

何建國

美 術 規 律

今日中国艺术家 CHINESE ARTISTS OF TODAY 今日美术馆典藏 DOCUMENTATION LIBRARY OF TODAY ART MUSEUM 2005.11.11 HEBEI EDUCATION PRESS
何建國 HE JIANGUO 美的规律 RULE OF BEAUTY

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何建国 HE JIANGUO
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河北教育出版社
HEBEI EDUCATION PRESS

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

何建国: 美的规律 / 何建国绘. — 石家庄: 河北教育出版社, 2006.10

(今日中国艺术家)

ISBN 7-5434-5967-1

I. 何... II. 何... III. ①素描—作品集—中国—现代②水墨画—作品集—中国—现代 IV. J221.8

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字 (2006) 第127794号

今日中国艺术家
何建国
美的规律
今日美术馆书库

出版发行
河北教育出版社
(石家庄市联盟路705号 邮编 050061)

监制
北京今日美术馆

印刷
北京雅昌彩色印刷有限公司

策划
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开本
787 × 1092 1/8

印张
32

版次
2006 年 10 月第 1 版

印次
2006 年 10 月第 1 次印刷

书号
ISBN 7-5434-5967-1

定价
680 元

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如发现印刷装订问题, 请直接与印刷厂联系调换
地址 / 北京市天竺空港工业 A 区天纬四街 邮编 / 101312
电话 / 010-80486788 联系人 / 刘磊

Chinese Artists of Today
He Jianguo
Rule of Beauty
Documentation Library of Today Art Museum

Published by
Hebei Education Press
(No. 705 Lianmeng Road, Shijiazhuang City, 050061)

Produced by
Today Art Museum

Plate-making and Printed by
Beijing Artron Colour Printing Co., Ltd

Scheme
Zhang Baoquan

Edition in Chief
Zhang Zikang

Executive Editor
Li Nuo

Design
Zheng Zijie

Design
A Qiang Wang Zhonghai

Size
787 × 1092 1/8

Printed Matters
32

Publishing Date
First Edition Published in Oct., 2006

Publishing Date
First Edition Published in Oct., 2006

Book Number
ISBN 7-5434-5967-1

Price
680

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美的规律

——我是怎样画画的 何建国

书法用笔

中国画与其他画种最大的区别就在于书法用笔。好老师教中国画先教用笔。好中国画家与书法家的区别是，不是为了写好字而是为了用好笔。用笔不过关，就像“皮之不存，毛将焉附”一样，任何一种对中国画的改革尝试都将归于失败。比如徐悲鸿，比如“岭南画派”，比如傅抱石，比如吴冠中……

如果说在徐悲鸿身上还残存着一些书法根底的话，那么在他的学生之后就皆是等而下，素描代替了书法用笔，方向不对，结果自然也不对，中国美术教育五十多年，投入和产出不成正比！

上述的这些道理我年轻时并不明白，我是在前辈们的督促下步入书法之门的。当年看到张正宇看画总是要单拿出一条线来品，且是津津有味，我当时就不明白这究竟是怎么一回事。后来看到黄永玉写的《蜜泪》写张正宇给郎静山画像，把铅笔立起来像用毛笔一样，目不转睛，慢慢地一根一根地勾线。我感到很亲切，因为那就是书法用笔，无论毛笔还是铅笔。

书法用笔很难。如果说画画我是生而知之的话，我承认书法我是困而知之，且是一个痛苦的漫长过程。

本书的编者本来要把我的书法作品全部删掉，我坚持留下来，原因是本书要对外宣传，而外国

人是实在不懂中国书法用笔究竟是怎么回事。这就是东西方绘画的差别，西方重外在，东方重内在。西方重整体，东方重一点一画之功。其实毕加索说的“一拿起笔就已经是一件艺术品”的画只能在中国产生，这就是书法用笔的魅力所在。这就是当年张正宇看画要拿出一条线来琢磨滋味一样，书法用笔不单单是对一个画画人也是对一个看画人的基本修养和要求。真画、假画在用笔上就可以真假立判，没有这个眼力谈不上鉴赏。西方人捧红的中国画家，我们中国人自己往往不明白它们究竟好在哪里，原因是西方人根本分不出也看不懂这用笔的好坏！

说是“困而知之”，绝不是自谦，我当时和时下的中青年一样从来没有把用笔当回事。我追求的是新颖、新潮，是出人意外，总之一句话是外在，不是内在。但这种外在的东西想要再上一层楼的时候，我发觉很困难，就像一座没有基础的楼房再漂亮也要一塌到底一样，我的画在前辈面前不堪一击，我决心从头再来，这个从头再来就是要过好书法用笔这一关。

自二十六七岁每天坚持临池算起，我开始选择毛笔，硬毫、软毫、长锋、短锋都试过后，我选择了长锋羊毫。历代碑帖，历代书家都比较之后，我选择了古拙一路。为什么选古拙而不选秀雅，因为我觉得秀雅学不好很容易变成妩媚，变成银

