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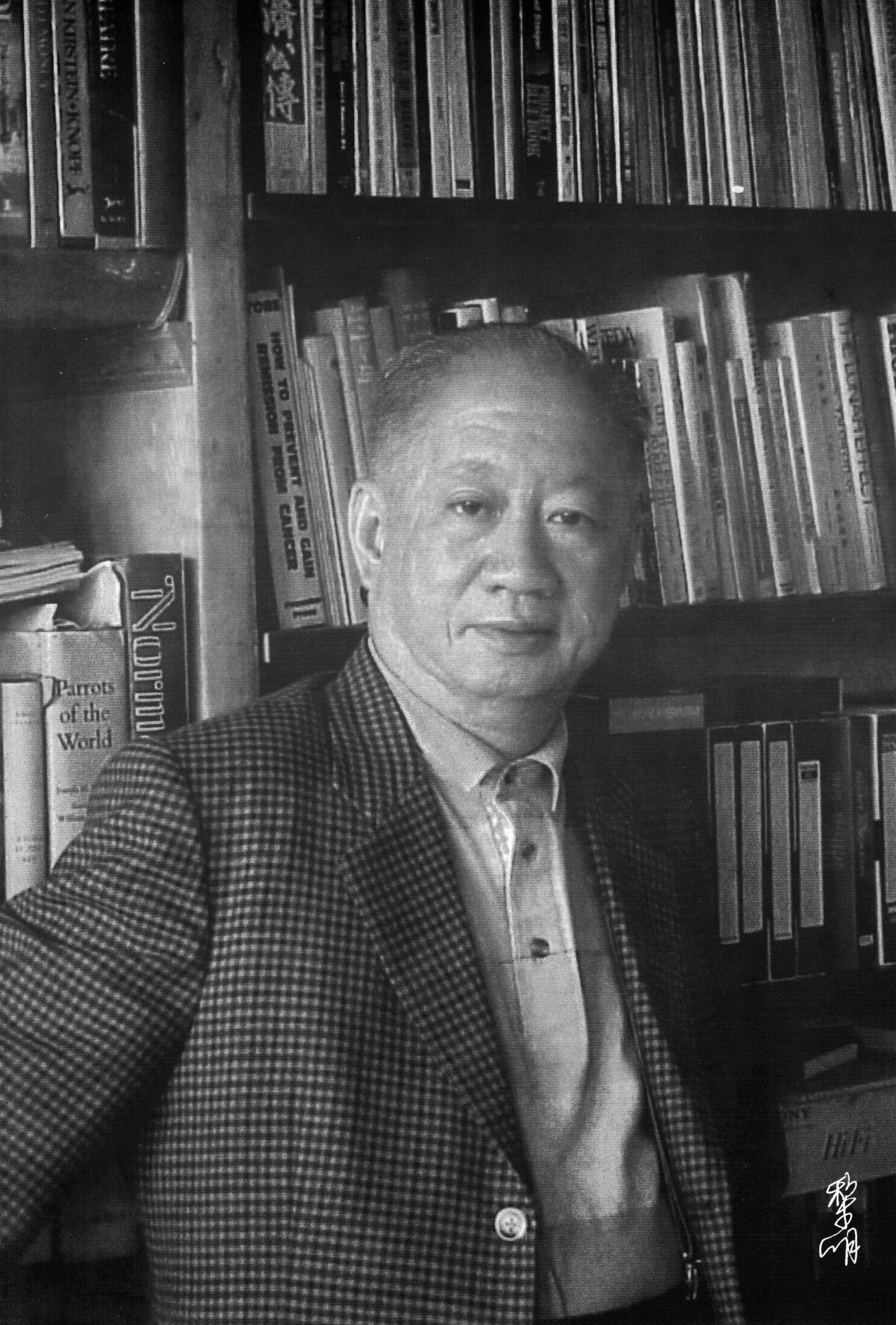
The Art of
LAI MING

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PEOPLE'S FINE ARTS PUBLISHING HOUSE



畫家黎明(馮紹連攝於紐約)
THE ARTIST LAI MING
(Photo by Selene Fung in New York)



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博大的畫境 精湛的繪藝

——黎明先生作品賞析 劉玉山

讀香港畫家黎明先生的作品，能引起我們心靈上的震動，調動起我們的激情，而這正是真誠的藝術最可貴的靈魂。

以他的鷹之作爲例：1996年的《蒼松老鷹》，用豎立的畫面描绘出一只立于松幹上的雄鷹，畫境似乎是十分靜寂的——茂密的松林渲染出無限生機，素潔的雲空映襯出雄鷹清晰的身姿。它沒有強烈的動勢，但是那背項上輕微抖動起來的羽毛，那犀利警覺的目光，它前面那一片開闊的天空，都使人產生一種它頃刻就將衝向雲端的聯想，一場搏擊的壯觀場景似乎就將在畫面外展開。

