

Jennifer Wen Ma 馬文

墨
之

Inked

誠品畫廊
ESLITE GALLERY

墨，是上千年來東方藝術語言和溝通的主體，代表所有的顏色，既可複製任何形體，給予筆觸意義，也帶來藝術形式的高度。同時，黑色是所有顏色的總合，也是一個「無」的強烈符號，這種全部包容同時又全部排斥的特質給予藝術極大的探索空間。

在馬文於台灣的首次個展「墨之」裡，「墨」是一個最主要的線索，藝術家試圖透過不同的作品來探討墨的各種屬性與特質，同時嘗試通過不同的手段來創造出它在當代藝術實踐中的無限可能。

以單一顏色代表所有的顏色，藉平面型態象徵現實空間，在靜止的畫面中蘊含著豐富的動態與歷時感……這些中國藝術裡特有的屬性，被藝術家延續且重新演繹於現代的展場時空與水墨動畫之中，而當這些作品的起因多數來自於一些動人的事物之際，伴隨著或歷史或藝術或文化等恢弘的關注，它們也從不間斷地吐露著個體內在的情感私語……

Mo, Chinese ink, has been the main medium for expression and communication for centuries in East Asia. It embodies all colors, emulates all forms, gives meaning to brush strokes, and brings about aesthetic achievements. Concurrently, black is the culmination of all colors and absence of all light. It is also a powerful symbol of void and muteness. Its duality allows great room for exploration.

In Jennifer Wen MA's first solo exhibition in Taiwan "Inked," mo dominates the artistic vocabulary as the artist investigates Chinese painting, ink and the color black from different contemporary perspectives.

Using a single color to represent all colors, employing two-dimensional forms to symbolize realistic space, embodying dynamic actions and a sense of time in a still image, these are some of the characteristics of Chinese art. Here MA extends and re-interprets Chinese aesthetics within a contemporary sense of time and space via installations and videos. As her works are also drawn from personal experiences and tales, they tenderly reveal MA's inner emotions and speak of heartrending moments in life while weaving poignantly between history, art and culture.

我是很唯心的， 我的出發點有很多都是感情…… 馬文談台北誠品畫廊個展「墨之」

採訪、整理/秦雅君

秦雅君：妳在台灣的首次個展命名為「墨之」，從英文名稱 Inked 可以更明確感受到它是一個動詞，在妳為展覽所寫的說明裡提到了「墨」在東方藝術系統裡的重要角色，以及黑這個顏色同時意味著「所有」與「空無」兩種相對性的特質，那麼在如此的背景之下，這個展覽名稱裡的選擇有什麼特別的涵義？

馬文：其實應該說，是先有了展覽裡的這些作品，才慢慢形成它們作為「一個展覽」的呈現。這段時間裡我一直在探索「墨」在現代藝術中可能的角色，尤其是作為一種驅動性的力量這部分，因此，這一系列作品都是從墨作為一個發點而分別展開。

我從小在西方受教育，二十歲回到中國大陸才開始學水墨畫，覺得很有意思，後來在自己創作的過程中，不時會想到或用到，但從來沒有系統性地討論過這個主題，一直是到兩、三年前開始做水墨動畫的時候，才開始意識到墨作為一個主體語言的涵義。其中，我覺得最意思的一點，就是中國傳統藝術裡的時間性和西方很不一樣，例如當我們閱讀一幅長卷時，它的時間已經在裡面了，同時中國文人在做作品時，常有很強烈的表演性與動態，但是我覺得華人的現代藝術並沒有真正去開發這個語言，所以我對這方面特別感興趣。

在這個展覽裡面，墨是一個最主要的線索，我試圖透過不同的作品來探討墨的各種屬性與特質。

秦：所謂在華人的現代藝術裡面沒有真正開發這個語言，妳指的是哪一方面？因為應用水墨、書法或是東方藝術裡的各項元素的現代藝術作品，好像還蠻常見的。

馬：可能應該說得更清楚一些。我覺得現代藝術最意思的一點就是它有一種刨根問底的精神，是要把無論什麼對象的本質找出來，它到底在說什麼？它如何切入現代生活與現代藝術？在華人世界中確實用水墨用得很多，但是我覺得，充分用一種當代藝術語言來關心我們這個社會中要討論的一些東西，而不只是表面性的使用水墨這個形式，在這一方面，不是沒有，但我覺得不夠。

