

Research Project Funded & Supported by
Research Committee, Hong Kong Art School
(a division of Hong Kong Arts Centre)



NEW HORIZONS OF LOCAL CERAMIC ART IN HONG KONG

A Research Focusing on The
Artistic Engagements of Graduates
with Specialty in Ceramics

by Rachel Cheung

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2001 ————— 2015

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	Most learners start pursuing art study from an interest and hobby, and some waited till the right time to display their works through exhibition. However, is that it for the study of art is all about? How does art inspire people to take a step towards a wonderful and meaningful outcome? Let's start from talking about arts education.	
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Introduction of the Project

This survey project is initiated by Rachel Cheung, Lecturer / Programme Coordinator (Project) of Hong Kong Art School. With the support of the HKAS Research Committee, Rachel is proceeding a study with the alumni who studied the Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art) programme jointly presented by HKAS and RMIT University, Australia, with ceramics as major. This programme has been run since 1998 and many of the alumni developed variedly in art and related areas. Rachel was a graduate from the first cohort of this programme and would like to take this survey as an opportunity to connect with the alumni. She hopes that the School and the alumni can work more closely together in the artistic pursuit and particularly on ceramic art in the future. This survey was carried out by Rachel and two alumni – Winus Lee, Ida Yu and a current student – Suzanne Au. The data collection methods entail an e-questionnaire and interviews with alumni with ceramics major graduated between 2001 and 2015.

The collected data is analyzed and the research result findings are presented in this book.

The Project consists of the following parts:

- Questionnaire survey and analysis
- Alumni meeting and interviews
- Write up of research findings

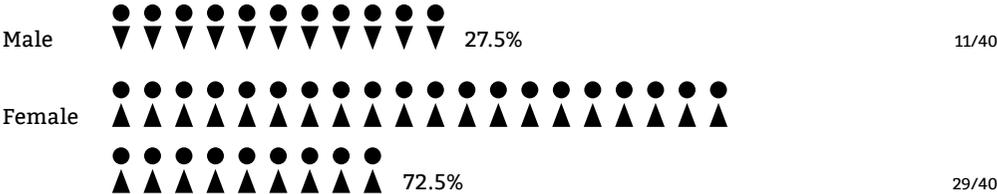
The purpose of the project is to create more networking opportunities, and make further contribution to the art community. We hope that this exercise can help re-unite like-minded alumni, and give rise to more potential collaboration in ceramic art related activities and programmes.

Questionnaire Summary & Analysis

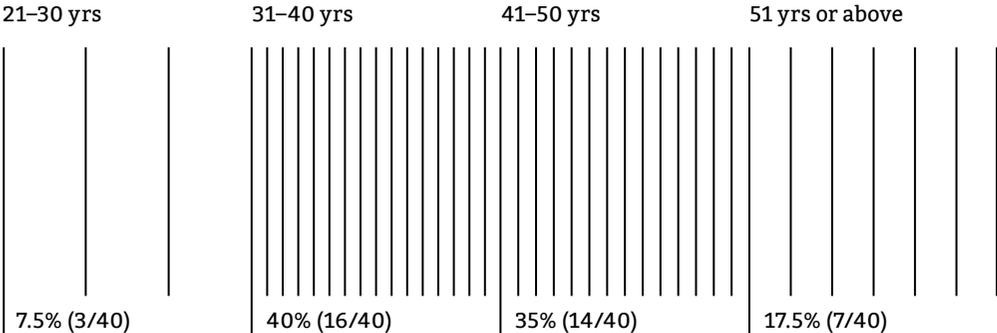
40 Responses

Basic Information

Gender _____



Age _____



Status Before Graduation

1	While taking this programme, were you employed? —	Yes	92.5%	37/40
		No	7.5%	03/40
2	Did you stop working while taking the programme? —	Yes	42.5%	17/40
		No	57.5%	23/40
3	Your job (if any) while taking this programme was? (Multiple selections) Related to: — The total number of selections from 40 respondents is 58.	Ceramics	12.0%	07/58
		Art	20.7%	12/58
		Education	29.3%	17/58
		Business	29.3%	17/58
		Governmental organizations	3.5%	02/58
		Others	5.2%	03/58
4	Did you have your own ceramic studio before or while taking this programme?	Yes	25.0%	10/40
		No	75.0%	30/40
	If yes, is it solely owned or shared? —	Solely owned	40.0%	04/10
		Shared	60.0%	06/10

Status After Graduation

1	Are you working in the same field as before graduation? —	Yes	47.5%	19/40
		No	52.5%	21/40
2	The company you are now working at is? —	Public entity	15.0%	06/40
		Private entity	80.0%	32/40
		Others	5.0%	02/40
3	What is the nature of your company? (Multiple selections) Related to: — The total number of selections from 40 respondents is 69.	Ceramics	17.4%	12/69
		Art	23.2%	16/69
		Ceramics education	21.7%	15/69
		Education	17.4%	12/69
		Ceramics business	4.3%	03/69
		Others	16.0%	11/69
4	What is your occupation? (Multiple selections) — The total number of selections from 40 respondents is 50.	Artist	32.0%	16/50
		Teacher	38.0%	19/50
		Administrator	12.0%	06/50
		Manager	2.0%	01/50
		Others	16.0%	08/50
5	Do you currently have a ceramic studio?	Yes	70.0%	28/40
		No	30.0%	12/40
	If yes, is it solely owned or shared? —	Solely owned	57.1%	16/28
		Shared	42.9%	12/28

6	If you currently have a ceramics studio, will you teach there? —	Yes	53.6%	15/28
		No	46.4%	13/28
7	After graduation, have you furthered your study by taking other programmes? —	Yes	47.5%	19/40
		No	52.5%	21/40
8	Have you continued creating artwork? —	Yes, mainly ceramic art	72.5%	29/40
		Yes, mainly in other medium of art	10%	04/40
		No	17.5%	07/40
9	Where do you create your artwork? —	Rental studio	42.5%	17/40
		Shared studio	25.0%	10/40
		Privately owned studio	12.5%	05/40
		Others	20.0%	08/40
10	How many local solo exhibitions have you participated in since graduation? —	None	65.0%	26/40
		1-5	30.0%	12/40
		6-10	2.5%	01/40
		11-15	0.0%	00/40
		16-20	0.0%	00/40
		21 or above	2.5%	01/40

11	How many local joint exhibitions have you participated in since graduation? —	None	5.0%	02/40
		1-5	45.0%	18/40
		6-10	17.5%	07/40
		11-15	15.0%	06/40
		16-20	5.0%	02/40
		21 or above	12.5%	05/40
12	How many overseas solo exhibitions have you participated in since graduation? —	None	90.0%	36/40
		1-5	10.0%	04/40
		6-10	0.0%	00/40
		11-15	0.0%	00/40
		16-20	0.0%	00/40
		21 or above	0.0%	00/40
13	How many overseas joint exhibitions have you participated in since graduation? —	None	47.5%	19/40
		1-5	37.5%	15/40
		6-10	12.5%	05/40
		11-15	2.5%	01/40
		16-20	0.0%	00/40
		21 or above	0.0%	00/40
14	Have you obtained any art prizes presented by art organizations in Hong Kong? —	No, I've never participated in any local art competitions	62.5%	25/40
		I've participated in competitions without being awarded	12.5%	05/40
		I've participated in competitions without being awarded	7.5%	03/40
		Yes, 1 to 5 times	17.5%	07/40
		Yes, 6 to 10 times	0.0%	00/40
		Yes, 11 times or above	0.0%	00/40

15	<p>Have you obtained award from overseas art organizations?</p> <p>—</p>	No, I've never participated in any overseas art competitions	75.0%	30/40
		I've participated in overseas competitions without being awarded	12.5%	05/40
		Yes, the finalist	7.5%	03/40
		Yes, 1 to 5 times	5.0%	02/40
		Yes, 6 to 10 times	0.0%	00/40
		Yes, 11 times or above	0.0%	00/40
16	<p>Did you accomplish other achievements such as obtaining scholarship, sponsorship or professional recognition?</p> <p>—</p>	Yes	7.5%	03/40
		No	92.5%	37/40
17	<p>Is your artwork being collected?</p> <p>(Multiple selections)</p> <p>—</p> <p>The total number of selections from 40 respondents is 62.</p>	No	24.2%	15/62
		Yes, by local art museum	14.5%	09/62
		Yes, by local organization	14.5%	09/62
		Yes, by overseas art museum	11.3%	07/62
		Yes, by overseas organization	8.1%	05/62
		Yes, by private collections	27.4%	17/62

18	Have you ever sold your artwork?	Yes	72.5%	29/40
		No	27.5%	11/40
	If yes, what is the sales channel? (Multiple selections) — The total number of selections from 29 respondents is 75.	Gallery	30.7%	23/75
		By commission	21.3%	16/75
		Art museum	10.7%	08/75
		Organization	16.0%	12/75
		Direct sales	21.3%	16/75
19	How many pieces of artwork have you sold? —	None	25.0%	10/40
		1–5	22.5%	09/40
		6–10	17.5%	07/40
		11–20	5.0%	02/40
		21 or above	30.0%	12/40
20	Have you ever participated in overseas artist-in-residence programmes? —	no	82.5%	33/40
		Yes, 1 to 3 times	17.5%	07/40
		Yes, 4 to 6 times	0.0%	00/40
		Yes, 7 times or above	0.0%	00/40
21	Do you have the following plans in the coming 5 years? (Multiple selections) — The total number of selections from 40 respondents is 96.	Holding Exhibitions	26.0%	25/96
		Participating in overseas Artists-In-Residents project	17.8%	17/96
		Setting up Studio	7.3%	07/96
		Furthering studies	13.5%	13/96
		Attending ceramics or art-related activities	33.3%	32/96
		Others	2.1%	02/96

22	Would you like to take part in ceramics-related activities in the future? —	Yes No	100.0% 40/40 0.0% 00/40
23	What kind of job duties would you like to take part in ceramics-related activities? (Multiple selections) Duties related to: — The total number of selections from 40 respondents is 158.	Curatorship or coordination Art-making (solo) Art-making (collaboration) Community (children) Community (teenagers) Community (adults) Community (elderly)	7.6% 12/158 20.2% 32/158 21.5% 34/158 14.6% 23/158 13.3% 21/158 13.3% 21/158 9.5% 15/158
24	Are you interested to join the third part of this project “Meeting with alumni for communication”? —	Yes No	70.0% 28/40 30.0% 12/40

Interview 1

About “Art Project”

Date: Nov 20, 2014

Time: 7 – 10pm

The alumni took this chance to share their experiences about the art projects in which they have participated. The projects related to the history of Wun Yiu (old ceramics kiln site in Tai Po), and social issues such as those related to Mashipo Village in Fanling and a traditional onglaze shop Chiu Kee in Peng Chau.

Participated Alumni

Kamie Cheng	member of Wun Yiu Project
Janice Fung	member of Wun Yiu Project
Louis Lo	member of Wun Yiu Project
Pat Kok	member of Wun Yiu Project
Rebeka Tam	member of YMCArts Urban-Rural Life Community Arts Education – Soil Creation: Soil Men
Ida Yu	member of YMCArts Urban-Rural Life Community Arts Education – Soil Creation: Soil Men / member of this survey project
Winus Lee	member of Chiu Kee Onglaze Shop / member of this survey project
Suzanne Au	member of this survey project / current student of RMIT University
Rachel Cheung	The coordinator of this survey project

Background information

Wun Yiu Project:

All members are the latest graduates. Attendees including Louis Lo, Janice Fung, Kamie Cheng and Pat Kok. The group tries to promote Wun Yiu to the locals and people abroad. (Mandy Woo and Maggie Wong were excused from joining.)

