

Interview with Anouk Kruithof

訪談 —— 李威儀
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VOP 你的創作包括了攝影、雕塑、藝術家作品書 (artist books)、錄像、裝置、寫作和行為藝術，能不能先談談你從事視覺藝術創作的背景？

Anouk 1999年至2003年我在荷蘭的藝術學院就讀，最初學習雕塑和攝影，之後從攝影系畢業。畢業作品展出時，我21歲快要22歲。接下來的暑假我展開了自己首次的創作計畫「The Black Hole (黑洞)」，並與藝術家Jaap Scheeren合作。2006年4月，我們在阿姆斯特丹的Foam攝影博物館舉辦個展，並出版了與這個計畫同名的第一本書。這對我們而言已是一項成就了。從那時起，我就持續地創作，並延伸至寫作、舉辦活動、策展、成立了一個獎、從事教學等工作，但多半都獨立在做自己的創作計畫。我可以樂此不疲地將好幾年的生命花在工作上，其他什麼都不做。我會一直堅持下去，而我理想的創作事業是可以窮盡一生來發展的。雖然我的創作量很大，但我從來不在追趕什麼，我想這是我的個性使然……

—— 以你過去的作品來看，你似乎一直很極積地探索視覺的表現方法，以及攝影本身的可能與限制是嗎？

Anouk 對我來說，使用任何媒材創作時，我很自然地必須先探索它的侷限，並了解如何在配合我的構想和最不受限的情況之下使用它，這是我創作中必要的元素，也是我習以為常的事。我在製作作品之初是從靈感出發，我選擇的題材以及由它們所引發的構思是我創作最初階段最重要的部分。

VOP Your works span across photography, sculpture, artist books, videos, installations, text and performance. Can you share your background for your visual art work with us?

ANOUK I studied from 1999 till 2003 at the art academy in the Netherlands, first I started with sculpture and photography and later I graduated from the photo department. I was 21, almost 22 when I had my graduation work up on the walls. After that summer I just started working on my first personal project called: *The Black Hole* in collaboration with Jaap Scheeren. Our first book with the same title came out together with a solo show in Foam Amsterdam in April 2006. That was an achievement for us. From then on I just kept making work, expanded with writing, organizing, a bit of curating, setting up a prize, educating, but mostly working autonomously on my own projects. I can live for years from my work and would never do anything else in my life. I just go on and I like to have a career that slowly and gradually develops over my life time. I am in no rush, although I produce a lot, that's just a character thing I guess...

—— From your previous works, it appears you have been actively exploring ways of visual presentation as well as the potential and limitations in photography itself, would it be right to say so?

Naturally when you work with a medium for me it is important to explore its boundaries and to get to understand the medium through working with it in a conceptual and limitless way of thinking. That's just a formal element of my practice and to me is normal to do this. I work from ideas, and the topics of my interest and the ideas, which come along with them, are the most important part to start making my work.

—— In *#EVIDENCE* you extended what Larry Sultan and Mike Mandel did in their 1977 work *Evidence*, but

—— 在《#EVIDENCE》(#證據) 中，你延續了藝術家 Larry Sultan 和 Mike Mandel 在 1977 年的作品《Evidence》(證據)，但以另一種形式來轉化，並做為攝影在現代社會中進入混沌狀態的表達。你可以談談這件作品以及它的製作起源嗎？
Anouk 《#EVIDENCE》是我在 2014 到 2015 年創作的作品，初次展出是在 2015 年 9 月的阿姆斯特丹。這件作品的靈感確實來自 Larry Sultan 和 Mike Mandel 的重要作品《Evidence》。當 Larry Sultan 和 Mike Mandel 的書在 1977 年出版時，它在攝影作為藝術的合理性以及作者論述上都是一部超時代的批判性作品。他們從美國西岸的多個不同機構的檔案庫中挑選照片，並將照片混合在一起，重現了一組由影像自身構成、預測美國未知將來的視覺篇章。他們的書展現了照片的意義如何受到其所處的情境影響。

