

# 容器

## CONTAINER

上海獅語画廊

艺术家：萧搏

策展人：王澈

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## 萧搏的容器

文 | 王澈

去年在杭州我和萧搏因为一个艺术项目选择在西湖上荡漾，周边的山水、城市景观包围着我们。为什么要荡漾？因为要阐释我们和包围着我们的景观之间的关系，其实就是人在一个空间（城市、艺术圈）中生活，自己的行为、思考会受到这个空间的影响，为了找到阐释两者关系的角度，我构想出了荡漾这个动作。这也像萧搏的创作方式，他作为一个艺术家在看待一些事、一些人、一些文化、一些艺术……，也创造了一个“四格”的方式来表达自己和他者的关系。当然这仅仅只是一种方法，就像我们选择了坐船在西湖上一样，而不是驾车，或者徒步穿行杭州。萧搏有了这个方法也可以说有了自己的语言或形式，当然，他的语言形式是在不断地变化，近几年来他正在使用这个“四格”的方式。对于萧搏来说，他必须要有一个容器，“四格”正是起到了这个作用，这样就可以把自己对外界的各种感受放进去。他不像别的艺术家对于某种感受比较敏感，他收集各种感受、思索它们，再放进创作中。将不同的感受和不同的语言形式结合，然后以“四格”的形式连续它们。

因为有了容器，或者说自己成为了容器，很多东西就可以放进来看看，琢磨它、感受它，盘盘它，自由度其实被打开了，一些事物既定的表述方式被打破，发现了事物的另一个关联、另一种形态，而这个结果也不是完全和既定了的那个结果没有关系，反而补充回应了一些什么。就像一种说法、一段情绪、一个绘画的笔法、一些相同笔画的字，奇妙的连接其实并不是仅仅在表达作为“奇妙”的那部分，仅仅只是很多既定的思路和方法以外的事情被称为了奇妙，真的奇妙吗？奇妙这两个字就挺有意思，“奇”是一种路径、方法，“妙”是一个结果。因为有奇怪的思维能力，所以得到了一个很妙的结果，但凡有奇思的人，其实也并不是他本身有多神奇，我觉得就是因为有了自

己的容器，像一个炼丹炉、试验场，开阔地尝试着一些别样的连接。这或许才是世界的本质，并不是仅仅被规训、被教育、被既定了的每一种思维、方法。有自己“容器”的人挺难的，这意味着他的思想、智识、经验、方法……要达到一定的广泛程度，就像那句话说的“没有地理观，就没有世界观”差不多，对于世界的观点，是阅读理解出来的，这里的阅读包括身体阅读和文本阅读两部分，萧搏总是笑呵呵的在看在听，似乎很客观，似乎把自我主体隐匿了，结合着他的作品看，才发现他是在容纳和调和。

萧搏的这个系列作品只看画面的话，就像是一种“方法美学”，能看到绘制的顺序，一个图式画四遍，除了微小的变化，或者说手工性，其他几乎是一样的。不论什么样的思考、感受，或者画法、色彩，在这种方法之下，变得一致性很高，画面让视觉持续遭遇着一系列的分隔与重复，像在一座平庸且乏味的日常之城中，并且这座城市被改造成了一种对其自身的连续模仿，让人们不得不关注乏味之物，感受文化的真空，颂扬平庸（即无意义）。这不是说萧搏的绘画性不够，反而他已经跨过了绘画关于色彩、空间、层次的这一块，更准确地说，他在提出问题，但不以问题的面貌出现，他在做相关的实验，但也不以实验的形态表达，仔细想想，艺术创作从来就不是线性面貌的事情。今天我们看到一个艺术家某个阶段的一种类型的创作，试图去理解一个艺术家也是困难的。但好在艺术家持续的创作中有些中心思想是基本不改变的。萧搏早期的作品用 24 张绘画（帧）来呈现一秒钟到现在“四格”的连续重复，画面在一种秩序中，被消除了叙事性，抽离了情绪，一张张放在那里，闭口不言，你似乎很难从画面中获得除视觉以外的任何信息。戒掉叙事，平复情绪这种事情，在艺术圈很少见，因为特别难。难点在于人会不自觉的叙事，不自觉的有一种态度，或是强烈的精神上的情绪、情结等。

没有叙事性并不代表不能叙事，反而是可以叙任何事，没有情绪也一样，可以是任何情绪。我上面提到的“乏味”，它是不是一种味呢？可以把乏味理解为一种结果，是经历了味之后的一种味，类比成一种修行的状态，感觉枯燥无聊，但所产生的思想可以解读世间任何事情。“真空”、“平庸”也是，一个是真的空了，一个是不高明。这些看似不是赞美，甚至贬义的词却存在很高的智慧，我回忆最初看到萧搏的作品后就是这种感觉，看不懂，不知道怎么看，用原来的经验甚至一下子不会看了，但自身的感受层面却又觉得这些作品怎么有那么强大的能量和温度呢？可以说萧搏的作品形式面貌是一方面，另一重要的方面是他创造出的一种画面状态引起的种种思考，对于我们既定理解的方式有颠覆和启示作用。

