

DECOR

A Decade of Wang Dongchun

王东春油画作品集 1997-2007

东春十年

Tianjin People's Fine Arts Publishing House

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著

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另类的王东春

+ 顾丞峰

在画家中王东春是个另类。

凡了解他的人都有这样的印象，王东春是一个温和（无论外表还是语调）的人，愤世嫉俗、故做放浪，这些在很多艺术家身上都程度不同显示出的姿态，在他身上都没有。他头上似乎总是留着一个板寸发型，坐在靠窗边的椅子上，当你的目光与他对视时，你会感觉是在和一个憨厚的北方壮汉在交谈。

那么又何出另类之言？

只要你回忆一下王东春这十年来的作品，无论是1998－2001年灰画面的《戏曲人物》系列，还是近年以来青冷银灰的《兵俑》、《侍人》系列，都似乎远离潮流或曰主流。这些图像与火爆的当代审美潮流迥异，也与叙述性无关，甚至寻找微言大义的努力也只会失败。站在这些画面前，当你搜肠刮肚地调用图像记忆库来寻找对位时，图像通常的闪回并不踊跃，一切悄然无声地滑过——当归类的惯常思维失效时，你会解嘲地对自己说：这是一个另类！

在南京这个画家风格之间并不太贴近的地区，王东春仍是个另类；放眼望去在国内当代艺术圈子里，他也绝对是个难以归类的异数。

我在思考，他的另类感由何而生？

看来，他似乎总与主流不由自主地保持着距离是一个关键，当许多人对文化含量“高”的符号（诸如无所事事的当代青年形体、诸如若隐若现的政治图形、象征图形）趋之若鹜时，他选择了文化含义相对固化的俑类造型，这个造型的含义在今天已经趋于固化，也就是说这是一个并不讨巧的母题。母题没有出彩处，于是观看者的目光就停在造型这个问题上，当下流行的画面处理是高纯度的色彩、有些画面甚至以香艳的色调吸引观众的眼球，而王东春的画面灰底绿调的青灰感效果却是用降低明度来取得的。你看

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看他的画板吧，颜色被调和成均匀的大块灰色，灰头土脸堆在画板上；画家手中的刮刀，宛如泥瓦匠手中的水泥铲，大块铺上，研平；可以想象出画家作画时保持的冲动感觉，各大色块间的衔接是生硬的、硬边的，甚至脸部的处理也仅仅是个大概，（因为他只用刀）一切都在冲动、粗率的状态下保持着手段的一致性，这与当下很多画家在画面上精细研磨出的效果又形成强烈反差。

其实就在灰调子俑造型的旁边，墙上挂的画家的小幅风景写生却是另一番景象，那是我们通常能看到的学院化抒情风景，他有这个能力，但一旦进入创作表达，王东春却满腔热忱一根筋地进入“泥瓦匠状态”。也只有在这种状态中他成为了自己，也成为在他人眼中的另类。

当然，他的这种对青灰甚至苦涩的色调的偏爱也有着自己的独特来源，读研究生期间在俄罗斯一年多的学习与观摩，使他不仅仅对弗罗贝尔的天魔系列有着特殊的喜爱，而且他更深入到俄罗斯东正教艺术中独特的视觉根源——那种最早来自拜占庭的宗教画像的苦涩、阴暗，形象衣纹的平面化甚至装饰化处理，那些点点滴滴，都化为了他赋予中国战士兵俑和侍女造型的内在力量。

我不知道王东春的兵俑系列能够持续多长时间，但我相信他和“它们”是独特的，这点确定无疑，因为另类，所以独特，独特是一种价值，甚至是我们这个躁动的年代不可多得的品质，当年的莫兰迪是独特的甚至是执拗的；当年的巴尔蒂斯也是情有独钟地封闭着自己，他们都成为了20世纪艺术的不可或缺的大师。我说这话不仅仅是一种鼓励，我相信王东春比我们大家想象中的更有主见，当然更需要自信。

也许有一天他会改变描绘对象，以别的什么并不时尚的形象为母题，但有一点几乎可以肯定：王东春仍会延续他的另类状态，那也是他的价值所在。



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侍人061025 布面油彩 55cmx33cm 2006年
Chamberlain061025 oil on canvas 55cmx33cm 2006

Among painters, Wang Dongchun is an exception.

People who know him all have such an impression that Wang Dongchun is a man of geniality (regardless of his outward appearance and tone of speech). He carries no cynical and unrestrained bearings found in many artists to various extents. Sitting in a chair by the window, he seems to always have a brush-cut hair style and when cross-eyeing with him, you would feel as if you were talking with a simple and honest strongman of northern China.

But why is he called an exception?

