

## **“Blue and brown” project 2013, Shanghai**

I have worked with art and photography for more than 30 years. I have behind me many exhibitions, a well-known name and an academic teaching carrier within the field of alternative photography. I believe that I have made a valuable contribution to the exploration and development of new techniques and new ideas within this one of the youngest forms of art.

Photographs are two-dimensional interpretations of the three-dimensional reality. I have always wanted to bring new expressive, textural dimensions to photographs and explore a possibility of creating some new three-dimensional interpretations of the flat images.

By choosing old archive pictures and making new manual prints and interpretations of them I underline clearly that the subject and the equipment that have been originally used are not what is the most significant part in a photograph. Photography to me is more like music, where interpretation and performance of the original piece is what defines a new creation of art.

I have chosen to use just a few images made by a local Norwegian studio photographer and make them mine by creating a visual concert out of these few originals by playing around with sizes, colours and frames.

I use manual processes, where application of liquid self-composed emulsions and process of exposure and development of each piece is what makes it special and unique, it is what makes it mine. In today's war for the copyrights in photography this is a revolution. In opposition to the art world obsessed with defining authorship I got the rights for use of the archive photographs and transformed these into new original works of art by declaring that I am neither an image-taker, nor a printer, but a free interpreter, a performer just as legitimate as a concert musician.

This form of photography, old photographic techniques like cyanotype blue and van dyke brown are the same ones that were used to make industrial blueprints and reproductions of drawings.

A photograph acquires meaning not just from its subject but from its framing, process, and deployment. I wanted to liberate photographs from limitations of frames, add textures and depth. The originals change so much, as the cyanotype or van dyke process add new textures and new dimensions to the subjects. Blue cyanotypes and brown van dykes on cotton, Chinese rice paper and silk are simultaneously interwoven, preventing any hard-and-fast interpretation.

By bringing old Norwegian archives to China and exhibiting them in my own version in Shanghai I provoked the curiosity and made people ask a new question: why here? By displacing the reality and making the objects anonymous I further emphasised my focus on form, shape, texture, colour and expression of an image.

So I have been so lucky to get an access to some old Chinese photographic archives, which I wanted to expose next to the Norwegian ones to create a sort of a dialogue. But there were a lot of issues with the copyrights on the pictures. I had a permission to use the Norwegian archives, but not the Chinese.

This project has been a new experience for me. It has been a beginning for a new exploration, a new approach, and a new possibility. Surprising, unexpected, unusual and daring way of work is like walking on thin ice. People kept asking questions like "why don't you take your own pictures?" I think, I knew what I was doing. I believe this kind of approach might even become common one day. But right now it is new and different, maybe a bit hard for other people to understand.

I have made a great effort to organize an exhibition, but the only presentation of these works has been done during the open studio event at the Art Peace hotel in February 2013.

### **Shanghai residency November 2012 - March 2013**

November 22

I arrived to Shanghai from Norway via Amsterdam in the morning of November 21.

The flights were actually as good as any flights like that can be. In Amsterdam I had again a collision with some fascist security guys. They always pick me up from the crowd and make a hell for me. I do not know what provokes them the most, my name or my face. They always find something to dig into. This time they kept me behind for 40 minutes delaying the plane as they claimed there was some sort of problem with my visa to China, which was not the case. Nobody later asked me anything about it upon arrival in Shanghai, so it was pure sadism from their side. I had ten hours of flight to meditate on the subject and try to forget all about it, but it was not easy. Maybe it is my old age or my demand of justice that make it so difficult. I still cannot forget the humiliation of standing there behind all the passengers and being looked upon as a terrorist.

Entering China went absolutely smoothly and quickly, no problems, no controls. There was a lady holding a board with my name on it and waiting for me as I have been told in the instruction letter. So I have been followed to a big black car with a driver wearing white gloves and a uniform, looked very official. It reminded me of my father's army awaiting me round the corners of Moscow during my previous life. I did not feel good about it, and it was embarrassing. I have never wanted to walk on a red carpet and feel privileged.

When the plane went for landing, I was surprised to see that all the landing stripes on the ground were marked with bright blue and green lights, it looked like a Christmas tree.

Driving from the airport has taken about an hour. The view and the traffic reminded me of Russia for some reason. Everything was overall grey with introduction of some primary colors, which looked dull and greyish too. Red, blue and green looked like a low-key grey. I do not know if it is the pollution or the strategy, but in Moscow everything looked just like that. Size of the motorways, size and shape of the architecture, horns, aggressive and dangerous driving manners gave me a feeling of getting totally out of control. Like big churches make one feel little in front of the God, these surroundings were extremely suppressive.

Only the tops of the high buildings were shaped like pagodas and even radio and other communication towers had an outline in a Chinese style. Heavy fog and noise reducing walls painted in dull orange, blue and that particular shade of green kept hiding the view. I kept thinking of George Clooney and the other celebrities, the jury that picked me out among many others to be an artist in residency at the Swatch Art Peace Hotel in Shanghai. I had a strange feeling of not belonging anywhere here.

When we drove in front of the hotel in the very center of the city, several guys in uniforms came out to drag all my numerous suitcases to my room. I kept just walking slowly in as a queen. My room on the second floor was a super modern designed solution with a lot of raw details of the old building shining through. A weird combination of red, green and golden traditional decorations, thick soft carpets, concrete walls and an open space shower in front of a huge double bed in front of an enormous window with no view, or rather a view on a similar wall a couple of meters in front and hundreds of gigantic air condition fans on the ground below making an even continuous booz. Transparency was not bringing any light into this space. Instead of exposing the surroundings into the space the space felt like making the inhabitant totally exposed from all sides. I noticed a lot of web cameras in the corridors and above the stairs. Hope they have not placed a few in the toilet!

The building was about a year old, but I could imagine how the renovation will look in a short while. The shower and the sink were covered with tiny mosaic tiles, the fillings in between were dirty already and impossible to keep clean. The tub gave no hot water over the sink and there was no handheld shower in addition to the big shower head hanging high above. Taking a shower was an act of self-exposure and humiliation, one felt so little, helpless and exposed to the power of modern light systems, switches and hidden wardrobes. Untreated bricks, concrete and steel, wooden floors and ceilings and white Ikea style shelves all along and up to the top and unreachable had no purpose and were chosen just for decoration. There was no sound insulation and it was not possible to turn off all the lights. I felt very naked even when I was dressed.

The staircase from the 20-th floor with dark and heavy animals and dragon woodcuts was blocked with poles and chains, so that no one could snick around. One was supposed to take the elevator, which could only be used with a card. Small Chinese with buckets and brushes were constantly cleaning and repairing something. There has been no place to hide, no space for privacy. It made me feel stressed and uncomfortable all the time.

Swatch Art Peace Hotel has no other guests, only two whole floors filled with about 20 artists from different parts of the world. There is a 4-th floor with luxury suits that are almost always empty unless some mysterious guests pop up now and then. In addition there are close to a hundred employees serving these twenty guests. How and why it is organized is a mystery to me and to all the others. There are no curators, no art or material information. One has to start everything from zero, find all what one needs by own initiative and ability. Artists only help each other, if the new person knows to ask the right questions. What a waste of energy! They could have prepared a page with some addresses and some information. It is like a game of being inventive, an IQ test. It is swim or sink!

The space is big! Rooms are big, hallways are big, and furniture is big and white. Modern and old, glass, concrete, traditional woodcuts and Chinese script as a three-dimensional plastic form hanging in the middle of the seven floors staircase. There are offices on the ground floor, exhibition hall with swatch watches on the first, artists on the second and the third, directors and luxury suits on the fourth, a restaurant on the fifth and a roof terrace on the sixth.

It takes time to run around the hallways. We are served dinner-like breakfasts with whatever one wants, vegetables and fruits, eggs and bacon, boiled eggs, fresh eggs, sausages, potatoes and noodles. Good coffee, bad coffee, black tea, green tea, two fresh squeezed juices, milk, soya milk, five types of bread and several types of cakes. Still everything tastes Chinese, and people are longing for European breakfasts French or Italian way and hate the sausages that are served the same every day.

We can pack things for lunches and dinners, and there are boxes provided. There are utensils, if one wishes to cook oneself. There are cupboards for each; there are refrigerators and freezers. I have not got so far as to find a supermarket yet.

I have not seen anything yet; there are so many things to see.

It is raining and it is humid, but not cold, about 15 to 18 degrees C, no wind. In the morning it was not bad, I walked along the Bund, along the river. Lots and lots of Chinese people everywhere. They like to talk to the foreigners, they ask a lot of questions, and they are friendly and polite. There are lots and lots of others as well, greyish men following everything. Put your backpack in front!

Traffic is unbelievable! Nobody respects any traffic rules, they drive on red light, they do not stop for walking people, and it looks scary, crowded and big. Architecture is very mixed, grand and suppressive, everything from classic to modern, from mosques to churches with pagodas and palaces in between. The streets are very wide and long compared to where I come from now, but very much like where I come from originally. Has to do with the amounts of people and the amounts of vehicles, of course.

I had to get in touch with a friend of a friend through another friend, so I dropped him an email saying that I am here and perhaps we could meet one day. I had plans to go and look for some artist materials. One of the artists mentioned, where I could find them. But when I checked my email before going out, I discovered that the guy is driving towards here already. He has been calling the hotel and communication was sort of broken. I had to drop my plans and just stay and wait for him. It has taken forever, and it felt like time wasted. I have been so anxious to find my materials and get started. Driving to the outskirts of Shanghai to a German settlement area and meeting his adopted Chinese daughter of 24 has not been a part of my program. I am sure he had the best intentions, but no empathy.

When he had finally arrived, he stopped in front of the Peace Hotel opposite. I did not have a local phone yet, so again, it was a broken communication through the hotel reception. He spoke Chinese, and as it showed later all the other languages as well, including Russian, Japanese, Arabic, German, French, Italian etc. He even looked like my second ex-husband

and was a totally genius crazy nut. I felt very uneasy and uncomfortable, but I also felt that I was trapped and totally in dependence. There was nothing I could do, I had to sit and listen to his true stories about Taliban, Norwegian involvement in Afghanistan, conspiracies and political truths. He had an Aspergers syndrome, and he was telling me a lot about it. We talked a lot about his best friend and my former husband. I have learned a lot about craziness, and nothing about Shanghai.

I have had a hard time to see and hear the story about his adoptive Chinese daughter Bente, as he referred to her. He found her as a child worker at some factory, he does not know her age, but she must have been about ten years old then. They registered her as 14 years old. He managed to get her out and adopt her. She has been staying with him since. At the age of 24, ten years later she had a nervous brake down. She has been diagnosed with schizophrenia and placed at a hospital for overweight young women with this disorder; there actually was a special hospital for just that kind of women, amazing. She did not look overweight to me. What am I then? An elephant?

Bente has been treated with medicines and electroshock, as I have been shocked to hear. She was absolutely normal, when I met her after we finally arrived to his house to pick her up. Her father made an impression of a heavier nut case. He had to sell his apartment in the center of the city and move to the outskirts in order to pay the bill for the hospitalization of his daughter. The area he moved to was halfway to Beijing, but it was a German style clean and green neighborhood with some plots of earth, bushes and flowers in between the blocks. There was no elevator to the fifth floor, and he said he had to bribe everyone to get the heating system to work.

We went to eat at a German restaurant; he ordered some vegetarian dish, while I ordered French lamb, which was probably above his means. So I offered to pay the bill, which has been accepted after a hesitation. Felt like everything went wrong. His daughter went to eat at a Chinese noodle place across the street. So there came Dagmar the German owner, and he kept explaining to her that I am a Frau of one of his colleagues, not anything else. I am so rude, so I kept contradicting his political views and admitted that German food is the worst I know. He did not seem to be offended by my direct speech, but he admitted later that he also felt uneasy. However this has been an experience I would not want to miss! I felt uncomfortable and uneasy as well, but it was interesting and surprising to come to know this man and his daughter.

He kept telling me that it might take as long as five years to make sure she can be on her own in the open world, but he had bought her an apartment in her home city. She was very musical, played a couple of songs on a couple of electric piano instruments he had. He played beautifully too and had amazingly moving pianist hands. But we all felt stressed and uneasy, so I asked him to take me back to my hotel. That might have offended him, I do not know. I run out of topics, it was hard to find what to talk about to Bente. I hate small talk and I am not good with crazy people. I do not know what to say or how to behave.

It has taken him only half an hour to drive me back, and in that area there were no taxies, or so

he said, maybe out of consideration. Though he explained to me that consideration of the others is an impossible thing for people with his kind of autism. I have suggested that he came back to visit later one time, but he kept telling me about his ME and no parking around Bund 19. He could not walk, he could not take the public transportation, and so he had to drive. He will be busy the coming days, as he is starting a new publication called [www.taliban-norge.no](http://www.taliban-norge.no). Thanks heaven!

November 23

Finally I got out of the hotel into the streets. My computer had to be fixed after I have done something bad to it on the instruction of a Swedish Apple adviser the day before leaving Norway. I went along the street and the first thing I walked into was a huge Apple store! Gods must have been watching over me. So I went back and took my computer with me. A Chinese guy was very quick to figure out what was wrong, but he sent me to another side of the world to visit an expert in recovering governmental lost data. I took a taxi for about an hour in each direction. The Governmental Data Recovery office looked tiny and dirty. The expert took an old screwdriver and started to screw off the back of my new Mac. I tried to explain that there was no hard drive, but his English was too poor. He soon enough discovered that there were two SSD processors and no hard drive to remove. He suggested I leave my computer behind for a back up and come back the day after. I said I would not do that. He said he had never seen this new Mac before. I asked him to order a taxi for me. He could not do that. I walked out and grabbed a car in front of the building and got back to the Apple store. My friend there told me that I had to make an appointment for the Genius bar, but I insisted on waiting for the genius, and he had helped me to fix my problems. My material from the two days of work before leaving Norway has been lost forever. It is the first time in my life that I have no back up. I have been too stressed before leaving for China, there were too many things to do, and I had to pack.

I have brought with me the most stupid clothes and no shoes. I forgot that I couldn't buy shoes here, only man's shoes. I have no light jacket; my coat is too warm and not waterproof. Lots of stupid mistakes make me feel unhappy and uncomfortable, but I cannot change anything now. I will have to manage with what I have brought with me. At least I have my photographic emulsions and an UV bulb, which I pushed into my bag instead of all the shoes. Maybe it has been the right choice anyhow.

Walked back to the hotel, left the computer, and walked towards the material stores. But it was nearly too late. They were closing. I bought some calligraphy paper with golden spots and carried it back wrapped in plastic under my umbrella in a heavy rain. My feet were wet and worn out, but it has been a productive day.

