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TEAM

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Art in a general sense is the expression of a subject, its ideas, feelings and visions of the world. Likewise, an artist rooted in his culture, has the opportunity to express the mental mechanisms of his culture, its origins and his interpretative processes of the world. For this reason, intercultural studies are of fundamental importance, and art is one of the best means of investigation because it can give a genuine image of its culture of origin. This could apply to modern art, traditional art, or to that which has suffered foreign influences. Any form of art in any situation is the mirror of the culture from which it comes from and is imbued with its aesthetic ideas. Therefore, the study of art from different cultures and historical periods will enrich the artist's expressive abilities. The vision of nature, the vision of man in the world and the aesthetic ideas of Western and Chinese culture are often almost the opposite, but this does not exclude the possibility of dialogue. We strongly believe that Western art can be enriched through knowledge of the latter. At the same time, however, we must be careful about what it brings and how it is imported, and above all, we must not allow external culture to prevail over indigenous culture. For this reason, dialogue must be undertaken with wisdom and in full knowledge of the facts, not only by transferring information, but also by having a deep knowledge and understanding of both cultures in order to find an appropriate mean of communication. This is the most difficult aspect of intercultural exchange, as we are living in the age of globalization and international capitalism. In the so-

called "global village" we believe we have unlimited cognitive possibilities with minimal effort and we are led to believe that communication is within reach and almost automatic, for example via the Internet or the ease of trade of goods, and this inevitably leads to superficial and mostly wrong communication. This vision is decidedly wrong, because it leads to shallow false knowledge, spread of prejudice and cultural arrogance. Unfortunately, there is no easy solution for the intercultural communication problem, therefore it requires an intellectual and cognitive effort, a desire to study and gain deeper knowledge. Thus, our goal is to create a language suitable for establishing a cultural dialogue that is structured and not superficial.

This magazine aims to give a voice to the contemporary Chinese and non-Chinese scholars and artists. Our purpose is to create a cultural bridge between two great cultures, in order to establish a rich and fruitful dialogue in the sphere of Chinese painting. Chinese mountain and water painting is one of the main artistic expressions in China, characterized by more than 1500 years of evolution and revolutions, and has found a new golden age of creativity and expression in the contemporary times. This magazine will introduce some modern and contemporary Chinese artists, the theories of Chinese painting and the views of environmental aesthetics, in a way that is reachable for everybody, from the academic world to any curious mind interested in the field of Chinese art and culture.

Our hope is to popularize an artistic expression that could have a positive impact on our lives, enabling us to cross certain limits subconsciously imposed by the western culture, from the very roots like the concept of reality, our existence, our place in this world and how we relate with it. Every cultural system has replied to these basic questions, but the answers are all different, and art is one of the deepest expressions that embody all of these diverse conceptions.

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OUR APPROACH

FROM THE FIGURE OF THE CHINESE INTELLECTUAL ARTIST TO CONTEMPORANEITY.

DURING THE EIGHTH CENTURY CHINA, A NEW FIGURE OF AN INTELLECTUAL ARTIST WAS BORN: THIS FIGURE WOULD BECOME TOPICAL IN THE CHINESE CULTURAL PANORAMA AND MAKE ITS WAY TO THE PRESENT DAY.

WENREN HUA 文人画, IS THE ONE WHO, FOLLOWING THE HUMANISTIC VALUES AND TEACHINGS OF THE TRADITION, UPDATES AND APPLIES THEM TO THE ARTISTIC-INTELLECTUAL NEEDS OF HIS TIME. THIS PROCESS HAS NEVER STOPPED, AND STILL PERSISTS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD.

THE WENREN HUA ENCOMPASSES THE POET, THE PAINTER, THE CALLIGRAPHER, THE THEORIST, THE SCHOLAR AND THE INTELLECTUAL IN A SINGLE FIGURE, AND SEES THE CULTIVATION OF THE SPIRIT AND MIND AS ONE OF THE MAIN PURPOSES OF HIS/HER WORK.

IN THIS WAY, A CLOSE LINK IS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN PRACTICE AND ARTISTIC THEORY; AT THE SAME TIME THERE IS NO SEPARATION BETWEEN THE ARTS, AND THERE IS A COMMON THREAD BETWEEN INTELLECTUAL PRACTICE AND MATERIAL APPLICATION.

OF COURSE THIS FIGURE IS CLOSELY LINKED TO CHINESE CULTURAL HERITAGE, BUT THIS DOES NOT MAKE IT LESS COMPATIBLE WITH THE ARTISTIC-CULTURAL NEEDS OF WESTERNIZED CONTEMPORANEITY.

IT ALSO FITS NATURALLY INTO THE TREND OF ENVIRONMENTAL AESTHETICS, WHICH IS AN EXPRESSIVE CHANNEL OF CONTEMPORARY ART AND OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE, GIVEN THAT THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS THAT AFFLICT OUR SOCIETY ARE OFTEN LINKED TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE DESTRUCTIVE APPROACH THAT CONTEMPORARY MEN HAVE TOWARDS IT.

RESPECT FOR NATURE AND THE NEED TO PRESERVE IT BY LIVING WITH IT IN HARMONY ARE INTRINSIC ELEMENTS OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE THOUGHT AND THAT OF THE WENREN HUA, WHICH SEE MAN AND NATURE AS TWO ELEMENTS THAT ARE PART OF THE SAME SYSTEM: IN THESE TERMS, IN ORDER TO PRESERVE HUMAN LIFE, NATURAL EXISTENCE MUST ALSO BE PROTECTED, OR ELSE WE WOULD GO TOWARDS THE DECAY OF BOTH.

MANIFESTO

We find ourselves living in the era of globalization. Thanks to the infosphere we live in, with just one click we can be in Togo, with two clicks you can be studying Sanskrit, with three you're already updated on what's going on in Bhutan, and with four more clicks you're listening to a piece played with the duduk, and immediately after we could be looking at two whirling dervishes. In half a day we become experts in Armenian music, Sufi spirituality, Himalayan geopolitics and in any other aspect of world culture.

Fantastic. Finally, a world without cultural barriers, devoted to the exchange and access of mutual knowledge. In this global village without borders, we dance to the beat of superficiality, sloppy culture and of cultural arrogance, where ignorance is adorned with two-dimensional images, where the concept of "knowing that you do not know" has been abolished, although without knowing.

It's important to note that, in this Village the chief is western, the customs and habits are also mostly western, and so is the linguistic and material means of communication along with most, intellectual expressions and world views of its inhabitants. The inhabitants tend to ignore what is found outside the Village, not by choice, but by condition, not out of lack of curiosity, but because of the limited means. The Village is truly global on a physical level, it truly embraces the entire earth's surface, but in fact

it remains on the surface, it does not deepen, and if it deepens it does it in its own way, as it would in the centre from which it developed. In fact, the Village is ancient and full of History and histories, it has always had multiculturalism, always in expansion and translation, but only recently has it reached global status.

The Village is now global, so everyone is welcome but the rules to follow are those of the Village head. Everyone can bring something to the table, but it will still have to be adapted to the matrix of the Village.

With these premises, it is possible to face and analyse infinite issues concerning the actual state of the alleged globalization. For instance, how it believes to know different cultures, but in reality this knowledge is based only on a store of empty images which are then filled with the world view of the aforementioned head of the Village. The same goes for that mercantile capitalism that has arrived at every corner of the globe, but gives the best of itself only if we follow the needs of the Village. We stand against a single world view, when in fact there are many. The ones that does not support diversity, but translates them, one that does not make them participate in the debate with their own voices, but accepts them only after a trial of metamorphosis. We are against the imperialism of tastes and customs, of judgment, of means of expression, and of what to express, a situation which

inevitably leads to a cultural flattening. Against this self-proclaimed global Village. It does not have the ability to see neighbouring villages, since it believes that all possible villages are within itself.

We as Sino-artists (some of non-Chinese origin, devoted to the study and practice of Chinese painting), will focus on the areas concerning our cultural sphere, precisely that of Chinese art. Especially those related to painting, with a particular eye for landscape painting, which from now on we will call according to the Chinese denomination, Mountain and Water painting.

"shanshui hua 山水画"

The main will is to communicate with the Village through our art and our words, to present one of the many shaded areas with which it is scattered. Our task is to find a language that is intelligible to the Village as well as faithful to the original meaning. Without smoothing its diversity, without avoiding clashes, without sweetening the pill. In this way it will be the Village that will make the effort to understand, and only in this way will the communication be successful. In fact, we trust in the Village's ability to understand languages not forged by itself.

The reasons that drive us in this campaign are varied and erudition is not one of those. At best it can be a side effect.

One of the biggest problems of the Village is that it believes that movements of progress and evolutions only exists inside itself, that it has reached the status of "modern", and those who are not indigenous come from a static culture, backward and anchored to the past; without the use of the means forged by

the Village and without its revolutionary spirit no one can participate in the dialogue of contemporaneity. So, to finally get into the subject, in the Village Chinese painting is traditional, therefore linked to the past, unable to evolve, something good just for the art history books and museums, worthy of respect, but with the same respect that is given for archaeological finds.

There is no conception of a modern or contemporary Chinese painting, also because when the term Chinese painting is pronounced, for some reason it is always accompanied by the adjective "traditional", which clearly denies the concept of modernity. Chinese art can only be defined as modern if expressed through the means and processes of modern western art.

Revelation! There is modern and contemporary Chinese art; mountain and water painting has been evolving for at least 1500 years, and continues to evolve, and other painting expressions are even older. As obvious as it seems, China is extremely large, therefore there are many centres of cultural irradiation, and for this reason there are various schools within China that follow different pictorial expressions. Consequently there is not just one movement of contemporary Chinese painting.

Our main objective follows:

To spread the knowledge of contemporary Chinese painting outside of China, and to give voice to the great artists of the last century as well as to the new young artists.

Why is it important you may ask? For starters, in order to make sense of the term globalization. But above all, to enrich the Village and to redefine its ideas of intellectual absolutism.

Chinese art, together with all the other intellectual expressions of China, refers to a system of values that has come down to the present day from ancient times. This great apparatus of knowledge and ideas has influenced and is still influencing the world view of Chinese people and of course also their artistic expressions. The same discourse can be re-proposed in a general way also to the evolution of the western mind, a process that probably was less coherent than the Chinese one, which however led to the formation of various expressions of thought rooted in the conception of the world that the Village forged during its evolution. And this is exactly the key point of our reasoning, once the world interpretation system is established, it is almost impossible to get out of it, as it is invisible, and its boundaries unrecognizable. Because it being the only view you know, you believe that it is the only view that exists. It's like those unfortunate people who were chained in the platonic cave. It wasn't until someone came in from the outside, did they realize the condition they were in.

This was also the case for China until the mid-nineteenth century. China behaved like the Village, just another Village that did not see those who were outside of it, except of course through its own modalities. And even though external cultural influences were accepted, it was always retranslated in Chinese terms, just like the Village does. As a consequence, there was a sense of cultural superiority compared to that which was not Chinese. Until one terrible day, when the barbarians arrived with cannons and rifles and destroyed the armies of the great empire. On that day, besides the fall of many lives, many certainties also fell in terms of value. Their system had not protected them from catastrophe, as it once did since the dawn of Chinese culture. This was not the first time that China fell into the hands of foreigners, and every time the foreigners were sinicized. Thus, their cultural continuity persisted. However, the value system was still slowly collapsing to the point where it almost disappeared. Since then it has rebuilt itself, but the system of the other foreign villages took a hold as well, strong of its modernity.

Accordingly, in contemporary China it can be said that there are two systems, the original and the imported one. The same could be said for the world of art, but art can be applied at will on any area. This has created a unique situation where the two worlds communicate with each other, sometimes one taking over the other, creating conflicts but also at the same time a fertile ground for creativity.

It is exactly for this reason that we want to make this new system of thought known to the Village, only then will it be able to see its own boundaries, so that it will be able to ask new questions and give itself new answers.

Let's take a concrete example. The ancient western visual arts and the Renaissance up to modernity, basically acted in the field of mimesis. In painting, all the techniques to represent the visual aspect of the surrounding world comes together. Now coming back to the Village, to top it all, there was this terrifying yoke called Albertan's perspective. The Village gave a great deal of value to the sight, making it almost the only tool for perceiving reality. Establishing invisible perceptual borders because they were all-encompassing. However, at a certain point artists and intellectuals got tired of this conception, and thus historical avant-garde was born. Unfortunately, not knowing any other way of perceiving the world other than the anthropocentric one of the gaze, they found themselves in a rather uncomfortable position, so much so that the path ended with destruction of the form and that of the painting itself, and having to resort to new media to be able to express themselves. It is precisely for these reasons that in contemporary era we refer to paintings as an "old lady" who keeps up with new artistic expressions with great difficulty.

So where is all this getting at? In China, the influence of western art came between the late 1800s and early 1900's. The first to arrive was via Japan, the realistic techniques of the Barbizon school. And what were the most shocking innovations for the Chinese? Mimesis, focal perspective, chiaroscuro, and all those techniques which at the time in the West were considered regressed, representatives of a system that in those years the avant-gardes despised because of its anti-contemporary expressions. Why was this seen in China as revolutionary and innovative? Because traditional pictorial theories disgusted the view and representation of form as perceived

by our eyes, therefore it was an almost completely unexplored area.

China has had the good fortune of meeting and accepting a different way of interpreting the world, so why should the Village be deprived of it?

Just how much could a new way of understanding reality help the old painting of the Village? A whole world would open up, which should not mimic the Chinese one, but be inspired by it. So, we also take sides against the supremacism of sight and consequently against anthropocentrism. Our desire is to introduce these new visions, these new conceptions, and these new values. Not that the Village is completely unaware of it, but this knowledge is hidden in academic publications, accessible to those interested in the subject, but very far from the world of contemporary art or anyone else.

To conclude, we will introduce one of these intrinsic aspects of Chinese art which can be of great help and source of inspiration for our beloved Village. Why is mountain and water painting of great value in the contemporary world and why should the Village re-evaluate it? In the great pictorial experience of the Village, landscape painting as an independent genre was born late, and died early. The fact that in China it is already the higher form of painting and has a millennium and a half of history should make us ask questions about how it has probably been underestimated. Well, in reality it has not been underestimated, in fact there is no right and wrong in art, it has been evaluated according to the means that the Village head, according to its conceptions and ideas. And it is precisely

for this reason, we must open the doors to new value systems.

