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All The World's Futures 多棱面的未来

第56届威尼斯双年展特别报道

生活 STYLE



All The World's Futures

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Georg Baselitz, *Not falling off the wall*, 2014年

时隔两年，水城威尼斯又迎来了国际上最重要的当代艺术展览。2015年5月9日至11月22日，第56届威尼斯双年展正式向公众开放。由尼日利亚裔策展人Okwui Enwezor策划的中央馆主题为“全世界的未来”，在全球金融危机的背景下，探讨了资本主义所带来的劳工和环境等问题，以及西方中心主义对边缘世界带来的破坏性影响。虽然名为“全世界的未来”，策展人Enwezor表示，展览并非关于想象未来，而是刻画了比乌托邦思想更激进的众多未来的可能性。

编辑_唐彦浩 撰文_Kevin McGarry, Anna Sansom 摄影_Alessandra Chemolio, Andrea Avezzù 供图_la Biennale di Venezia 设计_小原



Human Future 电影及出版展，Arsenale造船厂区

不是关于未来的声明

5月的第二周，数千名来自世界各地的旅客来到中世纪风貌的威尼斯城，却是为了参观国际上最重要的当代艺术展览。第56届威尼斯双年展于5月9日向公众开放，除了数十个国家主办的国家馆外，其中心是由尼日利亚裔策展人Okwui Enwezor策划的国际展，坐落在Giardini（历史最悠久国家馆所在的花园）中央馆，以及庞大的Arsenale展区，后者原是沿河而建、占地长达一英里的军械库。

Enwezor在十几岁时移居纽约，现正由他担任馆长的慕尼黑艺术之家（Haus Der Kunst）是欧洲最重要的文化中心之一，承办大型艺术展及歌剧、音乐和舞蹈表演。他享有一种独特的二元性：他成长于非洲南部地缘政治空间，那里也许是与当代艺术世界联系最稀薄的大陆，但他却攀升到西方艺术界顶层并成为一位明星策展人，花费同样可观的时间在美洲与非洲大陆工作。知道这些以后，我们也不奇怪在开幕前一天，站在中央馆外的他说到，他的展览虽然名为“全世界的未

来”，却绝对不应被看作是关于未来的声明。

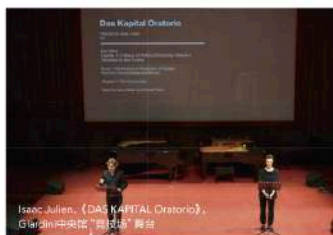
“‘全世界的未来’并非关于想象未来，而是刻画了比乌托邦思想更激进的众多未来。我信奉反乌托邦，因为我相信乌托邦是政治的终结。”他继续说，这个展览“其实着重于一个迫切的政治问题：我们在考虑世界时，应如何撇除单一的以西方为中心的方式？”他提供的答案是要依据多元性，依据不计其数的交织的思想、实践和文化，而不是已对边缘世界造成很大破坏的单一性。

对这个展览的评价是负面居多。没有多少评论家热情地对待Enwezor的预见。他们用“悲伤”和

“郁闷”等字眼，来形容这些表现世界各地的愤怒、痛苦和苦难的作品——如今显然是一个充斥着绝望的时刻；但偶然的轻佻、幽默或美丽却可作为宣泄，抵消野蛮残酷的表现。

Arsenale造船厂区

展览首先在造船厂区逐渐展开。一间摆满Bruce Nauman的霓虹文本的展厅，其中一部分叫做《美国暴力》（American Violence），指出了人们预料之内遭遇痛苦的罪魁祸首：近几十年来，资本主义势力的跨国帝国一直在失控地发展，而美国就是它的缩影。地面上用大型刀具拼插在一块组成的球体，是TKTK艺术家Abel Abdesamad的作品。走出黑暗，迎面见到的是由明明灭灭的细小白色圆柱体组成的一面墙，这是法国艺术家Philippe Parreno的作品《闪烁的灯光》（Flickering Lights），不稳定的亮光也许预示着举步维艰的能源问题，一个直逼全世界的危机。Parreno还让更多这样的灯散布在造船厂各个角落，隐晦地重申这个迫在眉睫的厄运。



Isaac Julien, 《DAS KAPITAL Oratorio》, Giardini中央馆“竞技场”舞台



Bruce Nauman, 《Eat Death》, 1972年, 供图:
艺术家本人及Artist Rights Society (纽约)



Huma Bhabha, 《Senzastolo》, 2014年

其他作品对残酷的表现更加直白。Melvin Edwards来自20世纪60年代的小型壁挂式焊接铜雕塑，链条、锥子和铁锚被锻造成无功能的静物；角落里是Monica Bonvicini笨拙的黑色锯锯和其他串在锁链上的暴力材料组成的形态，大如烤架上的母牛。大厅尽头是一架炮筒向上翘起的全尺寸黑色金属坦克。

