FRIEZE

23 October 2026

Cici Wu’s Lanterns Flicker in the Mind’s Eye

At 47 Canal, New York, her show considers the relationship between a sentimental folk tune and diasporic narratives

Madeleine Seidel



Cici Wu, *Goddess Kuan-yin (Full Moon)*, 2026, ink, mineral pigment, mulberry paper, bamboo wire, willow withies, wheat glue, animal glue, handmade glass and LED light, 136 × 81 × 46 cm. Courtesy: the artist and 47 Canal, New York; photograph: Sebastian Bach

‘Auld Lang Syne’ represents both endings and beginnings: the act of looking ahead to new possibilities while regretting those passing behind. Written by Robert Burns in the late 18th century and later set to music, the song is most often heard at the stroke of midnight on New Year’s Eve: as one year closes, another opens. This sentimental tune, whose worldwide popularity is due in part to its highly adaptable arrangement and its dissemination by Western missionaries, gives Cici Wu the title and theme for her latest show ‘Auld Lang Syne (prelude)’, which inaugurates 47 Canal’s new gallery space in Chelsea.



Cici Wu, ‘Auld Lang Syne (prelude)’, 2026, exhibition view. Courtesy: 47 Canal; photograph: Sebastian Bach

The Beijing-born, New York-based Wu – who works across and between sculpture, works on paper and film – presents eleven lantern sculptures, 'protocinematic' objects that recall the earliest projection devices. Emitting a cozy glow in the darkened space, the lanterns 'perform' portions of 'Auld Lang Syne' through a silent choreography of flickers that represents musical notation. In this context, the song is a symbol for nostalgia and a remnant of colonial history, recognizing that cultural artifacts linger as a reminder of narratives of migration and European soft power across Asia.

To Choose, To Stay (all works 2026) is one of the first pieces one encounters in the gallery space. Its boxy shape and protruding bamboo and willow armature recall a film projector or an old television set with rabbit ear-style antennas. Illuminated by amber, pink and icy blue LED lights nestled into the sculpture's structure, delicately rendered vignettes are painted across its surface: dancing people, landscapes and a hand twirling another device of nascent filmmaking, the stroboscope. Another smaller lantern titled *Shizuoka Prefectural Higher Girls' School in 1913* shows a bucolic sketch of the titular institution as a reference to the popularity of 'Auld Lang Syne' as a graduation song amongst Chinese exchange students in Japanese schools – a work just as much about coming-of-age as it is about displacement and diaspora.



Cici Wu, *Traveling Star*, 2024/2026, ink, mineral pigment, mulberry paper, bamboo wire, willow withies, wheat glue, animal glue and handmade glass, 52 × 107 × 43 cm. Courtesy: the artist and 47 Canal, New York; photograph: Sebastian Bach

Other sculptures reflect Wu's thesis more literally. *"Door Left Half Way"* and *"Ever Close to Staying Open"*, the show's two largest works, both take the shape of a door left ajar. While simple in form, "Door Left Half Way", in particular, rewards careful examination. The work – also made of bamboo, willow and mulberry paper – is hollow, and hangs from the ceiling, allowing one to look through its structure. The outermost layer consists solely of fragmented backwards text which references common closing salutations in English and Mandarin. Peering between the work's outer panels gives a view of a clipping from a local newspaper nestled into the armature, protected from the world like a precious keepsake.

Less successful are lanterns that mimic human and animal forms, such as *Goddess Kuan-yin (Full Moon)* and *Goddess Bari (New Moon)*, which

appear as glowing female figures made from loops of wood, wire, paper panels, glass and light. While thematically relevant – goddess Bari and the Bodhisattva Kuan-yin are both figures that guide souls after death in Korean folklore and Buddhist tradition – the literal rendering and identifying of their figures dulls the hazy nostalgia of the other works, which is achieved largely by the emotional ambiguity and anonymity of the scenes Wu portrays.



Cici Wu, ‘Auld Lang Syne (prelude)’, 2026, exhibition view. Courtesy: 47 Canal; photograph: Sebastian Bach

‘Auld Lang Syne (prelude)’ presents an intangible cinema: by breaking the medium down to only its most essential element of light, Wu portrays narratives of childhood and diaspora as memories flickering in the mind’s eye like an old film projector. A bittersweet ode, ‘Auld Lang Syne (prelude)’ expertly balances misty-eyed nostalgia with a sober understanding of how politics shape personal histories.

Cici Wu’s ‘Auld Lang Syne (prelude)’ is on view at 47 Canal, New York, until 7 November

The New York Times https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/28/arts/design/teresa-hak-kyung-cha-profile-bamfa-art.html

A Cult Figure, Silenced Too Soon, Resurfaces

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's poetry, performance and films inspired generations of artists. Never forgotten after her murder, a new exhibition sheds light on her legacy.

Listen · 10:21 min



By Aruna D'Souza

Jan. 28, 2026

To the names Eva Hesse, Francesca Woodman, Ana Mendieta, Sylvia Plath — visionary women all who died too young and became canonized in the process — add the genre-defying Korean American artist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha. Her experimental novel, "Dictee" — a radical, fragmented autobiography that reflects on the effects of displacement, the slipperiness of language and the precarity of memory — was published days after her shocking murder in 1982, at age 31. It propelled her to cult status among artists, writers and scholars, a position that she has never really left.

Until relatively recently, her fans' first — and sometimes only — encounter with her work was through "Dictee" and other writings, since her films, performances, mail art and other forays into artmaking were often ephemeral or difficult to access. Exhibitions over the four decades since her death — among them a 1993 Whitney Museum exhibition curated by Lawrence Rinder, the presentation of 14 of her films in the 2022 Whitney Biennial, a retrospective at the Hessel Museum of Art at Bard College the same year, and her recent inclusion in the exhibition "Echo Delay Reverb" through Feb. 15 at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris — have offered glimpses into the breadth of her interdisciplinary practice.

Now, "Multiple Offerings," a new show at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA), running through April 19, will serve up the most complete picture to date of the artist's prolific practice, realized over the course of a barely decade-long career. It's fitting that the show is at U.C. Berkeley, a place where Cha studied (she received four degrees in her time there) and worked (as an usher in the theater and art handler at the museum), and where her archives have been housed since 1992.



Cha's 1975 performance "Aveugle Voix" —French for "the blind voice," but also sounding like the phrase for "the blind sees" — incorporated strips of white cloth stenciled with words. via Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film

Archive; Photo by Trip Callaghan

On display is some of her earliest student work — she began as a ceramist — as well as moving image work, objects and ephemera from her performances, and a generous selection from her archives. It will also include a reconstruction of one of her most important installations, “Exilée” (1980), made in the wake of her first visit to Korea after immigrating to the United States at age 11 with her family. Like many of her works, it layers moving images, text and spoken word.

Importantly, the exhibition includes the work of artists, both her contemporaries and those who came to her later and have played crucial roles in keeping her legacy alive. “The impetus to do this show really came from conversations with contemporary artists,” Margot Norton, chief curator at BAMPFA, said.

One is Cecilia Vicuña, the Chilean poet, artist, activist and filmmaker who arrived in New York in 1980, around the same time as Cha. Given that they were both interested in “displaced people from different wars and tragedies,” as Vicuña recalled in an interview, people encouraged the two to meet. A few days before the planned rendezvous, she heard through the SoHo grapevine that Cha had been brutally murdered. (A security guard at the Puck Building in SoHo named Joey Sanza had raped and killed her; it took three trials over five years before he was convicted of the crime.)



Cecilia Vicuña's installation "Quipu Girok" (2021) is one of the works by contemporary artists who have engaged with Cha's work in the decades since her death. The title of the work, as well as the materials used, aligns Andean and Korean textile traditions. Cecilia Vicuña/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, Seoul, and London; Aaron Wojack for The New York Times

The missed encounter still haunts her. "My relationship with Theresa consists in me admiring and longing for the friendship that could have been," she told me. Vicuña has returned multiple times to Cha's memory in the years since, including a sound work for the 2020 Gwangju Biennial made in collaboration with the Colombian pianist-composer Ricardo Gallo. "I decided it was time to have Theresa come back to South Korea."

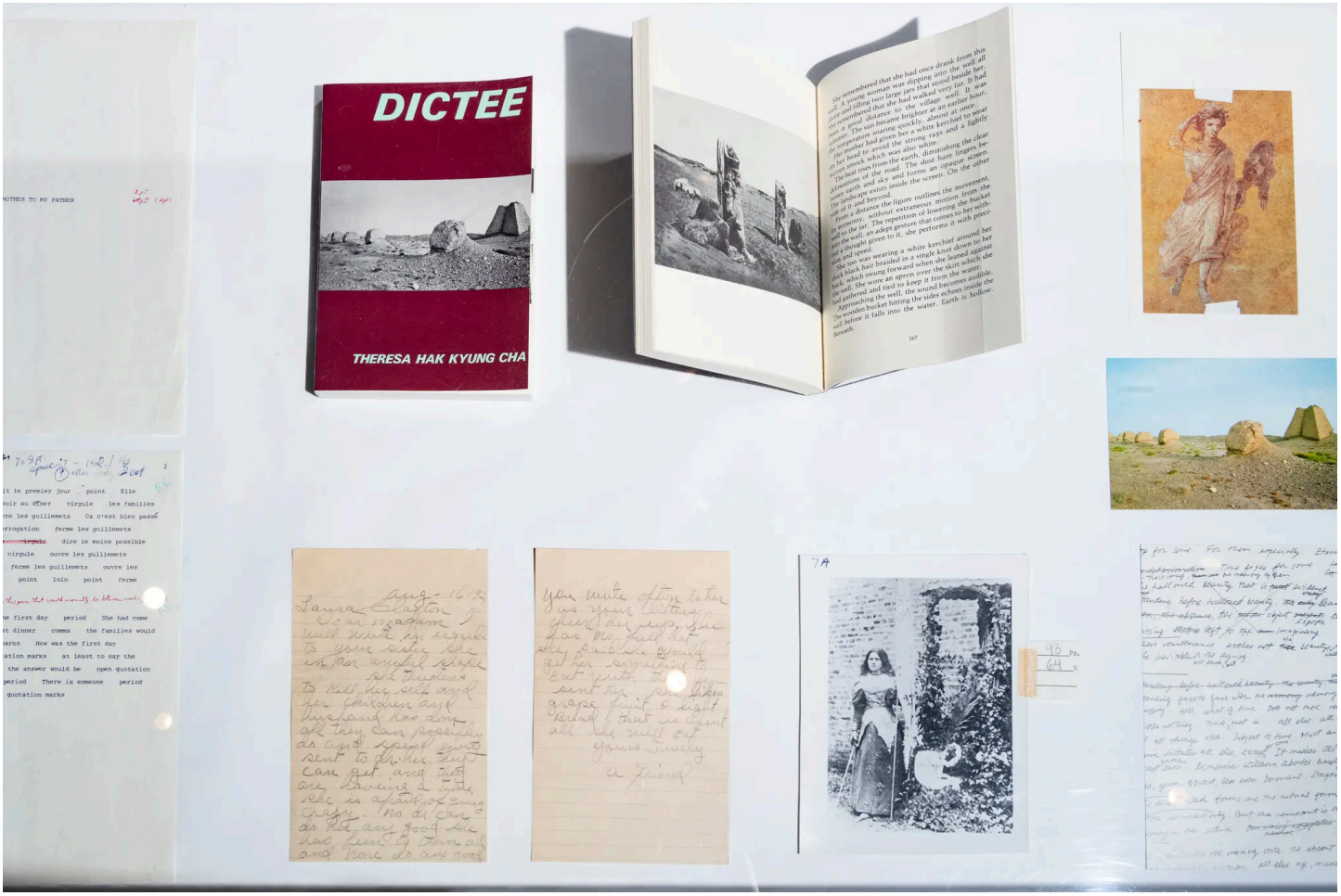
Victoria Sung, who curated "Multiple Offerings" with the assistance of Tausif Noor, described the "long tendrils of interconnection" on view. "For some artists, it's really about how Cha is thinking through memory, loss of language, the impact of colonization," she said. "For others it's how she is constantly overlapping forms, whether it's thinking about moving image through performance or performance through text."



In her performance "Barren, Cave, Mute" (1974), Cha used white wax to write words on large paper banners; a single lighted candle was used to melt the wax, exposing the words to the audience over time. via Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive

The presence of multiple voices in this show is true to Cha's desire to invite her audience to take part in creating the work's meaning. In "Audience Distant Relative" (1977-78), an unbound artist book accompanied by a sound recording of her voice, Cha imagined her relationship to viewers as a longed for, but imperfect, communication: "seen only heard only through someone else's description."

The artist's eldest brother, John Cha, summed up the shifting interpretations of Cha's work over the years. "First it was the SoHo avant-garde. And then after a while, people made her a feminist. Asian American academicians and artists came in and said, well, she's a feminist, but she's an Asian American feminist. And then after that, another crowd came and said 'Well, there's so much reference to Korean culture in her work,' so she became a Korean feminist artist."

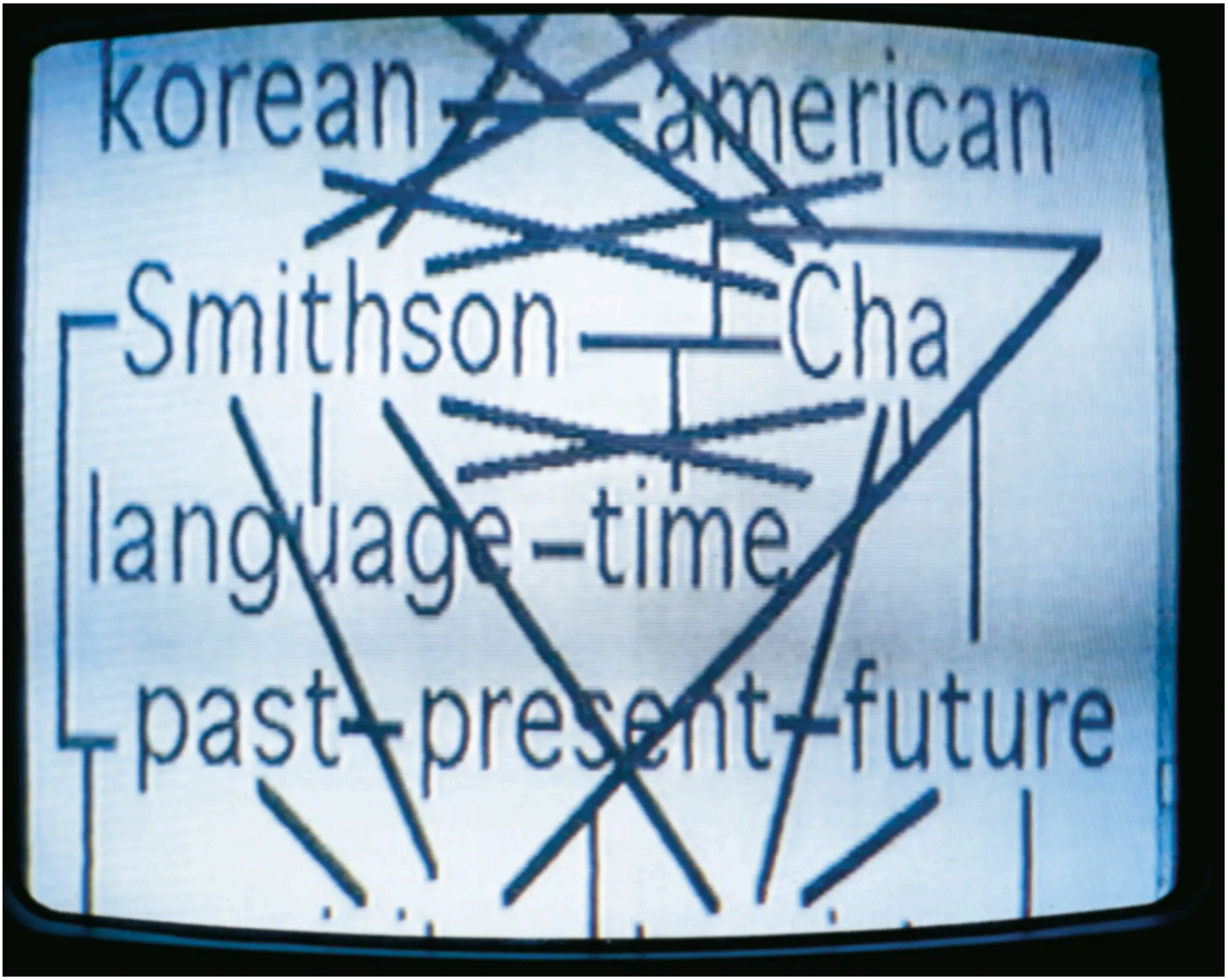


Cha's experimental novel "Dictee," published days after her death in 1982, combined family photographs and found images, concrete poetry and fragmented narrative. Aaron Wojack for The New York Times

When it was first published, "Dictee" was received by many as a revelation. "It had nothing to do with the New York vibe, or the California vibe. It was just kind of cosmic," said her friend and former classmate Reese Williams, whose Tanam Press first published the book. (It has been reissued multiple times since, most recently by the University of California Press in 2022.) Written in English, French and Korean, and interspersed with family photos, found images, diagrams and handwritten notes, it draws upon her own

autobiography, as well as the stories of her mother and that of a second woman, a freedom fighter, whose lives were shaped by the 35-year Japanese occupation of Korea in the first half of the 20th century.

Its form was influenced by her close reading of French poststructuralist thought and film theory. It is also marked by her fascination with language and translation — not surprising for a child arriving in the U.S. from Korea, where the national language had been banned during the Japanese occupation. “As a foreigner, learning a new language extended beyond its basic function of communication,” she wrote in a 1979 artist statement, becoming “a consciously imposed detachment.”



Renée Green’s video “Partially Buried Continued” (1997), created for the Gwangju Biennial, brought Cha’s work into dialogue with the Earthworks artist Robert Smithson, as well as with her own father’s slide photographs of Korea. Renée Green, via Bortolami Gallery, New York

Renée Green picked up a copy of Cha’s book shortly after its publication, intrigued by the black and white photograph on the cover, an image of a row of boulders in a pebbly field. “It related to landscape, but you didn’t know what it was,” she recalled. “It could be a moonscape. It didn’t have a location marker, but it resonated with other forms, like Earthworks.”

When invited to participate in the 1997 Gwangju Biennial, Green made a single-channel video, “Partially Buried Continued,” a reflection on artistic and familial genealogies. It brought Cha’s work into dialogue with the land artist Robert Smithson, as well as with slide photographs taken by Green’s father while he served in the Korean War.



In “Now Pretend” (1992), L. Franklin Gilliam drew upon works like Cha’s “Aveugle Voix,” creating a work that combined new and found footage to expose the arbitrariness of markers of racial difference. L. Franklin Gilliam

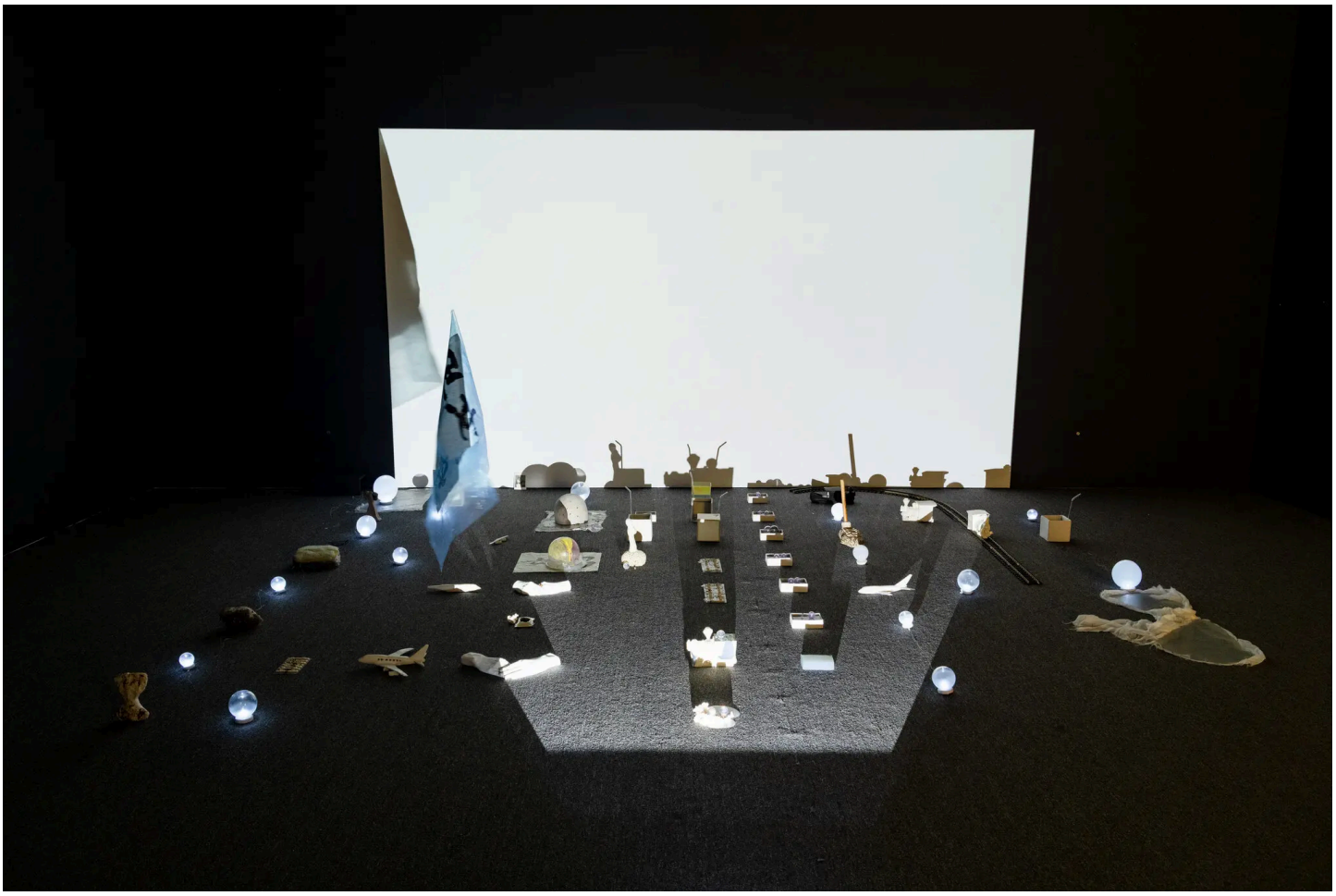


L. Franklin Gilliam

While an undergraduate at Brown University in the late 1980s grappling with semiotics and film theory, L. Franklin Gilliam, another artist in the exhibition, discovered Cha's 1981 book volume "APPARATUS," which juxtaposed theoretical writings — by Roland Barthes, Jean-Luc Godard and Dziga Vertov among others — with Cha's own visual essay. "I was just so moved to find someone who was struggling with film theory but at the same time felt as if it belonged to them," Gilliam said.

Cha's impact on Gilliam is apparent in the latter's 1992 film, "Now Pretend," which weaves together found and shot footage to deconstruct racial and gender stereotypes, and features images of a figure holding up words — us/them," "subject/object," "good hair/bad hair" — stenciled on strips of paper. They are a direct reference to Cha's penchant for materializing language in her performances and films using words printed on fabric and other supports, as in her 1975 performance "Aveugle Voix."

"It was such a beautiful and tactile way to think about language," Gilliam said.



"Upon Leaving the White Dust" (2017/2018), Cici Wu's oblique imagination of Cha's last, unrealized project. It consists of a projection of "stolen light" — recorded during a screening of the partial footage of Cha's film — and sculptural objects inspired by Cha's storyboards. Aaron Wojack for The New York Times

For Cici Wu, also in the show, Cha's experiences as an immigrant, her life marked by movement, felt like a point of connection. "My work also has to do with leaving and returning," she said. But so did Cha's deep understanding of the medium of film.

Wu's research in the BAMPFA archives a decade ago led her to Cha's last, unrealized project, "White Dust from Mongolia" (1980) in which the artist intended to return to the place her mother was born and raised during the Japanese occupation. Wu's "Upon Leaving the White Dust" (2017/2018), included in the exhibition, is an oblique reimagination of what Cha's work could have been. Wu created a device that recorded the light that emanated during a rare screening of the 30 minutes of footage Cha and her brother James had shot during a trip to Manchuria. "It was a way to steal the film via light, to abstract it into pure brightness," Wu said. Wu's light projection is paired with sculptural objects relating to Cha's extensive storyboards for her planned film.



A still from Cha's 1978 performance "Passages Paysages," which she realized in collaboration with her partner, the photographer Richard Barnes. via Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive



A documentation of the piece's installation at the Berkeley Art Museum. The piece consists of a recording of Cha's voice over a dreamlike sequence of still and moving images. via Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive

"She was thinking about how light and film could be a medium to convey the interior space of memory," Wu said.

The tragic end of Cha's life has often colored viewers' first encounters with her art, sometimes leading them to overlook crucial aspects of the work, such as her often very funny, and even playful, treatment of language.



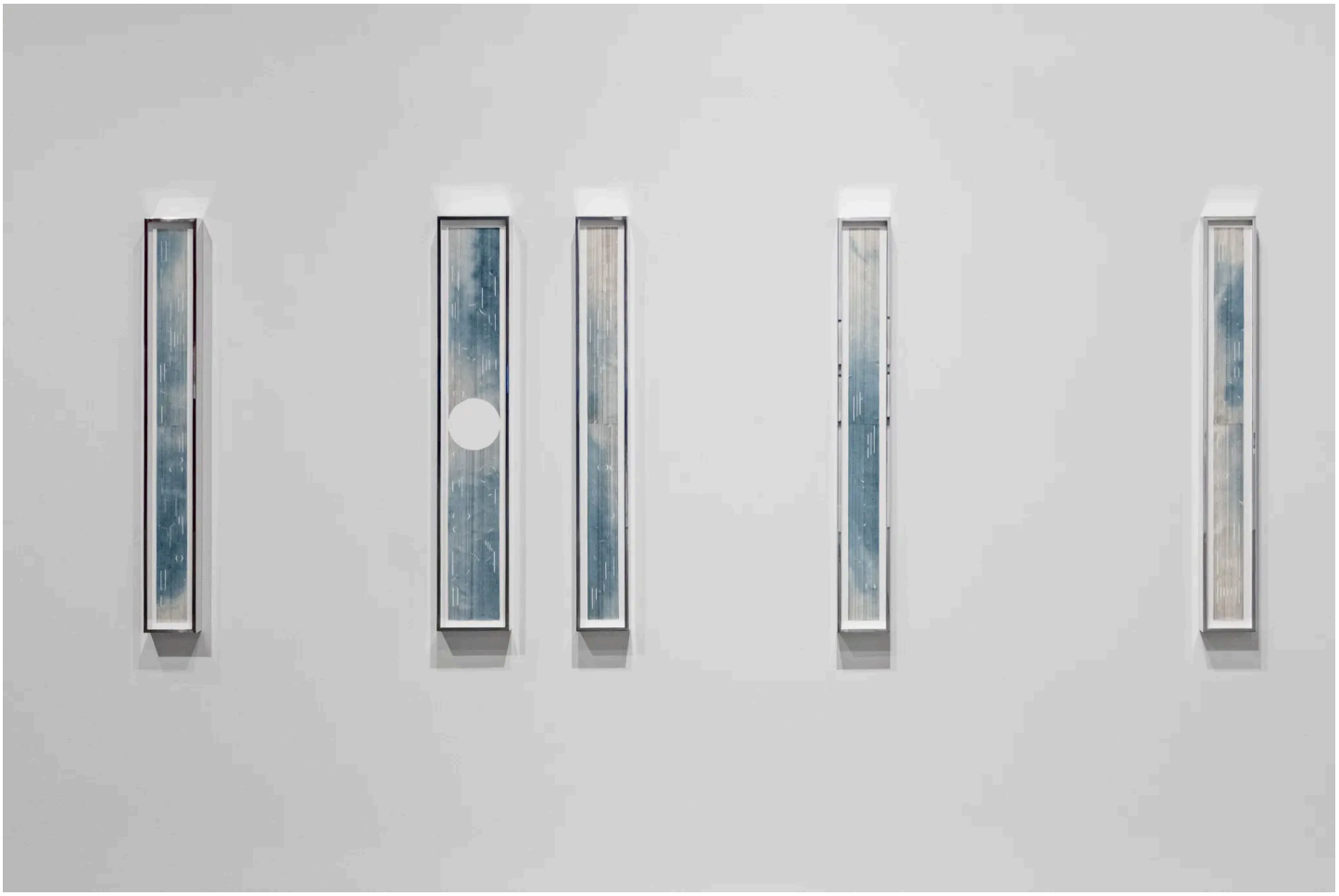
A slide from Cha's "Other Things Seen, Other Things Heard (Ailleurs)" (1978). The artist performed in front of images projected on the gallery walls, becoming a sort of screen, an accumulation of fragments and memories. via Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive

This has especially been the case in the wake of the publication of Cathy Park Hong's 2020 book "Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning," which introduced Cha to a wide readership. Her chapter on Cha begins with a detailed, almost forensic, account of her rape and murder.

