

## From a Scalpel to a Paint Brush

**“When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully on the closed door that we do not see the one which is opened for us.”**

*Alexander Graham Bell  
(1847-1922)*

The quotation by Bell, one of the most important inventors of the last century, could not be more relevant to my own situation. To many of my patients and friends, I had enjoyed a fulfilling and highly successful surgical career, and they could not quite understand why I suddenly decided to retire and become an artist. The truth was this transition was not entirely my choice as I was forced to retire from surgery when I was found to suffer from Parkinson’s disease. Having said that, this was a blessing in disguise for me as I discovered that I have a great passion for art, even more than my passion for surgery, which I never thought before would be possible. I would like to share with the readership of the *Cutting Edge* my re-discovery of myself, and how one can make the best out of a situation, even in the face of adversity.

Although I have only picked up painting again since January 2016, I have been extremely prolific (like I was with surgical publications) during these two years and eleven months, driven by an unforeseeable and uncontrollable passion for art. So far, I have produced a 185-page art album featuring 227 pieces of my artworks from porcelain, watercolour, acrylic to



**Dr Anthony PC Yim, MD**

*A Surgeon-Turned Artist*



*Art Album "My Second Career" -  
a collection of artwork by*

*Dr Anthony Yim*



Details about the painting can be found on Facebook.



Chinese ink paintings. This entitled *My Second Career* was published *en gratis* by AME in full colour, and released in April 2018. This was soon followed by my debut solo art exhibition at the Camlux Hotel, Kowloon Bay, Hong Kong from 19 May to 30 June 2018, during which over one hundred pieces of artworks, mainly paintings were exhibited. I was commissioned to paint the centrepiece for a brand-new hotel which was only recently opened in July this year called the Beacon in Mongkok, Kowloon, and the *Guiding Light* which measures 3.1 x 2.5 metres is now proudly hanging above the entrance foyer, together with a series of three Angkor Wat paintings (depicting sunrise, sunset and its memory) along its wall.

Why am I so attracted to art – a passion to the extent of almost becoming an obsession? Firstly, this is my character. Anyone who have worked with me knows if I decide to do something, I will be fully dedicated to it. Secondly, I was lucky to be born with a keen sense of colour and space, and my first career ambition was actually to become an artist. I was, however, talked out of it by my late father to pursue a medical career instead. Having worked as a surgeon for over three decades has given me new insights into art. To me, art represents a personal pursuit of perfection, so by that definition, a surgeon is performing art everyday in the operating theatre. Also, to me, true art is not so much to show others what you can do, but rather an inward journal to rediscover and enlighten yourself. The Chinese sometimes refer to this as self-cultivation, and was the prevailing

### *Angkor Wat series*

*Chinese ink and colour on Xuan paper,  
137 x 70 cm each*



*AME Art Gallery - featured  
artist Dr Anthony P YIM*

thinking among the *literati* in the Song Dynasty (960 – 1279AD).

While what constitutes art remains a subject of debate, the purpose of art to represent has long given way to expression with the advent of photography, so the value of an artwork nowadays lies not only on its aesthetics and details, but more in its ability to convey a non-verbal, visual message from the artist to the viewers, in the appropriate context of history and culture.

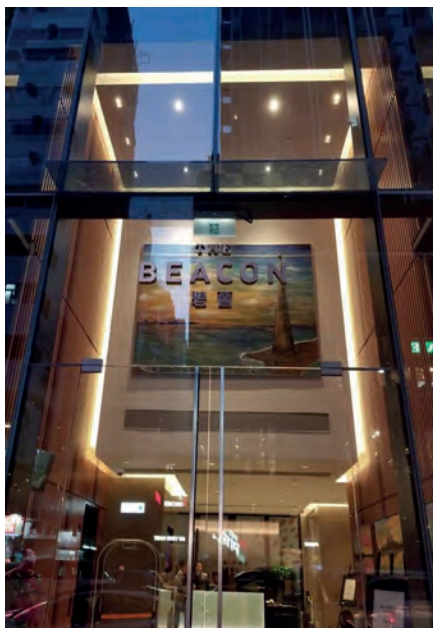
I was very fortunate to have been exposed to a wide range of art techniques, but have not become a pupil of any particular school of art. Therefore, I have no burden of history, and am totally free to explore as I firmly believe creativity should be an integral and essential part of today's art.

