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The Light Collector:

an interview with

Ko Sin Tung

物非物 訪談系列
採光者：高倩彤訪談錄

物非物展覽製作出品
呂岱如策劃

Never odd or eveN Interview Series
The Light Collector: an interview with Ko Sin Tung

Conceived in the making of the exhibition Never odd or eveN
Curated by Esther Lu

EDOUARD MALINGUE GALLERY

究竟什麼可讓今日居家如此摩登並且充滿魅力？

呂 你的作品經常回應現代生活底下以及網路影像世界裡的疏離感，也涉及或挪用許多日常生活經驗中常見的視覺符號。當然，世俗平凡的樣態本來就是人類存在與現實的大部分，而我很好奇想要瞭解你通常如何在你的生活中去探索與決定你的創作位置，而對你而言，這又如何回應你所認為的藝術與生活的關係。在香港的特殊生活條件是否對你的創作有什麼樣的影響或啟發？

高 住在香港這個城市其實經常都有很多令我關注的元素，應該說這些東西令我很難不注意它，我覺得自己是被動的，某程度上它算是一種干擾。我所說的這些東西通常都是人製造出來的，我對人製造給自己的東西感興趣，如我之前的一些作品中有些顯而易見的和城市空間有關的元素，像指示牌、修馬路的臨時工地等，是比較直接指向那些看得見的狀況；上一次的展覽則比較間接，嘗試以一個個人生活和環境來反映外部的世界和一些城市面貌。

其實我都沒有想自己的創作方向是否必然是這樣，於我來說它是很自然的，單單因為這些事情讓我在意，有時候影響我的思緒，所以從作品反映出來，不過我想這是很基本的。

呂 我覺得當創作成為一件生活裡自然而然的事情時，其實已經說明很多了。你一直以來都和創作保持著這麼輕鬆自在的關係嗎？可否描述一下你自己學習藝術與開始從事創作的歷

程呢？中間是否有任何關鍵性的事件或是決定點，讓妳持續創作呢？

高 不是。其實不那麼自在，很多時候很糾結，尤其是遇上不確定的情況，我是需要事情比較確定才能夠繼續下去的，好像還一直在找一種調和的方法，讓創作能夠保持一種步伐。

自己真正學習藝術是在大學，在最初的兩年，接觸不同範疇的科目，好像都只在嘗試新事物，我們的課程都很自由，做甚麼都可，所以是依靠自己去慢慢尋找方向的，到了三年級才稍為清楚自己的創作重點。在這段期間，雖然有很多時搞不懂自己應該做甚麼，但就養成了在教室逗留的習慣，這一點我現在回想是頗重要的，時間的投注無疑是增加了創作的投入程度，而且兩者互相滋長，使創作在我的生活裏形成了一種份量，才能成為一件可以持續的事情。

呂 對妳來說，什麼是採集光線呢？「光」又是什麼樣的概念？

高 「採集光線」是直接回應「採光」這個在台灣經常用到的詞語的。在七月份到這邊作資料搜集時，常看到這個於我而言相對是陌生的用詞，意思雖是淺白但卻提醒了我一些關於生活的重點。「採光」一般用於形容一個真實環境的狀況，是說明室內空間的光線是否充足的指標，我卻希望把它轉化成一個實際行動。如果窗戶的存在是為了吸納更多光線進入室內，那麼我便是代替了窗戶的角色，依靠行為來達到收集光線的目的。

在打印出來的畫面上，白色的部份處於異常光亮的狀態，我認為它們既是「光線」也是「非光線」。基於我們對真實光線的認知和經驗，知道那些是可以被稱為光線的東西，但因為它們並沒有真實光線的特性和功能，在這個層面上便是一種「不是光線」的東西了。



《採集光線：四維路
124 巷（房間 1）》，
2014
壓克力顏料、
無酸噴墨輸出畫布
60 x 88 公分

Collecting Light:
Lane 124, Siwei Road
(Room 1), 2014
Acrylic, archival inkjet
print on canvas
60 x 88 cm

呂 妳提到「非光線」這個觀念實在非常迷人而有想像性。但是，這個觀念對妳來說，除了是人造光，還有什麼其他的特殊意義或指涉嗎？所有其他神話和預言裡面所描述的其他光的形態？或是在我們視網膜可接收範疇之外的物質？這是一個什麼樣的隱喻？甚至，在這次的創作計畫裡，採集光線的這個角色有何特殊意涵？妳又透過什麼樣的行動來達成？

