contemporary China. Using only black and white imagery, her photography is rooted in calligraphy, the historical source of all of the plastic arts in China. It is with these “Chinese shadows” that she describes both the national renaissance and the repression of contemporary China. Strange dolls that Liu Xia calls her “ugly babies” roam the countryside of Beijing; these creatures are intended to escape the incomprehensible censors, representing the human condition in China.

By presenting the dolls, Liu Xia both reveals and hides, each doll telling a story.

**Living together with the dolls,
Surrounded by the power of silence,
The world open around us,
We communicate in gestures.**
 (“The Power of Silence,” November 1998).

Liu Xia, poet and photographer, is recognized and admired by the intellectual and artistic community in Beijing, but she is a forbidden artist. The original photos were first displayed publicly in Boulogne-Billancourt in October 2011. Before then, they could only be seen in

private, while they quietly circulated among amateur connoisseurs in China. The original prints were not allowed to leave China. The exhibition at Boulogne-Billancourt was a world premiere.

Will we question this censorship? How is it that these photos anger the Chinese government? Liu Xia is passionate about freedom of expression, though she is not a political activist. She has been isolated under house arrest in Beijing since January 2011 without any charge or trial.

The crackdown on Liu Xia is unacceptable in terms of human rights, but it can be explained by the fact that she married Liu Xiaobo, the winner of the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize, who was imprisoned for “undermining state security.” What was the crime committed by Liu Xiaobo? He sent a letter to the Chinese Communist Party requesting that it open discussions for a democratic transition -- a letter signed by tens of thousands of Chinese citizens, including the academic and artistic elite.

When asked why she shaves her head like a Buddhist monk, Liu Xia said that she will let her hair grow the day that Chinese artists are free to express themselves in their own country.

劉霞，是當代中國最重要的攝影家。她的攝影只使用黑白圖像，根植於中國書法，而書法則是中國所有造型藝術的曆史來源。正是帶著這些“中國陰影”，劉霞描繪了當代中國的民族復興和遭遇的壓制。這些被劉霞稱為“丑娃”的奇怪娃娃，在北京的鄉間漫游著，企圖逃避令人費解的審查，這體現著中國的生存狀況。

通過呈現這些娃娃並讓每一個娃娃講述一個故事，劉霞既傳達了也隱藏了她所要表達的思想。

**和玩偶們一起生活
沉默的力量無所不在
世界四面敞開
我們在手勢中交流。**

劉霞，既是詩人又是攝影家，被北京知識界和藝術界所推崇和仰慕，但是她是一位被當局禁聲的藝術家。這些照片原作首次於2011年10月在法國巴黎近郊布洛涅-比揚古對公眾展出。在此之前，這些照片只能私下觀看，在中國的業餘鑒賞家中間悄悄地流傳著。原始照片不允許從中國帶出。在布洛涅-比揚古博物館的展出，是世界首展。

我們難道不應對這樣的審查制度作出拷問？這些照片怎麼就惹怒了中國政府？劉霞熱愛言論自由，儘管她不是一個政治活動家。但是，自2011年1月起，她被軟禁在北京的家中，與世隔絕，沒有任何指控，也沒有任何審判。

從人權的角度來講，對劉霞的打壓是不能為人接受的，只能這樣來解釋：因為她嫁給了2010年諾貝爾和平獎獲得者劉曉波，而劉曉波則因“煽動顛覆國家政權”而遭監禁。劉曉波又犯了甚麼罪呢？他只是給中國共產黨寫了一封信，要求中國共產黨民主過渡展開討論，數萬中國公民簽署了這封信，包括學術界和藝術界的精英。

當被問及她為甚麼把頭剃得像和尚一樣，劉霞說：等到中國藝術家能夠在自己的國家自由表達自己之日，她會讓頭髮長長。

Liu Xia 劉霞



Born in 1959 in Beijing, Liu Xia is a poet, painter and photographer, and the wife of 2010 Nobel Peace Prize Winner Liu Xiaobo. For over three decades Liu Xia has been one of the most notable figures of the contemporary Chinese artworld. Her work in various media focuses on freedom of expression but remains rooted in traditional Chinese values and styles. Liu Xia is prohibited from public exhibit in China and her work is shown only in private or on the Internet. In 1996, Liu Xia married the writer Liu Xiaobo, imprisoned for his writings in favor of democracy. Since his arrest, Liu Xia has become her husband's spokesman to the outside world. After Liu Xiaobo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010, Liu Xia, though never charged or convicted in China, was put under house arrest. She has been deprived of all means of contact since January 2010.

