

The flame burning our generation

Gulu, June 2022

The establishment, exploring and examination of the relationships within people have always been my main artistic theme. However, during these 2-3 years, namely, after the world has been disrupted by the pandemic, several general concepts have been broken; people have been reduced to numbers, tools. Words and actions got restricted, flattened. I cannot say that this is a setback, but from a photographer's point of view, it (the artistic production) really became even more difficult. Since 2022, my camera is covered with dust, because I have no way to hold onto the same methods and beliefs of exploring the world as the past 10 years. I am continuously repressing and questioning myself: who am I? What do I mean to other people? Has my photography reason of existence?



Photos rely on our eyes to be taken, to capture art, they spark emotions through visuals, and deepen concepts and ideas through reality. Speaking about me (in specific), photography has always been the means for me to create connections with people. No matter work or life, I use my camera to find my place in this world. Throughout all this journey, what I am most interested in is people. Different faces, different backgrounds, everyone has their own thriving stories. From the moment that I take my camera and I get accepted by people, I can immediately feel trust, respect and love. What photography means to me is to connect with people, which is the most important part of my life. I do not mind clarifying this point, which is a bit reminiscent, because of recent changes. We are very passive, just like watching our own crabs boiling. We can neither adapt nor do anything about it.



While I am writing this essay, lockdown where I live just ended: because of the crossed tracking of where you have been, together where an infected person has been, at any time in the morning, you could receive a call telling you not to leave the house, there could be people coming to your house to install sensors to monitor and control you. After that, another person is going to come and test you, waiting at any time for a notification of regained freedom. Things like that provoke in people the sense of unsafety and doubt, that accumulated over a long period of time can reshape people's relationships. Strangers do not crave anymore to get to know each other, instead, they instinctively check the label on their head: "positive", "close contact", "lockdown surveillance staff" ... These names replaced "friend", "teacher", "lover", becoming people's fixed titles. So, going back to the initial question: who am I? What do I mean to other people? Has my photography reason of existence?



MIGRANT BIRD SPACE

Lu Mei 卢玫

Founder & Director

Germany: +49 176 3155 3507

China: +86 136 8113 7403

lumei@migrantbirdspace.com

www.migrantbirdspace.com

Office

contactmigrantbirds@gmail.com

mail@migrantbirdspace.com

Koppenplatz 5, 10115 Berlin

Tue-Sat 1-6 pm

+49 (0)30 49952524

When people received the permission to move around freely again, a lot of my friends left Beijing, some of them even left China. I, on the other hand, continuously face loss, and the end of certain relationships. I am afraid I am wallowing in sadness and emotions, and at the same time I am afraid of becoming apathic. I often go through the pictures that I have taken, I am filled with emotions, and I feel proud of every person in the photos. I think, even if we are insignificant, we can never lose ourselves. At the crossroad of this era, we need to be patient, prouder and more confident in ourselves, now more than ever.

Finally, I am going to try to answer the question that I raised myself: I am an artist, and I have the duty to love. My photography is the proof of me and the people I love's existence. We are connected reciprocally, and we have given birth to fires in the name of art, which are bound to burn the dregs of this era and make people become human again.

I am looking forward to it.

