



Lin Ruixiang: Garden Tour

Hu Bin 胡斌

Lin Ruixiang: Garden Tour -

林瑞湘：遊园无梦

By: 胡斌 Hu Bin

The artist Lin Ruixiang has titled her recent series of works "遊园" (Yóu Yuán, "Garden Tour") and explained: "I use a mental 'garden tour' to 'comfort this sense of decay that comes with spring.' 'All things revive' should be 'full of vitality,' so why does it correspond with 'decay'? This reminds me of the lyrics in *The Peony Pavilion* (《牡丹亭》): 'Originally, the flowers of various colors bloomed everywhere, but such beauty is all given to broken wells and collapsed walls,' which reveals a sense of wasted youth and sorrowful melancholy."

Of course, the artist is not attempting to express the so-called youthful melancholy in a narrative way; this is only an introduction, leading to the 'garden tour' in her consciousness. It is somewhat akin to the ancient Chinese literati's 'lying tour,' where they used landscape painting to meditate on nature. And as she unfolds her paintings filled with layers upon layers of stone imagery, we suddenly realize that this is not a tangible landscape, like the 'landscape of the full wall' one might expect. It is instead so quiet and

serene, constructed with circles and dots of varying thicknesses, gradually weaving together a misty, ethereal forest-like image. Many of her paintings appear as partial views of landscapes, fragmented and unclear, but when shown as a whole, they take on a grandeur reminiscent of Song dynasty landscapes.

In the structure of these interconnected patterns, occasional holes appear, like rock caverns, or like blank spaces in the painting; some parts are colored, yet the color layers seem to have no specific representational counterpart. Overall, although titled "Garden Tour," the work is more of an internal "walking," akin to her personal project Xiao Hun Qu (消渾曲), where she doesn't emphasize reproduction or form-giving, but rather exists in a fused state of brushstrokes and perception.

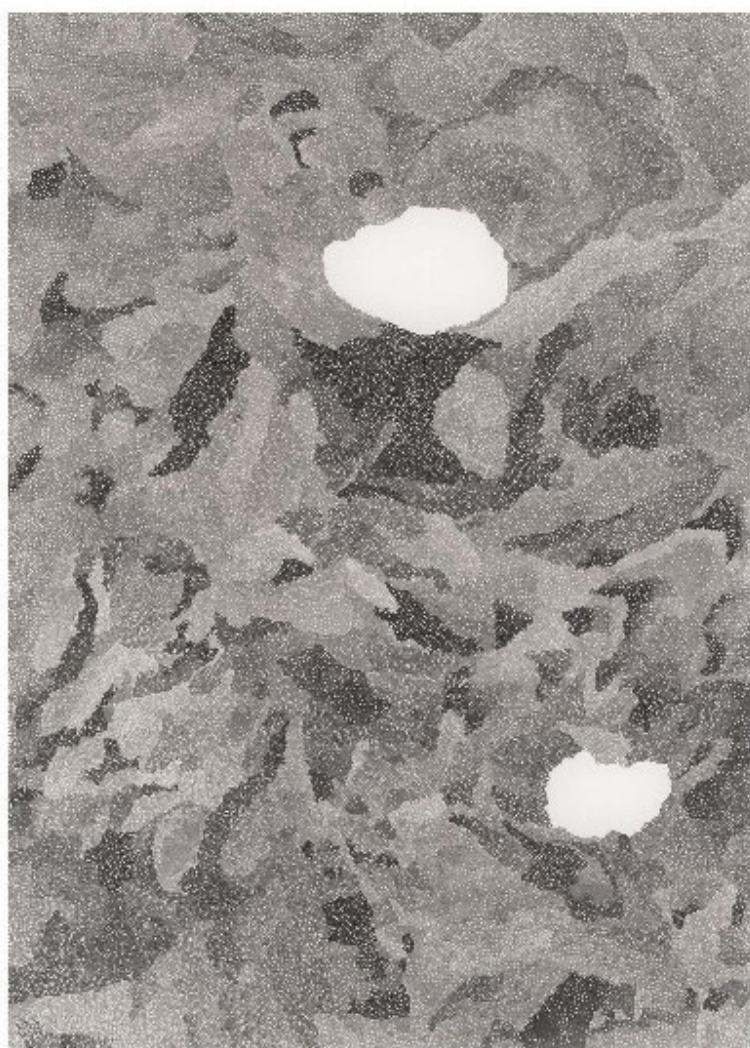
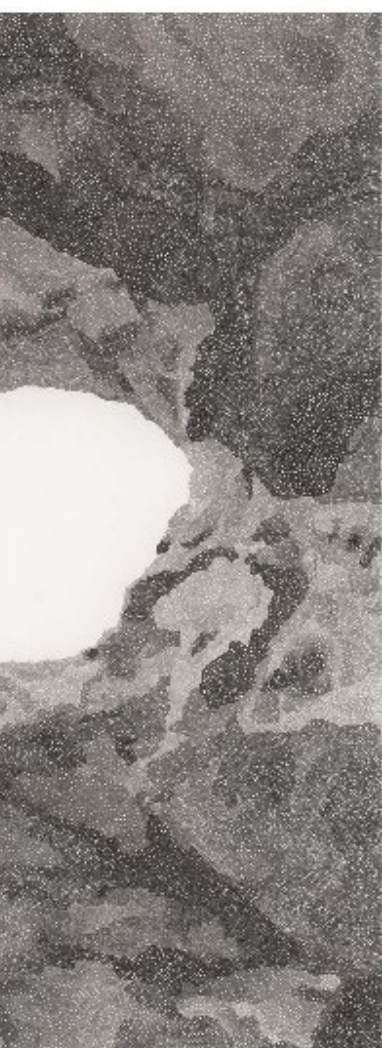
Some of her works include ancient poems written with deliberately incorrect characters, forming another layer of relationship between images and words. These phrases convey a sense of nostalgic sorrow, yet are completely unrecogniz-





