

Cai Zebin: A Revisit at 2 bis rue Perrel

Date: 2020.05.12 - 07.11

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Capsule Shanghai, 1st Floor, Building 16, Anfu Lu 275 Nong, Xuhui District, Shanghai, China

Capsule Shanghai is delighted to present artist Cai Zebin's second solo exhibition, "A Revisit at 2 bis rue Perrel" at the gallery. Consisting of the artist's most recent paintings, small drawings, and installations, that extend from the artist's continuous fascination with the relationship between the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real in creativity.

The title of this exhibition, "A Revisit at 2 bis rue Perrel" draws from Victor Brauner's (1903-1966) eponymous painting whose work paid tribute to Henri Rousseau while living in his former residence. In Brauner's painting, not only do we find the artist's appropriation of Rousseau's famous work, *The Snake Charmer* (1907), but also a surrealist icon of many limbs that be known as uniquely his. Hence, Cai's adoption of this title demonstrates the artist's intention to reveal the genealogy of images and visual resources that inform his practice, as well as asserting his position to this approach for creativity. "How does a work of art come into being?" – a question driving Cai's painting practice as much as the viewer standing in front of his works of art.

To resonate with the intent Cai Zebin has laid out in the exhibition's title, *Revisit* (2019), one of the large-dimensional paintings in this exhibition, conjures many visual elements that complicate our possible interpretation of this work on canvas. The three central figures draped in black from head to toe, each holding a red ball in one hand while having their mouths wide open. To those viewers who are informed in visual culture, these three figures have been iconic over the centuries. They may immediately recall many classics in art history ranging from Antonio Canova's Neo-Classical sculpture, *The Three Graces*, to Sandro Botticelli's *Primavera*, to Raphael's *Three Graces* from the Renaissance, to even Andre Derain's *The Dancer* in the post-impressionist period. At the same time, what's once depicted as nudes throughout the history of art is now draped in black latex wetsuit, what conveyed peace and serenity is now replaced with a sense of awe. As the disco lights in red beaming at them from all directions, the stage on which they stand begins to resemble a scene in Andrzej Zulawski's film, *My Nights Are More Beautiful Than Your Days* (1989). Furthermore, the area off stage and the high-rises on the back seem like two different spatial dimensions. What do each and the sum of the visual cues suggest and how should one understand a painting as such become the questions Cai Zebin presents to the viewer.

In fact, this approach to painting is very much in line with the central piece *Invitation to a Beheading* presented in his previous exhibition at the gallery. Cai appropriated Theodor Gericault's masterpiece, *The Raft of the Medusa* (1818-1819), by adopting a literary device, the narrative of Vladimir Nabokov's novel *The Defense*. For this exhibition, however, the scope of the artist's visual resources expands to include a broader spectrum of visual culture, ranging from the classical paintings to pop cultural icons of the present. Furthering what Henri Rousseau stated in the early 20th Century on taking nature as his realm of inspiration. For Cai Zebin, "Imagination is the sum of all my visual experiences from reality" written on a small painting among the many revealed to his viewers. This statement is also considered a prism to the condition of artistic practice today. How does one translate and transfigure all of these visual resources available on to the canvas?

In one of the exhibition spaces, Cai Zebin lays out many of the small drawings he had done in the course of creating the large-dimensional pieces for this exhibition. They comprise of head-portraits of Henri Rousseau, the "premature" drawings of Three Graces, the flute player in black in Henri Rousseau's *The Snake Charmer* (1879), biblical icons of the serpent and the apple, snow white and the witch tempting her with the poisonous apple and etc. It is their metamorphosis that sheds light on the mind of the artist. Of course, each visual cue embedded with many layers of meanings, as well as their evolution from the context in which they first emerged, influences how we perceive them today. Hence, their coming together on canvas opens up the potential for their reception now. Moreover, the palette-shape mirror, the most subtle yet pivotal device in this exhibition, not only references to the one in Henri Rousseau holds in his self-portrait in front of the Eiffel Tower but also projects what Jacques Lacan defines the functions of the mirror for bringing together the real, the symbolic and the imaginary. In other words, our reflection in the mirror, as artist and viewer, continues to relay as we explore the evolution of creativity with the understanding of the context in which we inhabit.

