

姜

國

芳

紫

禁



JIANG GUO FANG  
THE FORBIDDEN CITY



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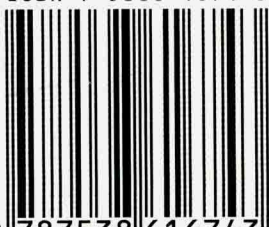
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Artistic Profile





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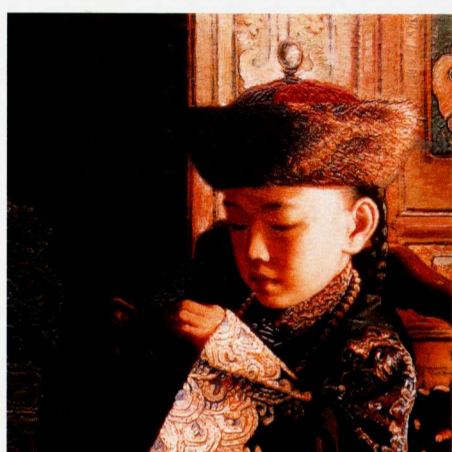
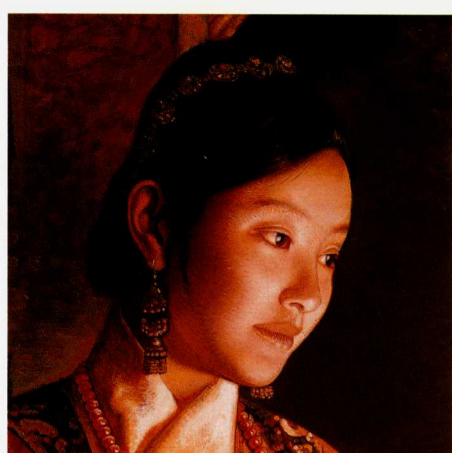
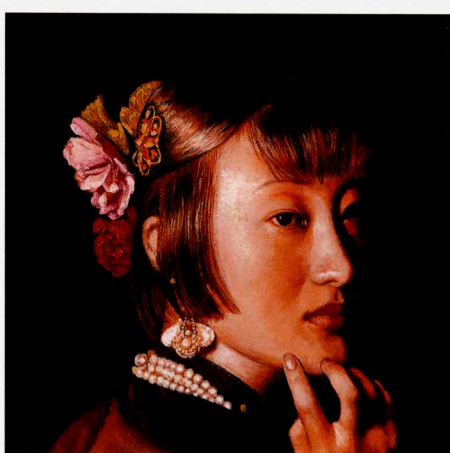
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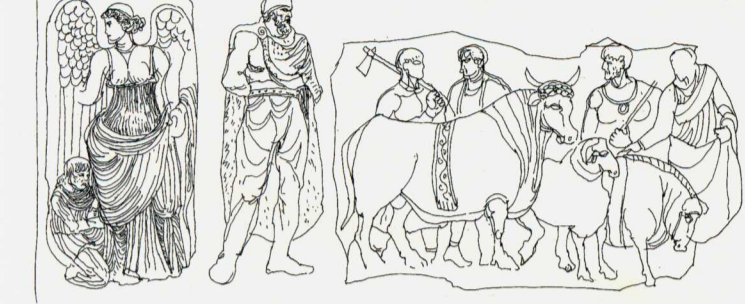
The Hall of Supreme Harmony

太和殿

1987

Oil on canvas

100 × 80cm



Sketch  
速寫

所謂歷史畫指的是以歷史事件為題材的繪畫。廣義上還包括以神話傳說、宗教故事為題材的繪畫，有時也包括描繪與作者同時代事件的繪畫。而成為歷史畫題材的事件，往往是該民族眾所周知的大事，同時畫家在表現手法上，一般都力求理想化與典型化。因此，歷史畫的意義，與其說是對史實的忠實記錄，毋寧說是對民族性和國家精神的思考追索。故而，創作歷史畫的傳統由來已久，並成為各個國家民族充分發揮美術的認識作用和教育作用的有力武器。

