

## Chapter 1

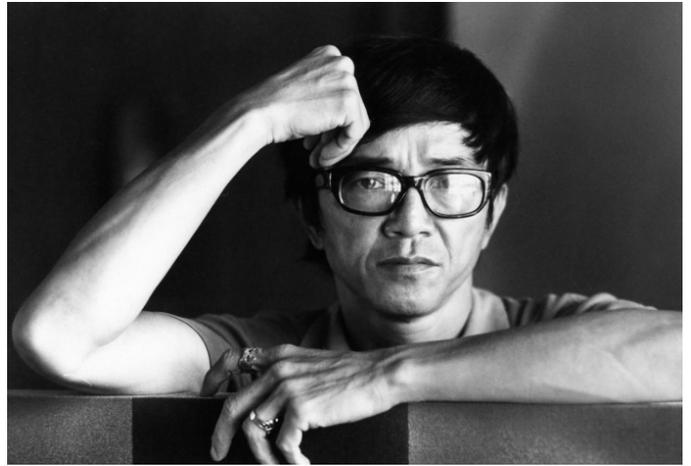
### 第一章

## The Life of Hon Chi-fun

Hon Chi-fun (1922-2019), a pioneer in the development of 20th century Hong Kong Art, was a self-taught Hong Kong artist. Hon's artistic career only began in earnest when he was 34. At the time he worked as a postal inspector in Hong Kong. On weekends, he practiced his painting skill by painting the countryside. In the late 1950s to early 1960s, Hon focused on realistic landscapes, with an Impressionist style. This practice fostered Hon's focus on shape, form, light, shade, and color. In 1964, Hon co-founded the art collective Circle Art Group. By that time, he was obsessed in the concept of modernity and an urge to experiment with assemblage and fuse calligraphy with oil painting. In the 1970s and 80s, circles began appearing much more in Hon's works. In terms of technique and material, the initial body of "the circle" also marks Hon's venture into screen-printing, and airbrush painting.

Hon immigrated to Canada in the 1992 and returned to Hong Kong in 2000. With intense eagerness, he continued to create artworks. During period, he realized that he was free to leave the circle motif behind. This realization spurred Hon to artistically focus on his renewed interest in place and landscapes. After a harrowing stroke in 2000, Ho soldiered on with his art. Even when Hon was advanced in his years, his later work emanates dynamism and ambition consistent with his younger self.

In 2017, when he was recognized as an honoree by Asian Society with an Asia Arts Game Changer Award, Hon Chi-fun described being born an artist. The born artist devoted himself to the art scene, and finally, on the 24th February of 2019, the artist passed away in the hospital, surrounded by his family.



韓志勳 (1922-2019) 是推動二十世紀香港藝術發展的先驅，也是自學成才的本土藝術家。由於家累再加上成長在政治動盪的時代，縱然韓氏自少就對藝術有濃厚興趣，也只有等到三十四歲，謀得郵政局稽查員一份穩定的職業後，方能開展他的藝術生涯。當時每逢週末，韓氏都會到郊區寫生，鍛鍊畫藝。大約在一九五零年後期至六零年代，他專注研習西方印象主義、後印象主義和野獸派畫風，並致力探索形狀、形體、光、影和顏色等視覺元素。一九六四年，韓氏與八位香港前衛藝術家創辦中元畫會。從此，他就更加活躍於畫壇，而畫風就更加趨向抽象。與此同時，韓氏沉醉在現代藝術，嘗試湊合不同物料創作，又在油畫中滲入傳統中國書法，走出了一條藝術新路。一九七零至八零年代，「圓」成為韓志勳的代表創作。韓氏還以發揮各種技法、物料和圓形本身的特性為手段，大膽嘗試絲印、噴筆和傳統畫筆作在創作中的表現性。

韓氏於一九九二年曾一度移民加拿大，二零零零年回港定居後繼續孜孜不倦地作畫，他更加發現自己不用被「圓」所囿，可以另闢蹊徑。於是，韓氏重拾自然風光帶給他的創作感動，以抽象的手法描寫山水景貌。回港後的春天，韓氏得了一次小型中風，但仍然不離棄藝術，反而在作品中表露他創作的活力和澎湃激情。

