



btr

不敢不敢与
意思意思：
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我认识一个冷笑话讲得很好的人。这个人的名字叫 btr。有一次，在我反复提到“肉身”两个字后，他讲了这么一个冷笑话：

在哲学上有个缸中之脑的假说，可以让我们摆脱肉身的束缚。摆脱肉身的束缚有利有弊，利在于我们可以自由自在，只管思考就行了；弊就是谁也不知道这个脑会出现在哪个缸里，也有可能是四川火锅店的火锅缸里。

哈哈。

btr 三个字母全部小写。在电脑键盘上输入 btr 三个字母用到的都是左手食指。

我会假想每个字母其实分别是一个字或词的首字母，比如 be the ren，或者“巴塞罗那 踢足球的人”；常见联想还有变态人、鼻涕人等。

让我们来看看全部大写会怎么样？

BTR

BRT……又或者，每个字母分别是一个人名首字母，这些人可能是作家或球员。

其实我们也可以简单就只把这三个字母看作它们本身，三个随机字母的随机组合。只是，在它们可能代表的无数种含义中，有一个是这个人。

写作在形式上是把文字组合起来，每一种组合成为被固定下来的表达。这些组合在调用每个字词的特定含义的同时，也会通过组合激发出新的含义。组合形成节奏，风格。以小说为例，如果一部小说是一栋建筑，那么建筑的结构、读者的思维在阅读时所穿行其中的空间等等，都是一名写作者在建造时需要考虑的要素。然而小说不是固定不变的，不同的读者，在阅读一部小说的时候所理解和感受的东西都不尽相同。好的冷笑话往往能提醒我们这一点。因为同一个词，当被放置在不同语境中时，它的色彩和意思就会改变，冷笑话的讲述者往往是那些从另类视角观察并拆解语言惯性的人，他们能够激活词汇平时的一些冷僻用意，将这些被忽视的语义烘烤出来——所以真应该叫热笑话才对。如果结合以上来考虑一件艺术作品的创作，尤其是针对那些着重观念的艺术作品，我们也会发现共通之处：跳脱出惯性语境，并往往将诠释交给观者，甚至由观者的参与赋予作品新的意义。李燎有件作品叫《艺术是真空》，我觉得“真空”这种提法挺贴切的，因为在看或阅读一件作品的时候，和读一部小说类似，观者的意识会进入“真的空”，一个某种程度上脱离现实的虚构空间。谁说小说（故事）与艺术不是最古老的裸眼 VR 呢？

I know a person with a great sense of dry wit. His name is btr. One time during conversations I used the phrase *rou shen* (or flesh) a couple times, to which he responded with a story:

In philosophy there is a theory called a brain in a jar that allows one to escape the bondage of flesh. There are pros and cons to being free of are our bodies. The good thing is of course the ability to think with boundless freedom; the bad thing is that one may not know into what sort of jar the brain would be placed. It could be a pot from a Sichuan hot pot restaurant.

Hahaha

btr is spelled in lower case letters. When typing with a keyboard, all three letters are performed by the left hand.

I could imagine that each letter, b, t, and r is an abbreviation of another word. For example, btr could mean “be the ren”; Or *basailuona tizuqiu de ren* (the man who plays soccer in Barcelona). Other interpretations include *bian tai ren* (pervert), and *bi ti ren* (snot man).

If we spell the name with capital letters

BTR

BRT... or, if we define each letter as an abbreviation of a person’s name, let say that of an author or a soccer player.

We can also see B, T, R, as simply three letters that can be arranged in any random configuration. Each configuration would have a different meaning, and one of them is the name of my friend.

Writing involves putting words together. Every grouping delivers a fixed expression. In a sentence, every word has a specific meaning, and when read together these words may manifest new collective meanings. Words strung together form a specific rhythm and style. For example, if we were to compare a novel to a building, then the structure of the building and the space through which the reader journeys should be carefully considered. That does not mean the experience of reading a novel is the same for every reader; each person may respond with different thoughts and feelings. A good sense of dry humor can often remind us of such multiplicity. Words placed in different contexts change in color and meaning. The person with a dry sense of humor is often good at deconstructing words from unusual angles. One can bring out rare usages of a phrase and reveal meanings that are often overlooked. The process is like baking something to steam out what is hidden inside. Perhaps jokes with dry humor should be called hot jokes. If we follow this train of thought we can find common ground between art making and telling a hot joke: the artist strives to think outside of normative contexts and leaves from for the viewer to make interpretations themselves. In some cases, artists also encourage the participation of viewers in creating a work’s meaning. There is an artwork by Li Liao called “*Art is Vacuum*”; I find the term vacuum quite fitting to describe art. Experiencing a piece of art is like reading a novel, in which the viewer enters an emptiness, a kind of illusory space detached from reality. In a sense, novels (or stories

不敢不敢

Dare Not Dare Not

顾灵
Gu Ling

讲好一个冷笑话需要做到以下几点：

1. 拥有丰富的词汇量
2. 熟悉且喜爱多义词（不仅是一词多义，还有可以同时作为动词与名词这样的多态词，比如信——相信一封信，猫——一只猫猫在那儿，画——画画；双关与歧义是意思表达的一种丰富的形式）
3. 不怕冷
4. 不要试图归纳讲好冷笑话的要点

Here are a few key points to a dry sense of humor:

