

GREATNESS OF SPIRIT

LI CHEN PREMIERE SCULPTURE EXHIBITION IN TAIWAN





Greatness of Spirit

Li Chen Premiere Sculpture Exhibition in Taiwan

大氣 — 李真台灣大型雕塑首展

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無心海 Clear Soul 2002

新老大師與新東方精神—李真雕塑的美學解讀

20 世紀的藝術曾經離美學很遠，甚至有批評家以不與美學家為伍而自豪¹。在美學缺席的那些年代，包括美、善、精神等在內的具有正面價值的詞彙都從藝術批評中蒸發了，它們甚至成了藝術的敵人。紐曼 (Barnett Newman) 曾經宣稱，「現代藝術的動力就是摧毀美。」² (“The impulse of modern art is the desire to destroy beauty.”) 批評家丹托 (Arthur Danto) 更直白地表明：「至關重要的是，要將美學意義上的美與更廣泛意義上的藝術卓越性區別開來，美學意義上的美可以與藝術卓越性毫無關係。」³ (“It is extremely important to distinguish between aesthetic beauty and a wider sense of artistic excellence where aesthetic beauty may not be relevant at all.”) 在當代藝術批評中，社會學填補了美學的空缺。然而，在快速的社會變革中，聰明人總是被歷史捉弄。格林伯格因為固守抽象表現主義而淪為笑柄，今天那些依然固守社會學敘事的批評家們也面臨文不對題的尷尬。

敏銳的批評家已經察覺藝術發展的一些新苗頭。希基 (Dave Hickey) 曾大膽預言當代藝術領域中將出現「美的回歸」(return of beauty)⁴。庫斯比 (Donald Kuspit) 則發現，當代藝術正在由「新大師」(New Master) 藝術向「新老大師」(New Old Master) 藝術發展。所謂新大師藝術，就是重視觀念、批判和創新的藝術；所謂新老大師藝術就是重視技巧、人文和審美的藝術；所謂新老大師藝術，顧名思義，就是二者的結合，或者借用黑格爾的術語來說，就是二者的「揚棄」(sublation)。為此，庫斯比號召畫家從街頭回到畫室，去研究和錘煉自己的藝術表達手段。⁵ 隨著美的回歸和新老大師藝術的出現，美學敘事必將重新回到藝術批評中來。

李真的雕塑，不僅明顯地體現了「美的回歸」，而且是典型的新老大師藝術，符合 21 世紀當代藝術的發展趨勢。正因為如此，我們決定採取美學視角來解讀他的作品。

每一個最初看到李真雕塑的觀眾，都會為作品的材質美所驚歎。李真雕塑的材質美，不僅體現在視覺上，而且體現在觸覺和聽覺等其他感官上。李真雕塑在顏色純度、明暗變化和光影過渡等方面有精妙的處理，再加上圓融的形象，在視覺上給人快適的審美享受。而且，這種視覺感受會喚起觀眾的觸覺欲望。一旦觀眾有機會觸摸這些作品，

由金屬所傳達的那種特有的細膩和圓潤的感覺，幾乎可以與玉器媲美，以至於觀眾會懷疑這些雕塑作品是否是用銅和鋼之類的金屬材料做成的。如果觀眾有足夠的敏感和欣賞藝術作品的實踐，再加上一點佛教文化的經驗，就能夠通過視覺和觸覺喚起一種聽覺通感，彷彿感覺到一種飽滿而餘音嫋嫋的寺廟鐘聲。李真雕塑所傳達的所有這些感覺特質，都屬於美的範疇。它讓人想起溫克爾曼 (Johan Joachin Winckelmann) 對古希臘雕塑的讚歎：「希臘藝術傑作的一般特徵是一種高貴的單純和一種靜穆的偉大，既在姿態上，也在表情裡。就像海的深處永遠停留在靜寂裡，不管它的表面多麼狂濤洶湧，在希臘人的造像裡那表情展示一個偉大的沉靜的靈魂，儘管是處在一切激情裡面。」⁶溫克爾曼的文字寫於兩百多年前，描述的是兩千多年前的古希臘雕塑，用它們來描述李真的雕塑似乎也沒有什麼不適的感覺。由此可見，藝術和美真有某些跨越時代和超越民族的共性。

當然，無論多麼粗心的觀眾，都能看出李真雕塑與古希臘雕塑之間的差別。李真是活躍於 21 世紀的雕塑家，他的作品的美不可避免地打上我們這個時代的烙印。在李真的作品中，除了那種普遍存在於古希臘雕塑之中的「高貴的單純」和「靜穆的偉大」之外，圓滑的曲線帶出簡約的輪廓，加上人物比例失衡，帶有可愛和樸拙的趣味，是现代人的幽默感。而李真作品中所具有的那種氣、勢、韻在古希臘雕塑中更是聞所未聞的。時代和文化造成的差異，在藝術中顯而易見。

李真的雕塑有一種內在的氣勢。這種氣勢所形成的生命感和動力感，不同於西方雕塑所把握的運動中的身體的某個瞬間。如果要在術語上做出區別，我們可以將前者稱之為「生動」，將後者稱之為「運動」。對於身體運動的表達，西方雕塑家也深有體會。比如，羅丹在講到何以能夠表達運動的姿態時就說過一段這樣的話：「你們問我的雕刻怎樣會表現這種『動象』？其實這個秘密很簡單。我們要先確定『動』是從一個現狀轉變到第二個現狀。畫家與雕刻家之表現『動象』就在能表現出這個現狀中間的過程。他們要能在雕刻或圖畫中表示出那第一個現狀，於不知不覺中轉化入第二個現狀，使我們觀者能在這作品中，同時看見第一現狀過去的痕跡和第二現狀初生的影子，然後，『動象』就儼然在我們的眼前了。」但是，羅丹所說的「動象」顯示只是運動，



大士騎龍 Dragon-Riding Buddha 2001



靈思 Soul 2006

與中國美學中講的生動很不相同。中國美學中講的生動，與氣的概念有關。只有在氣的充滿和順暢的情況下，人和事物才能顯得生動。生動通常無需借助外在運動來表達，而需要氣的內在運動和力量。顯然，沒有中國文化背景的觀眾，是很難感受到這裡所說的氣勢和生動。然而，它們正是中國藝術的魅力之所在。李真的雕塑之所以能夠將中國美學中所推崇的氣勢、氣韻、生動等特徵表達得淋漓盡致，原因在於他對中國傳統文化有深厚的修養，他不僅研究中國傳統哲學，在儒、道、佛等方面有所體會，而且涉及諸多視覺藝術之外的藝術樣式，在音樂、舞蹈乃至武術等方面有廣泛的欣賞經驗和獨特的實踐領會。

李真最初用它的雕塑從正面來表達東方傳統的審美精神的時候，居然讓一些藝術界的人士感到很不適應，因為在中國當代藝術界，中國文化審美精神從來沒有得到正面表達。80年代活躍的藝術家們，大都熱衷模仿西方現代藝術，我們可以將它們稱之為「在東方的西方藝術」。90年代以後一些藝術家在國際藝術界的成功，大都通過挪用文化符號突出文化身份的途徑，我們可以將它們稱之為「為西方的東方藝術」，也就是具有後殖民色彩的東方主義藝術。儘管李真的雕塑既吸收了不少西方雕塑的因素，也運用了不少中國傳統美學的資源，但是它們既不同於那種「在東方的西方藝術」，也不同於那種「為西方的東方藝術」。儘管李真的作品受到世界範圍內的藝術愛好者和收藏家的青睞，但是真正引起強烈共鳴的還是在東方文化圈裡，因為它們切中了在東方文化圈中成長起來的人們的審美訴求。從這種意義上來說，我們可以說李真的雕塑是「為東方的東方藝術」。這種「為東方的東方藝術」與具有後殖民主義色彩的東方主義全然不同，我們可以將其中蘊含的觀念和思想稱之為新東方主義或者新東方精神。

1. James Elkins (ed.), *Art History Versus Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2005).
2. Barnett Newman, "The Sublime is Now", in *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews* (New York: Knopf, 1990), p. 172.
3. Arthur Danto, *The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art* (Peru, Ill., Open Court, 2003), p. 107.
4. Dave Hickey, *The Invisible Dragon: Four Essays on Beauty* (Los Angeles: Art Issues Press, 1993), p. 11.
5. Donald Kuspit, *The Death of Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 182-183.
6. 溫克爾曼：〈論希臘雕刻〉，見《宗白華美學文學譯文選》，北京：北京大學出版社，1982年，第2頁。

無論是新老大師還是新東方精神，都表明在全球範圍內的當代藝術正在發生一種新的轉向。儘管由於敘事角度不同，東西方批評家對這種轉向的概括有些不同，但是如果我們撇開那些瑣細的差別，從更加宏觀的角度來看，我們可以說全球範圍的當代藝術正在由社會學敘事轉向美學敘事。李真作品最為人熟知的是那些追求完美精神境界的作品，它們充份滿足了美學敘事的論述，但李真雕塑也還有另一個帶有批判性的面向，是從早期便已經低調地在幾件作品中出現，透露他對人性的嘲諷，以及對現代社會荒謬現象的觀察。李真雕塑的最大貢獻，在於對古老的東方精神做出當代表達。表面上看來，這種自我表達不算困難。但是，一方面，由於在全球範圍內的現代性進程中中國文化的全面失語，要找回自我表達就需要文化上的充分自信和自覺。另一方面，由於漫長的中國歷史中已經不乏經典的自我表達，要找到屬於這個時代的表達方式就需要獨特的領悟力和創造力。李真的雕塑成功地將東方美學創造性地轉換成了當代話語，他的藝術既是傳統的又是當代的。李真的藝術中所體現的這種「亦此亦彼」的思維方式，與流行的「非此即彼」的西方思維方式全然不同。隨著全球化進程的深入，在避免文明衝突、達成文化欣賞方面，「亦此亦彼」的思維方式具有「非此即彼」的思維方式無法取代的優勢。李真的作品在今天受到世界範圍的收藏家和愛好者的歡迎，驗證了這種思維方式的優勢所在。



風神 Lord of Wind 2008

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Curator, Chinese Pavilion for the 54th Venice Biennale 2011

Chair, Art Theory and Criticism Department at Peking University

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兩忘 The Noumenon of Contrast 2004

New Old Master and the Spirit of the East – Interpreting the Aesthetics of Li Chen’s Sculptures

There was a period in the 20th century when art diverged from aesthetics to such an extent that certain critics rushed to draw a distinction between themselves and so-called aesthetics¹. In the years, words with positive connotations such as beautiful, good and spirit, all but disappeared from art criticism, and in some instances were even criticized as being an enemy of true art. Barnett Newman said: “The impulse of modern art is the desire to destroy beauty.”² Arthur Danto was even more direct with his observation: “It is extremely important to distinguish between aesthetic beauty and a wider sense of artistic excellence where aesthetic beauty may not be relevant at all.”³ For such critics, aesthetics in contemporary art criticism was replaced by sociology. Moreover, in a rapidly changing society history invariably pokes fun at intellectuals. Clement Greenberg’s insistence on staying loyal to abstract expressionism made him a laughing stock in some circles. Today, it is those critics who continue to embrace the sociological narrative approach that run the risk of becoming irrelevant.

The more astute critics have already begun to comment on a new trend in the world of art. Dave Hickey has boldly predicted the “return of beauty” to contemporary art. In the same vein, Donald Kuspit has noted a shift in modern art from “new masters” to “new old masters.” In this discourse Kuspit contrasted “new masters’ art” and its focus on concepts, critique and innovation, with “old masters’ art” which pays more attention to technique, culture and aesthetics. As such, “new old masters’ art” is an amalgam of the aforementioned terms. To use a word coined by Hegel, “new old masters’ art” constitutes a sublation of the other two methodologies. Little wonder then that Kuspit called on painters to return from the streets to their art studios, where they could better research and hone their artistic expressionism.⁵ With the return of beauty and the appearance of new old masters’ art, aesthetic narrative is set to make a return to art criticism.

The sculptures of Li Chen are not only a testament to the “return of beauty,” they are also an example of classic new old masters’ art, and therefore at the very forefront of contemporary artistic developments in the 21st century. It is on the basis of this determination that this paper offers an aesthetic interpretation of Li’s art.

The beauty of the materials Li Chen uses for his sculptures leaves many viewers speechless. However, the beauty of the material is not restricted to the visual impression the work makes on the viewer, but also in the way it impacts one’s sense of touch and hearing. Li’s exquisite use of purity of color, changes in brightness and darkness, and transitional light, combined with the rounded and curved surfaces of his sculptures presents viewers with a comforting sense of aesthetics. Moreover, the visual experience of these pieces creates a desire to touch them, but doing so causes viewers to question whether the sculptures are really bronze or steel, because the sense of refinement and

smoothness conveyed by the metallic material is almost as beautiful as jade. If viewers are sufficiently experienced in the field of art appreciation and have some understanding of Buddhist culture, then the visual and tactile experience of Li Chen's work should awaken their sense of hearing, almost like feeling the melodious silence after the ringing of a temple bell. All of the sensations and characteristics conveyed by the artist's sculptures relate to aesthetics. Indeed, they bring to mind the praise of Johan Joachin Winckelmann when describing ancient Greek sculptures: "The general character of outstanding Greek art is to be found in its noble purity and its solemn greatness, both in terms of posture and expression. In the same way that the depths of the ocean are in perpetual silence regardless of the raging waves on its surface, the expressions on the faces of Greek images reveal a great placidity of the soul, even when found within great passions.⁶" Although Winckelmann wrote more than 200 years ago and was describing Greek sculptures from more than 2,000 years ago, his words fit perfectly the sculptures of Li Chen. This fact alone is an indication that art and beauty share qualities that transcend time and culture.

Of course, even the most casual of observers would notice that ancient Greek sculpture and the works of Li Chen are very different. To start with, Li is a 21st century sculptor and as such his works cannot but be infused with a sense of beauty that is unique to the era in which he lives. Although one could say that Li's work is imbued with the same "noble purity" and "solemn greatness" of ancient Greek sculpture, it also contains round lines that highlight a simple outline and disproportionate human proportions. As a result, his pieces are simple and unadorned, but also infused with a modern sense of black humor. In addition, the *qi*, power and rhythm that are such an integral part of Li's work are unheard of in ancient Greek sculpture. In other words, differences in time and culture are clearly identifiable in different art work.

Li Chen's sculptures are possessed of a certain inner stature and this creates a life energy that differs from the way in which Western sculpture strives to capture a single moment of physical movement. If we are to draw a distinction in terms of designation, then the former refers to "lifelikeness," whereas the latter focuses on "movement." Western sculptors are particularly adept at the expression of physical movement. For example, when discussing how to best express movement Rodin said: "You ask me how my sculptures are able to express the 'manifestation of movement?' In point of fact this secret is quite simple. It is important to first determine that 'movement' is from one status quo to another status quo. In expressing the 'manifestation of movement' painters and sculptors must then focus on the process between the two states. If a sculpture or a painting shows the first status quo unconsciously transforming into the second, viewers are simultaneously presented with signs of the first status quo and the creative shadows of the second, then the 'manifestation of movement' appears right in front of us." However, Rodin's "manifestation of movement" displayed only movement, which is different to the focus on lifelikeness in Chinese aesthetics. The concept of lifelikeness is closely related to that of *qi* or inner essence and only when there is sufficient *qi* and it flows smoothly can people and objects be made to appear lifelike. Generally speaking, lifelikeness does not need to be expressed through external movement, but rather depends more on the inner movement and force of *qi*. Clearly then, viewers lacking a background in Chinese culture would find it very difficult to feel the *qi* described here. However, it is in these elements that one finds the core appeal of Chinese art. The ability of Li Chen's sculptures to so thoroughly express the power, rhythm and lifelikeness that are held in such high esteem in Chinese aesthetics can be attributed to the artist's background in traditional Chinese culture. Li has not only researched traditional Chinese philosophy, but has an excellent understanding of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. He also has a deep appreciation of artistic forms beyond the visual arts, including music, dance and even Chinese martial arts.



西風佛來 Elysium Buddha 2007

When Li Chen first started to express the aesthetic spirit of Eastern tradition through his sculptures, there were those in the art world who thought such an approach was inappropriate, because the aesthetic spirit of Chinese culture had never before been positively expressed in Chinese contemporary art. Most of the artists who were active in the 1980s were fond of copying modern Western art and produced works that are perhaps best characterized as "Asian Western art." After the 1990s, the handful of artists who became internationally successful did so by using cultural semiotics that showcased cultural identity. These works were "Asian art for the West," which is to say they were a mixture of Eastern art infused with post-colonialist ideas. Despite the fact that Li's sculptures incorporate many elements from the Western sculpture tradition and utilize many resources from traditional Chinese aesthetics, they could not be more different than "Asian Western art" and "Asian art for the West." Although his works are well received by art lovers and collectors around the world, they have resonated most powerfully within Eastern cultural circles, because they speak directly to the aesthetic needs of those who grew up with Asian culture. From this perspective, Li Chen's sculptures are "Asian art for the East." His works are completely different to post-colonial Orientalism in the sense that the concepts and thinking that underpin them are Neo-Orientalist or indicative of the spirit of the East.

Whether we use "new old master" or "the spirit of the East," both terms encapsulate the fact that contemporary art across the world is now moving in a different direction. Although their divergent narrative perspective means that Eastern critics have a slightly different understanding of this shift in focus, viewed from a broader point of view, contemporary art is clearly moving from a focus on the sociological narrative of art to one that returns pride of place to an aesthetic narrative. When people think of the works of Li Chen, what first comes to mind is their pursuit of spiritual perfection and the way they satisfy the desire for an aesthetic narrative. However, Li's sculptures also have another more critical aspect, one that despite being addressed in only a very low key way and appearing in just a handful of his works has been evident from the very beginning. In these the artist satirizes human nature and offers observations on the absurdities of modern society. The single most important contribution made by Li Chen is the way in which his sculptures present a modern expression of ancient Eastern spirit. On the surface, this form of self-expression does not seem particularly difficult, but the comprehensive failure of people to understand Chinese culture in the face of the global advance of modernism, means that the only way to restore such expression is to have the requisite cultural self-confidence and self-awareness. However, the sheer length of Chinese history means that there is no shortage of classical examples of self-expression. In such a situation, identifying an expressive form that suits the needs of the current era requires a unique awareness and creativity. Li's sculptures transform Eastern aesthetics into a contemporary language in the same way that his art is an appealing mixture of tradition and modernity.

Li Chen's art showcases a way of thinking that can be characterized as "inclusive," the diametric opposite of the popular Western way of thinking that emphasizes "choosing one or the other." As globalization becomes more entrenched and we seek to avoid cultural conflict and appreciate other cultures, an "inclusive" approach has a number of obvious advantages over "exclusive" art. Today Li's works are warmly welcomed by art lovers and bought by collectors all over the world, evidence of the inherent appeal of the philosophy that imbues his art.



若水 Blessing Water 2005

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1. James Elkins (ed.), *Art History Versus Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2005).
 2. Barnett Newman, "The Sublime is Now", in *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews* (New York: Knopf, 1990), p. 172.
 3. Arthur Danto, *The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art* (Peru, Ill., Open Court, 2003), p. 107.
 4. Dave Hickey, *The Invisible Dragon: Four Essays on Beauty* (Los Angeles: Art Issues Press, 1993), p. 11.
 5. Donald Kuspit, *The Death of Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 182-183.
 6. Johan Joachim Winckelmann "On Greek Engraving," in *Zong Baihua's Translations on Aesthetics and Literature*, Beijing: Peking University Press, 1982, p.2.

策 展 人
楊 心 一

美國康乃爾大學藝術史博士

李真的雕塑世界

李真是國際上極受矚目的當代藝術家，李真的雕塑將當代藝術的創作手法，與佛學和道家等提供靈感的形象完美融合，他創作不輟，欲理解他眾多的作品與系列，有很多進路，我們也發現他擅用具體的雕塑表達抽象的詩詞文字。他在作品上經常使用暗喻手法，雕塑似乎欲說還止，觀者在心理上往往產生不同解讀，並從雕塑本身透過參與，各自心領神會。人們總是不由自主的被李真的雕塑吸引，並且很容易體會到其哲學內涵和文化情思。李真的雕塑之所以能對觀眾達到這種效果，我認為內在於雕塑的形式特徵，外在於他對色彩（黑，紅，銀及金色等）的運用之中。

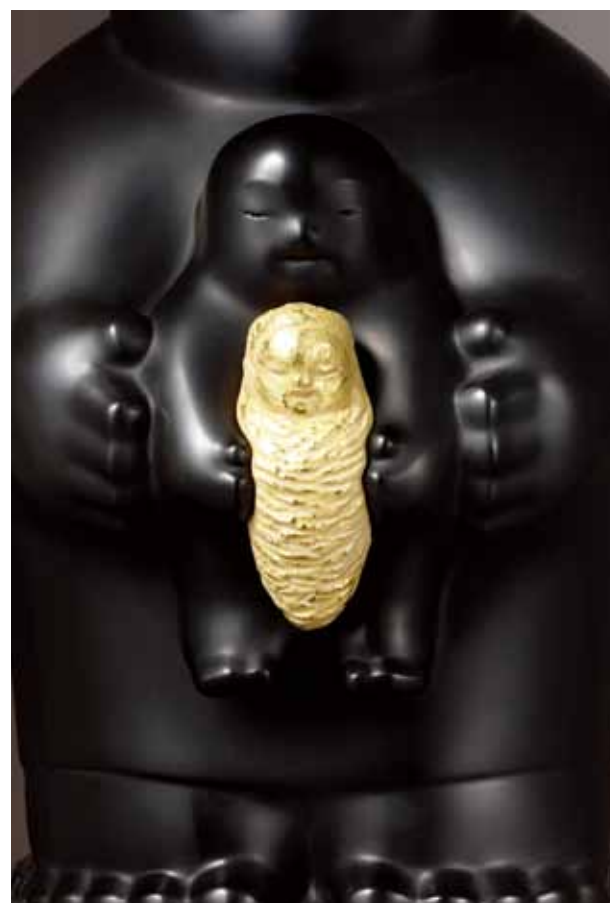
觀看李真的雕塑作品，觀者會被色塊面所深深吸引。雕塑的表面極度光滑，反射出落在雕塑上的光線，色塊面增加了雕塑的形式。由於藝術家所選擇的質感加上作品弧形、流動的線條，使得觀者的眼光被雕塑的形式所捕捉，不停的留連在雕塑上，觀者的視點不斷轉換，使靜態雕塑有如「氣」的微妙變化和遊移不定。從視覺心理學的角度，黑色本來會產生收縮和沉重的感覺，但李真的黑色雕塑造型圓滿而擴張，似乎充斥著氣體或能量，既有收斂情感的特質，又成功製造出懸浮感，顯得「既重若輕」。這種視覺張力使得地心引力在雕塑上失去了作用，使觀者達到了一種永恆 (Timeless) 的視覺心理狀態。可以說，李真巧妙的利用顏色 (color) 和形式 (form) 的對比，在靜與動、重與輕的對立和平衡中，創造出一種心理學上雕塑和觀者的互動。

李真的雕塑令我聯想到了西方繪畫史上的黑色畫 (Monochrome Black) 的美學觀。西方畫家有一種使用單純黑色的傳統，藉此反映墨色，以代表東方的象徵意涵；他們有

些使用黑來創作出畫面和背景，也就是畫布（白或米色）的辯證關係；而黑色也被用來再現對神秘力量的冥想與嚮往。關於黑色，李真曾自述道，「通常我們看到黑色的物質，總是沉重的。當你打坐或者閉上眼睛的時候，黑色卻是最輕的。但重要的是在表象之外的內心語言。」只有這種亦重亦輕，無色的至靜，可以作為精神的承載，使抽象性的空與氣，得到圓滿的表達。加上李真採用東方的墨黑色來表現在雕塑上，更是獨特。即使目的不同，但大體來說都是把觀看繪畫的過程作為一種人和自然的溝通，我認為李真因此更多元、更豐富，有著更多的可能，比其他純粹表現視覺意境的藝術家不同，呈現更多的心靈感受。李真這種藝術策略使我的雕塑史知識匱乏，讓我更確認李真雕塑獨特的創造性。

顏色已經不再是純然攸關視覺與心理，同時還凝結了東方文化的「虛空」美學。李真立基於中國禪宗「空而不無」的思想，以及道家「虛空粉碎，大地平沉」的表述，發展出他個人的藝術語言去表達一種心靈境地，在在豐富了他的雕塑世界，【虛空中的能量】、【大氣神遊】、【神魄】、【天燧】和【青煙】等系列作品進而一一問世。

可見，藝術家巧妙的以雕塑，經由色彩傳達給觀者的視覺、心理及文化三種符號，創作出獨有的面貌，是一種新東方美學的表現方式。



供養 Offering 2006

CURATOR
Yang Shinyi

Ph.D. Art History, Cornell University

Li Chen's World of Sculpture

Li Chen is an internationally renowned contemporary artist whose sculptures represent the perfect combination of modern architectural technique and the inspirational power of Buddhism and Taoism. Li has produced a great deal of art over the years, providing those interested in deciphering his work with a wide range of reference points. He has even proved himself adept at utilizing concrete sculpture to express abstract poetry. However, Li Chen's sculptures are often imbued with allusions which can make deciphering their meaning difficult, as a result of which viewers tend to come to their own tacit understanding of his work. In addition, people find themselves drawn to Li's work, which makes it easier to engage with the philosophical meaning and cultural sentiment they represent. The reasons the sculptures elicit such a response can be attributed internally to their formal appearance and externally to the artist's masterful use of color (black, red, silver, and gold).

When viewing Li Chen's sculptures one cannot help but be deeply attracted by the color and smooth, light-reflecting surface of the work, which qualitatively enhance its form. The texture chosen by the artist together with the curved arcs and flowing lines captivate viewers. As they linger over the work their viewpoint changes, imbuing the sculpture with the subtle changes and movement of *qi*. In terms of visual psychology the color black invariably creates a feeling of withdrawal and heaviness, but stylistically Li Chen's black sculptures are rounded and expansive, as if filled with air or energy. Despite being emotionally introspective, they also create a sense of being suspending mid-air, which is to say they appear simultaneously "light and heavy." This visual tension means that the rules of gravity do not apply to Li's work, which places the viewer in a visual and psychological state of timelessness. As a result, Li Chen's ingenious contrast of color and form in a situation where static and kinetic, lightness and heaviness are juxtaposed and balanced, creates a unique psychological interaction between viewer and sculpture.

Li's sculptures bring to mind the monochrome black aesthetic of Western painting. In the West there is a tradition of painters using black to reflect the color of ink in a way that symbolically represents the East. Some artists use black to create a dialectical relationship between the picture and the background or canvas (white or cream colored). At the same time, black is also used to re-present a certain degree of meditation and yearning for something mystical. Li Chen said the following when discussing his use of black: "Usually when we see a black substance it is heavy and serious. However,

when we sit in meditation or close our eyes black is the lightest of colors, so what is really important is inner language detached from external appearance." Only by being heavy and light, colorless and tranquil can black serve as a spiritual vehicle with the ability to fully express abstract space and *qi*. The fact that Li Chen expresses Eastern ink blackness through his sculptures makes his art even more unique. Although their objectives might differ, broadly speaking Eastern and Western artists consider the process of viewing a painting to be a form of communion between Mankind and nature. I would say that Li's works are more diverse and richer, replete with even more possibilities, the main difference with artists who focus on mere visual images being the way in which he showcases a much broader range of emotional experience. Moreover, Li Chen's artistic strategy lays bare my own lack of knowledge about sculpture, which leaves me even more enamored of the unique creativeness of his sculptures.

Li's use of color is not simply a matter of visual impact and psychology as his sculptures clearly incorporate the aesthetic of "emptiness" that plays such an important role in Eastern culture. Based on the Chinese Zen Buddhist idea of "something in nothing" and the Taoist expression of "smashing emptiness to create peace", Li Chen has developed his own unique artistic language which he employs to express a highly distinctive spiritual landscape. It is this that enriches his many sculptures, including *Energy of Emptiness*, *Spiritual Journey Through the Great Ether*, *Soul Guardians*, *The Beacon* and *Ethereal Cloud*.

Li Chen's ingenious use of sculpture, particularly the way in which he utilizes color to convey visual, psychological, and cultural semiotics, has created a body of work that epitomizes a new Eastern aesthetic.



天闕輕舟 Floating Heavenly Palace 2007

何壽川

永豐金控董事長

看見「大氣」的蛻變

李真的作品無論從那個角度看過去都是圓滿的，讓人會心微笑，好的創作，應該讓更多人認識，我們深刻的體會到一位藝術家的養成實屬不易，需要有舞台才能發光發熱。2007年，李真在國際藝術舞台上剛萌芽，本著關懷與支持藝術家的初衷，贊助李真參加「威尼斯雙年展」，開啟了他的國際創作之路。

轉眼一瞬，2011年，永豐金控獨家贊助李真首度回到創作原點—台灣，所展出「大氣」堪稱亞洲最盛大空前的展覽，我們有幸能參與到國際級的展出，並且欣賞李真這位土生土長的藝術家，帶來充滿深厚文化底蘊的創作，共同感受他作品裡傳達出的關懷與圓融。這是一場公益性質的展出，地點選在許多人遊憩往來的中正紀念堂，以開闊而自由的氣度，接壤你我、貼近土地。「大氣」展覽不只是他個人藝術創作的重要歷程，同時也帶領台灣的藝術展覽邁向國際化。

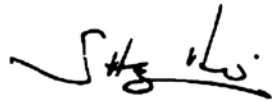
永豐金控在台灣走過一甲子的歲月；六十四年來以不斷創新的態度、誠懇樸實的底蘊，形塑今日的風華。全方位的產品與服務，一直是我們堅持與追求的目標；我們發展「最靈活便利的金融品牌」，並以新通路、新市場、新貨幣為行動主軸，提供無縫接軌的實體、虛擬通路金流整合服務，同時整合集團平台與事業，以完整的準備、積極的投入、拓展未來開闊的金融版圖。我們認為台灣的社會需要藝術養成來豐富心靈的寶藏，同時永豐不只致力於讓客戶財富倍增、生活帶來便利，更希望藉由藝術贊助累積客戶精神的財富，分享藝術為生活帶來的美好。

李真十年的創作、不變的堅持，成就今日享譽國際的雕塑家，他不會是台灣唯一能創作的人，台灣的下一代會帶給我們更多的驚喜，這必須是靠我們共同努力；永豐金控應善盡企業公民的責任，為台灣的藝術創作貢獻心力。我們將持續支持具有潛質的藝術家，培育他們走向國際舞台，同時藉由企業與藝術合作，分享更多美好的藝術作品，豐富台灣社會的心靈財富。



Photo by Timothy Lee

蘭亭 The Pavilion 2010



Chairman, SinoPac Holdings

Watching the Transformation of “Greatness of Spirit”

The works of sculptor Li Chen are invariably well rounded and appealing from every angle, often bringing smiles to the viewers. Great creations like these deserve to be seen by as many as possible. We understand that to nurture artists require lots of efforts, they need the right stage to perform and shine. Therefore, in 2007, when Li Chen was starting to establish himself in the world of international art, SinoPac Holdings sponsored his solo exhibition at the “Venice Biennale,” marking the debut of his rise to global recognition.

2011, SinoPac Holdings exclusively sponsors Li Chen's first solo exhibition in Taiwan, the origin of his creativity. The “Greatness of Spirit” exhibition is the largest of its kind ever held in Asia and we are honored to be associated with such an international event, particularly one that showcases the achievements of an artist who is Taiwanese-born and bred. The exhibition includes works infused with local culture that conveys a sense of concern of empathy and harmony. This is a public event with the artwork set on display at Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, wide open space imbued with a sense of freedom that draws people together and makes them feel close. The “Greatness of Spirit” exhibition is not only a milestone in Li Chen's career, it is also important in terms of achieving greater international exposure for exhibitions of Taiwanese art.

SinoPac Holdings has operated in Taiwan for the past 64 years, during which its innovative attitude and practical approach have laid the foundation of today's success. The company has always offered a full range of excellent services and valuable products. We developed one of the most “flexible” and “convenient” brands by developing new channels, exploring new markets and enabling foreign currency operations. SinoPac Holdings provides seamless services that integrate physical and virtual channels, while always on the look out to expand. However, we firmly believe that Taiwanese society needs to cultivate art

as a way of showcasing the more spiritual aspects of life, and for that reason, has sponsored art for many years.

Over the past decade, Li Chen has shown relentless demand for perfection and creativity, which resulted in his recognition as an internationally well-known sculptor. The creation will not stop; next generation of Taiwanese artists looks promising with even more surprises, but their success depends on us working together. SinoPac Holdings strives to fulfill its responsibility as a corporate citizen to promote Taiwanese art. We will continue to support talented artists and nurture them go on international stage, while utilizing cooperative ventures between the business and art worlds to share amazing works of art with the public, adding spiritual wealth to the Taiwanese society.



