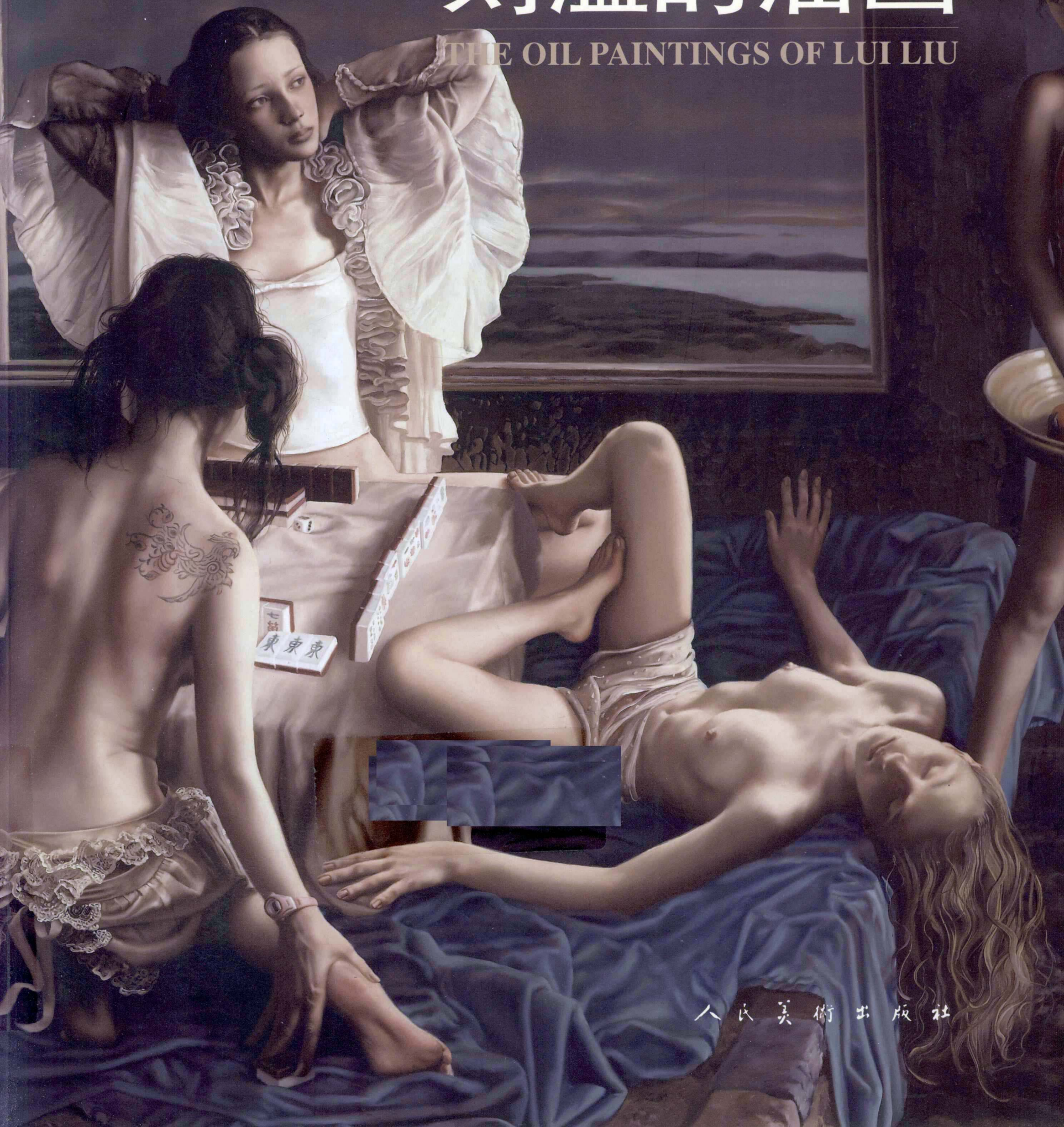


刘溢的油画

THE OIL PAINTINGS OF LUI LIU



人民美術出版社

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同学刘溢

——陈丹青

20世纪70年代末，第一幅描绘“文革”而迅即著名的画——几个迷茫的武斗者坐在画面上——是四川高小华于1979年完成的《为什么》。其实，还要更早，北京的刘溢已经画出一幅几乎同样的画，我记得画中墙面上被撕碎的革命标语，一片猩红色。

刘溢机灵，而且大胆。他和杨飞云、施本铭、夏小万同班，是我的美院老同学。三十二年前，1978年，假如我没记错，深冬的夜晚，忽然，刘溢窜到我与孙景波的宿舍，拎着那幅刚画好的画给年纪大的学生看。其时他正当二年级，好年轻的一张脸，轮番瞧着我们，期待回应，而大家不知如何回应——做得太早的事总归令人茫然而失语，我猜刘溢自己也不明白怎会弄出这么一幅画，然而以他当时的年龄，早已见过“文革”时期满街标语的猩红色，待进了油画班，可就抹开颜料，画起来。