The curators of "Multiple Offerings" are acutely aware of this. "We're really interested in centering her art, her life, her making," Sung said.

"She wasn't thinking about her own death when making her work, so we really want to stay grounded in the present of her making."

A piece by the New York and Seoul-based artist Jesse Chun, "시: concrete poem, stanza (for all the uninherited and inherited time travelers that hum through the slivers)," a ritualistic offering that pays homage to her artistic matriarchs, her maternal grandmother and Cha, will also be on view. Chun said she was struck by how many avenues there were to enter Cha's work. "It is really culturally specific to a Korean experience, but then she expands it, and it becomes this other kind of poetics that everyone can access," she said. "I think there's a lot of generosity there."



Jesse Chun, "시: concrete poem, stanza (for all the uninherited and inherited time travelers that hum through the slivers)," a ritualistic offering that pays homage to Cha and Chun's forebears. Aaron Wojack for The New York Times

A correction was made on Jan. 28, 2026*: An earlier version of this article misspelled the first name of an artist whose poem pays homage to Theresa Hak Kyung Cha. She is Jesse Chun, not Jessie.*

When we learn of a mistake, we acknowledge it with a correction. If you spot an error, please let us know at corrections@nytimes.com. Learn more

---

A version of this article appears in print on , Section AR, Page 16 of the New York edition with the headline: Silenced Too Soon, A Cult Figure Resurfaces



武雨濛，“来自未归还的灵灯”展览现场，2025. 图片由上海外滩美术馆提供，摄影：颜涛.

上海

武雨濛（Cici Wu）

上海外滩美术馆 I ROCKBUND ART MUSEUM
上海市黄浦区虎丘路20号
2025.05.02 - 2025.09.28

和白天相比，神秘与夜晚更相近，因为神秘往往晦暗不明。武雨濛（Cici Wu）高悬在外滩美术馆步梯间窗前的书型纸灯笼，携着超度、迎神和送魂之义，显然更多是为了夜晚准备的。让我们想象一下，每天午夜，美术馆闭店谢客，活人和城市一同睡去，灯笼将为谁人引路？步梯间是过渡性空间，是从A到B的关节，也可以是生到死、夜到昼、人到鬼的通道。所有被灯笼召唤的对象，要从此处上船。

据展览前言介绍，上海外滩美术馆大楼1930年代初建成时为皇家亚洲文会， 1970年代曾用于存放被查抄的书籍；而武雨濛运用“竹材和传统上用于珍本修复的保护级手工纸”制作的书型灯笼召唤的就是这段“被遗忘的过往。”旧书堆放处的空气并不洁净，所谓书籍的味道，多半不过是灰尘与霉变的气息。它们是书的另一种生命形式，在书籍不再或不能被阅读的情形中悄然延续。如果有人因此而生病——无论属灵的疾病，还是身体上的——也许恰好揭示出书籍的病理学，一门关于知识如何在幽暗状态下以腐败的形式存续的学问。

走进细看，每一盏纸灯笼篾条框架的边沿都系着写有书籍编号的白布条。它们就像是一面面小灵幡，指引书与人的出发和归航。灯笼始终保有被捆扎、封缄的意象，这一造型既源于竹条与纸张之间的结构关系，也暗含了对书籍作为知识载体被束缚与被堆放状态的隐喻。与此同时，它们与纸上水墨系列“书之灵魂”中（2025）的若干作品（如01与08号）共同指涉了书籍被贱斥、被架空的往昔——它们一度不被允许传递意义，沦为沉默的知识残骸。更进一步，在同系列其他几件作品（03、05、06、07号）中可辨识出的字迹，如“林森”、“革命”（Révolution）、“巴黎公社”（La Commune de Paris）、“抗争”（Struggle），则清晰地召唤出社会变革的主题。这种指涉就像一种文本的回声，唤醒了曾经主导时代意识的政治语言。若将这些词放置在七十年代的中国，它们既与彼时的官方话语同源共构，又在意义与实质的双重层面上被贱斥为全然异质的他者。

“来自未归还的灵灯”是一个有关失踪者的现场。从《庾文瀚未完成的归途》（2019）中自闭症少年消失的身影，到《字幕01（公义与希望）》（2019）里少年母亲的访谈文字与兔子灯彼此错置的回响，再到“来自未归还的灵灯”系列和“书之灵魂”系列所描摹的消失之书、私人印章与无主的愿望，这些作品在展览的编排中，被重新组织为围绕“未归失踪者”展开的线索，让那些被遗忘、被排除、被压抑的对象，以破碎的形式闪回于目力所及的世界。纸灯笼因而成了一个中介，不是为失踪者归来而设，而是特意为他们的缺席保留的占位符，就像中国人餐桌上为神明或远行者预留的那双筷子。从这个意义上来说，此次展览并非只是在悼念被侮辱与被损害的身体与知识，更是在历史与记忆的阴影中，为仍徘徊于遗忘边界的灵魂设立了可被见证的临时场所。

文／ 余永泽

July 18, 2025

Star Line

By Qu Chang

In early 2023, during my spring break in Paris, I visited Bergen to see the exhibition "Colorful Cloud Bridge: Better to Forget Each Other in the Rivers and Lakes," organized by Cici Wu and her friends. In the exhibition, her bamboo and rice paper "Colorful Cloud Bridge" was situated between the socialist propaganda of the 1960s and the vague political ideals of contemporary China, creating a work that felt both bleak and crystalline. After the exhibition, we signed up for a fjord tour. The details of the journey are hazy now; I only remember being taken by train into the snowy mountains, put on a boat, then transferred to a bus, and returning to the city at night just in time to see the aurora borealis.

In early winter of 2024, in Berlin, I visited Cici's exhibition "Travel Star between Ceasing and Arising" at the Berlin art space Scheusal. As I walked through the space hung with watercolors, rice paper depicting wings, flowers, and birds fluttered in the air, like ripples. In the dimly lit screening room inside the exhibition hall, a small, slightly tired-looking paper horse lantern lay with its legs curled up. In Xiao Ma's diagonally opposite video, "Another Cut" (2023), different scenes, current situations, and memories from New York, Hong Kong, and Beijing are stitched together, loosely outlining the history of loss for the Chinese people. That night, having recently moved to Berlin, I spent most of my time by Xiao Ma's side, drawing on the sense of security and tranquility of a brief respite.

During the Qingming Festival of 2025, Cici, my friend Echo, and I stayed at the Shimi Space in Dongguan for a few days to prepare for a nighttime screening. The afternoon before a heavy rainstorm, we cleared duckweed from the courtyard pond and sorted through the owner's belongings. Cici suggested informing the deceased owner of our activities and plans, so we lit a stick of incense beneath the courtyard's most fragrant osmanthus tree. After the incense was lit, a light rain began to fall.

For the past three years, I've been meeting Cici in various places—places she's passed by, places she feels at home, and places of anxiety and uncertainty. Cici was born in Beijing, spent her teenage years in Hong Kong, and then lived and worked in the United States, where she also resided and created works. In her article "Migration as a Standpoint," she discusses the political wounds of varying geographies, proposing a "migratory aesthetic" grounded in fluid geographies as a medium for ongoing expression, feeling, and physical and mental healing. While I'm not entirely convinced of the sustainability of constant movement, I can understand the historical surge and repetitive cycles of life she depicts through "migration." From the constant travel common in the work of professional artists to the constant wandering and encountering of people and time and space in her work; from the neoliberal rhythm of transnational commuting between cities to the soft and resistant notes struck within this often ironic rhythm—talking about Cici and her work requires a lot of movement, between here and there, between people, between events and diasporas, between sharpness and tenderness, between critique and innocence.

In organizing this article, I pondered how to narrate her work within the fluid geography she delineates using a fluid language? How can I write about an artist whose work revolves around "emotion" through the medium of emotion? After all, emotion is a fluid intersubjective interpenetration; the world of emotion is disorienting precisely because of its constant movement and multiple subjects, making it difficult to map and describe within the language of modernity. I need some coordinates to locate our journey in these mobile regions. The “coordinates” here should not mean “positioning”, but a rhythm and pulse in motion. I thought of the name of her Berlin exhibition, “Travel Star”, and the short poem she wrote in the exhibition introduction, which tells the story of “the song of the stars, like the ups and downs of life, the gathering and separation of friends. This is to find the feeling of being lost in the intervals of the displacement of the universe.”[1] Perhaps the stars can be a suitable starting point. After all, they are the most distant frontiers in our world, displacements that can be continuously tracked, and beams that connect the past and the future. Coincidentally, Echo is an astrology enthusiast, and we read Cici’s horoscope online together, which gave me the opportunity to find a few planets that guided our conversation as the starting point for traveling through Cici’s creations.



Travel Star, 2024. Installation view of “Travel Star Between Ceasing and Arising,” Scheusal, Berlin. Photo: Nick Ash. All images courtesy of the artist.

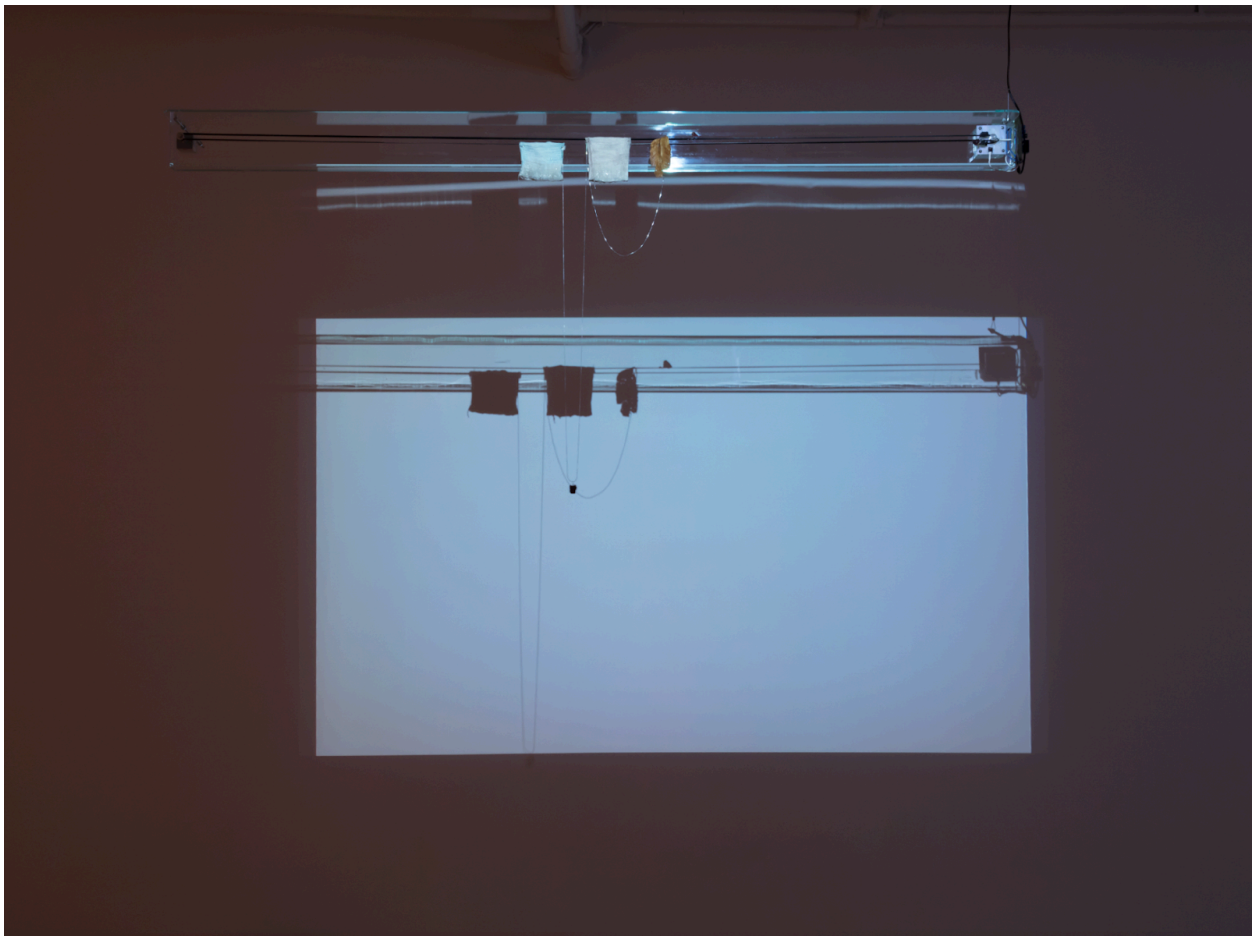
Venus in the Ninth House, Virgo [2]

Square Jupiter and Uranus

In the solar system, Venus is the brightest planet after the Sun and the Moon. Its light is so bright that it can cast a shadow on the Earth. Venus is a terrestrial planet with a mass, size, and distance from the Sun similar to that of the Earth. Because of its light and distance, Venus is often described as a symbol of beauty and love. Venus in the Ninth House, Virgo, is intertwined with the kinetic energy of long journeys and ideals, expressing the perception of a changing world. A Venus that is afflicted must also experience suppression from different angles. Its light may be more diffuse, floating, and lack a clear narrative and purpose.

Cici studied video art and film theory at City University of Hong Kong during her university years. For her, light may indeed be the starting point for discussing beauty and love, ideals and the world. A few days ago, she sent me a line from Jean-Luc Godard's sci-fi noir Alphaville (1965), one of which is the source of the title of her early work from 2017, Closer, Closer, Says Love:

—What is love?
—Your voice, your eyes, your hands, your lips. Our silence and our words.
The light that comes and goes.
The smile between us, and
The day and night that change in our seemingly unchanging time
Beloved by many, loved by one
Your silent promise of happiness
Love calls for closerness, hate calls for distance. [3]



Closer, Closer, Says Love, 2017. Motor, conveyor belt, pulley, light sensor, silicone, silver chain, dried strawberries, leaves, video (1 hour and 48 minutes, data from the film Moonlight)

The others she approaches (and loves) through her work always reflect herself—a female film director who can't find her own language, a lover she longs for but cannot obtain, a lost child, a small stone lost in historical archives. Because they are never the subjects of historical narratives, their encounters are always quiet and light. Viewers need to set aside their preconceptions and listen carefully and emotionally to find long-lost, sincere, and human echoes in the soft echoes, often fragmented and imaginary. In the "Dislocated Love" series (2023–), she uses the meticulous brushwork of ancient female literati as a mirror, repainting the scenes with different colors, creating moments of empathy and dialogue between herself and others. Although light is absent at this time, the rice paper, with its thin and fragile texture, still interweaves with light. In the Bergen exhibition, Cici stretched her rice paper paintings against the exhibition hall window, and the changing light outside was integrated into the paintings, telling the ups and downs of an "intersubjective journey."

Saturn in the 1st house, Capricorn [11]

Conjunct Neptune, Ascendant

What I am most interested in is Cici's Saturn. Echo said that Saturn has a strong contracting energy, representing self-discipline and challenges in life. When Saturn is in the 1st house and Capricorn, it makes people appear mature and oppressive. This is very unlike the Cici I know, an artist whose works revolve around light and light materials, and who sometimes seems too innocent. Perhaps just as light and shadow go hand in hand, lightness and heaviness also go hand in hand?

For me, Cici's work that maximizes "lightness" is her two ink paintings based on the film reel of American experimental film director Stan Brakhage's 1963 short film "Moth Shadow". "Moth Shadow" does not involve any filming. Brakhage attached moth wings, flower petals, and grass tips to 16mm film, then transferred them to projection film, and used lights to create light spots for 4 minutes. In an interview, Brakhage viewed this abstract, psychedelic, and fragile short film as a reflection of himself—the troubled artist's constant experimentation with visual expression was like a moth to a flame, the film stuck to the film and the glaring light of the projection machine reflecting a profound sadness.

In Closer, Closer, Says Love, Cici used her light frequency capture device "fluffy light" to record the changes in light in the film Moonlight (2016). These lights of constantly changing brightness were projected onto the wall, illuminating the automatic track device hanging in the space. When the light reached a certain brightness, the objects on the track (silicone-wrapped leaves, strawberries, cloth pieces) would move closer to each other, and then slowly separate as the brightness faded, like wandering lovers. The flow of light is both a visible shuttle and an invisible connection and the opening of a mysterious space. In different cultures and beliefs, lights often symbolize summoning and extradition - sky lanterns, lanterns, water lanterns, and even pumpkin lanterns. As a lighting technology, movies shape reality by weaving stories and rendering light and shadow. [4] In the short essay "Leaving the Cinema", Roland Barthes uses an embodied description to describe the soft feeling of waking up from hypnosis after the movie ends and the body exits the theater. [5] In Barthes's view, although film, as a mass medium, often participates in the commodification and flattening of human narratives, film, its light and shadow narratives, and spatial atmosphere can constitute a rare out-of-body ritual in the contemporary world. If "summoning spirits" sounds too fantastical, we might put it into the framework of emotion, and understand the subjects that flow between each other and are summoned by the light and shadow of the lamp as emotion. Empathy with the characters, the mutual penetration of reality and story during the playback, allow the engaged audience to enter a space filled with emotion and plot.

Film beams are the main medium in Cici's early works. As the weaving material of contemporary emotional narratives, they either illuminate or possess the objects sculpted by the artist. The encounter between flowing light and shadow and everyday objects renders objects into objects of emotion—like illuminated planets. The flow of light and the movement of objects lyrically converge in her works, swaying between the intertwined ups and downs of individual love and life trajectory. The constant theme in Cici's works – "love" – is often based on the "movement" that permeates life, the movement of people and objects, the flow of light, and the throbbing of the heart. The "love" rendered by "movement" overflows the usual narrative of love, hate, and passion, becoming a resonance over a longer time and a longer distance. The corresponding tidal rhythms, similar breaths, and familiar impressions and textures in distant time and space all provide the possibility of "emotion". [6] This understanding of intimacy provides her with a gentle entrance to dive into different histories and memories. Time is cyclical, and distance fluctuates – this intimate feeling that she calls "love" continuously flows between her works and the objects, people, images, and notes that the works connect. [7]
Jupiter in the Seventh House, Cancer [8]



“Lantern Strike” series, 2021-. “Wu Yumeng: From the Unreturned Spiritual Lantern,” exhibition view, Rockbund Art Museum, 2025

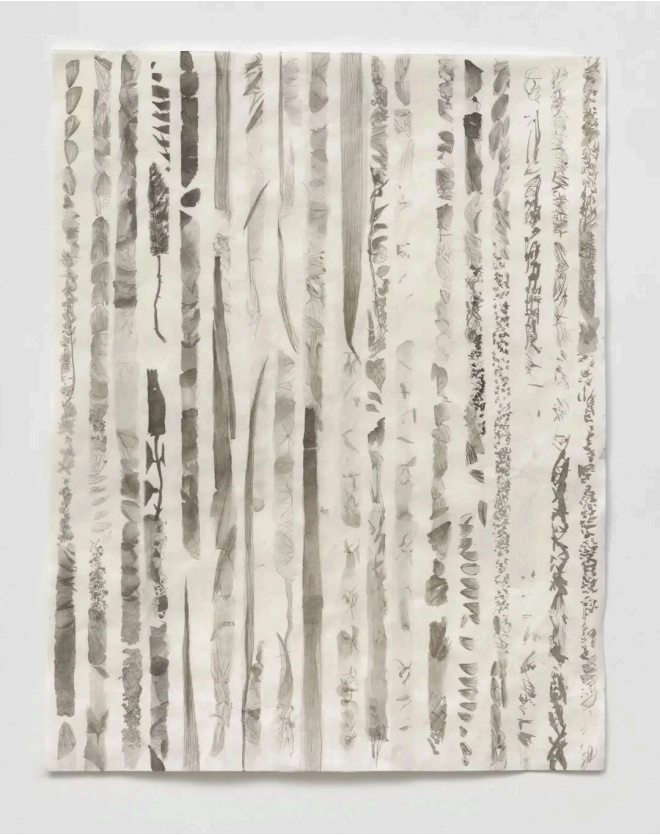
The others she approaches (and loves) through her work always reflect herself—a female film director who can't find her own language, a lover she longs for but cannot obtain, a lost child, a small stone lost in historical archives. Because they are never the subjects of historical narratives, their encounters are always quiet and light. Viewers need to set aside their preconceptions and listen carefully and emotionally to find long-lost, sincere, and human echoes in the soft echoes, often fragmented and imaginary. In the "Dislocated Love" series (2023–), she uses the meticulous brushwork of ancient female literati as a mirror, repainting the scenes with different colors, creating moments of empathy and dialogue between herself and others. Although light is absent at this time, the rice paper, with its thin and fragile texture, still interweaves with light. In the Bergen exhibition, Cici stretched her rice paper paintings against the exhibition hall window, and the changing light outside was integrated into the paintings, telling the ups and downs of an "intersubjective journey."
Saturn in the 1st house, Capricorn [11]

Conjunct Neptune, Ascendant

What I am most interested in is Cici’s Saturn. Echo said that Saturn has a strong contracting energy, representing self-discipline and challenges in life. When Saturn is in the 1st house and Capricorn, it makes people appear mature and oppressive. This is very unlike the Cici I know, an artist whose works

revolve around light and light materials, and who sometimes seems too innocent. Perhaps just as light and shadow go hand in hand, lightness and heaviness also go hand in hand?

For me, Cici's work that maximizes "lightness" is her two ink paintings based on the film reel of American experimental film director Stan Brakhage's 1963 short film "Moth Shadow". "Moth Shadow" does not involve any filming. Brakhage attached moth wings, flower petals, and grass tips to 16mm film, then transferred them to projection film, and used lights to create light spots for 4 minutes. In an interview, Brakhage viewed this abstract, psychedelic, and fragile short film as a reflection of himself—the troubled artist's constant experimentation with visual expression was like a moth to a flame, the film stuck to the film and the glaring light of the projection machine reflecting a profound sadness.



Re:Mothlight (Changing Brightness 01), 2023, rice paper and ink

In "Re:Mothlight (Changing Brightness 01)" (2023), Cici uses meticulous brushwork techniques to meticulously depict the organic membrane petals on a roll of film, their textures, veins, thin edges, and subtle colors. In "Re:Mothlight (Wash Away)" (2023), she uses ink washes to depict a large moth wing. Prompted by Saturn, I began to discern a profound weight within the light textures of these two rice paper ink paintings: the contrast between the tiny, translucent white moth wing and the large-scale painting smudged with thick ink, the contrast between the rapid mechanical rotation of the film and the measured, slow lines of the brushwork. Whether in terms of time, vision, or physical sensation, the tension between lightness and heaviness in both paintings conveys a certain immensity and slowness. Perhaps this is precisely how an image maker reaches the creative mindset of experimental filmmakers half a century

ago: the ink flowing through the texture of the rice paper reflects the scorching wings and petals on the film.

If one approaches Cici's work with a Saturnine melancholy, beneath the gently flowing light and shadow, one discovers that heavy emotions, difficult situations, and an inextricable melancholy are always present. In Yu Wenhan's story, her images and space don't pursue true "lightness"—abstracting the lost, mute boy into a symbol of power dynamics within the geopolitical landscape of Hong Kong and China. Instead, they channel the most dense and inexpressible emotions: the heavy longing of a bereaved mother, her relentless yearning, and her desire to bring him home. In the paper lantern installation "Colorful Cloud Bridge," political propaganda photography from the early 1960s is edited into childlike black-and-white stills. Small stones, grapes, seeds, and old family photos interspersed among the archival images, sometimes like insects flitting between pages, sometimes like tears in memory. Cici's work interrogates not the manifestation of political violence, but the beautiful aspirations and political ideals that we erase as we erase pain. In her recently completed and exhibited paper lantern installation series, "From the Unreturned Spirit Lantern" (2025), Cici revisits the former building of the Shanghai Rockbund Art Museum, the exhibition venue, and its history in the 1970s, where it housed over four million books confiscated during the Cultural Revolution. Mimicking the bundled forms of books at the time, Cici crafted hundreds of "letter" paper lanterns from bamboo strips and handmade paper. These illuminate various corners of the building and float upwards along the staircases and windows. The lightness of the lanterns seems to comfort the heaviness of the books, while the leaves and petals of the handmade paper echo the burning and self-destructive sorrow depicted in Braquehage's "Moth Shadow."

The heaviness, or perhaps the political nature, of Cici's work is perhaps precisely reflected in the fluidity between "lightness" and "heaviness." Rather than emphasizing the moral weight of one side within a logic of opposition, they attempt to bridge the gap between light and heaviness, drawing on human encounters, the flow of emotion, and the passage of light—picking up light dreams amidst the weight of history, and reconciling the density of memory and humanity within the fleeting romanticism of the past. Thus, violence and trauma also resonate and encounter romance and innocence; speculation and feeling, politics and humanity, can touch each other.

"Blowing a feather or dancing a sword before a troll"—this is the metaphor Cici offered when we discussed heaviness and lightness. It sounded a bit silly, and I laughed to myself. While writing this article, I gradually thought that if her lamps, paper, images, and paintings were a dance of feathers and swords, the monster they confront might not be the darkness we usually define, such as totalitarian politics, the burden of history, structural violence, and the cleansing of modernity. This troll might be the heaviness we (and she) unconsciously carry: worn memories, repressed emotions, purged knowledge, longings that find no language, hearts that find no connection. The former's darkness is insensitive to the light dance; it is mechanical, devoid of magic, unable to respond to softness, kindness, and beauty. Only the latter can be stirred by the dance of feathers and swords, because the mind possesses magic.



From the Unreturned Spirit Lamp, 2025. “Wu Yumeng: From the Unreturned Spirit Lamp,” exhibition view, Rockbund Art Museum, 2025

Notes

[1] The original text of this poem can be found on the Scheusal Space website: https://www.scheusal.net/ciciwu.

[2] Venus – balance, empathy, aesthetics, perception, creativity, love; Ninth House – world, knowledge, travel, change; Virgo – idealism, far-reaching goals, continuous pursuit, diligence, self-discovery through self-sacrifice. The above keywords are taken from Steven Forrest, The Inner Sky: The Dynamic New Astrology for Everyone, Bantam Books, 1984.

[3]

- So what is love then?
- Your voice, your eyes, your hands, your lips. Our silences, our words.
Light that goes, light that returns.
A single smile between us. In quest of knowledge,
I watched night create day while we seemed unchanged
O beloved of all, beloved of one alone.
Your mouth silently promised to be happy.
Away, away, says hate. Closer, closer, says love.

[4] For example, the 17th-century phantom lantern was the prototype of film technology.
[5] This article was also shared by Cici. The English translation of the relevant passage is: "Back out on the more or less empty, more or less brightly lit sidewalk (it is invariably at night, and during the week that he goes), and heading uncertainly for some café or others, he walks in silence (he doesn't like discussing the film he's just seen), a little dazed, wrapped up in himself, feeling the cold–he's sleepy, that's what he's thinking; his body has become something sopitive, soft, limp, and he feels a little disjointed, even (for a moral organization, relief comes only from this quarter) irresponsible. In other words, obviously, he's coming out of hypnosis. And hypnosis (an old psychoanalytic device–one that psychoanalysis nowadays seems to treat quite condescendingly) means only one thing to him: the most venerable of powers: healing."
[6] We may be able to understand “emotion” with the help of intersubjectivity.
[7] My recent series of discussion projects using life science as an entry point to re-explain "love" may also have been indirectly inspired by Cici. The first invitation I intuitively extended was to her, although she didn't quite understand the relationship between microorganisms and her work, and I couldn't explain it clearly either. When I wrote this article, the organic rhythm of life and love in her work became very clear.
[8] Jupiter - faith, vitality, self-confidence, happiness; Seventh House - intimacy, cooperation, partner; Cancer - family, women's experience, healing, emotion. The above keywords are excerpted from "The Inner Sky: The Dynamic New Astrology for Everyone".
[9] The interpretation is based on "Memory as a collective source, as almost having physical and organic dimensions, where space and time superimpose within it. It represents a body of time, units in time inside the time mass that is eternal and immeasurable, within which our existence is marked like a wound." Excerpted from Che Xueqing, "White Dust from Mongolia" plan, paper typescript, 1980. In the collection of the Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive. White Dust from Mongolia consists of a film and a historical novel, neither of which is complete. [10] Excerpted from the exhibition text of Leaving White Dust. [11] Self-restraint, boundaries, challenges, frustrations, darkness, self-expression, identity, individuality, integrity, loneliness, diligence. The above keywords are excerpted from The Inner Sky: The Dynamic New Astrology for Everyone.

