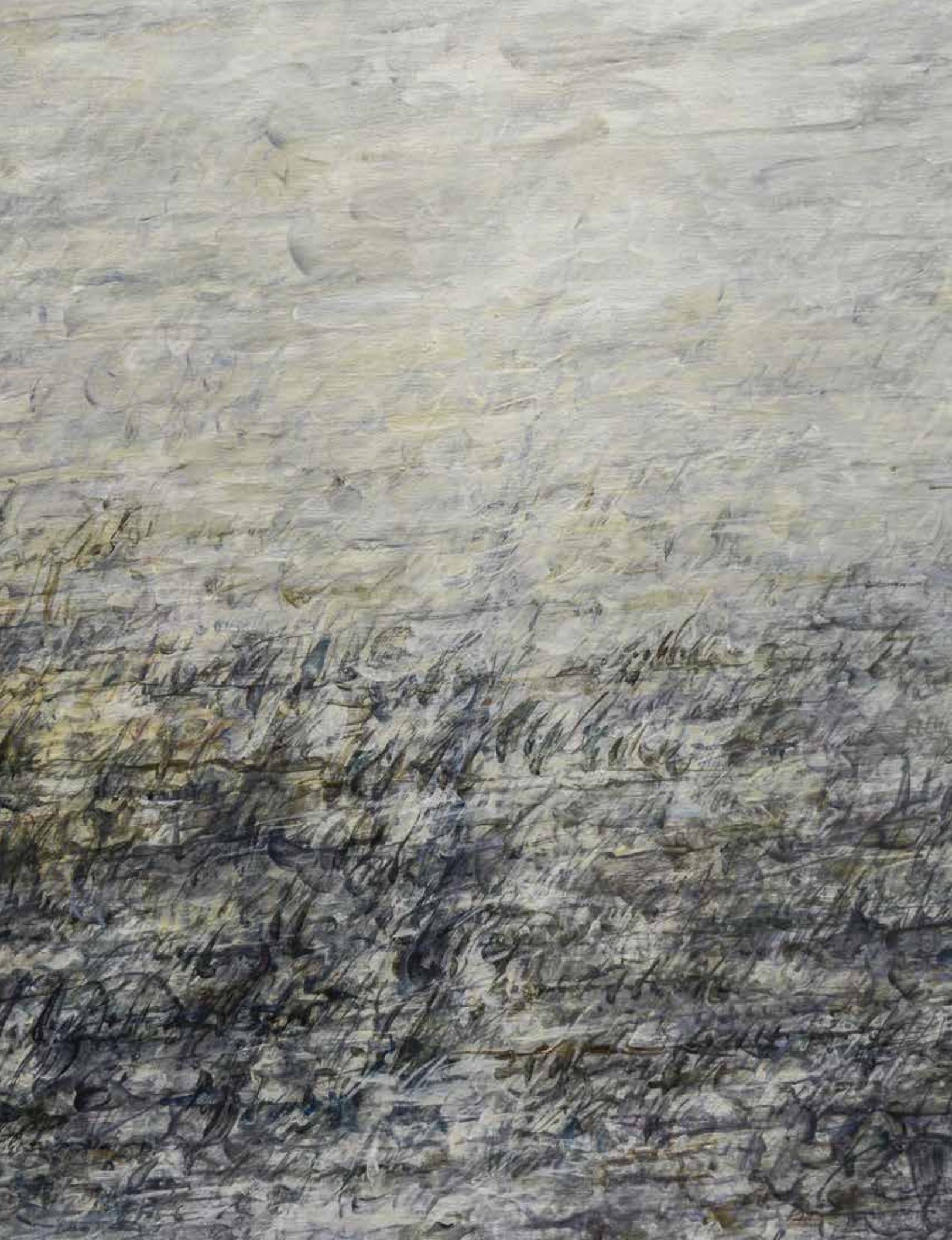


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劉國夫的虛筆
Phantom Brushstrokes of Liu Guofu

影痕的靈暈
THE AURA OF SHADOW TRACES

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謝飛 譯
Tran. by Jeff Crosby

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展覽前言

現代性繪畫的一切賭注就在于留下迷人呼吸的筆觸，繪畫的筆觸是一個藝術家給予世界的最美禮物，當我們看到劉國夫繪畫作品上迷人而迷離的筆觸，我們才真正感受到中國繪畫的魅力。

劉國夫接續了中國文化偉大的書寫性傳統，從倪瓚到龔賢，又與西方的抽象大師對話，與晚期塞尚與賈科梅蒂的筆法對話，形成了他自己的筆法與句法：恍惚叠加又如玉生烟的：如同虛化的影痕之虛筆。如此詩意的影痕，是存在的餘痕，也是書寫的「虛筆」：如夢似幻，如烟如玉，每一筆看似無用，祇是恍惚一下，但最後又生成出一種詩意的餘象。這是劉國夫發明的「虛筆」，形成了他繪畫的基本小句法，代表了當代中國虛薄藝術的卓越成就，讓我們看到了「中國式繪畫」真正的現代性品質與走向世界的可能性。

一旦我們接近劉國夫的作品，無論是了不起的《敞》系列還是《彌漫》系列，一旦我們的目光觸及畫面上的筆觸，都會被深深地吸引：裂變，冰片，碎片，無為，破壞，災變，脆弱，薄片，晶瑩，一次次叠加，形成了一種獨特的疊筆，擠壓中形成苔影或影痕般的靈暈厚度，看似薄透輕盈如烟，又透明厚實如玉，在這些影痕與虛筆中：風光水氣全彌漫其間，恍惚的影子，帶着迷影或幻影，迷離或出離，迷惑中尋找，還有着迷茫或蒼茫的隱痛。

劉國夫的繪畫改變了我們觀看的視角與感知方式，從近處看：所有筆觸都是凌亂，破碎，無序，躁亂，廢墟般，尋覓迷茫的；從遠處看：其筆觸叠加形成的却是虛靜，通透，詩意，玉質感，凝神呼吸着的；如此悖論的張力——凜冽的撕裂痛感與虛透的薄玉觸感——是通過一次次的摧毀又一次次的重構，反復繪畫而生成出來。這些作品讓我們看到了現代性審美純粹視覺的獨特貢獻，這是「反向重構」的靈暈，這是破壞中的生成。

這些筆觸看起來是虛的，但其實所有筆觸都是堅定的，如同冰片，寒冷，易碎，碎裂，這就是觀念，極為具有生命力觸感的觀念，體現出生命的觸感質地，或者如同廢墟一般，不是圖像的再現，而是辯證的筆法，是生命內在感受在更深層面的精神表達。畫面顏色呈現為黛藍色，這是中國文化最為美妙的色澤，是在時光的消逝與哀婉的餘留之間，在流散的飄零與歌咏的縈繞之間，在蒼茫的渾樸與透明的秀色之間，在悲情的哀怨與雄渾的激昂之間，所形成的心靈的色澤，這是真正意義上的中國色，看似抽象單色，但其實隱含着無數的其他色澤，并都被一種渾然的黛色籠罩着，富有迷人的詩意！

