

吕振光：近期作品展 / 序言

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返璞归真自风流

在与吕振光的谈话中，他道明了这次展览的契机。言及2010年奥沙画廊的实验性展览“吕振光《有你·无我》”。展览前，他将自己的作品交予四十七位门下学生，许他们把这些画作当作“现成品”进行创作，之后与自己的近作一同展出。之所以让出自己作品，令其被涂抹、切割、重组，或是为了打破创作上的僵局，寻求灵感上的启发，用他的话来说，寄托了“昔日我引你入门，今日你带我出门”的期望。

当初他这一决绝的做法，或来自一种艺术家对自身极限的焦躁，而也恰好反映出艺术史发展至今普遍面临的危机，在对前人思潮的批判、颠覆、破坏之后，当代艺术何以为继的思索。而对于学习西方油画仅有百年的中国艺术来说，每个个体都势必将整个西方艺术的演变轨迹高速体验一遍，从最初的接纳、融合，到最终的突破、回归，是对艺术家能力和信念的莫大考验。

吕振光的艺术历程分三个转折点，在台湾求学时期，精于浪漫写实；于84年从纽约归港，受到“新表现主义”影响，创作了以丙烯颜料为材质，历史故事与古典传说为主题的绘画；他在94年从伦敦大学金匠学院获硕士学位回港后，便不再单纯迷信西方文化，也是在那时产生了风格的剧变，创作出了以“山水”为题的全新系列。尽管他深谙西方艺术潮流，也尝试过装置等不同的表现方式，但在反思之后，决心回归绘画的根本，在平面绘画的范围内进行创新和变革。他的强大决意，来自于对自身精神世界的了解，以及对本土文化走向的信心。

这次由上海艾可画廊举办的“吕振光：近期作品展”正是在这种背景下应运而生。此次展览沿袭了他的艺术脉络，即是以“舍弃”而收获蜕变。日本枯山水大师枡野俊明说道：“舍去、舍去、再舍去，直到舍到不能再舍的时候，事物的真理、真实的一面就会呈现出来。”吕振光在艺术创作中体现出洗净铅华的视觉效果，默默耕耘的心境，抛却从无

的大胆尝试，确与枯山水的造境相似。舍弃，终究为了创新。在经历断腕的痛楚之后，他期望追回自己“丢失”的画作。然而这种回归并不是单纯的重复，而是集以往之大成。在他近四十载的绘画生涯中，将抽象山水的运用笔法和呈现图式都开发到了极致，已能驾轻就熟地表现出笔速的轻重、肌理的粗细、情感的跌宕。在新的系列中，他似乎已不在意技巧的变幻，而笔锋一转，再次呈现出质朴的意境，返璞归真，达到了“大道至拙”的境界。

艺术是劳作，绘画如修行

吕振光无意把他的画作做太多的阐释，认为太高深的解读也是“抬举”。对他来说，技巧形式和内容不可分割，定要排序的话，与“形式”相合的“技巧”在先，背后蕴藏的“内容”，即艺术理念和精神哲理为次。更贴切的说法是，艺术理念或精神哲理也是与形式相合，因而并没有什么蕴藏在作品背后。他将自己的艺术归纳为“立、饮、行、耕”，将对画面的经营过程本身看作值得深究的课题。“立：察觉位置；事物所见，思想能成。饮：察觉物质；媒介所用，感觉能动。行：察觉方向；处境所随，问题能解。耕：无意识空间；无上无下，无左无右，无高无低，劳作而已！”其中“立”和“饮”所指的对事物的位置和质感观察是作画基础，而“行”和“耕”则分别指绘画行为中的必然和偶然，可控与不可控的因素。在新的系列中，艺术家用笔刷刮擦，皱出山石般的质感，又引着颜料往下流淌，淌出落瀑般的动感。“笔绘”的可控与“流淌”的随机，恰似人生中的几多变数，正如此而具有潇洒魅力。借艺术家的金句，“有意难得意，无意非得意，有意无意真得意。”

