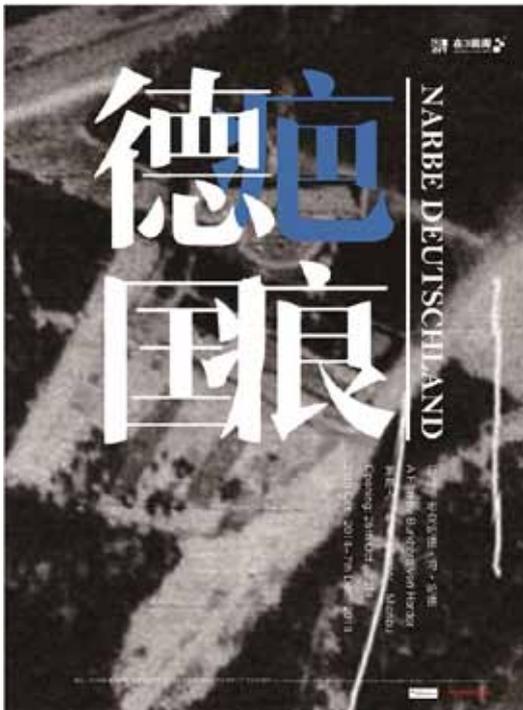


IN EVERY MAN LIES ALL MANKIND | Exhibition Preface



This, basically, is the tale of seven years, for Burkhard von Harder to shoot his unparalleled 16-hour film, “Scar Germany,” a cinematic odyssey encompassing the remarkable landscape traversing the length of Germany and woven together by a brilliant musical soundtrack. This generous undertaking allowed us to meet, get close to, understand and finally decide to exhibit and project the film by this great artist, who remains endlessly enigmatic and mystical; here, in late autumn of 2014. We are unsure whether this is simply the honor of Being 3 Gallery, or a serendipitous occasion for the entire generation? This is a personal cinematic vision. It allows us to perceive the theoretical achievement of André Bazin—a great master of French post-war modern film theory, the “Aristotle” of film, who wrote in his Notebooks on Cinema, “Film is an art, by which directors express their opinions of this world.” The concepts of this film are so clear: traveling along the path of the wall between East and West Germany, flying at low altitude over the German terrain, beginning from the southeast in the deep German forest at the Czech border, up to the blue sky of Schleswig-Holstein in the north, while passing through four seasons. By invoking the metaphor of scars that imply a sense of pain, Von Harder incorporates the enormous, disturbing and intangible historical background (the Iron Curtain era, 1961 to 1989, during the Cold War and beyond) into his personal gaze and contemplation, into the romantic Novalis road, the mythic German forests and the regenerating capacity of nature.

This, then, is the mental transition found in great volume. These long, lengthy single-shots spare no effort to explore the land of Germany, accompanied by another main part of the film: the music, which is a series of eastern influenced spiritual soundtracks, solemn and retrospective, written and played by his late stepbrother, Klaus Wiese. With the slow movement of the scenes, it (the film) has converted land and time into a mind map: a spiritual, huge, restless atmosphere informed by an extremely modest love. This is a series of metaphorical spaces: the mythological sorrow drawn from one’s hometown—indeed this is a scar, as we have long been expelled from that Lost Paradise; the fantasy-utopia of safe living—are we human beings able to achieve this? (World War II, the Cold War, the Middle East afterwards, the Korean War, the Gulf War and so forth, the endless dangers); The fundamental nature of poetic inhabitation—yes, the beauty of the natural environment has all returned since the end of the Cold War; but this is about the history of Germany and the aesthetic gaze into one’s personal fragments—we deeply love the words from Von Harder when referring to this film as “cutting through everything, the profane... without narrative, resistance, refusal, giving a glimpse of the path... the disturbance and salvation of the mind (the blue at the end - the undisturbed mind - that is always just within reach).” This, then, is a cinematic poem by Burkhard Von Harder, a poet who constantly appears in a space composed of a series of metaphors.

As an individual artist, this is all he carries: spirit, life, self comfort and so forth, all on his unpredictable path. Everything facing the past of Germany had already become a haunting obsession; and whereas originally, this artist was similar to a sensitive animal who is easily hurt, yet he managed to move forward, though finding no way to escape the weight of this personal burden. Then, at a very sudden moment on his wander, his vision elevated (his internal helicopter), and helped him restore the whole thing. Indeed, this film has been, in some predestined way, divinely fated to be presented here, and he, the flying bird in love with the land of Germany, has now vanished behind the veil of this poetic work.

Faced with this epic film, it might be misleading if we were too silent; but if we say something, it is this: the love that emanates from him for his country is as silent as that which used to envelope Germany, and now, he will probably wander on. Therefore, let us just simply watch the film and here I dedicate to Burkhard Von Harder as well as to everyone who is ready to come to witness this occasion, a phrase borrowed from the German woman poet, Herta Müller —“Everyone is the entire humankind.”

By wings of the helicopter, For seven years he has been looking down, He reconstructed the soul of the earth, “I wanted love to grow back, like the grass when it’s mown down...”

Mianbu, poet and art director of Being 3 Gallery, Beijing

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