

**V**ancouver-based artist **Howie Tsui (Tsui Ho Yan / 徐浩恩)** was born in **Hong Kong in 1978 and raised in Lagos, Nigeria and Thunder Bay, Ontario.** He works in a variety of media to construct tense, fictive environments that subvert canonized art forms and narrative genres, often from the traditional Chinese literati class. Tsui synthesizes diverging socio-cultural anxieties around superstition, trauma, acculturation, and otherness through a distinctly outsider lens to advocate for liminal and diasporic experiences. He holds a BFA (2002) from the University of Waterloo and received the Joseph Stauffer Prize (2005) from the Canada Council for most outstanding young artist. His work is in the public collections of the National Gallery of Canada, Vancouver Art Gallery, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa Art Gallery, City of Ottawa, Global Affairs Canada and Centre d'exposition de Baie-Saint-Paul.

**Howie Tsui's work tends to be a hybridization of historic Chinese art influences and 1980s-style Hong Kong pop culture, together with elements from North American pop culture.** The BC Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts supported the production of his project «Retainers of Anarchy», a 25-metre scroll-like animated film work, premiered at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 2017, and traveled to OCAT Xi'an in 2018 and Ottawa Art Gallery in 2019. It will continue touring to more museums in Canada, USA and China over the next 3 years. This piece uses very high tech computer software, an algorithmic program which requires new technology to run it.



In «Retainers of Anarchy» as well as in his recent work «Parallax Chambers», **Howie Tsui considers wuxia as a narrative tool for dissidence and resistance.** Wuxia, a traditional form of martial arts literature that expanded into 20th century popular film and television, was created out of narratives and characters often from lower social classes that uphold chivalric ideals against oppressive forces during unstable times. The people's republic of China placed wuxia under heavy censorship for fear of arousing anti-government sentiment. However practitioners advanced the form in Hong Kong making it one of the most popular genres of Chinese fiction. One of the most well known books of this genre is the trilogy «Legend of the Condor Heroes» by Jin Yong, subject to multiples adaptations.



Tsui's «Retainers of Anarchy» and «Parallax Chambers» references life during the Song dynasty (960–1279 CE), but undermines its idealized portraiture of social cohesion by setting the narrative in Kowloon's notorious Walled City—an ungoverned tenement of disenfranchised refugees in Hong Kong which was demolished in 1994. Beyond the subject of this work, it illustrates in a remarkable way Howie Tsui's transition from traditional drawing to new media art. Tsui was formerly noted for his works in ink on paper (The Unfortunates of D'Arcy Island, 2013 ; Horror

Fables, 2009), his installations of wood carved drawings (Hei Gung Deviation, 2017) and on animal skin (Of Malingers, Skulkers And Dupes, 2012), or even on a pinball (Musketball!, 2012).

## Solo Exhibitions

### 2020

Retainers of Anarchy, Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida  
Retainers of Anarchy, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Victoria, Canada  
Burrard Arts Foundation, Vancouver

### 2019

Retainers of Anarchy, Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa

### 2018

Retainers of Anarchy, OCAT Museum Xi'an, Xi'an  
Interloper and the Inverted Prism, Art Labor Gallery, Shanghai

### 2017

Retainers of Anarchy, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver

### 2013

Friendly Fire, Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba, Manitoba, Canada  
Horror Fables, Le Gallery, Toronto  
Celestials of Gold Mountain, Wil Aballe Art Projects, Vancouver

### 2012

Radiant Specters, Gallery Wendi Norris, San Francisco  
Friendly Fire, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, Canada

### 2011

Celestials of Saltwater City, Centre A (Vancouver International Centre for Contemporary Asian Art), Vancouver

### 2010

Horror Fables, MAI (Montréal, arts interculturels), Montréal  
of Manga & Mongrels, Gallery Jones, Vancouver

### 2009

Horror Fables, Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa  
Horror Fables, Ace Art Inc., Winnipeg

### 2008

of Shunga & Monsters, Le Gallery, Toronto

### 2007

of Manga & Mongrels, G+ Gallery, Toronto

### 2006

of Manga & Mongrels, Gallery 101, Ottawa

## Selected Group Exhibitions

### 2021

One World Exposition #3, Videotage, Hong Kong

### 2020

In the Present Moment: Buddhism, Contemporary Art and Social Practice, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Canada

