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PEOPLE'S FINE ARTS PUBLISHING HOUSE

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Paintings by Ming Jing

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序

白色和弦——明镜艺术简论

贾方舟

中国的抽象艺术家大多不愿放弃对意象的寻求而进入纯粹抽象状态,因为意象既是他们进入抽象的起点,又是他们希望获取的目标,而纯抽象艺术虽然也可能呈现出某种意象,却难以寻求意象为目标,即是从现实物象中获取灵感,进入作品时也要经过高度符号化的处理,从这个意义上看,中国的抽象艺术家,大多有自觉不自觉寻求意象的意识,因为在意象与抽象,具象与非具象之间本没有人为的、绝对严格的界限。艺术的高下也不以抽象的程度为准则。

当我们在不经意间突然面对明镜的作品时,我们立刻会有反应是“抽象”,但稍加深入地看下去,又会有似是而非的形象呈现在你面前,我们一般会把这样的造型特点归类为“意象性”。把这样的表现手法称之为“表现主义”或“抽象表现主义”。但我以为,这样的描述还不能完全表达我对明镜艺术的主要感受。我在明镜的画上更多地看到的是音乐,是音乐的氛围和音乐诸元素的视觉转换,因此,我用“白色和弦”来概括明镜的艺术面貌,我以为这是恰切的,以明镜的白色为基调,并佐以棕、黄、赭等暖灰色调构成画面是他一贯的也是特有的风格,与此同时,由这些柔和的暖灰色调所构成的画面又特别富有—种音乐感,也即一种音乐的节奏和律动,具体而言,它们好像一首首弦乐四重奏,优美的旋律和明亮的音色会不断撩拨听者的心弦,时而柔婉绵长,时而铿锵有力……

“抽象”作为20世纪西方现代艺术的一种全新的“语系”,其排斥具象的真正目标在直接指向内在精神的诉求和艺术本体的建构,它作为与具象艺术相对应的一种“语系”,使视觉艺术升华到纯粹的语言层面和象征状态,从而更接近音乐,也正是通过这种纯粹的“语言”状态,才使“感觉”进入最为直接的“表达”之中,明镜的作品虽然没有进入纯粹抽象的状态,虽然还始终保持着某些具象的因素,但其作品的本质特征却是以抽象为主导的,既然如此,画家为何不彻底放弃这种意象性的表达方式呢?我还没有机会和画家讨论这个问题,依我个人的揣测,原因可能来自两个方面:就创作主体而言,画家对风景、静物、人体或室内日常生活场景的描绘,只是为作品的发生获得了一个题目,为每一次的动笔找到一个出发点,就欣赏客体而言,画家也许是想通过这些可以识别的物象为前者提供一种进入作品的通道,以顺应他们面对作品首先要追问“这画的是什?”的习惯,但是,当我们准备批判作品的优劣时,我们所依据的价值尺度并不在“这画的是什?”而在“画的如何?”就画家自身来说,重要的也不在他画的是什么,画两个酒瓶也好,还是画一个品茶的女子也好,他真正要表达的是一种内心的状态,真正要创造的是一种富有音乐感的画面,所有出现在画面上的意象均不是他特别在意的描绘目标,而只是画家营造本体所需要辅助或习惯于辅助的一个对象,其着意处不在对象本身而在创造本身,即所谓“借题发挥”而已,这也是“表现性”画面和“再现性”画面的本质区别,前者以表现主体为第一要义,而后者则以再现客体为第一要义。

在此,我列举一些我喜欢的作品以说明它们的价值所在:《弹吉他的少女》(1997)、《二重奏》(1998)、《合声》(1998)、《吹笛子的女子》(1999)、《美丽的家园》(1997),以及近期所作的《瓶中花》(参见附录第36页)、《穿裙的女人》(见第41页)、《风》(见第209页)等作品,我判断这些作品为“好的”,其价值准则不在被描绘的客观对象是什么,或被描绘的是否准确,而在作品本身的“完成度”,即作品的结构、色彩和诸多形式要素的运用、它们之间的关系以及所形成的整体氛围,当我运用这样的准则去鉴别作品的“好”与“差”时,我发现,我更钟情、更感兴趣的甚至是那些意象模糊甚至难以辨别出意象的作品,例如《思绪·2》(1998)、《人体》(1998)、《白楼》(1999)、《故居》(1999)、《神心》



(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)

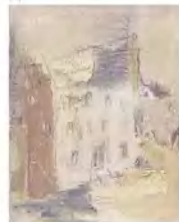
弹吉他的少女 *Playing Guitar*
布面油画 Oil on canvas
60cm × 50cm 1987

