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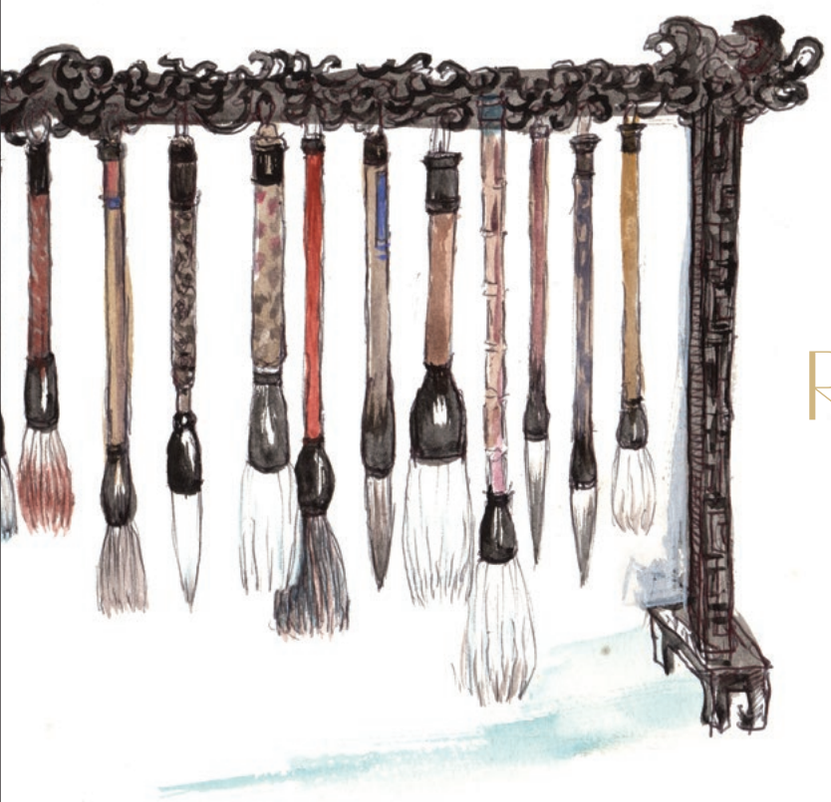

REMEMBERING SHANGHAI: A DAZZLING STORY OF ART HISTORY

未相遇的聯繫：一段藝術歷史

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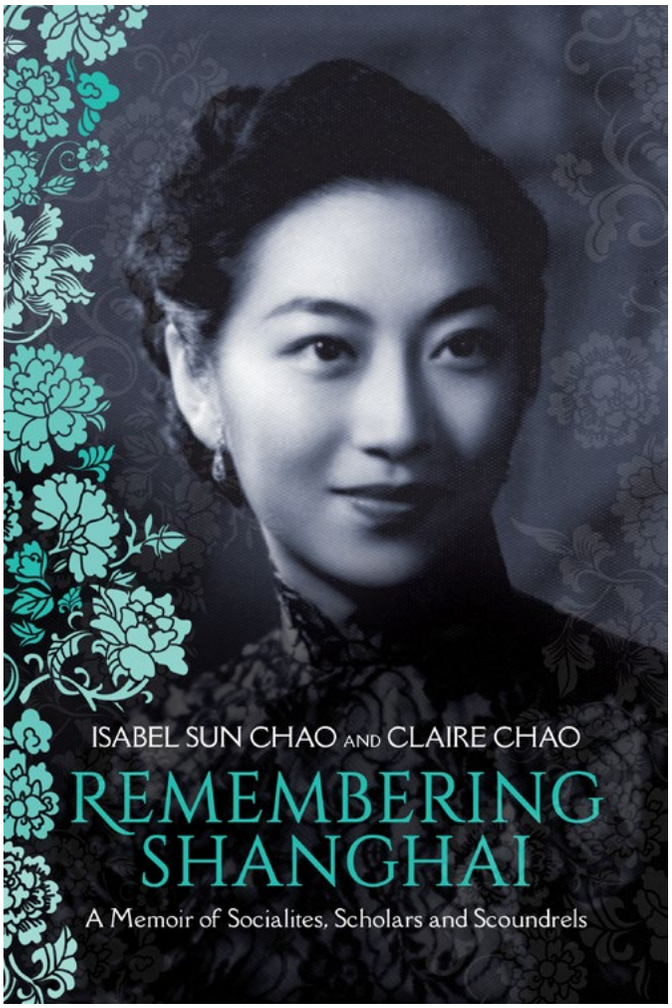

