

「穿牆術」 TKG+個展簡介 /許峰瑞 /2021

「Through the Walls」 TKG+ Press Release /Fong-Ray Hsu /2021

” 無論是有意或無意，現代的香料味精等調味品都是加工過的。這當然並不是說今日的調味品是純粹心理層面的而已，而是指不論說故事的人再怎樣誠實，也無法提供真實的東西，因為已經不可能再有真正的旅行故事了。為了使我們可以接受，旅行的記憶都得經過整理篩選；在最誠實無欺的作者身上，這種過程是在無意識層面上進行，他們用現成的套語和既存的成見來表現、取代真實的經驗。” - 克勞德·李維斯托，《憂鬱的熱帶》

旅行者，無論多麼地融入在地生活，都難以迴避與它者的差異，那基於時間、社會階層、空間上的座標距離，他終究是相對於它者的一位過客。對李維斯托(Claude Lévi-Strauss)而言，旅行之所以討厭，是因為掠奪式的檔案，在社會結構中無意識地被資本化為一種奇觀，當這些發現的過程被稱作探險，那所謂的真實，猶如一個擺放在人潮熙來攘往咖啡桌角上搖搖欲墜的玻璃杯，侷限在（不）移動的空間裡，等待自身掉落或倖存的下一個瞬間。對藝術創作的認識，就如同進入每個不同的地方，那並非發現式的以經歷來區分其類型而作為識別，或走進以媒材來做為分類的死胡同。分類作為一種檔案建構的目的是在於紀錄歸整，而面對未知事物的認識，以分類來作為一種識別，本身就是一個誤用。以標本方式來做紀錄所形塑出認識上的侷限，人類學者馬林諾斯基(Bronisław Malinowski)亦早已指出面對此困境的參與方法。吳耿禎長期以來結合圖像與詩的創作，也為此指出了一條道路。

2021年吳耿禎個展「穿牆術」，正是將自身化為座標來表示創作歧異性的系譜，以影像寫詩。同時亦回應到柏拉圖在理想國中將「靈魂的四種狀態」作為知識分類的表述，在著手分析四種靈魂狀態時採用「洞穴說」[1] 譬喻人類心靈的處境，指涉著當代生活中個體所思所見之運作模式。「穿牆術」中的四頻幕錄像裝置，以一男一女各自獨立發展形成視覺迴圈，這裡的影像猶如皮影戲般，穿梭在黑白簾空的圖像間化為影格，以身體的光影，編造一段肉身敘事，片段既是詩的塊體，也是潛意識的夢遊碎片。長期以來，吳耿禎對文字、圖像的高度掌握，成為了本次影像書寫的基礎，除了畫面本身豐富造型所構成的詞彙，其所熱衷於描繪那無法描繪的，表達那別人認定無從表達的創作企圖，顯現在此更是一種詩人的態度，一種對詩的追求。

「穿牆術」作品中一幅幅觀者得以清楚辨識的圖像，在光、物、人與投影面間與表演者共進形塑的語彙，打破了視覺的維度，使影像內容顯得陌生與疏離，仿如一則則寓言。影像於此彷彿進入對自然和原生性的解釋，像「精靈說」[2] 般重新賦予了每一幕圖像的象徵和意義。這裡的影像並非巫術，它無需向人們證明其能夠安撫靈魂與否，反而更像是魔法，採取了一種與日常生活中心理狀態不同的特殊運作於觀者面前演出，「真實」在此，顯得更為難以掌握。那是因為，認知中的明白是智力的，並非體悟。詩比歷史更真實，詩在感知層面經歷了詩人對經驗現象的萃取過程，只留下最純粹的經驗和情感，其所表達的，不是現實，卻比呈現現實的歷史更真實。

