



Siaw
-Tao
Chinese
Seal Carving
Calligraphy &
Painting Society

作品选集

Catalogue

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篆刻
还可这样

Carving
Possibilities:
An Exhibition by the
Siaw-Tao Seal Carvers



涛涛印人展

de Suantio Gallery
Singapore Management University | School of Economics
Level 1 (Opposite YMCA)
90 Stamford Road Singapore 178903

Siaw-Tao
Website



嘿

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还可这样

Carving
Possibilities:
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哈!

啸涛印人展

Carving Possibilities: The contemporary frontier of Chinese seal carving

A splash of crimson, commonly confined to a square, depicting a scrawl of often-illegible ancient script, usually found on a calligraphic scroll: this is perhaps the average person's cursory impression of the Chinese seal. While remarkable for its intricacy and beauty, this ancient medium can often feel inaccessible due to the amount of specialist knowledge required in order to appreciate its allure in entirety.

After all, Chinese seal carving possesses a lineage that spans thousands of years, possibly beginning in the Shang Dynasty around 1600–1046 BC. It's an artistic medium that has always evolved alongside the Chinese language – a journey that involves twists and turns tied to the history and politics of the land.

To attempt to condense this rich history into the span of a short essay or a singular exhibition would be a fool's errand. Instead, it is hoped that this exhibition of 32 artists working with this artistic medium in Singapore and Malaysia today might provide entry points for the casual observer to appreciate this art form.

In presenting the myriad ways in which contemporary artists are presently exploring Chinese seal carving, *Carving Possibilities* seeks also to survey the state of the craft in this day and age, and posit its potentials for future exploration.

Here are five key aspects of seal carving, through which one might glean its beauty:

1. Seal carving is moments of poetry.

Seal design usually begins with a piece of text. The popularisation of seal carving originally began with official seals (玺) and name seals (名章) which were used as records of authenticity and identity. Scholarly thinkers later began to create leisure seals (闲章), often selecting lines of poetry – or sometimes even whole poems or sutras – by famous dynastic poets for their carves.

When visually interpreted by the artist, these articulations accentuate the meaning of the text, or bring new dimensions to it that were previously untapped. Chong Choy's *Blue Skies / 天天天蓝* (see pg. 24) invokes an idyllic horizon with a curlicue flourish of the central 天 character. Leaving ample white space and breaking the conventions of the grid layout, he breathes an element of freedom into the composition. The visual experience of this sliver of text gains a fresh sense of poeticism when the artist infuses these design elements into the words.

While seal carving artists through the ages commonly gain inspiration from romantic imagery and evocative poems, many contemporary works now draw from multifarious sources. Modern-day seal carvers have seen fit to incorporate everything from pop song lyrics to prosaic rumblings, even their grouses about current affairs and vernacular – Singlish or non-Mandarin dialects – expressions into their work.

Tan Chin Boon's *Lay Flat / 躺平* (see

pg. 23) is a cheeky pictorial seal that comments on the prevailing zeitgeist where Chinese youth have chosen to opt out from the struggle of workplace success. Tang Yip Seng's *Ferocious weaponry and iron horses make strides of thousands of miles / 金戈铁马气吞万里* (see pg. 27) seal references the Russo-Ukrainian war, and is painted yellow, blue and red, marking the blood shed. Both works are examples of how current affairs find their way into artistic expression through this medium.



Ho Bee Tiam
Perseverance

A sense of the diaristic emerges elsewhere, with artists who use the medium to document significant occasions in life. Ho Bee Tiam's *Perseverance /*

锲而不舍, for instance, was carved to commemorate 15 years of Siaw Tao Society's seal carving gatherings.

In according these variant subjects with such aesthetic consideration, contemporary seal artists imbue everyday themes with an element of poeticism that invites curiosity and delight, and provokes thought.

2. Seal carving is imagistic beauty.

When considering the aesthetics of seal design, one cannot avoid considering the variety of steles and styles that seal carvers across the centuries have adopted.

Multifarious flair emerging from diverse script styles

From the most common seal carving script (Yin Zhuan, 印篆) to oracle bone script (甲骨文) and the pre-Qin dynasty great seal script (大篆), each script possesses the weight of its own historical traditions and idiosyncratic character.

Older scripts like oracle bone script and the large seal forms found on ancient seals (古玺) often bear pictorial relation to the subjects that they describe, because the characters of these scripts were derived from describing the natural world. It's possible for those unfamiliar with traditional Chinese script to guess at the meaning of the words thanks to this partial figuration.



Woon Zhe An
Lines from the Diamond Sutra
(in the style of Yuanzhu Wen)

Other scripts evolved from these, gradually taking on more abstract characteristics as well as particular stylistic flair of their own. Yuanzhu Wen (圆朱文) for instance is distinctive for its elegant and tensile rounded strokes, while the ornate bird-worm script (鸟虫篆) is serif-like in its incorporation of

bird beaks, fish tails and other creature parts (see pg. 56).

Some artists opt to utilise modern scripts such as simplified Chinese (简体字 and Kai Shu (楷书), which are more legible to contemporary audiences who don't possess prior knowledge of traditional

scripts. Tay Bak Chiang's *Broken Dreams / 破碎的梦* chisels the thick strokes of these characters in simplified Chinese. Its unevenly laid out composition, with a thin line running through the middle, exemplifies its message of fragmentation and disrepair.



Tay Bak Chiang
Broken Dreams

Dots, lines, and positive and negative space (点, 线, 红)

Traditionally laid out in grid format, the beauty of a seal made using Yin Zhuan (印章) is typically assessed by how well it utilises the vastness within that inch of the seal.

Seal artists speak of 'dot, line, and red (or, more accurately translated, the balance between positive and negative space – the ratio of red to white in a seal)' (点, 线, 红) when assessing the beauty of a seal. These considerations echo the elements and principles of design which are typically regarded as Western – line, shape, contrast, balance, rhythm.

The fundamentals of these various principles tend to be deployed alongside long-standing traditions such as adhering to the grid when laying out a seal composition. That said, many contemporary seal artists eschew the grid, making it apparent that the

aforementioned guidelines hold true even when artists push the boundaries of seal carving traditions.

Balance and beauty beyond the grid

In his later works, esteemed artist Tan Kian Por not only omitted the use of a grid in laying out individual characters, he also entirely eliminated the seal's typically rectilinear boundaries and embraced the organic form of irregularly shaped stones. The resultant imprints possess an expressionistic mark-making quality, despite the characters being clearly born from traditional script. This contemporary flavour may seem unorthodox to traditionalists, but one might say that these works nonetheless possess the fundamental qualities of a good seal.



Tan Kian Por
Cry of Injustice



Tan Kian Por
Inaction

Likewise, the artfully placed dots, lines, marks and arcs in Chua Chon Hee's *Exclamation Mark / 感叹号* (see pg. 30) and *Question Mark / 问号* (see pg. 31) create a visual experience that is aesthetically beautiful from both Eastern and Western perspectives, despite veering away from seal carving tradition. These purely pictorial seals exude an abstract expressionist flavour – they capture the essence of these respective punctuation marks, without referring to them literally in the seal design.

Meanwhile, other artists subvert conventions by incorporating non-Sino languages into seal carving. For instance, Tan Yong Jun's seals take up the challenge of fitting scripts that typically sprawl horizontally, such as Devanagari and Burmese, within the square of the seal (see pg. 38).

Tapping on seal carving's natural kinship with printmaking

Other artists such as Toh Chee Hao pursue a tradition more akin to printmaking, with their seals that contain representational imagery rather than text. While such pictorial seals count among some of the earliest existing formats of Chinese seals, contemporary artists incorporate imagery that speak to the modern times. The Brutalist facade of the iconic *Golden Mile Complex* is one in Toh's series of many intricately rendered Singapore scenes, while Chan Ru Ying's *Standing in One's Corner / 各站一角* depicts safe distancing measures from the pandemic days of not too long ago.



Toh Chee Hao
Golden Mile Complex



Chan Ru Ying
Standing in One's
Corner

Knifework (刀味)

The final element to consider when contemplating the beauty of a seal face, is perhaps the quality and character of the artist's knifework (刀味). The works of established seal artists such as See Hiang To, Tan Kee Sek (see pg. 14-15) and Ho Bee Tiam (see pg. 28) show how expert carving creates textural variances within seal script that possess aesthetic beauty.

At first glance, these seals may appear roughly hewn in an uncontrollable manner. Ironically, it takes a confidence honed over decades to develop a distinctive mark-making style – albeit with a knife rather than a brush.

The je ne sais quoi of a beautifully crafted seal

Regardless of how an artist pursues imagistic beauty in a seal's design – and there are so many ways – a good seal design possesses a beauty that feels balanced: tight, inevitable, yet at ease with itself. Each character should have sufficient room to breathe, yet coexist in harmony with the others. Though there is certainly a je ne sais quoi that defines a beautifully crafted seal, veteran artist Tan Kee Sek points out, "A good seal should possess skill (功力) and variation (变化), bear scrutiny (耐看) and have a strong style (味道)".

3. Seal carving is sculpture.

Beyond a seal's linguistic meaning and pictorial beauty, one must also consider its three-dimensional quality. To encounter a seal is to regard its form, materiality, scale and tactility – even if one does not directly handle it, its innate legacy as a functional object induces the perceiver to imagine its usage.

