

Living in Space

“Building” and “dwelling” form the conceptual foundation of manmade construction and spatial definition. One’s dwelling carries indisputable significance rooted in its functional role, and the relationship fostered therein, between man and domestic environment, exceeds theoretical categorization. The balancing act between intimate secret and open display becomes a lived experience, further refining notions of public and private space.

Layers of emotion, aesthetic appreciation, and personal interest culminate in a feeling of home whereby individuals securely connect with a community. As the most fundamental unit of society, homes observe and engage in a dialogue with their given era, and in the midst of rapid urbanization, homes ease the anxious pace of material pursuits. The home is the most familiar and natural of locations, nurturing self-expression and inspiring passion for life. Numerous philosophers have explored the significance of the home through the conceptual frameworks of language, the city, the Other, and more. The spiritual pillars of the home are not just the interpersonal ethical relationships it contains, but also the relationship between man and object within the household environment: the domestic space and furniture have character unto themselves. On the one hand, they are products that satisfy needs and usage habits. On the other hand, they also shape the set of activities and behaviors that constitute lifestyle. Domestic spaces are similar to what French philosopher Michel Serres called “quasi-objects.” The quasi-object is not a passive item controlled by humans, nor do people unconditionally yield to its objecthood. Rather, **the object and the user engage and interact with each other, akin to an athlete’s engagement with the physical demands of his or her equipment.** This bilateral exchange between person and object takes place within the domestic environment, an intimate exploration of the mutual dependencies that exist between person and person, person and object. This is also a relationship of privacy, forming an entity that exists relative to public space—the home. Today, the home is influenced by a number of new concepts, including sustainability, new graphical interfaces, new definitions of comfort, and rapid modernization. Furniture and its arrangement create an atmosphere linked to relationships between inhabitants, easing the alienation encountered in the outside world and reinvigorating the spirit for another day.

Is an accommodation a place or a space? The Chinese-American academic Yi-Fu Tuan claims that place is tranquil, while space is liberating. Michel de Certeau differentiates the two claiming that place is traditional, preconceived, habitual, while space is contains unrestrained elements of freedom. From this one can assert that when an accommodation is home, it becomes a place, while when a home becomes an accommodation, it becomes **a space. The concept of “home”** has long-established ethical and functional connotations: dwelling and raising children. Attachment and familiarity block contemplation of its essence and form. In reality, the transformation of societal institutions has given rise to a new system ethics. People today do not need traditional concepts to create their home. Three generations sharing a roof is a home, but a single person can also share in the warmth of a home. Home is not only for dormancy, a static nest. It is also a place where sitting comfortably in a chair one reflects on the entirety of society, inter-personal relationships, and material nature. Nietzsche used the mirror as a metaphor for the world—without beginning or end, nothing added or subtracted, never expanding but constantly in a state of flux. Does this not also apply to a home space with limited confines yet infinite possibilities? Seemingly defined blood relationships within the boundary of a physical space actually possess limitless societal and thematic evolutions. This exhibition explores the possibilities of the home, transforming it from a purely

functional place to an imaginary, creative space. Its definition provides an endless array of emotions and provides a starting point for societal constructions.

