



《忘德賦》在媒材與題材上雙重顛覆傳統中國畫作，姚瑞中這幅和朋友打麻將的〈檯上自摸加一台〉充滿新舊混亂的衝突感。

Playing Mahjong/Win Extra Point for Self-Drawn Pairing. Yao's "Wonderful" series subverts orthodox Chinese painting both through its choice of materials and content. This particular painting, which shows Yao playing mahjong with friends, is rife with a sense of conflict between the new and the old.

(右) 台北東區頂樓加蓋的工作室陽台上，姚瑞中翻開多年紀錄藝術靈感的筆記本：對照不遠處101大樓，他選擇立足的是邊緣建築裡的邊緣視角。(薛繼光攝)  
(facing page) On the balcony of his rooftop studio in eastern Taipei, Yao flips through notebooks that contain his artistic insights and inspirations over many years. He has chosen to take a stand for marginal works of architecture, as opposed to celebrated works of contemporary architecture such as Taipei 101, which looms nearby. (photo by Hsueh Chi-kuang)

藝術與書寫的纏繞式前進——

# 姚瑞中顛覆歷史文本

## Subverting Historical Orthodoxies

若將姚瑞中視為台灣當代藝術走入「盛年」的象徵性人物，並不為過。

這不只因為姚瑞中是後解嚴世代藝術家中的佼佼者，他同時身兼寫作、教書、策展人、藝廊經營者等多重角色，也代表了台灣藝壇蓬勃的活力。

姚瑞中在1994年初試啼聲推出裝置作品《本土占領行動》，以戲謔式創作凝視台灣歷史，被視為當代藝術揮別解嚴世代療傷式悲情的分水嶺。他的作品形式與歷史緊緊相扣，由「藝術創作」與「書寫論述」兩條主線相互纏繞著前進，特色是都以龐大的威權體制或傳統藝術文本做為顛覆

對象。

2007年的一次蘇格蘭藝術家驻村活動，發生戲劇性的轉折，原先以攝影和裝置藝術為主的姚瑞中，發想出被藝評人吳介祥稱為「史無前例的原創手法」，改用硬筆、金箔等反傳統媒材，細繪千百萬個線條代替水墨畫的渲染與濃淡變化，形成「偽山水」的藝術奇觀。

這個系列一下筆就好像停不了一樣的，今年四月中旬他又將推出全新的《甜蜜蜜》系列，以私微的自傳敘事方式竄改類似《谿山行旅圖》的主流中國古代名畫，把全新畫風發揮得更極致，頗有卓然成家之勢。

農曆年後，來到位於台北東區的姚瑞中畫室，已過了約定時間，遠遠才見到自稱「憤怒青年」的他滿臉倦容抱著孩子出現，充滿父愛的溫柔神情與過去形象判若二人。

「昨晚小孩就不舒服了，剛剛餵她吃東西就馬上吐出來，我們先等一下計程車，讓她媽媽帶去看醫生，」姚瑞中一面哄小孩，一面輕聲解釋。

當爸爸後，1969年次的姚瑞中邁向人生的黃金創作期，整個春節期間，他連除夕夜都熬夜作畫。爬上位於公寓頂樓的工作室，名為「摩卡」的俄羅斯藍貓跑出來迎接，屋子裡仍有前一晚



**I**t's no exaggeration to describe Yao Jui-chung both as the most representative figure in the realm of contemporary Taiwanese art and also as an artist who is coming into his prime.

More than just an art-world luminary of the post-martial-law era, Yao best encapsulates the vitality of the Taiwanese art scene because he wears so many hats, including those of writer, educator, exhibition planner, and gallery executive.

He first burst onto the scene in 1994 with *Military Takeover*, which took a sardonic look at Taiwanese history. Helping to move Taiwan beyond the tragic wounds of the martial law era, the installation was regarded as a watershed moment in contemporary art on the island. "Artistic creation" and "written exposition" are inextricably intertwined in Yao's work, which almost always features a strong historical resonance. Frequently, Yao aims to subvert authoritarian structures or aesthetic orthodoxies.

In 2007 Yao made a creative leap

when he was a resident at the Glenfiddich Artists Village in Scotland. He had previously focused on photography and installations. But at Glenfiddich he made a shift to what art critic Wu Chieh-hsiang describes as "unprecedentedly original methods." Yao began to create an aesthetic spectacle via "ersatz traditional Chinese landscapes." He used fountain and ballpoint pens, gold leaf and other untraditional media to create an abundance of fine lines, which substitute for the changes of depth found in traditional ink-wash painting.

