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Techniques for Painting  
Insects and Plants

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## 作者简介

王悲秋，名珪，号夷则、一画学童。1963年1月26日生于天津。现为天津画院专业画家、国家一级美术师、中国美术家协会会员、天津美术家协会理事、中国海洋画研究院院委、天津市政协书画研究会理事。

悲秋三岁涂鸦，小学时便用毛笔为所在学校画历史人物的宣传画，像李自成、洪秀全等，并在父亲的引导下临摹家藏佚名画家的山水、花鸟，对中国画有了初浅认识。

步入中学，开始学习素描、水粉，逐渐掌握了西方绘画科学的观察方法和表现手段。进入美校后，专业的基础课学习为他打下了坚实的写生基本功，同时，接受了中国传统绘画的笔墨训练，系统地学习了山水、人物、花鸟和走兽，为今后的艺术道路奠定了基础。

及长，考入天津市书画学院。循规蹈矩的教程安排和枯燥的基础课，无法满足他对中国画强烈的求知欲，最终于一年后辍学，开始了艰苦的自学生涯。首先背着画夹走进了天津、北京各大博物馆，对历代山水、人物、花鸟、走兽进行面对面的临摹，如饥似渴地汲取历代绘画之精髓，力求古人之技，以达古人之心。在坚持不懈地与古人对话和神交中，渐悟中国绘画之真谛，大量地临摹古画使他的笔墨技巧日臻完善。为锻炼笔墨的表现力，悲秋临摹时无论尺幅大小，山水、人物还是花鸟、走兽，从不打底稿，皆以毛笔水墨直接临摹，从而练就了过人的笔墨功力，凡是看过他临摹的人，无不为他每幅作品精彩的再现所折服。

具备一定的笔墨素养后，悲秋便不满足于步古人后尘，在摹古的同时，认真研读历代画论。他深知，中国画的创作要有所突破，只师古人是不够的，必须师法造化，从自然中探索属于自己的绘画语言。自20世纪80年代至今悲秋写生不辍，先后跋涉于全国二十多个省、市、自治区的五十余处名山大川。祖国的壮丽山河让他流连忘返，为探寻古人未到处，他不惧山高路险，不避酷暑严寒。在山水写生之余，他对周围的花鸟鱼虫也从不忽视，每每遇到，总会将其一并写生。

山川、海宇画不尽悲秋对中国绘画的挚诚热爱，人物、花鸟、走兽、草虫也是信手拈来，从雄狮、猛虎到苍鹰、山鹊，直至蝼蛄、蚂蚁，都成为他爱不释手的创作题材。为描写狮虎豹，他常到动物园写生，为表现雄鹰的精气神亲自豢养、观察，各样的飞禽、鸣虫更是养了许多。紧张的创作之余，看看鹰，望望鸟，听听蟋蟀、蝈蝈切股振翅之鸣和画眉、百灵委婉的歌声，便是悲秋最大的快乐。每次应邀到外地创作，他都在当地买上几笼鸟、几只蝈蝈。为画好昆虫，时而取笼观之，百看不厌，时而钻草丛、攀树枝，常因捕捉马蜂、牛虻而被蜇伤。大凡悲秋身边的人，都看到过他身上的累累伤痕，至今只要看到虫子就想抓，已成了他的习惯。经长期积累，写生下来的各种昆虫不计其数，终得草虫之形神。

诗人多识草木虫鱼之性，而画者其所以豪夺造化、思入妙微，亦诗人之作也。深谙其理的悲秋，为画好草虫阅读了古今中外大量关于昆虫的书籍，从《诗经》《尔雅》《中国虫文化》到法布尔的《昆虫记》，对草虫有了全方位立体的认识与理解。

生活是绘画创作的源泉，悲秋执着于写生，对生灵由衷地热爱，他笔下的昆虫“以动静游息之态，资于画笔之思致”。东晋顾恺之有“迁想妙得”之说，只有通过“迁想”，如画山则“予与山川神遇而迹化”，画竹则“其身与竹化”，画草虫则“不知我之为草虫耶？草虫之为我耶”，方能“妙得”物象的神韵。





# 序

◎ 李毅峰

昔人论画，详山水而略花鸟草虫，缘其天地之微也。然五行之精粹于天地之间，阴阳一嘘而敷荣，一吸而揪敛，则葩华秀茂，见于百卉众木者，见于蔬果虫鱼者，不可胜计，令古今画家才人与之交互。倾情于点画之妙，倾言于墨彩之精，晤对通神，成就古今花鸟传统。

西蜀黄筌、南唐徐熙开富贵、野逸之风。宋元以降，文人多染绘事，形嬉笑怒骂于梅兰竹菊，寄心性情理于蔬果花草，或细笔勾染，或随意为之，无不生动。传至文、沈，穷究物理，写其风骨，各臻其至。八大、南田既出，又使出新，别有风神。是知花鸟一格，非士大夫君子才人难由寄托也。审明此理，莫不发其变幻，象其物宜，启人之高志，发人之浩气也。

津门一地，素出翰才。画家王悲秋兄，少年之时即习书画，及长专攻山水，然于百卉情独所钟。其尝曰：写花卉实乃情意二字。情发则随手点簇，即像生肖物，又无不合意。意至则应以心手，意存笔先，象尽意在。或田蔬野草，或花卉翎毛，无不夺造化精神，另观者振羽。绘事不难于写形，而难于得意，得其意而点出之，则事物之理，挽于尺素间矣。又曰：天地之间，物物有生机，物物有生理。有生机便有生意，造化之妙，勃如荡如，不可形容矣，真得其意者，是在笔墨形似之外。

然花果草木、翎毛兽虫自有四时景候。其阴阳向背，朝夕晦朔，笋条老嫩，苞萼后先，皆有本性。而羽虫万千，声音颜色，饮啄态度，或巢居野处，眠沙泳浦，戏广浮深；或穿屋驻厦，啼春噪晚，知岁司晨。故知象必眼观体察，摹写其状，令其神出。昔易元吉入荆湖万守山百余里，以窥猿獭獐鹿之属，逮林石诸景，一一心传手记。韩幹画马，以马为师，终日纵观，每以笔记之。曾云巢画草虫，取草虫笼中观之，昼夜不舍，得其神后始落笔。此徽宗所言精谨不苟之状物精神也。而悲秋之于草虫，多于园中存笼养飞放之徒。小如蟋蟀蚂蚱，大到鸢禽猎犬，抑或鸡鸭雁鹤，蜂蝶鱼蝉，莫不朝夕拾察，笔墨涂之。斗转星移，日无暇己，而成今日之妙。昔有黄胄公谓写生乃画家毕生功课，须时时深入生活，会生才能活。

