

生活藝術雜誌 LIVING & ARTS MAGAZINE

# MACAU CLOSER

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## 小城舊事

# REMEMBERING THE OLD CITY

即日起至10月5日，「澳門炮竹行業——廖文暢新作展」在氹仔舊城區藝術空間展出。爆竹業一度是澳門的經濟支柱，現在已難尋踪跡。畫展為我們重現了當年的繁榮景象，以及不少生趣盎然的場面

*Macau Firecrackers Industry – New Works by Lio Man Cheong* is on display at the Taipa Village Art Space through to October 5, offering a rare and intriguing glimpse into the industry that was once the backbone of the city's economy

文 BY STACEY QIAO  
圖 PHOTOS EDUARDO MARTINS









**Why did you choose the firecracker industry as the theme of your paintings?**

**Lio Man Cheong:** I've always liked depicting the history and events in Macau. At a very young age, I became familiar with firecrackers. The firecracker industry used to be a pillar of the economy, with several big-name factories feeding a lot of people. Many of the impoverished households worked in the industry: men were in the factories making gunpowder or lifting finished products, and women and children were doing the less dangerous procedures of firecracker-making in their own homes. I had classmates, friends and neighbours doing it. That left a deep impression on me.

**The motions, even the facial expressions of the characters in your paintings are so vivid. How did you do your research on the industry?** *The Firecracker Industry in Taipa*, written by Lai Hung Kin, has been a tremendous help. Mr Lai used to live in Taipa, and knew the firecracker industry very well. His book also has many old photos that captured the manufacturing process of firecrackers, which was a great source of reference. I spoke with him, along with other experts, to learn about the exact procedures.

**Did you visit any sites of those big factories?**

I once went to the ruins of Iec Long Factory to paint from life. But the factory has long been deserted and was beyond recognition. Trees and weeds occupied the place, and the traces of the past prosperity were nowhere to be found. I could not help but wonder how the industry, once so dynamic, could disappear in a blink of an eye. The industry that once made Macau so famous in the world just vanished like the morning dew, and I felt it was such a pity.

**The works in this exhibition are all watercolours. Why did you choose this approach?**

With watercolour, I felt more confident in recreating the expressions and movements of the characters and their surroundings. But I also experimented with traditional Chinese ink and wash method before deciding on watercolour. I painted a long scroll of over seven metres, but Mr Lai pointed out that the production scenes there were not accurate, for example, there should not be any metal tools in the gunpowder making process, as they might create sparks and cause explosions.

**Have you incorporated some features of that ink and wash painting in your watercolour creations?**

Yes, you can see the characteristics of Chinese paintings in terms of the brushwork, the strokes.

為何會選擇炮竹行業作為創作的主題？

廖文暢：我一直很喜歡描畫澳門的歷史和事件。我很小的時候就接觸到了炮竹行業，那時炮竹還是澳門的一大支柱產業，有幾家很有名的炮竹廠，養活了很多。一般都是些貧困人家在做，男人在廠裏製火藥、裝卸貨等，婦女和小孩就在家做一些不那麼危險的工序。我有一些同學朋友和鄰居就曾經做過，給我留下了很深的印象。

那是如何進行前期研究和準備的呢？畫中人物的動作很流暢，甚至面部表情都非常生動。

黎鴻健先生的《氹仔炮竹業》一書對我幫助很大。黎先生小時住在氹仔，對炮竹行業十分了解。他的這本書中還有很多製造炮竹時的舊照片。我請教了他，還有其他一些專家，來弄清生產的流程。

有沒有去那些炮竹廠的舊址看看？

有一次我去了益隆炮竹廠的遺址寫生。那裏已經廢棄很久了，和我記憶中的完全不一樣。荒草萋萋，曾經的繁榮景象已經蕩然無存。我忍不住想，怎麼那麼大的一個產業轉瞬之間就消失了呢。澳門的炮竹行業曾經世界知名，但幾乎頃刻之間就消逝了，我覺得很遺憾。

這次展出的全都是水彩作品，為何偏愛水彩畫呢？

因為我畫水彩比較多，用水彩的話我更有自信能夠展現人物的表情、動作以及周圍的環境。我之前也畫過一張水墨長卷，有七米多長。不過後來黎先生指出，那幅水墨畫裏的炮竹生產步驟不準確，例如在製火藥這個步驟其實是不能出現任何金屬工具的，因為可能會擦出火花，引起爆炸。

