

The background is an abstract painting with a textured surface. It features a mix of earthy tones including shades of brown, tan, and grey. There are visible brushstrokes and some darker, more saturated areas, particularly towards the bottom and right sides, suggesting a dynamic and expressive artistic style.

象 罔

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象罔：白明的抽象艺术

岛子

在世俗中追求圣洁
在经验中巡弋超验
象则非无，罔则非有
非无非有，不嫩不昧
——题记

白明是以人文制陶而著称的艺术家，其影响广泛的非实用性的陶艺作品，总体上属于抽象精神的实践，因此无论陶艺或绘画，对白明来说，都是观念的物性载体，是选择不同材料表达主体的必要方式，同时最重要的是借助一种普遍的媒材，使个人造型范式得以形成。联系起来看，他的陶艺和抽象油画乃至尚未公开展示的抽象水墨，都力图在悟性的参与下，从世俗中追求圣洁，在生活经验中游弋于超验，从时间中的自然与物性的隐秘里攫取诗意。白明的“以一贯之”，即以抽象精神来支配物质媒介，抽象精神的最高表现乃是物质媒介和未知之物的结合，它意味着将物质转化为冥想的乐趣，转化为沉思的深邃以及非偶然性的事物。

范式总是由个别艺术家形成的，多数从业者盲目地在一个范式内创作，制作派生性质的乏味作品。事实上，陶瓷行业已经变成文化僵尸，抽象艺术的当代命运也不是没有危机感，因此，存在着一个连续的趋势，范式要不断突破、转换，并赋予媒材、形式以新生的灵性，形成一个相关却不同的范式。

继“大象无形”个展之后，“象罔”是白明近年创作的六十多件抽象油画作品的集中展示。作品大致分为两种形态，两个相互关联的实验空间，前者是自然抽象，后者是文化抽象，二者相互映照，相互阐发，实则为一个有机整体的浑然生成。

白明的“象罔”个展表明了艺术家不懈追求的意向，他始终在探索抽象语言的可变性与可能性，综合以往的线性风格和涂绘风格，形成了稳定的个人风格。把抽象艺术视为社会的疏离，不与时代相俯仰，本身是一种高蹈的精神，一种命运的对抗与自我的内省。抽象艺术本体蕴涵着构造世界本质的造型元素，决定了其与社会功利主义的媚俗保持着冷漠的距离，从而构成了一个精神自由而有内在规定性的空间。中国古代画论把绘画分为逸、神、妙、能四格，逸格为最高之格，实际寄予了人生理想和艺术理想的超然境界。抽象是主观意识对客体世界过滤、纯化的结果，也是带有主体性的非具象的思考。白明在学院体制中是孤独的，甚至是被功利主义漠视的，而在先锋的江湖艺术潮流中，他又显得相当审慎、内省并超然于方圆。艺术与人生的孤独与执着，使得艺术家保持一种虔诚的、冥思的自我发现和形上的宇宙论，近些年在抽象艺术的意象化追求中，白明的作品整体面貌进入了温润、透明又不失深邃、隽永的诗境。

白明的近期自然抽象表现了岩石、山体、河流的神秘、变幻和美，白色、灰色乃至变化莫测的墨色成为淡雅、冷逸的主调，以往的线性风格在虚静的意境中得到演进，使画面产生了运动感，这是“大象无形”展览之后最明显的意向性嬗变。即使在单幅作品中，都可以感受到线条的转折、波动、震颤、回旋，从一种景象转向另一种景象，有意保留了绘画的平面感，却巧妙地营造出富有神韵的意境。其文化抽象则是静态的，表现了历史的烟云、凝固的人文地理的沧桑、斑斑驳驳的神迹，随着视觉密度明显加大、加深，温润和透明向浑厚、雄强的势态和气态运行。

