

Ho Wai-On

何蕙安 《園林通藝》



INTER ARTES YUANLIN

(Yuan-Lin-Tong-Yi in Chinese)

Report to the Arts Council of England

CONTENTS

Hua-yuan Journey Preliminary Information

Ho Wai-On's visit to China

London-Beijing-Ningbo-Putuoshan-Hangzhou-Suzhou-Shanghai-Canton(Guangzhou)-Hong Kong-London

Inter Artes Yuanlin (Yuan-Lin-Tong-Yi in Chinese):

The development of 'Hua-yuan Journey' and Inter Artes, influenced by Ho Wai-On's visit to China

Appendix

Acknowledgement:

The research and development of this project has been assisted by the New Collaborations Fund of the Arts Council of England, British Airways, The Gulbenkian Foundation and the Great Britain-China Centre

Part One

“Hua-Yuan Journey” Preliminary Information

N.B. At the proposal stage the projected title was “Hwa-Yuan Journey”



Preliminary Information of

Hua-Yuan (flower garden) Journeys

a major live arts project

Project creator & artistic director: Ho Wai-On

The creation of an oriental environment - on the principles of Chinese landscape gardening, with nature and humans in harmony.

Involving painting, calligraphy, photographs, audio-visual, dance and music, Hua-Yuan will be a miniature of nature used as a framework for a kaleidoscope of the arts. British and Chinese artists will collaborate on the creation and performance of the various artistic elements.

The environment will be designed in such a way that, viewed from the outside, one is afforded grand panoramic views of the whole.

However, on venturing inside, attention is focused on a succession of different elements: one is now aware of the passage of time and the journeys from one section to another; the mind is stimulated by glimpses of the creative arts which move from traditional Chinese to contemporary as one proceeds.

Hua-Yuan is primarily a participatory event for the 'audience' and involves a variety of familiar art forms to which people can easily relate.



Hua-Yuan (flower garden) Journeys

Project creator & artistic director: Ho Wai-On

The attached passage demonstrates some of the principles of a Chinese landscape garden, carefully structured to reflect the creator's understanding of nature and spiritual depth. The garden is a miniature of nature, with carefully chosen plants and wildlife to go with the human presence: buildings, designs and other artistic creations such as the inscription of appropriate original verses on rocks. Though the garden provides grand panoramic views when walking around it, it is structured to provide restricted views when walking inside it - so that one is more aware of the passage of time and the journeys from one section to another. Different sections may imply different human activities and thoughts especially on the more spiritual side such as music, poetry, calligraphy, fine arts and philosophy. There is also an element of surprise and a contrast between real and unreal - for example, the sudden confrontation of mirrors and the fact that the garden is a miniature of nature, and yet there are miniature gardens inside it.

Hua-Yuan Journeys will re-interpret such principles through a collaborative production involving a plan for a space, design of objects, Chinese painting, calligraphy, photography and slide projection, music, dance and poetry (from Chinese traditional to contemporary style). Thus, within quite a large space either indoors or outdoors, a Chinese landscape garden plot will be designed.

Plants and bonsai will be of Chinese origin but native also to English gardens. Real plants may be used, or paintings or photographs, or dance used to convey plants. This oriental landscape is dotted with screens (for the display of paintings, calligraphy, photographs or slide projection), Chinese windows of various shapes (for silhouettes or dancers and musicians), mirrors and miniatures of symbols of Chinese garden buildings with inscriptions of poetry (housing audio/visual equipment).

All of this will serve to provide restricted views when one walks inside the garden. The style of art will progress from traditional Chinese to contemporary - to mark the passage of time. The space will be surrounded by a circular set to provide panoramic views when walking around it. The set and the scattered objects will compliment live performance and vice-versa, reflecting "Nature and Humans in Harmony".



Hua-Yuan (flower garden) Journeys

Project creator & artistic director: Ho Wai-On

"On approaching, one sees a panoramic view of nature - flowers, willows, rocks and streams - with a building here and there: gates, arched roofs of semi-circular tiles, lintels and lattices finely carved with ingenious design; walls of many colours, white marble steps carved with flowers, whitewashed walls with a mosaic of rare stones.

Entering, one's view is screened by a green hill; without this hill one would see the whole garden on entering. On this miniature mountain there are white rocks resembling monsters and beasts, dappled with moss or hung about with creepers, with a narrow zig-zag path between them. Through the boulders suddenly one sees a white rock with the first inscription - a suitable name for the spot to convey that this is not the main view or one of the chief sights but the first step leading to the rest.

One walks on through magnificent trees and rare flowers. A clear stream wells up where the trees are thickest; a stone bridge leads across to a level clearing and on it another pavilion half hidden by the trees.

Original and old quotations are inscribed on buildings and rocks, and in the distance one sees a fine lodge nestling in a glade amongst bamboo, and feels that if one could study at the window of this on a moonlit night one would not have lived in vain.