是观其作，数妙并焉。图画百卉，品类草木，写载其状，托物丹青，随色象类，曲得其情，此一妙也。花有常形，物有常理，姿态风神，枝叶穿插，花势俯仰，莫不得之于造化生成。一经入眼，当蕴胸中。凝神遐想，妙悟自然而臻于理，此二妙也。花贵得势。花得势，虽参差向背不同，而各自条畅；叶得势，虽疏密交错，而不紊乱。花枝连络更是以势为主，合而观之，一气呵成，此三妙也。草虫飞翻鸣跃之状，振羽有切股咄咄之声。蜂足欲跃，蝶翅如

春，皆点簇为之，随手点抹，青黄红绿，黑白相间，物物逼肖，蠕蠕欲动之神，观者无不绝倒，此四妙也。古人云：有笔有墨。姜白石曰：人品不高，落墨无法。浓淡精神，变化飞动，全在笔墨。悲秋象物，笔力遒美，筋肉骨气，脉脉相连，转折流行，鳞游波驶，点次错落，徐疾有序。然其精神发越，赖于墨彩交辉。色不碍墨，墨不碍色，或薄施粉彩，或染笔足之，自然妍丽，神采生动，此五妙也。津门名士襄军叹曰：悲秋以山水之概绘草虫，以写意之法画工笔。毫发毕肖，跃然纸上，非锥刺悬梁之功，莫可得也。信然。

或曰，悲秋写花草虫蝶，所言不得尽其妙，遍观其画，虽尺素在手，仍不能尽乎其志其情，故画多补文。古人云：诗言志。是以，悲秋写生，多记事物之原，描述其态。画者，文之极也。画文相映，辅以书法行之，更觉骨气，气韵并妙矣！

悲秋所画，求知求智。其以为画所以养性情，且如古人言，可涤烦襟，破孤闷，释躁心，迎静气耳。其曰：无知者，胆大者，妄为也。无知则无礼，无礼则无序，无序则画格必乱矣。故画者必当写生为重，有写方能生，摄生可达神。洞察万物，以意为先，若不立意而遽然下笔，则胸无主宰，心手相错。夫意者，先心意，后笔意，先立其意后落笔，亦即意在笔先耳。有立意，才可得意，才可意思悦适，胸中宽快，意合天道，平和古朴，意境方生，而生气自出耳。

其尝论写生，曰：造物必先造化，而造化者，天地之性、天地之情。写生则笔活，写生则意适。如写螳螂，眼大头小，颈细身长，两臂如斧，挺然作威，疾走如飞。画之以草绿写形势，加粉以取浮凸，宜没骨写之。其又论写意，曰：写意无非大小，然须先“写”。古画梅谓之写梅，画竹谓之写竹，画兰谓之写兰，何哉？盖花至清者，画之当以意写。写者，书意也，意不在形似耳。宋人陈去非诗云：“意足不求颜色似，前身相马九方皋。”其斯之谓欤！

观夫今人绘画，多所做作，枯涩重浊，躁气冲天，何谈品格气韵。悲秋之草虫写生，于细微处见天机与天资，生气呼之欲出。清人方薰曰：“学之而无外慕，久必有悟，悟后与生知者殊途同归。”实然哉！

当夫夏时音韵，妙趣横生。七八个星天外，两声虫鸟鸣。池塘蛙叫飞两岸，枝头蝉响游四亭。蝈蝈挺腹设武场，蟋蟀振翅比歌声。天地茫茫，山岳苍苍。复观悲秋百卉千虫，寒尽而共春生，黄没而同风起。岁岁青而滋荣，朝朝发而盛旺。愿其画法多变，传时代之精神，振国粹于斯时。嗟夫，忖其大智大勇之胆识秉性，人格操守，坚毅心志，英气豪情，岂不正像翱翔于长天宏宇之雄鹰乎！

## THE PREFACE

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In ancient discussions on painting, much was written on landscape but few on plant, birds and insects, as these were considered the lesser creations of nature. However, the essence of the Five Elements (Wu Xing) is found at its best between heaven and earth; with the breathing rhythm of nature, the seasonal changes are reflected in the bloom of flowers and flourishing of plants, and are found in all different kinds of vegetables, fruits, insects and fishes, and therefore touching the heart of painters and scholars now and before and thus become the subjects of their depiction. Painters devote themselves to the art of capturing the forms of these enchanting features and express their feelings in the ink and brushwork, by which a spiritual connection with nature is established and the tradition of bird-and-flower painting has taken shape.

Huang Quan of the Xishu Academy set the tone for luxuriant style, while Xu Xi of Southern Tang dynasty led the tradition of untrammelled style. It was a trend since Song and Yuan dynasties for Scholars to develop a habit of painting, and express themselves in the description of blooming plum, orchid, bamboo and chrysanthemum the emotions of ridicule, laughter and anger; the depiction of vegetables, fruits, flowers and plants reflected the mentality and disposition of painters; in outline and color, in free hand description, are the liveliness. When it came to Wen Zhengming and Shen Shitian, who delved into the order of nature and focused on such that reached the prime of capturing spirit and structure of objects. Ba Da and Nan Tian continued to excel and take the art to another height. It was then generally recognized that only scholars and educated people were capable of embodying personal emotions in artworks of bird and flower painting. Once it is understood, the audience will further contemplate the multiplicity of its meaning, and refresh one's sublime ambitions.

The city of Tianjin is home to great talents. Artist Wang Beiqiu started to learn calligraphy and painting since childhood. He specialized in landscape when he grew up, and favored flowers and plants most. He once said, the description of flowers and plants depends on affection. Paintings are made when he feels like it, and it turns out to be lively and similar to the object and everything is just to the painter's liking. The intention goes before the hand and directs the hand by the heart, the image is completed with the mindful of the intention. It can be a couple of vegetables or a handful of weeds, a bunch of flowers and a family of birds, all are in the prime spirits of nature which is inspiring to the spectators. The difficulty of painting lies not in representation

but in inspiration, while the inspiration is achieved and made explicit, the order of nature will be contained in the art work. It is said, between heaven and earth, there is life and order in everything. Wherever there is life, there is spirit, and this is where the essence of nature lies. It is difficult to describe, but when it is truly captured, it will be found beyond the likeness of the form delivered by the ink-and-brush.

