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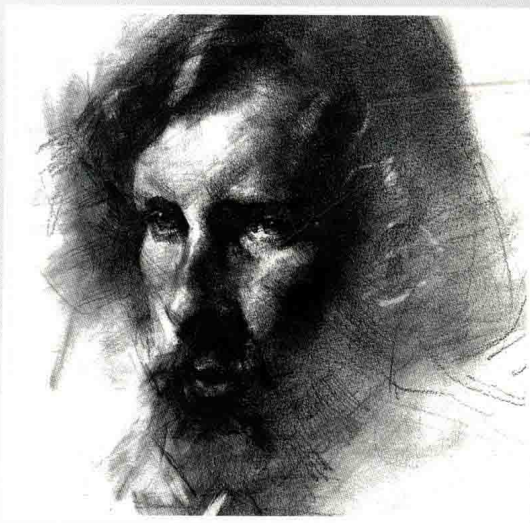
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BY YIM MAUKUN 冉茂芹 著

CLASSICAL SKETCHES OF FAMOUS ARTISTS • YIM MAUKUN

名家经典素描·冉茂芹②



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冉茂芹简介

1942年出生于中国湖南省桃源县。1965年毕业于广州美术学院舞台美术专科。1974年年画《送戏上船》入选全国美展。1978年油画作品《战士的歌》获广东省美术作品展一等奖。1980年移居中国香港。1989年移居中国台湾。

曾在中国台湾、香港等地举办个人画展十余次。出版油画、素描专集近30种。多年来还应邀在全国各大美术院校讲学。

荣誉和成就（部分）：

2006年应邀参加北京“中国国际艺术品投资与收藏博览会”，《先民渡海》组画获金奖。《抵岸》应邀参加“金陵百家（油画）展览”，《海峡夜浪》应邀参加上海、北京“精神与品格——中国当代写实油画研究展”。

最近出版作品：

- 2003年出版《素描精品技法》
- 2005年出版《一个头像的诞生》
- 2006年出版《粉彩笔记》
- 2007年出版《素描新语》
- 2008年出版《小画春秋》
- 2009年出版《素描过程集》
- 2010年出版《小幅架上油画写生》
- 2012年出版《素描手帖》
- 2013年出版《速写手帖》
- 2014年出版《风景手帖》
- 2015年出版《名家经典素描①》
- 2015年出版《名家经典素描②》

· 画作《灯下的女人》获美国《艺术家杂志》2005年封面大奖，并刊登于2006年1月号封面，有专文报道：《无字的语言》。

- 画作《铜手镯》获“美国肖像协会”2005年度竞赛一等奖。
- 画作《灯下的女人》获美国“2005年国际沙龙展”竞赛首奖，并在美国《西南美术》杂志2005年7月号刊登报道。
- 美国《国际艺术家》杂志2004年8月号刊登其专题撰文《色彩语言》及画作。
- 现为湖南师范大学美术学院客座教授、湖南文理学院客座教授。





About Yim Maukun



Born in Hunan Province, China in 1942, Yim Maukun was a graduate of Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts in 1965. He received wide acclaim as runner-up in the National Fine Art Exhibition in 1974. In 1978, he received the first prize in the Guangdong Province Art Exhibition with the oil painting *Soldier Song*. He moved from Mainland China to Hong Kong in 1980. In 1989, he moved to Taiwan, where he continues to live and work today.

Yim has held many solo exhibitions in Hong Kong and Taiwan. He is the author of nearly 30 books on oil painting and drawing. Yim is frequently invited to hold lectures and demonstrations at universities and art academies in Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Honors and Achievements (partial list):

Oil painting series *Taiwan Forefather* received Golden Award at the 2006 China International Artistic Works Investment and Collection Expo in Beijing. *Reaching the Shore* entered the 100 Top Artists Show in Nanjing. *Crossing the Surging Strait* entered the Fifty Years of Realism Painting Show in Shanghai and Beijing.

Recent book:

- *The Sketch Boutique Techniques*, published in 2003.
- *The Birth of A Portrait*, published in 2005.
- *The Pastel Journal*, published in 2006.
- *A New Language of Drawing*, published in 2007.
- *The Tale of Small Paintings*, published in 2008.
- *The Sketching Process Works*, published in 2009.
- *The Small Frame Oil Painting Set*, published in 2010.
- *Drawing Handbook*, published in 2012.
- *Sketching Handbook*, published in 2013.
- *Landscape HandBook*, published in 2014.
- *Classical Sketches of Famous Artists ①*, published in 2015.
- *Classical Sketches of Famous Artists ②*, published in 2015.
- Oil painting, *Lady in Shimmering Light*: Cover Award and Feature Article, *A Language without Words*, January 2006 issue of *The Artist's Magazine*.
- Oil painting, *Girl with Bronze Bracelet*: First Place, Portrait Society of America's 2005 International Portrait Competition.
- Oil painting, *Lady in Shimmering Light*: Best of Show, Salon International 2005. The painting is featured in the July 2005 issue of *Southwest Art*.
- Feature article, *A Language of Color*, in the August 2004 issue of *International Artist*.
- Visiting Professor, Hunan Normal University, China. Visiting Professor, Hunan University of Arts and Science, China.



