

十问十答

Q1: 请问你创作中的最终指向是什么?达到这种境界有没有一个途径?

童: 其实就是“画可通道”中的“道”,但是其出发点和归属点仍旧会落在具体的、现实的人生之上。老庄思想起步的地方,不曾把艺术作为追求的对象,“道”是创造宇宙的基本动力。他的体认本无心于艺术,但不期然地又归于具体艺术中升华上去的。人对宗教最深刻的要求,在艺术中都得到了解决。它是一种直达事物内部的圆满、自足的、与宇宙相通感的,通向自然无尽之境的。

达到这个境界是没有方式、方法和步骤的,但是它还是有几个前提。它需要把对象中外在的、附加的、已有的、人为主观的成见放下,对物不作分析的了解,要直接纯粹地从当下所感受到的事物里去找,使其成为自身的东西。放下以自我为中心的欲望,包括认识的欲望和主动表现的欲望。耳止于听,心止于符。以此为前提,才有可能打开个人生命中的障壁,与天地万物的生命融为一体。

Q2: 为什么这十五年来你选择的题材几乎仅限于肖像画?

童: 西方美术史大概就是一个肖像画的发展史。发展这么久,现在肖像画到底还有哪些突破的可能,我选择了这个很有挑战的主题,借用油画肖像来呈现中国山水精神。在肖像画的精微、具体、准确,和山水画的可游可居、灵动之境,在这两极之间获得的空间细窄的夹缝中若能生长出来的东西就会有很旺盛的生命力。被挤压的空间越小,它的爆发力就会越大,限制越多,天地就越宽。我是丰富自己的体验上,尝试各种媒介、各种视角,最传统和最当代的,但这些只是让我内核的“场”更广。当代艺术的现状是不断地推翻、换新;是猴子掰玉米,掰一个扔一个。我们是开发的、包容的、完整的,所有的新可能都会化入到这个“不变”中来。“不变”才有贯穿力的,才能切入得更深更广,才能“万变”。通过纯粹的形象打破写实与抽象附会迷离之说,拯救形象在图像时代的命运。

Q3: 为什么选择 41cm x 33cm 的尺寸,正面,平涂的背景和几乎不变的风格?

童: 这个尺寸是等同或略小于真实头像的比例、正面、平涂的背景,在视觉上没有太多张力的。虽然是一直画同一个尺寸、样式、风格,但平时也会有很多的积累,包括从小练书法和学国画,研究生上雕塑课程。除了这个尺寸外偶尔也会画其他大小的肖像。2006 年户外写生大风景,4m x 3m,一天一幅,连续画 11 天。有一贯性,才会有穿透力。虽然看起来是十五年来每天不断地重复,但其实恰好相反,每一张脸都是鲜活的、不可以复制的,每次画的时候都像一次新的历险、一个新的挑战,画面都是丰富的新世界。

Q4: 你作品不同的肖像有各自具体的特征,用了不同的笔触、颜色来表达,这样让画面中是否无法表现出整体的超越性,请问你怎么看这一点?

童: 超越性,其实就是我们讲的“画可通道”中的“道”。现在许多人心中“道”的样子,是一种非具体的、看不见摸不着的东西,但其实“道”都是由具体的艺术活动升华上去的。有一切的超越精神,都是从能见、能闻、能触,一时一地、自用自成的具体形象而来。也就是说只有不同,才有“和”的前提和动力。这样才可能在多样性中超越。

根据模特的特征的变化,画面重新构建的内在结构也发生变化。它不仅仅是画面的笔触、色彩的不同,而是内在结构整体的变化。这种超越是内向的,在形式上不是显而易见的。一个面孔就是构建一个新的世界,这更体现多样性和整一性之间的共生关系。

Q5: 为什么你画面中的形象都是模糊的?

