



CCSC LAUNCH DINNER, 15 APRIL 2015



LAURIE FAIRMAN AND CARRIE COX (CCSC)

DEAR FRIENDS,

We want to thank all those who attended the CCSC launch dinner on April 15. It was a wonderful turnout, and was an opportunity for more people to know about the mission of CCSC and our current projects. Thank you to those who generously donated pieces for the silent auction, and thank you to all who participated and donated in the form of a bid!

The Incense Conference, held May 1-2 in Nanjing, was also a great success. Attendees came from different cities across China, and even from other countries in Asia. The event brought together experts from different universities and institutions across China, who shared information rich in scope and content--ranging from an examination of the evolution in design and function of censers over the dynasties; a look at ritual aromatic practices as outlined in literary records from the Song period; to an overview of plant conservation and the the viability of artificial substitutes of agarwood --to shed more light into incense as a cultural practice with a history of more than hundreds of years that still continues on today. We were delighted with the positive feedback from attendees and speakers alike, and hope that CCSC may continue to have a role to play in promulgating to a wider audience the cultural knowledge related to incense.

Looking ahead, we are excited for the second half of the year and the events that we have planned, and we hope that you will join us for some of them as well!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Arts of Asia, for being a sponsor for the Incense Conference in Nanjing

Ms. Cathy Ho, Mr. Chiang Lim Che, and Mr. Brett Gordon, for generously donating pieces for the silent auction.

UPCOMING EVENTS

5 June 2015

Talk by Lin Xi (Cantonese)

This talk by award-winning lyricist Lin Xi will explore what it means to encounter and engage meaningfully with the influences of Chinese culture around us.

6 August 2015

Gu Qin presentation (English)

John Thompson, who has devoted 40 years to reconstructing, analyzing, and performing guqin music published during the Ming Dynasty, will be performing and discussing the earliest versions of melodies he learned from his teacher, Sun Yuqin.

9-10 October 2015

China Archaeology Symposium

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PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS

CULTURE OF INCENSE CONFERENCE
1-2 MAY 2015, NANJING, SHANGYUANSHUYUAN



Middle column, top to bottom:

Ms. Xin Ge, Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, “Tang Dynasty incense archaeological discoveries”; photo exhibition of excavated censers, ranging from the Han to Song Dynasties; Mr. Liu Hai Wang, Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, “Han Dynasty incense archaeological discoveries”; CCSC organizers and speakers

Right column, top to bottom:

opening incense ceremony; Day 1 of incense conference; Dr. Hui Fu Ping, Nanjing Agricultural University, “The Botanical and Historical Etymology of Agarwood”; Mr. Liu Hai Wang; Song Zheng Hao, Shangyuanshuyuan, “A study of incense in ancient Chinese paintings”

Left column, top to bottom:

Mr. Chu Xiao Long, Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, Introduction to Exhibition, “The Dynastic Evolution of Incense in China”; Mr. Liu Jun, “The use of fragrant materials in folding fans of the middle and late Ming Period”; Dr. Liu Ching Min, National Taiwan University of Arts, “The Composition of xiang pu (incense guidebooks) and the culture of incense in the Song Dynasty”; Wu Qing and incense demonstration



CENSERS THROUGH THE DYNASTIES

Highlights from the photo exhibition that took place during the Incense Conference, Nanjing, May 1-2.



Warring States (475-221 BC)
proto-porcelain



Western Han Dynasty (206BC-9AD)
Glazed pottery



Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220AD),
Glazed pottery



Han Dynasty,
Boshanlu with inlaid gold



Three Kingdoms Period (220-280AD)
Bronze with handle



Western Jin Dynasty (263-316AD)
Porcelain



Tang Dynasty (618-906AD)
Silver



Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127AD)
Qing Bai porcelain



UPCOMING

“Hide and Seek:
Uncovering the Secrets
of Chinese Culture”

Speaker: Lin Xi

Language: Cantonese

Friday, June 5th, 2015

7:00-8:30pm

304 Lyndhurst Building,
29 Lyndhurst Terrace, Central

Lin Xi is the prolific and award-winning lyricist behind the songs of many of Hong Kong's popular singers. He is noted for his songwriting partnership with composer Zhang Ya Dong for singer Faye Wong, as well as his compositions with and for Eason Chan, Miriam Yeung, Leslie Cheung, and Andy Lau, to name a few.

This talk will explore what it means to encounter and engage (whether actively or passively) with Chinese culture, and its influences and products that we see all around us, every day. From classical literature to the collecting of Chinese antiques, Lin Xi will discuss the insights and understanding—the secrets and treasures—he has gained about Chinese culture from various activities and pursuits.

For reservations, please contact
info@chineseculturalstudiescenter.org



INTERVIEW

BOVEY LEE, CUT PAPER ARTIST

Bovey Lee is a cut paper artist based in Los Angeles, California. Born in Hong Kong, Bovey has practiced Chinese calligraphy since the age of ten, and completed her BA degree in Fine Arts at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and her Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of California at Berkeley. She earned a second MFA in computer graphics and interactive media at Pratt Institute in New York.

