

連德誠

LIEN Der-Cheng

1953–

連德誠，生於臺北，1979年獲國立臺灣師範大學美術系學士，隨後於1983年取得美國北卡羅萊納大學藝術系碩士。連德誠回國後，1986年起，陸續發表展覽，並於1989年共同成立非營利展覽空間和藝術團體「二號公寓」，並多次辦理個展，也於本館2004年「立異一九〇年代台灣美術發展」及「開新一八〇年代台灣美術發展」展出，是臺灣1990年代具代表性的藝術家之一。

1995年，連德誠以〈新聞（四）〉(1992)及〈無題（華民國中）〉(1992)參加威尼斯雙年展「台灣・藝術」，當年適逢威尼斯藝術雙年展百周年，也是本館首次策辦臺灣館展覽，透過國際評審團選出五位參展藝術家包括：連德誠、黃進河、吳瑪悧、侯俊明與黃志陽。今將連德誠〈無題（華民國中）〉納入本館典藏中。

1992年，藝術家創作〈無題（華民國中）〉，依他的創作自述：「我意圖並置平面繪畫的三種再現模式：具象的、抽象的、以及文字的，……一面保留它們完整的片斷性，一面盡可能地施展它們之間的相互挑逗性。我追求一種 erotic of interpretation。」此語將作品的意圖表達得十分清楚，作品以拼貼和並置的方式，刻意呈現其中的歧義與曖昧。用反常的方式操作作品中的形象和語言，精細地挑動觀者的神經，以對日常語言的權力體系進行嘲弄和反省。

〈無題（華民國中）〉這樣的作品，挑戰的是觀者「想當然爾」的舒適感。本作品對於能識中文的觀眾，最為顯而易見的是藝術家對文字部分「華民國中」與「中華民國」的愚弄，使觀者無不身陷視覺與認知之間相違背的「誤區」，隨即再自行更正謬誤。而抽象部分，則以紅、藍分割，明示青天白日滿地紅的國旗底圖，但藝術家順時針轉了90度的安排，又不免暗示著1949年，中華民國／國民黨政府來臺後的政治分野。具象上，被放得比紅藍圖樣還大的鋤形蟲圖樣，似乎是傳達訊息量最低，卻又最客觀、最容易去脈絡的部分，使藝術家的傳達訊號再度模糊，也許能再誤導觀眾和某「華民國中」生物課堂圖像連結，而顯得「作者無心，觀者有意」。

1992年是臺灣解嚴後的第五年，黨禁、報禁已開，當時藝術家所操作視覺語彙不難對應至正發達的各式的媒體文宣廣告，且充分掌握了藝術創作的形式與內容之間，觀念的表達與不達，如思想炸彈，亦如迷因，十分機敏。而在今日看來，連德誠這些具象、抽象與文字拼構的作品仍十分有趣，它們潛入了觀者的訊息識讀縫隙。時隔30多年，閱聽娛樂與戰爭早已數位化，機器深度學習所建構的大型語言模型突破性發展的當下，本件作品對於探索人類心智與認知的形成及交換，格外具有意義。（蘇嘉瑩）

Born in Taipei in 1953, Lien Der-Cheng graduated with a bachelor's degree from the Department of Fine Arts at National Taiwan Normal University in 1979, and then with a master's degree from the Department of Art and Art History at University of North Carolina in 1983. Lien then returned to Taiwan, and in 1986 started participating in exhibitions. In 1989, he founded the non-profit exhibition space and art group Space Two and held several solo exhibitions. In 2004, his work was exhibited at the Museum in the two shows *The Multiform Nineties: Taiwan's Art Branches Out* and *The Transitional Eighties: Taiwan's Art Breaks New Ground*. Lien is considered a representative artist of the 1990s Taiwanese art world.

In 1995, Lien's 1992 works *The News #4* and *Untitled (Hua Min Guo Zhong)* were exhibited at the ART TAIWAN of the Venice Biennale. Also, 1995 marked the one-hundredth anniversary of the Biennale and was the first year the Museum curated the exhibition held at the Biennale's Taiwan Pavilion, for which an international jury selected the five Taiwanese artists Lien Der-Cheng, Huang Chin-Ho, Wu Mali, Hou Chun-Ming, and Huang Chih-Yang to exhibit work. Lien's *Untitled (Hua Min Guo Zhong)* entered the Museum collection in 2023.

In an artist statement about *Untitled (Hua Min Guo Zhong)* Lien wrote, "My intention was to juxtapose three different modes of expression—figuration, abstraction, and writing—in a two dimensional painting, and to retain the fragmented nature of each while also giving free play to any mutual provocations that might arise between them. In this way, I was seeking an erotic interpretation." Although this statement makes his intentions very clear, his way of presenting juxtapositions in the work seems to generate deliberately ambiguous and divergent interpretations. His perverse manipulation of images and words in his work provokes viewers in precise ways, and both mocks and reflects on the power structures inherent in everyday language.

First, it is writing that provides the provocation in *Untitled (Hua Min Guo Zhong)* subverting what is taken for granted and then leads to discomfort in the viewer. Obviously, the work is intended for readers of Chinese, as the artist has reordered “中華民國” (trans. “The Republic of China”) as “華民國中” (Hua Min Guo Zhong). This subtle trap leads viewers, at first glance, to mistakenly read a message that is not supported by their visual perception, and leaves them to reconcile the error on their own. Next, the work's abstract element can be found in the rectangle divided into red and blue, which is a clear reference to the national flag of Taiwan—composed of a white sun and blue sky on a red field. The artist, however, rotated the rectangle 90 degrees clockwise, alluding to the political division created in Taiwan after the Kuomintang government arrived in 1949. The figurative element of the work is a drawing of a stag beetle rendered larger than the red and blue flag diagram. This figuration seems to convey the least amount of information of the painting's three elements while being the most objective and easiest to decontextualize, further thwarting the successful reception of any distinct message sent by the artist. The beetle may also lead to erroneous associations with a biology class, especially because the characters “國中”(guozhong can be read as “junior high school”) appear in the painting. All of this creates a scenario where the artist lacks a specific intention, yet viewers read the work in a very deliberate and studied fashion.

In 1992, five years after martial law was ended, restrictions on forming political parties and on the press had already been lifted in Taiwan, and the visual language employed by Lien at this time had some correspondence to what was seen in the flourishing mainstream media and in advertising campaigns. He skillfully controlled relationships between form and content in his work, ensuring that his ideas were either conveyed and memorable or obscured and mind numbing—like memes or thought bombs—and demonstrating his high degree of perceptiveness. From today's perspective, Lien's works combining figuration, abstraction, and writing are still compelling and easily play on gaps in viewers' message decoding frameworks. Thirty years later, when entertainment and warfare have already been digitized for our consumption, and as continual breakthroughs are being made in the construction of large language models through machine deep learning, Lien's work seems all the more significant for its exploration of the formation and communication of thoughts by humans. (Chiaying Su)

無題（華民國中）Untitled (Hua Min Guo Zhong)

1992

壓克力顏料、畫布 Acrylic on canvas

173 x 238 cm

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