Mashipo Project:

In order to arouse the attention of Mashipo, Rebeka Tam and Ida Yu used the soil in Mashipo as medium for creating artwork in the YMCArts Urban-Rural Life Community Arts Education Project.

Chiu Kee onglaze Shop:

Winus Lee tries to continue the craftsmanship of Chiu Kee onglaze shop.

The Dialogue

1

What made you initiate the “Wun Yiu Project”?

Louis Lo — The initiator was Mandy, my classmate. One time, Mandy and a few fellow students were presenting a project about the history of Wun Yiu and its existing site. Wun Yiu has more than 400 years of history (started to decline in the early 20th century). It was once a center of porcelain industry and had tremendous production. However, only a few people in Hong Kong know this place nowadays. That presentation aroused strong reaction among the fellow students. We were very surprised to learn that Hong Kong had such ceramic industrial history. Mandy was deeply encouraged in the presentation of her project. With perseverance, she decided to explore this ancient craft industry; however, the data collected were more fragmented and not comprehensive. As a ceramic art student, she felt it was a great pity. After that, she determined to initiate a project with like-minded fellow students, including

myself. We would like to promote Wun Yiu to the locals and people abroad. We were not trying to keep the production like the past, but stimulating the local ceramic artists and enthusiasts, to continue that creative mind, spirit and put them into action. We launched the first event in April 2014. The theme of the ceramics exhibition was Wun Yiu. Each of us made two pieces of work: one was in response to its history, and the other was our expectation and vision for Wun Yiu, so as to convey the message to the public. The exhibition received great attention and media coverage. It also inspired us to believe that art could be a response to social concerns and related issues.

2

How to sustain the development of the vision and the planning? It has been a while since the exhibition, what is the progress?

Louis Lo — It is still in a preliminary stage, as we only hope to bring to people's attention



Wun Yiu kiln site – clay processing area



Wun Yiu kiln site – mining hole

the issue at the beginning. However, when we started to plan for the exhibition, we noticed that the subject matter and the theme could directly reflect and lead the direction of the entire programme. The exhibition attracted people from different public sectors and received very positive comments. It enabled us to collect a diverse range of responses as reference for the next plan .

Janice Fung — The concept of the entire programme was not from an artistic perspective, but the rich history of Wun Yiu, which involved the information of the locals' livelihood in the past hundreds of years. Witnessing the co-existence of Wun Yiu and porcelain industry, a prominent industry in Hong Kong was thus recorded. Though the artistic value was questionable, as a

ceramic artist, I started to review the impact of the history on us and its inspiration for our future creation. We wished to have the second exhibition in Wun Yiu village, but we were not able to do so at the moment due to various personnel and administrative issues.

Louis Lo — The exhibition was only a start to attract more like-minded people to join our project. We also wanted to discuss with the local villagers to further explore the sustainability of the project, and to organize exhibitions, seminars and events in the vacant schools there. We hope the villagers can have the chance to make blue and white porcelain, so as to get a touch on their ancestors' experiences, and even to exhibit their work pieces in the village.

3

What have you gained from this project so far?

Janice Fung — I have changed my views of Hong Kong. I never knew Hong Kong has such history of porcelain industry. Learning the presence of the porcelain mine and the rich history of Wun Yiu village have given me a whole new perspective.

Pat Kok — Wun Yiu was just a name to me in the past, but now I feel more connected with it. Through this event, I do not only learn more about the history of Wun Yiu, but feel the prosperity and the decline of its development in the old days, which has now become a monument, surrounded by barbed wire.



Members of the Wu Yiu Project, (from Left) Pat Kok, Kamie Cheng, Maggie Wong, Rachel Cheung (the Gallery owner), Mandy Woo (project initiator), Tina So, Janice Fung, Sum Lee and Louis Lo.

4

Did it make a difference to you after discovering Wun Yiu?

Janice Fung — Yes. I used to think that Hong Kong has nothing to do with traditional ceramics and I can relate ceramics to places like Jingdezhen in China, Yingge in Taiwan or Ceramics Biennale in Korea... The fact that Hong Kong has such a long history of ceramics and also abundant resources, is really beyond my imagination. It is wonderful to know that my favourite artform is actually so much related to this piece of land.

Kamie Cheng — It is such a pleasure to use art as a medium to examine Hong Kong culture. Art does not only speak for itself, but also convey the messages of cultural conservation and its importance to the public. This is the difference of this project from other art exhibitions or events in general.

Louis Lo — Different art and culture around the world might have its peak time, and vanished, but the seeds remained. For example, though Jingdezhen of China and Six Ancient Kilns in Japan are not as prosper as they were in the past, the art and culture are preserved. The precious resource of Wun Yiu is like a buried seed. As a strut, it works at different times, in different ways.

5

While studying ceramics, did you think it was a western medium? Had you always

been looking into western ceramics only? Did you have the chance to learn Chinese culture like Wun Yiu?

Rebeka Tam — The programme we studied was jointly presented by Hong Kong Art School and RMIT University in Australia. We learnt history of Western art, and focused more on western theories. The clay we used was imported from the UK and US. Foreign resources were our reference base. I have heard that the subject of Chinese ceramics history is added to the syllabus in recent years.

Ida Yu — I studied both ceramics and art subjects in the secondary school. Our teacher taught briefly about Chinese ceramic history. We once visited Wun Yiu village as an extra-curricular activity, our teacher told us that the rice bowls used in the trains at the old days were made of blue and white porcelain. They were like disposable lunch boxes nowadays, and some people after the meal would throw the bowls out of the train. Although we knew some fragmented history, we did not have much feelings about Chinese ceramics history. I first learnt pottery at spare time and later during the study of RMIT ceramics programme, and both seemed to move on the western learning.

6

For art projects with historical background, how did you keep the balance between different elements?

A HERITAGE INTO THE FUTURE

Hong Kong Ceramics — Wun Yiu

Cocktail Reception

2014.04.18

14:30 — 18:00

Exhibition Period

04.18 — 21

04.26 — 27

12:30 — 19:00



承先

碗 香港
窯 陶瓷

啟後

李慧心 Wai Sum Lee
郭香蘭 Fat Kok
黃钰雯 Madge Wong
盧世傑 Sai Keng Lo
胡子敏 Mandy Woo
蘇淑敏 Tina So
封愛賢 Janice Fung
鄭錦枝 Kamie Cheng

Unit Gallery

石硤尾郵局合源道藝術中心五樓五二三室
Room 523, 5/F, KOGAC, 30 Pak Tin Street
Shek Kip Mei, Hong Kong
unit.gallery@yahoo.com.hk / +852 9453 1626

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Photography: [www.royal.gov.hk](#)
Unit Gallery
Shek Kip Mei
Wun Yiu Project - "The Ceramics of Hong Kong"

The poster design of exhibition A Heritage into the Future.

Ida Yu — I was thinking if we should focus only on the proposition itself or create something else with the context when we worked on historically-based art projects. For instance, in an art project related to the quarry in 2013, my work had actually deviated from its history and brought no insights of conservation issues. However, the Wun Yiu Project was very different, in terms of its effectiveness and the feedback we had received. Probably it was due to the number of participants, the mutual visions or the solidarity of the group.

Rebeka Tam — I think the vision of the Wun Yiu Project was very clear. Getting more people to know this place is more important than the artistic expression. I believe we need to be humble, and more willing to let go of our egos when working on this kind of project. After all, we have to consider how to bring out the best result by mingling our individualism and the theme itself.

Rachel Cheung — Quarry is a heavy industry and Wun Yiu is a light craftsmanship. Though they both have their own history, they are not the same on cultural and artistic level. That is why they have caused various degrees of concern. In fact, quarry has nothing to do with art at all.

Winus Lee — Nowadays, more people express their concerns and treasure about the dying local history and culture. That is why the Wun Yiu exhibition has received public recognition. The audience could

take the chance to reflect on whether the Government should make a better balance between infrastructure development, livelihood, and local conservation.

7

What were the problems that you had encountered in the Wun Yiu Project? Was it true that the villagers had negative responses at the beginning and became more understanding over the issue and eventually supported your ideas?

Janice Fung — Wun Yiu is located at the Wilson Trail. We could easily get there to do research, but it is hard to find a way to talk to the local people, particularly at the beginning. It did not happen until we got a chance to meet an indigenous villager representative, from whom we tried to get more Wun Yiu information from. We thought that things were going well, and then we started to encounter various personnel and administrative issues. Therefore, we failed to hold an exhibition in their area and had no choice but to look for another exhibition venue.

Louis Lo — Finally, we held the first Wun Yiu exhibition in a gallery. There came a Wun Yiu villager who had not introduced herself to us in the beginning. After our introduction and explanation of our visions, her attitude changed from being very detached to receptive, and she was grateful that we had promoted the history



'A Heritage into The Future- Hong Kong Ceramics – Wun Yiu'- two exhibitors are sharing their thoughts with the audience.



of Wun Yiu. After reviewing our work, we realized that although our intention was simple and sincere, and the project was non-profit making in nature, it was hard for the villagers to accept us since we could do better in the prior consultation with the villagers. After the exhibition, we went to visit the villagers and the representatives again for better communication.

Ida Yu — I believe working on projects is very different from creating an individual work. Site visits, inspections and the communication with the locals are essential for a fruitful experience and result. Take Wun Yiu as an example and as Louis suggested, if there were organizations or groups to provide more supports to Wun Yiu village and organize workshops to the public,

it would be very effective. For instance, the art project launched in 2013 at Lei Yue Mun was originally researching on an abandoned site of old kilns. Nonetheless I could not find ways to get information, nor any support from the local people. I could only turn to the quarry in Lei Yue Mun, which made it relatively easier for me to find relevant information.

Winus Lee — Yes, things will proceed more smoothly when you blend into the community. On the contrary, if you asked too many questions during the first encounter, people will be skeptical about your intention. I believe a community project would have a better result if it is operated with a more sustainable approach.

**Some of the exhibits of
'A Heritage into The Future- Hong Kong
Ceramics – Wun Yiu'**



Sum Lee
From Discovery to Continuity
2014
Procelain
15.5cm (Dia) x 7cm (H)



Pak Kok
Blue and White Porcelain Ducks
2014
Porcelain
14cm (L) x 20 (W) x 14cm (H)

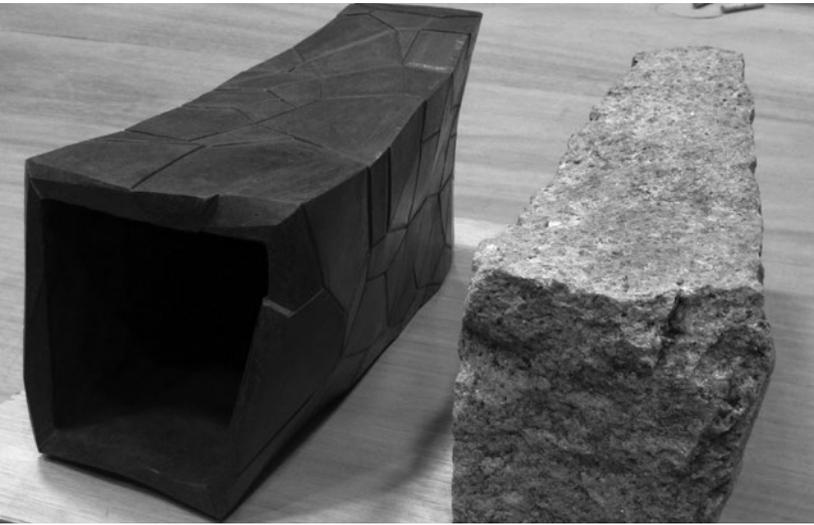


Maggie Wong
Seeking in Wun Yiu
2014
Stoneware
19cm (Dia) x 3cm (H)

A corner of Ida Yu's exhibition of the Lei Yue Mun Project

Ida Yu is looking for stones at the
beach of Lei Yue Mun





Exhibits of Ida Yu's
exhibition at the
Lei Yue Mun Project



8

Rebeka, how is the progress of your existing project?

