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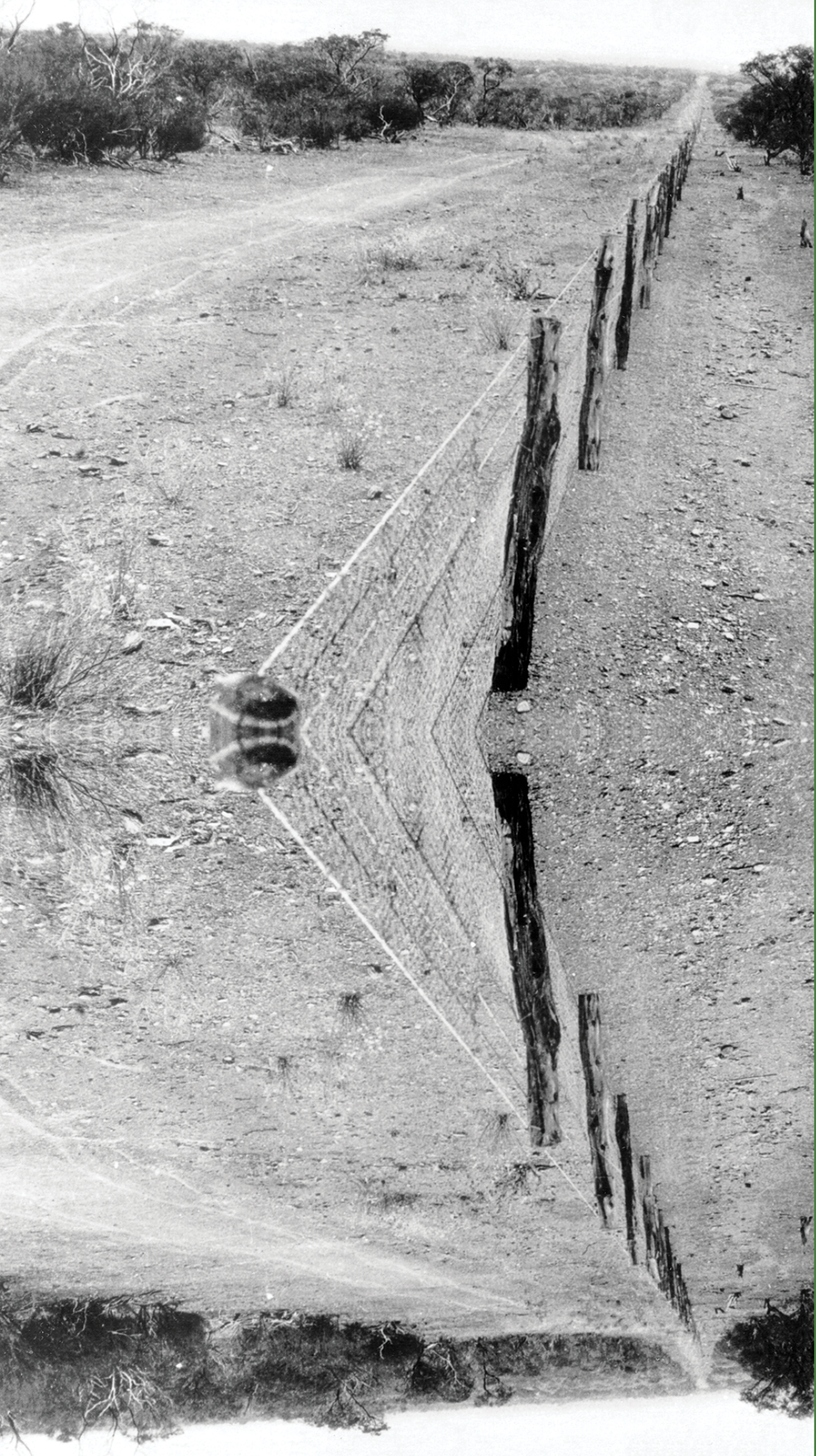
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# feature articles