此后风动一时的“伤痕绘画”，不见刘溢。他去干了什么？将近二十年后，我在哪份中国艺术杂志上见到一幅令我吃惊的画：五位全身赤裸的西洋女子挤在屋子里，做出各种既非情色，亦非正常的动作，整个画面似乎有着什么情节，介于插图放大和电影镜头的停格之间。查看作者的姓名：刘溢——这就是那位美院同学吗？这就是如今的中国当代艺术吗？其时我在纽约。

他还是那么大胆：画中有位女子的性器画得好生清晰，犹如花朵，虽然我早已见惯美国的裸女照片，但刘溢的手笔仍使我看得心惊肉跳；他也还是带着那份机灵：每位女子的四肢与身段画得有姿有势，不肯让一条腿或一只手闲着。但我最为惊异的是，刘溢这么能画！他显然运用照片，可是这般精准细腻的刻画绝对是一种本领——诸位明鉴，中央美院七八届油画本科生日后都是写实绘画的顽强竞技者，而且各占一份主题：杨飞云的中国式古典女体、施本铭的当代肖像、王沂东的红衣村姑、夏小万那些痛苦狰狞的男人体。而刘溢笔下一个个又一个西方女子（绝大多数裸体或半裸体，间或是一两位中国姑娘，当然，也几乎衣不遮体，正好露出男人们最想看见的某一截肉身）与他同班同行的画一样，都在证明着难以辩驳的写实能力，主要是，刻画能力。在刘溢画中，依我看，还多出两种能力——迄今我想不出准确的词定义这种能力——就是：戏剧性的表情，以及难以解读的情境。

如今我已见过多于三十幅以上的刘溢作品。他那些挑衅的、戏虐的情色内容不再那么令我惊异，而转为介于钦佩和困惑之间的审视：显而易见，在他手中没有一件作品是敷衍的、马虎的，没有一个局部刻画是他难以胜任的；换句话说，他运用技艺犹如游戏，当然，是相当认真的游戏。对应于冷静细致的写实技巧，同时，刘溢沉迷于大量幻象——是幻象，而不是主题——并赋予这幻象各种复杂的剧情。我不确定他是着迷于这类自己编

撰的剧情，还是剧情的绘画效果，在他画中，二者都很夺目，过于夺目，以至我总是很难决定被哪一部分吸引：是他的画艺？还是这画艺描述的剧情？那些女子除了种姓的差异（或西洋，或中国），大致是无身份的，不带有任何可辨识的文化背景与现实感；他所营造的情境也刻意抹去任何时代或国家的标记，虽然充满物质细节——当然，所有细节在他笔下都画得真实可信——但只是围绕人物的道具，营造气氛，并不陈述剧情。

看来刘溢不想诱导读者进入他的剧情，而是制作炫目而美丽的效果，但这种效果很难归类。它不是超现实主义：达利式的、玛格丽特式的、藉里柯式的超现实主义，多少指向隐喻，但在刘溢这里，看似隐喻的部分也被抽离上下文，与超现实主义得以展开的哲学、文学或神话渊源，并无干系；它更不是现实主义的，因作者与他笔下的女子完全不发生现实关系，毫无疑问，他非常想要画出这样的女子，但不是出于爱欲或性幻想——他不爱他的角色，也不想认识她们。

我认识刘溢，他是我的老同学。现在他要我给出评论，实在很难，等于要我画出像他那般精准的细节，我做不到。以我的揣度，刘溢的动机并不来自情色，而是源于绘画的野心——他不愿像他同班同届的老同学那样，仅仅描绘静止的课堂式人体，不愿仅仅画中国的女子；他深知裸女是西方绘画的符号，但他又不满足这一古老符号的因袭，不愿重复文艺复兴或巴洛克的裸女传统——初生的维纳斯、入浴的苏珊娜，或者，与半人半兽的“森林潘”相偕起舞的美人——如许多矢志于创新的后“文革”画家，他渴望画出既接近西方表象（藉此抹去一个中国画家的区域性文化身份），又是全新的、未被尝试的画（藉此实现一个中国写实画家向往的现代感）。这时，他的姿态化的、被消除文化属性的裸女，他的国籍不明的画面，他的耸动而难解的戏剧性，便似乎是可解释、可领会、可欣赏的。犹如西方当代时尚摄影中无所不用其极的想象力，刘溢的情色裸女并不意在情色，而在传达一种近于挣扎的形式的想象，这种想象无意指向任何意涵或世俗激情，而是，将这挣扎的想象竭力美化、技术化、非现实化，构成一组空洞而富丽，并不断自我繁殖的幻象。

以上分析也许完全错了：我愿换一种说法——刘溢真的是在编织剧情，他的剧情确实源自性幻想：那是一种关于写实技能的性幻想。在表面上，如我们所见，这些幻想全是肉身与表情，但当刘溢画出每一表情与肉身之时，他愉快地目击自己的才能。这种巨细无遗的刻画才能必须伴随怪异的想象，以便证实：他并不仅仅善于刻画。

2010年12月写在北京

My Classmate, Lui Liu

Danqing Chen

In the late 70s, a painting about the Cultural Revolution rapidly gained fame throughout China. Titled *Why*, by Xiaohua Gao from Sichuan Province, it depicted a few Red Guards sitting around and looking confused. Strangely, the painting brought to mind an earlier and similar one I had seen when I was a student at the Fine Arts Academy in Beijing. I remembered the torn banners of revolutionary slogans smeared with scarlet red. That painter's name was Lui Liu.

