




急湍

HIGH FLOW

约书亚·纳塔森
Joshua Nathanson

The background features a light purple color with several large, expressive brushstrokes in a vibrant orange-red hue. These strokes are scattered across the page, creating a dynamic and artistic feel. The text is centered horizontally and partially overlaid by these brushstrokes.

HIGH FLOW

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林中 *In The Trees*
壁画
Mural
2018

“急湍”，上海余德耀美术馆展览现场，2018年
"High Flow", installation view at Yuz Museum, Shanghai, 2018

亮灰色

萨曼莎·卡尔普

近来出现了一款全新的应用软件，可以通过人工智能将音频免费转成文字。无需人工听录——这种专有算法，经过成千上万段不同音源的测试，可以将音频自动转化为文本。在拜访约书亚·纳塔森高地公园工作室的后一日，我决定试用这个软件，并将我们长达数小时的对话（经我的 iPhone 录制）上传了上去。几分钟后，我就在收件箱内收到了文件，经过粗略浏览，我却发现了一些我们从未谈及的生词。

“一个想法因为他吃了几个世纪在这里出现就很有趣像一辆蒸汽火车。”

“这是它的转动并拒绝了他。”

“是的。拉一下。为什么我爱亮色。”

我们谈话中的一部分关键词被保留了下来，但是我请来偷听对话的人工智能却把它们改编成了完全不同的内容。某种程度上来说，这暗合了约书亚·纳塔森的作品，它们始于外光派传统对日常生活的速写，却在与各种数字界面（以及艺术家潜意识行为）的交互中逐步转变成他最为出名的布上作品。

这些作品很快因为鲜亮的色彩、层次丰富的构图以及异常松散、时而稚气的风格为人们所熟知。这种带有欺骗性的天真质朴掩盖了他的创作主题、完成方式和制作过程：他的作品不仅反映了一个荧屏化的社会（却并未使用诸如应用软件或是表情符号这样明显的标志），更生根于与计算机视角深入、独家的“合作”。正如我们现处的数字社会，熟悉的事物依照着一种奇怪、全新的现实规则被重组。又如我们在新的软件中输入个人信息时，新奇、愉悦等第一反应反而被怪异、复杂的情绪所取代。他所用的颜色本身变成了一种信号，像是热带鱼在深不可测的昏暗水域里穿梭时闪耀的亮光。

纳塔森此次为上海余德耀美术馆创作了五幅大型绘画，一组手绘壁画，一件动画影像，及一座高大的 3D 雕塑。本次展览，作为他在中国的首次个展，呈现了艺术家在创作实践中的延伸与突破——他对绘画进行考量的“范围衍生”，扩展到了新的外观、尺幅及环境。

这些新作源于 2017 年春天纳塔森在上海的驻地创作，期间，他沉浸于这座城市的商业景

观中。秉承艺术家从母文化转至另一种文化的谨慎态度，这些作品主要聚焦于他一贯的创作主题与两种公共空间：购物中心和公共公园。

成长于 80 年代休斯顿的城郊，纳塔森深受购物中心和核战的吸引，孩童的潜意识使他认为二者保有某种联系。一个展现的是慰藉人心的资本主义乌托邦，另一个则是对资本主义威势的存亡威胁（确切说是冷战将近时期）。纳塔森唤起了这些郊区商场对一个孩子而言超载的迷惑——微微发光的自动扶梯，色彩纷呈的陈列设计，无穷无尽的产品货架，美食区飘来的披萨和糖果的香味，电影、街机游戏的声音以及此起彼伏于这封闭环境中的笑声。

80 年代美国典型的商场设计犹如一个现代主义的匣子，极尽反光材料之能事以唤起这一代对未来的畅想：铬合金栏杆、平板玻璃、光亮的大理石一并沐浴在日光灯的照射中，大多数时候浸没在天窗洒下的阳光里。这些内饰再现了人们对未来建筑的臆想——即“生物站”的概念，一座在面临突发灾害时为精选出的小部分人群提供所需物资的永续堡垒（这一构想经由 1991 年建于美国亚利桑那州的“生物圈 2 号”实验基地得以普及）。置身于类似加尔文主义的奇异体系中，处于购物中心内，并且（关键是）选购商品，消费者们仿佛已成为未来灾难的幸存者。同时，购物中心鼓舞（和要求）人们进行狩猎与采集，使访客变为“猎获”某物的消费者，从而将这一空间转变为半天然的“景观”或是生态系统的延伸。介于安逸与垂危、得陇望蜀和捷足先登之间的这种张力成为了购物中心吸引公众的招牌与承诺。作为一个孩子，身处于商场中，纳塔森有时候会爬到梅西百货的服装架下想象世界末日。“它不单是一种悲伤或可怕的想法，实际上它和心满意足是相当的。”艺术家如是写道。

在纳塔森洛杉矶工作室的不远处，恰巧有一座“美利坚品牌购物中心”，与其说是现代购物中心，不如说是后现代的产物：它瓦解了商场的形态，回望遥想的过去而非（前途渺茫的）未来。紧随迪士尼及南加州氛围的潮流，购物中心建于户外，商铺临着一条时代风格不明的“主街”散开，经由多功能电车和散落各处的喷泉、树木、长椅得以完善。最近，纳塔森以莫奈处理吉维尼花园的方式对待美利坚购物中心，他不断对它的场景、人物和事物进行速写以作为新作的基础，同时又深感讽刺：自亚马逊和电商出现后，大多数美国购物中心已经变成了濒危物种。

在上海，他受启发于淮海路及沿街的繁华商场，并在其中寻获了美国 80 年代高度现代主义的购物中心表现出对未来的乐观情绪。由此而发的作品描绘了一种“国际化”的商场，

呈现的是经济发展的某一刻而不是某种特定的文化。购物中心也许投射的并不只是八十年代的“美国梦”，或是现今的“中国梦”，而是“资本主义晚期之梦”，它盘旋于我们所有人之上，犹如美食区里喷泉的弧线——瞄向头顶的天窗，成为一个无法企及的目标。

然而——商场所带来的愉悦感是真实的，挥之不去的。纳塔森的绘画忠实地捕捉了这一情感，不掺一丝嘲讽：丰富的商品、蜿蜒的走道和重重夹层勾勒出的无尽空间、（通过目光在画布上的游移得以重现的）狩猎般的探索。神秘的人物意指着人群，他们的目光，既观察着他人，又被他人所观看。