At its most fundamental, society is composed of household units. The concept of the **“modern home” has undergone a profound and dynamic evolution** in recent years. Contemporary society is driven by scientific innovation. On one hand, people enjoy the convenience brought on by new technologies, but as result, we have become isolated from one another. Urban dwellers and audiences have subconsciously been trained into the perfect consumers. Relations to society have been flattened into one-dimension. The **ethics ruling home life have also followed society’s evolution**. The age structure of household has reconstructed societal relationships. In a rapidly modernizing society, these factors continuously reconstruct **“home.”** Japanese artist **Kohei Nawa’s paintings and sculptures** add tension to space. Chinese artist **Wang Yuyang’s** installation works present sensual ruptures of light, and in the context of the museum space his works blur the lines between public and private space. German artist Tobias Rehberger constructs illusionistic spaces that bring on a sense of weightlessness and manipulate commonplace binaries of inside/outside, big/small. With the sensitivity of an architect, Zhang Yonghe creates spatial arrangements that bewilder audiences. **Korean artist Do Ho Suh’s work *Seoul Home*** is created with metal framework and silk. The rigid and soft materials create translucent spaces, belonging to a dream sequence. His works take the form of lived spaces and everyday objects, eliminating their functional purpose, exposing construction and surroundings. The **ideal “home” is not only** relegated to convenience and comfort. Aesthetic also plays a major role. In unique ways art constructs a perceptual world. Art influences our daily perceptions, and in this exhibition, artists present their individual perspectives through works aesthetically and conceptually **transfiguring “home.”** The exhibition reveals how materiality breakdowns the physical scope of private space. Suisse artist **Not Vital’s *Lotus Root*** is a metal replica of the beautiful flower’s murky root, bringing a traditional Chinese garden into a manmade environment. His marble ***Landscape*** follows a similar logic, reinterpreting the relationship between home and nature. The city of Chandigarh was the first planned city in India, designed by European architect Le Corbusier. Taiwanese artist **Michel Lin’s work *After Chandigarh*** is a collection of modernist furniture from the city. Differences in scale bring about uneven relationships of size and betray positions of power among users. The project also reveals parallels in the projects of modernization between nations (China and India). Chen **Wenbo’s paintings** explore a landscape of rampant consumerism in saturated colors, questioning how materials come together to form a home environment, how furniture produces a sense of self-hood in the middle-class. The artist uses paintings and furniture as ready-mades to construct installations, blurring the boundaries between interior design and art, giving rise to the question: How are desires and wishes produced, and what use have they in reality? Lin Tianmiao’s works speak to her personal insight. Her works often involve sewing, packaging, knitting in attempts to cover the exhibition space, subverting societal **meaning for these traditionally feminine crafts.** Lin Tianmiao’s submission to this exhibition is an enormous carpet covered in internet lingo describing women, revealing the bigotry that persists into the digital age. Through her reflections of the home, the artist takes a personal perspective and broadens it into a concept, **mapping out “home”** from an inner depth that also reveals how this space molds the individual subjectivities of modern urban dwellers. This subjectivity can also be mapped onto the relationship of **“host” and “guest”** in the aporia known as hospitality. According to Derrida, hospitality is similar to a gift. A genuine gift is beyond any mere self-interest or calculative reasoning. It resides outside of social contract and cannot be ceremoniously implicit. Only when the receiver is unaware of the giver and spared from the dance of customary gratitude can the gift be considered genuine. Genuine hospitality works in a similar fashion. First, one must have the power to host and, hence, must make claims to property and ownership, assuming an identity, yet the host cannot use this position to establish barriers toward the guest. Accommodations are not an external objects, nor are they an entirely internal



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experience. The motivation behind today's project for "me and home" comes from aspirations carried toward life and living. The gap between aspirations and reality nourishes emotional attachment to home and provides the impetus for improvement. Yoshitomo Nara's images of innocent, sweet children subvert adult viewers' notions of self-hood, questioning values of utilitarian society and its constructs of "purity" while recreating the feeling of "retuning home." American artist Laurie Simmons uses dolls and other female forms in her photography and video work, constructing environments reminiscent of the home to explore gendered roles in the household. Zhang Enli's recent practice combines architectural forms with painting. He creates spaces reminiscent of Socialist architecture from the 80s and paints them, producing works that research architectural history but puzzlingly straddle the boundary of real and imaginary.

The exhibition space is a site to encourage thought, and RedStar Macalline has joined UCCA to invite a range of international artists—some of them exhibiting in China for the first time—to explore the meaning of "home" through their own individual practices and cultural backgrounds. Audiences are invited to use these aesthetic encounters to reflect on their own perceptions of daily life. For a Chinese industry that is rapidly maturing and carries tremendous societal influence, a large exhibition has the potential to revolutionize practices, using art to expand channels of communication with consumers and add depth to the company message. The interaction with artists and audiences can strengthen brand image and also lends the opportunity to review history of the brand, expand upon its contribution to contemporary Chinese culture.

This exhibition features twelve, international artists with varied practices. Commonplace domestic items lose their function and familiar forms as the twelve artists create unique visual landscapes beyond traditional living environments. The exhibition explores the aesthetic and spiritual latitudes of home dwelling, turning the Great Hall of UCCA into a "dwelling place" for fantasy and contemplation, offering refuge during a journey of the soul.

Curatorial Team
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