



天長地久

葉世強 水墨

YEH SHIH-CHIANG IN INK
CONSTRUCTING ETERNITY

14/9 ————— 19/10/2024

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開幕及中秋歡聚：2024 年 9 月 14 日（週六）下午 2 至 6 時
展覽至 2024 年 10 月 19 日

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Opening and Mid-Autumn Reception: 14 September, Saturday, 2-6pm
Exhibition runs till 19 October, 2024

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漢雅軒將於九月舉辦葉世強水墨展《天長地久》，精選多幅精彩書畫作品，呈現傳奇畫家葉世強（1926 - 2012）純淨空靈的精神宇宙。

葉世強（1926 年生於廣東韶關，2012 年於台北逝世），曾師從高劍父先生於廣州藝專，並傾畢身修為突破創作框架自成一家。少年時期生命歷程反映大時代之流連轉徙，與家人兩岸分隔。曾於復興美工及台大美術社任教，教學風格與言行身教深受學生緬懷。期間亦隨孫毓芹先生習古琴、從南懷瑾先生禪修，長期以斲製古琴營生，在台灣琴界以音色蒼古鬆透著名。書畫作品僅與少數有緣人分享，絕不隨意示人。生活素樸拙古，深居簡出。他以孤絕而熱熾的筆墨融貫水墨和油彩等媒材，開拓畫布二維向度之侷限，從根植於日常的創作實踐推向美學極致，在離群索居的生命歷練中將藝術作為精神淬煉與身心修為的方法。

葉世強於 1949 年從廣州到台北遊覽，因此定居而終老台灣。二戰後，台灣的藝術家對應西方戰後的潮流，以中國傳統為藝術實驗的基礎，探索中國藝術的「現

代」出路。葉世強既不願意尾隨西方新潮運動，又不願受困於國畫的民族國家範疇，尤其避忌冷戰兩方的意識形態困局。葉世強以美術的永恆意境為依歸，同時投身於現代和傳統的藝術語言，發展出獨特的繪畫手法，以強烈的個性和深邃的精神境界打破成規。葉世強同時拒絕了藝術的學院體制與官方機制，又以不妥協的風骨抗拒藝術市場和官僚展覽制度。葉世強可謂貧而不窮，因貧而富得生命自由，因困而早成文化界的傳奇。他的案例突出了中國當代藝術論述中亟待整理的問題，比如「民族」與「國家」的議題，「意識形態政治下的創作道路」。葉世強代表的這條隱晦的藝術道路在一定程度上質疑了戰後以國家論述為主流的藝術史，對研究者提供了寶貴的思考線索。

YEH Shih-Chiang 葉世強 (1926-2012)

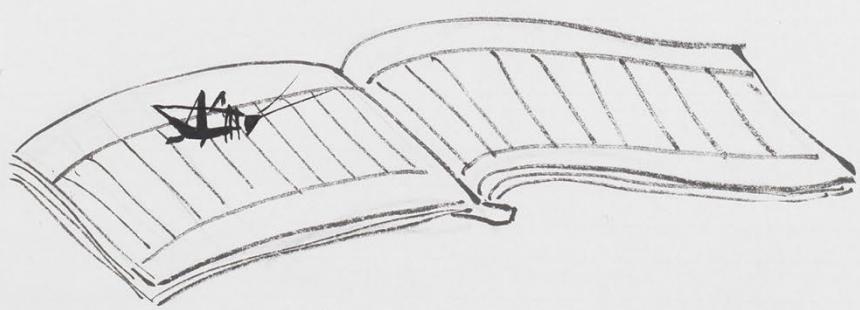
Rooster Crowing 《啼雞》

1995

Ink and Colour on Paper

135 x 69.5 cm





YEH Shih-Chiang 葉世強 (1926-2012), *Book* [Detail] 《書》[局部], 1995, Ink on Paper, 136 x 70 cm

葉世強的天長地久

親愛的父親：

那年，我在學校曾寫信給你，我不要讀書了，我要上天捉月捉星捉太陽，我要去看山和水天和地。不兩日，你來學校帶我去吃飯，你舉杯敬以我踐行之酒，一別到現在。父親，我不孤單、不寂寞，因為父親與我同在。