Form and materiality

Traditionally carved out of jade, bronze and stone, the materiality of the Chinese seal has undergone change and experimentation through the ages. The vast majority of seal carvers tend to carve directly on stones that have been cut to size and polished. These stones are widely variant in characteristics and possess their own sense of beauty. Artists such as Tan Shin Tiong bring their skill to bear on found objects such as plastic mahjong tiles, chopsticks and antique furniture legs, and organic matter such as seeds and wood (see pg. 34).



Oh Chai Hoo | What Provokes My Thoughts

6 Meanwhile, artists like Nyan Soe (see pg. 36) and Guo Shuming construct their own seals, moulding them out of clay or whittling them from wood. Inspired by clay seals (封泥) that were traditionally used to seal letters, Oh Chai Hoo uses plaster moulds to create seals out of clay, which he then continues to carve into directly.

Others such as Yew Tong Wei bring a conceptual bent to their craft, selecting materials that speak to their chosen themes. In *Seven Necessities* / 开门七件事, the artist incorporates organic ingredients into his work, adding a layer of literalism seldom found in works in



Yew Tong Wei | Seven Necessities

this medium. His choice of modern glassware to hold these seven essentials of daily life also infuses a contemporary touch to this traditional art form.

Whether additive, subtractive or hybrid, these techniques all result in sculptural forms born from the artists' experimental intent, albeit at a fairly small scale.

Scale

The average Chinese seal fits within the palm of one's hand, and is designed to be functional and portable due to its original purpose as a tool for authenticating official documents. But when treated as an art form – in this day and age where occasions for its functional use have rapidly diminished – it becomes a site for innovation.

Soh Suan Cheok's concrete *Crush You to Death* / 压死你 and brick *Break the Old and Establish the New* / 破旧立新 not only utilise unconventional industrial materials, but they also challenge the scale that one might typically expect from a Chinese seal (see pg. 18-21). How big does it have to get before it loses utility and stops reading as a seal?

On the flip side, artists like Tan

Guo Shuming
Heavy Fabric Draped Over Pristine Flesh



Shin Tiong have gone the opposite direction, carving on surfaces as tiny as the tip of a chopstick. There is a sense of ludicrousness in the extent to which this can be taken. Through this, one observes the seal artists' tendency towards playfulness.

4. Seal carving is culture.

Call it a by-product of the auxiliary nature of this medium, if you will, but it feels as though seal carvers often bring a sense of play to their craft. Tongue-in-cheek witticisms and visual-linguistic puns are not uncommon, as there is a sense of humour and experimentation that's never too far off when it comes to this art form, even amongst the earlier generations.

Even prior to 2011, master seal carver Tan Kian Por was exploring the use of digital software to create seal designs despite how foreign this new media had been to him.

Though he did not continue pursuing his craft in this direction, his forays into digital seal carving continues to spark a conversation about what the future of seal carving might look like, and whether its possibilities extend beyond the material realm. No longer tethered to the need for functionality, it's anyone's guess where future generations of seal artists might take the craft.

A culture of playfulness aside, this art form also serves as a bridge to Chinese heritage at large. When one learns to incorporate historic seal scripts from

across various dynastic periods, or uses this ancient art form to express present-day preoccupations, one essentially continues a conversation with our cultural past through engaging with this medium. It's a legacy that we inherit and continue to make our own. As time passes, so does the shape of this craft – it evolves alongside its practitioners' sense of identity, aesthetic influences and societal concerns.

5. Seal carving is greater than the sum of its parts.

It is perhaps obvious by now that there are myriad elements to a single seal. The relationships between its various components can sometimes be dissonant, or even create new meaning when considered in tandem – for instance by way of visual puns or contrasting aesthetic elements. The beauty of this art form lies in how its potential for expression is so extensive despite its modest scale.

The evolution of this medium since its ancient origins has always been dependent on the creative minds and nimble hands of its artists. At every turn, seal carving artists have pushed the boundaries of status quo to arrive somewhere exciting. Even now that the medium no longer possesses the significant practical function that once birthed it, it remains a cherished art form with a strong history that lends itself to immense artistic innovation.

In bridging tradition with modernity, the artists of *Carving Possibilities* chisel the next frontier of the medium. At its heart, it's a reminder of how art is a reflection of the intricate threads that tie one's culture and community together, across the vastness of time.

Curator
Michelle Lim

嘿，篆刻还可这样玩！ 当代前沿的篆刻艺术

一块常在书法卷轴上找到的方形红颜料与难以辨识的古代字体：这或许是一般人对篆刻印章的印象。这门古老的艺术媒介虽然精巧绚丽，但因为需要一定的审美意识来欣赏而常与人们产生距离感，难以让一般民众全面感受篆刻艺术的魅力。

篆刻艺术毕竟经历过千年演变，估计始于商朝（公元前1600—1046）。这一媒介一直紧挨着汉语的发展脉络——一个与历史与地方政治一同蜿蜒的曲折路程。

欲以一篇短文或一场展览完整地陈述如此丰富的文化，必定徒劳无功。相反的，此展欲通过32位新马印人的作品提供几个切入点，让公众更容易理解篆刻这一艺术媒介。

《嘿，篆刻还可这样玩！》呈献了当代印人们如何以千变万化的模式诠释篆刻艺术，概述了当代篆刻面貌，也探讨了篆刻未来发展的可能性。

1. 篆刻中的片刻的诗词句

印章的设计始于一段文字。印章

原本以公用印章（玺）与私人印章（名章）的形式流通，用以证明身份。后来，文人开始以诗句（有时是整篇的诗文或经文）刻入“闲章”中，为篆刻艺术注入新的元素。

这些字句通过印人的图像化，可以为文字带来更多的意义层次。张财的《天天天蓝》以“天”字舒卷的笔划勾勒出一片慵闲的天际。他在布局上安排了大量的“留白”，打破常见的方格，在排印上带入自由的意识（见24页）。印人通过设计元素把文字图像化，添加了一层诗意。

历代印人虽然常在浪漫的景象与诗句中撷取创作元素，但在当代印人却习惯从更广泛的元素中寻找灵感。当代篆刻作品中所看见的文字包括：流行歌曲的歌词，以至市井闲谈，甚至是对时局的抱怨与地方性的语言——包括方言与新加坡式英语——无不成为当代印人的灵感来源。

陈振文的《躺平》以诙谐的画面诠释中国年轻人放弃在职场上寻求成功的当下议题（见23页）。邓列成的《金戈铁马气吞万里》

刻在涂上黄、蓝、红颜料的木头上，提及乌俄战争以及当中人们洒下的热血（见27页）。这两件作品都体现当下时事如何被印人纳入印人篆刻作品题材之中。



何梅田 | 锲而不舍

篆刻作品也可有记事的功能，让印人通过作品记下生活中重要的时刻，如何梅田的《锲而不舍》纪念了海啸篆刻雅集的第十五个年头。

在为这些文字纳入美术考量的当下，当代印人也将当下的体验赋予诗意，令人惊喜，引人入胜。

2. 篆刻中的画面美

在考量篆刻作品的设计时，必不可少的是参考历代刻上文字的石碑与文物。从最常见的印章到甲骨文与大篆，每种字体都背负着历史意义以及它独特的性质。

多样的字体孕育出多样的美感

较古老的象形字体，如甲骨文、



温子安 | 金刚金四句偈
(圆朱文)

古玺上常见的大篆，在画面上通常与字面意义有着一点关系。这让不熟悉古老字体的人们得以猜到部分印文的含义，在读不出字的当下仍感受到趣味。

其它从这些古字演变的字体渐渐地抽象化，产生了各自的风格与趣味。例如，古雅的圆朱文以富有弹性的线条展现，而鸟虫篆是将鸟嘴、鱼尾及其它生物元素塑造成衬线状的字体（见56页）。

有些印人选择以简体字或楷书等易读的现代书体入印，让不认识古字的人们能轻易读出印章的文字。郑木彰的《破碎的梦》



郑木彰 | 破碎的梦

凿出简体楷书的粗线条，线条参差不齐，更有一条纤细的裂纹体现出分裂与绝望的意象。

点、线、红

从传统的审美角度来看，印章的美取决于在方寸之间，以印篆交错的线条与留白处所构成的方格式画面。

印人常谈及篆刻作品中的“点、线、红（更精确地说，是指红与白之间的关系）”，用以评估一件篆刻作品的成功与否。这些元素与西方传统设计中所注重的元素——如线条、形状、对比、平衡、节奏——不谋而合。

10 这些元素往往以传统的排印手法为根基——如以字体形成方格式画面——而从中演变。虽然如此，许多当代印人却撇弃印章中的方形布局，凸显出上述元素在印人突破篆刻传统的同时仍存在关联性。

方格之外的平衡与美

资深印人陈建坡在其后期作品中不只突破了方格式布局，甚至完全撇弃了印章的边框，完全顺着石章不规则的形状排字。这些作品充满着“表现主义”，即便字体仍清楚地源于传统书体。这类

当代风格或许对推崇篆刻传统的印人来说是非正统的，但也可说它们仍保留了一枚好印章的基本元素。



陈建坡 | 不平之呼



陈建坡 | 无为

同样的，蔡春喜的《感叹号》与《问号》以布局妥当的点、线、标志、弧形创造出一种东西艺术传统都能认可的画面美，即使她有些许脱离传统篆刻的布局（见30-31页）。这些没有文字的肖形印散发着抽象表现艺术的气息——捕捉了这些标点符号的精神，却没有在印面上直接地雕刻出标点符号本身。