样蜡枪头，中看不中用；变成花拳绣脚，上不了战场。其实前辈如贺天健、李可染都有这个体验。当年贺天健的字，一般人都看着好，一个内行人看着不好，说是：当当账房先生，记记账还可以，当书法家可不行。贺天健听了这个人的意见，改弦更张，结果一般人看着不好，而内行人看着好了。而“宁拙毋巧，宁丑毋媚”的这句古训也说明写字和书法用笔是两码事。写字好看，一般人能看懂就行了。而书法用笔则是要在这笔画中暗含着艺术的含金量，字写错了没有关系，不好看也没有关系，而如果含金量不够，每一根线条不能表现艺术的生命力，不能体现作者多年的修养，不能体现那种内在的美，这书法则是失败的。所以我说书法不在形式而在用笔，与其说是写字不如说是写线，与其说是表达内容不如说是表达笔墨功力，字本身的架构并不重要，重要的是表现这架构的每一根线条。近年我所以多重颜体，就是因为颜体更重内在美。张正宇虽是我敬仰的前辈，但我不走他画篆的那一路，因为他的篆书都被他的那些学生们给糟蹋得不像样了。一件徒有其表的东西是没有艺术生命力的。选择长锋羊毫的目的也是为了更好地表达这种内在美，虽然它的难度要较短锋硬毫大得多，不会用的人甚至连笔都提不起，这就要谈到内在美的表现——丹田一口气运至指尖，长锋羊、长笔杆，高提笔，像是气

功或是武术里的内功，从内往外发气，动作很慢，不是很快，要留住笔。甚至纸悬半空，笔要能提，能卧以求大量的接触纸面达到笔墨的交融，所谓“泥里拔钉”、“茧中抽丝”。这是一种活的东西，而不是死的东西，前辈说“百炼钢化绕指柔”，“柔里带钢，棉裹铁”，我是深有体会的！

现在书法家很多，而能书法用笔的却很少。因为表面的形式可以照猫画虎，甚至一日之功就可以达到。我看到日本的很多书家把汉字变来变去，现在国内流行的书风也是重形式轻笔法，大家争先恐后地变幻着自己的面貌，生怕落为人后。但毕竟形式面貌是有限的，而这种眼花缭乱、来去匆匆的流行东西看多了也会使人生厌，也不可能发展到一个更高的层次，而要静下心来，一笔一画来追求笔法的时候则需要一个很漫长的过程。我之所以选择楷书也是基于这个道理。篆书可以用表面的形式去唬人，而楷书则是一笔一画、规规矩矩地去做人。而书法用笔的目的正是要避开表面的虚伪繁华，通过这一笔一画之功得到用笔的要领，达到书画用笔的共同点。只有在这个层次上的深挖、深掘，我们才有可能上升到一个更高的层次，才不会陷于流行，才不会千人一面，才不会人云亦云，才不会东施效颦，才能够慢慢地形成我们自己的面貌。这也就是我再三强调书法用笔而不谈书法，把用笔和书法形式分开谈的

良苦用心所在。

没有量变就没有质变，我是积劫成菩萨。时间算来整整三十年过去了，书法用笔于我不单是手艺的提高，眼力的提高更重要。我自己形容像是X光机，有穿透力，用这两只眼睛看世界较之常人看得更深入更容易看清事物的本质。

近年我的创作更把书法用笔发挥到了极至，每日练功往往是先临帖，且不记内容，往往是只写几个字，再用写字之笔去勾一碗一壶。

当年赵孟頫叹道：“世人只学兰亭面，欲换凡骨无金丹”。我今天则是：“鸳鸯绣却凭君看，却把金针度与人”。愿我以上的这些话真能够成为世人的“金针之度”。

形式

音乐可以无词但不能无曲，有词无曲那叫诗歌或者散文，有曲无词才是音乐的本质。比如古琴曲有琴谱，但从未见有琴词。《平沙落雁》的演奏靠的是抑扬顿挫的旋律而其中未道一字。西方的钢琴、小提琴表演也是这个道理。学音乐要先识谱而不是先识词，词是附着在曲的旋律上的，曲是主，词是辅，曲有了，词唱什么都可以，时下流行的即兴演唱会就是如此。明白了这一点我们就可以溯本求源进入音乐的殿堂。

我不反对多读书，但我反对把读来的书大段

大段地抄在绘画作品上。我偶尔也用大幅的题字来充实画面，但那是为了画面的需要，题字往往没有任何内容，追求的是黑与白的对比，疏与密的对比，线与面的对比，书与画的对比。我强调的是绘画性而不是文学性。书法在我的画里面主要起的是装饰效果。

西方现代绘画对人类最大的贡献是把绘画从对文字的图解，从对物品的图像，从对生活的记录中解放出来。从如实描写到抽象思维，从看图识字到追求形式，这是人类迈向美的规律的一大步。

诚然，所谓“成也萧何，败也萧何”。与美的规律共生的就是反对美，反对一切形式的美。在美的规律还没有成熟，没有完善，没有深入人心的时候，反美的势力已经笼罩全球，就是所谓的“达达主义”“后现代主义”等等流行思潮。西方人的大脑很容易分化成两极，就像它们分不出什么是探险，什么是冒险一样，把洗澡水和婴儿一起倒掉啦！

形式之于绘画犹如曲谱之于音乐，有了曲谱的音乐才叫音乐，而有了形式的绘画也才叫绘画。塞尚第一次把现实物体分类成“立方体”“圆锥体”“圆柱体”。马蒂斯第一次把绘画构成比做音乐里的节奏，就像弹琴要按着节拍弹一样，画面的构成也应该按着节拍安排产生节奏。如果说罗丹的