二零一七年，韓志勳獲亞洲藝術協會頒贈「亞洲藝術創變者大獎」，當時他以「天生的藝術家」自況。的而且確，韓氏把大半生獻奉給藝術。在本年二月二十四日在家人的陪同下離開人世。

## Chapter 2 第二章

「他沒有為了抽象的形式而抽象，  
而是為了東方的個人心靈的  
宣示而抽象。」  
——韓志勳的畫友黃無邪

### The Abstract art of Hon Chi-fun

From childhood, Hon Chi-fun started to practice traditional calligraphy, recite cultural canons, and studied Chinese painting in his early years, in the tradition of ancient literati elites. Literati painters paid little attention on “scientific realism”, but instead focused on the concepts and imagery via calligraphy, poetry, and painting – the Three Perfections in Chinese cultural and artistic discourse. From these traditional obsession, it opened up a path for Hon towards abstraction.

Circle Art Group, which was co-founded by Hon Chi-fun, was regarded as Hong Kong’s local avant-garde. Their abstract art practices were described as “entrenched within a Chinese tradition”, whilst “fighting internal battles” between East and West, which produced new unexpected forms and concepts. Hon Chi-fun was particularly interested in the work of the Post-Impressionists, and he began to crave new forms of representation in 1960s. *Black Crack* (1964) marked the beginning of Hon’s abstract period. His bold sweeps of massive brushstrokes produced an effect like that of ink wash, while his use of color suggested the technique in Chinese painting that presents ink black in various hues and shades.

The late 60s and early 70s, Hon gained opportunities to broaden his artistic horizons. He was invited to present his works in London and Berlin. Not long

### 韓志勳的抽象藝術

韓志勳自小就讀私塾，唸的是八股文、詩詞歌賦、四書五經，求學期間就打穩了傳統中國水墨畫和書法的基礎。自古以來，文人水墨畫從不以追求寫實主義為目標，而是通過詩、書、畫三絕來表現畫家的思想。可以見得深受中國文化薰陶的韓氏糅合中、西畫法，終於創造出具有中國意象的抽象畫風。

可以見得韓氏熱愛中國文化，創造出糅合中國意象的抽象畫風。

作為「中元畫會」的成員，香港前衛藝術的代表。韓志勳的抽象作品被認為「植根於中國傳統」的同時，以西方藝術為載體，經過洗鍊而創造出出人意表的藝術形象和概念。從開始繪畫油畫，韓志勳就對印象主義產生興趣。進入六十年代，他鑽研探索現代藝術，作品《黑裂》(1964) 標誌着韓氏走向抽象藝術的開端。畫中粗放厚重的筆觸使人聯想到中國水墨寫意的筆墨，而當中的黑色還透出其他色調和陰影，加強了整幅畫面的張力。

一九六零年代後期至七零年代前期，是韓志勳透過遊學來

*“He makes abstract art not for the sake of being abstract;  
he does it to assert the Eastern soul of the individual.”*

—— Wucius Wong, a fellow artist of Hon Chi-fun

after, he received the fellowship grant from John D. Rockefeller III Fund which brought him to New York to study and travel for a year. The travelling exposed him to new trends in Western art including Abstract Expressionism, and graffiti culture. Upon returning to Hong Kong with a fresh perspective on the world around him, he incorporated the Western art trends, urban techniques from graffiti and spray paint with the traditional brushwork, enriched his artistic experimentation towards abstract.

擴闊藝術視野的時期。首先，他獲邀訪問倫敦和柏林，參觀展覽並展出自己的作品。然後，韓氏成為首位獲取洛克菲勒三世基金獎助金（現為亞洲文化協會）的香港藝術家，得以負笈美國。西方之旅讓韓志勳置身於歐美新興的藝術思潮之中，包括抽象表現主義和塗鴉文化。當遊學結束回到香港，韓氏即嘗試把西方的文化和藝術技法融入傳統的筆墨表現，將他的藝術境界再進一步邁向抽象。

## DISCUSSION 想一想

**Former Chief Curator of the Hong Kong Museum of Art, Mr. Tang Hoi-chiu described Hon's art "carries and Eastern spirit and ink-wash-like flavor. Yet these paintings all indicated a tendency towards a Western-style mode of abstract expression."**