## In/Visibility: Beijing Queer Film Festival and Alternative Queer Space

Nathan Shui

One morning in September 2014, a group of Chinese and international filmmakers, artists, academics, and film enthusiasts gathered at the Beijing Central Railway Station to board the 11:15 AM train leaving for a village near the Great Wall of China.<sup>1</sup> Unaware of the logistics of the event they were about to embark on, the participants were only equipped with the scant knowledge to bring their laptops, as instructed by an anonymous email received the night before. Once gathered in train carriage number seven, they were greeted by a mysterious organizer, who handed each of them a flash drive. On the count of three, all passengers plugged the keys into their digital devices and pressed the play button in perfect unison, and thus commenced the seventh edition of the Beijing Queer Film Festival (which will be referred to as BQFF or the Festival for the remainder of this paper).

Founded in 2001 by Chinese film director Cui Zi'en and students from Beijing University, BQFF is China's longest-running independent film festival centered on queer media and visual culture. The most exhaustive research on the Festival has been in media-culture scholar Hongwei Bao's essay "Queer as Catachresis: The Beijing Queer

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<sup>1</sup> Dean Hamer, "Hiding in Plain Sight: The Beijing Queer Film Festival," *Filmmaker Magazine | Publication with a Focus on Independent Film, Offering Articles, Links, and Resources*, January 7, 2015, <https://filmmakermagazine.com/88879-hiding-in-plain-sight-the-beijing-queer-film-festival/>.

Film Festival in Cultural Translation."<sup>2</sup> Bao extends the Derridean concept of catachresis from a linguistic analytical device, which examines the unstable relationship between signs and meanings, to interrogate the cultural translation between "the Euro-American archetype of gay identity" and the particular articulation of Chinese queer subjectivity.<sup>3</sup> Bao posits the phrase "Chinese queer" as an undetermined semiotic placeholder to register the complex socio-cultural process through which a particularly Chinese same-sex articulation is produced under the globalization of sexual and gender identities.

In this article, I approach the BQFF from a different vantage point than Bao by focusing on the issue of queer visibility. By queer visibility, I refer to a particular mode of queer self-manifestation that fluctuates between the states of concealment and disclosure—a contingent condition of existence that undergirds how sexual minorities in the People's Republic of China (PRC) negotiate and navigate power despite their culturally and politically constricted existence. The goal of this paper is two-fold. First, I explore how the Festival contributes to disrupting state power without using overtly aggressive tactics. Second, I argue that the astonishing longevity achieved by the BQFF organizers necessitates further scholarly attention to the cultural and political efficacy of an ambiguous queer visibility as enacted by the Festival tactics. Coming out as the dominant mode of queer liberation has come under increasingly critical scholarly skepticism in recent years. Its sweeping assumption of a pre-existent and closeted sexual subject, exacerbated by an oft-unspoken focus on cis-white men, risks disregarding the particular historical and material conditions from which non-Western queer subjectivities and experiences emerge. In response to the binary of coming out, scholars of queer studies, cultural geography, and urban history have now cultivated an intersectional sensibility of queerness that attends not only to gender and sexuality, but also race, class, historicity, and localized conditions.

Cultural geographer Andrew Tucker's book, *Queer Visibility: Space, Identity, and Interaction in Cape Town*, uses visibility to register the complex ways queer men living in different quarters of Cape Town, South Africa, carve out spaces of their own. For Tucker, the issue of visibility indexes more than the state of perception; rather, it describes a historical and cultural condition whose meaning is contingent upon the intersectional and localized network of race, class, gender, and sexuality.<sup>4</sup> As such, visibility destabilizes Western queer rhetoric by grounding the queer world in Cape Town on its own historical and sociocultural terms. By exploring the tensions between

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<sup>2</sup> Hongwei Bao, "Queer as Catachresis: The Beijing Queer Film Festival in Cultural Translation," in *Chinese Film Festivals: Sites of Translation*, ed. Chris Berry and Luke Robinson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 79–100.

