

Yuan Yuan

袁遠

INTRODUCTION

When approaching the interior and exterior spaces painted by Yuan Yuan, one has the queer sensation of opening the pages of a treasured storybook. Every detail, rendered minutely in delicate coats of fine paint evokes a sense of ephemerality; a mere blink of the eye and the contents of our visual novella may flutter and disappear. Indeed, one sighting is not sufficient. Yuan Yuan layers his scenes and through his use of perspective and hints of material objects imbues his paintings with a pluralistic vitality that stimulates our viewership and mind. Our gaze bounds from one element to another: past one door, through an archway, down a corridor, progressively wondering how that object found itself there, why that window is left ajar and inevitably what lies beyond the unpainted surface. A master of mystery, Yuan Yuan strays clues across the canvas for us the viewer to construct a narrative around a space, which his artistic mind has conceived.

In creating these rich canvases, Yuan Yuan has always been attuned to the elements of architecture: the fundamental building blocks of his painterly tales. As an artist based in Hangzhou, he has been sensitive to the intimate discourse held between Chinese and Western styles, carefully inserting the latter without pursuing its dominance. *Humid Region* (2011), for example, depicted a fading red and amber entrance hall flanked by two metallic grids, the corridor gateway discreetly ornated by an Italianate lamp, the corridor itself decorated by a European grid ceiling design. These subtle insertions in Yuan Yuan's oeuvre have since evolved, however, and gained in boldness. Indeed, his recent works possess a conviction regards Western elements such that when they are included their participation in the scene is more pronounced and their role in the plot more pivotal.

A greater interest in the subject is undoubtedly attributable. One may also remark, however, that in previous years Yuan Yuan had widely used collected pictures and a vivid imagination to recast and insert Western architectural styles. Those examples that could be encountered, such as along the Bund in Shanghai, were the product of cultural exchange – and while visually important – represent a historically incorrect amalgamation of Gothic, Baroque, Romanesque and Classical styles. In late 2012 though, Yuan Yuan embarked on the first of two residencies: one for a couple of months to Scotland and another for nearly four months to the USA. Vastly different areas of the Western world, the former introduced Yuan Yuan to a landscape replete with decayed buildings, imbued with historicity and folklore, while the latter,

with its grand constructions, illustrated the adoption and appropriation – at many times in a more extravagant manner – of architectural styles that had originated in Europe.

Yuan Yuan's new oeuvres undoubtedly reflect these recent exposures while building and maintaining his foundational practice: crucially, his recent paintings remain the creations of a vivid lyrical imagination and invite the viewer to assemble each milieu's individual stories. Where his recent body of work departs is the heightened sense of knowledge and confidence in Western architecture they evince: these elements, now that they are a part of Yuan Yuan and what he has experienced, are permitted to dominate a painting and become the primary focus. A further development in tandem to this architectural accustoming though, is a cultural and societal attunement. Yuan Yuan, adopting the mindset of an anthropologist, has observed how people live and when depicting his most recent scenes, has revealed a wider array of scenarios: the inhabited grand abode, the humble dwelling, the once exquisite residence, the crumbling commercial setting. Yuan Yuan's recent works thus possess a stronger relation with Western styles across manifold periods and manifest a wider repertoire stemming from a great sensibility to how others live or have lived.

介紹

乍看袁遠筆下的室內和室外建築猶如翻開一本珍藏故事書，具體得詭異而淒美。層層油彩交織粉刷出的每項細節曇花一現，如此的視覺中篇小說就在眨眼間抖動、消散。一眼誠然教人意猶未盡。袁遠藉層層遞進的場景鋪墊、觀點運用和隱晦的實物痕跡，賦予其畫作刺激觀者思想感知的多元化生命力。我們的視點聚焦於封閉空間的各個支點：穿越拱門、遊走於走廊之時不禁對物件理所當然的存在生疑—彷彿一扇虛掩著的窗都是畫家刻意的佈局，誘人窺探背後更多的景象。袁遠無疑是營造神秘氛圍的大師，在畫布上散佈各種線索，引導觀者還原由他構想出來的空間所催生的故事。

袁遠一向在構圖上精準地捕捉建築學的結構主題、細節和技巧，作為其繪畫故事的創作奠基。這位於杭州生活及工作的藝術家深受中西風格之間的互動啟發，積極汲取西方藝術養份的同時，亦忠於中國繪畫的基調並以其為主導。《潮濕》(2011)描繪的蕙紅和琥珀色門廊、左右兩側的金屬格柵、意式掛牆燈點綴的走廊入口和歐洲格子天花設計等細膩的鋪陳，都在袁遠的作品中不斷演進、更具靈魂。的確，他的近作滲透著一種對西方元素的堅定信念，在畫面上使其納入更彰著，在策劃上予其更關鍵的地位。

說起袁遠現在比以往更關注主體，必定留意到他近年傾向沿用收集得來的圖片及自身極鮮明的想像，將重塑後的西方建築風格再套用在創作過程當中。沿著上海外灘可見的例子皆是文化交流的產物—富視覺意義的同時，亦代表著哥德、巴洛克、羅曼和古典風格的錯誤歷史揉合。2012年末，袁遠接連在蘇格蘭和美國展開兩個住宅項目。這兩個景觀迥異的西方世界，一個充滿著闡述歷史性和民間傳說的頹垣敗瓦，另一個則以堂皇結構展示歐洲建築風格的美式應用及佔有。

袁遠的新作貫切了他固有的基礎，其發揮趨向成熟之餘亦明顯反映了這些文化接觸所帶來的感悟。新作一如概往，借勾勒生動抒情的想像引導觀者重組每一個氛圍所吐露的獨立故事。不同的是，作品表明了一種對西方建築的認知和信心昇華：當袁遠將它融合成自身和經歷的一部分，也就允許了它作主導、成為畫作的重點。這種建築學上的適應附帶一個突破，就是文化和社會點化。袁遠以人類學家的思維觀察人的生活方式，透過新作揭示一組更廣泛的場景系列：顯赫的大宅、簡陋的蝸居、風光不再的居所、分崩離析的商業環境。由此可見，他的近作包含了一種與西式風格更為強烈的跨時代聯繫，呈現一個源自其巨細無遺的敏銳觸覺、關於人的存在又或他們昔日的存在的劇目。

There Is No There There

Malingue, 26 Avenue Matignon, 75008 Paris, France

21.10.2015 – 05.12.2015

Edouard Malingue Gallery is pleased to present 'There is no there there', the first international solo exhibition of critically acclaimed Chinese painter Yuan Yuan (b. 1973, China) at Malingue Gallery, Paris. Taking inspiration from a quote by arts patron Gertrude Stein (*Everybody's Autobiography*, 1937), the works respond to the late writer's impressions upon returning home to California after living in Paris for over 30 years and discovering a ghost-like setting: all that was there was no more. Departing from Stein's lyrical description of loss, Yuan Yuan presents a series of imagined interiors, which focus on the recurring feature of mirrors. Since 3000 BC, when the Yellow Emperor Huang Di expounded the 'Fauna of Mirrors' – a myth citing that every reflective surface was a portal unto a different world harbouring creatures unknown to earth^[1] – the mirror has come to be a recurring symbol in literature, from Shakespeare^[2] to Sylvia Plath^[3], associated with our soul, its continuance and its surroundings.

Divided into three sections, the first room exhibits a series of mirror paintings that directly open unto an imaginary world, a fragmented distortion of reality. Alongside, a large-scale panorama spans the wall, presenting a hall of mirrors – an architectural reference to a duplicated Versailles Hall of Mirrors. Harking back to Huang Di, each painting reflects, in fine detail, spaces that exist beyond those that are immediately visible, whilst exposing certain incongruous spatial anomalies. This play on what you see and what actually exists heightens Yuan Yuan's characteristic as a master of vision; he decides what to reveal and how, which lends to each painting a recurrent aura of mystery. You, as the viewer, face to face with the mirror, are supposed to be surrounded in this setting, yet, your reflection does not appear, an element that draws a parallel with Bram Stoker's Gothic novel *Dracula* (1897)^[4]. Indeed, you are not seeing a truth, but rather connecting the dots between what Yuan Yuan has constructed – scenes that border the believable and the unfathomable.

From here, the second room shifts to a series of building entrances, which include the repeated

[1] Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Book of Imaginary Beings', 1957

[2] William Shakespeare, 'Richard II', 1595; 'Julius Caesar', 1599

[3] Sylvia Plath, 'Mirror', 1961

[4] "This time there could be no error, for the man was close to me, and I could see him over my shoulder. But there was no reflection of him in the mirror!", Bram Stoker, 'Dracula', 1897

mirror element, but solely in the context of revolving doors. As with the oeuvres in the previous room, they present various scenarios that the viewer is supposedly surrounded by, whilst suggesting that through the doors a different world exists. Echoing the architectures one finds in majestic entrances, from hotel lobbies to museum doorways, these oeuvres introduce the further notion of movement and continuance, which deliberately contrasts with the surrounding derelict scenarios, such as the fallen chandelier, that heightens a halting of time. This juxtaposition between continuance and arrest also reflects the mirror's conflicted position in novels, such as Thomas Hardy's 'I Look into My Glass' (1898), as an illustrator for a cruel passing of time^[5]. Yuan Yuan thus adds a further twist to his visual narrative, whilst prompting us to think back to Gertrude Stein's ominous impression and question whether the scenes are indeed no more.

In the final room, Yuan Yuan presents a grand reveal – a luscious, golden Louis XV interior, replete with opulent floor-to-ceiling Rococo elements. The scene, compared to the previous settings, alarmingly seems untouched, creating an impression that the first two rooms, in their varying states of decay, have been fictions of the viewer's own imagination. As with each of his works, however, further attention to detail is required; there is a mirror, and in it, one sees a completely contradictory scene. As if alluding to Oscar Wilde's 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' (1890), Yuan Yuan builds a conflict between beauty and decay, albeit in an architectural context, whilst equally summoning the mirror's further symbolic associations with narcissism^[6]. Yuan Yuan thus presents a final twist that brings the viewer back to his associations with theatricality, each tableaux being his unpredictable stage.

Overall, 'There is no there there' points to Yuan Yuan's identity as an absolute master of visual fictions. As in literature, from Antiquity to the later 20th century, Yuan Yuan builds his oeuvres through delicate symbolism with twists and turns, eliciting associations with fiction, horror and Romanticism – each painting, a masterful prompt for viewers to reflect upon their perception and existence.

[5] "I look into my glass, / And view my wasting skin, / And say, 'Would God it came to pass, / My heart had shrunk as thin!'", Thomas Hardy, 'I Look into My Glass', 1898

[6] Ovid, 'Metamorphoses: Part III', "Narcissus", 8 AD

馬凌畫廊將於巴黎MalingueGallery隆重呈獻廣受推崇的中國畫家袁遠(1973年生於中國)首個國際個展《There is no there there》。展覽標題摘自現代藝術發展觸媒格特魯德·斯泰因(Gertrude Stein)的1937年著作《Everybody's Autobiography》。受斯泰因啟發,袁遠的作品呼應了作家在外30年後從巴黎遷返加州住處的第一印象,以及幽靈般面目全非的場景:昔日的風光今天全然不復再。從斯泰因對漫失的抒情描述拓展開去,袁遠以鏡子為基序展現一系列想像中的內景。鏡的起源可追溯到公元前3000年,在黃帝盛世之時已有關於鏡子與幻獸的傳說^[1]——古人相信,皆凡所有反射面都能通往珍禽異獸棲居的異度空間。自此,鏡成了反覆出現在文學裡的象徵——如在莎翁^[2]和希薇亞·普拉斯(Sylvia Plath)^[3]筆下,其連續性和周邊環境便與人的靈魂結下不解之緣。

是次展覽空間分三部分,第一展覽室展出的鏡面畫作系列為現實的畸變開啟門扉。相鄰的大型全景壁畫則以凡爾賽宮的鏡廳為建築學基準,描繪一個掛滿鏡子的大廳。每幅作品讓人聯想到黃帝傳說,同時,其細膩的肌理影射肉眼所見的空間背後的另一神秘維度,以及兩者不協調的畸形。這種在視覺感知和不可見的現實之間不斷轉換的變戲法,將袁遠作為視覺敘述大師的技法發揮至極致:他主宰眼前的“現實”以及其揭示方式,從而賦予畫作一種詭秘的氛圍。面對鏡子的觀者理應沉浸於四圍的佈景之中,但正如布萊姆·斯托克(Bram Stoker)的哥德小說《德古拉》(1897)^[4]情節所述,這些“鏡子”反映不了“鏡中人”的倒影。誠然,你並不是事實的見證人,而只不過是在串連袁遠筆下那些徘徊於可信和不可理解之際的種種畫面。