Lui was in the same class at the Academy as Feiyun Yang, Benming Shi and Xiaowang Xia. I can still picture that winter night, over 30 years ago, when Lui burst into the dorm I shared with Jinbo Sun. His face was so young, his eyes so earnest. He held a painting he had just finished and couldn't wait to show us older students. We did not know how to react to his audaciousness. You tend to be at a loss for words when you see something ahead of its time. I guess even Lui himself wasn't sure how the painting came to be. Perhaps, that painting was a reflection of all he had seen and experienced during the Cultural Revolution. Using the oil paints at his disposal at the Academy, Lui had made the street scenes of blood-red banners come to life.

During the Scar Art era that followed, the trend was to depict the Cultural Revolution in paintings as a healing process. But after that first painting, we saw no more of Lui. What had happened to him? Some 20 years later, while I was in New York, an oil painting on the cover of an art magazine jumped out at me. The cover showed five naked Western women holed up in a room. Their gestures were not particularly erotic, yet there was something unusual and compelling about them. There seemed to be a storyline to the painting; like a freeze frame from a movie. Eventually, my eyes wandered down and there it was, the name of the painter: "Lui Liu." I thought, "Could it be? Is that my old classmate from the Academy?"

He was still as daring as that boy in the middle of the night. In this painting, one girl's labia was painted like a flower, meticulous and vivid. I was familiar with nudes, but the way Lui depicted these women had a startling effect on me. Every figure was posed in a different manner; not a single limb, not a hand or leg, was idle. The intelligence, precision and intricacy of the painting took my breath away.

Many of those who graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 1982 proved to be masters of figurative paintings. Each had his own theme: Feiyun Yang's Chinese classic females, Benming Shi's contemporary portraits, Yidong Wang's country girls in red and Xiaowang Xia's suffering male bodies. Lui paints female bodies, sometimes Chinese, mostly Caucasian, that are barely clothed and show parts of the flesh most appealing to the male audience. Indeed, Lui is like his classmates in his indisputable figurative technique. But in my opinion, his paintings also create dramatic expressions and mysterious atmosphere.

Now I have seen more than 30 of Lui Liu's works. His provocative and playful content doesn't shock me anymore. Instead, I feel something

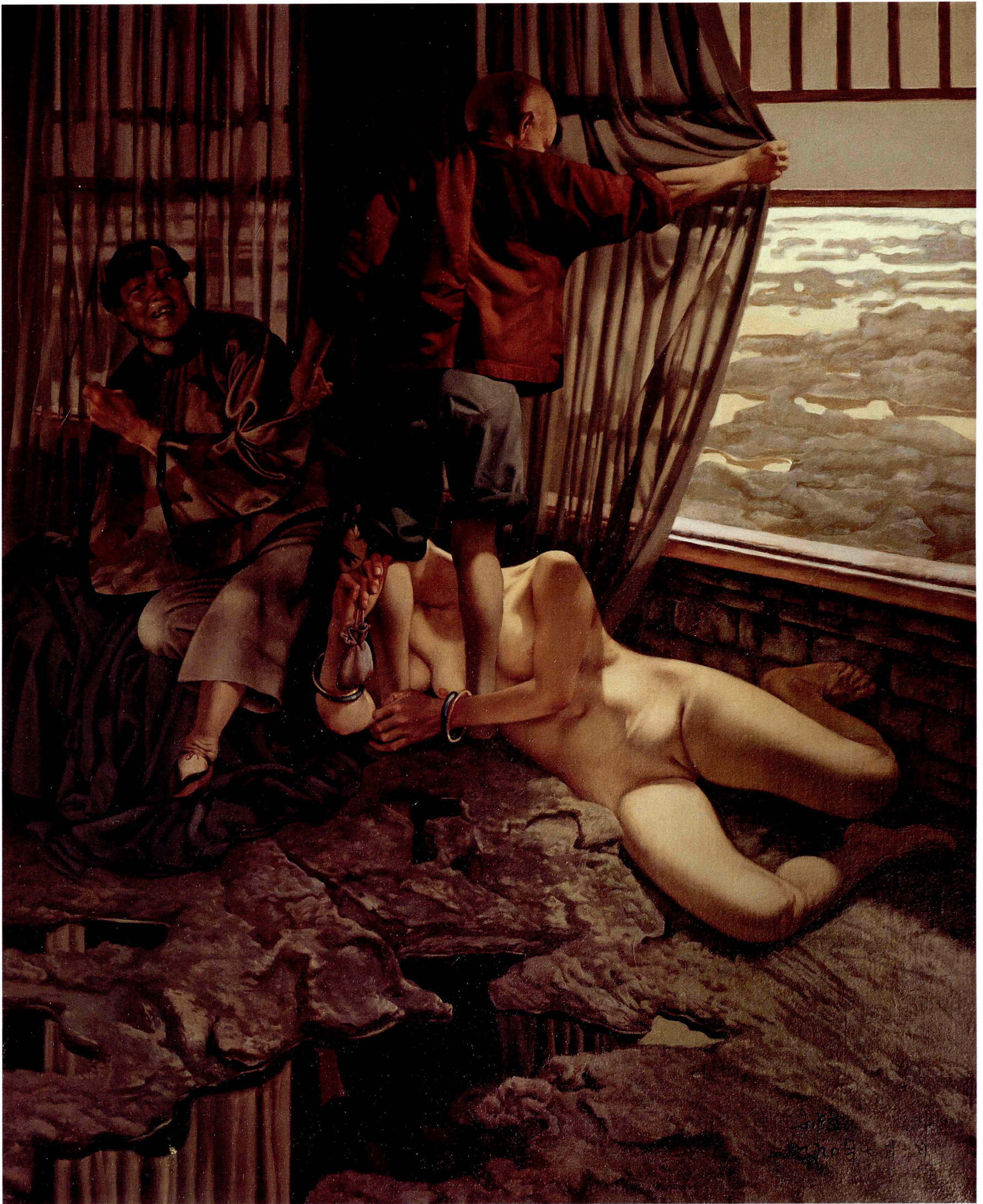
between admiration and puzzlement. In his paintings, no detail is beyond his reach. He uses his mastery of technique to play a sort of game, a serious game. His calm and meticulous realist technique merges with a fascination with illusions. A lot of complex stories seem to be woven into these illusions. I'm drawn into his art by his technique and by the drama he creates; I am uncertain which attracts me more. The scenes offer few clues as to time or place. Apart from their racial origins, the girls and women in Lui Liu's paintings are without identities. The details are authentic but, as merely characters' props, they aren't part of the narration.

