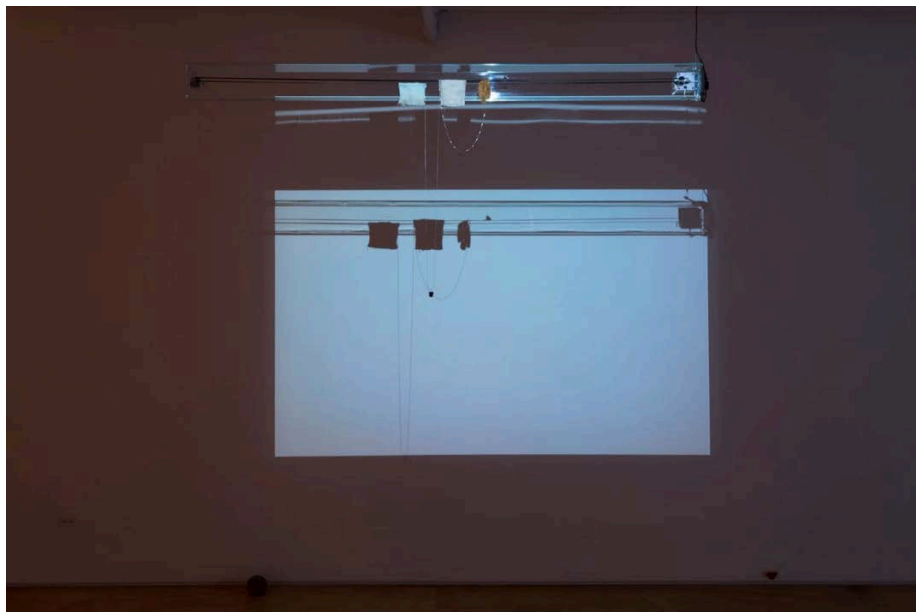


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Mosquitoes, Dusts, and Thieves: Exhibition Review

6 March, 2017

A strange enloring 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.



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

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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.



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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

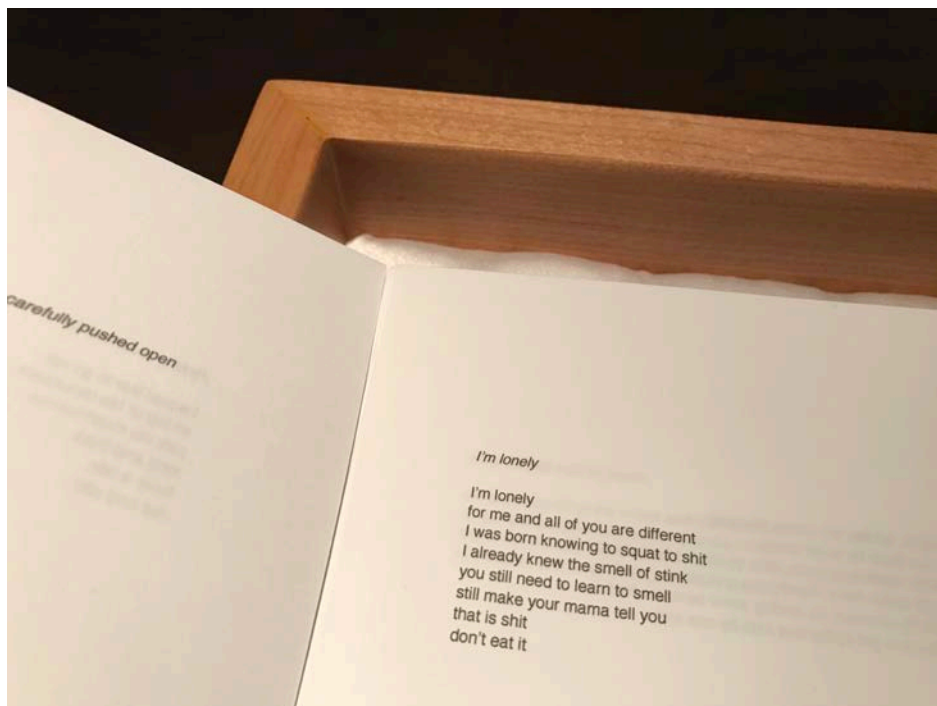
inquiry into the idea of sculpture, and together with the unfired “Stand,” they linger indefinitely; that is, as sculpture-in-becoming, calling for a reformation of the lexicon;

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.

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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 (gallery), New York**

By Taro Masushio