



赵国维 现代线描

ZHAO GUOWEI DRAWING

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赵
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CHINESE INK
现代线描

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國維的畫是赴是以沒的新探
索。他原有極踏實的寫實基礎。現
在又有，更為開濶的眼界。對造型，
空間的觀念都打破了以前的框。我
認為都是十分有益的。如何吸收歐美
的好經驗是我們這一代的歷史責任，
需要從各種角度進行試驗。我預祝
國維的更大成功。

錢紹武
二〇〇一年夏月

Guowei's painting has shown a new exploration since he going to the United States. Originally, he possessed a very strong basic skill in describing natural objects realistically. Presently, he has broken up previous bandage and opened up a broader view in shape and space in his painting, which is beneficial to his art.

Our responsibility is to learn the strength from American and European art, in which we need to experience from various aspects. I wish Guowei a great success in the future.

QianShaowu Summer, 2001

这是钱绍武先生于2001年看了我上世纪八十年代用炭笔画的人体画之后，热情地写在宣纸上的期许，尊嘱发表于此。

This is the calligraphy that Mr. Qian Shaowu wrote after he saw my pastel figurative drawings in 2001. He was passionate writing his expectation to me on the rice paper. I have it here by his permeation.

赵国维

1944年生，天津市人。雕塑家、画家。

1962年毕业于中央美术学院附中，1967年毕业于中央美术学院雕塑系。1973年为武汉歌舞剧院舞台美术设计师。

1982年赴美国定居。

美国Seagull Fine Art艺术出版商专属雕塑家，创作的系列雕塑作品，在美国各大画廊展销。其雕塑作品参展于纽约、洛杉矶等地艺术博览会，并受聘于美国马特尔玩具公司Mattel Toy, Inc, 为资深雕塑家。曾为西雅图大型古典民宅创作4件青铜雕塑作品，与丁绍光共同为上海大剧院创作巨型铜雕作品《和谐》。近年来创作人体素描焦墨作品有300余幅。北京《艺术》杂志2006年予以专题介绍，同年为香港宾馆Novotel Citygate Hotel 设计并制作巨型铜质雕塑《宇宙系列》两幅和系列素描作品（参加世界性招标获选）。曾获选担任美国马特尔公司芭比娃娃（Barbie）及男友肯（Ken）的造型设计。现代雕塑作品《宇宙》入选2008年北京国际双年展。

Guowei Zhao

Born in 1944, in Tianjin, China. Sculptor and Painter.

Guowei Zhao Graduated from the Center Academy of Fine Art Affiliated High School in 1962, Five years later, he graduated from the Center Academy of Fine Art in Beijing China. In 1974, as a stage designer, he employed at Wuhan Opera House for eight years.

In 1982, Guowei Zhao immigrated to the United States.

As a professional sculptor, he worked for Seagull Fine Art making a series of sculptures, which were shown at major galleries in the United States. Also, the pieces were exhibited at Art Expo in Los Angeles, New York, and other major cities in the United States. Then, as master sculptor he was employed at Mattel Toy, Inc. During those years he created four pieces of bronze sculptures for a classical castle at Seattle, Washington. Together with Mr. Ting Shaokuang, they created huge sculptures- "Harmony" for Shanghai Grand Opera Hall. Recently, Guowei Zhao has produced 300 pieces figurative drawings and ink paintings, some of which were published and reviewed in the Beijing "art" magazine in 2006. Same year, his two pieces huge copper sculptures series, "Universe", along with five ink drawings were selected by Novotel Citygate Hotel in Hong Kong, (Through a world wide bidding). As a major master designer, he designed "Barbie" doll and her boy friend "Ken" for Mattel Toy, Inc. In 2008, his sculpture piece "Universe" was selected and participated at 2008 Beijing International Bi-annual Art Exhibition in China National Museum.



无法挡住的魅力

——评赵国维的现代线描人物

贾德江

面对从美国归来的画家赵国维的一幅幅现代线描人物,有一种无法挡住的魅力扑面而来。我想各位艺术同道一定会和我一样感到十分惊诧、兴奋和激动。惊诧的是他线描语言的张力四射,兴奋的是他创造了线描的新的审美形态,激动的是他的作品内蕴着一种难以名状的精神上的震撼性与穿透力。这些画在宣纸上的黑白线描人像和人体,或以焦墨写意,热烈粗放,激越雄强,或以围绕细线,乱中取形,生意无限,其线型、线性已不是西方画家笔下的线条,仅仅是轮廓的分界线,也不是东方“吴带当风”、“曹衣出水”的传统线描的紧劲绵长,而是一种抽象与具象结合、东方与西方联姻、现代与传统嫁接,而具有异样香味的奇葩。

他的创作心态是开放的,他的表现手法是自由的,他似乎对表现主义的怪才科柯施卡以富有强烈动感的笔触、歪曲客体的变形抱有浓厚的兴趣,他仿佛对野兽派的领袖马蒂斯将形式提高到独立的地位,渗透着浪漫的东方韵味和质朴的非洲艺术特征情有独钟;阿岗·希尔笔下充分表达画家骚动不安情绪的紊乱线条,使他痴迷过,而卢西恩·弗洛伊德富有“肉感”的创作风格,融入强烈的心理感应与创作激情,探寻着具象世界中的人体与艺术想象巧妙结合的途径,也使他陶醉过。赵国维告诉我,对他影响最大的还是西方现代艺术之父的塞尚。

在塞尚之前,绘画基本上是再现自然、模仿自然的艺术,而在塞尚之后,艺术家们不再强调自然的再现,而是注重根据对客观自然的感受来表达主观意念,注重表现物质的具体性、稳定性和内在结构性,形成了他特有的结构主义的艺术特色。这位现代艺术大师,主张绘画要摆脱情节性和文学性,要强烈地去感受对象,反对冷漠地对待自然,非常强调主观感受的重要性,主张充分发挥绘画的表现力。他的这种观念推动了欧洲的纯绘画观念的流行和形式主义绘画语言的发展。在赵国维看来,塞尚在绘画上的革新精神是西方现代艺术最闪光的亮点,恰恰与中国绘画的写意精神不谋而合。

从中央美院附中到中央美院雕塑系,赵国维经过了九年的“中国学院式”教育的训练,使他拥有了扎实的西方造型基础,但骨子里深深烙下的却是民族传统的烙印。或许是受教于钱绍武教授的影响,赵国维对“以线造型”的迷恋和兴致与日俱增。当他从东晋顾恺之的“春蚕吐丝”圆润挺秀的线法,唐人吴道子“磊落挥霍”的“兰叶描”,北宋李公麟“淡毫轻墨”的纯粹线描形式,明末陈洪绶夸张变形的瘦劲古朴的笔法——走过之后,这位性格含蓄平和、内心激情澎湃的学子,更钟情于明人徐渭“走笔如飞”的狂放与奇崛,更偏爱于宋人梁楷的泼辣、简洁的粗笔大墨,更使他心驰神往的还有中国书法中狂草的龙飞凤舞。无论是“以头濡墨而书”的张旭,还是“忽然绝叫三五声,满壁纵横千万字”的怀素,狂草的创作者们,在他们激情到来之际,那种不可遏止、不能自制的迷狂与亢奋,极大地影响着赵国维的艺术取向。他不

再以铅笔如老僧补衲一般,从容而细密地去刻画对象,对炭笔那种拖泥带水、不清不明的模糊轮廓线也不再有所兴趣,用中国的宣纸、毛笔,以狂草的笔法,融入徐渭大写意的豪放,追求梁楷减笔描法的锐利泼辣,为现代人物立像,赵国维开始了他的特立独行的艺术之旅。

自1967年中央美院雕塑系毕业之后的若干年来,无论是在部队学生连的军旅生涯,还是在武汉歌剧院绘制布景的舞台,直到1982年赴美国艰苦创业的日子里,无论命运安排了怎样的起落,情感里接纳了怎样的荣辱,赵国维唯一放不下的只有他心中的线描艺术。

他的线描表现的主题是人像和人体,纸材是中国的宣纸,工具却是两样,一种是西方的马克笔,一种是中国的毛笔。如果我说得不错的话,赵国维的工具选择一定源于这样的目的:前者致力于西方绘画工具的革命,后者立足于传统艺术的再造。准确地说,使用马克笔塑造人体的线描语言,是赵国维赴美之后开始探索的课题。

马克笔是一种特制的钢笔,画出的线一样粗细,不讲浓淡,少有变化,是习惯用线的西方画家的作画工具。我们常说,线条是中国画的主要表现手段,用线造型是中国传统绘画的形式特点,但线描并不是中国的专利。我们不能说安格尔的线描不用于造型,不具备线形美,也不能说比兹莱以线条组成画面的黑白灰关系,不具备形式意味;我们同样可以看到,凡·高从东方绘画中吸收了营养,找到了恰好表达他感情的线,马蒂斯能以线的特有变化唤起读者感受到漫不经心的情绪。我想说的是,西方绘画中的线形美缺少的是中国绘画中的某种主观精神、情绪、意趣,我们称之为韵律的东西。赵国维正是以这种富有生气的韵律,使他的线描人物传达了“活”的精神和意趣。他以一种不完全依存所表现对象而连续运行的细线,“连绵相属,气脉不断”,追求不同程度的变形乐趣;他在讲究起承转合运线的停顿中,在宣纸上不经意地留下的“点”状,似悬珠缀玉而别有灵趣;外轮廓的线尽兴画去,圆硬中略带方折,细劲挺拔,流畅舒展,注重在力的控制中,强调造型的简练概括;内结构信笔由缰,圈圈绕绕,横涂竖抹,轻松自由,在看似无序的乱麻般线形中蕴藏着光影、明暗、层次、体感、质感的若有若无地诉说,大有随形入化的妙语。他的这类作品,已由自然的再现范畴,步入自由的艺术王国,是一种对艺术本质的领悟和个性化的高扬。它的审美价值,不在自然物象的结构美、神情美,而在于线的内部运动和重新组合而创造的一种绘画表现力。赵国维大胆运用外国现代艺术中的一些观念与精神、观察方法与构成方法,但他又不从外部形式上去模仿西方现代艺术;在他显示着浓厚现代意味的作品中,内涵着东方的艺术精神。他的富于弹性的具有强大生命力的线条,不仅显示了东方艺术家驾驭西方工具的能力,也跨越了西方的美学要求,呈现出一种新的审美特质。