<sup>3</sup> Bao, "Queer as Catachresis," 81.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Tucker, *Queer Visibilities: Space, Identity, and Interaction in Cape Town*, RGS-IBG Book Series (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 15–16.

queer groups along different racial and class fault lines, visibility as a queer analytical category exposes the reproduction of discriminatory and racialized practices in Cape Town that the Western queer prism fails to detect. This essay joins Tucker and similar scholars to argue that coming out—and its mode of radical visibility to claim power and agency—need not, and should not be, the only way sexual minorities navigate the field of political and cultural forces in which their everyday lives are embedded. The Festival posits an alternative form of visibility whose continuous and generative oscillation between emergence and disappearance troubles the one-off politics of coming out. The Festival's alternating visibility deconstructs the metaphor of the closet by replacing its enclosed spatiality—and its presupposition of a final, true self—with a series of porous boundaries demarcated by what Fran Martin calls a "situated enactment."<sup>5</sup>

In what follows, I gravitate towards two artifacts—a cartographic collage produced at the Festival's ten-year anniversary (fig. 1), and the train carriage mentioned at the outset of this text, which I will analyze using Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome theory, and Hakim Bey's theory of the temporary autonomous zone. These two strands of thought help understand how the BQFF strategically organizes its public visibility to circumvent or disarticulate state power and to carve out a space of its own. I use this ambivalent visibility to challenge the hyper-visibility of queer activism modeled after the Stonewall riot and to emphasize the former's more practical and inclusive approach toward cultural and political dissent in non-Western political contexts. Ultimately, through a situated reading of the BQFF, I intend to shed light on the following questions: How can the Festival's spatial politics be read in ways illustrative of ordinary and unfrontational queer politics in the contemporary People's Republic of China? How might sexual minorities appropriate state-regulated spaces to assert their own subjectivities without applying confrontational tactics? And how could such spatial appropriation be usefully mobilized and understood in terms beyond the narrow oppression-resistance binary undergirding Western-centric queer studies?

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<sup>5</sup> In Martin's seminal essay "Surface Tensions: Reading Productions of Tongzhi in Contemporary Taiwan," the author describes the "situated enactment" in relation to an implied spectatorship—a group of audience for whom the queer visibility is intended. In the context of the Festival, questions of audience, and what queer visibility is for, are key to my inquiry. See Fran Martin, "SURFACE TENSIONS: Reading Productions of Tongzhi in Contemporary Taiwan," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2000): 68.

