

“Something” and “Nothing”: A Study of Yiqiang Wu’s Mixed-Media Art

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This study focuses on the contemporary Chinese artist Yiqiang Wu’s mixed-media artworks, exploring his aesthetic philosophy of “something” and “nothing.” Within his artistic framework, “something” denotes the essence or rather the truth hidden beneath the overwhelming flood of information in today’s busy, bustling world. By contrast, “nothing” carries a dual meaning: first, the meaningless, popular, and transient information in print media; second, information that distorts or misrepresents reality. By deconstructing the conventional forms and embedded meanings of print media--such as magazines, journals, and newspapers--Yiqiang Wu has created a new artistic world of beauty and truth. At first glance, his works may appear devoid of specific meaning (“nothing”), yet they are deeply imbued with significance (“something”). Specifically, he transforms paper pulp made from the pages of printed pages into intricate artworks, where beautiful shapes, dynamic lines and varied colors interact in harmonious complexity. By interpreting his series of “In the Realm of Paper”, “Lines, Phenomena, and Expressions” and others, the study examines two interrelated processes in Yiqiang Wu’s practice: first, his deconstruction of the illusory “something” within print media, which reveals the underlying “nothingness” in its superficial or misleading content; second, his construction of profound “something” within the outwardly “meaningless” (i.e., “nothing”) forms of his own art. In doing so, the study argues that Yiqiang Wu’s aesthetic dialectic of “something” and “nothing” is not a passive reception, but an active pursuit of truth. In other words, he seeks to bridge the gap between objective reality and his subjective views of the world, ultimately revealing insights associated with spiritual transcendence and aesthetic experience.

Keywords: something; nothing; print media; Yiqiang Wu; mixed-media art