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# 林延：和空间商量着来

文 肖天时 译 柯玲香 图 否画廊

林延：门道

否画廊 / 纽约

2017/12/02-2018/01/20

我越来越享受依据不同的空间制定不同的方案的快乐，同它商量着来似的。甚至把空间本身的结构和因素运用到作品中去，常年适应中国传统手工纸的可变性，可塑性使我也越来越包容和自由。

**艺术汇：**你很擅长观察建筑的灵动和建筑与人的关系，也说过年少时很想学建筑。那么如果将自己的个性比作建筑的话，你是怎样的一栋建筑呢？

**林延：**可能是中国古代木结构的建筑吧，就像我去日本奈良看到的唐代风格的建筑。宽敞通透，有回廊，不封闭。苏州园林我也很喜欢，但我在北方长大，还是和既厚重又有灵气的建筑更亲近。木质结构本身比较贴近自然，最后也会回归自然，这样的归宿比石材钢筋那样恒久，好像永远会在那儿的建筑更像我的个性。

**艺术汇：**除了空气的流动，光也是你作品中非常重要的元素。你认为光在创作中是怎样的角色？

**林延：**因为纸有通透的特质，像玉一样。但又很朦胧，就像中国人的性格一样含蓄。我的作品常用多层的纸——是一小片一小片的纸逐层贴在上面，就像油画的笔触。借助一点光的作用，更能显现出纸本身的美、丰富的层次和制作的过程。

**艺术汇：**之前就得知你不喜欢用语言描述自己的作品，且你提到过古画之于当代艺术思维上更为宽广不羁。但我反而觉得不可言说是因为在有画面之前先有了语言和语言的手法。视觉本身即已是词句。你作品的标题常用凝练优雅的古语，想知道是先有画面还是先有语言本身的意象？

**林延：**其实视觉语言也是一种语言，其思维方式有别于文字语言的运用。相较自身的文字语言能力，我更精通视觉语言。我一般通过视觉来了解世界。比如和人交谈，可能说很多话我都不了解对方；但如果是画画的人，我一看画就知道你在想什么，你的生活状态，你是什么样的人，视觉效果会给我很多信息。所以我在创作过程中自始至终的思路都是视觉的，之后才去想标题。这是我不愿相互转译的两种轨道。以视觉作为工具来图解文字，在传达给观众的时候也是很生硬的。而我在创作过程中是全视觉导向的，在呈现给观众时也首先是瞬间的感受，从而引发出思考。

**艺术汇：**你的作品一定程度上是一种标本和残骸，抽丝剥茧之后对万物的形体的复刻。标本这一概念是为了企求永恒而对生命的扼杀和定格，以死来描摹生。而宣纸这种脆弱的材质却又点破了永恒的空和无。让我想到西藏的曼陀罗画。

**林延：**这也是自然而然体现出来的，倒没有刻意去做什么援引。确实纸这种材质比较脆弱，但对我来说又有很大的能量，这也是我喜欢的语言特质。我的作品在不同场馆展出时形态也有所变化，如流水般随意生长和不断自适，没有固定，永久和完整的形态。这些场域特定的作品就像生命中的一个瞬息，出了这个地方就再也看不到同样的了。

艺术汇：那么你希望每件作品的寿命是多久？一件作品在时间维度的持久性如何影响其解读？

林延：纸寿千年，作品能活多久在于看护者。我更关注一件作品在特定的瞬间观众所捕捉到的情绪和体验，这是展览的主要意义。至于之后作品能留存多久我其实不是特别在意了。

艺术汇：我注意到你的作品的描述既是场域特定装置又是尺寸可变。这样有机的延展性特性在观感上影响很大。你觉得哪一次的展出是空间和作品契合度最高的？

林延：我也是慢慢摸索才对自己的创作有一个了解。小的时候想学建筑，也不太明白为什么。但逐渐发现我确实擅长对空间的把握。从上研究院办第一个展，到2013年开始做更多的装置，我都会更有意识地先视察场地。而这一次在否画廊的展览的新作品是就地结合空间的门窗、壁炉，建筑装饰创作的，像从这个空间里生长出来的一样。和以前带作品来画廊布展还不一样，这次算我把作品与空间融为一体最紧密的一次。

