

“Australian Spirit, Chinese Heart”

A Profile of the Artist Di Xiong Yao



Submitted by

**Shu Fang Zhao
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**School of Communication, Arts and Critical Enquiry
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
La Trobe University
Bundoora, Victoria 3086
Australia**

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Summary

This creative thesis - *Australian Spirit, Chinese Heart* - takes the form of a documentary and a written exegesis that outlines the theoretical framework informing the treatment and production approach. The documentary is a profile of the Chinese/Australian artist Di Xiong Yao whose work integrates the artistic traditions of China and the West. Much of this discussion centers on his two masterpieces - “Soul of Australia” and “Two Hundred Kangaroos” – both of which take the form of very long Chinese scroll paintings. In reflecting on his approach to painting Di Xiong Yao shares much about what it is like to straddle two cultures. Di Xiong was born to a Russian mother and a Chinese father and grew up in Northwest China’s Sinkiang Uygur Autonomous Region, emigrating with his parents after the Cultural Revolution.

The documentary, which employs a self-reflexive/observational approach, has a three part structure. The first part introduces Di Xiong as a Chinese-Australian artist and covers his life before migrating to Australia. The second part observes Di Xiong’s life as a Chinese Australian artist who has developed a unique bi-cultural aesthetic in his scroll paintings of Australia’s indigenous people and Australian flora and fauna, referencing the influence of his experiences as an artist in China. The third part reflects on identity and biculturalism and the value of artistic experimentation, accompanying Di Xiong back to his homeland where he meets up with old friends and colleagues and rekindles his passion for traditional horse painting.

The exegesis compares the emergence of documentary film in the West and in China, outlining the major modes of documentary and how these mesh with Chinese traditions. Following this is an analysis of the external factors that impact on documentary production: new technologies, institutions and economics. Lastly, a critical appraisal of *Australian Spirit, Chinese Heart*, reflects on the purpose and the production process and how successfully the finished program achieves its goals.

Statement of authorship

This is a creative thesis completed according to the requirements of the La Trobe University Media Studies Program, consisting of a written exegesis of 20,000 words and a television documentary of 52 minutes duration.

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by the relevant Ethics Committee or Safety Committee or authorized officer.

Signed:

Print Name: Shufang Zhao

Date:

Introduction

In China, unlike Western cinema, documentary film, rather than fiction film, has been the dominant mode since 1949. In recent years, documentary TV programs have experienced a meteoric rise...showing how, under the market economy, although the government continues to use the genre as propaganda to promote its ideologies and policies, documentaries are being increasingly used as a medium where public concerns and alternative voices can be heard. It argues that there is a gradual process of 'democratization' in the media, in which documentaries play a significant role. (Chu, 2005)

In China, the generation of late 1960s and early 1970s is the unique making-sense generation which bridges the generations of Mao's totalitarian era and those of China's market reform era. As one of this bridging generation, I have witnessed and experienced China's political and economic developments through changes in daily living. Whether assigned by school, municipal propaganda department or led by self-preference, I have been nourished, educated and impressed throughout my childhood and youth by documentary films and television documentary programs. These have played a key role in developing my cultural and national identity while also expanding my understanding of the remarkable changes taking place in politics and the economy. So, long before I heard of John Grierson, the father of the British documentary movement, in the Western world, I knew that documentary could serve social and educational functions and dreamt of being a documentary filmmaker one day.

Many of the documentaries I watched in my youth followed the 'dogmatic formula', constructed from 'voice of god' commentary and the compilation of existing footage. However, I was fascinated by the various ways that documentary represented life, such as the scenes showing massing crowds and parades, the old archive footage, the poetic shots, the background music pacing and supporting the narration. I was persuaded by the tone of the commentator and believed what I was told. By the 1990s, following the economic and political reform, as Chu (2005, 13) notes, the Chinese government was still using documentary film to promote its political ideologies and policies, while Chinese intellectuals were increasingly using it to debate and communicate their perspectives. Outside the official system, dissenting views began to be circulated through independent, semi-independent or community driven documentary making.

Documentary to me is an interactive way to explore and understand our living world, because I believe that we are not only told and shown but we also think, understand and respond through watching. My interest in how documentary achieves this inspired me to become involved in the process of making documentary. I wanted to learn about the different ways that documentaries represent the world.

My interest in studying and making documentary was strengthened when I came to Australia. When I enrolled in Media Studies in Australia, my eyes were opened to the field of documentary history, the social functions it carries and, the different approaches to production. I believe that documentaries serve an important role as forms for social enquiry, and for public education as John Grierson advocated.

During my studies, I have examined different categories of documentary film and video productions and acquired research skills. Moreover, since early 2005 I have been presenting and producing television segments for the Chinese language program on Channel 31 making community news programs and personal profile programs. This gave me experience in many roles - camera operation, directing, interviewing and editing.

I decided to produce a documentary program about an artist, Di Xiong Yao whose painting and personal experience reflect on the kinds of personal and attitudinal adjustments bi-cultural people such as myself regularly undertake and which are now a common part of multicultural societies around the world. These adjustments are bringing new kinds of cultural fusion - between East and West and modern and traditional.

In this exegesis, I outline my understanding of the history and practices of documentary making to explain what has influenced my approach to this project and the particular hybrid form that my documentary takes. The following outline is divided into three parts: Firstly, a brief introduction of the respective documentary traditions of the West and China; secondly, I outline major modes of documentary, and discuss how new technologies, politics and economics impact and influence documentary making; and lastly I discuss the process of making my documentary - *Australian Spirit, Chinese Heart* –a profile of the Chinese-Australian artist, Di Xiong Yao.

Rather than commencing with a conventional literature review, which would not have been appropriate for this culturally blended creative thesis, I have discussed relevant literature within each section, identifying key issues, arguments and analyses that have influenced my intentions and approach.

PART ONE

DOCUMENTARY TRADITIONS

CHAPTER 1 Two Different Traditions

This creative thesis addresses the topic of bi-culturalism through the life of an artist whose work reflects two cultures – that of Australia and China. The documentary – *Australia Spirit, Chinese Heart* – thus has two different audiences, Australian and Chinese. To engage each the thesis draws on two sets of documentary traditions which are discussed in this chapter.

Documentary in the West

In the West the documentary form emerged in the 1920s, nonfiction cinema had existed for more than two decades. What has come to be called “documentary” developed slowly over a period of almost thirty years, from 1894 to 1922. According to Levin (1971, 7), cinema was divided into two main categories from the beginning and these remain essentially the same today: the realistic film as originally represented by the pioneering filmmakers, Auguste and Louis Lumière, and the fiction film as originally represented by experimental filmmaker, Georges Méliès.

The Lumière brothers’ films and other early films initially lasted less than a minute and consisted of footage of everyday events shot from a fixed camera position, providing contemporary audiences with a way of seeing moving reality reproduced upon a screen for the first time in 1895 (Levin 1971, 7). From 1895 until about 1900, filmmakers continued to seek their material directly from life. Nothing was too insignificant to be photographed so long as it moved: “people strolling in the streets, trees swaying in the wind, trains speeding, horses jumping”, Jacobs (1971, 2) observes these scenes were not only caught without prearrangement being consequently more natural, but evoked awe and admiration for their “faithfulness to true-life action”.

According to Jacobs, the invention of editing in 1903 was a major film development that brought great new capabilities for controlling and manipulating the flow of time, the speed of events, and screen continuity. Therefore, the film of fact was advanced from

random observation to selective aspects of reality, and the subjects were no longer limited to interesting bits of movement and action (Jacobs 1971, 3).

During the decade of 1910-1920, the factual film identified by Jacobs (1971) fell into several broad categories: popular and research studies, distant and exotic places, sport and nature films, travel and scenic views, picturesque and unusual occupations, and topical personalities. These categories suggest that these films marked a transition from a straight record toward a more personal expression on the part of the filmmakers. They reflect an obvious growing interest in exploring the social environment (Jacobs 1971, 4-5).

The advent of the newsreel, during this period, is also regarded as contributing to documentary development. Newsreels makers generally confined themselves to reporting hard news and human interests, claiming that they presented the facts without bias or special viewpoint. It has been noted that as a genre, newsreel lacked the comprehensive vision of true documentary (Rabiger 1998, 15). Jacobs points out that newsreels constituted a major new extension of the nonfiction film simply by demonstrating that visual news material could be manipulated to serve an ideological point of view (Jacobs 1971, 6).

The first major step towards the evolution of documentary as we know the genre today came out of Russia during and immediately after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Rabiger (1998, 16) suggests that the spirit of documentary originates from Dziga Vertov and his group Kino-eye. Levin (1971, 8) suggests that the work of Dziga Vertov, who edited actuality footage into newsreels, differed essentially in having a social purpose - it was to help in the task of indoctrination and informing the people about the revolution. Vertov's newsreel series called "Kino-Pravda", which means "Camera-Truth" was a precursor to the French phrase "cinéma-vérité". Vertov's "Kino-Eye" theory of filmmaking is viewed as a key contributor to Western documentary film origins.

In 1922 the first feature-length film of fact – *Nanook of the North* appeared. This film, considered a landmark production in the field of documentary studies, was made in 1922 by the American Robert Flaherty, who went well equipped to Hudson Bay territory in Canada and spent about a year in the life of a typical Eskimo family. He was in fact a

filmmaker and a one-man studio combined. After a year of shooting, he returned to New York, where he spent the next six months editing the film (Jacobs 1971, 7-8).

The feature length documentary, *Nanook* marked the arrival of a new type of film, sweeping away the notion that what the camera recorded was the total reality. The treatment of reality in *Nanook* brought the nonfiction film to a new level of achievement. “Discovering the essential drama” within the material of real life itself became the popular approach to documentary film. Factual cinema from *Nanook* onwards, Rabiger (1998) notes, began showing real life in ways that moved beyond the fragmented presentation of news footage. Flaherty proved there was another reality which the “eye alone” could not perceive, but which the “heart and mind could discern” (Jacobs 1971, 8- 9).

Hardy (1966, 13) writes that in the early 30s a “new word” and a “new name” began to appear with some regularity in the English-speaking world. The “new word” was “documentary” and the “new name” was “Grierson”. Grierson thought that documentary could be used as an effective tool for providing cultural or educational enlightenment (Grierson, 1966, 141-55). Grierson defined the non-fiction film by the new word of “documentary”, which he explained as “the creative treatment of actuality”, and he was the founder and leader of the British documentary movement which had a major influence on Western documentary traditions.

According to Hardy (1966, 18-22), the British documentary movement is frequently identified as “a major contribution to world cinema”. Domestically it had enormous influence on both the aesthetics and the institution of British cinema. The “movement” emerged within state-sponsored bodies in the 1930s and 1940s: the Empire Marketing Board (EMB) Film Unit (1927-33) which was established by John Grierson and Stephen Tallents; and the General Post Office (GPO) Film Unit (1933-39), which operated from the disbandment of the EMB until it became the Crown Film Unit (1939-52) under the Ministry of Information, with responsibilities for wartime and post-war propaganda.

Grierson’s first documentary film *Drifters* was sponsored by the E.M.B. The film, which

follows the work of North Sea herring fishermen, was a radical departure from anything being made by the British film industry or Hollywood. *Drifters* is remarkable for both its subject-matter and its technique. Hardy (1966, 17) observes that the way it “drew its drama at first-hand and from real life was something revolutionary”. A large part of its innovation lies in the fierce boldness in bringing the camera to rugged locations, such as a small boat in the middle of a gale, and leaves relatively less of the action staged. The success of *Drifters* made it possible for Grierson to develop his idea of film as a tool for social education and persuasion. Instead of directing films, Grierson devoted his energies to building up a film production unit and training other filmmakers who were united by their enthusiasm for a common aim. Between 1930 to 1933, the E.M.B. film Unit grew in man-power from two to over thirty and produced over one hundred experimental and exploratory films.

In 1933, when the E.M.B. was dissolved, the G.P.O. was one of the nation’s major industrial undertakings. Hardy (1966, 22) observes that the G.P.O. productions reflected increased emphasis on sociological observation which became more and more an integral part of the films and is evident in *Workers and Jobs* (1935, Arthur Elton), *Housing Problems* (1935, Arthur Elton) and *Enough to Eat* (1936, Edgar Anstey), *Song of Ceylon* (1934, Basil Wright) and *Children at School* (1937, Basil Wright).

By the end of the thirties, the public affairs of Britain were being discussed extensively and eloquently on the screen, both in the cinemas and on the far-reaching non-theatrical network. A movement had been founded with its roots in the public need to learn the facts of modern living and in the need of government and industry to provide these facts. One of the consequences was that on the outbreak of war there was in Britain a pool of film-makers trained in the use of the film for informational and inspirational purpose. (Hardy, 1966, 24)

The British documentary movement led by Grierson was not unique to Britain, but also had world-wide influence. Grierson promoted documentary as a tool for informing and educating the public about the modern world, for building citizenship. He also promoted documentary abroad through a number of public organizations in the United States, Scotland and Canada where he established the Canadian National Board.

What determined my decision to extend the range of documentary was the realization that our work could not depend on a single national sponsorship, however strong, but only on the international reality created by the common interests of the common people everywhere. (Quoted in Hardy, 1966, 28)

Grierson's vision spread as documentary film makers around the world took inspiration from the British and Canadian examples. As previously noted, Grierson coined the phrase the "creative treatment of actuality" (Grierson, 1966, 13) to define documentary and to signify that there was "an element of art involved in the capturing and construction of images from actuality into a coherent work with an argument and a point of view" (AFC 2004, 3). Grierson's much quoted definition highlights the process by which a documentarist integrates various components - words, music, images and sound effects - into a work that is functional and engaging, allowing "the citizen to become meaningfully involved in the general social process" (Grierson, 1966, 141-55).

