

## From a surgeon to an artist, an integration of medicine and art— Dr. Anthony P. Yim’s “My Second Career: A Collection of Artwork”

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With double identities of being a former surgeon and a full-time artist now, Dr. Anthony P. Yim symbolizes a perfect integration of medicine and art.

On April 13, 2018, Dr. Yim attended a book launch event to release his debut art album “My Second Career: A Collection of Artwork” (Figure 1) at Asia Thoracic Cancer Care Summit (ATCCS) 2018 held at Sheraton Hong Kong Hotel. As a former surgeon, Dr. Yim assembled many of his old and new friends to participate in the event (Figure 2). He was even invited as a special guest of ATCCS to share his perspectives on art with the theme “From a Surgeon to an Artist” (Figure 3).

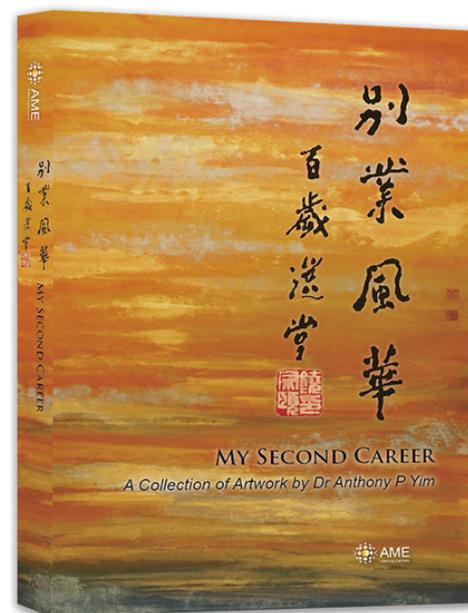
To fully present this special and fascinating career transition, AME Publishing Company seized the opportunity to have an exclusive interview with Dr. Yim, who shared the similarities between a surgeon and an artist, the experiences he had, and his words to the readers of his art album (Figure 4).

People often have a feeling that medicine and art stand on opposite ends of a spectrum. To Dr. Yim, however, medicine is a combination of science and art. Science rationalizes the certainties of the world, while art captures the uncertainties. Nevertheless, the biggest challenge for doctors is to solve the uncertainties in any emergency situations, just like creating, which is also full of uncertainties. To cope with challenges brought by uncertainties, experiences and skills are needed. Consequently, Dr. Yim encouraged doctors to pay more attention to various forms of arts existing in daily living.

In fact, medicine and art are like two sides of a coin. Dr. Yim is a real-life example telling us that art and medicine are closely related. When asked about the similarities between medicine and art, Dr. Yim said, “*To be an artist, passion is what you need. Frankly speaking, no matter what you*

*do, if you want to do it well, passion is essential. Second, you need to work hard, which means you really need to put time and effort in it. To be a surgeon or an artist, it is necessary to spend time on training. In my opinion, a surgeon also preforms arts every day by integrating professional expertise into sophisticated surgery. All in all, surgeons and artists are all pursuing perfection and profession.*”

Even if there are many similarities between a surgeon and an artist, differences exist still. Inevitably, an artist might go through more struggles in making a living compared to a surgeon. Dr. Yim felt blessed to be a surgeon prior to



**Figure 1** The art album “My Second Career: A Collection of Artwork” authored by Dr. Yim.



**Figure 2** Old and new friends gathered to attend Dr. Yim’s book launch event.



**Figure 3** Dr. Yim giving a speech on the topic “From a Surgeon to an Artist” at ATCCS 2018.



**Figure 4** Group photo of Dr. Yim and AME editors.

becoming an artist, which prevented him from relying on selling artworks for living. He creates artworks neither for money nor fame and, therefore, can fully enjoy the process of creating. If people love his artworks, it would be a bonus, but what is most important to him is to enjoy the moment of creating and love what he is doing.

Nowadays, art is important. Dr. Yim said one of his friends who is a professor of psychology once told him that the number of people with mental disorders such as anxiety and depression has reached a record high in Hong Kong

and other big cities. When Dr. Yim heard of this, he did not feel surprised because he knew that the pace of change is accelerating. He said, *“To many people, change would make them feel uncomfortable. We are facing stress from different aspects, from our jobs, relationships, and so on. We really need something to help us relieve our stress. Art could be a good tool and good venue. Painting sometimes lets us search our souls and enables us to discover ourselves, which helps us relieve stress. While people might think that stress is from their supervisors, family, or friends, in fact, the main stress is from ourselves.*



**Figure 5** Cover images of several AME journals designed by various artists.



**Figure 6** Interview with Prof. Anthony P. Yim: from a surgeon to an artist (1).

Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/article/view/25568>

*Therefore, we need to be able to express ourselves through either music or painting. Arts could let us rediscover ourselves."*

Medicine and art seemed to be far apart before we knew Dr. Yim. However, from Dr. Yim's story, we found that medicine is not only a science but also an art. More accurately, art is an essential part of medicine. Since 2015, Harvard Medical School has requested their students to take courses related to humanities and arts. Later, many medical schools adopted this education program. Yale School of Medicine has requested their students to go to the museum to observe oil paintings in order to cultivate their sympathy and ability of observation. At Columbia

University, medical students must take medical writing as a course, which trains them how to write novel, obituary, and so on. The purpose of requesting medical students to learn arts and literature is not to encourage students to abandon medicine for literature, but to help them better understand everyone's difference, making them more compassionate and considerate, and finally establishing a good relationship between doctors and patients.

Former Cover Editor of *The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, Dr. M. Therese Southgate, was once asked why a preeminent journal in clinical and scientific medicine would reproduce a renowned work of fine art on its front cover each week. Dr. Southgate answered:

*"There exists between the two an affinity that has been recognized for millennia. Art is a uniquely human quality. It signifies the unquenchable human quality of hope. Long and loving attention is at the heart of painting. It is also at the heart of medicine, at the heart of caring for the patient."*

AME Publishing Company adheres to the same philosophy and constantly tries to integrate art into our journals (*Figure 5*). We hope to perfectly combine art and medicine to let medicine reach a higher level and simultaneously further popularize art to the level we can reach.

For more details about our interview with Dr. Yim, please watch the following video (*Figure 6*), followed by a few selected artworks of his (*Figures 7-10*).

For more details about the art album, please visit <http://gallery.amegroups.com/>



**Figure 7** Selected Dr. Yim's artwork "Waterfall (IV)" (size: 69.5 cm × 138.5 cm).



**Figure 8** Selected Dr. Yim's artwork "Blue Mountain (IV)" (size: 76 cm × 33 cm).

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**Figure 9** Selected Dr. Yim's artwork "My Second Career I" (size: 46 cm × 34 cm).



**Figure 10** Selected Dr. Yim's artwork "Forest" (size: 27 cm × 18 cm).

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### Footnote

*Conflicts of Interest:* The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

### References

1. Cheung M, Shih TL. Interview with Prof. Anthony P. Yim: from a surgeon to an artist. *Asvide* 2018;5:591. Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/article/view/25568>