秦：可以從這次的展覽裡面的任何一件作品，舉例來談談妳如何藉由自己的創作去回應或體現妳前面談到的那個面向？

馬：這次展覽中有一件「墨花草」的現地裝置，我選擇了五種文人必畫的植物：梅、蘭、竹、菊、柏，每棵植物的表面由墨汁塗成全黑，姿態擺設如同傳統水墨勾圖，乍看之下觀眾會以為看到了水墨花草畫，細看時才會意識到它們其實是活著的植物，隨著

I'm very intuitive. My starting point is the heart.

Jennifer Wen MA discusses Taipei solo exhibition "Inked" at ESLITE GALLERY

Interview and compilation by CHIN Ya-chun

CHIN Ya-chun: Your first solo exhibition in Taiwan is called "Inked." From the English title we can sense particularly clearly that this is a verb. In your exhibition concept you have pointed out the important role of ink in the Asian artistic paradigm, and that the color black simultaneously signifies "all" and "nothing," two opposite concepts. This being the case, what is the significance of your choice of name for this exhibition?

Jennifer Wen MA: Actually, the artworks came to me first, and then gradually a vision of a cohesive exhibition formed. For some time now, I have been exploring the possible role of ink in contemporary art, especially as a driving force. Hence, all the works in this exhibition are developed with ink as the departure point, moving in different trajectories.

Being educated in the West from a young age, I didn't study ink and wash painting until returning to mainland China when I was 21. I found it fascinating, and later, thought about using it in my creative process, but never systematically investigated into the subject matter. It wasn't until two or three years ago when I started to make ink wash videos that I became aware of the significance of ink as a thematic language. And in doing so, I realized the temporal nature of traditional Chinese art was very different from that of the West. Particularly interesting was that when we read a scroll painting, for example, time is already embodied in the work. Also, there's a strong performative element and emphasis on movement in the ink painting process. I felt that Chinese contemporary art has not truly delved into this language, and became particularly vested in this aspect.

So, ink is the main thread in this exhibition, probing into various attributes and characters of ink through different works.

CHIN: When you say that the contemporary art of the Chinese has not truly developed this language, what aspect do you mean? Contemporary art works that make use of ink and wash, calligraphy or the other elements of Asian art seem quite common.

MA: I should explain clearer. I find the most interesting thing about contemporary art is its attempt to get to the essence of things. Whatever the subject, what is its nature? What in fact is it saying? How does it intersect with contemporary life and contemporary art? In the Chinese art world, ink painting is indeed ubiquitous. But fully using a specific contemporary artistic vocabulary to make works that concern current society and its discourse, rather than superficially using the form of ink, not that nobody has done it, just that we've not done enough.

CHIN: Can you give an example from any of the works from this exhibition to discuss how you respond to or experience this matter?

MA: In installation *Inked Plants*, I chose five plants that are musts for the literati painter: plum, orchid, bamboo, chrysanthemums and cypress. The surface of each plant is covered in ink, making it completely black, and they are styled and arranged after traditional ink compositions. At a glance, the audience may think they are paintings. With a closer look, one becomes aware that these are actually living plants, evolving with time. These inked plants will continue to grow during the exhibition period, gradually



時間演變，這些墨花草會在展期中持續成長，從黑色的身軀上逐漸長出綠色的嫩葉。對我來說，這是一個延續性的系列，其中我所思考的是生命的再生力，可能是自然與人，也可能是心理與情感……

這個系列曾經在雪梨與日本執行過，我覺得台灣的中國傳統文化內涵尤其深刻，所以我就想到用非常傳統的、文人畫的一些植物與構圖，它們一開始看上去有點像一個大型的國畫，水墨畫在現代藝術裡的一種轉換也經常就是放大，只是在我的作品裡面，這個大型的「水墨畫」是立體的，同時它也具有生命，會在時間經歷中有所演變，或許枯萎、凋零，或許新生出嫩芽……就像我前面提到在水墨畫閱讀裡的時間性，我則是在展覽的空間裡延續與展現這項特質。