Documentary In China

Historically, Chinese documentary film has been very much tied to changes in the political environment. As Chu (2005, 38) observes, film came to China in 1896 when the Qing Dynasty's Imperial rule ended and the Chinese republic was established. From the first Chinese documentary film made in 1905, to the birth of the People's Republic of China in 1949, three dominant groups of filmmakers can be identified: the private filmmakers, including intellectuals, opera or theatre artists and republican supporters, who were the pioneers of the Chinese documentary; and two political groups, the Republican government led by National Party; and the Communists led by the Chinese Communist Party who were relative latecomers.

Chu (2005, 41) points out that private filmmakers started a small film industry based in Shanghai and Hong Kong in the first two decades of the twentieth century, following in the footsteps of European and American films. This industry produced newsreels, landscape films, educational films, and sport documentaries, as well as feature films, and thus parallels several developments in Western cinema; for example, *shangwu yinshu guan fang gong/Workers leaving the Commercial Press (1917)* was a close echo of Lumière's *Workers leaving the Lumière Factory (1896)*. However, there are certain sub-genres of non-fiction film such as the travelogue and the American ethnographic film best represented by Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North (1923)* that did not gain popularity in China.

Furthermore, documentary film was viewed as being of no independent commercial value therefore newsreels and documentaries were regarded as supplementary content, by film distributors and exhibitors, when screening feature films (Gong, 1968, 142).

By the late 1920s, the Chinese National Party realized the value of cinema as a tool for education and propaganda. As a result the Central Film Studio was established in 1935 with the official function of promoting state “culture and education” (Du, 1986, 128). With its emphasis on education and information, Chu (2005, 48) notes the studio’s documentaries could be categorized as “news, education”, “guonan” (tragedies of the nation) and “jiaofei” (catching the Communist bandits). In its first year the studio produced about 200 newsreels and documentaries. From 1934 to 1937, the studio launched 53 series of *News of China* along with military educational films and governmental anti-Communist propaganda. The Japanese bombing of Shanghai in 1937 left few commercial film companies capable of producing documentaries. In the same year, the Communist and the National Parties joined forces to form the second United Front to oppose the Japanese invaders, and anti-Japanese messages subsequently became the key themes in their respective documentaries.

In comparison, Communist film producers were relative latecomers, who had learned from their Soviet colleagues about the potential power of film. The Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) own first film production team, the Yan’an Film Brigade, was established in 1938 with the official goal of uniting and encouraging people to attack the enemy (Cheng, 1966, 341:Vol.2). This film unit aimed to encourage people to oppose the Japanese by showing the facts of bloody battles with the Japanese; and to show the world how bravely the Chinese people were fighting the Japanese in order to gain sympathy and support (San, 2005, 81). Following the Japanese war, Communist filmmaking grew extensively from 1946-1949. According to Chu (2005, 50-2), the Yan’an Film Brigade split into two groups, one taking over the Japanese film studio in Manchuria, where documentary production was divided into two sections according to the war fronts. These reported on the Communist liberation army in the north and south fighting against the

National Party and covered events on the home front in Manchuria, while also showing the nation-building being undertaken by the Communists after the war. The second group followed the Communist army south to Shijiazhuang where the Huabei film studio was established, which was given one main instruction - to make news documentaries first, and then feature films. The newsreel-style documentaries produced under this banner included topics such as: Chairman Mao and other CCP leaders, celebrations of the new China in Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and other major cities, as well as women's conferences, youth conferences, and the establishment of the China and Soviet Union Friendship Association. Given the increasing isolation of China in world affairs from 1949 to the end of Mao's rule in 1976, Chu observes, "it was only to be expected that documentary film in the People's Republic of China would become a strictly censored platform for political dogma" (Chu, 2005, 50-2).

Being of that generation of Chinese born in the 1970s and living through the latter years of Mao's era, and then as a youth in Deng's reforming period, I was influenced by watching many dogmatic documentaries produced by the propaganda department. These documentaries employed the artifice of compilation overlaid with written commentary. Being accustomed to this style of documentary with a good understanding of the techniques I was able to apply them to my own documentary. However, I was also keen to incorporate aspects of various innovations by other western documentary makers, for the reasons I shall outline in the following chapter.

PART TWO

DOCUMENTARY FORM

CHAPTER 2 Documentary Modes

While the previous section outlines the origins of my particular perspective on the documentary, when considering how to go about the actual making of my documentary one of the hardest things was deciding on the style and form. What would suit this particular subject, and the audience that I wanted to reach in Australia and in China? While there are many modes or forms of documentary, as Richard Kilborn and John Izod (1997, 57) argue, nowadays, it is common for documentaries to exhibit elements from more than one mode. However, the various modes are still identifiable as a broad set of conventions that “address the viewer and relate the experience of the actual historical world in various different ways”. In order to explain my particular blend of modes I will first outline one of the leading typologies that I referred to in making my choice, that of Bill Nichols, the American documentary theorist.

Nichols (1991, 32) identifies four modes of representation that dominate the organizational patterns of most documentaries: expository, observational, interactive, and reflexive. These are outlined in greater detail in the following section.

Expository Documentary

The expository mode of documentary is usually considered to be the oldest form of documentary film. It was first demonstrated by Robert Flaherty in *Nanook of the North* (1922). During the 1930s it was the aesthetic norm for films made by the British Documentary Movement under John Grierson and by documentarists working under Pare Lorentz for the US Department of Agriculture (Kilborn & Izdo, 1997, 58).

Nichols (1991, 34) notes that expository documentary combined voice-of-god narration with poetic perspectives to help people to see the historical world afresh. He suggests that it arose from audience dissatisfaction with fiction film. In the expository mode the text addresses the viewer directly, with titles or voices that advance an argument. *Night Mail* (1936), a British documentary that utilizes a “voice-of God” commentary is another example of the expository mode. Kilborn and Izod (1997, 58) explain that the limited

sound-recording technology of the 1930s made it easier to dub in an unseen speaker, which subsequently became known as “voice-of-god” narration since the narrator explains what we see, in effect telling us how to interpret the visual evidence before our eyes.

The expository mode typically uses the narrator’s script as the main means for selecting, shaping and passing information on to the viewer (Kilborn and Izod 1997, 58). This mode gives the impression of objectivity and of well-substantiated judgment,

The rhetoric of the commentator’s argument serves as the textual dominant, moving the text forward in service of its persuasive need...images serve as illustration or counterpoint of the commentary...editing serves to establish and maintain rhetorical continuity more than spatial or temporal continuity (Nichols 1991, 34-38).

Even though the documentary may include elements of interviews, these tend to be subordinated to the arguments offered by the film itself, which Nichols (1991, 37) suggests, often emerge via an unseen “voice-of god” or an on-camera “voice of authority who speaks on behalf of the text”. In order to persuade, the expository documentary frequently assumes that the audience comprises “us” – people who share the values of the narrator. On the other hand, the subject material of a documentary is frequently represented as “them” – people who are different and strange to “us”, by nationality, race, class, income, gender or age (Kilborn and Izod 1997, P59). The authority of narration presents information in a rhetorical style designed to impress the listener with the thought that the commentator is offering the only reasonable way of looking at the topic under consideration.

The expository documentary favored by the British documentary movement under John Grierson faded after the Second World War due to the “retraction of the government and corporate sponsors” and the limited space for serious documentaries in commercial cinema. However, the arrival of television as a medium, with its massive and growing audience, delivering programs close to people’s lives, soon revived the documentary form (Kilborn and Izod 1997, 65).

Observational Documentary and Direct Cinema

The second mode, observational documentary, arose from the availability of more mobile, synchronous recording equipment and dissatisfaction with the moralizing quality of expository documentary. As Jacobs (1979, 406-19) concludes a new generation of film makers, growing dissatisfied with the way expository documentary held subjects at a distance behind the commentator's guarding voice-of-god, wanted to give the audience direct access to actions and words in the places where the subjects lived and worked, not in the studio environment. In 1960s, Robert Drew and a number of others in the USA began using the new film technology developing a new mode of documentary, which became known as direct cinema. Around the same time, Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin were experimenting with a different approach in France, *cinéma-vérité* (Kilborn and Izod 1997, 65).

One key difference between the observational and the expository modes was the former's refusal to allow re-enactments. Direct cinema offers the viewer the opportunity to look in on and overhear the lived experience of others, to gain what Nichols describes as "a sense of the rhythms and speech patterns of everyday life". He explains that the observational mode stresses nonintervention by the filmmaker with the crew preferably invisible. Rather than constructing a temporal framework, or rhythm, from the process of editing as in *Night Mail* (1936, Harry Watt) or *Listen to Britain* (1942, Humphrey Jennings), observational films avoid voice-over commentary, additional music, titles, reenactments, and interviews, and employ editing to enhance the impression of lived or real time. (Nichols, 1991, 42)

Kilborn and Izod (1997, 69) argue that direct cinema has a "distinctive rhythm". They explain that "the sense of telling observation, of looking in on real lives, comes not only from the characteristic long takes and the recording of significant moments in the story but also from the inclusion of periods of dead time". In the direct mode, editing generally sustains "a sense of continuity in space and time rather than to support the logic of an argument" (Nichols, 1991, 40).

Interactive Documentary and Cinéma-vérité

Interactive documentary, which enables documentarians to engage with individuals more directly, arose from the availability of the same mobile filmmaking equipment that sparked the development of direct cinema and from a desire to make the filmmaker's perspective more evident, to be more truthful about the filmmaking person (Nichols, 1991, 32-34).

Cinéma-vérité is a style of documentary that employs the interactive mode, combining the naturalistic techniques that originated in observational documentary with those of traditional documentary filmmaking - the stylized cinematic devices of editing and camerawork, staged set-ups, along with the use of the camera to provoke subjects. This mode is also known for taking a provocative stance toward its topics. Nichols (1991, 44) notes that the term originates from the translation of Dziga Vertov's *Kino-Pravda* (Russian for "cinema of truth"), in which Vertov's announced intention was to use film as a means of getting at "hidden" truth, largely through juxtapositions of images. Cinéma-vérité is French for "cinema of truth".

This mode emerged in the late 1950s, when the availability of portable synchronous sound recording equipment made interaction more feasible than it had been. Filmmakers might now also listen, and speak and interact with events happening before the camera. The possibilities of serving as mentor, participant, prosecutor, or provocateur - in relation to the social actors recruited to the film - made this more sophisticated than the observational mode. Such opportunities were explored by Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin in *Chronique d'un été* (1961), the film that is usually regarded as the key innovator of Cinéma-vérité. (Kilborn and Izod 1997, 70-71)

Where the rhetoric of direct cinema implies that the lives of the people observed by the camera are supposed to continue, as if they were oblivious to the fact that someone is making a film about them, the interactive mode acknowledges the presence of camera and crew. Those being filmed may talk directly to camera or signal its presence in other ways.

Alternatively, filmmakers might discuss the topic with their interviewees, and may or may not choose to appear on screen themselves.

Editing in the interactive mode typically serves to maintain a logical continuity between individual viewpoints (Nichols, 1991, P45). Kilborn and Izod observe that this can be done in several ways.

The editing of pictures and voice tracks (whether separately or together) can be devised either to support or to undermine what participants say, since there is always the possibility that they are not telling the truth; or it can favor the words of some in preference to others. Alternatively, the presenter's words and the images they validate can be deployed to give authority to the documentarian's point of view when it clashes with that of a witness. (Kilborn and Izod, 1997, 70-71)

The Reflexive Documentary

Finally, the reflexive mode, which is the most self-aware mode, arose from a desire by some filmmakers to make the conventions of filmic representation more apparent and to challenge the impression of reality that other modes normally conveyed unproblematically (Kilborn and Izod (1997, 75). This mode grew out of the dissatisfaction of some program makers with existing practices. So while representing the historical or social world, reflexive documentary makers also investigate the ways in which they are showing and talking about it. They do this by drawing attention to the way they address the viewer as well as to the way they deal with the world.

The main development of the reflexive mode occurred in the later 1970s and the 1980s in Britain, Canada and the USA. Lockerbie (1991, 228) remarks that is associated with a movement away from mimesis, realism and towards "formal innovation and experiment". Documentarians working in the reflexive mode tend to target a minority audience and it is often regarded as an experimental approach.

Nichols proclaims that reflexive documentaries address the ethical dilemma of filmic representation in two distinct ways. First, is the issue or subject that the text itself addresses specifically. Second, the text poses an ethical issue for the viewer by emphasizing the degree to which people, or social actors, appear before us as signifiers and functions of the text. Nichols observes that while the interactive mode may draw attention to the process of

filmmaking when this process poses a problem for the participants, the reflexive mode draws attention to this process when it poses problems for viewers (Nichols 1991, 57).

Nichols (1991) suggests that the historical world is a meeting place for the processes of social exchange and representation in the interactive mode, while in the reflexive mode the representation of the historical world becomes itself, the topic of cinematic meditation. Rather than simply hearing the filmmaker's voice along with other social actors in the interactive mode, the filmmaker speaks to us about the process of representation itself in the reflexive mode. Reflexive texts are thus intentionally self-conscious, "not only about form and style, but also about strategy, structure, conventions, expectations, and effect" (Nichols 1991, 56-57).

In conclusion, the various modes discussed are identifiable as a broad set of conventions in documentary making. From its early origins to contemporary times, the manner in which documentary addresses the audience has developed from a singular stylistic mode to a hybrid one. As Kilborn and Izod (1997, 57) point out, today, it is common for documentaries to exhibit elements from more than one mode. Being familiar with the compilation and "voice of god" technique of Chinese documentary during my formative years, this informed my approach to documentary making. So in my project I chose to apply expository mode for constructing the backbone, employing commentary throughout the documentary. However, in order to also engage the viewer in interpreting Di Xiong Yao's story, and how his experiences have affected his art and his attitude to life, I decided to also employ elements of the observational and reflexive modes in order to make the documentary more open and exploratory, to frame it as part of an ongoing conversation about multiculturalism and cultural fusion, rather than an attempt to be the final word.