Rebeka Tam — I am working on the project of YMC Arts Urban-Rural Life Community Arts Education, which is related to Mashipo Village and it is similar to the Wun Yiu project. My studio has been moved there for this project, because when you get closer to the people there, and even become a part of them, communication and work would be much easier after establishing rapport. For example, a villager lent us a house as the "Story House" a couple years ago, to display household utensils and appliances from those dismantled or derelict houses. With the aid of these found objects, we told the story of the village. However, when the "Story House" exhibition started to draw public attention, the owner began to worry that it would lead to earlier acquisitions, so he decided to take back the house.

9

Why did you launch the art project in this village?

Rebeka Tam — I have always been enthusiastic in helping reverse injustice. I first helped in protecting Choi Yuen Village, where I met two friends. One of them was an artist, another was working in YMC Art. I thought of these two friends when I watched a TV programme about Mashipo a year after. The two friends and I decided

to give a hand. The first big project was the "Story House" exhibition which lasted for six months. Prior to this, we had Mashipo tours for families, and some map drawing workshops, so that the public would consider this a place worth visiting.

10

Why did you want more visitors to come to this village?

Rebeka Tam — The Mashipo villagers were forced to move away ten years ago and the reluctance of the residents contributed to an atmosphere of desolation. In the meantime the property developers took this chance to propagandize the idea that it was therefore a place for further development. With profound love for the village, some young villagers came together and organized the "Mapopo Community Farm" and workshops, so as to express their feelings towards this native land and to encourage other villagers to retain the village. They also wished to gain public support by drawing more attention. We believe there is another way of living which is worth preserving, and it does not necessarily have to be living in high-rise buildings. In fact, co-existence is possible. So a few of us helped promote this message by holding various literary and artistic events. It proceeded for a few years with the production of video clips, wall-paintings and so forth. We hoped to incorporate art into our activities in a subtle way, so the elements of art could penetrate in the project. For example: Since the remaining

villagers believed that their homes would be confiscated any time, they were less willing to maintain the house. However, when Chinese New Year was due, a group of volunteers from YMCART helped them paint the walls of their houses with the sponsorship on the cost of paint. Following the participation of Shek Ka Ho, an artist who made a mural art map on the walls of villagers' houses, and more artists joined eventually.



Adults and children were playing with clay

11

How did you raise your funds?

Rebeka Tam — "Mapopo Community Farm" raised part of the fund. In addition, ceramic classes were conducted to generate more income. In fact, many people had never really touched the soil before, and since this 'get in touch with soil' concept matched perfectly with the intent of this project, we decided to increase the income through conducting the classes. In recent years, art is often used as a tool to discuss social issues when YMCART received fundings for education. Art is a soft agent to reflect the relationship between people and places, as well as to tell the stories behind the livelihood.

12

Have you encountered any hardship or resistance? Any positive response from others?

Rebeka Tam — We were once invited to hold an exhibition in a shopping mall, and

when the venue staff discovered that a few pieces of work that were actually against land resumption of the developers, our exhibits were covered or put away without prior notice. We were completely shocked by the way they handled the matter, and on the contrary we met a number of enthusiastic people to help in the farm. This was indeed out of our expectation.

Ida Yu — I joined the volunteer team of the project regarding 'The Urban-Rural Life Community Arts Education' in mid 2014. I thought that the artworks were not the major subject of this project. Instead, the ideas and vision that the participants had come to understand through ceramic art were more essential. The art projects that we have discussed today are related to history, community and social life. Throughout the process, several questions are raised, such as: why is Wun Yiu history being ignored? What is the aim of the project 'The Urban-



The participants of the clay workshop and their works

Rural Life Community Arts Education' ? Is it because urban and rural areas can hardly co-exist? Are these questions the reason for launching the project? Or, are these hidden questions only been discovered in the process of the project? I really appreciate the work of YMCART. You can tell that the staff were filled with passion in supporting the project, and they called for a number of volunteers to bring this soil project into reality. I truly hope that Hong Kong can have more organizations with similar mission and vision. Moreover, I also hope to bring more attention of students and alumni to the issues, and encourage their participation in related art projects.

Rebeka Tam — When Ida and I discussed the types of activity as well as other conservation events, we noticed the potential conflicts and clashes between the supporting and the opposing groups that might cause violent behavior. Therefore, we planned to launch a workshop, and let participants make human figures with soil and clay – to convey the conservation message in a peaceful manner. The young volunteers from YMCART gave a helping hand in organizing the workshops, they spent a couple of hours working together and enjoyed the project very much. On the other hand, participants expressed their feelings for this place through the making of clay figures. This is one of the magic of art, in which people may express themselves in a subtle way.

Ida Yu — Working on projects is very different from creating artwork, in terms of conception and execution. For example, I would arrange educational Mashipo tours before or after the clay figure workshops in order to understand the needs and expectations of participants, so as to set a beneficial programme, that could spread the messages efficiently.

Rebeka Tam — Working on these projects is similar to building a bridge between two poles. I always hope to find easier ways to improve and enhance the efficiency; such as arranging workshops that fit into



Clay preparation before the workshop

the schedule of educational tours with better time management so as to attract more participants.

Ida Yu — It is a more people-oriented approach. Resistance did not only come from the public, but also from the government and commercial organizations. Regarding the long term development plans laid down by these organizations, we may feel unfair and disappointed because self-censorship is enforced in reality.

Janice Fung — People often spotted social issues that are related to the livelihood, however, when it comes to the conflict of interests with individual organizations, collision and hindrance are unavoidable. There are in fact too many considerations in a single act. Therefore, we have to arouse more discussion in the public, so that people can have a better understanding of the issue for their analysis and further participation.

13

Do you have regular meetings on the projects? Have you come across disagreements between members that lead to deviation from the goals?

Ida Yu — With the coordination of the organization, our team works well so far.

Rebeka Tam — This programme has been launched in a harmonious approach over the years. Though our team has disagreement

on whether or not to use a more radical approach due to the grants for Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, it is never an unresolvable issue.

14

So, Winus, have you encountered similar problems in your Peng Chau project?

Winus Lee — I launched the Peng Chau's "Chiu Kee Onglaze Scheme" by myself, so everything seems simpler and there's no concrete plannings. Since Grandma has a little house in Peng Chau, I have the chance to know better about the place as well as to touch base with Chiu Kee porcelain. In 2004, the year I graduated, I learned that Chiu Kee was on the edge of closing down due to high rent. As a ceramic artist myself, I felt deep pity for them. It just happened that the lease of my ceramics studio in Hong Kong Island was soon to expire. I took the liberty of asking Mr. and Mrs. Lam about subletting their shop. Honestly, that decision was a bit hasty, because I was living in Chai Wan and working in Cheung Sha Wan. You can imagine the distance! Fortunately, I did not think too much at that time. Otherwise the outcome would not be the same.

15

What are your reasons behind such a bold decision?

Winus Lee — Prior to making the decision, I was able to talk with Mr. and Mrs. Lam,



Mr. and Mrs. Lam of Peng Chau Chiu Kee
at their ceramic shop

and see their porcelain glaze materials and tools occasionally. Then we started to know more about each other after a few conversations. Mr. Lam told me about the history of the shop and the decline of the industry. All the old employees changed their careers and he also planned to do so after closing down the business. I felt so sorry for them, especially when Mrs. Lam painted flowers on ceramic and said: "Ceramic production is not enough to earn a living. Cleaning jobs may not be a bad idea." She was over sixty... how sad it was! Therefore, with that impulse and passion, I proposed to sublet their shop. I did not consider how long it would last at that time. Since then, Chiu Kee and I were connected. In the beginning, I went to Peng Chau to do my own work during weekends only. When I slowly got used to it, I would go back to work even on weekdays. Then I proposed to Mr. and Mrs. Lam about teaching onglaze techniques and more students came to the class because of media coverage. It took me some time and effort to communicate with the two elderlies and they had also adjusted themselves to the new work mode. I was glad that they were willing to accept new ideas and elements. It was also a way of reviving the old craftsmanship, to a certain extent, by putting some new concepts on their products. As for me, I have learnt the virtue of persistence from our previous generation of craftsman and how to be at ease under unfavorable circumstances. I really got inspired by them.



Mrs. Lam is working at Chiu Kee ceramic shop

16

When did Chiu Kee start?

Winus Lee — Mr. Lam worked at Yuet Tung China Works (a porcelain factory) at the age of 20 during the 70's. After some years he went to Malaysia and met Mrs. Lam there. Then they came back and established Chiu Kee in Peng Chau. There were around 20 workers till the opening up of China, more people started opening factories in China which led to the decline of small-scale industries in Hong Kong. In the beginning of their business, clear-glazed porcelain wares were shipped by sea from Japan, and the pigment was imported

from Germany, Japan and other places. However when the cost pumped up, they turned to import materials from China.

17

It is very sad to know that Mr. Lam has passed away recently. Are there any major changes in Chiu Kee?

Winus Lee — Mrs. Lam has changed her perception about life after Mr. Lam passed away. She used to work every single day and now she is taking a day off per week. She has also reduced the number of ceramic classes, so as to free up more time for herself.

18

How do you see the future of Chiu Kee?

Winus Lee — I started to wonder about the future of this cooperation mode after joining Chiu Kee for the first few years. When would I leave Peng Chau? Would this onglaze craftsmanship in Hong Kong bring fade and wane after they retired? Of course, I wanted to retain and continue this workmanship, but I knew I could not take it over by myself alone.

19

If you become the successor, are there any other problems besides this “single-handed” issue? Or is it possible to run an onglaze center instead?

Winus Lee — The nature will be completely different. I had discussed with friends about running an onglaze resource center, workshop or to put more local elements on the onglaze utensils. Everything is under planning at the moment and we may apply for funding to perpetuate this traditional craftsmanship. I guess we have to be more active as Mrs. Lam has changed her perspective about the business recently, and I reckon if she may even close down the shop shortly. Though I may have a solution to continue the business, I have to further discuss with Mrs. Lam, and respect her decision. After all, she has put in a lifetime of hardwork.

20

You first helped them to retain the shop, then broadened their source of income. So have you thought of helping them to expand the business?

Winus Lee — We put ceramic souvenirs on the market sale earlier, but they were not as popular as onglaze classes. Then we realized that people visited Chiu Kee for participation instead of merely getting a piece of ceramic work. They wished to experience the history of onglaze, and it had changed my mind. I even had a stronger desire to spread the story of Chiu Kee to other communities.

21

It was all your own thought to help them retaining the shop. What were their thoughts and were they willing to accept your assistance?

Winus Lee — They did not like to teach or interact with students in the beginning, but gradually they got used to it in ten years' time. They found their own pace and the fun of teaching. In fact, we helped each other most of the time and I had learnt so much from them especially on the knowledge and techniques of onglaze painting.

22

In fact, we should have more research on traditional ceramics, such as oral history, video documentaries ... or can we arrange a group to learn onglaze with Mrs. Lam?

Winus Lee — It is very meaningful if we have more research in this area, as there are not many books about this kind of craftsmanship. As mentioned earlier, we studied mainly on western art in RMIT, slightly neglected Chinese ceramic art. Students from different backgrounds came to the same programme and studied together. After graduation, we explored and developed our own interests, and digged into it. Eventually, we extended our research to other areas no matter if it is either Chinese or Western art.

23

How do all of you feel about this alumni gathering and do you have any expectations?

Pat Kok — I feel glad to have such conversations through the gathering of alumni.