展览中最好的作品是安静的，其声音却被被人作品的咆哮所掩盖，比如展厅中八张Georg Baselitz的巨幅油画，描绘了倒立的恶魔似的教皇。耶路撒冷艺术家Jumana Emil Abboud的水彩画，俄罗斯人Olga Chernysheva乃至阿尔及利亚人Massinissa Selmani的石墨素描，都是引人入胜的纸上佳作，更为我们打开了认识世界不同地区争端的窗口。Ji Dachun的一套大多为单色的油画，描绘了让人联想到我们生活世界的大片陆地，并与很难辨清的边界纠缠在一起。

造船厂区最险弱的作品，要数Enesto Ballesteros的表演《室内飞行》(Indoor Flights)，艺术家用纸和小棍做成轻如羽毛的飞机，扭动机首，再把它抛向空中。飞机在空中滑翔，细绳松开而螺旋桨随之旋转，引导飞机平稳轻柔地通过空气，直到他再次抓住它，并重复这个过程。飞机的运动速度显得有些奇怪，比一般预期中重力作用下的物体的降落速度要慢得多。整场表演虽然休闲而放松，艺术家穿着日常服装进行操作，还不时与参观者聊上几句，却透出丰富的内涵——用普通材料和谦逊态度，却能创造出简洁物件和优雅动作。

造船厂区的内容庞杂得几乎让人数不过来。前不久去世的德国导演Harun Farocki的电影作品大全，自然是一大亮点。然而，展示形式并非通过单一屏幕放映他的某一部电影，而是同时并置他的全部作品，将展厅的墙壁化作许多小显示器组成的全景宽银幕。当屏幕上出现静电干扰，说明那部电影还没有被数字化，也许不能恰当地

保存到后世。这是一个不同寻常的姿态，双年展的评委为此颁给了Farocki一个特别奖——似乎这种荣誉更接近于终身成就奖。美国传奇艺术家Adrian Piper也是如此，她通过20世纪70年代从纽约市开始的多个令人不安的表演，将身份政治引入当代艺术领域。她赢得了金狮奖，这是参与Enwezor策划展览中的艺术家所得到的最高奖项。她在这里最值得注意的作品，是在一套三张桌子后配备了女性工作人员，由她们邀请参观者在iPad上签名，作出“我永远千金难买”等承诺。Piper的职业生涯当然是值得肯定的，但这个作品在概念和美学方面最糟糕的，它脱离现实，也并不扣人心弦，削弱了她自己的传统。这类年长的成名艺术家在本次展览中得到了很好的表现机会，然而他们带来的要么是奇怪的作品装置，要么并非自己的巅峰之作；这样的问题不能与催人奋进的未来展望产生共鸣，甚至连这展览本身也不是为了未来而策划（展览的标题本身令人十分困惑）。

Giardini中央馆

中央馆的情况要稍微好一点——也许准确的说法是，没那么糟糕。多产德国雕塑家Isa Genzken不同寻常的无装饰作品体现了数十个未实现户外项目的白色建筑模型，通过锁定在过去的无限潜力表现多元性概念。它们周围是Walker Evan的经典摄影系列《现在让我们称赞名人》(Let Us Now Praise Famous Men)，由拍摄于20世纪30年代大萧条时期的美国穷人黑白照片组成。