1. To have a vast vocabulary
2. To be familiar and have a passion for words with multiple meanings (not just words with many definitions, but also words that can be both noun and verbs—a kind of multi-state of language. For example, *xin* (信) can mean to believe or a letter; *mao* (猫) means a cat or to arch one’s back like a cat; and *hua* (画) can be both a painting and the action of painting. Puns and ambiguous phrases are expressions with abundant meaning
3. To be comfortable with dry wit
4. To avoid summarizing humor into a list of key points

btr 是一位作家和译者，人们或许会因为他是保罗·奥斯特的中文译者，或曾经担任文学杂志《天南》的编辑，或他写的《迷走·神经》而知道他。近期他翻译的《樱桃的滋味：阿巴斯谈电影》也出版了。他喜欢吃也基本吃得起、坚持看欧洲的足球比赛又不用上班、羽毛球打得很好而且体型仍保持在微胖有肚状态、家足够大可以放下很多书、经常旅游并且还友好使用朋友圈，看艺术展览和吃一顿好吃的、看一场球赛、打一场球、读一本小说或出门玩一趟类似，在他而言是一种日常活动。

因为要看欧洲的足球比赛，btr 的作息表就基本上是凌晨睡觉第二天中午起来在每天午夜左右，他的微信公众号“意思意思”会发布更新。意思这个词本身的含义就比较多，连用之后的意思更多。这个号的准确地址是 petite_mort，这是一个法语词组，字面意思是“小死”，实际的意思是“性高潮”。

作为一个从 btr 创建“意思意思”至今几乎天天看他更新的忠实读者，我认为他很擅长“玩文字语言的游戏”，尤其善于戏弄“文字”与“图像”。他在微信上发布的多个系列都是非常短小的图文组合，并先后结集出版成《迷你》与《意思意思》。这两本立方体状的书分别由一厚打小方纸堆成，每一张小方纸对应一日的微信更新内容。《迷你》可以称作是一部微小说合集，每一篇几乎都是比莉迪亚·戴维斯 (Lydia Davis) 的短篇小说更短小的小说。《意思意思》则是另一种看图说话或看话说话图，每页的一面是手绘、另一面是冷笑话，相互对应。从这些图文小品可一窥作者对文字的敏感度与一种热笑话般的幽默感。

btr 接触当代艺术要追溯到 2012 年受欧宁邀请参与策划大声展的文学单元，自那以来，btr 的文章中越来越频繁地出现艺术作品(或者客观地说，艺术作品在现实中的供应量越来越多了)，还应一些艺术杂志撰写艺术评论，其中有些疑似展评，有些则更为暧昧。这些更暧昧的篇章，以虚构居多，夹杂着一些符合事实的陈述，乍读起来也未必就能立马明白是真是假。

这些小说，且让我用小说来称呼它们（它们确实就很短小），无法被归类到“教材”中规定的艺术写作类别。艺术界对这些小说很感兴趣，大概是因为少有正经艺术评论之外的写作是认真关于艺术的（但其实这些小说看上去也不大认真）。

in general) and artworks are the ancient predecessors of virtual reality.

btr is both a writer and translator. Perhaps people know him by his work as the Chinese translator for Paul Auster, former editor for literature journal *Chutzpah!*, or author of the book *Vagus Nerve*. Recently, he has also translated *The Taste of Cherry: Abbas Kiraostami on Film*. btr loves to eat and he eats well. He insists on watching European soccer matches and not going to work. He is great at badminton yet still retains a slightly chubby figure with a paunch. His house is filled with countless books; he travels, and keeps in touch with his friends. btr’s everyday life consists of going to art exhibitions, dining out, watching football, and playing badminton.

In order to watch live broadcast of European soccer matches, btr sleeps in the morning and wakes up at noon. Around midnight everyday he updates his WeChat blog *yisi yisi* (which means to make do). The term *yisi* may mean many things, and it has many usages. The URL of this WeChat blog is petitmort, a french term that literally means small death and generally refers to the idea of sexual climax.

As an avid follower of btr’s WeChat blog, I know he is good at playing language games, especially the kind that teases with the idea of written language and images. btr typically posts pairs of text and image, many of which he has later published in his two books *Mini* and *yisi yisi*. These two books are each made of a thick pack of small square paper, and on every page is a day of WeChat post. *Mini* can be seen as a compilation of mini novels, every novel is shorter than the short novels of Lydia Davis. *yisi yisi* consists of images and text; a page of sketch drawing is coupled by a page of dry humor jokes. These couplings reflect btr’s sensitivity to language and dry sense of humor.

btr first got involved in contemporary art in 2012 when he was invited by Ou Ning to participate in the literary section of “Get It Louder.” Since then, art would frequently appear in btr’s writing (The output of contemporary art was also increasing in China). Sometimes he also published writings in art magazines; some of these writing read like exhibition reviews, while others are more ambiguously intended. These ambiguous writings contain a mixture of fiction and truth. It is not immediately clear which parts are true and which parts



