

MR CRAIG AU YEUNG YING CHAI:

I try to use eight minutes to introduce to you the first half of my life. Sometimes I will ask myself, "What am I doing?" In fact, I know and I know that more and more.

I am a graduate of the Design Faculty of The Hong Kong Polytechnic and that was 20 years ago. After graduation, I did not join the design or the advertising field. In fact, I joined a radio station.

Why did that happen? I can explain that to you later. In fact, I joined commercial radio and I have spent the first turn of my career life in commercial radio. In the process, I went to Taiwan and joined a magazine and then I also went back to university to study and then for a period of time I just left commercial radio and I actually did nothing.

According to commercial radio's rule, I could not take up any other part-time work, but in fact I did that. I designed the album cover for many singers, I designed the image for many singers and friends. I also have some theatre work experience.

I used to be one of the actors of (Chinese spoken), so if you take a look at this picture, you can see, whether you are able to identify me.

Besides, I also designed the sets and props for a number of friends for their theatrical performances. Mr Wong Chee Wah is my good friend and I helped him design props and sets. See here, this big shoe was designed by me and I thought it was a masterpiece.

I wonder if you are able to identify the one in the middle? That one is Pang Ho Cheung. In fact, I designed the packaging for his books some years ago.

At that time, I was still working for commercial radio, but all along I also had been drawing some comic cartoon figures. And then later I went to Taiwan and I also published my own drawings in a number of media in Taiwan. And there are different contents.

This series, namely "My Sky" had a Japanese version in the year 2000 and recently in Beijing and Taiwan all my comic productions had been consolidated. So this is the most recent style of my drawings. In the past, I only used single lines and

recently I tried to explore more with the paper cutting art of China and also the latest pattern work and so on. So I also strived for opportunities to take part in exhibitions, especially exhibitions of installations.

I did not only do two-dimensional drawings, I also made clothing out of my own imagination.

Some of these were the materials from my exhibitions. The book "My Heaven" is like my own personal diary, a lot of black humour in it but I also tried to talk about popular topics like love. And I talk about the relationships around me. So there are various kinds of relationships between couples mentioned in the book.

There are also the publications on cockroaches, so I played the role of an editor.

In the end of the 1990s, I published various comics entitled "Cockroaches". I was the editor.

Two years ago, I adopted the same spirit of cockroaches and together worked with cartoonists. We formed a group to publish our own publication. Last year this publication was on show in Switzerland and this is the picture of the exhibition in Switzerland and we were exchanging opinions with our readers.

Myself as a cartoonist, actually I've been doing that work for quite some time.

On the other hand, I'm also interested in interior design, architecture. I was so interested in it that I decided to work on projects on my own. Therefore, from 2000 to 2002, I ran a small shop selling modern designs by Europeans, just a little shop that I ran. I tried to be a storeowner and in that process I knew that the operations of design, consumption and culture. That's a good experience for me because I wasn't satisfied with just writing about design or stories about design. It's only when you actually start to source goods, discuss with designers and interact with your customers, exchange with the customers that you learned about other things.

I've also written quite a number of books on interior design and household living as well. So in the beginning, my articles were published in magazines and newspapers. There was a collection of my articles that came out in the form of a book.

So in the past decade, that's what I've been doing. An important writing series came

up later on and that's the collaboration between me and Hong Kong and Taiwan, that's the writing series under the theme of "Home". There are titles like "Chinese Home" and the collection also involves interviews conducted by me with my friends in various places. So I try to find what kind of living environments modern Chinese people are living in, what kind of products do Chinese people like to surround themselves with?

So apart from household items, I wanted to find the relationships between people and real objects, so I have created another series, my own series of my favourite Italian designs, et cetera, and this series are also produced in the form of a book.

So producing, publishing books is something that I'm really into.

So I also designed the cover of the book as well. Editors are usually very nice to me because I have done everything that I could and editors are usually very grateful to me!

Later on, I am also involved in my biggest interest, an interest that I've got since my childhood and that is related to food. During the SARS outbreak, I wrote a book entitled "Half Full". Because of this book, "Half Full" -- this is a book about my home cooking, my way of home cooking and stories associated with it. Because I needed to create the cuisines and do the cooking myself and treat my friends to my cooking, so I was very concerned about the atmosphere, the music played while we were having food and all the utensils we used. So slowly people started to realise that I also care about eating and food. And people invited me to be judges at food or cooking competitions.

Actually, I also enjoy travelling. Because I feel that the process of moving around, travelling is a processes that you can learn a lot of things, so I've also written this book entitled "Enjoy Yourself" and also photo installations in the book.

In 2006, that is last year, in the beginning of last year, I consolidated my views again. I talk about the pace of living in Hong Kong, for someone who's engaged in crossover work. You know, discipline is very important. You need to be able to control your pace of work.

So this is really something related to discipline and your own expectations for yourself. Therefore, I began to issue regular issues of this series and it was the first

one was issued in the spring. The next one was issued in the summer and there's (indistinct words) for every issue that we put out. Sometimes writers submitted their work to editors. You know, nowadays, the authors themselves have to be involved with all the promotional work of the book. I've called up my friend Wai Men to come to my book launch ceremony.

We have to calculate way in advance how to promote our books.

I've also had lots of communications with mainland audiences and this is the picture taken outside the Guangzhou Art Museum. I like to know how people think of my role and what they make of the titles that people give me. Last year I spent almost the whole year creating this series, "Hong Kong Flavour". This is a four-volume series. This is the Taiwanese version which has two volumes. The mainland version is coming out soon.

As I said earlier, once you have created a book, you need to be present at lots of book-related events. I can still remember very well the heavy turnout at my various events. And I need to maintain contacts with editors as well. And we ate that much food during our publicity events. For the sake of the book we also attended talks and demonstrations by chefs. I also went to Singapore to promote my books and to attend workshops as well and talks.

Recently, on the 10th anniversary of the handover, in Shenzhen there was a book fair and they used "Hong Kong Flavour" as a theme book. So I've come to a stage where people have identified with what I'm doing, my relationship with Hong Kong. But whether I can actually afford all these roles, I'm not sure. I'm still trying things out.

And I still don't quite understand why there are times when I managed to create some installation arts, like what you can find in Wanchai, installations related to reading. There are actually different styles installations that contrast the styles of my and my father's.

What do you mean by "crossover"? I think my father is a person from Fujian Province so my father is good at making flour cakes. Like to wrap things in flour papers. So I grew up with Fujanese food. So to me to put various things together, mix things altogether and enjoy the flavour of these various ingredients, to share these food with others is an enjoyable thing.

Lastly, I would like to share with you a picture which I've never shown in public. This is the picture taken of me when I was three, four years old, because I had this experience of crossing over when I was a child already.