

鏡式回返：
泰勒·科伯恩
訪談錄

Mirrorical Return:

an interview with

Tyler Coburn

物非物 訪談系列
鏡式回返：泰勒·科伯恩訪談錄

物非物展覽製作出品
呂岱如策劃

Never odd or eveN Interview Series
Mirrorical Return: an interview with Tyler Coburn

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

EDOUARD MALINGUE GALLERY

我們畫圖

送給你與你氣韻中的你

在一種可感知的形式裡聽見風景的聲音

呂 從簡單的問題開始吧，你大概何時認知到自己想要成為藝術家，而這又怎麼發生的呢？你如何理解藝術家的社會角色？也請你試圖談談你在創作裡的一些關懷面向？

科伯恩 我總愛開玩笑說，每位觀念藝術家背後都有個失敗的畫家。至少，我大概符合這個描述。藝術創作一直是我從有記憶以來就一直喜歡的事情，不過我的興趣不在於技巧堆疊而是往外擴散的；並沒有真正致力於某種媒材或工藝，而是混亂的。當我 11 歲畫著糟糕的漫畫時，我同時也在自己（不值一提、令人難堪的）個人網站上寫著對漫畫的評論。16 歲自學繪畫時，我為一個虛構的影星畫了像是雅克·維勒特萊（Jacques Villeglé）式的廣告，並從她的角度杜撰日記。而在大學的時候，我原有機會主修藝術，但是我情願選擇研讀比較文學，並且我也想盡辦法說服我「法西斯主義理論」的教授能夠通融，讓我以一個關於量產冷凍鬆餅為主題的錄像宣言來取代原本的期末報告。

多年來，朋友和家人當我是藝術家，但是我卻掙扎如何在現有的形式裡工作。或許這是我開始去思考藝術家社會角色的開始，藝術家在這個世界畫出或許不在既存論述裡可以被辨識的線條，但還是意圖去透過講述一個和世界有關的故事來改變我們聆聽的方式——以此讓這些線條變得可被辨識。

呂 我對於你去年夏天在台灣創作的《垃圾管理》計畫的背景感到好奇。你在研究過程裡發現了當地科技回收公司銷售著

一些由電腦回收材料所大量生產的藝術品。你買了一對石頭作為視覺索引，伴隨另外一組朗讀敘事聲音。其中一個音軌讀著喬瑟夫·艾迪生於 1710 年寫的故事《一先令的冒險》，另外一個音軌讀著你所寫的《一種文藝類別的冒險》，在此虛構故事裡，敘事者創造了「物件國會」，並且說了一則關於石頭的故事。這位敘事者是誰呢？可否請你介紹這件作品裡複雜的敘事層次？



《垃圾管理》· 2013/14

聲音與現成藝術品

作品細部：觀賞石

23x14.25x14 cm : 20.3x14.25x10.15 cm

CRT 螢幕玻璃、線路版上的環氧化物與
玻璃纖維粉末

Waste Management, 2013/14

Audio and found artworks

Detail: Scholar Stones

23 x 14.25 x 14 cm and 20.3 x 14.25 x 10.15 cm

CRT monitor glass, epoxy and glass fiber
powder from printed circuit boards

這些故事似乎點出兩種循環系統——貨幣與物質。他們彼此相關：交叉，但不平行。同時，你也刻意在兩個故事間創造了語言隔閡，用中文朗讀《先令》，英文讀《類別》。除非觀眾同時能說這兩種語言，否則這個隔閡無法被跨越。為何如此設計？你試圖從這樣的隱喻裡去描繪或是批判什麼嗎？

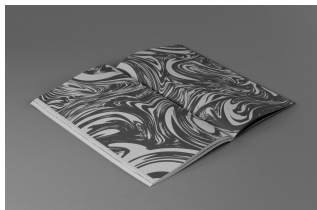
科伯恩 《一先令的冒險》的敘事者是「它—敘事」，十八世紀英國文學裡一種晦澀朦朧的寫作形式，其中商品與貨幣描述著它們的生產製造和循環。我當時藉由創造一種既非屬於不以人類為中心的「物—主人翁」，來作為一種矯正版的物本體論，以和人類價值網絡胡亂纏繞。

