

She came to Yunnan from Sweden after making bucket list

她写下遗愿清单，从瑞典来到云南

By Zhang Rui and Wang Dan Photographs by the sponsor



“艺术家的角色与规则”艺术展于2016年8月在瑞典斯德哥尔摩 Studio44 画廊正式启动，今年9月9日，中国·瑞典当代艺术交流展在昆明 TCG 诺地卡文化中心进行，来自中国和瑞典的八位艺术家分别带来了不同形式的艺术文化交流活动。

其中，策展人之一瑞典艺术家 Madeleine 自2008年首次来到昆明后，就爱上了云南的“慢生活”。这几年，她带领一批批瑞典艺术家和学生来云南采风、办展。在一场场艺术展中，诉说着她的云南情缘。

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In August 2016, art exhibition of “Artists Roles/Artists Rules” was officially launched in Studio 44, Stockholm, Sweden. On September 9 of this year, Exchange Exhibition of Contemporary Art was held in TCG Nordica Cultural Center, Kunming, Yunnan Province. Eight artists from China and Sweden have brought different forms of artistic works to boost art and culture exchanges for the event.

Among them, Madeleine, an artist from Sweden and one of the curators of the exhibition has led groups of Swedish artists and art students to Yunnan collecting folk customs in recent years. Madeleine first came to Kunming for the first time in 2008, and fell in love with “the slow pace of life” of Yunnan as soon as she arrived. Her attachment to Yunnan is revealed in different art exhibitions.

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New and old friends of Yunnan

云南的新老朋友

The pursuit of art is never stopped. With the subject of "Artists Roles/Artists Rules", in September 2017, China—Sweden Exchange Exhibition of Contemporary Art (Kunming stop) was held in TCG Nordica Cultural Center, Kunming. Four Swedish artists, Jannike Brantås, Madeleine Aleman, Ylva Landoff Lindberg (three females) and Rikard Fåhraeus (male) and four Chinese artists—Luo Fei, Xue Tao, Zi Bai (three males) together with a female artist—Lei Yan (male) have participated in the exhibition.

Luo Fei and Madeleine, the two curators of the exhibition met in Kunming in 2009, and the acquaintance was the foreshadowing of the aforesaid events. "I was at the low of my life in 2008 and felt helpless and had written a bucket list. There were only two wishes on it—visiting a place I'd never been to and making art the only thing to do for my next life. To make the wishes concrete I did some online research, and I came across a picture of terraced fields of Yuanyang County in Yunnan. I was so awed by its magnificent scene that I knew Yunnan was my next destination," Madeleine

said.

Following the information of the photograph provider, Madeleine contacted Kunming TCG Nordica Cultural Center and Luo Fei and she finally came to Yunnan. Madeleine stayed in Yunnan for four months and learned to slow down the pace of life in Kunming and enjoy things around her. "It was the most wonderful time of my life. I decided to visit Yunnan again after going back to Sweden," said Madeleine expressed.

It was Madeleine's fifth visit to Yunnan. Since 2008, She has led 13 Swedish groups of 18-year-old art students to Kunming Nordica Cultural Center for a month-long study. The project has been continuing for three years and the total time Madeleine has spent in Kunming is more than eight months.

Luo Fei and Madeleine had continuous communications in 2010, and eventually decided to do something that artists from both countries could participate together, but both of them had no clue as to where to start. In



2012, Madeleine joined Studio 44 of Stockholm and became one of the main organizers. "We hence had platforms and participants in both China and Sweden. She chose artists from Sweden and I select artists from this side and we planned to hold an art exhibition," Luo Fei recalled. The trip to Yunnan was their first visit to China for these Swedish artists except Madeleine. Yunnan is new to them, what struck Rikard and Jannike the most was the friendliness and warmth of the local people. "In Sweden, people's privacy is valued much higher, and maintain an interpersonal distance between each other, so much so that some degree of indifference is felt. The people here are quite different. They look at us out of curiosity on streets. Strangers show friendliness to us and we can feel the vitality of the place," Jannike said. "Adventure" and "new stuff" are inspiration sources of her artistic creation.

Communication beyond languages

国际微信达人



"Artists Roles/Artists Rules' is a socialized subject, and the word 'socialized' refers to discussions on how artists interact with society," Luo Fei said. Language barrier appeared to be the biggest communication obstacle between the artists of the two countries. But the problem didn't stand in their way. "A few months earlier, Luo Fei showed us how to use WeChat and I'm really good at it now! She also set up a forum for Swedish and Chinese artists on WeChat and everyone of us send a video each day. It is the way for us to have artistic exchange and we have been doing it for three months," Madeleine smiled.