高 我以「非光線」形容打印出來的那些光的部份，其實是對應著光線應有的非視覺層面，我對「光」的否定來自於它只剩下一種表面、一個軀殼，而欠缺其他感官方面的體現，這其實就是約瑟夫·科瑟斯的椅子所牽涉到的問題。而我想你說的人造光是一種整合了我剛才指的「光線」和「非光線」的定義。

在視覺層面上，這些被挑選出來的影像中，窗戶裏的光其實都不真實，甚至有種超現實的感覺。那些部份之所以有這樣的呈現，其實是因為現實內外的環境光線落差太大，經過相機的調節，光被捕捉下來，成了現在的模樣。這種對光的改造，於我來說是有興趣的，出來的模樣倒是有點符合了我們對光線的想像，是純粹、極致的白，而這好像只存在於想像的層面。現實的光往往依附在不同的表面，它欠缺了一種獨立的存在；現在的情況則好像是把光脫離了原來的物件，重新把光釋放和表現出來。

基於它的抽象，它在造型上的開放，其實滿足了更多的想像，畫面中的這些大面積的白色就讓我有了像「聖光」、「入

口」、「希望」這些正面事物的聯想，我會認為這和一個人把自己的期望投放在新的居所方面有著微妙的關係，窗戶在此就扮演著一個重要的角色。那麼，對我來說，整個「採集光線」的行為就變成了一種對室內空間的一項必要元素的追求，再進一步是對一個更好的生活質素的渴望。我揀選出來的那些窗戶都來自一些我不曾到訪的房屋，是從網路上租房子的網頁找來的，然後在電腦內作了一些剪裁，當中間接的方法和距離也許可以表達香港和台灣之間的差距吧。



《盡可能的白》· 2013
壓克力顏料、無酸噴墨輸出
83 x 113.5 公分

As white as you can, 2013
Acrylic on archival inkjet print
83 cm x 113.5 cm

呂 這個銜續對於居住空間想像的主題已經在妳的作品裡發展好幾個系列了，妳今年的個展也環繞著這個題目在發展，可以多談談妳對這個主題的關注或好奇的出發點在哪裡嗎？

而，同時妳的創作往往是利用網路搜尋到的影像作為一種影像畫面基底，從一個虛擬空間裡被再度轉化出來的平面、形狀、光線、顏色、材質等都是在一種完全扁平化、甚至隨著刻意放大的尺幅而失真的，這些失去了任何再現意義的影像所對妳個人展現的意義是什麼呢？為何會開始對於網路媒體影像如此著迷？不如讓我用一種直白的方式說，這些壞影像（bad images）為何如此吸引妳？網路空間對妳來說和現實世界之間的界線或是差異在哪裡？

高 開始的時候是比較關注一些公共空間的問題的，例如城市發展和土地用途的變化所製造出來的暴力令我們對公共空間的歸屬感消失，而這也同時聯繫到個人對「所擁有空間」的感受力被縮限，每個人就只剩下自己的居住空間才可以擁有掌控權力。作品指涉的不只是私人居所，而是對應內外的關係而衍生的一些觀察和想像，在表面上可能是關於我們藉著裝飾家居從而找到位置去安放我們對生活的期盼，但同時我對於能夠保存這個私人空間也抱有疑惑，所以在想像背後也關心我們有否這個想像的基礎。不過這次作品的地域背景不盡相同，取向也較著重我所面對的在地條件。

至於網路影像的使用，或是在網路上取材，起初是想要去了解及展現一個他者的角度，透過網路我亦能看到別人對於

其生活的一些想法，然而經過我的介入，自己亦好像成為了其中的一部份，某程度上是把自己的思想都放進去了。



《#》· 2014

電線膠布、無酸噴墨輸出畫布

240 x 68 公分

圖片由藝術家及安全口畫廊提供

#, 2014

Electrical tape, archival inkjet print on canvas

240 x 68 cm

Photo courtesy of the artist and Gallery EXIT

簡單點來說，由於現在的科技使我們能夠得到清晰度很高的電腦影像，太容易令人以為自己能夠接觸到真實。有了影像的憑據，我們對於現實的模樣的確有了一個相對肯定的參考，但當中必然帶有落差。這樣的經驗對我來說有著一種更大的衝擊，就是當我們以為影像能夠反映現實，在我們放大影像以求獲得更多資訊時，我們並沒有得到更多，反之影像內的形象越

