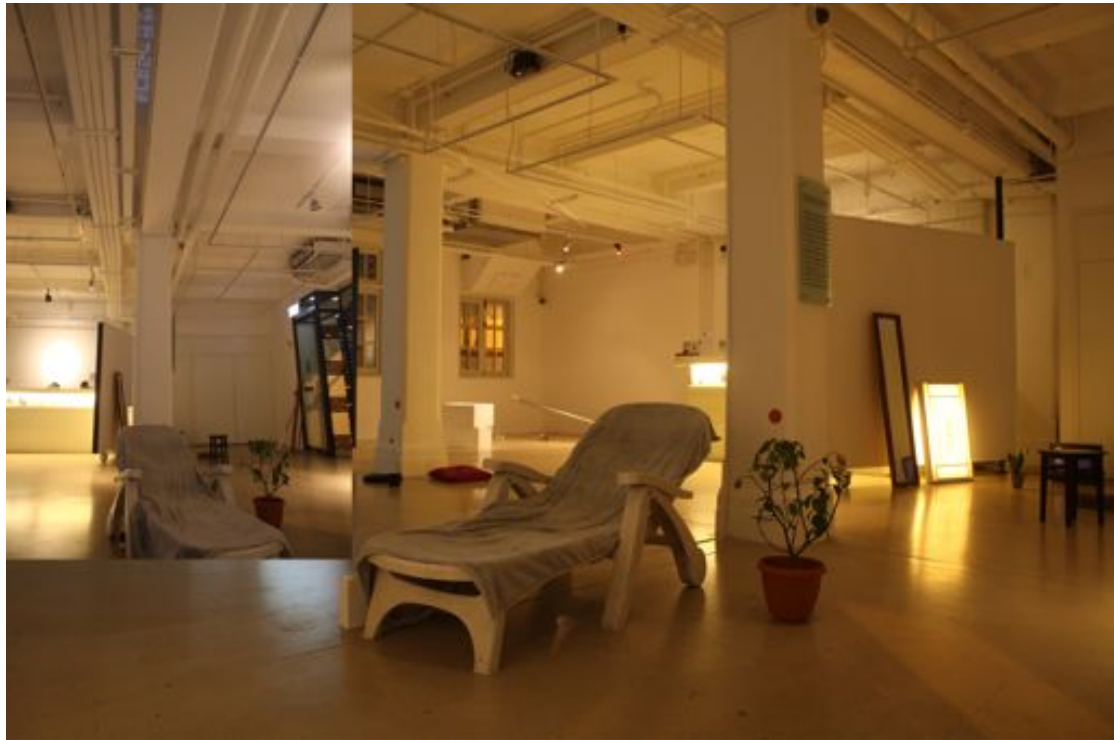


説來話長
I've seen it all

Gallery ceiling



Those who were born in the same era as me...
are mostly gone.

When I was young,
I was inconspicuous,
made a living with an ordinary job.
It was nothing like now,
needing to do all sorts of things.
Yet,
what I did was quite new at that time.
They saw the need.
I did quite well,
the business got better and better.

Those harsh traumatising days . . .
Those beasts were here . . .
I could do nothing,
forced by circumstances,
I had to do things I am not proud of.
Those disgraceful days...
I really hope you will never know what I have done.

There was a time when
the substance that sustained my life
was sucked out of my body all of a sudden.
I lied down quietly.
My stomach was rotting.
Everyone turned a blind eye to my suffering.
I thought I was going to die.

I once heard that
a person ate a mushroom
and found a mushroom tree sprouting in the stomach.
I was horrified.
It sat on my mind
but I never thought it would happen to me.
Up till now, I still have no idea how it'd got into my body.
It was thriving in me
Sucked up my nutrients,
penetrated my stomach lining,
burst my skin into seams.

At that time,
I felt I was just eking out a life.
Other little creatures saw me falling apart
unattended and neglected,
they invaded me.
Some say that
the smell of those creatures still linger,
so the even more displeasing ones dare not get near.
It can count as a blessing, after all.

