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### 姹紫嫣红开遍了断井颓垣 ——陈小丹作品中奢侈的伤痛与纠结 廖雯

大约2005年,我看到陈小丹的两张作品图片,一件是一节大棒棒两头生长出许多花片,另一件索性就是一大堆的花片。这些花片,似花瓣却不成形,层层叠叠,随性地翻卷着,素烧的陶瓷,似风化的"骨质",冷漠而脆弱,花片边沿上淡淡的暖粉色,呈渗血的"肉感",血腥却美丽,仿佛是骨头开放出肉花来,透着殷殷的伤害感,却顽强而赤裸地绽开着。"花"作为永恒的生命意象在艺术中的价值和方式,是我多年感兴趣的艺术问题,看见这"骨头花"便十分敏感,而且我的直觉告诉我,只有女人才会用这种"感同身受"的体验方式表现生命的伤害感。这样的方式,无论从我自身作为女人,还是从我作为女性艺术的研究者都很熟悉。

2006年,我意外地获得了一点赞助,《花非花》这个 研究课题得以展览的形式呈现,我想到了陈小丹的"骨 头花"。因为所选的其他艺术家都是人熟作品熟,只有 陈小丹是不相识的, 所以最后才联系到她。有点唐突, 或者是我的方式太直接了,在电话里我听出陈小丹似乎有 点意外, 甚至有点紧张, 但最后居然肯定地说, 除了那 两件"骨头花"以外,她还要做新作品参加这个展览。这 回意外的是我了,以我对陶瓷工艺的一点点常识,短时 间烧制大作品可不是件容易的事, 我告诉陈小丹时间只有 两个月,心里并不敢期待新作品可以如期完成,但陈小 丹对创作的执着和激情依然让我感动。一个半月之后,我 收到了几十个沉甸甸的大纸箱子, 打开一看, 竟是上万朵 陶"花"。陈小丹说,这些"花"都是她随心所欲捏的, 捏的感觉如同"包馄饨",冲动而愉快。陶"花"没有固 定造型, 似花非花, 单单一朵如粪坨瓦砾, 千万朵却如繁 花盛开,平铺在展厅地上有着生长和延伸的感觉。陈小丹

把粗拉、易碎、廉贱的低温陶做得如此生机勃勃,让我吃惊,而于敏感、细腻却嫌不足。我当时猜想,大约是没有足够的时间让陈小丹更深入完成她的感觉。

2010年, 我做《心血匠器》展览选作品时, 去了陈小 丹家里,希望可以更深入了解陈小丹的创作乃至生活的状 况。陈小丹带着我在她的工作室和仓库游览,她的作品多 得让我吃惊,连她的丈夫杨剑平都不知道她什么时候做了 这么多,并说陈小丹经常一冲动就去做,很疯狂。更让我 吃惊的是, 《花非花》展览中的粗陶花, 4年间已经被陈 小丹陆续"深加工"了。陈小丹说,那些粗陶花本来是 低温烧成,她一时冲动就上釉烧制,一时冲动了再上釉再 烧,上什么釉烧多少次,完全由她随心所欲。陶瓷本来造 型讲究、釉色难控、工序复杂、材质易碎, 而陈小丹的陶 瓷花完全没有了精贵的架子, 造型一朵朵一坨坨的, 像花 又像屎巴巴, 也依然讲究, 烧蓝、粉彩稀里哗啦、乱七八 糟的,如浆似汤,也不失华丽。陈小丹把她的这些"宝 贝"一箱箱搬出来,边絮叨边一个个摆在桌上、地上的时 候,有一种满足而愉悦的感觉。我觉得像是看一个"闺 秀"摆弄她的衣箱和首饰盒,而当这些美丽的"疙瘩"摆 成一大片的时候, 却呈现出一种随意、随时、随处的纠结 状,这恐怕正是陈小丹内心感觉的表达。

我与女艺术家接触的十几年间,每个人的心境虽然各有不同,但体验方式往往是非写实的,无秩序、无规律、无时空、支离破碎、重重叠叠的,"纠结"感是我们共同的心理意象。很多女性艺术家偏爱用心手相应、持续不断的手工方式,将内心难以言表的感觉,在手工过程中释放和凝结到"作品"中去。中国古人说"世本无相,相由心





生",陈小丹的陶瓷花,一个个捏造、烧制、上釉,再烧制、再上釉、再烧制,手工程度高,程序繁复,历时经年,最终的成"相",当与陈小丹的心理、心境有直接对应的关系。

陈小丹自己说"再好的日子也有伤痛和纠结",她的作品中反复表现的正是这种伤痛和纠结。"骨头"和"花"是陈小丹作品中的"宠物",她反复使用且不断扩张。从把陶瓷做成肩胛骨片状,绘以精致华丽的彩与釉,像装饰挂件般一块块吊起来,到把扭曲的大腿骨棒翻制成超大的雕塑,上面贴以如花瓣蝶翼的白磁片,到把动物骨头直接放进陶瓷窑烧制,在透纱幔上缀成文人画梅枝竹节状,甚至把翻制大骨头的硅胶模具翻出内面来,插满数百钢针……陈小丹一路冲突,一路疯狂。

近些年来,"陶瓷"作品很时尚,大多数艺术家只是换一种特别材质塑形,很少有人能像陈小丹这样把握和利用"陶瓷"自身的特性,融入作品的观念和视觉中。如陶瓷花,陶瓷的反复烧制,每次烧制都会有变形,都会更凝结,造成视觉上难言的纠结感,釉则是打破传统的精描细绘,直接泼洒,淋漓尽致地发泄却又不失华丽的身段。大腿骨棒,棒身和折缝处的白瓷片,纯洁而薄脆,细碎而繁复,如同死亡体中刚刚生长出来的精灵,似还魂,很凄美。我想,这一来得益于陈小丹陶瓷专业的素养,使她能自如地把握和使用陶瓷的各种特性,二来得益于陈小丹做作品时放松乃至放肆的状态,使她能自由地释放和表达,如她自己所说:"艺术给我乱穿衣的自由,以及在私下里胡说八道的自由"。