其实,赵国维最感兴趣的还是他的焦墨大写意线描,这是他在美国的20多年间思考最多、着力最大、用功最深的艺术形式。纵观中国绘画史,中国画的笔墨大都讲求文静、淡雅、秀逸的形态,所表现的多是“如烟、如云,如幽林曲涧”的意境,而明末大写意笔墨的开创者徐渭,则如闯入“幽林曲径”中的烈马,以奔放不羁的笔墨在似与不似之间,在有意无意之间,在可控与失控之间,呈现出气韵飞动、错落狂舞的视觉效果,抒发着他“开拓万古之心胸”的激情。在赵国维看来,一代宗师徐渭的愤激奔宕的画风,那“不求形似求生韵”的笔调,那满纸震颤、似真似幻的美景,是中国绘画长河中的最精彩之笔,与西方现代艺术之父塞尚的境界有异曲同工之妙。

就人物画而言,这种大写意画风在徐渭之前也曾出现过,宋代的梁楷就以放犷的粗笔大墨表达过这种意象,可惜的是,他的艺术价值并不被古代所欣赏而得以承传,以至于赵国维和他的同辈人一样,从进入高等学府起,便身不由己地在接受有关传统程式化教育以及西方素描色彩的基本功训练,这种双向哺育法培育的结果差不多将所有人全部赶上了一条缺乏大写意意味的用线造型的“写实主义”道路上,以为只有带光影的素描加水墨的人物画才是中国人物画的唯一模式。

美国不是中国艺术家的天堂,但却可以让艺术家在寂寞中有所思想。或许是赵国维的本心顿悟,或许是赵国维励志图新的精神,使得他与徐渭、梁楷这两位古人息息相通。他们启开了赵国维一种新的思路,那就是在历史的空白处使赵国维看见了用大写意笔法去表现现代人物的线描形式,会为艺术发展带来新的曙光。这种思路在赵国维的作品中被不断放大,不断地强调,对线的自律性的尊重和应用,使他在线条统领画面的神圣性中放弃了淡墨的表情,而孤注一掷地确立以浓墨为主的笔墨形态,焦墨写意线描人物便应运而生了。焦墨既是可贵的胆识、果敢的决断,也是情感积蓄后的强烈爆发,又是一诺千金的肯定答复。作为一种人生,焦墨是厚重超然的境界;作为审美范畴,是清晰,是明确,是苍辣,表现为单纯与高贵、雄悍与霸气、沉重和压抑。

赵国维选择的艺术范围不是传统的文人画,也不是花鸟、山水,而是现代人物或人体的写生,这种艺术神采和现代艺术有着某种亲缘性,因此最易转化成现代艺术。从本质上说,赵国维焦墨线描使中国艺术和西方现代艺术在精神上找到了契合点,并将这种精神承载在宣纸和笔墨上,通过焦墨写意,让它们交合渗化,创造出具有现代意义的艺术新境界。他下笔狠辣,大刀阔斧,粗笔恶墨,力量感很强。他凭借对人物肌肉、骨骼以及神情动态的深入研究和熟练掌握,不仅在人物高处(亮白)着力,更在人物低处(暗面)用心,以面衬线,以黑显亮,那种意由心生、笔随意转、得意忘形的状态,或生涩干裂,或沉重苍厚,或笔断意连,或粗野放纵,形成了一种“大墨无形”的浓枯之美,体现出精微的神机。这种类同于大写意花鸟的即兴表现形式,使焦墨的点线元素,“完全抛弃了解释性的企图,而成为内心情感的象征性符号”(康

定斯基语)。非描绘性的笔法、解溶的夸张形体、松活灵动的笔触所显示的潇洒兴味,同结构若即若离,意象的笔墨所要表达出的只是一个动字,在宁静移动中内充活力。赵国维不认为显现在宣纸上的笔痕墨迹,只有合乎书法用笔才有意义,而认定笔墨的重要性与感觉不可分离。这种感觉对帮助赵国维建立自己的艺术风格起到了关键的作用。

赵国维的焦墨写意是一种抽象和概括的艺术,它的优势在于强烈的主观性。抽象,是中国笔墨本身所具有的特质,包含着鲜明的民族性,而概括,是对复杂的形体或现象的归纳,它需建立在多种学养的基础上,具体到一幅作品,艺术家的个人趣味也必然融入其中。就这个意义来说,赵国维的作品更具有艺术性,更具有张力和冲击力。画中隐藏着对西法的汲取,主要不是技法上的,而是观念和精神上的同构。这种精神不是欧洲古典主义绘画的,而是西方现代艺术的表现主义精神。

显然,从马克笔的细线描法到毛笔的粗笔焦墨写意线描,是赵国维出入于中外历代大师的语言世界之后而独立寻得的艺术创造,也是他的至爱。如果说,他的马克笔线描不因为追求现代性而泯灭了民族性的话,那么他的焦墨写意也不会因为弘扬了民族性而湮没了世界性。在这些表现人体或人像的作品中,他将中国传统的以线造型和西方现代艺术精华兼收并蓄,化合为一,以现代的观念、线描的手法,轻松而自由地记录了画家生命的进程,是画家内心世界的一种物化结果,同时也显示了现代人对创造意识非理性的尊重,对抽象形体和现代线描形式的深刻感受,以及那种以自己独有的心灵所渗透于画面的富于情理和哲理的交融。我们无法挡住赵国维艺术所散发出的魅力,我们也不可否认他的艺术开创了绘画的新途径,虽然真正理解它还需要一段时间,但他的艺术精神必然会影响着东西方的许多艺术家。他的努力是具有世界性意义的。

2009年12月7日凌晨完稿于北京王府花园

Irresistible Charm

Review on Zhao Guowei's Modern Line Drawing

Jia De Jiang

Some irresistible charms are blowing on my face at the time when I'm enjoying the masterpieces of modern line drawings by Zhao Guowei, an artist from the United States. I think all fellow artists share the same feeling with me, surprised, excited and agitated. The surprise comes from his language for the lines radiating a strong tension, and the excitement is based on his creation of a new aesthetic form in line drawing, while the agitation is due to a kind of indescribable shock and psychological penetration. Those black-white figurative line drawings on rice paper are freestyle in pure ink, passionate and boorish, powerful and surging. Some are conglomeration twisted in thin line and others are shapes within the disarray, to express an infinite vital force. The shape and the character of the lines are no longer as the lines from western artists, neither with the outline of the shape as of the traditional, tight, inward as of "Wu zone when the wind," or "Cao cloth out of water"¹. Masterworks of combination of abstract and concrete, of marriage between western and eastern, are of graft by modern and tradition.

Zhao Guowei creates with open mind and in free style for expression. He seems to have an extreme curiosity for Kokoschka, an expressionist genius, with his strong dynamic strokes and distorted objects. He admires with penchant for Matisse leader of Fauvism, who raised the form into an independent level, and with the unvarnished character of African art, penetrated with romantic Eastern rhyme. He is obsessed with the disorder and agitative lines from Argonne Hill; and at the same time, he is greatly inebriated by Lucian Freud, who, full of creative passion and strong psychological sense, explored the ingenious combination of human body in the concrete world with art imagination. However Zhao Guowei has told me that he is mostly inspired by Cezanne, father of the Western contemporary arts.

Prior to Cezanne, the art was basically an art of reproduction or imitation of nature. Even since, artists have been no longer emphasizing on the reproduction on nature, but rather, focus to express subjective impression on the basis of personal reception for objective nature, and focus to express the concretion, stability and internal structure of the material so as to establish his personal artistic specialty of structuralism. This great contemporary art master advocated that painting should break away with the sense of plot and literary, and that the artist should try intensively to get known of the objectives and should oppose to treat the nature in a careless manner, and extremely emphasis the importance of personal sensation and advocated to make full display of the expression ability in the painting. With the concepts, he promoted the popularity "art for art's sake" and the development of formalism in Europe. To Zhao Guowei, Cezanne's innovation spirits in painting is the brightest shining point in the Western modern art, and the coincidence with the spirit of Chinese freestyle painting.

From the High School affiliated to Central Academy of Fine Art to the Academy's Sculpture Department, Zhao Guowei received nine-year training in "Chinese Academic Education", which provided him a solid foundation of western modeling. However deep in his heart, he was marked with the national tradition. Maybe due to the influence by Professor Qian Shaowu, Zhao Guowei had been growing day by day the fascination and interest in "shaping by line". Zhao had gone through various schools in Chinese history: Gu Kaizhi of Eastern Jin Dynasty with his beautiful curving and graceful lines, just as silkworm spinning

silk-threat; Wu Daozhi of Tang Dynasty with his "Lan Yi Miao"²; Li Gongli of North Song Dynasty for his style of simple lines as "Dan Hao Qing Mo"³; and Chen Hongshou from late Ming Dynasty with his brushes for old plain style of thin and strong lines with exaggeration and deformation. However, as a student, calm and inward in personality but passionate inside, Zhao Guowei was more in favor of Xu Wei of Ming Dynasty for his wild and odd personality by means of "paint with flying brush" style; and of Liang Kai of Song Dynasty with his vigorous and concise bold brush works. And he was even more fascinated with flamboyant Chinese calligraphy in cursive, whether Zhang Xu "drawing with hair", or Huai Su who calligraphed so swiftly as "with seconds of cries, thousand of characters done". Zhao Guowei was tremendously affected in his art direction by the unpreventable and uncontrollable ecstasy and excitement of those cursive creators at the time when their emotion was pouring. He was no longer satisfied using a pencil as an old monk to detail the objects calmly and meticulously. He was no longer interested in slovenly and unclear fuzzy contour with the pastels. In combination of boldness by Xu Wei with his free style and in pursuit of Liang Kai's sharp, pungent simple brush works, Zhao Guowei started his unique maverick art journey, by painting in wild brush style contemporary figures with Chinese rice paper and brushes.