I have even managed to find a place to eat before returning to the hotel.

November 24

It was so stupid of me to go out walking the streets on a sunny Saturday! The streets were so crowded as I have never ever experienced before. The amount of people has been

overwhelming. Not even a line to the mausoleum on the Red Square in Moscow can be compared to this! There was a concert on the People's square in the middle of Nanjing road, which has been stuffed completely with all the 20 millions people at the same spot, or it just felt like it. I have been attacked by a very insistent woman and lead into some scary side street, where they had a brand faking company. There has been no escape from there without leaving a lot of money behind, but at least I like what I have been forced to buy for probably far too much money. I turned exhausted.

I sat down at an American coffee shop and had a surreal feeling of a big capital of the world. After that I have committed even more idiotic shopping. I have been looking for a pair of working trousers and a t-shirt, but what I managed to get hold of looked terrible. There is nothing my size, I have to buy man's clothes, but even those are too small. Why and how have I managed to forget about it, when I was packing? I am terrible at planning things, and they have been terrible at providing information. So I have brought with me a lot of things I do not need, and all my clothes are way too warm for their broken air-conditioning and for the weather outside. In addition I have been so determined to bring my materials that all the rest has been taken out to give the space. None of the clothes left in the suitcase after that operation match or fit together. I am so hopeless at packing!

Back at the hotel I was unable to sleep. It is incredible how much noise they are making during the day. There is a continuous renovation going on, they are vacuum cleaning, washing, polishing and speaking across the long hallway to each other. It is worse than Italy that way. I have been asking for earplugs at every pharmacy, but they were just shaking their heads looking at me in great surprise. I have lost one of mine under the bed, and I do not have any more of those, which is another great mistake of this travel.

November 25

I stayed in the whole day, coated some paper and tried to rest. I could not sleep, but was dizzy from the lack of it. Talked to the guys at the reception and made them buy a sawing machine for me online. Had to take out some cash, so that they could pay with their card for me. Gave a tip of a 100 RMB, which the guy hesitated but accepted after all. I have no idea if it is stupid or not. Everybody tells me it is. Chinese just think you are stupid, they say. Another guy at the reception, the one who managed to buy a piece of glass for me, gladly accepted 20 RMB. I still cannot tell right from wrong.

I took a sleeping pill and collapsed in the afternoon. My jet leg has only turned worse with the time.

November 26

I went to get a few more things for the work. Hunting for treasures like a plastic bowl or a shit of paper requires some hours of walking around, but I actually have found most of what I need now. There are a few more things, but I know how to get them, it is only a matter of time.

Time is an issue here. When I was making my tests for the emulsions, everybody was trying to help. I am using a water sink outside my studio, so the moment I turned my head away, somebody would helpfully turn the water off. I have lost a few hours of work and a lot of materials that way. Now I am hanging out notes in five languages asking people not to turn the lights on and the water off for me. In addition the cleaning lady kept trying to wash the workshop, which she could not do in the dark of course. I do not understand, why they have to wash everything every day; it is too much to my standard! Since I came for less than a week ago they have changed the bed ware twice too, twice a week. This is a higher standard than what I have experienced anywhere in Europe or in USA and not very environmentally friendly. Well, the Chinese have been washing themselves long before the Europeans...

I am sort of fainting all the time, have no idea why. I do not feel well. Maybe it is the air pollution? I lack oxygen and I cannot breath. The smells are so over whelming everywhere!

November 27

Today it was sunny and nice outside. I took a taxi to the textile area, had to order some clothes and also to buy some cotton. It is very hard to communicate. They seem to understand a lot, but have their own opinions on everything. It is hard to make them do things the way I want, they are making corrections according to what they think is right.

We shall see what this will lead to. I managed also to get my bag repaired for 10 RMB, which has made me happy. Otherwise I have a feeling of being fooled most of the time. I have no idea if I am, or how much the things actually should cost. I just know that I am spending much more money than I intended or can allow myself. What this will lead to, I have no idea.

I got back to the hotel and got lunch. Started working. The sawing machine has arrived, now I have to use it. At the moment I am not sure I know what I am doing, but hopefully it will come later.

Have looked at the work of the other, young artist girl. They all are making sorts of junk art compositions with all the plastic flowers and the colorful details some how reflecting the city and the national character. Even the painters are inspired from the architecture and the boiling life outside. Everything is Shanghai inspired.

My project seems to be out of another world, which it also is.

In the evening there has been a confrontation with another artist. He was not happy about my running water. Maybe his old prostate did not like it either, so he got to go to the toilet far too often? I have no idea. Instead of telling me that it was disturbing, he just kept turning the water off in the middle of my processing. I have lost several hours of testing, very irritating.

I find it very rude that they sit and speak French or German very loudly at the breakfast table, which is excluding those, who do not follow. But I am not going to have any discussions or any more confrontations. That means I cannot work the way I planned. That also means that I have dragged all my equipment for no purpose.



After about an hour the sink has broken to the great satisfaction of some and to my horror. The water had run on the floor and into the room of another artist, who has been extraordinarily patient and understanding as opposed to the fascist two doors away. I had to ask for help from the hotel desk to get that fixed. What I can do now, I have no idea. Tomorrow will show. I cannot use the sink in my bedroom as it is covered with tiny white tiles, and the white fillings in between the tiles are dirty already as it is. If I use my emulsions there, it will be ruined forever. I cannot use the kitchen sink either, as the emulsions are poisonous. Could be a revenge idea to poison all the guests here. I am afraid to ask the staff, as they might tell me that there is no solution. But I might have no choice, as everything is so regulated and organized. I cannot just go somewhere and do what I please.

November 28

Now I have been here for a week. A lot of things have happened, and I had a lot of new impressions, a lot of stress and a lot of excitement of all sorts, both good and bad. In a strange way the jet leg only turns to be worse and worse, I do not sleep without a pill or two, and even then only for a few hours. I cannot move freely outside my room at night, so I feel trapped and imprisoned, which is stressing me even more. There are cameras everywhere around the hotel, hope there are none in the bedrooms, but I cannot be sure. I am getting paranoid from being watched all the time.

Breakfast has been served late because of the very important visitors, who were to be served first, so we had to wait.

Today we are going to have a party with the VIPs, the boarding comity from Switzerland, who has chosen us to come here. Jean, an old respectably looking gentlemen speaking French and heavily accented English, looked charming. I have made a fool of myself, not knowing, who he was. I said something about him having a good stay in Shanghai, and he was smart and replied that I must know that he is the one responsible for me coming here, a very important person. I wondered if he was George Cloony as it was mentioned in the information email. Oh my God! The other one was Silvano, an Italian from Milano, living in Switzerland. Both seemed to know a bit about art, it has actually been a delight talking to them, as opposed to all the members of the Chinese staff. Asian people often pretend to be able to understand much more than what they actually do, it is very hard to handle, as one never knows, how much they understood of what one is telling them.

I went out for lunch, found a place in one of the shopping malls in a high block, sat by the window with a view over the main busy street, relaxing. It is a problem to find the food, which does not disgust me, but my choice was not so bad this time. Talking with hands works fine for me.

After that I took a taxi to the printing shop, checking if I can make some big prints. The prices are not that low, and the quality is not what I wanted. But I have found a shop near the one that has been recommended by one of the artists, which might be useful. I have to solve my water

problem prime to starting doing anything at all.

Jean the boss promised to talk to Wuumi the project responsible about finding a solution. He understood the processes and he knows now that I need water inside my studio, not in the corridor. But this might take some time. Now I know more or less what I am going to do and how, so hopefully I can start walking around and looking at places. The problem is that I am up at 4 or 5, so I have a full working day before I can go anywhere. The shops do not open before about 10, the same goes for all the galleries etc. I am getting tired from just walking the streets, and besides, it is not fun when it is raining a lot. I have to start planning what I do when and how, which is upsetting. I would have rather taken it as it comes and lived from hour to hour, but that seems to be difficult.

The party started at five. All the artists have dressed up, which I have not. There were snacks and refreshments served, and a lot of really ok wine. I got full from a couple of glasses due to the lack of sleep. I am not very good at socializing and small talk, so I should try to avoid that in the future. All the artists are licking the bottoms of the big bosses, and they are jealous of each other, competitive and pretending. The Canadian guy, Emmanuel, said that I am very negative about everything. I had to think about it, this is not the first time I hear that I am negative. I consider myself not particularly negative, but maybe way too cynical for the most of these young and hopeful children. I am feeling old. I have been through it all, and I am tired of it all. I have no plans for the future, no intention of making a career as an established artist or being recognized as one by any members of the official art mafia. I am really proud not to be a part of the official art scene and proud to be an outsider.

November 29

I have organized my first pictures in my workshop. The big bosses, Jean and Silvano, have stopped by and looked at them. It has actually been a nice talk, friendly, encouraging and helpful. We all need some response, and theirs has been only good. That has made me feel better. I have explained my problems about water, and Jean has promised to find a solution.

In the meanwhile I have to be careful and not disturb the prostate man, which means I cannot really do any exposures. But I have a lot of other things to do, maybe I should use some time on seeing the city? I have not been anywhere just yet.

I took a taxi to the photo-printing place, which has been recommended to me by one of the earlier artists. It has been a disappointment. They had an Epson ink jet printer and a very little selection of printing materials. I found another one next door, which might be able to print the negatives for me, but everything depends on what quality he is able to produce. So we shall see.

I found a supermarket next to that camera and computer market, but it has also been a disappointment with high prices and low quality. I will just have to go out to eat; it is easier and actually cheaper than cooking oneself. Only I do not want to go out three times a day. On the other hand, one does not get to the ovens and pots in the kitchen here, as there are the same

people occupying the place around the dinner time. Sometimes they organize fellow dinners, but not everybody is being invited, which is pretty strange and unpleasant to me. I do not understand this attitude.

A couple of hours are wasted each day on waiting for Skype and surfing. Surfing is not easy. Internet connection is falling out after five minutes without activity, and so one has to log in again, which is totally frustrating. The connection is very slow, and that makes it practically impossible to work in a normal way.

I am very tired in the evenings. It must be all the excitement and all the unknown things and strange people around.

November 30

Friday is the end of the week, sort of here as well. I went to get more materials, which is a half an hour walk in each direction, and some time spent inside the shops. I always find something new, and I always spend more money than I intend to. Money has been running between my fingers, as it always does. Here it is supposed to be cheap, only it is not. All together I have been spending much more money than I would have normally done at home, but then I am getting a lot of stuff too. Hope it will give some results later.

There is an ugly atmosphere of hostility between me and some of the other artists. The German lady is leaving today. She has been kind to me. She has also given me all her wooden frames after she has stripped her pictures of them for posting. She told me that I am not the first person to have a conflict with Adolf. She told me that he is a conservative chauvinist and a fascist, and that he does not stand independent and clever women, who do not fit into his world of dominating old men. I could not even imagine that it could be something of the sorts.

The little French bubbling Swiss cartoon artist has attacked me in the corridor and shouted at me in bad English that they do not want me here, they have had it much better without me, and I may very well just go back to where I came from.

I cannot get used to this kind of talk, even though I have heard this kind of speeches before. But I will not allow anyone to talk to me like that!

I have sent an email with a complaint to the secretary, they have discussed it between themselves, they have talked to the guys, and all that has only made the things worse. Now everybody is talking behind my back about me. They say I have taken a role of a victim, which everybody is sympathizing with. It is just so unfair and stupid. But again, there is something about it, as I always am getting into trouble with other people one way or another. People are animals, not human beings, especially the artist brand. They bite and bark, they steal ideas and they need to hurt each other. Artists are probably the most egoistic and aggressive type. Jealousy and competition are their main motives. Perhaps that is a typical characteristic of a creative personality, the worse is the better. If one looks back, none of the great artists have ever had a good reputation as good human beings.

If that is the case, I am not going to be recognized as a creative personality due to my high moral standards and a belief into some basic humanitarian liberal values.

Here it is a wolf's world, and I am an intruder from some other species. So either they are going to eat me or I have to hide like a rabbit.

In any case, all these problems have actually lead to something positive for me. I have been offered to move to a bigger and better studio in a couple of weeks, which I am totally thrilled about. It is a much bigger space with some closets and shelves; so hopefully, it will give me some new opportunities. On the other hand, it also gives me some bigger responsibilities. Now I really have to make something big.

December 1

I am so upset and unhappy! At breakfast another German artist, Axel, has underlined to me, that it is not nice of me to pack lunches, as it leaves some other people, who do not get up before 11-12, without breakfast. It is great news! I thought that they are clearing everything away at 10. But I am glad he just explained it to me in a friendly way. How could I know? I thought they are constantly bringing more food, as it usually is at the hotels. Hans, who is my worst enemy here now, is packing a lot of food for lunch, and he does not care for the others. He was the one, who told me to do that. He must have been done that on purpose! This was really embarrassing. Nobody tells Hans not to pack lunches. I asked for Axel's special permit to take with me a banana, as I am still waking up very early, and I am getting hungry a long time before breakfast. I will look for a supermarket somewhere nearby today.

It is totally weird to run into those two guys around the place, small guys on high heels, as I call them all, and pretend that we do not see each other. They have not offered me any apologies, as the authorities have instructed them to do. Short men with long egos! I have to learn to live with them behaving that way. I do not feel like I have done anything wrong.

I did not know if I am allowed to continue using the water in the corridor or not. Axel is using it too. So I just did. I am very careful not to use it for too long, as I can come back to these tests later, when I get a proper space. It does not matter, if they are not washed properly. I just need to experiment, so I know what I am doing, when the time comes.

Have to gather the courage to go out for a supermarket and maybe a gallery visit. There is one just around the corner.

Went out, left my visit card at the gallery, found a little shop for some goodies, and had a meal. Back at the hotel now. Do not want to go out again. I am scared of all the crowds, especially in the weekends.

Met the Italian artist Aldo, an acoustic sound artist, very nice guy, and very nice work, which I

really liked. He invited me in and showed me his work on a computer. He has a combined bedroom and studio space, nice. I showed him my web site. We are friends.

Now I have ironed my last pictures and I want to do more work tonight. The prostate man is out, so I can dance on the table. All what I have done so far are just preliminary sketches. There are no good quality materials to get, no watercolor paper of any known brands, no glue that is archival etc. That is why I am considering switching over to textiles. At least I know that it is not going to fade and disappear after a short while. That is the reason why I have bought a sawing machine.

