

Transformation and Regeneration in Zhou Song's Inflating Series

By Alison Bracker



Fig 1
Keep Calm
Oil on Canvas
100 x 100 cm 2019

In *Keep Calm* (2019), an early painting in Zhou Song's *Inflating Series*, a sharply-defined rhombus traps an expanding male figure. As he swells, the man nearly bursts out of his turquoise suit. His belt comes undone, his watch pops off, and the rhombus' perimeter constricts his face, knocking his glasses askew. Song once noted that such bloated characters embody both human beings' self-regard as the universe's center and their escalating desires.¹ However, this scene of intense compression and expansion also suggests a potential change in the protagonist's physical or spiritual state, for his twisting legs and upward-pointing shoe imply rotation, a pictorial trope in western art history frequently indicating conversion or transformation. The figure thus appears to be at the beginning of a cycle, a defining moment in his direction, destination, or nature. Since conversion results in revolution, regeneration, and transformation, *Keep Calm's* allusion to rotation augers transcendent turning points for humans in Song's *Inflating* paintings.

Unlike metamorphosis, a visible, external process, conversion is invisible and internal. As paintings delineate a single moment, depicting the passage from one inner state to another has long challenged artists. Therefore, painters often twisted a figure's body or head, as Caravaggio did in *The Crucifixion of St. Peter* (1601), to convey impending personal, moral, or spiritual changes and a new era, thereby rendering the figure a metaphor for conversion. Similarly, Song employs twisted, diagonal, or upside-down bodies in his *Inflating Series*, indicating human and universal cycles and revolution. His contorting man in *Keep Calm* intimates a new, transformational age emerging from the societal, ethical, and global ramifications of a worldwide pandemic and ecological crisis.

Likewise, *Parallel Universe's* (2020) title and composition imply a society evolving into a post-corporate world where humans no longer conform to fit into confining roles and spaces. Four triangles contain ballooning, business-suited men whose heads point to the center, creating a human pinwheel that bespeaks revolution. Once again, compression and (implicit) rotation compel their knees and shoes to bend, send glasses and a pipe flying, and flap the pages of a book. The men's swollen bodies become grotesque as the competing forces of compression and expansion create breast-like forms under their tightly-buttoned jackets. By evoking the grotesque body, Song reinforces his series' allusions to transition and transformation. According to the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin,



Fig 2
Parallel Universe
Oil on Canvas
200 x 200 cm 2020

¹ Constanza Ontiveros Valdés, "Zhou Song," Widewalls, London, Widewalls Ltd., 2021, <https://www.widewalls.ch/artists/zhou-song> (accessed October 29, 2021).

² Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 24.

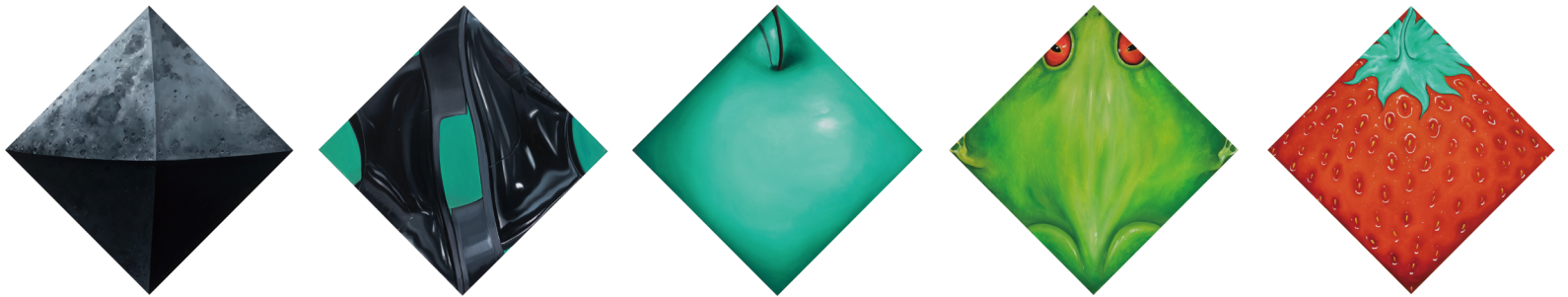


Fig 3 **Inflating Heart series** / Oil on Canvas / 40x40cm x 5 2020

The grotesque image reflects a phenomenon in transformation, an as yet unfinished metamorphosis, of death and birth, growth and becoming...In this image, we find both poles of transformation, the old and the new, the dying and the procreating, the beginning and the end of the metamorphosis.²

While *Parallel Universe* stops short of portraying metamorphosis, Song alludes to its possibility. A small vine or twig grows upwards from the painting's lower-left corner, testifying to the artist's desire to paint elements of animals, humans, and plants to detail our complex interrelationship with our universe and ecosystem.³ The flowering vine creeps over a man's shiny black shoe and threatens to pierce his engorged leg. Notably, its presence and looming entanglement with him signals more than our symbiotic bond with nature. It affirms that transformation through metamorphosis is both evolutionary and regressive, for, in mythology, literature, and art, humans metamorphose into animals, vegetables (including fruit), or minerals.

