

ME PARTY

I have been searching for an adequate word to describe how I was touched by Lin Zhipeng's photos, which vividly reveal the milieu of the present young generation; which is characterized with a kind of imaginary and whimsical self-entertainment. After the mid-90s, Zheng Guogu and Yang Yong, from Guangdong, became popular for their photos about the life of youth in cities. The playfulness, humor, and sweeping "mass selection" of the life scenes found in Zheng Guogu's photos, together with the detachment and ennui in Yang Yong's photos, are replaced by a detailed nullification of distance, even somewhat intimate, and the sense of intoxicated emotional involvement in Lin Zhipeng's photos.

He thinks that the camera ought not to document from any perspective other than the vantage point of the bearer; in other words, his own viewpoint takes precedence. He treats the camera as one of his dearest siblings, or as an extension of his own body, that experiences both the happiness and woe of quotidian life. The camera, to Lin Zhipeng, is also akin to the relationship between a doll and a child, for he is "playing house" with his camera, in a light but not playful mood, with a sentimental yet not saccharine tone. As he once said, "the fabricated sweet sensation, the stubbornness and desperation particular to adolescents, and the ambiguous but simultaneously definitive nature of youth and sex are all my favorite topics." The feeling that is generated, in particular, not only grants the viewer the agency to "see", but also permits him to witness and to participate in the scene.

This is what is unique about his perspective and photographic language. Therefore, no specificity exists, and any scene in any place and at any moment may become his theme. There is a kind of focus in the ostensible oblivion of moments, such as part of a leg and a foot in stocking in a high-heel, protruding hips and a miniskirt reminding us of the tail of a turkey, a T-shirt, while being pulled on, covering the head, and the profile of the tail of a toy chicken... Either driven by fashion or beauty, interest or "the ambiguous but simultaneously definitive nature youth and sex", Lin Zhipeng focuses on this part of life, which, is regarded as intimate and private, distinguishes his photos from those web ones and turn them into works of art.

These photos, either of casual capturing of episodes of quotidian life or of poses, call forth an "unconventional" sense that is different from the everyday life routine— the profile of the tail of a toy chicken, the bowing girl with stomach leaning against the wall, the girl lipsticking in the bathtub with wide open eyes, the boy in the bathtub with a banana in mouth, and the girl vomiting milk, two hands clothed in sperm. Such sense of the unconventional or even uncanny everyday life is particular to this generation or this group of generation, a kind of sense of

imaginary existential beauty. I thus got a word, “party”, “our party”, for the exhibition, but Meng Danfeng, publicist of the exhibition, suggested that I change it into “me party”, saying that in *New York Times*, “me generation” is used to refer to the generation born after 1980s. To combine “me” with “generation” is a good choice, for it is short and ungrammatical, like web language. Moreover, in their lives there is a certain feeling similar to that one can experience online, a state of “party”, different from everyday life. They play houses in their everyday lives, building on their own a stage-like private secret and virtual vacuum with neither the bond of traditional moral standard and customs, nor high-spirited social atmosphere, in which their love, sex, sorrow and happiness are streaming unrestrained through their self-directed and self-performed play of life for self-entertainment.

This is a state of life characterized with consumption, in which they consume both fashion and themselves. We can find not only imported clothes of well-known brands and French fries, but also naval rings, tongue rings, tattoos, nails varnished red and faces, heavily made—up, and bright colors as well. All, with the setting of simple life situations, become fresh, shallow and sensational. He considers it “primary beauty”, which he hopes to seize as much as possible. This highlighted sense of existential beauty of consuming and being consumed, detached from traditional culture and social common value, is both personal and international— —like the web, which is both exhilarating and horrifying.

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