雕塑追求的是真实性。戏剧性的话，塞尚和马蒂斯的画面则追求的是视觉效果，而绘画恰恰属于视觉艺术范畴。就这个层面上说，罗还属于形而下，塞、马则是形而上。

上面的这些道理我年轻时还是不懂，和一般画家一样我喜欢在画面上做一些修饰工作。吴冠中先生批评道：“画面上没有可有可无的东西，在画面上不起积极作用的就要起破坏作用。”其实这是上千年中国画的一个致命伤！它没有一个严格的构成法则，大多流于笔墨形式，卖弄的是技巧，缺少的是规矩。近百年对中国画的改革或从主题，或从文学，或从戏剧，或从光影，或从解剖入手，几乎没有一个人是从美的规律，形式的法则发出的。舍本逐末，新没有立，而原本中国画那些好的东西也被改革得丧失殆尽！

现在有个流行的名词叫“观念”，以为观念新了，画就能新。于是“行为艺术”“装置艺术”就都大行其道，比如光着屁股满街跑。我不是不喜欢人体艺术，近年我也画了大量的人体画。但如果说脱光了衣服就算艺术的话，那满澡堂子的男女老幼就都是艺术家了！我看到在某一个展览上一位作者用满池子染红的水代表血来比喻某国对某国的侵略，某大使当时就愤然上前捣毁了这个装置，并对展方表示抗议。换句话说恐怖如拉登者是不是也能用同样一种行为来解释他对美国发

动的“911”袭击呢？那不也是一种“行为”、一种“装置”、一种“观念”吗？同样人类共同的文化遗产，阿富汗的“巴米洋”大佛被炸前和被炸后的情景，不也是一种“行为”、一种“观念”、一种“装置”吗？只不过恐怖分子玩得比我们那些所谓的艺术家更彻底、更轰动、更大胆、更疯狂，更违背人类文明道德的底线！如果用“搬起石头砸自己的脚”这句话来形容西方一切反对美的各流派，各运动的各种“行为”、各种“装置”、各种“观念”是再恰当不过的话，我真希望他们再“行为”一次——搬起石头，砸向自己的脚，看他痛不痛！（按：一切以破坏为“行为”、为目的的活动，不但不是艺术，更是一种罪恶！）

其实“观念”这个词在50年前的中国并不陌生，那时党号召大家要把观念转变到无产阶级立场上来，要让画家来为政治这个“观念”服务。看来无论无产阶级还是资产阶级在“观念”这个名词上都如出一辙，那就是要艺术从属于政治，要把本属于视觉艺术范畴的东西强拉到政治这个舞台上听他们发号施令！50年前的“何其芳现象”是“思想（观念）进步，创作退步”。解放前涌现出的一大批文学家如巴金、老舍、茅盾等，纷纷“江郎才尽”！如果说50年前的“观念”扼杀了一大批天才的话，那么50年后的“观念”又想愚弄多少青年学子呢？“观念”和“视觉”是两码事，

二者不能混为一谈，更确切地说，“视觉艺术”是一门有范围、有底线、有规律的艺术。而“观念”的范围则难以界定，只要人的大脑还有思想在活动，其“观念”的范围就难以控制，所谓“一念之差”，好也是它，坏也是它，它不是一个人的主观意识所能控制的，也不是一个社会标准所能统一的，迄今为止还没有哪个国家能把人的思想（观念）控制住，曾经有人试过，但是都失败了！

“眼不高，手也难高。”这一句前辈的老生常谈再一次证明“视觉艺术”是一个眼睛的艺术，眼力不高，下笔必然低俗。同样，眼力不高，鉴赏也必流于鄙俗。（按：眼力代表修养，眼是外，修养是内。外在的表现是建立在内在修养的基础上的。）面对一些大牌评论家写的评论文章我常常忍俊不禁，常常会啼笑皆非。原因是他们常常不懂得美的规律，不懂得形式的法则，而要纸上谈兵，曲解作者的意图，误会作者的苦心。比如有人拿解剖来评论陈老莲的绘画，认为头大身小不合比例，更进一步曲解成是陈老莲患有眼疾，看人总是头大身小。读至此能不令人捧腹！早年更有一位鉴定权威与黄胄先生在琉璃厂买画，把他认为凡不合比例的陈氏作品全部让给了黄胄先生。结果黄胄先生得到的陈老莲的这批画不但真，且是精，令这位权威叫苦不迭。这其中的道理非常浅显，黄胄先生是多年修炼、有实战经验的大画家，而

那位“权威”只能算纸上谈兵尔！

须知，在美术的“形式”法则里自古就有“变形”一说，而中国画自古及今更是变形的高手，头大身小是变形的需要，更是审美的需要，不如此就不能表达作者内心的感受，就不能营造一个美的境界。中国民间年画里的大头娃娃，霍去病陵前的石雕怪兽无不是为了美而变形，而头大身小的！至今仍流散在民间的，类似于陈画遭遇的，具有超前意识，不为当世之人所认可的这类艺术品应该不在少数。我们的专家应该努力去提高自己的眼力，提高自己的艺术品位，而不是只会抱着乾隆皇帝的“石渠宝笈”跟着别人人云亦云，眼看着这些国宝自生自灭！

我看前人的画，往往不看他的名头，而是看他的水平，尤其是那种超前的审美意识，所以我多重“冷门”画家。比如陈老莲、龚贤、金农、伊秉绶。龚贤的山水造型完全用点，横的竖的各种不同的点，层层积累，体积厚重又产生各种不同的面，这其实是“立体派”的先声。看了莫迪利阿尼的变形，你再去看看陈老莲的变形，你就知道二者的异曲同工了。而金农、伊秉绶在书法里分黑布白的重要性，更说明书法不光是用笔，“形式”也是不可或缺的！