Isabel Sun Chao and Claire Chao, a dynamic mother-daughter team, join forces to tell their family history in *Remembering Shanghai: A Memoir of Socialites, Scholars and Scoundrels*, now a bestseller around the world. Isabel's father and Claire's grandfather, Sun Bosheng was a literati scholar and art collector with power, money, and wisdom. Even today, works that he once collected are worth millions, proving his taste. In the book, the authors vividly describe Isabel's life in Shanghai as an affluent Third Daughter and present the immediate impacts of the Sino-Japanese War and Cultural Revolution on their family. *Remembering Shanghai* proves how writing and art became languages of legacy for many Chinese families.

Isabel Sun-Chao 和 Claire Chao 是一對充滿活力的母女。她們在《Remembering Shanghai》這本暢銷世界的書中敘述了她們的家族歷史。Isabel 的父親（Claire 的祖父），孫伯繩，既是一位文人學者，同時也是一位有著金錢、地位和智慧的藝術收藏家。(其中一個可以證明他品味的是：從前他珍藏的藝術品現在已經價值數百萬。）在書中，Isabel 生動地描述了自己身為孫伯繩的女兒，在戰前上海過著怎樣的華麗人生，這跟緊隨其後發生的中日戰爭和文化大革命給他們家庭所帶來的影響形成了強大的對比。Isabel 在逃離中國時跟父親失散了。她跟她的女兒，Claire，透過書寫她們的上海朝聖之旅，以及孫氏的藝術收藏品，找到了她們的家族傳承。《Remembering Shanghai》也見證了藝術和文字如何成為了眾多中國家庭傳承的表述方式。

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In writing the story, Claire and Isabel followed in the footsteps of their roots, discovering and piecing together their family history. Although they do not possess the physical calligraphy pieces collected by their father and grandfather, they inherit the spirit in their hearts: Isabel pencils the sights and sounds of childhood in Shanghai, Claire has inquisitive observations on the Chinese language, and she iterates researched insertions about Chinese history. Their story echoes the learned scholars' way of expressing emotions, displaying intellectual ideas, and recording history through writing in Chinese culture. The watercolour images and photographs of the calligraphic tradition (pages 35, 146) and the way Isabel described her perspective on simplified and traditional Chinese script are captivating:

> Chinese is a tremendously difficult language. Through speakers of, say the Qingdao dialect in the North and Cantonese in the South are unintelligible to one another, all use the same written language. […]
>
> Suffice it to say, literacy in Chinese takes far more effort than mastering an alphabet and requires the knowledge of over three thousand characters[1]. The amount of rote memorization needed is breathtaking – thus the ubiquitous scene of schoolchildren with heads bent over exercise books, practicing character writing in endless columns of blank squares.
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> In a bid to increase literacy, since the 1950s the Chinese government has simplified the written language by reducing the number of character strokes. A few examples: horse, *ma* 馬, became 马; air, *qi* 氣, became 气, country, *guo* 國, became 国.
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> Though my mind accepts the practicality of simplified characters, my heart laments the aesthetic loss. Consider our family names: Isabel's, Sun 孫, has become 孙, the right half reduced to the character for "small." Claire's, Chao 趙, is now 赵. The "x" on the right, to us, does not look like the mark of a learned person.

[1]THESE ARE BASIC CHARACTERS THAT MAKE UP OTHER WORDS IN THE CHINESE LANGUAGE, WHICH NUMBER OVER 100,000.

