Press Release

Long March Independent Project

Insight Mapping: Spatial Media Ecology

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Long March Independent Space, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Rd, Chaoyang District, Beijing

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"To observe wood with one's eyes" constitutes the Chinese character "Xiang (相)", while "Kan-Xiang" involves observing "life" through the "face", providing insights into the causes and effects of human affairs, as well as their past and future. As a discipline that amalgamates astronomy, geography, humanities, medicine, and other fields, **it unveils the hidden aspects behind complex phenomena, revealing the truth.** Where there is "truth"(真相 Zhen-Xiang), there is also "fiction"(假象 Jia-Xiang). However, the "Xiang (象)" in "fiction" is not entirely inveracious; rather, it signifies an envisioned resemblance of objects, a virtually partial image of objects conceived in the mind. For example, the character "Xiang" (象 elephant) originally referred to wild boars (豕) with long tusks, but it was later associated with elephants because of their similar characteristics. This parallels our current discussion on spatial media (the multiple media constructing spatial experiences) from an ecological perspective. The facets of technology, industry, developers, creators, and the market collectively describe its complex habitat. **This time, we aim not to observe people, but to explore the nature of media.**

This is a site focused on the discussion of "media work". As a non-profit curatorial institution dedicated to the techno-artistic ecosystem, our perspective often centres on zooming in and out of our areas of research. Narrowing our focus ensured a close examination of the synchronous relationships between the development of technology, industry and new media, meanwhile the workflow of each type of creator is observed by broadening the scope. **"Insight Mapping: Spatial Media Ecology" is a multifaceted, distributed, and composite project that invites six groups of artists, all of whom have collaborated with Raiden INST extensively, to present their research trajectories and methodologies regarding different spatial media.** The project explores various themes, including the interaction between humans and simulated environments, image technology and spatial computing, screens as visualization media, the archaeology and new practices of retro media, and digital objects that bridge the physical and virtual realms. Each work and the related practice will be interconnected through the exhibition space's "Central Factory Hub," which acts as a nexus, aggregating and disseminating diverse information like a logistics sorting facility. As artists enrich their

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creations and practices in response to technological iterations, industrial advancements, and interdisciplinary demands, they connect with industry, technology, and their ecosystem through various media such as machinery, digital objects, code, avatars, and cyber cities.

Why are we undertaking such a project? In the prevailing understanding of contemporary art history, the examination of artists and their creations has largely been based on aspects such as style, medium, and period without focusing on the relationship between their work and the social production processes of their time. **Do social demands drive artistic creation, or do new ideas trigger the emergence of new industries?** Tracing back to the origins, cave paintings were created to document the activities of primitive tribes; dome paintings arose from humanity's longing for the sky and deities; panoramic paintings were developed to provide an immersive experience, often used to inspire soldiers before embarking on missions. In more recent times, Sensorama utilized synchronized multi-projector setups to create vast images, which spurred the development of today's immersive spaces and devices. These needs have persisted through history, and solutions have continually emerged, yet they have rarely been analysed from the perspective that combines art and industry to outline the overall ecosystem. This exhibition also reflects the significant role of market industry chains, such as those on Taobao and Goofish, in documenting and excavating the development of Chinese media. Additionally, it provides various strategies for practical implementation.

Nowadays, keywords such as immersive exhibitions, immersive media, techno-art, and interdisciplinary collaboration are often prominently featured in the promotion of exhibitions and projects that integrate various media. These concepts have become focal points for brands, industry stakeholders, markets, government cultural and tourism departments, and art museums. The emergence of these new media drives the development and transformation of various industries. What does the focus and research on new media signify for institutions and creators? Is it about finding a way out or creating one? **Clearly, this is no longer a matter of singular artistic creation but a convergence of efforts across different sectors. The processes of work and production collectively narrate the ecology of spatial media. This entire ecosystem represents the holographic surface behind the media, both abstract and tangible, transitioning from viewing a partial "image" to perceiving a three-dimensional "form". It is the implementation of a comprehensive strategy and a collaborative endeavor among all participants.**

Text by Du Xinchen