二重奏 *Trió*
布面油画 Oil on canvas
158cm × 126cm 1998

合声 *Choir*
布面油画 Oil on canvas
140cm × 120cm 1998

吹笛子的女子 *Playing the flute*
布面油画 Oil on canvas
41cm × 30cm 1999

美丽的家园 *Hometown Impressions*
布面油画 Oil on canvas
41cm × 33cm 1997



(5)



(6)



(7)



(8)



(9)



(10)

98 恋物 · 2 Art Consolateur II
布面油画 Oil on canvas
80cm x 65cm 1999

人体 Figur
布面油画 Oil on canvas
35cm x 27cm 1999

白楼 White House
布面油画 Oil on canvas
80cm x 50cm 1999

故居 Myold House
布面油画 Oil on canvas
80cm x 50cm 1999

禅心 Zen
布面油画 Oil on canvas
80cm x 50cm 2000

(2000)。还有最近画的《方案与陶器》(见第32页)、《红酒》(见第84页)、《新梦》(见第155页)、《赏花图》(见第183页)。这些作品虽然有非常明确而具象的标题,但画面呈现给观者的却是几乎纯粹的抽象语言本身。标题所述的形象被弱化到最小的程度甚至被抽离。此时,观者已完全没有必要通过辨认所描绘的物象去接近画家的心灵世界,而是可以通过富有情感的绘画语言直达画家的心灵。

抽象艺术兴起于20世纪初的西方。对于这一艺术展览,马列维奇曾给出这样高度的评价:“向完全抽象或非物象世界进军是20世纪艺术的最大成就之一,同时也是最有胆识的成就。”所谓“最有胆识”是因为,“抽象画家就像敢于把自己发射到广阔太空的宇航员。他们的领地是行星黑暗无光的那一边,他们标出看不见星球的存在”(A·表里布尼)。所谓“最大成就之一”是因为,它放弃了自古以来为母题的描绘,而创造了一种全新的、不需再借助物象的“语言”,明镜对于这一全新语系的理解与他音乐的兴趣不无关系,他不仅在他的作品中一再表现与音乐节奏相关的主题,更重要的是,音乐是他走向抽象表现的符号。我深信,音乐就是明镜艺术灵感的源泉,也是他的艺术重要的精神资源。正是音乐给他以无穷的动力和神秘的想象。据我所知,明镜作画离不开音乐。我曾于1998年去过他与其他两个同事合用的画室,最深刻的印象不是他画廊上的画,而是属于他那个角落的音响设备和丰富的磁带收藏。正是音乐,调动、调节乃至左右着他的绘画情绪,正是音乐,使他进入一种创造艺术的奇诡状态之中,没有音乐的激发,很难想象他的作画能产生如现在这样的画面效果。透过他的作画的那些不经意的涂抹和点划,你完全可以辨认出经由音乐元素转换而来的蛛丝马迹。我曾看过日本音乐鬼才喜多郎的所谓“乐谱”,其实就是一幅由点、线、几何形组成的抽象画,他的演奏所依据的就是这样一些只有他自己才能看懂的抽象符号。他将这些视觉符号有效地转换成音乐的能力,与明镜将由耳朵获取的音乐信息转换成富有音乐感的画面是异曲同工。

明镜的绘画创作始于他毕业后的80年代中期,那正是艺术新潮风起云涌的年代。明镜在经历了短暂的写实阶段以后,很快步入一种抽象和变形的风格尝试。到90年代中期,其“抽象表现主义”的风格面貌已趋于明朗。1997年,他的作品《飞鸟》在《走向新世纪·中国青年油画展》的获奖,标志了他的艺术成熟和视觉界的认可。我以“抽象表现主义”来描述他的风格倾向,是因为他的作品基本上是在抽象于表现之中,并非纯粹的抽象主义,而是倾向于抽象的表现主义。“抽象表现主义”这一概念,作为西方现代流派,出现于50年代的美国。在此,这一概念只是在风格意义上加以借用。就文脉而言,明镜的绘画,具上下文关系正处在西方现代和中国传统的交汇点上。在他的作品中,既可以看到西方现代艺术(特别是毕加索、马蒂斯、康定斯基和德皮埃斯)的影响,又可以感受到传统文人画的血脉。而且,就风格和理解着,他的作品所承袭的更多的传统基因,那一种以黑之白或白之黑的基调不只是一种个人趣味,更是与传统绘画的“空白”观念有着密切的内在联系。作品中凸显出的那种率直而为的绘画性和表现性,与传统绘画所强调的书写性和随机性又无不联系,特别是体现在作品中那种优雅情调,更与中国传统文化气质血脉相连。

