



## 策展論述

在當代社會裡，宗教常被視為「現代性發展」的對立面。社會學家馬克斯·韋伯用「除魅」（disenchantment）的概念指出現代性發展裡的去神秘化、去宗教化特徵，而多位學者如涂爾幹、席納爾，亦將「世俗化」（secularization）視為現代國家政治體制發展的重要錨點。在這個脈絡下，科學價值被極力推崇，而不合於理性辯證的傳統生活方式則被斥為迷信與守舊。然問題是，正因為現代科學只是人類的一種觀點、一種解釋方法，無法全然描述說明所有自然現象或人類活動。加上人類生活必然包含精神及感性面向，因此，獨尊科學、理性至上的現代語境，反而創造出現代社會裡宗教神秘學的真空。這個真空裡充斥各種謬誤、政治、算計、操弄與鬥爭；有心人士甚至利用這樣的真空，散佈恐懼、施行控制，期能從信眾中獲取金錢、地位、權力等諸多利益。

凱倫·阿姆斯特壯在《為神而辯》一書中認為，西方歷史裡的「無神論者」很少全然地否定神聖本身，而幾乎都是不能認同當時對於神聖的某些說法與觀念。對她而言，宗教是一種實踐的科學；人們經由儀式的幫助，付諸實行、親身體驗，最終抵達宗教的真理。這個過程與藝術美學相似：「儀式就像藝術品一樣，不僅能在美學層次感召參與者，也能引領他們進入更深層的存在面向。」這便是「重返神性」的策展宗旨：藉由人類的藝術性創作、展覽、及賞析，重新定位人與神之間的距離、拉近現代科學理性主義及前現代神秘學的典範差異；藉由邀請的藝術作品、邀請藝術家的詮釋、創作及策展論述，帶領觀眾介入神秘學領域，填補其被科學至上主義所排除出的真空狀態，讓觀眾以新的概念重新認識宗教及神秘學、重新認識「靈」與「神」。當我們對神性保有信念並持有敬意，且對當代主流宗教論述中所詮釋的神性存有疑慮時，我們不啻成了，套用阿姆斯特壯的概念：一位「無神論的有神論者」（atheistic theist）。

「重返神性」邀請的藝術家，依展覽設計之序有：吳權倫、陳澄如、寧森、李紫彤、許家禎、姚睿蘭。這些藝術家的作品均以一個非典型的宗教角度，對宗教儀式、個體神秘經驗、宗教的個體實踐、神秘主義的社會操弄，分別進行探討。首先

是吳權倫的作品〈角度—運氣〉。此作品創作靈感來自藝術家於韓國駐村時，在一古廟前的河床上偶然發現的數百座因當地人們祈願而疊起、高度過人的石頭塔。藝術家以紙雕、數據分析圖、花崗岩地磚，用科學數理方式，重新再現石頭塔結構。在策展脈絡中，石頭塔代表一種原始的宗教儀式，是人們重置自然物向自然致敬、以簡單的藝術創作再現自然之崇高性的行動，而〈角度—運氣〉代表的，便是藝術家以科學方式重置原始儀式、向儀式致敬之行動。簡言之，本策展以〈角度—運氣〉作品，再現並討論人類宗教儀式及宗教藝術的原始意義。

第二展區為陳澄如作品，〈致幻記 II：刻幻象〉。此作品以炭筆素描與錄像，紀錄於儀式中服用草本植物後的意識轉換經驗。對藝術家來說，轉換為薩滿意識的奇幻及奧妙旅程，不僅僅是私人情感及生命經驗的療癒，更代表著開發人類意識狀態中另一個更為廣闊的維度、並深具統合意識與無意識的潛力。〈致幻記 II：刻幻象〉所展現的實驗及旅程，並不止於宗教儀式，而是直指個體的神秘經驗為核心。意識轉換所開啟的薩滿意識，甚至可以說是人類所有宗教及神秘學之起源。藝術家的重製加上薩滿巫師執行草藥儀式的icaro吟唱與歌詞文本，讓原本無聲之作品更為完整。