八大山人是个“留白”高手，他画面中的空白与他的画同等重要。如果有收藏家在空白中题

字，无异于画蛇添足。而我的画则是一个“榫卯结构”，各部位之间镶嵌紧凑，环环相扣，牵一发而动全身。同样我看齐白石的画更看重的是他画面的形式处理，比如黑白、点线、块面，而不是看是否画了工笔草虫，再数数有几个贝叶。

如果说笔墨是通过实践来提高的话，则“形式”是非理论做基础不可。自发表作品以来，我就开始发表我的理论，且是乐此不疲，一发不可收。“不为良相，即为良医。”但庸医也是要误国、误民的。我真希望我们那些理论家们不要在“美育”这项关系国民素质教育问题上误国误民！

吴冠中先生曾把“形式美”比作美术教育里的主食面包。就像教音乐要先识谱一样，形式之于美术是美的核心，美的命脉。只有抓住了、摸清了、掌握了这些美的规律，我们才有可能最终进入美的殿堂。

生活

“要像小孩子第一次睁开眼睛看世界”一样，说明新鲜感的重要性。生活中并不缺少美，而是缺少发现美的眼睛。

老调重弹，不断重复自己，千篇一律，千人一面。不是有感而发，而是无病呻吟，闭着眼睛也能画的中国画，让人看了兴趣索然，味同嚼蜡！

“一头驴、一只鹰画一辈子。”“黄胄先生也该

计划生育了。”其实不单是黄胄先生的画，这是老中国画的一个通病。

客观地说，中国画的笔墨技巧有点像表演里的杂技，表演过程不能失手，一失手就宣告失败。而技巧是画家千锤百炼，熟能生巧，穷毕生之力修炼出来的，想在节目中多加一点花样确实很难。

“程式化”是中国画的特点之一。几篇老稿子，几个老样子，师傅带徒弟，世代相传，能跳出藩篱者就算是此中高手。

近百年对中国画的改革，其中一条就是“生活”。比如党的文艺路线就一直号召我们的文艺工作者要深入到工农兵当中去，去描写他们的生活。而现实是，能够被党号召的这些文艺工作者大都身居高位，有职有权，有名有利，且个个都是改革开放后先富起来的“千万富翁（亿万富翁？）”（所谓“近水楼台先得月”）。他们和那些下岗职工比，和太行山区农民比可说是天壤之别，已经是两个阶层了，怎么可能深入下去打成一片呢？那些住在用千万元打造的豪宅里的文艺工作者怎么可能会写出《茅屋为秋风所破歌》呢？所谓“朱门酒肉臭，路有冻死骨”，只能是有感而发，不会是无病呻吟！

我是画山水出身，但在我的画里很少能见到名山大川。原因是我久居城市，偶尔旅游一下也是走马观花，不可能深入下去，不可能有感而发。

而没有真情实感的艺术是没有生命力的！一些同我一样住在城里的山水画家请我为他们的画提些意见，我就把以上的这些话和盘托出。

“画自己感到最亲切、最熟悉的东西”，这是我生活中的切身体会。没有大标题，没有大制作，没有“假大空”。一切都是水到渠成，信手拈来。我不会用“无产阶级观念”去中政府设置的奖，也不会用“资产阶级观念”去中什么世界性的大奖。我就是我，我就是用我自己的眼睛去看世界，我就是在我自己这一亩三分地上勤奋地耕耘。没有汗水就没有收获，本集中收录的我各时期的作品，既不同于我的前辈，也不同于我的同辈，更不同于西方的流行思潮，甚至于每一时期又各不相同！套句现在时髦的话，就叫——“何建国的世界”。

所谓“情动于中，而形于外”，这是生活对艺术的最好诠释。在我的内心里充满了“求知欲”、“探索欲”。我的触角在艺术这个领域里无所不及，触类旁通，比如古砚，比如古陶瓷，比如“明式家具”。这些看似没有直接和我的画发生联系的东西其实在我的创作里都占有相当的比重，对它们的研究我都有专文论述。

一个人只有营养丰富才会身强体壮。同样，一个画家只有广收博采才会集其大成。在我的视野里——传统、民间是一路，西方、现代又是一路。二者并不矛盾，而是互为表里。用“构成”的法

则去看生活有时很有意思，比如“粉墙黛瓦”，比如“白墙黑窗”，那种黑白对比，那种各式各样的“几何式”门窗真是令人陶醉，它们既具中国古典园林的特色，其结构又与西方现代构成法则暗合，能不令人拍案叫绝！即便是生活中最简单的东西，比如我烧了17年的“蜂窝煤”，我也会找出它的美感——首先是“黑白对比”，其次是“点面对比”，这样一块煤就不是普通的取暖用品而变成艺术品了。再比如吃饭用的碗筷，喝茶的茶壶在我的笔下都会成为艺术品——碗是“圆面”，壶是半圆不方的“梯面”，筷子则是两条“线”这样“块面对比”、“线面对比”就都顺理成章，自然而然地产生了，它们既符合现代的构成法则，又具有浓郁的生活气息，画起来倍感亲切。近年我爱画的人体也是基于这样一种感悟——浑圆、丰满、富有曲线的人体呈“弧线”、“圆形”，外框则是“直线”、“方形”，再配以各种代表生命的果实，比如“石榴”、“莲蓬”、“苹果”一类，其造型皆呈“圆”或“半圆”的“放射状”，插在或放在“曲线”或“圆”或“半圆”或“圆中见方”的瓶里、盘里、罐里。这些都是生活中最常见的东西，也是最美的东西，把这些最美的东西集中在一起，那是一种对生命的招唤，一曲对生命的赞歌！至于从“明式家具”中感悟到的人体美，我有专文论述，此不赘述。平常我喜欢和媳妇骑着自行车绕后海、逛北海。我画的