另外，在中國畫裡任何東西都是用墨來畫，墨可以展示所有顏色，例如無論是嫩竹子還是老竹子，都可以用同一個材質淋漓盡致地表現，只是以前是在紙上用墨畫這些竹子、菊花，可是這次這個墨是直接畫在植物上，是畫在一個立體空間中，把原本平面的繪畫，變成三度空間，之後又加上第四個，就是時間，同時這些植物動態與變化是在一種無聲的狀態之下進行，也隱含著我所提到黑的雙重性質……這都是我在這個領域中進行的一些探索。

秦：可以談談這次也會展出的水墨動畫嗎？就時間順序來說，這些錄影作品更早於「墨山水」一類的裝置？我有看過其中的一件（《腦海風塵》），我很好奇它是如何製作的？

馬：其實很簡單，我就是玻璃上畫畫，因為如果是在紙上的話，

那個「暈」，也就是墨的那個動態，只能到一定程度就會被紙給停住，當我在玻璃上畫的時候，它就可以延續那個過程性與流動性，《腦海風塵》這件作品畫了大概一年多的時間，可能捕捉下來的只有十幾個小時的素材，然後再從這裡面尋找片段，把它連接起來，構成一個完整的錄像。這件作品其實跟傳統山水畫是很接近的，在我的腦海中就是人生的旅行，是一個精神上的山水。我覺得所謂的外在世界，最終其實在於我們怎麼去看待它，這個背景也會影響我們之後的行動與思考，所以這裡的山水是一種更抽象也更心理性的山水。

秦：這件作品的影像內容主要是一個人和一匹馬相偕行進在那些山水之間，人似乎很可以理解，為什麼是一個人和一匹馬呢？

馬：人在旅行中總還是需要伴侶，但因為這件作品表現的是一種默默的状态，而不是用語言來溝通的。人和馬在歷史中是經常在一起旅行的伴侶，他們之間有一種默契，但不是通過語言，而是心理上的一種默契。因為作品本來就是一個心理、精神、感情上的空間，我希望兩者之間能不用語言溝通，卻同時又是很親密的伴侶。

秦：我覺得在這個展覽裡面，有一個很大的題目，無論是對如何在當代（藝術）中延續中國傳統藝術裡的精髓，或者是妳自己對於藝術創作的終極關懷；但同時也並存著另外一面，就是一種很微觀與內心性的關注，譬如說包括那件為了已逝的好友所做的《墨友情》，或是呈現妳過去夢境的水墨動畫（《夢境》），又或者名為《不，我不後悔》的裝置作品，好像都跟妳個人的生命經驗有關……

馬：我覺得我是很唯心的，我的出發點有很多都是感情，做作品也是這樣，我所感興趣的都是從一個很小的、讓我心動的一件事情，會讓我聯想到很多很多，有時候就變成作品。關於墨花草的系列，其實是因為有一段時間我的情緒很低落，我每天起床以後總覺得有一個黑籠罩著我，無法呼吸，那一年對我來說十分艱難，一直走不出這個陰影，那個作品是從那兒來的。雖然我經常會談到藝術的歷史啊什麼的，但其實很多作品的出發點是從內心開始的，只是展現的方式不一定是個人的故事而已。

《墨友情》這件作品對我來說挺重要的，而且是藉由墨與植物這個系列切入我個人情感的一個實踐。這是為了我一個很好的朋友，他是一個台灣的藝術家，我們在紐約的同一所研究所處藝術，幾年前他因為癌症過世，而且很突然，所以我們沒有任何機會說再見。

sprouting tender leaves from their blackened bodies. For me, this series is a meditation about life's power to renew. It might be nature and man, and it might be the psyche and emotions....

Other works in this series have been shown in Sydney and in Japan. But in Taiwan, I feel that the connections to traditional Chinese culture are particularly profound, and I wanted to play with plants and compositions from very classical literati paintings. From the moment one looks upon it, it looks a little like a large-scale Chinese painting. Ink painting is often transformed into very large-scale work in contemporary art. In my piece, this large-scale "ink painting" is also alive and evolves as time passes, sometimes withering, sometimes sprouting soft buds anew. Just like the temporal nature of reading painting scrolls that I mentioned earlier. So I extend this quality in the exhibition.