It is funny though, as they have sent a wrong machine, a more expensive one than the one I have ordered. So they have sent a man with the right machine, he came to the hotel, packed everything back and set up a new machine for me, very effectively. I have not started using it just yet, but I will start tomorrow. I am exposing the cotton pictures now. Each piece has to be exposed for an hour and a half, there are four pieces for each picture, and so it makes it into six hours of only the exposure part, so everything has to be washed and ironed and sawed together, and ironed again, and mounted after. I am not making it easy for myself.

Have talked to some of the other artists, seems like there are many interesting people here, not only the ugly gnomes from Tyrol. I am very impressed by the level and quality of work, it gives me a feeling of inner panic. I hope I can hold the standard.

It is hard to live and work beside many strong and egoistic personalities such as good artists often are. Fortunately the place here is huge and so well equipped and organized as I have never experienced anywhere before. This should have made it easier, only it does not. It has something to do with people's surge for recognition, competition and exactly this inner panic that probably everyone is feeling just like me. We all feel that we have to hold the standard and make good work, which is so hard at times. I hope to find a solution after all.

December 2

Sunday was an international marathon day, so we were warned by email against going out. How considerate! I was glad to stay inside the building and kept working. Have found an interesting competition to apply to, so I have spent some time preparing the materials for the application. Everything is so well organized here! The printer works and scans, and I am able to use it for my negatives, so I do not need to go out. I am very pleased with that.

Went out for a massage, manicure and pedicure in the evening. Now I feel like a human being! They are so amazingly clever about these things here! It is such an enormous luxury to be taken care of in that way, and it costs close to nothing compared to Norway. I asked for French manicure, which I hoped should be just simple transparent something, but they have made it totally obscene with red edges and transparent layer over it, vampire like and sexy, but sort of elegant and sophisticated too, not vulgar as many other things are.

There are so many colors everywhere. What is not in architecture is in clothes and objects. As

opposed to my longing for colors from the USSR, they must have had strong colors in clothing and traditional crafts even through the years of the Cultural Revolution. But now it has exploded totally. I am so sorry that I cannot buy any clothes here, as everything is too small. I feel so related to Chinese people, and I have the same tastes for the colors, non-sophisticated primary colors.

December 3

Today it was so shiny and sunny in the morning that I decided to get out. I walked for many many hours, I took taxis in all directions, and I covered a couple of areas just in order to get the first impression. My sense of directions is so hopeless! I am a total geographic idiot, and it is stupid to use iPhone outside. A regular map should have been sufficient, only it was not. I have made a mistake and started walking in the opposite direction of what I was supposed to do, so it became more expensive to take taxi back, when I got totally worn out. But it has been pleasant to get lost, find a street of violinmakers, and old houses from before the war in the French concession. I took a lot of photos, I do not know what for.

After a long day in the wind, I collapsed. Worked a bit in the evening, and another day was over. The days fly. It is absolutely weird to see how these artists here act and behave; it could have been a reality show, indeed. It is abnormal and inhuman at the same time as it is very representative for human race and society. It is eating or be eaten, talking behind your back, no attempts made to give any sort of help or advise, just the opposite. They hide what they have learned and discovered, and they are afraid to share knowledge or information. Competition factor is the highest priority. Perhaps I am partly excluded due to my old age or my different attitude to norms and standards of human communication? But I am not going to change the world or educate the youngsters.

I have to figure out what to do with my project and how. There is a problem of transporting it back. As far as I can see, there will be no exhibition here, I am not going to run all over the place trying to sell myself to any of these commercial art galleries. I have an impression that there are few or none of the more serious ones around. Young capital phenomena are dominating the scene. There are lots of very rich people around with very high expenses and spending. They disgust me to such extent that I will do my best to keep away from those circles. All the art galleries are oriented towards these kinds of people, and they all have to survive. I will not survive among the sharks.

How have I even landed here? I am a dying dinosaur. Or is it too grand to even think so? Maybe I am just a dying ant, one of the workers, not the queen?

December 4

Now I have already been here for two weeks, still three months to go. I have decided to cancel my trip back for one week in January. It has been a very crazy idea in any case. The reason I even started thinking about it was the insurance. It costs more to extend the insurance for two months than it would cost to go back and forth to Norway. But it is too tiresome to fly for 17

hours in each direction in an after Christmas rush.

I worked for a while today to begin with. Went for breakfast early just to illustrate to those ugly idiots that I am not avoiding them, which I am. It is highly unpleasant to meet these guys before breakfast. So I have to find some new routines and eat a late breakfast, so I do not have to see them.

Took a taxi to the textile market again to collect my new coat and some other things. Everything is wrong, made real badly and awkwardly, different from what we have agreed, and for too much money. It has made me upset. On the other hand, I have to get used to it. It is a part of the situation here to be robbed, fooled and taken advantage of. If I think carefully about it that is exactly what I am trying to do towards them as well. Why do we buy cheap things? Why do we order clothes to be made?

I went out for a meal nearby. It is irritating to be followed by those fake products salesmen everywhere. They are hunting for idiots like me to rob them, to fool them etc. But I am learning, one time is enough for me.

It is hard to keep working on my project without knowing what it can lead to. I usually need to know about the exhibition space before I even start planning what I am going to do. Here I will have to imagine a space, take a chance. It is totally unbelievable that I manage to get anything done at all. There is no darkroom; there is no water, and just a few chemicals that I have brought with me. There is no way to get more, unless I ask someone to send me some in a parcel. That means a chance to take. Either it will work, or it will not.

The sweet Swiss girl went for a massage together with me in the evening. It was a place that I have found through a girl at the reception downstairs. It was ok, but not the best. I will have to keep looking.

After a couple of hours on Skype I have collapsed to bed.

December 5

It takes many hours to get things done. Each exposure takes an hour, even an hour and a half, so washing and drying etc. Preparing the negatives takes even longer, but fortunately enough there is a printer up to A3, which I have managed to make print on architectural paper, which is a little miracle around here. So I might not need to go to the printers market back and forth by taxi etc. I am very happy to be able to avoid that.

I went to some shop that has been recommended to me for getting some materials, but that was a flop. So I started walking as I thought in the right direction towards the Bund and the riverside. As it appeared to be after a long walk, I have been heading in the opposite direction, as usual. It is actually not so difficult, as all the names are written in English and marked west and east, south and north. Only I have no sense of those directions either, and I have a total disability to learn.

It is fun walking the streets though, if only it was not so painful for my back and legs. I like watching people. Like there would be a crowd of a hundred tourists all wearing red hats running after their guide and marching together. There are all those advertisement sellers everywhere, who flap their papers in front of you in a very particular way in order to attract your attention. There are all those who try to attack you to drag you into their small streets and shops where they are producing and selling all the faked leather products, watches and what not. That is exactly, where I got robbed the first day. Later I read on the web, that one is supposed to bargain and go down ten times the price they are asking. I am usually bargaining the wrong way and rounding up upwards. They probably do not appreciate it at all; just think that I am stupid.

I have to get back to the hotel after a few hours, as I do not want to visit the public toilets. Just a memory of it from the last time seven years ago makes me feel bad. But today I took a boat to Pudong, to the financial district and the brands shopping area. Had to use a public toilet there, it was actually cleaner than what I have seen anywhere in Norway.

I feel little in that enormous stone jungle of gigantic architecture, which is probably the purpose of it, I guess. These buildings are like the ancient temples are suppressing the little human figure in that scale of constructions. I do not like to be suppressed, so I did not climb the towers to see the city from the above, and I would not enter the malls of all the famous brands. My outfits do not look good there. I wonder where I can get a pair of shoes my size? The time will show, I guess.

I walked for a while in the park. I like Chinese parks with the stones and the well-trimmed bushes. It was nice to see some trees, some yellow leaves covering the grass and nearly no people there. Public sculptures are terrible though, also gigantic, either figurative or abstract, but always very big and shiny, nothing interesting.

I tried to walk back to the river, but it seemed to be too far, so I got a taxi back. It costs little, but if I do it twice or three times a day back and forth, it counts. I have to learn how to use the metro.

December 6

It is day out and day inside the hotel. Small ants of billions of Chinese are moving silently around the place cleaning, washing and polishing everything over and over again. They change the bed ware every third day, and they wash the ceilings and the walls with hot water and steam. For some reason they do not give us new slippers, maybe we are supposed to wash them ourselves? I have no idea. Mine are as dirty as they can be, I have my own slippers with me, and so I will start using them instead. But those are just some of the small mysteries of the place.

One has to guess the most of it. As I came out wrong with the other artists, I can not ask them questions either, not all of them, just some, so it is mostly guessing and learning by mistakes.



This is very typical China. Even those Chinese, who seem to speak good English, just pretend to do it. It is bad to show the weakness, and therefore it is better to pretend they understand and lead the others into some real problems. That is not the intension, but that is the natural result. Asian people do not like to loose their faces.

I have to ask to get some chemicals sent from Norway. It is not possible to even try to explain anything to anyone here. I asked the public relations lady at the reception to check for me, but she broke the name of one chemical into three different ones and told me they are all prohibited in China. Maybe I could try to find them through some ceramic studio? It seemed easier to ask to get them sent from home, but maybe that will lead to even worse problems, I have no idea. The time will show.

My partner has his birthday today. He is staying with my dog at home and keeps telling me how sad that is. I have bad consciousness anyway, with or without him telling me that. My only excuse is that my dog is actually his dog. He is the one, who decided what is best and how. I have been overruled a long time ago. As I said, he would not have come to visit me here anyway, either there has been a dog to take care of or not. But today is his birthday, and he is as sad as ever. One year closer to the grave, he said. I feel helpless, as I cannot help him to feel different. I cannot decide for him, what to fill his days with.

We have been together for fifteen years, but there is no more security about the relationship now than it was to begin with. I am not sure of anything anymore. I think we are together mostly because we both are terrified to stay alone. There are some good things, and there are some difficult things. We are trying as good we can. The dog cannot travel to Italy anymore, as he is too old. I wonder what is going to happen in the spring? If the dog is still going strong by then, I will need to stay at home with him. So it will lead to being separated again, and not being able to spend some time together in our only fellow home there. The dog is ruling our lives.

We spend hours on Skype every day. It is good, and it is bad too. But today is his birthday. There will be no celebrations, but he has received some sms-es from his kids.

My kids are difficult to get hold of. I am upset and constantly worried about them, but that is how it all turned to be. They are far away, they are not what I hoped they would be, and there is nothing I can do to change that. I just have to accept that. I am only needed, when they want money. I have to prepare to get old alone. No one is going to be around.

December 7

Today I have thrown myself into my bravest adventure so far. I took the underground to the other side of the city. I have found what I was looking for, and I have enjoyed my stay there. It has been a sunny day. The sculptural park was not very interesting, but there was one exhibition I liked in the museum. How do they pick up the artists, who is in charge of organizing it all, and where are all these people? I will never be able to find them, and I do not think I should. I do not want to be a part of this whole staged performance. I say it honestly. I would

have been embarrassed to become a part of it. On the other hand, there is no other way to reach the public. Or is there? Are there some other channels? The Internet? The cyber space? Maybe...

I have managed to find the way back, I found a restaurant to eat at, and I got back. The days are long here, but not boring as at home.

I am not participating in the Happy hours here on Friday nights, as the fascist Adolf organizes them. I am trying to avoid him.

December 8

Saturday, the end of the week, and the time is flying! I walked to the art materials shop again, I worked a bit, and I am wondering, if what I am doing is worth the efforts.

I had a nice dinner all by myself at a restaurant on my way back, which was not good for my stomach. That has ruined my plans for going out for a gallery opening with some cocktails etc. I have no idea what I am supposed to wear for these events. I have no fancy shoes, which is limiting my possibilities. In the end I was glad to stay home, it was a relief. Why should I do the things I do not like?

I kept thinking about the invitation to Fiffy's good-bye party. It just needs to be quoted as it is, without any comments.

### **Fiffy Von-Someone**

Departure and drinkies

Hello my lovelies

I will be departing this house and this country early next Friday morning.

So I shall celebrate this awesome time I have had with a night out on **Wednesday 12th starting 9.30ish**

I have business visitors before this or I would start earlier.

My plan is to have a few glasses of something here in the kitchen and then around 23.00 head off to my favorite dive bar which most of you have been to by now just past Jing'an. You are welcome – in fact positively encouraged to join me. The night might move from there, to somewhere completely insane if you have the stamina!

In addition, I will be partying this weekend. Tomorrow night I am currently looking at heading to gay bar 390 where Man Chyna – gay hip hop star is performing live. Saturday I have a friends Christmas party and then will go out afterwards so keep in touch if you fancy getting jiggy with it.

Smoochies  
Xx Fiffy

I really keep wondering if she is a man or a woman, or a transvestite. She has a child of three, but it can be just a child of her earlier partner or something, I have no idea. Maybe the change of sex allows to even having kids? Who knows? I am not an expert. And what the hell does it matter? The blond girl of three has been brought to Shanghai from Iceland just for a few days to be with Fiffy, as Fiffy has paid for her father's ticket back and forth. I kept thinking about these poor children, who do not have any right or chance to make a choice or a decision. They are just dragged into a situation, and have to deal with it as good they can. I am also thinking about my poor son, and what I have been doing to him. Compared to these children I have seen here, his life has been a paradise on earth. But maybe paradise is where your feet are?

Fiffy is making video art. She is painting too. I think her painting is really bad, I have not seen her videos just yet. But the backdrop she has built in her studio I really like. It is a black box in a perspective, all covered with plastic flowers. It must be a good backdrop for video making. She reorganizes all the details every now and then, with all kinds of plastic creatures, constructed chairs and porcelain animals. I wish she would leave that black box to me. But I think I have overheard that she has made it in such a way that it can be dismantled for storage and put together later again. I am really looking forward to moving to that space and changing it completely.

I am sort of hiding from the other people around here. I am going late for breakfast in order not to meet the gnomes. I actually like to wonder about this crazy hotel all by myself only saying hellos to the ghostly Chinese cleaners.

December 8

Saturday again, the time goes quickly! Some work, some sleep, some talk, and the day is gone.

I wanted to go for an opening with cocktails and other affairs, but suddenly I have changed up my mind and just stayed in my room. I have no energy for all the socializing and the small talk.

Has coated more paper and cotton. Now I am totally empty for the emulsions, but I have done a lot. Have no idea at the moment what I am going to use it like later or how to present it. Hopefully something will pop up in my head.

The amount of bad paintings and sculptures around is overwhelming. It is hard to see what is what. The amount of good things is also overwhelming, and it is not hard to notice that. My brains are spinning; my head is full of inspirations and ideas. I wish there has been an aim for all the creativity.

December 9

Sunday is a quiet day at the premises. People are gone somewhere for some openings or just a walk around and about. I like that I am left alone, that nobody is entering my room, washing and cleaning. I can sit and enjoy my loneliness without being disturbed.