The flowers and fruits of plants, flock of birds and animals take different shapes in four seasons. It is by nature that some prefer sunlight, some prefer shade; they look different from morning to twilight, from month to month. While there are tens of thousands of insects and birds, in different colors and sounds, in different shapes and attitudes while eating and drinking, some build their nests in the wild, some sleep in sands, some underwater, some play around in larger areas and depths. Some live close to human dwellings, some would sing in the spring as if they know the annual changes, and some buzz in the evening as if they know the cycling of day and night. Therefore, in order to capture their external shapes, one must observe with eyes and experience with the heart to capture the spirit. Yi Yuanji used to enter the Jing Lake and Mnt Wan Shou area of hundreds of miles to peep into the environment where monkeys and deer belong, taking sketches of the forests and stones of the landscape. When Han Gan used to paint horses, he learned from the horses, observing it day and night, and taking sketches. When Zeng Yunchao painted insects, he kept them in the cages and observed them throughout the day, unless he can capture the spirit he would not start to paint. This is what Emperor Hui Zong referred to as pursuing perfection in picturing the spirit of things. When it comes to insects and creatures, Beiqiu often raises them in cages or keeps them in his backyard. Small as crickets and locust, large as hunting dogs and eagles, chicks and ducks, wild geese and cranes, bees and butterflies, fish and cicada, are all objects of his observation and depiction. As time goes, he has been busying painting like this for years and has achieved today's perfection. Modern artist Huang Zhou used to say that sketching from nature is a lifelong homework of painters, as one has to always delve deep into life so as to make artworks lively.

To review Beiqiu's artwork, one can find a number of delicacies. For one thing, the subject of his work depicts flowers and plants of various species, the shapes and colors of which are captured with his own sentiments towards the objects. Flowers take their own shapes; species have specific orders to follow; the posture and texture of which are all made by nature's hand. Once perceived, they are impressively borne in the mind of the

beholder. By pondering the features, the rules and magnificence of nature will dawn on the beholder, which is the second delicacy. Being dynamic is the ultimate value of flower painting. Once dynamic force is attained, despite the various directions the flowers may face, each single bloom would elaborate on its own extension; while leaves are postured in patterns, they may cross one another in densities of high and low, it is never chaotic. Flourishing flowers and leaves found unity in dynamic forces, which is the third delicacy. Fourthly, the insects are captured in flight, in jumps and singing, as if the fluttering of the wings are heard with the creaking sound of the knuckles. The feet of bees are about to bounce, wings of butterflies are in the colors of spring, all of which are made as if in the casual washes of paint, in blue, yellow, red and green, alternated in black and white, vividly in motion. In ancient Chinese painting, it is said that it takes both the brushwork and ink to make good paintings. Jiang Baishi once said, greater virtue of the painter results in better artwork. It takes the brushwork and ink to determine the degree of brightness in washes of paint, the spirit it contains, as well as the transient moment captured in movement or in flight. Objects in Beiqiu's works are presented in brushworks of strengths and beauty, as if in a living creature where there is flesh and bone, an intrinsic integrity, with ups and downs, which has a living charm with its forces and repose. While the expression of spirit is dependent on the employment of both ink and color, the use of one does not hinder the other. Some are thinly covered in washes of paint, some are in abundant colors, all are presented naturally with vividness. And this makes the fifth delicacy. A gentleman in Tianjin, Xiang Jun once commented, Beiqiu's works of plant and insects are done with a heart for landscape, where freehand brushwork is found in Gongbi (traditional Chinese realist painting) technique. It takes years of hard work to achieve this level of realism and vividness, which is indeed the case.

Some has observed that each and every plant and insect is delicate, but it is not suffice to fully express his aspirations, that is why he continues to make inscriptions onto the painting. Ancient Chinese believe that poetry is for articulation of aspirations. Beiqiu's works tend to record the original state of objects. He is also a skillful writer. The painting and inscriptions complement each other. The calligraphy of the inscription adds to the strengths and spirit resonance of the work as a whole.

Beiqiu seeks wisdom and artistic conception in painting. He believes that painting can cultivate one's disposition, as commented by ancient Chinese that it can expel irritation, loneliness, uneasiness, and restore tranquility to the mind. He says that the ignorant and the audacious are reckless in deeds. Ignorance leads to disrespect of rules, which results in disorder in painting. That is why a painter should prioritize sketching from nature. By learning from nature, the art work can be lively and then capture the true spirit. In observation of

everything from nature, the spirit comes first. If a painter hastens to start painting without maintaining the spirit at first in his or her mind, the brushwork is doomed to miss the point. As to the spirit, the spirit in the mind goes before the one which can be contained and then delivered by the brushwork. Only by capturing the spirit of object, can it be made lively and naturally.

Talking about sketching from life, Beiqiu says, to paint, one has to learn from nature, and nature is the disposition and emotion of heaven and earth. By sketching from life, one's brushwork becomes skillful, and the spirit will resonate with nature. For instance, in the depiction of mantis, the characteristics are represented in the large eyes on a small head, thin neck in a long body, axe-like arms with an air of a general, and moving fast as if flying. Its color should be green as grass, shading should be the technique for coloring, and some powder can be applied to create relief effect. When he talks about conveying the inherent nature of subjects, he comments that although there may be a different scale of conceptualization, the conveying of conception always goes first. In ancient times, painting plum trees, bamboos, or orchids is referred to as describing or to bring out the inherent nature of these plants. Why? To describe the fragrance of flowers, it is more important to convey the conception of fragrance rather than the external shape of a flower. A Song Dynasty poet Chen Quifei once said in his poem, "as long as conception is captured, it does not necessarily have to appear in the same color; so is it true with the way ancient talent horse scout Jiu Fanggao works."

Generally speaking, today's paintings are mostly made artificially and hastily, appearing to be dull and heavy. There is nowhere to find character or spirit consonance. While in Beiqiu's plant and insect painting, there is gift and talent in details, life can be found everywhere. It was made clear by Fang Xun in Qing Dynasty: to learn to paint, one has to focus on things other than the exterior appearance, with due diligence, the secret of painting will dawn on the learner, who will be the same as those who are born gifted for painting.

As it is in the full swing of summer, all different kinds of sound form an interesting melody. Insects and birds sing under the starry sky; frogs croak in the pond, cicadas bray in the tree branches. Grasshoppers fight like generals, crickets flap their wings and compete in singing. You can't help wondering the vastness of the world, and the mountains far and wide. In Beiqiu's many works of plants and insects, the spring comes with the end of the winter, yellow flowers wither in the chilly wind. Year in, year out, plant will grow and flourish. We sincerely hope that Beiqiu will continue to develop his painting techniques, to express the spirit of the time and revive the craft of national treasure in the modern time. Can we indeed compare Beiqiu's wisdom, character, determination and heroic spirit to that of the eagle soaring in the sky!