大士 Avalokitesvara 1999

李真 創

亞洲藝術中心董事長



2004 義大利威尼斯第七屆國際雕塑及裝置大展 OPENASIA
"OPENASIA" at the 7th International Exhibition of Sculptures and Installations,
Venice, Italy



2001 美國紐約蘇富比總部「無疆界的中國」華人當代藝術展
China Without Borders, Sotheby's, New York, USA

李真的第一個十年

跟李真對談非常有趣。他總有源源不絕的新想法、無遠弗屆的想像力，帶著頑童般的活力，說著他的創作遊戲，加上那百分之百的執行力，他總能將想像化為實際，這樣強大的能量感染了身邊的每一個人。從早期的【空靈之美】到【虛空中的能量】、【大氣神遊】、【神魄】、【天燧】、【不生不滅】、【凡夫】、【青煙】、甚至油畫創作，展現了他豐沛的創作力，光看單件作品便相當精彩，若放進整個創作脈絡裡來看，更讓人驚喜。

十年來未在台灣發表個展的李真，已累積大量的作品，2011年我們在台灣的地標「中正紀念堂」，於秋末舉辦李真台灣大型雕塑首展—「大氣」，開創了中正紀念堂有史以來第一次的戶外雕塑展，22件雕塑各自神氣精采，展覽期間吸引百萬人次參觀，欣賞他十二年來追尋「新東方雕塑」的成果，讓我非常激動！

這些年來，李真已經發展出八個系列，可分為兩大系統。其一，是他對心靈「完美」的追求，展現在【空靈之美】、【虛空中的能量】、【大氣神遊】、【天燧】、【青煙】等系列。他在藝術與精神層面上，追求極度美善的境界，透過創作而不斷地趨近，對於這個脫離現實、只享受完美的想像過程，他曾說，這是「自我的精神療傷，因為生命是不完美的」。其二，李真的創作理想並不僅止於純粹精神的高度，早在1996《願》、1999的首次個展所發表的《蝴蝶王國》、2000《滄海行舟》、2000《迷》、2006《糜糜》等作品中，便已透露他對「人性」和「社會」的關注。他之所以追求那不可能達到的「完美」，是因為他很清楚現實中必然的紛亂，生命俗世中赤裸裸的缺陷、暗喻時下社會，進而發展出【神魄】、【不生不滅】、【凡夫】系列。我們在他的藝術世界中看到了天馬行空的想像，

也看到了社會活動的投射——「虛境」與「實境」，已成為李真創作的兩大系統。

李真七、八歲拿畫筆之後，就此對藝術著迷。在學生時期學習西方思潮，進入社會從事傳統佛像雕刻，並接觸到世界各地不同的藝術，爾後他體悟到，自己畢竟成長於東方，其中，東方的哲學概念十分貼近他的思考取徑，古典文學意象則與他的美感契合。而另一方面，他在形體、材質中摸索出樂趣，使雕塑在質感、視覺上有特殊的表現，成為他自我傳達的最佳形式。其中，李真擅長人體雕塑，卻不鑽研寫實的造型比例，他採用寫意的手法使作品在境界中達到平衡，更散發樸拙的味道、表現敦厚之美，反映他既古典又當代、自在喜悅的心境。

2007年威尼斯雙年展中，俄羅斯艾米塔吉博物館國際事務部主任吉伯森，曾評論：「就東方雕塑千年來的呈現，我可以確定李真作品具有時代性、是全新的面貌。」如果從雕塑歷史來看，由傳統的宗教藝術及古代政權的出土雕塑，一路延伸到近代，什麼是時代性的雕塑？我們看到了藝術家在時代與文化中對自身生活地域的自覺，因此一種新的東方雕塑，正在進行。

籌備了一年半，2011年11月，總算在中正紀念堂成功舉辦了李真台灣大型戶外雕塑首展—「大氣」，我和藝術家及工作團隊共同努力，進行場地規劃、運輸、裝吊、燈光、結構計算…等，終於完成了這場雕塑展。回想我與李真初次見面，竟然已經過了十二年，這

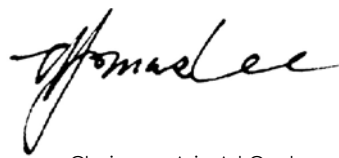


第 52 屆威尼斯雙年展 52nd Venice Biennale 2007

期間我們共同經歷了世界許多重要城市的巡迴展出，培養出深厚的友誼。李真已經十年沒有在台灣辦個展，我們舉行的這場亞洲規模最大的雕塑展，意義格外重大，特別感謝永豐金控獨家贊助這次的展覽，沒有他們的支持，這個重要的展覽不可能實現。在李真未來的十年，我和大家一樣共同期盼他帶來更精彩的創作。



造化之「不生不滅」：千歲與草民，2012年於西雅圖弗萊伊美術館展出
Li Chen: Eternity and Commoner, Frye Art Museum, Seattle 2012



Chairman, Asia Art Center



第 52 屆威尼斯雙年展 52nd Venice Biennale 2007

Li Chen – The First Decade

A conversation with Li Chen is invariably a fascinating experience because he is always brimming with new ideas and boundless imagination. An almost childlike energy infuses his talk of creativity as he strives to see his flights of fancy made real. In addition, such a level of commitment can be highly infectious and helps to motivate those around him. Li's earlier works, whether *Beauty of Emptiness*, *Energy of Emptiness*, *Spiritual Journey Through the Great Ether*, *Soul Guardians*, *Immortality*, *The Beacon*, *Ordinary People*, *Ethereal Cloud*, or his oil paintings, showcase the richness of his artistic genius. If one looks at a single piece then what stands out is the quality of the work, but taking a step back to get a better understanding of the creativity that underpins Li Chen's artistic oeuvre reveals something far more profound.

In the ten years since Li last held a solo exhibition in Taiwan he has created a great many new works. In late autumn 2011, Asia Art Center helped to organize *Greatness of Spirit* at Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall in Taipei, the first solo exhibition of Li Chen's sculptures in Taiwan. This was also the first time the memorial hall had ever hosted an outdoor exhibition of sculptures. The 22 works displayed were all unique and more than 1 million people visited the exhibition, eager to experience firsthand the results of the 12 years the artist spent pursuing "sculpture imbued with a spirit of the East."

Over the last few years, Li has created eight series of work which can be divided into two categories. On the one hand, there are those pieces that speak to his pursuit of spiritual "perfection" as represented by such works as *Beauty of Emptiness*, *Energy of Emptiness*, *Spiritual Journey Through the Great Ether*, *The Beacon* and *Ethereal Cloud*. In terms of the artistic and spiritual nature of his art, Li Chen seeks out perfection and by honing his skills and artistic philosophy over the years he has got ever closer to that goal. As to the necessary detachment from reality and imaginative process, Li once described it as a matter of: "spiritual self-healing, because life is imperfect." However, Li Chen's creative ideals are not limited to the purely spiritual plane. Early works such as



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北京中國美術館 China Art Museum, Beijing 2008



新加坡國家美術館 Singapore Art Museum 2009

Wish (Avalokitesvara) (1996), *Butterfly Kingdom* (1996) which was part of his first solo exhibition, *Travel through Time and Space* (2000), *Puzzle* (2000) and *Collective Consciousness* (2006), reveal his abiding interest in "human nature" and "society." In fact, the reason Li pursues unattainable "perfection" is exactly because he is so aware of the inevitable chaos of reality and complete exposure of worldly failings and flaws, that he embodies social metaphor such as manifested in *Soul Guardians*, *Immortality* and *Ordinary People*. When we view the art world of Li Chen what we see is his soaring imagination and the projection of social activities, a backdrop against which "reality" and "virtuality" are two juxtaposed aspects of the same creative approach.

Li Chen was captivated by art from the very first moment he picked up a paintbrush at the age of seven or eight. As a student he studied Western thought and his first job was carving traditional Buddhist idols, while still learning about different types of art from around the world. It was only later that Li started to reflect on having grown up in the East and his own cultural identity. As a result, he came to realize how oriental philosophical concepts approximated to his own way of thinking and that classical literature was full of images that dovetailed perfectly with his own sense of aesthetics. On the other hand, he appears to have enjoyed exploring shapes and materials, he alters the sculptures in order to create various texture and visual experience, and for him sculpture offers the optimal form of self-expression. Despite the fact that he has not researched realistic human proportionality, Li Chen is adept at sculptures of human figures, utilizing Chinese "freehand style" which not only ensures balance, but also creates a feeling that is simple and warm. They reflect Li's state of mind which seeks a combination of classical and contemporary, while reveling in the joy of life.

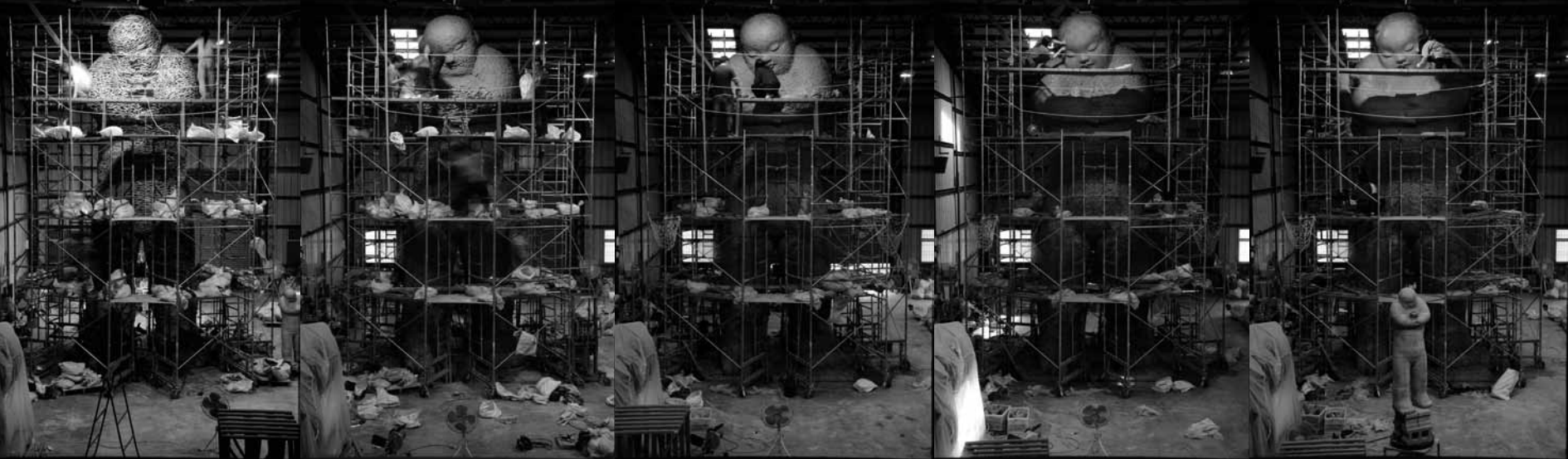
On viewing the work of Li Chen at the Venice Biennale, Stuart M. Gibson of the State Hermitage Museum St. Petersburg, Russia, was moved to say: "When it comes to Eastern architecture of the last thousand years, what I can say is that the sculptures of Li Chen belong to a specific time and represent something completely new." Seen from the history of sculpture, traditional religious art and the products of ancient political power – unearthed sculptures – continued into modern history, so what exactly makes a sculpture epochal? We have seen that Li's sculptures are young and imbued with modern visual language while highlighting the local nature of life, and as such can be considered examples of an evolving form of Eastern sculpture.

After 18 months of preparatory work, the *Greatness of Spirit* outdoor solo exhibition was held at Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall in November 2011. Many people, including myself, the artist and countless others worked very hard to plan the display area, transport the works, lift them carefully into place, ensure the works were properly lit and compile structural calculations. Finally, our many months of effort came together

in the form of an exhibition that proved to be a great success. Although it is now 12 years since I first met Li Chen, I remember it like it was yesterday. Since that time we have worked together on a number of important exhibition tours in cities around the world and become good friends. Li Chen had not held a solo exhibition in Taiwan for a decade, which made this exhibition, the largest in Asia, even more important. On that note, I would like to extend a special thank you to SinoPac Holdings for its exclusive sponsorship because without that support this important exhibition could not have happened. Finally, it is my hope, shared with fans the world over, that Li Chen will continue to regale us with breathtaking art for years to come.



北京亞洲藝術中心 Asia Art Center, Beijing 2008



李宜勳

「大氣—李真台灣大型雕塑首展」

策展總企劃

雕塑，藝術的重工

在藝術的範疇中，雕塑是「重工業」，近代眾多的藝術史學者總認為，要誕生一個雕塑家遠比畫家更不容易。

雕塑有著很突出的性格，這在我參與畫廊經營的十年中，感受很深，它的各個面向和特殊性都圍繞著雕塑實體的物理性質而展開。

首先，雕塑佔據三度空間，有複雜的內部結構及物理平衡，需要好的技術才能琢磨出藝術家天馬行空的概念；還得為作品與設備尋找廣大的工作室使用空間，讓藝術家在裡面搭建鷹架，爬上爬下，只為了從無到有地創作雕塑實體，過程中不但十分耗體力又有一定危險性。另外，雕塑雖是藝術家獨立創作，但從打底、泥塑、翻製、鑄銅、表面處理、到裝吊成品等繁複的製程中，需要助手的幫忙，有了助手就要成立工作室，並需要龐大資金到位去支持裡面的設備、材料、人力及管銷。通常藝術家總是不願讓許多俗務打擾他純粹的創作思維，但李真總是用心面對，所以一個雕塑家的才華，不只體現在創作雕塑，還能用於行政管理，唯有兼備理性與感性才能做到，李真在「大氣展覽」開幕演說曾表示：「處理這麼多繁雜的事務，遠比創作更加艱辛，我也不能免俗地要面對現實，這就是『江湖』。」

但李真的實驗精神帶著他不斷地去嘗試及挑戰，因為他很清楚，這就是雕塑家的宿命。



Steven Lee

Curatorial Planner-in-Chief,
"Greatness of Spirit: Li Chen Premiere Sculpture
Exhibition in Taiwan"

Sculpture as Heavy Industry

In the world of art, sculpture is a genre that requires much "heavy lifting." In this context, many modern art historians believe that it is harder to cultivate the skills needed to be a good sculptor than it is to excel at painting.

Works of sculpture tend to be prominent and eye catching. After working in art galleries for 10 years I have observed firsthand the extent to which the various facets and special nature of sculpture revolve around the physical character of the work.

Sculptures occupy a three dimensional space and are a combination of complex internal structure and physical equilibrium. As a result, only an artist with considerable technical expertise can breathe life into soaring transcendent ideas. In addition, sculpting demands a large studio space in which to work, one where the artist can install scaffolding to navigate around the piece and create a sculpture from nothing. This is a process that is not only physically exhausting, but can also be hazardous.

Although a sculpture is the independent creation of an artist, the complex and intricate production process, from establishing a foundation, to sculpting the clay, reproduction, casting, surface work and installing the finished work, almost always requires the help of assistants. With the assistance of others comes the need for a studio and funding to pay for the materials and equipment, as well as manpower and management costs. Generally, artists are unwilling to allow real world issues to impinge on the purity of the creative process, but Li Chen deals with such things himself. In this way, the talent of any sculptor should be viewed in terms both of the art created and the way he or she deals with the miscellaneous yet essential work involved. In other words, being a successful sculptor requires both rationality and artistic perception. During the opening ceremony to the "Greatness of Spirit" exhibition, Li Chen made the following observation: "Dealing with so many miscellaneous things is far harder than the art itself. Just like everyone else I have to face reality, after all this is the art business."

Li Chen's love of experimentalism drives him to continually try new things and take on new challenges, an approach he embraces as the fate of the sculptor.



蘭亭 The Pavilion 2010 (泥塑 Clay Phase)



追燭 The Pursuer 2010 (泥塑 Clay Phase)





捻花 Angelic Smile 2010 (泥塑 Clay Phase)





浮光 Flickering Moonlight 2009 (泥塑 Clay Phase)





天闕輕舟 Floating Heavenly Palace 2007 (泥塑 Clay Phase)

人類文明之多元性，在全球化的趨勢中加速交流，華人藝術家更是活力十足。然而作品文化法源與時代面貌，在自我認同和多元共生結構裡，更凸顯地域精神的重要性，畢竟全球化並非全一化，此時我們發現作者對自我文化的覺醒，表現出獨特的意境與函構，有了新的視野，使東方藝術靈氣再現生機。

Increased globalization has highlighted the diversity of human civilization and created an environment in which Chinese artists have been particularly active. Moreover, within a framework of self identity and diverse coexistence, the cultural origins of a work and the era in which it was produced highlight the importance of traditional spirit. Ultimately, globalization does not mean homogeneity and that draws our attention to the artist's awareness of his own culture and the way in which he expresses a unique artistic concept and meaning. It is this vision that breathes new life into the spirit of Eastern art.



圖片來源：國立中正紀念堂管理組 Courtesy of National Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall



展覽地點
中正紀念堂
台灣台北

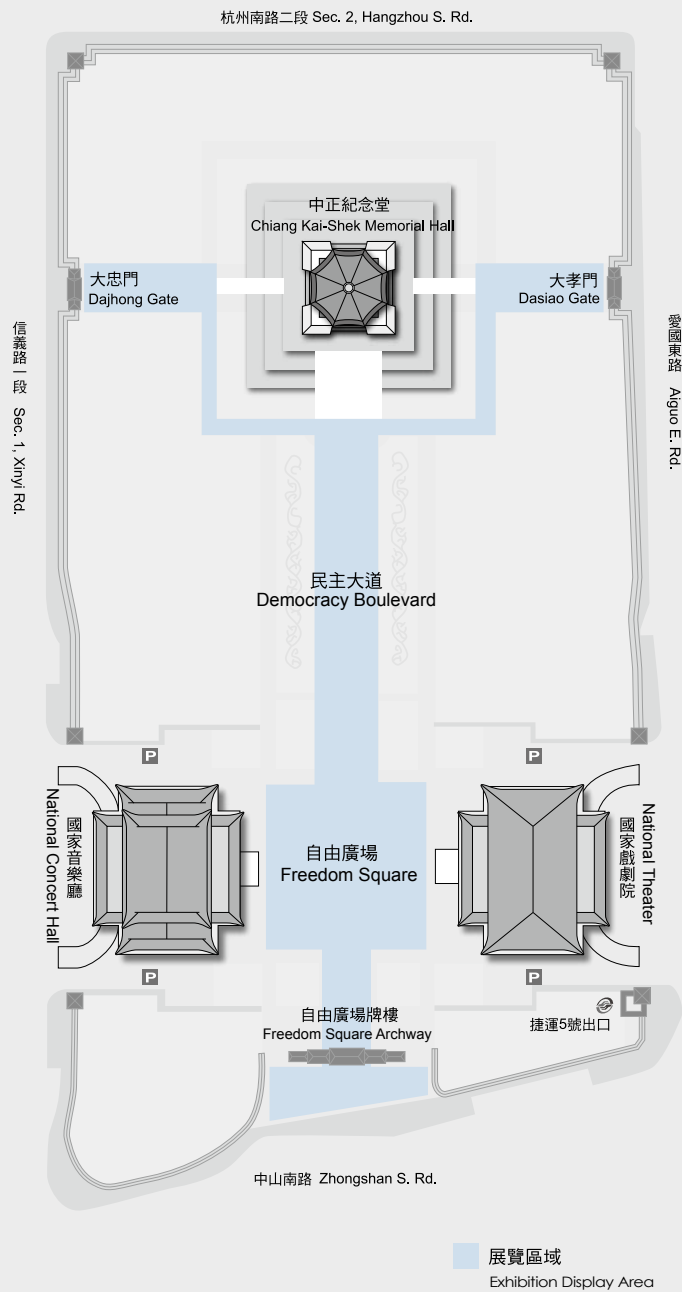
Venue
**Chiang Kai-shek
Memorial Hall**
Taipei, Taiwan

中正紀念堂位於台灣台北市中心，1980年時為紀念蔣介石而興建，是台灣最大的廣場，佔地 250,000 平方公尺，高 76 公尺的主建築矗立於中央，前方有民主大道、自由廣場，兩側為國家戲劇院、國家音樂廳，迴廊、中式庭園等則位於外圍。建築整體外貌以白色大理石及寶藍色琉璃瓦的搭配作為基調，壯麗而宏偉，東方風格十分鮮明。

作為一個政治象徵符號，中正紀念堂在解嚴前後見證了台灣社會的蓬勃發展。它經歷了各種政治、社會運動與意識型態的角力，在民主化過程中扮演了最重要的角色，同時也是國家級表演活動的絕佳場地。十年末在台灣正式發表的李真，從台灣地標向世界展示十二年的創作成果《大氣：李真台灣大型雕塑首展》，此為中正紀念堂成立三十一年來首次於廣場啟動的亞洲最大雕塑展，二十二件大型雕塑與展場相互輝映，圓滿而大氣，綻放出東方氣韻與當代視界的完美結合。

Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall is at the center of Taipei City. It was built in 1980 to commemorate former ROC president Chiang Kai-shek and is the largest square in Taiwan. The grounds in which the hall stands are 250,000 square meters in size, with the main building standing 76m in height. In front of the hall is Democracy Boulevard and Freedom Square, with the National Theater and National Concert Hall on either side. A roofed corridor and Chinese garden run around the periphery of the grounds. The exterior of the building is an eye-catching combination of white marble and royal blue glazed tiles, majestic and grand with a pronounced oriental style.

As a political symbol, Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall bore witness to the vibrant development of Taiwanese society in the period before and after the lifting of Martial Law. It has also played an important role in the process of democratization, while remaining a key venue for artistic and cultural performances. Having not held an official solo exhibition in Taiwan for over a decade, artist Li Chen decided to hold the *Greatness of Spirit: Li Chen Premiere Sculpture Exhibition in Taiwan*, showcasing his work over the past 12 years, at this landmark venue. This was the first time in its 31-year history that Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall played host to the largest sculpture exhibition in Asia. Li's 22 large works blended perfectly with the setting of the square, their rounded limbs and imposing stature the perfect combination of Eastern essence and modern vision.



展期 / 2011/11/6-12/4

地點 / 中正紀念堂
民主大道、兩廳院藝文廣場
Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall /
Democracy Boulevard, Freedom Square

李真系列作品 Li Chen Artwork Series

■ 中正紀念堂展出作品 Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall Exhibits

【空靈之美】The Beauty of Emptiness 1992-1997

水月觀音	Water-Moon Avalokitesvara	1992
普陀山	Pu-Tuo Mountain	1993
悟空	Sun Wukong (The Monkey King)	1993
思惟	Avalokitesvara	1994
自在	Avalokitesvara	1995
一葉	Avalokitesvara	1996
悲	Mercy Avalokitesvara	1996
智	Wisdom Avalokitesvara	1996
願	Wish Avalokitesvara	1996
行	Fulfillment Avalokitesvara	1996
靈山	Holy Mountain	1996
未來佛	Maitreya	1997

【虛空中的能量】Energy of Emptiness 1998-2000

雲中佛	Buddha on the Cloud	1998
涅槃	Nirvana	1998
空塵	Transcendence	1998
三覺者	Three Bodies of Buddha	1998
■ 世尊	Sakyamuni	1998
藥師	Buddha of Healing	1998
彌陀	Amitabha Buddha	1998
西來	Amitabha	1998
南海	Avalokitesvara	1998
無量壽	Amitayus	1998
■ 合十	All in One	1998
無憂	Shambala	1998
■ 無憂國土	Pure Land	1998
■ 大士	Avalokitesvara	1999
無間化育	Unceasing Cultivation	1999
如雲	Like Cloud	1999
蝴蝶王國	Butterfly Kingdom	1999
滄海行舟	Travel through Time and Space	2000
迷	Puzzle	2000
若然者	Nature	2000
白鷺鷥的春天	The Egret's Spring	2000
法界遊子	Siddhartha	2000
拈花微笑	The Buddha's Smile	2000
■ 和而不同	Harmonize without Compromise	2000
乘雲氣	Cloud Glider	2000
煙雲供養	Cultivated by Mist and Cloud	2000

【大氣神遊】Spiritual Journey Through the Great Ether 2001 -

■ 文殊菩薩	Wisdom Bodhisattva	2001
■ 普賢菩薩	Fulfillment Bodhisattva	2001
■ 大士騎龍	Dragon-Riding Buddha	2001
■ 天界山水	Landscape in Heaven	2001

雲中一如來	The Buddha in the Cloud	2002
■ 無心海	Clear Soul	2002
觀	Meditation	2002
■ 飛行樂土	Float to Sukhavati	2002
■ 地藏行	Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva	2003
清涼山	On Cloud Mountains	2003
三生石	Cause	2003
山行旅	Traveling In Mountains	2003
兩忘	The Noumenon of Contrast	2004
仙境尋幽	Visiting Fairyland	2004
天音	The Sound of Nature	2004
■ 清風雲露	Soothing Breezes Floating Clouds	2005
影沉寒水	Nothing in the Heart	2005
黃金雨	Golden Rain	2005
若水	Blessing Water	2005
糜糜	Collective Consciousness	2006
供養	Offering	2006
靈思	Soul	2006
入世	Entering the World	2007
西風佛來	Elysium Buddha	2007
雪峰仙蹤	Snow Wonderland	2007
御風遊	Riding the Wind	2007
■ 天闕輕舟	Floating Heavenly Palace	2007
菩提	Causal	2008
海上行者	Ocean Deliverer	2008
天池	Heavenly Pond	2008
出神入化	Elevation	2009
蒙之初	The Genuine State	2009
■ 浮光	Flickering Moonlight	2009
天空	Sky	2012
雲遊	Playing in the Cloud	2012
思念	Missing	2012
冥想	Fantasizing	2012

【神魄】 Soul Guardians 2008-2009

祭壇	Sacrificial Altar:	2008
審判者	Judge of the Underworld	
攝心者	Mind-Taking Guard	
攝魂者	Soul-Taking Guard	
乾坤莫測	Unpredictable Fate:	2008
東青龍	Dragon	
西白虎	Tiger	
南朱雀	Phoenix	
北玄武	Tortoise	
中麒麟	Qilin	
耳通	Wind-Accompanying Ear	2008
眼通	Thousand-Mile Eye	2008
■ 風神	Lord of Wind	2008

■ 火神	Lord of Fire	2008
雷神	Lord of Thunder	2009
雨神	Lord of Rain	2009

【不生不滅】 Immortality 2008 -

破天風	Sky Breaking Gale	2008
地心火	Earth Piercing Fire	2008
眼識	Visual Perception	2008
耳識	Audio Perception	2008
金剛不壞之一	Indestructable Spirit I	2008
金剛不壞之二	Indestructable Spirit II	2008
千歲	Eternity	2012
草民	Commoner	2012

【天燧】 The Beacon 2009-2010

燃燈	Illuminator	2009
攀龍燭	Soaring Dragon	2010
天火	Fire Master	2010
大羅金掌	Golden Palm	2010
托塔	Aerial Pagoda	2010
■ 追燭	The Pursuer	2010
■ 捻花	Angelic Smile	2010
■ 蘭亭	The Pavilion	2010

【凡夫】 Ordinary People 2010 -

吞吐洪荒	Boundless Desire	2010
二皮刀	Lip Blade	2012
大面神	The Value of Superficiality	2012
取相	Reflection of Mind	2012
玄機	Hidden Mystery	2012
金湯	Pool of Luxury	2012
無聲	Muted	2012
相互與矛盾	Reciprocity and Contradiction	2012
不息	Non-Stop	2012
童子	Lad	2012
橡皮人	Pliant Man	2012
蒼生	Sounds of Multitude	2012
匪夷所思	Incomprehensible	2012
非常	Inextricable	2012
無人	Arrogance	2012

【青煙】 Ethereal Cloud 2011 -

■ 一縷	Fleeting Wisp	2011
■ 日行千里	Moving On	2011
善變	Mood Swing	2012
風狂	Turbulence	2012

















Greatness of Spirit

Li Chen Premiere Sculpture Exhibition in Taiwan

首展
4



光復紀念
光復紀念
SOUTH FOR FREEDOM





自由廣場







Photo by Daniel M Shih 施銘成 攝影



世尊 Sakyamuni 1998





Bronze 103x90x195cm

世尊 Sakyamuni 1998





中正紀念堂

Bronze 134x148x338cm



合十 All in One 1998



Bronze 451x133x243cm



無憂國土 Pure Land 1998

大士 Avalokitesvara 1999





Bronze 110x207x250cm



Bronze 90x112x218cm



和而不同 Harmonize without Compromise 2000



Bronze 146x215x250cm



文殊菩薩 Wisdom Bodhisattva 2001



普賢菩薩 Fulfillment Bodhisattva 2001



Bronze 161x226x250cm

大士騎龍 Dragon-Riding Buddha 2001



Bronze 376x306x472cm





Bronze 158x127x243cm



天界山水 Landscape in Heaven 2001

無心海 Clear Soul 2002



Bronze 229x110x180cm

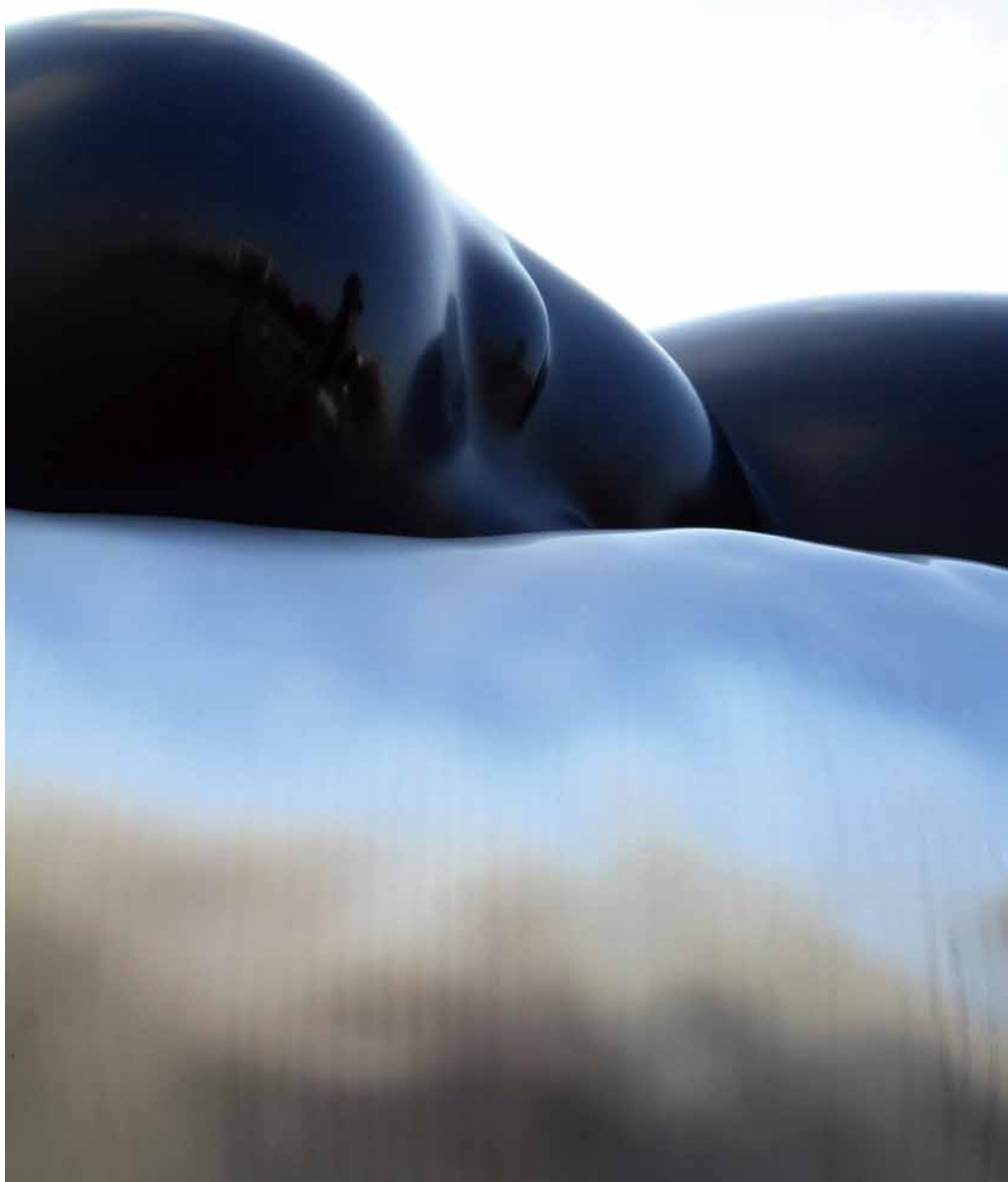


飛行樂土 Float to Sukhavati 2002





Bronze 310x165.5x223.5cm







Bronze 101.5x143.5x174cm



地藏行 Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva 2003





清風雲露 Soothing Breezes Floating Clouds 2005

Bronze 154x113x308cm





清風雲露 Soothing Breezes Floating Clouds 2005



天闕輕舟 Floating Heavenly Palace 2007







Bronze 334x205x848cm





天闕輕舟 Floating Heavenly Palace 2007





天闕輕舟 Floating Heavenly Palace 2007



浮光 Flickering Moonlight 2009









浮光 Flickering Moonlight 2009



209x300x319cm



風神 Lord of Wind 2008



風神 Lord of Wind 2008





156x311x363cm



火神 Lord of Fire 2008





火神 Lord of Fire 2008



Bronze 317x131.5x147.5cm



追燭 The Pursuer 2010



Bronze 150x180x420cm



捻花 Angelic Smile 2010







Bronze 315x235x810cm



蘭亭 The Pavilion 2010





蘭亭 The Pavilion 2010







蘭亭 The Pavilion 2010





Stainless Steel 128x110x349cm



一縷 Fleeting Wisp 2011



Stainless Steel 125x185x170cm



日行千里 Moving On 2011





在「真實與虛無」

我走出第一步時

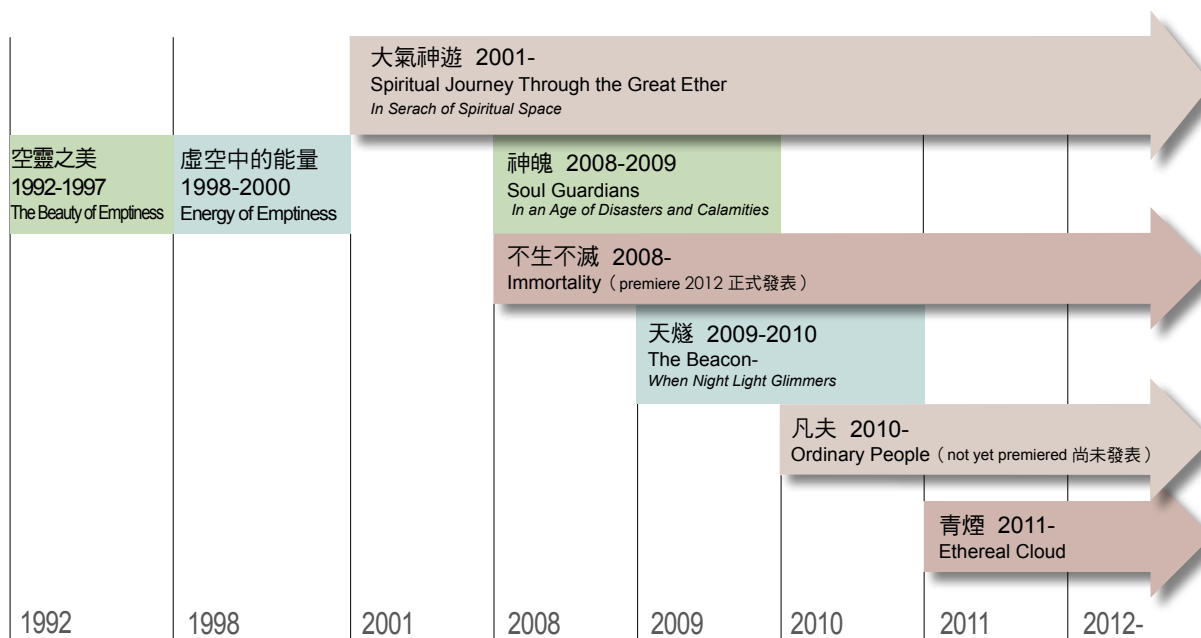
實現的路途遠比創作艱辛

Between "truth and illusion",

I took my first step.

The path to realization was much harder than creating art.