As long as you recall his works of this decade, either a series of the grey menu of "Drama characters" in the years from 98—01 or a series of green-cold silver gray Soldier Tomb Figure and Waiting Maid in recent years all seem to be away from the tide or mainstream. These pictures are not only totally different from the prevailing tide of aesthetic taste in contemporary times but also have nothing to do with narration. Even the effort to look for the tiny meaning would fail. When you exhaust your brains to try to find the contraposition with memory tank of the picture, pictures would usually flashback unenthusiastically and slip away quietly. When the customary thinking of classification fails, you would find an excuse to console yourself by saying to yourself: It is an exception!

In the region of Nanjing where the painting style is roughly the same among all painters, Wang Dongchun is still an exception. Scanning widely in today's artist circle in China, he is also absolutely an exception hard to be classified.

I am wondering about where his sense of exception

has come from.

Seemingly, it is a key point that he always can't help keeping a distance from the mainstream. When many people go mad about the cultural detonation with the content of "Highness" (such as the fainéant youth physique in contemporary times, such as the gleaming political figure and symbolic figure), he has chosen sculpts of the tomb figure of relatively fixed cultural meaning. Now the meaning of this sculpt has tended to be solid. That is to say, it is not an opportunistic theme. Gaze of viewers turn to focus on sculpt because the theme has no shining point. The disposal of menu popular nowadays is the color of high purity and some of the menus absorb the eyeballs of viewers even with flamboyant color. Moreover, the greenish grey effectiveness of greenness on black background on Wang Dongchun's menu is gained by reducing brightness. Look at his palette. Color is blended evenly into large patch of grey color, piling on the palette. The spatula in painter's hand, just like the trowel in mason's hand, spreads the color in large amount and smears the color smoothly. You can imagine the feeling of impulsion the painter maintains while he is painting. The linkage of each large block of color is curt and hard-sided, even the disposal of face is only a broad outline (because he only uses spatula). Everything is maintained in a state of impulsion, rough and careless in the coherence of artifice, which has formed sharp contrast with the effectiveness on menu worked meticulously by many painters today.

As a matter of fact, just by the side of the grey-tune tomb figure, a small life-painting of scenery-painting of nature of the painter hung on the wall has another sort of vision and that is the lyric scenery of academism we can usually see. He is capable of



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战士061107 布面油彩 170cmx105cm 2006年
Warrior061107 oil on canvas 170cmx105cm 2006



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战士060824 布面油彩 170cmx105cm 2006年
Warrior060824 oil on canvas 170cmx105cm 2006

doing this and once Wang Dongchun comes into the expression of invention, he will enter "the state of a mason", filled with ardor and sincerity and only in this state he would have become himself and would have also become the exception in eyes of others.

Of course, his preference to this kind of piling of greenish grey, even saline color has its own unique source. With a few years of practice and learning in Russia after graduation as a graduate student, he has not only had a special favor for Rubel's Evil of Heaven series, but also a deeper understanding of the unique visual origin in the Russian Orthodox Church art, i.e. that sort of saline, shadow and imaged cloth of complation, even ornament disposal from the religious pictures from Byzbtum and those dribs and drabs which have all turned into the inherent force that he had endowed with sculpts of the Chinese fighters and handmaiden figures.

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I do not know how long Wang Dongchun's soldier tomb figure could last, but I believe he and "they" are undoubtedly unique. Just because of exception, so it is unique. Uniqueness is a kind of value and even a peculiar character in the astir years of ours. Morandi in those years was unique and even stubborn while Balthus in those years also had a special favor to block out himself. They all became the unwanted art masters of the 20th century. My comments are not only a kind of encouragement and I believe that Wang Dongchun has more mind of his own than we can imagine and of course, self-confidence is needed all the more.

Perhaps, someday he will change the object of description and take other unfashionable images as the theme but one thing is almost affirmative that Wang Dongchun will still go on with his style of exception. It is where his value lies.



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战士040809
布面油彩
45cmx35cm
2004年

+
Warrior040809
oil on canvas
45cmx35cm
2004

要如兵俑保护王者一样恪守学术底线

与青年油画家王东春的对话

对话人：谢海vs王东春
对话地点：南京王东春工作室
对话时间：2006-08-28

我听说王东春的名字是在2001年，那一年我在操办“以未来的名义——当代青年油画家邀请展”，他送展的作品我现在记起来有些模糊，颜色灰灰的，物色也很暧昧。第一次相对集中地看王东春的作品是他的一本俄罗斯写生作品画册，颜色很好看，笔触也很大气，时间是在2004年，2005年初，我在上海策划自然风·江浙沪新锐艺术家邀请展，在展览上，我看到了一批十来件尺幅不大的战士系列的作品。不过，这时候王东春的作品似乎已经不仅仅在意画些什么了，而且好像是要说些什么。

