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SHANSHUI

**Innocence in the mountains: Zhang
Cangjian's Practice of Chinese
Mountain and Water Painting**

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Innocence in the Mountains

—Zhang Cangjian's Practice of Chinese Mountain and Water Painting

By: Lin Jiangquan

Zhang Cangjian's 张仓健 landscape is not only a material state, but also a spiritual state of "gathering things". "Getting the eye, embodying the hearts, and forming between the brush and ink" (Shen Zhou, *Calligraphy and Painting Collection*). "得之目，寓诸心，而形于笔墨之间"（沈周《书画汇考》） Besides the landscapes, there is another Zhang Cangjian. In Zhang Cangjian's paintings, objects are not only semiotics, but his brush and ink communicate with the soul in the wild and transparent spirituality. His spirit tries to start towards a borderless free state, so as to be unrestrained and arbitrary.（“出也无滞，成也无心，随手点拂而物态毕呈。”）

In the quiet, boundless or vigorous natural scene, Zhang Cangjian reminds of the factors that have not yet come and will come. His impassive landscape and the hidden corners in the current situation of life form an intertextuality, reflecting the complex social sentiment in these ancient corners, and discovering another part in the overlapping interpersonal network. He breaks the huge sociological landscape into fragments and then allegorizes the mixed and wrong structure. The existing thought shape and mutual materialized representation play in the landscape image. What can these images generated by staring achieve?

The world in Zhang Cangjian's landscape is not far away from the real world. He often uses the "banded schema" of virtual reality to separate our perception, and watches the land-

scape traces that are groping for differences fall into namelessness or disorder. Mountains, rivers and flowing waters or exotic natural environments were disrupted and connected by him. An unpredictable scene loomed in the blues. The psychological space in the real state was revealed in his region. It was gradually revealing the patchwork facts, loose essence, fragmented embrace and cold and empty appearances of the world, such as his works *Valley of Wind* 《风之谷》, *Harvest Story* 《收获物语》, *Illusion of Early Autumn* 《幻化初秋》, and more.

Whether learning from Huang Binhong 黄宾虹 (1865-1955) and Tang Liuru 唐六如 (1470-1524) or learning from Jing Hao 荆浩, Guan Tong 关仝, Dong Yuan 董源 and Ju Ran 居仝 of the Tang, of the Five Dynasties and Song Dynasty from afar, mountain and water painters should adopt their own methods to the ancients rather than imitate their traces. Throughout his mountain and water painting career, Zhang Cangjian has come down in one continuous line from ancient people to modern people. His brush, ink and techniques are like those of his predecessors, but his brush, ink and ideas are nourished by them. Huang Binhong said, "People say that you can walk in the sparse parts of the picture composition, but not in the dense parts. I prefer to say that you can walk in the dense parts, but not in the sparse parts."（“人们讲画面构图疏处可以走马，密处不使透风；我偏说密作可以走马，疏处不使透风。”）。 "Read" Zhang Cangjian's image, and go deep into a pioneering structure where ink and color are both in conflict and harmony. The secret of deep focus and shallow shift is hidden in the dense

Clouds of compassion on the mountain ridge 《慈云岭》，240x120, 2019



Valley of Wind 《风之谷》，137x68, 2018



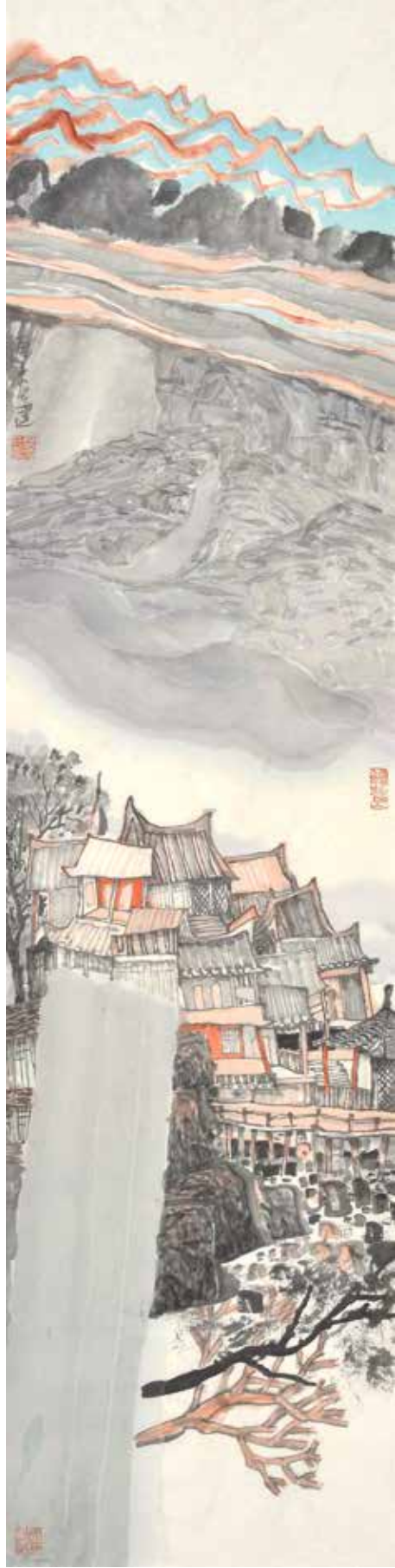
Source of the clear mountain stream 《澄涧之源》，137x68, 2018



parts and sparse parts.

