

我爱颜色

I LOVE COLOR

AIJING

艾敬

人民美术出版社





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# 把自己归零

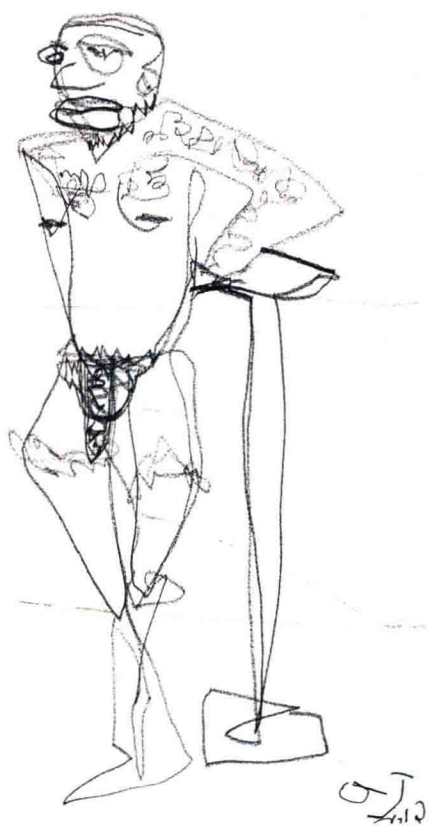
2012年11月，在中国国家博物馆展览之后，我陷入了一段忧郁和失落的时期，从那样一个辉煌荣耀的台阶上走下来，我的雄心壮志该如何继续延展还不得而知。记得当时我曾经说过：“站在国博的台阶，我看到了全世界。”这个豪言壮语并不可笑，也不自大，关键在于如何去准备和实现那些梦想。

2013年的春节，我回到纽约住了一个月。春节期间我一直在感冒，我咳嗽，喉咙吐出的痰是那么“霾态”。我不想描述那些，那些是过度劳累以及我热爱的北京给我的，我必须接受。春节我先在洛杉矶度过，每天睡在酒店里不想醒来，虚汗常常湿透了床单，松软的床被我睡了一个潮湿凹陷的坑，我不喜欢加州，不喜欢好莱坞，尽管日落大道城就在酒店门外，可是我宁愿睡觉，反正我感冒了，还很重，于是我吃药，喝药水，喝鸡汤，心里盼着回到纽约。

熬过洛杉矶又到了拉斯维加斯，我是一个吝啬的赌徒，每天给自己100元美金的预算，拉老虎机。很快我又回到了酒店房间，窗外是一片平川，是灯光的海洋。站在那里我猜想，同样的光亮映照着一个望向它的人们，而它映照人们不同的境遇，电影里也已经描述了太多。我是一个幸运儿，我什么都不缺，我也不敢去奢望意外之财，可是也不能说我不是“赌徒”。那一刻，我望向窗外，我其实在思量着自己还有什么筹码进行下一次出发。

在拉斯维加斯，为了打发时间，我每天去蒸桑拿和按摩，几天后终于登上去纽约的飞机。我的脸由于先前的感冒脱水，以及过度地蒸桑拿而出现各种爆皮以及一块块儿的红色敏感状，我对老伴儿说：“不好意思啊，以后我的脸就这样了。”

到了纽约的第二天早上，我就奔向我的皮肤科医生，我的皮肤马上就好转了，对此我从不担心，让我焦虑的是，我的感冒还没有痊愈。我不能喝咖啡了，我的嗅觉和味觉本能地不接受咖啡，可是我的生活习惯，我的记忆离不开咖啡。



艾敬的左手速写

Sketches with left hand by Ai Jing

2012

我决定一个人留在纽约，纽约的冬天很冷，我的貂皮大衣被我当成军大衣，为我遮风挡雨。我住在纽约下城这几年最喜欢的酒店，每天步行去画室练习素描，一天六个小时两节课，有时候九个小时三节课。那是一个给画家练习人体素描和速写的画室。人体模特都很有特色，黑人白人，男人女人，胖的瘦的都有。练习时间有从一分钟、五分钟、十分钟、二十分钟，到四十分钟不同的时长，提供不同的练习方式。