素描的谜踪（代序）

· 冉茂芹

素描摒弃了一切色彩，将绘画提纯为仅以线条的深浅来作为造型的手段。这种手段累积到文艺复兴后成为一项完整的艺术形式。

到了19世纪，美国和俄国等许多欧洲国家都将素描的材质、技巧做了多样化的改变，将早期文艺复兴时作为壁画、油画草图作用的素描转变成一种独立的艺术形式。欧洲画坛素描的形式多样而富有变化，并逐步积淀成为一种传统。但所谓的现代艺术、当代艺术兴起之后，素描渐渐只能见于仍坚持写实教学的传统学院与画室了。

这些年，国内美术高考生激增，应付高考的教学画室如雨后春笋，随着影像器具大量普及，教学以画照片取代了实物写生，传统失落了，一时之间写实主义找不到路了。其实，路还在那里，成群的画家还是走在那条路上。

徐悲鸿有句教学名言：“宁方勿圆”。他的素描温润精确，但是，却怎么也看不出“方”来。我到马克西莫夫训练班时，发现那里留下的文献也多是学员对马氏的回忆。马氏大力推崇契斯恰科夫教学体系中的整体观察、整体表现的绘画观，并得以在美术界广泛流传。但是，我们仍然看不到何为整体观察和整体表现。

1980年，我移居香港，不久开设了个人教学画室，我在画室的小黑板上每星期写上一段有关素描的话，题曰：“每周画语”，内容从方块、圆球的明暗规律和造型原理写起，逐步随作业内容而深化。当我深入研究“方块”（立方体）时，发现写实光影描绘的基本原理都在这里：比例，透视，明、灰、暗三大面的主体成型规律，当然还有圆球的五调子等。但是，我发现三大面是铁律，而且，可将此明、灰、暗的规律衍化到人物石膏像上去，并接引至人物的细节刻画中。

关于马克西莫夫传授契斯恰科夫绘画的整体观念，可惜我们没有见到其教学、作画的具体文献和影像记录。近十多年来，我利用摄影器材将我的作画过程记录下来：从直线起稿、分出大块亮部与暗部，将暗部以灰调子铺出，并“以灰代暗”的色块来做增、减、修正，然后，再画出明显的几处稍浅灰色块：如额侧、鼻侧、脸颊。这就完成了纸上“建筑与雕塑”的初形。再深入刻画时仍然是以明、灰、暗的规律去描绘物象的细部。最后，画到皮肤表层再结合解剖知识，用双眼对色调、虚实、节奏规律的观察、感觉完成画作。整个过程是活动的，可被更正和移动的，直到画者停笔。这是我的整体观步骤的描述。

多年来我在纸上以雕塑家、建筑师的观念观察物象、描绘人物，并做了大量实践，留下许多画作。

我将方块的光影原理带到人物画中，并将人物身上呈现的几何原理再拆解为块面描绘，使之转化成笔触式的画面形象。

我对美术界常传述的“结构”一词做过解释：一是几何结构的，如颈脖、四肢、手指呈圆柱体；二是内在结构的，如骨骼、肌肉；三是表层结构的，如我们肉眼看到的深浅、起伏。

我经过了几十年没有放弃在素描纸上的游走，并在白雪般的平面上去探讨建立了富有生命形象的可能；我经过了许多许多的白色谜踪才找到纸上建筑的步骤和纸上雕塑的方法。

对于没有深入参与写生作画的朋友而言，这篇短文就显得有些艰涩，本人在此说声抱歉了。



The Riddle of Drawing (Foreword)

• Yim Maukun

Drawing dispenses with color, distilling representation of the subject into the depiction of form through pure lines and tones. This technique was gradually refined until it became an art form in its own right during the Renaissance.

By the 19th Century, the media and techniques of drawing had undergone many changes in Europe, Russia and America. It evolved from being used for the drafting of frescoes and oil paintings during the early Renaissance to becoming an independent art form. Drawing has eventually developed into its own tradition. When so-called modern and contemporary art rose to the fore, however, drawing was gradually relegated to traditional art schools and studios that still insist on a representational art education.

There has been a jump in the number of students in China applying for fine art colleges in recent years, leading to the proliferation of art studios that focus on passing college entrance exams. The widespread use of imaging tools means painting from photos has also replaced painting from life in teaching. All of a sudden, tradition evaporated and Realism seemed to have fallen by the wayside. Yet the road is still there. Drove of painters have continued to follow the same path.

Renowned Chinese artist Xu Beihong famously said: "Be square rather than round". While his drawings were polished and precise, they don't look "square" at all. Most literature on Russian art educator Maksimov's training classes consisted of the students' recollections of their teacher. Maksimov was renowned in artistic circles for being advocating the Pavel Petrovich Chistiakov teaching system's approach of holistic observation and holistic expression in painting. But where can we see this holistic observation and expression?

In 1980 I moved to Hong Kong and soon set up my own small teaching studio. Each week, I wrote a passage about drawing on the small blackboard in the classroom that I called the "Weekly Art Talk". It started with the rules of light and shadow for blocks and spheres, the principles of form, then gradually went more in-depth during the course of teaching. When I studied the "Block" (cube) in earnest, I discovered that all of the basic principles for a Realist depiction of light and shadow were right there: proportion, perspective, as well as three aspects of light, value and shadow that defined the form. The five tones of the sphere were naturally included but I discovered that the three aspects were the ironclad rules. The rhythm of light, value and shadow could also be extended to plaster busts and from there, applied to depicting the finer details of the subject.

