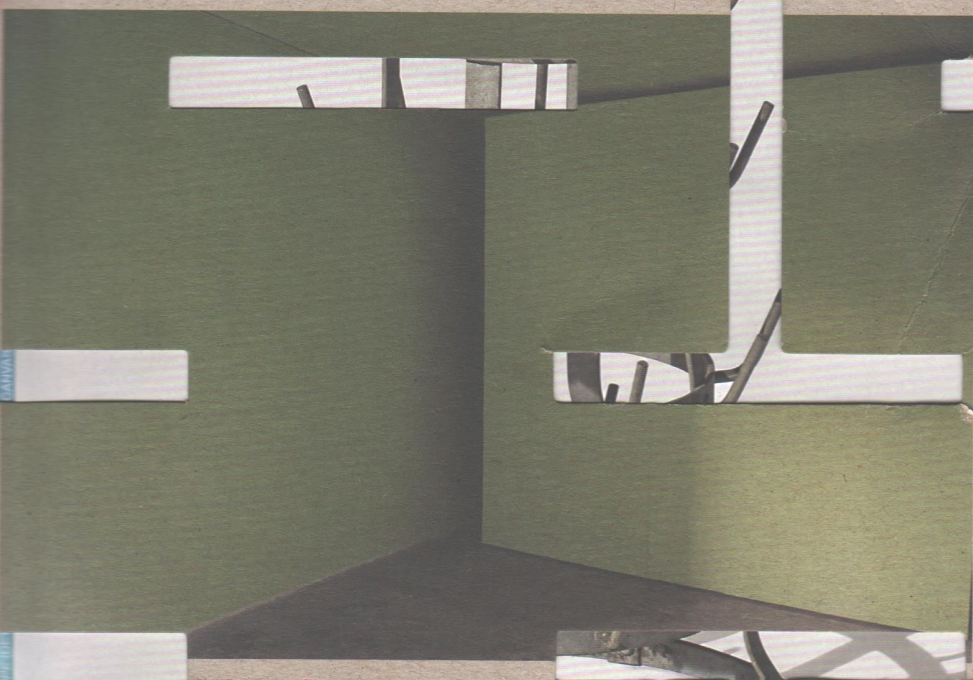


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每日转变：关小
文/谈颖

我心里想要说的是形象如何变成新物体的事 (*In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas corpora*)。

——[古罗马] 奥维德 (Ovid)，
《变形记 (Metamorphoses)》
(《变形记》杨周翰译，人民出版社1984年5月第一页)

奥维德用这样一句意图明确的声明为《变形记》(著于公元八年)开篇。在其后的二百五十个神话故事中，这位古罗马诗人将变形主题按照时间顺序记述下来——有时以一种随意的方式，有时则是重述脍炙人口的希腊神话寓言，也有时会偏离到其他意想不到的方向上去。其中一则埋藏入了我们集体意识的故事，可以在罗马的博尔盖塞美术馆 (Galleria Borghese) 见到，意大利雕塑家吉安·洛伦佐·贝尔尼尼 (Gian Lorenzo Bernini) 的著名雕像描摹了处于半变形状态 (mid-metamorphosis) 中的仙女达芙妮 (Daphne) 的故事——她的四肢变成一棵桂树的盘枝，在她试图逃脱被爱冲昏头脑的阿波罗 (Apollo) 的时候。同样，变形发生在我们的日常生活中；我们在电影中就体会过这些，因为电影配乐透过视觉图像使观众身临其境。例如，在《光之圣象 (Ikona of Light, 1983年)》中，英国作曲家约翰·塔文纳爵士 (Sir John Tavener) 在空无与充盈的音乐之光的双重性之间物质的变形。这部作品表现了声音中的光——光同时作为一种物理上的照亮和一个灿烂的精神。这种声音和视觉的流动性与易变性也可以在各种表演实践中找到：无论是古典印度舞还是中国京剧，大量的手势和动作都传达出一个非常明晰的叙事意义。那么，手势就能被听到，音乐能被看到，文学作品也能变形。

同样，中国艺术家关小也对所有种类的形态转变很感兴趣，无论这些转变是互动媒介的还是观念性的。她探索了超链接世界的数码影像是如何影响当代观看之道的。举例来说，她曾经引用过 (在Frieze杂志

