

SELECTED COLOR PAINTINGS OF YANG XIANRANG, ZHANG PINGLIANG



# 楊先讓、張平良彩繪選



大槐樹下的農家  
辛卯年秋  
先讓





楊 先 讓 、 張 平 良  
彩 繪 選

SELECTED COLOR PAINTINGS OF YANG XIANRANG、ZHANG PINGLIANG

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## 楊先讓、張平良彩繪選

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# 藝術的生命在於真實

讀楊先讓、張平良教授的畫

丁其甫

楊先讓教授和張平良教授的畫我是很早就讀過了，但是我直到現在才認識他們。我與楊先讓教授並且有過一次非常值得回憶的談話，他的談話與我發生了深刻的藝鳴，我發現我們藝術的語言太多了。

楊教授說：他是在海邊長大的，他出生在膠東半島的牟平縣養馬島，後來又到了朝鮮的仁川，日寇投降前又回到了祖國。他自稱是“島里人”。他說“那山，那海，那房前的石榴樹，學校後邊的甜水井，我乘舢板小船過島出島……詩情畫意般的美景，在孩提時幼小的心靈中就留下了難以磨滅的印象”。

他說：“幾十年過去了，思鄉的感情有增無減。記得一九六二年想表現家鄉面貌的念頭曾促使我回了一次養馬島。……我到島外的崑崙山下住了兩個多月，常常跑到山頂向北遙望，養馬島像一塊綠色的寶石，鑲嵌在大海中，光彩熠熠。”

他說：“我們這一代人的現實，是從生活裏來的，我偏重喜歡農村。……中國民間古老的東西比現代派還要現代派。外國現代派的東西是他們土地上長出來的東西，中國的土地應該長自己的東西。”

他說：“藝術一定要走自己的路，不能停留在模仿別人。”

他說：“我要用中國的筆墨紙和顏色，畫出西畫的味道來，我一直走着嚴格的寫實路子，但我是用強烈的感情來作畫，這感情就是熱愛祖國，熱愛家鄉，熱愛人民的感情。”

他說：“我要沿着自己的路走下去。……”

這一席談話，對我實在太具有啟發性了。我仿佛找到了一把理解他的藝術的鑰匙。大家知道，楊教授是一位著名的木刻家，我曾讀過他的許多木刻作品和後來出版的木刻選集，他的木刻就是有濃厚的農村味，濃厚的生

活氣息以及鮮明的民族藝術風格。例如他收在選集里的“出圈”、“武漢之夜”、“飲馬”、“晨”、“信天游”等等作品，都是既有豐富的生活內容又有鮮明的民族風格的佳作。我為什麼要提到他的木刻作品呢？因為我感到他現在所創作的彩繪作品，依然具有這兩方面的鮮明特色。而且，說實在話，他從新創的彩繪中所表現出來的生活和藝術，都大大地突破了過去的成就，到達了一個全新的高度。打開他的畫，一股濃厚的鄉土氣息、生活氣息撲面而來，使人倍覺親切感人。我自己是從農村來的，曾種過十多年地，我與楊教授一樣對農村有着特殊的感情。我感到農村美，農村純，農村有着無限的深情。我的農村與楊教授的養馬島一樣，現在都已經相當富裕了。舊日貧窮的影子已經難以找到，甚至連村子的外貌都改變了。昔日的破房子都改造成了二層三層的樓房；昔日的荒地，有的變了工廠，有的變成美麗的公園。當然，這一切都好。這是我們祖祖輩輩夢寐以求的！但是，我回到農村，除了覺得現在真好外，却老要去尋找那舊日的夢痕。我惦念着原有的幾間破屋，那是我天天挑燈夜讀的地方；那整天整夜細細流水的小水溝，那是我農忙季節天天去磨鐮刀的地方；那以前的竹林是我春天找竹筍、夏天爬到竹竿上乘涼的地方；還有鄰居屋角邊每到秋來滿開的紫扁豆花，大如喇叭一樣的金黃色的南瓜花；還有門前大片大片的荒墳，是我放羊、捉雲雀的地方；還有村頭古廟前的那棵已歷千年的古銀杏樹，每到秋深，滿樹的黃葉在夕陽的餘暉裏簡直透亮得有如玉樹臨風。這一切記憶，對我來說是永遠新鮮的。可是，我讀楊教授的畫，卻吃驚地感到他仿佛就是畫的我的記憶。我凝視着楊教授的那幅古銀杏樹，思緒久久不能平靜，我仿佛又回到了童

