

Exhibition Date 展覽日期:

14/3-13/4/2008

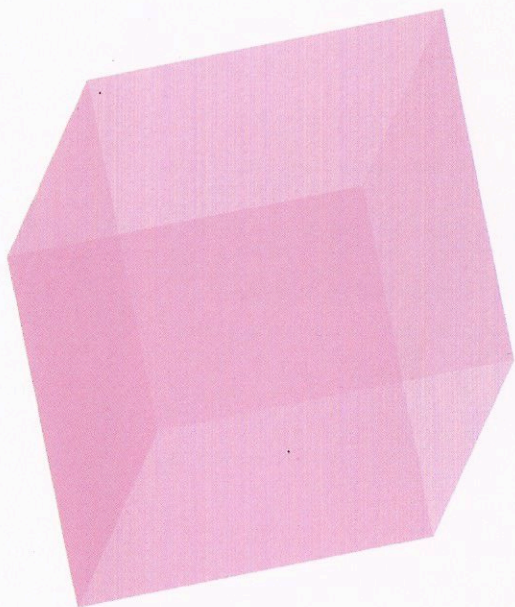
Opening 開幕:

14/3/2008 6-8pm

Artist Talks 藝術家交流:

15/3/2008 at 油麻地 kubrick-bc 2-3pm

22/3/2008 at 1a space 3-4pm



Altered Ambiance

轉 · 氛圍

Conversation with Magdalen Wong, Yuk King Tan, Nadim Abbas, YY Ma
Saturday February 16, 2008 (Anastasia Wong contributed by email)
By Samantha Culp

“Space” is one of those terms that is so commonly used (abused?) in art discourse, it’s hard to figure out what it even means anymore. Luckily for *Altered Ambiance*, curator Magdalen Wong and the four artists are taking a close, richly nuanced look at the subtle environmental changes that affect human perception of the space around them. It’s perhaps fitting that a few weeks before the exhibition, there are only rough outlines for what some of the works will be, as the show calls into question the relationships between work and venue, work and audience, and artists with one another. Many of the details will only be decided during installation, as artists are still negotiating their piece’s effects on the “ambiance” of the whole. All the same, the curator and artists (including Anastasia Wong, who was in the US but piped up via the magical space of email) gathered to discuss space, place and diffusion, with some interesting results.

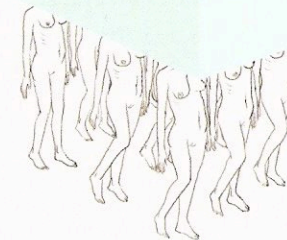
SC: Magdalen, as the curator, can you talk a little bit about the origins of this exhibition?

MW: When this project started off, I was planning an experimental sound event, and was thinking a lot about ambiance in relation to sound, and how sound can really change a space. Later on it developed into an exhibition with the theme of “altered ambiance”—instead of focusing on sound, I really wanted to talk about space. Not just about how space is utilized or understood, but really how people act within a space, and how their actions are dictated by the changes within the space.

SC: Can the artists each tell me a bit about what they’re planning for the show?

YYM: Well, I wanted to do some kind of performance, but it’s a video performance...Actually I don’t like doing performance, I kind of hate it (laughs). I was thinking about the fact that when I went to the July 1 protest, everyone was shouting things but everyone was kind of out shopping as well. I just found it quite interesting, I had never seen anything like that before. You know, it was everyone going out for a picnic or something...At first I wanted to make this performance quite political, but I realized I didn’t have to, so all the words I’m going to shout are about pop culture in HK, like “Andy Lau” or the stock market, just random things like that.

SC: How did you decide to shoot it on site, and how does the design affect the meaning of the piece?



YYM: We do have time before the exhibition to build the walls, the room, shoot it and everything...the room will be completely white, because even though the piece is about Hong Kong, I want to dissociate it. It could be elsewhere.

SC: Nadim, can you describe your piece and your work process?

NA: For this I’m going to make use of the former cattle trough in 1a space, and I’m going to fill it with liquid. I wanted to do some installation/sculpture on the theme of crying...But that’s just a loose way of starting, for me to find some kind of focus. Basically, a lot of this happens when I pick up the objects—it only happens to me when I start to play with my onions or my little squishy bottles or whatever, and eventually it starts to come together, and it’s all based on an image in my head.

SC: So why did you choose onions for this show?

NA: The thing about onions as a metaphor is that, well, they make you cry, so there’s the crying theme, but also this identity thing as well. There’s this play about a giant and he’s thinking about his identity, and he’s got this onion and he’s peeling the onion, trying to find his identity. But he peels off layers and layers of the onion, and keeps peeling until he gets to the center, and there’s nothing there, because an onion has no core. So that has to do with putting yourself into the work as well.

SC: Anastasia, your animations also have to do with “identity” in a way—can you talk a bit about that?

