

PONONG LIU'S PAINTING WORLD  
劉伯農的繪畫世界

古吳軒出版社  
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美術教育家、藝術家劉伯農先生名允亮，以字行，祖籍山東高唐。1935年生於上海，十二歲時隨父親渡海赴臺。自幼嗜好繪畫，後為海上大家吳子深的入室弟子，專工山水、蘭竹，所作意境高遠，筆墨蒼渾，深得吳師神髓。工筆花鳥則私淑北派名家于非闇先生，精工富麗，淳美典雅，直入宋元堂奧。在臺期間，與藝術大師如張大千、馬壽華、陳定山、金動伯等同游共叙，同時與謝稚柳、陳佩秋等大家亦為師友。八十年代起應邀赴美講學交流，先後被美國密西西比大學、塞浦斯大學、海岸綫大學、亞太博物館、洛杉磯博物館、紐約中國文化藝術中心聘為藝術客座教授，主授中國美術史及中國畫的創作，從游者千餘人，并籌組最早的洛杉磯雅集及北美青溪藝術家協會，積極推廣中華傳統文化藝術。獲美國加州州政府授予終身教授。回臺後又先後任教于臺灣藝術教育館和太平洋藝術基金會。其作品先後在臺在美巡展二十餘次，蜚聲國際，并為美國加州亞太博物館及臺灣美術館、紀念館等典藏。2002年出版《劉伯農的世界——工筆花鳥山水畫集》。

Ponong Liu, the Artist and Educator, was born in 1935 at Shanghai, China. Liu studied traditional Chinese brush painting over fifty years and was taught by various world-class artists, such as landscape painter Mr. Wu, Tsu-Shen and flower-birds painter Mr. Yu, Fei-An. In 1982, Liu was invited to move to Southern California in United States of America. By then, he started his art-teaching career for fifteen years. Liu also held more than 20 sole exhibitions in China, and United States. Liu's first painting album "What's Ponong Liu's World" was published in 2002.

## 我說我畫——代序

我生于憂患動蕩不安的時代，幼時雙親在外謀生，寄居在外祖家。外祖家人口衆多，經常是三餐不繼，故而對我的照料自然有所疏失，人私塾就讀也常輟學。1939年跟隨雙親渡海赴臺，生活依然清苦，但基本生活尚能維持，可喜的是一家人終於能團聚一起，直到1950年我完成了學業。

繪畫之道對我來說是源于性向與志趣，從小我就喜歡塗鴉，但苦無機緣。記得在讀高小時，父執輩中友人，見我喜歡玩筆弄墨，就送我石版《芥子園山水圖集》與顏真卿《麻姑山仙壇記》字帖各一冊，當時真是如獲至寶，朝夕摹寫臨習，可謂樂在其中，而我的自學階段總算開始了。進入中學時期，我的書法與山水畫已被老師同學們所稱羨，而我也漸露頭角。但是，在當時的大環境中，家家戶戶生活困頓，省吃儉用，能求溫飽已是不易。老一輩的更是認為從事藝術，如“繪畫”都是沒出息的行當，當然更不可能有能力讓你去學繪畫，雖然如此，但“繪畫”兩字一直在我心中澎湃。當時的我因為經濟條件不足，經常到書店翻閱名人畫冊，或是到裱畫鋪觀賞字畫，時時留意報章雜誌上某人的畫作，并予以收集剪輯成冊（到如今仍保留著），其中圖片如有清晰者，便于以臨摹一過，時復為之，如此求知若渴之心凡二十餘年。

