

## In Conversation with Cc Foundation: The Charm of Creation Lies in Its Limits

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In Shang Liang's series "Good Hunter", "Boxing Man", and "Sofa Man" developed through her previous solo exhibitions "New Order" (2019) and "Mortal at the Helm" (2021), she has invented and established the image of a new race of people known for its mutated muscle. The image of this "new man" can be conceived of as the artist's self reflection and projection. In the current exhibition, she continues to chart the freedom of identity construction and self display in a postmodern, posthuman context.

**Q: From "New Order" to "Mortal at the Helm", and now to "New Man", have there been any changes in your creative process or in the figures you portray?**

A: In the current iteration, the figures undergo a more internally driven process of release and expansion. They are situated in a continuum of potential evolution.

**Q: Do you anticipate introducing new series of figures in the near future in addition to "Good Hunter", "Boxing Man", and "Sofa Man", or do you intend to further deepen your exploration of the three existing ones?**

A: Within the framework of an overarching theme, I aim to carefully attend to and further develop the existing figures. At the same time, new series will naturally emerge as there are many more concepts I wish to realize.

**Q: We understand that you have mostly collaborated with galleries for your solo exhibitions. How does working with Cc Foundation, a non-profit institution, influence your conceptual approach to the exhibition? Could you share your thoughts on "New Man" in this context?**

A: The exhibition has taken on a more research-oriented and experimental character. In "New Man", each figure functions not unlike a module, with its

individual traits responding to certain aesthetic paradigms and constantly wrapped in interchangeable skins and wearables.

**Q: In your exploration of the body, gender, and subcultures, how does your identity as a female artist influence or perhaps limit your practice?**

A: Gender and gender identity inevitably shape how one engages with the world and how the world responds in return. Of course this is a significant process for everyone. All gender positions come with constraints. One cannot entirely transcend their own identity and lived experience, and yet one still attempts to inhabit or narrate life. I would say that it is precisely in such limits where the charm of creation lies.

**Q: Some of the figures in your works, particularly in the “Sofa Man” series, have their facial features removed. What is the reasoning behind this choice?**

A: With its facial features omitted, the figure becomes a stand-in, open to identification with anyone. The sofa, along with various other human-made objects, can be seen as an extension of the human body. Yet these ergonomically designed forms can, in turn, dictate our behavior and habits. It is as if the human figure was imprisoned within the sofa.

**Q: The posthuman era has been a central concern in your research and practice. How do you envision it? Would you say your work contains elements of futurist speculation? What kind of world do you imagine?**

A: I envision a world where extreme openness and conservatism continue to coexist in a highly pluralistic state. The human body may have undergone genetic modification through biotechnology, or been reshaped through cosmetic medicine. New forms of aesthetics may be increasingly radicalized, and the shifting of appearance and identity will likely bring about new social challenges, demands, and corresponding rules.

**Q: You have experimented with a variety of media, including cinema, photography, short films, and installation. Why did you settle on sculpture as a secondary medium for your practice? What considerations inform your approach to sculptural forms?**

A: I typically begin with painting, where I have the freedom to create figures. Moving on to sculpture then becomes a thrilling process, as it allows the figure to emerge from the flat surface into a tangible entity that can be touched and encompassed. Sculpture presents a more concise and precise form with materials and volumes that carry significance. The language developed in my sculpting process also feeds back into my painting, creating a dynamic exchange that fosters an ongoing evolution in my work.

**Q: In past interviews, you have mentioned that you aim to depict a particular type of human beings. They are predominantly associated with words such as “strength”, “muscle”, and “fist”. Do you think this amounts to a form of labeling and would you resist that?**

A: As a matter of fact, every artist is inevitably associated with certain labels that help people identify and remember them, much like how individuals are defined by their unique traits. In an age where everything is subject to rapid consumption, such labeling may actually serve a constructive purpose.

**Q: Would changes in daily life, such as those due to the pandemic or environmental shifts, affect your practice? Or do you incorporate your reflections on them into your work?**

A: Environmental and societal issues constitute both the context and the intangible constraints of an artist's work — whether one chooses to conform to them or to resist. Indeed, compared to pre-pandemic times when I had ample opportunities to travel and experience diverse ways of life, I now find myself largely rooted in one place, working in a highly routinized and solitary mode. This shift has led to a distinct change in my state of being. The continuous, uninterrupted status of my creative practice has given rise to unique reflections and evolving modes of expression across different phases.