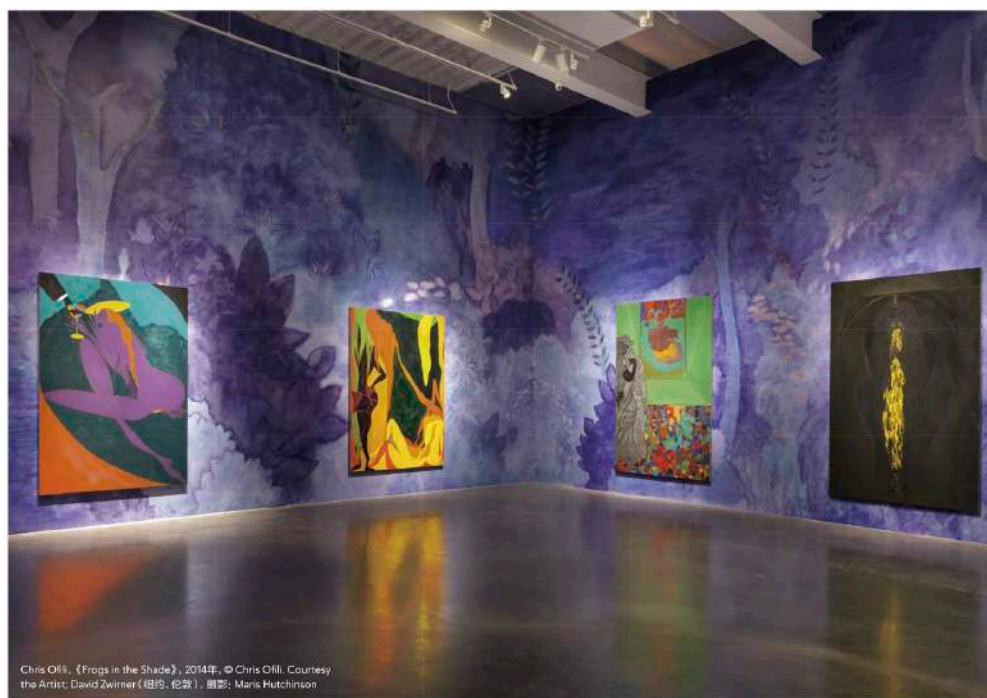
制度批判的先驱Hans Haacke在这里也占了一整个展厅，既有历史作品，例如他在纽约现代艺术博物馆开展的民意调查“洛克菲勒州长并未谴责尼克松总统的印度支那政策，会成为你在11月不给他投票的原因吗？”，以透明并排的容器收集不记名投票结果；也有利用现代技术的新作（效果稍显平淡）。妙的是能在这里看到Robert Smithson创作于1969年的作品《死树》

(Dead Tree)，一棵干涸（改造过的）倒下的树，上面固定着数面长镜子。这是对时光和生命流逝的有效冥想，虽然它被硬塞进一个太小的展厅里。这个展馆有许多幅好看的画，来自埃及的Inji Efflatoun以20世纪中叶笔触带来印象派丛林山脉风景画，来自法国的Marlene Dumas带来满屋子小幅系列黏壁画；美国人Kerry James Marshall创作的非裔美国夫妇自拍照片，故意营造既有摆拍又有抢拍的感觉。情绪和主题的随机性，令分门别类变成了不可能的任务——当这些艺术作品齐聚在同一个展览，我们很难找到理论基础，而只能宽泛地从不同的时期和地点进行采样。

“为了让展览超越简单的发生，” Enwezor说，“要经过一种看似重复的步骤：先要尝试发展新思想并得出双年展的最终构思，然后要寻找能让它发生的框架和形式。”其中一种形式成为了他的动力焦点，他将之称作“竞技场”(The Arena)，这是由建筑师David Adjaye创造的剧场，在展览期间连续上演各种不同的表演和行为艺术。“竞技场”项目的核心，也是“全世界的未来”的整体核心，是由英国导演Isaac Julian执导的卡尔·马克思《资本论》的舞台朗读。“我一直对中央馆过去的使用方法很感兴趣……我不想将它安置在现场以外，我想将它放在展览正中央……我想把《资本论》放在展览中央，这是一切的起点。” Enwezor在策展声明中称资本是“我们这个时代的伟大戏剧”，他还聘请艺术家将这关于资本的伟大文本创作成一部长剧。在2015年朗读这样一部让人精疲力竭的大部头，听起来更像是一种知识噱头，但将资本比作太阳，并让整个展览各种迥异的组成部分围绕它旋转，是一种很有说服力的姿态——这甚至让策展人古怪的“未来”定义，呈现出商品期货的维度：经济现实成为了生活现实的镜像。（翻译 _ Shirley Tang）



Terry Adkins, 《Gone Mute》, 1998年



Chris Oili, 《Frogs in the Shade》, 2014年, © Chris Oili. Courtesy the Artist, David Zwirner (纽约, 伦敦), 摄影: Maris Hutchinson



Wangechi Mutu, 《My Mothership》, 2014年



National Pavilions

国家馆

亚美尼亚馆：大灭绝幸存者

第56届威尼斯双年展的国家馆展区应中央馆的主题，大多探讨了包括迁移、殖民主义、环境和消费主义等在内的社会议题。亚美尼亚种族灭绝100周年纪念日后两周，亚美尼亚馆赢得了国家馆金狮奖。这场题为“Armenity”的展览在潟湖的一座面向Giardini的小岛上举行，一个美国僧人1717年在那里建立了Mekhitarist教派，展出了祖辈从大灭绝中幸存下来的16位生活在世界各地的亚美尼亚艺术家作品。花园里是由定居巴黎的Melik Ohanian创作的雕像《回忆的街灯——纪念碑，2010-2015》，应日内瓦的亚美尼亚社区邀请构思创作（不过因为目前的政治问题还没有装置），艺术家以该作品向亚美尼亚种族灭绝中的受害者致敬。雕像被拆解，青铜和铝制的87个零件置于地上展示。评委盛赞Adelina Cüberyán von Fürstenberg策划的展馆：“在流亡海外的民族基础上构成了这个展馆，每位艺术家都贡献了他们独有的地方特色和传承。”

