

The Idiom 2007

土語 2007

李向明

**LI XIANGMING**



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## 抽象與敘事

Abstraction and Narration

### ——李向明的抽象藝術

- Li Xiangming's Abstract Art

易 英

By Yi Ying

李向明的藝術經歷了具象、抽象和半抽象的歷程，這種描述很像一個現代藝術的傳統，但對於李向明却是很真實的。他的藝術像是從泥土中生長的樹，迎向生命和陽光之後，又回歸泥土，但不再是家鄉的泥土，而是歷史與文化記憶的泥土。如果李向明沒有走出大山的話，他很可能是一個鄉土畫家。他不是一個安分的鄉土畫家，像農民向往都市一樣，他告別鄉土是對現代藝術的追求，但是在追求現代藝術的時候他並沒有舍弃鄉土。他在20世紀80年代開始形式的探索，從寫實的鄉土變為原始主義的鄉土。原始主義包含形式，也包含着生命，李向明是將生命寓于形式之中。李向明從鄉土出走，記憶還留在鄉土，鄉土的變形就容納了他的生命記憶。

在李向明的抽象作品中包含着雙重的因素，一個是生命的記憶，一個是對現代藝術的向往。後者是顯性的，前者是隱性的。從表面上看，李向明的抽象繪畫偏重於設計性和形式感，顯得樸實而沉着，暖色的和諧往往是作品的基調。這個階段是李向明探索現代藝術的過程，他既不追求抽象中的文化設定，也不刻意個性和情感的表現。他像早期現代主義那樣，關注畫面的經營和形式的組合。這也是他自己的一個轉型的過程，從寫實轉向抽象，總是要戰勝自我的頑強抵制。在這個階段，他沒想到寫實與抽象結合的可能性，而是像寫實的觀念一樣，盡量把畫面做得完美。這是寫實畫家難以舍弃的自身的傳統，但是李向明的這種“完美”却是來自潛在的生命記憶，暖色的和諧，尤其是褐色的和諧總是使人聯想到黃土和北方的村落、連綿的大山和一望無際的平原。李向明認為這種關係是來自現實主義繪畫的訓練，一種擺脫不掉的色彩關係，特別是這一代畫家不是受巡回畫派就是受歐洲古典繪畫的影響。但是在他心理的深層，還是生活自身的影響，黃土如同他的生命，那種巨大的褐色畫面就像融入了他的生命。這種深層心理不是能明確意識到的，他的明確意識是告別傳統，創造現代。告別傳統實際上是告別自我。李向明不同於一般的學院藝術家，他不是學院裏接受的寫實繪畫的訓練，現實主義是他自己的選擇，藝術、技術、命運、生活都包含在這種選擇之中，他無法反叛自身。他越把抽象藝術做得完美，他越會陷入自我與人格的分裂。這是李向明告別黃土告別自我的一個過程，在流暢的筆觸和和諧的顏色下面壓抑着敘事的欲求。

抽象的繪畫隱藏着敘事，只是表述的動機各不相同。像李向明這樣從寫實過來的畫家是擺脫不了敘事的，他要擺脫的是舊的敘事，圖畫與形象的散文，當然還有黃土的身份。敘事於他不僅是語言的回歸，而且還是生命的記憶，這個生命不一定是早年的生命記憶，或童年被遺忘的記憶，而是生命的進程與精神的裂變、壓抑與痛苦、豁然與頓悟、思考與創造，等等。他因為向往現代，而從小地方來到大都市，進入了現代却生活在都市的村莊，彷彿在關照現代與都市。

Li Xiangming's art has undergone a process of figurative, abstract and semi-abstract paintings. This description seems like a tradition of modern art, but for Li Xiangming it is true. His art is like a growing tree cropping up from the ground, embracing life and sunlight, then returning to the soil, but it is no longer the soil that is embedded in native country, conversely it is the soil of historical and cultural memories. If Li Xiangming has never come out of the mountainous areas, he might be still a rustic painter. He is not a quiet rustic painter, rather like a farmer aspiring to urban life, he bid farewell to his native country to seek modern art, but he does not give up his rustic inspirations when pursuing modern art. He began to explore artistic forms in 1980s turning from realist rustic style to primitive rustic one. Primitivism contains both form and life, while Li Xiangming endows life into forms. He walks out of rustic land, but his memory still lingers there, and the transformation of rustic land will contain his life memory.

In Li Xiangming's abstract works two elements are included: one is life memory, other is aspiration for modern art. The later is explicit, the former implicit. Viewed from the surfaces, Li Xiangming's abstract paintings stress more on the essence of design and sense of form, looking like pristine and composed, the harmony of warm colors always constitutes the basic tone of works. At this phrase Li Xiangming explored the modern art, he neither ran after the cultural specification in abstraction nor expressed individuality and emotions meticulously. Like early modernist, he focuses on the composition of pictorial surfaces and combination of forms. It is a process of his own transformation from realism to abstraction, keeping on fighting against his own resistance. At this period, he never thinks of the possibility of combining realism with abstraction, but like realist conception, tries to perfect the pictorial surfaces. It is a kind of tradition that painters are unwilling to cast away, but Li Xiangming's perfection derives from his hidden life memory, a harmony of warm colors, especially brown harmony always reminds one of yellow earth and northern villages, running mountains and overspreading endless plains. Li Xiangming thinks this relation comes from the training of realist painting, a kind of color relation that couldn't be thrown away, particularly this generation of painters is affected either by The Traveling Art Exhibits painting or by European classicist painting. In his inner deep, however, he is affected by life itself, as yellow earth is just like his life, that enormous brown surfaces seem merged into his life. Such deep psychology is not definitely noticed, and his asserted consciousness is to bid farewell to tradition and create modern. To bid farewell to tradition indeed means to bid farewell to oneself. Li is distinct from general academic artists, he does not accept realist painting training within academy, but realism is his own selection. Art, technique, fate, and life are so contained in this selection that he couldn't rebel himself. The more he makes perfect abstract art, the more he is involved into the division of self and personality. It is a process of Li Xiangming saying goodbye to yellow earth, and to self, under a flow of brushstrokes and harmonious colors are suppressed a desire of narration.

