

Artist Lance Masai Jackson

By MASHA SAVITZ
Epoch Times Staff

SANTA MONICA, Ca.—On a gloriously typical spring evening in Santa Monica, artists, patrons and art lovers mingled in the James Gray Gallery at the renowned Bergmont Station, celebrating an exhibit opening on April 18.

In the show was newcomer Lance Masai Jackson with two pieces represented. The first is a monotone mixed media on paper called "The Waves Sift the Sand; What is Revealed is True Gold".

The second is a "cloud-scape" called "Evening Grays"(or "Clearing the Storm"), an oil painting in cool blues and grays. "The choice of color emphasizes the subtleties in life, the moral choices we have to make everyday are all different shades of gray; truth, kindness and tolerance (shown in the center with Chinese characters in rays of light) cuts through the haze and helps one to define wrong from right," says Jackson, who signs his work 'Masai'.

"Truth, kindness and tolerance clear storms in your path" Jackson says of his painting.

Filled with symbolism and metaphor, Jackson's work is inspired and guided by traditional Buddhist and Taoist teachings. A butterfly, the only colour on the monochromatic piece, represents complete trans-

formation. "When you actively improve your moral character, it will completely transform you," says Jackson. The artist lives by this profound wisdom and is also a practitioner of these scriptures.

Raised in rural NY, Jackson spent a great deal of time outdoors where he always felt the strong connection between nature and spirituality. Just after graduating from high school he decided to communicate these experiences through painting.

He received a classical education at Boston University School for Fine Arts studying from masters who gave him the skills and tools to fulfill his aspiration.

"Art's true purpose is to raise human consciousness and it's a more difficult thing to do," Said Jackson comparing his views to contemporary art which has become predominantly a vehicle for venting. "It's easy to be critical and tear up things which criticize society," he said.

"The basic law of the universe is to be kind, true, and tolerant. It takes strength to be these things [since] people think it is weakness," he said. Jackson pointed to Gandhi who overcame the English army with nonviolence.

Jackson, 45, works as an artwork installer and says, "Art should be curative." He notes how important it is to surround oneself with colours and objects which will affect



'Art's true purpose is to raise human consciousness ...'—Artist Lance Masai Jackson DEREK PADULA

us in a positive way. He believes strongly in respecting objects and finding the proper place for things, as well as finding the right balance in a composition.

People are very aware of the

food they eat, yet don't care about the kinds of images they allow into themselves. Jackson likens this to the way advertisement works, infiltrating the subconscious. Images have a strong influence on us wheth-

er we are aware of it or not.

As Jackson continues to synthesize and harmonize his passions, he is committed to bringing balance and harmony to all he does. "It's the reason to be an artist, to talk about

high level things."

Also in the show at the James Gray Gallery were works of artists Gadi, Rita Blitt, Cindy Ingraham, Tom Keefer, Jan Thompson, and Mara Galva

Exploring Chinese characters article 1: Introducing "一" (one)

By CHANG FUCHANG
Epoch Times

In this new series of articles exploring Chinese characters, (yi) is the first character we will introduce. It is used to represent the concept of one and first.

一, however, in Chinese culture, contains a deeper meaning, because it represents ancient Chinese people's view of the universe. Many of you may have heard "Tao," and "Taiji." Ancient Chinese people believed that before the formation of the universe there was chaos and infinity. 一 indicates that the universe was formed in a moment. Tao

was then generated from 一. At the same time, yin and yang were generated. Heaven and Earth and everything in the universe were then evolved from the interactions of yin and yang and they are forever lasting. Therefore, 一 also contains the meaning of unity and whole.

Following on from the understanding that in the Chinese language 一 plays the role of creating Heaven and Earth, 一 can, therefore, represent the concept of space. For example, by putting a short horizontal line or a vertical line above 一, it becomes the ancient character, 上 (shàng), meaning up; if you

put a short horizontal line or a vertical line under 一, it is the ancient character, 下 (xià), meaning down.

In particular, the space above 一 often indicates the divine world, and the space below 一 indicates the human world. Sometimes, the space above 一 indicates yang, and below indicates yin. Thus, Chinese characters can actually show different spatial dimensions. We will use examples to illustrate this later when introducing related characters.

Let us investigate further the process of creating Chinese characters. We now know that 上 means up, and

下 means down. The character 卡 (ka), shown below, combines 上 and 下. Can you guess what 卡 means?

