NAVIGATING NEW REALMS WHILE ROOTED IN THE GRAND LINEAGE

CHUA EK KAY’S PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION OF INK PAINTING

Man cannot discover new oceans unless he has the courage to lose sight of the shore.

人只有鼓起勇气，告别海岸，才能发现新的海洋。

Andre Gide | 安德烈·纪德

In his search for a personal artistic voice, Chua Ek Kay became a master in both Chinese and Western modes of art creation. Absorbing facets not only of their visual styles, but also of the philosophy underpinning each of them, he ultimately generated a fresh manner and approach that were satisfying to himself, while also expressing the spirit of Singapore.

Just as Chua’s life is a story of moving from China and settling in Singapore, so too is his art a journey with roots in China but which evolves far beyond those roots. Although Chua spent almost all of his life in Singapore, he was born in China’s Guangdong province. When he was a child, his family joined the throngs departing China due to political and/or social conditions and dangers, including fear of the repercussions of living under a communist state. His parents chose Singapore for their new home. The importance of this choice for Chua’s future development as an artist cannot be overstated. As Singapore was home to a large ethnically Chinese population and was then a British colony, both Chinese and British-style education were available, and art was offered as part of their curriculum. In Singapore, Chua received a traditional training in the intertwined arts of Chinese calligraphy, poetry and ink painting. The last was the tradition and medium in which he was most adept, and which he considered the core of his artistic practice throughout his life. In Singapore, Chua’s art could develop, shielded from the full force of political and cultural imperatives pressuring ink painting in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

蔡逸溪在寻求属于自己的艺术个性的过程当中，掌握了中西方的创作形式，从多方面吸取了双方的视觉风格与思想内涵，他最终从中创造出新的画法和风格，既满足了自我要求，同时又成功表现出新加坡的本质精神。

蔡逸溪的一生始于中国，安于狮城，其艺术历程亦有所相类。虽源于中国却能朝他方深入发展，几乎一辈子都在新加坡居住的他，出生在中国广东省，幼时即随着家人投入逃离中国政治社会动乱的迁徙人潮（其中不乏对共产党统治心怀恐惧的群众）。他的父母选择在新加坡建立新的家园，而这一选择对蔡逸溪作为一个画家的未来发展影响至深。人口以华族居多的新加坡曾经是英国的殖民地，中西式教育兼备，而且不管是华校或英校的课程中都有美术科。在这里，蔡逸溪以学习了传统中华书法、诗词与水墨画。在这三门息息相关的艺术当中，水墨是/db他最为精通的传统和媒介，被他视为毕生创作的核心。

蔡逸溪的艺术在新加坡发展演化，在一定程度上免于面对中、港、台三地水墨界所
Chua’s career as an artist had spanned an exceptionally significant time for this mode of art, and yet he seemingly navigated this fraught era with equanimity.

During Chua’s lifetime, China experienced extreme political and cultural upheaval which inevitably impacted the arts. Ink painting received particular scrutiny because its long history endowed it with singular import in all cultural battles. Adding to the complexity of the situation for ink painting during the second half of the 20th century, the speed of communication across the globe increased dramatically, leading to the rapid exchange of ideas in the art world. Thus, at the same time as China’s internal concerns challenged ink painting, so too did the artistic revolution occurring in Europe and the United States.

Historical Background

Chua Ek Kay’s personal journey as an artist and an individual, as well as his forging of a fresh mode of art, can be best understood when viewed in the context of the development of modern and contemporary Chinese ink painting. On the one hand, Chua’s art represents a localized offshoot of one of the grand art historical narratives that of Chinese ink painting. On the other, his art has acted as a bridging force, linking the aforementioned grand tradition together with that of the West. This dialogue between East and West is one of the most complex and fascinating stories of 20th-century art.

During the first few decades of the 20th century, many young Chinese artists travelled to Japan or Europe to learn new modes of art. They believed that in order to build a new China capable of meeting the world on equal terms, it was imperative to learn from the West. While the need to adopt Western science and technology seemed obvious, many considered an understanding of Western art to be an equally important component of successful modernisation. Those who studied in the art academies of Tokyo and Paris returned to become key figures in China’s art education system, establishing art academies and designing the curricula to include drawing from life as an essential component of study in the fields of sculpture and in both Chinese (ink) and Western (oil) painting. Furthermore, as one aspect of the modernisation of ink painting, they incorporated three-dimensional modelling and chiaroscuro effects into their ink works. A proponent of this mode of fusing the East and West, Xu Beihong (1895–1953) for example, had spent eight years in Germany and studied at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in France, among other places, before returning to China in 1927. He became one of the first presidents of the National Beijing Art College, the forerunner of today’s Central Academy of Fine Arts. Lin Fengmian (1900–1991) too studied at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and in Germany, before returning to China in 1925. In 1928, Lin helped to found the National Academy of Art in Hangzhou. There was an ideological drive behind the establishment of China’s art education system, and the students who had returned from their education abroad embedded that point of view within the structure of the new art academies.

