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张晓刚的绘画一开始就以它的抒情、犹豫、压抑和顾影自怜的气质吸引着人们。他的绘画充满着描绘的各种可能性，这种描绘是建立在个人经历和记忆的基础上。他的描绘从一开始就和他的个人经历紧密联系在一起。在张晓刚整个的创作里，我们可以洞悉到一个当代文化发展和变化的过程。

张晓刚的创作从对个人本能的尊重开始，这个尊重使他和凡·高的绘画激情激烈地杂糅在一起，同时伴随着对个人生命意义的追寻，他把生命理解为一种激情的燃烧。这个过程一直持续到93年左右在一个多元文化中发现自我价值的时刻，从那时起，张晓刚的绘画开始明确了自我的文化位置。艺术家的个人经历、经验、记忆以及想象被填进本能的情感释放里。与此前不同的是，这一释放有了自己的逻辑和方向，它们在艺术家日后的每一步发展中都渐渐地反映出来。从《大家庭》系列作品、《失忆与记忆》系列作品、《里与外》系列作品以及《绿墙》系列作品中，我们可以看到一个自我文化有意识地释放和自我定义的过程。在此次最新的创作里，我们可以继续感觉到他创作的自然延伸和发展，他此次更强调一种位置和角度。这不仅是对此次展览的作品，同时也在明确此前创作的位置和角度。

16: 9是一种现时比较流行的电影、电脑和电视机屏幕尺寸，我们俗称“宽银幕”。**16: 9**是今天我们看待世界的视觉角度和位置，我们越来越依赖这样的方式和尺寸去感知世界。张晓刚象征性地把他的记忆、现实和经验明确在今天这个角度和位置。

这是一个屏幕的世界，这个世界已经成为我们获得信息和认识自我的重要手段。这个世界天生具有虚拟的性质，而历史、记忆本身也同样具有一种虚拟性质。对于画家来说，绘画自身也是一种虚拟制造。当然，张晓刚对于制造虚拟没有兴趣，他只是回避不了环绕在他周围的虚拟世界。这个世界既有足够的空间让他施展表达和想象的能力，同时又在不断编制和形成与他个人的关系。在这个以“**16: 9**”为标题的展览中，有《车窗》系列作品，火车在艺术家早期求学和成长中扮演了非常重要的角色，它载着艺术家去获取知识、机会、朋友并身有感知地认识一个自我归属的世界。这个世界有浪漫的憧憬（一个拉小提琴的男孩）、有理想主义的图式样板（红梅、青松）、还有使每个人经历教育和改造的学校和农村。艺术家用“线”和平涂的方式试图再一次经历或是对他的经历再一次留下痕迹。这个痕迹充满了手的抚摸感。画面中颜料就像一层薄沙盖在被描绘的景物上，而画面中“线”的意象就像是一种不舍的泪痕寻找着被切断的联系。在《天堂》系列作品中，展现出来更多的是一种想象的错乱关系，一种对关系需要再定义的冲动。艺术家总是沉浸于对各种关系的感知中，各种关系总是能在不同的阶段展现出来。描述在这里也不仅是一种表达，它也更是一种关系的反映方式。有意思的是，当中国现代时间意义上的艺术早年被训练成一种反映的工具时，艺术家作为个人是被排除在外的。而如今，随着时代的发展，艺术家作为个人被再次尊重为一个真正的体验者和实践者，这个工具也已经深入到个人和社会的各种复杂的关系发展中。

16: 9标准显示屏被认为是观看大片和玩网络游戏的最佳选择。在这个标准比例里，我们开始经历的是虚拟的生活和情感。催人泪下的电视剧集也好，危机四伏的联网游戏也好，我们前所未有地将个人精力投入到一种向全体公众提供的虚拟情感中。“现实世界”所对应的似乎已经不再是“历史世界”，而是“虚拟世界”。真实生活已经在通过虚拟的方式重新建立，张晓刚试图通过个人经历来触及真实，而在触及真实的描述中他又虚拟记忆和现实的关系。通过这种虚拟，他释放出了自己。历史、记忆和现实的一切在这里都成了他释放自己的元素。

