

# 蒼茫化境

穆家善焦墨画集

Mu Jiashan Dry Ink Painting



人民美術出版社

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# 目录

## Contents

1	前言	
	Foreword	
	穆家善：自创新法，画胸中川山 范迪安	
	<i>Mu Jiashan—Creating a New Approach, Painting the Mountains in His Heart</i> By Fan Di'an	
5	文化自觉与艺术修养——穆家善的中国画创作 邵大箴	
	<i>Cultural Self-consciousness and Artistic Cultivation</i>	
	<i>Mu Jiashan's Works of Chinese Painting</i> By Shao Dazhen	
9	焦墨 写意 家园——穆家善中国画观感 薛永年	
	<i>Dry Ink, Freehand and Homeland</i>	
	<i>—Impressions of Mu Jiashan's Chinese Paintings</i> By Xue Yongnian	
13	苍茫化境穆家山 尚辉	
	<i>Mu Jiashan's Colossal Mountains in Wilderness</i> By Shang Hui	
17	穆家善又创新路 张朗朗	
	<i>Mu Jiashan Blazing a New Trail</i> By Zhang Langlang	
21	焦墨千毫皴起源 穆家善	
	<i>Origin of the Thousand-hair Brush Technique</i> By Mu Jiashan	
26	千毫皴焦墨作品	
	<i>Dry Ink Art Works</i>	
27	优胜美地颂（2011年）美国西部	<i>Glory of Yosemite</i>
29	天池玉辉（2011年）美国西部	<i>Glistening Lake from the Sky</i>
31	峡谷烟云别样情（2011年）美国西部	<i>Exotic Grand Canyon in Cloud</i>
33	西部优胜美地山主峰（2011年）美国西部	<i>The Towering Peak of Yosemite in the West</i>
35	西部大峡谷（2011年）美国西部	<i>Grand Canyon in the West</i>
37	万壑冷浮银（2011年）加拿大班佛	<i>Silver Winter Befalls Mountain Ranges</i>
39	高壑飞韵图（2011年）	<i>High Splashing</i>
41	妙造自然图（2011年）	<i>Legendary Mother of Nature</i>
43	原野小夜曲（2011年）	<i>Serenade in the Open Country</i>
45	化境苍穹尽萧瑟（2011年）	<i>Bleak Valley in Autumn</i>
47	山川无言溪自流（2011年）	<i>Silent Creek</i>
49	江流天地外（2011年）	<i>River from Sky</i>
51	高壑图（2011年）	<i>Perilous Peaks</i>
53	无名山川化作诗（2011年）	<i>Humming of the Valley</i>
55	微妙玄通岁月赋（2011年）	<i>Incredible Years</i>
57	清翠欲滴渺冥间（2011年）	<i>Crystal Creeks in Dusk</i>
59	翠碧烟霞（2011年）	<i>Jade Blue Fog in Mountains</i>
61	浩瀚江河出自小溪（2011年）	<i>Streams Make a Big River</i>
63	幽悠山川云浮动（2011年）	<i>Floating Clouds in Secluded Valleys</i>
65	晴空万里宽多少 一片闲云足卷舒（2011年）	<i>Leisure Clouds over the Sunny Sky</i>
67	秋水无声（2011年）	<i>Silent Lakes in Autumn</i>
69	苍茫化境之一（2011年）	<i>Boundless Land of Sublimity (I)</i>
71	鸣壑（2011年）	<i>Echoing Valley</i>
73	深山尽日无人进 樵夫老翁独自行（2011年）	<i>Aged Feller in Desolated Wilderness</i>
75	幽韵清殊（2011年）	<i>Charm of the Mountains</i>
77	秋水无声图（2011年）	<i>Mutilated Lakes in Fall</i>
79	苍茫山峦无言中（2011年）	<i>Stunning Landscape in Vast and Bumpy Mountains</i>

81	风云起惊涛拍岸（2011年）	<i>Lofty Coast in Billows</i>
83	江烟暮舟（2011年）	<i>Dusk Boat in the Foggy River</i>
85	石韵图（2011年）	<i>The Rocks' Tone</i>
87	清静至无余（2011年）	<i>Boundless Tranquility</i>
89	泉鸣图（2011年）	<i>Sound of Falls</i>
91	悠冥秋韵化苍茫（2011年）	<i>Charming Autumn in Remote Mountains</i>
93	苍茫化境之二（2011年）	<i>Boundless Land of Sublimity (II)</i>
95	阳春三月（2011年）	<i>Blossom in Spring</i>
97	愿乘长风破万里浪（2011年）	<i>Gone with the Wind</i>
99	泉高入梦喧（2011年）	<i>Falls in Dream</i>
101	峥嵘岁月（2011年）	<i>Hard and Proud Years</i>
103	江山不夜歌（2011年）	<i>Light of the Night over the Mountains</i>
105	目极万里 心游天荒（2011年）	<i>Heart Can Travel Where Sight Reaches</i>
107	南山雷雨北山晴（2011年）	<i>Storm vs. Sunshine</i>
109	秋天的诗篇（2011年）	<i>Poem in Autumn</i>
111	知无涯图（2011年）	<i>Knowledge Is Boundless</i>
113	尘世清流歌岁月（2011年）	<i>Clear Rivers out of Dusty World</i>
115	峡谷雄姿（2011年）美国西部	<i>Heroic Peaks of Canyon</i>
117	苍茫化境清音图（2011年）	<i>Song of Remote Mountains</i>
119	飞瀑漱苍崖 山空响逾远（2011年）	<i>Rock and Roll in the Valley</i>
121	积水成渊 蛟龙生焉（2011年）	<i>Dragon's Home</i>
123	瀑诗鸣壑（2011年）	<i>Hearing the Falls</i>
125	谷静秋泉响（2011年）	<i>Tinkling Spring</i>
126	西部峡谷入画图（2011年）美国西部	<i>Fantasy of Grand Canyon</i>
127	时人不识凌云木 直待凌云始道高（2011年）	<i>Shocking Height of the Woods</i>
129	清气澄余渣 杳然天界高（2011年）	<i>Heavenly Garden above All</i>
131	有道不穷心是月 无求开泰性如风（2011年）	<i>Immortal's Touched</i>
133	江晚烟微（2011年）	<i>Silky Fog Embraces the Dusky River</i>
135	白虹饮涧气冲霄汉（2011年）	<i>Rainbow Reaches Far and High</i>
137	云骋峰峦奇（2011年）	<i>Galloping Clouds over the Soaring Peaks</i>
139	千岩万壑流（2011年）	<i>Immensity of Mountains</i>
141	龙吟方泽 虎啸山丘（2011年）	<i>Hidden Dragon vs. Crouching Tiger</i>
143	凌云健笔意纵横（2011年）	<i>Drawing Flying Clouds with Great Ease</i>
145	林泉高致（2011年）	<i>Transcending the Worldless</i>
147	秋水无痕玉镜清（2011年）	<i>Autumn Reflected in Lakes</i>
149	造化在我心耶手耶（2011年）	<i>Feel and Draw the Fortune</i>
152	穆家善简介	<i>Mu Jiashan: World-Renowned Painter and Art Educator</i>
	五松图（3米水墨长卷）	<i>Story of Five Pines</i>
	阿里山水入画图（5米水墨长卷）	<i>Rivers in Ali Mountain</i>
157	穆家善年表	<i>Chronology of Mu Jiashan</i>
	松壑平远图（5米水墨长卷）2010年	<i>Remote pine Valley by Mu Jiashan</i>
168	后记	
	<i>Postscript</i>	