Ideology shaped the arts in China in other ways. In 1942, communist leader Mao Zedong gave a series of lectures, now known as the “Talks at the Yan’an
Forum on Literature and Art," on the role literature and art should play in a
communist society. These lectures established guidelines for art production,
centred on the belief that art should serve the people and further the revolution.
For art to achieve this goal, it should be relevant to the lives of "the people," it
should be easily understood, and it should convey a clear and worthy message.
Under such constraints, ink painting would consist mainly of figure painting and
would make use of Western-style three-dimensional rendering and so on to
produce easily read, didactic imagery. A painting of plum blossoms or of
an uninhabited landscape, for example, would have been criticised as being
meaningless unless one were familiar with the literary and artistic references,
or had the education to read the brushwork. By contrast, a realistic image of
happy workers labouring in a steel mill conveys an obvious message supporting
the goals of the state. The dictates of the paintings waxed and waned in power over
the ensuing decades, but generally gained in power with the establishment of
the People's Republic of China in 1949, and the Great Proletarian Cultural
Revolution from 1966 to 1976. The Red Guards who took action during the
latter sought to destroy the "Four Oids" (old thought, old customs, old culture,
and old morals). This entailed destroying not only books and art, but also
people who stood for the bourgeois values of the past, for example, traditional
ink painting practitioners. Under this rationale, they persecuted numerous
teachers, intellectuals, artists, among others. Methods of persecution included
demeaning and harsh forced labour; imprisonment; beating; humiliation. Some
died, and others were driven to suicide - all in the name of the revolution. Wu
Guanzhong (1919-2010) for example, an artist admired by Chua (see the
interview with Zhu Qi published in this volume), destroyed many of his own
paintings out of fear of persecution, but was still sent to perform hard labour
for years. Later on, though he produced many powerful and innovative works,
years of work had already been irretrievably lost.

It was evident that in mainland China, the very act of painting had become
highly politicised. While the harsh constraints on art gradually loosened up
following Mao's death in 1976, a great deal of knowledge and talent was lost for
ever. To paint with ink and brush on paper had become highly fraught, and
to learn to paint in the way of the masters, and to become a link in an ancient
lineage, was a goal that was increasingly difficult to attain.

The 20th-Century Diaspora of Chinese Painters

Born in 1947, Chua Ek Kay belongs to the large cohort of 20th-century artists
(among others) who started life in China but emigrated later. This diaspora
catalysed a major influx of new ideas and techniques into the realm of Chinese
ink painting. Coming as they did from disparate nations, these sources of new
ideas were varied. A summary of the circumstances of a handful of the best-
known artists will serve as a background against which to understand Chua Ek
Kay's situation. Liu Guosong (b. 1932) for example, was born in Shanghai and
moved to Taiwan in 1949, the year of the founding of the People's Republic of
China. He studied both ink and oil painting at the Fine Arts Department of
the National Taiwan Normal University and in 1957, co-founded the radical Fifth
Moon Group. The group's members blended the arts of China and the West,
most notably American Abstract Expressionism. The great connoisseur and