Went out for all the exhibition places around the hotel. There are many, and there are even more than those marked on the official art maps. Everything is big, enormous, grand, and often not worthy anything. In between the grand buildings and ridiculously grand interiors there are small passages and backyards full of garbage. One can see all that, when one walks up the floors in all the galleries and the museums on the Bund. The contrasts are shocking.

I have been thinking about attitudes towards the Chinese among all these foreigners coming here. Nothing has changed, not for centuries. I have got an email from the Dutch residency provider from my previous residency in Xiamen. They are celebrating 500 years of Dutch presence in China or similar! I just cannot believe it is true.

Went to see the Shanghai museum, the first art museum in Shanghai. There were some interesting works actually, but also a lot of junk, real bad junk. There were these big pages of blank porcelain paper, which made me think that I will probably never find that factory producing porcelain paper in big sizes. Otherwise why has this guy taken the effort to make sculptures thick as marble that are supposed to look like paper?

So there were those fishes made of fiberglass and painted in fluorescent colors. They were actually even better than the fishes from that Irish guy from Belfast, who had a presentation at the ceramic symposium in Denmark. His fish was made of clay tiles with photographs of old Belfast and the history of the city imprinted on them. How primitive can the concept be? These fishes here were at least not too pretentious, they were just fishes, emptied inside, so one could have a look from the underside and discover some knives and other things on the inside. Straight forward and primitive, but big and colorful at least.

Now I have soon to collect my courage and take a taxi to somewhere.

Only I did not. I have been hiding in my room with the lights off. How crazy a crazy can be? The Spanish guy has announced an open studio for those who would not be able to come to his opening on Saturday. I did not want to even show my face, but they got hold of me and took pictures etc. After that I have locked my door and pretended I was not even there. They speak really broken English, and as my French, Italian and Spanish is at an even lower level, it is best to just exchange hellos.

December 10

I have lost a feeling of days passing by. Every day is more or less as the day before. Naturally I discover more and more, but it is all of the same sort and the same kind. It is striking how

lonely one can be in a crowd of many people. It is hard to tell one day from another. What have I been up to today?

Breakfast at 9, avoiding the gnomes. Only today they were there. Sometimes the breakfast is served late, so they are still there when I come. We sit by the same table, they talk to each other in French, while I eat my breakfast and try to look out of the window. So they finally go away, and I can drink my tea in peace.

So straight to the workshop, starting the exposures of the day. Even though it takes a long time, there has been some production. I must say that I have done the best under the circumstances. I wish I had a bigger glass plate and more lamps. It does not make any sense to start ordering it all now. Maybe after I move to the new space in a week from now. At least I know what I am doing and how, so it is only a matter of time and money before I get to my aim. I wish there has been a contract for an exhibition already. I need to know about the size of the space, the height under the ceiling, amount of windows etc.

Went out to look for a pair of shoes for all the parties that are coming now. But there is no chance to find anything my size or looking normal. I have even made a research on Smart Shanghai and Hi Shanghai, but nothing useful came out. It said that Marks and Spencer on Nanjing road is a good choice, but I could not find it, it has probably closed down a long time ago. So there will be no shoes for me for the Christmas celebrations that I have so badly wished to avoid. Maybe I should hide in my room again?

It is a very strange feeling to be here at this hotel. On one hand it is big, grand and luxury. On the other hand it is a bit like a prison. We are under a constant over watch. I have a paranoid feeling that all the endless amount of cleaning personnel wandering everywhere has an extra income from the government as well. At least that is how it used to be in Soviet Union in my times. All the grandmothers in the elevators at big hotels were secret agents, so were all the prostitutes and the friendly girls in the bars. Maybe it is not like that here anymore, as the amount of foreigners is not exactly under control. I have no idea how it works, but I am sure they have some friendly freelancers wondering from one gallery opening to another.

December 13

I am loosing the count of days and weeks. What have I done? Where have I been? Yes, yesterday was a busy day that started with photo shooting for the Swatch Company and their promotions. So I went out for a meal and collapsed to sleep after that.

At 7 there was a VIP opening for the show of the Spanish guy. We all had to go, as there has been sent an invitation. The VIP reception has been held at the top of another luxury hotel on the Bund, at a bar on the top floor with a fantastic view on the river. We have been served drinks based on some sort of original Italian vodka, which is a non-existent phenomenon. It was a pure moonshine mixed with something sweet and some crushed fresh basil leaves, it was not bad, but way too strong. I got rather drunk after a couple of glasses. There was food served to grab by hand, including lamb chops on a napkin. Very stylish! I felt totally out of place

among all the young high-heeled ladies and well-dressed gentlemen. I walked back to our hotel together with a young Swiss girl I like.

At 9.30 there started another party for the parting Fiffy von Someone. I had a bottle of Chinese red wine I bought a long time ago, which has made a crazy mix on top of the moonshine cocktail headache from earlier. During the party I offered a glass of that red terrible vine to one of the gnomes. The other snobbish one announced that he does not drink Chinese vine. Well, good of him!

The day after was a day of regrets and a hangover, but not too bad. I just realized that I am not that young any longer. I was glad I have not joined the company for the dive bar experience. The snobbish gnome has told me during the breakfast that it was terrible, just as I guessed it would be. I was so happy to hear that he had to leave after a short while and that he felt all his clothes got ruined by the smoke. I met him at the breakfast table the day after. We are both trying to reduce the tension, but obviously the antipathy is mutual.

I am really looking forward to moving the workshop.

Basically, I have not done much today, I have not been out of the hotel. I just stayed inside my room most of the time. Aside from the acoustic session with Aldo, the Italian guy. It was some sort of 40 minutes long sound track from the Amazon forest, which was a bit too long. It was strange to sit in his bedroom and try to close the eyes and imagine one was somewhere else. The sound quality was not so good, and I got too distracted by the two smelly boys on each of my side. So we had to fill out some questionnaire about our experiences. I had no associations to the Amazon forest, but some abstract sculptures and futuristic films. The questionnaire was also very strange, and not very clear or precise.

December 14

The dominating Fiffy has left leaving behind puking and sick residents, who have been joining her on her late bar dives. Slowly they kept coming back to life and their usual activities. Fiffy's workshop is still stuffed with her items of all sorts. She has sent an email with a copy to me requesting Danielle to make sure that all her costumes and other artifacts have been destroyed and not fallen into my hands. I was shocked to read it the way it has been formulated.

In general I must say it is the first time I meet and experience my artist colleagues in their full glory of egoism, arrogance, self-sufficiency and a total lack of humanity what so ever. They are just as brutal and aggressive as wild animals of the worst sorts would be to each other, when placed in a closed environment like this here. Competition, biting each other's heads off and not showing any interest what so ever in each other's work or thinking. In addition there are language barriers and an endless amount of misinterpretations, talking behind each other's backs instead of asking direct questions and a complete absence of any motivation to cooperate or help each other.

I feel being taken advantage of when I go with Danielle to help her get something she needs, and later she does not even invite me to join her on her trip to the gardens as I asked.

A new couple of German dancers arrived yesterday. They asked to see my workshop, as I am moving and that is the one they might be getting. The guy entered the space, looked around, made a couple of comments on the light and the size of the room, and has not asked a single question about what I was working on there. He actually looked at the space without even seeing what was on the walls! It is just unbelievable! According to my codex of politeness, he should have shown at least some interest. But he was so totally absorbed in his own interests and needs, that anything else was not a part of his universe.

I am celebrating a sweet revenge though, as he and his lady are going to use my old studio, put a lot of music and jump and make a lot of noise for my fascist neighbor Adolf. Now he will regret that he had complained over the sounds of running water in the corridor! Fortunately none of these developments are going to be a part of my future existence here.

I could not really do any work, while waiting for my new workshop to get cleaned and moving over there. So I spent the day visiting a new fabric market, wasting even more money there. The amounts of textiles of all sorts is just so overwhelming, I cannot stop buying more and more. I will have clothes made for the rest of my life and more so. I have asked Fiffy where she was ordering her costumes, but she would not share that secret. I just cannot understand why? Is it because she hopes that in that way she will reduce my chances to become her strong competitor in the field of art? Or is it just a total lack of compassion?

Anyway, I have now discovered three different fabric markets, and I have tested a couple of tailors. Actually the first one seems to be the best. But we shall see the results by the end of next week. I have spent a lot of money on textiles and tailoring already, with a couple of complete disasters due to lies and false promises. Since I do not speak much Chinese, there is no option for any sort of protest or argument. The only result is that I will have to throw away the dresses and waste a lot of money. The tailor on the other hand is not going to have more orders from me. I do not know if that is a big loss for him. He has already made his profit on me, and there is always another idiot foreigner around the next corner.

The quality of everything is terrible though, and the prices are not cheap. I keep forgetting that while wondering among those stands at the fabric markets. Colors and textures, and the amount of different things overcome my common senses, if I have ever had any. How am I going to get all these things back home?

When I got back, they have been talking to me about the new workshop. I have asked them not to put up any extra lights, which they already had done, so now they will have to take them down again, but that is how it works here. Lots of misinterpretations and misunderstandings all the time. Like instead of sending me Fiffy's message, they have sent me an email entitled Cats massage. I sort of adore it!

In the evening I was determined to find the Blind massage place nearby, and so I did. It was very dirty and smelly, but the guy was very professional, as opposed to the other place I went to, which was clean enough and smelling holy Buddha, but the massage itself was real bad. I was a total ruin the day after. I will never go for any sort of spa or oil massage anywhere here.

God knows what that oil consists of! But if I go for a new blind massage, I will bring my own towel and some perfumes with me. It is hard to relax to the smells of food and sweaty guys on a bed next to you. The massage itself was real good though. I have no pains at all; only he has activated some blood circulation in my head, so I could not sleep. Or maybe I have caught some virus, which is making my throat sour and my nose stuffed. Danielle has been sick for a while; always giving me her warm French kisses together with the viruses. She is very young, friendly and sweet. She is the only one I feel very comfortable and relaxed together with. She speaks some Russian as well, and she has learned quite a lot of Chinese during her three months here. She must have a good ear for the languages, as her Russian pronunciation is just perfect.

Now I am only waiting for the workshop to get ready, so I can move and get installed permanently for the rest of my stay here.

Tonight there is the grand opening of Juan's exhibition. I am planning to go to that area a bit earlier, so I can visit the Photographers gallery on the same occasion. Hope they will finish the cleaning as they have promised, and I can get done with it. I went there a couple of times, but they have not started on it just yet.

December 15

After a while I called the reception and found out that things are not exactly as they seemed to be to begin with, which is sort of a usual thing that one just has to get used to.

There is a water leak from the ceiling of the new workshop. They have to get that fixed before I can move over. Also it has been confusing to decide where to place what and how. I have to get organized a new and to start it all over again. It is not that easy as I have to take into consideration many different factors like water and electricity. My confusion has led to making the maintenance people do everything twice. First I had to make them remove some lamps, so I had to make them hang those back again. All the tables have been moved around a couple of times, and still I am not satisfied.

In addition I got really sick, and it is only getting worse. All this is really upsetting.

I went to bed at 8, but could not sleep. This is such a waste of time.

December 16

The day started by moving the workshop and reorganizing the things. Had to move things around several times before I could figure it all out. Looks like I am going to have a better space than before, but it has certain disadvantages as well. There are only raw brick walls on both sides, a slide door on the third and windows on the fourth. No place to hang things up, which is annoying. They have promised me a white board by the end of the month, when somebody else is leaving. As I am so sick now, nothing much is going to happen anyway.



I went together with some other guys to the big biennale. Thanks God, they have invited me! It was very difficult to get a taxi to drive us there, and it was very hard to find a taxi back. There were 7 floors of enormous spaces filled with all sorts of art from all over the world. Some was very impressive, but there was a lot of crap as well. Like Boris Michailov from Ukraine, whom I know. He is a legend, like in the old Soviet times, a new Sholokhov. His photographs are really junky, and so badly presented. How did those curators pick up the artists? It is all based on myths and rumors. This question is always a mystery to me. I am actually very proud not to be a part of the game.

They had also an exhibition from the Pompidou Centre with the old classics. Sometimes it is good to bring together modern things and things, which are nearly a century older and look just as modern. It gives a feeling of what is essentially important and lasting, and how long it actually takes to get established the basics of art and the development of the ideas.

I got separated from the others, but met them later some place on the top floor. They have been drinking coffee, so now it was my turn. It has taken 40 minutes to get a cup of coffee and a cake at the restaurant on the fifth floor, so we walked for a while to find a taxi. It has been nice talking to these people, as they were Americans, speaking English. For the first time it was possible to have a conversation instead of a long line of misunderstandings and misinterpretations. A visiting girlfriend of one of the guys was really a delight to talk to; she was an architect who has switched to become a painter. For once, an intelligent artist with some basic knowledge of history, geography and art!

I collapsed to bed for a while after that trip, so there was some more work, and the day was over with.

December 17

A start of a new week! I am without a key to anywhere, as they are preparing a new card for me, which would go both to my room and to my new workshop. Celebration of the advanced technology has led to the fact that I could not go to the toilet, as I have been locked out of the room. At this mysterious hotel there are no public toilets available.

It has taken them several hours to get the key card made, but in the end my first round of trials was over. My new workshop is big and convenient with lots of locking wardrobes and shelves. So now it is only a matter of time till I am all settled. It takes time to figure out how to work, where to dry things etc.

My cold or flu or whatever that is is really shutting me down. Hope it will not last too long. The others have been sick for a couple of weeks, which is very frustrating. I have not been out, which is good, as I have no other choice, but work. Some progress is happening, but it is hard to plan without a specific aim. I really need to know about the size of the space and lighting conditions. At the moment there are just such basic considerations as money and how to transport the things later.

I did not want to go out for ordering the negatives, so I would rather make them here at the hotel on a big printer that we are allowed to use. I have even found the sort of paper that works for my negatives. So that means I am limited to A3 size, but I take the challenge as a part of the project. But so comes a matter of material choices and final sizes.

December 18

At 10 we three met in the lobby together with the representative of Swatch watch, who took us by taxi to an office that should extend our visas here. The place reminded me of an analog place in Moscow I have once been to together with my sister. Nightmare of administration and bureaucracy made efficient in a strategic Chinese manner. There were small cameras everywhere to make sure that the one who claims to be me has really been there. There has been a short hesitation around the size of my pass photograph, which we had to bring along, it was about 5 mm bigger than standard. I managed to talk the guy into cutting it to size. Next artist had a photograph, which was 5 mm smaller, that has taken about half an hour to accept. The charming smiles of our hostess broke the ice of the lonely official, and after three hours of waiting we left our passports behind in glued brown envelopes to be processed further later. It will take them a week to do that. Our secretary has assured us that this was the safest place on earth to keep ones passport, so we went back by taxi again. The driver has been chatting loudly to her in Chinese, and after a while she turned to us from her front seat and said we have to save her, the guy is scary crazy, telling her his whole love story with the tragic end. Well, we could not follow.

