

张如怡的艺术创作始终围绕着日常逻辑展开，探索人工制品、都市景观与日常体察之间的隐秘关系。作为张如怡近期最大型的机构个展，“低声细语”系统性地梳理了艺术家近十年来的创作线索。疏离的空间，凝固的仙人掌，均匀的网格，这些反复出现在张如怡作品中的视觉与材料元素，共同构成了一个静谧的后末日美学景观。人的存在被缩略成一种遗迹，仿佛只有不断凝结的水蒸气与化石般的仙人掌在低声呼应，细语着城市的静默。

此次展览还首次有针对性地呈现艺术家对于玻璃、塑料薄膜等透明的标准化生产材料的运用，以及材料背后所隐含的有关透明性的多重意向的探究。透明的物理结构看似隐形、包容与开放，却始终维持着一种克制但绝对的阻隔与孤立，成为错综复杂的现代社会关系的一种隐喻。从早期的绘画到全新的装置、雕塑、平面与影像作品，我们可以近距离观察到材料形式与功能之间的捆绑关系如何在张如怡的创作中被拆解、重组与再现，不知不觉之间，如植物生长一般构建出全新的样貌。

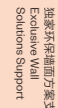
本次展览由 UCCA 策展人张南昭策划。展览独家环保墙面方案支持由多乐士提供，同时亦感谢尤伦斯艺术基金会理事会、UCCA 国际委员会、UCCA 青年赞助人、首席战略合作伙伴阿那亚、首席艺读伙伴 DIOR 迪奥、联合战略合作伙伴彭博、沃捷集团和垠艺生物，以及特约战略合作伙伴巴可、多乐士和真力长期以来的宝贵支持。

Zhang Ruyi's art centers on the logics that underpin daily life. She explores the hidden relationships between artificial products, urban landscapes, and everyday experiences. "Speaking Softly," the artist's largest institutional solo exhibition to date, is a systematic presentation of several creative threads she has developed over the past decade. Alienating spaces, fossilized cacti, uniform grids—these repeated visual and material elements are the building blocks of her tranquil, post-apocalyptic aesthetic landscape. Human existence is reduced to a vestigial trace, as if all that remains are the soft echoes of billowing water vapor and cacti fossils, whispering the silence of the city.

"Speaking Softly" is also the first focused presentation of Zhang Ruyi's use of glass, plastic films, and other standardized, transparent materials. Transparent structures seem invisible and open, even as they enforce separations that are gentle, yet absolute. Here, transparency serves as a metaphor for the complex, interwoven relationships of modern society. From her early paintings to several new installation, sculpture, video, and two-dimensional works commissioned by UCCA, the artist dismantles, recombines, and re-presents the binds between material form and function. From this process, new bodies emerge, grown like plants.

The exhibition is curated by UCCA Curator Neil Zhang. Exclusive wall solutions support is provided by Dulux. UCCA thanks the members of UCCA Foundation Council, International Circle, and Young Associates, as well as Lead Partner Aranya, Lead Art Book Partner DIOR, Presenting Partners Bloomberg, Voyage Group, and Yinyi Biotech, and Supporting Partners Active House, Barco, BenQ, Clivet, Dulux, and Genelec for their generous support.

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平面图 Floor Plan

周二至周日 10:00-19:00
(18:30 停止入馆) 周一闭馆
Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00-19:00
Last entry at 18:30, closed on Mondays

1
《沙漠并不悲伤，也并非无人居住》
The Desert is Not Sad, Nor is it Deserted
2022

2
《倚靠》
Leaning
2022

4
《种植 - 8》
Planter - 8
2022

12
《装饰物（氧化）》
Decoration (Oxidation)
2022

3
《短暂的凝视》
A Brief Stare
2022

5
《温室一角》
A Corner of the Greenhouse
2012

13
《现代化石（管道）- 2》
Modern Fossil (Pipe) - 2
2021

6
《水渍》
Water Stain
2022

14
《对遥远的折叠 - 2》
Folding the Distant - 2
2022

7
《碎屑》
Shards
2021-2022

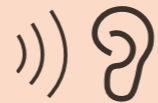
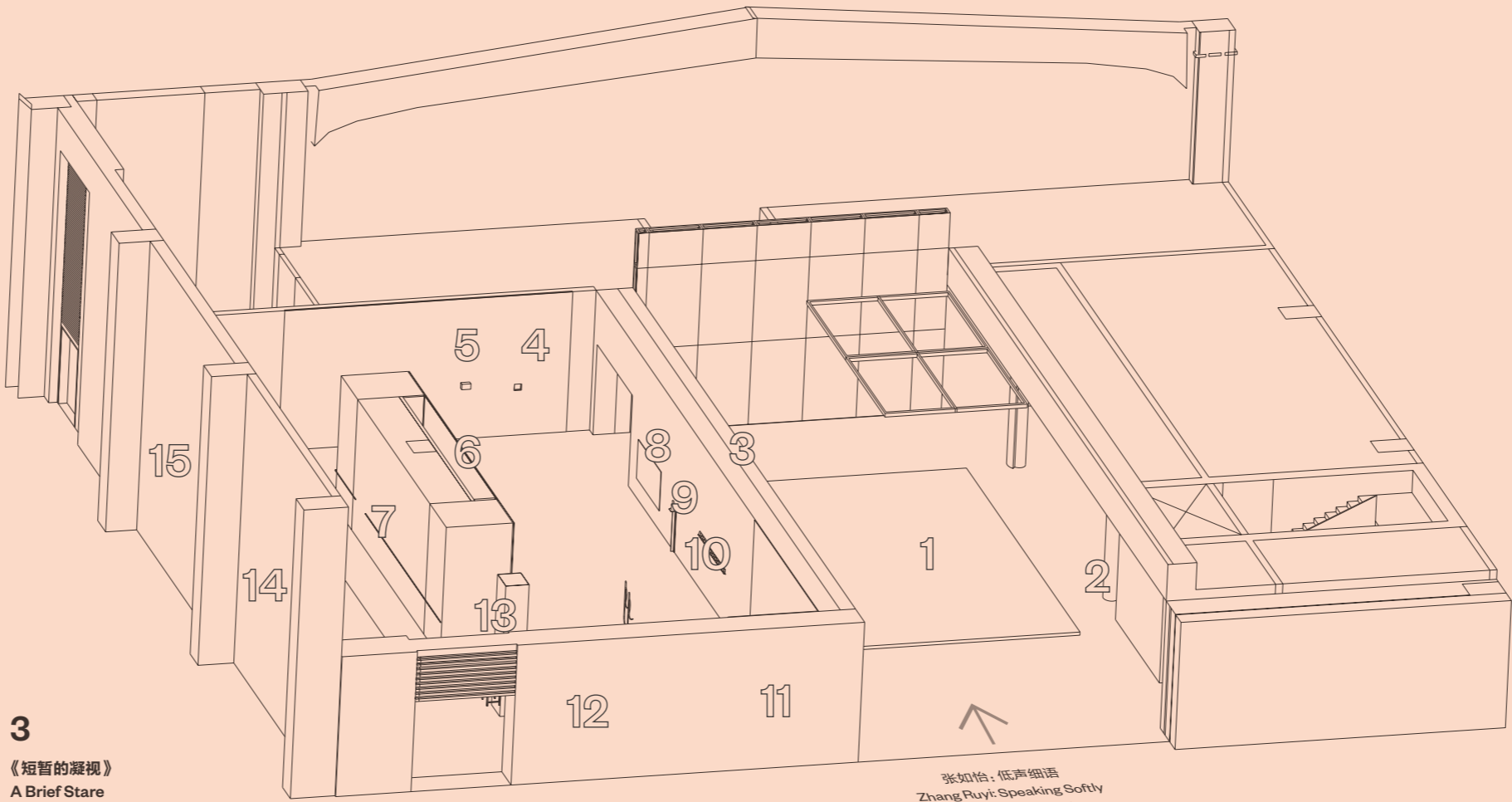
15
《外机》
Outdoor Unit
2021-2022

