

# We have to ... Hope

## 在没有它的地方寻找它



Artwork © Zan

Article © Angelina

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### ● 圣诞节后的圣诞树怎么样了

前天晚上回家的路上我看到了邻居做的“希望之树”这个装置。在上西区的临街小院里，一个像极了电影布景的树干倒挂在木结构搭起的横梁上。在它的下方是一个桌子，上面有一个木马。旁边的铭牌写的是“TREE OF x EPOH”，这个“HOPE”是倒写的，反过来看就对了。在从下方射上来的白光下，这件作品极简、优雅、空灵、聚焦也追问。这个形式极具仪式感，可以追溯到古代的刑法和献祭，还有耶稣之死。树干是反吊着被当众展示（斩首示众）！圣诞节后的遗产！圣诞节后我看到很多栽倒被遗弃在街边的圣诞树。尽管圣诞节前我碰到了几个街区卖圣诞树的小哥哥，他们从加拿大或者土耳其被雇佣来，只是为了在圣诞节前的这一个月卖出 300 棵树，为了省钱有些人住在街边搭起来的木屋里。他们在卖树的时候也在临时搭起来的销售摊位支架上打碟，将音乐带给那一个个下午，吉普赛！老人们小孩们男人们女人们移民们来买圣诞树，我没有，因为我没有家人在纽约。我们用不同的方式庆祝圣诞节！圣诞是耶稣诞辰，人们用礼物和灯光来装点一棵棵圣诞树来庆祝和点亮希望。

历史上的大多数庆典都以一种牺牲的方式进行，比如宰猪宰羊烹饪火鸡和砍伐和装点一颗圣诞树，庆祝丰收是，选举是，对一年的告别结束是，迎接新的一年开始时也是！人们会用各种形式来庆祝某些日子的重要与众不同和对自己进行嘉奖。人们用购物，用消费，用烟花，用塑料制品搭建成一个个光芒四射的节日夜晚... 人们欢聚一堂，然后第二天这些东西都将被扔掉、遗弃，进入我们谁都不知道的垃圾场或无从所知的城市垃圾回收销毁系统。所以细一看，这作品血腥、肃穆、无望、质问、悲凉而嘲讽！没有人在乎圣诞节后的这些树的何去何从，随它沉醉消溺在一个个难以清醒的宿醉早晨，全都和“我”无关，和一个城市渺小的个体无关。个人将不承担责任。每一个社会问题只出现在报纸和电视时，它和个人无关。社会问题的阵痛也和个体无关。在一种“社会无意识”和“个人有意识但渺小而无力”的造化 and 选择里人们有意识忽略、漠视、淡化结果。因“功用价值”而大肆砍伐，发展和利用，因“无用”而丢弃。而在这一过程中的那些“忽略和无视，冷漠和悲凉”，以及“结果”正是我们在试图在作品里找的“希望”但却怎么也找不到。

这是一个全民狂欢但不在乎狂欢之后我们会怎样的时代！这是一个社会问题消解了个人责任与我无关的时代！这会不会是一个死就死吧，只有 2025 没有 2026 的时代？2025 的加州大火和这棵圣诞节后的圣诞树有什么关系呢？

## ● 燃烧，死亡作为宿命

今天白天我又来看了这件作品。它是一棵被部分烧过的老树干。它的一部分被做成了一只木马。这似乎是我们都要面对的死亡命运。昨天在梦里有人跟我说：“我死了，不要任何仪式。只把我的身体砍伐……”梦里有 3 个人我们砍了一棵树，留下了一个树干，这树干好像又能做成书桌的板面，菜板，木马，饭勺，板凳，世界地图的拼块……像我一样的城市居民都在担心我们不会孤独的死在公寓里，我们也在担心我们死后究竟留下什么，我们正在追问活着的意义和价值是什么，个人和时代都在关心怎么代际传承这些知识，文化，财产，信念和精神，死亡作为宿命就在前方，而我们希望总有人站在巨人肩上！

## ● 关系

木马木马！

是新生，又是羁绊...

树干之用，可以是新生木马；又是一种关系和羁绊的建立。在世间，每个人都可以像一棵孤零零的参天大树一样成长生活又凋零，为什么我们还需要去建立这些人和人、人和动物、人和人的关系呢？是陪伴又是羁绊，是死亡又是新生，是结束又是开始，是告别又是传承，是结束又是再发展，是独立又是爱恋...

在没有希望的地方我们寻找希望，  
在没有爱的地方我们寻找爱，  
在没有它的地方我们寻找它，  
我们为什么要寻找，  
我们为什么需要它？

因为它就在我们心里  
我们  
在没有它的地方寻找它.....