「它—敘事」正好提供了一個形式解決方案，儘管也有其包袱；有些學者認為這種文學類別慶祝一種因仰賴對英國殖民地的穩健管理而興起的消費型經濟。喬瑟夫·艾迪生這種賦予一先令某種自主性，宣稱其對於「四處趴趴走」（正式說法：循環）之愛好的作者，正是催生資本主義的禍源。

和這個文學類別一樣，許多「它—敘事」的主人翁現在都過時廢棄了。所以，當我在把《一先令的冒險》從英文翻譯到中文的時候，我決定從這個文學類別的角度來寫一個故事，在這個交錯的歷史中斡旋調解，並想像這可以在當代造成什麼樣的影響力。這故事隨著一個沙粒變成 CRT 螢幕，而隨著 LCD 科技的取代，又變成電子垃圾的發展軸線展開。

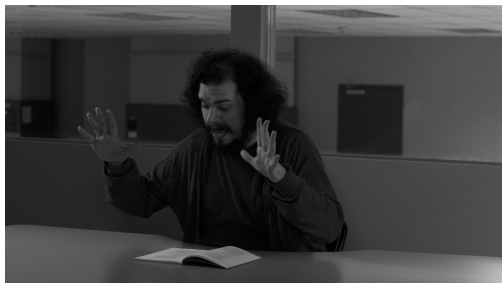
在喬瑟夫·艾迪生的故事結局裡，一先令被融化成一個樣貌無法形容的藝術作品，而且遠遠超越它原本的價值。在《一

種文藝類別的冒險》裡，沙粒變成仿製的觀賞石，是某台灣電子垃圾回收公司所製造眾多中式藝品中的其一產品。顯然，主人翁的故事在此結束，而他們美學上的無用也兌現為更高的價值。然而我們也知道，這些藝術一物件將在這個世界上繼續他們的旅程，他們的終極價值依舊沒有定數。



《我是天使》· 2012 -
書與表演
作品細部：書

I'm that angel, 2012 -
Book and performance
Detail: book



《我是天使》· 2012 -
書與表演
作品細部：Justin Sayre 在
紐約 Google 大樓中的朗讀表演
表演：2013 年 2 月 11-13, 18-19 日

I'm that angel, 2012 -
Book and performance
Detail: Justin Sayre reading at the
Google Building, New York
Readings: 11-13, 18-19 February 2013

至於聲音敘事部分，有一個重要的關鍵是周安曼閱讀了中英兩種文本。我希望聽眾可以思索新自由主義對通暢循環的迷思是如何在地理政治（包括語言）的分歧下落空，而資本主義中的聲音又如何可以像其他任何產品或服務那樣循環。

呂 你最近的多項計畫流露出裡一種內在焦慮，以重新思考科技如何在實體物質世界與虛擬世界中，建構與定義當代空間。在作品《我是天使》裡，你選擇書寫（書作為具體物件）以及特定場域性的表演（在雲端伺服器公司的機器倉房裡）。在《垃圾管理》裡，你以聲音敘事來伴隨你所找到的物件，其背後有著關於錯綜複雜的經濟循環與回收故事。可以聊一下你興趣或好奇的出發點，以及你對這個主題的感受性如何影響你選擇這些作品的再現形式？

科伯恩 《我是天使》作品中，「焦慮」的確是一個操作性關鍵字，主人翁並不了解「雲端」的本質，也因此並不了解他在其中的角色。我們往往形容焦慮的一種弛緩性作用：懷疑、憂慮、歇斯底里等。但是在我的書裡，焦慮是讓人物啟動的風，送轉著人物，也因此證實了他所有線上的足跡，他在這個世界上有其歸屬地以及他的身體。

許多我的作品計畫都試圖去探討新興科技的生命與物質條件，不是去浪漫化科技的內在本質，或是去暗示物理性的世界才是主要（或唯一）有批判性鬥爭的地方。或許科技操作在俄國形式主義者維特·薛克夫斯基所率先理論化的一種策



《關聯主義者搖椅上的七組肖像》，2009

Seven Portraits on a Correalist Rocker, 2009

凱斯勒搖椅複製品作為道具的表演

Performance on replica Friedrich Kiesler furniture

略上：它們將循環於當代虛擬生活的比喻和習俗都「疏離化」了。在他 1917 年的文章裡寫道：「藝術只能存在於人們回復其對生活的感受性時，藝術作為一種技術……存在的目的是要讓人感知事物、讓石頭充滿石頭感。」