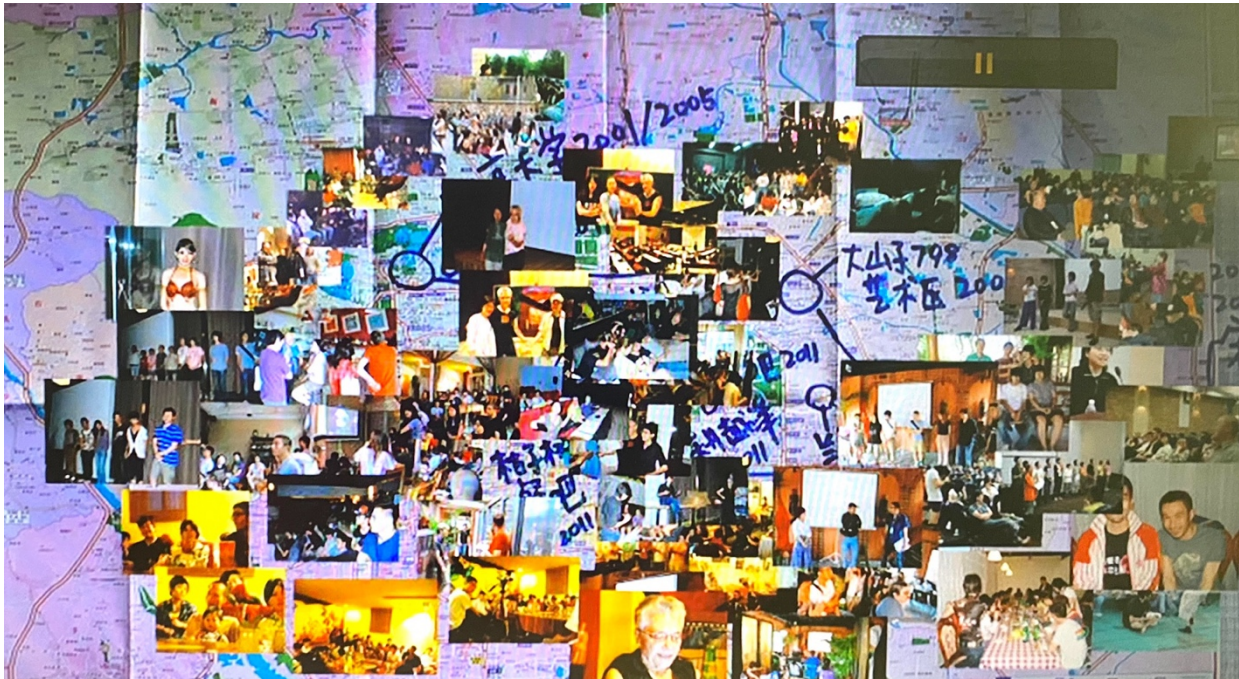


Figure 1. Photo collage superimposed onto the city map of Beijing. From *Our Story: Beijing Queer Film Festival's Ten Years of Guerrilla Warfare*, directed by Yang Yang and Cui Zi'en (Beijing: Beijing Ku'er Ying Zhan Committee, 2012). Screenshot capture by author.

### The Collage: BQFF's Guerrilla Spatial Tactics

The 2013 edition of BQFF kicked off with a film about its own history. Titled *Our Story: Beijing Queer Film Festival's Ten Years of Guerrilla Warfare*, the documentary leads the audience through the journey the Festival has arduously ventured through since its infancy.<sup>6</sup> One artifact featured in the film immediately captures the viewer's attention through its stark composition—a standard administrative map of Beijing on which is superimposed a collage of densely arranged photos (fig. 1). This collage acts as both a record of the BQFF's geography organized across its ten-year history and as an allegory of its quietly subversive, highly mobile spatial tactics.

The map of Beijing features the three subregions that make up the city's concentric urban configuration: the inner city, the inner-ring suburbs, and the outer-ring suburbs. The transport artery circulates along the historical axis put in place since the feudal Ming dynasty, further accentuating the geographic centrality of the inner city. The Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square occupy the very heart of the metropolis, serving as the embodiment of China's historical cultivation and political sovereignty respectively. Suggestive of the inner city's spatial privilege is its unchanged economic

<sup>6</sup> *Our Story: The Beijing Queer Film Festival's 10 Years of "Guerrilla Warfare,"* directed by Yang Yang and Cui Zi 'en, trans. Yang Yang et al. (Beijing: Beijing Ku'er Ying Zhan Committee, 2012).

and political prestige. The rest of Beijing has undergone tremendous urban transformations; by contrast, its inner city has remained the unassailable center of command. Reading the map from its center to the margin and following its north-south and west-east axis, an observer's gaze always gets pulled back to the inner city marked by the architectural icons of Tiananmen Square and Forbidden Palace, as if being pulled by the vortex of its concentric shape. The map serves to provide spatial guidance, and more importantly, to cartographically align the inner city's locational centrality with its cultural-political prominence. It is a diagrammatic representation of power par excellence.

Photographs are superimposed onto the city map, creating a collage out of the cartography of Beijing. The collage exhibits a subtle hint of intimacy, featuring photographs of smiling faces and cheering bodies suggestive of a robust communal solidarity. At the same time, the collage is provocative, using the forceful *mise en page* of these bodies to *overwrite* the city map, thereby contesting its political authority. The arrangement of the photos indicates the physical locations where each iteration of the festival has taken place. Each picture harbors variegated meanings and stories about the Festival. The collage assembles these fragmented moments and transmutes them into a mass of united bodies asserting their queer presence firmly onto the urban fabric of Beijing. Through this cartographic re-territorialization, the geopolitical center of Beijing, Tiananmen Square, is displaced and concealed. The city's concentric urban structure becomes short-circuited, its fabric rattled, and its power dispersed. Geographic landmarks and arterial infrastructures give symbolic precedence to the people who now have surfaced at the forefront of the cartography, troubling the geopolitical hierarchy inscribed in the capital city of PRC.