**In your opinion, which works in the exhibition show Chinese elements?**

前香港藝術館總館長鄧海超形容韓志勳的畫具有「東方精神和筆墨意趣，但趨向於西方的抽象表現形式。」  
你認為展覽中的哪些作品具有中國元素？

## SUGGESTED ANSWER :

**Students may answer with their own opinion. They may also give the examples that the artworks include Chinese calligraphy, the quotations of Buddhist sutra and Chinese sayings, and Chinese brushwork.**

建議答案：

學生可以自由發揮。他們可以舉出一些融合了中國書法、中國筆法、佛經和雋語的作品。

## Chapter 3 : The Circle

### 第三章：「圓」

#### 3.1 Circle: the shape chosen by Hon Chi-fun

#### 三、甲「圓」：

#### 韓志勳的代表圖形

##### DISCUSSION 想一想

Shapes can evoke certain feelings in artworks. What different ways does Hon use to represent the circle?

在藝術創作中，形狀能牽動人的感受。方形和正方形使人感到穩定；三角形給人大山不能移之感。那麼圓形有甚麼特性？帶給你怎樣的感受？

##### SUGGESTED ANSWER :

Some of the ways Hon represents ways does Hon use to represent the circle, geometric flat circle, circles to represents continuous movement, suggesting energy and power.

"The circle is me, the form of my own being, and the image that I value and cherish. It is the milieu and space at the moment, the world of perfection I seek after."

— Hon Chi-fun

In 1963 Hon Chi-fun created an oil painting *Untitled*, which represented one of his early experiments with the form of "circle" as a pictorial element in his repertoire.

「圓就是我，是我的自生形態，是我崇尚的圖象，是當時的環境、空間，是我追求的完美境界。」—韓志勳

一九六三年所作的《無題》，是韓志勳早期以「圓」為畫面元素的代表作。



*Bath of Fire* 《火浴》

1968

The monumental triptych marked Hon's milestone the series of "circles" and the opening of a new chapter in the artist's career. In the painting, the circles are split into sections and areas, which in turn are inlaid with smaller circles and other images. Hon combined techniques of oil painting with those of silkscreen; used colors reminiscent of American Pop Art while incorporating Chinese calligraphy.

這幅大型三聯畫是韓志勳「圓」系列的里程碑，也揭開了韓氏藝術生涯的新一頁。畫中的圓形被十字分割起塊面，在大圓之中有小圓和圖像。畫家融合了油彩和絲印技巧，又綜合了他曾用的元素如書法和佛經等中國元素，開創一種本於傳統而非囿於傳統的藝術手法。

After the great success of *Bath of Fire*, Hon Chi-fun continued to explore potential of the circle on canvas. The decade of 1970's saw the artist's series of "circles" evolving into spiritual and romantic art, including *Chasm Forever* (1971), *Karma Focus* (1971), *When Summer is Gone* (1972), *Last Paradise* (1973), *Beyond Space* (1973), *Up and Away* (1974), *Secret Codes* (1974), and *Ours Ever* (1974). Hon combined airbrush and conventional brush painting to create circles that appear to be glowing or luminous. The works tended towards simplicity and abstraction.

《火浴》的成功教韓志勳自信地繼續發展出一系列的「圓」。一九七零年代，韓氏的「圓」趨向更純粹的藝術形象，其時的作品包括《恆淵》(1971)、《通靈》(1971)、《夏杳》(1972)、《天眷》(1973)、《鍊石》(1973)、《未央》(1974)、《卿卿》(1974)、《素心》(1974)。韓氏運用噴筆和畫筆創作出許多更加簡化、抽象的「圓」和光的效果。



***Chasm Forever*** 《恆淵》1971

The artist skillfully employed different shades of blue and purple with soft strokes of airbrush color. The Chasm represents the female genital organ, which symbolize the ever continuing reproduction of life in nature, and evoking the origins of human life.

畫家技巧地利用噴筆造出深淺藍色的細膩變化。畫中的深隙表示女性陰部，象徵自然界的生生不息，使人向生命之源致敬。



***Floating Weight*** 《浮提》1971

We may find two layers in the work. And each layer shows a circle. Hon Chi-fun uses airbrush to feature an illuminating orb on the upper layer, and the arc of a circle in the other layer.