如果有一天，我要为王东春的作品写一篇评论文章，我一定会写上如上的这段描述，因为这样说是想说明在最近的几年里，王东春面对艺术的一种姿态，但所幸我没有写这样的文章，因为这样写文章的方法是一种最笨的，也是时下那些不负责任的评论家最惯用的套路，它非常保险地介绍了画家的艺术历程，也心无挂碍地阐述了艺术家推陈出新的可能，最后还可以套上一句“他的画假以时日，定会百尺竿头，更进一步”。

或许，一个庸俗的写者评论一位庸俗的艺术家可以采取这样的写法，但，写王东春不行。王东春的作品中有很多无法言说的东西存在，他有时候刻意地控制着绘画的随意性，有时候则刻意地放纵着作品的绘画性。王东春是我们常说的“好孩子”类型的那种人，但按正常的牌理出牌评说他的作品，多少都会游离于他作品的表面而不得要领。

王东春事实上就是一个充满矛盾的当代青年艺术家的“典型器”，你怎么看他的人和他的作品都对，你怎么看他的人和他的作品都不对。

所以，整理和王东春的对话文本或者说梳理他的非线性叙述是一件异常头疼的事情。

王东春具备了“70后”艺术家那种特有的风度，他不为世俗所左右，特立独行；他偶尔也语出惊人，但平时一定诙谐幽默；他似乎每天都在工作室里忙于画画，但他一年创作的作品的量并不算多，王东春还具备着“70后”艺术家群体中所没有的东西，比如他精神不颓废，做事不夸张，也不张口就半中半洋地说话，等等。

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那天，他坐在我的对面，突然说出“要如兵俑保护王者一样恪守学术底线”这样高深的话来，结结实实地吓了我一把。

谢海：你是一个有思想且情绪浓烈的艺术家，在这一点上，你的人和艺术几乎是一体的。

王东春：作为我这样70后的人具备自身的艺术思考和价值判断标准，也是很常态的事啊。而情绪浓烈、性情不羁则更多的是与生俱来的，当然作品肯定和我自身的很多东西是分不开的。

谢海：通过我的观察，近几年来你的绘画状态及创作作品和你的阶段性学习背景似乎不很匹配，比如你在南京艺术学院、南京师范大学、俄罗斯国立弗拉基米尔师范大学学习期间，你的作品特别是创作的作品几乎和学院化教学没有上下文的联系。你认为是这样吗？

王东春：也许是的，我觉得自己一直不是很安分的。从表面上看，当时一些以现在的眼光看来还是稚嫩的创作是和正常教学关系不大，但在我看来，实际上那些画面的背后还是与学习过程有藕断丝连的关系的。学生时代的我思想不可能像现在这么复杂，习作就是习作，按部就班的，但自己总希望能搞出些不一样的东西。我个人认为艺术重要的是差异性，先求异再求好，这也许是艺术发展的某种动力，大学时代也许认识还没有这样深刻，但总有各种各样的甚至有些荒诞的念头，现在外面所能看到的我当时的作品大多是创作，与时间一对应，肯定有出入。

谢海：可不可以这样说，你那时希望的不一样或差异性就是那种所谓的“反叛”精神。

王东春：现在似乎可以这么评价，但我当时也许并没有想这么多，我只觉得大家都用一样的方式画东西毫无意义，于是，我也就由着自己的性情去折腾。把自己关在租来的工作室里进行各种思考和尝试，包括材料的、技法的、图式的……偶尔有朋友和老师去看画，心里都有些发虚，总担心遭到众人的批判。

谢海：你的很多担心是多余的，好的东西总归会有



江南070615 布面油彩 50cmx40cm 2007年
Jiang Nan 070615 oil on canvas 50cmx40cm 2007



江南070628 布面油彩 50cmx40cm 2007年
Jiang Nan070628 oil on canvas 50cmx40cm 2007



码头 板面油彩 35cmx45cm 1995年
Dock oil on wood 35cmx45cm 1995

人喜欢的，就像你早几年的灰色系列那批作品，这样的作品你现在还画吗？

王东春：灰色系列作品因为我后来去俄罗斯学习而中断了，我在俄罗斯期间画了几十幅即兴写生作品。或许有一天，我觉得灰色系列的作品还是有意思的，可能还会再画上几张，但这种问题是个假问题，可能艺术注定就是和很多不确定性相联系的。艺术如果顺延某种可以既定的线索或方向发展，也许就不能称之为艺术。我认为艺术是和很多随机性、偶然性相联系的。当然，就一幅作品的创作而言，更需要艺术家自身的综合的艺术素养下的画面控制能力和判断能力，能够认识到创作过程何时收手。这一点我想是至关重要的。