如同劉國夫自己所言：「每個人的筆觸：就是他留在世上的痕迹。這是精神性的痕迹：偉大的

倪瓚就是如此。」當然，劉國夫的繪畫也是如此。

本次展覽，是劉國夫2012年虛薄繪畫突破以來的第一個個展，以其「虛筆」與「虛色」的反向重構，化腐朽為神奇，擺脫藝術史的習規，以水墨的水性化解油畫的油性，同時消解與建構、既碎散又凝結，在碎散消逝中涵攝自然的永恒生發，光氣融合，結合「晶體」與「火焰」兩種詩意質感，其美麗的黛藍色，喚醒了自然的靈暈，是中國虛色美學的代表作品！



序言
虛筆：筆觸之為句法

來到繪畫面前，是什麼吸引你？繪畫如此簡單，就是坦露在畫面上的顏料，也許你可以從顏料中讀取一些現象，但現代性繪畫似乎還拒絕可讀的形象，顯現的僅僅是渾沌的痕迹或者「非形象」，因此，一切看似變得更為簡單了，繪畫被還原為顏料，或者顏料的某種運動，某種痕迹，這就是筆觸（touch, brushstroke）。

從顏料到顏料，是什麼賦予這堆物質以能量？讓你面對畫布上的這些物質迹象時，被其吸引？如何讓這些筆觸不再服從于圖像的再現，也非僅僅是肌理感的制作，而是使之具有透明的詩意、虛薄的呼吸與迷人的光暈？在一個圖像復制的時代，也許這是繪畫唯一要做的工作。

筆觸，這是一個人留在世界上的痕迹；繪畫的筆觸，是一個人給予世界的最美的迹象。呼吸的筆觸，則是一個世界的餘存。

西方古典繪畫不允許暴露筆觸，而是要保持繪畫的光潔面，可能直到倫勃朗，表現性的筆觸才開始深深打動我們，似乎我們依然還可以感受到那個畫面形象的呼吸，還可以感受到筆觸的顫動。而中國傳統書法與繪畫，則不然，似乎一開始就要暴露筆觸，留下個體書寫時的每一次痕迹，如果我們去看可能是最早的法帖，那陸機的《平復帖》，那傾斜翩翩的筆觸，「禿筆賊毫，火箸劃灰」，似乎是用一支禿筆所寫出來，帶有隸書刻刀的拙樸，還好像用火鉗所寫，或者以灰燼在紙上塗畫出來似的，無法平復的心，在每一道筆劃裏震顫着，後來王羲之的《姨母帖》與《喪亂帖》，還有顏真卿的《祭侄稿》，直到蘇軾的《寒食帖》，筆觸就是永遠還在燃燒的餘燼，在後世讀者的目光中被反復點燃。進入繪畫，從宋代山水畫對皴法的發現，到元代文人畫書寫的用筆，筆觸，一直是中國文化書寫意志的心迹。

那麼，為何畫家為何要留下書寫時的痕迹？這是個體痕迹的銘記？這是讓每一個消逝的瞬間變得燦爛？是面對缺席的深淵？每一筆書寫完就是告別，就是身體的缺席，因此筆觸是個體生命呼吸或性格的見證？或者這是面對虛無的勞作？哪怕是無意義的勞作？

進入現代性繪畫，印象派開始塗寫，無論是否受到東方書寫性的影響，筆觸開始出現，或者擬似物象，比如莫奈的《印象·日出》，直到晚期的塞尚，還有梵高更是發明了自己短小而旋轉的筆觸——這是藝術家自己的「小句法」，如同一個偉大音樂家最為迷人的一段樂音，一直會縈繞重複在其它的作品中，構成基本的心語，構成繪畫的最小單元或元素，不僅僅是西方表現主義留下筆觸，儘管依然服從于形象的情感表現力，後來的抽象繪畫也是如此，儘管很多是以觀念性，或者制作性，在畫面留下肌理感，比如奧爾巴赫與里希特等人，而在湯伯利那里，無論是早期的塗寫與塗畫數字與拼音字母，還是後期繪畫上旋轉如花的大筆觸，或者流淌下行的顏料痕迹，筆觸，構成現代性個體存在感的見證。

辨識筆觸，就是辨識一個畫家在這個世界上絕對唯一的存在性，就是肯定其不可複製的唯一性，這幾乎是繪畫抵禦圖像複製的最後賭注。

在中國現代性繪畫中，這也是為何晚期黃賓虹從「勾古法」走向幾乎「盲目地」塗塗寫寫，讓筆性與墨性在每一次書寫中有着差異，又有着因為空隙處的留白，而獲得黑白的韻律對比，但整體上既有着山水的造勢而局部筆觸又看似抽象，從而讓筆墨具有了現代性；這也是為何到了1960年代的趙無極，以「勾皴點染」的山水畫筆觸來畫抽象性的風景，充滿自然物象暗示但又凸凹起伏的筆觸形成了畫面上元氣淋漓與光氣融合的構圖，從而確定了中國式繪畫的基本運動軌迹，讓油畫具有水性，有着抽象性，但又保持自然的生發性，盡管1980年代的趙無極走向了色域抽象，放棄了自然意境的營造，一旦隨後的藝術家回到筆觸與意境更為深遠的關係上，中國式繪畫將走得更遠，因為面對個體的殘損與破碎，如何以更為古遠與古雅的時間性來拯救，如何重新轉化古典的意境，這還是未完成的任務。

直到劉國夫，在他以油畫畫出的筆觸上，我們才看到了「中國式繪畫」真正的現代性品質。一旦我們接近劉國夫的作品，一旦我們目光觸及這些筆觸，就會被深深地吸引：裂變，冰片，碎片，無為，破壞，災變，脆弱，薄片，一次次疊加，形成了一種獨特的疊筆，擠壓中形成苔影或影痕般的靈暈厚度，在這些影痕中：風光水氣全瀰漫其間，恍惚的影子，帶着迷影或幻影，迷離或出離，迷惑中尋找，還有着迷茫或蒼茫的隱痛。

「每個人的筆觸：就是他留在世上的痕迹。這是精神性的痕迹：偉大的倪瓚就是如此。」
——劉國夫如是說，劉國夫也如是而為。

劉國夫接續了中國文化偉大的書寫性傳統，從倪瓚到龔賢，又與西方的抽象大師對話，與晚期塞尚與賈科梅蒂的筆法對話，形成了他自己的筆法與句法：恍惚疊加又如玉生烟的：虛化的影痕。如此詩意的影痕，是存在的餘痕，也是書寫的「虛筆」：如夢似幻，如烟如玉，每一筆看似無用，祇是恍惚一下，但最後又生成出一種詩意的形象，這是劉國夫發明的「虛筆」，形成了他繪畫的基本小句法，代表了當代中國虛薄藝術的卓越成就。



1. 無用的筆觸 破壞中生成的影痕



柯羅風景畫(Corot, Landscape) 局部 (Detail)

如同波德萊爾在《現代生活的畫家》中所言，現代性審美不同于古典美學在于：乃是從短暫過渡與破碎消逝中，抽取或者觸發永恒！一幅現代性的繪畫作品，如果没有足够的對於殘碎與飄逝的肯定與表現，而且使之具有永恒感，否則就不具有現代性，無論是晚期塞尚在風景畫上如同壁毯或馬賽克一般被火焰點燃的筆觸，還是通布利晚期眩暈流散的筆觸，現代性審美要求我們要同時肯定個體生命的有限性與自然元素的永恒性，在中國當代繪畫中，要讓這永恒性生發出來，却又保持個體的殘碎感，還讓殘碎還獲得新的靈暈，這是劉國夫的繪畫。