很多所谓的“山水画”都是从这里来的。北京没有名山大川，但它有文化底蕴，而艺术是一种文化的体现。所以北京的一草一木在我眼里都很亲切，都可入画。一年四季，无论春、夏、秋、冬我时时刻刻都在观察着北京的变化，每年的春天，我总是想把那盛开的桃花留下，所以在这本集子里有几幅描写春天的画，我索性就标成“且把春留住”！而北京的金秋则使我画了大量的以“黄色”为基调的画，那又是一种留恋，按传统题法就标为“春秋图”。北京建筑里“雕梁画栋”上面的油漆彩画——红、白、蓝、绿的颜色也是我画面的主色调，有点像京戏里面的大花脸，尤其再斑驳一点就更有味，那是一种大雅大俗的艺术。无论是平缓的土坡，岸边的垂柳，北海琼岛后山用“折粮石”堆成的“艮岳”石缝中倒垂的白皮松都是我撷取的绝好画材。而在我的“梨花书屋图”房顶上趴伏的猫咪，与屋里的蜂窝煤小火炉，房前的石榴树都是北京的四合院（大杂院）留给我的美好回忆。我是个“乐观主义”者，生活中遇到的困难不可谓不多（我是一个最早的“下岗职工”），我都会随遇而安，一笑了之。所以有人送我一个美称叫做“快乐的何建国”。在本集中有两幅最重要的作品可以为我的快乐作一注解，它们是《海棠花溪图》、《花发图》。我在画中题道：“海棠花溪花下魂，年年不负采花人”，那情景仿佛又回到

海棠盛开的时节，我和妻子结伴徜徉在那如花似雪的花的海洋里如痴如醉，久久不肯离去。《花发图》画于又一个春天的到来。创作此画时，我正对陕北的民间剪纸产生浓厚的兴趣。民间艺人眼中那种对人脸“正面”和“侧面”造型的独特认识使我不由得想起毕加索，这是中国民间“立体派”与西方现代“立体派”一次远距离的交流与对话，时值春暖花开，桃红柳绿，心情格外轻松愉快，于是小桥流水的岸边万物复苏，牛、马、老虎一齐上阵再配以春姑娘的各种不同的脸的造型，画的尾声又止不住再画一个人体，一切都顺理成章，顺势而就，没有半点的牵强附会，这种对生命的感悟对青春的留恋是我年纪越大越不可扼止的一种发自心底的呼唤！

“高贵者最愚蠢，卑贱者最聪明。”这是毛主席引用南朝僧人惠能的一句话。不是自谦也不是自卑，就像美术史中在野必胜于在朝。古陶瓷领域，卑贱的民窑瓷绘更胜于高贵的官窑一样，和那些眼下的飞黄腾达者相比，我走的是一条卑贱者之路。我有一位同学，小时候是靠画“儿童画”出名。长大后又靠画“主题画”（无产阶级观念）成名，身居高位。现在又靠画“商品画”（资产阶级观念）名利双收。我对别人笑谈我是小时候画“传统画”，长大后，而且越老就越画“儿童画”。我是返老还童，返朴归真，赤子之心常在。而这恰

恰是那些高高在上者所不可企及的。所以我说“感谢苦难！”两条不同的人生路，引发的是两种不同的结果。前者更重名利，老于世故，已不可能再用儿童的眼睛看世界了。我则是心无旁骛，把我自己当成了一件艺术的科学实验品来实验一个人的艺术潜力究竟有多大。我发觉我身上的能量从来没有像现在这样无比的聚集、喷发出来。我清醒地认识到我已经具备成为沟通前人和后人、东方和西方之间的一座桥梁。如果不努力地去，我将有愧于上天赋予我的才华。我像是夸父追日，大踏步地、永无止境地奔向美的前方！

后记

文章写完了，又感到有点多余，有点不合时宜。按时风讲，都什么年代了，谁还正儿八经地讲什么艺术。现在是“恶搞”（注：此“恶搞”非彼“恶搞”，因为我自己根本不会上网，请不要对号入座）的年代，现在是“超新新……”年代，下面又是什么年代，其速度之快，恐怕就是制造者本身一时半会儿也想不出来！如果我在这里说一句真话：现在是一个“愚蠢”的年代，恐怕必会遭到群起而攻之。“美”现在正处于一个低潮期，而“中国画”在世界上尚无立锥之地！中国人往往对本民族的精华、本民族的历史忘得很快，而对西方的，尤其是西方的“垃圾食品”、“垃圾文化”吸收得

又很快。这一点就连西方人自己也有点始料不及，有点瞠目结舌！

本来出集子写序言、写评论是件稀松平常的事，可到了我这里，编辑有点犯难了——三四万的字谁来写？我不得不勉为其难，我自己操笔来写，就像钱钟书先生说的：“一些毫无欣赏鉴别能力的文学研究者，好比是看守着后宫，成天在女人堆里厮混的太监，虽有机会，却无能力。”我绝不是针对所有的评论家，我想钱先生也是如此。但与其让不懂的人在这里品头论足，倒不如我自己，自拉自唱。我是个直性子，对于几十年来社会上发生的种种“怪现状”我是骨鲠在喉，不吐不快，正好借这个机会吐了出来。