从明镜近期的作品看,意象性的因素有上升的倾向,占据画面主导地位的常常是一两个个体的站姿或坐态。我不清楚这种变化的原因,但依我个人之见,他的艺术更善于不受任何物象的规范和束缚,更善于在画布上天马行空,因此,才能使他的抽象表现延伸到更加自由的至高境界。依他现在的进程而言,他的艺术离这样的境界并不遥远。

White Chord: A Brief Discussion of Ming Jing's Art

Jia Fangzhou

Most Chinese abstractionists are not willing to give up the concept of sketch and step into pure abstract art. This is because the concept of sketch on the one hand is their jumping off point to abstract art, and on the other hand is their aim. Although pure abstract art to some extent can represent some images but pursuing image this is not its aim. Even if abstract art gets inspiration from the real world, it still needs high symbolization when paint is put on canvas. In which case, most the Chinese abstract artists are conscious the concept of sketch, particularly as there is no contrived and strict borderline. The value of art is not measured by the standards of abstract art.

When we see Ming Jing's works, our first reaction is that it is "Abstract" art. If we look carefully, however, we can see some blurred images. Generally we categorize the art works with this kind of sculptured for as "Sketch Concept" painting, while we call the application of this kind of technique "Expressionism" or "Abstract Expressionism". These opinions, however, do not completely describe my feelings toward Ming Jing's painting. I see more music in Ming Jing's works, or more precisely, I see visual transformation in the musical atmosphere and musical elements. So I use the term White Chord to sum up the style of Ming Jing's painting. I think it is right as he is persistent with white colour as the base colour, and then assists this with some warm grey colours such as palm, brown and yellow. The soft French grey worlds under his brush are like musical quartets in that they have musical rhythm and movement that stimulate the audiences' heart with their beautiful rhythms and bright tunes.

As a new "phylum" in 20th century western modern art, "abstract" art has given up its copy of the real world, and aims to reveal the inner spirit and to construct an artistic ontology. As a "phylum" that is contrary to figurative art, abstract art transcends the visual plane and enters the level of the pure language and brushwork, therefore it is closer to music but the essence of which is abstract. Thus, it is through pure language that "sense" enters into the stage of expression directly. Although Ming Jing's work is not pure abstract yet as it still keeps some characteristics of conception, the main characteristic that it is abstract. Having said that, why doesn't the artist give up the concept of sketch completely? I guess there are two reasons: for the creative subject, the artist, his or her description of landscape, still-life, the body and indoor life scenes is just one excuse for the art work to come into being and exist, and is therefore a jumping-off point for the next brushstroke; for the object, namely the audience, this is probably a gate to enter the art world with distinguishable signs provided by the artist. In this way, the artist can satisfy the audiences' habits of appreciation and provide an answer to the frequently asked question: what did he or she paint? But when we judge the value of an art work, the scale we use is not "what is this?" but "how well has he or she done it?" Regarding the artist himself, what he or she paints is not as important, because no matter what he paints, two bottles of wine, a young woman who is enjoying a cup of tea, and so on, all he or she wants is to express a state of his or her inner world and to create a world suffused with musical rhythm. All of the images that appear on canvas are not the main objects or aim the artist tries hard to pursue, but a tool, an object that he or she needs or is accustomed to using to unfold the hypostases of painting. What he or she cares about is not the object but the painting, namely the technique used to "make use of a subject to elaborate one's own ideas. This is the hypostasis that is different between "expressionist" painting and "representative" painting. The former emphasizes the expression of the subject while the latter emphasizes the representation of the object.

Here I will take some works I like to demonstrate their artistic value, the works include "Playing Guitar" (1997) (see image 1 on page 6), "Trio" (1998) (see image 2 on page 6), "Choir" (1998) (see image 3 on page 6), "Playing the Flute" (1999) (see image 4 on page 6), "Homeworn Impressions" (1999) (see image 5 on page 6), and recent works see photographic reproductions of *Flowers in a Vase* (see page 38), *Woman at Leisure* (see page 41), *Coal Breve* (see page 209). My judgment concerning these works is that they are "good", and my measurement concerning their artistic value has nothing to do with the objects that the artist paints or with whether the objects are "correct" representations. The value only has things to do with the "level of finish", namely the handling of the structures, colours and other elements relating to forms and their relationships, and the atmosphere created by all of the above elements as well. When I try to evaluate Ming Jing's works as "good" or "bad" with this kind of scale in my mind, I find I am deeply in love with and more interested in those works with blurred images, or the works with non-figurative images. For example, works such as *Art Connaisseur II* (1998) (see image 6 on page 7), *Figure* (1998) (see image 7 on page 7), *White House* (1999) (see image 8 on page 7), *My old House* (1999) (see image 9 on page 7), *Zen* (2000) (see image

10 on page 7), and other recent works such as: *Bench and Bowl* (see page 32), *Red Wine* (see page 84), *Listening to Music* (see page 153), *Appreciating the Flowers* (see page 183). Although these works have clear and figurative titles, the world that unfolds in front of the eyes of the beholder is a pure abstract language. The images described by the titles are minimized to the smallest part, or even dispensed with. At this stage there is no need for beholders to approach the artist's inner world by identifying the images, rather they can enter the artist's soul through the passionate painterly language.

