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Planet China

China
underground

WOMEN

Planet China is a collection of interviews with experts, directors, designers, photographers, journalists, critics, and artists

*Planet China includes interviews by
Dominique Musorrafti and Matteo Damiani
with some of the most prominent experts of
China*

China-underground.com Since 2002, China-underground and CinaOggi.it are two web magazines curated by Matteo Damiani and Dominique Musorrafti dedicated to Chinese culture and represent a virtual bridge between Asia and Western countries.



Anita Wong
Artist

Celebrating women who push boundaries

This issue is a collection of selected interviews with inspiring women that worked hard to reach their path and dreams. All these women are connected with China from all over the world. They moved around the world to reach their goals. International Women's Day is a day for commemorates the movement for women's rights. A day for remembering the past days in which women were not allowed to be their self, to think, to talk, to study, to vote etc ... In some countries of the world, these problems still exist, for this reason, it is important to have examples, a source of inspiration to help others women to follow their own desires, never stop fighting for what they believe. Engage to achieve goals in any field. Women can be everything they want to be.



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Augusta Xu-Holland
Actress

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underground

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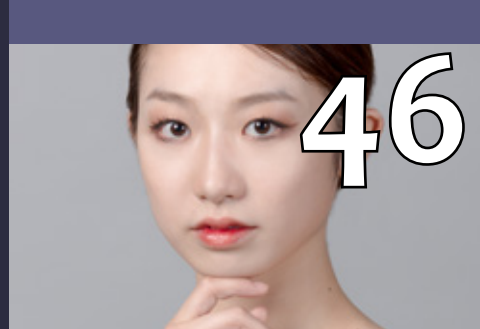
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Anita Wong

Modern and Tradition

Anita Yan Wong, Contemporary Asian American Women artist is Specialist in Modern and traditional Chinese art, Educator, and Thinker

Photos courtesy of Anita Wong

Anita Yan Wong is the 4th generations of Lingnan masters specializes in both traditional and modern arts. She received her B.A. (Honors) in Graphic Design from Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London and her M.F.A. and M.A. in Digital Photography and Digital Arts from Maryland Institute College of Art.

When did you realize you wanted to be an artist? What motivated you to get into art?

I knew I wanted to become an artist from a very young age when I was around 5 years old. My mum encouraged me to become an artist when she found me draw-

ing and loving it so much, while other children were playing outside in the playground. I started learning Guo hua (Chinese painting) from a Master - 辛鵬九 – a world-renowned Lingnan style master and one of the first pupils of Chao Shao An. I decided I wanted to be an artist at the age of 6 with the encouragement of my mum and my mentor, Guo hua master. I don't really know what motivates me to get into art and dream of being an artist, it just comes naturally. Each day I wake up and I am glad I am an artist.

What are the main topic and focus of your art?

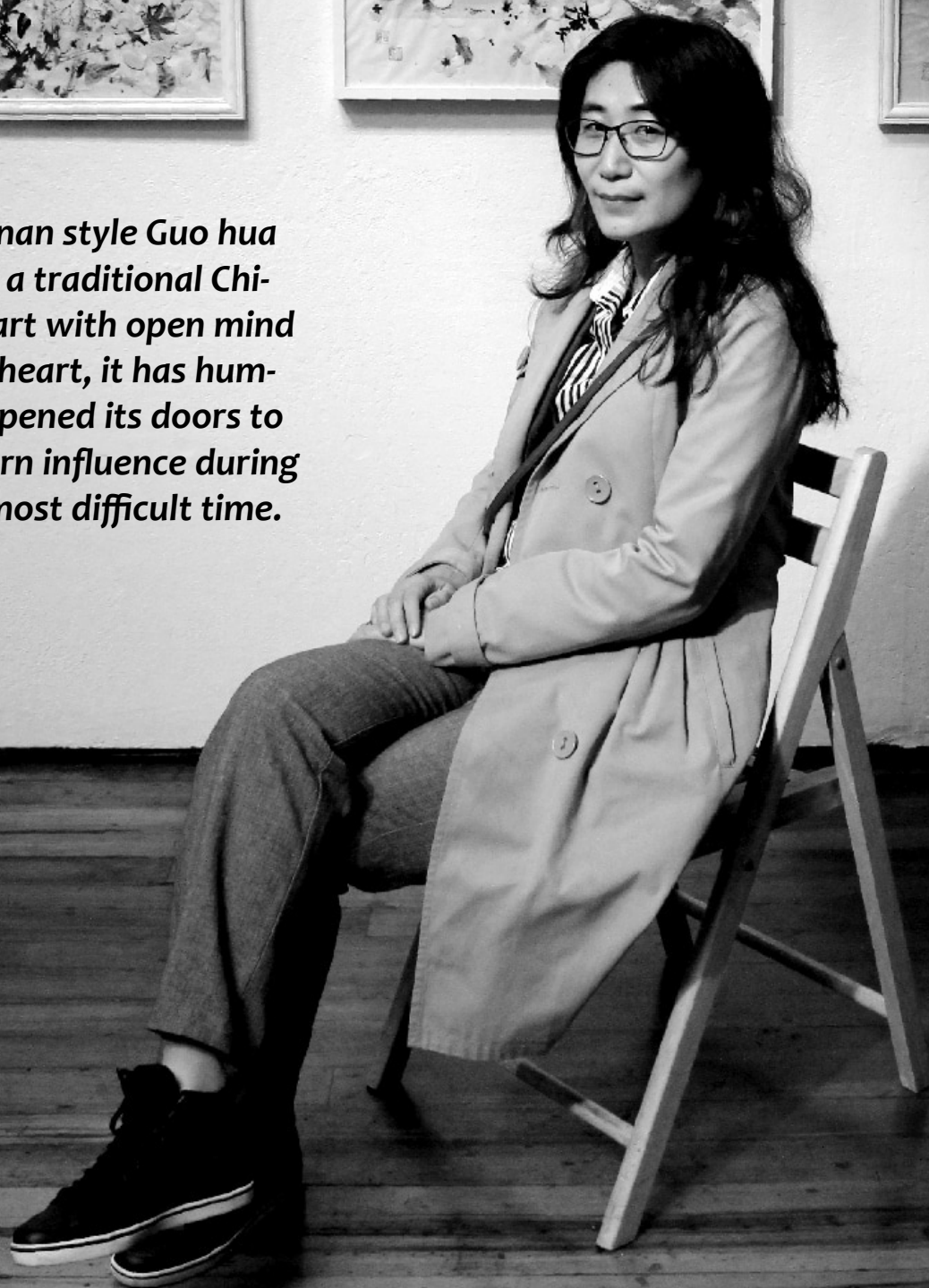
Nature is the main topic of my works, I like exploring the movements of my subjects and movement of time with my brush. My focus is

to develop unique styles of Guo hua and modern arts that speaks to both Eastern and Western viewers. I am amazed by the beauty in both Eastern and Western arts, but find it very challenging to combine them. I don't want to force or rush into a style because of some trend. I want to create something that I'm happy with, and my ultimate dream as an artist is to continue developing unique styles of Contemporary traditional arts that speaks to viewers in the Millennium.

Who are your biggest influences?

I don't have a particular artist or a particular art period that I follow because I want to be influenced by many great artists. I try to follow both Western and Eastern

Lingnan style Guo hua was a traditional Chinese art with open mind and heart, it has humbly opened its doors to western influence during the most difficult time.



art, I equally admire works by Claude Monet, Edvard Munch and the beautiful brush works found in Asian rice paper paintings. I am influenced by both traditional and contemporary works, I try to get my inspirations online and offline.

How do you keep yourself creative?

I keep myself creative and up to date by doing research, like reading online art magazines, blogs, and websites. Online materials are very inspiring to me, as the World Wide Web has brought us closer, brought cultures closer and brought a different style of art closer. I also find it very important as an artist to take a break from making art. It is important to not force myself to work,

I have to feel it and I will be naturally creative when I feel the idea. It is also nice to network, going to local galleries, shows, and museums to see what's out there.

***How did you find your personal painting style?
How long did it take to develop it?***

I found my personal painting



style (something that belongs to me and represents me) in 2017, in painting series titled "Tiger", "Rooster" which continued to the 2018 abstract Dog painting series. These paintings are more abstract and expressive than my older ink works. I am keeping an open mind and I don't intend to keep nor change my personal style, I don't want to follow any trend either. I believe my

personal style will change as I change with time.

Does your art have a philosophy message or reflect your personal philosophy of life?

Yes, my art is a reflection of who I am. What interests me as an artist is the sensitivity in the intersection between tradition and mo-

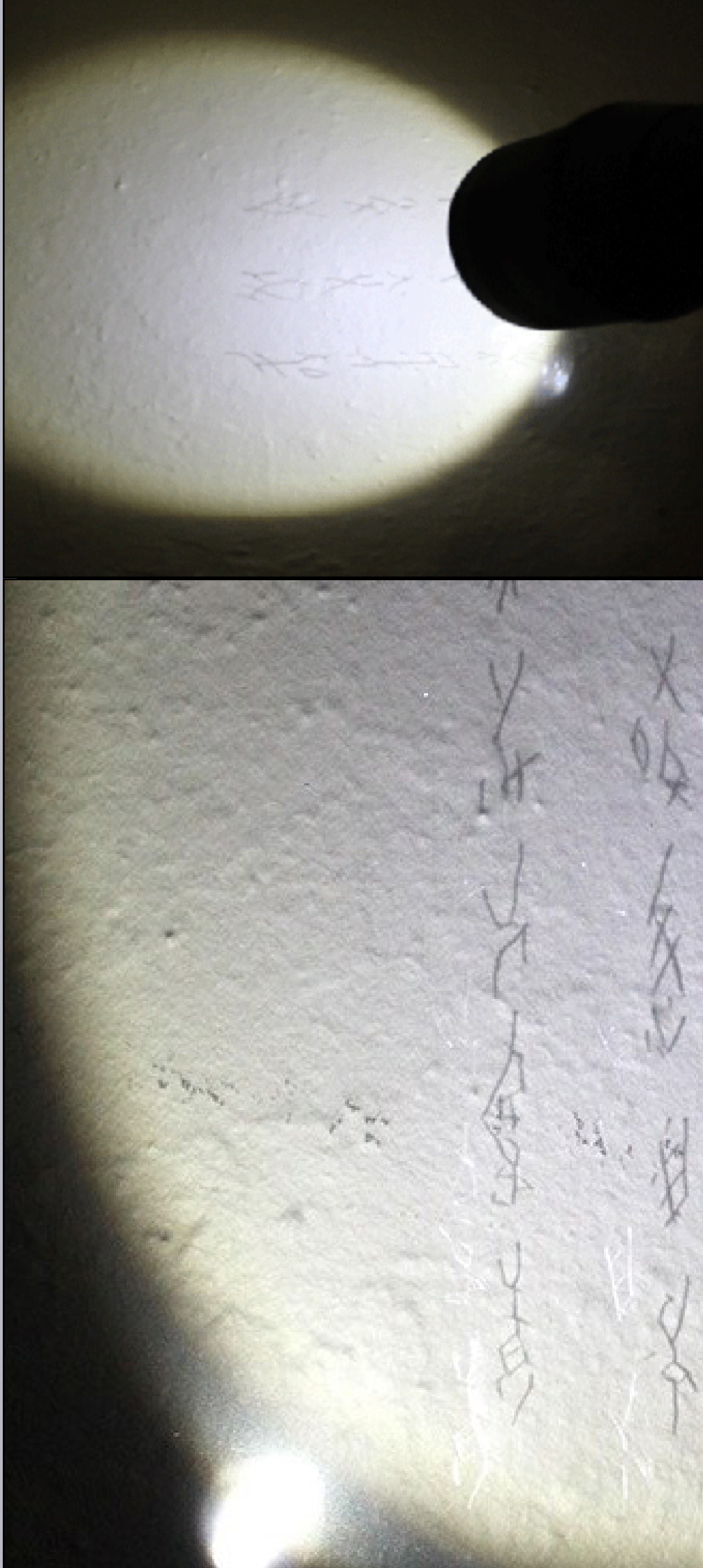
dernity. I'd like to revisit the time between old and new with my own artistic background in Guo hua and western painting; explore the potentials and styles without worrying if it's labeled as modern or tradition. I consider my current paintings very personal bridges I built between old and new. As an artist, I don't want to give up traditions without a very good reason, they are beau-




tiful to me and very human. However, I also don't want to be stuck in any boundaries. There is a lot I want to say but I trust that my paintings say it better than me putting it into words.