意识形态对中国艺术的塑造性影响，还表现在
其他方面。1942年，共产党领袖毛泽东发表
了一系列讲话（现称“延安文艺座谈会”），
探讨了文学与艺术在共产主义中所应当扮演
的角色。座谈会为艺术创作奠定了一套指导
方针，其基本信念是：艺术应当为人民服务
及推展革命工作。为此目的，艺术应当与所
谓“人民”的生活紧密关联，能够为他们所
理解，并且传达清楚而有价值的信息。在此
限制之下，水墨画只能是以人物画为主，要
运用西式的立体表现之类，画出容易看懂且
具教化意义的画面。举例而言，单纯画梅花
或者是无意义的山水，可能被批评是毫无意义，
除非观画者熟悉相关的文学或艺术内涵，或
者具备足以欣赏画中笔墨的学养。描绘钢铁
厂工人辛勤劳动的写实性画面则不然；它负
载的是群众一日了然的信息，支持国家的目
标理念。延安文艺座谈会所提出的准则在后
来的数十年间或更迭，但总体上发挥了越
来越大的影响力，特别是在中华人民共和国
1949年建立以后，以及1966至1976年无产阶
级文化大革命期间。在文化大革命时期，红卫
兵被称之为"破四旧"，也就是“破除旧思想、
旧文化、旧风俗、旧习惯”。为此，他们不仅
要毁灭书籍和艺术品，还要打击代表资产阶
级价值观的人士，其中包括从事传统水墨绘
画者。他们基于这种想法，迫害了数不尽的
教师、知识分子、艺术家及其他人士，迫害
的手段包括强制性及贬低性的艰苦劳动、监
禁、殴打、羞辱等等。在革命的名义下，有
的人因而死亡，有的人被逼得自寻短见。比如
蔡逸溪所欣赏的画家吴冠中（1919—2010）
（详见本册所收录、朱琦所编写的《蔡逸溪
谈艺录》），就曾经因为避免迫害而亲手销毁了
自己的大量作品，结果却始终难逃下放劳动
的命运。他虽然后来得以继续创作，画出了颇具
力度和新意的杰作，但其绘画生涯终究被夺去了
好几年的时间。

显然，绘画在中国大陆至此已被高度政治化。
虽然对美术的严厉限制在毛泽东1976年逝世
之后，便逐渐宽松，然而相关的知识与才艺已
经大量失传。运用笔墨在纸上绘画这件事，可
谓饱经风霜；学习前辈大师的绘画之道，接上
古老的传承，已是越来越难以企及。

离散海外的20世纪中国画家

纵观20世纪，曾有一大批画家（及其他人士）
早年生长于中国，后来继续移居他乡；
出出生于1947年的蔡逸溪，正属其一。这股离散浪浮势力促使大量新理念、新技法传入中国水墨领域。这些新的养分来自于不同的国家，来源不一。以下我们大略介绍此中最著名的几位画家，藉由他们各自的时代背景，帮助我们了解蔡逸溪所处的环境。

刘国松，1932年出生于上海，1949年（即中华人民共和国建国之年）定居台湾，后来在台湾师范大学美术系进修水墨与油画，1957年返台。台北成立的五人画会。该画会的会员热衷于融合中西方的艺术风格，特别是美国抽象表现主义。

大鉴赏家兼画家张大千（1899—1983），出生于四川省，1949年离开中国，先后栖身于巴西、阿根廷和美国加州，到了1978年才定居台湾。张大千虽然与国内画家有联系，但未能参与该会。他热衷于艺术的创作经历了一定的演化，比如他的泼彩风格，或是画个人的旅途来营造而生。寿琨（1919—1975），1948年从广东省移居香港。艺术界视其为香港水墨画运动的创始人。

王无邪，1936年出生于广东省，两年后落户香港。其学画的过程分为多个阶段，先是自学开始，1958年拜入吕寿琨門下，最后于1961至1965年间留学美国。王无邪自此以后便在香港定居。

赵无极（1920—2013），从北京移居巴黎，此后成为著名的抽象画家，是为法兰西艺术科学院院士。

这些离散画家以选择前往台湾、香港、法国和美国居多。对于西方前卫艺术所构成的挑战，他们大多奋力回应，并且表现出色，必须指出的是：西方前卫派的影响力登陆港台及新加坡，是该时期所盛行的保守的英国水彩画传统，以及当地各种种族与国籍社群的原有画风。

蔡逸溪的墨画导师范昌乾

蔡逸溪幼年去国，因遇上二十世纪华人离散海外的高潮，才有机会投入中国水墨画大家派—海上画派（海派），所谓的“海派”，早期的代表人物包括任熊（1823—1857）；它并不是一个正式的组织，而是指一群画家。其中一位就是蔡逸溪的墨画导师范昌乾。
Prosperity and Happiness | 富贵图

Wu Changshuo | 吴昌硕

Chinese ink and colour on paper | 水墨设色纸本
270 x 98 cm
Gift of Tan Family in memory of their late father
Dr Tan Tseh Chor

民族艺术研究室汉学之教授
Collection of the Asian Civilisations Museum Singapore
亚洲文明博物馆藏品

Flower | 花

Fan Chang Tien | 范昌乾

Chinese ink and colour on paper | 水墨设色纸本
99 x 34 cm
Collection of National Gallery Singapore
新加坡国家美术馆藏品