# 万物同举 共享天籁

◎ 王悲秋

人类在生存发展的进程中，始终与大自然关系密切，与动物息息相关。无论是原始社会的“南越巢居”还是“北朔穴居”<sup>①</sup>，都是以大自然为依托，彼此相互依赖。新石器时期，出现了磨制工具和彩陶，人类用简单的工具维持生存。继而饲养牛、羊、鹿、鱼，对鳄、虎、蛇、鹰感到既惊奇又恐惧，乃至崇敬，随着先民的崇拜，动物、昆虫就成为了原始社会的重要角色。

半坡村出土的彩陶“内彩四鹿纹盆”“人面鱼纹彩陶盆”等，用几何纹样表现先民与自然共存，赞美生命、追求美的炽热情感以及对动物、昆虫的讴歌。由此产生的原始艺术，诠释了先民对自然和生命的理解。对动物崇拜所产生的朴素艺术，成为向神表达祈望的媒介，祈求丰收、捕获更多的猎物、免除灾祸等，使人类更好地生存、繁衍。

昆虫遍布世界各个角落，先民在与自然的抗衡中艰难地生存，常以昆虫为食。《周礼·天官·醢人》记载的“蜺醢”<sup>②</sup>，便是用蚁卵制成的蚊子酱，亦有《礼记·内则》上载，用“爵、鸛、蜩、范”<sup>③</sup>制成食品，以供周王饔饩。远古时代的先民不但利用身边的资源进行生产活动，而且还能运用心智熟练地捕捉蚁、蝉、蝗、桂蠹、绀蝶、蛭螭、蟠虫、天虾、蜻蜓、蜜虎、龙虱、洋虫、棕虫等，以获取更多的食物来源。无论是洞穴、岩壁上的画作，还是新石器时期彩陶上的昆虫纹样，都是先民赖以生存、装饰生活、追求美的写照，这也许就是草虫艺术的萌芽之始。

昆虫与人类是从食关系，属物质领域的范畴，后作为艺术形象进入人类文化生活的领域，进而达到比类、喻人及图纹崇拜。商周时期青铜器上富于象征性的蝉纹，便是从生活中提炼而来。如汉代的玉蝉就有三种用途：一为佩蝉，二为冠蝉、三为含蝉。古代壁画中的各类昆虫，表象众多，古人通过昆虫这一媒介，崇尚自然、自得其乐、愉悦精神，由此可见昆虫在人们心目中的地位。

中国最早的草虫画《尔雅图》，是由魏晋郭璞绘制而成。东晋十六国的卢湛以赋描写蟋蟀的习性，如：“啾啾咧咧，翩翩翩翩。候日月之代谢，知时运之斡迁。”观察极其细微。《诗经》里亦有对蚕蛾、蝗虫、蚊蝇、蜘蛛和蟋蟀等昆虫的诸多记载。与人类生活相伴、相生的昆虫，成了描写对象，以至延伸为生殖崇拜。如螽斯，便是祈求多子多福的一个典型，这种象征延续至今。北京北端的百子门相对的就是螽斯门，借此表达对种族繁衍、昌盛的追求，而深受王公贵族、庶民百姓的珍爱。《鼎新图像虫经》引《促织论前序》曰：“观其物至微矣，而每为古人所取者，何哉？取其暑则在野，寒则依人，闻其声亦可以卜其时也。后之人以时物而有振羽之声，鹰扬之状，遂捕之而畜诸器，合其类而使逐角之，以资搏赛，以逸性情焉。”再者，西晋陆云在《寒蝉赋并序》中称，寒蝉有六德：“夫头上有綏，则其文也；含气饮露，则其清也；黍稷不食，则其廉也；处不巢居，则其俭也；应候守时，则其信也；加以冠冕，则其容也。”讴歌了蝉的品行，称其“是至德之虫，有含二仪之和气，禀乾元之清灵，蝉之天生淑质”；又云“黍稷惟馨而匪享，竦身晞阳乎灵和”，喻其高洁品格。唐骆宾王也曾以蝉借物寓志。

① 南越巢居，北朔穴居：见晋张华《博物志》卷三：“南越巢居，北朔穴居，避寒暑也。”

② 蜺醢：用蚁卵做的酱。《周礼·天官·醢人》：“饔食之豆，其实葵藿……蜺，蜺醢。”

③ 爵、鸛、蜩、范：见《礼记·内则》。爵：通“雀”，一种鸟，赤黑色。鸛：一名鸛，又名鸛，小雀。蜩：古书上指蝉。范：蜂。

唐天宝年间，盛行以昂贵的虫具饲养蟋蟀，以蟋蟀角斗分出胜负，一掷千金赌之。唐玄宗尤好至极，亲自豢养蟋蟀，一时间此游戏兴于宫廷上流社会。在绘画作品中，昆虫也占据一席之地。唐宗室滕王李元婴，擅画蝉雀、花卉，喜作蜂蝶，有《蛱蝶图》传世，朱景玄赞其“能巧之外，曲尽精理。”如初唐睿宗（李旦）时期，画鹤的名手薛稷，以六扇屏风画鹤，其构式新颖。唐开元年间冯绍正，擅画鹰、鹞、鸡、雉，形神毕现，嘴眼脚爪，毛彩俱妙，曾于皇宫画五龙堂，亦有龙之破壁、降云蓄雨之感。姜皎画鹰鸟，意态达神。李逵以蝇、蝶、蜂、蝉得名于世。晚唐边鸾，所绘花鸟，蜂、蝶、雀、蝉，神态生动，栩栩如生，赋彩精湛，欹艳如生。花枝迎风婀娜，写虫夺貌移神，蝴蝶翩跹飞舞，草之劲风偃仰，生机盎然，自然天成。贞元年间，新罗国曾献孔雀，唐德宗遂命边鸾于宣武门为其写真，一正一背，翠彩生动，羽毛色变如钿金遗妍，似轻歌曼舞，仪态宛若迎宾之姿，堪称妙品。