It seems that Lui Liu wants his audience to look at the stunningly beautiful effects, not be lured into the plots. One finds it difficult to categorize the effects. It's not Surrealism in terms of Dali, Magritte or Gericault, which usually points to metaphors. In Lui's works, the metaphorical elements cannot be traced back to any philosophical, literary or mythological origins as in Surrealism. Yet his paintings are even further away from Realism: no real relationship occurs between the artist and his female characters. He wants to paint them well but it's not erotic for him. He neither loves his characters nor does he want to really know or understand them.

I know Lui as my fellow classmate. And as such, he has asked me to critique his works. It is not an easy thing to do. It's like asking me to paint delicately like him - it's beyond me. I believe Lui Liu is not motivated by the erotic, but by his ambitions. His aspirations seem to differ from his classmates. He understands that nudes are symbols of Western oil paintings, but he is not satisfied with iconic symbols from a bygone era. He doesn't want to repeat the nude traditions of the Renaissance and Baroque schools the birth of Venus, the bathing Susanna, or the nymphs who dance with mythological beings. Like other post-Cultural Revolution artists, Lui Liu wants to create paintings that present the veneer of the Western world just enough so that his Chinese identity is erased. At the same time he wants his paintings to be fresh and innovative. In that regard, he is not unlike other contemporary Chinese Realist artists. If we understand this, then his timeless and borderless scenes, and his provocative and intricate plots are easier to explain, comprehend and appreciate. The nudes are intended to convey imagination, a sort of struggle. These painting do not point to any particular meanings or passion, but are intrinsically beautiful, technical and abstract efforts to create a series of hollow, splendid and self-proliferating illusions.

Then again, I might be wrong. Perhaps Lui really is trying to create dramas that derive from sexual fantasies. Then I believe it's his technique that is connected with sexual fantasies. On the surface, as we have seen, these fantasies are all flesh and facial expressions. In his every brush stroke, Lui witnesses his own talent with delight Through wild imagination, he proves that he is not just a Realist painter after all.

December 2010, Beijing



《石女》 布面油画 *Stone Woman* Oil on Canvas 61cm × 56cm 1991

媒体评论摘要

托马斯·荷斯曼，加拿大《国家邮报》，1999年11月：

虽然批评家们拿他跟意大利巴洛克艺术家卡拉瓦乔相比，但刘溢更喜欢新古典主义画家安格尔的作品。“他喜欢吹毛求疵。”刘溢这样评说这位法国画家精到的技巧。他只用三种颜色：黄褐色，黄，普鲁士蓝，必要时用黑色和白色于阴影处。

6年来，刘溢和妻子定居在加拿大，他在美国、欧洲及加拿大国内建立了一个忠实的收藏家群体。最近，刘先生越来越多地采用超现实的思路进行探索。他的画充满了讽刺和幽默，他在绘画中常常强调手，他认为手是沟通的最平均主义的渠道。对平衡的愿望、对传统的承接以及他平均主义的观点都来自他中国的成长经历。致于他生动的体现方式，却是很西方的。“这是一个有机的过程。是他内在的拥有。我不觉得他有意要把东西方的风格交融起来。”刘溢的妻子这样说。

麦克·丹尼尔，美国《道拉斯早报》，1999年7月4日：

刘先生很多产，他严谨地用布面人体油画来表达喜悦、优雅和一丝的惆怅。

刘先生在中国大陆成长和接受教育。1978年，他和另外7人被文化改革后重新开放的中央美术学院油画专业录取。在那里他的艺术实力得以展现。1989年，他在北京中国美术馆参加了重要的“中国现代艺术展。”刘先生现在多伦多生活，把他在 中国获得的无可挑剔的绘画技巧和他新近拥有的社会、政治和风格上的自由结合在一起。他的绘画洋溢着一种奇异的、模棱两可的情感力量。

