

SELECTED
PRINTS
OF

SHEN
ROU
JIAN

沈柔堅

版畫選集

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• 情感 • 理想 • 索求

沈柔堅版畫欣賞

何振志

在藝術的領域裏，天地之間，任憑他遨游、騰飛。

從畫家沈柔堅的中國畫和水粉畫可聯想其版畫；僅論及他的版畫時也可以感知其他。藝術的永生在於活力、節奏，悠然之水雖然引起美妙的思古幽情，但涓涓細流在空間和時間上皆是局限的。藝術的發展與時代同步，唯有納百川，川流不斷匯合，相濺起無數的水花細浪，才會姿態萬千。藝術產生於複雜因素的合成，沈柔堅的藝術特色就在於此。他版畫中從未體現孤立的版畫概念，也從來不用單一、靜止的表現手法。昔日，當文藝處於封閉之時，他仍有自己的見解，不屈從於概念化。他的作品曾遭議論，謂之“洋”，其實是新，是洋、傳統、民間的化合，憑視覺難以分解。在沈柔堅的畫裏看不到古人洋人的幽靈，他到底像誰？誰都不像，是他自己。

現在看到抗日時期和解放戰爭時期沈柔堅所作的版畫時，經歷過那個時代的人們，會感到那種在歷史上永垂的氣氛。在昂揚奮發的建設時期，他按着時代的強音符去構思，在水庫、船廠等版畫裏，有見識地美化工人的力量，把美表現在他的畫裏，力量表現在藝術中。雖然邁着與同時代同樣的闊步，却始終沒有迎合那統一的公式化。在他的作品裏時代之新和藝術之新始終同步，二者如同兩個同心圓，在一個軸上轉動，難分彼此。從五十年代直到今日所作大量版畫中，可見到他的藝術觀念始終如一，懷着理想走探索的路。

從兩幅版畫《雪夜》和《歌德故居》可探知他創作發展的綫索，前者見其藝術氣質，後者見到極鮮明的個性色彩。《雪夜》作於1957年。畫家以寧靜的抒情的雪夜表現美好的意願，寒冷之夜的情調濃而冷，此景却透着人性的溫暖。當時生活的基調是激昂的，很少畫家敢於游離於重大主題之外，而此時雪夜美如畫，如聽到畫家內心的獨白，如聽到夜曲。在沈柔堅訪問捷克斯洛伐克和德國之後，他的版畫藝術進入新的開拓時期。莊重、別致的《歌德故居》引起的驚異和議論并不足怪，他給人看到很有特色和個性的藝術表現。這幅版畫真象是一次覺醒引起的一次突破。《歌德故居》的景色是外國的，表現方法是特殊的，有人說它太“洋”，但它并不同於國外的任何版畫，它舍棄了慣用的中間色調，代之以強烈、新穎的對比。紅和綠此時開始出現在他的版畫裏，不慣見者，往往妄稱之為“洋”，

殊不知紅和綠在中國民間藝術中幾乎無處不見。在沈柔堅少年時就屢屢接觸到這強烈的色彩，才留下對紅和綠的不了情。可以說，這幅畫把這個名人故居納入極有特色的畫境，使此畫的藝術性超出它的主題的意義。今日看來，大片的綠，點點的紅，陪襯的黃，加以粗細有致的黑綫，帶着刀刻的韵味和力度，把詩情渲染於故居的綠蔭道。紅綠相間，濃艷發辣，明暗度強，這樣的表現不同於人們看慣了的調和的套色，不那麼淡雅和諧，不是悠悠然從平淡中去發現，它觸目便使人內心蕩漾。此後，沈柔堅的版畫中一再出現紅、綠的變調，或多或少，或濃或淡的紅和綠在《山區春色》、《南海之濱》、《早春》這三幅版畫上有顯然的不同，隨心變化，符合畫意。