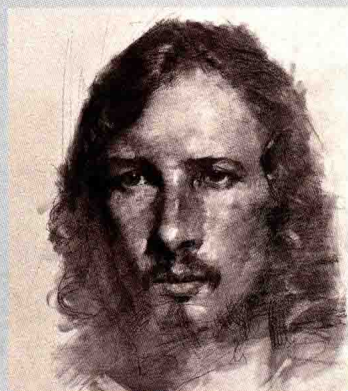
With regards to Pavel Petrovich Chistiakov's holistic approach as taught by Maksimov, it is a great pity that we have no actual records or images of the teaching and painting. I've been using photographic equipment to record my drawing process in the last decade or so: starting with straight lines, distinguishing the large blocks of light and shadow, using values to lay out the shadows, then using this "gray instead of shadow" color block to make corrections, additions and subtractions. I then sketch the lighter gray blocks such as the side of the forehead, the side of the nose and cheeks. At this point, the "building and sculpting" on paper is complete. For the details, I continue to follow the rhythm of light, values and shadow when depicting the details of the subject. Finally, I come to the skin where I draw on my knowledge of anatomy and use my eyes to observe and value, hard and soft edges, and rhythms in order to complete the drawing. This is a flexible process that can be modified and changed around until the artist comes to a stop. This describes my holistic approach.

For many years I have adopted a sculptor or architect's approach to observing subjects and drawing characters on paper. I've practiced extensively and produced a number of drawings.

I applied the principle of light and shadow from blocks to figurative drawings. The geometric principles on the characters were analyzed and broken down into blocks and then given shape in the drawing through strokes.

"Structure" is often mentioned in art and my interpretation is as follow: 1, geometric structures, the neck, limbs and fingers all have a cylindrical shape for example; 2, internal structure such as the skeleton and muscles; 3, the surface structure, the contours that we see with the naked eyes.

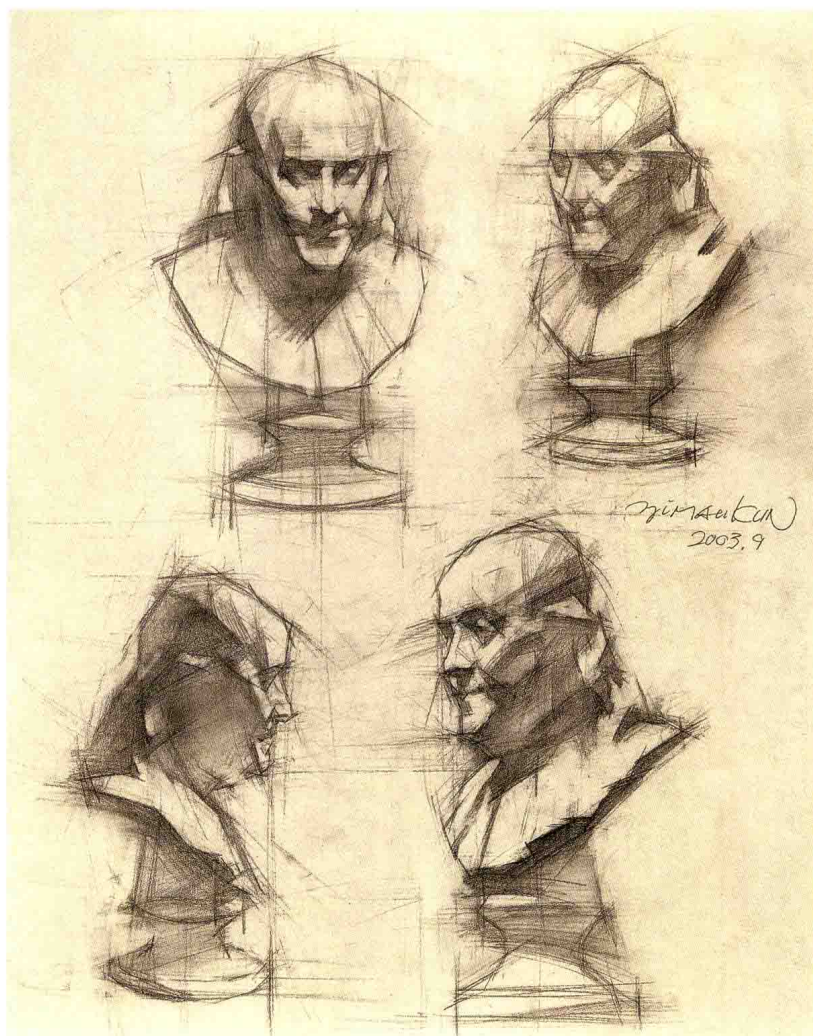
I have not abandoned drawing on paper even after practicing for so many decades. On the snow-white





surface I explored the possibilities of establishing rich, vibrant images. After many trials and errors, I finally found the way to build and sculpt on paper.

Those without extensive experience in live drawing may find this essay to be a little out of their depth, so please bear with me.