沈凌昊，“剩余物”系列-《后花园地图》（截屏）
2017 年
视频装置，尺寸可变

Shen Linghao, “Spare Object”—*Back Garden Map* (video still)
2017
Video installation, dimensions variable
Courtesy Frank F. Yang Art and Education Foundation and the artist

btr 在一些故事前写了这样一句话：“这些故事灵感来自于上海明当代美术馆的展览‘把一切都交给你’（策展人：比利安娜·思瑞克）。”在“关于 xxx”的写作与这种自称为“灵感来自于 xxx”的写作之间，存在差异吗？有趣的是，创作者经常被人提问“你的创作灵感来自哪里？”就好像没有这种从天而降的东西就无法创作一样。btr 的这些能非常舒服地被纳入虚构文学范畴的小说，自有其结构与方法，就像他自己说的那样：“这甚至有点像小说展开的方式：先披露故事的一部分，再不断补缀、修正、丰富、扩展、转变，甚至颠覆。”¹ 作品作为素材在小说中被修改或者在我看来再创作。在这些小说里，艺术同其他任何可用的素材一样，只是发生在作者身上的生活的一部分。

如果我是艺术家，我做了一件作品，btr 看到了我的作品后写了一篇小说，这篇小说里出现了一些我的作品的影子（这让我想到柏拉图说我们的现实或许是外界在我们洞穴上的投影的说法），我会怎么看待这篇小说呢？或许和看待其他小说时没什么两样？

对疑似展评的这些文章而言，比如“评论”上海外滩美术馆菲利普·帕雷诺 (Philippe Parreno) 个展“共此时” (Synchronicity) 的《共时城漫游指南》，文章中摘录（或说挪用）了策展人或艺术

are made up.

These novels (let me call them novels despite their brevity), cannot be classified as any textbook genre of art writing. The appeal of his novels to the art world perhaps stems from the rarity of authors who seriously write about art in a manner alternative to conventional art criticism (even though novels are generally not taken seriously).

In btr’s book, he writes in the preface: “These stories are inspired by an art exhibition at the Shanghai Ming Contemporary Art Museum titled ‘Proposals to Surrender’ (curated by Biljana Ciric).” I wonder, is there a difference between a piece of writing about xxx and writing inspired by xxx? Authors are often asked about their inspirations, as if no one believes that there can be any creation out of the blue. btr’s writings about art can be easily described as fiction incised with his own methodology and structures. As he says himself, “My words unravel like a novel: first there are some revelations of the story, followed by amendments, revisions, elaborations, extensions, changes, and even subversions.”¹ The artworks mentioned in his novels are treated as material to be manipulated or reprocessed. In these novels, art is just like any other usable material that he takes from his daily life.

If I were an artist and I created a piece of work that is written in btr’s novel, how would I perceive this novel, which embodies a shadow of my work? This reminds me of Plato’s theory that our reality is perhaps mere projections on a cave wall. Perhaps I would see btr’s novel in the same light as any other novel?

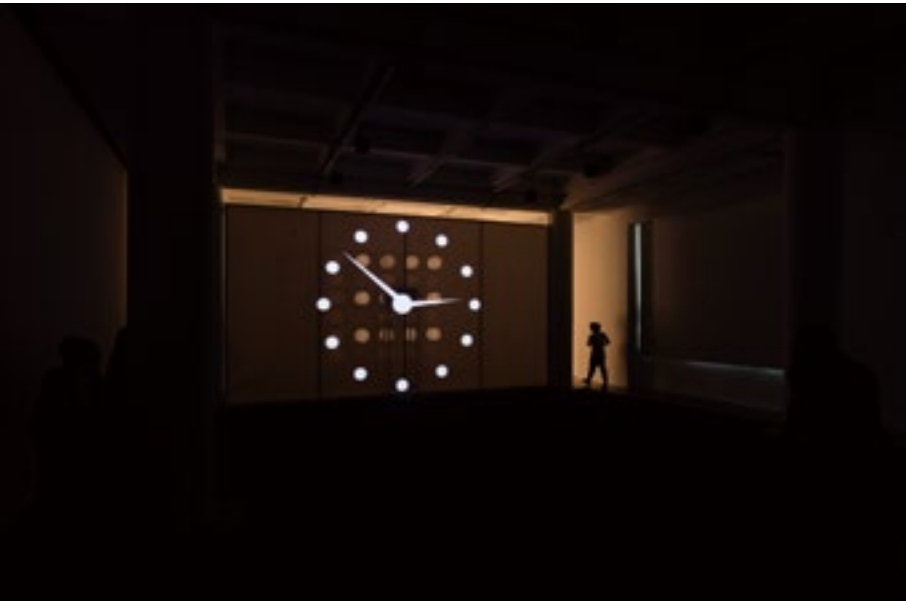


View of "Philippe Parreno: Synchronicity"
Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, 2017
Courtesy Rockbund Art Museum and the artist

家的一些现成文字（类似于艺术创作中的现成品），并将作者对展览的观感嵌套在文中类似于说明指示牌的文体中。标题与结尾处对《爱丽丝镜中奇遇记》的引用呼应了全文将展览喻作“共时城”这个虚拟所在（就像爱丽丝仙境）。艺术评论者、但同样实践虚构写作的陈玺安告诉我，在他看来，btr 的这些疑似展评所做的，“比如他会描述艺术品的结构，并应用在落笔的节奏上。所以看这种文字，就会比能让你一眼看尽的画面结构本身来得更像迷宫。这也许构成一些人喜欢艺术的理由，就像是人们都会好奇自己在别人的叙述里或画笔下的形象。就此而言，看这种文章的愉悦感，部分来自于想知道作品还会被怎么样叙述。也许更重要的是，对一些展览小说的作家而言，仅仅执笔评价事物是有点无趣了。写作对象能否开启思辨的可能才是问题。换言之，作品促使你挑战批评的模式，并问道，我们可以如何回望展览（re-view）？”