able, turning into symbols of words that 'drift with the wind.' "遊園" seems to be more about '游' (wandering) than '園' (garden). It appears to have both '游' and '園' at the same time. Prior to this, her works had mostly been themeless, presenting a 'state between certainty and uncertainty.' "遊園" is the result of her reflections after returning to China, extending from her own thoughts. She studied in France for eight years, and from the cultural nourishment she received, she was neither purely Western nor fully devoted to

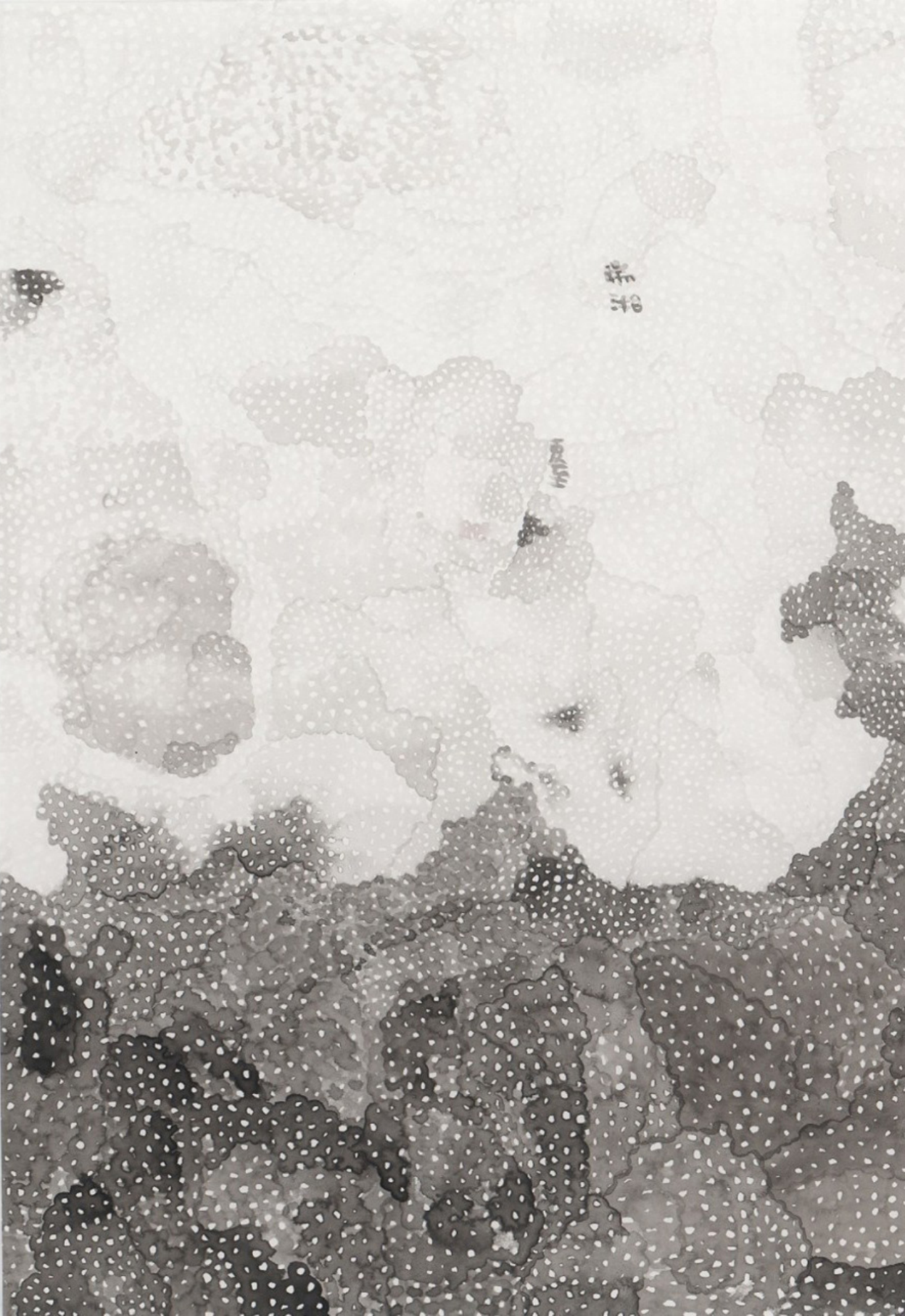
traditional Chinese culture. The cross-cultural context led her to rethink some aspects of Chinese culture. She was deeply influenced by Roland Barthes' theory of 'interstitiality,' and she also became fond of the *Shi Tao Painting Notes* (《石涛画语录》) and the story of *Zhuang Zhou dreaming of a butterfly*, finding in them a triadic, interactive relationship, rather than a binary one. She carefully translated Pierre Ryckmans' *Annotations on Shi Tao's 'One Painting Theory'* (一画论), and the concepts of 'vulgar,' 'trace-less,' 'non-action,'



and 'faint' from the theory impacted her. Ultimately, I believe the fundamental idea of 'One Painting Theory' was its inspiration in constructing a painting as an impossible method, not a tool to embody or materialize, but more about representing a free realm built on one's true nature. At the same time, 'One Painting Theory' had a guiding significance in the way she constructs her works. She continuously connects circles and dots to organize the relationships within the paintings, in harmony with the relationships

between 'painting,' 'ink,' 'brush,' and 'wrist,' as well as the painting logic of 'a single stroke on the paper leads to many paintings following it.'