素描的境界

· 冉茂芹

一个画家画了这么多素描，我自己都承认确实了不起。这与我的遭遇有关，30年前我离开内地到香港，人地生疏两手空空。因油画《战士的歌》刚在广东省以至内地打开的一点局面在香港完全作废。一切从头做起，“开毛荒”。左搞右搞鬼使神差地开起教学画室来了，这一教就一发不可收拾，而写实这一派又非得教素描不可，于是这素描我就又画了30年。

说实话，也是我自己喜欢画，以我的能力来教学，指手画脚当然可以，无人说闲话，不是有很多人喝茶抽烟看报纸吗？但这样让我不能忍受，“美色当前”岂可不画？所以，我为学生摆模特儿，摆静物的标准就是我自己的标准。画家不喜欢画画是不可思议之事，画家作画有如农民种田、铁匠打铁般天经地义，我就是一位“画匠”，像罗丹所说：“如果你是艺术家就不可能是什么别的。”

要教学总不能误人子弟、误人青春。传统艺术中的教学是要传授与解惑的，与现代艺术教学一进门老师就要学生“表达自我”、表现“自我风格”的路子截然不同。要画像物体就那么容易吗？那要掌握比例、透视、明暗、空间的种种知识，而这些知识又必须由浅至深、循序渐进，没有速成之路可走，一定要从基础做起，缺了哪个环节，那个缺陷就有如老虎般蹲在你的画中，不管你名气多大，明眼人是看得出来的，你非得要打死了老虎才能过得了景阳冈。

以我自身的经验来说，这个基础于素描而言就是石膏像素描。我1959年秋考上广州美术学院附中，那几年“大跃进”的冒进造成国民经济的大倒退，改由刘少奇出来主持中央日常事务，各条战线的冒进做法得以抑止，教育上也开始鼓励师生加强基本功与专业方面的训练，在这个大背景下我们附中这届两个班得以按原教学计划进行直到四年毕业。课业内容除水彩、创作外大量的的是石膏像素描，许多人都称赞我们附中这一届出人才，不少师友问我是是什么原因，我认为是这两个班没有搞所谓的教学改革，而且大量画石膏像素描，基础打得较为坚实吧。所以后来我就将这经验引申为：石膏像素描是基础中的基础。

素描到底意涵为何？当然，素描是绘画的基础；素描是一种单色描绘；素描是一种可独立存在的艺术门类……种种说法都不错。当我跨进去后方才知道何止如此？其堂庑之深、庙堂之大足可以让人一辈子游弋其中。

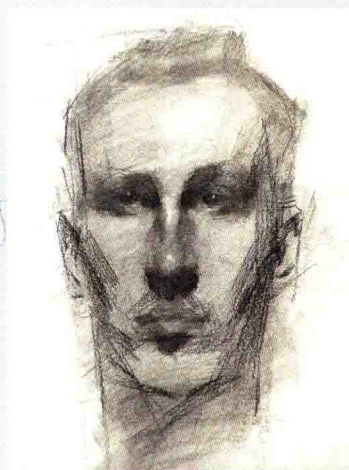
素描是一种建构

素描是一种在平面上的建构。这里说的是要像建筑师、雕塑家一般去塑造，我们长久习惯将绘画说成描绘，这两字似乎不包含体积塑造的概念。五百年前在意大利，文艺复兴的两位大师达·芬奇与米开朗琪罗就有过绘画与雕塑孰优孰劣的有趣争论，当然是没有结论。雕塑是以体积复制体积物，而绘画则是在平面上建构“体积”，虽然，这种平面上的体积物是虚幻的，但是，加上画家营造周围的空间，却可以描绘出任何历史场景和想象的画面。所以，文艺复兴的大师们要去完善在平面上塑造体积形与空间的探索，找到有关比例、透视、明暗、解剖、空气透视等手法，在“平面”上营造了《最后的晚餐》、《蒙娜丽莎》、《西斯廷的圣母》、《雅典学院》等有如圣·彼得大教堂、巴黎圣母院式的宏大精深的绘画作品。到近现代，一大堆人以现代的名义将那宏伟建筑的墙、门、窗都拆掉、放倒，平躺在地上了。今天，我们要在纸上重建体积形象竟如此艰辛，要将拆解了的比例、透视和解剖、明暗、光影和块面等规律性知识找回来，才能重建绘画的伟大建筑。

结构的意涵

很多教画的人，常说要“抓结构”，坊间甚至正规美术院校还开设一种名为结构素描的课。何为结构？是否结构就是骨骼、肌肉？我认为人物画中的结构包含：1.几何结构。如人





体中的类立方体、球体、长方体、圆柱体等，没有这些归纳式的理解与观察，我们的描绘就会支离破碎、琐碎不堪。2.内在结构。通常就是指皮下的骨骼肌肉，这种结构是皮肤起伏的决定性因素，没有内在结构的知识就会使画面表面化和荒腔走板。3.表层结构。表层结构就是我们眼睛感受到的、特定光线下的皮肤起伏。这起伏既微妙又有质感，有色彩，充满生命和感性，是作品的最后归宿。有太多人的素描比例、解剖都对了，但没有生命感，枯燥得很，其原因就是忽视了对象在此时空光线下的感性状态。

整体观察

什么叫整体观察、整体表现？什么叫从整体到局部，从局部回到整体？自20世纪50年代苏联专家马克西莫夫来中国开办训练班以来，这两句话几乎无人不知。我在《素描过程集》中试着以不少的作画步骤图来说明我对这一叙述的理解：我是从大团块出发，大直线起手，大明大暗布局，如此展开而逐步到五官，到细节，到表情。我常在教学中开玩笑地说：打倒“挖鼻孔”！在素描起手阶段，我要大家“目中无人”，也就是你在人身上看到的是线条、体块的比例与关系，关系对就有整体感，就和谐。对于常抠局部的人我也会说“我恨不得将你们的眼珠子挖出来……再将我的装上去”，大家哄堂大笑。