Abstract painting hides narration, but it only expresses a quite different motive. Li Xiangming as a painter of making realism for years couldn't get rid of narration, what he tries to shake off is old narration, picture and imaged prose, of course the identity of yellow earth. For him, narration means not only a return of language but also a memory of life. This life may not refer to remembrances of early life or some forgotten in a childhood, but to life progress and spiritual fission, depression and suffering, enlightenment and sudden understanding, thinking and creation, etc. Because he yearns for modernity, he comes to metropolis, entering modernity but living in a village like city, that it seems that he watch modernity and metropolis. So, personal experience, will, feeling and knowledge are absorbed into his paintings, abstract form is endowed with concrete content, thus his

這樣，個人的經驗、意志、感受和認識都融合到他的畫中，抽象的形式有了具體的內容，他的抽象由視覺的形式的抽象進入文化的抽象。在他的抽象中承載着個人的經驗和生存的意識，在某種程度上還是一種象徵的抽象。這種象徵並不是明確的符號，它通過標題的暗示表達了一種生存的狀態。生存又有兩方面的意思，既是個人的經驗，也是文化的整體狀況，兩者有時也纏結在一起。在李向明的作品中可以明確識別的是書法的漢字，如《符號的東方·山水封存》（2004）和《符號的東方·文化種植》（2004）。書法的抽象美一直為抽象藝術家所關注，並且總是為它賦予“抽象民族化”的意義。李向明對書法的搬用也不排除這種可能，但他在實質上並不是追求書法的抽象美，而是有更深層的含義。實際上，李向明的形式抽象就已經達到很高的水平，他無需再用書法來證明他的“抽象”能力，書法于他意味着“東方的符號”，如他所說“‘全球化’、‘一體化’語境的趨勢與現實使得本土文化受眾增添了殖民文化的警覺與嫌疑”。在全球化的壓力下，堅持本土文化的立場，是有機地參與全球化的文化戰略，抽象與書法、全球與本土似乎統一在李向明的作品中。這是他長期以西方現代藝術為參照來探索抽象藝術的一個重要的轉向，也為他的抽象藝術找到了“合法的”內容。實際上，李向明在本質上不是一個外向型藝術家，這種表面上的宏大敘事掩蓋不住他心理上的衝突。在他更多的作品中，並不是這種“全球化與本土化”的敘事，而是個人心理與精神的張力。從畫面上看就是形式的自由與精神的緊張的衝突，這也正是李向明作品的感動人之處。他的作品逐漸擺脫了繪畫性裝飾性的抽象，綫條、色塊、隱晦的形象、文化的符號都非常自由地組合在一起，但整體的趨勢是束縛與掙脫的對抗。李向明永遠處在這種矛盾之中，和諧、結構、敘事是他學習過的傳統對他的束縛，破碎、掙脫、粗野是他對這個傳統的反抗。在他的畫上不可能看到走調的色彩或耗散的構圖，如《遊戲規則》（2002），但幾根綫條在向心式的結構中自由地游走，幾筆粗糙的痕迹有壓制不住的欲望，與和諧赫然對立。至于那種形象的意象在抽象的結構中更具有心理的象徵，既是現代生活的誘惑，也是藝術家本人原始本能的召喚。不過這一切都掩蓋起來了，他用了全球化的大標題，那不過是一個放大的客體，他的“東方”應是他隱藏的自我。

看李向明最近的畫展就是這種感覺，因為看過他以前的作品，也跟他聊過、談過、爭辯過，他畫這麼長的時間，經歷這麼大的變化，但他還是在行走，從大山走向都市，從鄉土走向現代，而且走幾步就要回頭看看，所有的往前走和回頭看都深深地刻印在他的作品中。

（原載《世界美術》2005年第四期）

abstraction becomes a cultural abstraction from the abstraction of visual form. His abstraction bears personal experience and existential consciousness, which to some extent is a kind of symbolic abstraction. This symbolism is not a definite sign, but it implies a state of survival by titles. Survival has two meanings: both personal experience and wholly cultural state, which are sometimes tangled together. In his works what could be easily recognized is calligraphic Chinese characters, such as "Symbolic East - Landscape Sealing-Up" (2004) and "Symbolic East - Cultural Planting" (2004). Calligraphic abstract beauty is always concerned by abstract artists, and endowed with "abstract nationalization". Li Xiangming appropriates calligraphy from the same perspective, but he doesn't actually look for the abstract beauty of calligraphy, rather for more profound connotations. In fact, Li Xiangming's formal abstraction has reached a high level, he doesn't need calligraphy to prove his "abstract" ability, for him calligraphy means "eastern symbol", like what he says that "the tendency and reality of 'globalization'-'integration' context make local culture audiences become vigilant against and suspect colonist culture". To insist on a local cultural stance against the pressure of globalization is a kind of cultural strategy to take part in globalization organically, thus abstraction and calligraphy, global and local seem to be unified into Li Xiangming's works. It is an important turn since he refers to western modern art to explore abstract art for long time, so he finds a "legal" content for his abstract art. It is true that Li Xiangming is not an extrovert artist essentially, so this superficial grand narrative couldn't cover up his inner conflicts. His other works don't have this narrative of "globalization and localization", but personal tensions of psychology and spirit. Pictorially, it is a conflict of formal freedom and spiritual tension, which is also what moves audience in his works. His paintings throw off gradually the painterly, decorative abstraction, so lines, colors, obscure images, and cultural symbols are composed together at liberty, while the whole tendency is the confrontation between restraints and break-away. Li Xiangming is in such contradiction forever, harmony, structure, and narrative are the restraints upon him by the tradition he has learnt, broken pieces, break-away, and coarseness are his fight against this tradition. In his paintings you couldn't find out-of-tune colors or dissociative compositions, such as "Game Rules" (2002), but several lines move at random in the centripetal structure, some coarse traces reveal an unsuppressed desire against harmony. This imagery of images in abstract structures implies psychological symbolism, which is both a temptation of modern life and the summons of the artist's own primitive instinct. None the less, all these are covered up by his grand titles of globalization, which is only an enlarged object. His "east" should be his hidden self.

This is what I feel when I have seen his recent paintings exhibition, for I have seen his past works, talked to him, and debated. He has painted such long time by experiencing such dramatic changes, but he still walks on, from mountainous area to city, from the country to modernity, and also turns round to have a look when going forward. All walking ahead and turning round are imprinted in his works deeply.

Published in "World Art Journal", No. 4 issue, 2005  
Translated by Wang Chunchen

## 形式創造的文化主義立場 Cultural Standpoint of Formal Creation

——李向明藝術訪談錄  
Interview on Li Xiangming about his Art

地點：北京昌平上苑藝術家村  
時間：2007年7月21日  
訪談人：鄒躍進  
訪談對象：李向明

Venue: Shangyuan Artist Village, Changping, Beijing  
Time: Junly 21, 2007  
Interviewer: Zou Yuejin  
Interviewee: Li Xiangming

**鄒躍進（以下簡稱鄒）：**我的第一個問題是你從事美術創作以來大致經歷了哪幾個重要階段，你先做一個大致的描述好嗎？

**李向明（以下簡稱李）：**好的。大致應該分為三個階段：70年代我在部隊待整整十年，十年間，是我在繪畫上很被動的從天性喜歡抒情、唯美的形式主義，向主題性、情節性的繪畫調整、扭轉的時期；80年代轉業到地方，主要是作美術家協會的工作。這個階段是我在現代主義與現實主義之間徘徊、選擇的時期；從90年代開始，應該是真正進入現代主義的階段。這是我對自己的一個劃分，這裏面都有特定的歷史與環境的原因。

**鄒：**你早期也有一些具有現代主義傾向的作品，那是理性的自覺，還是一種偶然？

**李：**在我保存下來的作品中，有一張1976年表現太行山的小幅油畫，叫《大山的記憶》。我一直特別喜歡那張畫，用現在的術語它有點表現主義的味道，但那個時候我并不知道表現主義是什麼，最多知道印象派。這張畫說明我真正感興趣的是那些視覺形式的東西，如筆觸、色彩、綫條、結構等。可以說，我這個人一開始就是個形式主義者。如1979年畫油畫《春花》，就是為了表現一條弧形的綫與一條直綫的形式關係，而畫了一個圓形的大水池邊站立了一個人。所以，那個年代我的創作並不順。

**鄒：**也許你內心世界對繪畫本體有一種天生的喜好？

**李：**是這樣。記得小時候我在舅舅家時，我看到泥瓦匠抹牆泥的情景，當他把白灰泥塗抹到牆上的時候，我很驚訝泥瓦匠在土牆上揮動瓦刀時展現出的痕迹，是那樣的美，印象特別深，覺得好看，確實有一種本能的衝動。

*Zou Yuejin (hereinafter as "Zou"):* My first question is: how many stages have you experienced since you started artistic creations? Would you please give a general description?