“绘画早已成为我的生活习惯。”绘画，自上而下，周而复始的动

作，似耕作，似修行，如呼吸饮水一般地自然从容。艺术家从工作室地面扫出深深的灰痕，痕迹很像他近几年的作品中的笔触。他自曝之前曾扫过一年落叶，不知在简单反复的劳作中是否达到了冥想忘我的境界。他在绘画中的重复动作，对应着规律的生活，具有谢德庆的行为艺术“打卡”似的美感。他对于生活中简单题材的反复挖掘与智性诠释，不得不令人联想到半个世纪前的莫兰迪（Giorgio Morandi）。生活与绘画创作互相渗透，因而作画更能从心所欲，水到渠成。正如生活日复一日何其相似，但惊喜不断；他的画虽不刻意求变，但并不单调沉闷，每一处线条、色泽、肌理都传达出丰富细腻的细节体验。他说自己“二十年只画一张画”，这一张道出的人生百味，值得用一生去品尝。

拥抱流逝的大风景

光怪陆离的都市景象，放眼望不到地平线，肉身欲望沉重而灵魂无可去留。生活在香港的吕振光面对这一现代化的困境，希望利用创作来挽回流失的自然。

吕振光的作品风格经历了戏剧性的改变，由具像走向抽象，由丰富象征走向纯粹“形式”，由宏大的史诗叙事走向平凡的生活题材。早期绘画贴近现实，描绘了孤寂优雅的田园生活；1984年后的作品像儿时看过的演义故事画，又有点像原始人的岩画，跳跃着人像符号、诗词碎片；94年后的“一流山水”系列，一束束垂直或水平的细线条和颜色组成画面，开启了他延续至今的抽象风格。“近作展”上的新作，将他独有的风格伸展出另一种极致。他开始尝试更鲜活的色彩，画布的原色上流动着娇嫩的红、蓝、杏、青，好似植物抽出的新芽，粗细相间的色条，比起以往的平稳感，采取了更为生动的平衡。

艺术家寄情于抽象的山水，无非还是为了回归自然。吕振光在采访中谈道，“具象令我有些厌倦……而过多的形象在讯息泛滥下已互相抵消，对我来说它更显得软弱无力。”相应地，“资讯日强，感觉日弱……观念愈多，技艺愈疏，心神与手目的距离也愈远了。”图象泛滥反而带来心灵的空洞，而抽象能给予更为开放的想象空间，恰当的留白让观者代入对心中大风景的美好向往。这些作品传达着无法还原，不可言说，却可以真切体会的回忆。或许是上海松江工作室外金黄的田野，或许是新干线外飞驰而过的树木，或许是静默的莱茵河，是初春的山丘，是窗外滑落的雨滴。由一条线联想到一片风景，体现了与安德烈亚斯·古尔斯基（Andreas Gursky）浓缩百倍的庞大景观不同的美学，而确乎与中国文人山水画和园林艺术的“以小见大”的方式如出一辙。评论家、策展人吕澎教授对他绘画的纯粹性有这样的阐释，“吕振光以其简明的形式和绚丽色彩，表达了自己对‘什么是画’的解答……艺术家与其说是在努力地控制绘画形式的单纯性，不如说是从这种形式单纯

性中发现意义的丰富性。”

垂直与水平，体现了自然的尺度。自上而下，展现了物理的规律。那么从手臂到脚底的一笔又一笔，度量着身体的尺度，而林缓童笔下的“来回往返的身体作业”，或是在模仿无声无息却能鬼斧神工的自然本身。正如画笔成了手臂的延长，画面便成了双眼的延伸，向前踏出一步融入画卷，拥抱流逝的大风景。

Lui Chun Kwong: Recent Works / Preface

Written by Miao Jiang / Translated by Philana Woo

From abandonment to originality

In conversations with Lui Chun Kwong (b. 1956), he revealed the turning point for this exhibition. In his 2010 exhibition "Lui Chun Kwong. You Are Here I am Not" at Osage Gallery, the artist distributed his works amongst 47 former students, with the instruction to use the works as raw materials in their own original creations that were then exhibited alongside his more recent works. His works were smeared, cut up, and reassembled in the name of tearing down boundaries and casting inspiration in the creative process. In his own words, he wanted to achieve the effect of "I led you in yesterday, you lead me out today."