童: 模糊性是庖丁解牛的刀的精准性,存在于整体感的变化之中的清晰。整体感不是逻辑清晰的形式分析,是对运动中甚至为模糊性的本质的整体捕捉和把握,也是一种确定。画面始终呈现在一种不完满不饱和的状态,此时它就会发生错位的互动,互动之间就会发生整一性的关系。作品从来都是不确定的、模糊的、

不充分的、不一致的、不稳定的，它总是一种游离的、延展的、流变的状态，它才会有生命力，才会在不断的生成中变得完满，才接近世界原发时的混沌世界。

Q6：为什么你的肖像几乎不重点刻画眼睛？

童：举个例子，法国抽象大师德布雷，1998 年来华时，带他去看潘天寿纪念馆，他说潘天寿画得非常好，但画鹰时要是不要画眼睛的话，会更好。现在来看，可能这句话里讲了一个道理，在画面中眼睛是可以传达感情、说故事的。也就是说眼神是有叙述性，有表现性，有图解性的。顾恺之的人物画，有很多年也都是画龙不点睛的，画眼睛要注意点了睛之后就很可能把对象会活化。这个“活”，容易对象化、外化，是可见的。眼睛是很重要的，是沟通可见之物和非视觉里不可见之物的桥梁，是天地人神交汇处。模特眼睛的神是与模特平行的第二自然，传神以后就可以进到人物的本真。当模特的神与作者的神相遇交融的时候，就产生了一个世界，是一个完整的、自由的、可游可居的完满世界。

Q7：看你的画经常会对应到另一个艺术家身上，比如说苏丁、弗洛伊德，包括国内的刘小东等，你是怎么和看和他们之间的差别？

童：新的形式在“艺术死亡”后已经没有更深的价值了。我不会主动和别的艺术家拉开关系，在主动拉开的过程中，就陷入了另一种对形式的追求，它就不再是一个自然的、混沌的状态。把美术史上所有的前者，那些被割裂的东西全部都是打包在一起，成一个整体，整体地去看。它不会否定某一者，但在内核上可能有很大的差别。比如苏丁和弗洛伊德这些画家都比较在乎对象的生动性和潜意识；梵高和德国表现主义画家，他们关注自己作为艺术家主体的感情的表达。也区别于所有的写意画家，写意其实是一个关注笔触，关注语言方式的，是在抒发胸中之意的。在动“意”的时候，人的主观性就出来了，这种主观性会失去一个整体的精神性。我和他们的区别就是，我和对象和心之间的关系。他们讲究对象的生动性，作为艺术家主体的感情，手、心与物是割裂开的；而我是三者融为一体的。所以他们的“生动”是对象、形象的生动，而我的“生动”是一种动力，是整个画面的生息，是物我一体的生气，和对象共进共退的关系。这个生气是生命力在不断地扩充中、不断地完满的一种关系。

Q8：有一些批评家策展人把你的肖像画当作一种社会性的考察，你怎么看这个问题？

童：我的肖像画要呈现的东西都是模糊不清的，是不太抓得到的。讲社会性是很直接的、容易接大众都在谈的问题上来的，虽然和我的初衷没有什么关系，但……我画的肖像就是直接的、世俗的、活生生的、具体的，甚至有人说这些人都是生活底层的，类似于老庄经常假想出形残而德全的人。有模特说我画得比本人要丑，其实这不是“丑”而是一种存在的真实，是更接地气的。是永恒的。打碎虚伪的局限和表面的短暂的美，呈现出的是永恒，是一种大美。真实的人，超越而融混于社会性中，与一切众生往来，以与世俗处。模特本身就是不可分割的现实世界的整体。

Q9：你的作品是属于传统的还是当代的？

童：它不是主流但是超前性，而且是对现在正发生的当代艺术整体反省上的当代作品。判断一件作品是否有当代性不是看作品的形式和题材、意义，其中很重要的一个标准就是，它对当代的价值有没有发生批判性的关系。这种批判关系和当代艺术上否定和创新是不一样的，这是一种整体反省式的批判、是超越社会的片段、支离破碎、无根、各种危机、各种冲突的。人类天地神人一体性的自觉之力，将可以解决人类自身的矛盾。一种平衡，一种补充。把当代艺术中的各种异化融入化掉，恢复其生命力，给其最初始生命原动力、最完满的精神。它不是在象牙塔之内的，是给人类精神的一种安顿，具有普遍价值。我作品十五年如一日的、如参禅般的面对面的写生，其实就是对这种信息时代、对专利式快餐文化的一种发问。永远同样大小、看起来一样形式的作品按跨越十五年的线性排列在一起的仪式感。

Q10: 一个好画家和一个商业上成功的画家之间有差别吗?