《浮提》中有兩個層次，每個層次都有一個圓。韓氏以噴筆技法營造出一個反光的球體，覆蓋着另一個圓弧。

## 3.2 The circle is the journey of the artist's soul

## 三、乙 「圓」是畫家的靈之程

*"The circle grants me a fourth – and an even more spacious – dimension; it fills even the entire space of the painting, and gives the work a symbol of existence."*

— Hon Chi-fun

「圓給我更大的第四度空間，甚至畫的全部，也給畫的存在象徵。」  
— 韓志勳

From the late 1960s onward, Hon's paintings became increasingly dominated by the image of the circle. They are the circles of philosophy and the circles of substance (the shape on canvas). In works like *Frozen Blue* (1971), the artist enriched the circle by inserting religious and literary texts. Thus, the viewer is led into a spiritual universe.

In his later paintings, Hon's still depicts the circle but now his circles became increasingly full of tensions. The circular form, apparently revolving, is here set in sharp contrast to artist's re-asserted massive brushstrokes. In comparison with those circular images the artist had created during the 1970s, these circles appear to feature even greater inner force with less serenity.

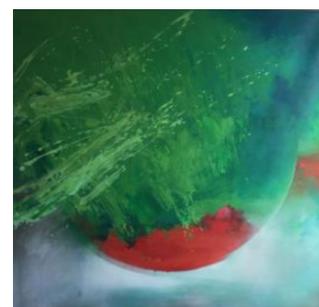
從一九六零年代後期開始，韓志勳致力於探索「圓」。那些別具幽玄意味的圓，將韓氏的靈思和哲學一一呈現在畫布上。作品《凝碧》(1971)在圓弧和色彩對比中，加插了哲學性的文字，將觀賞者帶到一個超時空的心靈宇宙中。

韓氏晚期繪畫雖仍繼續「圓」的系列，但他的圓已不一定是完整和純粹，而是具有更澎湃的張力。此時的圓有時如迴旋，有時回復他早年作品那種大筆揮灑。與七十年代的圓比較，又少了一份沉着，多了一份內在的力量，仿如把積壓的情緒釋放出來。

### *Height of Two Colors* 《華濃》 1987

Hon's circles in this period are unrestrained by their circular shape. Shades of red and green have mingled with massive, flowing and fierce brushstrokes intensified the tension of the circle.

韓氏這時期的圓不規限於完整的圓。正如《華濃》中以交融、粗放、流動和強烈的筆觸加強了圓的張力。



### *Nil and Void* 《空相》 1996

The circle is not a perfect circular shape, the arc of the circle disappears in the pale background. The swift brushstrokes, and the strong colors, join to enhance the vigor and momentum of the circle.

畫中的圓非完美的圓，它是部份隱藏在淺淡背景顏色的一闕圓。那迅速形成的筆觸和飛濺流湍的色點，營造出懾人的氣勢和動感。



## DISCUSSION 想一想

Symbolic meaning has played a significant role in Chinese culture. In Chinese culture, the circle is considered as "fulfilled", "perfection", "satisfied", "harmonious" and "unity". The nature of written and spoken language has contributed to the rich vocabulary of symbolism. Symbolic meanings form an intrinsic part of culture and are readily understood by Chinese people.

Could you suggest some idioms which related to the 「circle (圓)」?

### SUGGESTED ANSWER :

- 圓滿 (yuánmǎn) rounded off (「圓滿」, round and full, originated from Buddhist sutra, is an adjective and means "the ultimate completeness").
- 圓了夢想 (yuánle mèngxiǎng) made one's dream a

#### 建議答案：

許多事物都被中國人賦予象徵意義。中國人認為「圓」有「圓滿」、「完美」、「滿足」和「團結」的意思。反映我們的思維充滿創造聯想力，而象徵手法也豐富了漢語語言體系，成為中國文化的重要組成部份。

你能舉出一些有「圓」字的成語、詞語，或常用語嗎？

reality (「圓」, circle, is used as a verb, meaning "to fulfill", "to perfect".

- 方圓百里 (fāngyuán bǎilǐ) Hundreds of miles (「方圓」, square and circle, is used as an adjective, meaning "by and large", and is usually deployed before the size of an area).