这些作品似乎在质疑为什么商场不如另一个大受欢迎的写生场所——公园——那么像一个公共空间，在上海和洛杉矶都是如此。它们中的一部分源于复星公园等地的写生，重现的是诸如乔治·修拉的《大碗岛星期天的下午》等经典创作，不过，纳塔森是在触屏上“点彩”，而不是用点作画。最为重要的是，他的作品意在表现一种生机——即流转于生态系统中的动能——与画面的具体情境无关。公园和购物中心只是两处单纯的景观，受限于自身的规则、场景和消费形式。

就像美国的购物中心弥补了公共空间的缺失，变为郊区小家庭的绿洲，公园和商场之于上海这类大都市也是如此。公交系统犹如瞬间转移，或是时空穿梭——从法租界的里弄进入地铁，直接抵达浦东时髦的购物中心。纳塔森的构图瓦解了空间与时间，既适用于上海也适用于洛杉矶这样的“汽车城”。与“亮灰色”的上海天空（由于污染或单是湿气）形成对比，购物中心成了裹挟亮色的口袋——炫目得如梦如幻。

纳塔森的色系总是光怪陆离的，对比强烈的亮色、荧光色配上一些晦暗的色彩，造就了一种令人心神不宁、忐忑不安的效果。酸绿色、浅桃红和电光蓝相遇后——被一抹土红色打破，像是钢琴的小调。尽管画面中运用了诸多被视为“80年代”代表的荧光色及粉彩色，它们却并非在表达多数后网络画家和当代画家所追求的复古。相反，荧光漆的使用旁敲侧击了浸润大半现实生活的数码色彩。近期研究显示，普通一个美国人一天约有一半醒着的时间盯着某种屏幕（大多数其他国家的的结果基本相似）。所以人类已经逐渐适应自始存在的背光色——LED光穿过轻透外壳所形成的色彩。荧光漆与反光色罕见的显色方式即可模拟这种色彩，甚至固体颜料也可以。正如卡洛琳·L·凯恩在数码色彩的历史中所提到的“颜色算法”，“荧光色是一种基于光线和颜料，可增可减的阈值现象。”纳塔森的用色引入了这种“阈值现象”从而接近了电脑色彩，再出人意料地配上珠光色系。这种

综合效果并非为了中和屏幕色彩，而是使他们形成轻微的反差——也许是想让我们更深刻地体会到我们的视觉是如何随着电子设备进行调整的。

艺术家本身的视觉，毫无疑问，也受他自身设备的影响，这一影响也融入到了他的创作概念和实践过程中。借助纸笔写生后，纳塔森会将手稿复制到iPad中进行色彩实验。在此，荧光橙的线条可以划过深蓝色的色块而不失去原有的色泽并保持清晰的轮廓——在屏幕的乌托邦世界中，所有的像素点都生而平等。通过手写笔和指尖，纳塔森对形状、颜色、图形进行了实验；调低或调高色彩的饱和度，将事物从最小放大，把物体进行重置，仿佛它们是没有重量的家具。在传统的手绘临摹中，艺术家通过不同的选择塑造他所预想的形状。但是在数字化的工作流程中，有多少选择会因为细微未知的因素而改变：应用软件默认的线宽设定？可随时回溯不同版本的存档？大猩猩玻璃屏的触觉反馈速度？与其刻意避免，纳塔森反而着迷于这种相互作用——一种与电子设备的强化合作，甚至连我们自己都难以理解。这些概念也影响了艺术家新近创作的动画影片与雕塑，与电子设备的交互进一步“延伸”到了另一种媒介——比如动画中每一帧的衔接，或是图腾雕塑的使用材料。当指尖在3D建模中的“滑动”变为大型雕塑上的可触材料，这仍然能算是人类的手作吗？

此外，经过数不胜数的修改，作品最终还是使用实体颜料重新进行人工着色而不是由电脑完成最后的处理。艺术家使用了一种名为“彩猴”的设备，其原理是通过一台小相机扫描屏幕后，精确评估出（屏幕对人）显示出的颜色深浅，再帮助人们用真实的颜料调出相应色彩。纳塔森解释道，“这实际上就像是电脑在观察自己”。换句话说，彩猴是一个使电脑得以向现实世界分享其内生视角的工具（反之亦然）。自这指数变化的新纪元起，我们也许不该再问“演算法是否可以变为艺术创作者？”而应当思考“艺术家是否一直都是演算法的运用者？”

在人工智能转译的艺术家采访中，有一句话令我十分震惊，以致于我不得不重听一次音频原件。有一处，纳塔森提到，在某些作品中他会专注于描绘这些“癫狂、迷幻的商场”，这段话最终被转译成了“致幻的蛾子”。当商场变为“生物站”，公园变为地产景观，当我们的视觉受训于屏幕而非其他方式，当人类与电脑之手被缚于通灵板上借由牵拉创新——也许在画布上飞舞的鲜明色彩和形状确实是“致幻的蛾子”，一种我们都还未能辨识的奇特新物种。也许在这一点上，人工智能的转译是对的，它比我更能听清他在说什么。



优裕与文化 *Affluence and Culture*
布面丙烯 Acrylic on canvas
213 x 156 cm
2017

Bright Grey

Samantha Culp

There's a new app that offers free transcription of audio files via artificial intelligence. No human is listening – instead, a proprietary algorithm, trained on hundreds of thousands of other audio files, will turn it into text automatically. The day after I interviewed the painter Joshua Nathanson in his Highland Park studio, I decided to test it out by uploading our hours-long conversation (which I had recorded on my iPhone). A few minutes later, I received the document in my inbox, and I scanned through it only to find unfamiliar phrases neither of us had spoken.

"An idea because he ate it in centuries here it's really interesting brought about like a steam train."

"It is it's turning and turning him down."

"Yeah. Pull it. Why I love bright."

Some of the keywords of our chat were there, but the AI I had invited to eavesdrop had morphed and recombined them into something quite different. In some ways this is an apt metaphor for Joshua Nathanson's work, which begins with sketches taken from life in the tradition of plein air painting, but gradually mutates through conversation with various digital interfaces (as well as the artist's own subconscious gestures) to become the canvases he is best known for.

His paintings are quickly recognizable for their vivid color, layered composition, and a distinctively loose, sometimes childlike drawing style. This deceptive simplicity belies his subject matter, craft, and process: the fact that not only do his works reflect on a screen-mediated society (without including obvious symbols like apps or emoji), but that they've been constructed in a deep and unique "collaboration" with computer vision. Like much about our contemporary digital condition, familiar objects are re-composited in a strange new order of reality. Like when we enter all of our personal data into a new app, immediate reactions of novelty and delight give way to a sense of the uncanny and mixed emotions. His colors themselves become a semaphore, like the brilliance of tropical fish flashing through murky waters that are far deeper than we realized.

