

The Threshold of Paradise: A Review of the Ecological Art Exhibition "Paradise Is a Forest"

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ABSTRACT

The exhibition "Paradise is a Forest," curated by Xiao Huaide and Gu Tao, examines the close connection between the Evenki people and the forests of the Greater Khingan Range through the explorations of resident artists. The exhibition challenges the romanticized imagination of the Greater Khingan Range as a "paradise" and reveals the true face of the forest and the ecological and cultural challenges faced by the Evenki people. This article cites the philosopher Giorgio Agamben's concept of "messianic" to discuss the self-redemption of the Evenki at the end of their traditional way of life and how artists, through bodily experiences, cross the threshold of the messianic with the indigenous inhabitants of the forests. Finally, the article focuses on the phenomenon of lichen symbiosis in the exhibition, emphasizing the importance of human coexistence with others.

Keywords: Great Khingan, Evenki, Messia, Giorgio Agamben, Companionship.

*In vain, one dreams of a wilderness, far from
the madding crowd.*

Henry David Thoreau, Journal

1. INTRODUCTION

On June 21, 2023, led by Xiao Huaide and Gu Tao, the Evenki residency team of the Insight Salon, which included historian Zhang Xingang, climate activist Lu Mingyi, local artist Jiang Chuanfeng from the Great Khingan, artists Jiang Zhi, Shi Guowei, Liu Chuang, Long Pan, Bo Kai, Pan Lin, Tie Yang, Rao Yi, photographer Jiang Yuan, and publisher Yu Xin, embarked on a ten-day journey. Their exploration commenced at the nurturing banks of the Erguna River, the ancestral home of the Evenki people, passed through the Black Mountain Head port on the China-Russia border, traversed Shiwei Town, and went through Mangui, Genhe, and Alun Mountain towns, finally reaching the settlement of Evenki Hunters. The resident artists condensed their days of walking into the "*Jian Di (见地) Ecological Art Action • Great Khingan Ewenki Deer Tribe Residency Achievements Exhibition*", which opened on January 4, 2024, bringing a glimpse of the story of Ewenki woman Liu Xia, the vibrant ecology of the forest, and the current situation of the Ewenki Deer

Tribe from the forests of northeastern Greater Khingan Mountains to the bustling contemporary life.

2. THE FOREST IS NOT PARADISE

The title of the exhibition, "Tiantang (Paradise) Is a Forest," draws inspiration from Liu Xia's account of the Evenki worldview, in which she staunchly believes that the afterlife is a paradise-like forest where the deceased continue to safeguard their earthly descendants. The term "Tiantang(天堂, Paradise)," with its clear Western connotations, jumps out when spoken by the Evenki woman Liu Xia. Immersed in the indigenous Taoist culture, the ancient Chinese term "Tian (天)" referred to the "nine Palaces" inhabited by immortals and bodhisattvas. According to classical texts, it was a splendid architectural complex, with palaces arranged in accordance with the numbers of celestial stems and terrestrial branches, totaling around 108 main buildings. However, the "Tiantang" Liu Xia speaks of generally refers to the "Heaven" in Christian culture, whose imagery is starkly different from China's "heavenly palace," pointing instead to a pure world untouched by civilizations. The Christian concept of "Heaven" can even be traced back to the Greek

word "Leimon," referring to a field full of flowers. Another English term for "Tiantang" (Paradise) comes from the Old French "Paradis" (Garden of Eden), referring to the place where Adam and Eve lived before their transgression, often depicted as a peaceful forest inhabited by various creatures. As seen in the works of Jan Brueghel the Elder, "Paradise" is portrayed as fruitful and flower-covered banks of forest rivers where rests pairs of wild animals or domestic fowl. It is evident that whether it is "Heaven," "Leimon," or "Paradise," the Western concept of "paradise" imported into China points to an unpolluted woodland. Thus, the Ewenki people's association of their Great Khingan Mountains forest with the Western traditional imagery of "paradise," while initially surprising, is indeed fitting.