歷史畫的起源，在西方可追溯至古代的美索不達米亞和古埃及。希臘、古羅馬時期的繪畫則透過現實要素與神話要素的結合，展現了反映現實與歷史、神話與寓意的複雜構成。羅馬末期的歷史畫在描寫上強化了綫的、非肉體的、抽象化的傾向，並向強調精神特質與表現手法的拜占庭時期過渡。中世紀的歷史畫被視為傳達上帝福音的重要一環，畫面往往將



歷史人物與宗教場面相結合，或者將聖經、神話、聖徒的故事作寫實性地描寫。歷史畫在十四世紀文藝復興時期的意大利廣泛流行，並與人文主義相結合，形成了豐富的精神內涵。而稍後的巴洛克時期則大體上繼承了文藝復興的方向，同時又有了某些新的變化。十九世紀初期，歷史畫被新古典主義和學院派奉為最正統、最高貴的繪畫題材。歷史畫不僅被獨立出來，且被視為繪畫最高貴的表現領域。

歷史畫在中國同樣是起源很早，內容多是從歷史故事和反映歷史的文學作品中取材。從春秋戰國時期到十九世紀，歷史畫是中國畫家十分關注的領域。這些歷史畫通常都含有道德或是政治的寓意，而不單單祇是在描述歷史性的場景或情節。在表現手法上，中國的歷史畫起初是充分立足于宗教或文化的寓意，對實用功能性的要求往往超過作品自身的完善；而到了封建社會的後期，畫家才脫離純然的“教化”目的，開始重視作品的細節的描述性。

進入二十世紀，西方的歷史畫創作逐步式微，尤其到了第二次世界大戰之後，歷史畫已非藝術創作之主流，究其原因則是蓬勃發展的現代繪畫以及廣泛出現的新媒介運動所致。而在二十世紀的中國，以寫實主義來創作歷史畫無疑是其中最輝煌的篇章。二十世紀前葉徐悲鴻等人的歷史畫創作，對於激勵本民族的鬥志與信念，乃至對民族革命和民族解放運動的最終勝利都起到了不可磨滅的歷史貢獻。新中國的歷史畫創作是以表現革命歷史與政治相關的主題為顯著特征，曾經輝煌一時。但由於眾所周知的原因，歷史畫創作一度又成了社會政治的具體工具，甚至“墮落”為完全意義上的政治機器上的“齒輪和螺絲釘”，扭曲了作為歷史題材作品所必具的真實性，最終喪失了其藝術的獨立性與品格魅力。

雖則如此，但事實上歷史畫從未真正地衰落過，而總是能够



Sketch  
速寫



獲得“復生”。這種“復生”並不是簡單地起死回生，而是猶如鳳凰涅槃般地升華或重生。如果我們仔細考察二十世紀的世界美術歷史，甚至可以看到一些歷史畫創作成為了當代藝術的“脊梁”，成為了新藝術發展過程中的裏程碑。正如畢加索的《格爾尼卡》，亦如董希文的《開國大典》。前者與立體主義運動緊密相系，後者則是油畫民族精神探索的結晶。而在近來普遍強調“後現代主義”的文化語境下，歐美國文化界正掀起一場對二十世紀歷史畫創作的深刻反思，並普遍認為對歷史畫的忽視在某種程度上就是對自身歷史的忽視和對自身文化傳統的背叛。

的確，祇有洞察歷史發展的脈絡和充分了解當今文化發展的新趨勢，才能夠對姜國芳的歷史畫創作做出客觀和理性的評述，才能夠給與姜國芳的藝術以恰當地歸納和歸類。

事實上，在當代的中國，如姜國芳般潛心於歷史畫創作的藝術家已是鳳毛麟角。而論及已取得了令人矚目的成就，這一成就又不僅為中國社會所熟知，也為國際社會所認識，在當下則更可謂是無出其右。

