



Wang Wei 王衛



Editor's Note

Wang Wei's early works focused on spatial relations; in the previous decade, however, his practise has changed and evolved substantially, and this may have something to do with both the experience of co-founding with Rania Ho and Pauline Yao the storefront art space Arrow Factory on the Arrow Factory Hutong, Beijing, and the experience of accepting numerous interior design commissions, described by Wang as "gigs." In his artistic creation, Wang transforms observations of his immediate surroundings and aesthetic elements distilled from life, teasing out the power dynamics in the everyday life, and revealing undercurrents of self expression consciousness within the society. In this interview, Wang speaks of the two spaces he co-founded since 2008, Arrow Factory and Wujin. As the most sought-after spaces in the city centre – within the 2nd ring road in Beijing – the former lasted for 11 years and a half, and the latter is still running on a semi-underground basis after relocation. Undeniably, the exhibitions, events, happenings that took place in the two spaces exerted considerable and subtle influences on the neighbourhood, and the whole of the Beijing art scene. They provided an alternative to a homogenised model of commercial galleries and museum white cubes. Also, through series of explorations, discussions, discoveries and presentations, Arrow Factory and Wujin constructed a space where participants can freely and equally exchange their views. This was perhaps a way to resist what Hannah Arendt calls the banality of evil: replacing it with communal warmth and affect. Wang's involvement in and experiences with the two spaces over the years obviously have fed into his own artistic practises.

編者按

王衛早期作品中對於空間關係的關注，在近十幾年中發生了一些轉換。這些轉換或許不能與他和何穎儀、姚嘉善在箭廠胡同創辦的「箭廠空間」，以及他稱之為「接活兒」的商業性室內設計脫離干系。王衛對周邊環境的觀察和將生活中身邊殘留下來的美學元素轉換到了自己的作品中，從中不但連帶出它們所代表的權利，同時也揭示了民間自我表達意識的暗流。當我們聊到箭廠空間和五金這兩個 2008 年之後北京二環內最受關注的空間時——前者存活了 11 年半，後者遷址後依然以「半地下」的方式開放——不可否認，這兩個空間所呈現的一系列展覽、活動、發生，對於周邊胡同、乃至北京藝術生態都產生了潛移默化的影響。它們為商業畫廊、美術館的單一的白盒子模式提供了另類的存在。同時，兩個空間在探討、發現、展示藝術之余，為參與到其中的人們搭建了一個能夠自由、平等討論的場所。或許這可能是抵抗漢娜·阿倫特所指的「平庸的惡」的一種方式，用人與人之間的溫情將之替換。由此，這些年的參與和經驗也一目瞭然地滲透進了王衛的創作中。

He Xiao:
What have you been up to?

Wang Wei:
Me and Rania have been working on the Arrow Factory's new book. From June 10th to 15th, we went to Shanghai and worked with our guest editor Zian Chen. Arrow Factory's first book was the *3 Years: Arrow Factory (2008-2011)*; then came the *Arrow Factory: The Next Four Years (2011-2015)*. The last four years and a half will go into the new book, which has the working title of "Five Year Book" (五年書). So it

賀瀟：
最近在忙什麼？

王衛：
我和 Rania 在做一本箭廠空間的新書。6 月 10 號到 15 號，和我們的特邀編輯陳璽安在上海一起工作了幾天。箭廠最早的一本是《三年書》（2011 年），然後第二本是《四年書》（2015 年），剩下的這段大概有四年半時間，所以這本新書的名字就暫定「五年書」了，這樣就剛好成為一個系列。



works well as a series.

Earlier this year you participated in Edouard Malingue Gallery's *H A N D* online project; out of the five items you recommended, I found the video of *Reading Marx's "Capital" with David Harvey* particularly interesting. Specifically, before the pandemic, I was not aware of the "the flow of capital" that Harvey talked about; perhaps people tend to take it for granted until the chain or flow of things stop working.

I think it is very accurate to talk about it as a flow. In fact, people are becoming aware of this problem; that is, we are already living in a world that is substantially globalised, and that we are fairly concerned whether it is possible to go back to the previous kind of globalisation, or not. The world being stopped as it is makes us reevaluate the flow of things and people in the world before the pandemic, including the speed of logistics. It is like, although one is cut off from interacting with others in the pandemic, staying at home, one can still shop online. The flow of information is seemingly even accelerated.