也有其如陈咏峻的印人以非汉字来破除篆刻排印的习性，如将横势的天城文或缅甸文排入印章的方块中（见38页）。

一枚好印的美在于平衡感——即是紧凑的、必然的，又是自然的。每个字都应有“呼吸”的空间，也能与其它的字形成妥当的平衡。资深印人曾纪策以此概论

一枚好印的元素：“一枚好印应该透露出功力与变化，必须耐看，也有着强烈的味道。”

有的印人如卓志豪追求着一种更近似版画艺术的美学，以图像代替字体的美感。肖形印虽然是印章传统中最古老的形式之一，但当代印人的肖形印却反映出当下的情感。例如，“黄金坊”的粗野派外观在卓志豪的刀下活灵活现，而程儒颖的《各站一角》描绘了不久前冠病疫情下施行的安全距离措施。



卓志豪 | 黄金坊



程儒颖
各站一角

刀味

评估印章美感的最后一个关键元素就是印人的刀味。资深印人如施香沓、曾纪策（见14-15页）、何梅田（见28页）皆以老辣的刀味凿出富有层次的质感，这是篆刻美学的重要一部分。

这些印章或许第一眼看上去会显得随意或杂乱。其实，这种刀味需经长年的磨练，方有爽快下刀的自信，造就一个印人的独特风格。

3. 篆刻中的雕塑

观赏一枚印章是一种三维的体验，让观赏者在画面与字面的美感上有深一层的体验。观赏一枚印章也在于细究它的形体、材质、规模、触感——即使观赏者并没有真的触摸到印章，印章传统上的实用性也促使观赏者想象印章上手的感觉。

形体与材质

传统上，印章常刻在玉、铜、或石上，但经历年代的演变，早已引入更多样的材质。大部分的印人使用的是已切割好、抛光后的石材。这些石材的性质五花八门，本身就富有一定的美感。也有如陈信中把目光抛向多种非传统的印材，如塑料麻将、筷子、古董家具部件、或如种子和木头等有机材料（见



郭书明 | 冰肌恐纱重

34页)。也有印人如庄汉裕(见36页)和郭书明直接制作自己的印材,或以陶土塑成,或以木头凿成。胡财和从古代封泥的制作模式中得到灵感,先在石膏板上



胡财和 | 是什么扰动我的思绪

印文,再以陶泥翻印而成。

其它印人如尤东擘进一步丰富了印面文字的意思,把印文的概念衍生至印章本身。在《开门七件事》中,尤东擘把印面提及的有机材料融入印章,为这个艺术媒



尤东擘 | 开门七件事

介带来少见的直观感。

这些手法或多或少促成了一个从印人的实验中造就的雕塑感,创作出一种微型的雕塑。

规模

印章通常能把玩于手掌之中,因为历代的印章用处而有着实用性与可移动性。当它演变为艺术品的当下——一个已经没有太多使用价值的当下——印章的规模成为实验与挑战的聚焦点。

苏宣石的《压死你》刻在混凝土块上,而《破旧立新》刻在砖块上,不仅使用了非传统的建筑材料,也挑战了传统的印章规模(见18-21页)。一枚印章要多巨大,才会丧失用处而不能再被视为印章?

另一方面,陈信中反其道而行,在如筷子尖头如此渺小的面积上雕刻。这种极致的刻印手法有一种荒唐可笑的感觉,让人瞥见印人们诙谐好玩的一面。

4. 篆刻中的文化体系

或许因为篆刻艺术的小众性质,笔者时时感觉到印人们把一种游戏感带入他们的作品中。在挑选篆刻内容素材时,诙谐的俏皮话

与视觉语言的双关语并不少见,让我们感受到篆刻艺术是个充满幽默感与实验感的文化体系。

诙谐好玩之外,这媒介也是个通往中华文化的桥梁。当印人学会善用历代的书体,或学会如何在古老的艺术中添加当代意识,他实际上在与我们的传统文化进行对话——一个我们继承与延续塑造的文化。时过境迁,篆刻文化也一直在改变——它随着印人的自我认知、美学概念、与当下思维而改变。



陈建坡 | 笔墨

陈建坡在电脑使用的初期,尝试以电脑软件制作印章,对2011年而言是非常有前卫性的。这手法当时虽未能影响他人,却一直被视为探讨篆刻的可能性的的重要先例,让我们思考篆刻能不能跳脱实体的世界。篆刻现已跳脱实用性的需求,谁也无法预测篆刻艺术未来的发展方向。

5. 篆刻大于各部分之合

一枚印章有着不同层次的意义,这显而易见。这些不同元素的关系

有时体现出一定的矛盾,有时参杂在一起创造出更丰富的涵义——例如,图像双关语或冲突的美学元素。这个艺术体系的美感在于,尽管规模不大,但其表达潜力却如此丰富。

篆刻媒介的历史演变从古至今一直被印人灵敏的思维与精巧的手艺所影响。印人总是不断将篆刻的界限推向更精彩的境界。即使是现今,当篆刻已丧失了普遍的实用性,它仍是一个富有深厚历史底蕴的媒介,却又因其创作潜力而深受众人爱戴。

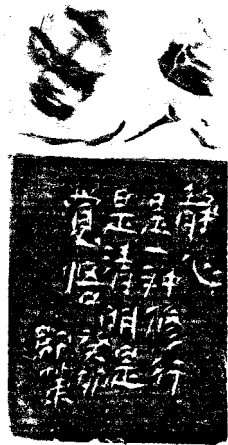
本次参与《嘿,篆刻还可这样玩!》的印人们把篆刻艺术带到今日当下,凿出这一媒介的一个新界限。概而言之,此展提醒着我们,篆刻艺术反映了一个人在文化与群体中千丝万缕的关系。

策展人
林佳宁

气平心专
3 x 3 cm



静心
3 x 2 cm



胡财和

Oh Chai Hoo

16



解离的真实 11.5 x 4cm



风干记忆 5 x 4.5 cm



Oh Chai Hoo

胡财和



压死你
13 x 13 cm

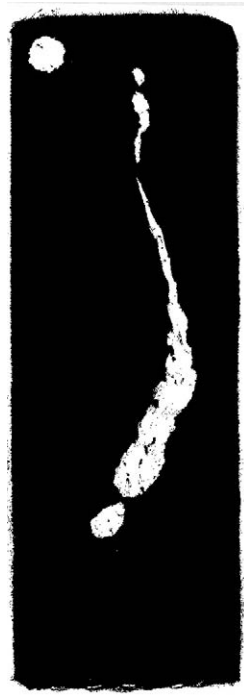
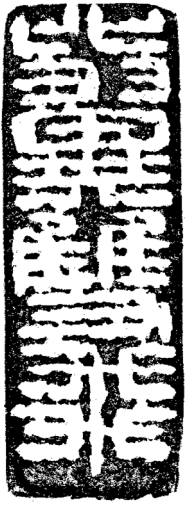
破旧立新
9 x 9 cm



躺平
2.5 x 3 cm

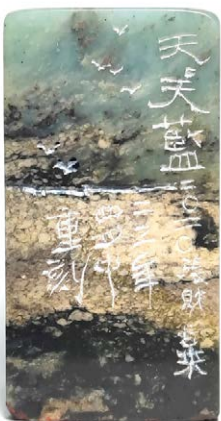


3 x 3 cm
别了江湖

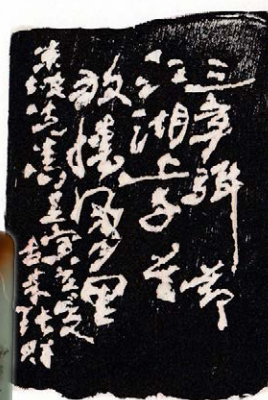




天天天蓝
3 x 3 cm



江湖
3.9 x 3.9 cm



邓列成

Tang Yip Seng

7 x 6 cm

金戈铁马气吞万里



等闲之辈
7 x 6 cm



邓列成

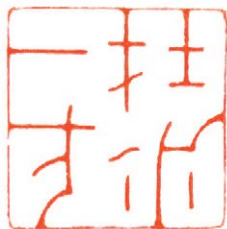
Tang Yip Seng



天道无情
5 x 5 cm



无病是福
5 x 5 cm



在水一方
2.5 x 2.5 cm



于山几处
2.6 x 2.6 cm



蔡春喜

Chua Chon Hee

30



感叹号 5 x 2.6 cm

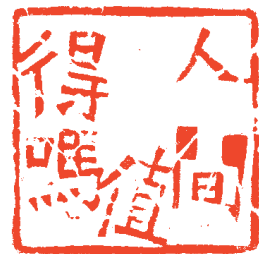
Chua Chon Hee

蔡春喜



回心 5.5 x 3 cm

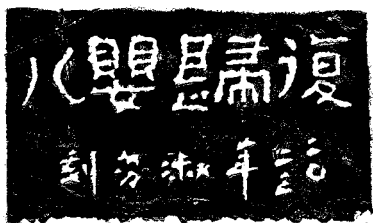




3 x 3 cm
人间值得吗



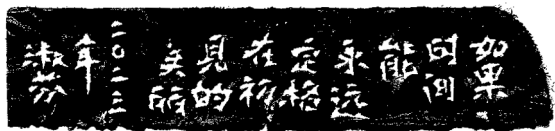
2.5 x 2.5 cm
让花成花



5 x 3 cm
复归婴儿



7.5 x 2 cm
人生若只如初见

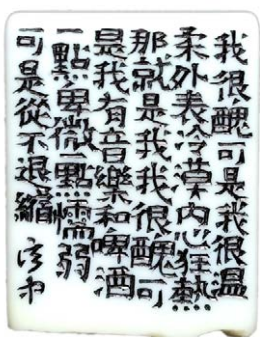
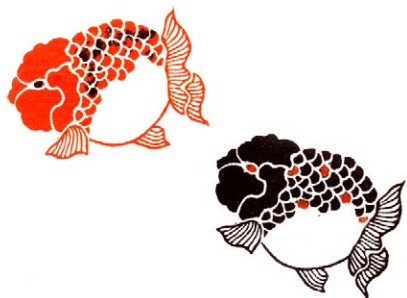