Once started in this vein, he hasn't been able to stop. In mid-April of this year, he unveiled works from his "Honeymoon" series, in which he inserts self-narrative elements to alter classic works of mainstream Chinese art, such as *Travelers Among Mountains and Streams* by Fan Kuan of the Song Dynasty. Demonstrating growing maturation, the series reveals Yao reaching new heights with this style.

After the lunar New Year, I visited Yao Jui-chung's studio in east Taipei. The appointed hour had passed when I saw Yao—formerly a self-proclaimed "angry young man"—appear in the distance. He was carrying his daughter and looked fatigued. The fatherly tenderness seemed at odds with his bad-boy image.

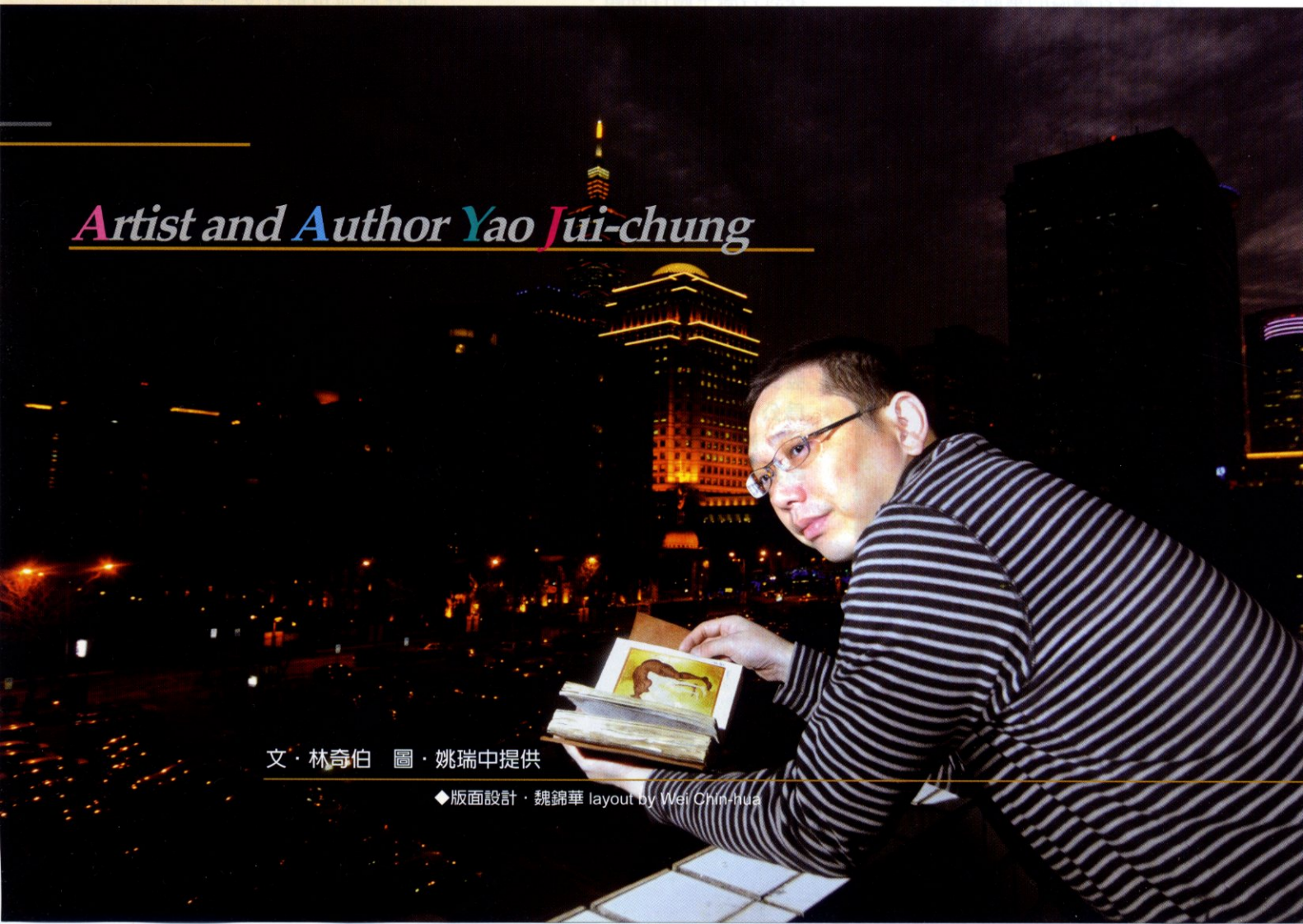
As Yao soothed his unwell child and arranged for his wife to take the girl to the hospital, he also softly issued apologies for being late.

