

Competition, 170x300cm, 2004

In “**Competition**”, I constructed a huge wall, that stood about 14 meters high and 40 meters across, and then we posted over 600 pieces of paper (110x90cm each) on which I wrote in traditional Chinese ink brush style in some instances and in felt tip pen and magic marker in others, a random selection of slogans and phrases from the advertisements that bombard us here every day. These ads include both domestic and international information about companies and famous brands, such as the lease of houses, education programs, restaurants, foot massage, etc. Everything is advertised, from items as big as airplanes (eg. BOEING) or as small as vinegar and condoms. On my gigantic wall, I make the fight for advertising as fierce as a struggle for military power, with inevitable casualties on the battlefield. I have also included some of the famous brands that proliferate in China, such as Shell, McDonald's, Durex, Starbuck's, along with a few of the anecdotes behind them and the misunderstandings that arise in translating these into Chinese for a foreign audience. Altogether, I've used around 3000 varieties of products and services on my wall to show off the allure of this mass advertising campaign that surrounds us.

In terms of visual form and content, this outdoor advertising onslaught is not unlike the big character posters (“Da zi bao”) posted by competing factions and littering city streets in China during the Cultural Revolution. In the past the streets were hung with posters in fights over political beliefs. Now the struggle is over financial power and business gain. Ads for items are like a rash growing out of control everywhere on our city streets.