The further development of modern tourism has expanded the meaning of "paradise" in the Greater Khingan Mountains. In the context of tourism, "paradise" does not always refer to the past in religious legends, but also denotes those undiscovered (or yet-to-be-created) unknown realms, or idyllic havens away from the hustle and bustle of modernity. As the tourism industry in the Greater Khingan Mountains developed in the 21st century, this northern forest gradually became a "heaven on earth" where one could escape the modern industrial society.

Located in northeastern China, the Greater Khingan Mountains are the largest mountain system in China, hailed as a natural treasure with rich geological landscapes, including fault zones, volcanic landforms, etc. Its well-preserved primitive features leave tourists from civilized worlds in awe. In the early Qing Dynasty, Han Chinese were strictly prohibited from entering the northeastern region for development, thus preserving much of the pristine landscape of the Greater Khingan Mountains. However, by 1955, a massive forest fire caused severe damage to the forest resources, prompting the Heilongjiang government to decide on forestry development in the Greater Khingan Mountains to strengthen forest fire prevention and control, marking the beginning of the exploitation of the Greater Khingan Mountains. Subsequently, sixty years of large-scale logging led to a drastic decline in forest quality, with problems such as imbalanced tree species

structure, weakened ecological functions, shrinking wetland areas, and reduced biodiversity. It wasn't until 2014 that the Greater Khingan Mountains region completely ceased commercial logging of natural forests. Leveraging its favorable ecological environment and rich forest landscapes, forest tourism became a new economic growth point in the region.

With the economic transition in the Greater Khingan Mountains region, painters, photographers, anthropologists, and poets have successively arrived in this scarred but fertile land, playing decisive roles in curbing the destruction of development. Seeing the trees and valleys of the Greater Khingan Mountains, they believe they have fulfilled their wishes, with the "untouched primariness" lying at their feet. Under the lenses of landscape photographers, humans and animals peacefully share this mysterious forest, making such scenes the hottest tourist attractions in the Greater Khingan Mountains.

However, do these photographers, artists, and tourists who yearn for "returning to nature" have any moment of doubt about the landscapes in front of them? Is this merely a product created out of nostalgia after the long history of development in the Greater Khingan Mountains has come to an end? In a photograph titled "First Time Hearing Ancient Forest Ballads," (see "Figure 1") with the lingering warmth of the setting sun filtering through the sparse coniferous forest, it falls on the backs of two Ewenki women, one old and one young, looking into the distance beyond the frame. The older woman raises her right hand slightly, striking a classic pose reminiscent of studio portraits. The work depicts Mani and her granddaughter singing Ewenki ballads, and the photographer emotionally interprets, "Hundreds of birds sing in harmony, and the forest joins the chorus." Under the lens of the Greater Khingan Mountains Photographers Association, the wilderness of the primitive jungle is nowhere to be found. Instead, there is a dreamlike tranquility and permanence, as if the Greater Khingan Mountains were a divinely bestowed Eden, where the history of reckless exploitation and plundering of the forest seems hardly worth mentioning in the face of the harmonious coexistence of humans and nature.



Figure 1 Wei Jihong, First Time Hearing Ancient Forest Ballads, 2021, photography.

