

## 在過滿的世界挖一個洞——曹斐個展

曹斐的藝術彰顯著迷人的不確定性。她是最早探究新千年中國的青年文化、工廠流水前線、互聯網和地域文化的藝術家，她的作品記錄並描繪出經濟轉型所催生的各種新奇人物和前所未見的社會關係。曹斐的敘述手法既不在讚頌也不在批判，卻總帶著對趣味和超現實情態的敏感眼光，她讓人物和場景脫離常軌，藉此質疑更廣闊的現實環境，在一個擠滿了人物、物件和意識形態的高速運轉世界中，挖出空洞，創造靜止的空間給予遐思。

這是曹斐首次在亞洲於美術館舉辦的大型個人展覽，藉著一部委約影像作品《監獄建築師》，直探大館歷史層次中呈現的不同面貌。影片有兩個角色：一個囚犯與一位建築師，他們跨越了不同年代，展開一段詩意盎然的對話。兩位主角分別代表大館建築群的今昔：過去是警署、法院和懲戒機構；未來則是文化機構。這部影像作品以藝術裝置的形式呈現，展現出複雜的歷史嬗變。《監獄建築師》參考香港的殖民歷史、電影文化、中國和全球的當代現狀，旨在探問身為觀眾的我們，是否會像以往囚禁於此地的囚犯那樣，無限期地等待未來的審判。

展覽同時展出藝術家的部分早期創作，充分展示其對編織現實以及人文主題的興趣。在裝置作品《倫巴》，映入觀眾眼簾的是一群仍處於初步試驗的智能機械人（吸塵機），探路似的穿梭於藝術家所設計的複雜裝置之中，其設計旨在測試它們能否憑直覺感知周圍環境。機械人無定向地行走，甚至被「遺忘」一隅自顧自地轉動，正好為都市人日復日穿梭於城市裡，且極度缺乏空間的掙扎寫照，刻板乏味而沒有靈魂。另外兩件作品專注敘述曹斐於「第二人生」的虛擬平台上的創作，當中《我·鏡》記錄了曹斐在2000年代中期初次探索「第二人生」網絡世界的成果，縱然此平台時至今日已落伍，但當時用戶可使用化身，超越身體形式及物理空間的限制，與他人互動。而《人民城寨》則是藝術家這次網絡探險的高潮，與《我·鏡》的敘述主線迥異，作品聚焦不在於男女主角的邂逅，而是從藝術家精心規劃的一個政體，調侃奧運會時代北京的烏托邦城市生活。《La Town》一作則可見藝術家在創作風格上的轉向，從探索模擬社會及反烏托邦的現象，向觀者道出一個有關頹廢和衰落的故事。而首演於上海的一個行為藝術展覽的《即將到來：香港》，是一個結合表演元素的藝術裝置，藝術家找來年輕的表演

大館當代美術館 TAI KWUN CONTEMPORARY

者，坐在鞦韆架上搖盪，同時用腳擊鼓，對無拘無束的幸福假象作出諷刺。

對曹斐來說，藝術是一個建構世界的協作過程，能夠折射出我們的生活現況。從事創作二十年，她合作過的群體和圈子，從廣州那些酷愛角色扮演的青年，到唐人街的饒舌歌手，到帶動中國目前電子商務興旺的快遞員，範圍廣大。在她所有創作計劃中，有兩點與眾不同：一是竭誠尋找新穎有力的表達詞彙，二是積極關注有份演出、製作及接觸她作品的人。

文：田霏宇

曹斐（1978年生於廣州，在北京生活和工作）是享譽國際的中國當代藝術家。她曾參加威尼斯、伊斯坦堡、悉尼、橫濱、莫斯科、台北、上海和廣州的雙年展及三年展，也曾在眾多博物館舉辦展覽，包括紐約古根海姆美術館、紐約現代藝術博物館、倫敦蛇形畫廊、泰特現代美術館、巴黎龐比度文化中心、巴黎東京宮博物館、路易威登基金會、上海龍美術館和北京尤倫斯當代藝術中心。她曾獲中國當代藝術獎之「最佳年輕藝術家獎」（2006年）和「最佳藝術家獎」（2016年）。曹斐於2016年在紐約MoMA PS1當代藝術中心舉辦首個大型回顧展，今年秋季將於德國杜塞爾多夫K21博物館舉辦第二個回顧展。