I am not in a good shape, feel like I have a high fever too. It is sort of a mixture of a viral and a bacterial infection together, not too brutal, but still it has knocked me off my feet totally and completely. The ventilation system is drying the air and brings even more bacteria to our bodies. Perhaps that is a sign from above to slow down? I have been really working hard every day until now. So now it is the time to reflect and to look over it again. I am mostly dreaming over it, over and over again, floating in some meaningful feverish nightmares over the surface of my enormous double bed and under the high ceiling of my luxurious room.

I have been out and worked a bit in my new wonderful workshop. Now it is organized more or less and it is functioning as it should, which does not make it more justified to do what I am doing, but I am the one to decide. It is a big pleasure, but also a great responsibility. I am not sure though that there are going to be any judges to this project. Why should I bother to show it to anyone? Maybe I should adopt the expression of working into a drawer literally? Just exhibit a wall of drawers, drawers one cannot pull out or open? And everybody, who wonders into the exhibition room, is just wondering why? Kabakov like arrogance?

December 19

A quiet day inside the house, I have not been out at all. Copied the 16 A3 negatives on rice paper, which has taken the whole day. The exposures are long; it takes about an hour to

process one part. The paper is falling apart too, but I managed to handle it, which makes me proud. No one can possibly appreciate it here, but who cares? I know what I am doing.

Went out to buy more paper for the negatives. Have to plan my next step. Tomorrow comes a German guy, who works with cameras obscures. I am a little concerned about it, preparing how to ask him kindly not to steal my ideas in progress, which is probably just my absolute paranoia.

It takes me three times to get the negatives the way I want them. There are things that I do not know how to do in Photoshop, and I have no patience to find out. So it becomes what it becomes, and I sort of like it, even though some people might say that it is a result of a circumstantial situation. I have arrived so far as to be able to say that I can allow myself to make a decision and a choice based on my circumstances instead of trying to stand on my head in order to follow my original idea. Adjustments and coincidences have to be a part of my production, that is exactly what makes it mine and not just anyone else's. A different person would have made a different decision under the same conditions. There are so many ways to go, so many paths and turns on the way!

It takes me about half an hour to expose each sixteenth part on rice paper, many hours to finish one piece. I have not decided yet how to mount it when it is finished. On one hand, I want to make an installation in my workshop and not to bother about anything else. On the other hand, it could be fun to make an exhibition in Shanghai! Just for the record of it, or for writing it down in my CV ? On the third hand it is just as I mentioned earlier, this game is all about whom you are playing it against. It is not a real war; it is a war in a cyber space with robots and organic self-imitational figures. One can chose sides, weapons, colors and backgrounds. But that does not make it less exciting or important of that reason. Real world killings are not less bloody or less hurting real people, but this so called real world is getting more and more distanced for the most of us. Just the tear dropping idealists are publishing animal and forest protecting manifestos on Facebook and Twitter as if that could help.

Being here in China now I am getting a feeling of how many people there are on this planet Earth and how many different opinions and attitudes there must exist among them. How is it even possible to dream of finding a common ground for communication? It would be so incredibly naive to hope to be able to demonstrate an opinion or create an artwork, which suggests an opinion, and expect anyone to understand, share or follow it.

Watching all these other fellow artists running around and about the place with their tongues hanging long down, biting off anything that sticks out on their journey through the thorny bushes, my heart is shrinking and my soul is slowly drying away, vanishing. My priorities have definitely changed during the last few months. Maybe my last residency in Denmark has demonstrated how hard it is to be a human being among all the wolves around. I feel like Kipling's Mowgly, only less fortunate.

I have to defend myself for leaving my loved ones behind and travelling the world instead of cooking meals and watching TV. Somehow I started to understand that the rock is rolling down a steep mountain, and nothing can stop the time. My health is not going to turn better, and my

time is all measured up and limited to a minimum. I want to use it so that I would not mind to leave this world, when the time comes. I remember my father dying with so much fear and regret that I swore then that I will do all that is in my power not to end up like him. I did not feel compassionate or sorry for him, I just felt disgusted and ashamed for the way he treated my mother and sister in his last months and years, or actually during his whole life. The only feeling going through me was a thrill, a threat and a possibility of becoming like him one day. That day is now approaching quickly. I want to spend every second of the time that is left with a feeling of at least a minimal satisfaction. I want to do my best to leave behind something that can be of value to other people, preferably the people I care about.

December 20

I could not sleep tonight. Insomnia is a curse of my life. I am also not a type to take it as it comes and sleep a day after instead. I turn desperate. I eat pills, which do not help, as I am so anxious, and my head is so full of jumping ideas running a marathon in a desert of sandy dunes. I end up totally exhausted by the morning, so after breakfast I just had to go down and close my eyes for an hour before that German photographer arrived.

He appeared to be a very easy-go and friendly person, whom it was very pleasant to talk to. There were no difficulties at all. Just as it has been very stressful and upsetting to meet that Norwegian friend of my ex-husband, it was just the opposite this time with this person. There has been some basic mutual understanding and background, when one could exchange half sentences and say half, while the other could immediately understand the point. What a relief! He spoke good English as well. He gave me lots of valuable advices about printing firms, cameras and galleries. It has been a very relaxing and pleasant conversation. By the end another German guy has turned up, a fellow resident and a painter Axel. It was pleasant to talk to him as well. He has been positive to what I was doing, which has given some additional sugar taste on my tongue. I could offer him some information about a sort of rice paper he liked, so all together it has been my nicest day here so far.

In the evening there was a party in the kitchen initiated by Pete, my best friend here. We were given instructions to contribute with food and drinks. So I went to look for a food supermarket and an outdoor market nearby. I have forgotten what it looks like with all the creatures slaughtered for sale! There were mountains of fruits and vegetables, fishes and crabs, oysters and shells of all sorts. There was a cake and sweet shop on the other side of the street. I have made an old mistake of buying something that looked like dark bread, but appeared to be some sort of sweet cake pretending to be a Scandinavian rye bread.

Otherwise I managed to get some vegetables and I dared to buy some meat. I have not cooked it for the evening party as the boys were making chili con carne. I have cooked some vegetables instead. The party started an hour later than it has been announced, so the vegetables all got overcooked. But compared to all the other weird things that people have brought along, it was still edible. I have talked to some of the guests from the outside world, I have even invited some of them to my workshop, but that was not a big success, they have completely swallowed their tongues, and said not a single word about what I have shown them.

Maybe they did not know what to say.

I talked for while to a guy from North Ireland, who was an architect. What is it about me and the architects around here? That must be a sign of something. He was very nice and funny; I like British sense of humor. He has lived in Shanghai for two years, and he was together with a pretty Chinese girl, learning Chinese in an easy way in a horizontal position, as he had put it.

Otherwise I felt a little bit strange around all the people. Maybe they are from Earth, but I am from Jupiter. I am thinking about the mess they have made in the kitchen, which has been left behind to the ghostly slaves cleaning it all up completely to a glorious shine of the breakfast table the day after. No wonder I do not want to organize another party next week!

People are watching each other like wolves. Who has brought what, who has been where, who has went with whom and why? They are looking into my pot when I am cooking and into my plate when I am eating. I am so absolutely not curious about all those details! But register that we all are under a close observation both by each other and also by the authorities. I am getting tensed and uncomfortable watching all those holy ghosts constantly polishing the walls and the counters. Uniformed faceless men and women are all the time soundlessly moving around the corridors. I imagine that they are all members of the communist party and true believers in the great future of the Chinese nation, which obviously demands spying on suspicious guests like us here. In any case that at least leads to a great level of hygiene around the hotel, as all the surfaces are being washed and polished several times a day. On the other side, it is striking to see how this newly renovated building, which is hardly two years old, is all falling apart at all joints and meeting points between different materials. This is when one can see the difference between good and bad quality of work. This is what "made in China" actually means.

December 21

I thought I was getting better, but so I turned worse again. Everybody else around is sick as well.

I went to the fabric market again to pick up the dress I have ordered. It seems like walking back and forth to the fabric market is going to be the only form of entertainment for me. At least I get some movement. This time it has not been done well, it is always made third of the size I have ordered, they make it sit tight to one's body, and it looks Chinese in fashion and style, no matter what design you are making. In any case, this is the end of my tailoring adventures. I do not want to go there anymore. Tomorrow I am going to pick up something else at another market, maybe that one will turn to be better.

It is really winter-cold and freezing today. The streets are empty of people; I have not seen Shanghai like that until today. However that was not a good reason to walk around with my nose dripping. I decided to allow myself a day off; I have not even entered the studio today.

My next step would be to prepare the files for a trial print, and so go to the printing shop, see

what they are able to offer. I am really curious. The German photographer has told me that the prices are good, better than in Europe.

I wish I knew what I am going to do and how. But here I am!

The **Peace Hotel** ([Chinese](#): 和平饭店) is a [hotel](#) on [The Bund](#) in [Shanghai, China](#) which overlooks the [Huangpu River](#).<sup>[1]</sup> The hotel today operates as two separate businesses. The North Building, built as **Sassoon House**, originally housed the **Cathay Hotel** and is today the **Fairmont Peace Hotel** run by [Fairmont Hotels and Resorts](#) of [Canada](#). The South Building was built as the **Palace Hotel** and is today the **Swatch Art Peace Hotel**. The two buildings both face [the Bund](#), but are divided by the famous [Nanjing Road](#), arguably the busiest street in [Shanghai](#).

Separated from the North Building by busy [Nanjing Road](#), the South Building was constructed as the **Palace Hotel** in 1908 on the site of the Central Hotel, which had been founded on the same site in the 1850s. When built, the six story hotel was the tallest building on Nanjing Road. The hotel occupies 2125 square meters, with a floor space of 11607 meters. It has a brick veneer structure, with six stories reaching 30 meters in height. The exterior adopts a [Renaissance](#) style. The hotel has around 120 guest rooms. It also featured two elevators, the first building to do so in Shanghai.

In 1909, the first meeting of the World Anti-Narcotics League was held here. In 1911, after the success of the [Xinhai Revolution](#), [Sun Yat-sen](#) stayed at the hotel and advocated commitment to the revolutionary cause. During [World War II](#), the building was occupied by the [Japanese army](#). In 1947 it was purchased by a Chinese company. After the revolution in 1949 it continued trading until 1952, when it was confiscated and used by the Municipal Construction Department. In 1965 it resumed trading as a hotel as a wing of the Peace Hotel.

Similar to its counterpart to the north, the South Building was renovated in preparation for the 2010 World Expo. It emerged as the **Swatch Art Peace Hotel**. It plays host to gifted artists from around the world who live and work for a limited time in apartment/workshops. The heritage facade and public rooms of the building have been restored to their original splendour, while the building also features boutiques, a Swatch showroom and restaurants.

December 25

I have been totally shut down by this flu. They have had a Christmas party here, which I had a good excuse to skip. I do not want to take any part in these activities, which do not give me any pleasure, and I do not feel like obliged to anyone. I consider it a total irresponsible and unacceptable behavior to leave such a mess after a party as they have done the last time. This demonstrates such a lack of respect and such an ugly attitude towards all these people, who have to clean it after! I am trying to put my room in order on those days they are washing. It is a basic thing; it is so much easier to clean if the surfaces are cleared up.

I remember stepping into the room of one of the residents. I just could not believe my eyes! How is it possible to create such a mess of those few items we have with us? How can it possibly fit into any form of a suitcase after? What is she planning to do with all these things? I have no idea.

I have slept and slept, and worked in my room, my eyes did not like it at all. I have only been out for some shopping and a massage. Have done some thinking and some computer work, which takes forever and goes very slowly.

What am I after? Fame or money? Or both, or none? I think honestly the last. I do not care for nothing anymore; I just want to get done, what I need to get done for whatever reason there has been. It can be totally coincidental and a result of a particular situation or a combination of circumstances, it does not matter, how it started. The main thing is that it has not stopped, but continued and developed into something, which I am not so sure just yet has happened this time.

Photography is all about interpretation. Interpretation of reality, interpretation of technique, and interpretation of material and form. Presentation is important. It is different, if it is made for a book or for a picture on a wall, for an exhibition or for a drawer. They have discussed for a long time, whether photography is a field of art at all?

For me there has never been any question. Just as a painter is using his oil or acrylic skills to express himself, a photographer uses a camera and a print or whatever other presentation he might choose. It can be a slide show, a web site, a video, a sculpture or a backdrop for a theatre performance, whatever. There are many forms already recognized and there will be more to come. The tools are important, but they are not the main thing. That is the main reason, why everybody can take a picture, but so few create art out of it.

I hope I do, or there is no reason to keep doing, what I am doing. I am trying to be honest. I am trying to be myself. Being myself, offering my personal individual interpretation is all, what this is all about. I do not know, whether my story can be of interest or any use to anybody, just the time will show. I cannot think about it now.

By choosing to work with archive photographs made by another photographer a long time ago, and by working on these pictures my way, presenting them my way, changing them, so they become something else, that is the essence of what I am doing now. I think by offering an obvious interpretation, not of a reality, but of a reality in the eyes of another in combination with all the tools that have been used that time, and in addition using all the tools that are available to me today, I do create something new and unique.

Somebody looked at what I am struggling with and asked if I could also use my own pictures for this process. I said that these are my own pictures now. They are mine! I have decided, how they should be used and presented, I have combined and organized them the way I wanted. It is like a musician would offer an interpretation of an existing musical piece, I make my interpretation here. By choosing to do so I underline and relate to the one most important thing about photography, it's ability and obligation to interpret.

This is my concept. Many photographers have been ordering prints to be made by other photographers after their instructions. This has not turned those printers into the artists, but has certainly colored the final work. Sometimes we do talk about those, who printed and not about those, who ordered the print. Sometimes it is the other way. Questions about copyrights are also important here.

Just like in art and in music, there are copyrights on photographs. As long as I refer to the originals, I have shown my respects to the original creator and have been honest about my own interpretation. The rest is up to the viewer.

Another important moment is my double vision. I do not see a single straight line, everything is doubled up in a cross, and somewhere in the middle there is a meeting point, which is constantly moving according to how I hold my head. Everything is moving all the time in all directions, and I have no idea, which images are real and which are projected or parallel. If one has not experienced that, it is not possible to describe or to vision this.