*Li Xiangming (hereinafter as "Li"):* Ok. Generally, there are three stages: in the 1970's, I stayed in the Army for ten years. During that ten years, I adjusted my art and transitted passively from naturally liking lyric and aesthetic formalist painting to thematic and scenario painting; I was demobilized from the army and worked in a local artist association in the 1980's, which was a period when I wandered and selected between modernist art and realist art; after it came to the 1990's, I entered a stage of modernist art. That is my differentiation of my own art experiences, within which you may find specific historical and environmental reasons for each stage.

*Zou:* You created some art works with modernist tendencies. Is it a rational consciousness or just a haphazard?

*Li:* Among the early works I preserved, there is a small painting representing Taihang Mountain created in 1976, the title of which is "A memory of the mountains". I like the painting very much. In a contemporary term, it is somewhat expressionist. However, I didn't know what expressionism is at that time. I only knew what impressionism was. That painting illuminates that what I was really interested in were those things in visual forms, such as style of painting, colors, lines and structures, etc. you can say that I have been a formalist since the very beginning. For example, in "Spring Flower" I created in 1979, I painted a person standing beside a large circle pond in order to show the formal relation between an arc line and a beeline. Therefore, my creations during that period of time were not very smooth.

*Zou:* Do you have an inherent fancy for the noumenon of painting in your internal world?

*Li:* Yes. I was in my uncle's home when I was a child. I saw a brickie put mud onto the wall. When he put lime mud on the wall, I was surprised by the marks he made when he moved his trowel on the wall. They looked so beautiful, which greatly impressed me and made me have a kind of instinctive impulse.

*Zou:* You also created some paintings about the countryside in the 1980's, but it seems that your art has not been influenced by *Wise*.

*Li:* Impersonally speaking, I am not interested in the subject matter of countryside. I just use the subject matter to fulfill my own ideas. I have had two dreams since I was a little child: either be an author or be a painter. If I become a painter, I hope my works to be exhibited in China National Art Museum and to be appreciated and recognized by more people. To create paintings on the subject matter of countryside is related to my hope to participate in major exhibitions. However, I pay more attention to the structure and form when I create a painting. In such aspect, I have been more influenced by *Cezanne*.

*Zou:* In the second stage of your art creations, there was a period when you wandered between realism and modernism. So, when do you think was the exact time for you to really enter the third stage, the stage when you explored the modernist art?

*Li:* There were always two routes in the 1980's. "Person who wants to escape", "Self-mockery", "The familiar and strange" and some other works were modernist, but were not steadfast yet. In the early 1990's, starting from those works in "Black and White Painting Collection", most of my works at that time were painted by fountain

**鄒:** 80年代你也畫過鄉土題材，但你好像不是受懷斯的影響？

**李:** 客觀地說我不是對鄉土感興趣，而是借用鄉土的題材來完成我自己的想法。我從小就有兩個夢想，要不當作家，要不當畫家。當畫家就想讓作品進中國美術館，希望被更多的人看到，被認可。畫鄉土題材與想參加大展有關，但在畫的過程中我更關注畫面結構和形式，在這方面塞尚對我的影響更多一些。

**鄒:** 在你藝術創作的第二個階段，有一個在寫實與現代主義之間徘徊的時期，那麼真正轉到第三階段，也就是現代主義藝術探索的時期，你認為是在什麼時候？

**李:** 80年代，一直是兩條綫。如《欲逃者》、《自嘲》、《這熟悉而又陌生的》等都是現代主義的作品，但這時不夠堅定。90年代初，從《黑白畫集》裏的那一批作品開始，大部分都是鋼筆畫，做了幾年的實驗。這個階段應該是脫胎換骨的時期，你給我做的第一本畫冊中的作品都是1995到1996這兩年畫的。

**鄒:** 嚴格地說，第三階段是從1995年開始的。我覺得有一個問題很重要，就是說你並不關注抽象，那你的理由是什麼？你最關心什麼？

**李:** 我不是不關注抽象，只是說我走到抽象這一步不是預先設定的一個方向，而是一個自然的過程。



大山的記憶 布面油畫 1976

在80年代初，我結識了羅工柳先生，他的一句話成爲我思變的重要誘因，他說：有的人一輩子都沒走出大學生的時代，沒有走進藝術家的層次。還有與栗憲庭交往的影響，他當時談到一個觀念就是說藝術是一種創造，不是摹仿，我們前幾十年的油畫全是蘇派的復制。可以說在當時對我是一種激勵與啓蒙。再加上讀書學習的知識積累，越來越強烈地關心起自己在藝術上的出路。我在哪裏？出路在哪？從哪兒開始？我們藝術的主流應該是什麼？這成爲我持續不斷的思考核心。

我認爲還是應從中國本土尋找出路。今天的平面繪畫早已成爲傳統，後現代的出現，使影像、裝置、行爲流行開來，這時，人們說你還想在平面繪畫上創造你自己的藝術有可能嗎？但是我覺得人類原有的傳統，創造過的輝煌，是不是就窮盡了？沒有新的出路了？我一直有這種懷疑，所以在這個階段上，我放棄了原來鄉土寫實的故事性描繪，而回到藝術的本體。但是同時我又不願意放棄我個人生存過程中對文化的思考，對社會的認知，原因是我想找一種和西方現代主義藝術不同的東西，我希望我的形式中是有內涵的，而不是“樣式主義”的。不過2005年在美術館舉辦個展時，我的折衷方案也受到了質疑。

鄒：就是徐虹和郭小川兩人認爲你的藝術不夠純粹？

李：他們講得很好，對我也有啓發性。不過，從理論到實踐常常是有距離的，站在我的立場上，我覺得它畢竟展現了一種我自己的藝術面貌。

鄒：是，因爲你的追求正好是不想純粹，不想抽象。

李：不是不想，而是有些問題放不下。一方面我對畫面的結構，以及一塊布的質地，一條綫的美感，色彩的和諧等非常迷戀，這主要還是一種內心的需求，好像是先天的一種癖好；另一方面我又不願放棄對人類文化的思考和對生存體驗的表現，這是後天學習與實踐中養成的一種習性。

鄒：當然內在需求是一個不好解釋的東西，但是我們能從你的畫面上解讀你的文化理想，你的藝術興趣。我覺得有兩個東西你是比較關注的，一個就是你對繪畫語言的興趣和迷戀，屬於現代主



pen. I experimented for several years. It should be a period when I thoroughly remoulded my art style. The works in the first catalog you made for me were all painted during the two years of 1995 and 1996.

