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The Beloved One Beyond
Autumn Water

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暗香盈袖熏衣草

百度百科中，有许多关于熏衣草的词条，还有一些文字，文笔不错，叫人开卷受益：

熏衣草是人生中某种半梦半醒的状态，淡到了极处，又刻在心底。

开花时节，其香远在十里之外都能够闻到；而更绝妙的是，站在一片大花田里边，嗅到的香依然还是淡远温和，不像其他的香花，急急地要把人薰倒。闲闲地信步从花间走过，衣角就留着一种冷香，悠远的像初恋时的心情。熏衣草的香味，既不像茉莉的清淡，也不像夜来香那样的幽怨，它就是如此恬美，我行我素，不在乎别人的眼光。喜欢的人会非常喜欢，不喜欢的人闻过一次之后就会避开它，这样独特的香，总是和更远更深的忧郁相连。忧郁，却并不幽怨，如秋后淡淡的月光，如隔着万水千山的思念。

钟爱熏衣草的女人，自身一定都有一种特别的味道，让你一眼就可以在人群中将她认出来：娴静，优雅，成熟。也只有经历过感情和生活历练的女人，才会真正懂得和欣赏熏衣草。

写曼文却先想起了熏衣草，那是因为，她就是一个“钟爱熏衣草的女人”的艺术家。

某日，我们在办公楼的走廊上不期而遇，她从头到脚一身蓝紫色调。我随口寒暄了一句“怎么到了普罗旺斯？”不料她好像遇见了知音，认真地问我是否也懂熏衣草。我尴尬地摇摇头，坦白说，那不过是一段关于色彩的记忆而已，于是，她便布道般介绍了熏衣草的各种头衔，“香草之后”“香熏之王”，并直言“现在很多不懂的人滥用香氛，那是在侵犯公共空间”。怕摘面子，事后，我赶紧上了百度，才略知熏衣草的卓尔不群，除了浪漫清丽之外，还有许多故事，许多疗效；才明白曼文为何喜欢它，谈论它，抑或已经将自己比作了它。

初识曼文，是在水乡朱家角的写生活动上。那天她也着一身熏衣草的颜色，在放生桥茶楼里招呼往来同伴们歇息饮茶。娇小羸弱、精致优雅的形象，和她身后画布上豪放硬朗的笔触形成了鲜明对比。后来，我们成了同事，进而成了朋友，虽然知道了一些她的身世，比如土生土长的东北妞却是纯正的江南血统、本名不叫曼文而是丽萍等，但这些故事仍然难以将她秀丽雅致的形象与她不拘格律的作品统一起来，仍然难以解释朱家角初识时留给我的疑惑：为什么她要为自己取了现在这样一个名字？为什么在功成名就时只身一人回到上海？为什么弱不禁风的样子一出手却判若两人？为什么16岁就考入鲁美掌握了扎实的造型基础，却一次次义无反顾地在画布上破坏自己改变自己？

现在，我仿佛在“熏衣草”的词条中，找到问题的答案了。

曼文钟爱蓝紫的色彩，因为那是熏衣草的色彩，宁静，理智，忧郁，沉稳，温婉，雅致，诚实，辽阔。

曼文追求自然的笔触，因为那是熏衣草的笔触，朴素，大方，平和，有序，简单，流畅，自由，安详。

作为女人，曼文和大多数女性艺术家一样，始终观赏着《自画像》，关注着周遭的《平淡人生》，不同的是，她的作品中没有矫揉造作的媚态，没有虚张声势的腔调和颠倒阴阳的企图，有的只是《关于生存体验的报告》。她悲天悯人，追慕《红颜》，对命运有着深刻的追问和思考，但吴依软语，竹音丝弦，自成一派平静温婉的文章；她充满情感，《秋水伊人》，对生活抱有强烈的渴望和向往，但淡云薄雾，素面朝天，另成一番纯净安宁的气象。她怕别人把她当做香水百合、四季玫瑰，所以不断地破坏自己改变自己；她明白自己的责任和使命，所以一出手就让人觉得判若两人。她是个知性、成熟的女人，知道自己《我们到哪里来？我们到哪里去？》；她属于东方都市的《蓝调》女儿，所以理所当然地回到《荷塘月色》的故里。

正是由于不同寻常的江南基因和北方经历，才使曼文兼备了蛾眉蜂腰的外形和行云流水的内心；正是由于她同时拥有着两个截然不同的名字，才形成了自己别具一家的情致和格调——淡淡的，轻轻的，却刻在心底。