《我是天使》藉著在雲端資料中心進行朗讀表演，而將「雲端」去神秘化，也把焦點轉換到網路之現象學與地理政治學上的條件上。這同時也把網路上口語式的寫作重新置放到一個相對老舊的資訊中心倉儲，讓當代語言在文學和日誌性寫作上有了新的對話。

《垃圾管理》很明顯地包含了「石頭」這個元素，但是它們也是經過類似一連串疏離化操作過程所生產出來的。科技

生產與廢棄的迴圈衍生了奇怪的美學副產品，這種極度的例外狀態或許可以幫助我們看清楚常態。換句話說，這些充滿石頭感的石頭是一種敘事性結論。身為藝術家，我的工作就是去把它們的故事倒過來說。

呂 我喜歡這個藝術家倒著說故事來讓石頭充滿石頭感的說法。我姑且挪用杜象的「鏡式回返」（*mirrorical return*）^[註 1] 概念來思考你在作品裡所建立起的推論思考空間。與其把這些石頭視為敘事性結論，我更傾向看待其作為敘事轉向的功能：你在原本的現實空間之上，疊置了第二層敘事空間，舉例像是你在《垃圾管理》中聲軌裡的虛構故事。你所建構的抽象鏡面，創造了一個空間，以此反射與推敲藝術和非藝術之間的概念關係。而作為一個觀者，我們從一個現成物、歷史資料、或其他事物上，去獲得這些關係的線索。就像是《垃圾管理》裡的一對石頭，《關聯主義者搖椅上的七組肖像》裡的搖椅，《指印與其他發送品》裡的簽名。這些滑溜的元素穿越時間並且往兩種空間方向呈現鏡像。這樣的操作方式可以視為你的主要美學載具嗎？你如何描述其中的交互作用，其如何知會你對推論思考空間的理解？

既然我提到了鏡子，我也很難避免可能的精神分析連繫。在你的作品裡，你似乎在許多歷史性資料與物質材料上投射了一種焦慮或欲望。你通常如何決定去回應或再演繹哪些資料或材料，舉凡像是達利的簽名、建築師凱斯勒的椅子？為何決定在自己的作品裡放置別人的作品？這些物件啟動了怎

樣的個人創作動機？為何你選擇在藝術史材料前擺開如此透明的姿態？

科伯恩 我想你建議以敘事轉向來作為理解框架可能更為貼近，因為歷史並不在我所引述的材料裡終結，而是暗示更多不同的發展可能。而你把《垃圾管理》和我其他早期的作品（早過於我近來對科技主題的探索方向）也提醒我敘事是我用來跨過當代門檻的方法。我並非歷史學者、考古學家、理論家，而我也會宣稱把他們的專業訓練素養帶到我的研究中。對我來說，敘事指涉了在專業上一種不設前提的方法，又起碼要求了一個言說的主體或主題。甚至，敘事是一個理想的社會性形式：它對過去和現在展開對話，也意圖有公開的觀眾。

敘事形式有眾多種類，「鏡像」是其中一個有趣的形式。我是從 1964 年杜象有名的刻文來理解的——那「回返」屬於《噴泉》，也就是他稱之為一個革命性水龍頭的原型。愛德華 D. 鮑爾給了一個對此刻文有意思的解讀，說明小便桶和水龍頭並不是一對類比的物件，而是「完全一模一樣的物件的另類宣示」。^[註 2] 或許我有點反覆，不過這不禁讓我想到德勒茲在他的著作《Cinema 2: The Time-Image》裡如何理解萊布尼茲的非相容性觀念。他寫道：諸多通往世界不協調的歧義道路並無法被你所取徑的這條路給斷絕，而是持續地屬於這個世界。將此回譯來觀看我的創作，你或許可說在這些主題下，我的另類與非相容性似乎也在歷史的循環裡找到安身之處。

現在我通常選擇具當代性的議題來處理。它們常從我對主流思潮論述的研究、尋求思想上的支援、或是批判——那些正在被述說與還未說過的話——冒出來。

《七個肖像》這件作品為例，當時我在一個商業畫廊上班，思索關於一位經紀人的形象，她的畫廊經常用一種方式來以她和她旗下藝術家之名來塑造她所有的個人自我意識。我選擇佩姬·古根漢，另外一位經常請求她藝術家朋友在他們的電影、攝影、音樂與繪畫作品裡為她留下肖像的人物的幾則故事，來側寫這種形象。我利用一個古根漢委託凱斯勒製作的搖椅的複製品來進行表演，這個物件同時作為一種她的分身，也是說書人的座椅。說穿了，那位經紀人才是這件作品的主題與批判中心，以七種方式再現。