Like surgery, I was blessed to have found my niche and focused interest at a very early stage as an artist. My main interest is to explore scientifically mixed media as a vehicle for expression. For centuries, paintings from the East were dominated by ink on Xuan paper or its equivalent, and western paintings by oil (more recently water colour and acrylic) on canvas. I, for example, explored the use of metallic-coloured cardboard as a substrate for mixed media to good effects. This combination enhances the effect of light on the painting, so the colour of the painting changes with the light and the viewing angle. Because of space limitation, I am only showing a tiny portion of my work. Anyone interested to see more can visit my facebook which is publicly accessible (username: Anthony Yim). Let the paintings speak for themselves. I hope my painting will inspire some readers to rediscover themselves. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

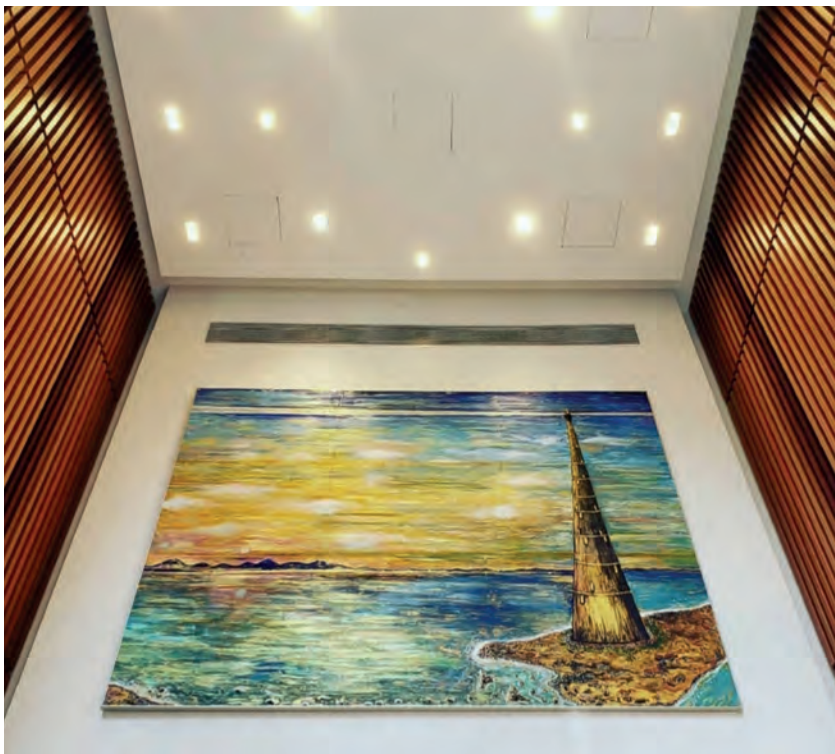
**“Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.”**

*Edgar Degas (1834-1917)*

## At the Beacon







### ***The Guiding Light at the Beacon***

*Mixed media with Chinese colour and Acrylic on gold and silver cardboards. The colour of the painting changes with the viewing angle, 3.1 x 2.5 m*



## **Paintings Made on Xuan Papers**



***Blue Mountain (III)*** Chinese ink and colour on Xuan paper, 76 x 33 cm





*Chi Series (I)*

Chinese ink and colour on gold

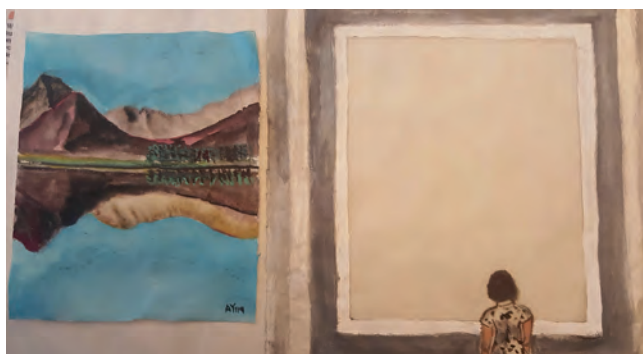
Xuan paper, 70 x 138 cm



*Transcending Time and Space – A Picture in a Picture*

A composite painting with Chinese ink and colour on treated Xuan paper. 24 x 69.5 cm

I invented this technique based on the fact that oil would render Xuan paper translucent from opaque. This allows the artists to expand the scope of their work, a technique I called *transcending time and space*





## Paintings on Card Paper or Cardboard



*2017.12.24 Chinese ink and colour on gold card paper, 79 x 54 cm*

I prefer to name my abstract paintings by the date of completion of the work instead of a worldly title which otherwise would limit the viewers' imagination and defeat the very purpose of abstract arts themselves

*2017.12.25 Chinese ink and colour on gold card paper.*

*A tritych measuring 78 x 54 cm (left), 19 x 54 cm (middle), and 78 x 54 cm (right)*







*Self Awareness* Acrylic on gold card paper, 79 x 54 cm.

