



常青画廊举办的帕斯卡尔·马蒂那·塔尤个展现场会

## 群展的终结？ The End of Mass-Exhibitions?

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*In fact, today's artists have the most profitable position in the art market. These times are also testing the artists: do they carry on creating or do they merely repeat themselves? Are they independent or do they follow the market?*

现在，整个中国当代艺术圈似乎都在为即将开幕的威尼斯双年展、卡塞尔文献展和巴塞爾艺术博览会而骚动，画廊主、艺术家、收藏家乃至地产商们渴望从中发现艺术潮流的走向、收藏的机会，甚至是从中偷学到一两招数。但是我怀疑这些产生于工业时代的“国际艺术大展”今年能否继续发挥引领艺术创作潮流的意义：在一个有成百上千件作品出现的展览中，几乎每个人的分量都变得无足轻重，更何况，通过网络、旅游、艺术杂志乃北京的美术馆、画廊，中国的艺术界人士已经可以越来越方便地接触到国外最新的创作和展览信息。今天已经不是火车、飞机的时代，而是信息技术的时代了。

至少在北京、上海这样已经很大程度上融入全球的艺术资本体系的城市中，我感觉不到和纽约、巴黎、伦敦、威尼斯、卡塞尔有什么信息鸿沟。但是我得承认，在越来越的艺术信息的轰炸中，来自本地的展览信息是最让人厌倦的——北京即使不是世界上艺术展览

最多的城市，也是艺术展览更新频率最高的城市，很多展览只存在一周甚至更短的时间，几乎每周都有超过十个展览开幕。在很多展览——往往是一些群展中——几乎总是同一些艺术家、同一些作品重复出现，这让对艺术圈稍有了解的人都感到兴味索然。

刚刚结束的中艺博国际画廊博览会（CIGE）也是如此，今年参展画廊的态度非常实际，绝大多数都带来的都是有卖相的绘画、摄影和雕塑作品，而有实验气息的装置艺术、录像艺术等几乎绝迹，可谓“能卖的都来了”。这凸显了中国当代艺术世界的尴尬：虽然已经成为国际艺坛的焦点，但是整个艺术体系仍然单薄的可怜，一方面画廊数量虽多，但急功近利的多，有长期规划和战略的画廊少；另一方面，商业公司、画廊和投资者主导的商业体系独大，而缺乏基金会、教育机构等非赢利机构和学术体系的支持，所以这一片繁荣总让人觉得心惊胆战。

### 双年展：两头没着落

在中国这块世界最大的土地上，各式各样的艺术家和策划人也让中国成为了世界上双年展最多的国家，仅仅我知道双年展、三年展就有上海双年展、北京双年展、贵阳双年展、成都双年展、广州摄影双年展、北京国际书法双年展、深圳城市 / 建筑双年展、中国艺术三年展、广州三年展、澳门设计双年展、深圳国际水墨画双年展、上海国际城市雕塑双年展……这里面有房地产商人和楼盘捆绑的宣传式展览，有策展人拼凑出的名目，也有政府支持的文化战略行为。

目前中国举办的双年展一般有两种操作形式，一是民间机构组织的展览，主要是美术馆、画廊或者策划人打出的旗号；二是政府支持的展览，如北京国际美术双年展，这是文化部和北京市支持的项目，有中央财政的拨款，还有上海双年展、深圳双年展这样市一级政府支持的展览。不过，在目前的政府治理结构下，政府支持的形式也有差别。

很多人都在抱怨中国缺乏欧美那样的基金会体制，这让展览的持续性、策展人的独立性受到很大影响。但是另一方面，中国却又每年举办这样多的双年展，精明的策展人发现有很多替代性的资金来源。之前，很多展览是受到财大气粗的地产商的支持，而如今，政府部分和商业画廊、收藏家成为新的资金来源。虽然国外的多数展览同样依赖赞助商和政府，但是相比之下，中国的赞助人往往要求直接的宣传效果或收益，往往干涉策划人的工作，甚至自己推荐艺术家参加展览。

国内目前的双年展模式仍然和威尼斯双年展、卡塞尔文献展有很大差距，这让中国本地的绝大多数大展处于两头没着落的尴尬境地：上，它无力邀请全球艺术家的广泛参与，无法造成一个丰富无比的全球对话的场面。展览仍然只是艺术圈专业人士的聚会，和本地的文化、观众缺少对话，也对当代的文化创意产业、旅游业没有产生促进作用。