我把自己归零，从地面开始。这个画室比地面更低，在地下室，需要走入一个陡峭的长楼梯。我每次抓牢把手，坚定地避免着滚楼梯事件的发生，这里来的画家什么样的都有，职业画家，年轻画家，住在附近的很多知名艺术家也来，但彼此很少有交流。每节课只有一次15分钟休息，大家都安静地专注于模特和笔下。这里就像是艺术家的“健身房”，操练着技法，也是一种休息。

这个过程中，在老师的提醒下，我尝试用自己的左手绘画。我发现自己的左手那么有意思，那么自由，左手画出的线条没有胆怯没有顾虑，自由流畅，似乎不可控却又能很完满地收尾。我对自己的左手非常满意。由此我想，每个人都有个特别之处，还没有被发掘，或许是被岁月埋没了吧？我特别高兴。

我在纽约的每一天都那么开心，想念家人，挂念老伴儿之外，我是那么开心。酒店里每一个人对我都很好。我算是大方，每次多给几块小费，算下来不是很多钱，却赢得那么多。我特别会计算小数点之后的钱，也很善于运用小数点之后的钱，因此我得到一个昵称是“点后”。我对小数点以前的钱很茫然，我可以用几十万去买绘画材料，买最好的，我坚信只有最好的才能叠加成最好。我毫不客气地“土豪”一般席卷画材店，仿佛钱就是一个“王八蛋”。我从巴黎买到纽约，店员都以为我是大艺术家，都跟我提曾梵志。几百公斤的绘画材料运回国内被海关调查了几个月，出具各种证明去解释画材乃自用而不是贩卖。

# I LOVE COLOR

生活是多样而丰富的，就像鲜花，每朵都不一样，都有各自芬芳。

我们被锁困在欲望和责任中，每天奔跑和追赶着。

艺术家最大的快乐是拥有时间，创作上最大的投入也是时间。在这样一个可以自由支配的时间里，最大的快乐是在色彩中游戏。

我一直在尝试，用“LOVE”这个符号去建立色彩的构成以及画面的可读性。

《I LOVE COLOR # 1》是系列的第一件作品，在中国国家博物馆展出时得到很多关注和好评，可谓从过去的“LOVE”系列作品中理性的工业化的和机械化的创作中得到了某种释放。

“I LOVE COLOR”系列作品在探索和尝试：用推翻和重建色彩游戏去颠覆符号与具象的界限。这样的作品的创作周期在一年左右，有时候搁置在一旁，画面干透了再画。每一层颜色都留下痕迹，每一种绚丽又被覆盖。这个创作过程对我是考验，这些色彩在欢快奔放的同时，你有时候真的不知道它们去向哪里，知道了又不好玩儿了，因此，我手中各种颜色的画笔好像是无数只顽皮的狗，我牵着它们，它们也牵着我。

“I LOVE COLOR1”的系列作品的创作方式，更像是在做游戏，孩童般地涂鸦方式，随意开始，无意中结束，犹如野马在悬崖前止步，什么时候奔放，什么时候收手。像是孩子们般的无畏和勇敢、天真和憧憬、好奇与期待，然后无所谓地离开，奔向下一个游戏。