我講得太多了，關於那件與達利簽名有關的作品就簡單說明，這像古根漢那件一樣，是我在 2008 到 2010 年間與其他文化實踐者產生對話的作品。一部分的我將之視為回應我個人之為藝術家的青澀：藉由創作與不同文化歷史有關的作品，來學習相關的知識並建立與此一種密切關係。我不認為這樣的對話會在眼見的未來停止，所以或許這也和成熟度沒有關係吧。

呂 探討再現是為一種對於當代藝術機制的審視。在你的創作手法裡，特別是經常以印刷物和表演來進行，是否隱含著一種去鬆開和觀眾固定關係的企圖，因此你創造了這些不穩定且批判性的位置來回應你激發的問題意識，而有些事實上還

暗示著機制批判的部分。你如何看待自己作品裡的時間性，以及你所希望和觀眾分享的時空感？

科伯恩 我的計畫常由未預設成果的研究出發。好吧，老實說，通常是未完成研究的副產品。《我是天使》原本預計是要成為論述《經驗經濟》的一篇專文，然而當我坐下來寫的時候，卻變成瘋狂古怪的鬼塚。

也可以說，雖然我的作品有不同的形式（從一系列迷幻海報到電台廣告），其中確有同樣的理路，也正如你暗示，對於既存機制或場域的敏感度也包含在內。我因此從策展人、藝術史學者權美媛和詹姆士·梅爾對於「推論」與「功能性場域」的論述上，擷取許多思想以理解公眾如何可在物理空間內與推論上地去啟動對眼前事物的交涉與協商。所以，在雲端資料中心表演或許會招來對特定場域性這種歷史形式的聯想，但同時作為雲端建設部署網絡裡的資料中心運作也提供了對這個網絡的極大討論。我對物理空間場域的興趣是基於如何朝更廣的推論考量上去展開的，而朗讀表演、說故事、對話等這些我常使用的方法，則是去把這些考量形式化的工具。

呂 在你的網站上，我發現你曾經在 2003 年時訪問過蔡明亮。在那十年後，你跑到台北駐村。隨意聊聊和蔡明亮電影，他的台北影像有關的故事、想法、幻想或影響……那些在都會風景裡抑鬱的情慾流動？[笑]

科伯恩 哈！坦白說，我想 2003 年與蔡明亮的訪談是我決定要來台北駐村很大一部分的原因，所以我很感謝他！我在上高中也還沒出櫃時，第一次看到蔡明亮的電影，而「抑鬱的情慾」是我當時日常生活裡的重要部分。我發現我很難回頭討論這個問題，因為這與我那段距離遙遠的生活實在太過貼近（而我也不願太常回憶那段日子）。

當然有些事情是徘徊未去的。大學時候我曾經寫過一篇關於現象學與電影的文章，其中受蔡明亮的電影藝術中被延長的時間和空間感很大的啟發。當時我想像這些現象學的條件有一種倫理上的包容性，讓觀者可以有極寬廣的經驗與詮釋空間，而儘管我當時的作品還蠻笨拙猛撞的，我也期待能夠與我的觀眾建立類似的倫理關係。

你說我近來的作品試圖去鬆開一種與觀眾的「固定關係」。我同意這樣的說法。對我來說，這是當時那些倫理考量依舊延續至今的表現。

註 1：鏡式回返（*mirrorical return*）是杜象在其作品《綠盒子》上的說明文字，指元素在構圖裡以鏡像方式穿越到另外一方。

註 2：Edward D. Powers, "Fasten your Seatbelts as we Prepare for our *Nude Descending*," in *tout-fait: The Marcel Duchamp Online Studies Journal*. Vol. 2, Issue 5, April 2003.

**We make pictures to make a landscape
that would sound in a form sensible
to you and your air of you.**

EL Let me start with the simple questions: when did you know that you wanted to be an artist, and how did it happen? How do you conceive of the social role of the artist? And could you outline some of the concerns of your artistic practice?