也许这不仅仅是中国艺术圈的问题，一方面，整个中国的文化体系、经济体系都在粗鄙而快速的发展，各个圈层之间的衔接、商业机构的开发能力都有局限；另一方面，也没有稳固的信仰体系或者文化传统支撑这一切，实用主义、功利主义是整个社会思想的主轴。



中艺博画廊博览会上法国 LAURENT GODIN 画廊展位

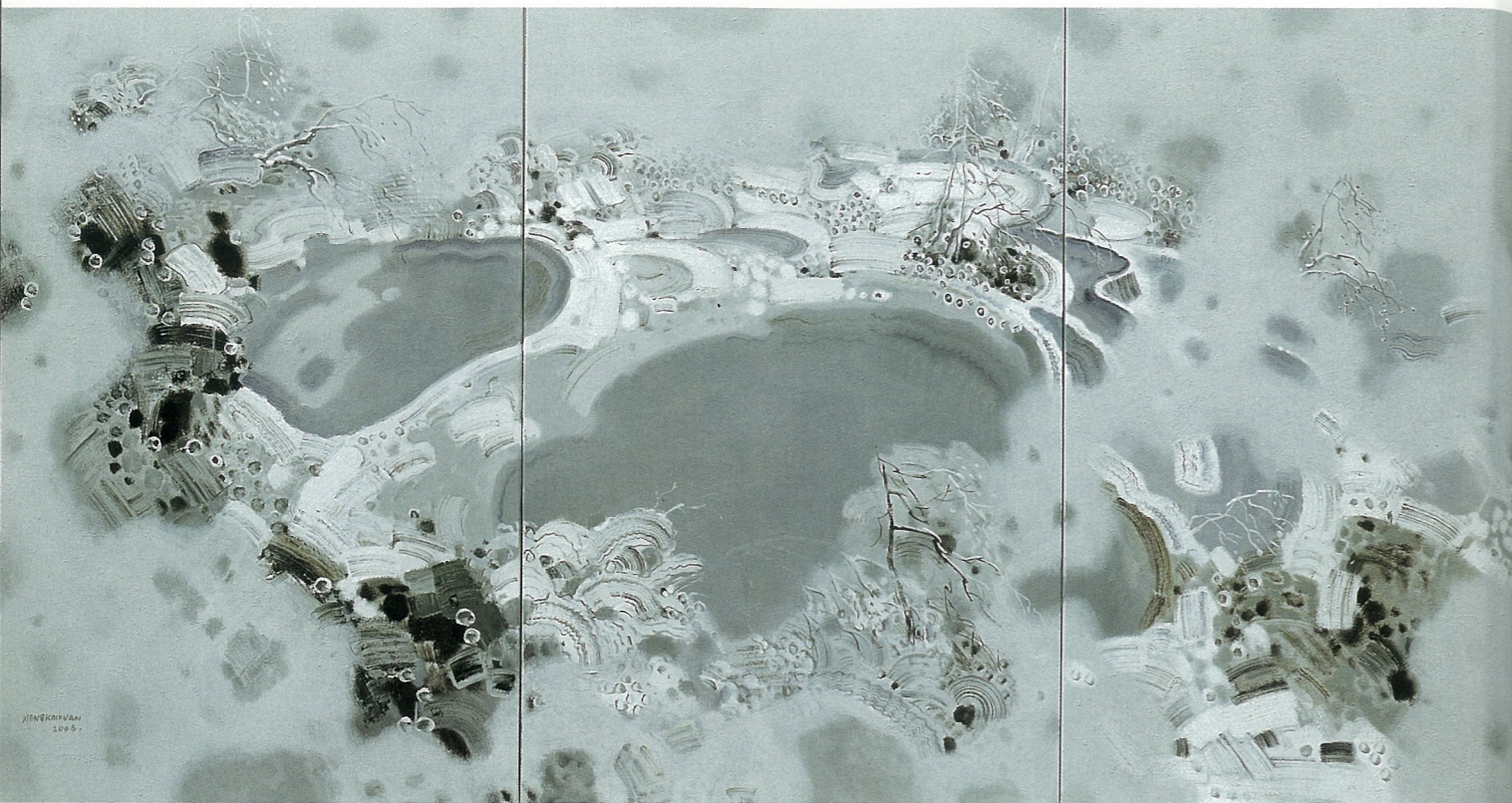
### 群展：艺术家什么时候学会拒绝？

当然，我还是应该感谢市场化我带来了更多选择：正是这三四年拍卖会、画廊交易价格的刺激，让很多私人 and 公司资本不断涌入，于是出现了更多的新画廊、更多的新展览。但也应该看到有更多的垃圾出现了，现在的北京已经有太多浪费观众时间的展览了，尤其是群体展览更是乏善可呈：最近两年艺术展览的数量如此之多，而参加展览的却几乎总是那些人，参加展览的总是那些作品，不仅观众没有新鲜感，连艺术家自己都厌烦了，他们更多的是把群展当作和朋友聚会的场所。

