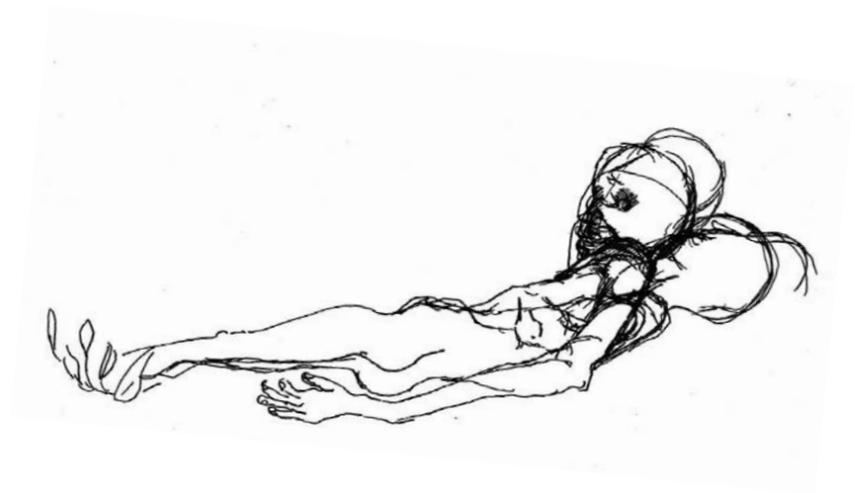


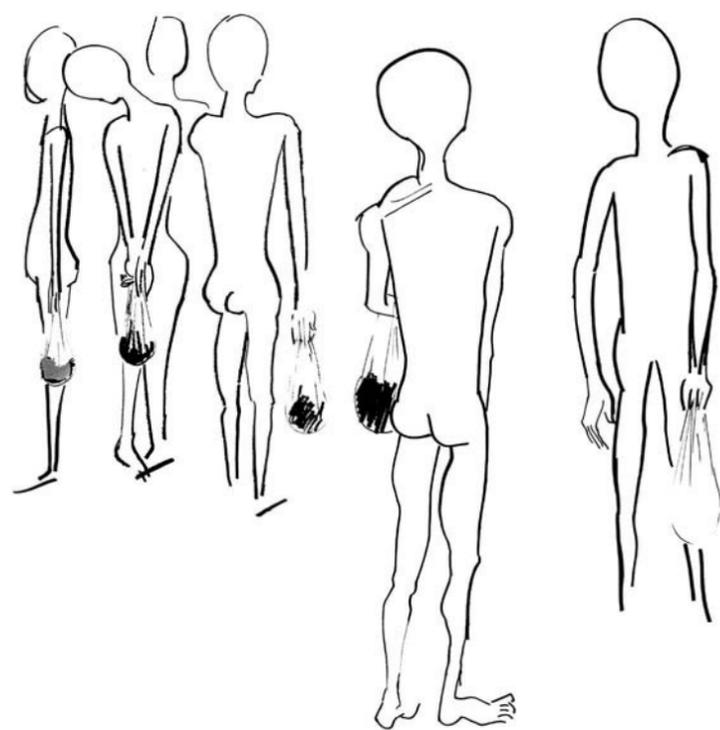
Zhou Tao

**THE
MAN
WHO
EATS
PIGEONS**

Kadist Art Foundation
Paris









After Reality, video still, 2013
现实之后，录像截图

Zhou Tao: Time on Earth
Jean-Michel Frodon

One of Zhou Tao's works is titled *Time in New York*. We see him moving about in his small apartment, with a large ball of string fixed to his belt, and the string thus giving material form to each one of his movements in his home. Little by little a network is woven, increasingly serried and complex, within which he evolves with a peaceful and careful elegance. The system of *Time in New York* might act as software for all the works filmed by Zhou Tao, providing not the key, but a formalization of the active principle. In fact, each one of his works, though in a less explicit manner, tends to apply the effects of a materialization of time. In an anonymous street in a Chinese city, in the middle of a luxuriant forest, along a watercourse, on the boundary between urban zone and wild nature, and on the confines of activities which seem to stem from farm work and craftwork, sport, and games, a string of sequences is in each instance developed, each one focused on a theme, which is often a hypothesis of a narrative in the offing (which will not come to pass) and invariably a particular sensory experience.