李真系列創作年表 Li Chen Chronology

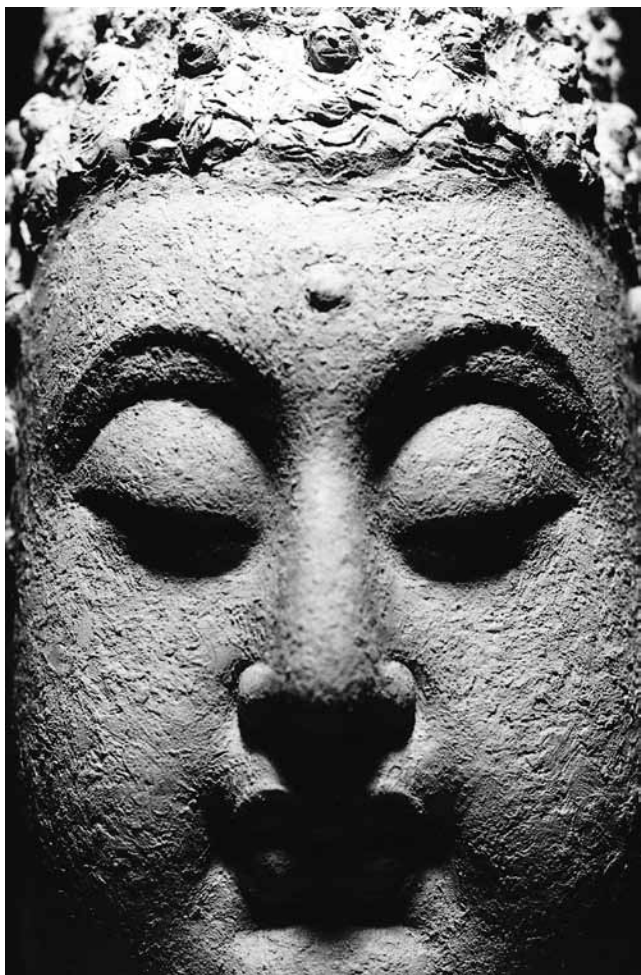




水月觀音 Water-Moon Avalokitesvara 1992

初期的讚嘆 — 【空靈之美】系列 1992-1997
Appreciation of Early Period:
The Beauty of Emptiness





靈山 Holy Mountain 1996

【空靈之美】是李真創作的初期階段。

台灣原居於華夏之邊陲，由於近代的開放使經濟文化等多元發展，形成活潑的創造力，其語言文字及閩南文化，影響深遠。隨著近代佛教等自中國遷移，轉而在擁有宗教自由的台灣盛大發展，而李真的父母也是虔信佛、道教的台灣家庭之一。台灣重要的藝術家陳幸婉、鄭瓊銘、李錦繡、黃步青、謝棟樑，是學生時期的美術老師，使他接觸到西方現代藝術潮流，但日後則從事佛像雕刻工藝的職業。佛學讓他對生命有不同的看法和人生觀，在此階段縱有因緣可發表作品，李真仍不敢展出，只因尚未做出令自己感動的作品。

資深藝評家暨策展人王嘉驥指出：「李真若繼續原來的事業，勢必有接不完的佛堂、佛像設計案。除了財源廣進之外，要在短期內執台灣民間工藝佛雕界之牛耳，也不是難事。然而他卻選擇了一條較為艱辛的道路。」在矛盾中，李真自問：「究竟要無我地雕出眾生心目中的『法相』，或尋求創作自由？」他從傳統工藝中習得了技巧、美感、意含，但佛像的功能就是要給人膜拜，從事佛教造相必須放下「我執」，必須是客觀的；然而創作則是絕對個人的主觀意念之體現。李真曾這樣處理這兩造的抵觸：「我沒有能力解放傳統佛像，所以我只能解放我自己。」

自我解放後，他廣泛閱讀傳統書籍，參觀博物館或古蹟中的雕像，吸取古典美學的養分，嘗試採用寫意的方式來表現，《水月觀音》(1992)、《一葉》(1996) 等作品於是誕生。此階段作品仍保留唐、宋等佛像的面貌，卻在結構上有些微不同，呈現「空靈」、一種虛無的美感，他自稱此階段為「初期的讚嘆」。由於承襲傳統造像方式，雕塑面貌並無劃時代的突破，李真在傳統雕刻中打下的紮實功夫，卻表露無遺。影響所及，現今坊間宗教藝術與工藝品等，採用空靈的結構來表現，已蔚為潮流。



未來佛 Maitreya 1997



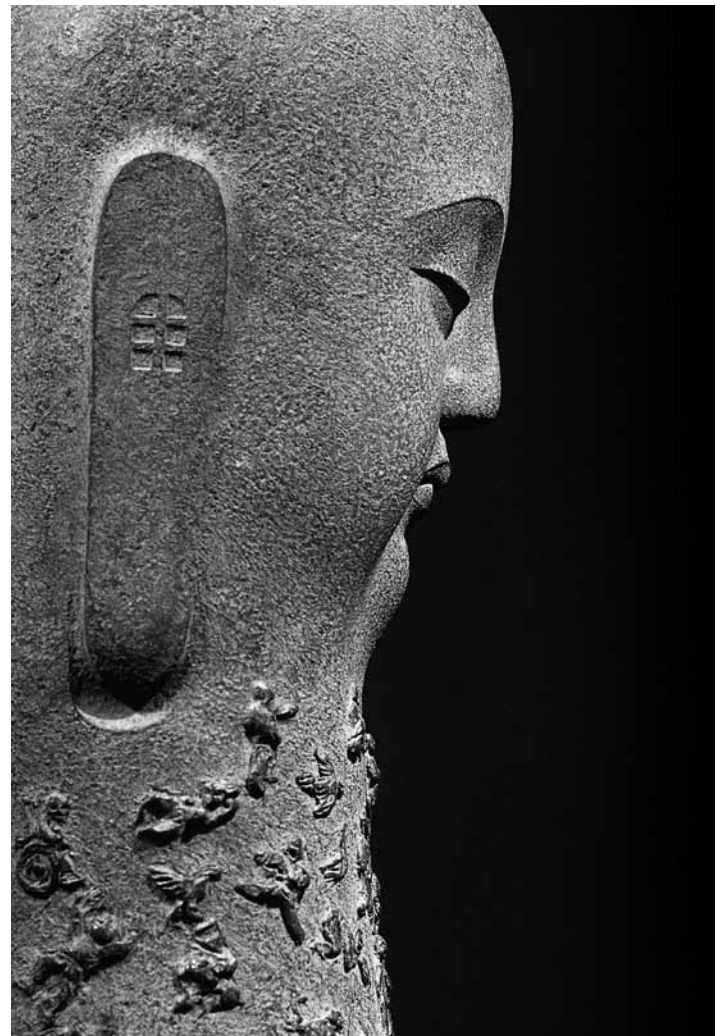
***The Beauty of Emptiness* is one of Li Chen's earlier creative works.**

Taiwan is located on the periphery of China, a country that has embraced political and cultural opening over the last few years, which has in turn sparked the diverse development of its economy and culture, leading to new creativity. As a result, China's language, written script and Southern Fukienese culture have had a deep and lasting influence. Li Chen comes from a devout Buddhist family background, a religion that was introduced from China and flourished in Taiwan. Li's early art teachers included some of the most celebrated Taiwanese artists: Chen Hsinwan, Cheng Chiungming, Li Junxiu, Huang Buhching and Hsieh Tungliang. Even though Li Chen developed his own distinctive style through the study of Western sculpture, he chose traditional Buddha statue-making as a career. Embracing religion has prompted Li to take a different perspective on life, though because such work failed to inspire he turned down all exhibition offers.

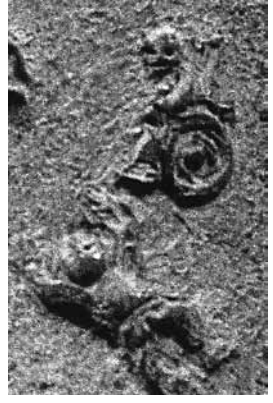
Distinguished art critic and curator, Chia Chi Jason Wang has said: "If Li Chen had stayed with his old profession, he would have enjoyed a plethora of requests and orders to design temples and make Buddha statues. In addition to accumulating wealth, it is almost certain that he would have become a leading light in Taiwanese folk arts and crafts. However, Li Chen chose a more arduous road." In the midst of internal struggle, Li started to ask himself: "Should I be selflessly sculpturing the deity's countenance, or seeking individual freedom through creation?" He acquired the skills, aesthetic appreciation and understanding of real world applications through traditional craftsmanship. However, the purpose of Buddha statues is for people to worship, thus devotion to religious work involves ridding oneself of subjectivity and remaining absolutely objective. In contrast, an artist's creative works are a direct manifestation of personal subjectivity. Pondering this dilemma, Li Chen said: "I do not have the ability to free traditional Buddha statues, I can only liberate myself."

After self-liberation, Li set about reading as many books on traditional Buddhist studies as he could get his hands on, whilst also visiting numerous Buddha statues

in museums and at ancient historical sites, to absorb as much as possible about traditional aesthetics. His effort to approach traditional Buddha statues with a "freehand" representation led to the creation of *Water-Moon Avalokitesvara* (1992) and *Avalokitesvara* (1996). In this period, although the artist's work retained the appearance of the Buddha statue with only slight structural differences, he had clearly already developed spirituality in "the aesthetic of emptiness." Li himself refers to this era as "appreciation of early period." As these works take much from traditional sculpting methods, the appearance of the Buddha did not represent any major break with the past, though what they did do was reveal Li Chen's solid effort in traditional Buddha carving. These works have also influenced the religious art and handicraft work of today, as expression through the structure of the "aesthetic of emptiness" is today the height of artistic fashion.



願 Wish 1996



界中界 — 【虛空中的能量】系列 1998-2000
Boundary within Boundary:
Energy of Emptiness



合十 All in One 1998

1998年，李真出現較大的轉變，其涉獵寬廣，不再受單一傳統的束縛，開啟他個展的勇氣。而當李真於1999年12月16日首次舉辦個展時，藝評家王嘉驥於《CANS 藝術新聞》撰寫〈比於赤子——李真的「新」佛教造像〉一文，說明李真如何展開這個承先啟後的重要階段。

比於赤子——李真的「新」佛教造像

專氣致柔，能嬰兒乎？~《老子》十章

王嘉驥

佛教於1990年代在台灣大興。就藝術社會史角度觀之，佛教信仰的蓬勃鼎盛，連帶意味著佛教藝術具有巨大的潛在發展空間。骨董市場上，佛教古文物交易的熱絡與持續不衰，當是其中的影響之一。同時，隨著佛教信眾與供養人的遽增，以及各地佛堂佛寺的廣泛設立，也為佛教藝術開闢了極大的陳列與表現空間。

值得觀照的是，台灣當代佛教藝術是否能夠隨此信仰傳播的黃金時期，同時也在上下兩千年的佛教藝術史當中，走出自成一格的時代風格暨美學？對於講究創新與凸顯自我的現當代藝術家而言，此一課題更是值得關注與矚目。

然而，佛教藝術畢竟是宗教藝術。既是宗教，便有正統(orthodoxy)的承繼與問題。凡宗教皆然，訴諸具體的藝術表現，不免牽涉一定的圖像傳統與儀式崇拜功能。就此而言，宗教藝術的表現與迴旋空間自然有其限制。但是，如果因此而論斷，佛教藝術除了繼承延續傳統之外，別無開拓創新的可能，則似乎又嫌過分故步自封。

時代不斷推移與變革，即便是源遠流長的宗教也必須體察且適當順應時代潮流與當代民情。而宗教表現時代性的最佳顯現，往往就在教義詮釋的開拓，甚至創新。教義詮釋有了包容與引申的空間，宗教藝術的圖像自然就有新的可能。

宗教藝術的圖像表現是否具有較寬較廣的詮釋空間，是否能夠任由藝術家進行自由營創，也與教義詮釋權的民主化(democratization)程度有關。教內宗派的權力結構若是傳統、集中而保守，權力階層嚴格而苛刻者，除非藝術家身居權力結構上層，具有影響、主導與詮釋宗教藝術再現(representation)的能耐，否則，單憑信眾階層或甚至教外一介平民藝術家身分，其個人詮釋下的宗教圖像再現，難免處在弱勢的權力槓桿之下。



大士 Avalokitesvara 1999

除了教義詮釋權的開放性之外，教內宗派權力上層對於藝術的素養、品味與態度，無疑也是當代宗教藝術發展的極大關鍵。反向思考，就以一個時代宗教藝術的發展及具體再現，證諸藝術史上其他時代的面貌，便可充分顯現此一時代的貢獻。至於宗教藝術的時代性顯現，除了教內宗派權力階級在意志與想像的行使之外，更與當時代的社會型態、人群意識、文化差異、地區藝術傳統、贊助人的審美、乃至於個別藝術家的認知有關。

整體而言，一九九〇年代期間，佛教信仰儼然在台灣形成鼎盛之風，而且，伴隨經濟的蓬勃富庶發展，台灣當代佛教藝術的創作卻迄今未見豐碩的成果。除了傳統儒道釋不拘的職業神佛雕刻藝匠之外，藝術界雖然有一些畫家延續水墨繪畫既有的傳統，投入佛畫創作的領域，但是，專致於佛像與佛教主題創作的現代雕塑家，如今仍屬罕見。即使有借用傳統佛教圖像及造型語彙者，其用意多半也不是為了發揚佛教信仰，豐富佛教藝術，而是為了一己創作與美感營造的需要。多數佛教場所所供奉之佛像或佛教題材的雕塑作品，似乎主要仍以沿襲先前既有的形象為主。近年來，隨著台海兩岸交流的頻繁，台灣對於中國佛教藝術史研究的方興未艾，佛教典籍與藝術文物圖錄大量出版，乃至於民間透過骨董市場的管道，傳入大量中國古代佛像或佛教雕塑。凡此種種，對於台灣佛像

乘雲氣 Cloud Glider 2000



雕塑的影響，主要仍侷限在仿古與沿襲的層面。一時之間，六朝以至唐宋時期的佛像風格不但受到教內人士、信眾與一般觀賞者青睞而鍾愛，甚至也成為許許多多佛教雕塑藝匠爭相模仿的對象。

就在這樣的時代與環境脈絡下，青年雕塑家李真（1963 年生）以「新佛像」或「現代佛像」的創作自許。作為佛教信眾的一員，李真以創造「新」與「現代」的佛教圖像自奉，這當中明白顯露著一股對於台灣當代佛教藝術的不能滿意與期待。「新」相對於「舊」，「現代」相對於「傳統」，這種想要不同並突破前人的宣示，意味著一種身分的自覺，一種時代性的自覺。

檢視李真不算長的創作歷史，自 1992 至 96 年間，其雕塑靈感暨形式風格的來源，主要來自中國傳統的佛教造像，尤其是唐宋兩代之風，可謂其學習期與摸索期。中國傳統佛教造像百世因襲，著重開臉，雕像或塑像的身形體態則受限於既有的圖像格式 (canon)，多有固定站姿、坐姿、手印、服飾配件、髮式，且強調正面性，以正面觀賞為主。相較李真此一時期的作品而言，其佛教造像的開臉，似乎主要參考唐宋兩代，並加以融會揉合。同時，在正面性之外，他對於作品的圓雕感較為講究。再者，至遲到了 1996 年，他已經明顯針對佛教造像的姿勢體態，乃至於服飾配件部份，進行較大的變革。原本強調繚絡配飾與衣褶線條的傳統佛教造像，如今都被簡化，甚至連衣褶都被取消，形成了一種極度素樸簡淨的風格。佛教造像的體態素簡至此，反而使得身體部分變得觀者聚焦的所在。

1998 年以來，李真的「新」佛像概念更加落實。造像時，開臉已然擺脫學習時期的唐宋美學，轉而回復到一種「中得心源」的創作常態，亦即以自己對佛教精神及教義的理解，融入藝術家個人的美感自信，逐漸形成自己的佛教造像美學。至於佛像體態的再現，則將先前已經醞釀成形的質樸素簡風格，繼續發揚光大，同時，更注入了具體而強大的能量。基於能量的擴大與充斥，佛像的身形開始膨脹渾圓，甚至出現了些微的變形。這膨脹變形的造像，凸顯了藝術家個人的風格語言。

李真再現下的佛教造像，展現出一種近乎清淨無為的清貧美學。雖然清淨、清貧、無為，卻又充斥著沛然莫之能禦的氣體或能量。如此一來，使得作品本身，既有情感收斂的特質，同時，又兼具氣體與能量極限擴張的效果。不但如此，李真的近作，譬如《無憂》與《大士》，更有讓佛像與菩薩像回歸嬰兒或孩提形象的明顯意圖。就此而言，似乎又明顯攝入了老莊「比於赤子」（《老子》五十五章）的哲學理想與美學。

無慾、清淨、無為的開臉形象，加上氣能充塞的身形體態，使得李真的佛像或菩薩像顯得既重又輕。若就風格的類比而言，這樣的美感氣質反而越過了唐宋之風，而更接近六朝高古佛教造像的神氣與意韻。

李真的近作凸顯了佛像無定形的觀點。這種無定形的觀點，彷彿也反映了佛教信仰在進入民主社會時，所必然遭遇的教義詮釋民主化的課題。事實上，台灣當代佛教的傳播，本身就具有高度多元化與民主化的特質。許多深具智慧和個人魅力的法師上人，便能夠吸引並聚集自己的門徒與信眾，自成宗派，自建法寺。更有許多法師上人以日常口語的方式，闡述佛法，集結成一本又一本的《語錄》，廣為流傳。更有許多在家居士甚至教外賢達，因為對於佛法與禪修之種種，別有機鋒、修持、或感應，也能自立別門，另闢脈系，採取折衷主義的觀點，度人超越。世紀末的台灣，佛教不但大興，而且是大乘小乘並起爭鳴的時代。當代佛法宣言的多元化，乃至於分眾化，無疑也助長了佛教造像走向民主化的氣氛。

再者，就藝壇生態而言，傳統佛教造像屬於職業藝匠之司。職業藝匠以實用工藝作品的製作為主：一方面要滿足贊助人的需求；一方面因出身師徒相承制，對於傳統格法亦步亦趨；另一方面，佛教圖像本有嚴謹的傳統，較不能脫離約定成俗的楷式，同時，也要獲得教內人士、信眾、供養人或贊助人的認同。凡此種種，使得傳統的職業藝匠不易隨心所欲。然而，「現代藝術」的觀念蔚為流行之後，強調純粹創作，不問實用性的藝術家，逐漸形成藝壇主流。此一潮流也使佛教造像的實踐出現了新的契機與可能。以創新為標的的現代雕塑家，相對於受傳統訓練的實用雕刻藝匠，形成了兩個截然不同的概念，甚至劃出了兩條分殊之途。

現代藝術觀念的輸入，促使台灣當代佛教藝術有了新的表現。不過，以「新」與「現代」自居的李真，在為佛教造像時，顯然也必須在傳統與創新的路口上躊躇。原因在於，傳統既行之有年，源遠流長，而且因為實用，所以不缺一般佛堂佛寺與普遍信眾的認同與贊助。一旦走入自由創新之路，漸往純粹創作的方向深入，「新」或「現代」佛教造像是否能夠符合佛堂佛寺崇拜儀式之所需，繼而受到教內宗派權威人士的認可，乃至廣泛信眾的青睞等等，在在皆屬難測。



法界遊子 Siddhartha 2000



三覺者 Three Bodies of Buddha 1998

畢竟，藝術家自我認可的佛教造像，容或是難得的創新之作，且極富藝術性，但是，若得不到佛教界普遍的認同與支持，便落入邊緣，甚至邊緣之外。李真的新佛教造像是否能夠在這兩造之間，找到一個良好的平衡——既能滿足現當代藝壇的審美要求及檢驗，又能獲致宗教界的贊可——這點目前仍未可知，但卻不失為一個值得努力的方向。儘管如此，除了李真個人的嘗試之外，佛教界人士在審美的品味、藝術的認知與價值觀、以及教義和圖像詮釋的彈性上，是否願意相對成長、呼應、對話、溝通，進而達到共識，也是莫大的關鍵所在。

除了一介信眾的身分，持續進行新造像的創作之外，李真也從傳統佛教藝術的圖像及語彙當中，擷取養分，作為佛教造像以外的雕塑靈感來源。1999年完成的《蝴蝶王國》，便是其中一件極具力度的飽滿之作。此作借用佛教密宗常見的「大黑天」〈Mahakala〉之類的圖像，加以變化。原本三面六臂的大黑天圖像，經過變形之後，更易為單面十二臂。原本密宗常見的大黑天的猙獰面目，在此已然不見，面部輪廓刻意模糊處理，不但比例變小，且若隱若現。原本男性陽剛特質極強的大黑天，也刻意改作女性柔和曲致的軀體。變形後的十二手臂，已不復見到佛教手印及所持法器，而是改以各種世俗化的通俗手勢，其中更是不乏嘻笑、怒罵、詛咒、祝福之類的手勢暗語。佛教神聖的手印，搖身一變，成為詼諧、戲謔、甚至帶著褻瀆意味的圖像。這圖像被藝術家命名為《蝴蝶王國》，直接影射台灣。十二隻手齊臂並展，形成類似蝴蝶展翼之形——這是李真個人想像力的綻放與馳騁。曾經以「蝴蝶王國」自豪的台灣，在李真刻意的形象聯想與連結之下，展現出一幅饒富趣味的新圖像。這新的圖像頂天立地、渾圓飽滿、通體自信的神氣與量能。十二手臂各持手勢暗語，再現一種眾聲喧嘩的多元，當中更是可見極優雅與極粗鄙手勢的並存，充分反映台灣當代社會的駁雜、紛沓、爭議與活力。李真《蝴蝶王國》之作，簡單、豐富、大氣磅礴，既帶赤子之天真，又不乏詼諧戲謔之調侃，無疑是李真晚近最令人心動的傑作之一。

至此，在「新」與「現代」佛教造像的自許之中，李真已經為自己的雕塑生命找出了一條康莊大道。

在這個時期，李真雕塑以一種優雅的姿態結合傳統與現代，冥想中的雕塑保持了傳統的特徵，但是它的體積、形狀與表面質感卻表現了現代藝術的活力，使人得到心靈的撫慰。

In 1998, Li Chen's approach to art underwent a significant transition as he broadened his field of study and freed himself from the constraints of tradition. This change also encouraged Li to hold his first solo exhibition on December 16th 1999. At the time, renowned art critic, Chia Chi Jason Wang, published an article in *Chinese Art News Magazine* titled "Li Chen's "New" Buddhist Sculpture" detailing this influential period in Li Chen's life.

Li Chen's "New" Buddhist Sculpture

Can One Become Like a Newborn Child by Controlling Qi? - Chapter 10
'Lao Tzu'

Chia Chi Jason Wang

Buddhism attained new popularity in Taiwan in the 1990s, a development that indicated the huge potential of Buddhist art, with the continued enthusiasm for ancient Buddhist artifacts on the antiques market being one influential factor. At the same time, the rapid increase in the number of Buddhist faithful and financial backers, and the establishment of Buddhist shrines and temples across Taiwan also provided a huge display arena for such art.

One key question is whether contemporary Buddhist art in Taiwan has been able to take advantage of the increased popularity of Buddhism and if an artistic genre, with approximately 2,000 years of history, has been able to present art lovers with a more modern style and aesthetic? For contemporary artists who attach great importance to innovation and showcasing their own ideas, this is an extremely important issue.

Buddhist art faces the issue of orthodox religious heritage and as with all religious art, artistic expression touches on long established image traditions and ritual worship, so the expressive space available is often limited. However, if such traditions are used to curtail debate, new development possibilities are excluded and upholding tradition becomes the sole focus of the genre.

Over time, even religion needs to be sensitive to the changing world in which it exists and adapt accordingly so as to remain relevant to the needs of society and people in a given era. In this context, one of the best ways for religion to keep up with the times is in the area of doctrinal interpretation. As such interpretations seek to be more inclusive they also invariably create new possibilities for the imagery of religious art.

However, the breadth of interpretative space allowed by religious art images and the degree to which artists are allowed to freely manipulate them is also influenced by the extent to which the power of doctrinal interpretation has been democratized. If the power structure of a religion



雲中佛 Buddha on the Cloud 1998



南海 Avalokitesvara 1998

is strongly traditional, concentrated and conservative, an artist can only influence, guide and interpret the representations of religious art if he or she is a member of the upper echelons of the religious establishment. In contrast, if the artist is a member of the pious faithful or an outsider, representations of religious imagery based on personal interpretation are far less likely to be accepted.

In addition to granting more people the right to interpret doctrine, it is also true that the artistic cultivation, taste and attitude of the leaders of a religion art is of crucial importance with regard the development of contemporary religious art. Looked at differently, the development and representations of religious art in a specific era is a testament to the nature of art in other periods because it makes it possible to showcase the contributions made in this era. Moreover, the timeliness of artistic presentations is not only influenced by the will and imagination of the leadership of a religion, but also a product of contemporary social forms, group consciousness, cultural differences, regional artistic traditions, the aesthetic taste of sponsors and even the understanding of individual artists.

Although the newfound popularity of Buddhism in Taiwan in the 1990s came on the back of economy prosperity and wealth, there were no major changes in modern Taiwanese Buddhist art. Although some painters sought to build on the existing traditional of ink painting or focus on Buddhist painting, with the exception of the traditional craftsmen of the Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist traditions who continued to sculpt Buddhist idols, very few modern sculptors chose to focus on Buddhist sculptures or Buddhist-themed work. In addition, even when they have made use of traditional Buddhist images and stylistic language, most have done so for their own creative and aesthetic needs rather than to nurture the Buddhist faith or enrich Buddhist art. As such, the Buddhist idols to which most Buddhist places are consecrated or the sculpted works in Buddhist materials primarily adhere to pre-existing styles. In recent years, as cross strait exchanges have increased research into Buddhist art in China has taken off, with the publication of numerous catalogues of Buddhist classics and artistic artifacts, and a large number

of ancient Chinese Buddhist statues and sculptures entering the antiques market. However, the influence of such developments on Buddhist sculpture in Taiwan has mostly been limited to imitations of ancient styles and adherence to convention. The style of Buddhist statues from the Six Dynasties (220-589) to the Tang (618-907) and Song dynasties (960-1279) has not only been well received and widely loved by the Buddhist faithful and art lovers for hundreds of years, many Buddhist sculptors have also competed for recognition and glory based on their ability to replicate that style.

It is in this era that young sculptor Li Chen (born in 1963) began to refer to his own work as "New Buddhist" or "Modern Buddhist." As a Buddhist himself Li decided to create "new" and "modern" Buddhist images, which clearly pointed to a certain level of dissatisfaction with contemporary Buddhist art in Taiwan. Invariably, when "new" is compared to "old" or "modern" to "traditional," a declaration in favour of something that differs from what came before signifies a certain self awareness of one's identity and the era in which one lives.

An examination of Li Chen's relatively short creative history shows that from 1992 to 1996 his inspiration and formal style came mainly from Buddhist sculptures in the Chinese tradition, especially the Tang and Song dynasties. In other words, this can be characterized as a period of study as Li slowly developed his own inimical style. Traditional Chinese Buddhist sculptures had followed the same rules passed on for generations with a particular focus on painting the Buddha's face, with the body shape and posture of the statue or sculpture limited to existing canonical images, with fixed standing and sitting positions, hand gestures, clothing accessories, hair styles, with a particular emphasis on a frontal view. The Buddhist sculpture produced by Li Chen in this period seem to have mainly referenced the Tang and Song dynasties and blended those two styles together. In addition to focusing on a frontal view of the work, Li's works were also imbued with a distinctive round and fulsome feel. Moreover, by about 1996 Li had already introduced clear changes in terms of the posture and even clothing accessories depicted in his Buddhist sculptures. For example, whereas traditional Buddhist sculpture

emphasizes tassled garments and the creases of clothes, Li Chen simplified such expressions and in some cases even eliminated clothing altogether, creating an extremely simple and unadorned style. In this sense, the simplification of posture in Li's Buddhist sculptures ensured that viewers focused on the body of the sculpture.

Since 1998, Li Chen has further developed his "new" Buddhist sculpture. When painting the Buddha's face he has also moved away from the aesthetics of the Tang and Song dynasties, returning to a creative norm that emphasizes "to get source inward from heart". In other words, Li has focused more on his own understanding of Buddhist spirit and doctrine which has become an integral part of his own aesthetic and self confidence, gradually creating a Buddhist sculpture aesthetic that is uniquely his own. As to the representation of the posture of Buddha statues, Li has expanded his simplistic and unadorned style, infusing it with a concrete and powerful energy. In terms of the expansion and fullness of the energy in his works, the bodies of Li's sculptures in this period have been fuller and rounder, and even appeared a little distorted. These fuller, distorted statues showcase the artist's own distinctive stylistic language.

The Buddhist sculptures of Li Chen highlight a minimalist aesthetic that approximates to worldly detachment. However, despite such detachment and minimalism they are still replete with unstoppable *qi* or energy, and as a result although the work is emotionally introverted, it also demonstrates the effects of *qi* and energy expanded to bursting point. Moreover, in more recent works such as *Shambala* and *Avalokitesvara* Li clearly seeks to take Buddha and Shakyamoni back to something resembling the image of an infant or a child. In this sense, such work is infused with the "newborn child" philosophical ideals and aesthetics of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu as seen in chapter 55 of *Lao Tzu*.

The otherworldly facial features of the Buddha images combined with a physical posture brimming with *qi* ensures that Li Chen's Buddha or Shakyamoni sculptures appear both heavy and light. In terms of a stylistic



白鷺鷥的春天 The Egret's Spring 2000



煙雲供養 Cultivated by
Mist and Cloud 2000

analogy, this aesthetic character goes beyond the style of the Tang and Song dynasties and is actually closer to the mystery and charm of Buddha sculptures from the Six Dynasties period.

Li Chen's more recent works tend to emphasize the lack of a fixed form in Buddha sculptures, a viewpoint that appears to reflect the way in which the democratization of wider society has forced Buddhism to address the issue of democratizing doctrinal interpretation. In fact, the spread of contemporary Buddhism in Taiwan has itself been highly diverse and democratic in nature. For example, many wise and charismatic Buddhist masters have proved adept at attracting followers and established their own schools and temples. Even more Masters have utilized everyday language to present Buddhist teachings, which have been delivered in countless volumes of top selling "Quotations." Lay preachers and members of the literati have even established their own ideas or schools on the basis of their own philosophies, practice and responses to the teachings of Buddhism or Zen Buddhism, adopting more eclectic viewpoints in the pursuit of transcendence. At the end of the 20th Century, not only did Buddhism find new popularity in Taiwan, but competing schools of Buddhist teaching flourished side by side. The diversity in modern Buddhist doctrine and declarations and even its division into different groups has certainly promoted an atmosphere that has facilitated the democratization of Buddhist sculpture.

Moreover, in terms of the art world traditional Buddhist sculpture is a professional vocation, to which end craftsmen produce practical handicraft pieces. On the one hand this involves satisfying the demands of sponsors on the other the fact that so many artisans are the product of an apprenticeship system means they have a tendency to adhere to tradition. Although there is a strict set of rules when it comes to Buddha images and a model that does not allow for any departure from set customs, such works must still be accepted by believers, financial supporters or sponsors. In other words, traditional craftsmen have not been able to produce works based on their own desires and preferences. However, after "modern art" became popular greater emphasis was placed on pure creativity and artists with little or no interest in practicality gradually became the mainstream. This created new opportunities and possibilities in the practice of Buddhist sculpture. With innovation as their main focus modern sculptors and sculptor-craftsmen

with traditional training, formed two diametrically opposed camps and effectively followed completely different approaches.

The infusion of modern art ideas resulted in a new expressive approach to contemporary Buddhist art in Taiwan. However, for Li Chen who uses such words as "new" and "modern" to describe his art, sculpting Buddha images clearly involves walking a fine line between tradition and innovation, because these traditions have existed for centuries, come with deep roots and are embraced by most Buddhist altars, temples and believers. As soon as an artist decides to take a more freely creative approach or moves in the direction of pure art, the question asked is whether "new" or "modern" Buddhist sculpture can meet the needs of the ceremonial forms of worship at Buddhist altars and temples, while retaining the support and acceptance of those in the higher echelons of the religion and the broader ranks of the faithful.

Ultimately, although the Buddhist sculpture artists identify with personally might represents a rare creative path and one that is richly artistic, without the universal acceptance and support of Buddhist circles, such work is destined to be consigned to the periphery of the religion or worse. As to whether Li Chen's new Buddhist sculpture is able to find a middle way between these two paths that satisfies the aesthetic demands of contemporary art circles and is accepted by the religious world remains to be seen, though this is a direction worth pursuing. Despite this, the key issue is perhaps whether those within Buddhist circles are willing to embrace growth, dialogue and communication over aesthetic taste, artistic understanding and value, as well accepting greater flexibility in doctrinal and image interpretation, and thereby map out a new consensus.

Other than being a member of the faithful and continuing to produce sculptures, Li Chen has also learned a great deal from traditional Buddhist art images and language, much of which inspires his non-Buddhist sculptures. In 1999, Li completed *Butterfly Kingdom*, which was an extremely powerful and full work. This piece made use of a "Mahakala" type image which is most often seen in Tibetan Buddhism, but which the artist changed to fit his own needs. Although the Mahakala originally has three faces and six arms, Li Chen transformed it into a figure with a single face and 12 arms. At the same time, the originally fierce face of

the Mahakala disappeared and the outline of the face was deliberately obfuscated, which reduced the proportions and made them less distinct. In this context, Li took the Mahakala, which was originally infused with male qualities, and deliberately depicted its body using the softness and curves of the female form. After this change in shape, the 12 arms no longer displayed Buddhist hand gestures or held religious utensils, but instead expressed a series of common hand signals used in every day life, designed to indicate amusement, anger, curses and the expression of good wishes. This transformed the sacred hand gestures of Buddhism into comical and satirical images that are even a little obscene. In addition, as the artist named this image *Butterfly Kingdom* it is clearly a direct allusion to Taiwan. The sight of 12 arms outstretched creates a shape that is reminiscent of a butterfly with its wings spread, an image that is bursting with the imaginative power of Li Chen. Given that Taiwan often refers to itself as the "Butterfly Kingdom" the artist's deliberate effort to connect the images showcases a new focus that is rich in amusement and appeal. These new images are towering, round, full of *qi* and the energy of self confidence. The image with 12 hands each making a different gesture also represents the diversity of voices and ideas. Viewers can see that the most refined and crudest gestures exist side by side, a reflection of the complexity diversity, confusion, disputation and vitality of contemporary Taiwanese society. Li Chen's *Butterfly Kingdom* is simple, rich, filled with towering human emotion, showcasing both childlike innocence and ironic mockery, making it one of his most moving and outstanding pieces.

Within the self assumed terms of "new" and "modern" Buddhist sculpture, Li Chen has mapped out a distinctive and successful path for his majestic Buddhist sculptures.