Since becoming a father, Yao, who was born in 1969, has entered a golden period of creativity. We ascended to his studio, on an apartment building's rooftop, where Yao unveiled one painting after another from his "Honeymoon" series. He explained how each of the works inserts modern people into vast traditional landscapes. Take, for instance, *Facebook Chat* (whose Chinese name means "unavoidable death" but sounds like "Facebook"). The cynic-protagonist, a recurring figure in Yao's work, sits

## Artist and Author Yao Jui-chung

文·林奇伯 圖·姚瑞中提供

◆版面設計·魏錦華 layout by Wei Chin-hua





徹夜工作的痕跡。

走進儲藏室，姚瑞中攤開一張張新作解釋說，這回《甜蜜蜜》系列是將現代人的逸樂圖像融合進龐大山水中。其中，〈小山水非死不可〉是一個姚瑞中畫裡慣常出現的犬儒者人物端坐在叢山峻嶺中；原野如此嬌美，圖中人卻專注使用著iPad上臉書（facebook）網站；山林如此龐大，焦點卻凝聚在只占畫面極微小人物急於向外溝通的執念上，所以此畫才反諷地取名自facebook的諧音「非死不可」。

〈藍氣球〉則更直接竄構古山水，像宋代范寬的構圖一般，大畫面裡姚瑞中和太太帶著孩子在巨幅山水的右下角散步，孩子的氣球脫手而去，飄上畫面的最上方；但有別於水墨畫的委婉靜謐氣息，這裡頭則以密密麻麻的硬筆線條和大片金箔填滿畫面，直接給觀者滿溢的華麗慾望。

### 出身政治世家， 反叛歷史正統性

彰化師範大學美術系助理教授吳介祥評論，姚瑞中的山水作品「符號的操作超過意象的塑造，這種近似修行的臨摹功夫，讓這

位心智奔放，意念雜駁的藝術家更為收納內斂，但這也不表示姚瑞中的挑釁力會因為這種自我磨練式的創作行為變得馴服。」

姚瑞中出身外省籍政治世家，父親為前省議員、水墨畫家姚冬聲；這位隨國民政府播遷來台的律師在59歲才得此一子，疼愛有加。

姚瑞中從小家裡就常有政壇大老出入，大夥兒一時興起當眾揮毫、互贈墨寶，也是常有的事；當時姚瑞中就對這種傳統文人雅士的藝術應酬覺得「太不純粹，屬於古董級的官場玩意兒！」

父親在姚瑞中19歲時就過世，從小看盡繁華的他，不覺地將男孩子對父親的反叛投射到大歷史的觀照中。1994年畢業於國立藝術學院（現台北藝術大學），3年後即代表台灣參加威尼斯雙年展，裝置作品《本土占領行動》探討台灣主體性問題。

他以照片、馬桶、狗籠、船、砲管、藍光等媒材裝置整個展館，最具話題性的是，照片部分是他模仿小狗撒尿占領地盤的本能行為，在台灣史上幾個象徵荷蘭、西班牙、明鄭、清、日本、國民政府統治者的登陸地點，拍下自己裸體尿尿的照片，宣稱自己已經占領台灣。

這種嘲諷、諧擬看待歷史的態度，引起藝壇關注。隨後，他又發表《反攻大陸行動》、《天下為公行動》等「行動三部曲」作品，顛覆中國近代史的各種歷史轉折。

「我反叛的是所謂的『正統性』，華夏文明都講究正統，那麼我會反思，台灣雖然擁有故宮那麼豐富的典藏，也匯集了中華文化精髓，統治權卻並不真正及於中國大部分的地方，這樣算不算正統？」

姚瑞中舉自己的家庭背景為例，父親在大陸時已有正房和二房，後來在台灣又娶了母親，「雖然說是迫於政治現實，但若依照中國固有價值觀，這應該就是娶妾吧！而台灣的偏房被欺負、忍氣吞聲，卻又得維持出一種大房的氣勢，非常奇怪！所以這就成為我觀看歷史比較特別的角度，才會有用尿尿來KUSO的靈感，哈哈！」

