

主持人：

谢谢大家来参加西安美术馆的活动，这是我和加拿大使馆一起合办的系列活动。

周琰：

谢谢大家，我想给大家介绍一下安迪·巴顿。他昨天告诉我说，你介绍我的时候一定不要把我当做画家。他从事艺术创作已经将近五十年时间，是 1980 年最早被选为代表加拿大参加悉尼双年展的艺术家。他每十年他的创作风格都有极大的变化。他最早画过一些我们可以说比较传统的造型油画，后来，他会侵入废弃的建筑、被遗弃的房子，然后把整个房子改造，用绘画的形式改造，像画壁画一样，但是是以抽象的方式绘画。他也画了很多油画作品，最近十年深受中国诗歌和诗法的影响，创作了一些有书法碑刻格局、结构和形式表现的作品，但是在光影和色彩方面继承了西方油画传统的西方诗歌绘画作品，下面请巴顿先生给我们讲一讲他艺术创作的心路历程。

巴顿：

我先想讲一下，我能来到中国，来到西安参加这个展览感到无比的荣幸。我在今天听了顾老师的讲座，和这几天与顾雄老师的接触，让我很是感动。他在 1989 年参加了中国具有开创意义的国家美术馆大展，今天顾老师又来到这里作为代表加拿大的艺术家参加这个展览，这件事情对我有极深极深的触动。

今天我要比较快一点地带大家看三组作品。在今天的这个讲座中和作品中，请你们留意两个观点，一个是无名，不想留下名字；一个是幽灵。在我们展览中有另外一个艺术家，边亦中(Ed Pien)，他做剪裁装置，他对幽灵有非常有趣的想法，可惜他现在不在这里。易卜生写过一个作品，叫做《傀儡之家》。在那个戏剧中，过去时代的幽灵跌落到当下的时间中。对我来说，我将幽灵视为我们如何与过去的人建立联系的存在方式。所有的文化都是同死者的合作。在我的作品中存在着幽灵，是一些他者，是其他的作品，其他的时间，其他的文化，其他的地点。



After the Revolution, 1986

背后这副展现的作品由另外一位参展艺术家收藏。在这个作品和其他类似的作品中，我想创作一些画作，看起来仿佛就要消失一般。



Unfurl, 1983

在这幅作品中，图象被投影到墙上，图形是被描画出来的，就像顾雄老师西红柿的创作描画出加拿大地图的图形。所有我使用的图象都来自他者，他所看到的杂志、其他人的创作，我把他们的图象直接复制到画布上。它们总是来自于某个他处，他们的颜色都被剥离掉，好像生命有了很奇特的改变。



Comfort, 1983



The Statues, 1984

在这个作品中，那个人物似乎在想着那个沙发，或者是关于信。这个图象是雕塑，我不知道雕塑是不是有性欲，但是我希望他们有。

我的绘画创作也想感觉起来像无名画师的创作。在我来，到这里，在我和我的朋友来到这里之前，我从来没有想到过我能有多么珍惜能不在灯光之下。我在这里非常强烈地感受到他们的作品，我喜欢写作，这样可以让他人的作品展现到台上，虽然大家关注我是一种很好的感觉，但是我倒是更喜欢在人群中是不被人认知的一张脸。



