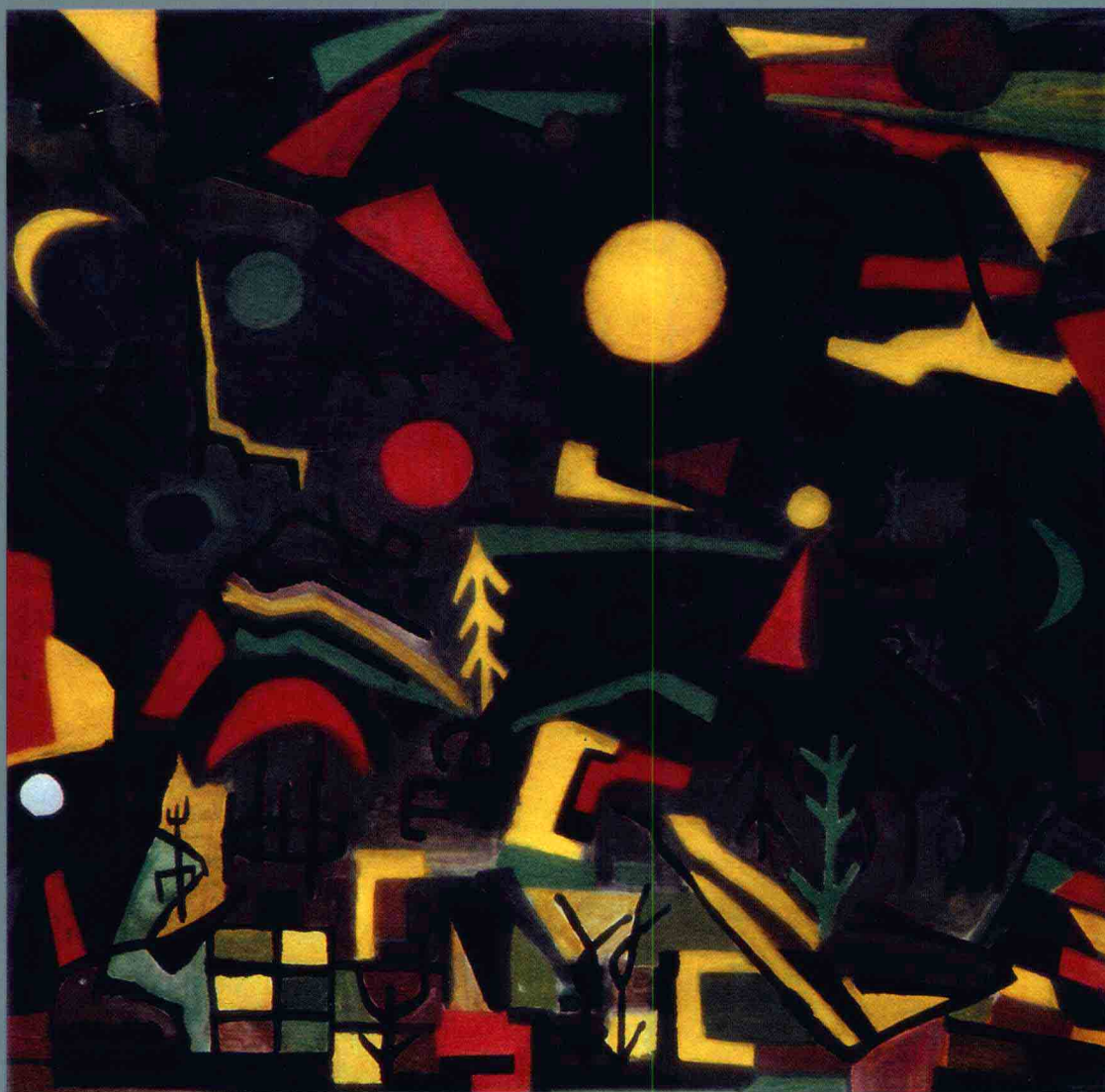


鄭陣畫集



榮寶齋出版社

Rong Bao Zhai Publishing House

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

严阵画集 / 严阵绘. — 北京: 荣宝斋出版社, 2004.6
ISBN 7-5003-0725-X

I. 严... II. 严... III. 中国画—作品集—中国—现代
IV. J222.7

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2004)第 046909 号

严阵画集

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装 帧 设 计: 小 涓
编辑出版发行: 荣宝斋出版社
邮 政 编 码: 1 0 0 7 3 5
制 版: 北京慕来印刷有限公司
印 刷: 北京慕来印刷有限公司
经 销: 新华书店总店北京发行所