我感覺到如同 Sultan 和 Mandel 對美國可見的不確定的未來狀態的好奇，所以在《#EVIDENCE》裡，我探索的是類似的質疑可否在影像作為純粹的見證已然失效的數位時代裡表現出來。我所選擇的影像來自於 81 個美國企業、私人機構和政府機關的 Instagram 帳戶，都具備了明顯的宣傳意圖並令人覺得可疑。攝影是事物的再現，它必然永遠是這樣的，而在現在這個人們更擅於解讀影像甚於文字的時代，情況更是如此。也許有朝一日，人類也會成為影像？

—— 對你而言，這些機構和組織的官方影像代表了什麼？

Anouk 我徹底查看了 81 個機構的 Instagram，這些機構跨越不同領域，而我瀏覽過的照片是數以千計的，所以要回答他們使用的影像究竟代表著什麼並不容易。我認為不管代表什麼，任何一

used a different way to transform it, manifesting it as an expression of contemporary photography entering a state of shapeless, blurred existence. Could you talk about how the creation of this work came about and give us a brief insight into it?

#EVIDENCE (2015) is an extensive project which I developed over 2014/2015 and which was first shown in Amsterdam in September 2015. Indeed I drew inspiration from the momentous book, *Evidence*, by Larry Sultan and Mike Mandel. When published in 1977, Sultan and Mandel's book was a critique ahead of its time on the validity of photography-as-art and ideas of authorship. The authors selected photographs from archives of various institutions across the West Coast of the United States of America, mixed them together and represented them in a sequence of autonomous images comprising a visual essay that predicted an ambiguous future of the USA. Their book demonstrated how the meaning of a photograph is conditioned by the context in which it appears.

I developed an interest I share with Sultan and Mandel in what the USA would look like in this sensible and questionable future. In *#EVIDENCE* I investigate whether a similar act can be performed in a digital age when the image as pure evidence has lost its integrity. The source of imagery that I choose is one with clear promotional intent and thus of questionable integrity: the Instagram accounts of 81 US corporations, institutions and governmental agencies. Photography is a representation of something, which of course will always be, now that we are in a time that people read in images rather than words we better beware. Maybe there will be a time people become images?

—— To you, what do those official Instagram images represent?

I checked the Instagram accounts of 81 organizations from top to bottom so it's not really easy to answer what their images represent because first of all it's a wide span of organizations and thousands of pictures I looked at. I believe an organization wants to tell "its story" through Instagram whatever that may mean, because this can be quite wide in interpretation. It can range from very neutral, to educational or promotional, it can be deceptive, misleading

個機構都想藉由 Instagram 講述「他們自己的故事」，這個故事究竟為何，則有各種解釋可能。它可能十分中立、可能含有教育性、可能具備宣傳推銷的作用，也可能是完全帶有欺騙的誤導性，甚至模稜兩可。然而這些機構和它們透過 Instagram 的視覺再現，都讓我感受到美國模糊不清的未來，這也是我挑選這 81 個機構來研究的標準。由於我不是美國人，要選出適當的目標並不容易，幸虧還有 Doug Emery（他也是藝術家）的協助。我將每一個我選用的影像佔為己有，在剝去它原先的宣傳意圖之後，又為它添上新的目的和更動它們要傳達的訊息。如此一來，產生出的新效果比原先的更不具體、不穩定也不透明。

—— 請談談《#EVIDENCE》裡製作的幾件影像雕塑作品，你為什麼選擇以這樣的方式呈現呢？

Anouk 我創作的一系列包括雕塑和由拍攝螢幕截圖（screenshots）所構成的蒙太奇的作品，是為了尋找新的價值和意義。這些作品突顯的是在我所研究在 Instagram 帳號中存在的、一些像是經過刻意裁切或經 Photoshop 加工過的影像，這些影像因為並不純粹而無法被視為證據。在我看來至關重要的問題是，這些影像背後的企業或官僚機構在上傳時到底有何策略？而這些影像和伴隨它們的文字又對人們的想法和行為產生了什麼影響，讓這些機構能夠達成它們預期的目標？不過，我研究這些影像的主要目標並不是要質疑這些機構的動機，而是要表達這個新的數位媒體中裝載的影像和訊息所帶給我的啟發。影像和訊息的結合以極具說服力的方式，表現了人類在溝通方面的進展和努力。

