

Brief of Work

The artwork shows a figure in red, standing in the middle of the city with buildings towering over him/her. The figure is also standing in a puddle which reflects symbolic objects of the old Hong Kong, like stilt houses and fishing boats. Although the buildings are in a dull monochrome, the figure itself and the reflection of the puddle are bursting with colour. The blurry amorphous cars in the background not only give a sense of uncertainty and loss of direction, but also exhibit the repetition of the line “the cars gleam silver like fishes”. The towering buildings give a sense of confinement, echoing the poet’s view of the city not allowing him to try for colour. In addition, they directly parallel the mountains in the reflection, insinuating that there is nature in mankind and mankind in nature (as shown through the stilt houses).

The painting style of the artwork is not aiming for realistic or detailed brushwork. Instead, it focuses more on the colours and the message that it brings. The reflection of “modern Hong Kong” is painted in less detail than “olden Hong Kong”, indicating the poet’s fear of the loss of human interaction.

Although the artwork may seem depressing and despairing at first glance, its message is much more positive. The artwork conveys hope in humanity. The figure in the middle is dressed in red, an auspicious colour for the Chinese, a manifestation of how Hong Kong will not lose its original roots. Even though the figure may seem alone, he/she is standing in a colourful puddle, signifying that he/she stays hopeful. The figure completes the artwork, connecting both the buildings and stilt houses. This ties in with the theme of loss of human touch, and sends the message that it is vital to have hope and strive for a balance between urban development and preservation of humanity.