伊拉克馆：隐形之美

“隐形之美”（Invisible Beauty）是伊拉克馆的标题，由伊拉克鲁雅当代文化基金会赞助。该展馆由根特S.M.A.K.当代艺术馆的艺术总监Philippe Van Cauteren策划，展出了伊拉克摄影奠基者Latif Al Ani和其余四名生活在伊拉克或海外的流散艺术家的作品。“我相信伊拉克的艺术家可以帮助重建社会。”去年11月前往伊拉克艺术家工作室中约见他们的Cauteren道。墙上还展出了逃离ISIS袭击的伊拉克北部难民创作的500多幅素描。这些素描被寄给北京的艾未未，由他甄选集结成册《幸存的痕迹：艾未未甄选伊拉克难民绘画集》，该书由鲁雅基金会出版。

美国馆：他们悄无声息地来到我们身边

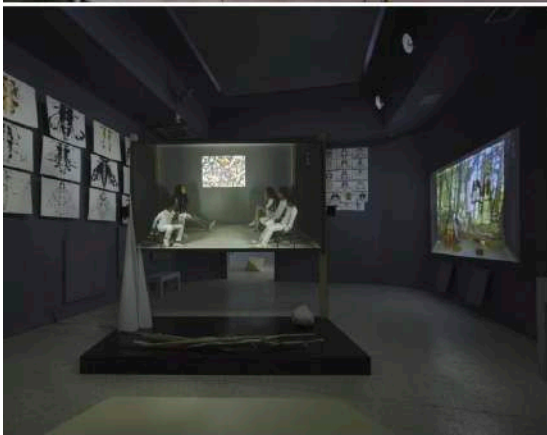
威尼斯双年展的评委特别提到美国艺术家Joan Jonas。这位78岁的录像和行为艺术先驱创作了一件多媒体装置作品《他们悄无声息地来到我们身边》。这件作品以一种抒情而神秘的方式通过录像、绘画和物品陈列探讨了其对气候变化的关注。每间房间中都有两个录像投影——一个代表该房间的基本主题（比如蜜蜂或鱼），另一个显示戴着白帽子或剪纸面具背诵鬼故事。乔纳斯与纽约的儿童组织工作坊，让他们在加拿大和纽约景观背景前表演。穆拉诺手工镜子的碎片置于她的素描和风筝旁。同样的主题延伸到院子



里，来自威尼斯潟湖切尔托萨岛的树干被黄铜线绑在一起。这位艺术家将于7月20日至22日在威尼斯Teatro Piccolo Arsenale演出，届时将与艺术家Jason Moran进行音乐合作。

芬兰馆：时辰，年岁，永世

芬兰馆中展出了一件有关毒物污染风景的装置作品《时辰，年岁，永世》，由IC-98工作室（Visa Suonpää和Patrik Söderlund组成的艺术家二人组）创作。在一个煤堆旁，一段黑白铅笔画录像展现了一棵树通过根系吸收长埋物质，接着繁殖寄生虫，模仿生命和死亡的循环。“这是设定在人类灭绝后的遥远未来的重度污染风景，这棵树因为吸收了核废料而生长旺盛。”Söderlund道。芬兰是欧洲森林覆盖率最高的国家，林场是整个国家福利社会的经济基础，Söderlund解释道。这一项目重现了Giardini如何破坏自然为双年展场馆腾出空间，包括Alvar Aalto设计的木质芬兰馆。这戏剧化的风景在对美的逐步破坏中铺陈开来，树枝的幽魂险恶地摇晃着，昆虫绕着树干疯狂地扇动翅膀。“这些素描的审美灵感来自中国风景画和19世纪浪漫主义欧洲艺术传统。”Suonpää说道。



法国馆：智能树的革命

Céleste Boursier-Mougenot策划的法国馆的主题是三棵真实的松树——一棵在馆内，两棵在馆外，围绕着英国、德国和加拿大馆。该艺术家的团队必须与其他展馆协商，以便让两棵馆外的树到处移动。“我希望看到这些植物自力更生。”这位法国艺术家道，他与法国国家研究中心LAAS-CNRS合作，研究如何使松树机动化。“我们希望这些树在Giardini四处运动——这是人类自由流动的概念，是欧洲宪法的原则。”这位艺术家希望创造一种“实验场景”，研究“树木新意志形式和新智能”是否可能发生。