如果说 btr 和展览小说家们开启了一种展览批评的新模式，那么除此之外，btr 还在小说中假想了一些新作品，成为了他小说中的艺术家。在《展览小小小说》的《马赛克艺术》和《摄影展》中，他写了一个画家和一个摄影师循环嵌套的创作逻辑，前者是基于因信号错误而产生的地铁屏幕画面所创作的马赛克动画在地铁中播放时因信号错误而被进一步马赛克化后又被重新创作成马赛克的“抽象后的抽象”，后者是拍摄、打印、扫描的反复重复；这些在我看来，都是对作品边界与创作自指（艺术特别喜欢自指）的生动说明，就像字典中用字对字做出解释。

在小说中构建艺术作品，这是一种对我来说新奇的做法，也和前面提到的那些疑似展评的写作不同。一般而言，小说是围绕人物塑造与叙事而生长的，如果看一部基于小说改编的电影，那么这部电影会是关于这本小说的主人公的故事。而如果这个人物是一位艺术家，那么在电影里我们或许会看到一些他的作品，但这些作品并非是作为主体出现的，只是用来辅助对人物的刻画。举一个不太恰当的类比：著名导演吉姆·贾木许的电影《帕特森》（Paterson）讲的是一个在美国帕特森市开公交的名叫帕特森的司机在看似重复无聊的生活间隙写诗的故事。主人公热爱威廉·卡洛斯·威廉姆斯的诗，而威廉·卡洛斯·威廉姆斯也是贾木许热爱的诗人。在影片中，主人公写的诗却又是另一位真实的美国诗人罗恩·帕杰特（Ron Padgett）的作品。于是这部电影与这些诗歌，某种程度上都是在以电影的形式与语言再现诗歌，我们可以说这是一部关于诗歌的电影。而在 btr 的这些小说中，作品被作为主体加以描述，而其创作者是隐身的，读者也不用关心这些作品的创作者是谁，是什么样的人。也就是说，



In regards to writings that flirt with the form of exhibition reviews, let us take for example btr’s *Synchronicity Travel Guide*, a book that “reviews” Philippe Parreno’s exhibition "Synchronicity" at Rockbund Art Museum. The guide borrows passages from the writings by Parreno and curator Larys Frogier, just as an artist may borrow readymade objects for. While the book appears to provide objective guidance to the show, it also includes the author’s



painter and photographer create art by creating loops imbedded in loops. In "Mosaic Art," the glitch image of a broken subway screen is rearranged into a new mosaic image, thus becoming an abstraction after an abstraction. “Photography Show” is about a repeated process of taking photos, printing, and scanning. From my point of view, these examples probe the boundaries of art and demonstrate how art references itself. Like how words are used to describe words in dictionaries.

Creating art in fiction is a refreshing idea to me. Generally, fiction grows from a story and its characters. A film that reinterprets a novel is often shot as a story that revolves around the protagonist in the novel. If this protagonist is an artist, then in the film we would perhaps see the artist’s work as supporting material to assist in character building. To give a contestable example, the film *Paterson*, by renowned film director Jim Jarmusch, is about a bus driver, Paterson, in Paterson City, who writes poetry during his repetitive and mundane daily life. Paterson loves the poetry of William Carlos Williams, who is much loved by the director himself in reality. Paterson’s poems in the film are in actuality material borrowed from the American poet Ron Padgett. In this film poetry is recreated in the form and language of film.

For btr, art is his subject and their true authors are left unmentioned. It is not important who, or what kind of person they are. For Jarmusch, it is with fictional characters that he creates his film, which exists in reality. For btr, fictional characters make up fictional art in his novels. btr’s novels are manifestations of himself, in which fictional things are the subject of his creation. The stories in his novels touch upon real works and exhibitions, but they are woven into fiction to form a new story. Can these novels, as a form of contemporary writing experiments, surpass the limits of fiction writing in the form of novels? How is the illusion of truth created in btr’s novels any different than conventional novels that tell stories so real that we almost believe them as true?

谢尔盖·齐尔品和斯蒂芬·齐尔品，《十音：在大调小调的内外》表演现场
上海明当代美术馆，2017 年

Sergei Tcherepnin and Stefan Tcherepnin, *Ten Tones: Inside and Outside the Major-Minor*, performance as part of "Proposals to Surrender," Shanghai Ming Contemporary Art Museum, 2017



Vestígios da provável sala de hóspedes

估計曾是招待賓客的地方

Probable remains of guest room



贾木许的电影用虚构的人物创作真实的作品，而 btr 的小说用虚构的人物创作虚构的作品，并以这些作品作为真实创作者（作者自己）的化身。虚构的东西才是创作的主角。小说中的叙述或许触碰到了相应艺术作品与展览的表达，但这些叙述交织在虚构中，从而形成了一个新的故事。这样的小说，作为一种当代写作实验，是否突破了小说本身的虚构叙事的边界？如果一部典型的小说会让我们觉得“像真的一样”，那么 btr 的小说中让我们觉得“像真的一样”的作品又有何特别之处？

