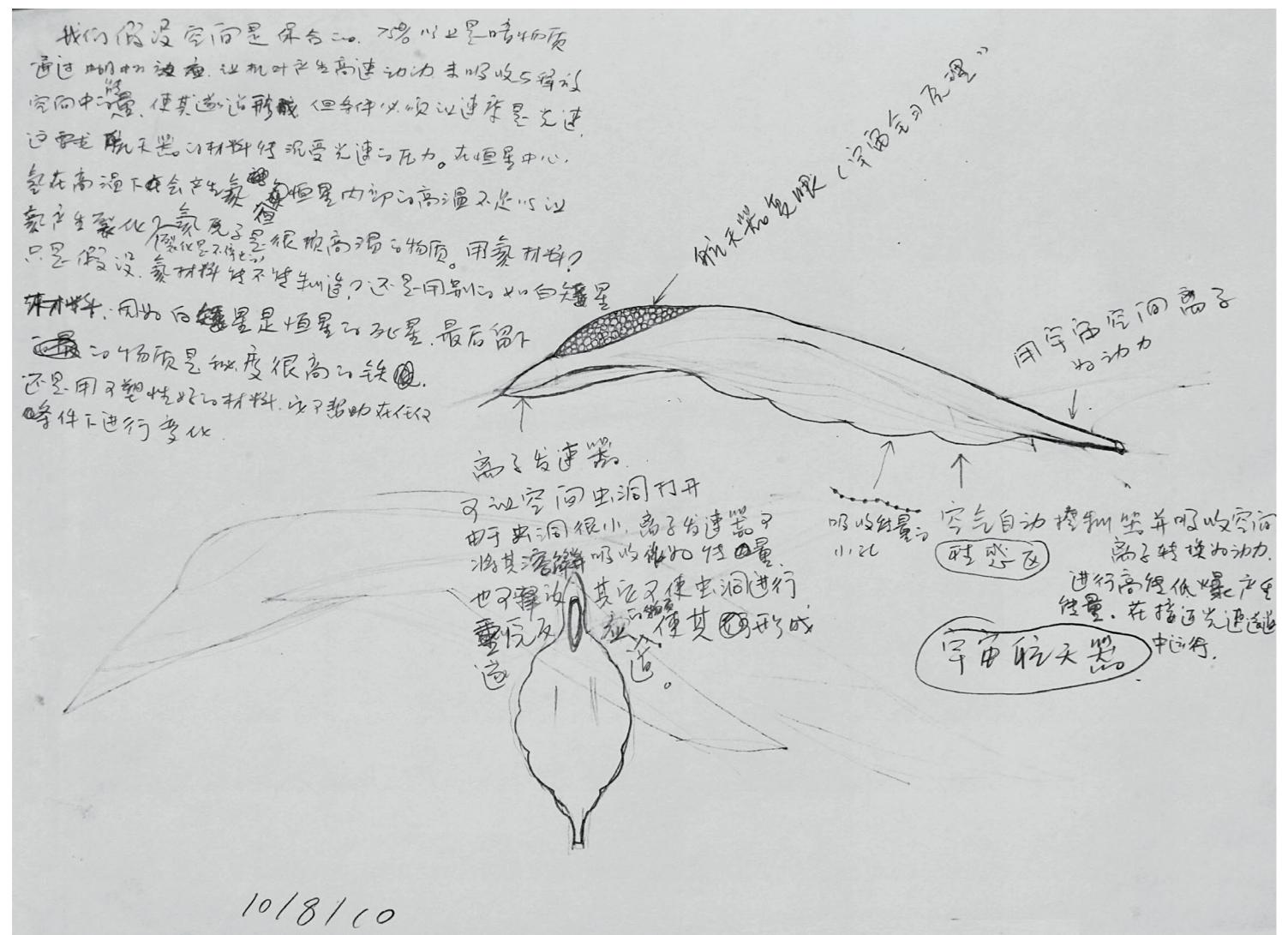


相性的雕塑 + 梦幻的物理

文 / 马修·贾纳特



Drawing
手稿

对于向阳建筑尺度的装置，我的最初印象是它们制造了势不可挡的雕塑式迷阵，而对作品进一步的解读揭示出了一则视觉“公式”——一道关于文化与科学的谜题待我去探解。

对一则数学公式的基本定义并非是对与错的证明，而是寻找价值或解决方式的追问。所以当面对《非常建筑之意园》Ultra Architecture - Garden in Mind 这件作品时，我们发现了古董家具；似曾相识而重新转化，丝线装置连接起了西方教堂平面图和与之对应的宋代郭熙的名作《早春图》。这些意义符号引领观众进入向阳作品中的中西文化视觉对话的意识。但也许向阳的雕塑对社会构成了一套更广泛的趣题，又或一则如下公式：