Years following 1967 when he graduated from Sculpture Department at the Central Academic of Fine Art, the only thing Zhao Guowei can never give up is his art of line, no matter whether in the army as a training student, or in Wuhan Opera House as a stage designer, and no matter in the United States where he suffered so much hardship in his new career, or how up-and-down by the density and emotionally. His line drawing mainly expresses human figures and portraits, on Chinese rice paper with two different kinds of pen-Western mark pen and Chinese brush. If I am not mistaken, the idea he had chosen these two tools were based on revolution of Western painting material and the re-creation of traditional art. Shaping human figures with markers was Mr. Zhao Guowei's new exploration after he went to The United States.

Marker pen is a special pen that enables one to draw lines in the same thickness with less variety. It is the tool that Western artists like to use for the line drawing. We often say that line is a main method in Chinese traditional painting, while actually it isn't Chinese patent. We can't say that Angell's line drawing was not for shaping and didn't express linear beauty. Neither we can say that Aubrey Beardsley didn't show formation in his black-white-gray relation of lines. In the same way, we can see that Van Gogh had absorbed the nutrition from Eastern to find the lines to express his motions, and Matisse woke up enabled to use line to wake up the viewers' mood by specific changes of lines. What I like to say here is that the lines in Western paintings lack a spirit, emotion, and interest in Chinese counterparts, which we call the rhythm. With the same lively rhythm, Mr. Zhao Guowei has conveyed the "live" spirit and interest in his lines.

Farther more, he is pursuing of varying degrees of deformation, which are "connective but belonging", "continuously in spirit" of a moving line, which is never relied on the others. He left "dots" casually on rice paper like suspending beads and jades full of special sentiments, at pauses and joints of lines. His artworks of this kind have stepped from a natural reproduc-

tion into a free art realm; it is digestion of the essence of art and individualization. The outlines combine square with round shapes, powerful and straight, fluency and stretch, focusing in force control; the emphasis lays on the conciseness of the shapes. As for the inner structures, the winding lines mix around, the seemingly chaos contain narration of light and shadow, brightness and darkness, layers and volumes, and texture. It's aesthetic value lays in the power of expression derived from linear dynamic move and re-formation instead of the beauty of structure of the natural objects and spirit bravely, Zhao Guowei exerted some concepts and observation \formation methods from foreign contemporary art, in the meanwhile, he was not superficially imitating Western modern art. In his art works, which imply a strong contemporary odor and oriental artistic spirit, his elastic and powerful lines full of strong vitality not only show the ability of the oriental artist to control Western tools, but also present a new aesthetic quality across the Western esthetes.

As a matter of fact, Zhao Guowei is interested most in the pure ink freehand brushwork, which, as an artistic form, he has considered, emphasized and worked most during his stay of more than 20 years in the United States. Looking back its history, the Chinese painting stressed most with the pen and ink to be gentle, elegant and graceful and to express moods as if smoke, clouds or quiet woods in a glen and bending gully. However as the pioneer of freehand brushwork in the late Ming Dynasty, Xu Wei, like a fiery horse breaking into the woods and the gully, presented a visual effect of flying spirit mixed with whirling dance in a way that seemed between like and dislike, intentional and unintentional, controllable and uncontrollable, and to express his enthusiasm of 'exploiting the minds of the ancient'. As Zhao Guowei understood Xu Wei as the maestro, his art style of wrathful rising and falling, his brushworks "with emphasis in spirits, not in appearance", and his masterworks of inspiring and implausible beautiful scenes fully-dotted on rice paper, all are the most splendid part in the long history of Chinese painting, sharing the same marvelous with Cézanne, the father of western contemporary art, though with different approaches.

For figurative drawing, this kind of freehand brushwork style had once appeared before Xu Wei. Liang Kai in the Song Dynasty had expressed his attempt with his bold, rough and startling freehand brushwork. Unfortunately, his art value was never appreciated and inherited by the ancient people. Zhao Guowei and his generation alike had to obtain involuntarily a traditional education in stylization and a basic training in western drawing and color once he was admitted to the institution for higher education. And as the result of the bi-directional nurturing education, almost everybody was forced to drive on a "realistic" way, but lack of freehand style formed by line. They assumed that only the figurative ink drawing with light and shadow plus the Chinese ink painting was the unique mode for Chinese figurative painting.

The United States is not the paradise for Chinese artists; however, it allows artists to develop their thought in the loneliness. Perhaps it is because of his insight or because of his spirit of encouragement and innovation that enabled Zhao Guowei, to get inspired by Xu Wei and Liang Kai, the two great ancient masters, and to open a new way of thinking, which helped him find out from the historical vacancy and blindness a form to create modern figurative painting with line, thus bringing a new light to his art development. Through his work, Zhao made this way of thinking further constantly developed and stressed. With the respect and practice of self-discipline for the lines, Zhao abandoned the light ink as the way of expression, which, as a divine, dominated the whole painting, and took a great risk by setting up a form with pure black ink as the domination, thus portraiture with the pure ink free brushwork drawing was emerging. Nevertheless, choosing pure ink is a valuable courage, resolute decision and as well a powerful explosion from accumulation of sensibility and an extremely positive answer to a promise. The burnt ink, as a way of life, is a spiritual realm of thick and heavy transcendence; and as an aesthetic category, is clear, definite and vast and scorching, representing the sharp contract of simplicity with nobility, brave with domination, and heaviness and oppression.

Zhao Guowei chooses the sketch of modern figures or human bodies as his artistic

range, neither the traditional Southern School, nor the flowers and birds, nor the landscape, and this artistic expression is pretty easy to be transferred into modern art since there is some kind of relationship within. With the burnt ink sketch drawing, Zhao Guowei finds in itself a spiritual point of agreement for the Chinese art and the Western art, and bears the spirits with rice paper, ink and brush. With the freehand brushwork, Zhao melts both arts together and creates a new artistic realm with modern sense. He draws in a very bold and prompt way: heavy ink, bold lines, to make his paintings with sense of power. With thorough study and profound master of the muscle, bone and the facial expression of the figures, Zhao pays attention not only to the high point (the highlight), but more to the low point (the shadow), with lines set off by the surface, while the light revealed by the dark; with a state of the intention from the heart, while the brush moving according to the intention, but the formation forgotten by the intention. His brush strokes are either jerky and choppy, or heavy and thick, or broke but the expression continues, or corniness and indulger, creating a beauty of density and withering in a status of formless ink and exhibiting the wonder of refinement. This kind of extemporization, similar to the great freehand brushwork of flower and bird paintings, makes the elements of dots and lines, "totally casting away any attempt of explanation to become a symbolical icon of the internal sensibility" (quote from Kandinsky). Non-descriptive style of painting, exaggerative body postures, grace from the flexible and beautiful brushwork, status of neither combination nor separation in the same construction, painting with imagination, all these come to one word: Movement, and quiet movement with full of energy.

Zhao Guowei doesn't think that the trace and ink appeared on rice paper will be meaningful only if the brushworks are calligraphic, but believes that the meaning lies in the inseparableness of the importance of the brushworks with sensibility, and the latter has played a key role in helping establish Zhao Guowei's artistic style. Zhao's burnt ink freehand brushwork is an art of abstract and recapitulation, the advantage of which is of strong subjectivity. Abstract is the specific characteristic of the Chinese brush and ink, with very clear nationality while recapitulation is a summary of complicated patterns and phenomena, need to be built on the basis of rich education and cultivation. As particular to any piece of art, the artist's personal interests must be involved definitely. In this sense, the works by Zhao Guowei are more artistic, more intense and more impactive. The absorption of Western painting skills hidden in his works is not mainly on technically, but of the same structure of concepts and spirits, for the spirits are not the characteristic of classical European painting, but that of the expressionism of modern western arts.

Obviously, it is the unique artistic creation by Zhao Guowei from the fine line drawing with marker pen to the line drawing of freehand brushwork with brush as the result of his study of the painting languages from master painters of China and abroad, and it is his true love. If we say that his marker pen line drawing doesn't perish nationality in the pursuit of modernity, we can then say that his burnt ink freehand brushwork will not perish his globalization because he is developing the nationality. Zhao absorbs the essence of the Chinese traditional formation with line drawing with that of the modern western art, in these works of human bodies or portraitures, and blends them together as one. And he uses modern concept and line drawing skill freely to record with ease the life progress of a painter, which is the materialization of the painter's inner world and also shows rational respect to the creative conscious by modern people and the deep feeling of the abstract shape and the form of modern line drawing. And it is also the blending of sense and philosophy through the frames with his unique soul. We cannot resist the charms by Zhao Guowei and his works, nor can we deny that he has created a new way of painting, in spite of the time required for true understanding. Zhao's artistic spirit will definitely influence many artists both from the East and the West. His effort is worldwide.