8
《对遥远的折叠 - 1》
Folding the Distant - 1
2022

9
《现代化石（伪装的睫毛）- 1》
Modern Fossil (Fake Eyelashes) - 1
2022

10
《编织影子》
Weaving Shadow
2022

11
《提取切片》
Extracting Slices
2022



请扫描二维码收听“张如怡：低声细语”语音导览。
Scan the QR code to listen to the complete audio guide for "Zhang Ruyi: Speaking Softly"

张如怡：低声细语

Zhang Ruyi:
Speaking Softly

2022.12.23 - 2023.4.9



尤伦斯当代艺术中心
Center for Contemporary Art

工作室中的创作过程，2022。图片由艺术家提供。
Work in progress at Zhang Ruyi's studio, 2022. Photograph courtesy the artist.



展览同期公共项目 Public Programs

在“张如怡：低声细语”展览期间，UCCA 公共实践部将推出 1 场聚焦艺术家创作主题的对话以及 1 次植物园徒步行走活动，旨在通过思辨与亲身体验的形式为观众理解作品提供多元视角。

During the exhibition period of “Zhang Ruyi: Speaking Softly,” UCCA's Public Practice department will present a conversation on the artist's creative themes as well as a guided walk through a botanical garden, deepening audiences' understanding of Zhang's artworks through both speculative analysis and firsthand experience.

加入会员 Become a Member

UCCA 会员旨在为公众开启通往艺术的窗口，提供更多深入了解高品质艺术和文化资源的机会。此次会员全面升级后，UCCA 会员可享四馆免费观展、双重超值礼赠、专享快速通道、更多专属活动、超值消费折扣及亲子专享福利等会员权益。每一位 UCCA 会员都是 UCCA 践行推动中国当代艺术发展信念的实质支持者。

UCCA membership offers the perfect opportunity to more deeply experience all that China's leading institution of contemporary art has to offer. We have recently upgraded our membership program to offer access to four locations without the purchase of additional tickets, special welcoming gifts, priority exhibition entry, members-only events, great savings and discounts, exclusive benefits for families, and more. When you become a UCCA Member, you are making a significant contribution to our mission of fostering the development of contemporary art in China.

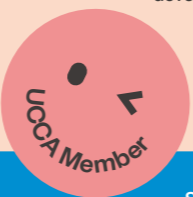
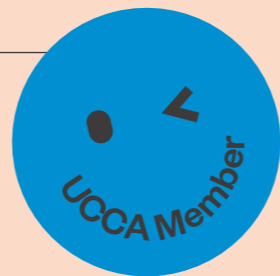


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展览同期儿童工作坊 Kids Workshop Series

基于本次展览，UCCA Kids 设计了一系列儿童艺术工作坊，将带领儿童在展览中观看艺术家张如怡的作品，并尝试了解艺术家创作背后的思路。在课程中，我们将一起探讨生活中常见的材料，如水泥、塑料布和瓷砖等，如何被艺术家吸收转化成为艺术作品。小朋友将尝试与多种生活中常见的基础材料互动，挖掘自己对不同材料的独特感受，并完成综合材料创作。

UCCA Kids has designed a series of art workshops inspired by the exhibition “Zhang Ruyi: Speaking Softly.” These workshops will introduce children to Zhang's artworks and help them understand the thinking behind her artistic practice. During classes, we will explore how commonplace materials from daily life, such as cement, plastic, and ceramic tiles, have been absorbed by the artist and transformed into works of art. Children will have the chance to experiment with different everyday materials, get in touch with their own feelings about these materials, and create mixed media art.



报名信息请关注
UCCA Kids 微信公众号。
Follow UCCA Kids on WeChat
for more information on class
registration.



工作室中的创作过程，2022。图片由艺术家提供。
Work in progress at Zhang Ruyi's studio, 2022. Photograph courtesy the artist.



近乎于无 Almost Nothing

张南昭
Neil Zhang



由约翰·萨德勒于 1851 年绘制的版画，展示了水晶宫的内部与钢筋结构。图片来自大英博物馆，通过 CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 授权。

在过去的 10 余年当中，张如怡凭借对材料语言的精准把握和纤细的感知，探索了以仙人掌和都市建筑为主的两条相互交织的创作线索。但当我们对这次展览中作品所运用的材料进行审视时，不难发现另一条鲜有提及的线索：不论是《浸泡景观-2》中包围在雕塑四周的玻璃，还是《沙漠并不悲伤，也并非无人居住》中附着在金属骨架上的塑料薄膜，都无一例外地指向了艺术家对于透明的标准化生产材料的关注。透明这种特性，隐含着洁净、规整、隔绝、控制与权力等诸多意象与议题。结合张如怡过往对建筑的持续关注，对其作品中透明性的讨论需要借助对建筑语言以及材料的思考而展开。

回顾材料生产的历史，玻璃的透明属性和其制造加工过程使之成为了一种隐含现代意识形态冲突的材料。19 世纪，玻璃成为一种能实现大批量工业化生产的建筑用材，在尺寸控制上有着超高的标准，追求绝对的平滑和整齐。1851 年，作为世界博览会场馆的水晶宫在英国伦敦的南肯辛顿落成，这座通体玻璃的雄伟场馆被视为该材料在建筑领域的一次突破。