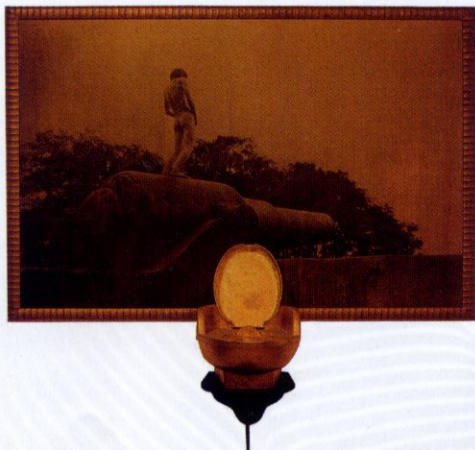
### 創作加論述的「全人」藝術家

有別於一般藝術家直觀情感、跳躍式的思考，姚瑞中最大的不同在於他也進行文字書寫，而且是龐大、有系統的藝術斷代史著作。

2002年出版《台灣裝置藝術》一書，厚達五百多頁的全彩圖文印刷，堪稱是一項創舉，也是目前為止資料最齊全的台灣裝置藝術專論書籍。

他戲稱自己有蒐集癖，工作室書架取下檔案夾，一攤開，全都是從1990年代就開始蒐集的藝術展宣傳品，目前已累積幾萬份，還全掃描成電子檔，再加上自己多年出入各項藝術展的影片拍攝紀錄，成為深度論述的基礎。

「在西方的文藝復興時期，藝術家會設計、會發明、寫日記，還要畫人體解剖素描，等於是什麼都會的『全人』嘛！在中國，像明代的唐寅也既是書畫家、文學家，還投身官場，擁有社會關懷；只是現代社會把藝術家分工化、規格檔案化了，以為藝術家就只能做『份內』的事。」姚瑞中因此把自己定位為像古人一樣



《本土占領行動》（左）和《廢墟迷走》這兩件作品，讓姚瑞中在藝術生涯的一開始就樹立憤怒青年形象。In his works *Military Takeover* (above) and *Roaming Around the Ruins*, Yao, just starting out on his career in art, established his image as an angry young man.







〈小山水非死不可〉暗諷現代人即使端坐寧靜山水中，也無視於多嬌美景，一心一意要玩facebook。右下為局部放大圖。  
In Facebook Chat, Yao Jui-chung pokes fun at the insistence of contemporaries to log onto Facebook—no matter how serene their natural surroundings. Below, a detail from the work.

amid vast mountain forests, occupying only a tiny portion of the painting. Despite the beautiful, unspoiled setting, the man's focus is on his iPad, as he checks his Facebook account.

#### Rebel from a political family

"In these works, Yao shows more manipulation of symbols than molding of images," explains Wu Chieh-hsiang, an assistant professor of fine arts at National Changhua University of Education, about Yao's landscapes. "The hard work involved in all the copying has seemingly tempered the aesthetic exuberance of this wise and bold artist with wide-ranging ideas. But in no way does this suggest that Yao's creative behavior is taming his proclivity for provocation."

Yao was born to a political family that came to Taiwan when mainland China fell to the Communists. His father Yao Dongsheng was a lawyer, provincial assembly member and traditional ink-wash painter. The elder Yao didn't have a son until he was 59, and he loved Jui-chung dearly.

Yao Dongsheng died when his son was just 19. As someone who experienced a life of luxury from a young age, Jui-chung unconsciously focused his rebellion to-

ward his father into historical commentary.

Three years after he graduated from the National Institute of the Arts (now Taipei National University of the Arts) in 1994, he represented Taiwan at the Venice Biennale. His installation *Military Takeover* explored the autonomous standing of Taiwanese identity.

Yao used sepia-toned photographs, toilets, dog cages, boats, cannons, blue lights and other materials, which he installed throughout the hall. Photographs of him urinating like a dog marking its territory proved to be most controversial. At the landing spots of various conquerors of Taiwan, including the Dutch, the Spanish, the Ming loyalists under Zheng Chenggong, the Qing forces, the Japanese and the ROC army, Yao took photographs of himself urinating in the nude.

This mocking look at history attracted a lot of attention in art circles. Next he worked on three series of works, including "Recover Mainland China" and "The World Is for All—China Beyond China," which aimed to subvert traditional narratives about modern Chinese history.

"I rebel against orthodoxy. Chinese civilization puts a premium on the or-

thodox. That pushed me to think: Taiwan has such a rich collection at the National Palace Museum. It holds the essence of Chinese civilization. But Taiwan isn't in control of most Chinese territory. So can it really be considered to represent Chinese orthodoxy?"