# 前言

## 穆家善：自创新法，画胸中川山

范迪安

旅美中国画家穆家善的画展在中国美术馆举办，我由衷地高兴并向他表示祝贺！他于20世纪90年代中期前往海外，进行艺术的研究和创作，也在美国的文化艺术和教育领域不遗余力地开展中国画的国际交流，赢得了许多赞誉。历经文化的穿越，而今携力作回国展出，这是十分有意义的活动。中国美术馆历来重视研究和推介中国画创作的优秀成果，透过这个平台，画家的学术探索和研究成果得以与同行交流，特别是得以与广大观众见面，从而实现艺术作用于社会的价值。画坛的同道虽对穆家善的艺术有一定了解，但毕竟行旅多年，朋友们对他在艺术方面的探索心得和代表性特征还不甚了解，所以他的画展在中国美术馆举办的意义是双重的：一是与画界同行们进行交流，使学界能够分享他在海外艺术探索的经验和体会；二是能够让更多的公众了解他的艺术，特别是了解一位在中外文化交流的旅程中不懈努力的中国画家和他的创作。

穆家善的展览集中展示了他近些年在山水画探索上的收获。中国山水画拥有悠久的传统，作为文化精神的载体，无论在样式、程式、意境和笔墨技法上都拥有极为丰富的积累，高峰壁立的名家气象成为横亘在当代山水画家面前的一道学术山峰，既要继承传统，还要有所突破，画出自家新意面貌，成为当代的共同课题。穆家善作品十分明显的特征是他继承了传统山水的基本精神，但又通过在艺术观念上的求新、求变和笔墨技法的实验与创造，形成了他艺术上宽阔的视野和新颖的面貌。作为在改革开放时代的艺术氛围中成长的中国画家，他在出国之前就已经在中国画的现代发展课题面前作过很多思考，前往海外的文化之旅使得他的视野更加开阔，大胆地破除了既有的观念束缚，披荆斩棘，勇于探索，其突出的特点是通过解决笔墨语言的表现性问题，实现艺术境界的创新。他的山水画以焦墨体格为描绘方式，以书写式的用笔用线为集中的语言，以苍茫化境的画面格调蔚成中国当代山水画创作中一道独特的景观。

焦墨山水是中国山水画的一方重要传统，但是从笔墨的表现形式上，这份传统还有发展的新空间。穆家善的可贵在于他通过研读历史，接近传统，从焦墨山水大家新安画派的程邃、晚年的黄宾虹到当代的张仃等画家那里得到感悟，从孜孜求索中脱茧而出，在焦墨的语言上自创新法，形成作品鲜明的个性特征：一是他把焦墨和写意更加紧密地结合起来，在极为浓重的墨色中强调抒写的意韵，将线与面、塑造与抽象等因素融会贯通，综合运用，使得他的焦墨山水与其他前辈画家相比，拥有更为醒目的视觉张力，在笔墨的挥洒中展现出更加流畅的气息，干裂秋风细节与润涵春雨的整体形成有机结合，老辣的笔墨与苍茫的意境相生相应，书写出一幅幅山川与云气紧劲相连、神采飞扬的诗意画面，宛若用纯墨和极重的黑色所交织成的视觉交响。二是他在焦墨用笔上探寻到了创造的契机，那就是他自己创立的“千毫皴”——将毛笔揉散开来，运笔之际千毫齐发，随性恣意，极大地增加了笔线的丰富性和表现性，既可以顿挫柔转，力透纸背，又可以如若微风拂缕，精致细密。他的视觉感受禀赋使他在运用千毫皴时得心应手，在创作过程中犹如投身到山水自然，深入与天地共气息，与丘壑同生长，画出了山水面貌的万千异态，在画面间荡漾起一种充沛的感性和创造的激情。

穆家善在山水画创作上独辟蹊径，这与他深入的学术思考与文化游历的艺术体验有密切关系。他的作品画的不是山水的实景，但是很好地把握了山水的造境规律，其中的丘壑构成和云水流脉既有合理的布局，又具备别具心



