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The colour that remains

Wai Yi, Monti LAI

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Residency Period: September to December, 2010



19/21102010

“The Colour That Remains”

A Residency Project at Lingnan University
by Lai Wai-Yi, Monti

展覽日期 Exhibition Dates 1 - 8 / 12 / 2010

地點 Venue

香港屯門青山公路 8號 嶺南大學 新教學大樓 3樓 323室 藝術家工作室
Artist Studio NAB 323, New Academic Building, Lingnan University,
8 Castle Peak Road, Tuen Mun, Hong Kong



THE VISUAL STUDIES ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAMME

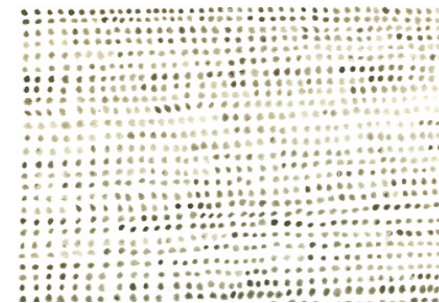
The Department of Visual Studies at Lingnan University offers an interdisciplinary programme designed to equip students with the historical and conceptual tools that will allow them to understand, appreciate, and analyse a wide range of visual phenomena. The artist in residence programme helps to sharpen students' understanding of artistic practices and their results through studio courses and interaction with artists. The AIR programme brings one local, one non-local, one established, and one emerging artist to the Lingnan campus every year. These artists are with the Department for a full semester, and during this time they are actively engaged in producing art in the Visual Studies studio, often in collaboration with students and the Lingnan community more generally.

Visual Studies seeks to foster an ongoing involvement, on the part of students and staff, with three key areas: Chinese Art, Art and

Well Being, and Environmental Aesthetics. The gentle, collaborative, and ultimately meditative process that Wai Yi Monti Lai developed in connection with the work titled "The colour that remains" makes a thoughtful--and thought provoking--contribution to all three of these areas. Those who were drawn into Monti's art-making process from the larger Lingnan community, sometimes from fields quite distant from Visual Studies, came to understand that art-making can nurture a mindfulness that is a source of well being. Just as importantly, "The colour that remains" demonstrates, concretely, what might be involved in connecting deeply and meaningfully with the natural and built environments we call home.

My colleagues and I are delighted to have been able to bring Monti to Lingnan.

Mette Hjort
Chair Professor and Head
Visual Studies



and that from which its loveliness arises.”

--Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Spanish poet and playwright

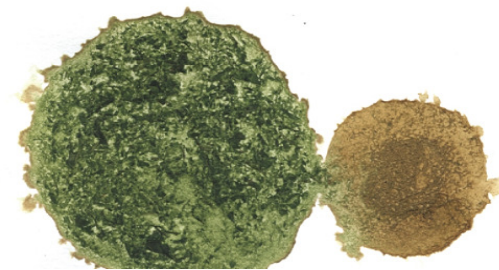
What is the colour that remains?

Close your eyes, and try to see the colour in your mind. Would that be white, yellow, orange, red, blue, purple, green or a mix of different colours? Green has been the colour that remains in my head whenever my eyes are closed, ever since I received a homemade herbal poultice after an accident at the age of 6. I was bitten by a dog at my aunt's home. It was a sunny winter day. I was wearing my favourite yellow furry coat. I was patting the dog's forehead and talking to her. Seconds later she bit me on my thigh. Maybe that's the way she played with her friends. My aunt was a farmer, and she rushed back to the house from the field to rescue me. After the accident, instead of sending me to the hospital, she collected some *Rohdea Japonica* (萬年青) from the garden and then mixed it with other ingredients to make an herbal treatment. The smell was very strong, and I still remember it today. The herbal poultice had a very dark green, almost black colour. It sometimes flashes through my mind and I have had an intimate feeling with this dark green colour, even today.

A Laboratory for the Green Colours

My impression of Tuen Mun is a place full of residential buildings and people. Interestingly its name was "Tsing Shan" (literally, a green mountain) before and it became Tuen Mun in the 1970s.¹ When I take the bus to Tuen Mun from home, I always notice this gorgeous "green mountain" which has been the home of many living things since the New Stone Age. During my first visit to Lingnan University, I was captivated by the beautiful mountain behind the campus. I once thought the mountain on the logo of the University is the one behind the campus. Of course I was wrong--the mountain symbolized is the White Cloud Mountain in Guangzhou. Despite my wrong assumption, the idea of using a mountain in the logo was inspired by the mountain behind the campus. My intention is to bring forward the green colour behind Lingnan.