Rebeka Tam — Great to have this reunion and I am glad to learn more about each other's artistic development. I can see potential of cooperation opportunities in the future.

Ida Yu — I often wonder when I shall be able to work on my own creation while I am spending much time on community work. Therefore, I try to differentiate community projects and individual work with better time management.

Winus Lee — My situation is also very fragmented. In fact, I am not good at using practical utensils to express art concepts. I focus more on contemporary sculpture in my own series of work. However, when doing community works, such as the co-exhibition with Chiu Kee, I particularly like to use practical utensils, which narrow the distance between people.

Rachel Cheung — Though I did not have the community project experience, I intended to find the answer on my own when I encountered similar problems. I do have thought of "throwing caution to the winds"

recently, like: I am Rachel Cheung as a whole and my life journey is a big project. While I am working on art education, I do have time to create and I make potteries in spare time as well. All of these 'I' make who I am and you are looking at who I am at the moment. Of course, the proportion will not be the same at different stages. When I get the chance to interact with public audiences, the best way to start the conversation is to talk about functional ceramics, and then we can go further to contemporary ceramic art and related topics.

Rebeka Tam — I also experienced some difficult time. I moved my studio to Mashipo for the sake of the project, but it was far and inconvenient for me. Since the project was in full swing, I had to struggle between suppressing my desire to work on my own work and focusing on the project.

Rachel Cheung — Most of us have to deal with this problem. We need to judge the priority between work and art creation.

Rebeka Tam — Art creation is the best romance but you have to squeeze the time out to do it.

Ida Yu — Although we have to put the project as our first priority, we should have time for ourselves afterwards, to precipitate our thoughts and to continue our own creations.

Rachel Cheung — Most importantly, we have to know our thoughts and aspiration in

the long run. So it is only a matter of time, we certainly can do what we want to do.

Winus Lee — The BAFA programme has been run for years. Though some alumni have put aside ceramics, I believe some of them will soon pick up the fun of doing ceramics again.

Rachel Cheung — Similar to Louis, studying ceramics was also a dream for some of our alumni. Fulfilling one's dream was something to be grateful of, but it was not easy to sustain your dream at all.

Louis Lo — Yes, as long as the wish persists, it will be fulfilled. Just wait for that opportunity, and let the seed grow.

Winus Lee — Making art in Hong Kong carries less flexibility and it is unstable when compared to other countries.



Winus Lee is working at Chiu Kee ceramic shop



Students are learning onglaze technique

24

So, what are the opinions from our new graduates?

Pat Kok — I set up my studio recently, so I can work more freely, and with greater motivation, I am able to work through the entire process, such as firing. This is truly gratifying and I can also take this chance to digest and refine what I have learnt and some can start all over again.

Kamie Cheng — I don't have much plan. I am just doing some part-time ceramic teaching at the moment.

Janice Fung — I start to feel the pressure on the rent since I have my own studio.

Therefore, I have to plan how to make use of my studio to increase revenue and of course teaching ceramics is also another source of income. I have got a lot to handle at the studio, and thus I do not have much time to do my own practice and creation yet.

Rachel Cheung — It is great to know more about each other. I hope we are able to build a strong cohesion among of all alumni and thus we can work on ceramics-related activities together in the future.

Ida Yu — Using ceramics as an artistic expression for social issues may seem a bit weak and slow, as it takes time to transform when issues are not related to ceramics. Therefore, messages can't be conveyed

directly with immediate effect. I certainly hope to have more interaction with other alumni in the future. After all, our school has been established for more than 15 years.

Suzanne Au — On a contrary, I see ceramics as something powerful and it all depends on your perspective if it is 'weak', why would the project of 'The Urban-Rural Life Community Arts Education' use clay figure? Clay is one of the oldest mediums on earth. It is also the root of human and, the most fundamental need, only that the world is flooded with new things nowadays.

Ida Yu — The project of 'The Urban-Rural Life Community Arts Education' is related to land. Participants used the soil in Mashipo to create art pieces is a symbol of support for this project. I think the message is direct and transmitted swiftly.

Janice Fung — However the speed and the influence are not necessarily in proportion to each other.

Ida Yu — We have to keep abreast of the time and respond to social issues in time. Otherwise, we may need to use other ways such as graphic design to help spread the message.

Rachel Cheung — We have to choose the most appropriate art medium to express ourselves.

Winus Lee — If we see ourselves as art creators and avoid confining ourselves to

ceramics, we can choose the best medium to do it.

Rebeka Tam — Everything is about choices, effectiveness and timing.

Winus Lee — The public see ceramics as an 'obsolete' medium.

Ida Yu — It is a 'slow' medium.

Rachel Cheung — It is a medium with long history. We started with interest and developed the knowledge, and more importantly, we get the mission to pass it on. We have the responsibility to tell people about contemporary ceramics, and even to promote it together.

Ida Yu — We hope that our alumni can work on more ceramics projects.

Louis Lo — There should be alumni who are interested in operating these projects, and we only need to tie-in the resources - manpower, money and time.

Rachel Cheung — As we all have passion for art, where should we start? Are there any subjects that you would like to work on?

Rebeka Tam — Oral history, missing history or the development of ceramics in Hong Kong... they are all very meaningful!

The conversation was finished in laughter!

Epilogue

Secondary school students were in deep concentration of the blue and white ceramics workshop



Hong Kong Art School and the members of Wun Yiu Project successfully applied for funding from the Quality Education Fund in late 2015, to organize activities in secondary schools to promote the history, culture and the application of the blue and white ceramics in Hong Kong.

Works were ready for loading into the kiln





Exhibition at Hong Kong Cultural Centre



Exhibition at PMQ

The exhibitions of the project regarding 'The Urban-Rural Life Community Arts Education' was held at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre and PMQ in April 2015.

Interview 2

About “Overseas Artist- in-residence Program”

Date: Dec 4, 2014

Time: 7 – 9pm

During the gathering, the Alumni shared with each other the inspirations of their experiences in the participation of the overseas artist-in-residence program.

List of alumni and details of their role/artist in the residence project are as follows

Siu Kam Han	Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Japan
Antonio Wong	Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Japan/ Icheon Cerapia, Korea
Ray Chan	Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Japan/ Tokoname, Japan and Estonia
Jessie Lam	Zhu-nan Snake Kiln, Miaoli, Taiwan
Joe Chan	Amino-cho, Kyotango City, Japan
Ben Yau	Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Japan/ Tokoname, Japan
Rachel Cheung	The presenter of the project Caithness Northland Creative Glass in Scotland
Ida Yu	Member of the project
Winus Lee	Member of the project
Suzanne Au	Member of the project, current student of RMIT University

The Dialogue

1

Where did the artist-in-residence program(s) take place? How did you learn about the program(s)? Why did you apply for the program(s)?

Joe Chan — I participated in the art festival about location and sound in the coastal area of Amino-cho, Kyotango City, Japan in 2014. As I was a member of the Sound Pocket, I was invited to the residence program.

Siu Kam Han — Upon the graduation of my master study in Fine Art a few years ago, I felt the need to broaden my horizon and thus I participated in the Artist-in-residence Program in Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Japan. In fact, I've learned about this organization for a while. Considering my qualification had fulfilled the requirements of the program, I submitted the application.

Antonio Wong — I had participated in the programs organized by Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Japan and Icheon

Cerapia, Korea. In recent years, since a number of ceramic artists from Hong Kong had participated in the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park's artist-in-residence program or visited the Biennale of Icheon Cerapia, there were loads of information for reference. I also joined the program after graduating from my master study in Fine Art, hoping to get inspirations for art creation in a new chapter of my artistic journey.

Ray Chan — I had also participated in the program organized by Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, Japan, and the program organized in Estonia as well. I had stayed in Tokoname for the first artist-in-residence program in Japan, then in Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park for three months. In fact, the application for Shigaraki's program was made by mistake, I accidentally pressed the button for application when I was researching for related programs through the internet. However, after learning it was a good choice, I contacted the organizer



Artists who stay in the same period as Siu Kam Han,
Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park

and re-submitted required documents for a complete application. For the program in Estonia, I was actually being invited by an Estonian Ceramic artist in Shigaraki.

Jessie Lam — A few years ago, I went to Taiwan with my students to experience wood-fired ceramics in Zhu-nan Snake Kiln, in Mialin area. They hosted a competition for building a Firewood kiln 4 years ago, and since I had organized a team to take part in the event, I became friends with the people there and remained in contact. As they were funded by the sponsorship of the program, I was invited to join, in the conversation with the organiser.

Rachel Cheung — With the recommendation of a friend, I had been to Zhu-nan Snake Kiln for the International Wood-firing Camp for 10 days around two, three years ago. It was a well-structured event with 10 participants. On the other hand, I joined the 8-week program by Northland Creative Glass in Scotland during year 2004. I had just completed my Master study in glass that year in UK, and was informed by a professor about the program. In view of this golden opportunity to know a new place as well as to continue my work on glass, I applied for the program.

2
Please further share with us your experience of the artist-in-residence program?

Joe Chan — In the past, only local Japanese artists would be invited to the Kyotango Art Festival. Yet, it was an exception this time as some foreign artists were also invited. The coordinator for the event was Akio Suzuki, the master of Japanese Sound Art. He invited the best sound artists, performers and dancers (including Xing Liang) from different countries to join the two-week event. As I am a ceramic artist, the organizer had deliberately assigned



Northland Creative Glass in Scotland



A studio in Northland Creative Glass



Entrance of Zhu-nan Snake Kiln, Miaoli, Taiwan

me to work in a museum with related facilities. The exchange opportunity was indeed meaningful, artists with different expertise gathered for individual art creation. The city was filled with different artists in producing art work relating to sound. Some artists produced audio effects with electronic devise, and created a space or a sound-scape in the hillside. I had created a work with ceramics to match the surrounding environment and sound. The Art Festival was very fulfilling and diverse, though under tight time-frame I was able to learn more about the people and the place before I started creating ceramics work. Despite the involved procedures to make a real human model by molding, I managed to complete my work of a human figure with the help of a volunteer before the opening of the festival. On the other hand, as I decided to exhibit in a national conservation beach, prior application and related paper work for approval were required.

Jessie Lam — I stayed at the Zhu-nan Snake Kiln for 10 weeks, and apart from using

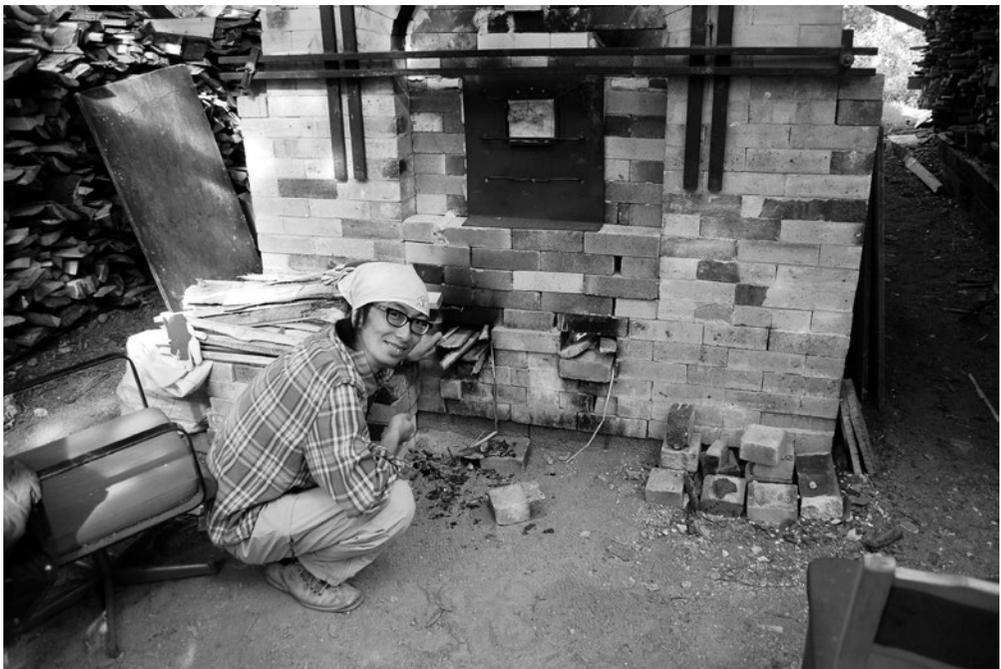
the local clay for ceramics work, we had experienced the entire wood-firing process: from collecting firewood to using the kiln. It enriched our knowledge and theories of wood-firing and kiln. During my stay, I participated in the competition of small-scale kiln design which enabled me to apply the theories I learned there. For the fuel, the locals there would collect floating logs and minimize dark smoke with appropriate wood-firing procedures so as to be environmental friendly. I gained the skills and experiences in the production of wood-firing in kilns of different sizes through my participation, and enriched my concept for creating artwork through personal development. The Residence program was a wonderful experience, and hopefully Hong Kong can build small-scale wood-firing kilns.