Zou: Strictly, the third stage started from 1995. One important question is that you do not pay much attention to abstract art. Why? What are you concerned about most?

Li: It is not that I don't pay attention to abstract art. What I really mean is that it is not a preestablished direction for me to walk into abstract art; it is just a natural process.

In the early 1980's, I got to know Mr. Luo Gongliu, whose one sentence became an important inducement for me to think of changing. He said: "Some people did not walk out of the age of their college for their whole life. They did not reach the level of being an artist". Another influence is my association with Li Xianting, who mentioned a concept of "Art is a kind creation, not an apery". Our paintings in the initial several decades were all copies of Soviet paintings, which had been a kind of prompting and enlightenment for me at that time. With my accumulation of knowledge, I began to think about my direction in the art. Where am I? Where is the outlet? Where to start? What should the mainstream of our art be? That has become the core of my constant reflection.

I think we should look for the outlet from China mainland. Today's plane painting has become a tradition. The emergence of post-modernist art has made video, installation and performance more and more prevailing. People would say, is it still possible to create your own art on plane paintings? However, I do not believe that human being's previous traditions and ever resplendence have come to the end and haven't any new outlet. Therefore, during that stage, I gave up my previous true-life narrative description of the countryside and come back to the art itself. At the same time, I didn't want to give up my consideration about the culture and my cognition of the society in my living process, because I wanted to find something different from the Western modernist art and expected that my formalist art is meaningful, but not only "formalist". However, my eclectic precept was oppugned when I held my solo exhibition in the National Art Museum in 2005.

Zou: Do you mean that Xu Hong and Guo Xiaochuan considered your art not so pure?

Li: What they said was very good and was an illumination to me, but there is a distance from theory to practice. From my point of view, it has at least represented my own artistic features.



義中的形式主義範疇。第二個是你對兩種文化，即鄉土文化和中國傳統文化的思考。這兩種文化在你作品中交替起作用，有時合二為一，有時分離，有時交融。易英說你從鄉土出走又回到了鄉土，但我認為你從沒有走出鄉土，你只不過是從寫實方式轉到了形式主義的方法，即你後來是用現代主義的觀點來關照鄉土的，所以，你這個鄉土已經不是鄉土的形象，不是畫鄉土，而是滲透在你的抽象藝術語言之中。比如你作品的色彩就是鄉土味的，和我們看到的泥土顏色、鄉村建築的色彩總是有關聯。

**李：**您說的這點我不否認。我們生活在中國這樣一個農業大國裏，常把東方和西方比喻為“土”和“洋”，從這個角度看，這“土”不僅僅是鄉土，應該是本土性的一種表徵。

**鄒：**你上次在美術館的個展主題就叫“土語”，那個展覽之后，主要是有布等材料的那批作品，這是你有意識的想回到中國鄉土中去時創作的作品。

**李：**這批畫就是2005年從歐洲回來後創作的，是我回望我們自身文化的一種舉動，因為歐洲那個環境與我們中國大地比較起來懸殊太大了。特別是我經常走京廣綫這條路，每次坐火車路過的時候，看到車廂兩邊全是没有綠色的大地和破舊的村落，特別是冬季，蒼茫一片，好像當年戰亂燒焦的土地依然猶存，我的心情就特別沉重，打心底為她而流淚。1993年我去美國回來就有這種思緒，這也不僅僅是個貧富的問題……這種矛盾衝突在內心一直沒有消除。

**鄒：**“土語”是你有意識回到鄉土的一種表現，可能和你去了歐洲以後有關係，但我認為你一直就有鄉土情結，它無意識地滲透在你的作品之中。在美術界，從80年代初的鄉土美術到85時期的文化尋根是一個轉換。鄉土美術表現的是農村落後貧瘠的一面，是要和“文革”的農村題材作品中到處鶯歌燕舞的歌頌形成對比。但是1985年興起的文化尋根就不一樣了，它是要在西方文化的衝擊下尋找到中國人得以立足的文化之根，所以當時的大西北、黃土高原因其蒼茫和充滿陽剛之氣而受到藝術界的青睞。我覺得你的抽象藝術語言中的鄉土味，與文化尋根中對鄉土的感悟很類似。

**李：**我和鄉土的情結緣由主要是兩點，一個是我在少年時期就生活在太行山農村裏；二是70年代經常被組織下到河北農村體驗生活。至于你說的“85”文化尋根影響了我的藝術，我沒有想過這一點。客觀地講，當時的尋根熱在藝術領域的表現大面上有許多外在的東西，我以為根就在我們流淌的血脈中，在我們的文脈中。我想得更多的是我們中國有幾千年的優秀文化，為什麼會導致這個國家後來的衰敗呢？為什麼元朝以後就越來越差了？

**Zou:** Yes, because what you are pursuing is just not to be pure or abstract.

**Li:** It is not that I do not want to, but that some issues cannot be laid down. On one hand, I am extremely infatuated with the structure of a painting, the texture of a cloth, the aesthetic feeling of a line and the harmony of colors. That is mostly a kind of innermost demand, like a kind of inborn partiality; on the other hand, I don't want to give up my reflection of human cultures and representation of my living experiences. That is a kind of second nature that has been nurtured in my studies and practices.

**Zou:** Innermost demand is something difficult to be explained, but we can unscramble your cultural ideality and your artistic interests from your paintings. I think there are two things you pay more attention to, one is your interest in and infatuation with painting languages, which belongs to the category of formalism in modernist art. The other is your reflection of two cultures: agrestic culture and Chinese traditional culture, which play alternant roles in your works, sometimes united, sometimes apart and sometimes inoculated. Yi Ying said that you left the countryside and came back to the countryside, but I think you have never left the countryside. You just transferred from true-life method to formalist method, that is, you subsequently use modernist viewpoint to care for the countryside, so your agrestic art is no longer agrestic form. You are not drawing agrestic paintings; instead, your paintings are infiltrated in abstract art languages. for instance, the colors in your paintings are agrestic, and are related to the colors of the soil and village buildings in our sights.

**Li:** You are right. We live in such a large agricultural country as China and often compare the East and West to "earthy" and "fashion". From this viewpoint, this "earth" is not only agrestic, it should be a token of nativeness.

**Zou:** The theme of your last solo exhibition in the National Art Museum was "Idioms". After that exhibition, those paintings on canvases were created when you consciously wanted to go back to Chinese agrestic art.

