

苏新平

版画艺术研究

STUDY OF SU XINPING'S
PRINTMAKING WORKS



隋丞 汤宇 主编
Sui Cheng & Tang Yu

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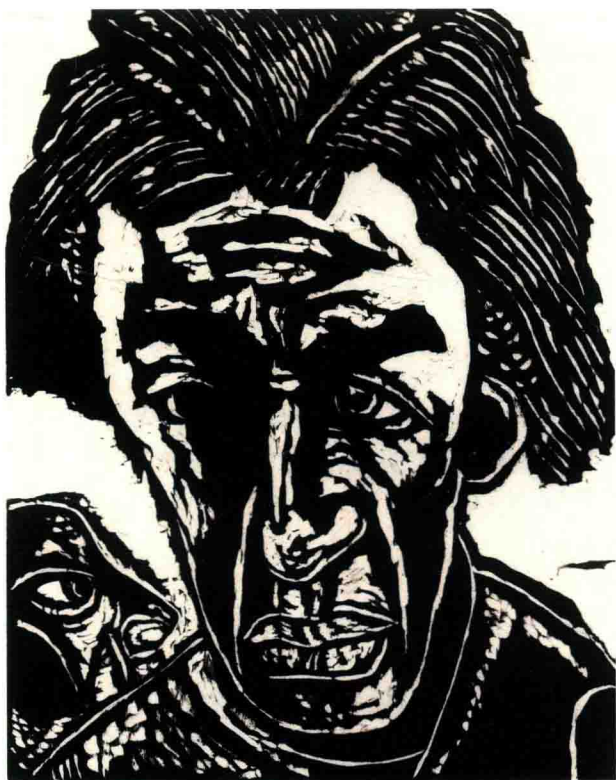
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表情 / Expression / 58cm×46cm / 黑白木刻 / Woodcut / 1996

新平的画

新平是一位注重实践的艺术家，1985年我就看到过他大量的黑白木刻画，强烈的黑白对比，刀用得像斧头砍下来似的。我感觉这人有一种能量，从而留下了印象。后来对他的艺术走向有了更多了解后，回想那批早期木刻画，已经有一种他的艺术和他这个人始终携带的“关键词”式的东西——强有力的性格与“艺术”之间的纠结。从那批木刻作品开始，他就是在用自己理解的艺术与之前在内蒙古的情境、记忆之间找到一种合适的、自己感觉“对”的关系。而依据什么来判断“对”呢？那时的他对艺术的理解是，革命的现实主义图像在思维里的遗存，以往版画历史（以新兴版画为主）的所有知识……都在当时新鲜的文化空气下重新排列，依自己的性格来“搅拌”，最终落实到每一幅图的每一刀往哪下。我相信，他都是在用木刻（拉得很开的黑白关系）与现实（像写实油画般的）进行拉锯。

进中央美术学院读研，他主攻石版画，以繁密的手绘笔触，开始了一个漫长的图像意象化的过程，是与内蒙古这个似乎开始被推远的、朦胧的时空进行的新一轮的较劲过程。生活与世界外在的物质痕迹、细节，到底能去除到什么程度？艺术史上现代主义、形式试验的成果与手里的这些画面呈现，仍然是一种拉锯式的纠结，最终只能靠性格的自主性决定最后的画面结果。

从石版“素描”变异到极简风格的石版画拉锯过程中，我与他有过多一点交流。后来我出国了，当再看到他那个艺术走向的抛物线落点的结果时，我眼前一亮：简洁的象征主义的画面，内藏着超出图式本身的提示与暗喻。我始终觉得，这时新平的画是最属于他的那种简洁凝重的、

透着对艺术（手头工作）谨慎的、不受干扰的、最适合自己的、肯定的手法，把真正想说的从容地说了出来。

当艺术圈称赞这些独到的石版艺术时，他却放弃了。这也许是中国现实的巨变，让他觉得那些内蒙古式的精神宁静有些太“远”了，面对躁动的社会现实他有话要说，且必须说出来。他艺术脉络中出现了象征特质的，对热闹的现实背后得龌龊部分进行指证的大幅油画。这批作品反映出他性格底线中固执的一面。

新平的这批东西与当时方兴未艾的泼皮等油画风潮不同，那些作品像是大会场下开小会的一帮人，先做一番自我拉低，用龌龊应对龌龊。而新平的画却像是面对歪风邪气招集大家开会，挨个分析出每个人的角色。一种漫画式的，图像（icon）归类式的，还有点社会宣传画式的，太阳落日般严肃色彩的油画出现了。后来这些作品常被中外美术馆作为最能反映中国现实图景的展览招贴使用。