Beijing Palace Garden
Dawn of December 7, 2009

自序

赵国维

“画如其人”是形容艺术作品和艺术家之间的关系,也是对艺术表现的深层期许。给自己的画册写序,写自己的画和人,不是件容易的事情。画画也许会画蛇添足,因为中国人画画感性、随意较多,往往说不清楚。写自己的“人”相对容易一些。我们这一代人经历了半个世纪社会的大动荡,每个人都会有感慨可写,只是画画人的感慨应在其作品中有所表达,或者痕迹会自然流露。至于是否有这些内涵显露,并不是自己说了算,而是由观者评判的。

我们受教育的那个年代,是集体理想主义,强调共性,穿一样的衣服,说一样的话,画一样的画。人和画都比较相近,算是人如其画。

一场大动荡来了,随波逐流者如我,狂热投入,忘乎所以。当然更谈不上画画了,荒芜多年,丢失了大好时光。

以后那些年,下放了,更失去了画画的权利。下放结束,我被分配到武汉工作,有机会去长江三峡画画。多年没有动笔,激情奋发,如饥似渴地画了一批三峡风景。至今像文物般地保留着,挂在我的房间里,独享只有自己能感受到的记忆。

改革开放了,1982年我只身去了美国。回想当年刚刚到美国时的窘迫心态,真有如“浪迹天涯”的“丧家之犬”,羞涩囊中仅有50元。在餐馆打工,第一个月当老板给我的信封中装着700美元时,我知道可以生存了。生存和精神是并存的,孤独的煎熬是最大的磨难,名副其实的独立生活是对前半生群体生活的最大颠覆和震撼。偶尔听到德沃夏克的交响乐“自新世界”,描述新移民的旋律,乡愁绵绵,为之动容。回忆这些年的往事,前不久我曾写了一幅“面壁二十五年”的字,我亲身体验到西方个人价值观的生存基础。西方的生活对我,一个中国人,确实是个挑战!

孤独促成思想。面对西方现当代艺术诸流派,我的起点是如实描绘对象的学院派。我的急切切入点点是塞尚,是破解塞尚之谜。当我比较深入地了解了塞尚及早期现代主义的内涵时,其实西方早已出现了反对视觉艺术的斗士杜尚。杜尚及他的中国当前追随者所提倡的“艺术必须灭亡”,从根本上并不能打动我。我认知塞尚及早期现代主义是我真实的心理倾向,并认为他们是西方艺术与中国传统艺术的交汇点。似乎西方的这个潮流与东方交集之后,又远走高飞了,用中国人的中庸理念来说,是走火入魔了。二十多年来,我朝思暮想,并未有定论,只是“凭着感觉走”,感情上接受不了的东西岂能勉强;还是心存艺术的崇高,期盼想出、画出属于自己的画来。

苦和乐也是并行的,改变了自己传统艺术的旧我,让思想穿行在艺术发展的进程中,倍感欣慰,也聊补离乡之苦。画画和写作一样,没有一点苦难的经历,很难积淀出厚重和内涵。

我这批画的产生,带有很大的偶然性。机缘给了我薄发多年积累的可能。由于有条件,我可以每周画两次模特,于是周而复始竟画了六、七年。开始投入的时候,只是出于一个雕塑家对画人体的爱好,但由于渴望艺术上的变革和企图挣脱传统的羁绊,我很快意识到这是合适的平台。我一股脑地把“写生”“素描”之类传统的规范抛到脑后。因为是无功利的,不知何时“可贵者胆”成了我的强项,在千变万化的随意之中释放自己,抓住所有的随意出现的灵感,大胆展开,而形成了自己的面貌。

除了上面讲的偶然机缘之外,这批画尚有其特殊性可述。一个中国画家,在宣纸上画了一批西方人的模特儿,国人看了也可能有些怪异。而我并不在意画的是东方人还是西方人,模特儿只是一个媒介,通过媒介表达我对对象和人间的感受。“感受”

的概念应可归纳为国人现在经常讲的表意。这是纯属个人积淀的自然流露,应是极具个人的品貌,一个对象到了画家的眼睛里变成了啥样?不同于对象,又不能说不对象,还是离不开“似与不似”吧。此外,既然把对象当做媒介,那么除了对媒介的感受之外,通过媒介要显露的是点、线、墨、形、空间……制造的张力,虽然这个概念,中国传统也有所论述,但属西方现代主义的视知觉理念。两方面的特质都能显露出来是我要追求的。

我的画面看起来是具像,但也非传统的写实,用毛笔宣纸画的又是西方人体这种不伦不类的作画方式证明我心存挣扎,对传统的依恋和对创新的期许。有一块试金石,就是杜尚,他在蒙娜丽莎的脸上画了两撇胡,彻底抛弃了传统,这是西方人的思维,适合我们吗?心中存疑,但无论如何,拥护他,反对他,还是模棱两可,都应该是发自本性的,不是盲从和强制。

我的两种画,一种是线描的,我称其为笔,另一种是焦墨的,我称其为墨。此笔墨非传统笔墨。我钟情线性的表现,曾经喜爱马蒂斯、毕加索,简炼、明快。年纪大了,认知国人的书画传统的线性表现。中国人的线可以追述几千年了,是人类最初的抒发情感的视觉语言,早在秦汉文字的“隶变”过程就创造了“蚕头雁尾”有起笔、运笔、收尾的线性抒情开端,以致后来的书画同源的“气韵生动”。当代如何发展?线要力透纸背,要形神兼备,单就这一条,就会难舍难弃了。

我画的线,胸中有形,手上肆无忌惮,随心所欲,甚而下意识,半睁半闭着眼,一笔下来不知线的去向,我强调的核心点是“线的未知性”。在未知中释放自我,我曾读过黄宾虹老先生的一段画画的趣事。他晚年八十岁时患了眼疾白内障,但仍坚持作画,自然是看不见的,也可能是看见一个影子而已。但当他眼疾痊愈后,惊喜地发现了意想不到的效果,这是一个绝妙的启示,寻求未知。

焦墨成了近些年我的“新欢”,由细线到焦墨是挣脱,语言上的挣脱和心理上的挣脱。此外,这些年看到西方表现主义的名家画的“黑画”,直觉他们是受了中国书画的启示,但他们用油彩画布,却可奔发出较强的视觉张力,为何?我认为并非只是工具之差。既然无意中闯进了自己的笔墨之中,便生出了一种强烈的驱使心,用墨色用宣纸表现这种冲破羁绊、冲出画面的企图心。

西方有评论家认为,中国画重复太多,一成不变,当然包括张力不够。我认为东方、西方艺术各有所长,各有其深厚的文化底蕴。取长补短是必然的途径无法回避的,士大夫的笔墨情趣延续了千余年如今到了没有士大夫的科学高度发展的当代,用视觉科学思维研究中国画的发展应该是动力之一。

我的焦墨是把墨放到媒介的形之中,是墨的上下左右前后的律动,目地是在宣纸上画出张力,也不失表意。

我认知这批画,无论是画的充分的,还是寥寥数笔,都是个人心境的释放,也是试创语言与观者交流,期待观者诠释。如此,有些朋友看了说是抒情的,我的岳父看了说“不敢恭维”,我的老婆看了说“焦墨很霸气”,儿子说“太沉重”了!

这本画册是习画50年才出的素描、焦墨专集,虽然是晚了些,可是于我来讲,心境是“刚刚开始”。

2009年10月20日-10月30日于洛杉矶——北京

Preface

Guowei Zhao

"A painting reflects the personality of the artist" usually describes the relationship between artist and artwork, which also allows for the deepest expectation for art.

Writing a preface for my book, as well as talking about my own paintings, are no easy tasks and even seem superfluous. Chinese artists prefer to create their works by will, and with personal feelings, which makes it extremely difficult to express the reasons behind the creation of an artwork. However, it is relatively much easier to write about myself.

Our generation, for almost half a century, has experienced enormous social changes. Every one of us may have a lot to say. An artist should be able to express his feelings through his artwork, which should be judged by the viewers, and not by what the artist himself says, or by the outpouring of his own sensations.

We were taught in idealized collectivism at a time when we were under the type of education emphasizing generality. The people became similar, in what to wear, to say, or to paint, and as the result, all paintings looked similar in style; therefore, arose the explanation: "a painting reflects the personality of the artist".

With a major upheaval sweeping across the nation, we drifted with the tides and devoted ourselves heart and soul. For years, we would just waste our precious time, doing nothing meaningful, and of course, without a touch of painting. In the years to follow, we were driven to remote regions and totally deprived of the right to paint. Having been assigned to a new job in Wuhan, I was provided with an opportunity to paint at Three Gorges of Yangzi River. With passion and enthusiasm, I painted numerous beautiful landscapes, which I have hidden as my treasure up to now, hanging in my room to arouse my precious memories all by myself.

With China opened to the world, I came to the United States in 1982. And it is really heartbreaking to recall the bitterness of that time. With as little as \$50 in my pocket, I felt like a homeless dog, wandering. However, the surviving and the spirit are in co-existence. Suffering the loneliness was the greatest hardship. To live all by one self is a great challenge and subversion to my previous life. From time to time, I was deeply moved when I heard, "From the New World" symphony by Devoshack, a melody for new immigrants. Not long ago when I recalled those years, I wrote a calligraphy, which said "Facing the wall for twenty years". The personal experience for survival based on the Western principle of personal value, to me, a Chinese man, is really a challenge.

Ideology (thought) comes from loneliness. In the face of various modern and contemporary art schools of the West, I started with the academic style of painting the objects realistically. As a starting point, I delved more deeply to understand Cezanne and modernism at its early stage. Actually, long before that Duchamp appeared in the West as a vanguard against the visual arts. However, by no way could I be moved (inspired) a bit by the theory that, "art must be dead" as advocated by Duchamp and his followers in modern China. I know that Cezanne and early modernism is what really drives me psychologically, which is the intersection of the Western art and traditional Chinese art. It seems that the western trend has been on the lam after meeting eastern art. From the viewpoint of Chinese Doctrine of the Mean, it has gone too far (mad). For over twenty years, I have racked my brain, but without any conclusion. Do as I feel right and I would not be forced to do anything I could not accept emotionally. Keeping in line with a great esteem of art (faith in art); I expect to paint, and to paint in my own style.