1972年春，在一次偶然的機會中，經我高中國文老師劉太希先生的推介，得識江南大畫家吳子深先生，並得其賞識，有幸添列門牆。可惜緣份太淺，僅結識三個月吳師便遽歸道山，雖然我們相處與受教的時間很短，但對於我今后的繪畫歷程影響甚大。因我在畫途中自我摸索探討近二十餘年，有太多的困惑，一旦進入師門，有如醍醐灌頂，豁然而悟。所以在當時的名畫家，如馬壽華先生、陳定山先生、姚夢觀先生與金勳伯先生等諸前輩，一致認為我已得吳門精髓，後來張大千先生見到我的畫作，也更認為雖由吳門奠基，而已登明人之室，並期望我繼續在這方面下功夫。

我臨習芥子園至今已近五十寒暑，也許是自己的資質有限，迄今沒有太大的成就與突破，但畢竟在這條藝術道路走過不算短的時間，故而心得自然是會有一些的，足可告誡後生晚輩作為參考。我認為凡事要“專一”，人的一生是有限的，不可事事都行，樣樣都精通。像元朝大畫家趙孟頫與近代大師張大千先生，在藝術世界中的全面性，那是少之又少的。所以先專精于“一”樣繪畫上，習至即久，自然熟能生巧，也許可獨領旁通就其二。藝術必須執著與專注，但它也有它的先決條件，就是“興趣”并有志于此，有定力、有毅力，當然更要有時間來運用，來練習來創作。若再加上一些機緣，則離成功之道就不遠矣！古人說“三分人事

七分天”，而張大千先生則認為“七分人事三分天”，天資不足恃，不用功是不行的。世上稱所謂的神童，大多到了成年以後便默默無聞了。何以如此？即是因為當時周遭的人一捧一寵，便得意忘形，自己以為了不起，從此不再用功，最後便是默默無聞了。凡事不進則退，這是自然趨勢，要想在國畫中有所成就，我認為必須得從臨摹古人名畫入手，體會畫中的精意、線條、形象、色彩、構圖等，並要研究古代南齊謝赫所稱的“六法”論。由此入手便具備了深厚的傳統基礎，然后再走出畫室，而向大自然。古人所謂“讀萬卷書，行萬里路”。見聞廣博加上實地游歷觀察，再與書本上知識相互印證，相輔而行，名山大川、奇花異草、異獸珍禽，熟記于心，也就是石濤所謂的“搜盡奇峰打草稿”，胸中自有丘壑，有了腹稿，下筆自然有所依據，經歷得多才有所收獲。游歷不但是繪畫資料的源泉，並且亦可窺探宇宙萬物的全貌，而養成廣闊的心胸。一個成功的畫家，技能已達到爐火純精，沒有成法能夠拘束他，限制他！這就是所謂的“俯拾萬物”即能“從心所欲”，處處皆畫。

最後，再說說我的創作觀。繪畫創作有時由內發而外應，意識的深淺、境界的大小、韻致的雅俗、技法的巧拙。反之有時也由外觸而內感，取材上的異同、審美上的差別、成象上的繁簡、表現上的粗細，根據此追尋創作，由得意而感物，或觸景而生情，由此激發，靈感即生，幻象也起。在這時若意象清現，快速掌握捕捉瞬間即逝意象，可立即成畫，如意象不清不生，則可以把握那瞬間的靈感，再追尋它，夢寐以求之。所以不論內發或外觸，意在筆先是先決條件。在心目中已構思的形象，確定畫面、縱橫、寬狹、大小、色調等表現方法。始行起草，起草時須百設推裁、起承轉合、大開大合、立意寄托等等，再三修正，真正做到古人所謂的“九朽一罷”。達到止于至善的完美境界，我認為這是最重要也最嚴肅的創作方法，要使自己創作有新意，非如此不可。有時即使見到他人佳作時，內心有所感動，激動的想摹寫一番，但自己應該有心理構想，方能形似他人，而神屬自己。有自己的心血投入，便有自己的內容。我對於作畫創作，從不敢走捷徑、求近功，所以從不敢想一下筆就作成一幅我所想像中的好畫，而是永存求進步的心。我深信一個有成就的藝術家，平時必須是多讀、多看、多想、多試，才能進境，始生新意。時間匆匆我已七十有二，但仍在追求我這個理想，至死不變。