抽象艺术的源头虽然为20世纪初的欧洲，百年来在全球发展出二十几个流派，但其文脉却更接近中国写意传统和书法传统，后抽象艺术的倾向就带有书写性与意象性。因此当代中国的抽象艺术的发展逻辑，呈现冷热交集，抽象与意象相互融合之势。在白明1990年代的作品中，可以看到其语言风格全面向冷抽象和热抽象开放与综合，这期间由线条的动感和涂绘的块面是构成换面的主要元素，比较注重色彩肌理的协调性，色调的微妙变幻，心灵的颤动和视觉上的明亮感是其主题，但看到细处，就会发现其调性是生涩中带有抒情意味。进入新世纪，白明回到了画布和宣纸，更多地引入意象性语言，尤其是墨色意象语言，逐渐生成了沉思、冥想乃至空间的神秘感。这次在方音画廊展示的作品虽以自然的抽象为主，但由于前期的探索经验积累厚实，从而能够克服对客体世界的“翻版”，进而摆脱自然的“翻版”，向文化抽象演进。墨色意象语言值得抽象艺术积极融汇，就在于它不模仿自然，但通过黑色极其简洁而变幻莫测的色调表达却包容万千气象。

从白明的近期意象化的自觉探索，我看到中国当代抽象艺术的一种文脉意向。这一文脉意向的特征概括而言是中国写意传统和书法传统的精神延续，我将其称作意象化的抽象。例如得意写形、澄怀味像，重意境和诗意的描绘，以中国意象美学观喻意于油画作品创作中，以象征、写意、表现的手法，结合现代的观念来表达现实生活的现象、历史的轨迹、自然之美。画面形与物的隐显转换于抽象的意味中，将西方的抽象表现融进东方的意象之中：实态与虚形交融互生，体现出中国传统意象美学思维在当代中国抽象油画创作中的运用和发展。意象化的抽象油画由于其具有本土的文化精神，又不失对当代文化语境的独特体验和感受，它从多角度、多方位表现着我们生活的现实和理想，并从艺术发展的现状体现出当今社会的审美趋向。意象化的抽象画家在长期的探索中，把西画的媒材、技术与西方绘画精神同东方审美意识和绘画精神的融汇形成的油画艺术，是中国人找到了一种自身善于把握和表达事物，抒发情感的方式。这种方式是中国画家骨子里就有的，也是文化母体中的遗传基因。中国意象化抽象油画具有的泼洒淋漓的豪放气势，委婉抒情的诗情意境，空间物象的虚实隐显等丰富了世界油画的表现语言，在当今世界艺术中仍有其扩展的前景。因此，抽象艺术的发展，已经不可能在抽象主义的老路找到回头草。

“意象”一词是我国传统文化中常用的一个术语。“意象”本名曰“象”。最初的涵义是指大象，后泛指各类物象，也包括虚拟的图像在内。将“象”与表意的功能相互联系起来，当始于《周易》的卦象。伏羲氏造八卦之说虽未能考证，但商代和周朝人借用卦象来占卜吉凶，则无可置疑，于是卦象也就成为表意的一种工具，这“意”自然是指上帝的道。上帝的道-真理为什么要通过卦象来表述呢？《易传》中有这样的解释：“圣人以有见天下之赜，而拟诸其形容，象其物宜，是故谓之象”。又说：“子曰：书不尽言，言不尽意。然则圣人之意其不可见乎。子曰：圣人立象以尽意。”这就是说，上帝的道幽深精微，难以用普通的语言文字来表述，只有凭借虚拟的“象”，采用比拟、象征的手法，才能加以领会和传达。这样“象”便具有了“形而上”的意味，而“立象尽意”也就成了“意象”说的导源。由此，与意象化的抽象艺术有关，有必要对展览的主题作提示性的阐释，“象罔”是庄子提出的一个意象美学本体论概念，《庄子·天地》篇有一个寓言：“黄帝游乎赤水之北，登乎昆