Song emphasizes this connection through successive diamond-shaped images in his *Inflating Heart* (2020) series. Each diamond contains an object that fills its surface, several of which produce a narrative of metamorphosis when considered alongside each other. A pair of shiny black shoes, a metonym for Song's male protagonists, appear in one diamond, followed by a frog and an apple, thereby tracing human regression to animals and vegetables. By juxtaposing men's shoes and a frog, the artist recalls the double metamorphosis—from a prince to a frog, and a frog to a prince—within the Brothers Grimm's fairy tale "The Frog Prince." Additionally, the shoes-to-apple connection conjures up the plight of Gregor Samsa in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, the traveling salesman who supports his family and awakens one day to find himself transformed into a giant insect. In a climactic scene, Gregor's father hurls apples at his metamorphosed son, and one imbeds itself into Gregor's back, severely injuring him and causing his eventual demise. The thrown apple sparks revelations within both Gregor and his father: Gregor comprehends that his life has changed irrevocably, and his father realizes that the family's fortunes now depend entirely on him. At the story's end, we discover that the previously static, struggling Samsa family has become upwardly mobile and that Gregor's sister's transformation from girlhood to womanhood is complete.

³ Zhou Song (personal communication, 7 January 2022).

⁴ *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Voloshinov*, ed. Pam Morris, (London: Arnold Publishers, 1994), 185.

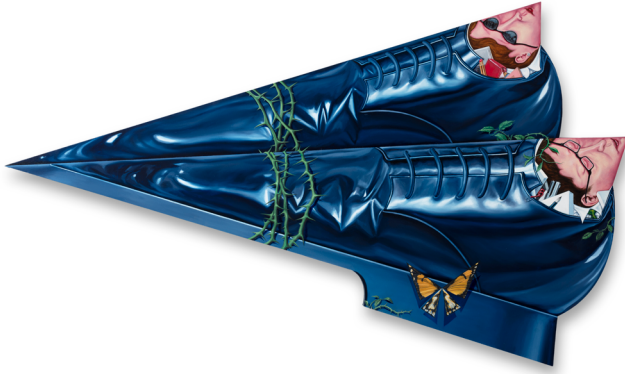


Fig 4
The Immortal Body
 Oil on Canvas
 200x120cm 2021



Fig 5
The Myth of Eternality
 Oil on Canvas
 232x160cm 2021

Despite the anxiety and disturbing consequences of Gregor's situation, the novella ends on a hopeful note, reminding us that the regression inherent in metamorphosis signifies a positive shift. As Bakhtin observed, "Metamorphosis serves as the basis for a method of portraying the whole of an individual's life in its more important moments of crisis: for showing how an individual becomes other than what he was."⁴ Song's *The Myth of Eternality* (2021), *The Immortal Body* (2021), and *Universe-Spirit-Equation* (2021) illuminate these attributes of metamorphosis through symbols of regression, stasis, crisis, and optimism. *The Immortal Body*, for example, expresses confinement, crisis, and potential revolution all at once. A thorny vine binds itself around a pair of gleaming blue shoes pointed inward, constraining them. The upper shoe contains a woman's head twisting from her white-collared neck and resting among feminine accoutrements, such as lipstick and items from a woman's handbag. In the bottom shoe, we glimpse a businessman's head turned at a 90° angle from his neck amid the trappings of corporate life: A tie, white collar, cable, notebooks, and fountain pen. Although the bound shoes limit movement, implying stasis, the upward-angled heads and sharp points at their chins allude to a clockface at the 1:00 and 2:00 positions, insinuating rotation, conversion, and, thus, regeneration.

Bakhtin perceived metamorphosis as a sheath for a concept of development that unfolds "spasmodically, a line with 'knots' in it" and visualized humans as open to change.⁵ *The Immortal Body's* bound shoes allude to these knots, while the figures' heads, twisting upwards and away from the trappings of global consumption and corporate life, mark a turning point. Indeed, the painting indicates renewal through a butterfly, a prevailing metaphor for metamorphosis, transformation, and hope. It flutters upward from the bottom shoe's heel next to a vine in leaf, another sign of regeneration. Meanwhile, the woman's lipstick and sunglasses insinuate a mask, which Bakhtin asserted is "connected with the joy of change and reincarnation...and with the merry negation of uniformity and similarity."⁶ He added, "The mask is related to transition, metamorphoses, [and] the violation of natural boundaries." Hence, Song's inclusion of these emblems denoting constriction, transition, and metamorphosis infuse *Immortal Body* with optimism and the potential for renewal and change, and away from the trappings of global consumption and corporate life, mark a turning point. Indeed, the painting indicates renewal through a butterfly, a prevailing metaphor for metamorphosis, transformation, and hope. It flutters upward from the bottom shoe's heel next to a vine in leaf, another sign of regeneration. Meanwhile, the wom-