小说中的艺术作品和现实中的艺术作品非常相似，它们之间的相似性是什么？像作品像在哪里？如今很多当代艺术的作品多在于观念，对这样的作品而言，其视觉表现甚或物质实体之于其表达的意义经常显得淡薄而模糊。因而这个问题或许会引申出一个更老的问题：一件作品如何成为作品？（我们暂且不讨论那些凭借外部条件即被 [自] 认作作品的情况。）

为了帮助解答，我先换一个我相信具有同质性的问题：当一件作品被收藏时，究竟什么被收藏了？比如英国艺术家组合汤姆森与克雷格海德 (Thomson & Craighead) 的一件基于程序算法、通过屏幕播放的作品《装饰性新闻》(Decorative Newsfeeds)²，由于程序算法和屏幕都会改变，因而它需要制定一套规则以及对未来播放方式的某种预判来设定重现这件作品的方法。因而这件作品在被收藏时，收藏的是他们的 25 张纸上铅笔手绘的曲线图式，以及一套规则。又如提诺·赛格尔 (Tino Seghal) 不允许自己的作品有任何的摄像或纸本记录，甚至连作品收藏的合同与作品再现的方案都只能由律师及公证人在场见证并以口述的方式予以保留。也就是说，收藏一件作品，大多意味着收藏重现这件作品的方式。只要能重现这件作品，那就意味着成功收藏了它。如果是这样，那么我们可否认为：重现一件作品，即等同于这件作品？而不论是纸面的规则还是口述，

Art described in btr’s novels is very similar to how they appear in reality. How are these two representations similar? A lot of what we see as contemporary art today is conceptual and for such kind of work, if we look past their visual appearance and materiality, their inherent meaning are often subtle or ambiguous. This brings us back to an old question: How does a art become a art? (Let us set aside the situations in which artworks are identified based on their appearance.)

To answer this, let me ask another related question: When art is collected, what exactly is collected? The English artist duo Thomson & Craighead for example, created a art *Decorative Newsfeeds*² that runs on program algorithms and presented on digital screen. Since the results of the algorithmic calculations and the format of the screen are factors that may change, the work needs a system in place that dictates some rules for work. When the British Council collected this piece of art, what they received was 25 pages of hand drawn diagrams on paper and an art manual. Another example is Tino Seghal, who forbid any photography or textual record of his work. Contracts for collecting his work and proposals for exhibition could only

2. *Decorative Newsfeeds* 是按照一套特定规则展示实时新闻标题的一件艺术作品。这张图片选自一本说明手册，其中描述了这套规则，根据这套规则，这件作品可以相应地被重新创造（be re-created）。你只需拥有获取实时新闻标题的渠道，并设定能够自动执行这套规则的系统即可。由此产生的动画或自动绘图必须展示在 16:9 的显示区域内。显示区域可大可小，可根据作品的展示环境重新定义。
Jon Thomson & Alison Craighead, 2006

这套规则如下：
1. 随机选取实时新闻标题。
2. 随机选取手册中的这 25 种预设曲线。
3. 被选取的新闻标题须循被选取的曲线在显示区域内移动。
4. 新闻标题随曲线移动的轨迹方向必须是随机的，但文本的顺序不可颠倒。
5. 新闻标题随曲线移动的速度必须是从四种预设速度中随机选取的，这四种速度分别是：慢；很慢；不那么慢和有点快。
6. 计算每条新闻标题从移入到移出显示区域的时长，并从中随机选取一个时间点再次重复第一条至第五条规则。
7. 显示区域内永远不应同时显示三条标题。
8. 无限重复这一过程。

2. *Decorative Newsfeeds* is an art piece that displays news headlines according to a set of specific rules laid out in an instruction manual. This is an image of the manual, which stipulates that artworks can be re-created by association. To proceed, one must have access to a live feed of news headlines and follow the instructions in the manual. The resulting animation or automatic drawings should be displayed on a 16:9 monitor. The display area can be determined based on the exhibition conditions.
Jon Thomson & Allison Craighead, 2006

The set of rules are as follows:
1. Select new headlines at random.
2. Select from the manual one of 24 preset sketch paths.
3. The selected headlines move according to the chosen path.
4. The direction to which the text path is moving should be random. But the letters in the headline text should retain its original order.
5. The speed at which the text path is moving should be selected at random from four preset speeds.
6. Calculate the time each headline takes from to enter and exit from the screen. Choose at random a timeframe in which rule 1 to 5 are repeated.
7. The display area should not show three headlines at one time.
8. Repeat without end this process.

be made through oral communication and with the witness of lawyers and notary publics.

In a sense, collecting a piece of work means collecting the method that dictates how the artwork appears. A successful collection means one has gained the ability to exhibit the work. Can we also say that the exhibition of a work is the same as the work itself? The works in question all leave behind a textual trace, on paper or by oral communication. Can we say that the core of these works is their textual trace which enables one to exhibit the work? If one can read a art description and manifest the artwork in his/her mind, does this manifestation constitute a validation of the work itself? The works of art in btr’s novels exist without the need to recreate them in material form. Art in fictional writing takes on the abstraction of a shared image between all works of art. This abstraction is supplemented by further elaboration to become a specific image. In this sense, the works of art in btr’s novels truly exist and can even be collected.