見模糊，更甚的是只看到不同顏色的小方格，模糊的特性令人立即意識到畫面和現實的分野，再者，目標與期望的不符合形成了強烈的失落感。我認為由於影像是一個靜止的畫面，所有事物停留在裏面，觀者會開始透過這個不變的畫面幻想和投放情感，它所提供的線索其實比較單一，但就更容易使人肯定和沉迷於想像出來的東西，而且影像可以不斷回溯，但現實不可能，那麼想像只會不斷加深，除非當中的慾望減卻。

我不肯定自己對壞影像產生興趣是否來自這些負面經驗，它也許訴說著一種缺失，而從當中的落差和缺失，我看得到問題出現在那裏，令我們無法達至我們理想中的生活。除此以外，也有一個想法就是想要對抗非常清晰的影像吧，現實已經非常清晰，模糊了的東西也許比較接近記憶和幻想的狀態，那裏才有多點有趣的東西……

呂 妳前面說了妳把窗戶採集光線的功能作為轉化為實際行動，我覺得這個採光行動充滿一個穿透性的延續，不是一個被動性的受光，它主動聯繫了想像、搜尋、影像採樣原地、媒體界面、數位與手繪的畫面生產等，若說有一線條表現這道光，那它穿越多重視覺領域，經過多道改造工程，以呈現一種新的欲望。我覺得妳作品中這些抽象的畫面好像一方面要提示影像生產這件事情的本質，但是一方面又好像完全非關影像。可以請妳談談妳藉由抽象表現形式傳達的行動意義嗎？

高 作品的整個發展過程算是複雜，但於我而言它又只是在實

行一個很簡單的概念。但不得不強調的是，所有行動的出發點都是影像內那一片抽象的白色，它原本在畫面中便已是富有吸引力的，可以說，它其實是整個影像的重心，我無法想像光從那個地方消失後室內環境的氣質會變得有多大程度的不同。它已由視覺層面自然地進展到想像、個人情感方面的領域，亦引領我作出一個回應的行為，這一種演化是一一串連起來的。

呂 當我第一次聽到妳想要在這個展覽裡所發展的創作方向時，我或許還相當興奮一股傻勁地回應說，我認為妳的創作手法對印象派的傳統有一個激進的再思考：其關聯性在於如何捕捉一種受到光線條件影響而碎裂的、被轉化的現實，以及網路上閃閃發光的影像訊息，特別是妳對光線這個概念有了一個全新的推進和改變的意圖。這些線索提醒了我這些早期現代主義繪畫的發展歷史。妳對我當時的奇想究竟有什麼想法呢，如果妳覺得方便多談一點的話？

高 之前倒是沒有想過……但多少也會看到一點時代差別。好像經過了百多年後，我們對光的追求依然，自然光的重要性沒有因為的時代的不同和科技的進步而減弱，但在我的作品中是可以透露出一點在特定社會環境下這種追求的框架和困難。還有就是，印象派的繪畫捕捉光的變化，描繪的現實雖是以不同的小部份所構成，但他們得出的一個結果是完整的；我的作品則在湊合現實，它們在過程中是零散的，而在最終可能也還是處於一個不圓滿的狀態。

What is it that makes today's home so modern and so appealing?

Lu Your work seems to often respond to a sense of alienation in modern life and the virtual world of imagery, and therefore traces lots of everyday life experiences and common visual codes. Certainly the mundane is a great part of human existence and reality—I am interested in learning how you usually decide your artistic position of dwelling in your everyday life, and how it addresses, for you, the relation between art and life. Do you feel it is influenced or inspired by the particular living conditions in Hong Kong?

Ko There are many things concerning Hong Kong, in terms of its living environment and condition. Perhaps I should say that it is rather hard for me to overlook them. In a way, they appear more like sorts of interference, and I am affected passively. They are usually artificial things, and I am interested in what human beings make for themselves. Some of my previous projects include noticeable elements of the city, such as direction signs, floor panels for fixing pedestals, and all these highly visible components in the public space. But my last exhibition takes a more indirect approach of reflecting the outside world and the urban landscape through just an individual's personal life and living condition.

