

## 找尋點·中國面貌

何慶基

將台北、香港和上海的當代藝術放在一起展出，其動機不難理解。一方面三城市有共同的中華文化背景，而且均是以華人為主的現代貿易都市，但另一方面這三城市在二十世紀各有其特別的歷史、社會和政治上的發展。究竟這些迥異的歷史背景和社會經驗，如何為三地塑造個別不同的面貌，而在這些差異的背後，又能否找到一些共通的價值和思維？

這三城市除了有其共同的中華文化背景外，還有另一共通點，就是它們均是沿海城市，有一個頗繁榮的現代大都會文化。這些以貿易為主的海岸城市，是與世界不同地方文化交流經商的交匯點，因而形成一種開放性和靈活性，但它們是否真的形成一種所謂「海洋文化」，以抗衡那中土文化？究竟這海洋文化是否真的存在，抑或它只是個籠統的稱號，內裡實有其個別風貌，甚至在表面上共同的形態，背後也可能有截然不同的成因。

### 香港的含糊存在

對香港人來說，一九九七年是個轉捩的年代。長久以來香港一直含糊地存在於中英之間。八十年代當中英談判香港開始時，兩方均謂它們代表香港。但香港人在整個談判過程中卻被置於局外，他們只能等待那據說是代表他們意願的中英聯合聲明。作為一個在「借來的地方、借來的時間」的寄居者，香港人從未能確定其存在的身份，而這含糊身份隨著九七問題的出現更見明顯。究竟香港藝術工作者如何面對這種含糊狀態？在回歸大陸之前及之後，香港的文化身份是否是一個需要認真處理的大問題？有趣的是大部份的香港藝術工作者，均若無其事的如常工作，反正不能控制自己的命運，不如乾脆各自找尋自己的路途。有些藝術工作者甚至對當前情況感到不耐煩而又希望不受干擾地自我創作。藝術工作者如黃仁遠，儘管他從不介意表達他個人的政治觀點，但他的作品，卻是個純藝術色彩和筆觸的享受。藝術可以是個逃避，但也可以是個拯救，在迷惑的情勢中建立定位。如果香港文化有一個特色，那會是它那突出的個人主義、和開放的多元表現。保留甚至停留於自我的空間，主動地決定自己的藝術路向而不受外在情況的影響，在過渡期間，是個重要的創作戰略。

### 個人語言和空間

一百五十多年的殖民政治，令香港從未有效地建立一種強大的整體意識，放任主義加上殖民主義對意識形態活動的抗拒，除建立了一努力賺錢的文化外，實難強化一種鮮明的香港心態。老一輩香港藝術工作者，仍與中國文化有點藕斷絲連，但對五十年代或以後的香港土生一代，連這文化關係也沒有。他們的成長期正值香港面對西方文化的湧現，而他們的作品亦強烈地反映出個人的風格和自我中心。儘管香港經歷一個極度令人迷亂的政治年代，藝術工作者如陳育強仍堅持對藝術語言及個人經驗的探索，藝術創作是個人經驗與藝術語言的作品，外在社會政治因素或有影響，但它們始終不是最後創作動機。同樣，冼焮和鮑藹倫的作品也會觸及社會政治等問題，但作品的起點，往往仍是由個人經驗出發。

### 女性藝術的定位

香港雖然是個頗開放的現代都市，傳統中國文化對女性的歧視仍普遍存在，令女性藝

術、女性的角色和感性等問題，也成為香港藝術的一個重要題目。藝術工作者如施遠、文晶瑩等，也包括張雅燕和馮美華的部份作品，均不斷探討這問題。文晶瑩以頗直接的方式，從月經、生產等女性獨有經驗探討女性身份和體驗，而施遠則收集個人經驗及記憶，混合而成如日記般的親密體驗。