谢海：一直没傻乎乎地问过你有什么人生理想，有什么艺术抱负之类的话，所以一直没弄懂你真正地想用图像传达什么，只是觉得你的画面挺好看的，比如像冷灰色调、刀刮与线刻这样的艺术表现形式自身所具有的美感。

王东春：我的最大的理想无非是想把画画好，把自己的人生感悟和所思所想通过作品表达出来。当然，更希望自己的作品能够有自身的文化切入点和关注点。曾经在一次研讨会上，有一位理论家说我的画是“增加中国当代艺术史写作的丰富性及视觉性总结”。我知道我没有那么伟大，理论家只不过是拿我的画说事，和我的画并无关系。我只是觉得自己带着某种文化的关怀去创作，可能作品会更有价值，这一点更为重要。

同时，画画对于我来说，就像是吃饭睡觉一样，很多时候已经成为一种生活需要，似乎生活和创作已经很难明确的分开，生活中更多的享受是自己创作时的那一漫长过程。也许，从中能够体会更多自身情绪悲喜与艺术思考的转换，以及完成作品那一刻会有一种别人难以体会的如释重负的轻松与愉悦感。

谢海：这种状态很重要。不少画家一旦介入市场自己就找不着北。你怎么看你们这代人的市场问题。

王东春：我很难去揣摩别人的心态，或是去刻意

强调我自身的淡泊，不过人人都缺钱这似乎是真理，但是我想上帝是公平的，他关了一扇门肯定会留下一扇窗的。艺术和金钱似乎要有一个取舍，艺术家不应该放弃自己的人文态度以及所应坚持的艺术精神，也许这样他的艺术生命会更长些。

谢海：那你有没有想过，如果经济条件改善了，就可以更好地创作作品。

王东春：那是纯粹逗自己玩。人性的贪婪是永无止境的，有了一间画室，就会想有一间带天窗的画室，然后就想要有壁炉便于写生和创作，画架一定要是液压的，坐凳一定是要具备旋转和升降功能的，没完没了。说到底就物质需求方面来说画画是一个很简单的事，真的左边站一个擦笔的，右边站一个挤颜料的，艺术也未必能搞好吧。

谢海：你就就极端化了。换一个话题，谈谈你绘画的历程吧。

王东春：从小时候说起吧！

谢海：可以。我们对话千万不要纠缠于学术，我们只要知道你绘画以外的事情。

王东春：先说我为什么画画吧。我小时候是在苏北长大的，就是因为一次在小学生绘画比赛中我获了一个什么奖，改变了我的人生。说来有些惭愧，当时获奖对于我并没有什么概念，最后打败我的是奖品——一支钢笔和一本精美的笔记本。显然，那时候的奖品比证书重要。

谢海：被套回来了吧，还是经济问题。

王东春：那时候哪知道什么是经济啊！那时只是觉得有些骄傲与喜悦，而奖品只不过是同学面前炫耀的资本而已。

谢海：开玩笑的，能够谈谈你所喜欢的艺术家和艺术风格吗？

王东春：上大学的时候，比较喜欢索汀、弗拉芒

克、鲁奥、弗鲁贝尔他们几个人的作品，一有空就去位于南京湖南路的外文书店里翻画册，还节衣缩食攒钱买了多本他们的进口画册，1995、1996年那会儿索汀全集一套画册要卖八九百的，那时候把画册堆在床头天天翻，现在家里还留有几套他们的画册，读研究生期间我去了俄罗斯才真正接触到他们的原作，才有了更为全面的认识 and 了解，同时也修正或纠正了自己原先的很多艺术观点和理念，特别是弗鲁贝尔的作品给我的印象很深，他的很多作品尺寸很大，色调灰暗，但很悲壮。

谢海：作为19世纪末俄罗斯巡回画派的叛逆者的弗鲁贝尔，他的画笼罩着末日感极强的悲剧氛围，特别是那个折磨了他一生的“天魔”形象，更是有种超自然的神秘色彩。好像你最近的《战士系列》也有着这样的意味。

王东春：也许是的，弗鲁贝尔的很多作品给我的触动很深，似乎画中有一种难以名状的东西，孤独而又强悍，作品的色调和人物好像能够投射出艺术家内心某种压抑晦涩的情感以及暗含其中的不屈的抗争精神。

谢海：所以我说你的《战士系列》作品也用“意味”这个词。

王东春：我的一个朋友曾在他的文章中评论过这一系列作品：“王东春在油画《战士系列》中引进了一组秦汉强势文化符号（兵马俑），这些符号看上去是在经历了世代风雨之后，偶尔落入他的画面，被随意地涂上了似有似无的几笔，有要说的没有说出来的和说不清楚的东西包含其中，而给你的只是一个引子。先人那兵戈呼风的壮阔场面犹如在昨日，它曾激励无数后人前仆后继浴血奋斗，但这些符号所代表的民族气性到了近代已潦落殆尽。国民性衰微和腐败，人心的脆弱，深深地刺激着艺术家的心灵，重新唤起复强民族的意识显得刻不容缓。”