不以規矩，不成方圓 (bùyǐ guījǔ, bùchéng fāngyuán) without rules, nothing can be done (idiom, from Mencius; 「方圓」, square and circle, are used together as a noun, indicating "proper achievements". 「規矩」, compasses and rulers. This is also how the term "規矩" became the noun for rules, regulations and laws in modern Chinese).

- 圓融 (yuánróng) well-rounded, thoughtful (originated from Buddhist sutra).
- 圓滑 (yuánhuá) sophisticated, tactful.

• 圓滿 (本為佛教用語，意思是佛事完畢。後來引申作沒有缺陷、漏洞，使人滿意。)

• 圓了夢想 (此處的「圓」字解作滿足，意思是實現夢想)

• 方圓百里 (形容大片區域)

• 不以規矩，不成方圓 (出自《孟子》。規是圓規；矩即曲尺。比喻做事要遵循一定的法則)

• 圓融 (本為佛教用語，指沒有矛盾、障礙的境界)

• 圓滑 (形容為人處世各方面都做得很周到)

# Chapter 4 : Light

## 第四章：光

### 4.1 Light in Artworks

Light is fascinating stuff. It radiates. It illuminates. It dazzles. It glows. Light bounces off objects and excites cells in our eyes, enabling us to see. We speak of the “light of reason”. We speak of genius as “brilliance”. Light is at the very core of the visual arts. Without light there is no art. Without light there is no life.

The way a subject is lit affects how we perceive it, and also helps to define spatial relationships. Therefore, artists are interested in manipulating light.

Sculptors are very careful about how their works are lit, for the shape, size, and position of shadows and highlights depends on the placement of lighting. Even two-dimensional works can be enhanced by lighting. From Renaissance, European painters like Caravaggio (1571-1601) and Rembrandt (1609-1669), developed the technique of “light and shade” – the depiction in a two-dimensional work of the effects of light and shadow, enhanced the three-dimensional illusion on the flat canvas, and changing the viewer’s mood. The modern artist Mark Rothko (<http://artbooks.yupnet.org/2016/02/11/illuminating-the-ethereal-mark-rothkos-work-from-his-sons-point-of-view-interview-with-christopher-rothko-by-david-ebony/>) was extremely particular about the way his large luminous paintings were illuminated when they were shown. The thin layer of paint generate the emission of light.

Light have been manipulated by the artists as their media for creativities. James Turrell is a contemporary artist who investigates light as a material for artworks. His work delves into what happens when we experience pure colored light in the absence of other sensory cues. Gazing directly into the space of the color, with nothing solid for the eye to settle on, one has the sensation of gazing into infinity.

### 四、甲 光與藝術

我們「光芒奪目」，乃因為光發亮、閃爍、亮麗，非常吸引人。有光我們才能看見，故以「靈光一閃」形容茅塞頓開，又以「天資聰明」形容天才，皆顯出光有啟發人的意思。光也是藝術創作的核心，沒有光，就沒有藝術；沒有光，甚至沒有生命。在視覺藝術的範疇，光線的研究是最重要的一環。不同的光源及強度，不單令造形產生變化，還會產生陰影以加強或減少表面的凹凸空間效果。因此，藝術家必須認識光影、利用光影做出好作品。

雕塑中的形和影兩者之間存着互為因果的關係，因為雕塑是以各種不同的形來產生視覺上的光影變化，並得到如素描的明暗效果。就是平面創作，因光線而產生的明暗處理也是重要的一環。從文藝復興時期開始，畫家如達文西(1452-1519)、卡拉瓦喬(1571-1601)和林布蘭(1609-1669)，已用明暗法透過光和影的強烈對比來塑造三維立體效果，並且渲染感情。直到現代，抽象表現主義大師馬克·羅斯科(<https://www.zhihu.com/question/20447604> 知乎：如何評價馬克·羅斯科的藝術風格?) 他探討發光顏色堆疊矩形的表現潛力，通過透薄的顏色層，實現光從圖像本身輻射的作用。

正因為「光」為創作者帶來源源靈感，也己成為新的藝術媒介。詹姆斯·特瑞爾的環境裝置藝術，便是通過探索光線、空間和顏色來探索的感官感受。他以單純的光和顏色刺激和喚醒人的感知，為觀賞者塑造空間轉換的視覺心理反應的經驗。

## DISCUSSION 想一想

In the exhibition, which circles drawn by the artist are flat? Which are project? Which are hollow? (Student may answer freely by their interpretations.)