姜國芳是二十世紀七十年代改革開放前後第一批進入學院并接受正規美術教育的藝術家。在中國的最高美術學府中央美術學院以優異成績畢業，並被選拔而留校任教。在學院學習的過程中，姜國芳即對以純正的歐洲寫實主義技巧來創作歷史畫感悟頗深。在隨後的教學和創作的生涯中，姜國芳更逐步努力將其完善成為一整套符合中國特色的歷史畫創作的技法系統。稍後頻繁的出國考察，更有條件讓姜國芳既向本民族優秀傳統索取精髓，又放眼世界，把握當代藝術發展的脈動。以此為契機，八十年代後期的姜國芳已經將自己的探索視點對藝術語言的關注，逐步轉向對理論體系的確立與提升。

九十年代以來，姜國芳對中國歷史文化的膜拜構成了自我的藝術情懷和藝術追求。同時對中國歷史文化的深刻思考與重估，無疑也推動着獨特之系列畫題的初步達成。事實上，如何借助油畫語言與歷史畫的創作形式來表現中華民族的歷史並聯係當代社會的變化，一直是姜國芳夢牽魂繞、苦思冥想的問題，而“紫禁城”系列作品的推出則似乎是初步的結論。

在姜國芳的“紫禁城”系列中，金碧輝煌的殿堂，雄偉壯麗的城牆門樓，縱橫交錯的街巷鋪陳出歷史的宏大背景，但畫家無意於還原歷史的真實，或者說是復原歷史的場景，更着意表現的是矛盾的衝突、歷史的嬗變，並努力投射上創作者的經驗痕迹，以及當代性的理解或文化性的結論。

因此畫家從未選擇過真正意義上的歷史事件或歷史人物作為自己的畫題。即便是像《奏折》、《天子》、《宮門》這類作品，與某些特定的歷史事件或歷史人物有着一定的關聯性，但是姜國芳並非僅僅是“圖解”歷史，而是通過闊大的空間結構和繁雜豐富的道具細節，以及對主體人物的刻意描繪，營造了一齣由畫家充任導演的“歷史活劇”，制造出戲劇性的情境張力和精神衝突。而在更多的作品中，女性形象往往成為了作品的描繪中心。《夢中芙蓉》、《宮闈之夜》、《禦花園中》、《春風吹入紫禁城》、《閨秀》，昏暗的宮殿室內、裝飾華麗繁複的宮門、雕龍畫鳳的屏風與床榻，構成了作品明確的清代宮廷之地點性。然而與那些津津於病態、孱弱的女性形象塑造的所謂“古典矯飾主義”迥異。姜國芳筆下的女性却是如此的自信、美麗、善良、健康，甚至充滿了現代女性的品格特質。

這些獨特的處理更明確地反映了姜國芳的歷史觀念，與畫家個人對歷史畫創作的界定：描繪歷史並非是要被歷史所拘，畫家必須從具體的歷史情態中抽身出來，去關注、去表現那些永恒的精神命題。

油畫的寫實傳統在表現物象的逼真性和複雜性方面具有明顯的優勢，但更重要的是寫實性的語言有助於繪畫經典性的理想實現。姜國芳站在美術巨匠的肩膀上，而反觀內審的結果則是畫家既試圖繼承古典寫實的精神，又努力注入個人的情感和理解方式，並將其轉化為緊扣時代脈搏的“新寫實主義”。在具體的創作中，姜國芳擅於結合美術發展的新結論，綜合美術諸流派的新成就，進而形成符合當代審美特點、展現當代審美特征的新繪畫形式語言、在造型、色彩、結構、空間、筆觸等諸方面推陳出新。

從近期完成的作品來看，姜國芳的歷史畫創作出現了一些形式語言上的新進展。自古以來，在歷史畫創作中最難解決的是人物間的相互關係、人物與環境的關係。姜國芳雖則同樣面臨着這樣的難題，但他首先立基於人物與環境和諧統一的大關係，借助於畫面氣氛的整體營造，統和了畫面的各部分；同時也致力於人物群像間關係的建立，而這一關係的建立則主要是通過情感性、情節性的描寫而得以強化。

