

城市记忆
CITY TRACERY
2011.9.11 - 11.13

上午艺术空间
am art space
Shanghai













城市记忆

两位艺术家: 于吉, 克利蒂娜·施米吉尔。**两个时代:** 一位艺术家怀着缠绵细腻上海本土童年记忆, 另一位则是从一个外国来访者的角度把握上海的时代变革。**一个空间:** 上午艺术空间所处的建筑载有其浓厚的历史回忆。**共同关注的问题:** 记忆是如何在创造中被表现, 有些事物承载着历史却并没有深陷其中; 怎样通过缓慢的劳动与工作解读时间与过去; 被陈列在空间内的艺术作品如何与观众沟通。**两个工作室:** 通过流动的观者, 在收集, 材料, 丢弃, 工作等形式中彼此转换关系。**在展览的过程中:** 展厅扮演了工作室的角色, 艺术家作品相互的参与、与空间的参与, 在反复臆想中作品随之发生改变。此次展览的构想受到德国哲学家瓦尔特·本雅明的影响和启发, 本雅明在《柏林童年》中按照“古代记忆激活法”构建一种特异的回忆, 这种自然记忆与“有意识回忆”的方法把事与物放在一个更宽泛的时间与空间里, 变得有意思, 用本雅明的话说, “是向回忆活动的深层内里进行逐一挺进”。

City Tracery

Two artists: Yu Ji, Christina Shmigel. **Two generations:** One with the lingering local memory of a Shanghai childhood, the other with a foreigner's grasping for a sense of place in a time of change. **One gallery:** an art space, containing discreet mementos of its historical past. **Shared concerns:** How can memory be manifested in the creation of something new, something that carries its history but is not mired in it; how does the slow creation of work by craft and accretion allow memory to inhabit it; how can the installation of the work in space contain the viewer. **Two studios:** The fluid nature of what is to be seen on consecutive visits, changing relationships between objects, collections, materials, discards, tracks of work efforts, of re-purposing. The exhibition idea, inspired by German philosopher Walter Benjamin's notion of activating the "atavistic memory": to incorporate the work of the two individual artists into the gallery in the way of the ever-evolving studios, thoughts in progress, responding to the particularities of the space, placing events and objects in a wider context of time and space. **Over the course of the exhibition:** The gallery acts as studio, the artists' engagement with the space and with each other's work continually re-imagining the initial installation. **In the end:** A viewing that carries the memory of the show's original form but is inextricably altered by time's passage. In Benjamin's own words, "it is in the profound activity of recollection that one advances step by step."

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Y = 于吉 Yu Ji

am: 两位艺术家在上海住了多久?

Y: 我是上海人, 在上海长大, 已经26年了。

am: 两位是出于何种原因选择在这样一个空间展出作品?

Y: 主要是这个空间在市中心最喧闹的地区, 空间又在地下, 没有窗, 没有自然光, 回声很重, 个性很强。

am: 请问是何种机缘促使两位合作此次的展览?

Y: 我和C认识大约已有7年了吧, 从最早还是大二的学生, 为C在上海多伦美术馆的个展做助理, 到现在自己也有了自己的工作室, 我们一同工作, 一同分享彼此的创作, 和生活, 我一直愿望和C合作一次。

am: 能谈谈本次展览的主题“城市记忆”吗?

Y: 我觉得给展览, 包括作品起名字都是件挺难的事儿, 当时和C商量, 她给了几个英文的备选名字, 我的想法是尽量地中性, 含蓄, 冷静, 当时敲定下来的英文是“City Tracery”, 想了半天, 就用“城市记忆”作其中文翻译了。

am: 两位迥异的文化差异想必也是展览所要呈现的主题之一吧?

Y: 文化差异是必然的, 在展览视觉上也绕不开, 但这并非我们主观想要表达的, 我们希望一切尽可能地自自然然。这是一个关于如何冷静观看和感受的展览, 最吸引我俩的也是这个。

am: 于吉, 我注意到展厅地上有几处马赛克似的痕迹, 请问这是作品? 为何选用这样一种表达方式?

Y: 这是作品。是我创作《公共空间》系列的一部分过程。制作模具, 在地面上一个个翻制, 于是留下斑斑驳驳的痕迹, 今年7月我用这个形式在一次群展中完成过另外一件作品, 当时是4米见方一大块, 我把余留在模具边缘的石膏保留下来, 整件作品面积大而轻如鸿毛。这次这件有微弱的改变, 视觉效果很不同, 这次我希望在形式上隐于空间。

am: 于吉, 作为80后一代, 你如何看待上海这座城市?

