

未竟之園

Neverending Garden

環境心理學家提出，能夠創造記憶、與先人聯繫及擁有對一個地方的歸屬感，對人們的身心健康會有正面的影響。這種「地方依附」情感能為人帶來裨益，例如產生美好的回憶、認同感、輕鬆的心情、正面情緒、個人成長以及與大自然更親近等，這都有助營造一個團結、親密和互動的社區。然而，身處一個大都會，我們和一個地方的記憶聯繫會不斷受到新發展的干擾——拆卸、搬遷、重建和翻新日復日地上演。新發展急速地取代舊事物，在不知不覺間消磨着人與地的連結，此時我們應要主動思考如何以創新的方式，重建我們和人地事的情感連結。

最初為香港皇家遊艇會會所的油街實現藝術空間，是一組充滿歷史痕跡的建築群，盛載着過去的種種人和事。然而昔日的故事及回憶並未隨着住客的遷移、建築活化及環境變遷而終結。我們在油街實現與藝術家協作，為社區注入新的想像和表現手法，以藝術計劃的形式重新創作、敘述和延續這些動人的故事。參與是次展覽的香港藝術家楊沛鏗和羅玉梅，一直關注人類文明發展與自然環境之間互相拉扯的共生關係。他們的創作讓我們思考人類對一個地方的想像和記憶是如何被創造、重塑或錯置，甚至可視之為一種身份建立與情感連結。

楊沛鏗熱衷研究香港土沉香生態和地方的關係。他在展覽廳重置一個人造的土沉香棲息環境：以奪目的植物燈替代天然光、白房間內播放着土沉香生長地的環境錄音、自動調濕設備排放着從當地收集回來的水份……人們用盡一切努力營造一個最理想、最安全的棲息地，希望保護這種珍貴的稀有樹免被砍伐者發現，但是土沉香卻自有求存的「策略」——它以種子獨有的荷爾蒙吸引黃蜂協助傳播繁衍。而在一個巨大的土沉香種子雕塑面前，我們也彷如黃蜂，一起重新發掘傳播地方故事的途徑。正如在斯里蘭卡，人們選擇積極推廣「金椰子」，讓它以名產的身份，成為廣為人知的文化標誌。

羅玉梅通過地理考察反思人與地方之間的情意結。相傳十九世紀一名印度籍測量師因思念家鄉而把新界北梧桐河命名為「印度河」，此故事啟發藝術家在河流一帶進行田野考察，在展覽轉化成視覺形態的考察報告，訴說着由上世紀牽連至今天的微妙人文景觀：《粵祭》是對民間於1963年因旱災而作的求雨儀式的重新想像；《河嚮》中以梧桐河上游排水道的田野錄音，連繫東西流向的水域及自道光年代（1821-1850）屹立在中游華山上的求雨石碑；流水聲覆蓋在《河圖》的航拍錄像上，展現一河兩岸、城鄉交替的景觀；

《河界》則隱約呈現麻笏河和梧桐河交界的水流攝影。充沛的河水流淌着，轉眼間已是一個世紀後的景象。

油街實現擴展計劃為我們帶來了一個新空間。新落成的小展館和廣闊的戶外公共空間，不但令周邊的社區更通達，亦讓我們能夠以更多藝術項目聚集不同的群體，與大眾創造美好的回憶。我們將一起在油街實現創造一個充滿無窮想像和友愛的「花園」，讓社群生生不息。

油街實現

Environmental psychologists argue that the sense of belonging to a place and the ability to build memories and connect with previous generations have a positive impact on our well-being. This idea is known as “place attachment”, and it brings with it a number of benefits, including the preservation of memories, the feeling of a bond, relaxation, positive emotions, personal growth and a connection to nature, all of which also play a part in creating solidarity, affiliation and community engagement. Nevertheless, our memories of and bonds with a place are constantly at risk of interruption by new developments, such as demolitions, relocations, rebuilds and renewals. When the world replaces the old with the new at unprecedented speed and our connections are disrupted without us realising, we need to take the initiative to re-establish our emotional bond with our place in creative ways.

The historic building of the former Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club, which is currently home to Oi!, holds the memories of its past residents and users. Their stories and their attachment to this place do not, however, end with its relocation, renovation or changing landscape. In a collaboration with artists to inject new imagination and representation, our stories are being recreated, retold and extended in the form of art projects at Oi!. Based on the artists’ observations of the conflict and coexistence between human development and natural habitat, the works of Trevor Yeung and Law Yuk-mui set out to give us an insight into the extent to which our imagination and memories of a place have been created, reshaped or misplaced, something that may also be considered a form of identity building and emotional bonding.

Trevor Yeung has dedicated himself to research on the habitat of incense trees in Hong Kong and its relationship with places. In this exhibition, he mimics the natural habitat of incense trees with dazzling LED grow lights; playing a field recording from where the incense trees grow in the *White Room*, and maintaining the optimal R/H level by diffusing water collected from the same area with an automatic control system. Countless efforts have been made to provide an ideal, safe space to help protect this endangered species that is dear to many people’s hearts. Yet, the trees on their own have a unique “strategy” of survival—a special kind of hormone in their seeds that attract wasps, which play an important role in seed dispersal. While standing under the gigantic sculpture of the seed of the incense tree in the center of the gallery, we can ponder innovative ways to pass on our local tales. In Sri Lanka, for example, the indigenous King Coconuts are treasured and promoted and have become a widely known cultural icon.

Law Yuk-mui reflects on the emotional bond between people and place through field investigations. Inspired by the 19th century legend of an Indian surveyor, who named the Ng Tung River in the northern New Territories “River Indus” out of homesickness, the artist conducted a field study along the river and transformed her findings into visual representation, unveiling an intriguing cultural landscape from the last century to the present. *Rainmaking* reimagines the ritual of praying for rain during a drought in 1963. *River Ensemble* comprises a field recording from the qanat system in the upstream section of the Ng Tung River, connecting the waters streaming from east to west, as well as the stele used in the ritual erected in the midstream part of Wa Shan since the Daoguang reign (1821-1850). In *River Atlas*, drone footage shows scenery along both sides of the river, alternating between urban and rural landscapes with the sound of flowing water in the background. *River Demarcation* is a photography work, which subtly captures the junction of the Ma Wat River and the Ng Tung River. Time flies as the river flows, and a century passes in the blink of an eye.