Reflecting on the contemporary situation for the television documentary in Australia, the following chapter discusses the technological, political and economic factors that weigh on how documentary makers approach their subject, which in conjunction with the aesthetic and structural issues relating to audience address and engagement just discussed, dictate the final form any documentary takes. At the end of this chapter I also evaluate how these matters have influenced my documentary, *Australian Spirit, Chinese Heart*.

CHAPTER 3 External Influences on Documentary Production

A number of external factors beyond the aesthetic and structural choices of documentary makers have also impacted on the documentary form. Developments in film and video technology have inevitably opened up new opportunities for experimentation. Largely dependent on government subsidy or sponsorship for most of its life until recently, documentary's development has also been greatly influenced by political and institutional factors. The following section outlines how each of these has affected the practice of documentary making and what this implies in the contemporary context.

Technological Change and Documentary Production

The documentary filmmaking equipment was relatively clumsy before 1950, as Rabiger (1998, 23) observes, "bulky cameras and huge, power-hungry sound recorders" were all that was available. This limited filmmakers' ability to catch life when it happened, therefore documentarians were restricted to staging, re-enactment and archival footage when making documentary. However, in 1950s and 60s, technological advances changed this and it facilitated new modes of documentary making.

First of all, the development of battery-powered, lightweight 16-mm cameras facilitated the hand-held long take which became much favored in both direct cinema and cinema vérité. The zoom lens made it possible to follow the action while constantly reframing it to record the most informative image Kilborn and Izod (1997, 65). Meanwhile, the development of faster film stocks meant that documentarians could shoot in most environments using only natural light. Furthermore, the invention of magnetic tape for sound recording permitted the manufacture of a relatively small, portable audio recorder. While the 16 mm Éclair camera made handheld sync filming possible. It was Richard Leacock and the Robert Drew group in New York who invented crystal sync technology in 1960, eliminating the need to link the tape recorder and camera with a constricting cable in order to keep sound and picture in sync.

The development of rifle microphones also introduced the ability to select and privilege some sounds over others. The recordist no longer had to bring a massive sound truck to capture the words of people standing in front of fixed microphones. While the difficulties of live recording meant that the quality of both sound and pictures shot in the field would often be rough, yet, it still added the significant “aesthetic of immediacy upon which observational documentary depends”. (Kilborn and Izod 1997, 65-66)

By the beginning of the 1960s these advances transformed every phase of location filming, from news gathering and documentary making to improvised dramatic production as Rabigger (1998) summarizes:

The outcome was a revolution in the relationship between camera and subject. Now truly mobile and flexible, the camera and recorder became observers adapting to life as it unfolded. A handheld unit could be operated by two people and follow wherever the action might lead. The camera became an active observer, and this showed on the screen in the immediacy and unpredictability of the new cinema form. (Rabigger 1998, 24)

Documentary makers have always been imaginative and keen exploiters of technological development. The two very different documentary modes emerging from these technologies in the 1960s were concerned with what was most truthful in the relationship between the camera and subject: direct cinema in America and cinéma-vérité in France. They can be seen as a reaction against studio-based film production constraints with the filmmakers taking advantage of advances in technology to film events on location as they unfolded. (Rabiger, 1998, 25)

Before the advent of digital video technology the cost of professional film making equipment and film stock limited who could enter the field of documentary film making. The advent of consumer camcorders in 1985 and more importantly, the arrival of high-resolution digital video in the early 1990s, lowered the technology barrier for non-professional documentary production, bringing a more “colloquial, personal voice to the form” (Rosenthal and Corner 2005, 4). With digital equipment production and post-production costs have been significantly lowered. Filmmakers can now conceivably shoot and edit a documentary, create the sound and music track, and mix the final cut on a home computer. Furthermore, the professional use of digital equipment has made the “one

person crew” option, (or from my own experience, the one person studio) even more accessible.

Today, the hardware and software for post-production can be installed in a personal computer. Technologies such as DVDs, FireWire connections and non-linear editing software – professional level systems such as Adobe Premiere Pro, Sony Vegas and Apple's Final Cut Pro, and consumer level software such as Apple's Final Cut Express and iMovie - all make documentary making relatively inexpensive.

However, it has been noted that while the means of production may be democratized, finance, distribution, and marketing remain difficult to accomplish outside the traditional system (Rosenthal and Corner 2005, 4-6). Thus many independent filmmakers have relied on film festivals to get their films noticed and sold for distribution. However, the arrival of internet-based video outlets such as YouTube and Veoh are changing the filmmaking landscape, particularly distribution and exhibition, in ways that are still unfolding.

But while technology might seem to be the major driver of change in documentary production, institutions and economics are often the primary definers of when and how that change evolves.

Politics and Documentary Production

Looking back at the history of documentary, it is clear that the styles and formats of documentary production are influenced by political, institutional and economic imperatives as well as by technological innovation, as previously discussed. It has been observed that institutional and economic constraints make it likely that, documentary nowadays will be condemned to a more marginal role or function more for entertainment than serving the social and cultural role once associated with the “golden age” of public service broadcasting (Kilborn and Izod 1997, 165).

In the past, in times of war, social movements, crises or national emergencies, documentarists have been called on to make educational and propaganda films to help governments to educate, to persuade or to impress the people (Lovell and Hillier, 1972,

31-2, 151). Hardy, (1966, 290) argues that documentary film, that engages more deeply through its style and content than newsreel and scenic films, is funded by state institutions because of its fundamental contribution to both government information and public education. Hardy explains that on one hand, documentary film meets the need of government for a colorful and dramatic medium to interpret the information of state; and on the other hand it meets the needs of educators for a colorful and dramatic medium to communicate at all levels. This perfect match between documentary and governmental and civic needs is evident in the propaganda films of the British documentary movement. During the war, documentary propaganda films dealing with controversial subjects required a production license in Britain, which was only available in the government department where the production was made. Thus documentary production was successfully controlled by government during the wartime era.

Hardy argues that the documentary was founded with its roots in the public's need to learn the facts of modern living and in the need of government and industry to provide these. For examples, during the wartime, documentaries like *Target for Tonight* and *Desert Victory* taught the British people how to dig for victory and put out fire bombs (Hardy, 1966, 25).

The impact of politics on Chinese documentary is even more obvious. With a different history and different political constraints, Chu (2005) notes the shift in Chinese documentary: "from dogma to polyphony". Chu sees this as a way of identifying an overall trend from the beginnings of documentary in Mao's era to its diversification in today's China.

Documentary film in China has changed since its beginning in the 1910s to the present, from an imitation of the Western tradition, to a highly authoritarian mode of presentation in the Mao era, and to today's more polyphonic and more 'democratic' and critical style. (Chu, 2005, 14)

Chinese news and documentary films were subject to strict film policies under the official documents of instruction and regulation issued by the Chinese Communist Party, the State Council, the Central Propaganda Department, the Ministry of Culture and the Film Bureau, as well as other related government departments. These policies guide the

selection of film narratives, matters of censorship, planning and production, management in distribution and exhibition, and the creation of suitable cinematic styles. With film regarded as a tool for mass education, film policies were made with the clear purpose of accomplishing national political and economic agendas, so the “visual illustration of political ideology” was the central guideline for news and documentary filmmaking in China (Chu 2005, 54-55).

Compilation documentary is one of the documentary categories impacted and influenced by China’s political policies. Chu (2005, 81) explains that compilation documentaries made of existing footage employing different editing methods have peaked twice historically as a sub-genre of documentary. In early 1960, when China faced serious economic difficulties in the wake of the Great Leap Forward and the subsequent break down of the Sino-Soviet relationship, compilation documentary served the goal of reinforcing Communist belief. Chu (2005, 82-84) examines compilation films of the early 1960s, which used the 1936 footage of the Red Army in Yan’an Shanxi shot by American journalists Edgar Snow and Harry Dunham. A documentary was made in 1963 entitled *Pictures of the Red army, A few Clips of Yan’an Life* (1963), using footage taken by Hong Kong youths in 1938 and by Soviet Union cinematographers in 1939, it is edited with the intent of reassuring the nation that the Communist spirit of self-sufficiency was able to overcome the worst difficulties and that the Party was well placed to lead China through hard times. The second time that compilation documentary flourished was immediately after the Cultural Revolution, when the nation started to critically review what had gone wrong. Such a review was an opportunity to publicly argue for the necessity of economic reform.

After the Party had declared the end of the Cultural Revolution and class struggle in late 1970s, the government was able to begin its compensation process of both financial recompense and political rehabilitation, admitting wrongs committed during the Anti-rightist Movement and the Cultural revolution, a large number of compilation films were produced to respond to this change in the Party’s policies. (Chu, 2005, 82)

Compilation documentaries provided the ideal vehicle for promoting this large-scale reassessment of policy, since existing footage provided all the evidence that could be easily re-shaped by competent editing to serve the new political agenda (Chu 2005, 83).

In the West the economic philosophy of neo liberalism has had a significant impact on documentary making. Neo liberalism refers to a set of libertarian philosophies that endorse the idea that government management of the economy is inefficient and undermines the effective operation of the marketplace. Privatization of the public sector is one of the outcomes of neo-liberalism, so widespread government enthusiasm for neo-liberalism around the world has represented a threat to public service broadcasting (PSBs), one of the primary sites for documentary. Public broadcasters usually receive all or part of their funding from government sources, rather than relying on advertising to the same degree as commercial broadcasters. This means that they are able to air programs that are less commercial in style, such as social documentaries, and educational programs. Public broadcasters usually do not chase ratings in the same way as commercial broadcasters, which can lead to the criticism that they are unresponsive to what their viewers want. However, this also reflects the ability of PSBs explores issues in greater depth and with more complexity than is possible in commercial media obliged to return a dividend to shareholders. PSBs can also present cultural fare that has special value that would not be supported by markets. Neo-liberal policies have made PSBs aware of the importance of audience ratings as a way of proving their public value to secure public funding, but have also affected the kinds of documentaries PSBs invest in and screen.

Television and Documentary Production

The commercial imperative and the radical transformations of the late twentieth-century with the deregulation of broadcasting, meant that documentary filmmakers had to adjust the pace and style of their work to get broadcast. Documentary theorists, Kilborn and Izod (1997, 166) are concerned that documentary's survival will be more dependent on its acquiring the entertainment potential of other television forms.

Before the advent of television there were few sites of exhibition for documentary. Indeed, the lack of an adequate distribution outlet meant that documentary films were struggling economically (Hardy 1966, 34). However, with the coming of television the situation changed quite radically, as the new medium quickly established itself as the

major provider of news and current affairs coverage. Once cinema had lost the sole responsibility for documentary, the genre quickly began to develop along different lines meeting the demands of the new medium. Television appeared in the 1950s and has actually transformed the documentary landscape. Grierson saw television's potential and the tensions it foreshadowed for documentary in 1953:

Television can do all sorts of things on its own, and ably too. It can give an immediate sight of public events. It can provide a living magazine about wonderful places, and things and people. It can give you stage shows of all kinds. But when all is said, it is just another way of presenting films...all over the country...but there isn't a lot of room for producers and directors in the film industry. There can't be. On the competitive level now established films are costly...since television represents the alternative basic economy for filmmakers...I conclude that the future of television in Britain means life or death to a great part of the art of cinema itself... (Quoted in Hardy, 1966, 35-36)

From the above quotation, it is clear that Grierson saw television as a means of continuing the work he had been doing in the cinema, a means of bringing the documentary idea to a new audience, while also appreciating that as a medium for the masses it would be largely used for entertainment.

While Grierson claimed that television opened a new spectrum for documentary, and Bourelly (1993, 49) took the view that, in spite of television's notorious "branding and standing" policies, there will still be windows of opportunity for the one-off creative documentary, nevertheless, others see television's commercial imperatives as making it increasingly difficult to find a slot for any program which does not fit standard expectations regarding duration, form and the demands these make on viewer attention. Kilborn and Izod argue that, historically the documentary has been closely identified with the aspirations of socially concerned filmmakers to provide some form of cultural enlightenment, and this meant that the filmmakers' importance within the broad economy of contemporary broadcasting has been underplayed. They also comment on the increasing internationalization of the media noting that while this "may bring economic benefits", it also tends to drive broadcaster preferences towards "lowest common denominator" programming that has broad, marketable, international appeal (Kilborn and Izod 1997, 175).

Often driven by the economic imperative, documentary nowadays tends to subjugate serious social pursuit to entertainment. “Reality TV” is a derivation of documentary. As a particular visual television form driven by global and economic imperatives, Reality TV “has moved the discussion on from the relationship of technology (video) and cultural form toward the mainstream of factual TV practice in the 1990s” (Dovey, 2000, 78). Reality TV began in the US with NBC’s *Unsolved Mysteries* in 1987, followed closely by imitations and reproduction of the form - CBS’s *Rescue 911*, *Real Life Heroes*, and the Fox version, *Cops* and *America’s Most Wanted*. In the UK the BBC’s *Emergency 999* is widely regarded as a reproduction of the *US 911* format but also promoted its own spin-off - *999 Lifesavers*. Originally started by the BBC in 1984, *Crimewatch* UK has been seen as central to the development of the form. Many of the US-based Reality TV shows were syndicated to terrestrial and satellite channels worldwide (Dovey, 2000, 81) and the format has now changed audience expectations of factual television programming almost everywhere. Dovey (2000, 84) argues that the political economy of the industry including the importance of audience ratings, low production costs, commercial network monopoly and global distribution, are all major contributory factors in the development of Reality TV.

