



Come!Come!, 170x200cmx3pieces, 2005

In the summer of 2005, I made “**Come! Come!**” (170x200cm x 3 pieces). It involved 800 models, 5 props-moving trucks, 8 passenger buses, 5 trucks of garbage of all kinds, and nearly 40 assistants to finish. I chose a location for the shooting on the outskirts of Beijing, at the Hebei Province border, in a remote area where permitting and security issues could be avoided. The weather was perfect for the photo shoot since there was little sunlight. But the temperature was quite hot.

“Come! Come!” is a triptych color photo work shot from the same vantage point with the 8 by 10 large-format camera placed on a scaffolding nearly five meters above the ground. The triptych’s left panel comprises a frontal portrait of 800 “demonstrators” holding a sampling of historically significant slogans and banners, beginning with the Opium War of the 1840’s, (one of China’s first large-scale confrontations with the outside world) from the far off history, all the way up to the present. These slogans and banners from recent events were chosen from a variety of historic books and records I’ve been reading over the last several months.

On the triptych’s right panel, the “demonstrators” hold slogans and banners from many of the best-known advertisements seen during the course of the Economic Reform period (1980’s to present). These include both local Chinese brands as well as many foreign brands. Together, the banners cover an interesting array of advertising concepts and slogans as well as a poignant record of the changing aspirations of a people over a course of time. The middle image in the triptych is one of a pile of debris scattered across an otherwise untouched landscape. The debris is comprised of the historical slogans, ads, banners, and daily garbage remaining after a large-scale event, a demonstration, or an act of historic significance.

The triptych gives the viewer three very different images of the same road and landscape. In this work, I use this outdoor landscape setting polluted by “demonstrators” to pose questions such as “What Is Coming?” “Who Is Coming?”, “How Does It Come?”, and “Why Is It Coming?”. “Why Is It Happening On The Same Road?” Are the crowds generating slogans, garbage, or commercial advertisements? Historic changes of diverse impact often take place simultaneously, while seemingly going down one and the same path. But one thing is certain: The middle road, littered with garbage rather than people, appears silent, but one can see smoke and fire in the distance, hinting at some struggle, chaos, uncertainty or disputes either having come just before or portending to come just after the people disperse.

Each of the images is shot using a wide-angle lens. I have deliberately cropped the people standing closest to the camera on the left hand panel without omitting them from the frame. On the right, I’ve let those tiny figures in the distance remain in the far corners of the shot. I mean to place history in the forefront and hint at the danger of allowing commercialism to get closer. My fear is that as commercialism (consumerism) moves ever closer, the risk of it overwhelming us and over-powering all that has gone before us gets bigger and bigger.