Also, in Chinese painting, everything is painted in ink, and ink is used to express all colors. Both the tender new and the weathered old bamboo, for example, can be vividly portrayed with this medium. In the past, these bamboos or chrysanthemums were painted on paper, whereas in this instance the ink is applied directly onto the plant, turning an originally flat painting into a three-dimensional space, and adding a fourth dimension: time. At the same time, the plants shift and change in silence, embodying the duality of black. These are some of the explorations I am making.

CHIN: Can you talk about the ink and wash animations that will also be exhibited on this occasion? As far as chronological order is concerned, were these video works conceived before installations such as *Inked Plants*? I have seen one of the videos, *Brain Storm*. I'm curious about how it was made.

MA: Actually it's simple: I painted on glass. Painted on paper, the natural running and movement, that is to say the dynamism, of the ink, could only go so far before being stopped by the paper fiber. When I paint on glass, that process and fluidity is extended. It took more than a year to paint the work *Brain Storm*, during which perhaps only ten or so hours of source material were captured. Then I looked for segments which I can put together to construct a complete video. This work is in fact very similar to traditional landscape painting. To me it is the journey of human life, a spiritual landscape. I feel that the external world ultimately exists in the way we look at and interpret it, which also influences our subsequent actions and thoughts, so the landscape here is a more abstract and more psychological landscape.

CHIN: The visual content of this work is primarily a man and a horse advancing together through those landscapes. It is understandable that you would draw a man, but why a horse as well?

MA: People need companions when traveling, but this work presents a state of silence, that is not communicated by means of language. Historically, people and horses have often traveled together, and there is an understanding between them beyond words. It is a silent agreement not in language but in the mind.



Because this work is intrinsically a psychological, spiritual and emotional space, I wanted the two to be intimate companions in rhythm, not speech.

CHIN: I feel that in this exhibition there is a grand macro theme, whether it is to extend the essence of traditional Chinese art in contemporary art, or your own ultimate concerns with creativity. At the same time, however, there is another aspect, a concern which is micro and of the inner mind, and includes, for example, the work, *Inked Friendship*, which you created for a friend who had passed away, or the video, *Dreamscape*, which portrays dreams from your past, and even the installation, *Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien*, all of which are apparently to do with your own life experiences.

MA: I am very intuitive. My starting point is from the heart. It's the same with art making. What spark my interests are often tiny things that make my heart skip a beat, and inspire many fantasies, and sometimes they turn into artworks. Like the inked plants series, it came from a time when I was depressed. Everyday as I got out of bed I felt as though I was shrouded in black, unable to breathe. That year was particularly difficult. I couldn't escape this shadow. That work rose out of that period. Although I often discuss art history and so on, in fact the starting point of many of my works is in the inner mind. It's just the final presentation is not necessarily a personal narrative.

The work *Inked Friendship* is very important to me. It is also my attempt to infuse my emotions in the inked plants series. The work is made for a good friend of mine, a Taiwanese artist. We studied art at the same graduate school in New York. A few years ago he died of cancer, and it happened so suddenly that we had no opportunity to say goodbye.

He was pro-Taiwan independence. At the time I didn't know many Taiwanese. I knew a few, but they identified strongly with the Mainland. He was the first to say to my face, "I am not Chinese, I am Taiwanese." I was utterly shocked. At the time we met, I hadn't

這個朋友是個台獨人士，當時我認識的台灣人不多，有的也是對大陸認同感很強的朋友，他是第一個在我面前說：I am not Chinese, I am Taiwanese，讓我很吃驚，倒吸一口冷氣。認識他的時候我沒來過台灣，所以我對於台灣的認識其實是從他開始的。之前我每次來台灣都還經常見面，一起騎著摩托車在外面跑，看他的工作室、看他的作品，但去年我來做跨年慶典¹的時候，他已經走了，所以就有一種傷感，我經常想念他，於是想為他做一個作品。

當我決定把「墨」作為這個展覽的主要脈絡時，就形成了作品的想法，因為我的朋友是高雄人，他的墓地也在高雄，所以我想在他的墓地附近用墨畫黑一棵樹，然後在展覽期間把這棵樹的影像同步傳到展場，我想肯定可以在影像中看到綠葉新長出來，透過這個影像的傳遞，也把我對他的情感、思念，穿越現實的時間與距離連接起來。