One of the most significant and meaningful aspects of what Zhou Tao does relates with the high visual quality of his images. Without any artificial aesthetic effects, the elegance of the frames and the way of accompanying the movements, and the intensity of the presence of human beings, plants, lights and different forms of matter turn out to be a resource involving an intelligence of the world and its shaping by the use of video. With him, beauty is a work tool for casting different eyes on situations, some of which lay claim to their artifice (short dance movements on a sidewalk, electrical apparatus diverted from its purpose in the public thoroughfare, occupation of a bunker invaded and abandoned by the tide), some of which seem captured by chance during a walk or a meeting.

How are we to define this oeuvre? The first formula which springs to mind is that of farcical documentary. Not necessarily comical (even if this is often what it is), but farcical. In the sense of the spirit of logical rupture and physical deregulation which presided over this particular moment in the history of film, synchronous with when the United States toppled over into a modernity with which what China is experiencing in the early 21st century bears some resemblance. And documentary, because the dimension of recording reality, a recording that is composed and given form, is central in this praxis.

But the more you look at his work, the more it appears that the reference to cinema is probably not the most appropriate one—even when the materialization of time seems almost to be a definition of cinema. Zhou Tao's works actually function on the basis of another, much more unusual principle. The eye which chooses and gives form to the images is less a filmmaker's eye than a photographer's. But a very special photographer, a photographer who isolates, like a "decisive moment" to use Cartier-Bresson's words, not a 250th of a second, but a minute or two.

Zhou Tao's art is thus like an answer, or rather, let us say, a counterpoint to that of Robert Frank, to the crisis of the special moment implemented, precisely under the influence of film, by a whole school of photographers—who did not realize they were becoming Bergsonian.

It is possible to see *Mutual Exercise*, *Power Here*, *Collector*, *South Stone* and *After Reality* as the practical outcome of a photographic eye, of a vision of singularity rich in meaning and of the mystery of an instant, but an instant in three dimensions (two spatial and one temporal), and not merely the two spatial dimensions which define photography. This is very different from what film does, like, incidentally, it is also different from almost all the varieties of practices which we encompass under the term video art, and which are not based on the concept of instant. As far as the photos also presented by Zhou Tao are concerned, they have the strangeness of appearing like a clue, a fragmentary trace of what he develops in his videos—it being understood that the said photos can no longer be looked at in the same way, once one has looked at his moving images.

This very specific way of going about things turns out to be enhanced by a novel possibility of *going to see* the world. Not only looking at it by sampling moments that are already there, available elements which it would "suffice" to be able to isolate, nor, needless to say, using it in order to incorporate therein one's own artefacts, but building a path, or, better still, an approach. In the filmed work of Zhou Tao, there is a dynamic, which runs on the blend of artifice and capacity to use already existing currents (movements of nature, people and machines, colour relations, light changes...).

Equidistant from inspired observation and creative gesture, this posture turns into a dynamic when it encounters a thoroughly real world, but one which it becomes possible to see differently.

This movement towards the world is also—and this is what creates the melancholy that emanates from his images—a feeling of a movement which, if it does "go towards", also agrees to traverse, and leave it behind. At this point, we must return to the ball of string in *Time in New York*. The materialization of what has been created, what has been made, what has been experienced, engenders an ever denser tangle. Since it does not erase itself as it goes along, but becomes a confusion, and in the end a prison, a spider's web in which the very thing that has given rise to it through its movements, which are its very life, is suffocated and paralysed. On the other hand, the other videos retain the *limited* trace, a circumscribed one, destined to the disappearance of a gesture, of a journey, of an encounter, of a shared moment, of a situation in the broadest sense. The brevity and, above all, the finiteness of the time-frames "photographed" by Zhou Tao are thus as decisive as what comes to pass in the duration of a shot, and what is suggested as a possible imaginary association, as an environment, and fictional development.