以靜寓動地抒發畫家寬廣的情懷，這是很好的一例。

1997年的《捕獵》，是一幅橫畫面，佔據構圖絕大部分的是鋪天蓋地的波濤，畫家用這雄壯的背景托襯出一只剛從駭浪中捕獵而得的巨鷹，它雙翼高揚、體似滿弓，極具動感，和背景的氣勢非常吻合，給人一種威猛雄健之感，令觀者肅然，鐘愛之情油然而生。但不僅此，依着鷹翅和波濤的外輪廓所形成的視覺引綫，我們會很自然地看到被置於畫面最下端的蒼翠的峰巒，它們是畫面中唯一靜止的形象，也是最凝重、最深沉的形象，當我們凝神觀賞它的整體面貌時，便會感悟到大自然內在精神是多麼的崇高。

這兩幅畫都是以景爲輔，以雄鷹爲主的，但都描繪出了恢宏的境界。它們是畫家胸臆的直抒、亦是畫家嚴密構思的結果。當然，也脫不開畫家嫺熟的繪藝。

我們透過這兩幅作品，可以發現黎明先生繪畫技巧的許多精湛之處。這裡我祇談及如下兩點：

一是刻劃形象的精準，這是寫實畫家能夠把形象描繪得生動感人的基本前提。黎明

先生在物象的比例把握上，在形體塊面的轉折處理上，在形體體量的斟酌上，在形象動勢的捕捉上，在光影的鋪排運用上，都是精妙而又適度的，既“接近客觀、肖似對象”，又有主觀上的強化和弱化。譬如，畫家在同一畫面上不求光源對所有物象照射的同一性：《捕獵》中的鷹是以右上方的光源形成體積感的，而波濤則是以左上方的光源形成體積感的，山巒却又是以正前面的光源形成體積感的。但是，它們都被畫家巧妙地融於一個畫面中了。又譬如：在透視上畫家也未依西方的寫實要求去統一畫面的景與物。如用西畫透視法則去畫，那麼在巨濤的前面是根本無法描繪山巒的，海水更不可能畫在山頂的上空。但是，畫家却這樣畫了，它並沒有讓人感到在視覺上有甚麼別扭，反而顯得十分軒昂大氣。這是黎明先生在以寫實爲基礎的畫路上，得體地運用了中國畫“妙在似與不似之間”的一個典型例子。推開來說，亦是嶺南畫派的初創人高劍父等在本世紀初留學日本，間接地鑒借了西畫法“爲我所用”的成功處之一。

二是墨色暈染皴擦自如溫潤，綫條勾勒揮寫暢酣有致。

先分析一下黎明先生畫中的墨與色：他堅持了中國畫以墨作爲主要材質的傳統——用墨勾畫輪廓，用墨（或在墨中稍調些色）皴擦體面，用墨暈染背景層次。墨，是畫面中的骨幹支撐物。在用墨時，畫家以謹慎工細爲前提，對物象的主要部位，如最具表情處，如在體面關鍵轉折處，都極爲精道地去塑造，抓得很準，以求似、求神；而在其它部位，則敢於放開，敢於放鬆，敢於放筆。如是，墨有濃淡、有乾濕、有虛實。這樣用墨既可精準地塑造形象，又可突出畫面主題，



同時也可構成畫面的節奏感和韻律上的統一。

顏色作為中國畫的輔助材質，一是為求得形象肖似，更貼近它的色相，更具質感；二是把它作為營造畫面氣氛的一種手段。當然，它是極淺淡地罩染在上面的，或是與淡墨調合在一起使用的。大量的亮麗色彩不多見諸黎明先生的畫面。但是，在形象的傳神部位，總會有小面積、較純而鮮艷些的色彩罩染上去。於是，它也就成了點睛之筆，像是一支樂曲中的高音區。

黎明先生也有畫面十分艷麗的作品，譬如1997年的《桐花孔雀》、《香遠益清》和1998年的《和鳴》，它們都大面積地用純色加以鋪染，而且冷暖色對比也很強烈，給人一種甜美悅目的印象。但如細細品味，畫家塑造形象的主要手段，還是以墨嚴謹勾勒做基底的。

最後再讓我們分析一下黎明先生用筆的優處。中國畫講究“筆與墨”，而線條的運用，又是用筆中的最主要手段，皴擦點染總體說來都是在它的基礎上發揮着作用的。當然，亦有“沒骨”等法，但那裡邊亦深藏着畫家用線的氣力和功底。吳昌碩畫中的力度感，齊白石畫中的渾樸感，潘天壽畫中的陽剛感，都是首先透過他們的用筆實現的。作為中西文化融合現象，出現在中國近代畫壇上的一些嶺南派畫家，如果說他們為了更肖似地捕捉形體和物性的微妙特徵，為了達到渲天染地作氣氛的烘托和對氣候的表現，而在某種程度上弱化了筆墨自身的力度，弱化了以空白代空間的魅力的話，那麼，我們看當代的嶺南派畫家，已經較他們的前輩更自覺地意識到了這一點。他們把“筆墨當隨時代變”這一永恆的藝術課題，做得有聲有色。他們沒有為追求真實而失掉畫作中的高