日本馆：手中的钥匙

日本馆遍布纵横交错的红线，红线上系着50,000把叮当作响的生锈钥匙，来自盐田千春。在这件题为“手中的钥匙”的巨型装置作品中，两艘古老的威尼斯渔船束缚在这些红线中，里面有130,000把钥匙。千春公开号召人们捐赠钥匙，从全世界收到了180,000把，她解释道，钥匙是传播情感和人类躯体的隐喻，红线则象征着血、命运、爱和家庭，而船只则意味着承载人、时间和记忆。“我想将人们的记忆连接起来，假如你手中有一把钥匙，你就有了生命中的机会。”

新加坡馆：海况

林育荣在位于Arsenale的新加坡馆举办的多学派展览触及土地开发这一争议问题。曾经在国家层面上为新加坡和中国竞赛的前帆船运动员，对于探索海洋事务有着一一种基于程序的方法。在展览空间中间是一个生锈的浮标——2008年左右在沙惹哈岛被附近的大陆板块吸收后消失的沙惹哈航标。海洋图显示，这个海中国家自1965年以来，如何通过岛屿和海岸周围的沙石移动面积从224.5平方英里增长至276.5平方英里。另一件展品详细展现了1972年游客委员会要求居民为他的岛（意为“罪恶”）提议新的名字，结果该岛更名为圣淘沙，意为“宁谧”。“艺术家们是进一步深化海洋波澜壮阔意象的同谋，而海洋是在企业和军队控制下，”林道，“我们需要全新的看待大海的方式。”

英国馆：我大喊Daddio

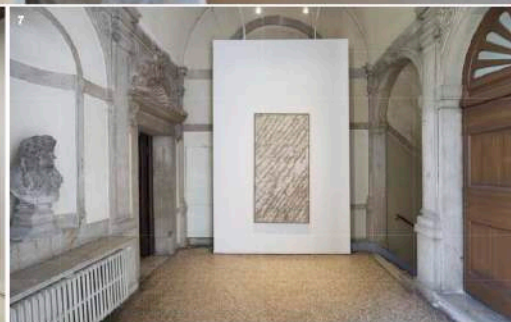
与这些政治性作品相反，英国馆的Sarah Lucas选择了圆融的情色主题。在花哨的黄色背景前，放置着让人联想起男性和女性生殖器，以及一根香烟从女性臀部中伸出的雕塑。这件作品毁誉参半。作品中，Lucas运用她常用的对性身份的隐喻，不过是以不同的物料，比如青铜。但是这组新作品欠缺早期作品的紧迫性。

丹麦馆：母语

在丹麦馆中，是越南出生、丹麦长大的艺术家Danh Vo貌不惊人但奇妙的作品。Vo收集了历史艺术品的碎片，将它们搭配起来，创造出不同寻常的并置，比如一块来自古罗马的希腊大理石右腿碎片和一件14世纪意大利木雕作品。他的奇妙想在法国收藏家François Pinault名下的大型展览空间Punta della Dogana中继续。（翻译 _ 黄少婷）

- 1.林育荣，《海况：当邪恶消散时（沙惹哈岛浮标）》，2014年，新加坡馆展览现场，供图：艺术家本人及Future Perfect画廊（新加坡）
- 2.盐田千春，《手中的钥匙》，日本馆展览现场，摄影：Sara Sagui
- 3.Sarah Lucas，《我大喊Daddio》，英国馆展览现场，摄影：Cristiano Corte，供图：British Council
- 4.J.C-96，《时辰，年少，永世》，动画制作Markus Lepistö，配乐Max Savikangas，展览设计OOF&A，芬兰馆展览现场
- 5.Joan Jonas，《他们悄无声息地来到我们身边》，美国馆展览现场





Collateral Events

平行展

Palazzo Benzon: 我的东方是你的西方

除了Giardini, Arsenal和散布在威尼斯城的89个国家馆外, 双年展期间还有不计其数的平行展览。在威尼斯众多历史悠久的宫殿之一本宗宫(Palazzo Benzon), 举办了“我的东方是你的西方”(My East is Your West)展览, 集合了印度艺术家Shilpa Gupta和巴基斯坦艺术家Rashid Rana的作品。该展览组织方是印度现代主义艺术家Satish Gujral的儿子和儿媳创办的古耶拉尔基金会。这场多媒体展中的一大亮点是Rana的交互作品《观看, 观者和被观看者》。Rana把位于巴基斯坦拉合尔的一间房间粉刷和装饰成宫殿中一个房间的样子。多亏实时投影屏幕, 参观者们可以站在威尼斯的房间里与远在巴基斯坦的表演者对话。最后一个房间中展出了Gupta的装置作品。一个人坐在桌边在一块接近4000米长的布匹上绘制线条。布料的长度代表着印度和孟加拉之间的边境线, 以及十多年前就开始建造的安全网。