王东春把这种有意味的历史痕迹移植到画面上，一是有意加强油画的民族感，二也帮助我们恢复丢失已久的某种记忆。这也是王东春从俄罗斯学习归来、反思本土文化之后，在中国油画实践上所作的一种有益的尝试。

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文字本身也许掺杂了很多对我的褒奖和鼓励，但同时似乎也贴合我的思想深处的某些自身无法言及的创作动机。

谢海：你近几年作品的画面好像一下平面了起来，而且用了很多刀刮的技法。

王东春：是的。我现在几乎全部用画刀来完成作品，画刀的锋利可能是画笔所无法企及的，同时也想通过画刀来抹平很多不必要的细节，摆脱原先多年的用笔惯性。因为我希望《战士系列》作品能够以缄默传达出某种隔绝尘世的雄壮或悲怆的意象，以及某种被切割后的历史阴影和被时间磨蚀后的痕迹，这种意象很难用画笔来贴切地表现。

谢海：刀刮方法的运用既是对油画的习惯性绘制传统的一种修正和反叛，同时也是你扬弃熟练、习惯、习气、程式和方法的一种策略，能否问一下，你对当下你所创作的兵俑系列满意吗？

王东春：这样的问题其实很难回答，艺术家和作品之间的关系永远是一个变化的平衡，或者说是阶段性的相对的满足，因为人似乎需要在不断的自我否定中保持自我的前进，因而，艺术理想和艺术表现之间似乎总是有着或近或远的距离，想和做之间也永远是一个交替上升的过程，这也许是推动艺术家成长与前进的直接动因。

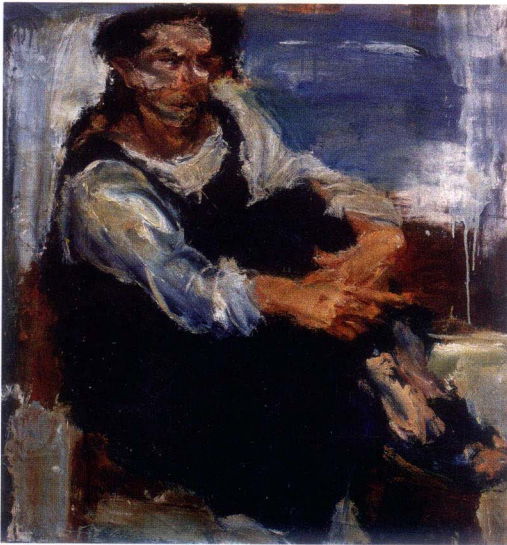
谢海：在《战士系列》之后你还有其他什么样的创作方向吗？

王东春：《战士系列》作品也许会成为我今后一段时间继续努力探索的一个重要方向，尽管我也会去不断尝试一些新的母题。从某个角度来说，这系列作品是在尝试对我少年时代的诸多模糊的记忆片段的某种形式上的修补，承载着我儿时故事及成长经历中的某种晦涩情结及自我梳理后的某种视觉沉淀，其中也会突显出我对本土文化所做的探究与理解。线刻与刀刮既是对秦砖汉瓦的那一恢弘壮阔的历史时代的纪念，也是多年来自我在材料和技法等方面对本土元素的尝试和转换，更是我的艺术理想和艺术精神的最为直接的外化与诠释。

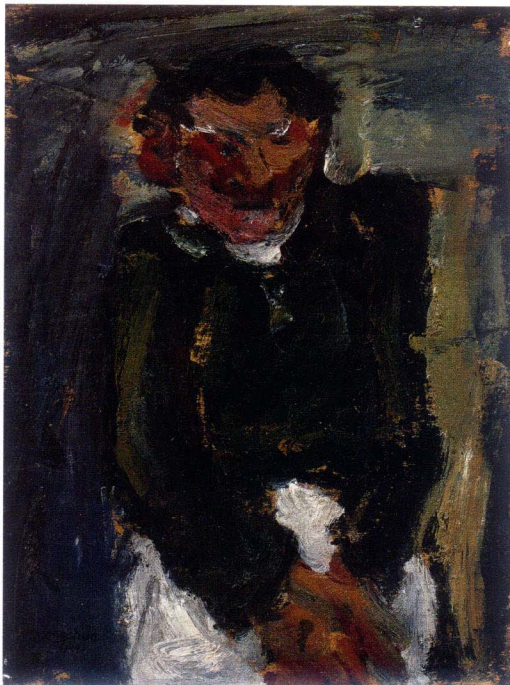
Academic bottom-line should be as adhered to as the emperor protected by terracotta warriors and horses