Yao cites his own family background: On the mainland, his father already had one family with his wife and another with a concubine. Then he came to Taiwan and married Jui-chung's mother. "Although you can say he was forced to do this as a result of political circumstances, according to traditional Chinese values, this represented the taking of a concubine!" Likewise, Taiwan, despite being bullied and forced to submit to humiliations, acts as if it's the true wife. How strange! Consequently, the situation gave me an unusual perspective on history—and inspired me to go the slapstick route with urination. Ha ha!"

#### Renaissance man

As opposed to most artists, who work from direct observation and intuitively leap to conclusions, one of Yao's defining characteristics is that he is also a writer. In particular he authors wide-ranging and systematic works about periods of art history.

His pioneering 2002 book *Installation Art in Taiwan*, with over 500 full-color pages, remains the most comprehensive work about installations in Taiwan.





的「全人」藝術家。

### 邊陲廢墟的鬼魅創作

因為這樣的深度關照和邏輯敘事能力，讓姚瑞中每一項創作都擁有龐大的文本為依據，再加以翻轉改造，這也讓他顛覆「正統性」的系列創作更具論述基礎。

在「行動三部曲」之後，他轉而關注台灣相對於如101大樓式「正統建築」之外的「邊陲廢墟」。他走遍全台灣拍攝各種工業、神偶、建築、軍事等閒置或廢棄空間，拍攝下各種隨時都可能被改建、抹去的歷史遺跡，展出並出版《台灣廢墟迷走》、《廢島》、《人外人》等攝影作品。

經過獨特鏡頭敘事與暗房等後製處理，這些攝影作品有說不出的陰暗鬼魅氣氛。

原先在台灣民間信仰裡被賦予神格性的塑像，在遭廢棄的荒野中「陰氣」完全從照片裡透露出來，即使在大白天逛美術館，都有腳底發涼的感染力！

狂放不羈的姚瑞中一路走來卻在2006年遇到了創作生涯的大瓶頸。他自稱是遭逢生平最大感情挫敗，生活作息脫軌，創作缺乏動力，如同槁木死灰。

此時，一群藝術界人士創辦「非常廟藝文空間」，半酒吧半藝廊，以發掘新銳藝術家為宗旨，並請人緣和人脈俱足的姚瑞中擔任執行長一職。結果姚瑞中不但未因此走出陰霾，還搞得身心俱疲。期間到紐約參加國際藝術家工作室駐村，幾乎茫然不知所措。

### 蘇格蘭駐村，生涯翻轉關鍵

屋漏偏逢連夜雨，「非常廟藝文空間」經營一年就虧損數百萬元，讓姚瑞中更加焦頭爛額。

然而行到水窮處，姚瑞中又獲

選「格蘭菲迪駐村計畫」，到蘇格蘭威士忌酒廠停留三個月；就像許多藝術家都曾在生命中的某個階段大頓悟或接近天啓式的開竅，姚瑞中的創作生涯也在此來個大翻轉！

「蘇格蘭像是個有精靈的地方，」回憶起這段時光，姚瑞中說，在台灣的時間被切割得太瑣碎了，彷彿一杯水不斷被攪動，生活長期處在混亂狀態，但蘇格蘭的靜謐讓這杯水沉下來，所有廢物都浮出來了，心情變得很穩定。原先打算攝影的他，又發現酒廠附近「大概是一百個武陵農場那麼大」，怎麼拍都是羊跟牛，十分無聊。

某日夜深入靜，他突然想起父親過世前曾希望自己幫他畫一張肖像，當下立即決定挑戰父親擅長的水墨畫。

但是，沒有材料怎麼辦？姚瑞中乾脆來個大反轉，用硬筆代替毛筆，以油代替水墨渲染，並且不落款、不留白、不用印泥、不做苔點，以印度粗麻紙代替柔軟宣紙，營造敦煌石窟般的粗糙質地的紙，連傳統國畫的留白處也讓他貼上滿滿的金箔，水墨畫遵循的「謝赫六法」全遭捨棄。

題材上，也顛覆中國畫雅俗共賞的特色，把小情小愛、打麻將、泡溫泉、春宮圖等日常生活入圖，再加上「五年級生」成長過程所養成的動漫品味，等於把中國士大夫標榜的倫理道德拉下

“During the Renaissance in Europe, artists would design, invent, write journals, and draw anatomical sketches. To this day, polymaths are called ‘Renaissance men’! In China during the Ming Dynasty there were figures such as Tang Yin, who was a painter, calligrapher, writer and even a Mandarin who showed great concern for society. It’s only in modern times that art has been subjected to standardization and division of labor, with the notion that artists can concern themselves only with matters ‘within their own ambit.’” Consequently, Yao regards himself as something akin to those artists of earlier eras who were “Renaissance men.”