在一个经历着前所未有的高速发展的中国社会里，我们今天所拥有的现实感和历史感可能和过去任何一个时代、和我们身边的任何一个民族都不相同。现实和历史的形成变得很快，同时也因为这种快，现实和历史都显得过于轻飘。在这次展出的若干作品中，我们可以看到一种转瞬即逝、似曾相识的生活，张晓刚通过描述试图牢牢地抓住它，即使在不断移动的生活中（车厢和药瓶的意象），他也要固定住一种希望，纵使这个希望是以历史或是记忆的影子出现。我们的时代正像一列在不断抛弃“现在”的列车。当这列车载着我们呼啸着驶向未来的时候，艺术家却选择停留在某个时刻，将他个人目之所及的现实和历史保留在他私人的记忆中。这种停留是对“易逝”的反动，是公共记忆的一种个体书写。

张晓刚持续性的探索和创作也是一个满足我们自身发展和需要的自我意识形成的过程。我们需要他的努力和实践。

16: 9是我们和他共同面对的一种现代观看的视觉方式。



From the very beginning, Zhang Xiaogang's painting fascinated us with its lyrical, wavering, suppressed, narcissistic and self-pitying qualities. It bursts with all the possibilities of description. In Zhang's case, this type of description is built on a foundation of memory and personal experience, and the latter has been intimately linked with his painting from very beginning as well. Throughout the whole of Zhang Xiaogang's work, we may clearly understand a process of development and change in contemporary culture.

Zhang's work embarks from a respect for individual instinct. It is this respect that so ardently couples his and Van Gogh's passion for painting together. At the same time, this respect exists in accordance with the search for the meaning of life, where Zhang understands life to be the blaze of passion. This process went on until roughly 1993, when Zhang discovered, in a more diversified cultural setting, the value of the self. There on out, Zhang's painting began to ascertain the position of the self in culture. His individual experience, understanding, memory and imagination came to embody an instinctual release of the emotions. The difference from before was that this release possessed its own logic and direction, both of which later would, in each step of the artist's development, be gradually ever more reflected. From the series "Big Family" and "Amnesia and Memory" to "In-Out" and "Green Wall," we can detect a process through which the culture of his self is consciously released and thus defined. In his newest work, we continue to feel the natural extension and development of his creation, though now he has placed greater emphasis on position, and perspective. This does not only apply to this exhibition. It is also a clarification of that position and perspective in his earlier work.

16:9 is at present the prevalent screen format used in film, television and on computers, commonly referred to as "widescreen."

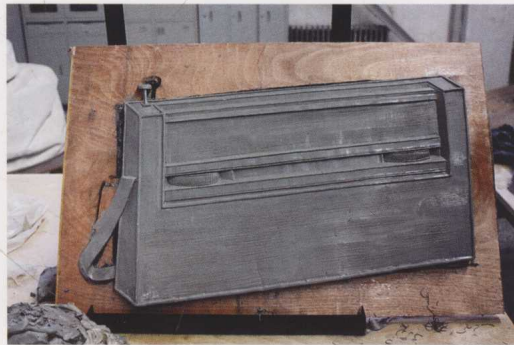
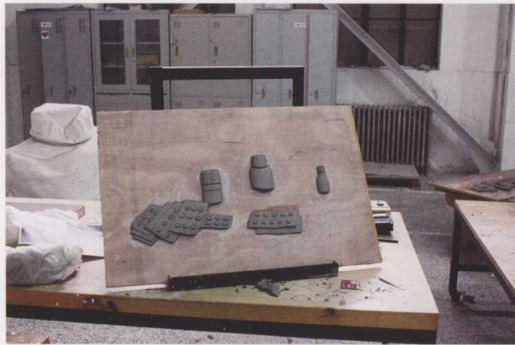
16:9 is the visual perspective and position from which we view our world, and we are ever more dependent on its dimensions in our perception of things. Zhang Xiaogang has symbolically clarified memory, reality and experience from this vantage point.

Ours is a world of screens that has already become the medium through which we receive information and knowledge of the self. This world inherently possesses a fictitious character, one that history and memory themselves share. For a painter, painting is in and of itself to create fiction. Of course, Zhang Xiaogang has no interest in creating fiction; he simply can't avoid the fictitious world revolving around him. Constantly weaving and forming a personal relationship with Zhang, this world contains enough space for him to make full use of his expressive and imaginative abilities. In this "16:9" exhibition, there are works from Zhang's "Train Window" series. During the artist's early learning and maturation period, trains (and riding in them) played an extremely important role, carrying Zhang to a world inside himself, a world that contained all the knowledge he would gain, opportunities he would have and friends he would make, a world he would come to perceive with his