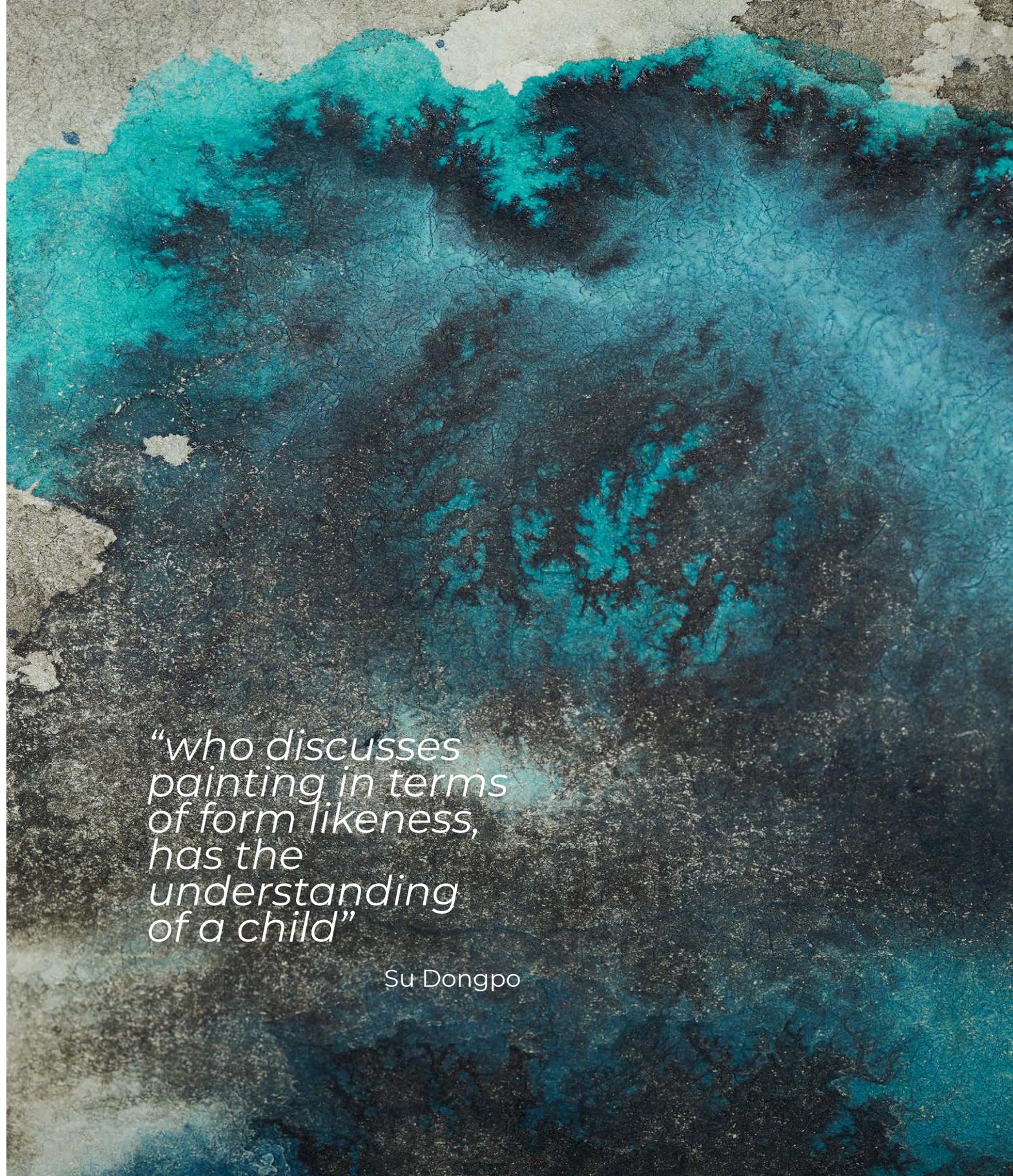
Art cannot be alienated from the reality in which it is produced, and one of the most important themes for us is that of ecology, in fact this hyper capitalist Village has massacred the world we live and does not seem to want to take steps back. Many have already set in motion to counter this destructive madness, but there is no contest. In the Village there has recently been talk of environmental aesthetics that lashes out against anthropocentrism to concert on environmental beauties, therefore going against one, the axioms of western aesthetics since ancient Greece, against that conception that sees man as the superior creature and dominant in the ecumene. This new point of view, at least for the Village, is one of the basic aspects of Chinese ethics. Philosophy and aesthetics are found in the texts at the base of Chinese culture, at the basis of Confucian philosophy and Daoist thought and continues to be repeated till modern times. A conception that does not just appreciate environmental beauties, but its holistic conception of the universe puts man on the same level as any other creation of nature. In *Yi Zhuan* 易传 (5th century BCE), a commentary on *Yi Jing* 易经, wrote that "the greatest virtue of heaven and earth is life" (天地之大德曰生), this is to say that the greatest virtue is to create an environment where all life forms and natural elements can coexist in harmony.

For this reason, too, the category of still life does not exist in Chinese painting, in fact for the Chinese artist it would be absurd to paint lifeless subjects.

For these and other reasons, the Village and the artists that reside in it will benefit from learning Chinese art. Mountain and water painting will inspire them, the beauty of nature will awaken the minds and set the minds in motion. The boundaries of the Village will begin to appear and we can finally begin to break them down.

"who discusses painting in terms of form likeness, has the understanding of a child"

Su Dongpo



The Poetic Dance of Lines: A Brief Encounter with Wu Guanzhong's Expressive Ink Art

By: Shuo Sue Hua

In a seminal paper, Martin J. Powers argues that the Chinese literati intellectuals have always found a way to construct the discernibly unique visual narratives to represent their national and cultural identity. Ink art is one powerful instrument for such sustenance of self-identification.¹ Wu Guanzhong (1919-2010) is a preeminent 20th-century Chinese painter. From 1937 to 1942, he studied Western oil painting and Chinese style painting in the Hangzhou Academy of Art under Chinese art masters Lin Fengmian (1900-1991) and Pan Tianshou (1897-1971).² In 1947, he won a government scholarship to study at l'Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux-arts, where the painter received training in both classical and contemporary arts in Paris, France. When studying in France, Wu immersed himself in the paintings from the period of European high modernism. The richness and freedom of expression in modern western paintings had widened his horizon of appreciating art and honed his painting skills.³

1 Martin J. Powers, The Cultural Politics of the Brushstroke, in *The Art Bulletin* 95/2 (2013), 312-327.

2 Zhijian Qian, *Towards a Sinicized Modernism: The Artistic Practice of Lin Fengmian in Wartime China, 1937-1949* (PhD diss., New York University, 2014); Wu Guanzhong, In memory of my teacher Lin Fengmian, in *Literature and Art Studies* 4 (1979), 71.

3 The European painters include Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), Eugène Henri Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), Henri Émile Benoît Matisse (1869-1954), Pablo Ruiz Picasso (1881-1973), Amedeo Clemente Modigliani (1884-1920), Georges Braque (1882-1963) and Maurice Utrillo (1883-1955). See Wu Guanzhong, *Again on Shitao's Comments on Painting*, in *Art Research* (no. 1: 1997): 43.

After returning to China, Wu taught at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 1951. He was criticized for being too "modern" in an environment where the preference for social realist style prevailed and dominated. Because of the artist's incompatibility with the mainstream visual trend at the academy, he was transferred to teach at the Tsinghua University in 1953 and the Beijing Normal College and College of Arts and Crafts since 1956. During the first half of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1977), Wu was sent to the countryside, and did not have the luxury to paint in a studio.⁴ In 1973, he was recalled to Beijing and resumed painting. While working on multiple commissioned projects for hotels, the painter was accused as a "bourgeois" painter. At this juncture he shifted away from Western-style oil paintings to work mainly in the Chinese medium.⁵

Wu Guanzhong's exuberant ink and color paintings display coalescence of Western and oriental visual languages. The artist's distinctive personal style leads to a new genre of Chinese ink painting.⁶ Since the late 1970s, the artist held successful solo exhibitions in China, increasing his popularity within the nation. Following a series

4 Wu Guanzhong, Cold Winter, Sweltering Summer, Earth, in *Collected Writings of Wu Guanzhong* 1 (Beijing: Tuanjie Chubanshe, 2008), 40-42.

5 For discussion on Wu Guanzhong's artistic development in response to the cultural politics in China, see Wenwen Liu, *Modernity Through Syncretism and Eclecticism: Wu Guanzhong's Artistic Practice in the Cultural and Political Environment of the PRC, 1949-1989* (PhD diss., Victoria University of Wellington, 2019).

6 Wenwen Liu, *Modernity Through Syncretism and Eclecticism*, 15-16.

Wu Guanzhong, *Waterfall* 《瀑》, ink on paper, 1999



of exhibitions in Asia, America, and Europe starting from the mid-1980s, Wu became known internationally. A recipient of the award of Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the French Ministry of Culture, he was the first living Chinese painter to hold a one-man show at the British Museum.⁷

An important part of the 20th-centu-

7 Michael Sullivan, *Modern Chinese Art: The Khoan and Michael Sullivan Collection* (Ashmolean Museum, 2001), 134.

ry Chinese art history had to do with its art in response to Western art, and scholars have pointedly discerned the cultural differences in conceptualizing the abstract quality in pictorial languages.⁸ When comparing Wu with the abstract painters in the West, art historian Fong Wen commented that "most modern Chinese painters have refrained from experimenting

8 A classical study is: Mayching Kao, *China's Response to the West in Art, 1898-1937* (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1972).



Clouds and snow 《云与雪》, ink on paper, 132x66, 1990

with non-objective art.⁹ The artist was conscious of the gazes landed at him from the West:

Each time I paint I imagine two men looking [at me] from behind: one is a fellow townsman [from China], the other

9 Wen C. Fong, *Between Two Cultures: Late-Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Chinese Paintings from the Robert H. Ellsworth Collection* (Metropolitan Museum of Art: 2001), 254; David Clarke, *Modern Chinese Art* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 46-47.

*is an art expert from the West. Are my paintings capable of moving both audiences? It is really difficult. I spent my entire life struggling with it.*¹⁰

Like many of his artist peers in China, Wu learned about Western art and theories through lenses filtered with Chinese terminology and concepts, for instance, by equating realism with *xieshi*, and

10 Wu Guanzhong, *Fifty Years of Painting*, in *Collected Writings of Wu Guanzhong* 1, 159.

abstraction with *xieyi*. A distinguishable feature of his ink paintings has to do with the insistence on connecting abstraction with the forms of concrete phenomena, rendering presentations of poetic dreamscapes.¹¹ His favourite metaphor is to consider painting as a kite with a string that connects to life

11 Artistic Concepts of Wu Guanzhong's Paintings Dance out from the Frames, News.gov.HK, accessed 13 April 2020. (<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201111/10/P2011111100395.htm>)

experiences, human emotions, and the karma of the world.¹² To him, non-objective abstraction in art is like a kite with a broken string, and the attempt at a hybrid style was to engender a pictorial language that is deeply historical in form while absorbing elements from the post-impressionists.¹³

12 Michael Chen, *Wu Guanzhong – a Kite with an Unbroken String*, 19-20.

13 Wu Guanzhong, *The Eyes of Painting*, 128.

Seeking for the common ground of employing abstraction for artistic expression in both Western modernism and classical Chinese painting, Wu's approach to abstraction called the attention of the scholars trained in the West to an illuminating discussion on the cultural differences in the pictorial narratives of modern abstraction between Western and Chinese paintings.¹⁴ With an understanding of both the Chinese

14 Wenwen Liu, *Modernity Through Syncretism and Eclecticism*, 144-158.

and Western sides of this issue, Michael Sullivan did not hesitate to show sympathy for Wu:

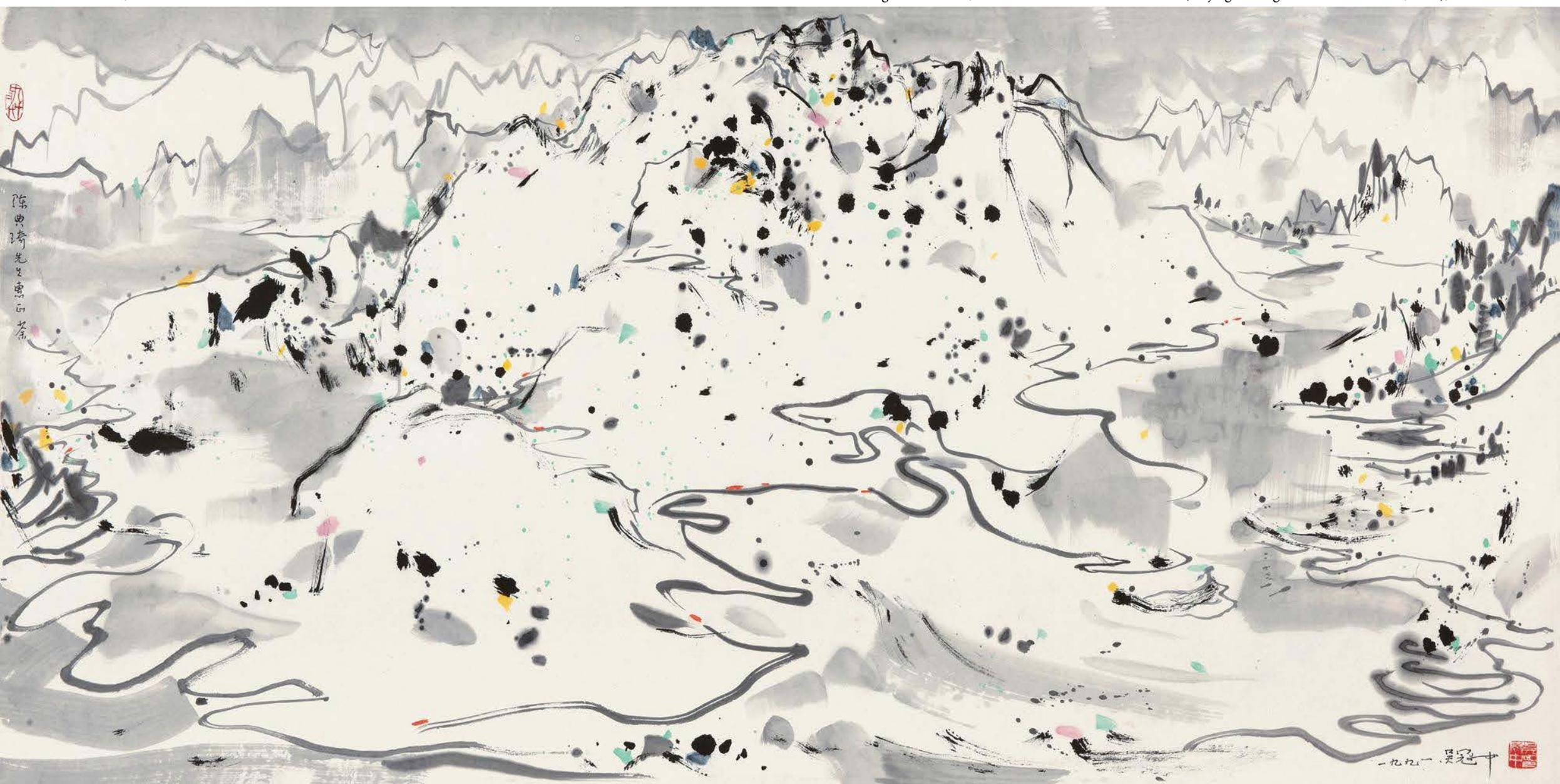
To Wu Guanzhong, abstraction means abstracting the "essence" of the form. To him, the greatest Chinese abstract painter is Bada Shanren. He is able to convey his disquiet and his sorrow through the play of black against white, and through the movement of his lines, and through figurative forms he pursues flux and transi-

ence. His rocks are top-heavy, looking as though they are about to fall and tumble. His trees are rootless, looking as though they are about to take flight. All these contribute to a feeling of dreamlike unreality in his painting.¹⁵ This, Wu Guanzhong calls abstraction. Since Chinese artists have always held that the forms of nature are the visible manifestations of a reality that lies behind the images, why diminish the force and meaning of the forms in

15 Peter C. Sturman, *Wu Guanzhong and The Task of Painting a New China*, 38-39.

the painting by removing all connections with nature? Why, in Wu Guanzhong's metaphor, cut the kite string?¹⁶

16 Wu Guanzhong, in continuous exchanges of thoughts with Michael Sullivan, was aware of the cross-cultural difference in understanding abstract aesthetics. As he writes in 1983: "Professor Sullivan recently wrote to me, saying that [my] abstract painting is different from [the Western notion of] nonobjective art...to me forms and phenomena must come from life with no exception..." See Wu Guanzhong, *Kite with Unbroken String*, in Ruixian Chen ed., *Collection of Wu Guanzhong's Writings* (Beijing: Bafang Wenhua Chubanshe, 1992), 19.