中国历史 ÷ 都市化 × 全球化 + 意识传统 - 欧洲 / 美国 宗教
消费主义 = ?

这是一道值得探索的大谜题，一道观众在参与作品的同时亦可加入自身的形态位置与身份值的谜题。

当代中国出现在欧洲的报刊媒体中最流行的曝光素材是关于发生在每个中国城市里的日新月异的社区发展、城市化、财富以及巨型结构的建筑。向阳以一条传统渔船和一座中式木“房子”来呈现其艺术，起初似乎是在暗示对过去和简化形态的渴求，而真正进入这座综合体时我们却找到了对比性的语言——珍贵的丝线以惊叹式的现代结构连接精致的水墨图像，将历史性植入当代性。向阳装置中的这种二元性清晰地标注了两者图像（与文化）的差异与相似处。在这道公式中，东方与西方找到了平衡而非矛盾。

研究中国经济发展、增长的消费和可支配收入的经济学家们，时常会评论中国年轻社会阶层随意的消费态度。而向阳对其作品材料和形式的取舍，仿佛对新都市美学把持着一面历史明镜，提醒我们关乎手工制作、自然媒材，以及一种慢下来的生活模式。有趣的是，作品是一个高度专注于手作元素的，将水墨、丝线、家具中的中国核心技艺进行重新构想的雕塑过程，由此带来的实体空间的体验，我们是否也能够从虚拟世界、电脑游戏平台、或雕塑“模拟城市”(SimCity)中的空间探索和寻获物品环节来获得呢？这个特质从德国卡塞尔 2012 年展出的作品《非常建筑之意园》中得到明显的实证。作品获得观众的热烈反响，原因之一便是作品潜在的互动性和可探索性。公共雕塑的挑战是其在公共空间中的影响力，而向阳的雕塑用本土建筑的熟悉的形式，将人们吸引进作品，进而揭开新的元素，并引领观众在抽屉、橱柜、门窗中探访并寻获其中的水墨和丝线宝藏。

将非常建筑描述为他的“梦幻之屋”，我意识到在书写向阳作品的时候，我原本以为会以一名盎格鲁撒克逊人(Anglo-Saxon)的视角和天性来对其作品做较直白的阐述，却在此过程中不时相较于向阳作品中固有的如梦特质——似曾相识的器物不停地变幻成另类形态，以及雕塑式的拼合所制造出的无法抗拒的、超越单纯理性的视觉叠加——是否此途径会更接近于理论物理学中科学家所使用实验工具来探求新现象？

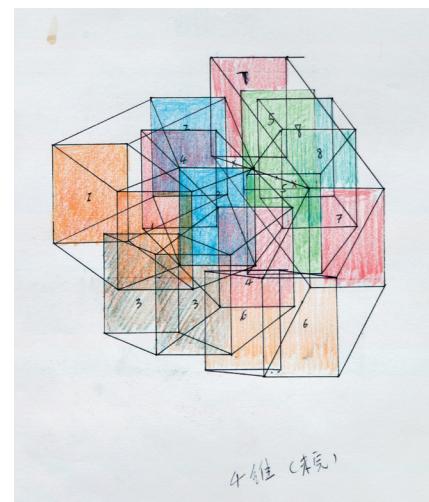
向阳最标致性的语汇，是用丝线将二维图像通过空间与之相对应的新图像进行视觉转换。如将作品中我们熟知的中国丝线的象征意义作过度解读，也许会是一个错误的考量——我们所了解的丝绸的历史，作为一项奢侈品、为皇室专供、连接中西方丝绸之路的贸易角色；而在其作品中，毋庸置疑向阳找到了色彩鲜活的丝线作为文化变化、转换以及他个人从中国到美国再回到中国的旅途之回响的完美媒介。伸直的丝线所带来的光鲜彩色的视觉效果，似乎带给了作品时光机或传送门的特质，事物经过空间和文化可以穿越转变——我再次好奇于向阳的雕塑语汇作为一则视觉公式，将“已知”和“恒定”参数与“未知”数相关联。向阳自信地把控着大型雕塑的元素——尺度、形式、和结构，但只有近距离的解读探索作品时产生的对多重材质、技法和图像的更深层理解，才能为揭开此谜题提供多一些的提示。

