

WHITE CUBE

Ellen Altfest

Green Spot

11 January – 16 March 2019

White Cube Hong Kong

White Cube is pleased to present an exhibition of paintings and drawings by the New York based artist Ellen Altfest, her first in China.

Working on a one-to-one scale, Altfest's art evolves out of a direct observation from life. Her subject matter includes male models, nude or partially covered by fabric, or the natural world experienced at its quietest, and works typically require several months to over a year to complete.

The time collapsed into her paintings generates a concentrated intensity that verges on the hallucinatory, with a level of detail that is unsettling in its degree of naturalism. Barry Schwabsky has characterised this 'realism' as a refusal to abbreviate, whereby Altfest, unlike other painters, does not economise on mark making or use of colour to generalise compositional passages. One of the earliest paintings in this exhibition, *Tree* (2013), for example, was made 'en plein air' in the woods of Connecticut over several months and seasons. Depicting a short section of a fallen tree that disrupts the composition diagonally, Altfest intensely renders its cracked, rough bark with a textured and craggy surface. Similarly, in the painting *Green Spot* (2017), which lends the exhibition its title, a constellation of white and mottled green lichen expands towards the edges of the canvas, its variegated spores examined to the edge of abstraction.

A starting point for several new works of male subjects is the traditional Japanese form of *shunga*. In these erotic woodblock prints, depicting explicit sexual scenes, the lovers were often clothed in kimonos with only parts of their bodies revealed. It is the equal status afforded the treatment of both body and intricately patterned fabric that most resonates with Altfest. In the work simply titled *Composition* (2014 – 15), for example, Altfest joins three distinct elements at the centre of her painting – a tartan blanket, a patch of dark skin and a woven rug – to create both a tension and sense of parity between each painstakingly rendered object. In *Abdomen* (2014 – 15), a detail of a male chest appears tipped-up and compressed within a shallow depth of field, propelling the viewer into an immediate and confrontational encounter.

Altfest's work connects to the history of Modernist painting and its material capacities. 'I want to upend the traditional hierarchy of painting,' she has said, 'by making the subject secondary to the composition that normally supports it.' This sense of inversion requires both a fidelity to the methods of traditional painting, its observational realism of people and things, and a refusal to abide by the norms of figurative representation. The male models in her

paintings serve only as objects of sight, equal to fabric or lichen, and not as carriers of feelings, as they might in a usual portrait.

By resisting the suggestion of any sentimental or personal attachment to her subject matter, Altfest is, by contrast, able to imbue the subject itself with an animated presence. She fuses together a sense of human experience with the object, so that 'empathy' itself can seem to lie within the painting's subject matter – body hair, green algae, or tree bark – and not with the observer, or their affective reaction to the work. By not adhering to the usual abbreviations present in realism, neither to the elimination of representation within abstraction, she makes the relationship of feelings to subject, subject to viewer and viewer to painting complex, questioning the experience – and power – of depicting and observing 'reality'.

BIOGRAPHY

Ellen Altfest was born in 1970 in New York, where she currently lives and works. She received an MFA from Yale University, New York (1997), attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine (2002) and was awarded a studio at the Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation, New York, NY (2004 – 05). Altfest has been granted residencies at the Zabludowicz Collection, Finland (2016); Bogliasco Foundation, Bogliasco, Italy (2014); Chinati Foundation, Marfa (2010); and lead an Artist Workshop at the Kyoto City University of Arts (2014). Since her first solo exhibition with White Cube in 2007 she has had solo exhibitions at MK Gallery, Milton Keynes, UK (2015); New Museum, New York (2012); and White Cube, London (2011). Group exhibitions include Royal Academy of Arts, London (2017); Museum Dhondt – Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium (2016); KUCA Gallery, Kyoto (2014); Kunstforeningen GL Strand (2014); 55th Venice Biennale (2013); Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas (2012); and The National Academy Museum, New York (2006).

With our thanks to Rima Yamazaki, director of 'Ellen Altfest: June 14, 2018 & October 18, 2018', for facilitating the film screenings during the exhibition.

White Cube Hong Kong is open

Tuesday – Saturday, 11am – 7pm.

Admission is free.

