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Images courtesy of Chen Bo-wen and
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Sun Yuan and Peng Yu, *Dogs That Cannot Touch Each Other*, 2003. Chen Bo-wen once sponsored the two artists to create a project involving guns.

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHEN BO-WEN ALL THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN POSSESS WINGS

所有的墜落者都長著翅膀
台灣藏家陳博文訪談

Chen Bo-wen is a doctor who began collecting art in the 1990s. In order to learn more about the works in his collection, he took an arts course and has also sponsored various experimental projects. He is currently a renowned collector in Taiwan.

Insight into Art

When it comes to art, Chen believes that the most important elements are whether artists have stayed true to the roots of their craft, and if they are successful in depicting the current times, as well as capturing the way of life that is common among all people. To him, as long as artists find and hold onto subject matters that they truly care about, it does not matter whether they convey their messages correctly or incorrectly, or even if what they are saying contradicts with what is present in their works. In his opinion, although it is difficult for art to provide us with 'answers', it can at least 'ask the right questions', enabling us to explore a better future for humanity through contemplation.

All Those Who have Fallen Possess Wings

On the subject of why collecting art is significant to him, Chen quotes from a poem, 'All those who have fallen possess wings'. He thinks that life is likened to the process of falling, an unavoidable fate. However, 'Collecting art gives me wings.' The most fundamental aspect of his collection process is his 'love for art', something which enables him to find his inner voice, as well as satisfaction.

Chen ordered his first piece, a sculpture by Taiwanese artist Sheu Wei-Jong, in 1994. Although it did not end up being in his possession, his journey of collection began here. In 1998, he came to realise that he has made numerous costly mistakes as a result of listening to information and spending money that he should not have. Consequently, he slowed the pace of collecting and started asking himself, 'What is collecting? Why do people who love art feel a need to collect actual works instead of just buying books containing pictures of them?' With these questions in mind, he spent three years studying the Citizen's Arts Course

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organised by the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, learning about everything, from modern to contemporary art, under the guidance of Prof. Yen Ye-Cheng. Although he still has not arrived at any definitive answers to the aforementioned questions, through this intensive learning experience, and later with the help of art consultant, Andre Lee, Chen was able to separate his mere fondness for art from the act of collecting. He viewed the latter seriously, and tried to accurately establish his perspective as a collector while amassing pieces in a systematic and pensive manner.

In his collection process, Chen sees 'quality' as the most important element of an artwork. He does not gather pieces according to a predetermined theme as curators do for an exhibition. Nonetheless, upon reviewing his collection after a period of time, he discovered that a certain degree of commonality had been established naturally. With this newfound knowledge, he thought he could continue in this direction while striving for refinement and improvement. For instance, one of the areas towards which Chen leans is works expressing concern for social issues. He believes that the many phenomena in modern society, such as globalisation, the widening of the wealth gap, environmental damage, complicated political situations, the wealthy becoming wealthier, the oppression of the young, and the absence of people voicing out for those who are suffering, can all be illustrated through art. Works which reflect the characteristics of a particular era, or those that show concern for vulnerable groups, always move him the most. In his opinion, just because a piece expresses a social issue, that does not mean it cannot be visually appealing – many works are impactful and poetic at the same time.

Chen also advises against collecting art for the purpose of selling for profit. "That really depends on whether you have that great an eye!" he remarks sardonically. Moreover, he points out that the costs associated with artwork transactions, including handling fees, transportation, insurance and storage, can be dauntingly expensive. It would usually be very lucky for an investment to realise 30-40% profit, but in the art world, that would just be enough to break even. It also goes without saying that if one wishes to make copious amounts of money from art, a lot time is needed – one must think in terms of 10, 15, or 20 years. In short, if one takes to art collection with an investment-led approach, disappointment is imminent.