展品中哪些圓是平的？哪些是凸出的？哪些是凹陷的？(學生可以因着自己的觀感作答)

### SUGGESTED ANSWER 建議答案：

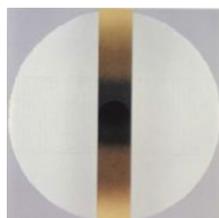
#### Flat circles 平面的圓



*Changing Stratus*  
《層變》  
1983



*Last Paradise*  
《天眷》  
1973



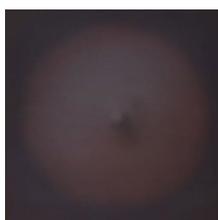
*When Summer is Gone*  
《夏杳》  
1972

A flat circle with a chasm in it:

#### Project circles 凸出的圓



*Floating Weight*  
《浮提》  
1971



*Karma Focus*  
《通靈》  
1971



*Up and Away*  
《未央》  
1974



*Chasm Forever*  
《恆淵》  
1971

A projected circles with a chasm in it.

#### hollow circles 凹陷的圓



*Nil and void*  
《空相》  
1996



*Beyond Space*  
《鍊石》  
1973

A flat circle with a project rim and a small circle hollowed out on it.

## 4.2 The radiant circles of Hon Chi-fun

## 四、乙 韓志勳作品煥發的光茫



From the early stage of Hon Chi-fun's artistic life, he was inspired by Impressionists, who emphasized on accurate depiction of light in its changing qualities. Until 1990s, both landscape and abstract painting, "light" still plays essential role in his painting. *A Place That Was* (1998) depicts the Jie River in Tianshui, a city in Gansu Province, China. We can see the river ripples and sparkles, and the reflection of the images next to the river. Hon bowered the theory of the Impressionist, he also layered inkjet prints of an older painting of Tianshui onto the acrylic painting depicting the same location, conveying the "flashback" of artist's memories .

For his abstract works, Tang Hoi-chiu mentioned "The decade of 1970's saw the artist's series of "circles" evolving into pure art. Holding his airbrush and conventional brush, Hon Chi-fun created circle after circle in light upon light – an arc of light, a circular ring of light, light in reflection, and the solar flame – which conceal or reveal their glory in the paintings, in an abstract, restrained and yet suggestive manner." Hon provided his circles with light, they are light in different forms.

Hon Chi-fun who is the first artist introduced airbrush on canvas. The use of airbrush to thinly distribute pigment lends Hon's artwork its ethereal quality and creates its barely perceptible changes in gradient, adding to the glowing effect of the circles.

從韓志勳踏入藝壇開始，他已被印象畫派追求光的效果所啟發。直到一九九零年代，不論他的風景畫或是抽象畫，「光」仍然是非常重要的元素。風景作品《天水》(1998)描繪中國甘肅省天水市的藉河，畫中可見光在水面造成波光明滅和兩岸倒影效果。韓氏不僅實踐了印象主義的創作理論，更將他描繪天水市的舊作打印成複本，逐層貼在塑膠彩繪的天水市風景畫上，彷彿畫家腦海裡閃出的舊記憶。

前香港藝術館總館長鄧海超談到韓志勳抽象畫中的光說：「七十年代韓氏『圓』的系列，走向純粹。他提着噴筆和畫筆，創作了一系列的圓、一系列的光：光弧、圓環、迴光、陽焰，抽象而含蓄地隱現掩映於畫面之上。」韓氏為他的圓賦予不同類形的光。

韓志勳是首位香港運用噴筆繪畫的藝術家。他發揮了噴筆令塗料呈霧狀噴出以達到薄而均勻地上色的特性，營造出細膩漸變的層次，使得他的「圓」如光體發亮。

## DISCUSSION 想一想

Searching for arc of light, circular ring of light, light in reflection, and the solar flame in the exhibition. (Student may answer freely by their interpretations.)

We may find light in reflection on some circles that are illuminated, for example *Floating Weight* (1976), *Karma Focus* (1971), and *Chasm Forever* (1971). The reflected light on *Floating Weight* tends to capture our attention. One technique is to increase the degree to which values gradually changes, presenting them as more dramatic contrasts, hence the illuminating orb impressed the viewers.