Abstract art rose up in western countries at the beginning of 20th century. Malevich provided a great comment about the history of abstract art: "The greatest achievement of 20th century art is in the world of complete abstract or non-figurative art, and which is also the bravest achievement as well." The reason we call it the "bravest" is that "Abstractionists are like astronauts who dare to project themselves into dark space and their territory is the dark side of a planet that punctuates the existence of the invisible planets." (A. Boliboni) The reason we say abstract art is "One of the greatest achievements" is because abstract art represents a radical departure from tradition, which emphasizes realism, and attempts to create a totally new language system in which they don't need to rely on figurative images. Ming Jing's understanding of this language system has a close relationship with his interest in music. Music is not only a related theme in his painting, but more importantly is also the main cause of his turn into abstraction. I believe that music is Ming Jing's inspirational source for art and spiritual resources. It is music that gives him endless motivation and a mysterious imagination. I also know that Ming Jing cannot paint without music. I have been to his studio, which he shared with two other colleagues, in 1998. What really impressed me is not his painting but the sound system in the corner and his rich collection of music CDs. It is music that maneuvers, adjusts, even controls his emotion with painting. It is music that leads him into a high state of creation. I can not imagine that his pictures would have the effect like these we see today if there was no stimulation from music. It is easy to identify the traces of elements transformed by music in his random daubing, dots and drawing. I have seen a Japanese musical genius' "Music Book" which actually is like a piece of abstract art that is composed by dots, lines and geometry. His performance is based on these abstract signs only understood by himself. His ability to turn these visual signs into music is the same as Ming Jing's creativity in turning the musical information received aurally into a picture with the feeling of music.

Ming Jing's oil painting started in the mid 1980s when he graduated and when new trends in art were emerging. After a short period as a realist, he experimented with expressionist styles and distortion. His style with the distinguishing characteristics of "abstract expressionism" was recognizable in the mid 1990s. In 1997 his work *Flying Insects* received an award from the exhibition called *Towards the New Millennium: Exhibition of Oil Painting by Chinese Young Artists*, which demonstrates the maturity of his style and acceptance by the art circle. I use "abstract expressionism" here because in most of his works, abstraction resides in expressionism but they are not pure abstraction but expressionism that tends to abstraction. The concept of "abstract expressionism" as one of schools of 20th century modern art came in the 1950s in America. Here I just use it to identify a style. In regard of the historical context, Ming Jing's painting stands at the meeting point between western modern art and Chinese tradition. From his works we can see the influence of western modern art (especially Picasso, Matisse, de Kooning and Tapes and in the mean time we can sense traditional literati painting. In regard of the characteristic and taste, Ming Jing's works inherit more genes from the tradition. The white colour with which he is obsessed is not only a personal taste but has close inner links with the traditional artistic concept "blank space/white space". The freedom of the painterly and expression shown in his paintings also have links with traditional paintings that emphasize randomness in writing and painting. The elegant atmosphere represented in his paintings originates from traditional Chinese culture.

From Ming Jing's recent works we can see that elements relating to the concept of sketch are increasing. The main characters that occupy the central position are always a couple of people who either are standing or sitting. I don't know the reason for this, but I think his art needs to be free from any bondage of figurative image and free from anything on canvas. Therefore his abstract expression can climb up to the supreme world of freedom. We can see from his current position that he is not far from there.

