



NGAI Wing Lam: No Dreams Can Last Longer Than A Night

Exhibition period: 21 October – 14 October, 2023

Exhibition opening: Saturday, 21 October 2023, 2 – 5 pm

Gallery EXIT is pleased to present **Ngai Wing Lam's** new solo exhibition 'No Dreams Can Last Longer Than A Night', on view from 21 October to 18 November 2023. An opening will be held on Saturday, 21 October at 2–5 pm. Ngai's creative practice focuses on painting, and her style is influenced by Western landscape paintings from the 18th and 19th centuries, such as works by Caspar David Friedrich and John Constable. In recent years Ngai mostly works with oil applied directly onto wooden panels cut or framed into different shapes, and displayed in the form of storyboards divided by specially designed wooden frames. Using the wooden frames as dividers for storyboards, the artist establishes narrative perspectives, then posits two landscapes against each other. This device is inspired by mediaeval religious paintings, where the frame is a part of the pictorial content, which is filled with hidden symbols and allegories. Painting on surfaces of specific shapes and forms, the artist creates a sort of narrative sequence and overview; at the same time, frames of different shapes also serve a decorative function, forming a connection with domestic spatial settings.

Ngai is particularly attracted to the filmic narrative form of montage and is inspired by a wide range of films from around the world. Childhood playthings such as pop-up books, cardboard houses, paper dolls, toy furniture, old TVs also serve as references for the artist as narrative settings. In two paintings featured in this exhibition, handcrafted relief sculptures of mermen are set against a painted background, an imitation stage design and a new experiment of the artist in the last few years. The hand movements of crafting the mermen dolls, the speed with which the material dries up, remind the artist of doing handicraft as a child, when the act of recreating the mind's image was most simple and direct, the thinking minimal and abstract. While this mode of production finds a parallel in her other job in wax figure restoration, the artist discerns a strong contrast between making three-dimensional sculptures and painting. In painting there is no limit to one's imagination, even when one can get lost with too much freedom, or become too contrived due to an obsession with details. On the contrary, she tries to follow the most primitive and raw method when handcrafting sculptural works, allowing herself to create with the purest mind.

The 'Dreamscape' series is an extension of Ngai's graduation work in 2008 at the Academy of Visual Arts, Baptist University. The 2008 series takes as its theme dream fragments that touch upon emotional relationships, nature, landscapes and dreams. The new works in this

exhibition, on the other hand, illustrate various dreamscapes, wherein the object-symbol 'bed' constantly appears. In a dream the artist once had, a big squirrel occupied her bed. The image stays, inexplicable. For Ngai, the bed is a private space and a sanctuary for everyone. Investigating and piecing together fragments picked up between the worlds of dream and reality, the artist endeavours to edit them into a continuous narrative. She believes that dreams are the reflection of consciousness undisguised; once we wake up and try to recall them, they are modified and cannot be restored to their original form by our unreliable memory. Meaning can only be recreated through the act of piecing together fragments. The works are presented in pairs of storyboards, demonstrating two views of the same scene. They may be mutually incompatible parallel worlds, or storyboards of different time sequences in the same film.

Ngai has always worked and lived in Hong Kong. Although the works exhibited here surround dreamscapes divorced from reality and do not refer to any specific places in Hong Kong, for Ngai, her works are always set against the background of Hong Kong and places she frequents. Shek O Beach constitutes the backdrop for *The Big Blue Blanket - "I found some shells."* and *The Big Blue Blanket - "I found some knowledge."* *The Failed/Expired/Invalid Love Story - Vega is too far away from Altair* and *The Failed/Expired/Invalid Love Story - Altair is too far away from Vega* are set in the suburbs of Sai Kung. The artist, who lives in urban Hong Kong, takes to a simpler life observing the influence of nature on humans, the relationship between weather and all things. The changes in weather and the surrounding environment are also reflected in the choice of colour in the works.

The merman character that often appears in Ngai's works is the artist's signature motif. The merman in the paintings is actually a koi, a popular pet in Hong Kong, since ornamental fish can easily be kept in home aquariums in small living spaces. These mermen have no fixed identities. Like actors, they appear in different scenes in different roles. Situated in gaps and corners, they are observers between reality and dreams. The mermen with identical outlooks and expressions exhibit endless transformations and experience unpredictable life dramas. This new series of paintings depict the legend of *The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl* in modern times. The merman Altair (Cowherd) and mermaid Vega (Weaver Girl) appear in separate frames, each leading a different life. A time gap is apparent here: Since Altair and Vega are 16 light years apart, even if Altair moves at the speed of light, it will take him 16 years to reach Vega. Hence the annual reunion of the two lovers can never happen.