Can you tell us about your art project inspired by “Nüshu”?

My great grandmother and part of my grandmother's generation had to bind their feet to be able to marry. It was considered beautiful, and it was a display of status—they didn't need their feet to work, they were called lotus feet. But in fact, that's very painful; they do it when the girls are extremely young, three years of age maybe. So the girls can't work and can't go outside. Women are not allowed to do many things. They don't have the status men do. So there's no freedom. Women were forbidden any kind of formal education for many centuries, and they developed the Nüshu script in order to communicate with one another. Then, right before they got married and after they got married, the women would write to each other in the secret language of woman: Nüshu. When men look at it, they can't understand because it's a language created by women and exclusively used by



"She believes it is important to take ones time to understand the root, the theory and true beauty in Guo hua, in particular Lingnan style Guo hua, master the brush and skill of this profound art form before attempting to transform and develop it into Modern art form"



women. Those writings are very poetic, often in the format of poems, letters or songs. It's always about how they suffer, how they miss their family. When you read it, it's very emotional. So, I want to learn more about Nüshu. I want to learn more about what they wrote because I'm a Chinese-American artist and I have all the freedom in the world, and when I look at my grandmother's time, not so long ago, women didn't have anything. But now that I have the freedom to express, what do I want to say in my art? So, this project was for fun at first. I didn't realize until later that it was an act in my own personal space that touched me on a very personal level. I somehow connected with these women, their stories, through this project. I came to realize how lucky I am, as a modern Chinese woman, to be educated and most importantly, allowed to express myself with my art. I look forward to getting up

every morning because I can create art. Now this project means a lot to me not only on a personal level but also because not many people know about Nüshu; it's invisible paintings etched on glass. These paintings and stories are revealed when the viewer shines a light on them. This action contains the meaning of discovering the secret letters of these women. This action connects the viewers to the hidden secrets and the women that wrote them.

What did it mean for your artistic path living outside Asia?

I think my international experiences shapes who I am. I am thankful for my international experiences, they make me appreciate the beauty in different cultures. I don't really know how to label myself because I have lived my life internationally...in Beijing, Hong Kong, London, and U.S. I know they are all home to me and



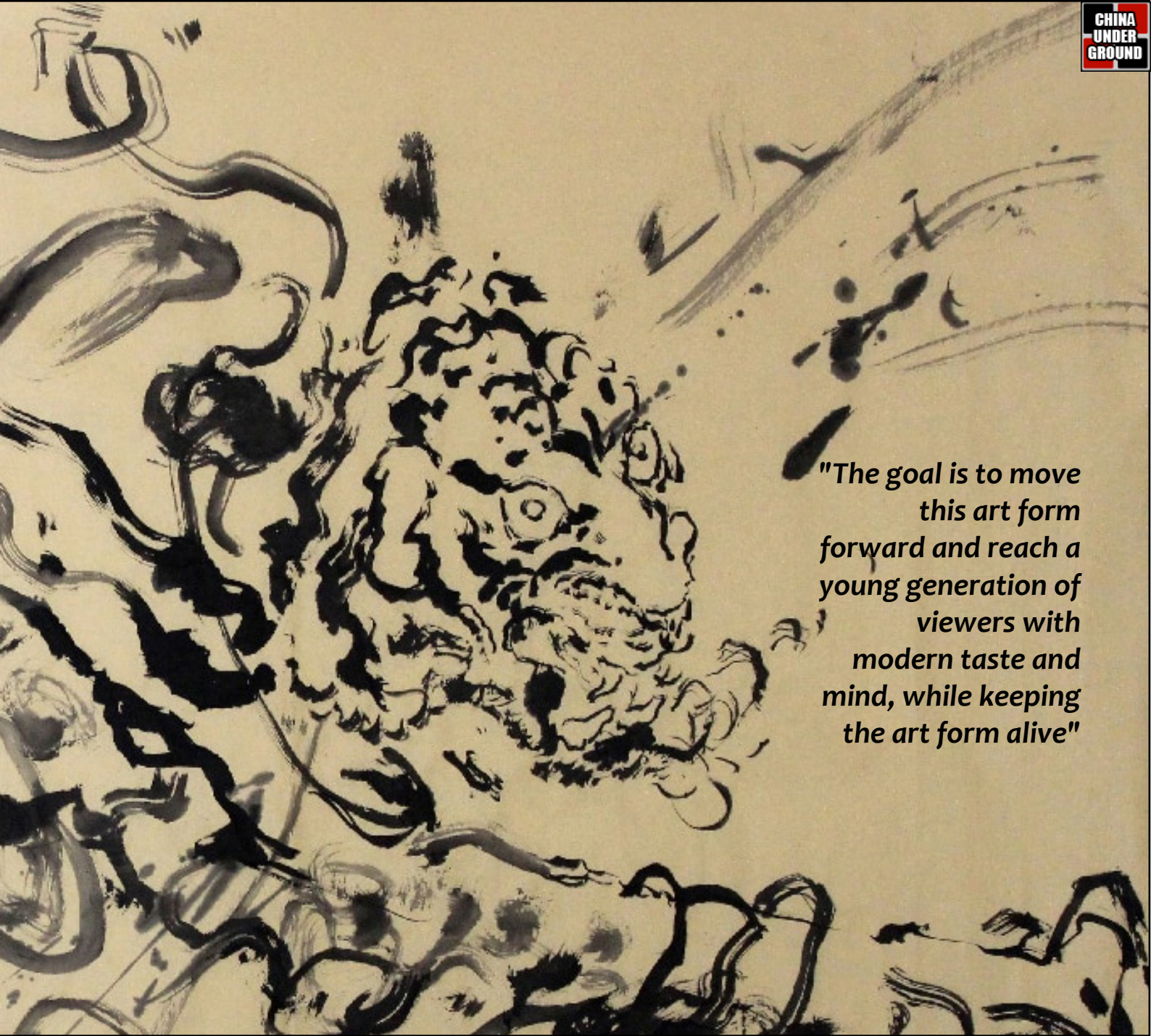
dear to me. When I feel lost about who I am, I look at my art and found myself again.

What is the biggest challenge about being an Art Professor during social media era?

I love social media and technology, I was teaching electronic media and culture for many years and I believe we could achieve a lot when

we combine Art and Technology together. I recently started a meet up "Silicon Valley Art and Technology" and I'm very excited to be the host who connects artists with technologists. In terms of challenge, I think traditional art is a different game, it requires a lot of practice. Yet guo hua and calligraphy were once practiced in everyday life among Chinese, the practice is no longer by many as the soci-

ety rely more and more on computers in generating information. Students cannot rely on the "undo" button when making a rice paper painting. It takes years and years of practice. I believe perhaps it is our human nature to take an easier path sometimes. I think the best way of preserving a tradition like rice paper painting is to make it adapt to the current time and Culture, this gets students excited and want



*"The goal is to move
this art form
forward and reach a
young generation of
viewers with
modern taste and
mind, while keeping
the art form alive"*

to explore traditional arts.

You are Founder and Curator of Behance Asia Team. How this social media for creative effectively helps in self-promotion?

I love Behance and I feel very honored as the founder of Asia Team. I have met many talented artists and became friends with people on oth-

er continents, someone I would not have met otherwise. Behance is a great place for artists/designers to showcase their portfolios. It is also a support system for artists to connect with the others that are equally passionate about their art.

Helen Feng

Don't settle for okay . . . be better

Helen Feng is regarded as the Beijing's Queen of Rock

Photos courtesy of Helen Feng

Helen, born in Beijing and raised in the US and Canada, has been a staple in the Chinese music scene since she moved back from Los Angeles to Beijing. She founded Beijing-based indie band Free the Birds, formerly Ziyao. Helen started a record label, FakeMusicMedia, Chinese electronic group Pet Conspiracy and Nova Heart band, that make a mix of sexy psychedelic disco music with lo-fi ethereal

pop vocals. Nova Heart played at China's most prestigious contemporary art gallery (UCCA), got invited to some of China's biggest music festivals, was guest at the Zurich Street Parade/Lethargy Festival, part of an MTV China special, and played a sunset spot at the main stage of Clockenflap festival in Hong Kong.

Can you tell us something about when you start to get into music? Did your family support you when they knew you wanted to start this career?

My mother and my father grew up as childhood friends in Beijing, but during the Cultural Revolution, they were sent to Mongolia to a work camp. There wasn't really that much to do there for two city kids. Herd sheep, break horses, dig ditches, and sit in a Yurt singing. They had big singing parties, sitting around a



stove in a communal Yurt, drinking fermented horse milk, and singing revolutionary songs cause those were the only songs you were allowed to sing in those days. Mao Zedong is that sun and stuff like that, believe or not it was like mating call in the late 60's. Anyway, my dad

like the way my mom sang my mom like my dad's singing, they sang to each other, they sang duets, they got drunk together, they fell in love . . . many years later, they had me. As soon as my mom found out she was pregnant, she turned to my dad and said, I bet our child

will be really musical. I don't even remember when I started, but there always music in the house and I always had lessons with really nice teachers. My parents always encouraged me toward music but never forced. It was just hard not to notice the joy in their

eyes when I did music, even if it was weird punky stuff with me dry humping a female bandmate, they would say, "it's a bit noisy, but I like energy." They never really complained. Once this shirt that I shredded a little too much did a Janet Jackson on stage and they were at the show, I think that was the only real time they ever criticized me. Something to the effect, you should choose your costumes better. But they never coddled me ever, whatever I did they would say "good. . . but you could do better." My parents were competitive athletes before the cultural revolution changed everything, so even in the arts, they set me up with an athletes mentality. The idea was always, don't settle for okay. . . be better. . . and whatever you start, finish it. Even failing is better than the incompleteness, cause you can't learn anything from unfinished work—and you won't learn anything from success or failure if you don't give it yourself all from the get-go. That stuck with me. . . I'm a slow learner, and I'm slow at finishing. But I always do because their voices are in the back of my head just nagging away telling me to "try harder, and finish my sh*t".

What are the ideas behind your songs? What do you want to tell?