At the same time, viewers are also amazed at how photographers use natural objects in the forest to construct a textbook example of depth: a unified light source, straight trees gradually receding towards the right rear of the frame, forming a vertical network space, ultimately converging on the cabin acting as the vanishing point. The unity of the picture is constructed by the horizon line and the upward-extending trees, absorbing the Ewenki people, the forest, sunlight, and the surrounding flowing air into a landscape calculated under the perspective. In these photographic works that praise the Ewenki people and the Greater Khingan Mountains, one can see the Western method of dividing subject/object structures — these works create a certain distance between the viewer and the scene being observed in order to more effectively control, attract, and dominate the viewer's gaze, as if the viewer is peering into another world, a paradise that is completely "other," reminiscent of the experience of watching animals in a zoo. As the artist Jiang Zhi said in his residency diary, without shotguns, the Ewenki people have lost their original way of life, undergoing a complete upheaval of their lifestyle, and today, Ewenki people dressed in brand-new minority costumes under the lens appear like creatures on display in a zoo, mere attractions of tourist culture and exhibits of museum culture. One artwork in the exhibition, "*I Can't Touch the Outside of the Glass*," created by artist Pan Lin through collage of images reflecting her experiences during the residency. The title of the work also evokes the visual experience of observing exhibits through glass; behind the glass, it seems as though Liu Xia and her reindeer are entangled by the dazzling forest, frozen as living

specimens of Ewenki culture; on the other side of the glass, one is placed in the position of the "viewer" who looks down from above. At the same time, the picture overturns the viewer's absolute power position with the chaotic yet fertile green. When it leads us into the depths of the wild and unpretentious forest, establishing a connection with a space one has never met before, it transcends the scope defined by the subject/object binary relationship. In the abstract strokes, the surrounding green begins to transform the way of viewing the world: the viewers are neither stationary nor distant from the world anymore, but "deeply fall into the world."¹ If one want to find some specific and clear objects, his gaze will only be captured by the brushstrokes and the fragrance of the materials, and then unfold into the whirlpool of the world.

1. Catherine Guertin, "Revisiting the Landscape: The Re-presentation of the Land in Contemporary Art" (2nd Edition), East China Normal University Press, 2014, p. 114.



Figure 2 Pan Lin, *I Can't Touch the Outside of the Glass*, 2023, Oil Painting on Linen, 200×170cm; Pan Lin, *Little Orphan with a Blue Ribbon*, 2023, Oil Painting on Linen, 200×170cm.

Confronted with such a landscape, one might question whether to forsake a detached observation in favor of pure sensation. A subtle transformation occurs between distant observation and intimate experience, facilitated by the physical presence. As advocated by Merleau-Ponty, it is recommended to detach the gaze from the perspective that serves as a regulator of power, allowing the spatial experience to evolve from a static, network-like setting behind the picture to a "space from which I measure everything... I do not see it from its shell, I live within it, I am surrounded by it."²

In any case, the world should envelop, extending beneath the feet, rather than being confined within the frame that lies before the observer; perhaps this is the whole meaning of the "Jian Di (见地)" Salon. This name is derived from the English "insight," but can also find a new understanding from the deconstruction of Chinese characters — "见(seeing)" and "地(land)," which means "to see another land," to obtain the most direct experience on-site, and to use all senses to feel the space. The founder of the Insight Salon, Xiao Huaide, has revived the ancient Chinese literati tradition of "traveling," where landscape painters would embark on lengthy journeys, often spanning months, forging a connection between the body and nature through the act of walking. The Chinese landscape combined with walking is different from the Western landscape painters who

capture momentary snapshots in sketches; instead, it is the crystallization of bodily sensations after a journey lasting several months. Therefore, in the Song Dynasty landscape, the depicted figures do not appear small; instead, they endow the landscape with endless breadth, allowing us to feel a certain balance, a harmony of proportions between humans and their surrounding environment.

2. Catherine Guertin, "Revisiting the Landscape: The Re-presentation of the Land in Contemporary Art" (2nd Edition), East China Normal University Press, 2014, p. 114.

