



CICI WU

Of Light and Shadow

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

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 x 29 x 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.

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



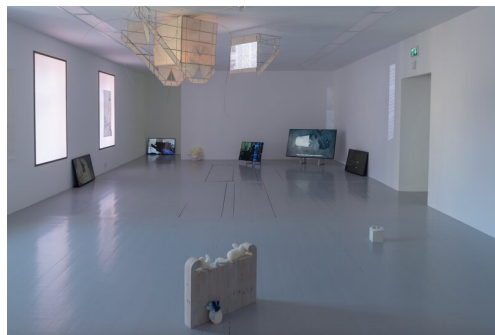
Re: Mothlight (Changing Brightness 01), 2023, ink on paper, 60×74×3 cm. Courtesy the artist and Empty Gallery, Hong Kong.

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人朋友“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 nothingness -->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 humanness tied, in turn, to technicity, particularly archival.

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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 iphonicallly-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 cuttngly 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-homeland, 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 digital 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



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.

BROOKLYN RAIL

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.



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.

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.



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 x 16 1/4 x 16 1/4 inches. Courtesy 47 Canal. Photo: Joerg Lohse.



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



'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.

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

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

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 China without 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



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.

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 unfinished 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 functional, 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 sculptures, 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 volume 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, camera, 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 unfinished work, provides the conceptual underpinning of Wu's project. Her sculptural works, arranged in columns representing the eleven pages of Cha's *White Dust* storyboard and bathed in the beam of the projector, cast enigmatic shadows that appear in somewhat jumbly, unfamiliar compositions on the gallery wall. Psychologically loaded, these have an unruly, disruptive implication – most people aren't happy when some object interrupts the hypnotic reverie of what Barthes called the "cinematographic cocoon". Shadows index a cinematic apparatus, yet their presence is traumatically unresolved and politically impartial, hinting towards the fleeting 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 translatable 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, glowing 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 represent techniques of overcoming distance, from touch, most simply, to industrial and globalised modes of transportation. Yet a corollary of each of these technologies is displacement: in a psychoanalytic 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 transformation, the exhibition complicates the individuated subject that is formulated 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治。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, 或者越南裔菲律宾人, 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

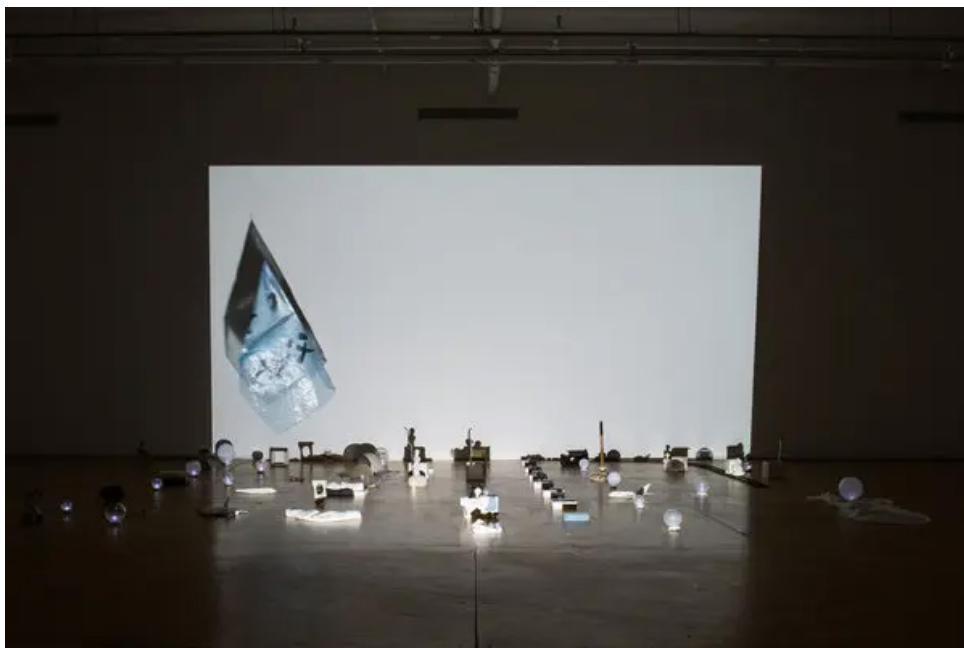
10 Galleries to Visit Now on the Lower East Side

