

空间, 空间, 空间, 空间

Space, Space, Space, Space

《绿毛怪》(局部), 2016年
声音、雕塑、设备、印刷品及其他媒介, 在地装置, 尺寸可变
第十一届上海双年展展览现场, 2016年

Green Hair Monster (detail), 2016
Sound, sculpture, devices, prints, and other media, site-specific
installation, dimensions variable
Installation view at the 11th Shanghai Biennale, 2016

瞿畅 Qu Chang

于吉2011年的展览“我独自站立”中呈现了一系列取自改革开放以来城市公共空间形态的雕塑。立方体石膏模块——一方面作用为搭建常用的方砖, 一方面模拟出老马赛克的效果——被用来堆砌出简单开放的空间造型, 一件件分坐于旧木块组合成的形似旧家具的底座上, 弥漫着一种粗糙、贫穷的集体记忆与简朴、脆弱的美感。这件名为《公共空间》的作品看似于吉创作中的一个异类: 它指向一个具体历史时段中具有阐释意义的一类挟带私密功能的公共空间, 在不需言明其意图的前提下, 已然朝向着一类与集体主义或公共性相关的社会研究。然而引用瓦尔特·本雅明的《柏林童年》, 于吉解释这场对历史细节的回溯所尝试贴近的是一种更原始的记忆, 是关联着“空间、瞬间和非连续性”的一手回忆——相异于线性的、自传式的叙事性回忆。此时, 本雅明透过碎片式的记忆图像回溯时代的历史意图在《公共空间》的雕塑中似乎是退居次位的, 借用他的回忆逻辑, 于吉试图搭建的是记忆切片所能够展开并重审的、作为雕塑的空间。作为于吉早期的作品之一, 若是以《公共空间》为连接点, 将它所发散出的“人”(包括身体、感知、回忆……)、“空间”(包括雕塑空间、展览空间、意识空间……)及“文字”(尤其是文字的内省意义)的相互作用视为于吉艺术实践的发力点, 或许能够连接起她作为雕塑艺术家(生产空间)和独立艺术空间运营者(空间生产)的多重工作, 并将它们贯通为一个结合着内观与外探的创作整体。

In Yu Ji's 2011 solo exhibition "I Stand Alone," at C-Space, in Beijing, she presented a series of sculptures that drew on the formal qualities of urban public space in reform-era China. Constructed with small plaster blocks—a common material made to imitate ancient mosaics—stacked and layered into simple and open spatial models, the sculptures were mounted on plinths constructed from bits of wood to look like old home furniture. The sculptures both alluded to a crude sense of collective memory, and exuded a plain, fragile aesthetic sensibility. This series, "Public Space," marks a sharp distinction in Yu's practice: it refers to a type of public space that possesses a private function during a concrete historical period. By repeatedly and clearly stating its intention, the piece orients itself toward a kind of sociological study of the relation between collectivism and the nature of communality. Quoting Walter Benjamin's *Berlin Childhood* around 1900, Yu describes this retracing of historical details as an attempt to access a pure, primal area of memory in its "spatial, momentary, discontinuous" form, as opposed to its linear, autobiographical, narrative-based aspects.

In the sculptures of "Public Space," however, this Benjaminian application of fragmentary memory to historical intent takes second place; borrowing this logic, Yu Ji instead attempts to construct a sculptural space in which specific shades of memory can be presented and examined. If "Public Space" is taken as a point of juncture, then the conscious and mutual dispersion of "person" (including body, perception, memory), "space" (including sculptural space, exhibition space, sensory space), and "text" (especially its introspective qualities) is revealed as the main force driving her practice. This reflects her dual role as an artist working in sculpture (producing in space) and the coordinator of an independent art space (giving space to production), connecting introspective observation and outward exploration in a unified whole.



