



蔡德怡

象嶼

2016

水墨絹本設色

15 x 77 公分

**Barbara Choi**

**The Legend of Lantau Island**

2016

Ink and color on silk

15 x 77 cm

Blue-and-green landscape is a traditional type of painting which can trace back to the Sui and Tang periods. Blue-and-green landscape in traditional paintings were showcased the theme of religion story, immortal and fairyland, and seclusion. Barbara Choi, studied in The Chinese University of Hong Kong and received her Bachelor of Arts degree in 2011 and Master of Fine Arts degree in 2015, combined the blue-and-green landscape style into the theme of Hong Kong scenery and legend painting. Choi started her painting of Hong Kong street and legend with the style of blue-and-green landscape in 2012, transferred from modern ink painting and flowers-and-birds painting. She would like to keep the appearance as well as her feelings and memories of Hong Kong through her paintings, as she thinks the culture of Hong Kong should be seen by more and more people. Meanwhile, her paintings gave an innovative twist to the traditional style. She mixed the actual landmarks and scenery in reality with the blue-and-green landscape in imagination, to showcase her creativity and make a contrast of the lively and bustling of Hong Kong and the quiet of nature. Using the technique of blue-and-green landscape, Hong Kong is presented in a way that similar to heavens or paradises which is an ideal world of Choi.

The idea of this painting, The Legend of Lantau Island, was came from the legend of Lantau Island. According to the legend, A feng shui master in Song Dynasty came to Hong Kong and described the feng shui structure of Lantau Island as “a big elephant is pulling a small elephant, so that it can continue the ‘monk’ lines” (大象拖小象，代代出和尚). By using imagination in terms of what the feng shui master have seen, Choi depicted the Lantau Island into the shape of a big elephant and a small elephant. Two elephants are facing with each other. The nose of the big one is like leading the small one to follow. On the back of the big elephant, there are landmarks of Lantau Island, such as The Big Buddha, Wisdom Path and Po Lin Monastery. The painting used fine line (gongbi) style, so details are presented clearly and neatly. Choi usually

drafts her paintings with pencils. After modifying for many times, she sketches the outline with brushes and then applies color. The blue and green colors Choi used in mountains are vivid and multi-layered from light to dark. When inherit the meaning of traditional blue-and-green landscape, she also prefers to use some pleasant colors, so that the viewers can have a good and enjoyable feelings when looking at the art works. All these things show the skillful technique of the painter and the times and efforts she has put.

It is noteworthy that Choi did not add neither inscriptions nor signature in her paintings. Only two little seals were stamped at the left bottom of the painting, *The Legend of Lantau Island*. This is because the archaic paintings that Choi imitated bear no such things and also she did not want to stop viewers' imagination or affect their perception towards the painting.<sup>1</sup> With a lot of blank space in the painting, it gives viewers a quiet and harmonic feeling, and leaves space for imagining the legend of Lantau Island and appreciating the culture of Hong Kong.

Hong Kong, as a modern metropolis, has its own unique culture and beautiful scenery. It always becomes an inspiration for artists. Born and raised in Hong Kong, Barbara Choi knows the legends and stories of this place very well. With love of her hometown, she depicts Hong Kong and reflects her experiences and feelings of this city on her art works. In her paintings, she always picks part of a street, a scene, a building or an object, and combine them into a landscape that is from her imagination. She deeply rooted her style into the blue-and-green landscape which used to portray religion story, immortal and fairyland, and seclusion in tradition. Using this style of painting, it is a projection of an ideal world and her nostalgic interpretation of Hong Kong history.

#### References:

Barbara Choi. "The Legend of Lantau Island 2016." Lee Shau Kee Library and Division of Humanities, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. <http://lbcone.ust.hk/exhibit/exhibition/141/artwork/3172>

Grotto Fine Art Ltd. "Catalogue of the exhibition Hidden Landscape"

---

<sup>1</sup> Grotto Fine Art Ltd. "Catalogue of the exhibition Hidden Landscape"