A dialogue with Wang Dongchun, a young oil-painter

A dialogue between two persons: Xie Hai and Wang Dongchun
The place for the dialogue: Wang Dongchun workshop, Nanjing.
The time for the dialogue: August 28, 2006



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X肖像 布面油彩 100cmx100cm 1998年
X portrait oil on canvas 100cmx100cm 1998



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Y肖像 板面油彩 50cmx40cm 1997年
Y portrait oil on wood 50cmx40cm 1997

I heard the name Wang Dongchun in 2001 in which I was sponsoring "In the Name of Future--Invitation Exhibition of Contemporary Young Oil-Painters". Works presented by him at that time are now somewhat blurred and gray with considerable ambiguity of the scenery according to my present memory. The first time I saw his works in a quite concentrated way was a picture-album related to his life-painting in Russia, with very nice colors and spectacular strokes. It was in the year 2004. In early 2005, I was planning "Natural Style---Invitation Exhibition of New and promising Artists of Jiangsu Province, Zhejiang Province and Shanghai" in Shanghai. At the exhibition, I saw over ten small-sized works depicting the soldier in series. However, his works at that time, as it seemed, not only paid attention to what he painted, but some ideas that he wanted to express.

Someday, if I am required to write a commentary on his works, I will surely add the description mentioned above, because such a commentary is intended to point out his attitude toward art in recent years. As luck would have it, however, I have not written such a commentary since this way of writing it is the silliest as well as the most frequently applied method adopted by those irresponsible critics. In a very safe way, it introduces the art development of the painter while freely expounding the possibility of weeding through the old to bring forth the new on the part of the artist, in addition to such a stereotyped sentence as "His paintings, as time goes on, will definitely make further progress".

Maybe a vulgar critic would make comments on a vulgar artist in this manner. However, it won't do to comment on Wang Dongchun, since there are many unspeakable things in his works. Sometimes, he is bent on controlling the randomness of the painting, and sometimes on giving free rein to the painting-nature of works. Wang Dongchun is a sort of person

marked by "A good child". However, if his works are commented according to normal rules, such a commentary would be more or less about the superficiality of his works rather than the essence.

Wang Dongchun is actually a "Typical example" of contemporary artists full of contradictions. You would feel right no matter how you view him as a person and his works, and you would feel wrong no matter how you view him as a person and his works.

Therefore, it is an unusual headache to sort out the text of the dialogue with him or straighten out his un-linear account.

Wang Dongchun possesses the mien unique to the artists born after the 1970s. Free from social conventions with independent practice, he occasionally makes surprising comments, but definitely with a sense of humor in daily life. He seems busy with painting everyday in his workshop, but the number of his works is not so big each year. He is also blessed with things that artists born after the 1970s don't have, e.g. high spirits, reserved ways of doing things and absence of speeches mixed with Chinese and English, etc.

That day, while sitting opposite to me, he spoke out such profound comments as "Academic bottom-line should be as adhered to as the emperor protected by terracotta warriors and horses", which truly amazed me.

Xie Hai: You are an artist with ideas and strong sentiments. On this point, you are, as a person, almost the same as art in an entity.

Wang Dongchun: This is very normal for a person like me born after the 1970s with art meditation and standards for judging the value, whereas strong sentiments and unrestrained temperament are more

obviously born with life. Of course, works are surely associated with many things of my own.

Xie Hai: My observation shows that your state of painting and works created in recent years seem inconsistent with your stage-oriented background of study. For example, during your study at Nanjing Art Institute, Nanjing Normal University and National Vladimir Normal University in Russia, your works, particularly works of creation, had no contextual relationship with academic teaching. Do you think so?

Wang Dongchun: That is possible. I feel myself always in a state of unruliness. Superficially speaking, some works of creation at that time, which are viewed as being naïve nowadays, were not much related to normal teaching. However, in my opinion, those pictures were actually connected somewhat with the process of study. My way of thinking as a student was not as complicated as it is now, since practice was practice in an orderly manner. However, I always desire to create something different. According to my personal view, the importance of art is featured by difference. Making a difference first before seeking for good quality may be a certain motive power of art development. My cognition as a college student was perhaps not as incisive as it is now, but I always had various and even weird ideas. Most of my on-display works completed at that time were based on creation, works which are definitely inconsistent with time.

Xie Hai: Can I say the difference that you desired for at that time is the so-called spirit of "Rebellion"?

Wang Dongchun: It can be evaluated in this way as it seems now. However, perhaps I did not think too much of it, only believing that it would be meaningless if everyone painted with the same style. Therefore, I let loose my way of doing things according to my own temperament. I shut myself up in a rented workshop, mediating and trying in different manners, including those related to materials, techniques and pictures..... Occasionally, my friends and my teacher went to see my paintings. I felt somewhat diffident, always worrying about being criticized.