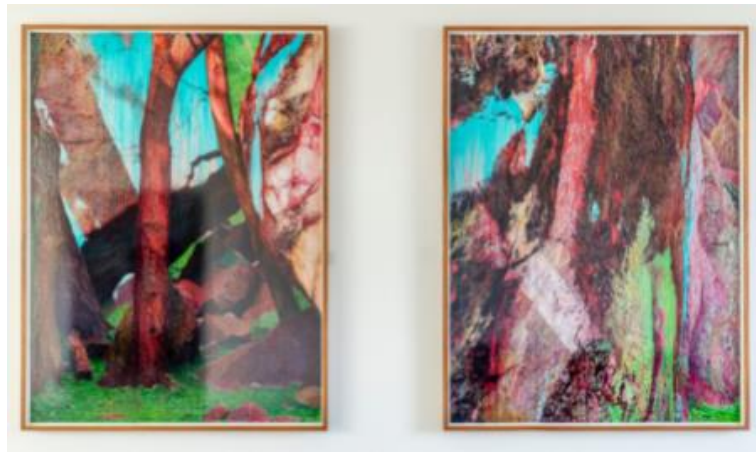


Figure 3 Shi Guowei, Scene A, 2023, Laser Silver Paper Base, Liquid Pigment, 130×171cm; Shi Guowei, Scene B, 2023, Laser Silver Paper Base, Liquid Pigment, 130×171cm.

The artists in this exhibition are walking and creating in this way. The Greater Khingan Mountains in their works are not objective, because they do not simply press some "shutters" to record this strange environment, using a framework imbued with power to confine the Ewenki people and their surroundings to the picture; instead, they immerse themselves to present a colorful, almost boundary-less world for us. Therefore, at some moment, they "feel the world."

Different from photographs serving as tourist promotional images, artist Shi Guowei's paintings oscillate between photography and painting. In "Scene AB," the artist goes against the objective pursuit of photography by using large-format cameras to take black-and-white photos, which are then colored on photographic paper, allowing personalized colors to intertwine and flow freely over the black-and-white film. Here, the conventional depth of field characteristic of Greater Khingan Mountain photographs gives way to a chaotic tapestry of vegetation and unconventional colors that obstruct any straightforward entry into the scene. If the former constructs a readily accessible three-dimensional forest in the imagery, then Shi Guowei wields a sharp knife, slicing through the lively two-dimensional slices of the forest. On crimson backgrounds with white filament-like veins, accompanied by colors like fruit green and purple-red, one can't help but think of the metallic green light shimmering on the fresh cut surface of raw meat; if fortunate, one might even see the nerves pulsating on the slices of meat, which represent the most piercing and vibrant life of the forest. The artist transforms brushes into blades, peeling away the thick scab that has prettified the wound of the Greater Khingan

Mountains, laying out the hidden pain before the viewers: this forest is not the exquisite corpse depicted in tourism advertisements; pulsating with life, it is warm, wild, and even bleeding.

The forest is not a paradise. Modern tourism often attempts to fix the imagery of the Greater Khingan Mountains as an untouched natural paradise, where the millennia-old way of life of the Ewenki indigenous people seems unchanged, as if they innocently accompany reindeer like Adam and Eve, peacefully passing through calm years. However, like all Edens imagined by humans, "Paradise" is also just a product of human civilization's craving and cultural imagination. According to notes from the residency members, after sixty years of forest logging, people salvaged the ruins of the Greater Khingan Mountains by planting pine trees in a rescue-like manner, hoping to restore the natural landscape here. However, today's Greater Khingan Mountains are far from their appearance before human intervention. In fact, one cannot imagine what an untouched natural system, free from human civilization's large-scale alteration (regardless of the outcome), would look like. This alteration did not only occur in the industrial age; it has been inevitably distorted and shaped by human power since the Ewenki people hunted in the forest, and even in the Neolithic period. This irreversibly changed world is the nature human now inhabit.

Clearly, the residency members participating in the exhibition do not aim to use art as a tool to reproduce a past that has already been lost within the confines of a canvas frame. Instead, they seek to explore the fragments that can still be discovered. They provide viewers with an immersive bodily

experience, which maximally eliminates cultural ideals, bringing a truly alive forest to modern society. This allows for an experience of the forest's rhythm, breath, colors, and sounds that continue to pulsate, sharing the same moment in a corner of the forest, breathing, absorbing, and savoring.