At Rest, ink on paper, 2010

Another stream of analysis of Wu's artworks drew a linkage between Wu and the leading American painter Paul Jackson Pollock (1912-1956), taking the curatorial writing for Wu's retrospective exhibition in 1987 for example:

Take, for example, 'Lion Grove Garden, Suzhou' (1983, cat. No 56). One sees in it a profusion of meandering lines and splashing colors that outlined the artificial rock arrangement and the trees in a typical Suzhou garden. To an art critic, the lines and splashes may call to mind the drip paintings by Jackson Pollock. Yet when asked, he claimed he had never seen a Pollock painting prior to this work. Indeed, the brushstrokes in 'lion grove' are probably more akin in spirit to those by the Qing painter, Ba Da, whom he admires. Like Ba Da, the lines in Wu's

*painting no longer just describe the apparatus, they reveal the state of mind of the artist. In Chinese painting Wu has found an expressive vehicle for his art. Since 1980, he has worked extensively in this medium.*¹⁷

Although the painter claimed to have not seen Pollock's paintings, comparative studies of Wu and American abstract expressionist painters offer a meaningful way to interpret his art and ideas.¹⁸ Peter C. Sturman suggests that Wu's artistic conception which treats form and concept as the key components of a painting is however fundamentally different from

¹⁷ Michael Chen, *Wu Guanzhong - a Kite with an Unbroken String*, 4.

¹⁸ It is not new to find scholars taking transcultural approaches for the study of 20th-century modern art, oftentimes cross-referencing and comparing paintings between Chinese paintings and Western art. For instance, Sherman Lee, the first to write

that of Pollock's.¹⁹ Art historian Richard Barnhart made a similar remark: "One of his [Wu Guanzhong's] most recent works created at the time of my writing this essay (October 1988) is a huge mural for the Beijing hotel, the largest painting he has ever done. The old pine trees he has painted, called "Pure, Strange, Old, and Weird," will remind some of Jackson Pollock, but it is clear that the writhing, liquid, flowing line and splashed dots of this exuberant creation have their roots far back in the seventeenth-century individualists, and somehow, in the artists of Paris who have been absorbed into the mind of Wu Guanzhong."²⁰

With knowledge in modern European

a Ph.D. dissertation on 20th-century American watercolor paintings, cross-referenced American watercolor paintings against Chinese ink paintings. See Sherman E. Lee, *A Critical Survey of American Watercolor Painting* (PhD diss., Western Reserve University, 1941).

¹⁹ Peter C. Sturman, *Wu Guanzhong and the Task of Painting a New China*, 43.

²⁰ Richard Barnhart, *The Odyssey of Wu Guanzhong*, 17.

and traditional Chinese painting techniques, Wu was attentively looking for pictorial languages suitable for capturing modern urban living experience in Asia's frontier cities. It was not fortuitous that the artist discovered a subtle resemblance between Hong Kong scenery and Paris on the canvases of French painters. He understands that the aesthetic system rooted in another clime (for example the Jiangnan area in China) is inadequate for the Hong Kong images. His Jiangnan-themed paintings are characterized by contrasts of black and white colours and sharply defined clusters of geometrical shapes including rectangles, shallow cubes, verticals and horizontals. Later in the writing the traveling artist compares what he observes, the unfamiliar, with what he knows.

The traditional brushwork (bi mo) [for Chinese style landscape paintings], for example, marking ink dots with the center tip or slanted tip of the brush to paint the moss, is not right for portraying



City Night ink on paper, 1997



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the Hong Kong landscape. Neither how Monet painted the [Parisian] boulevard nor the way Albert Marquet depicted the port scene is appropriate for this oriental metropolis. The narrow, densely populated old Hong Kong streets are similar to the modest alleys painted by Maurice Utrillo, however without the sense of melancholia. The modern architecture [in Hong Kong] features straight-line, a magnificent arc, smooth surface, busy

streets and pointed rooftops. It reminds me of the orchestra, the dragon tiger gate (long hu men) and the prose in its loosely defined structure. It should be entirely up to the artist to weave the brightly-colored vista that he/she sees himself/herself.²¹

In the 1990s, traveling to Hong Kong has ratified Wu Guanzhong's more im-
21 Wu Guanzhong, Wo Fu Dan Qing: Wu Guanzhong Zi Zhuan (Painting and My Life: Autobiography of Wu Guanzhong) (Hong Kong: Joint Publish-

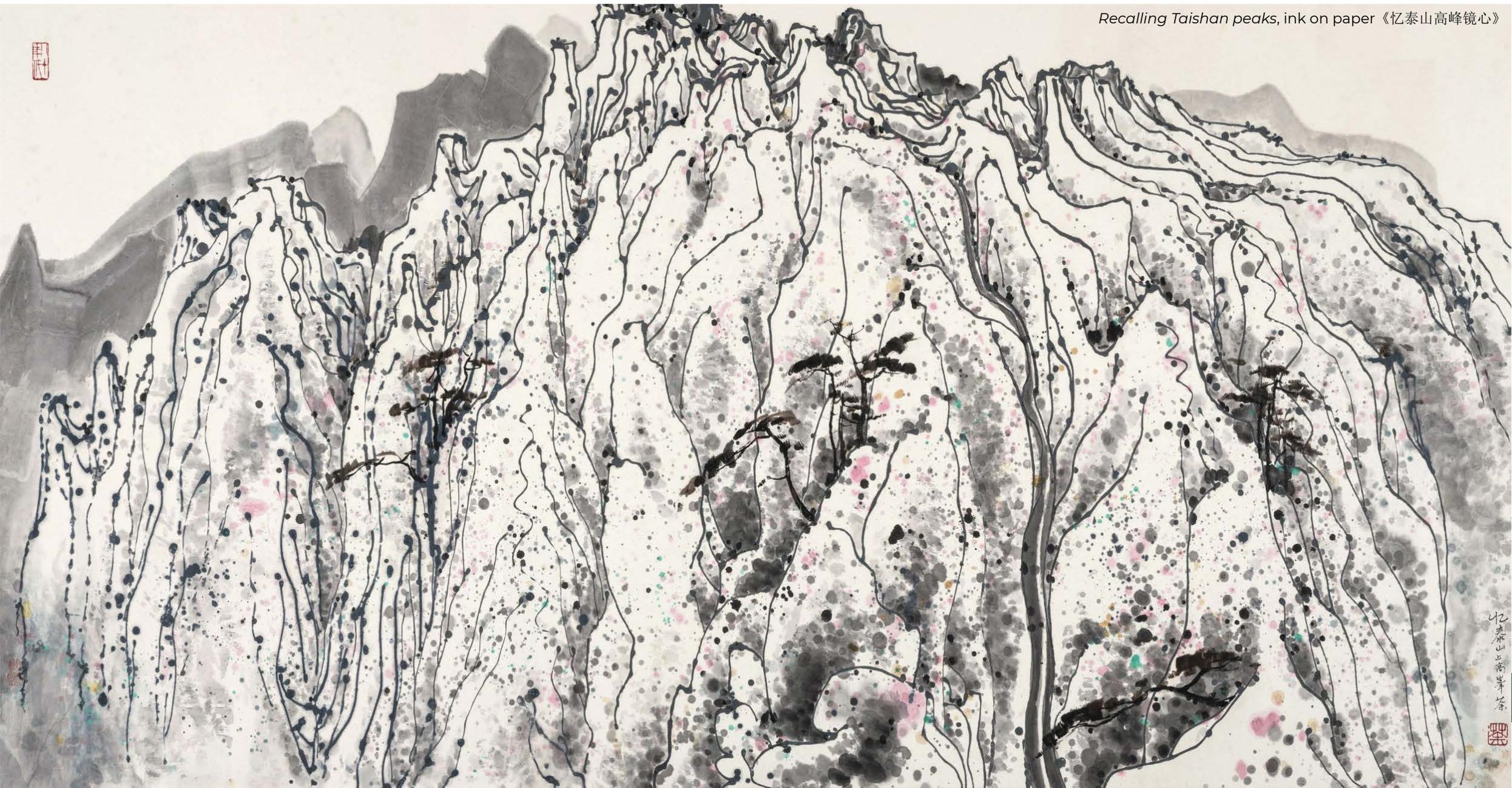
agitative reworking of Hong Kong cityscape, with a more daringly abstract and less documentary approach. Deliberately avoiding the predominance of gray tones, in *City Night* (1997), Wu uses the artifice of intense, pervasive black tonalities to evoke the sensuous exuberance and eternal loneliness born out of the city's nightlife he had seen and remembered. Hundreds of pairs of

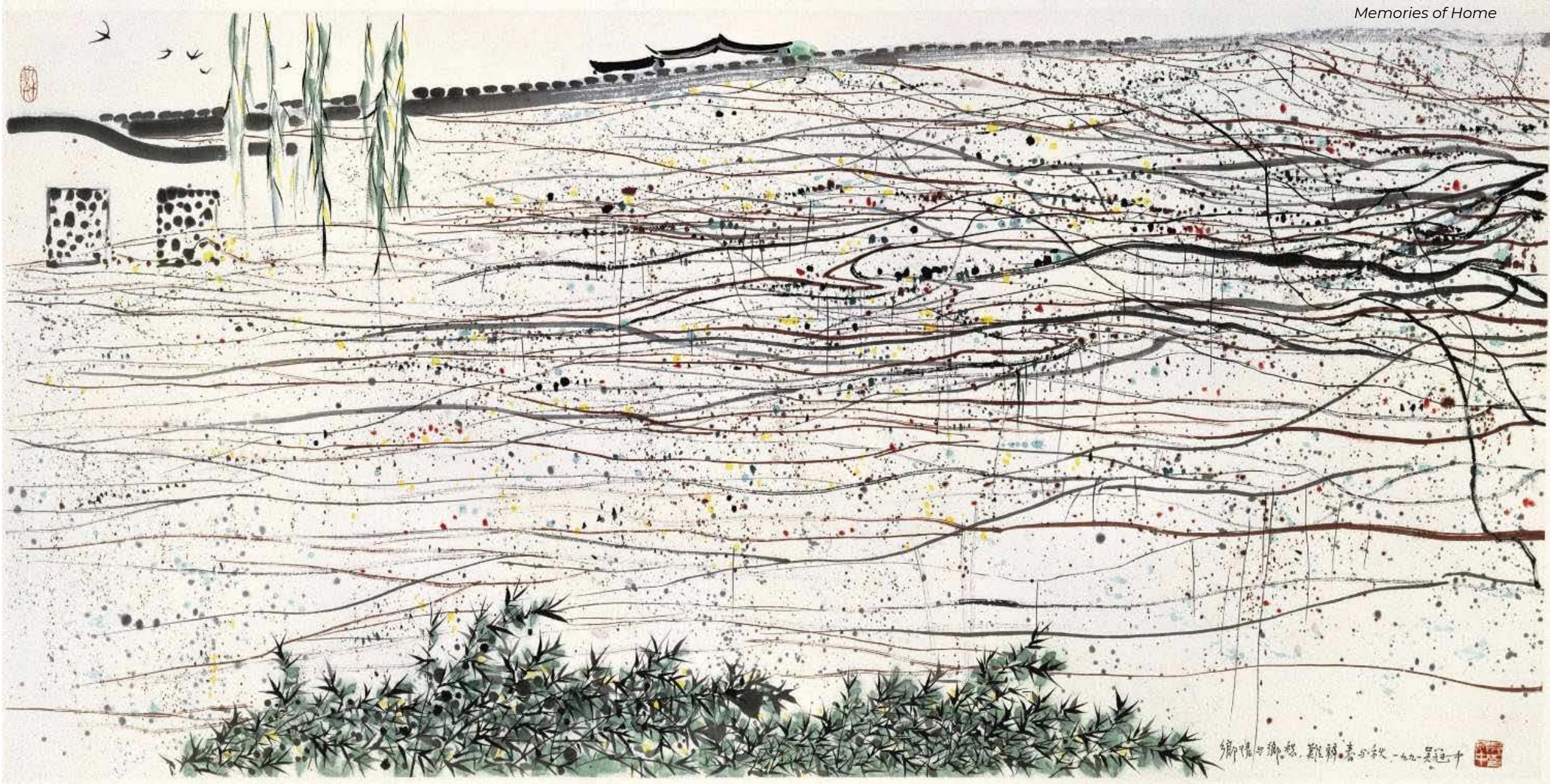
ing (Hong Kong) Company Limited, 2005): 70-71.

black and white shuttle across the dimming air to take the shape of variable grids, like a densely woven net. The lucidly colorful paint, splashed embellish the overwhelming gloom, exposing the imagined truth by pulling the viewer into an imagined reality of the bustling, populated streets, observing as the dazzling neon light traversing the dark background.²²

22 Chinese art historian Chen Chiyu suggests that

Recalling Taishan peaks, ink on paper 《忆泰山高峰镜心》





The painter needs not to specify location, but rather, he uses color, facture and rectilinear grid of intersecting, mellifluous lines to abstract the image. Concrete objects are leached out, and flatness and aesthetically controlled

Wu Guanzhong uses colors to compose abstract patterns which give new life to the city's architecture. See Chiyu Chen, "The Combination of Chinese and Western Influences on Chinese Modern Ink Painting with Lin Fengmian, Zhang Ding and Wu Guanzhong as Examples," *Art of the Orient*, no. 2 (2013):165-188.

unity of rectangle, square and circles emphasize the modernizing version of the city view. It hardly matters whether the painting clandestinely inscribes the memory of the painter's trip or encounters in Hong Kong or a hypothetical one that resulted from imagination with the pictorial ambition to reject an empirically grounded approach.