The Stories behind the Works

The range of media used in the works in Chen's collection is extensive. There are paintings, videos, installations, conceptual artworks, as well as pieces which resemble contracts and documents. Although they are not limited in geography, he mainly focuses on contemporary Taiwanese art, with Asian and international art in successive priority, due to finan-



Left:
Wu Chi-tsung, *Wire IV*, 2009

Right:
Su-Mei Tse, *Das wohltemperierte Klavier*, 2004. This work is an example of Chen Bo-wen's primary focus on contemporary Taiwanese art.

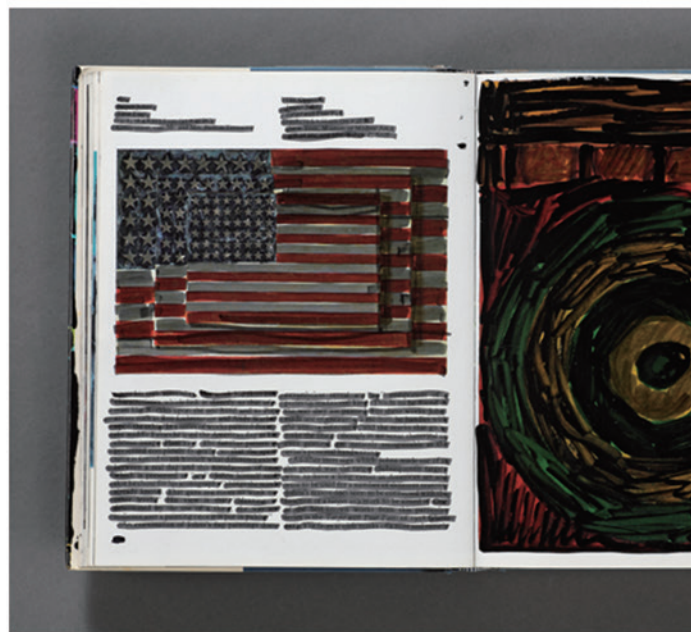




cial constraints. As a practising doctor with a fixed monthly income, Chen laughs and says, 'After deducting family expenses from my monthly income, the rest is basically spent on art. It's about TWD 10,000 per month. But sometimes, if I see something that I really like, I might end up using the money that's supposed to go into the kids' education fund.' As Chen is not a fan of art fairs, most of his purchases are made through galleries, with a couple of pieces acquired from auctions.

At 'Boundless Treasures: Inexhaustible and Limitless', the third Annual Collectors' Contemporary Collaboration held at the Hong Kong Arts Centre in March, Chen presented Shi Jin-Hua's 'Art Today' series and Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook's photographic works. During the interview, he talked enthusiastically about the stories behind the other pieces in his collection. He mentioned an exhibition in Taipei titled 'Open Sesame', in which he sponsored the projects of artists Sun Yuan and Peng Yu. As the two have some knowledge of firearms, the funds were used to buy two replica guns. Since Chinese law prohibits the civilian possession of firearms, the artists signed a contract with Chen stating that they were the rightful owners of the guns, with the collector having proprietorship over the project and being responsible for looking after the firearms. He must also polish them regularly and present them for viewing upon the request of the artists' friends should they visit Taiwan. If China's regulations surrounding firearms should relax in the future, or if the artists immigrate to a country which permits civilian gun ownership, the firearms must be returned to them. Chen says, 'They own the imitation guns, while I'm in possession of a concept. Should the firearms be returned, I'd only be left with four pieces of A4 paper and nothing else. Even though the guns are replicas, you can inject gas into them and fire BB bullets, so it is possible to inflict injury at close range. The funny thing is, China never gave up the chance to point missiles at Taiwan, yet they're entrusting a Taiwanese person with the custody of these weapons. There seems to be a lack of political consciousness here.'