本次展覽作品「穿牆術」由吳耿禎的影像，攜手王榆鈞的音樂，共譜創作。吳耿禎長期遊走於劇場與視覺展演空間的創作，一直以來是其思索視覺語言的田野及養分，於此同時，其令人驚豔的展覽計畫「剪紙合作社」與延伸的出版物《剪花活》、《剪剪入紙》都是其深度參與地方發展出的文化參與式創作成果。吳耿禎並非當代的剪紙藝術工作者，如前所述，那是一種分類的誤用，更恰當的描述，他更像是當代藝術中的人類學實踐者。其創作嚮往著一種原生性的創造，同時強調每個文化個體的獨特性。「穿牆術」藉影像隱喻著詩的創作，吳耿禎以自身的心理轉變，表現現代人受困於集體潛意識下的心靈狀態，將個體在追尋真理與自身關係道路上的取徑，引導至等待的時間中取得恍惚、曖昧的新身分。對於一種文化的認識，就如藝術家提取生命所行走過的感性經驗般，那既是創作獨特個性的迸發，亦必然碰觸到他者的共同深層的經驗所及之地。

[1] 「洞穴說」是這麼譬喻的：有一群代表著人類本性的囚犯，他們從小時候開始大腿和頸項就被枷鎖束縛住，囚禁在洞穴中，無法轉動視線往四處、或背後看。他們的棲身之地雖是暗無天日的洞穴，但他們仍有「光」，只是這個光並非象徵著真理向上所達的太陽光，而是由他們背後燃燒的火所投射出的火光，因為無法轉動頭部，所以無從得知光的來源是來自於火。而火光之前，有一些比較自由的人，可以在囚犯背後的通道自由穿行，扛著動物、雕像和器具，這些因為火光照射出來的幽暗影子，便成為了囚犯們在牆上所看到的清楚影像。他們無法區分，眼前的「真實」。不但不知道其

所見是憑藉「火光」，他們亦未曾見過「真正的光」，他們並未擁有區別、分辨真與假的條件，因此他們無從選擇地會將其所見、所感的一切視作理所當然，甚至是「真」的。柏拉圖，《理想國》，第七卷，洞喻。

[2] 狹義的說為有關靈魂的討論，廣義的定義，通常是指對精神生命的討論。大多數的專家都認為靈魂的觀念是整個精靈說(Animism)體系最原始的核心，它們包括相信動物、植物和物質亦具有和人類靈魂類似的構造等想法。伴隨著精靈說的說法還產生兩種控制人類、野獸和物質或靈魂的理論－巫術和魔法。西格蒙德·弗洛伊德，《圖騰與禁忌》，p.04

## PRESS RELEASE OF JAM WU : THROUGH THE WALLS

The red peppers of our own day are falsified, whether intentionally or not. This is not because their character is purely psychological; but because, however honest the traveller maybe, he cannot, or can no longer, present them to us in their authentic form. Before we consent to accept them they must be sorted and sieved; and, by a process which in the case of the more sincere travellers is merely unconscious, the stereotype is substituted for the real.  
— Tristes Tropique, Claude Lévi-Strauss. [1]

No matter how thoroughly the traveler immerses himself in the local lifestyle, he is powerless in averting the differences from the Other. The discrepancy based on time, class, and geographical distance determines that he is, after all, a passerby. Claude Lévi-Strauss detests traveling, as these predatory experiences are unconsciously capitalised in the social structure as a kind of spectacle. While the process of experiential discovery is called an adventure, this so-called reality is more like a tottering glass sitting on the edge of the coffee table in a bustling cafe. Confined to a (non)moving space, it awaits the moment of a fatal fall or a timely rescue. To understand art is akin to traveling. The perception should not be based upon a faux-discovery categorised through experience. Nor should it be a dead end that is categorised by the medium. The psychological process of categorisation generally helps to organise and arrange these cognitive experiences. But it would be a misapplication if applied in unknown territories. The taxidermy approach of cataloguing has circumscribed the possibility of understanding new knowledge. Anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski has provided methodology to confront this predicament. Likewise, Jam Wu has also suggested a similar path in his abiding commitment to integrating imagery with poetry.