劉國夫的作品，讓我們看到了現代性審美純粹視覺的獨特貢獻：這是「反向重構」的靈暈，這是破壞中的生成。近看：所有筆觸都是凌亂，破碎，無序，躁亂，廢墟般，尋覓迷茫的。遠看：其筆觸疊加形成的却是虛靜，通透，詩意，玉質感，凝神呼吸着的。如此悖論的張力——凜冽的撕裂痛感與虛透的薄玉觸感——是如何形成的呢？

這些筆觸如此美妙，又是如何形成的？一方面，是讓油畫具有水墨性的原理，又融入西方的水彩，如同現代性繪畫之伊始，柯羅在風景上做過的嘗試，柯羅的小幅風景畫上，似乎用水彩的畫法畫出了浸潤的筆觸與水氣的氛圍，而且樹體模糊潮濕，宛若水墨畫，當然晚期透納也畫出空氣中的水分也開始改變油畫的質地，但透納還是以光感的表現為主。而且他們都還是過于整體化，沒有充分接納殘碎，也缺乏薄透的生長性，劉國夫的作品充分接納了時間與未知，讓筆觸保持無盡的自然生長性。另一方面，則是在賈科梅蒂與龔賢之間對話，前者在反復消解筆觸中生成出相似性的魂魄，後者反復積墨法逼出畫面的潔淨白光，劉國夫的影痕或幻影之筆，看似破壞，但每一筆都餘留在畫面上，却產生了疊韻之美，錯疊之韻，這是「虛筆」的詩意。

這些筆觸看起來是虛的，但其實所有筆觸都是堅定的，如同冰片，寒冷，易碎，碎裂，這就是



賈科梅蒂晚期油畫作品局部
(Giacometti, late oil painting)



賈科梅蒂，《卡洛琳》，油畫
(Giacometti, Caroline, oil painting)

觀念，極為具有生命力觸感的觀念，體現出生命的觸感質地，或者如同廢墟一般，不是圖像的再現，而是脫離了現實，在更深層面的精神的感覺化。

藝術之為藝術，在劉國夫看來，其價值不在于成規與習氣，下筆之中，沒有一筆是別人用過的，而是未知的。所謂擺脫畫史的習氣，形成自己的風格語言，但不同于其他人，他們總是傾向于建構，反復建構，劉國夫則是破壞與解構——二者同時進行：越是破壞，越是建構；看似廢墟，却是生長。這是內在精神的投射，如同元代的倪瓚：其折帶皴看似斷斷續續，充滿苦澀，但却有着無盡的生長性。

同時性的破壞與建構，或者同時解構（destruction）與建構（reconstruction）的手法，具有極為重要的意義：一方面，面對了現代性的破碎與殘損，但又有着建構；另一方面，即避免了虛無主義的頹敗，又避免了古典主義的單純建構，而是讓二者保持同時性的顯現，一方并不排斥另一方，祇有現代人才如此肯定自身的雙重存在：既是如此有限與必死的（人類的身體與欲望），又是如此具有無限永恒性（來自于自然的隱秘生長性與力量），但二者不可能分離，必須同時顯現，這是一種真正意義上的現代性審美，在晚期塞尚那裏，在後期賈科梅蒂，在晚期湯伯利，都是如此。祇是劉國夫的繪畫，更為徹底：每一筆，而且無數筆，都是破碎，但都一一餘留在那裏，都可以看得到，都可以觸摸到，却又走向了光潔與生長性，這些餘留的筆觸還在透明的呼吸着，彼此還在碰觸，還在觸發着。儘管賈科梅蒂也是分解形體，但並沒有走向自然的生長性，還是服從于某一個形象的明確建構，而裏希特的風景畫也過于影像寫實化，帶來了錯覺，但不夠夢幻也不夠詩意流動，不夠「虛化」，還是太寫實；而湯伯利的流淌與結晶



里希特的風景畫(G.Richter, Landscape)



里希特的聖母領報局部(G.Richter, Visations, detail)

在形式上也過於誇張，過於悲劇性的宣泄，也許有着西方現代性審美「淨化」的品質，但在中國人眼裏，依然不夠柔軟，不夠靈動，不夠微妙。

看似破壞，祇是無為性與無目的的，看似一片片的廢墟，但整個畫面却充滿了生機，那些隱約浮現的物象，樹枝與樹幹，都還在生長，這就不同于本雅明在《歷史哲學論綱》中對克利新天使的思考，本雅明認為天使看到的是一個廢墟在升高的時代，看到的是堆積着尸骸的災難的，天使試圖停下來喚醒死者與修補生機的碎片，隨着廢墟的堆高，天使也被天堂的風所吹升，這才是歷史的進步。但對於劉國夫的繪畫，廢墟是廢墟，但廢墟也可以生長，作為災變的廢墟如何重新獲得生長性？面對廢墟如何逆轉？使之具有生長性？如何把化腐朽為神奇？

在自然景色中的生長性乃是救贖的隱含密碼，這也是阿多諾在《審美理論》中試圖發現却一直語焉不詳的，因為祇有有着漫長自然的生發性的中國藝術一直保護着自然的密碼，就是面對變化無常還能夠觸發生機，面對烟雲變滅還有着勃勃生機，氣韻生動乃是面對了支離破碎而萌發的，才是真正的鮮活。

在劉國夫的畫室裏，他最為喜歡的，也每日觀看的，乃是米氏父子的米氏雲烟，尤其是米友仁的《瀟湘奇觀圖》長卷，他相信，宋代山水畫正是因為出現了米氏父子對烟雲的表現，才克服了宋代過於寫真的衝動，讓自然的生機得到了最為充分的表現，看似群山懵懂與樹影依稀，但山石骨感與氣格却又雄偉而柔媚，「石如雲動」與「雲如石根」，一種辯證的筆法，一種詩意生長的筆法，已經被劉國夫領悟到了，而要使之以油畫的筆觸實現出來，這還是無人進行過的工作！

而且，還是用此腐朽敗落來呈現高貴神奇！從1985年以來的中國現代性繪畫，都基本上是化神奇為腐朽，或者說是一種反崇高的美學，這是接續美國波普藝術而來的傾向，一些具有現代情緒的風景畫也還主要是表達敗壞與腐蝕的形態，一種糜腐與敗壞的虛無氣息縈繞在這些風景畫上，基即便一些藝術家試圖回到中國傳統山水畫的自然虛淡上，但又過於簡單，都無力——「化腐朽為神奇」，而在劉國夫的作品上，我們却看到了如此的反向工作，既要畫出衰敗與殘損，又要畫出高貴與不可摧毀的美感。