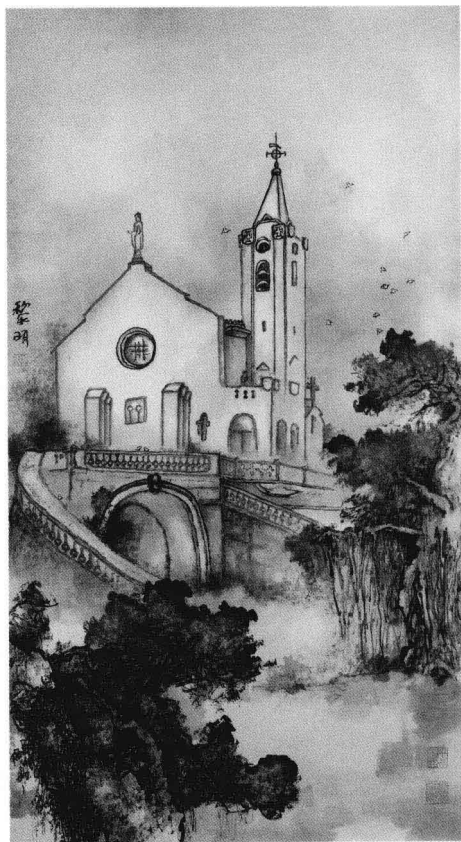
格調。譬如黎明先生，他們的作品就充溢着一種高尚的精神境界，一種雄闊壯觀的時代氣息感。而在用筆上，也較前人更加悉心，更加沉穩大氣了。這種在前人基礎上獲得的進步，在他以鷹為題材的作品中，表現得最為突出。這些作品中的主體形象，是畫家以滿含情感的筆力，用十分遒勁而優美的線條作骨幹揮寫出來的。這些線條抑揚頓挫、氣貫一體；粗細長短、平直曲折，俱有呼應和對比；濃淡輕重亦多具變幻。雖然，畫家仍保持了渲天染地的傳統手法，但却惜墨惜色，充分地留出了畫面的空白，讓其發揮自身的藝術魅力。可以說，作為當代嶺南畫派中優秀的一員，黎明先生在他的“交響曲”中是較其先輩們更懂得如何使用“空白”這一“休止符”的。也可以說，當代的嶺南派畫家們，已經除却了先前有些畫家給人們造成的“近似日本朦朧體，一味甜甜地畫下去會流于媚俗”的憂慮和擔心。

黎明先生由于繼承了中國畫的筆墨傳統，繼承了嶺南派先輩們大膽吸收西方藝術營養的勇氣和首創精神，因此，他的畫作便能夠既保持傳統嶺南畫派的和諧細潤之美，亦有當代嶺南畫派英氣豪放的氣勢。他的畫作是與時代共鳴響的。

我真的為他和他的同道者取得的成就感到欣然和敬羨！

2002

1999年1月25日大風之夜寫于北京
(本文作者為人民美術出版社總編輯、
國家藝術教育委員會委員、畫家)



嶺南畫派有傳人

——香港中文大學藝術學講座教授 高美慶

欣悉黎明先生將歷年佳作匯編成冊，公諸同好，因綴數語奉賀。

與黎明先生結交，始自香港中文大學文物館所藏簡氏斑園舊藏高劍父書畫的研究。黎先生是劍父先生晚年的入室弟子，自一九四〇年以十一歲稚齡即親炙教誨，一九四四年起正式成為春睡畫院弟子後更隨侍左右，因此對劍父先生此時期的生活起居、教學及創作情況瞭如指掌。聽他娓娓道來，令人猶如親歷其境。又獲賜覽珍藏的嶺南書畫，大開眼界。更為難得的是其中一些歷史文獻，包括民國初年由劍父、奇峰先生主持的審美書館印行的中日繪畫明信片 and 月份牌畫，對研究嶺南畫派及民國繪畫所受日本影響，以至劍父先生早年創作活動均有莫大裨益。而在言談之間，體會黎明先生對恩師的景仰敬重和對嶺南畫派的愛護之情，實足令人感佩。

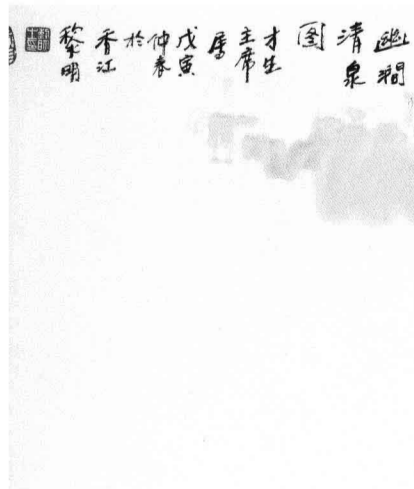
嶺南畫派是中國近現代畫史上的重要流派。開宗立派的高劍父、高奇峰和陳樹人，生於國勢積弱、民族苦難的年代，乃以革命思想貫通政治與藝術，謀求時代的變革和文化的更新。他們倡導的“折衷中西、融匯古今”的創作道路，象徵了新時代的藝術訴

