

Zhang Peili, Hangzhou, 1995. Photograph by Lois Conner.

张培力，杭州，1995年。康兰丝惠允。



Art and friendship, and a flying machine

Lois Conner

I met Zhang Peili in 1992, shortly after his exhibition with Geng Jianyi, *Recent Works: Art Show by Zhang Peili and Geng Jianyi since 1991*, at the Tayuan diplomatic residence compound in Beijing. My friend Francesco Dal Lago, who introduced us, was the curator. At the time, Peili was increasingly moving away from oil painting in favour of video art. The previous year he had made what would become one of his classic video works, *Document on Hygiene No. 3*, in which he films himself repeatedly washing a chicken, until it submits entirely.

From the summer of 1993, I started making an annual trip to Hangzhou. By then Peili and I had bonded over our work, becoming friends. When I visited, he invariably arranged accommodation for me. The first place I stayed was his studio, which was a friend's empty apartment. An unfinished painting of a saxophone graced the floor; buckets of paint dotted the room. I remember how he complained that he was frustrated and didn't want to finish the painting. His flying-machine works were made shortly after his saxophone works, possibly in the spring of 1994. They are part of his last group of paintings.

In the early years, whenever he had time, Peili would spend an afternoon photographing with me, sometimes with a book in hand, as he had soon become accustomed to my irregular rhythms when photographing. One afternoon, he

literally saved my life. I had set myself up on the roof of an old Hangzhou house to make a multi-panel work. The roof looked out over West Lake at Qu Yuan Fenghe. As I was walking the perimeter of the old wood-and-tile roof, in my excitement I lost my balance and stepped onto what I thought were solid white tiles. It was actually heavy paper emulating tiles, and before I knew it I was hanging upside down from the rafters in the restaurant below. Only my ankles had kept me from making a headlong dive. Peili adroitly pulled me back up before I completely fell through. It was scary, dangerous and comic—sort of like Peili's own artistic spirit. I didn't let anyone know I was hurt, and took this photograph (pp. iv–v) of Peili shortly after my fall. Once I had finished and went down the stairs to the street, I could hardly walk, so he took me to hospital.

Over time I proudly became part of what I think of as my Hangzhou family: Peili and his group of five artist friends whom he has known since childhood. Together we would explore Hangzhou, visiting their studios, looking at new work, sharing ideas and stories over Longjing (Dragon Well) green tea and delicious local cuisine, like *ba bao ya* ('eight-treasures duck').

Peili and his group of artists are friends that have inspired me, transforming my life in China and my work. They have questioned and encouraged, and teased me endlessly. Their conceptual approaches and work ethic are robust and unswerving. Many of them are nationally and internationally successful, yet they have chosen to stay at home in Hangzhou, one of China's long-lived cultural centres. No one in the group takes themselves too seriously. They are all committed artists and are powerfully supportive of one another.

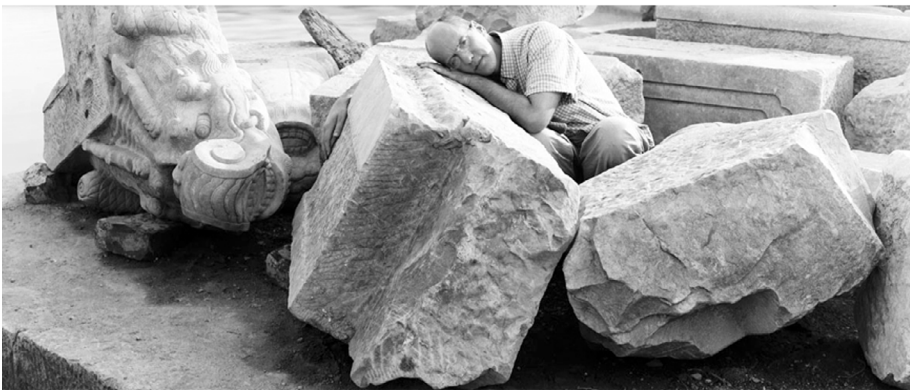
In 1996, Geremie R. Barmé (see image on the right) was a mystery guest at my house for dinner. I was forewarned not to ask him any questions testing his notoriously excellent scholarly Chinese—but I did anyway, thrusting a Taiwanese teacup bearing Buddhist sutras into his hand. He was gracious, and translated the humble lines with undeserved eloquence. And he never forgot my brashness.

That evening we discovered we had a mutual fascination with the imperial ruins at Yuanming Yuan, in Beijing, and we decided to meet up there in 1998 to begin a project together. Twenty years later, we are still dreaming up new ways to work together. Geremie has written introductions to nearly all my books and catalogues, even when the subject has had nothing to do with China.

That first year working with Geremie, I wasn't completely prepared for the Beijing winter, as I was planning to head to Hangzhou as soon as it got cold. On 24 November it snowed several feet overnight, and we were excited to return for a final day of work in the beautiful conditions. But after an hour my shoes were soaked, making trekking through the snow impossible. Geremie took me to have tea, rubbed my feet, gave me his second pair of socks—I only then noticed he was wearing two layers—and then we headed out again, with plastic bags between my new socks and my wet shoes. There are hundreds of instances of these acts of generosity that intersperse his serious and sardonic personality.

Working together is like being in a PhD course every day. As he glances at a detail in the landscape of a ruin, he casts his erudite and poetic eye across decades of learning to describe vignettes of history that make it visual. In Beijing he made the landscape appear to me as it was when the buildings and the grounds were a living, breathing palace.

I remember very clearly the day Geremie first described his vision for a centre for China studies within The Australian National University. Slowly, with a lot of work on every aspect of creation, from funding to the physical nature of the building, it became a reality. Beautifully designed, it became a vibrant, thriving intellectual community. In 2014, I donated *Flying Machine* (1994) to honour Geremie and his creation of the Australian Centre on China in the World, as well as to celebrate Zhang Peili, his art and our mutual friendship.