With the depth of his concerns, as well as his skills at logic and narration, Yao’s work starts with a strong textual basis, which then undergoes a transformation. This process gave his series that aim to subvert orthodoxy a greater theoretical basis.

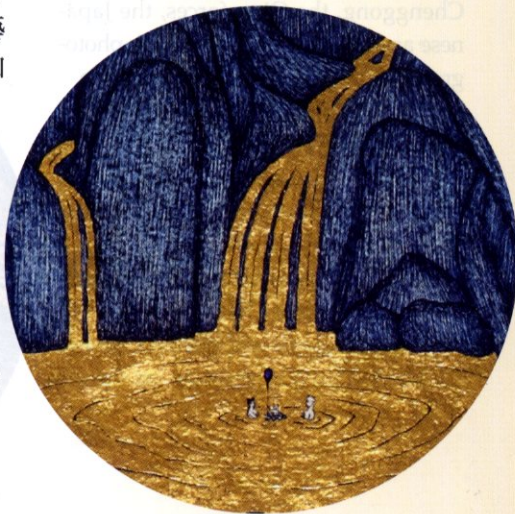
After those three early subversive series, Yao then turned his attention to “marginal ruins” (in contrast to orthodox works of Taiwanese architecture, such as Taipei 101). He travelled throughout Taiwan, photographing dilapidated statues of deities, industrial and military spaces, and other works of abandoned architecture. His photographic collections *Roaming Around the Ruins of Taiwan*, *The Ruined Islands*, and *Beyond Humanity* documented all manner of historical relics that were threatened with destruction.

With special darkroom processing skills and an ability to use the camera lens to construct narratives, his photographs conjure up a gloomy and macabre atmosphere.

He was able to capture the “dark side” of statues that had originally been invested with the powers of religious deities but have since been abandoned. Even when seen in daylight in an art museum, they still have the power to send chills down your spine!

Yet the wildly exuberant Yao hit a creative impasse in 2006.

Back then, some art-world people opened the VT Artsalon, which is half bar and half art gallery. Aiming to discover new, cutting-edge artists, VT Artsalon’s founders invited the sociable and





well-connected Yao to serve as executive director. The demands of the job pulled Yao into a funk, and he grew physically and mentally exhausted. During this period, he also went to New York for the International Studio and Curatorial Program. He felt overwhelmed and at his wits' end.

#### A turning point in Scotland

Making matters worse, after a year in business VT Artsalon was running several million NT dollars in the red, which only further added to Yao's pressures.

At this low ebb, Yao was selected to be a resident at the Glenfiddich Artists Village program in Scotland. He stayed at the distillery in Scotland for three months. The lives of artists often feature great epiphanies and dramatic changes of course, and this was a time when Yao's creative life took a big turn!

"Scotland seemed full of creatures from the spirit world," recalls Yao. He had been too consumed with trivial matters in Taiwan, where he felt like a glass of water that was constantly being stirred, always mixed up and disturbed. But the peace and quiet of Scotland let the water in his glass settle. What was rubbish floated to the surface, and his state of mind grew clear. Originally, he had planned to take photographs, but the distillery was surrounded by "a farm that was probably 100 times the size of Wuling Farm." Potential photographic subjects were all just sheep and cows, and these didn't interest Yao.

Then, late one night, he suddenly thought about how his father, shortly before he passed away, expressed the wish that Jui-chung would paint his portrait. Yao decided to take up the challenge of ink-wash painting, at which his father had excelled.

Lacking the proper materials, Yao made do with what was at hand, using ballpoint pens instead of brushes and oils instead of water colors. That in itself constituted a big shift from traditional Chinese landscapes. But Yao didn't stop there: he also didn't sign his work, didn't leave blank spaces, and didn't use ink pads or stippling. Moreover, by substituting Indian jute paper for soft Chinese art paper, he created a rough surface texture



最新作品《甜蜜蜜》系列裡的〈藍氣球〉窺構古山水構圖，氣息不但不委婉靜謐，還充滿華麗的慾望。左下為局部放大圖。

*Blue Balloon*, the most recent work completed in Yao's "Honeymoon" series, flees from the norms of traditional Chinese landscape painting. Neither tranquil nor understated, it positively brims with lavish desire. (facing page:) A detail from the painting.

like the paintings in the Dunhuang Grottoes; and he filled the spaces that had traditionally been left blank with gold leaf. He thus completely overturned "Xie He's six rules for ink-wash landscapes."

