

# From the Roots 一切從根

*Human Roots* by Mickael Obrénovitch brings the wonder of wood to Macau, in an exhibition that open our eyes to the beauty of nature, and communicating a message that we would do well to open our minds, as well as our eyes

Mickael Obrénovitch的《Human Roots》將會在展覽中把「木」的奇妙之處與大自然的美帶到澳門，讓觀眾大開眼界，並且傳遞「開闊思界與開闊視界同樣有益」這訊息

文 BY TANJA WESSELS . 譯 TRANSLATION BY JOÃO PEDRO LAU



Mickael Obrénovitch lives and breathes his passion for wood, and his latest work, *Human Roots*, on display in Macau as part of Le French May festivities, is testimony to that. The collection, made up of centuries-old teak tree roots found on Java Island, has been a labour of love that has taken the artist and his team three years to complete. “Wood has been my medium for the past ten years,” Obrénovitch, who was born in France, explains. “I studied applied arts and I used to be more orientated to design. Design and sculpture are very close, in different ways, but I really love art. The absolute meaning of art is very pure.”

The pursuit of a life more in sync with his mindset, saw Obrénovitch leave his career working for renowned advertising agencies in France, for the island of La Réunion, where he seems to have found his balance, reconciling his passion for sculpture with his work in digital communication.

However, it was a trip to another island three years ago that brought the artist to the focal point and body of work he is presenting in Macau now. After eight years in La Réunion, Obrénovitch went on holiday to Bali, a trip that turned into a longer term venture, as the artist has been there for the past three years.

“I have something with islands. I end up on islands. That’s my destiny,” he notes.

The unique wood culture of Bali caught Obrénovitch at the right time and right place.

“I fell in love with Ubud, because it’s a lot about wood carving. There are not many places in the world that are like that, actually it may be the only one. Everything is about the wood, the culture of the wood. They have materials, and the workers are just amazing, very nice people and culture.”

After a series of serendipitous connections, Obrénovitch found himself with a mountain of old teak wood, a studio space and a team of workers, provided by the Balinese family who adopted the foreigner upon his arrival. The world-renowned wood carving Village of Mas became the centre of his universe during the process of bringing *Human Roots* to life.

Mickael Obrénovitch活出他對「木」的熱情，並且以他最新的出品《Human Roots》作為這份熱情的見證。這批作品以爪哇島上找到的百年柚樹樹根為原材料，由Obrénovitch花了三年時間精心製作而成。

生於法國的Obrénovitch解釋道：「木已經在過去10年成為我的媒介。我從前修讀的是應用藝術，並且比較傾向於設計。設計與雕塑在幾方面都非常相近，但我真的十分喜愛藝術。藝術的絕對意義是非常純淨的。」

為了追求一個與他的思想更接軌的生活，Obrénovitch離開了他工作的一家法國知名廣告公司，去到了法屬留尼旺島。在那裏，他似乎找到了平衡，並把一個原本短暫的行程變成一個在島上長達3年的冒險之旅。

「我與『島』有一種不解之緣。我總是到最後都落在一個島上，這是我的命運。」

而在巴里島上獨特的木文化，就在機緣巧合下把Obrénovitch吸引住。

「我對巴里島上的Ubud鎮著迷了，因為那裡充滿著木雕文化。世界上沒有甚麼地方與那裡相似。事實上，那裡可能是獨一無二的。所有事物都與木或木文化有關。他們有材料，而且工匠的手藝都非常出色，那裡的人與文化都非常好。」

經過一連串意外的碰面與認識後，Obrénovitch不知不覺地就獲得了滿山的老柚樹、一個可以成為工作室的地方以及一隊工匠，全部由接待他的Balinese家族提供。而以木雕聞名世界的巴里村莊Mas就成了Obrénovitch把《Human Roots》帶到世界期間的小宇宙。

《Human Roots》曾經四次在巴里展覽過，其中最出名的一次是在世界知名的COMO Shambhala Estate裡展出6個月，當中包括1件專門為水療區設計的藝術品。





*Human Roots* has been exhibited in Bali on four occasions, most famously at the world renowned COMO Shambhala Estate, where a specially designed piece for the spa area was on show, along with the rest of the artwork, for six months. Describing the process of working the wood to completion, the Frenchman is quick to admit that it's no picnic. "It's hard work, physically and mentally, and I have people working with me. I could not do it on my own, I would die for sure," he laughs. "It's 35 degrees in Bali and there is no aircon in the studio, no fans, and a lot of dust everywhere. We worked on all the sculptures at the same time, because of the light and the inspiration. The team you are working with all influence the process. They gave me ideas at times." The respect for his cherished material is palpable at all stages of the process.

"All the pieces came from the same area, in Java. You can see from the wood, they probably came from the same forest. But it is difficult to trace. The climate in Bali is very aggressive. The sun and the humidity give character to the wood. You can see the life of the wood and what has happened to it. It is like a forest, every tree is different, but it is part of the forest."