Orchid | 萧寒花

Chua Ek Kay | 蔡逸溪

Chinese ink and colour on paper | 水墨设色纸本
69 x 52 cm
Collection of Catholic High School
公教中学藏品

风相似的画家。他们的创作特点是结合纯熟的笔墨、华美（或者富有关性）的构图，以及较具吸引力的题材，作品有时还显出新意，对画者的影响。蔡逸溪与海派之间，乃是经由其墨画导师范昌乾（1908—1985）而结缘。范昌乾出生于广东，早年为了学画而定居上海，1929年考入上海艺专国画系。他的老师当中最为有名的是王国维（1897—1928）、冯大中（1903—1973）等人，无一不是以色彩渲染、笔力健健的花鸟画著称。通过王国维，范昌乾的师承脉络可上溯至一代宗师吴昌硕（1844—1927）。吴昌硕的成就，在于引领笔法、设色及构图方面非凡的创新精神，所形成的画风将数百年来精英主义的文人画与较为通俗的画风风格连结。换言之，海派的作品富有新意，技艺高超，而且往往具装饰性，因而可雅俗共赏。我们看吴昌硕、范昌乾和蔡逸溪三人的花鸟画，不难看出其中延续至今的一脉相承（图1至图3）。

范昌乾毕业以后在中国南方及香港的学校任教，一直到1948年，他离开中国前往曼谷，到了1953年又转而落户新加坡，任教于新加坡中学，直到1968年方才退休。从1975年开始，范昌乾便在潮安会馆定期教导蔡逸溪，前后持续一两年。在此之后的好一段岁月里，蔡逸溪仍继续向他学习（但改为不定期地上课），从而渐渐掌握了海派的水墨技法。中国传统水墨画的教学，一般都就具体的物象种类讲究特定的笔法，这与师徒之间的传授大不同。画竹、画竹叶，各有不同的用笔方式；诸如兰叶、牡丹的花瓣及岩石等等，各有各的笔法。描绘鸟兽与人物，同样亦是下笔各有各一套表现。海派的一大创新在于吴昌硕以书法家笔法入画，开拓了表现空间。与此相类的是：蔡逸溪到了本身作品发展成熟之后，便认定长年以来所学习的笔法确实大有价值，但如果能突破使用范围，便更能扩展其价值。于是，他摆脱了早年所习惯的、变化较为有限的图像形态，纵笔远游。蔡逸溪的创作信念似乎是要力避教条主义，对一切无所谓排斥。

由于蔡逸溪居住在狮城，因此不似居在中国大陆那样有许多关于学习中水墨画的机会。到了80年代中期为止，新加坡一直以来只有一所美术学校——南洋美专。（该校于1938年南洋师专给予鼓励之下，由习艺于上海的华族画家同创办。）然而，身处新加坡而不是中国，终究并非全无好处。最主要的一点，当然是蔡逸溪因而免于被束缚
中国画家的政治意识形态所阻碍。此外，关于水墨在20世纪及往后的可行性的问题，神州大地上一度展开了激烈的争论。而蔡逸溪似乎更加不拘于成说。1985年，学者李小山（出生于1957年）于《江苏画刊》上宣布水墨画已是濒于消亡，激起了强烈的反响。早在1935年，贺天健（1891—1977）其实便已提出了类似的看法，只不过他同时也相信水墨仍有可能出现正面的转变；而李小山则认定其变化不会带来好的结果。6 在此数年后，著名画家吴冠中于1992年又在《南方周报》上直言“笔墨等于零”。对于传统水墨画是否还能跟上时代，显然有一些人持一种极强的悲观态度。蔡逸溪对此的争论肯定有所知觉，但他并不沉浸其中。

游学国际

蔡逸溪不仅从未放弃水墨画，而且实际上一直选择以水墨作为自己主要的创作媒介。值得注意的是：尽管如此，他在他的导师范宽于1985年逝世以后，他才决定成为全职画家，并且正式学习其他艺术形式。他以快速的步伐先后取得新加坡拉萨尔—新航艺术学院的毕业证书（1990年）、澳洲塔斯马尼亚大学纯美术系学士学位（1994年）以及澳洲西雪梨大学的艺术硕士荣誉学位（1995年）。走这一步，其实并不容易。首先，由于蔡逸溪当时已是新加坡公认的、受人赏识的中华传统文化倡导者，有些人并不乐意他朝这样的新方向行进。6 再者，他已经花费数年的工夫来研习传统水墨画；要脱离自己业已掌握并深度投入的事物，须有坚定的心，敢于凭借信念去做一次大冒险。蔡逸溪选择学习西洋美术，努力将融合中华水墨，实践跟随徐悲鸿、林风眠等20世纪早期画家充满理想的脚步，通过西洋水墨营造抽象画面，并非蔡逸溪独创的尝试；20世纪中期的某些海外华族画家，包括赵无极、刘国松等人，都曾经从事于此，他们发现：抽象表现派早已吸纳了东亚思想，并在创作中体现了他们对此的理解。故此，对这些做惯海外的画家而言，借用抽象表现派的画法而施之于中国水墨画有其合理性，而且可获得令人满意的成就。