开本: 787 毫米 × 1092 毫米 1/12

印张: 4

版次: 2004 年 6 月第 1 版

印次: 2004 年 6 月第 1 次印刷

印数: 0001-2000

定价: 46.00 元



神秘的诗意美

——诗人严阵和他的绘画艺术

· 孤鹜 ·

1

自从十多年前严阵在华盛顿成功地举办个人画展之后，他的被国外媒体称为“很特别”的绘画，那些既是中国水墨画又不完全是中国水墨画的绘画作品，便在国内外的艺术爱好者和收藏家中引起了广泛的关注。严阵在北京中国美术馆和澳大利亚首都堪培拉举办的个人画展，也相继获得了很高的赞誉。

严阵是中国著名诗人，从20世纪50年代起，他即以《春啊，春啊，播种的时候》、《江南曲》、《长江在我窗前流过》、《琴泉》、《竹矛》等诗集名扬天下。他的作品先后被译成英、日、法、德、俄、西班牙以及朝鲜、越南等国文字，在世界范围内发挥着影响。他分上、下两册出版的、被誉为中国《唐璜》的长篇叙事诗《山盟》，和近年问世的万行抒情长诗《含苞的太阳》，以及抒情长诗集《谁能与我同醉》，都在中国诗坛上闪烁着辉煌的光彩。

严阵既是诗人，又是画家。他的诗的特点，是用诗去绘画，而他的画的特点，则是用画去写诗。他的诗和他的画，虽然是两种不同的艺术形式，但在严阵的笔下，却融合为一种无与伦比的独特的艺术才华在一棵树的两个枝头同时绽放的各不相同却又相互依存的两个艺术世界。也许正因为如此，国外媒体才吃惊地喊出这些画的确“很特别”这样的感叹。而在中国国内数十种报刊的报道和评论，也从不同角度介绍了严阵绘画的突出特点，就是画中有诗。其中《文艺报》的文章最具代表性，它指出：“有一天人们来到中国美术馆的大厅读诗，人们读的不是用文字组合而成的诗，而是用线条和色彩画就的诗——这是我观看诗人严阵画展时的第一印象。”而画展签名簿上观众的留言，就更加证明了这一点。有人写道：“初看是诗人严阵水墨画，再看是画家严阵水墨诗。”“梦一般的色彩，诗一般的激情。”等等，等等，不胜枚举。从这些参观者留下的观感中，我们也可以感受到人们对严阵绘画艺术特色的广泛认同。

仅仅说严阵的绘画是一种“画诗”，似乎还不能完全地表达出严阵绘画中所流露出的那种非同一般的诗意美。因为这不是那种因袭古典的陈腐的所谓“诗意”，也不是那种信手拈来附庸风雅的所谓“诗意”。这种诗意美，它是画家在生活中来自心灵的感悟，和来自现实的发现。因而它就是一种原动力，它就是一种激情，它就会成为绘画艺术的新款式，它就具有原创性艺术作品才有可能具有的为人们灵魂带来强大震撼力的那种艺术魅力。

严阵认为：艺术和绘画，首先是灵魂，是人的感情，人的瞬息万变的情绪，在流逝不尽的时间和广阔无际的空间的不断交错中，通过色彩和线条所表达出的一种灵犀，一个超越，一种像寒夜钟声般苍凉深沉的回响。严阵的绘画，正是在不断完美的体现着他的这一艺术理念。