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2008年, 于吉与合作者邓叶明以上海香山路的一座别墅为址成立了上午艺术空间, 两年后, 空间迁至奉贤路的一个地下空间, 从早期结合艺术家工作室及展览场地的空间使用到迁址后对策展、驻留及公共项目的侧重, 空间逐步演变为兼具内容生产与公共参与的成熟形态, 项目包含青年策展人的展览项目、艺术家个展、剧场/表演、讨论会及驻留项目。与此同时, 上午艺术空间作为同辈艺术工作者们聚集、交流的空间功能也始终被创办者们所保留, 作为供参与者们交换并拓展视野的平台。在这样一种开放的、交流的、向外延伸的活跃情绪之下, 空间也不断以自我审视的态度回看自身的状态和所处的环境。以2011年为起点, 可以观察到一批以上午艺术空间的物理存在为考察对象的作品及展览, 包括荷兰艺术家Peter Vink通过灯管线条勾勒空间结构与细节的驻留创作, “小明和小红”(刘月和王雁伶)在《赞美诗》中以墙角折纸与二重唱模拟并歌咏一个不可见的平行空间, 刘钢在《当空间作为作品》中呈现的一个叠套式的物理平行空间和一批抽象的空间提问, 韩馨逸、杨

Space

In 2008, Yu Ji and her collaborator Deng Yeming opened am Art Space in a villa on Xiangshan Road in Shanghai; two years later, it moved to an underground space on Fengxian Road. From its initial function as both a gallery and provider of artist studios to, after the move, a specific focus on curatorial projects, residencies, and public initiatives, am Space has gradually matured into a place that is both productive and participative. am Space features projects by young curators, solo exhibitions, theater, performance, seminars, and residency programs; at the same time, it also serves as a place of reconnaissance for a new generation of artists and their collaborators and colleagues. An open atmosphere of dialogue has been consistently maintained by its founders, so that it serves as a platform for participants to interact and expand their horizons. As part of this open, outward-looking, and positive environment, am Space also maintains a healthy practice of self-reflection and examination, hyper-aware of the state of its own affairs and environment.

紫和刘辛夷以“地下场所”的语汇及社会意涵为背景所搭建的《密室》。同时，另一批空间内的展览则串联起“城市空间”的线索，通过人与机械的流动以及对城市环境的探险，排列出一系列糅杂着社会观察和城市浪荡者情怀的游曳章节（例如2011年的“交通环流”和“练习迷失”、2015年的“旅途愉快”）。一系列关乎独立艺术空间现状及功能讨论的机会也聚集着一批实践者们，在空间中不定期发生（2014年的“独立艺术空间在地实践笔记”，2016年的“后沙龙”）。

2015年开始，上午艺术空间发起“无窗的风景”系列，一方面回应地下室空间的封闭特征，另一方面描述着实验音乐/声音实践与空间/场景若即若离的关系，通过与实验音乐人的不定期合作，试探声音如何在空间中释放表演的张力、身体的戏剧性和感官的延伸。跳脱出对空间的单向观察，并从城市空间的丛林收敛至创作者身处的空间，一系列项目使人与空间与媒介的相互关系构成了一系列剧场式的项目，像是于吉与颜峻在《云深处》中呈现的灰尘与声音的浮动剧场、《缓坡》刘月中试图链接人物-空间的共振进而消弭感知时差的“极点空间”，叶慧审视身体机能发声的音乐项目《听（不）见》，都在来回错向地测试着材料作为身体、身体作为空间、空间作为剧场、剧场作为意识场等等的可能。

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关于身体向物、向意识的延伸，自然可以在于吉的个人创作中找到痕迹，从她大学时自发组织的松散艺术家团体“手感”开始，身体与物件的互相打磨、温度交换以致精神共融就成为于吉处理材料的手段。这些作品中，物件细腻的转变与态变都不无轻柔地暗示着一种漫长进程中的相互作用与渗透。“劳动”是于吉创作评论中的常见词，虽然工匠精神确为创作者所认可并借用的手工形式，然而这个以人为主体、指涉单向人-物关系的动名词似乎并不能准确地说明于吉在雕塑创作中往返渐进的、脱离主客体关系，并携带玄学想象的人-物关系。她在2009年的作品《与人体有关》中，将超过身体尺寸的大理石块打磨成使用过的香皂形状，作品光滑不规则的形态暗示着雕塑与其创作者、肥皂与沐浴者的时间关系，并通过物隐约传递着他/它们相互的动作、皮肤的触感和淋浴间的湿气。作品《绿毛怪》中，于吉在数个石块上植入或缠绕上自己被染成草绿色的头发，是为青苔——人与物灵活互换的关系在这里有以一种更加魔幻的方式被试探着。同样的物-我眼光在其后的《石肉》中亦可窥见：一块