The shiny background allows the viewer to see his/her own reflection and the viewer automatically becomes a part of this painting



*Enso*

Mixed media on black card paper, 70 x 50 cm

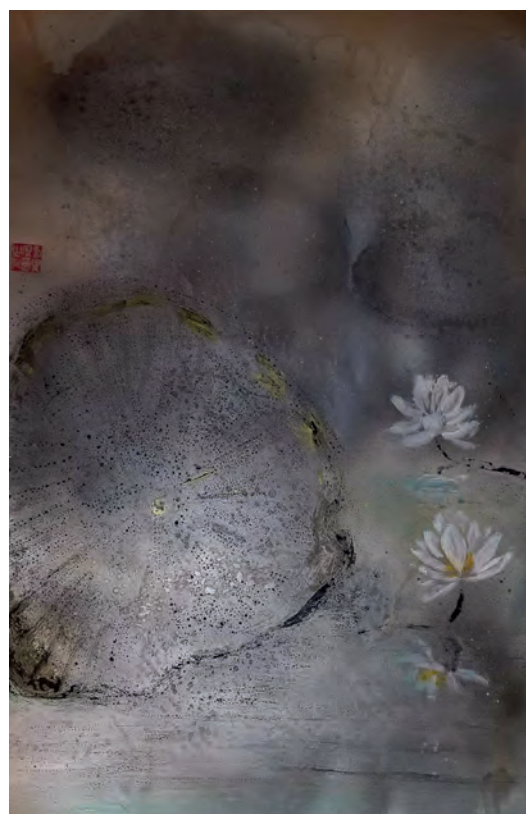
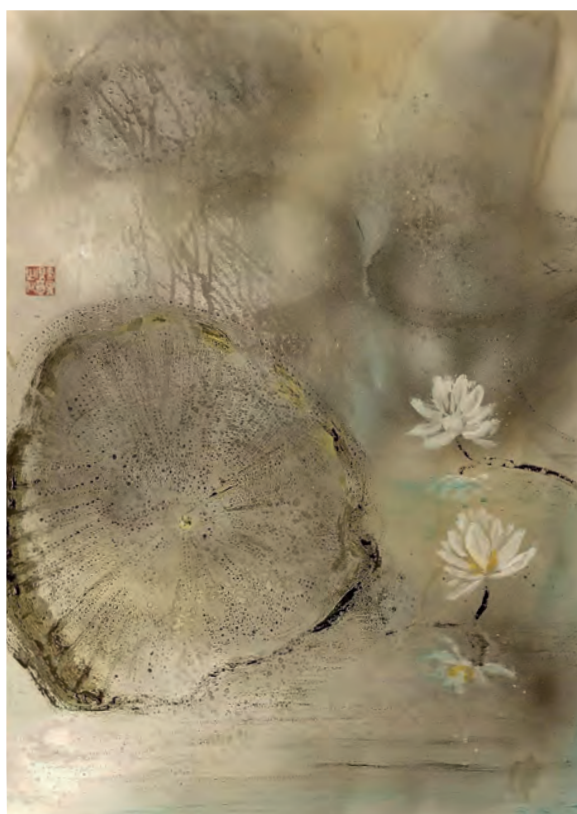






**Silver Lining** *Mixed media on black cardboard.*

This quadtych depicts an abstract landscape with light coming out the edges of a dark cloud, and mountain signifying hope in the face of adversity, 84 x 30 cm (from 4 panels)



**Lotus Pond in the Rain** *Mixed media on silver card paper, 76 x 53.5 cm*

Lotus stands for purity and enlightenment. The silver card paper enhances the effect of light on the painting so that the same painting taken without flashlight (left) looks different from the one with flashlight (right). This reminds us that there are different perspectives in looking at the same event or issue in life





*Dreaming Spires(l)-sunrise*

*Mixed media on blue card paper,  
77 x 53 cm*

This is a new interpretation of a western-styled landscape painting using unconventional media



