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草刺

胡晓媛

Grass Thorn

Hu Xiaoyuan

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新闻稿

Beijing Commune is pleased to present artist Hu Xiaoyuan's fourth exhibition at the gallery, *Grass Thorn*, from November 5th, 2017 to February 10th, 2018.

The exhibition is the second installment of a trilogy that Hu Xiaoyuan conceived and began working on in 2015. Following *Ant Bone*, the first part of the trilogy, the artist continues to use wood, silk, and metal as the primary mediums in *Grass Thorn*; however, compared to the contradiction and tension between the different materials that constitute *Ant Bone*, the works on view in this exhibition, with the artists' subtle treatment of the materials, strive to convey the subtle balance the artist experiences and observes in the quotidian. In the eponymous works from the series of the Grass Thorn and that of the Momentary Place, standing next to each other in the central gallery, the artist subtly incorporates natural objects and reclaimed objects she scavenged from ruins into her enduring and intricate practice.

The dilapidated metal rods supporting *Momentary Place*, is picked up from a demolished living area nearby the art district. While the people who used to lived in these temporary buildings have long been driven away, their fragile and short-lived residences are metaphorically resurrected in this rocky structure that the artist has constructed. The silk on top of the structure, having been kept in open air in the artist's studio yard for over a year, are already eroded and torn by the seasons. The artist's gesture of using and reconstructing these materials is just like the wood carvings and clay sculptures in the ancient Silk Road, where the improvised materials and the spiritual, formal aesthetic echo each other. Like the title suggests, ephemeral lives linger in time and space, and the artist seems to be capturing a form that is being destroyed in their warmth, hopefully recovering the warmth of existence through her caring and detailed touch.

Meanwhile, the *Grass Thorn* series is composed of a wider range of materials. The artist wraps parts of used wood objects with silk, meticulously touches up the wood lines, and places these wood pieces on top of iron structures

reclaimed or marble. To Hu, wood, stone and used rusty iron structures are all "ordinary objects" that are products of the natural evolution of time and progression; however, while submitting to nature, her choice of tracing the wood lines subtly imbues her work with the spirit of the self. This work process reflects the antagonistic yet mutually dependent relation of the self and natural law, as well as the underlying subtle balance.

The two walls standing on each side of the gallery separate Hu's new pieces on the wall from the central gallery space; the artist hopes to have her paintings observed from a close distance, as this particular way of seeing is similar to her point of view in the studio. Unprecedentedly, the lacquered surface of the wood boards is completed not by applying paint with the board lying flat, but by having the board standing as if it was canvas. On these large-scale silk surface, the artist spontaneously touches up the natural wood lines, and then represses these lines on the wood surface by thoroughly covering them with free brushwork. In the end, between the wood and the silk, between reality and the imitation of reality, and between dominance and domestication, the artist and her work become each other's ruler and savior.

Hu Xiaoyuan was born in Harbin in 1977. She graduated from the China Central Academy of Fine Arts, and currently lives and works in Beijing. Hu Xiaoyuan's works have been widely shown in the international art scenes. Important shows she has taken part in include "The Great Acceleration: Taipei Biennial" (Taipei, 2014), "The Ungovernables: New Museum Triennial" (New York, 2012), and Documental12 (Kassel, 2007), etc. Her works have also been shown in numerous museums and art centers, such as Palais de Tokyo, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Tampa Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Orange County Museum of Art, Power Station of Art, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Bildmuseet Umeå University, Shanghai Rockbund Art Museum, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Kunstmuseum Basel, and so on. Her works have been collected by Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; M+Museum, Hong Kong, and Power Station of Art, Shanghai, etc.