至五代，花鸟画逐渐独立成科，各种杂花、草虫在画家笔下经常出现。南唐官吏画家梅行思，最工写鸡，世称“梅家鸡”。梁相国于兢擅画牡丹，酝酿苦思无倦，动必增奇，有写生全本、折枝传于世。南唐画家郭乾晖，俗称“郭将军”，工画猛禽杂鸟，常于郊居杂柯处，止畜观之禽鸟，深思涤虑，纵赏其间，举意之笔，率得其真。同样流传至今的还有史琼的雉兔竹石，程凝的鹤竹，王道古的斗雀图，李坡的折竹、风竹，唐垓的水禽、鱼虾等。接踵其后的刁光胤、滕昌祐承袭了晚唐边鸾花鸟画的笔墨传统。刁光胤性情高洁超逸，终身隐居不仕，擅花竹、鸟雀、草虫、湖石、猫兔，尤其雀、蝶精妙，入蜀后精心教授门生，像黄筌、孔嵩都是其贤契。八十高龄仍耕耘不辍，为成都大圣慈寺的三学院大厅绘制花雀壁画，奇绝异彩。滕昌祐也是性情高洁，脱略时态，寿至耄耋。工花鸟、鱼龟、禽兔、蝉蝶，尤擅画鹅，曾在宅内置石，栽竹、杞、菊等名花异草备其观察写生，画作颇得意态神韵，无论折枝花草、草虫蔬果，形象鲜活生之笔端，所画动物毛色鲜泽，虫蝶用笔施以“点画”为之，创之己法，这一时期的花鸟画蔚为壮观。画家对花鸟鱼虫的描写，升华到精神层面，借物抒情、寓意，内涵深刻。笔墨技巧上，每位画家都有独到之处。北宋初年，江南布衣徐熙，常游园圃，观察其情状，对江湖间汀花、野竹、蝉蝶、禽鱼无不领略其理，脱现于胸，下笔成真，传有《鹤竹图》《雪竹图》《雏鸽药苗图》《玉堂富贵图》。独创“落墨”法，粗笔浓墨，逸笔草草，写枝叶萼蕊，略施丹粉，神生意香。西蜀宫廷画家黄筌，师承刁光胤，花卉蝉蝶承学滕昌祐，兼师诸家之长。通过观察写生，创造出自己的笔墨，其特点是淡墨勾勒、重彩渲染。所画禽鸟、草虫，形神兼备，花卉敷色浓丽，工整细腻，自成一派，世称“黄家富贵”，传有《写生珍禽图》《雪竹文禽图》。其子黄居寀、黄居宝承其父业，亦擅花鸟，黄居寀有《山鹧棘雀图》传世，黄氏父子画作深受北宋宫廷青睐。继而师承的画作有：北宋赵昌的《写生蛱蝶图》，南宋林椿的《葡萄草虫图》《蔬菜草虫图》、吴炳的《嘉禾草虫图》，元钱选的《草虫卷》，明孙隆的《花鸟草虫图》《花鸟草虫图册》、陈洪绶的《花鸟草虫册页》，清华昞的《菊花草虫》、居廉的《草虫圆扇》《花卉昆虫图之二扶桑》、居巢的《五福图》、任伯年的《草虫图》。

到了近现代，花鸟画有了长足发展，诸多花鸟画家都乐此不疲地表现这一题材，如高奇峰、赵少昂、陈半丁、李苦禅、张大千、刘奎龄、王雪涛等，尤其是齐白石表现的草虫作品，数量之多、题材之广，堪称之最。他们在运笔赋色、构图章法上，都别开生面，各显己意。线条的运用，或双钩，或一笔出之兼有轻重刚柔之感，所绘草虫无论工与写都能再现神情妙理。笔墨的运用，有没骨法，亦有浓淡兼用，彩墨并施，其特点是既有浓丽富贵之貌，又有淡雅野逸之状，悉臻其胜。

昆虫由食物，继而成为器物上夸张的图纹，发展到繁衍寓意的崇拜，再到借花卉草虫喻美好、幸福，最终形成独立的画科。伴随着文字记载与文学篇章的描述，运用赋、比、兴的手段，借虫之媒介，畅抒人类的喜怒哀乐，甚至用虫之形体、色彩的不同，预示和憧憬未来。

肇始，先民对神秘莫测的天地万物混沌不清。对于生命及周围环境中的猛兽、禽鸟及草虫认识懵懂之时，认为是神赋予的生命，这就是原始社会文化的萌芽。甲骨文卜辞中有：“今二月，帝令不雨。”“翼癸卯，帝不令其风。”讲一切都是天帝、神的命令，如起风、下雨。《诗经》中则有“天命玄鸟，降而生商”的诗句。古人认为，商的妣是玄鸟，是顺应天命而生的。《国语·周语》有“我姬氏出自天鼋”，犹言出自黄帝，黄帝亦称作轩辕（天鼋），也就是龟蛇崇拜的初启。人类和动物、昆虫成为相伴的精神媒介。另一方面，先民认为，自然界不是神所主宰的，是由他物变化彼物而来，像蝗虫幻化为鱼，是虫化之说，与儒、释、道均有联系，化者，变也。儒家也阐述了化生之变，《易经》曰：“天地感而万物生。天地氤氲，万物化醇。男女构精，万物化生。天地不交而万物不兴。”天地万物都是阴阳交合所产生，而“化”字即转化之意，其说朴素合理。《礼记·月令》云：仲春之月，“鹰化为鸠”；季春之月，“田鼠化为鴽<sup>④</sup>”；季夏之月，“腐草为萤”；季秋之月，“爵<sup>⑤</sup>入大水为蛤”；孟冬之月，“雉入大水

④ 鴽（rú）：古书上指鸛鷀类的小鸟。

⑤ 注③中有。

为蜃”。无论同类、异类，循环也。在人类生存繁衍的过程中，昆虫占据着广泛的领域，古人认为，人也是虫，即裸虫。《庄子》曰：“青宁生程，程生马，马生人……”“程”为何物？就是虎豹。“马生人”虽为唯心之观念，但也反映了万物的生生化化。中国的文化是儒、释、道杂糅，佛教认为一切众生，包括人类和动物在内，卵生之禽鸟，胎生之人兽，湿生之水中动物，则化生之天人，四类均为欲界众生。基于这种思想和观念，产生出非常多的化生故事，像鱼变蝗，蝗变鱼，赤虫化蜂，蜂化促织，乃至于人化蝶，蝶化妖，顺理成章，自然而然。虫之寓人、寓事，早在我国《诗经》中就有著录，像《国风·周南·螽斯》寓多子多孙、欢畅和睦的幸福生活。《国风·唐风·蟋蟀》以蟋蟀为对象，寓人之感物伤时，劝诫自己和别人勤勉，既欢喜娱乐，又不荒废事业，像贤士那样勤奋向上。《国风·召南·草虫》是以昆虫拟妻子盼丈夫归来的一首诗，用蝈蝈儿的叫声和跳跃来阐述人的情思。《小雅·甫田之什·青蝇》借青蝇营营飞舞寓小人谗言，斥害人祸国。《庄子·外篇·天运》借“虫，雄鸣于上风，雌应于下风而风化。类自为雌雄，故风化”喻夫妻。中国古代很多描写昆虫的，像蝉、螽斯、蟋蟀、蝴蝶、萤火虫，都是以其内涵深刻的咏颂为世人所称道。唐骆宾王的《萤火赋》就是借萤火自喻，抒其蒙冤之愤，“倘余光之可照，庶寒灰之重燃。”曹植的《蝉赋》借蝉自喻，托物咏怀，以其鸣叫之声寓其孤傲、高洁，其文“声嘒嘒而弥厉兮，似贞士之介心。内含和而弗食兮，与众物而无求。栖高枝而仰首兮，漱朝露之清流”。以蝶喻人的更多，《庄子·内篇·齐物论》中，庄子竟变成了蝴蝶，翩翩飞舞，不知是庄周做梦化为蝴蝶，还是蝴蝶做梦化为庄周，这是物化之变，消解物我界限，与万物融合。从自然现象的化蝶转化为蝶人互换，注入了新的内涵。东汉葛洪《抱朴子·外篇·官理》中有“髻髻背千金而逐蛱蝶”，描写的就是捕蝶的场景。再如《汉实录》载，右监门卫大将军许迁言：“臣奉命博州，至博平县东村，有豕弥亘数里，一夕言并化蝶飞去。”这就是具有传奇色彩的化蝶雏形。明代冯梦龙在《古今小说·李秀卿义结黄贞女》中曾言“梁祝化蝶之境”，颂扬了梁山伯与祝英台化蝶的爱情故事。说明中国传统文学借蝶喻人，赋予虫蝶象征意味的天人万物之对应，达到了具有哲理性的物我同化之境。