For Yuz Museum, Shanghai, Nathanson has created 5 new large-scale paintings as well as a hand-painted mural, a video animation, and a towering

3D-designed sculpture. This show, his first in China, thus represents a continuation and a twist in the artist's practice – a "scope creep" of his concerns within painting to new surfaces, dimensions, and geographies.

These new works emerged out of a residency Nathanson did in Shanghai in spring 2017, during which he immersed himself in the city's commercial landscape. Inherently cautious about the history of artists from one culture attempting to render another, the paintings focus on two public spaces that have been mainstays of his work all along: the shopping mall and public park.

Growing up in the Houston suburbs in the 1980s, Nathanson was fascinated equally by shopping malls and nuclear war, with a child's subconscious understanding of the connection between the two. One represents a soothing capitalist utopia, and the other an existential threat to the logic of capitalism (quite literally, in the waning years of the Cold War). Nathanson recalls the sensory overload of these suburban malls as hypnotizing for a small child – the shimmering escalators, the colorful shop designs, the endless array of products, the smell of pizza and sweets from the food court, the sounds of movies, arcade games, and laughter bouncing off every surface of the enclosed environment.

The classic 80's American mall design was a modernist box, with a maximum of light-reflective materials evoking that era's visions of the future: chrome railings, plate glass, gleaming marble, all bathed in the light from fluorescent tubes but also, in most cases, from the actual sun, via cutaway skylights. The interior replicates the psychological effect of that other speculative architecture of the future – the "biodome", a sustainable fortress providing everything a select group of humans might need in the event of an unforeseen disaster (as popularized by the experimental Biosphere 2 facility constructed in Arizona in 1991). In a strange form of quasi-Calvinism, to be inside the mall, and (this is key), shopping, is to suggest that one has already made the cut to be among the chosen survivors of a future catastrophe. At the same time, the behavior encouraged (and required) by the mall is of hunting and gathering, transforming visitors into consumers "on the hunt" for something, and the space into a quasi-natural "landscape" or ecosystem by extension. This tension between safety and precarity, acute desire and pre-emptive satiation, is the appeal and promise of the shopping mall as public space. As a child in the mall, sometimes Nathanson would crawl under the clothing racks at Macy's and imagine the end of the world. "It wasn't really a sad or scary thought as much as a feeling of true satisfaction," the artist has written.

Not far from Nathanson's studio in Los Angeles is a shopping center fittingly named "the Americana at Brand", which could be considered a post-modern instead of modernist mall: it deconstructs the mall form and looks to an imagined past rather than a (dead-end) future. Taking a queue from Disneyland and the Southern California climate, the Americana is outdoors, with its shops lining a simulated "main street" of indeterminate time period, complete with a functional trolley-car, as well as sprawling fountains, trees, benches. Lately Nathanson has approached the Americana the way that Monet did his Giverny gardens, frequently returning to sketch its scenes, people, and objects as the basis for new paintings, while acknowledging the irony that, ever since the advent of Amazon and e-commerce, most American malls are an endangered species.

In Shanghai, he was inspired by the glossy malls of Huaihai Lu and beyond, finding in them traces of the futuristic optimism of high-modernist shopping centers in 80's America. The resulting paintings suggest an "international style" of shopping malls, a form that represents less a particular culture than a moment in an economic trajectory. The shopping mall is perhaps not just a feature of the "American Dream" of the 80s, or the "Chinese Dream" of today, but instead the "Late Capitalist Dream", hovering above all of us like the arc of a foodcourt fountain's spray – aiming up toward the skylights overhead, like a target it will never reach.

And yet – the sensory pleasures of the shopping mall are real, and can't be easily dismissed. Nathanson's paintings render these pleasures faithfully, non-cynically: the abundance of products, the infinite space suggested by curving walkways and layered mezzanines, the discoveries of the hunt (re-enacted by the journey of one's eye around the canvas). Enigmatic figures hinting at a procession of others and their gazes, to see and be seen by.

They seem to question why a mall is any less valid a public space than a park, another favorite sketching spot, in Shanghai as well as Los Angeles. Several works began as sketches in places like Fuxing Park, recalling classics of the genre like "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte" by Georges Seurat, but Nathanson is a pointillist of the touch-screen swipe, not the dot. Above all else, his work is interested in vitality – dynamic energy flows within an ecosystem – and is radically agnostic about the context. The park and the mall are simply two landscapes, both circumscribed by their own rules, spectacles, and forms of consumption.

Just as American malls were stand-ins for a lack of common spaces, and became oases from the suburban nuclear family home, so both parks and

malls can be oases within a mega-city like Shanghai. Transportation can feel more like teleportation, even time travel – one might descend into the metro from a lanehouse alleyway in the former French Concession, and exit directly into a sleek shopping mall in Pudong. This collapse of space and time is echoed in Nathanson's compositions, as fitting for Shanghai as it is in an "autopia" like Los Angeles. In contrast to the often "bright grey" Shanghai sky (due to pollution or simply humidity), the shopping mall becomes a pocket of vibrant color – so brilliant it's almost like a simulation.

Nathanson's color palette has always been idiosyncratic, juxtaposing bright, fluorescent hues with muddier tones for an unsettling, emotionally-ambivalent affect. Acid green meets pale peach meets electric blue – but then interrupted by a line of earthy magenta that registers like a minor-scale piano key. Though there are plenty of neons and pastels, often shorthand for "the 80's", they're not self-consciously retro in the way many post-Internet and contemporary painters tend to utilize them. Instead, the use of day-glo hints at and undercuts the digital color palette we're immersed in for half our waking life. Recent studies show that the average American spends half of their waking hours looking at a screen of some kind (the range for most other countries is not be far off). Therefore humans are increasingly adapting to colors that are always-already backlit – that are composed from LED light shining through a slightly transparent hue. This is mimicked by the unusual way that day-glo or fluorescent colors work, even in physical pigment form. As scholar Carolyn L. Kane writes in her history of digital color, "Chromatic Algorithms", "fluorescents are a threshold phenomenon that are both additive and subtractive, light-based and pigment based." Nathanson's palette employs this "threshold phenomenon" to evoke computer colors, and then pairs them with surprising choices like jewel tones. The overall affect is not to counter-balance screen colors, but to estrange them ever so slightly – perhaps making us more aware of the way our vision is being recalibrated by our devices.