安娜拜拉·荷尔伯，美国《Met杂志》，1999年10月23日：

刘溢的风格深受古代大师的影响，并且技巧性极高。他的作品中勾画出一系列引人注目的妇女，他赋予这些人物的面孔、表情、身体及手势很强的现代感。比如，《中场》中那些女孩儿们穿的紧身的缎子内衣，《米拉贝拉》佩戴的银叶头饰，都有强烈的诱惑力和现代感。

克里·可汉，美国《底特律自由导报》，1998年11月22日：

其结果是显而易见的：超现实主义往往在感性和高度的绘画技巧中呈现出来。刘溢运用传统油画技法，却出自现代的思维方式，往往融合西方和亚洲的影响力。作品《蜈蚣女》做得尤其好。画面有良好的平衡感觉，亮度方面又让人回想起古典大师。现场展示了一位亚洲女性从笼子里放飞昆虫，她安详的神态和她同伴们恐怖的表情正好形成反差。昆虫像外星人入侵一般点缀着超乎现实的空间。

福兰克·普鲁凡扎努，美国《观察家和欣赏家》，1998年11月有15日：

“每个人都想与众不同。就这点来讲，各个人就没有什么不同。”刘溢说，“这是个产生过度个人主义的误区。在中国的文化里，你很难做出与众不同的表现。这就是挑战，你必须真正脱颖而出。”

无可非议的是刘溢辉煌的技巧和表现力的广度。评论家常拿他们跟超现实主义画家马格里特和萨尔瓦多·达利相提并论。

在作品的题材和情感力量方面，刘溢通过绘画和雕塑证明自己是一位娴熟的技师。他作品中包含了原始的色情、微妙的感性和纯粹的构图灵巧性等等丰富层次。尽管刘溢不想招摇，但他在绘画上的超凡技艺和诠释能力正在得到的世界性

的认同。他的作品显示出包括荷尔拜因、卡拉瓦乔及库尔贝等从一系列西方画家的影响。

巴里·卡拉汉，加拿大《流放者》，1996年夏季刊：

跟他作品的力度相比，刘溢显得很温和及谦逊。他用一种安详的、深思熟虑的语气交谈，还不时援引西方语言哲学家维特根斯坦的话。很难把刘溢的作品界定到任何特定的传统中。“我不会特地去表现古典或是现代。”他说。相反，刘溢认为，艺术家只是文化的载体。“你不能说你是一个艺术家，你就怎样与众不同。”他说，“我只是吸收那些进入我脑海中的东西。不需要明白这是什么：存在的神秘性就是我要表现的。”

刘溢作品中模棱两可的局面在《邪恶时期》这一作品中得到最好的体现。同样，黑色的运用意味深长，虽然颓废的情形在中国文化的氛围中还很新，但表现的情绪却是真实的：邪恶的感觉在那里，性的表达方面点到为止，提及却没有发挥。不清楚邪恶的行为发生了还是正在酝酿。这种模棱两可的表达在刘溢其他成功的作品中也很普遍，从而解放了刘溢，无论选择面向东方还是西方他都能昂然独立。最令人印象深刻的作品是刘溢的布面油画。他显然研究过荷尔拜因，特别是在卡拉瓦乔。他已经学会了如何利用一层又一层黑色形成的密度来播撒光的种子。是这种黑暗带给他画中那些形消骨立的女人带去生命，使你关注的的不仅是一幅“精致”的油画，而是画中人物那坚定的眼神和那双舞蹈演员的手之间的存在的关系。

刘溢是相对于中国“官方”艺术的另类，同时，他也对西方艺术采取了相应的复仇行动。他从西方的传统中学技术、选图标，学会了采取一种不恭、不敬和厌世的态度。

他对西方众所周知的图标的使用是公开的，甚至极具挑衅性。他意识的范围是非凡的，他对绘画技巧的掌握引人注目。最重要的是，在我看来，他明白自己所冒的风险。他听到了他的创造(模仿)之母正在啧啧地舔嘴唇，他却心定气闲，义无反顾。

我确信他的大胆的裸体绘画在北京一定令人震惊，但我们也可以看到刘溢作品中也有相当的讥讽意味，比如《金苹果的故事》里达利作品式的胖女人蒙娜·丽莎，巴尔加斯作品式的玛丽莲·梦露，似乎还有些“对安格尔的引述”。刘溢显然宁可冒媚俗的风险，也要跟无论是北京还是波士顿的人们开些玩笑，与此同时，他挽救了自己。

李鸣，中国《泰瑞艺术基金投资通讯》，2011年3月刊：

自欧洲文艺复兴以来，那些不朽的艺术作品除具有至今都让人叹为观止的高超绘画技巧外，大师们更聪明地通过画面表达了他们对现实社会的观察与思考，将人文思想、哲学理念等一起传达给观众。刘溢的“观念写实”绘画就是继承了一种传统，他用写实风格的油画幽默、诙谐地调侃现实生活，进而又结合当代的、国际化的绘画语言，使其作品充满当代气息。



《宫女》 板上油画 *Flying Kite* Oil on Board 46.2cm × 57.2cm 1990



《四季之冬》 布面油画 *Four Seasons - Winter* Oil on Canvas 122cm × 91cm 2000

Media Commentaries

Thomas Hirshmann, "From Mao to Munk", *National Post*, November, 1999

Although critics have compared him to the Italian baroque artist Caravaggio, he prefers the neoclassic work of Ingres. "He is very picky." says Mr. Liu of the French painter's precise technique. He uses just three colors: sienna, yellow, and Prussian blue, with the requisite black and white for shading.