Palazzo Fortuny: 比率

恢宏的福图尼宫(Palazzo Fortuny)正在举办展览“比率”(Proportio)。展览由Axel Vervoordt和Daniela Ferretti策划, 探讨了艺术、科学、音乐和建筑中的普遍比率。在入口附近是76岁的日本艺术家Shuji Mukai为场馆定制的装置作品, 他独特的黑墨书法覆盖了所有墙壁和镜子。一楼的长桌上展示着诸如Richard Meier和Le Corbusier以及1950年代至1960年代Zero group的艺术家的建筑作品, Anish Kapoor的凹面雕塑与Giacometti的具立方体并置在一起。录像《夜晚》(Night Time)由Hans Op de Beeck的精致水彩画构成。二楼主要是白色作品, 三楼展示了与宇宙相关的冥想作品。Maaria Wirkkala的《依赖》(Depending on)令人眼前一亮——这件作品包含三个秋千, 每个秋千上面小心翼翼地放着一杯水, 保持微妙的平衡。在我前往参观那天, 一杯水打破了, 毫无疑问体现了宇宙的深不可测。

Accademia: Mario Merz个展

威尼斯美术学院画廊(Gallerie dell' Accademia)正在举办意大利美术运动领袖人物Mario Merz的个展。题为“Citta Irreale”(虚构城市), 展览让人一睹Merz从1960年代至1990年代的多样作品及其对自然与社会创新之间对立关系的思考导致他在作品中将金属、岩石、木材和霓虹灯结合起来。Merz对制作小圆屋情有独钟。有一件1972年的作品用布捆和霓虹灯制成。另一件1994年作品以金属框架、岩石和霓虹灯管制成, 庭院中展示了1992年的一系列铁质圆屋。同时展出的还有他的素描、一件同心地面雕塑, 还有地表般的地面上用霓虹灯讲述了两棵树占据同一时空的故事。

Palazzo Contarini-Polignac: Dansaekhwa

附近的孔塔里尼-波里涅克宫(Palazzo Contarini-Polignac)正在展出由参展艺术家之一的韩国艺术家李再焕(Lee Ufan)策划的展览“Dansaekhwa”。“dansaekhwa”一词意为“单色画”, 指的是1970年代开始的一股韩国艺术潮流, 从这时起, 韩国艺术家们开始创作单色和极简主义作品。李选择了郑昌燮(Chung Chang Sup)、郑相合(Chung Dang-Hwa)、河钟贤(Ha Chong-Hyun)、金焕基(KimbWhanki)和Kwon Young-Woo等艺术家的复杂作品, 从帆布、报纸、棉布和麻布到水粉画作品不一而足。第一层展出的李的新雕塑和绘画作品清晰地表明, 他的作品如何受到上一代艺术家的启发。(翻译_黄少婷)

1. Rashid Rana, 《观看, 观者和被观看者》, 2015年, 单频道投影, “我的东方是你的西方”展览现场, Palazzo Benzon

2. 顶层大厅, “比率”展览现场, Palazzo Fortuny © Jean-Pierre Gabriel

3. Marta dell'Angelo, 《Foglie di Carandish》, 2015年, “比率”展览现场, Palazzo Fortuny © Jean-Pierre Gabriel

4, 5. “Citta Irreale”, 2015年, Mario Merz个展现场, Gallerie dell' Accademia

6, 7. “Dansaekhwa”, 2015年, Palazzo Contarini-Polignac, 摄影: Fabrice Seixas, 供图: Kukje Gallery

National Pavilions at the 56th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale

Two weeks after the 100th commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, **Armenia** scooped the Golden Lion for the national pavilion. Situated on the Mekhitarist Monastery and Island of San Lazzaro degli Armeni in the Venetian lagoon, it features the work of 16 artists living internationally whose grandparents survived the genocide. The jury praised the pavilion, curated by Adelina Cüberyan von Fürstenberg, for “forming a pavilion based on a people in diaspora, each artist engaging their specific locality as well as their heritage.” Poignantly, the exhibition, titled 'armenity', is on a tiny island in the lagoon facing the Giardini where an Armenian monk established the Mekhitarist Order in 1717. In the garden is a sculpture, 'Streetlights of Memory – A Stand of Memorial, 2010-2015' by Paris-based Melik Ohanian. Conceived for the City of Geneva at the request of its Armenian community (but not installed yet due to ongoing political problems), the piece is a homage to the victims of the Armenian genocide. Its 87 elements in bronze and aluminum are displayed on the ground.