How do we determine that a work of art in a novel is an actual work of art, and not a manifestation of the author? What makes a work of art a work of art? Is there a manual



这些作品都以文字或语言的方式作为留存后世的载体，那么一件作品的核心，是否就在于这些能再现它的文字或语言？同理，对一件作品的文字描述，如果能让读者在脑中充分再现这件作品，那是否就意味着这件作品已然成立？这么说来，btr 小说中的作品，重点不是可以重现，而是无需重现。虚构的作品抽象出了现实作品之间不可重现的那部分共相，再把它添加枝叶，修饰成具象。它们也就真实存在了、甚至还应该可以被收藏。

让我们回到前面的那个问题：为什么我们会意识到这些小说中提到的“作品”是作品，除了作者自己将其称为作品之外？是什么构成了一件作品之为作品的标准？有否创作指南或如何做一件艺术作品的手册让人们都可以去构想出“作品化”的东西来？这会让我想到黄永砅的《四个轮子的大转盘》：通过类似幸运大转盘的指针随机选择一些既定的艺术方案从而在一定程度上放弃艺术家的主观意志，或王郁洋与其程序员同伴开发的一套软件系统《王郁洋 #》：通过设定参数与读取艺术数据库来自动生成作品。btr 在他的小说中“创作”作品，与这些触及何为艺术这样的艺术元问题的创作，有异曲同工之处。不过，这些作品本身是真是假又有何区别呢？btr 在他的写作中一再提及苏菲·卡尔（Sophie Calle），这位以复刻自己与他人的真实生活作为创作、有时在旁人看来几近疯狂的艺术家的，恰是反驳现实与艺术（虚构）界限的一例。好比缸中之脑，既然我们无从得知也无法证伪，那么我们是缸中之脑抑或不是，之于我们又有何区别呢？对虚实判断更理性的做法，或许是玻尔兹曼大脑（虚构也是一种概率事件吗？），只是我们也无从得知那是一种怎样的大脑，以及我们是否应该将其称作大脑。

从根本上来说，文字，是这些小说创作的媒介，而艺术创作被用到了这样的写作中。小说中的这些作品，以文字为载体，服务于小说本身。而我能想到的一个有趣的反例或许是艺术家陆平原写的那些鬼故事，故事中的惊悚情节与平常的灵异故事相较并无甚特别，但这些故事的主人公往往是艺术家，故事中出怪事的对象往往是作品。对陆平原而言，这些故事并非为了拓展写故事的边界，而是假借故事这种媒介来讨论艺术界与艺术创作中的一些问题，这些问题是相对比较内部的，或许对大多数观者而言并不能激发起什么共鸣，但故事中的惊悚情节却可以。以《给你点颜色看看》为例，故事中的我从做医生的亲戚那里听说有个人腿上长了个不断变大的肿瘤，切除手术时伤口里流出了黄色的油画颜料。医生解释不了病情，但听患者说他做过一个梦，梦里去了一个喜欢用黄色颜料画画的艺术家的画展，

画展上黄色颜料的画亮得让他睁不开眼……反过来，btr 写这些小说，主要是为了写有趣新颖的小说，而艺术，作为一个母题往往是有趣新颖的，许多好的艺术所讨论的问题，又和意思、意识、表达这些小说也常常关注的元问题重叠，如此也就相得益彰了。同时，在文字表达上，这么做能强烈地拨动人们对阅读文字的敏感神经，但这一点却与现成的或虚构的作品想要讨论的具体话题关系不大了。

关于 btr 写作的另一项观察是将叙述、论述与虚构杂糅在一起。我的朋友周详说他“融合了非虚构艺术写作的技巧，并让他的虚构写作更成功。”btr 的疑似展评仍会被艺术媒体们当做艺术评论来发表，它们确实包含了有效的乃至专业的 / 职业的对这些作品本身的评述，只是这些写作与作品更多



处于一种平行的状态，而非附属。这一点或许也是受到了保罗·奥斯特的影响。btr 翻译了他的两本书：《孤独及其所创造的》和《冬日笔记》。这两本书都不是小说，某种程度上来说都是回忆录，或更宽泛地说都是非虚构作品，但它们又那么像小说。而且虽然是讲奥斯特自己和家人的事，但书中所言又是那么宽阔，完全可以拿来当成广义生命的评论集加以品读。在 btr 的写作中，我们也常常能看到这种介于评论与叙述之间的行文。且看两个例子：

with which things are made into art? Huang Yong Ping’s *Large Turntable with Four Wheels* relinquishes the subjectivity of the artist and allows the turntable to select art proposals at random. *Wang Yuyang#*, developed by Wang Yuyang and his fellow programmers, is a self-generating work that involves processing a digital art archive with preset parameters.

By creating art in his novels, btr touches on fundamental questions of art. Why does it matter whether the art in his novels is true or false? The writer often speaks of Sophie Calle, an artist who engraves her own life and the lives of others in her art. Sometimes artists who appear to be almost mad are those who reject the boundary between art and life. Does it matter if we are humans in flesh or mere brains in a jar if we cannot tell reality from fiction? Perhaps a more rational approach to determining reality from fiction is through the Boltzmann brain (if we consider fiction a matter of probability). Yet we do not know for sure what kind of brain that is exactly, or if we should call it a brain at all.