Pain and joyousness are parallel. I feel grateful to have move away from traditional art

and to free myself through the process of art development, which also eases the pain resulting from a gearing to return to my homeland.

Painting and writing have a lot in common, since without experiencing hardship, it is impossible to accumulate the abundance and connotation required to be a master in either.

Actually, I created these paintings with chances. The opportunity brought me the possibility of success with my accumulation over the years. With these advantages, I could draw models twice a week, which lasted for six or seven years. At the beginning, I simply drew models as a sculptor of the human body. But soon I realized it was an appropriate platform for me to break off from tradition in order to achieve my goal of fundamental change in my art style. By completely throwing out the traditional criterion of life-sketching, which is non-utilitarian, "Courage is valuable" became my strong point before I realized it. I, at last, released myself among the ever-changing objects, caught all the sprung-at-will inspirations, and made drastic developments, until I formed my own style.

In addition to the occasional opportunities, there was something special. when a Chinese artist draws western models on rice paper, it might be strange to even Chinese people. Irrespective of art connoisseurs being either Asians or Westerners, a model is just a medium in which, I can express my feelings for the objects and for the human beings.

Chinese people often sum up the concept of "Sense" as ideographic. This is typically personal accumulation through natural outpouring, which ought to be very personal. What do the objects look like in the eyes of an artist? Like it or not or at any point in between that range, it is hard to tell. In addition, if an artist uses the objects as a medium, what you can feel is the visual tension on the paper (or other mediums) through the basic elements, such as, point, line, shape and space... This concept has been categorized as visual perception in Western modernism theory, and also been discussed in traditional Chinese art theory. The reasons for discussing such are to show the specific characteristics of both.

My paintings take on the style of realism, but are not as the traditional. The style and method to paint human figures with a Chinese medium such as rice paper and brush, which was criticized as non-descript, revealed the struggle within myself, my love for traditional art and my expectation to be innovative. As a touchstone, Duchamp painted the mustache on Mona Lisa, which completely broke away from the traditional concept. This is the Westerner's way of thinking and is it acceptable to us? I have doubts about it. But in any case, either with support for or against, or somewhere in between, all of it comes from one's feeling (heart), and not from blind follow-up nor by force.

My drawing differs from traditional Chinese ink painting in two different ways. I hope to express art through both line and ink. "Line" is what I use to describe as "Bi". Dry ink is what I use to describe as "mo". I love the expression of the line. The works of Henry Matisse and Pablo Picasso have truly inspired me. Their works are both lucid and succinct. Now I have come to the realization that the ancient Chinese painting and calligraphy have long utilized the expression of "line", which can be traced back to thousands of years ago. It also suggested the earliest form of human literacy. As early as during the reformation of Chinese characters during the Qin and Han dynasty, our ancestors have used the shape of "silk worm's head and swallow's tail" to characterize beginning strokes, carrying strokes, and ending strokes. Thus, this created the foundation of Chinese calligraphy. Through years of evolution, Chinese characters have evolved into a divine and lively combination of calligraphy and picture.

My lines are drawn with complete competency; yet they are unconscious, or perhaps free-minded. Lines can be drawn through my subconscious mind, even with my eyes half-closed. I emphasize on the unknown nature of the line. Through its essence, I liberate myself. I have once read an interesting story of Mr. Huang Bin Hong. He had eye disease at the age of eighty, but it didn't stop him from painting. Once cured from the eye disease, he realized that the paintings he had drawn during those days had an unexpected effect. What a remarkable enlightenment - to search the essence of the "unknown"

In recent years, I have found "dry ink" to be my newest favorite medium. I found that "dry ink" possesses a more powerful expression. The transition between "line" and "dry ink" resembles both linguistic and psychological relief. Furthermore, I have perceived Western Expressionism's "black painting" to be influenced by Chinese calligraphy. I often ask myself: "why is it when Western painters use oil on canvas, it suggests a much stronger visual tension?" Once I realized that the difference is not within the tools or medium, I have developed an enormous sense of curiosity to explore the possibility of using ink on rice paper to express objects.

Some Western critics believe that Chinese paintings are rather repetitive, invariable, and inelastic. I think there are both pros and cons in the Western and Eastern art. It is wise to take the best of both worlds and apply it to a unified effort to pursue the true essence of art.

My dry ink drawings suggest visual tension. I purposely apply ink on the rice paper to produce a sense of rhythm within its shape. My paintings, whether complicated or simple, imply a relief of my spiritual self. They also have the desire to communicate with its viewers through its own language. I am anxious to entertain viewers' critiques. Thus, many friends have come to describe them as lyrical. My father-in-law once said; "It's hard to compliment". My wife says that she can sense my ambition. My son feels that my paintings are too depressing.

This album is produced with my 50 years of experience of sketching, drawing and painting. Although it is a bit late, I feel that it is just the beginning.

Guowei Zhao November 2009

Beijing & Los Angeles

线条的随意与果断

杰姆·陶特

孟满曾经是我蒙大拿大学绘画专业的学生，她请我为她的先生——赵国维的作品写评论。我没有见过赵国维本人，只是最近在互联网上看到他的作品，因此我对他的评论是有限的。

作为一个中国中央美术学院雕塑系的毕业生，赵国维在中央美院接受了很出色的高等美术教育。在美国，进入大学美术专业的要求与中国需数天的入学考试相比算是较为宽松的。因此，在中国，只有最有天赋的学生才能被选为接受高等艺术教育。

在1949年新中国建立之后，中国共产党沿袭被称作社会现实主义的苏联艺术教育体制。西方评论家经常把社会现实主义的内容描述成是纯粹的国家宣传，但是共产主义艺术学院所传授的绘画和雕塑技巧被西方社会视为“古典的”，要求艺术家掌握最高超的描绘现实主义的形式。这种形式曾在欧洲文艺复兴中、后期兴起。尽管在“文革”中很多中国学校关门，当20世纪80年代中国开始对外开放时，我们看到中国的艺术家们仍然比西方同行们在技术上更具有竞争力。仅从对国维雕塑及绘画作品的一个简单回顾我们便可以看出，国维是这些出类拔萃的毕业生之一。

一个好的现实主义艺术教育不仅应教授艺术家如何创造现实的感觉，更应培养他们适应各种不同风格和技能的技巧。

我在20世纪80年代教过一些从中国大陆来的艺术学生，当他们请我介绍不同形式的现代艺术时，我惊讶于他们掌握这些风格的快速程度，以及他们对艺术高素养的诠释。我看到的赵国维雕塑作品的图片也体现了这种才能，他运用了理想现实主义、新歌特式以及抽象派风格，但是无论他选择哪种风格，我们都可以看到一个艺术大师的造诣。

我被邀请对国维的强调艺术家自由运动的一系列焦墨和线描人体画作出评论。人体的变形体现了他对人体形态知识的延伸，就如同爵士乐音乐家即兴演奏他们熟悉的旋律一样，使我们想起他的轻松背离人体本身结构，既非错误，更非忽视，而是在表现他创造性的自由和对画面的修饰。

为达到这些，国维运用“轮廓素描”的技巧。在此需要对轮廓素描有一个解释。有很多种“轮廓素描”，但是大体上它是运用连续流畅的线条。这是一个较难的技巧，因为当艺术家在纸上落笔后，必须保持线条的流畅和连贯性，直到整个作品完成。在描绘人体的情况下，画家们须将他们的视觉注意力保持在所画的人体上，同时想象

着他们所画的线条实际上是在勾勒轮廓和描绘外形。这种绘画技巧给人们留下的印象是画家在半睡眠状态盯着所画对象，而手则在独立地做着另一件事情。

国维用一种特定的钢笔，在宣纸上不提笔连续运行，产生出一种像珠子穿在线上的独特的、流动的点 and 线。人体的明暗是由螺旋形的线快速旋转来完成的，就像是打蛋器产生出的线形。这个旋转的动作来自对象的结构，却不失掉国维轻松自由的表现，同时又创造出了一种三度空间的装饰效果。但是，无论线形是优雅或潦草，是快或慢，重要的是它赋予艺术家随意与果断的冲动，这种不同于胡乱涂鸦的自由是国维对人体的直觉和透彻的全面理解，这就如同人在手写字体时显现出的自然和直观。

但是不管手写体是美还是丑、笨拙还是优雅，取决于书写者最初练习抄写枯燥字母表时的用心程度，就像画家最初学习人体解剖的用心程度一样，以此决定了画人体轮廓线条时的美感。

国维的人体素描以及他的人像使人想起二十世纪新艺术主义运动和奥地利画家古斯塔·克里姆特的画。他太太告诉我们他每天往返60英里上班，画画是他在美国工作生活压力的释放。

稍早我提到来自中国高校的艺术系学生常常在个人风格的发展上缺乏自信。我所说的是20年前的事现在会有所不同。但在八十年代大陆来的学生要求我指定他们论文的内容，我很难向他们解释论文是他们自己的责任。他们似乎不习惯这种自由和自导方向。因此我感兴趣地听孟满强调赵国维在追求艺术上的自由，他们都认为艺术是自由的核心。孟满说她 and 赵国维在参观世界各地博物馆时发现，艺术的精髓是“他能想怎么画就怎么画，想画什么就画什么，不为谁画，也不为什么画，只在自己的自由世界驰骋”。我认为这是对国维无拘无束地用笔墨施展他自由的最好地诠释。

用孟满的话形容国维画画时：

“他拉着线条散步或舞着毛笔在纸上奔跑，时而舒缓悠闲时而狂喜激昂……”

2009年11月

杰姆·陶特系美国明尼苏达人，曾任美国蒙大拿大学艺术系教授、系主任。主教艺术社会学、艺术理论及任硕士生导师。艺术作品在世界各国展出，擅长版画，油画。蒙大拿大学“杰姆·陶特”大楼以他的成就而命名。1985年杰姆·陶特曾应邀去中国讲学，在中央美院等地作多次演讲，对中国及中国艺术颇有研究，并对中美文化交流做出很大贡献。

A Distant View

James Todd

Mann Zhao, my former painting student at the University of Montana, has asked me to comment on the drawings of her husband Guowei Zhao. I have never met Guowei, and have only seen his works recently on the Web site, so my observations about his art should be understood in that limited context.