From 2011 to the present, the active life of am Space can be observed through its projects and exhibitions. During his residency, Dutch artist Peter Vink installed neon strip lighting throughout the exhibition space, tracing its structural outline and architectural details; in "Anthem," artists Xiao Ming and Xiao Hong (Liu Ye and Wang Yanling used origami and sound to simulate and sonify an invisible parallel space. In "As a Space, as a Piece," Liu Gang presented a layered analogue of the gallery and a set of abstract spatial propositions. Han Xinyi, Yang Zi, and Liu Xinyi used the semantic and social connotations of underground space as a point of departure to construct "Secret Chamber." Meanwhile, a simultaneous yet separate series of exhibitions at am Space are connected by a focus on urban space. Human and mechanical flows, exploration of the urban environment, and a mixture of social observation and the feelings of urban wanderers make up this freer, discursive chapter of the gallery (for example, "Circulations" and "Practice to Get Lost" in 2011, and "Happy Journey" in 2015). An irregular and ongoing series of discussions focused on the conditions and capabilities of independent art spaces gathers yet another set of practitioners ("The On-Site Practice of Independent Art Spaces" in 2014 and "Post-Salon" in 2016).

Launched in 2015, the "Windowless Scenery" series at am Space responds both to the characteristics of its sealed, subterranean environment, and embarks on an exploration of the uncertain relationship between experimental music or sound practice and space or scenery. Through sporadic collaborative projects with experimental musicians, the series explores the ways in which sound in space liberates performative tension, the theatricality of the body, and the heightening of sensuality. Breaking free from the singular viewpoint of the space bringing it together with the surrounding urban jungle, this project turns the relationship between people, spaces, and media into a series of theatrical events. In "Deep in the Cloud," Yu Ji and Yan Jun created a floating theatrical atmosphere through a dialogue between sound and dust. In Liu Ye's "The Gentle Slope," she attempted to push cognition to its limits and eliminate the time lag of sensory perception by converging human, material, and space; in "Unheard," Ye Hui explored the musical potential of sound created by the body and its functions. These projects all strove to experiment and explore questions: What if material



《石肉 #6》
Flesh in Stone #6



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《绿毛怪》(局部), 2016年
声音、雕塑、设备、印刷品及其他媒介, 在地装置, 尺寸可变
第十一届上海双年展展览现场, 2016年

Green Hair Monster (detail), 2016
Sound, sculpture, devices, prints, and other media, site-specific installation, dimensions variable
Installation view at the 11th Shanghai Biennale, 2016

块状态松弛的肢体部块被松弛地塑形浇灌为水泥雕塑, 悬于墙面, 并没有绝对的身体和绝对的水泥, 人与物的边界继续互联并模糊着。

石头作为于吉试探人与物体与空间关系的一个关键媒介, 在2010年后便时常出现在她的创作与空间项目中。在与赵川的一次谈话中, 她谈及石头所承载的情绪, “它是自然万物随着时间消逝与变幻遗留下的沉重死亡感, 好像一股巨大的吸力抽走了灵魂, 只留下焦灼的壳”。这个满载记忆、情绪的地质产物一方面已是一件隆重甸实的雕塑(《精致的静物1号》中, 她几经跋涉寻得一块未被人工活动所改变的天然大石, 通过漫长的工作, 将其制成一幅版画, 一如记录一件庄重的雕塑), 另一面, 作为一个独立的空间实体, 它与人及展览空间的关系已然构成了剧场。正如Charles Merewether在文章中极为到位的描述:“(在于吉的作品中,) 戏剧与雕塑之间的关系形成了互惠的生命力量……作品的价值并不与任何代表性相关, 而是在于其中互动的可能性。”

were the body? Or if the body were space? Or if space were a theater? Or if theater were a sensory space?