当年为了取得西雪梨大学的硕士学位，蔡逸溪写过一篇涉及新加坡20世纪艺术史之重大课题的荣誉学位论文，题目为“南洋画风的兴起以及其对东南亚国家之区域主义所扮演的角色”。7 论文审视在20世纪中期兴起的新加坡

settling in Singapore. There, he taught at the Whampoa Secondary School until he retired in 1968. Beginning in 1975, and continuing for a year or two, Fan gave regular painting lessons to Chua at the Cha’ an Hall. Chua remained his student for many years thereafter (albeit with less regular lessons) mastering the techniques of the Shanghai School ink painting. Traditional Chinese ink painting education, such as the one Chua received under Fan, assigned particular brushstroke techniques to specific imagery. There was a special kind of stroke for bamboo stalks and another for bamboo leaves; one for orchid leaves, one for rounded blossom petals; and a variety for rocks. Birds, animals, and people were depicted using different vocabularies of strokes. As one of the major Shanghai School innovations, Wu Changshuo employed calligraphic brushwork in painting, expanding its expressive possibilities. In a similar vein, by the time Chua had realised his mature works, he concluded that the brushstrokes that he had learned throughout his career were valuable, but that their worth could be increased if one did not limit their use. Thus, Chua moved far beyond the somewhat predictable imagery which he had mastered early on. It seems that Chua’s artistic credo was to avoid didactism and be open to all.

Living in Singapore meant that Chua Ek Kay did not have the wealth of opportunities that mainland China offered for studying Chinese ink painting. Until the mid-1980s, Singapore had but one art school, the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts – established in 1938 by Chinese painters educated in Shanghai, with the encouragement of Xu Beihong who visited Singapore that year.4 There were, however, advantages to being in Singapore rather than China, chief among them of course, being the fact that Chua was not hampered by the political ideologies adversely constraining artists there. Furthermore, Chua seems to have missed out on the unproductive but hot debate in China on the viability of ink painting in the 20th century and beyond. In 1985, for example, scholar Li Xiaoshan (b. 1957) declared in Ji’ngsu Pictorial that ink painting was moribund, spurring contentious debate. He Tianjian (1891–1977) had expressed a similar notion as early as 1935, but while he believed that there was possibility for change, Li felt that contrived change would not lead to good results.5 A few years later, in 1992, the established painter Wu Guanzhong stated in Mingbao Weekly that “brush and ink are nothing.” There was an extreme pessimism concerning the possibility of traditional ink painting remaining relevant. Chua was certainly aware of the debate, but he was not immersed in it.

An International Education

While Chua never abandoned ink painting – indeed, it remained his mode of choice – it is interesting that it was only after his painting master Fan had passed away in 1985 that Chua decided to become a full-time artist and pursue formal studies of other modes of art. In rapid succession, he earned a diploma from LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts (1990), a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting) conferred by the University of Tasmania (1994) and a Master of Fine Arts (Honours) from the University of Western Sydney (1995). To take such a step was not easy for Chua. Firstly, as he had become a recognised and admired proponent of traditional Chinese culture in Singapore, there were some who were not happy with his new direction.6 Secondly, he had
devoted decades to the study of traditional ink painting; breaking away from something one has mastered and in which one was deeply invested required determination and a major leap of faith. In studying Western art and striving to integrate it with Chinese ink painting, Chua followed in the idealistic footsteps of early 20th-century artists such as Xu Beihong and Lin Fengmian. Chua’s experimental creations with abstract imagery using ink and brush on paper were reminiscent of those of mid-century diasporic painters including Zao Wou-ki and Liu Guosong. These painters found that the Abstract Expressionists had absorbed East Asian philosophy and manifested their understanding of it in their painting. Thus, for this group of diasporic artists to adopt Abstract Expressionist approaches to Chinese ink painting made sense and was a satisfying achievement.

