

THE BOOK  
OF  
**Failure**



編輯 EDITORS

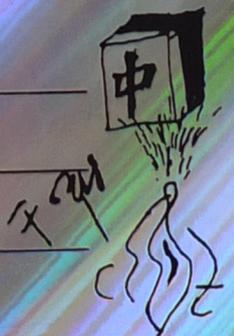
高伟云 Jeroen de KLOET  
周耀輝 CHOW Yiu Fai  
鄧麗雯 Zoënie Liwen DENG

級別 CLASS

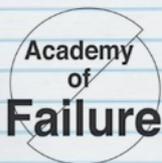
~~Middle~~

科目 SUBJECT

Humanities across Borders  
Asia and Africa in the World







PUBLICATION STUDIO PEARL RIVER DELTA  
Hong Kong / Shenzhen

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

'HOW DOES FAILURE LOOK LIKE?' ~~~~~	7
高伟云 Jeroen de KLOET · 周耀輝 CHOW Yiu Fai & 鄧麗雯 Zoënie DENG Liwen	
DESIGNER'S NOTES: ON LABOUR, POLITICS AND <b>FAILURE</b> ~~~~~	<b>17</b>
何穎雅 Elaine W. HO	
MAKE DO ~~~~~	22
Millie CHEN	
ZONES OF SILENCE: SPACES AND HISTORIES OF MIGRATION ~~~~~	<b>35</b>
柯念璞 Alice KO	
THE CORNER OF NGUYỄN BÌNH KHIÊM AND TỰ TÍNH (HÀ NỘI, 2005) ~~~~~	49
VÕ Hồng Chương-Đài	
LAND, MARTYR AND LAND ~~~~~	<b>53</b>
陈韵 CHEN Yun	
<b>FAIL!?</b> ~~~~~	<b>55</b>
LIN Xiaolan	
READING "ALPHABETIC WRITING" AS "HIEROGLYPHIC WRITING" ~~~~~	<b>58</b>
白雙全 Tozer PAK Sheung Chuen	
INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL LIFE (AND <b>FAILING...</b> ) ~~~~~	<b>57</b>
Giselinde KUIPERS	
CAN ANYTHING BE SAID IN PRAISE OF FRAGMENTATION? ~~~~~	<b>73</b>
Alena ALEXANDROVA	
<b>不成氣</b> THEY DIDN'T MAKE IT INTO THE AIR ~~~~~	<b>81</b>
周耀輝 CHOW Yiu Fai	
PROJECT PRODUCTION: DEPUTY DIRECTOR TRAINING CAMP ~~~~~	<b>85</b>
宋轶 SONG Yi	

A CLASS THAT WENT SOUTH: "FAILURE" AS A PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE AT TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY	98
封帆 Eric FENG Fan with 刁雪 DIAO Xue、丁晓玉 DING Xiaoyu & 孙家裕 SU Jiayu、李泓桥 LI Hongqiao、蒋林倩 JIANG Linqian、刘丽娟 LIU Lijuan、马茵 璐 MA Hanlu & 周天 ZHOU Tian and 徐晓慧 XU Xiaohui	
#FAILUREPROJECTBYSOEL	110
温善婷 Sandy WAN	
ÉTUDES FOR THE, WELL NOT EXACTLY, EVERYDAY	120
伍韶劲 Kingsley NG	
A NEVER-WRITTEN STORY, COOKIES, IN SEARCH OF LOST TIME	122
张慧婷 Stephanie CHEUNG	
I FAIL TO ARCHIVE MY PICTURES	125
高伟云 Jeroen de KLOET	
CHASING DREAMS	132
赵煦 ZHAO Xu	
ICE-NINE, WEATHER AS WEAPON	138
Yoeri GUÉPIN	
A FAILURE TO DRAW SNOW WHITE	142
王乐怡 Yvette WONG Lok Yee	
THE WILD CARD	147
谭迪诗 Daisy D.S. TAM	
ZOÉNIE'S NOTES: OCT-NOV 2018	155
鄧麗雯 Zoénie DENG Liwen	
CONTRIBUTORS	159

