

REVIEWS

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Gloria Awareness

written by Artomity Magazine



Sickroom / Hong Kong / Jun 16 – Jul 17, 2022 / Yang Jiang /

“Sickroom” is a term used in Japanese to describe a house in which a murder has been committed. In those who hear of this term, it creates a psychological predisposition without an actual experience, and emphasises a sense of passiveness. The recently formed experimental conceptual art collective Gloria Awareness used this concept of the sickroom as a starting point for its imagination. The exhibition of the same name examined human cognitive mechanisms, with the six exhibiting artists exploring how to cope with the sickroom.

By analysing the process of psychological association, Amy Tong and Nicole Wong both set about exploring the conditions of a sickroom, with the former focusing on its cause and the latter attempting to propose a solution. Tong's video *This Is A Dog Reading A Newspaper* (2022) had a sense of déjà vu from broadcast news – the voiceover came from found footage of someone teaching mnemonic strategies, borrowing their nonsensical nature to explain the completely invisible picture in the video.



This Is A Dog Reading A Newspaper by Amy Tong, Film still, digital video, 2022.
Courtesy the artist and Gloria Awareness.

Human cognition is mostly based on information obtained, and is influenced or deliberately led by society at large. When viewers use their existing understanding to fill in the logical gaps in a story and connect with things that are beyond the realm of human comprehension, their reading carries with it a pre-existing judgement. Conversely, Wong pondered how to remove society's established narratives to alleviate fear born of associations. The installation *Liquid Time* (2022) used drops of water as an example, neutralising this often seen image that is used to create a sense of unease or a negative emotion, and returning it to its harmless nature. The two pictures in the installation illustrated how to view water drops with renewed appreciation by changing

one's mindset; it could be an admiration of the beauty of their form, or a correction of bias. In the plastic bucket placed at the bottom of the picture were crystals shaped like water drops and materials that emit intense sound energy when struck, like temple blocks that generate sounds like drops of water falling, which gave them a more positive association.