例如《Neutral》（中立）這個系列，是由七個利用鐵以及印製在不同塑料材質——像是 PVC、

or even obscure. But all those organizations and their visual representation through Instagram to me gave an insight into what America's ambiguous future will look like, that was also my selection criteria for those 81 organizations I researched and my assistant at this project in the research period: Doug Emery (He is also an artist.) helped me with finding them. Because I am not American, it was a quite difficult task to find and select the right ones. I claimed the imagery I worked with as my own and I robbed it of its promotional intent, instead adding new, varying intentions and messages; less concrete, less stable and less transparent ones.

—— Can you talk more about your photo-sculpture works in #EVIDENCE? Why did you choose to present your work in this manner?

I made a variety of works such as sculptures and photographed analogue screenshot-montages re-interpreting the imagery in a search for new value and new meaning. The works acknowledge that the strategically staged, sometimes Photoshopped and cropped imagery filling the Instagram accounts, which I had researched, lack integrity to be viewed as pure evidence. To me the bigger issue remains what are the strategies of the various corporate/bureaucratic entities doing the posting, and how much effect the images and accompanying text they post are having on people's thoughts and actions in order to achieve their goals. Yet my main reason for studying these images is not to question the entities' goals and interests, but to express the inspiration that the images and the information contained in this new digital medium have given me. Together they communicate progress and the ambition of human endeavor in a very convincing manner.

For example *Neutrals* is a set of 7 sculptures out of metal and prints on different kinds of plastics, such as PVC, vinyl and latex. The images on the prints are taken from screenshots of the TSA's Instagram feed showing neatly displayed groups of confiscated items, mainly weapons. For documentation, the identity cards of the contraband owners were part of the display, but for privacy reasons they were always blurred up to a point where even the gender or race of the person were no longer discernible. I took out just those blurred ID cards and printed them on the different plastics. The metal constructions which the prints are laying

乙烯基塑料和乳膠——所構成的雕塑。其中使用的圖像是從美國運輸安全管理局（TSA）的 Instagram 照片的截圖，照片裡展示的是一組組排列整齊的被沒收物件，主要是武器。為了達到紀錄的作用，他們也會展示物品所有者的證件，但基於隱私的理由，證件上的個人資料如性別、種族等則會被模糊處理。我將這些模糊不清的證件另外印製在不同的塑料上。這些擺放了印有影像的塑料的金屬裝置構成了一個實體存在的雕塑物件，並與原本在 Instagram 上的數位圖像產生對應關係。這些金屬裝置和掛在它們上面的影像一樣，都有一種去人性化的感覺。

—— 你所使用的素材與它們的質地似乎延展了作品的觸感與想像。我有注意到你使用了如塑膠、橡皮等工業合成物材料，還有一些現成物，像是自拍棒；或是你在〈綠色不只是一種顏色〉將照片印在一條浴簾上，而在〈抱歉，查無定義〉、〈另一個宇宙〉則將照片做成了紙漿雕塑。你如何將這些材料、物件與影像連結？

Anouk 多年來我都在裝置或雕塑作品中將工業材料、撿來的東西（如舊書本）或日常物件（例如海棉）來與照片結合。我會盡力尋找具有張力和對我而言合理的組合。紙漿是比較經濟也更容易控制的媒材，它適合製造出形態比較不明確的作品，像是我在《Neutral》裡使用的乳膠、乙烯基塑料和PVC，因為他們具有透明性與靈活性，能與我所研究的主題相對應。例如，「證據」這個主題和透明性，以及和攝影的連結，也就是固定媒材與可塑材料之間的關係。對我來說，去思索靈活的照片也是有趣的事。

—— 你和攝影的關係具有一種能動性，但不是鏡頭前後的那種關係，可以談談你怎麼看待攝影嗎？

or stretched on form the sculptural bodies of a new physical existence, parallel to the original digital existence as images on an Instagram account. The metal shapes appear to have a de-humanized emotionality equal to the imagery added to them.

