

Edouard Malingue Gallery
马凌画廊

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That Is A Layer Of Gauze That Mimics
The Texture Of The Wall

Wang Wei

Opening
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That Is A Layer Of Gauze That Mimics The Texture Of The Wall

Edouard Malingue Gallery (Shanghai) is pleased to present Wang Wei's solo exhibition "That Is A Layer Of Gauze That Mimics The Texture Of The Wall" on 7th September. Wang Wei's earlier works explore artistic experiences that are extemporaneous, procedural, site-specific and de-constructivist. For instance, works such as *Temporary Space* (2003), *Ever Widening Ever Narrowing* (2005), and *Trap* (2005) focus on the individual's awareness of place and status in relationship to spatial planning and an individual's sensibility. In recent years, his practice has seen transplanting found visual elements and existing structures into the exhibition space. By altering the mode and position of viewing, Wang Wei explores the essence of the object and its implied social and political significance. Among the most frequently adopted resources and materials he uses include murals of the Beijing Zoo and the mosaic tiles manufactured in Guangdong, China. "That Is A Layer Of Gauze That Mimics The Texture Of The Wall" presents Wang Wei's three most recent works.

A free-standing white wall diagonally divides the gallery space in half. The wall stands on an equal area of mosaic floor, entitled *Suppressed Natural History 4*. Wang Wei has appropriated a mosaic pattern found in Dongguan for this series of works, *Natural History 4*. The regions along the Chinese Southwest sea board are known for their wet weather, and façades of the buildings are often covered in mosaic tiles, to protect and decorate the buildings with inexpensive materials. Upon Wang Wei's first visit to Dongguan in 2012, he was amazed with this city enwrapped in mosaics, where patterns and colors were either chaotic and random, or neat and orderly. Although the origins of these patterns unknown, they are readily adopted and continue to evolve. This kind of aesthetics for public décor – grounded on a combination of practicality with mainstream popularity – has become a unique landscape, an artificial nature that gradually saturates the urban landscape. Wang Wei's *Natural History 4* series can be comprehended as abstract paintings, rendered in mosaic tiles, where the material itself acts as the surface decor and the Dongguan-made pattern becomes its brushwork. The extraction and displacement of the mosaic tiles' original context highlights what the artist refers to as "inexpensive aesthetics," addressing the desires that motivate such a spectacle.

The CMU bricks used in building construction are scattered around *Suppressed Natural History 4* in the gallery space. Each brick is painted with the mural of a night constellation, found in the pavilion for nocturnal animals in the Beijing Zoo. The CMU brick is a substance which is light-weight and makes large volume buildings possible. Since 2018, Wang Wei has adopted this convenient and versatile construction material to his work. This marks his third execution of *Panorama 3* (previously mounted at Parasite in Hong Kong and Rockbund Art Museum in Shanghai). The artist considers this series an ongoing action, whose every presentation varies in its site-specificity. The walls inside the cages of the zoo are often painted with natural scenes of blue skies, white clouds, oceans, and forests. The zoo's curved wall surfaces and panoramic murals are techniques for creating an immersive visual deception. However, rather than considering them as a deceit to the animals, they serve as psychological compensation for zoo visitors who are likely to comfort themselves with the idea that the animals are "living in nature." Painting here disguises rather than decorates a deceptive space. Wang Wei's transplanting of the murals, from the zoo to the exhibition space, confuses the sense of space and displaces its context, urging the viewer to wonder what they are actually looking at, and whether or not to believe what they see?

The third work, *Corner*, is a video that expands from Wang Wei's previous work, *Famous Last Word*. The latter was realized on the outer wall of a community kindergarten in Guangzhou at the end of 2018. The sentence depicted on the wall comes from a private conversation in which the artist explained one of his wall related artworks, "That is a layer of gauze that mimics the texture of the wall." The artist had initially hoped to peel off a layer of the wall to expose its pale-yellow bricks underneath, as the phrase implies. However, in the course of realizing the work, a series of unexpected events aborted the original plan. Fortunately, the alternative still resonated with the internal logic of this work – the wall was covered, then revealed, covered up again, and revealed again. In other words, the ambiguous qualities of text and content are constant departing from and reshaping reality. For *Corner*, Wang Wei returns to the location of the work a few months later, and points his camera lens at this quiet, intense, ambiguous street corner, where the site remains a pile of unfinished rubble.

Hence, "That Is A Layer Of Gauze That Mimics The Texture Of The Wall" became the title of this exhibition. This seemingly garrulous statement is in fact the essence of his artistic exploration in recent years, for whom art mimics reality and makes it questionable, compelling its viewer to reflect on the essence of reality. The three works in this exhibition are indeed about the walls: the entirely exposed wall (*Suppressed Natural History 4*); the fully covered wall (*Panorama 3*); and the walls in-between state of being covered and revealed (*Corner*). The formal variations of the wall exist within the same space, where their underlying contents resonate with each other, so presence and absence engender a contradictory yet absurd existence.

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Wang Wei was 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 Venazia (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)