Due to the disruption from the pandemic, what we are able to witness now is not merely the flow of times but also the cycle of value production. It is a flow that is like a supply chain; the real economy in the chain sees a huge rupture. But like you said, you can shop online if you have the money, so another chain is formed in another space, in the virtual space, seemingly intact and unbroken. This phenomenon brings me to some of your installations that individually deal with the reality that we see and perceive.

I think this is a little bit like the relationship between looking and seeing, or 看 and 見 in Chinese. You may look, but you do not always see. Seeing means that you become aware of what is behind the appearance of things. In a way, this pandemic works like a mirror, reflecting many things for us to look and see.

Gordon Matta-Clark's *Food* reminds me instantly of Wujin, and the cookbook Rania is working on in recent time.

疫情期间你參加了馬凌畫廊發起的「H A N D」線上活動中的五個推薦，其中大衛·哈維談資本論的視頻非常有趣，尤其是他談到的「資本運作的流動」是我在疫情之前從未意識到的。可能在這個鏈條沒有停滯之前，人們覺得這是一種理所應當的常態。

你剛才用「流動」這個詞我覺得是特別準確的。實際上，現在大家也都慢慢意識到這個問題，就是我們已經生活在一個多麼全球化的世界裡面，而現在我們大家是有點擔心還能不能回到從前那種程度的全球化了。那樣世界的停滯，不但讓我們重新意識到疫情之前世界上人的流動、包括物的流動的程度。就像疫情中，即使人與人的往來中斷了，呆在家裡還是可以網購，信息的流動甚至是加速了。

或許我們正在見證的不僅是一種時代的流動，像疫情這種斷裂性的事件更是讓我們意識到了價值生產的循環。它是一個產業鏈式的流動，這個鏈條的實體經濟出現了很大的斷裂。但同時如你所說，如果你有錢你可以網購，它在另外一個空間，也就是虛擬空間里也形成了一個鏈條，它看起來又好像還沒有斷。這種現象讓我想到了你做的一些裝置作品，它們分別探討了我們看到的和我們感應到的這種真實性。

我在想這個有點像是「看」和「見」的關係。因為並不是說你「看」就能「見」，「見」更多指的是你能不能意識到表象之下的一些東西。而這次疫情確實有些像是一面鏡子，一下子照出很多現實給我們看。

戈登·馬塔·克拉克的《Food》讓我立刻想到了五金，以及 Rania 最近在籌劃的《Cookbook》。

那個短片是 Rania 推薦給我的，關於戈登·馬塔·克拉克 1970 年代初和幾個朋友在紐約下東區開過的一家叫「FOOD」的餐廳。短片用一種比較寫意的方法記錄下了餐廳開業前後的一些影像畫面。這個餐廳在當時就是個烏托邦的存在，包括裝修全部 DIY 自己



Rania recommended that video work to me. It was of course about the restaurant Gordon Matta-Clark and a couple of friends opened in the Lower East Side of New York, called simply *FOOD*. The video documents the opening of the restaurant in a rather free and relaxed way. The restaurant was almost utopian, for they did everything by themselves including the designs and interior decorations. Because it was an old building, they had to get rid of some walls, doors, windows and so on. I think that was also a point of origin for the iconic architectural works, or "building cuts" that appears in his projects later on. We are indeed similar this way; you know, a lot of my early works focus on spatial variation and transformation's impact on humans. Around 2007 I have started working with Rania and her sister on a number of interior design projects, mostly for commercial enterprises like restaurants and bars. The focus of my own practise since then has changed accordingly.

I remember vividly that for the first Susu Vietnamese restaurant in Beijing, you made a wall that uses patterns that are very identifiable, reminding one of the classic 1980s aesthetics, which is still visible today in public places like the Beijing Zoo or the Purple Bamboo Park.