一旦整個繪畫都還原為筆觸，如何用筆觸思考？筆觸在尋找，筆觸在呼吸，筆觸乃是生命的根性，筆觸乃是生命的痕迹，保持筆觸的未知，還不是哲學概念的投射，因為這是破壞的筆觸。甚至，劉國夫認為自己的繪畫還極其抽象：因為剛開始之際，這些筆觸乃是無目的性的，非建設性的，如同抽象繪畫的作畫方式，但又不可能走向西方式抽象，否則這又會落入到習規之中。但是，奇妙的是，這些看似無意義的筆觸，在幾十遍的書寫疊加之後，形象就不同了，漸



米友仁《瀟湘奇觀圖卷》(Mi Youren, Cloudy Mountains, ink on paper)

漸浮現出來，儘管并不建構具體的明確形象，最後却又有一個形象生成出來，這是奇妙之處：生成出來的僅僅是「餘象」：既抽象又具象，因為如果抽象的筆觸落入抽象形式——這就是俗套了。

對於劉國夫而言，一個藝術家如果能夠提供與美術史不同的一點點貢獻就足够了，如同培根所言，這也是德勒茲在《感覺的邏輯》中反復強調的，藝術唯一的責任是不要庸俗！即，不要落入「俗套」！一落俗套，藝術即喪失了偶發性與生成性，成為可以複製的物件。但沒有什麼比這個更為困難的了，對於已有上千年的繪畫歷史而言，對於一個天天畫畫的畫家而言，一上手就是俗套，就是習規。如何區別於其他人？對於劉國夫，其藝術語言的貢獻，其區別於他人之處，就在于：以看似抽象虛無的筆觸却建構起一個無盡生長的餘象。

這些筆觸處於模糊的暗示之中：有着隱秘的生命疼痛，內部的撕裂感，乃至撕碎感，但如此暴露又如此包藏：在反復疊加筆觸之後，一切都獲得了薄紗一般的朦朧詩意。繪畫需要幻覺，離開了幻覺，不再有藝術，但又不是人為制造的幻覺或錯覺，比如古典繪畫的深度錯覺，立體派的二維半，又不是抽象表現主義的純粹平面，而是有着深度，但又被輕輕遮掩，在平面上產生薄紗的疊印，但又保持了平面的平面性。劉國夫的幻化虛筆乃是充滿了詩意夢幻的筆觸！

劉國夫的作品，在視覺影像上的疊印，無數筆觸餘影的錯疊，帶來了傳統水墨的細微呼吸，又有着視覺殘影的時間餘痕，里希特的繪畫還是過於寫實與具體，而劉國夫的作品在餘影的婆娑輕微震蕩與朦朧的詩意之間，所謂「若染渾成綺，雲漫便成紗。」消解形體却留下筆觸的細節，對應于傳統的烟影之氣息，更為靈動，是自然色暈與光暈的降臨。

就如同劉國夫自己所言：「是藝術領着你走，一道筆觸催生另一道筆觸。而非相反。」

讓我們跟隨這些筆觸，與之一道呼吸，與之一道生長，與之一道感應萬物的韻致。



降臨/Descent

2012
布面油彩/oil on canvas
120x90cm



冷山/Cold Mountain

2012
布面油彩/oil on canvas
120x90cm



敞1 / Open Space No.1

2012
布面油彩/oil on canvas
200x250cm





2. 眩暈的書寫與《敞》的出場 現代性審美的發生

現代性藝術開始于面對未知與深淵，而一旦面對深淵，藝術不可能獲得形式，祇能保持深淵前面的眩暈感。眩暈（syncope）：乃是面對混沌（chaos）的旋轉或翻卷，面對眩暈，還能夠獲得某種形式，非形式的形式，還能夠賦予深淵以形式，這是藝術的開始。

眩暈，乃是古典繪畫基本上不去面對與不去表現的生命元現象，無論是古希臘羅馬時代之高貴的單純與靜穆的偉大，還是文藝復興繪畫的焦點透視與明暗法，都是趨向于穩定堅固，並且與敘事性對應，如同傳統形而上學追求真理的明證性。但是在浪漫主義之後，進入現代性，隨着上帝死去或者退隱，隨着全知全能視角的喪失，盡管有着所謂福柯敞景監獄式的政治控制，但藝術恰好是對這政治主權的反抗。因為藝術家最為徹底地感受到，世界已經進入黑夜，新的混沌已經被打開，世界的無根據狀態（unground）暴露出來，藝術首先就是凝視這無限敞開的深淵與虛無：但這又祇能導致眩暈，導致無休止的喧囂與躁動，却不可能消除此混沌帶來的眩暈。

二十世紀的哲學乃是對混沌的發現與思考，或者去思考混沌的不可能性，因為思考也喪失了自身合法性的根基，思想不可能如同古典的理性與本體論神學了，思想自身已經處于迷茫與迷思、迷途與混雜之中，不斷在混沌中面對自身的不確定性與不可決斷性，面對思想本身的深淵與「非真理」，對「非真理」的發現，但又不能陷入虛無主義，這正是對思想本身的考驗。

當然，這首先是尼采打開了混沌與虛無主義的大門，海德格爾打開了死亡的深淵，德勒茲發現了混沌與不可覺察的地帶，巴特陶醉于欲望自戀的瘋狂，德里達發現了不確定的虛所（chora），等等。

而現代性藝術，甚至比哲學，最為徹底經驗到了這個絕境（aporia）或者吊詭（witz）。這也是為何二十世紀哲學與藝術的聯系表現為哲學家們不得不去思考繪畫藝術，裏爾克的詩歌寫作因為1907年面對塞尚的繪畫，最早地打開了那個不可見的內在靈魂世界，《杜伊若哀歌》不過是面對不可見的可怕天使與死亡幽谷的眩暈。哲學家們當然都面對了一個個「不可思之思」，如果不陷入不思的處境，就祇能借助于藝術的中介來思：思之不可思——海德格爾思考梵高作品上的大地，不可見之可見性——梅洛-龐蒂與米歇爾·亨利思考塞尚的深度與康定斯基的顏色，不可表達之表達——利奧塔思考欲望的無意識話語以及紐曼的崇高，不可觸之觸——南希與德里達思考觸感，不可寫之寫——德里達思考書寫技術的幽靈化以及素描的盲視，不可欲之欲——羅蘭·巴爾特思考湯伯利（twombly）自戀書寫的不可能性，不可通之通——這是吾人要展開的中國藝術的困境，等等。

正是因為藝術面對了不可思與不可表達，還要去表達，還要通過繪畫來思，還要在表達中保持對那個不可表達之謎的思想，這就是藝術的吊詭與悖論之處，藝術還要賦予這深淵的眩暈以形式——這勢必改變所有已有的形式，因此，筆觸的狂亂與攪轉，滴灑與塗寫的新手法就出現了。



塞尚晚期油畫，《黑色城堡》
[Cézanne, 1904 - 06 Le Château Noir]



賈科梅蒂，《卡洛琳》，油畫局部
[Giacometti, Caroline, oil painting]