我很惊讶中国的艺术家——即使是排名在前十位的著名人物——为什么要用类似的作品参加那么多的群展，是因为艺术家和画廊主、策展人是朋友，还是仅仅为了又增加一次出镜的机会？也许是十年之前受到的冷落刺激了艺术圈的贪欲，那时候几乎没有正规的展览，也没有如此多的画廊出现，而今天，来自国内外的展览邀请实在太多了，大多数艺术家们则还没有学会如何说出“拒绝”这个词。

事实上，现在的艺术家在艺术市场中处于最有利的地位，这时候也是考验艺术家的时刻：是继续创新还是重复自己，是坚持自己还是跟从市场？幸好，还是有少数人选择了前者，因此目前的当代艺术才没有成为一个金钱堆成的垃圾场。相比每况愈下的群展，最近两年来北京最让我记忆深刻的展览都是个人展览——个人展览一方面给艺术家更多的发挥空间，另一方面也面临更为苛刻的批评，所以艺术家们更为重视这一台独唱的腔调，而合唱时人总免不了有偷懒的想法，更何况要和那么多滥竽充数的人为伍。之前刘小东、方力钧、宋冬、UNMASK、欧阳春都曾经奉献出了优秀的个人展览，常青画廊、阿拉里奥画廊也曾带来国外有水准的艺术家个展。

另外一个令人赞赏的方式是空白画廊把一位中国艺术家和一位外国艺术家进行组合展出的方式，类似的，把中国的古代、近代艺术品和当代艺术组合起来进行联展也将非常有趣，可惜，在目前中国的博物馆体系条块分割、策展不力的现实里，还没有更多有意思的展览出现。画廊、美术馆之外的非常态展览空间，也缺少有心人的开发。



雪融系列 12 油画 翁凯旋

It seems that the whole Chinese contemporary art scene is agitated by the Venice Biennale, Kassel Documenta and Basel exhibitions. Curators, artists, collectors and even land agents thirst to discover the new trends, collecting opportunities and even learn one or two tricks. But I doubt whether or not the big international art exhibitions can continue to foresee and develop the trends in creation this year. In an event, which exhibits hundreds and thousands of art works, the weight of each person becomes insignificant. Important persons in the Chinese art scene can get increasingly easy access to information about the newest international creations and exhibitions. Our era is no longer that of trains and planes, but that of information technology.

At least Beijing and Shanghai have become part of the most important art capitals in the world and I feel that there is no information gap between these cities and cities such as New York, Paris, London, Venice or Kassel. But I must admit that in a more and more commercial world of art, local information on art has become worrisome. Even though Beijing is not the city with the most exhibitions in the world, it is the city that changes most fast, with many exhibitions only lasting one week and at times even less. Each week, more than ten exhibitions open their doors and in many exhibitions—often the mass-exhibitions—the same artists and art works repeatedly appear, often making art connoisseurs feel uninterested.

The China International Gallery Exposition 2007 CIGE, which just ended was a good example of this. The attitude of the curators of this particular exhibition was very realistic this year, only choosing paintings,

photography and sculptures that would easily sell and chose not to exhibit experimental installations and recording-art. Thus one could say that only sellable art was exhibited. Although it has already become a focal point of the international art scene, CIGE magnified the weakness of the entire art system and proved to be an embarrassment to the Chinese contemporary art world. First, although there were a lot of curators, most of them were in for quick success and instant benefits and only a small minority had a strategy or long-term plan. Second; businessmen, curators and investors' minds are dominated by commercialism and therefore the lack of supporting funds, educational organizations, non-profit organizations and the academic world makes one fear for the future of events like these.