TC I like to joke that at the root of every conceptual artist, there's a failed painter. At least, that has some truth in my case. Art-making was an interest for as long as I can remember, though less the skilling up than spreading out—more the promiscuity than an orthodox submission to medium or craft. So while I made bad anime drawings at the age of 11, I also wrote critical essays about anime for a series of (unmentionably embarrassing) personal websites. When I taught myself to paint at 16, I made Villeglé-like advertisements for a fictional pop star, while simultaneously writing a diary from her perspective. Even in college, when given the option to major in art, I preferred to study Comparative Literature, where I could convince my “fascist theory” professor, for example, to let me make a video manifesto about mass-produced freezer waffles in lieu of a final essay.

Over these years, friends and family considered me an artist, but I was an artist struggling to work within the available forms. Perhaps this is when I began to develop an idea of the social role of the artist, who draws lines through the world that may not be legible within the existing discourse, but are drawn with the intent to become legible—that tell a story about the world, which may change the way we listen.

EL I am curious to learn more about the background of *Waste Management*, which you produced last summer in Taiwan. During the research process, you found some mass-produced art objects made from recycled computer materials, on sale at a local technology recycling company. You purchased two “stones” as visual references to accompany a constellation of spoken word narrations. One of the audio channels has a reading of Joseph Addison’s 1710 story, *Adventures of a Shilling*, and the other your fiction *Adventures of a Genre*, in which the narrator creates a “Parliament of Objects” and also tells a story about the stones. Who is the narrator of your fiction? Can you say something about the complex layers of storytelling in this work?

The stories seem to point out two circulation systems—monetary and material. They are related: crisscrossed, but not parallel. At the same time, you deliberately create a language gap between the two stories, as *Shilling* is read in Chinese and *Genre* in English. An audience member couldn’t bridge this gap unless she spoke both languages. Why this gap, and what are you trying to delineate or criticize through this metaphor?

TC The narrator of *Adventures of a Genre* is the “it-narrative,” an obscure form of 18th Century English literature, in which commodities and currencies describe their facture and circulation. At the time, I was seeking to provide a corrective to object-oriented ontology by creating a project wherein an object-protagonist’s life

is far from nonanthropocentric, but messily entangled in networks of human value.

The “it-narrative” thus offered a formal solution, though it came with baggage attached; as scholars argue, the genre celebrated an emergent consumer economy, largely reliant upon the steady operation of England’s colonies. By vesting supposed autonomy in a shilling, which proclaims its love for “rambling” (read: circulating), an author like Joseph Addison is boosting the capitalist cause.

Most of the protagonists of “it-narratives” are now obsolete—as is the genre. So in addition to translating *Adventures of a Shilling* into Chinese, I decided to write a story from the perspective of the genre, meditating on its checkered history and imagining how it could give an account of the present age. This story follows a sand grain becoming a series of CRT monitors and—with the introduction of LCD technology—electronic waste.

At the end of Joseph Addison’s story, the shilling is melted down to make an undescribed artwork, which it assures is of a value that far surpasses its existing one. At the end of *Adventures of a Genre*, the sand grain becomes part of an imitation scholar stone—one of many Chinese art-objects made by a Taiwanese e-waste recycling company. Ostensibly, the protagonists’ stories end here, when their aesthetic “uselessness” confers a higher value. Yet as we know, these art-objects will go on to make their own routes through the world, and their ultimate value is anything but certain.



《我是天使》· 2012 -

書與表演

作品細部：Justin Sayre 在紐約 Google 大樓中的朗讀表演

表演：2013 年 2 月 11-13, 18-19 日

I'm that angel, 2012 -

Book and performance

Detail: new server floor in the Google Building, New York

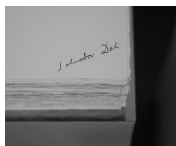
Readings: 11-13, 18-19 February 2013



As far as the audio narration, it's important to note that a single person (Freya Chou) reads both the story in Chinese and the one in English. My hope is that any listener may consider the following: how the neoliberal myth of frictionless circulation belies geopolitical divides (language included), and also how the voice under capitalism can circulate like any other good or service.

EL In your recent projects, there seems to be an anxiety in rethinking how technology builds and defines contemporary space—both in the material and virtual worlds. In *I'm that angel*, you employ writing (the book as concrete object) and performance in site-specific settings (the data centers of "the cloud"). In *Waste Management*, you choose audio narration to accompany found objects that carry stories of their complex economic circulation and recycling. Can you say something about your initial interest or curiosity in these subjects, and your sensitivity to form of representation?