When I am presenting the pictures the way I do now, it is partly an attempt to describe my daily life. I am trying to use my disability in a creative way. I cannot stop working because I am disabled. I just have to find a way to use it to the advantage of the result.

When I allow myself to let every part of an image to be slightly unfitting, that is done intentionally. I hope it is obvious, and no one can take it for a mistake.

December 26

It was a beautiful sunny day yesterday, but I did not go out at all. I have never learned to take the days after the weather. Today is cold and rainy, but that is when I finally dragged myself out to the printer.

First I have been trying to repair the sawing machine that I have bought, but that was not possible. The guy who has ordered it for me suggested to try to screw down something that is not adjustable at all. This is another experience of spending a lot of money on something totally useless. Just like the glasses I have ordered in the shop on Nanjing road, it was expensive and hopeless. Later somebody has mentioned to me that there is an optical market, where everybody goes to buy glasses, but now it is too late for me. I have already bought expensive and very bad glasses nearby. Maybe it is my fault that I am not able to find out about all the tricks? Maybe that is just how the things work here.

The printer appeared to be a very nice and knowledgeable guy, who spoke good English for a change. I am not sure though that he can help me. First of all I need to find out if I am going to make an exhibition or not. It does not make any sense to produce anything unless I have a use for it. I will not be able to visit the galleries before after the holidays, the clock is ticking, and the time is running out for me!

Perhaps I just should use the office printer I have available here and be satisfied with what I



get done with that? Maybe I should just print a few things on that silk imitation material just to have tried it? There are many decisions to take and no one to give me advice.

I looked at the last photography 2012 exhibition at MOMA and got a shock of massive disappointment. It all looks to me like a hopeless attempt to create a sensation out of nothing. It does not give me anything, the ideas are thin, and the concepts do not interest me at all. It gave me a feeling of the absurdity of fame, how nothing can be made into something by size and presentation. It is not like I am feeling that if I were given a chance I would have done better, maybe not. I am not envious either, I just think about the responsibility behind any sort of creation and presentation. It is like, when you are one minute late for a meeting, where 60 people are waiting, you have wasted an hour!

I have a fear of responsibility and a responsibility for the fear of making a decision right now.

I choose to work on those ten images I have managed to get from the Vestfold photographic archives. What I am doing is ridiculously tiny little tests of some sort of decorative variations on these few images. There is some progress in my work, or at least I can see what I am discovering. The question is if it is visible to the others. I cannot know if my young colleagues here just dislike everything I am doing before I even try to do it, or if it really is all that bad.

December 27

I have sent an email to all the residents here inviting them to order food for the New Year eve party. That has been a major fiasco. Nobody even replied. On the other hand I can hear them conspiring behind my back on going out together that night. I feel like an idiot for even having tried!

Have sent an invitation to the Asparagus man and his daughter, but that is also a major difficulty. I do not understand, what is going on at all. I tried to ask, what they eat, if we could order something. I tried to suggest that I cook. I do not understand, what it is going to be. I give up. I have landed on the moon!

They do not answer me, but a while after there comes an invitation for an outing a day after, and everybody responds to that one positively! There must be something wrong with me?

I met Aldo the nice guy in the corridor and he said that I should not take it personally. It is just that on NYE everybody gets stressed because there are so many crazy parties to choose between, they cannot make up their minds until the last moment.

December 28

Another trip to the fabric market ended up with a lot of bags on a way back. What am I going to do with all the things? I have more clothes than I can ever manage to use up during the rest of my life. I just cannot stop making them! This must be a reaction to never have been allowed to

study the art of textiles and attend to Shenkar school in Tel Aviv, as I wanted. Another trauma of the past!

It is a very lonesome time of my life. I hoped it will cause the longing for a two being, but it does not. Maybe this is a process of getting used again to being alone? I have been on my own in longer periods of my life, so this is not new, but it is different. I am scared of being totally alone, maybe getting sick and helpless. This is how it is not to have a family! I suppose I am not alone of being alone in this world. Many people have a family, but still are alone; maybe even more dislocated, isolated and misunderstood than I am.

The rest of the day has been spent on a computer.

December 29

A new trip to a new fabric market. I just can not stop! This one is closer and smaller. They have been very clever, everything is done fine. What am I going to do with all the clothes I have been making for fun? I will not be able to use them up till the end of my life, and it will probably cost a fortune to send them home.

The rest of the day has been spent on a computer again, not to healthy for my double vision.

It has been snowing in the evening, obviously not a usual phenomenon here, as everybody went to the windows on the third floor to take pictures of the snowflakes. It looks amazing from the kitchen down towards the river!

However I had no wish to go out.

It is hard to kill the whole day in the room, so I have to get to the workshop for a few hours in between to stay away from the computer, which is ruining my eyes and neck.

December 30

It was sunny and it looked nice outside in the morning. There was no snow left anywhere. I decided to go on a shopping expedition to French concession. After over a month here I got enough Chinese food for a while. I wanted bread and butter, cheese and cream. I have smiled to myself critically earlier, when Aldo told me about this grocery shop with all sorts of European food. But now I have been heading there myself.

I took a taxi there, and wanted to walk a bit around first, so come back and do the shopping before going back, but it was so freezing cold and windy that after walking up and down the same street a couple of times I decided to get over with it and get back. Double priced food comparing to the other markets, but I have bought my sour cream, cheese and even prosecco for the New Year eve. I have also bought éclairs at a French bakery and started walking away with heavy bags dragging my arms down. This could not last for a long time. The distances are

enormous here. The streets are wide and long, even at French concession. The beautiful mansions are hiding behind the gates, but the roads are just like everywhere else in this city.

I have forgotten about how it is to live in a big city! It reminds me more and more of Moscow. It is a different temperament in a big city, it is busy and noisy. People are aggressive and stressed, they bark at each other at every occasion, and they do not care about each other. This is normal.

Now I start appreciating my quiet life back home in Horten. Everybody is polite and helpful, only it is damn boring and there is nothing to do or to see. My health limits my trips to Oslo.

I have committed a major mistake by walking in into a newly opened nail saloon. It was more expensive than usual, and the girl spent two whole hours polishing my nails. She took her job seriously. I just cannot understand how it is possible to spend so much time on such a thing, but there I was sitting there, causing the whole affair to happen. I cannot understand how these places are surviving; I do not understand the economy here. Three girls were sitting there for the two hours at least while I was there. There were no other customers. I paid 80 RMB. How can this place survive? And there are such parlors on every corner here!

They have dressed me and hanged my bag on me and sent me out of the door. There was no toilet, they said. There might have been, but they did not want me to even see it, thanks God.

So I just had to get back to the hotel. That is it. That was my day.

December 31

A couple of hours killed on shopping stockings. Everything is mini size, I feel like an elephant on the moon.

A great blind massage. Again I have made a mistake of giving a tip, so there will be more expectations the next time. I constantly forget that the Chinese do not understand this idea of giving a tip as thank you for your good service. They just think you are stupid, if you are paying more than what you are obliged to.

There is a big party tonight. It looks like everybody is coming, or so they said.

This appeared to be the strangest New Year party I have ever been to or heard of. At first there was no one aside from the Germans cooking something for themselves and Adolf the gnome eating a tuna sandwich in his homely outfit.

I came down all dressed up for a party and felt like an idiot. It was impossible to find out what was going on. It looked like the Germans were having their own party in the space next to the kitchen, but they have not invited anyone from here.

Then the Chinese artist whose name I cannot pronounce popped up with the homemade food

and his two girls. He had also misunderstood the situation and started carrying his boxes to the other table. I tried to explain. Then one of his girls went to look for Adolf. He came spitting poison at me and saying that he is not hungry and does not want to see anyone. In between his bubbling he sometimes said the real truths like that here it is just as egoistic as it can be, everyone just cares for him- or herself. I have never experienced anything like it in my life.

People are just like animals; codex of honor does not exist. They are not ashamed of what they are doing either. It is taken for being normal. It is possible that I have missed a few details on the way. Like the fact that the Chinese guy got very drunk during the Christmas party and got into a fight, but I am not sure it was he or another one. I was not there, and they all are talking such bad English, it is hard to follow. Showed my workshop to the Chinese guy. He invited me to visit his workshop in Shanghai.

During the next couple of hours Adolf kept telling me the tragic story of his childhood, and all about his anti-Semitic views on the Swiss Jews and the rest of them in the world, and some more people have turned up. They had more wine. Adolf brought his Swiss chocolate. I had different cakes and a bottle of prosecco. Anna the girlfriend of the Canadian guy appeared to be originally Italian from lake Como area. My Italian appeared to be very bad. The youngsters were heading out for a hip hop party. Adolf was out for a jazz concert. The Germans kept cooking their meals. So I went to bed at 10 and gave a damn in the fireworks.

January 1

It is a sunny day. I should get out of here!

There are all the billions of the Chinese in the streets at the same time.

The weather is fine, not cold, and it is sunny. It was nice to walk a bit, but my eyes are so bad, I can hardly move without being run over by some bike.

Discovered a new street nearby with all sorts of shops with bands and decorations. They seem to gather themselves in the same spots, not so stupid.

What am I going to do about my eye problems? The more I sit in front of the computer, the worse it turns. Maybe the massage yesterday has not given a good effect either. Perhaps they are releasing something, so it turns worse before it can turn better? Or should I stay away from the massage for a while?

January 2

I have basically nothing else to do here, but work. Why did I come here at all? I could have stayed home. This place is not even close to my expectations.

Have coated more paper and trimmed the negatives. Now there are some 20 hours of printing waiting.

Mentioned what I think about the Germans party to one of the guys, but he just thinks that it is me there is something wrong with, not anybody else.

I certainly feel like an elephant that has landed on the moon with the head down first.

My broken neck is a proof.

January 7

A few days of quiet work have passed. I do not remember all what happened during these days.

Somehow I am a bit more content with my fate of staying here. The general feeling is the same, but I managed to avoid the unpleasant people at breakfasts, and there were no more confrontations.

Also I have got some things done, which is ok. I came to the conclusion that I do not want to ask for an exhibition. Any decent gallery has it's program full at least a year ahead. So if I want an exhibition here, I will have to come back to Shanghai, pay for my ticket and stay here and maybe even look for a place to work again, which is totally out of the question.

I do not even want to have an open house event. They say it has to be for one day only, and no unknown people from the outside world will be invited, unless I send them an invitation. I do not want to invite anyone, as I do not see the reason for that.

This has been a slow, but very important mental process for me. I came to a couple of important decisions so far. One is that I do not feel like doing more residences. The other is that I do not want to do anything anymore. I am ready to retire. Do nothing and burn all what I have done till now in a big fireball.

January 9

My depression from being here is not leaving me, no matter how hard I try. Maybe I do not try too much? I am hiding under the covers in bed. I have been sleeping a lot. More than it is healthy to sleep, more than it is healthy to stay in the same position in bed. My neck and back are not getting any better, but at least I am trying to take one long walk a day, every day.

Every walk is leading to spending more money, it is hard to avoid. I always get to buy something, while I am wondering around. It does not make any sense to buy food, it is much cheaper to eat out. Only sometimes I do not want to get out, not even out of bed.

Today I have managed to drag myself out to a gallery at French Concession. It is run by a Canadian guy, who has been friendly to me in his email. When I got there, he just honestly asked me what I am after. The question I could not answer.

So a big fireball is the only way out of this!

After a few new people arrived, the atmosphere here has changed a bit for the better. At least they talk to each other during breakfasts. Maybe I misunderstand a lot, but some of them are still so aggressively unfriendly to me! I suppose I just need to ignore it as much as I can. I do not understand any of the conspiracy, that is for sure.

After hesitating for a while, I decided to send a few more emails to some galleries again anyway. If I do not try, nothing happens anyway.

January 12

The days are vanishing between my fingers as sand or some long and dark silky hair. Maybe I have been a bit negative and pessimistic as usual, but it is a bit better now. The sweet Swiss girl is back, just hearing her laughter in the corridor makes me feel better!

She invited me out yesterday together with another artist. We had a real feast at a nearby Shanghai grandmother restaurant. It is hard to go out and eat alone here. Usually one needs to order several different dishes and share them.

I have been round and about a bit too, and the weather is good. Looks like this winter is over. The temperature is pleasant and it is sunny or cloudy and foggy, but it is not raining, and the air is dry, no wind either. I have been walking my feet off.

I would usually take a taxi to some place and walk back or walk in the direction I think might be the right direction for a while, so take a taxi back to the hotel when I get tired.

I have been to the opening of a photography show. The worst I have ever seen or could possibly imagine. Hopeless ideas repeating things that have been done ages ago, hopeless manual B/H prints, blown up out of all proportions and sold for ridiculous prices. I had a conversation with the so called artist through an interpreter, as he did not speak English.

I asked him why he is making such bad prints, and he answered that it is God's will that he does it that way. I apologized for asking a logical question to such a highly spiritual individual.

They have printed a book of 500 pages, somehow trying to hide the quality of the prints. The quality of the printed book was just as close to the quality of the work as it could get. A perfect match!

I am so tired of China!

Everything happening in the art world here is a parody on the developments in the western world, only bigger, uglier and in an even worse quality and a much greater quantity.

As I wrote before, this is probably my last trip here, and this does not inspire me for doing more residencies either. It is the time to retire!

January 14

I cannot stop buying more fabrics and making more clothes, it is an obsession. I will probably never be able to wear them all in my lifetime, but at least I had a lot of fun making them.

I walked back and forth to the market, which is rather far, so I am really proud of myself. They have of course fooled me by using synthetics instead of silk, but it is impossible to avoid. At least the clothes fit this time.

I have now copied a couple of big prints both on paper and on cloth, which has not been easy.

I wish I could go to the other printer tomorrow and make more negatives, but tomorrow I have to do some shopping for the party and cook. There is another day the day after tomorrow.

My moods are up and down during the day, my self security too. Sometimes I feel that I know what I am doing, the other times I think it is not good at all. The fact that there is no exhibition coming is disorienting me completely. It is hard to know what sizes to make or how to mount. I have to take into consideration that I might need to take it all home with me.

Most of the others around me here must be feeling very much the same, I can imagine. There is no communication between the artists here, only guesses and ugly comments behind each others backs. At least that is how I imagine when somebody tells me ugly things about another person, the next thing would be that he goes and tells ugly things about me around the next corner. I have been testing it. If I tell something to someone, after a while it comes back to me in a distorted form. What goes around comes around.

January 21

The days go by. I have been here for two months. I am looking forward to going home again, inspired by the fact that there is no home for me. Just to get out of sight of the billions of the Chinese eyes watching me here from all directions. I am getting the paranoid feeling of the Little people creating the atmosphere of watching and being watched by the eyes of the billions without the Big brother. The training has given the results. They are arresting themselves in a patriotic ecstasy.