Antonio Wong — The planned duration of the residence at Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park was a month but I quickly noticed that time was too tight so I extended the stay to 3 months; The mentorship program at Icheon Cerapia in Korea only lasted for two weeks, it was the fringe activities for the ceramic biennale which we might decide which leading ceramic artist to learn from. It was an honor for me to be mentored by Kukuli Verlarde who has received the Ceramic Biennale Award in Korea. During my stay, Kukuli had shared with us the experience and skills of making ceramics work through various demonstrations.

Siu Kam Han — I hope to explore the Japanese culture through the artist residence opportunity of Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park. I arrived Kyoto and visited different temples a few days before the residence. During the three months of stay, I was greatly inspired by my observations and was able to make some ceramic works.

Ray Chan — Estonia is a unique place, formerly a part of the Soviet Union but with its own history and interesting stories. During the month of stay, I did not only take

part in numerous wood-firing processes, but also met with artists from Russia, Turkey, USA and other Europe countries. To me, that was a strange place and I felt like traveling instead. The main theme of my recent exhibition was about bread, and in fact, the concept was basically conceived during my stay in Estonia. The locals there were particular in bread, the way they valued, respected and appreciated it as well as its embedded stories and customs were incredibly unforgettable. Since I had never planned for a specific theme for my



Ray Chan is taking care of the wood-firing

exhibition, I found this creative process very interesting and flexible while rethinking every detail of the journey.

Rachel Cheung — The wood-firing camp of Zhu-nan Snake Kiln had invited several experienced ceramic artists to teach us about the construction and categories of wood kiln, as well as the skills and concepts of wood firing. In addition, studio visits were specially arranged and therefore we were able to practice the whole wood-firing process from collecting logs, wood-firing the pots, to harvesting finished works from



Accommodation for artists of Northland Creative Glass



The main street nearby Northland Creative Glass

kilns. The kiln owners would share with us their experience from time to time, and let us operate the wood kiln. For the Residence at Caithness Northland Creative Glass in Scotland that was sponsored by the charity, there were a total of four female artists including me. The environment was quiet and cozy, and the studio located in a separate bungalow that was well-equipped while the two-floor building near it was our residence. This wonderful space had enabled me to devote myself in the intensive glass-making practice. The glass center was located in the village at northern Scotland, and provided an amazing experience of connecting with the nature. One may reach the stunning scene of the ocean and the cliff with only 10 minutes' walk, and to the John o' Groats at the north end of Scotland with two-hour ride where population was sparse. I enjoyed walking as it does not only offer a chance to get hold of the nature, but also to think more attentively for inspirations in life. There were lots of possibilities there when compared to the

bustling city life, for example, the whole village knew about the presence of us, and only a few shops were providing supply for the entire village. Everybody knows everyone there and thus purchasing on credit was available if you forgot your cash. Some glass artists from nearby villages would come visit us and even invite us to their homes. Every detail of the life there had enriched my knowledge about the artistic landscape, customs and culture of the local area. During our stay, we had also conducted a two-day workshop for a local center.

3

Have you learned about the resources and facilities available before arriving? Any detailed plans beforehand?

Jessie Lam — Not really, as the major objective is to learn more about wood firing.

Joe Chan — Apart from doing research on internet, there were meetings and site visits for the stay, so I have certain knowledge about the area. Though the reality was somehow different from what I had expected, we were able to tackle the problems by adjustments had been made through adapting to the situation and with reference to previous experience.

Siu Kam Han — During the research before the stay, I read a book of Bernard Leach (a

British Ceramic artist who was born in Hong Kong in 1887. Leach had lived in Japan for years and met with a number of Japanese pioneers in contemporary Ceramic arts). In this book, Leach had illustrated the difference of perspectives on environment, habits, and culture between the East and the West. According to his observation, the effects and ambiance of light displaying through Japanese paper window and Western glass window were completely different. His theory was different from what I had learned under western education, it had inspired me and thus I was particularly interested in the relationship between lights and interior spaces.

Antonio Wong — I had no detailed planning before the arrival, but I tried to relax a bit and release myself from the busyness and fatigue at work so I can be more focused in learning new things.



Siu Kam Han (right) is chatting with a staff of Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park. The staff himself is also a ceramic artist.

4

What do you gain from the artist-in-residence program apart from artistic experience?

Joe Chan — The residence program I joined did not require me to stay at the studio all day but my full concentration on the work. The 'completeness' of the process and the precious time to focus on it was quite difficult considering the context of Hong Kong. The main point was that I could discuss with a group of artists and create work together there. For instance, a 30-minute conversation about contemporary art was launched while I was doing my laundry and while the artist was having an orange; or the fag break for me and Xing Liang was the best time for another fruitful discussion. I didn't have such an in-depth discussion on arts since graduating from school but it had been so natural when we were in a foreign place where we experienced different lifestyles. In general, exchanging with artists and audience would broaden my horizon. However, I did not expect to learn any particular skill sets as there was abundant information at the internet that we might easily access. On the other hand, the information at the internet of Japan was systematic and accessible. Our shows and work have attracted a number of audiences all over the country and even paid courses were full, these experiences were totally different from the case in Hong Kong.



Joe Chan's work-in-progress



Antonio Wong is taking care of the wood-firing

Siu Kam Han — During my stay, I rarely communicated with other artists. However, I had learned a lot from them on how to arrange things (e.g. setting objectives & utilizing spaces at the kiln) and solve problems through observation. I had witnessed artists who made a breakthrough by not conforming to old practices. My art project consisted of audio and video recordings as well as cyanotype, which they found quite interesting and hopefully it would be a useful material for their observation.

Antonio Wong — I was accompanied by two Hong Kong Artists during my stay at Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park, and thus the three of us travelled together to experience the local custom and practice, such as the making of sticky rice dumplings and building houses with clay. We've learned different approaches in ceramic art making as well as the production of firewood kiln. For example, a Swedish ceramic artist would make use of body gesture in the exhibition,

and the Japanese pottery artist who had succeeded his family business for the 5th generation was generous to demonstrate his work for us. The experiences had broadened our horizon and enriched our knowledge of different cultures. Though I didn't produce a lot of work there, the connections and knowledge gained would be beneficial for our future development.

Ray Chan — I enjoy exploring materials and approaches in art-making, therefore I would experiment with new methods, observe others' work and approaches. I also take pleasure in leisure time, like making supper and drinking, I don't intentionally talk about art but it happens naturally as an exchange of ideas. As I was the only artist from Hong Kong by that time, it enabled me to take part in the exchange of art with other artists through group events without any reservation. I relished every minute of the residence and the network of contacts established.



Ray Chan (left) and the participating artists in Estonia



Siu Kam Han (right) hopes artists she meets will have chances to visit Hong Kong

Siu Kam Han — Yes, I was like the ambassador of Hong Kong who promoted the city to other artists in residence, hoping they would visit Hong Kong one day.

Jessie Lam — The artist-in-residence in Zhu-nan Snake Kiln was a home-stay program, as it was a ceramic art family, and the major exchange between us was about the technical knowledge on wood-firing instead of art and creativity. The discussion



Dinner at Zhu-nan Snake Kiln

during dinner time with the host was mainly about current politics and issues of Taiwan. The Snake Kiln would apply for the grant from Department of Cultural Affairs and conduct two to three community events for residents and neighborhood. It enabled me to know more about the local culture and enhance my language proficiency.

Rachel Cheung — As Zhu-nan Snake Kiln didn't have enough space to accommodate



It takes only 10 mins from Northland Creative Glass to the seaside

every one of us, we lived in hotels nearby and was slightly different from major participants of the artists in residence. Taiwanese were friendly, passionate and united. They welcomed us with kiln-baked pizza as we arrived, and arranged barbecue farewell party. It was a spectacular experience of wood firing, and enabled us to acquire more in-depth knowledge about the wood firing technique in a short period of time. Visiting studios of different ceramic

artists had been inspiring since I had learned more about their life and art-making process. On the other hand, the artist-in-residence program in Northland Creative Glass Center was a short one, there wasn't any breakthrough in artistic or technical aspect but it had provided a space for me to focus on thinking and creating artwork. Unexpectedly, the greatest inspiration and motivation were originated from the connection with the nature. You would think about your life journey and art when you were so close to the sky and the sea.

5

Did you have the chance to share your experience with other artists or audience during your stay at that time?

Antonio Wong — we were able to have casual sharings only.

Rachel Cheung — There were only four artists in the residence program, and thus we had in-depth discussions about art, culture, life and everything between us. During our stay conducted a mini-exhibition at the glass center and organized a Christmas market to attract more visitors at the festive season. I had exhibited a colorful piece of glass work and talked to a viewer for a while. He said my work was refreshing and touching to him, his comments were unanticipated as I didn't expect the work would be able to touch my viewers' heart. It was an interesting conversation and I felt blessed that my work was recognized.

Jessie Lam — The snake kiln at the Miaoli County was located in a countryside of Taiwan where people there were more conservative than those from the City. During the latter part of my stay, I had conducted my solo exhibition with my own



Rachel Cheung's work-in-progress



During the exhibition, Jessie Lam (right) has an interview with the local television broadcast



NHK Television Broadcast is recording the progression of Siu Kam Han's art workshop with children

perspective and approach. I had received some positive feedbacks from audience, and was told that my exhibition could arouse their interest in ceramic art, offer a more energetic atmosphere to the community, the exhibited work was as if launching a dialogue between the new and the tradition.

Siu Kam Han — One of the workshops that I had conducted in Shigaraki was produced as a NHK TV Program, it was a pleasure to communicate with participants and I felt satisfied when a little girl shared with me her joy to have completed a task on her own for the very first time through the event. Another Cyanotype workshop was mainly conducted for affected families in Fukushima nuclear disaster, so that they would have some outdoor activities since the radiation threat. With the engagement

of local residents and visiting artists in the workshop at the outdoor area, all participants were contented and the atmosphere was excellent. Personally, I think having a simple environment to rest one's mind was important to help putting their thoughts together.

6
If you will participate in artist-in-residence again, what will be reasons? And what will be the criteria for the destination?

Ray Chan — Even though there was no major breakthrough in previous artist-in-residence programs that I had participated, I was interested to take part in it as there were different experiences. For example, the artist-

in-residence in Tokoname was mainly on cultural exchange while the one in Shigaraki was on ceramic art. I was excited to learn different cultures in a new environment. I have no major preference for a designated country or location, but I hope it would not cost too much.