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*

Migratory Practice

燃点 Ran Dian

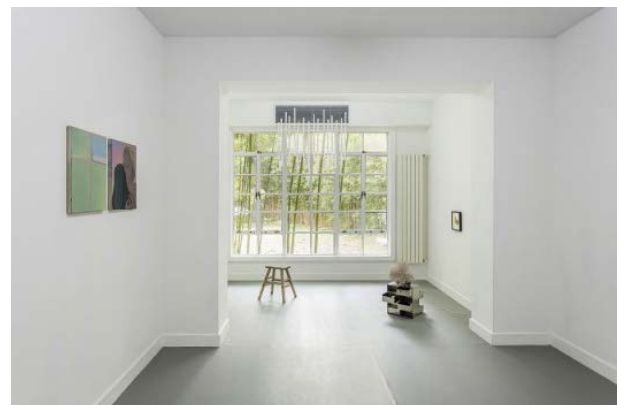
"Scraggly Beard Grandpa," Capsule Shanghai (1st Floor, Building 16, Anfu Lu 275 Nong, Xuhui District, Shanghai, China),

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 Guo-qiang, 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 positions. 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, language 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.

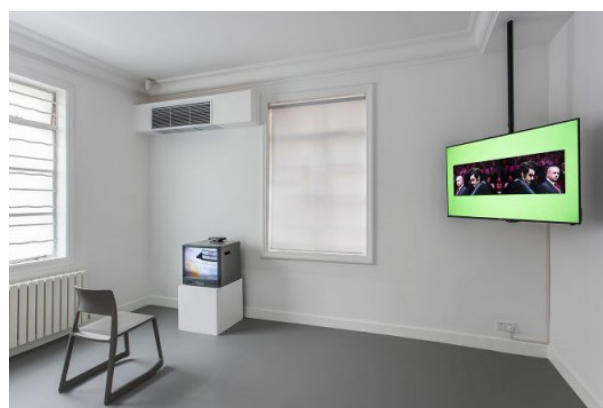
Without an overarching thematic conceit, the works in the exhibition seem to bounce words off of one another, and produce a collage of distinctly accented modes of art-making. In the garden, Rania Ho’s installation *Genus: Verduos Suburbanus Bucolia & Love Hate Relationship* (all works cited, 2017) ironizes 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

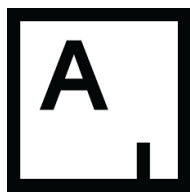
The 15th edition of Frieze London closed on Sunday 8th October: offering its visitors a diverse and dynamic selection of international emerging and established artists, alongside a curated non-profit programme of artist commissions, films and talks, established itself as one of the of the most exciting 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.



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*.



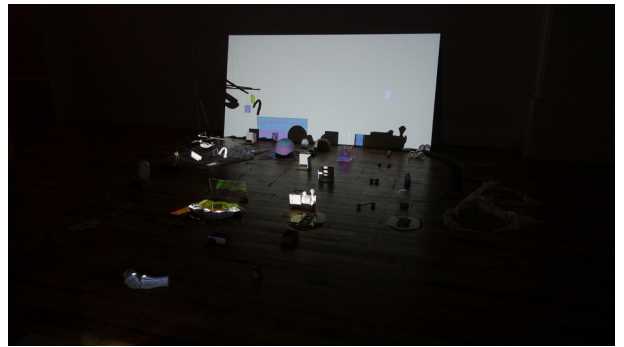
Cici Wu, *Foreign Object #1 Fluffy Light (terrence)*, 2017.
Photo by Joerg Lohse. Image courtesy of the artist and 47 Canal, New York.

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.

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 enluring 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

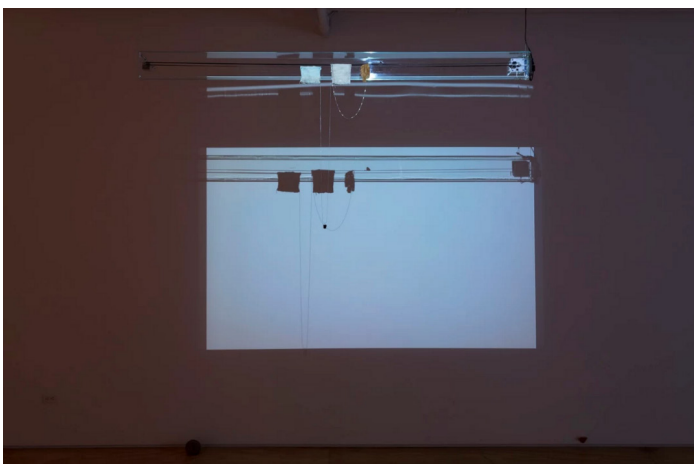
The libidinous machine pounds its hearts jittery with eagerness – there is a seeming algorithmic confusion in Wu’s work as it opens and closes that is more human than human with its sincere slip-ups; vulnerability to miscalculations. And the imperfect symbiosis is furthermore evident with an unsolicited 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