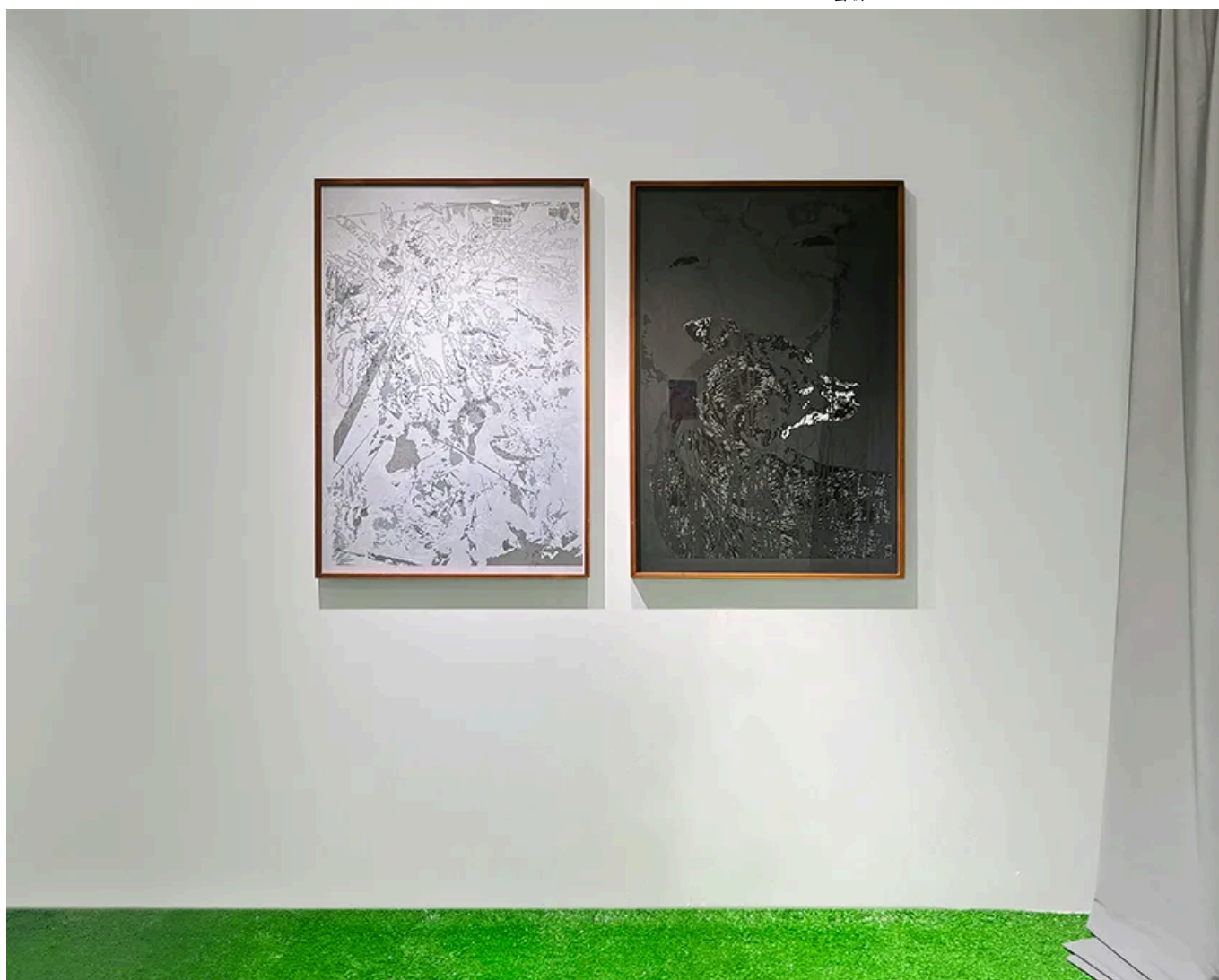


Liquid Time by Nicole Wong, UV print in frame, plastic bucket, crystal sand, wooden fish, audio on loop, size variable, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Gloria Awareness.

Both Wu Jiaru and cucurrucucu sought emotional value or inspiration from historical events. Wu's *freedom swimmer* (2022, acrylic on wood) depicted a human being without any identifying characteristics swimming freestyle from a red body of water towards a blue sea. The piece of wood, painted yellow, had the words "FREEDOM SWIMMER" printed on its side. This term, which was used in colonial-era Hong Kong to describe illegal immigrants, became a pun in the artist's interpretation, symbolising that freedom could also be an attitude and the ability to actively turn fear into courage.

cucurrucucu's collage *Untitled* (2015-2022) used *National Geographic* magazine's depiction of China in the late 20th century. The artist juxtaposed two unrelated images captured by the magazine to create a bizarre theatrical scene – China's godfather of rock Cui Jian singing passionately in 1989, side by side with a picture of a primary school classroom that looked bare and undeveloped, but with enthusiastic students. Cui Jian, as a spiritual leader at the time, was blindfolded with a piece of red cloth. The artist echoed this on the primary school children, who were positioned as the audience, and put red cloths over their eyes. Times have changed; the symbol and scenes that gave so many people courage and hope in a difficult period have lost their original sentiment and meaning in the present context, leaving behind a sense of loneliness and trepidation.

Meanwhile, Yan Wai Yin paced between the invisible and seen, capturing the moment when memories and reality overlapped. Her diptych silkscreen print *Stammers #1 & #2* (2022) originated from photographs of Tainan, Taiwan gathered from the internet to make up for the regret of not being able to visit in person. But what fascinated the artist in these photographs were the plants in the background that looked so ordinary as to be invisible. So she drew the outline of the plants, magnified, copied and overlaid them, using paint of different colour tones and textures to make a print of many layers. If you step back, the profile of a dog suddenly appears on the print – memories constantly transform in cycles in the mind.



Stammers #1 & #2 by Yan Wai Yin, Screenprints (unique), 99 x 66 x 3.5 cm each, 2022.
Courtesy the artist and Gloria Awareness.

Like a preacher, Chan Ka Kiu's work delivered an ultimate message – you and what you fear are in fact one and the same. Her video *We r all in this tgt* (2022) used her signature computer-generated voice and found footage to interpret a short text she wrote that combined arguments and feelings. The text argued that as we cannot be omniscient like God and cannot transcend boundaries like light, we are inevitably insecure. In the adjacent installation *Be The Light* (2022), she placed two extinguished candles atop the heads of two mannequins with reflective surfaces, demonstrating humans' ritualised attempts to reach for the divine. But while humans can't escape their physical reality, they at least know they have others by their side when they face what they fear.



Be The Light by Chan Ka Kiu, Mannequin, candle, size variable, 2022.
Courtesy the artist and Gloria Awareness.

In the current environment, the majority are caught between a sense of powerlessness to resist and having nowhere to go. On one hand, *Sickroom* reflected this, but on the other hand, it seemed to have found some respite. The venue was full of light and surreal, with fake grass on the floor and various reflective effects in the artworks. It did not have a forced unified ideology. However, not only did it not cause conflict, confrontation or bickering, but instead constituted a powerful rebuttal of groupthink. Although this is still a long way from a practical solution, but it might be because the solution has never existed, at least not in art. Artists convey their intimate and genuine feelings to the viewers, like a light source that flashes at the dark end of the abyss. Being able to bring a sliver of comfort would suffice. This was illustrated by Wu's sound installation *Untitled_heart Sutra_silver screen* (2022) – a square formed by laser rays in the centre of a giant reflective curtain gave this space a protective glow, even when the lights were not switched on. The chanting of the *Heart Sutra* filled one's ears, supporting the philosophical pondering about fear, and giving people courage to face the darkness.