During this period, Li Chen dexterously fuses traditional and modern elements into his elegantly postured sculptures. Although the sculptures in meditation are seemingly traditional, the size, shape, and texture are filled with the vitality of modern art, putting the viewer's mind and soul at ease.



合十 All in One 1998



如雲 Like Cloud 1999



The Image of Our Landscape

19th Century Singapore through Paint, Prints and Photography





李真一身體·精神·靈魂，2009年於新加坡國家美術館展出
Li Chen: Mind · Body · Spirit, Singapore Art Museum, 2009

無憂國土 Pure Land 1998

尋找精神空間 — 【大氣神遊】系列 2001-
In Search of Spiritual Space:
Spiritual Journey Through the Great Ether



雲中一如來 The Buddha in the Cloud 2002

圓融之境－李真的雕塑世界

范迪安
中國美術館館長

我們正處在一個圖像世界高度發達的時代，許多藝術的造型語言相互影響滲透，形式似曾相識，過目之後往往不能留下深刻的印象。但李真先生的雕塑是那種看過一眼便會令人不能忘記的藝術，它們以極為個性的面貌和極為強烈的風格讓人歎為觀止，猶如天外來客驚擾視線，也如遠古經典遺世獨立。

許多年來陸續有機會得以觀賞李真先生的作品，每次看到，往往來不及細究他風格的形成之因，只顧欣喜他作品又一次新的問世。似乎他的風格是與生俱來的，也是天然成熟的，儘管他只人到中年，甚至模樣還顯得年輕。我不知道別的藝術同仁在他的作品面前是何種感受，但是我相信他是一位有著天賦才情的藝術家，也是一位追求完美境界的藝術家。他的雕塑擁有自足的世界，那是由他作品飽滿的形體、圓潤的線條和通體渾然的意象交織而成的。

倘若仔細思量，一個藝術家的成功，必然是在存高遠之志的基礎上找到了解決問題的方法論，使感性的語言和理性的方式達到高層次的統一，方能成就一番具有創造性的景象。依我淺識，李真先生的雕塑至少在三個方面解決了當代雕塑創造面臨的課題，或者說，他的雕塑在三個方面解決了諸多矛盾統一的因素，從而孕化和催生出了別樣的成果。

其一，他的雕塑在品格上是以超俗為根本、凡俗與超俗的統一。李真先生的藝術大多取材於佛教主題或佛家思想，這表明了他身在世俗生活空間而懷想塵外世界的精神訴求。的確，他所做的大量佛祖、菩薩以及弟子的形象，是一尊尊超越塵世、自在自為的大像，甚至可以用「世尊」來概括他做的全部佛教主題雕塑。但是，他不是一個佛教藝術家，而是一個深刻領悟了佛家思想並沉浸於佛學境界中的藝術家，因此他的創造是獨特的，視野是超越性的，總是把佛教主題與自然主題、宇宙主題聯繫起來，使作品的造型如是一種吐納太極、充盈天地的「世尊」。有意味的是，他在造型上還表現出一種將凡俗與超俗結合在一起的樣式，佛教人物也擁有世俗生活的形態、神情與細節，由此讓人們感覺到它們與人世間情感的接近，形象自然而然具有雙重的內涵。

其二，他的雕塑在美學上是以東方為主導、西方與東方的統一。雕塑著重要解決的是三維形體的塑造，西方雕塑史提供了雄厚的經驗。李真先生的作品在雕塑的體量塑造等方面反映出他掌握西方雕塑語言的能力。但是，更多地折射出他對東方哲學的濃烈興趣和深厚底蘊，看他的作品，儒、道、佛多家思想融會而成的天人合一讓人感同身受。這正是他創作的可貴之處。他通過內在的修煉而成為一位主體意識十分鮮明的藝術家，著重從華夏文明與文化的遺產中吸取精華，他在追求作品內在品質的同時，並沒有犧牲其本身的形式美感，而是理性地尋找東方與西方之間的內在邏輯，在東與西的統一融合中實現由內而外的精神再現。他的藝術在生動的氣韻和偉大的靜穆之間形成了通融的二元組合。

其三，他的雕塑在語言上是從材料導向精神、材料與精神的統一。李真先生是一位對雕塑材料有高度敏感並且特別善於運用材料語言的藝術家，他所選用的材料都十分單純，色澤也特別統一，並且通過高超的打造技巧賦予材料以美感。例如，他使用東方美學中的黑白灰色彩體系就極大地強化了他的藝術主題，本是厚重的青銅、石子等材料經過他的處理變得輕巧靈動，猶如大氣漂浮，而且充滿著藝術家創作的「物外之趣」。通過對材料的選擇與處理，他使雕塑的材料變成了精神的語言。

節錄自〈圓融之境－李真的雕塑世界〉，《李真中國美術館個展－尋找精神的空間》



The Realm of Harmonization - Li Chen's Sculpture World

Fan Di'an
Director, National Art Museum of China

We are in the middle of a highly developed era and an iconographic world, the influences of which have permeated the formal language of many artists. Many of these forms we seem to have seen before, and we pass them over without leaving any deep impressions. But after only one glimpse at Li Chen's sculptures we cannot forget them. Their extremely characteristic faces and intense mannerisms make people exclaim over their perfection, just as they come from the outer reaches of space crossing through their vision, or as they were scriptures from remote antiquity that stand unique and outside of the world.

I have had many opportunities to enjoy Li Chen's works over the years. Every time while appreciating the works, I simply feel the joy of them appearing again, instead of spending time to deeply research the reasons behind how the artist has developed his style. Although he has just reached middle age and even retains young appearance, Li Chen's style appears innate and naturally mature. I do not know how other artists feel when facing his work, but I am convinced that he is an innately talented artist and one that is in pursuit of a perfect world. His sculptures possess self-sufficient world, and that is what causes his works to be so full and rich in form, mellow in line, and entirely integrated in concept.

If we consider it closely, an artist's success inevitably exists in their methodology of finding the solution to a problem based on a foundation of lofty aspirations, allowing the language of perception and method of reasoning to achieve a high level of unity, so that the method can result in a creatively imbued image. From my point of view, Li Chen's sculptures have found solutions to problems facing the creation of contemporary sculptures in at least three ways. That is to say, there are three ways in which his sculptures resolve many contradictions within one unified element, thereby conceiving and hastening the birth of a new kind of achievement.



First, in their characteristics, his works are founded on the transcendent, but they are combination of the worldly as well as the transcendent. Most of Li Chen's art is selected from the material of Buddhist subjects or Buddhist thoughts. This indicates his presence in the space of common life and also his yearning for the spiritual appeal of a world beyond mortal life. Clearly all of his large Buddha series, bodhisattvas and images of disciples are dignitaries that have surpassed this world. They are free and natural figures, to the point that one is able to describe all of his Buddha-themed sculptures as "Sakyamuni." Yet he is not a Buddhist artisan, but rather an artist with a profound understanding of Buddhism who has immersed himself in the world of Buddhist studies. As a result, his sculptures are unique and his vision exceeds form as he reaches Buddhist subject with natural and cosmic themes, making works that are like the "Sakyamuni" of divine creation and of the heavens and the earth. What is interesting is that the forms of Li Chen's sculptures show a kind of shape that is both worldly and transcendent. These Buddhist figures possess the forms, expressions and details of ordinary life, and therefore making people feel as if the figures are close to the world of human emotions, giving the forms a natural twofold connotation.

Secondly, his sculptures are aesthetically dominated by the Eastern and yet integrate the Western and the Eastern together. The molding of three-dimensional forms is the most significant subject that needs to be solved when sculpturing, and the Western sculptural history has provided rich experiences for it. In the modeling of sculptural form and in many other aspects, Li Chen's works reflect his understanding of the capacities of Western sculptural language. But they reflect his intense interest in and profound understanding of eastern philosophy to an even greater degree. Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist thoughts meld harmoniously in his works and create a personal feeling of unity with the world. This is exactly what is praiseworthy about Li Chen's works. Through his inner aestheticism, Li Chen becomes a completely

distinctive artist with his own subjective consciousness, emphasizing the quintessence distilled from the legacy of Chinese culture and civilization. While pursuing the inner character of the works, Li Chen rationally searches for logic between Eastern and Western, and represents an inner and outer spiritual realization in the unification of Eastern and Western rather than sacrificing the aesthetic form. His works form a dual composition through this merging of the vivid artistic conception and great solemnity of life.

Thirdly, the language of his sculptures moves from the materials towards the spiritual, and yet is a unification of materials and spirit. Li Chen is an artist who has a heightened sensitivity towards materials and especially excels at the use of material language. All of the materials he selects are entirely pure with a particular integration of color and luster. They also undergo a very skilled forging that endows the materials with aesthetic appeal. For instance, his use of black, grey and white colors system based on eastern aesthetics emphasizes the subjects of his art in an extreme manner. The thick bronze and heavy stone materials become light and delicate through his ingenious skill, as if floating on air, and yet it is permeated with the "transcendental interest" of the artist. Through the choice and management of materials, Li Chen transforms sculptural materials into spiritual language.

Extract from 'The Realm of Harmonization - Li Chen's Sculpture World' in "Li Chen - In Search of Spiritual Space - Solo Exhibition at National Art Museum of China"



御風遊 Riding the Wind 2007



黃金雨 Golden Rain 2005



入世 Entering the World 2007

李真的新作以及藝術中的靈性

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首先，我想說這次圓桌討論會的主題——〈論藝術中的靈性：超越性在當代雕塑領域是否自有其地位？〉——令人聯想到瓦西裡·康定斯基 (Wassily Kandinsky) 的《論藝術中的精神性》(1910年)。事實上，Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker 已經從當代評論的角度探討了這一聯繫，並且廣而論之，談到了神智學與東方哲學對康定斯基的影響，以及康定斯基本身對東方思想的誤讀。Danzker 的論文報告使我獲益良多，我這次發表的內容將參考其論點。

為了引入討論會關於「超越性」的正題，我想先引述中國禪宗影響最巨大的六祖慧能（西元 638—713 年）的一段話。他在《六祖壇經》中說道：

佛法在世間，不離世間覺。
離世覓菩提，恰如求兔角。
正見名出世，邪見名世間。¹

又說：

諸佛刹土，盡同虛空。世人妙性本空，無有一法可得。自性真空，亦復如是。

然而，這裡所謂的「空」，並不等同於「空洞虛無」：

莫聞吾說空便即著空。第一莫著空。若空心靜坐，即著無記空。

我們不妨以上述法語為念，依此審視李真的藝術創作。李真較早期的作品名為【空靈之美】、【虛空中的能量】、【大氣神遊】等等，其實命名甚為恰當。他在當中試圖追求的，看似一種矛盾，也就是要通過物理性的體量及品質捕捉體態豐潤的諸佛菩薩之輕虛空靈、無實無質，由此帶出物質性與非物質性之間的張力。這些作品雖然形式上為沉重的雕塑，其造像樣式、肢體姿勢、墊座相對於主體的大小、表面的光滑（「佛身無礙，體衣不二」）、體態之圓潤，乃至於人物的青春氣息，卻總使人隱約感受到一種虛體廓然。



從禪宗思想來看，此中的張力無非是要做到空而不無，在「內在」與「超越」之間達到適當的平衡，任此兩端在觀賞者的心中融合無礙。實際上，李真雕塑所蘊含的往來牽扯的矛盾，用「張力」這個詞來描述並不太恰當，因為這些塑像的形貌完全是安詳平和、心定意凝的。它們只是撩動了觀賞者的心靈，在那裡激發出虛來實往的動勢。

我想，觀賞者心中這種詮讀行為之開展的場域，我們可以用「靈性」這個詞予以描述。正如六祖慧能所言：

菩提般若之智，世人本自有之，只緣心迷，不能自悟。須假大善知識，示導見性。

若識本心，即本解脫。……

菩提本自性，起心即是妄。

淨心在妄中，……

現在我們回頭來看康定斯基。他說過：「凡是由真誠的心智所創造的、不顧外表是否合乎常規的藝術作品，必然永遠真實無妄。」康定斯基對物質性滿懷信心，只求其藝術表現直接發自內心或者所謂的「內在真理」。如 Danzker 所指出，這一「心源」引導藝術指向神智學普世主義的新時代，而這個新時代標誌著康定斯基所謂「精神轉振點」的一個新契機。按照康定斯基的說法，繪畫的各種元素（如「色彩之和諧」）用意在於「感動人的靈魂」。他還進一步解釋：這樣的藝術表現以「內在必然性的原理」為基礎。²

我認為，如果我們從「內心之觀照」和「作為認知之本的直覺」這兩項內涵來理解「靈性」及「超越性」，那康定斯基和李真兩人之間委實大有相通之處。然而，單就藝術作品本身的形式而言，我們不免得正視人們經常視為「抽象 / 具象」兩極對立的問題。關於這一點，請容許我先

提一提高名潞的高論，之後再回過頭來，談 Danzker 所說的康定斯基對東方美學與哲學的誤讀。這次討論會的主席薩巴帕迪提醒過我們：誤讀可以是正面的、帶來豐盛成果的。有多少亞洲藝術家誤讀了西方的美學概念，卻走出了燦爛的道路，正可說明這一點。

早些時候高名潞所講的意派論，很能幫助我們釐清抽象與具象兩者的非矛盾性關係。他通過解析西元 9 世紀張彥遠的藝術評論著作《歷代名畫記》所提出的「理」、「識」、「形」，化解了此中的矛盾分裂，使兩端大體相合不悖。³高名潞所論及的其他三元關係組合，包括抽象 / 概念 / 具象，還有海德格爾的「此在」(dasein) / 「去存在」(zusein) / 「器具」(zeug)。⁴海德格爾其實是進一步發展了胡塞爾的現象學。胡塞爾重點關注的是作為第一手體驗的意識，而海德格爾則將進而探討了體驗之主客二體（或者說是個體與世界之間的關係體驗）的結構特點。在高名潞看來，所謂的「意」，正是隱然涵蓋了我們從這些三元組合當中所能得出的各種關係。這些組合中的所有元素無不相依相成，不可分裂。

根據我的理解，如此說來，意派即是一種藝術創作與鑒賞的方法。藝術之作為一種表達，正是在「間隙」（即「關係空間」）之中才得以引出主體對世界的體驗。這樣的藝術不應當單純摹繪以任何特定概念、表述、感情（或任何形式之寫照、表述）對號入座的任何事物——即使格林伯格 (Greenburg) 所謂「自主性」的概念也不外是對某種理想的表述，故此也無法將它框住。西方慣用的抽象 / 概念 / 具象三大藝術範疇則不然，總是被人分別以觀，融入具象藝術—抽象藝術—概念藝術三者層層演進的大系統中。論者甚至更進一步，將三者說成是分別「表現」了人間實象、概念、邏輯、社會評論等等。其實，按照意派論的思路，我們大可以說：李真的作品既非具象，又非抽象，更不屬概念藝術；它是這一切元素的融匯，而且必然構成更高層次的一組三元關係的一部分。

記得我們這幾位講演人昨天跟薩巴帕迪進行過討論。他當時提到了阿蘭

達·考馬拉斯瓦米 (Ananda Coomaraswamy)。早在 1934 年，此人的名著《自然在藝術中的嬗變》(The Transformation of Nature in Art) 便已嘗試將印度、中國以及中世紀歐洲的藝術理論聯繫起來。這使我憶起：「意」這個概念的源頭之一，實為佛家。考馬拉斯瓦米筆下談到了「sadsya」這一範疇，並將它譯為「契似」，作此解釋：

事實上，很顯然的，物與物象造型之間的相似不可能是本質上的，而必然是類比或範型意義上的，或兩者皆是。造型所模仿的，是物的理念或種類；理智之所以能認識物，無非是通過這一方面。造型所重現的，並不是感官所感受到的、物的實質。⁵

考馬拉斯瓦米進一步闡明：

儘管如此，sadsya（即「視覺上的相應」）[案：考馬拉斯瓦米在此另作異譯] 仍經常被人誤解為關乎藝術品及描摹物件這兩者的外在形貌。實際上，它所指涉的，是完全自存於藝術品本身的一種特性，指的是作品當中知性因素與感性因素的相應相契。⁶

這豈不是跟「意」非常接近嗎？

據高名潞闡述，「理」、「識」、「形」還對應於編纂於西元前 1 世紀的《易經》當中的卦、辭、象。他引用《易經》裡頭「設卦以盡情偽」這句話，說明了易卦的用意。⁷

我姑且暫時把這句話放一邊，現在先把目光再轉到李真這來。前面講過，李真的雕塑持衡於有形無形、實質虛靈之間。他通過矛盾的動態，迫使觀賞者把作品看成是「空 / 質」等對立兩極的消解，盡顯「無特性」與「無想」的狀態，也即是以高度具象的手段抒發了脫離「寫照」與「表述」的意旨。李真本人於星期四傍晚在新加坡美術館的展覽開幕禮上便曾表明：他的藝術，旨在「化有為無」。

我們看李真的新作——2008 年首次在北京面世的【神魄】系列，還能看出一些新議題。在這裡代表該系列的，是設置在勿拉士巴沙路、豎立於

新加坡美術館對面的《火神》、《風神》，以及新加坡國家博物館前方草地上的《五行》。它們暗示著李真創作上的新轉折。【神魄】在較早作品「靈性」的基礎上再進一步，在更大程度上重視社會存在。這個新的創作方向，還注入了對當前鋪天蓋地的天災人禍的一種意識。所謂「人禍」，指因文化與政治衝突而導致的動亂與災難；至於「天災」，在新加坡這次開展的不久之前，就正好有颱風「莫拉克」席捲臺灣，在 8 月上中旬造成了巨大的破壞。

屬於【神魄】系列的《五行》是包含抽象 / 概念 / 具象，並且又指涉《易經》的卦象顯示。創作者在此設置奇幻的（甚至可說是呈忿怒相的）異獸，不僅為這個裝置作品增添了社會意味，也連接上了同一系列其他的具象形體。「理」在《五行》中尤其突出，而李真的具象元素則又有「形」。李真的雕塑其實讓我們看到了「理」、「識」、「形」的多種不同組合；這些組合在一段時間中的開展變化，或許還有值得我們深究的涵義。總而言之，讓意派思維引導我們觀賞李真的傑作，是恰當的。李真本人說過，《五行》是對他二十年來藝術歷程的一次「整合」。我們在這個節骨眼上，若再回想高名潞所說的「設卦以盡情偽」，無疑能更清楚地看出李真作品所具備的概念基礎。

現在，讓我談一談康定斯基。請容許我近乎貪圖方便似地表明一點：高名潞批評西方藝術過於倚賴具象寫照，而 Danzker 則說康定斯基誤讀了東方美學與哲學；我在此借用前者之說，贊同後者。如 Danzker 所言，康定斯基以及其他受神智學信仰影響的藝術家們認定：「未來的精神，只能在個人的感覺與直覺中實現，而通向這種感覺的唯一道路，乃是『藝術家的才華』」。雖然抽象藝術確實是氣魄宏大的大發現，標誌了西方藝術史上的全新轉折，但上面所說的「誤讀」，在於相信抽象派正是未來的具象派。

在我結束之前，我想針對這次討論會主題中的「當代」兩個字，簡單地說幾句話。我們注意到，李真早年學藝，並不是在美術學校修讀美術，而是當學徒，學習傳統與宗教工藝。對藝術史上的發展做歷時分析，是當前不少人感興趣的研究方向，而李真的這段經歷大概能給他們帶來一些需要著力開掘的內容。顯然，這與擴散中的、大體缺乏歷史承傳的後

現代多元主義大相徑庭。我們在詮讀【神魄】系列的造型樣式和雕塑表現時，要如何不僅僅將其作品視為對文化符號與象徵的摹繪而已？它們到底如何昇華，從而參與當代美學討論？李真的創作委實蘊含著一股深邃強大的力量。我們不應當把這股力量看成是受限於特定文化的。儘管如此，它的靈感之源，仍然只能是得之於歷史承傳。

節錄自〈李真的新作以及藝術中的靈性〉，*Li Chen's Solo Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition in 2009 at Singapore Art Museum: Li Chen: Mind · Body · Spirit*



無心海 Clear Soul 2002



海上行者 Ocean Deliverer 2008

1. 本文全篇所用英譯《壇經》引文，皆取自 A.F. Price and Wong Mou-Lam, trans., "On the High Seat of 'the Treasure of the Law: The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, Hui Neng'," (見：www.angelfire.com/realm/platform-sutra)。此外，以下譯著亦可供互參：*The Buddhist Text Translation Society, The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra*, The Sino-American Buddhist Association, San Francisco, 1977 (primary translation: Bhikshuni Heng Yin, editor: Upasaka Kuo Chou Rounds)。《壇經》自古有六個版本。關於近人對此經研究，可參見楊源興所編輯的《禪和之聲——2008年廣東禪宗六祖文化節學術研討會論文集》（北京：宗教文化出版社，2009年）。

2. 見：Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds, *Art in Theory 1900 – 1990*, 第94頁。

3. 見：高名潞《意派論：一個顛覆再現的理論》（桂林：廣西師範大學出版社，2009年），第39至47頁。

4. 同上，第154至162頁。

5. 見：Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, New York: Dover Publications, 1956 (original publication by Harvard University Press, 1934)，第13頁。

6. 同上，第13頁。

7. 高名潞《意派論：一個顛覆再現的理論》，第51頁。

Li Chen's New Works and the Spiritual in Art

Kwok Kian Chow
Director, Singapore Art Museum



出神入化 Elevation 2009

First of all, the title of this roundtable, *On the Spiritual in Art: Is There a Place for the Transcendental in Contemporary Sculpture?* Recalls Wassily Kandinsky's "Concerning the Spiritual in Art" (1910), and indeed Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker has done a critical contemporary take on the subject and further extended it to include the influence of theosophy and Eastern philosophy on Kandinsky's ideas, and Kandinsky's misreading of the latter. I have learnt a great deal from Danzker's presentation and will relate to her points in my presentation.

As a point of entry into the theme of "transcendental," I wish to quote the Platform Sutra (*Tanjing 壇經*) by Huineng 慧能 (638-713 CE), the sixth and most influential patriarch, or the fountainhead of Chan Buddhism:

The Kingdom of Buddha is in this world, within which enlightenment is to be sought; To seek enlightenment by separating from this world is as absurd as to search for a rabbit's horn; Right views are called "transcendental;" Erroneous views are called "worldly."¹

Huineng goes on:

All Buddha ksetras (lands) are as void as space. Intrinsicly our transcendental nature is void and not a single *dharmā* can be attained. It is the same with the Essence of Mind, which is a state of "Absolute Void."

The void, on the other hand, does not equate vacuity:

When you hear me talk about the Void, do not at once fall into the idea of vacuity (because this involves the heresy of the doctrine of annihilation). It is of the utmost importance that we should not fall into this idea, because when a man sits quietly and keeps his mind blank he will abide in a state of "Voidness of Indifference."

Let us bear the above in mind and now look at Li Chen's works. The challenge of Li Chen's earlier works (appropriately entitled *Beauty of Emptiness* and *Energy of Emptiness* and *Spiritual Journey Through the Great Ether*) was to look for what may seemingly be the

contradiction between physical volume and, to use using the very mass to capture the opposite, of which – the lightness or volume-less of the sumptuous figures of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas; hence, a tension between materiality and immateriality. It is the iconography, pose, scale to pedestals, smoothness of finish ("the blessed robes are at one with the Buddha's unobstructed self"), roundedness and even youthfulness of the figures that helped suggest the experience of the volume-less, notwithstanding the heavy sculptural form.

Seeing these tensions in the *Chan* philosophical context, they are about the void that is not the vacuity, and the right balance of what is intrinsic and what is transcendental, which must come into a synthesis in the viewer's mind. In fact, "tension" is not quite the right description of the kind of push-and-pull tussles in Li Chen sculptures, as they look completely serene and resolved, only because they stimulate the mental processes in the viewer of an animated movement between mass and void.

"Spirituality," on the other hand, I think, can describe the site that in which such a reading is taking place, that is, in the mind of the viewer. Let me quote Huineng again:

The Wisdom of Enlightenment (*Bodhiprajna*) is inherent in every one of us. It is because of the delusion under which our mind works that we fail to realize it ourselves, and that we have to seek the advice and the guidance of enlightened ones before we can know our own Essence of Mind.

To know our mind is to obtain liberation. Bodhi is immanent in our Essence of Mind, An attempt to look for it elsewhere is erroneous... Within our impure mind the pure one is to be found.

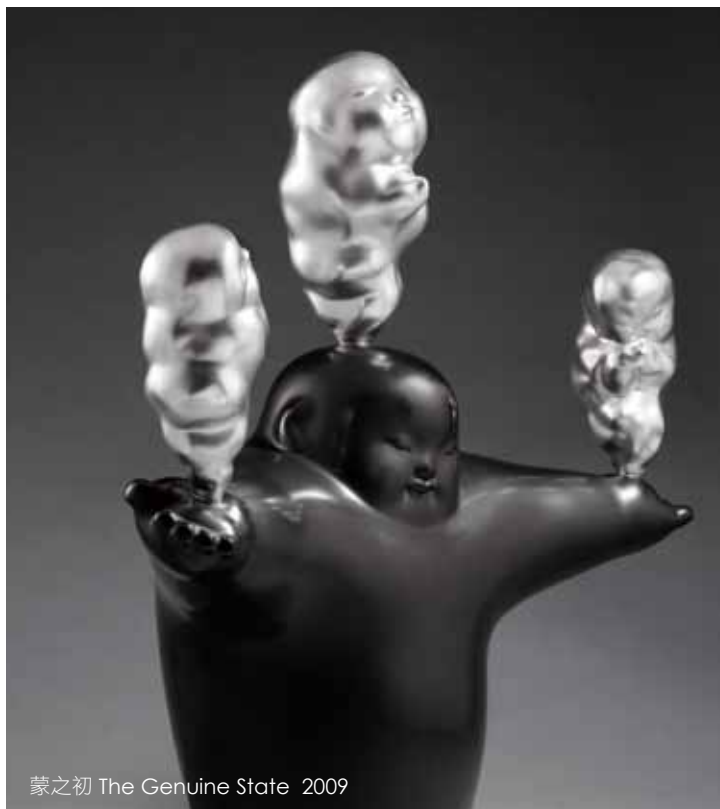
Let me now return to Kandinsky, who also noted that "all works of art created by truthful minds without regard for the work's conventional exterior remain genuine for all times." Kandinsky, on the other hand, had great faith in materiality, provided that the artistic articulation of which comes directly from the mind, or the "inner truth," which, as pointed out by Danzker, pointed the artist's reference to a new era of

theosophical universalism, one that signaled a new moment of what Kandinsky called the "spiritual turning-point." The use of elements of painting, such as in "the harmony of colours," was for the purpose of "touching the human soul," as Kandinsky put it. Kandinsky further explained that such expressions were based on the "principle of internal necessity."²

I believe there is quite a parallel, in the "spiritual" and the "transcendental," in the sense of the inner vision and the intuitive basis of knowledge, in both Kandinsky and Li Chen. However, in terms of the artworks, we are looking at what is often regarded as the polarity of abstraction and figuration. Let me first deal with this point by referencing Gao Minglu, before returning to Danzker's point about Kandinsky's misinterpretation of Eastern aesthetics and philosophy. We have also been reminded by T. K. Sabapathy, chair of this forum, that mis-reading can be positive and productive, as in the ample examples of Asian artists, mis-reading of Western aesthetic concepts.

Gao Minglu's *Yi Pai* theory, as presented earlier, is most helpful in explaining the non-contradictory relation between abstraction and figuration, in the general embracement of synthesis rather than fragmentation, through the explication of *li* 理 "principle," *shi* 識 "concept," and *xing* 形 "likeness," as cited from the 9th century art critical text by Zhang Yanyuan.³ Other sets of triadic relations invoked by Gao included abstraction, conception and representation, and Martin Heidegger's *da-sein* (existence), *zu-sein* (to be) and *zeug* (equipment).⁴ Heidegger further developed Edmund Husserl's phenomenology which centred on consciousness as a first person experience to one that considered the structural features of both the subject and object of experience, or a relational experience between an individual and the world. *Yi* to Gao suggested the kind of relations that may be drawn in these triadic sets, with each element dependent on the other elements in the set, and may not to be fragmented.

Yi Pai, or the *Yi* approach, in my understanding of Gao, then, is a method of art creation and appreciation. It is in the in-between or relational spaces, that art as an expression may invoke an experience



of the world. This art should not represent anything that may be pinned down in terms of concepts, narratives, emotions or any form of representation, even the Greenburgian notion of "autonomy," which was also a representation of an ideal. The Western art categories of abstraction, conception and representation, on the other hand, look at these as separate categories and set them in an evolutionary scheme of figurative, abstract and conceptual art. These categories

further "represent" human reality, concept, logic, social commentary, etc. Now, in consideration of Yi Pai, we can say that Li Chen's works are neither figurative, nor abstract, nor conceptual, but a synthesis of all these elements, which must further form a triadic relation.

In a discussion the presenters had with T. K. Sabapathy yesterday, Sabapathy mentioned Ananda Coomaraswamy, whose eminent book *The Transformation of Nature in Art* of 1934, was an early attempt to relate theories of art in India, China and, interestingly, medieval Europe, triggered my memory that the concept of "yi," in fact, had a Buddhist source. Coomaraswamy wrote of *sadrsya*, which he translated as "similitude," and further explained that:

It is in fact obvious that the likeness between anything and any representation of it cannot be a likeness of nature, but must be analogical or exemplary, or both of these. What the representation imitates is the idea or species of the thing, by which it is known intellectually, rather than the substance of the thing as it is perceived by the senses.⁵

Coomaraswamy further explained:

Sadrsya, "visual correspondence," (note: Coomaraswamy used a different translation here), has nevertheless been commonly misinterpreted as having to do with two appearances, that of the work of art and that of the model. It refers, actually, to a quality wholly self-contained within the work of art itself, a correspondence of mental and sensational factors in the work.⁶

This comes very close to Yi.

Gao explained that *li* 理 "principle," *shi* 識 "concept," and *xing* 形 "likeness" also referred to hexagrams, statements or text, and image as set out

in *The Book of Change*, which was compiled in the first century BCE. Gao quoted *The Book of Change* that the purpose of the hexagrams was for the purpose of the provision of the “fullness of what is true and false in a situation” 設卦以盡情偽。

Let me just park this phrase aside and come back to Li Chen for now. Li Chen's sculptures, we discussed, work on the tension between form and formlessness, mass and volumelessness, and the attainment of the “mind” through the dynamics that force one to apprehend the work as the erasure of polarities like void and mass so as to be “non-characteristic,” and evincing “non-thought,” or a desire to veer away from representation by the very figurative means. As Li Chen has it said himself, in his speech during the opening ceremony at this museum on Thursday evening, that the purpose of his art, was to “turn presence into absence” 化有為無。

New issues arise as we look at Li Chen's new works – the *Soul Guardians* series, first launched in Beijing in 2008 which is represented here by *Lord of Fire* and *Lord of Wind* on Bras Basah Road across from the Singapore Art Museum and the *Five Elements* at the front lawn of the National Museum, suggests a new turn in the artist's work. In *Soul Guardians*, the artist takes on a greater reference to societal presence, beyond the “spirituality” of the earlier works. This is a new direction with a sense of calamities, troubles and disasters, whether natural and or as a result of cultural and political clashes looming large at this point in time; the one immediately preceding the Singapore exhibition is the disaster of the Typhoon Morakot that hit Taiwan in early August.

The *Five Elements* in the series, is a hexagramic presentation that comprises abstraction, conception and representation, and referencing *The Book of Change*. The introduction of fantastic if not furious creatures into the *Five Elements* installation adds to the



天池 Heavenly Pond 2008



天空 Sky 2012

societal reference of the work and also draws a link with the figurative *Soul Guardians*. We see the different permutations of *li* "principle" (especially in the case of *Five Elements*), *shi* "concept," and *xing* "likeness" (on Li Chen's figurative elements) in Li Chen's sculptures and may look at the implications of the permutations over a period of time. It is, then, appropriate to look at Li Chen's works with our appreciation of them guided by Yi Pai. The artist spoke of the *Five Elements* as a "synthesis" 整合 of his artistic journey in the last two decades. At this point, let me bring back Gao's quote that the hexagrams were for the purpose of the provision of the "fullness of what is true and false in a situation," which enhances also the conceptual basis of Li Chen's work.

Now, Kandinsky. Please allow me to do the convenient thing of stating my agreement with Danzker in Kandinsky's misreading of Eastern aesthetics and philosophy by invoking Gao's critique of the dependency of Western art on representation. As Danzker said, the convictions espoused by Kandinsky and those artists



冥想 Fantasizing 2012

who had been swayed by theosophical beliefs that "the spirit of the future could only be realized in the feeling and intuition of the individual, and the only road to this feeling was 'the talent of the artist.'" What was the misreading part here was the belief that abstraction, notwithstanding the heroic discovery which marked a complete new turn in Western art history, was indeed the representation of the future.

Before I end, just a quick note on the word "contemporary" in the title of this forum; The fact that Li Chen's formative years in art did not occur in art schools but in through the apprenticeship of in traditional and religious art and craft, brings forth new challenges in the current interest in diachronic analysis of art historical development, in tangent with the propagation of a postmodern pluralism generally devoid of historical continuity. In reading the iconography and sculptural manifestation in the *Soul Guardians* series, how do the works engage in a contemporary aesthetic forum without being read merely as representations of cultural



symbols and icons? There is something deeply powerful about Li Chen's work that should not be read as being culturally specific, yet its inspiration has to be located in historical continuity.

Extract from 'Li Chen's New Works and the Spiritual in Art' in "Li Chen's Solo Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition in 2009 at Singapore Art Museum: Li Chen: Mind · Body · Spirit"

1. A.F. Price and Wong Mou-Lam, trans., "On the High Seat of 'the Treasure of the Law: The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, Hui Neng'," www.angelfire.com/realml/platform-sutra. All subsequent citations are based on Price and Wong, trans. For an alternative translation, see The Buddhist Text Translation Society, *The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra*, The Sino-American Buddhist Association, San Francisco, 1977 (primary translation: Bhikshuni Heng Yin, editor: Upasaka Kuo Chou Rounds). There exist six historical versions of the Platform Sutra. For recent scholarship on the sutra, see Yang Yuanxing ed., *Chan-he zhisheng*, the conference publication of the 2008 Guangdong Chan Sixth Patriarch Cultural Festival, Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2009.
2. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds, *Art in Theory 1900 – 1990*, p. 94.
3. Gao Minglu, *Yi Pai: A Synthetic Theory Against Representation*, Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2009, pp. 39-47.
4. Gao Minglu, *Ibid.*, pp. 154-162.
5. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, New York: Dover Publications, 1956 (original publication by Harvard University Press, 1934), p. 13.
6. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Ibid.*, p. 13.
7. Gao Minglu, *Ibid.*, p. 51.

