

李博文：高源谈“不已” | ARTFORUM展评

Li Bowen: GAO YUAN ON "ETERNAL RETURN" | ARTFORUM Review

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胶囊上海 | Capsule Shanghai



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高源，“不已”展览现场，2017.

高源在胶囊上海的个展“不已”展出了一个整体——动画作品《月晷》，以及组成这个整体的众多绘画作品。展览中的众多绘画作品有着双重性质：这些绘画是动画作品长达六年的繁复预备性工作的冰山一角，也是完全独立的、仅以自身为语境展开的作品，展示了与情感、经验相关的人物、物件和场景。展览将持续到4月30日。

对《月晷》的最初构思就是把一些偶然的灵感进行拆解和重组，衍生出许多虽能看出相关但并无因果联系的情景。但在剪辑时我发现这个设定无法完美成立，因为每个镜头都有自己的方向和情调，如果想让两两之间的关系刚好达到舒服的状态，就必须找到让所有碎片都刚好吸附到一起的队形，这样呈现的结果将是

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一个融贯的磁场，事物和人物将(仿佛)具有意义，行动和情绪的变化会形成似有若无的线索，最初设想的无始无终可拆可变的网状结构必然会消失。跑题的自由和向结局坠毁的趋势纠缠在一起，组合的选择即使没有唯一的最佳，也是有一定限定性的。所以虽然是虚构的作品，《月晷》的结构却是被发现而不是设计出来的。

动画本是一种高度综合的艺术手段，讽刺的是实现这个综合的途径通常是地位不平等的合作。工业所具有的一切原罪，动画工业都有。《月晷》的剧本、分镜、场景原画、动画和后期合成剪辑都由我独立完成，只有声音部分主要由潘丽完成。我选择几乎独自工作，一是为了控制作品整体风格，二是为节约成本，三是有些道德上的计较，觉得如果不自己去完整体验和承受动画的重复性体力劳动对人的耗损，仅仅做一个传统的导演/指挥者，就没有充分理解和反思动画这门艺术/工业的基础。今后打算做长片，希望到时能在压力下探索出相对良性的合作方式，估计很难，但还是想试试看。

一个人包揽多种职能虽然负担很重，但体验分裂也是件有趣的事情：绘制背景时我是一个普通意义上的风景画家，短则几天，长则一两个月，让一幅背景慢慢现型，直到脱离照片素材成为能够容纳一些什么的空间。我想让背景看起来比现实更实、更鲜明，希望在已经充分观察过现实的前提下再开始虚构，因为我觉得这样才能使其中上演的不可能显得可能。不过在具体的绘制过程中，笔触和观察偏差所造成的或许可以称为“表现性”的东西调节了这个过于简单的目标。绘制背景的当时我也不确定每幅背景具体要上演什么，有的最后被淘汰了，有的作为空镜头什么也没有发生。同时还画了很多随机的作品，我也依情况把其中一些纳入到背景中来，后来还直接使用了照片和录像。我认为当作品复杂到一定程度，就可以容纳一些溢出的枝节。

背景工作做了三年之后我才开始着手原动画，这是最折磨人的环节。比如说海浪的镜头，一共画了41张，每张至少要画4小时，为了不让汗水沾到纸上还必须戴手套，每次动笔之前都得下很大决心。海浪离岸又打回来的循环播放一次的时间不过几秒钟，整个镜头也不到一分钟。依此类推，十几分钟的动画花了6年才勉强完成。工作时间和作品播放时间的悬殊大到可笑的地步，让我对时间这个概念产生了强烈的虚无感。同时也察觉到“无限”一词的欺骗性：任何所谓一闪即逝的细节都可以一览无遗，每一瞬间、每一事物都可以不是秘密，毕竟哪怕是十分之一秒的图像认真画上一遍也就了如指掌了，无限并不是真的有那么无限。会看到如此无趣的真相，大概是对想要作出囊括一切的作品野心的某种惩罚吧。但这也是有价值的，对我有限的生命来说，已经大致知道这个世界在作为个体人类的观看对象时的“底细”了，大概今后无论走到哪里都不会太焦虑自己是否错过了什么。

《月晷》这个标题的由来几乎在每次放映时都会被观众问起。月晷是古代的计时装置，原理和日晷差不多，但远不如日晷方便，除了满月的那天以外都需要按日期做某种换算才能得到正确的时刻。我第一次用“月晷”一词给作品命名时还以为自己造了一个词。那幅画的内容是观众面对海浪(也是海浪镜头的原型)，上面叠了一只握着百合花的拳击手套。在为动画取名时，我回溯以往的所有作品标题，顺手搜索了一下“月晷”，才知道月晷是真实存在的仪器。它和月亮、和时间、和夜晚的关系，它的“不精确”，它那容易被忽视的幻影般的存在感，让我无法不再使用它一次。