[1] 豪爾赫·路易斯·博爾赫斯,《幻獸辭典》(The Book of Imaginary Beings), 1957

[2] 莎士比亞,《理查二世》(Richard II), 1595;《凱撒大帝》(Julius Caesar), 1599

[3] 希薇亞·普拉斯,《鏡》(Mirror), 1961

[4] "This time there could be no error, for the man was close to me, and I could see him over my shoulder. But there was no reflection of him in the mirror!", 布萊姆·斯托克,《德古拉》, 1897

第二展覽室轉移至一組同樣以鏡子為創作元素、但著眼於描繪旋轉大門的畫作。正如另一個房間所示的作品，這一組場景在包圍觀者的同時亦暗示了門後存在著截然不同的光景。作品呼應酒店大堂和博物館門廊等堂皇入口的建築美學，藉滲透有關動態和連貫性的概念對照周遭被遺棄的景觀：以墮落的水晶燈為例，時間彷彿停留在瀕臨拆遷的頹垣敗瓦之中。連續性以及囚禁之間的強烈對比反映了鏡子在小說如托馬斯·哈代的《鏡中人》(I Look into My Glass) (1898) 中的矛盾作用，闡述時間傷人的流逝^[5]。這樣一來，袁遠為其視覺敘述添上變局，誘使觀者回想格特魯德·斯泰因的不安疑問：昔日的風光是否真的不復再？

在最後的展覽室裡，袁遠展出一個盛大的揭示—— 路易十五式的奢華室內建築，由下而上都滿載著豐富的洛可可風格元素。與先前的佈局相比，這個場景似乎從一開始就排絕了生活，彷彿觀者剛才所見人去樓空的凋零狀態亦只不過是海市蜃樓。不變的是畫作肌理的細緻：袁遠透過畫中鏡裡的矛盾影像隱射奧斯卡·王爾德(Oscar Wilde)的著作《道林·格雷的畫像》(The Picture of Dorian Gray) (1890)，在建築學的語境裡構成美與腐朽之間的抵觸，同時帶出鏡子與自戀^[6]的象徵聯繫。作為結語，袁遠在此呈獻最後的變局並帶觀者回到他的戲劇性手法—— 每幅作品都是情節叵測的舞台。

總括而言，《There is no there there》點出了袁遠作為視覺敘述大師的身份意義。在文學層面上，袁遠從古代至後20世紀間擷取各個變局和轉捩點。以象徵為奠基的作品引伸至小說、恐怖和浪漫主義，敦促觀者反思他們自身的感知和存在。

[5] "I look into my glass, / And view my wasting skin, / And say, "Would God it came to pass, / My heart had shrunk as thin!", 托馬斯·哈代,《鏡中人》,1898

[6] 奧維德,《變形記:卷3》,"納西瑟斯",8 AD





Installation View
裝置現場



Installation View
裝置現場







Installation View
装置現場





Installation View
装置現場





Installation View
裝置現場



Installation View
装置現場







Installation View
裝置現場





Installation View
裝置現場





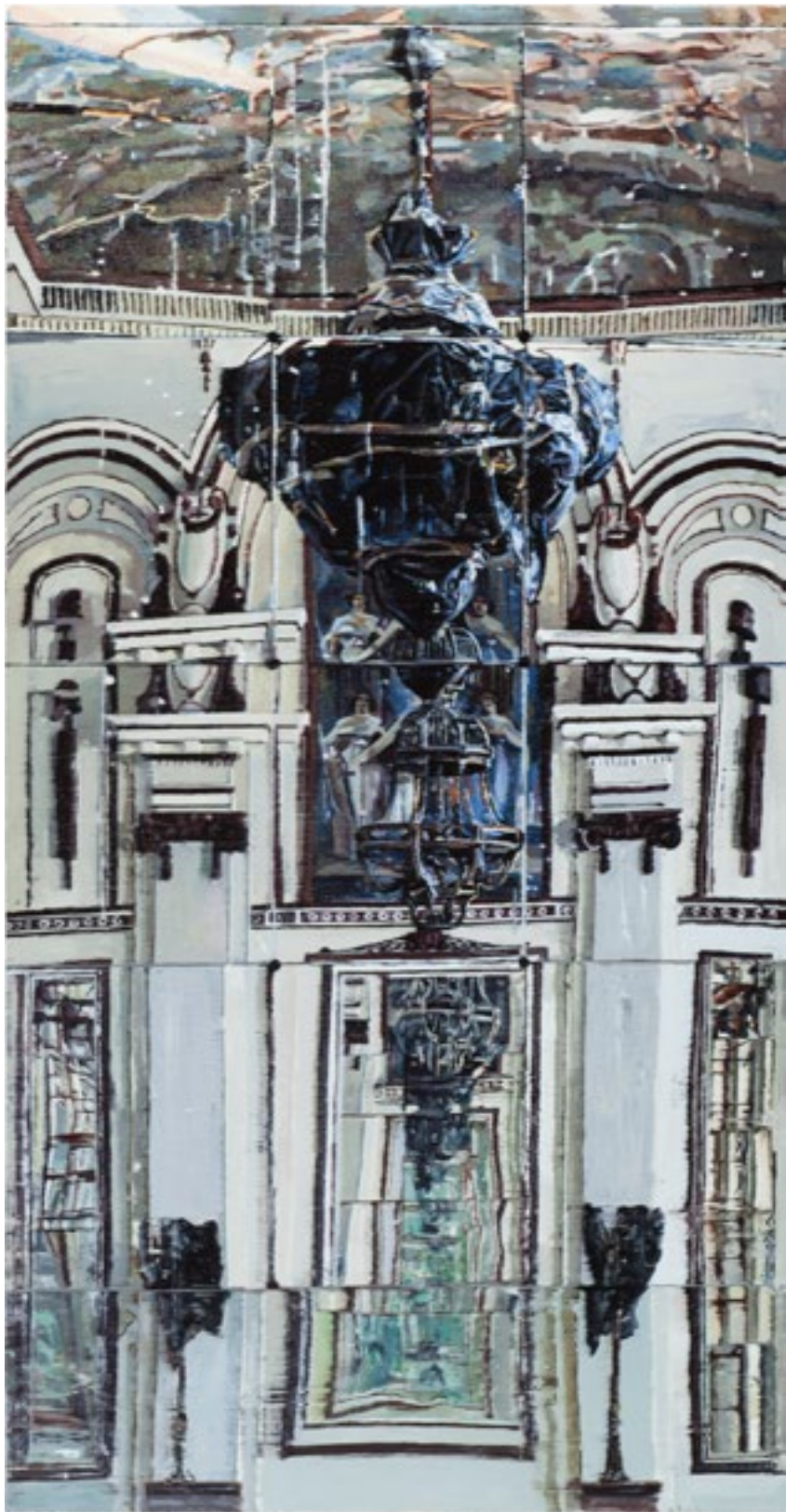
Installation View
裝置現場



The Other Side 3 另一邊 3, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
230 x 180 cm



The Other Side 8 另一邊 8, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
158 x 85 cm



The Other Side 7 另一邊 7, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
158 x 82 cm



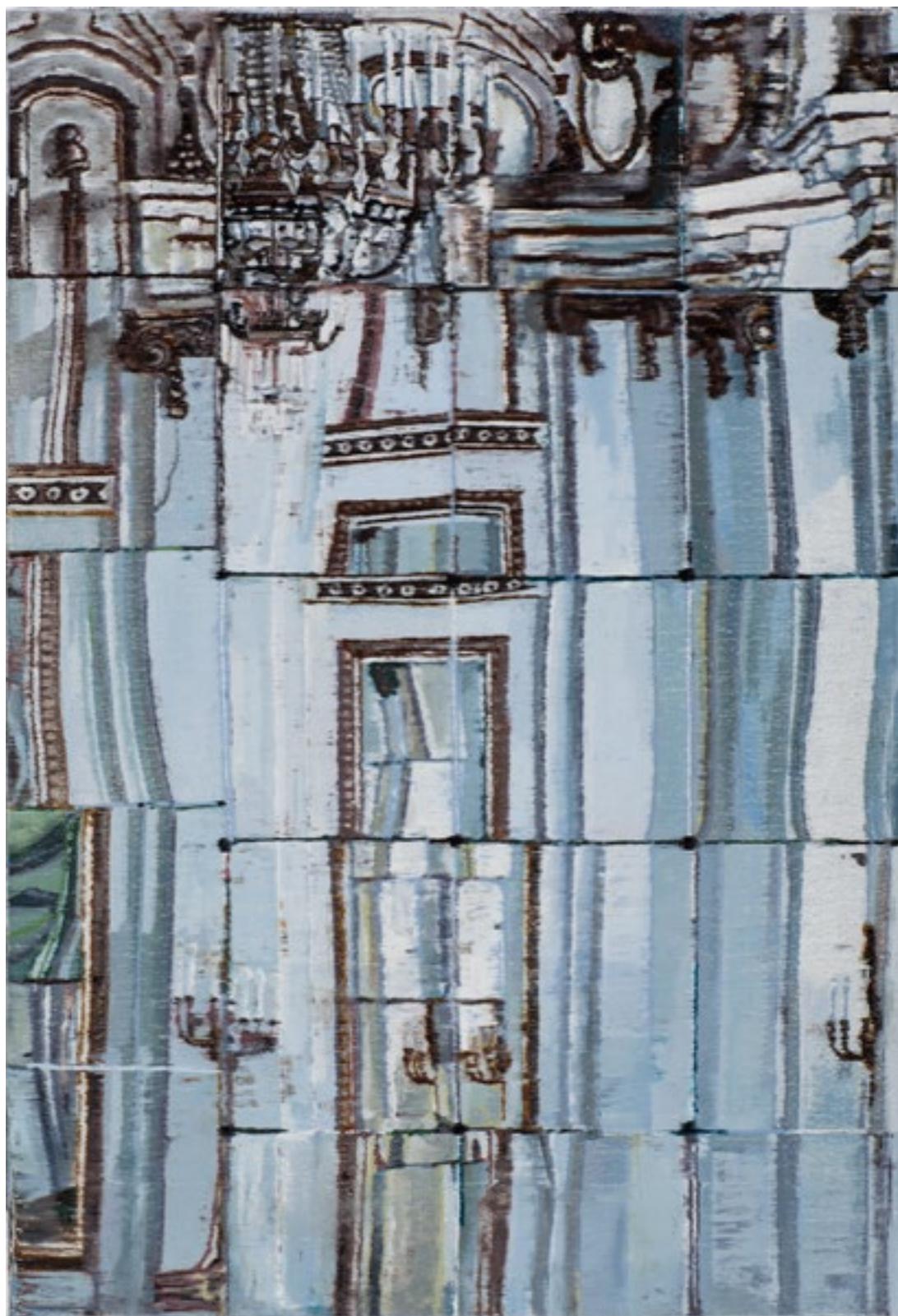


The Other Side 另一邊, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
230 x 63, 230 x 155, 230 x 63 cm





