

PRESS RELEASE

"Tao Aimin: A Woman's Long March"

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Long March Independent Space, Beijing

Installation Concept

A woman walks along the road, as if she is traversing time itself. The sharp edges of this collection of washboards have long been worn down, worn until all that is left are mottled traces of the ridges once there. Throughout their journeys, the owners of these washboards have experienced trials and hardships, tribulations and suffering, but their spirits persevere. Using art to chronicle their journeys is, in ways, akin to putting their histories down in writing. This is a life course filled with passion, a road in the long march of life.

Video Installation: Explanation of Work

The materials of this work are composed of over a hundred and sixty old washboards used by generations of Chinese women. To this day, many rural woman still use washboards—these ordinary everyday household objects—to do their laundry. The faces of the owners, some of whom are over 90 years old, are painted on some of the washboards. It is not an exaggeration to say that these women have spent half their lives bent over these boards, washing clothes for their families. The worn-down grooves of the washboards and lines a life of labor has left on their faces become almost indistinguishable. Each and every one bears the marks of its owners life, telling us stories from her life.

The video component of the piece was filmed during the process of collecting the washboards that began with the discovery of one mother's washboard. During the course of the project, I also collected the life stories and memories of each woman, took their pictures and spent time experiencing the genuine conditions of their lives. On the road, during the process of making the piece, I experienced loneliness and hardship, but still felt a kind of inner peace. It was as if this was also a process of seeking myself as well.

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