Yes, that cement tile wall uses a very classic 1970s or 1980s style, one that is still visible here and there in Beijing. This style clearly derives from a certain Socialist aesthetics, and was very popular back then as an architectural decoration because its craft was simple and cost was low. I learned a lot from design projects like this, especially when I get to meet and talk to the clients, who are mostly foreigners living in Beijing. On many occasions we talk about very specific styles, colours or materials; before having this experience, I was totally unaware of the fictions and manipulations in design practises. It suddenly occurred to me that behind decorations and designs, there exist ideologies and powers. From there, you can recall a number of my later works, such as the *Natural History* series, the *Mosaic* series, and the earlier *Historic Residence* (2009).

I was very impressed by the *Historic Residence*.

動手弄，因為那裡原本是一個老房子，所以裝修的時候要拆掉一些牆、門窗什麼的，應該也是在這個過程中讓他產生了後來最為經典的那些切割建築的作品。在這一點上確實我們有些相似之處，因為你也知道，像我早期的很多作品也是比較關注空間的變化對人的影響，大約從2007年開始參與Rania和她妹妹的一些室內設計項目，大部分是餐廳和酒吧一類的商業場所，那之後自己作品上的著眼點也跟著發生了一些轉變。

我記得印象特別深，就是北京第一家Susu越南餐廳的面牆，它的圖案具有一種可識別的八十年代的美學，這種美學也是在例如動物園或者那種紫竹院這種公共場所依舊可以看到的。

是，那面水泥花磚牆是很典型上世紀七、八十年代的風格，現在北京的街頭巷尾偶爾還可以找到。這種水泥花磚帶有明顯的社會主義美學特徵，因為工藝簡單、造價低廉，在那個時期作為建築裝飾物被大量採用。確實，參與這類設計項目使我得到很多不同的經驗，尤其是和客戶討論方案的過程。這些客戶大多是在北京的外籍人士，很多時候就是在討論一種很具體的風格、一種顏色或一個材料。而我過去可能完全沒有意識到設計行為裡面所具有的這種虛構性和引導性，也是突然意識到裝飾背後這種意識形態的存在與權力的意味。從這裡，你就可以想到我之後的一些作品，比如《自然史》系列、《馬賽克》系列，以及更早一些的那件《故居》(2009)。

《故居》那件我印象非常深。

對，那件作品就是關於顏色和人的一種關係。

《故居》那件作品（毛主席的衛生間），在我看來正因為它將一個看似普通的空間誇張地放大，才會給人唯有統治者方可佔有的空間感，或者它暗示了一種權力？

現實中的兩個衛生間其實只有十幾





Well yes, that work was about the relationship between colours and humans.

It seems to me that the *Historic Residence* (Chairman Mao's bathroom) maps a spatiality that only fits the ruler, because it enlarges and exaggerates a space that is apparently mundane. Or that it suggests a power?

In reality, two bathrooms combined is no more than a dozen square meters. So probably only when it is this large can one feel the absurdity.

I also remember you transferring that strange ceramic object from Sanlitun and presenting it in an art space. It was quite magical when it was in the street.

One time we were doing some projects in the Sanlitun area, so every time we walked past it I'd say to Rania it was utterly an artwork.

Yes, and it was there for very long.

Is it still there?

No, it is gone now.

One can read it as a power symbol: it was an obstacle on the sidewalk, but it persisted and stayed there for many years.

Today, most things are gone, removed. Speaking of removal, I think what is really absurd is the current state of the Arrow Factory Hutong, where the art space Arrow Factory and Wujin used to be. I walked past it just now, and where Wujin used to be is now walled up, and covering the wall a educational board on waste sorting. That window next to it is the pancake shop, right? How's Wujin? Is it still open on weekends?

Wujin's still around, now located in a nearby compound, and yes it is still open for business on weekends.

Be it the Arrow Factory or the Wujin, I admire your way very much. Wujin has been around for 7 years, right?