年，回到了那棵參天拔地的古銀杏樹底下，我頭枕着盤屈如虬龍的樹根，一片片金黃色的葉片落下來，落在我的臉上身上，我彷彿在做着金黃色的秋天的夢。這當然是我的幻覺，但是幻覺不是邯鄲道上神秘的枕頭引起的，却是楊教授的驚人真實的畫筆引起的。還有一幅題作“家園”的畫，那是誰的家園？我自己覺得又好像是畫的我的家園，那正面的兩開間的舊瓦房，兩側矮矮的舊得再也不能舊的茅屋，那不就是我的家嗎？特別是那東西矮牆里盛開着白花的梨樹，不就是我親手種的嗎？還有場園上籬笆里綠油油的菜圃，近處盛開着金黃色的油菜花，遠處門口還有一位老太太手裏拿着苕帚，這一切實在太真實了，不僅僅有典型環境的真實，而且有細節的真實。這幅畫，它震撼着我的心靈，撥動了我思鄉的和思親的心弦。江淹說“黯黯銷魂者唯別而已矣！”我曾背誦過這篇著名的《別賦》，不止幾百次地讀過這句話，但是使我真正嘗到這黯然的滋味的，却是這幅畫。也許有一點時機的因素吧，因為我離家四十年了，因為我的老母親，就像這幅畫裏的老太太，她去世已經二十五年了！

可以說，楊教授的每一幅畫，都牽動了我的感情。那縷縷的炊烟，我看着多麼親切啊！別看那木簡單的炊烟，我看得出在楊教授的畫上是有區別的，那幅畫為《臨江小巷》里的炊烟和題為《農舍》的炊烟，我看着是剛生火時的炊烟，烟濃而有力，有的直噴，有的剛從烟筒里直冒出來；而那兩幅《家園》和《江南小鎮》里的炊烟，是燒了一回的，而且是被風吹散了的炊烟，所以烟稀而散。還有那畫里的石拱橋，是地道的江南景色，我曾千百次地走過這種石拱橋，也曾千百次地坐着小木船從橋洞里穿過。我突然發現了那屋角邊

靠水的一株淡淡的桃花，在樹下的河邊還系着三條破木船，這淡淡的桃花太不經意了，但又是畫家十分經心的手筆。人們只知道桃花的艷，不知道桃花的淡，其實艷是與俗靠攏的，淡是與雅靠攏的。然而桃花是淡的嗎？不錯，是有淡的桃花的，那就是在桃花盛開以後，將敗之前，尤其是經雨以後，它的艷色就褪了。畫家難得的是細致的觀察，而更難得的是選擇。楊教授畫桃花，不取其艷，而取其淡，是見畫家高致！事實上放在這幅畫里，如果是一株鮮艷的紅桃，那末，整幅畫的情趣就完全被破壞了。

楊教授還有一些畫，如那幅《鄉間小路》，那幅《槐樹林》，又是仿佛為我畫的，或者說，如果由我來選擇畫面，我也將會作這樣的構圖。事實上我有幾幅攝影就是這樣構圖的。這里我是說的構圖，而絲毫也不是說作畫，千萬不能誤解，作畫我是一絲一毫也作不出來的，何況是楊教授這樣高的水平。我只是想說我與楊教授的藝術語言有太多的共同之處了。這也許仍然是我的自我膨脹，但是，這確是我的真實的感覺，請原諒就姑且讓我膨脹一回吧！