但愿人长久千里共婵娟
5 x 2 cm



2.8 x 2 cm
金鱼

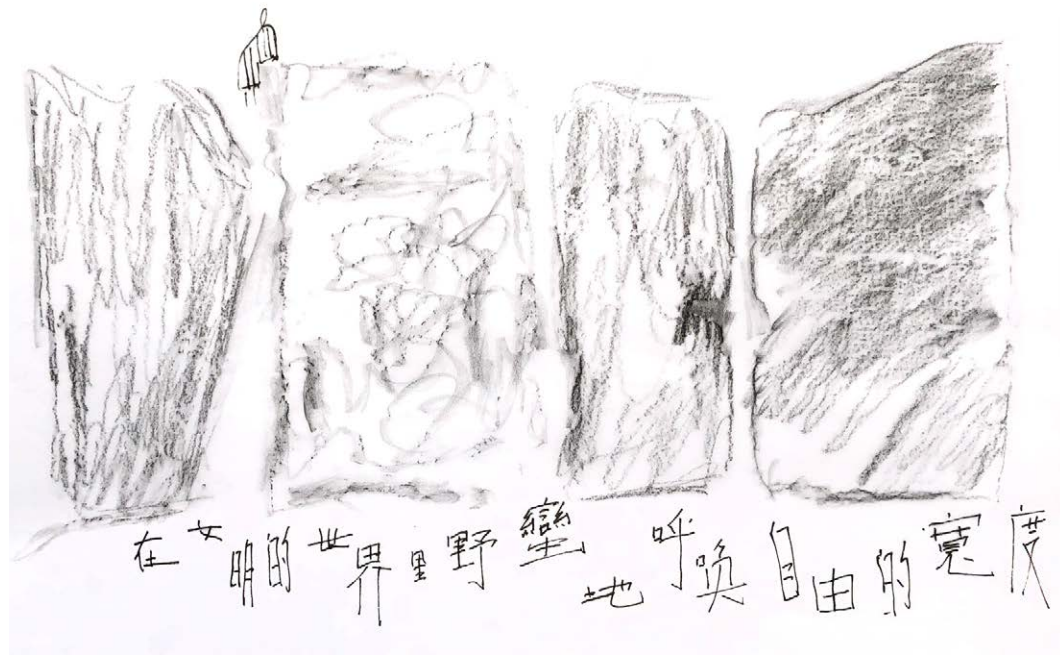


庄汉裕

Nyan Soe



欲望的影子
(缅甸文)
3 x 11 cm



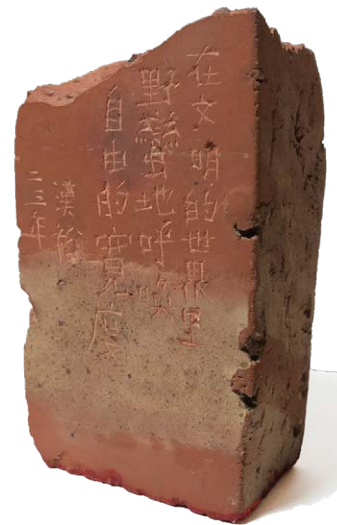
庄汉裕

Nyan Soe



在文明的世界里
野蛮地呼唤自由
的宽度

5 x 4.5 cm



Teoh Ai Keong

张爱强



能婴儿乎 老子第十一章
7 x 2 cm

兔 癸卯 (图像化)
2 x 2 cm



如是我闻 (天城文)
Evanh Maya Shrutam
4 x 2.5 cm



自由 (爪夷文)
Merdeka
3 x 3 cm



陈咏峻

Tan Yong Jun



喜上眉梢
3.5 x 3.5 cm



年年有余
4 x 4 cm



和合
2.5 x 2.5 cm



和而不同
2.8 x 2.8 cm





门神

8 x 8 cm



Toh Chee Hao 卓志豪



他們又跟對聯有淵源這
兩兄弟極長年所妖麻鬼
魁怪後來唐代秦叔和
尉志共出將封為門神
除了武將提魁大師鐘植也
替百姓守門其大甲中義我
所代表如關羽張飛趙雲
文官代表有魏征包公文天
祥等
二六十年真刻門神
有感并記早志三象刊

亭下底呈現門神之就是
自所守衛之神言徒把神
像點在門上神神可以驅邪
避鬼按家鎮宅保平安
等門神一般都不板率畫
為題村邊常看守之神
比較或向來充滿神韻有
很多神有文有武之也
最早期的門神是雕刻
在桃木板上傳最早刻
位是神荼和郁壘然

Terrez Tann

谭丽娴



你玩嘢呀
5 x 5 cm



你讲乜嘢呀
5 x 5 cm



嘿，篆刻还可这样玩！： 啸涛印人展



一本万利
4 x 2 cm



卓志豪

Toh Chee Hao

尤东暉

Yew Tong Wei

46



粒粒皆辛苦
2 x 2 cm



3 x 3 cm
物阜财丰 (南洋瓷砖)



Yew Tong Wei

尤东暉

黄淑华

Ng Sock Hwa



莫忘初心
4 x 3 cm



来一场不留余地的盛放

5 x 5 cm



Ng Sock Hwa

黄淑华

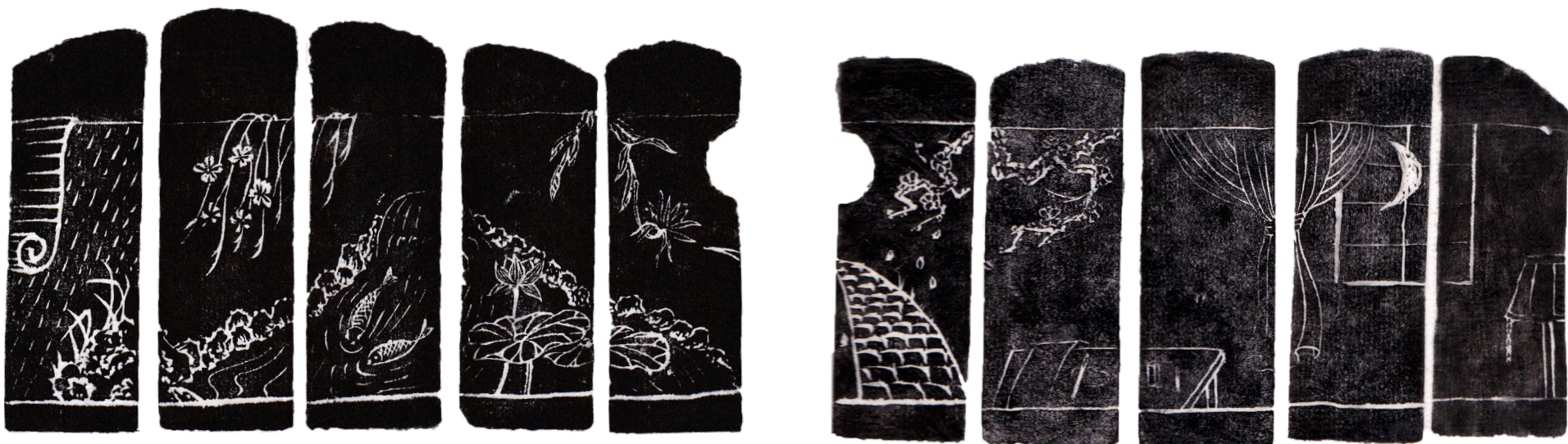




伏案弄石
2.5 x 2.5 cm



挂壁垂芳
2.5 x 2.5 cm





吉祥
2.5 x 2.5 cm



田家
2.7 x 2.7 cm



上下求索
2.5 x 2.4 cm



水齋
2.4 x 2.4 cm



华枝春满天心月圆

2.8 x 2.8 cm



般若波罗蜜多
2.5 x 2.5 cm



嘿，篆刻还可这样玩！：嘯涛印人展

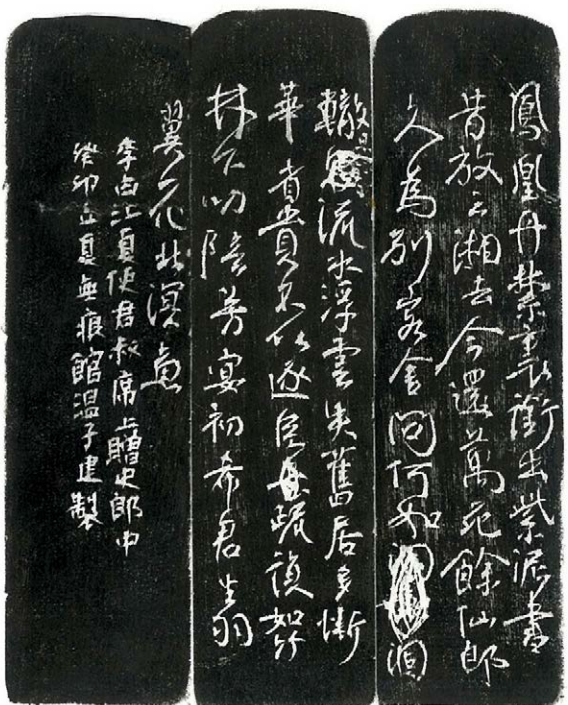
觀心... 般若... 華枝春滿... 天心月圓... 癸卯温子安於無痕... 癸卯三月三日開齋節温子安沐沐敬刻於無痕離中定下