经常 经常 经常 经常 经常 经常

已 已 已 已 已经 已经 已经 已经 已经 已经

日 经常 常 常 常 常 常 常 常 常 常 经常

简 简 简 简 简 简 简 简 简 简 简 简

单 单 单 单 单 单 单 单 单 单 单 单

该 该 该 该 该 该 该 该 该 该 该 该

there should  
be info about  
four people

该 该 该 该 该 该 该 该 该 该 该 该

业 业 业 业 业 业 业 业 业 业 业 业

余 余 余 余 余 余 余 余 余 余 余 余

业 余

业 余 业 余 业 余 业 余 业 余 业 余

或 或 或 或 或 或 或 或 或 或 或 或

或 或 或 或 或 或 或 或 或 或 或 或

相 相 相 相 相 相 相 相 相 相 相 相

想 不到 想 不开 相 当然 想法 想 人 非 非

daydream

相 心 相 心 相 心 相 心 相 心 相 心 相 心

满 满 满 满 满 满 满 满 满 满 满 满

足 足 足 足 足 足 足 足 足 足 足 足

满 足 满 足 满 足 满 足 满 足 满 足

满 腹 抓 疑

足智多谋  
resourceful

mǎn to have one's  
fù wǔ mind filled with  
抓疑 files with  
suspicion

ying

jian

gai

ye

huo

xiang

man

zu

man

## DESIGNER'S NOTES

### ON LABOUR, POLITICS AND FAILURE



Design takes on a funny, ambivalent role. Depending upon the particularities of the design, of course, it may be the thing that jumps out at you most, colouring all of the content in a particular way that may or may not be conducive to its reception—sometimes otherwise more furtive, allowing you to not consider it at all in favour of a concentrated reading. That is the trick of the matter, of course, because if we learned anything from structuralist thinkers or institutional critique it is that the media, the white cubes and the infrastructures are never really neutral, and we should be mindful of the ways of reading as much as what we are reading in the first place. So take this little, extravagant and rare note from a designer, like the ones that sometimes appear from translators, as an acknowledgement of what things we could not do well enough, but also of our powers. This is a note of caution.

In fact, I am writing to you from the most advantageous position of being able to be the one to have the ultimate say (when under slightly unethical grounds) about what is said here before going to print. I am the designer, but in this particular case, also an artist-contributor, also a copy editor, also in charge of publishing and production. This multiplicity is not something new to me, and in fact something I could call a purposeful experimentation—to play with the boundaries of collaboration and labour in a manner that questions a very fundamental sociopolitics of being. That sounds obtuse, perhaps, but let me attempt to contextualise with a line of thought from the small potatoes of individual agency towards a reconfiguring of our relations with the structures, cubes and casings which define us: this text and this book are being made, after the slow haul of many many months of conversation and delay, in Hong Kong over the summer of 2019, more than one year since the initial **Academy of Failure** gathering. This temporal coincidence only makes it more difficult to continue with a task which, on certain levels, can feel **futile** and **meaningless**

amidst widespread unrest and the urgency of a pending extradition bill, police brutality and the related **deaths** of several young people in the city. Having participated in several of the protests and on-site actions taking place, I and others in solidarity have to wake each morning thereafter and try to go to work like any other day, knowing that every single priority in life has perhaps shifted. The lines between us, daily life and the so-called larger infrastructures of society are stretched taut. What is to be done?

It was at this time that I returned, sullen, to a working InDesign document called "**FAILURE**. indd", staring for hours not knowing how possibly to proceed. So I started to read. And arriving at one particular footnote (*see page 13, footnote 4*), I decided to watch Ackbar ABBAS' keynote speech for the 2015 Moscow Biennale for Contemporary Art, in which he talks about the volatility and unreliability of the text. He talks about this in relation to the precariousness of society in general, about the question of how to live together and about that which is shared between politics, economics and art. He then goes on to reflect upon Hong Kong's 2014 Umbrella Revolution and its aftermath, and I return to the present moment of the on-going aftermath of this month's protests, occupation of the Legislative Council and media frenzy. I return to this design job I have taken on, and what it could look like to serve within a system (because there is no 'outside' anymore), as well as question it and reshape it at the same time.