求。但是時移世易，隨着創始者的先後辭世，後繼者如何在不同的時空中繼承和發展這流派的生命，是值得思考的問題。黎明先生的繪畫作品，為這課題提供了一些啓示。

黎明先生受業于劍父先生逾十年，五十年代作品已充分顯示其對嶺南畫派風格的掌握，不僅技巧純熟，而且意境清新，展現了個人特色。八十年代以來，遍游海內外名山大川，在山水畫創作方面更別開新貌。考究貫徹於其前後藝術生命，亦融會於其山水、花卉、翎毛、走獸各種題材，萬變不離其宗者，正是嶺南畫派的寫生精神。這種創作態度，是以晚清隔山畫派的居巢居廉為先導，由劍父先生繼承，再引進西方寫實方法而光大，一掃傳統繪畫臨古泥古之風。黎明先生善能秉承此優良傳統，直接觀察自然萬象，兼取其形神，更融入個人的襟懷感興，為嶺南畫派的持續發展作出貢獻，可謂有功於師門矣。

（本文作者現任香港公開大學人文社會科學院院長）

跋



小記畫家黎明

——嶺南畫派紀念館學術研究室主任 于風

在澳門青年學者陳繼春先生最近出版的《濠江畫人掇錄》專著中，收有題為《黎明與折衷派》的長文，對畫家黎明先生數十年的從藝經歷，特別是他與嶺南畫派奠基人高劍父先生的親密關係，以及當年穗、港、澳三地畫壇的往事，均有詳盡記述，內容豐富，資料翔實，讀後頗受教益，也引發一些聯想。

首先，在高劍父先生的衆多門生中，從小就有機會受到高師親炙的，大概就是黎明了。因為劍父先生與黎明的父親兆錫先生是至交好友，在抗日戰爭年代，高氏寓居澳門時，經常造訪黎宅，對當時十歲左右的黎明非常鐘愛，視如子侄，經常送他畫冊並予講解；加上黎明常隨父親與畫界的前輩交往接觸，這種種機緣，無疑對黎明後來藝術生涯的拓展播下了種子。

1944年，剛滿十五歲的黎明，正式拜高氏為師，并由高氏將他的原名黎國安改為黎明，成為“春睡畫院”最年輕的一員。

抗戰勝利後，黎明隨侍高氏抵達廣州，次年，高氏在“春睡”原址開設“南中美術專科學校”，命黎明兼任會計職務，同時每當高氏主持專題講座時，必叫黎明站在身旁，將主要字句寫上黑板，充當助教的角色。至於課業方面，高氏對他依然嚴格要求，每當對外舉辦畫展，也必督促他創作參展作品，為他提供實踐機會。凡此種種，都充分說明高氏對他的信任、器重和期許。難怪黎明至今，每當憶及往事，總念念不忘劍父先生對他的培養，那種懷戀之情，即使在半個多世紀之後的今天，依然那樣深切、誠懇。

但黎明先生的從藝過程，却並非一帆風順。他不能像有些畫家那樣，能以全副精力、不間斷地在藝術園地中耕耘創造，而是屢屢受到客觀的干擾，使他無法一以貫之地專心致力於繪畫事業。

早在1945年，他剛剛成為“春睡”成員不久，就因父親在商務上受到挫折，不得不一度中斷學業。幸而時間不長，便被劍父先生說服他的父親，並強行將他帶回自己的寓所，使他繼續學業。但到1949年，又因父親的生意有很大起色，急需黎明回去協助經營，這一次儘管劍父先生反對，但黎明礙於父命難違，只好告別恩師，離開廣州返回澳門。而這個時期，也正是黎明在畫壇上嶄露頭角；對藝術的領悟創造取得初步成果並開始贏得讚譽的時刻，這對畫家本人來說，確

實是莫大損失！

然而這也是對畫家黎明的一大考驗。是從此放下畫筆，棄藝從商；還是以更多的勤奮與努力，利用一切可利用的時間，繼續在繪畫領域探索追求？顯然黎明堅定的選擇了後者。

在這之後的漫長歲月中，黎明不論是在處理家族商務時期；或是後來投身教育工作同時；乃至他離開澳門到香港獨力謀生的數十年間，他把所有的業餘時間，都完全獻給了繪畫事業。由於他已具備當年在“春睡”和“南中”打下的扎實基礎，而且始終信守高師的教導：以自然為本，重視寫生，充分發揮傳統筆墨的性能去描繪與反映現實事物，因而一件件獨具特色的作品，在他筆下源源不斷的誕生。同時他與港澳美術界，始終保持密切聯繫；他的勤奮，也博得畫壇同道的讚賞。甚至可以說，黎明長期作為“業餘畫家”，但他的成就並不比某些專業人士遜色，甚至有過之而無不及。這與他分秒必爭、百折不撓的毅力是分不開的。而且越到後來，他的作品也越加恢宏精緻，藝術上也更加完美嫺熟。他確實是以自己的努力，排除一切客觀的干擾，實現了當年劍父先生對他的厚望。