**Li:** Those works were created after I came back from Europe in 2005. It was one of my actions to review our own culture, because the environment in Europe is greatly different from that in China. I often travel through the Beijing-Guangzhou railway line. Every time I sit in the train, looking at mother earth without greens and shabby villages, especially in the winter, vast and boundless, as if the adust land caused by the war still exists there, I become heavy-hearted and want to cry from the bottom of my heart. I began to have this

鄒：你的疑問也是當時的文化尋根感興趣的問題，那就是中國為什麼在後期會衰敗。對中國早期文化和漢唐的推崇與此有關。

李：我也希望在我的作品裏面有中國漢唐時的那種大氣的精神，像漢畫像磚、石刻。我就覺得明清繪畫的那種小氣，那種萎縮的小文人氣，我不喜歡。我希望在今天的藝術裏面應該找回那種大氣和精神。所以，我在我的作品中對中國傳統文化是有批判和反思的。我那些有書法的作品並不是因為書法美，我是把它作為一個符號對象來反思的。2005年參加北京國際雙年展的那張畫我取名叫《穿越廢都》，寓意有一種頹廢的東西一直在這個都市上空漂移着而沒有消失。

鄒：也就是說，你在作品中使用中國傳統文化的一些資源並不祇是贊美它，而是有着批判性的反思。

李：對。

鄒：這個問題比較複雜一些。我想問，你的這批具有“回望鄉村”性質的作品，對中國的鄉土或鄉村在價值上同樣是既有肯定，也有否定和質疑嗎？

李：可以這麼講，我在這一批作品裏面，我的精神世界確實很複雜，既有對這片鄉土的憐憫和同情，也有對它的失望和深深的愛，最後完成的這幅畫，我給它取名叫《在希望的田野上》。我想這個名字的含義是複雜的。

鄒：這個問題是否超越了視覺藝術的能力，不但抽象藝術，就是具像藝術所能承擔的內容也是有限的，這個問題你想過沒有？從一個觀眾的角度上來講，他們會同時感受到你對中國傳統文化、中國鄉土的眷戀、批判、反思和愛的複雜含義嗎？換句話說，你覺得你的作品能傳達出這麼多的含義嗎？

李：這一點我也很清楚，明白藝術不能替代哲學、社會學和其他的許多學科，因為繪畫主要還是視覺上給人的直覺感悟，至于它能傳遞多少東西，我覺得與讀畫人的生存體驗和文化背景有關係，不同的人會有不同的解讀方式和結果，這個也是現代主義藝術的特徵之一。

鄒：是的。中國古人所說的“詩無達詁”，也適合對現代主義藝術的解讀。比如我認為你的作品盡管很抽象，但其中包含濃郁的中國文化意味。除了那些明顯的漢字之外，也包括你對黑色大量的使用，以及你作品中那些綫條的審美趣味。我想，由于你對中國鄉土、中國文化的感受不是簡單的贊美和否定，而是批判性的反思，所以批評家能從你的作品中解讀出各種含義，如人文關懷、對中國鄉土的眷戀等，也正是這一點，使你的作品具有思想的深度。

李：我覺得藝術闡釋的模糊性恰恰是藝術的魅力之所在，因為它不可能像數學、像科學說的

feeling when I came back from USA in 1993. It is not just an issue of poverty and wealth....This kind of conflict never disappeared from my heart.

Zou: "Idioms" is a kind of manifestation that you consciously came back to agrestic art. It was probably related to your travel in Europe. However, I think you have a love knot of the native land all the while, which has been unconsciously infiltrated in your art works. In the world of art, it was a transition from the agrestic art in the early 1980's to the cultural return in 1985. What agrestic art represented is the side of the countryside's backwardness and poverty. It was a contrast to the magnification of prosperity in the art works of the subject matter of countryside during the Great Cultural Revolution. However, the cultural return arisen in 1985 was different. It was to find a base for the Chinese people to base upon under the impact of Western culture, so at that time the great northwest and the Loess Plateau were favored by art circles due to their vastness being full of masculinity. I think the arestic tincture in your abstract art languages is very similar to the perception of native land during the cultural return.

Li: The causes for my love not to agrestic art lied in two points: one was that I lived in the countryside in Taihang Mountain when I was a child; the other was that I was often assigned to experience the lives in the countryside in Hebei Province. As to the influence of the cultural return in 1985 to my art as what you said, I never thought about it. Impersonally speaking, the heat of cultural return at that time had a lot of external things on the whole in the field of art. I think that the base is just in the blood flowing in our bodies, in our cultural context. What I think more about is why China declined while it had thousands years of excellent culture? Why it became worse and worse after Yuan Dynasty?

Zou: Your doubt was an issue that the cultural return was interested in as well, that is, why did China decline in the sequel? The canonization of early Chinese culture and Han and Tang Dynasty was related to this.

Li: I also hope there is that kind of magnificent spirit in my paintings, like Tang Dynasty's painting and stone carving. I don't like the kind of narrowness of Ming and Qing Dynasty's paintings or the atrophied temperament of the scribblers. I hope today's art should call back that kind of magnificent and spirit, therefore, my works contain a kind of criticism and reflection of Chinese traditional culture. My works with calligraphy were not because of the beauty of the calligraphy. I took it as a symbol to be reflected. I titled the painting which participated in 2004 Beijing International Biennale as "Traversing the Ruined Capital", with an implied meaning of that there was something depraved fluttering in the sky above the city and never disappeared.

Zou: That is to say, you employed some resources of Chinese traditional culture in your works. You were not just admiring Chinese traditional culture, but were also reflecting it critically.

那麼的精確肯定。如果說我的作品在閱讀的過程中能够使人發生更多的聯想，我覺得是一個很好的結果。

**鄒：**你說你的作品不是抽象藝術，實際上也是堅持它應有文化含義。

**李：**確切的說，我不是建立在准西方意義上的抽象。按照抽象藝術本身的定義，它是追求審美形式的純粹性，但是我是覺得我和西方的純抽象有所不同，我希望在形式語言的背后蘊含着對文化和社會的思考。在我近期的作品《文心墨迹系列》、《紅牆紀事系列》等作品中，形式語言更簡約，更注重材料之間的差異感和平面間的厚重感與空間感。但對原有問題的思考並沒有削弱或放棄。

**鄒：**在中國藝術界，對冷抽象確實是沒有對熱抽象那麼感興趣，但批評家鄧平祥說你的藝術特徵是理性的激情，意思是說你的激情是在理性控制下的激情，既冷也熱。你同意他的看法嗎？

**李：**我是同意的。我們一直講畫如其人，實際上繪畫和我做人的準則，道德準則是一致的。在日常生活中，我也鼓吹寬松自由的現代主義觀念，但是我不希望放縱到沒有邊界的地步。我認為不管繪畫中的表現主義也好，還是酷似塗鴉般的原始現代主義也好，同樣有嚴謹的形和結構存在。所以，我的畫都是在非常冷靜的情況下完成的。沒有激情肯定是不行的，但我覺得成熟的藝術家，好的作品都是有理性控制的，包括波洛克那種徹底放縱自我的行動繪畫也一樣。對一件作品的添加、刪改，直到他判斷完成，單靠激情是不可能的。我很欣賞蒙德里安的作品，在他對畫面結構的純理性處理上我學到了不少東西。

**鄒：**有些理論家和批評家把中國那些具有現代主義藝術形態的藝術特點，說成是意象，這個意象包括具象和抽象很寬泛的範圍，其目的也是為這些藝術找到與中國傳統文化的聯系。因為我們一般都把中國畫中的寫意方式理解為意象性的。我不知道你思考過這個問題沒有？

**李：**我確實也思考過這個問題，特別是東西方之間的差異問題。2005年我在中國美術館做展覽的時候，很多人都問我“你表現的是什麼”。但是在歐洲的德國做同樣作品的展覽時，我只看到觀眾看到作品以後的激動，在那裏把我抱起來，和我聊天，沒有一個人問我說你為什麼這麼畫。我想抽象藝術之所以能在20世紀的西方成為主流，與西方人的基本審美觀念有關，他們需要美本身，並不關心表達了什麼東西，但是中國觀眾不一樣，我們把美放在第二位，把表現了什麼放在第一位，所以我覺得中國人的審美的最高

*Li:* Right.

