

艾未未访谈

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崔灿灿：你是什么时候看到这个房子的？

艾未未：我对古建的兴趣最早是在1997年左右，第一次去金华，看了一些古建，它跟北方的房子不一样，在一个围合的空间中，天井里的光使屋子里的光感很特殊，屋子里面都比较暗，外墙是封闭的，少有向外的窗户，在围合里又是完全敞开的，雨啊鸟呀什么的都可以进来。它跟家具制作的方式很像，组装出来并不生根，房子是放在地上的，这也是蛮特殊的。它几乎是放在那儿，是柔性的，它有重量，有风有雨，天长日久会发生变形，具有柔韧性。

崔灿灿：那这次展览的房子？

艾未未：这栋房子是我在几个月前，再去金华的时候看到的。房子被拆除，在市场上出售。老房子属于旧的文化体系，这个体系已经消失了，剩下些边角料，这个房子也是。话说这个房子，拥有它的都是大户人家，后来十户、百户住进去，村里最穷的人，把大户的房子占了，他们不懂这些房子，那个文化就毁了。你现在问住在里面的人，他们都不知道房子的主人是谁，为什么会建成这样，花了多少钱，有什么样的心思。要是他不认为这可以留给自己的后代，没有人会建这样的房子。房子是一个时代的标本，也是一个证据。

崔灿灿：是因为这个原因，您要把这个房子变成你的作品？

艾未未：不是，跟这个没关系，我不会因为这样的原因做作品，我通常分开走，我对一个东西有兴趣，就是单纯的兴趣，对它为什么会形成或者它的特征是什么，这个兴趣，几乎是独立的兴趣，并不期待把什么都做成作品，或说有什么意图在里面。看的多了，就有了一些理解，它的结构，做工。江西、安徽和浙江都有不同的特征。常青和唐人希望我做个展览，没有人明确说我不能做。为什么会用这个房子来做？我想不起来，当时可能就想起这个事，想起一出是一出，就做了。

崔灿灿：这个房子算现成品吗？

艾未未：你我也是现成品。文化，历史，还有这个房子都可以说是现成品。我喜欢用已有的，存在的逻辑引申出一个话题，那样省很多事，不用从头说起。我从来不相信一个艺术家是一个创作者，他只是那个挪用者和重新解释的人，创作是上帝的事，只是借用我们的口音说出来了。

崔灿灿：口音和习惯对艺术家来说有好坏吗？

艾未未：我觉得没有好坏之分，某些信息可能更丰富、更强大，对我们来说更新更有趣。有些信息很陈

腐，听而不闻，视而不见，觉得没有什么。

崔灿灿：你对这个房子做了什么改变？

艾未未：发生了很大的改变，不是我做了什么，是它本身在变，一个江西的房子出现在浙江，房子有历史和文化价值，它的美感，存在的理由，它的所有属性。它在另一个地方出售，被一个北京的艺术家买下，移至北京的画廊里，画廊是两家，两家恰好在一起，我用这两家画廊完成一件作品，这跟那个原始的房子没有任何关系了，那个房子承载的信息应该说是荡然无存，所剩是它的一些残骸，可能与空难的残骸相似。

崔灿灿：那这个展览更重要的是你答应了两个画廊要做一个展览？

艾未未：是我做了一个表示，我在中国做了一个展览。

崔灿灿：这个表示针对的是什么？

艾未未：针对我没有做展览而做的一个表示，它是发生，没有任何意义，没有任何含义，只是发生了。它发生了以后，我就不能说我在中国没做过展览，我只是可以说，我没有在一家画廊中展出过一件作品，我用两个画廊制作了一件作品，在一家画廊中看到的只是作品的一部分。

崔灿灿：展什么都无所谓吗？

艾未未：当然不是。

崔灿灿：那你怎么想？

艾未未：做任何事情，都不是无所谓。它是另外一件事情，跟你谈话的时候，我不是在卫生间，也不是在洗澡，我是跟你在谈话，这是非常确定的，和任何其他存在一样的确定。而且，和任何事情一样的重要。

崔灿灿：这个房子和你之前一贯对政治现实的关注和介入有什么关系？

艾未未：人像一只猫一样，它要么是白猫，要么是黑猫，要么是一只杂种猫。变化是在一个范围内的变化，每天舔毛，卧着睡，或者跳起来开门，这些秉性或者只有它具有，这只有，那只没有。你想变，超出了你的范围，这是个不用担心的事，关于变和不变，或有没有自我特征。

崔灿灿：你最担心的是什么？

艾未未：我担心的是现在是活着的，有活着的意识，然后过几天可能就死了，死了以后到底怎么回事也不知道，其他没有什么担心的。噢，有时要注意体重，我喜欢吃甜的，我一吃，大夫就说你不能老吃这个东西，这是要注意的。

