

ART MAKES ME

Interview with Zhang Yu

广东美术馆
GUANGDONG MUSEUM OF ART

张羽 / 编著

艺术 做我自己
——张羽访谈录

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自序

Foreword

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Foreword

《艺术，做我自己——张羽访谈录》即将由湖南美术出版社出版。突然意识到自己应该为这本书说点什么，这是我的第一本谈话录，也算是我的第一本文集。虽然，这不是一本理论文集，但也的确触碰到了一些在实践过程中遇到的相关理论问题。但有些遗憾的是，我在80年代到90年代中期与几位艺术家、批评家用录音机录制的一些很有批判性的谈话，因没有及时整理，结果时间长了都消磁了，比如1990年与天津人民出版社刘丰杰对谈“打倒新文人画”。现在找到最早的是《画廊》杂志上1995年与黄专的一次对话。

今年，我引起了水墨界内外的一些质疑，四五月间雅昌艺术网、99艺术网先后给我和朱其、任戡做了视频对话，主题是“水墨的终结”。这题目让圈内人士听起来的确有点不大顺耳，这其中似乎有些误解。其实，我是在2006年我的一篇文章中提出“水墨问题的终结”，2009年、2010年分别在北京、台湾策划了“终结水墨画——从‘水墨画’到‘水墨’”展览。同时，我又在《库艺术》杂志上再次重申“水墨画的终结”，如今大家把我的观点理解为“水墨的终结”，忽略了我针对的是“水墨画”。但也确实，二十世纪之前我们说水墨时就是水墨画。然而，进入二十一世纪“水墨不再等于水墨画”。批评家王端廷前些日子在微信上说：“张羽把水墨画家的饭碗给砸了！”我笑答：“这不可能，画家们该做什么还做什么”。端廷兄又说：“你把那些水墨画变成了行画。”这也许是个玩笑，但还是有些道理的。事实上，我只是终结了自己的水墨画，而与他人无关。每一个画家都会坚持做自己的事，哪怕是画行画，他也很清楚自己在做什么，以及他想要什么或者他能要什么。我并不在乎大家的这种误解，只是遗憾质疑者为什么不能深入思考这其中的问题。

也许有人说，你能把“水墨画终结”了吗？我认为这不是能不能的问题，而是我们没有能力去超越传统面对发展，如果不能，那么这条线索就是宣告终结了。因为，我们必须以超越的态度重新开始。其实，所谓“水墨的终结”是水墨作为画种的时代被我们终结了。那些杰出的传统水墨绘画，永远在那里，永远是启发我们前行的支点。实际上对我而言，水墨画终结与否不是一个問題。那天与高名潞先生谈话，他说：“终结论”是西方理论逻辑的认识，而我们不需要“终结”需要整合。你为什么要掉进西方逻辑系统里，这样消解了你自身的特殊性。“终结”对你有什么意义呢？而我个人认为，如今在思想认识上无需介意中西文化之分、系统之分，逻辑之别。我的目的不在于“终结”，也不在于中西的整体与分离。“终结”对于我最重要的是我走了自己的路。

自从我还不太懂事时就拿着画笔在街头临摹刘少奇、赫鲁晓夫、林彪、“四人帮”的漫画为学校的大批判作宣传开始，后来又朦朦胧胧地知道了艺术，就一直走到了今天。艺术这事儿我做了四十年有余，历经了“文革”大批判的政治宣传、改革开放后的创新、八五思潮后的现代艺术、如今艺术市场化炒作。社会在发展、世界在变化、认识在前行，但，对于我一直没变的是对艺术的热爱和真诚。我坚持了做我想做的事，不为名利所累。可有时也觉得自己有点可笑，自己的行为总是不合时宜，今天做艺术有谁不为名利呢？

我的艺术，或者说我整天折腾的这点事儿，似乎都与水墨有些关系，宣纸、毛笔、墨、水等。这点材料我折腾了半辈子，从开始传统层面上认识宣纸、毛笔、墨和水到放弃传统意义的宣纸、毛笔、墨和水，构建属于自己的宣纸、墨和水的当代认识。这半辈子，我从水墨的“表现”到“抽象”形式，又到“灵光”的图式，再到“指印”的行为，我只做了一件事，就是建立自己的表达方法，自己的语言体系，自己的表达。

这两年，自己把这点儿本来就已经简约的事再一次简化了。从蘸墨、蘸色摁指印到只蘸水摁指印，到如今仅剩下一碗清水。但，这碗清水却让我明白中国的文化是“水”的文化。我在想，自己可能已触碰到了问题的核心。剥开大象无形，步入空象之际。其实，我今天说的已经与水墨的那点儿事儿没有直接关系了，但与艺术的本质更贴近了。我越发觉得，我们应该回到最基本的东西，那才是觉悟。这个最基本的东西就是你如何说话，如何说你的话？进一步讲，就是你有你自己的语法及语言吗？这个看似不是问题的问题，在今天我们如何才能做到呢？