Space

In Yu Ji's practice, the extension of the body towards matter and sensuality can be traced back to nature; ever since she founded the loose independent art collective Feel, during college, here principal methods in the handling of material have been the friction between body and matter and the exchange of energies in search of spiritual communion. In these works, the exquisite deformation and metamorphosis of objects allude to the long, slow, and extremely subtle process of mutual application and absorption. "Labor" is a word that appears frequently in commentary on Yu's practice; although the spirit of art and craft appears, the idea of the subject creating a direct connection between body and material seems unsuited to Yu's work,

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2013年, 于吉与草台班在新加坡当代艺术机构合作了展览“落地”, 并继而将草台班的剧目《不安的石头》呈现于上午艺术空间, 在草台班创建者赵川语境中指涉着社会的压制、底层的不安、无望的暴戾的石头, 与于吉对石头更加内化、气韵式的解读互相碰撞与胶合, 构成一个充盈着关系张力的场域。与草台班的合作作为于吉探索空间中雕塑与人的行动关系的开端之一, 使于吉和上午艺术空间的实践都逐渐开始朝向观察混合着身体、毛发、声音、动作的人, 透过与尘埃、石头、建材、光影等等物件的转化与沟通, 在空间的距离、回声、壁垒之间不断的交错反射。于吉2016年在上午艺术空间呈现的“黑山”便将她展览“采硫日记”中的雕塑与录像作为构成空间丛林的“植被”, 而她与李博文、Nunu Kong两位表演者对场域的介入, 则透过各自的思考路线对空间进行意识层面的拓展。在她展于2016年上海双年展的场外作品《绿毛怪》中, 一个雕塑与空间相互作用的“丛林”再次被开垦于PSA的车库空间中, 一批结合她早前创作的雕塑、水果, 以及城市周边收集来的工业废弃物在松散、有机的状态下被排布为一个充盈着潜伏的生命力量的后人类场景——剧场性在身体不确切到场的环境下已经形成。

“落地”排练现场, 新加坡当代艺术学院, 2013年
Rehearsal view of "Settling," Institute of Contemporary Art Singapore, 2013

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“生肉笔记”展览期间的上午艺术空间，2017年
am Art Space in September, 2017
Photo: Zhuang Yan



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在这个意义下，于吉的创作更像是一种朦胧的诗歌写作——不讲求对每个词组、字句、段落的控制，仅仅在舒适、自然的选择下有节拍地排布韵律，调整文字、意义、节奏的距离。声音韵律、视觉的清爽与文字感受同重，并在他们的共同作用下不下太大力气地形成作品的层次，和可上下游离的肌理——是为一种简单、原始的生命力。从她在早期创作中对文学的引用（本雅明、中国古代文学）到这些文字逐渐隐形，内化地进入她的创作肌理，构成一种向内延伸的空间探索。而这种内省的、文学的气质也始终贯穿着上午艺术空间的实践（此处不再列举，前文介绍的空间展览及作品均呈现这一倾向）。在2017年的“朗读会”中，一批青年写作者和以表演为媒介的艺术家被邀请以一对一的方式，在朗读与表演中形成相互的关系。虽然现场表演与照稿朗读间的变动性并不平衡——更多是表演者单向回应着朗读者的声音和内容——但将文字内化于身体，造就空间探索的尝试仍旧有如阅读文字本身，令人感觉沉静并清晰。

在关于于吉的评论叙述里，不难看到一个时常浮现的悖论：一方面，她细腻的、返璞归真的、关注人-物内在关系及材料质感的创作跳脱出了当代艺术观念性的（以致时而投机的）、社会性的固有实践框架，作为一个更加内化、纯粹的异类独立于惯式；另一方面，在她作品中不可见的繁复手工与随之流淌的时间又作为一种观念价值被直接注入对她的讨论当中，成为理解于吉创作时不可回避的“意义”。或许正是这种挟带矛盾又互相提示的观念与物，以至意识与空间、阅读与表演、创作与运营，在回应着她创作中各个角色的戏剧关系和她实践的分层，以及分层中这许多不断延展的空间。

which has gradually abandoned the conventional subject-object relationship, while retaining the metaphysical connection between body and matter.