*Zou:* I have a rather complicated question. Were these works with the property of "reviewing the countryside" both affirmative and doubtful about the value of the countryside?

*Li:* That's right. In these works, my spiritual world was really complicated indeed. I had both a kind of commiseration and a kind of disappointment and deep love for the native land. The title of the last painting I created was "In the hopeful field". I think the meaning of the title is complicated.

*Zou:* I wonder if this problem has surpassed the domain of visual art. Not only abstract art but also representational art can only undertake limited contents. Have you ever thought about this problem? From the viewpoint of an audience, could they at the same time feel your sentiment, criticism, reflection and love to Chinese traditional culture and China countryside? In other words, do you think your works can convey so many meanings?

*Li:* I am very clear about this point. I understand that art cannot replace philosophy, sociology or many other subjects, because painting gives people visual intuition. As to how much it can express, I think it is related to the living experiences and cultural background of the audience. Different people will have different ways of unscrambling and different results. That is one of the features of modernist art.

*Zou:* Yes. What the ancient Chinese said "诗无达诂" is suitable to unscramble modernist art as well. For instance, I think your works are very abstract, but they contain full-bodied Chinese cultural meanings. Besides those distinct Chinese characters, it also includes your wide employment of black and the aesthetic meanings of the lines in your works. Because your perception of China countryside and Chinese culture is not just to eulogize or to negate, but to reflect critically, the critics can unscramble from your works various meanings, such as care for human cultures, sentiment to China countryside, etc. It is just this point that makes your works possess profound idea.

*Li:* I think the ambiguity that the art elucidates is just the whereabouts of artistic enchantment, because it is impossible for the art to be so precise and definite as mathematics and science. I think it will be a very good result if my works can make the audience have more mental associations.

*Zou:* You said your works are not of abstract art. In fact, you adhere to the inward cultural meanings of the art.

*Li:* Precisely speaking, my art is not based on quasi-Western abstract art. According to the definition of abstract art itself, it is pursuing the purity of aesthetic forms, but I think

境界是齊白石所說的似與不似之間，停留在意向階段，並不長于對純抽象藝術的審美。

鄒：是，這與中國的傳統文化有關。如果別人說你的藝術是意象性的，你並不同意？

李：我不完全同意。如果說我有意象性，那是建立在我對《易經》的認識的基礎之上的。我認為中國藝術中的抽象性的源頭是《易經》。你看《易經》就用那麼幾條長綫、短綫的變化可以解釋和表達出世界無數的可能性，它的卦象有八八六十四卦，全是用幾條綫的變化來表述。這種組合與變化，實際上就是綫的抽象的典範與源頭。一生二，二生三，三生萬物的概念，就是意象的概念，即大意之象。比如王懷慶先生，大家都把他的藝術列為抽象藝術，他的大部分抽象作品是以明代家具為具體對象的，但是在他的作品中，那個實物已經不在了，只是人們在閱讀他的作品時還能回味到這個實物的存在，以及它的歷史，甚至人的生存身份與實物的關係，實際上他揭示的是陰與陽、動與靜、曲與直、虛與實等形式關係，它蘊含着東方的道家哲學思想。所以，我覺得它不同於西方的抽象。再如尚揚先生的抽象，後來就簡約到剩下一條色域的邊綫，但這條綫或許是從董其昌那兒來的，跟西方的很不一樣。在他的《大風景》到《董其昌計劃》、《游山玩水》的一系列作品，通過對人與自然、人與山水相互關係的藝術表現，揭示了東方古人的自然觀與現代人的生存觀之間以及消逝的與存在的複雜關係。他的作品就有鮮明的東方人智慧與氣質。尚揚先生曾經說藝術天才可以從畫一條綫中看出來。我覺得他這句話很精彩，這裏潛藏着東方式的審美經驗。

鄒：從這個角度看，你的藝術毫無疑問也屬於尚揚、王懷慶他們那個範疇之內的。

李：其實我是想說他們兩位在國內當代藝術的格局裏面，在藝術探索上應該是很成功也很有成就的，大家是普遍認可的，但他們的畫用西方的現成概念無法完全解讀，用中國的傳統的概念也無法準確把握。也就是說，當面對這類作品時，用中國傳統的看法它更像西方的，用西方的看法它又更像東方的。從欣賞的角度看也是這樣，中國的觀眾認為更像西方的，西方的觀眾用抽象的觀點看，他們能理解，但是並不理解其中的文化含義。所以他們都有一些不貼切的地方。我在想，這是不是藝術家的實踐已經發生了一個新的變革，有了新的形態，而我們在理論上還相對滯後，還不能給它一個合理的說法。





my art is some different from Western pure abstract art. I hope my reflection of culture and the society is contained behind the formal languages. In my recent works such as "Series of Ink Accumulation" and "Series of Red Wall Record", the formal languages became more contracted, and I paid more attention to the difference among the materials and to the massiness and interspaces among the planes, but I did not weaken or abandon the reflection of intrinsic problems.

*Zou:* In Chinese art circles, the artists are not as interested in cold-abstract art as in hot-abstract art, but critic Deng Pingxiang said your artistic feature is being full of rational passions, that is to say, your passions is the passion that is controlled by reason. Do you agree with his viewpoint.

*Li:* Yes, I agree. We are always speaking that a painting mirrors the artist. In fact, my painting is coincident with my ethics and my guide line as a human being. During my daily lives, I also drum for loose and unrestricted modernist conceptions, but I don't want to indulge myself to the extent without any limit. I think both the expressionism and the primordial modernism which is extremely similar to graffiti have strict forms and structures. Therefore, my paintings are created under very self-possessed conditions. We cannot do without passions, but I think a mature artist or a fine art work is controlled by reasons, including Pollock's action painting by which the artist completely indulged himself. The accession, bowdlerization of a work, until he thought a work was completely finished, it was impossible to complete an art work only with passions. I very much enjoy the art works of Mondrian, from whom I have learnt a lot to deal with the structure of a painting with rationality.