刊载的一篇关于关小的Portfolio艺术家专题报道中，她提到了她的灵感来源) 2013年的一个新闻事件，即一群俄罗斯摄影师拍摄了一颗巨大的流星。我们每天都会从社交媒体平台上看到此类图像。技术令我们得以远眺其他的时间和地点，打破了地域性和时间性，并导致了一个意味着我们不再操纵于某个单一瞬间的状态——一个将技术对象开放至重复 (甚至是扭曲) 的状态。我们用肉眼看到的東西可能会变形，我们看待它的方式也会如此。用关小自己的话来说：“在这里展出的是一些大家已经习以为常的东西：一张图像是对一个事件的记录，这张图像广泛地传播，直到图像所记录的事件本身不再是主题，于是图像也就不再服务于事件，而恰恰反过来了。”

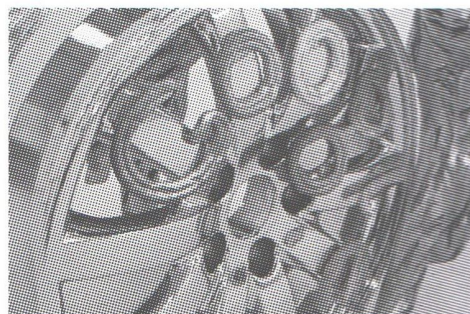
正是在这个流动的框架内，关小为巴黎国立网球场现代美术馆 (Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume) 的第九届卫星项目“我们的海洋，你的地平线 (Notre océan, votre horizon / Our ocean, your horizon)”创作了两件新作品：《如何消失 (How to Disappear, 2016年)》和《天气预报 (Weather Forecast, 2016年)》。

《如何消失》这件装置综合了声音、小屏幕视频和文字逐渐消失的投影，它包括了由三个相互交织的语音组成的配乐，每一个都说着一种不同的语言，都在宣告一次消失，此后图像和声音逐渐消失。当我们重新调整自己，开始思考讨论一次消失和实际上经历一次消失之间的异同。这正是关小希望达到的目标——一个令观众进一步了解他们认知过程的环境。我们几乎对自己的感官和下一步即将发生何事有着超认知 (hyperaware) 般的认识。她将这件艺术作品大致视作引出她展览中其他作品的一部序言。仿佛《如何消失》构成了她此次个展中“双联画”的第一部分，为观众充分体验 (其第二部分) 《天气预报》做好了准备。

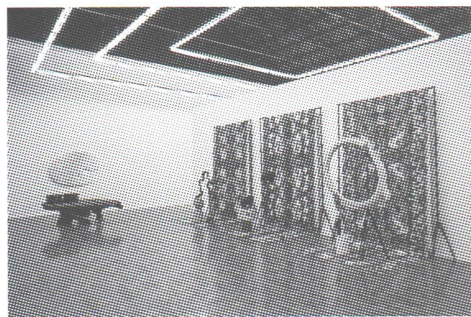
三屏录像《天气预报》展示了一个观察观念转变时更为生动的视角。这些录像采用了一些来自互联网的现成素材 (对关小而言，网络是常用素材库，她将素材收集的过程描



关小，《日落》，灯箱照片、木头、金属、假花、树脂，尺寸可变，2012 / Guan Xiao, "The Sunset", lightbox photo, wood, metal, artificial flowers, resin, dimensions variable, 2012



关小，《日落》(局部)，灯箱照片、木头、金属、假花、树脂，尺寸可变，2012 / Guan Xiao, "The Sunset" (detail), lightbox photo, wood, metal, artificial flowers, resin, dimensions variable, 2012



关小, “基本逻辑”, 展览现场, 天线空间, 2015 / Guan Xiao, “Basic Logic”, exhibition view at Antenna Space, 2015.