Translated by Simon Pleasance
& Fronza Woods

Jean-Michel Frodon is Associate Professor at the Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po) in Paris and Visiting Professor at the University of St. Andrews (Scotland) as well as a

journalist and a film critic. He is the author of numerous books; he has worked at *Le Monde* and has been the editor in chief of *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Jean-Michel Frodon currently writes for *Slate* (www.slate.fr), he is also Editor-in-Chief of the collaborative website www.artsciencefactory.fr.

I am not a “Dangling Man”. I have plans and schedules to follow. I know when to go to a wedding, when to attend a funeral. My job is one that everyone knows about, it is nothing special. It requires me to work hard and be responsible, just like any other kind of occupation. My job keeps me rooted in reality. It always makes me consider “what reality is”. It gives me a feeling of security.

On a gloomy and windy afternoon, I left the office for a funeral held in a cemetery in the distant countryside. It was the funeral of a friend who had died young. I got on the Metro, which was not crowded and became less so as it travelled further away from the city center—the destination was a place that people didn’t particularly like to visit.

A young man in glasses came aboard at the second or third station before the end of the line. He walked easily, carrying a strangely shaped box. The train was nearly empty at this point, but he sat down right next to me. He smiled at me, as if we already knew each other, then opened his box and took out a concertina.

It was only later that I found out that the concertina was actually a bandoneón. And it was only after I had heard its sound, that I believed his words: “listen to it once and you will never forget it.”

He told me he was invited to play a song at his friend’s funeral. It was his own song, called ‘The Song of Wind’, which was a favorite of his late friend. He started to play in the train. Winter was just arriving in our sub-tropical city, but I suddenly had a feeling that our bodies were still warm, as warm as a honey midsummer’s night. A sweet wind was blowing over a field in the countryside. Many people were on the pier, waiting for the waves to bring them mangos, sea grass and messages of fate. The abnormally warm weather slowed everything down and created a special rhythm of life.

When he had finished, he carefully put the bandoneón back into its box then turned to me, quite unexpectedly, and asked: “Can you believe that our encounter is real? ”

I experienced a certain moment. I found the same experience in Zhou Tao’s videos *Collector* or *After Reality*. The videos offer something far more complicated than what I had experienced in reality, yet I can only use myself as a medium through which to describe these works. In this time-space that is not “either-or” but “both-and”, it allows us to create and enter with our own ways. In the “moments” that we have, time is never cut. Therefore, my experience may just set the “depth of field” for viewing Zhou’s videos. When “we” long to surpass the limited time of our existence, our experiences will start to interact with this world.

We are travelling, not through images, but within a “volume of time”. It is only when the threads hidden within time link with our perceptions, at “that moment”, that existence can be revealed. This is why Zhou Tao does not perform (when you perform, you will be blocked by your own performance), but rather he moves. He moves, seemingly unaware of his own movements, as one “does not enter into communication with the outside world except unawares.”¹ He does so in order to throw himself

to this vast field of the world, to follow the footsteps of fate, to wait, to urge for the “revealing” of an invisible existence. But to reveal is not the goal. To reveal, but what for? If revealing equals to intervening and distorting the “shelter” where “existence” hides, all it will reflect will merely be our own confusion and desire. After all, since existence is invisible and silent, humans have to step forwards, transforming their own selves as the media with which to test its depth. Perhaps it is this “moment of unawares” that makes the elegance of human action possible.

But back to that afternoon: I saw a new pond when I came out of the Metro station. The leaves reflected the last bright rays of the setting sun. And far away, the river was flowing quietly as if making a silent statement: to this piece of land, we are all accidental intruders, strangers in exile. The way to return may be difficult at first to locate, but we can probably capture it, unexpectedly, in the ambiguous and carefree life of the plants here.

Translated from Chinese by
Anthony Yung

Hu Fang is a fiction writer and curator based in Guangzhou and Beijing. He is the co-founder and artistic director of *Vitamin Creative Space* (www.vitamincreativespace.com) in Guangzhou and *The Pavilion* in Beijing. His latest novel in English

version is *Garden of Mirrored Flowers* (co-published by Sternberg Press and Vitamin).