我一直喜欢孩子们画画，每次看到我外甥的画我都想签上自己的名字，就像一只馋猫蠢蠢欲动地盯着别人碗里的鱼。

我发现自己原来很勇敢，正是这份孩子般的勇敢才使得我自己可以不断去尝试和挑战自己。

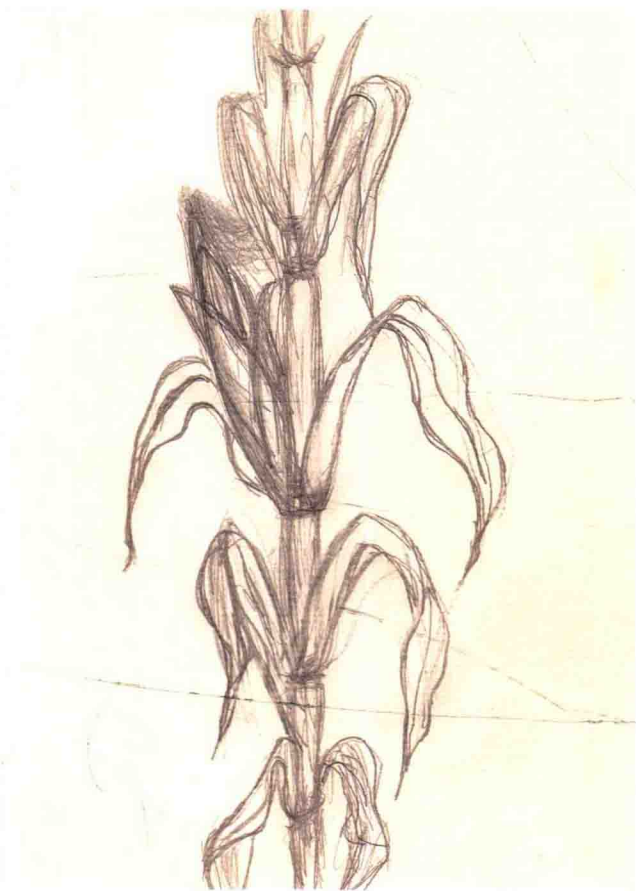


又做外甥的画

Drawing by Ai Jing's nephew



## 色彩的记忆



艾敬素描作品  
Ai Jing's sketches  
2013

回到北京的画室，面对那么多昂贵的丰富的绘画材料，我盘算着自己该如何把它们用好。我在想自己最喜欢什么色彩，我喜欢蓝色。蓝色那么深邃，那么清凉，那么自由，有蓝调音乐、蓝领阶层。日本语“蓝即是爱”。

于是我画蓝色，将各种蓝色叠加在一起，无法自拔，陷入分不清理还乱的境地。蓝色，我根本无法掌控，难道说，我的特质不是蓝色？

我想到了自己儿时的记忆，我的家乡沈阳，我儿时寒暑假常常去的新民县，乡村里的苞米地和丰收，土地和金灿灿的太阳，或许那是属于我的色彩？

于是我背起行装，回到了家乡，回到了土地。如今的乡村已经大变样，我几乎找不出视觉的记忆。我发现，所有记忆都是有关情绪的。也就是说：视觉艺术、音乐、诗歌或者文学语言都是在描绘主观情绪和情感，100% 去呈现现实是另外一件事情。

回到北京，我以记忆中的东北乡村，以大自然的丰收景象、玉米地、金黄色、太阳、不同阶段的绿色作为基调展开了我的色彩之旅。我欣喜地发现，原来自己非常善于运用色彩，大胆准确，毫不迟疑。我常常不自觉地采用明亮的黄色，这些黄色也有不同的层次，由深黄到更鲜亮的黄，就像太阳和光亮。我在这些色彩前面画超过两个半小时就会被这些光亮刺激而昏眩。我夸张地使用这些色彩，把自己的情绪和情感痛快地表现出来。

在其中一件作品《I LOVE COLOR #6》创作的一年多的时间里，画到最后，我是关掉画室的灯在傍晚画画，享受着那些颜料和色彩之间产生的光影。在没有照明的帮助下，透过窗外的自然光线我还在叠加颜色，很有意思。

# R 先生的魔咒

还记得在我筹备中国国家博物馆举办的展览期间，我每天手提着重重的公文包，里面全是各种文字和图片资料，其中我常常带着的一本画册是艺术家马克·罗斯科（Mark Rothko）的，我非常喜欢他的作品和那些色彩。我对他的作品不陌生，但是我对于艺术家本人却没有任何认知。我从未去查阅有关他的资料，虽然我十几年前就买过他的画册。他的作品常常出现在拍卖预展上，我曾近距离地观看，我琢磨不出他的作品有什么高深，但却是那么深深地吸引着我。开始我觉得他对色彩层次的把握有点像中国的水墨画，轻薄而细腻，但后来又觉得他的色彩似乎在传达着色彩以外的语言。

直到我的装置作品《我的母亲和我的家乡》在我母亲和家乡亲友们的帮助下完成后，我才惊异地发现，这个作品背后的色块呈现那么像是罗斯科的作品。不可思议，这种巧合激励着我去探究和实践。我开始着手创作色块作品“R 先生”系列（这是我作品完成后才想到使用的名字），尽管在创作过程中我不想去想这个人，但是他的影响就在我的周围，那些色块儿的构成总是脱离不开他的影子。我愤怒，我挣扎，我想去超越，却如同抽丝剥茧一般痛苦！绘画已经在 20 世纪死亡了吧？！我怀疑。