Floor 地板, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
150 x 230 cm



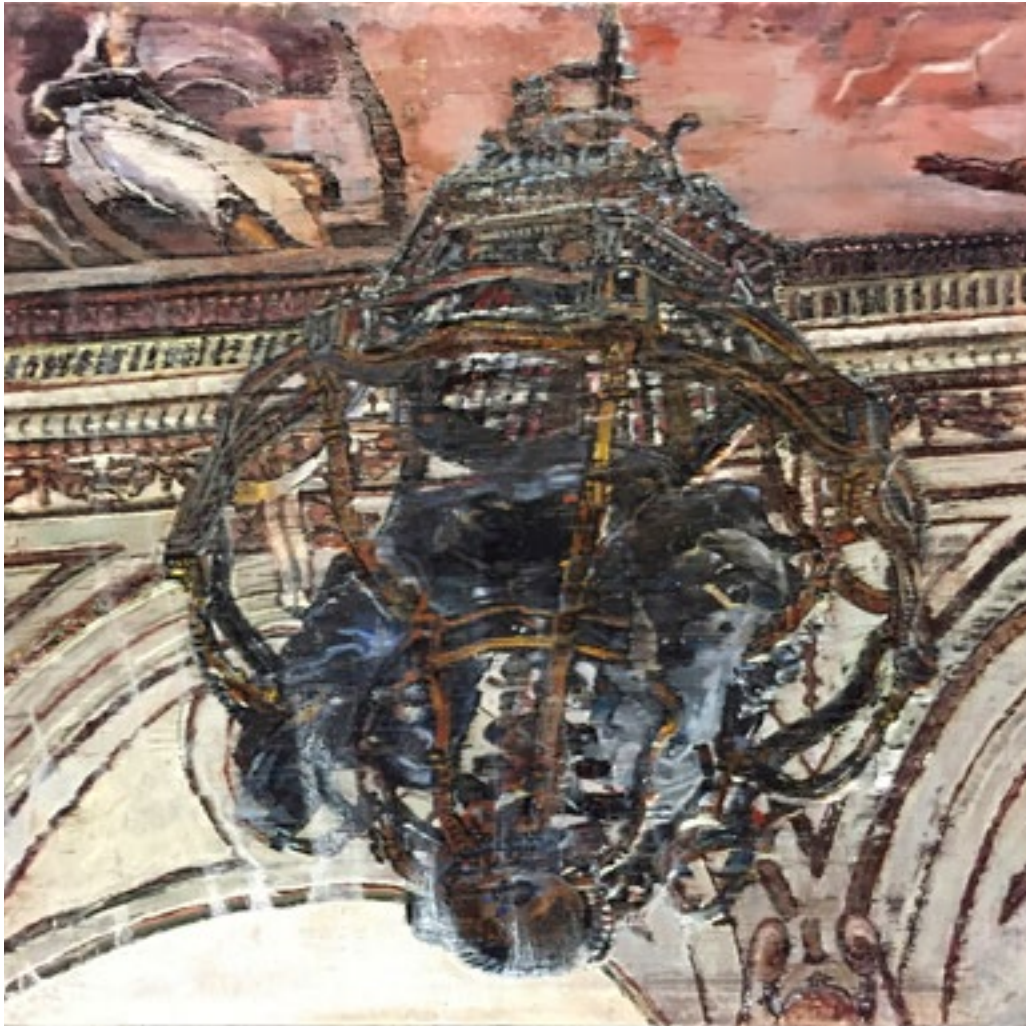
The Other Side 10 另一邊 10, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
63 x 43 cm



Unlocked Room 不上鎖的房間, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
55 x 40 cm



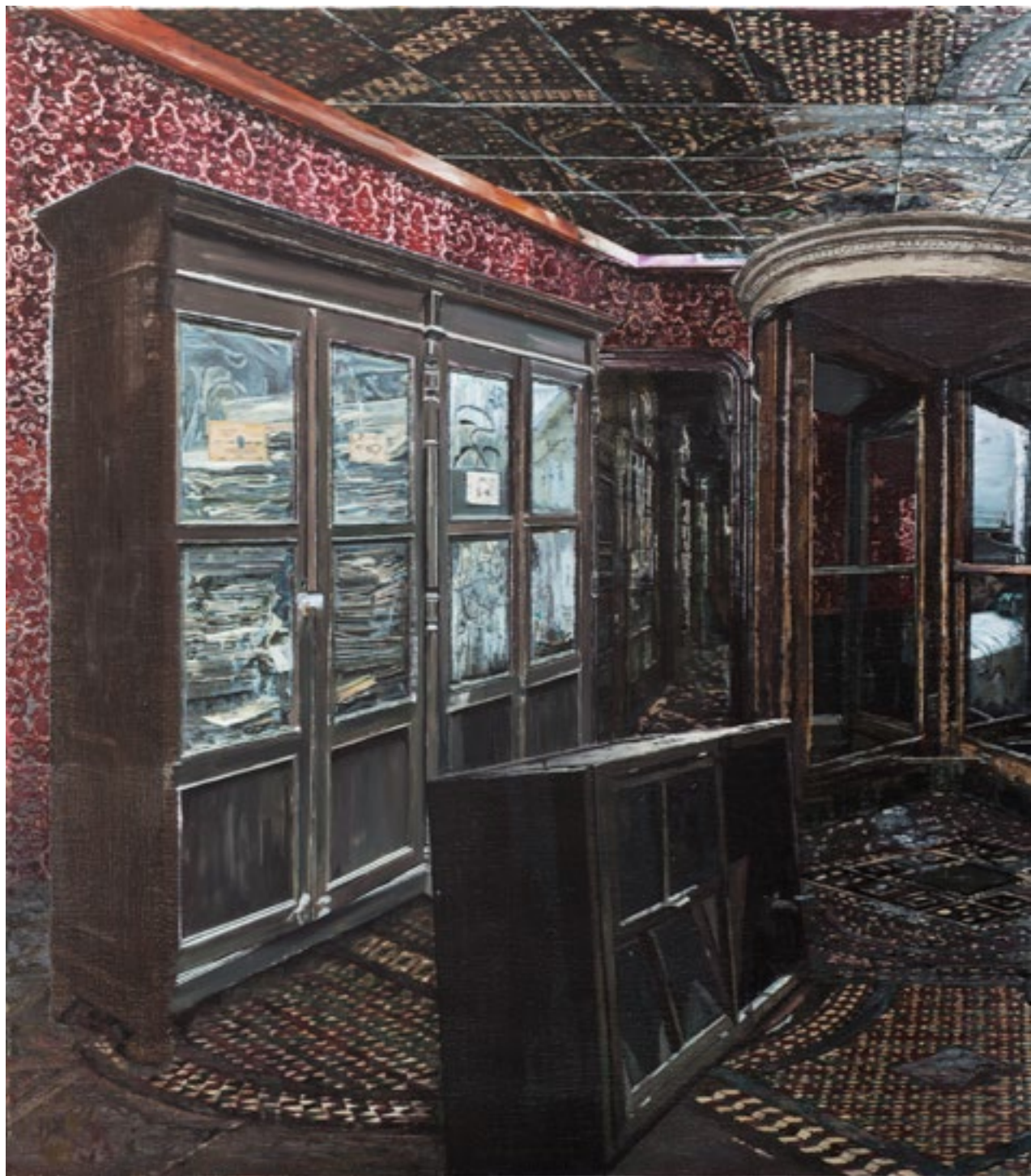
External Fire 1 長明燈 1, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
33 x 33 cm



External Fire 2 長明燈 2, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
33 x 33 cm



The End of the Day 一天的結束, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
70 x 62 cm





Parallel Worlds 平行世界, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
161 x 230 cm



Togetherness 歡聚,2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
202 x 135 cm





Romantic Museum 羅曼蒂克博物館, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
185 x 195 cm



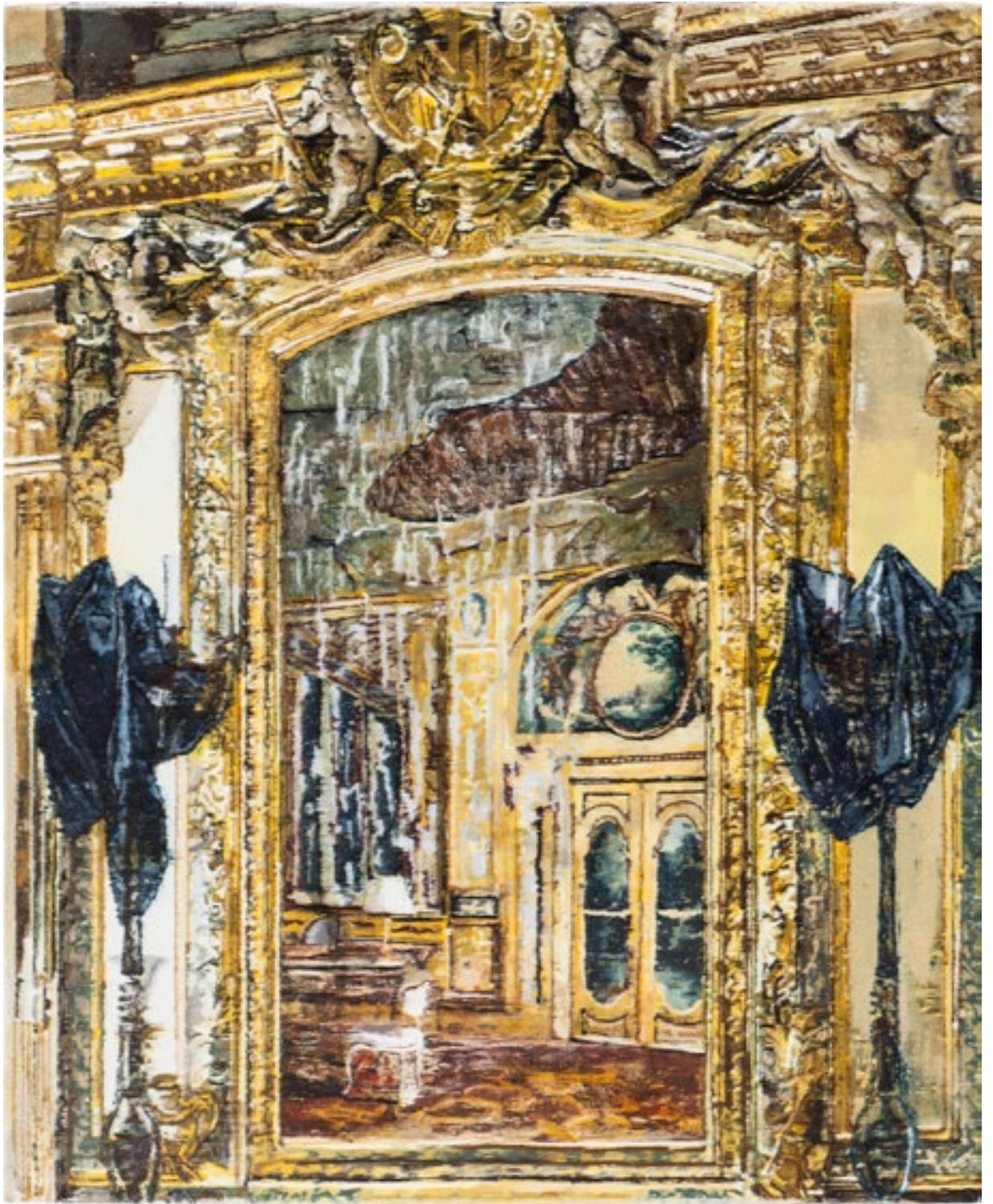


Golden Age 黃金時代, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
170 x 200 cm





A Lighthearted Palace 無憂宮, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
180 x 213 cm



Self Portrait 自畫像, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
65 x 53 cm



The Edge of the Mirror 鏡子邊緣, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
38 x 67 cm





The End of the End 盡頭的盡頭, 2015
Oil on canvas (油彩 畫布)
155 x 230 cm

Recent Works
最近的作品





Single Room In Lavatory
《獨立的衛生間》
2013
Oil on Linen (油彩 亞麻布)
145 x 200 cm

Single Room in Lavatory demonstrates Yuan Yuan's accentuated boldness in including elements that are Western in style. The gilded Baroque mirror on the right wall is the viewer's primary point of visual contact, which is then directed past an elaborate tap system towards a sumptuous bathing chamber that is teasingly concealed. Despite the captivating dominance of the mirror, Yuan Yuan has purposely envisioned the tiled room in red, which both reflects empiricism and a colour that symbolises good fortune and joy in Chinese culture. Beyond representing a merging of cultures, this work is an elaborate example of Yuan Yuan's great ability at introducing multiple planes of perspective on a canvas: not only do our eyes follow into the second room, the gilded mirror opens our vision onto a further space with an elaborate chandelier and balustrade. The reflection thus, as well as stimulating our vision, confirms that Yuan Yuan is indeed depicting a scene of opulent wealth, one that is focused on a personal area but hints to an even grander whole.