In short, the safe haven that television once seemed to offer documentary has become considerably less secure in the multi channel environment, where the competition for eyeballs means that entertainment is prized above all else. Documentary makers feel the influence of this most keenly when they are seeking funding or endeavoring to get their work distributed.

Documentary Funding: Constraints and Possibility

Although neo-liberalism has had some influence on cultural policy the Australia documentary sector continues to benefit from state and federal government subsidies for film and television and remains largely dependent on these. Screen Australia (SA) funds/ invests in documentaries through three pathways – the domestic door, the international door and the special documentary fund. The most accessible funding for local television documentaries is the co-investment scheme operated by SA in collaboration with the public service

broadcasters whereby SA contributes up to \$200,000 per program (or \$500,000 for a series), a maximum of 50 per cent of budgets for projects accepted for broadcast by the SBS and the ABC, with the latter contributing the remaining 50 per cent (Screen Australia 2008). Under the second pathway, through the international door, SA will invest between 40-50 per cent of the total budget on the condition of a presale agreement with an international sales agent, distributor or broadcaster. Like the other two pathways, the Special Documentary Fund, the third pathway, is intended for established documentary makers offering them a chance to be innovative with a budget of \$150,000 to \$200,000, free from any requirements for a market attachment. In addition to these three main funding routes there are others more likely to be followed by emergent filmmakers like myself. Development funding, which is generally for far smaller amounts, is more likely to be granted to first time filmmakers and is often used for production as well. Development funding for documentary is offered by both the federal agency, SA and by the various state agencies: NSW Film and Television Office (NTO), Film Victoria, Screen West in Western Australia and QPIX in Queensland. Nowadays it is relatively easy to find what funding is available by visiting the websites of these agencies.

Another way in which cultural policy has helped the documentary sector in Australia is through the Australian Content Standard, which aims to protect local content on free to air television. The Australian Television Content Standard (ATCS) requires that 55 per cent of the programming screened on free to air broadcasters between 6.00 pm and midnight should be locally made. In addition to this prime time quota, the ATCS also sets minimum hours for specific genres that are regarded as having special importance for the reflection of national identity and diversity – drama, documentary and children’s programming (ACMA 2008). The implementation of the ATCS is the responsibility of the communications regulator, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), which publishes the relevant figures annually. The ATCS does not currently apply to the PSBs , the ABC and the SBS, because their charters are regarded as guides for their managers regarding local programming. The Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) supports and screens documentaries that fulfill the principal functions and duties stated in its charter:

The principal function of SBS is to provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australian and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society. SBS, in performing its principal function, must: a) contribute to meeting the communications needs of Australia's multicultural society, including ethnic, Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander communities; and, b) increase awareness of the contribution of a diversity of cultures to continuing development of Australian society; and ...c) make use of Australia's diverse creative resources; and...h) contribute to extending the range of Australian television and radio services, and reflect the changing nature of Australian society, by presenting many points of view and using innovative forms of expression. (SBS, 2008)

However, increasingly, the criteria applied by state and federal funding agencies and by the public service broadcasters, value marketability alongside topic relevance and public interest, because as investors, these agencies are now expected to generate as much return on their investment as possible. This means that in addition to winning and engaging a large national audience there is now an expectation for overseas sales for any documentaries screened.

As an emergent documentary maker and a postgraduate student, I found myself excluded from most official documentary funding sources, even though my project - *Australian Spirit, Chinese Heart* – meets a key criterion of government agencies in reflecting Australia's cultural diversity. Nevertheless, like many first time documentary makers I identified other funding possibilities. I contacted organizations in the Chinese community and got support from the chairman of the Chinese International Art Festival committee; I successfully applied for a postgraduate research grant at La Trobe University; I contacted the civil council of the artist's hometown back in China and subsequently secured sponsorship from the Yili City council in Sinqiang province, as well as financial assistance from other private sector ventures in China. This approach, combining a number of small grants is a tried and true one and typical of the way that documentaries have been funded in the United States. Michael Moore funded his first film, *Roger and Me* through bingo evenings. The benefits of this method of funding are that it generally leaves the filmmaker free to follow his or her own creative direction, although of course the needs of the exhibitor or broadcaster still have to be considered if the documentary is to reach an audience.

Documentary Distribution difficulties and Possibilities

The traditional distribution channels for documentary are cinema release and television broadcast. Until the last decade feature length documentaries were relatively rare, and documentary practitioners of the television era have generally sought to meet the demands of broadcasters and the mainstream mass audience. However, now all broadcasters appear to prefer docu-soaps, reality-based series and factual programming over traditional social documentary, because the latter bring better audience ratings. Documentary practitioners have to keep dealing with constant changes with regards to preferred formats and strands and perceived audience demographics. There is a widespread feeling, rightly or wrongly, that the public broadcasters have downgraded the importance of Australian documentary in their schedules. The average weekly time-slots available for documentary content are only 9.5 hours on SBS TV in October, 2008. Noticeably, among these 9.5 hours of documentary content, one hour was allocated to Australian local productions.

For an entry level documentary practitioner without a presale contract from a broadcaster it is extremely hard to get access to the ABC or SBS, therefore I need to consider other possibilities of distribution for my completed documentary. As well as approaching the ABC and SBS – who both have strands into which my documentary would comfortably fit – I have identified several other options: subscription television, online distribution, public gallery exhibition, documentary festival submission and DVD release.

Pay TV channels are considered a “second market” which “hunger” for documentary and provide significantly more slots than in the “first market” – commercial and public broadcasters. The pay TV service, FOXTEL includes more than 100 channels among them: the *History Channel*, the *Biography Channel*, the *Lifestyle Channel*, the *Discovery Channel*, the *National Geography Channel*. Thus there is a big demand for documentary programs, even though purchasers pay significantly lower rates per hour than free to air broadcasters (AFC, 2004).

Online distribution also poses an exciting and flourishing future for documentary. Many people now have access to audiovisual media via broadband Internet connection, and producers can upload and release their video content for user downloading through social networking sites like YouTube and MySpace. These networks are having a remarkable impact on filmmaking because there are now over one billion people on the net (Ngai, Venn & Lee etc. 2007). Online film/video distribution does not require making the entire film available for downloading, but does create an environment for audience feedback, through online forums and user reviews.

I plan to create my own website for the documentary and to convert a short version of the documentary into a Quicktime file format for preview, which I hope will lead to online sales of the DVD. While the number of actual sales may be limited, online distribution of this kind will help to promote the film and assist the career development of everyone who participated in the film. I am also planning to arrange a public screening to accompany an exhibition of the artist's work, to promote him and the Chinese art form to the public, and will submit the documentary to relevant festivals, here and abroad.



PART THREE
MAKING THE DOCUMENTARY

CHAPTER 4 The Production Process

I believe that documentary can lead to a new understanding of social issues and offer profound insight into human lived experience, inspiring through the representation of personal stories of triumph, thereby entertaining and educating. Essentially, documentary to me is interactive in the way that the form invites viewers to explore and understand the living world. Viewers are not just told and shown but are also invited to think, understand and react as part of the viewing process. It was partly my interest in the process of documentary making that inspired me to become involved in documentary production.

As noted in the introduction, my interest in learning about documentary was strengthened when I came to Australia. I chose to major in the video production stream within the field of the Media Studies at university. Moreover, since early 2005 I have been presenting and producing television segments for the Chinese language program on the community television broadcaster, Channel 31, making community news program and personal profile programs. This gave me experience in many roles - camera operation, directing, interviewing and editing.

When I chose the topic for my creative thesis I decided to make a television documentary about an artist I had met in Australia. His career achievements and his life in Australia evoke various aspects of our multicultural society that tend to be neglected and were, I thought, worthy of some reflection. The following section reviews the three stages of the production process and also provides a critical evaluation of the finished documentary.

From Idea to Concept

When I first met Di Xiong Yao during location filming for the Chinese community program for the celebration of the Chinese Spring Festival at the Chinese Museum in Melbourne's Chinatown, I was amazed by his vivid and vigorous horse painting which he accomplished in the traditional way of Chinese brush stroke painting. During the interview that I did with him, I was told that he had finished two scroll paintings, 63 and 100 meters long which integrated Western and Chinese painting traditions. Later, when I was invited to see these two works, I was moved deeply by the scenes in the painting which depict Australian landscapes, animals, plants and Aborigines. The 100 meter-long scroll painting, *Soul of Australia*, is an epic paean to the way the Aborigines lived in harmony with nature prior to European settlement. I was fascinated by the artist's passion and devotion, which is evident in his paintings as well as by his vivid imagination which is reflected in the rich colors he uses. On further acquaintance I realized that Di Xiong Yao's family background and career path as an artist were also very interesting. The impulse to show not only the scope of his artistic talent but also to tell the unusual and moving story behind the way that he paints and the topics he chooses, became stronger and stronger until I determined that I must do it.

In making this documentary I have endeavored to inspire people who love the arts and are interested in different cultures. My documentary subject, Di Xiong Yao, is an artist whose mother is Russian and father is Chinese. Yao lived through the Chinese Cultural Revolution and came to Australia as a refugee in 1981. He has experienced many different cultural influences throughout his life, and this is reflected in his art works. He now sees himself as a role model for bi-cultural artists living in Australia. The documentary has three parts or acts. In the first part of the documentary, I introduce Yao and review his artistic career path when he was in China, going on to show why and how he combines Chinese ink wash painting and Western watercolor painting genres together in his art. Secondly, I relate how he came to produce his remarkable work, the one

hundred metre-long painting, *The Soul of Australia*, and scroll painting, *Two Thousand Kangaroos*.

Finally I accompany Di Xiong Yao to China as he reacquaints himself with his homeland in Singiang province, and returns to his first love, Chinese horse painting. This third act reveals how Yao balances his bi-cultural identity and reflects on the complexities, tensions and cultural nuances inherent in multicultural society.

Once I had defined the topic for my documentary, a creative thesis for the Master of Arts (Media) at A Trobe University, I wrote a proposal to present the basic ideas (See appendix 1 – Documentary Proposal)

Because my documentary involved human participants I was obliged to apply for ethics approval from the Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Humanities and Social sciences which wants to make sure that all human participants in research projects obtain appropriate and sufficient information about their participation prior to giving their consent. While this kind of process is a standard academic requirement it is unusual in the audio-visual production industry where the consent form is often called a “release form” and generally regarded as protection for the filmmaker (from later litigation from the participant) rather than protection for the participant. In addition to an English version of the Information and Consent Form required and approved by the Humanities Faculty Ethnics Committee, I also had to prepare one in Mandarin for the main subject, the artist Di Xiong Yao, who does not speak English (See appendix 2 & 3 – Information and Consent Form).

Preproduction

When I started to consider the practicalities of the project I realized there were a number of questions to answer; in what way would this documentary have audience appeal; where would it be likely to be exhibited; and what structural and stylistic approaches should I take? Taking on the roles of producer and writer-director, I began to seek answers to these

questions by working through the various steps of the preproduction stage, defined below by Rabiger:

The production period is that which covers all the decisions and arrangements prior to shooting. For a documentary, this includes choosing a subject; doing the research; assembling a crew; choosing what equipment will be necessary; and deciding the method, details, and timetable of shooting. (Rabiger, 1998, 113)

The following section outlines the various stages of preproduction and how I dealt with them, describing in detail the issues and decisions that influenced the way in which my project evolved from its original proposal form.

Research

The chosen subject of my documentary, the Australian-Chinese artist, Di Xiong Yao, created two extensive mural paintings in the traditional Chinese scroll form, depicting the Australian landscape and its indigenous people and animals. The hybrid aesthetic style of these paintings is unique and I find their representation of a Chinese perspective on Australia as an exotic land to be very powerful and emotionally moving. I knew from the start that these two paintings would be the strongest feature of the documentary so I needed to research various fields – Australia history and art, Aborigines and Chinese painting techniques. I researched these subjects in some depth over a period of some months. At the same time I was also reflecting on what kind of stylistic approach I should take, for this was both an “art” documentary – which invokes an abstract poetic treatment – and a “story” of the artist’s personal journey – which implies a narrative structure that could be either observational or expository in style. According to Rosenthal (2002, 50) the documentary researcher, needs to combine the penetrating “brazenness” of the good journalist with the “painstaking attention” to detail of the Ph.D. candidate and thus “must be observer, analyst, student, and note taker”. Following this advice I set out to become an expert on the subjects encompassed by my documentary, which was not always easy but was always interesting, and often exciting.

There are four separate parts to my research for this documentary. First, in pursuing my goal of becoming an expert in the various fields to be covered, I did a lot of print research

– reading books, magazines and newspapers – to gain a broad understanding of a number of topics: the Chinese Cultural Revolution; Australia’s multicultural policies; the painting traditions and techniques of both China and West; Aboriginal art and history; the response of critics and the public to Yao’s two scroll paintings at various exhibitions in Australia and abroad; and Yao’s own artistic philosophy and life story in China and Australia.

Secondly, in order to get visual references for the story telling in the documentary, I searched through the artist’s collection of family albums, picture folders of himself, collections of awards certificates, medals and trophies, and old footage of his exhibitions shot by other people and television stations. This visual archive research used a lot of my time and consumed much of my energy. The artist has a very comprehensive collection of memorabilia, which sometimes distracted me from the main theme and got me off the track from the central point of the documentary. I had to think through the project very carefully and constantly had to filter out many interesting but ultimately distracting aspects of his life that did serve the purpose of my documentary.