A Picture in the Surf Rolls In

Thirst,
1984

在这里你可以看到同一个图象创作的两个不同作品。我想我可以创作出一幅作品，图象就是他自己。



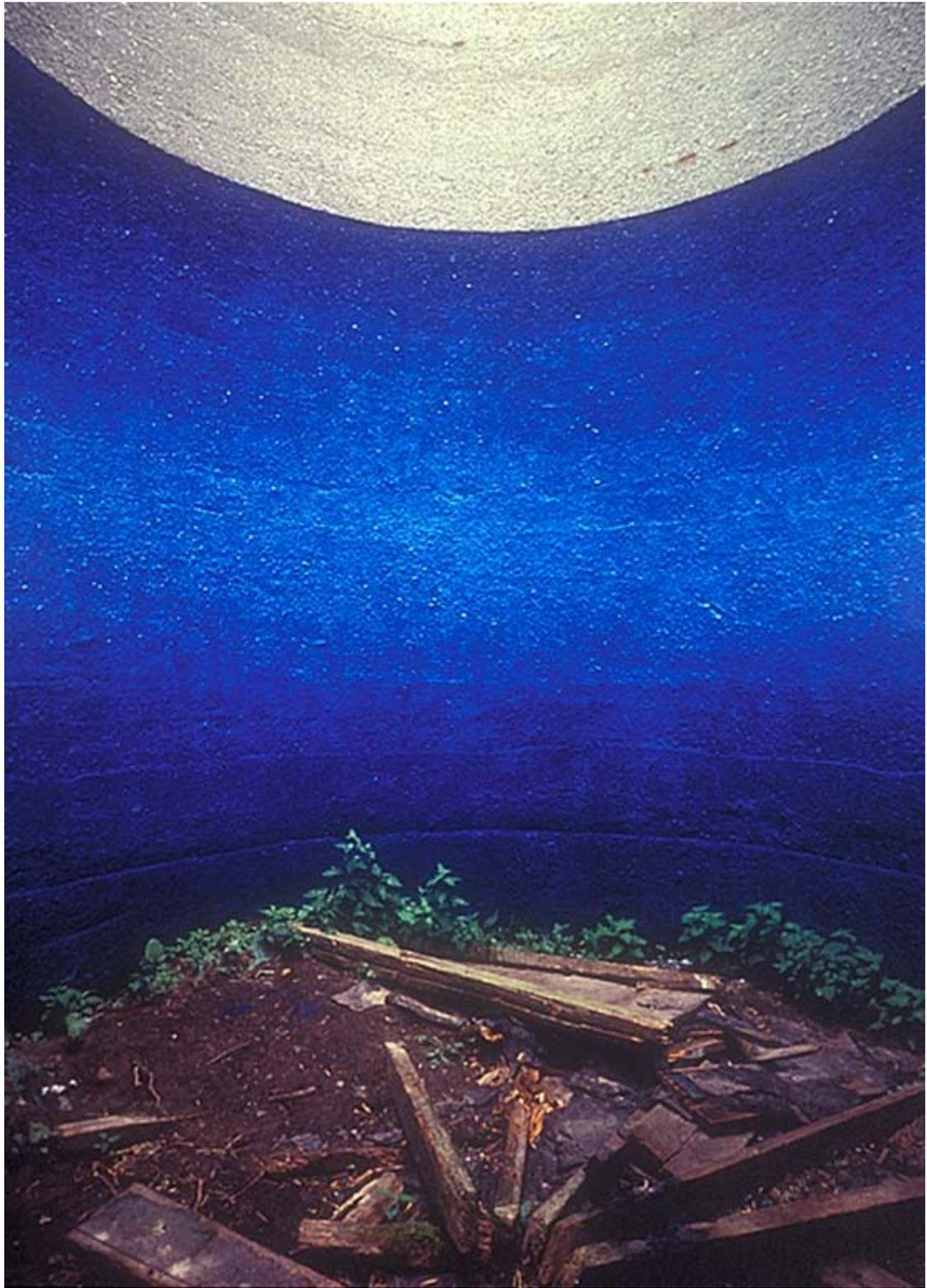
I never Dream About Anyone, 19

这个作品是一个人的两个图象，两个图象对立着，图象中一个的自我被他自身所萦绕，被他自身所困惑。样这幅作品受启发于一个乐队，他是一个非常深奥复杂的人。



The Soul Dispensing Reels and

最终你的作品总是会到某个地方，我的作品把我带到了某个地方，我创作的这个作品是巨大的，就是被画面所迷惑，或者说所驱使，投入到画面中，几乎要被画面吸引，但是好像又像爆炸一样的图象中。这幅作品认为是被他自己，被这幅绘画自身所困惑，所迷惑的绘画，我也觉得这幅画是一个渔网。这幅画也让我想起很多朋友，还有很多死于艾滋病的朋友，因为这些朋友的离去，我所生存的艺术世界好像就被割断了，我的朋友一个一个离去，有的朋友死去，那我做的事情只有绘画，我觉得像这样的画就像欲望一样去捕捞仍然可触摸的对死者的远离。





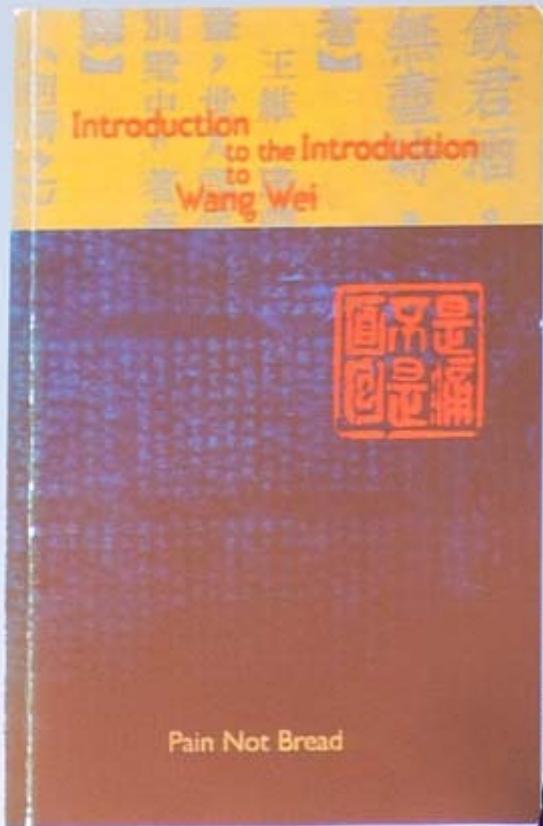
这个幻灯片显示了一个完全不同的作品系列。这一时期的作品，我创作了非常简单的绘画作品。这些绘画作品里只是色彩的块和面。我在一些被废弃的建筑里做画，它们通常是废弃工业用建筑，或者被人废弃的农场的房屋。这是一个圆柱形的料仓，我在这个圆柱形的建筑里试图做的是改变内部的弧面。如果你在内部会感觉到弧面的改变，你站在其中会感觉这个弧面似乎在远离你，而不是通常你在一个弧面空间里感觉到的。如果你想学习这些就得像我学习，这个作品大概差不多有 25 个人看到过，我想如果要是在中国做了这个作品，没准会有五十个人或者六十个人能够看到。我非常喜欢做这样的作品，我对中国的隐逸观念一直非常有兴趣。