The completion of Oi!’s development provides a new space next door to our current site. Comprising a small gallery and a large outdoor public space, it not only enhances accessibility within the neighbourhood, but also increases our capacity to create good memories and connect different people with art projects. Together, we will build a garden of never-ending imagination and affection where the community can flourish.

很努力地讓事情發生，土沉香

Try So Hard to Make Things Happen, Incense Tree

楊沛鏗 Trevor Yeung

香港早期曾盛產土沉香，並以香木業而聞名，有說「香港」（芳香的港口）是因而得名的。現在土沉香因被過度砍伐而瀕臨絕種，這次展覽會探究這物種如何適應周遭不斷變遷的環境，以及其獨特的求生方式，希望觀眾能從中與土沉香建立聯繫，繼而反思人類和自然的關係。

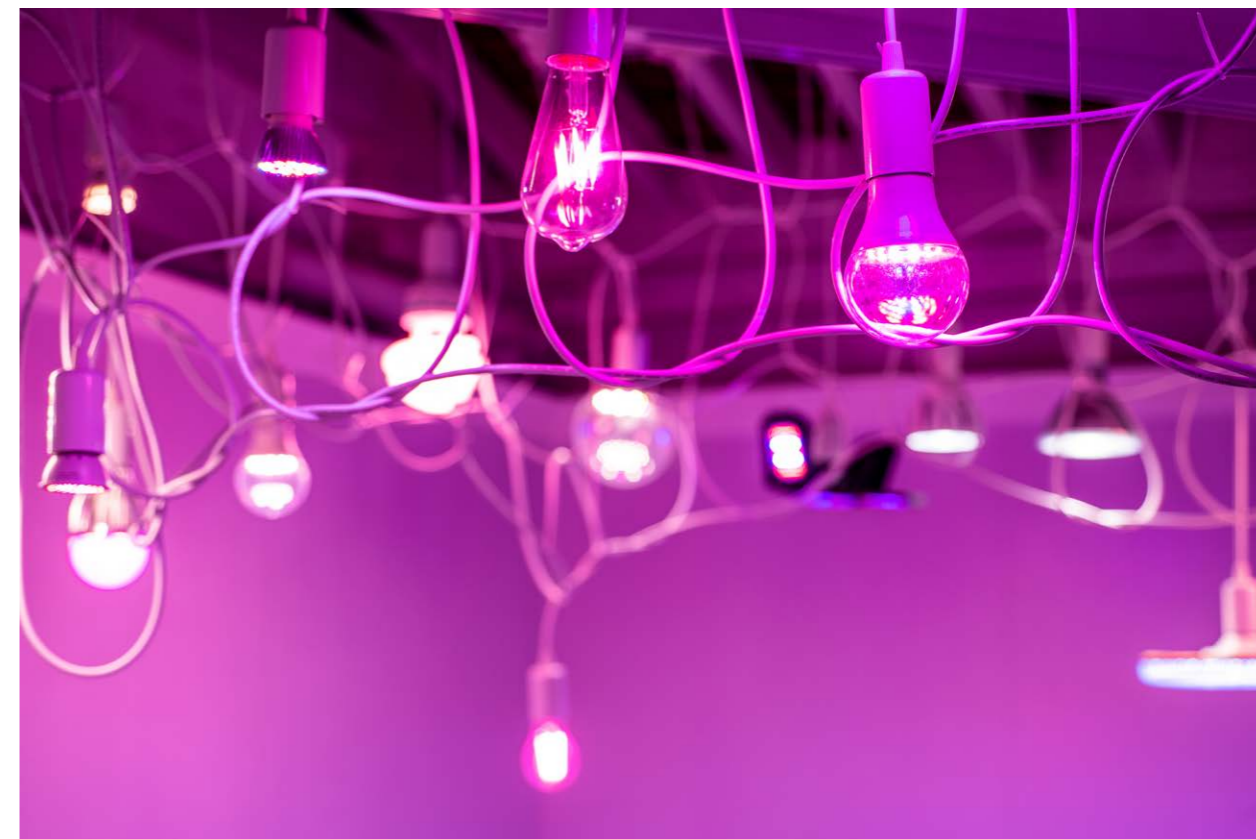
展覽將劃分成三個空間：《生長亭》是由二十盞植物燈組成的裝置作品，展示現今模擬太陽光的室內種植環境；另一個空間則呈現了由不同物件構成的花園，包括關於斯里蘭卡金椰子（種子）的作品、土沉香種子的大型雕塑，以及有關香港土生和常見植物的書籍等；而《白房間（土沉香）》則透過田野錄音和從土沉香生長地收集回來的水源製作加濕系統裝置，重現土沉香的自然生長環境。