TC "Anxiety" is the operative word in *I'm that angel*, as the protagonist suffers from not understanding the nature of "the cloud"—and thus his role within it. We commonly describe the stultifying effects of anxiety: doubt, worry, the onset of paralysis. Yet in my book, anxiety is the motor that winds the character up, spins him around, and thereby confirms that for all of his online perambulations, he also holds a place and a body in the world.



《指印與其他發送品》作品細部

Thumbprints and Other Takeaways (detail)



泰勒·科伯恩 & 薩爾瓦多·達利
《指印與其他發送品》·1960 - 2010
簽名過的印蝕刻圖紙、石頭、卡門貝乳酪、
蝕刻銅、台座
裝置現場：紐約 Elizabeth Dee

Tyler Coburn & Salvador Dalí
Thumbprints and Other Takeaways, 1960 - 2010
Signed etching paper, sucking stones, Camembert,
etching copper, pedestals. Dimensions variable
Installation view: Elizabeth Dee, New York

While many of my projects seek to address the lived, material conditions of emergent technology, they neither romanticize immanence nor suggest the physical world to be the primary (or only) field of critical struggle. Their operations, if anything, follow a strategy first theorized by the Russian formalist Viktor Shklovskii: they “defamiliarize” the

metaphors and conventions that encircle contemporary virtual life. “[A]rt exists that one may recover the sensation of life,” Shklovskii writes in his 1917 essay, “Art as Technique.” “[I]t exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*.”

I'm that angel thus demystifies “the cloud” through data center readings, which call attention to the phenomenological and geopolitical conditions of the Internet. It also re-sites online vernacular writing in an older information storage container, drawing contemporary language into conversation with literary and diaristic precedents.

Waste Management, quite obviously, comprises “stones,” which come into being through a similar series of defamiliarizing operations. The circuits of technological production and disposal have yielded strange, aesthetic byproducts, the very exceptionalism of which may help in illuminating the norm. These *stony* stones, in other words, are narrative conclusions. My work, as an artist, is to tell their stories in reverse.

EL I like this description of telling their stories in reverse “to make the stone stony.” I want to borrow Duchamp’s term, “mirrorial return,”^[1] to think through the discursive sites you construct in your works. Instead of taking these stones as narrative conclusions, I actually think they serve more as narrative turns. You superimpose a second narrative space on their primary one by, for example, writing fictional stories for audio presentation in *Waste Management*. With your own reconfigured mirror, you create a space to reflect and render a conceptual relationship

between art and non-art. As viewers, we are provided clues about this relationship: a readymade, a historical reference, or something else. In *Waste Management*, it is a set of stones; in *Seven Portraits on a Correalist Rocker*, the rocker; and in *Thumbprints & Other Takeaways*, the signatures. These are slippery elements that travel through time and mirror a situation from both ends. Would you consider such operations to be your main aesthetic vehicles? How do the dynamics within these operations inform your understanding of discursive space?

Since I mentioned the word mirror, it is hard for me to avoid the psychoanalytic association. You seem to project an anxiety or desire onto the historical references and materials that circulate in your projects. How do you usually decide what references and materials to re(en)act, like Dali's signature and Friedrich Kiesler's chair? Why do you include other people's work in your own? What kind of buttons do they push, on a personal level? And why do you choose to be so transparent with your art history references?

TC I think you're right to suggest that a narrative *turn* may be a better frame, as history is not done with my source material, and there may yet be more turns to take. And the way you've connected *Waste Management* to some of my earlier projects (before my recent preoccupations with technology) reminds that narrative is my way of straddling the threshold of the contemporary. I'm not an historian, an archaeologist, or a theoretician, nor would I claim to bring their disciplinary rigor to my

research. Narrative, to my mind, suggests a method that is not premised on professional expertise, but, at its minimum, requires a speaking subject or subjects. Moreover, narration is social in its ideal form: it has a conversation with past and present, intended for a public audience.

There are many types of narrative forms, of course, and it is interesting to think of the “mirrorial” as one. I’ve come to understand that term with reference to Duchamp’s eponymous 1964 engraving, where the “return” is that of the *Fountain*, which the artist describes as “an original revolutionary faucet.” Edward D. Powers gives a helpful reading of this engraving, interpreting the urinal and faucet not as analogous objects, but “alternate manifestations of the self-same object.” [2] I’m riffing here, but it makes me think of how Deleuze takes up Leibniz’s notion of impossibility—particularly in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. The many divergent and dissonant paths for the world, he writes, are not foreclosed by the path taken, but continue to belong to the world. Translating this back to my practice, I suppose you could say that I mine the alternate and impossible within topics that, in some cases, seem fairly settled in the historical record.