還有那幅《敦煌》，楊教授選擇的是莫高窟中間九層的主樓，兩邊是深秋的黃葉，畫面給人以崇高莊嚴的感覺。我去年十二月第三次去敦煌，恰好遇上大雪，一夜之間，鳴沙山、月牙泉、莫高窟、三危山變成了一片琉璃世界，聖潔無瑕，仿佛整個世界被淨化了，被純化了。我站在三危山前遠望莫高窟中心的主樓，真的感到了一種莊嚴肅穆的感覺，一種突然升起的虔誠的意識。當時我拿起相機拍了一張九層主樓的照片，現在看來，我們的藝術語言又是相通的，連同莫高窟主樓的那種莊嚴肅穆之感，我從楊教授的畫裏，似乎也同

樣得到了共鳴。

楊教授說，他要用中國的紙、筆、顏色，畫出西洋畫的味道，而內容仍然保持着中國的特色。我認為楊教授已經非常出色地達到了他的目的。甚至有的觀眾竟以為這就是油畫。那種立體感，光感，質感，由此而構成的真實感，確實包涵了油畫的語言。不過我要強調一點，這種油畫的藝術效果，是完全服務於表現地地道道的中國農村生活的，因此他的作品仍然有鮮明的濃厚的民族藝術特色，這是十分難得的，這是楊教授成功的創造。楊教授的的確確是在走着自己的一條獨特的藝術道路，而完全不同於那種以否定自己的民族傳統為前提的藝術觀。

我深深感到楊教授的畫，從深一層來說，他並不是靠藝術技巧，而最最主要的是他胸襟里的滿腔的熱愛祖國的熱忱，對家鄉的愛，對人民的愛，對祖國藝術傳統的愛，這才是他的畫的深厚的內涵。

張平良教授的畫，她的名作《六月雪》我是早就讀過的，因為這幅畫早已膾炙人口了。這一次，我却飽讀了張教授的作品。作為一個先睹為快的讀者，這些畫給我的最最突出的感受是新鮮感。畫面的色彩當然是瑰麗之極，然而最可貴的是這種瑰麗，并非單純的色彩的瑰麗，而是生命的瑰麗。因此，那些畫面上插在瓶子裏的花，透過它的色彩，似乎感到它的枝葉、花瓣間有着水分和生命的流淌，似乎它的顏色欲流，枝葉還在舒展。而且每幅畫的顏色的配置，既艷且雅，自然而和諧，就仿佛天然長在一起的。張教授的人物畫，如《六月雪》《反彈琵琶》《荷花燈》等，可以看出她深厚的功力，也可以看到她成功地吸取了敦煌人物畫的傳統，而又有創新發展。

楊、張兩教授的畫，其共同的特色是藝術

中的寫實主義和傳統精神。我認為這是藝術的極度重要的兩個方面。近年來寫實主義和傳統精神似乎不太被人重視，甚至被鄙視了。我認為這種不重視寫實和不要傳統的思潮，是不利於藝術發展的。藝術可以有多种形式，但不能拋棄傳統和排斥寫實，寫實應該在藝術中具有長久的生命力。

藝術如果脫離了祖國，脫離了人民，脫離了傳統，脫離了寫實，那末，藝術也就容易流於空洞或者流於形式。藝術需要幻想也需要抽象，但也更需要深刻的思想和充實的內容，以艱深文其淺陋，藝術是沒有前途的。因此，張、楊兩教授的嚴格的寫實的畫，對於當前的藝術來說，肯定會有重大的積極意義的。

一九九一年十月一日夜三時  
於京華瓜飯樓

## The Vitality of Art Lies in Truthfulness

Random Thoughts on the Paintings by Professors

Yang Xianrang and Zhang Pingliang

by Feng Qiyong

I studied the paintings by Professors Yang Xianrang and Zhang Pingliang long ago. But it is only recently that I got to know them. I had an unforgettable talk with Professor Yang. What he said struck such a responsive chord within me that I found we really had much to share in our views of art.

Professor Yang told me he grew up by the sea. He was born in the Yangma Island off Muping County on the Jiaodong Peninsula of Shandong Province. He later went to Korea and returned before VJ Day. Calling himself an "islander," he said, "The mountains, the sea, the pomegranate tree in front of the house, the sweet water well at the back of the school and my entering and leaving the island in a sampan... the picturesque sights left an indelible impression on me ever since my childhood.