Among Chen's collection is also Shi Jinsong's *Garden of a Thousand Creations*, a piece created by



polishing a brick wall. Its transparent appearance enhances its visual effect when placed in a setting such as the courtyard of a residence. When he first acquired the work, he was drawn by the story behind it, as well as its rich texture. Shi, a Chinese artist, has quite a large studio in Beijing. 'The studio should at least outlive myself', he originally thought. To his surprise, it was demolished in the blink of an eye by the Beijing government due to the 2008 Olympics without any room for negotiations. After its demise, Shi returned to what was left of his studio and took some bricks and pieces of wall away with him, creating works resembling Scholar's Rocks out of them. Chen considers this piece as an artist's transformation of the disrespect and oppression of the people by a totalitarian regime into an aesthetic object. It has the appearance of the renowned Scholar's Rock and looks like a traditional sculpture, yet it is made of bricks from a building which was demolished. On the other hand, Scholar's Rocks are the most commonly seen feature in the gardens of Suzhou in Chinese culture. With each dynastic change, when the literati become frustrated due to imperial oppression, they would hide in their gardens to make poetry and music. Therefore, these sculptures also symbolise the spiritual means through which scholars and intellectuals escape political tyranny.

陳泊文本身是一位醫生，於1990年代開始收藏藝術品，為提升收藏的知識修讀了美術課程，也贊助過富實驗性的創作計劃，現時是台灣知名的收藏家。

對藝術的洞察

對於藝術，陳泊文認為最重要的是藝術家有沒有回到藝術的本質，是否能體現這個時代的精隨，抓到所有人共通的一種生活方式。對他來說，只要藝術家的創作抓到了他所關心的主題，則藝術家會不會講，講對了，講錯了，甚至有些時候所講的和作品矛盾也無所謂。他認為，雖然藝術很難提供「答案」，但是可以「問一個正確的問題」，進而在思考中探究出人類更好的未來。

所有的墜落者都長著翅膀

談到收藏對於自己的意義，陳泊文引用詩句：「所有的墜落者都長著翅膀」，認為人生像是不知道從哪裡



(left)
Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook
Two Planets: Manet's Dejeuner sur l'herbe 1862 1863 and the Thai Villagers Group II
2008
Other than Taiwanese artist, Chen Bo-wen also acquire Asian art.

(middle)
Shi Jin-hua
Art Today
1998-2006
This work was one of Chen Bo-wen's collection shown in 'Boundless Treasures: Inexhaustible and Limitless'.

(right)
Bill Viola
Two Women
2008

墜落到這裡的過程，雖然墜落是命定、無可避免的，但是「收藏就像是我揮動著翅膀」。「對藝術品的喜愛」是他收藏歷程中最核心的部分，令他發現內心的呼喚及感到滿足。

陳泊文在1994年訂下第一件藝術品，是台灣藝術家許維忠的雕塑，雖然後來沒拿到作品，但從此開始了收藏的旅程。然而在1998年，陳泊文發現自己似乎走了很多「冤枉路」，聽了很多不該聽的資訊、花了不少冤枉錢，於是，收藏的腳步漸漸放慢，開始問自己：「收藏究竟是甚麼？喜歡藝術為什麼不能只買畫冊，而需要收藏呢？」帶著這些疑問，他修習了整整三年由台北市立美術館所舉辦的「市民美術課程」，在顏貽成老師的帶領下學習從現代到當代的美術知識。雖然直到現在，對上述的問題還沒有明確的答案，但是在密集藝術知識學習，以及日後藝術顧問李政勇的幫助下，陳泊文將單純的喜好藝術和收藏分開，把收藏視為一件嚴肅的事情，嘗試較準確地建立自己的收藏觀點，以及有系統、有想法的收藏。

在收藏的過程中，他認為自己最重視的是藝術品的「品質」，並不會預先設定一個議題，像是策展一樣以這個議題蒐集，然而在收藏一段時間後回顧自己的藏品，也發現自己自然地產生了一個脈絡，發現後也認為自己可以在既有的方向上繼續努力，不斷修剪枝葉以及進步。例如，關注「社會議題」的作品是陳泊文其中一個收藏的傾向，他認為當代社會有許多現象，例如全球化、貧富懸殊擴大、環境的破壞、複雜的社會政治、有錢人越來越有錢、年輕人被壓迫、沒有人替受苦的人發聲，而這些都可以是藝術品表現的主題。當這些時代的特色反映在藝術品上，或是表現關注弱勢族群的作品往往最能打動他。他認為並不是表達社會議題的作品就不能在視覺上是美的，很多作品往往震撼卻又詩意。