I have never thought
that I would be saved
on the verge of death.
I then started two new lives that were nothing like the old one.
More splendid than ever.
Who says old age must be dreary?

You now learn about
one of my two lives.
The other one is lesser known
but equally splendid.

My life now is vibrant and colourful
I think I am more charming than before.
I understand clearly, however,
that my charm springs from all that I have experienced.

I am old.

Everyone seems to enjoy stories of old times recounted by old folks.
I don't mind telling
just that too many have happened,
I myself can't even remember some of them.

I don't talk much.
I know I am repeating the same story
but I am also talking about a lot of things
talking about a lot of things at many places.
Pardon my long-windedness.
When I speak enough,
I will resume my silence.
By then,
you won't hear from me even if you want to.

Gallery floor



I have been introspecting.

Recently,
I realise I am in a state akin to meditation.
If you have the same practice,
you understand what I mean:

I sit still,
in silence,
introspecting,
observing every part,
observing every move,
observing every flow of my body.

I realise these parts, moves, flows are not exactly me.
I am just their vessel.
I just need to observe,
look at them
and do nothing,
everything will run smooth,
everything will become me.

I talk to every part and flow in my body.
Each speaks a different me.
Each speaks the same me.
All are me.

And I have been changing.
Even the one you are seeing right now
countless deeds done over the year.
You must have seen one or two.

The me you are seeing
is only one of the many.
I am everywhere,
I speak to myself wherever.

The bench close by is me;
the stairs going down is me;
the two trenches on the wall at the door is me;
the conduits at the ceiling are me;
the old wall outside with graffiti is me.

Unless you leave,
everything here is me.
Here is me.
Always.

I have always been introspecting.

Café (the Vault) wall



(Trees)

What else in this neighbourhood are from my era? I am surrounded by the younger ones, the less familiar ones. My remaining childhood acquaintances may just be the two living uphill. Half joke, half earnest, we always wonder who can stand and last longer here.

(The Bishop's House, 28 Kennedy Road)

Fewer and fewer of my age are left. Those who are in the same district but not exactly close by are, like me, fortunate enough to be doing well and living in abundance. We are all riding the changing tides and enjoy doing something completely different. This is probably what “adding value to life” means.

(PMQ, Tai Kwun: Centre for Heritage and Art)

Some of my old friends, who were more mediocre than me when we were young, have changed a lot. They have changed their names and transformed from head to toe to be elegant. But we have known each other long enough to appreciate our differences without unnecessary comparison.

(The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Lo Pan Temple, Canossian Mission, The Church of Christ in China Hop Yat Church (Hong Kong Church), Ohel Leah Synagogue, St. Paul's Church, Jamia Mosque, Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong Kau Yan Church)

However, would our outmoded looks be the only thing that have survived from our generation? None of us are doing the same things as before. The religious ones still stand fast. No one dares to touch them and they remain just as popular. Even people say how materialistic this place has become, religions are robust

nonetheless. I appreciate those who have faith in religion. They have never changed. Seeing them is like peeking into my era.

(Government Hill)

Oh that family, they used to be a noble home of carefree luxury. Probably because they have drawn too much attention, they were deprived as their businesses were taken away from them. Separated and forced into different occupations, their honour has faded. They may be in straitened circumstances now, but at least they have each other. It really worries me that no one knows when they will be targeted again.

(New government headquarters)

And the family business has been replaced by the new generation. Innovative or open-minded that may seem, the new ones are actually ruthless and conservative. Ban this, forbid that – nothing is sincere. The desire to show off and dominate keeps anything from being done. I am really sick of it. This sort of manner is common among this generation, huh?

(Central Market)

Gosh, to name an unfortunate one, that must be on the list. An ordinary one with modest ambition and no crave for long life or for fame. But now, with no way back into the old business, the living dead has gone through one operation after another, not to mention the bridge – I can hardly recognise! Half conscious and no authority, others take over and trample. Sometimes I think, if I were in such circumstances, I would rather die.