The artist's vision is, of course, calibrated by his own devices, and so he has made this an integral part of his conceptual and practical process. After drawing from life with sketchbook and pen, Nathanson replicates these sketches on an iPad, and begins to experiment with color. Here, a line of day-glo orange can slide over a navy-blue shape without losing any brightness or definition – in the utopia of the screen, all pixels are created equal. With stylus and fingertip, Nathanson experiments with shape, hue, figure; can dial intensity up and down, can scale an object from miniature to giant and re-arrange them like weightless furniture. As in the analogue tradition, the artist is making choices to inscribe his vision into form. But in the digital

workflow, how many of these choices are being shaped by ever more subtle, unseen factors: the app's default line-weight-settings? The multiple version-saves that allow backtracking? The very speed of the Gorilla Glass's haptic feedback loop? Rather than shy away, Nathanson is fascinated by this interplay – a type of increased collaboration with our devices in ways that we barely understand. These concepts are also an influence on the artist's new animated videos and sculptures, in which casual digital gestures are further “extruded” in other mediums – such as the flowing motion of an animation, or the physical matter of a totemic sculpture. When a single fingertip “swipe” in a 3D modeling program becomes a tangible texture on a massive sculpture, is it still the product of a human hand?

Likewise, after countless iterations of his paintings, the composition is finally re-painted by hand with physical pigments but not before the computer has one last say. The artist uses a device called a “ColorMunki”, essentially a small camera that scans the monitor to assess precisely what shades are being displayed (to human observers), and help them mix real paints to match. As Nathanson explains, “it's literally the computer looking at itself.” In other words, the ColorMunki is a tool for helping the computer share its internal vision with the real world (or vice versa). From this new era of exponential change, we may need to start asking not just “can an algorithm be an artist?”, but “have artists been algorithmic actors all along?”

In the AI transcript of the artist's interview, I was so struck by one line that I traced it back to its human audio source. At one point Nathanson mentioned that in certain works he focused on capturing these “spacey, psychedelic malls”, which became “species of psychedelic moths.” When mall becomes Biodome, and park becomes real-estate spectacle, when our eyes are trained by the screen and not the other way around, when human and computer hands are now locked in a Ouija Board push-pull to create new forms – perhaps the vivid colors and shapes that flit around his canvases are indeed “species of psychedelic moths,” a strange new breed we haven't identified yet. Maybe here the AI transcriber was correct, and heard him more clearly than I did.



随员 *Attaché*
布面丙烯 Acrylic on canvas
213 x 156 cm
2017

余德耀美术馆：你的作品在乍看之下非常扁平，但实际上它囊括了多个层面。我们很容易辨别每幅画的细节来自不同的空间与时间。你仿佛将数个三维世界压缩到了一个二维的空间。你是如何处理超扁平绘画与其蕴含的多重空间的关系的？

约书亚·纳塔森：我作品中的空间与橱窗展陈、舞台布景和壁纸中的空间类似。你甚至可以在中国的卷轴画中发现这种空间。它处于平面与深处的交界，表里兼蓄、相辅相成。但这一空间也是独树一帜的，它拥有自己的内部逻辑或逆向逻辑。实际上，正因为存在了一些有悖常理的事物，它们才会越看越有趣。例如，一幅画中可能有几个太阳，其中之一被放在了建筑物的前方。在静态的摄影空间中，这是有悖逻辑的。不过你可以把这幅绘画看作是自己在某个地方呆了一小时的经历和体会，在这一期间，你的视线到处游弋，不同的想法汇集于目所能及的每一处，由此，这幅画就有了另一种含义。

我希望在自己的画中蕴藏一些空间感，而一些引发错觉的纵深会有所助益。此外，我更关心的是构图、色彩与形状等绘画的基本特征，但是往往对空间的刻画会与之产生冲突。我一直试图传达的是一种情绪或心境，但发现这些抽象的绘画特征比引发错觉的纵深更为有效。就此来说，我的绘画可能更接近于音乐而非照片。

我们总能在你的作品中发现一些夸张的、成对或者单独出现的眼球。可以简单和我们谈一谈这些眼球以及它们的意向所指吗？

在我们的五感中，我认为视觉是人与世界相联的主要方式，我们借由视觉来观察世界。作为一名画家、一个主要通过视觉来感受世界的人，这对我而言就尤为重要。当我外出速写时，我常常觉得自己只是一个坐着作速记的巨型眼球，身体的其余部分都变得无关紧要了。另外，我在观察他人时发现，人们通常会环顾四周或者去辨别周围的事物。我被他们的眼睛吸引并对他们眼中的世界感到好奇。

你的作品主题都是非常严肃的，然而，你所选用的色彩往往是明亮活泼的（除却 2015 年在 VFS 画廊中展出的“劳动节”系列）。你如何看待色彩与主题、色彩与情绪之间的关系？色彩对你而言意味着什么？

人们常把强烈的色彩与喜悦之情联系在一起，但色彩可以去描绘一系列的情绪。我并不关心快乐本身，但我希望可以捕捉一种生命力。我的一部分绘画可能在描绘使人悲伤或不适的事物，但我仍希望它们富有生气。色彩是表达情感的绝佳方式。我会不由自主地使颜色和生命等同相联，所以这绝对是最关心的事。

有时我会用色彩使某些物品清晰可辨。比如我可能把一个苹果涂上红色，这样，观众就会知道这是一个苹果，而不是一个桃子。除此以外，我会给自己充分的自由去做任何我想做的事。我会耗费很多时间辗转于不同的配色，因为一切事物都是相联的，而我希望每件作品就整体来看都有它自己特定的情绪。

你曾经提到城市的“尖峰比我(或任何人)所想象的更为平凡：它自适于失序，居安于混沌”。你为什么对“城市”感兴趣并选择它作为作品的主题？

我一直着迷于人类的历史以及我们是如何从狩猎时代转变至今的。城市是人们簇拥而聚、试新存在方式的地方——是浓缩的人性。不过，我们现在在手机和“云端”上花费的时间越来越多，所以城市这一概念已经开始显得过时了。当我走入真实世界时，我常常感到自己身处一个巨型的主题公园内。它的名字可能会是“20 世纪后的乐园”之类的。

在你近期的作品中，主要描绘了两种公共空间：公共公园与购物中心。为什么会选择这两处进行描绘？它们分别代表了什么？

我认为公园与商场是不同类型的乌托邦。公园意指一种回归自然的理想形态，而商场则代表了资本主义晚期趋于完善的消费主义。前者追溯了过去，后者面向未来（或者说是现代主义的顶峰）。但也许真正的未来会在云端？