以我同为知性女人的理解,陈小丹表达的伤痛和纠结是奢侈的。这样说有两层意思:其一,这种伤痛和纠结是基于物质生活优越、时间充裕,渴望被欣赏、认同、呵护却又得不到满足的状态,中国古代的贵族闺阁女性,西方当年的中产阶级女性,都曾有过深刻的经验,这是一种高级的审美体验。不同的是,带着深厚的传统教养在现代生活中生存的女人,内心的冲突更加多重而激烈。正统与反叛、华贵与廉贱、顽强与脆弱、随性与纠结、死亡与生机种种,在陈小丹的作品中体现得很充分吧。其二,能够找到个人的艺术方式,释放和表达这些伤痛和纠结是幸运的。陈小丹经常自嘲自己做作品时的冲动是"发高烧",能够发高烧说明体质尚好。陈小丹常常"夸"我具有"天不怕地不怕的霸气",殊不知,我已经丧失了发高烧的能力。

近年来,我重新审视中西方文化方式的差异,发现西方文化基本上是向外的,比如西方的中产阶级女性纠结了,就产生了女性主义,向外哭喊、发泄,甚至歇斯底里;而中国贵族的闺阁女性纠结了,不过如《牡丹亭》中的杜丽娘,唱一句"原来是姹紫嫣红开遍,似这般都付与了断井颓垣",向内心深处辗转,慢慢体味隐痛的蚕食,直到生命耗尽,魂归无处。而我看陈小丹作品的心境,恰如李清照"不如向帘儿底下,听人笑语"。

2010-12-31于宋庄小堡

Brilliant Flowers Blooming Everywhere in a Dilapidated Place - Luxurious Pains and Tanglements in Chen Xiaodan's Works Liao Wen

In about 2005, I saw two of Chen Xiaodan's paintings, one was a big stick with many fragmented flowers attached to both ends, and the other was just a large pile of fragmented flowers. Those fragmented flowers were like petals but didn't form regular shapes, layers upon layers, randomly curling up; plain-colored ceramics were like efflorescent "bones", aloof and fragile; the edges of fragmented flowers had the tint of warm pink color, presenting the "voluptuousness" of oozing blood, bloody but beautiful, as if bones were blooming with flesh flowers, implying a serious sense of injury, but blooming tenaciously and nakedly. "Flower's" value and form as a permanent imagery of life in art is an art problem I have been interested in for many years, therefore I was very sensitive when seeing the "bone flowers". And I instinctively felt, only a woman could present the sense of injury in life through such an experiencing way of empathy to express the sense of injury in life. No matter as a woman or as a researcher of female art, I am quite familiar with such a way.

In 2006, as I unexpectedly obtained a little sponsorship, the research theme of "Flower Not Flower" could be presented in the form of an exhibition, and I thought of Chen Xiaodan's "bone flowers". I was quite familiar with other invited artists and their works except for Chen, therefore she was the last one that I contacted. Perhaps my invitation was a little abrupt, or

too straightforward, I felt Chen seemed a bit surprised, even nervous, however she gave me a positive answer, that besides those two pieces of "bone flowers", she would create new works to participate in this exhibition. Then I was the one to feel surprised. With my common sense about ceramic technique, it was rather difficult to create large-scale works in a short time. I told Chen she only had two months, not daring to expect her new works could be finished on time, but I was still touched by Chen's perseverance and passion for creation. Nevertheless, one and a half months later, I received several dozens of big heavy paper boxes, containing tens of thousands of ceramic "flowers". Chen said, she followed her inclinations and molded these "flowers", feeling like "making dumpling won ton", impulsive and pleasant. Ceramic "flowers" didn't have fixed molding, like flowers but not flowers. One piece seemed like shit or debris, however, thousands of them together were like various flowers blooming vigorously, giving us the impression of still growing and extending on the ground of the exhibition hall. I was really surprise that Chen made rough, fragile and cheap lowtemperature ceramics so full of life, however, lacking a little sensitivity and delicacy. Then I guessed, maybe she didn't have enough time to perfectly finish her works.