纵观严阵的绘画艺术，我们便可以进一步体察到，他画中的诗意美，应该说是一种神秘的诗意美。同时也应该被认为是一种梦幻般的略带几分悲凄意味的诗意美。这些美的深处，往往都有一种深刻的哲思，一种由感性切入的理性的启迪。花是美的，但美不等于花，也许在某些无花的时候所体现的美，比花所能表达的美，更为崇高和深刻。《荷塘之梦》是画家以抽象手法谱写出的一曲冷峻而具有无比震撼力量的乐章。画面上只有黑白两种原色，加以银粉，唤起人们如水似冰的感觉。画家表现的是冬天的荷塘，是既没有一片叶子，也没有一朵花和一个莲蓬的荷塘。画面上隐在后面的黑的线条和推在前面的白的线条，以及这些线条形成的许多正方形、三角形、菱形、圆形等的图案，是风雪摧残下残荷的缩影。而这些缩影组成的图案，又像是一些人们难以辨认的古老的文字。画家正是通过这些谜一样的图像，表达了内心的匠心和诗情、节奏和旋律，从而把人们带进一个梦境，一个荷塘之梦；一个既使人感觉到神秘和悲凄，又使人在绝望中预感到新的葱茏和美丽正潜藏在表面看来是一片衰败的景象之下的信念和希望。我觉得这就是严阵绘画艺术中的神秘诗意美。我认为，面对这样的绘画，你只能像读诗那样，去细细地品味它，像聆听乐曲那样，去静静地辨识它。

高昌故城是位于新疆古代丝绸之路上繁华一度的城市，如今已成为一片被沙漠淹没的废墟。严阵用黑、褐、灰、黄几种颜色绘成的半染夕阳半沉暮色之间的《高昌故城》，却使人从它既是真实的而又确如梦幻般的神秘而又苍凉的诗意美中，在时间空间永不停息的交织面前，去进一步清醒地评价人生和认识世界。

《普罗米修斯之火》的画面上出现的仅仅是一盏普通而又古老的马灯，但画家通过现实生活中这一平凡的景物，通过在这一景物周围色彩的强烈渲染，却浓缩而又真实地概括了中国整整一代人在马灯的照耀下所走过的道路。我相信，从画面上的那些光中，那些色中，你会隐约听到马蹄声碎，喇叭声咽。你会看到千山月色迷离，万壑竹影苍茫。这正是画家从平凡的景物中发现的令人震撼的高尚之美，也是从神秘的凄美中提炼出的我们这个民族的希望所在。我觉得，在今天，当人们的着眼点大都转移到自身的衣、食、住、行的同时，《普罗米修斯之火》这幅绘画的出现，就更显出画家的非同寻常的胸襟和气度。

《啊，岁月》则是一幅以远古人类最初绘制的以太阳、月亮、星斗为图案的古陶的碎片所组合的最具前卫意识的现代绘画。在这幅奇特而美丽的画面上，你可以领略到最古老与最现代，最永恒与最瞬间，最梦幻与最真实的巧妙的统一。它融人间的生死存亡，历史的兴废变迁，于神秘的时空之中，从而使人们更清晰地看清楚人世间正在发生和消逝的总过程中自我的位置。

《我的思念是银色的》，虽然只是黑色背景上的一束银色的花，但却给人一种走出花花绿绿，走出充斥着金钱和肉欲的世界的一种超越。使人回归于人，回归至那种十六岁的纯真和朦胧中去。从而为天天说爱，却并不知道什么是爱的浑浑噩噩的灵魂找到一片小小的淡淡的恬恬的净土。

《绝唱》、《俯视》、《听我苍茫》、《月光从梦中走过》、《涛声依旧》、《月色依旧》、《芬芳的烽火》、《青铜之舞》、《回答我们的泪水》、《残雪》、《注满月光的杯子》等等，等等。严阵的绘画，似乎都不是只能让人从表面上一览无余的那种画，而是那种能使人从并不规范的色彩和线条中感受到一种领悟，一种启迪，一种觉醒，一种震撼的具有强烈的神秘美和现代感的诗篇。

