

The Wall

Reshaping Contemporary Chinese Art

墙：中国当代艺术的历史与边界

高名潞
Gao Minglu

Cover

City and Body

The victory of the human body over the steel and concrete of the city is at once an impossibility and a path to salvation. In 1991, Lin Yilin began to build walls from cinderblocks in different locations, such as public squares, indoor spaces, and city streets. Often, he would build himself into the wall, leaving the outline of a human form. [Fig.7-15] Inside his walls you can also find Renminbi bank notes or massage machines. At times, he built walls in the night markets on the squares outside shopping malls, and allowed people to take out the bank notes in the cracks in order to urge people to contemplate the relationship between materialism and life in urban civilization. In the performance of *Safely Crossing Linhe Road*, 1995, Lin Yilin built a wall using dozens of bricks along a busy artery in the newly developed area of Guangzhou, and then removed the bricks and laid them again on the other side of the old wall. Repeating this action over and over, the entire wall was moved across the road, block by block. The moving wall is like an urban monster. Just as the wall [or the city] transforms the human into a sort of construction material, Lin Yilin makes the wall "human."

It's not a dialogue between ruins and city landscape, it's man's inner monologue [Zhang Dali]

Since Zhang Dali re- turned to China in 1995, he has dedicated himself to working in urban spaces. He is China's first graffiti artist, as well as the first "ruins" artist. His graffiti is mostly his self-portrait, which appears together with the tag "AK47." It can be interpreted as the devastation of human nature wrought by the violent disruption of urban construction. Zhang Dali then documents the ruined walls, self-portraits, and symbols using video and photography. Each vista that he selects has a particular significance embedded within it. Often this meaning is conveyed through comparison, for example, by juxtaposing demolished walls with the "permanent" landmark buildings of Beijing: the corner towers of the Forbidden City, Stalinist buildings among the "10 Great Construction Projects" of 1959, such as the National Art Museum of China, or newer symbols such as the Jinmao Tower in Shanghai. [Fig.7-16] Zhang Dali claims demolished walls as his own artworks, locating the walls in a larger urban landscape and creating a spectacle by contrasting urban ruins and skyscrapers. Zhang is not trafficking in urban anthropology or the geographical issues of urban development. Instead, he concerns himself with human nature. His work is entitled *Dialogue with Demolition*, 1995- 2003, [P1.27, No.1-31, which does not signify a dialogue between ruins and skyscrapers, or new and the old, but between human and concrete, or between essential human nature and urban alienation. It is, in fact, an inner monologue.⁹ [Fig.7-17]

Since 2002, Zhang Dali has gradually given up his photographic "graffiti" activities. Instead, he has begun to cast the bodies of 100 farmer workers and their relatives in plaster. [Fig.7-18] In this exhibition, he will display a video about the dismantlement and removal of Beijing as he has traced it for twenty years. The urban spectacles and distorted bodies combine in a bizarre scene. [P1.28]



图 7—17: 张大力 《暴力的过程》 1998 年 行为艺术
Fig.7-17: Zhang Dali Process of Violence 1998 Performance

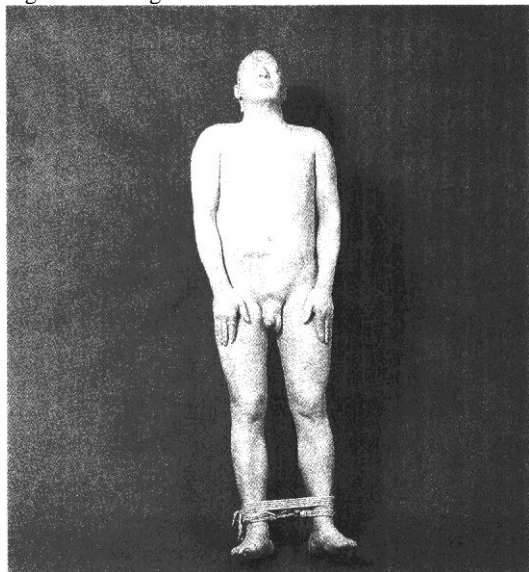


图 7-18: 张大力 《种族》[局部]2005 年装置
Fig.7-18: Zhang Dali Offspring [Detail] 2005 Installation



图 7-16: 张大力《拆墙与对话》
Fig.7-16: Zhang Dali Dialogue with Demolition 1998
Performance

都市与肉体

对于人类来讲，期望肉体征服钢筋水泥几乎是一种不可企及的幻想，但这是人的自我救赎的体验。林一林从 1991 年开始用砖在不同的场合[女日广场、室内、街道]建造墙。他常常把自己的身体砌在墙体内，当他从墙体内走出来以后，砖墙上会留下一个人形[图 7-15]，墙缝中间还常常夹着人民币、按摩器等。有时他在商厦广场的夜市上砌墙，并允许大家抽掉墙缝中的人民币，以此刺激人们思考在都市文明中物质与生命的价值关系。在《安全度过林和路》这件行为艺术作品中，林一林在广州新城的一条交通繁忙的主干道旁用几十块砖头砌起一堵墙，然后一块一块地把它取下来，移动到墙的另一面，再砌起来。如此反复，整堵墙被一点一点地搬到马路对面。这堵移动的墙，就像一个异化的都市怪物。“墙”成为林一林的化身，“墙”[都市]把人变成了物质动物，而林一林又把“墙”还原为“人”。

不是废墟与都市建筑的对话，是人的自我对话[张大力]

张大力 1995 年回国后一直致力于在都市空间中创作。它是中国第一位“涂鸦”艺术家，也是第一位“废墟”艺术家。他的涂鸦大多是自己的自画像，并与“AK47”的数字同时出现，其作品可以被解读为都市建设的大规模拆迁对人性的摧残。张大力用录像和照片的形式将废墟的墙、自画像和符号拍下来。他的照片选景常常采用对比的方式，比如，将被拆的墙与北京和上海的“永存”性标志性建筑，如北京故宫的城楼、作为北京 20 世纪 50 年代十大建筑之一的中国美术馆、上海金茂大厦等拍入同一画面。[图 7—16]张大力把拆毁的墙作为自己的作品，并将它像装置一样放入到一个大的“有意义”的都市背景中，造成了一种都市废墟和高楼大厦共存并置的“奇观”。[彩页 24]但张大力并不是在讲都市的人类学故事和城市本身的发展问题，他关注的是人性的问题。他的作品名称常含有“对话”，但并不是废墟与摩天楼的对话，也不是新与旧的对话，而是人和水泥、钢筋的对话，或者是本质的人和异化的人之间的对话。实际上，更是人自己和自己的对话。

从 2002 年开始，张大力逐步放弃了他的“涂鸦”摄影活动，开始用石膏将一百个民工和他们家属的身体翻模下来。[图 7—17]在“墙”展中，他将把二十年来追踪北京拆迁的录像投影到这些翻模下来的石膏像上，都市的“奇观”与扭曲的人体会形成一种光怪陆离的视觉形象。