伴随绘画发展的进程，花鸟画所表现的对象也在不断丰富，从魏晋南北朝时期简单的“杂鸟兽”“杂异鸟”和“杂禽兽”等一些带有祥瑞色彩的吉祥动物，至隋唐方兴未艾，花鸟画学科兼杂着微观草虫的涵括，到了宋代才真正确立了自己的地位。从单纯、僵滞的写形、写貌，延伸至写其姿、写其意、现其神趣，升华到关爱生命，区别虫子的益和害，摒弃了社会属性的功利观。以艺术本质追求，表现浓郁的生活气息，用花鸟草虫的自然属性和规律，赋予其人格化。借昆虫外貌和习性的不同，来寓意爱憎以及对生命的理解与诠释，从而表达自己的理想与追求。

我自幼热爱大自然，对自然界的万事万物都有着浓厚的兴趣，尤其钟爱花鸟、草虫，常常捕捉戏玩，甚至梦中都有虫子欢悦的叫声。三四岁时便模仿虫子的形态涂鸦，无论蝴蝶、蜻蜓、蟋蟀、蝈蝈儿、蚂蚱、甲虫，还是各种不知名的虫子，都画上了自家的墙壁。稍长，开始临摹画报及连环画上的昆虫，用笔细细描出虫子的体态，乐此不疲。少年时期更加痴迷于花鸟、草虫，从古代绘画中学到了双钩填色法、没骨法、破墨法等，虽然承袭临摹，笔墨相随，但不能尽抒情怀。若使笔墨神形毕现，就要深入研究、揣摩昆虫的结构特征，头、目、嘴、须、足及其栖息习性。观察其居、伏、飞、鸣、跃，不同类型昆虫的雌、雄区别以及不同状貌、神形。它们生活的环境不同，身形、大小、色彩都迥然不同。如草间的蚂蚱，有灰色、棕色、翠绿色，为便于隐藏，它们的身形、色彩都随着环境的变化而有所不同。如蟋蟀，以及在洞穴杂石间生活的种种昆虫，它们的形象特征会适应其生活的环境。再如蝴蝶飞舞，翅膀形色不一，或粉，或黑，或黄，或白，有黑红、黑蓝、黑黄、黑白相间，诸多颜色花纹异彩纷呈，应细致入微地观察，掌握其形、神、色。

青年时期游历祖国大江南北、名山大川，在山水画写生创作的同时，对草木间的花鸟鱼虫也不断地观察与写生，穷其结构，窥其自然状态下的神情。如蝴蝶追逐、环舞蹁跹的意趣，在花草间吸露饮蜜之态和巨嶂岩壁间的灿烂色彩，在幽壑湿地上蝴蝶群居的壮观场景。荆柯杂丛间，众虫鸣跃，其状貌、色彩不一，我常常伏隐窥觑，仔细观察昆虫状态。巨壑林莽间，蝉的噪鸣，在山谷间回应。正如南朝梁王籍有诗云：“蝉噪林愈静，鸟鸣山更幽。”这样时时观摩，心摹手追，默记了许多昆虫的形貌、神态，在表现时，头脑中经常浮现各种昆虫的瞬间形象，从而神融气泰地施墨点染。在写生真山真水的同时，于沟壑溪涧潭池间，观察游鳞潜浮之态，寄情于山川万物之状，从宏观到微观都是表现的对象。我既醉心于奇雄大壑、林木竹石，亦沉浸于草间小虫之天趣。正如古代画家徐熙整日畅游园林田圃，观察领悟其情状。赵昌画花，晨起朝露下，绕栏仔细观摩、揣度，调色施墨写之，自号“写生赵昌”。易元吉初工花鸟、草虫、蔬果，常于宅后搭建池塘，布其乱石丛花，蓄水饲禽，以孔窗窥伺自由状态下的姿态，酝酿笔墨，鲜活之态跃然纸素，还经常深入万守山密林深处，观察体会猿、猴、獐、鹿的习性，心传目击，遇有会意之态，马上捕捉，付诸毫端。

以我画胡蜂为例，首先对其形象、生活习性进行观察与研究。比如它的体态细长而光滑，头胸一体，口器为咀嚼式，腹部由细细的蜂腰相连，有三对脚和一对触角，有单眼、复眼及翅膀，雌蜂有螫针。虫体或黑、黄、棕三色相间，或单色，虫体绒毛较短，足长，翅膀长度超过体长。静时翅纵折，覆盖体背，这是它的生理结构，然画时要取其鲜活之貌、飞翔之状。明王铎在《写像秘诀》中言：凡写肖像必须通晓面目、表情、形态，虽面貌部位用“五岳四渎”<sup>⑥</sup>来比喻，但亦有不相当之处。纵有相对之体，如同四时气象，各有差异。人之活体，瞬间变化，或谈话，或眸子目视，静态本真之面目，性情显现，则能静而求之，掌握于心，闭目见之，足能凸显笔下。王铎又曰：平庸的画工“胶柱鼓瑟”<sup>⑦</sup>，若不通晓绘画之道，照摹对象，使模特儿如泥塑之人，方才摹写，所画之人必为陶俑，无神，无形，无情，无气，更谈不上笔墨精妙。既阐述了中国画笔墨图形的关键，又揭示了富有哲理性的中国画特色，画昆虫亦如此。

