



Real Rock Art

Atomic Fossils

The property of matter is the preserve of chemists, who use the periodic table to help order elements by their atomic number and chemical properties. It is also where artist Alice Wang gets her inspiration. “The periodic table is a code in which the whole universe is built upon, it’s something very simple,” she says.

Born in Xi’an but raised in Canada, Wang is a sculptor who studied Computer Science. Her exhibition features many natural elements: A rusting piece of copper oxidizing, turning that unmistakable, crystalized green color; a huge yellow beeswax monolith that emits wind from a circular hole; a mimosa pudica, otherwise known as a shy plant that closes its leaves when touched; moss growing on a rock that looks like a long dinosaur tail.

There is also a sculpture constructed of man-made ceramic, which, of course, consists of naturally occurring raw materials. The ceramic tiling looks like the fossil of a dinosaur in parts, but as you wander around it, the light reflects off the shiny, smooth white surface, manipulating the sculpture from every different vantage point. Juxtaposed against this is a real sculptured fossil that looks like a set of pearl pebbles, sparkling with the reaction to light.

Then there is the iron tube that is made from a meteorite. Appearing to be a simple piece of metal attached to the wall, upon learning it originated from outside this planet fills you with curiosity. “I’ve been working with materials like fossils and different types of metals like copper, gold and silver, which



also take a long time to form,” explains Wang. It seems obvious then that the next logical step is to work with something outside the planet and hence the tube sculpted from an element in the periodic table that landed on earth from outer space.

Usually for an exhibition like this there is a guide, something that the audience can read to get a sense of what the show is about. Here, all that you get is a copy of the periodic table. “When you explain artwork too much, it starts to lose its magic and its meaning.” Indeed, the periodic table is as much as we know to be out there and this exhibition is a way to crystallize this idea into something visual and sentient.

*** Misha Maruma, cncreate.org**

Alice Wang at Capsule Shanghai, Wednesday, October 18, Tel: 6417-0700



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