In a 2009 work titled *Something to do with the Body*, Yu Ji worked with a large block of marble, carving a bench in the shape of a used bar of soap, its glossy and irregular form alluding to the temporal relationship between the sculpture and its creator, between soap and its function, the faint transferral of which results in their interaction, the tactile sensation of skin and the humidity of the bathroom. In another piece, titled *Green-Haired Monster*, Yu embedded and bound a collection of stones with her own recently dyed bright green hair, resulting in a moss-like appearance. The potential of flexibility and exchange between body and matter are here explored through a more magical, illusory aesthetic technique. The same trope appears in the subsequent piece *Flesh in Stone*, a collection of limp forms resembling limbs, sloppily moulded with cement and displayed on walls, appearing neither quite like body parts or cement, again pushing and blurring the boundaries between body and matter.

Stone plays a crucial role in Yu's exploration of the connections between the body, matter, and space. In discussion with Zhao Chuan, Yu speaks of stone as a kind of emotional vessel: "It is nature's symbol of death, following the gradual vanishing and change of time. It looks as if a great energy has drawn out its spirit, leaving only an anxious and sullen shell." This geological product, holding all of nature's memory and emotion, is, in a sense, already a solemn sculpture. In *Refined Still Life #1*, Yu embarked on a determined search for a large natural rock as yet unspoiled by human activity. She then began the slow process of creating a large print of it, as if transcribing a gigantic, solemn sculpture. Seen another way, as the physical matter out of which her independent art space is constituted, the connection between stone and the human world: the artists and their exhibitions can already be said to be theatrical. As Charles Merewether succinctly put it, in Yu's work theater and sculpture nourish each other, creating a kind of reciprocal vitality. ... The quality of the work is not found in its representative qualities, but in the interactive possibilities held within.

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In 2013, Yu Ji collaborated with the theater company Grass Stage at the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore in an exhibition titled "Settling." An extension of a previous theatrical production, *Unsettling Stones*, previously shown at am Space, the exhibition was contextualized by founder Zhao Chuan's interpretation of "stone": social inhibition, low-level disturbance, and hopeless violence, all colliding and melding with Yu's more internalized, poetic conception, producing a field of interactive tension. This collaboration with Grass Stage was an early precursor to Yu's exploration of the relationship between sculpture and bodily action in space, and was the catalyst for a gradual observational shift towards the conscious mashing of body, hair, sound, and action, the dialogue between materials such as dust, stone, building materials, and light amid the physical properties of space: distance, echo, parameters and barriers, producing a state of constant dissonance and reflection. "Black Mountain," presented at Beijing Commune in 2016, took the sculptures and video works from another exhibition, "Diary of Sulfur Mining," and reconstituted them as vegetation within the forest of the gallery space, in which Yu then performed an intervention in collaboration with performers Li Bowen and Nunu Kong; these diverse strands of thought activated the space to create an extended plane of consciousness. In her contribution to the 11th Shanghai Biennale, titled *Green-Haired Monster*, a forest of sculpture and space acting on one another was once again reclaimed, this time within the Power Station of Art's parking garage. A selection of early sculptures, fruit, and abandoned industrial materials collected from the surrounding urban area, was loosely laid out in an organic state, a posthuman scenario full of concealed energy—theatricality produced through an artificial set of conditions in which the presence of the body becomes unsure, unstable.