陳泊文也並不建議以想要牟利的心態收藏藝術品，他調侃地說道：「那就要看看你眼光是不是真的那麼『好』？」；再者，他指出藝術品的交易成本，包含買進賣出時的手續費、運輸、保險、倉儲等開銷其實相當嚇人，通常投資獲利三四成已相當幸運，但是在藝術品の世界裡只是剛好把成本打平而已；更不用提如果希望在藝術上賺到大錢，需要放得夠久，以10年、15年、20年來計算。整體來說，如果抱持著投資的心態收藏藝術品，恐怕會失望。

收藏作品背後的故事

陳泊文收藏的作品媒材廣泛，繪畫、錄像藝術、裝

置、觀念藝術皆有涉獵，也收藏了一些是以合約、文件形式呈現的作品。雖然在地域方面沒有設限，然而因為財力有限，因此他主要關注當代的台灣藝術，其次再擴展至亞洲與世界。作為一個每月收入固定的開業醫生，陳泊文笑著說道：「其實每個月的收入扣掉家庭的開銷，基本都到了藝術品上，每個月大概是十萬塊台幣，但有時候看到喜歡的作品可能連儲備的子女教育金都拿了過來。」由於陳泊文比較不喜歡藝術博覽會，因此通常都是透過畫廊購入作品，有一兩件作品則購自拍賣會。

三月份在香港藝術中心的《「無盡藏：大藏無盡」——第三屆收藏家當代藝術藏品展》中，陳泊文帶來石晉華的「今日藝術」塗繪讀本系列、阿拉雅·拉斯迪阿的攝影作品，在訪談中他更侃侃而談自己其他收藏背後的故事脈絡。他提及在台北一個名為《芝麻開門》的展覽中，他贊助藝術家孫原和彭禹的創作計畫，由於兩位藝術家對槍枝有所研究，於是將贊助的費用購入兩把仿真槍。但由於中國的法律不允許擁有槍枝，於是藝術家與他們簽定合約，明訂藝術家收藏槍枝，藏家收藏計畫，並且負起保管槍枝之責，要定期擦槍、如果藝術家有朋友造訪台灣，可以要求參觀；假使有朝一日中國對槍枝的規管開放、或者藝術家移民到允許槍枝的國家，則槍枝需還予藝術家。陳泊文說道：「他們收藏像仿真槍，我收藏一個概念，一旦槍枝歸還，我除了四張A4紙，我甚麼都沒有剩下。這個槍雖然是仿真槍，但可以灌瓦斯，可以打BB彈，近距離還是可以傷人。有趣的是，中國從來不放棄把飛彈對準台灣，但是他們又把武力交給一個台灣人保管，好像似有若無的政治意識。」

另外，陳泊文更收藏有史金淞的《千創園壘石》，該作品由磚牆作為材料打磨而成，外型通透，放在住所的庭院有很好的視覺效果，收藏之初，他被這個作品背後的故事脈絡以及豐富的肌理所吸引。中國藝術家史金淞在北京有一個頗大的工作室，本來他認為「最起碼，一個工作室至少要活得比自己長久吧？」但沒想到因為2008年的奧運，工作室很快地被北京政府拆除，說拆就拆，沒有討論的空間。在拆完後史金淞回到工作室的廢墟，將磚塊、牆壁扛回去，鑿磨為像太湖石的作品。陳泊文認為，一方面，藝術家將一個極權制度對人民不尊重與壓迫做成美學的客體，外觀有展望出名的太湖石意味，這個作品的外型像傳統的雕塑，但創作的媒材卻是被拆除的磚塊；另一方面，在中國文化中，太湖石是蘇州庭園裡面最常見的景致，每一次改朝換代，當皇帝殘虐，士大夫不得志時，他們就躲到自己的庭園、吟詩作樂，因此這個壘石又象徵著文人、知識份子逃避政治壓迫的一種心靈方式。