Joe Chan — I have never deliberately applied for artist-in-residence programs on ceramic art and the programme are like a framework for me to work on. I don't have plans yet but I would opt for programs with longer duration, and I believe it would be a wonderful experience.

Rachel Cheung — I will opt for countries that I have never visited, so I can travel and create work at the same time.

7

Were there any differences in creating artwork locally and abroad?



Antonio is working in the studio of Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park

Siu Kam Han — I would normally create artworks or experimental works with a theme in Hong Kong, mainly for an exhibition. On a contrary, I produced even more experimental work abroad for future development as they were merely originated from my imagination with no specific themes at all. For example, I felt inspired by watching at the lotus pond in Shigaraki, therefore I decided to create an artwork about lotus and further develop the concept as soon as I finished my current task.

Antonio Wong — As I was occupied at work in Hong Kong and creating artwork was quite time-consuming, I might need to start with clearing the studio, then playing with the clay before I could get into the mood. However, the experience of seeing new things and meeting new friends abroad had inspired me in a lot of ways.

Ray Chan — I tried to add local essence to my own framework instead of adapting to the rules, and I enjoyed this very much. In general, I would create work according to my own wish no matter where I was. During the stay, though there were no associations between our works, the working atmosphere was terrific considering the growing motivation among us.

Jessie Lam — Despite the fact that coping with local working mode was necessary when abroad, it had not affected our attitude in art-making after returning to Hong Kong. The only difference between art-making



Artists are working hard during the wood-firing, Estonia



Jessie Lam is adding wood to the kiln and trying to control the temperature

in Hong Kong and in foreign countries was that you might easily get distracted in Hong Kong while you could devote yourself at work in artist-in-residence projects abroad. The direction of creating work had not changed much and we could further develop new ideas after returning to Hong Kong.

Joe Chan — I didn't anticipate for what I could get from abroad but truly enjoyed their mode of creating work, and the implementation of exhibition was as exciting as parachuting. It would be a lot easier for me to plan for an exhibition in Hong Kong, because I was more familiar with the environment such as the venue size, the number of sockets and related tools. Though my team had brought many tools and equipment for the setting-up of exhibition at Kyotango city, we could not be too particular in details when we were working abroad. To achieve a task in an unfamiliar environment



Joe Chan's artwork that produced in Amino-cho, Kyotango City is exhibiting at the beach during the art festival

with restrictions was extremely challenging and fulfilling indeed.

Siu Kam Han — The work created during the residence might not be relevant to the local context of Hong Kong, such as my series of work regarding Japanese paper windows. However, it would help the locals to gain a



An art gallery in Amino-cho, Kyotango City

better understanding about foreign culture.

Antonio Wong — There was a strong sense of space when we were abroad, and working with a group of people at a spacious studio was like going back to school days.

Joe Chan — I do not only hope to gain ceramics experience but to also explore diverse possibilities of arts freely.

8

Any unforgettable experience that you could share with us?

Siu Kam Han — We could see many deers and frogs at Shigaraki not far from the studio, and it was a wonderful experience to be this close to wildlife. In addition, we had organized a workshop for families from Fukushima and it was an enjoyable event for all the participating adults and lovely children.

Rachel Cheung — I had similar experience of the wildlife as well. There was a night when three artists and I went for a movie by car, and as it was a long journey, we had decided to get there through a shortcut. In the middle of the ride, we were stopped by numerous light spots ahead of us. As we recovered from anxiety, we noticed a herd of sheep ahead of us, and the light spots were actually the reflections of the sheep's eyes. It was an interesting experience for a metropolitan like me. The visit to Scotland was memorable, not only because I had built strong friendship there, but also because I truly enjoyed the stunning views where I had experienced the strongest wind, watched the maximum number of sheep, seen the brightest stars, and viewed the most unique landscape of a lifetime.

Antonio Wong — I had always recalled images of people and experiences from Shigaraki. We had once spent time at the highland without light pollution, and simply lied on the rocks to look into the clear sky, it was a spectacular experience. I also enjoyed the party with artists from different countries, and the days when we went to the groceries on a bicycle as well as the scenery on the way. A strong connection was established between us during the 3 months of stay, so we would feel hard when anyone of us had to leave. There were other unforgettable experiences, such as meeting the Emperor of Japan at Shigaraki as if we were the representatives of Hong Kong, and translating the English of our Peruvian



Antonio Wong is speaking with the Emperor of Japan

mentor in South Korea, it was funny because no one really understood his English so I tried to ‘translate’ his Peruvian English into comprehensible English.

Ray Chan — I had met a kiln builder with proficient skills in wood-firing during my stay at Estonia, he was capable of managing the temperature of the kiln and made adjustment efficiently. Before I could even get a full picture of the whole situation, he had completed all necessary procedures in a flash. I really admired his skills and discovered my interest in the process.

Joe Chan — During my stay at Tangocho, I adapted to other artists’ lifestyle and woke up at 6am every morning. It was a silent place nearby the seaside where you could hear the chirping of at least 6 different types



The wood-fired works of Ray Chan and other participating artists

of cicadas. The wonderful environment created a positive energy and made my day for work. On a contrary, we had often felt exhausted after 12 hours of sleep here in Hong Kong and I truly missed the time when I was highly productive at work.

Since our alumnus, Ben Yau was not able to attend the group interview, another interview session was conducted with him and the following was the dialogue in this regard.

9

How many times had you participated in artist-in-residence?

Ben Yau — After learning the opportunities of artist-in-residence from a friend, I participated in the Residence Program at Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park and Tokoname in Japan a few years ago. I stayed with a Japanese family during my stay at Tokoname and I knew about this place in a ceramic exhibition in Hong Kong. The former residence program was sponsored by The Hong Kong Arts Development Council, and since it was supported by Japanese Government, the accommodation and part of the studio fee were covered, I was only responsible for the material fee and the overall expense was affordable. The place was nicely operated, and the staff ranging from technical workers to the curator were all familiar with ceramics. Ceramic artists from Japan and all over the world worked diligently at the studio and exchanged ideas on creation of artworks. There was a huge kitchen and it had become a gathering spot for us to chit-chat and communicate. I met many ceramic artists there, some of them had come and gone swiftly, some stayed for months and I stayed there for almost 6 months since I needed some time to get used to new environment before working, and it

helped me to cope with my own pace. The advantage of artist-in-residence was that I could focus on the work without distraction. I tended to have simple lunch for better time management or ate out with other artists by bicycle, it was great.

10

Was it like a heaven for ceramic artists?

Ben Yau — Of course, creating work during the day and sharing with other artists under a care-free atmosphere at a cozy place was a bliss.

11

Why would you think of participating artist-in-residence?

Ben Yau — I had completed the BAFA Program at RMIT by that time, and without any plans, I continued to work at St. Jame's Settlement for another year. I was responsible for duties relating to elderly's funeral and assisted dying elderlies to manage after-death business. I thought it was a meaningful and fulfilling job but it didn't seem to suit me a lot, so I quit and planned to travel. A lot of my friends who were ceramics lovers also devoted to Japanese culture, and some of them had mentioned about Shigaraki. Though I was not particularly interested in Japan, I considered participating artist-in-residence in Japan as a good opportunity for learning new things.

12

Any unforgettable experience that you could share with us?

Ben Yau — It was a long journey to Shigaraki, I took the overnight bus from Tokyo to Kansai, and carried my bulky luggage onto the train from Kyoto to the destination. The nice sceneries and atmosphere on the way, such as seeing the train passing the tunnel and woods, as well as the beauty of Autumn, had enriched the journey, as if I was like watching Miyazaki's animation.

Another experience was the annual ceramic art fair in Autumn, the stalls were set up at the back garden of the Ceramic Cultural Park. All ceramic artists in town had taken

part in the event so I was able to talk to them and see their demonstrations. There were interviews from television broadcasting companies, and ceramic arts were promoted under the vibrant carnival atmosphere.

During my stay, there were a number of interesting experiences that had inspired me a lot in the pursuit of art. For instance, a female ceramic artist from Kyoto of my age shared her artistic journey with me, and how she had obtained successful achievements in the sector of commercial art by collaborating with a gallery agent to handle regular clients. Though she had her own studio in Kyoto, she insisted to spend a few weeks in Shigaraki yearly because of the gigantic kiln at the park for large-scale art work. Her experience was a good example for my artistic pursuit.

Works unloaded from wood-fired kiln



Interview 3

**About “The Journey of Art –
Contribute to the society,
with art through Education,
Exhibitions and others”**

Date: Apr 22, 2015

Time: 7 – 10pm

Most learners start pursuing art study from an interest and hobby, and some waited till the right time to display their works through exhibition. However, is that it for the study of art is all about? How does art inspire people to take a step towards a wonderful and meaningful outcome? Let's start from talking about arts education.

Attending Alumni

Joe Chan

Reed Cheng

Rachel Cheung

Joey Lai

Winus Lee

Siu Kam Han

Rebeka Tam

Antonio Wong

Ida Yu

The Dialogue

Rachel Cheung — Take me for an example, I got involved in art starting with a hobby. Back to school years, I had learned several mediums of art and then I took ceramics as my major study in the degree programme co-presented by RMIT University and HKAS. I even started my studio with friends and became a teacher of ceramic art. The completion of the RMIT Programme was a turning point, I was deeply encouraged to further pursue art and ceramics development since I had obtained an art prize on the year of graduation. Therefore, I carried on creating artwork, teaching ceramics hobby classes and extra-curriculum art lessons at various secondary and primary schools.

In the following years, I was honoured to accept the scholarship offered by two British Universities to pursue my master study in fine art. Five years ago, I entered HKAS as a lecturer, it was an important move in my art career. I was truly grateful with all the opportunities I had in my art journey that made me grew, and the experiences gained did not only apply to my teachings but also the sharings with students. It gave me the sense of mission, that I felt special with my students who were also my junior schoolmates at school. Would every one of you share how arts education influence you and our next generation?

1

Do you agree that conducting art exhibitions is a way of education?

Joey Lai — I was not able to fully engage in the creation and teaching of ceramic art because I was too occupied by my full time job as a designer. I mainly communicate with audiences through exhibition with ceramic art as medium. Once, I was invited to participate in an exhibition with the theme on fishermen of Aberdeen and the art gallery approached me because of my family background in the fishing industry. In the first few years after graduation, I simply hoped to conduct a good exhibition and did not consider much about educating audiences but I would start thinking about it now.

Siu Kam Han — I believe conducting art exhibition can enhance culture and education. Messages can be conveyed through exhibition and even direct conversation with audiences. I had participated in exhibitions and art projects which had interactions with audiences, however ceramics is not the only medium of art in offering artistic experience to audience. From my experience, using an unfamiliar art medium can help audience to think out of the box and broaden their perspectives. Let's take the graduation work of my master study as an example, I let audience touch a bag filled with unknown items and it had led to interesting responses and discussion. It was similar to the

meditation experience, and I hoped audience could balance their minds and expectation through unfamiliar experiences. Another example would be my four art projects about cyanotype, sounds and conversation in Japan, these workshops enabled participants to experience unfamiliar aspects and enrich themselves through arts and language.

2

Are your choices of art mediums in the activities derived from learning ceramics?

Siu Kam Han — Not really but it was related to the realization as we grew older and at certain phases in life, or it was about our own temperament. Learning arts through ceramics, and I was able to choose what I yearned for. I tried to explore more possibilities out of ceramics during my master study back to a few years ago.

As a result, I organized an art workshop for south-east Asian women and invited a number of relative organizations in Hong Kong to be a part of it. It was delighted to see the positive changes of participants after completing the workshop, for instance, these unsociable and conservative women who hardly set foot on unfamiliar places, were actually joining the opening of our exhibition and even visited my studio. It was a good experience for all of us. On the other hand, I had also conducted workshops for students with new elements of sound and it was thus more interesting and meaningful.