3. PARADISE IS A FOREST

"Awuni" in the Ewenki language refers to a place with rock paintings, and the rock paintings there date back to around 10,000 years ago, from the late Paleolithic period. Artist Jiang Chuanfeng's series of paintings "Awuni Group Paintings"

attempt to reinterpret, connect, and extend ancient creative methods based on the Ewenki language rock painting tradition. These works use brown pigments, blending the brushstrokes from ancient rock paintings with blue and white colors, presenting a unique expression from the artist's innermost being. From the strictest perspective, the entire history of human settled civilization cannot escape the blame of wanton plunder of nature, perhaps only the Ewenki people of the Paleolithic period may be exempt from this blame, as their cave paintings blend seamlessly with nature, never attempting to dominate it.



Figure 4 Jiang Chuanfeng, My Xianbei Mountain.3, Oil on canvas, 120×300cm.

Perhaps, the entirety of human history can be encapsulated as a series of negations on both internal and external fronts. The plundering of nature can be seen as an external negation, aimed at transforming the world into a "humanized nature" to maximize external benefits; while the internal negation lies in the production mechanism of humanity itself, which is to maintain the stability of modern sovereignty by constantly expelling internal "non-humans". Regarding the former, every small progress in modern society in any aspect always feeds on the losses of the external and the other. Therefore, visual artist Jiang Zhi realizes that everyone is born with the original sin left over from the process of civilization expansion. "Born with

guilt, we realize that the world is unequal everywhere... Regardless of our role, what we gain, others must lose, and even what I lose may cause harm to others." In the exhibited video work "Apology - Arong Mountain Episode", Jiang Zhi examines the apologies that humans hold towards others. He ties a young reindeer to an open space in the forest and places an electronic speaker nearby, which continuously playing the artist's hollow apologies: "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry..." In this futile action, Jiang Zhi attempts to establish a new connection between the reindeer and the speaker, reflecting humanity's remorse towards nature and efforts to engage in dialogue with it.



Figure 5 Jiang Zhi, Apology-Arong Mountain Episode, 2023, videos.

While human violence expands outward, a will to internal negation continues to exert its effects, maintaining the stability of sovereign societies by constantly producing and excluding "non-humans" within the collective. Jiang Zhi captures the awkward plight of the Evenki people: after their rifles are confiscated, they no longer see themselves as true Evenki, and their settlement at the foot of the mountain has not been integrated into mainstream modern life. In the oscillation of identity, the Evenki people live in the gap between civilization and primitiveness, as if they are "undefined people". More precisely, the Evenki people have never regarded the forest as their homeland; following the reindeer's constant migration has been their way of life for over a hundred years. To settled civilizations, they "give off a sense of homelessness, no land truly belongs to them." In the eyes of post-colonialist Homi Bhabha, "homelessness" is not a bad thing; rather than allowing the wandering to leave a deep trauma on the minds and bodies of the people, it is better to see it as a liberation of cultural identity, an opening of a negotiated space. In "*A Global Measure*", Homi Bhabha refers to minority groups as "half-stateless"... an exceptional phenomenon that is strange for certain territories and deviates from norms. Bhabha's terminology enters into a profound dialogue with the theories of Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, with the latter focusing on bare life as an "exceptional state" in stable sovereign states, namely refugees, immigrants, or colored races who cannot obtain full life rights, stripped of all relationships, "inclusively excluded" from political life, simplified into a purely bodily existence.

Curator Xiao Huaide once mentioned that the reason for seeking the last Evenki people in the residency program is to "seek others. What

humanity needs to consider in the future is, as we become stronger and stronger, how should we treat the 'eliminated' and the weaker ones left behind by technological civilization?" Seeking others is to seek those minority groups excluded by Agamben, as if the contemporary people blessed by emerging technologies naturally bear an ethical responsibility towards the backward weak. However, as in Bhabha's view, "homelessness" is not a plight of pity, but a key to breaking colonial hegemony. In Agamben's writings, bare life as an "exceptional state" is not an urgent problem to be solved, but a dissolution of binary oppositions, opening the key to messianic time.