*Zou:* Some theorists and critics explain the artistic trait of those Chinese arts that possess modernist art modalities to imago, which includes a wide range of representational and abstract arts. Its objective is to find the relations of these arts to Chinese traditional culture, because we usually consider the freehand brushwork in Chinese traditional painting as imagist. I don't know whether you have thought about that?

*Li:* I have ever thought about this issue, especially the difference between the East and the West. When I held my exhibition in the National Art Museum in 2005, many people asked me "what do you represent", but when I held the exhibition of the same works in Germany, I only noticed the audiences' excitation after viewing the works. They held me in their arms and talked to me. No one asked me why I painted in that way. I think, the reason why abstract art formed a mainstream in the West in the 20th century is related to the radical aesthetic conceptions of the Westerners. They need beauty itself, and do not care what has been expressed. The Chinese audiences are quite different. We put beauty to the second position, and put what has been expressed to the most important place. Therefore, I think the highest aesthetic realm of Chinese people is what Qi Baishi said "between likeness and unlikeness", resting on the representational stage and not adept at the appreciation of pure abstract art.

鄒：我以為解釋這些作品形成的原因要容易一些。事實上，20世紀的中國文化的特徵就是混雜性，我們的各種動機和目的都被混合在一起。比如既不願丟掉我們老祖宗的東西，又必須吸取西方的文化，這樣，這些文化，包括你剛才說的這種藝術現象，一個方面它非常的西方主義，另一個方面它又非常的傳統主義，它既很矛盾又很有獨特性。

李：可能我更關注藝術中的這種混雜、矛盾所形成的獨特性。

鄒：是的。實際上，從你的作品看也反映了中國當代文化的矛盾性和混雜性，用流行的說法就是傳統與現代給予了很好的融合，你的作品也因此而獲得了它的獨特性。但是，在美學而不是文化的意義上，怎樣對它給予準確、完整的解釋，也許如你所說，現在還做得很不好。

李：最早應該是20世紀30年代的人們就提出了東西文化融合的問題，林鳳眠、吳冠中都是這方面的範例，現在徐冰的行爲藝術也很好，與西方的行爲藝術之間有很大的不同，主要就是它有文化的含量，有東方文化的智慧。我覺得這些藝術不僅高于西方，也高于我們的藝術傳統。比如說徐冰獲金獎的那件作品，他把“9.11”現場的灰塵做成文字，用的是六祖慧能一句最經典的揭語：“本來無一物，何處惹塵埃”。這只有具有東方智慧的中國人才能想出來。他的這樣一件作品消解了在美國這樣一個強大的國家中發生的震驚世界的事件給人帶來的精神壓抑與恐懼。我覺得這個作品真是很有意義。

鄒：所以，從你對別的藝術家的看法中，也能發現你並不願意別人把你的藝術僅看成是純粹抽象的。事實上，你有更高的文化理想，即在中西文化的融合過程中，超越過去已有的藝術成就，創造具有原創意義的中國當代藝術。

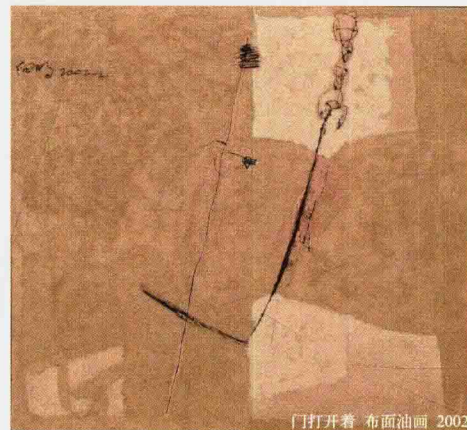
李：可以這麼說。

鄒：我想，不管你在事實上是否做到這一點，有一點是肯定的，那就是正是這種文化理想的指引，使你獲得了今天的藝術成就，並且還將指引你去進行更爲深廣的藝術探索。

李：也許正是你所說的我的文化理想在起作用，使我每一次畫完一張畫，都不滿足，甚至覺得幼稚，覺得與我的初衷有一定距離。

鄒：這一事實說明你的藝術仍然充滿了各種可能性，也是使你能在未來取得更大藝術成就的根本原因。

李：未來是未知的，只要不停下來，腳下的路就會不斷的延伸。



Zou: Right. That is related to Chinese traditional culture. Do you agree if other people consider your art as abstract?

Li: I don't agree absolutely. If my art is somewhat imagist, it is based on my understanding of the Book of "Changes". I think the headstream of Chinese abstract art is the Book of "Changes", which just use the changes of several long and short lines to explain and express limitless possibilities of the world. The sixty-four divinatory symbols are all enunciated by the changes of several lines. This kind of combination

and changes actually is the apotheosis and headstream of the abstract of the lines. The concept of "one procreates two, two procreates three and three procreates everything on earth" is just the concept of imagist. For instance, Mr. Wang Huaiqing's art is ranked as abstract art. Most of his abstract works take the furniture of Ming Dynasty as their material objects, which do not exist any longer. People can only call to mind and ponder the existence of the material objects, their history and even the relation of human existence to the material objects through perusing his art works. In fact, what he reveals are the formal relations between Yin and Yang, active and still, right and wrong, false and true. It contains a kind of oriental Taoist philosophy. Therefore, I think it is different from Western abstract art. Another example is Mr. Shang Yang's abstract art, which was contracted to a color sideline that probably came from Dong Qichang and was different from Western abstract art. In his "Grand View", "Dong Qichang Project" and "Enjoying the Landscape", through the artistic representation of the relations between human and nature, human and landscape, he revealed the complicated relation between the nature view of Eastern ancient people and the subsistence view of modern people, and the relation between the past and the subsistent. His art works possess bright wisdom and temperament of oriental people. Mr. Shang Yang ever said that an art genius can be recognized from a line he draws. I think that sentence is very brilliant. It contains a kind of oriental experience of appreciation.

Zou: From this viewpoint, your art undoubtedly belongs to the same category as Shang Yang and Wang Huaiqing.

*Li:* In fact, what I really want to say is that they are very successful and accomplished in the exploration of art within the field of Chinese contemporary art and are widely recognized, but their paintings cannot be unscrambled by existing Western conceptions or be grasped by the Chinese traditional conceptions. That is to say, this kind of art works looks more Western in a Chinese traditional point of view and looks more Eastern in a Western point of view. It is the same from the viewpoint of appreciation. Chinese people think they are more Western; Western audience can understand their painting in an abstract point of view, but they cannot understand the paintings' cultural meanings. Therefore, they both have some points inapposite. Does it indicate that the practices of artists have somewhat renovated and have some new forms while we are still relatively laggard theoretically and cannot give it a logical explanation?

*Zou:* I think it is easier to explain the reason of the formation of these works. In fact, the feature of Chinese culture in the 20th century was miscellaneity. Our various motives and objectives were mixed together. For example, we don't want to throw away our traditional things, and have to assimilate Western culture as well, thus, these cultures, including the artistic phenomenon you were just talking about, are very Western on one hand and very traditional on the other hand. They are both contradictory and unique.

*Li:* Perhaps I paid more attention to the uniqueness caused by this miscellaneity and contradiction.

