

A THOUGHT ON “LETHE”

In the muted light, surrounded by the gradually emerging images of a river on the screens, a growing awareness comes over me. Slowly but surely, I realise that I am now in a river. On a milky-coloured wool carpet, sitting, reclining, adopting various postures, while remaining in close proximity to each other, we were plastic bottle caps, black tubes, pieces of glass, sun-bleached wood and so forth. Lisa and the words flowed along the bottom of the river, in which we found ourselves, awakening our senses, imagination, and memories. Like water, like sediment accumulating behind stones, like the forces of gravity stretching and contracting space, time moves slowly but incessantly with them. And then, when the words cease, I keep gazing at the slowly changing images. I start to feel a sense of rising from the ground. Just a bit, maybe only about five centimetres. Yet enough to lose equilibrium. Comfortably floating, accompanied by the electronic sounds enveloping my body, I also feel a sense of drifting along in the river. To exaggerate slightly, it is like being subjected to choreography as an ambiguous but experiential arrangement on my body.

The visuals, which shoot various scenes from different angles, are sometimes saturated with colour, emitting strong light that causes halation and sometimes diminishes the contrast. Through these effects, I traverse past and present, which offers vague yet emotionally rich images. The countless stones and rocks, along with the constant reflections on the water's surface, evoking a feeling of fast-forwarding/rewinding, lead me into a unique sensory journey that creates another side of the world—an indescribable realm of coincidence and necessity.

A white stone seemingly placed vertically by human hands has appeared in one of the images. A non-subjective object, relying on external force or action, suddenly enters my perspective. I cannot look away. Till now, the work has been all about choreographing around fluidity, but the stone is distinctly and consciously “standing still” now as an anchor in a vast imaginary world. As I watch, the image slowly changes into a dancer in the same position. An object transforms into another object as if crossing the boundary of physical existence. This is the moment that the non-hierarchical approach of treating all objects equitably, a character of this work, manifests for me. From “say their names” to data mining, anthropology to economics, and even the ongoing brutal massacres in some corners of the globe, our world is entangled with a myriad of information and perspectives. Derived from the myth of Lethe in Greek mythology, representing the power of forgetting, this work, for me, suggests the inherent talent of forgetting that humans possess, namely, the capability of forgetting for regeneration and purification through projecting a vast landscape of untamed nature and the visual illusion of the constant flow of movement in which multiple perceptions emerge endlessly. Pursuing the aesthetic refinement of perpetual locomotion, it seems to touch the very core of nature without simplifying the complex layers of our own nature. We are always in a position that is nothing more than a preparation for embarking on a new journey together with what we sense and feel. For that, we might need to have a small sense of awareness not to abandon the excitement of embracing emptiness or nothingness, which may lead to having a common space where we can communicate with less fanaticism.