

Tian Jianxin: Vessel of Faces**Dates: 2023.07.22 – 09.09****Address: Capsule Shanghai, 1st Floor, Building 16, Anfu Lu 275 Nong, Xuhui District, Shanghai, China**

Capsule Shanghai is pleased to present "Vessel of Faces", artist Tian Jianxin's (b. 1994, Baoding, China) first solo exhibition at the gallery, featuring his recent reliefs and free-standing sculptures.

Underlying Tian's sculpture is a sense of anonymity often found in classical statuary. Guided by the natural structure of the raw material, his modestly sized, deftly shaped faces and human forms seem to engage in a never-ending dance of fading in and out of the vessels. The artist revives found and collected everyday objects and kitchen utensils, such as cutting boards, aluminium pots and copper ladles, by stripping them down to their intrinsic richness and conjuring full-bodied, energy-charged figures on the surface of what he calls "hard shells". The works on view, scattered in a seemingly random and unconsidered fashion, choreograph the viewer's eyes to meander between the material and the form, and inspire chuckles of delight from the perceptive observer.

Tian Jianxin graduated from the First Studio in the Sculpture Department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts. The traditional training of the academy requires artists to first learn to use their eyes, and to know how to see the form hidden in the potential of the material, a prerequisite skill in the practice of "making images from stone" in ancient China. Tian is predominantly influenced by classic masters and unknown craftsmen in the history of sculpture, ranging from Michelangelo and Rodin to the anonymous sculptors of religious statuary.

Working mainly with light-weight industrial products commonly used for containing water or food ingredients, Tian alters their bottoms and sides, and presents the works on the wall in a spontaneous and whimsical setup. It is the vessel's interior hollowness that makes possible the fullness of the exterior relief. From a frontal viewpoint, the figures shimmer in an aura of antiquity and modesty. More importantly, their lustre, texture and familiarity brought by their traces of time and use enrich the viewing experience with a tactile impulse.

Rarely narrative, his works center around the form of the body. In the continuity between the object and the relief, the works reflect Tian's adept technique and sagacious insights in defining forms. In addition to single-viewpoint reliefs, he also captures the volume and details of the human body with circular materials, most of which is soft metal, whose malleability allows it to transform and activate the surrounding space. The raised and recessed spots on the surface of the copper hot pot, aluminium kettles and tin flagons reveal the analogy between the cylindrical objects and the human body.

The title of the exhibition, "Vessel of Faces", speaks of the artist's interest and methodology. By working with the changing shapes of the vessel, he unveils alternative faces and expressions underlying the material. His work is both a reactivation of the readymade and a wrestle with the enclosed nature of the "hard shells". For Tian Jianxin, shaping is not only a means to make sculptures; it also summons the joy of resolving conflicts. Through re-imagining, hammering and chiseling, he grants everyday objects a subtle spirituality that only emerges under the artist's hands.

Text by Xia Tian

田建新：面容之器

展期：2023.07.22 – 09.09

地址：胶囊上海，上海徐汇区安福路 275 弄 16 号 1 层

胶囊上海荣幸呈现艺术家田建新的首次个展“面容之器”，展出其最新创作的浮雕与圆雕作品，展期为 2023 年 7 月 22 日至 9 月 9 日。

田建新的作品具有古典造像的匿名气质。这些尺幅克制的肖像表情与人体造型顺应于各色器皿的基底，凭借艺术家的塑形之力，这些形式似乎在永无止境地浮现与隐退。这些作品的主体本是案板、铝锅、铜勺之类的物件，通常都是厨房空间中的日常用具。艺术家将其视作偶得的材料，并为之赋予生机。它们是艺术家口中的“硬壳”，而雕塑的工作便是在其上剥离出某种内里丰满的形象。在展览空间中，作品邀请观众在质料与形式之间回还体察，在此期间，这些看似闲挂的塑像具备一种令人莞尔的能力。

田建新毕业于中央美术学院雕塑系第一工作室。学院派的传统训练要求艺术家首先学会使用自己的双眼，懂得如何在物质自身的潜力中看见隐藏的形式。在中国古代的传统中，这是“循石造像”的先决条件。田建新心所神往的对象是雕塑史中的经典大师与无名工匠：从米开朗基罗、罗丹到各类宗教传统中的匿名造像。

田建新所选择的材料是现代工业制品中较为轻盈的那类容器，它们通常用于盛放食材与饮水。他会在这些器皿的底面或侧边工作，最终将作品以充满奇趣的角度挂于墙上。在他的作品中，正是器皿内部的空无造就了浮雕本身的充实感。在单一视角的正面造型中，观众会在形象的眉宇之间感受到一种古拙的气息。更为重要的是，浮雕自身的光泽、质感以及因生活经验而带来的亲昵感会使“观看”本身转化为一种“可触”的冲动。

目前为止，田建新的浮雕形象鲜有叙事性。他的雕塑牢牢关乎于形体。在浮雕与基底的连续性中，作品旨在显露艺术家精巧的造型技艺与会心的睿智观念。除了单一视角的浮雕，田建新也尝试在微薄的环形材料中捕捉人体局部的体积感。这些材料大多都是软金属，因此，它的延展性满足了“自我进化”的条件。在火锅、铝壶和锡壶上，凹陷与凸起的环形块面能够同时展现这些圆锥型容器与人类身体的类比关系。

展览标题“面容之器”来源于田建新创作的形式与旨趣：艺术家选择与“容器”的形状变化一同工作，并以此展示这些材质潜在的容身所在。这些作品既是对现成品逻辑的一种修缮，也是与“硬壳”的封闭性所进行周旋的游戏。对于田建新来说，塑造不单单是为了雕塑，也是一种化解矛盾的喜悦。通过想象、敲击与捶打，艺术家为这些日用制品赋予了在艺术之中才得以窥见的微妙灵性。

撰文：夏天