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中国风景

CHINESE LANDSCAPE

许培武 主编





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言 此时此刻, 悲欣交集

/ 颜长江

中国古代,很少说"风景"这个词,主要是说"山水",有山有水,可游玩,可隐逸,是很高妙的,妙到一定程度,就是"境"了。所谓:

"采菊东篱下, 悠然见南山。"

"相看两不厌,只有敬亭山。"

这种交流完全是灵性的、玄妙的、会意的,正所谓"此中有真意,欲辩已忘言"。中国山水美学的真意究竟是什么?简言之,天人合一。人与自然是不矛盾的,人不会也不可能过多地干涉自然,融合得很完满,并达到了东方特有的神思飘渺之境,轻松而巧妙地得到了生的意义,解决了死的恐慌,因为早已把自己交付天地,人生自然会美丽和永恒。

可以说,一千多年来,这是中国人安身立命之本,也就是基本的世界观,而山水美学,也成为中国艺文的主体,可以说,一定程度上它是士人的宗教。我们曾经有个通常的观点,认为这是消极避世的,但当我身处沉沦的当代,再回看这种美学境界,突然觉得它光彩照人。

"山水",其实是向上的、健康的、积极的、明亮的,甚至是青春的、令人欢欣的……

最重要的,它也是根本的——乐天知命,融于大化,这种人生是最宽广的,是世界观的开始, 也可能是哲学的终点。

所以,中国人看风景,从来是亲切的,也是人化的。人与自然就像是知音,所谓:"我见青山 多妩媚,料青山见我也如是。"

自然也是自己。所以中国人不多打搅自然,不乱搞。中国建筑在这一点也达到了难得的境界, 曲线舒展,是在模仿自然(即"天地"),与自然相得益彰,这无疑是建筑艺术的最高境界。英国 探险家立德在光绪年间就充分认识到这一点。他观看重庆市区风景时写道:

"在中国偏远的西部,人类与自然的和谐没有遭到人为的破坏,风水,从好的方面说,具有最高影响力,使人与土地保持和谐的关系。灰白的雉堞仿佛是崎岖山崖上自然的突起物,城墙顺着高山低谷的走势而蜿蜒起伏,并未显出与自然风貌相冲突的痕迹,而鲁莽的西方风格则疏于此道。这

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里没有想修建高于邻人房舍的塔楼, 盗走他们的空气和阳光的好冒尖的暴发户。"

现在呢?我查到,重庆的一位网友读到立德的书后说道:"一百多年前的重庆,那简直不像我自己的地方,如此遥远,美好。"立德现在再来,一定痛心疾首,因为中国剩下的有山有水的古城已很难找到了。有一个世界出名的平遥,但本无山,也无水。中国的美好之境,本来轮不到平遥。

这一切, 是近一百年来, 尤其是近二十年来, 给完全颠倒过来了。

"天翻地覆"这句话用在这里很合适,首先是景观发生了根本变化,人无限地干涉自然,可以说已不再有"原生态"。天已污染,地已剥皮,人变得特别狼。现在,山水本身已无处隐逸,已被"拆迁"得差不多了。古代建筑,也拆得太多,只剩下单体的一些文物,只有科学的意义,而无审美的"环境"。

那么侵蚀和替换掉自然和古代街区村落的海量新建设又如何呢?由于权力拥有者普遍的低素质、庸俗化,制造出来的建筑、城市不仅索然无味,而且荒诞不经。可以说,遍布的是漂亮和奇特的垃圾,这些垃圾已彻底地改变了中国,中国不再是文本和老人、华人认识的中国了。如果还有一些传统与自然在,那也经过了古怪的变异,比如在张家界装电梯、在巫山建八十米神女像之类。我们就是一个拼盘或杂烩。

到底该怎样形容中国的当下奇观?英国摄影师纳达夫·坎德尔近年像立德一样,走过长江。他写道:"中国是一个看上去正在试图铲除自己根源、磨灭自己过去的国家。拆除和建设无处不在,其尺度如此之大,让我们不知道我们看见的到底是建设还是毁灭。"