Artist Lui Liu juggles stories of mingling with Toronto's jet set and of living in communist China with the kind of balance expected of a classically trained artist.

In the six years since he and his wife settled in Canada, he has built a following of devout collectors in the U.S., Europe and here at home. Lately, Mr. Liu has increasingly used the surreal to explore ideas. His paintings are full of irony and humor, often emphasizing the hands, which he feels to be the most egalitarian vessels of communication. The desire for balance, the adherence to tradition and his egalitarian views all come out of his Chinese upbringing. The vivid expression though is very Western. "It's organic. It's in him. I don't see him consciously blending Eastern and Western styles." says Ms. Zheng.

Mike Daniel, "Pleased to Meet them", *Dallas Morning Post*, July 9, 1999

Mr. Liu, prolific producer, displays strictly figurative oils on canvas that express joy, elegance and a touch of melancholy.

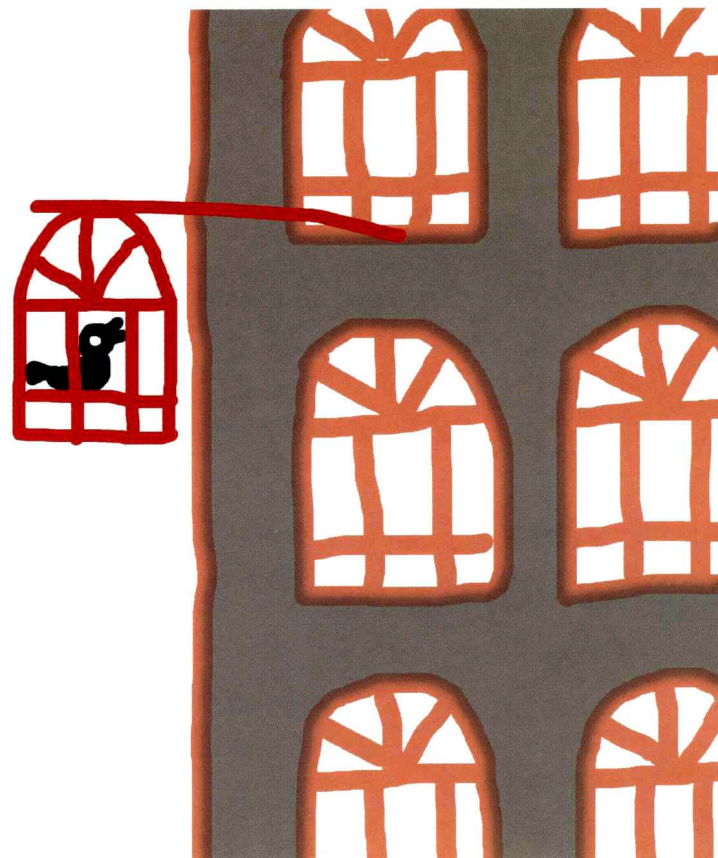
Mr. Lui was raised and educated in mainland China, where he exhibited such artistic prowess that when the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing reopened amid cultural reforms in 1978, he was one of eight people accepted into the oil painting curriculum. In 1989, he participated in the important "China Avant-garde Show" at the National Gallery, Beijing. Now a Canadian citizen living in Toronto, Mr. Lui combines the impeccable technical mastery he acquired in China with the social, political and stylistic freedoms he now possesses. Mr. Lui's paintings ooze a strange, ambiguous emotive power.

Annabelle Massey Helber, "Fait Accompli", *Met Magazine*, June 23, 1999

Resist the urge to hum "Louie, Louie," and check any Asian stereotypes at the door. The only thing about Lui Liu's ancestry that shows in his work is his masterful, painstaking technique, acquired at Beijing's Central Academy of Fine Arts, one of China's most prestigious art schools.

Nothing of his early life in a dysfunctional family or his coming of age in an oppressive society are reflected here either, except perhaps a profound sense of the joy he finds in what he says is the only true freedom: freedom of expression. "At first, my paintings revealed a sense of mystery, restlessness, nothingness, or isolation," he says from his studio in Toronto.

Lui brings something very contemporary to the faces, expressions, bodies, and hand gestures of the striking women he paints. Although the style is old-master influenced and painterly, his figures wear slinky satin lingerie in *Interval* or a sassy, silver-leafed headband in *Mirabella*. The work is very seductive, enticing viewers with provocative lances and milky skin.



Lui's backgrounds in *Moonlight* and *Flute Girls* are hazy and unreal, a throwback to a previous passion for painting surreal, humorous, and slightly bitter images.