艺术汇：你的作品也是一个逐渐扩张的趋势，像苔藓和藤蔓一样生长。从很小的残垣，逐渐到大面的建筑元素。有一天会希望覆盖整个空间吗？你理想的展出场馆是怎样的？

林延：留白的多寡还是根据空间自身的特性，看我需要怎样和它交流。平时看展我特别爱盯着白墙看，想象什么样的作品挂在这会更好。高低繁简，每个有特点的地方给我的感受都不一样，每次做展览如同做作品一样有挑战性。空间给我很多灵感，但艺术家在工作室制造的理想效果如到展厅因场地操作不专业而无法呈现出来会很遗憾。我越来越享受依据不同的空间制定不同的方案的快乐，同它商量着来似的。甚至把空间本身的结构和因素运用到作品中去，常年适应中国传统手工纸的可变性，可塑性使我也越来越包容和自由。

艺术汇：之前的访谈中你提到过创作是一个去繁从简的过程，“试着用最少的元素去表达最多的想法”。能大概描述一下这个抽丝剥茧的过程吗？留下什么，剔除什么，是一种感性还是理性的决定？

林延：这个过程其实是非常复杂的。看似简单的作品，我的草图会反复修改测算。比如最近在万营美术馆做的宣纸迷宫，细节计算非常繁琐。包括否画廊的这次展览，“静吟”是一件很长的作品。原本觉得屋顶不够高无法展示，最后还是想办法把作品挂了起来，而且找到了非常特别的方式。这个和作品及空间的交流过程都不能以我为中心，应变能力要强，敢于舍，在否定的过程中寻找最适的方案。

艺术汇：你都是一个人做这些？不管迷宫还是门廊。是需要自己一个人和空间谈判？

林延：对。想法虽然很多，但最终能叫我拍板可能就是灵光一现的决定。比如台湾诚品画廊那个展览，就是一条缝分割了墙面，纸从里面生长出来。开展的前一天晚上我还想了很多种办法：是不是要向上或向下延伸，像五线谱一样蔓延。到第二天早上还是决定只留那一条缝。整个繁复的过程大都在思维中消耗掉。每次创作我都不想重复过去，因此有时已经快到截止时间还在反复揣摩。创作就像冒险。但多年的经验让我深信，这道灵光一定会到我的脑子里来，只要耐心等待。所以我也不急。

艺术汇：这个问题比较个人，我发现普遍出自艺术世家的，作品会比较儒雅和温和。而那种成长环境中没有这方面背景，往往形同斗犬或至少作品形式或内容上比较激烈。对于这一点你怎么看？

林延：像我从小在中央美术学院教师宿舍的大院长大，画画对我来说就像吃饭和打扫一样是生活的一部分。周围长辈们谁都会，并没有什么特别的。到了巴黎求学我才认识不会画画的朋友，了解还有出去旅行不参观美术馆的人。而我年轻时没想用艺术来成就什么，视之为事业。画画时喜欢隐藏技巧来显技术达不到的活儿，表面不急不缓，内心活动激烈。过去谋生找工作时我从来不想找全职的。全职了哪还有时间画画呢？



[ 106 - 107 ] 门道 宣纸和墨 /

*Gateway, Xuan Paper and Ink, 310 × 190 cm, 2017*



# Lin Yan: Negotiating with Space

By Xiao Tianshi, Translated by Ke Lingxiang, Image Courtesy of the Fou Gallery

Lin Yan: Gateway

Fou Gallery / New York

2 December 2017-20 January 2018

"I become more and more enjoying the joy of making different designs according to different spaces. I feel like negotiating with space. I even integrate the structure and factors of the space into my works and always adapt myself to the variability of Chinese traditional handmade paper cutting. Such plasticity renders me more tolerant and freer."

**Art Frontier:** It seems that you are good at observing the soul of architecture and its relation to people. You once said that you wanted to study architecture in your early years. If you liken your personality to architecture, what kind of architecture do you belong to?