The project started with the collecting of leaves around the school and then from different parts of Tuen Mun. The collecting was followed by a grinding process in a mortar by hand. The ground paste was pressed to get the green ink. The process is truly meditative, and fosters a very clear vision on the leaves' transformation.



On appreciating the aesthetics of weather, philosopher Yuriko Saito suggests that “in this hi-tech age of manipulating most aspects of nature at our will, weather serves as a reminder that not everything around us is subject to our control...it can be a source of aesthetic pleasure, if we learn to humble ourselves to gratefully receive and celebrate the positive aspects of its gift to us.”² Rather than creating a beautiful or nicely composed drawing, I focus on visualizing and appreciating the aesthetics of leaves that is initially hidden from human vision.

The walls embracing us

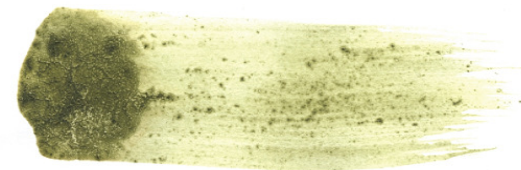
Hong Kong is often described as a concrete forest, a city full of concrete buildings. Many foreigners were amazed by the density of buildings when their airplane landed at the Kai Tak Airport before 1997. Being the first satellite town of Hong Kong since the 1970s, Tuen Mun is packed with more than ten public housing estates. It is the home of more than 500 000 people, and buildings are one of the most commonly found objects next to you.

The walls of these buildings are usually covered with mosaics called “Tsz Pei Sek” (meaning “tiles on paper”) in Cantonese, to give the surface a nice finishing. The work in my studio is inspired by these walls we pass by every day, walls that we are familiar with. Instead

of using genuine ceramic tiles, the wall features alternative specimen of leaves collected by more than thirty people who joined me to complete this two by four meters art piece. It is not the wall that we are portraying, but instead the relationship between city people and the nature. For me, a wall can be a barrier that prevents you from reaching out, yet it could also raise your awareness to retrieve what has been disconnected. This project suggests a new perspective on the appreciation of our environment, whether it is natural or manmade. It resonates with the idea of the Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh, with the mindfulness we should practice, so as to see our connection with everything, the “oneness” of this universe³.

After the exhibition, sooner or later the wall will be repainted to white, and the work may be covered forever. After you leave the exhibition, just close your eyes and see the colour that remains in your mind.

- 1, 劉智鵬 2003 : 《屯門風物志》(Tuen Mun Heritage) , 香港 , 屯門區議會。
- 2, Yuriko Saito (2005). “The Aesthetics of Weather”. Light A. and Smith J.M. (Eds), *The Aesthetics of Everyday Life*. (pp. 156-176). New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press
3. Thich Nhat Hanh(1992). Kotler.A (Ed). *Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*. New York, N.Y.: Bantam (reissue 1992)