I want to isolate myself in some remote place without people and their eyes. I do not want to be watched all the time. I need privacy. I am actually counting the days. I have been counting the days from the beginning of my stay. The great honor of getting chosen to come here turned to be a great torture!

This residency is a parody on an artist residency! There is no reason for it and the only

purpose is to promote Swatch? Why should I care?

I will probably get terribly bored again after a short while in the boring Norway, but right now I have got enough of the great city of Shanghai.

I have not seen enough of it actually. I must get out more, maybe it will help. It is rather scary to move around with my double vision. The bikes are driving on red lights and the cars are turning right on red lights. Have seen someone being hit by a bike today. It is a miracle that there are so few accidents. Good I have extended my health insurance.

There has been held an open studio for three other artists, two have opened their studios, while the last one has organized a great and ambitious presentation in the restaurant on the top floor. The restaurant is owned by a different person, so he has negotiated to hold an exhibition of his paintings there. It is Adolf of course! He has been refused permission to open his studio as he had joined another opening earlier. This is so stupid! In any case, his grand exhibition looked rather hopeless there. He looked like a little gnome in a big kingdom in that space, but he was greatly satisfied.

I am learning a bit about art and artists while being here. I am learning a bit about myself too.

The other two artists had a lot of visitors to their open studios. I have opened my space on the third floor as well, just to see how it works. Some people walked in by mistake. I am not going to organize an open studio. It is a waste of time. I am not interested in that kind of exposure.

We all went to eat at the Grandmother's restaurant in the evening. After a few beers my conversation with the third gnome went in a totally unexpected direction, he got excited and told me that I am always so negative. I wonder if he has been talking to the Canadian guy about me before or if it is a coincidence? In any case it has not been my intention to upset or agitate him, the last little gnome from Tyrol. I might be preprogrammed against the Germanic race and a race of short men on high hills.

Today however I have chosen to approach the boy and try to explain a few things to him, mainly because I have a feeling that he is the one, who is suffering without being able to expose himself or to protect himself, he would not even admit it. As an old grandmother I feel a responsibility for correcting what has gone wrong and explaining the things that might have been misunderstood. I do not know if I have managed to get through to him or not, but at least I tried.

I am tired of being here. I am exhausted from misinterpretations and misunderstandings, bad communication and a shallow level of conversations. The worst thing is that I actually assume that people surrounded in here are both smart and capable, more than many others at many other places. So why does it go so wrong? Or is it me? Is it my fault? In any case there is no excuse for being evil.

Yesterday I managed to walk along the main road to the People's square. Again I have chosen to do that on a crowded Sunday. I hate the crowds! After a long walk I finally managed to find a



well-hidden entrance to the museum and see the exhibition. The architecture is very impressive, and the size of everything is overwhelming. I am less sure about the quality of art.

January 26

My back is not getting any better. I spend many hours every day in a chair near the computer and too many hours in bed, none of which is making my back better.

Some days go by without me meeting any of the other residents at all. I do not mind. Each time I open my mouth and make a remark at the breakfast table or at some other gathering, they go mad at me for one thing or another. I am so pessimistic and negative, they say, it puts them in a bad mood. I can not be other than myself.

I remember the same thing has been happening, when I went to school in Oslo many years ago. I remember the people were making the same remarks and trying to avoid a conversation with me. No one likes to hear my critical remarks, they just want to paint the world pink and stay happy. Only I cannot see them being very happy or the world turning pink either.

In any case, might be it is the time to retire. I am too old and I know too much.

A couple of days ago I went together with sweet Danielle to French Concession to look for a possible location for her sculptures. She is totally stuck with them now. They are too fragile and it is too expensive to send them to Switzerland. I suggested to find a shopping mall or a hotel lodge, where they might place them. So we wondered about to have a look. She is not able to work this out I am afraid, and I cannot do it for her.

We found a few places, but it requires time and language to do the job. I do not think she is able to do it. I feel so sorry for her. She is so glad and optimistic, just the opposite of how I am. However we do go very well together, because she is considerate and kind as opposed to many of the others. Actually, as I am thinking of it, there are many others I do go well along with too! There are only three or four guys, who decided to spread bad words between themselves about me and my negativity. I have tested how the rumors get spread in a very short time, just pass the word, and it will get everywhere like a fire. These particular individuals are obviously the ones, who have a lot of mental problems themselves and a bunch of insecurity issues, all are short guys on very high hills, as usual. I have no collisions with handsome self-secure boys, rather the opposite.

Danielle has showed me some shops and told me about places to visit, which was very useful.

I have not managed to drag myself to any of the good places during these last few days, but I have been to the gallery district again and I have seen a few exhibitions, nothing especially interesting.

I have printed out the last pictures, no, I have one more! I bought more transparencies and I finished the textiles. Now I want to do some more printing, even though it is stupid to do it here

and drag it all back home again.

Have discovered that what I have been doing by cutting and sawing together has been old news... sad... fortunately I have not made too much that way! Now I will have to do something else. I had a bad feeling about it anyway, so now I am actually relieved. One step back, two steps forward.

Have bought some vegetables and stuff at French Concession today. It is more expensive to cook than to eat out, but sometimes I do not want to go out.

Today I had to cancel the food anyway, was just eating nuts and sweets. There was a big party full of people in the kitchen. The Chinese girl with a funny voice is finishing her residency, so she invited some guests. I had no wish to hang around there. The Germans were having their separate party for themselves in the room next to the kitchen again. Some people do not mind to do things that way, but I do.

The little Swiss gnome is making a lot of noise next door. I just have to bite my tongue and relax. He is leaving soon after have stayed the full time, the full possible six months here. Now he is probably packing all his toys. I am looking forward to having it more quiet and peaceful. We did not like each other very much.

January 31

Another a month has gone, I am actually counting the days. February is a rather dead month as half of it are holidays. I am not looking forward to it. It is my last month here.

Back home there is no much fun either though. I am glad I am not there for the funeral of my so to say father in law. At the same time I am sorry I am not there to help. They will probably feel better without me anyway.

There is sort of no good place for me to be. I have to learn to live with that.

Here the streets are busy with people buying and selling all sorts for the Chinese New year. It is going to be many people around here.

I went to the supermarket today to get food, so I have enough for the holidays. It is hard to get to the cooking plates at lunch and in the evenings, so I have to eat at some other times. The same principle is used around this matter as all the others. The most aggressive and egoistic are the ones who are cooking every day, while the others have to give up and go out to eat. During the holidays there will be no choice however, we will have to manage here somehow.

I have received a reply from one of the galleries. The owner is coming to see my work next week. So now I have been trying to get a bit more done, so I have things better organized as a whole. I have more than enough things though. I do not know if I want him to invite me for an exhibition or not. If he does, I will need to mount and frame all the pictures, it will cost a fortune.

But if I do not try, it will never get shown or sold. For some reason we all hope to get the work sold?

It has been rather peaceful around the hotel during the last few days. On one hand it is pleasant, on the other it is scarring boring. Just need to get through the rainy days. It is not very pleasant to go walking in the rain here. It is very dirty and stinky in the streets. The smells of Shanghai are strong and not so pleasant. I could go to a museum though if I had the energy, but I prefer to stay inside the building.

My impression is that in order to be chosen to be a guest artist at Swatch Hotel one needs to be as ugly on the inside as possible. One needs to be egoistic, self-focused and self-secure on the edge of being ridiculous and comic, and one needs to run over the other's dead bodies without any hesitation. Am I like that? One can see the sand in the other's eyes, while one does not see the elephants in one's own. I want to believe that I am not like them.

The Italian guy has left without saying good-bye to anyone, which is probably only honest. The Spanish guy has asked me for help with his shooting yesterday, but I did not have either the tripod or the type of camera he was looking for. If I had, I would have never given it to him anyway, one does not lend away equipment like that, it is sacred. I am wondering how these people are thinking? They have never asked if I needed some help, when I was in bed for three weeks and could not get out to eat.

The days are really long and boring these days. I am not sure I know what I am doing. I am satisfied one day, and upset and disappointed the other. One day I feel that the results are good, the other times I am not so certain anymore. There is no one to talk to, there is no one to ask or to get some respond. People here are not to trust. I do not want their valuable and blown up opinions, they might start a PHD research on the subject... I am curious what the gallery owner is going to say on Tuesday. I am not sure if I want an exhibition here or not, but if he takes me in, I will have to do it, it is too late to say no to that.

February 3

Have been to another gallery opening tonight. The work was terrible, but grand in size. Some hyperrealistic flowers and solid bronze sculptures of moose and giraffe in real sizes. The vine was really good though, and the French cakes were even better. All our residents were there and got three free servings. The gallery was a fantastic big space in a new developing part of the city, but it was way too big for any of us to be able to fill it up with our works.

After that we went in a taxi to the other side of the city for a meal. Snobbish art PHD graduates, a British guy and me. After several glasses of that vine and a few beers on top of it made our tongues go loose. So I have told my whole life story to the Canadian guy, who said he was impressed. I was impressed myself, the way it all turned out! But it was nice to talk to someone for a change other than on Skype.

There came an email from the little gnome from Switzerland showing how the hotel sucks. The

hotel ventilation tube mounted on his tiny hairy body at a particular spot, he has some great dreams about the size of his genitals. That made me so irritated! Several sentences were jumping in my mind for a while, until I managed to get it under control and not to write anything back at all. The obscene comments from the others made me polish my possible sophisticated answers in my mind. I am glad I was able to leave them behind, but it is a shame no one can read them. Things like: I am afraid I need a PHD in philosophy to be able to comprehend the sophisticated meaning of your art! The only thing that sucks is you, sucker! The depths of your blown up ideas are so grand, you might need a shrink!

There, now it is written down.

I have been cleaning the studio for the gallery director, who is coming tomorrow.

Passed by the studio of the lover boy and looked at his work, which is as delicate as a flower. When I see a boy like that, I wish I was 40 years younger! We certainly have a mutual attraction!

I am terrified by this visit day after tomorrow, and I do not know what I fear the most. If he says yes or if he says no. It will cost a fortune to frame the shit!

The sweet Swiss girl came by to ask for help with her emails. I am afraid, it is too late for it now... I promised to help her with the documentation in the weekend.

They are all so young and so smart! It is so strange to watch them here. It makes me feel older, but it also makes me remember how it was to be young, which is a wonderful feeling.

February 6

The meeting with the gallery director went ok, but he came about 3 hours later than he said he would, which has been extremely tiresome for me. He had a beautiful old Russian surname, but he did not speak any Russian, only some broken English. His grandfather was a white Russian immigrant to Shanghai after the revolution. I do not know how much of what I have been saying that went through to him, it is hard to say. He had a heavy French accent. I had a feeling that he has at least been trying hard to understand. My impression is that he did not like my works so much, but I might be wrong and mistaken. He would give me an answer in about two weeks, which is a bit late. I wanted to make a catalogue and to frame everything the way I wanted, which might become impossible. The time will show.

I invited the new Russian boy to join me on my trip to the Big Brand supermarket. I have spent a lot of money there on vegetables, which I thought I had to get, when I first was there. On the way back I walked in a wrong direction from the metro station and ended up at the vegetable market after all, where everything is much cheaper. I felt like an idiot! My hands were full with bags from before, so I could not buy too much. Double price and double weight... very stupid, but very typical of me and my lack of a geographic sense of directions... it is ridiculous.

All the children are going to drink beer at a bar tonight. I am not joining them, as usual. It was nice though that one of them has mentioned that I am welcome to join. I start feeling sick again, something is itching in my throat. The Spanish guy is feeling the same. In my incurable optimism I think we are all going to get sick again. Maybe the new arrivals have brought a new virus with them?

It is strange to think that there is less than a month left of this residency, which I thought would never end. Now I am getting a panic that I will not be able to get done all what I want to get done.

Today I have started on a new line of thinking. Who knows where I will end up and when?

February 8

I had a talk with the new lady resident from NYC USA. I have probably scared the hell out of her, as she has been avoiding me ever since. She is a video and installation artist with an impressive resume, and she is a grown up lady as opposed to the rest of the children. Maybe I am a big paranoid again and she has just started working on her own project?

She has visited my studio and I have shown her my work and told her my stories. As I told her this has been the first time in two months I have done that kind of thing. Nobody has ever asked me about what I am doing or asked to show my work. Maybe I have poured out a bit too many facts on her in one gulp...

It is freezing cold, windy and snowing outside. After a long period with warm and pleasant weather this is depressing. In addition i have got a new type of flu. My head is just exploding, and it is very paralyzing. On the other hand there is nothing much else to do for me during these holidays. It is actually good to have an excuse to stay in bed.

My new line of thinking around this project is probably a blind path with no exit...

February 10

Yesterday the sun came out and it suddenly turned to be warm and pleasant outside. The pollution is still very high, but it looks a bit better at least, even if it is an illusion.

We had a big party here, the first time during my stay, when everybody was present. The fascist is leaving tomorrow. He went around saluting and provoking the whole evening. Now he is gone, and I can breath freely!

There were no fireworks until the last moment. I was so tired that I could not wait and went to bed right before 12. I could hear the fireworks very close, but I have not seen it as there is no view from my room. It would have been too late to run out towards the 6th floor in my under ware. The others told me that the fireworks were shut from the neighboring building, so it must

have been special to see it from such a short hold. It sounded though as if there was not much of it this year, as it has been prohibited by the government to do it in private.

I always manage to avoid to see the most representative sides of this city.

The sun has been shining today. The streets got filled up with crowds little by little.

I have just stayed inside the whole day. At first the new grown up lady suggested that we go out together. I have been waiting for her for a few hours, but so she has changed up her mind and said that she is not feeling well and does not want to go out. Maybe it is good for me to stay inside as well, but it is very-very boring. There is nothing to do other than work a little and sleep a little. Maybe I will get a bit better by the end of next week, so I can get more out.

I wanted to write a proposal for the organizers of this residency, telling them about the basic things that we were missing and that it could have been so easy to provide, telling them that it is absolutely essential to have some organization above all these independent artists coming here. They need to provide basic behavior rules and instructions, like for example that it is not recommended to go around saluting fascist salutes, as it may provoke someone like me. They could also provide some basic hardware tools and materials. They could have made a more efficient list of where to get what etc.

On the other hand, I realize how much I have got effected by the atmosphere of this place. Egoism and selfcentering are now my main concern and focus. Who cares about what is going to happen after I am gone from here? No matter what I do, it cannot improve or repair, what went wrong for me here. That is soon the past. I thought I was an egoist until I met all the other artists here.