As a sculpture graduate of the Central Academy in Beijing, China, Guowei received an exceptionally high level of education as an artist. In the United States, entrance requirements for college art majors at state universities and colleges are lenient to say the least in comparison to those of China where several days of entrance exams are required for art applicants, and only the most gifted are selected for higher art education. Following the 1949 revolution, Communist China inherited the Soviet system of art training described as Socialist Realism. Western critics often described the content of Socialist Realism as mere state propaganda, but the painting and sculpting techniques taught in Communist art academies were "classical" in the Western sense meaning that artists were expected to master the most advanced forms of descriptive realism that had developed in Europe during and after the Renaissance. Consequently, when China began opening its doors to the West in the 1980s, and despite the fact that many schools had been shut down during the Cultural Revolution, we learned that Chinese artists were often much more technically competent than their western counterparts, and it takes only a brief survey of Guowei's sculptures and drawings to see that he was one of these noteworthy graduates.

A good art education in descriptive realism not only gives artists the knowledge of how to create illusions of reality, but also a wider base of skills with which to adapt their work to different styles and techniques. I taught several Chinese mainland artists in the 1980s, and when they asked me to introduce them to different forms of "Modernism" I was amazed at how quickly they mastered these styles and the high artistic quality of their interpretations. The pictures I saw of Guowei's sculpture commissions demonstrate this same versatility. He has utilized idealized realism as well as neo-gothic and abstract styles but whatever his approach we see the hand of a master artist.

I, however, have been asked to comment primarily on Guowei's black and white brush and pen drawings that are a series of studies of the human figure that emphasize the artist's freedom of movement. The distortions of his figures are extensions of his knowledge of the human form which, like a jazz musician's improvisations on a familiar melody, remind us that his effortless departures from correct anatomy are neither mistakes nor oversights but acts of creative freedom and embellishment.

To accomplish this, Guowei uses what is called a "contour drawing" technique, and it might be good at this point to explain what this means. There are variations of contour drawing, but in general it is the use of a continuous and unhesitating line. It is a difficult technique because once the artist sets brush, pen or pencil to paper he or she must keep the line continuously moving until the image is complete. In the case of the human body, artists often keep their visual attention on the subject while imagining that the line they are making is actually tracing the contours and outline of the figure. Watching artists use this technique leaves one with the impression that they are hypnotically staring at the subject while the drawing hand is independently going about some other business.

The particular contour pen technique use by Guowei involves periodic pressure points that are made without lifting the hand from the paper producing a peculiar pattern of dots which are scattered along the flowing line like beads on a string. The shading of the figures is done by a rapid circular contour line that spins like an egg beater. This spinning move-

ment determines the degree of light and dark shadowing without sacrificing Guowei's spontaneity, and it can also create decorative illusions of a third dimensional surface. But the key point of the contour line whether graceful, scribbled, slow or fast, is that it gives the artist a sensation of unhesitating freedom, and what keeps this freedom from being mere chaotic doodling is Guowei's thorough and instinctive knowledge of the human figure just as the forms and styles of human handwriting are for most people usually spontaneous and intuitive. But whether handwriting is beautiful or ugly, awkward or graceful, depends on how much care the writer initially gave to the early slow and tedious practice of learning to copy the alphabet just as the beauty of a contour line drawing of the figure is determined by how carefully the artist first studied the human body.

In contrast to the delicate line studies, Guowei's brush drawings are done with heavy expressive patches of black, and his brush work, like that of traditional Oriental calligraphy, is spontaneous and characterized by "one time only" applications. As with handwriting, the immediacy and beauty of the brushwork comes from the writer's or artist's earlier discipline of tedious and repetitious practice that eventually culminates in work that is free, intuitive, and seemingly done without effort. It is at this stage that consciousness and unconsciousness are wed in the creative act.

Guowei's characterizations of the human face and figure are reminiscent of the early 20th century Art Nouveau movement and the drawings of the Austrian artist Gustav Klimt. Art Nouveau was known for its expressive and ornamental use of flowing line and the subjects of Klimt's drawings often had expressively humorous cartoon like faces. Guowei's drawings are similar in this respect, and it would be interesting to know how his job as a Barbie Doll designer may or may not have influenced his art. His wife Mann tells us that when Guowei returned from his daily sixty-mile trips between home and work his drawings were a form of release from the tensions of his job and the adjustments to life in the United States.

Earlier I mentioned the high level of art training I saw in the students who came from Communist China, but what they often lacked was the self confidence to develop a personal mode of expression. My experience with them dates back some twenty years and more so this may no longer be the case, but during the 1980s, my Mainland Chinese graduate students expected me to dictate their theses, and I had a terrible time convincing them that a thesis was their responsibility. They were simply not accustomed to that kind of freedom and self-direction, so I find it interesting that what Mann emphasizes about her husband's Guowei's art is his need to be free, and that they both believe freedom is the core of great art. Mann says that what she and Guowei discovered together in their travels to the museums of the world was that the essence of art is achieved "when the artist is free to depict whatever is in his mind, in a style of his/her choosing, without regard for what was fashionable at the time." I think that explains best what Guowei finds so important in his expressively free and spontaneous use of pen and brush.

Again Mann expresses it best. She says when Zhao draws:

"He takes a line for a walk. It is leisurely one moment, exciting the next, and finally perhaps even exasperating."

James G. Todd, jr. RE*

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The University of Montana, Missoula, U.S.A

宣纸上的张力

叶武林

这是一本用五十年的经历才得以结集的画册。

五十年对一个人来讲，就是一生。

赵国维，少年时期即酷爱画画，1959年考入北京中央美术学院附属中学，正式习艺。十年之后拿到的是中央美术学院雕塑系的毕业证书。对于这段学习，他自嘲说：“其实学了半天，我并不知道什么是雕塑。”这是一句真话，赵国维这代人经历的艺术教育实在是坎坷难言。

那个年月的大部分时间，被用在参与各种政治活动，历经十几、二十年，专心画画成了画画人最大的奢望，不可求，更不可得。

幸亏有改革开放，二十世纪八十年代初，赵国维是最早的那批出洋者。他的想法极为简单，去异国他乡寻求一个安心画画的机会。我送他到机场过安检门时，见他慌乱和惶恐的举止，知道他为此行付出了多么大的牺牲。但是老天并不特别眷顾赵国维，美国也并非天堂。弹指一挥三十年过去，为了实现儿时的画画之梦，历经坎坷，屡受挫折。回顾这些往事，他却表现得通达、乐观、无悔。

对赵国维来说，在美国的日子是苦是乐，是得是失，其实并不重要。重要的是：他改变了自己被别人操纵命运的命运。他从一个失去了自我的依赖性、从众性、顺从性强的工具（他曾是60年代标准的三好学生），变成了一个独立开拓自己命运的人，一个学会了独立思考的人，一个思想自由的人。虽然是在讲“天赋人权”的国家生活，但做人的感觉也不是别人能赠予你的，而是自己一点一滴地从挣脱旧我寻找回来的，是自我觉醒而意识到的。这种做人的尊严也体现在他坚守自己的艺术理想的纯洁，维护自己的艺术尊严之中。为此，他曾放弃了许多以画获利的机会，从不为卖点和热点所动而随波逐流，这远离蝇营狗苟的名利圈子，乃至跳出界外不在行中，靠别的劳动方式养活自己，宁可不画画，也不画违心的画。

近些年，他应聘到一家著名公司，成了职业雕塑家，为公司创作时尚作品。这项工作的优厚薪酬给他的余生带来了稳定和富裕。我意想不到的是，赵国维在做职务雕塑的过程中，仍念念不忘学院派雕塑语言的补课，对现代雕塑语言的研究，进年更探索、实践，把西方现代雕塑语言与中国书写概念变成塑造的可能。从不知雕塑为何物到有意识地追求雕塑语言的张力，这问道与得道之间横跨了半个世纪，不能不说这是具有中国特色的求知路径。

从中国到美国，赵国维的生存空间有了巨大的变化，但是他的中国人习性变化却不太大。我后来在他的帮助下也到了美国，曾和他生活了一段时间，我们像过瘾似的大讲天津话（我俩都是从天津考上美院附中的），以至于后来感慨地说“来美国英语没大进步，天津话倒见长”。这种对故土的眷恋不仅表现在语言上，而是表现在对宣纸和毛笔的情有独钟。他很早就开始以书写方式抒发自己的情怀和郁闷，他经常读帖，读画。对传统中国书、画，有许多独特见解。他隔洋冷眼看中国画坛的新老文人画，认为其重笔墨精妙，而轻造型力度，有着视觉冲击力弱的弊端。这是个点了中国

文人画死穴的话题。好在他是界外之人，无人与他理会，但是他自己却蠢蠢欲动，总想找机会尝试一下改变的可能，露露自己的拳脚。

人生的命运总是如此奇诡。赵国维踏破铁鞋苦苦寻觅的画自己想画的画的机会，竟然来自一个全然可以忽略不计的偶然——他无意识地去了一个人体写生班去画人体。就是这个偶然，那个在漫长的人生旅途上铸就了独立意识的人，那个一直坚守艺术理想追求的雕塑家，那个对宣纸和笔墨有着母语般情结的中国人，三位一体碰撞在一起，鬼使神差地画了一大批人体画，且一发不可收拾地坚持了几年，一直到今天。