八八年十一月一日 兒 世強

民國七十七年寫這封信時葉世強先生已經離開韶關故鄉四十年，父親早在二十年前文革年代亡故。天地父母，日月星辰。天地備於我，以我叩問天地，此之謂孤絕。以其孤絕之故，葉世強先生的書畫可以磅礴高山俯臨大海，幾乎不知藝術館為何事。他喜歡作大幅油畫，四周澎湃而溢出周界的油彩無法被畫面框架，最好展示於野外，陳列山海之前。連篇滔滔的大字佛經是他夜裡於海邊公路的空曠路面揮筆潑墨而就，本該在星空下濤風中孤身誦讀。

從人生履歷看，葉世強修心之路，粗看似乎始於為世所棄。他被時代獨困於海隅、自棄於藝壇的習氣、失意於愛情、自外於社會。然而他行事與操守卻絕非孤僻遺世。細審他的生活細行與藝術情懷，反而只覺得豐富細膩、元氣充沛、自得其樂。他晚年回憶成長的軼事，行文真摯誠懇，懷念故土風物細緻入微、對雙親眷戀情深。他除了執著個人藝術目標，生活其實活潑又有情趣，完全不是反叛型的藝術家。即使從他那革命與抗戰年代審視，他既沒有苦大仇深的階級敵意，更沒有小資產階級那種時代失落感。從現代藝術的範疇討論葉世強這樣的藝術家找不到恰當定位，唯獨前現代中國的正統論述有「隱逸」這回事。

葉世強的藝術帶著一種絕對的純潔感，有如修煉人在既貧且困之際，於獨處間豁然開朗，以至無所罣礙。離開美術學院後的二十多年，他除了發奮書畫，也隨南懷瑾先生禪修、從孫毓芹先生習古琴，無往而不利。民國六十六年他遷居城外，每週到城裡教課三天，學生說他鍛練之苛刻會讓同學重複練習一劃筆法連寫六小時不許如廁。這反映了他對自己修煉的專精。技通於神則無往而不利，葉世強書畫從來一氣呵成，水墨畫每以分鐘計。

貧而不窮，所以富足。寓富足於貧，所以專精。葉世強越老彌精，以至入聖。「聖」的修為是「聽」。葉世強的意境有太空的寥廓、亘古的寂寞，畫面左右兩邊切不斷的圖境溢於宇宙的無窮盡。至於葉公書畫的龍蛇走動、戛然寂止，更是一以「聽」為師。畫面的大片色塊與遼闊跟西方一九六〇年代的抽象畫可以對照，而當時臺灣的美國新聞處的確很積極宣傳紐約風頭最盛的新潮，葉公也必定曾經關注。紐約抽象潮的好幾個名家以單色塊營造超越世間意象的精神境界，以抽象拒絕現實，轉而求證於永恆。葉公不走純抽象的路，但是他的拒絕同樣徹底。他拒絕學院制度，拒絕藝術對社會的任何妥協、一切商業利益。他把藝術修為提昇至純粹的信仰。

節錄自張頌仁《葉世強的天長地久》，2021 年



YEH Shih-Chiang 葉世強 (1926-2012), *Willow Boat* [Detail] 《柳舟》[局部], c. 2005, Ink on Paper, 136 x 70 cm

Hanart TZ Gallery is honoured this September to present 'Constructing Eternity', an exhibition of ink paintings by late Taiwanese master artist Yeh Shih-Chiang (1926-2012).

Yeh Shih-Chiang was born in 1926 in Guangdong Province, China, and died in Taipei in 2012. He was among the last class of students at the Guangzhou Municipal Junior Art College under the directorship of the illustrious ink painter Gao Jianfu. In 1949, Yeh and a few classmates planned an art expedition to the famous Dunhuang Grottoes, but they were frustrated in the effort due to China's civil war, which prompted them to redirect their journey to Taiwan instead; but here Yeh was caught up with the retreat of the National Republic government, and spent the rest of his life in Taiwan.

The experiences of his later youth, when he moved to Taiwan and was separated from his homeland, reflect the displacement, separation and mass migrations of the era. In Taiwan, he lived the life of a recluse in the countryside, and taught only part time at the Fu-Hsin Trade and Art School and the Art Society of National Taiwan University. His teaching style and mentoring, exemplified by his words and deeds are remembered fondly by generations of students. Over the years, he also became celebrated as a maker of 'guqin' (Chinese zither). In contrast to his fame as a maker of this music instrument, he was reluctant to exhibit his paintings and calligraphy, his true métier, although in time the legend of his art grew even with the limited works seen by Taiwan's art circle. Living in extreme simplicity and isolation, Yeh sought to maintain the purity of his artistic pursuit by rejecting the institutional constraints of the art world, even as his lifelong vision was to find his place in art history. In Yeh's final years, he rejected the offer of a major exhibition by the National Museum of History due to disagreement with standard curatorial practice.