裁的形式结构。从他的作品中可以感受到，他对传统山水画投入了长期的饱识新读，拥有许多山水画经典的意象，特别对传统山水画中的北派风格多有用心，追求的是雄浑苍茫的意境与心境。另一方面，他在前往美国进行艺术交流的经历中，也特别注重观摩领会西方现代艺术，特别是西方抽象绘画的优长，对绘画艺术中的黑、白、灰的节奏与整体的现代格局有深入的体会。他也踏访和感受美国的大峡谷、黄石公园等西方的自然风貌，将在异国所感受的“山水”形态与本土家园的自然记忆结合起来，由此在下笔的过程中进入到一种“天人合一”的创造境界。正是他在中西两种文化语境中不断穿行的独特经历，使得他的山水画达到从传统到当代的精神蜕变，也是中西艺术优长的结合。我认为，穆家善的这种创作成果足以使我们认识到，艺术上的本土性经验与国际化的学养能够在文化理想的高度上结合的话，就能超越文化的界限而形成新的创造，在这方面，穆家善所作出的努力是值得肯定的。

中国画的现代发展是摆在所有中国画家面前的课题，甚至可以说是20世纪以来从视觉艺术、民族艺术出发关涉到中国文化现代取向的总课题。经过百年来几代中国画家的努力，积累了丰厚的成果，涌现出从思想观念到语言方法自成体系的许多大师名家。但这个课题并没有终结，随着社会进入后工业时代、信息时代、全球化时代，中国画艺术如何保存传统的基因，赋予当代的内涵，创造新颖的样式，都仍然是艰巨的挑战。穆家善这些年的艺术有不断的发展，甚至是比较迅速的发展，就在于他在三个方面有清醒的认识和努力的实践：首先，是立志高远，要在传统的基础上画出时代的新貌。他认为从事艺术“既要传承，又要立新法”，重要的是“自立新法”，在中西艺术的历史面前，“不为古奴，又不做洋奴”，“不拘古人，不羨西洋，写吾心性”；在艺术创作上，要树立“裂破古今，横行天下”的信念。他这些年以充沛的热情从事创作，作品形成了雄奇而苍茫的气象，贯穿着一种蓬勃旺盛的时代精神。其次，是在解放自己思想观念的同时，大胆在笔墨技巧上寻找突破点。他认为“焦墨写山水，少了些渲染，但多了些个性风采”，因此，他紧紧把握焦墨语言的表现力，营构强烈画面的黑白反差，运用笔法的粗细变化，线条与皴擦的跌宕节奏，将焦墨山水这一传统推向了新的高度。在笔墨技法上，他深知，“思之容易，立法甚难”，“今人变法，多随时尚”，他在大量的实践探索中获得了升华，创立了“千毫皴”这一自立的笔法，由此进入到绘画表现的新境界。第三，是他在纷繁的中外当代绘画样式面前，既注重吸收各家所长，更注意提高自身学养，以会通求超胜。在实践中，他感悟到：“笔墨之质小学也，心智才学大道也”。正是他在山水的经营布局和笔墨运用中不断磨砺自己的才情与学养，由此真正沉入到自己精神家园的建构之中。

穆家善这些年行旅海外，在创作的过程中，也通过讲学、展览在海外介绍中国画艺术，使中国画这一民族形式在异国文化中得到了更多传播，其精神十分值得赞赏。他这次回国的交流展览也为我们在更加宽广的视野中研讨中国画的当代发展和中国画国际交流的重要意义，这是特别有价值的。他人到中年，正值艺术创作旺盛时期，足以让我们对他艺术的进一步发展充满期待。他这次的展览既可看成是他艺术的一次阶段性总结，又开启了他艺术创作的一个新的起点，他将会沿着“新法”不断开拓前行的美丽旅程。

2011年5月

（作者为中国美术馆馆长 中国美术家协会副主席）

## Foreword

# *Mu Jiashan—Creating a New Approach, Painting the Mountains in His Heart*

Fan Di'an

*Director, National Art Museum of China  
Vice Chairman, China Artists Association*

My hearty and sincere congratulations to Mu Jiashan, a Chinese painter residing in the United States, on his exhibition in the National Art Museum of China (NAMOC)! He went overseas in the 1990s to conduct his study and creation of art while energetically engaging in international exchanges on Chinese painting in the cultural, art and educational arenas, winning an array of recognition and commendation. Having traversed through cultures, he has now brought back his best paintings for exhibition in China. This is a highly significant event indeed! We at NAMOC always put a premium on the research on and introduction of excellent achievements in Chinese painting creation as this platform enables painters to exchange notes with their colleagues on the products of their academic exploration and research and more importantly, present them to the wider audience so as to realize the value of art in society. Though Mu Jiashan's art is known to a certain extent by his fellow artists, our friends may not be well aware of his insight from art experiment and his representative features--after all, he has been residing abroad more than a decade. For this reason, his painting exhibition at NAMOC has dual significances: to have exchanges with his colleagues in the painting circle so that the academic community can partake of his experience and reflections from his overseas art exploration; to give more members of the general public a better understanding of his art, particularly about a Chinese painter and his works—a painter who has been working unrelentingly on the journey of exchanges between Chinese and foreign cultures.

Mu Jiashan's exhibition concentrates on showcasing the headway he has made in his exploration of shanshui painting (i.e., mountains and rivers painting, or landscape painting) in recent years. With a time-honored tradition and as a carrier of China's cultural spirit, Chinese shanshui painting has very rich accumulation in terms of format, processes, artistic conception, and brush-and-ink techniques. The towering famed artists form a formidable academic mountain that lies in front of contemporary shanshui painters. It has become a common challenge facing the current generation to both inherit the tradition and have some breakthrough through painting one's own new style. A remarkable feature of Mu Jiashan's works is his inheritance of the fundamental spirit of traditional shanshui while forming his broad artistic vision and presenting a refreshingly new outlook through innovation and changes in artistic concept as well as experiments in and creation of new brush-and-ink technique. As a Chinese painter who grew up in the art world in the era of reform and opening-up, he had, before leaving China, done a lot of pondering over the subject of the development of Chinese painting in the contemporary world. His cultural journey overseas further broadened his vistas and gave him the courage to break away from the yoke of existing concepts and, through his explorations, blaze a new trail in his exploration through thorny bushes. His outstanding feature lies in addressing the expressiveness through the brush-and-ink language with a view to attaining innovation at an artistic altitude. His shanshui painting is based on dry ink texture as a means of portrayal, and calligraphic brushwork and delineation as a focal language, producing a picture of vast wilderness shrouded in mists—with a register and style that present a unique frame in China's contemporary shanshui painting.