靈識窮體 — 【神魄】系列 2008-2009
In an Age of Disasters and Calamities: Soul Guardians

使李真的作品內涵豐富、凝聚出具體美學特點的因素當中，最重要的還是他的出生地—臺灣那絢麗而複雜的文化與社會政治環境。這裡所說的美學特點，主要指民間文化與當地宗教元素的存在、純美術與工藝特性的並存不悖。

It has been above all the fascinating and complex cultural and sociopolitical conditions of Li Chen's birthplace, Taiwan, that have enriched his work and imbued it with specific aesthetic characteristics, especially the presence of elements of folk culture and local religion in his work, the easy co-existence of the fine arts and craft.

Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker
西雅圖弗萊伊美術館館長
Director, Frye Art Museum

【神魄】：災難時代

Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker
西雅圖弗萊伊美術館館長
時任德國慕尼黑國家美術館館長

我們的世界是如此的不安穩，無法預測的未知可能性急速增快，「神」不再是親切仁慈的象徵。



藝術家的花園

走進李真的花園，如同走入以墨黑翠綠渲染出來的禪靜之地，在滂沱大雨中尤其如此。穿過大門，映入眼簾的第一座巨型銅像，先見其足，其形體朝支撐整體的小山頂徐徐向下伸展。這件雕塑是李真的代表作之一——《無憂國土》，完成於 1998 年，1999 年曾在他的首次個展【虛空中的能量】亮相。作品的名稱指涉大乘佛教淨土宗的信仰。這一宗派強調淨信，重視系新阿彌陀佛，¹ 特點在於向全人類廣開方便之門，而不是高揚只限少數精英或神秘高深的修持法門。由此觀之，中國著名策展人兼評論家高名潞談到李真作品為廣大群眾所喜，就此提出的評論，還有李真在「高雅」藝術和「平俗」藝術之間不作區分，自然就都顯得特別有意義。² 李真打造立足於淨土傳統的雕塑及精神隱喻，其實是表達了他的一種奉獻之心，奉獻的物件是向廣大觀眾敞開方便之門的某種靈性修持兼藝術創作。

李真花園裡的第二件巨型雕塑是 2001 年的《大士騎龍》。李真也是在同一年開始創作【大氣神遊】系列，至今未輟。慈悲的化身觀音大士及其坐騎，在此具有飽滿厚實的軀體，顯得光滑圓潤，神氣充沛。像樹枝般粗壯的龍尾突起一塊塊鱗片，令人聯想到中國古代銅鼎。³ 同樣受古鼎造型設計啟發的龍足，分別立於龍珠、蓮花、祥雲及天火之上。⁴ 藝術家花園裡的第三件巨型雕塑位於左側，刻畫的是雙手合掌、閉目入定的釋迦牟尼佛。佛的僧袍與身軀渾然一體，線條極度精簡，令觀賞者想起「佛身無礙，體衣不二」這句話。⁵ 此像為李真早期作品，名為《合十》，作於 1998 年；其形象表現雖然比《無憂國土》更接近傳統，但依然顯示了他創作上的一種新趨勢。當我們從後面或旁邊觀看李真的雕塑時，它的性質竟會發生變化—具象化為抽象，軀體化為山水，主體與底座也合二為一。《合十》之名，無非指向佛教佛、法、僧三寶一體的和諧與安謐。

李真花園裡的最後一件物品，是一張仿製清代的紅黑二色漆椅，中央狹窄的靠背上刻著八仙⁶的形象。藝術家平常在花園中正是坐在這張椅子上，將意念專注於眼前的釋迦牟尼佛、阿彌陀佛和騎龍的觀音菩薩，靜觀冥想。這些雕塑，每一件都對應於凡人覺悟之路的某個階段，映現著普照所有修行者的慈悲。這三件屬於【虛空中的能量】（1998至2000年）及【大氣神遊】（2001至今）系列的作品，同時也標示了李真的藝術發展歷程，顯示他如何從唐宋佛像的傳統美學，走向別具個性、極度鮮明並又感應當代靈修的造像形態。

家居與靈性

李真的住宅分為三層樓，屋內充滿了各種物件，有木製傢俱、藝術品、書籍，質感豐富。家居與神聖空間在此並無區別。我們在一樓最先遇見的，是作於1999年的大型觀世音銅像。這尊站立垂首的菩薩高逾二米，雙臂張開，儼然是要擁抱走進屋裡的我們。在觀世音的右邊，寬敞舒適的客廳的角落裡，放置的是李真其他的一些雕塑作品。它們共同組成狀似祭壇的裝置，配上裝框的兩卷卷軸，卷中展現由李真的岳父所書寫的、關於覺悟的對聯。1998年的《三覺者》擺在中間；世尊（即佛祖）於此位處中央，雙手合於腿上結禪定印。這個組合中的第二位覺悟者是左側的阿彌陀佛—他露出右臂，手結施願印，掌心面向觀賞者，指尖向下；左手則持陶鉢，呈滿願之相。第三位覺悟者為藥師佛，位於右側；他舉著赤裸的左臂，手結據說有醫治聽覺障礙之效的空印，右手則掌心向上，置於腿上。上述三佛全都佩戴以銀、綠松石、琥珀及珊瑚等珍寶串成的古董項鍊。中間的釋迦牟尼佛手握蠟燭，軀體表面反射著輕柔的燭光。



位於《三覺者》左邊的是體積較小、作於2001年的雕塑作品《天界山水》。笑盈盈的佛滿足地閉上眼睛，以高舉的右手賜給我們金色的山巒，同時又以低垂的左手帶來代表一泓秋水的、單薄的銀質旋渦。橫向攤開的水具有流動性，是雌性的形象，是「陰」；垂直、雄渾的山從佛掌的谷底勃然升起，則是表現雄性能量，是「陽」。山的深溝裂隙、久經磨蝕的平滑表面，以及輪廓的豐滿，全都反映出從內部湧起的一股元氣；水的表面，則有風吹潮運、石落波興之象。此山此水，彷彿是從一幅傳統文人畫中摘取而得，運到天界，再由佛贈予我們，作為心靈避世清修之地。



位於《三覺者》右邊的是李真的另一件作品—2002年的《觀》。此作特別大膽，不僅對人體（或者說是超然的軀體）作了實驗性的再塑造，而且還結合了抽象與具象的表現。它在體積上比《三覺者》和《天界山水》都還要大，主體為一位信徒的形象，其雙臂高舉，捧著一尊處於覺悟狀態的金色坐佛。⁷ 信徒本身站在銀雲之上，軀體全無細節；頭顱的位置正好是整件雕塑的中心，纖細的手臂長度與軀幹雙腿相等，劃過身上的一條斜線隱約表示穿著僧袍。我們倘若繞著雕塑行走，從背後觀看，自會發現信徒的身體竟有所變化，成了顛倒過來的、被截短的無頭人，高舉的手臂成了接上臀部的一雙腿。我們此時繞到前面再看：他的頭顱卻又忽然像是長在陰部。⁸ 像這樣在神聖題材表現上違反常規，並且使

雕塑之「涵義」隨觀賞者的位置不同而不斷變易，正是李真後期（特別是最近這幾年的）作品之特點。

在客廳較遠的另一邊，在面向花園的窗前所懸吊在沙發上面的，是 2004 年的《天音》。這件雕塑是狀似截短的、風格化的佛像，將佛呈現為一口中空的洪鐘。佛的左手握著小錘，青銅錘頭以布料及皮條包裹。這佛鐘每響一聲，都像是敲擊者心跳的回音，是他們生活經歷獨一無二的記錄。觀賞者赫然意識到：這尊佛竟然戴著旨在幫助靈性聽覺的耳機。耳機的存在所引發的不快，還有對傳統造像形式的違逆，都是雕塑者有意為之的。李真在本冊所收錄的一次訪談中提到：「很多信仰者都認為我已完全背離了傳統精神，但我更需要的是去尋求符合我自己的精神需求，創作屬於自己的一個精神世界。」⁹

李真精心佈置的客廳尚有其他藝術品，如 2003 年的《三生石》和 2004 年的《仙境尋幽》。前者包含兩個形象，一黑一銀；它們在一座山上相擁，看似極樂忘我。作品的名稱固然指涉因果之理以及佛教「業報」、「生死輪迴」之說，¹⁰ 但又並非僅此而已。據藝術家本人解釋，此作的核心主題實為神識轉生，以及所謂「緣分」的觀念。¹¹ 第二件雕塑《仙境尋幽》刻畫了另一個極樂忘我的形象；它向右邊大幅度傾斜，黑身銀頭，頗顯「禦風而行、與天地為一的意境」。¹² 雖然這兩件雕塑都涉及靈性題材，但塑造出來的人物形象卻深具跨界性質，除了可作為寄託於佛教淨土傳統的精神隱喻以外，即使置之於流行文化與大眾傳媒的語境中，亦是契合無間，怡然自得。

初始與源頭：藏書室

西方的觀眾與藝評家傾向於把李真的雕塑視為深深植根於東方藝術傳統的產物。按照伊恩·菲德雷 (Ian Findlay) 的說法，李真成就了「一種現代版的佛教造像形式，它直接、簡單地感動今日的世界，卻又不削弱本身的靈性內涵。」¹³ 可是，熟悉佛教造像的亞洲（特別是中國）藝評家，卻愛從「與傳統雕塑的不同」來評論李真的作品¹⁴。事實上，夏禎在互聯網上撰文評論李真最新的【神魄】系列，就有此一說：「我認為李真先生的作品始終是和西方藝術、觀念的正面對話。」¹⁵

如果說李真客廳裡的佈置標示了他從 1998 到 2004 年的靈性與藝術創作歷程，那他住家二樓的書房及藏書室便是專為其藝術與思想發展、其靈感來源而設。他的藏書室證實了一點：李真非常熟悉西方藝術與文化。這裡除了有關於中華應用工藝美術及純美術的大量書籍以外，還有研究米開朗基羅 (Michelangelo, 1475-1564)、羅丹 (Auguste Rodin, 1840-1917) 及亨利·摩爾 (Henry Moore, 1898-1986) 等西方雕塑家的專著。這裡概述當代西方藝術的多種書籍，包括一部介紹西班牙超現實主義大師薩爾瓦多·達利 (Salvador Dali, 1904-1989) 的著作。特別令人感興趣的，是這裡竟然有關於非洲與大洋洲藝術的大量書刊。當中包括紐約的非洲藝術中心於 1988 年出版的一本非常重要的展覽畫冊——《藝術與文物》(ART/artifact)。畫冊探討了一些複雜的議題，如：「藝



術博物館如何處理創作者不稱之為『藝術』的藝術」，以及「過去一個世紀以來，來自西方的外人如何看待非洲的藝術與物質文化」。¹⁶ 這本畫冊除了細談往昔及當代非洲藝術，也探討了有關「非西方藝術」在西方藝術機構中整理與呈現方式的根本課題。畫冊中顯赫的撰稿人之一亞瑟·C·丹托 (Arthur C. Danto) 在自己文章的開頭引述了魯道夫·威特豪爾 (Rudolf Wittkower) 《寓言與象徵的遊移》(Allegory and the Migration of Symbols) 的一句話：「我們必須磨礪自己的評論判斷力，使之更為敏銳，因為自以為看出事物表面上的關聯是易犯的錯誤，可能會導致各種奇異的錯誤觀念。」¹⁷

我們如果根據「表面上的關聯」，以及或許因為偶然購買或他人贈送而納入藏書室的個別書刊，的確有可能對李真的創作產生「奇異的錯誤觀念」，而這是我想避免的。儘管如此，我還是認為他的作品確實如夏禎所言，是針對西方藝術、觀念展開的對話。¹⁸ 此外，我們有更重要的一項發現：除了大量的臺灣民間藝術品和中國佛教雕塑以外，李真的書房裡還擺設了一些非洲與大洋洲雕塑佳作，而這一類雕塑他本身的藝術創作注入了豐富的色彩。李真論及其創作所受到的各種影響時，曾經表示：「原始的東西能刺激我，使我充滿力量。那是貼近土地的、實在的體驗。對古老、原始的事物，我可以凝視好幾天。看羅丹的作品也能看見真實，但那在較大程度上屬於思想層面。我雖然欣賞它的技巧，但這並不使我振奮。原始的東西是神秘的。」¹⁹

李真的書房是美妙的大雜燴，書籍、雕塑、雕刻、高保真揚聲器與漆製傢俱齊聚一堂，當中有一些完成於 1992 至 1997 年間的早期作品。誠如



人們屢次所論，他第一件「獨立」的雕塑作品是《水月觀音》（1992）。此後的一段時間，他每年只做一件作品。據李真不久前回憶：「我所面臨的第一個難題，就是如何從傳統佛像中獲得解放。我足足花了七年的時間才掙脫了傳統，感覺我已找到屬於自己特有的雕塑表現，從此之後，我才真正感到自由。」²⁰ 換言之，無論傳統的西方觀眾把李真的雕塑看成是什麼，也不管他的作品題材有多麼貼近佛教淨土宗的信條，他總認為自己的作品已擺脫了當初灌注其中的雕塑傳統。我們若要理出李真「特有的雕塑表現」，就必須探究他的雕塑與傳統佛教圖像、與西方藝術創作到底有何不同。

藝術工作室

在 19 世紀歐洲，藝術家的工作室總是一種精心經營的舞臺環境，主要適用於自我表現、自我行銷，而不是實際的藝術創作。產生於那個時代的許多肖像和自畫像，著力於描繪歐洲藝術家在工作室內的情景，在觀念上把藝術工作室轉化為專門禮讚大師之成就（而非藝術本身）的神聖世俗空間。李真住宅頂層的工作室正好與此完全相反。這裡私密而凌亂，是進行密集藝術實驗的處所。李真巨型雕塑的製作和儲藏需要用上兩個大倉庫，但他在私人工作室裡只用木頭、繩索、黏土和蠟進行實驗，製作日後將轉化為大型雕塑裝置的小模型。這些具有高度表現力的黏土模型，是憑藉木頭骨架，以高明的手法塑成。按照李真的解釋，這些都是「軀體」。它們有的被藝術家往表面上不時加水，靠此持續「存活」；有的則被他放著不管，上面的黏土漸漸乾裂脫落，露出底下的木頭骨架，其整體也隨之分崩離析，自然「死亡」。這些黏土「軀體」無論是「生」是「死」，都蘊含著非比尋常的力量。

我們在李真的工作室裡所看見的蠟製模型，只有一個：《三覺者》（2001）。客廳裡那件十分引人注目的同名傑作，正是將此模型放大、以青銅鑄造的成品。至於黏土模型，有《觀》（2002）那尊高舉的金色坐佛的原型。此外，此處尚有多顆黏土頭顱，表情層次不同，有如沉浸在無限愉悅之中，我們在《煙雲供養》（2000）、《三生石》（2003）及《天音》（2004）等作品上都可以看到。說到底，整間工作室裡最具有感染力的東西，毫無疑問，還是李真為 2008 年 10 月在北京亞洲藝術中心展出的【神魄】雕塑群製作的黏土模型。這一作品系列標誌著李真創作上的一個轉捩點，即使將此視為他至今最重要的系列，亦不為過。【神魄】跟他的家居空間一樣，經過精確的設想經營，但其力度與凝聚密度實為前所未見，為 21 世紀當代生活提出了豐富而複雜的表述。

【神魄】：災難時代

如果說李真過去製作的銅雕精品表現了非凡的圓融和諧，那名為【神魄】的、叫人歎



為觀止的雕塑作品系列，則是針對我們這個充滿天災人禍、戰爭、衰敗及全球經濟與生態災難的時代而創作的。在談到創作上這一驚人的新意向時，李真自述：「這是未定天數，也是一種虛幻的價值，源於人禍天險。」

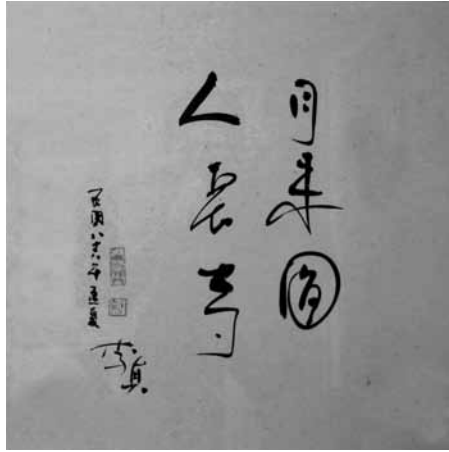
在整個【神魄】當中，統治陰間的閻羅王散發著籠罩一切的氣勢。他佔據最主要的位置，一手握著毛筆，一手拿著記載所有生靈及其壽盡之時的生死簿。他在憤怒及判處報應之際，震動不已，顯現出兩雙眼睛、兩張嘴、兩支毛筆，以及兩卷生死簿。作品邀請我們到他的腳下，坐在一張小紅椅上，感受他對我們的審判。高逾三米、身上鋪滿金箔的兩個助手——《攝心者》和《攝魂者》，站在《審判者》（閻羅王）的左右兩邊，在我們看來同樣有如泰山壓頂。左邊的《攝心者》手持凸面鏡，將站在面前的我們攝入金色鏡面。我們在那圓鼓鼓的幻境中，頭上腳下，變成細小的人影。在我們視網膜中央視野以外的所有細節霍然展現，週邊與中心合為一體。無論我們身在房間何處，都無法擺脫鏡面的收攝。同時，右邊的《攝魂者》也向我們伸出手來，呈現一塊凹面金鏡。²¹我們只要靠近它，便會看見映現在鏡面上的自己異常巨大；可是後退一兩步，卻又會陷入不確定的狀況，驀然看見自己頭下腳上、身形縮小。當我們恰好站在凹面鏡的焦點所在時，映射甚至會完全消失，令人不禁懷疑：自己是否已被攝入陰曹地府了呢？

當我們繞著《攝魂者》行走時，還會發現：聳立在眼前的，不再是個令人望而生畏的身影，而是從它單足而立的山脈中冉冉升起的一個形體。

這個形體或許看似從山間浮起的一朵雲；再過幾步，它又幻化為一塊高領披風，或是一棵積雪滿枝的大樹。這片身軀——山巒——浮雲——披風——大樹——風景的表面佈滿冰河般的紋路，像是被擦亮的一片金輝，仿佛雕塑正在夕陽中從內至外熊熊燃燒。我們一拉近距離，《攝魂者》看似截斷的手指便化為粗壯的殘木斷枝，上面一重重的圓圈即是多少世紀累積下來的年輪。另一邊，與《攝心者》一足相接的山脈比較高，但山坡並不以陡峭的角度下接平原。當我們繞著《攝心者》行走時，他那條紋縱橫的金色身軀同樣也越發抽象化，一連串的嬗變與聯想從中開展。此外，《攝心者》跟《攝魂者》一樣，脊椎上段有明顯突出的椎骨，令人不禁聯想到人體氣機運行的穴位。中國傳統的指壓按摩，正是利用這些穴位來補氣提神、延年益壽。

與前述幾件雕塑同樣居高臨下、俯視我們凡人的，尚有風火二神——其中一位是從天花板上垂吊下來的。《火神》位於《攝心者》的左邊，其身體多處的皮肉與孔竅正噴出火焰，把它照耀得遍體通紅。烏黑豐腴的《風神》，則是在《攝魂者》的右邊。二神代表風、火、雷、雨這四種自然現象中的兩種。《火神》懸浮在一圈木炭堆上，《風神》則是吊在一圈沙堆之上，其表面猶如佈滿風蝕的痕跡。李真在本冊所收錄的一次訪談中，有這樣的解釋：在中國，逼近京城的沙漠總是一再給北京帶來使一切活動癱瘓的沙塵暴，而這裡沙堆的用意，就是要喚起人們對這種天災的印象。《火神》舉起的右手拿著「火」這個漢字；其身影在我們巡繞底下的木炭餘燼之時，漸漸轉變為抽象形體。然而，吸引我們目光的，始終是從他身體各處——如口中、頭部、後陰及腳下激射而出的熊熊火焰。我們唯有走到雕塑前方的一定距離以外，才赫然發現：《火神》的左臂、軀幹和張開的雙腿共同構成了一個歪斜的符號，看似中文的「火」字，身體於此化為符號。

另一方面，巡繞《風神》巨大的黑色身軀，則使我們意識到它的豐滿。當我們從旁邊和後面投注視線時，它也變現如有書法韻致般的抽象形體。我們在近距離能看出《風神》表面的黑色處處不乏變化，有時粗糙而迷濛，有時又光滑明亮，儼然有一股氣流在上面急速流過，或者是身體的內氣繃緊了表皮。這個雕塑形象選用黑色，反映出李真對墨的各種形態的美感深深著迷。據他解釋，之所以如此結合「輕」與「重」，緣於在打坐中對墨黑之體性的新體會。²²能在大面積的黑色之中成就錯綜繁雜的效果，只因銅像表面上的黑漆塗抹得十分高明。



在離上述諸神不遠之處，有一尊顯得超然安詳的大型地藏菩薩銅像。地藏菩薩不僅是大乘佛教四大菩薩之一，也是重要的道教神祇。李真於此依循傳統，將他刻畫為一位已剃度的僧人，一手把持遍開冥界之門、驅散黑暗的法杖，一手握著象徵開悟的寶珠。²³菩薩坐在一頭高度風格化的麒麟上一種傳說中的四蹄異獸善於舞蹈，舞蹈中愛迅猛地晃動頭部。地藏菩薩因為他「地獄不空，誓不成佛」的宣言而受人崇敬，被視為眷顧淪落冥界者的菩薩。這位菩薩在李真的出生地台灣廣受膜拜，據說能在災難時刻，特別是在發生地震時（如 2008 年 5 月 12 日摧殘中國四川省的巨震）護佑信眾。在上述作品中，他處於絕對靜止狀態，耳長及肩，一腳踩在象徵脫離生死輪迴的蓮花上。李真將菩薩及其座騎麒麟的軀體塑造得表面光滑、神圓氣足。麒麟頭上有一根軟角，雙眼注視著我們，提醒我們：地藏菩薩已經降臨，來將我們從這個災難時代所構成的層層地獄中解放出來。

假如我們站在地藏菩薩的後方，目光略過《攝心者》、《攝魂者》和《火神》，自將瞥見遠處另一頭麒麟。這頭麒麟是 2008 年一件作品的主角；此作的主題是五行，也就是將天地萬物按「金、木、水、火、土」加以分類的古老宇宙觀體系。五行是與神獸及五大方位搭配的，秩序如下：土—麒麟—中；水—玄武—北；火—朱雀—南；木—青龍—東；金—白虎—西。根據學者們的描述，五行之說是「一套比類相通的宇宙論」，其「龐大的聯類體……橫跨宇宙物象的各種領域，將人世間的範疇（如人體、行為、道德、社會政治秩序以及歷史變遷等）聯繫宏觀宇宙的範疇，包括時間、空間、眾天體、四季交替以及各種自然現象。」²⁴ 正因為有這些複雜的物象關聯，五行體系並非一種靜態的宇宙觀，而是以持續互動及變化之理為基礎：「這五種宇宙能量自成相生相剋的圓形序列。」²⁵ 在李真《五行》的圓形排列中，《玄武》、《朱雀》、《青龍》、《白虎》都確確實實地被放置在北、南、東、西四方，而《麒麟》則是位於圓圈的中心（或者說是頂點）。²⁶ 五大神獸腳踏巨型羅盤—那是包羅天地的圖式，其表面上的同心圓鑲有各種符號和漢字，是風水大師²⁷ 所使用的工具。當中我們可辨認的符號，就包括古老《易經》的八卦，而《易經》正是主張「正」、「反」之間的動態平衡，要人接受「世間萬物無不變易」的道理。

雖然五行在西方往往被人聯繫到宇宙觀、古代神話及神聖事物，但是正如李真所指出的，它在中國也與現實世界的政治相關。²⁸ 比如在中國 20

世紀初改革運動的主要人物當中，學者兼思想家梁啟超（1873-1929）便曾經探討過五行體系的背景。²⁹ 故此，我們對李真的《五行》，不僅僅可視之為代表物理世界（包括時間、空間、天象及各種自然現象）的宇宙圖式，而是更應當以其為對人類行為與社會政治秩序的隱喻。藝術家在此故意將聯繫五行五方的每一隻神獸的頭部設置在下體部位，³⁰ 無非是在提醒我們：使我們步入這個災難時代的，正是人的欲望與貪婪，以及對大自然的蹂躪。

李真在創作雕塑的過程中，曾經建構高度精密的、超過三米高的木頭骨架。這次在【神魄】的另一個部分，首次展出了其中兩件骨架。屬於《攝心者》和《攝魂者》宛如骷髏般的結構體令人驚歎，在極度簡約中散發著非凡的力量。它們的表面還有泥塑過程中殘留的一點黏土，暗示著死亡與腐朽。假如誠如上文所言，李真過去精美的雕塑作品予人和諧、慈悲及心靈安定的感覺，那現今這批互相關聯的藝術品則是以以前所未見的急迫感告誡觀眾：時間不多了。我們被無法掌握的無常無定所包圍，死亡等著我們。李真提醒大家：由於物質主義毫無節制的表現，以及人們在生活中罔顧平衡與和諧的必要性，世界已急速陷入災難。他指出：在充滿人禍天險的時代中，對於精神信仰的依賴性越大。³¹

【神魄】的最後兩件作品—《眼通》和《耳通》—其實是出入精神世界與塵俗人間的「兩棲類」。高名潞在本冊中提出了敏銳的觀察，指出這兩件雕塑可說是「可愛」的。事實上，不少為之著迷的參觀者也確實把它們當作是拍照留念的理想背景。³² 它們所代表的神話人物—千里眼和順風耳—之所以能順暢無礙地跨入俗世，絕不止是因為戴了耳機、眼珠黝黑，或者是李真使了什麼藝術障眼法。在「現實生活」中，民間有一場牽引萬眾之心的世俗兼宗教盛事—為期七天、綿延三百公里的大甲媽祖出巡，³³ 而上述兩位正是當中的重要人物。巡遊的起點是離李真住家不遠的臺灣台中縣。2007 年的那一回，除了包含以無比虔敬熱情展開的傳統宗教活動以外，還安排了鬥牛陣、舞龍、擊鼓表演、流行歌手、西式搖滾音樂、「閃亮的花車上呈現著訴說現代生活故事的表演、政府政策的願景，以及各種商業廣告。」據大甲媽祖巡遊的官方網站表示，這數百年來，女神媽祖及她的兩個駕前護法千里眼和順風耳所背負的職責越來越多—正當現今人們面臨環境災難與疫病，情況更是如此。³⁴ 在 16 世紀明代小說《西遊記》中也曾出現的這兩大護法，不久前在大受歡迎

的電視連續劇《十兄弟》中又扛下了新的職責。2005年香港無線電視台所製作的這套連續劇，講述一對夫婦如何吞下了十顆明珠，繼而生下落地即已長大成人的十個兒子。十兄弟勇敢戰勝危險和邪惡，捍衛正義，而「千里眼」和「順風耳」便是其中兩位。這兩位神話人物最匪夷所思的現代化身，或許莫過於能在互聯網上找到的一款監視器材，即所謂「千里眼順風耳」附帶聲音採集器的望遠鏡。據說，它能让使用者聽到一百米距離以外的聲響和談話。

造像儀軌、諸神、民間宗教

佛教造像儀軌、道教諸位神仙以及臺灣民間宗教，為李真的藝術實驗提供了養分極其豐富的土壤。他既瞭解西方藝術家的思想與藝術策略，又欣賞非洲及大洋洲藝術豐富的造型與形象，作品遂卓越不凡，不受單一的規範與傳統所限。因此，人們對李真雕塑作品及裝置的接納總是模稜兩可，產生出同等恰當並又時而互相矛盾的多種解讀。

藝術家本人對此並不抗拒，認為「人有不同生命體驗、不同文化背景，在這模糊狀態裡玩味，有時會衝擊出很美的東西。」、「結合宗教信仰與藝術所產生出的效果」可以「不分國界或背景」，但要做到這一點，就必須使複雜的理念體現「一種單純性，一種返璞歸真」，使它「有拙味」、近乎「天真」。李真無非是利用作品所激發的強烈感受，以及出乎意料之外的「違反規則」表現，「去與觀眾的視覺對撞」。³⁵

然而，個別觀賞者的反應難免會帶有文化色彩。正如上文所提到的，對於中國的觀眾，李真的作品造型與傳統佛像之間的「距離」在一定程度上決定了深諳此道者的反應。對年紀較輕、不熟悉佛教傳統精義的觀眾而言，其創作中錯綜複雜的造型指涉自然顯得陌生、奇異。中國美術館館長范迪安說得好：他的作品或許會「猶如天外來客驚擾視線」，又「如遠古經典遺世獨立」。³⁶這有可能導致某位中國藝評家評論【神魄】時所說的「一個頗有點尷尬的局面」——也就是中國人「看不懂」，還得靠西方人來解釋。³⁷

另一方面，對於西方的觀眾，將李真的作品置於西方文化語境中又無可避免地會衍生出一種異國情調，產生出「種種奇異的錯誤觀念」³⁸來。正如



祭壇 Sacrificial Altar



乾坤莫測 Unpredictable Fate

冰封 Ice-bound 2008 Oil on Canvas



定 Fixed 2008 Oil on Canvas



高名潞在本冊中所指出，藝術品的發展成形自有它的文化背景，「但是否就只能以文化背景去為某件藝術作品下定義？這是關鍵問題。在西方，人們不會根據某件作品的文化背景去界定現代主義，圍繞作品的哲學和美術特色、語言、道德和精神意義等方面才是他們的考慮因素。」³⁹

那麼，李真創作中所灌注的哲學、美學及語言議題到底是什麼？范迪安認為：其主要的思想特點在於凡俗與超俗的統一，而且這不僅體現在題材上，最重要的是在作品的樣式上亦有表現。⁴⁰另外，根據范迪安的說法，李真的雕塑美學實以東方傳統（儒、道、釋三教）為主導，融匯了西方雕塑語言，形成個性非常鮮明的「二元組合」。⁴¹他還進一步指出：其雕塑的「材料語言」講究採用單純的材料（如青銅與石材）、以「東方美學」為本的「黑白灰色彩體系」，並且重視色彩與光澤的統一。⁴²

李真的雕塑哲理有多條脈絡。其一為藝術家本人所謂跨越國界與文化疆界的個人宗教信仰（高名潞稱之為「個人的精神性」⁴³）。其二為形式與意涵上的以一攝多；這一點落實到雕塑上，必然意味著視角和觀察點的不斷變換。⁴⁴至於五行體系所本的「比類相通的宇宙論」、其橫跨各類物象的複雜聯繫，還有它重視持續互動與變化的原理，⁴⁵就跟以氣為主的造型概念一樣，也都是李真創作中的主導原則。

至於李真雕塑的美學原理，其基礎實際上不限於東方傳統與西方雕塑語言的「二元組合」，而是還涉及與非洲、大洋洲的精神和物質文明持續對話。關於這一點，我們從兩個方面可以看出來。一是李真對雕塑軀體進行再塑造的某些成果；二是他雖然深受中國水墨畫傳統所啟發，其結合抽象與具象的方式卻另闢蹊徑的事實。誠如藝術家本人所言，對墨的

美感的體悟，是促使他做到「既重又輕」的一大助力。⁴⁶然而，大部分的評論家都同意：使李真的作品內涵豐富、凝聚出具體美學特點的因素當中，最重要的還是他的出生地—臺灣那絢麗而複雜的文化與社會政治環境。這裡所說的美學特點，主要指民間文化與當地宗教元素的存在、純美術與工藝特性的並存不悖，以及李真不時嘗試的、上文所提到的「可愛」與「大眾化」的表現。

除此之外，如上文所述，李真的材料語言運用了諸如青銅與石材等單純材料、「東方美學」中以黑灰白三色為主的色彩體系，以及色彩與光澤的相配相融。⁴⁷在青銅表面利用黑漆展現不同感覺的黑色，上文已經提過。李真在發展以精彩的嶄新方式與觀眾溝通的能力上，實已踏出相當重要的一步。他不久前表示：「我願意將我所熟悉的宗教造像轉置於另一種語境之中，把千年老傳統帶入當代世界，轉化你自以為很瞭解的事物。……我會一直創造新形式、新語言。」

經過歷時十年的靈性之旅，為哀悼逝世的父親而塑出多少呈大和諧氣象的心靈淨化之作，⁴⁸李真如今已進入藝術與精神修行歷程的一個新階段。處於持續互聯、互動與變化狀態的巨型身影震撼人心，作品完成以後仍徘徊不去的木頭骨架—這些都是李真所召喚出來的【神魄】，為的是要在這個災難時代幫助我們、警告我們。