Actually, I haven't really thought if everyday life is the direction of my artistic development. To me, it is just a very natural reflection, since these things are my concerns, and have impacts on my thoughts. It has thus become very natural that my projects should reflect them.



《通往 _____ 》· 2014

拼圖、木框

56.5 x 41.5 公分

圖片由藝術家及安全口畫廊提供

Gateway to _____, 2014

Jigsaw puzzle with wooden frame

56.5 x 41.5 cm

Photo courtesy of the artist and Gallery EXIT

Lu I think it says a lot if you start to feel that your artistic practice is very natural for you in your everyday life. Have you always kept such a relaxed and free attitude in relation to your practice? Can you please tell us a bit about your art education and your related background and experiences? Has there been any critical moment or turning point that has kept you working in art?

Ko No, actually, I wouldn't say that I am already that comfortable with my practice. Pretty often I feel like I'm struggling with uncertainties. I

need a certain context and condition to work and I have been looking for balance to keep my practice at a steady pace.

I would say my art education began with my time at university. In the first two years I was exploring and trying out different media, subjects and disciplines. It was a very open program, and we were allowed to do whatever we liked. Therefore, I took my time to work out my own direction, and gradually got to discover more about my own interests and direction in the junior year. During this period, I didn't really know what I was supposed to do, but I got into this habit of staying around in my department. When I try to reflect upon that now, it seems to be an important point that how I invested my time actually helped a lot in my artistic development—it became a habit and then an essential part of my everyday life. Maybe that's why I can still keep doing art.

Lu What is collecting light for you? What is light to you?

Ko "Collecting light" is my direct response to the house rental advertisement term *tsai guang* (pick light). It is a very common term in Taiwan but I had never heard of this term until doing my field research in July. It's very easy to understand its meaning and it reminds me again of some of the important things in life. Usually it is applied to describe the conditions of a physically real space to indicate whether there is enough natural light filling the interior space. Nevertheless, I wish to transform it into an art action. If the existence of a window

is to bring more light into a space, then I wish to take the role of a window, collecting light through my actions.

On the surface of a printed image, these white shapes indicate a shining status, which could be considered “light” and “non-light” at the same time. Based on our knowledge and experience of light, we recognize these white parts as light. But they do not have any qualities or attributes of light anymore and therefore it is “non-light” at the same time.

Lu This is fascinating to think about the concept of “non-light” as you coin it here. What does it really mean to you, apart from artificial light? What about all the other forms of light that have been described in mythology and fables—or matter that can be perceived other than through our retinas? What kind of metaphor does it stand for to you? Furthermore, what is the role of collecting light for you in this project, and what actions are you undertaking to achieve it?

Ko I describe these white, shining parts on the prints as “non-light” to describe those visual qualities that they do not possess in comparison to light. They are not light since they are stripped and have only an empty body, a sort of surface, and cannot have any sensible attribute of light. It is like the question Joseph Kosuth’s *One and Three Chairs* also asks. The artificial light you mention is another integrated definition of my “light” and “non-light”.

These lights coming through the windows do not appear real in any of these chosen images and even look a bit surreal, visually. This is because when the camera captured the light, the contrast between the interior space and the outdoor space was too high in its brightness. So it was actually a kind of photographic effect. Such alteration in light is very interesting to me, and surprisingly, this specific effect seems to match our imagination of light as a pure and ultimate white. In reality, light seems to be attached to all kinds of things on the surface and lacks an independent status. However, this particular effect seems to detach and release light from other things, and eventually it has its own individual expression.

Since light is abstract, it is actually open to endless plastic art possibilities for fulfilling different imaginations. These white figures on print actually provide me with some positive associations with holy light, entrances, hope, etc., and I think they have a very delicate relationship with how people project their own expectations for their new homes—and windows play a critical role here. Therefore, the whole ‘light collecting’ action becomes a necessary pursuit. It is more than a criterion for interior space; it is also a desire for a quality of life. I choose images from the local house rental websites, particularly those places I couldn't have visited in person. Maybe this indirect approach with these unreachable spaces, and the failed visiting experience, also express the distance and reality between Hong Kong and Taiwan.



《摩登家居系列》· 2013。無酸噴墨輸出、相框。尺寸不定。

Modern Home Collection, 2013. Archival inkjet prints with frames. Dimensions variable.