Obrénovitch承認要將一件木頭從原材料變成藝術品的這個過程並不輕鬆。

「即使我已經有其他人跟我一起工作，那還是一件在體力上和精神上都很艱難的事。」他笑說如果要他自己做的話，他一定會做到死。「巴里的氣溫高達攝氏35度，在工作室中又沒有冷氣和風扇，周圍又塵土飛揚。因為光線的關係，我們都會一起雕刻，還有因為這樣我們就可以互相給對方創作靈感。整個團隊都會對創作過程有所影響。他們有時會給我一些靈感。」

而這位法國藝術家對他製作所用的珍貴材料的尊重，也在製作過程的每一個步驟顯示出來。

「所有木頭都是來自爪哇的同一個區域。你可以從木頭上看得出來。他們大概是從同一片森林中出來的。但是其實很難去追尋他們的出處。巴里的天氣非常兇暴，那裡的陽光與濕度都給了那些木材自己的個性。你可以看得出那根木的整個生命以及有甚麼事發生過在它身上。就好像一個森林一樣，每顆樹都是不同的，但都屬於一個森林的一部份。」

Mas村也就成了Obrénovitch在埋頭工作時的一個最理想地點，並且是一個好地方去「傳遞他個人的生活意義，繼續他對絕對的追求，以及在無邊中的立身之地」。

但是，其實在這巴里的傳統村莊中也是有不少挑戰的。

*Human Roots*  
Venue: lao Hin Gallery  
Dates: April 22 to June 30  
Opening Hours: 11am - 7pm

For more details about this year's Le French May go to [www.frenchmay.com](http://www.frenchmay.com)

Mas Village also proved to be the ideal location for the spiritual process the artist embarks on when working, the wish to "pass on his personal vision of the meaning of life, his quest for the absolute, and his place in the infinite."

However, working in a traditional village in Bali is not without its challenges.

"You cannot do what you want. You think you are free to do what you want, but you cannot choose your workers. The family has to choose for you. And you don't choose when you have your workers; if you have to wait for one month because they have other commitments, you cannot say anything. You have to respect everything. That's what I learned in Bali. You have to be patient, and to let it go. It was so hard."

But let go he did, and the artist is eager to share his work and vision further afield.

"The purpose of my work is to find a discussion with the wood, to express the material of the wood, and to reach the absolute infinity. I'm agnostic but I trust the mystery of life. We don't know where we come from, where we are going, all we have is the now, we can only enjoy the moment," comments the artist.

"The same with my work, this wood is around 200 years old and it was here before us, and it will be here after us. It needs less oxygen than we do, and it creates oxygen for us to live. And that's the problem; we kill the materials that give us the opportunity to live. I try to sensitize people to this. It's a circle of life and we are trying to break it now, we try to control it. And that is just an illusion."

Bringing his work to a place like Macau is very important to Obrénovitch as "people here seem very far removed from nature and the source of so many everyday things. Part of my approach is to include fundraising to highlight awareness, and I am now currently working on a label to save Indonesian forests. Indonesia has the biggest forest in the world after the Amazon, and the problem is huge. There is enormous destruction going on."

The medium is the message for Mickael Obrénovitch. Currently working on a new body of work for one of Mauritius' best hotels, the artist is continuing on his trajectory of islands, wood and opening our eyes to the beauty that surrounds us. And our duty to protect it.



「你不能做所有你想做的事。你覺得你有自由去做你想做的事，但你其實不能選擇自己的工匠，而是由家族為你揀選的。你不能選擇何時可以有你的工匠。如果他們已經有其他事情要做，因而要等一個月才可以讓他們來工作的話，你也不能說甚麼。你要尊重一切的事，這是我從巴里學到的事。你要有耐性，以及要釋懷。這曾經是多麼難做到。」

但他真的做到了釋懷，而且Obrénovitch也很熱衷把他的作品與看法分享到更遠的地方去。

「我創作的目的是要尋求與木的一場討論，去表現木的材質，以及要達至無限。我是一個疑神論者，但我也相信生命中神秘的事物。我不知道我們人類是從那裡來、要去那裡。我們現在所知道的就是：我們要享受這一刻。就好像我的作品一樣，這木頭已經有大約二百歲老，在我們出現以前它就已經存在，並已經在製造氧氣來供應給我們。它需要的氧氣比我們少，而且還為我們製造氧氣。我嘗試讓人們對這事更敏感。這是一個生命的循環，但是我們現在卻要把這循環打斷、嘗試控制它，但這都只是一個幻想。」

為Obrénovitch而言，把他的作品帶到澳門是一件非常重要的事。「在這裏的人都好像與大自然以及日常事物的根源都離得很遠。我計劃的一部份是包括以籌款去喚起人們的關注。我現在也正製作一張貼紙去幫助拯救印尼的森林。印尼擁有除亞馬遜以外最大片的森林，而現在所遇到的問題也非常嚴峻，大面積的破壞正在上演。」

Mickael Obrénovitch所用的媒介，本身也是他的訊息的一部份。他現正為毛里裘斯其中一家最好的酒店進行製作，也繼續了他與「島」和「木」的緣份，並讓我們看到在我們身邊的美好事物，以及我們需要去保護它的這份責任。