Zhang Cangjian's landscape is a landscape that can lead to countless realistic paths. In his practice, landscape is not only a landscape, nor just a noun. He continued to move the moving track of the clouds and the mists until everything became clouds and the mists, or all the mountains contained five color layers that appeared in his deconstruction, such as *Love Seeks Color* 《情牵物色》, *Morning Talk* 《晨之语》. Different layers appear as images generated from time to time recognition of mountains. When he excavated the complex state of mountains and waters, he embodied several paths: first, he described the mountains and waters from fantasy to reality to direct resistance to reality; the second is to explore the subtle psychology brought by mountains and waters. He combines the poetic nature of mountains and waters with the original trauma of mountains and waters, explores the mysterious inner world of landscapes, and often emphasizes some variables of fate. He has a thorough understanding of the artistic characteristics - talking about self with images. He used thick ink blocks to separate the mountain combination that should have been in conflict, and ink and color were interwoven in the mountains, giving out a thick low voice or singing briskly. And the connection between the mind and the image is in a state of uncertainty, which eventually leads to the state of "taking pleasure" - "losing pleasure" (取兴 - 兴尽).

With the unique landscape equation to promote the development of his images, different brush and ink paths have developed a new gaze mechanism in a sharp or calm way. Through the gaze and blue color, the viewer is quietly lead to the overwhelming reality. He can set the clue of limited landscape, eliminate the infinite model, and try to reach the unknown "cloud" territory ahead with the progress of depth of field. Clouds and mists repeat