It is used to express "a check point," such as 關 (guan; pass) 卡 and 邊 (bian; border) 卡. The character 卡 also shows that things cannot move either up or down. Thus, another meaning of 卡 is to block.

In modern usage, 卡 is also used to transliterate foreign terms. As an example, 卡 is used for the translation of the English word, card. Birthday card is 生日 (sheng; birth) 日 (ri; day) 卡. 卡通 is the Chinese translation for cartoon. 通 (tong) means connection. Be-

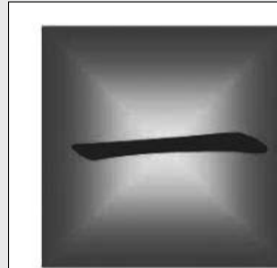
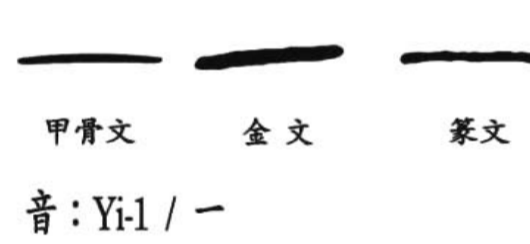


Photo: one



cause 卡 in modern times already has the evolved meaning of paper and pictures, thus 卡通 becomes the perfect translation for cartoon, literally meaning "connecting pictures."

Chinese translation not

only contains the sound of the English word, but also indicates the meaning. This example shows that after each Chinese character is created, the meanings have built up, developed, and extended over the course of history. Alpha-

betical languages, such as English, have to constantly create new words in order to meet the needs of changes in society. Commonly used Chinese characters, however, have been around for two thousand years.

Book review: 'Don't Sweat the Small Stuff... and it's all Small Stuff'

By CHRISTINA RIVELAND
Epoch Times Staff

Browsing the local bookstore, the above title immediately caught my eye. I had to peruse the paperback immediately and liked what I saw.

Purchased book in hand, I headed to my car, drove to a scenic spot and began reading right away. I stayed long enough to finish the whole book in an hour and a half and learned much about myself and interpersonal relationships in the world around me.

The author, Richard Carlson, Ph.D., is a frequent lecturer and stress consultant in private practice in Northern California, USA. His book has been No. 1 on the New York Times best-seller list for several weeks.

The book is a hands-on reference guide. In 100 short, easy to read essays, the author shows the reader how you can keep little things in your life from driving you crazy. There are strategies that make it possible for all of us to calm ourselves in our incredibly hurried life and keep stress to a minimum.

Dr. Carlson's gentle, supportive suggestions encourage introspection and reveals ways to make all of our actions in daily life more peaceful and caring, with the add-

ed benefit of making life more serene.

Essay 24 is one of my favourites: begin each day by thinking of someone to thank! It is something so simple, does not cost anything, and is a manifestation that gratitude and inner peace go hand in hand.

This simple act makes you feel good, and might just make the day for the one we thank.

When I ordered a sandwich at a fast food drive-through yesterday, the unseen clerk's voice sounded particularly melodious. I told him, "You have the pleasant voice of a TV announcer."

When I finally saw him, he grinned from ear to ear and told me that this is the nicest thing anyone had told him all week. He was one of the homeliest young men I had seen in a long time, but was overjoyed someone affirmed him. His inner beauty shone.

Most of the advice in Dr. Carlson's book transcend all cultures and enter the spiritual realm as well—all valid affirmations for me that his writing has universal appeal, and the solutions he proposes are applicable worldwide.

"Don't Sweat the Small Stuff... and it's all Small Stuff: Simple Ways to Keep the Little Things From Taking Over Your Life" by Richard Carlson, Ph.D. (1997) is published by Hyperion.

Anti-Folk hero kicks out the jams

Artist profile:
Paleface

By CHRIS HOLEHOUSE
Epoch Times Staff

Folk music and New York City is a staple long bonded in intimate synchronicity. And brewing steadily alongside the seasoned musical turf has been a supercharged protagonist, up heaving traditional folk norms.

The Anti-folk scene, which is now two decades strong, was initially conceived by a songwriter named Lach. He was playing at his after-hours club, The Fort on New York's Lower East Side, and was told his music was "too punk" to be considered folk music. The fateful interaction happened during the New York Folk Festival and therefore, Lach coined his event the New York Anti-folk Festival.

The scene has been a pivotal gathering point for many unique and now successful artists.