A sinuous path in bold blue color threads across the city map, marking out venues where past editions of BQFF were held. However, this linear path, bookended by two dots, indexes only a fuzzy description of the actual trajectory of the Festival's migration. As Deleuze and Guattari contend in *A Thousand Plateaus*, "a path is always between two points, but then-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both autonomy and a direction of its own."<sup>7</sup> In reality, the spatial movements of BQFF pulsed through a rhizomatic matrix spreading from a single point of creation, namely Beijing University, into multiple directions. To understand the variegated directions taken by different iterations of the BQFF, further contextualization of the event is needed.

The circle on the top left corner indicates the first and second editions of BQFF, held respectively at Beijing University and the then-semi-underground art district 798

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<sup>7</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 380.

Art Zone. The first edition suffered a premature termination after only one screening session and the second one followed a similar fate. With the threat of unpredictable cancellation, the Festival moved its third and fourth editions to Song Zhuang Artist Village on the far west periphery of Beijing. The art village is the most prominent rural art hub in North China, with over two thousand artist residents from various creative disciplines. Unlike the previous editions hosted as independently run events, the third and fourth editions were, to borrow the Deleuzian lexicon of Nomadology, "plugged into" the less politically sensitive Beijing Independent Film Festival as its queer-film unit. To encourage more dynamic interactions between the participants and filmmakers, the Festival changed its title to Beijing Queer Film Forum, emphasizing its nature as a platform for exchange and discussion. However, the rural migration also had its downsides. In particular, it compromised the event's founding principle of queer community building. As Bao points out, the art village's marginal location from the city discouraged the participation of urban queer folks due to their constrained spatial mobility; some could not spare a whole day to attend the event because of work commitments, and others simply lacked the necessary means to commute to the outskirts of the city.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the predominantly heterosexual attendees coming to the Independent Film Festival also unintentionally created an insecure environment for the queer participants to publicly display their identities out of fear of being recognized by acquaintances. Ultimately, moving outside the city of Beijing brought to light the challenge of maintaining the balance between fostering communities for sexual minorities and raising public awareness about the same-sex population for a broader, heteronormative public.

The fifth edition of BQFF ensued two years later in 2011. The Festival returned to the inner city. This "homecoming" was propelled by the tightening media censorship in China at large, which resulted in the closure of several Chinese Independent film festivals. The BQFF organizers initially booked Song Zhuang as its main screening venue, hoping the artist village would provide the same stability the Festival had enjoyed previously, but their reservation was canceled for unknown reasons only days before the inaugural screening. Determined to keep the show going, the Festival circled back to the city, where the organizers could take advantage of their extensive social circles to improvise plans as the Festival went.

And improvise they did. Unlike its previous incarnations based in fixed places, the 2011 BQFF had to leap from one venue to another in unpredictable patterns to steer away from censoring authorities. The circles dotting the collage in random patterns reflect the frequent and quick movements with which the Festival zigzagged through different places. Not all circled places were used as screening venues or were

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<sup>8</sup> Bao, "Queer as Catachresis," 93.



used at all. Some functioned as failsafe sites in case the ongoing venue was canceled last minute, some did host screenings but were terminated prematurely due to police intervention, and the others were not considered as screening venues at all but places for post-screening discussions. In the documentary, one of festival founders, Yang Yang, shared what it was like keeping the Festival going at that time of extreme uncertainties during the Festival's fifth edition in 2011:

