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Art Escape, a New Journey of Life

by [Nana Bee \(http://nanabee.ingo.com/about/english-me/\)](http://nanabee.ingo.com/about/english-me/)

I didn't know when the concept of escape had become a new lifestyle. For a while, there was an upsurge in modern world. When people need to get rid of everything and meet

alternative way, it is indeed a difficult choose, even more when there was no specific goal. However, nowadays, a person is easy to make any statement on social media before setting a sail, or punctuate at the airport to tell the world that a new travel is happening. But, would that become a meaningful journey to one's life?

In the era when social media was not popular, I experienced a travel of escape. But I have always felt that an adventure to satisfy my curiosity, to explore the front of different worlds, and to test my courage and serendipity. The inducement of initiation and interpretation of final output, if there were no crazy idea, there would be no many unexpected life experiences.

I met Charles Hecht when visiting Red Gate Open Studio in a city village of Beijing. He came over by riding a cute electric scooter from near-by art village named 318 where latter he said he was the first American artist in residency over that place. I felt his interesting and talkative. But this was not the reason why he made me curious. It's the age of grandpa. He still has the vitality that many young people don't have. Maybe it's the attitude that an artist must have. But he told me that he used to be a lawyer, but now he focuses on artistic creation. He showed me pictures of his studio and artworks on his mobile phone. When he knew that I had lived in New York, he was so excited that he invited us to visit his studio. As the party was still going on but he was ready to leave, we made an appointment to visit his studio another day. It's a very interesting picture in which him away on his cute scooter. New York City is a place that angel and devil live together. A lawyer is an intricate profession. What made he come over Beijing to be an artist with such shabby original? How interesting the story would be! It aroused my curiosity.



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Charles Hecht shows his studio in Beijing to Louis K Wang, a former professor of Pratt Institute

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When we visited Hecht’s studio, there were his installation in the yard, which were very interesting. After entering the room, he welcomed us cozily and prepared three kinds of cheeses for me. Knowing that I like white wine, he also prepared chilled white wine and red wine. We enjoyed his studio tour and tasted the wine. We share his story through his unique artworks. On the walls and desk of the studio, there were many colorful creations with childlike innocence and rich imagination that hardly draw a equal sign with a trial lawyer who once had focused on debate in legal system



Charles Hecht introduced his creative ideas in Beijing studio

A few years later, Hecht returned to New York. We became friends, greeting from time to time, keeping in touch. After the COVID-19 outbreak, he also cared about my situation in Beijing. At that time, New York has not been covered by the epidemic. However, so far Big Apple began to ask people to live in isolation. When I decided to hold an online art exhibition, Hecht also decided to support my idea and take part in the project with his works.



Glass works created by Charles Hecht when in Beijing

The epidemic gives us time to stop and rethink the pace of life. I remembered when a trip became a long-term stay in New York, helped me absorb a lot of artistic nourishment and made me understand that arts can arouse more enthusiasm of life. It suddenly occurred to me that I had to ask him an important question. What was the motivation of his transformation from lawyer to artist?

Here is the writings from him:

I became an artist by fate or accident. My daughter separated from her husband and I wanted her to meet someone nice so I took my 3 year old granddaughter for all day Saturdays and Sundays.

I do not believe in television to occupy a 3 year old. So we went to art galleries and museums. One day we went into a lumber store in Greenwich Village. They had a bin of odd pieces of wood that they sold by the pound. We picked out interesting pieces, put them in a large burlap bag and took them to my apartment.

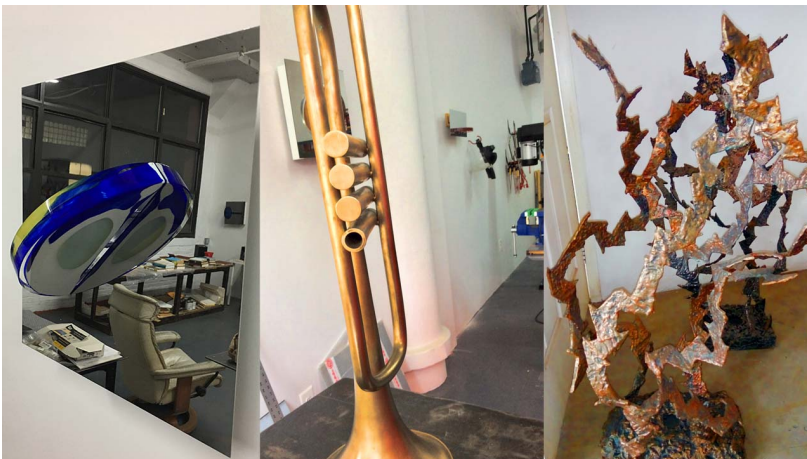


Hannah, the granddaughter who inspired Charles Hecht into the creative world, now is 26 years old.

I spent the next week figuring out what to create. Next weekend we created our first animals using a hammer, nails and glue. Hannah did most of the painting and we hung them on the fence in the local school yard. It was pure streetart, if you wanted it, take it for no charge.

After a year, I wanted to do something more and read about taking an adult education course in beginning metal sculpture at Pratt Institute. While others were making civets and candle holders, I was focused on learning the techniques so I could create my own unique sculpture. I drew out my plans and during the last class he asked me why I had not built anything. I showed him my drawing and a plan of how it would be completed. He asked me where I was going to do it. I said I would look for a metal shop in Brooklyn or Queens. After a pause, he said I need to look, he has use of the metal shop at Pratt on the weekends and I could work there. Wow! I never expected that. What an unexpected gift.

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 I spent the next four months working every weekend at the Pratt metal shop. Victor had arranged for my participation in a group show in Soho. In those days Soho was just starting out as a home for art galleries. This gallery was on the top floor of a textile wholesaler. The elevator only worked during normal business hours and the gallery paid him in cash to work after 5:00 pm. That gallery continued to exhibit my works and eventually introduced me to China.



Charles Hecht's works in New York Studio

This grandpa-level of white-collar after that came to Beijing to carry out an long-term march on “art escape”, experience the artist’s life, join exhibition, help in art education and set up an local studio to create a series of cross-cultural expressionist works.

Flashing back to the moment when in his studio of Beijing, we talked about issues regrading cultural misreading and the United States not a huge Disneyland. Life needs continuous learning. Comparing to those romantic and childlike works on the backdrop, the artworks displayed in the yard and on the bamboo fence, a story thus got a meaningful answer.



Charles Hecht's abstract expressionist work “Modern Family”

I believe there are many unexpected things in life that lead us on to a separate journey. But without curiosity and enthusiasm to explore, we can't create our own unique life experience. It's not just to go abroad sightseeing and buy souvenirs, but also a chance to change life attitude , pursuit soul things or quest the potential of self. As long as the enthusiasm is not extinguished, life is not just sofa and TV shows. Just like the trumpet above the cloud, there is always a place to play a different tune.



Charles Hchet's "Gabriel Blow Your Horn" was completed during the epidemic period

Dear netizens, Do you enjoy what story I present here?
What kind of feeling do you have right now? Maybe a great idea pop up at this moment will change your life.

Welcome to exchange thought with me. If you want to participate or work with art world, you can also [contact us for further advice. \(http://nanabee.ingo.com/about/english-me/\)](http://nanabee.ingo.com/about/english-me/)



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