Hong Kong-based art historian David Clarke once suggests: "The notion of

Hong Kong as the place where "East meets West" is an enormously widespread cliché, and one which manages to deny any separate identity to the colony, to reduce it to a "gateway" or "bridge" through or over which Chinese and Western influences pass.²³ In this respect Wu Guanzhong seems to share a common dilemma faced with his Hong Kong peers. They opted for neutralizing

²³ David Clarke, "Between East and West: Negotiations with Tradition and Modernity in Hong Kong

or muting the identity issue of Hong Kong, placing it to the background to give place for reconciling Chineseness and modernity in their art. As the painter tacitly oscillated between the Chinese cultural root and a quest for modernity, he effaced in his works the material and social depreciation of the city's colonial history. At the critical time of the trans-

Art," in David Clarke, *Art and Place: Essays on Art from a Hong Kong Perspective* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996): 73.



fer of sovereignty over Hong Kong, he consciously avoided the issue of regional geopolitics and international politics over the control of Hong Kong, albeit proud of the fruitful achievement of the city's economic development.

In the pictorial conception of Wu Guanzhong's abstract Hong Kong paintings, colored blocks seem to symbolize the artist's emotional content in response to the glamor of the motley crew of high-rise mansions and their human dwellers. It is the confluence of dreams and real-life encounters that motivate viewers to perceive, assess, visualize and invent their own interpretations of these works.²⁴ Wu writes that he has been pursuing the expansive, desolate, grand and profound realm, amplified with hopes for mankind, the multitude of happenings and emotions.²⁵

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²⁴ Michael Sullivan comments that Wu is able to "convey his disquiet and his sorrow through the play of black against white, and through the movements of his lines... Through figurative forms he pursues flux and transience. His rocks are top-heavy, looking as though they are about to fall and tumble. His trees are rootless, looking as though they are about to take flight... All these contribute to a feeling of dreamlike unreality in his painting." See Michael Sullivan, "Wu Guanzhong: Reflections on His Life, Thought and Art," in Lucy Lim, ed., *Wu Guanzhong: A Contemporary Chinese Artist* (San Francisco, CA: Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco, 1989).

²⁵ See Wu Guanzhong, "Time Immemorial (Hong-huang)," in Wu Guanzhong, *Collected Writings of Wu Guanzhong* vol. 2 (Wu Guanzhong Wencong) (Beijing: Tuanjie Chubanshe, 2008):3.

Between East and West – the *Enso* Cats by Endre Penovac

By: Thorsten Schirmer

Ink is a fascinating medium with great expressiveness. While ink in the Western tradition is primarily used for drawing, in East Asia it is the most important medium for painting. According to the Chinese tradition, calligraphy is a mirror to the soul. Ink painting in East Asia, whose most important means of expression are paper, brush and ink, is shaped by the same principles. China has kept and maintained this tradition to the present day and thus creating a unique alternative to Western painting. The Serbian Endre Penovac is one of the few Western artists who have successfully approached this tradition. His depictions of animals use the techniques of western watercolors, but also show the influence of Chinese ink painting.

Born in Serbia in 1956, Endre Penovac studied at the Art Academy in Novi Sad. Already in his youth, through the books and poems of Hermann Hesse, he came into contact with Far Eastern philosophy, which had a lasting influence on him. The focus of his work is watercolor and ink painting, in which he particularly focuses on depicting cats. In doing so, he reduces the form to a few expressive lines and gradient effects. In this way he succeeds in a remarkable range of expression, the degree of abstraction of which ranges from precisely observed and effectively simplified movement studies to the almost complete dissolution of form. What characterizes Endre Penovac's work is its fine balance between Western watercolor painting and influences from the East Asian tradition. His careful observation and high tech-



牧溪 Muxi 《六柿》 Six Persimmons 35.1 x 29 cm

nical perfection has earned him the recognition of a wide audience not only in the Western world but also in China, as his numerous international exhibitions, workshops and awards impressively confirm.

In East Asia, specializing in a subject that has to be practiced throughout life is a common challenge on the "Way of Painting" that Endre Penovac faces with his cat images. He expresses them with calligraphic brush strokes and ink washes or modulates them out of an ink circle, as the Chan monks uses to paint them as a symbol of the oneness of all being. This so called Enso (円相, jap. "circle") has its roots in the "Ten Ox-Herding Paintings" 《十牛圖》 of the Chinese Chan master Guoan Shiyuan, who around 1150 described and illustrated the way of enlightenment, showing an herd boy who has lost his ox, and starts to search for it. Finally, in picture eight there is no herd boy or ox left, just an empty circle symbolizing the highest

level of enlightenment. Penovac likes to transform this Enso into a sleeping cat, his beloved animal as the main subject. Corresponding to the image of the Enso with its open, converging ends, the poles of Occident and Orient come so close together in these works, resulting in a happy interplay of both traditions. So with his art work Endre Penovac joins the community of those people who stand for a dialogue of cultures As Goethe formulated it around 200 years ago:

He who knows himself and others
Here will also see,
That the East and West, like brothers,
Parted ne'er shall be.
Thoughtfully to float for ever
'Tween two worlds, be man's endeavour!
So between the East and West
To revolve, be my behest!

On the Divan, Johann-Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)



2020年11月



*What I call painting doesn't
exceed the joy of careless
sketching with the brush. I do
not seek for formal likeness;
I do it simply for my
amusement.*

Ni Zan

Jia Kemu's 贾客暮 Language Radius Beyond Mountains and Water Text

—A Preliminary Study on the Landscape Significance of Giacomo Bruni's Mountain and Water Practice

By; Lin Jiangquan 林江泉; Translated by; Cherry Tsang

Jia Kemu's thinking is freed from the shackles of formula, and philosophy is given the conditions for its survival and development. (Inscription)

Cruising between elegant and quaint, the vast and the expressionist schema, Jia Kemu, or is alias Fumo 腹墨, constantly escapes the conventional formulas and the inherent pictorial experience, the autonomous grammar widening the radius of his language. He pushes forward a new "time difference" in ancient paintings - the extracted structure and space belonging to "self" *wozhe* 我者. The texts of 12 countries are arranged in the traditional artistic conception and style, the concept of ink and wash, the structure and space of modernism, and the writing ability of traditional Chinese painting is brought to the complex

multilingual scene, and the long scroll with ink and wash as the main medium, *Ten Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains, Wanli Jiangshan* 《万里江山》(38x450 cm, 2018, fig.1) brings a recognition system of "citizen of the world" to generate icons that face reality. The image is formed according to the breath, and the movement and transformation of the image which mobilizes the dynamic code of the rocks, flowing water, trees and clouds.

The "one stroke" *yihua* 一画 emphasized by Shi Tao 石涛 (1642-1707), a famous painter in the late Ming and early Qing Dynasty, is a methodology for solving all kinds of things. Jia Kemu's landscape practice hides the relationship between "one stroke" and "different phenomena and things" *wanshu* 万殊, and achieves a certain symmetry with "the principle of one stroke". He emphasizes the movement of gestures, and his tightness is moderate, as loose as a tangle, as tight as a carving knife, his thinking is freed from the shackles of the program, and the philosophy of the rhythm of the picture has obtained the conditions for survival and development, and achieved the construction of saving ink and color. Connecting the empty scene and the real scene, connecting the divine scene and the real scene, when the realistic meaning of the landscape is drawn closer, the depth of field of historiography becomes active.

Jia Kemu studied Gao Qifeng 高奇峰 (1889-1933) and the Lingnan School of Painting, and I remember when he told me that Guan Shanyue 关山月 (1912-2000) was the first Chinese painter that caught his attention. During my study of mountains and water at preschool age, I was also influenced by Guan Shanyue's *Rafting in Autumn Stream* 《秋溪放筏》(fig.2) and other works. In this regard, I formed a spiritual resonance with

Jia Kemu. He believes that the landscape at the bottom of the brush comes from the depth of field in his heart: "the mountains in his mind", and the portraits of these mountains have become his mental models. The continuous mountain peaks from one self to another self; from one cloud to another cloud; from one way out to another are elusive and varied. As Fang Shishu 方士庶 (1693-1751), a painter during the Qing Dynasty, said: "The mind creates the environment, and the hand moves the mind, this is the virtual state. The virtual and the real are the existence of the brush and ink. Therefore, the ancients use the brush and ink to make the green mountains and luxuriant trees, living waters and moist stones, in order to constructs another kind of spiritual transmission outside of heaven and earth." *Tia yong an suobi*: "因心造境，以手运心，此虚境也。虚而为实，是在笔墨有无间，故古人笔墨具此山苍树秀、水活石润，于天地之外另构一种灵奇。" 《天慵庵随笔》 The different depths of field of Jia Kemu's paintings peaks a metaphorical depth of field from the self, daily life to the spiritual.

Human life is controlled by urbanization in all aspects. The media in the cities are moving people's attention to whether matter is the carrier of consciousness. The virtual has become a common way of life for human beings. In Jia Kemu's fictional "Mountain and Water Realty", fiction and realities relationship is a clue he has been following. In his series of mountain and water works, fiction and reality are synchronized. Within the same time and space, the two constitute the organic core of the movement of things. The viewer tries to find an exit in his mountains and waters through the twists and turns of social reality, which seems to exist for his mountains and waters painting. As the philosophy of



1

"being" conveyed in poetry:

no bird
there is no sky

push the window again
until you see the world
—*Birds and the Sky*
(Gye-gye Lin Kanyi)

It turned out to be the largest background in the landscape - meaning the existence of the sky is for the flight of birds. Urban scholars do not know whether the landscape can bear significant geopolitical responsibility, but it represents an artistic way of mediating in today's world. Urbanism is, on a certain level, evidence of rationality, the vertical development of architecture is the reflection of mountains and water.

In Jia Kemu's "Mountain and Water Text", an important monograph on the practice of landscape painting *Linquan Gaozhi, The Lofty Message*

of Forests and Streams 《林泉高致集》, from the Northern Song Dynasty, text by Guo Xi 郭熙 (1020-1090), Art Critic John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, University of Pennsylvania Architecture Professor William W. Braham's *Views on Landscape* Assortment of properties and architect and historian Alan Hess's traces of how landscaped public spaces came to be in the 1950s, it is clear that they all have common immediacy. Jia Kemu's practice of mountain and water painting and rubbing of physical objects has a timeless immediacy, preserving the real-time state of things, like Artist Stanley K.C Lam's automatic painting *Concrete Sends an Invitation to Rain*' (Automatic painting, rain, concrete, ink, acrylic sheet, dimensions variable, 2016, fig. 3), which is on an acrylic panel attached to concrete, and lets the rain wash away, leaving the shape of the rain, as on the mountains and water after rain.

The immediacy of works such as *Jinwen Shanshui* 《金文山水》, *Chinese bronze inscriptions Mountain and Water Series* (44x66 cm, 2020, fig.4.), *Xiajiang River After Rain* 《峡江云雾》 (24x32 cm, 2019, fig.5), *Hanshan Mingyan Temple* 《寒山明岩寺》 (144x26 cm, 2020, fig.6) and other works constitute Jia Kemu's "Mountain and Water Text". Light, shadow and color are enough to reveal and create a scene, or bring out philosophical and life scenes. The meaning or attributes behind these factors are not the point, what really matters is the physical state of the vision at that time and place. "Shanshui Text" is the process of materializing time and presence. In the dying "time difference" and restricted scenes, a tit-for-tat and dangerous and mysterious negotiation was launched on the tense relationship between mountains and water and the city. The famous Chinese scientist Qian Xuesen



钱学森 (1911-2009) proposed the concept of "Shanshui City" in the 1980s. In view of the emerging large-scale cement construction, he put forward a new model of urban development based on Chinese Shanshui spirit, which was meant to allow people to "stay out of nature and return to nature." Qian Xuesen pointed out that modern cities' worship of power and capital leads to maximization and utilitarianism. "Buildings in cities should not become living machines. Even the most powerful technology and tools can never endow the city with a soul."

Jia Kemu peeked into the interior of the landscape, spliced the bewildering landscape reality and time section, using the language codes of line, dot and texture strokes, dyeing and scratching, to mobilize the expressive levels of reality to penetrate the forbid-

den area of the landscape. In semantic dyslexia, the pleasure of cognition is deliberately delayed, and this delay will lead to the pleasure of knowledge production after a thousand turns. As Jia Kemu wrote himself in The Artist's Manifesto: "In Ten Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains, through the form of a long scroll, I wanted to show the vast space, the mountains in their stability and complex imminence likened to culture. The water's Antonyms, as a metaphor for intercultural communication, as a means of traveling between mountains, albeit at great distances. In addition, a series of inscriptions and seals were added, part of the ancient cultural heritage of Eurasia, to show exactly how the visual arts can more easily transcend cultural barriers, but the complexity and diversity that the written language brings can only be accessed



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through the study and knowledge of culture."

Starting from a line or a point, Jia Kemu re-fabricates and integrates the landscape. At the same time, his thinking and critical power also tries to re-integrate the social structure and create a new social model, thus entering into the contemplation of history and urbanism. What appears is not just a distressed earth, but a human scene like the picture of the world unfolded by the famous Chinese artist Jiang Heng's *The Butterfly of Judgment*, 江衡《审判之蝶》(130x85 cm, 2010, fig.7):

When malice pervades the earth,
Did you see it?
The world is so absurd
Good people don't end well
no one saves

when everything is evil
Did you see it?
Justice condenses into tears of sorrow
From which the butterfly of judgment
was born
Judge everything

When butterflies appear in the world
Did you see it?
it will punish the sinner
a hundredfold for his crimes
destroy it

When the due punishment comes
Did you see it?
Butterfly big eyes
And the people you hurt
crying sadly
—*The Butterfly of Judgment*
(Jiang Yutong,ZWIE)

Just like the picture of judgment unfolded by butterfly changes, Jia Kemu is a contemporary artist who alienates landscapes. His point of view ranges from the smoke cloud of his ink and