这真是一场古典的悲剧。自己掐死自己的孩子,或者弑了自己的父亲;以建设的名义,兴高采 烈地破坏自己的国家。

当然,与此相应,国人的世界观,也同样颠倒成天人对立。所谓人定胜天,山水美学完全退场。严格地说,其实我们并没有严肃的系统的世界观,因为再也用不着了,简单的生存法则和消费冲动已征服大家。也就是说,我们已无信仰,精神荒芜。这种从内心到外界的相应的风景,或者

说"疯景",是我们的基本现实。另一位近年深入拍摄中国的Daniel Traub,中文名叫叶仁杰的也写道: "生活在这里的人们对于环境有着戏剧化的姿态,或者急于将自身匹配于这些新的背景之下,或者仍困扰在个人的迷茫之中,对于这个瞬间形成的新世界无所适从。" 我们可以在"中国奇异主题公园"里"娱乐至死",但是,国人的普遍感觉恐怕是并无一种幸福感。这一种有中国特色的现代病,也让一部分人不得不反思、行动,去寻找建设新的精神家园的可能。

以上与摄影看似无关的东西,实际上就是我们这群人,或者说这个展览,能够出发的起点,基本盘,是要提出的问题,也是展览的内在主题。正如风景从来是人化的,好的艺术也会针对问题,好的艺术家也会当随时代。这一群摄影人都是深负责任感的,既然如此,则不管风格各异,都是现实主义的,他们自然会集中到一个问题,并恰好从各个侧面合成这个问题:透视当下中国外在的与内心的风景,看从何处来,看向何处去。

当山水已被挤压殆尽的时候,我们只能看现代意义上的风景。发起人许培武先生,也朴实而大 气地将展览定为"中国风景"。听到这个题目,上海评论家姜纬感叹道:

"中国风景,无风哪还有景?景人人可以看见,观却大有学问。'中国'两个字,情何以 堪!"

确实, "风"有浪漫之义,也是《诗经》里形容自在悠扬的民歌的名词。"风景"用在这里,只能是缅怀、是反讽了。而"中国"两个字,也是沉重非常。只是对于有责任的摄影家来说,我们不干,谁干?我们看来,看此风景,是当下中国当务之急!我们想用现代的目光去庄重审视当下的中国,各展所能,倾力面对,传送现场,并发出疑问。中国风景,可以说指中国的外观、面貌,因此,这些摄影家可以说,在集体为祖国相面。这个面相,已很成问题,可以看出病灶。所有作品——即便是感性和主观的作品,恰好可以汇合成一种全面的、理性的、客观的确认。

所以这个展览,并不一般。观看中国风景,是"中国"重生的前提。于是这种作品有救亡的意思,再也没有山水时代的潇洒。像是用最后的观照,以便提供一种开始。那么,我们是否寻找到什

么答案和方向?

我想,这批作者对于传统美学是再次肯定的,但作为在所谓开放前沿的现代人,他们也会从西 方文明中接受有用的普遍的价值观。总之,两者好的都应拿来,建设新的精神家园。这路径与前景 都很模糊,但摄影不仅是社会学的,它也是感性的,这些作品,首先用影像,再建立一种对土地和 人生的信仰。这是个基本的结论。

"观是大有学问的。"我们相信,参展摄影师都有各自丰富热烈的内心和独特娴熟的技巧。责任在肩,"中国风景"摄影展首先强调一种态度:认真看,认真展。所以强调手工制作,自助参展,想达到全程的纯粹性。在这个前提下再来看内容,大致有两种看的方法:一类是心象,用内心去反射现实;二是外象,也就是客观式地面对现实。各人的风格,可以大致总结一下:

丘是中国最深刻的黑白摄影师。他得益于南方的鬼巫传统,作品有如在暗暗的天光下地面上的 点点磷光,在闪耀,也在呻吟。他好像在用布满咒语的一把把小刀,给咱们提供中国切片。

这种楚辞般的鬼歌、灵歌、挽歌气质,也在同属南方的魏壁和罗凯星那里得到回应。只不过魏壁正面描绘包含巫术和戏剧在内的中世纪生活方式,他看来是想将这种方式固化、模型化,他只在照片上以挥动的书法,放纵他深厚的感情。罗凯星则多了一份急速,他也确实是乘坐火车来去"故乡"的。