Dry ink shanshui represents an important tradition of Chinese shanshui painting. Nonetheless, this tradition still has room for new development in the form of expression through brush and ink. What is commendable about Mu Jiashan is that, through studiously studying history and getting close to traditions, he derived inspirations from grandmasters of the Xin'an school of dry ink shanshui, i.e., Cheng Sui, Huang Binhong in his advance years, and Zhang Ding of today. In his incessant search, he finally broke out of the cocoon with a self-created approach in applying dry ink language featuring striking individualized characteristics in his works: First of all, he managed to bring dry ink and freehand brushwork into closer cohesion and stresses the meaning of calligraphic-style painting in heavy black ink, fusing such elements as lines, the plane, sculpture and abstraction into an integrated whole. The upshot is that his dry ink shanshui turns out to be more striking in visual tension that is the case with his predecessors, allowing for a greater freeflow in the deployment of the brush and ink, with details of the cracking-dry autumn wind and the nourishing spring rains combined as an organic whole, with mature brush-and-ink skills and the expansive nature correlating and corresponding with each other. From his calligraphic brush emerges a vigorous and spirited poetic picture of intricately linked mountains and rivers, on the one hand, and, mists and clouds, on the other, as if pure black ink and highly black tones were intertwined into a visual symphony. Second, through explorations he succeeded in finding an opportunity for creation with the dry ink brushwork approach, namely, the "thousand-hair brush technique" that he founded. With this technique, the brush is scrubbed and spread apart into one thousand upstanding hairs, employed at will simultaneously, thus adding significantly to the richness and expressiveness of brush lines. They can suddenly harden from softness, with a force that can penetrate the paper; they can also stroke one's face like gentle breezes, fine, dense, and intricate. Mu's gift in visual perception endows him with dexterity when putting the thousand-hair brush technique into action. In the course of artistic creation, he seemed as if plunged naturally into shanshui, breathing together with heaven and earth, growing with the mountains and

valleys, depicting the myriad faces of mountains and rivers and stirring up full sensuality and creative passion through the picture.

The fact that Mu Jiashan was able to open an independent trail in shanshui painting is closely tied with his deep-going academic thinking and his artistic appreciation and experience through cultural visits. His works are not factual reproductions of shanshui but, rather, a reflection of his better grasp of the laws governing the geological and environmental formation which results in not only a reasonable layout of mountain and valley formations as well as cloud and river shapes, but also well-designed structures. From his works, one can feel that he has invested long years in acquiring old and new knowledge of traditional shanshui painting and commands many of its ideas and images with particular emphasis on its North China style. What he is seeking is a grandiose and boundless ambiance and environment. On the other hand, in his art exchange experiences, he also pays particular attention to the study and appreciation of modern art of the West, particularly the strengths in western abstract painting, which gave him a deep understanding of the rhythm among black, white and grey in painting art and the modern pattern of integrity. He also visited and experienced in person the natural features of the Grand Canyon and the Yellow Stones State Park before combining in an organic manner the shapes and formations of “shanshui” that he had seen on foreign soil with the natural memories of his homeland. On this basis, once he applies his brush, he is able to reach the creative realm of “heaven and man in one”. It was his unique experiences of incessant shuttling between the two language environments of China and the West that brought about a fundamental change in his shanshui painting from traditional to contemporary, a combination of the strengths of Chinese and western art. To my mind, these fruits of creation of Mu Jiashan’s should suffice to make us realize that if the homeland-based art experience can be integrated, on a high plane, with international scholarship and self-cultivation, it can lead to new creations by transcending cultural boundaries. In this regard, Mu Jiashan’s efforts deserve our recognition.

The development of Chinese painting in the contemporary world is a subject that is laid out before all Chinese painters. One can even go so far as to claim that it has remained an overarching subject since the dawn of the 20th century that has a bearing on the direction of Chinese culture in our present-day world, starting with visual art and national art. Thanks to the endeavors of generations of Chinese painting artists for over a century, we have accumulated a reservoir of accomplishments and there have emerged many grandmasters and famous experts with self-sustained systems, from philosophical concepts to linguistic methodology. Yet, the research on this subject has not come to an end. With our society entering the era of post-industry, information and globalization, the art of Chinese painting is still confronted with a formidable challenge in areas such as how to preserve its traditional genes, imbue it with the inner meaning of our times, and create new genres and styles.

The fact that Mu Jiashan has been able to continue making progress—and fairly rapid progress at that—in art through these years is attributable to his sober realization and practical efforts in three areas.

Firstly, he set lofty goals, determined to portray the new looks of our times on the basis of traditions. In his view, in doing art, one should “both inherit and establish new approaches” of which “establishing one’s new approach” is important; before the history of Chinese and western art, one should “neither become a slave of antiquity, nor become a slave of the western world” and “should not be limited by the ancients or adore the West, but paint by following one’s heart”; in artistic creation, one should “have the conviction to “break away from the past and the present to travel the width and breadth under the sun”. All these years, he has been dedicated to creation full of enthusiasm, with his works forming a majestic and vast landscape through which runs a thriving and prosperous spirit of the times.

Secondly, he has the courage to search for a breakthrough point in brushwork techniques while liberalizing his mindset. He believes that “painting shanshui in dry ink has less fanfare but more individualistic style”. That is why he has a tight grip on the expressiveness of the dry ink language through conceiving and building strong black-and-white contrasts in his paintings; by varying the thickness of his brushstrokes and adjusting the rhythm between the rise and fall of lines and scrubbing, pushing the tradition of dry ink shanshui to a new high. On brush-and-ink techniques, he is deeply aware that “it is easy to think about it but difficult to establish a new approach” and that “people of today tend to follow the fashion when it comes to changing their approach”. After a plethora of practice and exploratory efforts, he finally attained sublimation—creating the “thousand-hair brush technique” which ushered him into a new realm of artistic creation.

