

阿斯巴甜作为一种宣言
Aspartime as a Statement
文/于非
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在刚刚过去不久的 2020 年的最后一个月，阿斯巴甜经过大约三年时间的韬光养晦与闭关修炼，终于带着他们最新的艺术项目 ZigZag 隆重复出了。与之前每一次阶段性的项目一样，他们从不畏惧改弦更张，重新出发。这一次也毫不例外，他们挥挥手告别了以两元出售创意思想的“淘宝计划”与为短暂易逝的 GIF 做保护壳的“ké”，义无反顾的投奔到了雕塑的创作浪潮当中。

In the last month of 2020 which has just gone, Aspartime finally made a comeback, after around three years of keeping a low profile for self-enrichment, with their latest art project “ZigZag”. As suggested by every previous project that marks the start of every stage of their art, they are never afraid to take a new path and start anew. This time is no exception: they dove without hesitation into the art trend of sculpture after bidding farewell to the “Taobao Project” of selling ideas for two yuan per idea and the “ké” Project of making cases for ephemeral GIFs.

阿斯巴甜向来乐于对艺术的神秘性祛魅，因此他们坦诚的将雕塑创作的材料与工具：塑料泡沫与电热丝，公之于众。面对雕塑这样一个有着深厚历史的艺术媒介，阿斯巴甜的介入方式看似过于直白浅显，然而他们所擅长的正是发觉寻常中的不寻常，简单中的不简单。如果说塑料泡沫是“不能承受的生命之轻”，那电热丝则是让“一切坚固的东西都烟消云散了”。

With the readiness to disenchant the audience with the mystery of art as usual, Aspartime disclosed frankly the material and tool for their sculptures: Styrofoam and electric heating wire. Aspartime’s approach to sculpture, a medium of art with a profound history, may seem too straightforward and plain, but they happen to be good at discovering the unusualness of something usual, the unsimplicity of something simple. If Styrofoam is “the unbearable lightness of being”, electric heating wire could make “all that is solid melt into air”.

强大的可塑性是对一个个体极高的褒奖，而这恰恰是泡沫所具有的宝贵特质。电热丝扮演了既柔软又锋利的画笔，让阿斯巴甜得以在三维材料上进行快意的速写。不存在对于形象具体的预设，只有忘我的在材料中时进时出、抑扬顿挫。很快这些白色的泡沫随着即兴的切割源源不断的输出，占据了他们家中里里外外的空间。如同被海浪席卷到岸边的巨大贝壳，阿斯巴甜凭借着它们似曾相识的偶发面貌，逐渐拼凑出种种意料之外又情理之中的形状。紧接着，他们借助真石漆，一种仿制天然石材质地与色泽的涂料，将白色泡沫全方位的覆盖，直至得以脱胎换骨以假乱真。

High plasticity, a phrase of great praise for an individual, happens to be a precious characteristic of Styrofoam. The electric heating wire plays the role of a soft and sharp brush, thus enabling Aspartime to sketch freely on three-dimensional material, with no design of any concrete figure beforehand but only self-forgetting rhythmic reshaping of the material. Soon scraps of the white foam are being cut out during the improvisation and taking up the empty space of their house. Like huge shells being washed up by sea waves, Aspartime pieces up step by step various unexpected yet reasonable shapes based on their fortuitous appearances with a sense of déjà vu. Then, they coat the white foam all over with real stone paint which imitates the texture and luster of natural stone, until it seems to become a new substance on the surface.

就这样在不知不觉之间，脱胎于白色塑料泡沫的雕塑群俨然构成了一派人文与自然景观：它们可以是沙丘、岩壁，可以是失落的文明、旧城的遗骸，也可以是原始部落的图腾、现代主义的设计，又或者是这一切的混合杂糅，一种重构之后的活在当下的包罗万象的纪念碑。这些雕塑的动人之处还在于那些隐匿在形象之外的看不见的无形之手，也许是风沙，也许是水流，也许是时间。巫鸿在《废墟的故事》中提及“迹”在古汉语中的微妙含义，“当一个后来人寻找往昔痕迹的时候，他也在旅途中留下了自己的足迹”。这些雕塑就如同是在无意识的考古旅途中染上了阿斯巴甜色彩的沧海遗珠。

In such a process, the group of sculptures built on white Styrofoam seems to constitute a cultural and natural landscape: they could be dunes or crags, or lost civilization or ruins of an old city, or totems of primitive tribes or modernist designs, or they could be the mixture of all of the above, an all-inclusive monument that has survived a reconstruction. The appeal of these sculptures also lies in the invisible, intangible hands hidden beyond the figures, which might be the sandstorm, flow of water or time. In his *A Story of Ruins*, Wu Hung mentions the subtle meaning of “trace” (*ji*) in ancient Chinese: “when someone is searching for traces of the past, he also leaves his own footprints along the way”. These sculptures are like pearls lost in the ocean stained with the Aspartime tone on an unconscious journey of archaeology.