Now, I generally choose these topics for what they might bring to bear on the contemporary. Often, they emerge out of my engagement with dominant discourses and seek to supplement—or critique—what’s being said and left unsaid.

Seven Portraits, for example, emerged at a time when I was working for a commercial gallery and meditating on the figure of the dealer,

whose gallery often takes her name—and whose “stable” of artists, in a fashion, comprise her ego’s very parts. In training a less celebratory light on this figure, I culled a series of stories about Peggy Guggenheim, who famously solicited her creator friends to render portraits of her in film, photography, music and painting. These I performed on a replica of a chair she commissioned Kiesler to make, and the object came to simultaneously operate as her surrogate and my storyteller’s seat. The dealer, in short, was the topical and critical center of this artwork, represented through seven accounts.

I’m running long, so will only note that the Dali piece—like the Guggenheim—was one in a number of projects that I made from 2008-2010, which dialogued with cultural practitioners. Part of me sees this work as reflecting my relative immaturity as an artist: learning about various cultural histories (and forming affinities) by making work in relation to them. That said, I don’t see these conversations stopping anytime soon, so perhaps maturity has nothing to do with it.

EL To interrogate representation is also to interrogate the institution of contemporary art. I wonder if your approach—especially the frequency of printed matter and performance—attempts to loosen a fixed relation with the audience, thereby creating a more tangible and critical position to reflect on the issues you raise—particularly those that hint at institutional critique. How would you describe the temporality of your works, and the spacetime you wish to share with your audience?

TC In general, my projects begin as research without premeditated formal outcomes. Well, to be honest, most of them are actually the byproducts of halted research. *I'm that angel*, for example, was first intended as a theoretical essay on *The Experience Economy*, and when I sat down to write it, a mad, scatological rant came out instead!

That being said, while my projects take different shapes (from a series of psychedelic posters to a radio campaign), there are certain common threads -- a sensitivity to a given institution or site, as you imply, is certainly one. I thus draw a lot of meaning from Miwon Kwon's and James Meyer's respective theorizations of the "discursive" and "functional site," in conceiving scenarios in which a public may be asked to both physically and discursively negotiate what's at hand. So while inhabiting a data center, on one level, may recall historical forms of site-specificity, the data center's operation within a distributed network of cloud infrastructure *also* lends to a discussion of the network at large. My interest in physical site, in other words, is motivated towards broader discursive considerations, and the frequent use of spoken performance, storytelling and conversation are means to formalize these considerations within my work.

EL On your website, I found out that you interviewed Tsai Ming-Liang in 2003. Ten years later, you took a residency in Taipei. Well, share some stories or thoughts, fantasies or influences in relation to Tsai's films, his images of Taipei...the repressed erotic desires in the urban landscape? [laughs]

TC Ha! Candidly, I think interviewing Tsai in 2003 was a large part of the reason that I got the residency in the first place, so I'm grateful to him! I first saw Tsai's films in high school, when I was still in the closet -- and when "repressed erotic desires" were an active part of my daily life. I've found it hard to return to them since then, as they are so strongly associated with a period of my life that feels remote (and that I'd prefer not to remember too often).

Still, there are things that linger. I wrote my college thesis on phenomenology and cinema, for example, drawing great influence from the protracted time and space in Tsai's cinematography. Back then, I imagined that these phenomenological conditions had an ethical valence, in allowing a great amount of experiential and interpretive room for the viewer. I hoped to establish a similar ethical relation to my own audience, even if my artworks of the time were fumbling and fanboyish.

You proposed that my recent work attempts to loosen "a fixed relation" to an audience. I agree. For me, this is one way that those ethical concerns continue to this day.

1. Derives from Duchamp's notes in the *Green Box*, the term 'mirrorial return' described elements that were to have travelled 'mirrorially' from one part of the composition to another.

2. Edward D. Powers, "Fasten your Seatbelts as we Prepare for our *Nude Descending*," in *tout-fait: The Marcel Duchamp Online Studies Journal*. Vol. 2, Issue 5, April 2003.

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