Xie Hai: Much of your worry is unnecessary. Nice things are always to the liking of people, just like a batch of your works in gray series completed several

years ago. Do you still create such works now?

Wang Dongchun: Creation of works in gray series was stopped since I went to study in Russia later where I completed dozens of impromptu life-paintings. Maybe someday, I will feel works in gray series are meaningful as well and possibly paint a few. However, this is a hypothetic issue. Art is possibly destined to be associated with many uncertainties. Perhaps art cannot be termed as "Art" if it develops along a certain established clue or direction. I believe art is concerned with much randomness and contingency. Of course, as for the creation of one piece of work, the capability of picture-control and judgment of the artist with comprehensive art quality is needed all the more and that his/her capability of realizing the process of creation should be ended. I think this is crucial.

Xie Hai: As I have never, in a silly way, asked you about your ideal in life and your art ambition, I have never understood what you really want to express through pictures. I only feel that your paintings look quite nice, for example, the beauty embedded in such forms of art expression as cold gray hue, knife-scraping and line-engraving.

Wang Dongchun: My biggest ideal is none other than making a success of painting as well as expressing my feeling about life and ideas. Of course, I further hope that my works can possess their own points of cultural focus and attention. Once at a seminar, a theoretician said that my paintings "Enriching the writing of art history in contemporary China and reinforcing visual summary". I know I am not as great as what I have been described. He just made comments on my paintings after all, having nothing to do with my paintings. I only feel I endeavor to paint with a certain cultural care and works can be more valuable in that way. This is more important.

Meanwhile, for me, painting is the same as eating and sleep. Very often, it has become a necessity in life. It seems life can be hardly separated from creation in an explicit way. More enjoyment in life lies in a long process of my creation. Perhaps I can feel more changes from sadness and joy to art meditation of myself in this process as well as relaxation and pleasure inconceivable on the part of other people at the moment when I have just completed a piece of work.



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战士060723 布面油彩 60cmx50cm 2006年
Warrior060723 oil on canvas 60cmx50cm 2006



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侍人060903 布面油彩 55cmx33cm 2006年
Chamberlain060903 oil on canvas 55cmx33cm 2006

Xie Hai: This state is very important. Quite many painters, once getting involved in the market, would get lost. What do you think of the "Market" of painters in your generation?

Wang Dongchun: I have found it very difficult to figure out the mentality of other people or purposefully emphasize my own indifference to fame and fortune. However, the lack of money for all seems true. However, I believe God is fair. With a door shut, he would surely leave a window open. A choice seems to be made between art and money. An artist should not give up his/her humane attitude and the art spirit for adherence. Maybe only in this way can his/her art life be extended longer.

Xie Hai: Have you ever thought about the fact that works can be better created if economic conditions have been improved?

Wang Dongchun: That's purely self-kidding. Human greediness is endless. With a painting studio available, one would have it with a dormer-window. Then, one would have a fireplace convenient for life-painting and creation. Besides, the easel should be of hydraulic pressure and the stool should be a revolving one with lift-control functions. Desires can be endless. In the final analysis, painting is a very simple thing with regard to material needs. Art may not necessarily be made a success if there is really an assistant rubbing the brush while standing on the left of the painter and another assistant squeezing pigments while standing on the right.

Xie Hai: You are going to extremes. Let's change the topic and talk about the development of your painting.

Wang Dongchun: Let me start from my childhood.

Xie Hai: OK. Please never entangle our dialogue with academic affairs. We only want to know things about you except painting.

Wang Dongchun: Let me first talk about why I wanted to paint. I spent my childhood in northern Jiangsu province and my life was changed simply because I won a sort of award at a painting-contest for pupils at the elementary school. I feel somewhat ashamed when talking about it since I did not pay much attention to the award. What finally conquered me was the prize, i.e. a fountain-pen and an exquisite

note-book. At that time, the prize was obviously more important than the award.

Xie Hai: Now you have touched upon the essence at last. This is an economic issue.

Wang Dongchun: I had not idea at all about economy at that time. I only felt some pride and joy, while the prize was just something that I could show off in the presence of my classmates.

Xie Hai: I am kidding. Could you say something about your favorite artists and art styles?

Wang Dongchun: As a college student, I was fairly fond of works by Sotin, Vlaminck, Rouault and Vrubel. Whenever I was free, I would go to take a look at picture-albums at the foreign language bookstore at Hunan Road in Nanjing and even bought a number of imported picture-albums with money saved through practicing economy. In 1995 and 1996, the picture-album of a complete collection of Sotin's works was worth 800 to 900 Yuan (RMB). At that time, I read those picture-albums piled beside my pillow everyday. So far, I still have a few sets of their picture-albums at home. It was not until I studied as a graduate student in Russia that I truly got in touch with their original works, which offered my a more complete cognition and understanding while having rectified or corrected many of my former art views and concepts. Works by Vrubel, in particular, impressed me very deeply. Many of his works are very large and gray hued, but very tragic and heart-stirring.