在胶囊上海的个展“不已”，除了展出一部分《月晷》中的架上场景原画和纸上原动画之外，我们还根据胶囊的空间特点和动画语言的特性做了一些新的安排。比如我在胶囊极具特色的大窗户上画的临时涂鸦，其

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实是在玻璃上重演了在动画拷贝台上的工作——“拷贝”窗外庭院的景象，每一个窗格都是一个不同的取景角度；往画布上打飞鸟投影：还原《月晷》中的一个镜头，使观者产生画动起来了的错觉；在卫生间中同时播放《月晷》的动画和声音素材的混剪，画的部分是两个投影仪叠在一起构成重曝般的效果，音的部分则使用了让所有声音听起来都像某种乐器发出的效果，两个投影和一个音响持续交错循环，达成的结果是观众并不会重复地看和听到同样的音画组合，如此尝试呈现《月晷》的另一种可能形态；在播放《月晷》的房间中铺满松针——用松针做地毯曾经是我家乡的一种风俗——借其特有的气味和质感与动画中的户外氛围呼应，也比较适合胶囊空间与自然环境较为亲和的调性；同时，胶囊西端的卫生间和东端的动画播放间传出的声音一起激活整个展场，使声音与画作在现实中也形成类似动画蒙太奇般的关系。由于声音在动画这门艺术中扮演着极重要又较容易被忽视的角色，在临近展览结束时我们还将邀请潘丽和thruoutin一起用《月晷》中的自行车这一重要物件作为发声工具做一场即兴演出，将声音的“幕后”价值摆到台前。

— 文/ 采访/ 李博文

— 英文翻译/ Eva Zhao 和 Meng'er Chu

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Exhibition View of Gas Yuan: Eternal Return, 2017

Gao Yuan's solo exhibition *Eternal Return* at Capsule Shanghai presents an entity the animated work *Lunar Dial* juxtaposed with the numerous paintings that constitute this body of work. Many of the paintings in this exhibition have double functions: they are merely the tip of the iceberg covering the lengthy and repetitive process of preparation of the animation. Yet they are also independent works that evolve within their own contexts by showing figures, objects, and scenarios that are associated with one's emotions and lived experiences.

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Gao Yuan: "My original conception of *Lunar Dial*, or in other words the presupposition of conditions, was to dismantle and re-array coincidental inspirations, generating related yet non-causal scenes which resemble a series of individual one-act plays. Yet during editing, even as early as the conceptual stage, I realized that my original plan could not be executed perfectly. Since every frame has its own direction and atmosphere, any two frames put together would either repel or draw to each other. For all pairs to dovetail, each piece has to adhere together; a coherent field would take shape, and things, events and characters in the animation would (appear to) acquire meanings. Changes in action and emotion would also form an indistinct thread, causing the indefinite and disintegrable web-like structure that I initially envisaged, to disappear. The freedom of digression and the tendency to crash to the end intertwine; even though there is no one single optimal option of alignment, my choices were still limited. This is the reason why *Lunar Dial* is a fictional piece; its structure was not designed but discovered.

Ironically, animation as an art form is in itself a great synthesis, as it usually comes into being through unequal collaboration. When collaborating, not everyone is granted enough freedom for his or her creativity, and as a matter of fact, no one is truly free. All original sins of industry as a whole can be found in the animation business as well. It is labor and resource intensive. It employs a great deal of flow line production that simply buries the painstaking effort of the collective under the name of the production company or the director. Due to the division of labor, one single individual could never have a complete grasp of the entire artwork. In the case of *Lunar Dial*, I cooperated with Pan Li only for the audio part and did the rest by myself. I chose to work alone for the undivided power to make decisions regarding my work and for cost reduction. I also chose to work alone for ethical deliberations: if I was just a director in the traditional sense, and did not immerse myself into the exhausting repetitive manual labor of animation production, I would not have gained a comprehensive understanding of animation and would not have been able to reflect upon the fundamentals of animation as an art form or as an industry. I made a goal of learning insights in renovating the production process of animation. In my future plan to make a full-length feature film, I hope to find a relatively positive way of collaborating under pressure. Of course, I know I am likely to fail, which motivates me even more to try.