“指印”是我的方法，“指印”是我的表达。其实，“指印”是一种境界。于是，指印带我认识了“水”，“水”让我包容一切并融于天地。我继续做我自己的这点事儿。

这本文集的出版要感谢湖南美术出版社，特别感谢李小山社长对此书的大力支持，感谢陈荣义先生在编辑工作中所付出的辛苦。

2014年4月28日 北京T3国际艺术区

Foreword

Art Makes Me : Interviews with Zhang Yu recorded Interviews with Zhang Yu is a forthcoming publication of Hunan Fine Arts Publishing House. I suddenly realized I should write something for this book. This is my first book of recorded interviews, and is also the first time that a book of mine is mainly about words. Although these words have not required hard work, they are still a new world for me.

The title of this book is somewhat jarring to the ear and might offend some people." So you've 'terminated' Ink and Wash, what are we others doing then?" The critic Wang Duanting said on the Weixin network: "Zhang Yu has smashed the rice bowl of the Ink and Wash artists!" I laughed and answered: "That's impossible! People will all do what they have to." My friend Duanting said again: "You have turned those Ink and Wash paintings into copies of old masters." Ha! This might be meant as a joke, but there is something to it. In fact, everybody will carry on with his or her own thing, even if it is copying old masters, knowing clearly what he or she is doing, wants to do, desires, or is capable of doing.

As for myself, it really hardly matters whether this is the end of Ink and Wash or not. The main thing is that I have travelled my own path. I have done what I wanted to do. I'm happy with that, for everything I have done along this path is what I have done for myself, and the ideals of my own. Therefore, what has been presented has been my own cognitive understanding and thinking. Perhaps this cognitive understanding and my performance may inspire colleagues or perhaps future colleagues who have some cognitive understanding of this...

Before I had reached any great understanding, I made a beginning by taking my paint-brush into the street and copying caricatures of Liu Shaoqi, Khrushchev and Brezhnev, to make propaganda for the Great Criticism at my school. Later I vaguely began to know about art, and eventually reached the present. I have been making art for more than forty years, and I have gone through many changes: the political propaganda of the Great Criticism during the Cultural Revolution, the renewal of Chinese traditional painting during the period of Reform and Opening Up, the modern art of the '85 New Wave of Thought, the turning towards ideology of the contemporary art of the end of the twentieth century, today's hype about the marketization of artworks of a nondescript character; the changes in society, the changes in the world, the changes in culture, the changes in cognitive understanding... and yet, I have never wavered in my love of art and sincerity towards art. I have thus persevered in making what I wanted to make, and have not laboured for fame and fortune. At times I have felt somewhat ridiculous. It is the case that my actions are generally

ahead of the times, that they have not fitted in the times, and that they are unpopular among people; besides, which artist today does not work for fame and fortune? On that point, I feel that I am a naive nice guy. Anyway, this book documents the naive-nice-guy aspect.

My art, or this activity that I worry about night and day, is all related to Ink and Wash: xuan paper, brush-pen, ink, water and so on. Just this little things and this bit of materials, I have been worrying about for half my life. From my first cognitive understanding, at the traditional level, of xuan paper, brush-pen, ink and water, to abandoning xuan paper, brush-pen, ink and water in the traditional sense, I have set up my own contemporary cognitive understanding of xuan paper, brush-pen, ink and water. In this half-a-lifetime, from the abstract forms of Ink and Wash to the schemata of *Divine Light*, and again to the fingerprinting performance of Fingerprints, I have only been doing one thing, namely creating my own method, my own language, and my own expression. My Fingerprints series, from universal culture in the sociological sense of everyday experience, to a reflection of the physical properties of fingerprints touching water, has achieved the presentation of changes in physical properties.

In the last two years I have simplified this point, which was already comparatively simple to start with. From the performance of dipping and impressing my finger in ink and in colour and then the performance of just making fingerprints in water, I have proceeded until the present when only the presentation of a bowl of clear water remains. However, this bowl of water has indeed allowed me to understand that the culture of China is a culture of water. I am thinking that I may have touched on the the core of our problem. Stripping away the "great likeness without shape", I have entered the bounds of "empty likeness". I am happy that I now have my own method, and can freely roam the horizon.

In fact, the issues that I am talking about today are no longer all that connected to that little business of Ink and Wash, but are closer to the fundamental physics of art. I increasingly feel that we should return to the most fundamental things, that only they are the core of art. Now the most fundamental things are how you talk, and what your words are like. What is your method of talking? What is your language? Taking it a step further: do you have a grammar and a language? Who among us today has dealt with this seemingly untoward question?