作为一个中国人，作为一个画“中国画”的画家（户口簿上填“待业”，自称“自由职业”），我有责任、有义务把我创作出来的作品和总结出来的理论奉献给那些而今还和我一样傻的、“美”的追求者和爱好者，在这个“恶搞”的年代使我们的心头还存有一块“净土”。

“我是为美而生，也将为美而死”。我手中有两支笔，一支伸向实践，一支伸向理论。为了创作美，宣传美，我将不遗余力！

2006年6月14日

Rule of Beauty

——How do I paint He Jianguo

Calligraphy

The essential difference between Chinese traditional painting and other kinds of paintings is how to use pens. The first thing that good teachers lecture on Chinese traditional painting is how to use pens. The difference between Chinese traditional painting painters and calligraphers is to be clever at using pen not at writing good characters. Unqualified at using pens is like "A thing cannot exist without its basis" any kind of reform on Chinese traditional painting will end up failure such as Xu Beihong, "Lingnan Painting School", Fu Baoshi and Wu Guangzhong.....

If Xu Beihong has some knowledge of calligraphy, his students are less and less of knowledge. Sketching takes the place of calligraphy and the wrong direction surely ends up with wrong result. The input of 50-year arts education in China is out of proportion with the output !

I did not know the above truth when I was young and I was forced into calligraphy under the supervision of the senior. In those years, when I saw Zhang Zhengyu enjoying a single line, I was confused. Later I saw Huang Yongyu wrote in Honey Tear that when Zhang Zhengyu portrayed Lang Jingshan, he stood his pencil like a brush

fixing his eyes on and drew the lines piece by piece. I feel friendly and know this is calligraphy no matter it is pencil or brush.

Calligraphy is hard. If I was born a painter, calligraphy is a harsh and long process for me.

My editor wanted to call my calligraphy works off this book. I insist on keeping them because this book will be publicized and foreigners have no idea of Chinese calligraphy. This is the difference between oriental paintings and western paintings and the oriental attaches importance to internal and the detail and the western attaches importance to external and the whole. The paintings as Picasso said "just taking a pen is an art only can be created in China, which is the charm of calligraphy. As Zhang Zhengyu enjoyed a line when watching paintings, calligraphy is a requirement both on painters and reviewers. Genuine paintings and fake paintings can be told from in virtue of calligraphy. We Chinese can not understand why the Chinese painters are popular in western countries and the reason is the westerners can't admire how to use the paintbrush !

It is not modest to say I "don't know it until I got into trouble". At that time I was as the same to the youth of these days. I was seeking for novelty

and beyond expectation, that is, the exterior not the interior. But finally I found it difficult to add more to the exterior just like to add some fancy stuff to a building without groundwork. I decided to come over from beginning and pass the barrier of how to use paintbrush well.

Since I was 26 or 27 years old, I began to try brush pen, firm pen, soft pen, long-haired brush and short-haired brush and finally I chose long-haired brush pen; I compared the inscription rubbing and calligraphers of past dynasties and chose ancient. The reason why I chose ancient not elegance is that I think if I can't do well in elegance, it will be easily impressive-looking but useless. The superior like He Tianjian and Li Keran had such experience. In those years the writing of He Tianjian was greatly admired by common people but a connoisseur thought it was not good and just qualified for keeping account. He Tianjian followed his suggestion and changed his writing, which resulted that common people can't understand his new writing but connoisseurs enjoy it very much. "would rather awkward than skillful, rather ugly than subservience" shows that writing and calligraphy are totally two different things. As to writing, it is ok to be good-looking and understood by common people, while as to calligraphy, it is a must to contain arts elements in the painting.

It doesn't matter to write wrong words or be ugly-looking, but if there is not art element in the painting and no life in line, the years culture training of painters and the interior beauty of paintings can't be expressed and the calligraphy is a failure. So in my opinion, calligraphy exists in how to use the pen but not in form and it is more like writing lines than writing characters and more like expressing the pen usage power than express the content. The structure of character is not important but each line of the structure is quite significant. Recent years I pay more attention to Yan Zhenqing's calligraphy because Yan Zhenqing's calligraphy focuses on interior beauty. I admire Zhang Zhengyu but I don't follow his seal character that has been cut to waste by his students. A specious thing has no life of art. The purpose I chose long-haired brush is to express interior beauty better. It is much harder to use long-haired brush than short-haired hard brush and those who don't know how to use can take the pen. Here I should talk something about the expression of interior beauty----move strength to finger point at one breath, long-haired brush, long pen holder and raise pen high just like Qi gong and internal work in Wushu to exert strength from inside to outside with a slow movement and keep the pen. Even with paper hanging in air and make paper and ink in maximum contact that is "pull nail from mud", "take out silk

from pod”。It is alive not dead. I deeply experienced “thoroughly tempered into perfection” !

Now calligraphers are many but those who know how to use brush pen well are rare. The surface form can be learned by imitation and even be obtained in one day. I see many Japanese calligraphers are Chinese characters over and over and nowadays in our country the fashion tide focuses more on form than vigor of writing. People are striving for the first to change the appearance. But surface form is limited and dazed fashionable things will annoy people some day and can't be developed to a higher level. To be quiet down and seek for vigor of writing require a long period. With respect at this reason, I choose regular script not seal character. Seal character is to attract people with the appearance, while regular script pays attention to each stroke. Calligraphy pen usage is to avoid false extravagance of the surface and obtain the essentials by each stroke and reach to the common ground of calligraphy. We can ascend to a higher level only by mining deeply on this level so as to shift away from blind imitation and parroting, which is why I stress on calligraphy pen usage instead of calligraphy again and again.