"Several decades have passed, yet the longing for my hometown has become ever stronger. In 1962, driven by the impulse of depicting the place, I made a trip to the Yangma Island.

"I stayed in a hotel at the foot of the Kunlun Hill off the island for over two months. During that time, I often climbed to the top of the hill, looking northward to the Yangma Island in distance, which looked like a piece of green jade glistening in the sea."

"Our understanding of the world has evolved from real life. I prefer the rural areas," Yang said. "The ancient Chinese folk art seems to me more modern than what the modernists now preach. Since foreign modernism has developed form

foreign culture, the Chinese culture should nurture something of its own."

He said, "one must forge one's own style in artistic creation rather than just imitate others.

"I will try to use Chinese brushes, pigments and paper to paint in the western style. I have been faithfully following realism all my life. I always do my work with a strong passion, or with love for my country, my hometown and my people."

Professor Yang said: "I will proceed in that direction."

I am greatly inspired by his words which seem to be a key for me to understand his works. Professor Yang is a renowned artist specializing in woodcut. I have seen many of his works and the collections of his woodcuts published later. His works have a rich flavor of life, rural life in particular, as well as a distinct traditional Chinese style. This can be seen in his works like "The Night of Wuhan," "Watering Horses", "Morning" and "Xintianyou," which are characterized by both a distinct Chinese style and a faithful reflection of life.

The reason I mention his woodcuts here is that the color paintings done by him still bear the characteristics of his woodcuts. In fact, his latest works outshine his earlier ones, representing a new high both in reflection of life and in artistic creation. Whenever you open his collections, you can feel the fresh rural air and relish a strong local flavor by which you cannot but be deeply touched. I was also born in the countryside. Having

worked on the farmland for a dozen years, I, too, have "evelope" a special passion for rural life, which in my eyes is beautiful and simple. Like the Yangma Island, my home village has changed a lot, with few traces of poverty left. People have become better-off. The dilapidated houses have given way to two or three-storey buildings. Modern factories and scenic parks stand where wasteland used to be.

The new landscape is what our folks have craved for generation after generation. Yet I always have the yearnings to look for something old whenever I set foot on the place. I miss the rundown houses where I used to read books by candlelight, the gurgling stream where I used to grind my sickles in the harvest season, the bamboo garden where I would enjoy the cool during summer time.

I cannot forget the purplish little flowers of hyacinth bean and large trumpet-shaped flowers of pumpkin in the corner of my neighbor's courtyard, the row upon row of graves extending into the distance where I would graze my sheep while I myself chased the larks, and the age-old ginkgo tree before the old temple at the entrance of the village, whose yellow leaves were shimmering under the setting autumn sun. All these memories are always fresh to me. When I see the paintings by Professor Yang, I am always surprised to find that he has visualized my memories. Lingered before the painting of an old ginkgo tree by Professor Yang, I could hardly rein in my drifting thoughts. The picture brought me back to my childhood, to the side of the old ginkgo,



where I lay against the tree root, dreaming while the golden leaves fell down, one after another, on to my face and body. It's only an illusion, of course, yet the illusion was created not by the mysterious pillow in an inn for travellers going to Handan as described in an ancient story, but by Professor Yang's true-to-life paintings.

The same is true of another painting entitled "Home". Whose home is that? It seems to be my home. The two old tile-roofed houses with the low and old thatched cottages on either side... Whose house can it be if not mine? didn't I plant the pear trees bearing white flowers in full blossom in the courtyard? The fenced vegetable garden on the open ground with yellow vegetable blossoms and the old lady with a broom in hand in the background... All this cannot be too true to life, true not only in the typical surrounding, but also in details. The painting strikes me deeply, and makes me all the more homesick. The Liang Dynasty poet Jiang Yan (444—505) said: "Only departure can make people gloomy and sad." I once learned by heart his famous versified essay "Departure" and read the verse hundreds of times, but what really makes me gloomy is this painting. This may be because of my mother, who died 25 years ago and looked very much like the old lady in the painting, or because of the fact that I had not visited my homeland for 40 years.