Notes

1. Robert Bresson, *Notes on Cinematography*, translated by Jonathan Griffin, Urizen Books, New York, p. 51.

周滔：地球时光
让-米榭·付东 著
陳潔曜 翻译

周滔作品之一《纽约时光》。我们看到他在自己的小公寓中来回活动，皮带上系着一团白绳，白绳物化了他在家中各个位置移动的轨迹。绳索渐渐交织成一个网络，越来越紧密和复杂，周滔就在这个网络中移动，平静优雅而细致。若从原初动机来看，《纽约时光》可尝试当作打开周滔所有影像作品的一个启动程序，而不只是提供一个观赏线索。他的每次创作都倾向于尝试把时间物质化，但手法不一定如此直接。在中国城镇的不知名街道、在繁茂的林子中、在流水边、在城市和原野的交界、在农人或工匠的劳作中、在运动中、在游戏中，一次次展开一连串的段落，而每个片段都紧扣一个主题，看似是对于即将出现的叙事的假设（但故事终不会发生），更多则是来自独特的感知体验。

周滔的创作中最重要和最耐人寻味的一点，在于其影像的视觉品质。不使用刻意的美化技巧，而在于摄影机取景与跟随动态画面的方式，人物、植物、光线和物质汇集的密度，透出对世界以及影像塑造随之打开的智慧显现。在他这里，美是以不同的视角来面对各种情境的创作工具，一些情景是有意为之（在人行道上做简单的舞蹈动作，把家用电器挪用到公共通道，占据一个小碉堡任由潮起潮落侵蚀），另一些则是某次散步或巧遇的偶然捕捉。

如何定义这类作品？让人想到的第一个参考是滑稽喜剧-纪录片。不一定是喜剧性的（虽然常常如此），但是荒诞，因为逻辑错乱的精神和不协调的身体也曾主导了电影史上一个特殊时期，即美国社会受现代化影响发生蜕变的年代，这与二十一世纪之初的中国正在经历的现实有着相似之处。而它的纪录片层面，包括对真实的记录、对录像的编排、对形象的塑造，则属于核心的位置。

而我们越观看他的作品，越肯定电影理论并不能作为最合适的参考，尽管时间物质化也算是来自电影领域的定义。周滔的创作事实上在遵循另一条更为独特的原则。选择影像并使之成形的眼睛，与其说是电影导演的眼睛，不如说是摄影师的眼睛。然而，这是一位特别的摄影师，他能抽离出像卡迪尔·布列松（Cartier-Bresson）提到的“决定性瞬间”，但这一瞬不是1/250秒，而是一或两分钟。

周滔的艺术可能是对摄影危机的一个回答，可以说对立于摄影师罗勃·法兰克（Robert Frank），回应了电影艺术影响下出现的拍摄“关键时刻（moment privilégié）”的危机——连摄影师们也没有意识到自己向柏格森派哲学思想（bergsonien）的转变。《互助练习》（Mutual Exercice）、《这里有电》（Power Here）、《寻找地热》（Collector）、《南石头》（South Stone）或者《现实之后》（After Reality），都可以看作是对摄影眼光的运用，对一个丰富而神秘的独特瞬间的视觉运用。这个瞬间拥有三个维度（两个空间，一个时间），

而不仅仅是定义照片的两个空间维度。这与电影所做的非常不同，也与大部分各种归类于录像艺术形式的实践不同，和不以瞬间时刻为概念基础的艺术不同。至于周滔呈现的摄影作品，它们具有像是线索的奇异性，像是在他录像作品展开过程中的片刻痕迹——显然一旦我们看过他镜头下的动态影像，就不会再以之前的眼光欣赏他的照片。

这种非常独特的作法揭示了一种崭新而丰富的可能性“去看”世界。不只是通过抽取出现有的时刻、一些只需懂得提炼便取之可用的元素，来凝视这个世界，也不是利用它来安插人们自己的造物，而是在这里创建一条道路，甚至更好，一个方法。周滔拍摄的作品中有一种活力，是巧妙的编排和使用现有日常事物（自然的运动、人与机器、色彩关系、光线变化...）的能力交汇在一起的产物。观察者的灵光和创造者的姿态两者占同等位置，这个态度在与真实世界的交锋中转化为一种动力，也提供了看世界的另一种可能性。