平米。而那件作品可能也就是只有當它大到那個程度，才可以感受到一種荒誕性。

我記憶猶新的還有你的那件把三里屯街上的那一塊奇特的瓷磚台子轉換到藝術空間里。原本坐落在人行便道上的那一塊台子也是很神奇的存在。

因為我們有段時間在三里屯附近有些項目。每次路過我就跟 Rania 說，它看上去完全就是一件「作品」。

對，而且它在那兒待了很久。

不知道現在還在嗎？

沒有了，沒有了。

它在那裡其實就是一個權力的展現，因為它在人行道上應該算是一個障礙物了，但還是存在了很多年。

現在都拆的差不多了。說起「拆」我覺得更荒誕的是你們家現在樓下的箭廠胡同，也就是箭廠空間和五金的原址。我剛才路過五金，門臉被砌牆的地方被貼了一個垃圾分類的宣傳牌。旁邊開的那個窗戶就是之前那餅店吧？五金的近況如何？還是週末開張嗎？

五金還在，後來是搬到附近的一個小院兒里了，目前還是週末營業。

無論是箭廠空間，還是五金，我一直非常欣賞你們的態度。今年五金也開了有七年了吧？

對，開了七年了。五金空間很小，但它有很多人的情感與智慧在裡面。最早是 Rania 自己做麵包，用一種舊金山的酵母，因為她在北京吃不到那種口味的麵包。當 2013 年箭廠旁邊的這間房子空出來後，我們就和另外兩位朋友一起把它租下來。其中一位朋友 Ken 是專業廚師，所以五金最早的菜單來自於他的設計。它是一個小生意，但到目前還沒有盈利過，偶爾也還需要再湊一點兒交



Yes, it's been 7 years. Wujin is very small in size, but there are emotions, feelings and wisdom here. In the first place, it was a place for Rania to make her own bread, using a special yeast from San Francisco, because she could not find bread like that anywhere in Beijing. When in 2013 the little room next to the Arrow Factory became available, we and a couple of friends took it and made it into Wujin. One of our friends, Ken, was a chef, so he designed the first Wujin menu. It is a small business, and has never done better than breaking even, and we sometimes have to scramble a bit for the rent.

But you do not expect much out of it. It feels like it is good as long as it is still there.

It contains within itself a simple, humble, moderate and sharing principle. It is in this way similar to what Arrow Factory was. Perhaps this is also why we deem its continuation to be important. It is also a place where we and friends can gather to do events. For example, before the pandemic, Wujin hosted a series of sound performances, called "Tiny Space Concert" (微現場), organised by Ake (阿科), who also works at Wujin.

I think it is also important to look at Wujin and Arrow Factory as they are in the bigger ecology. Although Arrow Factory only lasted for 11 years and a half. From the 2008 financial crisis, to before the recent pandemic, many non-profit spaces emerged in Beijing. Some would even call themselves institutions. Most of these are in the hutongs, some are in environments that are even more communal or residential. Spaces like this are of course essentially different from those run in the 1980s, such as those in the Diplomatic Residence Compound. This phenomenon is valuable because it is, as you mentioned, simple, humble, moderate, and also because it may in a subtle way gradually influence and shape its surroundings. It also serves as an alternative case, counterbalancing an art ecology that has been largely commercial in nature.

I think the most remarkable thing about the Arrow Factory is that it establishes this model of totally independent operation: a low-key, moderate way. It was never expanded, only

房租。

你們對五金一直沒有太大的預期，它給人的感覺就是，活著就行了。

它有一種簡單、樸素、適度以及分享的原則在裡面，在這一點上其實和箭廠有些相似。可能也就是因為這一點，讓我們覺得能繼續這樣一個空間的存在是一件挺重要的事情。還有，它也是我們和朋友們的一個活動空間。像在這次疫情前，五金就做了一系列聲音表演活動，叫「微現場」，而組織者阿科平時也在五金工作。

我覺得五金和箭廠空間的存在從一個更大的生態環境里看特別重要。儘管箭廠空間只存活了十一年半。從2008年經濟危機到疫情爆發之前，北京也層出不窮的出現了很多所非營利空間，有的甚至稱自己是「機構」，大多數遍布在胡同里，有的也在更偏向社區的環境中。這些空間當然與那些更早的，例如八十年代的外交公寓，有著本質上的差異。而它的可貴之處，除了你提到的簡單、樸素、適度的特點，還有它潛移默化地對周邊環境產生的影響，以及一種所謂的「反面」案例，為商業的藝術生態提供著一種平衡。