“The world open around us,
We communicate in gestures.”
Liu Xia

1959年出生於北京，詩人、畫家和攝影家，2010年諾貝爾和平獎獲得者劉曉波的妻子。三十多年來，劉霞一直是中國當代藝術界最引人矚目的人物之一，她的作品出現於各種媒體，注重表現言論自由，但是依然根植於中國傳統價值和風格。劉霞在中國被禁止公開展出作品，因而她的作品只能私下展出或發表在網絡之上。1996年，劉霞嫁給了作家劉曉波，劉曉波因寫作倡導民主而被繫在獄。自劉曉波被捕以後，劉霞成了她丈夫的對外發言人。劉曉波在2010年獲得諾貝爾和平獎之後，劉霞被軟禁在家，雖然從未有任何指控，也從未有任何定罪。自2010年1月起，她被剝奪了一切與外界聯絡的方式。

「世界四面敞開，
我們在手勢中交流。」
劉霞

Liu Xia’s Poetry
Translation by Zhang Yu
劉霞的詩

Edited by Bonny Cassidy
張裕 譯

One Bird after Another

一隻鳥又一隻鳥

We saw it
A little reflection left on the glass
It had been printed there for a long time
without leaving...

我們看到它
留在玻璃上的小小的影子
它印在那里好久不肯離去……

Every year on July 15 of the lunar calendar
The river would be covered with water lanterns
But they could not call back your soul...

每年的陰曆七月十五
河上會佈滿河燈
卻招不回你的靈魂……

The train heading for the concentration camp
Sobbingly ran over my body
But I could not hold your hand...

駛向集中營的那列火車
嗚咽地碾過我的身體
我卻拉不住你的手……

Untitled To Xiaobo
無題—給曉波

You speak you speak you speak the truth
You are talking day and night as long as you are
awake
You talk and talk
You are in a closed room while your voice breaks
out to spread
The death from twenty years ago has come back again
Come and gone as the time
You are short of many things but with you are the
souls of the dead
You have lost daily life to join the outcry of the dead
There is no response and none

You speak you speak you speak the truth
You are talking day and night as long as you are
awake
You talk and talk
You are in a closed room while your voice breaks out
to spread
The wound from twenty years ago has been bleeding
Fresh and red as the life

You are fond of many things but more passionate
accompanying the souls of the dead
You have made a promise to seek the truth with
them
On the way there is no light and none

You speak you speak you speak the truth
You are talking day and night as long as you are
awake
You talk and talk
You are in a closed room while your voice breaks
out to spread
The gunfire of twenty years ago has decided your life
Always living in death
You are in love with your wife but more proud of
the dark time with her you spent
You let her be but are more insistent that she
continues to write you poems after her death
In the verses there is no sound and none

2009.9.4

你說話你說話你說實話
你白天說夜晚說只要醒著就說
你說呀說
你在封閉的房間裡你的聲音沖到外面擴散
二十年前的那場死亡重又回來
來了又去如同時間
你缺少了很多東西但亡靈們與你同在
你沒有了日常生活加入亡靈們的呼喊
沒有回答沒有

你說話你說話你說實話
你白天說夜晚說只要醒著就說
你說呀說
你在封閉的房間裡你的聲音沖到外面擴散
二十年前的那個傷口還在流血
鮮紅鮮紅如同生命
你喜歡很多東西但更愛與亡靈們為伴
你對他們承諾與他們一起尋找真相
路上沒有燈光沒有

你說話你說話你說實話
你白天說夜晚說只要醒著就說
你說呀說
你在封閉的房間裡你的聲音沖到外面擴散
二十年前的槍聲決定了你的生命
永遠活在死亡裡
你愛你的妻子但更驕傲她與你共度的黑暗時間
你讓她隨心所欲更堅持讓她死后繼續給你寫詩
那些詩行沒有聲音沒有

2009.9.4

Freedom Reflex: The Photographs of Liu Xia

by A. D. Coleman

The Tang-dynasty poet Wang Jian (766-830) wrote a lyric in the patient voice of a wife contemplating her husband’s long absence. Roughly translated, it bears the title “Stone of Love,” and goes as follows:

**On this hilltop I wait for you,
The river below quietly flowing.
Never moving or looking homeward,
Standing here still, I become a stone.
Days and nights pass, rain and snow,
Till you return so I can speak again.**

Liu Xia’s photographs speak volumes.