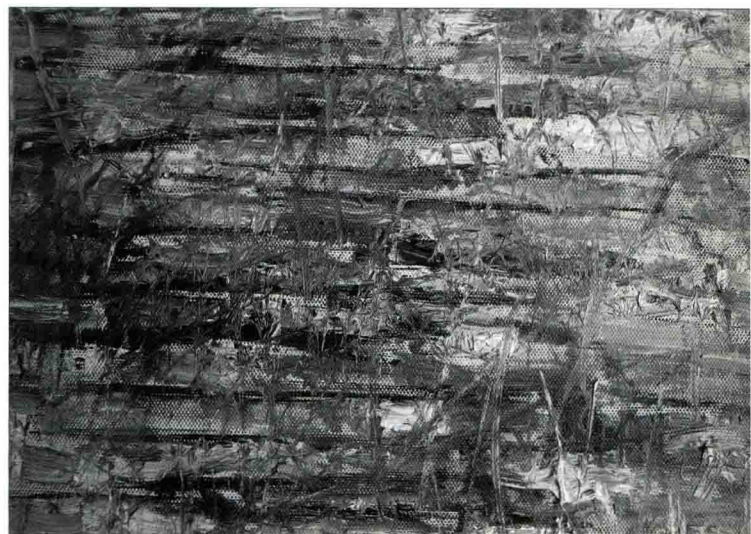
仑之丘而南望，还归，遗其玄珠。使知索之而不得。使离朱索之而不得。使吃诟索之而不得也。乃使象罔，象罔得之。黄帝曰：异哉！象罔乃可以得之乎！”寓言的意思是说，用理智（知）、言辩（吃诟）不能得“道”（玄珠），用视觉（离朱）同样不可能，而用象罔却可以追求神圣之道，在世俗中游弋于超验空间。象罔不是别的，是属灵的一个象征，是参悟上帝造化万物的灵性。正是“象罔”构成了抽象和意象艺术精神最深邃的秘密，并表达了这类艺术为什么躲避科学逻辑分析的道理。

需要自明而非自大自义的是，我们当今谈论的“意象”，实际上是已把古代哲学、神学、美学与当代文化观念相融会的意象了。它们之间的结合与互补，使我们既站在思想文化遗产上融合了西方近代以来关乎形象、具象和抽象这个概念，又同时能让我们从当代的哲学思维、文化理想出发，来理解与阐释中国传统的意象概念。对于意象的理解由于角度的不同，历来存有种种异议，这里一方面有对中国传统意象美学原意蕴开掘的深度、广度的不同，另一方面也体现出当代人们对意象的不同审视与理解。

康定斯基、马列维奇、保罗·克利、蒙德里安等许多的大师们以抽象艺术表现手法以及其实在内涵，主导着20世纪人类艺术思想和审美情趣的方向。“抽象”是“具象”的相对概念，是就多种事物抽出其共通之点，加以综合而成一个新的概念，此一概念就叫做“抽象”。“抽象绘画”（Abstract Painting）是泛指20世纪想脱离“模仿自然”的绘画风格而言，包含多种流派，并非某一个派别的名称：它的形成是经过长期持续演进而来的。但无论其派别如何，其共同的特质都在于尝试打破绘画必须模仿自然的传统观念。30年代和二次世界大战以后，由抽象观念衍生的各种形式，成为20世纪最流行、最具特色的艺术风格。抽象绘画是以直觉和想象力为创作的出发点，排斥任何具有象征性、文学性、说明性的表现手法，仅将造型和色彩加以综合、组织在画面上。因此抽象绘画呈现出来的纯粹形色，有类似于音乐之处。毋庸讳言，中国意象化的抽象油画的形成受到西方抽象派油画的直接影响和启迪，而本体上有别于西方抽象派油画。其把东方审美对神似与气韵的主观顿悟，与西方抽象艺术对内心情绪的通感与宣泄的自然融合，构建成中国意象化抽象油画本质特性。中国意象化的抽象画家在油画的绘画性趣味的营造中追寻着中国写意传统的抽象性（笔墨、肌理、痕迹等），并把“似与不似之间”的中国诗性朦胧意象融入画面，这也是具有中国文人精神、画家内心精神的自然而然。如吴大羽、陈荫霖、赵无极、朱德群、萧勤、苏笑柏、江大海等，白明近期的创作表明，他已经自觉走进了这个系谱。

藉由白明的实践，我们进一步明了，意象是介于具象与抽象之间的形态，这种意象充分体现了艺术家主体思想情感的艺术形象。意象化的抽象油画把某些具象的形象抹去、虚化，形成一种“非象之形”的气化状态，并与残留在画面上具象的“形”相对应，而产生一种幻化、飘渺的意境，给人的想象留下更多的空间。如把意象化抽象油画上具象的“形”进一步抽离，当画面上最后的“象”隐去，意象化油画也就还原为原初抽象主义油画。