一年多的起伏与跌宕，我在渐渐地试图去理解这些色彩之间的关系和构成、逐步地进入了“R 先生”的世界。我发现这些色彩就像迷人的魔，无形无踪影，让人痴迷、陶醉、迷失。

任何游戏都是有危险性的，颜色的游戏也不例外。

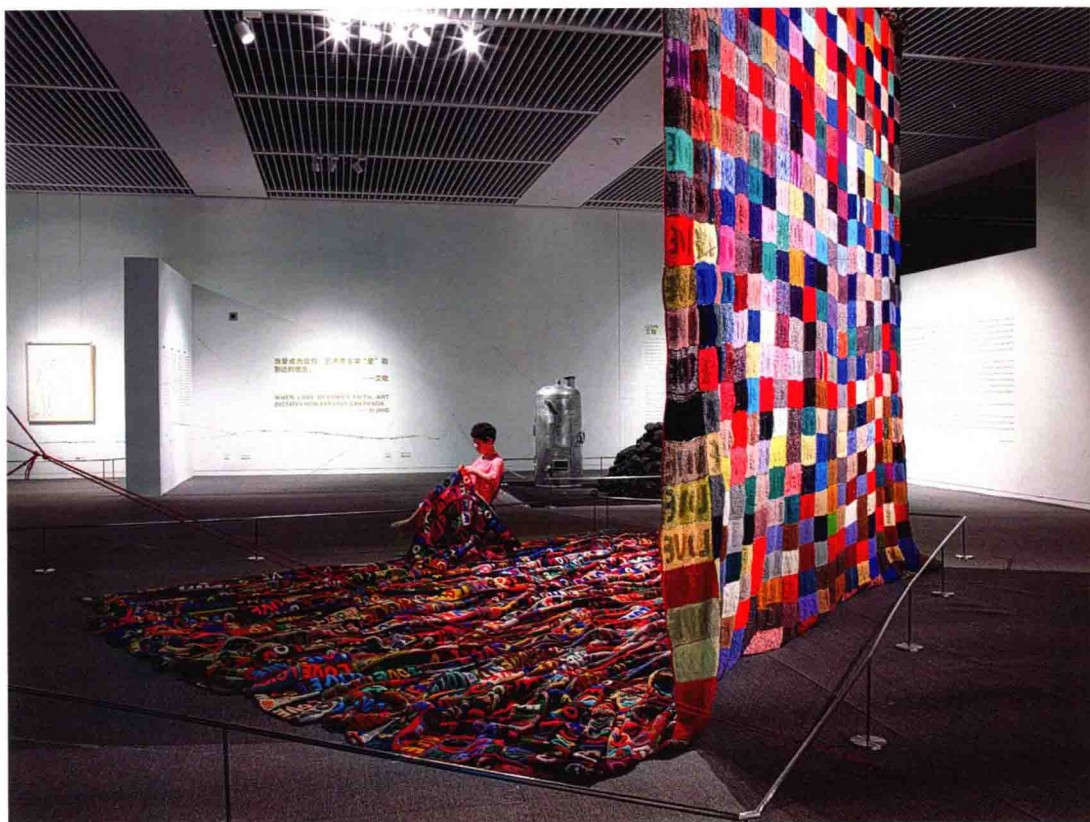
我决定不再画“R 先生”系列，就这几张已经足够。这个世界上不需要另外一个罗斯科，没有人能够超越他，我不能，也不想。我不想成为他，也无法成为，我就做我自己，一个能够拥抱阳光和土地的我。

多年前我就曾经预言了自己，在我出版的《艾在旅途》中我写道：“在人生的旅途中，我一路采集一路收获，直到有一天我遇到自己的土地，在那里将有更大的快乐和幸福等待我去耕耘去劳作。”



——Mark Rothko 的作品  
124cm x 78.7cm  
1956

艾敬 2014 年 5 月



艾未未装置作品《我的母亲和我的家乡》在中国国家博物馆展厅  
废弃毛线、玻璃钢、硅胶

*My Mom And My Hometown*

Installation: abandoned wool, glass fiberreinforced plastic, silica gel

600cm x 1600cm / 236.2in x 629.9in

2012



# BACK TO SQUARE ONE

After the exhibition at the National Museum of China in November, 2012, I fell into a melancholic and wistful state. I had no idea how to go on with my ambitions after such a glorious moment. I remember saying at the time, "I can see the entire world as I stand on the steps outside the National Museum." The statement was not laughable, nor was it conceited. The key was how I should prepare to realize all my dreams.