AW: The animations are of objectified figures behaving in controlled situations; being formed together and struggling to be apart. The lack of individuality and the idea of a group or a ‘coming together’ are the main properties of these simple animations. There is no narrative, no story with a beginning and ending, no climax. All is one continuous behavior of being part of everyone and a muted desire to be separate from the togetherness.

SC: Yuk, you’re planning to stage an installation on the topic of domestic helpers, and their unusual position in Hong Kong’s “space”. Can you talk about your view on the politics of installation art itself?

YKT: I’m really excited by the idea of “altered ambiance” or altered space, because as an installation artist, and I do call myself that, it seems to be about being incredibly sensitive to other artists and to the environment in the process of doing an intervention or transformation, or something between all those different aspects. I quite like the political idea about making an installation because you need to think beyond the idea of your own self or the role of the institution, and deal with the politics of how it all works out—artists working together or not working

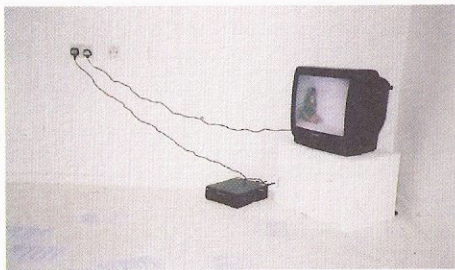
YKT: 那是一個大問題。如果有人說「我會以聲音或影片為材料」，他們的作品就肯定會首先被接受（眾笑）。我的意思是，作為主辦單位，他們會優先考慮這類作品的展示位置；而觀賞者亦然，他們會先看有聲或會動的展品，因那是最令人興奮的。

AW: 視像投射能改變空間的格調與感覺，為空間添加重要元素；亦能指引受眾循特定方式觀看空間，從而改變空間的觀察模式。投射視像有光、有動作、引人注目，令身處空間的人立即察覺到一些事情正在空間內發生。

MW: 這個展覽中，我希望用「氛圍」一詞帶出聲光以外的東西……氛圍其實並不指聲音，而是與空間相關。我們在空間內的感受，空間之中所存在的關係、氣氛等。若只是單純的空間，根本沒氛圍可言。為什麼呢？因為缺少了我們在空間裡面的感受。樹倒下了，卻沒人聽到……不就是這樣嗎？氛圍是我們對空間的反應，這種反應可因聲音、光線、氣味而改變。氛圍無時無刻在改變我們，以至對空間的反應。

YKT: 我亦不希望展覽所表達的「氛圍」只是一種隱約的東西，因為這也侷限了展覽本身的氛圍……

NA: 基本上這是人的因素。這是有人的空間，因此亦可如人一般的激烈，如人一般的隱約。



關於展覽：

本展覽旨在探索一個「地方」的影響。所謂「地方」，並非只由空間內的物件所界定，而是蘊涵獨有氛圍的一個空間，這種氛圍隨著空間內的個體與環境互動而改變。憑著空間範圍、聲音或氣味上的純粹變更，這種氛圍可以影響、改變人的感覺、思考，甚或舉動。本展覽邀請了四位藝術家，透過在他們創作歷程不同階段的作品，闡釋人類的空間互動關係如何受文化發展及歷史變遷所規範的日常責任所影響。

Nadim Abbas憑詩意想像，將平凡的物件帶進浪漫的空間敘述中。YY Ma的簡約錄像表演，以政治態勢反思香港的流行文化。Anastasia Wong以散落在空間內的動畫片段，展示簡單的「聚」「散」動作。Yuk King Tan的裝置將場地轉化成活的空間，逾越場地本身的形態與功能，並串連各個獨立的作品，令觀賞者穿越展覽時亦需留意他們所循的路徑。《轉·氛圍》融會動畫、錄像表演、雕塑及裝置等元素，誠邀觀賞者於不同空間內探討人類互動的本質。

Cattle Depot in March Arts & Community Online 三月在牛棚—藝術社區連線 3.14-4.13

Cattle Depot in March—Arts & Community Online is the very first arts event held at this historical site, aiming to generate greater public awareness of different arts and cultural activities happening in Hong Kong, encouraging members of the public to experience traditional and contemporary arts and invent new ideas freely. It is a partnership project of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Hong Kong Arts Development Council and the Cattle Depot Art Festival Association, featuring a wide range of activities including performances, workshops, talks and community activities.

To foster arts appreciation, this event welcomes public participation, offering an excellent platform for artists and members of the public to communicate with a view to creating an active dialogue with diverse perspectives on contemporary arts and culture. All the activities are free of charge. For enquiries and collection of admission tickets, please call 2529 0087.