当陀思妥耶夫斯基结束在寒冷的西伯利亚接近 5 年的流亡生涯之后曾造访伦敦，这座以钢筋为骨，以玻璃为皮的文化“温室”让陀氏大为震撼。在随笔《冬天记的夏日印象》关于伦敦的章节中，陀氏写道：“它（水晶宫）是如此庄严、恢弘和豪气，以至于你开始喘不过气来。”¹而这一章的标题“巴力”——希伯来神话中的邪神——则直白地说明了这位俄罗斯文豪的态度。他直觉般地意识到这座玻璃建筑所蕴含的那预言式的形象和纲领性的隐喻。

彼得·斯洛特戴克在《世界资本内部》一书中继续了陀氏对水晶宫的剖析，将水晶宫所代表的玻璃建筑样式看作是现代性最终极野心的象征——“创造一个人们永远不会离开的地方，一个包围一切的领域。”²如今，优质的玻璃在平滑度和纯净度上有了质的提升，透明得几乎隐形，让内部空间和外部空间的区分在视觉上愈发模糊，而在物理性质上则愈发坚韧。玻璃可以被看透，但无法被穿透；透明的结构看似隐形、包容，却始终维持着一种“有礼节”但绝对的阻隔与孤立。玻璃的透明性是自由、开放的，却也是欲图掌控，乃至专制的，成为现代社会权力关系的一种写照。就如同杰里米·边沁的全景监狱，一切都公开、可见，除了权力自身。

¹ 费奥多尔·陀思妥耶夫斯基（著），满涛（译）：“第五章：巴力”，《冬天记的夏日印象》，北京，人民文学出版社，1962 年，第 68-90 页。

² 彼得·斯洛特戴克（著），维兰德·霍本（译）：“第 33 章：水晶宫”，《世界资本内部：迈向全球化的哲学理论》，剑桥，Polity 出版，2017 年。

伴随着各地的工业化与城市化进程，这种西方的现代性欲望同样进入了中国。作为在 1998 年城镇住房制度改革中成长的一代，张如怡在 2016 年的作品《清洁》中，将现代商品住宅模型浇筑成两件雕塑，相对而置，浸没于水缸中，黑色的清道夫游于其间。白炽灯冷冽的光线以及整件作品多重笔直的线条所散发出的秩序感让人不由得联想起雅克·塔蒂的电影《玩乐时间》（1967）。影片中充满了导演对玻璃这一建筑元素的敏锐审视——与空间材料有关的一切都被道德化了，无处不在的玻璃幕墙，层层嵌套的玻璃办公隔间暗示着现代都市空间的疏离感、重复性及其对人的规训。不同于塔蒂作品中富有讽刺意味的压抑与冷峻，张如怡在自己的作品中留存了一丝温柔反叛的可能性。玻璃缸中的水填充了混凝土雕塑的空隙，随时可能将这些小型楼宇溶解、侵蚀；但水在整件作品中又保持着最低限度的存在感，以至于艺术家甚至没有将其列入作品材料中。同时，在作品中水和水箱边缘形成的三棱镜结构也揭示了透明性可以是一种视觉误导。我们的所见并非真实。

在张如怡 2019 年创作的《浸泡景观》中，艺术家继续了有关透明性权力关系的探索，但将作品的核心引向了生命领域。两件由扭曲的仙人掌与钢筋组成的雕塑浸没在装满水的玻璃缸中，作为有机物的仙人掌和无机的钢筋在混凝土的浇筑下得到了形质上的统一。这两者的结合，化身某种远古异域生物，在透明玻璃水缸与没过雕塑的透明液体的加持下，被赋予了生物学标本一般的质感。然而，水在其中并非扮演着福尔马林那样的保护者的角色，而是再一次充当了革命性的温床——随着时间推移，水的浸泡让混凝土雕塑上长出了青苔。在作品展出期间，似医院般洁净、通透、被充分规训的景观被青苔的缓慢占领所打破。

透明性与生命领域的交集并非偶然。19 世纪时，路易·巴斯德使用玻璃制实验仪器发现了微生物，同一时期出现的 X 射线成像技术（使皮肤和肌肉变得透明可见）和用于培育植物的玻璃容器沃德箱，已然将透明性的讨论引向了生命政治。

到了 20 世纪后期，工程师约翰·P·艾伦在 1987 年带领团队开始了一项极富野心的科学项目——生物圈二号工程。在这个由超过一万块玻璃搭建成的巨大金字塔形建筑中，设计者通过整合七个“生物群落”——雨林、热带草原、沙漠、沼泽、海洋、集约化农业和人类，试图还原地球——生物圈一号——的复杂生命支持系统。生物圈二号大量运用玻璃，为的是解决该建筑“物质上封闭，能量上开放”这一对几近于不可调和的要素。建筑结构被要求尽可能密封，以减少内部和外部的空气交换；但又要保持最大限度的透明，以最大限度地增加光照，来支持内部动植物的生长。然而，如同张如怡作品中令人意想不到的青苔在生物圈二号工程的末期，藤蔓类植物沿着钢结构扶摇而上，阻挡了阳光，从而间接造成了热带雨林植物的死亡。

生物圈二号工程本身的透明结构可以看做是一个上演实景秀的自然历史博物馆展柜。如苏格兰国立博物馆馆藏总监塞缪尔·J. M. M. 阿尔贝蒂所说：“就像活的动物和植物被培养的过程一样，当非生物 / 文化的产物进入博物馆，进入某类收藏，以及在它们随后的（来世）生活中，



张如怡，《被包裹的废墟》（局部），2022，混凝土、钢筋、碎石、马赛克瓷砖、塑料薄膜、铜丝、金属。雕塑：87 × 22 × 20 cm，碎石：36 × 16 × 26 cm 由 UCCA 尤伦斯当代艺术中心委任 Zhang Ruyi, *Wrapped Ruins* (detail), 2022, concrete, rebar, construction debris, ceramic mosaic tiles, plastic film, copper wire, metal sculpture: 87 × 22 × 20 cm, construction debris: 36 × 16 × 26 cm. Commissioned by UCCA Center for Contemporary Art

都受限于一系列的概念、分类和重述手段。……城市生活，像艺术一样，在玻璃背后的构筑中被净化了。”³从科学家的实验台到美术馆的展示柜，从细菌观察皿、动植物标本到人类的终极欲望——生物圈二号工程，玻璃作为一种介质、一个容器，承载了被观察和培养的对象，通过对内部的隔绝与透明化实现来自外部的审视，逐步定义着观看者与被观看对象之间的权力关系。

在2020年的作品《低声细语-2》中，张如怡对透明作为一种阻隔手段的关注无疑得到了最大化的体现。巨型的半透明塑料薄膜悬浮在空中，随着窗外的光线和空气的流动缓慢而无声地改变着自己的形态。当我们走近作品，能发现平滑的塑料薄膜上布满了仙人掌的针刺，这些刺穿透了塑料布，借由摩擦力悬挂其上。刺的尖锐消解了平滑的塑料布所象征的顺从，却也消解了触摸的欲望与可能。