中国文化其实更多地保存在南方的农村中。如果用诗歌意象来形容这三位有"南方精血"的摄影师,可以说分别是婴孩、农民和归家的游子。他们的表达方式分别是捡拾、收割和徘徊。这是三位距中国乡土最近的摄影师。

而又有几位,在乡土之上,以文人的面目出现,多少有些名士意味。许培武,将其作品命名为《林泉高致》,虽然他已不能完全悠然自得地在自然中吟唱。他拍下的风景中总有一种犹豫的状态,在这个美好的标题下也有反讽的味道。

这种反讽在颜长江那里来得更为直接。他的题材也是文人式的,他的一部分作品是神魂颠倒

型,直接与荒诞无稽一起调笑,达到反讽效果,另一部分作品则神不守舍,不断出现"伫立"、"眺望"的姿态,仿佛又在鼓励观者远走高飞,总之表达了批判、逃离、绝望的努力,有一种决然。

路泞则提供参展摄影师中难得的北方景象,明净、大气、朴素,让人在以上的"南宗"之外,想起范宽式的北派山水。他的作品,有时间归零的永恒气质,有情绪消失的空无状态,给展览提供了悠远的绝对的维度。

这三位,可以说是继承120摄影的正统路子。而又有三位,可以说是以现代的眼光与手法,正面来看当下生活:杨格亮借用景观摄影手法,正面、平稳地观看,如同一位沉着的工程师;杨俊坡在本次展览中难得地对准了城市,这有很大的难度,但他让快速的深圳无法逃脱他的手,看到了城市的光鲜之下的可怜,美好之下的无助,他是一位兄长的形象——也确实是。他的作品里有爱,对于当代景观,也许我们不能只是批判,也要宽容。这是一个时代的无奈,所有人的悲哀。

另外,蒙敏生先生,一位在逝世前才被"发现"的摄影大家,他的作品将中国传统园林审美和 当时的政治结合,这种从历史与现实两个维度同时观看风景的做法,与我们这次展览的理念一致。 我们将他纳入,顺理成章,也是向他致敬。风景,从来就与政治有关。

不管哪种,其实都含有一种评价和深厚的影像滋味。我们相信,这块土地上的风景已经变形以至成了异形,散落着零配件的现场正在急速变异,它们暗含过去与未来的密码和谶言。我们分头去搜寻证据,在不同的面向,去搞定一个整体。这个整体,是我们的依靠,也是我们所有人的意义,它呈现为一个问题——家园及精神家园的问题,这是中国当下的要害,也是艺术界最当下的题材。

摄影必须担负一定的历史使命。以往二三十年来,否定传统、解构意义是艺术时尚,当时有当时的需要,但一味这样下去,结果是空空如也,这种艺术到了当前,并无多大现实意义,反倒显得和消费主义合流,本身成为问题的一部分。现在当反其道而行之,去解决这二三十年攒下的新问题,找准穴位,重整衣冠,去恢复和建设什么东西。不少有识之士已认识到这一点:如果艺术有

其天生的不合作和反抗意识,那么反抗的对象已然改变。在摄影界,面对现实的作品已经很多,以 2010年为例,"不一样的风景"、"中国景"等展览已作了很好的彩色的观察,而我们举办这一黑白 群展,正当其时。

意犹未尽, 让我最后仍以立德的重庆日志作结尾吧:

"这一带有一定数量的人皈依天主教,原来捐献给本地神灵的一点点可怜的钱也转而交给教会,去修建那座丑得让人心烦的刷白的教堂。如今美丽的古老寺院连同冷落的殿堂,荫凉的庭院,以及足以抚慰厌倦尘世的心灵的一切艺术与大自然相结合的美好景观,都已逐步破败。就连那些声音圆润而从容的古钟也逐步地被粗俗的古董商全部收集走了,取而代之的是邻近的小教堂那不和谐的叮叮当当的铃声。我在林木繁茂的幽静山谷中散步时,曾经多少次听到那一下一下的深沉钟声,那是佛门圣殿的晚祷钟,我驻足聆听,望着那些参拜者和香火的轻烟。"

此中有深意,欲辩已忘言。

PREFACE

Sorrow and Joy Intersect at this Moment

/ Yan Changjiang

The phrase "landscape" was seldom used in ancient China; the phrase "shanshui" meaning mountain and water was used instead. Among mountains and water, people can enjoy the view or live in seclusion. This is extraordinary, wonderful to a certain extent; it is "heaven."