Lu You have continued with the theme of living space in quite a few projects. Your solo show that took place earlier this year was also developed around this subject. Can you please tell us why you are so interested in this particular theme, and what is your concern with it?

You employ internet-sourced images a lot and print them, making them your painting foundation. Transferred from the virtual space, all the related attributes such as planes, figure, light, color, texture and so on are flattened and even decreased dramatically in their resolution through such enlargement. These images lose their representation meanings and authenticity. How do you reinterpret these images, and why are you so obsessed with internet imagery? Well, let me put it

directly, why are these bad images so appealing to you? What's the border or difference between physical reality and virtual space to you?

Ko In the beginning, I paid more attention to the issues surrounding public space. For example, how urban development and the changes of land-use have created such violence so as to destroy our sense of belonging in public space. The consequence has been that individual perception of owned space has diminished, and everyone can only exercise their control and power within their own living space. So, my projects do not only address private living conditions—they also correspond to exterior conditions, observations and imaginations. On the surface, it seems as if we find comfort in doing home decoration and making arrangements in order to organize our hopes for life. Nevertheless, I am suspicious of whether we can really keep a personal space, and am concerned with whether or not we even have the basis for such imagination. But well, this new project actually focuses more on the local condition I have encountered due to the differences of geography.

My intention with the application of internet images or other materials is to understand and manifest perspectives of others. I can see other people's thoughts and ideas for living on the internet. My intervention also registers my participation and audiences can read me through this.

In a way, we can acquire high definition computer images using advanced technology, and images are so convincing that people

think they can just about to touch reality. With imagery evidence, we establish a rather certain reference system for how reality should look like, but it is still different. This experience has had a great impact on me. When we think that images can reflect reality and one has curiosity to acquire more knowledge from the images by enlarging them, we do not get more but actually less. What's even worse is that the figures are blurred, and we can only see pixels with lots of different colors. The foggy effect eventually reminds us of the separation between image and reality. The unfulfilled expectation and objective creates a strong sense of loss. Since the image now becomes a still picture, and everything stays inside this frame instead of flashing windows on the monitor, the audience can start to imagine new things from the image and project different emotions. With this pure visual reference, we can approach, recognize and indulge ourselves with our imagination. We can retrace imagery but not reality. Unless we control our desires, our imagination can only go deeper.

I am not sure if my interest in these bad images comes from these negative experiences. It addresses a kind of loss, and I can see the problems within the loss and the difference that separate us from our ideal life. Apart from that, perhaps I just want to fight against high definition imagery. In fact, reality manifests itself clearly already. The blurred images perhaps are closer to things like memory and fantasy, which offer more interesting ideas.

Lu You mentioned earlier that you transform windows' function of collecting light into an action. I think this action is a piercing force of continuation, instead of a passive reception of light. It actively connects imagination, searching, sites of photograph taking, media interface, digital image production and traditional painting, etc. If there is a line to depict such light traffic, then this line actually crosses many visual dimensions with multiple altering engineering processes to present a new desire. I think these abstract images in your work seem to remind us of the nature of image production, but at the same time it seems to not deal with the subject of image at all. Could you please tell us the meaning of your action through this abstract expression?

Ko The project has developed through a complicated process, but it is actually a simple concept. I would like to emphasize again that my intents are inspired by the abstract existence of white color in an image. They are very appealing to me as the heart of the entire image. I can't imagine how different these interior spaces would be if light were extracted from these images. More than a visual presence, they step into the realm of my imagination and affection, and call for my response. It is a series of progress.

Lu I was probably just being silly commenting on your approach as a progressive rethinking of Impressionism when I first knew what you wanted to develop in our exhibition. The aim of capturing a

transformed reality that is fragmented by the condition of perceived light, or the shining images from the world of the internet reminded me of early modern art history, especially how the concept of light has a new twist here. How did you take my reaction at the time, if I may ask?

Ko I have not thought about this before... but I can see the time lapse. It seems we still keep a passionate pursuit for light, the significance of which cannot be diminished in time with technological developments. My work reveals the framework and difficulty of this pursuit under particular social circumstances. Moreover, Impressionist paintings capture the flickering changes of light. Although the paintings are composed by many small dots, they try to achieve a complete canvas as a result. My work is more like a collage of reality. They are fragmented in the process as well as in their resulting status.

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