It is true that every painting by Professor Yang touches me, and how I am moved by the wisps of cooking smoke!

Simple as it is, such smoke is executed differently in Yang's paintings. The cooking smoke painted in "A Lane Overlooking the River" and "Farmhouse" is characterized by heavy wisps, some spurting upward, while others are just fresh from a chimney. But the smoke painted in "Homeland" and "A Small Town in the South" looks as if it has been dispersed by the wind and has circled in the air for a while. The stone arch bridge in the same painting is typical of south China. I have crossed and passed under such an arch bridge hundreds of times. I suddenly find a peach tree with pale-colored blossoms close to the water at the corner of the house. Under the peach tree are moored three shabby wooden boats. Though the peach tree seems to be a casual touch, it is actually done with special care. People may be interested only in the bright color of peach blossoms, and few take notice of pale-colored peach blossoms. In fact, a bright color tends to be vulgar and a pale color is inclined to be graceful. But, are there really pale-colored peach blossoms? Yes, some are. Peach blossoms turn pale after their full bloom and before withering, especially after being drenched by rain. The treasure of a painter is his careful observation, but a greater treasure is his sense of option. It is clear to see the good taste of Professor Yang from his option in painting pale-colored peach blossoms rather than bright-colored ones. Peach blossoms of bright-colors will surely ruin the appeal of the painting.

Some of Yang's other paintings such as "Country Road" and "A Grove of

Chinese Scholartrees" look as if they are specially done for me. In other words, I would compose the paintings the way Yang did. In fact, some of my photographs were composed this way. Here I am discussing the concept of composition, not painting. Please do not misunderstand me. I am by no means a painter, especially as compared with such a giant as Professor Yang. I just want to say I have a lot in common with Professor Yang in artistic perception. People may find my remarks self-complacent, but they are what I feel. Please forgive me for being self-complacent this time.

"Dunhuang," a painting showing the nine-storey main building of the Mogao Grottoes (in northwest Gansu Province) flanked by yellow leaves of late autumn, impresses people as sublime and solemn. Last December, I made my third trip to Dunhuang, a town on the historic Silk Road. It happened to be snowing heavily. The Mingsha (Singing Sand) Hill, the Crescent Fountain, the Mogao Grottoes and the Sanwei Hill all turned white overnight. Everything looked holy, pure and flawless, as if the whole world had been purified. Standing before the Sanwei Hill, I admired the main building of the Mogao Grottoes in distance. A feeling of holiness and solemnity welled up from the depth of my heart. I took several pictures of the nine-storey building. By comparing these pictures with Yang's painting, I find once again we share the same artistic views. Yang's painting makes me feel the same sublimity and solemnity of the main building of the Mogao Grottoes.

Professor Yang said he would use Chinese paper, brushes and pigments to do painting with a western taste but Chinese features. I find Professor Yang has been successful in achieving this goal. Some people mistake his color paintings for oils. The three-dimensional effect, light effect and texture effect, which together produce an effect of being true to life, really embody the quality of oil paintings. One thing I want to stress, however, is that these artistic effects of oil painting will find their expressions in China's rural life, pure and simple. Therefore his works are tinged with a distinguished national artistic style. This is Yang's unique hallmark. I think he is quite right when he says he will take his own way in painting. His approach runs contrary to that of self-styled painters who deny our national heritage.

I feel that the appeal of Yang's paintings, if we go deep enough into their meaning, lies not with his techniques, but with his love for his country, his hometown, his people and above all China's artistic traditions. This love is the true meaning of his paintings.

