

Translucent Time, Spiritual Evolution: On George Ho's *Curiosities in Gifting and Receiving*

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George Ho's Lutradur is a "non-traditional medium." Industrial in nature yet simultaneously possessing the qualities of both textile and paper, this nonwoven polyester fabric resists complete definition unlike traditional materials. This recalls Nam June Paik's practice, often understood through the idea of the non-traditional medium, which broke down the boundaries of conventional artistic forms and generated new experiences through the fusion of technology and art. What provokes curiosity in contemporary art is precisely the ambiguity of a medium that "cannot be fully fixed."

Unlike classical materials such as paint, canvas, or stone, the "non-traditional" medium blurs the lines between technology and art, everyday life and the artistic. Paik's practice expanded and deconstructed the traditional definition of the medium—transforming it from mere material or expressive tool into a multi-layered concept involving "flows of information," "temporality," and "interactivity." In this respect, Ho's Lutradur embeds "transparency" and "indeterminacy," rather than the fixed physicality of classical mediums. It carries a "hybrid materiality" that mingles light, image, electronic signals, and overlapping temporal-spatial dimensions. This ambiguity displaces art from the binary of "form and content," extending it instead toward "process–relation–experience." Material here is not static; it shifts according to the viewer's perceptual and sensory engagement, revealing itself as changeable and responsive.

Ho's works take the form of painting with acrylic and gold leaf layered upon Lutradur, yet simultaneously expand toward the experiential realm of installation. Originally developed as

a nonwoven industrial polyester sheet, Lutradur is lightweight yet durable, simultaneously sheet-like like paper and fibrous like textile. Unlike canvas, its translucency captures both light and shadow, while the acrylic and gold leaf applied upon its surface continually alter their expressions over time.

This sense of flux evokes not a static painting but the temporal flow and sensory modulation found in Meredith Monk's music. Ho translates this dimension visually, generating the impression of sharing a breath across different temporalities. Monk's compositional language—stripped of harmonic conventions and narrative, reliant instead on voice, breath, body, and space as instruments—builds auditory layers through timbre, repetition, and subtle variation. In her work, time unfolds not linearly but as a cyclical and overlapping return. Likewise, Ho's *Curiosities in Gifting and Receiving* constructs a surreal visual world of translucent layers where nonlinear temporality is embodied. Lutradur's surfaces absorb light, with patterns and colors shifting depending on angle and movement—suggesting an image never fixed, but always in flux with the viewer's position.

In this exhibition, Ho's series *Curiosities in Gifting and Receiving* demonstrates that time is not simply something that passes but something that endures. The fibers of Lutradur may discolor or contract subtly throughout the exhibition, revealing a mutable world beyond singular fixed moments. Much like in Monk's music, where the boundary between “before” and “after” dissolves and only the texture of the present remains, Ho invokes an expanded perception of presence through his art.

Ho's work seems to navigate a threshold where visual transparency intersects with auditory transparency. Just as Monk layers vocal lines so that each remains discernible while forming a new total texture, Ho overlays light, shadow, and form upon Lutradur, each maintaining its distinctness while contributing to the whole. The viewer thus encounters not a singular image

but an open constellation of sensations. His paintings extend toward the spatiality of installation, recalling Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of the "flesh of perception." In particular, the series *Curiosities in Gifting and Receiving* creates a field where vision, hearing, and tactility merge. Within this field, the viewer is no longer a distant onlooker but one who dwells, breathes, and becomes part of the work. The temporality his work proposes is not pre-given but completed through experience—a lived time.

Ho's *Curiosities in Gifting and Receiving* guides the flow of translucent time toward "spiritual evolution." Entering his work is not merely encountering an accumulation of sensory strata but rather stepping into a realm of "Chrono Alchemy." This recalls Hilma af Klint, who through abstraction represented the expansion of human consciousness from the material toward the spiritual. In her paintings, circles, spirals, and translucent layers of color reveal evolutionary stages, embodying both transformation and time's passage. Similarly, Ho's Lutradur installations operate upon this principle of metamorphosis. In works such as *Chrono Alchemy*, translucent planes interweave light and color, dissolving front and back, past and present, material and immaterial—layering stages of perceptual and spiritual evolution. His pictorial structures thus serve as embodiments of a spiritual process, generating perceptions that traverse thresholds. Here time appears not as linear succession, but as an "alchemical process" in which divergent layers align, prompting inner transformation.

As light filters through Lutradur, casting afterimages, past and present appear to co-exist within the spectator's gaze. The viewer becomes not simply a passive receiver but an active participant, reconfiguring their perceptual framework in a space where time and spirituality intertwine. Ultimately, *Curiosities in Gifting and Receiving* transforms the very meaning of time—no longer a measurable unit but a living process in which light, matter, and spirit

continuously reshape one another.

The work emerges, therefore, as an alchemical painting where time, space, light, matter, and spirit dissolve and reform their boundaries. Beyond mere flatness, Ho's surfaces—acrylic and gold leaf layered upon translucent Lutradur—constitute a multi-dimensional field of temporality and spatiality. His work in this exhibition can be understood through three key aspects.

First, at its core lies the dismantling and overlapping of time and space. Lutradur situates itself between total transparency and opacity, absorbing and transmitting light while ceaselessly shifting its threshold. The viewer thus is not fixed in a single here-and-now but experiences shifting temporal layers depending on changes in light and perspective. Past images and present forms overlap and coexist—visually enacting Bergsonian “duration (*durée*)” and “impermanence” in lived experience.

Second, the boundaries between light and matter collapse and merge. Unlike traditional painting, where the surface merely reflects light passively, Ho's works allow light to traverse Lutradur's fibers, where it refracts and scatters upon the acrylic and gold leaf. Boundaries of color and form blur, generating mutable visual encounters. In this process, light and matter cannot be separated; they remain in a living, alchemical interplay of mutual transformation.

Finally, Ho's work constructs a layered dimension of spirituality. The luminous superimposition of translucent hues symbolizes a flow of spiritual growth that transcends the physical domain. His paintings thus serve not merely as visual objects but as conduits through which spiritual energy circulates, transforms, and unfolds. In this spatial encounter, viewers confront their inner selves, passing back and forth between material and immaterial, seen and unseen.

Ho's spatio-temporal installations invite viewers not merely to "see" but to immerse physically and perceptually in the overlap of time and space. Through this embodied process, perception and spirituality are interwoven. In this way, *Curiosities in Gifting and Receiving* expands the definition of painting by dissolving and fusing boundaries. As time, space, light, matter, and spirit interpenetrate and reconstruct one another, Ho creates a "living alchemical field" of painting that invites viewers to rethink and re-experience their own existence and temporality.

(Translation: Heyjin Oh)