—— The materials you used in your creations and their properties seem to extend the sensibility and imagination your works carry. I notice you used materials such as plastics and rubber, which are industrial synthetic materials as well as certain products like a selfie stick. Or like in *Green is more than just a color*, you printed photographs on a shower curtain and in *Sorry, no definitions found*, and *Another Universe*, you turned photographs into papier mâché sculptures, how did you link up all these different materials?

For my installations and sculptures I already worked for years on combining industrial materials or found objects (old books) or daily life things such as sponges together with photographic prints. I try to find tense combinations which to me make sense as well, papier mâché is also a cheaper and more controllable way to create amorphous shapes, the latex and vinyl and PVC plastic I used for the *Neutrals* I appreciated because they have transparency and are flexible, both something that is opposite to the topic of my research. For example, the link between the topic evidence and transparency and the link between photography which is a fixed medium in relation to the flexibility of the materials. To me to think about flexible photos is funny as well.

—— Your relationship with photography seems to be dynamic and not merely a flat relationship being a photographer with equipment. Can you share your thoughts with us on the way you see photography?

I am not a photographer going out with equipment making photos. For years already I am not interested in that. I used to do this a long time ago though. Neither then I would just go and take pictures, I don't see the point of that at all, unless it's with my iPhone and it's spontaneous. That's important for me to do, but with doing that I don't have a plan with these photos. I search for nothing out there. That's important, to not search but find. I am not so interested in straight photography actually, but my interest goes to artists who work with the medium of photography. Photo-based

Anouk 我不是會帶著器材出外拍照的那類攝影師，我已經有好些年不這麼做了，雖然好久以前我也曾經是這樣的。我不認為那樣拍照片有什麼意義，我不會那樣去做。除了像是用 iPhone 隨興地拍照——這對我而言也是重要的，但我並不會去為這類照片設定任何計畫。我不會刻意去搜索什麼。不刻意搜索但是去發現，這即是關鍵了。事實上我對直接攝影並不感興趣，我感到興趣的是以攝影為媒材的創作者，像是以攝影為基礎的觀念藝術家、雕塑家，以及那些在特定領域或跨領域創作的人。

——來談談你的書吧。你已經做了好多本書了，是什麼吸引你一直做下去？

Anouk 我對做書好著迷。我的思考總是以書的方式，攝影、文字和書的形式總是能很有機地結合。它們的相互配合可說是「一氣呵成」的。今年夏天我會出版兩本新書，一本叫《Neutral》而另一本是我已製作五年多的大型書。《AUTOMAGIC》是一本像是一個物件的書，照片來自我的「automagic 檔案庫」，是在過去十二年裡使用 iPhone 和小型數位相機所拍攝的。這本書並不呈現清楚的敘事，而是希望透過在包裝於透明壓克力盒中的九本不同的書所呈現的九種視覺故事，以及一本文字書，來激起觀者個人的記憶和聯想。《AUTOMAGIC》是由照片蒙太奇、螢幕截圖、複製品、編輯與附加文字來轉化對影像資料庫的一項探索。裡面的每一本書都使用不同的紙材來強調不同的題材與概念，使得這本有像是物件的書有如多層次的雕塑。這也展示了攝影這個媒介的諸多可能性、創造性和無限的潛力，以及電腦和人的思維如何在我們觀看這個世界時，作為重要的資訊處理器。

conceptual artists, but also sculptors or people working site specific or interdisciplinary.

—— Let's talk about your books. You have done many artist books, what attracts you to keep making them?