Thirdly, in the face of a multitudinous assortment of contemporary Chinese and foreign painting genres and styles, he pays attention to drawing upon the strengths of various schools, but focuses even more on improving his education and cultivation, to excel with knowledge. In his practice, Mu has come to realize that “the mechanics of brush and ink is small learning; wisdom and knowledge are the big way”. It is with his persevering efforts to hone his talented skills and further his language acquisition through managing the layout and deploying brush and ink in shanshui that he is truly deeply involved in the construction of his spiritual homeland.

During his years of travel and residence overseas, while engaged in creation Mu Jiashan has also been introducing abroad the art of Chinese painting through lecturing and exhibitions, which has helped disseminate more widely the national genre of Chinese painting in foreign cultures. This spirit is most commendable indeed. His current exhibition back in China is of particular value in that it allows us to study and discuss the contemporary development of Chinese painting and the importance of international exchanges on Chinese painting through a wider prism. For Mu, middle age is just prime time for artistic creation, so much so that it gives us a full sense of expectations for further progress in his artistic endeavor. His current exhibition may be viewed both as a summation of his art for this stage and yet another new starting point in his artistic creation. He will continue to forge ahead on the beautiful journey through his “new approach”.

# 文化自觉与艺术修养

## ——穆家善的中国画创作

邵大箴

穆家善君在海外拼搏十多年，从彷徨、苦闷、寂寞、焦虑到自信，到取得成功，饱尝人生五味。在1991年完成南京艺术学院国画专业研究生学业之前，穆家善做过工人、军人和教师，又经历了“85新潮”和新文人画波涛的洗礼。他在学期间，中国社会中激进文化思潮开始沉寂，复归传统文化的思想显示出崛起的势头。南京是金陵画派的发源地，有深厚的传统文人画渊源。穆家善受明末石涛、梅溪和金陵诸家的影响是明显的。也正是在金陵绘画的传统中，包含着不拘成规、敢于叛逆和创新的基因，这种基因肯定也流淌在穆家善的血液中。

这位在中国受过传统艺术熏陶，在专业上训练有素的青年画家，20世纪90年代中期满怀憧憬和抱负，到被誉为西方现代艺术中心的美国纽约发展自己的艺术事业。到美国闯荡之后，他心中不仅交织着眷恋国画传统的心情与满怀革新的抱负，更为如何使西方人接受中国水墨画而奔波劳碌。出乎他意料的是，对东方艺术尤其是对中国传统艺术不甚了了的美国社会，在气势如虹的观念性前卫艺术氛围中，水墨画艺术很难有插足的余地。传达诗性和讲究笔墨情趣的水墨画，被认为是农业社会的产物，在后工业的科技信息时代早已是“明日黄花”，不适时宜了。也许正是与传统中国艺术观念、形态迥异的西方前卫艺术，促使穆家善苦苦思索，也迫使他认真研究艺术的本质、原理和功能，研究中西文化和艺术的同与异。他逐渐从不解、愤慨转向冷静地面对现实，一面梳理和认识西方现代艺术的脉络和走向，一面回过头来深入探究传统中国画文脉，由此增强了他的文化自觉：应该更深地扎根于传统，传承和发扬它的精神与技巧，使之具有现代意识和风采，同时尊重其他民族文化艺术的创造，适当地从中吸收有益的营养，为我所用。颇有意思的是，他到美国之后不久，他的画风逐渐发生变化。他在国内曾经一度迷恋过的“新文人画”也被抛在脑后，更倾向于从元明清时代的画风中寻求创造的资源。

综观西方艺术发展史，它的风格面貌变革交织着渐变与突变两种方式。进入现代后，突变成为主要方式。而自古至今的中国艺术，始终处在渐变的过程之中。这一方面与中国漫长的农业社会历史有关，另一方面也是由中国古代先秦以来崇尚天人合一的和谐哲学观所决定的。传统中国画不以直接描写客观物象、反映当前现实为宗旨，而是传达一种经过沉淀、提炼的观念、思想和感情，含有隐喻性和象征意味，它是深具诗性原则的艺术。它存在着远离现实的“出世”观念，但细细品尝，它的根仍扎在现实的土壤之中。因为处于现实环境之中的艺术家，在作品中表达的心性和真情实感，不可能不具有现代的文化情结。正是传统文人画这一自身矛盾的特性，它在中国现代社会变革的过程中不断受到质疑、批评和“改造”，同时它又顽强地在逆境中破土而出。试看20世纪，吴昌硕、齐白石、黄宾虹、潘天寿等大师，无不是在迎着逆风从传统中走出一条新路来的。中国文人水墨传统在自己的本土既然还受到种种的质疑和诘难，那在西方陌生的文化语境中不能受到人们的承认，就是完全可以理解的了，何况产生这种状况的原因还有我们对外传播工作不力的责任。在理清了思绪之后，穆家善开始从容地进行艺术实践的探索，同时通过讲学、授业、学术交流和作品展览，经过不懈的努力，终于使自己的艺术创作在国际画坛上争得一席之地，

从而扩大了现代中国画的影响。

穆家善采用的是借古开今的方法。古代传统是中国画的根，它浸润着不同于其他民族的中国文化精神。文人水墨画的写意体系和意象造型，传统山水画对待自然的“游观”方式，由黑白对比和笔墨变化所造成的情致和神韵，是它永恒的艺术魅力所在。实际上，文人水墨的这些特质是与西方现代艺术的审美理念相通的，而西方现代主义艺术在许多方面受到了包括中国传统绘画语言的影响。只是西方特定的社会环境和一味求新求异的思维模式，把反传统和追求表现、象征和抽象的趋势推向了极端。中国绘画崇尚渐变，不走“突变”、“激变”的道路，但也不能以不变应万变。如果我们一味迷恋前人的创造成就，忽视时代的变化和人们新的审美需求，不力求开拓水墨画的新局面，那么水墨画仍然要被时代抛弃。对此，身处美国的穆家善，比在国内安定环境下生活的中国画家感受尤深。可能正是这种“中国传统”与“美国创新”两种思维碰撞所产生的张力，给穆家善以智慧和激情，驱使他在绘画创作中奋力拼搏，而有所作为，从而打开了新的局面。