風神 Lord of Wind 2008



火神 Lord of Fire 2008

1. 阿彌陀佛是淨土宗的主佛。
2. 參見〈國際策展人與藝術家李真的對話〉，《神魄—李真雕塑》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2009。30-66。
3. 「鼎」是中國古代的一種容器，三足，有蓋，一般以陶土或青銅製成。
4. Jiunshyan Lee, "The Energy of Emptiness," *Li Chen: Energy of Emptiness* (52nd Venice Biennale, 2007), 11.
5. *Li Chen: Energy of Emptiness* (52nd Venice Biennale, 2007), 47.
6. 八仙指的是何仙姑、曹國舅、鐵拐李、藍采和、呂洞賓、韓湘子、張果老和漢鐘離，均為民間熟知的道教人物。
7. 這件雕塑似乎暗示「靜觀個人心中之佛，自有其樂」。
8. 參見〈意在言外〉，《神魄—李真雕塑》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2009。87-101。
9. 參見〈意在言外〉，《神魄—李真雕塑》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2009。87-101。
10. 根據佛教淨土宗的信仰，阿彌陀佛具有消業之能，能使人不再為業力所牽引而流轉於無盡的生死輪迴中。
11. 參見李真與筆者 2009 年 2 月 4 日的通訊內容。
12. 參見李真與筆者 2009 年 2 月 4 日的通訊內容。
13. Ian Findlay-Brown, "In Search of Spiritual Space", *Li Chen: Energy of Emptiness* (52nd Venice Biennale, 2007), 22.
14. 參見〈國際策展人與藝術家李真的對話〉，《神魄—李真雕塑》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2009。30-66。
15. 夏禎〈正面對話：李真的雕塑藝術〉，載於《中國藝志》2008 年 10 月號 http://new.artzinechina.com/display_vol_aid693_en.html。
16. Susan Vogel, Introduction and Foreword, *ART/artifact* (The Center for African Art New York and Prestel Verlag Munich, 1989), 10-11.
17. Arthur C. Danto, "Artifact and Art", *ART/artifact* (The Center for African Art New York and Prestel Verlag Munich, 1989), 18.
18. 夏禎〈正面對話：李真的雕塑藝術〉，載於《中國藝志》2008 年 10 月號 http://new.artzinechina.com/display_vol_aid693_en.html。
19. Ian Findlay-Brown, "In Search of Spiritual Space", *Li Chen: Energy of Emptiness* (52nd Venice Biennale, 2007), 23.
20. Ian Findlay-Brown, "In Search of Spiritual Space", *Li Chen: Energy of Emptiness* (52nd Venice Biennale, 2007), 22.
21. 《攝心者》和《攝魂者》手中的凹面鏡及凸面鏡具有「反映恐懼、快樂、悲哀等所有情緒的功能」—李真與筆者 2009 年 2 月 4 日的通訊內容。
22. 參見〈意在言外〉，《神魄—李真雕塑》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2009。87-101。
23. 李真曾於 1999 年完成名為《無間化育》(72x34x38 公分)的銅像，以細小的人與動物的形象搭配站立的地藏菩薩，刻劃它們憑藉菩薩的僧袍攀援而上的情景。據藝術家所言，那尊銅像看眼的是業力感召與心靈淨化的境界。現今【神魄】系列裡的地藏菩薩，則是有探討生死輪回之義，與整個作品系列一氣相連。
24. Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2-3.
25. Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3.
26. 五尊神獸各自持有五行之相關者的符號，或金、或木、或水、或火、或土；符號的背面又各有漢字，分別顯示東(木)、西(金)、南(火)、北(水)、中(土)。
27. 中國古老的風水，是以天文地理為基礎的體系，用以確保生活中生氣常在、趨吉避凶。過去人們看風水是為了給陰陽二宅(即住所和墓地)選址，如今則經常運用在建築規劃方面。
28. 參見〈意在言外〉，《神魄—李真雕塑》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2009。87-101。
29. Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China*, 5.
30. 參見〈意在言外〉，《神魄—李真雕塑》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2009。87-101。
31. 參見〈意在言外〉，《神魄—李真雕塑》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2009。87-101。
32. 參見〈國際策展人與藝術家李真的對話〉，《神魄—李真雕塑》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2009。30-66。
33. 臺灣政府臺灣文化建設委員會網站 (<http://english.cca.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=14075&ctNode=3906>)。
34. 2007 年中縣大甲媽祖觀光文化節介紹指南：《大甲媽祖繞境進香的基本團體與巡遊活動》及《臺灣媽祖信仰》http://203.70.236.218/96006/dajiamazu_EN_01.html。
35. 參見〈意在言外〉，《神魄—李真雕塑》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2009。87-101。
36. 范迪安，〈圓融之境—李真的雕塑世界〉，《2008 李真個展〈尋找精神的空間〉》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2008。6。
37. 夏禎〈正面對話：李真的雕塑藝術〉，載於《中國藝志》2008 年 10 月號 http://new.artzinechina.com/display_vol_aid693_en.html。文中寫道：「這倒也是目前很多有中國傳統師承藝術的一個頗有點尷尬的局面，即自己人看不懂，要靠西方人來教。」
38. Arthur C. Danto, "Artifact and Art", *ART/artifact* (The Center for African Art New York and Prestel Verlag Munich, 1989), 18.
39. 參見〈國際策展人與藝術家李真的對話〉，《神魄—李真雕塑》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2009。30-66。
40. 范迪安，〈圓融之境—李真的雕塑世界〉，《2008 李真個展〈尋找精神的空間〉》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2008。4。文中寫道：「[他的]佛教人物也擁有世俗生活的形態、神情與細節，由此讓人們感覺到它們與人世間情感的接近，形象自然而然而具有雙重的內涵。」
41. 范迪安，〈圓融之境—李真的雕塑世界〉，《2008 李真個展〈尋找精神的空間〉》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2008。7。
42. 范迪安，〈圓融之境—李真的雕塑世界〉，《2008 李真個展〈尋找精神的空間〉》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2008。7。
43. 〈國際策展人與藝術家李真的對話〉，《神魄—李真雕塑》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2009。30-66。
44. 李真說過：「雕塑是立體的。我可以繞著雕塑移動，而不是像繪畫那樣，一味坐在桌子前面。做雕塑，我可以移動。這是我的風格。」—引自：Howard Scott and Yuan Yuan, "Content in Emptiness", *Beijing Review*, vol. 51, no. 49, December 4, 2008。[原文："Sculpting is three-dimensional, and I could move around the sculpture instead of sitting in front of a desk painting. By sculpting I can move, it is my style."]
45. See Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3.
46. 參見〈意在言外〉，《神魄—李真雕塑》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2009。87-101。
47. 范迪安，〈圓融之境—李真的雕塑世界〉，《2008 李真個展〈尋找精神的空間〉》。台北：亞洲藝術中心，2008。7。
48. 李真說過：「早年家人去世，我當時的作品算是一種療傷法。…十年前，我的父親也去世了。…人們說我早期的作品看起來祥和、平靜、純潔，其實對我來說，那是一種靈性之旅。我在做那些雕塑的時候，心 總在避免低落的情緒，而創作的過程又給我帶來滿足感，所以我就嘗試以這種心靈淨化的方式替自己療傷。」—引自：Howard Scott and Yuan Yuan, "Content in Emptiness", *Beijing Review*, vol. 51, no. 49, December 4, 2008。[原文："My early works serve as a healing method since I lost my family members. …10 years ago, my father also passed away. … For my early works …people say those works look calm and quiet and pure. Actually that is a spiritual journey for me. I avoided despondent feelings when I made these works, and the process of creating these works gave me satisfaction, so I try to heal myself in this cathartic way."]



「祭壇」手稿 Sacrificial Altar (Sketch)

Soul Guardians: In an Age of Disasters and Calamities

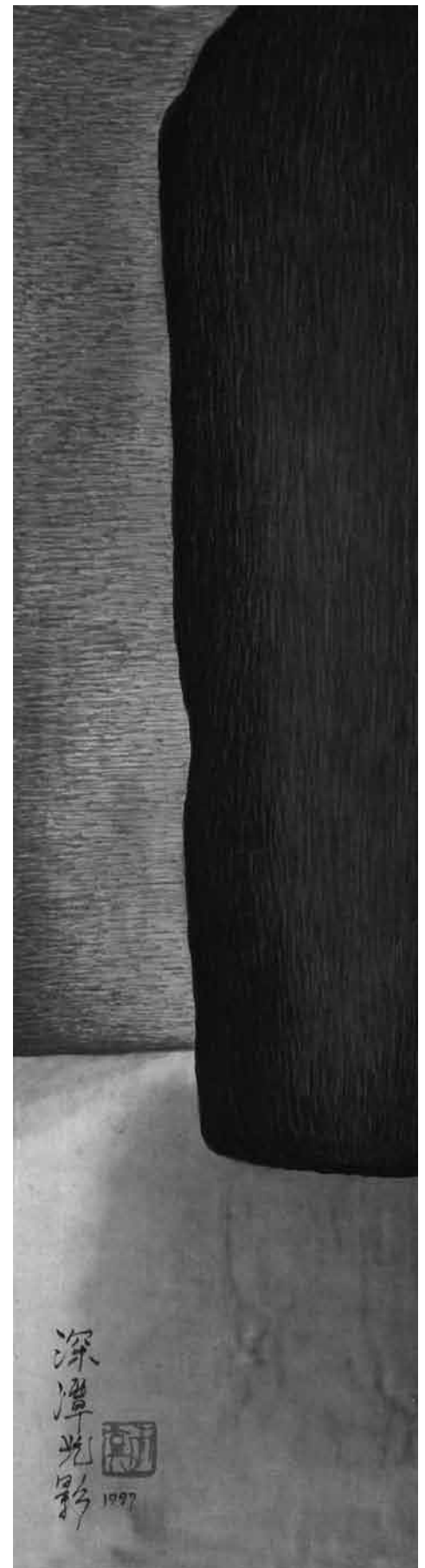
Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker
Director, Frye Art Museum, Seattle, USA
Former Director, Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, Germany

Our present world is unsafe and full of mishap, the pace of uncertainty ever greater, the gods are no longer benign.

The Artist's Garden

Entering Li Chen's garden, especially in torrential rain, is to be transported to a place of meditative stillness sketched in shades of ink black and verdant green. The first monumental bronze to be seen as one passes through the gate, feet first and sliding away to a mountain top on which he rests, is *Pure Land*. One of Li Chen's signature works, this sculpture dates from 1998, and was included in his first solo exhibition, *Energy of Emptiness*, in 1999. The title of the work refers to a branch of Mahayana Buddhism, Pure Land, which emphasizes faith and devotion to Amitābha Buddha¹ and is distinguished by its accessibility to all mankind rather than by its elite or esoteric spiritual practices. It is in this context that the comments of the renowned Chinese curator and theorist Gao Minglu regarding the broad appeal of Li Chen's work, and its lack of distinction between the high and the low arts, are especially relevant.² In creating sculptural objects / spiritual metaphors within the Pure Land tradition, Li Chen is expressing his commitment to a form of spiritual and artistic practice that is accessible to a broad audience.

The second monumental sculpture in Li Chen's garden is *Dragon-Riding Bodhisattva* from 2001, the year in which the artist began an on-going series of works titled *Spiritual Journey Through the Great Ether*. The Wisdom-Being Avalokiteśvara, the embodiment of compassion, and his carrier mount, are depicted full-bodied, smooth-skinned and abundant with life-force or *qi*. The tail of the dragon, thick like the branch of a tree, has protruding scales and is reminiscent of those found on ancient Chinese tripods or cauldrons. Each foot of the dragon, which was also inspired by designs on ancient *ding*³ vessels, rests respectively on a dragon pearl, a lotus flower, an auspicious cloud, and a heavenly flame.⁴ The third monumental figure in the artist's garden, to the left when one enters, is of Siddhārtha Gautama, Buddha, who is portrayed with his hands clasped together and his eyes closed in meditation. The robes of the Buddha - one with his body - are depicted in great simplicity reminding the visitor of the verse: "The blessed robes at one with the Buddha's unobstructed self".⁵ Titled *All in One*, and dating from 1998, this early work in Li Chen's oeuvre is more traditional than *Pure Land* in its representation. Nevertheless, it too reveals a new tendency in his work. When viewed from the rear or the side, the sculptures of Li Chen change their nature: the figural becomes abstract, the body becomes landscape, the being and its carrier mount become one. The title of this sculpture evokes the harmony and peace of the Three Jewels of Buddhism as One: the *Buddha* (The Enlightened One), the *Dharma* (The Teaching), and the *Sangha* (The Community).



The final object in Li Chen's garden is a replica of a black and red lacquer Qing dynasty chair with Eight Immortals⁶ carved into the narrow, central support of the backrest. It is on this chair that the artist sits in his garden and meditates on the figures before him: Buddha (Śākyamuni), the enlightened one Amitābha, and the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara on his carrier mount. Each sculpture recalls a stage in Everyman's spiritual passage to enlightenment and evokes the compassion which is offered to all those who wish to take this path. The three works, which belong to the series *Energy of Emptiness* (1998-2000) and *Spiritual Journey Through the Great Ether* (2001- present), also trace Li Chen's artistic passage away from the traditional aesthetics of Tang and Song dynasty Buddhist sculpture towards a personal, and highly distinctive, iconography of spiritual passage in contemporary times.

The Domestic and the Spiritual

The interior of Li Chen's house, which is spread over three levels, is rich in objects, wooden furniture, art works, books, and textures. No distinction is made between the domestic and the sacred. The first object one encounters on entering the first floor is a large-scale bronze of *Avalokiteśvara* or "Lord who looks down" dating from 1999. Over two meters tall, the bodhisattva stands with his head bowed and arms wide open as if to embrace us as we enter the room. To the right of *Avalokiteśvara*, in the corner of the large and inviting living room, are sculptural works by the artist that have been combined with two framed scrolls (with couplets on enlightenment written by Li Chen's father-in-law) to create an altar-like installation. The *Three Bodies of Buddha*, dating from 1998, are placed in the center. The middle Body is that of Buddha or Śākyamuni, his hands clasped together in his lap in the position of the *dhyāna mudrā* or spiritual gesture of meditation. The second Body, to the left, is Amitābha Buddha, this time with his right arm bare and pointing down, palm open towards the viewer, in the exposition or *varada mudrā* while his left hand holds an earthen bowl in the position of wish granting. The third Body, on the right, is the Buddha of Healing whose left arm is bare and raised in the gesture of the *shunya mudrā* while his right hand rests, palm upwards, in his lap. This *mudrā* is associated with healing of those who have difficulty in hearing. Each of the three Bodies is wearing an antique necklace made of silver and precious stones such as turquoise, amber, and coral. The central Body, Śākyamuni, is holding a candle whose soft light is reflected on the surface of his body.

On the left of the *Three Bodies of Buddha* is a smaller sculptural work from 2001, *Landscape in Heaven*. A smiling Buddha, his eyes closed in contentment, offers us golden mountains held high in his right hand



while he proffers a thin eddy of water made out of silver with his lowered left hand. The horizontal fluidity of the water evokes the principle of *yin* or female while the bold, vertical mountains rising from the valley of the Buddha's palm espouse the principle of *yang* or male. The mountains' deep crevasses, their smooth, eroded surfaces, and the fullness of their contours bear witness to the life-force or *qi* which rises from within while the surface of the water is marked by the breath of wind, by the flow of the tide, or by a falling stone. The word for landscape in Chinese is *shanshui* or "mountains and water." These mountains, this water, this landscape, have been captured, as if from a *literati* painting, and transported to Heaven, to Buddha, who, in turn, offers them to us as a spiritual refuge.

On the right of *Three Bodies of Buddha* is another sculpture by Li Chen, *Meditation*, dating from 2002. This work is especially radical in its experimental re-constitution of the (heavenly / human) body, and in its co-joining of the abstract and the figural. Larger than *Three Bodies of Buddha* and *Landscape in Heaven*, it depicts a devotee whose raised arms cradle a seated, golden Buddha in a state of enlightenment.⁷ The body of the devotee, who is standing on a cloud made of silver, has been stripped of all detail. His head is positioned at the center of the sculpture, his extenuated arms the same length as his body and legs. A diagonal line crossing the devotee's body suggests robes. If, however, one circumambulates the sculpture, the body of the devotee is transformed when viewed from the rear. It is now inverted, headless and truncated; the raised arms have become legs giving way to buttocks.



Circumambulating to the front of the sculpture again, the devotee's head now suddenly appears to be in the position of his genital organs.⁸ Such transgressions in the depiction of sacred subject matter, and the constantly altered "meaning" of Li Chen's sculptural works depending on the position of the observer, distinguish much of his later work, especially in more recent years.

On the far side of the living room, in front of the window facing the garden, and suspended above the sofa, is *The Sound of Nature* from 2004. This sculpture depicts a truncated, stylized Buddha, this time in the form of a voluminous, hollow bell. In his left hand the Buddha holds a mallet with a small head in bronze wrapped in cloth tied together with a strip of leather. Each ring of the bell is an echo of the heartbeat of the person striking its surface and a unique record of their life experiences. Suddenly one is aware that the Buddha is wearing headphones designed to aid spiritual hearing. The irritation caused by the presence of the headphones, and by the breach with traditional iconography, are intentional. In an interview reproduced in this volume Li Chen notes that "some people think that I have abandoned Buddhist iconography. But I am looking for something which meets my own spiritual needs."⁹

Among other art works in Li Chen's carefully choreographed living room are *Cause* from 2003 and *Visiting Fairyland* from 2004. The former consists of two figures, one black the other silver, embracing on a mountain in a state of bliss. The title of the work refers only in part to the principle of "cause and effect" and the Buddhist concept of Karma, the cycle of suffering and rebirth.¹⁰ Instead, the artist explains, the central theme of this work is transmigration of the soul and the notion of yuanfen or "predestined relationship."¹¹ The second sculpture, *Visiting Fairyland*, portrays another blissful figure, leaning strongly to its right, with a black body and silver head, and evokes "a realm of innermost emotion of riding the wind and becoming one with nature."¹² Although both these sculptural works refer to spiritual subject matter, they depict cross-over figures who would be as comfortable in the narratives of popular culture and mass media as they are in their role of spiritual metaphors within the traditions of Pure Land Buddhism.

Origins and Sources: The Library

Western audiences and critics tend to see Li Chen's sculpture as being firmly established within the traditions of Oriental art. In the words of the

writer Ian Findlay, he has made "a modern version of Buddhist iconography that speaks directly and simply to the world today without sacrificing the spirituality of it".¹³ Critics from Asia, especially China, on the other hand, who are familiar with Buddhist iconography, look at Li Chen's work "in terms of the *differences* to traditional sculpture."¹⁴ Indeed, in an online review of Li Chen's most recent series of works, *Soul Guardians: In an Age of Disasters and Calamities*, Deka Xia remarked, "I've come to believe Mr. Li's art is a dialogue with Western art and ideas."¹⁵

If the choreography of Li Chen's living room traces the artist's spiritual and artistic passage from 1998 to 2004, his study / library on the second floor of his house is dedicated to his artistic and intellectual development, and to the sources of his inspiration. His library confirms that Li Chen is well versed in Western art and culture. In addition to numerous volumes on Chinese applied and fine art there are monographs on Western sculptors such as Michelangelo (1475-1564), Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) and Henry Moore (1898-1986). A volume on the Spanish surrealist Salvador Dali (1904-1989) complements surveys of contemporary Western art. Of particular interest is the presence of numerous publications on African and Oceanic art. Among them is *ART/artifact*, an important exhibition catalogue from 1988 published by The Center for African Art in New York, which addresses the complex issue of how "art museums deal with art made by people who do not call it art" and how "Western outsiders have regarded African art and material culture over the past century".¹⁶ This catalogue addresses not only the finer aspects of historical and contemporary African art but also fundamental issues surrounding the ordering and presentation of non-Western art in Western art institutions. One of the distinguished authors of the catalogue, Arthur C. Danto, introduces his catalogue text with a quotation from Rudolf Wittkower's *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols*: "We must sharpen our critical judgment, for the pitfalls of superficial affinities may lead and have led to strange misconceptions."¹⁷

While wishing to avoid strange misconceptions of the work of Li Chen based on superficial affinities and chance purchases or gifts that have found their way into his library, I would nevertheless agree that his work is in dialogue with Western art and ideas as Xia Deka noted.¹⁸ The more important discovery, though, is that it is African and Oceanic sculpture, fine examples of which are to be found in his study together with numerous Taiwanese folk art and Chinese Buddhist sculptures, which have enriched his art. Li Chen, commenting on the influences on his



眼通與耳通
Thousand-Mile Eye &
Wind-Accompanying Ear 2008

work, remarked, "The primitive energizes and excites me. It is about earth, real experience. I can look at the ancient and the primitive for days. Looking at Rodin one sees the real but it is more intellectual. I appreciate the skill but it doesn't excite me. The primitive is mysterious."¹⁹

Among the splendid mixture of books, sculptures, carvings, hi fi speakers, and lacquer furniture in Li Chen's study are a handful of early works he produced between 1992 and 1997. As has been noted on numerous occasions, the first "independent" sculptural work he produced was *Water Moon Avalokiteśvara* (1992). Thereafter he made one work per year. "The first difficulty for me", the artist noted recently, "was to liberate myself from the tradition of Buddhist sculpture. It took me seven years to break from the tradition, to feel that I had found my own sculptural voice. From then on I felt free."²⁰ In other words, regardless of how traditional Western audiences may consider Li Chen's sculpture to be, regardless of how close the subject matter of his works of art may be to the tenets of Pure Land Buddhism, Li Chen regards his art works as being free of the sculptural tradition which had originally informed it. It is in the differences to traditional Buddhist sculpture, and in the differences to Western art practice, that we need to seek Li Chen's sculptural voice.

The Atelier

In nineteenth-century Europe the artist's atelier became an elaborate theatrical environment eminently suited to self-staging and marketing rather than to creative production. Numerous portraits and self-portraits of European artists in their ateliers from this period transformed the notion of the artist's workshop-studio into a sacred-secular space dedicated to celebrating the accomplishments of the Master rather than the art itself. Li Chen's atelier on the top floor of his house is the antithesis of this. Private, intimate and messy, it is a place of intense experimentation. While two large warehouses are necessary for the production and storage of his monumental sculptures, it is here, in his private atelier, that Li Chen experiments with wood, ropes, clay and wax, creating small models that, at a later date, will be transformed into large-scale sculptures and installations. These highly expressive clay models, molded expertly over wooden skeletons, are, Li Chen explains, bodies. Some he keeps "alive" by applying water to their surfaces; others are allowed to "die", their bodies tearing apart to reveal wooden skeletons underneath as the clay dries and separates. These clay bodies, both alive and dead, are extraordinarily powerful.

Only a single wax model is to be seen in Li Chen's atelier: the *Three Bodies of Buddha* (2001) which, enlarged and in bronze, provides such an important focal point in the artist's living room. Among the clay models is that for the seated golden Buddha held high in *Meditation* (2002). Another clay head in blissful reverie has been slightly modified for a number of works such *Cultivated by Mist and Cloud* (2000), *Cause* (2003) and *The Sound of Nature* (2004). The most powerful objects in the atelier, however, are undoubtedly the clay models prepared for Li Chen's installation *Soul Guardians: In an Age of Disasters and Calamities* at the Asia Art Center Beijing in October 2008. This series of works marks a turning point in the artist's oeuvre and can be regarded as his most important to date. Choreographed as precisely as his domestic space but with a new intensity and concentration, the installation *Soul Guardians* offers a rich, complex narrative on contemporary life in the twenty-first century.

Soul Guardians: In an Age of Disasters and Calamities

If Li Chen produced singular bronzes of exceptional harmony in the past, the spectacular series of sculptural works titled *Soul Guardians: In an Age of Disasters and Calamities* has been created for an era marked by natural and man-made disasters, warfare, decay, and global economic and ecological calamity. In commenting on the startling new direction of his work Li Chen noted: "Everything is uncertain and has an illusionary sense of value in this age of disaster."

The presence of Yanluo, the God of Death and Ruler of the Underworld, pervades *Soul Guardians*. He takes center stage, holding a brush in one hand and a book listing every soul and the allotted time of death in the other. Two eyes, two mouths, two brushes, two books of the dead are visible as he vibrates in anger and retribution. We are invited to sit at his feet on a small red chair as he passes judgment upon us. Two assistants, figures over three meters tall and coated in gold leaf, *Mind-Taking Guard* and *Soul-Taking Guard*, flank Yanluo in his manifestation of Judge of the Underworld and bear down on us. *Mind-Taking Guard*, on the left, holds a convex mirror. As we stand before him we are captured on its golden surface, upright but reduced to tiny figures in a bulbous world of illusion. Each and every detail, all that is beyond the scope of our foveal vision, is suddenly present; periphery and center are one. Regardless of our location in the room we are held captive on the surface of the mirror. *Soul-Taking Guard* to the right of the Judge also reaches out his hand to us, offering a golden concave mirror.²¹ If we stand close to *Soul-Taking*



Guard we see ourselves greatly magnified on the surface of his mirror. If, however, we step back, we enter a gyre of uncertainty. Suddenly we see ourselves inverted, and reduced in size. At the exact focal point of the concave mirror, our image disappears. Have we been sucked into the purgatory of the realm of the dead?

As we circumambulate *Soul-Taking Guard* we find ourselves no longer circling a threatening figure but a form that rises up from a range of mountains on which one foot of *Soul-Taking Guard* rests. At times this form appears to be a cloud rising from the mountains; a few steps further it has become a high-collared mantle, or a tree bearing a heavy load of snow. The surface of the body-mountain-cloud-mantle-tree-landscape is covered with glacial-like striations awash in a burnished golden glow as if it were burning from within in the setting sun. As we draw near, the stub like fingers of *Soul-Taking Guard* become broken branches of thick wood whose many rings indicate an ancient past. The mountain range on which *Mind-Taking Guard* rests one leg is higher and does not fall away to the plains. As we circle his striated, golden body it too becomes increasingly abstract, a place of transformation and evocation. We observe vertebrae protruding from the upper spine of *Mind-Taking Guard*, just as we have seen on the body of *Soul-Taking Guard*, and are reminded of the loci of *qi* (life force, *spiritus* or *elán vital*) in the human body which are employed in traditional Chinese acupuncture to invigorate our vital energy and to promote longevity.

Two other guardians of our mortal souls, one suspended from the ceiling, also bear down on the viewer. On the left of *Mind-Taking Guard* is *Lord of Fire*, red with flames protruding from his bodily orifices and flesh. On the right of *Soul-Taking Guard* is *Lord of Wind*, black and voluminous. They represent two of four natural phenomena (Wind, Fire, Thunder and Rain). *Lord of Fire* hovers over a circle of charcoal while *Lord of Wind* is suspended over a circle of sand, its surface marked as if by the passage of wind. As Li Chen explains in an interview in this volume, the circle of sand is meant to evoke the crippling sandstorms which regularly sweep across Beijing from deserts which are encroaching on the capital city. *Lord of Fire*, holding the Chinese character for fire with his raised right hand, transmutes into abstract forms as we circle the burned charcoal below. But it is the flames which shoot out of his body, his mouth, his head, his anus, and from under his feet, which rather capture our attention. It is only from a distance, front on, that one notices for the first time that the position of *Lord of Fire*'s left arm, his body, and legs

held wide apart, creates a skewed symbol reminiscent of the Chinese character for fire. The body becomes the sign.

Circling the vast black body of *Lord of Wind* we become aware of its fullness and the calligraphic abstract forms it creates when viewed from the side and the rear. In close proximity, we can see that the surface of *Lord of Wind*'s skin has different qualities of black, sometimes rough and cloudy, and at other times smooth and shiny as if rushing air has passed over it or as if it has been pulled taut over the body's inner life force, *qi*. The choice of black for this figure reflects Li Chen's preoccupation with the aesthetics of different translations of ink. As he explains, this bringing together of heaviness and lightness comes from a new understanding of the nature and quality of black ink which he has acquired through meditation.²² The effect of different qualities of black is achieved by applying pitch-black lacquer over the surface of the bronze sculpture.

At a slight distance from the *Soul Guardians*, and in a permanent state of transcendental peace, is a large-scale bronze of *Ksitigarbha*, one of the four principal bodhisattvas (enlightenment-beings) in Mahayana Buddhism and an important Taoist deity. One of the names of *Ksitigarbha* is Earth-Store or "the one who encompasses the earth". True to tradition, *Ksitigarbha* is depicted by Li Chen as a monk with a shaven head, holding in one hand a staff to force open the gates of the Underworld and to dispel darkness and, in the other hand, a jewel to symbolize the treasure of enlightenment.²³ *Ksitigarbha* is seated on a highly stylized Qilin, a mythical hooved figure whose dance is characterized by fast, powerful movements of the head. Revered for having vowed not to achieve Buddhahood until all suffering souls are released from the Underworld, *Ksitigarbha* is known as the bodhisattva of those who have been condemned to purgatory. Widely venerated in Taiwan, where Li Chen was born, *Ksitigarbha* protects his worshippers in times of disaster, especially earthquakes such as that which devastated China's Sichuan province on May 12, 2008. Here he is depicted in a state of absolute stillness, with elongated ears and one foot resting on a lotus symbolizing his release from the cycle of rebirth. The body of *Ksitigarbha*, and that of the Qilin he rides, are depicted by Li Chen as smooth-skinned and abundant with life-force or *qi*. The Qilin has a soft horn on his head; his eyes stare at us, and remind us that *Ksitigarbha* has come to release us from the Underworlds of this age of disasters and calamities.

If we stand behind *Ksitigarbha* we catch a glimpse of another *Qilin* in the



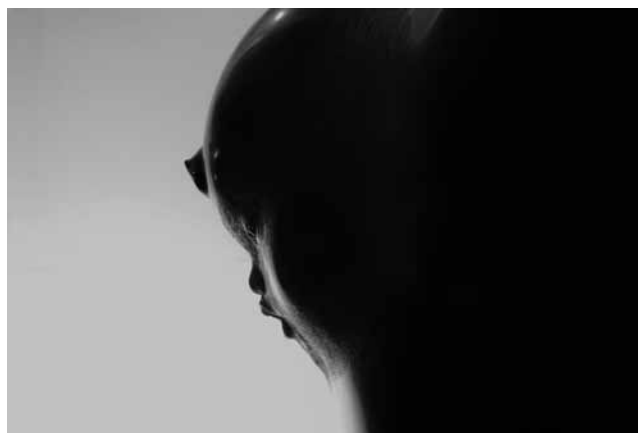
distance, past *Mind-Taking Guard* and *Soul-Taking Guard*, past Lord of Fire. This *Qilin* is the central figure of a work from 2008 dedicated to *Wuxing*, an ancient, cosmological system of classification of elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Wood and Metal. Each is associated with a heavenly creature and represents one of five cardinal points (Earth - Qilin - Middle; Water - Tortoise - North; Fire - Phoenix - South; Wood - Dragon - East; and Metal - Tiger - West). *Wuxing* has been described by scholars as "a correlative cosmology" with "an immense system of correlation-building ... among various domains of reality in the universe, correlating categories of the human world, such as the human body, behavior, morality, the sociopolitical order, and historical changes, with categories of the cosmos, including time, space, the heavenly bodies, seasonal movement, and natural phenomena."²⁴ By virtue of these complex correlations, *wuxing* is not a static cosmology but one based on the principles of constant interaction and change: "The five cosmic energies [conquer and generate] one another in circular sequence."²⁵ In the circular sequence of Li Chen's *Wuxing* the *Tortoise*, *Phoenix*, *Dragon*, and *Tiger* are positioned at the true cardinal points (north, south, east, and west) while *Qilin* is placed at the center or zenith of the circle.²⁶ The heavenly creatures are placed on a large-scale Luopan compass, a cosmological map employed by Feng Shui masters²⁷, with symbols and characters embedded in concentric rings on its surface. Among the symbols one can identify are the eight trigrams of the *I Ching* (*Yi Jing*), the ancient Book of Changes, which advocates the idea of the dynamic balance of opposites and an acceptance of the inevitability of change.

Although in the West *wuxing* tends to be associated exclusively with cosmology, ancient mythology and the sacred, in China, as Li Chen has pointed out, it is also associated with real world politics.²⁸ Among key figures of the reform movement in China in the early twentieth century who examined the political context of *Wuxing* was the scholar and philosopher Liang Qi-chao (1873 - 1929).²⁹ Li Chen's *Wuxing* should therefore be read not only as a cosmological representation of our physical world (time, space, the heavens, and natural phenomena) but also as a metaphor for human behavior and the sociopolitical order. He reminds us with this work - where the head of each heavenly creature / element / cardinal point has been intentionally placed in the position of the genital organs³⁰ - that human desires and greed, and the abuse of nature, has brought us to this age of disaster and calamities.

In another section of *Soul Guardians* Li Chen presents for the first time two of the highly elaborate, over three meter high wooden structures he

created in the process of producing his sculptures. The remarkable skeleton-like figures of *Mind-Taking Guard* and *Soul-Taking Guard* exude extraordinary power in their severe reduction. Still bearing traces of the clay which was used on their surface during the casting process, they create intimations of death and decay. If, as noted earlier, Li Chen had in the past created singular sculptural works which evoked harmony, compassion and spiritual reassurance, the present installation of multiple, interrelated works of art exhorts Li's viewers with a hereto unknown sense of urgency that the hour is nigh. Uncertainty envelopes us; death awaits us. Our world has been catapulted into disaster, Li reminds us, through the excesses of materialism, and through an indifference to the necessity of balance and harmony in everyday life. "There is," he notes, "an even greater need for the spiritual in our lives, a greater need for spiritual belief."³¹

The final two works in *Soul Guardians* straddle the spiritual and the mundane world: *Thousand-Mile Eye* and *Wind-Accompanying Ear*. These figures, as Gao Minglu astutely observes in this volume, could be described as "cute". They certainly provide an ideal backdrop for snapshots by enchanted visitors.³² The ease with which the mythological figures *Thousand-Mile Eye* and *Wind-Accompanying Ear* slide into the mundane world is not only due to their headphones, black eyes and Li Chen's artistic sleight-of-hand. In "real-life" they are key characters in an extraordinarily popular secular-religious event: the seven-day and three hundred kilometer³³ long Dajia Mazu pilgrimage which begins in Taichung County, Taiwan, near to Li Chen's home. In 2007 the Mazu pilgrimage included not only traditional religious events conducted with great spiritual fervor but also bull fighting parades, dragon dances, drum performances, pop singers, Western-style rock music and "glittering and well decorated vehicles [with] performances telling stories of life today, vision of government policy, commercial advertisements." As the official website for the pilgrimage notes, over the centuries the goddess Mazu and her two Guardians, *Thousand-Mile Eye* (Qianli Yen) and *Wind-Accompanying Ear* (Shunfeng Er), were assigned more and more duties as people were confronted with environmental disasters, epidemics and the plague.³⁴ The two Hero Guardians (who also figure in the sixteenth-century Ming dynasty novel *Journey to the West*) have recently taken on additional duties in the popular television series *Ten Brothers*. In 2005 the Hong Kong based production company TVB produced the series in which a couple swallows ten pearls and subsequently gives birth to ten, fully-grown sons who fight off danger and evil. Among these defenders of justice are *Thousand-Mile Eye* and *Wind-Accompanying Ear*. Perhaps the



most bizarre of modern transformations of these two mythological figures is to be found in surveillance equipment available on the internet – the Thousand-mile Eye Wind-accompanying Ear Telescope Sound Collector – which enables its owner to hear sounds and conversations from over one hundred meters.

Iconography, Pantheons, Folk Religion

Buddhist iconography, the pantheon of Taoist immortals, and Taiwanese folk religion have provided an extraordinarily rich breeding ground for Li Chen's artistic experimentations. His understanding of the intellectual and artistic strategies of Western artists and his appreciation of the rich iconography and forms of African and Oceanic art, have resulted in an extraordinary body of work that refuses to conform to a single canon or tradition. It is for this reason that the reception of Li Chen's sculptural works and installations is often equivocal and results in equally appropriate but at times contradictory interpretations of his work.