## 從歷史中找身份

在過渡期一些環繞著香港文化身份的新問題開始湧現——「究竟什麼是香港人？」、「香港文化與國內的中國文化有何差異？」九七年是歷史性的時刻，是一段歷史的終結，也是一個新的歷史的開展。過渡期間歷史變成一個流行題目，對如何看殖民統治下的香港歷史，北京當然有它的新演繹，但在香港也流行著一種有濃厚懷舊色彩的對本土歷史作回憶。由於官方的歷史（不論是中方的還是英方的）均不可信，個人親密的歷史經驗，變成較實在的起點。例如曾德平便不時藉童年經驗的物件和形象，希望展示一些獨特的香港風貌。張雅燕用傳統中國山水畫風格，滲入社會主義中國形象和資本主義香港面貌，製造出有點荒謬而又格格不入的大中華景象。石家豪以傳統工筆人物畫技巧，繪畫漫畫式人物，當中亦涉及性、角色分配的把玩，是香港較少數以此方式把玩傳統的藝術工作者。

## 科技的新可能性

消費主義對台灣和上海的藝術工作者來說，均是個重要的創作命題。八十年代台灣經濟迅速發展，以及大陸的經濟開放和市場改革，導致消費提升，消費主義文化成爲一種新的文化衝激，既五光十色復令人擔憂。這種深受西方社會影響的消費文化和物質主義，自然引起藝術工作者的反思甚至批判，消費主義變成一種社會腐敗甚至政治腐敗的隱喻。有點反諷的是香港作爲世界其中一個最大的購物商場，消費主義好像早在六十年代已廣爲香港人所接受，而消費主義則鮮有成爲香港藝術工作者探討的題目。反而在科技層面香港藝術工作者的興趣較濃。藝術工作者如鮑藹倫及馮美華，早於八十年代初期從事錄像藝術工作，至今錄像仍是她們裝置作品內的重要之事。年青一代藝術工作者如盧燕珊亦不時使用錄像配合其裝置。但她們雖然均採用錄像創作，其探索路向各有不同，由探討錄像媒體本身，以至回應香港生活種種狀態不等。近年電腦藝術亦在香港漸趨普及，開始形成一股不容忽視的力量。黃楚喬多年從事攝影工作，近年開始將電腦技術配合攝影形像，成功地將既定形像如英女皇加以扭曲變動，產生頗具玩味的戲謔效果。

## 找尋那中國面貌

香港進入了新的年代，它有必要重新爲自己定位。越來越明顯的是我們出現了一種新宣傳運動，薰陶教育我們更「中國化」。但這個「中國」是個什麼東西？這三個地方的藝術正反映出同是中華文化爲背景的城市，仍有截然不同的風格和路向（也有和世界其他大城市差不多的現代都會文化）。香港藝術本質上的多元化及個人化，亦顯示出個別的面貌，正爲自己所置身的特別位置，訂下不同的策略。當三個中國現代城市放在一起時，它能否勾劃出一個試圖掙扎適應現代社會的中國新風貌？而在這劇變的年代，剛脫離殖民義，正學習與中國大陸建立關係的香港，又能否爲自己定位？

## HONG KONG: LOOKING FOR SOMETHING

Oscar Ho

Most artists did nothing. They continued to do their work, to deal with their everyday business. After all, they did not have control of their destiny. Some artists became disillusioned and tired of the whole political situation, and simply wanted to be left alone. There were also artists like Yank Wong, who never shied from expressing his political views, liked to keep some intimate space for his personal enjoyment of art. Art might be an escape, it might also be a rescue, saving one from the chaotic, disturbing reality.

If there is anything characteristic of the Hong Kong culture in this period, it would be its outstandingly individualistic character, as well as its open, pluralistic nature. Being personal was an important tactic saving Hong Kong artists from the absurd situation during the transitional period. Many Hong Kong artists sought pleasure in personal expression about their personal world.

### **Personal Language**

For over 150 years under the British rule, Hong Kong never nurtured a collective ideology. The laissez-faire mentality plus the colonial discouragement of ideological thinking was not a conducive nurturing ground for the growth of any strong, collective ideology, with the exception of the vision of aggressive money making. The older generation of Hong Kong artists born in China still bore an emotional attachment to China. Some of these artists would still like to draw some Chinese connection, or even revitalise the Chinese culture with art. However, for the new generations born in Hong Kong during and after the 50s, there has been no such hang up. Growing up at a time when Hong Kong was beginning to encounter the Western culture in a rather direct way, this generation has little emotional attachment to China, and their works strongly reflect an individualistic approach to art. In spite of the fact that Hong Kong has gone through probably the most politically antagonising period in its history, artists like Chan Yuk Keung still insists on refining his artistic language. The making of art is mainly a negotiation of artistic language and personal experience. It is fine if the personal experience happens to touch on political or social issues, but it is never intentionally political. Artists like Si Yuen and Ellen Pau might also comment on social and political issues, although the starting point of their work has always been personal. The formal or technical treatment of the work is essential for them.