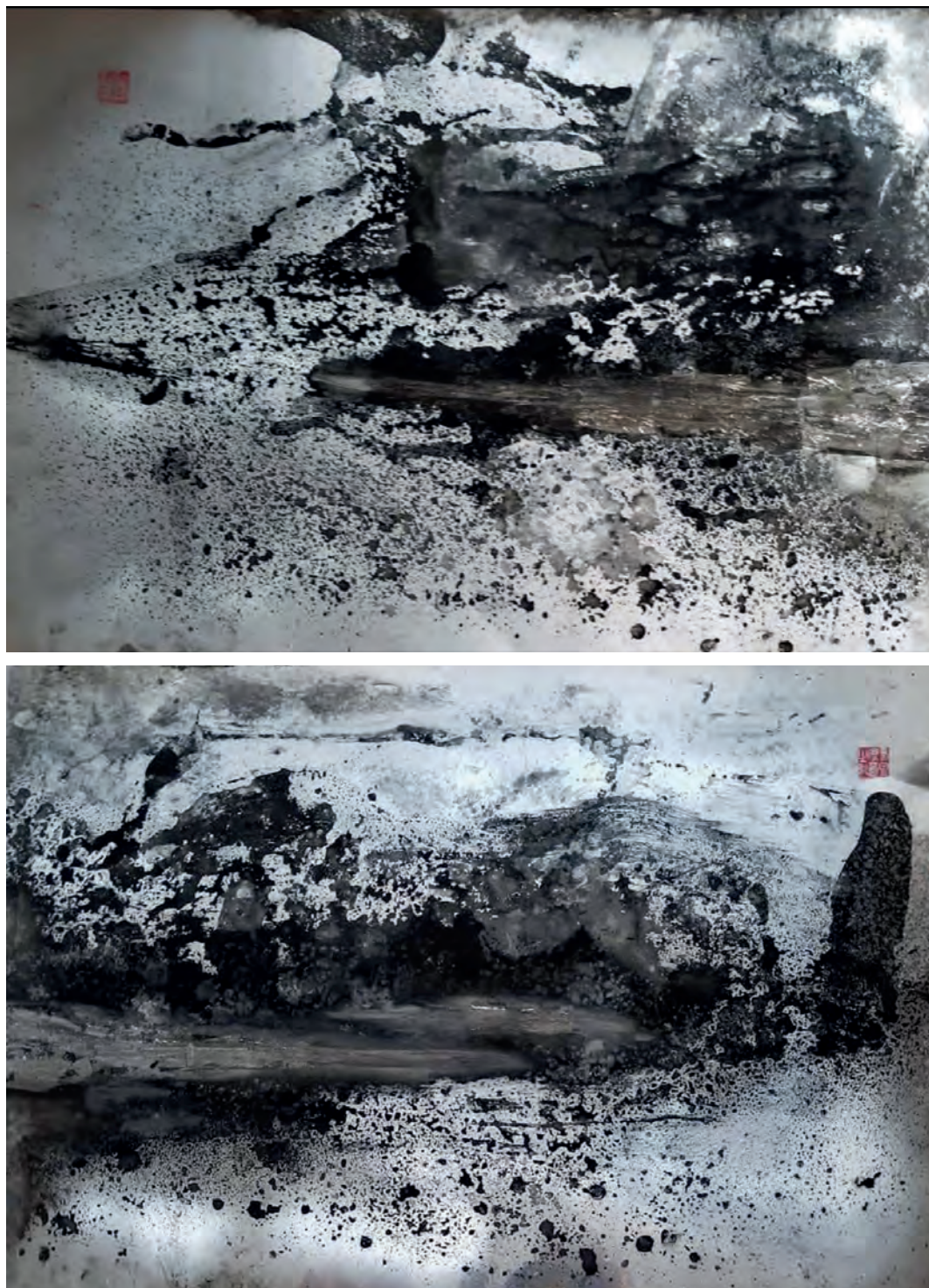
*Huang Shan*

*Chinese ink and colour on a silver card  
paper, 53 x 74 cm*

This is a new interpretation of a Chinese landscape painting using unconventional media



*2018.08.26 These are a pair of Chinese ink splashed paintings on silver card paper, each measures 73 x 54 cm. The upper silver card is dull, while the lower is shiny. The ink was splashed across these two cards with subtle differences signifying our journey at different stages of our lives*