In Wu's latest solo exhibition *Through the Walls*, he emerges as a set of coordinates to embody the ambiguity in art making, composing poetry with imagery. At the same time, his artistic practice also responds to how Plato compares the four states of soul to the four representations in the classification of knowledge in the Republic. Using the Allegory of the Cave [2], Plato compares the four states of soul to the condition of the human mind, which also denotes how the individual functions, based on the visible and the intelligible in contemporary life. The four-channel video installation in *Through the Walls* creates a visual loop by having a man and a woman perform body movements separately. The projection resembles a shadow play in which images in black and white weave across the screen, transformed into film frames, choreographed into a narrative of the body, each frame a segment of the poem, as well as a phantasmagoric fragment of the subconscious. Wu's mastery of text and imagery has been the basis for this form of writing with imagery. In addition to the visual vocabulary created by the rich shapes in the images, his passion for depicting the indescribable and expressing creative attempts that some might consider ineffable is the manifestation of a poet's endeavor, the pursuit of poetry.

In the work *Through the Walls*, the distinguishable images build a rich visual vocabulary through the interaction between the light and shadow cast on the screen and the performers. It challenges the typical visual experience, creating a sense of alienation and aloofness that permeates its imagery, each frame resembling an allegory. The video seems deeply engaged in the implications and interpretations of nature and primitiveness. Just like animism [3], it reasserts symbols and meanings to each image. These images are not witchcraft or voodoo. They do not need to prove their worth by appeasing souls. More like magic, they operate in a unique way that is different from our everyday state of mind. Its reality is therefore more arcane and unfathomable. That is because understanding is more about cognition and intellect than about awareness and feeling. In this sense, poetry embodies reality to a larger extent than history, as poetry is the essence of what the poet has experienced and observed. Poetry is, therefore, his life and sentiments distilled, comprising not dry facts, but an experience more real than history.

The exhibition *Through the Walls* is a collaboration between the imagery of Jam Wu and the music of YuJun Wang. Wu's long-standing practice in theater and art spaces has been a sanctuary that serves as his inspiration and nurtures his visual expression. His exhibition project *Papercut Field* and its publications *Papercut Field* and *ka ka jip choa* have been remarkable achievements thanks to his dedication and involvement in local culture. Wu is not so much a contemporary paper-cutting artist, which, as mentioned earlier, is a misuse in categorisation, than a practitioner in anthropology in the field of contemporary art. He aspires to authentic and primitive creation while emphasising the uniqueness of each individual. In *Through the Walls*, Wu constructs a poetic allegory through imagery. Derived from his personal experience in psychological transformation, his work delineates the state of mind of those that are trapped in the collective subconscious. In the path where individuals pursue in the search of truth and self-knowledge, Wu paves a new way and directs them to a place where one awaits and acquires a new identity steeped in trance and ambiguity. Understanding culture, like the artist's condensation of his emotional experience, is, in this case, both an eruption of unique individuality in art making, and an inevitable encounter with the Other's universal experience.

---

[1] *Tristes Tropique*, Claude Levi-Strauss, Hutchinson & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 1961, p. 39.

[2] The Allegory of the Cave is a metaphor for a group of prisoners who represent human nature. Their thighs and necks shackled from childhood and imprisoned in a cave, they were unable to turn their eyes to look around or behind them. Although they lived in a dark cave, there was still light. But this light was not the light of the sun, which symbolizes the truth, but the light of a fire burning behind them. The source of which was not known because they could not turn their heads. Before there was this light, there were people who were allowed to walk freely through the passages behind the prisoners, carrying animals, statues, and tools. These shadows of the free people became clear images the prisoners saw on the walls. They could not distinguish between what was real and what they saw. Not only were they unaware that the shadow was formed by the light from the fire, but they had never seen real light. They were not equipped to distinguish between the real and the unreal, and therefore they had no choice but to take what they saw for granted, even as real. (Plato, *The Republic*, Book VII, *The Allegory of the Cave*).

[3] The narrow definition of the term is the discussion of the soul, and it is, however, broadly defined as a discussion of spiritual beings. Most experts agree that the idea of spirits is the core of animism, which includes the belief that animals, plants, and matter also have something similar to the soul of humans. Along with this theory came two other theories about the control over humans, animals, and matter or spirits, which are witchcraft and magic. (Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, p.4)