我覺得箭廠最重要的還是它建立了這樣一種完全自主的運營模式吧，就是一種低調適度的方式。這個空間也不擴大，它就一直保持十幾平米這樣的一個規模，而且最後做了這麼多年，也說明這種方式是可行的。當然了，它的背後肯定也離不開包括像你這樣的很多朋友的支持與幫助，偶爾也會有些來自基金會的贊助，像做出版物的時候。

同時你們幾個參與者又搭了很多自己的時間、和精力，以及資源。

對，那個就是你感興趣的話就那樣做了。

你們的這種工作方式更有機，每個人有自己擅長的領域，比如姚嘉善作為策展人更擅長與藝術家溝通，等等。這十幾年一直在一種



maintaining the a-dozen-or-so-square-meters space, for many, many years. That history says something about this unique way. Of course, it also depended upon support and help from many friends like yourself, and occasionally some sponsorships from foundations like what we would do when making publications.

And you co-founders spent time, energies and resources on it.

Yes. That is what you do, when you are interested in something.

It appears to be a very organic way, each partner working in his or her own field. For example, Pauline Yao is a curator, so she is used to and good at communicating with artists. In more than a decade's time, you co-founders worked together in a very democratic way.

In fact we tried our best to stay away from noises and disturbances, so that we can be fully dedicated to the spaces and the projects. But of course you can call it organic.

I remember also that there was a time when projects took place more rapidly. Towards the end of the Arrow Factory however, especially during the time of the hutong reform a couple of years ago, when the government tightened its grip, the projects and exhibitions took place at a slower pace. This is also what I meant by organic; it has something to do with how you deal with an external force majeure. You'd change, act and react accordingly.

Maybe it has something to do with fate as well. Luck has it that we were allowed to use it for so long, for more than a decade.

Yes. I do not see you as the sort of independent space that has the ambition to turn into a major institution from the outset, or that you were never meant to start this space with the intention to snatch some kind of power. It is like what Arendt traces in *The Human Condition*.

I also recommended for the *H A N D* project an interview between Arendt and Günter Gaus in 1964. She talks about the Eichmann

商議的模式下去做這件事。

我們實際上就是盡可能的排除各種干擾，這樣就將注意力全部放在空間的項目上。當然你可以說這是更有機的一種方式。

而且，我記得有一段時間項目更換的密度很頻繁。但是後來接近尾聲那段時間，尤其是拆牆打洞時期，也就是城管查的很嚴的時候你們的項目就沒有那麼頻繁。我提到的「有機」也和這種不可抗拒的外部環境的變化有關，根據變化來調整你們在做的事情。

哈哈，可能也有一些機緣在裡面吧，剛好這間房子就讓我們一直用了十幾年。

對。我覺得你們自始至終都不是具有遠大抱負成為大機構的那種獨立空間，或者說你們做這個空間的初衷從來不是去獲取某種話語權。這就如同阿倫特在《人類的境遇》中追溯的。

在那段視頻訪談中阿倫特也談到了對納粹軍官艾希曼的審判，以暴治暴實際上只是一種復仇，復仇並不解決問題。所以她當時提出了「平庸的惡」，認為這種「平庸的惡」是問題的根源，在現實中是更普遍的存在。她強調在面對強權的時候，更需要一種獨立思考的能力。包括對於我們當前所面臨的一些所謂很迫切的問題，大家都應該考慮一下它的根源到底是什麼。我可能很多時候是覺得，你只能用一種更好的價值觀去替代它。

我們都是北京人，你最喜歡去北京的什麼地方？是動物園嗎？

確實，小時候最喜歡去的就是北京動物園。最近這些年總去是因為作品中經常會用到一些動物園的元素。比較有意思的是，我每次去總是能有一些新的發現。這可能和我的工作習慣有關，很多時候它就是一個循序漸進的發現和思考的過程。

從很大的程度上講，動物園可能是我們所生



trial; combatting violence with violence is only a revenge that does not solve problems. So she talks about the banality of evil, and claims that this banal evil is the origin, the root of the problems, to be found everywhere in life and reality. She emphasises that, when confronting powers, one particularly needs the ability to think independently. We should spend time and consider the root of many problems, including the so-called very urgent ones we are facing today. I tend to think that you can only go beyond it with a better set of values.

Me and you are both from Beijing; what is your favourite place in Beijing? The Beijing Zoo, perhaps?