有沒有在水彩創作中融合了水墨畫的一些特徵？

有的，你可以從筆法方面看出中國畫的特點。

這些作品似乎個人留下一種「未完成」的印象，特別是沒有清晰的框架，這在水彩畫中很不尋常。

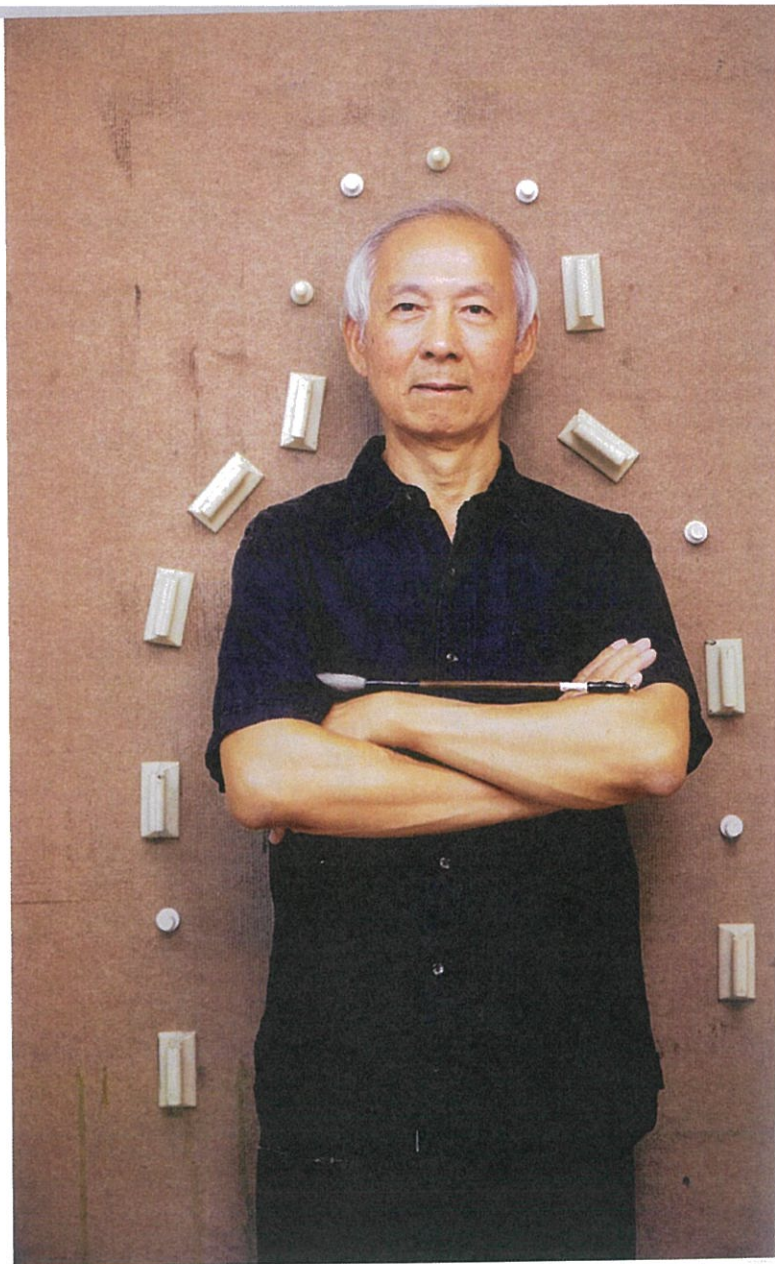
我是特意這樣做的。沒有填滿整個空間，這也是借鑒中國畫中的「留白」，給觀者留下想象的空間。

除了水彩畫，您之前還創作過一些油畫。你會選用不同的繪畫媒介表達不同的創作主題嗎？

總的來說，我的畫作都是比較寫實的。但是，不同的繪畫媒介還是有差別的。水彩畫的話，我主要畫風景。但如果我想要更有創意一點，那麼油畫就是首選。有時我也會用水墨畫來描畫我想中的場景和人物，比如糅合水墨畫技法和卡通畫特點來繪製歷史人物，庇山耶、利瑪竇等等。