To make them, she employs the simplest of means: an old Russian-model twin-lens reflex camera and black & white roll film she can process herself in her home darkroom -- generic analog tools, materials, and processes that haven’t changed radically in over a century. Through this camera’s lens she addresses subject matter no less elementary: a cluster of small dolls from Brazil, gifts from a friend, that she calls the “ugly babies,” juxtaposed with each other and simple props (a birdcage, a heap of cigarette butts, tea candles, scraps of cloth, stacks of books, a jar, some flowers) and then configured on a table, a bookshelf, a chair, a couch, a mirror. She registers these scenarios in her negatives with no special effects (save for occasional double

exposures), using only available light. She develops the results in her home darkroom.

On rare occasions she takes her dolls outdoors, to the beach or what looks like a barn or cowshed, to direct their performances in other settings. In a few cases one of them interacts visibly with a human being, boldly confronting some oversized fingers or perching like a parasitic twin on the shoulder of a man who resembles strikingly her husband, the writer and activist Liu Xiaobo; another suffers the crushing squeeze of a giant hand. Sometimes she dispenses with the dolls entirely, draping her fingers with dark cloth to turn the visible tips thereof into featureless faces atop oddly feminine shrouded figures, mourning and bearing witness. Or she merely knots and configures a dark silk scarf into dimensional forms to examine, or scrutinizes some slowly decaying vegetables.

We might consider this a form of child’s play, albeit freighted with all the gravity and emotional identification that children bring to such games. Taken out of context, considered merely as another body of work presented to the international image community, it’s hard to imagine anyone finding these images, or their patently introverted maker, dangerous. Yet Liu Xia, though never charged with any crime, has lived under house arrest in their

Beijing apartment since January 2011, this incarceration following the October 2010 announcement in Stockholm that Liu Xiaobo, already imprisoned on trumped-up charges, had received the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize. Only her mother has permission to visit her on occasion. And these pictures, extracted under the government radar by the French economist and social commentator Guy Sorman, cannot be exhibited or published in the People’s Republic even though, like Liu Xia, they have broken no laws.

Thus we must consider these nominally mute images and their unassuming, reticent creator as somehow quite vocal and deeply threatening to what the Chinese Communist Party likes to refer to as “social harmony,” by which they mean their own unchallenged grasp on power and control over their 1.4 billion subjects.

Statistically, of course, Liu Xia and Liu Xiaobo have no significance as members of a population that size. Yet the totalitarian mind cannot allow exception; permitting even a single citizen to adopt a shape other than that of the “mold” that Mao Zedong notoriously devised for his people threatens the hegemony of that matrix. The modern totalitarian state does not afford anyone the luxury of such divergence [1] “Propaganda cannot

be satisfied with partial successes, for it does not tolerate discussion,” as Jacques Ellul wrote half a century ago; “by its very nature, it excludes contradiction and discussion.” [2]

Some would argue that the new China, with its capitalism-friendly economic policies, power-hungry princelings, flamboyant billionaires, and rampant governmental corruption, has moved away from its totalitarian past. But, even if so, the Tiananmen Massacre is little more than two decades past, still fresh in the memories of many. Meanwhile, a new generation has emerged whose access to information and communication via social media make Procrustean Mao-style “molding” all but impossible -- a fact that the old guard in the current regime, with their limited grasp of these technological and sociological shifts, fail to comprehend yet find profoundly unnerving.

As Ellul argued presciently half a century ago, electronic technologies make other, subtler kinds of social control eminently feasible. [3] Yet even were China’s rulers technologically savvy enough to use the new media to their full advantage, they would still face the problem of the occasional, intractable exception. The Russian scientist I. P. Pavlov wrote thus about one of the otherwise domesticated dogs he tested in his laboratory:

We started off with a very simple experiment. The dog was placed in a stand. It stood quietly enough at first, but as time went on it became excited and struggled to get out of the stand, scratching at the floor, gnawing the supports, and so on. For a long time we remained puzzled over the unusual behaviour of this animal, until it occurred to us at last that it might be the expression of a special freedom reflex, and that the dog simply could not remain quiet when it was constrained in the stand. [4] (Emphasis in the original.)

Pavlovian science stands mostly refuted and discredited today. [5] Yet its premises underpinned the indoctrination techniques of all the totalitarian states of the twentieth century -- not just the U.S.S.R. but Nazi Germany and the People’s Republic of China -- and, in an ostensibly benign form, entered the infrastructure of behaviorist psychology, to become a central component of all subsequent motivational research, including marketing and propaganda studies.

Apparently it comforted Pavlov and his colleagues to cast this dog’s refusal to submit and conform as merely another, previously unidentified “reflex,” no different in kind from the salivating at the mere sound of a bell that they conditioned in more

obedient dogs. Though they had already made propagandizing their subjects an official policy, the first state ever to do so, the Soviets had not yet refined it. Pavlov thus could afford his bemusement at this exception to the rule, tolerating it by bringing it into the fold via nomenclature.