Interestingly, from Lin Ruixiang's reading, it is evident that she is more interested in books that interpret Chinese culture from a Western perspective, such as the works of French-Chinese scholar Cheng Baoyi on Chinese poetry, calligraphy, and painting. Cheng Baoyi's academic background is connected to French structuralism, where his





Garden Tour 1 《游园》1, ink and colors on paper, 39x39 cm

goal is to reveal the deep structures and reasoning behind poetry and narrative, and the extended meanings that emerge from them. Roland Barthes, Shi Tao, Cheng Baoyi, and the occasional works she has explored, such as Plato's theory of 'Ideas' and the Buddhist view of 'dust particles and emptiness,' form a network of mutual reflections on subject-object relationships. Of course, this network is developed through her own perspective.

I am not trying to mystify Lin Ruixiang's creative semantics, but rather to capture the reasoning and direction of her paintings within the shifting relationships of her consciousness. Her "游园" begins with a single point and gradually expands, setting the tone for a particular painting, and in the process, her mood and thoughts bring forth various images and words. She floats within the logical structure of this organization, yet neither 'responds to objects' nor 'hints at meaning.' Her "游园" naturally contains emotions, but they are not fixed or stagnant, nor do they set up 'dreams.' Between the real and the imaginary, between affinities, she strives to find a way of growth between the subject and the object.

"In March 2016, as everything revived and spring arrived, I felt

I should go out and tour the mountains and waters to fulfill my life. However, for various reasons, I could not travel, and I felt quite frustrated. Yet, Plato had already told us that everything we see in reality is an illusion; only ideas are real. And the Buddha also told us the truth of 'dust particles' and 'impermanence.' So, I decided to take a mental 'garden tour' to explore the process from dust particles to illusions, in order to soothe this sense of decay that comes with spring."

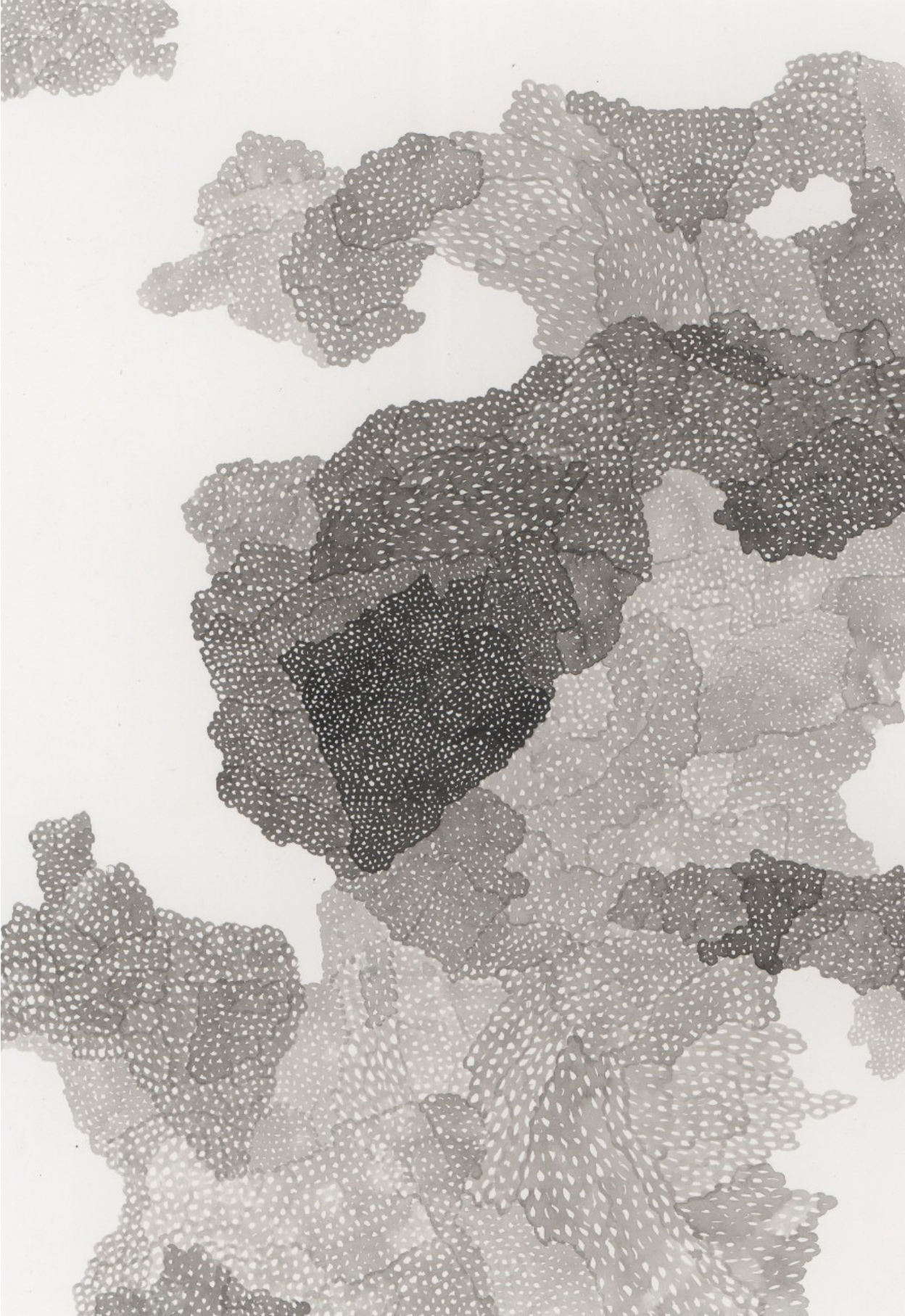
艺术家林瑞湘将新近创作的系列作品命名为《遊园》，并说：以意识上的遊园来“抚慰这一腔由春而来的颓废”。“万物复苏”本应“生机勃勃”，缘何又与“颓废”对应？这让我想起《牡丹亭·遊园惊梦》里的唱词“原来姹紫嫣红开遍，似这般都付与断井颓垣”所透示出的韶华虚度、青春愁闷的意味。