In terms of subject matter, he also subverted the lofty character of traditional Chinese painting by inserting scenes from everyday life, such as glimpses of people playing mahjong or taking baths in hot springs. Then he added comic-book ele-

ments, which are common to the artistic vocabulary of those born in the 1960s. It was as if he was pulling down Chinese scholars' moral precepts about art. Consequently, he named the series in Chinese "forgetting the moral code" (though he gave it the English name "Wonderful," which is very close to how the Chinese characters sound). Says a laughing Yao: "The angry young man, after going into exile to be a shepherd like the Han-



神位，故取名《忘德賦》。「憤怒青年在這種蘇武牧羊式的放逐之後，開始關心微觀個人感受了，」姚瑞中哈哈笑著說。

在「格蘭菲迪駐村計畫」台灣負責人、藝術家陳慧嶠的要求下，這批畫作先被拍成照片傳回台灣。沒想到許多蒐藏家單看照片就直接出價購買，也創下台灣首次駐村藝術家作品還未送回台灣就銷售一空的紀錄。

當時正值大陸藝術品市場爆起之際，許多記者連忙訪問陳慧嶠，是不是台灣藝術品市場也開始走入盛世。陳慧嶠謹慎解釋，「《忘德賦》真的是特例，代表一位台灣中生代藝術家的大蛻變，夠創新也夠前衛。」

### 蚊子館踏查，影響政府政策

回台灣後，姚瑞中將「微敘事」、「私日記」的手法發揮到更淋漓盡致，屢屢開拓新局。《如夢令》系列讓春宮畫簋位為

正統，《恨纏綿》把更隱私的幾段纏綿悱惻又痛徹心扉的感情反芻成畫作。

這種以千萬線條堆疊出來的綿密質感，簡直是一場大修行。夜深人靜之際，姚瑞中就在工作室中獨自一人一筆一筆畫下，現在不再需要蘇武牧羊的放逐，即使在繁忙的台北也能藉由數小時長坐的專注得到沉澱、消除焦慮。

然而，姚瑞中的另一個論述性創作也同時展開，他在任教的師大與北藝大美術班課堂上發起一項台灣閒置公共設施抽樣踏查。一來訓練美術系學生走出課堂的能力，各自返回自己故鄉進行田野踏查；二來也分擔他一人無法獨立完成的全台閒置空間拍攝計畫。為了更集中焦點、避免爭議，這項「政治地理學」踏查計畫不懷抱糾舉的大責任，也不列出建築物設計人、營建商，單單由現場直擊照片與簡短敘述文字表現。過去十幾年來台灣「一鄉

鎮一停車場」、「一鄉鎮一文物館」等政策亂象在畫面中幾乎無所遁形。

這本名為《海市蜃樓》的書出版後，引起行政院長吳敦義的高度重視，下令全台公共閒置空間必須在一年之內活化。而緊接著，姚瑞中也展開第二波踏查計畫，這回不只要找出更多蚊子館，還要檢驗行政院這項一年活化政策的成果。

《海市蜃樓》以學生作品居多，但透過關懷故鄉的年輕人熱情，一張張黑白照片充滿反差式的戲劇張力，諸多設計豪華的建築或長滿荒煙蔓草，或圍滿黃色警戒布條，姚瑞中於此真的延續先前的邊緣廢墟創作系列，發展出更龐大、真誠的敘事文本，是近年難得結合社會議題與藝術展現的佳構！

### 進入成熟期，提攜後輩

當年在威尼斯雙年展上惡搞台灣殖民歷史的姚瑞中，今年正式邁入42歲，不管是諧擬式的裝置作品、轉喻式的偽水墨畫，都進入了成熟期；過去那些自成一格卻讓藏家卻步的廢墟攝影作品也同時轉化成美術教育和社會監督的龐大結構。

姚瑞中一手往上抓住神龕上的傳統藝術，投以頑皮的嘲笑，一手往下提攜活力十足的新生代藝術家，催促他們走出琉璃塔、走進庶民角落。

如今，這位曾經事事憤怒的藝術家，邁向人生黃金十年，也代表台灣同一個世代藝壇中堅的崛起，負起承先啓後的當家大責。

大學時就讀美術系藝術理論組的姚瑞中，曾認為自己選錯了路，應該早點接受創作訓練，但是他卻讓我們看到，藝術創作就像各種人生事業一樣，只要用心耕耘，早晚會開出燦爛花朵。

藝術多美好，辛勤多奇妙！□



暗夜燈下，姚瑞中以千百萬筆線條為修行，消化生活中的焦慮與慾望。

（薛繼光攝）

In the dead of the night, Yao can be found applying thousands upon thousands of fine lines on his paintings. The work serves almost as a form of ascetic practice, dispelling anxieties and desires. (photo by Hsueh Chi-kuang)



Dynasty mandarin Su Wu, begins to closely observe his inner feelings.”