### **Being Women**

Female consciousness has always been an important issue for many young artists. Although Hong Kong is a relatively open society, the traditional prejudice against women still exists. The issue of women and art remains a popular topic for some local female artists. Artists like Jenny Sze, Phoebe Man frequently deal with the issue of the role of women and female sensibility. While Phoebe Man takes a fairly direct way of investigating female body and menstruation, Jenny Sze takes a more intimate approach. She collects images from everyday life, mixing them with personal experiences and memories. Her work is a private journey based on a delicate sensibility.

### **Identity through History**

During the transitional years when Hong Kong was preparing her return to China, a new sense of cultural identity developed. The question, "Who are the Hong Kong people?" and "What is Hong Kong cultural identity?" became popular issues. Reflection upon history-the history of China,

history of Hong Kong, and personal history-had become important issues for Hong Kong artist. An artist such as Kith Tsang, in his investigation of a distinctive local cultural identity, attempts to identify Hong Kong identity through an investigation of intimate personal history. While Lucia Cheung utilises traditional Chinese painting formats and disrupts it with Hong Kong images to highlight cultural and political conflicts and the contradiction between Hong Kong and the grand Chinese civilisation. Wilson Shieh also utilises traditional Chinese painting format and techniques, but disturbs them with sexy comic figures to create mocking images about the interplay of sex roles. The funky, slightly cynical style of Shieh is somewhat unusual in Hong Kong art.

### **Technology and Possibilities**

Consumerism is a significant topic in Mainland China and Taiwan. The rapid growth of wealth in Taiwan and the opening up of the market in Mainland China during the '80s created a dazzling as well as disturbing landscape of consumerism. Along with the growth of consumerism, which is also a sign of Westernisation and materialism, artists respond critically, and sometimes cynically. Consumerism becomes almost a metaphor of social and even political decay. It is ironic that in Hong Kong, one of the most active shopping malls in the world, consumerism is not an important issue for the artists. This is probably because there has been such a long history of consumerism in Hong Kong since the '60s, and consumerism is a well-integrated part of Hong Kong's culture.

It is in the technological area that some Hong Kong artists indicate a strong interest. Artists like Ellen Pau and May Fung were already actively involved with video art in the early '80s. They remain important figures in the video art/installation field. Younger artists such as Lo Yin Shan also utilise video as a form of artistic expression; she frequently integrates video as part of an installation. Although these artists all utilise video for their work, they nevertheless have their own individual pursuit, ranging from questioning the nature of the media to the contemplation of life within a dramatic city like Hong Kong. In recent years computer art increasingly becomes an important new form of Hong Kong art. Holly Lee, who has been active as a photographer, has moved onto computer graphics. Successfully twisting and relocating photo images with the computer, she is able to create many interestingly ironic images. Considering the lack of working space in Hong Kong, computer art provides an effective way of art making which is likely to become an important form of art in Hong Kong.

### **The Search for Something Chinese**

As Hong Kong is entering a new era, there is a new need to redefine herself. Increasingly there is a systematic campaign to make Hong Kong more "Chinese". But what is this thing called "Chinese"? The diversity that exists amongst the work of artists of these three cities shows that the term "Chinese" is too general to be a clear definition summarising a complex culture like China. It also reflects that China, as shown in the work from the three cities, is still struggling to redefine herself, to meet the challenges and rapid development of the modern world. Bringing together three of the most 'modern' Chinese cities, has the exhibition outlined certain images of a new modern China which is still struggling to find a comfortable position in the world? In the midst of these rapid changes, can Hong Kong find a position for herself?