在生物界中，动物以鲜艳的颜色、锐利的尖刺、具有攻击性的声音进行自我保护与防御，阻隔外界的危险。这些手段是直观且本能的。而在无机材料的世界里，隔绝却以一种看似洁净无害、平滑柔顺、开放可观的形态被呈现，只有当真正试图去触摸的时候才感受到这种对交互的冷酷拒绝。不同于仙人掌的刺或动物皮肤上的毒液，玻璃和薄膜其实是可以被轻易破坏的，它们近乎于无的材料属性并不坚固。不论是家门上贴的封条，绿化带前拦起的白色胶带，抑或是乘坐国际航班时避免交叉感染的塑料薄膜铠甲，它们的存在不是物理性质的隔断，而是指代权威的不可侵犯性。你需要自己判断跨越这条可以轻易被解除的屏障后续需要付出的代价为何，这一点是透明性最本质的威胁。

这篇短文以张如怡的创作以及材料语言为起点，希望为读者引入一个跨时空与学科的对话空间。张如怡的创作向我们传递了当代视觉艺术家们的创作与形形色色的理论和领域之间平行的关系，正如詹明信所言：“你从美学出发，纯粹的美学问题，而讨论到最后，终归回到政治。”⁴因此，文中的政治不应做狭义的理解，而是关乎人与人、人与物、物与物之间纠缠的状态与演化。

³萨缪尔·阿尔伯特·J.M.M.: “在玻璃之后构建自然”，《博物馆与社会》，第6卷第2期，2008年，第73页-97 (<https://journals.le.ac.uk/ojs/index.php/mas/article/download/116/13>)。

工作室中的创作过程，2022。图片由艺术家提供。
Work in progress at Zhang Ruyi's studio, 2022. Photograph courtesy the artist.

⁴詹明信，伊恩·布凯能：“采访张旭东”，《詹明信谈詹明信——有关文化马克思主义的对话》，达勒姆，杜克大学出版社，2008年，第175页。



生物圈二号工程的金字塔型玻璃温室。图片来自 iStock，摄影：chapin31。





张如怡, 《低声细语 - 1》(局部), 2020, 仙人掌刺、薄膜。图片由艺术家提供。
Zhang Ruyi, *Speaking Softly - 1* (detail), 2020, cactus spines, plastic film. Courtesy the artist.

Over the past ten years, Zhang Ruyi has explored two intertwining creative threads with a precise material language and a delicate sense of perception: cacti and urban architecture. But when we examine the materials used in this exhibition, we soon discover another, less explored thread in her practice. Whether through the glass surrounding the sculpture of *Submerged Landscape – 2*, or the plastic film affixed to the metal skeleton in *The Desert is Not Sad, Nor is it Deserted*, the artist's works seem to indicate her interest in transparent materials of standardized production. Transparency and imagery related to this quality often connote cleanliness, order, isolation, control, and power. Bearing in mind the artist's continuing exploration of architecture, a discussion of her use of transparency must draw upon how she treats the language of architecture and materiality.



An 1851 print by John Saddle depicting the interior of the Crystal Palace and its iron structures. Courtesy the British Museum, licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Looking back over the history of material production, the transparency of glass and its manufacturing process has embodied the conflicts of modernist ideologies. In the nineteenth century, glass became an architectural material that could be produced at an industrial scale. Its size could be controlled to a high degree while still pursuing total smoothness and regularity. In 1851, the Crystal Palace was built in London's South Kensington neighborhood for the World's Fair. It was an amazing venue made out of glass, and the building's size and grandeur were an architectural breakthrough for the material.

When Fyodor Dostoevsky, who had previously spent half a decade exiled in the cold of Siberia, visited London in 1862 he was shocked by this cultural "greenhouse" of glass and steel. In the chapter on London in his book *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*, he wrote, "It [the Crystal Palace] is all so solemn, triumphant, and proud that you begin to gasp for breath."¹ The title of this chapter is "Baal," a false god in the Hebrew Bible, which makes it clear what the Russian literary giant's attitude was towards the city. He was intuitively aware of the prophetic imagery and doctrinal metaphor represented by the glass building.

Peter Sloterdijk's book *In the Interior World of Capital: Towards a Philosophical Theory of Globalization* continues Dostoevsky's dissection of the Crystal Palace, seeing the glass architectural style it represented as a symbol of modernity's ultimate ambition, a "building that would be spacious enough in order, perhaps, never to have to leave it again."² Today, quality glass is much smoother and purer, with transparency so high it is almost invisible. Internal and external space are increasingly indistinguishable, even as the glass is physically stronger. Glass can be seen through, but not pierced. Transparent structures seem to be invisible and capacious, even as they maintain obstructions and separations that are seemingly "courteous" but also absolute. Glass transparency is free and open, but it also desires control, even autocratic control, making it an excellent illustration

¹ Dostoyevsky, Fyodor, David Patterson trans. "Chapter V: Baal." *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1997), pp. 42-52.