YEH Shih-Chiang 葉世強 (1926-2012), Bamboo 《竹》, c. 1995, Ink on Paper, 135.5 x 69.5 cm

Yeh Shih-Chiang: Constructing Eternity

Dear Father,

I wrote you a letter from school, saying that I wanted to quit school, that I wanted to ascend to the sky and grasp the moon and the sun. I wanted to see the mountains and waters, the Heavens and the Earth. Not two days later, you came to school to take me to lunch. You raised a glass to toast me and wished me well on my journey. Father, I'm not alone, nor am I lonely, because, my Father, you are always with me.

November 1, 1988, from your son, Shih-Chiang

When Yeh Shih-Chiang wrote this letter to his father in 1988, it had already been forty years since he left his hometown of Shaoguan, and twenty years since his father's death during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Heaven and Earth, Father and Mother, Moon and Stars. Nature resides within the self, and it is through the self that one engages with the universe. Is this not the meaning of solitude? It was from within his solitude that Yeh Shih-Chiang found a space to create his calligraphy and painting: works powerful and expansive enough to encompass mountains and seas—there was no place for art museums in Yeh Shih-Chiang's artistic practice. He loved creating monumental works in oils in which the surging and overflowing paint could not be constrained within the frame. These are works that are best displayed outdoors, at the edge of the mountains, by the sea. And, indeed, Yeh Shih-Chiang would often spread out his paper on the public roadway by the seaside and write long, overflowing Buddhist scriptures in large characters: these should be chanted under starry skies, in solitude with the wind and waves.

At first glance, Yeh Shih-Chiang's artistic career seems to have been sealed by ill fate. The tides of history set him adrift far from home and, during his early years in Taiwan, he became alienated from the arts scene, suffered deep disappointment in a love affair, and was socially isolated. Yet a more careful look at his life and his artistic sensibility reveals a man of refinement, full of vitality and contentment with his life and with himself. In his later years, he often recalled memories of his youth, and wrote sincerely and frankly about his nostalgic

longing for the sights and sounds of his hometown, and about his deep affection for his parents. Yeh Shih-Chiang was not at all the rebel-artist type. Even during the years of revolution and the War of Resistance against Japan (the Second Sino-Japanese War, 1937–1945), he suffered neither from bitter class hostility nor the petty bourgeoisie's sense of loss during a time of radical social change. It is difficult to position an artist like Yeh Shih-Chiang in the modern art discourse. A role more suitable for him is a figure from pre-modern China: that of the literati recluse. Engagement with the sociopolitical reality is the duty of every Confucian literatus, and, when times are not propitious, an honourable retreat is the way of the literati recluse.

Every aspect of Yeh Shih-Chiang's daily activities were informed by a conscious awareness of the necessity for inner cultivation shared by both the Confucian literati and Zen traditions. For twenty years, after completing his art training at the Taiwan Provincial Teachers' College, he not only threw himself passionately into painting and calligraphy, he also learned to craft traditional guqin (Chinese zither) instruments, studying with a master of guqin, Sun Yuqin, and, for many years, Yeh Shih-Chiang practiced this as his main art form. He also deepened his practice of Zen meditation through studies with Master Nan Huai-Chin. Inspired by his spiritual practice and a simple yet uncompromising way of life, he entered into a new creative period, creating a range of works marked by a pure fluidity of line and a dynamic inner power. Passionate and focused, Yeh Shih-Chiang would complete a painting in a single session, sometimes within minutes. In 1978, Master Yeh moved to a rural suburb on the outskirts of Taipei. For a number of years, he biked into the city to teach three days a week. His students recall his method of training as rigorous, even harsh, and, under his discipline, they would practice a single stroke of calligraphy for six hours straight, without even a bathroom break. This is reflective of the demands Yeh Shih-Chiang placed on his own self-cultivation.

