



The whirlwind choreography and fierce noise of producer **Pan Daijing** drum up performances of electronic domination

Dance Of Power

"I still feel like I'm at a very early stage in what I do," declares Pan Daijing. The Chinese born Daijing has nonetheless racked up an impressive range of projects since setting out on her chosen path and settling in Germany just over a year ago. To date she's given dozens of wildly varying live performances in galleries, museums, theatres and clubs, just as often acting out abstract rituals as summoning pummelling noise techno sets. "Everything is under the same name," she says. "I produce dance music under it, but then playing live is another project based on improvisation; more of a theatre thing for me."

The night following our meeting in a Berlin cafe, Pan Daijing's multiple personalities all make an appearance at her set at CTM Festival. With a submissive co-performer in tow, she enters dancing a passage of emotive choreography over taped music, then vocalises in front of some candid video projections recorded on the street. By the finale she stands behind a table of gear, rallying a closing wall of gutted electronic melodies and noisy thuds.

Keenly building them around the specifications of every gig, Daijing sees each single performance as a new task. Earlier shows saw her experiment with dismantling standard electronic music practices, donning leather masks and bodysuits, vacating her gear entirely to prowl and emote around the space. Rather than any connotations of BDSM (which admittedly helped score her some bookings), she deployed the mask merely to "objectify" herself in performance, morphing her body into a blank and

malleable abstract tool. In the case of CTM, the performance is based on an improvisation "but a narrative is still there", she says. "This one is called *Elephant*." The title is meant to signify an intrusive or jutting large object as much as the animal itself, conversely portrayed by the negative space on a large imposing stage barely filled by Daijing and her partner. "How architecture frames and shapes the space is what inspired me to deconstruct," she explains. "A rhythm doesn't have to be danceable, a rhythm can lie in silence."

Initially aiming to study accounting at university in China, Daijing ultimately wanted to escape the banal routine of it all. "If you went to a boarding high school in mainland China, it's like you're in the military – you all dress the same, we have the same haircut, our rooms look exactly the same," she comments. "That's how it is for three years. I wanted to take revenge on this sort of thing." Luckily an exchange programme with University of California, Santa Barbara appeared, and Daijing even managed to wrangle a quiet shift to a theatre class for a few months.

In addition to Western dancers like Pina Bausch and Trisha Brown, she cites contemporary Chinese choreographers such as Lin Hwai Min and Tao Ye among her key influences as a mover. "Both of them really implement Chinese philosophical elements in their work," says Daijing. "You can see the power, but the power lies in the softness."

Having mostly focused on live performance, Daijing's recorded output to date remains slight. 2015

saw her murky industrial debut tape *Sex & Disease*, while a 12" EP on Bedouin finally saw the light of day in January. Noisy as it may be, *A Satin Sight* is largely built around inventions over 4/4 rhythms, documenting some of Daijing's most melodic output yet. Second track "Exile" is even built around a John Carpenter-esque synth melody. The EP was produced more than a year ago during a period living back in Shanghai, and aptly features sampled dialogue from Lou Ye's 2000 film *Suzhou River*, set on the titular Shanghai river where Daijing lived during production. "I do a lot of recordings, especially electronic dance music," she says, "but I generally don't like this standard recording industry album cycle."

Even so, a debut LP is due for release on Berlin label Pan. "It's funny, Pan and Pan!" In typically atypical fashion, the upcoming album takes Daijing's work into yet another new direction. "It's beatless – and it's opera," she states rather bluntly. The album will introduce classical opera singers into an unpredictable narrative of Daijing's own invention, soundtracked with Buchla synthesizers and fist-beaten open piano strings, among other things. "The story was inspired by this German philosophy term," says Daijing. "Vorstellung: referring to a person's own projected perception of the world." The album is due this summer – but Daijing continues: "After the Pan album I've already got something else in mind. I want to do a pop album." □ *A Satin Sight* is released by Bedouin
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