Author Qu Chang is a curator and writer living in Berlin. She is currently the Curator of Discourse at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, and co-directs the 2025-2026 exhibition program at Shimi Space with Shi Jinhua. She received her PhD in Cultural Studies from Lingnan University in 2024. Previously, she was a curator at Para Site Art Space in Hong Kong. Artist Cici Wu (b. 1989) is an artist currently living in New York, born in Beijing and raised in Hong Kong. Her work has been exhibited at major art institutions and events, including the Asian Art Biennial in Taiwan (2024), the 11th Mediacity Seoul Biennale (2021), and the Yokohama Triennale 2020 Episōdo 02 (2020). She has had solo exhibitions at the Rockbund Art Museum in Shanghai (2025), Scheusal in Berlin (2024), Empty Gallery (2023, 2019), and 47 Canal in New York (2021, 2018). She is a co-founder of the artist-run space PRACTICE in New York and the collaborative project The Room of Spirit and Time. From 2015 to 2021, she worked at the Asian Art Archive, a nonprofit library, archive, and research platform in the United States, assisting with the digital archiving project Joan Lebold Cohen Archives and directing the Betsy Damon Archives: Keepers of the Waters.

"Peer to Peer" is a new column launched in 2025 by the journal "Divergent Criticism." Every long-term creator forges their own unique path, but sometimes their paths intersect, and writers and practitioners walk together for a while. The profiles in this column are drawn from the accumulation of these journeys.

Thanks to the Wu Zuoren International Art Foundation for supporting the payment of this article.
Thanks to the individuals and organizations who supported "Wrong Path" through the "Patron Program."

July 18, 2025

星行

曲畅

2023年初，我趁着在巴黎驻留的春假，去伯尔根看了 Cici Wu 和她的朋友们组织的展览“彩云桥：不如相忘于江湖”。展览里，她用竹片和宣纸扎出的《彩云桥》架设在60年代社会主义政治宣传和当下中国隐约残存的政治理想之间，既黯淡又晶莹。展览后，我们报名了一个峡湾之旅，具体的旅程已经模糊，只记得被火车带进雪山、带上行船，再转入巴士，夜晚回到城市时，恰好看到了极光。

2024年在柏林的初冬，我去了 Cici 在柏林的艺术空间Scheusal的展览“Travel Star between Ceasing and Arising”。穿过垂挂着水彩画的空间时，映着翅膀和花鸟的宣纸会随着气流飘动起来，像是荡起的涟漪。展览内厅幽暗的放映空间里，卧着一个蜷着双腿、略显疲态的小马纸灯。小马斜对的录像《另刂》(2023)里，纽约、香港、北京的不同场景、现状和回忆被缝合在一起，松散地勾勒着华人的失落史。那晚，才搬去柏林的我大部分时候都停留在小马的身边，汲取短暂休憩的安全感和宁静。

2025年的清明，Cici、我和朋友 Echo在东莞的石米空间里住了几天，为一场夜间放映做些准备。我们在暴雨来临前的下午给屋院池塘清理浮萍、整理屋内主人的旧物。Cici 提议向过世的屋主报备我们的活动和计划，于是我们在庭院里香气最沁人的桂花树下上了一支香。香点燃后，下了一场小雨。

过去三年，我总是在不同的地方和 Cici 碰面——经过的地方、感觉是家的地方、焦虑彷徨的地方。Cici 在北京出生，在香港渡过青少年时期，然后在美国生活和工作，也在不同的地方驻留和创作。在文章《迁移作为立场》中，她谈及不同地理中肌理相仿的政治伤口，提出一种以流动地域为基础的“迁徙美学”，作为持续表达、感受和身心修复的媒介。我虽然不太相信持续移动的可持续性，但也能明白她透过“迁徙”勾勒的历史潮涌和生命往復。从职业艺术家工作中常见的持续旅行，到她作品中不断徘徊、相遇的人与时空；从都市间跨国穿梭的新自由主义节奏，到在这不乏讽刺的节奏中敲击出柔软又有抵抗性的音符——谈论 Cici 和她的创作需要许多移动，在此地与彼处之间，人与人之间，事件和离散之间，锐利和柔软之间，批判和天真之间。

组织这篇文章时，我在想，怎么在她所勾勒的流动地理之上用流动的语言讲述她的创作？怎么用情去写一个围绕“情”创作的艺术家？毕竟，情是流动的主体间渗透；情的世界让人迷失也正是因为持续移动和多重的主体使它难以被测绘，难以被现代性的语言描述。我需要一些坐标来定位我们在这些流动地域中的旅行。这里的“坐标”不应该是“定位”，而是一种移动中的节奏和脉搏。我想到她柏林展览的名字“Travel Star”和她在展览介绍里写的短诗，讲述“星行之歌，如同生命起伏，朋友聚散。这是在宇宙的位移的间歇里，找寻被失落的感受。”[1] 或许星星可以是个合适的开始，毕竟，它们是我们世界里最遥远的疆域，是可以被持续追踪的位移，也是连接过去和未来的光束。恰巧 Echo 是个星像学爱好者，我们一起在线上读了一次 Cici 的星盘，让我借机找到几颗导引我们谈话的行星，作为游历 Cici 创作的起点。



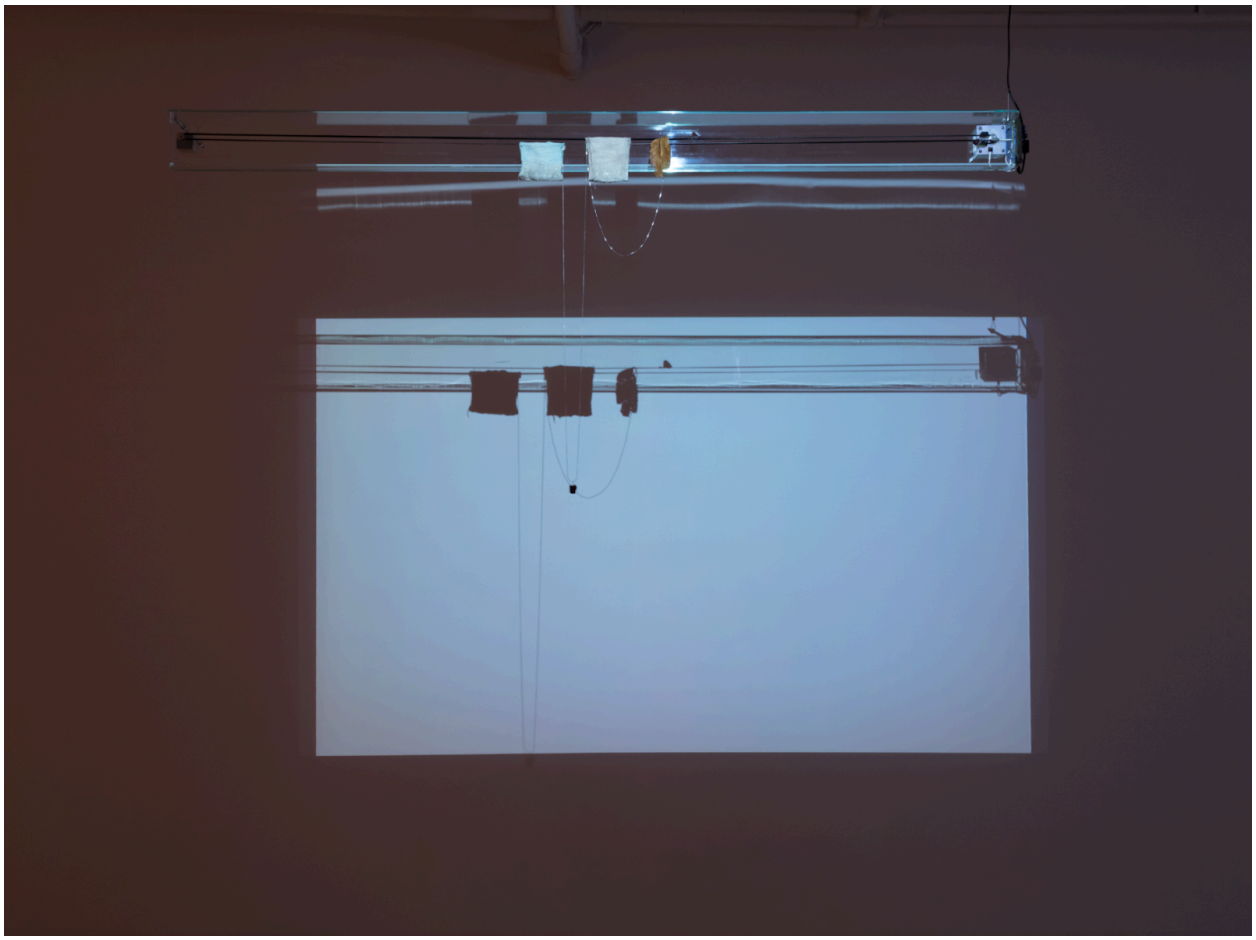
《Travel Star》，2024，“Travel Star Between Ceasing and Arising”展览现场，柏林Scheusal空间。摄影：Nick Ash。全文图片致谢艺术家

金星九宫，处女座 [2]
刑木星、天王星

太阳系里，金星的亮度仅次太阳和月球。它光芒亮白，可以在地球映出阴影。金星是一颗类地行星，质量、体积、与太阳的距离都和地球相近。因为光芒和距离，金星常被描述为美和爱情的象征。落在九宫处女座的金星交织着远行和理想的动能，表达着对变动世界的感知。被刑克的金星也必定体会着来自不同角度的压制，它的光或许更加涣散、漂浮、缺乏明确的叙事和目的。
Cici的大学时期在香港城市大学休息录像艺术和电影理论，对她来说，光或许确是讨论美和爱、理想和世界的起点。几天前，她给我发来了让-吕克·戈达尔（Jean-Luc Godard）的科幻黑色电影《阿尔法城》（1965）中的一段对白，其中一句是她 2017 年的早期作品《Closer, Closer, Says Love》的标题出处：

—什么是爱呢？
—你的声音、眼睛、双手、嘴唇。我们的沉默和语言。
　来去的光。
　我们之间的微笑，和

我们看似不变的时间里的昼夜更迭
为众所爱，为一人所爱
你沉默着许诺快乐
爱唤更近，恨唤远离。*[3]*



《Closer, Closer, Says Love》，2017。马达、传送带、滑轮、光感器、硅胶、银链、乾草莓、叶子、录像（1小时48分，数据来自电影《月光男孩》）

在《Closer, Closer, Says Love》里，Cici 用她的光频捕捉设备“fluffy light”（绒光）记录了电影《月光男孩》（2016）中的光线变化。这些亮度持续变幻的光被投影在墙面上，照亮悬挂在空间里的自动轨道装置。当光线达到特定亮度时，轨道上的的物件（硅胶包裹的叶子、草莓、布块）便会向彼此靠近，然后再随着亮度渐弱，慢慢分开，像是游曳的恋人。

光的流动既是可见的穿梭，也完成着不可见的连接和对神秘空间的开启。在不同的文化和信仰里，灯都时常隐喻着召唤和引渡——天灯、提灯、水灯，甚至南瓜灯。作为一种灯光技术，电影透过编织故事、渲染光影来塑造现实。[4] 在短文《离开影院》里，罗兰·巴特（Roland Barthes）用一段具身的描写讲述电影结束后、身体退出影院时，近似催眠将将醒来的绵软感。[5] 在巴特看来，尽管电影作为大众媒介时常参与对人文叙事的商品化和扁平化，电影及其光影叙事和空间氛围却可以组成当代世界少有的灵魂出窍仪式。如果“召灵”听起来太过玄幻，我

们或许可以把它放进情的框架里，将灯的光影所召唤的、彼此流动的主体理解为情。与人物的共情、现实与故事在播放时的相互渗透使投入的观众进入一个被情和情节填满的空间。

电影的光束是 Cici 早期创作里的主要媒材。作为当代情感叙事的编织材料，它们亦或点亮、亦或附身于艺术家雕琢的物件。流动的光影与日常的物件相遇，将物渲染成情动之物——像是被点亮的行星。光的流动与物的移动在她的作品里抒情地相汇，摇曳在个体的爱恋和生命轨迹的交错起伏之间。Cici 作品中的恒常主题——“爱”——时常都基于生命中弥漫的“动”，人和物的移动、光的流动、心的悸动。被“动”所渲染的“爱”溢出惯常的爱恨情仇的叙事，变成一种更长时间和更远距离中的共振。遥远时空中对应的潮汐节奏、相似的气息和似曾相识的印象和质感都提供着“情”的可能。[6] 这种对亲密性的理解为她潜入不同的历史和记忆提供温柔的入口。时间是循环的，距离是起伏的——这个被她称为“爱”的亲密情状持续地流动在她的作品，和作品所连接的物、人、图像、音符之间。[7]

木星七宫，巨蟹座 [8]
冲土星、天王星、上升

在2018年的影像装置《离开白色尘埃》里，Cici 回溯了韩裔美国艺术家车学庆生前未完成的电影《蒙古的白色尘埃》(1980)。电影讲述了一个在20世纪上半叶在日据中国东北长大的韩国女孩的故事。在多重殖民之下，语言被层层剥夺，使她最终失去了说话的能力。在一段自白里，车学庆将记忆标记为电影故事的主体。这里，记忆并不是没有实体和重量的离散话语，而是包裹着时间和空间、“我们”和“他们”的巨大有机体。它不仅是个体叙事的集合，也是可感、可嗅的实体。个体记忆是这庞然大物上的一道伤口，虽无法呈现全貌，却打开感受的通道，让人触摸到记忆间交错相连的肌理和脉络。[9]《离开白色尘埃》里，Cici 所试验的便是记忆的物质性，以及它如何将不同个体缝合。她将自己幼年时的迁移经历潜埋在基于车学庆的电影分镜所铺设的装置里。《蒙古的白色尘埃》的电影光晕投影在一阵整齐排开的物件上：年轻女孩的瓷塑像、模糊的母亲照片、母亲的手和梅子核……这些物件暧昧地摇曳在车学庆和 Cici 的回忆之间，为探索记忆的质地提供了一个入口。投影机亮白的方形光斑和地面物件映出的矮影所打开的记忆切口既不是集体的，也不是属于个体，而是一条连接着女孩和母亲、艺术家和艺术家、冷战和现代化的主体间通道。深入记忆肌理的伤口割开共同的感知，这既是通灵，也是爱。

在她的创作里，Cici 所聚焦的不仅是电影作为一种现代影像技术，也是电影流光中浮动的古老巫术。她用缠绕着故事的电影光线催眠日常物件，制造不同人、情和灵的相遇。那些以光为灵的情动之物所连接起的是亲密性流动的多重路径：地理之间、主体之间、时空之间、记忆之间。它们附身于不同的材质，以不同的方式游移，像是带着迷路的男孩回家的小牛纸灯、淌着被遗忘梦想的彩云桥、带着灰烬的轻盈缓缓漂浮的书……基于此，她探索电影对记忆的承载，和记忆透过电影所表达出的物质属性。她所关注的不仅是电影的叙事，而是它的身体：“声音的颗粒、字幕的叹息、灯光的束线”，以及它们在日常空间中凝结成的、充盈着连接可能的情感物件。[10] 在她的创作轨迹中，这些物件也逐渐地从略显机械化和雕塑感的日常物件转向更加轻盈的宣纸、水彩和竹片。

在2019年的影像装置《庾文翰未完成的归途》里，Cici 首次使用自己拍摄的电影。她对光的处理也因此出现了转变：从借用已有电影的光线转为在电影内外（包括电影的叙事空间和放映空间）植入光。在佛山学习制作的纸灯成为她传递光的媒介。庾文翰是香港回归后最早的失踪且未寻回人口之一，他患有自闭症，2000年、15岁时在九龙与母亲走失，随地铁误入罗湖口岸，被海关人员认定为大陆籍，进入深圳罗湖，自此失联。在这部关于庾文翰的影片里，Cici 制作的小牛纸灯幻化成男孩的妈妈，伴着清脆的铃铛声，带着他的灵魂沿着地铁和渡轮，寻找回家的路。母亲记忆中他爱去的地方、失踪档案里记录的对话成为归途上零碎的音符和指引。电影画面之外，Cici 在展览空间的角落里安置了小牛纸灯和几盏在香港电影道具仓库寻得的、弃置已久的吊灯。像夜空里微闪的星，它们轻轻点亮被逐渐遗忘的香港电影史、在边境迷失的孩子、思念孩子的母亲，和那些政治与人性交织的旋律。

在随后的作品里，Cici 也尝试将纸灯改装为影像的记录装置，将编程控制的数码相机植入灯笼，替代沉重且机械化的 Bolex 摄影机（《灯笼大罢工》系列，2021–）。从电影里的光线交织，到纸灯引渡的时空穿越，和持灯者穿梭的物理维度，光在她的创作里变得愈发轻盈、动态、去技术化。



“灯笼大罢工”系列，2021—。“武雨濛：来自未归还的灵灯”展览现场。上海外滩美术馆，2025

她通过作品去靠近（和爱）的他者总是映照着她自己——找不到语言的女电影导演、渴望又不可得的恋人、走失的孩子、在历史档案中迷路的小石头。因为他们从来都不是历史叙事的主体，所以他们的相遇也总是安静、轻盈的。观者需要放下一些成见，仔细地、动情地聆听，才能在那不乏破碎和臆想的轻响里找到久违的、真诚的、人性的回响。《Dislocated Love》系列（2023–）里，她以古代女性文人的工笔画作为镜，在重绘时，为画中景物填入不同的颜色，连成她与她的共情时刻与对话。光虽然在此时缺席，但宣纸仍旧以透薄脆弱的肌理与光线保持着交织。在伯尔根的展览里，Cici 把她的宣纸画绷于展厅窗前，窗外的光线变化便融入画作当中，诉说一场“主体间旅行”的阴晴。

土星一宫，摩羯座 [11]
合海王星、上升

我最感兴趣的是 Cici 的土星。Echo 说，土星有很强的收缩能量，代表自我的管束和生命里的挑战。土星落在一宫和摩羯座时会令人表现得老成持重、具有压迫感。这很不像我认识的 Cici，一个作品围绕着光和轻盈材料的艺术家，一个有时显得过于烂漫天真的人。或许如同光与影的同行，轻盈和沉重也是相伴的？

对我来说，Cici 将“轻盈”最大化的作品是她以美国实验电影导演斯坦·布拉克黑奇（Stan Brakhage）1963年的短片《蛾影》的胶片为蓝本绘制的两幅水墨画。《蛾影》不涉及任何拍摄，布拉克黑奇将蛾翼、花瓣、草尖贴在16毫米胶片上，再转印至放映胶片，由灯光打出时长为4分钟的光斑。在一场访谈里，Brakhage 将这部抽象、迷幻又充满脆弱感的短片视为自己的镜照——困窘艺术家对视觉表达的不断试验如同飞蛾扑火，贴在胶片上的薄膜与放映机器的刺眼光线相照，映出一种深刻的悲伤。



《Re:Mothlight (Changing Brightness 01)》, 2023, 宣纸、水墨

《Re:Mothlight (Changing Brightness 01)》（2023）中，Cici 用工笔画的技法细描整卷胶片上的有机膜瓣，它们的纹路、翅脉、薄薄的边缘和淡淡的颜色；《Re:Mothlight (Wash Away)》（2023）中，她则用水墨晕染的方式勾勒出一张大幅的蛾翼。我在土星的提示下，开始从两幅宣纸水墨画的轻盈质地里读出沉凝的重量：微小透白的蛾翼与的晕染着厚重墨色的大尺寸绘画间的差异，胶卷的高速机械转动与工笔画节制缓慢线条的对比。无论是在时间、视觉还是体感的维度，两幅绘画里轻与沉的张力间都透着某种庞大和迟缓。这或许正是一个影像创作者去触碰半世纪前实验电影人创作心境的方式：蔓延在宣紙肌理中的墨汁映照著胶片上灼熱的翅膀和花瓣。

如果带着土星的忧郁去看 Cici 的作品，轻柔流动的光影之下总是不乏沉重的情绪、困难的情境、解不开的惆怅。在庾文翰的故事里，她的影像和空间并没有追随真正的“轻”——将走丢的失语男孩抽象化为中港地缘政治里的一个权力关系符号。相反，它们流向的是最绵密和难以诉说的情绪——一个失去孩子的妈妈沉重的思念，反复的思忖和带他回家的愿望。在纸灯影像装置《彩云桥》里，60年代早期的政治宣传摄影被剪辑成充满童真黑白的静帧影片，小石头、葡萄、种子和家庭旧照像间或跳跃在档案图像中，有时像穿行在书页间的昆虫，有时又像记忆里的眼泪。Cici 在作品里质询的并非政治暴力的显影，而是我们在抹去伤痛时，同时擦洗掉的美好愿

景和政治理想。在她刚刚完成并展出的纸灯装置系列《来自未归还的灵灯》(2025)里，Cici 回溯展览场地上海外滩美术馆的建筑前身，和它在70年代被用于存放逾400万册文革时期被抄图书的历史。模仿彼时图书被扎捆的形态，Cici 用竹片和手工纸制作了数百件“书札”纸灯，它们点亮建筑的不同角落，也顺着楼梯窗户逐层向上漂浮。纸灯的轻盈似乎慰藉着书籍的沉重，而手工纸中的叶片和花瓣则重复着布拉克黑奇在《蛾影》中燃烧和自噬的悲伤。

Cici 作品中的沉重感，或者说政治性，或许恰恰体现在“轻”和“重”的流动中。它们并不意图在对立的逻辑中强调一侧的道德重量，而是基于人的相遇、情的流动、光的穿行，尝试着黏合轻与重——在沉重的历史里拾捡轻盈的梦想，在飘忽的浪漫主义里调和稠密的记忆和人性。于是那些暴力和创痛的也与浪漫和天真的发生着共情和相遇；思辨和感觉、政治和人性也能够触碰彼此。

“在巨怪面前吹一片羽毛或是舞一支剑”，这是我在和 Cici 讨论沉重与轻盈时她提供的比喻。听起来有点傻，我暗自笑她。写这篇文章时，我逐渐想到，如果她的灯、纸、影像和画是羽毛和剑舞的话，它们所直面的怪兽或许并非我们惯常定义的黑暗，比如极权的政治、沉重的历史、结构性的暴力、现代性的洗刷。这个巨怪可能是我们（和她）自己无意识携带的沉重：那些被磨损的记忆、被压抑的情绪、被清理的知识、找不到语言的渴望、找不到连接的心。前者的黑暗对轻舞无感，它是机械的，没有魔法，无法回应柔软、善良和美；只有后者才能被羽毛和剑舞挑动，因为心灵有魔法。



《来自未归还的灵灯》，2025。“武雨濛：来自未归还的灵灯” 展览现场。上海外滩美术馆，2025

注释

[1]此诗原文见Scheusal空间网站：https://www.scheusal.net/ciciwu。

[2]金星——平衡、共情、审美、感知、创造力、爱情；九宫——世界、知识、旅行、变动；处女座——理想主义、目标遥远、持续奔赴、勤勉、自我奉献中的自我发现。以上关键词摘自Steven Forrest,《The Inner Sky: The Dynamic New Astrology for Everyone》, Bantam Books, 1984.

[3]

- So what is love then?
- Your voice, your eyes, your hands, your lips. Our silences, our words.
  Light that goes, light that returns.
  A single smile between us. In quest of knowledge,
  I watched night create day while we seemed unchanged
  O beloved of all, beloved of one alone.
  Your mouth silently promised to be happy.
  Away, away, says hate. Closer, closer, says love.

[4]例如，17世纪的幻影灯便是电影技术的雏形。

[5]这篇文章也由Cici分享。相关段落的英文译文为："Back out on the more or less empty, more or less brightly lit sidewalk (it is invariably at night, and during the week that he goes), and heading uncertainly for some café or others, he walks in silence (he doesn't like discussing the film he's just seen), a little dazed, wrapped up in himself, feeling the cold–he's sleepy, that's what he's thinking; his body has become something sopitive, soft, limp, and he feels a little disjointed, even (for a moral organization, relief comes only from this quarter) irresponsible. In other words, obviously, he's coming out of hypnosis. And hypnosis (an old psychoanalytic device–one that psychoanalysis nowadays seems to treat quite condescendingly) means only one thing to him: the most venerable of powers: healing."