### 2019

Asia Now Art Fair, Paris, represented by Galerie LJ  
Spring! A Group Show of Works on Paper, Galerie LJ, Paris  
Façade Festival, Vancouver Art Gallery and Burrard Arts Foundation, Vancouver

### 2018

Luminocity, Kamloops Art Gallery, Canada  
We'll All Become Stories, Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa  
Diverse Voices from Vancouver, Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland

### 2015

Bites Back, Art Labor Gallery, Shanghai  
Anatomica, Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax  
越界/粵界 (transgression/cantosphere), Centre A, Vancouver  
Truth of the Matter, Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa

### 2014

Shine A Light: Canadian Biennial, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa  
A Journal of the Plague Year - Islands Off the Shores of Asia, Para Site, Hong Kong  
Thru the Trapdoor, On Main Gallery, Vancouver  
Neo Folk, Ikkan Art International, Singapore  
Beside Yourself, Audain Art Centre, Vancouver

**2013**

You Cannot Kill What is Already Dead, Doris McCarthy Gallery, Toronto  
Spatial Poetics XII: Release Me, Powell Street Festival, Vancouver  
Intersections, Cineworks, Vancouver  
Accumulations, Le Gallery, Toronto  
A Clear Blazing Trail, Magic Pony Gallery, Toronto

**2012**

Phantoms of Asia: Contemporary Awakens the Past, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco  
The Calendar's Tales, 808 Gallery, Boston University School of Fine Arts  
Local Flora, Galerie SAW Gallery, Ottawa

**2010**

Exploded View, Ottawa Art Gallery  
Monster, West Vancouver Museum  
Made in Canada, Shenkman Arts Centre, Orleans  
Par Chemin, Yves Laroche Galerie d'art, Montreal

**2009**

Life Drawing, Narwhal Art Projects, Toronto

**2008**

Hut on an Island, Grasshut Gallery, Portland  
Listen to your Heart, MOHS Exhibit, Copenhagen  
Parcours et Perspectives, Musée d'art contemporain de Baie-Saint-Paul, Quebec

**2007**

The Pleasure, Jaime Torres Bodet Cultural Centre, Mexico DF

**2006**

Fresh Start, Arena 1 Gallery, Santa Monica  
I Am 8-Bit, Gallery 1988, Los Angeles  
Said and Done, AntiSocial Gallery, Vancouver

**2005**

Enjoy Relax Happy, Niagara Gallery, Toronto  
My Culture Includes My Scene, Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa  
Then and Now, Gene Siskel Film Center of the Chicago Institute of Art, Chicago  
Semi-Permanent05: Sketchel, Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, Sydney

**2004**

Coming Soon, Gene Siskel Film Center of the Chicago Institute of Art, Chicago  
Fresh Produce 04, Gallery Anno Domini, San Jose

**2003**

Scatalogue: 30 Years of Crap in Contemporary Art, Galerie SAW Gallery, Ottawa

**Public Collections**

National Gallery of Canada  
Art Gallery of New South Wales  
Vancouver Art Gallery  
Ottawa Art Gallery  
Musée d'Art Contemporain de Baie-Saint-Paul  
Canada Council Art Bank  
City of Ottawa  
Global Affairs Canada  
Embassy of Canada (Beijing)

**Awards****2018**

Sobey Art Award Longlist

**2012**

RBC Emerging Artist Award

**2010**

Corel Endowment Fund for the Arts Award

**2005**

Joseph S. Stauffer Prize, Canada Council for the Arts

## Grants

**2018**

Canada Council for the Arts, Travel Grant

**2015**

Canada Council for the Arts, Long-Term Grants to Visual Artist

**2014**

BC Arts Council, Project Assistance to Visual Artists

**2013**

Canada Council for the Arts, Assistant to Visual Artists: Project Grants

**2012**

Canada Council for the Arts, Travel Grant

**2011**

Canada Council for the Arts, Assistant to Visual Artists: Project Grants

Ontario Arts Council, Exhibition Assistance Grant

Ontario Arts Council, Visual Artists Emerging Grant

City of Ottawa, Creation / Production Grant

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Canada Council for the Arts, Travel Grant