三組作品將為觀眾帶來截然不同的感官體驗，並從不同面向訴說土沉香的故事片段，同時留下讓各人自由演繹的想像空間。

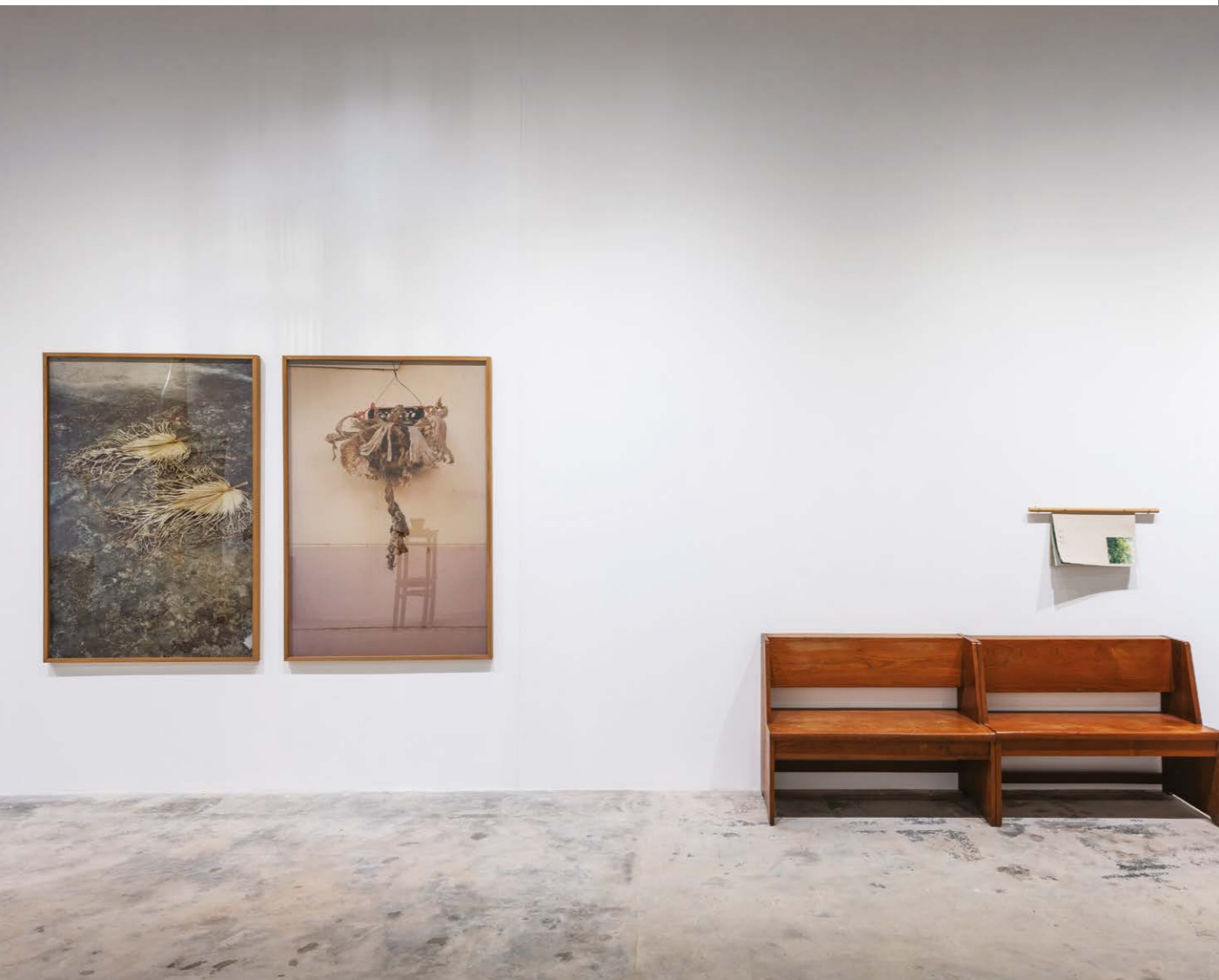
Incense trees (*Aquilaria sinensis*) were once planted in large numbers in Hong Kong to supply the incense industry that prospered at that time. They are also believed to be the origin of the name Hong Kong, meaning “fragrant harbour”. Rather than addressing the threats this species faces today, this exhibition explores how it adapts to the changing environment and fights to create a higher chance of survival for itself. Visitors are invited to connect with the incense tree and reflect on the relationships between humans and nature that it embodies.

The exhibition comprises three rooms. *Growth Pavilion* is an installation with over 20 grow lights that replace natural sunlight to cultivate plants indoors in our modern times. The second room presents a narration of a garden with art on the King Coconut (seeds) from Sri Lanka, a giant sculpture of the seed of the incense tree and books about plants native to Hong Kong and trees that are commonly found here. The *White Room (Incense Tree)* contains field recordings and substances emitted by a humidifying system using water collected from areas where incense trees grow.

The different settings create multiple sensory experiences for visitors while telling fragments of stories about the incense tree, opened for each visitor to contribute to.