崔灿灿：你说这个房子有很多变化，是什么造成了它的变化？

艾未未：这个房子的后人的几句话说得很清楚，为什么有这个房子，它经过了什么，属于一个家族和姓氏，是汪氏的祠堂。祠堂用做家族拜祖或商议家族的大事，相当于人民大会堂，开两会的地方，也是个广场，一

个公共的论坛。公有制以后这就不存在了，有了新的价值体系，由单一的权力解释所有人的生存需求，抹煞了个人存在的一些最原始的品质，人的情感和一些人性的特征也随之都消失了，这个生态可以说是没了，像土壤被筛净到无法再种植了一样，沙化了。它的身份被毁掉了，成为没有依托的东西，一个废物，这样说吧。

崔灿灿：中国古代的木质建筑在今天也衰落了，这跟它的技术和实用价值有一定的关系吧。

艾未未：私有制消失的时候，它就结束了。建造的理由是一个家族作为财富和身份的体现，由家族的稳定和家族应该有的秩序来完成，秩序是在几千年中形成的。不管它合不合理，它具有自身的完整性，这就是文明，文明不是说个人能够完成的，它通过一个完整的伦理体系和不断锤炼的语言来传达。即便那套体系没有破坏，木材也没有了，它的一根柱子少说也要50年至100年的生长，这样的建造方式不能满足今天的人口的密度和城市化。

崔灿灿：中国古代的建筑在两千年以来历史中，从基台到柱子、横梁的结构关系都很稳定，它也没有什么变化吧？

艾未未：没有变化的需求，因地制宜包括因陋就简，随着材料和经济发生着变化。它的伦理是一致的，像中国的家具，只是取材不同。是在一个完整的系统里，被一个伦理体系所支配着。

崔灿灿：这个伦理体系很先进的，很实用？

艾未未：它曾经是很实用的，今天实不实用有待于考察。它在过去的几百年致使中国落后，可以说是衰败，它没有对人们的生存提供更好的解释，让人们快乐的生活。

崔灿灿：这个古老的房子，既没有先进性，也没有实用性，它在展览上和观众，和现代社会，现代人是什么关系，要去交流什么？

艾未未：作品不应该直接这样对应，它有它自身的语境，有显性和隐性的部分，不能以这样直接的，扳手去扳动一个螺丝一样的关系来解释。那样的作品没法做，把它说的头头是道，也只能显得虚假。

崔灿灿：这个展览和博物馆里的文物展览有什么区别？

艾未未：我无法说区别，是因为我不知道他们的意图是什么。大多数文物展是展现一类物质所承载的文化信息吧，作为某种历史的证据。我对此没有兴趣，我用一个体系来完成另外一个体系的事，我在乎展览所呈现的状态，状态是这个作品，不是作品是这个旧房子，这个房子在展览中已经不存在，它穿过了两个房子，实际上，整个城市架都建造在这个房子之上，作品形成的时空是一个调包，有点穿越的意思，但不是碰瓷。

崔灿灿：是你给了它一个新的语境？

艾未未：不是我给了它一个新的语境，是它根本就存在，它就是一个新的语境。因为这个它，已经不是那个房子本身，是一个事件和时间在一起才成为了它，没有这个事件和时间，我不会对这个老房子有兴趣，我的意图是让它能够成为另外一个状态。

崔灿灿：这个状态包含你要在中国做一个展览？

艾未未：那当然，包括我个人的身份，立场，和我的经历，知识，我的是艺术家同时不是艺术家的身份。

崔灿灿：你觉得这个展览在中国能做？

艾未未：从开始想这个展览它就在做，它是不是最后在那个地方呈现，这是我不能够肯定的。我同样不知道地球明天还在不在，它已经在了这么久，我们假设它还会在。我不知道这个展览能不能做，我只能假设既然有这么多展览，我的展览肯定也可以做。我也只需要知道这么多。

崔灿灿：你在中国做这个展览，跟你去年两次撤展有关系吗？

艾未未：没有关系。

崔灿灿：没有一点关系？

艾未未：没有直接关系，如果它也被撤展了，那不就有关系了吗？

崔灿灿：你的作品中用了一个中国的古代建筑，你怎么看你跟蔡国强、徐冰作品中对中国传统资源的借用之间的关系？

艾未未：第一我不是很了解他们，第二以这种方式归纳作品挺糙的，作品有很多层面，它的复杂难以简单解释。

崔灿灿：这件作品和你之前的作品有什么不同？

艾未未：我有上百件作品，它们的做法很不同，有扎起的风筝，也有弄直了的钢筋，还有烧的葵花子，无论方式还是意图，都呈现了不同的特征。我认为不同是我做它们的理由之一，我不喜欢重复一个稳定的方式，那样是懒惰。

崔灿灿：我没有问的了。

艾未未：结束在这儿？很好。祝贺你，策展人崔灿灿，中国最优秀的新一代策展人。

Interview with Ai Weiwei

Participants: Cui Cancan and Ai Weiwei

Date: April 11, 2015

Location: Caochangdi, Beijing

Cui Cancan: When did you first see this building?