The artist himself welcomes these "different perspectives, different viewers, different understandings." The expression of "religious belief, and its processes, through art works" in a manner which goes "beyond national boundaries" requires, however, that complex ideas need "to embody a certain simplicity [and be] almost naïve in nature." Li Chen uses the strong emotions his works generate, and its unexpected transgressions, as a means "to have some kind of impact, to create a collision with the audience."³⁵

Inevitably, though, the response of the individual viewer will be culturally nuanced. For audiences in China – as mentioned earlier – the "distance" between the iconography of Li Chen's work and that of traditional Buddhist sculpture will be a determining factor in the response of those schooled in its refinements. For younger audiences, however, who are not familiar with the nuances of Buddhist traditions, the complex iconographical references in his oeuvre will appear alien and exotic. As Fan Di'an, Director of the National Art Museum of China so eloquently expressed it, the works may appear to have travelled "from the outer reaches of space" or to be "scriptures from a remote antiquity."³⁶ This can result in a "rather embarrassing situation", as one Chinese critic noted in a review of *Soul Guardians*, should Westerners take on the role of explaining the "incomprehensible" references.³⁷

For Western audiences, however, another form of exoticism comes into

play and "strange misconceptions"³⁸ are inevitably generated when the work of Li Chen is ordered in a Western cultural context. As Gao Minglu points out in this volume, art works do develop out of their cultural background. "But," he asks, "can you only use this background to define the art itself?" In the West, one never defines Modernism according to an artwork's cultural background but rather according to its philosophical and aesthetic issues, language, moral and spiritual meaning, indeed many different aspects.³⁹

What then are the philosophical, aesthetic and language issues which inform the work of Li Chen? Fan Di'an argues that it is the co-existence of the transcendental and the worldly in the subject matter, and above all in the forms, of Li Chen's work which is its key philosophical characteristic.⁴⁰ The aesthetics which inform his sculptures are, according to Fan, primarily those belonging to Eastern traditions (Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist) unified with western sculptural language in a highly distinctive "dual composition".⁴¹ The "material language" of his sculptures, Fan Di'an suggests further, consists of the use of pure materials such as bronze and stone, a black, grey and white color system "based on eastern aesthetics", and the integration of color and luster.⁴²

Among the philosophical principles informing Li Chen's sculpture are also what the artist terms personal religious belief (and what Gao Minglu would call an individualized spirituality⁴³) beyond national and cultural boundaries. Another is plurality (in form and meaning) within the singular, and the constantly changing perspectives and points of observation this implies in a sculptural context.⁴⁴ The "correlative cosmology" on which wuxing is based, its complex correlations among various domains of reality, and its principles of constant interaction and change,⁴⁵ are also governing principles in the work of Li Chen as is the form-giving concept of *qi* or life-force.

The underlying aesthetic principles in Li's sculpture are based not only on a "dual composition" of Eastern traditions and Western sculptural language but also on an ongoing dialogue with the spiritual and material cultures of Africa and Oceania. This can be recognized in certain re-constitutions of Li Chen's sculptural bodies and in his co-joining of the abstract and the figural in a manner that is quite distinct from that within the Chinese ink painting tradition on which Li draws heavily for his inspiration. The aesthetics of ink, as mentioned by the artist, are crucial to his ability to bring together heaviness and lightness.⁴⁶ Most critics agree, however, that it has been above all the fascinating and complex cultural

and sociopolitical conditions of Li Chen's birthplace, Taiwan, that have enriched his work and imbued it with specific aesthetic characteristics, especially the presence of elements of folk culture and local religion in his work, the easy co-existence of the fine arts and craft, and the forays into the "cute" and the "popular" referred to earlier.

The material language Li Chen employs, as noted above, consists of the use of pure materials such as bronze and stone, a black, grey and white color system "based on eastern aesthetics", and the integration of color and luster.⁴⁷ The application of pitch-black lacquer over bronze surfaces to achieve different qualities of black has been mentioned earlier. The recent use of fiber glass instead of bronze in order to greatly increase the scale of his works, has been an important step in the development of Li Chen's ability to communicate with his audience in new and exciting ways. "I am willing," he commented recently, "to bring religious iconography with which I am familiar into another context, to bring a thousand year old tradition into the contemporary world, to transform something that you *think* you know...I will always be creating new forms, and new languages."

After a spiritual journey lasting ten years during which Li Chen mourned the loss of his father by creating cathartic works of great harmony,⁴⁸ he has now embarked on a new stage of his artistic and spiritual passage. Powerful, monumental figures in states of constant correlation, interaction and change, and the wooden skeletons that remain after their production, are the *Soul Guardians* which Li Chen has conjured forth to aid us, and to warn us, in this age of disasters and calamities.



雨神 Lord of Rain 2009



攝魂者 Soul-Taking Guard 2008

1. Amitabha is the principal Buddha in Pure Land Buddhism.
2. See "International Curators' Dialogue with Li Chen." *Soul Guardians – Li Chen Sculpture* (Taipei: Asia Art Center, 2009), 30-66.
3. A *ding* is an ancient Chinese vessel with legs and a lid that was usually made of ceramic or bronze.
4. Jiunshyan Lee, "The Energy of Emptiness," *Li Chen: Energy of Emptiness* (52nd. Venice Biennale, 2007), 11.
5. *Li Chen: Energy of Emptiness* (52nd. Venice Biennale, 2007), 47.
6. The Eight Immortals - Immortal Woman He (He Xiangyu), Royal Uncle Cao (Cao Guojiu), Iron-Crutch Li (Li Tieguai), Lan Caihe, Lu Dongbin (Leader), Philosopher Han Xiang (Han Xiang Zi), Elder Zhang Guo (Zhang Guo Lao), and Zhongli Quan – are popular figures in Taoism.
7. This sculpture suggests the happiness which is attained through the contemplation of the Buddha within oneself.
8. See "Beyond Description." *Soul Guardians – Li Chen Sculpture* (Taipei: Asia Art Center, 2009), 87-101.
9. *Ibid.*
10. In Pure Land Buddhism the Amitābha Buddha has the power to destroy the Karma which would bind one to the constant cycle of rebirth.
11. Li Chen in correspondence with the author, February 4, 2009.
12. Li Chen in correspondence with the author, February 4, 2009.
13. Ian Findlay-Brown, "In Search of Spiritual Space", *Li Chen: Energy of Emptiness* (52nd. Venice Biennale, 2007), 22.
14. See "International Curators' Dialogue with Li Chen." *Soul Guardians – Li Chen Sculpture* (Taipei: Asia Art Center, 2009), 30-66.
15. Deka Xia, "A Face-to-face Dialogue: Li Chen's Sculptural Art", *artzine China*, October 2008 (http://new.artzinechina.com/display_vol_aid693_en.html)
16. Susan Vogel, Introduction and Foreword, *ART/artifact* (The Center for African Art New York and Prestel Verlag Munich, 1989), 10-11.
17. Arthur C. Danto, "Artifact and Art", *ART/artifact* (The Center for African Art New York and Prestel Verlag Munich, 1989), 18.
18. Deka Xia, "A Face-to-face Dialogue: Li Chen's Sculptural Art", *artzine China*, October 2008 (http://new.artzinechina.com/display_vol_aid693_en.html)
19. Ian Findlay-Brown, "In Search of Spiritual Space", *Li Chen: Energy of Emptiness* (52nd. Venice Biennale, 2007), 23.
20. Ian Findlay-Brown, "In Search of Spiritual Space", *Li Chen: Energy of Emptiness* (52nd. Venice Biennale, 2007), 22.
21. The concave and the convex mirrors held by the Soul Guardians have "the function of reflecting all emotions including fear, happiness and sadness." Li Chen in correspondence with the author, February 4, 2009.
22. See "Beyond Description." *Soul Guardians – Li Chen Sculpture* (Taipei: Asia Art Center, 2009), 87-101.
23. In 1999 Li Chen produced a bronze titled *Unceasing Cultivation (Ksitigarbha)*, 72x34x38 cm, in which the standing bodhisattva is depicted with small human and animal figures ascending his robes. This bronze, according to the artist, refers to Karma and the realm of purification. The present work, which was made in 2003, is closely related to the *Soul Guardians* series in its exploration of the cycle of life and death.



雨神 Lord of Rain 2009



雷神 Lord of Thunder 2009

24. Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2-3.
25. Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3.
26. Each of the heavenly creatures holds in its hand the symbol for the element with which it is associated (Earth, Water, Fire, Wood and Metal). The symbols on the back of each of the Five Elements are Chinese characters indicating East (Wood), West (Metal), South (Fire), North (Water), and Middle (Earth).
27. *Feng shui* or "wind-water" is an ancient Chinese system based on astronomy and geography employed to ensure *qi* is present in life. It was used traditionally in choosing a place to live and to find a burial site. Today it is often used in architectural planning.
28. See "Beyond Description." *Soul Guardians – Li Chen Sculpture* (Taipei: Asia Art Center, 2009), 87-101.
29. Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China*, 5.
30. See "Beyond Description." *Soul Guardians – Li Chen Sculpture* (Taipei: Asia Art Center, 2009), 87-101.
31. *Ibid.*
32. See "International Curators' Dialogue with Li Chen." *Soul Guardians – Li Chen Sculpture* (Taipei: Asia Art Center, 2009), 30-66.
33. Council for Cultural Affairs, Government of Taiwan (<http://english.cca.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=14075&ctNode=3906>).
34. Introduction Guide to Dajia Mazu Sightseeing Cultural Festival, Taichung 2007: "The basic groups and itinerant activities of Dajia Mazu incense-offering of the border-tour" and "Mazu Belief of Taiwan" (http://203.70.236.218/96006/dajiamazu_EN_01.html)
35. See "Beyond Description." *Soul Guardians – Li Chen Sculpture* (Taipei: Asia Art Center, 2009), 87-101.
36. Fan Di'an, "The Realm of Harmonization – Li Chen's Sculpture World", *Li Chen: In Search of Spiritual Space* (Beijing: Asia Art Center, 2008), 6.
37. Deka Xia, "A Face-to-face Dialogue: Li Chen's Sculptural Art", *artzine China*, October 2008 (http://new.artzinechina.com/display_vol_aid693_en.html). "This might have been a rather embarrassing situation most of the arts succeeding Chinese traditions are trapped in, i.e., they're incomprehensible to fellow countrymen, who then have to be instructed by westerners to understand them."
38. Arthur C. Danto, "Artifact and Art", *ART/artifact* (The Center for African Art New York and Prestel Verlag Munich, 1989), 18.
39. See "International Curators' Dialogue with Li Chen." *Soul Guardians – Li Chen Sculpture* (Taipei: Asia Art Center, 2009), 30-66.
40. Fan Di'an, "The Realm of Harmonization – Li Chen's Sculpture World", *Li Chen: In Search of Spiritual Space* (Beijing: Asia Art Center, 2008), 6. "These Buddhist figures possess the forms, expressions and details of ordinary life, and therefore making people feel as if the figures are close to the world of human emotions, giving the forms a natural twofold connotation."
41. Fan Di'an, "The Realm of Harmonization – Li Chen's Sculpture World", *Li Chen: In Search of Spiritual Space* (Beijing: Asia Art Center, 2008), 7.
42. Fan Di'an, "The Realm of Harmonization – Li Chen's Sculpture World", *Li Chen: In Search of Spiritual Space* (Beijing: Asia Art Center, 2008), 7.
43. See "International Curators' Dialogue with Li Chen." *Soul Guardians – Li Chen Sculpture* (Taipei: Asia Art Center, 2009), 30-66.
44. Li Chen cited in Howard Scott and Yuan Yuan, "Content in Emptiness", *Beijing Review*, vol. 51, no. 49, December 4, 2008: "Sculpting is three-dimensional, and I could move around the sculpture instead of sitting in front of a desk painting. By sculpting I can move, it is my style."
45. See Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3.
46. See "Beyond Description." *Soul Guardians – Li Chen Sculpture* (Taipei: Asia Art Center, 2009), 87-101.
47. Fan Di'an, "The Realm of Harmonization – Li Chen's Sculpture World", *Li Chen: In Search of Spiritual Space* (Beijing: Asia Art Center, 2008), 7.
48. Li Chen cited in Howard Scott and Yuan Yuan, "Content in Emptiness", *Beijing Review*, vol. 51, no. 49, December 4, 2008: "My early works serve as a healing method since I lost my family members...10 years ago, my father also passed away...For my early works...people say those works look calm and quiet and pure. Actually that is a spiritual journey for me. I avoided despondent feelings when I made these works, and the process of creating these works gave me satisfaction, so I try to heal myself in this cathartic way."





神魄，2009年於北京798藝術區亞洲藝術中心展出
Soul Guardians, Asia Art Center, Beijing 798 Art District, 2009



李真的雕塑是那種看過一眼便會令人不能忘記的藝術，它們以極為個性的面貌和極為強烈的風格讓人歎為觀止，「猶如天外來客驚擾視線，也如遠古經典遺世獨立」。

After only one glimpse at Li Chen's sculptures we cannot forget them. Their extremely characteristic faces and intense mannerisms make people exclaim over their perfection, just as they come from the outer reaches of space crossing through their vision, or as they were sculptures from remote antiquity that stand unique and outside of the world.

中國美術館館長 范迪安
Fan Di'an
Director, National Art Museum of China



大羅金掌 Golden Palm 2010 (泥塑 Clay Phase)



夜光盈昃 — 【天燧】系列 2009-2010
When Night Light Glimmers: The Beacon



天燧是一種儀式，「盈昃」才是它的生命。

— 李真

2009年某日，李真一個人從忙碌中回到家裡，點亮佛堂裡久未燃燒的燈燭，享受那份寧靜的溫暖，引發出對早期《燃燈》手稿的連結——這是本系列的靈感源頭。如果說，李真以【大氣神遊】系列尋找到了一方精神空間，那麼【天燧】就是這個精神空間的延伸，本系列只製作八件即結束，主題更為聚焦。

人們因為有火而能飽餐，是文明的起源，在各個文化、宗教中都有傳說，例如中國的燧人氏、希臘神話中的普羅米修斯、原始部落的圖騰等等對火的崇拜皆指向光明、指引心靈，人與火的互動之間洋溢著溫暖、平安、智慧與幸福，對人的意義因此歷久而彌新。在焰舞光躍之際，靈動而具生命力，這氣氛充滿了循環不息的呼吸。在此般「人 / 雕塑 / 火光」的對話中，李真說：「天燧是一種儀式，『盈昃』才是它的生命。」可見，藝術家意圖使作品在點燈的過程中讓雕塑更具有「互動性」。從不同角度觀察光影搖曳與雕塑明暗的變化，在視覺層次上說明了作品的立體感。這三維的實體存在，觸動感官知覺，點亮心境的靈性，在影子、氣氛、呼息、空間的關係中，雕塑的生命意義因而更豐富。

我們也看到部分人物雕塑。李真明顯地塑造長腰低臀的比例，並手持東方元素，呈現圓潤的體象，是華人身形的普遍特質，一眼就能辨識出人物的地域種族，他還塑造彷彿時下「嘻哈」自然垂落的腰線，添加了這個時代的幽默感，其創作之奇特令人驚艷。



蘭亭 The Pavilion 2010



捻花 Angelic Smile 2010



攀龍燭 Soaring Dragon 2010



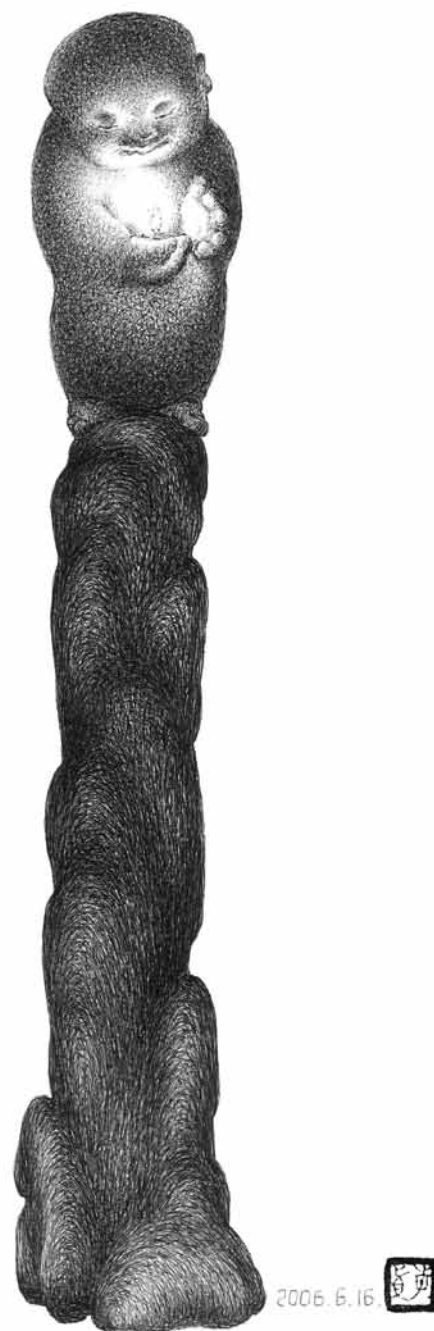
Behind the Beacon series is a ceremonial process; its essence lies in Yinze — the full of diminishing glory of the sun and the moon.

— Li Chen

One day in 2009 Li Chen returned home after a busy day at work, lit the oil lamp in the family hallway for worship where that had sat idle for so long and sat there enjoying the warmth of the silence, an experience that brought to mind the manuscript of one of his earlier works "Illuminator" and that experience provided the inspiration for this series. If in *Spiritual Journey Through the Great Ether* Li Chen is searching for spiritual space then *The Beacon* represents an extension of that space. This series was completed with just eight pieces and was very focused in terms of its motif.

Fire provided Mankind with the ability to cook food, marking the beginning of civilization. All cultures and religions have legends about the birth of fire, in Chinese legends it is Suren, in Greek legend Prometheus. Even the totems of primitive tribes and their reverence for fire point in the direction of light and the idea of providing spiritual direction. The interaction of people and fire is replete with warmth, security, knowledge and happiness and as such the significance of fire for Mankind has been remained unshakeable over the years. The dancing flames and light seem infused with spirituality and vitality, an atmosphere that is infused with an endless cycle of life. Faced with this dialogue between "people / sculpture / fire and light" Li Chen says: "Behind the Beacon series is a ceremonial process; its essence lies in Yinze — the full of diminishing glory of the sun and the moon." Clearly then the artist attempts to ensure that the the act of lighting the lamp makes the sculpture more "interactive". If we observe the movement in light and shade from different angles and changes in lightness and darkness on the sculpture then this visual layering explains the three dimensional feel that infuses the work. The real world existence of three dimensions stimulates the viewer's sensory awareness and speaks to the spirituality in the human soul, as the interplay of shade, atmosphere, breathing and space combines to enrich the life meaning of the sculpture.

Li Chen clearly designs the proportions of his character sculptures so that the waist is elongated and the posterior low, while infused with Eastern elements, the result being a body image that is round and fullsome, common characteristics of the Chinese body type. As a result viewers can discern at a glimpse the race and geographic origins of the characters depicted in Li's sculptures. He also crafts a naturally hanging waist line reminiscent of the "hip hop" clothes popular today, infusing the works with a modern sense of humor and it is this combination that makes his works so unique and appealing.



2011《追燭》展出於「擁抱絲路」超級馬拉松終點—中國西安
The Pursuer at the destination of ultramarathon "Running the Silk Road", Xi'an, China





造化之【不生不滅】系列 2008-
The Immortality of Fate

滄桑是記憶散落的塵蟎，虛幻則如沉澱後的清明。 — 李真



弗萊伊美術館 Frye Art Museum 2012

延續【神魄】，李真不斷地創作及實驗，醞釀多年的【不生不滅】終於 2008 年問世。美國西雅圖弗萊伊美術館館長 Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker 長期觀察李真的創作歷程，催生他於美國美術館的第一檔個展《造化之「不生不滅」：千歲與草民》，並親自擔任策展人。

李真說：「心識是不可思議，以為肉體之外別有精神的實體者。」因此他試圖重新探討「永恆」的意義：生命究竟應由物質、身體、還是精神的活躍性來決定？在生命終結時，是否能以記憶、傳奇、輪迴、信念、肉體以外的實體者繼續存在？

【不生不滅】以木頭、繩索、陶土等為媒材，傳達雕塑本體元素的語彙。他刻意藉由長時間的氧化作用而使雕塑的質地蛻變，作品與大自然的互動，猶如經歷時空日月的自然藝術，將本系列定義為一場「軀體」的演化。人們總是看慣了完整的外表，卻遺忘銷蝕的美感，這些作品腐朽敗壞，但觀者即將感受到不生不滅的精神意識。Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker 說：「李真不留情地將『千歲』的榮光去除，使其形貌只剩下最素樸的木頭骨架，與躺臥在壓克力箱中的『草民』質地相同，都是行將頹圯的木質，李真更以燈光將『千歲』鏤空的骨架投影到牆上，點出人生虛幻的本質，『千歲』的生命及他所掌握的世俗權威，都將轉瞬消逝。相形之下，『草民』手持麥穗，儘管社會資源不成比例地被少數人掌控，他仍掙扎生存。」

除了木頭質地暗示頹圯的宿命，藝術家更是毫不隱藏地向觀者表露整件作品的內部結構，西雅圖時報記者 Michael Upchurch 在報導中提及這些「軀體」的弦外之音：「這些作品都不是精雕細琢的木雕。它們表面粗糙，帶有許多小木刺和彎曲的釘子。因此這些作品的形式很穩固，但是表面極其粗糙，帶給觀者很大的視覺衝擊。《千歲》主雕塑的右腳踝有一個開口，正如希臘神話中的阿基里斯之踵，讓觀者可以看到雕像的中空，暗示著此雕塑人物的脆弱不堪。」

美國藝術評論家 Nancy Worsam 則表示：「李真的作品驚為天人，每一件都是經典之作。」「這些莊嚴肅穆的作品由高處俯瞰觀者，暗示了生命的短暫、自然的力量以及錯誤的偶像崇拜。《千歲》的主雕塑是一尊十二呎高的木製人物，手中握有閃閃發光的寶物，代表人類的精神與智慧。它的周圍環繞著一群阿諛奉承的手下。這件作品代表了一個美術館級的大尺寸道德劇，李真想藉此鼓勵觀者去探尋自我認同以及存在本質。」上述評論，均點出【不生不滅】從材料、雕塑本體、精神意義的特殊性，並談到對當代社會的啟示。

而李真本人也曾談及此系列在他創作脈絡中的意義。下列節錄自李真接受《畫刊·今日中國美術》藝文記者駱阿雪訪談時，針對 2012 年在美國西雅圖弗萊伊美術館的個展：造化之「不生不滅」：千歲與草民的部分對話。

問：最初是在 2008 年亞洲藝術中心看過您的個展，當時展出的作品多為體現自然精神，而《不生不滅》展則是在探索「人事的興衰與權力的更迭」；再者，以前多為銅雕，【不生不滅】系列採用木頭骨架和未燒的陶土草繩等粗糙材質，轉變很大。您的轉變從何開始，又將引向何方？

答：其實，材料借用於思考，我的創作思維沒有太大改變。以 1999 年首次個展中的《蝴蝶王國》，2000 年的《迷》，和 2006 年的《靡靡》三件作品為例，就已經在探討人與社會現實了。只是我沒有整理，也沒有做系列創作，所以都被隱藏在【虛空中的能量】、【大氣神遊】中了。這次我把他們更明顯地展現出來，人們就會覺得有很大的轉變。

問：「不生不滅」展覽中的「草民」，是一種博物館式的展出方式，用玻璃套在作品外面，像是呈現一種古代留下來的珍寶，這種方式是設計過的，還是因材料原因不得不採取的方法？另外，在展覽的文字介紹中，「千歲」與「草民」是相連的關係，「一起隱喻政界與商場上的權力競逐……」。那麼，如果單獨展出「草民」，其價值又是什麼？

答：在這次展覽中，只有《草民》被罩起來，這是我刻意的。我是雕塑工作者，雕塑永遠是主體，所涉及到的其他媒材，都是用來增強雕塑語言力量的。我希望罩子可以達到兩個效果。第一，通過這種方式給草民敬仰和尊嚴；第二，在草民的手上有一些麥穗和雜糧，這是草民生存的元素，我不想讓觀者去觸碰和玩弄。「千歲」和「草民」的關係是並存的，在歷史的輪迴裡，他們身份不斷迴圈和轉變。我們以前生活在皇權的世紀，現在

則處在資本的世紀，但都有各自的「千歲」，那些對社會資源掌握得越多的人，他們的責任也就越大，東西方都一樣。所以，在展覽開幕的時候，我講過一句話，即對我而言，我對千歲有更高的期待。

藝術家借用「千歲」與「草民」兩個中國古代帝制中貴族與平民的稱號，暗示草民在生命的顛沛中生成如草芥般強韌的性格，展現創造力與生命力，他們甚至是無名英雄；千歲彷彿是擁有者、保護者、卻可能也是毀滅者，兩者在生命歷史的長河前同顯微渺。唯有將「人」置放在循環永無休止的慾望世界，才能詮釋人性本質。

而李真進行【不生不滅】系列的方式，是將作品完成後先進行首次的破壞，再刻意讓作品曝露在自然中，經過一段時間的氧化作用，最後再二度將作品解構再破壞。這種特殊的手段使材料與結構有嶄新變化，雕塑因而產生了強大的力量，如同靈魂受到召喚，像是一種超脫生死的狀態，精神轉以不同的形式一再蛻變。關於「不生不滅」，李真曾說：「歷史不斷地輪迴，重複於人性之中。」



金剛不壞之二 Indestructible Spirit II 2008

Transience is the scattering dust mites of memory. Illusion is the brightness after becoming settled. — Li Chen

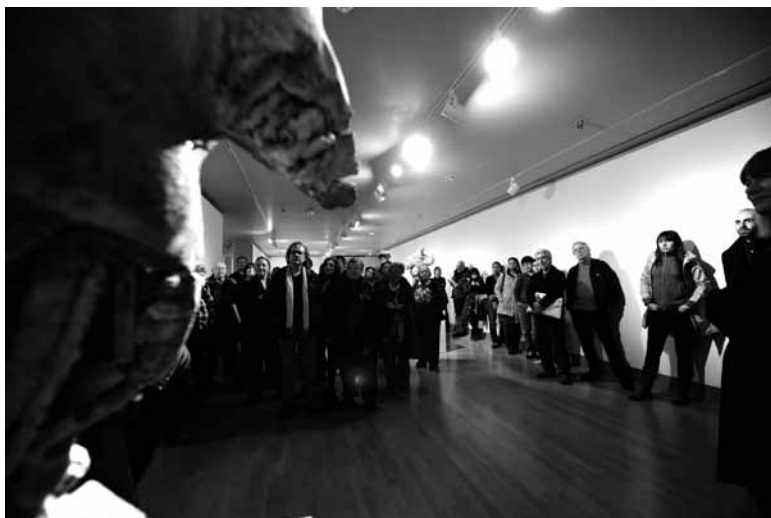
Ensuing *Soul Guardians* and many years of constant creation, experimentation and fermentation, Li Chen finally unveiled *Immortality* in 2008. Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Director of the Frye Art Museum in Seattle, who had paid close attention to Li Chen's work, invited Li to give his first solo exhibition in the United States and personally curated it as *Li Chen: Eternity and Commoner*.

Li Chen stated: "Remarkable is our mind, it exists as a spiritual body other than flesh." Therefore, Li decided to reexamine and redefine the meaning of "immortality." Li poses the question: Is life determined by the material and the bodily, or by spiritual vitality? Can life continue as a legend, a belief, in a form outside of the physical body?

This series makes use of media such as wood frames, rope and pottery to communicate a vocabulary of elemental physicality. In addition, Li Chen intentionally made use of the long-term effects of oxidation to produce alterations in the quality of the sculpture. The interaction between the works and nature, as if experiencing the passage of time, transforms into a form of natural art reflecting a mutual responsiveness between man and the natural world. "It is a bodily evolution!" Li Chen expressed; people are accustomed to a wholeness of the outer appearance, and easily forget the beauty of erosion. These bodies record the process of decay, conveying to the viewer the spirit of "immortality." According to Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker: "Stripped of their glory, reduced to skeletons of







wood in *Eternity*, lying in a glass case like *Commoner*, our modern gods are reminded by Li of the transience of human life and earthly power. Li Chen uses lighting to project the *Eternity* with engraved hollows onto the wall, pointing out the illusory nature of life. Because social resources are disproportionately controlled by a small group of people, the *Commoner*, holding a husk of wheat, struggles to survive.

Besides utilizing wood frames to reflect the transience of human life, the artist even goes further to expose the interior structure of the sculptures. Michael Upchurch, a reporter from *Seattle Times*, talks about the implication of such "bodies": "Far from being fine wood-work, the sculptures bristle with splinters and crooked protruding nails. They're strong in form, but crude in surface, giving the impression of something both powerful and jerry-built. In one telling detail, the right heel of the power-figure in *Eternity* has an opening in it, exposing him as hollow: his point of Achilles-like vulnerability?"

Nancy Worssam, an important American art critic, also stated: "It's hard to pick favorites, but Li Chen blows me away." "He creates figures that majestically look down on viewers, reminding us of life's transiency, nature's power, and false gods. In the major piece, *Eternity* created especially for this exhibition, a commanding twelve-foot tall wooden figure holds a glittering treasure representing human spirit and wisdom. Surrounding him are sycophants and subordinates. They stand on a bed of clay, mere skeletons of wood. It's a gallery-sized morality piece inviting us to examine who and what we are." The above reviews have clearly shown the uniqueness of *Immortality* from its material used, body of sculptures, to spiritual meanings; they also mentioned the connotation of such artworks in contemporary society.

Li Chen once talked about the significance of this artwork series in his context of creation. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Li Chen by reporter Luo Awue from *Art Semimonthly · Chinese Art Today* on his solo exhibition at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle in 2012: *Li Chen: Eternity and Commoner*.

Q: I first saw your works in 2008 at the Asia Art Center solo show, where most of the creative expressions evinced a deep natural spirit, while *Li Chen: Eternity and Commoner* explores "the rise and fall of human affairs and the alternation of power". The earlier works were mostly bronze sculptures, while *Immortality* relies on more earthy, rough materials such as wooden structures and raw (non-kiln treated) rope, quite different from the other works. When did this transformation begin to occur? What influences impact on your further directions?

A: Actually, my pieces do not involve tremendous transformations, I have always been insistent upon conveying my ideas through material. *Butterfly Kingdom* in 1999, *Puzzle* in 2000, and *Collective Consciousness* in 2006 were already engaged in a soulful dialogue, robustly enquiring into the spiritual while also exploring how the humanities rejuvenate our belongingness and inform our social reality. The key difference then may be in the lack of having organized this theme so discretely, or of their presentation in such a series, leaving them

in the midst of *Energy of Emptiness* and *Spiritual Journey Through the Great Ether* series. This time however, I have conveyed them more concretely, so much so that others can sense a significant transformation underway.

Q: In *Li Chen: Eternity and Commoner*, the *Commoner* is presented in a museum style display, with a glass encasing surrounding the work, as if protecting a treasured work produced in ancient times, but is this manner of exhibition necessarily the product of careful design, or does this merely reflect the nature of the material so that only this method of display could be used? Additionally, in the explanation for the exhibition, *Eternity and Commoner* connect for "metaphorically describing the world of politics and commerce in competition for social power...". So, when *Commoner* is displayed alone, what value does this reflect?

A: Only the *Commoner* was covered, and this is purposeful on my part. As a sculptor, I always focus on the sculpture as the centerpiece, while the inclusion of other media is used to enhance the sculptural language's explanatory power. I hope that the transparent cover can achieve two effects. First, I hope that this method will provide the *Commoner* with a sense of respect and dignity; secondly, in the *Commoner*'s hands are some wheat grains and other grains, reflecting the *Commoner*'s dependence on these for survival, and I wanted to avoid any visitors trying to touch or play with these elements. *Eternity* and *Commoner* involve shared relations, which over the course of history, undergo continuous loops and transformations in their status. Previously our societies were ruled imperially, while now it is capital that reigns supreme, but each has their respective *Eternity*, which for those who control more social resources, also ought to demand greater responsibilities, whether in the East or West. Hence, at the opening, I remarked that I hold more expectation for *Eternity*.

Li Chen borrowed the name "Eternity" and "Commoner", two terms for lordship and ordinary people in ancient China; hinting that *Commoner* represents the anonymous heroes, with their tenacious character and vitality in times of turmoil. *Eternity*, on the other hand, while being the possessor and protector, is also capable of destruction. However, both *Eternity* and *Commoner* ultimately leave behind nothing but skeletons, and are mere drops in the long river of history. Li Chen restores the fundamental nature of human beings, that is, the pursuit of power and immortality are universal—they are human desires.

There are two stages of destruction to the making of this series. After performing the first stage of destruction, Li Chen exposes the damaged sculpture in open-air for a period of oxidation, and as time gradually disfigures and transforms the bodily form, he then performs the second destruction. This unique treatment gives birth to new structural and material metamorphoses that invigorate the sculpture with power and energy. The spirit is being summoned as it transforms and manifests itself in different shapes, as if we are witnessing a reincarnation process that is beyond life and death. About immortality, Li Chen once said: "History constantly circles on itself, repeating itself in human nature."



道化之「不生不滅」：千歲與草民



THE HISTORY OF CHINA

1. The story of China's history is a long and complex one, spanning thousands of years. It is a story of a civilization that has endured through countless challenges and changes. The history of China is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the Chinese people.