In 2010, to select works for my exhibition "Creating with Their

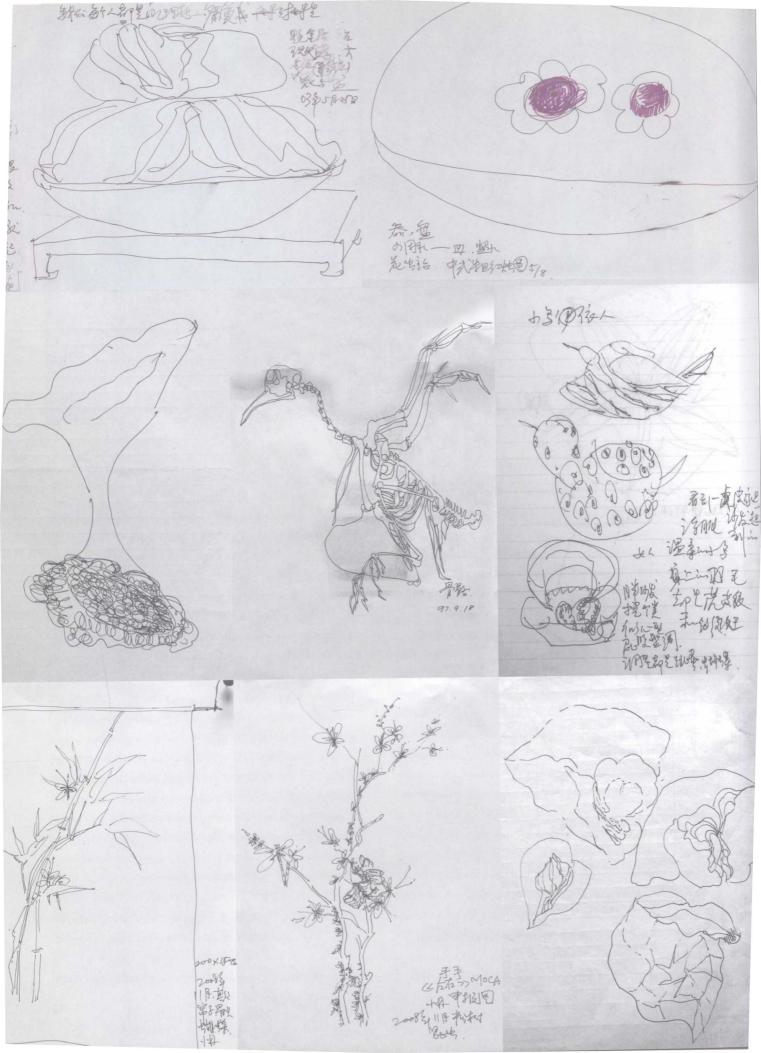


Heart and Blood", I went to Chen's home, expecting to learn more about Chen's creation and life. Chen took me to look around her studio and storehouse, and it was amazing to see the large quantity of her works, even her husband Yang Jianping didn't know when she had created so many works, and told us that Chen often made lots of works out of impulsion. What's more surprising was the ceramic flowers from the exhibition of "Flowers Not Flowers" had been successively "further processed" by Chen during the last four years. Chen said, those ceramic flowers were fired in low temperature, then she glazed and fired them out of impulsion, and later glazed and fired them out of impulsion again - it was completely up to her impulsion to decide to put on which sort of glaze and fire them for how many times. We usually pay much attention to ceramic wares' molding, not-easily-controlled glaze, complicated working procedures and the fragile material, however, Chen's ceramic flowers don't have the exquisite air with the molding of lumps, like flowers and also like shit. She also glazed them different kinds of colors, miscellaneous and somewhat magnificent. Taking out the boxes containing her "treasures", Chen chattered about them. Meanwhile, she placed them on the table and the ground one by one, feeling satisfied and happy, and I felt like watching a "young girl" playing with her wardrobe and jewelries. When those beautiful "lumps" were placed side by side into a

large stretch, they presented a casual and random situation of tanglement, which was perhaps the expression of Chen's inner feelings.

During more than one decade of contacting female artists, I find that, though different people have different mental states, their experiencing ways are mostly un-realistic, disorderly, irregular, disregarding time or space, fragmented and overlapped, with the feeling of "tanglement" as their common psychological imagery. Many female artists prefer the way of handwork of hand continuously corresponding to heart, releasing and consolidating the indescribable feelings into their works. There is an ancient Chinese saying, "There is no physiognomy in the world, what you see is what you think." From kneading, firing, glazing, firing again, glazing again, and firing one more time, Chen's ceramic flowers experience complicated procedures of handwork lasting for quite a few years, eventually becoming the current appearance, which is certainly connected with Chen's psychological and mental state in a direct way.

Chen once said, "There are still pains and tanglements in the best days." Her works repeatedly present the pains and tanglements. "Bones" and "flowers" are Chen's favorite themes, and she repeatedly uses them and continues to expand them. From



making a piece of ceramic work into the shape of blade bones painted with exquisite and spectacular glazes and colors and then hanging them like ornaments, to turning over the mold of a twisted thigh bone into a huge sculpture stuck with white porcelain chips like petals or butterfly's wings, to directly firing animals' bones in a kilm and sewing them in the patterns of plum blossoms and bamboos in literate painting on a transparent silk background, and even turning the silicon out-layer of that huge bone sculpture inside out and sticking hundreds of steel needles onto it, Chen rushes forward in a crazy manner.

In recent years, "ceramic" works are quite fashionable. Most artists just change to another special material and molding, and almost nobody could grasp and take advantage of the distinguishing quality of "ceramics" like Chen, incorporating it into the works' conception and vision. Taking her ceramic flowers for instance, the ceramic works are repeatedly fired, the shapes change a little after each time of firing, and condense more, producing an indescribable sense of visual tanglement; she breaks the glaze's tradition of meticulous outlining, directly splash the glaze onto her works, thoroughly releasing her emotion but still maintaining the magnificence. In the thigh bone, the white ceramic chips at the bone's body and the twisting point are pure but thin and fragile, trivial but complicated, like a phantom just arising from a dead body, like revival after death, sadly beautiful. I think, on the one hand this benefits from Chen's specialty in ceramics, enabling her to freely grasp and apply ceramics' various qualities; on the other hand, this benefits from Chen's relaxed ever wild state, so that she could freely release and express herself, just like what she said, "Art gives me the freedom of dressing myself, and also the freedom of random talk in private."

With the understanding of also being an intellectual woman myself, I know that Chen's expression of pains and tanglements is luxurious. This has double connotations: first, this sort of pains and tanglements are based on the situation of living a

superior life, having enough time, desiring for appreciation, acknowledgement and attention without being satisfied. Both of ancient Chinese aristocratic women and western women of middle class in the past had the same intense experiences, which is a high-class aesthetic experience. What's different is, surviving in the modern life, women with the profound cultivation of traditions have more expansive and vehement inner conflicts. Orthodoxness and rebellion, luxury and cheapness, tenacity and fragility, willfulness and tanglement, death and vitality, and etc, all these have been sufficiently embodied in Chen's works. Second, it's lucky to find an individual way of art creation to release and express these pains and tanglements. Chen often mocks herself that her impulsion during creation is "high fever", however the capability of "high fever" means the physique is still alright. Chen often gives me the "compliment" that I have "fearless arbitrariness", but actually I have lost the ability of having "high fever".

These years, I review the difference between the ways of Chinese and western cultures, and find that western culture is mostly outward, for instance, the western women of middle class engendered feminism out of tanglements, crying, screaming, even becoming hysteric, while, ancient Chinese aristocratic women could only sing in tanglement, like Du Liniang in the drama Peony Pavilion, "There used to be various flowers blooming everywhere, now is only a scene of dilapidation". When I appreciate Chen Xiaodan's works, my mental state is like one line in Li Qingzhao's *ci* (classical poetry conforming to a definite pattern), "I would rather stay at home behind curtains - out of sight, and there I'd listen to the laughter of others to share the mirth of this festive night."

Written in Xiaobao, Song Zhuang on December 31, 2010.