Things that affect me emotionally. I struggled with depression so I wrote about that. I had certain private trauma's in my life so I write about them. Some happier moments, so I write about them. I stream of consciousness lyrics, and I try and figure them out and make them make sense, so I can't really explain my lyrical ideology. . . it's whatever comes the fuck out. I write about my fantasy of who I could be. My internal world is like Faulkner filtered through the lens of David Lynch. It's pretty F-d up. But when it comes to the way they build up, I try to hide the details or rather zoom in on them so intensely that I don't have to talk about it directly. Like you see a scene playing out, but instead of writing about two arguing over I don't know some stupid shit, you zoom in on a small hand gesture that means sooo much, so much you can relate or feel, but you don't see the scene play out but you can see the gestures and relate to that moment. Or perspective, the distortion of perspective through a human mind. Just like when you look at someone after you've cried, their face looks like twisted and warped through the

lens of swelling tears. . . or when your drunk and stumbling through the street and all the lights have halos. That for me is emotionally warped perception. I learn something about myself, about the way situations and humans play out, about our fate and how both futile and heroic it all is. I write about that. Sometimes, I see a story unfold before my eyes and I try and place myself also zoomed in on the details, or warped through the imagined perception of my subjects. I have this world in my head, where it's like a fun glass mirrored room of everything, blown up, shrunk down, from ten different angles, and through the mind's eye of different people.

Is there a song or more songs you are particularly connected? Are there any songs dedicated to someone or to a moment that marked a significant change in your life?

Yes, but it's very private. You'll have to guess.

What are the main challenges you face as a woman in making music in China?

Musically, not that many. When I started doing music here, I actually found it ini-

tially to be less sexist than in the U.S. I worked as a lower level worker in the Hollywood before I came to China, and I dealt with toxic workplaces where women were objectified and demeaned in small ways on a daily basis, but that was an overall accepted norm in L.A. in the late 90s early 2000's. I experienced nothing as bad as the stories I've been hearing, but it was enough to question my self-worth and understanding of what made me worthwhile as an individual. In China, honestly, I found more people to look up to at the time. I worked radio, TV, and other forms of media alongside making music, and honestly, I pretty much only had female bosses here. But it doesn't mean it doesn't exist here, just it's separated by class and profession and for me, I was lucky because I was in the right group of both in China. I had my protection so to speak. . . which I now know that even the top women L.A. were not even afforded. I never really encountered pushback as the band front person, or as a musician. I only started getting push back when I decided to become a label head and build my own business instead of just being a musician. I suddenly felt, like for the first time, even though I had a business degree and our projects were successful,

for the first time since being in China, I had a peer which I respected ask me "wouldn't you rather be having babies right now then doing this?" But yeah, be better. That's all I can think, that's all I know. Nothing is more powerful, then being better.

What changes in the industry in China, compared to when you start to play music? Does this affect your way of creating music?

There is 1000 times more money now in original music then when I started. When I first started in early 2000's it was mostly packaged pop stars, factory system artists that all did the same sugary sweet ballets, western pop knockoffs, or nationalistic anthems. Even these stars were seeing their paychecks cut by piracy and a lack of playing opportunities. Those who didn't feed the mainstream system all co-existed together in a pool of burning rebellion. It didn't matter that these bands were maybe a bit "derivative", the need to communicated a certain dissatisfaction with society often bested any hopes of being

coming big in the music world. So musical style aside, what was genuine and original was the energy, the anger, and the motivations. Now there's more money in the music industry than ever before. At the same time, artists are more confused. They get a lot of conflicting signals. . . and the best way to kill a rebel is not by fighting against the rebel, but giving them just enough to make them want more, and then telling them quid pro quo. The reality is, the barriers to self-expression in mainstream media is pretty much the same if not even a little better than before. But because most underground artists are not content in staying unknown and secretly even if they don't say so want to make it, the self-censorship has gone up because they don't want to close off those channels for themselves. I started at a time when getting

ting rich off the music that we were making was not an option. But now, it is, and artists are conflicted. They don't know how far they want to push their artistic expression if



they want to toe the line, cross the line, or do the kind of music that will sign the checks. I have to deal with that in artist development now, and man, when I find a person who knows what he wants whatever that place is, I feel like I want to kneel and cry and thank the heavens. Meanwhile, a bunch of investment people more apt at investing in large-scale real estate developments and payment APPs is coming into the creative industry with absolutely no understanding that this is not an industry that works well with "economies of scale". They don't understand what the tricky depressed conflicted and beautiful animal creativity really is, and how to properly support its

growth. Vast amounts of all this money are wasted, but even this is changing. In China, decades move in years, and years feel like decades. If you want to do a separate interview. . . I can give you a 10 page paper on this stuff. For me, musically, I'm trying to cut out as much noise as possible but it's not easy. I guess as we get older, we all reminisced about simpler days.

How important is it nowadays for women to make their voices heard in China?

Everyday is important for everyone to make their voices heard everywhere. . . if they have something relevant to say. I think in soci-

ety we encourage speaking more than we encourage thought and action, and the amount of empty babble going out and polluting our thought space is immense and distracting. I know this is about China, but I have to get this off my chest. One of the more disturbing things I noticed is this eagerness to replace Wonderwomen with Jane Doe. Honestly, some of the ways the coverage is going these days seem like for me the press is treating it like "oh no, this guy harassed me which means a lifetime of therapy. . . I'm so weak now cause I've been violated." What I want to hear from the media is "Sure this guy harassed me but I'm still a F---ing champion and I'm gonna

your 1000 accomplishments or how you were brave and tough and this sh*t barely phased you. There ARE injustices that need to be out, but they can only end when women feel there is an alternative version of them out there. . . not the victim, but the champion. That's another form of sexist repression. Just look at Oprah speech... and how the press covered that speech. How they ignored her accomplishments and just focused on METOO. Like hardly anyone focused on the fact that she was the first black woman to get a lifetime achievement award from the Golden Globes which was 80% of her speech, it was all about METOO.... that's the greater injustice. So yeah, I want women to be heard, for the right reasons in China, and in the world.

What are the main differences in playing music in China, compared to other countries?

That's so hard to say. I mean this is such a general term you have to specify. Like versus South Africa, England, the United States, Iran, etc. If you want something distinctively different, well. . . there are a lot of Chinese people, like everywhere. All jokes aside, not much these days. I think a lot of artists that come here will find it very

similar to touring the U.S. or Europe now these days, it's really not as grungy and crazy as the old days of packing into standing only passenger trains. . . now it's like high-speed rails and airplanes, decent sound systems, and good audiences sizes. But obviously we are more famous here, so I guess for us, it feels a bit more plush then when we go overseas and we're as well known.

Can you share with us a story from the backstage?

Once many many years ago we shared a backstage with one of China's biggest thrash metal bands. At one time the guitarist calls me over and says, you wanna join us for a drink. I looked over, and a bunch of muscular tattooed dudes with shaved heads or long shoulder length hair is sitting around a nice wooden carved Tea-set sipping daintily on Pu-er tea and commenting on the bouquet of this particular tea. I held up my bottle of Vodka and said how about we drink mine. They turned to me and said, "oh that doesn't really go with the tea."

report his ass, move on with my life, go out and build my own Uber, my own Miramax, my own White House with my sisters (and a few good men too) accept not run by a--holes. If I could get a few more wonder women stories, as opposed to Jane Doe stories, then yeah I want to hear their voices. I want my future daughters to grow up thinking they are destined to run this world, not just be victimized by men. That they can D-I-Y. China and everywhere. But what' hilarious is that when you try and introduce that angel of inspiration and not just victimhood. . . the media these days go, Oh no, we just want to know about that time you were, you know, touched, not about



ZHUO DAN TING

China's

Queen of Tattoos

Photos courtesy of Zhuo Dan Ting



In January of 2007, Ting opened Shanghai Tattoo, which became an instant media sensation.

Zhuo Dan Ting is a tattoo artist and owner of Shanghai Tattoo Studio. After graduating from high school, Ting accepted a place in Harbin Normal University's Art School. Ting found herself pulled to the underground, where she fell in love with brutal death metal and DIY street punk fashion. There, art

was not done in pencil and paper, but in needle and flesh. Many of the characters in that world wore tattoos—and after seven hours, a pack of cigarettes, and a lot of blood, Ting did too. Ting had made a name for herself doing tattoos for her friends in Harbin's underground music scene: every work

was original, developed through tireless discussions and drafts. Afterward, she had left university to study tattooing full time.

How did you get started with tattooing, what fascinated you?

First time I saw tattooing I fell in love with it, was something new that I had never seen before, another form of art, another form of expressing art. I loved the fact that you could

When she was a child Ting's father, an art teacher, was quite impressed, and bring her around his artist friends late at night to teach Ting their techniques.

wear art on your skin, see it every day of your life.

Have you always had clear your career as a tattoo artist since your childhood?

I knew I loved art as a child but never considered doing it for a living. As a child, I really didn't think too much as what my career would be, was busy being a kid I suppose.

How long have you been working as a tattoo artist? What was your first tattoo?

I started tattooing in 2001. The very first tattoo I did was a tribal phoenix on the lower back of a woman. Actually did a matching for the ladies husband but on his upper back. So the first tattoo was actually two of the same.

Did you face any difficulties, as a woman in this

industry, at the beginning of your activity?

I did but really didn't pay attention much as I was pretty focused on the art. It was till later when I realized the struggle I had been dealing with which is my societies views on women and what they should look like and be doing for a living. I guess a woman with tattoos in view (neck, arms) and big green

mohawk wasn't ideal then. Got treated like shit by many many people in those days, but luckily I had thick skin and an agenda of art to focus on.

What's the strangest thing you've been asked to tattoo?

Strangest thing... I had tattooed a portrait of a woman's husbands penis one time. Was pretty interest



ing actually as I didn't want to see any pictures of it, so we went through kind of an interview describing the details, had drawn it up off of the description. Funny thing too was my father had come and visited me later that day and had found these drawings of a penis in my studio which was very embarrassing and awkward when trying to explain myself haha.

Do you think there are still stigmatized and taboos on tattoos in China?

It's getting better but yes of course. People especially

the older generations tend to group tattoos with being bad, the shamed one in the family. In the city of Shanghai maybe not to bad these days as its heavily influenced by more western culture. More countryside cities in China the judgment is a bit harsher, some and or most people never even seen a tattoo especially a heavily tattooed person.

In your opinion, are there differences in the culture of tattoos in China compared to the West?

Yes most definitely! To the best of my knowledge mainstream tattoos have been around way longer in the west than China which has had more time to be excepted. I mean when I opened Shanghai Tattoo back in 2007 there were only a handful of shops here, in a city of 20 something million people. Elsewhere in the world, western countries had hundreds in their cities I'm assuming at that time with far less population, that is a huge difference. Also, style of tattoos are a lot different as well as far as Asian traditional,



American traditional, etc., there are many differences of time, art, styles, and such.