## I talk about my painting — preface

I was born during a time of great turmoil and unrest. Because my parents had to make a living away from home when I was little, I was entrusted to live with my maternal grandparents. The family was large and life was unruly with no regularity, not even in the daily meals. Naturally, my upbringing suffered. Even at the old-fashioned private school where I was enrolled, I often had to skip classes. In 1939, I followed my parents, crossing the ocean to Taiwan. Despite much hardship, we were able to maintain the basics of our lives. The happy part was that our family was reunited together until 1950 when I finished my schooling.

To me, painting comes from interest and aspiration. As a child, I already liked to scribble, but sadly did not have the opportunity to learn properly. I remember when I was in elementary school, one of my father's friends saw that I enjoyed playing with brush and ink, and gave me a lithograph copy of *The Mustard Seed Garden Collection of Landscape Painting* and a copy of Yen Chen-ch'ing's *Ma-ku-shan Hsien-t'an-chi calligraphy model book*. At the time, it was truly like being given a treasure. Morning and night I copied and traced from these books, finding joy in doing so. One could say that the self-teaching stage of my life began. By the time I entered middle school, my calligraphy and landscape painting were admired and praised by my teachers and classmates, as I gradually showed some promise. However, that was a time when life was difficult for every family, and everyone was frugally saving for food and daily necessities. It was not easy to just keep warm and be fed. The older generation believed that art, such as "painting" was not a distinguished profession. Certainly, it was out of the question to be allowed to study painting. Despite this, "to paint" remained buoyant in my heart. At that time, because I did not have enough money to spend, I often went to bookstores to browse for volumes on paintings by famous artists; or I would go to shops where paintings were mounted to enjoy the works of calligraphy and paintings there. I always looked out for paintings that were published in newspapers and magazines so that I could collect the clippings in an album which I still have today. If I found a painting composition that was fresh, I would copy and study it. This was how I quenched the thirst in my heart for more than 20 years.

During the spring of 1972, an unplanned opportunity arose. My middle school teacher Mr. Liu T'ai-hsi introduced me to the renowned painter from Chiang-nan, Mr. Wu Tz'u-shen. I was very

fortunate to be accepted as one of his pupils. Regrettably though, our relationship was cut short by Master Wu's death three months later. Although our teacher-pupil association was far too short, it influenced me deeply. Because I had spent over 20 years seeking answers on my own to many difficult issues in painting, following the guidance of a master was like filling a flask to the top with knowledge. In a flash, I realized many solutions to my questions. That is why a number of well-known painters of the time, including Mr. Ma Shou-hua, Mr. Chen Ting-shan, Mr. Yao Meng-chu, and Mr. Chin Ch'in-po, all thought that I had absorbed the essence of the Wu style. Later, when Mr. Chang Dai-ch'ien saw my paintings, he too thought that my emerging individual style was firmly based on the Wu approach. He counseled that I continue to conscientiously develop it.

I have copied and studied The Mustard Seed Garden for close to 50 years now. Probably because of my limited ability, I have not achieved any great successes nor made any artistic discoveries worth commenting about. But since I have traveled this "art road" for a long time, I have inevitably gained enough understanding to share with my students and future generations for their reference. I believe that one must be "focused" in whatever one does. Human life is short and it cannot do or understand everything. For example the great painter Chao Meng-fu of the Yuan dynasty and the modern master Chang Dai-ch'ien are internationally recognized as being good in every aspect of painting and calligraphy. They were the rarest of the rare, and as far as we can see now, there are no successors for perhaps another 500 years. Being good in one area of painting and practicing it for a long time naturally bring skill and understanding. Art must follow a focus though it also must have the pre-requisite "interest" along with determination, concentration, and perseverance. Of course there must also be time set aside for practicing and for creating. With a bit of unexpected opportunity, success will not be far away! An ancient saying notes that "3 parts is human effort and 7 parts is natural talent." However, Chang Dai-ch'ien's artistic achievements are "7 parts human effort and 3 parts natural talent." Talent is not enough if one does not work hard. Most of the so-called young geniuses of the world quietly fade into oblivion when they grow up. Why is that? It is all because they received too much attention, became too self-absorbed, and thought too highly of themselves at a young age. Consequently, they felt no need to work hard. Finally, they faded away and were never heard of again.