《獨立的衛生間》充分展示袁遠在風格上揉合西方元素的大膽嘗試。觀者的第一視覺接觸點落在右方牆上的巴洛克式鍍金鏡子，經過精緻的自來水系統，再往半隱蔽而撩人的豪華沐浴室深入延展。任憑鏡子在畫面佈局上的主導地位，袁遠刻意為馬賽克瓷磚塗上紅色—朱紅映射經驗主義，亦含象徵好運氣和喜悅的中華文化意義。這一作品不僅表現兩種文化的融合，也突出袁遠在同一畫布上描繪多個透視平面的精湛技巧：觀者的目光順著毗連房間的方向，那鍍金鏡子開拓我們的視野，通往另一個點綴著精巧水晶吊燈和欄杆的空間。畫面盛載觀感刺激，且肯定了袁遠的確是在描繪一個極盡奢華的場境時，表面上聚焦於個人層面，實際上暗指一個更宏大的整體。





Must Be Ok With Humidity
《我不介意潮濕》
2013
Oil on Linen (油彩 亞麻布)
150 x 190 cm

Must Be Ok With Humidity exemplifies Yuan Yuan's painterly manner of depicting, with incredible attention to detail, the various individual features of a particular space that contribute to its own narrative. In this scene, we find a single room that evinces a striking passing of time: great layers of paint peel off the central wall - a result of the humidity referred to in the title - while clusters of dark green mold seem to have crept over the remaining areas. The floor tiling, once ornate and a vivid burgundy and turquoise blue, has been discoloured and is visibly chipped in the corners. Despite the detritus, Yuan Yuan sparks our marvel by introducing signs of inhabitation: a laundry line swings from one wall to another, clothes hanging; kitchenware is laid out upon a cabinet, which is protected by plastic cloth. In contrast to *Single Room in Lavatory*, this space, which doubles as a kitchen and a laundry room, is humble: a single light bulb rather than a ravishing chandelier hangs from the ceiling. Upon closer inspection, our curiosity is further sparked: the cabinet is not a simple wooden structure but rather a dainty red baroque piece of furniture with slight gilding. The contrast between this sign of material holdings and the room prompts the questions: what is the story, when did it happen and why.

《我不介意潮濕》說明了袁遠獨特的繪畫方式：透過對一切細節和肌理的嚴謹關注，構成每個特定空間的各種建築元素便醞釀出該空間所吐露的語境。在這個場境，活現於眼前的是單由一個房間敘述的時間流逝之態：呼應作品標題對潮濕的觸覺聯想，牆上的油漆一層層地剝脫。與此同時，深綠色的霉菌在留白處蔓延。曾經華麗的酒紅和翠藍色地磚，如今剩下脫了色的缺口。任憑這些頹敗的殘屑，袁遠終歸透視了空間裡的棲居痕跡：一條掛滿衣服的晾衣繩懸於兩道牆壁之間；廚具攤佈在鋪了膠枱布的櫃頂。與《獨立的衛生間》相反，這個多用途空間是何其的簡樸：沒有綺麗的水晶吊燈，就只得一個燈泡照亮著房間。仔細觀察，觀者更發好奇：纖巧的櫃檯非但不是一般的木造結構，而是一個呈棗紅色、稍微燙金的巴洛克式傢俱。物質上的支配和房間本質形成的鮮明對比教人生疑：這裡敘述的是一個怎樣的故事？它又是在何時發生、因何而發生？

A Little Bit Lonely I
2013
Oil on Canvas (油彩 畫布)
190 x 160 cm

The painting *A Little Bit Lonely* presents Yuan Yuan's burgeoning interest in the Renaissance and his ability, through including multiple planes of perspective, to suggest space beyond that which is strictly shown. This interior depicts an entranceway to a multi-story building. Our eye is primarily guided by the left-twisting stairway to the right of the canvas. Lined by a wooden bannister, one follows the structure, wanting to see what is on the next level. Not revealed, one then sees the multiple doors to the left, which lead down a corridor and are nearly concealed by large flaps of wallpaper that have been peeled off. This area does not seem inhabited, but one can imagine it having served a designated purpose. Since abandoned, it has suffered the tests of time and is alone in speaking for what it once was. Yuan thus presents an invitation for our minds to travel into the past and imagine for ourselves the origins of this illusory space. Simultaneously, Yuan introduces his interest in a cultural movement, which although of the past and originating in Italy, has developed into a general style that manifests itself worldwide.

《一點點寂寞》映照袁遠新興對文藝復興的興趣，以及其擅於透過構出多個透視平面來暗示那潛藏在畫面背後、不為人知的二度空間的精深技藝。這個室內佈局呈現一個玄關，通往一座多層建築的內部。觀者的目光由左旋樓梯引導延伸至畫布的右方，沿著木製欄杆組成的結構方向，徒想窺探樓上的光景。我們終於留意到左側沿走廊的幾扇門—幾乎被剝脫的牆紙瓣完全掩沒。驟眼看，這地方沒人居住，但還是吐露了一種暗昧而不再的意義。人去樓空以後，剩下的斷垣廢牆歷盡歲月的試煉，獨自黯然道出昔日的風光。袁遠以此邀請觀者回到過去、憑空想像這個虛幻空間的淵源。同時，他展現自己對一個文化運動的關注—縱然這運動源於意大利，它終究發展成一種涉足世界各地的流行風格。







Blue X

《憂鬱 X》

2013

Oil on Canvas (油彩 畫布)

158 x 190 cm

This work by Yuan Yuan represents his evolved striking boldness in introducing elements of Western architecture. The painting depicts a detrudd interior of what was once a grand abode; from behind an elaborate iron bannister, painted in light turquoise, the viewer looks upon a long turquoise-blue corridor, lined with ajar French windows, some of which have been kept open by encroaching exterior floral overgrowth. To the right of the painting one sees a hall, which leads down to a winding staircase. Aside from elaborate planes of perspective, this painting is strikingly replete with Italianate features: the cast-iron bannister, the Baroque columns with Corinthian detailing and the segmental arches. These elements cumulatively lend themselves to the recurring theme of storytelling: the viewer is prompted to wonder what occurred to a home or space that evinced such wealth and was founded upon such monumentality.

袁遠筆下的這幅作品再次體現了其就西方建築學元素在中國藝術上的大膽處理。畫作描繪一座顯赫大宅經遺棄後的內部廢墟；從淺青綠色的鐵欄杆身後，觀者的焦點落在內襯半掩落地窗的翠綠色長廊，有幾扇窗甚至因繁茂的植物而敞開著。畫面右方可見一個大廳，直通往一道迴轉樓梯。除如斯縝密的透視平面之外，畫作亦充滿了意式風格特徵：鑄鐵欄杆、巴洛克的科林斯柱式和平圓拱。這些元素累積地推進反覆出現的敘事主題：目睹這建基於宏大紀念性、曾經富麗堂皇的家，觀者不禁希望探尋它的經歷。

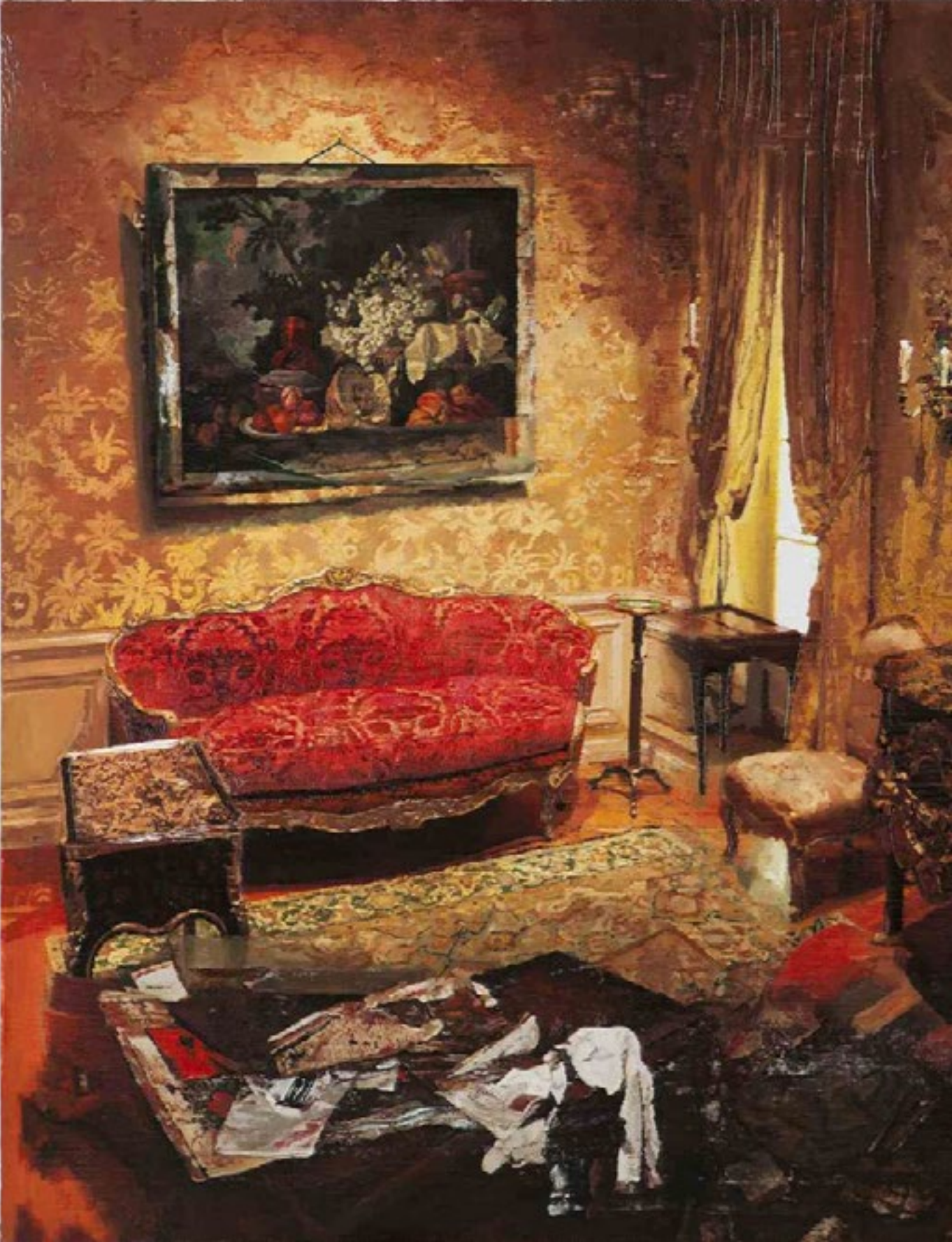




A Little Bit Lonely II
2013
Oil on Canvas (油彩 畫布)
150 x 210 cm

In this particular painting, Yuan Yuan depicts an interior that exposes a great state of dereliction and by-gone glamour. Remarkably, this work also introduces the eerie possibility of ongoing inhabitation or an alarming vision from the past. The scene depicts large French bay windows, which are spread open unto a long hall. Despite paint chipping off the ceiling in large slabs and the large ornate floral tiles having been damaged by disrepair, a long table is placed in the middle of the hall and remarkably surrounded by twelve matching chairs. As if frozen in time, a pristine white linen cloth has been laid out, and glassware as well as dainty porcelain has been set on the table. The windows, replete with striking cracks in the glass, are an incongruous sight in juxtaposition with the arrangement as well as each of the chairs, which are also seemingly intact. The entire scene seems to be cast from memory, as if on the one hand Yuan Yuan is depicting what is actually before him, while on the other hand his mind is filling the blanks of what this space once was or indeed could have been.

在這幅作品中，袁遠勾勒的內景以無主之城之態，略帶一種懷緬傷逝的情緒感受。值得注意的是，作品還表現了持續棲居的詭誕可能性，以及窺探過去的懾人視覺。這個場景描繪一列寬敞的法式窗台，朝著長廊延伸開去。任憑從天花一瓣瓣地剝落的油漆和千瘡百孔的碎花瓷磚，一張長餐桌被置於大廳的中央，由12張相襯的椅子圍繞著。純白色的亞麻布平攤在桌面，擺放著玻璃器皿和纖巧的瓷器一時間猶如停頓在某瞬間。與完好的椅子相鄰卻滿佈裂痕的玻璃窗，在如此的佈置下顯得格格不入。整個畫面如若記憶的定格，彷彿袁遠一方面像真地描述眼前的景象，另一方面又嘗試憑空聯想存在於這空間、真實和幻想的曾經。





Museum VI
《美術館 VI》

2013

Oil on Canvas (油彩 畫布)

150 x 190 cm

This painting demonstrates an elaborate degree of opulence and is based on a vision Yuan Yuan had of what the Metropolitan Museum in New York would resemble, should it be inhabited. A prime example of his visional flair and storytelling abilities, Yuan Yuan depicts a single room with golden silk material that hugs the walls, its ornate floral pattern glistening in lavish accordance with the Rococo fauteuils as well as the gold leaf and marble cabinet below the window with closed blinds. A primary point of visual contact is the Dutch or Flemish still life painting to the left—most wall, which in a gilded framed depicts a feast brimming with fruit, set against a dark exotic landscape. This first object draws the viewer's gaze throughout the room and to its various ornaments: the wall-mounted chandeliers, the lusciously draping golden curtains. As if plucked from a royal 17th century European setting, Yuan Yuan exemplifies through this scene his great ability at imagining and depicting two extremes, from the desolately detrued to the seemingly untouchable and abundant.

