

Interview in WeChat

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Xu Hanyin

Born in Taizhou, Zhejiang in August 1998, she graduated from the Oil Painting Department of Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts, Sichuan Conservatory of Music. And now she is a 2020 graduate student majoring in fine arts at Wenzhou University.

"In the process of moving forward, be alert to extreme rationality, never fall into superficial feelings, and always remain faithful to self". Xu Hanyin's artistic creation is like her motto, are often between extreme thinking and emotional feelings. Her creation involves painting, photography and performance art. This series of artistic practice is based on the context of academic art. But like most young artists under the academy system, her artistic trajectory rejects conventions and is full of unknowns, and always persist in the search for self. Xu Hanyin's works are usually grotesque and novel, but they can strongly convey people's primitive emotions. This interview focuses on Xu Hanyin's persistence and transformation of artistic practice in the context of the new academy.

Recent Art Practices:

2020, participated in Beijing Yue Art "Tian Show"-an exhibition dedicated to the ocean "Escape"; 2020, participated in the "Singing and Appropriation-Nomination Award for Future Artists" and won the Best Work Award; 2020, participated in the "Doing Things" and "Anonymous Story Collection" projects of Luhu a4 Art Laboratory; "Flashpoint" exhibition; 2020, participated in the Yuexiamen - Mengzhongyuan Dreamland Exhibition in Huacai Art Museum; 2020, participated in the "99 Project" of performance artist Cai Qing; 2020, participated in Crazy Exchange of the 2nd International New Contemporary Art Network Exhibition; 2021, participated in the online exhibition of the dream of beauty and art; 2021, performed performance art in lighthouse, "Untitled".

Q: I know you used to study in Chengdu, and now you start a new graduate life in Wenzhou. What do different college environments mean to you? In other words, what's your opinion about the academic and art system in China? And how does it influence your creation? You know, we used to be in the same context, from "Art Examination" to "Academic Art".

Xu: I think about the influence of locations on the artist's works for a long time. I was born in a very conservative town in Taizhou. Before I was 21, I never go through a period of rebelling, and I didn't know what I really wanted to do. Until I came to the Sichuan Conservatory of Music and was enlightened by several important teachers, I started to have a preliminary understanding of art, and for the first time I came into contact with the concepts of “bad painting”, and the concept of "Nonidentity" in painting. The four years in Chengdu are a process of continuous experiment, trial, and accumulation of knowledge and experience. At the same time, the works created in each context are also a process of confrontation and uncompromising with themselves. The artistic atmosphere in Chengdu is relatively free, while tradition and conservatism are my first impression on Wenzhou. When I first came to Wenzhou from Chengdu, I was often trapped in a vicious circle of self-doubt because of the gap of regional artistic concepts; Fortunately, I had my friends and teachers who were willing to talk with me about the artistic concept here.

Now I think Wenzhou is like a mirror, constantly reminding myself not to be rigid. I started to be able to pursue a more internal state and to look for individual events in this region in a more active manner.

I think the transformation from "Art Examination" to "Academic Art" is essentially the submission to the system. “Art Examination” is more about focusing on a mode, while "The Academic" may require us to find more possibilities. But these two transformations, like the process from 0 to 1 to 0, I think it is a pathological process. “Academic Art” may provide us with some better and bigger platforms to expand our vision, but “Art Examination” is a springboard under the power system. Under the social system, we have no choice but to do something.

Q: Since you moved from a relatively open environment to here, will those traditions restrict your development? What do you think of these changes?

Xu: When creating works, I may need to pay attention to the identity transformation from the student to an artist. The more conservative the place is, the more I want to do extraordinary things. I don't want to cause any trouble to anyone, but I also don't want to reduce the strength of the works because of the environment, as well as my original intention and appeal. However, now I can feel the more familiar atmosphere around me, which is a kind of inertia of life. And it's also a kind of feeling, a kind of love. You know, you can't have your cake and eat it too. Therefore, the location cannot limit my development, only I can limit myself.

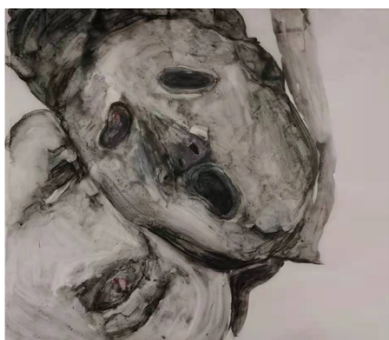


Lighthouse performance art, 2021

Q: Yes, in fact, I think your creation seems much bold after you come to a relatively conservative environment. The performance art you did in Lighthouse Space is also very attractive to me. Can you tell me how you conceived this work? Is this different from your previous works?