述为“它们找上门”而非她找到它们), 这些视频将旅行用作一种传达观念转变的参数的隐喻。就像旅行能够改变我们一样, 一个观念、一件事物、甚至是人类和动物也可以转变我们。艺术家选择《天气预报》作为题目, 正是因为就其本质而言, 天气是一个无常的、波动的、模糊无形的现象。它既是一个抽象物, 又是一台关小可以用以编织她对变化之叙述的适用仪器。

虽然并非线性叙事, 延展至三块屏幕上的视频被分为三个连续的部分。在每一个章节, 关小运用了丰富的图像和视频, 用她的话来讲, 它们遵循着“相同的规则或逻辑”。在她对这些部分的叙述中, 预示了发生在作品中变形的过程, 她试图让主题的每一部分与下一部分彼此关联。在每个序列之间, 一段文字出现在所有三块屏幕上: “你能如何坐在椅子上看遍欧洲?” 关小表明, 在旅途中发生、或者于新景点和声音之体验所获的现象变化, 是一种你在自己家中就能得到的转变。

其迷人之处还在于, 关小的作品本身激活了传输。在科幻世界, 运输者(在电影《星际迷航(Star Trek)》中)将一个人或者物转换成一种能量模式或者去物质化(dematerialized)的状态, 在将它“照耀”向一个目的地之前, 在那里它被重新转化为物质, 或者还原物质化(rematerialized)。通过输入坐标, 关小提出一个她的观众群体或许会选择接受的问题: 从一个地方到另一个地方物理上的运动对于变形的发生是否是必要的? 还有什么其他的東西能够使我们照耀遍布全世界的呢? 如果我们不需要体验其他地方, 我们又该如何自我认知, 或者我们最初从何处而来? 虽然艺术家并未直接着眼于这些特定情形下的身份思考, 但是她的确暗示了身份是如何能够从一件事物转化成另一件的。

关小近期举办了她在英国的首次个展《扁平金属(Flattened Metal)》, 展览在伦敦当代艺术学院(Institute of Contemporary

Arts, 简称ICA)举行。这次展览展出了一件新的装置作品, 五面巨大的屏幕, 前面放置着各种材料的雕塑, 包括静音扬声器。物件的堆集将历史混合在一起, 转变了时间的线性假设。比如, 一件由树脂和玻璃纤维制成、模仿七至十世纪亚马逊部落鸟头饰物的复制品, 被装在了一个貌似是古代君王权杖的把手上。这两件看起来仿佛来自远古的东西, 与一只现代高科技的赛车靴互动起来, 共同构成一个或许仅属于未来的、怪诞的复合结构。这件作品重申了艺术家找寻那些在时间、地点和目的上并不相似的物件之间某种形式等同的兴趣。在她看来, “无论是植物、人类还是动物, 他们得以感受世界的过程是完全一致的。”

在《行动(Action, 2014年)》这件同样入选伦敦个展的三屏视频作品中, 艺术家同样集成了声音、文字和图像来构建一次视觉旅程。三面屏幕展现出一种富有节奏感的和谐: 击掌声伴随着跺脚声, 一面屏幕的书页翻动, 另一面屏幕中的少女秀发随之飘然。居中的屏幕中, 关小内心的思考通过文字展示出来: “对我来说, 节奏意味着一切意识的交叉点。这是我理解万物之间关联的一种方式。它帮助我去尝试和传输动作, 去看、去听、去想这些交叉点, 并自由地去建立他们彼此间的联系。”

这种在视觉上看到节奏的方式, 透过活动影像的图像, 提醒着我配乐能够如何传达一部影片的视觉感情, 也让我想到由墨西哥导演亚历杭德罗·伊纳里图(Alejandro Iñárritu)执导、墨西哥音乐家安东尼奥·桑切斯(Antonio Sánchez)配乐的电影《鸟人(Birdman, 2014年)》。桑切斯, 这名爵士打击乐手, 被伊纳里图委以寻找“电影内部节奏”的重任。一个内在的节奏控制着电影的视觉影像、叙事结构和情节铺陈, 在我看来, 正是这种节奏在左右与转变着角色们互动的进行, 而非相反。

在最近的一次访谈中, 关小指出, “我们本来拥有五种感官, 但是我

们却正在变得越来越仅关注于视觉和听觉。”在其作品中，她似乎在尝试均衡不同感官、事物和人群的价值层级结构。为了促进我们对此的理解，一种（感觉中枢的）民主化就此发生，因为对于艺术家而言，事物的不同部分是全面地相互关联的。

