

许哲瑜: 没有来自家的消息

Hsu Che-Yu: No News from Home

VANGUARD GALLERY
SHANGHAI

2016.11.15—2016.12.25

许哲瑜的黑白录像《没有来自家的消息》由两类截然不同的再现形式组合而成:一类是被他从背景里勾勒出来做成动画的人物,另一类是些人物实地被拍摄时候的环境本身。他的动画人,无论是动作还是表情,都故意不遵循镜头的透视——像是被卡在编码事故里的浮游生物,贫贱而顽固。人的衣服,他用平铺花纹代替,让数码纹路漠然地流过人的身体。与此对照的是作为脚本的实景现场:不过哪怕是在这样的直接拍摄里,他也明确地拒绝了通过细节的深入或者是镜头的移动来纳入更多的信息。

这是典型的许哲瑜的录像风格。不过这个录像不是展览全部。在不大的展厅里,顺着其空间结构,观众会接触到三个作品。第一个作品《寻找苏万钦》由无头的照相馆肖像模板和一封书信构成。书信里的语言在不断地升级对诡异细节的描述的同时也在不断强化对确认的渴望。第二个作品《相簿剪贴》看上去由照片构成,而里面的人物头像多数被裁剪掉。第三个作品除了上文提到的录像,还有在放映它的黑暗空间墙上的一幅皮面刺青,名字叫《哥哥的背》。到此为止,我必须承认

我故意漏掉了交代他这些作品围绕的内容:家庭生活,走不出去的家庭生活。

社会生活里的残酷,以及它是如何黯然而又有序地发配到个体身上的?这个命题一直牵扯着许哲瑜的神经。早些时候这个残酷是新闻中骇人听闻的事件,是文案中记载的某些历史篇章,后来这个残酷是和文学实践缠绕生长出来的人生悲剧,是身边的家人朋友生活中不可以抹去的日日夜夜。面对这样一个命题,其实一个矛盾一直悬置在他面前:一方面他不想重复媒体或文献里对残酷均质而煽情的再现,另一方面他又想保留一种他在媒体语言里观察到的“冷”和对“情感投射”的应用。对我而言,许氏残酷来自公众媒体再现距离,成形于自己修复的艺术距离;而对这两种距离的调配是他回应那个矛盾的方式,是阅读他作品的线索,同时也是这次展览的一个施力点。展厅里三个作品里对肖像的处理相似和不同,对已经非常自我割裂的图像与叙述者文字之间关系的推敲,都试图在暗示我们:非均质的“无肖像”,也许正是残酷一词的试用肖像。黄静远



Two distinct visual modalities are evident in the black-and-white video *No News from Home* by Hsu Che-Yu: the first is applied to the animated figure of the video's protagonist whose contour detaches itself from the background, while the second consists of on-site filming of actual scenes and environments where the protagonists' (i.e. the real actor and actress) actions originally took place. In the course of the video's unfolding, the actions and expressions of these flattened characters, while embedded within a background, do not synchronize with the spatial mise-en-scène of the camera lens. Deprived yet resolute, they are planktons caught up in a

lighting failure. Ornamental patterns used in place of their actual attire impressively glide across their bodies. Even during his filming of the background, however, when direct engagement is required, the artist is stringent on the video's visual message, unwilling to zoom in the camera or pan over to give audience more information.

This visual strategy is typical of Hsu's works, but the video is not the only work in this exhibition. Moving across the physical structure of its compact space, visitors will encounter three groups of work. *A Letter to Su Wangqin*, the first group to come in view, is a display that places a written letter alongside a standard headless template



《没有来自家的消息》(截屏)

2016年

录像

10分10秒

No News from Home (still)

2016

Video, 10 min 10 sec

左:

《相簿剪贴》

2016年

图片剪贴

尺寸可变

Left:

Photo Album Clips

2016

Photo clipping

Dimensions variable

used by photography studios for portraits. Uncanny details gradually accumulate in the descriptive language of the epistolary writer, all the while intensifying the reader's desire to pin them down. The second work *Photo Album Clips* is a series of photographs, but most of the faces are edited out. Besides the video mentioned earlier, the black box where it is projected also includes a tattooed piece of leather hanging on the dimly-lit wall, entitled *Brother's Back*. Together they form a third group. At this point, I have to confess that my description so far has deliberately left out the obvious theme of these works: the family life that everyone endures and experiences.

The brutality of social life, as well as its insidious, methodical impact on individual life, provokes Hsu into action. In earlier works, the artist's references were culled mainly from atrocities in the news and various episodes from history. These were later joined with life tragedies both spun from and organically growing out of literary practices, and enduring moments in the lives of families and friends. When confronted with this theme, a key dilemma undergirds Hsu's entire practice: on the one hand, he wants to distance himself from the homogenization and the affect-laden cooption that pervade media and textual representations of social brutality; on the other, he still wishes to retain a sense of the impersonal typical in news reports and to work with their manipulation of psychological projection. For me, Hsu's version of brutality stems from the representational distance in media observation and is reinvented in the reparative distance of artistic restoration. The balancing act taken in the face of this apparent contradiction—and in the face of these two distances—forms a conceptual thread throughout his works, in light of which their visual interest and potency could be gauged and examined. The portrait variations proposed by all three groups of work, as well as their search for possible relations between a language of narrative and a conception of image that is fractured within itself, seem in the last instance to suggest this: these faceless or “non-” portraits whose surface refuses to be homogenized are a possible portrait of brutality itself.

Huang Jingyuan (Translated by Qian Wenyi)