

Workshop: Pandemic Product

Guidework 工作室

Biography

Guidework: A small-scaled creative studio based in Beijing, founded in 2018. They are dedicated to bringing original, fun and design-oriented contents and products to the market. During the pandemic, they created a booklet named 'Safety! Safety!'. They collected over 400 'Special Period Passes' from all over the country and assembled them into a booklet in the hope that the products of this special period would be preserved. The cover is made of the same non-woven fabric as the mask.

Guidework 工作室成立于2018年，是一家小型创意工作室，致力于将原创、有趣且设计导向的内容和产品推向市场。在疫情期间，他们创作了一本名为《Safety! Safety!》的小册子。他们从全国各地收集了超过400个“特殊时期通行证”，并将它们汇编成册，希望这些特殊时期的产品能够得到保存。小册子的封面采用了与口罩相同的无纺布。

Safety! Safety! 小册子

The recording of the book 'Safety! Safety!' launch:

小册子《Safety! Safety!》发布会记录

<http://www.notion.so/Guidework-Book-Launch-9f6a4d50881447b3ad82c4d742ada572>

Welcome to the launch of the new book *Safety! Safety!*, we are a small studio called *Guidework*. For many audiences who often come to (Shanghai Artistic Book Fair) *abC*, we may be new faces, because it's the first year of *Guidework* to participate in the *Artistic Book Fair* Shanghai, because last year, we went to the Beijing fair. Coincidentally, this year is the 2nd birthday of our studio. At this time, we came to

Shanghai to attend the **abC** book exhibition which is really a great pleasure and honour for us.

Guideswork
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First, we will briefly introduce our studio, because basically we are still new faces to you. We usually take some design projects as well as running our own workshop. Due to the pandemic this year, our workshop did not operate properly but the previous year we had worked in this way several times and received positive responses.

The form of the workshop is about everyone working together in 48 hours or in a few days. Of course, the most significant point is that we will also do our own works that will be published independently. These are the two books we have produced. The first one is called **The Board** and the other **Safety! Safety!** Therefore, today we're going to talk about the first work we will publish at the Shanghai abC—**Safety! Safety!**

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The Board
(Safety! Safety!)
abC



Overall presentation



Overall presentation

In fact, the word “出入平安 (Chu Ru Ping An)” is quite common in our daily lives, and appears most as the print of door frame in China (the meaning of the Chinese word of 出入平安 means that “safely going in and out”. It is an idiom of China). As a result, when we see the word, we will feel that it is a positive expectation, “going in and out” is such a common thing that we always do during normal times.

But, you know, since the outbreak of the pandemic early this year, the “going in and out” thing started to become unusual, even special. Our studio began working on the sixth day of this Chinese New Year, which was the time that our communities had not yet locked down and before communities distributed passes to each resident. At first, the act of checking passes was not that strict but with the fast spread of the virus, not just in our community but in many residential areas, the pass became of utmost importance. Then, we’d realised that we were witnessing a phenomenal event happening. It was incredibly weird that we came to rely on a pass in order to live.

In about February or March, we saw some public and self-made activities launched online, like “Exposing your passes”, “Collecting everyone’s pass” and so on. When I saw them, I felt that it’s meaningful to do something similar. From our point of view, the pass seems to be the mark of this period.

That reminded me of a book *Old Sparks (Collection of Objects No .1)* of Shiwei CAI. We used to call the script on the side of the matchbox the “sparks”, CAI collected all the matchboxes in China then and made them into a book. According to this, our current passes are more like the “food coupon” which we had decades before. A lot of people have mapped out the collection of the food coupon in China, including in Guangxi Province. Normal University Press has just issued a book this year, called *China in the Tickets*. In this sense, the pass must be seen as a representation of our current time and act as a witness to our experience during the special year of 2020. What is more, we’ve just found out that the Chinese

pass was more common in those early days. We could perhaps look at them as all being temporary passes at first sight, because the communities might not have expected the pandemic to last so long. As the time went on, the pass we see now is much more advanced than what we saw in February. At the time, we might not have brought our ID cards but must have the pass with us—because the pass then has a name, phone number, ID number, address, and many people’s passes even had a copy of their ID card.

With our collection, little by little, the pass is gradually taking on new meaning. We can see a variety among them, such as “each household can only issue three passes a week”, this is a one-time pass, after once in and out it would be recycled. There are also passes that were distributed every day, with every date on them. There are also “vouchers” in the upper right corner of the passes—just like the movie tickets, being teared at the corner, so the passes can be kept. There is also a whole piece of paper with a pass, a pass like a brochure, and so on.