一切看来十分自然，数字媒体为关小乐于操控的熵变量（the entropic variables）提供了完美的环境。关小独特的嗓音，她那识别不规则的联系与表达对转变事物本质的想法、几乎是与生俱来的能力，都令她多次出现在重要的国际展览上（除了ICA和国立网球场现代美术馆的展览之外），其中包括第13届里昂双年展、第9届柏林双年展、第5届莫斯科青年艺术双年展，以及伦敦扎布罗多维茨收藏馆（Zabludowicz Collection）的个展。

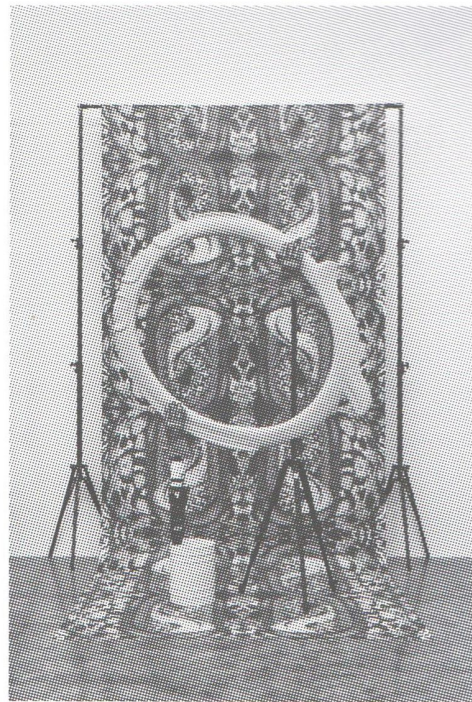
所有这些近期的展览为艺术家交出了一份亮眼的成绩单，而艺术家对于诸如“年轻艺术家”、“女性”抑或是“后网络”之类的标签并不感兴趣。她的艺术创作或许是一种决定分离的主见和意识，同德国物理学家海森堡（Werner Heisenberg）提出的量子力学的测不准原理（Heisenberg's uncertainty principle）亦不无相似之处，就好像一旦它们被分类，那她的想法就会瞬间丧失其意义。在某个时间点，当一些社交控罹患FoMO（害怕错过）综合症时，也许这些变形的经验会适时地帮助人们做到专注：一个真正的传输者，在我们自身的、以及其他更多的虚拟现实之间，照耀着我们。■译/王之浩

Everyday Transformations:
Guan Xiao
By Ying Tan

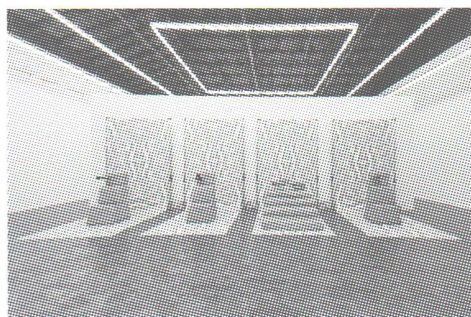
*In nova fert animus mutatas
dicere formas corpora (I intend
to speak of forms changed into
new entities)*
—Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

Ovid opens the *Metamorphoses* (AD 8) with an explicit statement of intent. In the 250 myths that follow, the Roman poet chronicles the subject of transformation—sometimes in an arbitrary fashion, sometimes retelling well-known Greek fables, and sometimes straying in other, unexpected directions. One of these stories, which entered our collective consciousness, can be seen at Rome's Galleria Borghese, where Giovanni Bernini's famous sculpture tells the tale of the nymph Daphne in mid-metamorphosis—her limbs turning into the twines of a laurel tree as she escapes from the love-stricken Apollo. Transformations occur in our everyday lives, too; we experience this in cinema, as film scores transport audiences sonically through visual imagery. In *Ikon of Light* (1983), for instance, the composer Sir John Tavener articulates the transformation of matter between the duality of absence and the fullness of light in music. The work is an expression of light in sound—light as both a physical illumination and a resplendent spirit. This fluidity and mutability of the sonic and the visual can equally be found in performative practices: in both classical Indian dance and Beijing Opera productions, a multitude of hand gestures and movements communicate a very distinct narrative meaning. Gestures, then, can be heard, music seen, and literature transmogrified.

Guan Xiao, too, is interested in all kinds of transitions between forms, be they intermedia or conceptual. She explores how contemporary ways of seeing are influenced by digital imagery in a world of hyper-interconnectedness. By way of example, she has previously referenced (in a Frieze "Portfolio" piece in



关小，“基本逻辑”，展览现场，天线空间，2015 / Guan Xiao, "Basic Logic", exhibition view at Antenna Space, 2015.