這幅畫作表現的堂皇富裕是基於袁遠對紐約大都會藝術博物館的聯想，假設博物館成為一所住處後會是怎樣的光景。作為他天賦的觸覺和敘事技巧的最佳證明，袁遠細膩的筆觸在此描繪一個被金絲四壁環抱的空間，華美的碎花圖案與洛可可式安樂椅、垂簾下的金箔和大理石櫃檯相輝映出眩目的奢華。觀者的第一視覺觸點自然落在左壁上鑲著鍍金框架、描繪異國水果盛宴的荷蘭或弗拉芒式靜物掛畫。這一視覺觸點接著向房間內部深入延伸，引導觀者注視周遭的裝飾：壁掛式水晶燈、懸垂金箔簾幕☒☒透過這彷彿從17世紀歐洲皇族佈景直接裁出來的景觀，袁遠再次展現其勾勒極端的變戲技法，將廢墟似的記憶和一種盎然而不可觸摸的存在同時活現於眼前。

Beneath the Metropolis

《地下II》

2013

Oil on Canvas (油彩 畫布)

190 x 127 cm



Bunker I

《地下I》

2013

Oil on Linen (油彩 亞麻布)

83 x 100 cm



Untitled

《無題》

2014

Oil on Canvas (油彩 畫布)

160 x 110 cm



Welfare Hotel
福利旅館

Art Basel Hong Kong 2014
香港巴塞爾藝術展 2014

14.05.2014 - 19.05.2014

Edouard Malingue Gallery is pleased to present a solo show with rising Chinese artist Yuan Yuan (b. 1973, Zhejiang) at Art Basel Hong Kong. A graduate from the highly acclaimed Oil Painting Department of the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, Yuan Yuan approaches the canvas as an exploration of a particular thematic: the interior and exterior of spaces that evince a trace of humanity and a passing of time. Notably vacant, the areas portrayed balance an apocalyptic aura of desolation with a distinct sense of previous inhabitation. This new series of works, presented to the public for the first time, draws on Yuan Yuan's previous practice but reveals the impact of his recent residential experiences. in Scotland and the USA. Employing a darker palette and depicting more cavernous sites, they evince the contemporary plague that strikes architectural constructs: buildings are emblems of an age, yet around the world and particularly in China - where rapid and radical changes are constantly occurring - the significance of such symbols are constantly in flux.

Yuan Yuan is of a generation witnessing bygone buildings and districts being abandoned or repurposed. Therein arises a heightened fascination with preserving, however possible, those elements of architecture that bear a legacy of time despite their detruing and altering state. Yuan Yuan's method is that of observation, imagination and consequent depiction: he absorbs the various architectural elements, whether traditional Chinese or Western, and creates out of them an imagined vision. Despite his final painterly renditions ultimately being fictional, Yuan Yuan takes inspiration from certain constructs and areas. Examples range from underground architectures with historical and militaristic significance to grand monuments of architecture that have cultural wealth and stylistic significance to districts that have witnessed a passing of time. Their contested illusion, however, is heightened by each work being rendered in a highly realistic manner: every slight feature, whether a slither of peeled wall paint or a fragment of chipped floor tile, jumps from the canvas. This is due to Yuan Yuan's distinct painterly manner of applying and subsequently scratching the painted surface, a method that echoes the physical properties of the areas he depicts.

These latest works draw most notably on Yuan Yuan's experiences in Europe and the USA. *Bunker* (2014), for example, appears to relate to his visit of Scotland's Secret Bunkers in Abingdon and Anstruther as well as his ventures through Paris' underground and Philadelphia City's StatePenitentiary. The painting reveals

a tenebrous corridor devoid of natural light that through its low ceiling and apparent moisture resembles a tunnel, which ultimately leads to a heavy door. The muted tones, as well as the faint outline of a skull, point to an underground terrain that was once frequented but no longer of use. This thematic, replete with mystery, permeates throughout his other works, such as *Behind the Door* (2014), which follows Yuan Yuan's previous practice of presenting with great sensitivity Western architectural styles, from the Baroque to the Renaissance. In this oeuvre a black and white tiled floor leads our gaze to a door that has been left ajar; layers of light turquoise paint peel from its surface confirming the sites deterioration and suggesting its abandon. Although the precise story behind each place is uncertain, it is precisely this unyielding sense of questioning that marks Yuan Yuan's work, for his creations are not only paintings, but also chapters in a continuously evolving visual novel that expounds the individual stories of multiple milieus.

Yuan Yuan's work has garnered critical acclaim worldwide and been exhibited in multiple international locations including Paris, Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai and Taiwan. His paintings are held in numerous private collections, including the DSL collection of Contemporary Chinese Art and have been featured in multiple publications, including Artinfo.

馬凌畫廊於2014年的香港巴塞爾藝術展隆重呈獻中國藝術界新星袁遠(1973年生於浙江)個人展覽。袁遠畢業於杭州著名中國美術學院油畫系,擅於透過在畫布上描繪室內和室外空間,探討建築上人性的痕跡和時間的流逝。在他畫筆下的往往是寂靜無人的空間,帶有一種末日蒼涼的氛圍,觀者卻能從細節中感受到一點昔日住客的痕跡。從是次展覽首次公開的一系列作品中,觀眾除了可看到袁遠過往的繪畫手法,也可留意到藝術家近期在蘇格蘭和美國生活體驗的影響。這系列的作品用上較深的色調,描繪的空間也比過往的空蕩,從而帶出舊建築在當前社會中面對的問題:這些建築物都是年代的標誌,但在變化急速的世界環境下,尤其在中國,建築物的意義亦隨之而改變。

對於舊建築和城區的荒廢或重建,袁遠和他那一代人絕對不會感到陌生;儘管那些建築已逐漸被遷拆,面貌亦今非昔比,不少人仍然像袁遠一樣盡力保留建築上的時代元素。在創作的過程中,袁遠十分著重觀察、想像和描繪:先把看到的中國或西方建築元素消化,然後利用想像把空間繪畫出來。雖然油畫中的空間均屬虛構,但都是根據現實中存在的建築而創作出來的。當中的例子包括富有歷史和軍事意義的地下建築、具有文化價值和藝術風格的宏偉文物建築、以及見證時間流逝的舊城區。袁遠以其逼真的繪畫手法把畫中的建築描繪得栩栩如生,他利用獨有的油畫方法,把油彩塗上畫布,然後再把部份油彩刮掉;每一個細節,如牆壁上一片片斑駁剝落的油漆或地上缺口的瓷磚,都彷彿立體地呈現出來。

袁遠的最新作品靈感主要來自他在歐洲和美國的體驗，其中的作品如避彈室 (2014) (Bunker)，靈感來自他在蘇格蘭阿賓頓和安斯特拉瑟見過的秘密避彈室，以及巴黎地下鐵和美國費城的州立監獄。這幅作品展示一條不見天日的陰暗走廊，其低樓底和潮濕的表面令走廊看來猶如一條隧道，通往一道沉重的門。柔弱的色調，加上一個輪廓隱約的頭骨面向著這個現已變得寂靜無人的地底空間，讓作品充滿神秘感。這種主題亦滲透在袁遠的其他作品如門後 (2014) (Behind the Door)，作品用上袁遠過往細膩的表達手法，描繪出西方的建築風格，包括巴洛克和文藝復興風格。在這作品中，黑白相間的磚地連接着一道半掩的門，從剝落中的淺綠松石色油漆看得出此地方已衰落，並已荒廢了一段日子。

縱使袁遠沒有清楚說明其作品中每一個空間背後的故事，然而這種疑惑感正是其作品引人入勝之處，他的作品不只是一幅幅的油畫，也是一本情節不斷演變的視覺小說中的一個個章節，闡述各種環境背後的獨立故事。袁遠的作品在世界各地均獲好評，曾於多個國際城市如巴黎、香港、新加坡、上海和台灣展出，他的畫作獲不少私人收藏家及機構收藏，當中包括DSL Collection的中國當代藝術收藏系列。袁遠的作品亦曾被多個傳媒刊物包括〈藝訊〉報導。





Behind the Door

《門後》

2014

Oil on Linen (油彩 亞麻布)

83 x 55 cm

[Previous page](#)

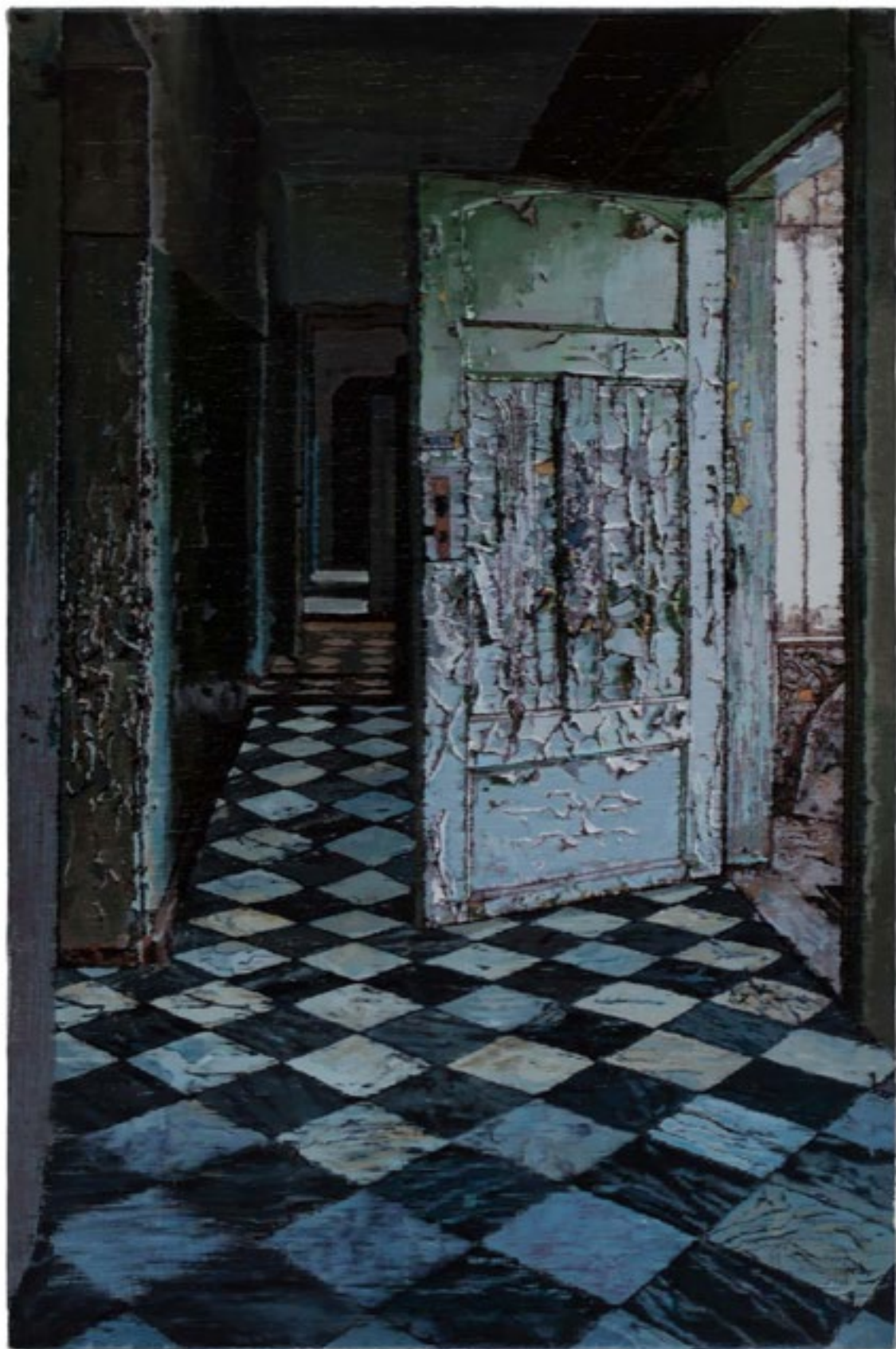
Welfare Hotel

《福利旅館》

2014

Oil on Linen (油彩 亞麻布)