河上沒有人唱歌

There Is No One Singing on the River

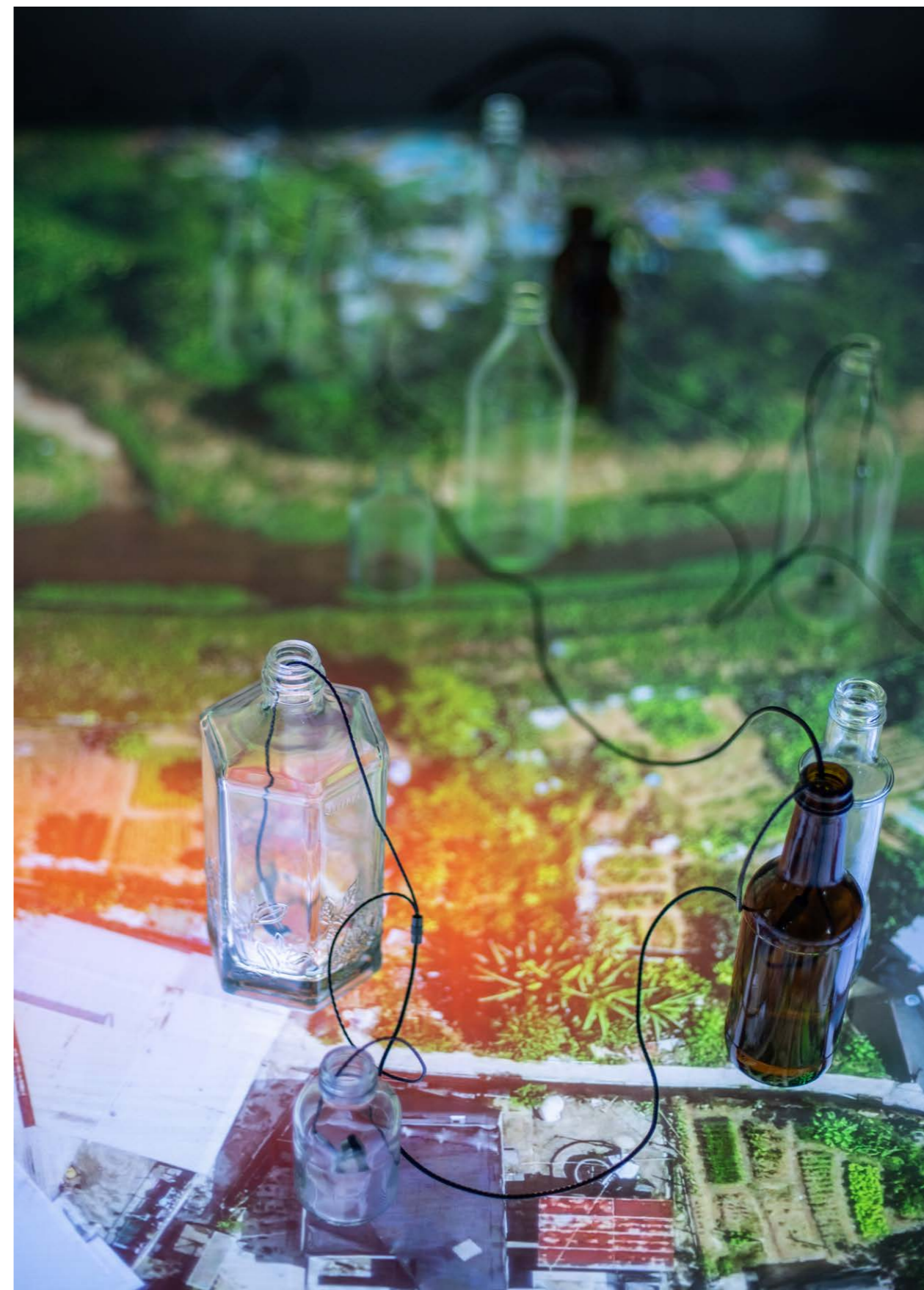
羅玉梅 Law Yuk-mui

地緣情結是什麼？是我在黑龍江省的梧桐河想起香港？在香港的梧桐河想念印度？還是在深水埗的基隆街想像台灣？

梧桐河流經新界北，「River Indus」是它的英文舊稱；與丹山河（River Jhelum）、石上河（River Sutlej）及雙魚河（River Beas）構成了印度河水系的疊影。非偶然推翻了偶然，異地與原鄉情感交錯編織成地理想像，測繪記錄於地圖，又消失於地圖。Google 導航北上南下。上半世紀，人類渴望下雨；末世紀，到邊境看太陽下沉。夏至是二零二一也是二零一三的那一天。無人機在四百米的高空攝錄城與鄉斑駁的肌理，麻笏河與梧桐河匯流處，是一道不平衡的風景。

What is meant by place attachment? Did I experience it at that moment by the Wutong River in Heilongjiang when I had a powerful memory of Hong Kong? Or that other time by the Ng Tung River in Hong Kong as I was hit by a sense of nostalgia for India? Or while I was walking down Ki Lung Street in Sham Shui Po with thoughts of Taiwan in my head?

The Ng Tung River in the northeast New Territories, Hong Kong, was originally called the River Indus in English, reflecting an image of the waters of the Indus River and its tributaries, the Jhelum, Sutlej and Beas rivers, that flow through Pakistan and India. Serendipity is never truly accidental. A longing for home and a yearning to travel abroad interweave to form geographies in the imagination, charted in maps but sometimes vanishing from them. Google navigation keeps north at the top of maps. In the first half of the century, mankind yearned for rain; in the second people crossed the border to watch the sunset. The summer solstice fell on the same day in 2013 and 2021. At an altitude of 400 metres, drones record the textures of urban/rural areas, where the confluence of the Ma Wat River and the Ng Tung River forms an imbalanced landscape.







So much water, so far from home

瞿暢

So much water

「溪流並不只是流動的水，她還是流動的泥沙、流動的石頭，以及流動的生態系。沒有一條溪流像地圖上那個僵硬、不可更移的幾何圖形，溪流每天生長、堵塞、漫衍、沉積。溪流遠比我們可以測量到的長、深、曲折，而秘密。」（《家離水邊那麼近》）

延着一條垂直的金屬梯架，可以由新界北區孔嶺村的地面下沉至丹山河畔疏通河流的水道——這是羅玉梅深入地理的方式。

夏日雨水綿密，狹長的水道裡迴蕩雨水敲擊河流、風雷雨電伴隨蟲鳴狗吠的聲響。徘徊於其中，或近或遠的音律縈繞身畔，它們挾帶着河水的濕氣在水道深長的洞壁上震顫出悠遠的迴響，召喚出許多關於河水的記憶。

丹山河從八仙嶺腳下開始流淌，匯集山泉及雨水，一路蜿蜒西行，流匯成梧桐河之後向北延伸，依次與麻笏河、石上河與雙魚河匯流，最終在羅湖融匯為深圳河。「九龍界限街以北，深圳河以南」，正是1898年中英簽署的《展拓香港界址專條》中租借給英國的新界地區界址。彼時，英國派遣至新界的印度籍地理測量師為這裡河流標註名稱，或許是出於鄉愁，縱貫北區的梧桐河被他們以「印度河」命名，而印度河數條重要的支流則成為梧桐河支流的名稱：傑赫勒姆河（丹山河）、比亞斯河（雙魚河）、薩特萊傑河（石上河）。接受精確定位與繪圖訓練的測量師們不乏傷感地為他鄉的河流冠以故鄉的名字，藉助命名在殖民版圖中連接起充滿溫柔與感傷的情感紐帶。然而，現代測繪學的視野卻只限於對領土的標註、對界線的劃分，它看不見河水下的情感潛流，聽不見河床上砂石低語的故事。於是，以「印度河」為起點，羅玉梅開始她對新界北部河流的「測繪」。她的測量所關心的，是天空到水底的距離，季節到季節的長度，記憶與願望的形狀。

1963年夏季恰逢乾旱，《香港工商日報》記錄了上水鄉村的二百餘名婦女於梧桐河畔的華山山頂設壇求雨的過程。她們在山頂的求雨石邊鋪設青竹、花果、清水、祭祀牲畜，演練一套古老的儀式。據稱法事進行不久，便天降甘霖。

2021年夏季，羅玉梅在丹山 / 傑赫勒姆河的水道內遇見一條乾死的下口鯰魚。同年夏天，在一幅綠幕前，她依照文獻記載重現了1963年的祈雨儀式，她手搖銅鈴，踏着禹步，播頌咒語，向商羊神鳥祈雨，用黃豆與X光片製造雷雨聲效，作為想象的、歷史的回聲。

2013年6月21日的夏至，羅玉梅初探梧桐 / 印度河，在孔嶺村的一戶屋簷下錄得當日颱風的聲音。

2021年6月21日的夏至，羅玉梅回到丹山 / 傑赫勒姆河水道，在水道內的金屬梯架上安置錄音器材，記錄了夏至的夜雨，以及日間的蟬鳴、鳥叫、狗吠與廢鐵回收場的機動聲。