We may also find some of the circles are glowing, they are arcs of light, circular rings of light, solar flames, and moonlight, such as *Last Paradise* (1973), *Secret Codes* (1974), *Our Ever* (1974), and *Now and Silver* (1987). In *Ours Ever*, the soft-edged white circle is like a flash of sun. Hon Chi-fun's use of red color represents the warmth of the sunlight. *Last Paradise* shows a fireball surrounded by a halo. The background features various degrees of red like the evening sky and lets the viewer enter a meditative state.

試在韓志勳的「圓」當中找出反光、弧光、光環、光的反映、和大太陽的光輝。(同學可以憑自己的觀察作答)

我們可以發現有些圓像是個受光體反射出光芒，如《浮提》(1971)、《通靈》(1971)、《恆淵》(1971)。《浮提》最觸目之處是圓上的一遍反光，反光的部份顏色明度最高，越接近反光部份的邊緣顏色明度漸漸調低，與沒有反光的部份，那明度低的地方形成強烈對比，一個反光的圓球就活現在觀眾眼前。

我們還可以找到一些發光的圓，它們是弧光、光環和大太陽的輝，例如《天眷》(1973)、《卿卿》(1974)、《素心》(1974)，和《霧顏》(1987)。《素心》中圓形的邊緣是條軟邊線，讓中央的白色圓形變成令人眩目的陽光。白色的光體被紅色包圍，就使人感到光的熱力。另一幅《天眷》是個被光環圍繞的火球，背景是一片不同彩度的嫣紅色上，猶如火球飄浮在紅霞裡。正如觀眾凝視詹姆斯·特瑞爾的裝置藝術一樣，當我們的眼球被光與顏色完全吸引之後，便能了解韓志勳和特瑞爾的作品都能產生轉換視覺與心理反應的效果。

## Chapter 5

### 第五章

## Artists and the exhibition space

When we are appreciating this retrospective exhibition, and visiting this spacious and full equipped gallery, it is unimaginable that the local artists lacked purpose-built exhibition spaces in 1960s when Hon Chi-fun marched his first step on the art scene. The artists resorted to exhibiting their works in the in the annex of St Joseph's Cathedral, and other ad-hoc spaces.

In 1962, the old City Hall opened the City Museum and Art Gallery. This is the city's first official museum, and it was the predecessor of the Hong Kong Museum of Art. Hon was invited by John Warner, the first curator to participate in the inaugural group exhibition, *Hong Kong Art Today*. Hon Chi-fun and the Circle Art Group gained the recognition from Warner also actively supported their exhibitions by writing in their exhibition publications, acquiring their works for the Museum and Art Gallery's collection, and loaning their works overseas for exhibitions.

The Group was invited to hold its annual exhibition at the Museum and Art Gallery, was marked the formal affirmation of the Group's achievement and sustained effort. The Group was sponsored by the Gallery and was given the exhibition space on the eighth floor which was exclusively to the programs organized by the institution, which endorsed the Group as representative of Hong Kong art. Some exhibits were collected by the Museum and Art Gallery. Amongst the acquisition was Hon Chi-fun's *Bath of Fire*, the monumental triptych you may now appreciate in this exhibition.

## 藝術家與展覽空間

在這個美輪美奐的展館中欣賞韓志勳的作品時，大家或許難以想像六十年代當韓氏初踏藝壇時，香港缺乏專供藝術展覽空間，當時的本土藝術家只有在聖約瑟座堂新翼及其他臨時場地展示作品。

香港大會堂的香港美術博物館於1962年開幕，是香港第一所公共文娛中心、香港藝術館和香港歷史博物館的前身。韓志勳獲美術館第一任館長約翰·溫納邀請，參與《今日的香港藝術》聯展。溫納同時器重韓氏所屬的中元畫會，曾多次為畫會的展覽出版撰文，又代表美術館收購會員的作品，並積極將作品帶到海外展覽。

1968年，中元畫會第五屆年展得到香港美術博物館的認可，得以在大會堂八樓舉行。由於八樓只供美術館策劃的活動所用，不公開租借，這代表畫會已成為館方肯定為香港藝術的代表。展覽後，香港美術博物館收購了畫會的展品，當中包括韓志勳的大型三聯畫《火浴》，確立了韓氏在香港藝壇的地位。