《吕卡山之舌》(局部), 2017年
Lycabettus Tongue (detail), 2017

Space

With this in mind, Yu Ji's work becomes a form of misty poetry—rather than striving for control of individual phrases, words, or paragraphs, snug, organic selections are presented poetically, with the distance of meter, rhyme, manipulation of text and meaning. The natural rhythms of sound, fresh visual elements, and the sensation of text are equally weighted. Their coexistence and shared functions form the substantial layers of the artwork, organic textures floating with a simple, primal energy. In relation to her earlier works, which draw on literature (from Walter Benjamin to classical Chinese literature), the gradual disappearance or internalization of text into her current practice constitutes a spatial exploration gradually turning inwards. This introspective, literary temperament has also begun to influence the direction of *am Space*. In a 2017 event titled "Reading Aloud," young writers and artists working in the medium of performance were invited to pair up, creating a dialogue between recital and performance. Staged performance and literary recital do not share the same level of fluidity (it was more often than not the performers who responded to the sound and content of the readers), but, as text is internalized by the body and incites the exploration of space, it achieves the same calm and clear effect of reading text.

In commentary and criticism on Yu Ji's work, there is a paradox always floating on the surface: in one sense, her sensitive and primordial explorations of perception, materiality, and the inner relations between body and matter cast off the essentially conceptual and social (and occasionally speculative) framework of contemporary art thought, replacing it with a pure, internalized set of concerns apart from style and custom. In another sense, the technical complexity hidden with her work—its flowing, temporal quality—acts as a set of conceptual values directly absorbed into Yu's discussion of her work, which in turn produces an unavoidable sense of meaning. Perhaps, in her work, it's precisely the way that concept and material, consciousness and space, reading and performance, production and operation, illuminate each other: carrying contradictions, responding to the various theatrical roles and many spaces at play, constantly expanding and extending within these layers. (Translated by Dominik Satter Dvorak)

对话于吉: 野草

A Conversation with Yu Ji: Wild Grass

LEAP: 我知道你正在准备在伦敦画廊赛迪HQ的群展“中国2185”。这回带过去的是哪些作品?

于吉: 有三件作品, 一件是去年上海双年展上展出的《绿毛怪》系列其中的单件《公共空间7号》; 一件是三个来自上海的拆迁废墟里的缸, 里面盛了伦敦荒野里杂草榨的汁; 还有一件作品是上海建筑里拆除的螺纹钢, 从伦敦画廊空间的顶部垂下, 加上肥皂和蜡, 是在展览现场制作的一件雕塑。

LEAP: 能讲一下这些从城市废墟里挖掘出的材料的渊源吗? 螺纹钢本来的功用是什么? 那些缸子呢? 是上海家庭比较常见的物件吗?

于吉: 螺纹钢就是建筑墙体里的根基。缸子很常见, 用来煎中药和炖大肉。

LEAP: 所以用缸子盛放野草汁是这样一种对熬制中草药的呼应。我知道植物在你的创作中出现很多。是在最近才开始以液体的形态出现的吗? 收集野草是怎么开始的?

于吉: 去年在上双的“绿毛怪”里用了青苔汁, 但是青苔很难榨出汁来。这次试了野草。我很喜欢植物, 很多时候对于工作的想象来自各种夹杂的记忆。比如我这几天发现自己的想法好像源于之前去台北。我特别喜欢他们的青草茶。他们周末的青草市场里一大捆一大捆的植物给我留下了深刻印象。中国是中草药国家。我觉得天性里和植物很亲近。这里有一种信赖。

LEAP: I know you're now preparing for the group exhibition "Zhongguo 2185" at London's Sadie Coles HQ. Which works will you be showing there?

Yu Ji: I have three works in the show. One is a piece titled "Public Space No. 7," which is a part of the installation *Green Hair Monster*, shown at last year's Shanghai Biennale; another piece consists of three jars that I found in demolition sites in Shanghai, which contain juice pressed from various weeds collected from still-wild areas in London; the third is a sculpture that will be constructed onsite in London, featuring a rebar taken from the ruins of a Shanghai building treated with soap and wax, and hung from the ceiling of the gallery.

LEAP: Can you speak about the origins of these materials that have been excavated from urban ruins? What was the original function of the rebar and the jars? Are the jars common to find in a Shanghai household?

Yu Ji: The rebar is the kind that's frequently used inside the walls of buildings. The jars are a very common type in Shanghai, used for brewing traditional Chinese medicine or stewing meat.