我非常喜欢创做这个系列的作品。创作这样的作品是非常疯狂的艺术行为，需要大量时间的工作。通常我到这些被废弃的房子里，闯进去做这样的创作，往往是非法的。比如说这个房子是禁入的，我做这种把它改造艺术作品的非法行为。对这些被废弃的建筑和空间，我对待他们像对待孩子一样的感觉。

在这面墙上你可以看到对这个墙面很多的损害，在这个作品中这些损害的痕迹就是这个作品的幽灵。在一个被损坏的墙面的平面上创作，比起在完好无损的画布上创作要难很多很多，因为有这种非法因素在里面创作，就像被马刺刺得马一样，受了很大刺激。

在这个作品中很重要的是它实际上是在一个平面上绘画，但是我希望我绘画的这个平面可以让你感觉到环形、环面的感觉，我想让这个平面弯曲起来。



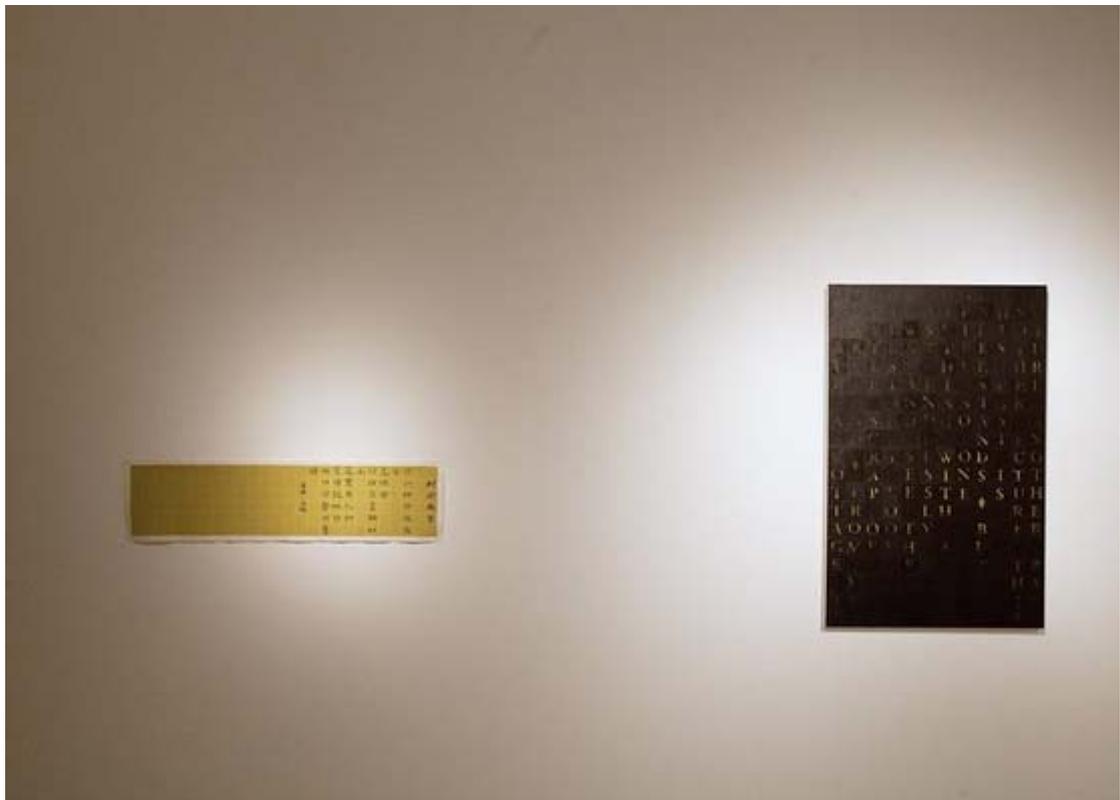
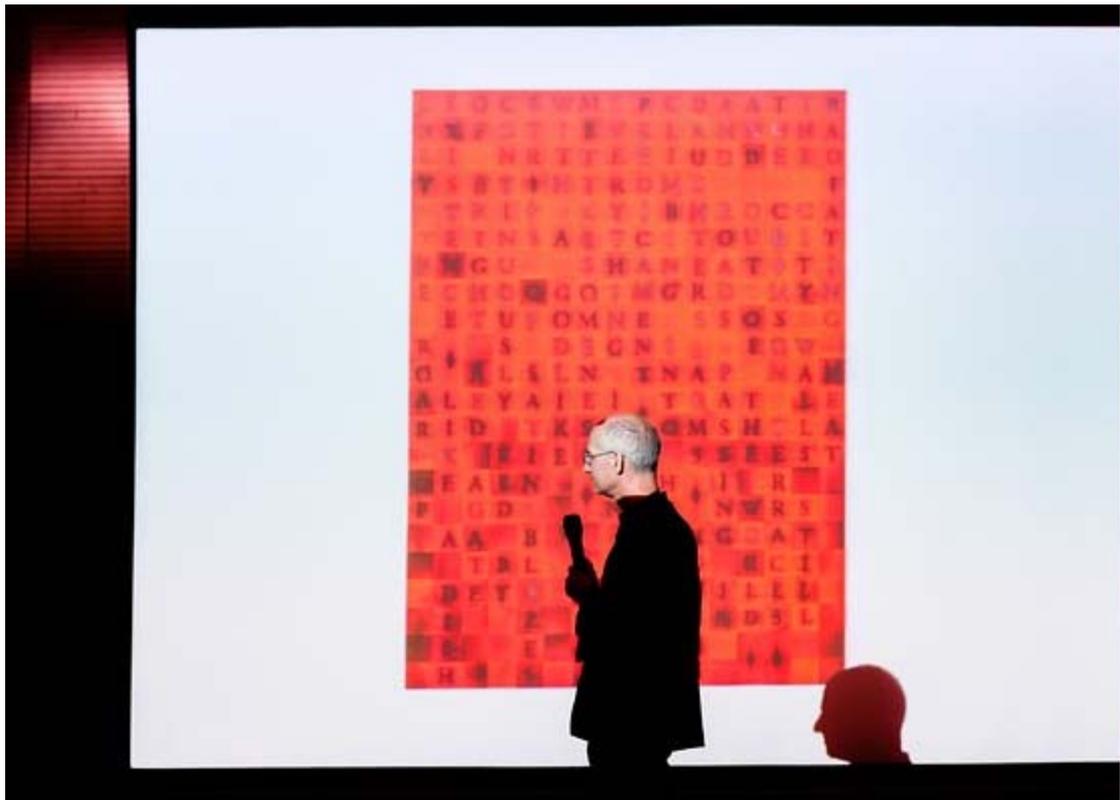


