

工藝深角度 Perspective

邵婷如的創作

尋求真正的自我覺醒

Works by Ting-ju Shao: In Pursuit of True Self-awareness

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土是原始與太初物質，寄託著製作者的感情，一經火煉，就永遠固存。它能夠經由人手的探觸，從具延展性的大地物質脫穎出神奇的形式，這點吸引了世世代代的藝術家，許多人更探索它做為當代表現之完美媒介的潛力。

土的表現力說明了它廣泛的歷史用途與製陶傳統，但土的踏實回應，在我們對現實與幻想的認知已被數位媒體抹滅的世界中特別令人安心，並使它持續成為一種切身的藝術媒介。土所提供的無窮可能，搭配製作者的創造力，滋養了新的當代表現，它融合新的美學與世界觀，同時拓展傳統界線與限制。

邵婷如（1963-）是臺灣頂尖陶藝家之一，精熟於以土製人偶打造抒情世界。她的作品有如「立體繪畫」般經常富於畫面，她也以獨特的身分介紹她的每具人偶。她將這些身分不明的人偶放在各種情境當中，在一個經常充滿「戲劇性」與「敘事性」的獨特小宇宙登場，讓人一看就入迷。

這些人偶不僅個個如雕像，也的確能夠以戲劇性的方式有機發展自己的敘事與所在時空感。每件作品的標題都如詩句般富於機智，在激發想像力的同時，也將觀者的注意力重新引向作品所陳述的重要社會問題。

我於2006年在（日本）滋賀縣立陶藝之森策展人三浦弘子的介紹下認識邵婷如，當時三浦弘子所策展的「人形：另一種陶藝美」正於兵庫陶藝美術館展開，該展以「人類」為主題，邀請歐美與亞洲陶藝家齊聚展出。

邵婷如展出的是二件代表作：〈那達達的馬蹄聲勿促響起，誰才是宇宙的過客呢 2？〉（2002）與〈遇見宇宙美麗的綠光 2〉（2005），皆是令人難忘的作品。彷彿從動畫或插畫中逃出的人、天使與鳥形陶偶以卡通般的隨興風格展示，其未上釉的簡潔質地格外驚人。

巨喙大得出奇的大白鳥步步逼近小人，當中有種微妙的幽默感；白色有翼人形靜靜停在高大的紅色壯漢肩上，兩者的相安無事也很有意思。我本能地將邵婷如的作品看作是圖像性與敘事性的，也感覺到了她投入創作的情感分量。

站在〈遇見宇宙美麗的綠光 2〉前，則特別讓我想起宮崎駿（1947-）的動畫長片《天空之城》（1986）中，巨型機器人和鳥兒在廢棄城堡四周的田園景色中和平共處的景象。作品邀請著觀者共享片刻寧靜。

宮崎駿在《天空之城》中憂心人是否能與大自然共存，邵婷如的作品則心有戚戚地指出我們必須重新思考自己與大自然的



邵婷如 那達達的馬蹄聲勿促響起，誰才是宇宙的過客呢 2？
2002 陶瓷 120×33×34cm
日本陶藝之森當代陶藝美術館藏
（圖版提供／日本陶藝之森當代陶藝美術館）

Hearing the trotting sound of the horse, do we know just who is the visitor in this universe 2?, The Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park



關係。兩位藝術家都覺察到多數文明受人類追求進步的慾望驅使而興起的過程，也同聲譴責人類為掠奪大自然資源而往往種下毀滅禍根的傲慢。然而歷史告訴我們，大自然本身具有恢復力，無論人類如何剝削也無法阻止它復原。也許大自然和人類共存需要某種層次的犧牲，但人終究無法脫離大地之母而獨立。這種順天應人的主題，在兩位藝術家的作品中都清楚可見。

仔細想想，邵婷如或許可被看作是一位社會藝術家，但她在創作中探索的每個主題也反映著自己的內心掙扎、多重思緒，以及對「我們是誰」和「人何以為人」等存在問題所試圖做出的回答。她的每件作品都體現了深厚的情感力量。

換言之，她對我們現代社會中的矛盾極為敏感，也批判甚嚴，但同時也質疑自己的觀點，甚至可能容許自己的思維長驅直入心靈之中。她的創作是經過土的中介、火煉的物理雕刻形式而呈現的思緒遺跡，它們標示著她自身在真實世界的存在，提醒她守住信念。她的作品背後有一股創作驅力。她的作品體現著寧靜、純粹、美，以及最重要的，生的意念。

2012年4月，（美國）西奧勒岡大學展出邵婷如的最新裝置作品〈貪婪年代，逆光而行〉。此作包含她的五件人偶原型，每具人偶都揹著比身體尺寸長上許多的細長麻袋，在重負之下朝著同一個方向屈身奮力前進。將作品以類似劇照的方式呈現是邵婷如的典型手法，但此作刻意省卻了她十分擅長的喜劇表情，這點特別值得注意。