[6] 我们或许可以藉助主体间性/intersubjectivity来理解“情”。

[7] 我自己近期以生命科学为入口、试图重述“爱”的一系列讨论项目可能也间接受到 Cici 的启发。当时直觉地发出的第一个邀请就是给她的，虽然她也不太理解微生物和她的作品有什么关系，我也说不太清楚。写这篇文章的时候，生命和爱在她作品里的有机律动变得十分清晰。

[8] 木星——信仰、生命力、自信、幸福感；七宫——亲密关系、合作、伴侣；巨蟹座——家庭、女性经验、疗愈、情感。以上关键词摘自《The Inner Sky: The Dynamic New Astrology for Everyone》。

[9] 解读基于"Memory as a collective source, as almost having physical and organic dimensions, where space and time superimpose within it. It represents a body of time, units in time inside the time mass that is eternal and immeasurable, within which our existence is marked like a wound." 摘自车学庆,《来自蒙古的白色尘埃》计划书，纸质打字稿，1980年。藏于伯克利艺术博物馆/太平洋电影资料馆。《来自蒙古的白色尘埃》包含一部电影和一部历史小说，但均未完成。

[10] 摘自《离开白色尘埃》展览文字。

[11] 自我约束、界限、挑战、 挫败、 黑暗、自我表达、身份、个性、正直、孤独、勤勉。以上关键词摘自《The Inner Sky: The Dynamic New Astrology for Everyone》。

作者

瞿畅是一位生活在柏林的策展人及写作者。她现为柏林世界文化宫话语策展人，并与石金花共同运营石米空间2025至2026年的展览项目。她于2024年获岭南大学文化研究系博士学位。此前，她为香港 Para Site 艺术空间策展人。

艺术家

Cici Wu（生于1989年）是一位现居纽约的艺术家，出生于北京，成长于香港。她的作品曾在重要的艺术机构和活动中展出，包括台湾亚洲艺术双年展（2024年）、第11届首尔Mediacity双年展（2021年）以及横滨三年展2020

Episōdo 02（2020年）。她曾在上海外滩美术馆（2025年）、柏林Scheusal空间（2024年）、Empty Gallery画廊（2023年、2019年）、纽约47 Canal画廊（2021年、2018年）举办个展。她是纽约艺术家自营空间PRACTICE及合作项目 The Room of Spirit and Time的联合创始人。2015年至2021年，她在美国非营利图书馆、档案馆和研究平台亚洲艺术文献库工作，协助数字存档项目Joan Lebold Cohen档案，并主持负责了Betsy Damon档案：Keepers of the Waters。

“同行”是《歧路批评》于2025年开启的新栏目。每一位长期创作者都会走出自己独特的路径，有时轨迹交汇，写作的人与实践的人相伴同行一段路。本栏目的侧写来自这些同行途中的积累。

感谢吴作人国际美术基金会对本文稿酬的支持。

感谢通过“赞助人计划”支持《歧路》的个人与机构。

THE
ART-JOURNAL
艺术新闻

June 27, 2025

新艺见 | “来自未归还的灵灯”:一次忧郁的悼念

撰文 孙佳翎
编辑 杨曜

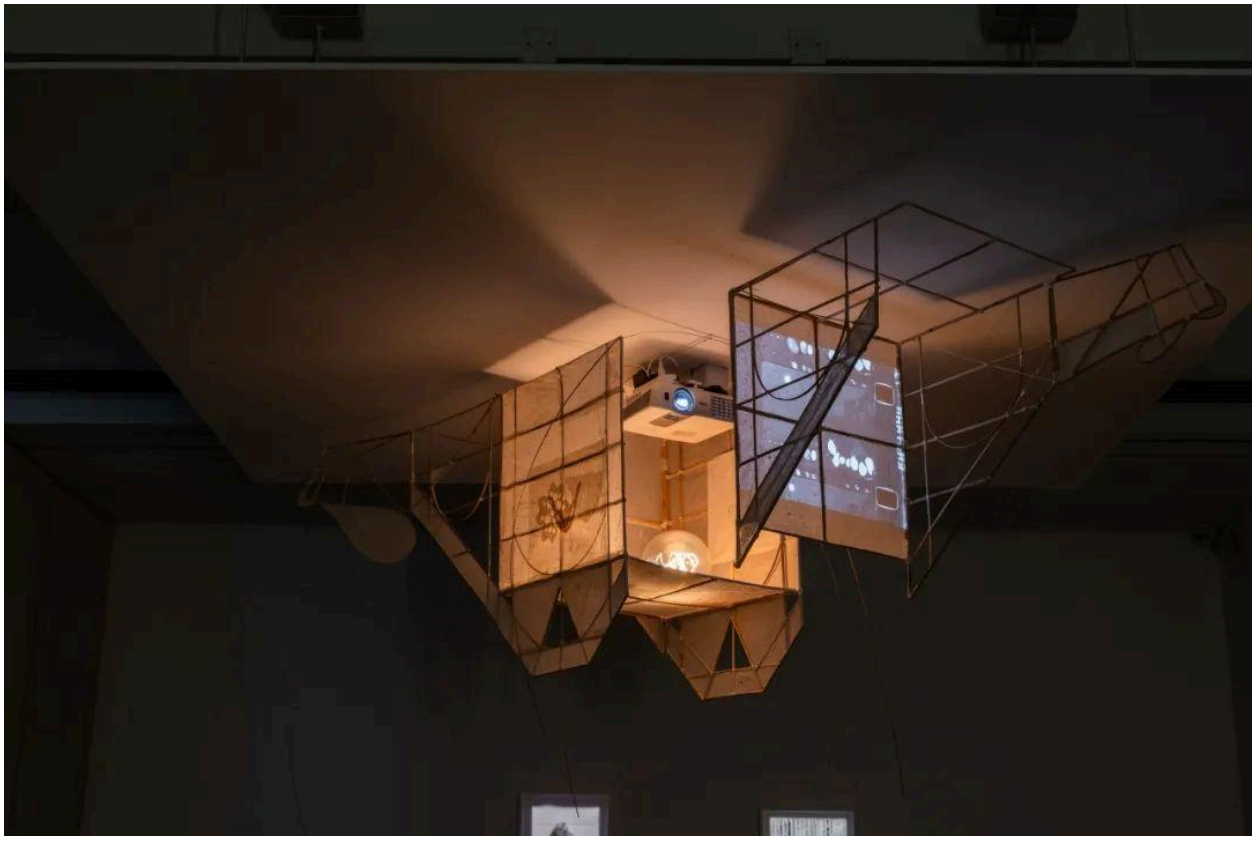


艺术家武雨濛（Cici Wu），摄影 / Jeffrey Liu

在艺术家武雨濛（Cici Wu）的首次机构个展“来自未归还的灵灯”中，她借由投影与灯笼布置了一处暖黄色的温柔乡，各处散出的微光纷纷从薄如羽翼的竹材或是手工纸张的边缘穿过，而伴随这份剔透与轻盈的，是艺术家从多种媒介中唤起的、滞重的历史记忆。“意识的变革不应诉诸教条，而要分析神秘意识——对自我都显得晦暗不明的意识，”艺术家在展览前言中引用了年轻的马克思，“届时就可以看出，世界长久以来所期盼之物，是一种它只需意识到就能掌握之物。” [1]
2019年艺术家在Empty Gallery的个展“未完成的归途”中呈现的小牛灯曾令我深受触动，当时出于对“离散”与“身份认同”议题的关注，我只将灯笼理解为一种文化符号或民族主义表征，直到此次对话，我才真正认识到光作为“影像制作的最小单位”在她创作中的关键作用。艺术家所述的对电影工业及“扩展影像”（expanded cinema）

的关注[2]在“未完成的归途”中体现为对二者巧妙的批判性运用：既不反抗前者在机械复刻中对记忆的征用暴力，也不尝试以实验电影挣脱线性历史。
在“来自未归还的灵灯”中展出的她十年间的重要创作，虽形成独特的“旧日美学”，却绝非单纯怀旧，而是旨在发掘光学媒介固有的哲学潜能。譬如，她创造出的“竹纸灯笼”作为光学媒介亦是悼念的仪器，不仅揭露历史叙事中真实与虚构间的朦胧状态，更作为反思历史认识框架的思想实验装置——既生产幻象，又通过自我暴露机械本质来消解幻象。难以言说的情感与意识，由此在艺术家对光学媒介的探索中逐步显影。





上：武雨濛，“来自未归还的灵灯”展览现场，上海外滩美术馆，2025年，©上海外滩美术馆，摄影/颜涛 下：武雨濛，《彩云桥》，2023年，©武雨濛，摄影/颜涛

在倒悬于展厅高处的装置《彩云桥》（2023）中，艺术家收集来的家庭照片，唤起罗兰·巴特所言的，被摄影机械对“此曾在”（that-has-been）的复现确证过的死亡[3]。与私人照片并置重组的，是艺术家取自1962年的《人民画报》中的共产主义现实主义的宣传图像。丰饶的民间艺术（folk art）与大饥荒的历史背景形成剧烈反差，富含社会主义美学的乌托邦意象，也在瞬间的自我觉察中转为对历史的哀悼。在美术馆东侧的楼梯空间中，《来自未归还的灵灯02》（2025）作为艺术家被全新委任的特定场域装置作品，则引发了这场悼念中的又一次高潮。艺术家使用物理意义上脆弱的竹材与手工纸，以轻盈的“书灯”形式，对历史档案进行幽灵化的回溯。“比如这个被封锁的楼道空间（观者只能从高处远观），呼应了和查禁书籍相关的历史时空，”艺术家谈及场域意涵时说道。

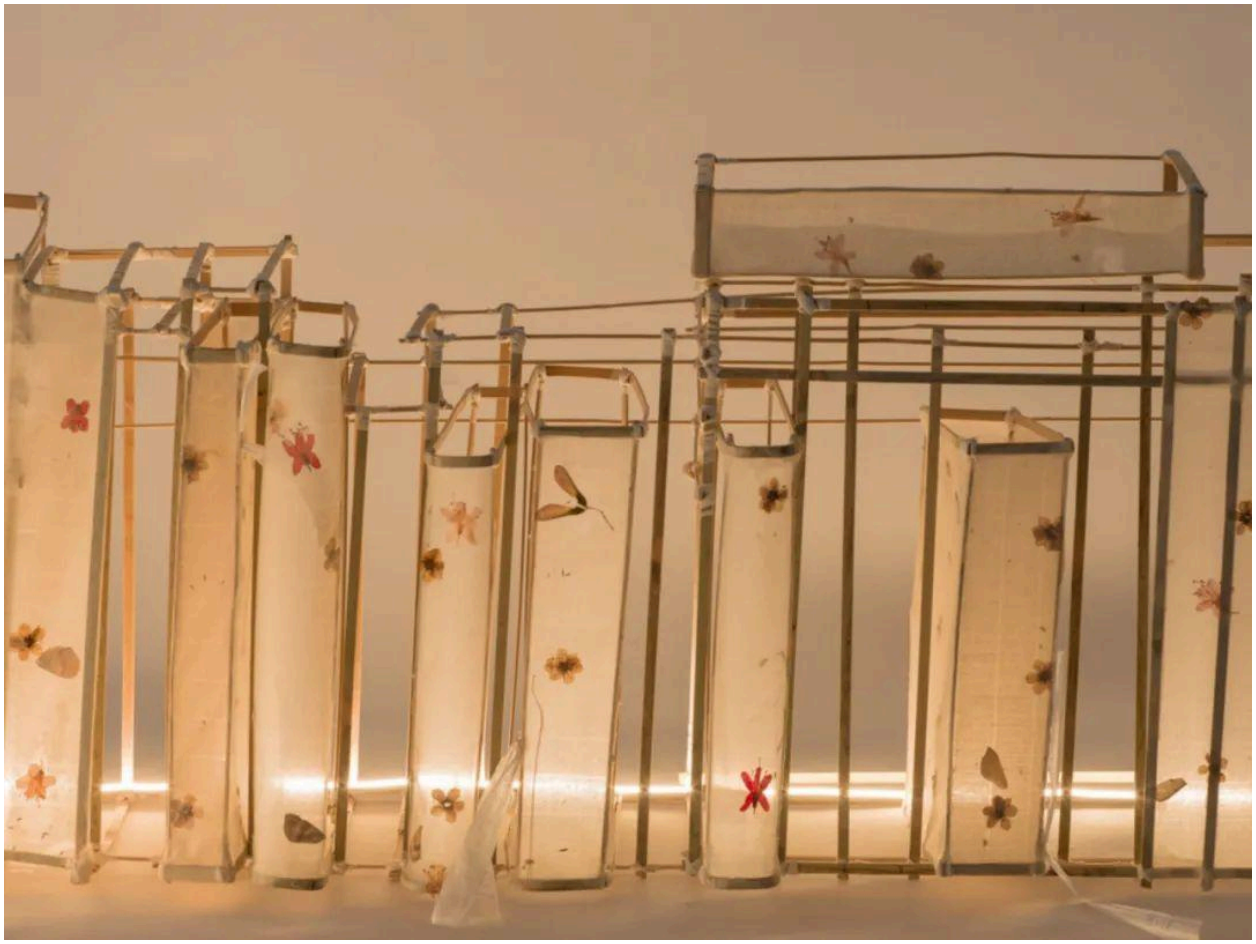


武雨濛，“来自未归还的灵灯”展览现场，上海外滩美术馆，2025年，©上海外滩美术馆，摄影/颜涛

起初，该作品不可接近的设定令我困惑，不过，结合艺术家引用德里达所言的作为“非生非死的存在”的幽灵，似乎就可以完满解释她对于历史创伤本身可见却不可及的状态的钩沉。若有人在暮色中，立于虎丘路的街面仰望楼梯间里的微光，是否会感受到投向集体创伤的目光？艺术家在这个问题上停滞了片刻，她坦言，对这种距离感，以及只有在闭馆的时间后，才能从漆黑一片里看见亮光的场域设定的立场仍是模糊的。这能否在美学的层面，借观看行为中的复杂性，去遥望作品所映射的政治社会格局？




左:武雨濛,《来自未归还的灵灯02》, 2025年, 由上海外滩美术馆委任创作, ©武雨濛, 摄影/颜涛;右:武雨濛, “来自未归者的灵灯”展览现场, 上海外滩美术馆, 2025年, ©上海外滩美术馆, 摄影/颜涛



武雨濛，《来自未归还的灵灯03》，2025年，由上海外滩美术馆委任创作。©武雨濛，图片由艺术家提供，摄影/Felix Wong

在《飞蛾之光》（2024）系列中，武雨濛用工笔水墨复现斯坦·布拉哈格（Stan Brakhage）的实验电影里常见的自然物拼贴（如飞蛾翅膀与花瓣）。她将宣纸竹纹的宽度严格对应16毫米的电影胶片规格，并用水墨的墨色层次去模拟胶片的光影闪烁，将银幕时长坍缩为现实中悬停的瞬间。若回溯艺术家多次援引的布拉哈格，不难发现后者正是以视网膜逻辑（retinal logic）重构视觉的秩序为名。譬如在《狗星人》（Dog Star Man, 1961-1964）中，快速切割的纯色块与生物显微影像模拟了人眼在极限状态下的神经脉冲，唤起以躯体肉身为基础的“体验视觉”（experiencing vision）[4]——布拉哈格所言之“心跳与呼吸才是电影的原始蒙太奇”着眼的正是生物的原始节奏（biological rhythm）[5]。这也解释了武雨濛选择将动态影像铭刻为宣纸上的笔触的原因，即“让描摹胶片齿孔的物理过程，和传统胶片的剪辑语法共享某种亲缘性”，艺术家坦言。



武雨濛，“灯笼大罢工（强烈的孤独）”，2021/2025年，与声音艺术家Ryo Ikeshiro合作，由艺术家和Ryo Ikeshiro提供，©武雨濛，摄影/颜涛



武雨濛，“来自未归还的灵灯”展览现场，上海外滩美术馆，2025年，©上海外滩美术馆，摄影/颜涛

从媒介本体论的层面来看，武雨濛显然是此类宣言的拥护者：“在电影溢出放映机并挣脱线性叙事之后，它就成为重组时空的政治工具——投影仪是武器，光线是起义的粒子”[6]。武雨濛不仅对以布拉哈格为代表的、对胶片进行物理性干预的直接电影（direct cinema）进行致敬，更是让她的作品悬置在手工性与机械性间的临界点上，邀请历史的幽灵在这种物质共振中获得重述权。回到光线氤氲的主展厅中，《字幕01（公义与希望）》（2019）作为影像《庾文翰未完成的归途》（2019）在雕塑维度的扩延，延续了上述对物质材料进行幽灵学转译的创作逻辑。艺术家介绍道，“我将曾在黄金时代的电影中被真实使用过的道具灯，转化成为小型灯笼，而灯笼背面的字迹也并非无迹可寻，它们是影像中的主角庾文翰的母亲的叙事注脚。”



武雨濛，《庾文翰未完成的归途》，**2019**年，由艺术家和香港**Empty Gallery**提供，©武雨濛，摄影/颜涛

《庾文翰未完成的归途》基于2000年香港自闭症少年庾文瀚的失踪事件展开，艺术家邀请演员张洋洋（曾出演杨德昌《一一》）扮演成年的庾文瀚，并推测其可能的回归路径。影片交替呈现日常场景（地铁站/市集）与超现实空间（雪原/空屋），用画面从模糊到清晰的渐变过程，模拟记忆修复的迟滞过程。影片中，作为情感复归符号的纸灯笼，和荧幕外在机械电影的造梦工序中不可或缺的道具灯遥相呼应，区别在于，后者以人造性（artificiality）刺穿虚构的帷幕。

“这是一次将字幕物质化的尝试”，艺术家介绍道，“也是我对结构电影的核心主张——让媒介的物质性成为新的语言——，的一次回应”。如阿赫默德（Aijaz Ahmad）所言，“翻译行为从不发生在平等的语言场域中，它总是将第三世界文本置于‘被解释’的客体位置，而西方文本则保持‘自明’的主体性。“[1]武雨濛亦指出，“字幕在部分西方学者眼中是被漠视的”。诚然，在西方电影研究中，字幕被视为“受限翻译”（constrained translation），但所谓“限制”——时空压缩、文化转换——，正是被殖民的地区的观者普遍面对的现实。因此，字幕作为电影的结构性的骨骼，在某种程度上揭露了全球知识生产体系里的等级制。武雨濛让字幕脱离影像轨道成为可触物（tangible object），让它从服务性的文本，升格为自主的文化技术装置，一方面让它们书写后殖民语境下的离散家史，另一方面，也激发它们真正地占据物理空间。

在《一一》中，演员张洋洋饰演的少年曾在祖母葬礼上低语：“也许有一天，我会发现你去过哪里”——这段原声带以碎片形式重现于武雨濛的影像。2019年已初现的这种虚构与非虚构的诡谲交织，在当下的展览中延伸出更复杂的关联：纸张渗出的微光与“不可近观”的展陈，共同拒绝任何辨别或修复幻觉的尝试。在这种拒绝背后，是艺术家借多元媒介对创伤本质的叩问：创伤即永远延期的归还。当竹纸灯笼在殖民建筑中为历史守夜，它允诺那些未偿之债以幽灵之姿游荡与复归。

[1] 马克思在1843年致阿尔诺德·卢格的信中提出的 “对现存的一切进行无情的批判”（《德法年鉴》的指导原则），是其早期思想转型的核心纲领。这一论点不仅标志着他与青年黑格尔派的决裂，更奠定了马克思主义批

判理论的基石。对年轻的马克思而言，意识变革需通过物质实践显影意识形态的建构性，而非费尔巴哈式抽象人本主义或鲍威尔式观念批判。
[2] “扩展电影”是后工业社会的感知革命，其本质在于解构银幕的专制框架，使电影成为环境、能量与意识的流动场域。参阅：Youngblood, Gene. Expanded Cinema. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1970.
[3] Barthes, Roland. Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography. Translated by Richard Howard, Hill and Wang, 1981.
[4] 参考Sitney, P. Adams. Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde 1943-2000. Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 158. Brakhage, Stan. Metaphors on Vision. Anthology Film Archives, 1963.
[5] Brakhage, Stan. 讲座录音. 1974. 美国国会图书馆录音档案（Library of Congress Audio Archive.
[6] Rees, A. L. Expanded Cinema: Art, Performance, Film. London: Tate Publishing, 2011, p. 29.
[7] Ahmad, Aijaz. In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures. Verso, 1992.

ARTFORUM 艺术论坛

May 2, 2025

武雨濛（Cici Wu）
上海外滩美术馆 | ROCKBUND ART MUSEUM
上海市黄浦区虎丘路20号
2025.05.02 - 2025.09.28

文 余永泽



武雨濛，“来自未归还的灵灯”展览现场，**2025.** 图片由上海外滩美术馆提供，摄影：颜涛.

和白天相比，神秘与夜晚更相近，因为神秘往往晦暗不明。武雨濛（Cici Wu）高悬在外滩美术馆步梯间窗前的书型纸灯笼，携着超度、迎神和送魂之义，显然更多是为了夜晚准备的。让我们想象一下，每天午夜，美术馆闭店谢客，活人和城市一同睡去，灯笼将为谁人引路？步梯间是过渡性空间，是从A到B的关节，也可以是生到死、夜到昼、人到鬼的通道。所有被灯笼召唤的对象，要从此处上船。

据展览前言介绍，上海外滩美术馆大楼1930年代初建成时为皇家亚洲文会，1970年代曾用于存放被查抄的书籍；而武雨濛运用“竹材和传统上用于珍本修复的保护级手工纸”制作的书型灯笼召唤的就是这段“被遗忘的过往。”旧书堆放处的空气并不洁净，所谓书籍的味道，多半不过是灰尘与霉变的气息。它们是书的另一种生命形式，在书籍不再或不能被阅读的情形中悄然延续。如果有人因此而生病——无论属灵的疾病，还是身体上的——也许恰好揭示出书籍的病理学，一门关于知识如何在幽暗状态下以腐败的形式存续的学问。

走进细看，每一盏纸灯笼篾条框架的边沿都系着写有书籍编号的白布条。它们就像是一面面小灵幡，指引书与人的出发和归航。灯笼始终保有被捆扎、封缄的意象，这一造型既源于竹条与纸张之间的结构关系，也暗含了对书籍作为知识载体被束缚与被堆放状态的隐喻。与此同时，它们与纸上水墨系列“书之灵魂”中（2025）的若干作品（如01与08号）共同指涉了书籍被贱斥、被架空的往昔——它们一度不被允许传递意义，沦为沉默的知识残骸。更进一步，在同系列其他几件作品（03、05、06、07号）中可辨识出的字迹，如“林森”、“革命”（Révolution）、“巴黎公社”（La Commune de Paris）、“抗争”（Struggle），则清晰地召唤出社会变革的主题。这种指涉就像一种文本的回声，唤醒了曾经主导时代意识的政治语言。若将这些词放置在七十年代的中国，它们既与彼时的官方话语同源共构，又在意义与实质的双重层面上被贱斥为全然异质的他者。

“来自未归还的灵灯”是一个有关失踪者的现场。从《庾文瀚未完成的归途》（2019）中自闭症少年消失的身影，到《字幕01（公义与希望）》（2019）里少年母亲的访谈文字与兔子灯彼此错置的回响，再到“来自未归还的灵灯”系列和“书之灵魂”系列所描摹的消失之书、私人印章与无主的愿望，这些作品在展览的编排中，被重新组织为围绕“未归失踪者”展开的线索，让那些被遗忘、被排除、被压抑的对象，以破碎的形式闪回于目力所及的世界。纸灯笼因而成了一个中介，不是为失踪者归来而设，而是特意为他们的缺席保留的占位符，就像中国人餐桌上为神明或远行者预留的那双筷子。从这个意义上来说，此次展览并非只是在悼念被侮辱与被损害的身体与知识，更是在历史与记忆的阴影中，为仍徘徊于遗忘边界的灵魂设立了可被见证的临时场所。



Portrait of **CICI WU**. Photo by HG Masters for *ArtAsiaPacific*.

CICI WU

Of Light and Shadow

BY TIFFANY LEUNG

The pink dolphin of the Pearl River Delta is a lost species, long associated with Hong Kong but now more mythical than real as its numbers have dwindled to the point of extinction. The memory of them, or the imagination of them, as cultural signifiers, returns anew in Cici Wu's new lantern-sculpture *Foreign Object #2 Umbra and Penumbra (Dolphin)* (2023). Constructed with bamboo and rice paper, the various-shaped lanterns she has made in recent years are central to her practice. They become visionary devices, illuminating the darkness and casting undefined shapes, light, and shadows, as if animating the ways our memories can be transformed and resurface in unexpected ways, invoking the interplay between our identity and memory.

For Cici Wu, many of the questions she raises in her practice tackle issues of belonging and displacement, and this sense of constant negotiation reverberates throughout her diverse body of work, ranging from paper-based sculptures, videos, ink drawings, and mixed-media collages. Having moved from her hometown of Beijing to Hong Kong at 13 and now residing in New York, Wu critically examines the discourses surrounding diaspora and migration. Resisting conventional and predictable interpretations of identity, her work transcends particular geographical regions and nationalities and intertwines different temporal coordinates by alluding to poetic storytelling, micro-local histories, symbolism, and anachronic sensibility.

Cinematic language plays a pivotal role in Wu's exploration of ideas. With a strong interest in reimagining and deconstructing the cinematic framework, Wu seeks to subvert and interrogate dominant narratives that shape our understanding of social, cultural, and historical belonging. Her work often evokes dreamlike states and obscure forms from the distillation of the fundamental cinematic elements—time and light. Within this realm, the lantern, being a significant motif, is both medium and subject that embodies the artist's investigation of language, memory, cultural, and political structures, along with different states of consciousness and emotions. Wu's works lay the ground for narratives that are yet to unfold, whether imbued with vivid recollections or distorted through a subjective lens.

Central to "Belonging and Difference," Wu's recent exhibition at Hong Kong's Empty Gallery, is the eponymous new film created in collaboration with Beijing-based filmmaker Yuan Yuan. Shot on a 16mm film and DV video, the 24-minute video amalgamates footage from New York's Chinatown, Hong Kong, and Beijing during 2021 to 2023. The first moments read: "Rationality is far from me tonight. I turn to irrationality with misunderstanding a cat or star," then it drifts into a visionary state through a choreography of nonlinear sequences that Wu and Yuan captured in the three separate locations. The film interweaves scenes of conversations with small-business owners in New York's Chinatown discussing the pandemic's impact on their livelihoods, to masked citizens at health checkpoints, scenes of bus rides, a monumental gate that once stood as the entrance to the now-defunct Temple of the Moon, where ritualistic sacrifices to the moon took place. Interspersed throughout are lingering shots of anonymous streets, accompanied by elliptical prose in both English and Chinese, The montage of

unfolding tawny gray-blue haze elicits an uneasy familiarity that is tied to the recent history of the pandemic and is accompanied by a soundtrack of instrumentals adapted from the closing score in *Lan Yu* (2001), a melodrama about a love affair set in Beijing during 1989 by Hong Kong filmmaker Stanley Kwan, and fragments of voiceovers by the artist. The film evokes a tacit desire to make sense of various temporalities embedded within different geographical locations from New York to Beijing, yet this yearning remains intertwined with a sense of dislocation, reflecting the inherent challenge of reconciling her transitory existence upon the artist's ongoing formulation of a sensuous visual vernacular.

During the pandemic that put an end to the mass protests in Hong Kong, Wu's feelings of anxiety and disorientation have shaped the ideas in *Belonging and Difference* (2023) and its namesake exhibition. She turned to art as a means of processing her experiences, navigating and reconciling her feelings, and "repairing the relationships between herself and Beijing, and that of Hong Kong and Beijing." The exhibition included initial works created during this time, a series of five delicate ink drawings on cut-outs of rice paper, collectively titled *Accepts Forgetting, As Well As Remembering*. Wu likens the process of creating them to free-writing, resulting in semi-abstract depictions of her consciousness. In *Accepts Forgetting, As Well As Remembering 04* (2022), for instance, faint blue pigments permeate the rice paper, elucidating the hazy outline of a quatrefoil. Adjacent to it, a lantern hovers as the most discernible element in the composition. These muted collages employ personal and cultural symbols, encapsulating Wu's ongoing navigation of her emotional experiences. For Wu, the act of cutting, layering, and pasting paper serves as a means "to forget and repair, but also to remember the cosmic connections between us," which enables her to process, reflect upon, and counter the overwhelming intangibility of her emotions during that time.

In addition to her intricate works, light is a primary material in Wu's practice of luminous paper constructions and sculptural forms she has been experimenting with in recent years. As Wu explained, "I'm interested in looking









Belonging And Difference, 2023, still images from 16mm transfer to digital, DV video: 24 min. Courtesy the artist and Empty Gallery, Hong Kong.



Foreign Object #2 Umbra And Penumbra (Dolphin), 2023, bamboo wire, paper, Raspberry Pi 4b USB webcam, neopixel ring LED, cable, memory card, 73 × 29 × 99 cm. Courtesy the artist and Empty Gallery, Hong Kong.



Unfinished Return of Yu Man Hon, 2019, still images from 16mm transfer to digital, 19 min 16 sec. Courtesy the artist and Empty Gallery, Hong Kong.



Re:Mothlight (Changing Brightness 01), 2023, ink on paper, 60×74×3 cm. Courtesy the artist and Empty Gallery, Hong Kong.

at paper lanterns as a medium and technology. Their relationship with light is very similar to early cameras such as the Bolex 16mm." Wu stages the lanterns as projection screens, transforming the iridescent quality of the material into an otherworldly apparatus inspired by Chinese folklore and mythology. One of Wu's recent hybrid-lantern sculptures, exhibited in the Hordaland Kunstsenter in Norway earlier this year (and which forms part of her latest exhibition), is *Tsaiyun (Rosy-Cloud) Bridge* (2023), a bamboo and rice-paper construction suspended from the ceiling. The work draws inspiration from the design of a bifurcated bridge found in traditional Chinese architecture. One end houses a projector that screens a slideshow of photographs from *China Pictorial*, a Communist-run periodical with family portraits, landscapes, art, and scenes of life in the 1950s and '60s—a brief period marked by openness to the arts and to cultural development. Wu encountered these clippings in New York in 2020, and for her they evoked a strange sense of familiarity, resonating with her exploration of blending complex historical and emotional layers.

The retelling of the past through imaginative cinematic language is exemplified in Wu's earlier film *Unfinished Return of Yu Man Hon* (2019). Shot on 16mm film, the narrative revolves around the true story of Yu Man-hon, a 15-year-old boy with autism who went missing after being accidentally separated from his mother on public transport; he was last seen at the Lo Wu border between Hong Kong and China more than two decades ago. This well-known but unresolved case is depicted through a series of montages, tracing the possible places he could have passed through at the time. Interwoven with this is a fabricated present, wherein Wu depicts Yu Man-hon's return to Hong Kong, traveling on trains and ferries, and in front of projections of investigative articles and missing-persons reports, symbolizing his quest to retrieve the story of his own disappearance. Through fragmented and elusive memories, entwined with visualizations of a now-adult Yu Man-hon, the film explores the blurred boundaries between a speculative history and an imagined present, and challenges a fixed framework of understanding our own sense of history, further disrupting the enclosure of identity and the sense of place.

Wu's works consistently interweave different temporalities and histories, creating a collision of narratives and fragmented identities: the past is refracting the lens of the present, while the present is reimagined based on the echoes of the past. In turn, the present dreams of a future. Wu's imprint is rooted in autobiographical experiences, but traverses the boundaries of location, nationality, and time. Her works serve as channels through which personal and collective narratives, as well as representation and fiction, intersect. The lantern, with its alluring glow, transforms objects into vessels for imperfectly told stories, carrying the weight of personal and collective memories. As Wu said to me in our conversation, "they hold light and search for things in the darkness," thereby capturing the sense of hopeful ambiguity and the ever-evolving construction of meaning that emerges from her ongoing attempts to grasp and comprehend the world.

