

Edouard Malingue Gallery  
马凌画廊

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Xuhui District, Shanghai

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Dwells in the Solid Shadow of the  
Unreachable

He Yida

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## Dwells in the Solid Shadow of the Unreachable

Edouard Malingue Gallery is delighted to present female artist He Yida's solo exhibition, "Dwells in the Solid Shadow of the Unreachable" during the November art season in Shanghai. Comprised of the artist's latest works, the exhibition focuses on two critical aspects of her ongoing practice: a reinvestigation of our understanding of familiar urban elements and her passionate exploration of the language of sculpture. He Yida's practice has never involved "creating works"; in her own words, "I don't make new things, what should be here in this world has already been created, my practice is to observe, unearth and study the objects around me through my presentation. And what drives my research is to discover the ways of perceiving the world."

He Yida draws inspiration from various corners of the city, be it the abandoned objects on the street, the frames left from cut-off metals, fragile surfaces covered in plaster – these have all been the objects of emulation in her work. Through meticulous structural planning, her practice challenges the aesthetics of everyday life, the relationship between the objects, and searches for the origin of art on a broad scheme, while resisting the value of monumentality. He Yida's adoption of the readymade for her practice is grounded on the consolidation of materials: she observes the curves, textures, weight of these materials before she selects from their existing qualities to bring them together into a new ensemble. Hence, He Yida has developed a sculptural language that is uniquely hers: on the one hand, it acknowledges the former practicality of the object, on the other, it builds a conspicuous yet grand and dexterous theater of objects gathered from the street.

A set of amalgamated rods emerge from the ground, a carved out metal panel existing as the base. To the bottom a carved piece of plaster anchors the sculpture. In effect, there is a nod to the iconic Roman column yet it does not appear in its formal essence. Absence is a subject matter He Yida addresses but is ambivalent in displaying. Through her latest works, although the pieces may vary in forms, dimensions and applied materials, the "void" is always present. What are the ways in which we conceive things? What gives them the form they "should" have? He Yida tries to present the missing parts for us to look at the absent "protagonists", and as irrelevant as these objects may be, the abandoned elements, parts, raw materials, are configured according to their true forms and contours.

Thin and sharp metal is a material He Yida often uses in her work. She appreciates its fragility and lightness with a sense of presence, the qualities that seem to foster greater possibilities in the language of sculpture. He Yida's initial interest in using the blind was from the installation of this everyday item in her art studio and home. The visual order and subtlety, the handle on the blind, and an idle pulling cord could cause chaos. The cord hanging from the blind has been partly cut off. This is where disarray occurs, like many of He Yida's previous works – one finds order and chaos in the same context. The useful parts in a child's architecture model are removed and used as the blueprint; she uses silver spray paint to highlight the "useful parts" on the blind, allowing the notion of the "void" to emerge again in this work.

The dividing walls made of hollow PET sheets is the largest work in this exhibition. He Yida decided to turn the functionality of this part as the installation itself in her decision to make wall dividers. The lightness of this material and its hollow structure provide greater structural possibilities, in which, He Yida fills the PET sheet with white liquid (paint and glue), and the residue left on the inner surface unexpectedly turned the PET sheet into the common white walls in the art gallery. Since her earlier practice of pouring paint into transparent sacks and casting metal structures in silicon and dripping paint over the mirror sheet, He Yida has integrated the qualities of liquids into her artistic system. For her, the liquid is a material that can be poured, spread into its forms its an uncontrollable element and the perfect candidate to fabricate chaos.

For He Yida, exploring the language of sculpture is synonymous to the process of searching for the truth where the various materials become manifestations of different qualities. Be it light or heavy, flat or creased, soft or rigid, they are only embodiments of a language of expression in sculpture without being the conduit for content. The objects are still themselves, and sublimating the mode of expression as content is what He Yida calls "truthful exploration".

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He Yida (b. 1980, Shanghai) currently lives and works in Shanghai. She graduated from Chelsea College of Art and Design, London in 2007. He Yida's practice is not just an exploration of the language of sculpture, but also a reexamination of our cognitive process of familiar urban elements. Focused on presentation and representation, He juxtaposes actuality and image of things, which challenge the way idea forms. Exploring the sculptural language is an approach towards reality for He. Materials and forms carry their specific language of expression. Whether light or heavy, fragile or strong, the composition of the individual materials forms the expression. The presentation becomes the representation it carries. Without the projection of reference, the actual substance emerges. In He's works, regardless of various forms and materials, "essential" and "core" are absent while "void" is always present. Using inessential things, abandoned elements and attachments, He Yida tries to shape the object with missing parts and re-examine our cognitive process of things. He's sculptural language of superficiality and morphology simultaneously becomes a reality regenerated from images, as well as phantom haunted from behind.

Her solo exhibitions include: Dwells in the Solid Shadow of the Unreachable (Edouard Malingue Gallery, Shanghai, 2019), Right Misplacement (A+ Contemporary, Shanghai, 2016), In Case (C-Space, Beijing, 2013). Her selected group exhibitions include: Very Natural Actions (Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong, 2019), Longan (House of Egorn, Berlin, 2019), A Tree Fell in the Forest, and No One's There (Power Station of Art, Shanghai, 2018), Condo Shanghai: Soul of the Soulless (Edouard Malingue Gallery, Shanghai, 2018), One Second Ago (Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong, 2017), NAN KAN: Inexplicit Ethics and De-ranking Perspective (Surplus Space, Wuhan, 2016), Daily Formalism (BANK, Shanghai, 2016), Alchemy (Between Art Lab, Shanghai, 2015), Peepshow (Long March Space, Beijing, 2015), Follow (MOCA Shanghai, Shanghai, 2011). In 2018 He Yida completed a residency at the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art, Manchester supported by the Liverpool Biennial.