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。

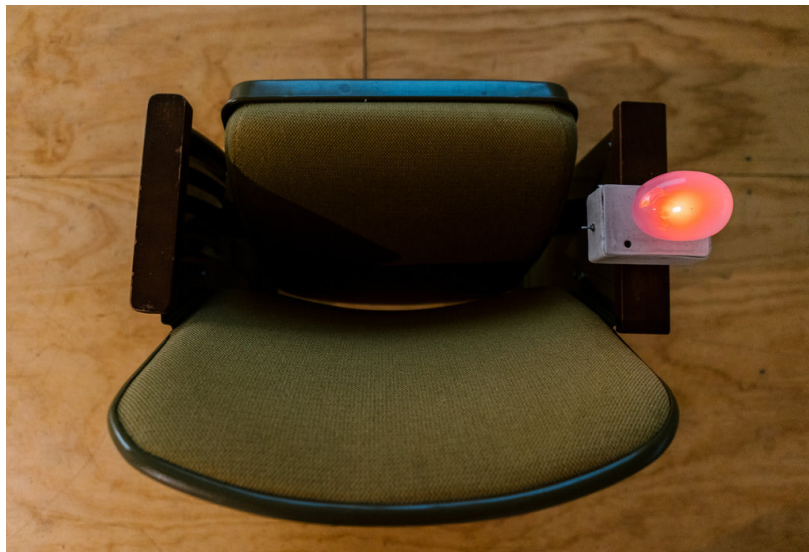
尽管看起来像是躲在他人的话语和普通的物品背后，艺术家的语焉不详其实直白坦承：特制辣椒酱是外祖父的秘方，而从他的辞世开始，何京闻经历了十年既像惩戒也像修行的生活——“人有时感受不到自己体内的器官”——身体内部的虚无被总结到创作当中，使作品中的种种性暗示显出了“血味”。比如任航文字中荷尔蒙的躁动与旺盛与其摄影作品相一致，但作为文本的译者，何京闻的自我反观则多出了克制与痛苦，他在词语的转化和编织中梳理着私人记忆。

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*

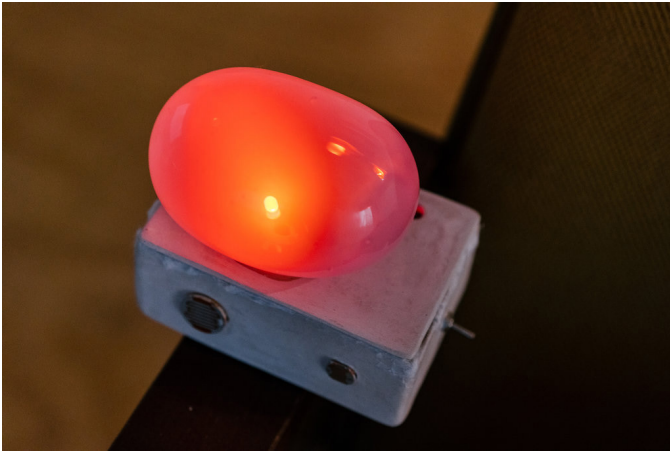
Global Artists, Whispered Statements

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

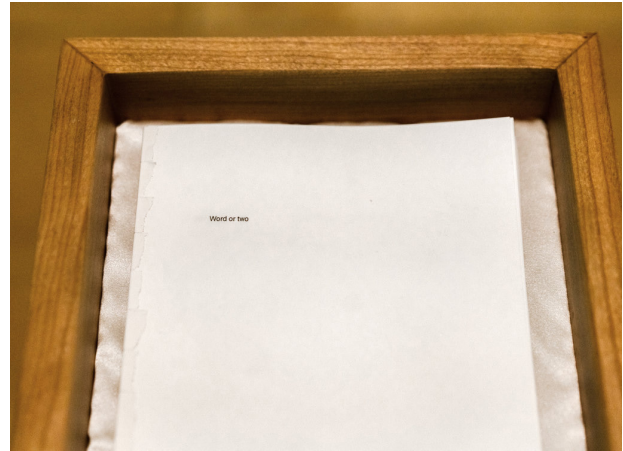
These three artists are prime examples of transnational identity, having been born in China and educated in America, where they now live as artists and run an alternative space in New York called Practice. Here, at their first collaborative exhibition, through Feb. 12, they create the sense of an intimate 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 kouroi, 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.



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.

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