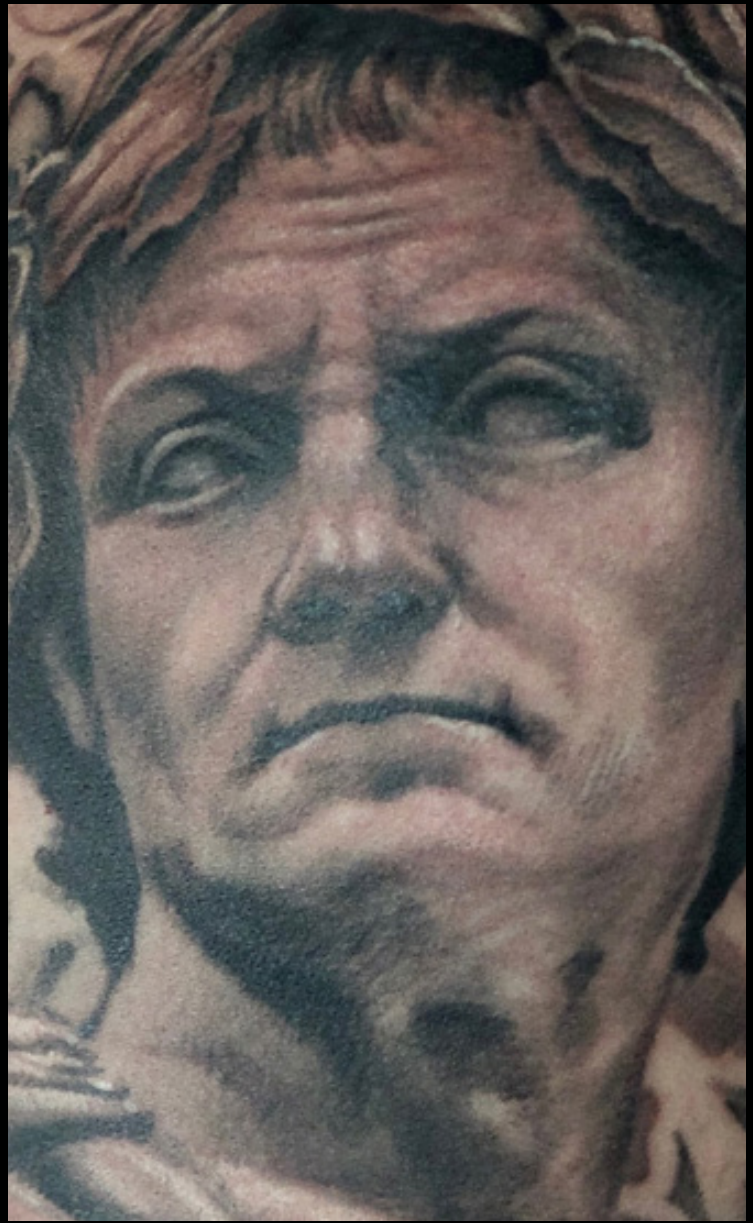
How much has the perception of tattoos changed in China compared to when you started?

Its changed a lot these days, seems people are getting more and more tattoos in China, the younger generation especially. I think with more athletes, movie stars, pop stars being more tattooed it is breaking that barrier of being a bad person

Chinese culture holds. Now tattoos are being associated with being rich, famous, successful which younger generations are embracing.

C-U: Since China has one of the highest C-section rates in the world, has the number of women asking for tattoos to hide C-section scar increased over the years?
Z D T: Yes, I have had many inquiries over my career, and covered many birth scars. Pretty much has been solid steady for the time I have been tattooing, not really increasing, staying consistent.

The past years have cemented Ting's status as China's Queen of Tattoos, with customers flying from all corners of the globe.



The Art of Min Liu

*Min Liu is a Taiwanese-born animator,
with a unique style and a dark sense of humor*

Photos courtesy of Min Liu



Min Liu is a Taiwanese motion graphics designer and animator, now based in New York. She earned her BA in 2010

from National Taiwan University in Taipei and her MFA in Computer Art with a concentration in 2D animation and mo-

tion graphics from the School of Visual Arts, NYC in 2013. She focuses on hand-drawn cel animation since then.

How did your adventure in the animation and motion graphics design world begin? How did you understand that being an animator and motion graphics designer would be your profession?

My major in college was accounting, but I had always felt something was not quite right about my life. Then I accidentally picked up a portfolio of Aaron Nieh, a famous graphics designer in Taiwan. That when I found what I really want to do for myself. I started from scratch; I self-studied basic software, applied for the School of Visual Arts in New York and moved to the States. At first, I focused on graphic design in the broadest sense of the word, but the more I learned, I realized that animation is the right media which helps me tell my story.

Who influenced you as a person and as an animator and motion graphics designer?

Inspired by #The100DaysProject Min Liu challenged herself to publish a unique animation every single day and made Bloody Dairy



"I always like things with dark humor. Something twisted and disturbing but not too horrific."

The very first artist that inspired me as an animator is Shi Shi Yamasaki. I love the feeling of hand-drawn animation and studied hard to create something like hers. Another artist I like is Junji Ito, a Japanese manga artist who's notorious for his disturbing horror stories. I like something dark with a weird sense of humor.



Did you do specialized studies or your work are the results of your passion?

I studied basic software. I feel that inspiration from daily life is more important to me, a technique is something you can learn and become fluent at. I am still in the process of trying to master the art of animation.

What are your sources of inspiration and what is the creative process behind your animation?

Daily life mostly. I enjoy going to concert/art show/museum, or just walking around the street, watching people etc.

Do your animations express your mood and the way you see the world?

D e f i n i t e l y .

How would you describe Bloody Dairy and #The-100DaysProject? How did the idea come about?

I always love doing cel animation, after I finished a long-term project last year,



"I don't really have a big picture for this project, I guess I just want to push my insanity and see how far I can go."

I decided to take a break from work for a while and do what I really love. At that time, there's a trend on Instagram called #the100day-project, this is a project that people do a thing for a 100 days, it can be anything, drawing, photographing, cooking etc...

So I decided to do an animation every day for 100 days. I carried a sketchbook with me during that period, whenever I saw something or thought of something

interesting, I did a quick sketch. When I running out of ideas, I will go through the sketchbook.

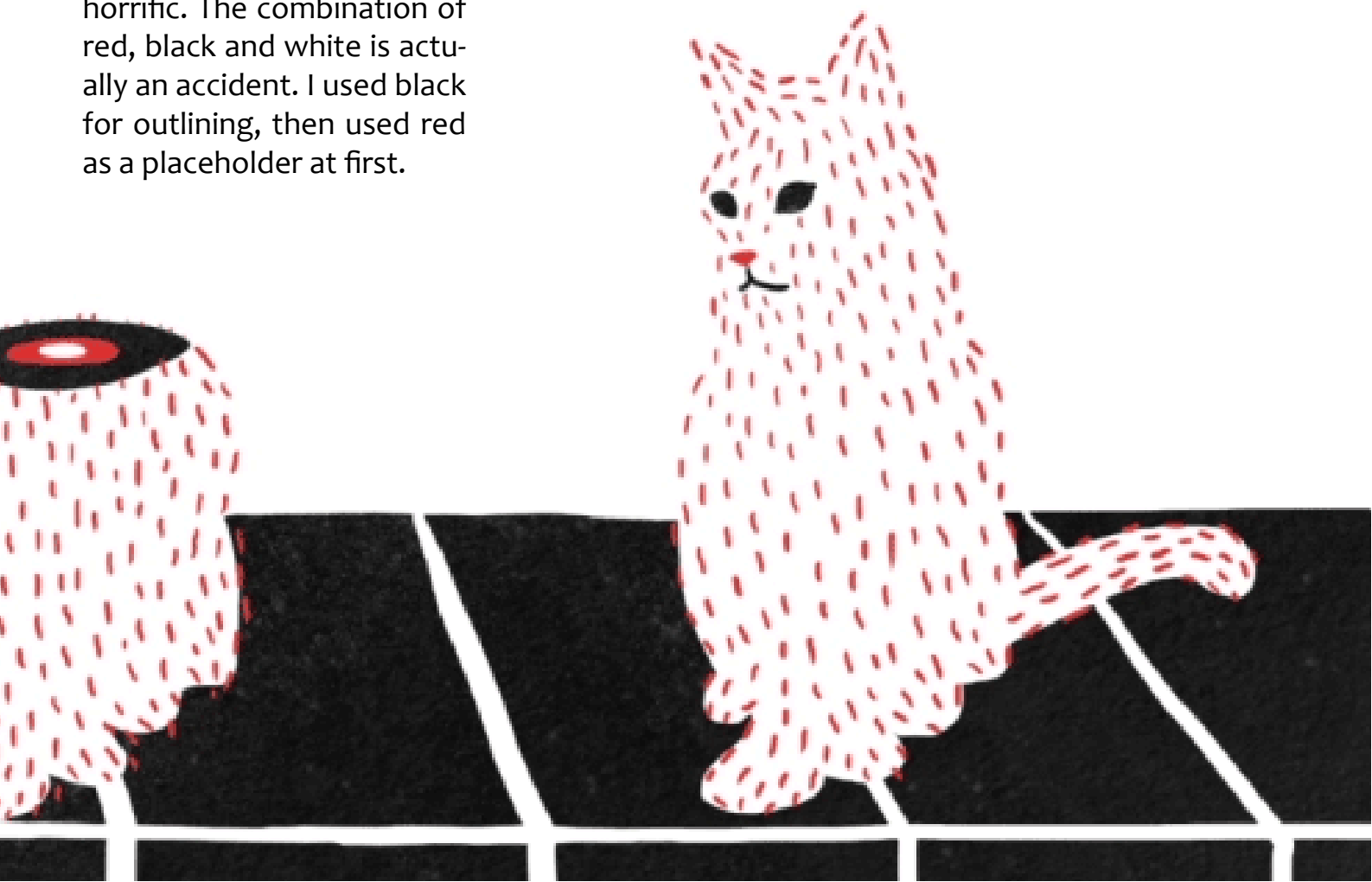
I don't really have a big picture for this project, I guess I just want to push my insanity and see how far I can go.

You create a lot of three-chromatic animations (red, black and white). Why did you make this colors choice?



"Animation is the right media which helps me tell my story"

I always like things with dark humor. Something twisted and disturbing but not too horrific. The combination of red, black and white is actually an accident. I used black for outlining, then used red as a placeholder at first.



But after I finished the draft, I was fascinated with the violent beauty of the color palette, I just went with that.

Living outside Asia affect your way of being inspired?

I will say yes. Living overseas definitely opens my eye to the world. And especially living in New York. This is a great city for all kind of culture/style/people, I really feel I am more comfortable and confident here.





The Fabulous WORLD OF Qin Leng

Qin Leng is a designer and illustrator known for her illustrations of children books

Photos courtesy of Qin Leng

Qin Leng was born in Shanghai, she moved with her family to France and after, she moved to Canada. She has produced animated shorts, which were nominated in various national and international film festivals. Qin Leng always loved to portray the innocence of children and has developed a passion for children's books. Drawing is her passion. She dreams of being able to illustrate and share her ideas and emotions.

What does motivate you to become an illustrator?



I have always been drawing, for as long as I remember. My father is an artist himself so from a very young age, I have been interested in the world of visual arts.

I went to university in Film Animation and started working as a designer for television series in 2006. However, I continued to draw in my spare time and realized quickly enough that I wasn't satisfied with simply drawing at home...

I wanted to get my work published. So in 2009, after submitting my portfolio to a large number of publishers, I

landed my first publication job. The

world of illustration is so vast with so many different projects to work on, that I find it incredibly stimulating. It is a perfect way to constantly challenge

"ferrier" coat. Morning fashion



"Drawing f
as a hobby
became
expres.

myself and perfect my style.

***Do you remember your earliest illustration?
What was about?***

My very first illustration was at the age of 3 when I went to the hair salon for the first time. I came home and drew my experience: me, in a

chair, with hair on the floor, a mirror, a ton of tools on the counter and hair on the ground. My parents were impressed by the amount of detail I had retained and translated into the picture. My very first commissioned illustration was a cover of a non-fiction chapter book on a pretty serious topic actually: young teens' preg-

nancy, called "Dear Diary, I am Pregnant". It felt incredible that my illustrations could potentially be used to make kids laugh, but also help them cope with difficult issues such as this one.