浮游天地
寄身微
2.5 x 2.5 cm



一化北冥魚
2.4 x 2.2 cm



陈志锐

Tan Chee Lay

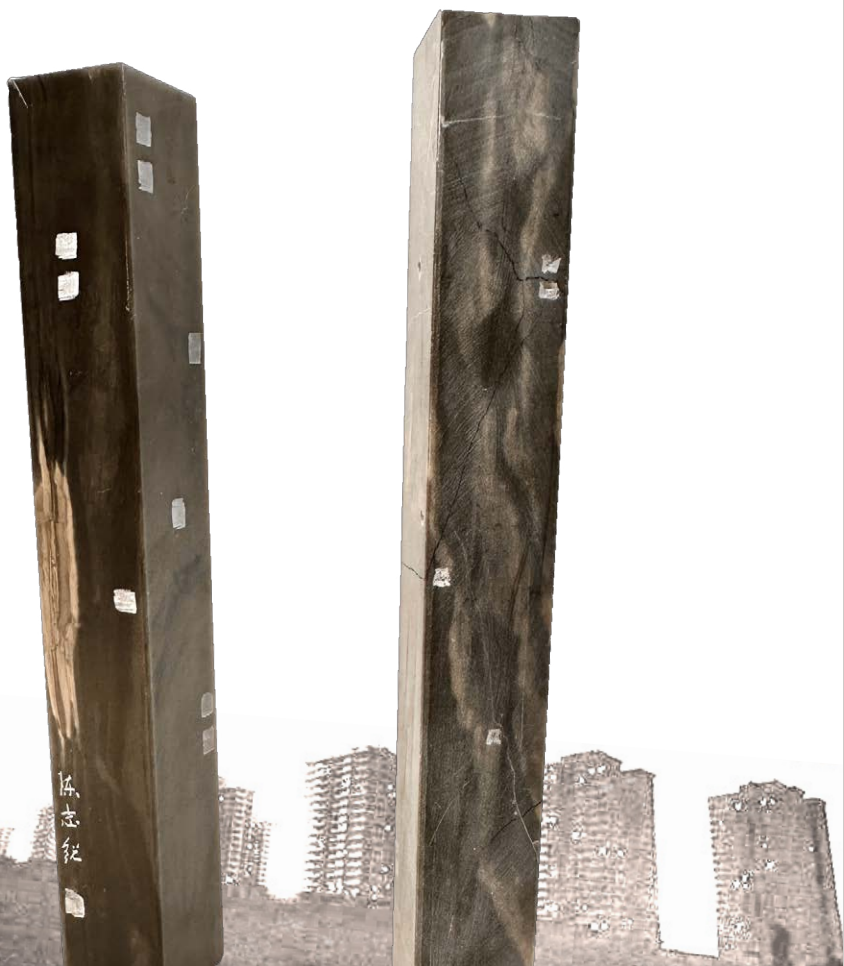
58



大牌1号
2 x 2 cm



大牌2号
3 x 3 cm



豪情仍在
3 x 3 cm



浮沉随浪
3.5 x 3.3 cm



Tan Seow Wei

陈晓薇

嘿，篆刻还可这样玩！：啸涛印人展

程儒颖

Chan Ru Ying



Uh-Oh
2.5 x 0.8 cm

休息是为了走更远的路
0.8 x 1.5 cm



Ong Fang Zheng

王芳政



正见
1.6 x 1.6 cm



正语
1.9 x 1.9 cm



佛 2 x 2 cm



慈 1.5 x 1.5 cm

2 x 2 cm

日日是好日

2 x 2 cm

快乐是神仙



A Brief History of Seal Carving in Singapore

A Chronology of Seal Carving in Singapore

The antecedence of seal carving in Singapore were practical seals used to verify one's identity. Possibly the earliest form of Chinese art to arrive in the region, we can occasionally catch glimpses of early seals in early documents, inscriptions, plaques, and temple artefacts. Based on this reasoning, when the Singaporean Chinese community reached a certain size by the mid-19th century, there must have been local carvers who worked on seals, making them the pioneers of the practice in Singapore.

The earliest known seal album imprinted in Singapore is the Shihanzhai Seal Album (师汉斋印存), compiled in the 24th year of Guangxu's reign (1898) by Yeh Chih Yun (叶季允 Ye Jiyun, 1859-1921, the editor of Lat Pau), which contained around 180 seals completed after his southward migration. The author was fortunate enough to receive a photocopy of the album in Mr. Tan Kian Por's collection, and it is not hard to see that Yeh's influences were coherent with that of late-Qing carvers, basing their aesthetics on the epigraphic emphasis of the Zhejiang School and playfully varying on them. These seals reflect the styles popular in Nanyang at that time, such as mixed scripts, imitated leaf patterns, outlined characters, mixed red and white characters, and "hanging needle seals", which are now deemed "heterodox" stylisations. These seal imprints are important early evidence that the history of seal carving in Singapore cannot simply be understood within the chronology of the art form's

development in China. While there is no known information about contemporary practitioners during Yeh's time, there must have been other individuals engaged in seal carving and they may be discovered by future generations. It is known that Sun Peigu (孙裴谷, 1891-1944) once published a seal album in Singapore, but I have not had the fortune to view it personally.

Following which, a generation of seal carvers migrated to Singapore due to the invasion of China by the Japanese. Some of those who settled in Singapore were Goh Teck Sian (吴得先 Wu Dexian, 1893-1962, arrived in 1938), See Hiang To (施香沱 Shi Xiangtuo, 1906-1990, arrived in 1938), Chang Tan Nung (张丹农, Zhang Dannong 1903-1975, arrived around the 1940s), Wong Jai Ling (黄载灵 Huang Zailing, 1895-1973, arrived in 1945), Tsai Wan Ching (蔡寰青 Cai Huanqing, 1907-1970, arrived after 1945), Tan Keng Cheow (陈景昭 Chen Jingzhao, 1907-1972, arrived in 1949), and Fan Chang Tien (范昌乾 Fan Changqian, 1908-1985, arrived in 1956). This generation of seal carvers was influenced, to some extent, by the modern curricular teaching of Chinese art and had begun to regard seal carving as a stream of visual art. They had established certain standards and concepts regarding the art history, stylistic schooling, and aesthetic theory of seals. Compared to Yeh Chih Yun, their seals may have lost some capriciousness but have greatly contributed to the overall awareness and proficiency of seal carving in Singapore. Among them, Goh Teck Sian favoured the seals of the Qin and Han



Goh Teck Sian
Unbearable to Look Back

dynasties, Tan Keng Cheow inherited the seal style of Wu Changshuo, popular in fine arts academies, from his teacher Huang Binhong, while Chang Tan Nung drew inspiration from seal styles popular at that time. All of them stood out as prominent figures among the seal carvers of this generation.



Chang Tan Nung
The Bamboo Old Man

In addition, there were several individuals such as Lin Qianshi (林千石, 1918-1990), Tao Shoubo (陶寿伯, 1902-1997), and Feng Kanghou (冯康侯, 1901-1983), who briefly stayed in Singapore or had close connections with local practitioners, providing nourishment to the local community. During this time, the conditions for seal engraving exhibition and circulation, such as the printing of seal engraving catalogues, seal imprint panels, and even organizations (like the Nanyang Epigraphy, Calligraphy and Painting Society 南洋金石书画会 was established in 1948, with executive members including seal carvers Wong Jai Ling, Tsai Wan Ching, and See Hiang To), had also taken shape in Singapore. This reflected that the market and connoisseurship of seals in Singapore had by then outgrown customisations for practical use.

If one were to consider the most influential figure in the development of seal carving in Singapore, it would undoubtedly be Mr. See Hiang To, who taught at Nanyang Academy of Fine

Arts. See, also named as Hongze 宏泽, was born into a family of scholars and artists in Zhangzhou. His father, Shi Gongnan (施拱南, 1880-1946), was also a calligrapher, painter, and seal carver, and their family had a considerable collection of books and materials. In 1975, See compiled and published the Lixianglou Seal Album (荔香楼印集), a collection of his father's seals.

See's seal style is diverse, combining characteristics from different sources, ranging from ancient scripts from bronzes and coins to imitations of contemporary masters such as Wu Changshuo, Zhao Zhiqian, and Qi Baishi. His seals exuded the "flavour of the knife" regardless of the style, exuding a strong sense of archaic beauty. Overall, his seals aligned with the prevailing styles in contemporary Chinese fine arts academies, particularly influenced by the Zhejiang School, which held an indelible influence over literati seal carving. Through his seal albums, one can observe the solid foundation of his skills, which might have appeared somewhat too formalized but allowed him to efficaciously educate the next generation of seal carvers during his tenure at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts without imposing his own style on them.