*Zou:* Yes. Your works have actually reflected the inconsistency and miscellaneity of Chinese contemporary culture. In a fashionable word, tradition and modernity have been very well inoculated. Your works have thereby acquired their uniqueness. However, perhaps it is hard to give it an exact and integrated explanation aesthetically.

*Li:* It should be early in 1930's that people put forward the issue of the inoculation of Eastern and Western cultures. Lin Fengmian and Wu Guanzhong were two examples in aesthetic experience of this aspect. Now, Xu Bing's performance art, which is quite different from Western performance art, is very good as well, mostly because it is culturally meaningful and possesses the wisdom of Eastern culture. I think these arts are not only higher than Western arts, but also higher than our traditional arts. For instance, in his art work that was awarded golden prize, Xu Bing made the dust at the "9.11" spot into characters, using the most classical Buddhist's chant of Liuzhuineng "There is originally nothing, where does the dust come from". Only the Chinese people who possess Eastern wisdom could think it up. This art work of his has cleared up the mental oppression and fear caused by the world-shaking event that happened in such a powerful country like the United

States. I think this work was really meaningful.

*Zou:* So, from your attitude to other artists, we can find that you don't want others to consider your art as purely abstract art. In fact, you have a higher cultural ideality to surpass the previous artistic achievement and create contemporary Chinese art with initial meanings in the process of inoculation of Chinese and Western cultures.

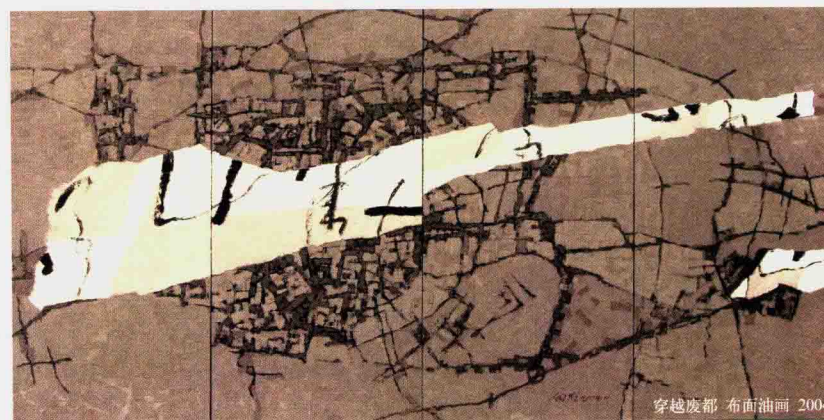
*Li:* That's right.

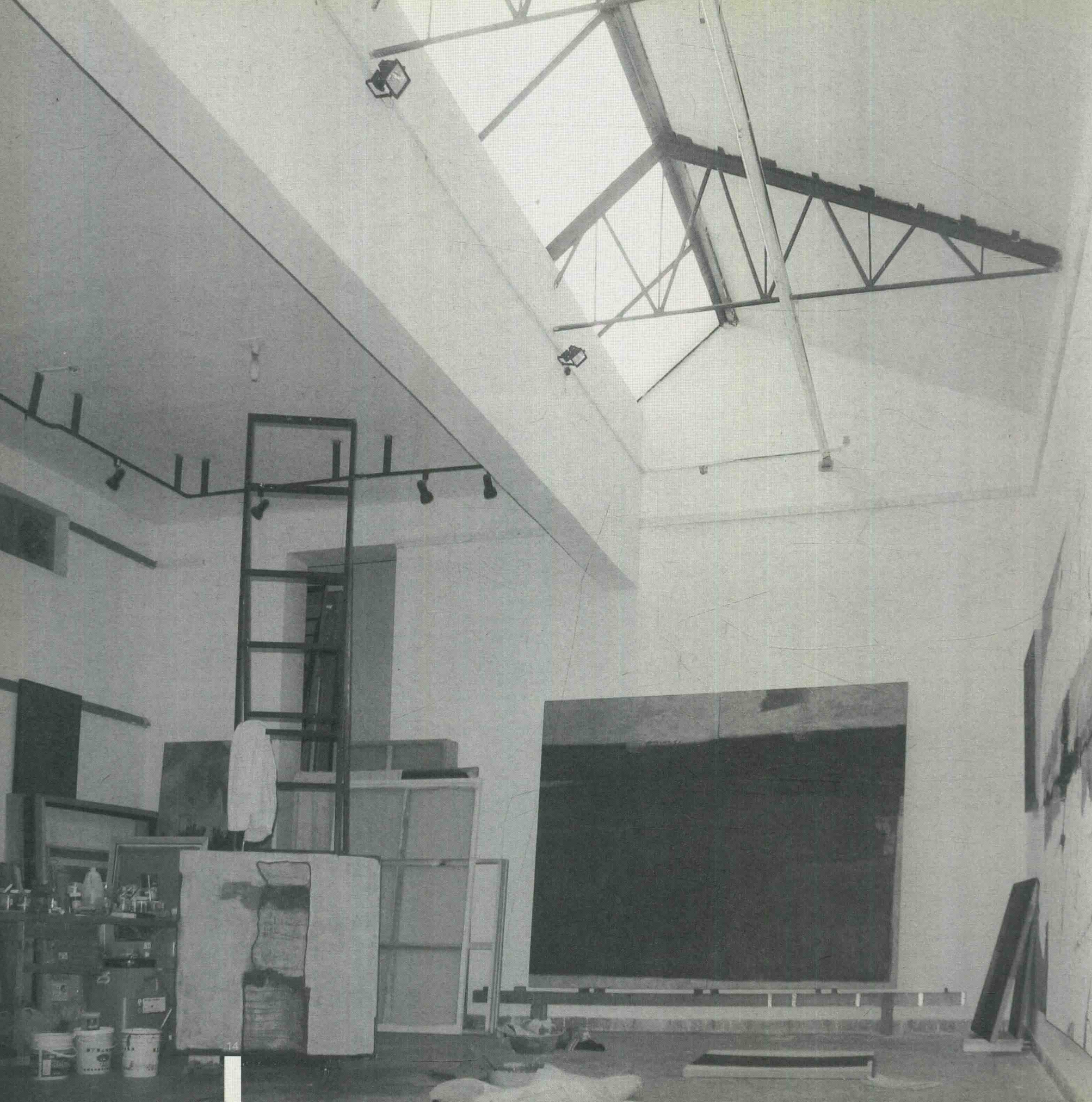
*Zou:* I think one point is affirmative whether you have actually lived up to it or not: it is just the guidance of this kind of cultural ideality that has made you obtain today's artistic accomplishment and it will direct you to undertake more profound artistic explorations.

*Li:* Perhaps it is just as what you said that my cultural ideality has played an important role and has made me feel unsatisfied whenever I finish a painting or even feel it is puerile and think it has some distance from my original intention.

*Zou:* This fact indicates that your art is still imbued with various possibilities which is the ultimate reason for you to acquire greater artistic success in the future.

*Li:* The future is unpredictable. The road under our feet will ceaselessly extend as long as we do not stop.







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