不知道是否与曼文那淡淡的愁绪有关，写到这里，新闻中传来洛阳性奴案的后续报道，联想到眼下太多的暴戾、诈骗、轻生、滥情，我想，我们的生活是有状况了。什么状况？曼文说得也好，太多的滥用香氛，侵犯了我们的公共空间，使这个空间充斥着虚伪、喧嚣和急功近利。

感谢熏衣草，它装点了我们的生活，也为在这个空间中日感疲惫烦郁的你我，排除焦虑，疏解压力。

李向阳 上海油画雕塑院院长

My Sleeves Are Perfumed by the Fragrance of Lavender

In the encyclopedia of Baidu.com, there are many entries about lavender and also some quite good essays benefiting the readers.

Lavender is a status in life of being half dreaming and half awake, extremely light, but also inscribed on the bottom of heart.

When it's blooming, its fragrance could be smelt in the distance of ten miles away. What's more interesting, when standing in a large stretch of lavender field, you could still appreciate the light and gentle scent, unlike other fragrant flowers hurriedly trying to suffocate people. If you wander leisurely among the flowers in the field, a certain cold fragrance would be left in you dress, as remote as the feelings of first love. Neither as insipid as jasmine, nor as secretly woeful as evening primrose, the fragrance of lavender is so refreshing, pleasant, persisting on its unique style and not caring about others' opinions. People, who like it, would especially like it, however, people, who don't like it, would avoid it after smelling it once. Such unique fragrance is always connected with more remote and more profound melancholy. Melancholy, but not secretly woeful, it's like the faint moonlight after autumn, like the yearning and missing separated by numerous mountains and rivers.

A woman cherishing lavender must have a special taste, so that you could recognize her among a large crowd of people – gentle, quiet, elegant and mature. Only women having sufficient experiences in life and emotion could really understand and appreciate lavender.

When writing about Liu Manwen's art achievements, I think of lavender at first, as she is a woman artist "cherishing lavender".

One day, I unexpectedly encountered her on the corridor in the office building, and she was dressed in bluish purple all over. I spoke casually, "Have you been to Provence?" All of a sudden, she seemed to meet a bosom friend, and seriously asked me whether I knew about lavender or not. I awkwardly denied, and said frankly, that was only a memory about colors. Therefore, she introduced the various titles of lavender like preaching, "the queen of sweet herb", "the king of aroma therapy", and etc. And then, she told me forthrightly, "Now, many people abuse perfume, which actually invades the public space." To avoid seeming ignorant again, I looked it up in Baidu.com afterwards, and then slightly knew about the features of lavender – besides its romantic beauty, it also has many stories and curative effects. Thus, I understand why Manwen loves it, talks about it, and even compares herself to it.

When I got acquainted with Manwen, it was in a sketching activity in Zhujiajiao, a water-town. That day, she was also dressed all over in lavender's color, and greeted the participants to take a rest and drink some tea in the teahouse beside Fangsheng (set free captive animals) Bridge. Her delicate, fragile and elegant image formed a distinct contrast with the carefree and tough brushstrokes on the canvas behind her. Later, we became colleagues, and then became friends. Though I know something about her life experiences, such as the facts that she is a pure southerner of Jiangnan though being born and growing up in the Northeast, her original name was Liping instead of Manwen, and etc, these stories still couldn't unify her exquisite and elegant image with her unrestrained works, and still couldn't

explain the doubt forming during our first meeting in Zhujiajiao: why did she give herself such a name? Why did she go to Shanghai when achieving success and winning recognition? Why is her art style completely different from her fragile image? Why did she boldly destroy and change herself on canvas again and again after entering Luxun Academy of Fine Arts at the age of 16 and received solid training in molding?

Now, I seem to find the answers to these questions from the entry of “lavender”.

Manwen loves bluish purple, as that is the color of lavender, quiet, rational, melancholy, steadfast, gentle, elegant, honest and expansive.

Manwen pursues natural brushwork, as it's the brushwork of lavender, simple, tasteful, peaceful, orderly, unadorned, fluent, free and serene.