- Fiona He

蔡泽滨：旧地重游佩雷尔街2号

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胶囊上海，中国上海徐汇区安福路275弄16号1层

胶囊上海荣幸推出艺术家蔡泽滨在画廊的第二次个展“旧地重游佩雷尔街2号”（A Revisit at 2 bis rue Perrel）。展览包含艺术家最新创作的架上作品、小幅画作和装置作品，延续了艺术家长期以来对创作中象征性、想象及真实之间关系的迷恋。

展览标题“旧地重游佩雷尔街2号”取自于维克多·布劳纳（Victor Brauner, 1903-1966）的同名画作，后者是布劳纳暂住在亨利·卢梭（Henri Rousseau）的故居时，向这位伟大画家的致敬。在布劳纳的画作中，我们不仅看到了艺术家对卢梭的名作《耍蛇女》（The Snake Charmer, 1907）中人物的挪用，还能看到那个一头多肢的超现实主义的形象，这也是布劳纳作品中所独有的意象。由此可见，蔡泽滨采用这个标题，旨在揭示构建其创作实践之图像和视觉材料的谱系，同时也申明了他对这种创作方式的立场。“一件艺术作品是如何产生的？”——这个问题同时驱动了蔡泽滨的绘画实践和在他作品前的观众的观看体验。

为了与展览标题所阐述的意图建立共鸣，此次展出的大尺幅油画作品之一《旧地重游》（Revisit, 2019）所使用的诸多视觉元素，令我们对这件布上作品的可能性解读变得复杂化。画面中的三个中心人物从头到脚被反光的黑色潜水衣包裹，每人手中都拿着一只红球，同时大张张嘴。对于那些对视觉文化敏感的观众来说，这三个人物在几个世纪以来一直都是标志性的图像符号：他们或许令人即刻联想到许多艺术史上的经典作品——从安东尼奥·卡诺瓦（Antonio Canova）的新古典主义雕塑作品《美惠三女神》（The Three Graces），到桑德罗·波提切利（Sandro Botticelli）的《春》（Primavera），再到文艺复兴时期拉斐尔的《美惠三女神》，甚至是后印象派时期安德烈·德兰（Andre Derain）的《舞者》（The Dancer）。与此同时，这些贯穿整个艺术史中的裸体，在此变成了黑色的乳胶潜水衣；而用以表达平和、宁静的视觉语汇被一种惊愕感所取代。红色的迪斯科灯从各个方向照耀着这些人物，她们所站的舞台开始像安德烈·祖拉斯基（Andrzej Zulawski）的电影《我的夜晚比你的白天更美》（My Nights Are More Beautiful Than Your Days, 1989）中的场景那样浮现出来。此外，舞台下的区域和背景中的高楼大厦似乎呈现了两个不同的空间维度。这些视觉线索分别和共同暗示了什么，观众又该如何去理解这样一幅画作，便成为了蔡泽滨向观众提出的问题。

事实上，这种绘画方式与蔡泽滨之前在画廊展出的重要作品《斩首之邀》（Invitation to a Beheading）颇为一致。蔡泽滨通过采用弗拉基米尔·纳博科夫（Vladimir Nabokov）的小说《防守》（The Defense）的叙事方式，从而对泰奥多尔·席里柯（Theodor Gericault）的杰作《美杜莎之筏》（The Raft of the Medusa, 1818-1819）展开挪用、解构以及转译。在本次展览中，艺术家对视觉材料的使用范围向更广泛的视觉文化延伸，涉及到从古典绘画到当下流行的文化元素，延续了亨利·卢梭在20世纪初曾经所描述的以自然为灵感的境界。对蔡泽滨而言，“想象力是我在现实中看到的图像的总和”，这句话被他写在一张小画上，和其他许多小型画作一起出现在观众眼前。这句话也可被视为描述了当下艺术实践状况的一个切面。它引发出了艺术家所面临的问题：应如何将这些可利用的视觉材料全部转化和转移到画布上？

在画廊的一个展厅中，蔡泽滨将呈现他在为此次展览创作大尺寸作品的过程中所绘制的多幅小画作。它们包括亨利·卢梭的头像，“尚不成熟”的《美惠三女神》的草图，亨利·卢梭《耍蛇女》中灰暗的长笛手，《圣经》里的蛇和苹果的意象，以及白雪公主和用毒苹果诱惑她的女巫等等。这些图像的蜕变，让我们得以一窥艺术家的天马行空的构图中流露出的蛛丝马迹。当然，每一个视觉线索都蕴含着多层次的意涵，以及从最初生成的语境到当下的演变，这些因素皆影响着我们今天对它们的解读。因此，它们在画布上的共同出现，为我们打开了在当下感知艺术作品的可能性。此外，调色板形状的镜子，也成为本次展览中最微妙也最关键的元素之一，它不仅参考了亨利·卢梭在埃菲尔铁塔前的自画像里的调色板，而且还折射了雅克·拉康（Jacques Lacan）所定义的镜子的功能，即将真实、象征与想象结合在一起。换言之，作为艺术家或是观众，镜观的自身的时候，结合对自身所处环境的理解，将继续探索创造力的演变及传承递下去。

— 贺潇