此作似乎赤裸刻劃著工人們一生勞苦而少有回報的絕境，以及富人們對勞工處境漠不關心、只汲汲營營於追求私利的貪慾。更有甚者，此作對一再鼓勵這類乖異社會的荒謬世界，似乎透出一股憤怒。現今的資本主義一如人間（金錢）遊戲，操弄支配人們的慾望，不但令人迷失在其中，更讓人喪失初心與精神性的連結。最明白道出這點的，是她的系列作品中代表希望及「天人合一」的有翼天使，在這件作品中首度轉過了身，不再面對人物掙扎求生的方向。

作品所觸及的全球金融危機，於2008年首度震撼華爾街，最後衝擊了全球信用市場，並持續危害許多國家的經濟安危。雖然邵婷如深有所感，但她仍認為我們所看見的問題不過是冰山一角。

在她的作品中，拯救的「光」所體現的形式為天使、心靈之神、人的覺醒與啟迪，以及最寶貴的人類特質「我本是」。也許標題中的「逆光」就意指著我們對真相一無所知。

面對一位致力於發掘人類精神性的藝術家，邵婷如接下來會如何追求其雕塑創作，讓人引頸期待。「人類能夠為世界留下什麼？」這個問題無疑將繼續引導著邵婷如追求真正的自我覺醒。

看見邵婷如2013年的新作時，它們和先前作品的截然不同讓我吃驚。這些孩童形象的人偶是以瓷土製作，清一色閉著眼睛，彷彿陷入冥思。對敘事的強調少了，取而代之的是這些人偶所蘊含的一種強烈的急迫感——彷彿在刺激觀者以批判的目光思考我們當前的社會議題——這似乎是作者祈求解救的一種表現。人偶們莊嚴地站著，不發一語。當我為這篇先前出版的文章寫後記時，我又再次肯定，邵婷如是一位傑出的藝術家，能夠以雕塑的形式呈現出一個挑戰人類精神界線的世界。

後記

（原文刊載於德國陶藝雜誌 *New Ceramics*, Issue 5/14, Höhr-Grenzhausen: Verlag Neue Keramik GmbH, 2014. 8-13）英譯中／謝汝萱

邵婷如 貪婪年代，逆光而行
2012 陶瓷
美國西奧勒岡大學個展現場
Age of greed, against the light (exhibited in Western Oregon University)

Clay is a primitive and primordial substance that trustingly lends to the emotions of the maker yet once fired is forever fixed. Its ability to transcend from malleable material from the earth to magical forms through contact with the human hand has fascinated artists for generations including many to explore its potential as a perfect vehicle for contemporary expressions.

Its versatility testifies to its extensive historical use and ceramic making traditions, but it is the tactile responsiveness of the clay, especially in a world where digital media blurs our perceptions of realities from that of fantasy, that reassures us and continues to make it a relevant art medium. The endless possibilities clay offers paired with the maker's creative energy nurture new contemporary expressions that blend new aesthetics and world-views while pushing conventional boundaries and limitations.

Ting-ju Shao (1963-), one of Taiwan's leading ceramic artists, has complete mastery of orchestrating lyrical worlds using clay figures. Her works are often pictorial as though they are 'three dimensional painting'. She introduces her figures each with unique identity. She places these ambiguous figures in a variety of scenarios to stage an often uniquely 'theatrical' and 'narrative' microcosm that instantly engages the viewer.

Not only are the figures sculptural, but the way in which they are allowed to organically develop their own narrative and sense of space and time they occupy is indeed theatrical. Each of the witty titles is like a piece from a poem that sparks the imagination while some redirect the viewers to more serious social problems addressed in the work.

I first met Shao in 2006. She was introduced to me by Miura Hiroko, Curator of the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park (Japan), during an exhibition curated by Miura and held at the Museum of Ceramic Art, Hyogo entitled Human Form in Clay: The Mind's Eye. The exhibition brought together ceramic artists from U.S.A., Europe and Asia based

on the theme of 'mankind'.

Shao exhibited two key works: "Hearing the trotting sound of the horse, do we know just who is the visitor in this universe II?" (2002) and "Meeting the beautiful green light of the universe II" (2005). Both were particularly memorable. The simple texture of unglazed stoneware of the human, angel and avian figures presented in cartoon-like whimsical style as though having escaped right out of anime or illustrated images were particularly striking.

The tiny figure intimidated by a large white bird with incredible bill is subtly humorous while the white winged figure sitting quietly on the shoulder of a large stocky red man mutually enjoy calm is charming. Instinctively I came to regard Shao's work as being pictorial and narrative, and felt her emotional presence as she created the work.