Fingerprinting is my method. Fingerprinting is my expression. In fact, fingerprinting is a realm. And so fingerprinting has brought me to a cognitive understanding of water. Now I have the method of water, water allows me to embrace everything and melt into heaven and earth. And I continue to do my own bit of work.

Zhang Yu

28 April 2014, T3 International Arts Precinct, Beijing

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今年，我引起了水墨界内外的一些质疑，四五月间雅昌艺术网、99艺术网先后给我和朱其、任戡做了视频对话，主题是“水墨的终结”。这题目让圈内人士听起来的确有点不大顺耳，这其中似乎有些误解。其实，我是在2006年我的一篇文章中提出“水墨问题的终结”，2009年、2010年分别在北京、台湾策划了“终结水墨画——从‘水墨画’到‘水墨’”展览。同时，我又在《库艺术》杂志上再次重申“水墨画的终结”，如今大家把我的观点理解为“水墨的终结”，忽略了我针对的是“水墨画”。但也确实，二十世纪之前我们说水墨时就是水墨画。然而，进入二十一世纪“水墨不再等于水墨画”。批评家王端廷前些日子在微信上说：“张羽把水墨画家的饭碗给砸了！”我笑答：“这不可能，画家们该做什么还做什么”。端廷兄又说：“你把那些水墨画变成了行画。”这也许是个玩笑，但还是有些道理的。事实上，我只是终结了自己的水墨画，而与他人无关。每一个画家都会坚持做自己的事，哪怕是画行画，他也很清楚自己在做什么，以及他想要什么或者他能要什么。我并不在乎大家的这种误解，只是遗憾质疑者为什么不能深入思考这其中的问题。

也许有人说，你能把“水墨画终结”了吗？我认为这不是能不能的问题，而是我们有没有能力去超越传统面对发展，如果不能，那么这条线索就是宣告终结了。因为，我们必须以超越的态度重新开始。其实，所谓“水墨的终结”是水墨作为画种的时代被我们终结了。那些杰出的传统水墨绘画，永远在那里，永远是启发我们前行的支点。实际上对我而言，水墨画终结与否不是一个问题。那天与高名潞先生谈话，他说：“终结论”是西方理论逻辑的认识，而我们不需要“终结”需要整合。你为什么要掉进西方逻辑系统里，这样消解了你自身的特殊性。“终结”对你有什么意义呢？而我个人认为，如今在思想认识上无需介意中西文化之分、系统之分，逻辑之别。我的目的不在于“终结”，也不在于中西的整体与分离。“终结”对于我最重要的是我走了自己的路。

自从我还不太懂事时就拿着画笔在街头临摹刘少奇、赫鲁晓夫、林彪、“四人帮”的漫画为学校的大批判作宣传开始，后来又朦朦胧胧地知道了艺术，就一直走到了今天。艺术这事儿我做了四十年有余，历经了“文革”大批判的政治宣传、改革开放后的创新、八五思潮后的现代艺术、如今艺术市场化炒作。社会在发展、世界在变化、认识在前行，但，对于我一直没变的是对艺术的热爱和真诚。我坚持了做我想做的事，不为名利所累。可有时也觉得自己有点可笑，自己的行为总是不合时宜，今天做艺术有谁不为名利呢？

我的艺术，或者说我整天折腾的这点儿事，似乎都与水墨有些关系，宣纸、毛笔、墨、水等。这点材料我折腾了半辈子，从开始传统层面上认识宣纸、毛笔、墨和水到放弃传统意义的宣纸、毛笔、墨和水，构建属于自己的宣纸、墨和水的当代认识。这半辈子，我从水墨的“表现”到“抽象”形式，又到“灵光”的图式，再到“指印”的行为，我只做了一件事，就是建立自己的表达方法，自己的语言体系，自己的表达。

这两年，自己把这点儿本来就已经简约的事再一次简化了。从蘸墨、蘸色摁指印到只蘸水摁指印，到如今仅剩下一碗清水。但，这碗清水却让我明白中国的文化是“水”的文化。我在想，自己可能已触碰到了问题的核心。剥开大象无形，步入空象之际。其实，我今天说的已经与水墨的那点儿事儿没有直接关系了，但与艺术的本质更贴近了。我越发觉得，我们应该回到最基本的东西，那才是觉悟。这个最基本的东西就是你如何说话，如何说你的话？进一步讲，就是你有你自己的语法及语言吗？这个看似不是问题的问题，在今天我们如何才能做到呢？

“指印”是我的方法，“指印”是我的表达。其实，“指印”是一种境界。于是，指印带我认识了“水”，“水”让我包容一切并融于天地。我继续做我自己的这点儿事儿。

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2014年4月28日 北京T3国际艺术区

Foreword

Art Makes Me : Interviews with Zhang Yu recorded Interviews with Zhang Yu is a forthcoming publication of Hunan Fine Arts Publishing House. I suddenly realized I should write something for this book. This is my first book of recorded interviews, and is also the first time that a book of mine is mainly about words. Although these words have not required hard work, they are still a new world for me.