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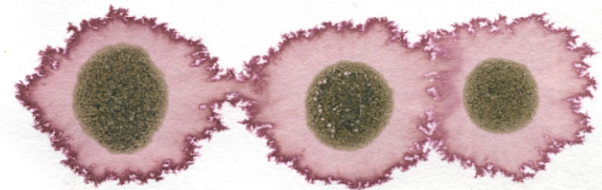
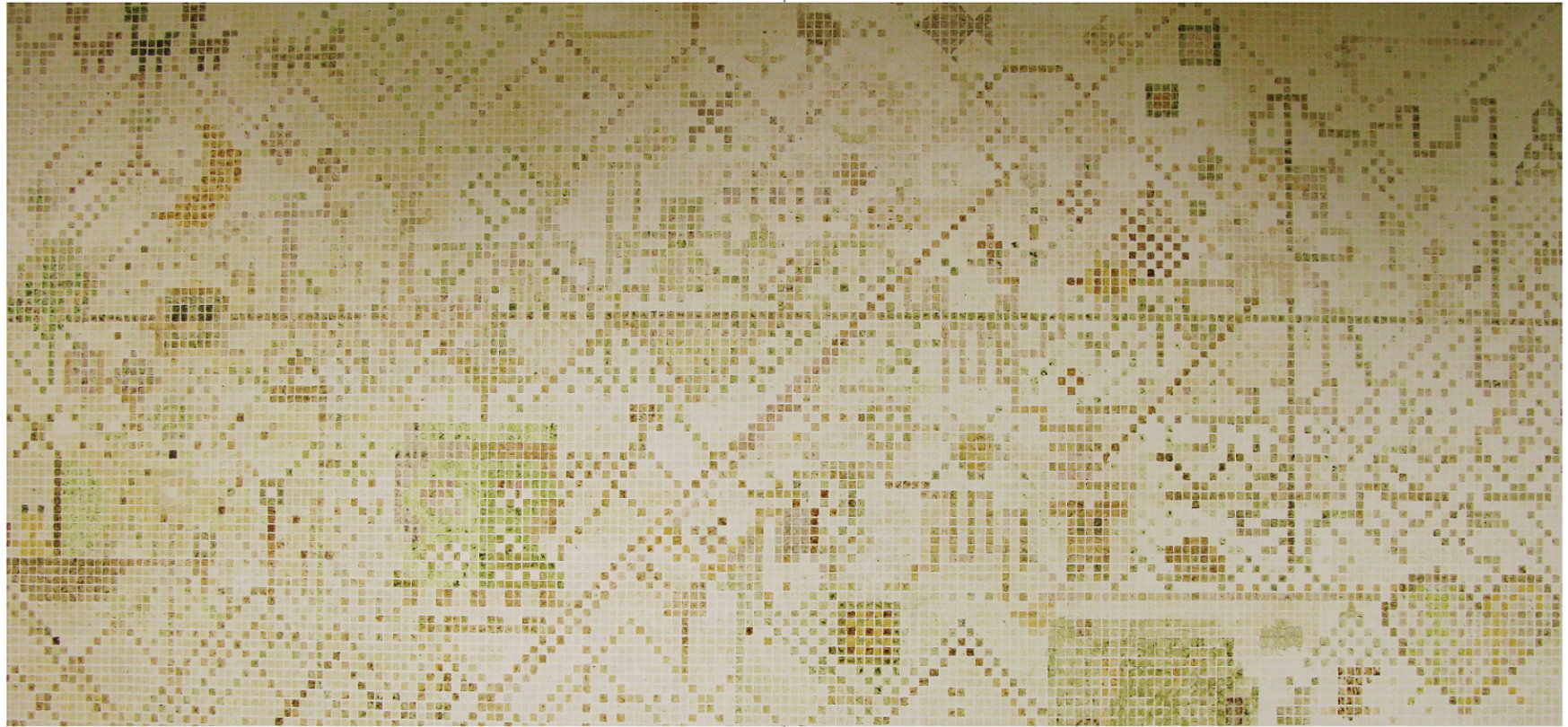


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黎慧儀 Wai-Yi, Lai (Monti)

Born in Hong Kong, Lai Wai-Yi, Monti received the Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art), Royal Melbourne Institute of technology (RMIT) University co-presented with Hong Kong Art School in 2004. Currently, she is a MA Student in Environmental Art, Aalto University (former University of Art and Design Helsinki). Her works are mainly mixed media and site specific installations. Lai is an active visual artist and educator. She has organized solo exhibitions in Hong Kong and Finland and has participated in joint exhibitions in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Finland and Germany. She was awarded the Grant for Emerging Artist, Arts Development Council in 2008 for her début solo exhibition. In 2004, she co-founded the artist and art administration group, MIA (Mere Independent Artists.)

www.waiyilai.blogspot.com

work on the wall. (According to the date of participation)

Shing Hung	Andrea Sauchelli
Yan Ching-In	Jenny Cheung
Lau Mei-Yee	Carol Yim
Wong Yan-Ping	Chloe Siu
Wong Yung, Egg	Drica Lam
Eric	Anna Kwong
Cathy	Rafael De Clercq
Yeung Lai-Yui, Victor	Verna Kai
Yvonne Wang	Frieda Luk
Irene cheung	Laam Law
Vincy Au	Lau Wing-Ki
Veronica Tam	
Elaine Tsang	Special Thanks to
Elaine Yam	My parents
Vivian Li	Professor Mette Hjort
Luk Yu-Ping	Students form the Studio
Suen Tai-Lun	Practice Class
Chen Lin	Alan Chan
Ma Hui	Teresa Chan
Mette Hjort	Yvette Fung
Lai Chung-Por	Vicki Lau
Kwan Oi-Chun	Joyce Tong
Vicki Lau	Kaye Wong
Yam Choi-Tung, Rainbow	Leo Wong
Zoie So	The Comptroller's Office

Catalog Design : Leo Wong



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