读穆家善近几年的作品，可以明显地感觉到他风格面貌的变化。他放松了自己的心态，力求使自己的创作自由地抒发内心的感情。他反复提醒自己：“水墨之变化应顺其自然，方气韵生象，得法于道。”所谓自然，就是不做作、矫饰，不戴假面具，真实地展示自己的内心世界。与此相关的是，在格调上他力求脱俗，不用作品讨好观众，不画为人人称赞的所谓好画。他用黄宾虹的话“画须令寻常人痛骂方是好画”自勉。我们看到，他摆脱了早期作品对画面布局和笔墨完善与全面的追求。在布局上，他往往涂写山水之一角，在取其整体势的基础上，注重笔力、笔势的动感与节奏以及墨的气韵。他作焦墨山水，既不同于黄宾虹用焦墨染画，也不同于张仃的焦墨写景，而在笔的顿挫上讲究骨力、讲究气韵，进而表现心性。穆家善鄙视崇洋的思想，坚信中国画在现代有广阔的天地，同时，他又有开阔的胸襟，敢于吸收某些洋画技巧为我所用，又不失国画的传统精神。例如：在表现空间和画面构成上，他便是这样做的。在一幅山水画的题款中，他这样写道：“中华绘画水墨为上，自王维多重诗境与书性，而绘画的构成少了些深入表现的立体思想，现代社会东西方艺术兼而并重之，乃立新法之道也。”

画，不论中西，均有精神与技巧两个层面，只有它们完满结合，方是真正的艺术。穆家善的中国画创作之所以能受到国际画界的关注，是由于他有高度的民族文化自觉、丰厚的艺术修养和开阔视野。他以自己的睿智和悟性运用水墨技巧，表现了中国传统的天人合一的文化精神，而这种精神也正是科技信息文明社会所缺乏的。他向人们贡献的是不落俗套的有创新锐气和开放气魄的水墨艺术。这一点，对我们当今画界颇有启发意义：不论我们的作品是服务于国内大众，还是面向世界，艺术家必须具有民族文化的自觉精神，必须十分重视艺术品格的纯正，而归根到底必经要有全面的艺术修养。

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# Cultural Self-consciousness and Artistic Cultivation

## *Mu Jiashan's Works of Chinese Painting*

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After more than a decade of struggle overseas, Mr. Mu Jiashan has gone through the gamut of human experiences, from wandering, depression, loneliness and anxiety, to self-confidence and eventual success. Prior to completion of his graduate studies in 1991 as a Chinese painting major at the Nanjing Art Institute master program, he had been a worker, soldier, and teacher who went through the trials and tribulations of the New Tide of 1985 and the repercussions of new literati painting. During his college years, the school of radical cultural thinking began to subside in Chinese society while the school advocating a return to traditional culture showed an rising momentum. Nanjing, as the place of origin of the namesake Jinling (aka. Nanjing) school of painting, is steep in the history and influence of traditional literati painting. Mu Jiashan bears visible imprints of Shi Tao of the late Ming Dynasty, and of Meixi and the Jinling schools. It is precisely in the traditions of Jinling painting that are found the rebellious and innovative genes that do not blindly follow the rules set in stone—the kind of genes that must also be flowing in Mu's blood.

In the mid-1990s, Mu, a young painter educated in traditional art and well-trained in his profession, went to New York, United States of America—widely recognized as the Mecca of modern art of the West—to develop his art career with great anticipation and ambitions. After launching his adventure in the U.S., while his heart was intertwined with nostalgia for Chinese painting and ambition for innovation, he was bent head over heels trying to bring westerners around to accepting Chinese ink and wash. Much beyond his expectation, in American society where there was little knowledge of oriental art, particularly of traditional Chinese art, it was more than difficult for the art of ink and wash painting to gain a toehold in the avalanche of the avant-garde art world. Ink and wash painting, characterized by its poetic nature and emphasis on the fun of brush and ink, was regarded as a product of agrarian society and a withered flower of yesteryear, not suitable for the post-industrial hi-tech information age. Perhaps it was this avant-garde art of the West in great variance with the traditional Chinese concept of art that prompted Mu Jiashan to keep pondering and forced him to study studiously the nature, principles and functions of art as well as the commonality and difference between Chinese and western art. From incomprehension and anger, he gradually changed to facing the reality calmly, sorting out and coming to grips with the pulse and direction of modern western art while turning around to explore in depth the evolution of traditional Chinese painting. This helped increase his cultural self-consciousness: He realized that he should be more deeply rooted in traditions, inheriting and developing its spirit and techniques to acquire modern ideas and styles while respecting the artistic and cultural creations of other nations, drawing on some of their useful nutrients for his own use. Interestingly, soon after his arrival in America, his painting style started its gradual change. He cast aside the new literati painting with which he had been fascinated for some time while in China, and turned more inclined towards searching amidst the painting styles of the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties for resources for his creativity.

A study of the history of development of western art reveals an interwoven pattern of evolution and revolution in its change of styles and outlook. With the onset of the modern era, revolution has become the predominant means. In contrast, Chinese art has always been going through a course of evolution, from antiquity till present. On the one hand, this has to do with China's long history as an agricultural society. On the other hand, it has been predetermined by the philosophical concept of harmony which advocates worshipping the integration of nature and man, a concept and practice that can be traced back to the pre-Qin days. The goal of traditional Chinese painting is not the direct, objective depiction of beings and things or reflection of the present but, rather, the conveyance of concepts, thoughts and feelings that have been distilled and condensed. It is an art deeply enshrined in poetic principles. It contains a concept of "detachment from the Earth" that is remote from reality but, when tasted leisurely, reveals its roots that are deeply imbedded in the soil of reality. This is due to the fact that artists, who live in reality, cannot express their character and real feelings through their works divorced from the cultural sentiments

of the day. It is precisely this self-contradictory feature of traditional literati painting that has been subjected to incessant challenges, criticism and “reforms” throughout periods of social change in modern China. Meanwhile, it has tenaciously kept rising against great odds. If we cast our eyes back to the 20th century, such grand masters as Wu Cangshuo, Qi Baishi, Huang Binhong and Pan Tianshou all invariably blazed new trails from traditions against strong headwinds. Now that the Chinese literati ink and wash traditions are the subject of a whole array of questioning and fault-finding on its own soil, it is entirely understandable that they are not accepted by people in an alien cultural and linguistic background of the West. What’s more, this state of affairs is attributable to our ineffective advocacy abroad. After clearing his thoughts, Mu Jiashan proceeded with his experiments in artistic practice in a composed manner, making tireless efforts through lectures, teaching, academic exchanges and exhibitions till he finally established himself in the international painting arena and, in the process, expanded the influence of contemporary Chinese painting.