順着丹山河西行，在粉嶺龍躍村附近便是梧桐 / 印度河與麻笏河之交匯處。梧桐 / 印度河流速和緩、河水淡藍，而麻笏河水流湍急、色澤厚重。交匯時兩條河的紋理與速度相互摩擦，在一條河上並行出兩路水流。趟着河水，羅玉梅採樣了交匯處的兩條河水以及它們水底的聲音。於是，水紋、水路、水聲、水體以及身體趟過河流的記憶成為她測繪河流的數據：交錯起伏的水紋局部被燈帶打亮、梧桐 / 印度河一路蜿蜒向北的路線被無人機低空捕捉、水流在河底與泥沙碰撞的聲音在玻璃樽內共振迴響、深淺不一的河水在塑膠桶內浸泡着羅玉梅趟河而行的相片。展覽中唯一接近地理測繪的視角來自一架無人機由早上至黃昏時分從孔嶺村一路北上至羅湖火車站的低空俯拍。黃昏的光暈漸把畫面染成橘紅，伴隨着河底水流的迴響，無人機緩慢地向北飛行，俯視梧桐 / 印度河所串聯起的農田、道路、工地、棕土，新界與深圳，以及不同時空裡的事件、地理與祈願。展覽昏暗、粗糲的空間猶如河床邊的水道，它的洞體內散落着河水湧入水道時留下的生命、聲音與記憶。羅玉梅在空間的角落及滑輪座椅周圍堆疊起厚重的沙袋，仿佛在避免河水衝入時將這些記憶帶走——畢竟，相比起書寫的歷史，它們顯得如此脆弱，隨時都會從指縫中流走。

羅玉梅的創作常常透過水體勾勒香港的地理。從《維多利亞之東》中對消失的海域的追溯，到《那傳來浪潮的方向》裡對海上遷移的勾勒，水體在她的作品中既是描繪香港地貌及地緣政治的重要元素，亦是映照個體記憶、身份與情感結構的流動晶體。由磅礴、充滿史詩感的海水退回至絹細、聲響細膩的溪流，「河上沒有人唱歌」以散文的結構丈量着關於河流的種種深度：從天空的凝望到山頂的儀式，從地面的勘探到水底的音律，羅玉梅垂直丈量着地理空間的深度與記憶。在她勾勒的河流地貌中交錯着微觀的、個體的聲音以及漫長的、歷史的迴響，譬如殖民全球化下被錯置的鄉愁流入河水所匯成的區域邊界，又譬如一條魚的願望和一隻鳥的視野。

羅玉梅告訴我在讀台灣作家吳明益的散文集《家離水邊那麼近》，於是我也翻起這本水汽氤氳的文集，恰好讀到作者談及自己多年沿水而行的田野調查，為的是書寫那些「漂浮在水上、沉默到水底、隨着水所流逝、以及化為雨水重新滲透進入土地的種種」。誠然，水所流經、滲透的地理一路向下蔓延，牽動起被遺落和不可見的歷史與情感，它們交疊起伏，形成難以測繪的地貌，觀察者必須深入它們的岩層與水體，連接它們所滲透的不同時空與地域——這是羅玉梅深入地理的方式。



So far from home

當沉香在19世紀與一眾名貴香料在香港港口被大量交易、轉運時，或許鮮有人知道它生長自名為土沉香（或稱牙香樹）的樹木。當土沉香在20世紀被盜獵者砍伐、被植物園架起金屬圍欄保護時，也許很少人知道它種子的模樣。沉香令人著迷：它氣味曼妙，價比黃金；它來自土沉香的傷口，是樹幹保護傷口的油脂與真菌結合出的奇妙物質；據傳，沉香亦是香港作為「香料港口」的名稱起源，它的生長、貿易、文化象徵都與這座城市有着千絲萬縷的關聯——它既是商品亦是符號，是被反復挪用在歷史敘事、商品宣傳和人造神話中的固定材料。它的生命和它的所指一樣，已經被往復的開採、貿易、商品化與符號化所剝奪——畢竟，沒人記得它的樹木。

「很努力地讓事情發生，土沉香」圍繞土沉香與它的生命展開。土沉香喜好溫暖濕潤的氣候，常常生長在香港和廣東沿海的成熟樹林中。於是，楊沛鏗分別以「光」與「水」為材料，模擬出適宜土沉香休憩生長的環境：《生長亭》中，二十餘盞植物生長燈圍成粉色的燈光裝置將空間轉化為光合作用的場所；《白房間（土沉香）》裡，一對喇叭以及一台巨型加濕器持續釋放著藝術家在西貢大腦上洋村及南丫島的土沉香樹群附近收集的環境音與山泉水霧，調節著適宜土沉香生長的濕度。

但是人造環境是否真的能夠哺育植物的生命？《生長亭》外的一幅手繪圖中（《兩依賴者》），一棵單株銀杏佝偻依著生長燈柱，雌雄異株的銀杏樹在單獨生長時無法結出果實，畫中的銀杏只能持續生長卻無法繁衍生存——「生長」與「生存」間的錯位使植物的「生命」變得撲朔迷離。在《白房間》的入口，一組常見於動物園鳥籠的透明塑膠門簾與門鏈鎖住屋內的濕氣與聲音，在為空間提供「保護」之餘，亦為它扣上枷鎖。「生長」與「保護」更多是植物的心願還是人的執念？兩個房間中遲遲沒有植物現身，只有觀眾的身體與房間內的光與水相互作用。儘管如此，加濕機與植物燈還在不斷運行，彷彿仍在為土沉香準備一個舒適的「家」。

但是土沉香沒有家。它需要昆蟲將它的種子帶走，在不確定的遠方繼續生長——離開是它們生存和生長的策略。土沉香的果實會在成熟時裂開，垂吊出蛹形的種子，它們會釋放一種特殊的荷爾蒙，吸引黃蜂將它們帶走，藉此播種、繁衍。主展廳中，一件被放大的土沉香種子模型懸吊在半空中，它與人的尺寸比例恰如土沉香種子與黃蜂，靜靜懸掛在空間中，等待着「黃蜂」。

但是黃蜂或許早已在漫長的飛行中發生意外。就像暴風雨中花盆，隨時會從窗邊跌落。展覽內，與種子一同懸浮在空中的還有諸多徘徊不安的思緒：鄉愁、焦慮、恐懼、希冀。塑膠索帶反覆出現在展覽的許多細節中，它們修補、固定着破損的花盆與傢俬，亦標註着關於土沉香的諸多脆弱性。楊沛鏗將在香港尋得的二手傢俬拆裝、拼接成展覽中的展示底座。底座上，兩件在入窯前便被摔破、縫合的陶盆透過身體的傷口呢喃着前路上可能的意外與風浪。