## We have to ... Hope

### Seeking It Where It Isn't

- What Happens to Christmas Trees After Christmas?

On my way home the other evening, I came across an installation by a neighbor titled "Tree of Hope." In a small, street-facing yard on the Upper West Side, a tree trunk, resembling something from a movie set, was suspended upside-down from wooden beams. Beneath it stood a table with a wooden horse atop. A plaque beside it read "TREE OF x EPOH," with "HOPE" spelled backward—correct only when viewed in reverse.

Bathed in white light projected from below, the artwork felt minimalist, elegant, ethereal, focused, and inquisitive. Its form evoked a sense of ritual, recalling ancient executions, sacrifices, and the crucifixion of Jesus. The inverted tree trunk, hung for public display, suggested execution or decapitation—a stark relic of Christmas past.

After Christmas, I saw many dumped and discarded Christmas trees lining the streets. Just weeks earlier, I had encountered vendors selling Christmas trees across several blocks. These young men were hired from Canada or Turkey to sell 300 trees in the month leading up to Christmas. To save money, some lived in makeshift wooden huts along the street. While selling trees, they DJed music at their temporary stands, infusing afternoons with a gypsy-like festivity. Elders, children, men, women, and immigrants came to buy Christmas trees. I didn't buy because I have no family in New York.

We celebrate Christmas in different ways! Christmas marks the birth of Jesus, and people use gifts and lights to adorn Christmas trees as a way to celebrate and illuminate hope. Most celebrations throughout history have involved some form of sacrifice—slaughtering pigs or sheep, roasting turkeys, cutting down and decorating Christmas trees. Whether it's to mark a harvest, an election, the end of a year, or the start of a new one, people find ways to honor the importance of certain days and reward themselves. They celebrate through shopping, consumption, fireworks, and building dazzling festival nights with plastic decorations...

People gather in celebration, but the next day, all these things are discarded and abandoned, sent to unknown landfills or to city waste disposal systems we barely understand. Viewed through this lens, the "Tree of Hope" appears bloody, solemn, hopeless, questioning, desolate, and ironic. No one considers the fate of these trees after Christmas. They disappear into mornings blurred by hangovers, disconnected from "me" or the lives of insignificant urban individuals.

Personal responsibility is erased. Social issues emerge only in newspapers or on television, seemingly unrelated to personal lives. The pain of societal issues has nothing to do with individuals. In this "societal unconsciousness" and "individual consciousness (but the feeling of smallness and powerless)"—people consciously choose to ignore, dismiss, or downplay consequences. Trees are felled for their "utility" and discarded for being "useless." The neglect, apathy, and melancholy in this process—and the ultimate "Consequence"—reflect the "Hope" we seek in this artwork but fail to find.

This is an era of collective revelry with no concern for its aftermath, an era where the personal responsibility has nothing to do with the social issues. Is this a time of "let it burn" with no future beyond 2025? How do California's wildfires in 2025 relate to this discarded Christmas tree?

### ● Death as Fate

Today, I revisited this artwork. It's an old tree trunk, partially burned. Part of it has been crafted into a wooden horse. This seems to symbolize the inevitability of death that we all must face.

Last night in a dream, someone told me: "When I die, I don't want any ceremony. Just cut my body down..." In the dream, three friends of mine and I chopped down a tree. What remained was a tree trunk, which seems could be crafted into desktops, cutting boards, wooden horses, ladles, stools, or pieces of a world map...

As city dwellers like myself, we worry about dying alone in our apartments. We also worry about what we will leave behind when we're gone. We are constantly questioning the meaning and value of life. Both individuals and the era are concerned about how to pass on knowledge, culture, wealth, beliefs, and spirit across generations. Death, as a fate, lies ahead of us. Yet we hope that someone will always stand on the shoulders of giants!

### ● Relationship

The purpose of the tree trunk can be to transform into a new wooden horse; it also signifies the establishment of connections and bonds. In this world, every individual can grow, live, and wither like a solitary towering tree. But why do we still need to forge relationships—between people, between humans and animals, and between individuals and others?

It is companionship and also a bond,  
It is death and also rebirth,  
It is an end and also a beginning,  
It is farewell and also inheritance,  
It is closure and also further development,  
It is independence and also love...

In places without hope, we seek hope.

In places without love, we seek love.

In places without it, we seek it.

Why do we search?

Why do we need it?

Because it resides within our hearts.

We...

In places without it, we continue to seek it...