For his Master of Arts (Honours) in Visual Arts degree from the University of Western Sydney, Chua wrote a thesis touching on the major issues in 20th-century Singapore art history, titled “The Emergence of the Nanyang Style and its Role in the Regionalism of ASEAN Countries.” The thesis looked at the development of a Singapore-informed style of painting in the mid-20th century, and considered possibilities for a pan-Southeast Asian style. Written at the crossroads in Chua’s life when he was searching via education and travel for a viable new direction for his oeuvre, it presented one method he chose to examine his position as an artist. Chua quoted Chia Wai Hon, the Singaporean representative to the ASEAN Art Symposium of 1993: “To stay with the traditional would mean cutting themselves off from the mainstream of contemporary art ruled by Western aesthetics. If they are to go modern, they would be distancing themselves from their ancestors and might end up in a blind alley trapped in an alien movement that takes them nowhere.” Chua may have reproduced this quote as a reflection of his own anxiety regarding this position.

Chua’s reinvention involved not only formal education in Western modes of art, but also travel to new places, reaching as far as the vast stretches of empty desert in Australia’s Northern Territory, the lush landscapes of Indonesia – including the lotus ponds of Bali – and the colourful sights of Nepal and India. He was very open to the influences of these disparate places, and was sensitive to colour, space, and form. This sensitivity led to his extended interest in painting lotus ponds and the old streets of Singapore.

**Synthesis of Life Experience**

As with all art, Chua Ek Kay’s mature works are the product of his personality, his circumstances, his particular journey through life, and the opportunities that came his way. Studying Western art, he imbibed new ideas while mastering new media and techniques. Not only did Chua embrace life wholeheartedly as an odyssey of discovery, he found journeys of the physical rather than metaphorical kind – his travels to unfamiliar places – to be a source of personal and artistic growth. Seeing unfamiliar sights or listening to music he loved, he was inspired to take his art in new directions, venturing far beyond the safe and familiar. Approaching life and art together with a clear and open mind, he devised a fresh manner of ink painting uniquely suited to his home of Singapore.

本土画风，探讨了发展一种泛东南亚画风的可能性。蔡逸溪撰写论文之时，正处于人生的十字路口。他当时正在通过教育和旅行来为自己的创作寻找可行的新方向，而写论文正是他所选择的一种自我审视的方式，用以明晓自己作为一个画家的立场。蔡逸溪在文中引述了1993年东盟艺术研讨会之新加坡代表—谢惠汉的话：“保守传统，意味着自己与西方美学所主导的当代艺术主流断绝。如果选择走向‘现代’，即是远离自己的祖宗，有可能从此走入死胡同，受困于全无出路的异类风潮。” 蔡逸溪抄录这段话，或许是藉此折射出他本人与这种观点相连的焦虑。

蔡逸溪的自我改造，涉及的不仅是正式学习西洋美术形式，而且还有游历所未至之地。其足迹所及，远至澳洲澳洲北区偌大空旷的沙漠、印度尼西亚草木葱郁的自然环境（包括爪哇的荷塘），以及尼泊尔和印度五彩缤纷的景象。他对这些不同地方所带来的影响采取非常开放的态度，并且对色彩、空间及形体保持敏锐的感觉。基于这种敏锐性，他的绘画题材后来才会延伸至荷塘以及新加坡的老街景。

**人生经历的合成**

跟所有的艺术创作一样，蔡逸溪比较成熟的作品甚是性格、周遭环境、具体的生命轨迹以及所获之种种机遇交叉结合的产物。通过学习西洋美术，他不仅掌握了新媒介、新技法，也吸收了一些新的理念。他全心投入了人生的发现之旅，发现实体层面上（而不是隐喻层面上）一次次的游历一也就是前往陌生地点的实际旅行一可激发个人与艺术成长。无论是从新不熟悉的景物，或是享受他所喜爱的音乐，他都能从中获得启发，把创作推往新的方向。大步超越自认为“安全”的、已然熟悉的领域。总而言之，他以清楚而开放的头脑同时切入生活与艺术，成功开创了独适于画之所在——新加坡——的崭新水墨形态。
REFERENCES

1. These were the Indian Fine Arts Society, Malay Art Society, and Society of Chinese Artists.


5. For example, see Yee Tshiu Yi, “A Dreamer in Search of His Path: Reminiscences of Chua Ek Kay’s Life,” published in this volume.


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