## 关于艺术家

**萧搏** 1977 年生于杭州，毕业于中国美术学院综合绘画系，现工作生活于杭州。萧搏的作品呈现出主体隐匿的状态，显现主体痕迹的是他对于方法的设定，而随后的过程犹如自动程序一般，凭借材料特性、审美直觉、语言规则或身体走势等催化条件推动作品的完成。各个平行系列都遵守着相似的生成结构，却导向不同的视觉结果。

其个展包括：“开业大吉”，三角洲 The Delta INST，杭州（2025）；“纯良饭局”，想象力学实验室，杭州（2023）；“22”，1000 PRESS，杭州（2022）；“解题”，MUUM Art Space，杭州（2022）；“两种方法”，今格空间，北京（2018）；“萧搏”，世界画廊，香港（2018）；“一个另一个”，55 画廊，上海（2017）；“留下”，55 画廊，上海（2015）；“断片·片段”，站台中国，北京（2008）；“帧”，站台中国，北京（2006）；“反复的重复”，导艺术空间，北京（2006）。

## 关于策展人

**王澈** 1986 年出生于邯郸，现生活工作于北京。独立策展人。2010 年至今一直从事艺术评论写作和策展工作，注重在不同地貌中流动、思考并展开项目，以行走策展的理念强调过程与整体感知。曾策划：“开业大吉”（杭州，2025）、“后退几步：从结果向原因还原”（深圳，2015—2016）、“绵绵若存走岷江”（四川省岷江流域，2016—2017）、“莽原”（内蒙古，2016）、“沙漠驻留”（内蒙古库布齐沙漠，2017—2020）、“燕山散步”（燕山山脉，2018—2023）、“走新疆”（新疆南疆，2019）、“黑戈壁计划”（青海黑山戈壁，2020）、“走神”（福建省，2020 至今）、“天地游戏——走青藏”（青藏高原，2022 至今）、“生长的河——走怒江”（云南省怒江流域，2022）、独山蛰居（浙江遂昌县，2024 至今）等长期项目以及艺术家个展和群展。

## 容器

### CONTAINER

Leo Gallery Shanghai

ARTIST: Xiao Bo

CURATOR: Wang Che

DURATION: 2025.6.28–8.03

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VENUE: 3F, Ferguson Lane, 376 Wukang Road, Xuhui District, Shanghai



## XIAO BO'S CONTAINER

Text | Wang Che

Last year in Hangzhou, Xiao Bo and I chose to drift across West Lake for an art project, surrounded by mountains, waters, and the urban landscape. Why drifting? To articulate the relationship between ourselves and the landscape around us—in essence, the relationship between a person and the space (city, art world) they inhabit. One's actions and thoughts are inevitably shaped by such a space. To find a way to express this dynamic, I came up with the gesture of drifting. This is much like Xiao Bo's artistic approach. As an artist, in observing certain people, matters, cultures, and forms of art, he has devised a "four grids" method to express his relationship with others. This is merely a method, just like our choice to take a boat on the lake instead of driving or walking through Hangzhou. In adopting this method, Xiao Bo has developed a language or form of his own. Of course, his visual language is constantly evolving, but in recent years, it has taken shape through this four grids structure. For Xiao Bo, a container is essential—this format serves that function, enabling him to contain and channel his responses to the external world. Unlike artists who are acutely sensitive to a specific kind of feeling, Xiao Bo collects a variety of perceptions, reflects on them, and integrates them into his work. He merges diverse feelings and visual languages, sequencing them through the continuity of the four grids form.

Because there is a container—or more accurately, because he himself becomes a container—many things can be brought in to be examined, considered, felt, turned over in the mind. A greater degree of freedom emerges. Fixed modes of expression are broken, and new associations and forms are discovered. Yet

these new outcomes are not entirely disconnected from pre-existing ones; on the contrary, they often serve as supplements or responses. Like a phrase, a mood, a brushstroke in painting, or Chinese characters with similar stroke structures—Xiao Bo's works draw subtle connections among them. These links are not just “curious” (qí miào, 奇妙) in a superficial sense. What we label as “curious” often simply lies beyond familiar patterns of thought or methods. But are they truly curious? The term itself is quite interesting: “qí” (奇) refers to an unusual path or method, and “miào” (妙) to a result or effect. It is because of a peculiar mode of thinking that one arrives at a refined outcome. Those with such imaginative thought are not inherently magical—it's rather that they possess a container of their own, like an alchemical furnace or an experimental site, where new and unexpected combinations can be tested. This, perhaps, is the essence of the world—not a world defined solely by discipline, instruction, or predetermined logic. Possessing one's own container is no easy matter. It means one's thoughts, knowledge, experience, and methods must attain a certain breadth. As the saying goes, “without a geographical view, there is no worldview.” A perspective on the world is gained through reading—both of texts and of the body. Xiao Bo, always smiling as he looks and listens, appears detached, as though concealing his own subjectivity. Yet in viewing his works, one realizes he is absorbing and harmonizing.