Anti-folk directly opposes the more polished sounds of contemporary music with raw and authentic acoustic sounds featured in an open mike format. Artists like Beck, Ani DiFranco, Billy Bragg, and Regina Spektor brought a mainstream spotlight to Anti-Folk through the years, while other artists such as The Moldy Peaches and Daniel Johnston, as in the Sundance film *The Devil and Daniel Johnston*, helped lend a cult atmosphere to the scene.

One of the first Anti-folk artists to be signed to a major record label in the early 90's was songwriter aficionado, Paleface. Living in Brooklyn

for years, Paleface sculpted his technique while playing out and learning the musical ropes in the city. Resonant and driven, Paleface's voice conjured up early Tom Waits and his playing was always in a mode of thinking outside the box. Paleface's combination of hip hop lyrics atop acoustic chord progressions was a key inspiration for Beck's early work on *One Foot in the Grave* and *Mellow Gold*.

"We used to go to all the open mikes together. He taught me Daniel Johnston songs on the sidewalk and let me sleep on his couch. He was a great songwriter, a generous friend, and a big influence on my early stuff," says Beck of Paleface in Annie Leibovitz's book *American Music*.

Paleface was heavily influenced by the Bob Dylan inspired Daniel Johnston, who had initially showed Paleface a few things about writing songs. Beck, in turn, mused Paleface.

"It's like a family tree kind of thing. I found out about Daniel and I was like, Oh man, this is the way to do it. So I started trying to be like that. And then Beck saw what I was doing and he started to take that from me. I don't know if he knew Daniel, I must have turned him on to Daniel. It's funny because I was the one who played Beck (The Beastie Boys') Paul's Boutique. He had never heard that record. It's a family tree. You start out kind of copying somebody else and then it eventually turns into you. I started out copying Daniel. And I think Beck kind of did the same thing with me. He saw what I was doing and he liked it because I was putting hip hop lyrics in there. I

wasn't doing beats stuff like that like he got into. I was using folk music and I was toying with putting different styles together," says Paleface during our phone interview.

The early years proved to be an influential foundation for Paleface, but the recent spotlight and media exposure across the city and in Rolling Stone led Paleface to an inevitable implosion. Nearly dying from alcohol abuse after a tour in 1997, Paleface had to drastically alter his lifestyle.

Startled by his recent hospitalization and downward spiral, he began rehabilitating and started a brand new song writing process. He recorded many lo-fi bootleg tapes that would eventually saturate the Anti-folk scene during his re-emergence in the upcoming years.

About the same time Paleface was recovering and easing his way back into the scene, Monica "Mo" Samalot, a key player in the Paleface 2.0 era, was making her way towards the path that would lead to her eventual pairing with Paleface as his drummer and sidekick.

"I was a junior architect at a firm living in East Village at the time. I just happened to go to this open mike and I was having a great time just hanging out. PF was coming back into the scene from a time of recovery and that's when we met. I was introduced to his music, the Moldy Peaches, Regina Spektor and tons of really awesome, accessible artists which inspired me to play music."

Mo was motivated by her recent introduction to Paleface and the Anti-folk scene, so she took up the drums. After a couple of years of practice and schooling, Mo eventu-

ally asked Paleface to jam with her. The pair connected and starting writing and touring together.

Feeling the fringes of Brooklyn life and the need to get on the road and tour, Paleface and Mo relocated to Concord, North Carolina where they began work on their most recent record, *The Show Is On The Road*. The album is a farewell to the Anti-folk days in New York City and features Paleface's unique blend of gruff melodies, scratchy acoustic rhythms, and Mo's tenacious backbeat.

"It's a transition record about leaving New York and going on the road. I've entered a new phase where I'm no longer just a songwriter up in Brooklyn, which I was in the early part of this decade. Now, I'm just out on the road. That why this record is called *The Show Is On The Road*, says Paleface.

It's apparent that Paleface has a certain veteran quality to his tone and way of playing music. *The Show Is On The Road* is raw and light on production, holding true to his Anti-folk roots, but also evolving in his own new direction. The album was released last month on the Ramseur Records label.

"If I do look back, I guess I've learned a lot of thing. I've gathered wisdom along the way, and I'm just happy I'm still around. The object is to stay in the game and I'm still doing it. I lot of people would have just given up cause they didn't get famous or whatever. That's really not what it's all about for me," concluded Paleface.

To learn more and hear a sample of the music, visit Myspace.com/palefaceonline