Featured image: *Untitled* by cucurrucucu, Cut-and-pasted printed paper, 35 x 45cm (framed), 2015-2022.
Courtesy the artist and Gloria Awareness.

「心理瑕疵」(Sickroom) / Gloria Awareness / 香港 / 2022年6月16日至7月17日

「心理瑕疵」在日語中是形容「凶宅」的用詞，而從被告知者的角度看來，這是一種沒有切身經歷卻形成心理陰影的體驗，其中也強調了被動的狀態。最近發起的無範式實驗性藝術概念Gloria Awareness，以「心理瑕疵」作為出發點展開想像，同名展覽橫跨不同維度與意識形態，對人類的認知機制進行檢視。乍看展覽傳遞的信息有些碎片化，其實可將其梳理成一個包括提出假設、借鑑歷史、闡明方法論的提案，六位參展藝術家一同探討被告知者該如何應對「心理瑕疵」。

Amy Tong與Nicole Wong分別透過解析聯想的過程，前者探索「心理瑕疵」的成因，後者嘗試提出解決方案。Amy的錄像作品《This Is A Dog Reading A Newspaper》(2022年)有播報新聞的既視感——旁白來自教記憶法的拾得影像，借用其中不合現實邏輯的故事，來解說一個全然隱形的畫面。在人類所處的維度，個體的認知大部分基於其接觸到的資訊，因而受到社會的影響或蓄意引導；當觀者用現有認知填補敘事中的邏輯缺口，進而與超出人類理解範圍的事物產生連結時，其解讀也因此帶有預先判斷。Nicole則思考該如何去除社會對事物的既定註腳，從而療癒因聯想而產生的恐懼。裝置作品《Liquid Time》(2022年)以「水滴」為例，將這種常在影視作品中製造詭異氣氛或表達負面情緒的意象，還原到其中性、無害的本質。裝置中兩張圖像演示如何透過思維的轉換，以重新欣賞水滴——可以是型態上的美好想像，也可以是角度的校正。圖像下方的塑膠水桶內，形似水滴的透明水晶、發出滴水聲的木魚等擁有音頻能量的物質，用於引發更多對水滴的正向聯想。

吳佳儒與cucurucucu均從歷史事件中尋求情緒價值或啟發。吳佳儒的木板丙烯作品《freedom swimmer》(2022年)中一個沒有具體身份特徵的人，以自由泳的姿勢，正突破一片紅色的水域，游向一片藍色的海。塗成黃色的木板側邊寫有「FREEDOM SWIMMER」字樣——曾被用於比喻偷渡者的用詞，被藝術家譯作一語雙關的「自由泳者」，喻自由可以是一種姿態，一種主動將恐懼轉化為勇氣的能力。而cucurucucu的拼貼作品《Untitled》(2015 – 2022年)中的素材，來自上世紀末《國家地理雜誌》對中國的刻畫。其將該雜誌拍攝到的不相關的兩個場景拼貼在一起，產生光怪陸離的舞台效果——1989年搖滾教父崔健熱血沸騰的演唱，和教育扶貧之下落後卻氣氛熱烈的小學課堂。作為精神領袖的崔健當時用一塊紅布蒙住自己雙眼，藝術家便也給課堂上「聽演唱會」的人都「戴」上一塊紅布。時過境遷，曾在如此艱苦的年代給大眾帶來勇氣、希望的符號與意象，在當下的語境卻難以找回原初的情懷與解讀，令人感覺孤獨不安。

忻慧妍在「隱形」與「可見」之間踱步，記錄思維與現實世界重疊的剎那。其雙聯絲印版畫作品《Stammers #1 & #2》(2022年)，源於其網上徵集在台南現拍的相片，以彌補無法親身遊歷的遺憾。而這些相片中令她著迷的，卻是背景那些平凡到近乎隱形的植物。於是她勾勒出植物的形狀，將其放大、複製、疊加，並用不同色階、質地的顏料印成多個圖層的版畫。後退幾步觀看作品時，一隻狗的側臉突然在畫面中浮現——記憶會在腦中循環往復不斷變化，一直默默提供陪伴的人事物也會在這個過程中意外現形。