## 如此盛开 ——陈小丹作品解读

江梅

陈小丹几乎将她所有的作品都命名为"盛开"。按常识理解,"盛开"既是一个动作,也是一种状态,如花儿在盛开,或盛开的花儿,都有生机勃发、生命力蓬勃张扬之意,它们的差别是微妙的,只不过前者侧重"盛开"这一动作的时间性和一种生长的力量,而后者更着意于"盛开"对花儿状态的修饰性强调,其生长的力的因素减小了,肆意开放的形态描述的分量增加了。陈小丹的作品大多取名为"盛开",我以为有取此双重涵义之故。而"盛开"还可由此引申出更广泛的联想和隐喻,与人类的身体、生命、思想、灵魂的状态等挂钩。或许也可以说,正是因为"盛开"一词有如此这般丰富的内涵,陈小丹才将自己的几乎所有作品都命名于"盛开"这个总题之下。

回顾陈小丹"盛开"系列的创作轨迹,可以追溯到她早期的一幅代表性油画作品《飘》。那时"花朵"已经出现在画面上,以某种相对具象的形态,一些小的花朵散落于画面之上,围绕着同时似乎又被某种力量吸引着,聚集在粗重的被黑色方框框住的具有强烈女性象征意味的"黑洞"周围,阴郁沉重的色彩,飘浮、幽深、迷离的气息,画面下方特意做出的厚重肌理,增加了与上方图像的对比感和画面力量的平衡,也暗示着陈小丹对于作品自身质感的某种在意。事实上,这种对于材质本身质感的在意和注重在她后来的系列作品中得到了进一步强化和提升,成为她作品中最显著,同时也是最值得玩味的一个特征。

作品《飘》犹如昙花一现,参加完1993年首届中国油画双年展后,因为照顾家庭孩子的缘故,陈小丹基本离开了艺术圈。在相当长的一段时间里,陈小丹担当着一位敬业的老师、尽责的妻子与母亲的角色,她奔忙于教学工作和家庭琐事之间,几乎无暇抽出时间专心搞创作。尽管学生的尊敬和爱戴可以使她的内心获得一定的满足,然而,随着时光的流逝,她越来越有一种危机感,觉得自己离少女时代、大学时代的艺术梦想似乎是愈行愈远了,这让她很焦虑不安,也时常气馁,甚至对自己的才能,有时也会

感到些许的惶惑。不过她最终还是决定要相信自己,决定要听从自己内心的渴望和召唤。

20世纪90年代后期,陈小丹开始一心一意地创作,她 画了很多草稿,根据草稿再进行油画创作。她尝试着画 了一批带有表现主义风格的油画,这些油画在格调上显得 颇为抒情和诗意,一下子得到周围不少朋友的肯定。画面 上是些半抽象半具象、类似花朵状的图形,一般人看了之 后大多以为她画的是一些花,她自己当时似乎也有些不确 定,回答别人的提问时也含含糊糊地说是花。不过,在 我看来,画面上的那些类似花的形状表现得只是一些漂浮 的、情绪性的意象罢了,书写性的笔触传达更多的是创作 者的某些精神和心理状态。事实上,这些意象在陈小丹的 创作中始终存在着,并处于不断衍生变化的态势,它们时 而表现出强劲,时而又显示出柔软,总是与其内在的心境 相吻合。

这批20世纪90年代后期创作的绘画,对于陈小丹日后的创作来说可被看作类似于某种试笔,或者说进入真正创作状态前的一种调试和准备。

2000年,我在组织一个女性艺术展的时候,看到了她的这批油画,感觉到里面既有女性对色彩、对用笔很敏感细腻的东西,同时整体上又很大气洒脱,于是希望她参展。那次是一个综合类的展览,除了绘画,还有综合材料、装置、摄影、录像,陈小丹特别认真,不仅送来了画,还特意用粉色、肉色的艺术纸随形做了两个三维作品,作品外观并不讲究,隐约有"花"的意象,看上去比较简率,放在展厅里,视觉效果倒很不错。现在回看这两件作品,我觉得对陈小丹非常重要,它们意味着一个新的起点,之后她的一系列引起艺术界广泛关注的综合材料,装置作品"盛开"的创作,正是从这里出发。

也是从2003年起, 陈小丹决定运用她的老本行——陶

瓷来表现自己的某些艺术想法。对于陶土的性能和烧制, 她觉得自己有比较好的感觉以及把握能力。借朋友的陶艺 工作室, 她开始进行创作上的尝试。烧陶有风险, 做好的 泥坯进炉烧制, 开炉时并不能保证个个是成品, 陈小丹的 这批作品虽然也不例外,但从结果来看,这一尝试无疑是 成功的。除了几件损毁品外,那些完整的作品效果令人惊 喜。陈小丹最初将它们命名为《花》,而实际上作品本身 所涵盖的精神能量远远超过了这个名字的通俗内容。或许 可以称之为"花",但已不是植物学意义上的,因为它们 看上去既不芬芳也不娇艳,或许也可以喻之为"花",但 确已不是普遍意义上的, 因为它们虽是物质性的却又绝对 与灵、性相关。它们似乎介于"似是而非"之间,更像是 某种观念的产物。2004年, 其中的2件应邀参加了在爱尔 兰国家现代美术馆主办的"龙族之梦——中国当代艺术 展",得到国内外艺术界人士的好评。它们构成了陈小丹 迄今为止最重要的作品系列之一。

做这批陶的时候,陈小丹说工作状态中的自己就像个手艺人,只不过她没有手艺人做东西时参照的图像范本。她凭感觉用手揉捏陶土,一片片、一块块地捏塑堆造,创造的是自己内心臆想的形象,那些骨头状、不规则的蜂窝、以及花瓣状的陶雕,造型奇异,肉色的陶体上浸染着如血渍般的粉红色,给人以强烈的视觉震撼和感官刺激。或许是身为女性的直觉,我第一眼见到这些作品时就很自然地感觉这些作品一定与女性生理和心理经验密切相关,因为它们传达出来的与女性身体有关的味道很强烈。果然,就在我难以准确描述这些作品时,陈小丹提示了我:"我觉得这些东西像脏器"。是,确实像脏器,不仅像脏器,有的还像是开了"花"的骨头棒。陈小丹将它们称作"花",真是另类的花儿。后来,这组作品易名,被纳人"盛开"系列,一个意义上更具开放性的词。