ARTFORUM
艺术论坛

卑尔根
Tsaiyun (Rosy-Cloud) Bridge
HORDALAND KUNSTSENTER
Klosteret 17, Bergen, 5005
2023.02.25 – 2023.05.07



"Tsaiyun (Rosy-Cloud) Bridge / Forget Each Other in the Rivers and Lakes"展览现场，2023.

1986年，比利时策展人杨·荷特（Jan Hoet）在根特市几十户人家的客房里策划了一个名为"Chambres d'Amis"的展览,在彼时成为重新想象美术馆空间的标志性展览。"chambre d'amis"这个意为"客房"的法语表达为家中的客居空间赋予了一层特别的意涵——"朋友的房间"。如果说"客房"自动划定了"主人"的支配地位和"客人"的从属性，那么"朋友"则似乎对空间有了更多主动权，也与"我"有了更亲密的关联。因为信任、喜欢、需要和分享，"你"入住"我"，成为"我"的一部分。这样，"朋友的房间"里主客不明，它的主体更多是构成"你我"友谊的事件、行动和感觉。

在挪威卑尔根 Hordaland 艺术中心Cici Wu的展览"Tsaiyun (Rosy-Cloud) Bridge / Forget Each Other in the Rivers and Lakes"（彩云桥/相忘于江湖）里，我不断想起这个表达——"朋友的房间"。展览中，Cici Wu邀请了七位在过去一年里与她有着密切交流的艺术家朋友们"入住"，在彼此的相聚和相连之下，一起感受并轻微调整自己与朋友们的时空坐标。

展厅中央的天花板上，Cici Wu用竹片和宣纸悬起一座"彩云桥"，桥身中空，并从中间断开，一台投影仪将录像的光影从桥的一边投射到另一边的截面上。这部不乏中国早期静帧动画气质的录像素材取自艺术史学家高居翰（James Cahill）用1962年英文版《人民画报》制作的剪报。在艺术家充满童趣的剪辑里，这些1960年代初政治风暴缝隙中对美好生活的玫瑰色演绎并没有遭遇直觉式的嘲讽，而是与一座轻盈的竹桥一起连接起彼时与此刻所经历的各种不安与期盼，以及从中流淌的政治和生活想象。作为展览的召集者，Cici Wu用她的作品在空间中提示着连接和陪伴的诸多可能，这些作品大多靠在玻璃窗畔，灯笼的光闪回应窗外不定的阴晴，宣纸和水墨把日光滤成彩色。

映照在这些光影下的朋友们也都有各自的坐标和颜色。Park Xun青蓝色油画勾勒着韩国完州郡荷塘里波光粼粼的茂密生态（《Lotus Pond》[荷塘]，2023）；旁边，Emilia Wang随着1928年帕乌·卡萨尔斯（Pablo Casals）演奏的大提琴曲《天鹅》哼唱，她的毛毡软雕塑散落在地上，兔子、石头、心脏（《dream headboard》[梦的床头板]，2023）。展厅另一头，地面散落着陈巧真和徐智彦的五频道短片，每个屏幕记录一位香港朋友的日常，以及在社运背景下，他们与身边物品的关系与记忆（《有关日常物的对话》[A conversation about our undulating things]，2023）。与这些录像彼此相望的，是增盐太郎（Taro Masushio）用黑白摄影及不同视角所记录下的日常物，微妙地测验着现实的不同侧面，以及不同现实彼此重叠、干扰的可能性。展厅外的咖啡室里，尹景辉的8毫米胶片录像记录了艺术家与五位香港高中生共同使用一部录像机所生成的多重视角（《我和我的世界》[Through the window I saw my world]，2023）。二楼的阁楼空间里，莫小菲与Cici Wu合作书写的虚构故事集成为她录像作品的蓝本，录像以Cici为主角之一，展开两段从"缺失"与"消失"的现实事件延伸出的梦呓叙事（《Lovers Revolt, Lovers Revolve 1&2》，2020–2023）。

如果说杨·荷特式的展览在今天已经让显得有些欧洲中心和事件性的话，"彩云桥"则重新为我连接起历史和当下、展览和生活之间彼此渗透的美学和道德边界。它让我想起"朋友的房间"的奇妙；提醒我放下尖刻的态度，去制造更广阔的信任和关心；以及，在展览这个本身具有表演和说教性质的空间里去实践朴素的、日常的善。毕竟，我们都在尝试透过自己的工作成为更好的人。虽然谁都不敢断言什么是最好的道德，但是一个可以和信任的朋友相互连接、透过彼此的理解而延展自己的房间，对我来说，是最好的空间。

–瞿畅

燃点 Ran Dian

"As we remember and abstract in the dark"
— On Cici Wu's Umbrascape Art
by Kyoo Lee
translated by Qianfan Gu

Cici Wu
Lantern Strike (Strong Loneliness)
June 25–August 6, 2021 at 47 Canal

Nighttime: I get into bed, I turn off the light, I lie back under the covers to go to sleep. But I need to blow my nose. I reach out in the dark and successfully locate the top drawer of my bedside table; I open the drawer and with the same assurance find the handkerchief on the right-hand side. I put it back and close the drawer again just as infallibly.

This is the kind of episode that enables us to formulate a notion of proxemics.

THE NOTION

Neologism coined by Edward Twitchell Hall (The Hidden Dimension, 1966; French translation in 1971). Proxemics = "the interrelated observations and theories of man's use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture"; dialectics of distance. For my part, I shall restrict my use of the word to the very localized space of the subject's immediate surroundings: the familiar space… [– Roland Barthes, How to Live Together: Novelistic simulations of Some Everyday Spaces, p.111]

Christmas is coming, and this year is ending with some of us holding up alright, sort of.

Christmas trees, however small, should not be without lanterns, some might say, and they might be right, how about then those festive greens and snowy nights inside a lantern? You could get one, too.

Collecting is recollecting in reverse order. Recalling Lantern Strike (Strong Loneliness), Cici Wu's last exhibition last summer on the



Foreign Object #2 Umbra and Penumbra (+852 bunny), 2021. Courtesy of the artist and 47 Canal, Photo courtesy: Joerg Lohse

2nd floor of that building, "a prelude on the dissolution of light" (Press Release), I remember that immediate impression I had upon entering the gallery: that nocturnal coziness, a min-holiness made mobile, how an ambience can be such an artful enigma in itself, I remember sending a mental note to myself. Later the QR code on the wall says:

The humble lantern structures familiar feeling, an art of stateless memory that casts undefined shapes and shadows as we remember and abstract in the dark.

The varying shapes of the lanterns are derived from popular folk symbols across cultures: a star, a rabbit, a lotus, a pagoda, to name a few. They hang glowing and suspended […]. Embedded in a few of the lanterns are specially programmed, open-source digital cameras, a new kind of optic device initiated by Wu to record the contours of shadows.

"As we remember and abstract in the dark" … what, exactly?

THE LAMP

Cited here as an object-center, a crystallizer of proxemics: […] produces a lit being and a dark nothingess -->through a paradoxical but logical reversal, it is in complete darkness that the habitual gesture is exposed: darkness can create the very essence of proxemics. […] The essence of myself, it's what I don't even need

to see to take pleasure in.

– Roland Barthes, How to Live Together: Novelistic simulations of Some Everyday Spaces, p.112

Imagine a cave, pre-Platonic cinematic, where a fire itself had to be made somewhere before someone could start talking about some such. Imagine a spark, striking flint with a rock, something nowadays a match or a power cord could do more instantly. Lanterns, appearing somewhere in between in the cultural evolutionary history of optical devices, take up quite a uniquely misty, enduring position. Used by the barrel-dwelling hippie philosopher Diogenes (412/404 BCE-323 BCE), for instance, who also became famous for his street search for a philosopher, the lantern that helps you see a sea of things at night moves with you like a magnetic lighthouse.

Welcoming dusks and greeting dawns, a lantern keeps you company in between, wherever you are headed or settled. Consider, for instance, the seasonal location of Yuan Xiao Festival (The Chinese Lantern Festival), the fifteenth day of the first month (Yuan) in the lunar calendar, the end of the Lunar New Year that marks the first full moon of the lunar year. This colorful, typically red, Deng Long (Chinese Lantern) "public art," I would say, an annual, Buddhist-inspired ritual that started in Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) as a communal trick with which to protect this fragile lifeworld from the divine or imperial wrath (depending on which legend you choose to follow, look it up for yourself), is in itself a living allegory of survival, of lives to be secured and sustained.

Contained yet uncontainable, necessarily utilitarian yet diffusively ephemeral, the lantern "produces a lit being, a dark nothingness" (Roland Barthes, see above) irreducible to a being or a nothingness; as an adjacent object, it works like an adjective, rendering beings visible in its glowing specificities. Its mobile techno-naturalism, archetypically prefigured in our ancestral cave-dwelling hunter-gatherers sitting around fires and ancient Chinese "homemakers" or "gatekeepers," so to speak, follows the quotidian rhythm of this endless manifold shadow plays we call time, and its ambient ambiguity that also allows spaces of literature to unfold reflects the generic structure and material density of our basic humanimality tied, in turn, to technicity, particularly archival.

Contained yet uncontainable, necessarily utilitarian yet diffusively ephemeral, the lantern "produces a lit being, a dark nothingness" (Roland Barthes, see above) irreducible to a being or a nothingness; as an adjacent object, it works like an adjective, rendering beings visible in its glowing specificities. Its mobile techno-naturalism, archetypically prefigured in our ancestral cave-dwelling hunter-gatherers sitting around fires and ancient Chinese "homemakers" or "gatekeepers," so to speak, follows the quotidian rhythm of this endless manifold shadow plays we call time, and its ambient ambiguity that also allows spaces of literature to unfold reflects the generic structure and material density of our basic humanimality tied, in turn, to technicity, particularly archival.



TS (Celestials), 2021. Courtesy of the artist and 47 Canal, Photo courtesy: Joerg Lohse



Foreign Object #2 Umbra and Penumbra (+63 prototype), 2021. Courtesy of the artist and 47 Canal, Photo courtesy: Joerg Lohse

This way, Wu's paper-based umbragraphic art becomes reflectively archaeological. Wu's narrative drawings and semi-automated shadow-tracking animations, staged and streamed at once, are materially interactive and interactively dynamic, and audible along the way, in some subtextual way, are the artist's transculturally inflected responses to the helio-photo-centric history of seeing, cinematic, in particular. Implicitly performed and programmed in this subtle counter-light show of porous animateriality is an interstitial meditation on and whispers across the 24/7 imMEDIAcy of our contemporary visual culture in which modern colonialism and global capitalism are embedded. The contoured minimalism and muted luminosity of Wu's umbragraphia comes from the invisible gaze and energy of an-other(wise reverse- or counter-)imagineering storyteller lodged in each object thus connected, each allegorizing such survival tactics of alter-native space-making, solitary or social. Stretching this other allegory of the mobile cave a bit further in contemporary idioms as well, we might as well say that each lantern is (in/beside) a cave, a table, a bed, a spot, a pixel, a room, a street, a city, a world inside and outside your iphonically-charged pocket.

Such uncanny, serially materialized "foreign objectness," to borrow this potent image from Wu's pieces so titled and itemized, anchors her poetics of transitorily illuminated dwelling. Those fire-handling, lantern-holding, animal-herding hands in each portable body of optical vibration dissolve into time, vestigially, and just when they become floating signifiers in this mélange lounge of time, their gestural traces become part of the shadow plays the exhibition space frames and animates on multiple registers. Here, legibility meets obscurity in the algorithm of time, and you could be intimate with it, or indifferent to it, depending on your existential relation to each, such, moment.

At the heart of this semioptics—semi-optics, and semiosis & optics—of gently phosphorous bodies, on which Wu's twinkly stars reflect, is a sense of community, communion and communication, a constellation in the microcosmic sense as well. How to be alone and together, visibly or otherwise, and where to position oneself, in the age of mass, rapid, and often forced migrations on the planetary scale: while the question itself could be so ordinary, so banally "modern" even, the renewed urgency of the call itself remains cuttingly contemporary today. What would it mean to do site-specific art today, for instance, in the age of the pandemic, when the precarity and fragility of our daily life has become as radical as the tokenized non-fungibility of a really virtualized and virtually real life? Who moves and why, and not? Where and when do the locational specificities of the show, not just the postal address, "47 Canal, 291 Grand St #2nd, New York, NY 10002, USA," but a contextual fact, e.g., Chinatown in New York in the middle of it all, figure in our appreciation and understanding of it, solo or collective? And how, how deeply, could one be there there in solid-arity with "us" in this real climate crisis together … if not in the very amplification, trans-resonation?



Installation view. Courtesy of the artist and 47 Canal, Photo courtesy: Joerg Lohse



Installation view. Courtesy of the artist and 47 Canal, Photo courtesy: Joerg Lohse

Lantern Strike.

So I also recall noting there the choreographic subtlety with which each object and image in Wu's show is put in relation and distinction to one another, then noting how and where the artist's attention unfolds. In Wu's thoughtfully executed exploration of the expanded cinematicity of the experience of quotidian spacetime in motion, in this kind of post-cinematic nano-homelandscape, each socially distant and connected translucent entity plugged into USB cords embodies a certain wirelessly "paper-thin" paradox, a structurally animated paradoxical sentiment of the times we are living through as well. What we sense there, and here, is a semiotic nearness—irreducibly fragile and resilient, dear neighborliness—of digitALONEness, digital aloneness and digitall oneness.

This is where animatronics, cybernetics and proxemics come together as if hanging out together on some multiple intersecting platforms, in the concrete abstract, which is where I see Wu's compositional signature is. If this artificial bunny that glows grows on you, that is not just because you are a sentimental creature of comfort called a human being but rather because there is some photosynthetic resonance between you and the electrobunny, and what matters is such common animaterialities in this universe or that metaverse or wherever. The internet of bunnified things mirrors the infrared core of bunny fragmentations including each other's innumerable singularities in digital and postdigital environments. Perhaps then, this inner bunny-outer bunny contraction could also be part of an evolving generational fable,* flatness fighting its own flatness, heart-to-heart.

And here we go, Wu's semioptic, umbragraphic art stops to tune in … to your "strong loneliness."



Strong Loneliness, 2021. Courtesy of the artist and 47 Canal, Photo courtesy: Joerg Lohse

artasiapacific

How did people navigate the second year of the pandemic in New York?

As the pandemic is still happening, I can only speak to what I saw. Many of us are still less active in the usual ways. My gallery in New York, 47 Canal, hasn't had any opening receptions since the pandemic started. In the early days there were stages of fear and the moment when you realize social welfare is tied to your immigration status, which we overcame through intimate circles of friends supporting each other. Then there came a moment of reflecting more deeply on art-making and ideas of engagement. We have tried to reflect on what has changed—and what should be changed—in the social context of the art scene. I noticed that more artists are redirecting their energies to local community work and spending more time with people they treasure. Many art workers found 2021 to be an even more difficult year to sustain their dreams and lives. On the other hand, it also showed the great potential of creating a more solid foundation for alternatives within the world's most capitalistic center.

Were you able to make art during the various waves and lockdowns?

Yes, I made a series of new drawings, *Lantern Study* (2021), that were presented in my solo show, "Lantern Strike (Strong Loneliness)" (6/25-8/6). I was looking for traces of paper lanterns from paintings and other art forms made in the pre-modern era. The exhibition also included new sculptures that I made in 2021. The different forms of the lanterns [including a star, lotus, and pagoda] were crafted according to various geographical locations and their historicity. They functioned as both sources of light and as encoders of movements; they are experimental devices that record what may be seen as a suggestion of bodies by isolating shadows in the environment. Flipping a surveillance technology on its head, it demonstrates a world of pure motion;



Installation view of Cici Wu's "Lantern Strike (Strong Loneliness) at 47 Canal. Courtesy the artist and 47 Canal, New York, 2021. Photo by Joerg Lohse.

removed from identification, the anonymous shadows jump around on a screen [in an adjacent room]. I'm very glad I made new work—without it I might have felt even worse. Art-making is still a way to process thoughts and mourn.

What has been your experience of the many in political conversations across the United States in the last two years?

Intellectually and spiritually, Black Lives Matter has transformed humanity and consciousness globally. It has cultivated a collective consciousness to systemic racism, racial capitalism, transformative justice, abolition, healing and self-care. Decolonial discourse is at its foundations, and the conditions of postcolonial theories are still changing.

It's important to participate in building the future even if it's going to take longer than one's lifetime. Abolition or transformative justice frameworks are not focused on the results that we have to realize before we die; it is a practice of imagination and a learning to think otherwise. All these ideas are still ongoing, and small actions in everyday life mean a lot. People are more consciously resisting, manifesting themselves, practicing more empathy on a daily basis, and finding reconciliation with family. It has been a time for us to re-examine our identity and explore new possibilities, and also a time to say goodbye to the old self and welcome the new self. I felt lucky that I have an intimate circle of friends; we've shared a lot of changes, reflections, and discussions in the past two years.

What's been happening New York's Chinatown the pandemic?

Initially business dropped by a half or two thirds
for many small vendors. The biggest Chinese restaurant, Jing Fong, had to close because it couldn't pay the rent. It was a cultural and social space that fostered significant values that many in Chinatown want to preserve, such as the banquet culture and the 318 Restaurant Workers Union—it was the only unionized restaurant in Chinatown. There were also ongoing protests against MOCA [Museum of Chinese in America] from groups like Youth Against Displacement as well as protests led by NMASS Workers Center to end 24-hour shifts for home-care workers (most of them are immigrant women). The family of one of the board members at MOCA, Jonathan Chu, owns the building where Jing Fong used to be, and MOCA had accepted a city-government grant of USD 35 million as a concession for a new jail in the neighborhood. People were infuriated and disappointed. We don't want Chinatown to be like a museum, with certain parts nicely preserved to attract more tourists—this doesn't benefit local residents and working-class people. The closure of any big restaurant has a huge impact on the small businesses nearby, and the damage often lasts longer.

Have these conversations influenced your way of working?

They have definitely influenced my way of thinking. I'm more aware that the contemporary art world may not be the only world to share my work. In terms of production, I want to work more slowly. I still have a lot of feelings and thoughts that need to be processed first. I realized the goal for me in making art is primarily to become free—and to constantly think about what freedom means, for myself. I also want to grow old with my friends, and to find someone I love in this journey.

How do your lanterns—which reference folk symbols from various cultures in Asia and capture contours of shadows with a low-fi, open-sourceprogrammed camera—connect with your interests in cinema and in history?

For a longer-term project, I was planning to look at the transcultural and transnational history of these lanterns, interpreting them as a technological precursor to the development of early cinema—a development that is deeply historically entwined with capitalism, colonialism, nationalism, and globalization. Defining cinema through its basic abstract unit, light, I wanted to search for the transnational, abstract, and feminine origins of early motion pictures. "Lantern Strike" led me to an imaginative past and a speculative form of media—which are given here as the absent, or invisible, historical beginnings of an early cinema in a quasi-fictional Asia. In imagining alternate worlds, I recognize that something has to exist and last longer than this lifetime—something that goes beyond death and life. Therefore, compassion (kindness), love (innocence), and commitment (wish and direction) are meaningful. Immediate consequences and opportunities are no longer my interests.



Left and right: the April 10 rally for Asian American women in Chinatown, New York, 2021. Photos by Andrew Ratto. Images via Wikimedia Commons.

THE BROOKLYN RAIL



Cici Wu, *Foreign Object #2 Umbra and Penumbra (+852 carambola*), 2021. Bamboo wire, paper, glue, metal wire, neopixel led, opencv camera, raspberry pi 4B, power adapter board, switch, led, micro-usb cable, lithium battery, memory card, artist's lantern holder and plinth, 51 1/2 x 20 1/2 x 14 3/4 inches. Courtesy 47 Canal. Photo: Joerg Lohse.

Histories of cinema tend to follow a timeline of technical and mechanical innovation. In acknowledging cinema's precursors, or proto-cinema, historians point to early shadow puppets, magic lantern slide projectors, and the first instances of photography capturing movement over time.

In Lantern Strike (Strong Loneliness), her second solo exhibition at 47 Canal, Cici Wu presents nine sculptures, four drawings, and a video, all dated 2021, that invite us to expand our understanding of proto-cinema by letting light, perception, and philosophy lead the way. Wu considers this reimagining of early cinema to be "outside the existing framework of cinema history." She endeavors to align proto-cinema with what she terms "light, optical experiences, and abstraction of images."

This includes the timeless play of light and shadow from sources we sometimes take for granted, such as lamps or moonlight. We also might think about how people can interpret the same light differently. Firelight, for example, can suggest ceremony, celebration, light chasing off darkness, and home, but it can also mean danger, destruction, and war.

Lantern Strike (Strong Loneliness) encourages togetherness, an Asian transnationalism, and solidarity across borders despite national and international crises. Wu's nine paper lanterns approximate specific local lantern designs, and their titles include the corresponding telephone country codes. Foreign Object #2 Umbra and Penumbra (+84), referring to Vietnam, is a blue diamond-shaped lantern hanging from a stick that rests in a round glass vase on a low wood plinth. Foreign Object #2 Umbra and Penumbra (+63 prototype), signifying the Philippines, is a pink star-shaped lantern, also hanging from a stick with a wooden armature and a similar plinth supporting it. There is a rabbit for Hong Kong, a pagoda for Indonesia, and a flower for Myanmar. Thailand hangs the highest, while the South Korean lantern seems to lay on its side. The lanterns cluster together like a glowing pre-colonial or postcolonial reunion, a coalition of neighbors, protesters, or a union on strike.

Further exploring cinematic resonance, Wu embeds digital cameras in her lanterns. They're inactive in the gallery, signifying images to come. Lanterns often have text written on them--names, wishes, or riddles--but the messages of Wu's lanterns are also yet-to-be-determined. The lanterns resemble a watchful community--watching us and watching each other--perhaps wary as a result of the violent past, enduring colonialist attitudes, and an uncertain future. The digital camera, like the lantern, processes and produces light; at either end of a temporal spectrum, the camera and the lantern have a lot in common.

Wu's drawings use ink, mineral pigments, and glue on Japanese paper to historicize her interest in these lights. Lantern Study 01 (Woman Admiring Plum Blossoms at Night) and Lantern Study 02 (Lighting a Hanging Lantern for the Obon Festival) are based on Japanese woodblock prints, the first from the 18th century by Suzuki Harunobu, the second from the 19th century by Shibata Zeshin. In Lantern Study 01, a woman uses a lantern at night to provide light as she gazes at a blooming tree. In Lantern Study 02, another woman lights a hanging lantern as a signal to her ancestors. In these two intimate scenarios, the lanterns, like cameras, assist with connection to other worlds.

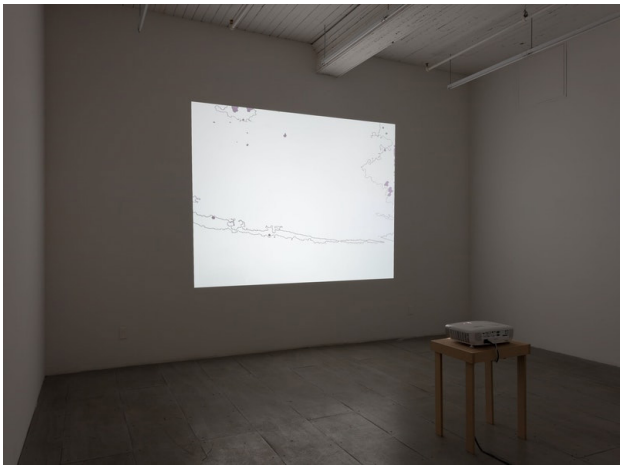
TS (Celestials) is based on a section of the Tang Dynasty silk scroll, Eighty-Seven Celestials, sometimes, perhaps erroneously, attributed to eighth-century Chinese painter Wu Daozi. The scroll depicts a procession of gods carrying decorated poles and wearing hairstyles incorporating what appear to be ribbons, flowers, and gems. There are no lanterns in this spiritual drawing, but the scroll makes reference to cinema. A scroll unfurls over time like film.

Strong Loneliness, a single channel, nine and half minute video, serves as the final scene in the exhibition. Wu made the video with one of the lantern cameras programmed to recognize shadows. Shadow detection is usually used to clean up images, sometimes in surveillance. Lantern camera in hand, Wu traveled through New York City. In the video recording, her pathways look like a fast-moving patchwork of layered lightmaps. Realistic details, like an aerial view of Manhattan and a protest, are fleeting, quickly overtaken by colorful shapes. We hear children playing, but we don't see them. Buildings become warped and rounded, as if the lantern camera is imposing a fisheye view. The city is no longer entirely architectural or human. Instead, it is an exuberant mash-up of color, line, and sound. Shapes change everywhere along the way.

In Wu's work, lanterns address spatial, historical, spiritual, and political realms. And with lanterns in hand, abstraction follows fast. According to Chinese legend, an emperor once planned to burn down a hunter's village after the hunter accidentally killed the emperor's prized bird. Instead, the villagers worked together to light lanterns and set off fireworks, fooling the emperor's soldiers, who stayed away because, from afar, it looked like the village was already on fire. In this legend, the interpretation or misinterpretation of light saved the community. It became the stuff of legend. Or, Wu might submit, it was an optical experience worthy of being considered proto-cinema. It was a summoning of light and powerful and multivalent symbolism.



Installation view: Lantern Strike, 47 Canal, New York, 2021. Courtesy 47 Canal. Photo: Joerg Lohse.



Installation view: Lantern Strike, 47 Canal, New York, 2021. Courtesy 47 Canal. Photo: Joerg Lohse.



Cici Wu, *Foreign Object #2 Umbra and Penumbra (+95 prototype)*, 2021. Bamboo wire, paper, glue, metal wire, neopixel led, opencv camera, raspberry pi zero, micro-usb cable, artist's lantern holder and plinth. 48 1/2 × 16 1/4 × 16 1/4 inches. Courtesy 47 Canal. Photo: Joerg Lohse.

Christie Lee, "'Curtain' art exhibition in Hong Kong draws you in and explores the power of a piece of cloth to frame, conceal or reveal", *South China Morning Post*, 23 May, 2021

South China Morning Post

'Curtain' art exhibition in Hong Kong draws you in and explores the power of a piece of cloth to frame, conceal or reveal

Curtains conceal. They invite speculation. They can also be a framing device.

In the latest collaboration between Para Site art space and Shanghai's Rockbund Art Museum, 23 artists have used this malleable and potent symbol in a compelling exhibition spread across Para Site's North Point location and an exhibition space at Soho House in Sheung Wan.

This show has been two years in the making, since Rockbund initiated it in response to the two institutions' previous co-production, "An Opera for Animals".

"I think it's [an] ongoing laboratory, and I think this is what exhibition making should be about," says Cosmin Costinas, executive director and curator of Para Site, who adds that closed borders have made it a real feat to create coherent negotiations between the artists' divergent positions and interests.

"Curtain" was meant to be staged with live performances but the pandemic has prevented that, so it has been curated in a way where the multifarious ideas of the theme are activated by the audience.

One of the most powerful works at the Soho House venue is Gustav Metzger's *Historic Photographs: To Walk Into – Massacre on the Mount* (1996).

One lifts a light beige cloth to see a chilling photo taken in 1990 after the Israeli police killed 21 Palestinians following a dispute between Jewish and Muslim groups on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Once the curtain is lifted, the proximity to the greatly magnified image forces us to confront the monstrosity. However, your eyes are only able to see sections of the photograph at a time because of the scale. The work encourages a visceral interaction with the image – critical in an age when we are desensitised from a constant bombardment of sensational images – while questioning the limitation of understanding.

Another work is a video of Leigh Bowery performing at the Anthony d'Offay Gallery in 1988. Donning various outlandish costumes made from drapery, the outrageous performance artist strikes poses in front of a one-way mirror.

"The curtain is something that lifts, used to reinvent the self. It allows you to choose what to put on for the audience. It hides, but also empowers through the act of hiding, as you get to decide what version of yourself to present to the world," Costinas explains.

...

And in *Foreign Object #2 Umbra and Penumbra (prototype, 2021)*, Cici Wu creates a sculptural lantern that supposedly "captures shadows", evoking the early days of modern cinema. Mysterious and fragile, the device forms a sensory link between the viewer and images on the screen that represent the artist's investigation into histories that "resist the nationalist and colonial narratives of mainstream cinema", the catalogue says.