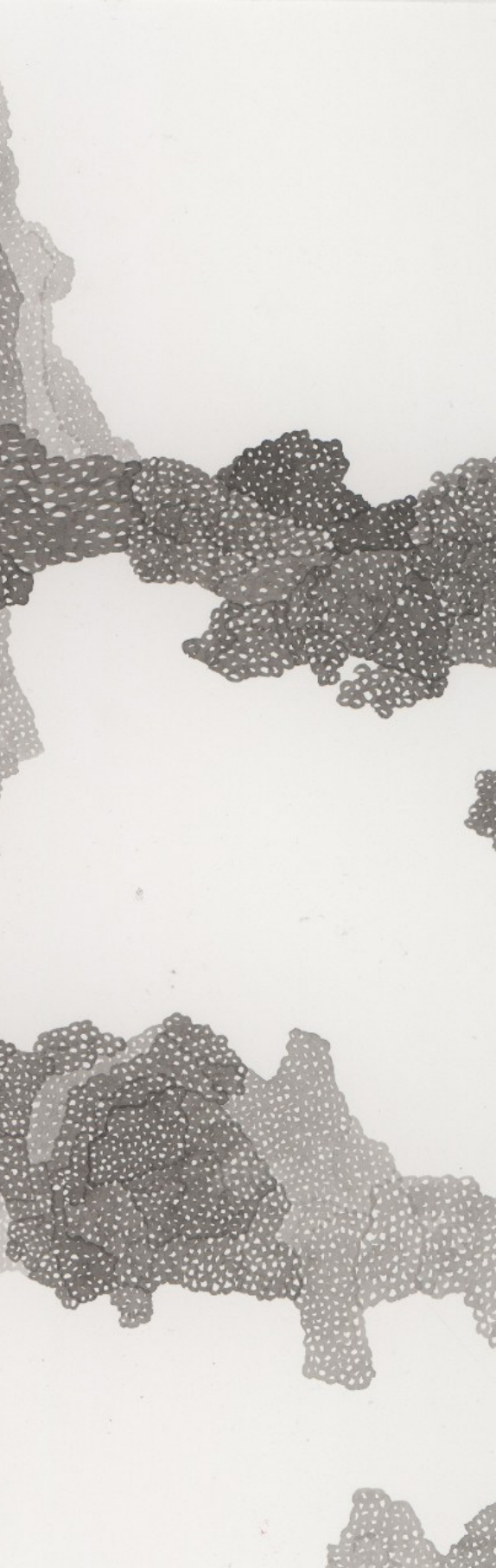
当然，作者不是要以叙事性的方法表达所谓青春惆怅的心绪，这只是一个引子，导引出意识里的“遊园”活动，它有点像是中国古代文人的“卧遊”，透过山水画卷来悟对自然。而当展开她那有如幽室结网，构建起的层层叠叠的山石意象画幅时，我们倏然明白，这也不是“满壁江山作卧游”的有形的山水征貌。她是那么沉寂地，用或浓或淡的圈点一步步来织就连绵的似是而非的云林之物。不少画卷看上去像是山水的局部，斑斑驳驳、晦明晦暗，而当展现全景的时候，则