Especially standing in front of "Meeting the beautiful green light of the universe II" inspired me to conjure the scene in Miyazaki Hayao's (1947-) full-feature animation film Laputa: Castle in the Sky (1986) where the giant robots lived harmoniously with birds in idyllic landscape surrounding the derelict castle. The work invites the viewers to share with it a moment of peace.

While Miyazaki in his film Laputa apprehensively questions man's ability to coexist with nature, Shao's work in a similar stroke voices the need to reassess our relationship with nature. Both artists recognize the rise of many civilizations driven by man's desire for progress. Both equally blame man's hubris that often spelled his own downfall through stripping nature of its resources. Nature itself, however, has shown through history its resilience and despite human exploitation continues to rejuvenate. Perhaps nature and man cannot coexist without some level of sacrifice, yet man cannot live independent of Mother Earth. This stoic theme is certainly palpable in both artists' work.

In reflection, Shao might come across as social artist, but every theme she explores in her art mirrors her own inner conflicts,



邵婷如 遇見宇宙美麗的綠光2
2005 陶瓷 95×55×44cm
日本兵庫陶藝美術館藏
(圖版提供／日本兵庫陶藝美術館)

Meeting the beautiful green light of the universe II, The Museum of Ceramic Art, Hyogo, Japan

layers of thoughts, and attempts to answer existential questions about 'who we are' and 'what makes us human'. Each work she creates embodies deep emotional strengths.

That is to say, she is acutely aware and sharply critical of contradictions in our modern society, while at the same time questions her own views, an exercise which she perhaps allows her ideas to run rampant deep into her psyche. Her creations serve as vestige of her thoughts mediated by clay and fired into physical sculptural forms. They mark her own existence in the real world and remind her of her convictions. Her work is fuelled by an urgency to create. Her work embodies serenity, purity, beauty and above all the will to live.

In April 2012 at the Western Oregon University Gallery (U.S.A), Shao's most recent installation entitled "Age of Greed, Against the Light" was exhibited. The work involved five of her prototype figures each trying to carry on its back a thin long sack far greater than their physical size. Buckled forward and heaving under the weight, the figures struggle to move in the same single direction. Presenting the work similar to a snapshot from a play is a typical method she employs, but the deliberate lack of comical expression Shao is so adept at executing was particularly noticeable.

The work appeared to be a stark portrayal of the desperations of laborers, who are trapped in a life of harsh labor with little compensation, and the greed of the rich, who sheds no interest in labor conditions but instead addicted to the thrills of personal gains and profit. Above all, however, the work seemed to vibrate with anger at the absurd world that continues to encourage such disparate society. Today's capitalism as a game of humanity (wealth) manipulates people's desire by not only disorienting them, but also forfeiting their naiveté and spirituality. This is made particularly poignant as for the first time in her series of work, the winged angel who represents hope and 'the moment when human and nature share harmony' turns its back and faces the opposite direction to where the struggling figures

are headed.

The Global Financial Crisis that the work references and first rocked Wall Street in 2008 to eventually cripple the world credit market continues to plague economic health of many nations. While she is fascinated by the crisis, Shao still feels that the problems we see are just the tip of the iceberg.

In her work the saving 'light' manifests in the forms of angels, spiritual gods, a man's awareness and enlightenment and, the most treasured human attribute, '我本是'. Perhaps the title *Against the Light* suggests our ignorance to the truth.

For an artist devoted to uncovering the human spirituality, it is with great anticipation to see how Shao will continue to pursue her sculptural creations. 'What legacy can mankind leave to this world?' The question will surely guide Shao in her pursuit of true self-awareness.

Postscript

Seeing Shao's new body of works from 2013, I was taken aback by the drastic departure from her previous works. The figures are porcelain skinned image of children all with their eyes closed as though in deep calm meditation. There is less emphasis on the narrative. Instead a strong sense of urgency conveyed by the figures — as though to challenge the viewers to consider with a critical gaze the social issues we face — is as though a manifestation of the author's prayer for deliverance. The figures stand in solemn quietness. As I write my postscript to the previously published essay, I am convinced once again that Ting-ju Shao is an exceptional artist who could sculpturally demonstrate a world that challenges the human spiritual boundaries. ("Works by Ting-ju Shao: In Pursuit of True Self-awareness" was originally published in *New Ceramics*, Issue 5/14, Höhr-Grenzhausen: Verlag Neue Keramik GmbH, 2014. 8-13. Translated from Japanese by Kazuko Morohashi [諸橋和子])



"Works by Ting-ju Shao: In Pursuit of True Self-awareness" 原載於德國陶藝雜誌 *New Ceramics* 2014 年第5期9月號。當期封面作品為邵婷如的〈倘若遺棄了那個承諾，我就不再完整〉。