Global Times, In the Vicinity, Text/Hu Bei, Dec 12th, 2013





IN THE VIC

By Hu Bei

ne night early this year, armed with a video camera and a bucket of chocolate sauce, young Chinese artist Li Qing stealth-ily approached the bronze bust of Alexander Pushkin that sits atop a stone pillar at the inter-section of Yueyang Road and

Dongping Road.
Li climbed up the struc-ture and poured the bucket of chocolate sauce over the bust. The chocolate sauce began to dribble down Pushkin's head, passing over his nose to his shoulders and chest. Li recorded the whole act with the video camera.

"Of course, I was very cau-tious and finished all the work and cleaned up the bust before the police caught me," Li told the Global Times. The finished 20-minute video work, Sweet Statue: Pushkin in Shanghai, Statue: Pushkin in Shangna, is now on show at his latest solo exhibition, Li Qing: In the Vicinity, being held at Leo Xu Projects on Fuxing Road West in Xuhui district.

"The elements in every work all reflect a kind of con-tradictory entanglement. It is something that I think the city of Shanghai can't get rid of and which still exists now during its modernization process," Li

In Sweet Statue: Pushkin in Shanghai, chocolate is a typical lovers' gift, symbolizing ro

mance, while Pushkin is also a representative Romantic poet,

who wrote many love poems.

"It's what they have in comrnon," Li said, "but for me, they are intrinsically differ-ent; chocolate is the symbol of a materialized and secular culture, however, Pushkin's poems are more spiritually romantic."

Li explained that the pour ing of chocolate sauce over the bust symbolizes his belief that our modern consumerist society has covered people's pursuit of spiritual culture.

Windows are another major image that Li makes use of to demonstrate contrast in his new exhibition. He collected several old window frames, which were once ubiquitous in 1980s Shanghai. Behind the real windows are oil paintings of windows, creating a juxtaposition of contrasting architectural styles.

Li chose a window of the HSBC (Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corpora-tion) building on the Bund and a window of the Shanghai Exhibition Center (the former Sino-Soviet Friendship Build-ing built in 1955) on Yan'an Road Middle as the subjects of

his oil paintings.
The HSBC building is a Victorian-style neoclassical design, ily on Russian- and Empire-



with Stalinist innovation

They are two typical architectural styles of Shanghai's modernization period and are both well-preserved in today's Shanghai," Li said.

Shanghai," Li said.
"In these series of works,
the paintings of the windows from foreign-style architec-tures were placed behind real windows from local families, which looks like two different styles of real windows are really adjacent to each other. It is just a common reality in Shanghai, the coexistence of local and foreign, history and now," Li added.

Date: Until January 14, 2014, 10 am to 6 pm from Tuesday to Saturday; 12 am to 6 pm on Sunday, closed

on Monday Venue: Leo Xu Projects Address: Lane 49, Building 3, Fuxing Road West 复兴西路49弄3号楼

Admission: Free





By Hu Bei

Can you imagine a scene in which a group of Chinese women in the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) wearing long gowns and skirs with their hair in a bun or coll are standing together around a pool table and playing billiards? And not far away from them, gathered around another pool table, several Chinese men who drag their long queues at the back of their heads are also playing billiards.

nestes are also playing bullards.

In fact, the above scene really exists; it was drawn and published in Dianshizhai Pictorial, a Chimese-language pictorial magazine printed in Shanghai from 1884 to 1898. An illustrated supplement of Shen Bao, one of the most influential Chimese-language newspapers in Shanghai from the late 19th century, Dianshizhai Pictorial had a big impact on the whole country at the time.

Huang Xiangong, the

time.

Huang Xiangong, the
director of the Historical
Document Center at Shanghai Library, told the Global
Times that this illustration
should be regarded as a precious and valuable historical
document.

should be regarded as a pre-cious and valuable historical document.

"Today you probably can't find a photo which records a scene of people in the late Qing Dynasty playing billiards, but this drawing, which depicts the scene so vividly, is still accessible for people today and tells us that billiards was imported into China and entered Chinese people's daily life as a new form of entertainment after Shanghai opened its port in 1843." he said.

Huang added that soon after Shanghai opened to the outside world, photography was also brought to China, but was not widely used in the Chinese news industry. During the late 19th century, illustrations depicting news and events became a novel and effective way of spread-

and events became a flovel and effective way of spreading news in China, especially in Shanghai.

According to Huang, from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, there were over 200 different periods! pictorial newspapers and magazines being publish



in the country.

As well as Dianshizhai
Pictorial, another famous
one was Picture Daily, which
was printed daily in Shanghai beginning in the late
19th century.

"With the combination

"With the combination of with the combination of written text and striking visuals, those pictorials be-came much more appealing to a broader audience than many newspapers where text was the major part," Huang

said.

Recently, in commemoration of the 17-0th anniversary
of the opening of Shanghai's
port, under Huang's direction, the Shanghai Library
and the Shanghai Bookstore
Publishing House compiled
a book featuring more than
acc reprinted pictures from

a book featuring more than 300 reprinted pictures from many different pictorials published in Shanghai during the late 19th century to the early acti century; "We limited the time frame of the pictures to the first 60 years after Shanghai opened its port, so from 1843 to 1903." Huang said, "because the changes that the port opening brought to Shanghai, to China were most obvious during that period and those changes could be reflected vividly through those pictures."

In the book, all the pic-tures were classified into 10 subjects, which represented different aspects of Shanghai society at that time, such as transportation, public utili-ties and entertainment and recreation.

recreation.

"The pictorials reflected all aspects of life in Shanghai at that time, ranging from international celebrities, graphic novels to Shanghai architecture, and so on. They are all important historical sources to understand and study national conditions and citizens' lives during and citizens' lives during that time," Huang said.



show at Li Qing's solo