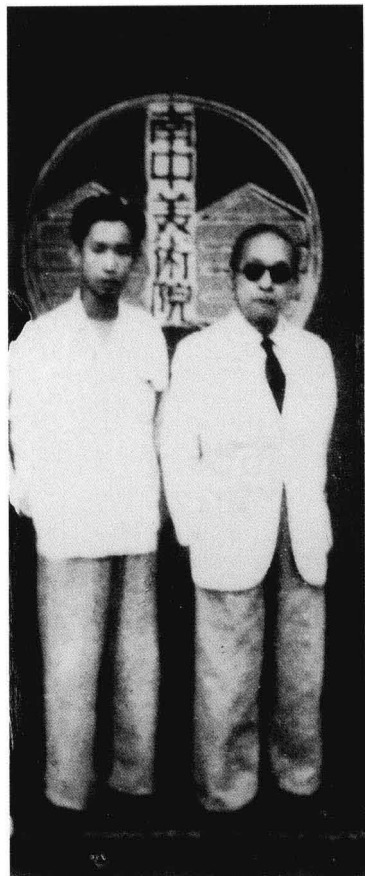
早在1947年，廣州一批青年國畫家，在高劍父先生關懷下，曾成立“春潮社”，以宏揚劍父先生的藝術主張並探索國畫創新道路為宗旨。時隔半個世紀後的1996年，黎明在香港倡議重組“春潮畫會”並親任會長，這一舉動受到同道的支持與響應，甚至已移民美、加多年的畫友、學生，也紛紛“歸隊”。在97'香港回歸祖國之際，“春潮畫會”也展開了頻繁的藝事活動，包括黎明本人在穗、港兩地先後舉辦慶回歸的個人畫展，引來畫壇的諸多好評。“春潮”的誕生，似已為年屆古稀的黎明揭開他藝術生涯的新的一頁。

明代詩人李東陽在《過錢塘江》詩中有這樣兩句：“野闊潮聲壯，天晴海氣收”，我想借來作為對“春潮畫會”的禮讚，祝願這滾滾春潮，不斷壯大，一浪接一浪，奔騰不息。

1998年9月於廣州美術學院



黎明與導師高劍父(中)，及同門黎葛民、陳曙風、梁法、葉綠野、許統正(1949年) MASTER GAO(MIDDLE), AND LAI IN GUANGZHOU, 1949



黎明與導師高劍父在廣州(1948年) MASTER GAO JIAN-FU AND LAI MING

A Grand Pictorial Expression And Refined Painting Skill Paintings By Lai Ming

Looking at the paintings by Mr. Lai Ming, a Hong Kong artist, one will find his heart aroused and filled with passion. That is indeed the most highly valued spirit of genuine art.

To take his work entitled *Eagle and Pine Tree* as an example, the vertical painting dated 1996 portrays an eagle perching on a pine branch. The scene of the painting seems still -- thick pine woods show endless vitality and the clear sky sets off the figure of the eagle. The eagle does not show any strong tendency to move, yet the fluttering feathers on its back and neck and its sharp and vigilant eyes, as well as the open sky in front of it, give you the idea that it is about to fly towards the clouds and that a fierce struggle will take place beyond the painting.

This painting is a good example that demonstrates how an artist can express his feelings by implying 'motion' with 'stillness'.

Hunting painted in 1997 is a horizontal composition dominated by surging waves. Against this background the artist has painted a giant eagle with its prey hunted out of the waves. The eagle has wings raised high and a body like a full bent bow. It strikes one with the strong impression of motion. In this way, it fits well with the background. Its powerful presence inspires in the viewer a sense of awe and admiration. Moreover, following the outline of the eagle's wings and the waves, our eyes will naturally meet the green mountain peaks at the bottom of painting. They are the only static forms in the painting and the most dignified as well. When we gaze at the whole scene, we will feel the sublimity of great nature.

Those two paintings both have eagles as their central motif against a landscape background. Both of them convey a sense of extensiveness. They are the direct expression of the artist's heart and the result of his careful consideration, and, of course, his adept skill.

These two works are clear indications of Mr. Lai Ming's refined painting skill, two aspects of

which I wish to offer my comments below.

First is the accuracy in the portrayal of images as a prerequisite for a realist painter. Mr. Lai not only has achieved proper proportions, mass and weight of his forms, he is also able to place them in light and shade and to capture their movement. He portrays forms 'objectively and close to the real' and at the same time injects his subjective artistic conception. For instance, the artist uses different sources of light over different objects, but integrates them into a harmonious whole. The eagle in *Hunting* has its source of light coming from the upper right corner, while that of waves come from the upper left corner. The peaks instead are lit from the front. As for the use of perspective, the artist does not follow the rules of Western realism to unify the scenery and the objects in it. No painting based on Western perspective, would depict mountains in front of sea waves, or the sea above the mountain. However, the artist did precisely that. It is not awkward at all. On the contrary, it looks highly dignified. Mr. Lai Ming has succeeded in fusing the methods of Western realism with the Chinese ideal of 'between likeness and unlikeness'. Broadly speaking, it also represents the success of Gao Jianfu and other founders of Lingnan School who studied in Japan at the beginning of this century. They indirectly borrowed the Western painting method and used it in their own painting.

Second concerns the use of ink, colour and line in the works of Lai Ming.