Xie Hai: As a rebel of Mobile Painting School in Russia at the end of the 19th century, Vrubel's paintings are shrouded in a tragic atmosphere marked by an extremely strong sense of the end of the world. That image of "A heavenly ghost", which particularly tormented him all his life, is featured by a mysterious color of super-nature. It seems your recent works entitled "The soldier in series" bear the same implication.

Wang Dongchun: That's probably true. Many works by Vrubel impress me deeply. It seems there is a sort of indescribable thing in his paintings, i.e. loneliness and fierceness. The hue and human figures in his works seem to be able to project a certain depression and obscure sentiment in his heart as well as an

indomitable spirit of resistance.

Xie Hai: That's why I have said that your works entitled "The soldier in series" also uses the word "Implication".

Wang Dongchun: In his article, a friend of mine once made comments on your works entitled "The soldier in series": "Wang Dongchun incorporated into his oil-painting "The soldier in series" grade-one symbols (Terracotta warriors and horses) of influential Qin and Han culture. These symbols, through century-old wind and rain, seem to have occasionally fallen onto his paintings which have been smeared in a few vague strokes at random, including things to be expressed but in vain and those failing to be expressed clearly, only leaving behind an introduction. Spectacular and fierce battle-scenes of our predecessors seemingly took place yesterday, inspiring countless people in following generations to strive forward successively. However, national temperament represented by these symbols declined in contemporary times along with deterioration and corruption of national nature as well as fragility of public feelings, deeply needling souls of artists. Re-arousing the awareness of revitalizing the nation has become a matter of immediate urgency."

Wang Dongchun has transplanted such meaningful historic traces onto the painting, serving to purposefully reinforce the national sense of oil-painting on the one hand and helping us to restore a certain memory long lost on the other. This was a beneficial attempt by Wang Dongchun in the practice of Chinese oil-painting after coming back from Russia as a graduate student and reflecting on Chinese culture.

Written comments themselves may be blended with many compliments and encouragement for me, but seemingly suited to a certain motive of creation beyond my words in the depth of my heart at the same time.

Xie Hai: Your paintings in recent years seem to be plane all of a sudden, along with many knife-scraping techniques.

Wang Dongchun: Yes. I am now painting almost exclusively by using the painting-knife whose sharpness probably makes it difficult for the painting-

brush to match. Meanwhile, I also want to use the painting-knife to rule out many unnecessary details and shake off my habit of painting-brush application for many years. Therefore, I hope "The soldier in series" can tacitly express a certain magnificent or sorrowful imagery featured by being isolated from the human world as well as a certain historic shadow cut off and a vestige worn out by time. It is not easy to aptly express such imagery through the painting-brush.

Xie Hai: Application of knife-scraping is either a correction of and rebellion against habitual painting tradition of oil-painting, or one of your strategies of giving up proficiency, habits, formulas and methods. May I ask if you are satisfied with a series of terracotta warriors which you are painting?

Wang Dongchun: In fact, it is very difficult to answer such a question. The relationship between the artist and works is always a changeable balance, or I may say that I am relatively satisfied by stage because people seem to need to make progress in continuous denial of themselves. Therefore, there always seems to be a near of far distance between the art ideal and art expression. There is also always a process of alternative rise between desire and actual practice. This may be a direct factor for promoting the development and progress of the artist.

Xie Hai: In the wake of "The soldier in series", do you have any other direction for creation?

Wang Dongchun: "The soldier in series" may become an important direction of mine for continuous exploration in a period to come, though I will also constantly try some new themes. From a certain angle, "The soldier in series" is an attempt of correcting and supplementing in a certain form many ambiguous fragmental memories of my childhood, while bearing a certain obscure affection of stories about my childhood and my experiences of growth as well as a certain visual precipitation after self-examination, including prominence given to my exploration into and understanding of Chinese culture. Line-engraving and knife-scraping are either the memory of a spectacular historic age with the Qin bricks and Han tiles, or my attempt and change targeted at Chinese elements in the fields of materials and techniques for many years. What's more, they are the most direct externalization and exposition of my art ideal and art spirit.



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战士071024 布面油彩 118cmx99cm 2007年
Warrior071024 oil on canvas 118cmx99cm 2007

+ 对页
侍人040524 布面油彩 60cmx50cm 2004年
Chamberlain040524 oil on canvas 60cmx50cm 2004