最後，陳嘉翹的作品似傳教的形式，傳遞一則終極訊息——你與令你恐懼的事物本為一體。其錄像作品《We r all in this tgt》(2022年) 以一貫的電腦人聲和拾得影像，演繹其寫作的一篇結合論證與感想的短文。該文內容解析當我們無法像神一樣全知，無法像光一樣消除邊界，我們必然會缺乏安全感。一旁的裝置《Be The Light》(2022年) 中，兩具鏡面人體模型各自頭頂著一根熄滅了的蠟燭，進一步示範人類想成為神而不得的狀態。但我們要記住的是，人類雖無法從三維的能量場超脫，但至少在面對恐懼時身邊有彼此。

當下的環境中，大部分人都有種無力反抗又無處可逃的無奈。「心理瑕疵」這個展覽，一方面反映了如此境況，一方面又讓筆者似乎找到喘息之地——展場佈置得明亮而超現實，如鋪滿假草的地板、作品中各種反光視覺效果；沒有強制統一意識形態的討論方式，不但沒有引發矛盾、對立與拉扯，反而形成對思維綑綁的有力反證。雖然這樣的行動過後，離獲得實際解決方案仍有很長一段距離，但這也可能歸咎於解決方案根本就不存在，或至少在藝術中不存在。藝術家向觀者傳達自己私密而真實的感受，像是在深淵裡黑暗盡頭一閃而過的光源，帶來一絲安慰足矣。正如置身於吳佳儒在展覽中的聲音裝置作品《Untitled_heart Sutra_silver screen》(2022年) ——一塊巨大反光幕布中央的雷射彩光方形，令這個空間即便沒開燈時也有光的庇護；耳後傳來《心經》的吟詠，為其對恐懼的哲學思辨加持，使其勇於面對黑暗。

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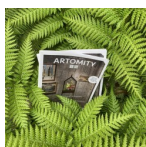


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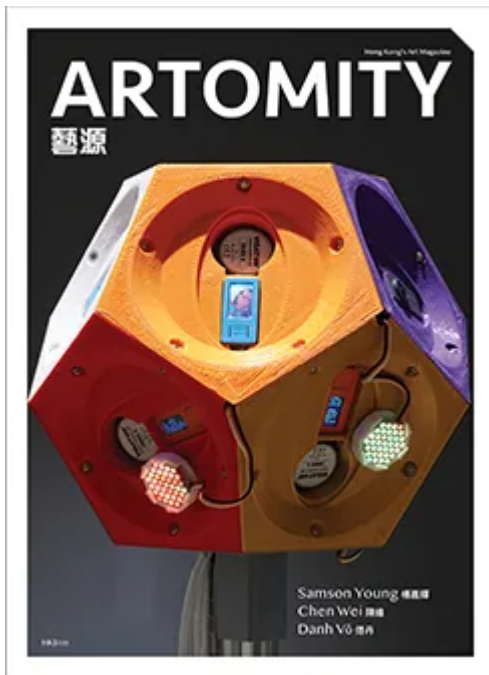
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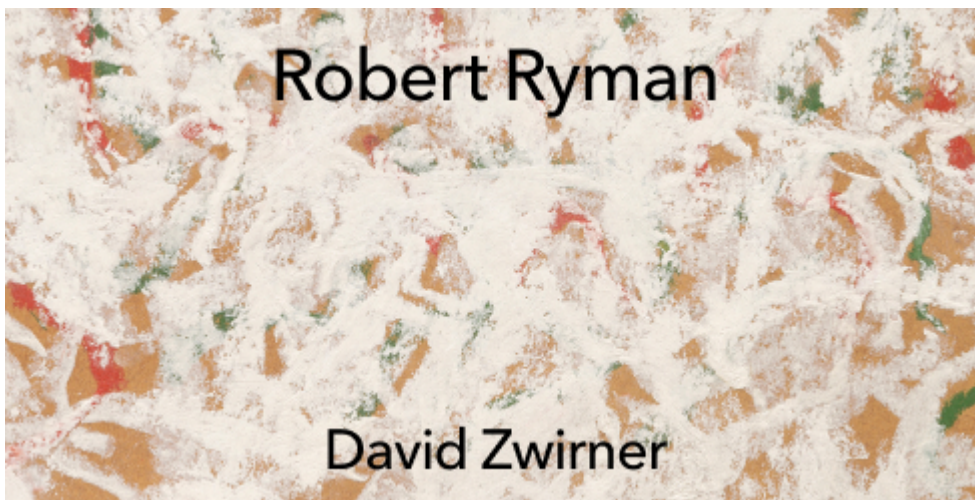
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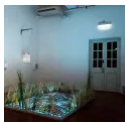
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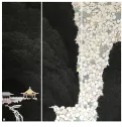


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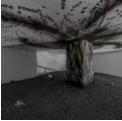
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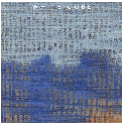
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