有了整体观念就有希望成大画家，不然，充其量只能是画匠。

找回中间调子

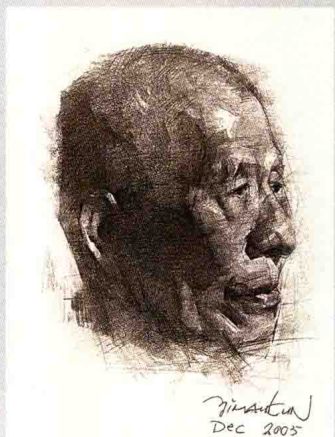
中间调子是光影绘画中明、灰、暗的重要一环，是文艺复兴绘画中重要的资产。现代绘画走向装饰化与平面化，必然忽视、抛弃这重要的环节，我们要在自我训练中找回来。物象因中间色调而厚重，而丰富，而真实，又饶有韵味。中间色调最需要我们的眼睛去感受它的深浅韵律，因而也最感性，它和黑与白的两端相比不是更具音乐感吗？它的微妙转换的特性对画者深具挑战性。

写实的境界

民国初的大学问家王国维先生在《人间词话》中说：“境非独谓景物也，喜怒哀乐，亦人心中之一境界。故能写真景物、真感情者，谓之有境界，否则谓之无境界。”说得多么明了透彻啊！我在20多年前就在给学生的素描讲义之中用了法、理、境三字来概括三个不同的层次。而“境”字在人物画当中最不容易表述清楚，在此，王国维将人物画也有“境界”的存在一语道破：喜怒哀乐为人心中之境界，真感情者谓之有境界。境界，这也是一张画的最高目的，是艺术品存在的终极价值。一幅画光画得对、画得像还不够，能品而已，还要有趣、感人，有境界，方能达到妙品、神品之品位。

照片真实、艺术真实、变形真实

德国表现主义艺术家博伊斯，以一张他抱着淋满油漆的兔子的照片（标题文字：怎么向兔子解释什么是艺术？）来表达七八十年前现代主义碰到的困扰。今天，轮到传统意义上的写实画家困扰了。与19世纪的米勒和列宾不同的是：我们的身边挤满了两派人马，一派满手拿着照片在抄，对这类极似照片的画，老百姓都说画得像、画得好；另一派是将照片画成漫画，坚称是真正的艺术。反倒是写实画家要费很大力气向人们解释写实艺术与上面两种图画的区别为何了。在19世纪的库尔贝举起现实主义旗帜以后这几乎是毋庸置疑的问题啊。面临



当今的混乱，我们却要不断地重申：现实主义的写实是不夸张，不变形，有提炼，有取舍，既不同照片更不同表现主义的。简言之，它是真实的，也是艺术的。

这个艺术真实的命题不搞清楚就会走到无止境地模刻对象的照片主义路子上去。这种照片真实有什么不好呢？因为它取消了艺术形式的审美功能，又阻断了艺术品的联想作用，用烦琐的哲学式的真实代替了观赏者的审美参与。照片写实与表现主义夸张变形的路子，OK，那些都是艺术，只是不是写实艺术。

写实绘画的重要标志是写生

不管学院派或泛学院派，19世纪随古典写实进入到现代写实过程中，确定了绘画的知识、技巧、方法均需从写生得来，艺术技巧的教育和传承也需要通过在写生中来展开，来贯彻。写实艺术的教育，绝对不是仅仅靠书本、靠语言来进行的，所有的语言、文字都只是教学辅助手段，不能代替对实物的描绘。

每一次写生都是一次新的探索，对生命，对艺术的探索。我们面对生命首先要虔诚和尊重，要忘我、无我，你才会有新发现的喜悦，才有生命的庄严。要尊重对象，不要随意轻率地“整形”，改变对象。不要用你简单的所谓“个人风格”硬套在对象上。在深入观察之后又要与真实保持距离，下笔之前脑中要升起画面，然后，调动一切修养和经验来追寻你心中的画面。在此，我没有用齐白石的名言，似与不似之间的艺术标准，那是表现主义的描述，是齐白石、毕加索、马蒂斯的标准，不是达·芬奇、列宾、米勒的标准。多年来只用此说界定作品高低是不恰当的。

意在笔先，是所有作画者应有之举，不独中国画者然，画西洋画的人因为写生，有物在眼前，不少人以为可以照搬实物，这是一大谬误，也常导致画面生硬、琐碎、无生气。所以，不仅要写生，还要意在笔先，成竹在胸。心中要有个“最高任务”，就像俄国百年前的大导演斯坦尼斯拉夫斯基要求演员去完成塑造人物形象的那个“最高任务”。