白明的抽象油画融会意象之道之后，讲究气韵和妙悟，但依然倚重感知上的本能、灵魂深处的潜意识来推进画面，意境逐渐深远阔大，其间隐含着大自然的神韵，充满着天地万象的神秘、变幻和美，日愈显现出冷逸兼有雄浑的抒情抽象绘画风格，这种风格趋向说到底也是个性和人格的境界表征。



2007. 09. 25, 清华园

XIANG MANG: Abstract Art of Bai Ming

Dao Zi

*Seek for saintliness in the world
Cruise for transcendentalism in experience
Image exists but deceive does not
Neither existing nor deceiving, but absentminded*
— colophon

Bai Ming is an artist famous for ceramic, whose impracticable ceramic works of extensive influence belong to practice of abstract spirit as a whole, thus no matter ceramic or painting are all natural carriers of ideas for Bai Ming, and necessary method to express subject with selection of different materials, meanwhile the most important thing is to form a personal modeling paradigm by a general media. Connected together, his ceramic and abstract oil paintings, even abstract wash paintings not yet exhibited publicly, try to, with participation of perception, seek for saintliness in the world, cruise and patrol in transcendentalism in life experience, and seize poetry in nature of time and secrete of nature. Bai Ming's 'to put one against all', i.e. to control natural media by abstract spirit, and the best express of abstract spirit is combination of material media with unknown things, which means to alter materials into pleasure of meditation, into abstruse of contemplation and things not by chance.

Paradigm is always formed by exceptional artist, whereas most practitioners produce blindly within a paradigm, executing derivative poor works. As a matter of fact, the ceramic industry has become a cultural corpse, and fate of abstract art at the present age is not out of sense of conjuncture, therefore, there is a continuous trend that paradigm should be constantly breakthrough, transformed and giving neonatal spiritualism to media and form to form a related but different paradigm.

After personal exhibition of 'immateriality of great image', 'image deceiving' is a centralized exhibition of over sixty abstract oil painting works created by Bai Ming in recent years. Works are approximately divided into two forms, i.e. two experimental spaces correlating to each other, the former of which is natural abstract, and the later is cultural abstract, which shine upon each other, and explain upon each other, in fact a whole creation of an organic integer.

Bai Ming's personal exhibition of 'Image Deceiving' has shown an untiring seeking intention of the artist, who has been exploring changeability and possibility of abstract language, and colligated former linear style and scribble style, and has formed a stable personal style. To regard abstract art as alienated from the society, not pitching with the age, itself is a kind of high spirit, a confront against fate and a self introspection. Abstract art reality contains modeling elements that construct the world essence, which decide its maintenance of unbending distance with custom accommodation of social utilitarianism, thereby forming a space of free spirit with internal regulations. Painting theories of ancient China divided painting into four cases of leisure, spirit, excellence and skill, among which leisure is the first case, actually a detached bourn placed on life ideal and art ideal. Abstract is the result of percolation and purification of object world by subjective consciousness, and also non-representational consideration of the main body. Bai Ming is lonely in the academy system, even disregarded by utilitarianism, whereas in art tide of vanward corners of the country, he looks quite prudent, introspective and detached from circumference. Loneliness of and clinging to art and life make the artist keep a kind of cosmism of devotional, meditative self discovery, and in seeking for imago of abstract art in recent years, the whole visage of Bai Ming's works has entered into an mild and lenitive, transparent but abstruse and meaningful poetic artistic conception.

Bai Ming's recent natural abstract has represented mystery, phantasmagory and beauty of rocks, mountains and rivers, in which white, grey, even protean ink color have become the keynote of quiet elegance and cold leisure, and former linear style has been evolved in an empty whisht artistic conception, which creates a sense of movement in the menu, the most obvious intentional change after exhibition of 'Immateriality of Great Image'. Even in a single piece of works, it can be felt about turn, wave, tremble and involution of lines, turning from on vision to another, intentionally reserving plane of paintings, while skillfully built an artistic conception with abundant verve. His cultural abstract is static, exhibiting historical

clouds, concretionary cultural and geographic vicissitudes, variegated spirit marks, evidently increasing and deepening with optic density, moving from mild and lenitive and transparent to integrated, massive and powerfully strong circumstance.