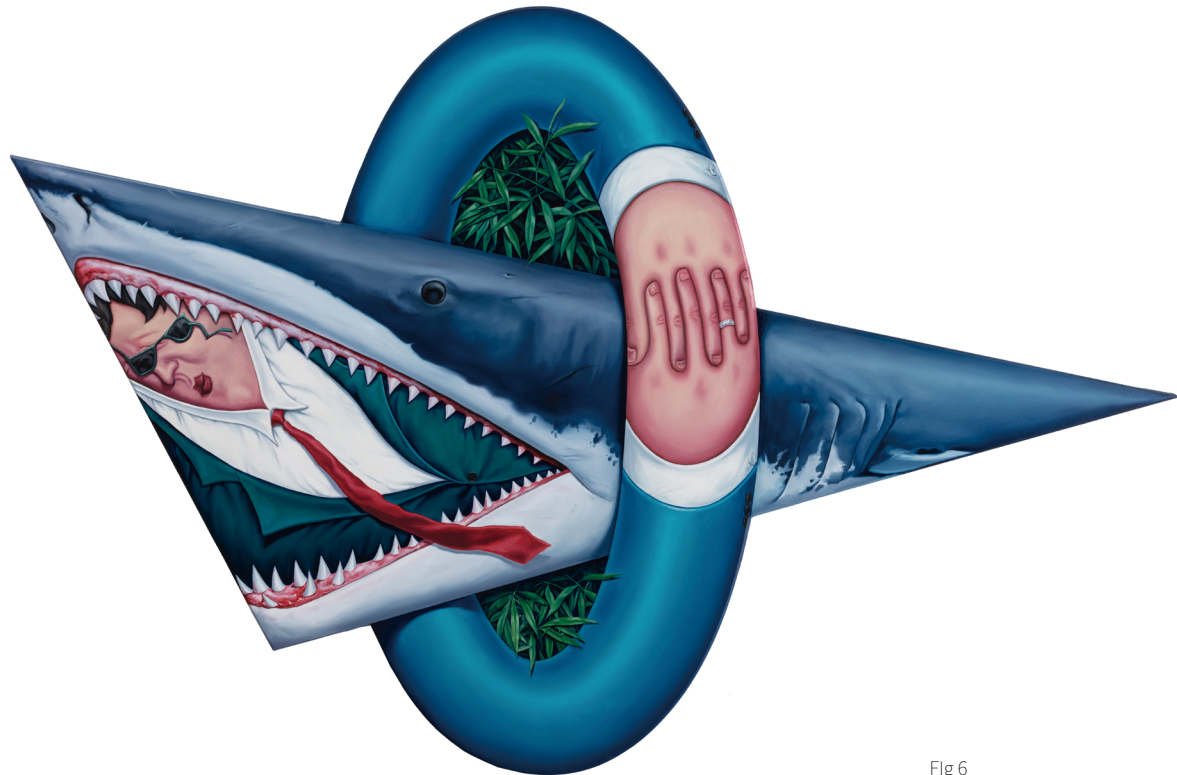


Fig 6
Universe-Spirit-Equation II
 Oil on Canvas
 198 x 124cm 2021

an's lipstick and sunglasses insinuate a mask, which Bakhtin asserted is "connected with the joy of change and reincarnation...and with the merry negation of uniformity and similarity."⁶ He added, "The mask is related to transition, metamorphoses, [and] the violation of natural boundaries." Hence, Song's inclusion of these emblems denoting constriction, transition, and metamorphosis infuse *Immortal Body* with optimism and the potential for renewal and change.

The Myth of Eternality and *Universe-Spirit-Equation* illustrate metamorphosis and revitalization even more forcefully by merging human bodies with roses and an octopus in the former and a shark and grass in the latter. Although *The Myth of Eternality's* sharp borders, painted belts, and the octopus' tentacles convey constraint, the geometric shape that contains these elements again recalls a pinwheel. Song underscores the tension between compression and revolution. He also heightens the

painting's sense of completing a cycle by pointing the octopus upward and inverting or angling the figures into spikes, signifying metamorphosis through rotation and its regressive-yet-positive aspect via blooming roses (vegetation) and the octopus (animal) dominating the figures.