童: 当然很多时候是有很大差别的, 甚至是相反的。有名气和商业上成功的画家会和整个时代的现状有紧密的结合,; 一个好画家更可能对于这个时代有一种超越性, 很多时候会走在整个思想史的前沿, 甚至与这个时代主流相反的。

成功的艺术家的作品是指向对当下社会的认识, 反映或者批判, 是直接的、有效的、实用的。当然他也容易同时与当代艺术的利益场发生关系的。想成为一个成功的艺术家, 只要有策略, 有步骤, 努力地去办, 就有可能有很大收获的。好的画家的作品是洞察到事物内部的, 通向精神自由的无限之境的, 以无目的为目的。

Q1: Could you please tell us what is the final direction of your creation? Do we have a path leading to this state?

A: In fact it is the “ Tao ” in “ The painting can lead us to Tao. ” But the starting point and the destination will still fall on the concrete and realistic life. The place where the thought of Laozi and Zhuangzi start has not put art as its object, “ Tao ” is the basic motivation for creating the universe. He originally has no intention in art, but has generalized all these to the art. The most profound requirement of people towards art have been solved in art. It is interlinked with the universe, the satisfactory, self-contained endless state of nature that contains in the innermost of the things.

We have no ways, procedures and methods to get to this state, but it still has several prerequisites. It needs us to put aside the extra, additional, objective prejudices, the understanding of things without analysis, and it requires us to find directly from the current existing things for the things that can finally belong to us. To set aside the desire of egoism, including the desire to recognize and to actively represent. We should use our ears to listen and our hearts to feel. Based on this prerequisite, we can open the obstacles in life and merge with the nature.

Q2: Why the theme that you have chosen in recent fifteen years are all confined within the portrait painting?

A: The western art history is the history of the development of portrait painting. Having developed for so long, what is the possibility of the breakthroughs of the portrait painting? I have chosen this relative challenging theme, to display the spirit of China ’ s landscape painting by the oil painting. Between the correct, refine and detailed character of the portrait painting and the random of the landscape painting, the things born between the two must have vigorous vitality.

The smaller the room you ’ ve been squeezed into, the more explosiveness you have. The more limitations, the wider range you have. I ’ m trying to enrich my experiences, use all kinds of medias, points of view, both traditional and contemporary. All these will make my inner “ field ” wider. The status of the contemporary art is to continuously overthrow and renew. To have one and then abandon it. We are open, inclusive and integrate. All the new possibilities will come into this “ invariability ”. Only the “ invariability ” has the most penetrating power, and can cut deeper and wider, come to all the changes.

Q3: Why do you choose the size of 41cm* 33cm, the front, the flat painting background and the invariable style?

A: This size is equal to and maybe a little smaller than the size, front and flat painting background of the real head picture, and it doesn ’ t have too many tensions visually. Although I ’ ve been drawing the same size, pattern and style, I still have many accumulations in normal times, including the Chinese calligraphy and the Chinese painting that I ’ ve learned in my childhood. And I studied sculpture in my postgraduate study. Apart from this size, I will also draw portrait in other sizes. In the 2006 outdoors paint from life, 4m x 3m, I ’ ve drawn one picture everyday and continued for 11 days. Only do we have the consistency, can we have the force of penetration.

Although it seems that I ’ ve been repeating for the 15 years, but the fact is just the contrary, every face is vivid and irreplaceable, every time I paint is like a new experience and new challenge, the picture is the rich new world.

Q4: The different portrait of works all have their own detailed characters, and you have used different styles of painting and colors to express them, which may inhibit the picture from showing the transcendence of the integrity. What do you think of this?

A: The transcendence, in fact is the “Tao” we talked in the “The painting can lead way to Tao”. In the heart of many people, the appearance of “Tao” is an ambiguous and intangible thing. But in fact “Tao” grows from the concrete art activities. All the spirits of transcendence come from the visible, smell and touchable detailed figures. That is to say, only in this way can we have the prerequisite and motivation of “harmony”, and transcend in the variability.

According to the change of the character of the model, the reconstructed inner structure of the painting is also changing. It is not only the difference of the styles of painting and the colors of the painting, but also the changes of the inner structure of the integrity. This kind of transcendence is introvert, and not obvious in form. A new face is a new world, which shows the symbiotic relation between the variability and the unity.

Q5: Seeing your painting, we will always compare them to another artist, like Chaim Soutine, Lucian Freud and domestic Liu Xiaodong, what do you think of your differences with them?