Though the headstream of abstract art is Europe in the beginning of 20th century, which has developed into more than twenty genres over the world in the recent hundred years, its context is more adjacent to Chinese enjoyable tradition and handwriting tradition, and abstract art inclination has calligraphy and imago. Thus developmental logic of abstract art in China at the present age presents a trend of intersection of cold and heat, and abstract and imago inosculating with each other. In Bai Ming's works in the 1990s, it can be seen that his language style opened and colligated to cold abstract and hot abstract entirely, during which sense of movement of lines and scribble blocks were the main elements to compose the menu, relatively paying attention to harmony of color texture, delicate change of tinge, and vibration of soul and brightness feeling in vision were its subject, but when viewing in detail, it will be found that its melody is jerky lyric implication. After entrance into a new century, Bai Ming has come back to canvas and rice paper, introducing more imago languages, especially ink color imago language, gradually creating mystery of contemplation, meditation, even space. Though the works exhibited this time in Fangyin gallery were mainly natural abstract, for deep accumulation of exploration experience in early time, he was able to overcome 'reprint' of object world, further to get rid of 'reprint' of nature, and to evolve to culture abstract. Ink color imago language is worthy of active digest of abstract art, because it does not imitate nature, but expresses and contains myriad phenomena through most compact and capriccioso tinge of black.

From Bai Ming's recent self-conscious exploration in imago, I have seen a contextual intent of abstract art in China of the time. The character of this context intent sums up to spiritual continue of Chinese enjoyable tradition and handwriting tradition, which I would call imago abstract. For instance, imago image clarifies the mind in picture, and recognizes description of artistic conception and poetry, explaining Chinese imago aesthetic view in production of oil painting works, and expressing phenomena, historical track and beauty of nature in practical life with symbolized, enjoyable expressive technique, combined with modern conception. Concealment and display of form and matter in the menu convert in abstract implication, fusing western abstract expression into orient imago; real form and false form blend with each other, embodying exercise and development of Chinese traditional imago aesthetic thought in production of abstract oil painting in China of the time. Imago abstract oil painting has local cultural spirit, as well as particular experience and receipt of cultural of the time, which expresses reality and ideal of our life from multiple points of view and orientations, and embodies taste trend of society nowadays from actuality of art development. Imago abstract painters have been fusing media, technique and spirit of western paintings with orient taste consciousness and painting spirit to form an oil painting art in a long period of exploration, which enables Chinese to find a manner that is easy to grasp by themselves to express things and feeling. This manner exists in Chinese painters' hearts, and is also a genetic gene from cultural matrix. Chinese imago abstract oil paintings have a bold and unconstrained vigour of douse and freedom from inhibition, a poetic artistic conception of circumbendibus and lyricism, in which false or true and concealment and display of space, matter and image etc. have enriched expressive languages of world oil painting, which still have foreground to expand in world art of the time. Therefore, development of abstract art will not be able to find way back on the old road of abstract art.

"Image" is a term of traditional culture in China. The real name of "image" was called as "xiang", the original name of "image" means "elephant", later it means all kinds of objects including visional pictures. Connecting "xiang" and represented functions can be dated back to Gua image in Zhouyi. Though we can't examine that Fuxishi created Ba Gua, it is undoubtedly that people lived in Shang and Zhou dynasties





used Gua image to augur luck and bad fortune. Then Gua image has become a tool to represent meaning which naturally is God's will. Why God's will or theory must be represented by Gua image? There is an explanation in Yizhuan come down from ancient people that the sacred person can see everything earlier than anyone, so he can describe them by any image. Then it is said that "Confucius said that the book can't describe people's language which can not express people's meanings either. Then sacred person's meaning can't be known; and Confucius still said that it is the sacred person who created image to express his meanings. That is to say that the God's will is so far-reaching and exquisite and can't be represented by the common language, it can only be learned and conveyed by way of visual "picture" with comparison and symbol skills. In this way, the 'xiang' has the meaning of "above the shape", while "creating picture to express meaning" become the source of the term of "image". Therefore, by connecting with imaged abstract art, it is necessary for us to explain the exhibited subject, "xiangwang" is a concept of image esthetic ontology put forward by Zhuangzi (Chinese ancient thinker), he has a fable in his Zhuangzi. Heaven and Earth: Huang emperor traveled north of Chishui and climbed the Kunlun Mountain to look over the south, he found his mystic pearl was lost. Then he dispatched Zhi to look for it, but failed, so did Lizhu and Chihor. Then he had to resort to augury, he got his mystic pearl at last. Huang emperor said that it's so surprised that image can help him to get it. The fable told us that it is not possible to know his will (mystic pearl) by reasonability (Zhi), speech (Chihou), so did vision (lizhu), but image can know God's will and travel in super experienced space. The image is a symbol of soul to know the will of the God, while, it is the image that construct the secret of abstract and image art and express the principal that why this kind of art fight against scientific logic analysis.

