CLAYLABORATION
CONTEMPORARY CERAMIC ART EXHIBITION

Annie Wan
不一樣的藍調

not / the Same Blues

不一樣的日出

not / the Same Sunrise

混合媒介藝術家 葉建邦

Mixed Media Artist Elvis Yip

Books that are not books...

Ceramics that are not ceramics...

As you enter the room, your eyes are quickly drawn to Annie Wan’s four-part large-scale ceramic installation. It is an imposing scene, with numerous ‘books’ spread out on the ground and hanging on the walls. Upon closer inspection, however, you will discover that these are not actual books. Instead, they are actually pieces of book-shaped ceramics that can no longer be flipped through.

Just how were these ceramic books made? Annie began by collecting a large number of physical books from all over the place, and then patiently applied each page with clay slip, covering the book, inside and out, with wet clay. After being fired under temperatures in over a thousand degrees, the paper pages of the original books turned into ash, while the clay slip between each page transformed into thin and delicate pieces of ceramic, preserving their shapes and textures, almost like a fossil of the ‘book’. But would you still consider what you see in front of you a book? What makes a book a book? As a ceramic work, how is it different from what we imagined?

Meanwhile, on the other side of the room is another part of the display—a video installation that records the entire process of Annie applying clay slip onto some images of ceramics and paintings. Intriguingly, the video is played backwards. Under the camera lens, the images that have been covered with clay slip seem to reappear before our eyes with a flick of the artist’s brush. The simple process of applying clay slip onto a book now becomes an abstract performance. As you turn around, you will see another work by mixed media artist Elvis Yip, whom Annie has invited as her creative partner. In this work, Elvis mixed clay slabs with cement to create an entirely new work. By merging the two media, it certainly widens the realm of creative possibilities for ceramic art.

The endless possibilities of contemporary ceramics

After looking at works, you might be left wondering: why are these ceramics so different from what we usually see? These are because Annie has always liked to base her ceramic works on conceptual thinking. Besides investigating the essence of ceramics, she also aims to conquer people’s minds. The works in this exhibition are no exception. In fact, ‘books’ has been a recurring theme in her work in recent years. When it comes to books, she has always felt that is their content that matters. Their value is based on what is embroidered in their words, their forms and appearances are merely a vehicle. On this experimental artistic journey, she takes one step further in her exploration of this theme. On one hand, Annie deliberately breaks away from traditional ceramic craftsmanship with the basic technique of applying clay slip, questioning where ceramic art stands and its relationship with contemporary art. On the other hand, she finds inspiration through discussions about the essence of ceramic art with Elvis, whose main medium of creation is not clay. She further adds painting and video art to her creative platform, exploring the ways ceramics and these other media influence each other. Through this collaboration, Annie strives to take ceramics a step further into contemporary art territory, while exploring how contemporary art is also broadening its scope by taking the developments in ceramic art into consideration.
In my work, I strive to rethink the nature of ceramic art and its creative process and to extend ceramics into other facets of contemporary art. This project plays with forms and images that reference painting, video and ceramic techniques. The nature of ceramics is to craft singular objects by hand with raw materials. These objects share the same physical space with their audience while paintings and videos exist within frames that can act as windows, carrying viewers to imaginative places outside of an exhibition gallery. So in this project, I combined the three different artistic approaches to see how the media influence each other.

I invited two artists to collaborate with me. Elvis Yip is into mixed media, and Lam Wing-sze is into video. Neither has trained in conventional ceramic making, and therefore can see something new in ceramics. They were free to respond to my creative contributions and explore their own concepts. I hope this creative experience would bring in different perspectives and art media to enrich the project.

尹麗娟
Annie Wan

Annie Wan obtained a Higher Certificate in Studio Ceramics from the Hong Kong Polytechnic. She further received a Master's degree in Fine Arts from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1999. She currently holds the position of Assistant Professor at the Academy of Visual Arts of the Hong Kong Baptist University. In her works, she tends to focus on the conceptual elements, constantly questioning and rethinking the nature of ceramic art.

葉建邦
Elvis Yip

Elvis Yip graduated from the Hong Kong Baptist University with a Bachelor of Arts in Visual Arts in 2013. He likes to ridicule the absurdity of this world through tease and humour and often applies unusual materials in his artworks.