Garden Tour 2 《遊园》2, ink and colors on paper, 39x39 cm









Garden Tour 3 《游园》3, ink and colors on paper, 39x39 cm

具有某种宋人高大山水的气象。在网结的构造中，不时会出现一些孔洞，有如山石的洞眼，又宛若画面的留白；也有部分设色的，色层似乎也没有什么具象对应物。总体上看，名为“游园”，实则更多的是一种内心意义上的“行走”，就像她的个人项目“消浑曲”上的行动一样，她不强调再现和赋形，而是处于一种笔线与感知的胶合状态。有的画面有错假字组成的古人诗词，这似乎又构成图像与语词的另一层关系，这些词句有具体的对应内容，多传达追忆哀婉之意，但是又完全无从辨识，成了“随风飘散”的语符。

“游园”似乎在“游”而不在“园”，似乎既有“游”又有“园”。在此之前，她的作品大都是没有主题的，呈现的是一种“确定与不确定之间的状态”，而“游园”则是她回国后，从自身思考脉络延伸出的结果。她留学法国八年，从所受的文化滋养来看，既不是纯西方的，也不是全然地皈依中国传统，跨文化的语境使得她重新思考中国文化的一些东西。她曾深受其所阅读的罗兰·巴特（Roland Barthes）的“间性”理论的影响；她又倾心于《石涛画语录》和“庄周梦蝶”的典故，并从中找到并不是非此即彼的三元交互关系的界域对应。她如此耐心地翻译了汉学家李克曼（Pierre Ryckmans）注释石涛“一画论”的篇章，画论中“俗”“无迹”“无为”“淡”的概念阐释影响了她。当然，我觉得最根本还是一画作为无法之法，作为体物方式的启发，它不拘泥，不物化，不作承载工具、进入之道，更多地体现的是一种建立于自性本体