我数十年不间断地观察胡蜂，无论在杜鹃盛开的弥山亘野，还是园圃林间，抑或在宅院内外。因季节变化，蜂体颜色有所不同，只有用心深研，才能明察其理。当春时节，胡蜂育子，或树木、屋檐、岩壁，均是胡蜂筑巢之处，蜂脾，鬣鬣然，形如倒钟。它们在巢旁旋转而飞，萦绕盘旋，嗡嗡作响，悬停于空，扇动飞舞。其背部和六足隐约可见，头略俯视，轮廓模糊。于草花茎叶间采集花蜜，轻盈翻飞，若逐顾盼，倘有触动，躲闪惊骇，动作敏捷，倏尔消逝。通过对胡蜂的审观细解，其头部的形状，眼须的位置，胸部的黑黄纹理，肢节的长短结构，腹部的斑纹及运动时的状态，飞行时偃仰上下的六足之姿，在茎叶上爬搔的神态、透视，都要了然胸中，通过心画眼击，全方位地掌握其形姿。

南朝谢赫的“六法论”，是绘画创作的机杼，我认为，气韵生动统要全盘，骨法用笔、应物象形、经营位置是辐辏，随类赋彩、传移模写是辘之廓。若付诸笔墨表现胡蜂瞬间的形神，需经身心感受，专心笔墨。古代表现各类禽虫的技法众多，然萧规曹随<sup>⑧</sup>，毕竟不是自家之法，只有运情施色才能意明笔透。要把具体细微的结构形象转化为笔、墨、色的运用，就需在纸素上另造物象。还以胡蜂为例，画胡蜂飞行之状，涉笔之前，其鲜活之态已孕胸次，通了细微之形。想象蜂飞嗡嗡、翅膀扇动、快速敏捷之状，用心感悟胡蜂瞬间之形色。创作时，调以色彩，迅速地铺出色块，简括、精准，不失骨力，寥寥数笔积出外轮廓。在未干时，用中锋兼正侧之笔，按所画蜂的透视行笔，中墨点出眼、胸、腹的纹路。后用轻淡之墨，笔肚处入稍许淡色，掺和淡墨，以侧锋铺毫、敛气，笔肚用力，掠擦羽翅。要以轻重、虚实之笔，画出翻飞之感。趁湿从胸部两侧画出双翼，以虚劲之笔，既爽利又恣意地写出翅脉的感觉，达其飞舞之势。再据其态，画出蜂之六足，勾其须，用散锋似有似无地丝出身上绒毛，要有虚实之分。虽写其大意，但精审每笔，笔笔生趣，方得蜂之神韵，具有迁想妙得之感染力。

通过对胡蜂的观察，掌握其细节结构。描写飞行的胡蜂时，怎样施笔落墨，以物寄情、物我交融，从而写出胡蜂之神貌，要与物象互通，画出意造天成之感。一般草虫画技法，有的用线勾勒敷色，有的点染、擦抹，浓淡兼融，墨破色、色破墨、撞水法、撞粉法，以此类推。像蛱蝶翩翩风致，若美人之姿。高洁之蝉、酿蜜之蜂、尚德之螽斯、趑趄之蚱蜢、攫物如虎之螳螂、鼓翅嚅嚅之蟋蟀、浮潜闲乐之鱼等等，世间一切生物皆有灵性，只有深入体验，抽象和具象同时融入作品，注重主观创作意念，赋予虫人类的精神，才能激活虫之神貌，创作出既生发天趣又有内涵的诗意作品。这样创作出的草虫，不是简单的虫体描写，是人虫互换发出更高境界的虫体再现。写虫运情，笔墨颖逸，匠心独运，草虫才能生趣滔滔，若为“稿子手”<sup>⑨</sup>，笔路怎能活脱生神？施墨晕色，无论粗放、工细，均以气骨驱动笔墨，精彩诸生，其斯定为上品。

本书录有我多年魂牵梦绕构思、创作的《溪山怡乐图》，其为据于梦境绘制的草虫长卷，把鲜活的草虫融入壮丽、空灵的大自然，用夸张的手法表现水泽芦草、丘陵峻山，内置奇花异草、烟霞云岚。以梦境之神秘，躐至千载，借昆虫之躯，度人之精神；依虫之属性，画草虫形态，“置陈布势”。中国画构图有“三远法”，我在构图上，从不同角度描写花草间的活虫，窥视水草密处小虾、小鱼的悠游闲放。用动静结合的方法，画连绵的山峦，以烟岚连之山体，间以花草，曲折回旋，层层递进地表现纵深之感。以梦境之浮沉，画草虫欢悦的场面，有聚有散，气脉相通，达至鸿蒙。以芸芸众虫、莘莘花草，表达物象的错杂万端，使画面上擎天宇，下达物微，游目骋怀，赏心达趣，人虫合一，万物同举，共享天籁。

草虫长卷的创作，让我感受颇多。写生和创作是相辅相成的，无论写神、写形、写态、写情，都离不开丰富的生活体验，石涛谓之“蒙养”。心物相通，人虫相通，浸淫其间，不断培养感悟能力，研求至密，有感而发，以畅神达情之笔墨，表现出具有象征意义的、鲜活的草虫。只有回归自然，潜心与自然交友，与万物众生同心，独辟笔墨蹊径，方能写出自家之言，绘出自家之境，以时代之笔墨再现春秋。

⑥ 五岳四渎：原是大山大川名，相学借指面部器官或部位，以此测断人的福寿休咎。金张行简《人伦大统赋》曰：“五岳必要穹与隆，四渎宜深且阔。”薛廷年注：“五岳者，额为南岳衡山，鼻为中岳嵩山，额为北岳恒山，左额为东岳泰山，右额为西岳华山。四渎者，耳为江，口为河，眼为淮，鼻为济。”

⑦ 胶柱鼓瑟：现含有贬义色彩，也作“胶柱调瑟”。比喻拘泥成规，不知灵活变通。

⑧ 萧规曹随：萧指萧何，曹指曹参。汉初，萧何为丞相，制定律令制度，后曹参继萧何为相，完全根据萧何的成规办事。后以萧规曹随，比喻按照前人的成规办事。

⑨ 稿子手：清画家松小梦在《颐园论画》中说：“古人名作，固可师法，究竟有巧拙之分。彼以稿本入手，半生目不睹真花，纵到工细绝伦，笔墨生动，俗所称稿子手，非得天趣者也。”

## All in One World: An Introduction to the Paintings of Plants and Insects

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In the long process of human development, human existence has always been closely related to Mother Nature and the animal world. In the early days of human society, our ancestors either lived in trees in southern China or took habitats in caves in northern China; both ways of living were highly dependent of nature. Grinding tools and colored pottery appeared in the Neolithic Period, where people employed simple tools to make a living. Later on, farming of cattle, lambs, deer and fishes started, and people tended to hold feelings of surprise and fear towards crocodiles, tigers and snakes, which developed into worship. By then, animals and insects became an important part of the primitive society.

