

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

China's lipstick king returns after tank cake controversy

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After months in exile, Li Jiaqi is back on China's airwaves. His broadcast drew over 60 million viewers in two hours and sold \$17 million worth of goods. Image credit: Li Jiaqi's Weibo

By **Gemma A. Williams**

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After an exile of 103 days, China's most famous livestream host Austin Li returned to the airwaves on Sept. 20.

Affectionately dubbed the "Lipstick King," Mr. Li's session gathered 3 million views in 10 minutes more than 60 million in total and received more than 120 million likes.

Across the two hours, upwards of 63 million viewers tuned in to see the host's lowkey, unannounced comeback.

The broadcast **included** well-known names such as Anta, Neiwei, L'Oral and Nivea and, despite his calls for audiences to "shop rationally," many of the products which ranged from shoes and socks to air fryers and eyebrow pencils quickly sold out. According to local **media**, sales were in excess of \$17 million (120 million RMB).

An incident on June 3 saw Mr. Li's livestream abruptly interrupted following the appearance of a tank-shaped cake on **camera**. His team cited this as a "technical error," but it drew widespread attention and speculation.

Now, more than three months later, and without any explanation or fanfare, he is back. Fans have eagerly awaited his return the last post on his Weibo account has nearly a half-million likes and comments. During the session they gushed, "you finally came back" and "no matter what you sell, I will buy everything."

The enterprising Mr. Li failed to acknowledge either his absence or the reason for his return.

In fact, the mainland's livestreaming sector as well as its top host are both under ongoing scrutiny. Many presenters have disappeared for a variety of **reasons**: controversy, tax scandals and more.

However, this puts Mr. Li firmly back in play in the run-up to the country's biggest retail festival, Double 11. As he offers a valuable lifeline to companies looking to reach consumers, this is very good news for brands, especially beauty ones.

Perhaps even more than the fans who fueled the Weibo hashtag, "Li Jiaqi Livestream," with a commendable 72 million views they will be relieved that the lipstick king has returned to take his throne.

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