2017 年，你前赴上海寻找灵感、筹备此次展览。是否可以简单用几个词来形容你对这座城市印象？此次展出的作品与你在上海的经历有什么关系？

在去上海之前，我的绘画主要基于对洛杉矶公园和购物中心的速写。这次展览，我还是决定以上海的公园和商场为创作基础。这些地方无论在哪里其实都大同小异，但我想我会发现其中的细微差别，而这就是我作品的意义所在。但事实上，真的很难看到有什么区别！所以有段时间，我感到自己最初的想法有点傻。

不过最终，我开始觉得自己与这座城市同步了，它逐渐影响了我对商场和公园的观察角度以及思考方式。其中最为主要的，就是上海令人震惊的城市规模。当我穿梭于城市间，我感到自己仿佛在一个巨大的机器或某种宇宙飞船里。并且它在持续不断地高速增长。我在西岸地区的余德耀美术馆做驻地时，几乎每一个街区都是一个巨大的建筑工地。人行道和工地外围筑起的胶合墙板上，贴着最终建设的效果图——公寓、商区、餐厅、篮球场、画廊等等。仿佛每个街区都是一个自成一体的城市。

此外，我发现我在上海遇到的人都很热情，也有远见。尤其在艺术圈内，有一种万事萌生、开放发展的感觉。这让我想起 90 年代末的柏林，当时艺术家和画廊都纷纷迁居前往那里。和在柏林一样，我也常听人们说“兄弟，你真该看看这个地方十年前的样子！”。大家都非常期待接下来会发生什么，而这种感觉是会传染的。不同于被禁锢在某一空间里，它使你感到一切都漂浮在空中，带着梦幻般的质感弥漫开。

这一次，你把自己的动画作品也带到了中国。这种实验性的尝试将静态的作品画面转变成了 25 秒的动态电影。这一概念或想法是如何产生的？

我受启发于过去五年中在网上常常看到的 gif 图片。我发现它们真的很感人——我可以一遍遍地看它们，即使是最简单的那一类。我认为根据这一体验来做一个动画会很棒。我把这个动画的时间拉得比传统的 gif 更长一些，并且加入了配乐。动画中的许多元素也会重复循环。

传统动画的工作量非常大，所以即使是最好的动画也会试着做一些简化。比如，当一个角色在说话的时候，除了嘴巴，它的其他部位都是静止的。如果整个动画的每个部分都在变动，画出全部场景的时间就永无止尽了。但由于这个动画只有 25 秒，我就能够使数百万个小物体动起来。当一切都在运动的时候，就产生了一种我非常喜爱的迷幻效果。

在我的绘画中，我常以不同的方式描绘同一个场景——从不同的角度，在一天内的不同时间，随着我的情绪而波动。动画作品可以使我游移在这些元素中并使他们展开对话。

在这部动画中，我们可以见到商场里的人们乘着自动扶梯上下移动。它无缝循环着，但企图使人感到整个场景是在永远上升的自动扶梯上看到的。商场如此引人入胜，显然需要向着“天堂”和你渴望的一切不断攀升。而配乐则是为了传达这种体验的精神本质。音乐中持续不断的低音指向了不可抵挡的欲望。

我们现在已经进入了数字时代。电视、电话、笔记本电脑不仅改变了我们的生活，也改变了我们看待世界和表达自己的方式。同时为我们提供了新的艺术形式。它是如何影响你的生活和创作的？

首先，这些技术使我在进行传统艺术创作时获得了极大的自由。通过在 iPad 上速写，我在色彩部分可以完成很多现实生活中难以实现的事（例如使用色彩校正工具同时改变一幅作品中的所有颜色）。通过 3D 建模，我可以在很短的时间内制作出相当复杂的雕塑。即

使要做一些巨大的改动也比较简单——移动某些部分，扩大或缩小比例，保存多个版本等等。这些技术本身都有自己的美学，也很容易使人产生依赖，由于它们与最前沿的技术息息相关，因此你会感到它们就像是这个时代内化的产物。所以我尽量避免落入陷阱、在我的作品中突出这些技术，而是把它们作为一种使人惊叹的辅助工具。

毋庸置疑，我们所有人总是在盯着这些屏幕，不断于其中跳转。如果屏幕只是播放电影和电视，那么它是一种被动的输出，但现在我们却在使用这些技术进行交流，游戏，购物等等。我们在这些虚拟空间里耗费的时间越来越多，而这影响了我们的一切。与现实世界相比，这些地方少了人情味，却被更饱和的色彩和信息填充，致使用户养成一种“签到”的习惯。甚至当我们在真实世界中坐下，只是单纯感受当下也变得越来越困难。我们迫不及待地想找一些简单的事情做，或者干脆回到手机里。电子游戏变得越来越先进，尽管过去我常常惊叹于他们所创作的物体可以如此逼真，比方汽车、树木、天空等，但某种程度上这又发生了反转，我开始观察现实世界并思考它究竟有多数字化。

展览的名为“急湍”，是否可以分享一下它背后的故事？

我想为这组作品增添一种梦幻般的感觉。创作方法之一就是在已经完成的作品表面喷上透明的喷雾。我用的是高登金牌的颜料，他们有一系列专门用于喷绘的丙烯产品名为“急流”。

而我不断地感到上海的一切都有很强的流动性，处于世界潮流的尖端。仿佛所有的一切都从一条快速通道上淌过，优雅而自信。又像是骤雨过后冲过街道的水流。

Yuz Museum: Your painting looks super-flat at first glance, but it actually embodies several planes and layers. We could easily tell that the details in each painting are from different space and time. It seems that you compress the three-dimensional worlds into a two-dimensional space. How do you manage the relationship between the super flat painting and the multi-space it contains?

Joshua Nathanson: The space in my paintings is similar to the space found in window displays, stage sets and wallpaper. You can even find it in some ancient Chinese scroll paintings. It's on the threshold between flatness and depth and plays with both – they inform one another. But it's also its own unique type of space with its own internal logic or counter logic. You know, it's actually the counterintuitive stuff that makes them fun to look at. For instance a single painting might have multiple suns and one of them might be placed in front of the buildings. It doesn't make sense in terms of a static photographic space. But you could see it as a painting about the experience of having been in a certain place over the course of an hour, where your eye moved back and forth through the world with many ideas attached to each position, and then it starts to make sense in a different way.