Let me first analyze the use of ink and colour in Mr. Lai's paintings. He inherits the Chinese tradition of using ink as the main medium, following the process of outlining and texturing in ink with occasional use of colours, with ink wash for gradation. Ink provides structure to the painting. In using ink, the artist is very careful and shows fine draughtsmanship, especially the key elements in an image, in order to achieve resemblance in form and in spirit. In other parts, however, he relaxes his painting brush and draws freely. In this way, his style attains

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great variety in ink gradations and composition, at the same time striking a balance between formal accuracy and rhythmic expression.

Colour in Chinese painting is subordinate to ink, yet it is useful for achieving formal likeness and creating atmosphere in a painting. It may be applied lightly or in combination with ink. In Mr. Lai's paintings, one seldom finds a lot of bright colours. Only small patches would appear in strategic placements, serving as highlights similar to the treble in a musical composition.

Mr. Lai Ming sometimes works with bright colours. Examples are *Peacock and Tong Tree Flowers*, *Blooming Flowers of 1997*. And *Perfect Harmony* of 1998. Pure colours are used unsparingly in these works. The contrast between warm and cold colours are very strong, which makes the painting delightful to the eyes. But upon closer scrutiny, one still finds the artist's insistence on ink lines as the basis of form.

Finally, let us analyze the fine quality of Mr. Lai's brush manner. Chinese painting emphasizes 'brush and ink', in particular the execution of lines by the brush. Even in the 'boneless method', the artist's competence in brush manner is still essential. The strength and vigour in the paintings of Wu Changshi, the simplicity and harmony of Qi Baishi and the boldness and power of Pan Tianshou are all realized through their brush. If we say that artists of the Lingnan School, in striving for a synthesis of Chinese and Western painting, chose formal likeness and atmospheric effects at the expense of the expressive power of ink and brush and void, then their followers in the contemporary art scene are making a conscious effort to rectify the situation. Not only are they carrying forward the eternal artistic theme -- "the use of brush and ink shall change with the time, they are also maintaining their lofty ideals without succumbing to realism." To take Mr. Lai Ming as an example, his

works are filled with a spirit of dignity and sublimity, and a strong sense of our times. His use of the brush is more careful, more subdued. His progress is based on the achievement of his predecessors. His works of eagles especially reflect this view. In these works, the main motif is constructed by powerful and rhythmic lines charged with the emotions of the artist. Although the artist keeps the traditional method of applying washes to cover the background in the painting, he uses ink and colour sparingly to leave much blank space. It may be said that as an outstanding member of the Lingnan School, Mr. Lai Ming knows better than his predecessors to utilize blank space as an expressive vehicle. In other words, contemporary Lingnan masters have succeeded in dispelling certain criticisms against their predecessors brought about by their close resemblance to the 'morotai' style of Japanese painting and the adoption of a sentimental style catering to popular taste.

Mr. Lai Ming carries forward the Chinese tradition in using brush and ink, and also inherits the courage and originality of the predecessors of Lingnan School in boldly absorbing Western artistic expression. Therefore, his works not only retain the harmonious beauty of the Lingnan style, but also capture the heroic boldness of contemporary Lingnan masters. His paintings are echoes of our times. I admire Mr. Lai Ming and his colleagues and feel truly pleased with what they have achieved.

Written on 25 January 1999, a windy night in Beijing.

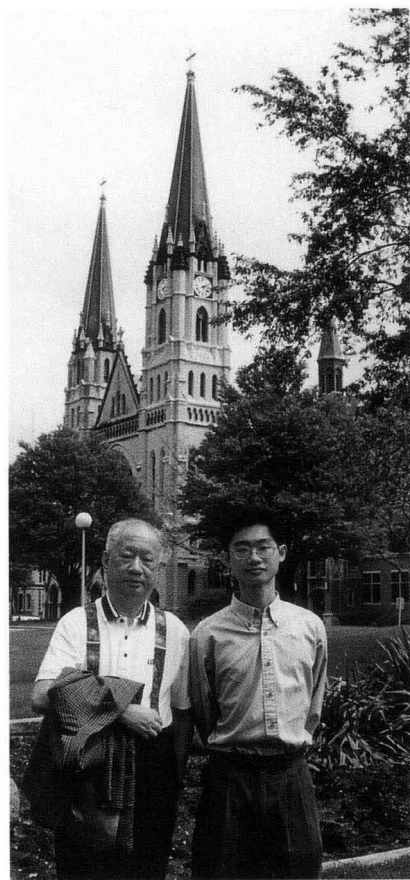
(The author is the editor-in-chief of People's Fine Arts Publishing House, a member of National Arts Education Committee of China and an artist.)

Liu Yushan



黎明夫婦乘熱氣球高空俯覽科羅拉多河谷
AT COLORADO RIVER, USA

黎明與兒子黎文希在大學校園
LAI'S SON ANDREW MANHEY IN
UNIVERSITY, MILWAUKEE, USA



A WORTHY SUCCESSOR TO THE LINGNAN SCHOOL OF PAINTING

I am pleased to learn that Mr. Lai Ming is compiling a selection of his paintings dating from 1947 to the present for publication. I came to know Mr. Lai through my research on the collection of the Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, specifically those paintings by Gao Jianfu formerly in the collection of Mr. Jian Youwen, a good friend of the Lingnan master.