3

正因为严阵的绘画，绝不是那种传统的一般的中国绘画，而是一种诗人画，一种中国现代的诗人画，是一种把表达内心感情作为艺术创作主体的绘画，所以他在绘画艺术理论方面，也必定有自己的主见。他认为一个现代画家如果期望获得成功，在不断探索甚至创造适应现代生活要求的表现手段之外，还必须具有下列三个方面的素质：一、必须情有独钟。他认为一切文化艺术，包括绘画，都是感情的产物。绘画也和其他文化艺术一样，必须有感而发。哪怕一朵花、一棵草、一只鸟、一条鱼，只

要出现在画面上,就必须带有画家自己的感情色彩,都必须是属于画家自己才有的花、自己才有的草、自己才有的鸟、自己才有的鱼;而不是客观存在的谁都能看到的那种花、那种草、那种鸟、那种鱼。为此,画家必须在绘画之前对自己所要表现的对象情有独钟。因为情、感情、激情,是一切艺术的生命。也是一切艺术的灵魂。如果人们从画面上感受不到画家的那种情,这幅画也只能就是一幅画,而绝不会成为引起人们共鸣甚至使人受到震撼的艺术品。二、必须随心所欲。这里的随心所欲,是要求画家完全按照自己的意愿,按照自己的审美观进行绘画。不管是西方也好、东方也好,不管是中国也好、外国也好,不管是古人也好,今人也好,他们规定的一切,只能对他们自己的绘画起到制约作用,对别人,则只能是借鉴。你觉得他们说得有道理,你就去学;你觉得他们说得没有道理,你可以不睬;你觉得他们说得不完整,你可以补充。要把所有权威和名家裹在你心上的那些绳子通通割断,把自己从一切禁锢中解放出来,任凭自己的感情流泻。要画什么,就画什么,要怎么画,就怎么画。绘画不是将自己的生命之线牵在别人手里的风筝,而是能够海阔天空地任自己去自由飞翔的艺术之鹤。严阵先生认为,有了这样的随心所欲才能在艺术开拓过程中真正地找到自我,找到自我体现和自我把握。三、必须梦寐以求。这里的梦寐以求,指的是艺术实践中的主客观的统一。有感而发了,也放开了,但心里想的和画面上出现的效果不统一怎么办?这时,画家绝不可以降格以求,而必须去寻找新的突破点。必须去演示出能够达到自己所要求的艺术效果的新的数据。当然,这些问题主要应该归属于现代绘画的技巧方面和现代绘画的工具方面。严阵认为,对一个意欲表现现代人情感和现代人生活的画家来说,单靠世代相传的那套老的技法和那支老的画笔,应该说是很不够的。

总之,从严阵的绘画作品和严阵有关绘画的论述中,我们可以强烈地感受到,他通过自己绘画表现出的,是他内心诗一般的情绪和他灵魂深处的那种孤高的人性美。

细心的观者也许会从严阵的某些绘画作品上发现一颗镌有“诗人之梦”四个字的图章,深识严阵绘画艺术的人都知道,诗和梦幻正是构成严阵绘画不可缺少的两个重要元素。因为植根于现实而却飘忽于现实之上,有梦幻般闪动的诗的意识,有梦幻般缭乱但却神秘的构图,有梦幻般难以捉摸的缤纷飘忽而又美妙绝伦的色彩,正是诗人严阵绘画的魅力所在。

Mysterious Beauty of Poetic Flavor

--Poet Yan Zhen And His Painting

By Gu Wu

1

Since successfully holding a solo exhibition of paintings in Washington ten years ago, the unique paintings of Yan Zhen, a variant of Chinese inkwash, have aroused wide interest among art-lovers and collectors at home and abroad. High praise and media attention have also followed his individual exhibitions held in museums in the capitals of China and Australia.

Yan Zhen is a famous poet in China. He first earned his reputation in the 1950s with beautiful collections of poems, including *In Spring, in Spring, While Seeding*, *Song of Jiangnan*, *Changjiang River Flow through in front of My Window*, *Musical Spring* and *Bamboo Lance*. His poetry has been translated into English, Japanese, French, German, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese and others, and others, and has been read around the world. His two-volume epic *A Solemn Pledge of Love*, was praised as of Chinese version of *Ton Juan*, and *Sun in Bud* and *Who Can Be Drunk With Me* both long lyrical collections of poems were well received. All these poems reflect a brilliant light in Chinese poetry.