The officers were from three different units [Bureau of Public Security, Bureau of Cultural Affairs, and Bureau of City Administration]. Each unit's representative asked us one question, and after hearing these three questions, we knew it was of no use to negotiate...during the talk, I already started to think about new festival locations. I knew it was impossible to negotiate with them. The committee decided that the Festival couldn't go out like that. We have to continue and to look for another venue. We immediately started to search for new places. We all started to rack our brains like crazy for possible places. In the end, we held the opening at the Beijing Vinyl Café . . . Organizing the rest of the Festival was a case of "playing it by ear."<sup>9</sup>

Yang Yang's account articulates the process whereby the Festival organizers succeeded in sustaining its momentum in its highly constrained spatial condition. By slipping into the urban network joined by everyday spaces, the Festival activated what Deleuze and Guattari call "the rhizomatic potential." This rhizomatic potential consists of the ability of a centerless and interconnected network to resurrect itself from conclusive destruction due to its lack of point of origin and therefore a heightened resilience to focused effort of eradication.<sup>10</sup> Quotidian spaces, such as book shops, restaurants, and tea houses, collectively constituted a lattice equipped with "multiple exits and lines of flights," allowing the Festival to swiftly move through and under the field of censorship.<sup>11</sup> These guerrilla-warfare tactics also reflect what Michel de Certeau described as the powerless people's quiet endeavor to navigate the environment strategized by the powerful—traceless, hard to locate, and always on the go.<sup>12</sup> Relying on not a fixed *emplacement* but a hyper-malleable mode of mobility realized by the organizers' queer social networking, the 2011 BQFF achieved what anthropologist Lisa Rofel describes as "nomadic activism."<sup>13</sup> That is, it engages in "maneuvering *within and*

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<sup>9</sup> Excerpt from *Our Story: Beijing Queer Film Festival's Ten Years of Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Yang Yang et al.

<sup>10</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 6-8.

<sup>11</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1.

<sup>12</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

<sup>13</sup> Lisa Rofel, *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 158.

around the various powers that shape subjectivities, social enterprises, political belief and economic inequality in China."<sup>14</sup>

What this nomadic activism further accomplished amounts to the appropriation and temporary transformation of the stratified, state-regulated space. China scholars have discussed the creative potency of queer activists to temporarily dislodge certain public spaces from the heteronormative reign through the creation of counter-publics. In her essay on Chinese Grassroots queer activism, "Going Public," Elisabeth Engebretsen states that Chinese queer grassroots activists demonstrate incredible abilities to "best manipulate the organizational terrain" to encourage queer public participation in anti-queerphobic mobilization.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Rofel observes that Chinese queer activists are successful nomadic subjects who know how to use differentiation among governmental bureaus to influence political decision-making that benefits queer rights.<sup>16</sup> Bao, citing both Engebretsen and Rofel, argues that Chinese queer activism often takes on a carnivalesque performance to temporarily transform the public sphere to safely slip into queer dissents, no matter how subtle and undetectable.<sup>17</sup> These different strands of discussion about Chinese queer activism find a compelling point of convergence in the seventh edition of BQFF, specifically in train carriage number seven. BQFF's creative re-appropriation of the train carriage illustrates a particular queer spatial practice that is locally, culturally, and politically specific to the queer communities in most regions in China.

### **Train Carriage Number Seven: Ephemeral Queer Reterritorialization**

Trains share certain affinities with Foucault's heterotopic ship, in the sense that they too operate as "a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is self-enclosed and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea."<sup>18</sup> But trains also move in less chaotic velocity than the Foucauldian ship, as their trajectory remains physically tethered to the dictation of the railway, which is further subjugated to the larger infrastructural network. Trains do not exist at the same level of autonomy as ships either, for their operation and movement are prescribed by intricate navigational systems such

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<sup>14</sup> Rofel, *Desiring China*, 158.

<sup>15</sup> Elisabeth L Engebretsen, "Of Pride and Visibility: The Contingent Politics of Queer Grassroots Activism in China," in *Queer/Tongzhi China: New Perspectives on Research, Activism and Media Cultures*, ed. Elisabeth L Engebretsen and William F Schroeder (Copenhagen: NIAS - Nordic Institution of Asian Studies, 2015), 6.