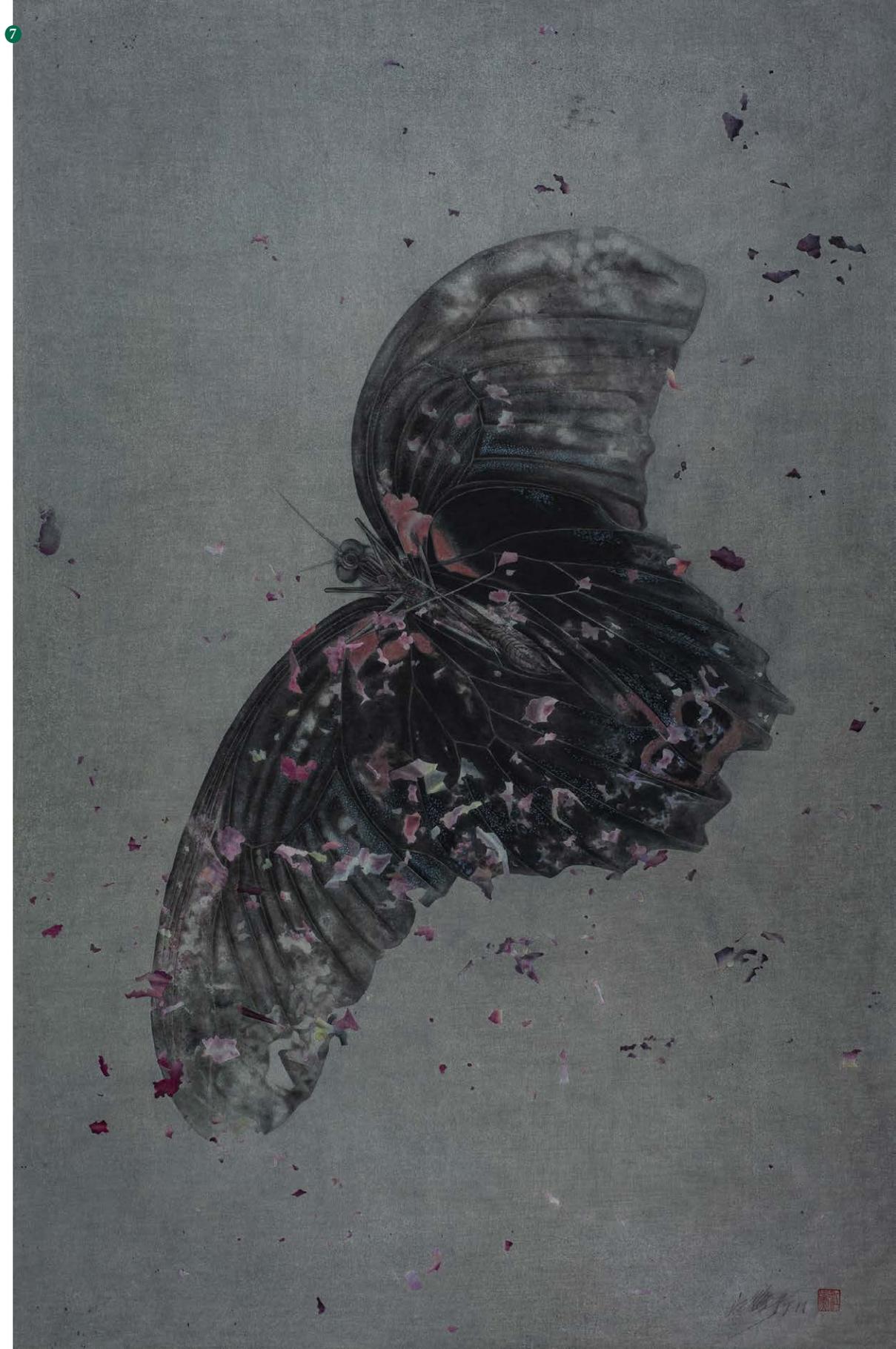
wash trajectory to the continuous surrounding streamlines, linking and recombining real life and cultural heritage. A single geography has equally the effect of linking and accommodating the efficacy of every phenomenon. The psychological space is endowed with a new perspective and axis in Jia Kemu's landscape text transformation. You don't have to escape from here, you don't have to belong there, to visit Jia Kemu's landscape is to return to a place that doesn't exist. When you realize that you want to go back to the original landscape again, maybe when the landscape disappears, it is possible that even your fictional landscape no longer exists. If we talk about the strangeness of the environment, then painting is not as good as mountains and water. If we talk about the subtlety of brush and ink, then mountains and water are not as good as painting" (Dong Qichang's *Painting Purpose*) "以境之奇怪论, 则画不如山水; 以笔墨之精妙论, 则山水决不如画。" 董其昌 (1555-1636)《画旨》. The "Mountain and water text" can be a substitute for the spatiality, urbanism and architecture; mountains and waters are also the sum of what our eyes can reach. Jia Kemu's psychological geography of mountains and water in various media and fields may step by step delete the real one, and finally achieve the goal of "de-mountain and water-rization", which was a beginning without an end. Only the landscape is outside the landscape, and the landscape is outside the view. Only by finding a different kind of landscape outside the view, it can surpass the brush and ink.

6

Lin Jiangquan, is a Chinese contemporary artist, architect and writer. Since he's childhood, he has been studying Poetry, Calligraphy, Painting, Seal cutting and Drama with famous Masters from the Yu Youren Standard Cursive Calligraphy Society. He was admitted to Tsinghua University as a teenager. His art practice includes Painting, installation, Architectural design, Modern Chinese, Japanese and Korean calligraphy and seal carving, Novels, Poetry, Film, and Art criticism. He has been invited to hold exhibitions in well-known art venues in Europe, America, Asia, Oceania and Africa, including the Portuguese National Gallery, the University of Lisbon, Sweden's National Museum, Harvard University, the University of Michigan, etc. As a visiting professor, he lectures at the University of Wales TSD U.K, and is an invited tutor for Harvard University's Design course. He was called by the Author of "Performance Art" published by the Chinese University of Hong Kong: "There are three artists who can deal with difficult problems today: Cai Guoqiang, Xie Deqing and Lin Jiangquan." He also won the Ding Ling Literature and Art Award (1998), and his works are collected by domestic and foreign art Museums, Galleries, Foundations and private collections.



7



At the Source - Paintings of Jean-Baptiste Née

Amont

Lorsque nous cherchons à écouter, comme le fait un animal aux aguets, nous commençons intuitivement par nous immobiliser, et rester silencieux. Vides, tendus vers l'extérieur.

Je m'installe dans la montagne pendant quelques heures. Son mouvement apparaît. Les brumes remontent les pentes ; la pluie devient plus fine ; le vent se lève ; la nuit s'approche. J'entends quelques éboulements épars.

Il ne me suffit pas de rester fixe : je dois aussi faire taire en moi quelqu'un qui parle constamment. Il nomme les choses, dresse devant elles un écran, y reproduit le monde en trompe-l'œil, en schémas, et vit en vase clos dans ce décor savant — aveugle aux choses mêmes. Je peins pour me taire, et lui rendre la vue.

Déchirer silencieusement l'écran des mots, voir le monde en amont.

At the Source

Translated by: Didier Legaré-Gravel

When we try to listen, as a watchful animal would, intuitively, we start by making ourselves still. Empty, turned outwards.

I set up in the mountain for a few hours. Its movement starts appearing. The fog climbs up the slopes; rain gets thinner; the wind rises; night approaches. I hear a few scattered rockfalls.

Standing still is not enough: inside me I must silence someone that talks constantly. He names things, puts up a screen before them, on which he reproduces the world in trompe-l'œil, in diagrams, and lives in the vacuum of this sophisticated set - blind to reality itself. I paint to stop talking, and to restore his sight.

Silently tear apart this screen of words, and see the world at the source.





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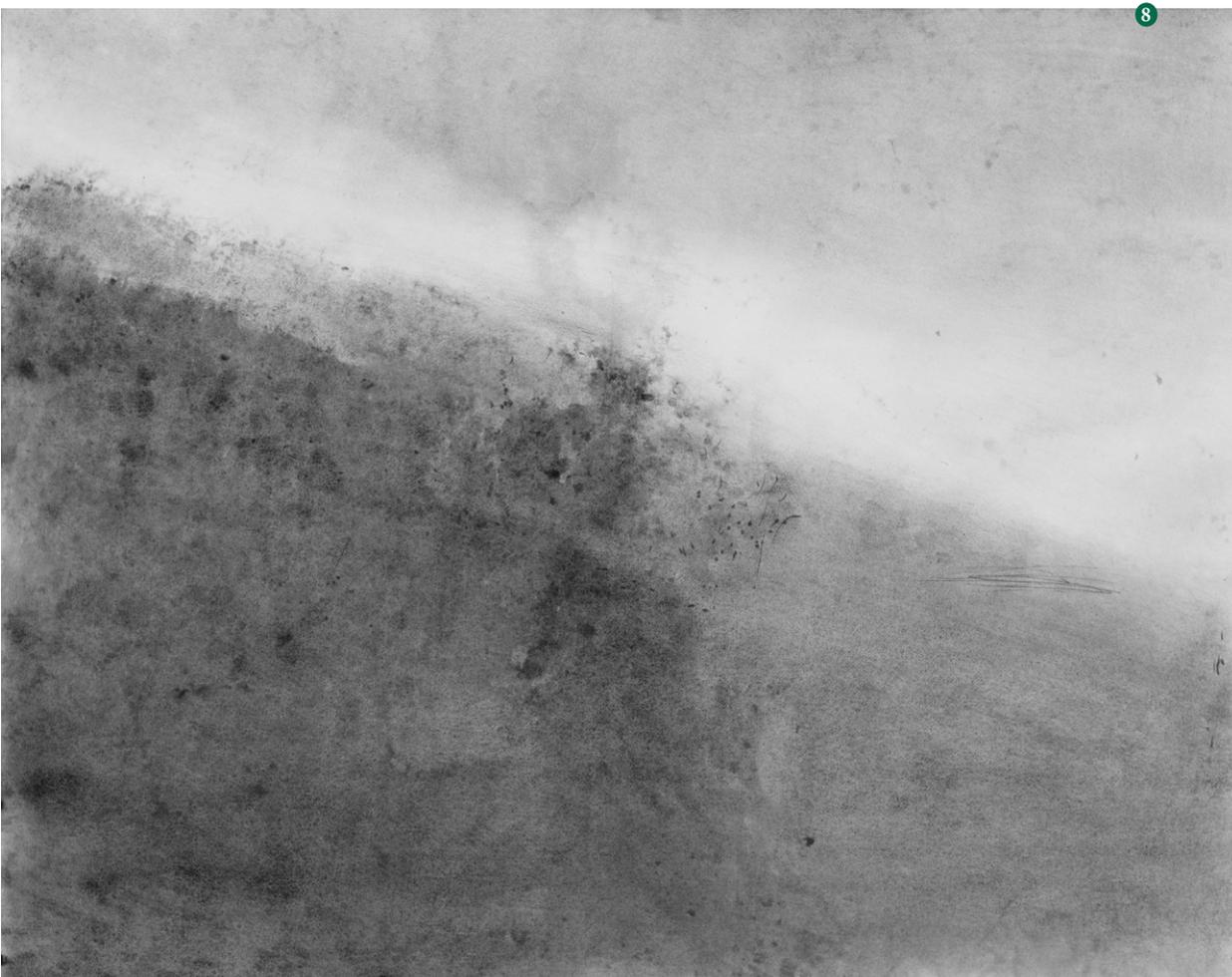
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1. *Massif, nuée (III)*
gouache on paper
113 x 175 cm, 2021

2. *Terre, ciel, nuée*
gouache on paper
86 x 112cm, 2021

3. *Nuée, masses*
gouache on paper
56 x 76 cm, 2021

4. *Massif, brumes (VI)*
gouache on paper
32,5 x 50 cm, 2021

5. *Massif, nuit, brume*
watercolour on paper mounted on
canvas
56 x 76 cm, 2021

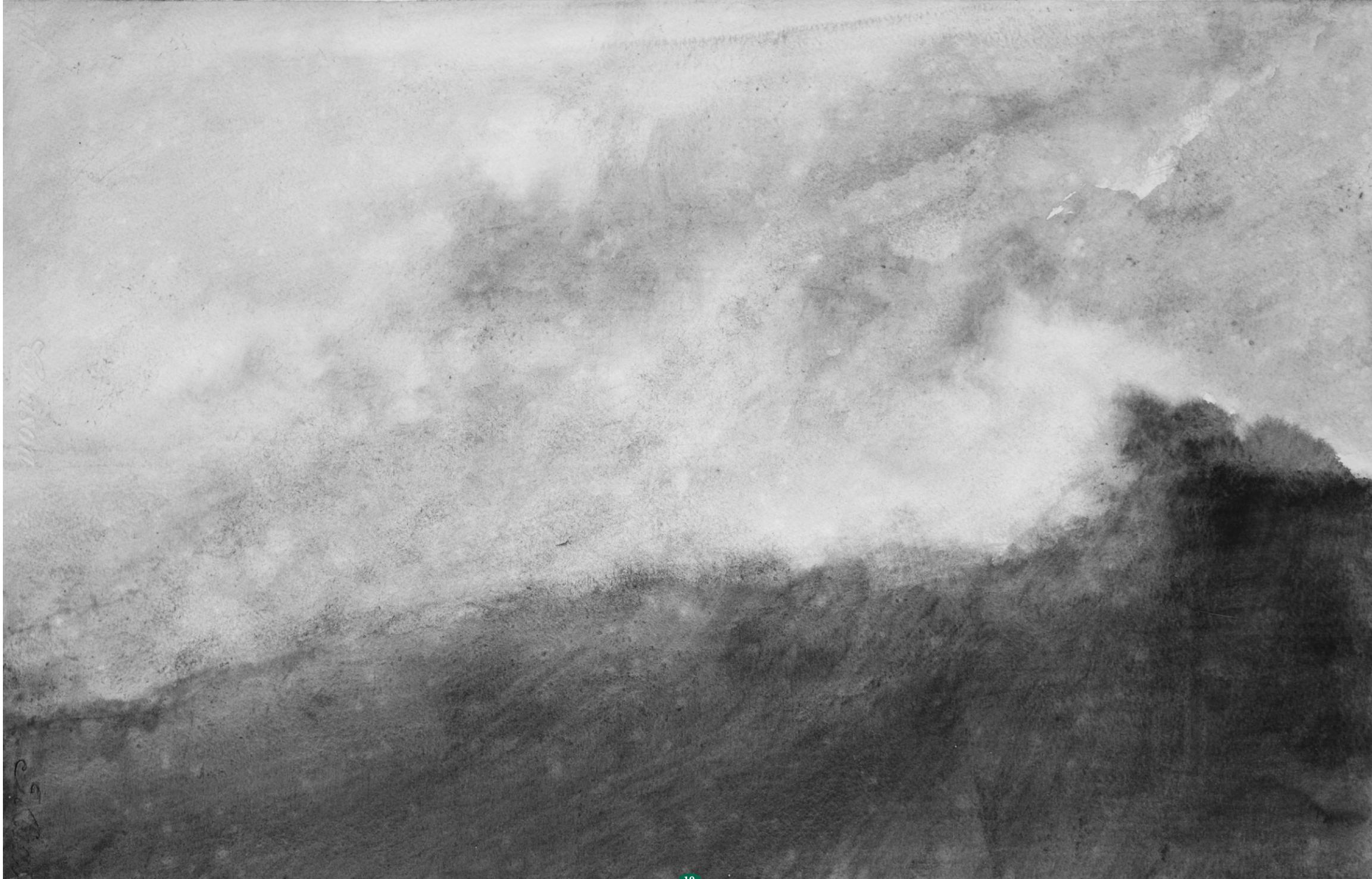
6. *Nuée, soir, pluie*
watercolour on paper
38 x 56 cm, 2021

7. *Mouvement, origine*
gouache on paper mounted on can-
vas
113 x 175 cm, 2020

8. *Versant, neige, vent*
gouache on paper mounted on can-
vas
89 x 113 cm, 2020

9. *Dévoilement (XVI)*
gouache on paper
32,5 x 50 cm, 2020

10. *Dévoilement (XVII)*
gouache on paper
32,5 x 50 cm, 2020



Jean-Baptiste Née, born in 1986, he is a French painter and plastic artist, who graduated in 2012 from les Arts-Décoratifs, Paris. Jean-Baptiste Née works on location in the mountains, facing the impermanence of the elements. Since 2015, he gives them a growing role in the creating process: rain, snow, frost are part of the painting. He sets up his “great studio” in the Swiss Alps or in the French

massif du Vercors —notably in winter—, as well as during long treks in the Italian Alps. In winter 2018, he worked in the Wudangshan and Lushan massifs, China, and developed an interest in the daoist idea of “Heaven” (or “Sky” according to the french translation). In 2021, he published *The Naked World*, a monograph of his work on paper. His studio is in Montreuil, France.