Do you prefer to work more using digital or traditional tools?

first started
y, but soon
a way of
ssion"

La fête foraine

Without a doubt, I much prefer working traditionally. Even though I always work digitally at the animation studio where I am employed full time, I am more comfortable drawing with a pencil or brush on paper for my illustration projects. I love the feel of paper under my fingers, as well as the organic flow of working with paint

and letting happy mistakes give character to my work.

Why do you decide to focus on children books?

I have always loved to draw children. Their innocence, their pure unfiltered joy, their silliness, are all qualities I strive to translate into my work.

Would you like to create graphic novels also for an older audience?

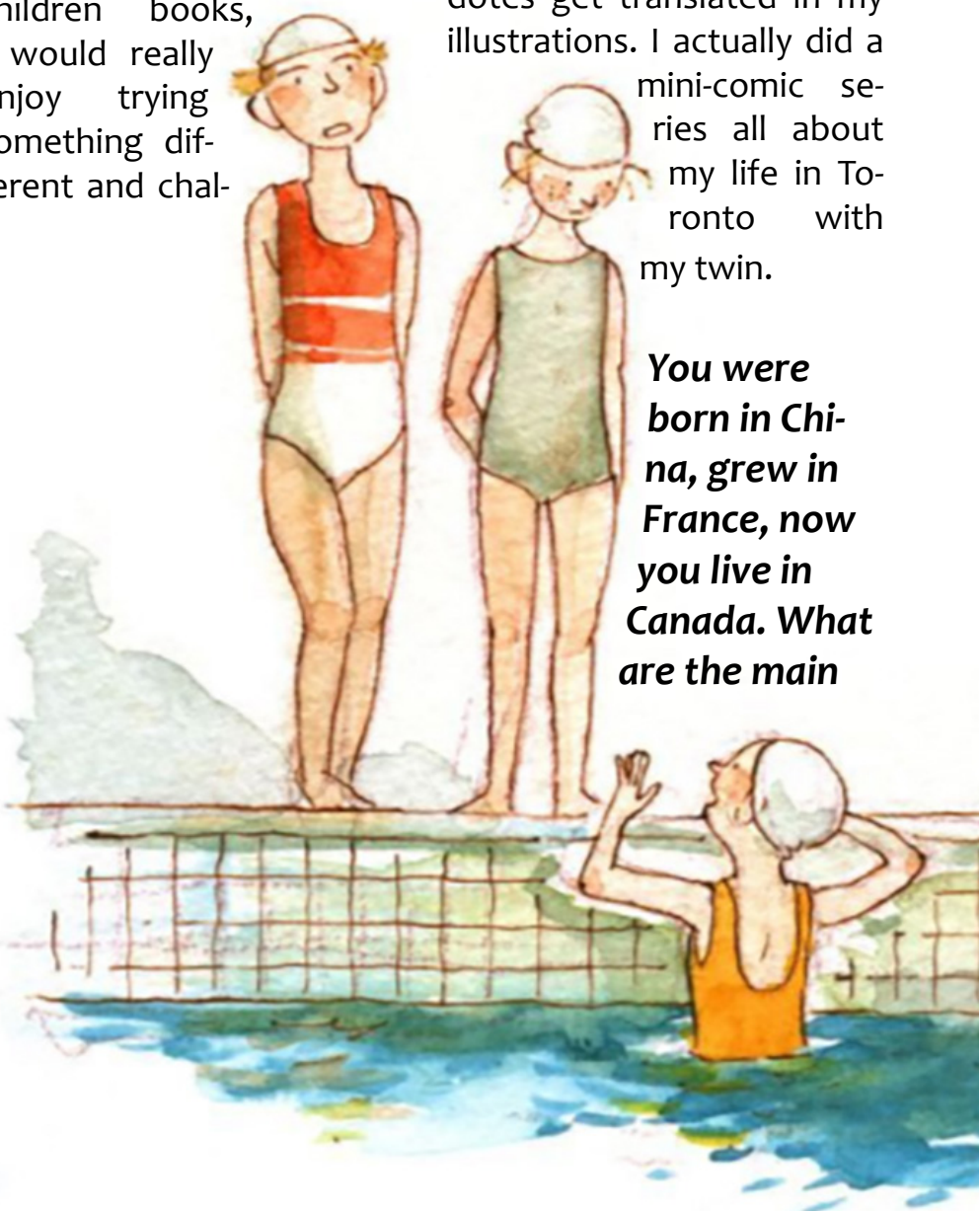
I would really love to. After having done over 40 children books, I would really enjoy trying something different and chal-

lenge myself. Hopefully, I can find an author with who I would be able to collaborate on such a project.

In one of your bio, you mentioned you have a twin. What are the best childhood memories of growing together?

My twin and I are best friends. We do everything together, finish each other's sentence, and often say the exact same thing at exactly the same time. I don't have a specific memory with my sister, but many of our anecdotes get translated in my illustrations. I actually did a mini-comic series all about my life in Toronto with my twin.

You were born in China, grew in France, now you live in Canada. What are the main



differences you notice in education and relationships?

I don't remember much about China since I left when I was 4. I spent 5 years in France, and it is where I have the fondest memories of growing up. It isn't cliché to say that the French have a "joie de vivre". They know how to take things slow and enjoy every minute of it. As a child, I did so many activities with family but also at school. We had classes outside in the fields, learning hands-on about nature, plants, and animals, and food.

Art and culture is something that is taught from a very early age and I think it has greatly shaped my interest in visual arts and my illustration style.

Does living in different countries influ-

ence your way to illustrate and life?

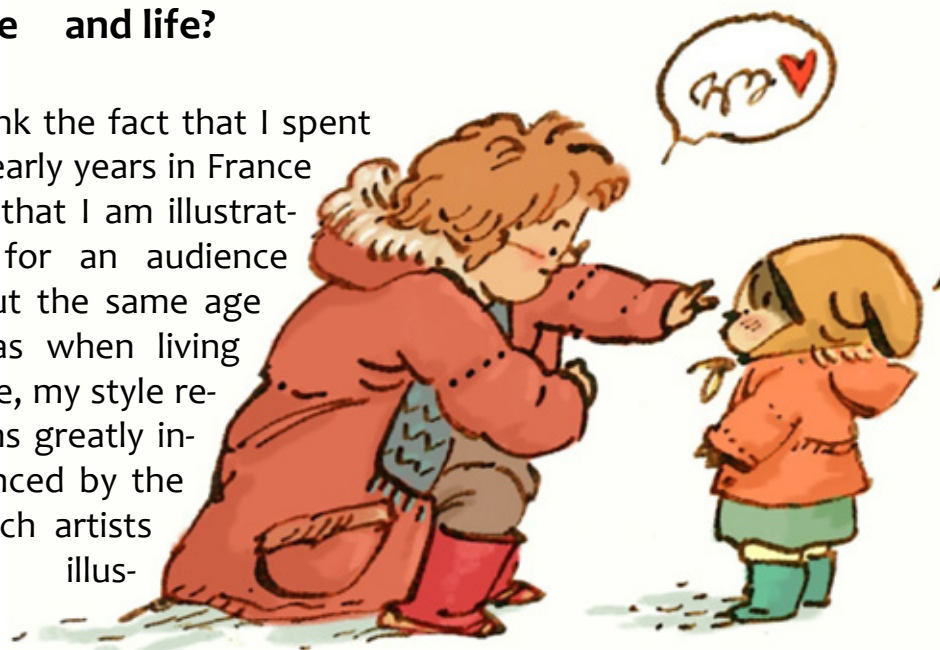
I think the fact that I spent my early years in France and that I am illustrating for an audience about the same age I was when living there, my style remains greatly influenced by the French artists who illus-

trated the books I read as a child.

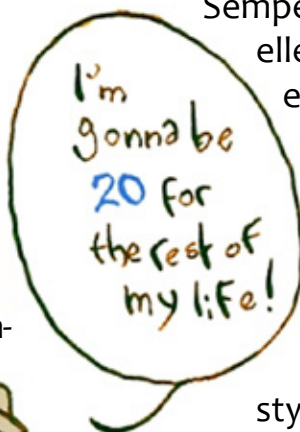
Jean-Jacques

Sempé and Gabrielle Vincent, for example, are an important source of inspiration. And I think my painting and inking style remains very classic.

Your art is so catchy. How much important is it for communicating in a multicultural and intergenerational world?



generation gap



oct 3. 2012

'I was once young too'



My monthly
haircut

"Her illustrations
reflect both East and
West cultures."

I always keep in mind that I am drawing for all the kids in the world. My books may start in Canada or the US, but they do get translated in Turkey, China, Korea, Russia, and I want to make sure that children of all those countries can recognize themselves in the characters I create in my books. For instance, I refrain from drawing a stereotypical white kid with blond hair blue eyes as the main character. I also dislike portraying girly girls. Or really manly boys. I like my characters to seamlessly fit either or. Basically, I want a girl to be able to relate to a boy character in my book, as much as I want a boy to

be able to relate to a girl character in my book.



Thierry Chow Feng Shui

Following her dad, renowned Feng Shui master Chow Hon-Ming, Thierry became one of the few woman Feng Shui masters in Hong Kong. Her mission is to help to balance everyday environment space, home, and work, adding traditional five vital elements with an artistic and stylish improvement of contemporary design. Following her own path, she is bringing Feng Shui a modern new language and a new face.

Can you tell us something about you and your background

I grew up in Hong Kong but went to Canada when I was 10 yrs old, I had always been an artist since I was young, as I loved doodling in class when I couldn't focus. I've always loved art and being creative, when I went to university I had studied fine art, but later on graduated with a bachelor of applied illustrations. My father is a feng shui master for over



Thierry Master

Thierry Chow is a Feng Shui master with a unique and modern focus on environment and design