Ontario Arts Council, Exhibition Assistance Grant

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Canada Council for the Arts, Assistant to Visual Artists: Project Grants

Canada Council for the Arts, Travel Grant

Ontario Arts Council, Exhibition Assistance Grant

Ontario Arts Council, Visual Artists Emerging Grant

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**2007**

Canada Council for the Arts, Travel Grant

Ontario Arts Council, Visual Artists Emerging Grant

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Ontario Arts Council, Exhibition Assistance Grant

**2005**

Canada Council for the Arts, Assistant to Visual Artists: Project Grants

Ontario Arts Council, Exhibition Assistance Grant

**2004**

Ontario Arts Council, Visual Artists Emerging Grant

City of Ottawa, Creation / Production Grant

## Residencies

**2020**

Hong Kong Open Printshop, Hong Kong (<https://www.open-printshop.org.hk/>)

**2019**

Burrard Arts Foundation, Vancouver

**2014**

Spring Workshop, Hong Kong

**2011**

Centre A International Centre for Asian Art, Vancouver

**2009**

Art City, Winnipeg

**2008**

Symposium international d'art contemporain de Baie-St-Paul, Baie-Saint-Paul, Québec

**2007**

Islands Fold Artist Residency, Pender Island, British Columbia, Canada

## Catalogues

### 2018

Art Labor Gallery, Howie Tsui: Retainers of Anarchy, Shanghai, 2018. Authors: Karen Smith and Anna Holmwood.

### 2017

Vancouver Art Gallery, Ottawa Art Gallery, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Howie Tsui: Retainers of Anarchy, Vancouver, 2017. Authors: Alice Ming Wai Jim, Diana Freundl, Michelle Gewurtz, and Michelle Jacques.

### 2014

National Gallery of Canada, Shine A Light: Canadian Biennale 2014, Ottawa, 2014. Author: Drouin-Brisebois, Hill, Kunard, Shaughnessy and Vogl.

Laurence King, The Book of Hearts, London, 2014. Author: Francesca Gavin.

### 2012

Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Howie Tsui: Friendly Fire, Kingston, 2012. Author: Jan Allen, Steven Loft & Paul Roberston.

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Phantoms of Asia: Contemporary Awakens the Past, San Francisco, Authors: Mami Kataoka & Allison Harding.

### 2009

Carleton University Art Gallery, Howie Tsui: Horror Fables, Ottawa, 2009. Author: Emily Falvey & Sandra Dyck.

### 2008

Islands Fold Publishing, Of Shunga & Monsters, Pender Island, 2008. Author: Luke Ramsay.

## Selected Bibliography

### 2019

Nooshfar Afnan, "Howie Tsui: Parallax Chambers," Artomity, (Winter, Issue 11).

### 2018

Nicole Lee, «Pacific Crossings & Howie Tsui: Retainers of Anarchy,» Asian Diasporic Visual Cultures and the Americas, (Vol. 4, Issue 1-2, 2018), P213-216.

Victoria Nolte, «Asian Canadian Minor Transnationalism: A Method of Comparison,» Asian Diasporic Visual Cultures and the Americas, (Vol. 4, Issue 1-2, 2018), P65-88.

### 2017

Elliott Albrecht, «Howie Tsui: Retainers of Anarchy,» Artomity, (Summer, Issue 5).

Kevin Griffin, «Retainers of Anarchy mashes up time up time and narrative to arrive at the present», Vancouver Sun, (7 April).

Rachel Rosenfield Lafo, «Howie Tsui: Retainers of Anarchy», Galleries West, (9 April).

William Tham, «Terminus/Gateway Cities: Pacific Crossings and Retainers of Anarchy at the Vancouver Art Gallery», Ricepaper, (10 April).

Nathaniel Ainley, «Traditional Chinese Scroll Painting Comes to Life in an Algorithmically Animated Projection», Vice, (12 April).

### 2015

Michael Baker, «Retainers of Anarchy: In Conversation with Howie Tsui», nomorepotlucks, (Nov/Dec, 2015).

