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广场、鸽子与乌鸦
THE SQUARE, THE DOVE, THE CROW

文 / 张岱
TEXT / Zhang Dai

艺术家张大力对于2014年夏天在成都K空间举办的个展“广场”是这样阐述的，“广场没有鸽子，这并不妨碍我自由想象：一群群白色的精灵飞翔在深蓝色的天空之下。”

白鸽作为精灵的说法来源于基督教典故。在《创世记》中，诺亚在大洪水后放出一只鸽子，用来勘察洪水是否已经退却；《马太福音》中写道，耶稣受洗后，圣灵仿佛鸽子一般降临于他，而“和平鸽”也因此成为了基督教中用来代表圣灵的符号，继而在现代世俗社会演化成为和平与自由的象征。

这样一种对于鸽子的符号化解读对于中国来说是具有现代性的，它伴随着具有基督教传统的西方文明进入了近现代中国的社会语境之中。在此之前，中国传统绘画中少有鸽子的形象出现。它不是什么祥瑞的象征，地位还远不及鸳鸯和鹌鹑，更不用说代表“和平”、“自由”这些现代性的理想。它反而是一味重要的食材，和鸡、鸭并无二致，比如烤乳鸽就是一道起源于广东一带的名菜。

王世襄在《北京鸽哨》中曾写道，鸽子作为一种玩赏鸟类，在中国已经有至少千年的驯养历史。像鸽哨这种颇为讲究的玩物也存在了有200余年——在头顶掠过的悠长的哨音也成为了北京的声音记忆的一部分。在2005年由英国使馆文化教育处与颜峻合作的“都市发声”声音艺术项目中，也能找到对于鸽哨的演绎。

此外，正像张大力写道的，在全球各地都有不少大型广场因为鸽子大量聚集而变得知名，比如伦敦的特拉法加广场、阿姆斯特丹的水坝广场、悉尼的马丁广场、威尼斯的圣马可广场等等——那里有着“漂亮的雕塑和喷泉，闲散的人们和飞翔的鸽子”。这样的景象在艺术家眼中俨然成为了一道令人向往的风景线。在他的个展“广场”中，硅胶铸成的人像上，安插有不少鸽子的标本，蓝色和白色的颜料像鸽子的排泄物一样落满人像的肩头。

然而，这些广场上聚集的鸽子，由于携带了大量的病毒和细菌，实则成为了公共健康的严重隐患，它们的排泄物也把广场上的雕塑变得面目全非。2003年，时任伦敦市长的肯·利文斯通就曾颁布条例禁止在特拉法加广场上饲喂鸽群；2007年，伦敦威斯敏斯特市政厅也推行了类似的条例。然而这些举措却受到了大量民众和诸如“保留特拉法加广场鸽子”（STTSP）这样的民间组织的强烈抗议。

中国北方大部分的广场没有饲养鸽子，但有不少乌鸦在这些地区盘踞，它们的排泄物将街道两侧的人行道染成了白色。城市中聚居的乌鸦在白天时会飞往城外觅食，傍晚时候，鸦群会回城过夜。而这种与广场人群缺乏互动的飞鸟，比起鸽子则更具神秘感；乌鸦作为一种符号也有着更为复杂的解读。

在迦勒底神话《吉尔伽美什史诗》中记载的有关大洪水的故事中，生还者和永生者乌特纳比西丁放出的鸽子飞行了一阵子便折返回来，他继而放出了一只乌鸦，后者一去不返，乌特纳比西丁因此断定乌鸦发现了陆地。在这则与《圣经》中所记载几乎同源的故事中，乌鸦扮演了比鸽子更为重要的角色。

中国很多民族在古代也曾崇拜过乌鸦。在北方，至今还存在着对于乌鸦的敬仰和崇拜。满族的传说与文献中载录，鸦鹊曾拯救过努尔哈赤和爱新觉罗氏家族成员的性命，因此被奉为神鸟，不受加害。在沈阳故宫和北京故宫里祭天用的索伦杆上，或者曾经在北方城市的一些高楼上，都有用来盛放食物饲喂乌鸦的装置。这也是造成乌鸦在某些地区聚集的原因之一。

诚然，无论是黑色的神鸟抑或白色的精灵，它们的形象都构成了广场为人们所留下的视觉记忆。

IN THE SUMMER of 2014, Zhang Dali opened a solo exhibition titled "Square" at K. Gallery in Chengdu. As he describes the project, "The fact that there are no pigeons on a square doesn't prevent me from imagining them anyway. In my mind I can always picture them: a group of white spirits fluttering upward into a deep blue sky."