I like to have some sense of space in my paintings but I've found that a little bit of illusionistic depth goes a long way. Also, I'm more concerned with basic formal properties like composition, color, shape etc. and the depiction of space is often at odds with these things. I'm always trying to convey a mood or a state of mind and I find that these abstract properties do the job better than illusionism. In this sense my paintings are probably closer to music than they are to photographs.

We could always find exaggerated eyeballs, paired or alone, in your works. Can you tell us more about the eyeballs and what they refer to?

Of our five senses I think that sight is the main way we connect to the world as we navigate through it. Especially for myself as a painter and a visual person. So when I'm out making sketches I often feel that I'm just one big eyeball sitting there taking notes – the rest of me doesn't really matter. Also, when I'm watching other people, I realize that they are often doing something similar in the sense that they are looking around and taking stock of things. I'm drawn to their eyes and I wonder how they picture the world.

The topics in your paintings are quite serious, however, the color you choose is bright and vibrant (except the series exhibited in 2015 for VFS show “Labor Day”.) How do you see the relationship between the color and the theme, the

color and the emotion? What does color mean to you?

People often conflate intense colors with happiness but color can be used to depict a whole range of emotions. I'm not concerned with happiness per se but I always want to depict vitality. Some of my paintings might be about sad or uncomfortable things but I still want them to feel alive. Colors are simply a great way to convey emotions. I can't help equating color with life itself so it's definitely one the things I care about most.

Sometimes I use color to make certain things recognizable. For instance I might paint an apple red so the viewer will know it's an apple and not a peach. But otherwise I give myself total freedom to do whatever I want. I spend a lot of time going back and forth between different color combinations because everything is interrelated and I want each work to have its own specific set of feelings when it's seen as a whole.

You once mentioned that the city's “apex more mundane than I (or anyone) had imagined: comfortable with its dysfunction, cozy in its chaos”. Why does “city” interest you and why do you choose it as a main theme of your creations?

I've always been fascinated with the history of humanity and how we have shifted over time from hunter gatherers to where we are now. The city is where we are all jammed together and experimenting with new ways of being – it's concentrated humanity. But of course we are spending more and more time in our phones and “in the cloud” so it's already starting to seem outmoded. When I go out into the real world I'm often struck by the feeling that I'm in a giant theme park. It's title would be “Late 20th Century Land” or something.

Recently, two public spaces have been the main topic of your work: the public park and the shopping mall. Why did you choose these two places? What are they referring to?

I was thinking that parks and the malls both operate as types of utopian spaces. Parks represent a return to nature in an idealized form. Whereas malls represent the perfection of consumerism within late capitalism. Parks point toward the past and malls point toward the future (or at least the height of modernism). But perhaps the real future will take place in The Cloud?

You came to Shanghai in 2017 to find your inspirations and prepared for this exhibition. Would you use a few words to describe your impression of the city? How do the artworks in this show related to your experience in here?

Before I went to Shanghai I was making paintings based on plein air sketches of parks and malls in Los Angeles. For this show I simply decided to make work based on parks and malls in Shanghai. These places are similar wherever you go but I figured I would find small differences and that's what the work would be about. But in actuality it was really hard to see much difference at all! So for a while I thought my initial idea was kind of silly.

But ultimately, I began to feel as though I were syncing up with the city and it started to inflect the way I was seeing and thinking about the malls and parks. One of the main things was simply the scale of the city, it really blew my mind. When I was going through it I felt like I was in a giant machine or some sort of spaceship. And it seemed like it was growing really fast. While I was doing the residency at YUZ Museum in the West Bund area, almost every other block was a huge construction site. On the plywood walls surrounding the sites, along the sidewalks, they had posted the plans – apartments, shopping areas, restaurants, basketball courts, art galleries etc. As if each block would be a self contained city in itself.

Also, I found that the people I met in Shanghai were very enthusiastic and forward looking. Especially within the art community there was a sense that things were really starting to grow and open up. It reminded me of Berlin in the late 90's when artists and galleries were beginning to move there. And, like Berlin, I kept hearing versions of “man, you should have seen this place ten years ago!”. People were genuinely excited to see what was coming next and this feeling was infectious. Instead of feeling locked into place it felt like things were sort of floating and suffused with a dreamlike quality.

You are bringing the animation to China this time. The experimental practice transformed the still image of your painting into a 25-second film of the dynamism. How did you come up with this idea or concept?

I was inspired by some of the gifs I saw floating around on the internet over the past 5 years. I found them really mesmerizing – I could watch them over and over, even the really simple ones. So I thought it would be cool to make an animation based on this type of experience. I made this animation a little longer than a traditional gif and I added a soundtrack. Also a lot of the elements within the animation are looping as they go past.

Traditional animation takes a lot of work so even the best animations tend to simplify things. For instance when a character is talking everything is static except for the mouth. If every part were moving for the entire show it would take forever to draw everything. But since this animation is only 25 seconds I

was able to animate a million little things. When everything is moving it has a really psychedelic effect that I love.

In my paintings I'm often depicting the same scene but in a variety of ways – from different angles, at different times of the day and within the framework of my mood fluctuations. An animation allows me to move between these things and to let them have a conversation.

In this animation we have a shopping mall with people going up and down the escalators. It's a seamless loop but it's meant to feel as though the whole scene is being witnessed from an escalator that's going forever upward. Malls are such aspirational places that it obviously had to be an upward movement toward “heaven” and everything you always wanted. The soundtrack was meant to convey the almost spiritual nature of the experience. And it has an incessant bass line that's akin to the unstoppable nature of desire.

We now enter into digital age. TV, phone, laptop not only changed our lives, but also changed the way we see the world and how we express ourselves. It provides us with new forms of art as well. How does this impact your life and influence your work?

First of all, in a really basic sense, these technologies have really given me a lot of freedom in working with traditional art concerns. By sketching on the iPad I can do things with color that are really hard and sometimes even impossible in the real world (for instance, changing all of the colors all at once with a color adjustment tool). And with 3D modeling I'm able to make a fairly complex sculpture in a short amount of time. It's so easy to make dramatic changes – moving things around, shifting the scale, saving multiple versions etc. These technologies each have their own aesthetics and it's easy to lean on them because they feel inherently contemporary simply because they're associated with the newness of the technology. So I try to avoid falling into that trap by thinking of these things as amazing tools but not something I want to really foreground in the work.