"June Snow" by Professor Zhang Pingliang, on which I had the pleasure of feasting my eyes long ago, has enjoyed great popularity since it was painted. Recently, I have spent a lot of time exposing myself to her works. What strikes me most is the freshness conveyed in the paintings. Of course, the colors of her paintings are gorgeous, but what I treasure most is not the beauty of the colors but the beauty of life expressed in

her works. People can literally feel the flow of life and water among the leaves, twigs and petals of the and flowers in the vases she painted. They look as if the colors are ready to flow, and the plants are still stretching their twigs and leaves. Zhang matches different colors to a turn, bright and graceful, natural and harmonious, as if they are created to match just like that. People can sense Professor Zhang's solid foundation by viewing her portrait paintings such as "Hometown, Moon and Snow," "Plucking the Pipa Behind the Back," and "Lotus Lantern." These works show that she has not only successfully absorbed the traditional techniques displayed by the Dunhuang portraits but also broken new ground.

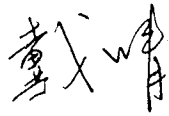
The paintings of Professor Yang and Professor Zhang share the characteristic feature of combining realism and tradition. To my mind, realism and tradition are very important aspects of art. In recent years, they have not received adequate attention or have simply been negated. I think the trend is no good for developing art. Art can have many different styles, but this does not mean to get rid of tradition and expel realism. Realism should have lasting vitality.

Art, if divorced from the motherland, the people, the tradition and realism, is apt to become a mere formality. Art needs imagination and abstraction, but it also needs to be thought-provoking and meaningful. The art characterized by sophisticated skills but shallow meaning will lead nowhere. Therefore, the strictly realistic paintings by Professor Yang and Pro-

fessor Zhang are a positive contribution to the current world of artistic creation.

3 a.m., October 1, 1991  
at my simple home in Beijing

# 喧鬧中的一方淨地



當一種景象，一個感覺，哪怕是一縷無以名狀的情緒，突然出現或久久縈繞在畫家心頭，而他又覺得憋着不說實在難受的時候，他就作畫了。

但這畫如何作呢？

中國人講究化境。不管那山那水那蟲那鳥包括那美人兒他有没有見過，畫家只畫他自己的精神。還有他的氣度與情操。

西畫重逼肖。不但輪廓、不但色彩，就連材料、紋理、光——包括光的反射折射散射漫射以及色溫，也一絲一毫不放過。這頗象有人頭疼腦熱了，中醫只氣派恢宏地和中理氣解表除穢，西醫却要查血查尿作切片外帶照X光。

只不知郎世寧畫馬的時候有没有躊躇。但林風眠結構他的塘與鶴，肯定是在歷經了兩種文化、兩種哲學、兩種眼界與心態的衝撞與折磨之後。

楊先讓夫婦受的是西方美術教育，他們是在四十年代末相繼考入當時的國立北平藝專的。當然這教育已是第二手的了，因為他們的老師是徐悲鴻，而徐悲鴻推崇的是“在我國古代繪畫的傳統上吸取西方繪畫優秀技巧”；在接下來的教育中更注入了西方文化的另一支——馬克思列寧主義和毛澤東對他們的中國化。因為從延安來的江豐繼任學院首腦，而他最推崇的是以嫻熟的現代技巧表現熾熱的社會理想。

這些，這對年輕、純潔以及如當時所有的青年一樣“忘我”的畫家全都不打一點折扣地接受下來。他們那時雖然也忙着打腰鼓、出牆報，但畢竟是美術最高學府，畢竟是正派聰明誠懇又勤奮的青年，他們受到了嚴格的業務訓練，打下了扎實的西畫技巧基礎。但他們的“神”是不寧的。他們没有功夫、没有權利甚至

連想都没有想過審視自身、表達自身、擴展自身，只一古腦兒卷入一個又一個政治高潮，奉獻着自己的心力和才華。

今天不那麼刻薄的青年已經懷着憐憫與容諒來看楊先讓五十年代曾那麼著名的木刻了。他們不能忍受將任何一件事物偶像化與概念化，哪怕是英勇純潔的女英雄劉胡蘭。他們不知道，在河南文水貧瘠的山坳里作畫的楊先讓，想起自己無憂無慮的公子哥兒的十五歲——劉胡蘭正是在這個年齡就義的——是多麼愧疚；不知道他爲了將七位被鋸下頭的鄉親一一畫出，須付出多麼大的勞動；更不知在那從未見過照片與肖像畫的窮鄉僻壤引起的巨大轟動。

