

A Few Words for Fong Chung-ray

Nearly forty years ago my wife Khoan and I had the pleasure of meeting Fong Chung-ray in Taiwan, and receiving from him a beautiful abstract painting, and a little picture that he contributed to an album that was circulating among our artist friends in Taipei and Hong Kong. Since then, I have lost touch with him, so I was delighted to hear from him recently, to receive two exquisite small works from his hand, and am happy to respond to his invitation to write a few words about his recent work.

For I have wondered for some years what Fong Chung-ray was doing, or whether his art had developed or, as often happens, had become lifeless and repetitious. I was pleased to find, in the little works he gave me, and others he sent me on a disc, that his art has matured, while losing nothing of the poetry of former years.

This maturing seems to take the form of an even more sensitive handling of texture, which has become richer, more varied, and more beautiful as he explores the possibilities of mixed media and collage. To let your eyes wander over the surfaces of these pictures is a pure sensual pleasure.

What do they mean? Today the critics and their public are always looking for meaning in an abstract work of art, as though its meaning could be conveyed in words. The French Poet Paul Valery wrote, "Those who have eyes know just how irrelevant words are to what they see". If I have words, they are not to explain the meaning of Fong Chung-ray's art, for the meaning is in the work itself, but merely to express my joy and gratitude for what he has created.

Michael Sullivan
Oxford, England
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