

Tree of Life 2023: Memory Garden

物語生命樹：記憶庭院

Linda Chiu-han Lai @ Para Site

"signals... here and there" 瞬息...彼/此

(chapter 3)

Within the period 5 Aug -- 30 Sep 2023

Proposed 21 May 2023

***This proposal is OPTIONAL: it applies in case Linda Lai's presence is to be built into the plan of Chapter 3.

In the form of a performance:

Enacting Matteo Ricci's "memory palace" according to Jonathan Spence.

The process of deconstructing Tree of Life as a live performance: the process of naming the objects

Can happen as two sections: one in English, one in Cantonese...

Proposed dates: 26 August – 10 September | 29-30 September 2023

A lecture performance:

- /with rough instrumental sounds marking the intervals

- /tone: objective, inventory list, keyword narratives, the absence of the first-person "I"

Filing and packing:

- /A "secretary," sitting by a small desk on one side of the performance will take handwritten notes of the description of objects presented in the lecture, each in a separate paper file. (police record)

- /Another recorder will make instantaneous imaginary sketches of each object (one per sheet) based on the spoken description (court illustrator)

It would be great if I can involved other participating artists.

The tree of life speaks...
... the fruits it bears, outgrowths, tendrils
... the objects, tools and instruments
All with a narrative that outlives ours

The tree of life speaks...
Housing memories...
Potentially histories...

Hail, hail down... show yourselves.
Let us hear you out... disparate, dispersed, disembodied, dissipated voices
Channeled, connected.

Source

The “memory garden” is based on Jonathan D. Spence’s *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*.

“In 1596 Matteo Ricci taught the Chinese how to build a memory palace. He told them that the size of the palace would depend on how much they wanted to remember. ...”

“...these palaces, pavilions, divans were mental structures to be kept in one’s head, not solid objects to be literally constructed out of “real” materials.”

3 main options for memory locations according to Ricci

[1]

Drawn from reality, e.g. visited buildings, objects one had seen and recalled in one's memory

[2]

Totally fictive: imagined, conjured up, in any shape or size

[3]

Half real half fictive, e.g. “a building one knew well and through the back wall of which one broke an imaginary door as a shortcut to new spaces, or in the middle of which one created a mental staircase that would lead one up to higher floors that had not existed before.”

3 main options for memory locations according to Ricci

Purposes of the mental constructs:

/to provide storage space for the concepts that make up the sum of our human knowledge

/to get an image of everything that we want to remember

/to assign a position to everything that we want to remember so it can rest and be easily remembered.

One must multiply the possible locations rather than stick to one.

Our memory system should result in increasing and strengthening our memory.

The source of Ricci's memory palace

Memory training – [Greek poet Simonides, Spence --] Xi-mo-ni-de (Ricco)

A gathering with relatives and friends (a drink party at the palace) – Simonides the only survivor after the palace was crushed by a wind...
“mnemonic method”