A special mention was awarded by the Venice Biennale's jury to Joan Jonas in the **United States Pavilion**. The 78-year-old pioneer of video and performance art has made a multimedia installation, 'They Come to Us Without a Word'. It explores her concerns about climate change in a lyrical, mythological way through videos, paintings and vitrines of objects. Two video projections are in each room – one presenting the room's main motif (such as a bee or a fish) and the other featuring children wearing white paper hats or papier-mâché masks reciting ghost stories. Jonas organised workshops with the children in New York, getting them to perform against her video backdrops of landscapes shot in Canada and New York. Rippled mirrors handcrafted in Murano are placed alongside her drawings and kites. The theme continues in the courtyard, where tree trunks from Certosa Island in the Venetian lagoon are held together by copper wire. The artist will be making a video performance with music by Jason Moran at Teatro Piccolo Arsenale, Campo della Tana, in Venice on July 20, 21 and 22 (ticket information will be available in June).

Issues of war, migration, colonialism and the environment are among the diversity of subjects explored by other pavilions. 'Invisible Beauty' is the title of the **Iraq Pavilion** in Ca' Dandolo on the Canal Grande, funded by the Ruya Foundation for Contemporary Culture in Iraq. Curated by Philippe Van Cauteren, artistic director of the S.M.A.K. museum for contemporary art in Ghent, it features work by the founder of Iraqi photography Latif Al Ani and four other artists living in Iraq or the diaspora. “I do believe that artists in Iraq can help rebuild society,” says Cauteren, who travelled to Iraq last November to meet artists in their studios. Also on display are over 500 drawings made by refugees in northern Iraq who fled the onslaught of ISIS. One drawing depicts the city of Mosul which a man fled from when ISIS took over; another by him depicts his flooded refugee camp. A third drawing by an 18-year-old girl depicts her best friend dead and bloodied after having being raped on Mount Sinjar. All the drawings were sent to Ai Weiwei in Beijing who made a selection for a book, 'Traces of Survival: Drawings by Refugees in Iraq selected by Ai Weiwei', published by the Ruya Foundation.

A blackened installation about a toxic landscape, 'Hours, Years, Aeons' by IC-98 (the artist duo Visa Suonpää and Patrik Söderlund), is in the **Finnish Pavilion**. Next to a heap of charcoal, a black-and-white, pencil-animation video shows a tree sucking long-buried matter through its roots, then reproducing parasitical insects, imitating the cycle of life and death. “It's a poisonous landscape set in the distant future after mankind has disappeared, and the tree is thriving off nuclear waste,” says Söderlund. Finland is the most densely forested country in Europe and its forests plantations finance the country's welfare society, Söderlund explains. The project echoes how nature was destroyed in the Giardini to make way for the pavilions, including Finland's wooden one designed by Alvar Aalto. The dramatic landscape unfurls in a lingering destruction of beauty, the ghosts of the branches swaying menacingly, insects fluttering in a frenzy around the trunk. “The aesthetics of the drawings were inspired by Chinese landscape painting and the 19th century romantic tradition in European art,” says Suonpää.

Three robotic pine trees – one inside and two outside, circulating near the British, German and Canadian pavilions – are by Céleste Boursier-Mougenot, representing France. The artist's team had to negotiate “more than expected” with the other pavilions so that the two exterior trees could move around. “I wanted to see what the plants could do on their own,” says the French artist, who worked with LAAS-CNRS, France's national research laboratory on how to motorise the pine trees. “We wanted trees everywhere in the Giardini – it was the idea of free circulation of people, a principle of the European Constitution,” he

adds. The artist wanted to create an “experimental situation” to find out whether “a new form of determinism or a new intelligence in trees” could happen.

The **Japan Pavilion** is enmeshed in criss-crossing red threads from which 50,000 rusty keys jangle down, courtesy of Chiharu Shiota. In this immersive installation titled 'The Key in the Hand', two old Venetian fishing boats are entrapped among the threads and have 130,000 keys inside them. Shiota made an open-call asking people to donate the keys and received 180,000 from around the world. As she explains, the key is a metaphor for transmitting feelings and the human body; the red threads symbolise blood, destiny, love and family; while the boats are about carrying people, time and memory. “I want to connect people's memory and if you have a key in your hand, you have a chance in life,” says Shiota, the first expatriate artist (she has been living in Berlin for 17 years) to represent Japan.

The controversial issue of land reclamation is tackled by Charles Lim in a multi-disciplinary exhibition in the **Singapore Pavilion** in the Arsenale. Lim, a former sailor who competed at national level for Singapore and China, has a process-based approach to explore maritime affairs. In the middle of the space is a rusty buoy, a replica of the Sajahat Buoy that disappeared off Singapore's southern coast around 2008 after the Sajahat island had been absorbed into the surrounding land masses. Maritime charts show how the sea state has grown from 224.5 to 276.5 square miles since 1965 through the movement of sand to outlying islands and coasts. Another exhibit details a competition by the tourist board in 1972, asking residents to propose a new name for Pulau Blakang Mati (the island's name meant “evil”), resulting in it being renamed Sentosa, meaning tranquillity. “Artists are complicit in furthering this image of the sea being sublime when it is the corporates and military that control it,” says Lim. “We need to have new ways of looking at the sea.”