<sup>16</sup> Lisa Rofel, "Grassroots Activism: Non-Normative Sexual Politics in Post-Socialist China," in *Unequal China: The Political Economy and Cultural Politics of Inequality*, ed. Wanning Sun and Yingjie Guo (London: Routledge, 2013), 158.

<sup>17</sup> Hongwei Bao, *Queer China: Lesbian and Gay Literature and Visual Culture under Postsocialism* (New Delhi: Routledge India, 2020), 120.

<sup>18</sup> Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986), 27.

as the timetable, ticket dispenser, train station, and other external factors that put the vehicle in fixed spatial and temporal positions. A train is one part of a static infrastructure, the tip of a branch at the end of the reproduction system, and therefore a sub-territory to the field of state power.

However, after its departure from the station, while the train remains on track and therefore still attached to the regulatory system commanding it, its interior space takes flight to a temporarily untethered state, thereby creating what Hakim Bey refers to as a "temporary autonomous zone (TAZ)," an anarchistic space within which rules are temporarily bent and elided. TAZ is a term describing the temporary suspension and appropriation of the state-regulated space as "an uprising, which does not engage directly with the State, a guerrilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to reform elsewhere/elsewhen, before the State can crush it."<sup>19</sup> Referencing Deleuze and Guattari's theory of Nomadology, Bey's articulation of the TAZ explicates the precise working mechanism of BQFF's queer guerrilla warfare. "The TAZ is an encampment of guerrilla oncologists: strike and run away. Keep moving the entire tribe...the nomadic machine conquers without being noticed and moves on before the map can be adjusted."<sup>20</sup>

Using laptops and flash drives, the participants of BQFF temporarily turned train carriage number seven into a makeshift screening venue. In other words, they re-territorialized the space into something that deviated from its originally assigned purpose—a transportive vehicle turned into a queer performative stage. The critical mass of BQFF's participants also played a crucial role in this transformative process: one laptop playing a film would not have turned the carriage into a theater space, but a carriage full of people gathered for the same purpose, compounded with the sheer force of their assembly, did. It is important to recognize how the quiet act of watching the documentary in silent collectivity is itself a politically potent act of resistance, enunciated "in excess of what is said, and that mode of signification is a concerted bodily enactment, a plural form of performativity."<sup>21</sup> This intense process of spatial makeover happened swiftly. Once the train arrived at its destination, the BQFF participants quickly disembarked from the carriage and proceeded to the next meeting point. Everything went back to business as usual.

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<sup>19</sup> Hakim Bey, *T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* (Weehawken, NJ: Grim Reaper Press, 1985), 101.

<sup>20</sup> Bey, *T.A.Z.*, 102.

<sup>21</sup> Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 8.

## Conclusion: (In)Visibility

The two case studies of the collage and the train carriage testify to the BQFF's oscillating status between disclosure and concealment, a strategic deployment of (in)visibility in the form of double presence at the level of both surface and subterranean manifestations. This surface-to-subterranean relationship is captured by Carl Jung, the psychologist who first introduced the botanical term "rhizome" into the philosophical field:

Life had always seemed to me like a plant that lives on its rhizome. Its true life is invisible, hidden in the rhizome. The part that appears above the ground lasts only a single summer. Then it withers away—an ephemeral apparition. When we think of the unending growth and decay of life and civilization, we cannot escape the impression of absolute nullity. Yet, I have never lost the sense of something that lives and endures beneath the eternal flux. What we see is blossom, which passes. The rhizome remains.<sup>22</sup>

I find Jung's description of the rhizome—the underground source of life force that becomes visible at seasonal intervals—illustrative of a more capacious and generative understanding of queer visibility, which does not confine one's sexual self to a rigid divide between disclosure or concealment but locates it in a dynamic and permeable exchange between the two. "Its true life is invisible, hidden in the rhizome": Jung's appreciation of the underground life source posits a stark contrast to the metaphor of "the closet" and its identarian politics of coming out. Although both the rhizome and the closet depend on the dichotomy of concealment and revealing, they hold polarizing assumptions regarding how this optic dyad might inform and empower one's subjectivity. Furthermore, there is also no single point of origin; queerness *is* networks that span underneath normative structures.