这是碑林，我的一生被唐代所改变。有整整十年时间，我和我的两个朋友从事于创作这本假的唐代的诗歌。这本书在国外有非常好的王维诗集的译作，也有好的王维诗歌的介绍。我和我的两位朋友阅读了英文翻译的王维诗歌和关于王维诗歌的著作，然后我们写了这本书，叫作对其他人的王维英译本的再创造。有整整十年时间我和加拿大这两位诗人一起沉浸于王维诗歌中。如果你们将来有幸见到这两位加拿大诗人，这位男的你们一定要让他朗读李白的《将进酒》，这位女士用很薄的诗集在全世界赢得了最重要的几个诗歌奖项。他还是一个加拿大非常著名的物理学家。我们三个人有十年时间共同写作，改变了思考和行为人生。

Su Shi, *Rain on the Festival of Cold Food*



就是在那段时间我的妻子给我买了一本中国的书法，那时候并不对那感兴趣，因为我并不喜欢，所以我妻子非常伤心。因为我的妻子为这件事伤心，而最后生气了，我就觉得也需要下点功夫了解一下书法到底怎么回事。我是极度认真的人，最后是苏轼这幅字打动了我。这幅作品是惊人地美，让我觉得这是非常美的视觉作品，但同时又是一首诗，在西方根本没有类似这样的东西。既然苏式都把好的作品做了，我只能做不好的作品了。所以有整整五年时间我都是在做糟透顶的作品。对我来说用西方的方式、西方的材料和工具学习另外一种文化的艺术形式和艺术手段是非常困难的。现在我给各位展示一下这次展览展示的我的两幅作品和其他一些作品。



如果你懂英文，也对中国的古文有一定了解的话，你可以看到这幅画，不管是从英文还是从中文来说读法都是错的。我有一位朋友看见我搞了这样的东西，不管是从中国的还是西方的阅读习惯看，怎么看都是错的，高兴的不得了。你可以看到中国的古文是从上到下，总右到左，西方文字阅读方式是从左到右的，这个让我想到总是错的这句话。



我到中国来是梦寐以求的愿望，而且实现了，而且不仅仅是我，还有我的朋友，从多伦多那边过来的朋友，他们的作品也在这得到展现，非常高兴，谢谢中国。现在给大家看一下这是上面那首诗的中文翻译，这首诗我把他当做向长安致敬的诗，这首诗写的唐代文明历史在人们心中的印象和现在的联系。