《三月在牛棚—藝術社區連線》乃於牛棚此歷史地點舉行的首個涵蓋多種文化藝術的藝術節，目標為使公眾更認識在香港發生的各類文化藝術活動，聯繫傳統及當代藝術並鼓勵創作。

是次藝術節為期一個月，由康樂及文化事務署、香港藝術發展局及牛棚藝術節協會合作舉行，期間將舉辦一系列活動，包括藝術展覽、表演、工作坊、講座及供社區人士參與的普及活動，是一個聯繫藝術家及公眾的平台，歡迎各界人士參與以提升公眾的藝術素質，為當代文化藝術建立多元視點的活躍對話。所有活動均屬免費，查詢及索取免費入場券請電 2529 0087。請即與牛棚連線！

together, what a curator is...

Once I was invited with a group of other artists to do a show in a New Zealand museum, connected to this idea of "reinvigorating the dead space" of the museum, the idea of getting more visitors in. I did this work that I really loved, where I put strip lighting on the top of a vitrine, and blacked out the vitrine glass with black adhesive. The lights would go strobing on the top and then go strobing on the bottom, and every so often the whole vitrine would light up as well. But unfortunately the museum was annoyed that there were so many lights reflecting on other things, and that it was antagonistic to the other artists because it was so overwhelming. So they closed the show down early. So it's about being sensitive and being not sensitive; I'm kind of playing around those lines.

SC: How do the other artists feel about these issues of sensitivity, fairness, and distraction that go into exhibition planning? For instance, what do you think is the ideal spatial condition for your work to be presented?

AW: Lots of space. I like lots of space, but I don't have a specified idea of how my works should be displayed. Being able to show and share the works are more important. I prefer working with the unpredictable, because that's just more natural and realistic. Not everything can be planned, although organization and visual communication are important in ways to reach the public. The world kind of runs in a chaotic but organized way; society needs control, and sometimes people need to be told what to see or do.

YYM: My stuff always gets put in the corner, I don't know why... At a graduation show, mine was even put in a separate room with a door. A lot of my pieces have sound, so it's kind of hard to put together with other pieces.

SC: Well this gets back to the basic theme of "ambiance", which you normally think of as referencing sound or light. Even with film or video-making, ambient sound is a big issue, of how much there is that you can't "get rid of"—it's the bottom layer. Within an exhibition space, if there's something that has sound and the others don't, and you're looking at a photograph but hearing this sound, does the sound become a part of that work, or your experience of that work? It's an interesting issue.

YKT: That's a HUGE issue. The people who say, "I'm working with sound or moving image," they always get first-go (much laughter). I mean with the organizers, to figure out where to put them, but also for with the viewers, because they go first to something that moves or has sound because that's the most exciting thing.

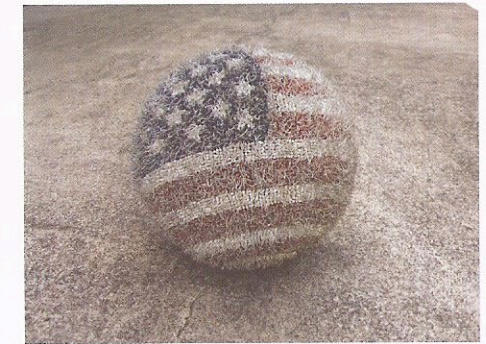
AW: Video projection is a significant element added to a space, as it changes the tone or the mood of the space. It also changes the way the space should be viewed; it gives instructions to the audience, and guides them into seeing the space. It tells whoever is in a space that there is something happening; there is light and movement and you should look at it.

MW: For this show, however, I really wanted to use the word ambiance not just about sound or light...ambiance is not really about sound; it's basically about space. How we feel in space, the relationship within the space, the mood. If it's just a space, there's actually no ambiance. Why? Because we're not there to feel anything. If the tree falls and there's nobody to listen to it...right? Ambiance is a reaction of us towards a space, which could be changed because there's a sound, there's a light, there's a

smell. Ambiance is always changing us to react in the space.

YKT: I also don't want the show to be only that "ambiance" is something really subtle, because that limits ambiance as well...

NA: Basically it's the human factor. It's space with the humans in it, so it can be as extreme or as subtle as humans are.



About the exhibition:

This is an exploration into the effect of a "place". A place is not just a space defined by objects within it, but it is an area with a specific ambiance altered by the interaction between people and the surrounding environment. It is an atmosphere that could change or influence one's feelings, thoughts, and actions by simple modification of spatial dimension, colour, noise, or smell. In this exhibition, four artists at different stages of their creative career bring together their responses to their understanding of spatial relationship between people, that are often influenced by the everyday responsibilities dictated by our developing cultures and passing histories.

Nadim Abbas's poetic imaginings bring together mundane objects in a romanticized spatial narrative, while YY Ma's minimal video performance reflects on Hong Kong's pop culture through political gestures. Scattered throughout the space are tiny short animations by Anastasia Wong, depicting simple motions of union and separation. Bringing all these individual works together is Yuk King Tan's installation that transcends the form and function of the exhibition area into an active space, where the audience is required to pay attention to their paths while traveling through the show.

Featuring animation, video performance, sculpture and installation *Altered Ambiance* invites the audience to enter into different spaces where discussions of human interactions are made.