**Lin Yan:** Maybe the ancient Chinese wooden architecture, like those in the style of the Chinese Tang Dynasty that I saw in Nara, Japan. Spacious. Fresh air can go through every corner of the house. With corridors but not an enclosed space. I like the classical gardens of Suzhou, but I have a much more affinity with the architecture that is both massive and ethereal, as I grew up in northern China. The wooden architecture itself is closer to nature and will finally return to nature. Such a destination is more permanent than that of those materials such as stones, steels, and irons. The type of architecture that will eternally exist in the world seems to be more like my personality.

**Art Frontier:** Apart from the flow of air, light is also a very important element in your work. What do you think is the role of light in your creation?

**Lin Yan:** Paper is transparent, like jade; it is also hazy, like the reserved nature of Chinese people's character. I usually employ multi-layered paper, pasting the small flakes of paper layer by layer, like the strokes applied to the oil painting. With the help of a little light, the work can show the beauty of the paper itself, the abundance of its layers, and the process of creation.

**Art Frontier:** You once said that you did not like to use verbal language to describe your own works and also mentioned that, compared to our contemporary art, the artistic thinking of ancient paintings was more broad and uninhibited. On the contrary, I feel that our inability to interpret is due to the fact that we first had verbal language and the skill of communication rather than paintings. Vision itself is words. You always use the archaism, concise but elegant, as the titles of your works, I wonder if you have vision first or the images are actually produced by these archaic words?



**Lin Yan:** Visual language is also a language, though its way of thinking is different from our use of verbal language. I am more proficient in visual language rather than verbal language. I understand the world generally through vision. For example, when I talk with others, I may be unable to know them; however, when I look at the painting, I immediately know what the painter thinks about, his life, what kind of person he is. The effect brought by vision can give me a lot of information. Thus, vision is my way of thinking throughout the process of creation, the title is figured out afterward. They belong to two different tracks of creation that I refuse to exchange. If we use vision as a means to convey messages, vision itself is a stiff way whilst communicating with the spectator. I am totally guided by vision in the process of creation. When my works are presented to the spectator, it is the fleeting feeling that comes first, which subsequently provokes thoughts.

**Art Frontier:** To a degree, your works are a kind of specimens and wreckage, representing the forms of objects in the world after stripping their various appearances. The concept of the specimen is to seek eternity while destroying life and freezing it so as to use death to depict life. Contrarily, the fragile texture of Xuan paper denotes the emptiness and nothingness of eternity. All this reminds me of the Tibetan mandala painting.

**Lin Yan:** What you said comes out in an involuntary manner. I did not intentionally invoke it. Indeed, Xuan paper is a relatively fragile material, but it possesses considerable energy in my eyes. What I like is exactly such a communicative power of Xuan paper. The dimension of my work changes in every exhibition, like water shaping in an arbitrary way and always adapting itself to circumstances, without a fixed, perpetual or complete form. These site-specific works are like the fleeting moments of life, they will vanish as soon as they are out of these specific sites.

**Art Frontier:** How long do you expect each of your works will last? Temporally speaking, how does the persistence of a work of art influence its interpretation?

**Lin Yan:** Paper lasts a thousand years. The life of artworks depends on the conservators. I attach more importance to the emotions and experiences that the spectator possesses while looking at a work of art at a particular moment. That's the central purpose of an exhibition. I actually don't particularly care about such issues as how long my works will last.

**Art Frontier:** I have noticed that the description of your works denotes such features as site-specific installations and dimensions variable. Such an organic flexibility has a strong impact on our perception. Which exhibition do you think has achieved the best harmony between the exhibit space and your works?

**Lin Yan:** I begin to understand my own creation with effort. When I was a little girl, I did not quite understand why I wanted to study architecture. Gradually, I come to know that I have an ability to control space. From my first solo exhibition until 2013 when I began to do more installations, the first thing I always do before the exhibition is to examine the exhibit space on purpose. These new works displayed at the Fou Gallery were also created according to the doors, windows, fireplaces, and decorations of the exhibit space. It seems that they are something that grows naturally in the exhibit space. The exhibition at the Fou Gallery is different from others, for which I brought my works to the galleries; it is in this exhibition that my works are integrated into space in the most compact way.