这批画既有张扬的视觉冲击效果，又有自由自信的人格底蕴，一反我先前熟悉的赵国维面貌，突兀在眼前的赵国维简直是个奇迹，令我惊奇，令我陌生。

赵国维的人体画是用雕塑家的思维方式画的。造型手法显然不同于传统素描表现空间体积的手法。他以高处积墨的手法处理体积，浓墨被毛笔像泥土被刮刀一样堆积到高点，层层加厚加墨，使凸出的体积涨出纸的平面，同时凹进去的空间也用墨笔蘸出负空间，陷进纸面，这一凹一凸的强化，使画面形体充满了张力。

赵国维选用宣纸、毛笔、墨来表现人体，其用心就在于用中国的传统绘画工具材料所必然带出的中国式审美趣味，来表现被西方艺术奉为圭臬的体积和空间。不仅如此，他还有更深层次的思考，即如何用中国式的语言诠释西方审美要点，如何在表现造型力度时要具有中国审美的灵动自然的特质。赵国维从中国写意山水画的用笔观念中受到了启示，笔笔皆不落墨于被描绘物象的具体形状，而笔笔皆在意被描绘物象的空间组合，映衬连接，进退避让在浑然一体的大造型、大氛围中，无所谓错笔败笔，无所谓精笔妙笔。笔笔相连、笔笔互补、笔笔相顾，笔笔作坠石响，笔笔若云水韵。即使在积累堆积成浓墨一片中，也有着空灵的活眼。

“丘壑在胸”的先验思维，使“落笔无悔”的宣纸、毛笔、墨的运用有了抽象表现的可能，赵国维从中得到了最大的精神享受。他说他画到得意处时甚至闭上眼睛乱涂，庄子称之为近乎“道”的技艺境界，也许是指此吧。

中国当代艺术史，就是一部中国当代人的精神史，其中最具意义的是人性的回归。

艺术家是以个性的觉悟和艺术风格的独特从以往那个文化禁锢的铁板一块中挣脱出来的。这个挣脱的过程便是中国当代艺术史的叙述要点。

命运给赵国维的艺术机会是吝啬的，命运的不公平反而唤醒了他的人格觉醒，而人格的觉醒升华成艺术的品格。我以为这本画册的基本意义在于此。

“五十年磨一剑”个中滋味一言难尽，好在这是一柄能出手展示的好“剑”，剑舞何处？我期待着。

2009年10月于草寺蓬院

Visual Tension on Rice paper

Ye Wu Lin

This is an album that represents a fifty-year body of work.

Zhao Guowei has immersed himself in the world of art since his childhood. In 1959, he was admitted to the High School Affiliated with the Central Academy of Fine Art in Beijing, China. There he formally began his career in art. Ten years later, having majored in sculpture, he received his diploma from the Central Academy of Fine Art. During those years of study he was self-mocking: "In fact, after a long period of studying, I don't really know what sculpture is." Which was true, in that, the art education Guowei and his generation experienced was a long period of unspeakable frustration. Back then much of an artist's time was wasted on themes of government political correctness. For almost two decades the artist's ability to follow his inner passion and creativity took a back seat to the production of works of patriotic propaganda.

Fortunately political reform in the early nineteen eighties allowed Guowei to go abroad to study and to follow his dreams. Simply put, he was looking for art opportunities abroad. At the airport on his departure I saw the panic and fear in his eyes and realized how much he had sacrificed emotionally and financially to pay for this journey. But the past thirty years in the United States haven't exactly been a paradise. During that time in order to pursue his childhood dream he has experienced many frustrations and suffered many setbacks. Still in recalling the past he values all the reverses and expresses no regret.

To Zhao Guowei it is not a question of whether life in the United States is happy or whether there is suffering, gain or loss. The point is that he has changed his condition of being manipulated by others. From one who had no self-confidence and he has become an independent thinker, charting his own artistic destiny.

Even though he lives in a country, which advocates human rights, no one gives you a road map to follow which lets you easily shed your previous inhibitions. It is a rude shock, which is extremely off-putting for any artist. Maintaining one's sense of balance and artistic purity is difficult under most circumstances but especially so in a foreign land. Guowei eschewed many opportunities to sell his work and chose to make his living outside the art world. His choice allowed him to create art at his own pace, in accordance with his own sensibilities and passion.

Over the years he was employed at a major toy company in Los Angeles and became a professional sculptor. For sixteen years he had created many successful products for the company. His earnings provided a stable life for him and his family. While working at his sculpting job he was able to stay abreast of developments in the world of academia and contemporary sculpture. Recently, he has been probing the possibilities of combining the components of Western sculpture with the principles of Chinese calligraphy. The person who professed, "that he didn't know what sculpture was" is now applying new concepts to an ancient art form. His way of searching and experimenting spans a half century. One might say that it is the pursuit of knowledge in a typically Chinese way.

From China to United States Zhao Guowei's living space has dramatically changed but his Chinese nature has not changed at all. With his help I came to the United States and lived with him for a period of time. We had talked amiably in Tianjin where we both attended the Central Academic of Fine Art and then we joked that "After came to U.S., our English has not improved but the Tianjin dialog has been improved quite bit." The kid of affectionate homesick is not only showing in language but also expressed on the typical penchant with rice paper and brush. He started expressing his emotion and loneliness in calligraphy long before. Frequently, studying the calligraphy model and observing painting, he forms a distinctive idea in Chinese painting and calligraphy. Cross the ocean, he view

the new and old Chinese paintings with cool detachment, consider it as weighted on brush and ink but ignoring shape and strength, therefore, it has a defect that is weak on visual tension of wallop. This is a topic to directly point at the dead spot of Chinese scholar's painting. Luckily he is an outsider, no one care what he had said. But he attempts to try for change and show his tricks.

Life is so unpredictable. Zhao Guowei had searched everywhere for an opportunity to paint. Then he started attending live-model workshops, where he could draw twice a week. It was a turning point where Zhao Guowei formed a sense of independence and an artistic identity. It shaped a Chinese artist who has an unbreakable connection with rice paper and ink-brush.

These are paintings, which express great tension and visual impact. They contain the spirit of a man who exhibits a free and confident personality. His efforts are totally different from his previous work. The paintings appearing in front of me are astonishing in their candor and their simplicity.

Zhao Guowei's figurative drawings are done with a sculptor's eye. His style, in terms of volume and space, is clearly a departure from his previous work, which was executed in a more traditional fashion. Instead, he utilizes heavy ink at the high point of the object to deal with bulk. The dry ink accumulates in thick layers. The protruding bulk rises above the paper and the negative space sinks into the paper to produce a great tension.

The purpose of choosing rice paper (xuan), brush and ink to paint the human figure is to express the Chinese aesthetic in using traditional Chinese painting materials. It also expresses bulk and space, which used to be esteemed in Western Art. It allows the artist to use Chinese artistic language to convey an aesthetic essence from a Western point of view. Zhao Guowei has been enlightened by the concept of brushwork in Chinese freestyle painting. Each stroke is not used to describe realistic shapes. Each stroke, bold and contrasting, moves and forms a seamless unity. Guowei is indifferent to what is called wrong or failed strokes. Or what is called extractive and fine strokes. All his strokes are connected and complementary. All of them are as sound as a falling stone or the rhythm of a waterfall. Even in the accumulated dense ink, you can still find a sense of emptiness within.

Foresight makes it possible to create abstract creatures with brush and ink on rice paper, with the unique characteristic that the image cannot be modified once created. Only then and there, Guowei obtains his greatest spiritual delight. He said "when painting with his eyes closed and with his head turned he would make a mess on paper". That may be the state of mastery, which Zhuangzi called "Dao". With a consciousness of personality and unique artistic styles, artists have broken from the cultural confinement of the past. Chinese contemporary art has freed itself from the chains of the past.

Though fate has never been generous in giving Zhao many opportunities, that unfairness has fundamentally awakened his true personality, which had been sublimated during his earlier years. Now it is clearly evident in his distinctive artistic vocabulary. I feel that this is the most significant characteristic of this album. You can hardly express with a few words deep meaning for "Fifty Years to Polish a Sword". Fortunately the album itself is a sharp sword---a masterpiece--- that can be proudly displayed. I look forward to even more thoughtful and brilliantly executed pieces in the future.

Oct. 2009, at Cao Si Peng Garden

Ye Wulin, Professor in The Academy of Film in Beijing. Professional artist in oil painting and mural. Exhibited in United, France, and many countries around the world.

