

**Artforum China, 2017 – translation into English**

**“Mosquitoes, Dusts, and Thieves”**

**47 CANAL**

**New York**

**2017.01.12-2017.02.12**

Three founders of New York alternative art space PRACTICE, Ho King Man, Cici Wu and Wang Xu, put up a group exhibition at 47 Canal, which is not far away from their space, from a collective and curatorial focus to a more private and artistic expression. The title of the exhibition comes from the beginning of the eighties, based on the pragmatism considerations of anti-mosquito, anti-dust, anti-theft, the habit of building fences to cover the balcony for being closed protected. These three things are in a state of changing, they are not welcome and excluded, and they are the voice not to be heard and blind spots not to be seen. In connection with the recent US events: the follow-up to the election, the gentrification of New York's Chinatown, and the turmoil triggered by immigration ban, which implicitly refer to identities of minority, internal and external differences in the legal system, the contradicted complex relationship between oneself and others, and many other issues.

The works of the three artists are created in 2017, and they are fully explored in the form and meaning of their familiar medium. Wang Xu had been trained in sculpture at both Chinese and American academies. The work "A Stand" (2017) was based on the style of ancient Greek Kouros. The copying of the Western classics is a necessary stage in the studies of sculpture in China. This practice combines individual's knowledge of shape and memory with a vague western link. The semi-air-dried texture of the clay shows feelings of unfinished handwork. The sturdy body is slightly larger than the real human body. And it is more like functional clothes stand where hooks interjected all over the body, which comes from Wang Xu's habit during production process to interject a stick on a sculpture which temporarily hanging his own clothes. The work makes the sculpture a metaphor about, between pure art and usable objects, the relationship between the artist and his creation.

Wang Xu has his own rethinking on the academic practices, he has been trying to go out of the studio and create. The video "Summer Wind Before Rain" (2017) shot in Storm King Art Center in New York during which his residency there, which is an attempt to place the body and creation in the wilderness: he collected the clay and plants from the mountain, and made the raw materials of the sculpture through the process of mixing and drying; and recorded the process of making a head portrait for a gardener from the Art Center. Two of them standing in an opposite position at outdoors, he picked up a pile of corn stigma to portray the gardener's upper lip beard, as if a silent exchange coverage by the surrounding nature. Considering the fact that the large-scale public installations are the main collections of the Art Center, in the video most of the human behavior is preparation for the sculpture, and the shot natural surroundings is more like a foundation for the sculpture.

Cici Wu entered the cinema with the self-made machine "Foreign Object #1 Fluffy Light (the prototype)", and collected data of the light of a just released feature film "Moonlight". The work "Closer, Closer, Says Love" (2017) had the recorded gray in different shades projected to the

exhibition wall, the changes of light then received by another sensor device, linked to reflect to the necklace, clothing sleeves, leaves, and dried strawberries by moving them back and forth with the "story". This is a set of abstracted light languages, as human's love and story have been abstracted into movement of color and image on film screen. The artist further abstracted the film into fluctuation of lights. Mechanical devices are like human beings, determining their own reactions and actions in the process of understanding and learning the language, and then shape and write a new story. In the exhibition, her installation is like a miniature one-person theater, folding seat is facing the square projection, hanging above head the necklace and the suspended communication often occurs while watching a film – inject a shape that able to feel for mobile images, it is whisper the machine speaks, and theater the bright lights bought in focus.

Ho King Man takes poetry creation as the main practice, but he only shows one creation, in the form of checklist from the exhibition materials - "Bloody Flavour Won't Go Away, Squeezing Juices Out of the Time" (2017): the title and the name of the installation, four verses were named to the handmade book (he and Casey Robbins jointly translated a collection of poems from Ren Hang), the sculpture installation (the poetry was placed in a nearly one meter high coffin-alike wooden box), the odor (a fragrance based on a homemade chili sauce) and the ready-mades (cut brass watering can roses). Poetry is traceless, and like everything that the smell in the exhibition spread into the space. This is reminiscent of Stéphane Mallarmé's understanding of poetry: "chance defeated word by word", and here from Ho King Man, perhaps poetry invented chance by chance.

Although it seems like hiding behind the words of others and ordinary objects, the artist's mentioned but vaguely words however was actually straightforward admitted: the unique chili sauce is from grandfather's recipe, and since his death, Ho King Man went through a decade of life of not only like discipline but also like spiritual practice - "people sometimes cannot feel the organs in their body" - the nothingness in the body was summed up to create the art, so that all kinds of sexual implication of the works shows "bloody flavor". Such as the restlessness and maniacal of hormones in the words of Ren Hang are consistent with his photography. However, as a translator of the words, Ho King Man's self-reflection has more restraint and pain, he combs personal memory in transformation and weaving of words.

If it is difficult to reach a common view, is it still necessary to tell? The exhibition period coincided with the current troublous US political situation, every resistances, demonstration, and protests to some degree provided a powerful expression. But the three artists proceeded from a small and concrete point of view. They did not respond to the problem with hyper enthusiasm. Instead, they showed a possible harmony, a pragmatism in which each retained their independence but still able to live together. It is Ho King Man's daily practice of poetry, it is Cici Wu's cited Foucault's "formless friendship", and it is Wang Xu's understanding of art - "art is a personal trip again and again".

- Gu Qianfan