Thirdly, I thought about what I needed in terms of other participants - experts in various fields - for interviewing for the documentary. After some reflection I decided that I needed at least four interviewees: someone to speak on how Aboriginals might view Yao’s representations of them; someone to speak about Yao’s work from the perspective of an Anglo-Australian with expertise in the art world; and someone to speak about Yao’s work from the perspective of Chinese person with knowledge of Australia; and someone to speak about how Yao’s work was received at the time of his major exhibitions several decades earlier. I then assessed their potential value to the documentary and their willingness to be included in the film. This involved talking with them by phone or emails, and then selectively inviting them to participate in the documentary and sending them interviewing consent forms.

I knew that the topics and style of Yao’s scroll paintings could be a sensitive matter for indigenous people and that Yao’s representation of the Aboriginal way of living prior to white settlement might be deemed politically incorrect and be seen to be stereotyping

Aboriginal people. However, I also knew that Di Xiong Yao had a very good relationship with the Aboriginal people he had painted and that he admired the relationship they had with the land and certainly had not intended to demean them in any way. So I was very pleased to meet the Aboriginal Studies academic, Julie Andrews, who I believe brings a refreshing and enthusiastic interpretation to this aspect of Di Xiong Yao's work. I next undertook background research to identify a suitable interviewee to represent the Anglo-Australian perspective on Di Xiong Yao's paintings, and was fortunately put in touch with Philippa Kelly, a former editor of the arts journal, *Art Monthly Australia*, who had lived for many years in Hong Kong and was familiar with Chinese painting techniques and able to appreciate the skill with which Yao had integrated the two painting traditions. When it came to locating someone to offer the Chinese-Australian perspective the Chinese Consul General, Shu Gen Liang, a collector of Di Xiong Yao's work was an easy choice and I was very grateful that he made time for the interview, which I think will have particular impact for the Chinese audience for the documentary. Yao himself suggested the fourth interviewee, Race Mathews, the former Victorian State Minister of Art, whose recollection of the opening of Di Xiong Yao's exhibition in Melbourne was particularly useful in validating its impact. However, I think all of these interviewees are very important in making the documentary authoritative and for giving it wider relevance.

Finally, I undertook location research, sometimes with and sometimes without the artist, in order to identify suitable locations and venues for filming. I decided to film both in Australia and Di Xiong Yao's hometown in China. In Australia, in order to cover the process by which Yao accomplished his two major Australian artworks, I decided to film in the Grampians Brambuk Aboriginal Center, the National Gallery of Victoria, and at Hanging Rock National Park in Victoria. For the China shoot I planned a lot of location filming to both enrich the coverage related to Yao's back-story and to convey to the audience the various ways in which he keeps his national and cultural identity alive, the contemporary story that is told largely in a reflexive-observational style. (Please see appendix 4 – shooting Schedule)

Writing the documentary proposal and the treatment

My proposal served as a working hypothesis, representing my perspective on various aspects of the subject, and their dramatic possibilities. It certainly helped to prepare me for directing the film, and for identifying material that was designed to say something instead of just blindly going out and filming stuff that I hoped could be hammered into shape during editing. When developing the proposal, I paid a lot of attention to how I would tell the story; outlining the central characters of the film; and identifying material that would provide some kind of climax and also thinking through how the film might end. When writing the proposal, I needed to make final decisions on the approach, style and structure, the main elements that shape the film into “a logical and emotional whole” which are needed to engage the audience (Rosenthal, 2002, 59). With this documentary, I was not going to simply illustrate the art techniques and theories; rather, I want to tell something that would interest art lovers as well as story lovers.

The artist, Di Xiong Yao is the central figure of this documentary but I have also included myself and my voice in the film because I wanted it to be self-reflexive, to reveal the process of filmmaking and not to pretend that there was no camera crew present. Yao frequently comments to me through the camera which I am operating and I believe that this gives the film life, a sparkle offering an interesting and more immediate perspective. This reflexive repartee, albeit in Mandarin, also helps to redress the potential distancing arising from Yao not being a fluent English speaker – his comments appear as subtitles. I feel this reflexive approach will engage viewers more directly in the world of the documentary.

Some viewers might have an impression that documentary filmmaking lacks a clear structure like fiction and feature filmmaking, however, I agree with Rosenthal (2002, 63), that “just as every good book and play needs a structure, so, too, does the documentary film...It should present an interesting, well-shaped story, with pacing and rhythm that lead to a satisfying resolution”. Following this advice I decided to try to follow the classic three act structure when writing the treatment. After introducing Di Xiong Yao as a

Melbourne based, Australian-Chinese artist, the documentary's first part moves to Yao's hometown in China, showing the people, horses and Yili River that Yao calls the "mother river", with both Yao's voice and my own heard on the sound track. This first act recounts Di Xiong Yao's family background and how his passion for painting began. The second part begins with Yao standing, silhouetted beside the Yili River and then moves, drawing viewers in to Di Xiong Yao's life in Australia and relating how he came to paint his two amazing murals. The final act takes viewers from Yao's studio in Melbourne to his hometown again, where he returns to his life-long artistic passion – painting horses. The documentary ends with Yao beside the Yili River, amongst friends from his hometown who dance and sing together. I developed this structure, China-Australia-China, with a timeline that shifts from present to past to present, to help viewers understand Di Xiong Yao's past and contemporary work, and to aid their engagement and reflection on the personal challenges of being bi-cultural.

In terms of style, as related in parts one and two of this exegesis, there is no standard approach for documentaries. In order to best serve the topic and to engage the viewer's attention and interest, I decided to combine different modes from Bill Nichols' typology. Thus my documentary integrates the expository, observational, interactive and reflexive mode at various times and in various ways, as the topic and structure require.

When I was writing the treatment for the documentary I often found myself being pulled in different directions by the variety of possibilities that I had identified. Rosenthal (2002, 94) observes that the most common problem is "trying to decide whether to proceed chronologically, intellectually, or spatially". I found this to be very true. I became confused about whether the documentary should follow the chronological progression of Di Xiong Yao's lifetime or offer an essay on Di Xiong Yao's artistic works. This documentary is about art, about the artist, and about the migrant experience, and each of these three aspects covers a broad spectrum. Di Xiong Yao's painting had gained lots of international awards and had been well reported on by the media. However, when I looked at Di Xiong Yao's artworks, there are too many elements and techniques

embodied for me to cover them all. If I went too deep to explain it all to audience, it would be too dry. The audience might get bored because these specific artistic and technical fields are very specialized. When I spent time with Di Xiong Yao, I found that I was most enthralled by the stories he told about his life journey as a migrant artist. If I found this interesting so too might a general audience; because Australia is a country with many migrants, Di Xiong Yao's migrant experience would arouse echoes amongst audience members who share that experience. So, when writing the treatment, I chose to add more color to the documentary by including Di Xiong Yao's stories about his past life, rather than just focusing on his art. (See appendix 5)

Shooting plan

According to the treatment, I needed to preplan the shooting schedule (see appendix No.7) because my documentary covers public and private location shooting – city views inside the National Gallery of Victoria, and filming in China and rural Australia. In order to secure my shooting plans, I sought permission before I went onto any location to film. I was a bit concerned about the location filming in China. The area we went to, Di Xiong Yao's hometown in North-western China, is an Autonomous Region for different Chinese ethnic groups, about whom the Chinese government is very sensitive. I thought it likely that a foreign film crew would have difficulty in getting a permit. Fortunately, Di Xiong Yao has a very good reputation in China and a good relationship with the local council and he helped me to get authority for my shooting schedule through his local contacts. The local council was proud of Di Xiong Yao's artistic achievement and saw our visit as a cultural exchange. They were happy to provide transport and hospitality to us and even assigned a cameraman from the local television station to help, so our location shooting in China was very smooth.

Budget planning

When the treatment was done, I started to work on the budgeting plan costing the equipment and other needs of the project, and I realized that my funds would not go very

far. Fortunately, apart from the airfares, the China shooting was relatively inexpensive. As I mentioned earlier, being multi-skilled was also a cost saving. My past experience in television production at Channel 31, where I had often directed, presented and edited my own shows, enabled me to do much of the shooting and all of the editing for the documentary myself. I must say thanks to the new digital video technology because documentary filmmaking with a high definition (HD) camcorder along with non-linear digital editing makes the production much more affordable and time efficient than the older methods. Without this technology documentary making would still be a dream for me.

Production

In addition to having a good story and being able to persuade others to participate, a documentary director needs technical knowledge and skills. The director needs to understand camera movement, and the different ways in which pans, tilts, crabs, tracks and dollies affect meaning for the viewer along with the impact of various different shot sizes and compositions. The director also needs to understand a number of other screen craft matters including: continuity, which is important for maintaining correct screen direction between shots and for linking sequences; cutaways, which are shots that help to condense time and shift point-of-view in a sequence that might otherwise have a problem with screen directions; shot impact, which can stimulate and intensify the viewer's emotion; and lenses, which can adjust depth, angle and focus of shots. It is only when a documentary director understands all of these technical matters that he or she can really be in command during the shooting (Rosenthal, 2002, 165). In addition to technical knowledge, the documentary director must have a vision and an attitude appropriate to the documentary genre. Even though many documentaries can be written, set up, and shot as if they were features, other documentaries require an entirely different "mindset and mode" of work. This is because many documentaries have no script being about life as it unfolds in front of the camera, which cannot be planned for in advance.

Having acquired an understanding of these matters during my years as a reporter and presenter with the Chinese program team at Channel 31 I did feel in control and

succeeded in getting the shots that I wanted. My experience and knowledge of camera operation definitely helped here. My knowledge of camera operation has also been enhanced by my interest in photography, which I have studied and practiced with a single lens reflex camera, and through which I have come to understand how different effects can be produced with different lens types. Being concerned about whether the quality of some shots would accommodate my chosen aesthetic for the documentary, I directed the cameraman, when I was not shooting myself, detailing how I wanted the shots to look. Sometimes I found it best to get a shot myself to obtain a special quality that I wanted.

I began with a very clear concept of what my documentary was about and the ideas I wanted to explore. First of all, I aimed to appraise how Australian multicultural society enables and enriches the artist's creativity; secondly, I wanted to demonstrate how this artist combines art forms from different cultural traditions; finally, I wanted to use Yao's story to show how migrants both maintain and reinvent their cultural identities. My three act story structure - moving location from China to Australia to China – was devised to serve these goals.

The aesthetic style was also very important in my mind when I decided on this documentary topic. I have been very influenced by the expository mode of documentary of the type that John Grierson and his followers developed. As discussed in Part One it is also a style common in Chinese documentary and one to which I am accustomed, and which I know will meet the expectations of Chinese audiences. Thus this was the obvious mode or style for my documentary but I also wanted to integrate several other modes, using them occasionally throughout the film, to take advantage of their various strengths: the immediacy of the observational mode during Yao's visit to his old school; the collaborative integrity of the interactive mode in his meetings with friends in Yili – his hometown, including the lunchtime banquet in which his friends spontaneously join him in song, and the transparency of the reflexive mode in my interviews with Yao in his studio. Because the art and the artist are the major subjects of the documentary, I also decided to integrate what I think of as a poetic visual style. On many occasions I preferred

to use fixed, carefully composed shots, recorded from the tripod, and to light for atmospheric effect, as needed.

My location filming schedule was made at the preproduction stage, yet the subject matter to be filmed was divided into two sections, pre-planned and spontaneous. With the pre-planned scenes I was able to outline exactly what was to be shot, which included: the location shooting of Yao visiting the National Gallery of Victoria; Yao's outdoor sketching activities; Yao exercising in the park; the interviews; Yao's visit to his old school in Yili; and Yao's exhibition in China. This type of location filming is not so difficult because what needed to be shot was pre-planned clearly.

However, the spontaneous scenes were more difficult because actions and events cannot be foreseen and the situation was constantly changing. When Yao and my crew visited his friends and participated in several local events, I chose to mix the observational and reflexive modes for filming this final act. Here I had to quickly decide what shots I needed because it was an unplanned filming environment. For example, when the artist stood at the Yili River Bridge in the evening to watch the wedding of a Uigur couple with their family at the bridge, I quickly saw the opportunity and asked the cameraman to get some shots of the wedding couple and their party; similarly when the artist had a chance encounter with friends of his mother I alerted the cameraman to film their greetings because I knew spontaneous moments like these would help to enrich Yao's story. Shooting situations such as these does not demand any special skill so much as the intelligence to shoot the right thing at the right time. Once the moment is gone, it is impossible to re-capture it with the same authenticity.

The relationship between the director and the cameraman is crucial in filming because some cameramen may be agreeable at the beginning and then refuse to take directions on location (Rosenthal 2002, 171). Luckily, a good friend of mine, a former classmate from the university, Christian Stranger, who is experienced in camera-operation was interested in my documentary and keen to travel to China to experience a different culture, so we teamed up together for the filming. Before we started filming, I discussed with him how I

envisaged certain scenes before setting these ideas in concrete in the shooting script. In order to avoid any conflicts, I made it clear during these early discussions that while I was happy for him to recommend ideas for shots, as the director I retained the final judgment. I would confirm shots in the monitor and as mentioned earlier sometimes directed him on the framing when this was crucial. From time to time we would discuss a shot in great detail to ensure it concurred with my vision for the documentary. Sometimes we had differences of opinion. On one occasion, during the filming of a scene where the artist walks by the river and sits down to sketch, Christian suggested handheld shots with the camera at a low angle following the artist's footsteps along a river before he sat down. I felt this would not work well in my documentary because the shaky tracking shots would evoke terror of the kind associated with the thriller genre, creating suspicion in the viewer's mind, which was not conducive to the kind of documentary I had planned. So this technique was not used.