这首诗类似于古诗和古词的含义，历史、个人、时代全部交织在一起。你们可以想像意大利的诗人但丁，这是一首非常好的诗。事实上我认为作为一个观众，如果你不懂英文，对欣赏这幅画作没有任何影响，反而会更好。我去碑林不识汉字，那些碑我读不懂，但是整个碑林对我来说就像一座庙一样。如果你不懂英文可能就像我去碑林看那些碑是一样的感觉，我觉得对我自己来说是非常奇妙的。有一种非常不同于自己文化的文化，这种文化可能永远也不会属于我，但能真正从中学习到东西。

在我为这次展览画册专门写的文章中【<http://www.douban.com/note/415414920/>】，我试图来

解释这种发生在我身上的情况。联想到现代非常著名的诗人和翻译家冯至，他比较早地翻译德国著名诗人里尔克的作者。冯至把里尔克的诗歌带到中国，中国诗人的声音里也有里尔克的声音，这可能是我在做的事情。

我想更多谈谈书法，而不是绘画。书法在我看来，有那么迷人的一点，从历史的角度来看，在明代以前美和美学是融为一体的，没有分割的。【我在这里用了两个词，美和美学，你们来思考他的观念是不是在中国艺术或者美学观念里边契合，】黄庭坚曾经说过一句话，如果你想提高你的书法，你首先要培养你的正直心。我总是嫉妒古人，可惜我没有生活在那个年代。可是如果你能把不同的文化，不同的时间放在一起，这句话就是我要说，也是我想说的，如果你想提高你的艺术，要培养你的正直心，还有就是对未来的承诺的美的信念。你们在我的作品中也许看不到这种正直。但是通过我的学习，我来创作这样的作品，我整个人生被改变了。

在这次展览中的两部作品都是我对中国的想像，这幅作品是关于长安和西安在唐代，一千多年前的西安和今日的西安之间的来来回回的变化换位或者交流。这个作品也是一首诗，是想像王维山居的，诗名叫《村舍岁末》。很显然我现在让王维看到了他当时看不到的东西，这也是王维的亡灵，也是我自己的幽灵。



我的作品如果从光和影来讲是非常西方化的，我有一个朋友叫刘任均，是香港出生加拿大长大的艺术家。这个作品应该叫《书房》，是影像作品。这位艺术家他经常用他的想像去烦每个人，然后刘任均告诉我你的中国只是你想像的。我说是。刘任均在几年前也回到中国，看了中国以后再

见到我说，“我现在也对这想像的中国感兴趣。”

中国现在很丰富，有不同的面貌，和很多国家不同的是，我觉得以前中国是那么强大，就是因为一个理想的模式塑造的。也许像苏东坡，但是所有的作品都是关于理想的中国，并不会因为我自己当时的近况、自己时代的困境和艰难而有所改变。也许我是个傻瓜，但我的作品直到今天仍然能感动所有人。我的作品想展现中国最美好的一面。不管全球化、商品化，我所认为的中国不管有多强大，都有好人。

顾雄：

我觉得他的讲座是非常好的，他就像一个诗人在叙述他最原始的想法。

巴顿：

我是一个比较私密的人，很乐意带大家到花园里边，我可以滔滔不绝的讲两个小时，而不是站在公众的讲台上，我觉得我讲的是一些非常珍贵有价值的事情。

提问：

他提到他喜欢中国文化，他的创作受很多中国文化的影响，当然他说的影响可能是他在加拿大接触介绍中国文化的翻译包括这些书籍，他这次来到中国以后，他想像的中国和他看到的中国到底是有多大的差别？

巴顿：

事实上这个真实的中国和我想像的中国其实很接近。我两年前去杭州的时候，雇佣了一个导游，那个导游对我特别好，我后来觉得这其实就是我过去读过的儒家之道。在我和导游相处的几天当中，有上百次的细节中我发现她对我的那种方式，那种友好，那种美好，并不是雇佣了她有金钱的交易可以体现的。虽然我今天谈论了很多苏轼，但是在中国时候和平常百姓接触过程中，这些中国人的慷慨，这种友好，经常让我觉得羞愧。我未来中国之前想像中国是那种全球化的，发展很快的，商业化的，根本什么都不在乎的中国，这就是为什么我觉得中国文化这样的东西仍然是活生生存在着的。

舒阳：

谢谢巴顿给我们分享他对中国的想像。我刚才看了巴顿介绍他的作品，比如从最开始他朋友收藏的作品，然后又到他入侵到一个建筑里边去创作这样的作品，一直到最后给我们展现的和中国相关的创作，这种不同类型的作品跨越很大，但是有一个共通点，他一直在试图突破边界，从图象的边界，从那样一种具像形象的到现在书法的碑帖式的，甚至社会的边界，非法的侵入到一个建