However, Yan Zhen is both a poet and a painter. The characteristic of his poetry is to paint with the poem, and the characteristic of his paintings is to write with the paintings. Although his poems and painting are different forms of art, they combine into a unique artistic talent that bursts forth simultaneously as two ends of the branches of a tree, nothing in common with each other but two interdependent artistic worlds. It is this uniqueness that induces such special comments from the media. Dozens of domestic and international newspapers and magazines have introduced the outstanding characteristics of his work-poems in paintings. Among them an article in *Literature and Art Newspaper* was the most representative, pointing out: "When people come to the China National Museum of Art to read poems one day, what people read are not poems made up of characters but drawn with lines and colors-this is my first impression when I attend the painting exhibition of Yan Zhen, the great poet." Audience messages in the signature book of the painting exhibition echoed this, with someone writing, "At the very first sight, what are seen are Yan Zhen's inkwash paintings, but then the inkwash poems of Yan Zhen are revealed" and "Colors of dreams, passions of poems". Most gratifyingly, the messages that these visitors leave show the sweeping acceptance of each paintings' artistic characteristics by regular people.

Yet it seems that the term painting poems alone cannot represent completely the unique poetic beauty of Yan Zhen's paintings. The paintings are neither the stale poetic flavor of borrowed traditions nor that dull taste of copied works. These works, like poetry, show a painter's feeling from his soul in life, and from fresh realistic discoveries. The art is motivated and passionate, and it becomes a new style delivering artistic charm and strong surprise to people the way only an original artistic work can. Yan Zhen thinks that art and painting are, first of all, the soul and emotion of people. It is a person's fast changing mood, a matrix of endless time and unlimited space, colors and lines, spiritualism and transcendence, like a bleak and deep echo of a big bell sounding at night. This artistic spirit in Yan Zhen is perfectly expressed by his paintings.

Making a general survey of the art of Yan Zhen, we further experience the poetic beauty of his paintings; secret, dreamlike and forlorn. However, behind that beauty lies deep and philosophical thinking, a rational enlightenment based upon sensibility. A flower is beautiful, while beauty means much more than a flower. However, the beauty without flowers is much more noble and impressive than that with flowers. *Dream of the Lotus Pool* is a cool but shocking movement of techniques applied by the painter. The painting contains only two primary colors, black and white; and silver powder is added to produce icy feelings. What the painter intends to portray is a lotus pool in winter, without a single leaf, flower or seedpod. The black lines that glint in the back, white lines in the front, and the figures of squares, triangles, diamonds, circles that result from those lines allude to malformed lotus being tortured by the severe cold. On the other hand, those figures look like recognizable old characters. The painter conveys his own ingenuity, poetry, rhythms and melodies through these enigmatic figures, thus leading people into a dreamland—a dream of a lotus pool, which is not only mysterious and sad but also lets people experience the belief and hope that beauty and serenity are hidden behind such ruins. That, in my esteem, is the poetic beauty and mystery in Yan Zhen's painting. From my point of view, you digest such paintings just like reading poems, and appreciate them just like silently listening to music.

Gaochang Ancient City, which once flourished along the ancient Silk Roads in Xinjiang, is now a stretch of ruins flooded by the desert. The painting, *Gaochang Ancient City*, by Yan Zhen, depicts that city lying in the setting sun using black, brown, grey and yellow. It seems to comment on life and the world, a dreamlike, mysterious and bleak poetic beauty, a matrix of time and space that never ends.

Only an ordinary and ancient hurricane lamp appears in the painting of *Prometheus' Fire*. However, by using such an ordinary item as the subject and strong colors in the background, the painter has expressed a journey that a whole generation of

Chinese took accompanied by the lights of hurricane lamps. To the best of my belief, from the lights and colors of the painting, you will not only hear silvery clops of horses and sobbing of horns but also see a misted moon high above mountains and deep shades of bamboos in the gullies. Such is the noble beauty that gives people pause as they discover the ordinary objects used by the painter. It is also where the future of our nation lies, refined from the desolate beauty of mystery. In my view, this painting displays the unusual mind and bearing of the painter.