Mao and those who served him learned that Pavlov's "freedom reflex" is contagious, and must be contained if not expunged. Easier to achieve that in Mao's time than in ours. Since Tiananmen, the strategy of his successors has been to substitute, gradually, the seductions of Aldous Huxley's Brave New World for the repressions of George Orwell's 1984. People in China today feel free to express their political opinions to each other without fear of the thought police swooping down on them, so long as they do so privately -- not publicly, and certainly not on the record, not in print, not on radio or television, not on the internet, in either words or images. Most of them seem willing to accept those restrictions now that they can choose to eat McDonald's hamburgers, drink Pepsi-Cola, and accessorize with iPhones.

But not all. That problematic "freedom reflex" just keeps cropping up. It manifests itself in straightforward acts of citizenship such as Liu Xiaobo's co-authoring of Charter 08, a call for democratization of China. It takes the form of Liu

Xia speaking out on his behalf, marrying him in prison, enduring like a rock until he's released. And it imbeds itself in these photographs.

"You may find the dolls in my photos have lives and the silk in my photos has soul," Liu Xia wrote to a supporter in the United States. Dolls, mannikins, masks, and other simulacra of the human form have proved useful to photographers ever since the Surrealist movement began a century ago. They continued that service through the late modernist photography of figures like Ralph Eugene Meatyard and M. Richard Kirstel and then into the postmodern photography and photo-based art of Laurie Simmons, David Levinthal, Andres Serrano, and many others. Similarly, photographers have long found diverse ways of rendering inanimate objects as energized and inorganic substances as alive.

Chinese photography has no extended tradition of the symbolic still life. If Liu Xia's theatricalized dolls hark back to any authentically Chinese photographic antecedents, it would be to Zhang Yixin's elaborately staged, melodramatic, hyperreal color photographs of the "Eight Model Operas" developed by Jiang Qing in the first three years of the Cultural Revolution. Those seem an unlikely reference point for this project of Liu Xia's, yet her familiarity with western predecessors remains

uncertain.[6] Regardless of the extent to which Liu Xia has absorbed the history and traditions of world photography, her work with the medium connects her to practitioners around the world, past and present.

But their photo-historical lineage hardly jeopardizes China's status quo or justifies her captivity. Nor does their literal subject matter -- dolls, silk scarves, vegetables, commonplace household furnishings and objects. What troubles the waters is their content. For these dolls have much to say, and at least one of them (which I take as a surrogate for Liu Xiaobo) just won't shut up.

Some force -- infrequently visible, always much larger than them -- puts these homunculi through an endless series of ordeals: ties them up, cocoons them in plastic, sticks them behind bars, seals them in jars, stuffs them into a birdcage, sets them adrift in the dark, subjects them to a unilluminating harangue, squashes them brutally in a fist. Yet in the next image they're back. In addition to the male doll already mentioned, two female dolls recur, one of them apparently perplexed by the bizarre goings-on, the other really angry about it all; I read them as aspects of Liu Xia herself. If the frequent presence of books symbolizes the life of the mind, then the silk

sculptures function as metaphors of the life of the spirit, the calm center, the combination of softness and strength needed for survival. The cowed fingertips serve as a Greek chorus, looking on.

In short, a whole drama plays itself out in these images, a narrative of survival under extreme duress and stubborn persistence in speaking truth to power. Thoughtfully crafted, they convey their layered messages with persuasive acuity and uncompromising directness. These pictures tell their story to anyone visually literate, from any culture. Their power is inherent, their messages clear, yet there is nothing specific in them to which the Chinese government could object -- nothing, let's say, that would legitimize the authorities rounding up a thousand people who decided, on a given day, to don t-shirts bearing these images and wear them around Beijing, or Shenzhen, or Chengdu.

What else explains why Liu Xia lives under house arrest in Beijing, and why these simple black & white photographs of dolls cannot be shown in mainland China today? They constitute acts of resistance, visible and on the record as such once she gave her permission for their public display. They also open a conversation about the situation and rights of the individual citizen in relation to his or her government, a dialogue whose commencement

the Chinese Communist party cannot afford -- because, as Jacques Ellul wrote, "Propaganda ceases where simple dialogue begins." [7] Through the dispersion of these image-spores that "freedom reflex" can propagate; they invite the viewer to breathe them in deeply, then exhale.

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[1] Except, of course, for those who feed at the golden trough at the top, with Mao's extravagant example as a case in point.