Exhibitions include Nevada Museum of Art; Wing Luke Museum, Seattle, Washington; Brooklyn Museum of Art; Museum Bellerive, Zurich, Switzerland; Museum of Fine Arts, Beijing, China; Fukouka Museum of Art, Japan; Hong Kong Museum of Art.

To see more of Bovey Lee's work, visit her website at www.boveylee.com

Why did you choose papercutting as your main medium of artistic exploration?

I knew about traditional Chinese paper cutting as a young girl. But my formal art training was calligraphy, painting, and digital media. I only began cutting paper in 2005 after my father gave me his small collection. I wondered if I could create something as intricate and beautiful. At that time, I primarily worked with digital means and really missed creating with my hands. To have the best of both worlds, I decided to incorporate my drawing and computer skills into cut paper.

What is it about papercutting that makes it unique as a form of expression?

Cut paper is very alluring. It is two and a half-dimensional, if you will, because of the shadow that a cut paper piece casts. Shadows are intimate because we have shadows. In addition, what draws me to it is every tiny little parts must connect to form the whole picture. I think it's essential a world view that I hold, i.e., everything's connected.

To what degree does the idea that papercutting is a Chinese cultural tradition and heritage, play into the conceptualization and realization of your work?

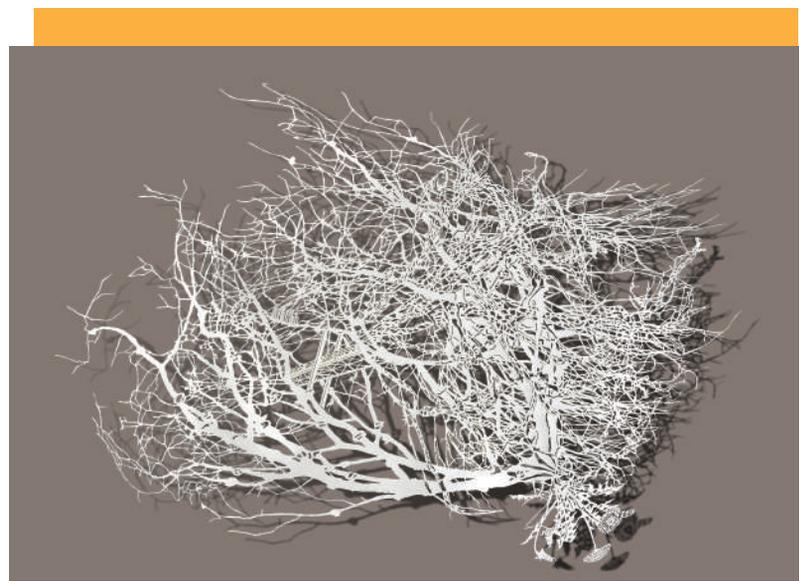
It is a starting point for my work. I want to extend cut paper into the realm of the contemporary art world through referencing traditional folklore, iconographies, and cultural symbols. The cultural tradition and heritage becomes part of the commentary in my work that deals with contemporary issues of massive urbanization and its effects on the environment.

Can you tell us more about your choice to use xuan paper (Chinese rice paper) in your work?

Xuan paper is particularly special to me because it's the first art material I used since age 10, when I practiced Chinese calligraphy and landscape painting. Chinese invented paper so I also feel a sense of cultural significance and relevance in using it in my work.