Generally speaking, figures, bulls and horses may be drawn after models and be made alike; mountains and waters cannot be made by copying but only by the skill of the heart which is superior in the things that it grasps.

Mi Fu

Gao Qifeng 高奇峰's texts on Art

By: Giacomo Bruni

Historical background

During the second half of the 19th century, the imperial court was facing decline as the Chinese territory was troubled by the imperial forces, facing threats both from the western countries and Japan.

In 1894 to 1895, China faced its worst defeat against the Japanese in the first Sino-Japanese War. China was not strong enough to take on their enemies, as they were still using "Second Industrial Revolution" technology. This tragic event made the situation between the population and the foreign dynasty¹ even worse.

The theorist of the revolution against the institutional powers of the time was Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen) 孙中山 (1866-1925), the leader of the Chinese Nationalist Party *Guomin tang* 国民党. At the beginning of the Nationalist party, in order to remain free from the persecutions of the imperial government, their headquarters was based in Japan. It was during this time that Sun Zhongshan met the three founders of the Lingnan School of painting, Gao Qifeng 高奇峰 (1889-1935), his brother Gao Jianfu 高剑父 (1879-1951) and Chen Shuren 陈树人 (1883-1949), who were all born in Guangdong province, the area most linked to the western world. The three artists, after joining Sun's nationalist party, actively participated in the renovation of their country. They believed the political, cultural and artistic renovations were extremely connected.

After the foundation of the new gov-

¹ Qind dynasty 清朝, they were Manchu people, a different ethnic group from the Han, the Man, in chinese manzu 满族.

ernment, the first project was to mod-

ernise the country, to exceed the closure and conservatism of the previous government, and to open up to the external world, while also keeping their cultural roots in mind. However, following the death of Sun Zhongshan, the Guomin tang took a different direction, which was less interested in the renovation and cultural aspects. This was partly due to the fact that Gao Qifeng, Gao Jianfu and Chen Shuren were somewhat marginalised from political life.

In 1907, like many intellectuals of the time, Gao Qifeng had travelled to Japan to complete his art education, as Japan was the first country to introduce western ideas in east Asia during the Meiji period (1868-1912). However, their enthusiasm and openness to new ideas had put them at risk of forgetting their own cultural origins. A western orientalist named Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908), along with other local intellectuals, played an important role in safeguarding the Japanese traditional art from foreign influences. They created a new genre of painting called *Nihonga* 日本画 "Japanese painting", a pictorial expression that had already to some extent, merged with the techniques of both eastern and western art, and yet in opposition to other painting genres that followed and used western techniques and materials, which was called *Yoga* 洋画.

Educational background

Gao Qifeng studied Western art, in particular the techniques of Realism that had entered Japan through the Barbizon school, whilst also studying *Nihonga*. His education made his ideas about the relationship between renovation and tradition even

stronger. Thus, Gao Qifeng, his brother Gao Jianfu (1879-1951) and Chen Shuren (1884-1948) founded the Lingnan school of painting, *Lingnan huapai* 岭南画派, with the purpose of creating a new national painting style, in order to reunify their own country. This new style was named *Xinguohua* 新国画, "New national painting"², and aimed to create a break from the formalism and the blind copying of the ancient masters, who had characterised much of the last period of the Qing dynasty. They hoped to create a new perspective in Chinese pictorial art, by looking at tradition with a critical eye, dialoguing, and adapting it to the historical, aesthetic and cultural needs of the time.

Following the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, the Gao brothers moved to Shanghai, where Gao Qifeng founded a pictorial magazine called *True Records* 《真相画报》, in order to spread their revolutionary ideas on Chinese art. During the first twenty years of the new Republic, the theories of these artists had a national resonance. Lingnan School became one of the principal sources of the renovation of Chinese art, and upheld a main role in the cultural life of the country until the Nationalist Party began to lose the approval of the population, in response to the motionless policies of Jiang Zhingzheng regarding the Japanese attempts at invasion which began during the 30's.

Gao Qifeng's art and theory

Gao Qifeng's novel painting method is the result of "unifying Chinese and Western and blending ancient with the modern" "折衷中西，融汇古今". Gao Qifeng established the use of brush and ink system of Chinese painting as the main body, and gave full play to the

² *Guohua* 国画 is the term used in China to refer to the Chinese painting, that is the use of traditional materials: paper, ink and brush





strength of Chinese painting with "vivid charm", "Boneless brush", and also extracted the characteristics of Western painting, which are accurate in rich colours, and the "science" of artistic expression, creating a harmonious and novel style. Gao Qifeng's brushwork has been influenced by the "Ju school" style of painting, their "boneless method", "hitting water" and "hitting powder" are the basic brush techniques that he uses to express his "naturalistic" painting.

Gao Qifeng's artistic production can be divided in two periods, the first comprehends his early studies with his brother and the influence of Julian 居廉 (1828-1904) painting style, his experience in Japan, the participation in the revolution and his time in Shanghai. This period was characterised by the influence of western painting learnt from the Japanese masters and finally the unstoppable editorial activity of spreading his news and ideas about painting in Shanghai. His artistic, editorial and revolutionary activities were deeply related.

The second period started when he returned to Guangzhou in 1918, when he began concentrating solely on the fields of creation and education. Overtime, he lost the influence of Japanese painting and began to perfect and adapt his artistic needs to the painting techniques of his old master, Julian. He grew closer to the literati painting, Confucianism ideas and the lifestyle, and it was in this period that he successfully created the new style of the Chinese Bird and Flower painting *huaniao hua* 花鸟画.

Even though Gao Qifeng had stopped all his political activities, he continued to spread his ideas about the new Chinese painting

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with editorial and teaching activities. In 1925, Gao Qifeng was appointed as an honorary professor of Lingnan University 岭南大学, where he gave two important lectures on aesthetics and art education: the "Aesthetic feeling and cultural education" *Meigan yu jiaohua* 《美感与教化》 and "The Art of painting is not lifeless" *Huaxue bushi yijian siwu* 《画学不是一件死物》³.

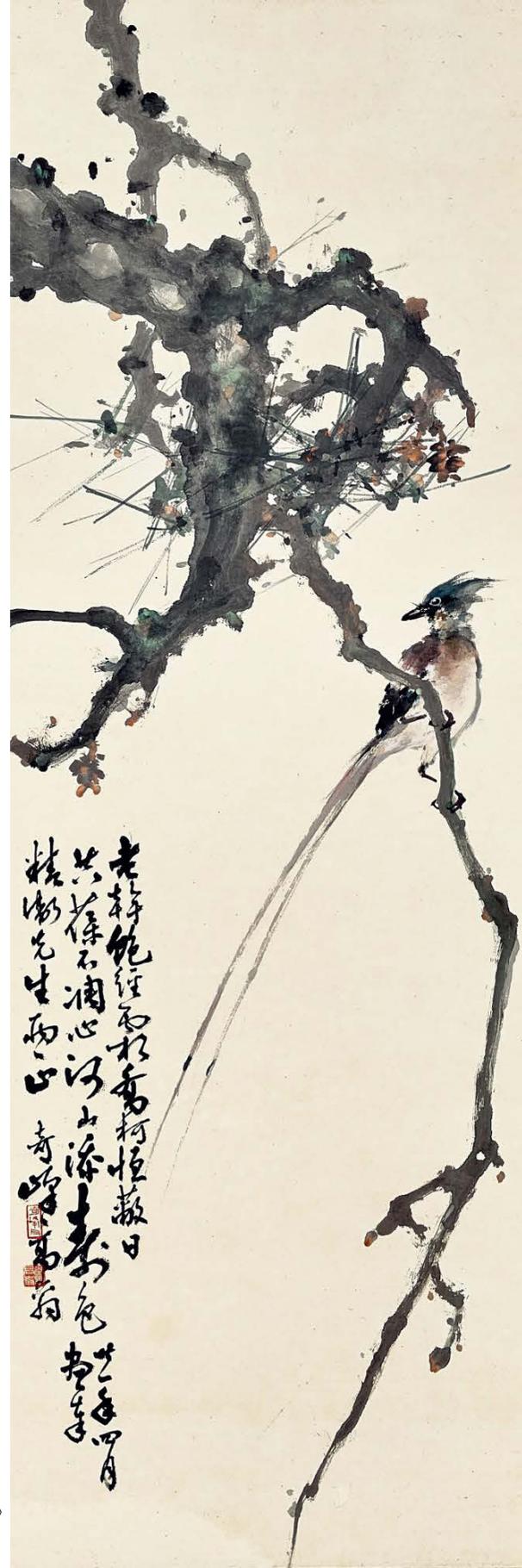
These two texts of Gao Qifeng had great value, both in relation to the times in which they were written, and characterised by one of the biggest revolutionary processes of China, both artistically and culturally, and also in relation to contemporaneity. The harmony he proposed between tradition and contemporaneity, between national and foreign culture, were fundamental themes for the historical moment, and it can also be applied in our time. This thought would go on to become the *modus operandi* of the Lingnan school, and also of many other Chinese artists up until the contemporary times.

In the Chinese artistic and intellectual panorama, the relationship between national and foreign tradition is a much debated and important topic. The Confucian values Gao Qifeng promoted, and the role of art in the formation of the individual is highly topical in the contemporary world afflicted by desire for power and money, where humanitarian values are rarely taken into consideration and where even the figure of the artist links his production to mere monetary gain.

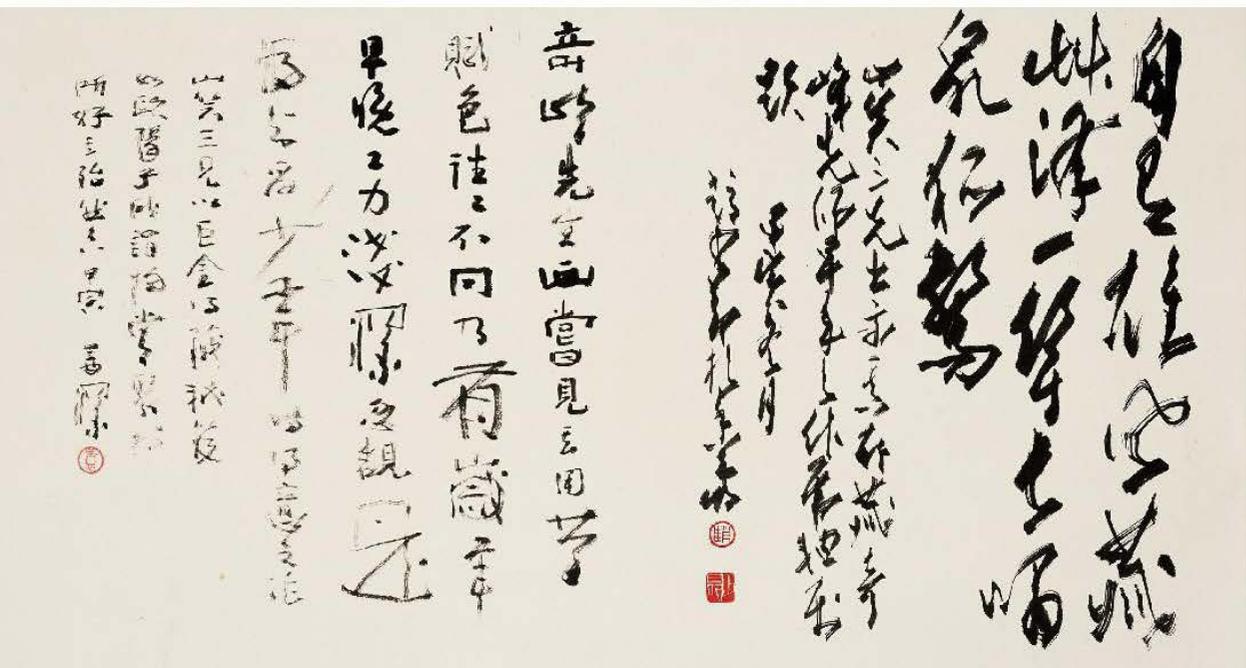
The need for an English translation of the two texts has also to do with the fact that Gao qifeng's vision of the world is a universal vision.

³ These two articles were published in Gao Qifeng's collection of paintings and in various magazines of the time

Paradise Flycatcher on Pine Tree 《喬柯添壽》 125,5x47



老幹能經雨如香柯恒傲日
 共探不凋心以山添壽
 精微先生西心 奇峰書
 壬午年



Careless among mountains and rivers 《江山啸傲》, 50x87.5

A theme that not only affects contemporary society, but also the global artistic panorama. Thanks to the revolutions of the last century, China has found various ways in which to relate to the Western society, which are still in constant evolution and have often brought benefits and new ideas. However, the situation is different when considering the relationship the West has towards the Chinese and other foreign cultures. The Western art scenes and its expressions have set themselves as the image of world art, oftentimes ignoring or knowing mostly superficially, other foreign traditions, thus, limiting its expressive possibilities.

Aesthetic feeling and cultural education - 《美感与教化》

By: Gao Qifeng 高奇峰

Translated by: Giacomo Bruni

美感原系人所同具的，与孟子所谓人性本善相同，但社会环境逼人，故多人随处忘不了利害的计较，把天然的美感及美德就供给那利害计较的牺牲，以至无论何事都渐渐丧失了天趣，所以不能不藉一种艺术去调剂，以激动其天然，兴复其美感。

The Aesthetic sense is a natural capability of all humans, just like Mencius used to say, the human nature is basically good and virtuous, but the threats to the social environment and their reckless striving after selfish interests have dissipated the natural aesthetic feelings and moral virtues. Selfish interests have gradually consumed the natural charm of life. Therefore, it is the role of art, to adjust, revive and rejuvenate that aesthetic senses, which is Nature's gift to us all.

美感者何？将见闻之事实或过去之印象加以一己之构思与及学力之丝验，融会贯通，不可方物。其藉工具以表露丁外，极

错综变化之能，由规矩准绳而达到神而明之的境界，则所谓美术也。

What is the aesthetic feeling? It is that thing that adds ones conceptions and imagination to the knowledge of facts or past experiences and impressions; as the understating of things can't be just through a comprehensive study of the elements. The only way to to understand and reveal all the various intricate variations is by starting from the basic norms to reach and understand the mystery of things, this is what is called art.