Mr. Lai, who came under the personal tutelage of Gao Jianfu in 1940 at the tender age of eleven and lived with the master since his admission to the Spring Slumber Painting Studio as a disciple in 1944, has provided me with a wealth of intimate details of Gao Jianfu's living habits, his teaching and creative activities during the last few years of the life of the master. It was also a rare treat to view his personal collection of works of the Lingnan School, and the few postcards of Chinese and Japanese paintings and calendar paintings published by the Aesthetics Book Store, carefully preserved by Mr. Lai, shed light on the impact of Japanese painting on the Lingnan School and Republican painting, as well as the early artistic career of Gao Jianfu. Moreover, I was impressed by Mr. Lai's deep respect for his teacher and his love for the Lingnan School.

The Lingnan School has established itself as an important school in the history of modern Chinese painting. All three of its founders, namely Gao Jianfu and Qifeng, and Chen Shuren, were moved by the weakness of the nation and the suffering of the people. They embraced revolutionary ideals which were manifested in politics and in art, seeking to modernise China and to rejuvenate Chinese culture. Their artistic ideals of harmonising the past and the present and synthesising Chinese and Western art

symbolise the spirit of the new era. Yet, with the passing away of the founders and the many political and social changes taking place since 1949, questions are raised as regard the legacy of the Lingnan School and the new directions it would take. Mr. Lai Ming's paintings may provide an example of the school's continuing development.

Mr. Lai has studied with Gao Jianfu for more than ten years when the master passed away in 1951. By this time he has complete grasp of the artistic expression of the Lingnan School and was already showing signs of a personal style. From the eighties onwards he travelled extensively, producing many landscapes with a fresh vision. There is one thing which runs along his entire artistic career and finds expression in all his subject matter, whether it be landscape, flower, bird or animal. That is the study from life and nature, which can be considered the cornerstone of the art of the Lingnan School. This new awareness of real nature, originated in the art of Ju Chao and Ju Lian in the late Qing period, was inherited by Gao Jianfu, who expanded it by assimilating the realistic techniques of Western art to free Chinese painting from the slavish imitation of the ancients. Mr. Lai Ming has followed this tradition to the best of his ability. He is in direct contact with the myriad manifestations of nature, capturing their form and essence, at the same time giving expression to his own moods and feelings. His paintings are eloquent testimonies to the celebration of nature in the Lingnan School of art.

Mayching Kao

Professor of Fine Arts

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

FOREWORD

黎明夫婦與學生合影
STUDENTS CEEILY NGAN, SIUFOON YOUNG,
ANGELA SUEN, SIUWAN YEUNG, SIUCHUN WONG,
CHUNCHIN KO & YUETWING CHIU.



The Artist Lai Ming

Recently, I read "A Short Biography of Macau Painters" by Mr. Chan Kai-chon, a young scholar in Macau. In this publication, there is a long article "Lai Ming and the School of Compromise" which gives a detailed descriptions of the decades of painting experience of Mr. Lai Ming, particularly his close relationship with Master Gao Jian-fu, the founder of Lingnan School of Painting. Also mentioned in the article are detailed descriptions of some incidents happened in Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau. After reading such plenty and accurate information, some ideas came up to my mind.

Among the many students of Master Gao Jian-fu, Lai Ming might be the only one who had the opportunity to follow his teacher, Master Gao, from a young age. Being a close friend of Lai Ming's father, Mr. Lai Siusek, Master Gao often visited the Lai's family when the Gao's family stayed in Macau during the Sino-Japanese War. The ten-year-old Lai Ming was particularly Master Gao's favorite. Master Gao regularly brought along some art-prints with him and explained to Lai Ming accordingly. Accompanying his father, Lai Ming also had frequent encounters with senior painters at that time. Such favourable circumstances gave rise to the later art career of Mr. Lai Ming.

In 1944, Lai formally became one of Master Gao's students at the age of fifteen. He also changed his name from Lai Kwok-on to Lai Ming under Gao's will, and became the youngest member of the "Chun Shui Art Academy".

After the victory of the Sino-Japanese War, Lai accompanied master Gao to Guangzhou. During the next year, Gao established the "South China Art Academy" at the original premises of "Chun Shui Art Academy" and instructed Lai to take up accounting duty in addition to assisting him in writing down key words on the blackboard during his seminars at the Academy. At the same time, Lai was also under Gao's strict supervision and guidance in respect of painting study. Whenever there were exhibitions, Gao also urged Lai to participate as an opportunity to apply his skills. All these clearly showed Gao's trust in Lai and high expectations on him. No wonder after half a century as of today, Lai still bears in mind Master Gao's fostering so deeply and sincerely.

Nevertheless, Mr Lai's art life was not as plain-sailing. He could not concentrate continuously in his art field with all his will, as some other painters do, due to some external factors.