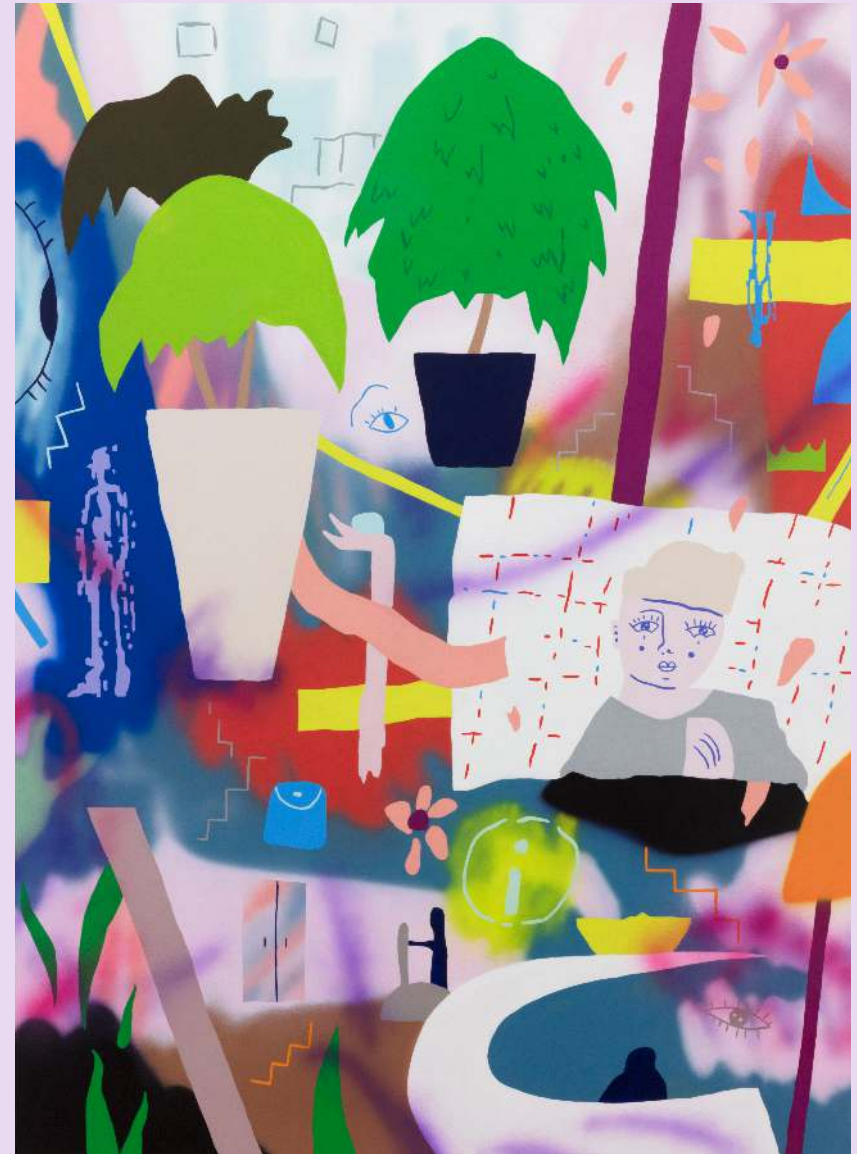
But yeah, all of us are always looking at these screens and jumping around within them. When it was just film and television it was all very passive but now we are using these technologies for communication, gaming, shopping etc. We are spending more and more time in these spaces and that affects everything about us. Compared to the real world, these spaces are colder, more saturated with color and information, and tend to cultivate a sort of habitual “checking in”. Even when we are just sitting there in the real world it's becoming harder to be in those moments. We want to be doing some small

tasks or simply get back into our phones. As video games became more and more advanced, I used to marvel at their ability to create things that looked “real”, like cars, trees, skys etc. But somehow this started to reverse itself so that lately I've begun to look at the real world and to think about how digital it feels.

The exhibition is called 'High Flow', would you like to share with us the story behind it?

For this body of work I wanted to add a dreamy feeling to the work. One of the ways I did this was by adding transparent sprays of color over the top of the finished paintings. I use Golden brand paint and they have a line of acrylics that's made for airbrushing and it's called “High Flow”.

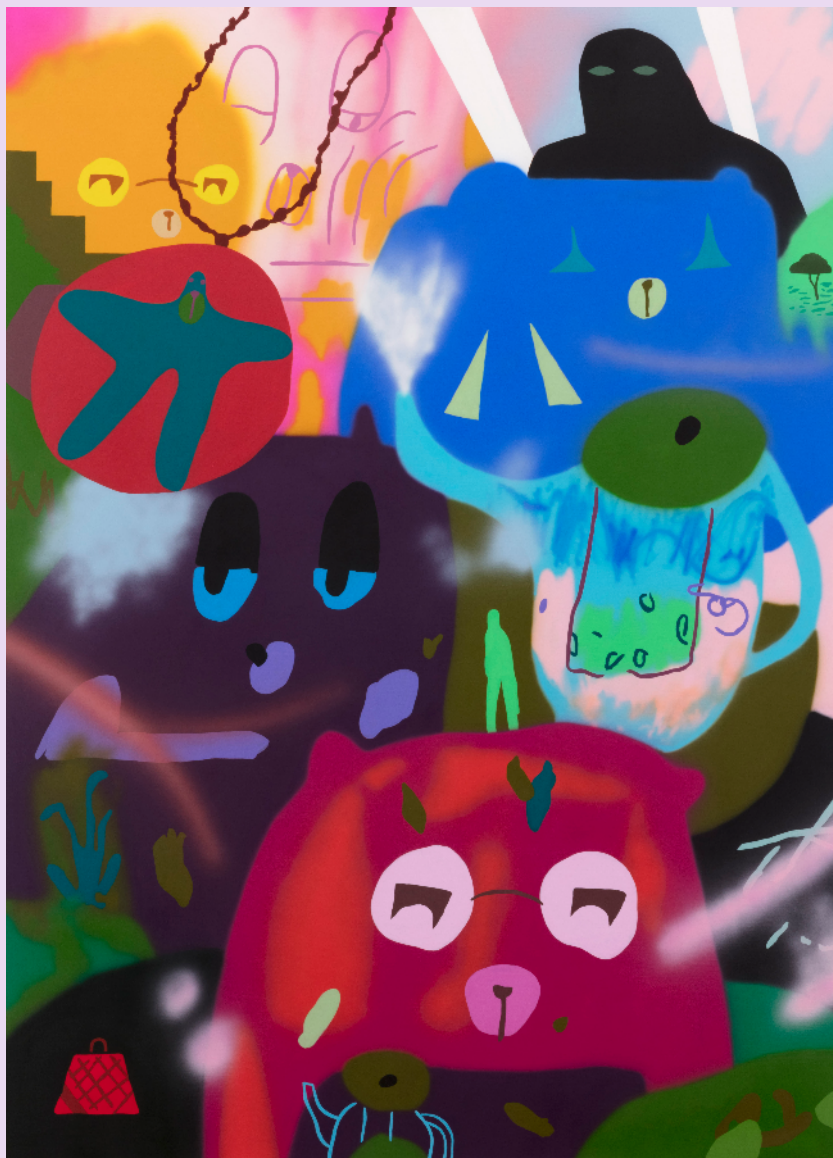
Also, I kept getting the feeling that things in Shanghai were very fluid and on the cusp of where the world is headed. As if things are chugging along at a fast past but with a type of graceful confidence. Like water flowing down the street after a hard rain.