筑里边去创作，还有文化的边界，从加拿大这样的西方环境里跨越到中国古代的传统文化里。我刚才问他一个问题，他这些作品也提到去碑林，我们中国传统的拓片，我说他的作品有没有直接从形式上受到中国传统艺术方式的影响，他说对他来说有直接的影响，比如说颜真卿的书法，他的用笔跟西方油画浓重材料上是不一样的，是像书法上很灵巧的方，当然他并不是写的是书法，可也是直接受到这样的影响，并不是说模仿。

巴顿：

米芾说过，你从拓片上学不到书法，但是对我来说学到了很多。

提问：

因为现在很多中国人从文革之后就大量接触西方哲学，而现在有很多艺术家关心东方的哲学，中国现在所经历了一系列变化，所面临都是西方国家面对过的，想请您具体谈一谈两种哲学之间是否存在一种融合。

巴顿：

很明显,看起来这两种文化和两种哲学或者思考系统是融合的，但是我自己不相信两种不同的东西是真正可以融合的.刚刚提到孔子的一句话，述而不作。在整个西方 1970 年以来，根本没有这样的思想和这样的东西。我想不管我们大家喜欢不喜欢，我们都是过去的继承者。从西方观念来讲这个继承的核心是宗教的观念。但我们都是过去传统的继承者。我觉得我们都不能逃避这种东西。比如说我的好友经常会跟我说一句话，你看看你做的决定又是新教徒的决定，新教徒就是移民到北美的移民，这种东西尤其是整个东部海岸是根子里的影响。通过自己来讲我们个人有个人的努力，但是作为集体中的个体，我们割断不了甚至阻止不了，你所继承的过去和影响。比如我是无神论，但我不能取消类似新教徒的影响。在我刚刚开始学习中国文化东西的时候，我觉得这个东西一点意义都没有，说不通，可是现在觉得学起来特别难得，是不在生活中的另外一种文化，所以从这一点上来说，我并不能说我理解了中国，我只能说它改变了我。

提问：

我自己本身比较喜欢诗歌，和您相同我也比较喜欢异国的诗歌，在中国诗歌无论是诗歌书法绘画还是音乐，背后和中国的哲学都是相通的。我在读西方很多诗歌时候我发现我也会被感动，在了解西方哲学之前，我很想了解不管是中国诗歌和哲学的综合还是西方的诗歌，中西方的诗歌您自己感觉他的共同之处在哪？

巴顿：

李白和杜甫都是中国伟大的诗人，但是李白翻译的很糟糕，但是杜甫翻译的很好，所以在外国到现在都一致认为杜甫是最伟大的诗人。

最好的诗歌是关于人的苦难，人的爱，在人的不足中通过语言的强烈得到表达，它深深的从情感

的深处抵达我们，所以也改造了我们，改变了我们，诗歌是对心的教育。

提问：

我觉得你对中国传统书法有一些了解，我想问一下你对中国当代书法的一些看法和了解。

巴顿：

首先我对中国现当代书法并不是特了解，据我所知，就在我了解范围内，我对杭州王冬临的书法比较感兴趣，但如果中国当代有真正有意义的好书法，那是丁乙的绘画，而且我认为钢笔毁了书法。

提问：

非常感谢巴顿先生，我听您谈话，觉得您是特别浪漫和特别理想主义的艺术家的。

巴顿：

我可以给你解释我为什么那么热爱崇拜苏轼，因为苏轼就是个傻瓜，在权力巅峰做傻事，你知道他的生活，还能在他的作品中能给我们那样的东西，还能那样的说话，其实我觉得中国有一个非常好的词叫做痴，这种痴我的朋友曾经提醒我，警告我，你太痴了，意思是你不是当代中的人，但是我觉得如果这是痴，那我就痴吧，我觉得艺术本来就是一件痴事。所以你说的很对，我是又浪漫又理想的痴人。

我觉得人们其实都怕做一个浪漫的人，做一个理想化的人。我自己也害怕。但是这是文化中真正需要你成为，需要你做的，做你必须要做的活，这是你这一生所要做的事情。

<http://www.douban.com/note/393058678/>

安迪后来根据当天的讲座整理了一篇文章：

A Lecture in Xi'an

Before I begin, I'd like to say something which I have said to Gu Xiong in private. As many of you know, Gu was one of the artists in the ground-breaking "China Avant-Garde" exhibition in Beijing in 1989. It means the world to me that now he represents my country in this exhibition. I hope that, in the future, when you think of Canada, you will think of Gu Xiong, since he is what is best in us...

I've done many different types of artwork over the years. Today I'm going to show three different groups of work, which may seem discontinuous. But I want to discuss them in terms of anonymity and ghosts. About anonymity, I want to say that although I enjoy my moment in the sun, the truth is that I prefer to be at the side of the stage and to place someone else in the light. This is why I often write criticism, why I've written about the works of my friends, Jamelie Hassan and Ron Benner. In this way I can take part in the long struggle over interpretation, which is the struggle over what we should value.