Heavy as the workload was, shouldering all these responsibilities on my own propelled me to fully experience what it's like to split myself into different roles. When painting the backgrounds, I was a common landscape painter. Actually, I can barely call myself a painter because when I started six years ago, my skills were still quite rudimentary, so ultimately I consider myself more of a self-taught apprentice. I sometimes spent days, half a month, or even an entire month on one painting, and gradually broke away from photographic source material, so that backgrounds could emerge as a space to be filled. Paying homage to the real world, I wished for the background to appear more substantial and graphic than reality. I felt that only through full observation of reality could I set the stage for the unlikely, making it appear likely. This simplistic goal, however, was regulated in the painting process by what may be called 'expressive', caused by my brushstrokes and deviated observations. When I was painting the backgrounds, I was not exactly sure what I would stage in each frame. In the

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end, some paintings never made it to the film; some were only used as scenery shots without much else. I also painted a lot at will. Some of these paintings were integrated into *Lunar Dial*, and photos and videos were used as well. When a piece of artwork has a certain degree of complexity, it can contain a lot of branching themes.

Only after three years of background work did I start on the main event: the animation itself. I went through a lot of pain in this phase. For the shot with the waves, I drew forty-one pictures, each of which took at least four hours. It was summer and I had to wear gloves to prevent sweat from smearing the paper. Every time I took up the pen, I had to push myself, thinking: it's for the sea, it's worth all the effort. Yet one loop for the sea waves to move away from the shore and then roll back lasts for just a few seconds, and the entire shot is less than a minute. This is the reason why an artwork of less than fifteen minutes' duration took me six years to finish. As is usually the case with any animation, the gap between the length of the film and the time I spent working on it was so massive that it almost seems ridiculous; as a result, I have acquired a strong nihilistic sense for time. Meanwhile, I feel I have touched upon the core of 'infinity' - every transient detail has become clear; there are no longer secrets for every moment and every thing; a picture that only lasts a tenth of a second can be completely grasped after drawing it once. One can gain anything when one has nothing. This terrible feeling is perhaps a punishment for my wild ambition to create an all-encompassing artwork. Yet I still find it worthwhile as now I know about the essence of the world as seen by an individual human being, even though my own life is limited. I guess from now on, wherever I am, I will never fuss over missing or overlooking anything.

A lunar dial is an ancient device for measuring time. It works on similar principles as a sundial, but using it is far more cumbersome, since except for days with a full moon, it does not directly tell the correct time, but instead requires a number of calculations based on the specific date. I had not known that such a thing existed when I first chose the title, thinking I had created a new term. I had a picture with the same title and it depicts an audience facing waves (a prototype for the wave shot) with a boxing glove holding a lily flower. To find a title for the animated film, I reviewed all the titles of my work in the past and looked up the word 'lunar dial' on the Internet. Only then did I find out about the existence of this device and that an example of it, along with a sun dial and a star dial, is installed in the Heaven Temple of the Forbidden City. I felt compelled to use it as the title to my film for its relations to the moon, time and night, for its 'imprecision' and its shadowy, easily neglected existence.

Besides the paintings and paperworks from *Lunar Dial* that are featured in the solo exhibition *Eternal Return* at Capsule Shanghai, we also adopted some new arrangements on the exhibition design according to the gallery space and the language of animation. For instance, the temporary graffiti that I painted on the large windows of Capsule Shanghai is actually a reproduction of the work I've done on the copy board in the making of the animation - "copying" the view of the outdoor courtyard. Every piece of the window glasses takes a different angle in representing the exterior view; the flying bird projected onto the canvas imitates a scene from *Lunar Dial*, which gives the audience an illusion of an animated

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painting; the bathroom space presents a remix of the *Lunar Dial* animation and its accompanying sound. The moving images projected onto the wall from two projectors create a double-exposure effect, and as for the music component, the soundtrack brings together the sounds that resemble or correspond to certain instruments. The fusion between the looping sound and moving images creates an unpredictable combination of the sound images that reduces the possibility of any repetition. Such experimentation, therefore, offers an alternative take on *Lunar Dial*; the floor of the room where *Lunar Dial* is shown is covered with pine needles - a tradition of my hometown. The unique smell and texture of the pine needles enable the darkened room to communicate with its exterior surroundings, and enhances the harmony between the artwork and nature-friendly spaces like Capsule Shanghai. At the same time, the sounds exuded from the bathroom (to the west) and the video room (to the east) resonate with each other and in doing so, activate the entire space, forming a montage-like relationship between sounds and images in a tangible reality. Because of the crucial yet unnoticeable nature of the sound in animated art, we will invite Anita Pan and thruotin to the gallery towards the end of the exhibition to hold a spontaneous live performance of the soundtrack of *Lunar Dial* using the reoccurring motifs in the animation in order to underscore the importance of music in the making of this animation."

Interviewed by Li Bowen

Translated from the Chinese by Eva Zhao and Meng'er Chu