透過書寫家族的點點滴滴，Claire 和Isabel 追溯她們家族的歷史，去尋找家族的根源。雖然她們父輩所收藏的書畫藝術已經遺失了，但是她們內心卻傳承了藝術的精神。她們的故事沿用了文人學者表達情感、知性想法、以及中國文化中用書寫記述歷史的做法。例如Isabel 在書里記錄了她童年在上海生活的情景和聲音。Claire 對中國語言則滿懷好奇，並在書中加入了許多她對中國歷史的深厚認識。書中的水彩畫和中國書法（第35和146頁）、還有Isabel對簡體和繁體漢字的看法都非常有意思，像是下面的一段節錄：

> 中文是一門異常困難的語言。雖然不同地方的人有他們各自的方言，而操不同方言的人無法聽懂對方的口語，（比如操北方的青島方言的人和南方的粵語使用者），但用的書寫語文卻是相同的。
>
> 更準確的說，比起學習英文字母，對漢字的認識和學習需要我們付出更多的努力。如果要對中文有一定認知，我們需要學會至少三千多個漢字。花在機械性地記憶生字的時間教人倒抽一口氣，因此我們常常見到學校的孩子常常低著頭在永無止境的空白格里練習寫字。
>
> 為了提高識字率，自50年代起，中國政府便藉著減少漢字的筆畫來簡化書寫系統。比如說：“馬”被改成了“马”，“氣”被改成了“气”，而“國”則改成了“国”。
>
> 雖然我能夠理解簡化漢字的緣由，但我的內心卻忍不住為繁體字美感的流失而感到些許失落和悲哀。以我們的姓氏為例：Isabel Sun 的“孫”字被改成了“孙”，“孫”字的右边被缩减到了“小”字。而 Claire Chao 的“趙”字現在成了“赵”，簡體字“赵”右边的那個“x”，對我們來說，一點都不像是一個有學識的人的名字。

By penning *Remembering Shanghai*, the book's existence in and of itself is an expression of legacy. Here, the language of legacy is formed upon the shared love for Chinese culture that unexpectedly connects a grandfather and his granddaughter who never met. In the story, we find that the art once owned by Sun Bosheng also forms another language of legacy. Practices of Chinese art collectors and general admiration for Chinese art continues to shape the way his children and grandchildren understand him. Sun Bosheng often used 'Humble Tranquil Studio' as a pseudonym to mark his ownership of particular pieces. It is because of this common practice that the family and researchers are able to recover what was once in Sun's collection (although all of it was lost during the tumultuous twentieth century in China). For instance, Claire, who wrote her Princeton senior thesis on Wang Hui, an iconic Qing Dynasty painter, would later find that Wang had been the creator of several precious art pieces that had belonged to her grandfather fifty years earlier.

Remembering Shanghai is a book that takes you to on a journey from pre-war Shanghai and to an emerging Hong Kong – one that was just forming its own identity with the influx of migration from around the world. It tells of several generations of affluence and poverty, most of all showcasing the ways legacy can be understood beyond physical objects passed on from one generation to the next, but ideas and forms that are cherished and connect us all.

透話創作《Remembering Shanghai》，這本書的內容以及書寫行為本身也是承傳文化的一種載體。在書裡，孫伯繩曾經收藏的藝術品也是傳承的一種方式，他對中國文化的欣賞成為了他的下一代了解他的渠道。孫伯繩在他收藏的一些藝術作品上經常記有他“虛靜齋”的別號來作為他藏品的標記。正因為這些標記，他的家人和研究學者才能找到他的一些收藏（儘管他大部分的收藏都在中國動盪的二十世紀遺失）。比如說，在普林斯頓大學撰寫大學畢業論文時以清朝著名畫家王翬為研究對象的Claire，不久後發現她的祖父在五十年前曾藏有的一些王翬非常珍貴的作品。

在《Remembering Shanghai》這本書中，Isabel 和Claire的文字帶領我們從戰前的上海到正在冒起的香港遊歷了一番－一個當時正在隨著四海八方而來的移民而逐步建立起它獨特身份認同的城市。Isabel 和 Claire 的故事敘述了這個家族幾代人貧富起伏的故事。更重要的是她們的文字展現了即使沒有實質的物件作為依託，文化傳承依然可以通過不同的思想和形式被一代一代地傳承下去，將我們聯繫在一起。

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