I think there's a quality of anonymity to my paintings of the 1980s. The images I used were not of my own invention. I only transmitted them, copying them from newspapers, magazines and books where I found them, and often bringing one image in relation to another. I painted the images in white, never in colour, because I wanted to drain them of reality, so that they would appear not as depictions of the world but as an image. I wanted them to feel as though they could be switched off, that they were temporary appearances on the screen that the surface of canvas is. I found images in various magazines and newspapers and books, made black and white copies of them, and then photographed them as 35mm transparencies, which I projected onto the dark grounds I had painted.

Over time, I realized that I could repeat the same image, that I could place the same image in different contexts, as I did in *Comfort* and *Statues*. In each painting, the same image of a somewhat thoughtful, perhaps somewhat anguished man appears—it's a sculpture which is presumed to be the self-portrait of the master carver of Strasbourg Cathedral. I remember finding it in a book of art when I was a teenager and spending hours looking at it. In *Comfort*, this image appears with an expensive Italian sofa: perhaps he is pondering creature comforts, though what use is a sofa for a stone sculpture? In *Statues*, the image appears paired with Rodin's *The Kiss*. Perhaps here his concern is sexual, though both he and Rodin's figures all are carved of stone. Do sculptures have a sexual life? Or perhaps the fact that they're sculptures shows that the images know that they are simply images, and so it's possible to sense some sort of truth behind the falseness of an image?

I was haunted by images, and tried to make paintings that were haunted too. In slightly later paintings from the middle 1980s, *The Flavour of Green Tea with Rice* and *I Never Dream of Anyone*, I repeated an image over itself. I found that by repeating the image, I could make it hover above itself, dislocated, as though it were no longer taking place on the material surface of the canvas. The second image seemed to lack all embodiment, to be an image that was only image. I often thought of Henrik Ibsen's play, *Ghosts*. For Ibsen, ghosts were an image of the inherited past, the past that weighs down upon the present and crushes it. But I didn't. I think ghosts are the sign of an involuntary commitment to the past.

By 1988, every painting I made had exactly the same image—the mesh of canvas enormously magnified. The AIDS crisis had begun; my friends were dying and the heart was being cut out of the Toronto art scene. All I could do in my studio was to cover canvas with paint; I thought of them as nets to catch mortality in. All I did was to repeat myself, though of course each time

the painting was slightly different, though all of them seem mournful, valedictory.

Eventually the colour brightened, became more pure and more sweet. For reasons that still aren't clear to me, I wanted to retreat from the artworld and from the galleries and museums, to be somewhere where I could work completely freely and be far from the promotional culture that was beginning to dominate the artworld. I think you'll understand this, since there is a long history in China of poets and officials who left government service to live in reclusion. I retreated to the abandoned architectures of factories, ceramic works and farm silos.

This is the Grand Valley Silo from 1992. I wanted to work in a circular space, to make a pool of colour that could completely surround you. It was an amazing experience to be able to step into a well of colour. But I didn't want to make a painting which simply coloured the existing space. Painting always involves a virtual space, a phenomenological space that is not identical with what is already in existence. In that way, painting seems always to involve at least a tiny imagining or the smallest differing from the state of things as they are. In the Grand Valley Silo, the silo curved around you horizontally. I tried to make the colour-space appear to curve vertically.

The painted area was twelve feet high, exactly half the height of the silo. It's difficult to see in a photograph, but the lighter area appeared to bulge out towards you. The darker areas of course receded, and so they seemed to bend away from you at your feet and above your head. The painting was made with coat after coat after coat of very thin but very intense acrylic paint. There were about eight tin coats where the painting was lightest and about sixty where it was darkest. It was physically very demanding; it took an entire summer to complete the paintings, climbing up and down ladders, constantly criticized by an unhappy groundhog whose residence I had invaded.

This next image is the Georgetown Curve, 1993, which is simply a very long band of colour that attempts to make a flat wall appear to curve. It surprised me perceptually. I knew that the darkest area would appear to recede while the light area came forward, and of course this happened. But what I hadn't expected was that sometimes your eye would see the wall in terms of the intense saturation of colour. The most saturated colour will seem closest to is, the most desaturated colour farther away. When this happened, the dark centre which usually receded would suddenly flip and instantly seem incredibly close.

Like the Grand Valley Silo, it appeared anonymously in its site, with nothing to state that it was an artwork. And to return to ghosts, you can see in the photograph the damaged, scraped, gouged wall on which it was painted. I tried to nurture that history by installing a present tense, the present tense of this colour suddenly appearing, in the past which was the abandoned factory. The painting was in part just a way of cherishing these damages, this abandonment. I felt when I had finished that my life had worth living—though only a handful people saw this or saw the Silo.