As one walks on one catches sight of apricot trees and the brown walls of an abode, and the sight tempts one to retire to the country. The path now curves around a slope, passes flowers and willows, rocks and springs. Presently, in the shade of the willows, one glimpses an arched wooden bridge. Once over this a choice of paths lies before one.

Stepping through the arched gate at the end of a path, one is confronted by tall weathered rocks which hide a house from sight. Along the walls of the house run covered corridors. There are niches in the walls fitted with carved symbols and miniature gardens. One could brew tea here, play the lyre and burn rare incense.

When one goes forward the passage is blocked; on turning back one suddenly sees a big mirror and, on passing round this, one comes to more doorways. Passing screens out into a courtyard filled with rose trellises, another hill bars the way and one no longer has any sense of direction. But as soon as one rounds the foot of the hill one finds oneself on a path not far from the main entrance."



Hua-Yuan (flower garden) Journeys

Project creator & artistic director: Ho Wai-On

PHILOSOPHY

- To create an audience-friendly contemporary art form through inter-disciplinary and inter-cultural experimentation
- To promote the fusion of modern and traditional art forms
- To illuminate the Chinese precept of Nature and Humans in Harmony
- To promote inter-collaboration between Chinese and British artists

ELEMENTS INVOLVED

- Screens (for the display of paintings, calligraphy, photographs, slide projections)
- Chinese windows of various shapes - for silhouettes and enclosing spaces for dancers, musicians and other performers
- Miniatures or symbols of Chinese garden buildings (for housing audio/visual equipment)

AIMS

To promote greater British/Chinese cultural understanding

- British and Chinese people love landscape gardens. This project offers a combined-arts experience illuminating the essence of Chinese cultural and spiritual life through Hua-Yuan (flower garden) - a subject which is familiar to the general public.
- Elements from British culture will be present through the collaboration of British artists, and through research on common features of British and Chinese landscape gardening as well as other links.

To attract the general public to a contemporary art event

A view of contemporary art as the continuation of the past may lessen people's hostility towards what they cannot immediately comprehend.



Hua-Yuan (flower garden) Journeys

Project creator & artistic director: Ho Wai-On

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

1. Cultural / artistic

- the concept of Chinese landscape garden, its connection with Chinese spiritual philosophy, and how to re-interpret this through other art forms
- a list of plants/bonsai of Chinese origin which can also be found in English gardens
- raw material & existing performing materials
- a list of British and Chinese artists/performers for stage production
- liaison with a British theatre designer

2. Technical

- the concept and technical knowledge of audio-visual performance
- materials to be used for installation

3. Finance & Performance (research)

- a list of sponsors/promoters/venues/relevant organisations
- marketing / promotion strategy

4. Finance & Performance (contacts made)

- staging the project

5. British & Chinese Artists: discussions

- a basic design that can be adapted to different sites and venues
- interaction between art forms and between artists
- fusion of modern and traditional art forms

6. Written reports and visuals

- the report with contributions from all involved
- models, plans & designs
- list of organisations contacted



Hua-Yuan (flower garden) Journeys

Project creator & artistic director: Ho Wai-On

Ho Wai-On was brought up in Hong Kong, but has now lived in England for nearly thirty years. Her education includes: Chinese and English literature (Chinese University of Hong Kong); Royal Academy of Music (John Swire UK Scholarship); film and television direction and production (London); First International Dance Course for Professional Choreographers and Composers; Computer Music Workshop (Stanford University); and Contemporary & Electronic Music (Cardiff University). She is best known as a composer and creator/director of cross-cultural combined-arts projects. She has written numerous compositions for various combinations - vocal, instrumental, orchestral, electronic, computer, multi-media, and the scores for three short films. These works reflect different cultures including Western, Chinese, Japanese and Indian, and span various art-forms including music, dance, theatre, design and multi-slide projection. She has lectured and received numerous commissions. Since 1974 many of her works have been performed (and/or broadcast) in the UK, Hong Kong, USA, Denmark and Taiwan. Festival performances include Greenwich, Edinburgh Fringe, Asian Arts, Newcastle, Huddersfield, and Contemporary Chinese Composers. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of Inter Artes, and has staged many cross-cultural combined-arts projects in Britain and abroad.

RESEARCH IN CHINA

(during November 1994)

Travel

London - Beijing (with British Airways subsidy)

Beijing - Ningbo

Ningbo - Putuoshan - Ningbo

Ningbo - Hangzhou

Hangzhou - Suzhou

Suzhou - Shanghai

Shanghai - Hong Kong

Hong Kong - Guangdong - Hong Kong

Hong Kong - London (with British Airways subsidy)

Venues to visit & artists/promoters to contact

Beijing: Well-known gardens & sites - and meet artists and officials

Ningbo: Visit temple

Putuoshan: The China we all dream about!

Hangzhou: Landscapes and modern art

Suzhou: Well-known landscape gardens

Shanghai: Visit garden & temple; meet artists & officials

Guangdong: Modern Dance