Xu: When I first came to Wenzhou, I was very anxious and began to think about what life is. If I can only control my own life (even I can't control myself), then will

everything we do be nothing in the future? What is the relationship between nihilism and consumption of life? I think of transforming this thing into an object in my life, cigarette. Smoking is also a cyclical process. It can be transformed from something invisible to something visible, and it can also be interpreted as a kind of boredom. When I smoke a row of cigarettes, it's also a challenge to my body. I also want to form a sense of impact. I have to devote myself to the process of behavior. Even when the behavior is over, I feel that my lungs and eyes can hardly bear it, but I don't care about everything. At that time, I only focus on myself. But I think I'm wrong, because we can also explain the relationship by Pierce's immediate object and dynamic object, that is, we often say that the visible immediate object points to an invisible dynamic object, and the dynamic object is a more complex and deeper structural relationship. When we appreciate contemporary artworks, the process is essentially very similar to the principle of dream interpretation. I will not upgrade my works. I feel that I have always been in a stage where I can't let go. Later, I found that it's not a good thing to have a heavy heart of gain and loss. You can do whatever you are. If you are Morandi, you can't do what Andy Warhol does. I have a better understanding of who I am to make a good work.



剪影
素描 · 40×30cm · 2019年
Cucoloris, 2019, Sketch



雾
素描 · 40×50cm · 2019年
Fog, 2019, Sketch

Q: I am very curious about what you are thinking in the process of making this performance art. In other words, what are you thinking about in the process of actually creating other works (such as the process of painting) (Some of your oil paintings also attract me. They are usually kind of weird.)

Xu: I don't devote myself to my performance art, since I'm afraid of making mistakes in cooperation. It's not easy to do and record performance art. It needs the running in of all kinds of people and things. In the process, it may deviate from the original intention and appear uncontrollable factors. I hate this. When I draw, I don't think about anything OR everything to some extent. I like to observe obvious state of people. I like Marlene Dumas very much. Of course, her context is definitely different from mine. She is very straight, emotional and strong, same as my personality. Sometimes she is arrogant and sometimes she is sultry. She has a great influence on me, but this also becomes my weakness. Nonetheless, it's inevitable that she's out of date, too, but that's OK. I used to combine new materials to create new things. However, these are leftovers from other people's creation. Painting, like creation in other fields, requires meditation. Sometimes techniques and materials are not so important. I like to draw pictures that impress people. I don't think too much when I draw or create. And I like to do it within my control. Anyway, I can't create after getting drunk. I hate losing control.

Q: It sounds like you emphasize the visual presentation of your work. I'm very curious about what part you are most concerned about completing a work of art? Is it the background and concept of creation, or the specific form?

Xu: Background and concept are most important. I think the form is not so important compared to them, but it is also very important. I just watched the recent South African contemporary photography exhibition at Box Art Museum. According to the works of those two artists, the background and concept are very important, such as the nomadism revealed in the picture. The artist also uses montage. In their own context, the language used is very short and accurate, novel and straightforward. I think how to project your

artistic language into your situation is very important. With the original form, the context and sincerity of the language are the most important. Considering the artist's personal life background, national and ethnic aesthetic relations, his own growth experience, it is difficult to fuse them into a photo. I also want to create pure works.

Q: I think this may be a kind of "artistic feeling" to some extent. In this situation, have you ever considered the future direction of your personal work?

Xu: I haven't made the choices, but I will try my best not to get out of this field. When I create, I will choose areas that touch me, such as the subtle relationship between people and society. The human emotions are not just about anger, sorrow, and joy. Some subtle emotional states are also intriguing things. At each stage, the fascinating things are different. I don't want to close my own possibilities. I need to reflect on my own knowledge, experience, and feeling in the work often. At this stage, I want to see through the essence of something, but in fact, it is often difficult. The process of exploration is quite fascinating to me. Because I am now in a closed college, I want to express a little resistance to the system. I may be not far away from painting, and be inclined to performance art and photography. This is uncertain.