这走向世界的动作，也表达出一种必须穿越眼前世界的同时并将之抛却于身后的情感，这形成了如同在周滔的影像中所显现出的忧愁。再回到《纽约时光》中的白绳。存在过、完成过和经历过的都被物质化，形成了一团越来越错综紧密的线体。如果不逐步清除这些痕迹，它将成为障碍，最后成为牢笼，一个由创作者本身的日常运动形成的让人瘫痪、窒息的蜘蛛网。相反的，其他的录像保持有限的痕迹，确保让一个个姿态、路程、相遇、分享和其他各种状态消失。周滔这种短暂性的、即时完成的摄影时刻，与取景时间的真实时刻，以及暗示的环境、虚构故事的想象和发展，都具有非凡的决定性意义。

作者简介
让-米榭·付东为巴黎政治大学 (Sciences Po) 副教授，苏格兰圣安德鲁大学 (l'Université de St Andrews) 的访问教授；身为电影记者和影评人，撰有多本著作，曾为法国《世界报》影评、

《电影手册》主编，现为网站 slate.fr (www.slate.fr) 的撰稿人、网站 artsciencefactory.fr (www.artsciencefactory.fr) 之主编。

我不是一个“晃来晃去的人”(dangling man)。我的生活有计划，包括何时去参加婚礼和葬礼。我的职业是所有人应该熟悉的那种职业，它并不特别，但像所有的职业那样要求着我的忙碌和责任，它让我生活在现实中，并不断地让我经验“什么是现实”，以至于让人心里踏实。

一个天色阴沉、刮风的午后，我从公司赶往偏远的郊区墓园，去参加一个英年早逝的朋友的葬礼。地铁并不拥挤，越到后来，人越来越少——人们并不愿意去往那个地方。在差不多就到最后两三站的时候，上来一个戴眼镜的年轻人，他拎着一个形状奇特的盒子，不紧不慢地走来，车厢几乎空无一人，他却偏偏坐在了我的身边。

他对我微笑，似乎我们似曾相识，然后打开盒子，取出来一架手风琴。

我后来才知道，那架所谓的“手风琴”实际上是班东尼琴(Bandoneon)。直到听了班东尼琴所发出的特有的音色，我才理解了他所说的：“只要听一次她的声音，你就再也离不开她。”

他说他受邀请去为一个朋友的葬礼演奏他所创作的《风之曲》，这是朋友生前最爱听的一首曲子。他开始在车厢里演奏。这个亚热带的城市即将进入冬季，我突然感到我们的体温好像停还留在甜蜜的仲夏之夜。郊区种植草皮的田地上空，吹拂着的风是甜的，大量的人们在渡口等待漂流过来的芒果、水草和命运的消息。温暖、反常的天气，令这儿的一切变得迟缓，产生出一种特有的生命节奏。

他小心翼翼地将班东尼琴放回盒子里，突然回过头来问：“你相信我们的相遇是真的吗？”

我经历了某个时刻，后来又在周滔的影像《寻找地热(Collector)》或《现实之后(After Reality)》中经历过，它们远比我所经历的现实复杂，以至于我不得以自身为媒介去印证它的存在。在“亦此亦彼”而非“非此即彼”的时空，如果你感受到了，这就不再是虚构。每个人经历的“时刻”中，时间并不会断流，由此，我的经历也可能成为观看周滔影像的“景深”，在“我们”渴求超出自身有限的存在那一刻，我们的经历开始与这个世界相互作用。

与其说穿行于影像，还不如说我们共同穿行在“时间的体积”中，当时间中那些隐藏的线索与自己内心的交互的时候，存在才有可能在“那刻”显形，这就是周滔不采取表演（当你表演时，你被表演遮挡了视线），而只用动作——看似不经意的动作似乎是“在不知情时方能进入与外界的交流”，¹从而将自身抛置于世界的田野之中，跟从命运的足迹，等候、促使隐秘的存在“显影”。而显影也并非目的，显影又如何？如果显影只是干扰和扭曲了“存在”潜身的“容身之所”，