泡沫的可塑性以及它轻盈、朴实的品质令人着迷，更让阿斯巴甜流连忘返。可以想见在不久的将来，他们也许会换一种工具来造型，用另一种涂料来伪装身份，泡沫依然会是那个不变的主角，持续占据着他们创作生活的中心。这一点并不难理解。20世纪60年代以来的西方雕塑艺术家们当中青睐“暂时性材料（ephemeral material）”的不在少数，他们甚至有意去选消费社会中的“废料”来构成雕塑作品的主体。容易让人忽略的是，阿斯巴甜不同于这些前辈艺术家们对于材料的观念之处是，塑料泡沫尽管被源源不断的从工业生产与艺术加工的环节中舍弃下来，它却实实在在的有着强大的不可替代性。若是失去了由塑料泡沫充当的模具，那些更加被看重的，有着更大质量，更高价值的材料们将无以被赋型。

Impressive for its plasticity, lightness and artlessness, foam has become a frequently-used art medium of Aspartime. It's foreseeable that, in the near future, they might go for another tool of modeling, or another paint for disguising, but foam would still be the constant protagonist at the center of their art practice. This is understandable. Since the 1960s, there have been a good number of sculptors in the West who favor the use of “ephemeral material” and would even employ the “waste” of the consumer society for the main body of their sculpture. Unnoticeably, Aspartime has a different understanding than these predecessors: though being discarded constantly from industrial manufacture and artistic processing, Styrofoam is still highly irreplaceable as a matter of fact. Without the moulds made of Styrofoam, it'd be impossible to give shape to the materials which are regarded as more important, of higher quality and as more valuable.

由此奇迹出现了，被时常作为替代品的泡沫成为了真正的孤品，所有经由它的躯体所翻模而成的材料则变成了对它的一种模仿。就像阿斯巴甜在 ZigZag 系列中的泡沫雕塑作品之外，还以此为原型翻制了做工精美、用料考究的家具与花器。它们也许比泡沫有着更持久的生命，但它们终究是追随着泡沫的影子，依附于泡沫的身体而存在。泡沫本身不去指涉或象征任何的意义，它只是它自己。最终，唯有泡沫是不可替代的。

Hence such a miracle: Styrofoam, often used as a substitute, has become a truly unique material, and all the others, whose modeling relies on the help of a foamy body, have become a form of imitation of

it. For example, besides the Styrofoam sculptures in their Zigzag series, Aspartime also used them as archetypes to make elaborate furniture and vases with well-selected material. They may have a longer life than foam, but they are always shadows of foam that are each built on a body of foam. Foam itself doesn't denote or symbolize anything; it's nothing but itself. Eventually, only foam is irreplaceable.

尽管有阿斯巴甜的慧眼识珠，泡沫在普罗大众眼中，在日常生产生活的角落里依旧是那个最最寻常而消除个性的材料。阿斯巴甜一直以来都容易对看似微不足道的事物产生怜爱，也正是因为对泡沫这种他们称之为“独特的平庸”的存在产生了超乎寻常的共情，才会通过日复一日的创作，通过精心构建的展览，来对泡沫进行最为深情的告白。他们将一度处于现代主义运动核心的格特鲁德·斯坦因（Gertrude Stein）诗中的金句“玫瑰就是玫瑰就是玫瑰就是玫瑰（Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose）”挪用过来为泡沫题名。词与物之间紧密咬合的含义与节律所传达的情感不言而喻。愿玫瑰永不凋谢，愿泡沫亘古长存。

Despite Aspartime's perspicacious employment, foam, in the eyes of the general public, is still the most common and characterless material in the corners of everyday production and life. Aspartime has developed a habit to feel compassion for seemingly insignificant things, and it's just owing to their unusual empathy with foam, which they call a being of "unique mediocrity", that they would profess their deepest feeling to foam through the time they spent on the sculptures and the efforts they made to put up the exhibition. And they rephrase foam with the famous quotation of Gertrude Stein, the mother of modernism – "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose". The signification that links the word to the object snugly and the feelings delivered through the rhythm are both obvious. May roses never fade, and may foam last forever.

“我们正在将泡沫变成永恒”是阿斯巴甜写在个人网站上的一句话，或许可以理解为他们为短暂、易逝、平凡的事物正名的宣言。当然，世界上本没有绝对的永恒，只有对永恒所作的浪漫的想象。如同“阿斯巴甜（Aspartime）”的名字来历：象征着无处不在的代糖甜味剂和兼职般的自由创作灵魂，这其中所暗藏的处世哲学与艺术态度更是一种无声的宣言。他们总是选择无害的去挑战一些既定的思维模式与艺术潮流。在加密艺术逐渐大行其道的时代，曾经作为互联网原住民的阿斯巴甜却越发积极的投身到线下；在人们已经逐渐习惯艺术家的双手被机器与劳动力取代的当下，阿斯巴甜却沉迷于纯手工的制作乐此不疲。套用斯拉沃热·齐泽克（Slavoj Zizek）对疫情之下的亲密关系所做的注解：“身体的接触是通往精神之路”，阿斯巴甜同样选择在最讲求距离与效率的此时此刻，让彼此与作品靠的更近。

"We are making foam perpetual" is a sentence by Aspartime on their personal website, which can be construed as their justification of short-lived, ephemeral, ordinary things. Certainly there's no absolute perpetuity in the world but only romantic imagination about it, as suggested by the motive for their name "Aspartime": it symbolizes the ubiquitous sugar-substitute sweetener and part-time-like soul with the freedom to create; the philosophy of life and attitude to art hidden in this are more a silent statement of theirs. They always like to challenge some established modes of thinking and art trends by keeping their philosophy intact. In this age where crypto art is thriving, Aspartime, a native of this Internet age, is now becoming more and more active in offline practice; and as people are now getting used to the hands of artists being replaced by machines and manpower, Aspartime is addicted to pure handwork and has developed an indefatigable love. As in Slavoj Zizek's interpretation of the intimate relationship in the context of COVID-19 – "bodily contact is a path to spirituality", Aspartime has also chosen to get closer to their work when distance and efficiency are priority concerns in current times.