Keri Guten Cohen, "Lui Liu", *Detroit Free Press*, November 22, 1998

The result is decidedly surrealistic, often sensual and always rendered with a high degree of painterly technique. The paintings are executed with traditional oil techniques but come *Free Range* from a contemporary mind-set, often blending Western and Asian influence. is especially well done, with a good sense of balance and a luminosity that recalls the Old Masters. The scene shows an Asian woman releasing beetles from a cage; her peacefulness at setting them free is countered by horror from her companion. The insects dot the landscape like surrealistic space invaders.

Frank Provenzano, "Pushing Art to the Borderline", *Observer & Eccentric*, November 15, 1998

With many of today's cutting-edge artists exploring issues of gender, self-identity and turning the materials of art into its own subject, the seeming inaccessibility and esoteric nature of contemporary art could be a consequence of individualism gone awry.

At least this is the provocative view of Lui Liu, one of China's most promising painters who immigrated to Canada. "Everyone is trying to be different, to be individualistic," said Lui Liu, "It's excessive individualism. There's no way in Chinese culture you can stand apart and be different."

Yet for all his desire not to draw attention to himself, Lui Liu is gaining international recognition for his extraordinary painterly technique and interpretive skills.

In subject matter and emotive power, Lui Liu's paintings and sculptures present a masterful technician whose layered work contains a raw eroticism, subtle sensuality and sheer compositional deftness. True to Lui Liu's Eastern aesthetic influences, each line, stroke and gesture are inextricably related.

What is undisputed is Lui Liu's brilliant technique and expressive range that critics have compared to Surrealists Rene Magritte and Salvador Dali. And his work also shows unmistakable influences of Western painters from Holbein to Caravaggio to Courbet.

In particular, Lui Liu's realistic painting of bare-breasted women with famous faces (Marilyn Monroe, Princess Diana, Jackie Kennedy Onassis and Mona Lisa) is a modern-day mythical interpretation of Theodore Gericault's famous *The raft of medusa*, circa. 1819. Part philosopher intent to bridge differences between East and West, part social critic focused on overturning meaningless traditions, Lui Liu is surprisingly nonconfrontational and unassuming.

He speaks in a quiet, thoughtful tone, often quoting Western philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's notions of truth and language. The power of Lui Liu's work, however, cannot be distilled to any particular tradition. "I don't try to be ancient or modern," he said. On the contrary, Lui Liu contends that artists are mere conduits for culture. "You can't say you're an artist and you're different from others," he said. "I just want to accept what comes to my mind. I don't feel I have to understand as long as the mystery is there."

Barry Callaghan, "Lui Liu", *Exile, Summer, 1996*

This ambivalence, this tension between poles, also obtains in *Subjectivity via Objectivity* (three men gong nowhere who are starting at shoes), *Temptation Via Imagination* (a traditional couple huddled beneath naked female clouds that clutch), and most particularly in *Women in Autumn* and *Complex via Climax*, the first a surrealist exercise - a sexually provocative but appropriate passage through both sides of the mirror, with Chinese faces imposed on a Western "landscape" - Western nudes - and the second, a meditation, wherein naked horror is highly stylized, Goya as rendered by Max Walter Svanberg or perhaps Leonor Fini.

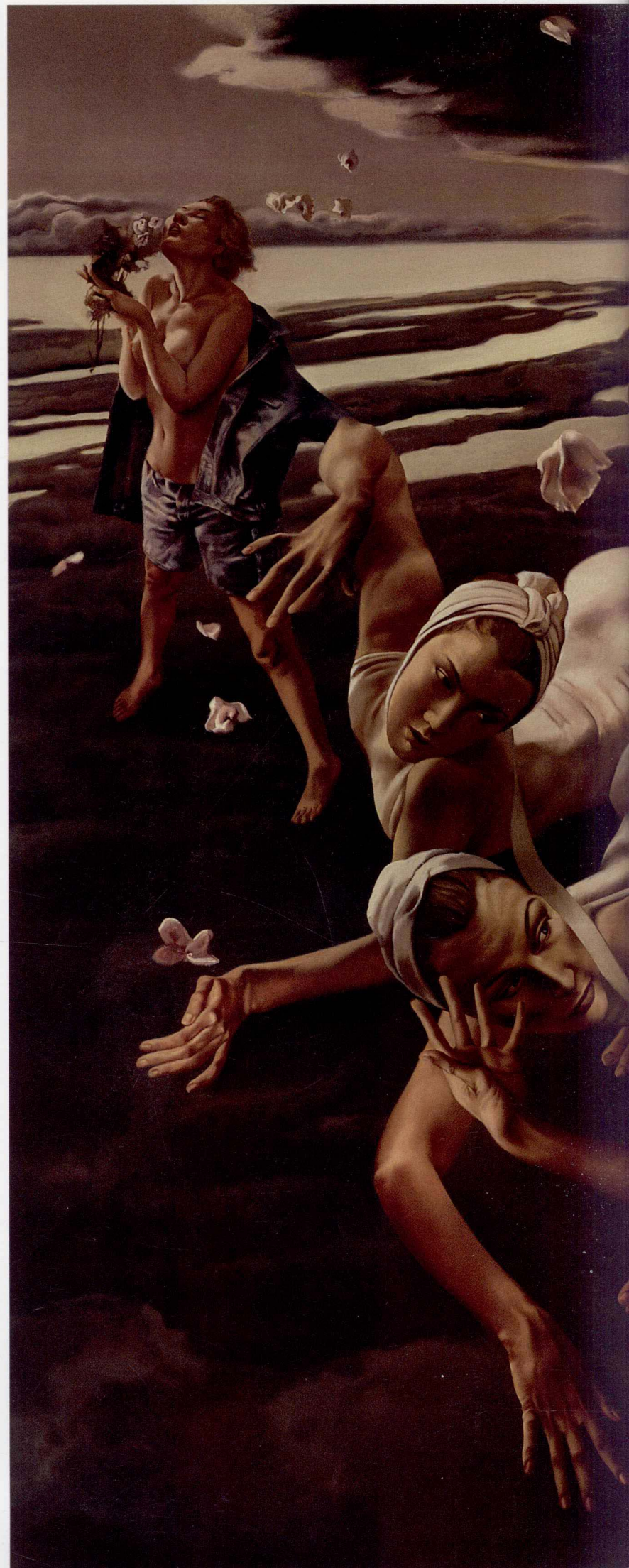
The most impressive paintings, however, are the oil on canvas portraits. Lui Liu has not only looked at Holbein and particularly at Caravaggio - he has learned how to make black on black a density that seems full of the seeds of light. It is the darkness that brings the women - so big-boned but emaciated and almost anorexic in their sexual repose - to life, so that you see that that is more than "fine" painting at work: there is no reliance on parody here, there is a real relationship between the unflinching eyes and the hands that have a dancer's movement, even in their stillness.