Initially, this drastic approach stems, perhaps, from the anxiety an artist feels regarding his personal creative limits and at the same time, reflects a common concern felt throughout the development of art history. Where does one go after critiquing, subverting, and destroying previous schools of thought? Furthermore, for Chinese art that has been influenced by Western oil painting of the past century, every work is subject to scrutiny under the lens of Western art development, from the early stages of acceptance and merging, to the final breakthrough and retrospective; each stage representing a major test of the artist's ability and conviction.

Lui's artistic career may be divided into three sections: His "romantic" still life period, from when he studied in Taiwan; his "neo-expressionism" period, after he returned to

Hong Kong from New York in 1984 and painted historical and mythic scenes in acrylic; his shift away from Western cultural influences, when he returned from studying at Goldsmiths' College, University of London in 1994. It was also at this point that his personal style underwent a dramatic shift and he created a new series based on "landscape." Despite his familiarity with Western traditions, including creating works of installation and other popular media of the time, upon his period of reflection, he made up his mind to return to the foundations of painting, innovating and transforming within the parameters of the canvas. This breakthrough resulted from a deeper understanding of his own psyche, as well as a growing confidence in contemporary Chinese art.

It is under this context that the exhibition "Lui Chun Kong: Recent Works" opening at AIKE-DELLARCO in Shanghai came together. This exhibition represents a continuation of his artistic quest to cultivate change through abandonment. Leading Japanese Rock Garden designer Shunmyo Masuno said: "Abandon, abandon, and abandon yet more, until there is nothing left to abandon, and that is when the true form of the thing presents itself." Lui's art works embody the visual effect of the pure form that has been rinsed clean of pretense; a state of quiet cultivation, embarking bravely from a clean slate, similar to the conditions of a dry landscape. Abandonment as the path to originality. Looking back to the Osage exhibition, he wished to "recover" his "lost" works. This "retrieval" should not be interpreted as a

mere repetition of his past creation, but rather a synthesis of his oeuvre. In his nearly forty years of painting career, Lui has explored the technique and schema of abstract landscape painting to realize almost perfection, able to represent at ease the lightness and tardiness, delicacy and coarseness, emotional ups and downs in his paintings. In the new series at this exhibition, he has filtered out virtuosity but turned back to simplicity and originality, almost reaching a state of "the true Dao is similar to utmost clumsiness."

Art is labor, painting is spiritual practice

Lui does not want to provide too much explanation for his art works, believing it would be another form of "flattery." For him, form and technique can't be separated from content. If it must be categorized, "form" in conjunction with "technique" are primary, with "content" and concept or spiritual philosophy being secondary. Or perhaps it would be more apt to say that concept or spiritual philosophy is also entwined with form, rendering an artwork without further hidden meaning. He sums up his artistic practice as: "Standing, Drinking, Walking, Ploughing," and sees the creative process itself as a topic worthy of study. Standing: awareness of position; from things I see, ideas are formed. Drinking: awareness of materials; from media I use, sensibilities are motivated. Walking: awareness of direction; through circumstances I follow, problems are overcome. Ploughing: unconsciousness of space; no up or down, no left or right, no high or low, it is but a walking practice! "Standing" and "Drinking" refer to the investigation of the position and texture of a subject as the foundation of an artwork. "Walking" and "Ploughing" refer to certainty and chance within a painting, those elements that can and cannot be controlled. In the new series, Lui scrapes his brush to create the uneven texture of rocks or the downward flow of trickling waterfall. The controllability of the "brush stroke" along with the spontaneity of the "flow" are like the myriad variations in life and imbue the works with a natural and unrestrained charm. Borrowing from the artist's classic saying: "Intention does not guarantee attainment. A lack of

intention is not the opposite of intention. Therefore, to be neither intentional nor intentionally unintentional is the way."

