

MR CHIU KWONG CHIU:

I think I should speak in Cantonese.

Actually, I haven't spoken for a long time. I can't speak Putonghua, I can't even speak Cantonese very well, actually. Last night I prepared for this presentation all night, because I was working in Beijing all along and this morning I heard Prof Ge and so I've turned all my answers into questions. I don't know how to present them. Let me try.

Perhaps we could all ponder these questions together.

In the past two decades or so, I've always been involved in education and writing. By "writing", I'm sure you understand I'm originally a visual artist, so I think in images. When I was studying in Europe, I noticed a phenomenon that we don't have here. In Europe, the death of a culture I won't say is less than ours, but is at least the same as ours.

So in terms of cultural convergence, perhaps we have always overlooked the point or when we do see the point, we would usually result to an improved approach. In Europe when the young people grow up, they would have prepared a whole set of literature for the young people. When the young people grow up, in their society, they don't expect every young person to then turn to the study of art and culture, but when a young person does decide to embark on that path, he will find that all the materials are ready there for him.

When I came back to Hong Kong to teach, I noticed a problem in this respect, and that's why the past two decades I've made attempts to write.

Prof Ge said in his conclusion, the second point particularly, that's very comforting to me. He talks about making traditions part of our social customs and I'm going to talk about that now. I wonder if it's too bright. Several years ago, I had an opportunity to go

into the Garden of the Emperor Chien Long. There was this dark corner in the garden and I saw what looked like an alien chair. I found it really strange. It's a chair but at the same time it's just a root of a tree and it's trying very hard to become the root of a tree again. So I found it really odd.

If I say young people or new generation of China see this, they would just consider this piece of waste. But people who consider this waste, possibly would be into other kinds of waste. I feel rather bad. Originally I had some answers, but now those answers all become questions.

When you see this illustration, because I have been teaching for too long, students have been to my class, they would have seen this. Originally I thought I would try to introduce the development history of Western arts to young people. Over time, I came up with this, something similar to the John Riskin's direction. So the marks left by human that became greats and culture. So it's become evidential space.

But in 2000, I went to Europe and then I came back and then I stopped my intention to publish that book. So apart from that event related to Chien Long's garden, there's another event which moved me. The architects and craftsmen then worked very hard to find out among the stones their soul of culture and religion. So that is a kind of battle with the stones. When I taught, I said that this kind of battle is actually shaking our thoughts.

Then I made an attempt to do something. That is, since nature is doing all these to us, I would rather start to dismantle the items myself, so I started with architecture. Before nature turns architectural structures into ruins, I dismantled the items first.

If you look up, you'll face this package of inner thoughts but, in fact, your heart is turning the other way. I tried to develop a visual solution for this. I was naive and ignorant then. I thought only the cover remained. And after that attempt, an issue arose. That is, at the end of the day, what are we to choose for

our young people? Everybody is telling you that he or she needs only a vitamin C tablet. You cannot drag him or her into something more complicated. Then I tried to turn my thoughts into something known as deduction. I know that I'll never be able to express my theme. However, I know that I can continuously simplify that theme.

After making that attempt, I felt that I had been very lucky. My students had not grown up yet, so they found their subject very interesting.

Then I started another attempt and I was rather greedy in this. I would like to express that theme in one go. I tried to use tools and traditions to manifest that theme. Now, it's actually a bird. This chop is another charisma in Chinese tradition.

For a country with a history of 2,000 years, it may have 2,000 chops already. And that's actually the characteristic of Chinese paintings. I tried to use practices to manifest that theme and then I placed a small boat there. I did tell the media something about this boat.

In the museums of Hong Kong -- well, you should visit our museums more frequently. In fact, there are very excellent works in our museums. I actually learnt this boat from our museums. However, that learning failed. I tried to copy the boat which was drawn by Shen Zhou. In just a minute, I tried to experience what Shen Zhou experienced and of course I failed. But that was an exploration of Chinese paintings. I tried to express my inner thoughts. Something so personalised is bound to be considered ugly by other people. My students told me that that drawing was difficult to swallow. I tried to quantify very complicated issues. Take, for example, the surroundings and the atmosphere. Can be something very complicated and difficult to understand.

Let me disclose a secret: well, here, this book is about ten merits. Of course, if I'm talking about Harry Potter, it's better.

I was actually dreaming. Certain themes cannot be manifested immediately. Maybe I was too long-winded and too cumbersome in my expression.

Chapter 14 out of the 16 chapters was repeated by me. I thought my students would like that chapter. During classes, my students did express their feelings and sentiments, as I did when I was young. I went to Chen Goh in Fujian province to look at the model of a boat. I also went to Kaifeng to see how their boats looked like.

We all know the famous painting of "Along the River during the Ching Ming Festival". However, we never tried to view it. It's only recently when the painting was exhibited in Hong Kong that we looked at it. However, this time the exhibition was mobilised more by national sentiments than by love and feelings for culture.

Then I went to Beijing. At the very beginning, I tried to understand Beijing as a tourist. I had loved to visit Beijing for a long time ago. The painting of "Along the River during the Ching Ming Festival" had not been regarded highly by me previously. Well, facing a space of 720,000 square metres as well as a history of almost 3,000 years, I had the feeling that China was rather complicated and difficult to tackle.