(Queen's Pier)

Those who have contributed so much, of superior statuses were, with much surprise, ill-treated and died in grief. Out of reminiscence, out of deception, out of perplexity, or out of lack of creativity, they mimicked the deceased with some kind of phony glory. The new generation is so good at replicating and every detail of the outlook is perfect. Yet, they cannot fool me. Age and experience do not tell lies. If they really appreciated their predecessors, why wouldn't they have treated them nicer? Why does the new generation have to imitate the last one? The lifeless imitation disgusts me.

(Construction sites)

Even I have never left here and keep a watchful eye every day, some that are gone all of a sudden still escape my notice. Where they were are left empty. Sometimes, I only know that something has gone, without knowing exactly what is missing. Some say that life and death are destined. They are happy to see the new generation emerging. I am just sorry for our short lives. As long as they are in good shape, even the ordinary and the passable ones should not die for no reason.

(High rises)

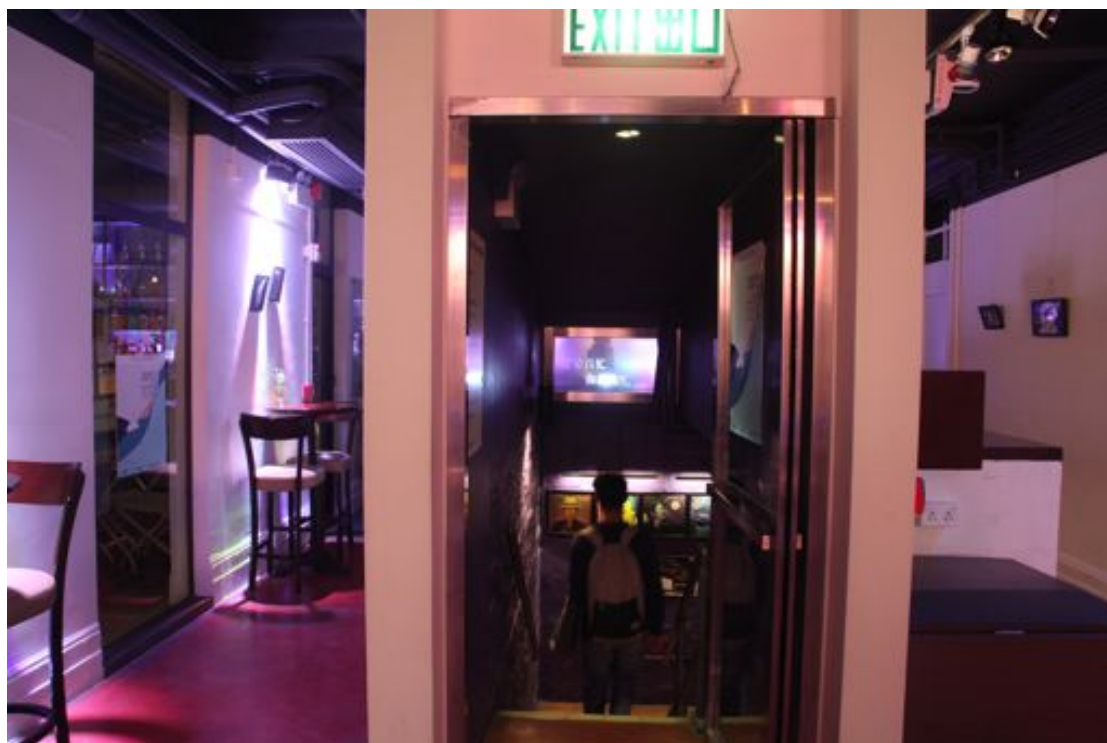
Those of the new generation are much taller than mine. Is this a symbol of strength or a disguise of hollowness and detachment? No doubt they are young. They enjoy competing in height, or size, or fashion. They do not care about

endurance. Anyway, if you are on the harbour, you can see the lofty competing for the sea, competing to be seen. I am old. I am content to sit in a corner and watch their contests.