Fundamentally, words are the medium that make up novels and, in the case of btr, works of art are written with them. The works of art as expressed in the medium of words services the novel itself. I am reminded of artist Lu Pingyuan’s ghost stories, in which strange things happen to works of art. Artists often appear as protagonists who encounter events not much different than any other ghost story. Through storytelling, Lu explores questions concerning art and the art world. While the questions he raises may be obscure and only understood by insiders, his thrilling plotlines are easily relatable. “I’ll Show You Some Color” is a story told by a doctor who speaks of a man with a growing tumor. During surgery, yellow oil paint drizzled from the wound. The doctor could not explain these symptoms, but his patient had told him about a dream, in which the patient visited a painting show of a friend who loves to make yellow oil paintings. These paintings were so bright he could not open his eyes.

btr is interested in writing new and interesting novels, and art as a subject is to him new and interesting. A lot of questions discussed in art, including ideas of meaning, consciousness, and expression are reflected in his novels. At the same time, linguistic expressions affect us as sensitive beings. But that is whole other discussion to of its own; let us focus on the topic of reality and fiction in writing.

btr combines factual descriptions, commentary, and fiction altogether. A friend of mine Zhou Xiang says that btr "uses nonfictional art writing techniques to complement make his fictional writing." btr’s quasi-art exhibition reviews are often published by art media as art criticism, and these reviews do provide effective and professional commentary on works of art. The difference between btr’s semi-reviews and art reviews is that, for btr, the works of art and his words about them are of equal status; not one is more important than the other. Perhaps this idea stems from Paul Auster, whose two works were translated by btr, *The Invention of Solitude* and *Winter Journal*. These books can be considered memoirs, nonfictional works, but they read very much like novels. As Auster tells stories about himself and his family, he touches upon broader things on life. His books can be considered a collection of commentaries about life in general. Similary, in btr’s work, we often see this style of combining narrative with commentary. Here are two examples:

例 1

“而是一个真正的园林：纸上（地上）的园林。亭、阁、斋、廊、池、馆、堂、楼、圃、庵、处，皆用抽象的符号一一标注。取名都有诗意：远翠阁、后乐堂、停云庵、冠云峰、休休亭、也是轩、又一楼、借景池、听风处、五峰仙馆……就好像园林风景已蕴于这些名字之间。凭图游园，大可望字生景，以至任何具象画面皆属多余。”³

例 2

“再细看，“后”与“花园”间略有空隙，似乎暗示着可以（甚至应该）用另一种方式来理解“后”与“花园”之间的关系——这儿的“后”或许并非方位的指涉，与我们所说的“苏州是上海的后花园”或“上海的私家园林是租界的后花园”中的“后”并不一样，而可能代表着时间上的“后”，“后现代”的“后”。或地下之于地上、幕后之于幕前、边缘之于中心之“后”。而以花园之地图作为“后 花园”，不就是以抽象向具象、或者说以虚构向现实借景吗？”⁴

Example 1

“As is a true garden: a garden on paper (grounded). Use abstract symbols to label pavilions, courts, studies, galleries, ponds, halls, gardens, temples, huts, and offices. These places are poetically named: Yuancui Chamber, Houyue Hall, Tingyun Temple, Guanyun Peak, Xiuxiu Pavilion, Yeshi Pavillion, Yousi House, Jiejing Pond, Tingfeng Office, Wufengxian Building...These names are inspired by their surrounding landscape. To walk in drawings of a garden, one can imagine places with words alone, such that any realistic sketch would be unnecessary.”³

Example 2

“When we look again closely at the term *houhuayuan*, there is a gap between *hou* (back) and *huayuan* (garden) and this gap suggests that there can be (or should be) another way of understanding the connection between *hou* and *huayuan*. *Hou* does not always mean ulterior, as is the case when we say ‘Suzhou is the backyard of Shanghai’ or ‘The private gardens in Shanghai are the backyards to the Concession area.’ *Hou* may also refer to the passing of time, as in *Houxiandai* (Postmodern); or it can mean ‘under’ as opposed to ‘above ground,’ ‘backstage’ as opposed to ‘on stage,’ ‘marginal’ as opposed to ‘central.’ My *houhuayuan*, as a map of a garden, is an abstraction or fiction borrowing the landscape of something concrete and real.”⁴



5. 语出加西亚·马尔克斯《百年孤独》（范晔译，南海出版公司2011年6月第一版），“世界新生伊始，许多事物还没有名字，提到的时候尚需用手指指点点。”

btr 会很快地吸收时新的语汇和表达方式，灵活串联各类读者熟悉的或不熟悉的内容。这两点让读者在阅读他的小说或其他写作时都觉得亲切轻松且体验丰富

btr 有几个常用梗，对熟悉他的人而言，在重复看到这些梗时会有一种偶遇彩蛋的感觉，并会加固“这些小说均出自一人之手”的印象。比如“用手指指点点的世界”⁵。

btr 也会通过点明流露出对一些特定作家及其笔下人物的喜爱，比如刘易斯·卡罗尔和他笔下的爱丽丝（《共时城漫游指南》）和白皇后（《几何的感伤》）。

btr 对如今泛滥的微信文体和追求阅读量（将文字当做纯粹的消费对象的行为）不乏揶揄，并调侃说他的微信号是“一千减”，他主要关注的号都是“三十减”或“五十减”，以对应主流媒体追求的“十万加”。

btr is quick to learn trendy words and ways of expression. He combines together words that are familiar and unfamiliar to readers. The combination makes reading his work a rich experience with a feeling of lightness and closeness.