In contemporary culture, some curtains require a peeling away of, others need to be felled, but perhaps there are also those whose very presence, as mediator, allows us to reach certain, albeit fragmented, truths.

https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/arts-culture/article/3134357/curtain-art-exhibition-hong-kong-draws-you-and-explores

MOUSSE

Poetic Justice for Yu Man-hon: Cici Wu

"A Bolex camera is like a spiritual tool, just like how paper lanterns had a similar purpose in the past. Both are technologies related to a spiritual way of searching for things."
—Cici Wu 1[1]

New York-based artist Cici Wu is interested not only in the materiality of the tools and machines we use to observe the world, but also in the myriad ways our worldly experiences are propelled by subtle interactions among language, memory, rituals, sociopolitical structures, and different states of awareness and emotions that can be triggered by moving images and their ambient effects. Turning increasingly toward the supernatural, Wu's work alternates between drawing, film projection, and sculpture, skillfully interweaving the human and the nonhuman into surrealistic, dreamlike installations.

The 16mm film *Unfinished Return of Yu Man Hon* (2019) opens with a sequence of white light refracted through paper cutout shapes. In and out of focus, as well as passing between positive and negative imagery, a subtle animation of emoticon shapes floats amid a pale-blue sea of flickering celluloid. Against an atmospheric soundtrack by Victor Au, different intensities of color saturate the screen before abruptly cutting to the back of someone's head looking out to a body of water. It is in this moment that a voice "enters" the film, speaking first in Mandarin, then in Cantonese, and finally in English: "Wo jiào Yu Wen-han—Ngo giu Yu Man-hon—My name is Yu Man-hon." The calm invocation of this name comes as an unexpected surprise given the more than twenty years since the well-known and still-unresolved case of his disappearance. Yu Man-hon was a fifteen-year-old with autism who could barely speak at all. He

1 From a conversation with the artist, July 2020.



Cici Wu, *Unfinished Return of Yu Man Hon* (still), 2019
Courtesy: the artist and Empty Gallery, Hong Kong

let go of his mother's hand and ran into an MTR subway station, becoming separated from her in the crowd and managing to get as far away as the Lo Wu land border with China. There he somehow was able to run undetected through the tightly controlled checkpoints, getting to the bridge until he was finally caught. His unintelligible cries led him to be taken for an illegal immigrant and he subsequently became caught in a legal gray area. He was sent back and forth across the border before being left to wander the streets in Shenzhen alone, never to be found again. More than the "cold-hearted indifference"[2]displayed by immigration policies on both sides, Yu Mon-hon's disappearance quickly turned into cross-border folklore, re-triggering the fear and suspicion still unresolved in the years since the handover.

The "unfinished return" alluded to in the film's title and repeated in her 2019 first Hong Kong solo exhibition at Empty Gallery refers to Wu's ambition to summon Yu Man-hon back to our world. Woven into the film's structure and method of installation, the memory of Yu Man-hon has been extended into layers of multiple "returns" that call out

2 Carol A. G. Jones, *Lost in China?: Law, Culture and Identity in Post-1997 Hong Kong* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press: 2015), 118. (The artist maintains an ongoing dialogue with Jones, most recently at Asia Society Hong Kong Center, July 2020). The border has in fact been a site of disappearance for countless children, many of them with cognitive disabilities.

to him. A montage of scenes offers hints to where he could be passing: a market where he clutches a lamp, a moment on a ferry accompanied by a paper cow, glances of a bus depot scene, before passing through the land border again. These moments are interspersed with projections of investigation reports and missing-person posters, traces and reminders of his previous life. The artist chose Jonathan Chang, the Taiwanese former child actor famous for playing the boy in Edward Yang's film *Yi Yi* (2000), to channel the spirit of Yu Man-hon. Other ethereal fragments are included to mark an unexpected migratory turn from Hong Kong to snowy Minneapolis—a place where Chang lives in seclusion, away from his cinematic representation. Next to the screening, a series of faux colonial-era lights—former film props in HK movies—fill the gallery space. Each lamp is carefully restored and altered: trinkets and bells added, or dim bulbs wrapped with bamboo frames, crafted into paper lanterns or turned into animal sculptures. These works are either suspended low to the ground from the ceiling, or strewn across the exhibition floor. Textual fragments mix together with parts of the original investigation report. Like harbingers or amulets, these words have been pasted onto the various skins of the lights as "subtitles" in combination with phrases such as "justice and hope," "forgotten to forget," and "Memory Cow."

In an interplay between the light sculptures and the oneiric narrative arc on-screen, the figure of Yu Man-hon drifts within a meditative loop, and together as the audience, we are pulled in to follow the different fragments and traces of places related to him. There are immeasurable feelings of loss when something important to us disappears. It is here that the unfinished return in the title suggests a redemptive potential, a return prolonged and extended into the future as Yu Man-hon gradually awakens with a new memory and state of awareness. In what Ackbar Abbas attributes to an ability to "[work] with disappearance [. . .] using disappearance to deal with disappearance,"[3]. Hong Kong itself is arguably a city defined by its ability to resiliently exist on borrowed time in the face of a constantly receding identity. It is within this context that Wu makes a point of imagining Yu Man-hon not as a symbol of suffering or something forever taken away, but as a defiant spirit able to roam again in this world of ours. When Yu Man-hon went missing it was August, the time of the Hungry Ghost Festival. In the liminal moment between living and dead, Wu looks to the spiritual realm to imagine a return that is also a day of reckoning for the failures of law and order to protect the most vulnerable in our societies. By rewiring our connection to the loss of Yu Man-hon, remembrance is transformed into resistance and perpetuates a will to keep the imagination alive, anticipating some poetic justice that awaits us in the future.

3 Ackbar Abbas, Culture and the Politics of Disappearance (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1997), 8









ART AGENDA

Cici Wu's "Unfinished Return"
by Leo Goldsmith
March 26–June 6, 2019
Empty Gallery, Hong Kong

June 6, 2019



View of Cici Wu's "Unfinished Return" at Empty Gallery, Hong Kong, 2019. (Left) Cici Wu, *Unfinished Return of Yu Man Hon*, 2019. Video Installation, film prop lamp, paper, bamboo wire, glue, video (16mm transferred to digital, 18:35 min), dimensions variable. (Middle) Cici Wu, *Memory Cow (Mother)*, 2019. Paper, bamboo wire, glue, handkerchief, investigation report, photograph, raincoat, silicone 105 x 60 x 102 centimeters. (Right) Cici Wu, *Subtitle 01 (One side different)*, 2019. Paper, bamboo wire, glue, film prop lamps, bells, wire, raincoat, 70 x 70 x 25 centimeters. Image courtesy of Empty Gallery, Hong Kong. Photo by Michael Yu.

The "unfinished return" in the title of New York–based artist Cici Wu's first solo exhibition in Hong Kong refers to a legendary incident in the city's recent history. In August 2000, Yu Man Hon, a 15-year-old autistic boy, was separated from his mother in an MTR metro station in Kowloon. Somehow, the young man made it to a checkpoint at Hong Kong's border with Shenzhen, where he was able to cross into Mainland Chinawithout identity documents. Once on the other side of the border, unable to make his way back to Hong Kong, Yu disappeared, never to be found.

For many, the story of Yu resonated as an allegory of Hong Kong's relations with Mainland China in the early days following the handover of the former British colony to the People's Republic of China in 1997. There is indeed the shocking indifference of the authorities, especially in dealing with the most vulnerable. But there is also the sense of loss, of blurred national and cultural identities, and of the border as a liminal zone where one's very body might dissolve into evanescence. Revisiting the story some 20 years later, Wu's exhibition ponders the cultural resonance of Yu's ambiguous fate, even offering a speculative dénouement to the mystery, staging Yu's reappearance in Hong Kong as an altered, ghostly presence in a city that has itself irrevocably changed.

Located across the 18th and 19th floors of the Grand Marine Center near Aberdeen Harbour, Empty Gallery draws visitors from the building's elevator and straight into a very dimly lit antechamber, which leads to an almost hidden corridor that connects to the gallery's similarly shadowy foyer. The darkened network of passageways at first resembles a labyrinth more than a gallery, but the experience is more seductive than claustrophobic. Sharing the space with another solo exhibition (by the artist Tishan Hsu), Wu's show is accessed by descending a flight of stairs into the gallery's lower level, where viewers follow the dim glow of Wu's light sculptures and video projection, and its soundtrack, a dense collage of fragmentary voices and chiming bells.

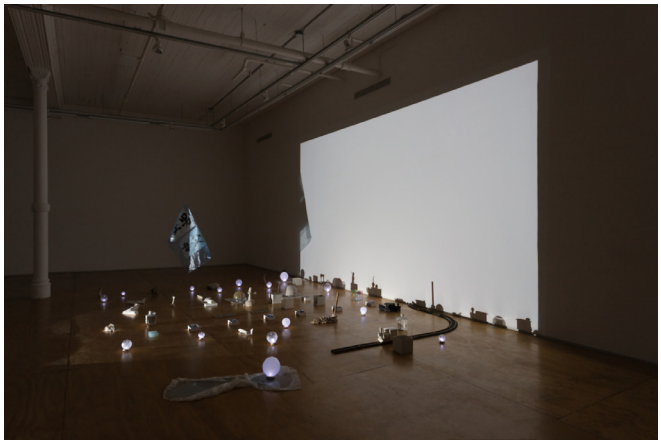
Entitled *The Unfinished Return of Yu Man Hon* (2019), the video forms the centerpiece of the exhibition. which also includes a series of mixed-media light sculptures. Indeed, the video is itself an assemblage, mainly filmed on 16mm (with some VHS home-movie footage), and compositing discrete sequences of a young man, presumably Yu, traversing a set of diverse transitional spaces (airport, bus terminal, metro trains, ferries) in a distinctive knit wool cap. Pushing the threshold of the analog film's capacity to register its images, Wu frequently finds the young man's figure dissolving in a haze of blue-white-pink light or blurring into the background as he's captured in fogged-lens

images of snowy landscapes, or the chaos of an MTR station or busy marketplace. In a surrealist flourish, Yu is also accompanied on his journey by a small cow constructed from glued paper on a bamboo wire frame, and featuring photocopied scraps from the official police report on the disappearance pasted onto its hide—which is also exhibited alongside the other sculptures.

The presence of this cow—as a sculpture titled *Memory Cow* (2019)—in the gallery space, and the ambient illumination offered by the light sculptures to complement the video projection, creates a subtle sensory link between the objects and images that Wu has brought together here. These mixed-media sculptures—delicate, hybrid constructions from paper, bamboo wire, plastic film-prop chandeliers, and assorted found ephemera—bear titles such *Subtitle 01 (Justice and Hope)* (2019) and *Subtitle 01 (Forgotten to Forget)* (2019), further hinting at processes of linguistic and cultural translation at play. In a sense, these objects bridge the ephemeral and imaginary spaces onscreen and the material and historical worlds to which they allude. Further scrambling these distinctions, Wu adds an intertextual layer by casting for the role of Yu the Taiwanese actor Jonathan Chang, most widely known for his part, at age nine, in Edward Yang's exquisite family melodrama *Yi Yi* (2000). Wu's video even cites a small fragment of *Yi Yi's* soundtrack—the heartrending moment at the end of the film in which Chang's adorable adolescent character, dressed in a tuxedo, reads a letter to his recently departed grandmother at her funeral and wonders, "Perhaps one day I'll find out where you've gone." Thus, even the biography of the actor becomes curiously entangled in the mystery.

Cici Wu
"Upon Leaving the White Dust" 47 Canal
18.04. – 27.05.2018

When Korean-American artist and novelist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's unfin- ished film White Dust From Magno- lia (1980) was screened at New York's Museum of Art and Design in 2017, Cici Wu was in the audience, capturing it with her *Foreign Object No. 1, Fluffy Light* (2016). This artwork – a func- tional, globular sculpture – records light data at twenty-four frames per second. The result of Wu's recording, converted to digital video, is the centerpiece of "Upon Leaving the White Dust", her first solo exhibition at 47 Canal. The pacific flicker of the thirty-minute looped projection of the movie sans images frames an ensemble of sculp- tures, almost all of which are small, acutely allegorical objects laid in a grid on the gallery's floor and refract Cha's literary and artistic accomplishments. In 1982, Cha left behind White Dust following her unjustifiable death at the age of thirty-one. A film and historical novel begun in 1980, it tells the story of a young woman who is Korean yet resides in China following Japan's 1909– 1945 occupation of her native land (Cha's parents grew up in Manchuria, present day northeast China, in exile). She is also known for the experimental novel *Dictee* (1982) and edited *Apparatus: Cinematographic Apparatus* (1980), with contributions by Roland Barthes, Jean-Louis Baudry, Maya Deren, and Cha herself, among others. This vol- ume approached film theory through the psychoanalytic and poststructuralist lenses then being developed in France, underlining the ideological significance of the mechanics of representation, and the nuanced political meanings of the viewer's relation to filmmaker, cam- era, screen, image, and so forth.



Cici Wu, *Upon Leaving the White Dust,* 2017/2018
Ceramic, clay, handmade glass, silicone, plaster, white fabric, rice paper, ink, plastic drop cloth, sponge, mop, Lehmann Gross Bahn train tracks, white LED, enameled wire, dupont connectors, arduino, video, dimensions variable

This anthology, as well as Cha's unfished work, provides the conceptual under- pinning of Wu's project. Her sculptural works, arranged in columns represent- ing the eleven pages of Cha's *White Dust* storyboard and bathed in the beam of the projector, cast enigmatic shadows that appear in somewhat jum- bly, unfamiliar compositions on the gal- lery wall. Psychologically loaded, these have an unruly, disruptive implication – most people aren't happy when some object interrupts the hypnotic rev- erie of what Barthes called the "cine- matographic cocoon". Shadows index a cinematic apparatus, yet their presence is traumatically unresolved and politi- cally impartial, hinting towards the fleet- ing constitution of the dream-screen, and its entrapment of the spectatorial subject. Every so often, for a fraction of a second, the light brusquely drops as a scene changes in White Dust. The effect is quietly destabilising.

All handmade (with the exception of a half-arched section of a model train track), the sculptures constitute a trans- latory reading of Cha's notes for *White Dust*, and score certain thematics of her practice more largely. A scattering of LEDs in hand-blown glass bulbs are connected by enameled wire, glow- ing with the conviviality of jellyfish. Unglazed ceramics make the majority of the installation's recognisable elements: aeroplanes (one grounded, yet without wheels, another wingless), steam trains, tenderly crossed hands, and strange, cuboid clay cartons with glass drinking straws.

Across many scales, these repre- sent techniques of overcoming distance, from touch, most simply, to industrial and globalised modes of transportation. Yet a corollary of each of these technol- ogies is displacement: in a psychoana- lytic mode, that of desire, as structured by the relation to the mother, and, in a geopolitical mode, that of diaspora, as introduced in Cha's work, and Wu's in turn. The installation holds these forces in uneasy equivalence.

A flag, made of rice paper and plastic, droops from the ceiling, with Chinese inscriptions reading "woman, man" on one side and "father, mother" on the other. Deliberate, tantalisingly detached, and romantic in its logic of fuzzy metonymy and formal transfor- mation, the exhibition complicates the individuated subject that is for- mulated by dominant apparatuses of representation, delicately undermining some of the slippages of post- structuralist thought. In its afterglow is a paean to the legacy of a non-white postmodern avant-garde in the US, in which a social and psychological distance regarding Asia is troubled, a poetics of displacement collapsed.

-Harry Burke

ARTFORUM
艺术论坛

武雨濛谈“离开白色尘埃之时”



武雨濛（Cici Wu），“离开白色尘埃之时”展览现场，2018.

武雨濛(Cici Wu)1989年生于北京，成长于香港，目前生活和工作于纽约。她的个展“离 开白色尘埃之时”围绕美国艺术家、作家车学庆[1]关于文化和记忆的未完成讨论展开。武雨 濛用她自己发明的录光装置，将车学庆未完成的影像素材转译成光，再转化为数码影像;地 面散落的数十件手工物件则回应车的剧本故事线。本文中，她谈到了在前全球化时代亚裔身 份的塑造和全球化的今天亚裔的身份自洽。展览将在纽约 47 Canal持续至5月27日。

《离开白色尘埃之时》(Upon Leaving the White Dust，2018)是此次同名展览上的唯一 一件作品。该作品(展览)的命名一部分来源于美国艺术家、作家车学庆生前未完成的一部 电影:《来自蒙古的白色尘埃》(White Dust from Mongolia ，1980)[2] ;另一部分来源 于我对“离开”这个动作在时间和空间中的想象。此外，我也希望可以赋予“白色尘埃”多 种象征。

我的确想把车学庆带回到纽约当下的艺术现场，因为她的一些思想很值得被再次关注。1980 年，全球化大潮还没形成，身份和文化尚未像今天这样被大规模资本化。在这样的年代，车 学庆想要发掘关于人的故事，想知道那一小部分从韩国流亡到伪满洲的人是如何生活的，他 们的历史是什么，而并非利用表面的图像或视觉元素来构建某种形象，这让我感到很好奇。 我欣赏她作为一个亚裔美国艺术家，如何很早地意识到并开始为非美国白人观众而创作，一 个人就开启了全球艺术语境下创作的一种实验精神。更可贵的是，这种实验精神来得非常自 然，似乎她天生就能理解文化之间的差异，同时具备在理解之后凝合这些差异的创造力。

我对车学庆的工作感兴趣，部分也是因为我在纽约的生活圈子里有许多影响着我的人，他们都是美国人，同时也可以说是亚洲人。在我的展览文本里，我引用了车学庆的一段关于《来自蒙古的白色尘埃》的文字：

“所有的元素都被植入历史的语境来呈现，为的是减少来自不同民族文化的亚洲人彼此之间的地理距离和心理间隔。

记忆，作为集体性的源泉，具有近乎实体和有机的维度，那里时间和空间相互叠加。它代表着时间的躯体，是位于既永恒又无法衡量的时间体内部的计量单位，其中我们的存在如同伤口一般被记录着。”

这些文字写于1980年。我好像从来没有真正理解过亚洲人可以来自不同的民族和文化，也就是说，这世界上有韩裔美国人，也有韩裔中国人，或者越南裔菲利宾人，甚至韩裔俄罗斯人、日本裔巴西人等等。他们的存在大部分是因为战争，无论是武力上的还是文化上的。车致力于讨论的并非政治或者身份差异，她想探索的是如何减少人与人之间的地理距离和心理间隔。我非常受这个想法的影响，并且也开始意识到自己的存在也许真的是这个世界的一道伤口。当然，我也清楚地知道并不是每个人都有必要或想要成为这种“伤口”。

我一直把电影院看作一个承载图像的场所，并从这个载体里得到很多灵感。在《离开白色尘埃之时》中，你只能看到单调的光的明暗变化，没有图像。去年纽约艺术设计美术馆放映了《来自蒙古的白色尘埃》仅三十分钟的电影素材，放映期间电影院的光线被按照每秒二十四帧的速度记录在我做的一个手工小设备（Foreign Object #1 Fluffy Light, 2017）里，然后转化成数码影像。我觉得观看这些光的时候，就像是在观看一个人转身离开影院的瞬间所体验到的感觉。

地上的物件包括烧过的陶瓷、未烧过的泥、玻璃、硅胶、玩具火车轨道等等，都是《来自蒙古的白色尘埃》故事

分镜的内容。唯一离开地面的是一块透明的蓝色塑料布，夹在两张宣纸之间，一面写着“女男”，另一面写的是“父母”。我第一次在《听之任之》 里看到“女男”的时候，是用西方女性主义的思维方式想到一些理论。但另一方面，在研究的过程中，我发现车在描述战争中去世的年轻女性革命者时，会写道：“她是由一个父亲，一个母亲，所生。”在墙上的投影把所有的东西都变成了中性的影子，是一些未完成的意义。

[1] 车学庆（Theresa Hak Kyung Cha）1951年生于韩国釜山，13岁随家庭搬到旧金山，在加利福尼亚大学伯克利分校主修比较文学和艺术，其作品关注由政治及地域变迁带来的文化、记忆的错位和变异，形式包括行为表演、录像、绘画和写作等等，1982年在纽约遇害。

[2]《来自蒙古的白色尘埃》包括一部电影和一本历史小说，均未完成。伯克利艺术馆/太平洋电影资料馆。

–瞿畅

FRIEZE

Cici Wu, 'Upon Leaving the White Dust'
47 Canal
18 April – 27 May

The Korean-American artist and novelist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha once described memory 'as a collective source, as almost having physical and organic dimensions … It represents a body of time […] within which our existence is marked like a wound.' At the time of that writing – which artist Cici Wu quotes extensively in the press release to her show 'Upon Leaving the White Dust' – Cha was attempting to finish her 1980 film *White Dust from Mongolia*, with her brother James in South Korea. Neither the film nor its accompanying novel was completed when a New York City security guard raped and murdered Cha in 1982. In Wu's astonishing exhibition – her first solo show at 47 Canal – the artist returns to Cha's unfinished work in a melancholy installation and film that presents, as homage, the wounds left by memory and time.

Wu's show features small, mostly white, plaster-cast objects arranged in a grid on the gallery's blonde wood floor: hands posed atop one another, bare feet, a mop, a train's locomotive car, Lehmann Gross Bahn train tracks, an airplane and small, globular lights that pulse faintly in the half-dark. The objects are partially lit by a stark white film which fluctuates in brightness based on light data collected from Cha's *White Dust*. In the dimly lit gallery, one might be tempted to first refer to the space as 'dreamy' or 'dream-like'. It isn't. Instead, Wu's pieces crackle with the presence of history and the obscure mysteries that lie within them. 'Upon Leaving', with its 'plurality of entrances', as Wu writes, recalls Freud's interpretation of the uncanny as the familiar which the subconscious has made unfamiliar. Here, world-historical narratives have plunged into small objects, endowing them with pasts – and futures – the present has scrambled to suppress.



Cici Wu, *Upon Leaving the White Dust*, 2017/2018
Ceramic, clay, handmade glass, silicone, plaster, white fabric, rice paper, ink, plastic drop cloth, sponge, mop, Lehmann Gross Bahn train tracks, white LED, enameled wire, dupont connectors, arduino, video, dimensions variable

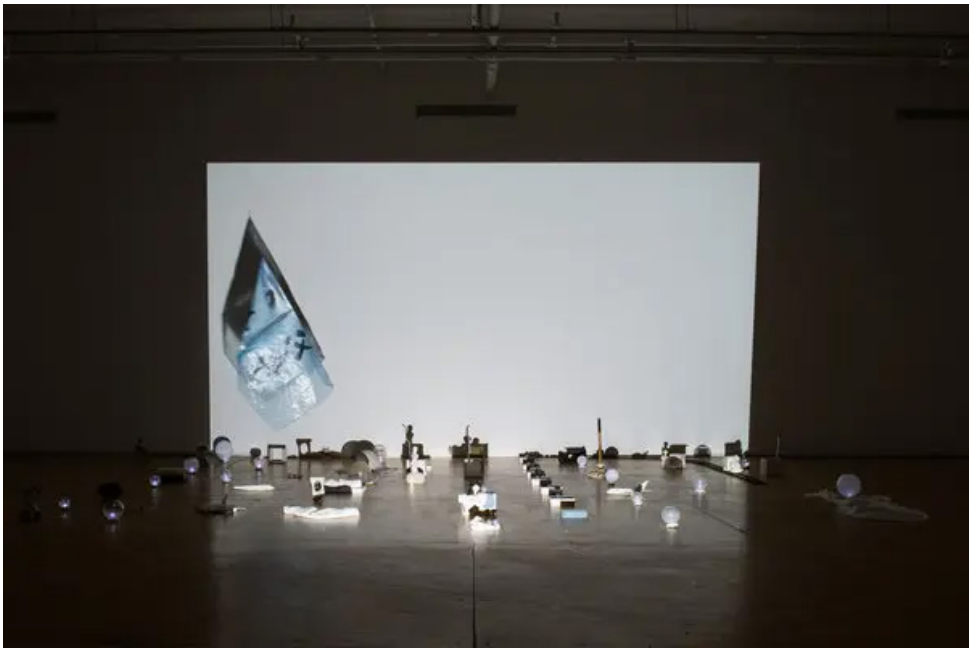
The New York Times

10 Galleries to Visit Now on the Lower East Side

Galleries, small and midsize, are having a rough ride. Rents keep climbing. So do art-fair fees. And certain people who might help pay the gallery bills — collectors, big-museum curators — keep not showing up except at a handful of spaces with social cachet and publicity machines. Plus, a sizable portion of the art audience has taken to doing its looking online, raising the question: Why have physical galleries at all?

Because they're the only places where you truly see new work, experience it. Scale, texture, light, air, mood; all that changes when you're physically present, shifting positions, moving in close, backing away, hearing noise from the street. Most of the galleries on the Lower East Side are still storefront-size, scaled for shopping, and open on Sundays. They put you in intimate contact with objects, sensations and ideas so you can examine them, stay with them, make them your own.

47 CANAL through May 27; 291 Grand Street, second floor
The American artist and writer Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (1951-1982), one of the most intriguing figures of the 1970s, seems to have dropped from view for a younger generation. So it's great that Cici Wu, who was born in 1989 and came to the United States from China in 2012, pays tribute to her in a show, "Upon Leaving the White Dust," that sculpturally evokes a film, "White Dust From Mongolia," that Cha shot on a trip to her native South Korea and that was left unfinished when she died in New York City at the age of 31. Against a flickering projection of white light, Ms. Wu sets an assemblage of small objects that refer to images in the film: trains, an airplane, a mop, the silhouette of an urban skyline. "Memory, time, silence, words, and whiteness" were the essence of Cha's art, wrote the art historian Moira Roth, as they are of Ms. Wu's homage.



"Upon Leaving the White Dust,"
an installation by Cici Wu at 47 Canal on Grand Street. Credit: Vincent Tullo for *The New York Times*

燃点 Ran Dian

Migratory Practice

"Scraggly Beard Grandpa," Capsule Shanghai (1st Floor, Building 16, Anfu Lu 275 Nong, Xuhui District, Shanghai, China),

Writing from Paris in 1991 under the pseudonym "No Beard Fei," Fei Dawei penned a letter to fellow art critic and curator "Scraggly Beard Grandpa," the pen name of Li Xianting in Beijing. Fei's letter was a response to Li's concern that "if art leaves its cultural motherland, it necessarily withers." Li had previously asked Fei, "Do you believe you have made an impact on the Western art world?" In the wake of China's first avant-garde art movement, known as the '85 New Wave, many artists from China who moved to the West for political reasons were grappling with how to actively engage their new social worlds; Fei claimed that Chinese artists living abroad could still address "contemporary cultural questions in their new environments." Several decades later, the letter from Fei and Li becomes a point of departure for the exhibition "Scraggly Beard Grandpa" at Capsule Shanghai.

Curated by Cici Wu and Wang Xu, co-founders of PRACTICE, an artist-run space previously in an old apartment in New York's Chinatown where they hosted a year-round residency program open to artists from around the world, the group show staged a casual encounter between the Shanghai art scene and twelve PRACTICE alumni. PRACTICE was established nearly three years ago in the Chinatown location as a place for artists—mostly friends of the founders—to live and make work while passing through the city. The space became a studio, exhibition space, and mahjong house to cultivate a community, however transient, for conversations between artists, and, well, practice.

The founders of PRACTICE, who were born in China, make reference in the text that accompanies the exhibition to the early wave of Chinese artists who moved to New York in the 1990s, which included Zhang Huan, Cai Guoqiang, and others. While times have certainly changed for China-born artists and the general contours of the art world since the 1990s, the core function of PRACTICE as a quasi-familial support network reveals a social practice that stands in for a sense of community that the early generation likely lacked. Chinese artists who moved to New York in the 1980s and 1990s were largely viewed as political exiles in the West. Although many of the artists from China, both then and now, were trained at prestigious art academies in their home country, and later in U.S.-based art programs as well, the dual challenges of being far from home and trying to stay afloat in New York's unforgiving urban context placed many in precarious postions. Well aware of this history, the founders of PRACTICE have established a strong foothold in Chinatown, which has been the location for an increasingly mobilized anti-gentrification movement that overlaps, at times in uncomfortable ways, with New York's contemporary art world. The scene has been set for intervention.



"杂毛连须公"，展览现场，胶囊上海，鸣谢胶囊上海
"Scraggly Bearded Grandpa", exhibition view, Capsule Shanghai, courtesy Capsule Shanghai.



“杂毛连须公”，展览现场，胶囊上海，鸣谢胶囊上海
“Scraggly Bearded Grandpa”, exhibition view, Capsule Shanghai, courtesy Capsule Shanghai.