(Jia Fangzhou, Well Known Art Critic, Art Activist)

明镜照无涯

水天中

20多年前，美术界的一位领导干部大声疾呼——警惕西方抽象主义艺术进入中国。他明确表示“不赞成、不提倡抽象派之类的现代派艺术”，并断言“它们在社会主义国家中没有前途”。这种看法的背景，是中国艺术家已经开始了试探性的抽象绘画创作。从20世纪80年代前期开始，一些不安分的画家就在写实和非写实的边界线上徘徊，曹达立等人的一些作品就是如此。吴冠中关于抽象美和“形式主义”的辩护，给与他们试验和寻求的勇气和信心。1985年4月间在安徽泾县举行的“抽象艺术讨论会”上，我散发名为《抽象绘画争取合法生存空间。我说抽象绘画对我们的社会和国家是无害的》……我这样说显然有一点“幼稚可笑”，但事实是在短短几年中，抽象绘画如雨后春笋破土而出，虽然当时还没有得到可以尽情展示的环境。

和同时代的其他中国画家一样，明镜也是从严格的写实绘画训练入手，开始绘画创作道路。从他早期的风景和人像作品中，不仅可以看到对写实技法的充分掌握，而且可以感觉到一种特殊的清静和自然。从80年代后期开始，他着手抽象性绘画元素的研究。在《窗外飘来的云》(1987)、《有阳台的房间》(1988)等作品中，传达客观物象的“语义符号”渐减，经过提炼的线条和色块，具有古典风味的写实图式被表现性形式所代替。在80年代末期的明镜作品中，看到优雅而单纯的色调，这使他的同时代作品显得柔和而颇具韵味。

进入80年代，明镜进一步向抽象靠近，但源于现实生活的绘画母题与情调始终在他的画面上弥漫。从《蓝色恋曲》(1991)到《阿利里的三女神》(1994)，深幽的蓝色调与温暖明亮的或黄色调相继出现。从以后的作品看，画家越来越偏爱明朗的蓝、粉、黄。1996年的《雨中行走》可以说是在色彩调配试验方面的典范组合，这种组合成为明镜作品的主导色调，并且反映着画家的气质和心境。

在最初的抽象性语言的成功使用之后，明镜并没有完全放弃现实世界的物象符号。那些跃动的人物、安谧的歌血以至开阔的天地，常是他作品旋律的情感动机。但对这些物象的使用并不是出于某种形式的先入之见，或者理想意识的勉强发挥，而是他情感的投射，是“自传性的”歌咏，或者仅仅是画笔运行中偶然得到的冲动。他把这些包含着朴素感情的元素组成统一的形式整体，这种形式整体对他来说，其艺术和情感上的价值，远远超过许多同行孜孜以求的传统规范 and 经典图式。

当然，我们在欣赏明镜的作品时，一方面会注意到它们大多数不是抽象绘画，它们是有形体、有主题的；另一方面，我们注意到这些形象与一般具象绘画上的有明显的不同，那是一些抽象性的形象。罗杰·弗莱在谈论抽象绘画中形象的感受力时曾经指出：“某些形象使我们产生一种幻觉，似乎他们有自己的生命”。但那种向我们传达其生命力的感情力量“完全不取决于它与真实事物的相



(1)



(2)



(3)

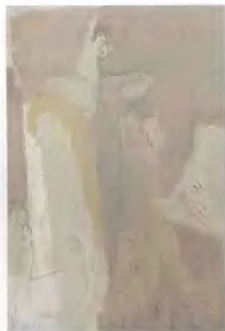
窗外飘来的云 *Clouds*
布面油画 Oil on canvas
127cm × 150cm 1987

有阳台的房间 *Room with Balcony*
布面油画 Oil on canvas
130cm × 150cm 1988

蓝色恋曲 *Love Song*
布面油画 Oil on canvas
120cm × 160cm 1991



(4)



(5)



(6)

房间里的三美神 Three Beauties

布面油画 Oil on canvas
156 × 126cm 1994

在雨中行走 Walking in the Rain

布面油画 Oil on canvas
180 × 121cm 1995

浪漫的主题：丘比特在水中相遇美人鱼

Cupid meets Mermaid under Water
布面油画 Oil on canvas
126 × 156cm 2002

似，我们甚至可以说，与真实物完全相似会使我们丧失情感”。明镜作品中的那些形象可以作如是观。如果他画出逼真的人物、静物或者风景，他所拥有的特殊艺术感染力必然消失。出现在他作品中的人与自然的形象使我们感动，并不是因其具体的种属、表情和姿态，而是画家赋予他们特殊的形式趣味——它们的色彩、动势和不可分割的整体感。实际上，他的画中没有任何单独观察和分析的单个形象，局部和细节是不可分割的。如果说画面整体去关注局部，例如某个人体、某个花朵、某个云彩，在他的画面上不存在作画时关注的“焦点”；你不能说“这个人物的面部处理得很好”或者“室内的光线画得不太好”等等。从作品标题看，他常常选择女性人体、简单的居室、室内景，也常常给它们以“抒情性”的标题，如“弹吉他的少女”、“美丽的家园”、“丘比特在水中相遇美人鱼”。但这些文字只是一种标记与提示，与一般绘画上必然下功夫描写的丘比特与美人鱼迷人形象不同，他关注的是整体感，他所描绘的丘比特与美人鱼的相遇与传统艺术中的画面完全不同。如果在他的画面上出现传统的形象，他们“与真实物完全相似会使我们丧失情感”。也许我们可以把明镜的绘画形式概括为“抒情的抽象”，或者“抽象性表现”。他排除或减弱了语义因素，但并没有排除表现因素。他虽微妙而微妙的色彩、率性而从西的笔触，既是形式也是内容，既是手段也是意义。我们不是从他的画面点出的那些形象得到感性满足和审美愉悦，让我们满足的是他抽象性的抒情表现。这种“抽象性的抒情表现”包含的情感不等同于日常生活的感受，不必然与艺术家的现实经历相联系，它包含着更加辽阔的精神境界。而作为具体的绘画作品，它还包含着画家对绘画材质的情感，包含着使用这些材质时产生的风神意韵，抽象性的抒情表现，在很大程度上就是画家用物质材料进行形象构成时生发的感受。