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Various passes



Various passes

As the pandemic went on, the pass design became more advanced. The communities on the same street would have a uniform pass design. Like a pass from a neighbourhood we collected near Beijing Capital Airport, they're in different colours, blue is for the ordinary resident living in the neighbourhood, red is for the aircrew, for the airport staff. We also find that, in some places, passes are divided into resident pass and non-resident pass.

Here are some passes we collected at the **Beijing abc Book Fair**. During July last year, the outbreak in Beijing was coming to an end. At that stage, the passes we collected have a lot of traces of daily usage. Personally, I really like these kinds of passes, they don't look as smooth as we first collected, but these traces are the records of our common experience during that time. Then, the pass was used for so long that many of them have plastic coats, but still with obvious marks of usage. Like this pass, distributed in March, with a severe back tear and the user has taped it up, but the most interesting thing is that there is a small line of words under it: released on June 6, 2020. During the outbreak, the community was locked down and no one could get into the community without passes until June 6th, 2020. Therefore, look at that line, it says "reused on June 14, 2020", due to the second outbreak in Beijing—the pandemic was serious again at that time, so the passes were reused then.



We also found a lot of unexpected stories about passes during



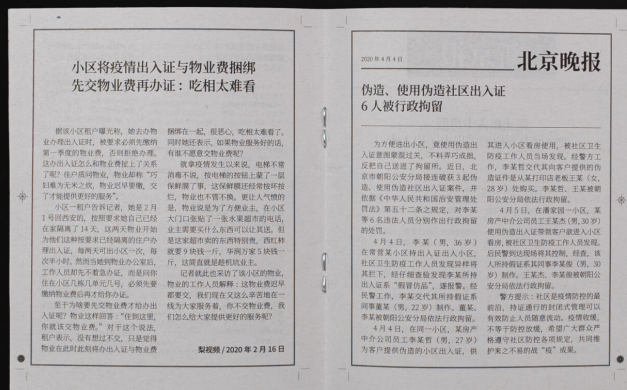
Similar slogans on passes

Initially, we were thinking about how to present these hundreds of passes, and then we felt that we did not need to do too much designing or special arrangements. What we have done is just put the passes together, since this represents everything, and we did not need to explain too much what they were because everyone has their own experience in relation to them. Now when we put these passes together, many different things came to mind: it is like evidence of history, the map of what we were going through during that time. Thus, we decided to name the book ***Safety! Safety!***, and we wanted to make it look like the mask we wore during the pandemic. It was also the same size as the mask. Additionally, the cover of the book used the same material as the mask: non-woven fabric—as far as we know, this may be the first book to use mask material. We went with a soft hardcover form for this.

Hardcover is usually formed by attaching a cloth to a piece of cardboard and then re-bound, but because there are many holes in the non-woven fabric, it could not be placed directly



News booklet



Inside page



News about SARS

When we come to the *abc book fair*, ourselves, or the people who come to our booth, might feel that we don't fit the whole atmosphere of the book fair which is mostly illustrations, comics or photography. Our work, it is not avant-garde or trendy photography, just a piece of an ordinary pass. However, I think there such work should be done; this is also the significance of the *Guideswork*.

Both of our current works are very practicable topics. Once an audience came to our booth and asked if we were only concerned about the community. I would like to borrow the Biao XIANG's view of "nearby"— We want to start with people and things that happened nearby. We want to rediscover the surrounding life through such works and observe the space of our own lives. If you want to summarize what we do with a few keywords, that may be—find the topic that is "nearby" and stick to the topic for a while. Taking collecting more than 400 passes as an example, we could let the audiences go back

to “nearby “, intervene in “nearby “, observe nearby life, and even create their own “nearby “.

Last year in Beijing, **abC** heard a lecture from the director of the **abC Art Book Award**, his ideas overlapped with the vision we want to achieve by doing this. We hope to tell you through the work that such a book is not just about what I want to do and what I could do, but also about how it could be done.

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abC abC

The above is our brief introduction about the work **Safety!Safety!** and our **Guideswork** studio. At last, I would like to thank everyone who provided us with their passes. We should remember that summer was accompanied with masks and passes and we hope that the work of the passes is no longer a reflection of our current situation but has become a historical material record. I hope we can go back to the world without passes. Thank you all.

Please feel free to share with us your ideas about special products during the pandemic!



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