During the China shoot time was critical and I had to make it very clear what shots were and were not required for the documentary. On one occasion Christian was very excited when we were filming in a local market at Urumqi - the artist's hometown in China – and did a lot of shooting because it all looked very interesting to his Western eyes. However, because some of these shots did not stand by themselves and would have to be edited into a sequence and because some were even unusable or irrelevant, they would not have warranted the time required in the reviewing and selecting during editing, as I explained to Christian, my camera operator, on that occasion.

Directing the interviews

Before the shooting started, as detailed earlier, I lined up a list of potential interviewees who I believed would give my documentary greater authority and a broader perspective. When planning the China shoot I realized that I also needed someone who was familiar with Di Xiong Yao's background to talk about how he had learned to paint. As noted earlier my other interviewees included: Philippa Kelly, an authority on the arts in Australia and in China who could comment on Yao's major art work from a professional

point of view; the Chinese Consul General in Melbourne, who could comment on the cultural and social significance of Di Xiong Yao's art; and the Aboriginal studies academic, Julie Andrews, who could comment from an Aboriginal perspective, on how the artist had represented Aboriginals in his epic scroll paintings. I arrived at this list of interviewees after careful consideration, following talks with the artist Yao and my supervisor. When each interviewee agreed to participate I sent him/her a consent form as approved under La Trobe University human research ethics procedures, along with a brief introduction of the artist and his major art works, and an interview questionnaire. The ethics consent form allowed the interviewee to set conditions on how their comments were to be used and gave them the opportunity to veto parts if they wished. Fortunately, after speaking to me and reading the information sheet, all of my interviewees were happy to sign the ethics form giving me full rights to use the recordings I took of their interviews.

At the interview filming stage, I had two concerns: the first was where to do the interview and the second was how to direct the interview. I selected the filming location by asking myself three questions in accordance with Rosenthal's advice:

Will the background add to the mood and drama of the story? Will the interviewee feel at ease in the location, with the possibility of numbers of people around to interfere and distract? And is there any situation of the background being so strong that it distracts from the interview? (Rosenthal 2002, 177)

Many of my interviewees preferred to be interviewed at their home or place of work where they felt totally at ease in the familiar surroundings. However, I chose outdoor locations in some cases in order to enliven and enrich the visual content of the footage. For example, I chose Di Xiong Yao's little backyard and nearby parkland to interview him about his lifestyle.

In directing the interview, Rabiger (1998, 183) suggests there are two basic set-up possibilities: position one is when the interviewee looks, or appears to look, directly into the camera, which adds a certain authority to the interview, with the interviewee making direct contact with the viewer; position two is the oblique angle, which relaxes the quality of the interview, making the interview less authoritarian and more informal and friendly.

Rosenthal (2002, 178) offers the third position of two person interview, which is used mostly for news or when a documentary series is being conducted by a famous host. The two-person set-up is also used when you are deliberately aiming at or expect a confrontation. I chose the first position standing close to the camera so that the interviewee appears to be talking to the audience. However, I also sometimes chose to appear in the shot when doing the interview because I wanted to include myself as Yao's interviewer to make the documentary more relaxed and honest. This interview style, one that Rosenthal doesn't include, has become well established since his book was written, particularly through the documentaries of Roger Moore and Nick Broomfield (Dovey 2000). For example, when I interviewed Di Xiong Yao about how he composed the 100 meter long scroll painting, *Soul of Australia*, he talked naturally with hand signs when I stood next to him and appeared in the shot; I also walked side by side with him asking questions when we visited the local market in his hometown. This interview style is honest and adds fun and makes sense of the filmmaking process. This filming style also seemed more appropriate because Yao does not speak English and had to be subtitled, which saps the power of his personality to some extent. Thus the inclusion of his body language in shots in conversation with me helps to give a fuller portrait of the artist's personality.

Rosenthal (2002, 181) also emphasizes that before the interview starts, the director has to decide whether the questions will be heard after editing. If the questions are to be cut out the director must ensure that the interviewee gives the statements that are complete in themselves. For example, when I interviewed La Trobe lecturer in Aboriginal Studies, Julie Andrew, I asked, "What do you think of Yao's painting?" She answered, "His painting is telling a story... ", omitting the introductory phrase that I would need for the answer to make sense by itself without the question.. So I asked her to respond with a "self-contained" answer.

Postproduction

Shooting merely provides the raw materials for the film; however, the real building process takes place during post-production which is generally supervised for the most part

by the editor. While most documentary directors are also likely to be the writer and to be competent editors, Rosenthal suggests that there are two reasons for having an editor: the shooting process usually exhausts directors before they even begin editing, which is itself an arduous task; and because editing needs a fresh eye which the director lacks. It is said that the director is likely to “fall in love with material regardless of its worth” whereas the editor, who sees only what is on the screen, is usually a better judge of the value of shot. An independent editor is also likely to see new and different ways of using the material (Rosenthal, 2002, 199). Although I agree with much of Rosenthal’s arguments here budgetary constraints meant that I had to work as director, writer and editor. After the shooting stage I did take a long break to overcome my fatigue and refresh my mind so that I could devote myself to all the tasks of postproduction.

Editing in the past was more complicated than it is now with digital cameras and nonlinear editing. Since the arrival of the Avid computer editing system in the 1980s, other companies such as Adobe Premier, Media 100, and Final Cut Pro have come along, offering nonlinear editing operation systems that are relatively simple. All the sound, music, effects, and narration can be digitized and stored ready for editing and mixing. This is because the system allows an incredible facility for integrating all sorts of combinations of picture and sound. This new technology enables me to fulfill my desire to make documentaries of my own at an affordable cost. The editing stage of my documentary involved the following procedures: the rushes; the editing script and the editing process which includes the assembly cut, the rough cut and the final cut; and finally, the recording of narration and the final sound mix. The decisions and crafting involved in each of these are discussed in more detail below.

The rushes

The term “rushes” is one that originates from film technology and refers to the first viewing of unedited footage; it represents the first step in the editing process. I shot 35 tapes in total which is equal to 35 hours of footage. I dubbed the video tapes onto VHS which helped to make sure that the mother tapes would not be damaged through multiple

viewings. Also, I generated time coding when dubbing in order to give myself accurate cue points for finding shots later in the edit suite. I viewed all the footage in order to choose the most valuable shots according to the treatment. I prepared different log books under different titles for future use. For examples, my video log was set out as follow:

Video Tape Source			
Reel 6			
#1	Sc.5	00:10:00-00:15:00	Australian costal scenery
#2	Sc.6	00:20:00-00:30:00	Yao sitting walking at the beach

I also set up logs of stills, archive materials, and music and sound. Logging does involve a lot of time-consuming effort, but it is worthwhile when you go into editing. Viewing the rushes helped me to pick up on scenes that I had not thought of but which bring special qualities to the documentary. For example, we shot some scenery along the Old Silk Road area, which I did not intend to use in the documentary. We shot it because we were excited by its beauty. However, watching the rushes, I found these scenes allowed the viewer space to move naturally into the film. The inclusion of the Old Silk Road landscape helps to lead the viewer into things that have gone before.

The editing script and assembly cut

The editing script is a guide for the editor during editing and is generally very detailed but because I was editing the documentary myself, my editing script was quite simple. After viewing the rushes and readjusting my vision of the documentary, I wrote the editing script and the commentary, which gives me clearer written directions for editing. Meanwhile, I transcribed all interviews, which helped me to decide what parts I should use and where they should go in the documentary.

The assembly cut is the first assembly of the rushes. The editor takes the best material, the best shots, and puts them roughly in order according to the script. At this stage, the editing gives a very loose sense of the whole film, whether it is organized well and whether the structure works (Rosenthal, 2002, 208). Once I had completed the editing script and had the interview transcripts ready, I put all the raw segments that I intended to use in the documentary into the first raw assembly cut.

The rough cut and the fine cut

The real work of editing began when I started working on the rough cut and fine cut. During this editing stage, I had to pay a lot of attention to the structure, climaxes, pace and rhythm, which helped to make the sequences work well together. In my editing, I endeavored to follow the three act structure, China-Australia-China, which was the ground plan for the film's development. I also paid much attention to the pace because I wanted to avoid the possibility of "overloading" materials. During the scripting stages, I was full of ideas for how to construct the film which looked fine on paper, but during editing, I found I had too many. I realize that viewers might not be able to absorb so much information, so I had to drop a few scenes. Meanwhile, I began to pay attention to the rhythm within the sequences. I specially kept an eye on duration. For example, I integrated footage of Di Xiong Yao's hometown using the landscape and the people to create a background sequence about where Yao is from. I had so many beautiful shots and I was reluctant to abandon them, however, in the end I realized many were irrelevant for the documentary, so I shortened the sequence.

As the rough cut proceeded, I tried to use commentary as a general guide tract for the picture editing which I thought helped established the logic of the film and the flow and length of the shots. I read the commentary to the edited pictures to adjust the length of the sequences to meet the needs of the story. I also applied different music and folk songs to my documentary. Most of the music sound track was written and recorded for the documentary. For example, the opening didgeridoo and guitar tracks were composed by the musicians who I know who agreed to be part of the documentary project. The Kazakhstan folk songs were recorded when we were shooting at the artist's hometown and the singers agreed to let us use their singing for the documentary.

When the rough cut was done, I invited different people who are from different backgrounds to preview the documentary. By doing this I wanted to get the reactions of the intended audience to get feedback, which would be tremendously helpful to me, enabling me to see where the mistakes were and to guide the film closer to my vision for

it. However, I would listen to comments selectively because some of them were meaningless and even destructive.

Since my final version is fifty-two-minute film for television, I tried to keep my rough cut no longer than sixty-five minutes with which allowed me ample scope to trim and refine at the fine cut stages. Three elements dominated during the fine cut stage: narration, music and effects. I needed to finalised commentary, music and sound effects. For example I needed to be careful of how I presented stills in the film, whether or not to use a fade-in, fade-out effect. Should I pan or tilt with the stills? Should I keep the full color or grayscale of the stills? Even though I seemed to spent a tremendous amount of time and energy on the commentary and effects, I did appreciate that the digital technology of the nonlinear editing suite made it much easier for me enabling me to easily change, swap or weed out shots or sounds as I thought necessary.

Finishing the film

Narration script, voiceover and soundtracks

Once I finished picture editing, I started to deal with the sound mix. There are five sound tracks in my editing project: one narration track, two sync tracks and two music tracks. With the narration track, I had to make sure that the words hit at exactly the right spot, so sometimes I did this by making small changes to the pictures and other times I had to lengthen the narration by adding pauses between words or phrases or by shortening the narration by taking out extraneous words. Also, I had to be careful about how much text I actually needed in my documentary. For example, my supervisor reminded me that I should leave some space without verbal explanation or commentary to allow viewers some thinking time and space to interpret because this helps the film to breathe.

I have different roles as a producer, a director, and a good friend of the artist in the documentary. I appeared in some shots as an interviewer or a companion of the artist during the journey back in China, integrating the observational mode into the documentary. In order to acknowledge to the audience that the documentary is produced

through my observational and selective eyes, that reflecting my thoughts about the artist and his work, I decided to do the voiceover by myself to make it consistent. Although my supervisor helped me with the English pronunciation because English is not my mother tongue, I still unintentionally speak in the expressional tones of a speaker of Mandarin; however, I think this offers a ring of authenticity that is important here.

With the music tracks, I had to make sure that the music fades in and out naturally and not too abruptly. One of the essential things is to check that the music, narration and sync tracks harmonize with each other. For example, with some shots of the city scenes, I took out the sync and applied music as company; however, this left the sequence lacking a present-day sense and it was too lifeless, so I restored the actuality sound at a low volume to reinstate its natural atmosphere.

Subtitle, titles and credits

Another thing I needed to do in finishing the film was to prepare subtitles, titles and credits. There are two options for the presentation of titles and credits. The first one is to present them white or colored on a black or colored neutral background which is simple and effective. The second option is to superimpose them over still or moving pictures which Rosenthal suggests look flashier and dramatic (Rosenthal, 2002, 259). I used two options in my documentary because I did not just put on titles and credits but also put on subtitles for Yao and the interviewees in China. Because of changes in the composition of the pictures I needed to be careful that the subtitles would stand out enough. Where the background color was too similar to the subtitles, I would superimpose a half transparent color layer to follow the rule: make sure the titles and credits are readable.

Because Yao and other interviewees in China did not speak English, I generally opted to use subtitles for the English language version of the documentary. The problem I initially encountered here was in subtitling Yao's interview; sometimes the English translation of what he said was too long and the subtitle space too limited. This meant that the fade in and out between the different lines of speech had to be very quick, which risked viewers

missing some parts of what was said. In order to solve this problem, I did engage an actor to dub Yao's interview, which did make it easier for viewers to follow, however, in my test screenings some viewers complained that the voice dubbing weakens their connection with Yao. So I decided to keep the original copy with subtitles and to offer the dubbed English version as an alternative to broadcasters.

Chapter 5 Critiques and Conclusion

On screening the finished documentary to different viewers, I got various different responses. My own thoughts about how *Australian Spirit, Chinese Heart* has turned out are now quite complicated and are explored in this chapter. I feel that I now know how to make a documentary, having undergone every stage of the process: as a producer, director and editor. Nevertheless I do accept that with the wisdom of hindsight some things could have been better if done differently, albeit with more time and resources. Thus the following discussion explores both the strengths and weaknesses of the documentary as I now acknowledge them, by way of concluding this exegesis.