譬如见了一只荔枝，其鲜艳嫣红之色素，便想到他晶莹如玉的果实，亦清亦香的气味，联想到那荔枝丹砂万颗星缀树中，与绿叶婆娑相映成趣，及它生产地之粤岭风光，便发生无限诗趣，自然想到东坡谓“日啖荔枝三百颗，不妨长作岭南人”之句，同时又追想东坡之为人、之遭遇及其清高的才调，又想到韩元吉词“故人莫恨东南别，不寄梅花，千里寄红雪”的交谊如何高洁亲厚。又如见见忘忧的萱草，便感觉到诗经谓“焉得萱草，言树之背”，背是北堂，同时便感觉到母亲之慈爱，与及生我助劳，如天覆地教的罔极亲恩，当如何养志立身以冀图报于万一。那就是美感。

For example, when we see a litchi and its bright red color, we think of it being lustrous and transparent like a jade fruit, and its delicious taste and smell, thence we associate with countless trees full of red litchis like vermilion stars and dancing green leaves pleasingly in contrast with each other; from here we think about the scenery of the Lingnan in South China and infinite poems, that naturally takes the mind to the words of Su Dongpo: "Eating three hundred litchis every day, I would long live as a Lingnan man", these verses takes us back to the same time of the noble life of Su Dongpo, away from politics and material pursuit. Finally we arrive at the sublime friendship sentiments in

the words of Han Yuanji: "old friend, don't let us regret the parting in the southwest, if I can't send you a plum blossom, vermilion snow I'll send you for a thousand mile". Or when we see the plant of forgetfulness (Orange Daylily), we think of the Book of Poetry where it says: "How shall I get the plant of forgetfulness? I would plant it on the north of my house"⁴, and at the same moment we feel the love of our mother and how she sacrificed for us, how she patiently taught us with kindness, and placed in us her ardent hopes. Then we begin to look forward to find a way to return, at least a little bit, from all the love she gave to us. This is the aesthetic feeling!

然而一人一时一地的美感，究属一人一时一地的事，倘欲与众兼善，则不能不纪载此种美感，以期普利群生。但是，传记是以叙其事，不能载其形；赋颂可以咏其美，不能备其象；惟图画之制可以兼之。昔人言之綦详，故有心世道者，多托花木，鸟兽，人物以比兴讽世，以兴复人之美感。如木兰蓓莽比志向的坚贞，翠竹苍松表凌寒之节操，以骐驎兰蕙喻君子，鸱鸢荆棘喻小人。写紫制枯荣，鹤鸽急难，冀兴起兄弟之友爱及群胞团结之精神。画慈乌反哺，孝羊脆乳，以增人子的孝思。务使人能接受美感，自能见善，足以戒恶；见恶所以思贤，见贤而又思齐矣。所以画虽一艺，其中存有大道，具有万理，古圣前贤非常注重的。有虞之世作绘事彰施，于是礼乐大阐，教化因之以兴，故能揖让而天下治，此其明证矣。又唐吴道子作地狱变相图，当时许多恶人惧罪改业。宋郑侠绘流民图，促使王安石变法，从根本推翻。宋亡，郑所南画兰不画土，令人兴起故国河山之痛，虽数十年后卒收攘夷光复之功，是知画的美感感人，其力最大。唐张彦远谓，画足以成教化，助人伦，与六籍同功，四时并运，真千古不移之论矣。

4 韩元吉 (1118-1187), famous poet of the Southern Song.

5 The poem continues: "Longingly I think of my husband, And my heart is made to ache." 《诗经·卫风·伯兮》

However the aesthetic sense of each man from each place, the past and present, cannot be spread and perpetuated, unless its put down in record. However, a narrative form can describe the facts but cannot express the shape, poetry can evoke the feelings but cannot depict the form, only a painting can create it. The words of the ancients were extremely thorough, the social situation of their times was in their minds and hearts, they practiced the painting of flowers, trees, birds, beasts and figures in order to chant the life and to revive the aesthetic feeling of the people. Thus, the woody-orchid with its luxuriant growth represents ambition and determination, the verdant bamboos and evergreen pines stand for sober moral integrity, the gallant horse and the fragrant orchid are metaphors for the gentleman, while the cuckoo and thorns refer to a vile person. Depicting luxuriant and wither plants, wagtails and doves in danger, was to inspire the spirit of fraternal love and cooperation. Painting a mother crow feeding its nestling, or the lamb breastfeeding instills filial sentiments. When a man has aesthetic sentiment he can recognize the beauty and naturally can escape evil, when seeing the ugly he can recall the virtuous, and when the virtue can be seen he can level with it. For these reasons, painting is not just an art, but it incorporates the Great Way⁶ which is the intrinsic order of things, and this held a great value for the ancient masters.

During the Yu dynasty⁷, painting was generally taught accordingly to the system of *rites and music*⁸, for this rea-

6 *Dadao* 大道, the way of Dao.

7 Yu chao 虞朝, is an ancient Chinese dynasty of the beginning of the third millennium BCE, was mentioned alongside the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties in numerous historical Chinese works.

8 *Liyue* 礼乐, was a complete system of rituals and music during the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties, to promote a moral and ethical education to maintain



son the cultural education⁹ prospered, and the society was ruled in peace and prosperity. During the Tang dynasty, Wu Daozi¹⁰ painted a picture of hell¹¹, and upon seeing the suffering evoked by the painting, plenty of evil people changed their way of living. During the Song dynasty Zheng Xia painted an exiled refugee, which inspired Wang Anshi¹² in his revolutionary institutional reforms. At the falling of Song dynasty, Zheng Suonan's¹³ painting of orchids without soil made the masses grieve over the loss of their national territory, and after ten years of resisting the foreign invasion, they finally reconquered their land; this is the great power of the aesthetic feeling. The Tang scholar Zhang Yanyuan said about painting: "[it] can accomplish cultural education, elevate the human relations, as the learning of the six classics and effects life like the changing of the seasons"¹⁴.

既知画足以兴复美感，又足以成教化，则绘事要旨自不可不作深刻的研求，否则所画杂乱无章，正如不和协之音律，嘈嘈杂杂，徒乱人心曲，不特不能兴复美感，而且将要发生一种反感了。绘事要旨为何？不外画法之“四格”“六法”“六要”

the harmony of social order.

9 *Jiaohua* 教化, refers to the Confucian education system that promotes social and ethical values.

10 吴道子 (680-759), was one of the most relevant painters during the Tang dynasty.

11 *Naraka*, the Buddhist hell.

12 Zheng Xia 郑侠 (1041-1119); Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086) was a politician, calligrapher, poet and prose writer. He served as chancellor and attempted major and controversial socioeconomic reforms known as the New Policies.

13 郑所南 (1241-1318), poet and painter, famous for his painting of orchids, after the fall of the Song Dynasty, all the orchids he painted had no soil and roots, as a metaphor of its land conquered by a foreign dynasty.

14 Is the first sentence of Zhang Yanyuan 张彦远 (ca. 815-after 875), the *Lidai Minghua Ji* 《历代名画记》 (*Record of Famous Painters of All the Dynasties*), a precious historical document, as it is the main source of facts about artists from Tang and pre-Tang times.

。四格者，应物象形，创意立体，曰神格；笔筒形具，得之自然，曰逸格；墨妙笔精，心手相应，曰妙格；雕模造化，学力深邃，曰能格。六法者，曰气的，曰用笔，曰象形，曰赋色，曰布局，曰模写。六要者，曰神，曰清，曰老，曰劲，曰活，曰润。明乎此绘事三昧，自可成竹在胸，挥酒如意。

Knowing that painting can revive the aesthetic sentiment and promote cultural education, we should next try to study the fundamentals of this art, otherwise it will be confusing and chaotic, like the noise of an untuned instrument that disturbs our sensibility, and instead of reviving the aesthetic feeling it's going to produce the opposite effect. The fundamentals of painting are the four manners, the six principles and the six essentials.

The four manners¹⁵ are: the divine, where the form can express a solid creative idea; the rare, when the shape is depicted with simple and natural brush strokes; the ingenious, the ink is exquisite and the brush full of life when there is a sympathetic response between the hand and the mind/heart; the skillful, which comes with profound knowledge and effort.

The six principles¹⁶ are: rhythm, the use of the brush, resemblance, coloring, composition and copy.

The six essentials¹⁷ are: spirit, clarity, ripeness, strength, vivacity and smoothness.

Knowing these three pillars the painter will have the mind ready to express its own ideas and a brush with no re-

15 *Liuge* 六格, from *Yizhou minghua lu* 《益州名画录》 *Famous Paintings from Sichuan*, a painting critique written by the Song period scholar Huang Xiufu 黄休復

16 *Liufa* 六法, established by Xie He 谢赫 on the 6th century.

17 *Liuyao* 六要, from the *Zhonglu huapin* 《中麓画品》 a text written by the Ming scholar Li Kaixian 李开先 (1502-1568). Not to be confused with the more popular liuyao of the Five dynasties period painter Jinghao 荆浩 (850-911), explained in its *Bifa ji* 《笔法记》.

strictions.

再本已饿已溺之怀抱，达已达人的观念，无论抒情寓意，寄托比兴，各体的画都足以兴复人的美感，而使贪夫廉，儒夫立，则于教化上殊非小补也。

We have to embrace other people's pain and take it as our duty to relieve others, with the idea of helping one another, with a sincere desire to serve humanity; any style of painting is enough to revive the aesthetic feeling of the masses, and make the corrupted honest. Confucianism established it, thus making a real contribution to the moral culture of mankind¹⁸.

The Art of painting is not lifeless - 《画学不是一件死物》

我以为画学不是一件死物，而是一件有生命能变化的东西。每一时代自有一时代之精神的特值和经验，所以我常常劝学生说，学画不是徒博时誉的，也不是聊以自娱的，当要本天下有饥与溺若己之饥与溺的怀抱，具达已达人的观念，而努力于缮性利群的绘事，阐明时代的新精神。

I am of the opinion that painting is not lifeless, it is something full of life, with endless possibilities of change. Each age has its own characteristics, spirit and conceptions of the world, and for this reason I often warn my students that the practice of painting should not merely be for the attainment of personal renown or fame, nor for the aesthetic gratification nor as a pastime. The current world is afflicted by hunger and miseries, therefore the students need to embrace them as are their own afflictions, and then work hard in order to produce works that will benefit humans and nature and at the same time express the new spirit of its age.

18 The last two lines area quote from Lin Zhengta 林正大, *Kuojiang Shenzi* 《括江神子》, a Song dynasty poem.

所以，我们学画除了解剖学，色素学，光学，哲学，自然学，古代的六法，画学的源流应当研究外，同时更应把心理学，社会学也研究得清清楚楚，明白社会现象一切的需要，然后以真，善，美之学，图比，兴，赋之画，去感格那混浊的社会，慰藉那枯燥的人生，陶淑人的性灵，使其发生高尚，和平的观念。庶颓懦者有以立志，都鄙倍者转为光明，暴戾者归乎博爱，高雅者益增峻洁。

We, who study painting, have to equip ourselves with the knowledge of anatomy¹⁹, psychology, sociology and understand them clearly. We have to comprehend the phenomena of our society, and then with the principles of truth, goodness and beauty²⁰. We can purify the turbid of our society, console the aridity of human life, and refine people's personalities, instilling an elegant and gentle way to see things. The ones who are hesitant will have firmness of purpose and determination, the ones who are despised will receive credit, the ruthless will embrace fraternity and the noble-hearted will shine forth even more brightly.

19 The application of western anatomy knowledge on Chinese art was very late, the first text that describe the application of anatomy at the art is the book *The uses of anatomy on art* 《艺用解剖学》 of Jiang Danshu 姜丹书 (1885-1962) dated 1930, five years later the lecture of Gao Qifeng.

20 Truth, goodness and beauty in literature and art are the aesthetic standard to evaluate the social significance and artistic value of a work. Truth *zhen* 真, is the authenticity of art, refers to whether the work correctly reflects the essence of life, and whether the author has the right feeling and understanding of the society. Good *shan* 善, is the tendency of art, that is, what is the significance and influence of the image depicted in the works on the society. Beauty *mei* 美, is the expressiveness of art, refers to whether the form and content



务使时代的机运转了一新方向，而后世观了现在所遗留的作品，便可以明白这时代的精神和美德及文化史事。这才是我们作画的本旨。

This means to make the current age turn in a new direction, so that when the position of the work are harmonious and unified, whether there is artistic personality, whether there is innovation and development.



terity looks back at our works of art, they may easily understand the spirit, the virtue, the culture and history of our time. These are the main purposes of our practice of painting.

我以前是单纯学习中国古画的，并且很专心去掌仿那唐宋各家的作品。后来觉得其优美之点固多，然倾向哲理也易犯玄虚之病，而且学如逆水行舟，觉得不集众长无以充实其进展之力。

In the past I had devoted myself solely to the study of the Chinese ancient paintings, and I primarily focused on imitating the great works of the Tang and Song dynasties. Later on I realized that even though these works have many exquisite aspects, they have the problem of having too much philosophic inclination and therefore they are too illusive and imaginary. Furthermore, studying is like sailing against the current, unless the scope of our research is wide and universal, our effort will lack creative power.

汉明帝时，西域画风输入，艺术上得了外来思想的调剂，于是画学非常发达，日臻昌盛，此其明证也。所以我再研究西洋画之写生法 及几何，光阴，远近，比较各法。以一己之经验，乃将中国古代画的笔法，气韵，水墨，赋色，比兴，抒情，哲理，诗意那几种艺术上最高的机件，通通都保留着。

During the reign of the Ming Emperor of the Han Dynasty²¹, paintings from the western regions were already introduced to China. Imported artistic ideas and models opened new ways to collaborate with the evolution of the Chinese painting, making it more prosperous.

For this reason, I took up the study of western painting, paying close attention to the practice of sketching from nature, expressions of light and shade, perspectives and other paintings

21 Emperor Ming of Han 汉明帝 (28-75), it was during Emperor Ming's reign that Buddhism began

techniques. Then I chose the finest aspects of western painting and applied them to the Chinese traditional brush and ink techniques, expressions of the tones and atmosphere, coloring, allegories, poetic flavor, philosophical meanings and emotional expressiveness.

至于世界画学诸理法亦虚心去接受，撮中西画学的所长，互作微妙的结合，并参以天然之美，万物之性灵，暨一己之精神而变为我现时之作品。尤望各学者扩而充之，口益孟晋。我所谓画学不是一件死物意在于此。

I tried to retain the best aspects of the Chinese art of painting and merge them with the best techniques and methods of composition of the universal art schools. Picking up the best aspects of the western and Chinese painting and blending them in a harmonious and delicate unity, following the natural beauty, the quality of all living things and my own spirit, to the result that is the current state of my works of art.

I hope that every scholar expands the scope of their research and try to be progressive at all times, because the art of painting is not lifeless.

to spread into China, and with it also its art expressions.

Eros and Thanatos in Enzo Fiore's landscape paintings and the latent drives of nature in Lan Ying's *Shanshui* painting

By; Aurora Vivencio

There is a similarity between the works of Italian artist Enzo Fiore and the Chinese Ming Dynasty artist, Lan Ying 藍瑛 (1585-1664), both whom present what they see in inert form, yet manage to achieve a higher synthesis that reveals being in its totality: high-low, spirit-matter and thought-body. The landscape works of both artists present us with a nature that has no beginning and no end condition, but rather a constant and persistent continuous cycle where man, matter, nature, life, and death insist on a fatal attraction, resulting in a loss of balance.

Although the two artists are chronologically far apart, Fiore shows many commonalities with Mountain and water painting, or *Shanshui hua*'s depiction, such as the sweeping views, the unfolding of the eye in the composition to a rarefied horizon, a manifestation of the essence of things slowly unraveling, tying in with the concept of *natura naturans*, and so conceptually matching Lan's work.