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艾倫·奧菲斯特

綠蘊

2019年1月11日至3月16日

香港白立方

香港白立方隆重呈獻駐紐約藝術家艾倫·奧菲斯特於中國的首次個展「綠蘊」，展出其畫作。

奧菲斯特的作品觀照日常生活，並以一對一的比例進行描繪，往往歷時數月、甚至一年多才能完成。其創作的主题包括男性模特兒，有裸體的也有被布料掩蓋的；又或捕捉自然界最謐靜的一刻。

奧菲斯特細膩寫實的筆法，不僅勾勒出時間流逝的痕跡，更讓這些日常風景呈現出一種超現實的不安感。美國評論家巴瑞·史瓦斯基 (Barry Schwabsky) 將這種「寫實主義」形容為「拒絕縮寫」，而奧菲斯特的筆法則體現了這種「拒絕縮寫」。有別於其他畫家的繪畫風格，奧菲斯特沒有刻意以狂野的筆觸或巨幅的色塊來編排構圖，反而鉅細靡遺地描繪其筆下的主题。比方說在這個展覽中最早期的畫作《樹》(2013年)，便是藝術家在美國康州的樹林進行為時數月和數季的戶外創作。她以一棵倒下的樹為主题，卻只聚焦刻畫當中與畫布成對角的部分，並鮮活地呈現破裂、粗糙、紋理迥異的樹幹表皮。是次展覽題為「綠蘊」，正是以2017年的同名畫作為題。畫作捕捉了向畫布邊緣伸展的地衣，斑駁的白綠地衣相互交織，探索抽象的界限。

以男性模特兒為題的作品均取材自日本傳統的春畫作品(偃息圖)。這些色情木刻版畫描繪了露骨的性愛場面，愛侶的身體在和服的蓋掩下若隱若現。奧菲斯特對愛侶的身體和錯綜複雜的和服圖案能夠同等地呈現於畫幅上，以及當中微妙的平衡感產生共鳴。其作品《構圖》(2014-15年)匯集了三種截然不同的元素——一條格子毛毯、一層深色皮膚和一塊編織地毯。物件經過她精心渲染和編排後締造出難以言喻的張力和平衡。作品《腹部》(2014-15年)則集中描繪腹部的皺褶和延伸，推使觀者馬上進行近距離的察看。

奧菲斯特的作品與現代主義繪畫的歷史及其物料的可塑性緊密連繫。她曾表示「希望顛覆傳統的繪畫方式」，而「透過把構圖凌駕於描繪的主题之上應該可達成這個目的」。這種顛覆有賴於藝術家對傳統繪畫方法的忠誠、對人和事的實質觀察，以及拒絕依循具象的表達方法。她筆下的男性模特兒只是其中一個視覺對象，與織物或地衣無疑，並無蘊含一般肖像畫中所承載的情感。

正是因為奧菲斯特反對其筆下的主题承載任何個人情感和連結，反而使主题更見鮮活。她把人的感受和經驗與物件結合，因此這些毛髮、地衣和樹皮無須依靠觀者或觀者的情感反應，自身便能具備「同理性」。因為不默守現實主義中存在的「縮寫」，亦不以抽象形式消除表象，奧菲斯特才能建立情感與主體的關係，並使之受制於觀者和觀者對繪畫複雜性的理解，藉此質問描繪和觀察「現實」的經驗和力量。

奧菲斯特於1970年出生於紐約，現定居和工作於此。她在紐約耶魯大學取得藝術碩士學位(1997年)，及後就讀緬因州史科根繪畫雕塑學院(2002年)，並獲紐約瑪麗·沃爾什·夏普藝術基金會頒授工作室獎(2004-05年)。她曾參與不同的駐留計

劃，包括：芬蘭薩布多維奇典藏中心(2016年)；義大利的伯格里亞斯科基金會(2014年)；德州馬法鎮辛那提基金會(2010年)；並在京都市立藝術大學領導藝術家工作坊(2014年)。奧菲斯特於2007年在白立方舉辦首次個展，期後相繼在英國米爾頓凱恩斯的MK畫廊(2015年)；紐約新博物館(2012年)和倫敦白立方(2011年)舉辦個展。曾參與的展覽包括：倫敦皇家藝術學院(2017年)；比利時迪俄里市竇德特戴尼斯博物館(2016年)；京都KUCA畫廊(2014年)；丹麥Kunstforeningen GL Strand(2014)；第55屆威尼斯雙年展(2013年)；德克薩斯州休斯頓當代藝術博物館(2012年)和紐約市國家設計學院博物館(2006年)。