This arrival at ambiguity is best realized in *A Sinister Period*. Again, the command of the blacks is significant, and though the "scene" borders on the gothic (and an acquired gothic, because decadence - in the Chinese context - is still new, the emotion seems honest: the sinister feel of - among other things, sexual repression - is started rather than over-stated, implied rather than exploited. Whether a sinister act has been committed or is being concocted is unclear, is ambiguous, and as in all his other successful works this ambiguity free Lui Liu from the Mother of his Invention, frees him so that he can stand alone facing east or west, as he chooses.

Lui Liu is at the center of this attempt to stake out an aesthetic that is an alternative to China's "official" art. He, like other painters, has turned West with a vengeance, turned to our traditions for techniques, for icons, for attitudes of cynicism, irreverence and malaise.

His use of Western icons is blatant, almost defiant. The range of his awareness is extraordinary, his mastery of painterly techniques compelling. But most important, it seems to me he understands the risks he's taking. He has heard his Mother of Invention (Imitation) licking her lips, and he has covered his tracks.

I'm sure his soft sleazy nudes are shocking in Beijing, but we can see that there is also a note of parody in paintings like *The Story of the Golden Apple* - the Dali-like *Mona Lisa* as a fat lady, the Vargas-like Marilyn Monroe spread-eagled on her back, the decorous "quote" from Ingres? Lui Liu, has shown that he is prepared to risk kitsch but by rendering the risqué as a joke on everybody, whether in Beijing or Boston, he has saved himself.



《游春图》布面油画 *Parade* Oil on Canvas 132cm × 167cm 1994





《哦！加拿大》 布面油画 *Oh! Canada* Oil on Canvas 122cm × 112.5cm 1994

从《石女》到《泥女》

——星尘

李叔同写过一首《落花》：

纷，纷，纷，纷，纷，纷，
惟落花委地无言兮，化作泥尘；
寂，寂，寂，寂，寂，寂，
何春光长逝不归兮，永绝消息。

中国传统社会中的女性人物，一向被双重标准的礼教设置在复杂的性别隐喻之中。在这种尊阳贬阴的秩序命题下，女性人物不但面对文化与性别上的问题，事实上也面

对着内向的道德与性别冲突。20世纪80年代初，刘溢画过一张《石女》，乡间、泥沼、村姑、裸体。仿佛就是李叔同《落花》的写照：“一落花委地无言兮，化作泥尘；春光长逝不归兮，永绝消息……”

张爱玲小说《连环套》中，有一段这样的故事：“广东乡下的一个妇人，家中养着十几个女孩。为了点小事，便罚一个女孩站在河里，水深至腰，站个一两天，出来的时候，湿气也烂到腰上。养女初进门，先给一个下马威，在她的手背上紧紧缚三根毛竹篾，筷子深深嵌在肉里，旁边的肉坟起多高。隔了几天，肿的地方出了脓，筷子生到肉里去，再让她自己一根根拔出来。直着嗓子叫喊的声音，沿河一里上下都听得见。”

张爱玲在《心经》中又有这样一番叙述：“篱上的藤努力往上爬，满心只想越过篱笆去，那边还有一个新的宽敞的世界。谁想到这不是寻常的院落，这是八层楼上的阳台。过了篱笆，什么也没有，空荡荡的，空得令人眩晕……”文句中充满象征意义的描写，刻画出女性渴望逃离闺阁政治的冲动。一如拼命往上攀爬的藤，渴



《泥女》(局部) *Mud Girl* (detail)