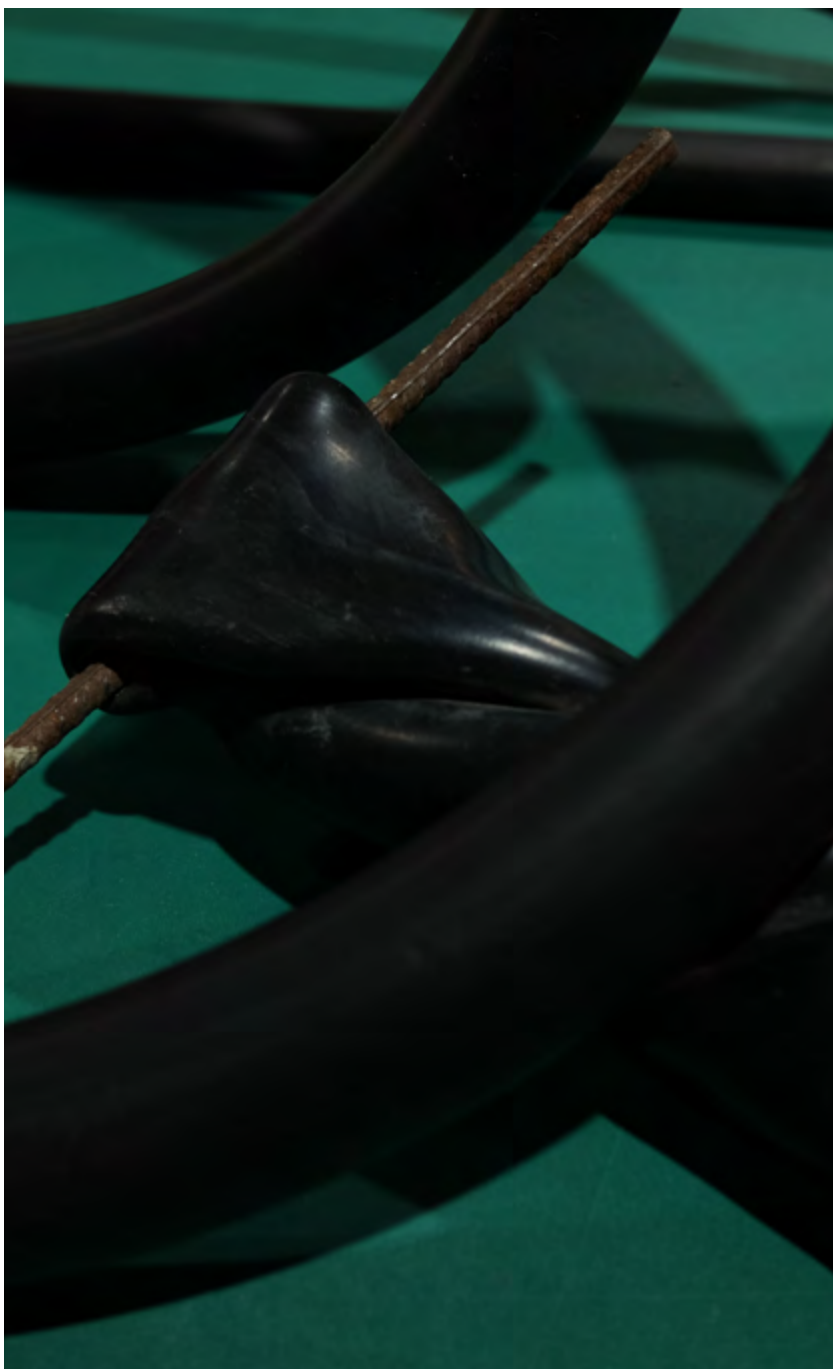
² Sloterdijk, Peter, Wieland Hoban trans. "Chapter 33: The Crystal Palace." *In the World Interior of Capital for a Philosophical Theory of Globalization* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017).

of modern societal power relations. Just like Jeremy Bentham's panopticons, everything is open and visible, apart from power itself.

Accompanying endemic industrialization and urbanization, modern, Western forms of desire have also arrived in China. Zhang Ruyi is part of the generation who grew up alongside the urban housing regulation reforms that China enacted in 1998. In her work *Cleaning*, Zhang casts a model of a modern commercial house as two sculptures, placing them opposite one another and submerging them in a tank of water, with a black scavenger fish swimming between them. The sense of order evinced by the harsh white light of the incandescent lamp and the multiple straight lines inevitably reminds viewers of the Jacques Tati film *Playtime* (1967). The film is replete with the director's keen observations of glass as an architectural element—everything related to spatial materials, such as the ubiquitous glass walls and many layers of nested glass offices, has been moralized, which suggests the repetition and alienation of modern urban space, as well as how it imposes discipline. Zhang's work differs from the sardonic portrayal of oppression and severity in Tati's film in that it contains the possibility of a sort of gentle rebelliousness. The water in the tanks fills the gaps in the concrete sculpture, an omnipresent threat of dissolution and erosion for these small buildings. However, water has only the faintest sense of presence in the artwork, such that the artist does not even list water as one of the materials. At the same time, the prismatic structure formed by the water and the tank's edges also shows how transparency can also be a visual misdirection. What we see is not necessarily true.

In Zhang Ruyi's 2019 artwork *Submerged Landscape*, the artist continues her exploration of the power dynamics of transparency, but she shifts the main focus of her work towards the arena of life. Two sculptures, which are made from twisted cacti and rebar, are immersed in water in a glass tank. The organic cactus and the inorganic rebar are cast in concrete to make a single, combined form that resembles a strange, ancient creature. When placed in the transparent glass water tank and immersed in liquid, it seems to have the quality of a biological specimen. Yet the water does not act like formaldehyde. Instead, it creates a revolutionary hotbed: with the passage of time, erosion will cause moss to grow on the concrete sculpture. It is hospital-like in its transparency and cleanliness, a spectacle of complete control. Yet this quality is disrupted by the slow infiltration of the moss while it is exhibited.

This intersection of transparency and biology is not a coincidence. Louis Pasteur discovered micro-organisms by using glass laboratory instruments. During the same period, X-ray technology was invented, which could make skin and flesh transparent. Around the same time, the Wardian case, a terrarium used to cultivate plants, was also



³ Alberti, Samuel J. M. M. "Constructing Nature Behind Glass." *Museum & Society* 6, no. 2, 2008, pp. 73-97. <https://journals.le.ac.uk/ojs1/index.php/mas/article/download/116/131>.

◀ 工作室中的创作过程，2022。
图片由艺术家提供。
Work in progress at Zhang Ruyi's studio,
2022. Photograph courtesy the artist.

invented. All of these discoveries implicitly connect the discourse of transparency to biopolitics.

Moving on to the late twentieth century, in 1987 the engineer John P. Allen led a team to realize an ambitious scientific project—Biosphere 2. In this massive architectural undertaking, a giant pyramid made of more than ten thousand glass panels, the designer tried to recreate the complex natural support system of seven Earth (Biosphere 1) biomes: rainforests, savannah grasslands, deserts, wetlands, oceans, cultivated agricultural land, and human habitats. Biosphere 2 used a large amount of glass to solve the seemingly irreconcilable architectural challenge of being “materially closed and energetically open.” The structure had to be as hermetically sealed as possible to reduce air exchange, yet it also had to have a maximum level of transparency to increase light exposure and support the growth of flora and fauna inside. And yet, just like the unexpected moss in Zhang Ruyi's work, during the final stages of the Biosphere 2 experiment, vines traversed the steel structure, blocking the light and indirectly killing some plants in the rainforest biome.

The transparent structure of Biosphere 2 is like a reality show version of a natural history museum display. As Samuel J. M. M. Alberti, Director of Collections at the National Museums Scotland, once noted, “Just as living animals and plants are cultivated, so abiotic/cultural ones, on their way to the museum, as they enter the collection, and during their subsequent (after)lives, are subject to a range of conceptual, classificatory, and re-contextual practices. It transpires that city life, like art, is purified in its construction behind glass.”³ From the scientist's laboratory table to the showcase cabinet in a museum, from petri dishes to animal specimens to Biosphere 2—the ultimate manifestation of human cultivation—glass is simultaneously a medium and a container, bearing the object of observation and nourishment, enabling external scrutiny through internal isolation and transparency, and defining the relationship of power between the viewer and the viewed.