Universe-Spirit-Equation bolsters these connotations by interconnecting humans and the natural world. The shark's jaws open wide to reveal one of Song's inflated businessmen, whom it appears to have swallowed whole. However, the painting's title implies that the two characters may be equal rather than one prevailing over the other. Furthermore, human arms with interlaced fingers encircle the shark and growing grass, embracing their reference to metamorphosis and nature while completing a circle. A wedding ring on a finger consolidates the themes of transformative cycles and human unity with flora and fauna.

⁵ Morris, 181.

⁶ Bakhtin, 39-40.

⁷ "Interview/Zhou Song," *Al-Tiba9 Contemporary Art*, Issue 9, Barcelona, October 7, 2021, <https://www.altiba9.com/artist-interviews/zhou-song-hyperrealism-illusionism-painting> (accessed November 3, 2021).

As we have seen, many of the *Inflating Series*' paintings testify to hope and the human capacity for change. However, the series' inner tension springs from those that present moments of stasis and utter confinement. "The *Inflating series* is a reflection on our living conditions in the real world,"⁷ Song recently declared, presumably referring in part to global warming and the pandemic's repercussions on human lives, livelihoods, and the natural world across the globe. He painted two of his works—*Moment of Existence* (2020) and *Stepping on Magritte's Sky* (2020)—in the year his and other cities enforced and monitored pandemic-related immobility. Both artworks delineate the crises and pressures humans have endured since 2019 and our need for transformational shifts. For instance, *Moment of Existence*'s triangular shape restrains a gleaming blue shoe into which Song shoehorns a pale blue face with closed eyes. There seems no room for escape for either the person or the shoe. Correlatively, *Stepping on Magritte's Sky* divides the canvas diagonally between a shiny black shoe in a pitch-black interior and an enticing Magritte-like exterior that the shoe's wearer cannot penetrate. Its demarcation of inside and outside recalls the inner and outer processes of conversion and metamorphosis, but both paintings appear to accentuate confinement, precluding rotation and its cathartic effects.

In spite of these barriers, the possibility of change reasserts itself in *Moment of Existence*'s pale blue face, which evokes the 1990 Voyager 1 photograph of Earth as a pale blue dot. After seeing the photo, Carl Sagan claimed, "Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light."⁸ Song develops these sentiments through his grotesquely bloated characters. Perhaps surprisingly, they imply advancement even in their exaggerated state, for, as Bakhtin noted, "The grotesque body...is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed."⁹ *Reincarnation*, another painting from 2021, reaffirms this notion by reprising the complete circle from *Universe-Spirit-Equation*. Its interlaced hands fuse with Song's characteristic black shoes to suggest humanity's engagement in a never-ending but progressive cycle.

Song's *Inflating Series* originated in Beijing, yet its motifs of metamorphosis, conversion, and our interrelationship with the universe strike a chord throughout the world. This year's 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia has dedicated itself to three themes that permeate Song's series: The representation of bodies and their metamorphoses, the relationship between individuals and technologies, and the connection between bodies and the earth. Furthermore, 2022's Biennale takes inspiration from the work of Leonora Carrington, who, like Song's figures, was "always fleeing the strictures of a fixed, coherent identity."¹⁰ As in Carrington's stories, Song's paintings provide his protagonists with paths to revolution, conversion, and metamorphosis amid cultural, environmental, and societal turning points. Cecilia Alemani, the Biennale curator, has declared, "The time we are living in is a moment of crisis and deep trauma, but it's in moments of crisis that we can hope for a positive transformation."¹¹ Ultimately, *Inflating Series* enacts and confirms that conviction.

⁸ Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space* (1994; reis. New York City: Ballantine Books, 1997), 7.

⁹ Bakhtin, 317.

¹⁰ Cecilia Alemani, "Statement by Cecilia Alemani," La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, <https://www.labiennale.org/en/art/2022/statement-cecilia-alemani>, accessed October 9, 2021.

¹¹ Alex Marshall, "A Curator's Vision for a Post-Pandemic Venice Biennale," *New York Times*, June 9, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/09/arts/design/cecilia-alemani-venice-biennale.html>, accessed February 1, 2022.