Following Agamben's logic, with the normalization of the state of exception and its infiltration into the secret of social life, everyone in today's society has long been prepared to become "bare life". Faced with a bleak future, Agamben points out a messianic path of salvation full of theological implications for us, symbolizing a complete suspension of law, salvation from secularism, and also referring to an instantaneous "now" time structure. Messianic time encompasses the past, nullifies the future, and focuses only on the present, opening a dimension that is both transcendent and immanent.

"Messiah" comes from the Hebrew "Māshīah," meaning "anointed one." After several twists and turns, this concept evolved into the image of a savior when the end of days arrives — when the end times come, the Messiah assists God in fairly judging all sins, and the righteous are instantly redeemed, entering the true, good, and beautiful kingdom of the Messiah. According to Jewish theological tradition, from creation to end, the homogeneous linear time reaches its endpoint when the end of days arrives, thus messianic time is often

interpreted as a kind of eschatological time. However, what Agamben opposes is precisely the aforementioned linear view of time and eschatology. In his view, messianic time "is not the end of time, not the moment of time's end, but the reduction of time itself, thus beginning to disappear... it is the time between the end of days and its own end."³

On November 20, 2023, Liu Xia passed away at the hunting point in the Greater Khingan Mountains, symbolizing the end of the last moment in the dense forest for the Evenki hunters. For decades, researchers and documentarians from outside have continuously entered this mysterious paradise, but it is only the few artists in the exhibition and the last Evenki people who immersed themselves in the moment of tranquility before the end of time, accompanying them through the "remaining time" before the fulfillment of the end of the world. During this period, Evenki hunters drank, fought, and idled in the forest, their lifestyle occasionally shocked the civilized "outsiders," but found resonance in Agamben's portrayal of the life status of the messianic remnants. As "remnants" entering the messianic era, the Evenki people, like children, happily forget all the established rules of civilized society, escape from the divisions of time, space, and self-body, liberated from purposeful relationships, and re-engage in the unrestricted use of their infinite potential in an open posture. Just as Liu Xia's calm and meticulousness when making cigarettes, adding tobacco, tea leaves, and alcohol step by step, as if giving shape to time. Every action of Liu Xia transcends the established rules and boundaries at the moment, allowing the residents of the residence to "truly see the integration of people and nature, without a sense of separation." Thus, one might argue that when Liu Xia engages in these simple activities — making cigarettes, drinking, and dissecting reindeer — she embodies Agamben's portrayal of "contemporary individuals" who live fully in the moment and are perpetually poised to draw hope from every instant. She presents her life as a "purposeless means," thus opening up her own time — a messianic time.

In the eyes of visual artist Tie Yang, Liu Xia retains the essence of human beings as earthly organisms, existing entirely in the present like animals, transcending all the moral judgments set by modern civilization. When Liu Xia suddenly brings about the advent of messianic time, the

linear historical process of humanity is suspended, akin to a roaring machine finally coming to rest, and humanity's internal and external negations and violence are cast into a vacuum.

Between 1933 and 1939, Kojève, in his lectures on Hegel at the *École Normale Supérieure* in Paris, depicted a scene where, after the end of linear progressive history, the natural world continued to exist in its eternal state, where humans and animals lived peacefully in harmony with nature or established existence. "What ends is not time, but the so-called Man in capital letters, the big subject opposed to the object."⁴ People no longer fundamentally change themselves, nor is there any reason to change the world they know. With the cessation of action, transformation, and war that negate the established world, only enjoyable things like art, love, and games are preserved, accompanying the remnant into this vacuum of time.