在明镜之前或与他同时从事抽象性绘画的中国画家，各有不同的艺术取向。他们一般喜欢借用传统文化符号或写传统文化意象为自己绘画的基本架构。在形式语言上，对强烈、神秘、繁复、刺激的追求，远远超过对单纯、平静与和谐的爱好。而在作品构思上，常常给自己设定了大量需要解决或者需要展示的问题，例如中国古老的涅槃精神或是西方现代的存在主义哲学之类。因此，从写实走向抽象的步伐，并没有放松中国艺术家的创作心态，他们反而更加沉重了。与此形成对照的是明镜的艺术境界，他所追求的直是人和自然的生命状态，有时、平和而且悠然自得。从这一点看，明镜的艺术境界是中国式艺术境界的发展，明镜的生命状态是中国人生命状态的延续。

明镜的绘画正在赢得越来越多的理解和爱好，这从一个侧面说明我们的艺术空间正在变得越来越具有包容性，当代中国观众的艺术审美力在不断提高。因为从“喜闻乐见”的角度看，明镜的画远不是那种可以被所有的观众都理解的艺术，人们需要排除原有的审美惯性，超越传统的文化习习，尝试观照世界的心灵之境，方才有可能欣赏这颗心无挂碍、镜无涯际的艺术。

The Limitless art of Ming Jing

Shui Tianzhong

Twenty years ago, an official cadre in the art world lifted up his voice and said, "Look out, western abstract art is entering China!" He clearly meant "I disapprove, I do not advocate some forms of modern art, such as abstract art", and he affirmed "It has no future in Socialist countries". The background to this opinion was that Chinese artists had already begun experimental abstract art creation. From the early 1980s, some restless artists started to wander on the boundary between Realism and non-realism, some works from Cao Dali are like that. The justification of abstract art and "externalism/formalism" by Wu Guanzhong gave them the courage and confidence to try and seek. At the "oil painting art conference" which was held in Jing Xian, Anhui, in April 1984, I advocated a legally sanctioned survival space for abstract art. I said that abstract art is "harmless" to our society and country...what I said was obviously quite "naive and ridiculous". The fact is that over the next several years, abstract art emerged although there was no environment where it could show itself freely.

Ming Jing, like other Chinese artists in the same period, started from a practice of strict realism. His early landscape and portrait works not only demonstrated a master skill in realistic painting, but also spread a kind of special peace and nature. From the late 1980s, he began investigating abstract art forms. Works such as *Clouds* (1987) (see image 1 on page 10), *Room with Balcony* (1988) (see image 2 on page 10), and so on, are curtailed by objective "Semantic symbols". Classic Realism was replaced by Expressive forms, highlighting essential lines and colors. The works of the late 1980s show an elegant and simple tone which makes them more mild and light.

Entering the 1990s, Ming Jing moved closer to abstract art, but the themes and sentiments originating from reality flow into his pictures. From *Love Song* (1991) (see image 3 on page 10) to *Three Beauties* (1994) (see image 4 on page 11), dark blue tones and warm broad tones successively appeared. From then, he more and more favoured broad grey-brown-yellow tones. The work *Walking in the Rain* (1996) (see image 5 on page 11) uses a combination of colors, which have become typical as his leading tones in works that reflect his temperamental and mind.

After successfully mastering abstract language, Ming Jing did not completely give up symbols of reality: moving figures, still objects and even the open universe are usually the emotional motivators of his works. Utilizing these symbols, however, does not mean he is following a pattern or elaborating his ideas, rather, they express his emotion through autobiographical association or contingency toward that which has happened. He unites simple emotional factors into a form, where art and emotional value are of far more prominence than pursued by artists using traditional criteria and classic patterns.