"While picking asters beneath the Eastern fence/My gaze upon the Southern mountain rests."

"We are not tired, the Peak and I/ Neither I of him, nor he of me."

This exchange is spiritual, mysterious, and knowing. "It has true meaning, but when I try to express it, I have forgotten the words." What is the true meaning of the Chinese shanshui aesthetic? In short, it is the oneness of man and nature. There is no contradiction between man and nature. Man cannot and will not excessively interfere with nature nor successfully merge with nature. Man cannot and will not reach the misty heaven of Eastern thought, easily and skillfully master the meaning of life, or resolve the fear of death. This is because man has already consigned himself to Heaven, where life is beautiful and eternal. This is said to be the basis on which Chinese people settle down and it has been central to the Chinese world view for more than a thousand years. Shanshui aesthetics have also become the center of Chinese literature and art. To some extent, shanshui is the scholars' religion. We all used to share the view that shanshui is negative and elitist, but when I look back on this aesthetic world from the present, it seems brilliant.

Actually, shanshui is progressive, healthy, positive, bright, and even youthful and joyous.

Most importantly, shanshui is essential; when you are happy in this life, you are in harmony with greater changes. This kind of life is vast; it is the beginning of a world view and the goal of philosophy. Therefore, Chinese people always see landscape as intimate and human. Man and nature are like close friends; "I think the mountains are beautiful, and I think they feel the same way about me."

Nature is also oneself, so Chinese people seldom disturbed and spoiled nature. In this regard, Chinese architecture also reaches a rare plane. Curves extend in an imitation of nature (that is, "Heaven and Earth"), thus architecture and nature bring out the best in each other. This is undoubtedly the highest state of art of architecture. British explorer Archibald John Little fully understood this when he traveled to China during the reign of Guangxu Emperor. Upon seeing the urban landscape of Chongqing, he wrote, "But here in the far west of China, nothing has intervened to mar the accord between Man and Nature. Feng-shui, in its best sense, reigns supreme, and Man harmonizes with the soil as a bird with the air and a fish with the water. The buildings are all in keeping with the environment. The hoary

battlements seem a natural excrescence on the rugged cliffs, and as the city walls follow the sinuosities of hill and dale, there is no sign of that strife with Nature which our bold Western methods encourage. No braggart upstart building towers rudely above its neighbors, stealing their air and light."

And today? After reading Little's book, someone from Chongqing wrote, "The Chongqing of more than one hundred years ago is not like my Chongqing, it is so distant and so good." If Little were to come back, he would be deeply saddened, because it is hard to find ancient cities with mountains and rivers in China today. Pingyao is world-famous, but it has neither mountains nor rivers. Pingyao was not originally included within the boundaries of China's beauty.

All of this has been completely reversed in the last hundred years, and especially in the last two decades.

The phrase "upside down" is very appropriate here. Landscape has undergone fundamental changes. Humanity has endlessly intervened in nature so that its original ecological balance no longer exists. The sky has been polluted and the earth has been skinned; people have become greedy. There is no shanshui in which to live in seclusion nowadays; they have been almost completely demolished. Ancient architectures have also been destroyed to too great an extent. Only a few solitary artifacts have been left behind; they only have scientific significance and not an aesthetic "environment."

What about the sea of new construction that has corroded and replaced nature and ancient streets and villages? Because the powerful are generally mediocre and vulgar, the architecture and cities that they have created are uninteresting and absurd. One could say that they have placed beautiful and strange garbage everywhere. This garbage has thoroughly changed China such that today's China is no longer the China of the books and memories of the elderly and the Chinese people. If traditional and natural things still exist, they have undergone bizarre changes. For example, elevators have been installed in Zhangjiajie and an eighty-meter high goddess sculpture has been built on Wushan. As a result, we are a confused mixture.

How should we describe the wonders of contemporary China? British photographer Nadav Kander is a modern-day Little, traveling along Yangtze River. Kander wrote, "China is a nation that appears to be severing its roots by destroying its past. Construction and demolition are happening everywhere, on so great a scale that it makes us wonder whether we are really building or destroying."