The Flow of the Story

In life there is a "flow of events" and not all are memorable. A documentary about an individual's life takes only those parts judged significant and bridges them together (Rabiger, 1998, 67). In this documentary, carefully choosing significant aspects of Yao's life, I have endeavored to interweave these selected times, events and locations together into a three act structure that follows two geographical shifts - China-Australia-China - and which provides viewers with an easy and clear location and timeline to follow. The duration of any film should be determined by how much attention it demands just as the speed of a movement on the screen is judged by its context, where it is going, and why (Rabiger, 1998, 66). My original thought on the duration of my documentary was 26 minutes. However, after completing my research, I decided that would be too short to cover the artist's life and artistic journey, so I chose to extend it to 52 minutes. This raised the stakes for me in maintain the audience's attention and interest. A long duration can be

boring unless you build it in powerful rhythms. So when making the documentary, I tried to obtain diverse footages and other elements that would contribute a variety of rhythm.

The images and sounds both contain strong rhythms that help in varying the sequences. I also applied different types of music and song as background or accompaniment to arouse viewer's emotion and pleasure. Archive footage, stills and location filming were also used in various combinations to achieve the optimum visual engagement for the viewer. I was very gratified when a Channel Nine producer, to whom I showed my documentary during the preview screenings, commented:

Great start dissolving through from art to landscapes. In fact the impressive landscape shots throughout the film are so good they could even be hung onto longer. The background on why he paints was insightful and interesting - Kangaroo sketching footage is great. I loved the use of archive footage - establishes his credibility over a number of years shows his journey effectively. (Adrian Beck, 2007)

Indeed, many viewers gained the impression that the artist has a complete image archive of his life and artwork. Certainly, Yao did provide me with access to his personal archive including his collection of the news coverage of his exhibition, and this helped me a lot during my research and in editing at the postproduction stage. While I would have liked to have had the money to have been able to reconstruct Yao's journey around Australia, which he undertook when he was preparing to paint *Tow Hundred Kangaroos*, one viewer argued that "The stills and old newspaper are more accurate records as 'document' of Yao's journey than any recreation would be."

Quality of the Shots and Location Shooting

In the preview screening, many viewers commented on the quality of the cinematography. The aesthetic quality of the shots was designed to fit with the documentary's subject matter - an artist and his art. I feel that some of the staged shooting comes across well, for example, the horse racing and fire site, which were pre-organized by myself through the local officials. This is largely because we explained clearly beforehand what was needed to all participants to gain their trust; as a result they all behaved quite naturally in the footage.

When watching my documentary you will notice that the shots are quite steady. When shooting, I tried to use handheld shots as little as possible for two reasons: firstly, a tripod-mounted camera can zoom in to hold a steady close shot without crowding whoever is being filmed. The handheld camera gives this mobility, but at the price of unsteadiness; secondly, the shooting did not need to cover a lot of unpredictable events, rather, location filming was pretty much pre-organized. This complies with Rabiger observations:

The two kinds of camera-presence – one studied, composed, and controlled and the other mobile, spontaneous, and physically reactive to change – contribute a quite different sense of involvement, imply quite different relationships to the action, and alter the film’s storytelling “voice” Rabiger (1998, 199)

Because I prefer this visual style, I kept handheld shooting to a minimum unless, as in the last part, when Yao visit his hometown, where I was keen to represent the spontaneity of the events. In this kind of location shooting I operated the camera myself because this enables me to combine the sensibility of an editor, director and camera operator, which usually, in my experience, produces the best results. For example, when we chanced upon friends of Yao’s mother and the Uigur wedding displayed at the Yili Bridge, I knew immediately that footage of these events would add color to Yao’s journey and how I would cut the sequences, so shot both scenes myself.

With the limited budget, we could take only one camera with us on the China shoot, however, I knew how to direct the shooting from different angles to give the impression of multiple cameras at the location and I am very pleased with the coverage that I achieved for the scenes in China.

Multiple Music Soundtracks

One of the aspects of the documentary that I am most satisfied with is the music soundtracks that I created. I regard the music soundtracks as a reflection of the documentary’s multicultural theme. Documentary films tend to use less music in comparison to feature films, since music can break the illusion of reality. However, when used well, music can lift a film tremendously. My documentary is about art and is the story of an artist, so I tended to apply music to suit a particular aesthetic sensibility. Moreover, my documentary is about how the artist absorbs and integrates different

cultural elements during his artistic journey, so I tried to use folk songs and music from different ethnic groups to indicate a multicultural atmosphere. For example, I used the Aboriginal instrument, the didgeridoo intercut with Chinese traditional music under the opening scenes of Dixong Yao's painting, *Soul of Australia*, to engage the viewer's attention. I mixed a Kazakhstan folk song under the landscape scenes of the artist's hometown with commentary that relates the artist's background. While to emphasize the dramatic changes Yao's family endured during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, I used a well-known Red Guard song from Mao's era. I believe this music helps to color the scenes and give a flavor of the different times covered in my documentary.

Some Misgivings

The thing I most regret in my documentary is that I could not recreate the scenes of the artist traveling in the Australian outback when he met and painted many Aboriginal people. I was constrained by the budget and by Aboriginal cultural protocols. In order to explain how the artist collected materials for his painting of *Soul of Australia*, I could only use his own still photos and the artist's account in his interview. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, some viewers commented that the use of archive footage and stills establish the artist's credibility over a number of years and shows his journey quite effectively and creatively.

There were some aspects of Yao's life that I was not able to cover. Viewers raised questions such as "Is he poor or rich"? "Is his life a struggle"? "How about his current circumstance"? "What is his personal/family situation?" "What is the Chinese Cultural Revolution"? Some of these questions touched on topics that Yao obviously found sensitive. He avoided talking about his personal life. He only wanted to talk about his painting and the past in China. In order to be respectful of him, I chose not to explore those aspects of his personal life. I realize this may be a cultural difference between the expectations of Anglo Australians and Chinese audiences and is thus one of the issues to be dealt with in making a documentary for both these cultural groups.

Another disappointment was that I could not get more Aboriginal people to comment on the art work of *Soul of Australia* or to be otherwise involved in the documentary. This was partly because the ethics procedure was rather complicated. As Beattie (2004, 80) explains, formal protocols have been devised to address questions of the ownership, control and access to images by and about indigenous Australians. As result the only images of Aboriginal people in the documentary are still photos from Brambuk Aboriginal Center in The Grampians in Victoria, for which I sought and received permission from the center to use on the condition that I display the required warning to Aboriginal viewers - “This program may contain images of people who have passed away” – because the Aboriginal people are very cautious about how images of deceased people are displayed. I was very pleased to resolve the problem of locating an Aboriginal interviewee, when I met Julie Andrews, who is a lecturer in Aboriginal Studies at La Trobe University and has an Aboriginal background and was happy to give me her thoughts on Yao’s murals.

Conclusion

Australia Spirit, Chinese Heart developed from a thought and a vision and became a personal journey of time and financial constrains - a long and demanding one from the first idea to the final cut. The learning process encompassed practical and theoretical engagement with the Western style of documentary, which was something that I had already become acquainted with during my formal study in Australia. Rather than the Chinese expository/compilation with its “voice of god” commentary style that I was exposed to during my youth in China during the 70s, 80s and 90s, this study, from the literature review about Western documentary makers with their open-minded approach to documentary making – has broadened my vision of what documentary can achieve. This project has enabled me to absorb and experiment with an array of Western documentary methods. Through every phase of this thesis, but especially in my technical filming and editing, the project has refined my skills and understanding of both the documentary form and the production process. I envisage the final step in this learning process will be

releasing and marketing this documentary. I am hoping that a public service television broadcaster will be interested but if not I will enter it in film festivals and promote it online. I am quite hopeful that given my two audiences – Australia and China – it will be seen by many viewers. In this way I hope to gain viewer feedback to continue the learning journey of this production, and to grow and improve by undertaking further documentary projects.

Appendix 1

“Australian Spirit, Chinese Heart”

---Documentary of Artist Di Xiong Yao

Proposal

Production details

Title: “Australian Spirit, Chinese Heart”---Chinese Artist Di Xiong Yao

Researcher: Shufang Zhao

Writer: Shufang

Producer: Shufang zhao

Director: Shufang Zhao

Type: Television documentary

Format: DV

Length: 52 minutes

Background

Australia is a country of migrants and Aboriginals. Artists feel free with their artistic creations and work since the government's multicultural policy encourages people to maintain, develop and share their national and cultural identity with people from other ethnicities. However, there are some artists complain that those unique sorts of art form from different cultural backgrounds are very difficult to be fostered within the society where occupied by western mainstream art forms, moreover, lacking of financial support drives them away from artistic careers. Yet, there are many other immigrant artists who have gained wonderful creative experience and broad recognition from their artwork which reflects multicultural elements and themes.

Chinese artist Di Xiong Yao, from North-western China who has migrated to Australia and lived in Melbourne for years, is one of those successful artists. Di Xiong Yao's mother is a Russian and his father is a Chinese, and this brought him sufferings during the time of Chinese Cultural Revolution; he spent his adulthood in a minority area in China and now he residents in Australia...He has been experiencing different cultural impacts along his whole life, and this has been reflected in most of his artworks.

Synopsis

Chinese artist Di Xiong Yao, from North-western China migrated to Australia and now lives in Melbourne. In order to gain inspiration for his painting, he had made round trips of Australia three times. By searching for Aboriginal paintings in mountain caves, making friends with Aboriginals, observing Australian wild lives, and exploring natural environment, Di Xiong drew thousands sketches and obtained a great deal of inspiring for his creation.

In this 52 minute documentary Di Xiong Yao tells the audience where his inspiration comes from, and how he creatively combined Chinese brush techniques and Western style painting in his finished masterpieces titled “Australian Spirit” and “Two Thousand Kangaroos Painting”. These two unique outstanding paintings won him awards both internationally and in Australia.

Di Xiong Yao seeks to reflect Chinese culture and Australian culture from what he has been experiencing in his daily life in Australia. For example, he feels familiar with horses since he grew up in rural in China, so he specialized in drawing horses. He often picks up creative themes from rural Australian and even from the Melbourne Cup Festival...

In this documentary, Di Xiong shares his experience of how he maintains and develops his cultural and national identity while experiencing his Australian daily life. Also, he will bring forward difficulties through his path of artistic career as an immigrant artist in Australia...

Style

Documentary style

This 52 minutes documentary of “Australian spirit, Chinese heart” is in a combination of expository and impressionistic styles. There is a clear narrative line running through the whole story, in which images are edited as components to the argument (main theme) being articulated in voice-over or interview. However, voice-over in this documentary is mainly by the subject itself, commentator’s voice-over will be minimal and general.

While structuring this documentary in an expository style, the impressionistic mechanism is also employed to highlight the subject’s personal feeling. The interweaving of small acting, actuality footage, and archival images is paced to the evocative and incidental music, allows audience an aesthetic effect.

Interviewing style

The interview of the subject will be conducted in different locations: the artist’s studio with his painting as surroundings and background, national park where he was sketching, or even in a local market shopping.

The studio interview will be mostly set up with medium close-up shots of the subject, however, close-up shot will be used when he is telling something very interesting or emotional. The subject looks directly at the interviewer and the camera (and so his audience) at one and the same time. The interviewer can control the subject’s gaze by where the interviewer stands in relation to the camera; medium or long shots will be used when the subject is showing and introducing his painting with oral comments.

The interview in national parks and other outdoor locations is just going to show the action, the sound of interview itself will be taken in a quiet place like Dixiong Yao’s studio. The location interview will mainly be edited as “thought track” using the artist’s voice under other shots of him at work.

Australian Spirit, Chinese Heart.

There also have some interviews of people related to the subject, like friends, families or other artists relating their thoughts on the subject or his paintings.

Camera style

In this documentary, some hand-held observational camera work and long takes is for the subject working in his studio. Low angle camera shots are set up for the subject facial expression when painting, while high angle camera shots are for the drawing process. In studio interviews, eye level camera is most likely the set up on tripod. Also, static style tripod work will be set up for location shooting of the subject going about his daily life—shopping, meeting with friends, visiting galleries and sketching in the wild land etc.

Sound style

Actuality sound will be picked up with a plug-in boom-mic in location shooting for post-production editing. Wireless mic is used in subject interviews. Music is an important sound part of the documentary for evocation and incidental music.

Appendix 2

Information and Consent Form



This Master of Arts (by Research) project is a creative thesis (video) approved by La Trobe University Research and Graduate Studies Office (RGSO).

Research Topic:

Creative Thesis (Video) Australia spirit, Chinese Heart-- Chinese Artist Dixiong Yao (Invanov Sergey)

Project Aims:

This project aims to explore how a Chinese immigrant artist has adapted to Australian society and to reflect on various multicultural themes.

Participants:

Major Subject: Di Xiong Yao (Male)

Interviewee: _____

Brief Description:

Australian-Chinese artist Di Xiong Yao migrated to Australia 25 years ago. Exploring the natural environment of Australia, he drew a hundred meter - long painting named "Australian Spirit" and another painting called "Two Thousand of Kangaroos". In this 25 minutes documentary, Yao will explain his inspiration for painting and share how he maintains his Chinese cultural identity while experiencing Australian daily life.

In order to let viewers have a better understanding on the subject and his artwork, the selected interviewees will be asked to comment on the person of artist Di Xiong Yao, and on his painting and various artistic and multicultural issues they raise.

Methods of Data Analysis: Literature Review, Interview on camera

Research Procedures:

This research will be finished within a two year period. The creative thesis includes a DV format documentary, which involves interviews and location filming. The major subject of the documentary is expected to devote about 4 weeks for interviews and location

filming. Other interviewees need to spend about an hour for interviewing on camera. All interviews and location shooting will be pre arranged by agreement of participants.