在繪畫作品上，祇有呈現出眩暈感的才是天才，是否經驗到眩暈，乃是繪畫天才性的絕對標志。

塞尚晚期的風景畫，整個畫面如同火焰一般炙熱地氣氛，筆觸越來越模糊恍惚，似乎向着遠方的聖·維克多山不止息涌動着。莫奈晚期的睡蓮也是進入燃燒的混溶之中，幾乎看不到形體。梵高的自畫像上背景處的筆觸也是回旋着的，似乎要把這個自我吞噬，梵高的向日葵也是對此炙熱旋轉的獻祭姿態，這都是對眩暈的被動性經驗。接續梵高如此瘋狂的則是阿爾托的素描與自畫像。隨後，哪怕是康定斯基在進入抽象之際，畫面綫條也開始了眩暈，祇有眩暈才可能去除已有的形象或物象，才可能走向抽象。到了賈科梅蒂的雕塑與繪畫，畫面上無數細碎的筆觸最後形成的肖像似乎是被黑暗的背景所吞噬着，越來越玄暗，越來越接近于鬼魂一般的顯臨（epiphany）。培根繪畫上疊加的面孔也是旋轉糾集着的。到了湯伯利，依然如此，無論是早期的塗寫還是晚期的無題與玫瑰系列上，玫瑰形體以大筆綫條的旋轉與攪轉來表現，就是對混沌的瘋狂擁抱，如同玫瑰花委身于夢幻的幻象，在不可避免的衰敗與挽留中撕扯着自身。

即便面對混沌而眩暈，現代性的繪畫也傳達出了面對混沌而眩暈的「形式」語言，這正是吊詭之處，即吊詭表現為：世界是無根基的深淵，但凝視深淵，却既要保持對深淵的關注，又要不被深淵吞噬，還賦予其「非形式的形式」（inform, uniform, deform等等）。這正是藝術的魅力，也是對藝術家最為至高的挑戰：塞尚疑惑着，莫奈眼睛模糊了，梵高割耳與自殺，波洛克滴灑與酗酒，羅斯科與紐曼自殺，祇是在湯伯利那裏，通過回到自然的自由書寫，似乎避開了深淵的毀滅性衝動。如何面對深淵或者混沌而不陷入毀滅的瘋狂——這對於西方藝術家也許是異常困難的。



迷墙/ Enigmatic Wall

2006
布面油彩/ oil on canvas
2mX1.6m



异景之二/Alien Realm

2011
布面油彩/ oil on canvas
150cm×180cm

劉國夫的作品在當代繪畫中，從早期有關西藏主題的《迷牆》系列上，那個背對着我們、瘋狂奔向遠方的僧人形象，就是被遠方神秘的靈光所吸引，身體被一種旋風般的精神所引導，無法自我控制，似乎陷入了精神的恍惚與迷惑之中，要去穿越那遮擋了秘密的高強；進入2006年左右的《異境》系列則是畫面上的樹枝被一種恍惚不定的光芒所拂過，總是有一種無名的憂鬱與感傷的氛圍縈繞在畫面上，正是這種氛圍讓觀看者的目光不可能固定，而是帶有一種迷離與迷茫的詩意之美。

而進入2012年，劉國夫開始畫出自己新的《敞》系列作品，一個更為明確的深淵，一種更為奇妙的眩暈感來臨了。在名為《敞2》的2012年作品上，我們可以看到，畫面中間有着一個敞開的環帶空間，一個似乎坍塌出來的凹陷，一個神秘的運動場，一個氣息涌動的深淵被打開了，似乎一個宇宙的能量場被發現出來，一切都會落入其間，一切也可以從中涌出，或者如同黑洞，或者如同灰洞，在周邊有着事件即將發生。在畫面中間傾斜着，似乎還可能旋轉，因為其不穩定，導致了眩暈，這是繪畫重新進入了渾沌，這是藝術家要發明自己的「渾沌類」，如同德勒茲在《什麼是哲學的》結尾所言，保持渾沌的涌現，但又生成出可能的形態，此旋轉的環帶，似乎是一個盟約，一個環狀戒指，讓筆觸在不止息地涌動與可能的形態中間，保持張力：既要涌動又要凝結，既要光感如柱又要氣感衝蕩，這是繪畫之新的開始！

這是形成了一座能量「場」（field），也是「敞」（open）開了一個視覺的場域，漢語本身提供了如此巧妙的回響：而這正是一個原初直覺的宇宙混沌（chaosmos）的發現，是德勒茲與海德格爾都試圖打開的一個不可覺察的地帶：生命要回到此源頭，視覺要重新萌發，從不可見到可見，從不可感到可感，從非對象性中自身涌動出可能的樣態！它還是繪畫平面自身的敞開：這是一個懸空的無維度，不是二維平面與三維錯覺，而是帶有四維時間性生發，但回到自然的原初涌動，在維度之前的那個渾沌之中，一切都從中涌動出來，一切都還保持着這種原初涌動的光波。畫面上的萬物形態，并非某一種具體的物象，而是「光波」回響與回旋時的擴散所臨時的匯聚。而且是柔和的環舞，這是海德格爾在沉思荷爾德林的詩歌與闡釋《荷爾德林的天空與大地》時所期待的節日的環舞，柔和的節慶，這個光帶隱微地在畫面上環舞着，而且筆觸的呼吸與鮮活，如同薄薄的烟嵐，如同輕紗在曼舞。也是詩人里爾克在晚期的《杜伊若哀歌》與《奧爾弗斯的十四行詩》所歌咏的那個詩意的敞開，對於劉國夫，這是來自于自然的詩意生成！

這個環狀帶，如同一道靈性的光圈，或者一道神秘的項鏈玉帶，宛若一條幾千年時光打磨過的玉帶，一種虛薄的玉質感觸發了新的觸感，此玉質的環帶一直在劉國夫的作品上約隱約現着與敞開着（比如隨後的《敞2》，《敞15》與《敞16》，《彌漫5》與《彌漫7》等等），這個環帶是一個繪畫世界的重心。從重心處涌動着氣流與光帶，整個畫面就被一種渾然流動的氣息所



敞2 / Open Space No.2

2012
布面油彩/oil on canvas
200x250cm





敞16 / Open Space No.16

2013
布面油彩/oil on canvas
95x167cm





弥漫5 / Pervading No.5

2014
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
150x130cm

充滿，此中間的凹陷處，涌動出無數的波浪與波光一般的暖流，源源不斷，似乎那是生命的源泉被挖掘出來了。

而且，畫面顏色呈現為黛藍色，這是中國文化最為美妙的色澤，是在時光的消逝與哀婉的餘留之間，在流散的飄零與歌咏的縈繞之間，在蒼茫的渾樸與透明的秀色之間，在悲情的哀怨與雄渾的激昂之間，所形成的心靈的色澤，此種色調，也是真正意義上的中國色，看似抽象單色，但其實隱含着無數的其他色澤，赭色與灰色，藍色與青色，但都被一種渾然的黛色籠罩着，富有迷人的詩意！

自此，劉國夫發現了生命的能量場，一個個氣團似乎也是對中國山水畫米氏雲烟的轉換，這是一種化解形體的感受力，把「氣感」與「光感」融合起來，把水墨的元素性與油畫的元素性不可思議地融合起來了。整個畫面的生命體如同火焰在跳躍，如同丹田在呼吸。