Like most women artists, Manwen always appreciates Self Portrait, pays attention to Insipid Life surrounding her, and what's different is, there is only the Report about Experiences of Existence instead of pretentious ingratiation, exaggerative manner or subversive expectation. Being sympathetic, she admires those Pretty Women, proceeding profound consideration and inquiry about life, however, she composes it in a peaceful and gentle way; being full of feelings, the Beloved One beyond Autumn Water reflects the strong desire and yearning for life, however, creating another sort of pure and serene atmosphere. Being afraid of being mistaken as fragrant lily or rose, she constantly destroys her image and changes herself; she knows about her responsibilities and mission, therefore, her works have an entirely different style from her person. She is an intellectual and mature woman, knowing exactly “Where Did She Come? Where Will She Go?” She is a girl of Blues belonging to the eastern metropolis, thus, naturally returned to the hometown with Moonlight over the Lotus Pond.

Just because of her extraordinary southern genes and northern experiences, Manwen is endowed with a fluent inner world; just because of her possession of two completely different names, she forms her unique individuality and taste – light, gentle, however deeply inscribed on the bottom of heart.

Being unsure whether it was concerned with the light melancholy feeling about Manwen, I stopped during my writing of this article, heard about the continuation of the sex slave report in Luoyang from the TV set, and associated it with the overwhelming surliness, deception, suicide and fooling-around in the present times, then I thought, something was wrong with our society and life. What are the problems? What Manwen said was quite reasonable – too much abuse of perfume invades our public space, thus, this space is filled with hypocrisy, flippancy and yearning for quick success and instant benefit.

I extend my gratitude to lavender, for adorning our life, and even more for eliminating anxiety and pressure for you and me.

Li Xiangyang

Director of Shanghai Oil Painting and Sculpture Institute

走向社会的广度和历史的深度

我们通常判断一个艺术家的诸多因素：师承关系、地域文化、个性特征，这些在刘曼文性格和作品中都可以鲜明地找到相对应的地方。

刘曼文是我的大学同学，恢复高考制度后的第二年也就是1978年考入鲁迅美术学院的，我们两届入学相隔半年。她既没有当工人、当兵的经历，也没有经历过上山下乡的磨难，对于她而言既是人生的幸运，也是她以后更多地从个人内心体验出发的重要因素。因为专业成绩突出，刘曼文是从初中破格被鲁迅美术学院油画系录取的，与同届的很多同学相比，在年龄上更像是两代人。所以，作为上个世纪80年代初美术创作主流的那些反映知青生活和反思“文革”的作品样式并没有出现在她的作品中，反之，她在毕业后的那几年中创作出的很多风景题材的作品，更像是独立于那个时代之外的抒情诗。随着年龄的增长，在积累了更多的人生阅历和体验之后，刘曼文的艺术创作开始逐步形成了以自己的生活经验为基础，折射出生命体验和人生感悟的语言方式。

作为一位有着南方血统和江南文化渊源的女性艺术家，刘曼文的艺术感受方式是敏感而细致的，但是在北方长期的生活，以及在鲁美接受的扎实系统的专业教育，又使她的作品造型语言中体现出丰厚、有力的表现。正是这两种看似矛盾的文化基因融合、统一在她的精神中，使她的作品呈现出简约而不失细腻、粗犷又不失委婉的独特品质。

刘曼文的作品从少女时代的单纯、诗意、抒情开始，在经历过人生的丰富生活阅历之后，她开始审视女性在家庭和社会中的存在和意义，创作于这个时期的《平淡人生》、《独白》等系列作品使她成为上个世纪90年代重要的艺术家之一。

2003年定居上海之后，刘曼文的艺术创作也开始出现另一个转折点。如果说此前她的作品更多地偏重于个体的生活体验和生命感悟的话，在这之后，刘曼文的视角似乎更多地转向社会的广度和历史的深度。

在这近十年的时间中，刘曼文开始以《蓝调》系列作为主线，关注都市商业化和物质化的社会背景下女性的身份异化，从而折射出这个时代的诸多特征。在这里，她不再仅仅关注自己所熟悉的家庭生活环境和场景，从一个“女性艺术家”到一个用“女性视角”观察社会的艺术家转变。这里面，既有她生活环境的变化而带来的不同人生感悟，又有她艺术修养的积累而促使的风格转型。由这个思路出发，刘曼文进而把视野扩展到历史的深处，以自己的方式去感悟和思考人生的价值和厚度。在《红颜》、《秋水伊人》系列中，对民国时期女性形象的描绘已经超越了单纯的性别局限，消解了时空的屏障，成为了一种在历史的上下文中去思考生命意义的隐喻。与此同时，那些在她的作品里久违了的对于自然景观的描写，又出现在她的作品中，只是它们已经不同于早年的“风景画”的概念了。在《秋水伊人》中出现的那些自然景观除了表达富于情感的主观性之外，更重要的还是她将之用来象征生命个体在大时空中的恒久与流动之间的矛盾统一。生命的意义从哲学的层面上来讲，可能是无解的，但是从人生体验的角度来思考，给我们留下了更为广阔的想象空间。