之后,陈小丹沿着类似的思路,衍生创作了系列其他 作品。如她用陶土手工捏制了数千个不同形状的小件作 品,或在陶坯表面加上粉红、大红、土黄、熟褐、灰、白等釉料烧制成素色陶,或在瓷上着石绿、石青、钴蓝、藤黄、粉色、红色等鲜艳的粉彩,再描金后烧制。展示时,将它们悬挂,或堆成有特殊意义的图形,或者仅是随意在地上摆放。不同的陈列方式,产生的效果完全不同,有时是精灵古怪,有时是素朴自然,有时又是华丽贵气和肆意张扬的……

陈小丹还将这些小东西放到大自然中,在草地上、雪地上、沙土上,有时全部裸露着摆放,有时则做一些掩埋,然后,她为这些在背景中摆好造型的小东西拍照,用摄影的方式留下见证,于是出现在照片上的又是一番别样风情。小丹还曾做过一大批这样深粉红色的小件,她将它们在地上平铺开来,形成很大的阵势,远看这些红色、翻卷的东西,像层层叠叠的花瓣堆积在一起,近观则让人感觉截然不同。它们不像花瓣,说它们是厚厚的、色泽鲜艳的肉体碎片倒更形象些。这些由小件作品巧妙而灵活地组成的一件件作品,某种程度上体现了陈小丹创作思维中诙谐、幽默、轻松的另一面。

骨头和花朵的意象,最早出现在2003年创作的那批陶质作品中,其中一件管状作品,两端伸展出很多不规则的陶片,由于肉色的陶体上染有红色,这件作品给人以骨头上开出花朵的怪异想象。当时看到这件作品,我很兴奋,觉得这件作品不仅质感好、形式到位,而且气场很足,尤其是女性主义色彩很浓,感觉完全是凭借着创作者内在、甚至女性本能的力量产生的,有一种强劲的女性生命意识在里面。

记得我和陈小丹谈了我的看法,她也很认同,并且把她当时的工作状态和精神状态讲给我听,也谈了她对女性问题的一些思考。对于女性生理和心理的特殊性、女性在现实中遭遇的困惑和难题,以及比较实际的女性健康问题我们交流得比较多,显然她很关注这些问题,也试图寻找

解决之道。随着交流的深入,"骨头上开出花朵",逐渐 形成了一个残酷、坚韧,同时又美丽、脆弱的死亡与生命 交织的意象。陈小丹似乎对自己创造的这个意象痴迷了, 她想要进一步地创造和表现这样有些惊心动魄的东西。生 命与死亡,美丽与残酷,坚韧与脆弱,多么奇妙的并置, 它们不正对应着人生和世界的真实?

陈小丹开始有意识地收集一些动物的骨头,将它们清洗、烧煮、剔除残留的筋肉,挑选其中形状比较有意思的进行翻制放大,做出很逼真的石膏、树脂和瓷的骨状雕塑,她又到景德镇请工人特别手工制作了白瓷的花朵和昆虫,她说昆虫也是跟花朵一样的生命,美而脆弱。她将这些白色的花朵和昆虫按比例小心地黏到骨头上,白瓷花朵和昆虫的脆弱、柔美与骨头的坚硬、冰冷形成鲜明的对照,与之前的陶质作品相比较,具象的骨头与花朵、昆虫,令作品更具有了一种伤感的象征主义色彩和诗意之美。

开始时的作品并不大,30~50厘米的长度,做了几十件,展览时一长排悬挂在墙面上,与灯光造成的影子交错相织,形影相随,自有一股冷艳之气相逼。2007年下半年,陈小丹挑战自己,创作了3件大体量的系列作品,主体分别是玻璃钢材质和铝质的,虽然造型相类,但材质的不同却产生出完全相异的感官效果。2008年"深度呼吸"展和"女性的创造"展上的两件玻璃钢材质作品,巨大的肱骨或矗立或平卧,肱骨上时而密集时而零散地开放着白色的花朵和细小的昆虫,尺寸的放大,令作品在保持原有气质的同时更具视觉上的张力。而目前从未公开展示过的那件铝质作品,在经细心打磨后,通体散发出璀璨而清幽的光芒,与白瓷花朵、昆虫的结合,使它显现出了某种异样的、似乎带有些许科幻色彩的美感。

这3件大型作品的成功尝试,对陈小丹来说喻示着创作上的一个重要飞跃。她不再担心自己对大型作品的驾驭,创作心态也变得更加自信和自由。

陈小丹之后的作品中,确实可以看到这种积极的变 化。在2008年"左手右手"展上的《盛开·寒梅图》、 《盛开·竹》这两件综合材料作品中,除了延续使用白瓷 花,她还大胆地将现成的铝网、丝绸作为底子与背景,并 直接将真的动物骨头作为梅花、竹子的枝干缝制其上,梅 花、竹子的造型挪用自清汪士慎的梅花与郑板桥的墨竹, 这让她的作品在传达一如既往的"惊心动魄"之美的同 时,平添了几许古典的文人气息。而2010年在红庙艺术空 间悬挂展出的作品, 巧妙地利用了老建筑的架构和光影效 果,用最普通的鱼网和粗糙废旧的彩色纸制作了一大束看 上去质朴、温情的"花朵",密致的鱼网包围着、同时也 纠缠着"花朵", 花朵的处境——安全同时又被桎梏, 似 乎暗示着人类个体, 尤其是女性在现实生活中的处境, 即 总是在某种对安全感的依赖和对自由的渴望之间徘徊与纠 结。陈小丹对此采取的是一种善意的提醒方式,用的则是 自己熟悉擅长的艺术语言和手法。