那么，它将映衬出我们的慌乱和欲求。说到底，存在隐形，而人类不得不挺身而出，以自身为媒介测试存在的水深，也许，正是这份“不知情时”保证了人类的行为还有可能是优雅的。

回到那天下午，我出站后，看到一个新挖的水潭，即将坠落的太阳让树叶发出最后耀眼的光芒，而远处，河流在静静流逝，似乎在无声地证实：对于这片土地，我们都是意外的闯入者，流放的陌生人。我们很有可能在遍寻不得的情况之中，无意之间找到回返之路，如果我们能领会此地植物的暧昧和自在。



After Reality, video still, 2013
现实之后，录像截图

胡昉，作家、策展人，生活在广州和北京。他所参与的当代艺术空间实践反映在维他命空间(www.vitamincreative.space.com)和观心亭的一系列项目之中。与之平行的是他的小说写作，他最新出版的小说有《苦恼人的微笑》，《镜花园》等

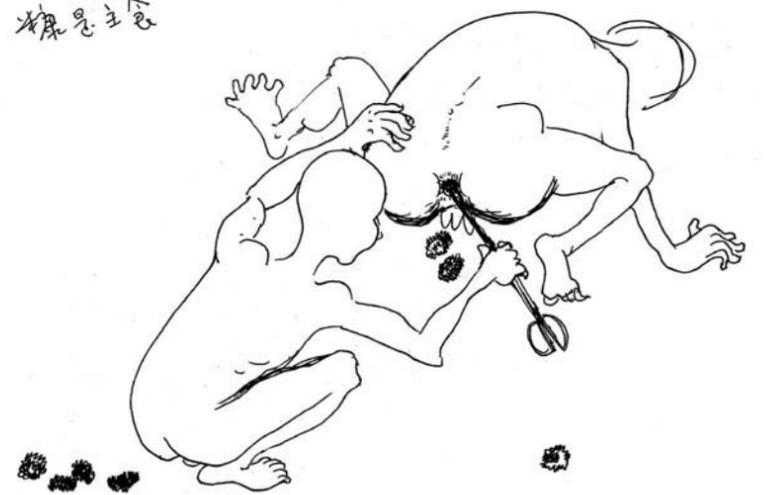
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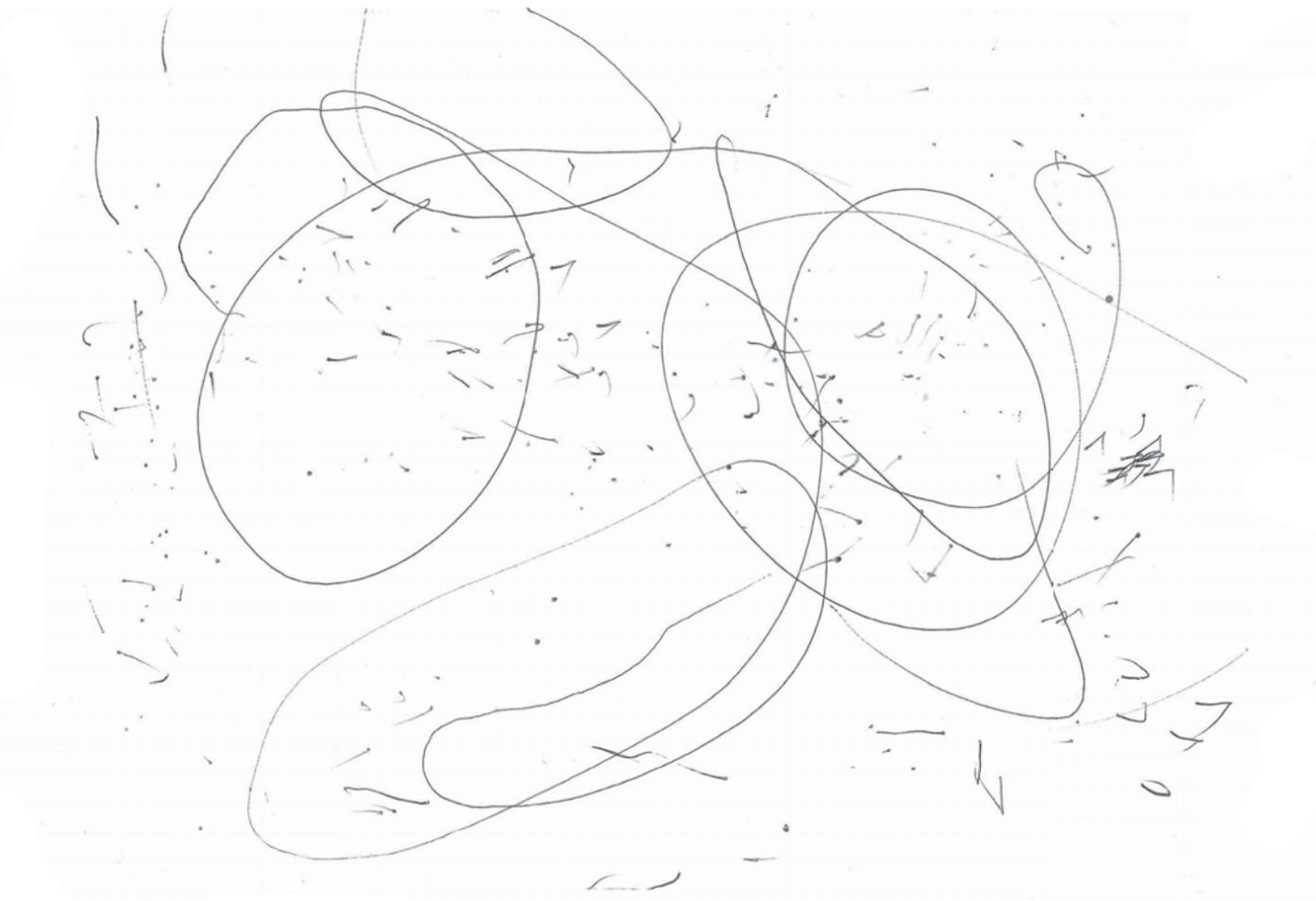
1. 罗贝尔·布列松(Robert Bresson)，《电影书写札记(Notes sur le cinématographe)》，中文版，张新木译，南京大学出版社，2012，p. 87