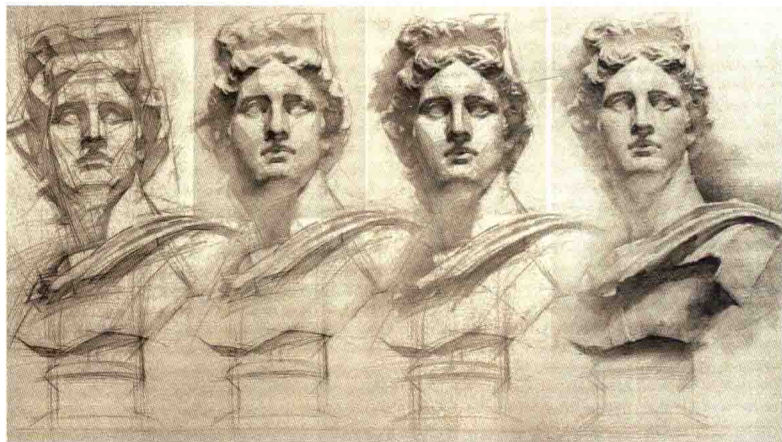
今天讲了素描是平面上的建构，讲了结构三含义，讲了找回中间调子、整体观察，又讲了艺术真实和写生是写实绘画的宝贵资产，还说了写生务必要意在笔先，人物画也要有境界……

最后，我还要说一个秘密，在平面上“建构”体积形就是：体块理解与块面方法，并将这块面意识融合在对象的自然真实的美感之中。你真明白了这点就诸法皆空，就能点石成金啊！

还有什么啊，没有了，真的没有了。

本书在编撰过程中，得到广西美术出版社黄宗湖总编辑和责任编辑吕海鹏先生的大力支持，在此谨向他们表示衷心的感谢。

2011年10月1日于台北
原载《名家画室·素描手帖》，2012年版





Pursuing the Highest Ideal of Drawing

• Yim Maukun

I'm quite proud of the sheer number of drawings I produced, something that I attribute to how I established myself in Hong Kong long time ago. When I left Mainland China and arrived in Hong Kong thirty years ago, I was a stranger in a strange land with only the clothes on my back. After coming to Hong Kong, I was basically throwing away the career start I had made in Guangdong with the oil painting *Soldier Song* which won the first prize in a major art competition. Everything had to be started from scratch again with a "clean slate". Through a series of accidents and coincidences, I opened a painting studio for private teaching. Once I started teaching there was no turning back. Since drawing is something you must teach in the realism art academy, I kept drawing for thirty years as well.

I must admit that it's because I like drawing. When I teach drawing classes, I can certainly get by with giving basic instructions and sitting back to drink tea, having a smoke or reading the newspapers. Though that's not my style. If the subject is there, why should I pass up on this opportunity? That's why the models or still life I set up for students are all arranged the way I like. A painter that doesn't like painting defies the imagination. A painter at work is just like a farmer tilling the field or a blacksmith striking the iron. You call me an "artisan" if you like but I agree with what Rodin once said, "If you are an artist then you can't possibly be anything else."

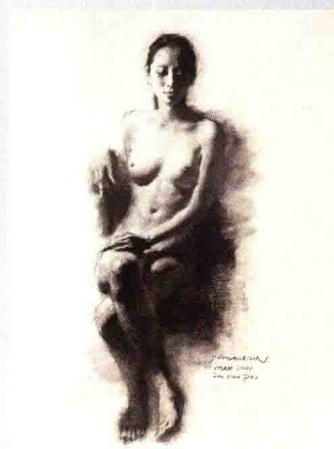
As a teacher you should not mislead your students and waste the golden years of their youth. In the traditional arts, teaching is about giving instructions and answering questions. This stands in stark contrast to modern art where teachers start out by pushing the student to "express yourself" and "find your own style". Is it really that easy to paint portraits and objects? What about proportions, perspective, shading and space? There are different degrees of mastery to each of these skills as well. You must start with the basics and master all of them step by step because there are no shortcuts. It doesn't matter how famous you are either. If there is a gap in your knowledge, to those in the know the flaw will stick out like a sore thumb. This is a flaw you must fix if you wish to go any further.

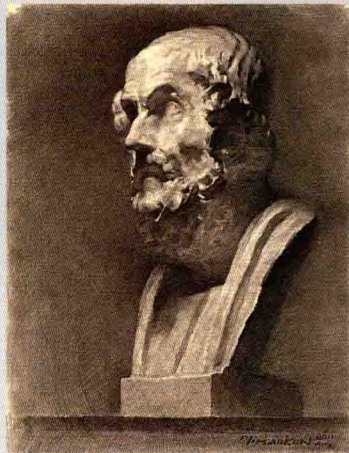
For me, the basics of drawing lie in the practice of cast drawing. When I passed the examination to enter the affiliated high school of the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts in 1959, Liu Shaoqi had been put in charge of the central government after the economy had been crippled by the Great Leap Forward Movement over the past few years. The extremism of the popular fronts was reined in and the educational establishment began encouraging teachers and students to focus on basic skills and professional training. At our high school, these changes allowed the two classes in my year to follow through on our curriculum until we graduated four years later. Apart from watercolors and art creation, our classes involved a great deal of cast drawing as well. Many people have commented on the number of outstanding artists produced during this period of time. Many teachers and students also asked me what made our class so special. In my opinion, it was because these two classes had no truck with the so-called "educational reforms". Instead, we did a lot of cast drawing and built a really solid foundation. Based on these experiences, I eventually came to the following conclusion: Cast drawing is the basic of the basics.