It is a natural tendency for things to regress if it does not progress. If one wants to succeed in Chinese painting, I believe that one must copy famous ancient paintings as a start, so to understand the refinement, line, shape, color, and composition, etc. At the same time, one must evaluate the "Six Principles" of Hsieh Ho from the Southern Ch'i period. With this beginning, one will have a rich grounding in tradition. After this, one can leave the painting studio and face Nature. The ancient saying, "Read 10,000 books, walk 10,000 miles," indicates a wide knowledge complemented by practical personal experience. One must compare book knowledge with real encounters, so that together, famous mountains and rivers, rare flowers and plants, uncommon animals and birds, will all be deeply imprinted in the mind. This is what Shitao called "thoroughly searching the strange peaks to create a rough draft." This way, the mind with its valleys and peaks has mental drafts that will guide the brush naturally in painting. Personal experience provides good results because it is not only the source for painting, but is also a glimpse into everything in the universe. Personal experience also cultivates an expansive mind. When a successful painter's art reaches the most refined stage of development, he cannot be contained or controlled! This is the so-called "bending down to pick up the ten-thousand things" so that "one can achieve what the mind desires." One will then find paintings everything in Nature.

Finally, I would like to talk about how I look at creating art. At times, it begins from within and responds to exterior elements such as the depth of knowledge, the expanse of experience, the cultivation of expression, and the skill in composition. Conversely, sometimes the creative process is affected by exterior elements such as talent, connoisseurship, form, and expression. Following these processes, inspiration can be sparked by imagination, making the concept easier to grasp and translate into a painting. If the concept is not yet clear, instantaneous inspiration can help reveal it. Hence, no matter whether the process begins from within or without, the will to create must first be present at the tip of the brush. The form is already composed in the mind before the other determinations of size of the painting, width and breadth, broadness and narrowness, big and small, colors and the method to express it. Beginning with a draft to explore all sorts of compositions and expressions, one must revise it several times, just as in the ancient saying "stopping only after nine (numerous) failings." In this

way the best and most harmonious expression is reached. I believe this is the most significant and solemn creative method. It must push for new expression. Sometimes it is tempting to copy someone else's beautiful work that is greatly affecting. But one must still have a concept before emulating others. Inspiration must be accompanied by hard work before the concept can be expressed. I have never taken any short cuts in my approach to painting. So I have never thought that a good painting can be instantly composed as soon as the brush touches paper. I have always thought that improvements can be made, deeply believing that a successful artist must be well-read, observant, thoughtful, knowledgeable, in order to enter the realm of creating new concepts. Time has rushed by and I am already 72 years of age.

Still, I continue to follow my ideal until the day I die.

Liu Po-nong notes this in Lung-hua Studio, Shanghai, October 23, 2006

This preface is translated by Ms. June Li, Curator of Chinese Garden at Huntington Library. She has also worked at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art for 14 years. Library thanks towards Ms. Li's translation endeavor and for her invaluable support as always.

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花鳥畫作品

Flower-birds Paintings



牡丹孔雀圖 紙本 135 × 66cm  
Peonys with peacocks (paper)

歲次丙戌年春三月 伯晨作於申城



白鴿紅葉 紙本 93 × 40cm  
Red leaves with pair pigeons (paper)

武城李正书和春三月  
仙舟飛雲於台之備在



蝶花争妍 纸本 104 × 33cm  
Red peonys and butterfly (paper)