During Chinese New Year in 2013, I went back to New York and stayed there for a month. I was sick the entire time with a cold, and I kept coughing out "smoggy" mucus. That is not what I want to focus on; I just accepted that as what my beloved but overwhelmed Beijing had imposed on me. I was in Los Angeles first. Every day I was in bed, refusing to get up. My sweat soaked through the sheets, and my extended state of sleep left a damp and sunken pit in bed. I did not like California or Hollywood. Even though the Sunset Boulevard was right outside the hotel, I'd much rather sleep. I was sick, very sick, so I kept taking medicine and eating chicken soup, hoping to return to New York as soon as possible.

After Los Angeles, I made it to Las Vegas. I was a stingy gambler, only allocating 100 dollars for myself each day to play the slots. Very quickly, I returned to the hotel room again, with a view of flatness outside the window and a sea of lights. I thought at that moment, these same lights were shining on different people looking at them, as shown in the movies. I had been lucky, and I did not need anything. I did not wish for unexpected fortunes, but I would not say that I was not a gambler. Gazing at the view outside, I wondered what chips I had in my hands as I headed on to my next journey.

In order to kill time in Las Vegas, I went to the sauna and spa every day. When I eventually got on the plane for New York, rashes broke out on my face due to dehydration from the cold and excessive sauna time. I told my "partner", "I'm sorry, this is what I will look like from now on."

The morning after I had arrived in New York, I went straight to my dermatologist. My skin condition drastically improved, but I still had not gotten over the cold. I could not drink coffee anymore because I could not smell or taste it, but it was a habit. My memory could not be separated from coffee.

I decided to stay in New York alone. That winter in New York was freezing, and my fur coat became my armor against the weather. I stayed in my favorite hotel downtown and walked to a studio everyday to practice drawing. I had two classes each day for six hours in total, sometimes, three classes for nine hours. It was a studio for artists to practice figure drawing and sketching. There were all kinds of models- black, white, men, women, fat, skinny, you name it. The time of a practice session ranged from one minute to five minutes, from ten minutes to twenty minutes, and forty minutes: different lengths of time offering different methods.

I wanted to, start from the ground again. This studio was even lower, in the basement. One had to walk down a narrow and long stairway. I gripped the handrails tightly so that I would not trip and fall. There were all kinds of artists taking lessons in the studio- professional artists, young amateurs, and some famous artists who lived nearby- but we rarely communicated with each other. We only had a fifteen-minute break for each class, and everyone focused on the models and drawing. It was a gym for artists, training skills as well as resting.

In this process, I began to draw with my left hand, as suggested by the instructor. I was surprised to discover how interesting and liberated my left hand was. There was no fear or constraint in the lines drawn by my left hand, seemingly uncontrolled but always ending on a perfect note. I was very pleased with my left hand, as if it were an undiscovered gift.

I was very happy in New York. Even though I missed my family and my "partner", I was very happy. Everyone working at the hotel was very nice to me. When it came to tipping, I was very generous. It was not much money, but I gained so much from it. I was very good at calculating changes and making use of spare changes. As a result, I got the nickname "the Queen of Spare Changes". I was clueless with the numbers before the decimal point. I would spend thousands and thousands of dollars on the best art supplies because I believed that I could only make the best work with the best materials. I would splurge in art supplies stores, as if I wanted to give all my money away. From Paris to New York, the staff at art supplies stores all thought I was some famous artist, and they kept bringing up Zeng Fanzhi. When I carried back all the supplies that weighed hundreds of kilograms, the custom investigated for months and I had to explain that I was not a smuggler and all that stuff was for my own use.

# I LOVE COLOR

Life is unpredictable and substantial, like flowers. Each flower is different but beautiful in its own way. We are trapped in desires and obligations, always chasing and rushing after something.

Happiness for an artist is to have time, and the biggest investment in art-making is also time. With time to spare, my happiness lies in the game of colors.

I keep trying to use the symbol of "LOVE" to construct color and the accessibility of a work.

*I love Color #1* is the first of the series, and it received a lot of compliments during the exhibition at the National Museum. It seemed free from the rational mechanism of the past "Love" series.