关小, 《4S 前传》, 玻璃钢、汽车尾喉、汽车排气管、广告部数码打印、C 型支架, 900 × 286 × 300 cm, 2015 / Guan Xiao, "4S Prequel", fiberglass, exhaust tail, exhaust pipe, digital print on vinyl, C-stands, 900 × 286 × 300 cm, 2015

which she describes her sources of inspiration) a news event from 2013 showing a group of Russian photographers taking pictures of a gigantic meteor. We receive such imagery via social media platforms day in, day out. Technology telescopes us into other times and other places, collapsing geography and temporality and resulting in a state that means we no longer operate in a singular moment—one that opens the technological object to repetition (and even distortion). What we physically see can be transformed, as can the way in which we view it. In Guan's own words: "What is shown is now very common: an image of an event being documented and so widely circulated to the extent that the event itself ceases to be the subject. The image is no longer in the service of the event; it's the other way around."

It is within this fluid framework that Guan Xiao presents two new works, "How to Disappear" (2016) and "Weather Forecast" (2016), in Jeu de Paume's 9th Satellite program entitled "Notre océan, votre horizon / Our ocean, your horizon." An installation consisting of sound, video on a small screen, and a projection of disappearing text, "How to Disappear" includes a soundtrack composed of three intermingling voices, each speaking a different language and announcing a disappearance, after which the image and the sound effectively vanish. As we reorient ourselves, we begin to think about the difference between discussing a disappearance and actually experiencing an absence. This is exactly what Guan Xiao wants to achieve—an environment that makes visitors more aware of their cognitive processes. We become almost hyperaware of our senses and

what might occur next. She sees this artwork very much as a preface to her next work in the exhibition. It's as if "How to Disappear" forms the first part of a diptych to her show at Jeu de Paume, priming the viewer to fully experience "Weather Forecast".

The three-channel video "Weather Forecast" presents a more vivid look at the possibilities for conceptual transformation. Taken from footage found on the internet (a frequent source for the artist and a process she describes as "them finding her" rather than the other way around), the videos use travel as a metaphor to convey the parameters of conceptual transformation. Just as travel can transform us, so can a concept, a thing, and even human beings and animals. The artist chose "Weather Forecast" as the title because weather, in its very nature, is an impermanent, fluctuating, amorphous phenomenon. It is both an abstraction and an apt apparatus through which Guan Xiao can weave her narrative of change.

The video, although nonlinear, is separated into three sequential parts spread over three screens. In each segment, Guan uses images and video that, in her words, share "the same rules or logic." In her narration of these sections, which informs processes of transformation that occur in the work, she attempts to correlate one piece of subject matter to the next. Between each sequence, a text appears on all three screens that reads: "How can you view Europe from a chair?" Guan Xiao suggests that the phenomenological change that takes place through travel and from experiencing new sights and sounds is a transformation that can be provided in your own home.

What is fascinating in this is that Guan Xiao's work itself becomes an agent for transportation. In the science fiction world, transporters (à la *Star Trek*) convert a person or object into an energy pattern or dematerialized form before "beaming" it to a destination, where it is reconverted into matter, or rematerialized. Guan Xiao poses a question by typing in coordinates that her viewership might choose to accept. Is physical movement from one place to another necessary for transformation to take place? What else can we beam across the world? If we needn't travel to experience other places, how might we identify ourselves or where we are from in the first place? Although the artist does not directly focus on ideas of identity in this particular case, she does allude to how identity can transform from one thing to another.

Guan recently had her first solo show in the United Kingdom, "Flattened Metal", at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA). The exhibition included a new installation comprising five large printed screens in front of which were placed sculptures composed of various materials, including muted speakers. The assemblage of objects conflated history, transforming linear assumptions of time. For instance, in one work, a replica of a seventh- to tenth-century Amazonian bird head, remade using resin and fiberglass, sat above what looked like the handle of an ancient scepter. These two pieces, which appear to have been sourced from antiquity, interacted with a high-tech racing boot to form a strange composite structure that perhaps belonged in the future. This work reiterates the artist's interest in finding formal equivalences between objects

that are dissimilar in time, place, and purpose. In her view, "whether a plant, a human, or an animal, the process of how they feel the world is exactly the same." In a world where the internet provides a platform where voices are commensurable, Guan Xiao, with this work, seems to ask how we might create our own hierarchies amid new information.