Zhang Ruyi's interest in transparency as a mean of differentiation reaches its greatest expression in her 2020 piece *Speaking Softly - 2*. A large, translucent, plastic film is suspended in mid-air, quietly and slowly changing form along with the changing light outside and the flow of air in the gallery. As the viewer approaches the work, they discover that the smooth plastic is full of cactus spikes that pierce the sheet, held up by friction. The sharpness of the spikes counteracts the smooth surface of the plastic and the sense of compliance that it seems to symbolize, while also counteracting the desire and potential for touch.

In the biological world, animals use bright colors, sharp spikes, and aggressive sounds to protect and defend themselves, a form of

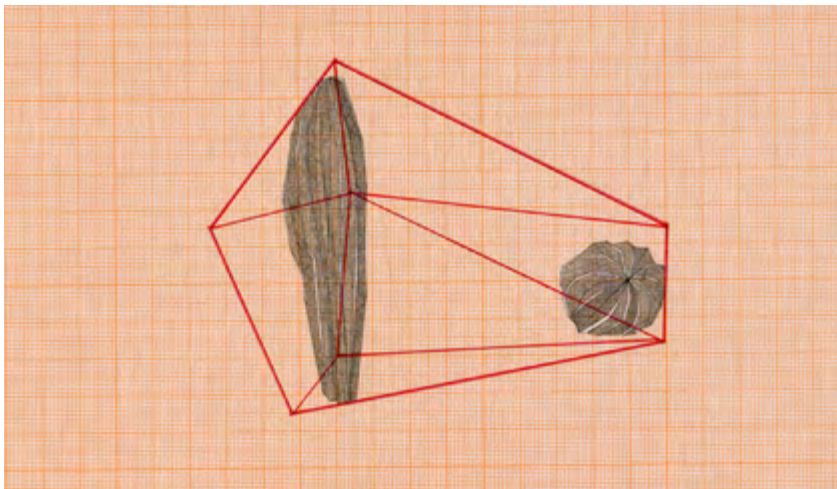
isolation against the dangers of the outside world. These methods are all instinctive and innate. But in the world of inorganic materials, isolation is presented as clean and harmless, smooth and supple, open and observable. Only when one tries to touch it does one sense its cold rejection of true interaction. Different from cactus spikes or poison on animal skin, glass and membranes are easily broken, physically almost nothing, because they are materially unstable. Whether it is a paper seal placed on a door, a white strip blocking off a lawn, or the plastic films now used to prevent infections during international flights—their presence is not so much a physical separation, but a reminder of the inviolability of authority. You have to judge for yourself the cost of crossing this easily broken boundary, which is the most essential threat of transparency.

This short essay has attempted to use the material language of Zhang Ruyi's work to create a discursive space that is interdisciplinary and spans different times and locations. Zhang Ruyi's practice conveys to us the parallel relationship between contemporary visual artists and many different theories and fields. As Frederic Jameson has commented, "You start from aesthetics, purely aesthetic problems, and then, at the term of these analyses, you end up in the political."⁴ The political discourse in the above text should not be understood as politics in the narrow sense, but rather as the state of evolution and entanglement between people, between objects, and between people and objects.



The glass pyramid of the Biosphere 2 project. Via iStock, photo: chapin31.

⁴ Jameson, Fredric, and Ian Buchanan. "Interview with Xudong Zhang" in *Jameson on Jameson: Conversations on Cultural Marxism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), p. 175.



张如怡，《温室一角》，2012，工业计算纸、水彩笔、铅笔、丙烯、铝塑板、铝合金、博物馆级亚克力，17.5 × 25.5 × 5 cm（含框）。由艺术家提供。
Zhang Ruyi, *A Corner of the Greenhouse*, 2012, colored marker and pencil on drafting paper, aluminum composite panel, aluminum alloy, 17.5 × 25.5 × 5 cm (with frame). Courtesy the artist.

奇美拉空间 Chimera Space

戴章伦
Asea Zhanglun Dai

奇 空间无实相，她的每一副幻容都造化出新的异境。一处空间，是其外部裹挟的广延及内部存驻的诸物之间共存秩序的综合。张如怡擅长制造冷致幽微的空间变相，以不动声色的错置和重复，将一方处所点化为不同材料与结构相斥相系、辩证嵌合的“奇美拉空间”。其中人形灭没，又人迹遍布，有如人与非人杂处的交错群落。人手所栽所筑、与人朝夕共处之物活化为“物怪”，择处而栖，以形变示意（而非讲述）环境与物、物与物之间挤压出的共生因果。

物怪 “奇美拉”是希腊神话中由不同动物的部位嵌合成的怪兽。张如怡的雕塑创作通过对日常之物进行材料置换与去功能性嵌合，孕育出一种既带日常气息、又脱离日常情境的“物怪”。

仙人掌是张如怡雕塑造型中的一个核心意象，也被她视为自我肖像的隐喻。仙人掌具有极强的储水能力，能在其他花木无法存活的干旱环境生长。其植株厚实挺拔，肉茎柔软却外生尖刺，纵置身于家居盆栽，亦带一股不容侵犯的柔韧。她以混凝土这一现代人居建筑常用的建造材料来翻制仙人掌的不同形态：在《角落 - 2》(2018) 中，一根由拆迁废墟回收的钢筋从混凝土仙人掌多褶的肉间穿过，构成它的脊骨，高伫于布满瓷砖的柱顶，暗示楼起楼塌、生灭一念的都市环境中的个体生存境遇。而在《一株 - 2》(2018) 里，倒伏的混凝土仙人掌上遍生绽开的导线，有如一块待充电的肉，静候渺无音讯的电能。两团相同的混凝土仙人掌构成《浸泡景观》(2019) 的主体，沉于水族箱底，若两簇发髻并立，各有两条钢筋交穿，撑起同样的斜度。箱顶 LED 灯照出微弱的光，智能电热棒调控水温，清道夫鱼在两团仙人掌间穿游，构成一种有机生命与钢筋混凝土嵌合而成的“物怪”共栖的自足生态系统。

张如怡的雕塑物件还多选取人居环境中的日常用品，用混凝土这一惰性材料翻制，消除其实际功用，从而对现实的流通秩序进行微妙的局部阻断。这是张如怡独到的造物法，亦是她对加速现实的委婉干预。她作品里频繁出现的插座正是当代生活中被大量使用的流通端口。在展览“无序之美”(2016) 中，她将若干混凝土翻制的中国插座“安装”在英国卡斯雕塑基金会林区的树干上，又把一个混凝土地插藏在基金会办公区近旁供人休息的草坪中（《暂缓》，

2016)。被“暂缓”了现实之用的中国插座与人工栽植的英国草木不动声色地嵌合，使“物怪”出没于日常。在另一件作品《电船》(2015-2016)里，三只拆开的二手插头立插于混凝土翻制的多孔插板，插头内的螺丝暴露在外，昔日电流灼出的焦痕隐约可见。两条崭新的黄色导线将三只插头串联，同时弯出两道交叠的弧，与插板构成宛如船篷与船身的形态关系。这艘嵌合电船亦如一个小型“物怪”，暂停了它的日常载电，在无用的静止中航向未知的广阔自足之界。