色彩與質感是過去歷史畫家往往有意回避的話題，因為過去人們認為對這些因素的過多關注將削弱作品主題性的表現。但姜國芳毫不理會這些陳規，轉而強調在表達歷史觀念的同時，展現視覺性的意義。因此畫家不斷增強色彩與質感的表現力，甚至不惜在畫面中人為地設計光源，來展現色彩與質感的表現力。畫面空間的塑造也有了新的變化，正如姜國芳強調的“東方藝術的靜態、平面裝飾性、人物的神意交流”，依據這些藝術主張，背景的歷史空間被有效地轉化為一種傳達意念的“場”，這是一種錯綜複雜的結構形態，並對應於作品的主題而呈現出豐富變化的特質。

以歷史的眼光來評價姜國芳的歷史觀念與“新歷史畫”，我們可以這樣認為，畫家創造的不僅僅是“繪畫性的歷史”，更是“歷史性的繪畫”。也就是說畫家在開創歷史畫的嶄新篇章的同時，自己也因在此領域中的開創性工作，而進入了歷史的視野。



Memorial to the Throne(draft)  
《奏折》草圖

# Jiang Guofang’s New Historic View and “New Historic Paintings”

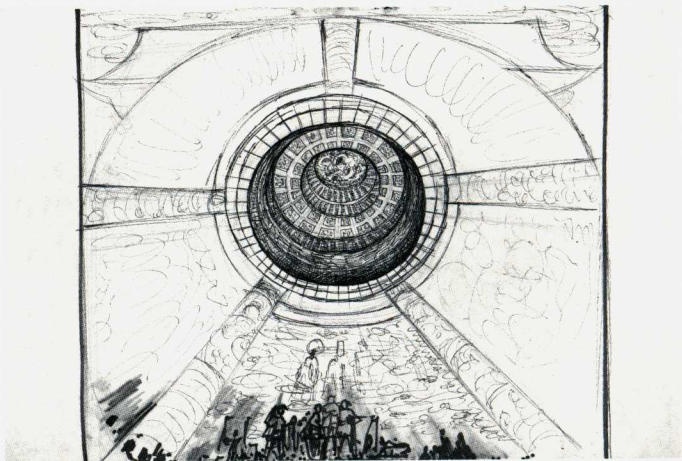
by Zhao Li



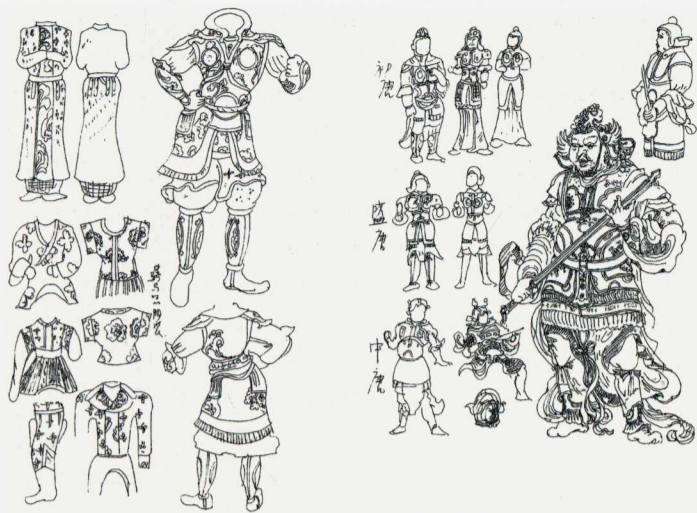
Sketch  
速寫

Historic paintings refer to paintings that draw material from historic events. In a general sense, historic paintings also feature myths, legends and religious stories. Sometimes, paintings that depict events contemporary with the painter are also classified as historic paintings. Historic events used in historic paintings are usually major events widely known by society. Meanwhile, painters generally stress idealism and typification in their artistic expression. Consequently, historic paintings are not just faithful recordings of historic facts. They also reflect on the spiritual exploration of a people and a nation. Historic paintings have therefore become a time-honored tradition. Many countries have used them as a power-