返观陈小丹这些年走过的艺术之路,我总会心生感动和感慨。2005年,我曾经在《"伤花怒放"的意象》一文中写过关于陈小丹的印象,我说我将"伤花怒放"与陈小丹的作品联系起来,并不是说小丹的创作与这本书(《伤花怒放》是一本关于摇滚乐的书)以及与摇滚乐有多大的关系,而是这个词本身所体现出来的一种鲜明刻骨的意象:受伤的花朵蓬勃地开放,美丽、哀绝又顽强,这引发了我的联想。我眼前浮现出小丹的形象,蓬松略有些凌乱的卷曲黑发,宽松合体的衣着,清秀的脸庞上嵌着一双大大的眼睛,眼神中时有焦虑之意,有时因为疲乏,原本白皙的脸庞会有些暗淡。她会疯狂地抟泥捏塑,不顾白天黑夜,她会率直地诉说关于艺术和人生的感喟和体悟,以自己特有的方式。她个性和意志的坚持,不仅体现在说话和行动,更体现在她的那些"伤花怒放"般的作品"中。

离写那篇文章的时间已过去5年,5年中不仅陈小丹的 创作进入一个旺盛而成熟的阶段,她的形象也发生了很大 的变化, 顺滑的长发垂至腰际, 脸庞依然清秀, 但眼神中 少了焦虑与不安,虽然有时也会被失眠症所困扰,但总的 来说,内心变得更沉稳和安然,她说每次一旦开始做作品 了就感觉很幸福。艺术是一剂良药,对于陈小丹来说,这 是真实而肯定的。她内心很敬佩的两位"老牌"女艺术 家,一位是维维安·伊斯特伍德,国际时装界的老顽童、 老朋克,以反叛和标新立异的时装设计风格名世;一位是 布尔乔亚,今年刚以96岁高龄过世,一直被誉为国际艺术 界的"常青树",作品以激进、叛逆的女性主义艺术风格 著称。当然她谈起弗里达·卡罗、KIKI·史密斯、雷迪·嘎嘎 时也眉飞色舞。对这些心仪的女艺术家,她常说的一句话 就两个字:"过瘾!"这其中我想不难发现作为艺术家的 陈小丹内心深处的激情和梦想。行文至此, 我忽然记起她 几乎与2008年那件大作品同时完成的另一件大型作品,它 也可说是她创作前面那件大作品的副产品——翻制树脂作 品时的硅胶外模,剥制下来以后,那酷似皮肤的生理性的 质感和色泽让陈小丹激动不已, 真是无心插柳之得, 经过 仔细的考虑,她开始了繁复的手工制作,几百个银色金属 别针被她一个个别在了硅胶大皮上,然后将它摊开悬挂 在梯子上。这件作品对人形成的视觉冲击和心理震撼都很 强,但这种强与那些有花朵意象的作品又有不同,显然它 带有张扬和反叛的挑衅意味。这是在向她喜爱的女艺术家 致敬吗?

陈小丹是一位真诚地用自己的生命体验来浇灌自己作品的艺术家。她很珍视自己的直觉和感悟力。对事物,她始终有着自己的美学观,比如她对材料的独特敏感,生活中她总是能在一些平凡不起眼的物品,如皱巴巴的纸张、布料、鸡鸭鱼骨、烂树枝上发现其中特殊的美,她将这些东西整理整理,某些时候就用入作品里了,感觉很随意其实背后用心很多。关于感悟力方面的事例,记得有一次,陈小丹很认真地告诉我制作过程中发生的一件事,当时她为了将各式餐桌上收集来的骨头做净化处理,就试着将真的骨头放进窑中烧制,希望烧过的骨头会非常干净,没想

到真的见到烧过的骨头时,自己简直惊呆了,那种白简直让人心惊,完全跟这个世界没有了关系,用陈小丹的原话讲:"感觉那是灵界的东西,很震撼。"怎样将它们用到作品中,她至今也没有想好。或许某一天,我们会在陈小丹的某件新作中发现这些神秘的东西,不过那也不足为奇,必定是她诚心触发灵性所造就的作品,这真令人期待。

从20世纪90年代初期那幅具有显在女性意识的油画 《飘》, 到今天以骨头和花朵为基本元素的充满生命意识 和终极追问的雕塑与装置,可以说陈小丹每个时期的作品 都内在地被一条神秘的线索所串连。这条线索隐匿于艺术 家的生命内部,随其生命的起伏而不断衍生,某种意义上 可以说与她个体生命的成长血肉相连。她不同时期的作品 往往暗合于自我生命经验的变化与更迭, 体现出她对于生 活、身体以及社会文化情状变迁带给自身冲击与省思的某 种过人的敏感甚至偏执。正是这种敏感甚至偏执,令陈小 丹的创作得以突破庸常的那些"闺阁情调式"的女性艺术 创作, 而深入到女性生命经验的本质, 创造出一种属于自 身的尖锐又有力的艺术语言,女性的敏感温柔静美与女性 的粗砺暴虐荒凉在作品中并存,呈现为既矛盾又协调的奇 妙结合体。就此而言,我们或可作出这样的判断,陈小丹 为我们创造的这份视觉经验无疑具有独特性,它在展示女 性生命经验和身心双重社会体悟, 揭示女性精神独立成长的 层面, 为当代的女性艺术研究提供了一个有价值的范例。

2010年12月26日于上海

### So Blooming: Interpretation of Chen Xiaodan's Works Jiang Mei

Chen Xiaodan has named almost all her works "Bloom". According to common sense, "blooming" is not only an action but also a state. For a flower which is blooming, or a blooming flower, both indicate the significance of vigorous vitality with a subtle difference: the former emphasizes the timing and the growing strength of the action of "blooming", and the latter concentrates on the state of the flower with less emphasis on the element of its growing strength and more description about its unrestrained state of opening. Chen Xiaodan names most of her works "Bloom", and I believe it has double connotations. "Blooming" could also lead to more comprehensive mental associations and metaphors related to the states of human body, life, thought, soul, and etc. Maybe we could put it in this way, just because of the word's profuse connotations, Chen has put almost all her works under the theme of "blooming".