What is the meaning of drawing? There are those who say that drawing is the foundation of painting; that drawing is monochrome painting; that drawing is an independent art form.... All of these would be right. But I discovered that drawing was something far more. There is no end to its possibilities and you can spend your whole life exploring its true potential.

Drawing is a Form of Construction

Drawing is a form of construction in a two-dimensional plane. Here the word "construction" refers to building something like architects and sculptors. We are accustomed to thinking of painting as a form of portrayal of a subject which doesn't imply a sculpting of physical volume. Five hundred years ago, an interesting debate occurred in Italy between Da Vinci and Michelangelo on the relative merits of painting and sculpting. However,





the argument between the two great masters of the Renaissance naturally is still unsettled. In sculpting, a physical volume is recreated in physical form. In painting, the "physical volume" is recreated on a plane. Though the physical volume on a plane is a virtual construct, the painter can use the space around the object to depict any historical scene or imaginary setting. That is why the masters of the Renaissance explored the sculpting of physical volume and space in two dimensions to discover techniques such as proportions, perspective, value, anatomy and aerial perspective. From these efforts emerged great artworks such as *The Last Supper*, *Mona Lisa*, *Sistine Madonna* and *Academy Athens*. The paintings were the two-dimensional equivalents to architectural masterpieces like the St. Paul Cathedral and Notre Dame in Paris in terms of sophistication and artistic merit. As we approached the contemporary era, people started tearing down the walls, doors and windows of those grand buildings then leaving them lying around on the ground. Today, reconstructing shapes and volumes on paper has somehow become extremely difficult. We must rediscover the principles of proportions, perspective, anatomy, value, light, shadow and surfaces in order to rebuild the architecture of art.

Meaning of Structure

Many painting teachers talk about the need to "master the structure". So-called structural drawing classes are offered by personal studios and even art academies. What is structure? Does structure mean skeleton and musculature? My theory is that structures appear in several forms within portraits:

1. Geometric structure. Examples include the cubes, spheres, rectangles and cylinders that define the human form. Unless we can observe and comprehend these shapes in a systematic manner, our drawings will feel haphazard and disjointed.

2. Internal structure. This usually refers to the skeleton and muscles underneath the skin. The form of the skin is determined by this underlying structure. A lack of knowledge about the internal structures leads to shallow and amateurish results.

3. Surface structure. The surface structure is defined by the contours of the skin as it appears to our eyes under certain lighting conditions. The contours are very subtle yet filled with texture, color, life and feeling. They determine the ultimate worth of the work. I've seen far too many cases where the artist got the proportions and anatomy right in their drawing but it still came across as flat and lifeless. They invariably ignored the sensual nature of the subject under the lighting of that particular time and space.

Observing the Wholeness

What is the wholeness observation and wholeness presentation? What does going from the whole to the parts and from the parts back to the whole mean? Practically everyone has heard of these two phrases ever since the Soviet artist Maksimov set up a training course in China. In my *The Sketching Process Works*, I attempted to illustrate my understanding of this subject through numerous sketches in progress: I start with large blocks, straight lines and masses of light and shadow before gradually moving on to the features, details and expression. I often say jokingly during the classes: Stop "nose-picking" (focusing on details like nostrils)! When people are about to start a drawing, I usually tell them to "ignore the person". In other words, what they should be looking at is the relationship between the lines and blocks that make up the human form. If they can get the relationship right then a harmonious whole will emerge. For people that get hung up on the details, I say: "I wish I could gouge your eyes out.... And stick my eyes there instead". This always gets a good laugh.

If you can master the concept of the whole then you might become a great painter. If you don't then a craftsman is the most you will ever be.



Rediscovering the Mid-tones

The mid-tones are an important element in the value scale when painting light and shadow. They are also one of Renaissance's most important gifts to painting. Modern painting's emphasis on the decorative and two-dimensional means that this important element has been neglected and discarded. We must therefore train ourselves to master this skill once again. It is the mid-tones that give depth, variety, realism and interest to objects and images. Our eyes are required to appreciate the finer rhythms of the mid-tones and this makes it all the more sensual. When compared to pure black and white, don't the mid-tones come across as more musical? For the painter, the exquisite variations of mid-tones make it all the more challenging.



Depicting the State of Mind in Realism

In *Criticism and Interpretation*, the early 20th century scholar Wang Guowei said, "The state (Jingjie) does not just mean a certain place or object. Happiness, anger, sorrow and joy are also the state of the human mind. Those that capture the essence of the scenery and emotions can be said to have lived up to the ideal of realism; those who don't do not." What a clear and concise description! I began using the concepts "Method", "Principle" and "State of Mind" more than twenty years ago in my lecture notes on drawing to represent three different dimensions. The concept of "state of mind" is the hardest of the three to explain in portrait painting. Wang Guowei however managed to get straight to the heart of the matter and point out that the "state" exists in portraits as well: happiness, anger, sorrow and joy represent the human state of mind so we should strive to capture the true emotions. This ideal is what every painting should strive for. It defines the ultimate value of an artwork. It is not enough for a painting to look right and has good likeness. It needs to be interesting, touching and evocative in order to become a true work of genius.



