



我的藝術之路系列二

陳思光：「我發現試驗性的陶泥製作過程十分有趣。」

「遇上藝術・走在藝術道上」乃香港藝術學院去年夏季開放日時提出的標語，年來我們仍一直細細咀嚼由這帶出的討論。有趣的是，從不同人士的分享中，我們除了嚐到箇中各人所經歷的各種甜、酸、苦與辣，亦同時領略到藝術道上不同的人竟有著不少共同的感受及經歷。在這個系列中，我們將邀請不同的校友及學院的藝術行政人員就同一組問題執筆分享他們在創作、學習及藝術行政工作上的不同感受，邀請大家一起經歷他們的藝術之旅。而我們相信，你也會對以下的問題有你自己的答案。

文：陳思光

先後於1996年及2000年於英國劍橋大學取得學士及碩士學位，其後修讀香港藝術學院與澳洲皇家墨爾本理工大學合辦之藝術學士學位，主修陶藝，並於2007年取得藝術碩士學位。他的部分作品為香港文化博物館所藏。

中譯：香港藝術學院傳訊及發展部

問：你是怎樣遇上藝術的？

我在大約六歲那年首次接觸「藝術」，雖則那並非稱得上一個愉快的經歷。就如香港不少小朋友一般，我小時候被迫學習彈鋼琴，我無法理解為何當時大部份的鋼琴教師對懶散的小朋友都較為嚴厲。當時我討厭上鋼琴課，且如很多小朋友般不喜歡練習那些沉悶無比且重複乏味的鋼琴指法，但回想當年，我實在感激父母給我這個學習鋼琴的機會，而我亦很慶幸自己並沒半途而廢。

鋼琴課讓我獲得基本的音樂訓練，之後我加入了兒童合唱團，並隨團巡迴表演。中學時期，我繼續進修音樂，在修讀二十世紀音樂史的期間，我認識了何謂印象主義及表現主義，並發現不單只在音樂的領域，在繪畫的國度同樣有這些派別，這是我首次接觸視覺藝術。

我差不多到二十歲才開始接觸陶藝。當時我在大學修讀數學，我參加了學生會舉辦的陶瓷學會，覺得學習陶藝製作可能是很有趣的事（當時很可能是受了電影《人鬼情未了》的影響）。出乎我意料之外，陶瓷學會每年都有盈餘，皆因不少學生在學期開始時繳付了會費，但在迎新會後就不見踪影。由於沒有老師或導師，工作室也常只有一兩個學生，我就開始用我自己的方法來做「陶瓷」。我嘗試將不同的物料混合在一起，然後毫無顧忌地把它們放進窯裡。那時的作品雖稱不上美麗，但我發現試驗性的陶泥製作過程十分有趣。

問：是甚麼驅使你選擇走上藝術之路？

我想是機緣巧合吧。

畢業後我在金融界工作了數年，並有機會修讀一個非全日制學位課程，開始正式的陶瓷和藝術訓練。當時公餘進修成為風氣，不少同事都報讀兼讀制課程，只是他們大多選擇商業或法律，而我則選擇了藝術。

我想延續我在大學時開始的陶藝創作，而我這個喜好試驗的創作習慣絲毫沒變。在我的研究中，我不斷嘗試將不同的物料與非傳統的東西混合在一起，並觀察其變化。製作過程中當然會經常出現裂縫、爆炸、熔煉、倒塌、窯溫不足或過熱和漏釉等情況，所以我完全能理解為甚麼在燒窯時總沒有人願意把作品放在我的作品旁邊。

修畢學士學位後，我租用了陶藝導師的工作室中的一個小小工作間。但那時因為正職已佔用了我大部份的時間，我的陶藝創作反比前少，所以感到租用那工作間是用來存放物件多於製作陶藝。儘管如此，我仍然非常享受夜闌人靜時獨自在工作室進行創作的時光。

不過我不滿足於我當時所做的事，我想對陶藝有更深入的認識。我作出了人生重大的改變——我辭去了正職並報讀了藝術碩士課程，用了兩年時間深入研習陶藝，以及研究靈性的藝術，期間我亦把握時間去了多次旅行。

完成碩士課程後，我問其中一名導師：「我希望能嘗試做任何與藝術有關的工作，那我應該做甚麼？」導師建議我該利用我財務上的專業知識協助香港藝術學院，因此我便當了兩年多學院的兼任財務顧問。其後，我全心全意地投入藝術創作，成為全職陶藝創作者，並獲學院邀請執教。

問：走在藝術道上是一怎樣的？

雖然有時候作品未如預期般理想，但我很享受陶藝創作的過程。當然，能否堅持創作下去是一個問題。我仍在摸索如何為支持長期陶藝創作適當的平衡點。身邊不少朋友經常問我如何藉陶藝創作養活自己，並希望我可給予一個直接快速的答案。但我只能說「我還不知道。」這答案顯然未能滿足他們的好奇心。