在過滿的世界挖一個洞——曹斐個展

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大館總監：簡寧天

# A hollow in a world too full — a solo exhibition by Cao Fei

Cao Fei's art is a study in exuberant ambiguity. Her early works were among the first to tackle the vibrant youth, factory, online, and regional cultures of millennial China, capturing and reflecting upon the new kinds of human subjects and social relations that its economic transformation was making possible. Neither celebratory nor critical, and always with an eye for the surreal and the fun, her explorations propose characters and scenarios that question larger realities by deviating from them, creating hollows—spaces for suspended reflection—in a fast-moving world full of people, objects, and ideologies.

This exhibition, Cao Fei's first large institutional exhibition in Asia, revolves around a newly commissioned film that engages directly with Tai Kwun's layered history. *Prison Architect* unfolds as a poetic dialogue across time between two characters—a prisoner and an architect—who represent the building complex's past as a police, judicial, and penal institution and its future as a cultural institution. Shown in an installation setting designed to embody this same complexity, the film makes references to colonial history, Hong Kong cinema, and the Chinese and global contemporary, asking if we as viewers might be, like the inmates who inhabited this place before us, waiting indefinitely for trials to come.

Following the transformation of Cao Fei's oeuvre in the past ten years, the exhibition's selection of artworks carefully elaborates her skills in the fabrication of realities and a sensitivity to human subjects. The installation *Rumba* greets viewers with a flock of Roombas—these primitive attempts at intelligent robotics—plodding their way across a precarious apparatus built to test their ability to intuit their surroundings; it is reminiscent of restless routines in cities and conjures limitations in individual space. *i.Mirror* highlights Cao Fei's initial plunge in the mid-2000s into the online world of Second Life, a now outdated platform that allows users to embody avatars and interact beyond the limitations of bodily form and physical space. *RMB City* is the culmination of this adventure: beyond the love story of *i.Mirror*, the artist created a polity which riffs on the utopian motifs of Olympics-era Beijing. In *La Town*, she takes an analogue, dystopian turn, voicing a story of decadence and decline over

shots of a collection of handmade architectural models. And for *Coming Soon: Hong Kong*, the second time this work is presented after it was conceived for an exhibition of performance-art tableaux in Shanghai, she enlists young performers on swings to beat drums with their feet, in an unsettling caricature of carefree happiness, rhythmic unpredictability, and constant improvisation.

For Cao Fei, art is a collaborative process of world-making that refracts our everyday situation. In the two decades she has been working, she has engaged with communities and contexts ranging from adolescent Cosplay enthusiasts in Guangzhou to Chinatown rappers to itinerant couriers powering China's current e-commerce boom. In all of her projects, two elements stand out: a commitment to finding new and nuanced expressive vocabularies, and an engagement with the people who produce and encounter her work.

By Philip Tinari

Cao Fei (b. 1978, Guangzhou; lives and works in Beijing) is amongst the most internationally renowned artists of her generation. She has shown in biennials and triennials in Venice, Istanbul, Sydney, Yokohama, Moscow, Taipei, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, and at museums including the Guggenheim, MoMA, Serpentine Galleries, Tate Modern, Centre Pompidou, Palais de Tokyo, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Long Museum, and UCCA. Named the "Best Young Artist" (2006) and the "Best Artist" (2016) by the Chinese Contemporary Art Awards, she staged her first retrospective at MoMA PS1 in 2016, and will present another at K21 Düsseldorf this fall.

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Presented by UCCA

Curated by Philip Tinari

For Tai Kwun Contemporary: Xue Tan (Exhibition Manager)

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Tai Kwun Contemporary

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