Of course, when looking at Ming Jing's works, we noticed that most of them are not abstract paintings. They have form and structure and theme. We also notice, however, that the images are obviously different from concrete painting in that there are abstract images. Roger Fry, when talking about the influence of images in abstract paintings, pointed out "some images produce hallucinations, which seems they have their own

lives” but those emotional forces that deliver vitality to us “do not completely depend on the similarity they have with reality. We can suppose that we lose our emotion if they are completely similar to reality.” The images in Ming Jing’s works can be regarded in a similar way in that we can assume he will definitely lose the special artistic quality his works possess if he pursues vivid figures, objects and landscapes. The reason that figures and nature in his works touch us is not because of their specific type, expression or gesture, but because of the special meaning given by the painter, which is their color, gesture and indiscernible overall sense. In fact, his work should not only be analyzed as single images as parts and details can not be separated. If we only pay attention to the part, like a certain figure, a certain flower, a certain cloud..., but ignore the whole there is no “focus” on his work. You can not say “he did a good job on this figure’s face” or “the light in the room is not well done” and so on. From the titles we can see that he always picks women’s bodies, simple rooms, indoor scenes, and also always gives them “plot” titles, such as “*Playing Guitars*”, “*Hometown Impressions*” and “*Cupid meets Mermaid under Water* (see image 6 on page 11)”. These texts, however, are just a kind of sign or hint, which is different from Cubitt’s and the mermaid’s beautiful forms. What Ming Jing emphasizes is the whole picture. The encounter of Cubitt and the mermaid he described is completely different from a scene depicted in traditional art. If there are traditional art images in his works, “we lose our emotion if they are rendered completely after reality”. Probably, we can summarize his painting style as Lyrical Abstraction or Abstract Expression. He excludes or reduces semantic factors, but not expressional factors. The elegant but delicate colors and straightforward but calm brushwork that he uses are both form and content, measure and meaning of his works. What gives us satisfaction and aesthetic enjoyment are not the images indicated in the titles, but his abstract lyrical expression, which contains a kind of emotion that is different from daily life and not necessarily related to the artist’s life experience. It covers a broader spiritual realm. As individual paintings they contain the emotion the artist has toward the materials of art production and the thinking process when using them. To some extent abstract lyrical expression is the feeling the artist has when he is using the materials to compose the images in his works.

Chinese artists who have engaged with abstract painting previously, or are Ming Jing’s contemporaries have various art pursuits. They usually like to use traditional cultural symbols or images for their basic painting structure, they are after strong, mysterious, complicated and exciting forms, far more than simple, peaceful and harmonious ones. And they always pose many questions that need to be explained or demonstrated, such as the spirit of age-old Chinese Zen or modern western Existentialism, and so on. The result for Chinese artists is that the pace from Realism to Abstract Art makes them feel stress rather than releases them. This is in contrast to the art realm to which Ming Jing, who is always in pursuit of a comfortable, mild and leisurely life between human being and the nature, belongs. From this point of view, the realm of Ming Jing’s art is a development in the Chinese-style art realm and his life is a continuation of the Chinese artists’ life state.

Ming Jing’s works are more popular now, which means our art space is more and more tolerant, and appreciation of artistic form is increasing in the Chinese audience. In terms of “love to see and hear”, however, Ming Jing’s paintings can not be understood by all of the audience. People need to get rid of their aesthetic inertia, exceed traditional cultural rules and clear the mirror which reflects the soul of the world, so that the art without limit can be enjoyed.

(Shui Tianzhong, Well Known Art Critic, Senior Researcher at China Institute of Arts.)

雾化的情欲

——观明镜近作

刘骁纯

如果不是站在历史地位的角度而是站在文化对话的角度，明镜的艺术可与德·库宁比较。他们都是画家，都是从具象走向抽象的画家，都是将女人体作为情欲表达借口和载体并以女人体为基本解构对象画家，都是因为“遑笔草草”的极端化而使具象因素不断消解的画家，都是“笔法为先”向抽象推进的画家。德·库宁的艺术被称为抽象表现主义，明镜的艺术则可称为抽象写意主义。

“写意”与“表现”迥异而异辞，两者的突出特征都是特别强调运笔直抒胸臆，强调运笔过程与生命展开过程的同一性。中西学界之所以选择不同的词语指称同一种观念的艺术现象，根源于文化性格和文化语境的极大差异。在中国书画语境中，“表现”可归入“写意”门下狂放的一路，在西方艺术语境中，“写意”可归入“表现”门下盘桓的一路。“写意”更趋超逸淡泊，“表现”更趋缜密豪横，但笔笔见心，笔笔见性，则是他们的共同追求。