Colored pottery excavated from Banpo, such as "the bowl decorated with four deer on the inside", "container with human face and fish pattern" and etc., employs geometry patterns to demonstrate the co-existence of our ancestors and nature, to praise life and beauty passionately, and appreciate animals and insects. From here has grown primitive art, which interprets the understanding of life by the ancient people. The simplistic art form, is a media to express to God wishes of harvest, of more hunted prey, and a desire to be kept away from disaster, for a better condition of existence and development.

Insects can be found in all corners of the world. Our ancestors fought hard for a living in nature, and had to take insects for food. The expression of "Chi Hai" recorded in THE RITES OF ZHOU refers to the jam made from ant eggs. It is noted in RITES that, "sparrows, quails, cicadas and bees" were made into food to serve the king. Our ancestors not only made use of resources that can be reached easily to produce food, but also used their mind to skillfully capture ants, locust, cicada, moth, damselfly, grub, lethocerus indicus, dragonflies, diving beetle, and etc. to maximize the food resources. The insect images, be it, drawings in the caves, on the rocks, or the insect patterns on the colored pottery, they reflect the living conditions that human ancestors depended on, patterns they used for decorations, and an expression of pursuit for beauty, which might serve as the beginning of the art of plant and insect

In the beginning, plant and insects served as food for humans, and fell into the category of materials. Later on, they entered human life as artistic images, and became metaphors and objects of worship. In Sang and Zhou dynasties, bronze wares were often decorated with metaphoric cicada patterns. The jade cicada in Han dynasty could be used in three ways: it could be worn as accessories, could be put on the hat, or put in the mouth of the dead. There were various different representations of insects in the ancient rock paintings. By way of the medium of insects, human ancestors admired the nature and amused themselves, and thus revealing the role of insects in people's lives.

The first Chinese painting of insects is found in Guo Pu's illustration of Er YA, in the Wei and Jin period. Lu Chen in Jin period once wrote in a prose describing the living habits of cricket, "Buzzing and blabbering, dancing gracefully, as if it is aware of the change of season and time." The Book of Songs also had a lot of depiction of insects such as caterpillars, locusts, Mosquitos and flies, spiders and crickets. Insects had then been developed into the subject of representation, and later on became the symbol of fertility. For instance, long-horned grasshopper, has long been a symbol of having numerous offspring, and it is still today.

the north of Beijing, there is a gate called the "gate of hundred sons," just opposite the "gate of long-horned grasshopper", as an expectation of the flourishing of the family in people and in wealth, and is adored by both aristocrats and ordinary civilians. It reads in the "Preface to Cricket" of THE LATEST ANTHOLOGY OF INSECTS published in the late 16th and early 17th century: "Small as it is, it has always caught the attention and even favor of ancient people, why? In summer days it is found in the wild, while in winter days it takes shelter close to humans; by listening to its songs people can tell the time (of the year). Apart from these, it buzzes with the flap of wings and has an air of eagles, later on, people tend to capture them and keep them in containers, and make them fight each other in games and gambles to kill time." In the Preface to "Ode to Cicada," Lu Yun of Western Jin Period elaborated that cicada has six virtues: "With tassels on the head, it looks gentle; taking in only air and morning dew, it is very pure; having no grains or corns for food, it is really clean; where it lives does not make any nest, it has a simple way of life; as it echoes the seasonal changes, it is trustworthy; if it takes on hats, it will look smart." It spoke very highly of cicada's virtue, literally the "most virtuous insect which embodies the harmonious energies of heaven and earth, it is as clear and bright as the sky, and thus is born of a fair nature." It praises its sublime character in the fact that the cicada "does not take the grain or corn despite its inviting fragrance, and piously maintains an ascetic state of mind." Tang dynasty poet Luo Binwang used to employ the image of cicada as a metaphor to express himself.

In mid eighth century in Tang dynasty, it became highly popular to raise crickets in expensive containers and gamble in the cricket fight, some would throw thousands and thousands of dollars into the gambling. Emperor Xuan Zong of Tang dynasty enjoyed the game tremendously, and would raise crickets on his own. Soon, the game thrived in the Palace and upper class. In the art works, insects do have a role of its own. The royal clan of the Tang dynasty, Li Yuanying, was famous for painting cicada, birds flowers. Butterflies and bees were his favorite subjects for painting, among which a "brush-footed butterflies" was known as the best. Zhu Jinxuan praised him as being "not only skillful but also elaborate in detail." In early Tang dynasty, Xue Ji was famous for painting cranes on six-piece folding screens, with original compositions. Feng Shaozheng, who was good at painting eagles, pigeons, corks and pheasant. The creatures he painted captured both the representation and spirit of subjects, the beaks, eyes, claws, feathers were colorfully and skillfully presented. He used to paint dragons in the royal palace, where the dragons appeared to break off from walls and bring down the cloud and rain. Jiang Jiao's eagles and birds were presented vividly. Li Ti was famous for painting flies, butterflies, bees and cicadas. In late Tang dynasty, Bian Luan's plants and birds, bees, butterflies, sparrows, cicadas were captured lively in posture, exquisite in color; flowers and branches swayed in the wind, the insects were elaborated in great detail, butterflies flapped their wings, grass leaves bent over strong wind, making a scene full of life and vigor. In the first half of the seventh century, Silla once presented peacocks to Tang dynasty, Emperor Dezong asked Bian Luan to make sketches at Xuanwu Gate. Luan painted two peacocks, one in the face, the other in the back, both in vivid colors of greens, colors of the feather change beautifully, as if dancing to a melody, in welcoming guests, which was indeed a superb work of art. When it comes to the tenth century, plant and birds painting gradually developed into a separate genre, where all kinds of flowers and insects appeared in artworks. Mei Xingsi, an official of Southern Tang dynasty was good at painting roosters, which were referred to as "Mei's rooster". Prime Minister of Liang, Yu Jing was famous for painting peony. He was diligent in conception, and each time he painted, there would be new surprises. A complete edition of his sketches "Zhe Zhi (Branches)" was known to the world. Artist Guo Qianhui of Southern Tang dynasty who was good at painting raptors and birds, was known as "General Guo." He chose to live in suburban areas to raise livestock and birds and observe them in daily life. Painters of the same prestige include Shi Qiong, who was famous for pheasants, rabbits, bamboos and rocks; Cheng Ling's crane and bamboo;