有人說，水彩畫，或更廣泛地說「繪畫」，正在失去在藝術界的主導地位，不敵一些「新興」藝術形式，像藝術裝置、多媒體藝術等。您有同感嗎？

也許在某種程度上是。我確實覺得現在看到的「新興」藝術形式的作品越來越多。但水彩畫在中國大陸、台灣或東南亞國家仍然很受歡迎。原因可能是它比較易學，也易於欣賞。我相信水彩畫仍然有其獨特的魅力。



Your works seem to leave an impression of 'unfinishedness', in particular with the absence of a clear frame, which is quite unusual in watercolour paintings.

I did it on purpose. I did not fill the entire space, just as you always leave a blank in traditional Chinese paintings. A blank is what makes the image linger in the viewer's mind.

Besides watercolour, you also do oil painting on canvas. Did you have different intended themes for the different painting media?

Overall, my paintings are figurative. But there are differences when it comes to different painting media. With watercolour, I mostly draw landscapes. But if I want to be more creative, oil painting is preferred. Sometimes I also resort to ink and wash paintings to draw imaginary scenes and characters, like mixing ink painting techniques with cartoonish characters to draw historical figures, like the ones of Camilo Pessanha and Matteo Ricci.



在這次展出的畫作中，有沒有你最喜歡的，或者是給你帶來最大創作樂趣的一幅？

有的，就是那幅描繪過去幾家著名炮竹工廠的畫。我每天早上去游泳時，都會路過益隆炮竹廠的外牆，那幅景象深深印刻在我的腦海裏。在畫中，益隆長長的圍牆和其他工廠的大門交織在一起。西裝革履的老闆，牽著狗的守衛，挑夫……他們好像從過去走了出來。此外，這幅畫中的暈染技法也借鑒了水墨畫，營造出夢境一樣的氛围。現實與想像混合在一起，今天和過去的記憶也變得模糊。

您的許多作品畫的都是澳門的過去，有濃濃的懷舊之感。您是否對昔日感到強烈的依戀？

我10歲時移居澳門，那時的澳門和現在非常不一樣。當時，鄰里之間很親近，人情味很濃。我認識每一個鄰居，和他們的孩子一起在街上玩耍，和附近的人都很友好……但是現在完全變了，我們甚至不知道隔壁鄰居姓甚名誰。當然，發展是不可避免的，我們無法阻止它，只能隨遇而安。但歷史不應該被埋沒和遺忘。就我而言，我選擇用畫畫來記住我心目中的這座城市。藝術創作，以及書面記錄，在保存集體記憶方面不可或缺。

**Some say that watercolour, or painting in general, is losing its dominance to other emerging art forms, like art installations, multi-media art, etc. Do you feel the same?**

To some extent, maybe. I do feel there are more and more works of 'emerging' art forms. But if you look at the mainland, Taiwan, or Southeast Asian countries, watercolour is still very popular. The reason might be that it is beginner-friendly, and easy to appreciate. I believe watercolour painting still has its unique charm.

**Of all the paintings on exhibit, do you have a favourite one, a painting that gives you the greatest pleasure?**

Actually there is. It is the painting of the famous firecracker factories in the old days. I walk past the walls of Iec Long Factory when I go swimming every morning. The image is sort of imprinted in my brain. But in the painting, the walls of Iec long are also intertwined with the facades of other factories. The bosses, the guard with the dog, the porter...they are right there in the picture, walking out from the past. Also, the rendering technique is again borrowed from traditional Chinese painting, to create a dream-like atmosphere. The reality is mingled with imagination, and the present blurred by memories of the past.

**Many of your works are about the city in the past, evoking a sense of nostalgia. Do you feel a strong attachment to the old days?**

I moved to Macau at the age of 10, and the city was very different then. The community was tight-knit, and the human touch was so much stronger. You knew every neighbour, you played with their kids on the street, you were on good terms with people nearby...But now it's all gone. We don't even know the name of the guy next door. Of course, development is inevitable, and there is no way we could stop it. We can only take things as they are, and adapt to the circumstances. But history should not be buried and forgotten altogether. For my part, I choose to paint as a way of remembering the city I first encountered. Art, as well as written records, play a distinctive role in preserving our collective memory.



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