(Light decorations)

I don't really get the taste of the new generation. They now like to wear headwear with big logos or sparkly and colourful outfits. Some put lights on their heads, beaming everywhere. They start to wear Christmas outfits before the end of November and wear gold and red right after Christmas to embrace Lunar New Year. Why so eager to celebrate? Celebration should anyway have some class.

Restaurant (Colette's) glass



I may have seen you before.
Are you one of the regulars?
Have I seen you passing by me?
Is it the first time we meet?
Too many people,
too many going on here.
I am not young enough
to remember everything.
In fact, I have forgotten my age.
At this age,
a year older or younger
makes no difference.

You come here for business,
for a heart-to-heart
for chit chat,
for gossip,
for a drink to relax,
or for some art and culture today?

Seeing this place getting hastier and hastier:
Talk business in a hurry,
inhale art and culture in a hurry,
drink and chill in a hurry,
heart to heart in a hurry,
chit chat in a hurry,

gossip in a hurry,
I am not interested in joining in the rush.

I am talking to you.
When you are not here,
I talk to myself.
I may not be in a hurry,
but I have a lot of things to do every day,
A lot to enjoy,
not bored at all.
I talk to myself
just because I want to.

When I talk enough,
I resume my usual silence.
By then,
you will not hear from me even if you want to.

If you are busy,
off you go.
I have time.
I am always here anyway.
I have time,
I have all the time.

Backdoor



I know most of you don't have the time
or intention to stay for long.
There's no space around me
or reason for you to stay.
It wasn't the case back then,
since when have my surroundings become so cramped?

Some say,
this place is like a stream.
Do you follow the flow down like gravels
or that go upstream against the rapids like some little creatures?
That said, it also depends on your definition of
"up the stream" and "down the stream".
For instance,
the reclaimed land on the north is down the stream,
but since it's also the heart of the financial centre,
it can well be up the stream,

and is undoubtedly so.
Isn't everyone busy climbing up the ladder?
All those vehicles,
all those people flowing to the coast,
despite having stood here for so long,
I still can't figure out where is supposed to be up,
where is supposed to be down.

You may be here just to pay me a visit.
If it's the case,
I truly appreciate it.
I'm old now,
Not as strong as the younger ones.
You can see
I'm undergoing a small surgery.
Nothing to worry about,
I've been well taken care of
inside and out.
I will get well soon,
charm like never before.
Don't be fooled by all the wounds,
my vitality and viscera have never been better.

If you happen to pass by,
You may think I mumble to myself
without understanding what I talk about.
If you pass by here often,
it shouldn't be your first time looking at this corner, right?

Right now,
amidst the rapids,
only you and your companions are left
standing here obliviously,
watching me talk.
Rush hour traffic
or people in a hurry,
may earn you some glares,
some grumbles and grunts.
This place is becoming less and less friendly.

But you're still standing here.
If you've got no companion,
you may think you are on your own,
but I've been standing here too,
just like you,
standing here obliviously,
longer than you have been,
way longer than you have been,
way way longer than you have been.

Someone once considered me oblivious,
that I should go,
but I refused.
Now no one can make me leave,
thanks to my obliviousness.

If this place is really a stream,
then I am a boulder,
brushed against by the rapids,
by the crazy traffic,
by the hectic pedestrians,
by the speed of time,
I am still standing here.

Many say that this place is like a ship,
there is, in fact, groundwater running beneath me.
I can sail to nowhere,
The coast was moved, from few blocks away me,
to further and further away,
until it was totally obstructed from my sight.
But those who boarded this ship
seem to have reached different times,
different places.
This is what's so special about this ship.

If you want to escape from the overwhelming rapids,
to take a breather,
do walk around this ship,
you can always find an entrance.
Like a ship with various hatches,
I have much more to tell,
I can continue inside,
You can take your time,
and listen to me without getting cold shoulders.

This is, indeed, a long story.

Window outside theatre (dust)



I have been standing here

Everyone has walked on, faster and faster

Nobody cares to take a good look at me

Street (shadow)



You pay attention

In the rapids

You can see me talking to you

I have been standing here all along