秦：那件《不，我不後悔》的裝置，妳在作品說明裡提到，它是一幅畫著妳的生命旅程的地圖，而且尤其標示出的是失敗的經驗？

馬：就是失敗的經驗。因為人很喜歡想自己和說自己，但多半都是很偉大的那一方面，但是這個作品展現的是我回顧人生中屬於傳統意義上的那些失敗，我覺得是用另外一種方式來看自己，作為一種小的階段性的總結，與此同時，這個題目就顯得很重要，就是「我不後悔」。

其實從我個人來說，我不認為這些傳統價值觀上的「失敗」，是我認為的失敗，我只是把它視為人生經歷很重要的幾個章節。反倒是這種所謂的失敗中，你可以總結出對你來說什麼是重要的，什麼是不重要的，意識到不重要也是非常有意義的一件事情。所以這件作品很個人，對我來說需要很多勇氣才能夠做出來，另外還包括在呈現中，需要說白話說到什麼程度，因為這不是一個隱私的問題，更是一個藝術語言上的問題，也就是你怎麼去把握你的作品以使它對觀眾是有共鳴的，而不是只是把你的日記拿出來。

秦：從妳的計畫看來，這件作品預計在展廳的地面上鋪上黑沙²，這個黑沙主要是做為繪製「地圖」的載體，採用黑沙這個材料的想法是什麼？

馬：這個作品其實還是延續了我對中國水墨的探索，只是我希望它不是那麼直接和明顯地去討論那些元素。這個作品的靈感來自

中國古畫中的地圖。中國人畫地圖跟西方人很不一樣的是，我們不是很在意精密性，你看西方人幾百年前的地圖，跟現在雖然有誤差，但那個大形都在，但我們的地圖主要表現的是沿海這些是什麼港口？住的是些什麼人？它更關心的是社會關係，所以你看那些地圖，基本上看不太出來它是在什麼地方，除非你閱讀它的名稱，還得知道那些古代的地名才知道它指的是現在的哪個地方，但通過視覺精確性，你是閱讀不出來的，它很抽象，同時又包含很多中國繪畫的技巧和美學，是一個想像空間與具象空間的結合。

這和我現在要做的作品蠻有共同感的，它是我個人生命歷史的地圖，同時也是一種想像空間與具象空間的結合。用黑沙做底有好幾個角度的設想，一方面，黑色符合了這個展覽整體的美學，另一方面，一般來說你在沙盤上做地圖，多半是用淺顏色的沙，然後上面包括路、河流等是用深顏色來標記，我在這裡反過來，就像負片一樣，也意味著在這裡述說的是一個反常於一般歷史的角度，它述說的並非偉大或成功的事件，而是一個個失敗的經驗。

這件作品的名稱出自一首法文歌〈Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien〉，就是「不，我不後悔」，然後現場裝置的背景音樂將會是我唱這首歌。其實我很害怕讓觀眾聽見我的歌聲，因為我嗓子不好，唱歌也常嚴重走調，所以我從不在人前唱歌，但我一個人的時候很喜歡唱、經常唱。不過我覺得這件作品強烈要求我自己唱，我必須自己唱，所以我現在正鼓起勇氣準備去錄音室唱這首歌，這對我將是很大的挑戰。

秦：從妳過去的作品，以及這次展出的內容來看，妳在創作形式上的實踐，其實還蠻廣泛的，這是一個有意識或無意識的發展？我會這樣問的原因是，其實對藝術家來說，其實技術還是蠻重要



been to Taiwan, so my knowledge of Taiwan actually started with him. Later I'd come to Taiwan, we often hang out together, riding around on a motorbike, visiting his studio, looking at his art. Last year, however, when I came to work on The Republic of China Centennial Grand Countdown¹ project, he had already passed away and my heart was filled with a great sense of lost and grief. I thought of him often, and wanted to make a work for him.

When I decided to use ink as the main framework of this exhibition, I conceived the ideas behind *Inked Friendship*. Because my friend was from Kaohsiung and his grave is in Kaohsiung, I wanted to paint a tree near his grave black, using ink, and then transmit live video of the tree to the exhibition venue. I am certain we would see green leaves growing anew. Through the transmission of this image, I want to send my thoughts to him, transcending actual time and distance.

CHIN: In the introduction to the works, you mention that the installation *Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien* is a map outlining your life's journey, and particularly indicating experiences of failure.