See Hiang To
Spotless

His students founded art societies became the three core pillars of Singapore's seal carving community, showcasing See's significant contributions to future

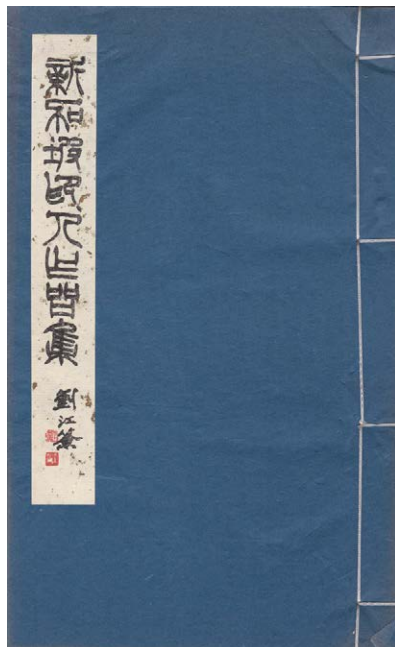
generations. Zhuang Shengtao (庄声涛, 1944-) and Oh Khang Lark (胡康乐, 1945-) founded the Molan Society 墨澜社 in 1967, Tan Kian Por (陈建坡, 1949-2019) and Tan Kee Sek (曾纪策, 1951-) founded the Siaw-Tao Chinese Seal Carving, Calligraphy and Painting Society 啸涛篆刻书画会在 1971, and Wee Beng Chong (黄明宗, 1939-) founded the Lanting Art Society 兰亭画会在 1987.

As mentioned earlier, the subsequent generation of seal carvers had mostly encountered the practice through the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, either as teachers, students, or indirectly. It is worth noting that at that time, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts did not formally establish a specialized seal carving program. Instead, students pursued their interest in seal carving and sought guidance from their teachers on their own. As a result, more informal organizations such as art societies played a crucial role in the development and sharing of seal carving during this period.

Seal carving can be understood as a mature art form by this time. The practitioners were not just producing seals with practical uses but also creating more artistic works. In terms of form, they began exploring possibilities beyond the inheritance of the Ming and Qing styles. This period marked the emergence of a unique and distinctive seal engraving practice in Singapore, as the walling-off of China led to divergences in our understanding of seal aesthetics.

This generation of seal carvers was much more vibrant compared to the earlier period, and it is regrettable that this article cannot fully list them all. Among those in the transitional period were Lim

Hui Eng (林惠瀛, 1921-1984), Tan Tee Chic (陈世集, 1928-2011), Lim Mu Hue (林木化, 1936-2008), Liu Pao Kiang (廖宝强, 1937-2023), and Le Eng Wah (吕永华, 1943-), in addition to the five students of Mr. See Hiang To mentioned earlier. There were also others like Tan Kin Chwee (陈岳钦, 1951-), Tan Chin Boon (陈振文, 1953-), and later generation engravers such as Ho Bee Tiam (何梅田, 1958-), Teo Yew Yap (张有铤, 1960-), Oh Chai Hoo (胡财和, 1960-), and Lee Soon Heng (李巡兴, 1962-), and so on, which are too numerous to enumerate. Information about seal carvers of this period is relatively easy to find and for further details, readers can refer to the other article in this publication. The 1970s was also a mature period for the publication of seal albums. Starting with Seal Album of Liu Pao Kiang (廖宝强印集), published in 1963, almost every seal carver has published their



Singapore Seal Carvers' Exhibition Album 2002

own seal albums or participated in the publications of art societies. This greatly strengthened the overall artistic community in Singapore in terms of their exposure to and understanding of the art of seal engraving.

The first local publication that summarized the development of Singapore's seal carving scene was Seal Carving in Singapore (新加坡篆刻), published in 1976 to accompany an exhibition of the same name. It featured the works of ten seal carvers and was foundational to the documentation of the practice in Singapore (it is noted that Tan Kian Por and Tan Kee Sek's works were not published as they engraved poems by Mao Zedong). This catalogue demonstrated the nascence of the concept of a Singaporean seal carving practice in the 1970s.



Tan Feng Sheng Gloria | Bao Ding Disembles the Ox

Siaw-Tao, together with the Sibaozhai Gallery, later jointly organized and published four editions of Singapore Seal Carvers' Exhibition/Album (新加坡印人作品展/集) in 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008. During a time when the internet was not yet widely accessible, these attempts at tracing the history and current practice of Singaporean seal carving were important and set the foundation for this article.

These publications were all organized by the seal carvers themselves, who attempted to conceptualise the history of seal carving in Singapore through their own experiences. However, we are still in urgent need of more critical and discursive articles. It is hoped that this article can serve as a starting point to spark the attention of relevant authorities and the academic community, and eventually lead to the compilation of a more comprehensive and accurate history of seal carving in Singapore.

In recent years, the seal carving community in Singapore has been persistent in its efforts, continuously exploring the possibilities for the development of the practice in Singapore. This exhibition, along with the other article in the same publication, will use the works of the Siaw-Tao Chinese Seal Carving, Calligraphy and Painting Society as a starting point to compile the various viewpoints held by practitioners in 2023.

There are two major groups of seal carvers missing from this article. The first group consists of the so-called "seal artisans" who have been overlooked by the fine arts system over the years. These practitioners primarily focus on making practical name seals and includes not only the pioneers over more than a

hundred years but also those who have connections with many renowned seal carvers. For instance, Tan Kian Por, a Cultural Medallion awardee and a member of the Xiling Seal Art Society, has also sold touristic seals at the Sentosa Arts Centre. The distinction between seal artists/artisans should not be too rigid, and it is hoped that we will have a deeper understanding of these nameless practitioners in the future.

The second group consists of seal engravers from Malaysia. Although Malaysian seal carving history has some differences from Singapore's, there is also a close connection, especially during the period when See Hiang To taught at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts. My understanding of this aspect is limited and cannot provide a reasonable overview, but I would like to highlight this as a subject for future research.

Scaffolding the Art Historical Discourse of Seal Carving in Singapore

Compared to compiling a chronology of seal carving in Singapore, writing a comprehensive history of the practice in context is a much more challenging task that remains unexplored to this day. I am aware of my limited knowledge, but I have had the opportunity to interact with many senior practitioners and therefore feel qualified to provide a conceptual scaffold for future art historical narratives on seal carving in Singapore.

Drawing from various works on the history of Chinese seal carving, including those by Deng Sanmu (approximately in the 1930s), Ye Luyuan and Qian Juntao (1974), Sha Menghai (1987), Bai Qianshen (1993), Li Gangtian and Ma

Shida (2009), and Sun Weizu (2010), the development of seal carving as an art form is roughly understood by the academic community as follows:

Shang and Zhou Dynasties:

The beginnings of seals

Warring States:

The development of seals

Qin and Han Dynasties:

The regularisation and scaling of seals

Northern and Southern Dynasties to the Song:

The decline of seals (some scholars believe that this period has been unfairly neglected by future practitioners)

Yuan Dynasty:

A stimulation through the introduction of alien cultures, the start of literati seal carving

Ming and Qing Dynasties:

Through the practice of the Anhui and Zhejiang Schools and introduction of the aesthetics of knife techniques, seal carving saw a renaissance, emerging as a form of art.

Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China:

Through the practice of masters such as Wu Changshuo, Deng Shiru, Zhao Zhiqian, and Huang Shiling, the artform saw development in many aspects (including the stylisation of scripts, knife techniques, and formalism), forming the high noon of modern seal carving.

From the establishment of the People's Republic to the Cultural Revolution:

The introduction of new stimuli (such as the inscription of contemporary and vernacular words, simplified characters) due to the changed cultural context, forcing the artform to confront the possibility of development by breaking with formalism.

After reform and opening-up:

A certain degree of distance with the late-

Qing and Republican schools allowed the artform to break out of formalist practice, seeking new stimuli to develop on traditional elements of the artform (such as knife techniques, stylisation of scripts, formal composition), forming the second high point of modern seal carving.

This exposition is heavily influenced by Western art historical perspectives, tracing a path from classical practice, through a period of decline, to renaissance, and finally encountering modernism. Setting aside the correctness of this narrative, when attempting to use this framework to analyse the history of seal carving in Singapore, we find that Singaporean seal carving either exhibits a vertical “belatedness” (for instance, Yeh Chih Yun’s seals reflect styles that Chinese masters had already abandoned by the late-Qing, or the seal styles of See Hiang To’s generation did not align with the innovative trends of their contemporary Chinese counterparts), or a case of horizontal “detachment” (many of the seal styles represented in this publication are disconnected from developments of the artform in China). This fallacy undoubtedly arises from an imposed cause-and-effect relationship—the development of seal carving in Singapore has certain connections with China, but it does not directly and constantly receive stimuli from China, nor should it be conceptualised by fitting it into the context of Chinese seal carving history. In the realm of painting, Michael Sullivan already emphasized in his 1996 publication *Art and Artists and 20th Century China* that art in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other regions Chinese migration and settlement should not be too directly aligned with painterly development in mainland China. Instead, emphasis should be placed on

their unique cultural atmosphere and the artistic styles and directions that emerge from within. The same consideration should apply when writing the history of seal carving in Singapore.