但是破裂的陶盆也可以被修補。就像乾枯的植物也有再生的機會、被棄置的物件也可能被找到新的用途。一對椰子被安置在空間一側，展覽期間，這對種子的生命形態亦將不

斷變化。草木、果實、種子、木材以及它們的圖像在展覽空間中與土沉香的生命彼此凝神，互為隱喻，共同在希望與憂慮、離別與眷戀間來回起伏。

但是展覽不單是一個暗湧着矛盾情緒的告解室，它亦是一個供人研習植物生命的閱覽空間。一張二手教堂凳旁，放置着楊沛鏗為香港土沉香製作的藝術家書，記錄了他在研究過程中所見的三類被不同程度禁錮、傷害的土沉香。一批被塑膠鏈條捆綁的書籍則介紹了香港與其它地區的植物、保育理念及園林設計。在這裡，楊沛鏗認真研習植物的習性、歷史與生態，他努力地理解並感受土沉香的生命，卻情不自禁地過分代入，深陷於土沉香生命中的種種經歷與情緒。

楊沛鏗的創作著迷於曖昧性，他透過植物、昆蟲、小型動物以及它們在都市空間裡的生態製造着親密的距離、求而不得的渴望、患得患失的不安。他的作品中，動植物不再是被動的象徵或比喻，它們介入藝術家的社會觀察、親密記憶以及彼此的生態。它們的形態、生命與人的身體、觸摸、親密感知相互置換，干擾植物、動物、昆蟲與人的固有邊界，並拓展着交織敘事的可能性——多重的曖昧性由此而生，它們遊走於藝術家的私人經驗與情緒波紋、植物與周遭生態的親密關係，以及不同生命之間深入、緊密、浪漫的彼此牽絆。

「很努力地讓事情發生，土沉香」既是土沉香與動植物交織而成的敘事，亦是楊沛鏗關於希望與失敗志忑糾結的思緒。他用盡力氣地在二者之間來回徘徊——他在植物種子的離開中看到希望，卻又擔憂路途上的意外，傷感於遠方的鄉愁；他想像一個讓植物舒適生長的家，卻明白「家」的謊言；他看到土沉香的生命被固化為呆板的城市及商品象徵，卻忍不住在重新勾勒它的生命時，再次看到城市的影子。

好在此時，如若望向窗外，會看見油街實現的花園內一棵安靜矗立的土沉香幼苗，慢慢生長着。

關於作者：

瞿暢是一位駐香港策展人及寫作者。現為嶺南大學文化研究系博士候選人。

So much water, so far from home

QU Chang

So much water

“The stream is not just flowing water; she is also flowing sands, flowing stones, flowing ecosystems. No stream is like the rigid, immovable geometric figure on the map. Every day the stream grows, clogs, diffuses and deposits. The stream is far longer, deeper, and more sinuous and mysterious than we can ever measure.” (*So Much Water So Close to Home*)

Along a vertical metal ladder, one descends from the ground of Hung Leng Tsuen in the northern New Territories to the watercourse for dredging the Tan Shan River. This is how Law Yuk-mui delves into geography.

Rainfall is heavy in the summer. The sounds of rain hitting the river, of thunder and lightning, of the chirring of insects and barking of dogs reverberate in the long, narrow watercourse. Wandering in the midst of it all, rhythms from far and near trail about, carrying the moisture of the river, striking upon the extensive wall of the watercourse, creating far-reaching echoes, and summoning the many memories about the river.

The Tan Shan River begins at the foot of Pat Sin Leng, gathering mountain springs and rainwater as it meanders westward, joins the Ng Tung River and extends northward, followed by the Ma Wat River, the Shek Sheung River and the Sheung Yue River, before finally becoming the Sham Chun River (or the Shenzhen River) in Lo Wu. The area “North of Boundary Street on the Kowloon Peninsula and south of the Sham Chun River”, later known as the New Territories, was leased to the United Kingdom under the Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory, signed between the Qing Dynasty of China and the United Kingdom in 1898. At that time, Indian surveyors sent by the British to the New Territories named the rivers. Perhaps out of a yearning for home, they named the Ng Tung River, which ran through the north district, the “Indus”, and the tributaries of the Ng Tung River were named after the other important branches of the Indus River: Jhelum (the Tan Shan River), Beas (the Sheung Yue River) and Sutlej (the Shek Sheung River). Trained to be precise in positioning and mapping, the surveyors, in a sentimental gesture, conferred names from home upon the rivers in a foreign land, and through the act of naming, connected the emotional bonds of utmost tenderness and melancholy across the colonial map. But modern surveying and cartography is limited to marking territories and drawing boundaries; it does not discern the emotional undercurrents or hear the murmured stories of the sands and debris on the river bed. So beginning with the “Indus River”, Law Yuk-mui “surveys and maps” her own rivers in the northern New Territories. She is interested in the distance between the sky and the river bed, the length between seasons, and the shapes of memories and prayers.

During the summer drought of 1963, there was a story in *The Kung Sheung Daily News* about 200 village women in Sheung Shui, who set up an altar at the top of Wa Shan by the Ng Tung River to pray for rain. They laid bamboo, flowers, fruits, fresh water and an animal sacrifice beside the rain prayer rock on the mountain top and performed ancient rituals. It is said that not long after they performed the ritual, rain fell from the sky.

In the summer of 2021, Law encountered a dried catfish in the watercourse of the Tan Shan/Jhelum River. The same summer, in front of a green screen, she re-enacted the 1963 ritual according to the archival records. Ringing a copper bell and pacing the Steps of Yu, she chanted mantras and prayed to the Shangyang bird god for rain. With soybeans and x-ray films she produced the sound effect of a thunderstorm—an imaginary, historical echo.

On the summer solstice of 21 June 2013, Law first visited the Ng Tung/Indus River and recorded the sound of a typhoon under the eaves of a village house in Hung Leng Tsuen.

On the summer solstice of 21 June 2021, Law returned to the Tan Shan/Jhelum River. She installed recording equipment on a metal ladder in the watercourse and recorded the night rain, as well as the sounds of cicadas, bird songs, dogs barking and machines from a nearby scrap metal yard.