此刻我只希望能繼續擴闊和發展我的創作，因為我知道在我能稱自己為藝術家之前，我仍有很長的路要走。

在藝術創作和藝術行政這兩個崗位工作了一段日子後，我對這兩個角色有更深的體會。我欣賞藝術家無盡的創意和他們獨到的觀點，但同時我亦佩服藝術行政人員將創意化為現實的能力，儘管這有時必需涉及某程度的妥協和磨合。我想除非某一方讓步，否則這兩個角色間的磨擦將很可能繼續下去——我當然希望這樣的情況不會經常發生。

有人說基於我的財務專業背景，我應該可以更好地游走於兩個範疇之間。坦白說，我並不認同這樣的說法，相反對

我來說這正可能是一個障礙。在創作過程中，我的意念偏向務實安全，但有時會流於單調乏味。而在處理問題方面，我即使可以客觀地找出問題所在，但我不懂如何解決問題的技巧，亦欠缺那份處理問題的韌勁。總而言之，我認為「藝術」的道路並不易走，而且對我而言是一個無終止的在職培訓過程。

問：在香港修讀藝術或從事有關藝術的工作，最需要堅守的信念是甚麼？

在香港進行藝術創作絕不容易並且充滿挑戰，當中還有不少客觀限制，例如欠缺空間、設施不足、缺乏資助、很少人欣賞手製作品等等。我正學習如何將這些所謂的「規限」化成創作意念，再製成有趣及新穎的作品。目前我尚未達到這境界，但希望能不斷有所改進。變則通，我想這也是香港人的特性吧。

問：你希望藝術、或是你正從事的藝術工作將來會為這社會帶來甚麼？

我仍未知道。

就我目前所做的事，我絕對不敢說我可以如何貢獻社會，但正如我之前提及，我希望延續在陶藝方面的創作，並繼續進步。我希望有一天，具質素的藝術論壇及討論不再只是邊緣小眾人士參與的活動，而大眾的藝術修養和素質都能有所提高，以更知性的角度去欣賞藝術。

My Journey of Art Feature Series II

Ray Chan: I found the experimental clay making process quite fascinating.

Discussions and sharings linger on even after the School's Open Days last summer as the slogan of the event "Encounter with art. Embark on a journey of art" has touched the hearts of many of our alumni and the School administrative staff who have been working for art over the years, with passion and dedication. In this feature series, they will share with us their own journey of art by responding to the same set of questions. And we trust you have your own answers to the questions too!

Text: Ray Chan See-kwong

Having received his BA and MA degrees from the University of Cambridge, U.K., Hong Kong ceramist Ray Chan obtained his BA (Fine Art) and MFA degrees from RMIT University (co-presented with Hong Kong Art School) in 2002 and 2007 respectively. His artworks are in the collection of the Hong Kong Heritage Museum.

Q: How did you encounter with art?

My first encounter with "art" happened when I was about six years old. It was not in particular a nice experience though. Like many small kids in Hong Kong, I was forced by parents to take piano lessons. I don't know why most piano teachers back in the old days were really harsh on lazy students. I hated those lessons at the time as you could imagine that not a lot of children like practicing, especially those boring and repetitive finger exercises. Come to think of it now, I am grateful that my parents did provide me with such opportunity and am glad that I didn't give up.

The piano lessons provided me with some basic music training. I then started singing in the children's choir, and went on tours with the choir. When I was in secondary school, I studied cert and a-level music. During the time I studied 20th century music history, I started to learn about impressionism, expressionism, etc and discovered that there were paintings assimilated to them, not just music. That was my first encounter with visual art.

I did not start making ceramics until I was around twenty. When I was studying mathematics in the university, I thought that it might be fun to join the pottery society organised by the Student Union (I was probably influenced by the movie *Ghost* at the time). To my surprise, the pottery society that I joined made profit every year as there were many students joined and paid the one-off membership fee at the beginning of the term and then never showed up after the welcoming parties. With no teachers, no tutors, maybe only one or two fellow students in the studio, I started to make "things" on my own. I tried mixing different materials together and then chucked them into the kiln without restraint. I don't think I made anything "beautiful" at the time but I found this experimental clay making process quite fascinating.

Q: What has inspired you to embark on a journey of art?

By chance I guess.