Based on this perspective and the chronological discussion presented in the earlier part of the article, I roughly divide the development of seal carving in Singapore into several periods and outline their aesthetic significance. In brief, it can be summarized as a progression from a phase where a profound understanding of formalized styles prevailed to a phase of breaking away from formalism. The outline of the practice in Singapore over the past 200 years is still incomplete, lacking a comprehensive archive of information (especially regarding “artisan” engravers). Future research may support or challenge my overview:

1820s-1930s: Influx

This period marks the time when the practice of seal carving was introduced to Singapore. With a few exceptional cases, the artistic aspects of seal carving were not well-defined during this period. In the middle phase of this period, there should have been sufficient practitioners in Singapore to provide practical, decorative, and religious seals for the overseas Chinese community (some seals might have also been brought in from other regions). Later, a group of literati who migrated to Singapore introduced aesthetic formalism fashionable in the Southeast Chinese cultural spheres. At this point, practitioners and connoisseurs in Singapore began to circulate and share their seal imprints. Singapore began to have what we may term ‘literati practitioners’, with Yeh Chih Yun being one of the early representative figures.



1930s-1960s: Consolidation

During this period, incoming seal carvers from Southern China shared a basic consensus on the formalist connoisseurship of seals as an artform, centred on the admiration of epigraphic formalism as represented by Wu Changshuo. These ideas had connections with the systemisation of traditional art in the modern Chinese fine arts academies. The practitioners of this period were fond of exploring scripts beyond the basic Han seal script (especially the oracle bone script and bronze inscriptions), and they predominantly focused on knifework to bring out the beauty of linear expressions. Many of these engravers started transmitting knowledge of the practice, especially those with connections to Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, such as See Hiang To, Wong Jai Ling, Tan Keng Cheow, and Goh Teck Sian. They laid the foundation for the earliest systematic seal carving education in Singapore, and their epigraphic style became the fundamental reference for the next generation of practitioners.

1960s-2000s: Localisation

In the previous period, the face of seal carving that took shape in Singapore now serves as a reference for artistic creation. However, it did not form a distinctive factions or sense of a stylistic school. Most practitioners were willing to explore their own aesthetic preoccupations, diverging from practice in China and contributing to a period of localized development. Apart from more easily accessible information and the stimulation brought by more unearthed cultural artefacts, practitioners started infusing modernist aesthetics into their seal engravings, making the impressions

more artistically grounded compared to the previous period (many seal carvers from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts majored in painting, as the academy did not offer a specialized seal carving programme). Practitioners also delved deeper into the technical possibilities of the artform, seeking out unique and idiosyncratic knife techniques. In the 1970s, Chinese seal carving masters established contact with Singaporean practitioners and began to exchange new ideas on the artform (Tan Kian Por became an overseas honorary member of the Xiling Seal Art Society in 1994), further propelling Singaporean seal carving into the modern era. The emergence of seal carving societies also facilitated more horizontal exchanges among practitioners, leading to the overall development of an independent and distinctive lineage in Singaporean seal carving.

The government's awarding of the Cultural Medallion to Wee Beng Chong and Tan Kian Por in 1979 and 2001, respectively, also served to affirm the status of seal carving as an artform.

2000s onwards: Independent Development

During this period, practitioners in Singapore diverged significantly from the developmental trajectory of the practice in China. With changes in their sense of linguistic affiliation and the impact of more non-Chinese cultural elements, their works became increasingly dynamic and even started challenging many established formalist concepts (the digital seals created by Tan Kian Por around 2010 stands out as a landmark work). Some seal carvers continued to lean towards classical seal styles, which, though distinct from

the earlier mentioned modernist and post-modernist styles, also signified a departure from the trends followed by Chinese practitioners.

Overall, seal carvers during this period almost entirely shed the sense of being a subset or localised flavour of the broad Chinese seal carving narrative, merely viewing it as a point of reference, marking a phase of independent development for the art of seal carving in Singapore. For a focus on the practitioners of this period and their artworks, please refer to the other article in this publication.

The art of seal carving in Singapore is still in an awkward position. Although art institutions to some extent acknowledge its independence and validity as an artform, they still find it difficult to regard it as a "discrete" artform and engage it in detailed analysis. For example, the Asian Civilisations Museum's exhibition featuring Tan Tsze Chor's 陈之初 Xiang Xue Zhuang 香雪庄 collection of art (2019) did not engage with Qi Baishi's seals within an art historical framework, and it was only in a sculpture-themed exhibition at the National Gallery (2022) that Oh Chai Hoo's ceramic seals were showcased. This article provides a rough outline, and I once again call on the academic community and researchers to recognize the development and uniqueness of seal carving in Singapore, to conduct scholarly discourse on the topic, and ultimately to complement the shortcomings of this article.

Tan Yong Jun



《新加坡篆刻史略》

新加坡篆刻纪年

新加坡篆刻艺术的起源于实用性的印章，用以证明身份。印章及书法相信是华侨当初南来时最早带入本地的中华美术之一，我们不时能够在新加坡早期的公文、碑文、匾牌、庙坛中瞥见其踪影。以此推理，在十九世纪中旬，当新加坡华人社群达到一定规模后，必定有印匠在本地治印，成为新加坡篆刻史上的一批先驱印人。

现存最早钤盖于新加坡的印谱为光绪二十四年（1898年）叶季允（1859-1921，名懋斌，号永翁、惺噩生，《叻报》主编）所刊行的《师汉斋印存》，收录了其南渡后的约180方印章。笔者有幸获得陈建坡先生藏本的影印本，其中不难看出其印风与清末杂家相符，在饶有浙派金石美学的基础上，还多了无拘无束的玩味性质。其作品包括杂体、拟叶纹、双钩、朱白文、悬针篆等非“正统”印风，见证了当时南洋一代印章所流行的灵性布局，是重要的文献，也很早体现出新加坡的篆刻史不能够附加在中国篆刻大家的发展脉络上。与叶季允同期的印人暂无所考，但必有

他人，待后世发掘。据悉，孙裴谷（1891-1944）曾在新加坡刊行印谱，但笔者无缘观摩。

随后，是一辈因日军南侵而南渡的印人，最后定居新加坡（又称“星洲”）的有吴得先（1893-1962，1938年抵星）、施香沱（1906-1990，1938年抵星）、张丹农（1903-1975，约1940年代抵星）、黄载灵（1895-1973，1945年抵星）、蔡寰青（1907-1970年，1945年后抵星）、陈景昭（1907-1972，1949年抵星）、范昌乾（1908-1985，1956抵星）。这代印人或多或少受到中国现代艺术教学的影响，已将篆刻视为一门视觉艺术体系，对印章的传播、流派、美学有了一定的既定标准与概念，比起叶季允少了些玩味性质，但大大激起了新加坡整体的篆刻认识与水平。其中，

吴得先钟情于简洁的秦汉印风、陈景昭从其师黄宾虹继承美专中流行的吴昌硕印



吴得先《守琴轩主》

风、而张丹农从当时流行的多种印风中汲取养分，均为此时代印人较为突出者。



张丹农《在水一方》

另外，又因数位如林干石（1918-1990）、陶寿伯（1902-1997）、冯康侯（1901-1983）等诸君短暂在新加坡逗留，或与本地印人有着密切联系，也为本地的篆刻界提供了不少养分。此时对篆刻展出的形式与设备，如印刷印谱、印屏、甚至社团（南洋中华金石书画社成立于1948年，理事有印人黄载灵、蔡寰青、施香沱），也基本在新加坡成形，体现出篆刻艺术已经有了实用订制以外的观众及市场。

若谓对后世发展最具贡献者，当属执教于南洋美专的施香沱先生。施香沱（字宏泽）出生漳州世家，其父施拱南（1880-1946）亦为书画篆刻家，家藏颇具规模的书籍资料；施香沱后于1975年为先严刊印了《荔香楼印集》。香沱先生的印风不容一语盖之，结合了不同流派的特

点，古至金文、泉文、古玺，今至吴昌硕、赵之谦、齐白石等大家的摹印，多用切刀，印风无不突显浓厚的金石味。整体而言，其篆刻作品与当代中国美专所流行的印风一致，为以浙派为本而后发展的文人篆刻。从印谱中，可见先生稳扎的功底，或有点形式化，却也恰好让他在南洋美专执教时向下一代印人传授了深厚的基础，却不以自身的印风影响学生的发展方向。其学生庄声涛（1944-）、胡康乐（1945-）等于1967年创办墨澜社，陈建坡（1949-2019）、曾纪策（1951-）等于1971年创办啸涛篆刻书画会，黄明宗（1939-）于1987年创办兰亭画会，为新加坡篆刻界的三个核心点，可见其对后世的贡献非同小可。



施香沱
《三分痴气一升糊涂》

后辈的印人如前所述，很多都通过南洋美专课程体系接触篆刻，师生相授，或间接接触。据悉，南洋美专当时并未正式成立篆刻

专科班，都由学生凭着自己的兴趣自行向教师请教，也因此于此辈起画会等民间组织对篆刻的发展与交流愈加重要。把篆刻视为一门艺术体系基本上于此时完全成熟，印人们刀下的作品不仅有实用性印章，也有了更多的艺术作品，在形式上印人们也开始探讨清末民初流派印传承之外的可能性。要谈新加坡篆刻面貌的独特性，应该从此时说起；此辈早期恰好遇到中国封闭的时候，对篆刻美学的理解开始有分歧是自然的。

此辈印人较之前期印人活跃许多，恕此文无法尽数列出。中间过渡期的印人有林惠瀛（1921-1984）、陈世集（1928-2011）、林木化（1936-2008）、廖宝强（1937-2023）、吕永华（1943- ），后除了以上所列出的五位香沱先生的学生外，也有陈岳钦（1951- ）、陈振文（1953- ），再后来如何梅田（1958- ）、张有铄（1960- ）、胡财和（1960- ）、李巡兴（1962- ）等印人更是不胜枚举。此期的篆刻作品相对容易寻得资料，本文在此不作赘言，详见本刊另一篇文章。