Ai Weiwei: I first became interested in ancient architecture in about 1997. The first time I went to Jinhua, I saw some old buildings that were decidedly different from those in northern China. The light filtering through the skylights into the rooms was very special. The rooms were actually rather dark, because the exterior walls were solid, with very few external windows. However, it was entirely open inside the walls, so that anything—birds, the rain—could get in. The methods are very similar to those used in making furniture. The house has no foundation; it simply rests on the earth, which is also very unusual. It feels as if it was gently placed there. It also has weight, and after being battered by the wind and the rain, it began to change shape and become more pliable.

CCC: What about the building in this exhibition?

AWW: A few months ago, I went back to Jinhua and saw this house. It had been dismantled so it could be sold. These old buildings belong to an old cultural system that has already vanished. All that was left of that system and that house were fragments.

The people who owned the house were a wealthy family, then dozens or hundreds of families lived there. As a result of social movements, the poorest people in the village came to occupy a building once owned by the richest. The current occupants don't understand the building, because that culture is dead. If you ask the people living in it, they don't know who owns the house, why it was built that way, how much money was spent, or the ideas behind building such a structure. If the original builder hadn't thought he could leave it to his descendants, he wouldn't have built this kind of house. The building is a specimen, evidence of an era.

CCC: And it was because of this that you wanted to turn the building into a work of art?

AWW: No, it has nothing to do with that. I don't make artworks for that reason. I often try to avoid that. My interest in things is very pure; my interest in why it exists or what is unique about it is independent of anything else, including the expectation that it may become an artwork, or the intentions behind it. The more you look at it, the better you understand its structure. The architecture of Jiangxi, Anhui, and Zhejiang are all distinct. Galleria Continua and Tang Contemporary Art wanted me to do an exhibition, and no one has explicitly said that I can't. Why did I use this building? I'm not entirely sure. It sprang to mind at the time, so I just did it.

CCC: Could this building be seen as a ready-made?

AWW: You and I are also ready-mades. Culture, history, and this building can all be called ready-mades. I like using existing logic and extending it. It saves a lot of time, because you don't need to start from the beginning. I have never believed that an artist is a creator. He is only an appropriator and a re-interpreter. Creation is the work of God, and we are just speaking with our voices.

CCC: For an artist, are there good or bad voices and habits?

AWW: I don't think you can say it's good or bad, but something might be richer or stronger, newer or more interesting for us. Some things are so old that we don't see or hear them, as if they don't exist.

CCC: How have you changed the building?

AWW: This structure has undergone many changes, but none at my hands. It has always been changing. When a Jiangxi house appears in Zhejiang, it has historical and cultural value, which encompasses its beauty, reason for being, and all of its properties. It was sold in this other place and bought by a Beijing artist. It was moved to a Beijing gallery—two, actually. The two galleries are close, so I have used these two spaces for a single work. This has nothing to do with the original building. There is nothing left of the information contained in this house; all that's left is a few bones, like the wreckage of a plane.

CCC: So what's more important about this exhibition is the fact that you're doing an exhibition in two galleries?

AWW: I wanted to make a statement, that I am doing an exhibition in China.

CCC: Who is the audience for this statement?

AWW: I want to show that I haven't done an exhibition. The fact that the exhibition happens has no meaning or implications; it simply happens. After it happens, I cannot say that I've never done an exhibition in China. I can simply say that I did not exhibit a work in a gallery. I used two galleries to create a work, and you could only see one part of the work in each gallery.

CCC: So it doesn't matter what you show?

AWW: Of course not.

CCC: So how do you think about it?

AWW: It doesn't matter what I do. This is something else entirely. When I talk with you, I'm not in the bathroom, and I'm not showering; I am talking with you and this is very certain, as certain as any other existence. As such, it is just as important as anything else.

CCC: What is the relationship between this house and your previous political engagement?

AWW: People are like cats, whether white, black, or calico. Change takes place within a specific scope. Every day, a cat might lick its fur, sleep, or jump to open the door. This might simply be the temperament of this cat, but not that one. If you want to change, and move beyond this scope, then you don't need to worry about whether you change or not, whether you do or do not have these traits.

CCC: What are you most concerned about?

AWW: I'm currently concerned with living, and having an awareness of life. A few days from now, I could die. I'm not exactly sure what happens after I die, so I don't worry about it. Oh, sometimes I focus on my weight. I like sweets, and when I eat them my doctor reminds me I shouldn't, so I have to concern myself with that.