正如劉胡蘭爲之獻身的事業正經歷着巨大的痛苦并且不可避免地正成爲歷史一樣，畫家夫婦僅僅屬於這一政權的“宣傳工作”的那一部分激情，也正歸于平靜。當他們漸漸步入老年的時候，被硬灌進去又生喚出來的火爆與喧嚷不見了，只留下童年時候的單純真率、劫波歷盡後的醇和寬諒，還有藝術家永遠不會老去的感覺和日臻圓熟的技巧。

收在這本畫冊里的正是這對夫妻這一時期的作品。先讓畫山畫水畫田野畫窄巷；半良畫花畫神女；華貴的花，絢爛的花，樸素清新的野花，以及生活中所缺少的而她內心里所編織的美好意境。在北京，鮮花是很奢侈的，但在他們并不寬裕的家里却是鮮花不斷——春天，一大捧；秋後，一小束；有時也就是一枝一朵，但都虔誠地供着，痴痴地愛着，更怕這嬌柔無助的小友終有一天要萎掉，只有放下手邊的一切匆匆畫下來……。他們没有花園，他們也没有多少機會在花中留連彳亍，他們一直忙着培育和扶植別人——他是教師而她

是編輯——這批繪畫，可能是他們唯一的，在種種喧鬧中爲自己存留下來的小小的、一方天地了。

如果讀者在這里看到了他們的寧帖與溫敦，碰巧又想到保有它們的艱難，你就分享了大陸中國人最難得的那一份摯真，就更與畫家，也更與人性和人心的拯救靠近了。

1991.12. 北京

# A Piece of Quiet Land in the Midst of Bustle and Noise

by Dai Qing

When a phenomenon, a perception, even a sentiment that beggars description suddenly appears or lingers long in a painter's mind and he feels that he cannot restrain himself from conveying it, he paints.

But how does he execute this painting?

Chinese people stress transformed artistic conception. No matter whether an artist has seen that mountain, that stream, that insect, that bird and that beauty, he paints only his own spirit, his air and bearing and his feelings as well.

Western painting stresses likeness. Not a trace of the contour and colours, and of the materials, veins and light including the reflex, refraction, dispersion and diffusion of light can be allowed to slip by. This resembles the case that somebody has a minor illness such as headache, a traditional Chinese practitioner treats the patient as integral, regulating the functions of the stomach and spleen and inducing sweat to remove detrimental external factors. But a doctor of Western medicine asks the patient to have an analysis of blood and urine, make incisional biopsy and X ray examination.

We do not know whether famous Italian painter Giuseppe Castiglione (1688—1766), known as Lang Shining in China, hesitated when depicting horses on a silk scroll. But when contemporary Chinese painter Lin Fengmian designed ponds and cranes, we are confident that he did so after he had experienced collision and torment of two cultures, two types of philosophy, two outlooks and two kinds of state of mind.

Yang Xianrang and Zhang Pingliang, husband and wife, had received Western art education. They were admitted into National Beiping Art College in succession. Of course, their western art education was second-hand. For their teacher, the famous painter Xu Beihong, adored the following motto: "To assimilate

from the fine skills of Western painting on the basis of the tradition of ancient Chinese painting". Another branch of Western culture—Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong investing them with Chinese characteristics—was instilled into the education they had received. Jiang Feng who had come from Yanan succeeded Xu Beihong as President of the art college. What he adored most was to express fervent social ideals with proficient modern techniques.

This young couple, pure, "selfless" painters like all young men and women of that time, accepted all these without a tiny bit of discount. At that time, although they were busy with beating waist drums and putting out wall papers, they were, after all, studying in the highest art college. They were upright, intelligent, honest and diligent young men and women; they received strict professional training and laid solid basis in the techniques of Western painting. But their "spirit" was restless. They had neither time nor right to and even never thought of examining, expressing and expanding their self. They were altogether whirled into one political upsurge after another, dedicating their efforts and talent.