“杂毛连须公”，展览现场，胶囊上海，鸣谢胶囊上海
“Scraggly Bearded Grandpa”, exhibition view, Capsule Shanghai, courtesy Capsule Shanghai.

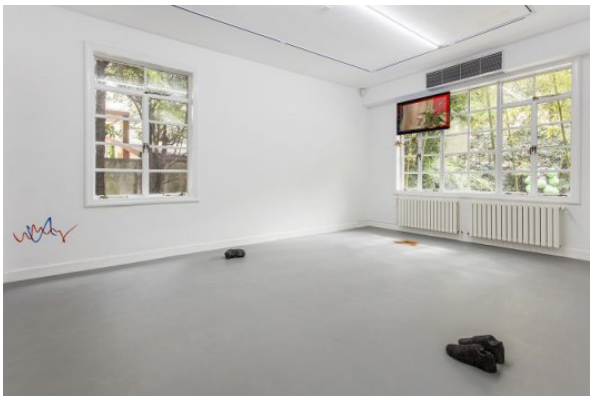
For PRACTICE, langauge becomes a metaphor for connection and disconnection. The shared languages of the art world — English, installation, site-specific — create bonds and opportunities for artistic exchange. Today’s fluid global movement of artists (not only from China) no longer reflects an art world linked primarily to national ties and fixed geographical locations. Multilingual art communities have sparked mobility that becomes a powerful form of agency, and allows artists to shift their practices from survival mode—many artists from the first wave of China’s avant-garde painted portraits on the streets of New York to get by—to social practice, affective labor, and the processes of community-making. The collective of artists— several born in China, though most from elsewhere — reunited in Capsule Shanghai for “Scraggly Beard Grandpa,” where the gallery floor was painted gray to resemble their space in New York. There was a sense that a set of shared experiences were actively transplanted into the unfamiliar territory of Shanghai, a city with a rapidly expanding art scene marked, in large part, by pragmatic, market-oriented tastes.

Without an overarching thematic conceit, the works in the exhibition seem to bounce words off of one another, and produce a collage of distinctly accented modes of art-making. In the garden, Rania Ho’s installation Genus: Verduos Suburbanus Bucolia & Love Hate Relationship (all works cited, 2017) ironizes the meticulous pruning of plants for topiaries in suburban contexts. Wearing inflatable, nylon ripstop costumes meant to function as camouflage, a single-channel video, alongside the bulbous costumes, depicts a whimsical “love hate relationship” that was performed on site. Yunyu “Ayo” Shih’s “Before It Happens” constructs a fragile barrier near the entrance of the gallery with modular sculptural elements made of concrete and metal. They form a wall defined by negative space, and gesture to partition walls built between bordering nations. The skeletal structure creates frames through which viewers can speak to one another across the space as they tread lightly around the precarious object.

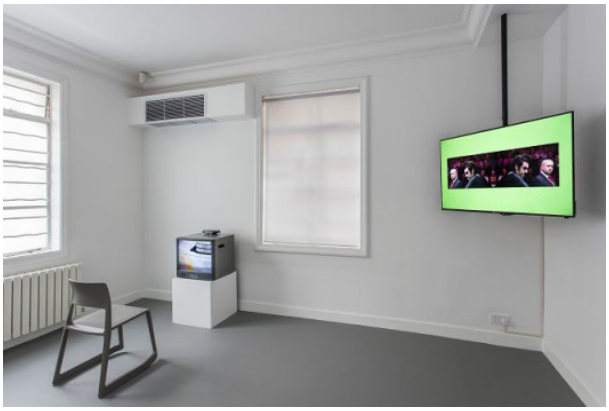
Almost as if to hide away in silence, Irini Miga’s Landscape for a Thought works on a poetic micro-scale to produce an anti-monumental work that is terse yet profoundly meditative—a tiny, cut-out cone from the wall filled with the sawdust of its own making. João Vasco Paiva’s The Last Kauai Bird I and II features an unmatched pair of Nike sneakers carved out of hardened volcanic lava by local artisans in Bali, along with an audio recording of supposedly the last Kauai Oo bird calling out for a mate; in this case, the ultimate absence of communication is extinction. Zheng Yuan’s Game works within the visual idioms of the video essay as it contemplates how we experience real and virtual worlds through cameras and simulation technologies. From live-broadcast sports to 8-bit video games and Chinese scroll paintings, Zheng’s analytical dissection of ways of seeing adds a dense coda to the exhibition for viewers to reflect back on the visual languages of the other artists’ works in the exhibition. The concept that “each person is their own territory,” a statement from Fluxus artist

Robert Filliou quoted in the exhibition text, reinforces the singularity of the artists' distinctive styles, and helps to patch over the idiosyncratic gaps between the artists' works.

Reflecting on the role that language plays in bringing together PRACTICE's artists on their intersecting itineraries in and out of Chinatown, the exhibition feels like an unfinished conversation that trails off after a long night of talking over hotpot. As stated in the exhibition text, "language, evolving from being a tool to a habit, became a game." In the exhibition's game of artistic languages, there is a sense that the human connections and shared experiences between the artists add layers of meaning that transcend the works themselves, though this remains partially untapped and requires further context about the artists' on-the-ground social practice in Chinatown; this dimension of shared experience cannot so easily be sensed in Shanghai, where the feeling of immediacy and urgency feels distant. Yet unlike other group shows that try and fail to develop a coherent conceptual thread, the show's deliberate avoidance of an imposed thematic unity presents a curatorial provocation. Produced at the time of Shanghai Art Week, with its typical mayhem of art fairs and champagne parties, "Scraggly Beard Grandpa" feels refreshingly out of place in Shanghai's burgeoning contemporary art world—one that increasingly resembles anywhere else in the metropolitan constellation of art world capitals.







"杂毛连须公"，展览现场，胶囊上海，鸣谢胶囊上海
"Scraggly Bearded Grandpa", exhibition views, Capsule Shanghai, courtesy Capsule Shanghai.

the Artling

Highlights from Frieze London

The 15th edition of Frieze London closed on Sunday 8th October: offering its visitors a diverse and dynamic selection of international emerging and established artists, alongside a curated non-profit programme of artist commissions, films and talks, established itself as one of the of the most exciting destination in the contemporary art world. The fair brought together more than 160 of the world's leading galleries, attracting over 68,000 visitors.

The Focus section, including 32 galleries aged twelve years or younger and curated by Fabian Schöneich (Portikus, Frankfurt) and Ruba Katrib (SculptureCenter, New York), offered interesting presentation which attracted significant institutional attention and resulted in acquisitions from international institutions and private foundations. This section has appeared as the most exciting one, remaining the definitive destination to discover emerging talents.

The New-York gallery, 47 Canal (booth H13) presented a well-balanced group of artists, in which Cici Wu's sculptures sat on the plinths at the center of the booth. Wu (b. 1989), who grew up in Beijing and studied in Hong Kong, has moved to United States in 2012. Even if her work could looks like soap bubble, as, for instance, *Foreign Object #1 Fluffy Light* (2017), they have a sort of functional aspect: these objects are meant to be taken with you to the movies, where you can use it to record up to two hours of ambient light on an SD card. A device that seemingly 'absorb' the atmosphere and recreates a magical and minimal aura in the space where is displayed. Wu, mixing electronics and machinery, is truly able to surround us with an intimate, special joy.



Cici Wu, *Foreign Object #1 Fluffy Light (terrence)*, 2017. Photo by Joerg Lohse. Image courtesy of the artist and 47 Canal, New York.

Alexander Forbes and Molly Gottschalk,
"10 Artists to Watch at Frieze London, 1:54, and Sunday", *Artsy Magazine*, October 6, 2017

10 Artists to Watch at Frieze London

Frieze London built its brand by claiming itself to be the defining voice on the cutting edge of contemporary art. The fair still remains fertile ground to discover new talent and fresh-out-of-MFA-program young upstarts, though to be fair, the art world's overall attention has since broadened in scope. (Reflecting that trend, the winners of Frieze's own Stand Prize for its Focus section of young galleries have consisted only of artists born in the first half of the 20th century for the past two years.)

Meanwhile, Frieze's satellite fairs continue to provide collectors opportunities to dig deeper, exploring what directions contemporary art may head in next.

Sitting on its plinth at the center of 47 Canal's Focus booth, Wu's *Foreign Object #1 Fluffy Light (terrence)* (2017) looks a bit like a soap bubble. Closer inspection reveals two light meters affixed to the glass orb's front and a set of blinking LED indicator lights nestled in its center amid other electronics. The work is a functional object of a sort: It's meant to be taken with you to the movies—the source of inspiration for much of the artist's practice—where you can use it to record up to two hours of ambient light on an SD card. At Frieze, the piece blinks as it records the relatively unwavering and flat light of the fair's tent. But, during a January show at the gallery (which she shared with Ho King Man and Wang Xu, two other Chinese expatriates with whom she started a Chinatown exhibition space cum residency called Practice) it sat on the armrest of a theater seat and played back the grayscale recording of Wu's trip to see *Moonlight*.



Cici Wu, *Foreign Object #1 Fluffy Light (terrence)*, 2017. Photo by Joerg Lohse. Image courtesy of the artist and 47 Canal, New York.

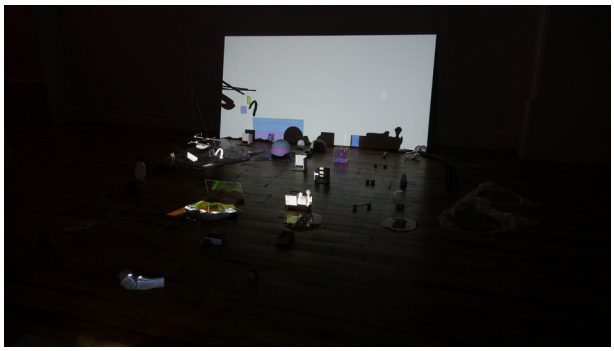
Banyi Huang, "Can Archives be Performed? Su Yu-Hsien and Cici Wu Respond in Two New Works",
Cultbytes, February 26, 2017

CULTBYTES

Can Archives be Performed? Su Yu-Hsien and Cici Wu Respond in Two New Works

Brought on by the over saturation of information in our present day, exploring archives has become a popular topic for contemporary artists. How does one position oneself in relationship to historical archives? What happens when the archive itself is dust-ridden, fragmented, or unrealized? Su Yu-Hsien and Cici Wu have created two immersive and interconnected worlds as an attempt to grapple with these challenging questions for "A Disappearing Act," on view at the artist founded non-profit Triangle, in Brooklyn. The works in the exhibition do not provide clear cut answers, instead they call attention to research, ongoing process, and the profoundly ungraspable nature of time and memory.

A flickering display of light and shadow, materiality and translucency, New York-based artist Cici Wu's "Untitled" is comprised of two parts: a large light projection on the back wall, and an array of hand-made objects strewn on the floor. Through researching archival materials surrounding "White Dust from Mongolia," an unfinished film by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, the work is a reconstruction of the latter's original conception. A Korean-American artist, novelist, and filmmaker active in the 70s and 80s, Cha's life was tragically cut short in 1982, her uncompleted project frozen in time. Using a quirky device of her own invention, Wu recorded the changing intensities of light from Cha's only surviving 30-minute footage, juxtaposing it with objects and images that correspond frame-by-frame to the film's storyboard—a delicate pair of plaster hands, a faded photo from a newspaper's missing-persons column, a slowly-turning mobile of colored glass panes. The fragmented piece lies between arrest and motion, ghostly apparitions and incessant retreat. The interplay between different textures and materials, shimmering lights, and temporalities leaves the viewer with a sense of ambiguity.



Cici Wu, *Untitled*, 2017. Mixed-media installation. Courtesy of the Artist.



Cici Wu, detail from *Untitled (White Dust from Mongolia)*, 2017. Mixed-Media Installation. Courtesy of the Artist.

Su Yu-Hsien, an artist hailing from Taiwan and showing in New York for the first time, takes a different approach. In a curtained room within the exhibition space, Su's two-channel film installation stages a reenactment of "Prophet", a play written in 1965 by Taiwanese playwright Huang Hua-Chen, whose artistic and literary achievements have now sunken into relative obscurity. As red velvet curtains gradually pull apart in one video—only to reveal more layers of curtain behind layers—an elderly couple quarrels in an otherwise empty theater. The heated dialogue highlights the discrepancy between the man's self-illusions of grandeur as an avant-garde artist, and the mundane reality of his failure to achieve (to his wife, all his novels, paintings, scripts, and architectural blueprints are nothing more than 'bullshit aesthetics'). Presented in the form of an absurdist 'anti-theater', the film reveals contradictions within modernism itself, as well as the impossibility of importing a Western transcendental man to the social-economic structure of post-war Taiwan.

For Huang Hua-Chen, disappearing from public view was a consciously performative act integral to his practice, which, along with his satirical declaration that "Prophet" was "possibly the worst in Chinese-language plays", deliberately eroded and diffused the notion of authorship and heroic individualism. Similarly, if Su's resurrection of that particular moment in the history of Taiwanese theater placed Huang back in the spot-light, his act of restaging nevertheless points to how the self-contained entity of originality is further punctured by reinterpretation and the small transformations therein enacted.

In "The Aesthetics of Disappearance", Paul Virilio talks about how photographic technologies may accidentally capture 'absent' moments of the everyday, as something akin to feelings of vertigo or epileptic fits. As someone who is "obsessed with feelings", Wu is interested in bringing affective experiences back into an expanded cinema primarily occupied with technological discourse. Although each scene is materialized as a disparate object and organized in a certain order, somehow our physical-emotional interactions with them escape chronological order. Take from the work what you will, a miniature city of memories, or an abstract machine that churns historical materials into playful reimagining and quiet resilience.

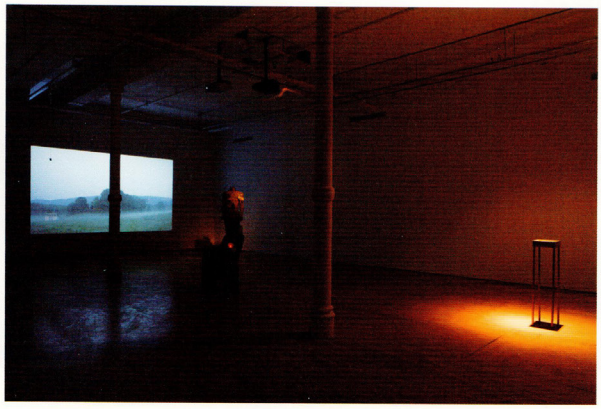
For both artists, it is not a matter of establishing artistic lineages via reworking, but rather one of finding affinities with figures embedded in history, thus opening up unexpected networks of connections and belongings. Wu discovers in Cha overlapping terrains: the itinerant identity of immigrants, female subjectivity, and the aesthetics of abstraction, while Su finds in self-effacement, satire, and historical reference a way to bridge theater and cinema. Both works constitute small, sensual ruptures within the technological seamlessness through which we experience time.

Su Yu-Hsien and Cici Wu "*A Disappearing Act*" runs through Feb 16-Feb 27, 2017, Saturday – Thursday, 12 – 8pm at Triangle, 20 Jay Street, #317, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

http://cultbytes.com/reporting/onview/archive-su-yu-hsien-cici-wu/

ArtReview Asia

Ho King Man, Cici Wu, Wang Xu, Mosquitos, Dusts and Thieves



Mosquitoes, Dusts, and Thieves, 2017 (installation view). Courtesy the artists and 47 Canal, New York

How can we work together? This question will be urgent, if not existential, to those of us seeking, over the next four years, to build a coherent opposition to America's hard-right and xenophobic turn. Modelling new forms of collectivity, at once sufficiently flexible and intrepid, is no straightforward project for seasoned activists, let alone contemporary artists. In their group show at 47 Canal, *Mosquitoes, Dusts, and Thieves*, New York-based Chinese artists Ho King Man, Cici Wu and Wang Xu present an exhibition about forming relationships between things, humans and each other. Ho, Wu and Wang are no strangers to working together. In 2015 they founded Practice, an exhibition space, studio and residency project on the top floor of a building in New York's Chinatown, a rare vestige of an alternative space in Manhattan. While preserving a distinct sense of autonomy, accord shines through this visually and conceptually tight exhibition that is dense with feeling, but never saccharine.

Wu smuggled a device that records ambient light into a screening of the film *Moonlight* (2016) and then projected her collected light-data through a suspended strip of Plexiglas; the light flickers occasionally like a dysfunctional strobe. The viewer watches this installation, titled *Closer, Closer, Says Love* (2017), unfold while sitting in a movie-theatre chair bolted to the gallery floor. Wu's small light recorder sits on the armrest. The latter is a separate work, titled *Foreign Object #1 Fluffy Light (prototype)* (2017). A bubble of opalescent glass crowns the recorder as a soothing orange light blinks inside, a gentle reminder that this device's power remains on. There's a mesmeric wonder to Wu's art, which is reinforced by the contraption attached to the Plexiglas strip: a motor and pulley system that would operate an automatic door. In irregular spurts, it pulls two silicone-coated sleeves closer and then apart, like the material ghosts of two unknown individuals, brought together and separated by forces larger than them.

If the human element in Wu's work is presented as an absence, then Wang places an interpersonal relationship centre stage. The video *Summer Wind Before Rain* (2017) follows Wang during a residency at Storm King Art Center as he makes the clay that will become a portrait of the sculpture park's gardener. The video splices empty shots of the lush upstate landscape, spectacular God's-eye footage of the gardener mowing crop circles and an intimate moment as Wang sits with and sculpts his subject. A head is conspicuously absent from Wang's *A Stand* (2017), a slightly larger-than-life kouros-like figure made from the same Storm King clay. Several coat hooks are embedded into the dried, gruff surface – a gesture that suggests sculpture can carry physical, and emotional, weight.

Peppery notes of chilli sauce – the recipe of Ho's grandfather – waft through the gallery. Breathing in the garlicky scent, coming from a multifaceted work titled *Bloody Flavour Won't Go Away, Squeezing Juices Out of the Time* (2017), viewers can appreciate the quiet theatricality to Ho's translation of Beijing photographer Ren Hang's poems, printed out and stacked in a wood and silk-lined case on a spot-lit pedestal, which also underscores human relationships. Several of the poems contained in those pages, such as 'I'm lonely', are crass and irreverent: 'still make your mama tell you / that is shit / don't eat it'. In a work titled *(having thai takeout during christmas eve)* (2017), watering-can roses, cleaved in half, dot the gallery walls and seem to grow like brass fungus. Ho positions himself as mediator here, as a translator with privileged access to original sources of knowledge, be they his grandfather's or fellow artist's.

Wu, Wang and Ho conclude their poetic and ambiguous exhibition text with a Foucault quote. 'They have to invent, from A to Z, a relationship that is still formless, which is friendship,' says the French theorist in a 1981 interview. 'That is to say, the sum of everything through which they can give each other pleasure.' The sum of *Mosquitoes, Dusts, and Thieves* is a collective statement of empathy between people and things. *Owen Duffy*

SLEEK



From "Mosquitoes, Dusts and Thieves," Courtesy of 47 Canal

Mosquitoes, Dusts, and Thieves: Exhibition Review

A strange enlowing object; poems whose words waltz between grace and abjection; archetypal sculpture made of mud; and a scent of spices greet the viewer into "Mosquitoes, Dusts, and Thieves." This exhibition at 47 Canal by Ho King Man, Cici Wu, and Wang Xu misleads, carefully and deliberately – if one were to search for the central logos, they would be left in a self-designated conceptual maze. The three artists pursue different ideas and inquiries; the exhibition itself negates the ordinary coherence – and the cognition runs amok in attempting to understand the whole. Instead it requires distance – away from framework, an ideology. The only way to think through it is to rely on intuition, and intellect will follow. In facing these pieces, despite the individual differences, a sense of rhythm emerges; a bodily response – one breathes alongside the artworks, and the artworks itself. Perhaps it is an exercise, of what an exhibition could do and mean, not through the habitual and finite work of conceiving an articulated idea realized through form, but by something else, something germinating underneath, like the scent, which emanates from nowhere and perspires everywhere.

Ho King Man is the culprit behind the gentle scent; the most literal scene of breathing, while an anticipation gives life to "A Stand" (2017) by Wang Xu, a headless figure; think Greco-Roman statue, made from dripping soil exhumed from Storm King, equipped with coat hooks embedded throughout. The thick and lumpy surface breathes quietly, waiting its transformation in flames – but we are not there yet. Complete with an empty chair for no one, Cici Wu makes a strange and estranging cinema entitled "Closer, Closer, Says Love" (2017). The film shown only changes in its shade of light and dark – it is a film reduced to the fundament of films; light. Between the chair and the projection is a scaffolding-like moving frame and a dried strawberry suspended on silver chain, dangling between the two moving parts opening and closing, sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly – a la cardiac arrhythmia, corresponding to something within its cybernetics.

Another work by Ho is a book of poems written by a friend and translated in collaboration with another, an orgiastic constellation of attachments housed in a deathbed-like pedestal, all of his pieces are titled "Bloody Flavour Won't Go Away, Squeezing Juices Out of the Time" (2017). In the book, words like

shit, mother, art,

and

semen

generously adorn the pages – the words are dense and viscous in substance, in contrast to the weightless appearance of the simple font and the touch of fine paper. The elegant yet raunchy piece collapses intellectual comprehension of the words and sensorial phenomenon of seeing, invoking a physical response quiet and violent as if to place one just before an orgasm, swelling in anticipation. Equally sensuous is the video "Summer Wind Before Rain" (2017), which exposes the private act of sculptural making; the artist wrestles within flora and fauna, in dripping soil, the sun painting his skin a fleshy magenta. But it is also a heady tautological inquiry into the idea of sculpture, and together with the unfired "Stand," they linger indefinitely; that is, as sculpture-in-becoming, calling for a reformation of the lexicon;

a

sculptural

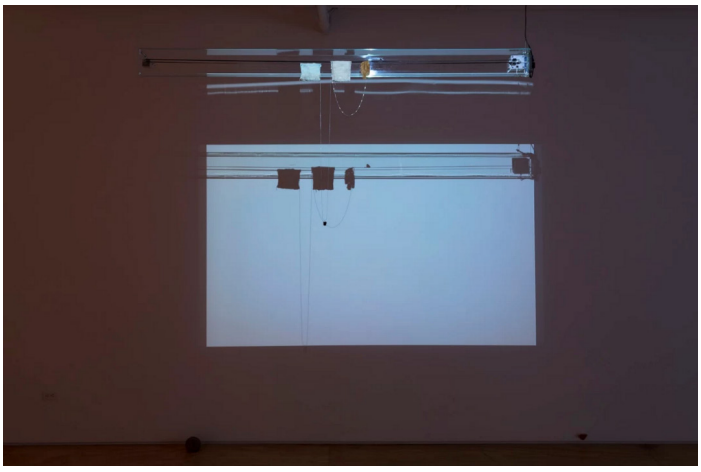
The libidinous machine pounds its hearts jittery with eagerness – there is a seemingalgorithmic confusion in Wu's work as it opens and closes that is more human than human with its sincere slip-ups; vulnerability to miscalculations. And the imperfect symbiosis is furthermore evident with an unsolicited obstruction – a lump of soil, another sculpture by Wang, hides awkwardly in the shadow of the projection, as if it had just crawled out into a being moments ago. This small yet ingenious gesture breaks down the hermetic property of Wu's work, opening it to an uncertain dialectic of intimacy. And this gets closer to the heart of the exhibition.

What is not meant to be next to one another, perhaps paradoxically, is exactly what is meant to be next to each other, indeed because of the fissure, and to maintain it is to pry open the space to be confused, to be audacious, to press and pull, to fail and invent. That is to say that there is something working, germinating in the gaps – and chances are, that

thing

does not have an appropriate noun attributed yet. The pieces with the different inquiries must co-exist while both repelling and attracting each other, bound only – and temporarily – by something as imperceptible as a single breath. And that seems to be the work of the three artists together, to pursue ways to be that is many, plural; to have the plentitude in the self – even if as trespassing and undesired as dusts and thieves. And I say, let us have the mosquitoes take their sway.

"Mosquitoes, Dusts, and Thieves" was at 47 Canal, New York



From "Mosquitoes, Dusts and Thieves," Courtesy of 47 Canal

ARTFORUM
艺术论坛

Gu Qianfu, "Mosquitos, Dusts, and Thieves", *Artforum* China, February 3, 2017

蚊子，灰尘，和小偷

纽约替代性艺术空间PRACTICE的三位主创何京闻、Cici Wu（武雨濛）和王旭，在与自己空间相邻不远的47 Canal举办了群展，从集体性的、策展实践的侧重，转向更私人化的、艺术创作的表达。展览标题的所指是从八十年代初期开始，出于防蚊、防尘、防盗的实用主义考量，而把阳台筑起护围加以封闭的习惯。这三样物件都处于变动状态，它们不受欢迎而被排除在外，是不被聆听的声音和不被观看的盲点。联系最近的美国时事：大选的后续、展览所在地纽约唐人街渐起的士绅化进程、移民禁令激起的风波，这些物象含蓄地指涉了少数族裔的身份、合法系统的内外差别、自我与他者之间矛盾复杂的关系等诸多问题。

三个人展示的作品皆创作于2017年，对各自熟稔惯用的媒介进行了形式与意义上充分的探索。王旭接受了中美两国学院派的雕塑训练，作品《A Stand》（2017）以古希腊Kouros风格为参考。临摹西方经典是在中国学习雕塑的必经阶段，这种训练将个人对形状的认识与记忆与某种含糊的同西方的联系凝聚在一起。作品半风干的泥土质地显出未完成的手工感，壮硕健美的躯体略大于真人，且周身插满挂钩而显得更像一具实用的衣架，这来自于王旭在制作过程中常常顺手往雕塑插上棍子以便临时悬挂自己衣物的个人习惯。作品使雕塑介于纯粹的艺术与可用的物品之间，有关艺术家与其创造物之间关系的隐喻。

王旭对于学院派的实践有着自己的反思，他一直试图走出工作室进行创作，视频《雨前的夏风》（2017）拍摄于纽约上州暴风国王艺术中心（Storm King Art Center）的驻留期间，是将身体与创作置于旷野中的尝试：他收集山间的泥土和草木，经过混合、晒干等工序用作雕塑的原材料；还纪录了为艺术中心一位园丁塑造头部肖像的过程，两人在室外相对站立，他拿起一撮玉米须去描摹对方上唇的胡子，像一次被周遭的自然所覆盖的无声交流。考虑到艺术中心正是以大型户外装置为其主要的收藏，视频中展现的人的行为大多是在为雕塑而做的准备，而所拍摄的自然环境也更像是一整片为雕塑而存在的基座。

Cici Wu带着自制的机器《外来物＃1 毛茸茸的光（原型）》进入影院，收集了一部正在上映的剧情片《月光男孩》（Moonlight，2016）的光的数据。作品《近一点，近一点，爱情说》（2017）把这片被记录成不同色阶的灰白投影到展墙上，其明暗变化又被另一个感应装置接收，联动反映到牵扯着项链、衣袖、树叶和干草莓的一串物件，使它们随着"剧情"来回移动。这是一套已被抽象化的光的语言，正如人类的爱情与故事被抽象为电影屏幕上的色彩与图像的运动一般，艺术家将电影进一步抽象成光的起伏波动。机械装置与人一样，在理解和学习语言的过程中决定自身的反应与动作，再塑造和谱写出新的故事。在展陈上，她的装置像一个微缩的单人影院，折叠软座正对着方形投影，挂在头顶的项链与看电影时心头常有的悬而不决相通感——为流动的影像注入了具态可感的形状，那是机器诉说的细语，和光亮照出的剧场。

何京闻以诗歌创作为主要实践，但他只展示了一首自己的创作，以展览资料所附的作品列表的形式——《血的味道去不了，把时间榨出汁来》（2017）：标题也是整组装置的名称，四行诗句则被分别冠名到手工书（他与凯西•罗宾斯共同翻译了任航的诗集）、雕塑装置（诗集被放置在近一米高的仿棺木木盒中）、气味（基于家制辣椒酱而成的香水）和现成品（经过切割的黄铜浇花壶喷嘴花洒）这四个物件上。诗无影无踪，又像展示的气味那样蔓延到空间中的一切。这让人想起马拉美对诗歌的理解："逐个征服词语，从而征服偶然"，而在何京闻这里，或许是在逐个发明偶然，从而发明诗歌。

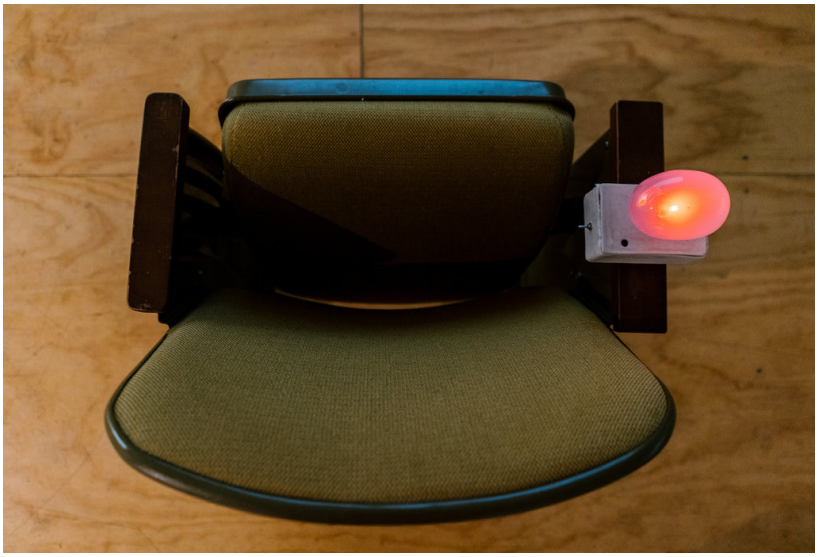
尽管看起来像是躲在他人的话语和普通的物品背后，艺术家的语焉不详其实直白坦承：特制辣椒酱是外祖父的秘方，而从他的辞世开始，何京闻经历了十年既像惩戒也像修行的生活——"人有时感受不到自己体内的器官"——身体内部的虚无被总结到创作当中，使作品中的种种性暗示显出了"血味"。比如任航文字中荷尔蒙的躁动与旺盛与其摄影作品相一致，但作为文本的译者，何京闻的自我反观则多出了克制与痛苦，他在词语的转化和编织中梳理着私人记忆。

如果达成共识是困难的，那么诉说是否仍然必要？展期恰逢动荡的美国时局，各种反抗示威游行从某种程度来说提供了一种有力的表达。三位艺术家则从小而具体的出发点着手，他们并没有用亢奋的热情去回答这个难题，而是他们展现了一种可能的和谐，一种各自保有独立但仍能共同栖居的务实。是何京闻实践的日常诗意，是Cici Wu引用福柯所说的"无形的友谊（formless friendship）"，也是王旭对艺术的理解——"艺术是一次又一次的私人旅行"。

The New York Times

10 Things to Do in NYC Now

It's a big city, with plenty to do, see, hear and watch. This guide is a sampling of cultural highlights taking place in New York this weekend and over the week ahead. And there's much more where these came from.