When reviewing the track of Chen creating the "Bloom" series, we could retrace her steps back to an oil painting "Drifting", one of Chen's representative pieces in her early phase, with "flowers" presenting relatively representational images at that time. Some small flowers were scattered around, surrounding and also being attracted by a certain strength of a "black hole" with a strong symbolization of women, which was enclosed by a thick black square frame. The gloomy and heavy colors, the drifting, profound and blurry atmosphere, and the particular heavy texture made in the bottom of the painting, all these added to the comparison among these images in the higher part and the equilibrium between the strengths in the painting, meanwhile implied Chen's attention for her works' textural quality. As a matter of fact, the attention and emphasis on the material's quality has been gradually strengthened and improved in her later series of works, forming the most conspicuous and meaningful characteristic of her works.

Her painting *Drifting* didn't last long in people's impression. After participating in the "1st Chinese Oil Painting Biennale" in 1993, Chen was almost complete separated from the art circles

to take care of her family and child. For quite a long time, Chen played the roles of a respectable teacher, a responsible wife and mother, being busy with the teaching job and family chores, and could hardly spare any time to create works. Though satisfied with her students' respect and affection to a certain extent, she was more and more bothered by a sense of insecurity with time elapsing, feeling that her dream about art during her youth and college had departed from her farther away, which really disturbed and frustrated her. Sometimes, she even felt confused and unsure about her talent. However, she eventually decided to believe herself, listening to her inner desires and summons.

In the later stage of the 1990s, Chen began to concentrate on creation. She painted a great many drafts, and then created oil paintings according to the drafts. She tried to create some oil paintings with the style of expressionism, seemingly quite lyric and poetic, and instantly obtained lots of friends' affirmation. In the paintings, there were most semi-abstract and semi-concrete flower-like images, most people thought they were flowers, and she seemed to be uncertain about it at that time, and ambiguously admitted they were flowers when answering others' questions. However, in my opinion, these flower-like shapes were just some drifting emotional imagery, and the calligraphic brushstrokes delivered more about the painter's certain spiritual and psychological state. Actually, later these imageries always appeared in Chen's works, continuing to change and evolve, sometimes powerful and sometimes gentle, conforming to her inner state all the time.

The paintings created in the later stage of the 1990s could be regarded as a sort of attempt for Chen's future creation, or a sort of adjustment and preparation for entering the state of real creation.

When organizing a female art exhibition in 2000, I saw these oil paintings, perceiving a woman artist's sensitive and exquisite elements about colors and brushstrokes which was also spectacular and unrestrained, therefore I asked her to join my exhibition. That was a comprehensive exhibition, including paintings, mixed media, installations, photographs, videos, and etc. Chen was especially assiduous, not only sent me paintings, but also created two pieces of three-dimensional works made of pink-colored and flesh-colored handicraft paper. These two pieces' appearance was not dainty, implying the imagery of "flower", seeming rather simple and carefree, and producing quite a good visual effect in the exhibition hall. Now reviewing these two pieces, I realize their importance to Chen, indicating a new starting point, and her later creation of the "Bloom" series of mixed media and installations started exactly from here.

From 2003, Chen decided to apply her old skill of making ceramics to expressing some of her artistic ideas. She felt that she had quite good feelings and hold of ceramic clay's performance and firing. She borrowed her friend's ceramic studio to make experiments of creation. Firing ceramic has its own risks: unburned moulded ceramics are put inside a kiln to be fired, and nobody could guarantee they would all be successful results after coming out of the kiln. Though Chen's works were not exceptional, this attempt seemed to be successful. Except for some broken pieces, those intact works were really amazing. At first Chen named them Flowers, however those works' spiritual energy actually exceeded this common title far away. Perhaps we could call them "flowers", but they were never common flowers in the sense of botany, as they didn't seem fragrant, delicate or charming; perhaps we could compare them with flowers, but they were not common flowers, as they were substantial but definitely related with intelligence and spiritualism. They seemed to be between flowers and non-flowers, more like the product of a certain concept. In 2004, three pieces of these works were invited to participate in "Dream of Dragon Race - China Contemporary Art Exhibition" organized by Irish Contemporary Art Museum, obtaining compliments from the art circles at home and abroad. They constitute Chen's most important series.

When creating these ceramic works, Chen described herself working as a craftsman, but she didn't work with patterns for reference like any craftsman. She squeezed, pressed and rolled the clay with instinct, and created imagined images. Those figurines of bones, irregular beehives and petals, and the blood-like pink color on those weird-shaped flesh-colored ceramics, could bring strong visual impacts and sensory stimulations. Perhaps out of a woman's instinct, I naturally felt these works must be closely related with women's physiological and psychological experiences at the first glance, as they delivered a strong sense about woman's body. As expected, when I had difficulty finding the exact words to describe those works, Chen gave me a hint, "I think these are like internal organs." Yes, they were really like internal organs, not only organs, some were like bones with blooming "flowers". Chen called them flowers, and they were really alternative flowers. Later, she changed the names of this series and included them into the series of "Bloom" - a more open word.

Later, following the similar thought, Chen derived other series of works. For instance, she created thousands of different shaped small ceramic pieces, painted some with pink, red, yellowish brown, burnt umber, gray, white and some other glazes and burnt them into plain-colored ceramics, or painted some with turquoise, azurite, cobalt-blue, gamboges, pink, red and some other bright colors, traced in gold, and then fired them. When displaying them, she hung or piled them into patterns of special significance, or just placed them on the ground randomly. Different ways of displaying produced completely different effects, sometimes cute and weird, sometimes natural and unsophisticated, sometimes luxurious and spectacular...

Chen also put these small pieces into the nature, on a lawn, a snowfield or sandy oil; sometimes they were all exposed in the site, sometimes some of them were partially concealed. Then, she took photographs for these small works to make records in the way of photography, therefore they had another appearance in those photos. Chen also once made a great many dark-pink

colored small pieces, scattering them on the ground to form a large pattern. Viewing them from a distance, those red curling things were like fragmented petals layers upon layers; closely observing them, you would have an absolutely different view: they were unlike petals, more like thick and bright-colored flesh fragments. These works consisting of small pieces reveal the humorous and light-hearted side of Chen's creation to some extent.

The imageries of bone and flower first appeared in the series of ceramic works created in 2003. In one piece of the works, a pipe-shaped object had many irregular ceramic pieces attached to both ends, as the flesh-colored ceramic was tainted with red color, this piece of work gave audience the weird impression of a bone with flowers blooming on it. I was really excited to see this piece, impressed by its textural quality, appropriate form, sufficient charisma, and especially the strong sense of feminism. I had the feeling that it was the result of the artist's inner even instinctive female strength, with a strong perception of female life hidden inside.