「藝術即是反復尋找。用圖象、用士氣、用精神。總之要反常規。藝術即創造。」

——劉國夫如是說！他藝術發展的幾個階段也是如是所為！



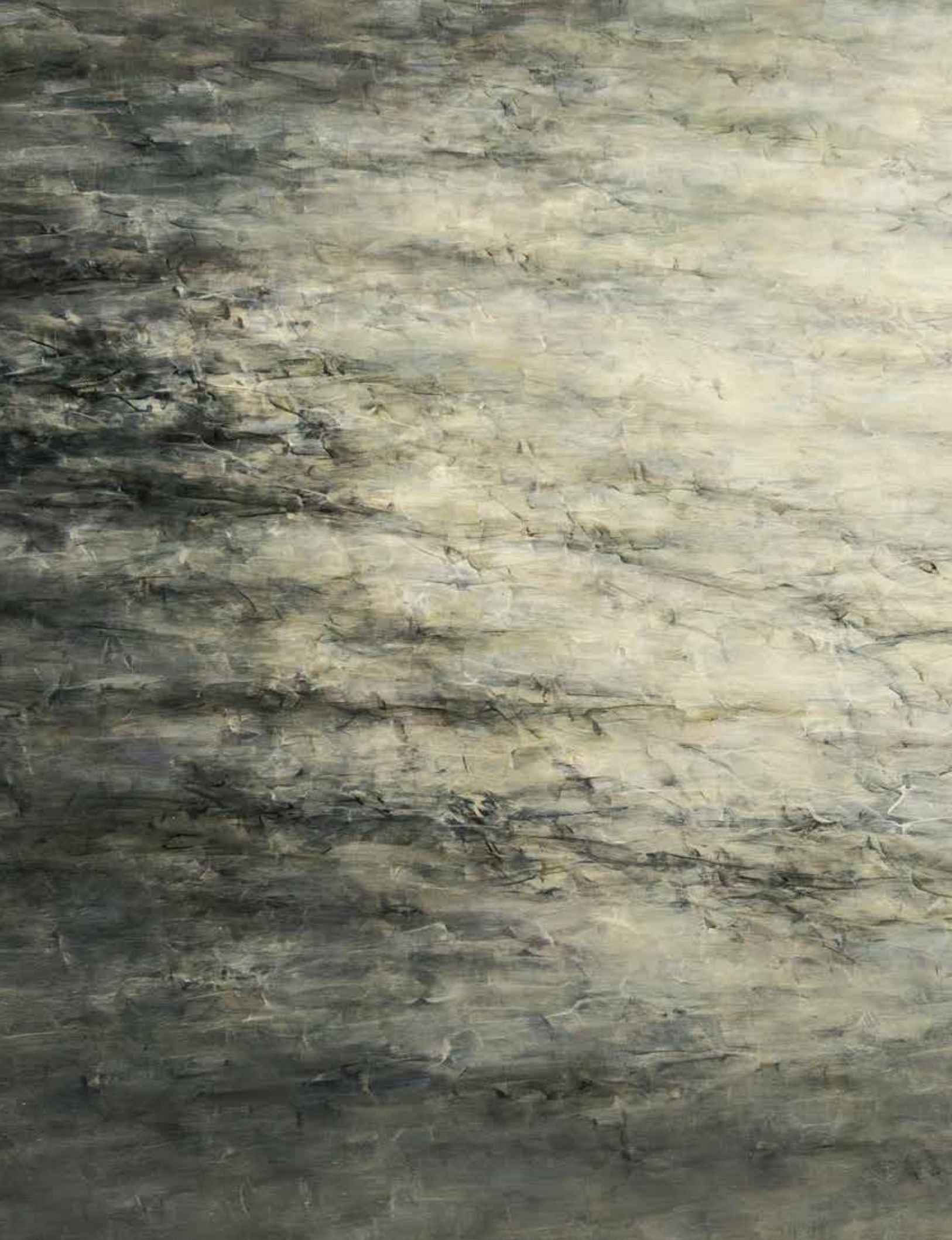
冷山3 /Cold Mountain No.3

2012
布面油彩/oil on canvas
120x90cm



彌漫7 / Pervading No.7

2015
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
180x150cm



3. 觸感的轉化 從油性到水性

迷墙/ Enigmatic Wall

2003
布面油彩/ oil on canvas
80x80cm



獨白之七/Monologue 7

2010
布面油彩/ oil on canvas
180x150cm



劉國夫的筆觸如何生成出來？他的繪畫之前已經經歷過三個階段：

首先，是2001年以來名為《迷牆》的西藏組畫系列中那個個體性的喇嘛形象。這是對西藏異域的印象中，在對一種佛光或聖潔靈性之光的苦苦尋覓中，所生發出來的。這個個體倉惶無路，但又堅定頑強，作為一個漂泊者與多餘人，但因為有着對聖潔精神之光的向往，徹底地被一種尖銳的光芒所牽引，畫面因此打開了一個內在靈魂的徹照空間。從一開始，劉國夫對光的感受就異常敏感。這個階段主要從圖象，從青春記憶上尋找那未知之光。畫面呈現出一種很復雜的影像化的虛象，看似半透明的毛玻璃的觸感，似乎是遙遠的記憶被時光阻隔了，但藝術就是要穿越此阻隔。

其次，則是2004-2006以來這個個體形象開始退出場景，讓心靈的空間被那一道道佛光瞬間掃過，但與自然之光融合起來，在朦朧而淡薄的晨曦或者黃昏一般的光綫基調中，自然世界的那種餘光得以挽留。這個階段的劉國夫無疑還有着里希特感光膠片式的那種懷舊感，但虛薄的光感更為單純了。

其三，則是2007-2011年這段時間，超越之前的西藏組畫，打開了更為廣闊的自然景色，畫出了《獨白》與《異境》等系列，更為回到自然之物在敗落與繁盛之間掙扎的那個時刻，進入難分難捨的糾結氛圍，強化油畫語言本身的表現力，加強局部肌理以及書寫性的筆觸，並且結合了光感與氣感，內心的獨白與靈異的風景，以書寫性的筆觸結合了二者，是對趙無極1970年代繪畫更為表現性與生命情感的強化。畫面或繁複激烈而深情，或瀕臨絕境而峻急，都是在驚鴻一瞥之中把握事物消逝而充滿悲情的瞬間，或描繪殘枝敗柳凋落而不屈燃燒之間的張力。

這個中間階段主要從筆法、中國文化的抒情傳統，從文人化的審美趣味以及整體氛圍的營造上進行。

而這之後，則是2012年走向虛薄空靈的繪畫，進入了繪畫之新的階段，則是從精神上進入深淵，更加深沉與內在，體驗隱秘的痛感，這不僅僅是劉國夫自己的新階段，而是利用水墨性滲透或滲染的原理，改造了油畫的品性：藝術家回到宋代蒼茫渾厚的意境，以層層滲染的中國水墨性原理帶入油畫，畫出帶有透明玉質感或包漿的色質感，接續晚明金陵畫家龔賢，畫出了名為《敞》的系列作品，萬象森然的林間空地中有着氣化的無限生機，筆觸還在生長之中；而一個環狀的開口形態所打開的是一個渾然飽滿，玉光充溢的神秘場域。