It was during the 1990s, as I was doing these architectural paintings, that I began a decade-

long immersion in Tang dynasty poetry. I began writing poetry collaboratively with my friends the poet, Roo Borson, and the poet and physicist, Kim Maltman. Together we took apart translators' forwards and critical introductions to Wang Wei, and later, the other great Tang poets. From words and phrases we'd found, we began to make poems. We wrote together for ten years, beginning just for the pleasure of it, though eventually we gathered enough poems to make a book. But at one point, perhaps after six or seven years of being immersed in his poetry, I began to be visited by Wang Wei's ghost. I don't mean that I saw a whitish translucent figure. I simply felt his presence behind me at times. As the poems slowly began to form a finished manuscript I knew that his ghost would leave me. The book was published and Wang Wei never visited me again. I'm left with information, or knowledge, things I've learned about him, but his presence, real or imaginary, vanished for ever. If ghosts are the sign of an involuntary commitment to the past, clearly I'm no longer committed to Wang Wei as I once was. I suppose this is true.

But during the time we were writing those poems, I began to become fascinated by Chinese calligraphy, though I couldn't read a single character. I especially came to love Su Shi's Rain on the Festival of Cold Food, which has such startling writing—sometimes like tall flowers on stems, sometimes like slanting rain. But what astonished me was learning that this work of visual art was also a great poem—that it was both art and literature. Under Su Shi's influence, I tried to make paintings in the English-speaking world which could be both art and poetry—for several years the results were terrible. But eventually I found my way.

This painting, which is in the show here, is one of the first successful paintings. It imagines Xi'an as Chang'an and confuses the two, mixing the past and present. The text comes from a poem by Pain Not Bread, but taken apart and reworked just as we took apart texts and made poems from them. The English letters are laid out in vertical rows that are read from left to right. In English we read from left to right—but horizontally, not vertically. And in classical Chinese, the writing is done in vertical rows—but from right to left, not left to right. I remember my old friend, Andrew Lee, delightedly, "The paintings are wrong in both languages!" That perhaps is where the paintings are at home, slightly outside either culture.

Two and half years ago I finally was able to visit the Forest of Stele, shortly after the Spring Festival. What turned out to be most useful for me to see was Yan Zhenqing's Yan Family Stele, with its deeply carved, very upright characters. I was also very struck by how beautifully written was Liang Shengqing's Yu Shi Tai stone. When I returned home, my friend, the artist Yam Lau, said to me one day that I was fascinated by an ideal China. I don't know whether he meant this simply as an observation or as a criticism. But in any case, it is and was true. A year or so later, when Yam returned from another of his long visits to China, he told me that what he'd said of me was true also of him, that he too was fascinated by an ideal China. I think you can see this in these images taken from a recent work, *Between the Past and the Present: A Chinese Scholar's Studio*, which he made in 2012.

Yam makes animations. What you see in this one is a modernist scholar's studio on a boat, a floating studio which he has designed for himself. Perhaps it is floating on the Grand Canal, in

some apparently timeless moment. In the studio, on the scholar's desk, there is a tiny a folding screen. It lifts into the air and unfolds itself. What is revealed on the screen is not a a literati painting of a landscape or a gathering in a pavilion. Instead we see a video recording of a busy afternoon street in contemporary China, the street where Yam lived that summer in Beijing. The quiet stillness of a scholar's studio, floating on the Grand Canal in an idealized past, contains the noise and hurry of contemporary Beijing,

Clearly Yam Lau's work knows that this "ideal China" is an illusion and that it always was an illusion, an image at best of what we could be at our best. But I want to say that I think Su Shi too was fascinated by an ideal China—since he was exiled three times, once even by his own faction. He died returning from his last exile in Hainan Island; the Cold Food scroll that I love so much was written in exile. Perhaps Su Shi was a fool then, to be exiled so often, always dissenting, never able to stop his mouth from speaking what he saw as the truth. Obviously this "ideal China" was crucially important to him. Perhaps it came from the long Confucian tradition; I don't know, perhaps one of you will know. The important thing for me to say here is that this ideal still perpetuates itself and even infects a foreigner like myself. I realize that every nation has its own myth and that through that myth it projects an image of itself to itself, an image it would like to believe. But I think this "ideal China" is something different, an ideal which is a cultural achievement. I think that it calls to us, and that if Su Shi was a fool, then it is necessary now to be a fool, to live according to something important than our own advancement, than our own careers.

I see art in the light of that ideal. And so I want to leave you with two thoughts which are perhaps cannot be held together, because they come from completely different times and very different cultures. The first is Su Shi's friend, the calligrapher Huang Tingjian's insistence that "To learn calligraphy, one must develop a sense of justice." The second is the French novelist Stendhal's observation that beauty is the promise of future happiness. The first sees in art the demand that we must change our lives, if we want make the art that must be made. The second sees the beauty in art, but sees it as proof that life has failed to be what it one day must be. Perhaps these can never be united intellectually, but I believe that they can be held together in the contradictions of an individual life, that they can and must be lived out. Thank you.

-Andy Patton

note: This essay is reconstructed from notes that formed the basis of a lecture on my work given in Xi'an on August 11, 2014. The lecture was part of the public programming for the "Transformation of Canadian Landscape Art: Inside and Outside of Being" which was presented at the Xi'an Art Museum August 10- September 21, 2014.