

## Alice Wang, Capsule, Shanghai

Todd Meyers



Exhibition view, Alice Wang, Capsule Shanghai, 2017.  
Photo: courtesy of the artist and Capsule Shanghai

The first piece that greets viewers is a large raised white flowerpot filled with *mimosa pudica*, a plant sensitive to movement that recoils and folds its leaves protectively inward when touched. The work does not announce itself immediately and could be as easily an extension of the garden outside as it is part of the exhibition. But it is the plant's awareness of us rather than our awareness of it that is so uncanny—its slight movements as we unwittingly brush against it in passing, oblivious to its reaction. The exhibition includes a video installation (with Ben Tong) entitled Oracle (2017), a moody array of landscapes and organisms, but otherwise all the works are untitled, which gives them an additional sense of interiority; they are not here for us but for themselves, acting on their own.



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Photo: courtesy of the artist and Capsule Shanghai

The first thing one notices about Alice Wang's exhibition at CAPSULE is the way her work subtly incorporates the space. The gallery—a combination exhibition space and art laboratory—occupies a lush 1930s garden house brilliantly redesigned by the architect Nunzia Carbone. Quietly hidden at the end of a winding alley, the gallery is filled with light and connects the outdoor green space to the interior through large led windows. Just as the gallery has a porous relationship with the environs that surround it, Wang's work seems to mold to the features of the space.



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There are works that are less delicate but no less potent as the *mimosa pudica* planter. A sliver of moss seemingly forced up through the floor like a tiny mountain edges towards the window, an escape measured on a tectonic clock. It is a work that plays off the stark white interior of the gallery and the dense sylvan world outside. In another piece, a large copper plate leaning against a wall transforms more rapidly, its colours altered by long streaks of condensation that form images like gas clouds or otherworldly topographies, patterns of bright, satisfying greens held on a deep earthen surface of the copper. The plate reacts to the mixture of late summer humidity, the rush of cool,

conditioned air, and the presence of viewers in the space. The work shares visual echoes with Andy Warhol's *Oxidation Paintings* (1977–78), his playful commentary on abstract expressionism spoken in splatters of urine, but Wang's work is not tongue-in-cheek. The copper is an organism adapting and reinventing itself in this ever-changing milieu. It is safe to say that change in these works is key. In another visually striking piece, a cluster of fossilized clamshells gilded in silver is arranged in an amoeba-like pattern on the floor. It is impossible not to notice the lustre of the silver fading, untouched but unprotected and thus subject to tarnish and decay. Over time, the fossils will eventually

There are two pieces that assert themselves more than others: the first, a triangular wedge of beeswax and water vapour, and the second, a towering slab of beeswax with a hole lined in silver. The triangular wedge, connected to the wall by an electrical cord, has dozens of perforations laid out in a symmetrical pattern from which a fog of vapour emerges. For a moment, the vapour is suspended, and then falls over the sides and disappears. The wedge is small but is just as imposing as the tall slab of beeswax, also tethered to the wall by an electrical cord, which emanates a mechanical whirling sound but seems to do nothing in particular, either cooling or melting the piece, or perhaps concealing some secret labour. The beeswax constructions feel meditative but refuse the spiritualism of aesthetically similar works by artists like Wolfgang Laib, which are not about the substances themselves but the way substances are taken up as a symbol by both artist and viewer. Wang instead exposes the ontology of substance brought forth through the *techne* of form. The wedge exhales vapours and the slab hums with inner life. Alice Wang produces works that are animated by their own chemistries and that enfold their surroundings. These are works that transform and mutate; metamorphic works that respond to the worlds they encounter to become something new.

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展览现场，王凝慧，胶囊上海，2017，  
照片：由艺术家和胶囊上海提供

在胶囊上海王凝慧的个展中，最先引起人们注意的是作品与空间之间的微妙结合方式。这家画廊融展览空间与艺术实验室为一体，坐落于一幢三十年代的花园雅舍，经由意大利建筑师依青（Nunzia Carbone）出色改造。静默地藏一条弯曲的小巷尽头，整个空间被光线充满，大型的格窗连接着户外的绿地与内部空间。正如画廊与周遭有着相互渗透的关系，王凝慧的作品似乎契合了这个空间的特点。映入观众眼帘的第一件作品是一个种满含羞草的白色高托花盆。含羞草对外界十分敏感，触碰它时，叶子会因自我保护而内卷合拢。这件作品不算高调抢眼，作为展览的一部分，也可被视为户外花园的延伸。但吊诡的是，植物意识到了我们，并非我们去意识植物——我们经过时，不经意碰触到它，也不会注意到它细微的运动。展览还包括一个名为《Oracle》（2017）的视频装置（与Ben Tong共同创作），它由随性排列的景观和生物体组成。其它作品皆无命名，恰好为作品添加了一种内在性质。作品并非为我们，而是因自身而存在，具有自主性。



展览现场，王凝慧，胶囊上海，2017，  
照片：由艺术家和胶囊上海提供

展出的其它作品不如《含羞草》那样微妙，但也同样有力。一抹青苔好似受迫，由地表隆起，像一座边朝窗户的微缩山脊，一次地质构造的精心突破。这件作品与画廊内鲜明的白色形成强烈对比，泄露了外部森林世界的茂密生机。另一件作品是一块斜倚墙壁的大铜板，它变化得更快，颜色由腐蚀引起改变，形成了类似气体云或异域地貌的图案，深土色的表层分布着丰富的铜绿色。这正是铜板对夏末潮湿的空气、空调冷气，以及空间的观众等综合因素做出的反应。该作品与安迪·沃霍尔的《氧化绘画》（1977-1978）在视觉上有着异曲同工之妙。安迪·沃霍尔曾开玩笑地评论抽象表现主义满口胡言乱语，但王凝慧的作品没有半点戏谑的意味，她的铜板是一个在变化的环境中不断适应和重塑自身的有机体。可以肯定地说，变化是这些作品的关键所在。在另一件足具视觉冲击力的作品中，一堆镀银的蛤蜊化石性似变形虫，被堆放于地面。很容易见证银色光泽的消退，化石虽原封不动，但没有采取保护措施，银色自然会失去光泽，变得衰朽，随时间流逝，终将变成黑色。每件作品都以激烈的方式呈现，但都是一个蛹，等待着揭示出新的形式。



展览现场，王凝慧，胶囊上海，2017，  
照片：由艺术家和胶囊上海提供

其中的两件作品最具表现力：第一件由一块三角楔形的蜜蜡和水蒸气组成；第二件是一块厚实的柱状蜜蜡，中有圆孔，以银边镶嵌。楔形蜜蜡由一根电线与墙面联结，其上密布的小孔以对称形态排列，水蒸气从中浮现。水蒸气在一瞬间悬浮于空中，接着向两边散逸，随后消失。楔形蜜蜡体积虽小，但与柱状蜜蜡一样让人印象深刻，也是由一根电线系在墙上，发出机械的轰鸣声，似乎没有特定目的，既没有使蜜蜡冷却或融化，也没有隐秘的动作。蜜蜡的构造令人沉思冥想，它拒绝其它审美类似的作品如艺术家沃尔夫冈·莱普的唯心论，不关乎物质本身，而在于艺术家和观众将物质符号化的方式。相反，王凝慧通过形式技法呈现出物质的本体。楔形蜜蜡呼出水蒸气，生命在柱状蜜蜡内部发出嗡鸣。王凝慧创作出了被自身化学反应激活的作品，这些作品拥抱了周围的环境，不断地转化、变异，动态地回应着它们遇见的世界，呈现出全新的样貌。