The works in *I Love Color* are about exploration and attempts, overthrowing and reconstructing the game of color in order to challenge the distinction between symbols and imagery. It usually took me a year to complete such a work. Sometimes I left it aside and painted over it again when it dried. Every layer of color left its traces, and every piece of brilliance was covered up again. This process is challenging to me: as the colors run freely on the surface, you have no idea where they are going. It would not be fun if you do. As a result, the brush in my hand is like a bunch of free-spirited puppies-I am holding a leash around them, and they are holding one around me.

The way I created the series *I love Color* was more like a game. It began with childish doodling, casually and freely. It ran wild like a horse at the edge of a cliff. It resembled children's fearlessness, courage, innocence, dreams, curiosities, and expectations. Eventually they left for their next game, giving no care.

I have always liked children's drawings. Whenever I see one by my nephew, I want to sign my own name on it, like a hawk searching for food.

I think I am actually very courageous, and it is the childlike courage that has kept me going and challenging myself.



# THE MEMORY OF COLOR

When I returned to my studio in Beijing, in front of my expensive and abundant art supplies, I tried to figure out how to maximize them. What is my favorite color? I like blue. Blue is deep, fresh, and free. Blues. Blue collar. In Japanese, the word "blue" sounds the same as the word "love".

So I painted in blue, laying different shades of blue together. I was lost in it. I had no control over the blue. Had I always felt blue?

My childhood memory came to me, and my hometown Shenyang. When I was little, I always went to Xinmin County during vacations, where it was filled with cornfields, the earth and the shining sun. Maybe that was my color.

So I packed up and went back to my hometown, back to the earth. Villages have changed drastically, and I could barely find what I remembered it to be. I realized, all the memories were related to emotions. That was to say, visual art, music, poetry or literary language were all expressions of subjective emotions, but it was a different thing to display reality.

When I was back in Beijing, I began my journey of color based on my memory of the northeastern Chinese villages which were so defined by colorful harvest: the cornfields, gold; the sun, different shades of green. It pleased me that I was good at using colors, in a bold and precise way. I kept using yellow, different shades of yellow, ranging from dark yellow to bright yellow, like the sun. I would get dazed after standing in front of these colors for more than two and half hours. I used these colors in an exaggerated way to release my emotions freely.

It took more than a year to finish the work *I Love Color #6*. In the end, I turned off the lights in the studio, painting at dusk and enjoying the light and shadow between the paint and the color. It was a tantalizing process to add colors onto the canvas in the dim light from the outside.

# THE MAGIC SPELL OF MR. R

When I was preparing for my exhibition at the National Museum, I carried around a heavy suitcase with a lot of research and images in it, one of which was a catalogue of Mark Rothko. I like his color and am familiar with his work, but I do not know much about the artist himself. I never looked up anything about him even though I had bought his catalogues more than ten years ago. I have had the opportunity to look at Rothko's paintings closely at auction previews. I could never figure out if there was any profundity in his work, but I was so inexplicably drawn to it. At first, I thought the way Rothko handled the layering of color was akin to that of Chinese ink paintings, light and delicate. Later on, it seemed that Rothko's color was a language that spoke beyond itself.

When I had finished my installation *My Mother and My Hometown* with the assistance of my mother and relatives, it became clear that the background of this work resembled Rothko's paintings. It was an incredible coincidence, and it motivated me to experiment further. I began working on my color pattern series Mr. R. I came up with the name only after the series had been completed. I tried very hard not to think about him in the process of painting, but his influence was there, and the construction of the patches would always reflect it. I was angry, I struggled, I wanted to exceed him, but it was as painful as peeling off my skin! Has painting died in the 20th century already?! I doubt it.

During the year of ups and downs, I slowly got to understand the relationships and constructs between those colors, as if I were making my way into the world of "Mr. R". These colors are magic spells-they are shapeless and undetectable, yet mesmerizing and enchanting.

Every game is dangerous, including the game of colors.

I decided not to continue with the series *Mr. R*; it was enough to have these few. The world does not need another Rothko; nobody would exceed him. I am not able to, nor do I want to. I do not want to become him, nor can I. I will just be myself, one who embraces the sunshine and the earth.

AIJING  
MAY 2014

**MANY YEARS AGO I PREDICTED HOW I WOULD GO ON. IN *AI ON THE ROAD*, I WROTE, "IN THE JOURNEY OF LIFE, I COLLECT AND GAIN ALONG THE WAY, UNTIL I FIND MY OWN GROUND, WHERE I WILL HARVEST GREATER HAPPINESS AND SELF-FULFILLMENT."**