至此，刘曼文的作品从诗意的理想抒情，到现实的人生体验，再到社会的价值思考，最后抵达历史的意义追问。这个逻辑过程，既是她艺术风格、语言变化和发展的过程，也是她对于自己的生命价值、生命意义不断发掘，并从中获取意义的过程。

作为她的老同学，我期待着刘曼文在今后的艺术道路上继续进行她的深度探索。

韦尔申 鲁迅美术学院院长

The Width towards the Society and the Depth of History

We usually judge an artist through many elements: the relation between teacher and student, geographic culture, individual feature, and etc. We could find the distinctly corresponding elements in Liu Manwen's character and works.

Liu was my schoolmate in college. She passed the entrance examination to Luxun Academy of Fine Arts in 1978, the second year after the recovering of national university admissions test. Our dates of entering the academy were half a year away. Having no experiences of being a worker or soldier, and growing up without going through the difficulties of going and working in the countryside or mountain areas, she was fortunate in life, which was also an important reason for her to start from her individual inner experiences. Because of outstanding professional grades, Liu was specially recruited by the oil painting department of Luxun Academy of Fine Arts from junior high school. Compared with many other students of the same term, she seemed to belong to a different generation. Therefore, the patterns reflecting the life of the educated youth and the introspection about the Cultural Revolution as the mainstream of art creation at the beginning of the 1980s didn't occur in her works. On the contrary, during the several years after graduation, she created many works on the theme of scenery, more like lyric poetry independent from that era. Having accumulated more experiences of life with age increasing, Liu gradually formed her art style based on life experiences, reflecting the form of language about life experiences and comprehension.

As a woman artist with the southern origin and source of Jiangnan culture, Liu has a sensitive and exquisite way of perceiving art; however, her long-term stay in the North and the professional education of solid training received in Luxun Academy of Fine Arts endow the molding language of her works with profuse and forceful expression. On account of these two seemingly paradoxical cultural genes integrated and unified inside her spirit, her works manifest a unique feature, concise but exquisite, rough but gentle.

Starting from the pure, poetic and lyric flavors in her youth, and then having experienced the vicissitudes in life, Liu began to inspect the existence and significance of women in families and the society. And the series of *Inspid Life*, *Soliloquy* and others in this phase made her become one of the important artists in the 1990s.

After settling down in Shanghai in 2003, Liu had another turning point in her art creation. If we say her previous

works more emphasized individual life experiences and comprehension, later her perspective more turned to the width of the society and the depth of history.

During the last decade, Liu began to take the Blues Series as the main clue, paying attention to dissimulation of women's identity in the social background of urban commercialization and materialization, therefore, reflecting the various characteristics of this epic. Here, no longer only being concerned about her familiar environment and scenes of family life, she transformed to observe the society with her perspective changing from a "woman artist" to a "woman". The changes in her living environment brought different comprehensions about life, and the accumulation of her art cultivation expedited the alteration in style. Setting out from this thought, Liu further expanded her vision to the depth of history, perceiving and considering the value and depth of life in her own way. In the series of Pretty Women and the Beloved One beyond Autumn Water, her depiction of women's figures in the period of the Republic of China exceeded the simple limitation of sexual differentiation, eliminated the barrier in time and space, and became a sort of metaphor of considering life's significance in the context of history. Meanwhile, the depiction of natural scenery having disappeared in her works for quite a long time emerged again, but they were different from the concept of early "landscape painting". In the Beloved One beyond Autumn Water, those natural landscapes symbolize the paradoxical unification between individual life's eternity and flow in the macroscopical time and space besides expressing feelings. Philosophically speaking, the significance of life probably has no answer, however, if we consider in terms of life experience, there is more expansive space of imagination left for us.

Thus, Liu's works developed from poetic and lyric expression of ideal, to realistic experiences of life, then to the consideration of social values, and finally to the inquiry about historical significance. This logical course is not only the developing course of her art style and language, but also the course of continuously discovering life's values and significance and obtaining significance from it.

As her old schoolmate, I expect Liu Manwen to continue her profound exploration in her future art career.

Wei Er'shen

President of Luxun Academy of Fine Arts