要把油畫往前推進一步或哪怕半步都是異常困難的，在無數的杰作與老大師面前，這門所謂已經熟透的語言，哪里還有着可能性？這也是為什麼二十世紀後半葉西方基本上要放棄繪畫，走向了概念藝術。里希特結合圖像攝影技術與繪畫，帶給繪畫一種新的視覺感，加強了油畫自身的表現力；而湯伯利以其詩意的個體性狂寫把整個詩性傳統簡化為綫條與色彩的旋轉，把油畫的色彩帶入新的極致。



惡之花之九/ Flowers of Evil 9

2011
布面油彩/oil on canvas
100x80cm

但對於一個中國畫家呢？油畫不僅僅是材質的感受力與圖像的力量，也不僅僅是色差的對比與感覺的張力，而是在可見與不可見之間的遊戲，在可通與不可觸之間的轉化，是對材質本身的絕對強化或弱化，劉國夫面對了這個挑戰，如果油畫語言是堆積的，每一次的筆痕都會被後來的筆觸覆蓋，顏料會顯得厚重，如同蘇丁（Soutine）和奧爾巴赫（F. Auerbach）等富有表現主義力量的藝術家所為，但如果「反向」使用，僅僅祇是平塗呢，繪畫又回不可避免走向圖式化，缺乏顏料的質感與油畫味道！保持「反向」的運作，越是以油畫顏料去畫很多遍，反而越來越「薄」，但給觀眾的視覺感受却還是異常「虛厚」，這個同時性地不斷增加又不斷減少的方式，感覺的張力不斷被反轉的重構方式，有着什麼樣的繪畫之道？並且帶來了什麼樣的藝術形式語言？劉國夫2012年以來名為《敞》系列的作品，可以啟發我們思考這個「反向重構」藝術方式的重要性。

要有油畫味，要有着油性，但又完全不是西方繪畫已經有過的那種油畫味，無論是寫實的光滑，還是抽象表現的筆觸，無論是顏料堆積的厚度還是平塗的平面感，要聞到油畫的味道，但又有着中國文化水性的虛靈，這如何可能？劉國夫做到了，虛薄的繪畫自此可能！

中國現代性繪畫，尤其是油畫，一直在所謂的油畫的民族化與油畫的中國性之間糾纏，其實面對油畫顏料的質料感，面對油畫能量的生命釋放，面對形式語言發明的挑戰，從觸感出發，從材質



塞尚晚期水彩
[Cézanne, Late Water Color]



塞尚晚期水彩
[Cézanne, Late Water Color]

本身更為深層的能量轉化出發，讓光感的材質接納氣感，讓粘滯的油性接納滲透的水性，讓具象或抽象的形式保持在虛薄的過渡生長之中，並且具有詩意的韻致，這是中國藝術要打開的新感覺地帶。

劉國夫的繪畫改變了油畫的本性，使之具有了東方性的美感：一層層透明的疊加，讓覆蓋性的油畫在水性稀釋中留下了筆觸，所有筆觸都在畫布上，一次次透明疊加，每一次都在，每一筆很肯定！但并不遮沒，因為其虛薄的透明度，反復後，所有之前的筆觸還都在那裏，却又彼此重疊着，很多畫家下筆肯定其筆觸却被後來的筆觸所堅硬地覆蓋了！有人畫得很虛——却祇是簡單地虛而平薄已，如何畫很多遍，看似有着厚度，却還是如此虛薄，這是新的技藝。因為每一次下筆時以薄的油性上去，上面與下面的色層落上去又是明確的，看似隨意其實在招式中。一筆一筆相互呼應，擠出白邊，不是畫綫，而是疊印出來。不同力度感的筆觸，疊印成靈氛，婆婆多姿，搖曳生情。筆從不洗，用筆從不簡單地塗掃，無數筆觸形成可能的樣態，是浮動的生長性在引導着筆觸的生成！

其次，則是對顏料與顏色的化解，就是要徹底改變油性的質地：

首先，油性與水性的關係，這也是塞尚晚期面對的問題。進入20世紀的塞尚，因為持久地面對自



敞21 / Open Space No.21

2014
布面油彩/oil on canvas
110x160cm

然之後，開始以水彩來捕獲自然的生動性，大量的水彩風景畫與靜物畫，如同美國批評家夏皮羅在關於塞尚的水彩畫時所高度評價的，是自然的、詩意的與抒情的，是天才的流露，塞尚一直希望在油畫上傳達出水彩的這種自然生動性，但苦於時間不夠，而且如何以油畫畫出水彩的虛薄與透明感？那些《大浴女》難道不應該沐浴在自然的水氣與光綫中？不應該更為透明與虛薄？我們已經在相關的作品上看到了塞尚的這些努力，但一直不夠明確，而且對後來的影響也甚微！儘管塞尚是西方現代藝術之父，但似乎從立體派開始，更多是形式語言的抽取上，比如所謂的圓柱體與立方體，而就材質本身的自然化，虛薄化，却被西方遺忘了，關鍵問題在於：西方後來的繪畫過於受到如下幾個方面的影響了：一個是走向影像技術化，修拉的點彩畫已經開始，儘管其素描如此虛薄，哪怕後來的里希特的膠片式繪畫，如此薄透，但還是過於寫實，關鍵是祇是平塗式油畫，油畫本身的氣息服從於圖像的薄透質感了；一個是走向形式抽象語言，這是從畢加索到抽象表現主義，都是如此，以抽象反對自然，當然喪失了自然元素的變化與渾然的氣息；一個是走向概念藝術，概念的瞬間想法或者社會批判，遺忘了人心與自然的感懷，遺忘了身體與自然的原初聯系。而如果有著中國式繪畫，有著繪畫的再次回歸，這是讓繪畫塞尚面對的問題上，如何更為自然的表現自然的自然性？油性向着水性的回歸，是一個可能性，這是生命觸感的改變。

其次，透明的疊加：油畫加不上你覆蓋性的，多次反復後，一般之前的筆觸無法留不來，但劉國夫的筆觸都留下來了，所有筆觸都在那，這種透明疊加的方式，每一次都在，但每一次之前的筆觸都被之後的遮沒，反復後，却還都在，却又重疊着，既虛透，又厚實，因為多次的疊加，祇是如同疊加透明的絹紗，有人虛了祇是虛而已，而要如此的「厚」又如此的「薄」——這才是技術，虛薄的繪畫其實有著高超的技藝，要求藝術家反向使用技術，從手感與筆觸上發現自己的技術。

再其次，就色層而言，一筆下去，上面與下面的色層在對比上，落上去又是明確的，形成透明的平面深度空間。但此空間，並非西方意義上的空間與錯覺，有著幻象與錯疊，但又不是依靠拼貼而來，而是就油性本身在反復疊加中，形成一層層薄透的、呼吸着的空間，如同唐代「六層紗衣見紅痣」，或「若染渾成綺，雲漫便成紗」的詩意，如此表淺，但又如此豐腴，如此漂浮，但又如此雋永，有著南方皎月映照紗窗、而映照在懷念或者做夢者的美麗面孔上的透明色層那種詩意。古典詩意以如此破碎分解的方式重現，這也是其內在感人的力量所在。