Recently, I joined the Contemporary Ceramic Society Hong Kong with a few alumni and became one of the members. The society hoped to enhance the communication between members and external parties through enrolling new members and one of the channels was creating a webpage on social media. Through interviewing members, I posted articles at the society webpage to updates of ceramic arts of the society and our members. These were all derived from learning ceramics.

3

Would others also share your teaching experiences in art?

Reed Cheng — My daily activities took place at JCCAC as I taught ceramic arts (mainly hobby classes) at my studio located there. I noticed something interesting, when there was a public space for art, people would expect different ceramics classes or services. For example, people from different backgrounds and age would come to learn ceramic arts, and there was an art therapist who brought cancer patients for classes in order to experience the art making process instead of learning about the proper making of it. I came across similar organizations quite frequently and therefore I realized their need to exchange with each other in a cosy environment instead of the know-how. They did not only appreciate the first artwork of their own but were also grateful for the kind arrangement when they

were ill. Though with detailed plans and arrangements, I found it quite difficult to facilitate workshops for people with mental illness as it was inevitable to have spontaneous incidents such as participants throwing things or leaving their seats without prior notice. I understood chaotic situations were inevitable and this was one of their learning patterns that I came to learn and accept. My role as a teacher was slightly different as teaching was more complicated and I had to deal with multi-tasks.

Rebeka Tam — Talking about Reed's ceramic studio, I think he is playing a supporting role in education, a huge back up for teachers like us who do not have sufficient facilities. I often seek his help to fire pottery works of students, and he has always arranged their chaotic works in an orderly manner. Though he has always stationed at the studio and hardly conduct outreaching activities, his role is very important. I also know that he has worked on a project that published an education book about ceramics for kindergarten children and the copies were distributed to kindergartens in Hong Kong.

Reed Cheng — The book was published at least 4 years ago, that experience made me realized the difficulties to seek funding. The proposal was written with my work partner and a number of amendments were required to further persuade the funding body after the submission. There was a period of time that I had constantly applied for project

funding, but I later realized excessive adjustments made to fit into funding bodies' requirements would go against the objectives and flexibility of the project. Therefore, I brought my focus back to studio work and setting up a studio gave me greatest satisfaction in education. With a studio space available, I wish to accomplish something in a limited time frame. Education is one of my consideration though I may no longer wish to teach in a few years. I like this studio space and I wish to make good use of it. With this resource, I can start planning about to teach, but not vice versa.

Rachel Cheung — I have also rented a studio at JCCAC. I divided the studio into two, half for my working area, another half for a cosy exhibition space for emerging artists to showcase their works for the public. As the owner of the gallery, I am able to talk with art workers and audiences, exchange idea and broaden artistic views and perspectives. Both my studio and Reed's studio are at JCCAC and we have been working hard for our beliefs.

Joe Chan — I have been a part time teacher at Hong Kong Art School for five years and I have been pondering the meaning of education in the first two years since I was first an artist, then an art teacher. I have always believed that one has to be engaged in something they wish to comprehend, and the more they are engaged, the better understanding they have, with a better picture, they can understand difficulties of

different stakeholders. I taught at courses organised by St. James' Settlement and tried to understand the reasons why people pursue art study when surrounded by arts. I met children with Down syndrome, mental disability and autism. I think the content of arts education is quite diverse, for example, ceramic art is popular at primary schools, secondary schools, and schools of ethnic minorities. For artist-in-residence programmes, artists lead students to complete an artwork and set up an exhibition. I had even been an art consultant for Tung Wah Group in taking care of young drug addicts, and to materialize the whole project. Recently, I used online shopping platform as teaching materials, let students understand how little resources can also make artworks. I led RMIT students to do this exercise, hoping to make them understand backgrounds or resources should not be an issue for art-making.

They can do anything if they really want to; if you have the right objectives, you must get the support from others. On a contrary, even with funding, you may not find your money well-spent. For example, hiring an artist as the host of a big event would cost thousands of dollars and fulfilling the sponsor's requirements are not what I enjoy doing, so I tried something else and found what I need. This is how I teach. I am now teaching at Hong Kong Art School and I have a strong sense of belonging, I hope to make improvements. Though I am busy, as an artist and a teacher, I also work on my

artwork and exhibition. I believe everything is about education, but I notice students' desire for knowledge is not strong at all and some of them remain at the stage of having hobby classes instead. It seems that common knowledge is not common to everyone.

Reed Cheng — Once I conducted seminars for secondary school students, as requested by the principal, I tried to organize interesting activities with knowledge based seminars. I therefore brought potter's wheels to the school and start lecturing from a bowl. Amazingly, most students only know how to use the bowl but not how it was produced. Then I used images and the actual artifact to teach them about the production process. Since it was my first time having seminar and demonstration simultaneously, I found it an interesting experience. In the seminar, I introduced ceramic art, the appreciation of art and its production methods. A few students came to my studio to learn ceramic art for a few years afterwards, though very few of them can keep up the learning, there were interesting combination of students, like a couple came and joined the classes for three whole years.

4

How did you get along with students in class?

Joe Chan — I don't want to compare my generation with students nowadays, they are facing more competition and they are a lot

younger than us when we pursue the study of fine art. They are committed to work in the art industry but they are not as enthusiastic as we used to be. I am also learning how to teach recently, the more I learn about arts education, the stronger I feel the need to change the teaching approach in every two years. Instructional teaching approaches may not be workable, and we may even need to use inventive teaching methods such as designing a game for them, thus they are encouraged to reach their greatest potential in learning. The world changes rapidly nowadays, from authoritative teaching to engaging students in learning activities and the latter would make a difference.

Rachel Cheung — I normally adopted the mode of lecturing, or launched individual and group discussion. Discussion among students would enhance their thinking and analytical skills. In addition, following up on individual progress is also crucial since some students may not wish to discuss their topics and issues in public due to different concepts, development direction and perspectives. I basically would not go against their concepts but would provide opinions and solutions accordingly.

Siu Kam Han — Right, students have different potential and progress. I believe education is about influencing people instead of scoring.

Rebekka Tam — I had keen interest in education before studying ceramic art,

but my hobby was drama. I took a drama programme which had profound influence on me. It had inspired me on the idea of education and thus I studied visual arts afterwards. My first job was managing a painting studio, and since I know nothing at that time, I kept reading to figure out the meaning of education. I was lucky as I could keep trying under the guidance of very good teachers throughout the learning process. Till now, I had approached different groups of people and taught students with special needs under the impact of my husband at work. As you mentioned, teaching the same thing to different people made me understand more about the relationships between people and arts.

When I work on a customized programme now, I would ask ‘why would they need this programme? What can I offer?’, and I understand that what I think of art is not sufficient in this.

Joe Chan — An institution trains artists and short art courses only introduce a medium of art. Some people will spend a year time to teach a student with mental disability, from drawing nothing to a simple circle, of course it is difficult as the ultimate goal not what he can draw but his ability to respond through the process, so arts can be a medium of communication instead.

Rebekka Tam — As an artist, I really fear of repeating myself. However, as I approached more students with mental

disability, repeating seems important to them, so it raises a good question: ‘what can arts actually do?’ It does not only affect how I create artwork, but make me appreciate more on the art medium I use.

Rachel Cheung — Talking about ‘repeating’ yourself, I thought of two groups of students on the same module. Since the class was split into two groups due to the number of students, I had to teach the same thing in the morning, then in the afternoon. Through repeating what I taught in the afternoon, it helped me review the content of the morning class and supplement the class in the afternoon, it was truly satisfying indeed.

Antonio Wong — There was a teacher in the RMIT course who was very inspiring, not only that she could help solve my problems, I also noticed that other students were often benefitted from her advice, some might even get sentimental and cried after the conversation. I therefore felt that the role of teacher was an inspiring source for students, and I started pursuing art therapy studies after graduation.

I think arts education is different from inspiring others through art. There are two types of art therapy: (1) art psychotherapy, which refers to the healing effects in art making process; and (2) art as therapy, art making before communication. I think arts education is fascinating, and I was once inspired by two co-workers from St. James’ Settlement. I was inexperienced by that

time, but I was truly surprised to see the progress of people with mental disability in communicating with others through painting and ceramics. I was deeply touched, through repeating certain steps, they were calmed and delighted.

I wasn't familiar with arts education, but through teaching kindergarten children and hobby classes, I saw participants who were greatly inspired through producing ceramics work. For example, a mother and daughter joined the workshop. The daughter was quite dependent at the beginning, but through the conversation in the art-making process, she started to be more engaging. This made me understand people would have different outcome throughout the process. Another example was a group of DSE students from the first cohort who felt themselves as an experimental model, they were confused and uncertain about their future. Ceramics classes helped them ease the stress and establish confidence. Once, a student squeezed the clay but had no idea what it was.

After exchanging with one another, he started imagining the clay as his thumb so he came up with a direction for his work. He had gained more confidence, and he shared his experience with his groupmates, supporting each other and explored more in the learning process. One of the most significant features of ceramics was the transformation and its process was a remedy and therapy. Gripping the clay tightly and release it, you may see what it is like, and

continue adding or removing clay to make a piece of work. I think it is quite amazing as you may realize the control and choices in life through the process.

Winus Lee — I have been teaching visual arts in secondary school for a long time. I would review my work and hope to bring something different to students every year. Secondary school students are fear of boredom, impatient, and lack of concentration.

I normally would set the standard of programme slightly higher than the quality of students, make it more challenging and interesting. I think learning from peers is very important so I encourage students to learn from each other and keep them energetic in class. During critique sessions, students are required to explain to each other about their work showcased in class, so they can feel positive pressure and greater motivation. When there are groups performing well, the general standards will be heightened.

Apart from teaching, I also conduct exhibition and organize courses at Peng Chau Chiu Kee Ceramics shop, so participants can experience traditional craftsmanship. Some may learn little about it, and some may decide to study more. In the exhibition with Chiu Kee last year, I worked with young designers, produced some short videos and ran some workshops in order to provide better understanding about on-

glaze. We hope to meet more old masters of on-glaze and learn from them though we understand that we may not be able to learn every bit of knowledge from them. It is still a pleasure listening to their experience and appreciate their works. This skilful handcraft is in decline in Hong Kong, and experts in this area are rare, so we hope to promote it to the public so it can continue to grow. We have a group of supporters who contribute with funding and time to perpetuate this handcraft through filming and documentation. Not long ago, a professor who studied on-glaze techniques in south-east countries approached me and informed me of his intention to make on-glaze an intangible cultural heritage in Hong Kong. His actions reminded me of the importance of perpetuating the heritage and the fact that no one should give up on negligible handcrafts because it would come to an end. I realize that persistence is what we need to complete a meaningful thing, the results may surprise you at the right time.

Siu Kam Han — As if sowing a tiny seed, it would not bloom immediately but at the right time.

Winus Lee — The description about sowing is good: some seeds fell on the soil, some fell on on rocky ground and withered, its growth is somehow determined by co-incidence.

5

How does arts education go along with artists who value character, independence and individuality?

Siu Kam Han — Under the education of Hong Kong, students are often disappointed by the expectation of teachers and adults. From the role of an artist, I hope to remind youngsters to consider issues with different perspectives. I had once conducted a Cyanotype workshop for a group of mothers and children in Japan. A mother was not happy with her produced work and thus I gave her some encouragements and advice to cheer her up.

Another example was a ceramics class for students with communication and learning problems, one of the little girls was only willing to attend the class with the companionship of her teacher. She asked if she could bring some clay home to continue the work, so I let her do so and reminded her to bring back her work for the firing process. Since then, she was in love with ceramics and continued the class in the following semester. Though she didn't talk much, she no longer needed teacher's companionship and even had knew some new friends.