向阳成长于中国、以艺术家身份成名于美国、后又回归发展的生活经历，给了他审视两者文化和社会的洞察力和视角。将向阳与美国

作家托马斯·沃尔夫(Thomas Wolfe)相对照，后者描写美国文化且在回到美国前于欧洲生活多年。他的名句“你永远不能再回乡”似能够捕捉当代艺术家的处境。他们旅行海外，所创作的作品反映他们的家乡以及全球事件的影响，在多个国家、双年展和场境中呈现作品于新的观众。正如沃尔夫，向阳的作品将自传式的记忆与原初的、有创造力的意象，和在不同大陆生活所生成的世界观相结合。2014艺术北京上，向阳的《可支配的彼岸》*Scholar's Boat*呈现了一幅超越时间的、富有田园传统的图像，加上建筑的结构形态和其于都市北京的环境铺陈种种，这些总括出了他的文化错位性，以及一位放逐在当今社会的历史旅人的身份。

向阳的新作骨骼系列《宇宙弦》*Cosmic Strings*中，他面向未来科技，将新的艺术探究视觉化于弦理论。该理论探索新维度在理论上的可能性，通过数学概念来解释在量子物理学标准模型下无解的现象。在2014年，来想象一下多元性、二元性和转型这些观念是属于理论科学家的，还是属于当代艺术家的？是多么有趣！

最终，来解开向阳雕塑的视觉公式的最佳方式，是亲身参与其中——穿行于意园，在艺术家那充满趣味性的、手制的美学中探索，花些时间来发掘一个更个人化的解答。其中，雕塑作品描述了看似对立或相驳的文化之间如何转为互补、相互关联和相互依存。看起来，一位艺术家的创作直觉和实验性的雕塑研究可以和新型弦理论的理论数学相互跨界，我们也可以开始看到艺术与科学之间的(丝线)千丝万缕。



Drawing
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Scholar's Boat
可支配的彼岸
2014

Analogue Sculpture + Dream Physics.

Matthew Jarratt

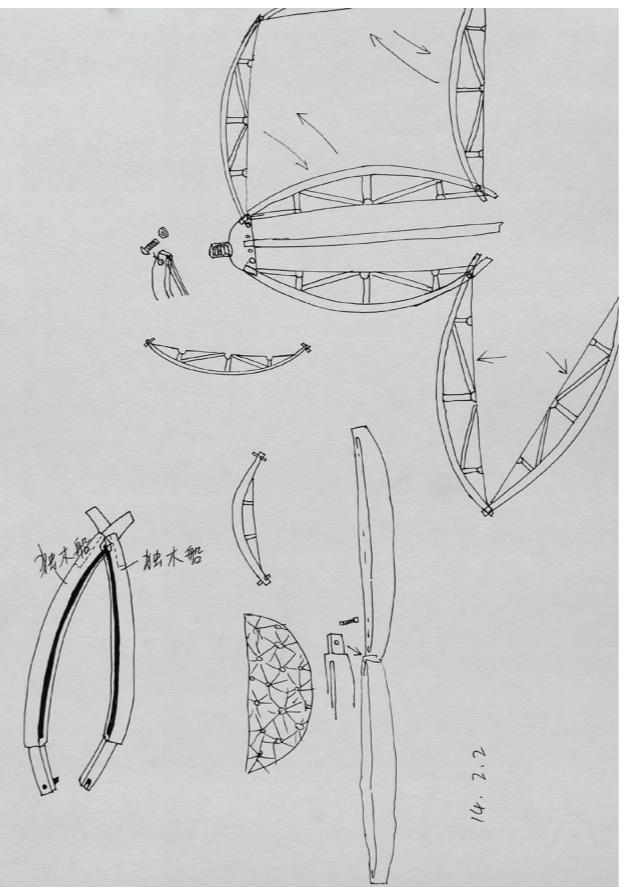
My initial impression of Xiang's architectural scale installations are that they create overwhelming sculptural puzzles, however a closer reading of the work reveals a kind of visual 'equation' – a cultural and scientific puzzle to be explored.