张如怡时常通过网格布造出一种“奇美拉空间”，即一种内生嵌套空间。它既固定边界又辟出维度，既是对空间中不同物体间关系的重构，又是对于空间结构与情境的再部署。

进入网格，既是置身于具体而日常的人居环境，又恍若从其间抽身，走进玄机隐布的空间阵列。张如怡的“奇美拉空间”要求观者经验与观念的双重渗透。在展览“对面的楼与对面的楼”(2016)里，她首次尝试在空间中大面积使用网格，此展是“奇美拉空间”排布的代表案例。展览的原生空间是上海一套空置的老式套房，进门便遇到张如怡用方格瓷砖砌起的网格墙，这类瓷砖在上世纪80、90年代曾作为上海公共住宅楼外立面的常用材料。通过使外部立面内嵌，隔断视线向内的窥延，从开始便产生一种外与内的倒错，并通过网格设下一种肃然冷寂的秩序。

物在空间中，又在网格里。网格是束物之网，又是物生之场。在展览现场一面方形白墙的正中，张如怡围出一块方形瓷砖网格区域，左半边悬挂着一株细长的活体仙人掌，夹在两栋混凝土楼房微缩模型之间，被一道铁丝困缚(《盆栽》，2016)。在另一方向，张如怡在原先卧室入口正中垂直放入两扇翻制的混凝土门，门被上下两根铁丝捆绑，有如两块夹板，一株被连根拔起的活体仙人掌倒悬于其间的窄隙(《间距》，2016)。卧室中竖立着一根网格瓷砖柱，由八幢相同的混凝土楼房微缩模型拼合成的结构构成柱顶，与天花板相接，“楼房”的窗面皆向内翻扣(《柱子》，2016)。外与内的物被面对面地捆绑、嵌合，极端亲密又极端束缚。日常的尺寸关系被扰乱，物的人烟被网格缩影为抽象形态。张如怡的网格围布出一种整洁、压抑、诡异、惊悚的物的体感，亦指涉现实生活中人与环境、人与人之间的挤压共生。

在另一个房间，一方网格被嵌进混凝土水槽之内，以凝固取代流动(《倒影》，2015-2016)。然而，它同时又与其他房间中出现的或斜倚、或竖立、或支撑、或覆盖的网格彼此呼应，构成一种流动变化的整体节奏，又似将整体空间的网格倒映其间。水槽托起网格，像戴着旧日瓷砖的面纱，亦如物的遗骸，收纳着旧宅之外流逝的光阴，封储它残留的余韵。

张如怡的“奇美拉空间”是一种有差异的重复，重复打开差异，使物分化，使其不溺没于一般性的深渊。她常选取样式重迭、却内含差异之物，以线性序列将它们排列组合，呈现出单个物件的特异性，又使整体产生出一种有序与无序相交合的变化。

网格

正

在《流失》(2016)里，张如怡用许多同样的混凝土插座在墙上排开一道间距相同的序列，若干插头在插座形成的序列上无规则排布，被杂色的导线两两相连。仅用插座、插头、导线三个元素，张如怡就造出一个内嵌四组变量的复杂序列：插头的颜色、导线的颜色与形态、插头与插座间的关系、插头与插头间的关系各不相同，又彼此相系。整件作品产生出一种交合悖论：每个在序列中看似重复的插座因为其上插头的变化而成为独特，反之，每个在序列中看似相异的插头却因为插在重复的插座上而获得了某种共性。

《重叠》(2016)采用了相似的创作手法，它的组合元素更少，组合方式更简单：将若干来自废品回收站的老式铁门以相同间距、相同倾斜度焊接在两根相同的方管上。每扇门的大小、颜色、样式、花纹各不相同，唯一的共性在于它们都是被弃置的门。这些门如今已不再用于锁住什么，它们静静斜倚着，如一道斑斓的水波，亦如一个层叠的时光隧道。时间仿佛流过，“奇美拉空间”的出口正被打开。



张如怡，《暂缓》，2016，“无序之美”展览现场，英国古德伍德卡斯雕塑基金会。图片由卡斯雕塑基金会提供。
Zhang Ruyi, *Pause*, 2016, installation view from "A Beautiful Disorder," CASS Sculpture Foundation, Goodwood, UK. Courtesy CASS Sculpture Foundation.



张如怡，《重叠》，2016，铁门、钢，尺寸可变。图片由艺术家提供，摄影：王弦。
Zhang Ruyi, *Overlapping*, 2016, iron gates, steel, dimensions variable. Photograph by Wang Xian, courtesy the artist.

There is no real aspect to space; each of its illusions creates a new otherworldly realm. A space is the synthesis of its extended outer surfaces and the ordered co-existence of the objects residing in it. Zhang Ruyi is adept at creating cool, subtle spaces in disguise, calmly using dislocation and repetition to turn a single site into a “chimera space” where different materials and structures are mutually exclusive and dialectically interlocked. The human form has disappeared, yet traces of people are pervasive, like an ecotone in which the human and non-human co-exist. Manmade objects that day in, day out exist as part of our lives are animated as “monsters” searching for a dwelling place. They display their deformations to hint at (rather than directly relate) the symbiotic causality between environment and object, and between object and object, which have squashed them into this state.

Strangeness

The Chimera is a monster from Greek mythology, made up of parts from different animals. Zhang Ruyi’s sculptures embed various everyday objects, replace their materials, and remove their functionality in order to create an analogous monster. This monster is pregnant with the atmosphere of daily life, yet also breaks away from this context.

Monsters

The cactus is a central image in Zhang Ruyi’s sculptural forms, serving as a stand-in for the artist in what become metaphorical self-portraits. Cacti have the ability to store large amounts of water, and are able to grow in arid environments where other flowers and trees cannot survive. The plant is thick, tall, and straight, its soft flesh hidden underneath a spiny exterior. Even if placed in a pot at home, it retains a certain toughness and flexibility. Zhang uses concrete, the most common of construction materials in modern human habitations, to reproduce the cactus in many different forms: in *Corner-2* (2018), a steel bar recovered from the ruins of a demolished building passes through the pleated flesh of a concrete cactus, forming its backbone. Standing tall atop a column covered with ceramic tiles, it evokes the life and death struggles of individuals existing in urban environments, where buildings seem to rise and fall in blink of an eye. In *Individual Plant-2* (2018), a concrete cactus fallen on its side is covered with open wires, like a piece of meat quietly and hopelessly waiting to be charged with electrical energy. Two identical clusters of concrete cacti constitute the main body of *Submerged Landscape* (2019), sunk at the bottom of an aquarium. The two rounded masses sit side by side like two hair buns, each pierced by two intersecting steel bars that prop them up at the same angle. The LED lights on the top of the box emit a

faint glow and smart heating rods control the water temperature as suckermouth catfish swim between the two cacti, forming a self-sufficient ecosystem of “monsters,” in which organic life and steel-reinforced concrete coexist.