No quantitative change, no qualitative change.

30 years has passed by since I knew this truth. For me, calligraphy pen usage is not only to improve handicraft, more important is to improve eye vision. I compare myself to X machine with penetrating. If looking into the world more deeply, you can more easily find the essence of things.

Recent years I bring calligraphy pen usage into full play. Each day I copy a few words from models of handwriting without remembering the content and use the vigor to paint bowl and pot.

Zhao Mengfu ever signed “ the earthling just learn Lan Ting and desire to change the vulgar without catholicon” . Today I say : “you may misread the embroidered drake, but the golden needle which made it, I can't pass it on to you.” Hope my above words can be a “golden needle” .

Form

There may be no lyrics but must be music in songs. Those with words but no music are called poetry or essay. The essence of songs is with music but no lyrics. Such as ancient song has music but no lyric. The performance of Wild Geese Falling Down On The Sands depends only on cadent tune. The same

is to western piano and violin performance. To study music is first to study music not lyrics which is attached to music. Music is the host and lyric is the supplement. As long as there is music, lyrics can be anything. The popular improvisation concert is like this. We can enter music temple after understanding this truth.

I am not against reading more, but I am against to copying a big paragraph on the painting. Once a time I will use many inscription to enrich my painting for seek of painting. Usually inscriptions is meaningless and only in seek of the contrast of black and white, the contrast of scatter and thick, the contrast of line and face and the contrast of words and painting. I stress on painting not literature. Calligraphy is just a decoration in my painting.

The largest contribution of western modern painting is to set painting free from words illustration, goods image and life record. It is a big step toward beauty from learning words with help of picture to seeking form.

“A person's success and failure arose out of a single factor” . Rule of beauty exists together with opposition of beauty to be against beauty of any form. Before rule of beauty is mature, optimal and popular, power against beauty has haunted the world, that is,

"Dadaism" and "Postmodernism". The western brain is easily differentiated into two extreme such as they can't tell exploration and adventure and throw away baby and washing water together!

Form for painting is like music to song. Only song with music is a real song and only painting with form is a real painting. It is Cezanne to first divide substantial matters into "cube", "cone" and "cylinder" and Matisse to first compare painting to music of song. Like playing instrument in accordance with music, the form of painting should be in accordance with music to produce rhythm. If we say sculpture of Rodin is in seek of authenticity and dramatic, the painting of Cezanne and Matisse is in seek of vision effect. Painting belongs to vision category. In this case, Rodin is below form and Cezanne and Matisse are above form.

I didn't the above truth when I was young and likes to do some decoration on my painting like other ordinary painters. Mr. Wu Guangzhong criticized that "there is no dispensable things in painting. Those that are not active will be damaging in painting." It is a death wound for traditional Chinese painting for hundreds of years. There is in short of form principle and propriety. The reform on theme, literature, drama and dissection during recent hundred years doesn't

abide by rule of beauty and principle of form. It attends to trifles and neglect the essentials and even good stuff of traditional Chinese painting have been reformed away!

Nowadays, there is a popular word "conception". Some people think they can innovate painting just in virtue of new conception. Therefore "behavior art" and "device art" are in power such as running naked. I don't mean I don't like body art and I have drawn a lot of human body paintings during recent years. But if it is art to just be naked, all people----male, female, old and young in bathroom will be artists. Once I saw in some expos someone hint the invasion of some country to another one by a pool of red-dyed water, the ambassador was that angry to destroy that device at the spot and protested to exhibiting part. In other word, whether can terrorists like Ladden excuse in this way for their action such as "911 attack" to America? Isn't it a "behavior", a "device" and a "conception" too? Also isn't the bombing of Afghanistan "Bamiyan Colossal Buddha" a "behavior", a "device" and a "conception"? Only terrorists are more entire, daring, crazy and more against bottom line of human morals than the so-called artists. It is quite proper to describe "behavior", "device" and

"conception" of all western schools against beauty with the phrase of "taking up a stone only to drop on one's own feet". I expect them to move the stone again to hit their own feet and see whether it hurts. (any activity for the purpose of damage is not art but a crime !)

In fact the word "conception" was not strange even in China of 50 years ago. At that moment the Party called on everyone to convert transfer conception into proletariat ground and required painter to serve this "conception". It seems that in term of "conception" proletariat and bourgeois are exactly the same, that is, arts should serve politics! "He Qifang phenomena" of 50 years ago is "progressing conception and retrogressive creation." The batch of gifted litterateur coming out before liberation like Bajin, Laoshe and Maodun are all "out of talent". The "conception" of 50 years ago snuffed so many talents and the "conception" of nowadays fool so many young people. "Conception" and "vision" are totally two different things and should not be confused together. To be more exact, "vision art" is an art with scope, bottom line and discipline, while the scope of "conception" is difficult to be defined, as long as there is thought in human brain, it will be difficult to control the scope of "conception".

"A momentary slip" will be good or bad too, which is not under control of subjective consciousness and social standards. Up to now no country can control human conception and even someone has ever made a try but ended up failure !