Angela Ko, «Interview with Howie Tsui», Left Coast Art, (June 8, 2015).

### 2014

Doretta Lau, "Play List: Howie Tsui", South China Morning Post, (May 11) P2.

«Artist Eats: Howie Tsui", Worlds Best Ever

### 2013

"Hit List: Howie Tsui," Akimbo

Christine Conley, "Howie Tsui", Canadian Art (Winter 2013), 148.

### 2012

Erica Gomez & Vanessa Kauffman, "On the Cover: An Interview with Howie Tsui", Eleven Eleven (Issue 15), P255.

Peter Simpson, "Pinball Battlefield", Ottawa Citizen (14 May), C5-C6.

Jesse Hamlin, "Asian Art Museum's 'Phantoms of Asia' connects", San Francisco Chronicle (13 May), P14.

Andrew David King, "Ghosts in the Archive", ZYZZYVA (26 June).

### 2011

Joni Low, "Evoking Past into Present: The Spectral Imagination of Howie Tsui", Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art (Nov/Dec 2011, Vol.10 No.6), 67 - 86.

Robin Laurence, "Ghost Stories Find Scary Form", Georgia Straight (16 - 23 June) 63.

Kevin Griffin, "Howie Tsui: A Bestiary of Horror Stories", Vancouver Sun (1 July).

Jeff Hamada, "Howier Tsui/Interview", Booooooom! (14 July).

Carren Jao, "Howie Tsui at the crossroads of culture", Poketo (5 July).

#### **2010**

Petra Halkes, "Exploded View", Border Crossings (Vol. 29, No. 3, Issue 115), 131-132.

Helena Wadsley, "Of Manga & Mongrels", Galleries West (Vol. 9, No. 3, Fall / Winter 2010).

Aaron Boissonneault, "Horror Fables", PaperWait (Vol. 12 ) 34-41.

Paul Gessell, "The Trouble with Excellence", Ottawa Citizen (5 March), A3.

Robin Laurence, "Monster: The Fear Inside", Canadian Art (25 February).

Paul Gessell, "Odd, and Odder ", Ottawa Citizen (27 February), G1.

#### **2009**

Robert Enright, "The Mongrel's Progress: Howie Tsui", Border Crossings (Vol. 28, No. 4, Issue 112), 16.

Cindy Deachman, "Black Magic", Ottawa Magazine (February/March), 47-48.

Paul Gessell, "Creep Show at Carleton", Ottawa Citizen (27 April), D1.

David Balzer, "Spring Drafts", Eye Weekly (26 March), 47.

Rupert Bottenberg, "Mulling over Manga", Montreal Mirror (12-18 March), 45.

Sandee Moore, "Freaky Fixation", Uptown Magazine, (Nov. 5 - 12), 17.

Rosanne Barrett, "Long-distance call: Howie Tsui", South China Morning Post, (13 Dec), 10.

#### **2008**

Paul Gessell, "Corporate Art on the Edge", Ottawa Citizen, (Jan. 24), E-E1.

Leah Turner, "Artisan". Color Magazine, (Autumn Issue, 6.4), 86.

#### **2006**

Allison Collins, "From Tsui's Imagination", Ottawa Xpress (14-21 September), 17.

Paul Gessell, "A weird and wonderful collision of east and west", Ottawa Citizen (14 September), E1.

#### **2005**

Anita Euteneier, "Culture Clash", Ottawa Xpress, (June 23-30), 18.

#### **2004**

Anita Luo, "Showstopper", Jasmine Magazine, (Fall), 68.

Fateema Sayani, "Howie Tsui in Process", Hipster and Poser, (Sept.), 14-15.

#### **2003**

Colin Vincent, "Howie Tsui", Mirror Magazine, (Dec/Jan), 12-13.

Denis Armstrong, "Poop packs a punch", Ottawa Sun, (June 19), 34.

Anita Euteneier, "Suspended Adolescence Goes International", Ottawa Xpress, (May 15-21), 17.

Alan Neal, "Where watching paint dry is great fun", Ottawa Citizen, (April 21), B4.