A: The new form doesn't have deeper value after the “Artdeath”. I won't separate myself actively with other artists, because in the process of separation, you've been trapped into the pursuit of another form, and it will no longer be a natural one. To see those former ones in the art history and those separate things together as a unity. It will not negate any one, but may have huge differences in the core. For example artists like Chaim Soutine and Lucian Freud all concern about the vitality and sub consciousness of the object; Van Gogh and German expressionism artist concern much about the expression of emotion of themselves as the subject of art. In “Yi”, the subjectivity of people just comes out, and this will lose the spirit of the integrity. The difference between me and them is the relationship between my object and my heart. The vitality of the object and the emotion, heart, hand of the artists that they studied are separate; however for me these three are one. So their vitality is the vitality of the object and my “vitality” is one motivation, the liveliness of the whole picture, and symbiotic relation. This liveliness is a relationship in which the vitality is continuously expanding and fulfilling.

Q6: Do you think there are any differences between a good painter and a commercially successful painter?

A: Surely it has huge differences, and even the contrary. The famous painter and the commercially successful painter will have close combination with the status quo of that time; a good painter may have the transcendence of this time and many times will be in the front of the history of the whole thought and even contrary to the mainstream of the time.

The work of a successful artist is always the cognition, reflection and critics of the contemporary time, it is direct, efficient and practical. Of course he will easily have relations with the interest of contemporary art. If you want to be a successful artist, you should have strategy, procedure and work hard, you'll very likely to achieve a lot. The works of a good painter will notify the inner part of things, and lead to the infinite state of the freedom of spirit, aim at aimless.

Q7: Why do you never emphasized on eyes in your portrait?

A: For example, when the German abstract great master, Olivier Debre came to China in 1998, I took him to the Pan Tianshou memorial hall, he said Pan Tianshou paints very well, and it would be better if he omit the eyes when drawing the eagle. Now this sentence seems to tell us a sense, the eyes in the picture are able to convey the emotions and tell the stories. That is to say the eyes are narrative, expressive and illustrative. The figure painting of Gu Kaizhi also omit the eyes when he draws the dragon for many years. When painting the eyes we should be aware that after when painted the eyes, the object might be activated.

This “activation” is visible and obvious. The eyes are important, and they are the bridges between the visible and the invisible, and also the intersection between the sky and the earth. The spirit of the eyes of model is the second nature of the model, after being activated it can come into the nature of the people. When the spirit of the model intersect with that of the painter, it will create a world, a integrate, free and random perfect World.

Q8: Some critical curators use your portrait as a inspect of the society, what do you think of this?

A: The things that my portrait want to present are all ambiguous and unavailable. To speak about the society is something very direct and which accept the general public to express their opinions, though all these have no relations with my original intention, but...my portrait is direct, secular, vivid and detailed, and even some people say these peoples are all in the lowest level of life, like the figure often imagined by Laozi and Zhuangzi. Some models said the one I painted was much uglier than them,in fact this is not “ ugly” but an existing truth which is eternal. To break the limitations of hypothesis and the ephemeral beauty of the surface, it will presents an eternal beauty. The real man transcend and emerge in the society, get along with the secular people and society. The models themselves are the integrity of the inseparable real world.

Q9: Why all the figures in your paintings are ambiguous?

A: The ambiguity is the accuracy of Prince Huei's Cook was Cuttingup a Bullock, which exists in the change of the sense of integrity. The sense of integrity is not the formation analysis with clear logic, but the general capture and holding of the ambiguous nature of the things in sport and it is also a certainty. The picture will always present an imperfect and unsaturated state, and in this time it is having a malposed interaction. The interactions will have unified relations. The works will never be certain, saturated, clear, consistent, stable, and it will always in an isolated, expanded and changeable state. Only in this way can it be vivid, and become gradually perfect in the continued growth, finally reach the original world of chaos.

Q10: Are your works traditional or contemporary?

A: It is not the mainstream but it is leading, and it is the contemporary work that reflects on the already happening art integrity. To judge whether work is contemporary or not , we should not see the formation, meaning or theme of the work. A very important standard is to see whether it has critical relations with the contemporary value. This kind of critic relation is different with the negation and creation of the contemporary art, this is a reflective critic of the unity, which has transcended all the segments, crises and conflicts. The inner power of human, sky, earth and the god will solve the conflicts of human themselves, which is a balance and a supplement.

To integrate all the dissimulations in contemporary art, resume its vitality; give it the most original motivation and the fullest spirit. It is not inside the Ivory tower, but a settlement for the human spirit and has the general value. The face-to-face paint from life of me in this 15 years, which is like practicing meditation, in fact I am asking the information age and the potent fast-food culture. The sense of ceremony from the works of the same size and formation, which has crossed the liner arrangement of 15years.