CCC: You've said that this house has changed a lot, but what has caused the building to change?

AWW: The inheritors of this house said it clearly in a few sentences. They talked about why they had this house and what it had been through. When it belonged to a single family, it served as the ancestral hall for the Wang family. The hall was used for ancestor worship or major business deals, equivalent to the Great Hall of the People, where they hold the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Similarly, it also has a square and a public forum. After all land was made communal, this system of ownership ceased to exist and a new system was put in place. A single power interpreted the needs of all people, eliminating the most primal trait of individual existence. Human emotions and some human characteristics disappeared with it. We could say that this ecology no longer exists; like land that has been sifted to the point that nothing will grow, it has become desert. Its identity has already been destroyed, becoming an unsupported ruin.

CCC: Today, Chinese wooden architecture is already in decline, because of its technical and practical value.

AWW: When the system of private ownership disappeared, people stopped using this type of architecture. The building represented a family's wealth and status, and it was bolstered by familial stability and order. This order was created over the course of several thousand years. Rational or not, it is an integrated system that we call civilization. Civilization is not something that an individual can create; civilization is communicated through a complete ethical system and a continuously refined language. Even if that system had not been destroyed, the forests would have disappeared, and each pillar would have taken 50 to 100 years to grow. These building methods are not suited to our current population densities and urbanization levels.

CCC: Over the course of more than two thousand years, ancient Chinese architecture has been very stable, from the platform to the relationships between the pillars and crossbeams. Has this remained unchanged?

AWW: There was no need to change. Because of local conditions and materials availability, the house changed with material and economic considerations. Its ethical system was consistent; it's like Chinese furniture, but the materials are different. It existed within a complete system, and it was controlled by that system.

CCC: Was this ethical system advanced and practical?

AWW: It was once very practical, but whether it's still practical today remains to be seen. For the last few hundred years, this system made China backward. You might call it decline, because it did not provide human existence with a better explanation that would help people live happily.

CCC: If this old building is neither advanced nor practical, then what relationship does it have with exhibition viewers, modern society, or modern people? How will it communicate?

AWW: The work does not directly correspond. It has its own context, with visible and hidden parts. It can't be that direct. We cannot explain it through a direct relationship, like screwing in a screw. I can't make those kinds of works. If I explain it clearly, it will only appear false.

CCC: What's the difference between this exhibition and exhibitions of artifacts in museums?

AWW: I can't say they're different, because I don't know what their intentions are. Most exhibitions of artifacts want to present the cultural information carried by a specific type of object, which serves as a kind of historical evidence. I'm not interested in this; I am using one system to complete something for another system. I care about the states I present in this exhibition, and the state is this artwork. The work is not an old house, because the house does not exist in the exhibition. The work contains two houses; in fact, this city is built on this house. The space and time created by the work is a stealthy substitute; it passes through things, but it does not destroy them.

CCC: Are you giving the building a new context?

AWW: It's not that I'm giving it a new context; it is a new context because it exists. The work is not the house itself; it was created through the combination of events and time. If not for these times and events, I would not be interested in this house. I intend to bring it into another state.

CCC: And this state includes the fact that you wanted to do an exhibition in China?

AWW: Of course. It encompasses my identity, viewpoints, experiences, and knowledge, and the fact that I am both an artist and not an artist.

CCC: Do you think this exhibition can be done in China?

AWW: The house was there before I thought about this exhibition, but I cannot say whether it will be finally presented in this place. Similarly, I have no idea if the earth will still exist tomorrow; it's already been around for a long time, and we suppose that it will continue to exist. I don't know if this exhibition can be done; I simply suppose that, if there are already so many exhibitions, I should be able to do mine as well. I only need to know this much.

CCC: Is this exhibition in China related to the two exhibitions that you pulled out of last year?

AWW: It's unrelated.

CCC: Not even a little bit?

AWW: It's not directly related. If this one is shut down, isn't that related?

CCC: You're using ancient Chinese architecture in this work. How do you see the relationship between your work and that of Cai Guoqiang and Xu Bing, who have drawn on traditional Chinese sources?

AWW: First, I don't really understand their work, and second, summarizing art in this way is rather crude. Artworks have many layers, and their complexities are difficult to explain simply.

CCC: How is this work different from your previous works?

AWW: I have made hundreds of works, and each is different. Some took the form of strung kites, straightened rebar, or fired sunflower seeds. Regardless of the methods or intents, all of these works are different. It is different because I don't like replicating existing methods. That's just lazy.

CCC: I'm out of questions...

AWW: So we'll stop there? Good. Congratulations to Cui Cancan, China's best young curator.