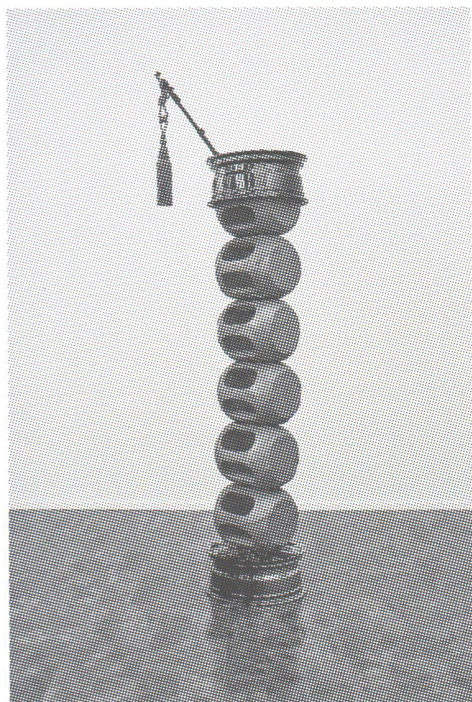
In "Action" (2014), a three-channel work that was also included in the London exhibition, the artist likewise integrates sound, text, and images to produce a visual journey. The three screens display a rhythmic harmony: hands clap while feet tap, and as the pages of a book turn on one screen, a girl's hair flies in the wind on another. On the central screen, text displays Guan's inner musings: "For me, rhythm means all the intersections of sense. It's a way I understand the associations between things. It helps me to try and transfer action, see, listen, think about interactions and freely build a link between them."

This way of seeing rhythm visually, through imagery within moving image work, reminds me of how a musical score can carry out the visual sensibilities of a film. *Birdman* (2014), directed by Alejandro Iñárritu and scored by Antonio Sánchez, comes to mind. Sánchez, a jazz percussionist, was tasked with finding "the internal rhythm of the film." An intrinsic rhythm governs the film's visual imagery, narrative, and storytelling, and it seemed to me that this rhythm moved and transformed the characters to interact, not the other way around.

In a recent interview, Guan observed that "we have five



关小,《4S前传》,玻璃钢、汽车尾喉、汽车排气管、广告部数码打印、C型支架,900×286×300 cm, 2015。/ Guan Xiao, "4S Prequel", Installation, fiberglass, exhaust tail, exhaust pipe, digital print on vinyl, C-stands, 900×286×300 cm, 2015.



关小,《五个漫步穿过黄昏》,雕塑,黄铜、汽车轮壳、自拍杆、流苏,47×75×245 cm,2015。/ Guan Xiao, "Five Walks Through the Dusk", Sculpture, brass, car wheel, selfie stick, tassels, 47×75×245 cm, 2015.

senses, but we are becoming more and more focused on just seeing and hearing." In her work, she appears to equalize the hierarchies of value inherent in senses, objects, and humans. A democratization (of the sensorium) occurs in order to facilitate our understanding of this, because for the artist, different pieces of matter are comprehensively interrelated.

It seems natural that digital mediums provide the perfect environment for the entropic variables Guan Xiao likes to manipulate. Guan's unique voice, her innate ability to recognize anomalistic associations and express her ideas about the transformative nature of objects has seen her featured in prominent international exhibitions (in addition to the ICA and the Jeu de Paume) including the 13th Lyon Biennale, the 9th Berlin Biennale, and the 5th Moscow Biennale for Young Art, as well as in the Zabłudowicz Collection.

All of this recent activity makes for an impressive lineup for the artist, who incidentally isn't very interested in labels such as "young," "female," or "post-internet." Hers might be an assertive and conscious resolve to be set apart, as if, and not unlike Heisenberg's uncertainty principle for quantum mechanics, her ideas might suddenly lose their meaning if they were classified. At a time when some suffer constantly from a "fear of missing out," perhaps these transformative experiences are needed in order to engage us: a real transporter, beaming us between our own and other, more virtual realities.