Young men and women of today who do not say unkind words about others now view Yang Xianrang's woodcuts so renowned in the 1950's with pity and tolerance. They cannot bear idolizing and generalizing an object, even it was such a brave and pure heroine as Liu Hulan. They do not know that Yang Xianrang who executed paintings in an impoverished col in Wenshui County, Henan Province and how consciencestricken he felt when thinking that he was a carefree young master at fifteen while Liu Hulan died as a martyr precisely at this age. They do not know how much arduous endeavour he must pay in order to paint the portraits of all the seven fellow villagers whose heads

had been chopped off. Moreover, they know far less that this would cause a tremendous stir in the remote, backward place that had never seen any photograph or portrait.

Just like the cause that Liu Hulan had dedicated her life to was undergoing great pain and unavoidably becoming history, that part of the passion that the couple of painters owed only to the "publicity work" of this state power was quieting down. When they gradually advanced into old age, the riot of emotion, bustle and noise that were instilled into and urged out by effort vanish. What remains are only simplicity and straightforwardness of their childhood, mellowness, and leniency after all their unfortunate experiences and the perception that artists will never grow old and the skills that will become mature and well-tempered day by day.

Collected in this album of paintings are precisely the works of this couple during this period. Xianrang painted mountains, streams, fields and narrow lanes. Pingliang painted flowers, luxurious flowers, flowers in a riot of colours, simple and refreshing wild flowers and beautiful artistic conceptions which are deficient in life but she weaves them in her inner mind. Flowers are a luxury in Beijing but are constantly seen in their not well-off home. Large clusters in spring and a small bunch in late autumn. Sometimes, even when there is only one branch of or one flower, it is honoured with devotion and crazily cherished. They are more afraid that this delicate, helpless little friend will wither up some day. They hurriedly put off things on hand to paint it. ....They have no garden and few chances to stroll slowly and linger in the midst of flowers. They have been all along busy with teaching and fostering others. He is a professor and she an editor. These paintings—probably they are a small piece of land they have left from all sorts of bustle and noise.

If herein readers see their composure, warm-heartedness and honesty and by chance think of how difficult they have preserved them, you will share that most rare portion of sincerity among mainland Chinese. And you will get closer to the painters and to the rescue of human nature and human mind.

Decembr 1991. 12

我們都是出於西洋繪畫科班，  
後來又都喜歡玩弄中國花卉筆墨。  
“版畫家”、“美術編審”、  
“教授”是我們的職稱，  
近十多年，  
我們又對中國傳統民間美術  
迷戀與研究着。  
藝術世界本來就是那麼豐富而寬廣。  
對我們說來，  
互相滲透交融是很自然的了。  
利用中國的紙、筆、墨優勢，  
以西方繪畫的視角，  
去構圖去表現那物象的光與色，  
借此反映我們內心的情與境。  
這種繪畫，  
就稱它為“彩繪”吧。

作者

We are both first trained as western style painting professionals, who later became attached to flower painting of the traditional Chinese school. Our titles include: "graphic artists," "art editors," and "professors." Over the past dozens of years, we have also done some research on Chinese folk arts.

The world of art, in the first place, is rich and spacious. It is only natural for us to blend the different schools of art.

We intend to capture and express the light and color of the material world from a western approach and with the Chinese paper, brush and ink so as to reflect our inner feelings and state of mind.

We would call this kind of painting "color painting."

The Authors



**CATALOGUE  
OF  
YANG XIANRANG'S  
PAINTINGS**

**大槐樹下的農家**

71×97cm 1991

早逝的理論家馮湘一曾說：

“楊先讓人那麼瀟灑、風趣，而畫却那麼老實。”

我也揣摩

這貌似不統一的現象。

可能這正說明

一個人是立體的原故吧。

**A Farm House under a Big Scholartree**

71×97cm 1991

Yang Xianrang is free,

easy and humorous,

but his paintings are down-to-earth.

said Feng Xiangyi,

a theoretician who died young.

I also ponder upon this paradox.

This may serve to show the many sides of a person.



槐樹下的農家

辛卯年秋  
先謙



新 綠

72×96cm 1989

**Fresh Verdure in Spring**

72×96cm 1989