[2] See Ellul, Jacques, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 11.

[3] Ellul wrote his germinal study in the pre-digital era; his models were print, radio, film, and especially television. Yet his insights translate readily to the internet and social media of our time.

[4] Pavlov, I. P., *Conditioned Reflexes and Psychiatry. Lectures on Conditioned Reflexes, Vols. 1 and 2*, trans. and ed. W. H. Gantt (New York: International Publishers, 1927). See Vol. 1, Ch. XXVIII.

[5] See, for example, Bernard J. Baars, "I. P. Pavlov and the Freedom Reflex," *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Volume 10, No. 11, November 2003, pp. 19-40.

[6] As she's kept incommunicado, it has proved impossible to interview her or correspond with her about these photographs. I've learned only that she made the majority of them, the interior still lifes, during Liu Xiaobo's prison term 1996-99; the few images made elsewhere date from after his release.

[7] Ellul, Jacques, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 6.

自由反射： 劉霞的攝影作品

by A. D. 科爾曼

唐朝詩人王建（766-830）寫過一首抒情詩，描述一位耐心等待的妻子思念久別丈夫的吟詠，題為《望夫石》，全文如下：

望夫處，江悠悠。
化為石，不回頭。
上頭日日風復雨，
行人歸來石應語。

劉霞的攝影作品寓意豐富。

她為此採用了最簡陋的手段：一架俄羅斯老式雙鏡頭反光相機，以及她可在自家暗房裡處理的黑白膠片——一個多世紀沒有根本改變的通用模擬工具、材料和流程。通過這架相機的鏡頭，她涉及的是再初級不過的題材：一群巴西的小玩偶——她稱之為“丑娃”的朋友禮品，並列一起，加上簡單道具（一個鳥籠，一堆煙頭，小蠟燭，布片，成堆的書，一個罐子，一些花），然后配置在桌子上，書架上，椅子上，沙發上，鏡子上。她把這些場景記錄在她的底片上，沒加特殊效果（除了偶爾的兩次曝光），僅使用可採光。她在自家暗房裡洗放照片。

在少數情況下，她把玩偶拿到戶外，或到海邊，或到看來像個谷倉或牛棚的地方，以其它的佈置進行導演。有幾次，一個玩偶顯然

是與一個人相作用，或是大膽地面對一些巨大的手指，或像一個寄生體棲連在一個人肩頭，而那人極似她那位作家兼社會活動家的丈夫劉曉波；另一個玩偶則遭受一隻巨手的粉身碎骨的捏擠。有時，她完全摒棄了那些玩偶，用黑布懸垂在一些手指上，使可見的指尖變成毫無個性的面孔，顯露在裹起的奇特女性形體之上，服喪作證。或者，她只是將一幅深色絲巾打結，佈置成多維的形式來考察，或審視一些慢慢腐爛的蔬菜。

我們可能會認為這是一種兒戲，盡管包含着兒童帶入遊戲的所有鄭重和情感認同。且不說其涵義，僅僅看做向國際影像界展示另類作品，也很難想像有人能找到這類圖像，或者找到它們那位顯然內向的製作者，危險。儘管劉霞從來沒有被指控任何犯罪，但是她自2011年1月以來就被軟禁在北京的公寓裡，這是在奧斯陸於2010年10月公佈早已被莫須有罪名關押的劉曉波獲得2010年諾貝爾和平獎之後。只有她的母親獲准偶爾探望她一次。這些照片由法國經濟學家兼社會評論家居伊·索爾曼（Guy Sorman）在政府雷達下帶出，卻不能在中華人民共和國展出或發表，即使像劉霞他們那樣並沒有犯法。

因此，我們必須把這些看起來無聲的形像和它們那沉默寡言的謙遜創作者，作為是對中

共喜歡標榜為“社會和諧”的一種多少相當深沉的威脅，而他們所謂“社會和諧”的含義是：自己不容挑戰的掌權，以及對14億臣民的控制。

當然在統計上，劉霞和劉曉波作為那樣人口規模的成員微不足道。然而，極權主義思維不容例外，不允許哪怕一個公民接受有別於毛澤東眾所皆知為其人民設計的“樣板”，否則就會對其霸權模式構成威脅。現代極權國家不給任何人這種分歧的奢侈[1]。雅克·埃呂爾（Jacques Ellul）半個世紀前寫道：“宣傳不能滿足於部分成功，因為它不容討論。就其本性而言，它排除抵觸和討論。”[2]