380 x 270 cm (diptych 二連作)



No Littering

《禁扔廢棄物》

2013

Oil on Linen (油彩 亞麻布)

200 x 170 cm





The Mirror of the Cross 1

《十字路口的鏡子 1》

2013

Oil on Linen (油彩 亞麻布)

63 x 43 cm



The Mirror of the Cross 2
《十字路口的鏡子 2》
2013
Oil on Linen (油彩 亞麻布)
63 x 43 cm

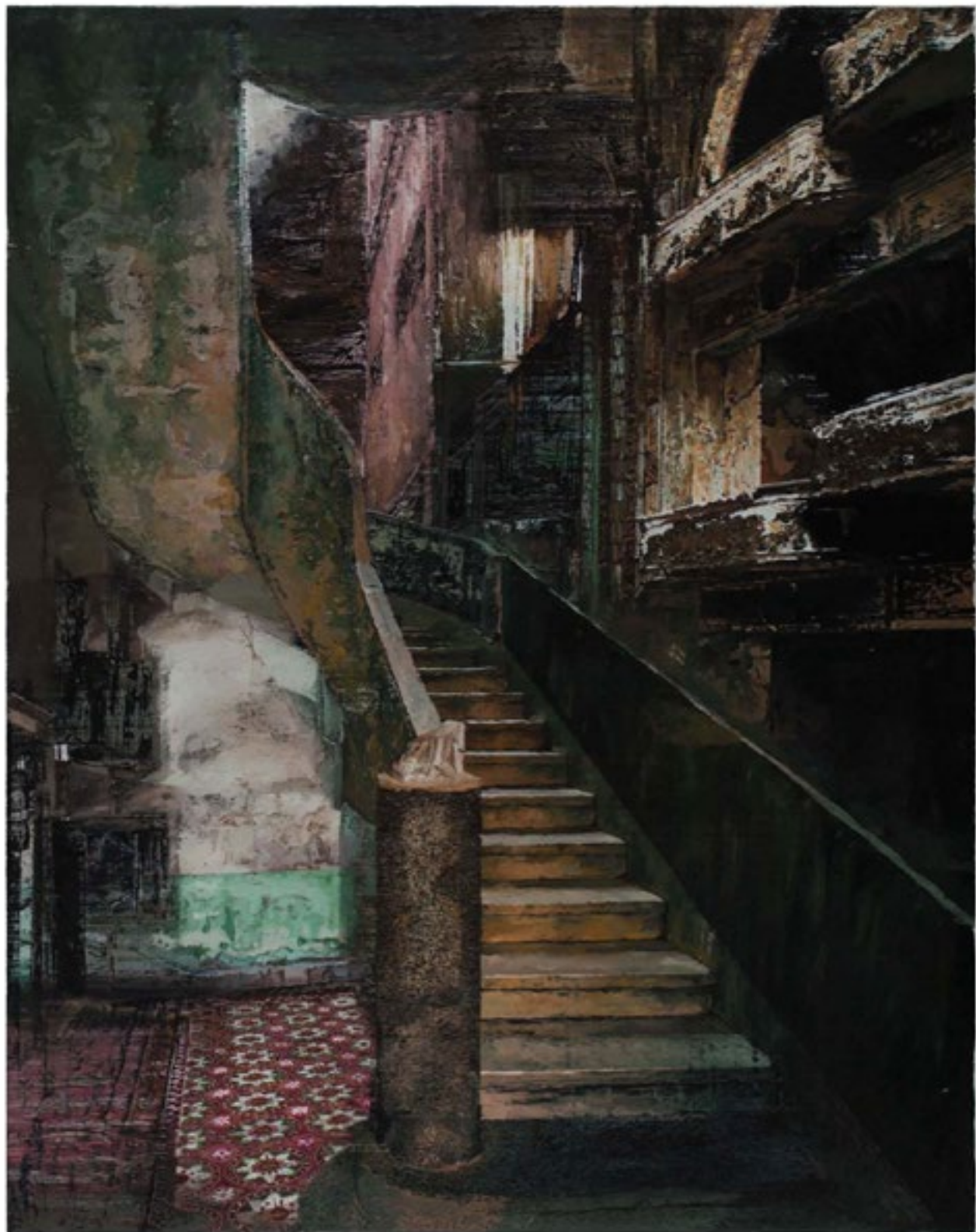
Common Ground Community

《共同點社區》

2013

Oil on Linen (油彩 亞麻布)

190 x 150 cm



Humid Region
潮濕

Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong
馬凌畫廊, 香港

20.09.2012 - 10.11.2012

Humid Region

《潮濕》

2011

Oil on Canvas (油彩畫布)

180 x 170 cm



Paris II

《巴黎 II》

2012

Oil on Canvas (油彩畫布)

63 x 43 cm



Occupiers

《佔有者》

2012

Oil on Canvas (油彩 畫布)

70 x 48 cm







Museum III

《美術館 III》

2010

Oil on Canvas (油彩 畫布)

102 x 135 cm

Blues IX
《憂鬱 IX》
2012
Oil on Canvas (油彩畫布)
170 x 200 cm







The 30th Floor

《三十層》

2012

Oil on Canvas (油彩畫布)

38 x 180 cm





Entrance

《入口》

2011

Oil on Canvas (油彩 畫布)

263 x 149 cm





Fragments

《碎片》

2012

Oil on Canvas (油彩 畫布)

Triptych each panel 132 x 50 cm

Total Size 132 x 150 cm

Ground Floor

《底樓》

2012

Oil on Canvas (油彩畫布)

200 x 125 cm



Daylight
《白晝》
2012
Oil on Canvas (油彩 畫布)
223 x 190 cm







Demolition

《危樓》

2012

Oil on Canvas (油彩 畫布)

65 x 85 cm

Alleyway

《過道》

2012

Oil on Canvas (油彩畫布)

178 x 124 cm







Installation View
装置現場





Installation View
裝置現場





Installation View
装置現場

Interview between Yuan Yuan and Hilary Binks (Extract) 袁遠與希拉里·比克斯對談錄 (節錄)

HB Often the places seem dilapidated, almost in ruins. What are you trying to convey by depicting such places in your paintings?

YY Ruins give us a sense of security, it is a living space without a sense of pressure so you can do whatever you want. Abandoned places are also a public space simultaneously, meaning that you may enter freely and visit. This is similar to the process of a viewer looking at an artwork. I try my best to identify the residual traces left behind, although not so much about what the place contains now, but rather: what the place used to contain for a long time, which no one can take away and which cannot be seen.

比克斯 你描繪的地方往往是顯得破舊不堪，幾乎是一片廢墟。什麼是你想透過這些作品傳達的？

袁遠 廢墟給人安全感已經是沒有壓力的生存空間，你在裡面干什麼都行，被放棄的地方同時也成了公共建築，表示你可以進入參觀，這和來看藝術家的作品過程很類似，我想盡可能的找出存留的痕跡，不是這地方現在有什麼，最好的是：這地方曾經有什麼持久的存留著，誰都無法帶走。而且是不可見的。

HB In all your works, it is as if a stage is set, but there are no actors. There are never any people. Do you want to hint at a human presence by, for example: the dripping water? Or perhaps the thousands of little tiles, all identical, hint at the millions of people in China?

YY I want to represent 'people' by using traces of human activity, which is why the works don't involve any natural landscape. A space full of human traces always heightens our curiosity. If you find a piece of paper in an old inhabited house, you will pay attention to it particularly. The projection on the paper becomes much larger. The neat and orderly tiny tiles follow my working habit, I spend a lot of time tidying up the studio. I would not be able to work if a tool was not in its correct location. But once I start working, I work quickly.

比克斯 在你所有的作品中，它就像一個固定的舞台，卻沒有演員；從未涉及任何人。你是否想暗示人類的存在是衍生自滴水這個這程？抑或是成千上萬完全相同的小瓷磚是像徵擁有人口億萬的中國？

袁遠 我想通過人活動的痕跡來表現人，所以也未涉及過自然風景，充滿人味的空間特別讓人好奇。在別人居留過的房子裡，如果發現一片紙都會格外的去留意，紙片被人的投射放大了。
經常整齊的排列小瓷磚也是我做事的習慣照成的，我每天花很多時間整理工作室，是因為有一件工具不在它該在的位置上我就無法開始工作，但一旦開始工作會進行的很快。

HB I wonder if you are trying to convey a sense of passing time, of history and transition in your paintings? Or do you just want the viewer to focus on the visual effect of the patterns you depict?

YY Yes of course, what I meant by invisible things is time, people are afraid of it. It is fine for the viewers to just focus on the visual effect as well, as they themselves have unconsciously given up time.

比克斯 你是否想透過作品去傳達一種在歷史過渡上，時間正在流逝的感覺？或你只是想觀眾專注於圖案所帶來的視覺效果？

袁遠 當然是，我想說的不可見物，就是時間，大家都害怕的東西。
觀眾專注於圖案帶來的視覺效果也行，不知不覺中，他也奉獻了時間。

Yuan Yuan – the New Landscape of Contemporary Chinese Art

by Gladys Chung

Thirty years elapsed since contemporary Chinese art began to make strides in 1980. In retrospect, the '85 New Wave Movement, spearheaded by the Xiamen Dada group, Gu Wenda and Xu Bing, gave emphasis to experiment, ideology and free style, while the 1990s saw stronger focus on the interrelation between art and society, a motive that prompted artists like Zhang Xiaogang, Zeng Fengzhi, Fang Lijun and Wang Guangyi to draw on portraiture, realism and expressionism in exploring and communicating the emotional state and living condition of their generation, as well as the ethos of the era. Today such notions as experimentalism, portraiture, realism, sociality and expressionism have become the cornerstones, hence also the traits, of contemporary Chinese art as known in the international arena. Nevertheless, just as these styles are getting established and elaborated, the neoteric – and even those born after the 80s – is arduously looking for new direction of development that might steer the next orbit of contemporary Chinese art. Expression in cartoon and anime is one of the very catchy ways adapted by the many 'post-80s' artists emerged after 2000. The art of Yuan Yuan represents yet another innovative mode of expression that encapsulates the inner being of the new Chinese generation.

The themes Yuan Yuan fixed on have been most unusual: the façade of buildings, the interior of living spaces, a serpentine corridor, and, as it happens, the hoary wall and shattered window of a ramshackle structure. The spaces he arrays share in common the apocalyptic aura of bleakness and desolation; a vacant space, that is to say, becomes the pivot of expression. Such a setting is, to me, visually stunning in the first place. 'The person' has been a key and vivid element in the history of contemporary Chinese art: the experimentalist art in the 80s, for example, is often marked by the participation or staging of the artist, and Chinese art since the 90s widely appeal to portraiture as an expressive icon, like the laughing face of Yue Minjun, the masked figure of Zeng Fanzhi, and the comrade image of Zhang Xiaogang. Yuan Yuan, however, sets his sights on a break with his predecessors. He tries to work out a wholly different artistic language and expression – a thoroughly vacant space devoid of 'the person'. His 'space' looks centripetal and cavernous, vested in an all-swallowing gravitation like that of a black hole.

It trails your point of focus deep inside the canvas, putting you in mind of a bleak, forsaken space – a bare state of existence that objectifies the air of emptiness and desolation and the sequestered, penetrating ambience. An icon like this ap-

parently carries the emblem of an age, wherein China is undergoing rapid and radical changes and new social phenomenon springs up: old buildings and old districts are abandoned and knocked down one after another. Real estate development becomes the jewel in the crown which every Chinese city runs after; reconstruction schemes, at the same time, explode in the cause of a more advanced and stylish city image. It is an age when the new upersedes the old. Many architecture bearing the legacy of time are falling apart, like the red-brick buildings and old houses constructed out of the intimate concourse between China and the West since 1911, in a fusion of traditional Chinese and Victorian styles with Romanesque pillars and spiral staircases and Baroque motives. Yuan Yuan's 'vacant' space reflects the ache of what is lost and gone. The abandoned architecture and the forsaken space are reinterpreted as an abstract symbol implanted with strident political and social criticism; they stand for the state of China in transformation and, with this signification, recount how China as an open, newfangled consumerist society is influenced and shaped by the global economic environment. They point up, moreover, the conflicting impetus of the people — the subjects of the city, who dither between acceptance and rejection. In China as in the rest of the world this psychological incongruence or struggle is ubiquitous in the face of national and regional development; it is, therefore, a significant theme to attend to for both Chinese and Western contemporary artists. In China, for instance, Zhang Dali's *Demolition* (fig.1) features the contrast between the majestic forbidden city and the crumbling old living quarter, 'revealing the experience modern Beijing had, particularly in the past decade, of the parallel ventures of "destruction" and "protection" in simultaneity (Wu Hung, *The 'Dialogue' of Zhang Dali: Conversing with the City*).' The same goes to young artists like Ying Xinxun, a contemporary of Yuan Yuan, who are solicitous about the disfiguring city and the perishing living space (fig.2).