MA: They are indeed experiences of failure. When people think and talk about themselves, most of the time it's about one's greatness. This work, however, presents a look back on failures in the traditional sense. It's an alternative way to look at oneself. It's a minor summary at this stage in my life, in the meantime, saying, the title is very important here, "No, I regret nothing." Actually, as far as I'm concerned, these "failures" in the sense of traditional values are not what I believe to be failures. I look at them as a few important chapters in the course of one's life. Paradoxically, it's from these so-called failures that you can conclude what is important to you and what is not important. To be aware of the unimportant is just as essential. So this work is very personal. It took a lot of courage for me to make it. Also, including in its presentation, there is the question of how blatantly narrative I should be and how much to reveal. This is not about privacy but an issue of artistic language: how you grasp your work and make it resonate with the audience, rather than one of simply setting out



your diary for others to read.

CHIN: Reading your description, you intend to spread black sand² on the gallery floor, using it to draw a map. What is the thinking behind using black sand as material?

MA: This work is a continuation of my explorations into Chinese ink painting. But I wanted it to be less direct and obvious in discussing those elements. The spirit of this work comes from ancient Chinese map paintings. Where the Chinese are very different from Westerners in the painting of maps is that we are not so much concerned about visual precision. You see maps by Westerners from several hundred years ago, and, although there are inaccuracies compared with those of the present, the general form is there. But what our maps showed was mainly names of cities, ports and mountains, who the people were that lived there. It was more concerned about social relations. So, when you look at those maps, you can't quite see what the place is unless you read its name, and you have to know the ancient place names in order to know their corresponding contemporary places. But through visual accuracy, you won't be able to read it out. It's very abstract, while also containing many techniques and aesthetics of Chinese painting. It's a combination of an imaginary space and a formal space.

There is considerable commonality between this practice and this installation. It's a personal map of my history, my life, while at the same time it's a combination of an imaginary space and formal space. The use of black sand to make the backdrop of this landscape has a few angles. On the one hand, black conformed with the overall aesthetic of this exhibition. Secondly, generally, if you make a map on a sand board, it's usually made of light-colored sand. Then, on top, including for roads and rivers, and so on, dark colors are used as symbols. Here I reversed it, like a negative, and signifying that what is being narrated here is an anomaly in general historical standpoints. What it is laid out is not something great or successful, rather each one an experience of failure.

The name of this work comes from a French song, "Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien", that is, "No, I regret nothing," and I will be singing this song. To tell the truth, I'm mortified to singing for the public, because I don't have a good voice and am always seriously off-key. I never sing in front of others, though when I'm alone I love to sing and do so often. However I feel strongly that this work requires my own voice, that I need to do the singing personally, so I'm now mustering the courage to prepare to go to the recording studio to sing this song. This will be a huge challenge for me.

CHIN: From observing your previous works, as well as the content you're exhibiting on this occasion, it seems there are a wide range of art forms in your practice. Is this a conscious or unconscious development? The reason I ask is that, in fact, to artists, technique is still very important, so most artists still study a certain kind of form meticulously and then let their own technique mature to the point at which they can wield it in their expressions with ease. Looking at this aspect from the outside, it will often be the way people learn to identify your works. To me it seems that your

的，所以大部分的藝術家可能還是會特別鑽研某一種形式，然後讓自己的技術純熟到能夠得心應手的去表達，這個部分從外在上來看，常常也會是別人認識你的一種方式。以我來看，就會覺得你的作品發展得……

馬：太散了。（笑）

秦：這是一個有意識還是無意識的發展？

馬：我覺得兩方面都有，無意識的一面是我的興趣範圍特別廣，我其實對什麼都很有興趣，什麼都想說兩句，所以經常看到東西以後我就會有靈感，會很想嘗試。有意識的一面可能跟我學設計的背景有關，對藝術的手段和體現我不認為它們有高低之別，在設計或廣告的領域裡為了達到預期的效果，你必須透過任何可能的手段，我想早期的這種訓練可能有一些影響。不過我現在多少有一種緊迫感，覺得沒有比較專一、明確的語言好像會讓別人不知道該把我放在什麼地方，我有感受到這種壓力。不過我總覺得生命是很長的，藝術生命也是如此，我還有時間可以展現，我想有些東西是要在事後才能看得清楚，所以雖然我感受到似乎應該要有一定的明確性，但我從本質上不認為這是一個問題，所以也沒有刻意要把它拉回來。