This is truly a classical tragedy. You strangle your own children or kill your father and in the name of

construction, you happily destroy your own country.

Of course, the world view of the people of the country will change to the point that man and nature clash. Man will conquer nature regardless of shanshui aesthetics. Strictly speaking, we do not have a serious and systemic world view because it is no longer necessary. The simple rules of survival and consumer impulses have overcome all of us, that is, we don't have beliefs anymore; we have only spiritual desolation. The landscape that corresponds to the journey from the heart to the outside world, the "mad scene," is our basic reality. Another photographer Daniel Traub has traveled extensively in China taking photographs in recent years. He wrote, "The people with their gestures seem theatrical, as if eager to appear in step with these new backdrops. Others seem absorbed in their thoughts, lonely, stunned by this new world that has suddenly appeared."We can be "amused to death" in the strange China theme park, but most people are afraid that they will not feel happy. This is a modern disease with Chinese characteristics, which forces people to rethink and act and find a possibility for building a new spiritual home.

This would seem to have nothing to do with photography, but in fact, it is a starting point and a foundation for us or this exhibition. It is an issue that must be raised and it is also the exhibition's inherent theme. Because landscape is always humanized, good art can target problems and good artists can confront the era directly. This group of photographers has a deep sense of responsibility. Regardless of the style of their works, they are all realistic. They naturally focus on a problem and synthesize this problem from every angle; they want to penetrate contemporary China's external and internal landscapes, seeing where it came from and where it will go.

When the shanshui has been squeezed away, we can only look at landscape in the modern sense. Xu Peiwu, the force behind this exhibition, simply but grandly named this exhibition "Chinese Landscape." On hearing this title, Shanghai critic Wei Jiang exclaimed, "Chinese Landscape! Is there still scenery when there is no wind? [The Chinese word for "landscape" is composed of the two characters for "wind" and "scenery."] Anyone can see scenery, but viewing is very demanding. But how can we bear the word 'Chinese?'"

Indeed, the word "wind" has a romantic connotation, but it is also the noun used to describe the melodious folk songs in the Book of *Odes*. If I use "landscape" here, it is just nostalgic and satiric. The word "Chinese" is very serious. Responsible photographers think that if they don't capture it, no one

will. In our view, capturing the landscape is top priority for contemporary China. We want to use modern eyes to look seriously at contemporary China; we want to show our abilities, resolutely confront and convey the scene, and express our doubts. Chinese landscape can be expressed as a Chinese appearance and face; these photographers are collectively examining their country. This face has a lot of problems; the photographers can see the infections. All the works, even the emotional and subjective ones, can be joined together to form a comprehensive, rational, and objective affirmation.

This exhibition is not ordinary. Observing the Chinese landscape is a precondition for the rebirth of "China" .Therefore, these works imply salvation, without the effortlessness of the shanshui era. It is like a final glance before we can keep walking. But have we found a direction?

I think that these photographers reaffirm traditional aesthetics, but they are also open, forward-looking, modern people. They also accept universal, useful values from Western civilization. In short, both of these good things should be used to build a new spiritual home. The path and prospects are very vague, but photography is both sociological and emotional. These works use images to create a belief about land and life.

"Viewing is very demanding." We believe that the photographers in this exhibition have rich, vibrant inner worlds and unique skills. In shouldering this responsibility, the Chinese Landscape photography exhibition emphasizes the attitude that one should look and present seriously. Therefore the exhibition focuses on handmade works and self-installation of the work to achieve a pure exhibition process. There are basically two ways to look at this premise. The first is the mental image, which uses the heart to reflect reality; the second is the outside image, which is an objective confrontation of reality. Every participant has his own style, which is summarized below.

Qiu is the most profound black and white photographer in China. He has benefited from the Southern tradition of witchcraft; his works seem to glow slightly from a secret sunlight reflected off the ground, brilliant and groaning. He seems to use a knife full of spells to offer us slices of China.

The ghost songs, spiritual songs, and elegiac airs, like the Songs of Chu, receive responses from fellow Southerners Wei Bi and Luo Kaixing. Only Wei Bi positively portrays the magic and drama of medieval life. He seems to solidify and model this method; he brandishes calligraphy, indulging his deep feelings in photos. Luo Kaixing's work is faster; he definitely takes the train to and from "home."