[Fig.1]
Zhang Dali, *Demolition*, 1998



[Fig.2]
Ying Xinxun, *Fragments of the City III*, 2009



[Fig.3]
Rachel Whiteread, *House*, 1993, internal casting of 193 Grove Road, Bow, East London (destroyed)

In the West, Rachel Whiteread, a British artist, sculpted a pallid, concrete cast after a to-be demolished old house in East London (fig.3) as a means to grieve over the displacement of the old city and its culture by commercial development. Like all these artists, the strategy of Yuan Yuan is to transform architecture, or space, into expressive icons that articulate a peculiar state of sentiment in a peculiar era. Inheriting the traits of contemporary Chinese art, the artist has a penchant for a subtle issue from personal experience; the overtone of Yuan Yuan's creation, in other words, is still 'the person' and 'the sentiment', which vouchsafe his works a great emotional potency and a spirit symptomatic of his time. What sets him apart from his predecessors is that, instead of revolving around the grand narratives of weighty history, Yuan Yuan returns to the more secretive living space and achieves a more reticent and allusive expression of 'the person' and 'the emotion'. It is this nuance that constitutes Yuan Yuan's uni-

que artistic language and iconic expression. He has, moreover, the ambition to overstep the bounds of locality, hence his portrayal of architecture in a medley of style: old houses in classical Chinese decoration, Western structure and Baroque-style spiral staircase found in the Shanghai leased territory in the past century, and the tenement houses, with their narrow entrance and darkgreen iron gate, common in Hong Kong. An overpowering universality is embedded in his wistfulness for the vanishing space and city culture. The same phenomenon confronts different cities at different time.

Painterliness and Formal Aesthetics

Against his ultra-simplistic and vacant space Yuan Yuan gives prominence to two elements: the texture and spatial structure of the buildings. They are, certainly, the motifs of his works, but more importantly they mark the artist's exploration on painterliness and formal aesthetics, which strings his creation to the global artistic trend, enables dialogue between them and confers upon his works an artistic subtlety more profound than most of his contemporaries'.

deserted, unoccupied room is pictured in *Museum III* (p. 16-17), where the unbroken expanse of red-brick walls alone form the pith of expression. The artist, with his delicate and tightlypacked brushstroke, colors the bricks red tint by tint, allowing us to discern the different shades of red in transition. In *Ground Floor* (p. 28-29) and *Entrance* (p. 22-23) the color gradient is rendered by the floor and wall tiles in craggy dark green. The mottled, exfoliated wall in *Humid Region* (p. 10-11) and the rotted, fractured wooden window frame in *Fragments* (p. 26-27) manifest not only the coarse texture of clay and wood but also the painterly property of ink-wash as a spread and oil as a coating of pigment. All these contribute to the intensely expressive quality of the works — one might even detect, at closer look, the movement of the painter's hands when he is drawing a line or applying a paint.

The concept of 'repetition' seems equally appealing to the artist. Yuan Yuan's works is distinctively rich in repetitive, analogous and spatially continuous elements interior to a structure: serried rows of identical windows, edifices, bluish floor tiles, spectator seats, and a series of stair steps, among others. Through this maneuver the artist describes 'repetition' as the general principle by which modern society is constituted, a principle that consumes us and assimilates our living space. The depiction of these repetitive, spatially continuous architectural elements also enables the artist to demonstrate the tonal variations of a single color and, therefore, put across his exploration on painterliness, color and brushwork. His works, which transmute the most ordinary and familiar material onto the level of color expressionism, nestle between the figurative and the abstract, between the

realistic and the expressive. This, in fact, is the very idiosyncrasy of Yuan Yuan's creations. In *Entrance* (p. 22-23), for example, the artist deftly manipulates a virtually photo-realistic technique to reproduce the ceramic floor tiles in paramount fineness and scrupulosity. The work looks as true as a photograph, but the touch of a painting and the texture of the pigment remain readily observable.

But what Yuan Yuan tries to represent is more than the texture of architectural material. He is also keen on showing the intricate, criss-cross structure inside of a building — with his formal aesthetics. The orderly arrangement of the stairs, the windows, the rectangular wooden doors and wardrobe, as well as the square-shape motifs on the wardrobe door all play to render the canvas into different abstract, geometric forms. The artist even goes for a close-up of a room in *Door I* (fig.4), in which we find the floor tiles alternating in two different colors, and the light-yellow wood door and the dark-brown wardrobe stand as a contrast, and convergence, of geometric patterns. It calls to mind the contrivance of Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) as he extracts the geometric structures of the New York streets and buildings and turns them into creative elements (fig.5). It seems, in this regard, that Yuan Yuan has indeed set out to discourse with Western artistic philosophies like constructivism and abstract formalism. In Europe and America the quest after pure artistic expression — the representation of abstract philosophy and symbolic concept by means of color variations and spatial arrangement — had preyed on the minds of two generations of modern artists, from the 1920s to 1950s. They sought, ultimately, to divorce their art from any description, story, figuration and narration so as to express sentiment through pure artistic elements like color and brushstroke. The praxis so conceived inclines towards theory, abstraction and conceptualization. Yuan Yuan's formal aesthetics, however, is one that bound with landscape; the scene and the aura of former times remain intact in his works, while geometric forms are hidden beneath the composition. Geometric shapes and intersecting lines, as they are in Piet Mondrian's or Wassily Kandinsky's (1866-1944) formal abstract art, bear a rational and often remote demeanour. They seem beautifully mechanical, acutely evocative of the cultural essence of the Western industrialized society and the spirit of its modernization progress. The expression of Yuan Yuan, on the other hand, is impassioned; he, too, extracts geometric shapes from modern architecture — the product of industrialized society, but his representation, enhanced by his study on color variations, brushwork and painterliness, is more lyrical and revealing and exhibits more of the painter's sentimentality. Such a trait reminds us of what Yuan Yuan inherits from the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, where he graduated from the Department of Oil Painting and obtained a master degree. The China Academy of Art, formerly known as the Hangzhou Arts School, was established by the most acclaimed educator Cai Yuanpei and headed by eminent ar-



[Fig.4]
Yuan Yuan, *Door I*, 2011



[Fig.5]
Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Grid 1*, 1918 © 2012 Mondrian/Holtzman Trust c/o HCR International USA

tists like Lin Fengmian (1900–1991) and Wu Dayu (1903–1988). It was the pacemaker of China's modern and contemporary art world. The teachings and creative productions of the Academy had put on track the pursuit and refinement of formal aesthetics through the depiction of landscape and still life. Lin Fengmian, for example, has a mixture of geometric forms concealed under his flowers, court ladies and Chinese opera: the postures of the ladies form curve and arc, the curtain in the background forms straight line, and the vase forms a cone. The combination of different geometric blocks of color is virtually a variation, or transformation, of Cezanne's cubism (fig.6). That said, the formal aesthetics of Lin Fengmian is inextricably linked with his portrayal of human figures and still lives. Through them, he visualizes abstraction and the beauty of geometry without being dull, tedious or overtly theoretical; through them, he preserves the pursuit of narratives, ambience and mood central to traditional Chinese art. This orthodox undertaking of the Academy influences several generations of artists, from Lin Fengmian and Wu Dayu, who venture on abstraction and still life, to Zao Wou-Ki (B. 1920) and Chu Teh-Chun (B. 1920), who devote to abstraction and landscape, then to Xu Jiang (B. 1955), who, too, takes on abstraction and landscape. There exists a lineage of artistic pursuit in the works of all these artists, and those of Yuan Yuan may also be considered a descendant.

In roughing out the artistic distinctiveness of Yuan Yuan's works, we find his concern over general social issues and his quest after color expressionism, painterliness and formal aesthetics representative of the wave that sweeps over young artists in China: 'Desinicization'. Gradually it is shaping up contemporary Chinese



[Fig.6]

Lin Fengmian, *Camellias*, 1940s

袁遠－中國當代藝術的新生風景

鍾嘉賢

中國當代藝術從1980年發酵，至今已走過三十年的發展歷程。概括而言，80年代的「85新潮」強調實驗性、觀念性和自由風格，這方面可以廈門達達、谷文達及徐冰等為代表；踏入90年代，藝術家則側重藝術與社會的連結，以肖像、寫實、表現主義的元素，探討和呈現一代人的情感悸動、生存狀況，甚至是時代精神，這方面可以張曉剛、曾梵志、方力均、王廣義等藝術家為代表。而不論是實驗性、肖像、寫實、社會性或是表現主義，都已經成為中國當代藝術的基調、特徵，為國際藝壇所普遍認識。但在這些風格奠基和深化的同時，中生代、甚至是80年代後出來的新生代都致力另闢蹊徑，探索中國當代藝術的下一個路向。2000年以來接連出現的「80後」藝術家群體，他們的卡通、動漫表現方式便是其中一個十分突出的路向。袁遠的藝術，正代表另一種嶄新風格，特別是中國新一代的精神面貌。

袁遠往往以建築物外牆、室內居住空間、轉折過渡的迴廊、甚至是舊建築內的灰牆破窗為題創作。所有的空間呈現，都有一個共通點，都是寂靜無人，空蕩的空間成為表現的主軸。這種場景設計，首先帶給我巨大的視覺衝擊。「人」在中國當代藝術的發展歷程中，一直是十分突出和主要的元素。80年代的實驗藝術常常以藝術家的介入和表演為標誌；90年代以來，「肖像」更是最普遍的表現圖式(icon)，岳敏君的笑臉、曾梵志戴面具的人像、張曉剛的同志肖像等。袁遠卻有意要突破前輩藝術家，建立截然不同的藝術語言和表現圖式，把「人」的元素抽去，呈現完全虛空的空間。他的「空間」更彷彿有一種內向深入、像黑洞的吸食力量，把觀察的視點一直拉往畫面的深處，也因此讓人深刻意識到空間的荒蕪、被棄置，是一種孤零零的存在狀況，可以被擬人化的解讀為一種虛空、孤寂的氛圍，幽獨深邃的情景。這種圖式帶有明顯的時代印記，從另一角度隱喻著中國當前城市急速變化，舊建築、舊城區被遺棄、甚至被一批批遷拆的社會現象。中國各城市爭相開發房地產、也有為了建立先進、新潮的城市形象，於是出現各種重建項目，新的代替舊的，很多從民國(1911年)以來，因為華洋雜處而建立，帶有維多利亞風格、羅馬柱、旋轉樓梯、巴洛克樣式、中國傳統式的紅磚樓、老房子都趨向破敗。空間的「虛空」折射了一種失落和消逝的情緒感受。荒廢的建築和空間，被袁遠重新詮釋成帶有強烈政治與社會批判含義的抽象符號，象徵著一種變化中的中國狀況，呈現中國作為一個新型、開放式的消費主義社會，正如何被世界性經濟形態所改變和影響，也強調城市的主體——人們所生起介乎接受與抗拒的矛盾情緒。這種矛盾情緒和心理掙扎，正是當前中國、甚至是世界很多地區在發展時會面對的精神寫照，也因此成為中國、甚至是西方當代藝術的一個重要議題。在中國，就有張大力(B.1963)的《拆》(圖一)，以平民老城區的殘垣敗瓦與皇家紫禁城的金碧輝煌作對比，「表現了北京在現代，特別是過去十年裡所經歷的『破壞』與『保護』的雙重進程」(巫鴻《張大力的〈對話〉：與城市交談》)。與袁遠同一輩的年青一代藝術家，也