In contrast to these political offerings, Sarah Lucas in the **British Pavilion** has opted for slick obscenity. Against a gaudy yellow backdrop, there are ironic sculptures evoking male and female genitalia and a cigarette poking out of a woman's bottom. Some hate it, some love it. It sees Lucas using her usual tropes about sexual identity but in different materials, such as bronze. But this new group of audacious pieces lacks the urgency of her earlier work.

In the **Danish Pavilion** is the understated, curious proposal of Danh Vo, an artist born in Vietnam who grew up in Denmark. Vo has collected fragments of historical art and matched them up to create unusual juxtapositions, such as a Greek-marble sarcophagus fragment from Rome with a 14th century Italian wood carving. Vo's witticisms continue at the Punta della Dogana – the vast exhibition space owned by French collector François Pinault. In collaboration with Caroline Bourgeois, Vo has deftly curated a group show, titled 'Slip of the Tongue', featuring his own work and that of other artists such as Tetsumi Kudo, Nancy Spero, Fischli & Weiss and Ugo Rondinone.

Collateral Events

Palazzo Benzon: 'My East is Your West'

Besides the 89 national pavilions in the Giardini, the Arsenale and the city of Venice, there are countless exhibitions. In Palazzo Benzon, one of Venice's many historical palaces, is '**My East is Your West**' which brings together work by the Indian artist Shilpa Gupta and the Pakistani artist Rashid Rana. It is organised by the Gujral Foundation, founded by the son and daughter-in-law of Indian Modernist artist Satish Gujral. One highlight of this multimedia show is Rana's interactive piece 'The viewing, the viewer and the viewed'. Rana painted and decorated a room in Lahore, Pakistan, in a way that mirrors a room in the palazzo. Thanks to a real-time projection screen, visitors can have a conversation with people standing in the identical-looking room in Lahore. In the last room is an installation piece by Gupta. A man sitting at a table is drawing lines on a piece of hand-woven cloth that is nearly 4km long. Its length represents the border between India and Bangladesh and the security fence that has been under construction for over a decade.

Palazzo Fortuny: 'Proportio'

At the splendid Palazzo Fortuny is the exhibition '**Proportio**'. Curated by Axel Vervoordt and Daniela Ferretti, it explores universal proportions in art, science, music and architecture. Japanese artist Shuji Mukai, 76, has covered the walls and mirrors in a space near the entrance with his distinctive calligraphy in black ink. Works by architects Richard Meier and Le Corbusier and by artists from the 1950s-1960s Zero group are displayed on a table on the first floor. Anish Kapoor's concave sculptures are juxtaposed with

Giacometti's black cube. A video, 'Night Time', is of exquisite watercolour drawings by Hans Op de Beeck. Mainly white works are on the second floor. Among pieces relating to the cosmos are on the third floor is Maaria Wirkkala's 'Depending on' – comprising three swings with a glass of water precariously balanced on each one. On the day I visited, one of the glasses had smashed, undoubtedly signifying the universe's unpredictability.

Accademia: Mario Merz

A solo show by **Mario Merz**, who was a leading member of the Italian artistic movement Arte Povera, is at the Gallerie dell'Accademia. Titled 'Città Irreale' (Unreal City), it's an insightful introduction to the diversity of Merz's work from the 1960s-1990s and his reflections on nature versus innovation in society, leading him to combine metal, stone, wood and neons in his pieces. Merz had a longstanding interest in making igloos. There's one from 1972 made from cloth bundles and neons, another from 1994 made from metal structures, stone and neons, and a series of iron igloos resting on slabs of stone from 1992 in the courtyard. Also on display are his drawings, a concentric floor sculpture, and neon writing about two trees occupying the same space of time on an earthy floor.

Palazzo Contarini-Polignac: Dansaekhwa

The contemplative exhibition **Dansaekhwa** at Palazzo Contarini-Polignac is curated by and features the work of Korean artist Lee Ufan. The word dansaekhwa means “single-colour painting” and refers to an art form begun in the early 1970s when Korean artists began making monochromatic, minimalistic works. Lee has chosen intricate works by Chung Chang Sup, Chung Sang-Hwa, Ha Chong-Hyun, Kim Whanki and Kwon Young-Woo ranging from oil paintings on canvas, rice paper, cotton and hemp cloth to gouaches. Looking at the subtlety of Lee's new sculptures and paintings on the first floor and his rock installations on the ground floor, it's clear how his work has been inspired by the generation before him.

The Venice Biennale, 'All the World's Futures', runs until 22 November 2015. www.labiennale.org