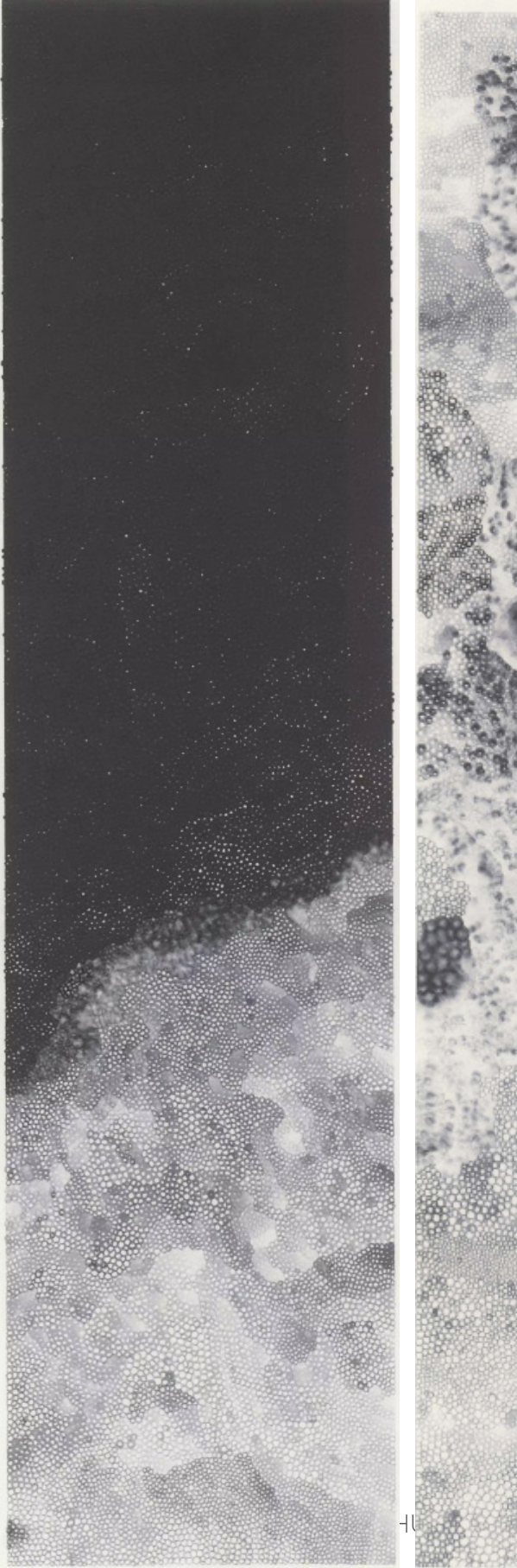
的自由境界。同时，“一画论”对她而言，在构造画面上又具有某种指示的意义。她不断连接圈点组织画面的关系，与这里面所说的“画”“墨”“笔”“腕”的联动关系，以及“一笔落纸，众画随之，一理才具，众理附之”的画理秩序形成某种暗合。

有意思的是，从林瑞湘的阅读看，她所比较热衷的是西方诠释中国文化的书籍，比如法国华裔学者程抱一解读中国诗词书画的著述。程抱一的学习背景与法国的结构主义有关，其力图揭示的是诗词叙述背后的深层结构与推理方式，以及由此承托出的引申寓意。罗兰·巴特、石涛、程抱一以及她零星涉猎的柏拉图的“理念论”、佛教的“微尘虚空”观，这之间构成一个相互映照的主客体关系认知的网络。当然，这个网络是以她的视角而展开的。

我不是要玄化林瑞湘的创作语义，只是想在她的意识流变的关系中捕捉到其绘画的缘由与取向。她的“游园”由一点蔓延开来，起始其实已经奠定了某一画幅的基调，在此过程中，心境和神思带动起各种意象和语词，她潜游于这种组织结构的逻辑之中，却既不“应物”也不喻示。她的“游园”自然有情绪在，但是不定型，不凝滞，亦不设“梦”，虚实之间，相性之间，主客之间力图找到一种生长的方式。

“2016年3月，万物复苏，春天来了。我觉得我应该走出门去游山玩水才不负人生，但是由于各种原因不得出行，甚是懊恼。然而，柏拉

Garden Tour 14, 16, 17, 18 《游园》14, 16, 17, 18, ink and colors on paper, 98x24 cm





图早就告诉我们，现实中所见一切皆是虚空，只有理念才是真实的。而佛也告诉了我们关于“微尘”与“无常”的真相。于是我决定在意识上做一场“游园”之旅，探索由微尘到虚像的进程，以抚慰这一腔由春而来的颓废。”