**Art Frontier:** Your works also reveal a tendency to gradually expand, as moss and vines grow, from small ruins to the large architectural elements. Have you ever considered that your works may someday cover the entire exhibit space? What is your ideal exhibit hall?

**Lin Yan:** The amount of blank space in the exhibit hall should accord with the nature of the space. It relies on how I

negotiate with space. Usually, when I go to a show, I very much like to gaze at the unoccupied wall, imagining what kind of works can be displayed there so as to attain a better effect. Every exhibit space is special, either tall, low, intricate or simple, and each gives me a particular impression so that to do an exhibition is like to create a new work of art, possessing a sort of challenge. Space offers me a lot of inspirations, but I will feel regret if the ideal effect produced in the studio cannot be represented in the exhibit hall due to the unprofessional management of the space. I become more and more enjoying the joy of making different designs according to different spaces. I feel like negotiating with space. I even integrate the structure and factors of the space into my works and always adapt myself to the variability of Chinese traditional handmade paper cutting. Such plasticity renders me more tolerant and freer.

**Art Frontier:** You mentioned in the previous interviews that creation is a process of simplification: "Using the least amount of elements to express the most thoughts." Would you like to describe such a process of simplification? Does the issue that what should be kept and what should be discarded belong to a sentimental decision or a rational one?

**Lin Yan:** Such a process is actually very complicated. These seemingly simple works are created after a lot of revisions and calculations that I have made with my drafts. For instance, the maze of Xuan paper, Phekda (2017), that I created for the exhibition, Useless Value (24 December 2017-17 March 2018), at the Wanying Art Museum, Shijiazhuang, needs considerable, complicated calculations for the details. So does Silent Song (2014-2017) displayed in the exhibition at the Fou Gallery, as the work is very long. I thought that my work might be too long as the ceiling seemed not high enough; fortunately, we still succeeded in displaying it in a very special manner. It is not I who make the decision in this process of negotiating with my works and space; on the contrary, I have to adapt myself to both of them and give up my own ideas, aiming to obtain the best plan in such a process of self-denial.

**Art Frontier:** Were you always alone while doing that? Either the maze of Xuan paper or the gates? Is it because you need to negotiate with space alone?

**Lin Yan:** Yes. I do have lots of thoughts, but I always make up my mind because of one fleeting idea that I have had in a flash. For example, in the exhibition at the Eslite Gallery, Taiwan (09 April 2016-08 May 2016), it seems that Xuan paper has grown out of the crevice on the wall. I still had various plans the night before the exhibition: would it grow upward or downward, extending like the stave? In the next morning, I had finally decided to merely keep the crevice. Such a process of redesigning and calculating is spent in my mind. I would not like to repeat the past so that sometimes I still think about my works even though the deadline is approaching. Creation is like an adventure. However, my experiences convince me that I merely have to wait because such a fleeting idea will certainly emerge in my mind. So I am not in a hurry.

**Art Frontier:** My following question may be personal. I see that the works created by the artists who grew up in an artistic family seem more refined and moderate. Those created by other artists are usually more radical, either in terms of their forms or contents, like fighting dogs. What do you think?

**Lin Yan:** I grew up in the large courtyard of teachers' residency at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts, painting was part of my daily life, like meals and cleaning. Everyone in my life knew how to paint and it was not special if one could paint. It was when I continued my studies in Paris that I began to know the facts that there were some people who did not know how to paint and some people who would not visit museums while travelling abroad. When I was young, I considered painting as my career rather than to use art to make myself famous. When I paint, I like to hide my craftsmanship in order to convey what cannot be achieved by technique. It seems that I am not in a hurry and with a lot of patience; on the contrary, my mind is very active. I had never tried to find a full-time job when I needed money for living in the past. How could I have enough time to paint when I had a full-time job?





日夜之间 1 宣纸 镜子 有机玻璃 /

*Between Day and Night 1, Xuan Paper, Mirror, and Plexiglass, 87 × 87 × 20 cm, 2014 - 2017*