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造化之「不生不滅」：千歲與草民個展，西雅圖弗萊伊美術館
Li Chen: Eternity and Commoner, Frye Art Museum, Seattle 2012













草民 Commoner 2012







千歲（局部）Eternity (detail) 2012





千歳（局部）Eternity (detail) 2012

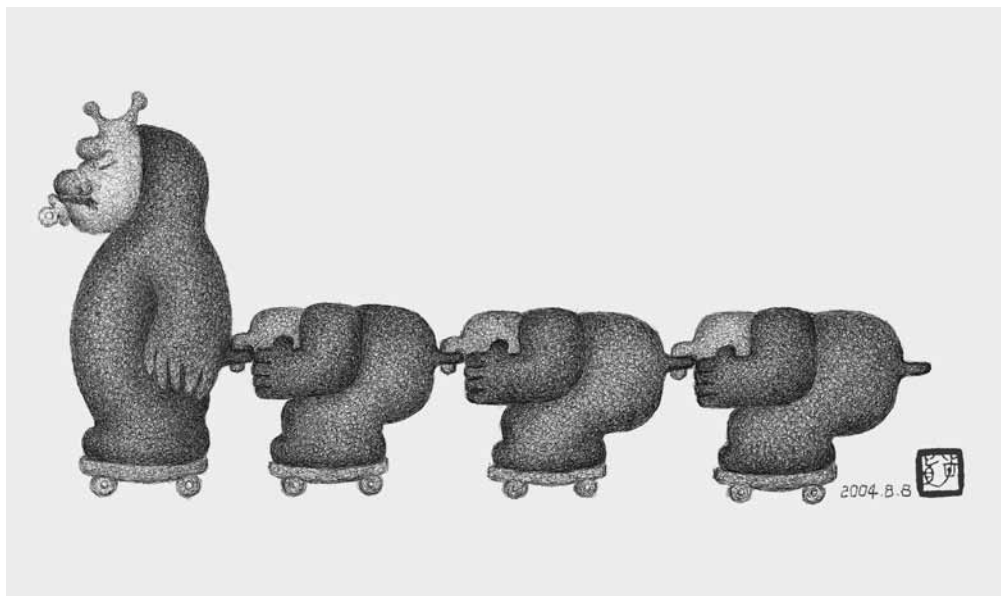


【凡夫】系列 — 知識與迷悟 2010-
Ordinary People: Enlightenment and Obscurity





蝴蝶王國 Butterfly Kingdom 1999



糜糜 (手稿) Collective Consciousness (Sketch) 2004

凡夫，刻劃人性的面貌，呈現你我的習氣。 — 李真

李真早期的創作《願》(1996) 即顯露對社會議題的關注，並在首次個展的《蝴蝶王國》(1999)、爾後的《滄海行舟》(2000)、《糜糜》(2006) 等，更加顯著。藝評家王嘉驥曾在 1999 年提過《蝴蝶王國》，便是其中一件力度飽滿的傑作：「此作借用佛教密宗常見的『大黑天』(Mahakala) 之類的圖像，加以變化。曾經以『蝴蝶王國』自豪的台灣，在李真刻意的形象聯想與連結之下，展現出一幅饒富趣味的新圖像。這新的圖像頂天立地、渾圓飽滿、通體自信的神氣與量能。十二手臂各持手勢暗語，再現一種眾聲喧譁的多元，當中更是可見及優雅與極粗鄙手勢的並存，充分反應台灣當代社會駁雜、紛沓、爭議與活力。簡單、豐富、大氣磅礴，既帶赤子之天真，又不乏詼諧戲謔之調侃。」

許多人認為李真創作僅追求自我精神愉悅、樂在其中，但他卻用【凡夫】系列來反照社會人性的種種習氣。先前幾個系列的雕塑強調流

暢的線條、光滑的表面質感，創作者所追求的心靈美善，不言可喻；而【凡夫】系列部分作品則刻意製作粗糙崩裂的表皮，描繪凡夫俗子的各種樣貌，某些作品甚至隱含粗俗的圖像，其中不乏藝術家自身的體驗及社會活動的感知。他選擇了與內涵相應的雕塑形式，呈現人與社會的活動，同樣也充分展現他的創作力。

德國現象學家胡塞爾 (Edmund Husserl) 主張，認識世界的方式是直接描述我們體驗到的世界，但須把原有的成見拋在一邊，不解釋分析這些現象的關係與內涵。但這不表示將流於表面的描述，特別是像李真在這個系列中，大規模地呈現「現象」，他不斷而大量地描繪外在所見的社會型態，集中形成一個提問：表面看來，我們的建設增多了，物質生活進化了，然而，李真問：「人性，進化了嗎？」

「凡夫」的種種面貌呈現生命的滄桑與人性的深層世界，自古以來

我們自以為看穿表面，其實是喃喃自語，他可能連自己的問題都無法解決。
We always believe we can see beyond the superficial, but often such a belief is nothing more than mumbling related to our own unresolved issues.

知識糜糜 ... 詭思傳音 ... 盲目真是讓「人」更加狂喜。
"Knowledge" implies collective consciousness.....strange noises are conveyed.... Ignorance makes "people" ecstatic.



匪夷所思 Incomprehensible 2012



童子 Lad 2012

沒有相應的進化，人們往往陷入生存與生性的漩渦中，難以自拔，這就是李真所謂的「根氣」。如本系列第一件作品《吞吐洪荒》，在一口大氣的吞吐之間，將慾望的原貌實體化，明顯地呈現人類蠶食鯨吞的力量——不斷地繁衍、爭奪，無窮盡，可比蒼穹宇宙。藝術家與作品型態就現象的創作手段，並以遊戲的態度呈現共業。

所以李真曾說：「這是浮動星球，充滿極度強悍、粗俗的生存與知識遊戲。」我們確實從此系列作品中感受到剛烈的人性力量，他認為凡人心中都有「善」、「惡」，習氣會牽絆、蒙蔽我們，甚至吞噬本心。雖然創作處在這兩個極端，但其雕塑卻有一個共同點——人物都是孩童的身形比例，頭大身小，時而表現滿足天性，時而反映世間紛亂。純真的孩子經知識教育後，將在未來受到現實的衝突與刺激，激發他凸顯自己暗黑或良善之面向。但也正是因為生命短暫的過程中，人們在制度、集體意識與價值裡不斷累積每一個時刻念頭，轉化以思想為驅動、以物質為載體，一則則反映人類進化的考驗與不完美。

一種格調的標準關乎他人，而輕乎自己，在不以為然的皮相中現形。

When one applies a higher standard to others than oneself contrarian superficiality makes an appearance.

善於「啃食」、「批判」與「讚美」總是讓人害怕、歡喜，在動物世界也是如此。如果你畏懼或敬仰，你於是失去「沈默的智慧」。

A proclivity to "gnawing", "criticism", and "praise" scares and pleases people, traits found in the animal kingdom. When you fear or respect you sacrifice "silent intelligence."

在深邃吸吮... 吸吮著。不曾間斷。充滿理所當然的傲慢，在絕對自我虛弱中，敏感自尊。

The process of continuous suckling is marked by self-evident weakness and the sensitive self-respect that is part of absolute self awareness.



吞吐洪荒 Boundless Desire 2010

“Ordinary People” depicts human nature, showcasing our habits. – Li Chen

Li Chen's early work *Wish* (1996) revealed his interest in social issues, an approach that was even clearer in *Butterfly Kingdom* (1999) in his first solo exhibition and the later pieces *Travel through Time and Space* (2000) and *Collective Consciousness* (2006). In 1999, the art critic Wang Chia Chi thought that *Butterfly Kingdom* an extremely powerful and full outstanding piece as such, “This piece made use of a “Mahakala” type image, but which the artist changed to fit his own needs. Given that Taiwan often refers to itself as the “Butterfly Kingdom” the artist's deliberate effort to connect the images showcases a new focus that is rich in amusement and appeal. These new images are towering, round, full of qi and the energy of self confidence. The image with 12 hands each making a different gesture also represents the diversity of voices and ideas. Viewers can see that the most refined and crudest gestures exist side by side, a reflection of the complexity diversity, confusion, disputation and vitality of contemporary Taiwanese society. Li Chen's *Butterfly Kingdom* is simple, rich, filled with towering human emotion, showcasing both childlike innocence and ironic mockery.

Many people believe that Li Chen's works are all the artist's pursuit of his own spiritual joy, a process that he revels in, but Li clearly uses *Ordinary People* to reflect on the habits of society and human nature that he has observed. The sculptures that preceded this series focused on flowing lines and smooth surface texture, so the artist's pursuit of spiritual perfection was instantly recognizable. In contrast, some of the *Ordinary People* works are purposefully given a rough and cracked surface, a depiction of the various guises in which ordinary people can appear. Some of the pieces even contain vulgar images, some of which reflect the artist's experiences and his perception of social movements. The way in which Li Chen selects sculpted forms that correspond to the inner meaning of the pieces highlights people and social activities, while showcasing the artist's own creativity.

German phenomenologist Edmund Husserl argued that by directly describing our experience we can understand the world, but it is necessary to put preconceived notions to one side and to not explain nor analyze the relationships or meaning of such phenomena. However, that does not mean that such depictions remain superficial. If we look at this series by Li Chen, we can see that it showcases “phenomena” on a large scale. The artist constantly and voluminously depicts the things he observes in society and these are brought together as one question: Although we appear to have much more construction than before and material life is better, Li Chen asks: “Has human nature improved?”

The different facets of “Ordinary People” highlight the fact that the vicissitudes of life



蒼生 Sounds of Multitude 2012



二皮刀 Lip Blade 2012



金湯 Pool of Luxury 2012


and complexities of human nature have changed little over time. People remain beset by problems of existence and character they find difficult to resolve, what Li Chen refers to as "basic nature." For example, the first work in this series, *Boundless Desire*, seeks to make desire concrete, showcasing the propensity of humanity to consume apparently without end – constantly reproducing and holding onto things for as long as possible. The artist creates his works by displaying this phenomenon and it is through such performances that he focuses on the shared "karma" of humanity.

Li Chen has said: "This is a vibrating planet, marked by the powerful and brutal interplay of existence and knowledge" and viewers can feel first-hand the tumultuous nature of humanity from this series. Li believes that all people have the capacity for "good" and "bad," recognizing that habits can limit and blind us to such an extent that they consume the goodness that resides within. Although creative work exists between these two extremes, Li Chen's sculptures share one thing in common, namely the characters he portrays have physical proportions generally associated with children; large heads and small bodies, one moment displaying contented satisfaction, the next reflecting chaos and confusion in the world. Once innocent children are exposed to knowledge and education they are bound to feel the impact of reality in future, which could cause them to reveal their better or darker side. However, life is short and people are constantly inundated with ideas based on collective consciousness and the values to which they are exposed. Such thoughts often lead to action through the vehicle of material life, reflecting the tests and imperfections that define human evolution.

蒼生 Sounds of Multitude 2012

生存、尊嚴 一種自然的生聲力竭。
Existence, dignity... The voices of the multitude clamor to be heard.





青煙，是靈魂的形狀，記憶的臉孔，感悟的化身。

Ethereal Cloud- it is the shape of the soul, the face of one's memory,
the embodiment of an enlightened moment.



心懸半空—【青煙】系列 2011 -
Suspended Heart: Ethereal Cloud



無形的雲霧提供了李真發想【青煙】的靈感，而雲的抽象性同時也是他創作的源頭，早期的【空靈之美】、【大氣神遊】系列中之作品（《仙境尋幽》2004、《御風遊》2007）即有雲的元素，復於2011年始以不鏽鋼鑄造進行【青煙】系列創作。光是仿造雲霧的模樣並不能滿足李真，此系列的造型回歸到雲的本色，思想上則是以雲氣暗喻靈魂的狀態，他首度挑戰以堅硬材質仿擬空氣感，藉以探觸記憶在時空變幻中的深度。

「青煙」給人們最直接的感覺，是淡而虛無，稍縱即逝；質感上則是輕飄、連綿不斷，或帶有些許溫度。青煙或許是雲，也或許是沉香燒出的煙霧，或清晨的露氣，又如思念的飄渺無形。進行中的作品《坐看》、《暴》、《善變》、《萬丈金烏》、《逐流》、《風狂》等，都將是李真一種另類的詮釋方式，極具靈性。



日行千里 Moving On 2011





The formlessness of clouds and smoke provided Li Chen with the inspiration that led to *Ethereal Cloud*. At the same time, the abstract nature of clouds is also a source of creativity for the artist. In his earlier works *Spiritual Journey Through the Great Ether* and *Visiting Fairyland* (2004) and *Riding the Wind* (2007) viewers can see cloud elements, an approach revisited in the stainless steel casting of *Ethereal Cloud* (2011) series. However, merely copying the appearance of clouds is not enough for Li Chen, so this series of works seeks to express the very essence of clouds. In terms of ideas, the clouds and air in this piece are a metaphor for the soul and this is the first time the artist has used such hard materials to try and create a sense of air, which he uses to focus to explore the depth of memory in changing times.

The first direct feeling one has when viewing "Ethereal Cloud" is its transient and fleeting nature. In terms of texture it is continuous and imbued with a hint of warmth. Whether clouds or smoke, the fresh feel of a brand new morning or the fragrance smoke from an incense stick, it floats in the air, formless, like longing. Ongoing works include *Quiet Thinking*, *Violence*, *Mood Swing*, *Glorious Sun*, *With the Flow*, *Turbulence*, etc. All of these pieces are imbued with the Li Chen's alterative interpretative logic and are extremely spiritual in nature.



善變 Mood Swing 2011

李真的雕塑持衡於有形無形、實質虛靈之間。他通過矛盾的動態，迫使觀賞者把作品看成是「空 / 質」等對立兩極的消解，盡顯「無特性」與「無想」的狀態，也即是以高度具象的手段抒發了脫離「寫照」與「表述」的意旨。

Li Chen's sculptures work on the tension between form and formlessness, mass and volumelessness, and the attainment of the "mind" through the dynamics that force one to apprehend the work as the erasure of polarities like void and mass so as to be "non-characteristic," and evincing "non-thought," or a desire to veer away from representation by the very figurative means.

新加坡國家美術館館長 郭建超
Kwok Kian Chow
Director, Singapore Art Museum

「大氣－李真台灣大型雕塑首展」 李真開幕感言



時間實在過得太快，前面貴賓講的話，其中有一句「這是一個不確定的時代」，讓我想到真的太多的不確定性。就像我剛剛很忙的時候，去上廁所，跑進去繞了一圈要找那個尿桶，繞了一圈奇怪怎麼自己都找不到啊，我就開始對不起……，因為我跑錯了，跑到女廁所去，這也是不確定性；我繞回來，趕快跑到左邊，要到男廁所去，結果人家說：「小姐，妳走錯了。」這是……不確定性。

今天非常的感動，為了我「一個人」的展覽大家來到這裡，謝謝台上台下所有參加的貴賓、我的親朋好友，還有這十二年來第一次參加我的開幕典禮——我的母親。

時間總是在記憶中流失，一回頭，十年沒有在台灣辦個展，孩子長大了，我和朋友多了稀疏的白髮。

我八歲拿畫筆，從紙張塗鴉到課本、書包，因此功課一次比一次更淒慘，每次考試時，只有地理還可以，中文普通，英文、理化從一開始就被打趴在地下了，但有時候運氣好還可以站起來猜猜看，尤其是數學。可惡啊！「X」、「Y」¹到底是誰啊？「口塞²」？「口塞」了什麼東西？每次想到「阿花被打³」，不知道傷得有多重……，終於混到高中美工科畢業。

我的母親是家庭主婦兼家庭手工，她沒有讀書，我卻在她身上學到了「不怕吃苦」和「毅力」。

我有一個忙碌的父親，他是個重感情的人，我在他身上學到了「情義」和「骨氣」。他從不給我過度壓力，記得我剛踏入社會的時候，在工作之餘有時候在家裡做作品到半夜，父親總是會問我：「這是有人跟你訂做的嗎？」我說：「不是，這是我的作品。」再來我就會聽到：「哼！甲飽太閒！」（台語），也就是中文「吃飽沒事幹」。我很遺憾，13年前他走了，連我人生第一次個展都來不及欣賞，現在大家看到的這些作品就是吃飽沒事幹的成果。

還記得 1987 年時，一位即將出家的居士路過我的工作室，他跟我說：「年輕人，我以前也是在畫畫的，你的寫實功力不錯喔，要不要來塑佛像呢？我有一個小佛堂，讓你來試一試。」我一口答應了，後來發現塑佛像比人體雕塑更加困難，我開始進入學習宗教藝術與佛學典籍的階段，因而「取法乎上」，但卻發現「技不如古人」。講到這一段，我必須提到我的岳父，認識他是李真一生的幸運，我們有時候會一起到故宮，我喜歡跟他聊藝術，每次我完成一件雕塑時，都急著找他分享，他啟發我的思想，對我影響很大，對我期待更高；幾年前他也走了，第二次遺憾又來了——平凡也好，成功也好，你捨不得又如何，生命終究是這樣的。所以，有一天不管我們是如何的離開這個世界，身為「人」，我們必須相互學習如何快樂地消失，這好像也不太容易。

我們來談一談創作的經驗。2002 年的過年，我跟一些朋友（今天他們也來了），帶著家人，下午到清境農場的深山裡露營，晚上彈吉他、品酒、泡茶，玩到深夜兩三點，帶著疲憊的身體入眠，卻下起大雨，背部又濕又冷，痛苦難熬！早上雨停了，在痠痛中甦醒，打開帳篷，哇！眼前一座非常渾厚的山嶺壓著雪白的雲層，久久不散，美到不行。我望著它，心裡想著：「昨夜苦不堪言，真不如此山長眠」，我馬上拿起紙筆開始素描，將山嶺移到雲層下面，換我爬到雲上去躺一躺，果然，唉呀！舒服！太妙了！這就是《飛行樂土》的誕生。

有一個晚上，和朋友在春陽部落的山谷裡過夜，夜間的溪水如雲河，月亮讓我看到自己清楚的影子，這是美麗的記憶；幾年後，一首詩詞「千江有水千江月，萬里無雲萬里天」，把我帶回春陽部落的夜空，我想把這種感情釋放出來。把月亮畫在畫布上是容易的，雕塑有結構物理性，這的確是困難的。讓 - 我 - 想 - 到 - 我 - 的 - 祖 - 先 - 李白，抓月亮沒弄好，就掛了，所以：喝 - 酒 - 是 - 不 - 可 - 以 - 游 - 泳 - 的，還是「神遊」

比較安全一點。我「足踏秋水，影如月，遨遊千江，見浮光」，《浮光》作品 2009 年因而誕生。

作品太多了，一時也講不完。今日科技因不斷的推翻錯誤而方便生活，藝術卻不斷變化而豐富我們的生命。我只想做我有感覺的事物，藝術對我來講是一種幻化無常，什麼都有可能，就像「好奇貪怪生虛境，自有天魔入夢來」，或者「思之、思之，神鬼通之」；藝術的奇妙，無法解釋。

我不是宗教家或思想家，我只是喜歡創作，當我完成泥塑時，其實最高的感動已經結束了。一部好的文學、音樂，它從不發表，就等於不存在了；所以，藝術的偉大在於「分享」，藝術的生命在「真實與虛幻」之間，當我走出「分享」的第一步時，才發現，處理這麼多繁雜的事務，遠比創作更加艱辛，這是藝術的重工業，從作品品質到展覽，我都有所堅持，所以不能免俗的要面對現實；哎呀！這就是「江湖」！

生命追求理想的過程，總是有懷疑、批評、讚美、感動，這在人性裡都是很自然的反應。所以今天非常感謝一路走來協助我的朋友們，及在座的學者、貴賓，感謝何董事長夫婦一路的支持，謝謝我的經紀人李先生及所有工作人員，這麼多年來，我們一起完成了許多艱困的展覽，還有我的老婆及孩子們，可以讓我專心的創作，今天他們也都來了。希望現在和未來，在紛擾的世界裡，我們都不要流失人性的善良與可愛。最後我想用一句話回到我的座位。⁴

2011/11/5 19:00 於台北中正紀念堂 • 自由廣場

1. 「X」、「Y」為數學方程式中的變數。

2. 數學三角函數中的 COSINE 發音近似中文「口塞」的念法。

3. 數學中 Alpha、Beta 發音近似中文「阿花被打」的念法。

4. 在李真講完話回到座位的同時，舞台上螢幕出現以下這段話：「藝術的偉大在於「分享」，藝術的生命在「真實與虛幻」之間。我不只在做雕塑，我在創造幸福，創造一種讓人享受的東西。」



Li Chen's Opening Reflections on "Greatness of Spirit: Li Chen Premiere Sculpture Exhibition in Taiwan"

I recently had an experience that made me reflect on the fact that time passes too quickly and life is filled with far too many uncertainties. Minutes ago, I was very busy and had to find a bathroom. Off I went, but once there I found myself walking up and down searching for a urinal, thinking to myself "that's strange I can't find one." Then I had an epiphany, made my apologies and left after suddenly realizing that I was in the ladies. Now that's an uncertainty. I retraced my steps and turned left into the men's toilets only to hear someone say: "Excuse me miss you're in the wrong place" – more uncertainty.

I am deeply moved that so many people are here today to see my "solo exhibition" and I would like to thank all our esteemed guests both on stage and in the audience, including some of my best friends and a special thank you to my mother, who is attending the opening ceremony of one of one of my exhibitions for the first time in 12 years - a round of applause for her please.

Time passes so quickly, it is hard to believe that I have not had a solo exhibition in Taiwan for 10 years. My children have already grown up and both myself and my closest friends have a lot more white hair than we once did.

I first picked up a paint brush when I was eight years old and from there scribbled on bits of paper, text books and even my book bag. I was so immersed in painting that my class work suffered, so much so that every time we had exams geography was the only subject I did well in. My Chinese was average and my results in English and science were terrible from the very beginning, though even then I was sometimes lucky enough to be able to guess the right answers. But math was definitely the worse, damn! Who are "X" and "Y" anyway? What is a cosine? Does it mean a mouth stuffed with something (the sound "cosine" is like "mouth stuffed with something" in Mandarin)? Every time the teacher talked about Alpha and Beta (the sound "Beta" is like "be beaten" in Mandarin), I was left wondering which one would win in a fight. Finally, I muddled through and managed to graduate high school in arts and crafts.

My mother is a housewife and the family handyman. Despite the fact that she did not go to school, it was her who taught me the importance of "being determined", and "not being afraid of bitterness".

I had a very busy father who attached a great deal of importance to feelings and he taught me the importance of "ties of friendship" and "strength of character." He never pressured me to do anything, but one story comes to mind. Not long after I got my first job I sometimes used my spare time to work on my art at home, sometimes staying up until midnight and my father asked: "Did someone commission you to make this for them?" to which I answered: "No, this is my own art work." After a brief pause I would hear him saying: "Too well fed and too much time on your hands." One of my greatest regrets in life is that he passed away 13 years ago without having the chance to see my first solo exhibition. At this juncture I should emphasize that the works you will see here today are all a result of me having been "too well fed and having too much time on my hands," as my father would say.

In 1987, a lay Buddhist visited my studio and said to me: "Young man I used to paint a little myself, your realist work is really quite good, would you like to try and make a Buddha statue? I have a small Buddhist altar why not try your hand?" I agreed right away. It was not until later that I discovered sculpting Buddha was much harder than sculpting a person. My response was to throw myself heart and soul into studying religious art and the Buddhist classics. I always "learn from high," but soon found that I "lacked the technique of the ancients." At this point I really have to mention my father-in-law. Meeting him was one of the greatest blessings in Li Chen's life. We occasionally visited the National Palace Museum to see an exhibition. I loved talking to him about art and whenever I finished a new sculpture he was the first person I want to share it with. He opened my mind to a great many things, was a huge influence on me and always hoped I would go on to greater things. He also passed away a few years ago and I was once again plagued by regret. Whether one leads an ordinary life or is successful we still can't bear to see loved ones go, that's just life. So, regardless of how we leave this world, as "people" we must learn from each other how to happily disappear and that is not an easy thing to do.

Let's talk about my creative experiences. During Chinese New Year 2002, myself, a few friends (who are also here today), and our families went camping in the mountains near Chingching Farm. That night we played the guitar, drank wine, made tea and enjoyed ourselves until about 2am or 3am, when we dragged ourselves off to bed. Then it started to



pour down and I remember my back being wet and cold and being in intolerable discomfort. The rain stopped in the morning and I woke up in agony, opened the front of the tent. Wow! Right in front of me was a huge mountain ridge covered by a layer of snow white cloud that seemed to linger there forever. It was a sight of stunning beauty. I stared at it and thought about how much pain I had been in during the night. I immediately grabbed a pen and paper and started to sketch. I moved the ridge under the cloud, and it was my turn to climb onto the cloud and lay down. It was so wonderful, so comfortable. That was how *Float to Sukhavati* was born.

One night I spent the evening with friends in a mountain valley near the Chunyang Aboriginal community. The bubbling brooks at nighttime were like a sea of clouds and the moonlight was so bright I could see my reflection in the clear water. This was a beautiful memory and a few years later I read a poem. The words "Water in a thousand rivers reflects the same moon, while a cloudless sky offers one a clear view," transported me back to that night in the mountain valley, and I really wanted to do something with the emotion the experience created in me. Painting the moon on a canvas is easy, whereas sculpting something with structure and physical properties is far harder. It also brought to mind the story about my ancestor Li Bai who tried to pick the moon out of a lake while drunk and ended up falling in and drowning. Therefore, no swimming when drunk is the moral of that story. Wandering in one's imagination is safer and that is how "I walked on the autumn waters, my shadow like the moon, traveling far and wide and marveling at the twinkling light." It was this experience that led to the 2009 work *Flickering Moonlight*.

I really have too many works to talk about them all here. In the modern world technology makes life more convenient for everyone by correcting mistakes, whereas art enriches our lives by continually changing. I just want to do those things that make me feel and art for me is something ever-changing, a realm within which everything is possible. These strange things come to me in dreams, as if spirits and ghosts casually visit me when I sleep. The true wonder of art is inexplicable.

I am not a religious man, nor a philosopher, I just love making art. After I finish a clay model the peak of the emotional rush has passed for me. If

an excellent piece of literature or music is never published or made public then that is tantamount to it never existing in my book. In other words, for me the greatness of art is to be found in "sharing." The life energy of art is located somewhere in between "reality and illusion," but it was only when I took the first step toward "sharing" that I found dealing with so many miscellaneous things is far harder than the art itself. This is the heavy industry in art. From the quality of art to the exhibition I stick to certain rules, but just like everyone else I have to face reality, after all this is the art business.

When an individual devotes his or her life to the pursuit of an ideal, doing so is often filled with doubts, criticism, praise, emotion, all of which are the normal human reactions. So I would like to give many thanks to all the friends who have helped me on this journey and all the scholars and distinguished guests here today. Thank you to Chairman Ho and his wife for their support over the years, to my agent, Mr. Lee, and everyone who has worked to make this exhibition happen. Over the years we have completed many difficult exhibitions together. And I would like to thank my wife and children, who let me concentrate on creation. They are all here today. I very much hope that now and in future, we hold on to the kind and loving aspects of human nature, even if the world we live in is messed up. Finally, one last word and I will return to my seat.¹

Li Chen at Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall
19:00, 5 November, 2011

1. When Li Chen finishes his speech and returns to his seat the screen on the stage displays the following words: "The greatness of art is to be found in 'sharing.' The life of art is to be found between 'truth and illusion.' I am not making sculpture. I am creating happiness, something to be enjoyed."

李真 1963年生，目前創作於台中、上海兩地。早期涉獵佛學道家等，在自由創作的精神中融入自我攝心之情感，並吸收東方傳統與西方雕塑、及原始非洲大洋洲等藝術養分，更結合當代思惟，作品不受單一傳統束縛，呈現渾然天成的效果。李真透過藝術進行個人的「精神療傷」，在俗世中尋找樂土，在作品中創造靈性空間，用幽默詼諧的方式暗喻世事，希望欣賞者能察覺其中的精神元素。

1999年，李真作品首次於台北曝光，自2000年起在紐約、芝加哥、耶路撒冷、哥本哈根、邁阿密、巴黎、倫敦、北京、上海、日內瓦、新加坡、首爾等許多城市展出，更於2007年第52屆威尼斯雙年展舉辦大型個展，成為百年來首位以個人名義受邀舉辦個展的華人藝術家，2008年中國美術館個展，2009年於新加坡國家美術館舉辦戶外大展。2011年，李真於台北中正紀念堂舉行《大氣：李真台灣大型雕塑首展》，為亞洲歷年來最大的戶外雕塑展。2012年李真受邀於美國西雅圖弗萊伊美術館，舉辦他美國首次的美術館個展《造化之「不生不滅」：千歲與草民》。

2013年李真歐洲巡迴展，即將從法國巴黎凡登廣場開始。透過雕塑，藝術家期待與更多人分享生命中的各種感受。

Li Chen was born in 1963 in Taiwan, and currently works in Taichung and Shanghai. Li Chen accomplished a style which has fully liberated itself from the confines of tradition by incorporating feelings of self-mindfulness and interpretations of Chinese classics from the Buddhist and Taoist traditions, blended with contemporary thought, evincing a remarkably refreshing and natural affect. The underlying aesthetic principles in Li's sculpture are based not only on a "dual composition" of Eastern traditions and Western sculptural language but also on an ongoing dialogue with the spiritual and material cultures of Africa and Oceania. Furthermore, Li Chen's art work aspires to a spiritual arts therapy, uncovering a wealth of joy amidst the simple life's pleasures, innovating a spiritual space through the pieces, as humor embellishes a metaphorical engagement with the world, in the hopes of sharing this consciousness with the viewer as they appreciate the spiritual elements informing these creations.

In 1999, Li Chen had his artwork debut in Taipei. Since 2000, his world tour exhibition started from New York to Chicago, Jerusalem, Copenhagen, Miami, Paris, London, Beijing, Shanghai, Geneva, Singapore, Seoul, etc. He gave a solo exhibition in the 52nd Venice Biennale in 2007. In 2008, his work was recognized at a major solo exhibition at the National Art Museum of China in Beijing. In 2009, Singapore Art Museum invited him to have his first solo outdoor sculpture exhibition. In 2011, Li Chen's *Greatness of Spirit: Li Chen Premiere Sculpture Exhibition in Taiwan*, marked Asia's largest outdoor sculpture exhibition and the most expansive open air undertaking in the thirty year history of the CKS memorial. In 2012, he launched his first solo exhibition in the United States—*Li Chen: Eternity and Commoner*, at Frye Art Museum in Seattle.

In 2013, Li Chen will launch a European exhibition tour that will start at La place Vendôme in Paris. It is, therefore, the artist's truest desire to share life's inspirations with viewers through his own sculptures.



個展	2012	造化之【不生不滅】：千歲與草民，弗萊伊美術館，西雅圖	
	2011	「大氣：李真台灣大型雕塑首展」中正紀念堂，台北	
	2010	夜光盈昃－【天燧】，上海藝術博覽會國際當代藝術展，上海	
	2009	「李真：精神·身體·靈魂」新加坡國家美術館，新加坡	
	2008	靈識窮體－【神魄】，亞洲藝術中心，北京	
		「尋找精神的空間」中國美術館，北京	
	2007	「虛空中的能量」第 52 屆威尼斯雙年展，義大利	
	2005	「李真雕塑展」台北國際藝術博覽會，台北	
	2003	「大氣神遊」古豪士畫廊，紐約	
	2001	「李真雕塑 1998-2000」大河美術畫廊，台中	
	2000	「虛空化境－界中界」台北國際藝術博覽會，台北	
	1999	虛空中的能量」台北國際藝術博覽會，台北	
	精選國際聯展	2011	「燦爛的倫理學」Interalia Art Company，首爾
		2010	「新東方精神 II－承啟」亞洲藝術中心，北京
			韓國國際藝術博覽會，首爾
		2009	香港國際藝術博覽會
2008		「新東方精神展覽 I－沉積」亞洲藝術中心，北京	
		「源－第一屆月亮河雕塑藝術節」月亮河當代藝術館，北京	
2007		「中國當代藝術前沿展 1966-2006」路易斯安那現代美術館，哥本哈根，丹麥	
		「中國當代藝術前沿展 1966-2006」以色列博物館，耶路撒冷	
		「威尼斯第十屆國際雕塑及裝置大展 OPENASIA」，義大利	
		「天行健－中國當代藝術前沿展」亞洲藝術中心，北京	
		「世事而非」斗山藝術中心，首爾	
2006		「中國當代雕塑十人展」亞洲藝術中心，北京	
		新加坡藝術博覽會	
		台北國際藝術博覽會	
2005		上海國際城市雕塑雙年展	
		北京中國國際畫廊博覽會	
		上海國際藝術博覽會·新加坡藝術博覽會	
2004		「威尼斯第七屆國際雕塑及裝置大展 OPENASIA」，義大利	
		「虛擬的愛－當代新異術國際展」，當代藝術館，台北	
		北京中國國際畫廊博覽會	
2003		上海國際藝術博覽會	
		芝加哥國際藝術博覽會	
2002	紐約國際現代藝術博覽會		
	佛羅里達州－棕櫚灘國際藝術博覽會		
	芝加哥國際藝術博覽會		
2001	休士頓國際藝術博覽會		
	「無疆界的中國－華人當代藝術聯展」蘇富比曼哈頓總部，紐約		
	巴黎第一屆亞洲藝術博覽會		
	日內瓦三月沙龍藝術博覽會		
	芝加哥國際藝術博覽會		
	紐約國際亞洲藝術博覽會		

Solo Exhibitions	2012	Li Chen: Eternity and Commoner, Frye Art Museum, Seattle
	2011	Greatness of Spirit: Li Chen Premiere Sculpture Exhibition in Taiwan, Taipei
	2010	The Beacon– When Night Light Glimmers, ShContemporary 10, Shanghai
	2009	Li Chen: Mind · Body · Spirit, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
	2008	Soul Guardians- Li Chen Solo Show, Asia Art Center, Beijing
		In Search of Spiritual Space, National Museum of China, Beijing
	2007	Energy of Emptiness, 52nd International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, Venice
	2005	Li Chen Sculpture, Art Taipei 2005, Taipei
	2003	Spiritual Journey through the Great Ether, Michael Goedhuis Gallery, New York
	2001	Delights of Ordinary People, River Art Gallery, Taichung
	2000	The Transformation of Emptiness– Boundary within Boundary, Art Taipei 2000, Taipei
	1999	Energy of Emptiness, Art Taipei, Taipei
	Selected International Group Exhibitions	2011
2010		Spirit of the East II - Bridging, Asia Art Center, Beijing
		Korea International Art Fair, Seoul
2009		ArtHK 09, Hong Kong
2008		Spirit of the East I- Accumulations, Asia Art Center, Beijing
		The Origin: The first Annual Moon River Sculpture Festival, Moon River Museum of Contemporary Art, Beijing
2007		China Onward: Chinese Contemporary Art 1966-2006, The Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen
		OPENASIA, 10th International Exhibition of Sculptures and Installations, Venice
		The Power of the Universe – Exhibition of Frontier, Contemporary Chinese Art, Asia Art Center, Beijing
		Exploration and Revolution of images in reality by the 14 contemporary Chinese Artists, Doosan Art Center, Seoul
		TOP 10 Chinese Contemporary Sculpture Exhibition, Asia Art Center, Beijing
2006		China Onward: Chinese Contemporary Art, 1966-2006, Israel Museum, Jerusalem
		ARTSingapore, Singapore
2005		Art Taipei, Taipei
		Shanghai International Biennial Urban Sculpture Exhibition, Shanghai
		China International Gallery Exposition, Beijing
2004		Shanghai Art Fair, Shanghai
		ARTSingapore, Singapore
		OPENASIA, 7th International Exhibition of Sculptures and Installations, Venice
2003		Fiction Love– Ultra New Vision in Contemporary Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei
		China International Gallery Exposition, Beijing
2002	Shanghai Art Fair, Shanghai	
	Art Chicago, Chicago	
2001	International Contemporary Art Fair, New York	
	Art Palm Beach, Florida	
	Art Chicago, Chicago	
	International Fine Art Fair, Houston	
	China without Borders, headquarters of Sotheby's, New York	
2000	Asian Art Fair, Paris	
	Salon de Mars Art Fair, Geneva	
	Art Chicago, Chicago	
		The International Asian Art Fair, New York

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我喜歡無中生有
當泥塑完成時
最高的感動已經結束了

李真

I love creating something from nothing.
After I finish a clay model,
The peak of the emotional rush has passed for me.

Li Chen