What Mu Jiashan employs is the approach of “opening up the present by borrowing from the ancient”. Ancient Chinese traditions constitute the roots of Chinese painting. They are soaked in the Chinese cultural spirit, one that is dissimilar from the cultural spirit of other nations. The artistic glamour of these traditions is found in the abstract freehand brushwork and image composition as featured in literati ink and wash, the touring view approach for treating nature as is adopted in traditional scenery painting, the temperament and grace that result from the black-and-white contrast and the brush and ink changes. In fact, these features of literati ink and wash are in tune with the aesthetic concept of modern art of the West; in many respects western modernist art has been influenced by, *inter alia*, the language of traditional Chinese painting. However, the particular social environment of the West and the thinking mode in hot pursuit of the new and different have pushed to the extreme the anti-tradition tendency that is after expression, symbolism and the abstract. Chinese painting, which worships gradual change and shuns “sudden change” and “radical change”, cannot possibly cope with the myriad changes by remaining unchanged. If we are indulged in our fascination with the creations and achievements of our predecessors to the neglect of the change of the times and the new aesthetical demands of a contemporary world, if we don’t work hard to open up a new phase for ink and wash painting, it will eventually be forsaken by this era. As a U.S. resident, Mu Jiashan feels particularly deeply about this than his peers who live a cozy, stable life in China. It was perhaps the combined force resulting from the clashes between the two lines of thinking, *i.e.*, Chinese traditions and American innovation that gave Mu Jiashan the wisdom and passion that drove him to fight hard and accomplish a great deal, breaking new ground in his artistic creation.

Viewing Mu’s works of the past few years, one can easily detect a change in his style. He has adopted a relaxed approach and sought to express his inner feelings freely in his works. He keeps reminding himself, “The changes in ink and wash should follow the course of nature so that the *qi* (air) and rhythm will give rise to liveliness in shape, so that the product will benefit from the right approach.” By the course of nature he means genuinely revealing one’s inner world by staying away from affectedness and masks. Correspondingly, he tries to stand above worldly fashion in register, not to ingratiate himself with viewers or to paint the so-called good paintings to curry favor with everyone. For a motto to encourage himself with, Mu quotes Huang Binhong’s words: “A painting is not good till it is heavily criticized by people on the street.” We find in Mu an artist who has freed himself of the hot pursuit of a comprehensive layout and brush/ink perfection as are reflected in his early works. For layout, he now tends to paint just one corner of the landscape and, on the basis of taking in the overall posture of the entire object, he focuses on the power and momentum of the brush as well as the rhythm of the ink. In creating dry-ink *shanshui* (landscape), his technique is different from Huang Binhong’s dry-ink dye painting and Zhang Ding’s dry-ink landscape. Instead, he pays more attention to the power as expressed by the brush’s sudden stops and turns as well as the rhythm which, by extension, express his inner mind. Mu Jiashan looks down upon West-idolizing ideas, believing as he does that Chinese painting has a bright horizon in today’s world. Meanwhile, he is open-minded and brave enough to assimilate some western techniques without losing the traditional spirit of Chinese painting. Such is the case in the expression of space and composition. In a caption to one landscape painting, he writes, “In Chinese painting, ink and wash are regarded as superior. Since Wang Wei’s days, too much premium was placed on the poetic environment and the calligraphic approach, with little multi-dimensional idea for deeper expression in the composition. Putting equal emphasis on eastern and western art of our contemporary world represents the way to a new approach.”

A painting, be it Chinese or western, has two levels—the spiritual and the technical. Only when they are integrated in a perfect fashion can there be art in the true sense of the word. The fact that Mu Jiashan’s creations of Chinese painting have attracted so much attention in the international art circle is attributable to his high awareness of his national culture, deep-seated artistic cultivation and broad vision. Exercising his ink and wash skills with wisdom and power of understanding Mu displays the cultural spirit of harmony between man and nature as enshrined in Chinese traditions. This spirit is precisely what is lacking in our civilized society that is inundated with scientific and technological information. What he has contributed to us is a form of ink and wash that is non-stereotypical, innovative, creative, open and courageous. This is thought-provoking to the painting world of today: Whether our works are to serve the populace in China or to face the world, artists should have a consciousness of their national culture and pay full attention to the purity of their artistic style. In the final analysis, they should have comprehensive cultivation in art.