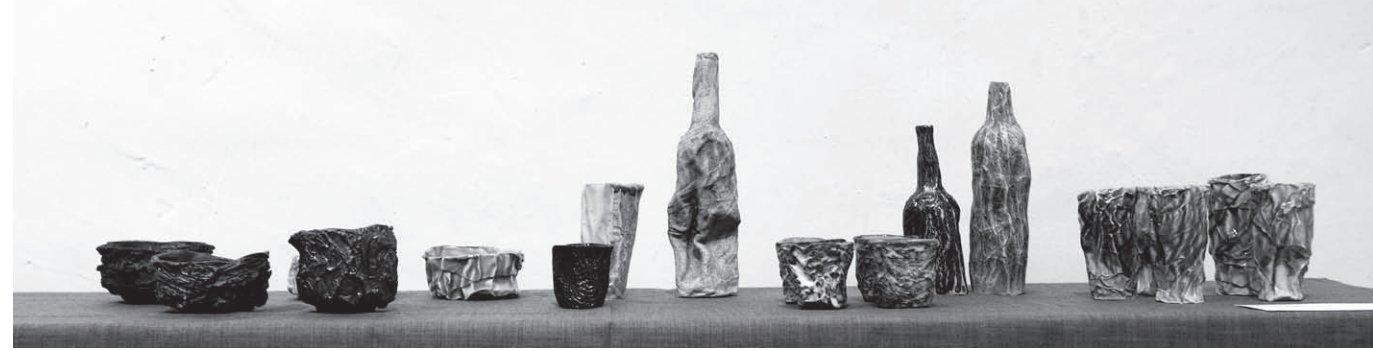
After graduation and having been working in the financial sector for a few years, I had an opportunity to enroll in a part-time degree programme and started my formal training in ceramics and fine art. Many of my colleagues also took up part-time second degree programme which seemed to be a trendy thing to do. Of course they chose Business or Law but I chose Art.

I simply wanted to continue with what I started in the university. That sense of experimentation still remains within me. During my study, I kept testing different materials, mixing unconventional things together, and observed their transformations. Ceramics faults like cracks, explosions, melting, collapsing, overfiring or underfiring and glaze running excessively all over the kiln shelves, just to name some, were of course unavoidable. I could understand perfectly why no one wanted to put their pots next to mine in the kiln.

After graduating from the bachelor degree course, I rented a small space from my ceramics tutor's studio. I didn't do much as my full-time job consumed most of my time. Sometimes, I felt like I was paying rent for storage rather than making ceramics. However, I did enjoy very much my time at the studio alone in the middle of the night making things.

It wasn't enough, I thought. I want to know more and am not satisfied with what I had been doing. I made a radical change and quitted my full-time job, then enrolled in a Master in Fine Art programme and spent two years with clay and researched on spirituality art. Of course I didn't waste this opportunity to do quite a number of travelling.

When I graduated from the master programme, I asked



one of my tutors, "What can I do now? I am willing to try anything related to art." My tutor suggested that I could use my knowledge in the financial sector to help the Hong Kong Art School. So I worked for the Hong Kong Arts Centre as a temporary financial consultant for about two years. After that, I made a bold attempt to be a full-time ceramic practitioner and was occasionally invited to teach in the Art School.

Q: How do you describe your journey of art?

I enjoy my time making ceramics, sometimes the outcomes may not be as satisfactory as I would have liked but the making process is always fulfilling. Of course, sustainability is another question. I am still trying to find a right balance how I could support what I do on a long term basis. The interesting thing is that people around me keep asking me how I can make a living by doing ceramics. They seem to be more concerned than myself and many demand a quick and direct answer from me. I could only reply, "I don't know yet." This answer doesn't seem to satisfy their curiosity.

My main concern now is that I hope my work will continue to evolve and develop as I think I still have a long way to go before I could call myself a professional artist.

Having been working briefly in both the art making and the art administration fields, I started to appreciate more the distinctive functions of these two roles. I admire the wild ideas from the artists and their inspiring points of view. I also admire the practicality of art administrators to turn the ideas into reality (though sometimes these ideas are kind of compromised). I guess the tension between the two sides will never stop unless either side gives up - I hope that will not happen too frequently.

People say that I have an advantage of understanding both sides due to my financial background. Frankly, I don't agree

and I even think sometimes it could actually be a hindrance. When making artwork, my ideas usually tend to be more pragmatic, safe, and it would sometimes become boring and dull. Understanding the situation is not helping either because I don't know how to fix the problems and lack the stamina to execute in an appropriate manner.

To answer this question, I think this "art" path is difficult and is a never-ending on- the-job-training to me.

Q: What do you think is the most important belief for those who are studying art or working for art in Hong Kong?

Making art in Hong Kong is probably not easy but certainly challenging. There are many limitations or restrictions: lack of space, funding, facilities (e.g. no reduction or wood firing), as well as appreciation of handmade ceramic works, and you name it. I'm learning how to turn these so-called "limitations" into creative ideas and make something interesting and innovative. Not quite there yet but I hope I could keep improving in what I do. I guess the flexibility and adaptability are the characteristics of Hong Kong people. And for people working for art, it is important for us to think out of the box and to break through the limitations.

Q: In what way you hope the art or your work for art can help contribute to the society?

I don't know yet.

I am definitely not in the position to say how I could contribute to the society by doing what I am doing. As I mentioned earlier, I hope I could continue making more ceramics and continue to evolve. I hope one day, quality art talks and discussions will no longer be activities for a marginalized group of people, and people could appreciate art more, in both intellectual and spiritual terms.