This series of works by Xiao Bo, when viewed simply in terms of their visual surface, resembles a kind of “methodological aesthetics.” One can observe the order of painting—a single motif repeated four times, nearly identical except for minor hand-rendered variations. Regardless of the thought, feeling, technique, or color involved, under this method the works exhibit a high degree of consistency. Visually, they subject the viewer to continual segmentation and repetition, evoking a monotonous, banal urban realm—one that has been transformed into a repetitive self-imitation. This compels us to pay attention to the banal, to feel a cultural vacuum, and to ironically praise mediocrity (that is, meaninglessness). This is not to suggest that Xiao Bo's painting lacks visuality. In fact, he has already moved beyond conventional concerns of color, space, and depth. More precisely, he is posing questions—though not in the form of questions. He conducts experiments—though not with an experimental appearance. On reflection, artistic creation has never followed a linear progression. When we encounter a specific phase of an artist's practice, understanding it is never easy. Fortunately, in the continuity of an artist's work, certain core ideas remain largely unchanged. Xiao Bo's earlier works depicted a single second using 24 painted frames. Now, in the four grids repetitions, the narrative has been stripped away, the emotion withdrawn. One painting after another stands silently; it is difficult to extract any information beyond the visual. To eliminate narrative and suppress emotion is a rare feat in the art world—precisely because

it is so difficult. The challenge lies in our unconscious tendency toward narrative, our instinct to express attitudes or intense emotional and psychological states.

The absence of narrative does not mean that nothing can be narrated; the absence of emotion does not imply a lack of feeling. The “banality” I mentioned above—might it not be a kind of sensation? Perhaps it is a sensation that comes after all others have been exhausted, comparable to a form of spiritual practice. It may feel dull and tedious, but the thoughts it yields can offer insight into all aspects of the world. The same applies to “vacuum” and “mediocrity”—the former being truly empty, the latter being less than refined. These seemingly unflattering terms can in fact embody great wisdom. When I first saw Xiao Bo’s work, I had such a reaction: I couldn’t understand it. I didn’t know how to understand it. My usual ways of seeing no longer worked. Yet at the level of raw perception, these works emanated a powerful energy and warmth. One could say the formal aspect of Xiao Bo’s work is one part of it, but more importantly, it is the state of the image he creates that provokes deep reflection—challenging and enlightening our established modes of understanding.

## ARTIST INTRODUCTION

**XIAO BO** born in Hangzhou in 1977, graduated from the Comprehensive Painting Department of China Academy of Art and currently works and lives in Hangzhou. Xiao Bo’s works present a state of hidden subjectivity, where the trace of the subject is revealed through his method settings. The subsequent process unfolds like an automatic program, driven by catalytic conditions such as material properties, aesthetic intuition,

language rules, or bodily movements. Each parallel series adheres to similar generative structures yet leads to different visual results.

His solo exhibitions include: "Kai Ye Da Ji," The Delta INST, Hangzhou (2025); "Pure and Kind Dinner Party," Imagination Mechanics Lab, Hangzhou (2023); "22," 1000 PRESS, Hangzhou (2022); "Problem Solving," MUUM Art Space, Hangzhou (2022); "Two Methods," Today Art Museum, Beijing (2018); "Xiao Bo," World Gallery, Hong Kong (2018); "One Another," 55 Gallery, Shanghai (2017); "Stay," 55 Gallery, Shanghai (2015); "Fragments," Platform China, Beijing (2008); "Frame," Platform China, Beijing (2006); "Repetitive Repetition," Doart, Beijing (2006).

## CURATOR INTRODUCTION

**Wang Che** born in Handan in 1986, currently lives and works in Beijing as an independent curator. Since 2010, he has been engaged in art criticism writing and curatorial practice, focusing on mobility, thinking and developing projects across diverse landscapes. Guided by the concept of "curating through walking," he emphasizes the process and holistic perception.

Curated projects include "Kai Ye Da Ji" (Hangzhou, 2025), "A few steps Back: Restoring from the Result to the Cause" (Shenzhen, 2015 – 2016), "Walking along the Minjiang River" (Minjiang River Basin, Sichuan, 2016 – 2017), "Wildlands" (Inner Mongolia, 2016), "Desert Residency" (Kubuqi Desert, Inner Mongolia, 2017 – 2020), "Walking along the Yanshan Mountains" (Yanshan Mountains, 2018 – 2023), "Journey through Xinjiang" (Southern Xinjiang, 2019), "Black Gobi Project" (Heishan Gobi, Qinghai, 2020), "Lost in Encountering" (Fujian Province, 2020 – present), "Game of Heaven and Earth: Walking on the Tibetan Plateau" (Tibetan Plateau, 2022 – present), "The Growing River: Journey along the Nujiang River" (Nujiang River Basin, Yunnan, 2022), and "Solitude in Dushan" (Suichang County, Zhejiang, 2024 – present). Additionally, he has also curated solo and group exhibitions for artists.