February 11

Today is a grey day. The sweet Swiss girl has finally decided to make her photographs, exactly on a wrong day and at a wrong time of the day. I helped her to hang up the background and gave her the instructions. I felt really sick, but I had to help her. It was so irritating that she has been waiting so long, and spoiled her chance to make the good pictures. What was the point of buying the background, if she did not wake up on the right day, when the sun was out?

It is totally frustrating that this flu is making me so paralyzed. My head is exploding and I cannot work much. It is so boring to stay in bed the whole day, but I do not really have a choice. It sort of comes and goes. It is hiding. It gives me an impression that it is gone, and then it shoots back at me. Maybe it is a blessing that it came now and not the next week. If it is going to last like the last time, I am not going to be much better the next week either, it goes over three weeks or so.

I feel so tired and so upset. When I am thinking back about my last residency in China, it must have been very much of the same. Strange how a human being is able to forget about things! I did remember that it has been hard the last time, that is the reason why I have made my stay a

month shorter this time. Still I forgot about how lonely and isolated one often feels at the residencies.

I am turning sixty in a few weeks. It is about time to stay home. No more residencies for me!

February 13

One more artist arrived from Nederland, a girl. She has also been to Xiamen earlier. She is very nice. Now we have four women here, which makes it more bearable. At least they are not skateboarding in the corridors at nights!

I am sick, sick and sick. Have been laying down the whole week. Hope it will get over soon.

I had a nice talk with Russian-Austrian-American boy. Surprisingly intelligent and smart guy! I always liked talking to him... at least he speaks English... But something is wrong with him. He has a double personality. I am afraid he is on heavy drugs, just like Adolf. Strange how this hotel that has been holding the first convention against opium in China is now breeding the addicts in it's rooms.

The sweet Swiss girl managed to finish her photos today as it was sunny. I am happy that she did! They are all surprisingly clever, when I think more about it... and I am just getting old and worried.

I have been thinking that I should make a list of what is missing here at the hotel so the next residents could get it better. On the other hand it requires some time to do it well, and I am just like all the others - who cares! I could make it a bit funny... like saying that it should be prohibited to use extreme salutations or a skateboard in the corridors at nights.

My time here is nearly served, and I have only a couple of weeks left. That is when I wanted to be a tourist and travel more. If my flu does not go away, that will not be possible.

Today there have been some totally sudden and unmotivated fireworks at seven in the evening, which I have missed again. Looks like I am missing all the fun! The only fun I have is work! I wonder how it goes about the exhibition? I suppose I will be disappointed if he does not even reply to me. I am trying to prepare myself by saying that I do not really want this exhibition, but to be honest, I do! It could be fun to see this project in a gallery hanging framed properly on the walls.

He has to give me an answer in the run of next week. If he decides to show the work, I will have only a few days to organize the framing and the catalogue. Maybe I should prepare the catalogue ahead of time?

February 16

A week has gone since the Chinese NYE. I have been flat in bed most of the time, feeling dizzy and sick. I have not seen any fireworks. Each time I have heard them, it has been too late to run to the top floor to see them.

Today at breakfast The American lady asked the usual how are you without expecting any answer and kept talking about her family and her mother, who is over a hundred years old. It is strange how this place makes everybody to focus on their own matters even more than before.

We have received an invitation to participate at Venice Biennial as part of Swatch art presentation, whatever that is going to be. Looks like we are invited to deliver two pictures of our works each. Now I have to prepare these before I am leaving in two weeks. All of a sudden, the time is getting short. I do not feel well either.

There is going to be a gathering and a party here tonight, but it is out of the question for me to cook for them. I am kicked down flat in bed. That makes me even more isolated from the others than before, not that I am too sorry for it.

My stay here has been colored by individuals like Adolf and Monkey, their names standing for what they represent, a fascist and a monkey. Now there seem to be nice people around, but I am not socializing with them as I am not well. Maybe I will still have a chance later.

I have managed to get out of the cave and do more work, even went out to get some food. So I am getting better?

February 21

I had a great day yesterday. For once. The sun was out, and I went to French concession. Could not find what I was looking for, but have enjoyed myself anyway. Had lunch at a new opened sushi restaurant, have done mani and pedi for the last time and had a haircut. Everything went well, no mistakes, no idiocy. It could be the right time to start my residency a new.

In the evening I have been invited out by the american lady to Yuannan restaurant. I have not been to any of the traditional places here yet. I enjoyed the company, which I cannot exactly say about the food. But it has been sort of an interesting place, in the backyard and for the locals, probably authentic, good to have seen and learned about, even if I am not going to come back to Shanghai.

Today was not a good day though. I have been waiting for another gallery owner, but he has not called and he has not shown up. The first gallery has refused me.

Now I have to breath out and pack the things to take them home. It is probably the best thing to do anyway. Just do not know, what I am going to do with them there? Nobody needs all this production. The amount of art produced in the world will soon be greater than the amount of viewers! This is going to be my statement for the Venice biennial.

February 23



Today is the worst day so far. Just went for breakfast, and after that have stayed in bed the rest of the day. Felt really bad. It is as if there is some science fiction animal sucking on my brains, head and the whole system from the insides. That animal got really mad at me today and is making a revenge.

Yesterday I went to the underground to get to the optical market, only there were three different stations called Shanghai railroad station, and I have been to all three. In addition I have taken a train in a wrong direction, trying to get back from one of them. I went in and out three times and I decided to get there no matter what. I finally got there after four hours of sightseeing on the underground and have ordered a pair of glasses, which means I will have to go back there in a week.

My throat has not been well before I went there, and it turned really bad after. It is as if I have been infected and polluted by all the spitting Chinese on all the railroad stations of the city. At least it is obvious that I should not go by my own to any gardens outside the city.

I had to ask the concierge to get me some medicines today, which he did. But I am still feeling bad.

Yesterday I have made some new unfortunate efforts in order to organize some presentations. Nobody is interested in me, which is probably a natural result of all my talking. They all went to participate in the performance by a collaboration of the Italian guy and the Germans. They went to the multiple exhibitions by the sweet Swiss girl, but they would not come to see my work.

I have no idea what I do wrong, but obviously I do something wrong. Maybe they just sense that I dislike their morals, opinions and behavior, they are not stupid. Maybe they misunderstand half of what I am saying due to the language problems, especially the French and the Italian speaking people, who speak a very limited English. In any case there will be no open studio and no presentation on my side. I doubt that they are going to even bother to say good bye to me. I feel hurt, and I really do not think that I deserve it.

I think they are just extraordinary egoists, the whole bunch of them. They are the creamers, the squeezers, those who manage always to get the most out of it, very self sure and very insecure at the same time. They all have multiple personalities and change from being sweet and friendly, when they need something from one, to being really ignorant and never minded after they are over with it. Just like the sweet Swiss girl.

She had made me to stand on my feet for an hour and wait for her till her frames were made. She made me show her where to buy the background for her photographs and help her make them. When I asked her to tell me and show me on the map where the shoe market was, she suddenly did not have the time. That could have taken five minutes, maybe even less. Basically, they do not care for other people. They do not care to behave according to the code of honor. They are they, they are all the same, the artists with good names and good educations, with all their PHD-es. PHD-es do not make them into human beings.

Funny, how the Canadian guy signs his emails, his name and PHD under. No information on what kind of PHD, just his web side.

I am really-really looking forward to getting out of here!

One more week!

I wonder what would have happened if I had sent this blog to them to read?

Probably just like the last time in China, they would all be surprised and shocked? As if they do not know what they are doing? Or is it abnormal to be as I am and expect other people to be nice back? It is not so that one needs to pay back a favor to the same person. It can be a chain reaction, you receive a favor from one, but give it back to another. Life is a favor bank. The condition is that one does not misuse the system.

February 24

Still in bed. Have got the concierge to bring me some Chinese medicines yesterday, it helped, but I am still totally stuffed.

Today at breakfast I have met a new guy, a representative for the Swatch group. They have actually sent a representative here, after we have demanded a tool shelf, which we could fill with our tools, which we leave behind, so the new arrivals can use them.

He actually asked me, what I think can be improved and what is lacking. Maybe they will improve the situation in the future, but it is too late for me. On the other hand the purpose of this place is to promote Swatch, not to promote the artists or the art. They are actually using the artists and their good names in order to achieve their purpose. This is business and not pleasure!

Of all the residences I have done this is the most controversial one. Just makes me think that the art scene is also controversial, especially here in Shanghai. It is all a big business and it is all about money. The market for art has collapsed here, but they are still selling young and promising Chinese. That is why I wanted to do that faked identity exhibition, where I would present a project under a false Chinese name and hire a young and beautiful Chinese girl to play the artist. Or should it be a homosexual boy? Maybe even better!

Tonight they are all going out to eat and say good bye to the sweet Swiss girl who is leaving tomorrow. I wonder if she even finds it necessary to say good bye to me? I am not going to take the initiative.

Later someone has knocked and asked if I am going to join them for the party. I asked him to ask the girl to knock on my door when she came back, only she has not done that. I dropped her an email, she left me a plastic flower and a panda. All well, no talking together, avoid

confrontations!

February 25

I really need to see a doctor. Where do I go? Have dropped an email to the authorities, no answer yet.

They came back to me rather quickly and made an appointment for me. I took a taxi back and forth. Now I have the antibiotics.

Talked to the other guys here about the sweet Swiss girl leaving without goodbyes. They meant it was a totally normal thing to do. I wonder what kind of screening the participants here have been through? It must have been a super-egoism test. If you do care for other people, you are not welcome here. The problem with this theory is that I have passed that test too! And I consider myself to be a considerate person.

I had a breakfast talk once here with the Canadian and the Italian guys about the future of Italy, the election etc. It turned to be a rather strange conversation due to language issues as usual. I wonder how these guys managed to pass the language tests for their PHD-es? They misunderstand and misinterpret totally anything that is being told, at least that has been my experience, when I talked to them.

They manage to produce incredibly meaningless texts in English though about their own work, like this for example:

[The Aleph) contains in his inarticulable shape all the relations with the universe and he is, ultimately, the universe itself. J.L. Borges

The sound installation proposed for the Bazaar Compatible explores possible (or impossible) territorial interstices. Those are the ones the auditor / observer perceives with his body when he moves into the Bazaar. The materials present are real, sonorous, luminous and immaterial. The addition of the concrete and the impalpable immerses the participant (because first of all that's an experience and the dispositif is there only to trigger it) into an imaginary that only belong to him. The space defined by INTERSTICES is absolutely subjective, neither deterritorialised, nor reterritorialised ; it is just there as a succession of immaterial plans ready to be felt and perceived. Maybe the interstices considered by the installation are nested between various folds, at the intersection of various planes. But well, I digress. Enter, walk and listen (to your self)

The most incredible "dispositif" I have seen... he does not even care to use an English word there. Fortunately I am sick and have an excuse not to participate in the "dispositif"... even if I think it could be interesting, definitions and words apart.

I have started to pack. I am really looking forward to getting out of here!

February 27

I am not feeling well and have to stay in a horizontal position as much as I can. Started packing. It is a long process. It can be that I have to buy an extra suitcase, need to take it all down in order to see how much it becomes in size and weight.

I hope I am not sick with a new epidemic virus. I can hear more and more people getting sick. I am not getting any better, and the antibiotics do not work. So it is either the wrong type of antibiotics or it is a virus. Hope I will be able to get on the plane!

March 1

I cannot believe that I have been here for so long! This is a training camp for egoism. The Chinese do not understand this thing about our need for privacy. They scream to each other over my head, when I sit down alone to eat in the kitchen. They come into my room to clean, while I am in the toilet. They move all kinds of private things without hesitation around the room and the studio. I feel so exposed!

The personnel is very helpful, but also very intruding. There has been some action in the kitchen today, looks like they are making an effort to get things a bit better organized.

Met the Italian guy in the corridor, he had hold a safe three meters distance from me. He asked if I was ok. He did not ask, if I needed any help with anything.

They are having a dinner and a one day exhibition opening for the Spanish guy. I am in bed, getting only worse with the time and angry about my fate.

March 3

So this is it, the end of my stay here. I have been flat in bed for a month now. I have been flat in bed for a month to begin with, that leaves about a month for the rest of my stay. Everybody else seems to have made it much better, making shows, presentations and performances. I have been refused by two galleries. No wonder I am bitter.

On the other hand I allow myself to think that it is not only that I am that bad and my work is that bad. My name and my background are important, my disability to compromise and to lick the bottoms play an important role too.

This has been an important residency, my last residency, which has taught me an important lesson. I hope I will be able to retire now and to stop producing. At least I have to stop searching for an exposure. Maybe it is not such a bad thing to leave it all to my son. Maybe he will be better at placing it somewhere?

Perhaps I still have some time to get things organized!

## The afterword

Half a year after getting back home I am still sick. I had to undergo a surgery in my nose. The pollution has ruined my health. They still do not know exactly what it is. There has been a new bird flu epidemic in Shanghai at just about the time when I was there. This residency has effected my life.

I have had a quarrel with Silvano and Jean about my artist statement for the Venice biennial. It might have been the stupid secretary again, or it might have been censored away. In any case I have not discovered it before a week after the opening. I am glad I did not go there for the reception, but we have visited Venice a week later. That is when I discovered that they have fooled me.

After a long discussion they promised to replace the board with my work and put my artist statement in place as I required. A victory! I did not bother to check again if that has been executed. I do not care for this biennial. In fact it is a shame to be represented there in that way as a Swatch artist.

I could have had the courage to leave that place earlier.

I could have had the courage to say no to this biennial participation.

Only it is hard to be brave and reject all the opportunities for exposure to public.

It is only possible to try and see how it goes.

This time I have failed badly.

This has not been a success story.

I still hope I will get up again from my knees.

I feel like a rape victim.

## Swatch stand in Venice, 2013

All the residents of Swatch Art Peace Hotel during 2013 have been invited to participate in the 55. Venice Biennial as a part of the Swatch group stand. This has not been aimed at promoting the artists, but to promote the company. I have been very dissatisfied with my stay in Shanghai, but I decided to use the opportunity to have my say in the matter. I have prepared two self-portraits to be placed at the fellow stand that was designed as a board with vertically rotating pictures of all the participants. One of my pictures was called “self-portrait as a blue eyed optimist”, the other “self-portrait in a dark mood”. The board could be turned

around, so it has been constantly changing from one picture to another. There was also a short text, telling what I felt about the biennial and the residency organized by the Swatch group: “Art should exist to make humans human. Today we have more artists than viewers. On their climb to the top through the hard competition some artists act like animals. I hope not to become like them.”