Following the Tan Shan River, in the west lies Lung Yeuk Tsuen in Fanling, close to which is the confluence of the Ng Tung/Indus River and the Ma Wat River. When the gentle flow of the pale blue water of the Ng Tung/Indus River and the rapid and opaque Ma Wat River meet, the textures and speed of the two rivers collide and two parallel streams flow in the same river. Law walked into the river and collected samples of the two waters at the confluence and the sound of the water as it rushed over the riverbed. The data for her river survey included water patterns, flow, sounds and bodies, and memories of her crossing the river. The interlaced and undulating water patterns were partially illuminated by light strips; the northward meandering Ng Tung/Indus River was captured by a low-flying drone; the sounds of water colliding with sand and dregs in the riverbed reverberate in a glass bottle; in a plastic bucket, a photograph of Law wading in the river floats on different shades of water.

In the exhibition, the only perspective resembling that of surveying is from a drone, which flew over Hung Leng Tsuen all the way north to the Lo Wu railway station, from morning till dusk. Little by little, the fading light dyed the scene saffron. Accompanied by echoes from the riverbed, the drone flew slowly north, overlooking landscapes connected by the Ng Tung/Indus River: farmlands, roads, construction sites, brownfield land, the New Territories and Shenzhen, and events, locations and prayers from different times and spaces.

The dark, rough exhibition space resembles a watercourse by the riverbed, whose cavernous body is scattered with the lives, sounds and memories left behind as the river flows past. In the corners of the space and around the rolling chairs, Law stacks heavy sandbags, as if to protect the memories from being washed away by the influx of water. After all, compared to written history, they are fragile and likely to escape through our fingers at any moment.

Very often in her works, Law Yuk-mui charts the geography of Hong Kong through waterbodies. In *Victoria East* where she traces the vanished seas, and *From Whence the Waves Came*, in which she maps the trajectory of migration across the seas, the body of water is not only an important element in her depiction of Hong Kong's landscape and geopolitics, but also a moving prism, reflecting individual memories, identities and emotional structures. From the majestic and epic seas, to the silky, delicate streams, *There Is No One Singing on the River* measures the various depths of the river through the prose structure. From gazing at the sky to the ritual on the mountain top, from exploration on the ground to underwater rhythms, Law probes vertically into the depths and memories of geographic space. The river landscapes she maps are intertwined with microscopic, individual voices, and enduring, historical echoes, such as the regional boundaries formed by rivers, fused with displaced homesickness under colonial globalisation, the longing of a fish, and the vision of a bird.

Law told me that she was reading *So Much Water So Close to Home*, by Taiwanese writer Wu Ming-yi. So I picked up this essay collection steaming of humidity, and chanced upon the part where the writer wrote about his years of fieldwork along the waters, in order to write about “the things that float on water, fall silent underwater, vanish with the flow of water, and those transformed into

rainwater, infiltrating back into the soil". Indeed, the geography through which water flows and penetrates extends all the way down, evoking lost and invisible histories and memories. Overlapping and undulating, they form landscapes almost impossible to map. Observers must go deep into and under their rock formations and water bodies, and connect the many eras they have passed through and territories they have penetrated. This is how Law Yuk-mui delves into geography.

So far from home

When agarwood, together with precious spices, was traded and transported in large quantities via the Port of Hong Kong in the 19th century, few probably knew that it came from a plant called the *Aquilaria sinensis* (incense tree). When incense trees were felled by poachers or protected by metal fences in botanical gardens in the 20th century, few probably knew what their seeds looked like. Agarwood, or *chabm beung*, is fascinating: It has a wonderful fragrance and commands prices similar to gold. The fragrance comes from resin produced by the plant, as a self-treatment against fungal infection or external wounding. Legend has it that agarwood gave Hong Kong its name, "The port of spices". Its growth, trade and cultural symbolism are inextricably linked to this city. Both commodity and symbol, it has been constantly appropriated in historical narratives, commercial marketing and mythmaking. Its survival, like its representations, is threatened by over-harvesting, trading, commodification and symbolisation. Hardly anyone thinks of the tree itself.

Try So Hard to Make Things Happen, Incense Tree reflects incense tree and its life. The plant thrives in a moderate and humid climate, and is often found in forests along the coasts of Hong Kong and Guangdong province. Using "light" and "water", Trevor Yeung simulates an environment suitable for the growth of incense tree. In *Growth Pavilion*, over 20 grow lights are arranged in a circular installation of pastel light, transforming the space into a site for photosynthesis. In *White Room (Incense Tree)*, a pair of speakers and a giant humidifier continuously release the sounds and mists of mountain springs collected by the artist from incense tree groves in Tai No Sheung Yeung, in Sai Kung, and on Lamma Island, replicating the humidity suitable for the growth of the tree.

And yet: Can an artificial environment nurture plants? In *Two Reliers (Not Working)*, a drawing outside the *Growth Pavilion*, a single ginkgo tree leans against a grow light. The dioecious ginkgo does not bear any fruit when grown alone. The ginkgo in the drawing can continue to grow, but it cannot propagate; the discrepancy between "growth" and "survival" renders the "life" of plants ambiguous. At the entrance of the *White Room*, transparent plastic curtains and door chains, commonly found in bird cages in a zoo, keep the humidity and sounds within, providing "protection" as well as confinement. What are "growth" and "protection"? Are they what the plants desire or are they mere human obsessions? No plants materialise in the two rooms; only the audience interacts with the light and water. Still the humidifier and grow lights continue to operate, creating a comfortable "home" for incense tree.

And yet: Incense tree has no home. Insects carry its seeds to indefinite destinations, where they are disbursed. Parting is their strategy for growth and survival. When ripened, the fruit of incense tree opens in two flat valves. A silky thread at the base of the fruit holds the seed in the air, which emits a special hormone to attracting wasps, which spread the trees seeds far and wide to help them multiply.



In the main exhibition hall, an enlarged model of the incense tree seed as it would appear to a wasp is suspended in mid-air, silently waiting for its "wasp".

And yet: Wasps commonly encounter accidents during flight, like a flower pot on a window sill that falls in a thunderstorm. In the exhibition, suspended in the air together with the seed are various restless thoughts—of homesickness, anxiety, fear and hope. Cable ties appear recurrently in many of the details. They are used to repair and reassemble broken flower pots and furniture, indicating the many fragilities of incense tree. Yeung disassembles second-hand furniture found in Hong Kong, and reassembles it into a plinth, upon which two pottery pots, broken and put together before being fired in the kiln, whisper through the bodily wounds about the possible accidents and dangers on the road ahead.