Indeed, that was my favourite when I was little. In recent years I go there often because I use some elements that are found in the Zoo. Interestingly, every time I go there I get to discover something new. This might have something to do with my work habits: it is to be developed, discovered and articulated gradually.

To a rather large extent, the zoo could be a metaphor for the society.

I care more about the pavilion designs. The zoo is an exhibition of course, so when I go there I investigate how they curate it there. My Dongguan mosaic work (*Natural History 4* series, since 2012) is similar. The mosaics are mostly found today in urban villages densely populated with buildings. Neighbouring buildings may have different patterns because they are owned by different people, so the mosaics could be arranged abruptly, in stark contrast with one another. Therefore, visually it can be really weird, although it can also be seen as the presentation or exhibition of the owner's personality, style and aesthetics. Every time I see a wall covered with mosaic tiles, I can feel an extremely strong vitality.

活的這個社會的隱喻。

我在其中更關注的是那些場館的設計。動物園實際上也是一個展覽，我每次去更像是研究他們在如何「布展」。同樣，我那個東莞馬賽克的系列作品（《自然史4》系列，2012年起）也是類似的方式。這些馬賽克圖案大多來自城中村密集的建築物上，經常是相鄰的房子由於主人不同，馬賽克圖案的選擇也會是截然不同，視覺上其實非常突兀，但這也可以看作是房子主人個性與審美趣味的一種「展示」。我每次看這些貼滿了馬賽克的牆面時，都能夠感受到一種極強的生命力。



Wang Wei

Born in Beijing, China 1972. In 1996, he was graduated from Central Academy of Fine Arts. Now he lives and works in Beijing.

Wang Wei is a multidisciplinary installation artist who looks at how the navigation of physical spaces can inform us about our own lived reality. Through modifying existing architectural structures with subtle, surprising additions or appropriating stylized features from disparate sources, Wang Wei has developed a strong practice around interventions that are aim to disrupt human perceptions of space while opening a dialogue about construction, labor and ways of seeing.

Wang Wei's work has been exhibited in series of important exhibitions including: Thailand Biennale (Krabi, Thailand 2018); The Second Yinchuan Biennale (MOCA Yinchuan, China 2018); 2017 California-Pacific Triennial (Orange County Museum of Art, USA 2017); Pavilion of China at 12th International Architecture Exhibition -La Biennale di Venezia (Venice, Italy, 2010); 2009 Shenzhen Hongkong Bi-City Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism (Shenzhen, China, 2009); The Real Thing: Contemporary Art From China (Tate Liverpool, 2007); Foreign Objects (Kunsthalle Wien Project Space, Vienna 2007); Beyond: The Second Guangzhou Triennial (Guangdong Museum of Art, China 2005); A Second Sight: International Biennale of Contemporary Art (National Gallery in Prague, 2005); Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video from China (International Center of Photography, New York 2004); The First Guangzhou Triennial (Guangdong Museum of Art, China 2002); Post-sense Sensibility: Bodies and Delusion (Beijing, China 1999).

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王衛

1972 年出生於北京，1996 年畢業於中央美術學院壁畫系，目前在北京生活與工作。

王衛是一位多領域的裝置藝術家，關注物理空間的引導性如何標示出人們自身的生活現實，通過使用細微和出人意料的補充物或借用不同來源的風格去改造現有建築的結構，王衛發展出一套強有力的介入實踐，旨在擾亂人們對於空間的普遍認知，同時開啟關於建造、勞動和觀看方法之間的對話。

參加過的主要展覽包括：泰國雙年展（泰國甲米，2018），銀川雙年展（銀川當代美術館，2018），加利福尼亞太平洋三年展（美國橘郡美術館，2017），第十二屆威尼斯建築雙年展中國館（威尼斯，2010），深圳香港雙城雙年展（深圳，2009），真實事件（利物浦泰特美術館，2007），有異物（維也納美術館項目空間，2007），第二屆廣州三年展（廣東美術館，2005），布拉格雙年展（捷克國家美術館，2005），在過去與未來之間—中國新影像（紐約國際攝影中心，2004），首屆廣州三年展（廣東美術館，2002），後感性—異形與妄想（北京，1999）。

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