Y: 上海是我的故乡, 没有人是不对故乡怀着眷恋之情的。但这个城市正在肆意剥夺我们的童年和记忆, 我身边很多的朋友他们的幼儿园拆了, 小学因为修建高架搬了, 中学改名字了, 最爱吃的饭店突然有一天就不见了, 诸如此类, 这就是这个城市带给我们的, 我不知道如果没有记忆的痕迹, 我们又该如何温习对故乡的爱。

am: 你如何看待与上午艺术空间这样一个年轻的非营利实验艺术空间的合作?

Y: 本来我们也是好朋友, 相互欣赏, 所以合作很愉快, 中国需要这样不以营利为目的的, 相对非商业的, 勇于实验的艺术空间, 我想这和空间主人也进行艺术创作很有关。这是一个很理想化的地方, 对我们的创作是有助的。

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C = 克丽蒂那 施米吉尔 Christina Shmigel

am: How long you have been in the city?

C: Since 2004: almost seven years.

am: Why did you choose to show works in this kind of space?

C: Because am art space is a gallery that is interested in showing experimental and experiential work rather than the kind of commercial work that is more common in Shanghai galleries.

am: What is the reason for you two artists doing such an exhibition together?

C: Yu Ji & I have known each other almost the whole time that I have lived in Shanghai. It has been really exciting to watch her develop as an artist and to learn from her about Chinese culture. It is very surprising and almost magical to me that despite the fact that we are a generation apart in age and of such different cultures, we share a common feeling about many life experiences. Though our works do not resemble each other, the things that inspire us to work are often similar.

am: Could you talk about the name "City Tracery" ?

C: The exhibition was inspired in part by Yu Ji' s reading of Walter Benjamin' s memoir, Berlin Childhood. She was taken with the idea of how memory leaves traces of the past in the present, layering one' s experience of place. Both of our works draw on sights common to the city of Shanghai - public toilets, carts of used materials, etc. Yu Ji' s floor drawings are a tracery of her activity of making; the collected materials of my work - chairs, wood, styrofoam - a tracery of the activities of the inhabitants of this city.

am: What do you think you bring to the show from your difference of your culture and identity?

C: One of us sees the city as an insider, the other as an outsider and yet we are both making work that seeks to express universal qualities, form and beauty that can be found in unlikely places, places that others might not expect to find beautiful.

am: Can you talk about these chairs? Because they are so familiar to Chinese. How about for you? I mentioned you use package a lot in your works, do you have special meaning of using it?

C: Chairs are the companions of humans so in every culture they "stand in" as symbols for the self. I like the small Chinese chairs for how they keep you close to the ground: they give a feeling of solidity, of being settled in place. To my western eye, they also confuse my sense of size: are they for children or for adults? So how do I know the size of the objects near them? These old chairs also have a history, a tracery, of their use on their surface. It speaks to me about the passage of time & of the beauty that can be found in the ordinary.

The packaging is inspired by all the different kinds of loads - shoe boxes, plastic pipes, wood from torn down buildings, styrofoam - I see in Shanghai, tied to carts & bicycles & motorbikes. It's very typical of here & something I never see in America. To make the loads stay in place, the drivers have to balance all the pieces & bind them together. It's a very sculptural problem that they are solving even if they don't think of it that way. I admire their skill and sense of structure & making sculpture based on their work makes me appreciate it even more.

am: Christina, as an artist comes from USA, can you talk about your view of Chinese Contemporary Art here?

C: There are not that many artists making work in my area of sculptural installation in China...though there are Chinese artists making very powerful work of this kind in the West. I think this is partly because right now there are not many institutions that support this kind of work in China; here the scene is very much about works that can be sold. On the other hand, those artists that do make installation work here often work on a much grander scale than would be possible in the USA & that is thrilling to see.

am: As am art space is a young non-profit art space, what do you think about cooperating with them? and what do you think they can do for Chinese Contemporary Art?

C: I think that am art space is such an important addition to the Shanghai art scene. As I mentioned above, there are not many galleries that support the kind of installation work that lets a viewer have an experience in space & am art space seeks out and encourages this kind of approach. With its residency program and its philosophy about art, am art spaces encourages artists to take risks with materials and ideas and space. For me, working at am art space was a rare opportunity to make work that is closer to my ideal: work that is strange to me and to the viewer.