Photos courtesy of Thierry Chow

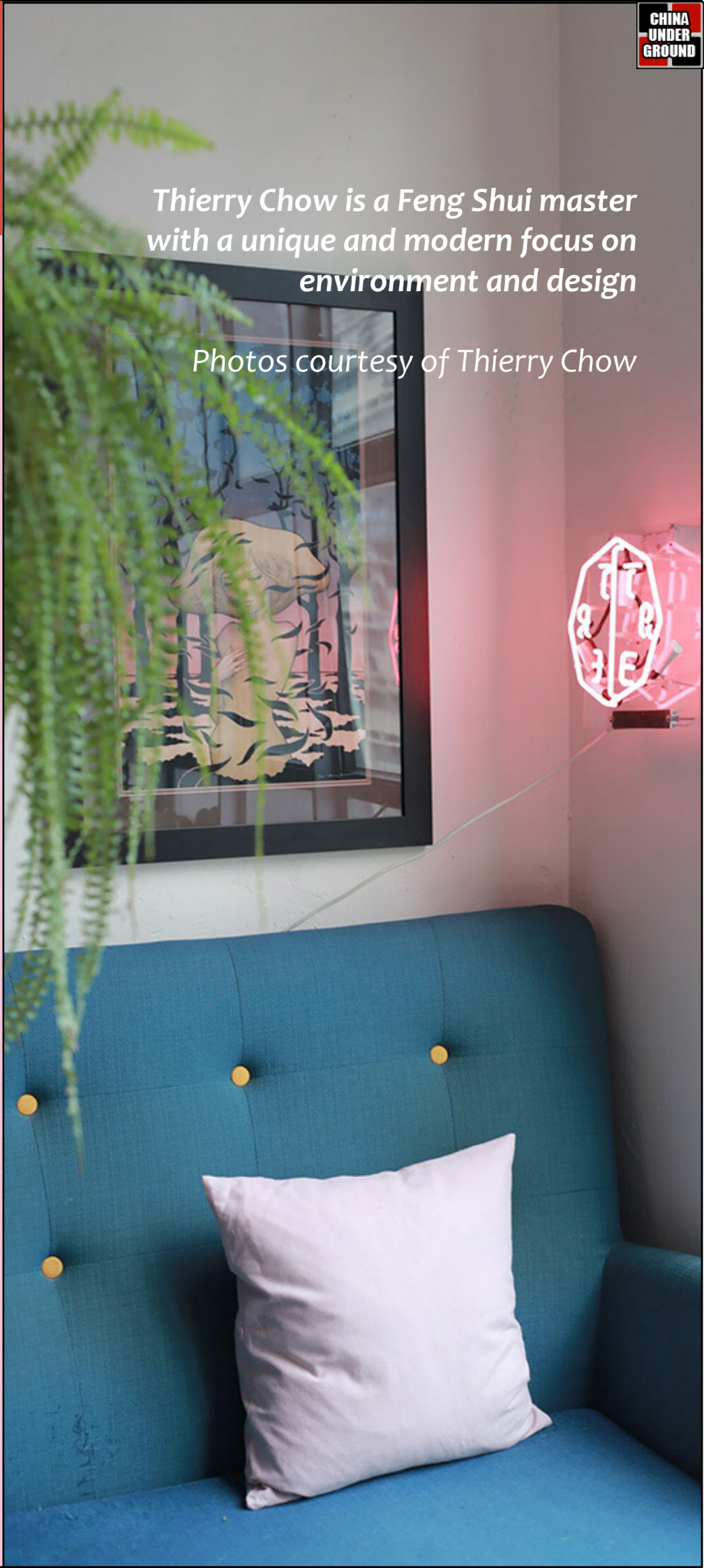
"I've always loved art and being creative"

30 years, I've started apprenticing under him when I got back to Hong Kong after graduating university.

How did you first become interested in Feng Shui? What motivates you?

Growing up with a father that's a feng shui master, I actually was never interested in feng shui. When I came back to Hong Kong after graduating university in Canada, I've worked a few jobs, design, teaching art, movie assistant, and I wasn't happy and had this strong feeling that there must be something else out there I want to do.

Then one day having dinner with my father, I suddenly had an idea to learn feng shui from him, and I felt strongly it would give me the right platform and opportunity to



use my creativity, and that's when I decided I would learn it and to make it my mission to modernize feng shui by combining design and feng shui, and of course to keep the importance traditional and vital elements of feng shui, but to give it a new language and new face.

What is Feng Shui? Why can it be important and applicable to daily life?

Feng shui is the relationship between us and the environment, and how it affects us both physically and mentally, it is not the only important thing in life, but it is one of the most important layers that makes up with life is, it is a practice that is great for maximizing one's wellness.

It is super important as our environment is one of the most important elements in our lives, having a good space and good environment can help one to be happier and healthier. It is applicable to daily life, like places that we live in, work in, how a place makes us feel is very important. On a big scale it is about how healthy our environment is, environmental issues such as our pollution, and garbage issues, these all affect us.

Do you have your Feng Shui philosophy? Do you

practice meditation?

Personally I meditate and practice Buddhism, they are things that help to keep me centered and balanced. My feng shui is so much more than just interior, it is also about the exterior, as it's the relationship between environment and people, we should all look at the big picture and be more aware of the health of our planet.

I always make sure my home and workplace feel comfortable and welcoming, there are things I'm really picky about, such as how much natural light I get, and what colors I use for interior and decorations. I think every space has its own personality, and it really reflects who we are internally.

What are the main benefits of following Feng Shui? Can Feng Shui change your lifestyle?

The main benefits of feng shui are enhancing one's mental health, enhancing one's physical health, it is a supernatural way to enhance and improve ones living and working space, brings awareness to our environment and the effects it has on us.

Can you tell us something about the role of



"The five elements are the vital elements of the planet, metal, water, wood, fire, and earth"



"The main benefits of feng shui are enhancing one's mental health, enhancing one's physical health"

design in contemporary Feng Shui?

Since feng shui deals with the environment, and also the five element (which means everything in our

life can be put into five elements category), for example, shapes, patterns, colors, materials can all be categorised, with these we can really play with the design with the theory of feng

shui. From designing ones interior to different decoration to homewares etc ...

How do you combines ancient metaphysical traditions with modern



"Feng shui is the relationship between us and the environment, and how it affects us both physically and mentally, it is not the only important thing in life, but it is one of the most important layers that makes up with life is, it is a practice that is great for maximizing one's wellness"

aesthetics?

I think it's about keeping the tradition and important vital information, but the key is to be able to explain them in modern terms, and in ways that modern society would understand. I think as long as two have a good balance, it will create something amazing when they are combined.

What are the simplest elements of Feng Shui that can help for balancing everyday lifestyle?

Simple elements such as understanding the five element theory is very useful at helping balance everyday life.

The five elements are the

vital elements of the planet, metal, water, wood, fire, and earth. For example we are naturally drawn to these elements, that's why we love the presence of ocean (water), forest (wood), sun (fire), earth (mountain), and as modern day goes it is okay to have these elements integrated into our lives and in our living/working space, so it's good to have these elements in our living space.

One example would be placing more plants in your home, not only will it clean the air, it also helps one to become more productive.

Does living outside Asia influenced your way of following Feng Shui?

I think there are mix opinions and perspectives on what feng shui is, and I think no matter what one knows about feng shui, and if you live in Asia or not, it is good to keep an open mind and to know that feng shui is and can be a very natural way to enhance one's living quality, it doesn't have to be superstitious.

Do you face any difficulties explaining Feng Shui environmental therapy to Western people?

I've had many opportunities to explain feng shui environ-

ment therapy to western people, and as my husband is also western, I've gained a method in explaining it so that western people can understand better. I think sometimes it's hard to explain it to people in Asia also, as many have a misunderstanding of what feng shui is, so it really goes for both but in different ways.

How do you balance social media and contemporary technology lifestyle with the knowledge of Feng Shui?

Feng shui can help one to achieve balance, too much of anything isn't good, and feng shui is all about environment, it is good to take a break from digital and tech life and actually look at our nature and enjoy the beauty of it.

Official site

Tang Min

Ballet Mistress

Principal Dancer from 1979 to 1988 at National Ballet of China

Photos courtesy of Tang Min

Mistress Tang Min is responsible for the level of competence of the dancers in Hong Kong Ballet (HKB). The Hong Kong Ballet (香港芭蕾舞團) is a classical ballet company founded in 1979. Mistress Min Tang is in charge of teaching the daily company ballet class.

When did you realize that your artistic path would be dance? At what age did you start your training?

My career in dance is a coincidence. I started professional ballet training at 10 years old. During that era, pupils at regular schools were being selected by professional ballet teachers when they visited.

"Tang Min, before joining Hong Kong Ballet as Ballet Mistress in 2009 as the same post in Guangzhou Ballet for four years."





What were the moments fundamental to your dance training?

I believe that your personal condition and hard work are the major criteria. From my point of view, I feel that understanding dance and innate talent are both important. Dancing is not just body movements, but also familiarity with the music, on-stage performance, and body coordination, etc.

What were the major problems and difficulties you have encountered? What are the greatest sacrifices you made in the name of dance?

I think the major issues are how you tackle personal weakness. I would keep improving my artistic insights to make myself become perfect on stage. I am not treating developing a career in my favourite profession as a sacrifice, but I did have to leave my family for training when I was 10.

How did you feel to dance with the National Ballet of China as Principal Dancer from 1979 to 1988?

Fortunately, we were the first generation to graduate after the Cultural Revolution. I became a Princi-

"Ballet Mistress Tang Min won the silver medals at the Osaka International Ballet Competition in 1984 and the Varna International Ballet Competition in 1986."



"Tang Min was part also of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens and Fort Worth Dallas Ballet"

style, and there are many more styles now.

From dancer to Ballet Mistress, what are the main responsibilities of each? What did you have to develop in order to become a good Ballet Mistress?

As a ballerina, all you need to do is concentrate and do your best. As a ballet mistress, you need to completely manage the rehearsal studio, understand each dancer's positions and postures, connect with the music and monitor the entire rehearsal process. You also need excellent insight, good communication skills and a sincere heart to be a good teacher.

For your experience, what are the main differences between ballet in Asia and abroad?

Ballet is an international art form, with its own language for expressing the same emotions and feelings. The only difference is that each country has its own characteristic repertoires.

pal Dancer at The National Ballet of China when I was 17 years old. At that time, I encountered various opportunities, including participating in international ballet competitions three times. Coached by my teachers, I achieved prizes and build up concrete fundamentals for my profession.

Can you tell us about your experience as Principal Dancer at Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre? What about your experience in ballet before joining Hong Kong Ballet as Ballet Mistress?

I left China in 1988 and started to develop my career in

the United States and Canada, playing lead roles at various companies. I had the chance to collaborate with different choreographers, company directors and dancers of many nationalities. Participating in different kinds of repertoire enriched my experience, as I had never experienced that in China at that time.

How much has ballet changed since you graduated from the Beijing Dance Academy to date?

Fundamental training has become more scientific and exact. Dance styles have become free from any one

Yang Ruiqi

My life is all about dancing

*Coryphée at Hong Kong Ballet,
one of the premier classical ballet companies in Asia*

Photos courtesy of Yang Ruiqi

Yang Ruiqi was born in Harbin. She started her training at Shanghai Dance School and graduated from the John Cranko School in Stuttgart in 2012. She joined Hong Kong Ballet as a Coryphée in 2016. Yang was a finalist at Prix de Lausanne competition in Switzerland in 2009 and 2010, and at the Taoli Cup Dance Competition in 2008.

When did you realize that dance could become your profession? Have you always wanted to be a dancer? Yang Ruiqi: Pursuing my favorite job as a profession is one of the most wonderful things on earth! It is presumptuous to say “my life is all about dancing”, but nevertheless, dancing is indispensable in my life. Danc-

ing is a tough job though, and I have faith to do my best as it is my own choice.

Who has influenced you most?

It is hard to pick one person who has had the most influence on me. Life contains many joined dots, and we need to grab our opportunities. There are many brilliant people around me to learn from. If I really had to pick one person, I would definitely choose my parents (yes, I chose two people finally)!

Is there a role you have dreamed of playing since you were a child?

I cherish all the roles that I play.

What role did you play that will always have a special place in your

heart? Is there one in which you identified more of yourself?

I would choose Olga in “Onegin”. She is a typical innocent girl with a subtle personality. This is my best memory of my time at Stuttgart Ballet.

Can you tell us something about your experiences abroad and what differences you find compared to Asia?

I am still me. For me, I like the bustle of cities that make me feel energetic. Europe is a peaceful place to stay, and I learned how to enjoy moments alone.

What limits of life did ballet help you overcome? What did dance help you strengthen?



We need to strengthen ourselves from our inner heart to face life issues, which is the same approach I have in my career. Strength is nurtured from the mind's core, which is the most basic requirement for dance training.

How important is discipline? How much time do you spend on training a week?

Discipline is a good habit, as we know what is essential and what is not necessary.

We wear our appetites on our bodies, so we need to control it by not eating too much. Sometimes you think you really want to eat a lot, but you may not actually be able to eat that much.



What does a dancer have to take into consideration to achieve great goals?

