

He Yida *Right Misplacement*
A+ Contemporary, Shanghai 29 October – 11 December

He Yida's latest exhibition is decidedly quiet and measured. Prima facie, with almost all works untitled and not a trace of wall texts, it seems to entice us into the sole contemplation of He's deft play of sculptural language and spatial arrangement. At opposite ends of the main gallery are two sculptural installations (all works 2016) composed of the same set of materials: a coarsely plastered sponge cuboid sitting atop a piece of frosted glass. Besides the different dimensions of the two sculptures, only a close look would reveal another slight variation: in one installation a piece of the glass has its frosted side facing upward, while in the other this is inverted to show a matt finish. Another work, comprising two separate structures, features a concrete block wrapped in a nylon net placed next to a slim but steady metal-frame stand that holds a roughly plastered piece of chicken wire at eye level. The artist is adept at arranging materials into subtle formal balance, and such playful manoeuvring runs throughout the show.

That the exhibition is titled *Right Misplacement*, however, begs us to look beyond form for what exactly has been misplaced, and the value of – or reasons behind – its misplacement. In our interview, He admits she is particularly drawn to three kinds of things: 'poor' things, kitsch objects and 'extravagant' things. Ostensibly contradictory signifiers, the antagonism and dynamics embedded in this triangular nexus are inflected in the exhibition on a more conceptual plane. In another untitled work, a wooden structure, with its four legs clumsily covered in spray foam, stands in an anthropomorphic pose. On the floor next to it rests an ordinary ornamental vase topped with a piece of Styrofoam, both objects scavenged from the streets by the artist. Here, the poor Styrofoam, the kitschy vase and the wooden structure marked by its apparent sculptural excess flirt with each other as well as the space that houses them. This awkward juxtaposition of an intently

– if crudely – sculpted structure and an assemblage of found objects within a single work solicits us to reflect on how 'context' usually always affects, sometimes even dominates, our assessment of a work, and the possibility of decontextualisation. This impression intensifies in the side gallery, where a piece of chicken wire supported by a twig stands next to a comparatively large piece of inverted carpet, both objects leaning against the wall on one side. This calculated placement gives a visual impression of being on the verge of sliding: a muted *pas de deux* between two objects stripped of their origin. In the face of a nebulous contemporary aesthetics in which mass-indie, Ikea-chic and minimalist penchants float amok along a capitalist axis, He holds on to recontextualising street junk in a white cube, preserving insignificance and intuition with an attitude. The exhibition title has been placed on the far right of the wall by the entrance: right doesn't mean correct, it's just right. *Alvin Li*



Untitled, 2016, wood, styrofoam, ceramic, 103 × 70 × 182 cm. Courtesy the artist