有人會爭辯說，新的中國有親資本主義的經濟政策，有貪權的太子黨，有浮躁的億萬富翁，還有猖獗的政府腐敗，已經離開了極權的過去。但是，即便如此，天安門大屠殺才過去二十年多點，許多人仍然記憶猶新。同時，新的一代已經出現，他們對信息的獲取，通過社會媒體的溝通，讓削足適履的毛澤東式“樣板”幾無可能——事實上，現政權的老衛士們對這些技術和社會學的轉變掌握有限，無法理解，更發現深陷手足無措的境地。

正如埃呂爾半個世紀前所預見的，電子技術使其它各種更細微的社會控制顯然可行[3]。然而，即使中國的統治者在技術上足夠精通使用新媒體以充分發揮其優勢，但他們仍然會面臨異常棘手的偶發意外。俄羅斯科學家巴甫洛夫（I. P. Pavlov）曾如此寫過他在實驗室測試的家狗之一：

我們從一個非常簡單的實驗開始。狗被放到一個架子上。最初，它非常安靜地站着，但牠隨着時間推移而變得激動起來，掙扎着要離開架子，抓地板，啃支架，等等。很長一段時間，我們對這動物的異常行為感到困惑，直到最後使我們想到，這可能是一種特殊的自由反射的表達，當狗被限制在架子上時，根本牠無法保持安靜，當牠被限制立場。[4]（在原有的重點。）

巴甫洛夫學說今天大多站不住腳[5]，然而其前提奠定了二十世紀所有極權國家的灌輸性技術——不僅在蘇聯，而且也在納粹德國和中華人民共和國，表面上是良性形式，進入行為心理學的基礎而成為所有後續動機研究的核心組成部分，包括市場營銷和宣傳研究。

顯然，令巴甫洛夫及其同事們欣慰的是，這隻狗的拒絕，可以提交並確認為只是另一種

前所未知的“反射”，與那些更聽話的狗僅以鈴聲為條件就垂涎三尺沒什麼差別。雖然蘇聯是有史以來第一個有如此官方政策的國家，早已做到使其臣民被宣傳化，只是尚未完善。巴甫洛夫因此能承受得起對其規則例外的困惑，通過命名法將其束之高閣而容忍它。

毛澤東及其僕從們聽說，巴甫洛夫的“自由反射”是可傳染的，如果不能消除，就必須包容。在毛時代比在我們時代更容易實現。天安門事件以來，其繼承的策略一直在逐步取代。以赫胥黎《美麗新世界》（Brave New World）的誘惑，來取代喬治· 奧威爾《1984》的鎮壓。中國人民今天感到向彼此表達政治觀點是自由的，無須恐懼思想警察對他們撲來，只要他們這樣做是私下的——不公開，而且肯定不做記錄，不打印，不上電台或電視，不上互聯網，無論是文字還是圖像。他們大多數人現在似乎願意接受這些限制，他們可以選擇吃麥當勞的漢堡包，喝百事可樂，配備iPhone。

但這並非全部。有問題的“自由反射”不斷出現，體現在公民的直接行動中，例如劉曉波共同創作的《零八憲章》，呼籲中國民主化。“自由反射”採取了劉霞代表他發言的形式，與他在監獄裡結婚，像岩石般承受到他獲釋，也嵌入這些攝影作品之中。

劉霞對一位美國支持者寫道：“你可以發現，我照片中的娃娃具有生命，絲綢具有靈魂。” 自超現實主義運動在一個世紀前發端以來，玩偶、假人、面具及其它人形模擬物，已經證明對攝影師有用。它們繼續發揮作用，貫穿像拉爾夫· 尤金· 米特亞德（Ralph Eugene Meatyard）和M. 理查德· 克里斯特爾（M. Richard Kirstel）等人的晚期現代主義攝影，然後進入勞麗· 西蒙斯（Laurie Simmons）、大衛· 利文索爾（David Levinthal）、安德里斯· 塞拉諾（Andres Serrano）等許多人的後現代主義攝影和照片藝術。同樣，攝影師們早就發現了不同方式，使無生物欣欣向榮，令無機物栩栩如生。

中國攝影還沒有擴展靜物寫生的傳統。如果劉霞的戲劇化玩偶追溯到任何真正的中國攝影先例，那就是張雅心所精心推出的聳人聽聞的超現實主義彩色劇照，顯示文革前三年江青開發的“八大樣板戲”。那些似乎不可能是劉霞這個項目的參考點，但她對西方前輩的熟悉程度也不明朗。[6]無論劉霞吸收世界攝影歷史和傳統到什麼程度，她媒體接觸的工作使她聯繫到世界各地過去和現在的實行者。