# 焦墨 写意 家园

## ——穆家善中国画观感

薛永年

看穆家善的山水画，就会想到传统，想到传统的活力，想到传统的生长点。

近百年来，中国画的传统有二，一谓引西入中；二谓借古开今。前者无论中体西用，还是西体中用，都在积极学习西方，却没有完全隔断传统，只是重视科学意识，改变视觉观念，也改造了语言方式，在世纪的变革中渐成主流；后者则拉开中西距离，稳步与时俱进，不是绝然不吸纳西画因素，而是注重可以兼容的一面，更关注艺术的人文价值，大都中体西用，坚持民族文化精神、传承民族艺术思维方式，发展笔墨语言的特色，虽时有升沉，但在近三十年来，更加引人注目。穆家善就是20世纪60后年龄段中发扬借古开今传统最终在焦墨山水领域卓然自立的佼佼者。

他是20世纪90年代中叶旅居美国的，出国之前，就读于南京艺术学院。接受的教育，既有写实观念主导的西画素描速写传统，也有被齐白石等近代大家平民化了的借古开今传统。不过前者是主导的，以至他的速写，也注入了气贯神流的笔意。他早期的中国画创作，属于新文人画。新文人画既是对西潮袭来的因应，也是对创作意识政治化的反拨，更是传统文人画的新变。穆家善的新文人画，无论人物还是山水，一开始就都致力于诗情与笔趣，意兴闲适，笔姿轻松，墨韵澹荡。攻读研究生阶段，他开始由借鉴近人转入追踪古人，风格渐渐变灵动为苍茫，寓轻松于沉厚，论者称之为新水墨。

旅居美国初期，他沿着新水墨的探索，开始更多画心中的山水。接着，他一方面更直接地了解西方的现代后现代艺术，思索中西艺术之异，研究人类共同的视觉美感，包括构成与色彩对视觉的强化，另一方面则把乡情升华为一种救赎城市躁动灵魂的山水精神，借径石涛的昂藏、徐渭的恣肆、龚贤的浑厚、齐白石的简拙，画“神游千载，视通万里”的山水，注入儒道释合一的精神，发挥“一画之理”的整体性与书写性，创造了一种不同于传统文人画与新文人画的穿越历史时空的山水：宁静而朴茂，凝重而苍茫，简约而浑厚。在美国的多元化中，传播了中华文化。

新世纪以来，据友人张子宁著文评说，穆家善可谓两条腿走路。一是更深入地领会传统的精华，从题画看，他对于石涛、董其昌、王原祁、黄宾虹的画论都能心领神会，得其要妙。二是更进一步师法造化，到美国的大峡谷、黄石公园、优胜美地，中国的黄山、齐云山写生。创作则以中国的艺术精神，融入实地的观察感受，熔铸古今，旁参西画，水墨淋漓，墨色交辉，磅礴活脱。近年，他更化繁为简，推出了苍茫浑厚一片化机的焦墨山水。此前，他固然极重用笔，但一律发挥“水晕墨章”，此时则自觉地以焦墨代水墨，正如他题画中所说：“变法水墨，焦墨可开蹊径。”于是，他的独具个性的艺术从此臻于大成。

焦墨山水难度极大，减少了用水，行笔就滞涩，易于刻板，难于气韵流动，但却为发挥用笔提出了更高的要求，也为颇得书法运行妙谛的穆家善开辟了新的空间。我曾经指出：“了解‘墨分五色’者都知道，‘焦浓重淡清’的墨色之别，无不有赖于墨中含水量的多寡。只用含水量极少的焦墨作画，一方面对用墨提出了更精微的要

求，以干求湿，将浓作淡，用笔代墨，化繁为简，艺术语言无疑更加纯净了，另一方面，对墨法的弱化，又势必为解放笔法开辟了新径，仍然大体服从‘应物象形’的用笔，却因不刻意表现空间层次的纵深与光影的明灭，实际上也在一定程度上从西法写实风格中超拔出来，为能够相对独立地形成有助于表达心情意绪的笔法律动而去‘精骛八极，神游万仞’。”

在古代，众所周知的焦墨山水名家，是新安派的程邃，但他那干裂秋风的焦墨，画的是地老天荒的遗民感情，而且在“笔中用墨”，受到一定局限。近代发展焦墨的大家，除去90岁后的黄宾虹之外，就是晚年的张仃。黄宾虹的焦墨山水，小幅为多，筌路蓝缕，未能全力以赴，克尽其才。张仃的焦墨山水，一定程度上受到写实观念的束缚，描绘对象，精微有余，写心抒情，畅达不足。穆家善的焦墨山水，既不同于程邃、黄宾虹，也有别于张仃。比起程邃来，他的意境化枯寂为苍茫；比起黄宾虹来，他的境界更大，笔墨形态也更丰富；比起张仃来，他的丘壑位置都经过了内心感情的熔铸，删拨大要，留其精粹，气脉贯穿，情韵流动。如果说张仃的是趋于写实的，那么，穆家善的焦墨山水则是写意的。

穆家善的焦墨山水，多画高山大壑，跌宕起伏，山奔云走，浩渺苍茫，时而也有梯田的旋律、雁阵的节拍。他画的不是眼前的风光，而是雄奇而苍茫的胸中丘壑，是一腔浩瀚蓬勃的阳刚之气。从意境境界而言，他自称林泉高致，但不是古人幽寂枯老、萧条淡泊的情致，而是万象森罗中的浩然正气，是一种无言的大美。从画法而论，他彻底摒弃了色彩，代之以极尽变化的渴笔焦墨，以笔法的主导，在笔法中实现墨法，既有大笔勾勒的恣纵畅达，又有小笔皴斫的精到细微，还有焦墨渴染干擦的浑茫与含蓄，而且他充分发挥了黑与白、大笔触与小笔触、笔法线条与凹凸块面的对比，这一切又都化入一气呵成的笔势中。他在题画中曾经强调“构成”，并指出“现代社会东西方艺术兼而并重之，乃立新法之道也”，道破了他在焦墨山水中也不回避吸收西法以为我用。

经过四十年的实践与思考，穆家善终于在焦墨山水中“立定脚根，决出生活”，把焦墨山水在建造精神家园中推向了更高的境地，这既离不开他弘扬传统文化精神的自觉，也离不开他在画内外从容修练的心态。尽管他的焦墨山水刚刚确立，还大有丰富完善的余地，但至少提供我们两点启示：一是中国画传统的生命力远远没有穷尽，而中国艺术的写意精神，具有普世意义的宝贵精神财富，在工业化信息化社会中尤其值得重视。二是传统需要发展也必然发展，对于借古开今的画家而言，深入领会中华民族的哲思文化、诗意文化和书法文化自然是基础，而把握自由浪漫而整体的思维方式，结合当代视觉经验，以中国画语言为体，借鉴西法以丰富中国画语汇，还可以开拓出各种新的发展空间。

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