And yet: Broken pots can be repaired. Like withering plants that may revive, discarded objects may find new uses. A pair of coconuts are placed on one side of the space. During the exhibition, the life form of this pair of seeds continues to metamorphose. The plants, fruits, seeds and wood in the exhibition space look upon the life of incense tree, as they serve as metaphors for each other, moving between hope and anxiety, parting and longing.

And yet: The exhibition is not only a confessional filled with complicated emotions; it is also a reading space for the study of plant life. Next to a second-hand church pew lies an artist's book, made by Yeung for incense tree, which records the three types of incense tree in different degrees of confinement and injury, which the artist encountered in his research. Another bunch of books, bound by chunky chains, introduce plants, conservation and gardening designs of Hong Kong and other regions. Here Yeung takes an earnest interest in the study of the habits, history and ecology of plants, trying hard to understand and experience the life of incense tree, investing so much in it that he is deeply caught up in the many experiences and emotions in its life.

Fascinated by ambiguity, Yeung creates through plants, insects, small animals and their urban ecology an intimate distance, an unrequited desire, and a fretful anxiety. In his works, animals and plants are no longer passive symbols or metaphors; they intervene in the artist's social observations, his intimate memories, and each other's ecologies. Their forms and lives interchange with the human body, touch, and sense of intimacy, interrupt the inherent boundaries between plant, animal, insect and humans, and expand the possibilities of intertwining narratives, giving rise to multiple ambiguities, wandering between the artist's personal experience and emotional textures, the intimate relationship between plants and the surrounding ecology, and the profound, intricate and romantic ties between different lives.

Try So Hard to Make Things Happen, Incense Tree is a narrative of incense tree intertwined with other animals and plants. It also expresses Trevor Yeung's entangling thoughts about hope and failure. Exhausting all efforts, he wanders back and forth between the two. While he sees hope in the departure of the seeds, he worries about accidents along the road and is saddened by homesickness; while he imagines a comfortable home for plants, he understands the lie of "home"; seeing its fossilisation into a rigid symbol of the city and commodity, he is driven to redepict the life of incense tree, and yet finds himself again facing the shadow of the city.

Fortunately now, looking out the window, you will see a quiet incense tree seedling in the garden of Oi!, growing slowly.

About the author:

QU Chang is an independent curator and writer based in Hong Kong. She is currently a PhD candidate at the Department of Cultural Studies, Lingnan University.

關於藝術家 About the artist

楊沛鏗 2010年畢業於香港浸會大學視覺藝術學院。他採用植物生態、園藝、攝影和裝置來隱喻日常生活中人與人之間的關係，並通過創造不同規模的系統，對系統中出現的生物、植物、動物甚至觀眾施加控制。

楊沛鏗近期參加的雙年展和群展包括香港大館的「信任&迷茫」(2021)、德國科隆雕塑公園的「KölnSkulptur #10」(2020)、法國的「里昂雙年展2019」(2019)、中國 UCCA 沙丘美術館的開幕展「後自然」(2018-2019)、第三十八屆愛爾蘭EVA國際雙年展(2018)、第四屆孟加拉達卡藝術峰會(2018)。他的作品被巴黎現代藝術博物館、龐比度中心和香港M+博物館所收藏。

Trevor Yeung graduated from the Academy of Visual Arts at Hong Kong Baptist University in 2010. His practice uses botanic ecology, horticulture, photography and installations as metaphors that reference the emancipation of everyday aspirations towards human relationships. He creates different scales of systems which allow him to exert control upon living beings, including plants, animals, as well as spectators.

Yeung has participated in biennials and exhibitions including *Trust and Confusion* at Tai Kwun, Hong Kong (2021); *KölnSkulptur #10* at the Stiftung Skulpturenpark Köln, Cologne, Germany (2020); La Biennale de Lyon 2019, Lyon, France (2019); *After Nature* at UCCA Dune, Beidaihe, China (2018-2019); the 38th EVA International Biennale, Limerick, Ireland (2018); the 4th Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka, Bangladesh (2018). His works are collected by Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, Centre Pompidou and M+ Museum (Hong Kong).

羅玉梅為香港中文大學藝術碩士，是藝術家營運機構天台塾創辦人之一。創作以影像、聲音和裝置藝術為主要媒介。常以田野調查作為方法，介入城市空間及日常，捕捉歷史的物理痕跡、人的心理軌跡、時間的形跡與地緣政治的關係。

近期參加的展覽包括台北非常廟藝文空間的「流·忘」(2021)、日本水戶藝術館的「道草展」(2020)、印尼日惹雙年展(2019)、香港巴塞爾藝術展ParaSite藝術空間展位的「那傳來浪潮的方向」(2018)及中國廣州紅專廠當代藝術館的「未來生活手冊」(2017-2018)。2018年獲香港藝術發展局頒發藝術新秀獎(媒體藝術)及第二十三屆ifva獨立短片及影像媒體比賽(媒體藝術組)傑出作品獎。

Law Yuk-mui graduated from The Chinese University of Hong Kong with a Master of Fine Arts (MFA). She is the co-founder of the artist-run organisation Rooftop Institute. Using imagery, sound and installation as her media of preference, and adopting the methodology of field study and collecting, she often intervenes in the mundane space and daily life of the city and catches the physical traces of history, psychological pathways of humans, the marks of time, and the political power in relation to geographic space.

She has participated in exhibitions including *The Drifts* at VT Artsalon, Taipei (2021), *Michikusa* at Art Tower Mito, Japan (2020), Jogja Biennale, Indonesia (2019), *From Whence the Waves Came* at Para Site's booth, Art Basel, Hong Kong (2018), *Future Life Handbook* at Redtory Museum of Contemporary Art, Guangzhou, China (2017-2018). She received the Award for Young Artist (Media Art Category) of the Hong Kong Arts Development Awards and the Excellence Award (Media Art Category) of the 23rd ifva Awards in 2018.

未竟之園

Neverending Garden

17.12.2021–12.6.2022

藝術家 Artists

楊沛鏗 Trevor Yeung

羅玉梅 Law Yuk-mui

油街實現 Oi!

劉鳳霞 Lesley Lau

鍾婉嫻 Joan Chung

陳麗怡 Chan Lai Yee

陳素芳 Sophy Chan

張曉恩 Angela Cheung

黃雅珠 Sabina Wong

本刊物由康樂及文化事務署於2022年1月編印

油街實現編製

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First published by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, January 2022.

Produced by the Oi!

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