The closet indexes the modern assumption about the precondition of truth and authenticity, which attributes empowerment to radical identity transparency, usually achieved through the politically privileged action of "coming out."<sup>23</sup> The metaphor of the rhizome, on the other hand, assumes a mosaic state of translucency, neither unproblematically transparent nor resolutely opaque. The rhizome's alternating manifestation between visibility and invisibility thus challenges the closet by questioning the validity of its wholesale embrace of transparent selfhood. In the case of the BQFF, the unpredictable yet ephemeral eruptions of screening venues across the city of Beijing

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<sup>22</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, *Memoirs, Dreams, Reflections*, ed. Aniela Jaffé, trans. Richard Winston (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 4.

<sup>23</sup> The Foucauldian architecture of the panopticon further dramatizes such a direct translation between power and visibility. We can also recall Eve Sedgwick's theorization of the closet as well as Michael Warner's concept of the queer counterpublics, which both contest the reductive dialectics of the gay-versus-straight binary.

articulate the logic of the rhizomatic visibility vis-à-vis disclosure and concealment. Indeed, the Festival's guerrilla-warfare spatial strategy demonstrates that the relationship between visibility and invisibility need not be mutually exclusive.

In his critique of the Occupy Wall Street movement, activist Emahunn Raheem Ali Campbell contended that the lack of serious efforts made by white occupiers to foster a safe environment for people of color—who run a much higher risk of police brutality—severely compromised the political potential of the movement.<sup>24</sup> Campbell's lamentation thus criticizes the useful but problematic notion of radical political visibility that often assumes the presence of a white, cisgendered body. The same critique is also applicable to the practice of queer dissension, especially when we consider the drastically variant degrees of queer precarity—depending on one's social and economic standing, their vulnerability to risks and retaliation fluctuate. On this pragmatic level, the BQFF's ambiguous relationship to visibility facilitates a more inclusive and encouraging environment for the socially precarious members of queer communities. It attends more specifically to the indigenous queer politics exercised by everyday people, who navigate the political and social landscape of PRC in a similarly ambivalent fashion. As Bao observes, "for many queer people in China, one does not need to be completely in or out. Being in and out depends on the specific context and the person who they met."<sup>25</sup> The contingencies of how many (but certainly not all) Chinese queer people choose to perform their gender identities and sexualities thus necessitate a flexible mode of and freedom to move between the state of "in" and "out."

The BQFF committee recently released the call for submission for the Festival's fifteenth edition. The event has grown from a campus-run festival to what the organizers call "a historical narrative made of cinematographic fragments" [无数个这样的影像碎片, 构成了属于我们的历史叙事。Wu shu ge zhe yang de ying xiang sui pian, gou cheng le shu yu wo men de li shi xu shi].<sup>26</sup> It seems that the event has secured a certain degree of stability, and the possibility of virtual screening also partially mitigated the impact of spatial constrictions it faced in the early 2000s and 2010s. Still, it is crucial to look back at the spatial struggles BQFF endured in its earlier years to understand that the regulation and production of space are intimately tied to various modes of visibility. Just as becoming visible can be a potent expression of queer

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<sup>24</sup> Emahunn Raheem Ali Campbell, "A Critique of the Occupy Movement from a Black Occupier," *The Black Scholar* 41, no. 4 (2011): 42–51.

<sup>25</sup> Bao, "Queer as Catachresis," 97.

<sup>26</sup> Zhengni Wazhao, "2022爱酷电影周征片正式开始! Call for Submission 2022 Love Queer Cinema Week [2022 ai ku dian ying zhou zheng pian zheng shi kai shi! Call for Submission 2022 Love Queer Cinema Week]," May 17, 2022, <https://www.bjqff.com/15th-festival/call-for-submission-2022/>. Quote translated by author.

dissent, invisibility or conditional visibility can also be used by queer communities to leverage for better mobility and autonomy to navigate the field of power.

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