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WHAT I FEEL IN A WOODEN BOX AND MOISTURE CREAM

- TIANMIAO LIN

I was strongly fascinated when I first saw those worn tool boxes used by building workers and immediately bought them. The boxes, nailed with leather bands and iron wires, are like antiques, an object used for centuries but without the fragility of antiques. They are coarse, rugged and wild, symbolizing male crudity and dominance. As tool boxes, they must contain something. This "something" was the beginnings for my idea on the relationship between the feminine and the masculine.

This "something" would possess the quality of overcoming that hardness with softness, a softness that expands the boundaries with subtle force. What could bring this sensory metamorphosis? What could hold and force the spectator to accept it with all of his or her senses? My object turned out to be several kilograms of moisture cream.

When the smooth, pungent beauty substance of pink and white overflowed the coarse wooden rim, the air was filled with a heavy scent, a scent associated with a cheap, vulgar taste. The function of the box is weakened. It can no longer hold the cream under control. The cream, full of life and sensation, flirts and subverts the tension and solidity of the box. In the sustaining antagonism of the two elements, the original identity is absorbed into its contrary.

There are themes and concepts in my work that are simply hard for me to translate by conventional methods. This work implies the paradoxical nature of the laws and conventions within our lives and the seduction of the material world. In my work are my innermost thoughts and feelings about my role in my culture and in the larger world. It is only through seeing, smelling and touching, especially through the touch of the spirit, can one approach any of these implications.

- Translated by DONG WEI