And then, every day in Beijing there were thousands of people moving in front of me. Now there's a vehicle and then I asked myself, "If the vehicle was moved away, what would it look like?" So I tried to develop along that line.

So I wrote that book, but when I wrote that book I encountered another problem. When we carried out the survey on it, to us it's happiness, right, because that's winter. At about 4 am, I went out to look at the fields and then very dramatically I could see the stars, the morning stars. However, when this historical space was spread out in front of me, when all the people were gone, it's very difficult for me to enter the scene and the atmosphere. So I had to ask people to come in again. So I did this repeatedly.

So what I'm going to say is that people assisted us in reflecting on history and revisiting history. This is something very complicated. The images actually reflected what Prof Ge told us just now. Chinese culture is very, very complicated. It's so complicated that I should use concepts that I heard in my childhood to describe it.

When I was small, we had football teams, Dong Fang, that means "East" and also Nan Hua, "South China". And during a fierce battle, it's very difficult to discern who had been hurt or injured.

So this complicatedness could not actually be resolved by me. So what I could do was to use what I learn when I was trained in visual arts. And my knowledge about young people was not sufficient. Since I needed more people, I added more people to it.

Fook Hung Garden, you know that this garden was built by Emperor Chien Long when he was young. A fund in Hong Kong reinstated it. It was actually burned down in the 1920s and they examined me to design an invitation card for them. So I depicted this reconstructed garden for them. It is his. I don't know how to say it. It's very difficult to express it. Oh, it's him. It's he. He. Her. I tried to use images to attract the interest of people.

Just now, the maid in the palace was outside in the open space when the whole area was illuminated. I've always thought there are deep thoughts that could influence people, so this palace maid was embarrassed.

But what I actually wanted to introduce was this cat. So that's my first attempt. If visual language can start from serenity to activity, then what role science and technology can play?

Among all the races in the world, the Chinese race has the most respect for science, technology and tools. So that's my first attempt. Apart from eye expressions, gesture, posture, this cat can be expressed like this. And then I started another attempt. This should have emerged in our bookstores. The production team

did not have sufficient time and our resources were rather meager and then there was this very serious problem of investigation and verification. Due to copyright problems, we can only build in voices and sounds without copyright. Your laughter made me feel that I was not creating culture. Oh, that's really miserable.

Let's just look at the cat. It's acting very secretly and suspiciously. My personal thought was that since young people love things that can be moved, I would rather move these pieces for them. And in these movements, they would try to appreciate what we had done.

Having made this endeavour, I started working formerly with the Forbidden City publisher. This is my office. You should really envy me because I'm working here. I would like to share this with you because I'm really happy working there. When I work there, it doesn't matter about the heat, the sun -- no, not this one. I have two assistants and we work in Beijing.

In Hong Kong, in the academic circle, they always say that the Polytechnic University students have no interest in culture but these are two students that I taught at the Polytechnic University 10 years ago. Since they have graduated, they have always worked with me on these various projects.

So we were doing research on literature. This picture, I've asked for it for five years before I got it. I feel a sense of loss. The labels there were for us to do -- that were put on there for us to do, survey. Every night we scrolled, we rolled out the picture so we could look at it.

Oh, I have only three more minutes? Okay, I'll be quick.

So this is what we saw. There's something we tried to -- that we're trying. And we tried to promote the Forbidden City through a series of publications so that we could export this place, in a sense.

Of course, maybe in China we're importing hundreds of ideas a day. We may not export the same number of ideas, because Chinese culture is just so complex. These pictures I took for Dr Ma Kai Fai. He wanted me to tell you what I'm doing now, so this is what I'm doing.

I'll be very quick. In the Forbidden City, there are a lot of very interesting things, like how they can do -- in some of the gardens they have bamboo trees. We can see them. Every day, the bamboo trees sort of cleanse the sky, so as to cleanse our soul, but then the bamboo leaves are turned upside down to sweep the floor. It's very interesting. It's about the relationship between nature and human.

In the Chinese race, you could see all these very interesting interrelations in Chinese daily life, so these are the phenomena that I noted. I hope in future there will be another opportunity to share these with you.

Now, very quickly, very quickly, because of time constraints, this is a trial run. My assistant, Kenny, in Hong Kong, who told me this, but still there are a lot of errors and imperfections. But we have to give young people a chance to learn and develop. Even I need to learn and develop. I'm really scared today because just now Prof Ge said he's like brick trying to attract jade, but I'm here in front of two experts in the field. I look like a really messy sandwich.

In the whole painting, we still need to do editing. We have to verify where we have got it wrong, but at least in this attempt, we tried to depict the Forbidden City as it was like in the daily lives of people. I think it will take us another year to complete this.

Our production we bothered by 2D and 3D. That's why sometimes you see people like this because we haven't done a 3D image. Look what happened to that person. But I think it's a good thing, because then that person is not on the boat. As we -- just by moving the camera.

I mentioned this to the Art Museum of Hong Kong. I said that we could also try this so that in junior and senior secondary schools, students and teachers would then become attracted to this presentation. Because we have such a rich culture, they shouldn't be just for the retirees. We're talking about young people in their teens or 20s. And if then they come to be drawn to Chinese culture, imagine they have still tens of years to develop their interest. I think it should have ended.

Well, running out of time, so I'll speed it up. I hope there will be another opportunity to present the finished product to you so that we could hear your comments and your criticisms.