

## “升华”

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这个展览标志了张大力艺术实验中的一个新项目的起点，通过系统调查照片的修改和所使用的方法，反思中国现代视觉文化的机制。

自从照相技术在19世纪中叶被发明并被广泛地运用到新闻、广告、艺术以至于普通人的生活中，它超越了以往所有模拟现实的美术手段，甚至取代了现实，以摄影图像构成了作为认知对象的现实世界本身。虽然研究摄影史的学者不断提醒我们这种取代和构成的人为性和功利性，但是当我们看到一幅照片的时候——特别是在看到所谓的“新闻照片”、“历史照片”和“私人照片”的时候——我们的直接反应仍然是：这是真的，这是我。

一幅照片不但在其原始形态中已经含有特定的文化取向和拍摄者的目光，它的洗印过程更给人们提供了干预和改造现实的极大可能性。政治评论家们已经指出了世界现代史中出于政治目的对照片的屡屡篡改，张大力的调查使我们看到这种篡改并非偶然个案，而是官方摄影的一个基本和内在的机制。其所改动的对象不但是老照片或领袖肖像，而且也包括新闻摄影和群众场面。经过改造的图像不但重现造就了历史事件和英雄形象，而且也提供了认知现实和“人民”的基础。它们的目的并不在于记录真实的世界，而是在纪实的口号下推广某种“精神”或意识形态。

张大力所收集和整理的图片反映出若干改造照片（即改造现实）的方法：（1）取消照片中的特定形象；（2）置换照片中的特定形象；（3）框定局部，取消形象的上下文；（4）改变背景，突出中心人物或主题；（5）增设道具和细节；（6）对中心形象加以“提高”和润色。这些方法常常结合使用，其目的有多种，有时是直截了当地政治性的，有时则是带有“艺术性”的，目的在于创造一个理想的画面。值得注意的是，几乎所有这些方法都必须与绘画相结合：被取消人物或背景所留下的空白必须填满，毛泽东眉间的一丝皱纹也可以被细致地抹平。仔细对比这些图像，我们常常被修改者的苦心和技术所惊讶甚至感动。

张大力的这个调查的意义并不仅仅在于揭露这些现象，而是在于引导我们去考虑两个更深远的问题。首先，我们开始认

识到对照片的修改并非仅仅局限于政治宣传。实际上，类似的篡改被全社会所接受和采用：我们每个人都更理想的、“升华”了的自我形象所吸引。翻出家中的全家福老照片，它们的底片上总会有照相馆做的细致“修版”；而当今在电脑上改动形象、增益背景更是手到拈来、司空见惯。政治文化中对照片的篡改因此绝非是一个孤立的现象，而是有着一巨大的群众性的文化和心理基础。

第二个问题所牵涉的是这一政治视觉文化和“革命现实主义”文艺及文艺理论之间的关系。根据毛主席的《在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话》，郭沫若提出了“真正的（革命）文艺是极丰富的生活由纯粹的精神作用所升华过的一个象征世界。”（《文艺论集：批评与梦》）这个展览中的图像可以说都符合这个原则：它们都“来于生活”但又“高于生活”，通过精神的作用把现实升华为一个浪漫主义的象征世界。

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Цыветем гревруий Кавуар



张大力  
Zhang Dali

第二历史  
Second History  
图片  
Photo

2005

## "Sublimation"

Wu Hung

This exhibition marks the beginning of a new experimental art project for Zhang Dali: to reflect upon the mechanism of modern Chinese visual culture through systematically investigating the purposeful doctoring of photographs.

After photography was invented in the mid-nineteenth century and utilized broadly in news reporting, advertisement, art, and daily life, this visual technology surpassed all previous artistic means in mimicking reality. It even substituted for reality itself, using photographic images to construct a world as the object to be observed and recognized. Scholars of the history of photography constantly remind us about the artificiality and utilitarian purposes of such substitution and construction, but when we face a photograph – especially a so-called “news photo,” “historical photo” or “private photo” – our direct response is still often: This is real; this is me.

A photograph already embodies cultural specificity and the photographer's gaze in the original shot; the printing process further allows ample opportunities to interfere with and distort reality. Political scientists have documented many cases in modern world history, in which photographs were doctored for political purposes. Zhang Dali's investigation further suggests that rather than being isolated incidents, such distortions indicate an essential, internal mechanism of photographic production. Doctored subjects include old photos and leaders' portraits, as well as news photos and snapshots of ordinary people. The doctored images not only help reconstruct historical events and images of state heroes, but also lay a foundation for comprehending the world and the idea of the people. Instead of recording what is real, these images advance a certain “spirit” or ideology under the name of photo reportage.

The photographic prints collected and organized by Zhang Dali in this exhibition demonstrate a number of methods used to doctor existing photos (and thus to alter reality). These methods include: (1) erasing particular figure(s)/image(s) in a photograph; (2) replacing undesirable figure(s)/image(s) with desirable ones; (3) reframing a photograph, making a part the whole; (4) modifying the background of a photograph to reinforce the central figure(s); (5) inserting images into an existing photograph; and (6) polishing and perfecting the central figure(s). These methods are often used in combination; their application serves various purposes, sometimes explicitly political, other times “artistic,” aiming to create a more balanced composition. It is worth noting that almost all these methods are facilitated by painting: the empty space left by an erased figure must be filled, and a tiny wrinkle between Mao's eyebrows can be carefully flattened by delicate brushwork. Comparing these images closely, we are often surprised and even moved by the painstaking effort and skill of the photo editors.

The significance of Zhang Dali's project does not simply lie in

laying bare these phenomena. Rather, it leads us to think about two deeper issues. First, we begin to realize that the distortion of photographs not always serves political propaganda. In fact, it is accepted and employed by society at large, since everyone seems attracted by ideal, “sublimated” images of themselves. The negatives of old studio portraits, for example, always bear traces of “xiuban” – penciled refinement of people's features. As for recent digital images, they are even more prone to elaborate editing techniques, from altering people's faces to elaborating background scenery. The distortion of photographs in political culture is therefore not an isolated phenomenon, but has an enormous cultural and psychological basis.

The second issue raised by these images concerns their relationship with “revolutionary realistic” art and the theory of “revolutionary realism.” Based on Mao's Talks in the Yan'an Seminars on Art and Literature, Guo Muoruo once argued that “genuine (revolutionary) art and literature is a symbolic world, created by pure spiritual factors through sublimating an extremely rich reality.” (Papers on Art and Literature. Criticism and Dream) This principle, in fact, can be applied to the doctored images in this exhibition, which all “came from life” but are “higher than life,” and which, as “sublimation” is defined in dictionaries, transform images from their “primitive state into something with higher spiritual or cultural value.”

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张大力  
Zhang Dali

第二历史  
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