秦：我覺得這種創作形式的發散傾向可能涉及兩方面的討論，一個是如妳所說的，觀者是否可能透過持續觀看這些作品以掌握藝術家及其創作，不過我也覺得並不需要只是為了具有較高的辨識度或讓人可以把妳（的作品）納入某種脈絡之中而去進行調整，因為興趣或樂趣都是創作裡面很迷人的元素。我想瞭解的另一部份在於，採用不同的手段或者形式是否可能造成妳創作上的一種阻礙。事實上現在有很多藝術家的工作方式很接近妳現在的狀況，就是選擇了一個自己覺得最適合表現某個構想的手段，但未必是自己熟悉或熟練的技術，因此勢必得要（部分地）委託其他的專業者，那麼妳要如何藉由別人的手來充分實現妳心目中的抽象概念？

馬：我看到的不是阻礙，反而是一個機會，我真的這麼認為。就像我做錄像，但是我對錄像技術真的一點都不懂，我覺得藝術的魅力就是你如何透過你的手筆將材料提煉成為你的特殊語言。譬如我做《豆豆與一百隻沙漠行走圖》的時候，協助我做影像剪接的人事先提醒了很多要注意的事，但我一個也沒有去注意，因為我覺得我已經想好作品是什麼樣子，我就只想著要去拍了，但片子出來的確有很嚴重的問題。那個片子是拍我的七歲小姪女豆

豆，她走起來真的很可愛，讓我看了很陶醉，但拍出來根本不能用，因為她在前面走，我在後面跟拍，結果影像一直在晃動，把它加進我那些動態的水墨畫之後，就整個全是在動，而且是彼此沒有關係的動，根本沒辦法看。

我後來從影片裡面找了一組我最喜歡的她走路的姿態，我就把她的身影從一張張照片擷取出來，然後重新擺好、修圖，最後就用這些單幀的照片結構出新的影片。

秦：也就是說妳用了抽格的畫面。

馬：對，我覺得這就是我的手過濾了整個作品的細節，當然我花了很多時間去修，做了好幾遍，但我其實蠻享受的。幫我做剪接的人說，妳應該設好一個藍背景，打好光，然後再去拍，但我要是那樣做的話，豆豆可能就不那麼可愛了，一個小女孩在一個藍背景前面一直原地走，你想她可愛的了嗎？她一定是在沙漠裡面，這麼走這麼走，又跳又怎麼樣，而且那孩子走起路來，有時候交叉著腿呀什麼的，她的真實可愛的那一面，也就是藝術有魅力那一面。事實上經歷過那些程序，最後也給了這個作品另外一種藝術語言。

秦：所以那個錄像作品是實際拍攝了妳姪女的畫面，然後再結合妳畫在玻璃上的水墨畫？

馬：對。背景音樂是她自己彈的，是她自己作的鋼琴曲，很可愛。總之，我覺得不要把它看作是一個障礙吧。

秦：不過就現實層面來看，這種要求作品辨識度的壓力應該會是永恆存在的。

馬：我覺得整個來說我們現在都比較懶，包括我看其他藝術家的作品的時候也是，我也希望一下就明白他在做什麼，但我覺得對我來說最有意思的藝術家，就是讓我經常在猜測，我越是弄不清楚，反倒會更想去看他東西，當然前提是作品好。我想應該是要有一個平衡吧，就是持續有一些東西在探索，但也有延續性的主體語言。

註¹：由文建會所主辦的「中華民國建國一百周年慶典」活動，於大佳河濱公園河畔舉行，由林懷民擔任總顧問，節目由創意團隊林克華、蔡國強、馬文、張國永、王嘉明共同規劃，首次結合水面、地面及空中大型晚會演出。

註²：裝置作品中使用的黑沙，後因水氣蒸發而顏色變淺。

works are developing as...

MA: Too scattered? (Laughter)

CHIN: Is this a conscious or unconscious development?