1970年代也是印刷篆刻集的成熟时期，从廖宝强于1963年刊行的

《廖宝强印集》开始至今，几乎每位印人都刊行了自己的印谱或参与了画会的刊物，大幅度地加强了新加坡艺术界对篆刻艺术的接触及认识。本地第一部以概括新加坡篆刻界发展脉络的印谱，为1976年配合同名展览而出版的《新加坡篆刻》，收录了10位印人的作品，是一册奠基性的刊物（据悉：陈建坡与曾纪策刻的毛泽东诗句不收入印谱中），说明当时就有了新加坡篆刻体系存在的概念）。啸涛篆刻书画会与四宝斋画廊后于2002年、2004年、2006年、2008年联合举办与刊行了四册《新加坡印人作品



《新加坡印人作品集》2002

展/集》，在网路不通行的年代试图谱出新加坡篆刻的前世今生，可谓本文的先河。

这些合集皆由印人自行组织，通过自己的实践提出对新加坡篆刻体系这一课题的想法，但我们还急切需要更深入的议论性文章，望此文能够抛砖引玉，激起有关当局与学界的关注，整理出一部较完整、精准的新加坡篆刻史。

近年来，新加坡篆刻界亦坚持不懈，持续探讨篆刻艺术在新加坡发展的可能性，此展与同刊中的另一篇文章将以啸涛篆刻书画会



《新加坡印人作品集》2002

的作品为例，整理出2023年的印人们对此议题所持有的各种观点。

此文中缺席的印人有两大群体。其一为历年来被美术体系忽略的所谓“印匠”，即主要接受姓名章订做的印人。此群体不仅包括了一百多年来的先驱印人，也与很多知名印人的经历相关；如新加坡文化奖得主、西泠印社成员陈建坡，也曾于圣淘沙艺术中心售出标定为纪念品的印章。印人与印匠之间的区别不宜太过明确，我们期待将来对这些至今无名的印人有更深入的了解。其二为马来西亚的印人。马来西亚篆刻史虽与新加坡有着一定的分歧，但也有着紧密的关联，尤其是在施香沱执教于南洋美专期间。笔者对此的了解片面化，无法做出合理的梳理。这是未来可作研究的课题之一。

新加坡篆刻史刍议

相较于整理出一份新加坡篆刻年谱，编写一部新加坡篆刻史艰难许多，至今无人从事。我自认学识不足，但又接触了不少前辈印人，因此只能对新加坡篆刻史这个课题作出刍议，为将来学者铺路。

综合如邓散木（约1930年代撰写）、叶潞渊与钱君陶（1974年）、沙孟海（1987年）、白谦慎（1993年）、李刚田与马士达（2009年）、孙慰祖（2010年）等编写的中国篆刻史，学界所整理的中国篆刻艺术发展脉络大致如下：

商、周：印章艺术雏形

战国：印章艺术蓬勃发展

秦、汉：印章艺术规模化且制式化

南北朝至宋：印章艺术没落（亦有学者认为是后世印人所忽视的时段）

元：异文化带来冲击，文人印章的开始

明、清：经皖、浙派印人的发展，印章艺术得以复兴，介入刀法美学，蜕变为篆刻艺术

清、民：经吴昌硕、邓石如、赵之谦、黄士陵等大家的实践，篆刻艺术受到多样的刺激（如文体、刀法、形式）而扩展，是篆刻现代性的鼎盛时期

新中国成立至文革：篆刻艺术因异样文化氛围而受到刺激（如：当代印题、白话文、简体字），面对篆刻艺术的转折、破旧

改革开放后：印人与清、民流派有了一定的断层，使得篆刻艺术破出流派意识，在传统美学元素上（如：刀法、文字美学、布

局）多方面汲取养分，形成现代篆刻的第二个高峰

以上论述多少受到西方艺术史观的影响，谱出的是从古典经过没落期再复兴又从中寻出现代意味的脉络。且不谈这论述的正确与否，当我们试图以此脉络梳理新加坡篆刻史时，会发现新加坡的篆刻体现的不是一种纵向发展的“滞后性”（“belatedness”，如叶季允所刊刻的是清末大家已撇弃的印风，或施香沔辈的印风没有同期中国大家的标新立异）就是横向发展的“脱离性”（“detachment”，如此刊物中的许多印风与中国篆刻发展脉络脱离）。

这谬论无疑来自强加的因果关系——新加坡的篆刻艺术发展与中国有着一定的关系，但并不直接从中国输入，也不需以置入中国篆刻史脉络的方式来解读。在绘画方面，苏立文教授在1996年出版的《20世纪中国艺术与艺术家》中就已说明港、台、及其他华人聚集地的艺术不应与中国本土的发展进行太直接的接轨，而应重视这些地区独特的文化氛围以及从中衍生出的艺术风格与去向。在谱写新加坡篆刻史之时，也应有此考量。

笔者综合此观点及文章上段所阐述的纪年，粗略地分出新加坡篆刻艺术的几个分段及其美学意义，极其简短地说，是从塑造对流派形式化有深厚认识的阶段走向跳脱流派形式化的过程。新加坡200多年来的篆刻大纲现今仍不完整，欠缺全面性的资料搜集（尤其是民间印人），有待来日的研究可论证或推翻笔者的刍议：

1820年代（或更早）—1930年代：输入期

此时为篆刻工艺输入新加坡的时期，除了一些特别案例外，印人对篆刻的艺术性不太明确。这时期中段，新加坡有足够的印人为海外华人提供实用性、装饰性、及宗教性的篆刻作品（有一部分印章也从外地带入）。后期移居的文人群体将印章的审美输入了中国东南文化圈中，而新加坡开始有分享篆刻藏品的做法，甚至有自己刻印的文人，以叶季允为较早的代表性人物。

1930年代—1960年代：成形期

此时的南来印人对篆刻美学的概念基本一致，推崇以吴昌硕为代表的金石美学，与中国现代美专将传统美术系统化的过程有联系。此期的印人喜于探索汉篆

以外的字体（尤其是金文、甲骨文），几乎都通过“切刀”手法体现出印面的线条美。不少印人开始授课，尤其是施香沔、黄载灵、陈景昭、吴得先等与南洋美专有关系的印人，造就了新加坡最早的系统化篆刻教学，而他们的金石派印风也成为了下一代印人的基本参考资料。

1960年代—2000年代：在地化

前一期于新加坡成形的篆刻面目，成为此期的创作参考资料，但没有形成强烈的流派性质，大多印人都愿意探讨自己的篆刻美学观点，以此与中国体系有所脱离，是篆刻的在地发展时期。除了较容易寻得的资料以及更多的出土文物所带来的刺激，印人也开始在篆刻中注入现代美学，印面较前期相比更有画意（南洋美专不授篆刻专科班，多数印人主修绘画）。印人也在技巧上进一步发展，寻出有个人面目的刀法。1970年代后，中国的篆刻大家开始与新加坡印人交流（陈建坡于1994年成为西泠印社海外名誉社员），更把新加坡篆刻艺术推向现代期。篆刻社团的开始也意味着印人有了更多的横向交流，整体上让新加坡篆刻艺术发展出独立的脉络。

政府于1979年与2001年颁予黄明宗与陈建坡的“新加坡文化奖”奖章也在一定程度上肯定了篆刻艺术在新加坡的地位。

2000年代后：独立发展

此期的印人基本上与中国篆刻的发展脉络有了更大的分歧，加上印人对语言的认同感有所变化，以及更多非中华文化体系元素的冲击，使篆刻风格愈发灵动，乃至有作品开始在形式上推翻许多对篆刻定义的既定概念（可以陈建坡于2010年左右创作的电脑篆刻作品为标志性作品）。亦有印人钟意于古典印风，虽与之前所述的后现代印风发展迥异，但也同样意味着与中国大家的风格走向有所分歧。概而言之，此期的印人近乎完全脱离了与中国篆刻体系的附属关系，仅将其视为一种参考资料，可谓是新加坡篆刻艺术的独立发展期。

此期印人为此展的焦点，详见本刊另一篇介绍文章。

篆刻艺术在新加坡仍处于一个尴尬的局面。美术馆等机构虽多少承认篆刻艺术的独立性，却很难将其视为一种“完整”的艺术形式而做出详尽的讨论。例如，亚洲文明博物馆的“香雪庄”主题

展览（2019年）没有以美学框架展出的齐白石印章，而国家美术馆唯有在雕塑的主题展里（2022年）才展出胡财和的陶印作品。此文为粗略的大纲，笔者再次呼吁学界与研究员正视篆刻艺术在新加坡的发展与独特性，以更深入的论述弥补此文的不足。

岁癸卯炎日

陈咏峻撰于洗戟斋

参展印人

Siaw-Tao Seal Carvers

程儒颖	Chan Ru Ying
张财	Chong Choy
蔡春喜	Chua Chon Hee
蔡书庭	Chua Soo Teng
符芳俊	Foo Fung Chun
郭书明	Guo Shuming
何梅田	Ho Bee Tiam
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尤东暉	Yew Tong Wei

嘿，篆刻还可这样玩！：啸涛印人展

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编辑 Editorial

策展 - 林佳宁 Michelle Lim

文章 - 林佳宁 Michelle Lim, 陈咏峻 Tan Yong Jun

设计 - 陈晓薇 Tan Seow Wei

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苏宣石 Soh Suan Cheok

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