蟻穎琳：夢短夜長

展期：2023 年 10 月 21 日至 11 月 18 日

開幕：2023 年 10 月 21 日（星期六）下午 2 時至 5 時

安全口畫廊呈獻**蟻穎琳**最新個展「夢短夜長」，展期為 2023 年 10 月 21 日至 11 月 18 日。開幕將於 10 月 21 日星期六下午 2 時至 5 時舉行。蟻穎琳的創作以繪畫為主，風格受卡斯巴·大衛·弗雷德里希及約翰·康斯特勃等十八至十九世紀西方風景畫流派影響。近年多以油彩在木板上作畫，裝裱或裁成不同形狀，並以特製木框劃分成一個個分鏡畫面的形式展示。藝術家以木框作分鏡，設立不同敘事角度，再以對倒的形式展示兩邊的風景，靈感來自中世紀宗教繪畫。在中世紀宗教繪畫中，畫框與畫面內容息息相關，隱藏了各種符號與暗示。藝術家在特定形狀或設計的底板上作畫，藉以將故事分鏡或表現作品整體內容。各式形狀的畫框亦具有裝飾性的功能，與家居空間設置形成更強的連繫。

蟻穎琳尤其喜歡電影的剪接敘事形式，深受不少東西方電影啟發，涉獵之電影種類廣泛。藝術家兒時玩物的立體圖書、紙板屋、紙玩偶、玩家家酒的傢俱模型、舊式電視，作為各種故事場景亦成為創作時的參照。是次展覽展出兩幅繪畫作品，繪畫背景之上添加手捏立體人魚角色，模仿舞台設計，為藝術家近年的新嘗試。製作人魚人偶的手捏動作和材料變乾的速度，讓藝術家憶起小時做勞作，只是簡樸直接地模塑出心中的模型，創作思考模式簡潔而抽象。這種製作模式與她從事的蠟像復修工作異曲同工的同時，製作立體雕塑與繪畫兩者思維卻也存在強烈對比。繪畫時盡可天馬行空，儘管題材太闊會讓人迷失，或太執著細節而使畫面過於雕琢。相對的，手捏立體作品時則藝術家盡量以最原始粗糙的方式，讓自己以最純粹的心態創作。

《夢境》系列為蟻穎琳 2008 年於浸會大學視覺藝術學院的畢業作品之延伸。畢業作品以夢境碎片為題，觸及感情關係、大自然、風景與夢等類別主題。新作中則展現了一個個夢境空間，畫中均出現「床」這一物件／符號。藝術家曾經作過一個夢，夢中一隻大松鼠佔據了她的床。那畫面一直揮之不去，無法解釋。對蟻氏而言，床是一個私密空間、每一個人各自的避風港。藝術家嘗

試於夢境和現實之間來回拼湊考察，把夢境碎片剪輯成延續的故事。她認為夢是赤裸的意識；人夢醒後一旦嘗試把夢境記下，夢的內容已歷經二次修飾，單憑記憶無法回到夢境的原型，唯有透過拼湊，為碎片重新創造意義。作品以「一對」的分鏡形式出現：同一場景、兩個鏡頭。它們可能是互不相容的平行時空，也可能是同一齣電影中不同時序的先後分鏡。

蟻穎琳一直在香港工作生活，雖然今次展出之作品環繞夢境，脫離現實之餘沒有顯示出任何特定的香港場景，然而對她而言，其作品背景由始至終都與香港、與她常去的地方有關。《藍色大被子 - 我找到一些貝殼。》與《藍色大被子 - 我找到一些知識。》的背景為石澳海灘；《不可行／失效的愛情故事 - 織女星》與《不可行／失效的愛情故事 - 牛郎星》則取景於西貢郊區。於香港城市生活的蟻氏近年尤其嚮往簡單生活，觀察大自然對人的影響、天氣與萬物的關係；在作品中的色彩運用亦反映了藝術家周遭的天氣和環境變化。

在蟻穎琳作品中經常出現的人魚角色乃藝術家的標誌主題風格。繪畫中的人魚實為錦鯉，是香港常見的寵物，因為觀賞魚類能於狹窄的居住空間飼養。這些人魚沒有固定的身份設定，在不同的場境出現，就演出不同的角色，如同演員一樣。他們同時亦是來回於現實與夢境之間的觀察者，身處不同角落。樣貌表情看似一式一樣的人魚其實展現了無窮變化，經歷著變幻莫測的人生。是次新作所繪畫的是現代牛郎織女的故事，男人魚和女人魚分別出現於不同的畫框內，各自過著不同的人生，亦展現了一種時間的落差：由於牛郎星與織女星之間相隔了十六光年，即使牛郎以光速追趕，也得花上十六年才能遇上織女，所以二人根本沒可能每年見一次面。