

ARTIST'S STATEMENT (2004)

Lam Yuk Lin, Pauline

From "Test of Rebirth" to "The New Renascent Bronze Age"

With the demise of British Colonial rule, people of Hong Kong begin to reflect upon the place they live. Despite standing in the meeting point of Chinese and Western cultures, they are lost in their own culture and history. A sense of loss thus haunts their minds.

Starting from the Nineties, many Hong Kong artists consider the identity crisis and culture recognition as their sources of inspiration. In other words, they are tracing their cultural origin. Maybe they want to look for what they lost in the past and re-establish a society and culture to which they once belonged.

"Test of Rebirth"

With the beginning of the so-called 'origin tracing' in 1993, a number of works related to the Test of Rebirth were released. In my work, I choose Chinese medicine as a medium of inspiration. There is a story about it. In a spring day that year, my mother was worried about her sore throat. Under the influence of western culture, most youngsters hold a skeptical attitude towards effectiveness of the Chinese medicine, in negligence of its prevalence over three thousand years. While my mother took western medicine, she strongly believed in the effectiveness of its Chinese counterpart.

The name of the work: Xylocopa Dissimilis, some kind of bee. It is round and fat. It is 25cm long and dressed with soft black hair. It has a pair of compound eyes.

After the occasion, my interest in Chinese medicine and, more broadly, Chinese culture was aroused. From the appearance, the dead insect is no difference from the living one. As an ingredient of the Chinese medicine, the insect is preserved against decay, to some extent, showing the meaning of existence. I call it the 'rebirth' as its second life is given and prolonged by human beings who are the beneficiaries from its rebirth. People take away its first life while giving it a second one (another form of existence). Its existence is, in turn, more valuable and meaningful than ever before. That makes me think about the meaning of rebirth.

"The New Renascent Bronze Age"

After the political transition in 1997, the enthusiasm over the 'origin tracing' subsided. However, my zeal for the cause hasn't gone. No longer do I cling to materials of the old days. Instead, I turn to the culture of Bronze Age as an impetus to my inspiration. According to the history of Bronze Age culture, its popularity was built upon its easy casting. Also, its durability could satisfy

people who are looking for everlasting relationships. After many years, the durability of bronze is gradually replaced by other materials but its cultural legacy is still having a far-reaching influence upon us.

Now I try to embody my works with the lost culture from a female perspective. I forsake the technique of bronze casting in favor of sewing and tailoring. By doing so, I hope that I could change the image and nature of bronze in the minds of others. It not only represents the dignity of women in this ever-changing era, but also rejuvenates the long lost culture.

從「再生試驗」到「新銅時代」

殖民地社會的臨近結束，令香港人反思到所生活的這塊土地，雖然一直處於中西文化交匯點，卻竟然失落於自己的文化歷史。一份又一份的失落感遂立時湧現，猶如當頭棒喝。是故於 90 年代中開始，許多藝術家也以追尋身份和文化的認同作為創作的依歸，紛紛投向「尋根」的探索。或許就是要尋回昔日所失去的，以重新建立屬於我們社會和文化。

再生試驗 (Test of Rebirth)

在一九九三開始了我對「尋根」的探索，一系列再生試驗的作品亦陸續公開發表。作品中我選用了中藥作為創作的媒介，是始於同年春天的一個下午，當時母親為著「聲嘶」的毛病而煩惱。一般年輕人在西方文化的薰陶下，對中藥多抱持懷疑的態度，也許從不理會中國醫學已有三千多年的歷史，但母親在嘗試西藥之餘，仍深信歷史悠久的中藥。

品名：咸竹蜂 (*Xylocopa Dissimilis*)，蜜蜂科昆蟲竹蜂的全蟲，體形鈍圓肥大，長約 2.5 厘米。體黑色，密生柔軟的黑絨毛，複眼一對。

就在這一個偶然的機緣下，它喚起了我對中藥的興趣，亦促使我對中國文化的追尋。這個已經沒有生命的死去有機體，外型上卻與擁有生命時的它相去不遠。成為中藥的它，不易腐化，並夾附著另一層存在的意義。或許我可以稱它這個狀態為第二生命，是人類賦予它、延續它存在於世界上的時間，所以這狀態的唯一目的，就是為了人。人類奪去了它的第一生命，卻輔予它第二生命(另一個存在於這個世界的狀態)，反增加了它對人來說的存在意義及價值，這令我想到「再生」的意義。

新銅時代 (The New Renascent Bronze Age)

隨著 97 的過渡，「尋根」的熱潮逐漸減退，但我對中國悠久文化的熱情，則至今仍未忘懷。我不再依戀舊日的物料，而是選擇了歷史悠久的青銅文化作為現在創作的引發器。據記載青銅文化的鼎盛，乃基於銅易於鑄造及能滿足人類對恆久的追求。畢竟在時代的轉變下，銅恆久的特性已逐漸被其它物料所取代，然而其遺留下來的文化對後世卻仍影響深遠。

今天，我嘗試以女性的角度及手法去延續這個曾經失落的文化精神。運用了編織、剪裁、縫紉的技法代替傳統的鑄銅法，圖改變銅這種物料在傳統上呈現於人前的面貌和特性，以表現這個多變年代的女性精神和尊嚴外，亦銳意延續這個曾經失落的文化

© Lam Yuk Lin, Pauline 1997.