Early in 1945, soon after Lai became a "Chun Shui" member, Lai had to quit painting as his father encountered some setbacks in his business. Fortunately, not long afterwards, Master Gao persuaded Lai's father to let Lai stay with him in Guangzhou to continue his studies. This was time when Lai's talent became noticed in the painting circles. This was also time when his creation in

art became appreciated. However, in 1949, there was big improvements in his father's business and Lai was forced to return to Macau to help his father. Since Lai could not disobey his father, he had to bid farewell to Master Gao and leave Guangzhou despite of Gao's objection. It was indeed a great loss to the painter himself.

Nevertheless, this was also a big test to painter Lai. Should he give up painting and become a businessman, or should he work harder and spend all the time he has available and continue his exploration and pursuing in the field of art? Obviously, Lai had chosen the latter.

During the following decades, whether Lai was dealing with family business or when he later joined the education field and until then when he left Macau for Hong Kong to make a living, Lai devoted all his spare-time to painting. Since he had laid solid foundation in "Chun Shui" and "South China" art academies during his early years and had been following what his teacher had taught him: "base on nature, emphasize on nature," he could carry on the traditional method of Chinese painting to describe and reflect the reality. As a result, unique works were produced one after another. At the same time, he maintained a close relationship with the artists in Hong Kong and Macau. And it was his diligence that was spoken highly of by the other artists. More importantly, even though Lai was an "amateur painter", his achievements were no worse than other professionals, and maybe even better. This has to attribute to Lai's grasping of every minute and his will to keep on painting. As time went by, his works became more delicate and closer to perfection. It was really due to his hard work that he worked himself through all those disturbances in real life and lived himself up to Master Gao's expectation.

As early in 1947, there was a group of young artists in Guangzhou who set up the "Springtide Society" to spread Master Gao's advocacy in art and to explore a new way in traditional painting. Half a century later, in 1996, Lai Ming formed and chaired the "Hong Kong Springtide Art Society" in Hong Kong. His act was supported across the Chinese art field, and even by those members and students across the Pacific Ocean, in the US and in Canada. In 1997 when Hong Kong reunified with China, the "Springtide Art Society" was busy in organizing activities in art. This included the "Lai Ming Art Exhibition 1997" held in Guangzhou and Hong Kong which received high appraisal from the painting field. This establishment of the "Springtide Art Society" also marked a new page in the art life of Lai Ming.

Ming poet Li Dongyang once wrote a poem "Crossing the Qian Tang River" with the two lines: "Tides are strong in wild places, while the waves end in fine weather." I would like to use this poem as a tribute to the "Springtide Art Society". May the "Springtide Art Society" expand and roll on forever, and continue to spread the world of Chinese Art.

Yu Fung

September 1998

Guangzhou Academy of Fine Art

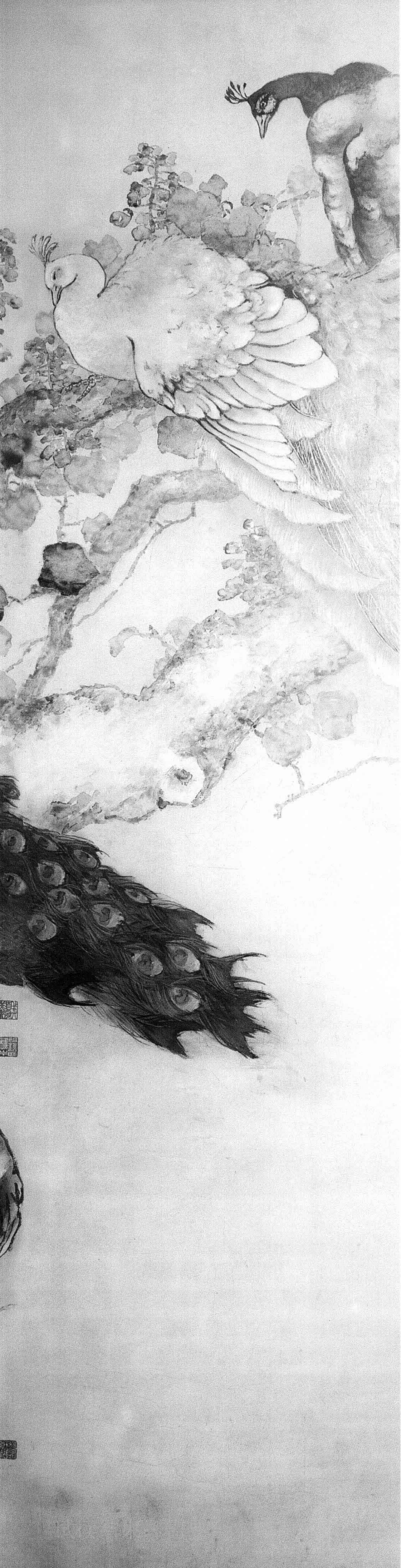


黎明漫遊意大利在羅馬城留影(1996)
TRAVELLING AROUND ROMA, ITALY

黎明參觀秦始皇兵馬俑坑
VISITING THE TERRA-COTTA WARRIORS
AND HORSES OF THE QIN-DYNASTY







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