从前几年开始，他又在画一种大幅的油画风景，引起了像李陀、汪晖这类文化学者的兴趣，他们借画面图像的寓意，阐述各自研究领域的话题，比如文学史上的“荒原”现象、人类文明与自然等。而我感兴趣的是这批画中表露出的，包括作者在内的无所适从感和危机感，特别是笔触与图像中透出的，只在宋画中才有的某些图式的来源。我向他证实，这些图像处理与宋画的关联，他诚实地说：“画时确没有想到过宋画。”

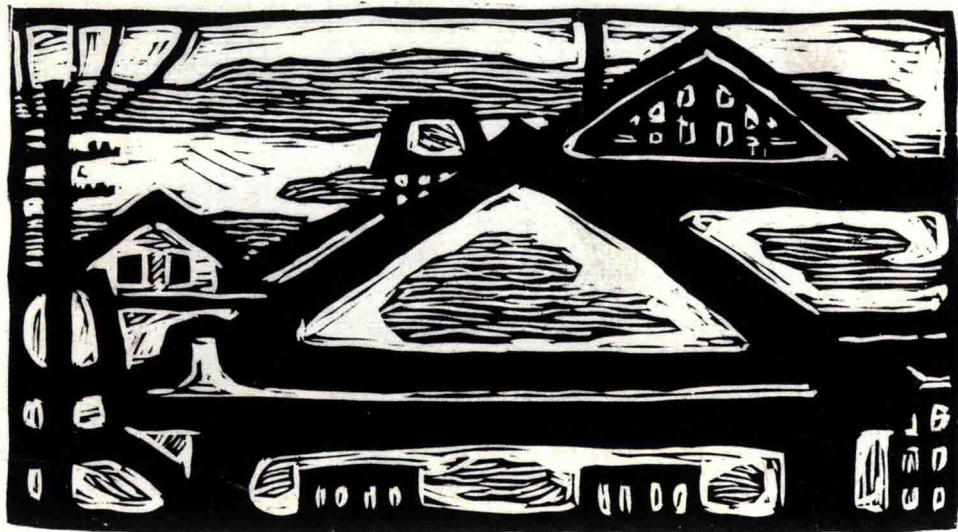
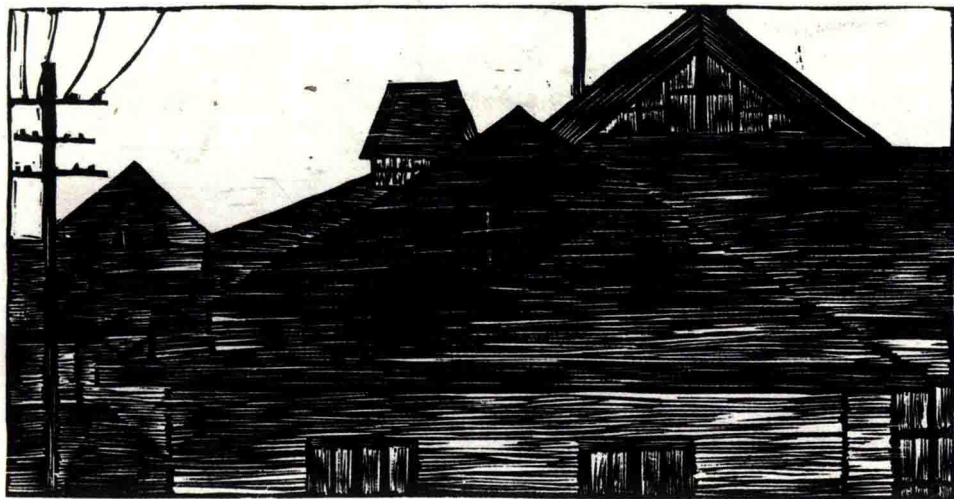
艺术创作的过程说到底，其实是每一个创作者用艺术这件事与自己性格及内心进行较量；已有的艺术手法和风格“强大无比”，教科书告诉我们好的艺术应该是这样的。而属于个体的更深层的部分又在涌动，说：“我是我，真正的我在这儿。”大师的“语法”好，但用它说出来的不是我要的，有时几乎就差那么一点点或者完全走样。从以往的学艺经验中，从展览、画册、网络、身边同行的手法中搜寻、比对、混合、试试看，也许有谁的能对上我；这有点像在超市里买鞋，结果没有一个合适的。也许需要再从人类制鞋史的缘起处——草鞋时代开始，再找一遍……这还是不行，它的发展逻辑环环相扣，太清晰了，毫无漏洞可钻。唯一的机会，看来要从光脚时代开始了。确实，在没有任何“鞋”的概念的前提下，佛才出现。这句话是从一句禅语中挪用过来的……

上面这段是自引旧文《心有灵犀》中的一段。在写这篇小文时，新平的艺术又有了新的面貌。他一定又是在固执地寻找着什么；仍然是在当下现实的语境中，在“什么是艺术”的混沌中，做着与他这个人的价值观、内在性格互相较劲与纠缠的事情。

