

## 何恆雄

HO Hong-Hsiung

1942-

何恆雄創作的〈騎馬戰〉是臺北市國際獅子會成立 30 週年之際，於 1991 年捐贈予本館的作品，直至 2021 年始完成入庫程序；亦是彼時以「公眾藝術」稱之，作為公共藝術開端的標誌性創作。

何恆雄是臺灣從事地景雕塑藝術的先鋒者，1988 年以 46 歲之齡赴美聖路易芳邦藝術學院美術研究所取得碩士學位，回國後創作風格從 80 年代極簡塊面輪廓，與受朱銘影響的斧劈斷面，轉而走向個人語彙強烈，敘事結構更為鮮明的後現代主義路線。〈騎馬戰〉以騎馬打仗為題，藝術家自述是從小學玩到大學的遊戲，雕塑中一位即將被拉下馬，但仍奮戰到底的騎士就是自身形象的轉化。

在這件寬幅達 4 公尺的雕塑，何恆雄融入四人一組，兩組八人互相對衝拉扯的形象。倘若這件作品是以「雕塑品」的形式，圈限在美術館展出，觀者在一兩公尺之遙的距離，未必能在這深具浮雕感的雕塑看出這是一場以人為騎，以人為戰士的肉搏騎馬遊戲。但在作品捐贈之初則已擇定為北美館戶外展示藝術，正切合了彼時於解嚴後開始鬆動的創作氣氛，無論在形式、主題與藝術語彙上，何恆雄揮別過去對於線條造形簡化的追求，純粹抽象的表現形式，轉而從立體派的解構尋求突破的切角。自縱面與橫斷面的轉折揉合魏碑書體的遒勁，將人形與近似樹木枯啞又有力的韌性相容為一；在交纏錯落中回應了自文藝復興以降將人體自石塊解放的浪漫。

從作品正面觀之，何恆雄投射自身那位即將跌落馬騎的戰士，下巴緊緊挨著對手戰士的側頰，他仰天難以自控的身體，眼看就要被踐下馬來，但仍被作為座騎的三位戰友箍牢，彷彿真然踏在馬鐙上作殊死戰，自始至終人馬合一。作品裡充作座騎戰馬的人形，皆以半蹲之姿表現出投入騎戰的力道，同時也在量體上以彎曲的腿足撐起整件作品的基座，這樣的安排也與作品上半部人物對峙緊貼，略顯凝重糾結的戰士構成比例上的和諧。

從生活的痕跡找素材，脫胎於大自然的形像，以及在東方書法結構與西方藝術風格裡劈斬成一條前所未見的蹊徑，這是何恆雄〈騎馬戰〉為自身矗立座標，從 20 世紀 90 年代走向 21 世紀鳴放的驚蟄先聲，亦是藝術家自言：誠實忠於自己的作品。在眾聲喧嘩的世紀末匯聚半生藝術能量，他不諱眾取寵，且在當時即率先認定這是屬於公眾的「人人可觸摸，甚至攀爬它」，藝術高牆，早在他的斧鑿中應聲而落。（吳思瑩）

Ho Hong-Hsiung's work *Chicken Fight* was donated to the Museum in 1991 by the Lions Clubs International on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of its Taipei's chapter. However, it was not formally processed and entered into the collection until 2021, and was one of the first artworks in the collection to receive the designation of public art.

A pioneer of environmental sculpture in Taiwan, Ho traveled in 1988 at the age 46 to the United States, where he received his MFA from Fontbonne University in St. Louis, Missouri. After returning to Taiwan, he was influenced by styles prevalent in the 1980s, such as the use of minimalist blocks of color and outlines, as well as by the textures and the use of an ax in works by Taiwanese sculptor Chu Ming. Ho developed an intensely personal art language emphasizing narrative compositions with post-modern sensibilities. His sculpture *Chicken Fight* is based on the children's game of the same name, which he enjoyed playing from elementary school through college. In the work, a rider about to be pulled off his mount but still fighting is actually based on the artist's own image.

In this four meter wide sculpture, Ho created an image of two four-person teams trying to pull each other down. If this work were displayed in the enclosed space of the Museum in the manner of a sculptural artwork, viewers would have to view it from a distance of only one or two meters, and therefore would not have been able to appreciate all sides and the deep cuts in the sculpture's mass, or see that it's depiction of a game where a person is ridden by another who is engaged in hand-to-hand combat. However, soon after the work was donated, it was decided that it should be exhibited outside the Museum, and this decision and the creation of this work coincided with the end of martial law and the beginning of a more open environment for all aspects of art, including new forms, subject matter, and language. Ho bid farewell to his formal pursuit of pure abstraction based in simplified lines and forms, and began a new chapter by combining the vertical planes and cross sections of Cubist deconstruction with the vigor of Wei Dynasty stele inscriptions. With tree-like human forms that appear as a powerful mass of tangled figures, Ho was responding to the romantic liberation of the human figure from stone that had started in the Renaissance.

From the front of the sculpture, we can see where Ho used his own likeness for the fighter who is about to be knocked off his mount. His chin is pressed firmly against his adversary's cheek and is looking up as he struggles to control his body with an expression indicating he is about to fall. Yet he is still encircled by his three comrades in arms, and standing in his "stirrups" ready to fight to his death and united with his "horse" throughout. The human figures serving as horses in the game are all squatting and showing the exertion of all their strength in the fight, and also seem to be supporting the weight of the sculpture with their bent legs and feet. This arrangement also forms a harmonious proportion with the upper section of the work, where the dignified fighters are struggling and closely packed.

Seeking ideas in the traces of his life and imagery born of nature, and laying an unprecedented path through Eastern calligraphy and Western art, Ho Hong-Hsiung established his own towering position with *Chicken Fight*. From the 20th century harbingers of the 1990s, to the awakening as he headed into the 21st, the artist held fast to his own words, "Be honest and loyal to your own works." At the turbulent end of the century, he gathered the energy accumulated in half his life as an artist, and did not think about pleasing the public with sensational tricks. He was the first to recognize that this was something that belonged to the public, as he said, "Everyone can touch it, and even climb on it." Wielding this statement like his ax and chisel, the artist knocked down the wall of high art. (Seeing Wu)