The metaphor of the spirit as a dove has its origins in Christianity. In the book of Genesis, Noah releases a dove from the ark in order to survey the aftermath of the great flood. Elsewhere in the Bible, the dove represents the Holy Spirit: in the Gospel of Matthew, after Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit is described as "descending upon him like a dove." Within secular society, the dove has become an emblem of peace and liberty.

In China, this kind of symbolism bears a hint of modernity: the dove as a symbol was introduced with the arrival of Western Judeo-Christian thinking to Republican China at the turn of the century. Before this time, doves rarely appeared in Chinese paintings. Moreover, the dove was not considered an auspicious symbol, certainly less so than Mandarin ducks or the quail, much less a sign of peace or liberty. Rather, doves—pigeons—were seen as an important food source, no different from chicken or duck; in fact, fried squab remains a delicacy in Cantonese cuisine.

In his book *Beijing Pigeon Whistles*, Wang Shixiang writes that the practice of domesticating pigeons can be traced back almost 1000 years in China, and that the masterfully crafted whistles that imitate them have been around for more than 200 years. The lingering coo of pigeons overhead has come to define memories of Beijing. In "Sound and the City," the 2005 sound art project organized by Yan Jun for the British Council, listeners can pick out the distinct sound of the pigeon whistle in the background.

Further explaining his exhibition, Zhang Dali goes on to speak about the public squares across the world that have become famous for their masses of pigeons and doves: he describes Trafalgar Square in London, Dam Square in Amsterdam, Martin Place in Sydney, and Piazza San Marco in Venice as "teeming with picturesque statues and fountains, leisurely people, and drifting flocks of birds." In the eyes of an artist, this is the kind of scene that epitomizes beauty. In "Square," taxidermied pigeons perch atop Zhang's silicone figures, swaths of blue and white paint splashed across their shoulders like excrement.

But the pigeons that gather in these squares also bring with them viruses and bacteria, a major public health issue. Bird droppings that accumulate on the sculptures that dot these squares render many of them unrecognizable. In 2003, Ken Livingstone, then mayor of London, banned the feeding of pigeons in Trafalgar Square. Similar regulations were implemented in the area surrounding Westminster Hall in 2003. These moves have not been well received by the public, resulting in protests and the foundation of organizations like Save the Trafalgar Square Pigeons.

张大力，《K7.飞翔的鸽子》， 2013年
宣纸蓝晒，94.7×176.7 厘米
Zhang Dali, ***K7. Flying Pigeons***, 2013
Cyanotype photogram mounted on rice paper,
94.7 x 176.7 cm

There are no pigeons to feed in the public squares of China's northeastern Dongbei region. This is the domain of the crow, whose droppings layer the street in a thick white dye. Unlike other urban birds, crows leave the city to forage during the day and return only as night falls, when they come home to sleep. This kind of bird does not interact with people in the square, and feels the more mysterious for it. As a symbol, it is equally complex.

The Mesopotamian myth, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, also contains a record of a great flood. The lone survivor of the flood, an immortal named Utnapishtim, also releases a dove to search for land: it disappears from sight, but soon returns to the boat. Utnapishtim then releases a crow: it flies toward the horizon and never comes back, leading him to conclude that there must still be dry land. Unlike in the Bible, here the crow is more important than the dove.

Many of China's ethnicities traditionally worshipped crows. The crow is still venerated today in the north of China. According to Manchurian legend, it is said that a crow once saved the life of Nurhaci, founder of the Later Jin dynasty. Because of this, the crow came to be revered as a sacred bird, a supernatural creature immune from harm. Totems erected to worship the gods in the Mukden Palace and the Forbidden City—and, for a while, taller buildings across the northern cities—once included installations for offerings of food for crows, encouraging them to gather there.

Both sacred black bird and fluttering white spirit are tied up with the imagery that defines the collective memory of the public square. (Translated by Nathaniel Brown)