body. This world contained romantic longing (a young boy who played the violin), patterns of idealism (red plum blossom and green pine), as well as all the schools and countryside that reshaped every individual's experience and education. With his use of line and even application of paint, Zhang attempts to re-experience, or at least to leave traces again on his experience, traces replete with all the tenderness of a caress. His use of color makes it seem as if a thin layer of sand were covering the entirety of the canvas, and the imagery of line conveys what seem to be the stains of tears that couldn't bear to leave, searching for a lost connection. The "Heaven" series depicts a series of imagined relationships that are often inappropriate, and an impulse to re-define what those relationships mean. The artist has always been immersed in his perception of all sorts of relations, as visible in all his different periods and series. For him, depiction is not only expression of form, but a method for illustrating these relations as well. What's interesting is that when art in the context of modern China was earliest taught to be used as a tool---and only a tool---for reflection, the artist as an individual had been ostracized. And that today, in accordance with the progress of the times, the artist as an individual has been given newfound respect, as a true practitioner of art, as someone who lives art; and that this "tool" has already thoroughly penetrated the development of all sorts of complex relations between the individual and society.

The 16: 9 aspect ratio is considered optimal for feature films and online gaming. Within this scale, then, what we have begun to experience is fictional life, fictional feelings. It works for the tear-jerking melodrama of TV dramas, and the thrill of online gaming. Our energy is suddenly expended on fictional feelings directed at mass audiences. What corresponds to the "real world" seems to no longer be part of the "historical world," instead part of the "fictional world." Real life is already being rebuilt under the constructs of fiction. Zhang Xiaogang is attempting to make contact with the truth through personal experience, and in depicting this process, he fictionalizes the relationship between memory and reality. Through this fiction, he releases himself; and history, memory and reality all become a component of this release.

As we in China live in a society that is developing at an unprecedented rate, our perception of reality and history may very well have nothing in common with that of any past era or of any other nation. The shape of history and reality changes with great speed, and because of this speed, history and reality appear to be overly buoyant. In the several works of this exhibition, we can see a life that is both fleeting and familiar. Zhang Xiaogang is trying to get a firm grip on that life, even if it is in a constant state of movement (the imagery of the train carriage and the medicine bottle). He must solidify a kind of hope, even if that hope only appears in the shadow of memory or history. Our era is like a train that constantly deserts the "now." As this train carries us whistling towards the future, the artist has chosen to remain in one particular moment, hoping to keep the visible



components of reality and history as part of his private memory. Remaining in that moment is a reaction against the fleeting nature of time, an individual's transcription of public memory.

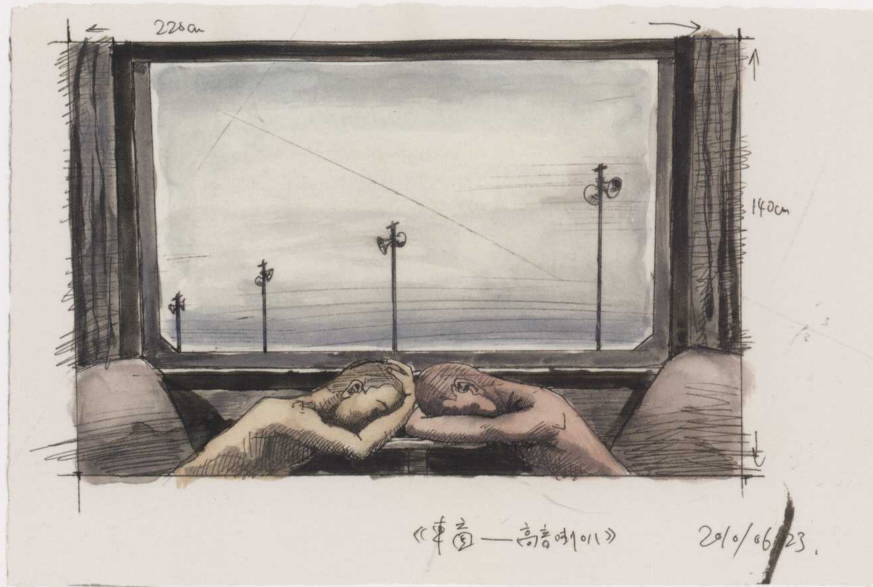
Zhang Xiaogang's continual exploration and creation fulfills a process through which we construct the necessary consciousness of the self and thus are able to develop. We need him to persevere, to carry out his practice.

16:9 is the modern way of watching and seeing things. Together with the artist, we are here to confront this.

Translator: Einar Engström







Train Window - Blackout

车窗——停电日

Oil on canvas / 140 × 220 cm / 2010

布上油画 / 140 × 220 cm / 2010



TE. 1917. 20/10/17.

