

## Heterotopia On the Route

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We live in a time enveloped in thick fog of mystery. Who are we? What is our city? Answers to these questions are not becoming clearer, despite that currently, the medium is internetized, capital investments globalized and the global interaction increasingly more convenient. We live in a world of instability (uncertainty), and when this uncertainty is a unique case of its own, its complexity, diversity and strong differentiation makes our reading and probing an isolated practice. For this reason, when we are faced with a complex situation of such, we return to a beginning point to clear our minds and look for an alternative route of discussion. For example, if we set the beginning point for our discussion as utopia and we see it as an object of discussion, we can then include heterotopia in our discussion - in juxtaposition to utopia, as a 'utopian' space that exists in between different spaces. The fragmented existence of heterotopia could be viewed by us as cracks reserved for artists. In this compressed and fragmented space, against this other landscape, art works exist as illustrations.

Returning of the urban scene, Arjun Appadurai's discussion of cultural globalization emphasizes on the importance of imagination as 'field of social practices.' Culture is factually constructed in a globalized context. The binary opposition of resistance and dominance and resistance has been ended and replaced with a scene of cultural production that features integration, interaction and cultural reproduction. The positive meaning of this is that there lies the potential of a comprehensive remodeling of cultural practice. However, in reality, under the suppression of capital and ideology, cultural production and the cultural practice itself are actively being heterotopianized - they exist in reality, but are in the meantime forever in other spaces. Of course, the more practical choice is for cultural production to 'castrate' itself - it makes compromises to capital or authority, and suffice for acting as mere commodity or landscape.

'Heterotopia On the Route' is an encounter, or rather a collectively-presented carnival. The exhibition comprises of three sections. The first section 'Chongqing Chongqing' features the megacity Chongqing; the

second section 'Nomads & Variation' focuses on travelling and arriving; the last section 'Disenchanted City' exposes (criticizes) urban landscapes and hidden passwords. A total of 22 artists with whom I've cooperated on a deep level have participated in this exhibition. Organhaus, an independent art organization established in 2006, provided assistance with regards to individual artist cases and documentation.

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A story:

A western explorer came to the African Savanna and carried with him some accessories as gifts for the native people, including two full-length mirrors. As he came close to the tribe, he sat down beside a tree for a break and leaned the two mirrors against the tree. Shortly after, a native man rushed towards the mirror and broke it with the spear in his hands. The explorer stood up and asked the cause for such action. The native man replied that because the man in the mirror is trying to kill me, so I killed him first. The explorer realized that this native man had never seen a mirror before and didn't understand its function, so he walked up to the remaining mirror and explained to the native man: Look, this is a mirror, you use it to see yourself. The native man replied: now I see, but I didn't know before.