八十年代所作版畫與五、六十年代相比，顯見二、三十年間的無休止的探求，在那混亂的十年之後，被抑制的創作欲在他的刀和筆下化為新時期的光彩。近年來的作品中，可見觀念之新是他的本色，創作自由使他多年在理論上的諸多見解得以實踐。自然原是要人去贊頌，去表現它的天地之靈，內涵之美，這全在於畫家主見之高低，不在於依附自然的程度。八十年代的沈柔堅在大膽概括，簡練多變，構思奇巧之際，更注重濃縮和強調，以求達到超越自然，比它的原樣兒給人視覺上更大的滿足和啓示，決心不使真實之物給人心理上以局限。八十年代他的藝術觀坦率地展示在創作中。1981年的《花之城》是又似又不似的，是畫家意念中的綜合形象，意在花叢之外的天地。此時畫面的色調為之一變，暖色為基調，十分切意。同年所作的《珠江上》，畫幅不大，却是一幅大畫的氣概，明快的活力和現代感不免使人想到它如果作為現代建築中的裝飾壁畫，定然十分協調。主色的綠和白帶動漸強的節奏感，少許的紅和黃疏密不定，增強動感，黑白紅綠共同形成有起伏動勢的組合，這不是慣見的大自然中的江上，它為視覺提供了奇異的美。《珠江上》刀法縱橫，色彩醒目，發辣利索，使人歡愉和躍然思動。《村屋》作於1985年，是充滿鄉情的小品，似乎是記憶中浮起的家鄉。那黑頂白牆，半開的門的江南村居，那泥土的清香和空氣的清新十分誘人。《夜闌人靜》作於1986年，它與二十九年前的《雪夜》同樣有內心獨白的意味，但二者已顯然有很大的不同。此情此景是畫家自我意識的表現，畫面詩情盎然，與其說是寫景，不如說是寫情，萬籟俱寂，畫家的想像力在月光下自由蹣跚，多少思緒，伴隨着多少美好的意念，盡在畫中。色彩是變調的紅、黃、藍，現出沉靜的暗紅、灰藍、偏冷的土黃，它們默默地契合，僅畫出輪廓的藤椅和卷簾，背向大片藍色的夜空，面向灑在平臺上的月光，這一切融合為一種難以言傳的情緒。構圖中的橫直綫，加上椅子和月亮不求全的圓形，是無修飾的形式美。1986年的《南方風情》則是構圖之巧占了先，亞熱帶密密層層的綠蔭被加了重音，綠叢中的人和景一閃而過，像是偶然的，這景中之景如同在凝聚的光綫裏，它引向對畫外的遐想。

沈柔堅克盡一位藝術家對時代的職責，他相信藝術有無際的空間可以展拓，如永不會有片刻停頓的時光一樣，向前流動和變化，藝術生命才會不息。面對自然，他始終懷着主見，他不帶成見地吸收，一切皆納入藝術，因而能無拘束地在表現形式上融會貫通。他的創作在於事先思考，用色果斷，落筆逍遙，在刀鋒和色彩的組合、綫條和空白的變化之中但見大刀闊斧的意味，無刻意做作的痕迹。他的版畫、中國畫和水粉畫彼此之間有着直接的血緣，但在不同畫種中有更繁多的因素使他們各具風彩。這樣就形成他的藝術的整體。

時代之新在他的創作中始終是個前提。他的版畫是時代的盛世風光，精神向上，找不到一點淡泊、消沉和蒼涼。他的詩意之中不求古風餘韻，而蘊含着現代人的沉思和理想。

Shen Roujian sails and flies freely in the kingdom of art. His Chinese ink paintings and water colours are reminiscent of his prints, and vice versa. The eternity of art lies in vitality and rhythm. Although brooks might evoke associations with remoteness, the slow waters are limited in terms of space and time. Art develops with times. Only if many rivers converge, can they produce various sprays and ripples. Likewise, successful creation of art is based on various elements. Such is the case with Shen Roujian's art. His prints do not reflect merely the concepts of print-making, nor do they apply stereotyped techniques. In the old days, when censorship of art prevailed, Shen Roujian still adhered to his own views, and did not subject himself to stereotypes. Therefore, his prints, abused as "foreign", were often under fire. Actually, Shen blended freshness and foreignness with Chinese traditions and folk art in his works. So, to some extent, the mixture makes him unique. There existed few imitations of ancient or foreign artists in Shen's prints. Whom did he look like? He was a student of everyone, and at the same time he was not a disciple of any one.

Those who experienced the wars in the 30's and 40's could easily feel a historical sense in Shen's prints of the war period. During the construction period in the 50's, Shen's works evoked dynamic sentiments of that period. In two of his prints that depicted reservoir and shipyard, he exalted workers' power. He was able to transform their power into beauty and vitality in his art. Although he marched together with the times, the artist disdained to go along with any stereotypes. Shen always renewed his art as our age requested. It seems as if age and Shen's art were two circles sharing the same axis. The main reason for this is that he had talent to embrace his own ideals in his works.

Shen's two prints "Shanghai Snowy Night" and "Geothe's Residence" demonstrate his development in a way. The former reflects his character, the latter his idiosyncrasy.

"Shanghai Snowy Night" was made in 1957. The print represents serenity of a snowy night with an intent to express human warmth. The coldness outside and the yellowish warm lights inside are contrasted to convey human warmth. Art served politics almost exclusively in that period, so few artists had the courage to work beyond political subjects. Yet, "Shanghai Snowy Night" is lyrical in mood as if the artist were making an internal soliloquy. After he visited Czechoslovakia and East Germany in 1960, his art took on new dimensions. With its unconventionality, "Geothe's Residence" marks a breakthrough. Amazement and criticism followed up. Although "Geothe's Residence" presents a foreign scene, its way of expression is fresh. Some think the picture is too "foreign", yet it is different from any foreign prints. Instead of ap-