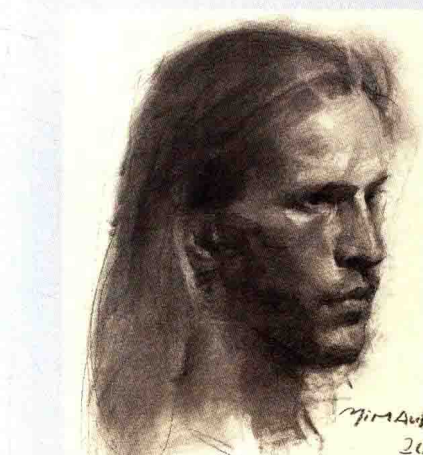
Photo Realism, Artistic Realism, Exaggerated Realism

German Expressionist artist Joseph Beuys used a photo of himself holding a rabbit covered in paint to express the headache that Modernism ran into seventy or eighty years ago. The caption read, "How do you explain art to a rabbit?" Today, it's the traditional Realist painters that are having a headache. Unlike Millet and Repin of the 19th century, however, we are flanked by two different schools. On one side you have those who spend their time copying photos and are applauded by the general public for how true the painting is to the photo. On the other you have those who turn photos into cartoons then claim that as true art. Realist painters now have to spend a lot of time and effort explaining to people the difference between Realist art and the two types of paintings mentioned above. Since Courbet began promoting the Realism school in the 19th century this has become a major sticking point. Despite the chaotic situation we face today, we must emphasize once again that the true Realism does not involve exaggeration or warping. It is about distillation and selection. It is not the equivalent of photos and it is definitely not the same as Expressionism. In other words, it is about what is real but it is also about art.

Unless you can come to grips with the concept of artistic realism, you will end up following the photo-realism road to slavish replication. The problem with this kind of photo-realism is that it removes the aesthetics from art and obstructs the associations that art can create. The aesthetic involvement of the audience is replaced by a trivial philosophy of realism. Photo-realism and the exaggerated warping of Expression can all be considered art but they are not Realist art.

The Mark of Realism is Painting from Life

During the transition from classical Realism to modern Realism that occurred in the 19th century, both the





academy and non-academy painters affirmed that the knowledge, techniques and methods of painting were derived from painting from life. The teaching and learning of artistic techniques must also be conducted through painting from life. Realist education does not rely just on books and words. The spoken and written words are just teaching tools. They are not a substitute of painting from life.

Every life painting session is a new journey of exploration into life and art. We must approach life with sincerity and respect. In order to experience the joy of discovering and the dignity of life, we must abandon our self-consciousness and self-awareness. We must also respect the subject. Do not "improve" the subject without a good reason, or trample all over the subject by forcing your so-called "personal style" upon them. After carefully observing the subject, you must also maintain your distance from reality in order to find an image inspired by life. Before putting brush to canvas, let the image take shape in your mind. Now use all of your skills and experience to pin down that image. There is a famous quote by Qi Baishi on how art is judged by resemblance and non-resemblance. I did not use that quote here because it is the criteria of Expressionism. It may be the chosen criteria of artists like Qi Baishi, Picasso and Matisse but not the artists like Da Vinci, Repin or Millet. Yet for many years, this was inappropriately used as the sole standard by which art was judged.

All painters and not just Chinese painters should always let their thought guide the brush. In Western painting, life painting puts the object in front of the artist so a lot of people think it is enough to just reproduce what you see. This is a serious misconception that frequently leads to stilted and lifeless paintings bogged down in the details. So you must not only paint from life but also let your thought guide your brush and have the image already fixed in your head. You must have a "higher purpose" in your heart. A century ago, the great Russian director Stanislavsky often told actors that their "higher purpose" was breathe life into their character.

Today, I talked about how drawing is construction on the two-dimensional plane. I also talked about the three meanings of structure, finding the mid-tones and observation of wholeness. I talked about how artistic realism and painting from life are a precious part of the Realist heritage. I also said that the mind should guide the brush during life painting, and that character portraits have their own ideal as well...

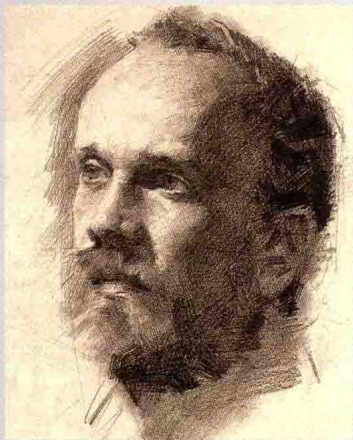
Finally, I would like to let you in on a little secret. When "constructing" a physical volume on a flat surface, you must understand how to use blocks and surfaces. Now infuse this understanding into the natural aesthetics of the subject. If you really understand this then everything else is easy!

Is there anything else? No, that's definitely it.

Book on the compilation process, obtained the Guangxi Fine Arts Publishing House editor and executive editor in chief Huang Zonghu, editor of Mr. Lv Haipeng's strong support, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to them.

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The Original Famous Studio Drawing Handbook in March 2012



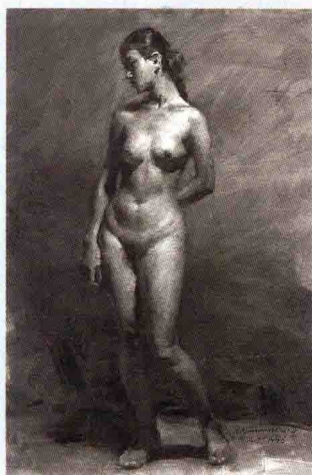


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