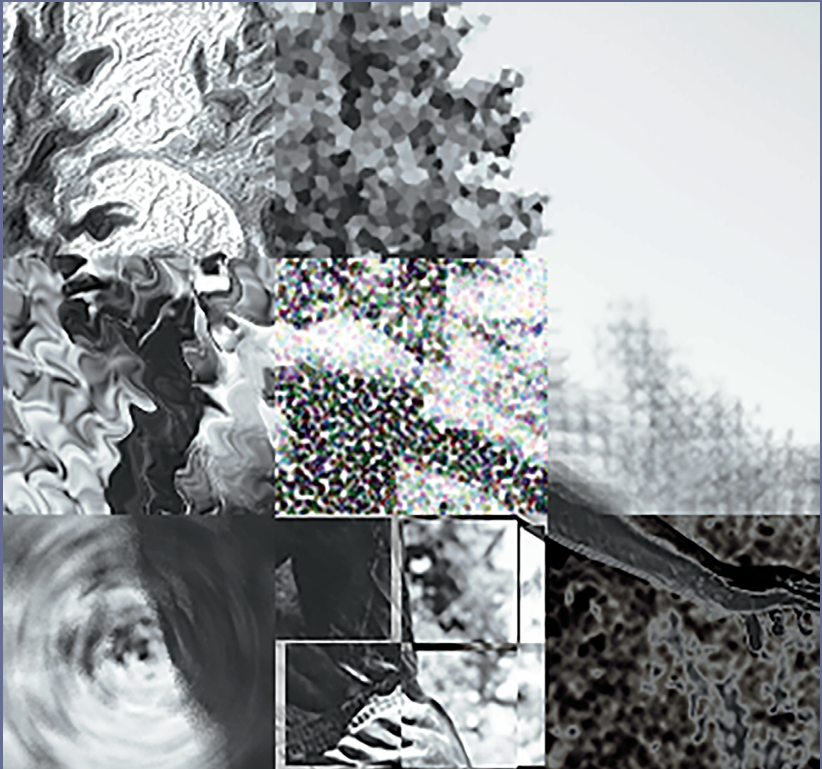


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Passing On by Hugo Xiao

sion in his works. The value of the artist means to be one that can express their emotions within their work and allow others to watch or read the peace and feel something.

FA: “If you think about yourself as a camera, you automatically put a barrier between you and what you see. The lens, the filter. But sometimes to tether, and build a char-

acter, I also have to use my imagination. I don’t want to only see the reality. For example, I see you, I can describe you in a way but then I don’t like this part of you I can make it up and change it or take my part of mine and put it into your place and it is a way of playing. I always think about sculpting when I write. You have to build something, build characters, build emotions, build structural sentences. It’s a craft that will come naturally.”

Q&A FROM THE EVENT

AUDIENCE: We live in a digital universe, today and there are stories everywhere. Hundreds, thousands, millions of them. We are surrounded by stories. Each one of these people is feeling very much as you described, “I got something to say! I want to write! I got a story in mind!” and sometimes I asked myself, “Okay, I want to write but what will separate or what will distinguish what I am doing from the tens of thousands of stories around me. Sometimes I read them, and I think, ‘These are wonderful, I can never write this good’. The question boils down to “What gives you the confidence to work for a year or two on a novel and at the end of that time say, ‘I got something here, this is good’”.

FA: It is because I like it because I want to. When I was 20, I read a lot and when I started writing, and found that was my career, “I want to become a writer” and I

humming sound above me and I know you will stay alive, at least in memory, as long as I breathe. “Sorry”, your hushed whisper reaches me, apologetic hands stroking up and down my back. That, too, makes me too hot and too cold simultaneously, “Sorry, sorry, it’s alright now.”

You speak English to me now too, only sometimes, because I’ve forgotten much of the tongue that bound us together. Are you still Chinatown if you do? Can you forgive me just this once?

The chicken from the past, warm in its takeout box, still tastes the same and I wonder why you couldn’t have been free to do the same.

I try to call out to you, Chinatown, as you break away from my present. As the sun sets and you walk away from me without another glance, foreign words slip away from my tongue like gold in the foreign rivers our people panned once.

I know you must know English. You could have, should have heard me. We both knew then.

But I let you go.

You slink back into the boxes like the pretend rats we once saw and I watch you, tongue twisted and you disappear among the throng of the homeless.

In/visible until my memory and words find me again.

The Loving Hand by Hugo Xiao