- SENTIMENT
- IDEAL
- QUEST

ON SHEN ROUJIAN'S
PRINTS

HE ZHENZHI

plying neutral colours as a rule, Shen uses strong and unique colour schemes for contrast. Since then, red and green began to appear in his prints as major colour schemes. The ignorant call this kind of schemes "foreign". As a matter of fact, red and green are the favourite colours in Chinese folk art. Shen got acquainted with the contrast between red and green ever since his childhood. Hence he cherished special feelings for these two contrasting colours. The artist intensifies the surroundings of the great poet's residence with lyrical effects and he carries them beyond the importance of its theme. In "Goethe's Residence", big areas of green colour are dotted with red colour, and set off with yellow colour. Black lines are rhythmic due to the vigorous effects made by chisels. All these combined make the shaded path immersed in a lyrical mood. The bright and vigorous schemes of red and green, merging with each other, form a sharp contrast of light and darkness. This kind of colouring is different from the conventional preference for neutral colours. The picture does not seek elegance and easy-earned harmony, nor does it express beauty in a plain way. Rather, "Goethe's Residence" is meant to electrify the eye. Since "Goethe's Residence", the variations of red-green schemes have appeared frequently in Shen's prints. He uses them differently in "Spring in the Mountainous Region", "South Sea Beach" and "Early Spring". His variation depends on the particular sentiment and mood of these pictures. We can perceive from his prints that he has never ceased to quest. After the chaotic decade (1966-1976), with his suppressed desire freed, his brush and chisel expressed more talent in his works. To seek freshness becomes his major objective. He is inspired to put into practice the theoretical notions he has acquired for long. Nature invites artists to praise its miracles and beauty. The task depends on imagination rather than imitation for full expression. Since the 80's, Shen has attempted to use more compact designs to portray objects. He is aware that imagination produces better effects so he intends to reject psychological limits cast by the physical reality. As a result, Shen has demonstrated more imagination in his recent works. "City of Flowers" (1981) is a good illustration. The picture displays a synthetic image that leads one to imagine an enormous world beyond the flowers in the foreground. The artist turns to warm colours this time in order to make them harmonize with the subject. "On the Pearl River" (1981) is a print small in size. Yet it has the effects of a big one. With its lucidity, vigour and modernity, "On the Pearl River" invites us to think that if it was enlarged into a large mural for a modern building, it might be very harmonious. Green and white as major schemes in the picture form rhythms that become stronger in degree. Some red and yel-

low colours are dotted irregularly for kinetic effects. The artist also manipulates black, white, red and green to animate the rippling river. The picture does not offer a familiar scene but an unusual one. The effects made by chisels are full of vigour. Given its bright colours and compact design, the picture has the power to excite feelings and thinking. "Cottage" (1985) is rich in bucolic sentiments. With a black roof, white walls and the door ajar, the village house seems to be the artist's native place that keeps haunting him. The fresh treatment of earth and sky also adds more charm to the scene. "Serene Night" (1986) is reminiscent of "Shanghai Snowy Night" made twenty-nine years ago. To some extent, both of them function as internal soliloquys. But in the meantime there are differences between the two pictures. "Serene Night" is a vehicle of emotional subtlety, for it accentuates emotions rather than the scene itself. Though tranquil as the scene is, the artist's emotions are overflowing. The artist applies dark red; greyish blue and cold yellowish brown to describe serenity. He only offers vague outlines of the folded bamboo curtain and the empty cane-chair on the balcony, with its back against the dark blue night and its front facing the moonlight. This kind of visual language represents emotions subtly. In addition to the horizontal and vertical lines in the design, the chair back and the moon defined by irregular circles convey charm naturally. In "Southern Sentiments" (1986), the design takes priority in the artist's consideration. He accentuates thickness of the green tropical bushes in the foreground. Only a small part of the foreground is bright, in which we have a glimpse of a woman weaving bamboo articles. The small scene inside the big scene looks as if frozen in the light, evoking imagination.

As artist, Shen Roujian feels his responsibility for our age. He believes that art, like ceaseless time, has infinite space for the artist to explore. Only if art changes ceaselessly, can it live forever. Shen always acquires things within and beyond art in order to enrich his art. Therefore, he is able to fuse different things to establish his own style. Shen's success owes to careful thinking that always takes priority in his creation. Full preparation enables him to use chisels and colours at will. His chisels and colours, lines and space are thus rendered with vigour and power. Shen's prints, Chinese ink paintings and water colours are closely related to each other. But each genre also has its own different appeal. For all these reasons, Shen's art achieves its integrity.

To seek the freshness of our age always remains Shen Roujian's central objective. His prints reflect positive spirits of our age. We can seldom find negative sentiments like indifference and bleakness there. His art always reflects positive modern thinking and ideal.

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1、珠江上
On the Pearl River





2、上海雪夜
Shanghai Snowy Night





3. 歌德故居
Goethe's Residence



4、船塢
Dock