不過，他們的攝影史沿襲，很難危及中國的

現狀，或證明囚禁她有理。她那些作品的直觀題材——玩偶，絲巾，蔬菜，都是司空見慣的家常用品。引起麻煩的是作品的內容。因為那些玩偶有很多話要說，至少其中之一（我把它看作劉曉波的代理人）不會閉嘴。然而，在此後的圖像中，他們又回來了。除了早已提及的男娃娃外，兩個女娃娃也復出了，其中之一顯然對這異常的繼續感到困惑，另一個真的完全生氣了——我的理解劉霞自己就是這樣。如果書籍的頻繁存在象徵着心靈生活，那麼絲綢造型的功用就是隱喻精神生活，平靜的中心，為生存所需的剛柔相濟。那些戴頭巾的指尖仿佛一個正在旁觀的希臘劇合唱隊。

總之，這是一出以這些圖像自己演出的完整情節劇，一個在極端壓迫下生存並頑強堅持向權力說真話的的故事。 它們的製作周到，以有說服力的視覺和不妥協的直接傳達多層次的信息。這些圖片向來自任何文化的有圖像釋讀能力者講述自己的故事，其力量與生俱來的，訊息明確，但是其中並沒有甚麼具體東西是中國政府能夠反對的——比如，一千人某天決定把這些圖像印在T恤上在北京或深圳或成都穿，沒有甚麼東西能使當局合法地圍捕這些人。

甚麼別的原因解釋為何劉霞被軟禁在北京生

活呢？這些玩偶的簡單黑白照片為何不能在今天的中國大陸展覽呢？它們構成可見的抵抗行為，而且她曾經給了允許公開展覽的紀錄。他們還打開有關公民個人權利和狀況與其政府相關的談論，中共負擔不起的開始對話——因為正如雅克· 埃呂爾所寫，“宣傳終止在對話開始之處。” [7] 通過這些圖像種子的擴散，“自由反射”得以傳播，它們邀請觀眾深深呼吸，然後呼出。

^[1] 例外的是那些由頂層金飯碗喂養的人，毛澤東的奢侈就是一個典型例子。

^[2] 參見雅克• 埃呂爾 (Jacques Ellul): Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 11.

^[3] 埃呂爾寫了他在前數字時代的初步研究，其模型是印刷、廣播、電影，尤其是電視。而且，他的見解也同樣適合我們這個時代的互聯網和社交媒體。
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^[4] 巴甫洛夫 (I. P. Pavlov):Conditioned Reflexes and Psychiatry. Lectures on Conditioned Reflexes, Vols. 1 and 2, trans. and ed. W. H. Gantt (New York: International Publishers, 1927). See Vol. I, Ch. XXVIII.

^[5] 例如，參見伯納德·J·巴爾斯(Bernard J.Baars):"I. P. Pavlov and the Freedom Reflex," Journal of Consciousness Studies, Volume 10, No. 11, November 2003, pp. 19-40.

^[6] 由於她被與世隔絕，已證明不可能採訪她，或與她通信討論這些照片的問題。我只是聽說，她在劉曉波於1996-1999年被監禁期間拍攝了這些靜物寫生的大部分，而少數照片的製作日期則是在劉獲釋後。

^[7] 雅克• 埃呂爾 (Jacques Ellul): Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 6.

“...To Little Xia, Who Plays Games with Dolls Every Day...”

(from the subtitle of a 1999 poem by Liu Xiaobo)

Several years ago, I first saw the photograph of Liu Xiaobo with one of Liu Xia's dolls perched on his shoulder. It's a beautiful, tender image, the doll nestled against his ear, held close by his hand, and of course the smallness of the doll makes Liu himself seem larger than life. The pose, against a blank background, is almost heroic—like something you might see on a propaganda banner or poster. Both Liu and the doll gaze off into middle distance, and neither much likes what he sees there. And at the first fleeting glance, the doll looked almost like a child, until I looked more carefully and saw that it was, indeed, a doll. It is, notably, the only photograph in this exhibition with a full human presence; in several others there are fingers, and a hand, or actually a fist.

A significant feature of this particular doll is its open, twisted mouth—a howl, a silent scream. It's a feature that is perhaps the signature of this collection, because it conveys so precisely what the collection as a whole portrays, the frustration, anger and helplessness of the innocent that cannot be articulated or heard. This aspect of the collection is echoed in the way that the images are constructed: the dolls bent into incongruous poses, sometimes wrapped or bound, and the use of homely, domestic materials—bits of cellophane, broken pieces of wood, soft wads of fabric, the rungs of a chair-back, a birdcage, little candles. This is how girls sometimes play with dolls: they

contort their limbs, cut their hair, beat them up, throw them in the air. They make up elaborate, dark stories using the materials at hand.