"Foreign Object No. 1, Fluffy Light," by the Chinese-born artist Cici Wu.
Credit Jake Naughton for *The New York Times*

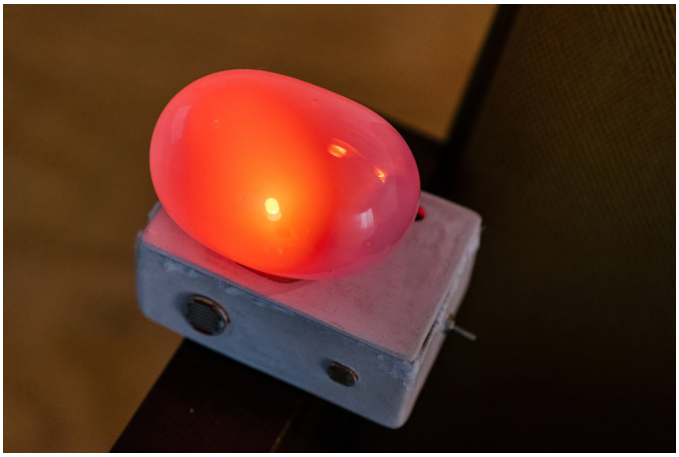
Global Artists, Whispered Statements

'Cici Wu, Ho King Man, Wang Xu: Mosquitoes, Dusts and Thieves' at 47 Canal

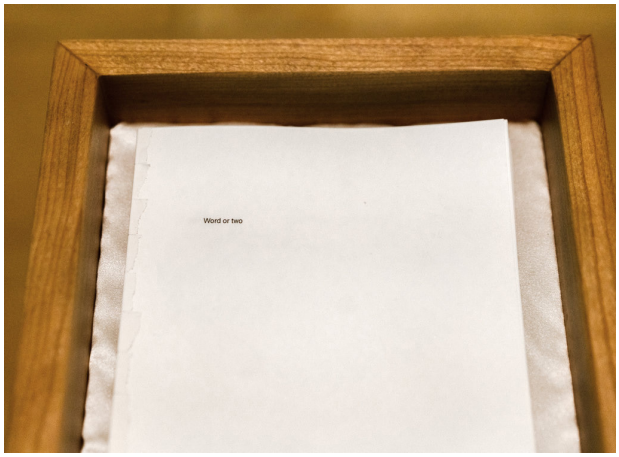
These three artists are prime examples of transnational identity, having been born in China and educated in America, where they now live as artists and run an alternative space in New York called Practice. Here, at their first collaborative exhibition, through Feb. 12, they create the sense of an intimate conversation among a small, international group of friends. With sculpture, video, installation and a book of poetry, they defy expectations of what global art should look like, choosing to make intimate statements, rather than take on broad sociopolitical issues.

-Barbara Pollack

The New York Times



A detail from a Cici Wu installation at the 47 Canal gallery. She is among three young Chinese artists showing there.
Credit: Jake Naughton for *The New York Times*



A detail from works by Ho King Man. The manuscript translates poetry by the photographer Ren Hang into English.
Credit: Jake Naughton for *The New York Times*

Review: Chinese Cultural Nomads Find an Oasis

Transnational is the new buzzword in curatorial circles, aimed at artists whose cultural identity is fluid, a hybrid of the many countries where they have lived, studied and now work.

Cici Wu, Ho King Man and Wang Xu are three such artists, who were born in China, educated in the United States and now call New York their home. In 2015 they turned their shared studio in Chinatown into an ad hoc alternative art space and impromptu residency program called Practice. Run on a shoestring budget that's covered by their income from part-time jobs, and with no website, Practice has attracted a word-of-mouth following among young international artists who, like the founders, lead nomadic lives.

"What we are trying to do is to find a new alternative to identity politics, to put our Chinese identity on a lower level and open ourselves to something more focused on the relationship between the three of us," said Ms. Wu, a recent M.F.A. graduate of the Maryland Institute College of Art who endearingly works artspeak into heartfelt statements about their mission.

Ms. Wu and her two partners now have a new opportunity to test their ideas, not as curators but as artists, at their first collaborative show, opening this week at the 47 Canal gallery. Working to the last minute to finish the installation, they are similar to many artists who have limited gallery experience, despite having run a space of their own.

"They are still in that very idealistic place in their practice and they have a very open-ended idea about what this exhibition experience can be," said Margaret Lee, a founder of 47 Canal and its director.

Mr. Wang has the most developed solo career and regularly shuttles among artist residencies, a studio in Beijing and the Practice space on Eldridge Street. Yet he hardly can be described as a jet setter, coming from a modest family in Dalian, where his father was a taxi driver. Having studied at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing and Columbia University's graduate program in visual arts, Mr. Wang combines formal Chinese training in realist sculpture with a Conceptual bent that he picked up in New York.



A sculpture by Wang Xu.
Credit: Jake Naughton for *The New York Times*

He presents a contemporary version of a Greek kouros, a standing nude minus a head, with a surface of pebbly gray clay that seems as if it might disintegrate at any moment. Antique hooks placed around the body turn the work into a somewhat silly coat rack that invites interaction but diminishes its impact.

Mr. Wang's video is more engaging, projected on an adjacent wall. He traces his steps during a residency upstate in which he lived in a hut made of wood and clay gathered from the forest. Here, his only human interaction is with the resident gardener, who creates crop circles in lush fields as he rides on a mower the size of a golf cart. In the course of the 11-minute video, Mr. Wang makes clay and fashions an oversize bust of the gardener, building layer upon layer by hand until the sculpture becomes a realistic rendition of the man before him.

Ms. Wu, who grew up in Beijing and studied in Hong Kong before coming to the States in 2012, has developed an intriguing vocabulary that uses electronics and machinery to surprisingly intimate effect. To create her installation "Closer, Closer, Says Love," she sneaked into movie theaters with a device that recorded the ambient light, not the film being shown. The resulting imageless video is then projected onto a mechanism with light sensors (not unlike an automatic door) that responds by shuttling two ragged sleeve cuffs back and forth, like forlorn lovers who keep trying to meet but are ultimately yanked apart. Casting shadows on the wall of the gallery, the installation conveys the sense of watching a romantic encounter, achieved almost magically with minimal, mundane materials.

Finally, a spotlight on a small book resting on a wooden table invites viewers to read the words within its pages. This work, by Mr. Ho, provides an English translation of the poetry of Ren Hang, a Beijing photographer best known for his surrealistic images of naked young models in provocative poses. Mr. Ren likes to post poems to his website that are equally suggestive, with titles like "Each Time I Do Something Bad."

Here, his poems take center stage — no photographs are on view — revealing to American audiences a fresh voice that in this setting can only be engaged by one person at a time. Mr. Ho, who was born in a small town in the south of China, moved with his family to the United States in 2000 and attended Fordham Law School; he is still experimenting with the possibilities of installation, not having yet achieved a fully resolved work.

As a whole, this exhibition has a sweet sentimentality that defies presumed notions of what global Conceptual art should look like or address. "We are attracted to work with an inner independence," Mr. Ho has said, describing Practice's criteria for working with artists. The phrase applies equally to the works on view, which are refreshingly free of the critiques of socioeconomic conditions and commodities that often sprout at biennials and art fairs. Everything here is brought to an intimate level, creating the sense of a conversation within a small circle of friends who happen to be participants in a borderless, international network.

Cici Wu, Ho King Man, Wang Xu: *Mosquitoes, Dusts and Thieves.* Through Feb. 12 at 47 Canal Gallery, 291 Grand Street, second floor, Manhattan; 646-415-7712, 47canal.us.

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/12/arts/design/chinese-cultural-nomads-find-an-oasis.html

ARTFORUM

Best of 2016: Du Keke

10. PRACTICE (111 ELDRIDGE STREET, NEW YORK)

I visited this project space on the top floor of a Chinatown apartment building on the last day of Song Ta's exhibition "How Is the Weather." The trio that run the space—Ho King Man, Cici Wu, and Xu Wang—were talking about how to repurpose the screens and iPads that had been used in the show, debating whether they should try to return the most expensive one to the Apple Store. Their animated argument was great fun to watch, and their obvious energy also explained why, in just a year and a half, this tiny noncommercial space has become not only a place for young artists to make and show work (it has a residency program as well as an exhibition space) but also a social hub—the perfect venue to have, say, a "relaxation party" (one was recently organized by Cao Fei), hold a book launch (as did Arrow Factory), or just meet friends and eat hot pot. I dined there three days later, but that was part of Seon Young Park's participatory artwork.



Artforum, December 2016, vol. 55, no. 4

無論
WHATEVER



Written and translated by Banyi Huang
撰写和翻译：黄半衣

My first encounter with Cici Wu and PRACTICE was through the artist Cao Fei, with whom PRACTICE organized a show called Relaxation Party. What active minds lie behind such an unconventional yet thought-provoking theme? Urged on by a curiosity to interview Cici, one of the co-founders, I made my way through fruit stalls and fish markets to an old-style apartment building in Chinatown. Hidden in a tight space flooded with light, PRACTICE is an alternative space consisting of monthly exhibitions and a one-room artist residency.

我是通过艺术家曹斐第一次认识到 Cici Wu 和 PRACTICE，因为 PRACTICE 曾为曹斐做过一个名叫《放松派对》的展览。在这个不寻常但耐人寻味的主题背后潜伏着何样充满活力的头脑？充满了好奇心想要采访 Cici——PRACTICE 的创始人之一———我接连穿过水果摊和海鲜市场走到唐人街的一座老式居民楼前。隐蔽在一个狭小而阳光充溢的公寓里，作为另类艺术空间的 PRACTICE组织每月轮换的展览和一房间艺术家驻留项目。

Seated by the window was Cici, surrounded by materials taken down from the last show. Still recovering from the five flights of stairs, I was immediately struck by her soft spoken yet determined demeanor. Switching fluently between English and Mandarin, Cici opened up about herself and her practice with unusual sincerity and clarity, depositing me in a poetic landscape where narrative and abstraction fused into one. It was a conversation about cinema, feelings, identity, and everything in between.

Cici 坐在窗前，被刚拆卸下的展览材料围绕着。尽管我仍由于爬完五层楼梯而喘息，Cici 温和而坚决的姿态立即让我着迷。流利地穿流于中英文，Cici 用真挚明了的语言与我分享她和她艺术实践的故事，置我于一种叙事与抽象描述融为一体的诗意化风景之中。我们聊到电影、感情、存在感，以及它们之间的一切。

Banyi: How did your fascination with cinema come about?

你是如何开始对电影着迷的?

Cici: You know the moment when you realize you are an artist? It occurred to me years ago when I was holding a video camera in my bathroom.

对于我来说，真正意识到自己在做艺术的那一瞬间，是在多年前我在洗手间里手拿摄像机时。

For me, cinema is able to induce human tears through the mere fluctuation of light, therein lies the departure point for my fascinations with cinema itself. Montage, structured as a series of fragments, calls on us to mentally complete the projected actions. Emotion, the internal activity that populates the spaces in between the flickering of light and that which fixes them together, is a movement of the soul.



Imagined Cinema, 2015

Ceramic, silicone, plaster, plastic chair, coffee, fairy light, color single-channel video 3 min.

对于我来说，电影可以通过纯粹光的明暗变化使人落泪，这是我对其迷恋的出发点。蒙太奇是由一系列不完整的片段组成；它要求我们在脑海里把投影中的动作与情节拼接在一起。感情，作为一种居于光影片段之间并把它们联结在一起的内在活动，是一场灵魂的运动。

B: Then is it the desire to share with others your abundance of emotions and perspective on cinema that motivate you to create art?

那么你是不是很想通过艺术创造来与他人分享你丰富的情感以及对于电影的独特看法?

C: Emotional engagement is really important to me. I wonder if affective experience and the poetics of cinema are largely under-examined in the discussion of "expanded cinema", where new media and technological development remain the focus.

我很看重情感上的互动。我质疑在'扩展领域的电影'的讨论中，对于新媒体与高科技的过度关注是否低估了情感的体验以及诗意影像的重要性。

However, I don't think I would use the word 'share'. It is too humble, too generous, too kind. I would prefer something more political, perhaps a personal manifesto on art and a re-definition of cinema. If I were to be ambitious, I would like for the power of the small and personal to affect how we perceive every system.

然而，我并不想用'分享'这一个词。它太谦卑、慷慨、和仁慈了。我倒偏向一种更政治的态度，来发表我对于艺术的理解以及重新定义电影的个人宣言。用更有野心的话来说，我想聚集微小细节和来自内心的力量，让人们重新看待各种知识和系统。

B: But your work isn't overly didactic. To be assertive yet not aggressive—these are qualities rare to find nowadays.

但是你的作品并不带有过多的说教性。这种不卑不亢的品质在当前十分罕见。

C: There should be lots of different directions that don't involve the stigma attached to sentiments and feelings. The path I take explores the enormous range of affections through the making of objects, for emotion is the most mysterious system.

我希望人们可以不带着偏见去讨论研究'情绪'和'感觉'。我选择通过雕塑的制作来探索情感所包涵的巨大跨度和可能性，因为感情对我来说是最神秘的系统。



We Became Mirrors, 2016

Glass, cheesecloth, silver nitrate, sugar, ammonia, silicone, single-channel video

B: That leads to the question of how you came to find sculpture to be your medium.

那么雕塑是如何成为你的媒介的?

C: I came across sculpture in my installation workshop at college. It wasn't so much about craftsmanship than the investigation of how two objects meet each other. My first sculptural work was a three dimensional autobiography, a research on the intimate relationship between installation and text, signs and signifiers. Starting with the idea of childhood memories, I collected a lot of toys, including a toy train of mine, and studied old toy stores in Hong Kong.

我是在大学的装置实验课里最先接触到雕塑。与其说是学习具体的制造工艺，还不如说是认识到两个物体如何相遇并且联在一起。我的第一个雕塑作品可以形容为一本三维空间的自传，是一份对于装置与文字、符号和能指之间亲密关系的探索。从儿时回忆的概念出发，我收集了许多玩具，包括我小时候的玩具火车。并且考察了香港的旧时代玩具商店。

B: Was that the Eyelash My Hands Wink (2011) piece?

这是不是 《睫毛我的手眨眼》(2011) 作品?

C: Yes. Influenced by Lacan at the time, I was interested in how the systematic arrangement of objects reflects the subconscious. Then in grad school I went in the opposite direction, becoming invested in the actual craft behind molding things with my own hands.

是的。那时我受到拉康的精神分析影响，对于物体的系统性布置及其所反映的潜意识很感兴趣。上研究生后我走了完全相反的方向，投入到翻模和使用原始材料的工艺创作中。



Eyelash My Hands Wink 《睫毛我的手眨眼》, 2011

Plywood, LGB train, motor, found toys, industrial components, candle, handkerchief, readymade objects

Recently I realized why sculpture is so important to me. The way my hands deposit my feelings in objects is not dissimilar to how emotional hope is conveyed to the family through the mother's hands. You can see that is the nature of domestic labor, the way mothers prepare meals and arrange the home. I wish to use sculpture to define the delicate relationship between cinema and emotion, as well as the indescribable sparks created by their encounter.

最近我才意识到为什么雕塑对我如此重要。我用手将感情注入物体的创作过程其实和母亲的手在不经意间将希望传达给家庭的方式很相似。这也是家庭劳动——比如母亲做饭和收拾房间——的本质。我希望通过雕塑来定义影像与情感之间微妙的关系，以及它们相遇那瞬间所带来的，那些无法用理性言语描述的火花。

B: Chantal Akerman's work immediately comes to mind. There is something about the quotidian that is central to domestic labor, somewhat female, somewhat neglected.

这让我马上想到导演香坦·阿克曼的作品。家务劳动的重心围绕着平凡的琐事，是一种极易被忽视的女性劳动。

C: She is one of my favorite filmmakers. I'm interested in the logic behind domestic work in Chinese families.

阿克曼是我很喜欢的导演之一。我对于中国传统家务劳动背后的逻辑很感兴趣。

B: Do you always draw the found objects from your own experience? Is there necessarily a symbolic significance?

你总是从自己亲身经验中去寻取现成物吗？其中是否必然有象征性的意义？

C: I always make a differentiation between ready-made objects and found objects. Ready-made is something commonplace that doesn't require a special definition, like a mass-produced cup. Found objects, on the other hand, have one more layer, distinguished by a special smell or a personal scar.

我总会把'现成品'和'现成物'（直译：找到的物品）区别开来。现成品更加常见，不需要特别的定义，比如说一个批量生产的杯子。相比起来，现成物则有另一层含义，由一种特殊的味道或者亲身体验的伤痕所区别开来。

B: I was really struck by the poetic statement of your conception of Automatic Door (2015). You spoke of the inherent sadness structuring the mechanism, in that its function lies precisely in the moment when the doors are forced to pull apart.

我非常受你对于《自动门》(2015) 富有诗意的设想所感动。你讲到过自动门的机械结构本身所固有的伤感，因为它的功能只能在两扇门被迫分开时启动。

C: I see it as a letter to my partner, with whom I had a long-distant relationship lasting many years.

我把这个作品当成一封信，写给一个跟我有过多年异地关系的人。





Automatic Door 《自动门》, 2015

Oak, silicone, motor, engine, sensor, flowers, plastic, dress, light bulb, LED, clock

B: I see the play between light and shadow as an allusion to cinema, because they act upon the viewer in a similar way. It also has to do with the translucency of the materials you use. It's your style.

在你的作品中，光影的采用是对影像的指代，因为它们给观众带来相似的体验。相应的你还经常使用透明的材料。光影斑驳是你的风格。

C: Yes I use light intentionally. It is an essential element: it is not only there when I make my works, but also in space where I present them; it is the first outlet that informs the direction I take. My eyes take on the mediated lens of cinema, of which light dictates the overall mood.

是的，我很清楚我在用光。光是基本的要素；它不仅仅充溢着我的工作室，同时也点亮展览空间; 光的明暗会首先影响我的制作方向。我的眼睛取代了电影的镜头，其中光影支配整体氛围的基调。

B: I noticed that In Search for Siu-Sin (2015) is the only work that takes place in darkness.

我发现 《小倩》(2015) 是唯一一个在黑暗中展示的作品。

C: It is only dark because of technical limitations. I treated the projection as an object that slowly followed the moving train. Siu-Sin, a character from the film A Chinese Ghost Story (1987), holds a special place in my memory with her ghostly apparition by the window. However, by revisiting the film, the installation recreates a spatially looping narrative where Siu-Sin levitates around the room, while her lover endlessly pursues in candlelight.

由于技术上的限制我无法采用一般的日光。我将作品中的投影看作一件跟随玩具火车缓慢移动的物体。《倩女幽魂》（1987）的主角"小倩"从窗前飘过的画面我记忆犹新。然而在回顾这部电影的过程中，投在墙上的影像衍生了新的空间幻想，变成了一个小倩一边飘走，男人一边不断在烛光下追寻的循环。



In Search of Siu-Sin, 2015

Plywood, motor train, mini projector, slip ring, film footage

B: In The Phone Rang, So the Room Suddenly Began to Snow (2014), it seemed like you were blurring the boundary between video and the physical space of the room.

在《电话响起，房间突然下起了雪》(2014)中，你似乎在刻意模糊平面影像和观众所处实体空间之间的界限。

C: For me it was more about constructing a montage with the flatness of video and the three-dimensionality in which the objects preside. I wanted to create something new by bringing them together. In film language, montage is about combining short trivial shots to create unexpected results.

我其实更想通过结合影像的平面性和物体所处的三维空间来创造出一种类似剪辑的新体验。电影语言是这样描述蒙太奇的：多个不起眼的极短镜头合成在一起可以制造出乎意料的效果。



The Phone Rang, So the Room Suddenly Began to Snow
《电话响起，房间突然下起了雪》*2014*

Oak, nylon tulle, handmade glass, silicone, wax, resin, seaweed, balloon, rotary telephone, honey, candle, paint, mirror, umbrella bag, rubber gloves, piezo sensor, arduino, *Center Stage* (1992), *Happy Together* (1996), *Fallen Angels* (1995), *Comrades, Almost a Love Story* (1996), *Chungking Express* (1994)

The non-diegetic objects in the room—the perfume bottle, the rubber gloves, the telephone—are taken from five commercial Hong Kong films made in the 90s. They were then cast and recreated. The shoe from *Comrades, Almost a Love Story* (1996) reminded me of dancing, so I made a ballerina shoe; the rubber gloves worn by the actress made circular movements, thus the rotating fan with the gloves at-

tached mirrored that motion. They are subject to a trivial and hidden personal interpretation.

空间里的非剧情性物品，包括香水瓶、塑胶手套、电话、桌子等，都在五部香港九十年代的主流电影里出现过。我用不同的材料将它们重新塑造。电影《甜蜜蜜》里女主角穿的鞋让我联想到跳舞，所以我做了一只舞鞋；女演员手带塑胶手套环绕时钟表面擦动，那么风扇上的手套是在模仿圆形的运转轨道。这些物品的制造与摆设都源于一种看似琐碎和相对隐蔽的个人理解 。



Detail view of *The Phone Rang*
《电话响起 》细节

I tried to make an experimental micro-narrative in three-dimensional space: when the telephone rings it triggers the gloves to spin, activating the room in a chaotic way. It is not necessarily a pleasant experience. Fragmentation is the nature of montage, and it is such an atmosphere that I wanted to set up.

我尝试在空间中创造一个实验性微叙事：电话铃声的响起促使附带手套的头顶电扇开始运转，并激发空间上升到一种近乎混乱的状态。观众感受的不一定是令人愉快的体验。分裂的状态是蒙太奇的本质，我想构造的也就是这样的氛围。





Detail views of *The Phone Rang*
《电话响起 》细节

B: Now I am really interested in hearing about filmmakers that have inspired you.

现在我很想听你讲讲对你有启发的导演。

C: The first that comes to mind is Sergei Eisenstein, who pioneered the usage of montage. Of course, I am drawn to experimental non-narrative filmmakers, like Stan Brakhage and Chantal Akerman. I'm also influenced by my professor, Linda Lai, who is into Direct Cinema.

我首先想到的是谢尔盖· 爱森斯坦，他开拓了蒙太奇的运用。当然，我也很喜欢创作非叙事性电影的导演，像斯坦·布拉哈格和香坦·阿克曼。我还受到我导师黎肖娴对于“直接电影”研究的影响 。

B: You don't fit the stereotype of a contemporary Chinese artist. I feel compelled to ask the question: how do you perceive of your identity?

你并不符合想象中一般中国当代艺术家的形象。我想必须问问：你是怎样理解你自己的身份的?

C: A contemporary Chinese artist needs to be redefined by time. It is almost as though I lived in Hong Kong for a hundred years, passed through Beijing for a day, and New York, it feels like it's been two centuries already. Identity is something fluid that is open to interpretation and alterations. I am just like water, and can disappear into water at any time.

我想中国当代艺术家需要随着时间的变迁不断被重新定义。有时我感觉自己曾经在香港生活了一百年，在北京待了一天，而在纽约像是活了两个世纪。个人身份应该具有流动性，并且能够接收不同的诠释和改动。我就像水一样，可以随时消失在水里。

B: Now for something practical: how do you balance the many roles you hold in your daily life?

现在转向一个实际的话题：你到底是如何平衡你生活中扮演的多重角色?

C: I am lucky to have a part-time job at Asia Art Archive in New York, and share this weird space with Bill and Xu, with whom I enjoy working. Running the program at PRACTICE makes me reflect on my own art practice: it helps me understand who I aspire to be, and whom I want to support. PRACTICE exists due to an urgency that we share, as well as a longing for purposelessness.

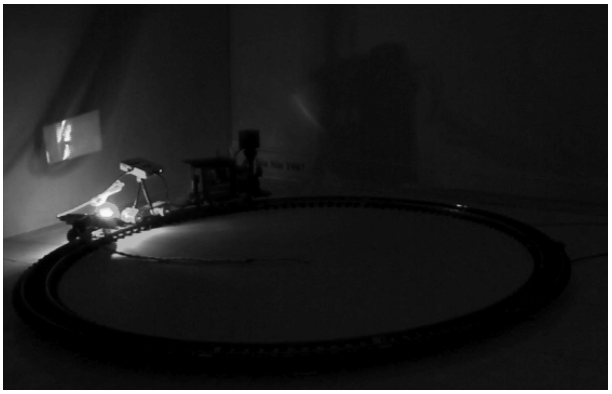
我感到幸运，能在纽约的亚洲艺术文献库一边工作，一边与 Bill 和王旭分享这个奇怪的空间。管理 PRACTICE 的项目让我反思自己的艺术实践：我慢慢开始理解自己想成为什么样的艺术家，以及自己想支持什么样的艺术家。PRACTICE 之所以存在，是因为我们不单感到一种紧迫感，同时也有一种对无目的性的向往。

Needless to say sometimes my studio work would be sacrificed, but I'm learning to balance my time better. Bill and Xu want to give me time to work on my stuff. We help each other.

当然有时我在工作室里的创作空间会被牺牲，但我开始学习怎样平衡地分配时间。Bill 和旭想要给我更多时间去创作。我们彼此帮助。

As I wrapped up our interview, sounds of footsteps and laughter began to filter through the air, as friends gathered for yet another celebratory opening. It was a feeling that confirmed the spirit of openness, sharing, and spontaneity embodied in Cici's words.

正当我完成采访时，脚步和欢笑的声音开始渗透到空气中。朋友们相聚开始庆祝另一个展览的开幕。那个感觉证实了 Cici 言语中坦率、分享，以及随性的精神。



Cici Wu was born in Beijing, and later moved to Hong Kong with her family. She received her bachelor's degree from School of Creative Media, City University HK, and completed her MFA at Maryland Institute College of Art. She is currently living in New York City.

Cici Wu 出生在北京，之后随家人移居到香港。毕业于香港城市大学创意媒体学院，并且从马里兰艺术学院取得艺术硕士学位。目前居住在纽约。

www.thinknotonceofme.org

https://www.wulun.org/cici-wu