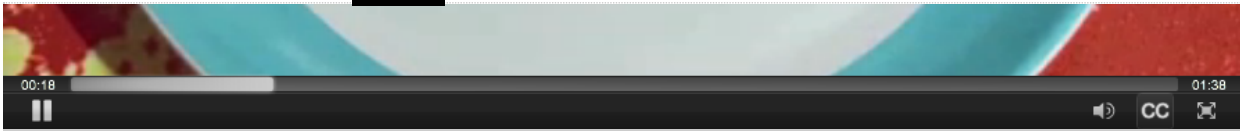


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The Art of Dinner

Mr. Chow is Grilled by Jackson Boxer as He Rekindles the Flame of His Artistic Passion

A long-distance phone call connects London restaurateurs young and old as Brunswick House co-founder Jackson Boxer talks to Chinese gastronomic patriarch Michael Chow in today's stop-motion animation by Texan photographer and artist Trey Wright. The bespectacled face of glamorous Chinese cuisine took up a residency in Hong Kong, returning to art after a 50-year sabbatical with *Recipe For a Painter* at Pearl Lam Galleries, his first solo exhibition. With encouragement from dealer and curator Jeffrey Deitch and inspired by Chinese, European and American art movements, Chow started on a series of large-scale, mixed-media collages under his birth name, 'Zhou Yinghua.' In the same vein as his groundbreaking Mr. Chow restaurants—the first of which he opened in Knightsbridge in 1960s West London—the culinary legend's artwork is linked to his complex relationship with China, which he left for England at the age of 13 to escape Mao's Cultural Revolution. Below, the after-dinner conversation continues with Boxer, who recently co-founded east London destination Rita's, quizzing Chow on his crossover from food to art.

Jackson Boxer: I've always been fascinated with *mise en place* and *mise on scene*—the directorial creation of how the restaurant runs. Can you tell us about your father's background in Beijing Opera?

Michael Chow: My father wrote many operas and performed many different characters on stage for over 65 years with the interruption of the Cultural Revolution. I continue to have that passion and I treat a restaurant as theater, or a long-running musical. I'm trying to be as creative as possible with them.

JB: As a successful restaurateur re-approaching the canvas after 50 years, is your art simpatico with your restaurants?

MC: Chinese cuisine was something I could get hold of as a cultural medium and that I could communicate with the West. Cuisine has a tendency towards art, however it is a craft and the job of the craftsman is to repeat exactness every time. Painting on the other hand is the opposite, it shouldn't be the same: it is an expressionist process.

JB: What is it that made you feel comfortable making art again?

MC: I felt suppressed like a pressure cooker until Jeffrey Deitch came along and saw my work, and really encouraged me. These things that have happened over the last 22 months have been incredible. I know I'm old but I am full of energy: I still have lots to say and problems to solve within painting.

Recipe For a Painter runs through March 8 at Pearl Lam, Hong Kong.

CONVERSATIONS ▶

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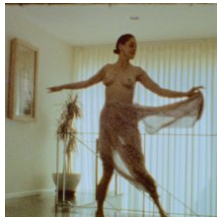
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