MA: I think it's both. On one level, it is unconscious in that I have a wide-range of interests. I'm interested in many things, and want to say a few words about everything, so, if I have inspiration after seeing something I'd set out and try turning it into a work. It's a natural inclination. A conscious aspect is perhaps connected to my background in the study of advertising and design. In regards to artistic means and forms, I don't believe there are hierarchies. In the fields of design or advertising, in order to achieve the expected effect you must use any means possible. I am perhaps influenced by this earlier training.

But I can now sense a bit of urgency and pressure, as though by not being focused enough or have a clearly recognizable language people may not know where to place my work. But life is long, and this is as true of artistic life. I still have time to reveal myself. I believe that some things can only be seen clearly after the fact, so although I am aware that a recognizable style or art form may be necessary, in essence I don't believe this is a problem, so I have not deliberately reined myself in.

CHIN: This nonspecific tendency can be looked at from two aspects. One is, as you say, whether the viewer can, by continuing to view these works, grasp the artist and his/her work, but I also feel that it's not necessary to have a relatively high level of recognizability or to enable people to categorize the artist or his/her work, because interest and amusement are both alluring elements in art creation.

The other aspect that I want to understand is whether adopting different approaches or, let's say, art form, can present an obstacle for your creative process. In fact, currently, many artists work in the same way as you; that is to say that they have chosen an approach that they feel best suited to express a certain concept, but not necessarily a technique with which they are familiar or in which they are proficient, because ultimately the technical part could be (or partially) commissioned to other specialists. So how do you, through the hands of someone else, fully realize an abstract concept you have in mind?

MA: What I see is not obstacles, but an opportunity. I truly believe this. I make videos, for example, but I don't know much about the techniques. I think that the fascination of art is how, through your hand and brush, you refine your materials into your own unique language. When I filmed *Dodo with One Hundred Meeps Walking in the Desert*, my video editor reminded me of many things to which I needed to pay attention to in advance, but I didn't heed to any of them because I already knew exactly what the work should look like in my mind. I just went ahead with my camera and shot it, but the end result indeed had many problems. I filmed my seven-year-old niece, Dodo, following her with my camera. I was in love with the way she walked, adorable and real. But the video turned out

unwatchable because the image was constantly moving. When I added my flowing ink and wash paintings, the whole thing was moving and what's worse, the elements seem completely unrelated. It was simply unwatchable.

Later I selected a video segment of her walk that I liked the best. Isolated the still frames, and cropped out her figure frame by frame, rearranged, retouched and finally composed a new clip from these screen shots.

CHIN: That is to say you made these screen shots.

MA: Yes. I felt that this was my hand filtering the details of the whole work. Of course it took a lot of time, and I made numerous tries, but I quite enjoyed it. My editor had said, "You should set up a blue background with good lighting and film the work in a studio." But if I had done it like that Dodo would not have been as natural. A little girl pretending to walk against a blue background: do you think she would have been as cute as she would have in a natural setting? She had to be in a desert, walking like this and that, sometimes jumping, sometimes doing something else, and she has walked on roads, sometimes placing one leg across the other and so on; it's in these details we have the charm and character of the artwork. Actually, going through the whole process ultimately gave this work a different artistic expression.

CHIN: So the work integrates a film of your niece and the ink and wash paintings you painted on glass?

MA: Yes. The background music is played by her. It's a piano tune that she wrote herself. Very sweet. To come back to your point, no, I don't think one needs to view it as an obstacle.

CHIN: But in reality, this pressure for works to have a level of recognizability will always exist.

MA: I think that nowadays we are all rather lazy, including myself when I look at other artists' work. I too hope to understand in an instant what the artist is doing. But I feel that, as far as I'm concerned, the most interesting artists are those who keep me guessing. The less I understand, the more I want to see the artist's work. Of course the premise is that the work is good. I think there has to be a balance; that is to say that there continues to be things to be explored, while maintaining a continuous thematic language.

Note

1: The Republic of China Centennial Grand Countdown, organized by the Council for Cultural Affairs and held by the river at Dajia Riverside Park, with LIN Hwai-min serving as general advisor, and the program planned by the creative team of LIN Ke Hua, CAI Guo-Qiang, Jennifer Wen MA, Leo CHEUNG and WANG Chia-ming. The first large-scale evening event to integrate water, land and sky.

2: Black sand used for the installation lightened in color as the moisture evaporated during the course of the installation.