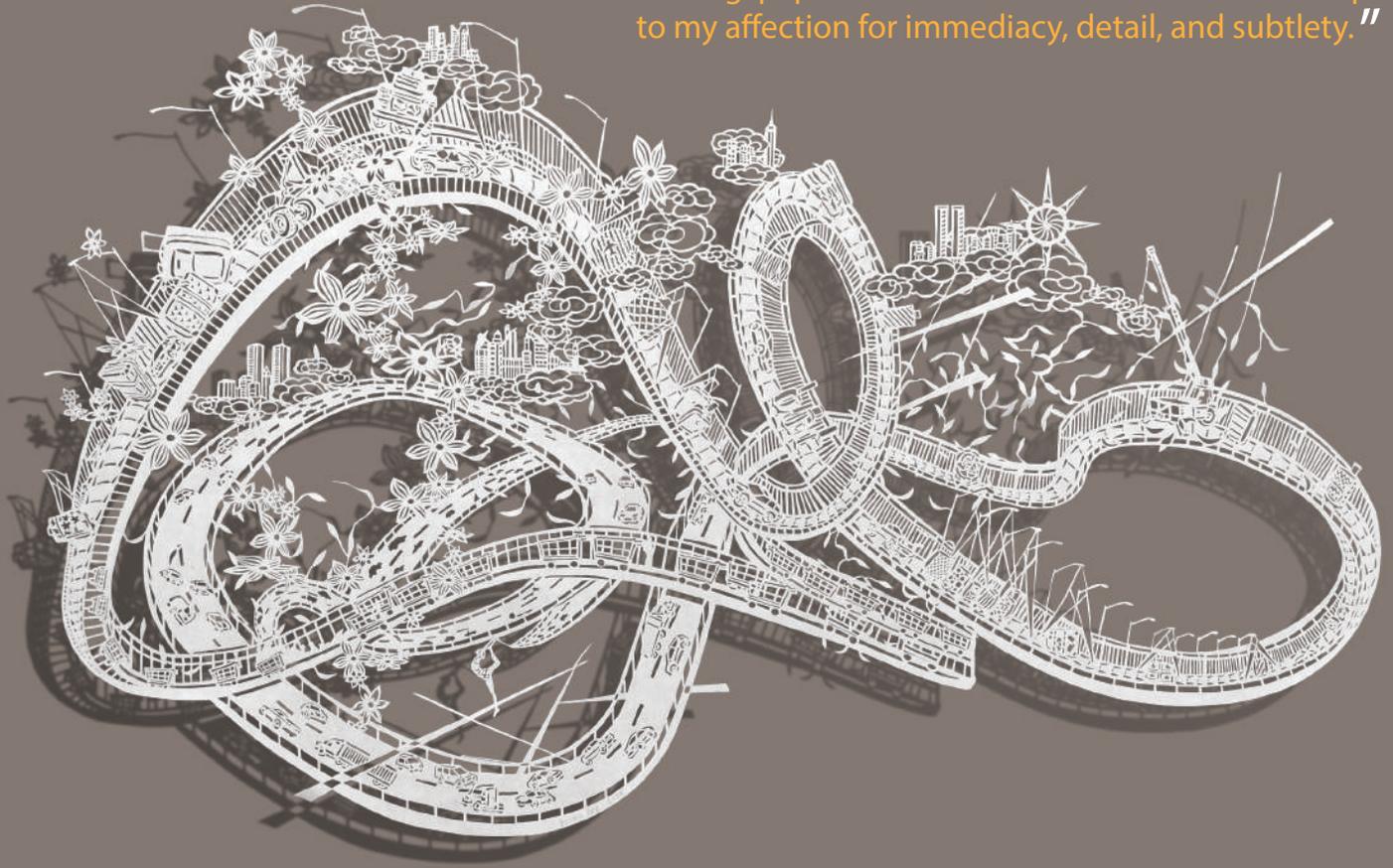
Do you feel like this modern crossover of concept and skill requires a different set of skills than the ones applied by traditional papercutting artisans?

It primarily involves a need for individual expression and



BOVEY LEE, ROOTS-DANDELIONS, 2014, CHINESE XUAN PAPER ON SILK, COURTESY OF ARTIST

"Cutting paper is a visceral reaction and natural response to my affection for immediacy, detail, and subtlety."



BOVEY LEE, THE RIBBON DANCER, 2015, CUT PAPER, CHINESE XUAN PAPER ON SILK, COURTESY OF ARTIST

creativity, developing one's lexicon and style in cut paper that speaks to and resonates with a contemporary audience.

In 2009, papercutting was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Do you feel independent of or connected to such concerted efforts to ensure the viability of papercutting as a traditional art form?

I feel independent of such efforts. My goal is in creating contemporary cut paper as a personal, artistic practice.

What is your usual process of creating one of your pieces? How long does it take?

My work process is systematic and has three phases. Forming the idea is the first step; I spend a lot of time reading the news, observing people and things, researching from books, magazines, and the Internet. During this initial phase, I keep all the options open.

And then, I go through the process of filtering, refinement, and polishing the idea. This involves putting the idea on paper and/or on the computer. Before the final hand cutting process, I compose the images using the computer and software. And then, I print out the digital images and use them to cut with. The images are photographic and I translate them into patterns of solid and void, while cutting free hand without any rulers or stencils. The laborious cutting occurs last because it is an irreversible phase. I have to be very certain of what I cut out and leave in. I hand cut each work on a single sheet of

Chinese xuan paper backed with silk and both are renewable and eco-friendly materials. The tools I use are simple: cutting mat, X-acto knife and blades, staples, clips, and paperweights.

My work is like drawing with a knife and is rooted in my study of Chinese calligraphy and pencil drawing. Cutting paper is a visceral reaction and natural response to my affection for immediacy, detail, and subtlety. The physical and mental demand from cutting is extreme and thrilling, slows me down and allows me to think clearly and decisively

How long it takes depends on each piece, depending on its size and level of intricacy.

How would you describe the evolution or development of your personal work (with xuan paper and paper cutting) over the years, and what potentials or directions do you see your own work exploring in the future?

My early works were a mix of cultural commentaries and autobiographies. In working with a new art form, I thought it was natural to be introspective, looking inward to find inspirations and develop a personal expression. Eventually, I wanted to expand my message to comment on issues I cared about, such as power, sacrifice, and survival. My recent works explore the effects of massive and rampant urbanism on nature. In 2015, due to my relocation from the East Coast to the West, I am working on new pieces that are inspired by this journey. Because I began my life in America on the West Coast, it has been an odyssey of sort and I am very excited about this new direction.