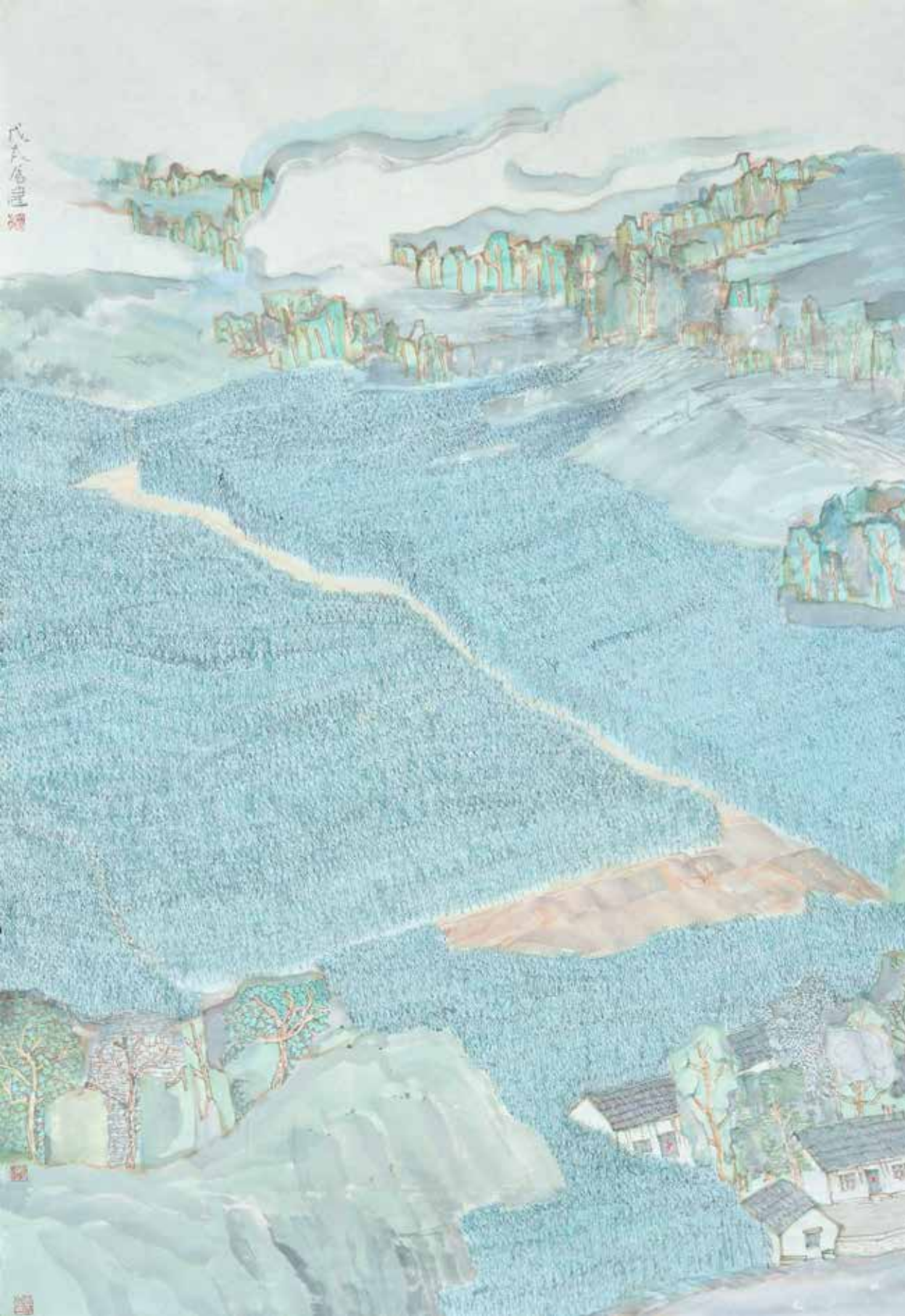
Longyin Temple 2 《龙隐寺之二》, 137X34, 2020



and advance step by step, creating another "cloud" image effect, fulfilling the promise given by clouds and mists internally.

The mountains were reconstructed, superimposed, re-reconstructed and re-superimposed by Zhang Cangjian, or a "reconstruction theory" was reached outside the mountains, resulting in chemical reactions inside and outside the mountains. In the face of his banded language setting, in the vague provocation and alienation, layers are deleted and reconstructed from the bottom to the top, but there is a resurgence of the yellow finch behind. When one kind of mountains and clouds seems to want to lead the theme to oppression, they are soon swallowed up by another, more common theme. When this depth of field has lost the attachment of the first half of the pair, it becomes related to the outside of clouds and mists. Such overlapping processing of landscape images indicates the opposition between human instinct and sociology. The landscape is divided by time and space, and in the narration of memories or dreams, it reflects the nihilism view that the artist and the depth of field have reached a consensus.

The most basic linear image production of landscape samples, such as *Qing Mu-chuan Journey* 《青木川记游长卷》, *Longyin Temple* 《龙隐寺》 series, and *On the Lake* 《湖上》 series, runs through his image practice. From tranquility to uncontrollable, and then back to tranquility as a mystery, clouds and mists advance layer by layer with a sense of destiny. The momentum of repetition and ferocity are equally important. For the first time, it is boundless or disorderly, hiding multi-level meanings behind unbridled mountains. Suspended, confused and nervous, the different mountain plots hold an extraordinary continuity in tune, and show their relatively unified spiritual essence under the constant variation of clouds and smoke. The mountains are compact





and stacked in strips, which firmly guide the perception of the retina. It seems that every step of the vision is full of suspense. Silence is often cruel, overlapping and interlacing into a synonym of the same "I"; Or bounce back from the depression of self doubt.

The scope of a person's travel is his world. Zhang Cangjian's travel has covered Asia, Europe, America and China, especially in Iran, India, Laos and other mysterious countries. Along with his travels abroad, he went deep into the social scene of different languages and searched all the wonderful peaks abroad with his painting bag. What brought Zhang Cangjian a broad path to his creation was that he constantly "negated" himself in the schema, and the technique of "either this or that" created a constantly changing painting style. The brewing and promotion of "leading pleasure" 引兴 concentrated on the middle stage of the painting process. Li Rihua 李日华 (1564-1635) called the eye-catching observation of "pleasure" as "the ignorance of meaning", and believed that "the ignorance of right and wrong has to be ignored." (Li Rihua's *Miscellaneous Decorations of Purple Peach Pavilion* 《紫桃轩杂缀》:是非有心于忽,盖不得不忽也。). The so-called "ignorance" has the meaning of observing uncertainty and the uncertainty of aesthetic image. Zhang Cangjian has transcended countless mountains and rivers with this double uncertainty, from "entering" in the traditional classics of ancient people to "going out" from the learning from the past, to "learning from my heart and writing my method" to "writing the law outside of me", spanning Descartes' "I think, therefore I am", to Lacan's "I am outside of me".

A mountain seen up close has one aspect, seen from a distance of a few li it has another, from one of many angles it has yet another, each distance has its own particular shape, this is called "the mountain that changes shape at every step". The front is one way, the side still another, the back still another, from every [point from which you look at it] there are just as many differences, this is called "the mountain changes shape from every point of view". In this way thousands of mountain shapes join together in one mountain, shouldn't we be aware of this?

Guo Xi

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