Yeh Shih-Chiang was poor but lacked nothing. Living modestly, he had the supreme luxury of focusing his energies as he chose, without extraneous distractions. In the 1960s, Master Yeh's contemporaries in the Western art world were experimenting with various forms of abstract painting, using gestural brushwork and mesmerising colour fields. He was sure to have taken notice of these developments in the West as the US News Agency in Taiwan was very

active in promoting modern art during these Cold War years. Although Yeh Shih-Chiang did not follow the way of pure abstraction, his parallel path that rejected the mundane world was even more uncompromising. He further rejected the institutional system of art, rejected any compromise between art and society, and rejected all profit or gain from art. Yeh Shih-Chiang sought to elevate art into his own uncorrupted faith.

Excerpt from “Constructing Eternity”, Chang Tsong-Zung, 2021



YEH Shih-Chiang 葉世強 (1926-2012)

Farmer's House 《農夫之家》

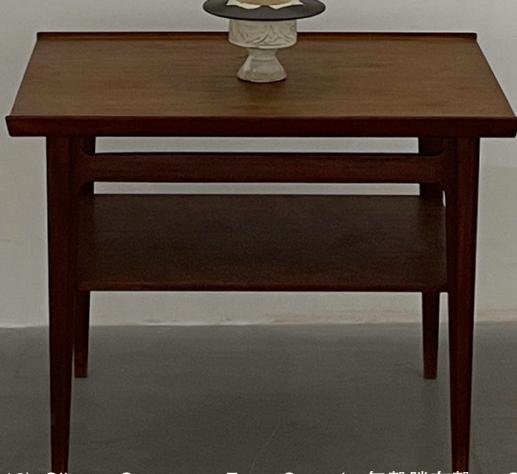
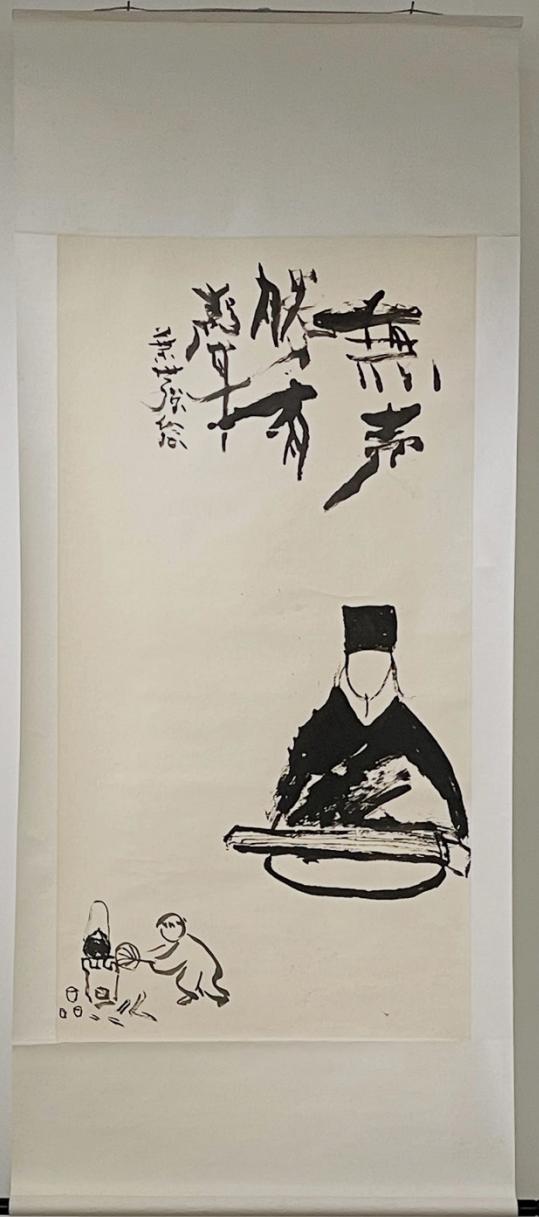
c. 2000

Ink on Paper

136 x 70 cm



YEH Shih-Chiang 葉世強 (1926-2012), *Two Lotus Pods, One Leaf* [Detail] 《二蓬一葉》[局部], 2008, Ink and Colour on Paper, 136 x 70 cm



YEH Shih-Chiang 葉世強 (1926-2012), *Silence Surpasses Every Sound* 《無聲勝有聲》, C. 1995, Ink on Paper, 134 x 68 cm