有如應歆珣等，也關注城市、生活空間的傷逝(圖二)。在西方，就有英國藝術家雷切爾·懷海特 (Rachel Whiteread, B.1963) 以倫敦東城區一所行將被遷拆的老房子為模，倒模成一座蒼白的豐碑(圖三)，表現舊城、舊文化被商業發展所消滅的傷逝。袁遠和上述這些藝術家的策略一樣，把建築、空間轉化表現圖像，表達一種情感狀況和時代感受。「人」和「情感」的元素，仍是袁遠作品的底蘊，承續了中國當代藝術一直以來的特質，從當前個人生活經驗出發，發掘問題，因此賦予他的作品一種時代精神和情感力量。所不同的是，他不再囿於前一輩藝術家的宏大敘事與沉重歷史，他回到更秘密的生活空間，對「人」和「情緒」的表達更為幽微曲折，建立了他本人獨特的藝術語言和圖像形式。袁遠更有意的超越中國本土，使這種對城市文化、往昔空間的懷緬呈現更深刻的普世意義，於是他描繪的既有中國式的佈置的老房子、也有上世紀上海租界的西洋式建築、巴洛克樣式的旋轉樓梯、甚至更有香港常見，入口走道狹隘，墨綠式鐵閘的舊唐樓等。不一樣的時間、不一樣的的城市，卻都面對相同的現象。

繪畫性與形式美感

在極簡和虛空的空間中，袁遠強調了兩個元素：建築物料的肌理質感與建築物的空間結構，這兩者不單是他的繪畫主題，同時分別標誌了藝術家對繪畫性及形式美學的探索，能與世界藝術潮流接軌、對話的同時，也使袁遠呈現中國年青一輩藝術家中少見的豐富藝術層次。

《美術館III》(第16-17頁)描繪了空無一人的荒廢房間，表現的重點放在一塊緊貼一塊的整面紅磚牆。藝術家以細膩、綿密的繪畫技巧，一筆一筆點染紅磚色彩，讓人看到紅色單一色彩的層次轉換；《底樓》(第28-29頁)及《入口》(第22-23頁)則以為地面、牆面上的瓷磚鋪陳，表現荒澀青綠的色彩層次變化。又如《潮濕》(第10-11頁)斑駁剝落的牆壁、或是《碎片》(第26-27頁)被蝕裂的木頭窗框，既表現泥石木材的粗糙質感肌理，同時又包含了水墨滴染、油畫堆疊的繪畫性特質，賦予畫面極強烈的表現風格。看得更多一點，你甚至可以感覺到在畫一根線條或一種色彩時，畫家的手是怎麼動的。

與此同時，袁遠彷彿著迷於「重複」的概念，集中繪畫建築物內部各種重複、相類、連綿鋪排的元素，如：一排緊貼一排，形狀相同的窗戶、高樓、地板的藍色方磚、觀賞台的座椅、一級又一級的樓梯階梯等。主題上，袁遠揭示「重複」為現代社會的普遍構成原則，貫注到各種生活空間，包圍著我們。而透過描繪重複、連綿鋪排的建築元素，藝術家得以表現單一色彩的變化遞進，表達他對繪畫性、色彩和筆觸的探索。作品把日常生活最常接觸的物料提升至色彩表現主義的程度，穿梭於具象與抽象、寫實與表現。事實上，袁遠作品最能抓緊我們目光的是他遊走於具象與抽象、寫實與表現的這個特色。以《入口》(第22-23頁)為例，藝術家採用近乎攝影寫實(photo-realism)的細膩技巧，一筆一筆描繪地面上的瓷磚，製造了如攝影相片般的真實，但仔細看，又能看出繪畫的特性和顏料的質感。



【圖一】
張大力《拆》1998年作



【圖二】
應歆珣《都市碎片III》2009年作



【圖三】
雷切爾·懷海特《房》1993年作

袁遠不單呈現建築物料的質感，在整個畫面空間佈置上，也特別強調建築物內部的縱、橫交錯的結構層次。方整的樓梯階梯、窗只、長方形的木門與衣櫃，櫃門上的方形紋飾，也在畫面上呈現為抽象、幾何的形式美感。甚至於《門I》一作(圖四)，把房間一隅作局部大特寫，地板上雙色交錯的地磚、淺黃色木門及深棕色衣櫃，莫不是幾何圖案的輻輳和對比，令人聯想到蒙特里安(Piet Mondrian, 1872-1944)把紐約城市街道、建築結構中的幾何元素提煉為創作元素的手法(圖五)，表現袁遠要更多與西方構成主義、抽象形式主義等風格作對話的意圖。貫穿1920-1950年代，歐美現代藝壇有整整二代的西方藝術家致力探索純藝術元素，以色彩變化、空間組合來表現抽象的哲理、象徵概念，終極的探索目標在於完全脫離描述、故事、造形、敘述性，轉為以色彩、線條來表達情感。整套藝術實踐偏重於理論、抽象化、概念性。但袁遠對形式美感的探索，是始終結合了寫景主題，保留了情景、老房子的情感氛圍，又在圖面中隱藏各種幾何形式。幾何形式、縱橫線條，在蒙德里安或康丁斯基(Wassily Kandinsky, 1866-1944)的西方抽象形式藝術中，都帶有一種理性和冷峻的形態，彷彿帶有機械式的美感，深刻反映了西方工業社會、現代化進程的文化內涵和精神面貌。袁遠的表現則剛好相反，他同樣從現代建築—工業社會的產物—提煉出的幾何形式，但在表現上，卻同時結合他對色彩變化、筆觸形態、繪畫性的探索，於是呈現更多抒情性、畫家的感性及表現性的特質。這種特色，又不期然令人想到袁遠自杭州中國美術學院而來的藝術承傳。袁遠畢業於中國美術學院油畫系，於該校完成了他的學士及碩士課程。中國美術學院前身即為杭州藝專，由蔡元培所創辦，林風眠(1900-1991)、吳大羽(1903-1988)等統領，成為中國現當代藝術重鎮，他們的教學及創作示範，即奠定了在寫景寫物中提煉、探索形式美感的藝術路向。林風眠的花卉、仕女、京劇，畫面構圖隱藏了不同的幾何形態，仕女的婀娜多姿構為曲線、弧線、背景的窗簾為直線、花瓶為錐形體等，各種幾何色塊組合，彷彿塞尚立體主義的變奏和轉換(圖六)。林風眠的形式美感又始終和他對人物、靜物的描繪緊緊扣接，以靜物的主題來呈現抽象性、幾何美感，沒有落入一種呆板、枯燥、過於理論思辯化的窠臼，常能保留中國藝術傳統中對故事性主題及情緒意境的追求。這正形式中國美術學院的傳統，影響了幾代的藝術家，從林風眠、吳大羽開始的抽象與靜物，一直到趙無極(B.1920)及朱德群(B.1920)的抽象與山水，再延至較近代的許江(B.1955)的抽象與風景，都有一脈相承的藝術追尋。袁遠的創作走向也都可被歸納於此藝術脈絡之下。

從袁遠的藝術特色一直思考下去，他對普世社會議題的關注、他對色彩表現主義、繪畫性、形式美感的追求，代表了中國當代藝術在年青藝術家群中逐步形成的一種創作風潮——「去中國化」，逐步超越了純中國本土的情境及議題，追尋具普世意義的年青一代成長記憶、精神狀況，同時更多借鑒西方現代派的藝術風格和方法，在美學形式上有更多層次的探索。這種風潮無疑有別於1990年代中國當代藝術的主流路向，在承續中又有個人嶄新的演繹，預示了中國當代藝術下一波更多元、更豐富的藝術風景。



【圖四】
袁遠《門I》2011年作



【圖五】
蒙特里安《Composition with
Grid 1》1918年作
© 2012 Mondrian/Holtzman
Trust c/o HCR International USA



【圖六】
林風眠《茶花》1940年代作

BIOGRAPHY

YUAN YUAN

Born in Zhejiang, 1973. Lives and works in Hangzhou.

Education

2008 MFA, Oil Painting Department, Sichuan Fine Arts Institute

Solo Exhibitions

2015

'There Is No There There', Malingue Gallery, Paris, France

2014

Art Basel Hong Kong, Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong

2012

Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong

Imagined Memory - A Home From Home, ShanghART H-Space, Shanghai
Dawn, New Art From China, Zhong Gallery, Berlin

2011

La Vie en Rose Dayanita Singh & Yuan Yuan Dute Exhibition Sakshi Gallery, Taipei
STEAM ROOMS, JGM GALLERY, Paris, France

2009

Polar Night, Xiaopin Gallery, Shanghai, China

2008

The Blind Man and The Elephant, Xiaoping Gallery, Shanghai, China

Group Exhibitions

2016

Art Basel Hong Kong, Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong

2015

Luo Zhongli Scholarship Ten Years Review Exhibition, Chongqing MOMA, Chongqing, China

2014

In Memory of a Landscape, James Cohan Gallery, Shanghai, China

Art 021 Shanghai, China

Bazaar Art Jakarta 14, Edouard Malingue Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia

Reformation, White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney, Australia

Art Stage Singapore, Edouard Malingue Gallery, Singapore

China platform curated by Huang Du, Art Stage Singapore, Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong

2013

Art Taipei 13, Edouard Malingue Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan

Foundational Work II, ShanghART H-Space, Shanghai

Post-Politics, Seven Chinese Artists of the New Generation, artshare.com

Foundational Work, ShanghART H-Space, Shanghai, China

2012

Artists at Glenfiddich 2012, Exhibition 3, Group Exhibition Glenfiddich Distillery Gallery, Scotland, U.K.

Armory Show, New York, U.S.A.

2011

Daybreak, Arario Gallery, Beijing

5th Chengdu Biennial, Chengdu, China

2010

Home-Stay, Osage Gallery, Shanghai

Daily, Qinghe Contemporary Art Museum, Nanjing

NanJing Biennale, Nanjing

2009

Future-together, Nomination Exhibition, Arario Gallery, Beijing

2008

Chinese Freedom, T SPACE, Beijing

Luo Zhongli Scholarship Exhibition, Chongqing Art Museum, Chongqing

Fresh Eyes 08/Negative, Hexiangning Art Museum, Shenzhen Collections

Collections

POMERANZ COLLECTION, Vienna, Austria

DSL Collection, Beijing

White Rabbit Collection, Sydney

簡歷

袁遠

1973年生於中國浙江,工作及生活於杭州

學歷

2008 中國美術學院油畫系第二工作室研究生
1996 畢業於中國美術學院油畫系

個人展覽

2015
'There Is No There There', Malingue Gallery, 法國巴黎

2014
馬凌畫廊展位, 香港巴塞爾藝術展, 香港

2012
馬凌畫廊, 香港
《賓至如歸》, 香格納畫廊H空間, 中國上海
《破曉, 中國新藝術》, 中畫廊, 德國柏林

2011
《玫瑰人生》黛雅妮塔辛、袁遠雙個展, Sakshi Gallery, 台灣台北
《蒸汽房》, JGM畫廊, 法國巴黎

2009
《極夜》, 小平畫廊, 中國上海

2008
《摸象》, 小平畫廊, 中國上海

群展

2016

馬凌畫廊展位, 香港巴塞爾藝術展, 香港

2015

羅中立獎學金十周年回顧展, 重慶當代美術館, 中國重慶

2014

《地形中的記憶》, James Cohan畫廊, 中國上海

《Art 021》, 中國上海

馬凌畫廊展位, 印尼雅加達藝術博覽會, 印尼雅加達

《革新》, 白兔畫廊, 澳洲悉尼

馬凌畫廊展位, 藝術登落新加坡, 新加坡

《中國平台》, 由黃篤策展, 馬凌畫廊展位, 藝術登落新加坡, 新加坡

2013

馬凌畫廊展位, 台北國際藝術博覽會, 台灣台北

《基本工作II》, 香格納畫廊H空間, 中國上海

"Post-Politics", Seven Artists of the New Generation, artshare.com

《基本工作》, 香格納畫廊H空間, 中國上海

2012

Artists at Glenfiddich 2012, 格蘭菲迪畫廊, 英國蘇格蘭

Armory Show", 美國紐約

2011

《破曉》, 阿拉里奧畫廊, 中國北京

第5屆成都雙年展, 中國成都

2010

《駐·留》, 奧沙畫廊, 中國上海

《日常》, 南京青和美術館, 中國南京

南京雙年展, 中國南京

2009

《未來一同行》, 提名展覽, 阿拉里奧畫廊, 中國北京

2008

《梯空間: 斷舌》, 中國北京

羅中立獎學金獲獎作品展, 重慶當代美術館, 中國重慶

《新視覺08: 底片展》, 何香凝美術館, 中國深圳

收藏

POMERANZ COLLECTION, 奧地利維也納

DSL COLLECTION, 中國北京

白兔畫廊收藏, 澳洲悉尼

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