寧森的作品〈圓〉，以 Siri 語音互動模式，表現自己與想像中過世的祖母之間的互動。此作品不僅細膩展現人們與過世親人連繫之情感期盼，亦貼切地呈現「宗教」作為人們與心中神聖的、不可觸及之物相互聯繫的中介橋樑。而不止是對過世親人的思念，宗教是人們投射各種期盼與慾求（如求婚、求財、求子、求官、求平安）的中介。許家禎的作品〈我（你）收藏一部分的你（我）〉，進一步將自己的日記，製作成這個中介的「表意系統」。藝術家以自己的網路日記作為文本，擷取部份語錄製作成 60 張卡牌、供參與群眾隨機抽取。藝術家本人則擔任「靈媒」或「桌頭」的角色、解釋卡牌意義，並以自己對於那些曾經恥於公開發表的情緒與心緒來與參與者對話、解答、甚至相互治療。「算命」、「占卜」，並不真的在給予預言、預知未來，而是透過表意系統，與靈及占人相互連結，達到療癒而解惑。



李紫彤作品〈#迎靈者〉，則將上述的情感及慾望，進一步擴展至集體社會層面。藝術家於展覽期間開設三個地區（台灣、匈牙利、哥倫比亞）與政治暴力有關的亡魂臉書帳號，並邀請三位參與者依照研究史料及調查訪問內容為基礎、扮演這三位亡魂、生活在臉書上，與彼此及其他使用者們互動。展期最後一帳號將關閉，貼文會被印出、焚燒，獻予無形的亡靈。藝術家用此方法、再次書寫與連結各地私密的歷史敘事。宗教並不限於個人的療傷、救贖與滿足，而更扮演著處理「正義尚未轉型」（因政治或社會枉死而無處申冤）時個人與社會之間的斷裂、撫平集體傷痛的重要角色。

至此，我們談了人們以儀式（創作及實踐）及神秘經驗，作為逼近神域、體驗神性的方法，以及人們的精神需求（欲望及期盼）如何對應、投射、延伸至宗教神秘對象。最後一個展間則進一步探討人們如何利用並操作這個對象，來再次滿足個人的物質及社會需求。姚睿蘭的作品〈印予召准：教育部孔孟思想推廣處附屬宇宙大吸附宗教領袖就業輔導組大神官章機組〉，以大符神禡像及神龕為元素、設計一位意識型態大神。此神祇之職責，在於保佑儒家孔孟思想順利實行，讓人民百姓習慣逃避責任、放棄自身主體性，而將主權交予其他「上師」、「師父」，或是天神或天子般的領導人。另一件作品〈舊國團附屬崩世代自我價值低落心理療程之對抗資本主義自治烏托邦體驗營神祕學專職單位大神官章機組〉，則是探討有心人士如何利用資本主義發展下現代社會裡的各種負情緒（如疏離感、虛無感），以宗教神秘學為幌子及工具，提供民眾「速食式」的精神糧食，並從中獲得金錢與權力。

## Curator's note

Religion has been seen as the opposite of modernity in contemporary society. Sociologist Max Weber used the concept of "disenchantment" to designate the characteristics of "demystification" and "anti-religion" in modern society. Many scholars, such as Émile Durkheim and Larry Shiner, believe "secularization" is one of the most significant factors appearing in the development of modern national political systems. In this context, the value of modern science is highly esteemed, and traditional ways of living and believing that fail to pass the inspection of science are condemned as superstition and conservatism. Yet, the problem is that because modern science is just one of many methods developed by mankind to theorize, interpret and explore the psychic world, it can neither entirely explain humans' spiritual operation and emotions, nor truly fulfill our spiritual needs. The long prevailing idea of prioritizing rationalism and positivism therefore creates a religious/spiritual void in modern society—a void not only loaded with many assertions and deceptions, but also often manipulated by scoundrels for their personal interests and social power.

In her book *The Case for God*, Karen Armstrong argues that, in history, there were few atheists entirely denying the idea of God; they just disagreed with certain discourses of God at that time. For her, religion is a form of practice, through which people experience and then reach religious truth by themselves. This process is similar to artistic creations, because, as the scholar believes, rituals are like works of art—not only can they inspire participants at the aesthetic level, but also lead them into a deeper aspect of existence. This is the curatorial purpose of "Return to Divinity"—through artistic creation, exhibition, and appreciation, to reflect concepts of divinity, to re-adjust the distance between humans and God,



and to blur the boundary between modern scientific rationalism and pre-modern mysticism. With the artworks of six Taiwanese artists addressing different aspects of human religious/spiritual activities—such as religious rituals and installations, mystic experiences, views on death and afterlife, tools invented for predicting the future, and so on—this exhibition invites the audience to re-examine and re-conceptualize the ideas of spirituality, divinity, cosmos, and religion. When we have faith in and respect for the supernatural or certain form of divinity, but at the same time have doubts about how these are interpreted by contemporary mainstream religious organizations, we inevitably become—drawing on Armstrong's notion — "atheistic theists."