Fig 7 *Stepping on Magritte's Sky* / Oil on Canvas / 100 x 100cm 2020



Fig 8 *Reincarnation* / Oil on Canvas / D160cm 2020

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周松的《膨胀系列》：变革与新生

Transformation and Regeneration in Zhou Song's Inflating Series

[法] 艾莉森·布雷克



图1
《保持平静》
Keep Calm
布面油画 / Oil on Canvas
100 x 100 cm 2019

《保持平静》（2019）是周松《膨胀系列》早期的作品，画的是一个被困在菱形里的膨胀男性。他膨胀的身体都快要把他青绿色的西装撑破了。他的皮带被撑开了，他的手表被撑掉了，他的脸则被挤在了菱形的边界上，眼镜都撞歪了。周松借膨胀的身体表达了两层意思：一是人类自以为是地将自己视作宇宙中心，二是人类的欲望总是不断升级的。¹ 不过，压缩与膨胀的强大张力也表明主人公在身体或精神上存在改变的潜能。他弯曲的双腿以及垂直向上的皮鞋暗含了旋转的意味，这是西方美术史常用的比喻手法，用旋转暗指转化或变革。从这个角度看，这个男性仿佛马上就要转起来了。这对他的走向、命运、性情而言都将是决定性的时刻。转化会引导一个人走向变革与新生，由此看来，《保持平静》中的旋转比喻彰显了周松《膨胀系列》的一大主题，即人类意义非凡的转折点。

变形是一种可见的外在变化，但转化是看不见的内在转化。绘画作品描绘的是一个定格的时刻，如何用画作呈现内在状态的转化一直是困扰画家的难题。画家常用的解决方案是用扭动的身体或头颅代指即将发生的转化，有可能关乎个体、道德、灵魂，也可能关乎新的时代。卡拉瓦乔的《圣彼得受难》（1601）就是一个例子。周松在《膨胀系列》采取了类似的手法。系列里面的人体或是扭曲的，或是循着对角线放置的，或是倒置的，这样设计是在暗指人类以及宇宙的循环和变革。席卷全球的新冠疫情以及生态危机引发了全球性的后果，社会和伦理都受到了冲击，《保持平静》暗示一个新的、截然不同的时代将从此孕育而出。类似的，《平行宇宙》（2020）的标题和构图暗含着这样一层意思：社会正在迈入后企业时代，人类今后难以再和有限的角色和空间相匹配。画面被分割成四个三角形，每个里面都塞着一个胖得跟气球一样的男子，穿着商务正装。四个人的头都指向了正中心，形成了一个风车，代表着即将转动的改革。和《保持平静》相似，这一幅也有压缩和（暗含的）旋转的意味，四个人的膝盖和皮鞋因此发生了弯曲，眼镜和雪茄因此飞了出去，一本书的书页也因此翻动了起来。他们西装外套的扣子都扣得很紧，在压缩与膨胀的强大张力下，外套的褶皱让人觉得下面的仿佛是乳房，这让他们圆鼓鼓的身体显得十分怪异。周松通过怪异的身体加强了这一系列对转化和变革的指涉。俄国哲学家米哈伊尔·巴赫金说过：

怪异的图像反映了变革中的一种现象，一种尚未完成的变形，可以是关乎生与死的，也可以是关乎成长与转化的……这样的图像中，我们可以同时看到变革的两极，旧与新，衰亡与繁衍，变形的开端与终点。²



图2
《平行宇宙》
Parallel Universe
布面油画 / Oil on Canvas
200 x 200 cm 2020

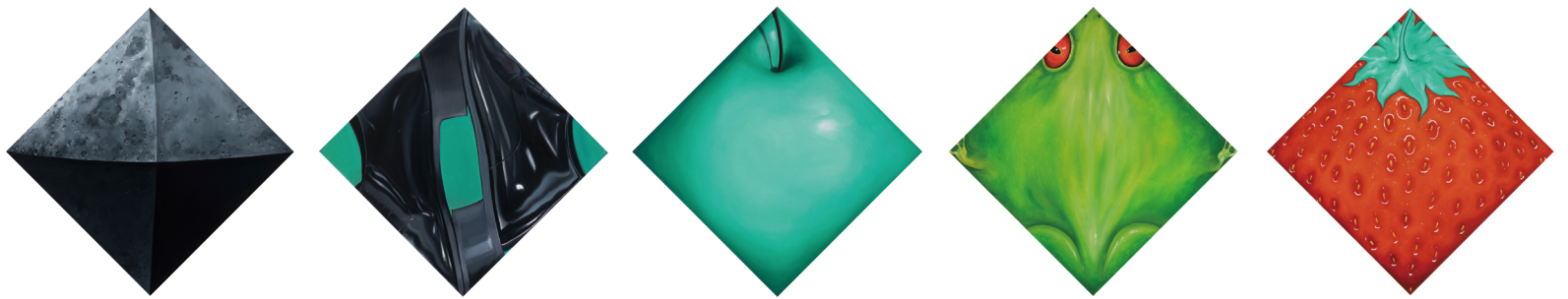


图3 《膨胀的心》系列 / Inflating Heart series / 布面油画 / Oil on Canvas / 40x40cm x5 2020

周松虽然没有在《平行宇宙》中直接画变形，但他确实暗示了这种可能。这幅画的左下角长出了一小段藤蔓，也可能是细枝，这足以说明艺术家渴望在画作中用动物、人类和植物的元素详细展现我们人类和宇宙以及生态系统的复杂相互关系。³ 开花的藤蔓爬到了男子锃亮的黑皮鞋上，仿佛再生长下去就要刺穿他膨胀的小腿。显然，藤蔓的存在以及它和人纠缠到一起的趋势并不只是在象征人类和自然的关系。除此之外，藤蔓说明变形既可能是进化，也可能是退化，要知道，神话、文学、艺术中都有人变成动物、植物（包括水果）乃至石头的例子。