飞越 Flythrough
布面丙烯 Acrylic on canvas
213 x 156 cm
2017



永恒的轮回 *Eternal Return*
布面丙烯 Acrylic on canvas
241 x 429 cm
2017



怪熊 *Strange Bears*
布面丙烯 Acrylic on canvas
213 x 156 cm
2017



如何繁盛 *How To Thrive*

高清影像, 1080x1920 像素, 有声, 50 秒循环播放
Video projection, 1080x1920 pixels, 50 seconds in length and
running on a loop with sound
2017

“急湍”, 上海余德耀美术馆展览现场, 2018 年
"High Flow", installation view at Yuz Museum, Shanghai, 2018



本性 Real Nature
玻璃钢, 丙烯及聚氨酯
Fiber glass, acrylic and urethane
183 x 137 x 396 cm
2018

艺术家现场创作
On-site shot of artist at work

关于艺术家 About the artist

约书亚·纳塔森，生于1976年，于2006年获得加州帕萨迪纳市艺术中心设计学院艺术硕士学位，2000年获得纽约视觉艺术学院学士学位，现生活并工作于洛杉矶。纳塔森曾为芝加哥现代美术馆及洛杉矶郡立美术馆完成重要的委托创作。他的个展包括：“森林草坪”，Downs & Ross 画廊，纽约，2017年；“与兔子共同制造回忆”，Kaikaikiki 画廊，东京，2016年；“泡沫”，卢斯画廊，都灵，2016年；“劳动节”，VFS 画廊，洛杉矶，2015年；“平衡”，独裁者艺术空间，柏林，2005年等。群展包括：“电子高速公路”，白教堂画廊，伦敦，2016年；“村上隆的超扁平收藏——从萧白与鲁山人到安塞姆·基弗”，横滨美术馆，横滨，2016年；“我知道你有灵魂”，ARNDT 画廊，新加坡，2015年；“在论坛体育馆的王子”，灯塔艺术中心，洛杉矶，2012年；“大招贴”，先选画廊，维也纳，奥地利，2009年等。

Joshua Nathanson (b.1976) received his MFA from Art Center College of Design, Pasadena in 2006, and BFA from School of Visual Arts, New York in 2000. Nathanson now lives and works in Los Angeles. Significant commissions include Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles. His solo exhibitions include: "Forest Lawn", Downs & Ross, New York, 2017; "Make Memories with the Bunny", Kaikai Kiki, Tokyo, 2016; "Froth", Luce Gallery, Turin, 2016; "Labor Day", Various Small Fires, Los Angeles, 2015; "Balance", Diktatorian Project Space, Berlin, 2005 and etc. Group shows include: "Electronic Superhighway", Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2016; "Takashi Murakami's Superflat Collection – From Shōhaku and Rosanjin to Anselm Kiefer", Yokohama Art Museum, Yokohama, 2016; "I Know You Got Soul", ARNDT, Singapore, 2015; "Prince at the Forum", Beacon Arts Center, Los Angeles, 2012; "Big Poster", Pro Choice, Vienna, Austria, 2009 and etc.



艺术家约书亚·纳塔森
Joshua Nathanson, the artist

关于余德耀美术馆项目空间 About Yuz Project Space of Art

余德耀美术馆项目空间是独立于余德耀美术馆年度展览计划下的全新展示空间，于2015年9月正式对公众开放。项目空间邀请艺术家针对美术馆空间、环境及观众，创造特定场域的艺术作品及项目。以“一个项目 + 一个展览”相结合的方式，在艺术家主动与空间产生互动的同时呈现当代艺术正在发生的当时当刻。

余德耀美术馆项目空间旨在为国内外艺术家提供创作展示的平台和交流的契机，期待新的概念、内容和趋势在此发生。此外，项目空间希望艺术家在介入到美术馆空间的同时，激发出不同以往的创意和想法，尝试打破既定的创作形式，探索当代艺术创作的可能性。

Yuz Project Space of Art is a new independent program of Yuz Museum's exhibitions, which opened to the public in September 2015. Yuz Project Space of Art invites artists to make site-specific works or projects, engaging boldly with the museum, its surroundings and its audience. Combining a "project + an exhibition," the artist interacts actively with the space and aims to present the moment when contemporary art is happening.

Yuz Project Space of Art is the place where innovation, invention, and a new movement happen in the pathway of an artist. It aims to provide another platform for Chinese and international artists to exhibit their artworks as well as more opportunities to communicate with each other. Yuz Project Space of Art invites the artist to get inspired with new ideas by engaging the artist with the museum space and try to make some break-through artworks that are different from its own line.

关于艺术家驻地计划 About Yuz Artist Residency

余德耀美术馆推出艺术家驻地计划，旨在为艺术家提供更多当代艺术的创作实践，并力图为非本地的艺术家深入了解中国文化、促进中外文化交流创造契机。

The artist residency at Yuz Museum aims to provide an environment for cultural exchange, an opportunity for non-local artists to learn about China and Chinese culture.

本手册为余德耀美术馆于2018年2月3日至4月4日举办的约书亚·纳塔森项目空间展览“急湍”特别制作。

This brochure is produced in conjunction with the Yuz Project Space of Art exhibition "High Flow" at Yuz Museum from February 3rd to April 4th, 2018.

文章撰稿 / Text Contribution

萨曼莎·卡尔普，作者、制作人，主要关注艺术、品牌推广及思辨方式，《艺术界》杂志特约编辑，“LEAP文化™” 访谈创始人之一，曾常居中国，现居于洛杉矶。

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封面 Cover

约书亚·纳塔森，《如何繁盛》，2017，高清影像，1080x1920 像素，有声，50 秒循环播放

Joshua Nathanson, *How To Thrive*, 2017, Video projection, 1080 X 1920 pixels, 50 seconds in length and running on a loop with sound

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yuz project space of art

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