As a counterpoint to this exhibition, we've seen published at the same time in English *No Enemies, No Hatred: Selected Essays and Poems* by Liu Xiaobo (Belknap/Harvard, 2011). Chosen by Liu Xia, the essays are an overview of Liu's writing and thinking over twenty years on a wide range of issues—Tiananmen Square massacre, the Han Chinese in Tibet, radical ultra-nationalism, the Chinese government's Olympic Games “gold medal syndrome,” the exuberant anarchy made possible by the Internet.

As I read these essays while reflecting on Liu Xia's photographs, I was struck by three things. First, that Liu Xiaobo writes a great deal about the children and young people of China. He mourns unceasingly with the mothers of those killed at Tiananmen Square; spelling out the names and circumstances of young people killed, expressing his guilt because “None of the conspicuous activists—like me—were killed.” He asks the difficult question: “Why is it that we scarcely hear the voices of the people who paid the heaviest price (Liu Xia's dolls in their bed of candles), while the luminaries who survived the massacre can hardly stop talking?” He writes about the cult of “little emperors” imbued with “ab-

solute egotism” created by China's one-child population policy. His exploration of the 2007 scandal of child slaves exploited in the “black kilns” of Henan Province (like the dolls suffocated with cellophane) was one of the articles used in his 2009 trial as evidence of guilt of “the crime of inciting subversion of state power.”

Secondly, Liu explores the roles of many players in “Culture and Society,” writers and intellectuals, erotic cinema, Western heroes like Havel, Ghandi and Jesus Christ. In one essay, he examines the crucial role of “egao” (variously translated as parody, satire, spoof, lampoon, prank) in undermining totalitarianism. “Truth-telling politics is the open challenge offered by a few fearless people of conscience. Joke-making politics is the private digging away at the base of the wall....” One of the numerous examples he gives of subversive humour in art is the “bald idiot” series of the artist Fang Lijun, which embody the principle, “ugliness is beauty” in characters with wide-open mouths and empty eyes. Liu Xia's “ugly babies” with their big, glaring eyes and open mouths (not unlike Fang's “Howl” portraits) are perhaps not as overtly satirical, but they are profoundly subversive. Using dolls, “babies,” in works of art about repression and powerlessness is a defiant parody of child's play. It doesn't provoke maniacal laughter, like some of the more cynical forms of egao that

Liu enumerates, but it draws on similar wells of common, private experience and inspires a kind of pure fearlessness. Everyone plays with dolls, don't they?

Finally, most obviously, is the conversation these two people are having about words in their work. Almost one-quarter of Liu Xia's photographs use words, or books—towers of books, a doll squeezed into a corner of a bookshelf, a veil of words obscuring a doll from the viewer. The books are both a source of pride and intimidation; the dolls are tiny and vulnerable beside a pillar of books. For Liu himself, writers are his heroes and words are weapons, building blocks in his reconstruction of Chinese democracy. They are also his downfall; in 2009, he was condemned to 11 years in prison because of seven of his elegant, persuasive sentences, a total of just 224 Chinese characters.

Several commentators have made the point that Liu Xia prefers to be apolitical, not to be involved directly in the public critique of China's regime. She was not an active participant in events at Tiananmen Square, nor a signatory to Charter 08. And yet she has been punished. Her work is banned in China. Since October, 2010, she too has been detained, contained, although never charged or convicted with anything. Her confinement within her Beijing apartment since October 2010 is almost a parody of the

imprisonment of her husband, Liu Xiaobo. She might be the doll portrayed as trapped behind pictographs, looking out, like a woman at a window, or the doll in the bright metal cage, waiting, beside a lit candle. (This suite of photographs was done ten years before Liu's current incarceration, but the pattern of confinement, visitation, exchange of poems, absence, silence, was already the story of their lives.)

In the final image of the collection, the howling doll is trapped between what look to me like two lion heads, door knockers, perhaps. He cannot get down until someone removes him, and then perhaps the door behind him will swing open. Until then, he is imprisoned and silenced. But Liu's words can still be heard, seen, read aloud: “I look forward to the day when our country will be a land of free expression...a country where all political views will be spread out beneath the sun for citizens to choose among.... I hope that I will be the last victim in China's long record of treating words as crimes.”

Marian Botsford Fraser
Chair, Writers in Prison Committee,
International PEN
Toronto, Canada,
May, 2012

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