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p.C 98 'Jenny Holzer 优秀的的虚妄真理' [Translation: Jenny Holzer Good False Truths]

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The article starts with an introduction to Jenny Holzer's career, leading into an edited transcript of the interview conducted at Pearl Lam Galleries' on the press preview.

**MW:** How did you produce the Chinese artworks in the exhibition?

**JH:** My staff and I worked with 5 translators to edit the texts. The selection criteria for our translators was that Chinese must be their mother-tongue, and they would ideally also have living experience living abroad, so that the texts would be translated well - and reflect the culture and life here in Hong Kong.

**MW:** As the content of translation is not too much, why do you need 5 translators?

**JH:** I asked them to work in group. To create the best translation of each phrase, they discussed which they felt could be the most appropriate translation and then proposed each one to me. When they couldn't understand the original meaning clearly, it was also my duty to explain it. Actually their translations are even better than my originals, because my texts don't read very smoothly. (Laughs)

**MW:** You used lots of texts created by yourself in *Truisms*, but you abandoned them for a time, using texts by other writers. Why do you come back to *Truisms* this time?

**JH:** The first time I decided to abandon my own writing was when creating a memorial work. I thought I should use a eulogy verbatim if someone had written it already. I also started to adopt poetry into bigger subjects at that time. But for this exhibition, since I'm not very familiar with Hong Kong, I decided to use the subjects that I'm most confident in – *Truisms*. This series are very much like proverbs, so they are universally understood. For example, quite a few of the texts in the *Truisms* actually take inspiration from Mao Zedong's 'Thought', and also Confucianism. At that time, I was looking for inspiration and new ideas from people who are smarter than I am. Of course I didn't copy their sentences directly, but my work is inspired by them and similar to their philosophy.

**MW:** Do you find it difficult to write these texts?

**JH:** Because I'm not a writer! I did spend a lot of time writing *Truisms*. You can have a try – Good fake truths are actually really hard to write.

**MW:** It is interesting that although these texts were written 30 years ago, they

are still very meaningful nowadays, as if there was no progress in people's mind during this period.

**JH:** That's the advantage of *Truisms*. To some people, that's nearly belief.

**MW:** What do you think about the character of LEDs? The material changes the concept of poem reading, because normally the reader takes their time to appreciate meaning, but your LED devices make the poem keep fading away, which limits the reading time.

**JH:** I hope to do an experiment on this. It's true that people will have different reading experiences depending on various media. The understanding and experience would be very different if you read text on a mobile phone, LED work, bench or shirt. Every work has a media that it is best suited to, I think.

**MW:** But most of the works in this exhibition are showed on LED, and the flow of the texts is so fast that people can hardly see it clearly. It makes me feel like there is an "information explosion".

**JH:** Yes, I made it to be like this deliberately. Because that's what reality is like – information passes too fast to fully appreciate.

**MW:** What's your opinion on "information explosion" in today's world?

**JH:** It's fascinating, but also too easy to get obsessed with. It changes the way you look at things, and then it changes your mind in both good and bad ways.

**MW:** Do your works deliberately criticize the modern day "information explosion"?

**JH:** Not really. Because I think there is a good side to any information explosion. It gives everyone the opportunity to access information they need. But on the other side, it allows people to be easily manipulated. I hope my work will inspire people to ruminate over various possibilities within meaning.

**MW:** Although your subject matter uses text, your art is visual art after all. When you created "Light Stream", how did you work around the difference in the structure of the English and Chinese characters. For example, how did you choose the font?

**JH:** I chose a series of fonts I liked first, and then I asked about their impact. For example, some of the fonts are typically used for newspapers, and others are more commonly used on websites or government letters. I had to ask because I don't have any Chinese background. Eventually, I found a relatively modern, but also neutral font. It doesn't belong to anyone particularly.

**MW:** Does the unique structure of Chinese characters inspire your creation?

**JH:** Chinese characters are more attractive than English ones, because they are images or signifiers in themselves. In this way I can guess the meaning,

even if I don't read Chinese.

I'm planning a new project about ancient text. I enjoy exploring the ways in which ancient peoples expressed very abstract concepts.

**MW:** Your works are usually exhibited in the public realm, while this time we are in the gallery. How does this differ for you?

**JH:** I like both. The main difference is the audience. In public spaces, many people can see the works, and they can talk about it even though some of them even don't know that is art. In contrast, in the gallery space, people who already appreciate art can explore the work in a deep way – considering art history and the connections between text and contemporary art.

**MW:** Exhibiting in the public space must hope to have some impact on society viewing the work. Did you want to express specific ideas?

**JH:** Not specific ideas necessarily, but an enormous amount of information. I was 28 at that time, and I was looking to find out who I am. So I listed out a series of questions – from war to peace to love – and then I wrote down some opinions under every question. They are not only my ideas, but also many others'. I put those opinions on the posters, on the streets. I thought these ideas might be helpful for other people.

**MW:** When you go back to the texts you wrote 30 years ago, do you feel like that they are naïve?

**JH:** I'd rather say it's sincere. I hope I could be as sincere as I was at that time.

**MW:** I remember you deliberately hid your identity when you put posters on the street at that time.

**JH:** Yes, I hoped people would just see the concept, not the person who expresses it. On the one hand, it's because I was shy; but on the other hand, if people knew the texts were written by a twenty-something girl, they would consider it as 'little girl's trick'. I wanted the work to have no connection to me.