

Macao: Back to Common Roots

Macao was known as “Keng Hoi” (Mirror Sea) in ancient time, a place where the Chinese nation lives generations after generations. It is located in the southeast of China, leaning against South China Sea to the south. After the mid 16 century, it was gradually occupied by Portugal; the Government of the People’s Republic of China resumed the exercise of sovereignty over Macao on December 20th, 1999.

“Macao: Back to Common Roots” illustrates in image form about the rich Chinese and Western culture with long history that meet at Macao, and affect each other creatively. The people come together and dedicate themselves in promoting the political, economic and cultural development of Macao; the joy of returning to the motherland and the new appearance of the special administrative region, etc. Lok Hei is the first person to create this kind of drawing in Macao’s art history.

The “Macao: Back to Common Roots”, created by Lok Hei in the format of Chinese traditional scroll painting depicting officials of different hierarchies, missionaries of different religions, and people’s appearance from different seas and lands; as well as buildings and ships in various styles, and the outlook of the city in different periods in Macao, a place where East and West meet since the Ming dynasty until present. In addition, the 100 meter long fiber pen drawing links closely together the outstanding and representable events and elements, covering history, economy, religion, custom, education, literature, drama, news, publication, board casting, movie and TV, art, music, dancing, architecture and association, which took 8 months to complete.

As an iconic architecture of Macao, the A Ma Temple and the ruin of St. Paul church are the most prominent in the scroll painting. Although the ‘Yang Chuan Shi’ (Stone of Western Ship) of the former one and the stone carving ‘Angel’ of the latter one represent different believes and religions of different nations, they have the same pursuit of a brilliant lifestyle. Also, the ‘Firecrackers Making’ and ‘Woven Rattans’, etc., display the living scenario. While the ‘Feast of Na-Tcha and Parade’ that goes through the main streets and small alleys in the city, or the Portuguese folk dances that people sing along the journey, they also reveal the local customs of the small city.

The artwork used lines to form the shape of the main body. The sequence and combination of thickness, curvature, angle, direction and distance, etc. are rich in variation. Through the changing movements of the pen, it expressed the trend, rhythm, interweaves, volume and sense of strength, etc. The style of the drawing is realistic, and the scenarios are interrelated. The drawing technique is not limited to one type, which is refreshing and innovative. The introduction of Montage approach and modern designing concept have created more sense of layers to the picture. While it is filled with historical affection, it also goes with the attitude and behavior of acceptance towards aesthetic which is currently popular, namely, the aesthetics trend.

The “Macao: Back to Common Roots” is based on Lok Hei’s pure sentiment as an artist who was born and grew up locally, it recreates the historical scenario of Macao evolving from a small fishing village to become urbanized, modernized and globalized, exhibiting the unique spirit and cultural features of Macao, with epochal significance.

Author: Chan Kai Chon

Translation: NTC Communication & Translation Services