香港白立方

開放時間為逢星期二至星期六

上午11時至下午7時

免費參觀

如有查詢，請聯絡：

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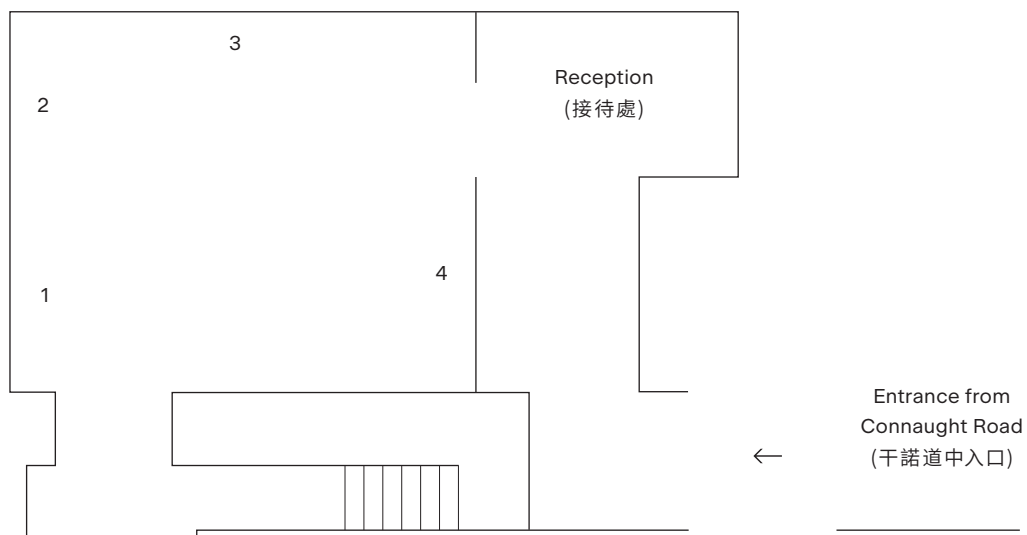
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GROUND FLOOR

- 1 *Composition*
2014 – 2015
Oil on canvas
24.5 × 27.8 cm | 9⁵/₈ × 10¹⁵/₁₆ in.
- 2 *Abdomen*
2014 – 2015
Oil on canvas
23.5 × 25.3 cm | 9¹/₄ × 9¹⁵/₁₆ in.
- 3 *Three Folds*
2018
Oil on canvas
28.3 × 34.6 cm | 11¹/₈ × 13⁵/₈ in.
- 4 *Stripe*
2016
Oil on canvas
30.5 × 33 cm | 12 × 13 in.



FIRST FLOOR

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| <p>1 <i>Three Parts</i> 2014 – 2015 Oil on canvas 18.3 × 18 cm 7³/₁₆ × 7¹/₁₆ in.</p> <p>2 <i>Green Spot</i> 2016 Watercolour on paper 20.8 × 21.1 cm 8³/₁₆ × 8⁵/₁₆ in.</p> <p>3 <i>Black Spot</i> 2018 Watercolour on paper 18.5 × 16.5 × 3 cm 7⁵/₁₆ × 6¹/₂ × 1³/₁₆ in.</p> <p>4 <i>Green Spot</i> 2017 Oil on canvas 21.11 × 17.46 cm 8⁵/₁₆ × 6⁷/₈ in.</p> <p>5 <i>Tree</i> 2013 Oil on canvas 20.6 × 28.6 cm 8¹/₈ × 11¹/₄ in.</p> <p>6 <i>Three Dots with Twine</i> 2018 Watercolour on paper 18.5 × 16.5 × 3 cm 7⁵/₁₆ × 6¹/₂ × 1³/₁₆ in.</p> <p>7 <i>Three Shapes</i> 2018 Watercolour on paper 19 × 18 × 3 cm 7¹/₂ × 7¹/₁₆ × 1³/₁₆ in.</p> <p>8 <i>Stripe</i> 2017 Coloured pencil on paper 21.7 × 25.5 cm 8⁷/₁₆ × 10¹/₁₆ in.</p> <p>9 <i>Stripes</i> 2016 Coloured pencil on paper 15.7 × 16 cm 6³/₁₆ × 6⁵/₁₆ in.</p> | <p>10 <i>Ellen Altfest: June 14, 2018 & October 18, 2018</i> film by Rima Yamazaki 2018 8:56mins</p> |
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