写意性、表现性的抽象艺术属热抽象，与冷抽象艺术家不同，大部分杰出的热抽象艺术家都有一个从具象走向抽象的过程。这个过程十分重要，热抽象就是在具象与抽象的交战中热起来的，艺术家的生命张力就是在具象与抽象的拉锯过程中升腾起来的。以明镜的艺术为例，他画中的女人体，以及环绕女人体形成的画面，都不是可有可无、无足轻重的。几乎每一张画，一起笔，他的灵魂就为女人体及其画面所吸引，但在自己的对象中既感受不到古希腊女神雕像的神圣，也感受不到春宫画的淫放，他感受到的是性要和情欲的虚无。

他不关注女人体和家居环境的个性，但他特别关注自己独特感受的个性。他画中的人体曲线，虚淡的白色调，连乱带踏笔触和画面肌理，以及画面经常出现的敏感唇舌的暗示图形，都可以看出明镜对女人体和家居眷恋和复欲。这种复欲与性有关但又针对具体的个性化对象，因此可以视为一种两性交爱受欲。

明镜一定感悟到了实写情欲了无意义，才使他的画越来越趋笔草草，直到不再便于称为具象绘画。他渐渐把女人和家居肢解并隐藏到了幕后，笔触、色调、肌理、空间、点线面的交织逐渐成为他诉说心声的主要语言。这心声依然与性有关，与情欲有关，只是越来越虚无缥缈，那是一种被神雾化了的情欲。

德·库宁对女人和性的虚无感导致了他的愤怒、批判和报复，明镜对女人、性、家的虚无感却导致了他的超逸、淡泊，以及不平静中的平静。

Atomized Ardor

— about Ming Jing's recent works

Liu Xiaochun

The art of Ming Jing can be compared to Willem de Kooning as a cultural conversation, although not in terms of the historical periods they work in. They are both oil painters, both moved from Concrete Art to Abstract Art, both use the woman's body as the excuse and subject for expression, and as the basic deconstructed object. Both artists gradually dissolve concrete forms in an extremely "freewheeling style", and both the artists approach Abstract Art with the belief that "the style of writing comes first". The art of Willem de Kooning is called Abstract Expressionism, whereas Ming Jing's art can be called Abstract Essentialism.

Essentialism and Expressionism are homogeneous but of different origins: They are both the direct expression of the process of moving the brush and the process of life and they both emphasize identity. The academic world of China and the west chose different terms to describe a same art phenomenon because of great differences in their cultural characters and structures. In the context of Chinese painting and calligraphy, Expressionism belongs to a wild-style branch of "essentialism"; while in the context of western art, "essentialism" belongs to a mild-style branch of "expressionism". Essentialism is more indifferent to fame and wealth while Expressionism is more radical. They have the same pursuit, however, which is to express the essence of a form with every movement of the brush.

Essentialism and Expressionism are both "hot" forms of Abstract Art, which is different from the "cold" expressions of Abstract artists. Most of the top "hot" Abstract artists develop from a concrete art to an abstract art, an experience of process that is very important. "Hot" Abstract Art developed from a fight between Concrete Art and Abstract Art, at the time that the artists were maturing. Take Ming Jing as an example, none of the women's bodies and the homesteads around them in his works are dispensable or frivolous. In almost every painting he used as a starting point the way he was affected by the body and the homestead. He does not have this same affection for the holiness of a statue of an ancient Greek goddess or for the lewdness of pornography. What he feels is the nihilism of Eros and ardor.

He does not pay attention to the characters of women's bodies and the environment of the homestead. Rather, he pays particular attention to the character of his own unique feelings. His works show that he is sentimentally attached to the women's bodies and the homestead in the curves, light white tones, scratching and rubbing brushwork and textures, and the figures always imply his sensitivity toward them. This affection relates to sex, but is not aimed at specific objects, so it can be seen as kind of universal sex, love and desire.

Ming Jing must have realized the meaninglessness of realistically expressing ardor, and thus his works became more freewheeling until they stopped being Concrete Art. He gradually disassembled women and the homestead and hid them behind the curtain, while the brushwork, tone, texture, space, and the intertextures of point, line and ground become his main expressive language. His expression still relates to sex and ardor, but it is more and more illusory. It is an ardor that is atomized by Zen.

The nihilism to women and sex resulted in Willem de Kooning's rage, aversion and revenge, whereas nihilism toward women, sex and home resulted in Ming Jing's transcendence, indifference and peace out of restlessness.

(Liu Xiaochun, Well Known Art Critic, Senior Researcher at China Institute of Arts.)