As a ballerina, your natural body figure is very important, but we cannot all rely on this. We still need a

multi-faceted approach to work with sweat and exertion every day to enjoy those great moments on stage.

"She joined Stuttgart Ballet as an Apprentice in 2012 and was promoted to a member of the Corps de Ballet in 2013"



Augusta Xu-Holland

Between Art & Science

***A career in China in the entertainment industry
and ecosystem of the environment***

Photos courtesy of Augusta Xu-Holland

Augusta Xu-Holland is a New Zealand actress and bioenergy enthusiast. She was born in Auckland to a Chinese father and New Zealand mother. Augusta has a Bachelor of Science (Biology) as well as a Bachelor of Arts (Asian Studies). She moved to Beijing where she broke into film industries and hold on her dual career in acting and in green energy. In 2015, she was cast in a leading role in the film “The Last Race - On Wings of Eagles”, playing the New Zealand nurse, Catherine Standish.

How did you start your acting career in China?

I noticed a demand for foreign actors in China that

could speak Chinese when I was living in Beijing. But because the industry was still at a relatively early stage, rather than taking the conventional route of film school and then signing to an agency, I looked to see what resources I had at hand and jumped in. I added a number of foreign acting agents on Wechat, started with a few commercials and then a few months in I had the fantastic opportunity of a principal role in On Wings of Eagles starring Joseph Fiennes and Shawn Dou.

What do you enjoy the most about acting?

I did a science degree and was working in PR and events when I first moved to China but I had always wanted to master a specific creative skill and to create art. Then the great thing about doing it in China is that I am

"I did a science degree and was working in PR and events when I first moved to China but I had always wanted to master a specific creative skill and to create art"



in the frontline getting stuck in and working hard among other like-minded talents helping to define the future of the Chinese film industry in the world. It's very rewarding for that reason.

Did you face an unexpected moment during your work experience?

I didn't expect to be doing so much action work. It was pretty amazing to learn how to do fight skills in my last

project, sci-fi action feature, Meta Area. I learnt physical skills, fight sequences and worked with a wire where you are fitted with a harness and do things like walk on walls and fly. One time, I slaughtered six enemies with two katanas and saved the day, which was pretty cool.

What has been a highlight for you as an actress?

My current project has been

a real joy so far. It's a feature film shooting over a really long period so there is plenty of time to get the right shot. I'm playing a half Russian half Northeastern Chinese 25 year old brothel owner in 1930's Shanghai. The costumes and wigs are amazing and I'm working alongside really skilled talent, on and off screen. So far I have sung a Russian opera aria in underwear, smoked thirteen filterless cigarettes and worn four different



"It was pretty amazing to learn how to do fight skills in my last project, sci-fi action feature, Meta Area"

wigs (including a pink one).

Your role in On Wings on Eagles (aka The Last Race) brought you to Cannes Film Festival. Can you share some memories of the international event?

It was delightfully what you would expect, plenty of yachts and champagne. It was nice to bring a little bit of China to Cannes

too like colourful kites from Weifang in Shandong province, and watching them fly on the beach.

How do you combine your work in bioenergy with your acting career?

I try to bring a soft power element to the sustainable energy industry. Since I started acting I have spent time at a bioenergy company called Kaidi Eco working on their international and local proj







"It was nice to bring a little bit of China to Cannes too like colourful kites from Weifang in Shandong province, and watching them fly on the beach"

ects with the UNDP. We work on projects such as sustainable energy for farmers in Guangxi and poverty alleviation. I have been occupied with acting more lately but I am definitely open to exploring bioenergy and environmentalism further in the future but mostly hope that my interdisciplinary model encourages the Chinese market to think about how we can create a complete ecosystem of the environ-

ment, economics, technology and, well, even including the entertainment industry!

Green solutions and clean energy are important for planet's future. What are the main differences between China and New Zealand?

I guess the main difference is that New Zealand is much, much smaller. It has a popu-

lation of around four million. This makes it easier to make national changes, coming from individuals. China is obviously much bigger but on the other hand, changes have the potential to happen on a much larger scale and the potential to be really beneficial for the whole world.

Yummy and healthy visual

**Food photographer, menu designer
and F&B visual strategist**

*Photos courtesy of Chiara Ye. The photos were taken for
the following restaurants in order of appearance:
Nyonya Kitchen; GloKitchen-Crossfit; Lotus - Chef Zhao Yi Bin*

Chiara Ye is a renowned Beijing food photographer and food stylist. She was born in China and has lived in Italy since childhood, where she had studied art and photography. Chiara is a professional food photographer that works with food and its visual representation.

How did you get into photography and when did you decide to choose it as a profession?

My passion began during high school, at Art Institute, where I followed an experimental class on performing arts disciplines. From there I started to study photography, film editing, photo-shop etc ... everything that was visual art fascinated me. I learned the method,

I immediately became passionate and interested in taking portraits, the possibility of manipulating images and beauty as I pleased. The first commissions from friends and acquaintances started almost as a game. At the time I had just finished high school, and I thought it could be a job that would never bore me, that would bring me to meet different people every day and give me the opportunity to travel, but it still seemed incredible that someone could really pay for my photos. It all began as a passion, which was followed by studies at the Institute of Photography where I was able to learn the history of photography and techniques. It is only after I moved to Beijing in 2013 that I really started to experience photography as a profession. When I arrived here I realized how my background of studies in It-

aly had been important for my artistic training, which made me different from all the other photographers around me. Thus began the first professional jobs

Did you speak Chinese with your family when you were living in Italy? How useful was your linguistic knowledge to transfer to Beijing?

I used to speak Chinese only with my mother. With no one else. It made things a lot easier, but moving to China was also a trauma in the beginning. In the first few months, I had no one to talk to in Italian and my Chinese was not as good as it is now. I was advantaged because I understood the language, but everything was different above all it was difficult to build real interpersonal relationships. Now I am very

experience with Chiara Ye

connected to the big Italian community that is here.

How did you approach food photography?

I always liked to take food's photos even before Instagram became a fashion. I have always photographed everything I ate, at that time no one was doing it yet and I was "hated" by the unfortunates who found themselves eating with me and who were forbidden to touch a fork without having taken all my pictures. When I moved, I started with fashion photography, which was what I liked most. It was my circle of friendships to approach the food photography. A friend who worked for a restaurant at Factory 798, asked me to take their new menu. I immediately liked the idea even though I had never taken pictures of food at a professional level,





but it gave me great artistic satisfaction. From there they started calling me many other restaurants in Beijing.

Chinese and Italian cuisines are among the most popular in the world. What are the main differences and difficulties for a food photographer in enhancing these dishes?

From my point of view, there is not so much difference in making these sets. It depends on the type of presentation of the food. For example, for healthy food, I have to show that the ingredients are very fresh and then around the plate and the food I add vegetables to specify and show the "viewer" the ingredients that are



in there. Each plate can potentially be represented and photographed in many different ways, changing the background, for example on white background, in location or creating a real set, it all depends mainly on the final message that you want to give to the customer. This is the most important thing.

Are there any more or less photogenic foods than others?

Absolutely yes! For example, I don't like taking pictures of steaks! Sometimes the dishes with ingredients with very similar colors make the distinction of the ingredients difficult. An example can be the kung pao chicken. Sometimes the difficulty depends on how the food is served.

Do you taste what you photograph?

Yes, yes! Obviously after the shooting. When shooting I'm very focused on what I'm doing. Not always. However, it can happen that I have to add a little bit of oil to give a fresher look to the image or other ingredients. Other times after the shooting the food has become inedible and need to be discarded. I've been to restaurants many times where the food on the menu was beau-



tiful, but then it came totally different. I don't want anyone who sees my photos to feel disappointed. With the restaurants I work with, I can say I feel very lucky because they leave me a lot of freedom. We don't want to disappoint customers.

"China is moving towards healthy food! I see more and more customers looking for healthy food and also visually in the menus there is great demand to underline this aspect"

In China, as in other Asian countries, as well as being good, food must be visually beautiful.

Yes especially beautiful. Everything is focused in be visual. I met some Italian restaurateurs who make some very good dishes, but

the visual image isn't the best, this doesn't help them because here in Beijing there is a great demand that the dishes are varied, different, healthy and also visually appealing. This stimulates the market and it's a good thing because every restaurant has its peculiarity in the

choice of dishes and in the care of the interiors. There is a lot of creative requests.

You grew up in Italy. Has Italian culture and cuisine influenced your tastes?



Absolutely. The knowledge I learned in Italy, everything I ate, everything I learned, even from the families of my friends, helped me a lot and I still feel it every day in my work, because this knowledge gives me so much help in creating images. My background: growth and

studies in Italy have helped me and led me to do a good job here in Beijing, in a really lucky moment. I feel in the right place at the right time. If I had stayed in Italy I do not know what my profession would have been.

What are Italian dishes that you like most? Which Chinese ones?

I like pasta, pizza, of course.

"One thing I like about Beijing and Shanghai is that you can have the chance to try restaurants of any kind of world cuisine. Besides the food environment is very varied and competitive. The chefs propose dishes of high quality, very close to their origin countries but at the same time highly creative"

But what I like the most is the quality of Italian raw food. In Italy most of the time, the dishes were always delicious and it was because of the quality of raw food. Here is missing. I like Beijing Duck and everything made by my mom. The best Chinese food is eaten at home because is linked to sharing. For example, during the Chinese New Year, we find ourselves making dumplings together. There is a lot of joy. A dish eaten together, as they say in China, is more fragrant. It's tastier.

I also wanted to add that everyone can take pictures of food the most important thing is to have a lot of passion and imagination. My photos are 20% of photography knowledge and everything else is passion and knowledge of food. If someone wants to work as a food photographer, he or she can start right away. I think those who are motivated can do it. Everyone has a smartphone that has a camera with a good lens. The most important is to have a lot of passion, patience, and constancy.



Matina Cheung: Teach



ing Yoga in Hong Kong

Matina was born and raised in Hong Kong. She is a certified 200 RYT. Her yoga journey started at the age of 17, and she feels life has been better than ever since. Not only a healthy body, but also a positive mind, and a happy soul.

How and when did you start to get interested in yoga?

That was the time that yoga started getting popular in HK. I thought it looked cool at the beginning but when I started my practice, it actually felt different from other exercises I have tried before.

Most of the other exercise, I felt exhausted after the training, but yoga made me feel

**" Everything
is about
'balance'"**

Matina is a certified yoga instructor and first stepped on her yoga mat at the age of 17

Photos courtesy of Matina Cheung





more awake and energizes after practicing. No more making me sweat but also restore my body and mind.

How long have you been practicing yoga and when you become an instructor?

I have been practicing it for almost 14 years now and I started teaching since early 2014.

"Yoga practice is so important that it not just calms my mind but it helps me to check and feel my body and the condition of the day"

What types of yoga do you have the most experience instructing?

I used to practice a lot of hot yoga, but now mostly I teach vinyasa and yin-yang yoga.

Do you have a yoga philosophy?

I would say I believe that everything is about "balance". Finding balance leads

**" I have been
practicing for almost
14 years now and I
started teaching since
early 2014"**





to health. Effort and rest, day and night, yang and yin. We are taught to work hard, but also we encourage you to listen to your body. We are all unique, comes with a different type of body, background, condition... but it's our own practice that balance our unique body and our own life.

How important is meditation in yoga practice?

It's so important that it not just calms my mind but it helps me to check and feel

my body and the condition of the day. I usually do a short meditation before my practice or teaching, commit to myself and see how I feel in the present.