A home truth "with low-level eye vision, it is hard to have high-level works" proves again that "vision art" is an art of eyes; low-level eye vision definitely will lead to vulgar appreciation. (eye vision is on behalf of culture; eye is exterior and culture is interior and the exterior expression is built on interior culture). Sometimes I don't know whether to laugh or cry when I read reviews of some major reviewers because they have no idea of rule of beauty and rule of principle and they are armchair strategists and misunderstood the painstaking of authors, for instance, someone reviewed painting of Chen Laolian in terms of dissection and thought the head and the body is out of proportion and even misinterpreted that Chen Laolian had eye disease and looked at people with big heads and small bodies. Some identification authority ever bought painting with Mr. Huangzhou in Colorized Glaze Factory and the person gave away all works out of proportion of Mr. Chen to Mr. Huangzhou. As a result all these works are genuine and elaborate. Mr. Huangzhou is an experienced

master painter and that "authority" is just engaging in idle theorizing !

It is necessary to know there have been "deformity" in arts "form" principle and traditional Chinese painting has been a master of deformity and big-head-and-small-body is a need of deformity and appreciation, except that, there is no way to express the inner feelings and to create a beautiful image. Moppets with big heads in China folk new spring paintings and the stone carved animals in front of Huo Qubing cemetery are deformed for beauty. Nowadays there are many arts with leading consciousness but not respected in the folk. We should endeavor to improve our eye vision and our taste of arts instead of echoing what other says with Qianlong Emperor's "Shi Qu Bao Ji" and watch helplessly the national treasures emerging of itself and perishing of itself!

When watching ancient paintings, I often don't emphasize the author but his level especially the leading appreciation consciousness, therefore I stress more "less attentive" painters such as Chen Laolian, Gongxian, Jinnong and Yi Bingshou. Gongxian's landscape paintings are made totally with dots, different horizontal and vertical dots to create different surfaces, which is the first sights

of "cubism" . You can see the deformations of Amedeo Modigliani and Chen Laoliang are different in approach but equally satisfactory in result. The importance of contrast of black and white in the calligraphy of Jinnong and Yi Bingshou proves that calligraphy is used not only with pen and "forms" are significant too!.

The eight-mountain hermit is a master of "keeping blank" and the blank in their paintings is equal important to his painting. If some collector made inscription on the blank, it is like gliding the lily. My painting is a "mortise structure" and each part is connected closely and a tiny change will move the whole painting. I attach more attention on the form transaction in painting of Qi Baishi such as black and white, spot and line and block and face instead of watching whether there is painted grass and worm with meticulous detail.

If writings are improved by practice, "form" is based on theory. Since I publish works, I began to publish my theory and never tired from this. "If not be qualified prime minister, to be qualified doctor as well" barber-surgeon will delay the nation and the citizen too. I sincerely hope theorists don't "delay the nation and the citizen" on the matter related to national quality education!

Mr. Wu Guangzhong ever compared "form beauty" to the staple bread food of arts education just like knowing music first when learning songs and form to arts is the key and life line of arts. Only mastering and knowing clearly of the rules of beauty, we can enter palace of beauty.

Life

The phrase of "To look at the world like babies opening their eyes for the first time" can explain the importance of fresh sense. It is not for lack of beauty but for lack of eyes to find beauty in life.

Harping on the same string is making a fuss about an imaginary illness. To draw traditional Chinese painting with eyes closed makes people feel insipid and uninterested !

"To draw an ass or a hawk for a life" "Mr. Huangzhou should exert a family planning" which is not only a portrait of Mr. Huangzhou's painting but also a common fault of old traditional Chinese painting.

To be objective, as to traditional Chinese painting, the writing skill is like the acrobatics in performance, which doesn't any accident. Skills come from practices and should be refined with the whole life.

"Formula" is one of the features of traditional Chinese painting. Several outdated drafts and several outdated samples, masters teach prentice and run in the family. Anyone who can drop out this pattern will be a superior.

"Life" is one of reforms on traditional Chinese painting during the recent hundred years. For instance, the Party calls on literature operators to be close to workers, farmers and soldiers and describe their life. While in fact, the majority of these people are in high position with power and fame. They are "multimillionaire (billionaire?)" (That is "first come, first served; A water-front pavilion gets the moonlight first--the advantage of being in a favored position") They are quite different from layoff workers and farm in Taihang Mountain. How can two different classes mixed together? How can those who live in grant houses at the cost of multimillion write My Cottage Unroofed By Autumn Gales ? The work like Wines and meats become rotten in the mansions; Dead bones become rotten at the doors of them" only can be achieved with the true feelings, not a fuss about an imaginary illness !

I start from drawing landscape painting, but there seldom exist famous mountains and rivers. The

reason is that I live in cities for so long a time; even my travel is just glimpse, which can't endow me with truth sensation. The arts with true feelings are in short of life. When some landscape painters who live in cities too ask me to give some suggestion, I will frankly told them my view.

My own experience is "to draw things about which you feel closest and most familiar." Success will come when conditions are ripe. With no large topic or facture. I will not adopt "proletariats opinion" so as to get reward from government, neither "bourgeois opinion" for some global reward. I am I and I will to see the world with my own eyes and work hard in my own way. No pains no gains. This book collects the works of my all periods, which are different from the senior, and my compeer and more different form western trend of thought. They are unique for different period. If described in the modern words, it should be called---- "the world of He Jianguo"

"Be moved by feeling inside, appear outside" is the best explanation of arts. My heart is filled with "desire of knowledge" and "desire of exploration" . I want to know everything about arts such as ancient inkstone, ancient china and "Ming Dynasty furniture" which seem no direct connection with my painting but do have a role in