Geremie R. Barmé, Yuanming Yuan, Beijing, 2000. Photograph by Lois Conner.

白杰明，北京圆明园，2000年。康兰丝惠允。

艺术、友谊与飞行器

康兰丝

Lois Conner

我认识张培力是在1992年。当时，我的朋友弗兰（Francesca Dal Lago）在北京塔园外交公寓策划了“最近的工作：张培力和耿建翌1991年以来的艺术展”，并介绍我们认识。那时，培力开始逐渐远离绘画，专注录像艺术。1991年，他已创作了《（卫）字3号》这样的经典作品——在录像中，他反复清洗一只活鸡，直到小鸡完全驯服。

自1993年夏天起，我每年都会到访杭州。我与培力已经通过交流作品成为朋友，每次到杭州都由他来接待。我住过的第一个地方是他在朋友的闲置公寓里搭建的工作室。地上铺着一张未完成的萨克斯管油画，房间里到处是油彩桶。我还记得他抱怨着绘画令他感到沮丧，他甚至不想画完这张画。大约在1994年春天，他在《萨克斯管》系列之后完成了《飞行器》，这是他最后几张绘画作品之一，此后再未拾起画笔。

早年间，只要有空，培力常会和我一起在下半午出门拍照。有时候他也会带上一本书，因为很快他就习惯了我拍照时毫无规律节奏可言。

一个下午，培力甚至成了我的救命恩人。当时，我把相机架在西湖曲院风荷对面的一栋老房子屋顶上拍摄，我一时兴奋在走动中不觉一脚踏空。原来这是一种铺了瓦片的老式木质屋顶，我自以为踩到的白色瓦片实际是纸壳做的。我还来不及反应，就已经掉了下去，倒挂在楼下餐厅屋顶的椽木上，如果不是脚腕刚好挂住横梁，我就会头朝地直摔下去。在我完全着地之前，培力机敏的把我提了上去，整个场面惊险又滑稽。与培力的创作精神不谋而合的是，我没有告诉任何人我受伤的消息，还在摔跤后不久为他拍了这张照片（见图iv-v页）。拍完后，我顺着梯子爬下屋顶，到了街上才发现我走不了路，还是培力把我送到了医院。

渐渐的，我也成为了这个令我骄傲的杭州大家庭的一员，张培力和他相交多年的五位艺术家带着我逛杭州、喝龙井茶、吃八宝鸭、参观艺术家工作室、谈创作的同时天南地北的聊天。

培力和他的朋友们不仅给了我无尽的灵感，也改变了我的创作和我在中国的生活。他们向我发问，给我鼓励，也时常与我调侃。他们的观念创作和工作伦理茁壮而强韧，其中许多人都是全国乃至国际知名的艺术家，却仍然选择家乡杭州这个中国历史文化名城定居。这个群体里没有人太把自己当回事，每个人都是严肃的创作者，也是彼此坚实的后盾。

1996年，白杰明（Geremie R. Barmé）（图、19页）成为了我家晚餐会的神秘嘉宾。有人事先提醒过我，不要试图考验他人尽皆知的高超中文水平，但我还是忍不住塞给他一个印着佛经句子的台湾茶杯。他表现得从容大度，翻译之优美远胜原文，而我的无礼也令他印象深刻。

那个晚上，我和白杰明发现彼此对北京圆明园遗址有着浓厚的兴趣，决定1998年在圆明园合作一个项目。如今二十年过去了，我们仍然不断设想一起工作的新形式。他是我绝大部分摄影书和展览画册文章的作者，哪怕作品题材与中国无关。



Zhang Peili: From Painting to Video exhibition opening night, 26 August 2016: From left, Serina Bird (Australia-China Council), Olivier Krischer (ANU), Kim Machan (MAAP-Media Art Asia Pacific), Zhang Peili, Lois Conner, Richard Baker (ANU), Stephanie Fahey (Australia-China Council).

2016年8月26日，“张培力：从绘画到录像”展览开幕典礼。左起：Serina Bird（澳中理事会），柯惟（澳大利亚国立大学），金曼（亚太媒体艺术），张培力，康兰丝，Richard Baker（澳大利亚国立大学），Stephanie Fahey（澳中理事会）。

与白杰明一起工作的第一年，我原计划天气转冷就回杭州，因此没有做好应对北京冬天的准备。11月24日那天，地上连夜积起了几英尺厚的大雪，我们心情激动，准备在这样的美景中开始最后一天的拍摄。然而我的鞋在短短一小时内就湿透了，无法继续在雪地里走路。白杰明带我去喝了热茶，帮我按摩脚部，还把他带的袜子给了我。我这才发现他竟然带了一双多余的袜子。再出门时，我的新袜子和湿鞋之间套了一层塑料袋。在他严肃善谏的性格背后，总有着无数令人温暖的慷慨举动。

和白杰明工作的每一天都像在上博士导课。他以博学而富有诗意的目光审视废墟的每一个细节，将几十年的学识浓缩为一个个可以视觉化的历史片段。北京城的建筑和景观仿佛一座座鲜活而有生命的宫殿，在他的描述中向我敞开。

我始终记得，白杰明第一次向我提起他在澳大利亚国立大学创办一个中国研究中心的设想。经过各方规划、资金筹备到实地建设的多年运作之后，这个构思终于付诸现实，这栋美丽的建筑也成为了富有活力的知识摇篮。2014年，我捐出收藏多年的画作《飞行器》，向白杰明和他创办的中华全球研究中心致敬，也为了张培力，他的艺术和我们共同的友谊。

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