Fiore's landscape paintings, unlike Ying's *Shanshui hua*, are textural-tactile, and this affects our gaze, which no longer dwells on an aesthetic appreciation of the good realization of the landscape elements, or formal and technical of the work, but leads us to appreciate the naturalness in it's contained, made up of plant elements, branches, roots leaves, mossy earth, leaves and insects in epoxy resin that stand out in the center of the composition. In this contained and made up of plant elements, such as

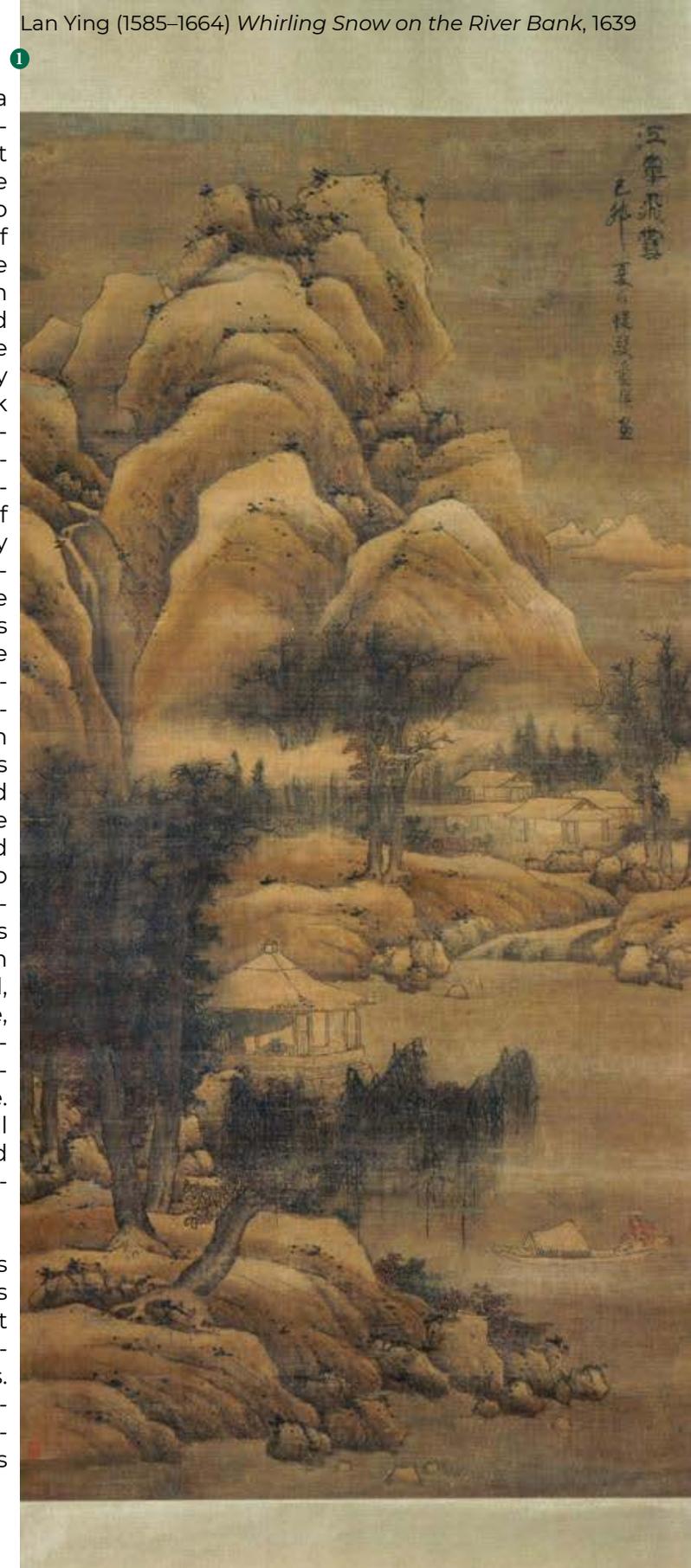
branches, roots leaves, mossy earth, leaves and insects in epoxy resin that stands out in the center of the composition. These roots and soil mixed with flowers and insects are shown to our eyes like on a stage, inviting the viewer's gaze to visually move beyond the frame, as it proceeds toward the gradually thinning horizon, as it occurs in Lan's *Whirling Snow on the River Bank* 《江皋飛雪圖》 (Fig.1, 2) mountain and water painting, recreating that sense of infinity.

In *Whirling Snow on the River Bank*, we see in the foreground a river bank with its rocky shoreline, clumps of trees, and a man in a boat drifting toward an open pavilion. In the middle section, a group of houses is nestled in a wooded valley, and a stream enters the river in a series of shallow rapids. Behind the houses, hills culminate in a towering mountain, while in the distance another mountain range of the Hangzhou Province area is almost visible. There are no continuous contours, but the shapes are suggested by the broken lines of the severed band line. Lan Ying creates the mass of the mountain, its cracks, and valleys, by carefully applying many layers of yellow ochre and shades of burnt sienna alternating with water tips to shade the edges that recreate that sense of tension and openness to infinity. The unpainted silk on the mountain-tops, trees, houses, and boat suggests the thin blanket of snow. The blurred dots enliven the surface and suggest sparse vegetation.

In the work *Section 2005* (figs. 3, 4, 5, 6) by Fiore, from the series of landscapes

inspired by Leonardo da Vinci, such sparse vegetation refers to the concept of life and death, as the dawn of the world that also embodies the last act of the representation of the world itself. Here is how in this interplay of visual and physical tensions where the viewer is also physically brought closer to the work to observe its details, Thanatos manifests itself, continuous tension emerges in these landscapes of sienna tones, seemingly calm and tranquil and inherently in turmoil. While the Thanatos in Lan is manifested through the dense and charged gongbi with which the mountains were painted, such color drafting well equates in terms of materiality and visual thickness with the resins and organic world of Fiore. The relationship between Eros and Thanatos, in Fiore's studies, finds a constant dialogue in which: beginning and end, genesis and apocalypse, and creation and annihilation interact in a continuous and intense exchange. The inanimate material takes on a new form and becomes a carnal expression of body and life.

Everything in these works suggests and induces us to move in both works, but through two levels of different aesthetic approaches. In Lan's there is a phenomenological-perceptual involvement and projects us





into the natural world through our perceptions, while in Fiore's he seems to want to lead us with a firm and delicate hand into the legend of a mythical dimension of the landscape through a direct involvement with the material. If at first glance the image of both appear to us as a pictorial, almost graphic portrait, approaching them we are enveloped and involved within a multiplicity of forms, of animal and plant entities that inevitably lead us back to nature as macro, seen in its imposing overall forms or as micro, understood as a manifestation of something particular, unique and unusual.

Fiore's vision for this landscape filters a sense of caducity and transience. It is meant as *vanitas* that is inevitably an "active part" of human life, but at the same time it brings back to life what seems to have ended the journey. This journey made by the viewer and the Chinese scholar in his scroll paintings, on the other hand, never ends, as the viewer is always called upon to move through this "landscape-remembrance" imprinted by the painter on the canvas. It perpetuates in a continuous circle, which is not the case in Fiore's works. It is here that the fundamental juncture between Eastern and Western landscape painting occurs: the consuming tension of Western painting, with that tension in Chinese potential that is not consumed in a rush but lingers and hovers slowly in the work recurring in a cyclical way.

Slow is the unfolding of our gaze among the tree canopies hiding a landscape of dark, earthy tones,







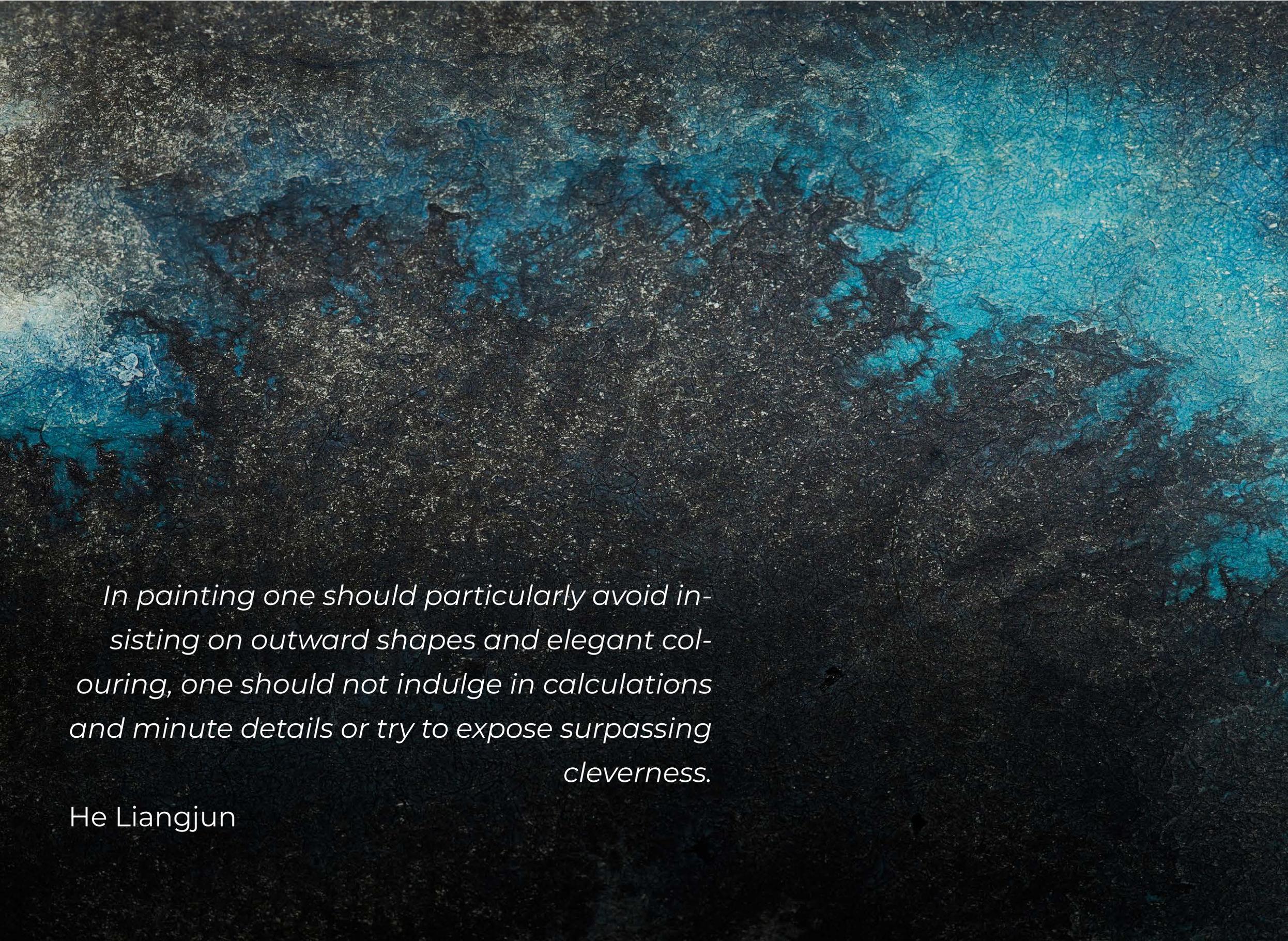
until we reach the vision of a crisp mountain. It is precisely such chromatics and the gloomy and sparse atmosphere obtained in Fiore through the technique of Leonardesque sfumato that creates a sense of disquiet and mysticism and that at the same time recreates that breath of life, that apocalyptic and epiphanic sense that leads the viewer to lead a journey into 'existence itself, since the represented landscape is not topographically identifiable. The journey that the viewer takes in Fiore's works is more toward the truth of things than toward the reworking of it. Such a journey that extends vertically in the work of both works helps us to understand and dive deeper into that window on the world that the artists offer us.

Could it be in this sense of extreme indeterminacy of edges, coupled with mellow, thick hues of color like sienna, the secret to unveiling the essence of nature? May it be this latent circularity

and loss in the infinite that creates an epiphanic sense of the future that is the key to understanding the essence of nature? For Fiore, and as well as for Ying, the search for materiality highlights the desire to go beyond mere visual aesthetic enjoyment and to enjoy on a tactile level of perception. And such a result mirrors an ongoing search for the essence and naturalness of earthly elements in both Western landscape painting and *Shanshui hua*.

Aurora Vivencio was born in Naples in 1991. In 2016 she graduated with honors at the Academy of Fine Arts in Naples (ABANA), earning a master's degree in Visual Arts. Since 2016 she has been "Subject Expert" in History of Contemporary and Modern Art at ABANA. Since 2017 she has been a collaborator-technician at the Internationalization Office at ABANA. Since 2019 she has been a teacher for lower and upper secondary schools in Arts, Images, Designs and Art History. Since 2020 she is a PhD student at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou.





In painting one should particularly avoid insisting on outward shapes and elegant colouring, one should not indulge in calculations and minute details or try to expose surpassing cleverness.

He Liangjun

Repetitive Metaphors in *Lin Quan Gaozhi*— *Shanshui* in Chinese Contemporary Art

林泉高致的隐喻系统 ——记中国当代艺术中的山水

By: Zeng Dongping 曾东平,
Lin Jiangquan 林江泉

The new generation of contemporary Chinese artists use different media to open up the folded real space of landscape. This is implicitly compatible with the linear progressive view of history criticized by the German philosopher Walter Benjamin. Benjamin repeatedly stressed that the meaning of historical events is possible only in connection with the present. This issue presents the works of Chinese contemporary artists Xue Ruozhe 薛若哲, Deng Chengwen 邓称文, Stanley K.C.Lam, Li Shun 李舜, Huang Zhiqiu 黄知秋 and Jiang Zhongjing 江中靖. The internal structure of *Shanshui* in their works is a system of repeated metaphors from the materialized continuous history of an era.

Deng Chengwen, *Self-Circulation* 《自我循环》, 160X140, oil on canvas, 2020





Stanley K.C Lam , *Lin Quan Gaozhi in the rain* 《雨中的林泉高致》, Automatic Painting, Rain, Concrete, Ink, Acrylic Sheet, Dimensions Variable, 2016





Huang Zhiqiu, When a section of Guo Xi's *Early spring* was enlarged I found an orchid, ink wash



Jiang Zhongjing, *The big mountain* 《大山》, photography

Giving a voice to the great masters of the past and to the contemporary young artists

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WE STAND AGAINST A SINGLE
WORLD VIEW, WHEN IN FACT
THERE ARE MANY.
THE ONE THAT DOES NOT
SUPPORT DIVERSITY, BUT
TRANSLATES THEM.
ONE THAT DOES NOT MAKE
THEM PARTICIPATE IN THE
DEBATE WITH THEIR OWN
VOICES, BUT ACCEPTS THEM
ONLY AFTER A TRIAL OF
METAMORPHOSIS.
WE ARE AGAINST THE
IMPERIALISM OF TASTES AND
CUSTOMS, OF JUDGMENT, OF
MEANS OF EXPRESSION, AND
OF WHAT TO EXPRESS,
A SITUATION WHICH
INEVITABLY LEADS TO A
CULTURAL FLATTENING.