It should be known clearly but not by guessing, what we are talking about the image means the image integrating ancient philosophy, theology and aesthetics and modern culture concept. The combination and complementary between them made us appreciating the ancient cultural heritage to integrate western contemporary concepts about image, picture and abstract, meanwhile, we can learn and explain Chinese traditional image concept from modern philosophy thoughts and cultural ideas. There are various views to understand image due to deferent understanding of "image", on the one hand, there is a deference of depth and width to discover the original aesthetic concept of Chinese traditional image, one the other hand, people's different views and understanding resulted in different views about "image".

Some masters such as Kandinsky, Malevich, Paul Klee and Mondrian led the orientation of humans' art thoughts and aesthetic interest in the 20th century with abstract art method and its real connotation. "Abstract" is the corresponding concept of "picture" and is the common point collecting many things and constructs a new concept which is called 'abstract'. Abstract painting is means the style of painting in the 20th century that devoid of "intimating nature" including many kinds of schools but not the name of some

school. It is evolved for a long period time. Whereas, no matter what kind of the school is, its common characteristics lies in trying to broke traditional idea that painting must intimate nature. Since the world war in 1930s, some forms derived from abstract idea had become the most fashionable art style with unique characteristics in the 20th century. The abstract painting starting from direct perception and imagination to refute any expression methods with symbol, literature and description and only comprehend and organize the shape and color on the painting paper. Therefore, abstract painting expressed the pure color is similar with music. It is undoubtedly, Chinese imaged abstract oil painting has been influenced and inspired by the western abstract oil painting. But it is still deferent from western abstract oil painting in essences. It integrated oriental esthetic subject comprehension to atmosphere and inside feeling and outlet in western abstract art to construct the essential characteristics of Chinese imaged abstract oil painting. Chinese imaged abstract painters are pursuing abstract of style Chinese ink painting when creating painting interest of oil painting such as brush, ink, texture and trail, etc. and mingled Chinese poetic image of similarity and dissimilarity into painting, which is a natural connotation integrating Chinese human spirit and painter's spirit such as Wu Dayu, Chen Mengpi, Zhao Wuj, Zhu Dequn, Xiao Qin, Su Xiaobai, Jia Dahai, etc. by seeing the works of BaiMing, he has entered into the school already.

We can known from Bai Ming's works that image is a form exists between picture and abstract, which fully embodied art image of artists' main thoughts and art image. Imaged oil painting cut off and versioned some concrete image to form a kind of gas condition of shape without picture and correspond to the shape of picture remained on the canvas and generates a kind of image visual environment and gives people more spaces. If we draw further the shape of picture on the imaged abstract oil painting, when the last "image" was hidden, the imaged oil painting is turned back the original abstractism oil painting.