Rachel Cheung — It is important to make students feel satisfied. Recently, a student had some concentration issues in class and was not speaking in good manners. In fact ceramics skills could be gained through practicing, but he was determined to ruin

every piece of work created by him in class. I guessed it was due to his lack of confidence and his perfectionism, therefore I tried to communicate with him in a gentle manner and talk to him in a strategic way until he gained confidence to keep his first piece of completed work. This may be a trivial matter, but different approaches are needed for individual students. Unlike the time I taught hobby classes, I found teaching a pleasure as well as a challenge since I was able to communicate with every student on a daily basis.

Winus Lee — After teaching the subject of visual arts for years, I changed from demanding good quality of work to lowering the standard of quality work from students as I realized that my students may not have to be an artist. I hope they can enjoy the process of learning about arts. Some students may be interested in art, some may only hope to express negative emotions through art, so we need to teach according to students' capability.

Rachel Cheung — As if I would tell my students with ceramics major that this would be their only chance to learn about ceramics, I hope they would enjoy the class and create as many works as they wish. I don't expect them to become ceramic artists but a quality audience after the study.

Ida Yu — I started with a clear teaching plan before the class, but as I gained more experiences and got familiar with the

context recently, I realized that learning about the personality of students and making adjustments on the teaching plans according to their learning progress might help them achieve better results. Though some students came to class to kill time and some had no intention in becoming an artist, I aimed at arousing their interests in the art mediums. For instance, I would let students understand more about themselves during the process in pottery throwing classes. Ceramics is merely a medium and I hope to bring something more to students through it instead of forcing them to accomplish certain standards. This is different from the recent YMC Arts in education project that I worked with Rebaka, the project explores how to maintain the balance between the development of cities and villages, and messages are transmitted through ceramics as a medium of arts. As time passes, I felt the change in me, I used to be quite self-centred when I was a designer and would not think in someone's shoe if I had something in mind. However, I had come to learn more about how others feel through communicating with people in teaching ceramics, I sometimes even felt that I was working in the customer service industry. I am now a part-time teaching assistant of ceramics at Hong Kong Baptist University, and I often communicate with students. I would advise them and share my skills with them but this is different from formal education. I mean formal education, extracurricular activities and hobby classes have different educational aims and levels. The focus would be on the content, then the

academic results at school, but if it is hobby class, I would adjust my way of thinking, I believe students have to be complimented, they would perform better and cooperate in class if they have the sense of success.

Antonio Wong — We have been discussing how ceramics can inspire people, and the plasticity of clay before firing is considerable, the first firing fixes the shape, the second firing for colouring and glazing. The production process is filled with transformation, and this can help those who have always been looking for exits in life.

Rebeka Tam — Talking about Ceramics' features, Ida and I worked together in YMCArts project, participants were able to discuss the recent hot topic on North-east New Territories Incident, since the duration of workshop is even shorter than hobby class, I thought carefully about how to let them understand the issue in a short period of time and be able to exchange ideas in this regard as they might not be able to comprehend the culture of villages. Ceramics is a very good medium that can substitute verbal communication, they could start a conversation with through ceramics. We made clay human figures, talked about rural stories and made bread together. Eventually, we came to feel the culture of the village and the definition of rural area. After the events, we exhibited the finished work of clay human figures at Hong Kong Cultural Centre, then PMQ in Central. The exhibition had definitely

attracted the attention of audience and thus launched a dialogue between them.

Siu Kam Han — Though ceramics is a textural material, I noticed very few people would truly feel its texture with their hands. On the other hand, language and sound are very direct, the former was established through transformation over the years with number of varieties. Sound is easier to memorize, thus I started wondering about the meaning of sound. How to connect the touch and feelings for ceramics? This connection is rare in our society.

Joe Chan — It is difficult to fully express your idea through language nowadays, because many people have no patience to read. Unofficial statistics shows that images can achieve better results than language. People only have the patience to read the first 50-100 words.

Joey Lai — My works are quite abstract, sometimes I wonder if audience can really understand when they give me positive feedbacks, and how I can find the balance when explaining the idea of my work.

Rachel Cheung — Did you explain to audience about your work then?

Joey Lai — Yes, I did but they might not have the patience to listen since it took time and audience had to go through the work a few times before truly understood my work.

6

We have all conducted exhibitions, any profound feelings that you wish to share?

Joey Lai — I had conducted an exhibition about fishermen with a few friends some time ago and we had arranged the visit and research study of their daily routines for the exhibition. I felt that the study was not thorough enough and since I joined in the middle of the study, it was really hard to give concrete opinions. However, I was interested in the project and hoped to further investigate about the topic.

Joe Chan — I hardly be present in my exhibition as I tried to avoid the audience. I tended to let audience ‘manage’ my work before discussing with me. I don’t wish to explain to them about the concept of my work directly so I rarely stand beside my work in the exhibition and start a conversation with them.

Winus Lee — During the exhibition with Mr. and Mrs. Lam from Chiu Kee at PMQ, a senior came and started a conversation with us. We later found out this senior was an experienced ceramic artist who paid a visit after learning about the exhibition. He brought us some of his work and tools, and we even visited him afterwards. Interestingly, he had become our ceramics teacher and I was delighted to have this platform in connecting people.

Siu Kam Han — Everyone needs joy and recognition, take my ceramic class at school

for an example, when school teachers arranged an exhibition for students, participating students would be extremely exciting so it tells the importance of recognition in life.

Rachel Cheung — Right, I had my first exhibition many years ago, and a while later, a woman visited the studio where I taught ceramics and she told me that she wished to learn ceramics due to the inspiration she got from my first exhibition. I was thrilled and deeply moved as an emerging artist at that time, knowing that my work could inspire people as well as being recognized by even a stranger, was truly encouraging to me.

7

Would you like to share about the learning attitude of students from our next generation?

Ida Yu — From my observations in the past few years, I think arts education has certain issues. For example, students would quickly lose interest after picking up the skills for wheel throwing, lack of motivation, enthusiasm and determination. It was quite different from teenagers from my generation, and it was uncertain if it was due to education or family issues.

Rachel Cheung — Teenagers nowadays have no patience for wheel-throwing or making ceramic works, and since they are afraid of failures, they may possibly use

'boredom' as a pretext to give up on a subject.

Siu Kam Han — They treat learning as a game, and they have many other options if they choose not to play. Ceramics is not significant to them, they still have many options if they stop learning ceramics.

Ida Yu — A few years ago, most children I taught considered clay as a fascinating subject, even getting hands on it would delight them, they learned with a modest heart. However, they lost the motivation to learn as soon as they enter secondary school studies. They preferred a direct answer from teachers and not to think, this was most devastating to me and it became the most unappealing teaching approach as I need to change mine to accommodate them. From this we learn about the problem of our education, children lose curiosity for the world as soon as they grow up. Though the change of society may be one of the reasons, I reckon if we can have a better approach in this regard.

Winus Lee — While teaching at primary or secondary schools, I would let students do what they are interested in whenever possible.

Ida Yu — Me too, but most junior secondary school students are reluctant to think. Ask them to think hard is somehow a discouragement for them.

Winus Lee — True, you've got to remind students for classes even for those who took

the initiative to apply and pay for the class. Sometimes, you've got to send notice to their parents to ensure their attendance, as if we need to force them to class.

Ida Yu — I tried to give them samples for class work and they would follow when they found it pretty. However, they easily felt bored and intended to give up when they could not perform well without paying more effort. Students seem to look for 'instant gratification' in learning, and I think this is a deeply ingrained problem that is increasingly difficult for us to tackle.

Rachel Cheung — Many young students that I have approached are lack of concentration and independence. Even though very detailed guidelines are laid down, they would continue asking about the requirements repeatedly. Eventually, I start thinking of ways to help them recall the important points.

Antonio Wong — It would be quite difficult for students to come up with a concept of work in class, but it would better if we could give them the topic before the class so they could do prior preparation and research online. I've tried this method and it works.

Winus Lee — Some students would not bother copying the answer even if they were given one.

Antonio Wong — Did they give up on themselves?

Winus Lee — They may not be giving up, but they only do things they like and are not fond of copying English answers. However, different students vary, and it makes teaching more difficult as they are too self-centred.

Ida Yu — This issue does not only occur on common secondary school students, it is the same for visual art students at postsecondary institutions.

Siu Kam Han — Teaching can be gratifying, for instance, I've taught a class to make ocarina. Among them, there was a student with unsatisfactory academic performance who was also slow and shy. To my surprise, she took an active role in class and turned on the recorder I prepared for the class and started playing the ocarina. She was the most active and energetic student in class when we produced the video for class review and sharing, and it was completely different from her previous performance. Another example was a student from technical school who had often skipped regular classes, he had made a special effort to attend my ceramics class. Learning that he had continued fine art study after graduation, I could feel the impact of arts.

Rachel Cheung — Arts is a part of life, arts education is not only about the knowledge of art but the inspiration to students through the teachers' character. Along with students' personality and learning attitude, it contributes to the unique style of individual student. Through education, both students

and teachers may get to know more about themselves. For me, teaching has broadened my perspective in humanities, which is unimaginable for me before engaging in the education field. Teaching can inspire students to create work as well as to solve problems. The main idea is to help them solve problems in the making of art, but it can help easing their mental stress through conversation.

Antonio Wong — I had taught students of gerontology and they would work at elderly's home in future. I let them play with clay in the workshop and explored approaches to enrich elderlies' lives through art, so they started making shapes of dumplings in the process and were satisfied with the results. I think bringing this happiness and influential messages to elderlies and blended arts into the community is a wonderful thing.

Siu Kam Han — Artists convey messages through art is similar to literates publish writings. I like graffiti and recently, I saw one on a mirror with the statement 'I sick leave tomorrow'. I think it is humorous and those who dislike working would be thrilled to see it, as if reading <Chicken soup for the soul>, this is art, delights you and evokes resonance among readers.

Book Editor's Thoughts

The first part of the research project was to gather information about alumni's status and changes before and after graduation through the distribution of questionnaires and data analysis. More than a hundred of questionnaires were distributed to alumni with ceramics as major study; however a number of them might have missed the questionnaires due to outdated contact information. We had successfully collected 40 questionnaires that corresponded to one-third of our alumni population, and it was quite a satisfactory response rate for the study.

The questionnaires reflected that 92.5% of respondents were working adults who went back to school for the study of ceramics. After graduation, about 84% of respondents left their previous jobs and further develop in ceramics and art-related field, hence embarking on a new chapter of life.

The second part of the research project was to invite respondents for a gathering, it is hoped to not only reconnect with fellow

alumni but also exchange ideas on the impact of arts and art-related experiences after graduation. Among the 40 respondents, 16 (including me) of them participated in three individual sessions of gathering with different discussion topics to share their views on the impact of art to the society.

In this simple, direct and humanistic research project, the most precious and impressive of all was the meaningful sharing and sincere discussion between alumni. It was a rare opportunity for all of us. For most alumni, the study of arts was considered as an important milestone in life. It had been a rewarding experience for our personal development, the study of arts was definitely beneficial to those who pursued a career of art-making and education, or considered arts as a practice of self-reflection. Through working diligently, we may influence others with arts; we believe arts and creativity can make a difference in various aspects, as well as bringing us to a brighter future. Arts education nurtured our dreams of

contributing to the society. While making artworks, we would also engage in teaching in order to perpetuate the appreciation of arts and make the most out of arts itself.

I felt sorry for the delay in the project, but I was pleased with my decision to set forth the project proposal three years ago. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to reconnect with our alumni, their great determination in the journey of arts was indeed encouraging.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the participation of all alumni as well as the support from the Hong Kong Art School Research Committee.

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