周松在《膨胀的心》系列中用一连串的菱形图案强调了这种联系。每一个菱形都被填满了，有的菱形和别的菱形连起来看会组成一个变形故事。第二个菱形里装的是一双锃亮的黑皮鞋，这也是周松作品中男性主人公的转喻，紧跟着的两个菱形分别装着一只青蛙和一个苹果，这样连起来看就是人类退化成动物和植物的过程。男士皮鞋和青蛙的并排摆放让人想起了格林童话《青蛙王子》中的双重变形，即王子到青蛙和青蛙到王子的两次变形。另外，将皮鞋和苹果连起来看会让人想起弗兰兹·卡夫卡《变形记》中格里高尔的不幸遭遇。格里高尔是一名旅行推销员，是家里的顶梁柱。一天，他一觉醒来，发现自己变成了一只巨大的甲虫。故事发展到高潮，他父亲用苹果砸已经变成甲壳虫的他，有一个苹果直接砸进了他的背部，重伤了他，他最后也是因此离世的。扔苹果的场景对格里高尔以及他父亲而言都是顿悟时刻，格里高尔就此意识到自己的生命不可逆转地发生了改变，父亲则就此意识到自己成了家庭唯一的指望。故事的最后，读者发现停滞不前的萨姆沙一家有了向上发展的势头，这主要是因为格里高尔的妹妹完成了从女孩到女人的转变。

¹ Constanza Ontiveros Valdés, "Zhou Song," Widewalls, London, Widewalls Ltd., 2021, <https://www.widewalls.ch/artists/zhou-song> (accessed October 29, 2021).

² Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 24.

³ Zhou Song (personal communication, 7 January 2022).