Biennales: A double loss

China, this world's biggest construction site, hosts the biggest amount of biennales in the world, thanks to the many artists and government officials. When I think of biennales and triennials, the Shanghai Biennale, the Beijing Biennale, the Guiyang Biennale, the Chengdu Biennale, the Guangzhou Biennale for Photography, the Beijing International Biennale for Calligraphy, the Shenzhen Biennale for Architecture, the Chinese Art Triennial, the Guangzhou Triennial, the Macau Biennale for Design, the International Ink Biennale of Shenzhen, the Shanghai International Biennale for City Sculptures and many more come to mind. In these exhibitions, one can see a lot of advertisements for land agents, in addition to others that were scrambled together by organizers and government strategists for culture.



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At the moment, the biennales organized by China can basically be divided into two groups: the first, exhibitions organized by organizations that operate among the people such as art galleries. Second, exhibitions organized by the government, like the Beijing International Art Biennale, which is a project organized by the Ministry of Culture and the City of Beijing and funded by the central government. Other examples include the Shanghai Biennale and the Shenzhen Biennale. Considering the present policies and composition of the government, however, the way the government organizes these events is somewhat different.

Many people complain that China lacks a funding system like the European one, which could influence the duration and independent character of the exhibitions. But on the other hand, even though China organizes so many biennales each year, organizers feel that there are many other sources of funding. In the past, many events were held by wealthy real-estate businesses, whereas today local governments, commercial galleries and collectors provide new sources of funding. Although abroad many exhibitions also depend on businesses and governments for their funding, in China, many sponsors often demand direct publicity and often interfere in the work of the curators, even recommending artists themselves.

At the same time, the form of biennale exhibition is still a big difference in funding between Chinese exhibitions and exhibitions like the Venice Biennale or Kassel Documenta. This makes most of the Chinese exhibitions subject to an embarrassing loss. First, they lack the strength to be able to invite a wide range of international artists and thus cannot produce a

forum for an international dialogue. Second, these exhibitions are still only professional gatherings, lacking a dialogue with local audiences and culture. Also, the originality of modern culture, as well as the tourism industry, cannot play an accelerating role.

Perhaps this is not solely a problem of the Chinese art scene. First, Chinese culture and economy are both at the centre of high-speed development, converging on many different layers. The development of commercial organizations moreover, also has its limits. Second, there is no stable belief system supporting all of this. Pragmatism and utilitarianism form the backbone of the ideology in Chinese society.

Mass exhibitions: When will artists learn how to say no?

Of course, I should still be grateful for the many choices offered by an open market. The last three or four years, the open market stimulated the prices at auctions and art galleries and increased incomes of individuals and companies, thus causing the appearance of more art galleries and exhibitions. But we can also notice the appearance of more and more rubbish. Beijing today already has too many exhibitions, which are a waste of the audiences' time. Especially mass exhibitions that appear to be unable to display anything interesting. In the last two years, the number of art exhibitions increased greatly, but it's still the same artists that participate in them and it's still the same art works that are on display. So it's not only the audience that can't find fresh emotions, even the artists themselves are fed up with it all and consider the mass-exhibitions to be a get-together for old friends.

I was perplexed as to why Chinese artists—even the most famous ones—use similar works to participate in so many different exhibitions. Is it because artists, curators and organizers are friends and are only interested in exposure? Maybe it is the greed that started stimulating the art scene 10 years ago, when the appearance of new art galleries and regular exhibitions were still rare. Today, there are simply too many invitations for joining art exhibitions at home and abroad, and artists still don't know how to say no.

In fact, today's artists have the most profitable position in the art market. These times are also testing the artists: do they carry on creating or do they merely repeat themselves? Are they independent or do they follow the market? Fortunately, only a minority chooses the former, so that contemporary art didn't become a wealthy pile of rubbish. Compared to the mass-exhibitions that go from bad to worse, the exhibitions that came to Beijing, which are worth remembering most, are individual exhibitions. An individual exhibition gives the artist more space, but on the other hand it causes more fierce criticism to surface. The artist by consequence, however, will be challenged and in turn become more interested in the creation process. Contemporaries who choose the easy path are not only lazy, but also associated with others as space fillers of no significance. Liu Xiaodong, Fang Lijun and Ou Yangchun each held outstanding individual exhibitions and likewise Evergreen Art and Arrario galleries have hosted individual exhibitions of an international standard.

Other ways of exciting the public to appreciate an exhibition is to hold a joint exhibition with both a Chinese and a foreign artist participating or combining Chinese traditional art with Chinese contemporary art in one exhibition. Unfortunately it is often not a realistic option, considering the present policies of the Chinese museums and the lack of the right people to fill the position of curator in art galleries.