

## Zhou Wei “Natural System”

Artificial plants take up a considerably extensive fraction of our daily life and environment. They replicate the natural – individual and potted flowers, foliage, nursery and courtyard grown plants, made of modern industrial materials: muslin, linen, wool, wood, polyester, non-woven fabrics, paper and plastic; immortal and elastic, they withstand the most demanding of customers.

The last three decades have witnessed the soaring development of China’s artificial plants industry featuring high level of state of the art technology. According to their trade organization, artificial plants boast the following characteristics: 1) highly flexible and environment-friendly. Major sources of artificial plants are pollution-free or low pollution materials such as plastic, silk, polyester, a mixture of resin and clay, metal bar, glass tube, blow molding paper, cello silk, decorative paper, and colored ribbon. These materials are highly shapeable and colorfast, which contribute to the life-like quality of the product allowing it to rival its natural counterpart. 2) Well-adapted to the environment. It is not an easy task to grow natural plants, especially in urban cities given their insufficient sunlight resulting from a massing of buildings and the application of household appliances like air conditioners. On the contrary, artificial plants maintain their color and gloss, never fading from bloom. 3) Easy to maintain. Artificial plants are the best choice for working couples. They will never bother you with mold growth or decay; no need to water, trim or debug. They don’t require natural sunshine, and are much safer than natural flowers if put into a child’s mouth. 4) Inexpensive, easy to move and versatile. Most types of artificial plants are much cheaper than living flowers. They can be easily moved and recycled to fit any new atmosphere and decor.

Artificial plants have become increasingly popular in urban life as they fill a void within people eager to regain an intimacy with nature. Collective demands together with enormous profit margins have provoked the formation of a systematic artificial ecology industry. It is noted that this industry in China has already stepped into the maturity phase. Since 2004, the consumption of artificial plants has exceeded ten billion Yuan, with up to 60 billion plants exported to more than 60 countries in Europe and North America in 2004 alone, and the number has continued to increase by an average 17.2% every year between 2005 and 2008. In 2009, though facing a financial crisis worldwide, the increasing rate was maintained at 10%. The industry has become a significant contributor to the growth of regional GDP and export value. It is expected that the scale of production in this promising industry will grow at an annual average rate of over 18% from 2010 to 2012.