Garden Tour 13 《游园》 13, ink and colors on paper, 109.2x78.7 cm

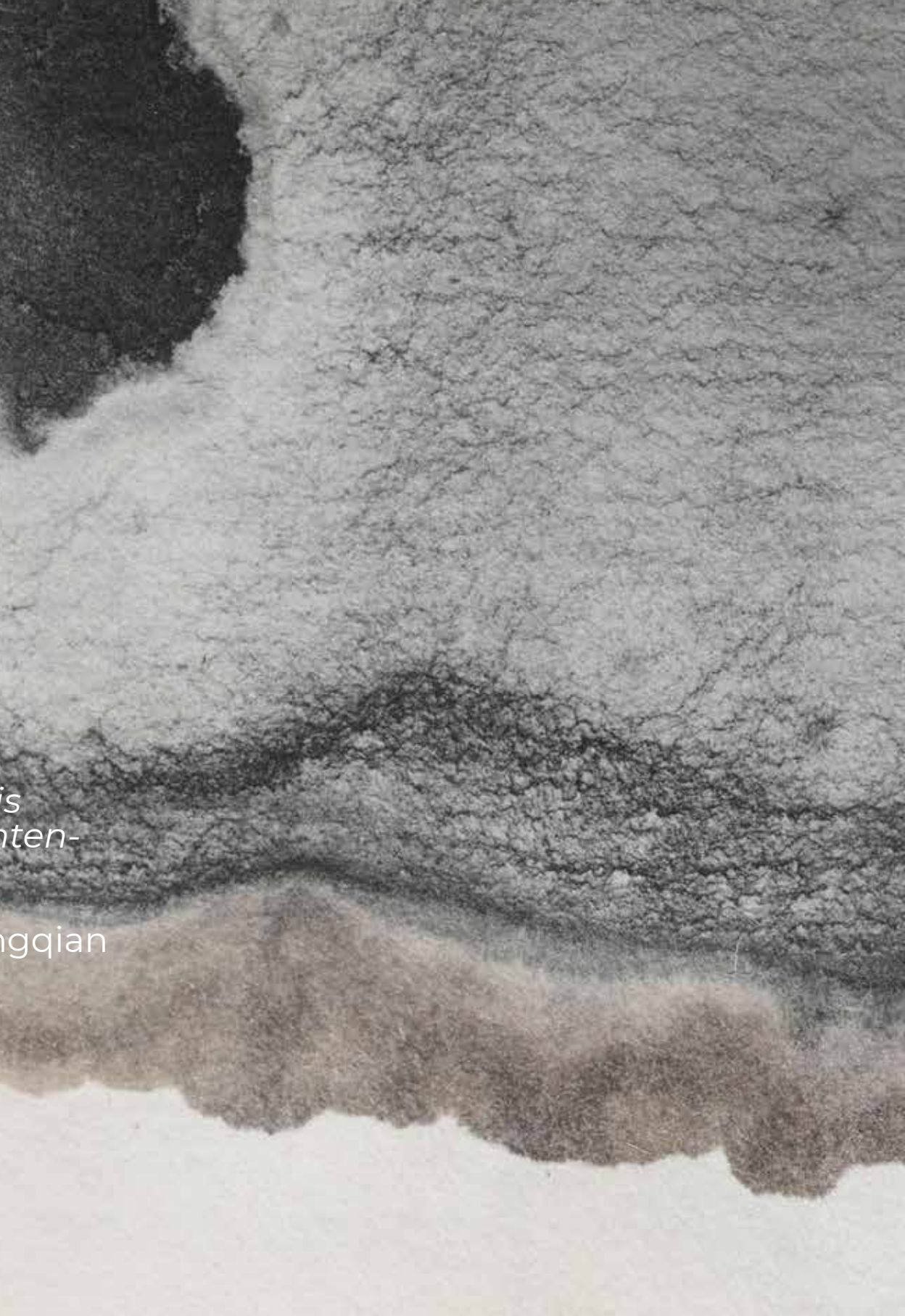
Garden Tour 5 《游园》 5, ink and colors on paper, 109.2x78.7 cm





*"The highest and deepest level [of creation] is
achieved when one acts halfway between intention
and non-intention."*

Shen Zong



's
nten-

ngqian