Commencement Date: 30/03/2006

Expiry Date: 29/03/2008

Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences:

School of Communication, Arts & Critical Enquiry (Media Studies)

Investigator: Shufang Zhao,

Phone: 0410 492 983

Email: s2zhao@students.latrobe.edu.au

Supervisor: Ms Mary Debrett, Lecturer

Phone: 9479 2167

Email: M.Debrett@latrobe.edu.au

School of Communication, Arts & Critical Enquiry, La Trobe University

This video documentary is being made as part of a creative thesis, which is to be submitted towards a Master of Arts degree at La Trobe University. The documentary will explore the life of a Chinese immigrant artist and various arts related and multicultural themes.

Since you are important to this project, I would like to interview you when making the documentary. The interview will be recorded on camera.

In order to protect you from the risk of being misrepresented, before the interview, I will discuss your role in the completed documentary and the sort of questions that I will be asking you in the recorded interview for this documentary. Also, I will provide you with a question list for interview beforehand. The interview location and time will be pre arranged according to your agreement.

As a participant, you will be provided with an opportunity to review the final cut documentary prior to submission of a thesis or any public exhibition. Also, you will be invited to a viewing of the completed documentary along with all of the other participants.

Australian Spirit, Chinese Heart.

Footage and audio collected will be kept by me for five years. These may be used by me for a similar bigger project in the future. Also, La Trobe University will keep a copy of this project for educational purpose. The completed video documentary may receive video or film festival screenings or be broadcast on television.

You should be aware that in the documentary you are to be identified visually. If you prefer to remain anonymous, please feel absolutely free to say so and not to take part in the project.

Please understand also, that you are free to withdraw from active participation in this documentary and may request that any material obtained as part of your participation be destroyed and not used in any way, provided that such a request is made within two weeks of the commencement of shooting.

Any queries regarding the nature or conduct of this film may be directed to

Shufang Zhao:

Contact number: 0410 492 983,

E-mail address: s2zhao@students.latrobe.edu.au

OR

Mary Debrett:

Contact address: Media Studies Programs, School of Communication, Art & Critical Enquiry, La Trobe University, Bundoora VIC.3107 Australia

E-mail address: M.Derett@latrobe.edu.au

If you have any complaints or queries that the investigator has not been able to answer to your satisfaction, you may contact the **Ethics Liaison Officer, Human Ethics Committee, La Trobe University, Victoria, 3086, (Ph: 03 9479 1443, e-mail: humanethics@latrobe.edu.au).**

“I, _____ have read and understood the information above, and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in the project, realizing that I am free to withdraw from active participation in this documentary and may request that any material obtained as part of my participation be destroyed and not used in any way, provided that such a request is made within two weeks of the commencement of shooting.

I agree that research data provided by me or with my permission during the project may be included in a thesis, presented at conferences, on television and published in journals.”

Name of Participant (block letters):

Date:

Signature:

Name of Investigator (block letter)

Date:

Signature:

Name of Supervisor – MARY DEBRETT

Appendix 3

Research and Graduate Studies Office



Telephone & Email Directory Fax: (+61 3) 9479 1464 Email:

信息须知及同意书

这个艺术硕士学位(研究)项目是拉特罗布大学研究生办公室(RGSO)立项认可的硕士生论文(录像)研究项目。

研究课题： 论文创作(录像)：“澳洲魂,中国心--中国画家姚迪雄”

项目宗旨： 探讨一个移民澳洲的中国画家如何适应澳洲社会并在艺术创作上反映澳洲多元文化的相关主题。

参与者： 姚迪雄和其他五位受访者

项目简介： 中国画家姚迪雄 25 年前移居澳大利亚。在游历澳洲的自然风光后，他完成了全长 100 米的被称为“澳洲魂”的绘画创作和另外一幅命名为“两千袋鼠图”的绘画创作。这部 25 分钟的纪录片将向你述说姚迪雄如何获得创作灵感，并和你分享他如何在澳洲的日常生活中保留自身的中国的文化特性。

研究分析方法： 文献审查、摄像机拍摄采访

开始日期： 2006/03/30

截止日期： 2008/03/29

人文社会科学学系： 艺术、通讯及哲学(媒体研究)学院

研究人员： 赵淑芳

电话： 0410492983

电子邮件： evasunny@hotmail.com

导师： Ms..Mary Debrett

电话： 94792167

电子邮件： m.debrett@latrobe.edu.au

人文社会科学学系：艺术通讯及哲学(媒体研究)学院

这部电视纪录片是拉特罗布大学硕士学位研究项目论文的一个组成部分。此纪录片将探讨一个中国画家的移民生活经历和绘画艺术创作所涉及的多元文化主题。

在研究项目进行的过程中，单纯要求参与者签署同意书并不合适，因此以下所提供的信息将以参与者和研究员赵淑芳谈话的形式摄录备案。

纪录片开始摄制前参与者须知信息谈话录影内容：

因为你是这个项目的一部份，所以在制作此纪录片时我会对你进行采访，采访会以摄像形式进行。在采访中，我会要求你讨论与身份确认、文化观念和艺术传统相关的议题。所采集的视听资料将会被我保留五年。这些资料不会被其他人使用，但有可能在我将来更大范围的研究项目中使用。

你应该知道在此纪录片中你的形象将会从视觉上被辨认出来，如果你想保持匿名，请随时向我说明并不要参与这个项目。

你可以自由退出参与这部纪录片，并要求销毁任何有你参与的录影资料并确保不做其他途径使用。但请你明白，这种请求必须在开始拍摄两个星期前提出。

完成的电视纪录片将有可能在影展中放映或在电视节目里播出。

这个谈话录像进行后一周内，你将会拿到一份录像带副本作为资料保存。项目导师 Mary Debrett 将保有另外一份副本作为纪录。

联系信息

你对这部纪录片如有任何疑问可直接联系赵淑芳和 Mary Debrett (联络资料将提供给参与者)。

对这部纪录片如有任何疑问也可以直接联系：维多利亚州拉特罗布大学道德伦理委员会，联络官，3086(电话：03-94791443,电子邮件：humanethics@latrobe.edu.au)。

研究员：

签名：

日期：

Appendix 4

Shooting schedule

There are total 3 weeks (21 days) of shooting

Location shooting –

1 st , August	Artist visiting and doing sketches at Hanging Rock, Mt. Macedon, Victoria
2 nd , 3 rd , August	Artist visiting Grampians Mountain National Park in Victoria
4 th , 5 th , August	Artist exploring landscapes and searching for Aboriginal rock drawings in Great Ocean Road in Victoria
7 th , August	Artist visiting art galleries in Melbourne
8 th , August	Artist shopping in the market, jogging down Yarra River side
9 th , August	Artist sorting out materials collected from National Parks and wild lands for inspiration for painting, teaching students in his workshop.
10 th , August	Artist socializing with friends
11 th , August	Interview with Aboriginal cultural expert – La Trobe academic Interview with art reviewer – see newspaper cutting - possibly d-hansen@netspace.net.au or pwebb@theage.com.au
14 th , August	Interview with dealer gallery owner Interview with collector of artist's works Interview with organizer of Chinese International At Festival. Melbourne 2006
15 th , August	Interview with Chief of Chinese Consulate in Melbourne Interview with Australia-Chinese Friendship Association

Studio shooting –

16 th , August	Interview artist in the artist's painting workshop
17 th , August	several sequences on Chinese painting techniques – mixing inks, demonstration of painting, etc
18 th , August	Departing for China from Melbourne airport

Location shooting –

16 th , October	Location shooting with the opening of the artist's touring exhibition's first stop in Melbourne
17 th , October	Interview with visitors of the artist's exhibition
7 th , November	Location shooting with artist joining the event of Melbourne cup
8 th , November	Studio shooting with the artist's favorite painting of horses.
16, 17 th , November	shooting pick-ups

Appendix 5

Treatment

Begin with Australian famous landscapes and city view and its people, montage with close up to medium shot of footage of the painting of “Australian Spirit” (evocation music and commentator’s simple start up poetic introduction voice-over).

Yao sketching in a national park (commentator’s voice over).

Yao back to his studio, sorting out his work (commentator’s voice over and Yao’s talking to the off-screen interviewer about his devotion in painting).

Yao sitting in his studio telling his personal background information to interviewer (overlap with archival pictures and footages from his home town in China).

Two interviewees (Yao’s former art teachers) tell how Yao started learning painting when he was young.

Yao migrated to Australia. He visited galleries and did outdoor sketching (reflexive commentating what he has done in order to keep his pace in painting as an artist).

Switch to studio interview, Yao telling how he locked up with the thematic subjects for his Two Hundred Kangaroos painting.

Interviews of Race Mathews, the former Art Minister of Victoria and Kelly Philipa, the former editor of *Art Monthly*.

Yao tells how he got the inspiration for painting of *Soul of Australia* and how he fulfilled his achievement.

Australian Spirit, Chinese Heart.

Yao's painting of *Soul of Australia* and *Two Hundred Kangaroos* (commentator's comment on the painting from of Yao's painting, accentuate the aspect of the Eastern and Western technique combination).

Interview with Shu Gen Liang, the Chinese consulate General in Melbourne to comment on the social and cultural significance with Yao's art work.

Yao's daily life that emphasizing on his experience on the impact of Eastern and Western culture and customs.

Yao returns to his hometown, the journey to show how he maintains his national identity.

Yao visits the local market in the capital city of his hometown.

Yao visits his old friend, a local artist who is the principal of the local art academic university.

Yao returns to his town visiting his ole school mates.

Yao Visits his old school and old family house.

Yao sketches on the way to farms that he used to work in.

His horse painting exhibition in Chang Chun, China.

The end

Appendix 6

Artist Professional Biography

Artist Di Xiong Yao, also known as Sergay Ivanov was born to a Chinese father and Russian mother grew up in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. He was self taught and worked with water color, oil painting, charcoal, woodblocks with guidance from many the most famous painters in China. In 1978, he studied traditional Chinese painting under the professors from the Central Academy of Fine Art in Beijing.

Yao, who migrated to Australia in 1979, has been studying Aboriginal arts for over twenty years, and has traveled around Australia three times to have a personal experience of the Aboriginal culture. The result of these trips is two successful paintings.

Finished in 1985, the long scroll painting entitled "The 200 Kangaroos" (Now named "2000 Kangaroos") was first shown in China National Art Gallery, which was partly funded by The Australian China Council in 1983. Soon after, the 63-meter long painting was on show as part of Victorian 150th Anniversary Celebrations in 1985 at the World Trade Centre. It was also exhibited in Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia for Australia's 200 Anniversary, which was sponsored by Qantas and fix by Council of Australia High Commissioner. So far the painting "2000 Kangaroos" has been exhibited in 83 cities around the world; therefore, Mr. Yao has been regarded as an art and cultural ambassador by the media.

The other painting, "The Soul of Australia" completed in 2001, which reflects the deep feelings of human beings towards the land, nature and Aborigines into an epic painting. The 100 meter-long scroll is a passionate attempt to depict the rich and colorful Aboriginal history, culture through the Aboriginal painting. This long piece of art work has been invited by the Chinese government to exhibit at National Museum of China, Beijing for the 30th Anniversary of the Australian Chinese Diplomatic Relationship in 2002. Till now, "The soul Of Australia" has been successfully exhibited in more than 20 cities around China including Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Hangzhou etc.

Di Xiong has applied traditional Chinese painting methods, tools and material as well as western painting techniques in the two scroll paintings. According to the Aborigines, the evolution of their people and that of the universe are inextricably linked. Through the painting he intends to highlight his strong belief that all human beings, natural plants and animals on the earth have equal rights to the natural environment. This scroll is a synthesis of the Aborigines and their world of the ocean, mountains and land. The artist tries to promote his idea of that we should all treat each other as equal members of a big family.

In addition, Di Xiong is specialized in horse painting. He is considered as one of the most remarkable horse painter by professional arts critics in China.

Major exhibitions and events of Di Xiong Yao (Sergay Ivano)

07/1982

Participated ABC Radio's 50th Anniversary touring exhibition

09/1982

Three artist's joint-exhibition, National Art Gallery, Canberra

08/1983

Seven pieces of Yao's paintings were elected to be shown at Victoria Art Society's annual exhibition

11/1983

Solo exhibition, opened by Edmund Capon, Director of Art Gallery NSW

03/1985

Completed 63 metre-long panoramic scroll painting of "Two Hundred Kangaroos"

04/1985

First exhibition of "Two Hundred Kangaroos", China National Art Gallery

08/1985

"Two Hundred Kangaroos" painting exhibited at World Trade Center, Melbourne as part of the celebration of Victoria 150th Anniversary, opened by Race Matthews, Minister of Art

04/1986

"Two Hundred Kangaroos" painting exhibition for Pan-Pacific Tourism Conference, sponsored by Qantas and Australia government

04-08/1987

“Two Hundred Kangaroos” painting touring exhibition in China Major capital cities

01/1988

“Two Hundred Kangaroos” painting exhibition in Indonesia for celebration of Australia’s 200th Anniversary, organized and opened by Council of Australia High commissioner

07/1988

“Two Hundred Kangaroos” painting was collected in *Guinness Book Records*

01/1989

“Two Hundred Kangaroos” painting exhibition, Museum & Art Gallery of Northern Territory

10-11/1989

“Two Hundred Kangaroos” painting touring exhibition in Hawaii and Vancouver

10/1989

Yao was collected in *Who’s Who in the World, Tenth Edition* by Marquis Who’s who Biographic

03/1992

The 20th Century Award for Achievement, Cambridge International Biographical Centre England

1987, 1991

Two round trips in Australia for collecting sketch data for painting of “The Soul of Australia”

1999-2001

Started to paint “The Soul of Australia”

05/2001

Completion of painting “The Soul of Australia”

12/2002

Exhibition of “The Soul of Australia”, China National Art Gallery, Beijing, for celebration of China-Australia Diplomatic Relationship 30th Anniversary

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