I remember I talked about my opinions with Chen, and she agreed with me, also telling me about her working and psychological states at that time, and some of her considerations about women's problems. We had more communications about the specialty of women's physiology and psychology, women's difficulties and problems in reality, and some more practical problems about women's health, as she apparently cared much about these problems, and also tried to find solutions. With further communications, I found that "the bone with blooming flowers" gradually formed a cruel, tenacious but also beautiful, fragile imagery of death and life interwoven together. Chen seemed to be obsessed with this imagery, trying to further create and represent these shocking and amazing objects. Life and death, beauty and cruelty, tenacity and fragility, they were miraculously put side by side, just corresponding to the reality of life and the world.

Chen began to intentionally collect some animal bones, cleaned, boiled, picked out the remaining meat, selected some of interesting shapes, turned over the mould to enlarge the size, and created vivid bone-shaped sculptures of plaster or resin or porcelain. Going to Jingde town, she asked craftsmen to especially produce hand-made white-porcelain flowers and insects. She said, "Insects are lives just like flowers, beautiful and fragile." She carefully stuck these white flowers and insects to the bones according to proportion. The fragility, gentleness and beauty of the white-porcelain flowers and insects formed a distinct comparison with the hardness and coldness of the bones. Compared with her previous ceramic works, the representational bones, flowers and insects added a melancholy touch of symbolism and a sort of poetic beauty to her works.

At first, the works' sizes were not big, with the length from 30 to 50 centimeters. She created several dozens of works, hung them in a long row on the wall during the exhibition, interweaving with the shadows made by the lights to make the audience feel a kind of quiet elegance. In the latter half of 2007, to challenge herself, Chen created three pieces of large-scale works, mostly made of glass fibre reinforced plastic and aluminum. Though these works had similar molding, different materials produced completely different sensory effects. As for the two pieces of glass fibre reinforced plastic participating in the exhibitions of "Deep Breath" and "Women's Creation" in 2008, the huge shoulder bones of glass fibre reinforced plastic stood or lay at the entrance of the exhibition, and white flowers and tiny insects gathered or scattered on the bones. The enlargement of the size enabled these pieces of works to maintain their inherent temperament and meanwhile put on more visual tension. As for that piece of aluminum, which has never been publicly displayed, after being carefully polished, it shines with bright and quiet light, and the combination with white-porcelain flowers and insects presents a touch of particular beauty a little bit like a science fiction.

The success of these large-scale works meant an important leap

in Chen's creation. She no longer worried about her creation of large pieces, and her mood of creation became more confident and unrestrained.

We could clearly perceive this positive change in the following works. In "Bloom - Plum Blossoms in Snow" and "Bloom -Bamboos", the two pieces of mixed media participating in the exhibition of "Left Hand & Right Hand" in 2009, besides continuing to use white porcelain flowers, she boldly used readymade aluminum net and silk as the background, directly sewed real animal bones onto it as the branches of plum trees and bamboos, and borrowed the molding of plum blossoms and bamboos from Wang Mian's plum blossoms in the Yuan Dynasty and Wang Shishen's ink bamboos in the Qing Dynasty, which not only enabled her works to deliver the familiar "shocking" beauty but also added the touch of classic literate painting. In the piece of work hung in the red temple art space in 2010, she skillfully took advantage of the old building's structure and effect of light and shade, used the commonest fishing net and tough waste colored paper to make a large bouquet of unsophisticated and cozy "flowers", fishing nets tightly wrapped the "flowers", meanwhile tangled with them. The flowers were in a safe but also restricted position, seemingly implying the situation of human beings especially women in the real life, that is, always lingering and hesitating between the dependence on a certain sense of security and the desire for freedom. Chen reminded people in a well-meaning way, applying her familiar and skillful art language and means.

Reviewing Chen's art career in those years, I would always feel touched and have lots of thoughts. In 2005, I wrote about my impression about Chen in the article "The Imagery of Wounded Blooming Flowers". I said, I connected "wounded blooming flowers" with Chen's works not because Chen's creation had much to do with this book ("Wounded Blooming Flowers" is a book about rock music) or rock music, but because this phrase itself presented a distinct imagery - wounded flowers vigorously

bloomed, beautiful, sad and tough, which stirred my mental associations. Then Chen's image emerged in my mind: a little disheveled curly hair, loose and fitting clothing, a pair of big eyes on her delicate face with somewhat anxiety inside, sometimes her previously fair-complexioned face seemed a little dim because of weariness. She would crazily work with clay disregarding day or night; she would straightforwardly talk about her understanding of art and life in her unique way. Her personality and perseverance are not only represented by her words and behaviors, but also reflected in her works like "wounded blooming flowers".

It has been five years since I wrote that article. During the past five years, Chen's creation entered a flourishing and mature phase, and her image has also changed a lot. Smooth long hair grows to her waist, her face is still delicate, but there is no longer anxiety or restlessness in her eyes, though she is still sometimes bothered by sleeplessness, generally speaking, her inner world becomes more tranquil and peaceful. She said, she felt happy every time she began to create something. Art is good medicine, which is true and definite for Chen. She really admires two old women artists: one is Vivienne Westwood, an old child and old punk, in the international fashion circles famous for her rebellion and unconventionality, and the other is Louise Bourgeois, who just passed away in this year (2010), was regarded as an evergreen tree in the international art circles, famous for her drastic and treacherous feministic style. Of course, she also talks with high spirit about other women artists, such as Frieda Kahlo, Kiki Smith, Lady GaGa ··· Her usual compliment for those favorite women artists is "fabulous". Hence, we could easily discover the passion and dream deep inside Chen's heart. When writing this article, I suddenly recollected another large piece of work finished almost the same time of that large-scale work in 2008, which could be regarded as a by-product of the previous largescale work - the silicon out-layer mould of that resin sculpture. After peeling it off, Chen was really excited by its physiological texture and color looking exactly like skin, which was truly