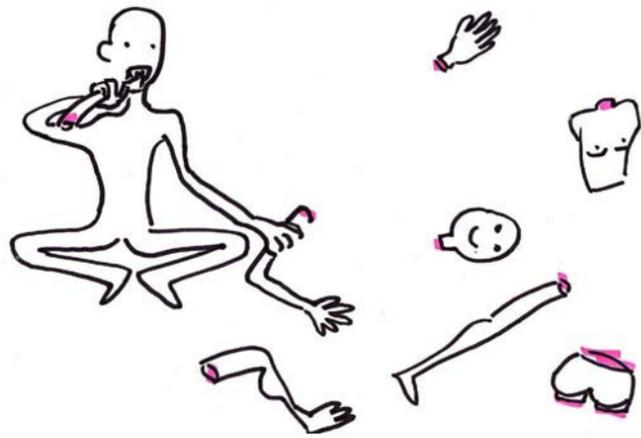
Chaff is main staple food

糠是主食

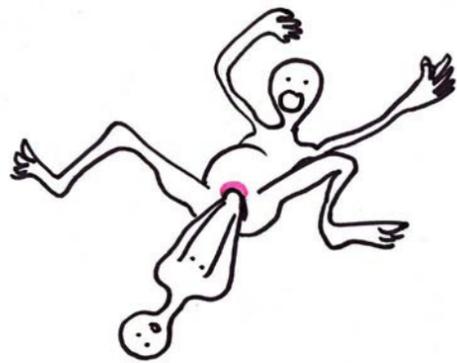




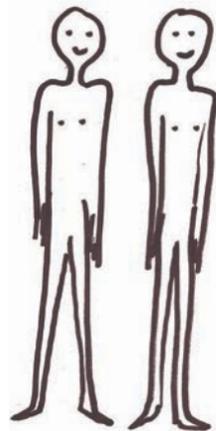
please eat me



then. You will be pregnant



then. childbirth



Two

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