The first exhibition room presents the artwork of Chuan-Lun Wu, "Angle-Fortune" (2016-2017). Using 3D-scanning, data analyses, documentation and paper-carving, the artist represents a stone pile built by the riverside near Baekdamsa Temple, South Korea. Piling up stones is a primitive religious ritual of making a wish in Korea. By doing so, humans create a simple artwork by re-setting natural objects in praise and honor of sublime mother nature. "Angle-Fortune" is an artistic action with similar essence, in which the artist applies science and mathematics to honor primitive religious rituals of mankind. By presenting this artwork, "Relocating Divinity" discusses the primitive meaning of human religious ceremonies and religious art.

The second exhibition room presents Yin-Ju Chen's artwork, "Notes on Psychedelics II: Inside a Memorable Fancy" (2018-2019). The artist uses charcoal drawings and videos to show her spiritual experiences after imbibing a herbal soup during a shamanic ritual, illustrating the

transformed states of mind evoked and invoked by the shamanic practice. This spiritual journey, as the artist believes, has the potential not only to broaden one's understanding of different dimensions of human consciousness, but also to unify ordinary and altered states of human mind. What "Notes on Psychedelics II" explores is therefore not only religious rituals but also individual spiritual experiences, which can be the core and even the common origin of human's religion and mystic beliefs. Yin-Ju Chen remakes this artwork by including icaros chanted by a Taiwanese shaman practitioner, Lin Li-Chun, rendering the original soundless version even more completed and enriched.

In his work "Reunion" (2018), Ning Shen imagines Siri as his deceased grandmother and engages in a daily conversation with her. The artwork not only delicately represents human's deep mental desire for connecting with the deceased relatives, but also discloses the important feature of religion as an intermediary bridge between people and the sacred. In fact, besides mediating people's remembrance and reminiscence, religion is also the intermediary to which people project various expectations and wishes, such as for good marriage, wealth, offspring, promotion, peacefulness and composure). In the artwork "I collect a piece of you / you collect a piece of me" (2014-2019), Jia-Jhen Syu transforms her online diary into a type of this "intermediary symbolic system," by making the diary into a set of fortune-telling cards. The artist plays the role of "psychic" or "spiritual medium", and explains the meaning of the cards to her audiences with her emotions and moods that she was once ashamed of announcing publicly. By doing so, the artist and the audiences share certain emotional commonality and gain certain form of mental cure. Perhaps, as this artwork tries to show us, "fortune-telling" and "divination" are not really giving predictions about



the future, but casting doubts and healing broken souls by reaching mutual connections and mutual understandings.

Tzu-Tong Lee's work, "#Ghostkeepers" (2018), expands the abovementioned dimensions of emotions and desires to the level of collective society. The artist creates three fictional Facebook accounts, inviting her participants to play the roles of three political victims on the social platform. The three participants have to share posts and interact with each other and other users. On the last day of the exhibition, the artist closes the accounts and prints all their posts. A ceremony is then held to burn the posts and see off the three ghosts. "#GhostKeepers" aims to collect and write private, individual stories that are forgotten in the grand narrative of modern history. The artwork manifests the fact that human religious activities are not only for personal healing, redemption and spiritual satisfaction, but also can play an important role in dealing with the rupture between the individual and the society. They may facilitate the transitional justice in a society, and assist the society to alleviate the collective pain.

So far, we have discussed how people use religious rituals and mystic practices as means to approach the image of God and to experience divinity, and how people's spiritual needs (desires and wishes) are projected and extended to religious/mystic objects and activities. The final exhibition room further explores how people can use and manipulate these mechanisms to gain their material interest and social power. Two of Jui-Lan Yao's artworks — "An Automatic Sealing Machine for Psychotherapy Course of Healing the Low Self-esteem of the Bomb Generation, Unit of Mysticism, Camp for Experiencing Utopia and Fighting against Capitalism,

the China Youth Corps, ROC" (2019) and "An Automatic Sealing Machine for Employment Service Station for Religious Leaders and Universe Masters, Bureau of Promoting Confucius and Mencius Thinking, Ministry of Education, ROC" (2019)—explore how false prophets provoke people's negative emotions (e.g. alienation, nihilism) and offer them religious mystics as spiritual fast-food to obtain benefits. Confucianism is one of traditional ideologies that these false prophets often utilize to demand their believers to respect authority, making them accustomed to renouncing their own subjectivity to authoritative leaders, such as "guru" and "master".