徐冰

艺术家、中央美术学院学术委员会主任

2018年4月8日



习作1 / Draft No.1 / 8.5cm × 16.5cm / 黑白木刻 / Woodcut / 1980

习作2 / Draft No.2 / 9.5cm × 17cm / 黑白木刻 / Woodcut / 1980



习作 32 / Draft No.32 / 12cm×10cm / 黑白木刻 / Woodcut / 1981

XINPING'S WORKS

Su Xinping is an artist who stresses practice. In 1985, I saw a considerable number of his black-and-white woodblock prints. They were all black, without a single color. From the intense contrast between black and white and the hatchet-like way in which he carved, I felt that he had some energy, and it made an impression on me. Later, after I gained a better understanding of his artistic tendencies, I thought back to those early woodcuts, which already contained some of the "keywords" for Xinping's art and the man himself. They incorporated his strong personality into "Art". Beginning with that series of woodcuts, he found an appropriate relationship—one that he felt was "right"—between art as he understood it and scenes and memories from Inner Mongolia. How did he determine that it felt right? The cultural "fresh air" of the time had re-ordered his understanding of art, the vestiges of revolutionary realist iconography in his thinking, and all that he knew about the history of printmaking (primarily New Prints). He mixed all of these with his own personality before infusing them into every cut in every image. I believe that he was using woodcuts (pulling out the black-and-white relationships) and reality (e.g. realist oil painting) to work out internal issues and make judgments.

In his graduate work at CAFA, he focused on lithographs and those dense strokes began the long process of formulating his imagery. This was a new matching of wits

with Inner Mongolia, a place that seemed located in a hazy, distant time and space. To what extent could he remove the traces and details of life and the materiality of the outside world? The art historical products of modernism and formal experimentation, as well as their presentation in his work, became a complex process of give and take in his hands. In the end, he could only rely on the autonomy of his personality, which determined the final images.

As he worked his way back and forth from variations on lithographic "drawings" to extremely simple lithographs, he and I talked a lot. I then left China, and when I eventually saw where the parabola of his artistic trajectory had landed, my eyes lit up. His simple symbolist images concealed suggestion and metaphors that transcended the images themselves. I always thought that Xinping's paintings from this period were the appropriate and dignified revelation of his circumspect, undisturbed, and affirmative way of making art (from personal experience) in a way that best suited him. He just calmly said what he really wanted to say.

When the art world praised his unique lithographs, he abandoned them. Perhaps it was the massive changes in Chinese reality that made him feel that the spiritual peace of Inner Mongolia was too far away. Confronted with the restlessness of society, he had things he wanted to say and had to say them. Large oil paintings with symbolic qualities that pointed out the dirt behind the excitement of reality appeared in his body of work. These works reflected the stubbornness underpinning his personality.

Xinping's work was different from the ascendant Cynical Realism and other trends in oil painting. That phenomenon felt like a smaller group of people had called a private meeting at a larger conference. You needed to pull yourself down first, then fight dirt with dirt. Xinping seemed to confront this noxious, unhealthy meeting and analyze the roles they played, one by one. He created a cartoonish, iconographically categorized, and the poster-like mode of oil painting with the solemn colors of a sunset. Later, these works were often used by art museums around the world as exhibition posters depicting Chinese reality.

A few years ago, Xinping once again started painting large landscape in oil, which cultural scholars such as Li Tuo and Wang Hui found interesting; they used the allusions in the images to elucidate themes in their own research, such as the "wasteland" phenomenon and the relationship between human civilization and nature in the history of literature. I am interested in what these works revealed, including the artist's sense of uncertainty and crisis. In particular, the brushstrokes and imagery reveal image sources that can only be found in Song paintings, but when I went to him to confirm the connection between the treatment of these images and Song paintings,



逛市集 / Shopping on Fair / 32cm×42cm / 黑白木刻 / Woodcut / 1985

he sincerely replied, "I've never thought about Song painting when I'm working."

In the process of creating art, every creator uses art to balance his own personality and inner world. Existing artistic methods and styles are 'peerless and formidable', and our textbooks tell us it is what good art should look like. Then something very deep in an individual bursts forth to say: I am me. The true me is right here. The masters may have good 'grammar,' but using it to speak is not what I want. Sometimes it seems that I was just falling a bit short or needed to go in an entirely different direction. I searched, compared, mixed, and tried things from my past experience studying art, as well as exhibitions, catalogs, the internet, and the methods of my colleagues, figuring that something might suit me. It's a bit like buying shoes at a supermarket... none of them quite fit. Perhaps I needed to start from the beginning of the history of human footwear, looking again, and beginning from the era of straw sandals. This didn't work, because its developmental logic was too tight and clear, without any