Chinese culture is better persevered in rural areas in the South. If there are three poetic images to

describe these three photographers with Southern blood, they are the baby, the farmer, and the traveler returning home. These three figures express themselves through the gestures of picking, harvesting, and wandering. They are the three photographers closest to the land of China.

There are few photographers who have scholarly features and a literary air in China. Xu Peiwu named his works Secluded Elegance, although he cannot be entirely carefree in nature. There is always a hesitation in the photos; under this beauty there is also irony.

The irony is much more direct in Yan Changjiang's work. His subject matter is also literary, but some of his works are obsessive, joking with the absurd, to an ironic effect. His other works are more distracted; figures are often captured standing and staring, as if encouraging the viewer to escape to a distant place. In short, his work expresses the struggle of criticism, escape, and despair; he is determined.

Photographer Lu Ning provides a rare Northern scene, clean, grand, and simple. In contrast to the Southerners discussed above, his works evoke Fan Kuan-style Northern shanshui. His photographs have an emotional emptiness and the eternal air of frozen time. He contributes a distant, perfect dimension to the exhibition.

These three photographers have inherited an orthodox 120 mm photography, but the next three photographers can be regarded as using a modern vision and approach, directly confronting contemporary life. Yang Geliang borrowed the landscape photography technique of direct and steady observation; he is like a calm engineer. Yang Junpo is a rarity in this exhibition for focusing on a city. This is very difficult to do, but the swiftness of Shenzhen could not escape Yang's grasp. Yang has seen the piteousness in urban brightness and the helplessness in urban beauty; he truly is an elder brother. Yang's work contains a love for the contemporary scene. Perhaps we must not simply criticize; we must also be tolerant. This is the frustration of an era, a tragedy for everyone.

Meng Minsheng was a photographer who was "discovered" just before his death. His works combine the aesthetics of traditional Chinese gardens with the politics of the time. This method of observing landscape from the two dimensions of history and reality is consistent with our exhibition concept. We have included his works, but we are also paying tribute to him. Landscape is always related to politics. All types of landscape contain an evaluation and a deep pictorial flavor. Currently, we believe that the landscapes of this piece of land have been deformed and reformed, a rapidly changing site scattered

with spare parts. These landscapes imply the codes and the prophecies of the past and the future.

We went our own ways, capturing different kinds of evidence to be made into a whole. This whole is our support; it has meaning for all of us, but it manifests as a problem, a problem of the home and the spiritual home. This is a vital moment in contemporary China and it is also the most contemporary subject in the art world.

Photography must have a defined historical mission. For the past two to three decades, the negation of tradition and the deconstruction of meaning have been fashionable in art. This was necessary at the time, but blindly continuing like this will result in complete emptiness. In the present this kind of art has little practical significance and has actually converged with consumerism and become part of the problem. Now, in contrast, we are trying to solve the new problems that have accumulated in the last two or three decades. We need to identify the release points, restore civility, and build something. Many people of insight are already aware of this; if art has an innate sense of uncooperativeness and resistance, then the object of resistance had already changed. In photography, many works confront reality. For example, in 2010, exhibitions like Chinescape and Different Landscape were good color-photography viewing experiences, so it was time to put on a black and white exhibition.

I wish I could continue discussing these matters, but let me end this article with an excerpt from Little's Chongqing diary.

"There are a number of Catholic converts around here whose mites are diverted from their local deities, going to swell the fund from which the distractingly ugly white-washed churches, affected by missionaries, are built. Meanwhile the beautiful old temples with their cool halls and shady gardens and every aspect which art and nature can combine to soothe the brain, weary of the outer world, are falling into decay. Even their rich deep quiet-sounding bells are being slowly removed by the barbarian curio-collector, to be replaced by the discordant jingle of the chapel adjacent. How often in some quiet wooded valley have I heard the deep bell sound with a single stroke at long intervals, of some Buddhist shrine calling to vespers, and I stop and listen while watching the worshippers and smoking incense." It has true meaning, but when I try to express it, I have forgotten the words.



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