The title of this book is somewhat jarring to the ear and might offend some people." So you've 'terminated' Ink and Wash, what are we others doing then?" The critic Wang Duanting said on the Weixin network: "Zhang Yu has smashed the rice bowl of the Ink and Wash artists!" I laughed and answered: "That's impossible! People will all do what they have to." My friend Duanting said again: "You have turned those Ink and Wash paintings into copies of old masters." Ha! This might be meant as a joke, but there is something to it. In fact, everybody will carry on with his or her own thing, even if it is copying old masters, knowing clearly what he or she is doing, wants to do, desires, or is capable of doing.

As for myself, it really hardly matters whether this is the end of Ink and Wash or not. The main thing is that I have travelled my own path. I have done what I wanted to do. I'm happy with that, for everything I have done along this path is what I have done for myself, and the ideals of my own. Therefore, what has been presented has been my own cognitive understanding and thinking. Perhaps this cognitive understanding and my performance may inspire colleagues or perhaps future colleagues who have some cognitive understanding of this...

Before I had reached any great understanding, I made a beginning by taking my paint-brush into the street and copying caricatures of Liu Shaoqi, Khrushchev and Brezhnev, to make propaganda for the Great Criticism at my school. Later I vaguely began to know about art, and eventually reached the present. I have been making art for more than forty years, and I have gone through many changes: the political propaganda of the Great Criticism during the Cultural Revolution, the renewal of Chinese traditional painting during the period of Reform and Opening Up, the modern art of the '85 New Wave of Thought, the turning towards ideology of the contemporary art of the end of the twentieth century, today's hype about the marketization of artworks of a nondescript character; the changes in society, the changes in the world, the changes in culture, the changes in cognitive understanding... and yet, I have never wavered in my love of art and sincerity towards art. I have thus persevered in making what I wanted to make, and have not laboured for fame and fortune. At times I have felt somewhat ridiculous. It is the case that my actions are generally

ahead of the times, that they have not fitted in the times, and that they are unpopular among people; besides, which artist today does not work for fame and fortune? On that point, I feel that I am a naive nice guy. Anyway, this book documents the naive-nice-guy aspect.

My art, or this activity that I worry about night and day, is all related to Ink and Wash: xuan paper, brush-pen, ink, water and so on. Just this little things and this bit of materials, I have been worrying about for half my life. From my first cognitive understanding, at the traditional level, of xuan paper, brush-pen, ink and water, to abandoning xuan paper, brush-pen, ink and water in the traditional sense, I have set up my own contemporary cognitive understanding of xuan paper, brush-pen, ink and water. In this half-a-lifetime, from the abstract forms of Ink and Wash to the schemata of *Divine Light*, and again to the fingerprinting performance of Fingerprints, I have only been doing one thing, namely creating my own method, my own language, and my own expression. My Fingerprints series, from universal culture in the sociological sense of everyday experience, to a reflection of the physical properties of fingerprints touching water, has achieved the presentation of changes in physical properties.

In the last two years I have simplified this point, which was already comparatively simple to start with. From the performance of dipping and impressing my finger in ink and in colour and then the performance of just making fingerprints in water, I have proceeded until the present when only the presentation of a bowl of clear water remains. However, this bowl of water has indeed allowed me to understand that the culture of China is a culture of water. I am thinking that I may have touched on the the core of our problem. Stripping away the "great likeness without shape", I have entered the bounds of "empty likeness". I am happy that I now have my own method, and can freely roam the horizon.

In fact, the issues that I am talking about today are no longer all that connected to that little business of Ink and Wash, but are closer to the fundamental physics of art. I increasingly feel that we should return to the most fundamental things, that only they are the core of art. Now the most fundamental things are how you talk, and what your words are like. What is your method of talking? What is your language? Taking it a step further: do you have a grammar and a language? Who among us today has dealt with this seemingly untoward question?

Fingerprinting is my method. Fingerprinting is my expression. In fact, fingerprinting is a realm. And so fingerprinting has brought me to a cognitive understanding of water. Now I have the method of water, water allows me to embrace everything and melt into heaven and earth. And I continue to do my own bit of work.

Zhang Yu

28 April 2014, T3 International Arts Precinct, Beijing



张羽北京大山子环铁艺术城工作室，2013年
Zhang Yu's Studio at the Huantie Arts Precinct, Dashanzi, Beijing, 2013