The general definition of a mathematical equation is that it is neither a true or false statement, but a problem for finding values or solutions. So, when we encounter *Ultra Architecture – Garden in Mind* we find antique furniture; familiar but transformed, silk thread installations linking a western Cathedral plan contrasted with the famous Song Dynasty painting "Early Spring" by Guo Xi. These signifiers lead viewers to an awareness of visual dialogue between Chinese and Western cultures within Xiang's work. But maybe Xiang's sculpture poses a wider set of playful questions for society or an equation where:

$$\text{Chinese history} \div \text{urbanisation} \times \text{globalisation} + \text{intellectual tradition} - \text{European/US } \frac{\text{religion}}{\text{consumerism}} = ?$$

It is a great puzzle to explore and one which the viewer can add in their own geometry and identity as they engage the artworks.

The most common story about modern China in the European press and media is of the rapid change to communities, urbanisation, wealth and the mega structure architecture that is multiplying in every Chinese city. By presenting art within a traditional fishing boat and a domestic wooden 'house' Xiang seems at first to indicate a longing for an older and less complicated time but into this mix we have the contrasting language of precious silks in a striking contemporary structure connecting delicate ink images and transporting the historical to the contemporary. This dualism in Xiang's installations clearly highlights the differences and similarities



Drawing
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between images (and cultures). In this equation East meets West and finds balance rather than conflict.

Economists who observe China's growing economy, increase in consumption and disposable income often comment on the relaxed attitude to consumerism across the younger society yet Xiang's choice of materials and forms seem to hold a historical mirror to the new urban aesthetic and reminds us of the handmade, natural materials and a slower way of life. It is interesting that a sculpture process that is so focussed on multiple hand crafted elements, and the reimaging of core Chinese techniques in ink painting, silks and furniture can also be experienced as physical space from a virtual world, a platform computer game or a sculptural SimCity – with spaces to explore and objects to find? This quality was certainly evident in *Ultra Architecture – Garden in Mind* when shown in Kassel, Germany in 2012. One of the reasons for this installation's huge popularity with visitors was the potential for interaction and exploration. The challenge for so much public sculpture is its impact in the public realm but in using the familiar forms of domestic architecture Xiang's sculpture drew people inside and this is where his work often reveals new elements and the need for the

viewer to explore the drawers, cupboards, doors and windows and encounter the ink and silk treasures within.

Describing Ultra Architecture as his 'dream house' I am aware that in writing about Xiang's work I bring an Anglo-Saxon viewpoint and instinct to make a more literal estimate of the artwork but this is contrasted by the inherent dream like quality of Xiang's sculpture - the constant transformation of familiar objects to altered states and an approach where his 'sculptural collage' creates a visual overload that is irresistible and beyond the purely rational – possibly this approach is closer to theoretical physics where scientists use experimental tools to explore new phenomena?

