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# A portrait behind the portrait behind the portrait ...

## 肖像背后的肖像 背后的肖像...

David Boyce at Blindspot Gallery Hong Kong

原文 Caroline Ha Thuc

*We are all an amalgam of everything that we have seen, read or experienced, so, in a very broad sense, I am the sum of all these self-portraits, and more.*

我們都與我們所見、所讀或所經歷的一切相互交融，因此，在一個很廣泛的意義上說，我是所有這些自畫像的總和，甚至更多。

In his new show at Blindspot Gallery, Hong Kong-based New Zealand photographer David Boyce (b.1960) focuses on influence and originality in art, arguing that it is not the work of an individual, but part of a collaborative process.

For a long time, western art has evolved with the idea of constant innovation as a way to break with the past, and avant-garde movements were precisely based on originality. Challenging this conception of art history, and more in line with the continuity that prevails in Asian cultures, Boyce reveals the figures of the artists who have deeply influenced his work. From Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) to Arcimboldo (1526-1593) to Ai Weiwei (b. 1957) to Caravaggio (1571-1610), more than 20 portraits are combined with Boyce's own face, giving a tangible shape to the tremendous influence these artists have exercised on the photographer.

The artist himself has carefully planned the way the works

are displayed, using a salon style that recalls the old museums and galleries he visited during his early years. He has always been attracted to frames, especially the heavy, ornate, usually gold ones that dominate some of his works. The space looks like an old attic, which could be seen as a metaphor for his unconscious and memory. The dark background that isolates the personality of each image increases this feeling of a strange portrait gallery of mysterious ancestors.

The figures are blurred and uncanny, creating some confusion about their identity. Boyce plays with this idea of recognisability, keeping some distance from his subjects to give visitors room for thought. His technique is a combination of magic and tricks, smoke and mirrors. After all, identity is an intellectual construction: we know neither who the individuals behind the self-portraits were nor who these new hybrid people are.

Projecting his own face onto old figures could also be interpreted as a way to refer to art history itself, following a long lineage of artists who have reappropriated the masters. Hong Kong artist Chow Chun Fai (b. 1980), for instance, features himself in *The Creation of Adam* as painted by Michelangelo (1475-1564), whereas mainland China's Miao Xiaochun (b. 1964) replaces all the faces in Cranach (1472-1553) or Bosch (1450-1516) masterpieces with his own. Will we experience a global identity crisis with hegemony of the self?

In the case of Boyce, probably not, as the artist tends to surrender the demand for individuality, quoting a Greek myth in which the blind giant Orion carried his servant Cedalion on his shoulders, he defines himself as a dwarf on the shoulders of these giant masters, heading towards an unknown goal.



在刺點畫廊 (Blindspot Gallery) 為他舉辦的新展覽上，在香港工作和生活的新西蘭攝影師大衛·博伊斯 (David Boyce, 生於1960年) 專注於藝術的影響力和獨創性，認為它不是一個人的工作，而是合作過程的一部分。

長期以來，西方藝術已逐步形成不斷創新的理念，以此來與過去劃開界限，而先鋒派運動恰恰正是基於獨創性展開的。為挑戰藝術史的這種設想，且與亞洲主流文化的連續性更為一致，博伊斯揭示了深深影響他作品的藝術家。從弗裏達·卡羅 (Frida Kahlo, 1907 年至

1954年) 到阿切波爾蒂 (Arcimboldo, 1526年至1593年) 再到艾未未 (生於1957年) 最後到卡拉瓦喬 (Caravaggio, 1571年至1610年)，超過二十多幅肖像與博伊斯自己的臉相結合，使得他們給這位攝影師帶來的巨大影響力被賦予了一種實實在在的形態。

藝術家本人也精心策劃了作品的展現方式，使用一種沙龍的風格，讓人回憶起他在早年參觀的老博物館和畫廊。他總是被畫框所吸引，尤其是分量十足、裝飾華麗的那種，通常金色的畫框主導著他的一些作品。房間看上去像一間舊閣樓，這可看作是他潛意識和記憶的一種隱喻。分離每張畫像品性的暗色背景，增添了關於這種神秘祖先的怪誕肖像畫廊的感覺。

這些人物是模糊神秘的，使人對其身份產生些許混淆。博伊斯在可辨性上做文章，與他的主題保持一段距離，給觀眾一定的思考空間。他的技術將魔術與花招相結合，煙霧與鏡子相結合。畢竟，身份是一種智力建設：我們既不知道誰是自畫像背後的個人，也不知道這些新的混合人是誰。

將自己的臉龐映射到歷史人物

之上也可以被理解為指代藝術史本身的一種方法，移植藝術大師作品的藝術家不計其數。例如，香港藝術家周俊輝 (生於1980年) 在米開朗基羅 (1475年至1564年) 所畫的《創造亞當》中提及了自己，然而中國大陸的繆曉春 (生於1964年) 將克拉納赫 (Cranach, 1472年至1553年) 或博世 (Bosch, 1450年至1516年) 的傑作中所有的面孔都替換為他自己的。我們會體驗一種自我霸權帶來的全球性身份認同危機嗎？

在博伊斯的事件裏，很可能不會，因為這名藝術家往往會放棄對個性的需求。引用希臘神話中的失明巨人俄裏翁 (Orion) 將他的仆人司德來 (Cedalion) 置於其肩膀上，他將自己定義為攀登在這些巨型大師肩膀上的一個侏儒，朝著一個未知的目標前進。

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*Untitled 02: From the Shoulders of Giants*  
by David Boyce, 2012.  
Pigment print, 45 x 30 cm, ed. of eight.

Above  
*Untitled 11: From the Shoulders of Giants*  
by David Boyce, 2013.  
Pigment print, 50 x 29 cm, ed. of eight.

Courtesy the artist and Blindspot Gallery.