Draft Painting  
創作草圖



ful tool for providing awareness and education. The origins of historic paintings can be traced back to the time of Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt. Paintings in the ancient Greece and Rome eras employed a combination of real and mythological elements, from which emerged the representation of actual and historical events with mythology and fables. Historic paintings at the end of the Roman Era showed a consolidated linear, non-carnal and abstract tendency and entered the transition stage toward the Byzantium era, when spiritual qualities and representation techniques were emphasized. Historic paintings of the Middle Ages were used as an important means to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paintings usually combined historic figures with religious scenes, or realistically depicted stories of the Bible and legends. Historic paintings became very popular in Italy during the Renaissance era in the 14th century as they were merged with humanism and resulted in rich spiritual connotations. The subsequent Baroque era continued the trend of the Renaissance era, though some changes took place. In the beginning of the 19th century, historic paintings were regarded by painters of neoclassicism and academism schools as the most orthodox and noblest paintings. Not only had historic paintings become independent from other types of paintings, they had also been ranked as paintings of the highest order. Historic paintings originated in China rather early and mainly drew material from historic stories and literature. From the Spring and Autumn periods and the Warring States period until the 19th century, historic paintings were a very important area for Chinese painters. As these historic paintings usually contained moral or political overtones, they were not merely reproductions of historic scenes or plots. In terms of techniques of expression, China’s historic paintings origi-



Sketch  
速寫

nally dwelt upon religious or cultural matters. Demands for their pragmatic functions usually outweighed demands for perfection of the works themselves. It was not until the later period of feudal society that painters finally disengaged themselves from “preaching” and started paying more attention to descriptive details in paintings.

Entering the 20th century, the importance of historic paintings declined in the West. Particularly after World War II, historic paintings were no longer regarded as the mainstream form of artistic creation, due in part to the vigorous development of modern paintings and to the emerging new media movements. In China however, it was then that historic paintings created through realism had undoubtedly reached their zenith. During the first half of the 20th century, historic paintings by Xu Beihong and others inspired the struggling spirit and confidence of the Chinese people and contributed greatly to the final victory of the revolution and the liberation movement. Historic paintings of New China mainly featured themes that reflected the revolutionary history and politics. Gradually, the function of historic paintings was reduced to that of a political tool, and even degenerated completely into “gears and screws” of political machines. The compulsory authenticity of historic paintings was distorted and ultimately, historic paintings lost their independence and glamour as a separate school of art.

In spite of this, historic paintings have never truly faded, but have always managed to be resurrected. This resurrection is not simply bringing something back from the dead, but more in the manner of sublimation like Nirvana. If we carefully inspect the world’s art history of the 20th century, we can even see that some historic paintings have become the backbone of contemporary art and a milestone in the cause of art development. Examples of such works are Picasso’s *Guernica* and Dong Xiwen’s *Founding Ceremony*. The former is closely associated with cubism while the latter is the crystallization in oil painting of the exploration of national spirit. In

the recent context of post-modernism which had been gaining popularity, European and American cultural circles conducted a profound reassessment of historic paintings of the 20th century and had universally acknowledged that neglect of historic paintings meant neglect to some extent of their own histories and betrayal to their own cultural traditions. Indeed, only by fully perceiving the threads of thought in historic development and fully understanding trends of current cultural development can we make objective and rational reviews on Jiang’s historic paintings and properly summarize and classify his art.

In fact, there are scarcely any artists in present day China who devote themselves to the creation of historic paintings like Jiang. He has made outstanding achievements which are well-known in China and have also been recognized by the international society. He is without equal in this regard.

Jiang was among the first batch of artists that received a formal art education in the late 1970s, when China adopted policies of reform and opening. He graduated with distinction at China’s highest seat of fine arts learning, the Central Academy of Fine Arts, and was appointed to the faculty upon graduation. While a student in the Academy, he developed a profound understanding of portraying historic themes with pure European realism. During the course of his teaching and creation, Jiang gradually developed a set of techniques suited for historic paintings with Chinese characteristics. He also traveled frequently abroad, which made it possible for him to grasp the pulse of contemporary art development in the world while extracting the quintessence of the fine tradition of Chinese arts. In the late 1980s, he gradually shifted his focus of exploration from a mere concern for artistic language to the establishment and refinement of his theoretical system.

In the 1990s, Jiang turned his worship of Chinese history and culture into his own artistic pursuit. His deep thinking and reassessment of Chinese history and culture undoubtedly