

Beyond presentation and representation

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The sixth "Gas Station" exhibition mainly focuses on video work from two young artists, including Hongkong artist Lam Pok-Yin and Taiwan artist Hsu Che-Yu.

In the three photographic series of Hongkong artist Lam Pok-Yin, there are colorful photography with light hue, long distance shooting and few scattered figures, presenting the society scenery with natural gene of "New colour photography", following the style of Joel Sternfeld and Stephen Shore.

Joel prefers to capture the spot having stories behind. He uses the surrounding details to imply the local atmosphere and reveal the hidden problems in the society sceneries. However, in Lam Pok-Yin's camera loves to capture sceneries with a grey attribute, like the high-rise residential complex and urban shopping mall's surrounding. Those spots are ubiquitous city elements and not unique at all. Some spaces could be ignored easily, like the backside of a shopping mall, the entrance of one road tunnel and the meadow under scaffolds. Those ordinary and uninspiring spaces having transitional characteristic attracts Lam Pok-Yin.

Figures in the photos are away from the crowd. Those anonymous people are absorbed into their own world. Their condition is irrelevant with the outside world, meanwhile confirming that there are invisible barriers among photographer, audience and those figures. It can be easily connected with Thomas Struth's work. His camera excludes people's trace out of the view rigidly. Those ordinary spaces become alienated ghost towns. Architecture is the basic composition structure of Lam Pok-Yin's work. He used to be an architect, and this role let him fall into the entwined thoughts unconsciously: he grew up in those space lacking personalities. A sense of ridiculous is under the accustomed surface. For example, the construction site safety isolation net with natural landscape printed on it, lining the construction site behind it, where the worlds of two attributes are confusingly converging here. In order to emphasize those grey spaces, the photo is in a Turquoise blue hue and the distant view looks almost flat. He even tries to shoot from an overlook perspective. In this way, he flattens a three-dimensional space into a two-dimensional plane, also excludes the possibly existed dramatic factors. By compressing the multi-layers sceneries into the same plane, the contradictions referred to at different levels can be superimposed at the same time.

Another work *My Book Is My Camera* is directly considering the relationship between photographer and media, moving from the "taking picture" phase into "making picture" phase. Since this series, photography for Lam Pok-Yin is no longer a presentation or reproduction, but an experiment. This experiment starts with making hand-made notebooks, then writes down things and feelings, and eventually uses notebook pinhole camera to shoot selfish photos. The process of superimposing the photos with text reveals his inquiry and exploration towards the

relationship between the shooting methods and people in the current society. The most irreplaceable parts are the hand-made method and the time lapse process during the pinhole shooting. Through them, he breaks through the photographer's inertia in controlling the shooting results meanwhile experiences the challenges and stimuli generated by uncontrollable factors.

Taiwan artists Hsu Che-Yu's animation work *Sighing Flowers and Shamisen, November 11th 1970*, and *Perfect Suspect* are using the actual places where the original cases happened as the stage, and then adding the animation characters and actions. Hsu Che-Yu is an "absent" character, because he knew these cases through media indirectly. The work is not using the method of presentation or reproduction, but was based on his impression of those cases and the feeling he generated when visiting those actual places. Therefore, the unreal reality thus formed implies a two-way entangled relationship between controlling and being controlled, consuming and being consumed. The extended various phenomena are all included into the concept of Baudrillard's simulacrum map.

Hsu Che-Yu's work is not following the logic of real cases. Using some clips or repeated actions, the timeline of his work is wandering among real characters, made-up protagonist and me. He is using the "theatre setting" to digest the dramatic attributes within the cases. During the process, evidence proving and confirmation are cancelled, using fiction as a reference to another fiction. Hsu Che-Yu's impression of history comes not only from media but also from the textbook. In his work *November 11th 1970*, the repeated actions at the inauguration of the statue in Tainan Park happen on the same person, who is painted by Yüan Chih-Chieh as a model. Through the interpretation of that period of history, the artist finds the collective characteristic. From nowadays perspective, this collective characteristic is extremely ridiculous. Therefore, Hsu Che-Yu gives this character a title of *The Nameless Man*.

As for Hsu Che-Yu, the urgent issue is not "is it real?", but "is there any reality?". This kind of confusion implies speculation in a Marguerite style. "Pipe" related images, texts and real objects are related to the presentation and reproduction of symbols. Except that, the perception of real objects triggers the Foucault's thoughts, which have been embedded deeply into philosophy. Movie *The Matrix* has an allegorical plot that the strong Matrix system can directionally control human-being, reflecting the impossibility to escape from media control in modern life. It is the media's acceleration that makes the modern society fall into the abyss of virtual world quickly. The hidden correlation within the world is: the news consumes cases and he emulates the method and consumes the news. He also internalized by the media together with the same generation. In *Sighing Flowers and Shamisen*, He uses his typical mindset and approach to break down the oppressive history when Taiwan was occupied by Japan with a feeling of nonsense. The reality, original things and its representation approach are all being challenged, module—it is those videos that create called "hyper-reality". Under this type of regular structure, videos represent absence as an existence. The imagination and feeling replace reality, also weaken the contrast with reality within this uncertain situation. The past incidents and people are internalized into the "hyper-reality".

Hsu Che-Yu's works are subconsciously emphasizing this simulation process, and the artist himself

is standing on a point in the timeline and facing those time, environment and history that he had never experienced but actually existed. When he looks at the other moments in the same timeline, will he feel a sense of panic? Possibly, this feeling can be replaced by the sense of gaming gradually, entering into a strange reality that is neither true or false.