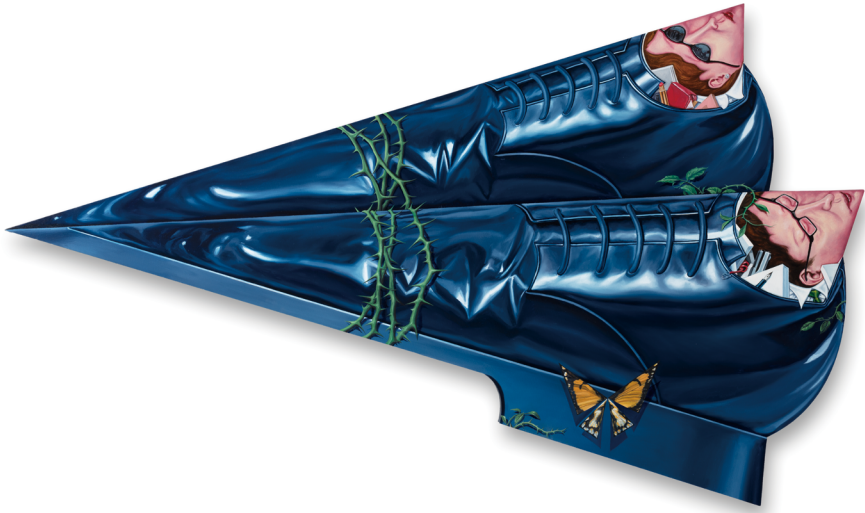


图 4

《不朽的躯体》

The Immortal Body

布面油画 / Oil on Canvas

200x120cm 2021



图 5

《永恒的神话》

The Myth of Eternality

布面油画 / Oil on Canvas

232x160cm 2021

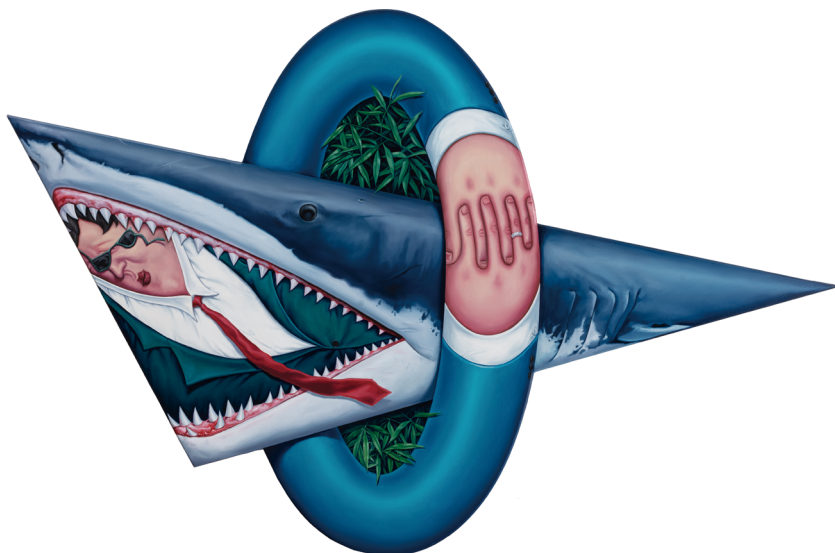


图 6

《宇宙·精神·方程 II》

Universe-Spirit-Equation II

布面油画 / Oil on Canvas

198x124cm 2021

格里高尔的结局虽然令人唏嘘，但整个中篇小说是带着希望收尾的，这提醒我们变形中内含的退化其实也有积极意义。正如巴赫金所言：“我们可以透过一个人一生中的艰难时刻去描绘他，而变形正是这一方法的基础，它可以展现出个体是如何变成另一个人的。”⁴周松在《永恒的神话》（2021）、《不朽的躯体》（2021）、《宇宙·精神·方程 II》（2021）三幅画中为了凸显变形的特性，用到了许多意象来象征停滞、危机和乐观。《不朽的躯体》就同时带有束缚、危机以及潜在变革的意味。一根带刺的藤蔓将一双发亮的蓝色皮鞋紧紧地绑在了一起，两只鞋的头部指向了同一方向。上面一只鞋里面是一个女人的头和白领，从白领位置看，她的头明显转向了另一侧，头下面还有口红、女用手提包等一系列女士用品。下面一只鞋里面有一个商人的头，位置刚好转到了和脖子呈直角的位置，里面还可以看到一系列公司生活的标志：领带、白领、电话线、记事本、自来水笔。这双被绑在一起的鞋肯定会限制人的行动，内含停滞的意味，但两个仰起的头以及尖锐的下巴刚好对应钟面一点和两点的位置，这种构图让人联想到了旋转以及转化，继而延伸到新生。

巴赫金将变形视作一种发展理念的保护层，变形的展开过程在他看来是“断断续续的，就好比一根有好几个结的绳子”，他同时还认为人类拥有改变的可能。⁵《不朽的躯体》中绑在一起的鞋和巴赫金所说的绳结是对应的。画中两个人的头都在向上转动，试图摆脱消费主义以及公司生活的标志，这样一幅图景呈现的是一个重要的转折点。蝴蝶也印证了这一点，人们常常用蝴蝶来比喻变形、转变以及希望，这里的蝴蝶更是有新生的寓意。蝴蝶拍打翅膀从鞋跟的位置往上飞，蝴蝶边上还有一小段长有叶子的藤蔓，这又是一个富有新生寓意的意象。与此同时，女士的口红以及墨镜让人联想到了面具，用巴赫金的话讲，面具“和变化以及转世的喜悦紧密联系在一起……并愉快地否定掉了统一和相似”⁶。他还补充道：“面具是和转化、变形以及违反自然的界限联系在一起。”周松就这样在《不朽的躯体》中加上了带有压缩、转化和变形意味的象征物，它们共同为这幅画注入了乐观精神，让这幅画展现了变化与新生的希望。

《永恒的神话》和《宇宙·精神·方程 II》也阐释了变形与新生，但力度更大，前者将人体、玫瑰、章鱼结合到一起，后者则将人体、鲨鱼、草地结合到一起。《永恒的神话》中，棱角分明的轮廓、皮带以及章鱼的触角都是束缚的化身，但整体的几何轮廓却是风车的模样。周松强调了压缩与变革之间的张力。同时，他特意将朝上的章鱼，倒置或斜置的人体打造成了尖尖的形状，这些元素共同完成了一个旋转的循环，这种旋转象征着变形。另一方面，绽放的玫瑰（植物）与章鱼（动物）相比人体，明显处于支配地位，这是旋转中退化的一面，但这一面也拥有积极意义。

⁴ The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Voloshinov, ed. Pam Morris, (London: Arnold Publishers, 1994), 185.

⁵ Morris, 181.

⁶ Bakhtin, 39-40.