To be honest, even if I have been practicing for years, meditation is still something that I couldn't handle well, but it teaches me to accept more of myself, and I know I still have a long way to go.

What are the main benefits of following a yoga course?

Since everyone is very different, following a course will help the teacher to get to know more about the student and easier to give suggestions and adjusted individually.

Like one has spine issues and one has shoulder injuries then they might need some simple advice or to do another variation of the pose.

Can yoga change your life?

To me, mentally yoga brings



me a more peaceful mindset, physically it gives me a better health for sure, and somehow also a more discipline in life – eating healthier, practice regularly.

Who practices yoga must follow a particular diet?

I think its optional. Since I practice, I naturally more concern about health. That's why I try to eat healthily and choose to pick food or products that are more eco-friendly.

I m not very straight to it yet but trying. I eat everything, as I said it about a balance, but I choose to eat less meat as I think, I don't need that much of it and it harms animals and the environment.

Do you believe there are age limits to practice yoga or start attending a course?


Of course, not, yoga is really for everyone, just pick one that suitable for your own condition.

"Yoga brings me a more peaceful mindset"



Heanne McCollum

Personal Training & Lifestyle Coaching in Hong Kong



*Heaney supports to achieve fitness goals,
optimize health and well-being through
training system and nutrition guidance*

Photos courtesy of Heaney McCollum

*"I have always been
interested in health
from a young age"*

Heaney McCollum is Personal Trainer & Lifestyle Coach. She helps and supports women to living a happy, healthy and fit life. Heaney supports to achieve fitness goals, optimize health and well-being through training system and nutrition guidance. She thinks that stay positive and believe in yourself, eat well and nourish your body with the right wholesome foods, and then you can become your own artist and



sculpt your body and life into the best shape you can be. Her goal is to give you the tools to workout safely and effectively, to guide and support to achieve the most confident body

shape and maintain it for life. Heaney has a vision: to create a community of like-minded women who want to motivate and inspire one another on their journey towards bet-

tering themselves, both the mind and body.

How and when did you start? What motivated you to become a Personal Trainer?

***"Yoga brings me a
more peaceful
mindset"***

I could whilst working long hours and later on came to a realization that I wanted to live my interest and become a PT so I quit my job 4 years ago and studied to become a Personal Trainer.

What does a Personal Trainer do?

We have a deep passion for helping people work towards achieving their health goals, whether that is to look good or to feel good.

Is there a better time to train and achieve good results quickly?

Everybody's body clock is different. Some people have more energy in the morning and find training more effective, some people are the opposite.

How many times a week does a person have to train?

Depending on their goals. I say everybody should move for at least 30mins

a day, whether that is a walk or a workout.

Do you believe there are age limits for those who decide to get in shape?

No, as long as they are guided by a professional and not on any extreme program or diet.

Are there any foods to avoid during training?

I believe in bio-individuality, there is no one diet that fits all.

Is traditional Hong Kong cuisine suitable for those who want to keep fit?

Home cooked Chinese food is generally healthy. I would suggest to avoid processed, premade sauces and ingredients and stick to wholefoods and quality ingredients.

Does the Hong Kong weather conditions affect the outdoor training program?

The rain makes it tough to train outdoors.

I have always been interested in health from a young age, the interest grew when I moved back to Hong Kong 6 years ago and started working for a marketing firm and have neglected my own health. I committed to looking after myself as much as



Elle Lee Style Blogger

Being an ex-fashion model and a current fashion columnist/writer, Elle has a unique way of bringing selected international and regional influential topics to her readers.

Photos courtesy of Elle Lee

Elle Lee is a style blogger, fashion writer that explores trends and share her point of view of style and beauty tips. She also does vlogging on Youtube and Youku from time to time. Being an ex-fashion model and a current fashion columnist/writer, Elle has a unique way of bringing selected international and regional influential topics to her readers.

Could you tell us a bit about yourself?

I am a do-it-all kind of #girl-boss – a writer, a TEDx speaker, an entrepreneur, an emcee, an influencer (1 million combined followers)... the list keeps getting longer. Born in Shanghai, matured in London and Hong Kong; I am also an explorer, nonstop traveling to over 50+ countries, 300+ cities. And of course, the aim is to cover the whole earth and maybe space too. Sky can't even be the limit!

"My biggest influence is my mum because she's always taken good care of herself"

What inspired you to start working on fashion



and style?

My first real encounter with fashion was modeling for a top teen fashion magazine in China when I was 16 ish. But I think the biggest influence is my mum because she's always taken good care of herself. She's a Shang-hainese elegant lady, that kind of is self-explanatory.

What do you love most about your work?

I love the fact that I get to

work in different fields but regarding fashion, I think it's the excitement. The nonstop creative part and the creative inspiring people I meet along the way.

Does living outside Asia have influenced your way of seeing fashion and style?

Definitely. Fashion in the West is bolder, and style is more varied. People are not afraid to dress up and shout out their personality throw

the things they put on themselves.

So it kind of taught me how it's beyond just looking good.

What would you say is the biggest difference between Asian and Western girls style?

Western is more bold, and Asian is more conservative and appropriate.

Yet that has slowly changed,

***"People tend to shop online,
shop fast and are less concerned
with foreign brands"***

styles in Asia are now quite diverse and younger generations are not afraid to showcase their identity through their outfits.

***What's most important
for Asian girls style?***

Heels perhaps. Asian girls on average are more petite compared to Western girls. So most of the Asian girls like to wear heels to make them look taller.

***What's most common in
Asian girls bags?***

Beauty products like cushion compact, or a good selfie camera/phone.

***Does social media change
fashion habits in Hong
Kong and Mainland Chi-
na?***

Yes extremely! There are so many KOL, bloggers, live streamers, vloggers. China has a huge population and they tend to shop online a lot! Now they can actually see ordinary people wearing certain clothes online live before making that purchase,

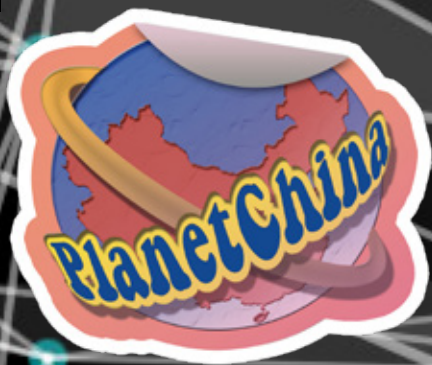
so they prefer that too.

And because everything is delivered super fast in China, people tend to shop online, shop fast and are less concerned with foreign brands.

***Does online content in-
fluence buyers more than
traditional ads?***

I think they still both influence buyers. Big brands are spending more money to create online content too, but traditional ads will always be there. However, the conversion of online content to sales is far more effective than traditional ads.

***"China has a huge
population and they
tend to shop
online a lot!
Now they can
actually see ordinary
people wearing
certain clothes online
live before making
that purchase, so they
prefer that too"***



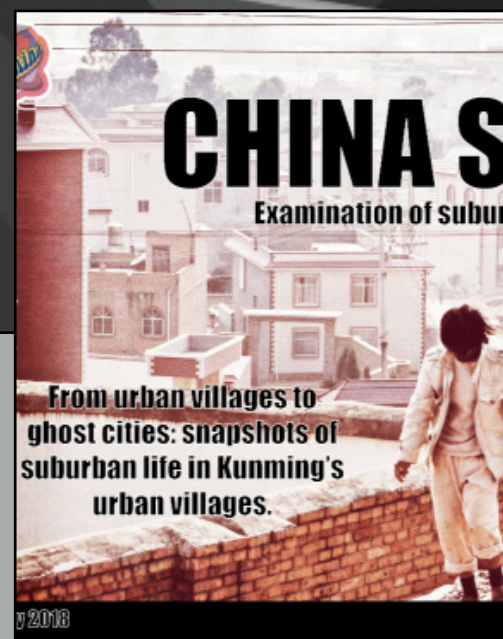
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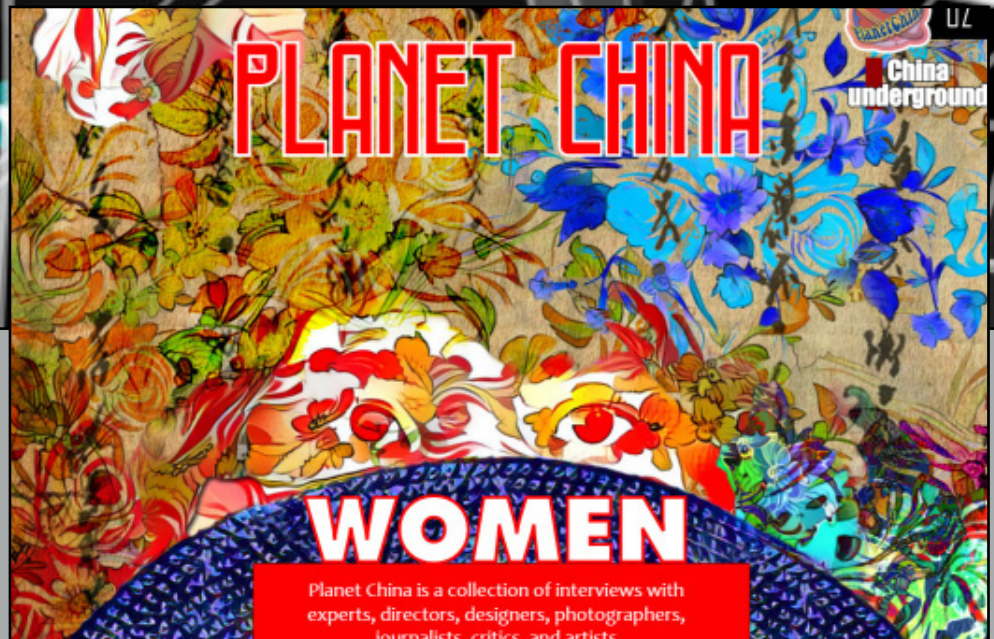
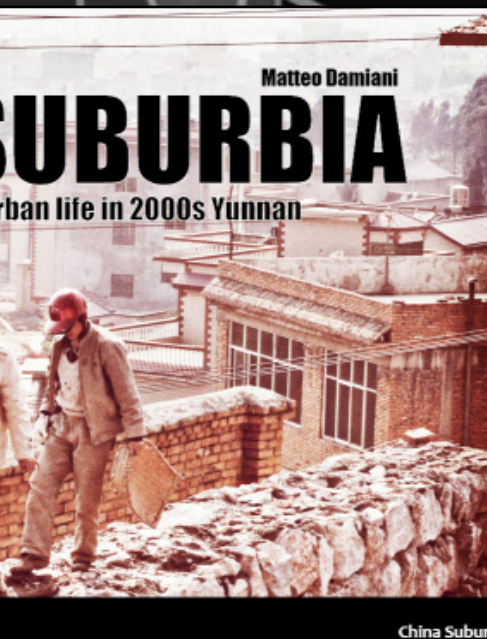
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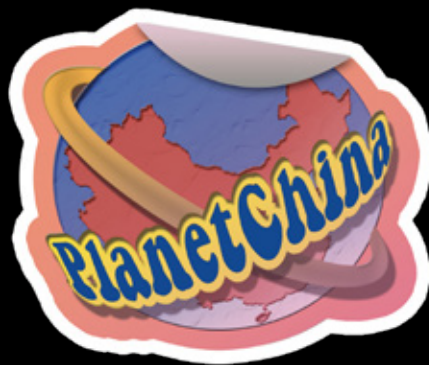


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