线和墨的遐想

孟 满

看国维的画有一种震动，那些流动的线条绞结而成的团块漫延成形，演变成似是而非的形体，那前后跳动在画面上的黑白色块都给人一种难以捕捉又无法描述的幻觉。像飘浮的云，像零落的花瓣，或像随意丢弃的一缕破布，一块巨石，一尊老树……总之，在这些形体之中有着对另一个不可知世界的遐想，又有对人生变幻莫测的无奈。

国维有着对物体深刻描述的能力，而正是这种能力使他能不断超越自己而进入新的领域。他天马行空，自由自在，玩造型于股掌之中，他从未刻意去模仿现代艺术或是传统画家，一切却都在不经意之中发生。他借画面这块方寸之地宣泄在异国生活的孤寂，讲述内心语言无法表述的人的情感世界。看国维画画像是在享受悠闲的田园漫步，或是在欣赏一场激动人心的交响曲——舒畅、自由，又跌宕起伏，但没有困扰和纠缠，也没有犹豫和徘徊，任线条笔墨游走在画面的方尺之中，游走在虚实之间、黑白之间，更游走在他和画面之间，像照片在显影液里，渐渐的、不停顿的完全显露出全貌，他拉着线条散步或舞着毛笔在纸上奔跑，时而舒缓悠闲时而狂喜激昂……

不论是传统观念还是现代主义，不论是写实还是抽象，抑或是色彩或是黑白，好的艺术带给我们的决不仅限于画面本身的直觉表象，而是超越表象而产生的无限想象，甚或一个全然不同的世界。谁又会从人体想到花瓣，想到凋零，想到朦胧的人生呢？也许画家本身也无法事先完全刻意去预料，而结果就产生在有意与无意之中，产生在笔尖的流动之中，产生在画的过程之中，也流露在不经意之中。是画面本身给予我们的启迪，正是画家以他的顺其自然，顺应笔墨，也顺其心律而发生。也许意在笔先应该为意在笔行之中更为恰当。石涛云：“盖以无法生有法，以有法贯众发矣。”法是人创造的，学习前人是为了超越前人，艺术之法是要立个人之法开前人之无法。“太古无法，太朴不散，太朴一散，而法立矣。法于何立？立于一画。一画者，众有治本，万象之根”。国维用自创的一画开始了他独特的写意形式。

国维埋头画了几年的线描，有几百张精彩之作。当我们还都在那些缠绕不清的线团之中梳理头绪时，他却从细线转为焦墨。从灰色近乎神经质的线团跳进强烈的黑白色块，而他放任自流无拘无束的风格却有过之而无不及。面对他的焦墨更多的是精神的震撼和情感的冲击。有压抑的令人窒息，有丰富的目不暇接，有坚硬的岩石刺破画面，也有斑驳的老树历尽沧桑。他画面里的文字，不是说明，不是诗歌，是即想即写，信手拈来，随感而发，与画面形象水乳交融。也是不知所云甚至荒诞不经，给赏画人平添了一分情趣。字又是形和线，成了画面的一个整体。

国维不善言辞，疏于交流，二十多年来，他过的是两点一线式的单调生活，然而无论在两点的哪一头他都全身心地投入对艺术的追求之中。在马特尔玩具公司，他负责芭比娃娃的造型设计，要在方寸之中精确到不差分毫，晚上他留在公司画模特，尽情释放他一天的压力，享受线条带给他的悠闲自得，常常十点多到家后还要打开他的画，一张一张回味当时作画时的感动，兴奋之情溢于言表。我为他能自由地画自己的画而高兴，也常常会被他的画打动，一起谈到深夜。

还有什么能比做自己钟爱的事还幸福的事呢。国维天生是为艺术而生，为艺术而活，谁也无法改变这一点，他可以不说，不睡（他不能不吃，美食家是他另一个头衔），几个月不出门，却不能一日不画，一日不雕。他坚持画自己的画，找自己的语言，从不趋炎附势，随波逐流；他喜欢透过对象细致观察，又能跳出对象观其势态并任意发挥；他不为学院派的功底所束缚，又不抛弃技巧而为其所用。正可谓亦出亦入，收放自如。我想观念的解放是重中之重。

在多年倾心研究中西方艺术时，我们同访欧洲走遍巴黎、罗马、慕尼黑的所有博物馆，探讨西方艺术的发展轨迹。在纽约大都会博物馆，在卢浮宫，在梵蒂冈拜倒在诸多大师的脚下，从中探究艺术之真谛，才能有后来他能想怎么画就怎么画，想画什么就画什么，不为谁画，也不为什么画，只在自己的自由世界驰骋。然而，艺术的路崎岖漫长，虽已年过半百，一切却好像才开始，他整装待发，跃跃欲试，又要开始新的征程。

随想随写，想哪儿写哪儿，忽然好像受画的影响，变成了随意，顺手牵来。

其实生活中并不总是想好才做，刻意安排的。生活中的随意，下意识，随处可见，在下意识之中发现自己，发现更多的艺术表现形式，会打开我们的眼界，让思维插上翅膀飞得更高更远。

2009年11月8日于美国洛杉矶

孟满系赵国维之妻。艺术家，硕士学位。毕业于美国蒙大拿大学艺术系、中央工艺美术学院装潢美术系。1985年赴美，现为自由职业设计师、画家。

The Reverie of line and ink

Mann Meng

Viewing Guowei's drawings, I am stunned. The floating lines spiral into a strange conglomeration, and shapes evolve into other peculiar forms. The black and white colors meander to and fro, creating an illusion which is hard to comprehend and difficult to describe. It is at the same time a floating cloud, a decayed petal, a piece of cloth, a solid rock, and an ancient tree trunk... All in all, it contains a reverie of an unknown world and a resignation to the unpredictability of human life.

Guowei possesses a strong ability to describe natural objects realistically. Going beyond that ability permits him to enter new realms. He handles shapes and lines with ease in a powerful, unconstrained manner. He never attempts to imitate any artist, either contemporary or classical. Things just happen naturally. We sense his loneliness-in-a-foreign-land within the contained space of the drawing paper and are privy to his personal inner world. Viewing Guowei's painting is to stroll leisurely in the idyllic scenery, or perhaps listen to a melodic symphony-cozy and free but full of twists and turns--- without hesitation and wandering. His lines are spontaneous and seem to amble across the paper, moving amid appearance and emptiness, black and white, interacting within his drawing and himself. It looks like a photo emerging out of developer--- gradually, continuously, until the whole is exposed. He takes a line for a walk. It is leisurely one moment, exciting the next, and finally perhaps even exasperating.

Whether it is a traditional concept or modernism, realistic or abstract, color or black and white, the exquisite caliber of his work conveys not only the visible, superficial image on the paper, but a sense of unlimited imagination, allowing the viewer to visit an imaginary world which is totally different from the one you can see in the drawing. Who associates the human body with flower petals? Perhaps the artist himself has no understanding of what is happening to his painting; still his work is infused with both the conscious and subconscious. With the movement of his pen point, the artist has created an art that also reflects an outpouring of the unconscious. We can be enlightened by the artwork itself. Furthermore, the artist, while presenting a view of nature to us allows his mind to follow his beating heart.

An ancient Chinese artist once said that the idea occurs before the brush strokes. Perhaps it is more proper to say as that the idea occurs throughout the process. The ancient Chinese artist Shi Tao said: "The way to set up a basic rule is to use the "no rule" to develop the universal regulation." We study it in order to transcend it. There are no immutable restrictions in art. Change is the high standard of art. "There were no principles in the distant past due to the chaos, the standards were established when the chaos disappeared. How are the standards established? They are universal principles that are innate to artists: no ordinary people can understand them. (Shi Tao)

Guowei uses his own distinguished lines to create his unique, enjoyable forms. He worked on his line drawings for years. In total he has successfully produced over 300 pieces of line drawing. However, he suddenly jumps from it to black brush strokes and dry ink on rice paper---from nervous, meandering lines to strong black and white forms. Nonetheless, his free and unconstrained style is even stronger than before. Facing his new drawings, I am taken aback and emotionally impacted by his new paintings. Some of them are so oppressive that it is hard to breathe. Others are so exuberant that they absolutely dazzle. Some drawings are hard as rock and seem to break through the paper; some exhibit the distress of a decaying ancient tree.

The calligraphy in his drawing is neither the explanation nor is it the poetry of classical Chinese painting. It is thinking as writing. The words pass from his hand to the paper imbued with feeling. Lines form shapes, which converge to create forms some of which appear preposterous, adding a touch of humor to the paintings. Clearly the calligraphy is line and shape, combining to form unified images that call for introspection and lead to insight.

Guowei is a quiet and rather unsociable being. Over twenty years he lived a life that physically took him on a straight line between two spots---driving daily 60 miles from home to work. But no matter how his life unfolded, he always kept working at his art. At Mattel, he was a master designer of the Barbie Doll, which required the sculpting in detail of small-sized models. In the evening, he attended model-drawing workshops. Art served as his release from the pressures of the job and the tribulations of modern life in a foreign land. He enjoyed the leisure of line drawing and often got home after 10pm. Frequently he laid his drawings on the floor and talked with me about his experiences at the workshop. His excitement showed clearly in his words and mannerisms. I was so happy for him that he could work independently. Often I was touched by his work, and we talked until past midnight.

There is nothing that compares with creating your own work. Guowei was born to create art and to live for art. He can live without talking, without sleep, without going anywhere, but never without art. His entire existence is about art. He expresses his inner world through a uniquely sublime artistic language, untroubled by what is commonplace and current. He observes the object with care and then steps away from the object to capture its dynamic momentum. He is not bounded by academic technique, but uses it uniquely for his own good. Thus his drawings push and pull the viewer from the apparent to the unseen. It is important, as an artist, to liberate one's mind and to break from restrictions that are either self-imposed or emanate from the outer world.

Throughout the years, Guowei and I have visited many art museums in America and Europe and observed Western Art. We have frequented the museums of Paris, Rome, Florence, New York, and Munich. At the Metropolitan Museum and the Louvre, we showed great respect for the many well-known masters. We discovered that the essence of that art is achieved when the artist is free to depict whatever is in his mind, in a style of his/her choosing, without regard for what was fashionable at the time. He/she revels freely, uninhibited in his/her inner world.

A career in art is often long and arduous. Even though he is now over 60, Guowei is still fresh and imaginative, ready to create new works, ready to portray new visions. Curiously, as I write, I can feel the influence of Guowei's work. I am conscious of the spontaneity in his worldview and hopefully have opened myself to the joys of that expression. If his work teaches us anything, it is to cherish the freedom to adapt, the freedom to change course and to fly in a new direction, the freedom to always be young of spirit.

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Los Angeles, USA

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