So to continue tracing a line, let us talk about another very popular banner called DIY, sometimes more romantically as DIWO, or 'Do It With Others'. What DIY and DIWO fundamentally insinuate are not just the self and autonomy, but another relation to that which is larger than self. So as a publication maker, I would like to ask you to consider the DIY qualities of this print-on-demand book as an attempt to challenge our own roles within a system (*e.g.* academic, economic and social, among others). It is the first publication produced by Publication Studio Pearl River Delta, as promised to the editors over one year ago. It is both machine-made and handmade, both collaboratively and independently produced. The day that the application for the ISBN was submitted, a virtual ghost town was made of the western part of the New Territories where our studio is located because anti-protestor Triad thugs had mercilessly **attacked** people on the metro the night before. I returned from Kowloon to the New Territories on the bus because we were all told they

would attack again. Every part of making this book has been connected to very specific sociopolitical, temporal and economic conditions which, like everything we do, can be considered in the slightest possible way to either maintain the status quo, numb us to it, or... maybe something else. A book, a bookmaker; words, someone with something to say; images, an observer; stories, someone who lives through them. We can be many, but we are many in relation.

Abbas concludes with Theodor ADORNO and a return to **failure. Failure**, as he says, is a concern for 'how to act, particularly in spaces that we do not accept or do not feel we can live with'. And as I wake up these mornings, I have to consider the possibly predictable **failures** of our movement and the desolate **failures** of my own inabilities to proceed. But at the same time, via this reading and this writing, something has shifted:

*Those who took part in the movement saw the city in a different way. They became aware that the spatial configurations other than the established ones were possible. Interesting enough, the protest sites were also the chosen venues for weddings and even births to take place. They were also where we saw artworks being produced. These artworks were on the whole ephemeral products of the moment, sometimes crude and hardly masterpieces, but they took their energy from what was happening on the streets, and this gave them an edginess that separated them from kitsch. Just as the Occupy movement changed our perception of the city and the streets, so its art changed our perception of art. Not as someone else's work that we stand back from and admire when we have the time, but as something that we ourselves can do.*

(ABBAS)

Much gratitude to the editors, Sam Yi Yao CHAO, June LEE, Anh TRAN and XIN Heng for doing this together.

\_the Graphic Designer, the Copy Editor,  
the Publisher & the Production Worker  
June–August 2019

## COLOPHON

editors\_ 高伟云 Jeroen de KLOET  
 周耀輝 CHOW Yiu Fai  
 鄧麗雯 Zoénie Liwen DENG

publication design\_ 何穎雅 Elaine W. HO

cover illustration\_ 子 杰 June LEE  
 辛 恒 XIN Heng

coordination\_ 鄧麗雯 Zoénie Liwen DENG

translation\_ 蘇海天 Gordon SO

proofreading & copyediting\_ 周亦瑤 Sam Yi Yao CHAO  
 鄧麗雯 Zoénie Liwen DENG  
 何穎雅 Elaine W. HO  
 玄蓮昊 Michelle Y. HYUN

Academy of Failure logo & poster design\_ 沈 宾 Biin SHEN

first edition of 248 copies published by\_

OURWORK.IS (Hong Kong) for PUBLICATION STUDIO PEARL RIVER DELTA

printing & binding\_

複印 INFO (Wuhan) & PUBLICATION STUDIO PEARL RIVER DELTA (Hong Kong)

additional copies available internationally unlimited print-on-demand via\_

PUBLICATION STUDIO ([WWW.PUBLICATIONSTUDIO.BIZ](http://WWW.PUBLICATIONSTUDIO.BIZ))

ISBN\_

978-988-74145-0-6

香港出版 Published in HONG KONG

The copyright of each of the contributions in this book belongs to the individual authors. The views and opinions expressed in this book are those of the authors. Should the rights of any person entitled have been overlooked, legitimate claims shall be compensated with the usual provisions.

Thanks to all contributors and partner institutions for their dedication to this publication. This book is the publication of the multi-disciplinary **Academy of Failure** workshop that took place in May 2018 in Beijing, involving international artists, academics and activists. The workshop as well as the publication of this book have been supported by a consolidator grant from the European Research Council (ERC-2013-COG 616882 - ChinaCreative). The workshop was also part of and funded by the 'Humanities across Borders: Asia and Africa in the World' project of the International Institute for Asian Studies, supported by the Mellon Foundation. See also: [WWW.CHINACREATIVE.HUMANITIES.UVA.NL](http://WWW.CHINACREATIVE.HUMANITIES.UVA.NL) and [WWW.IIAS.ASIA](http://WWW.IIAS.ASIA).



Academy  
of  
**Failure**