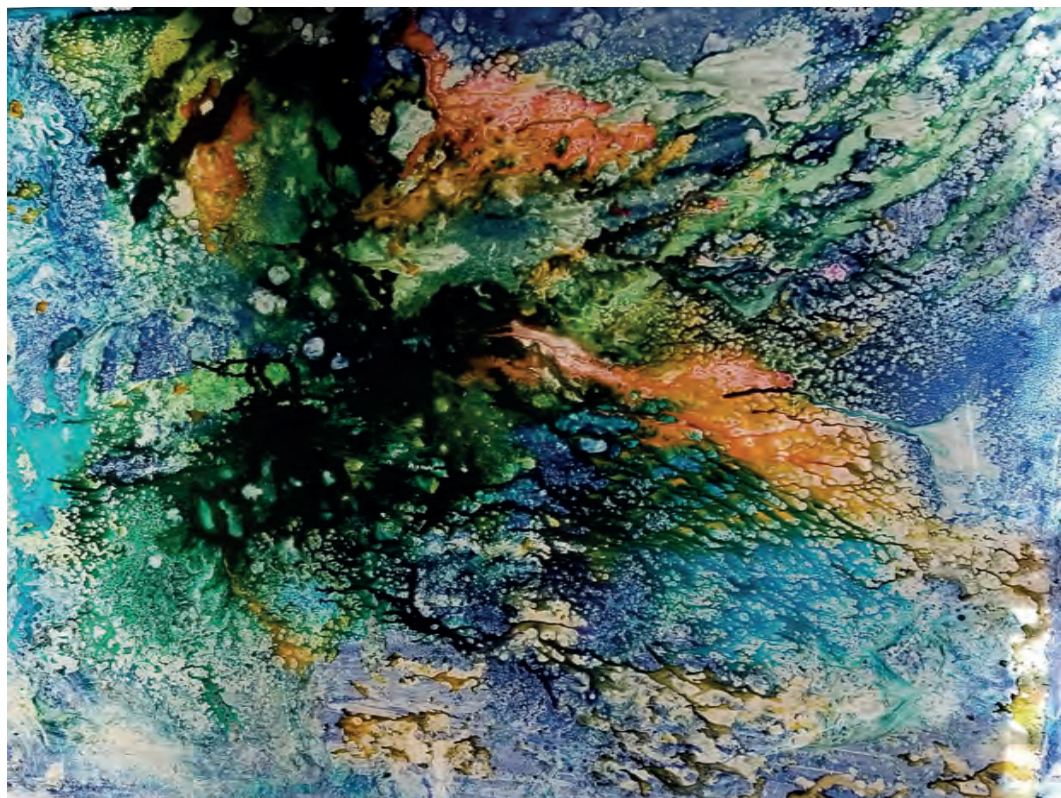
## Paintings on Clear Plastic

### *Colour-light dynamism*

My latest endeavour is to explore mixed media on clear plastic to reproduce the effect similar to stained glass in a Cathedral. These six images capture a glimpse of evolving colour patterns I call light-colour dynamism



2018.12.07 Mixed media on clear plastic, 87 x 63 cm



### What have I learned?

Life is a learning process. After I picked up painting again, I have become a happier person, and people around me generally find me more approachable than before. To respect life is to live it to the fullest under whatever situation. I feel blessed and enlightened, and I would like to share two points with our readers, each of these points has a painting to go with it:

#### 1. Acceptance

Happiness is a personal choice, and not a result. Sustainable happiness has to come from within you, and in order to do that, you must find out who you really are, which include your strengths as well as your weaknesses. You have to understand and accept yourself for who you are, and be grateful for what you have. Only then will you be able to see farther and broader, and fully understand and embrace other things in life, like diversity and the accelerating pace of change.

I was very lucky to have a successful first career early on which made me feel I could change the world. As I grew older, I realised many things in life are simply out of our control. Confucius nearly two thousand five hundred years ago advocated self cultivation – emphasising the importance of putting yourself in order first, and family, country, and the world will follow (修身，齊家，治國，平天下).



*Peep at a Naked Man Standing in Front of a Broken Mirror*

*Mixed media on card paper; 44 x 75 cm*





## 2. Perspectives

I regard wisdom the ability to look at things from different perspectives. The way you view an issue helps to define who you are, like a glass half filled is half full or half empty; a sudden life event, a challenge or an opportunity? Our judgement is often influenced by our knowledge, past experience, our history and culture. It is easy to overlook other perspectives but to fully understand a problem and to find a solution, we must look at things from different angles. This is the very reason why I am focusing on refining my painting techniques to highlight how a painting could look so differently under different lighting and from different angles.

## Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the Editorial Board of the *Cutting Edge* the invitation and the superb assistance of Mr Patrick Ho in preparing this article.



*My Second Career: an interview  
with Dr Anthony YIM*



## East Meets West

*Mixed media on card paper,  
50 x 70 cm*

