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另类空间
ALTERNATIVE SPACES

岩彩画在中国/YANCAL IN CHINA
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露茜·瑞文/LUCY RAVEN
张奕满有关书籍生命的最新创作再度证明他是一个实话实说的艺术家，并在后观念艺术的姿态下为个人和材料保留了位置。这位学成于伦敦的新加坡艺术家现在由维他命创意空间（广州/北京）代理。他一头扎进文学作品世界的同时又避开了庸常，用新的绘画和雕塑展示了有关人类孤独处境的广泛思考中短小精干的一个个片段。

十几幅大小相同的画作点缀于阿姆斯特丹Motive画廊经过改装的墙面上，展览名字非常清新，就叫“岛（封面）”。艺术家在想象中为一系列平装出版物设计封面并将其变成绘画，其中包括保罗·奥斯特的《偶然之音》、安布斯特的《沙の女》以及阿道司·赫胥黎的《岛》。每件作品画面里读者时都是一个自我建构的时刻，画面上新构成主义的颜色碎片与不同作者和书名产生了某种不拘一格的对话。

此处，张奕满回归了作为一种固有观念的孤独。展览的辅助性材料中包括一份图示说明，展示了艺术家围绕“弃儿”概念进行的各种联想思考。观众由此得以了解张奕满从准备初期开始直到最后想到的所有关于孤独的对象。张奕满的画作以其独特个性充分理解与之相对的同名小说尽管讲述的是寻找自我的故事，却更多喻指了广义上的社会实体，而主人公有限的体验往往成为人类集体经历的宏观表达。

学设计出身的张奕满做项目时常常按照设计公司模式操作。“岛（封面）”相当于是今年早些时候第八届欧洲艺术宣言展上分列餐厅两边墙壁的海报系列的延伸，而海报系列又来自艺术家2006年的《无题（简装封面1号）》。这种把程式化形式上套的做法在本次展览的其他两件雕塑作品中也能看到。艺术家在一年中读过的四本书被随意地堆在一起，旁边放着几个玻璃杯，也是同一种图
The latest incarnation of Heman Chong’s work with the lives of books reaffirms him as a straight-talking artist who reserves a place for the personal and the material within the gestures of post-conceptual art. The London-trained Singaporean artist who is represented by Vitamin Creative Space (Guangzhou/Beijing), delves into literature and yet side-steps the prosaic to present new painting and sculpture as concise moments in an extended consideration of human solitude.

Roughly a dozen identically proportioned canvases punctuate the reconfigured walls of Amsterdam’s Motive Gallery in an exhibition plainly titled “Island (Covers).” As imagined paperback covers for a fictive publishing run, the paintings propose images for works of literature such as Paul Auster’s The Music of Chance, Kobo Abe’s Woman in the Dunes and Aldous Huxley’s Island. Each piece addresses the viewer as a self-constituted moment with neoconstructivist shards of tonal colour set in impassive conversation with titles and authors of the various stories of selfhood they propose to contain.

Recently relocated to the new cultural district of Amsterdam’s north, Motive is a generous space by Dutch standards. Even with its unheard-of raised ceiling, the gallery was comfortably bustling despite the impressively miserable weather of early winter. Chong’s showing was accompanied by two other parallel, or in the gallery’s terminology “parallax” exhibitions; “Anti” by Dutch photographer Martine Stig and “Itinerary” by French artist Dominique Pettigrand. All three offerings took the single figure, either alone among the multitude or in a more literal isolation as their point of departure.

Here Chong returns to solitude as an idee fixe. Included among the ancillary material of the exhibition is a diagrammatic map of the artist’s associative thoughts around the figure of the “castaway.” The audience is permitted entry to Chong’s mind at the point of his preparation, and is taken through various schemata of scenarios for isolation. In their singularity, Chong’s canvases are wise to the way in which the journeys-to-the-self of their namesake novels are metonymical for the greater social entity, and to the way in which the confined experience of a protagonist often serves as a meta-tale for the collective being of humanity.

Trained in design, Chong’s projects often operate with the artist as a production house. The “Island (Covers)” series is itself an extension of the offset A0 posters that lined the canteen walls of Manifesta 8’s main venue earlier this year, which in turn grew out of the 2006 series “Untitled (Paperback Covers #01).” The application of formula to form is also employed in the two sculptures included within the show. They are points from an annual series in which four books read by the artist over the course of a year are casually stacked along with a set of water glasses used over the same period. These beside assemblages exude restraint in their ultra-limited editions as the result of a simple set of conceptual terms. In referring to the sculptures, Chong points to the status of both the books and glasses as “vessels.” In a canny move he has created containers that lay bare his influences, presenting objects as indexical to identity.

The social smarts of Chong’s pieces prevent their concern with solitude from being inflicted experientially on the viewer. A recent Western vogue for literature in exhibitions holds sway from Massimiliano Gioni’s 2006 Berlin Biennale titled after Steinbeck’s Of Mice and Men, to Jens Hoffman’s recently completed trio of shows based on classic American novels at the CCA Wattis Institute in San Francisco. In its weaker moments, this turn to narrative supports excessive contrivance and audience manipulation. But in Chong’s exploration of the lone subject there is no solipsism, no cloying attempt to induce the audience into an experience of the novels at hand. Rather, the compression of image and narrative within the canvases and sculptures presents solitude through a self-contained referential complex of objects. Vivian Zingler