I am addicted to book-making. My mind pretty much functions in thinking in books, photography, text and the book-form go together in a very organic way. It's a match like "flow". This summer I will publish 2 new books, one called *Neutral* and the other is a huge book object which I have worked on for more than 5 years now. *AUTOMAGIC* is a book-object, which contains images drawn from my "automagic-archive" taken with iPhones and small digital cameras over the past twelve years. The book does not seek to present a clear narrative, which is created rather by the viewer's own memories and associations provoked by the nine visual stories presented in nine different books, joined together with a book of text in a transparent acrylic glass box. *AUTOMAGIC* is an exploration of an image archive transformed by means of analog photomontages, screenshots, reproductions, editing, and the addition of text. The diversity of topics and concepts in each book is highlighted by the use of different papers, which make a multi-layered sculpture of this book-object. It demonstrates the resourcefulness, the adventurousness, the sheer infinity of possibilities of the medium of photography, and shows how the computer and the human mind can act as processors of ways of looking at our world.

—— Due to technological improvements in photographic technology and developments in social media, distribution of images over time and space has become more commonplace. Do you think images are freer in this era of technological advancement?

Yes images are flowing around, free to use for everyone, everyone is a pirate, everyone can be a photographer and images get reinterpreted and re-used and shuffled and re-thought all the time, that's what makes the image-universum landscape out there also so exciting.

—— The uses of photography are very diverse today and constantly evolving, as you mentioned yourself, images are in a state where they are time and again re-interpreted.

——由於攝影技術的進步與社交媒體的發達，生產和傳遞影像現在都變得稀鬆平常了。你覺得影像在科技社會的發展下更自由了嗎？

Anouk 是呀，現在影像氾濫，任君使用，每個人都是盜圖賊，誰都可以成為攝影師。影像不斷地再詮釋、再使用，且無時無刻不被挪用和重新思考，這正是使得現在的影像地景那麼刺激有趣的地方。

——攝影的運用如今非常廣泛且持續變化，你剛才也提到了影像一再被重新詮釋的狀態，我想知道你會怎麼定義當代攝影？

Anouk 當代攝影就像水。到處都有影像。攝影已經變得大眾化，視覺的素材漂浮在四面八方。有時候影像會消逝，其意義再也不確定也不清晰。在對攝影的理解不斷改變的時代，脈絡比過去任何時候都更為重要。

——那麼，對你而言，在這個影像時代裡做為一個視覺藝術家最大的挑戰是什麼？

Anouk 這是一個藝術家可以無比自由的年代，也是我夢寐以求並希望永遠不會醒來的美夢，我無法想像自己從事任何其他的工作。其實，藝術家踏出的每一步都是挑戰，你會有一個充滿自由的生活，同時也會有一個充滿不確定感的生活。假如你認真想想……有誰會一直等待你的創作嗎？但你得對你的作品和你自己保持信心，即使這有時候是很困難的。但這是一個挑戰，是你必須一個人面對的。雖然有時候你也有機會與許多人合作，但是到了最後，你還是孑然一身，這是身為藝術家的你必須接受的現實。 ❶

I would like to know how you define contemporary photography?

Contemporary photography is like water. There are images everywhere. Photography became democratic and visual footage is floating in all possible directions. Sometimes the image gets washed away. A meaning is no longer fixed or clear. Context is what matters more than ever in this time where the grip on photography constantly changes.

——What is it like to be a visual artist in these times of images and visuals and what would be your greatest challenge today?

It's the most free existence to be an artist and a perpetual dream which goes on forever I don't even picture myself doing something else. Every single step of the existence of an artist is a challenge actually. A life full of freedom but also a life full of uncertainties. If you really think sober... who is waiting for what you're going to bring out there? You have to believe in your work and in yourself and sometimes of course that's tough. That's a challenge and basically to be also always alone. Even so you can collaborate with many people in your practice; in the end you're alone and that's something you have to accept when you're an artist. ❶