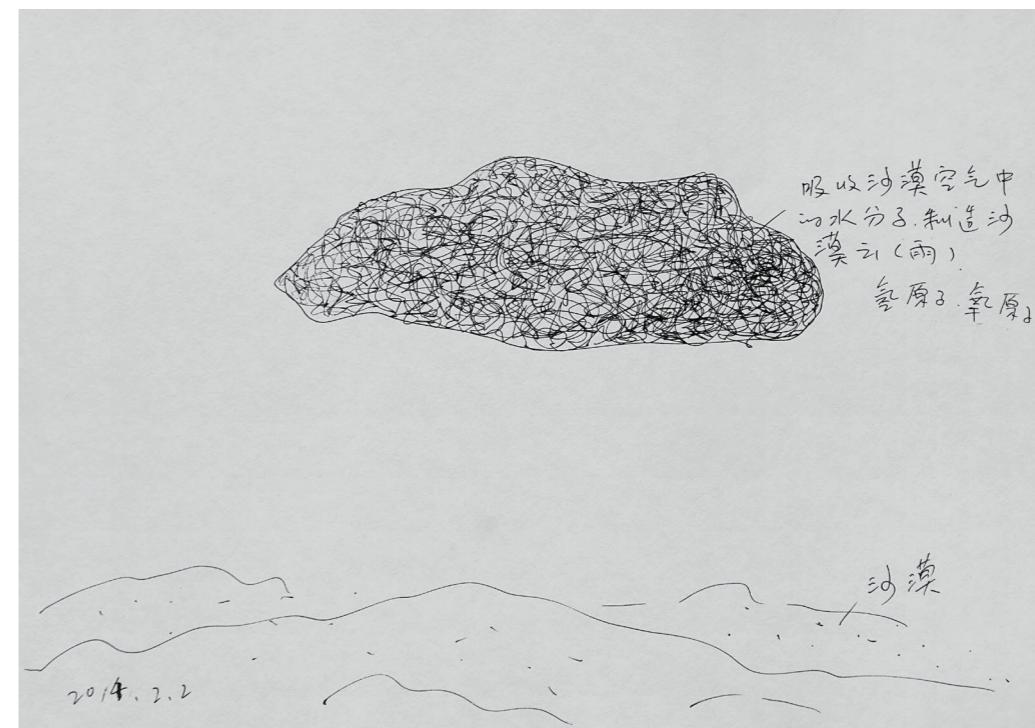
Xiang's most iconic language is his use of silk to visually transport a two-dimensional image through space to connect to a new and opposite image. It is possibly the wrong calculation to over read the well known symbolism of Chinese silk in Xiang's work – we know the history of Silk as a luxury, reserved for Emperors and the trading role of the Silk Road in connecting the East and West but in Xiang's work it is hard to deny that he has found the perfect material of vibrant silk threads to convey cultural change and transformation and an echo of his personal journey from China to America and back again. The sheer visual and colourful impact of Xiang's tensioned silks seem to give the sculpture the quality of a time machine or portal where things can travel and change through space and culture – again I wonder about Xiang's sculptural language working as a visual equation where 'known' and 'constant' parameters are connected to 'unknown' elements. Xiang is an artist who handles the big elements of sculpture – scale, form and structure with confidence but it is the closer reading and exploration of his works that yield a deeper understanding as multiple materials, techniques and images add clues to resolve the puzzle.

Xiang's experience of growing up in China, becoming successful as an artist in the USA and returning and developing his practice in Beijing gives him insight and perspectives on both cultures and societies. By contrast American Author Thomas Wolfe wrote about American culture and spent a lot of time in Europe before returning to the USA, his famous quote 'you can never go home again' may capture the situation of the contemporary artist who travels, makes artworks about their homeland, impact of global issues and presents work for new audiences in many countries, biennales and contexts. Like Wolfe, Xiang Yang's work combines autobiographical memory with original and inventive imagery with a world view formed by living in different continents. At Art Beijing in 2014 Xiang's *Scholars Boat* seems to provide an image of timelessness and rural tradition but the addition of the architectural structure and its location in modern Beijing seemed to sum

up his issues of cultural dislocation and a historical traveler marooned in the contemporary world.

With Xiang's new series of Bone Works *Cosmic Strings* he looks to future technologies and visualizes his new artistic enquiry into String Theory which promotes the theoretical possibility of new dimensions through a mathematical concept that tries to explain certain phenomena which is not currently explainable under the standard model of quantum physics. In 2014 it is interesting to consider whether ideas of multiplicity, duality and transformation belong to theoretical scientists or to contemporary artists?

Ultimately the best way to resolve the visual 'equation' of Xiang's sculpture is to engage with it – to walk through the Intellectual Garden, to explore, to spend time and to discover a more personal 'solution' in his playful, hand crafted aesthetic where a sculpture describes how apparently opposite or contrary cultures add up to become complementary, interconnected and interdependent. It seems that an artist's intuitive way of working and experimental sculptural investigations may now overlap with the new theoretical math of String Theory and we can begin to see the (silk) thread between art and science.



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