Therefore, when asked as an artist what reflections the encounter with the Ewenki people brought him, Shi Guowei candidly replied, "Live well, cherish the present. In fact, the power of the artist is very weak, and art cannot change anything." Sounds pessimistic, but it constitutes the uniqueness of this residency. In this exhibition, the forest did not appear as the classical image of a "primitive paradise." However, entering this forest, Liu Xia and the members of the residency can, in the actions of the present moment, open up a messianic paradise in the sense of Agamben. When the "civilized people" who intrude from the outside no longer yearn for an untouched primitive forest but use their bodies and creations to accompany the Ewenki people through their remaining time, they, along with Liu Xia, cross the threshold of messianism and achieve self-redemption. As recorded by curator Xiao Huaide, they "temporarily put down the habits of summarizing, summarizing, and refining as researchers," abstaining from any attempt to document or salvage anything, or from contributing to the edifice of cultural ideals. Instead, like the "wise animals after the end of history" described by Kojève, they live in a materially rich and completely safe environment, stopping at the pleasures and satisfactions brought by art, love, and games.

3. Giorgio Agamben, "The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans," translated by Liqing Qian, Central Compilation & Translation Press, 2016, p. 78.

4. Bataille, "The Sacred Conspiracy," in *Vision of Excess*, p.181.



Figure 6 Liu Xia Making Cigarettes, Photographed by Xiao Huaide.

4. COMPANIONSHIP

Entering the second-floor space of the exhibition, the moss, lichen, and fungi brought back by the residency members are scattered throughout the corners of the exhibition. A cluster of lichen resembling pale clouds floats on the central open space of the exhibition hall, attracting passing viewers to bend down and examine its surface's subtle undulations and textures, inhaling the valuable forest scent. Lichen, a symbiotic phenomenon in the natural world, is an alliance

formed by two organisms: fungi and algae or bacteria. Fungi form a filamentous structure in the upper part of the lichen, constructing a framework for survival and space, while algae or bacteria rely on these filamentous structures to absorb and accumulate energy and nutrients from the sun. In a mutually dependent relationship, both life forms change for this union: fungi form a protective epidermis for photosynthesis and respiration for algae, while algae voluntarily give up their cell walls to seek refuge in fungi.



Figure 7 "Paradise is a Forest" exhibition site.

The form of lichen evokes associations for photographer Jiang Yuan; she finds the shape of fungi reminiscent of tree roots and remarkably similar to human neurons. Perhaps this is because human DNA in the body has a natural tendency to form alliances with other species, just like fungi. During the ancient Cambrian explosion, human

bacterial ancestors mingled with other species, disrupting and exchanging their genes. When two bacteria merge, they form an independent new life. Therefore, modern biology, including our own DNA, retains traces of such mergers, different species that formed alliances hundreds of millions of years ago, intertwined in the deepest part of our

genes, branching and flowing, weaving a dense and intricate network.

People are large-scale lichen. When modern humans entering the forest are irresistibly drawn into the intertwined ecosystem, for that brief moment, they, like fungi and algae, form partnerships with other beings. Pan Lin said in a conversation, "I can feel that she has a kind of loneliness that cannot be released. At least from the movie and meeting Liu Xia in person, I feel that she needs companionship. People went, directly bringing her that kind of companionship." No longer studying, recording, or rescuing, but accompanying, the members of the residency temporarily set aside the preciousness of modern society in Liu Xia's time, opening up their own ecological circle to the others in the forest, interrelating in a circulation of intensity, inheriting from each other, and constituting a symbiotic relationship in the sense of Donna Haraway, a relationship composed of "genome, consortia, community, and mortal boundary formations." Thus, the concept of "Jian Di (见地, to see the field)" may be viewed as the "on-the-ground work" Haraway advocates, an effort to reconcile the dichotomies between civilization and nature, subject and object, for we are inevitably bound to form symbiotic partnerships in Earth's evolutionary journey, sharing a common future.

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