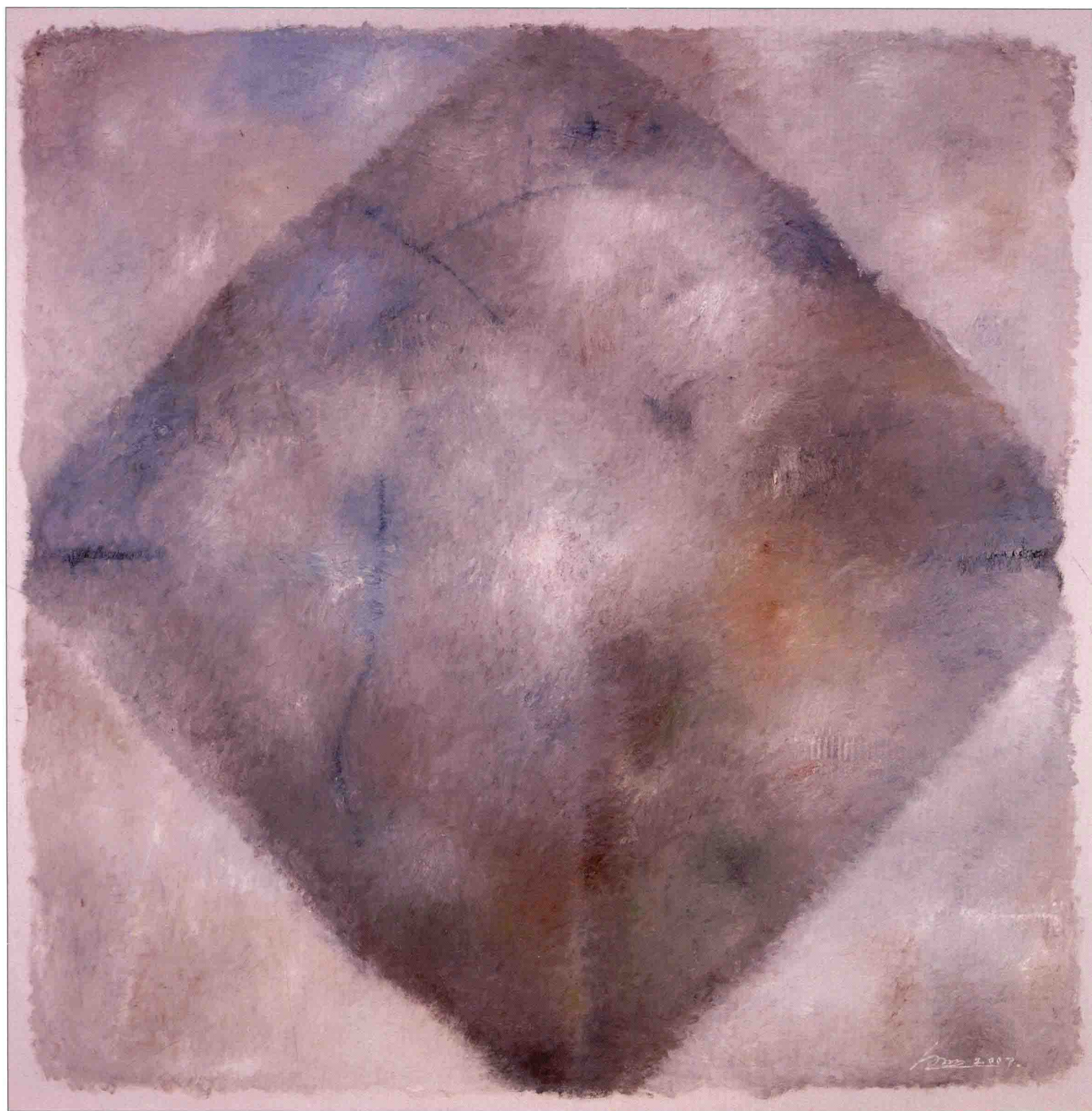
After Baiming's abstract oil painting mingled with image, while pursuing atmosphere and exquisite language, he still paid attention to using perceptive innate capability and potential consciousness of deep soul to express meanings in his painting. The image environment can extend gradually and contain the atmosphere of nature full of secret, change and aesthetics of heaven and earth, which shows increasingly the lyric abstract painting style with cool beauty and macular strength. In a word, Bai Ming's abstract oil painting embodies a state symbol of individual and personality.