At the request of artist Chen Hui-jiao, the director of the Glenfiddich Artists Village Program in Taiwan, Yao sent photographs of the paintings back to Taiwan. Unexpectedly, collectors were so enthralled that they just went ahead and bought the paintings having only seen the photos. It was the first time a Taiwanese artist in a residency program abroad was able to sell all of the artworks produced there before even sending them back to Taiwan.

### Influencing government policy

After returning to Taiwan, Yao Jui-chung used micro-narratives and private journals to push limits even farther, breaking new ground again and again. His “Dreamy” series places erotic paintings within the traditional Chinese aesthetic orthodoxy. The paintings in his “Romance” series draw from his ruminations about painful private experiences.

The process of creating the texture of these paintings, which comes from the aggregation of thousands of fine lines, is akin to ascetic practice. Often, you’ll find Yao alone in his studio in the dead of the night, applying one stroke at a time. These days there’s no need to be sent into exile to become a shepherd like Su Wu. Even in the busy city of Taipei, one can find a few hours to sit in concentration, settling one’s mind and dispelling one’s anxieties.

Meanwhile, Yao launched another series of discursive art. Through the classes he was teaching at National Taiwan Normal University and Taipei National University of the Arts, he organized a survey of idle public buildings and spaces throughout Taiwan. On the one hand, the survey provided art students with fieldwork experience, often in their own hometowns. On the other hand, it shifted from his shoulders some of the burden of photographing vacant spaces around Taiwan. That task had been too much for Yao to carry out alone.

To provide greater focus and avoid political controversy, the survey steered away from faultfinding, and it didn’t list architects or construction companies. It simply consisted of photos taken by class members and short accompanying narrative texts. Nevertheless, the government policies that



看似瀟灑，姚瑞中卻眷戀每一段感情，《恨纏綿》系列反蜀婚前情史，《遠走高飛》交雜著四個時空，滿滿難以忘懷的過去。

Although he may look suavely above it all, Yao Jui-chung is in truth highly sentimental. His series “Romance” features ruminations about his pre-marital romantic history. *Elopement*, which combines four different temporal snapshots, is full of nostalgic longing.

put parking lots and museums in every town were exposed for all their madness.

The resulting book, *Mirage: Disused Public Property in Taiwan*, attracted the notice of ROC premier Wu Den-yih, who issued an order for all of the disused public spaces in Taiwan to be brought back to life within a year. In response, Yao launched his plan for a second survey, which was aimed both at finding disused public spaces and also at assessing the effects of the policies to revitalize them.

Most of the photos in *Mirage* were taken by students. But imbued with the passion that these young people feel for their hometowns, the black-and-white photos feature stark contrasts and dramatic tension. Capturing images of fancy works of architecture that have become abandoned and weed-choked or wrapped in yellow warning tape, the photos have allowed Yao to continue to explore the themes in his earlier creative series on marginal ruins—but with more sincere and wide-ranging narrative texts. The collection is a rarity in recent years: a work that both succeeds artistically and demonstrates social awareness.

### A leader for the next generation

Back when he attended the Venice Biennale as a young man, Yao was spoofing Taiwan’s history of colonization. Now, at age 42, his parodic installations and

his metonymic mock ink-wash paintings have alike entered eras of maturity. And although his photographs of abandoned places haven’t been a hit with collectors, they have turned into a vehicle for fine arts education and social vigilance.

With one hand Yao Jui-chung is reaching toward the shrine niche of traditional art, taking a mocking and mischievous approach, and with the other hand he is guiding a vital young generation of artists, pushing them to leave the ivory tower and go out among the people.

Formerly the archetypal artist as an angry young man, Yao is entering his prime. He represents the ascension of his generation of artists in Taiwan, and he is also shouldering the duty of passing down traditions and educating youth.

As an undergraduate, Yao majored in art theory. He has since regretted the choice, believing that he should have received fine arts creative training earlier in his career. Yet he has demonstrated that artistic creation is in many respects similar to work in most fields: with strenuous efforts tilling the soil, brilliant flowers will sooner or later bloom.

How beautiful is art, how marvelous hard work! □

(Eric Lin/photos courtesy of Yao Jui-chung/tr. by Jonathan Barnard)