Oh Years is a most fashionable modern painting, painting a combination of ancient potsherds with figures of the sun, the moon and the stars as depicted by ancient civilizations. This fancy and beautiful painting provides you with a chance to appreciate the subtle harmony between the most ancient and the most modern, the most everlasting and the most instantaneous, the most dreamlike and the most real. In this painting, life, death and changes of history are all interjected into a mysterious space-time, thus enabling people to see clearly their own place as the world continues to run.

My Missing Is Silver is just a silver flower with pure black background, demonstrating a sublimation that has broken the confines of greediness of money and sex, bringing people back to an origin, back to innocence and virginhood that are only available for people at the age of 16. The painting may offer a small piece of pure land for those poor souls who spend their day talking about love while having no idea of what love really is.

Paintings of Yan Zhen, such as *Poetic Masterpiece*, *Overlooking*, *Listen to the Vast Inside Me*, *Moonlight Passing by Dreams*, *Roses as Ever*, *Beacons of Fragrance*, *Dance of Bronze*, *Answer Tears of Us*, *Remaining of Show*, *Cup Filled with Moonlight* and others cannot be understood just by observing the painted objects. Instead, they are poems of strong mysterious beauty and modern and modern flavor, from which people can acquire apprehension, enlightenment and surprise from the non-standard colors and lines.

3

Most paintings of Yan Zhen are truly not ordinary traditional Chinese paintings but poetic paintings, reflecting modern China, with expressive passion as the painting subject. Without a doubt, the artist has his own definite painting theories. He holds that in addition to constantly exploring and creating new visual methods to reflect modern life, a contemporary artist expecting success should have several other key qualities: First, an artist should have his/her own unique passion. From his point of view, any art, including painting, is yielded by this emotion. Painting, like other forms of art, must come from intense feelings. Anything that is painted, even merely a flower, a blade of grass, a bird or a fish, must convey the passions of the artist. And the subject, grass, bird

of fish, must be something that only the artist can express, not what people see in real life. For this reason, the artist must have his own passion toward he intends to draw. Passion is the life of all art as well as its soul. A painting is no more than a painting, and never a word of art does move or surprise people, if people don't feel the artist's passion from the painting itself.

Second, an artist must follow his inclinations when painting, that is, to paint at will and follow his own ideas. Rules, whether Eastern or Western, foreign or Chinese, ancient or modern, serve only as references. Do it if you think it makes sense, otherwise just leave it alone. Supplement it if you find it incomplete. Break the confines of those authorities or masters, set yourself free and give freedom to your passions. Just paint whatever you want by whatever means you prefer. Painting is not flying a kite that has to be directed by a person but a crane of art that can fly high and free above in the sky. It is Mr. Yan Zhen's view that only such free will can guide artists to their real ego and direct them in exploring their art.

Third, artists must have the courage to seek whatever they dream of, that is, the unification between the subjects and the objects of the art. You are full of passion and are not following the rules, but what if your painting differs from the ideas in your mind? In that case, the artist must not compromise, you must look for some new breakthrough to generate the desired artistic effects. As a matter of course, these problems relate to the techniques and tools of modern painting. As Yan Zhen believes, it is far and away insufficient for an artist who hopes to capture the emotions and lives of modern people to rely solely on the traditional paintbrush handed from generation to generation.

In short, what we feel vividly from the paintings and the relevant discussions with Yan Zhen, are his great passion, his poetic nature and the great charms of his noble humanity.

Some careful viewers may find the seal *Dreams of Poet* on some of Yan Zhen's paintings. People fully aware of his art understand the two important and indispensable elements of his paintings are poems and dreams. Yan Zhen's paintings are far more than realism although based upon reality. With poetic traces that shine like dreams, composition that dazzle and mystify like dreams, and flowing, pretty colors that are elusive like dreams; this is where the glamour of his paintings lies.

雨声初歇
The Raining Sound just Disappearing



群山
Mountains



月光之吻
The Kiss of Moonlight





长城曙色
The Great Wall at Daybreak



绝唱
The End of the Song

秋在远处漫步
Autumn roaming in the Distant



月光从梦中走过
Moonlight Through Dreams