Videos shot by artists of both countries were rich in content, some were scenes of life at home, some were work scenes at gallery, performance art on streets were also included, all of which were combined as a collective work exhibited in the gallery. Among those images, artist Xue Tao spit newspapers from his mouth, a clip of Madeleine's life shows her murmuring a dream talk to herself. The video is played repeatedly on screen. Jannike told

us that the purpose of exchanging videos was not to search for answers to something, but to communicate in resonance, and rationalize the irrational. Moreover, it allows for free imagination and creativeness within a unique framework.

To Rikard, the more unconventional an art creation is, the more valuable it becomes. "Artist Xue Tao likes to use newspapers as the tool props for shooting a video. I'd follow his suit in response to him. We found ways of communication that transcend linguistics."

"The video clips are sometimes fragmented to some extent, but some videos carry narratives," Luo Fei added. "Artists hope to find similarities in life scenes. For example, if an artist shoot a rotating frame, other artists would also intend to obtain the same rotating scenes. The results may reflect different attitudes and conditions, but all are aimed at portraying the similar objects through artistic forms."



China-Sweden artistic exchange

中瑞艺术交流

The project has been launched at Studio 44 gallery of Stockholm in August 2016 and is being extended in Kunming. "The independent creations of each artist are based on his or her principles and points of view, and are also the imaginations of their ideal world. Roles and Rules of Artists is an exhibition about artists' missions, responsibilities and their social postures. Such postures are sometimes passively given, and sometimes defined by themselves," explained Luo Fei. The goal of the project is to meet the desire of artists of China and Sweden to explore and discuss the similarities and differences among artists under various circumstances.

Hosting the China-Sweden Exchange Exhibition of Contemporary Art in Kunming is the decision of Luo Fei. "After all, the vast majority of artists are not in the art centers of the world. Most of the participating Chinese artists had experiences of exhibiting in Europe. Although we've been roaming around arts centers, we still choose to return to our birthplaces, and to bring in and out international exchanges, views and ideas is a way to enliven a region."

On September 9, the day of opening ceremony, Madeleine stood standing in the center of the exhibition hall, blindfolded and her ears covered. She faced four direc-

tions of north, south, east and west in turn, perceiving energies around her and transformed these energies into sound and released them. *Net Series* of charcoal painting is the work of Madeleine exhibited on the other side of the hall. Paintings on display were a part of "Axis of the Universe" series.

Madeleine keeps trying to integrate her life experience and psychology, subject of her life-long interest, and spirituality into her art works, transcending logic thinking and daily life through hypnotism and meditation, to enter another realm, subconsciously sketching with a charcoal pencil on notepad. Each sketch presents a meditation of a stated behavior. "I've been studying psychology and spirituality for about 40 years, and will rid myself of all external objective factors. My paintings are the results of my meditations". Luo Fei perceived her works as dialogues between her dreams and herself.

Jannike Brantås, a Swedish artist also presented an on-site performance. She wore a robe and a hat in yellow and stood on two brushes. While she was holding a bowl of ink in her hands, two assistants raised a blank long scroll in the air. She then tried hard to draw a straight line with a painting brush in her mouth. The ink dripped down from the



line leaving strips of ink marks. The performance art was called *seismograph*.

Artistic practice of Jannike include expressions of different forms, it currently concentrate mainly on behaviors and devices of different forms. Her works focus on probing the realm of life, her devices are made of simple and reusable materials, and her themes relate to language, space, movements and structures. "I seek to explore the poetic realms, which manifest the innermost experience of mankind." Her exhibit work, *Still Alive*, consists of a table, a piece of black cloth and a few mirrors. The table stands for the artist, the black cloth under the table on the ground represents the environment surrounding the artist, while the mirrors scattered on the black cloth are reflections of such surroundings.

Rikard, another young artist from Sweden arrived in Kunming two weeks before the exhibition in preparation for his work—a picture composed by copies of 200 Chinese paper currencies, Background pattern in the center of the work is the image of Kunming Lake with his own portrait on it. Color of Pu'er tea is selected as the color of these paper banknotes and seals of different eras were printed on each currency. It is an artistic elucidation of local elements of Yunnan by

Rikard.

Other watercolor works of Rikard are self-portraits of himself. He is shirtless in the paintings and is spitting in his hands. Rikard told us that: "Protest sometimes is a way to express potential needs and result in the consequences like spitting on somebody. Art is a continuous work, artist should spit in hands, roll up sleeves to work hard and never give up. Watercolor paintings are the main way of my working, though I never exhibited it, I learnt how to paint when I was a kid since it is regarded as a lower art form that was spurned. I feel frightened for the displayed series of watercolor at present, but finally, I still did so because it is also fraught with dangers in water. it is an adventure."

After the exhibition, the artists from both countries are heading to Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture for traveling and interview purposes. Besides appreciating sceneries and delicacies, Rikard is also looking forward to encountering elephants.