btr frequently references some of his own jokes, and for those who are familiar with him, the joy of encountering the same jokes repeatedly is like finding unexpectedly an Easter egg. After all, his many novels are written by one man alone. A good example would be “To point at the unnamed things in the world.”

btr publicly professes his love for specific authors and their characters, as he does for Lewis Carroll’s Alice in *Synchronicity Travel Guide* and Snow White in “Geometry of Sentiments.”

btr often teases the trends of today, how we follow an excess of WeChat texts and how we desire for wide readership (to treat words as mere objects of consumption). He mocks himself by describing his WeChat account as -1000, and the accounts he follows a -30 or -50. These are his own terms that respond to a saying in mainstream media, a general goal to reach over 100000+ views.



文字的形式也是他在写作中非常关注的一个方面。比如中文里的回文诗，或英文里正过来或反过去都是同一个词或正过来、反过去恰好构成了两个词的这类结构，也被推导至长篇幅的行文中，并以一种发生在行文中的行动来开启这种结构的运转，就好比是罗曼·西格纳（Roman Signer）的那些让人噗嗤一笑的行动，而这些文字就像录像一样将他脑中的行为记录了下来。比如在《李尔克的最后一盘磁带》中，他把里尔克的《秋日》里比较著名的段落（谁此时孤独，就永远孤独）用贝克特的独幕戏《克莱普的最后一盘磁带》（Krapp’s Last Tape）中倒带的形式戏仿，见下方节选：

虎，
就举着，抱着，发着电邮，
随着风向标游荡，
飘向远山的雾凇。

（倒带的声音）

向远山的雾凇。

（倒带的声音）

雾凇。⁶

所以在写这篇评论的时候，我觉得我的文学素养完全不足以支撑我从 btr 小说写得如何的角度来评论，而如果从艺术写作的角度去看又是不合适的，因为如读者读到这里肯定已经意识到的，我并不认为他的写作是关于艺术的。但作为一个写作艺术的人，我又觉得这种不关于又有什么关系呢？毕竟，他小说中的艺术都是那么活泼调皮，而且“像真的一样”。大概编辑会希望这篇文章是在把 btr 当做一位创作者而狡猾地变成了可以被“艺术写作教程”之类的工具书归类的“艺术家专题”吧。可这些“定性”的讨论完全不影响读者去阅读并喜爱 btr 的小说，而 btr 的小说想必会为相应的展览和作品带来更多观众。如果说专门的艺术写作的读者可能首先是一些对艺术有所了解或感兴趣的人，那么阅读 btr 的小说并不需要任何的预设与门槛。在涉及艺术的这些小说中，他用平易近人的方式化解了这些作品在专业领域的“作品性”，把它们用文字揉捏成了另外的他的作品。这样的做法对艺术本身会带来怎样的影响呢？是否存在局限了读者发现作品更多可能性的问题呢？我想如果存在这样的局限，那也是每一位写作者都会存有的局限，在打开一些新东西的同时或许也未能避免关上了或避开了一些其他的东西。无论如何，放轻松去阅读这些跳动着诗意的文字吧，但愿你还没把诗意看成一种俗气。

6. btr 著《展览小小说》中的《李尔克的最后一盘磁带》

5. "Rilke’s Last Tape," published in *Exhibiting Short Novels*

btr is interested in exploring words as form. For example, he takes Chinese palindrome poetry, English palindromes, or words that form a certain phrase when read forwards and backwards; and develops long passages centered around a main event happening in the text. Take Roman Signer, for example: his humurous actions are recorded in his mind as film. In btr’s "Rilke’s Last Tape," Rilke’s famous passage "Whoever is alone will stay alone" is rewritten in the manner of Beckett’s rewinding performance in "Krapp’s Last Tape." Here is an excerpt:

Tiger,
Raising, holding, sending emails,
Swaying with the weather vane,
Mist heading towards distant mountains.

(The sound of rewinding tape)

Mist towards distant mountains.

(The sound of rewinding tape)

Mist.⁵

In writing a piece of criticism, I do not think my literary knowledge is enough to comment on the merit of btr’s novels from a literary standpoint. Nor do I not think it is suitable to speak of his work from the angle of art writing. You may have sensed by now that I do not consider his work as writing about art. As an art writer, I am not concerned with his unconventional association with art. After all, the art in his novels is always lively, witty, and so real as if it existed in reality. Perhaps my editor would hope that this essay about btr can be considered an artist profile that fits the textbook description of contemporary art writing. These musings about how to classify btr’s work cannot affect the reader’s enjoyment of reading them. Because of his work, exhibitions and artworks mentioned in his writings can also attract more audience. While avid readers of art writing are first and foremost insterested in art, btr’s novels do not require any prerequisite of art knowledge. In his writings that involve art, he casually dissolves the status of artworks and their place in a professional field. How does his work affect the art mentioned in his work? Does btr constrain readers from perceiving a work of art in their own way? Perhaps this is a question for any writer, for the act of opening something often involves closing other possibilities. Regardless, please read these words with ease, infused with poetry and rhythm. I hope this poetic quality does not come across as kitsch. (Translated by Sheryl Cheung)