图 7
《踏着玛格丽特的天空》
Stepping on Magritte's Sky
布面油画 / Oil on Canvas
100 x 100cm 2020

在《宇宙·精神·方程 II》中，鲨鱼张开了大嘴，里面是一个圆鼓鼓的商人，鲨鱼似乎把他整个吞进去了。这种设计隐喻着人类和大自然作为相互联系的存在。不过，画作的标题同时暗示着鲨鱼与人的平等关系，而非支配与被支配的关系。商人十指交叉的双臂将鲨鱼以及生长的绿草围在了里面，说明他乐于拥抱后者所代表的变形以及自然。与此同时，双臂环绕的动作是一种循环的表达。手上的婚戒进一步强化了这幅画的两大主题——转变的循环，以及人类与自然生物的统一。

正如我们所见，《膨胀系列》的许多画作都在呈现希望以及人类改变的可能。不过，这一系列的内在张力是从当下的停滞以及十足的束缚中生发出来的。周松近期讲道：“《膨胀系列》是对我们现实世界生存境况的反思。”⁷ 他这么讲，大概是在指全球变暖以及疫情对人类乃至整个自然界的深远影响。2020年，他的城市以及别的城市都因为疫情实施过隔离，城市因此停摆，也正是在这一年，他创作了《存在的时刻》与《踏着玛格丽特的天空》。两幅画作都描绘了人们自2019年以来忍受的危机和压力，同时也呈现了人们求变的需求。《存在的时刻》的轮廓是一个三角形，里面是一只发亮的蓝色皮鞋，鞋子里面则塞着一张蓝色的脸，面色苍白，双目紧闭。不论是人，还是鞋，似乎都没有逃离的可能。《踏着玛格丽特的天空》的画面被对角线分割成了两块，一块是锃亮的黑皮鞋，背景漆黑一片，代表了里面，另一块是玛格丽特风格的动人风景，代表了外面。鞋子的主人无论如何也穿越不了分界线。这幅画的内外划分呼应了变形以及转化的内外过程。不过，两幅画似乎都在强调束缚，旋转的可能性被排除在外，旋转的净化效果更是无从谈起。

尽管如此，《存在的时刻》还是留有变化的可能，线索就是面色苍白的蓝脸，这张脸让人联想到了旅行者1号在1990年拍摄的暗淡蓝点，那个不起眼的蓝点正是地球。卡尔·萨根看到这幅照片以后，感慨道：“我们装腔作势，我们自以为是，我们总觉得自己在宇宙中拥有尊贵的地位，现在，这个暗淡蓝点就足以动摇这一切一厢情愿的想象。”⁸ 周松用他怪异的膨胀人物表达了上述情感。这听上去或许不可思议，但这些夸张的人体也暗含着进步的意味。正如巴赫金所说：“怪异的躯体……



图 8
《轮回》
Reincarnation
布面油画 / Oil on Canvas
D160cm 2020

是处在发展过程中的躯体。这个过程永远不会终结，永远不会完成。”⁹ 2021年创作的《轮回》通过重奏《宇宙·精神·方程》的完整循环，再次表达了这一层意思。交叉的双手和周松标志性的黑皮鞋融为一体，表明人类处在一个永无止境的循环之中，但这种循环是有进步意义的。

周松《膨胀系列》的创作地在北京，但这一系列的主旨（变形、转化、人类和宇宙的相互联系）是可以在世界范围内引起共鸣的。今年举办的第59届威尼斯双年展有三大主题，分别是“身体及其变形的表现”、“个体与技术的关系”、“身体与地球之间的联系”。周松这一系列的画作无不和这三大主题密切呼应。再一个，本届双年展的灵感是利奥诺拉·卡林顿赋予的，她和周松画作中的人物一样，“永远都在摆脱固定、连贯身份带来的束缚”。¹⁰ 周松的画作和卡林顿的故事有异曲同工之妙，都在文化、环境、社会的转折点为主人公提供了通往变革、转化、变形的道路。双年展的总策展人塞西莉亚·阿莱马尼表示：“我们当下生活的时代充满了危机和严重的创伤，但恰恰是因为到了危机时刻，我们才能期待积极的转变。”¹¹ 《膨胀系列》生动阐释了阿莱马尼的洞见。

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⁷ “Interview/Zhou Song,” Al-Tiba9 Contemporary Art, Issue 9, Barcelona, October 7, 2021, <https://www.altiba9.com/artist-interviews/zhou-song-hyperrealism-illusionism-painting> (accessed November 3, 2021).

⁸ Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space* (1994; reissued, New York City: Ballantine Books, 1997), 7.

⁹ Bakhtin, 317.

¹⁰ Cecilia Alemani, “Statement by Cecilia Alemani,” La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, <https://www.labiennale.org/en/art/2022/statement-cecilia-alemani>, accessed October 9, 2021.

¹¹ Alex Marshall, “A Curator’s Vision for a Post-Pandemic Venice Biennale,” *New York Times*, June 9, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/09/arts/design/cecilia-alemani-venice-biennale.html>, accessed February 1, 2022.