"Painting has long been my life habit." Painting, from top to bottom, the cycle from start to finish, is a natural process like ploughing, or spiritual practice, or rather breathing and drinking water. As the artist sweeps away the thick layer of dust on his studio floor, the traces recall the brush strokes of his works in recent years. A year before he embarked on a journey of self-exploration through the repetitive process. From the repetitive process of painting and a disciplined life, he experienced an aesthetic sensibility not unlike Tehching Hsieh's "One Year Performance 1980 - 1981 (Time Clock Piece)." His examination of life's raw materials in search of meaning is reminiscent of Giorgio Morandi. Life and the painterly process engage in a symbiotic relationship. Art thus stems from a place of the heart; when water flows, a channel is formed. Life is routine, yet filled with surprises; his paintings do not represent intentional attempts at change, nor are they weighed down by tedium. Every stroke, color, and texture convey the rich and nuanced sense of detail. He has said: "In twenty years I only painted one painting." This painting embodies life's myriad flavors, and is worth savoring for a lifetime.

Embracing a passing landscape

In the dazzling and strange urbanscape, the skyline is indiscernible. The air is heavy with desires of the flesh, but bereft of spirituality. Living in Hong Kong, Lui is confronted by this modern dilemma and hopes to use his artwork to retrieve some of the eroded nature.

Lui's artistic style underwent a dramatic shift, from concrete to abstract, from rich symbolism to pure "form," from epic narrative to everyday life. His early paintings were closer to realism, depicting the elegant solitude of rural life. His works after 1984 contained elements from the beloved historical romance novels of our youth, as well as cave paintin-

gs, leaping from figurative symbolism to fragments of poetry. After 1994, in the "Yi Liu Shan Shui" series, vertical and horizontal lines of color formed the picture, marking the beginning of the abstract style that continues to this day. The new works in this show are an extension of this style to a new extreme. He experiments with more vibrant colors. Delicate reds, blues, apricots, and greens flow across the canvas like new shoots of vegetation. The colors alternate between lines thick and thin, exhibiting a more dynamic sense of balance compared to the calmness of earlier works.

The abstract landscape that the artist is so enamored with is but a way to return to nature. In interviews, Lui has said: "I was tired of figuration. There were too many images and messages. And it was not strong enough for me. It became nothing." Accordingly: "The stronger the knowledge, the weaker the feeling... the richer the concept, the more watered down the skill, and the greater the discrepancy between the mind and the hand's eye." An overflowing image of the digital age results in spiritual void, whereas abstraction can provide a freer space for contemplation. It is this blank space that has the power to draw in the viewer to see the infinitely grander landscape within. While difficult to articulate, these works are experienced vividly. Perhaps it is the golden fields outside the Songjiang studio, the woods flying past while riding on the Shinkansen bullet train, or the somber Rhine. It is the hill on the first day of spring, raindrops flowing down the window. Conveying an entire landscape with a single stroke contrasts from Andreas Gursky's exponentially concentrated epic landscapes and bears greater similarity with the micro aesthetics of Chinese landscape and landscape art, in which a universe is contained within a single detail. Of Lui's aesthetic purity, art critic and curator Lv Peng wrote: "Lui Chun Kwong responds to the question 'What is painting?' through the use of simple forms and vibrant colors... Rather than making an effort at controlling painting's 'purity,' the artist discovers its rich signification through pure form."

Vertical and horizontal reveal the dimensions of nature. Top down reveals the laws of physics. Stroke upon stroke from arm to foot measures the dimensions of the body. This "rep-

etitive physical worksheet" is perhaps an attempt to achieve nature's divine inspiration through soundless action. It is as if the paintbrush becomes an extension of the hand and the canvas an extension of the eyes, with a step forward and into the integrated picture scroll to embrace a passing landscape.