Zhang Ruyi also utilizes select daily necessities from our living environment in her sculptures. She once again uses the inert material of concrete to remake these objects, eliminating their functionality and thereby subtly and partially blocking their real world circulation. This is Zhang’s unique creative method, and also her tactful, understated way of intervening in an accelerated reality. The electrical sockets that appear frequently in her work are indeed interfaces for circulation, widely used in contemporary life. For the group exhibition “A Beautiful Disorder” (2016), she “installed” Chinese electrical outlets made out of concrete in tree trunks around the forested area of the CASS Sculpture Foundation in Sussex, the United Kingdom. She also hid another concrete outlet on the lawn set aside as a rest area next to the foundation’s offices (*Pause*, 2016). The Chinese sockets with their “paused” functionality are embedded within the artificially planted British greenery, drawing out “monsters” to haunt daily life. In another work, *Electric Boat* (2015-2016), three dismantled second-hand plugs are inserted into a concrete power strip. The screws within the plug heads are exposed, and scorch marks from past electric currents are faintly visible. Two brand-new yellow wires connect the three plugs in series while at the same time bending out in two overlapping arcs, forming a morphological relationship with the power strip which resembles that between a boat’s canopy and hull. This chimeric electric boat is also a miniature “monster”: its daily charge of electricity suspended, it is headed for the unknown, a vast, self-contained realm within a useless stillness.

The Grid

Zhang Ruyi often uses the form of a grid to create a kind of “chimera space”; that is to say a nested, endogenous space. The grid encloses boundaries and also creates dimensions: it is not only the reconstruction of the relationship between different objects in space, but also the redeployment of spatial structures and situations.

Entering these grids is like stepping inside a highly specific yet mundanely everyday living environment. But it is also as if you have withdrawn from this space and entered an arcane spatial array of hidden fabrics. Zhang Ruyi’s “chimera space” requires permeation into both the experience and conceptual thinking of viewers. The artist first attempted to utilize grids over a large



张如怡，《倒影》，2015-2016，混凝土、金属、木板、瓷砖，63.5 × 46.5 × 26 cm。图片由艺术家提供，摄影：王闻龙
Zhang Ruyi, *Reflection*, 2015-2016, concrete, metal, wood panel, ceramic tiles, 63.5 × 46.5 × 26 cm. Photograph by Wang Wenlong, courtesy the artist.

张如怡，《柱子》，2016，混凝土、铁、金属、木板、瓷砖，295 × 33 × 33 cm。图片由艺术家提供，摄影：王闻龙。
Zhang Ruyi, *Pillar*, 2015-2016, concrete, iron, metal, wood panel, ceramic tiles, 295 × 33 × 33 cm. Photograph by Wang Wenlong, courtesy the artist.



area in the exhibition "Building Opposite Building" (2016), which provides a representative example of her arrangements of "chimera space." The exhibition was housed in an old-fashioned apartment in Shanghai. Entering the space, visitors were met with a wall grid Zhang made out of checkered tiles. This type of tile was commonly used on the façades of residential buildings in Shanghai in the 1980s and 1990s. By using the would-be inlay of an external façade, Zhang disengaged from the inward extension of the line of sight. From the outset there was an inversion of the external and internal, and the grid established an awe-inspiring, silent order.

Objects are in space, and also in grids. The grid is a web in which things are bundled, but also a field where things are recreated. For "Building Opposite Building," Zhang Ruyi enclosed a grid of tiles in the middle of a square white wall. On the left she hung a thin and long living cactus, which was sandwiched between two miniature concrete models of buildings, bound together by a wire (*Potted Plants*, 2016). Elsewhere in the exhibition, Zhang placed two cast concrete doors vertically in the middle of the doorway to what was originally a bedroom. The doors were tied together by two iron wires, one at the top and one at the bottom, just like two pieces of plywood. An uprooted live cactus hung upside down in the gap in-between (*Spacing*, 2016). A tile-gridded column was erected in the bedroom, with a structure composed of eight identical miniature concrete buildings forming its top, which reached very close to the ceiling. The windows of these "buildings" were all facing inwards (*Pillar*, 2016). These internal and external objects are tied together and interlaced, making them extremely intimate and extremely bound together. The everyday relationship between sizes has been disturbed, and the grids have miniaturized the traces of human life on the objects into abstract forms. Zhang Ruyi's grids encompass the physical sensations of a tidy, depressing, bizarre, and horrifying object, and also point towards the real life pressures that symbiotically arise between people and their environments, as well as between people.

In another room, a grid is embedded in a concrete sink, solidifying what would normally flow (*Reflection*, 2016). However, it is at the same time connected with the grids in the other rooms that recline, stand vertically, support, or cover, forming a fluid and evolving overall rhythm, while also seeming to reflect the grid constituted by the space as a whole. The sink is what holds up the grid, the old tiles acting like a veil or the remains of past objects. It collects time that has passed outside of the old apartment building, sealing its lingering charm inside.

Zhang Ruyi's "chimera space" is a kind of repetition that retains difference, a repetition that opens up difference, and which differentiates between objects so that they do not drown in the abyss of generality. The sculptor often selects items to work with that overlap in style yet are somehow different, arranging them in a linear sequence and presenting the singularity of an object, making the entire production a kind of transformation in which order and disorder intersect.

In *Flow Away* (2016), Zhang Ruyi lays out an equally spaced sequence of identical cement electrical outlets on a wall. A handful of plugs are randomly distributed across the sockets, joined in pairs by colored electrical wires. Using just three elements—outlets, plugs, and wires—Zhang creates a complex array embedded with four variables: plug color, wire color and shape, the connection between plug and socket, and the connection between plugs. Each is distinct yet interconnected. The piece as a whole produces a coupling paradox: each of the seemingly repeated sockets is rendered unique due to its differing interaction with the plugs. The inverse is also true: each seemingly unique plug gains a measure of commonality by being inserted into one of the repeating outlets.

Overlapping (2016) employs a similar technique, but with fewer elements and in an even simpler configuration: old iron gates sourced from a recycling facility are welded to two identical steel beams, each of the gates equally spaced apart and tilted at the same angle. The size, color, style, and pattern of every gate is unique; their only common attribute is that they have all been discarded. No longer used to keep anything locked away, they just lean quietly, like shimmering ripples in water, or a cascading time tunnel. Time seems to flow past; the exit to "chimera space" has just been opened.