Tsinghua University Sep. 25, 2007

灰白的精神 THE GREY SPIRITS



灰白的精神·方正之外 之一 The gray spirits • besides square and propriety No.1 80 × 80cm 2007 Oil on canvas



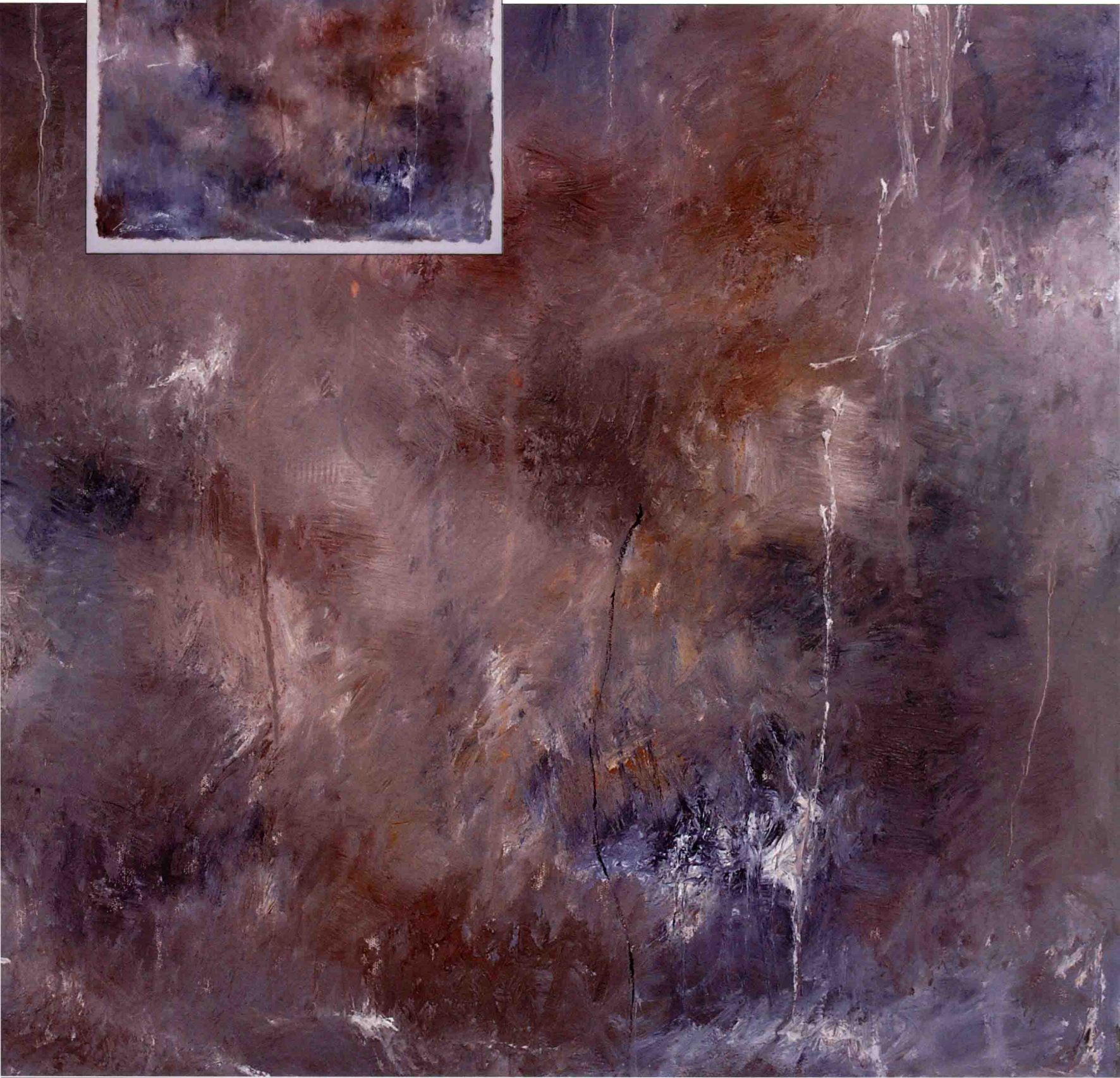
灰白的精神 • 方正之外 之二 The gray spirits • besides square and propriety No.2 120 × 120cm 2007 Oil on canvas



灰白的精神 • 由心观水 之一 The gray spirits • See water from heart No.1 80 × 80cm 2007 Oil on canvas



灰白的精神 • 由心观水 之二 The gray spirits • See water from heart No.2 80 × 80cm 2007 Oil on canvas



灰白的精神 · 由心观水 之三 The gray spirits · See water from heart No.3 80 × 80cm 2007 Oil on canvas



灰白的精神 • 由心观水 之四 The gray spirits • See water from heart No.4 120 × 150cm 2007 Oil on canvas