當然，這些筆觸也是以書寫性的方式進行的，借用中國文化的草書筆法，畫面上不僅僅畫出生長的樹枝，而且還有烟氣繚漫的水草，在草寫與草木內在的元素性的感通上，劉國夫的一些作品，比如《繚漫3》等作品，每一筆都似乎是草寫出來，整個畫面因為此潦草或者倪瓚所言的逸筆草草，而一直保持了生動性，還有，就是畫面的毛茸茸觸感，如同王原祁所言，畫山水畫要毛，所謂的「毛」就是筆觸保持着自然擬似的生動性觸感，似乎筆觸還在生長！似乎筆觸伸手可及，正



彌漫3 / Pervading No.3

2013
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
120x300cm





劉國夫工作室 (Studio of Liu Guofu)



劉國夫工作室 (Studio of Liu Guofu)

是這種誘人的觸感才是繪畫的誘惑。而這是來自于自然的生長性與誘惑，而非來自于人類的欲望，這也是自然生動的詩意所具有的現代性意義——化解我們日常的欲望，使之回復到自然的生長性上，保持了欲望的活力，但不陷入欲望的虛妄！這種書寫的生長性，不同于曾梵志等人的「亂筆」，那祇是一味地重復用一種筆觸或者過于寬大的形狀，其實還是西方式用筆，並沒有中國文化筆觸的微妙性與細微的生長性，還是欲望的燃燒，而劉國夫的筆觸，在亂草與枯木之間，看似衰敗與凋零，却有着內在生長的不可抑制地趨勢！帶有時間的荒寒感，如同荒草的廢墟感，但此廢墟却因為筆觸吸取了混沌的力量，依然保持了自身的生長性。

最後，這些筆觸，還有着巴赫音樂的節奏。酷愛音樂，也是音樂高端發燒友的劉國夫，整日在畫室中，與古典音樂為伴，無論是巴赫，還是貝多芬的音樂，都被轉化到筆觸之中了，也許巴赫賦格與卡農的節奏與復調性與草寫的自然模狀巧妙融合了，如果我們去仔細觀看，或者傾聽，畫面上的那些凝固了的樹幹，就如同音柱，而那些在風中婆娑的樹枝，有着搖曳的節奏。離開了節奏不會有藝術，時常枯坐幾小時的畫家，就是傾聽古典的音樂，讓自己單獨與偉大的靈魂交流！

繪畫的涉事乃是與音樂建立隱秘的關係，而這個隱秘的關聯來自于——節奏！在劉國夫看來，音樂是非常抽象的，但對於心智高的人又非常具象：因為其中有着普世的生命情感。如同以抽象形式呈現具體的生命力感。如同畫布上的筆觸，看似亂筆，其實在似與不似之間，祇是局部變亂，但每一筆都異常明確，以堅定的筆觸塑造柔軟模糊的東西！

怎麼賦予筆觸以節奏？這包括：靈動，變化，生長，想象，還有面對現實的陌生或抽象性，最後，則是回到個體對生命的感悟。言符本身沒有意義，但在音樂家的組合中獲得了意感，以一種超現實的魔力，產生了差異的形態，不同于現實的意味。劉國夫的筆觸就是如此，如同音樂化解聲音，繪畫則是如何釋放顏料的能量，以自由與散亂的筆觸，形散神不散，保持不可控，但却又有着靈動；富于變化，畫了幾十遍次，每次都不一樣，却有着疊韻。保持生長，畫面總是漫延與瀰漫着一種詩意的氛圍；在筆觸的支離破碎與凝結與之感之中，又有着生命的情感；筆觸的細節看似抽象，但整體上却又暗示自然生長的態勢。

「那些藝術家祇是用抽象的方式做抽象，或具象的方式做具象，而沒有提供一個差異性的自我構建的邏輯。他們祇是單一與歷史的經驗。沒有未來生長的經驗。」——劉國夫如是說！



敞15 / Open Space No.15

2013
布面油彩/oil on canvas
95x167cm





4. 消散與凝結之間 或在賈柯梅蒂與龔賢之間



龔賢(Gong Xian)
《山水册》



王原祁(Wang Yuanqi)
《小中見大》

筆觸乃是生命，筆觸乃是靈性，筆觸乃是繪畫最為隱秘存在的最為微妙的顯現。

如此筆觸的來臨，或者說，劉國夫這種獨創的技法中隱含着什麼樣的原理呢？

首先，利用了中國文化道家「損之又損」的道化原則：所謂「反者道之動，弱者道之用」，不斷地以顏料去畫，但加入水性添加劑等材質，却使之顯得「薄」與「透」，弱化顏料本身，既需要等待足夠長時間，讓顏料變乾，但又必須為後面的顏色層次做準備，而且，每一次的顏色層次都會遺留下來，似乎是無數的薄紗在包裹畫布，但總體感受還是減損與薄化的。

其次，對傳統水墨感知方式的轉換。在油畫顏料的層層疊加之中，那種虛薄的氣息無處不在，這個筆觸暈散開來，以氣感充盈每一次的顏料筆觸。劉國夫把宋代「米氏雲烟」那種雲蒸霞蔚的「間透」感轉換出來了，石塊或者山頭因為烟雲瀰漫，似乎被烟雲滲透進去而隔斷開來，實際上是米芾點側鋒卧筆帶來的濕潤之筆，因為之間的透氣，似乎整個山勢在躍動，自然的生機得以充分展露出來，讓每一筆觸都具有生長性，這是自從趙無極轉換西方油畫語言以來，中國藝術家所自覺學習到的不同于西方的方式，讓筆觸保持生發的可能性，似乎繪畫不可能完成，



範寬(Fan Kuan)
《雪景寒林》

那些看視樹草，看視烟雲的氣象，還在蔓延，還在生發。保持筆觸的鮮活與可生長性，這是對自然性的模擬，也是中國當代新繪畫的基本特徵！

再次，傳統水墨技法的轉換。則是在不斷加厚顏料質感之中，劉國夫又學習了龔賢的積墨法，晚明金陵畫派代表人物龔賢晚期的「白龔」，就是以層層墨色的堆積，但這個堆積帶來兩個對比的效果：一方面是墨色的蒼古與沉鬱；另一方面却是不畫之處被積墨逼出一種高潔的玉質光感（比如《敞8》與《敞30》，《彌漫7》與《彌漫15》），在并不注重光感的水墨山水畫傳統中，幾乎祇有龔賢畫出了這個光感，但這却是通過借助于生宣的留白，當然是通過積墨的對比層次而「催生」出來的，以至于有人認為龔賢可能受到基督教版畫對光感追求的影響！劉國夫轉換了龔賢的手法，也是利用油畫顏料的層層堆積，但加入稀釋劑之後，又是以水性衝淡油性，因為底層白色的餘留，在與周邊藍灰色的對比中，以及白色光感的強化中，這種渾白的玉質感似乎無處不在！也許劉國夫還借用了王原祁的那種氣團的形式化堆積，讓氣團保持涌動與涌現，有着氣息的生長性，因為油畫顏料本身的光感，但因為水性與筆觸的生發性，光感融入



敞30 / Open Space No.30

2013-14
布面油彩/oil on canvas
200x300cm





彌漫9 / Pervading No.9

2015
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
137x200cm

了氣感，還因為刮擦的手法帶來的波折感，那一折折的橫向光波，水斑和光斑一波波展開，可以與中間的環狀玉帶產生對比，似乎這是從某個混沌的中心散發出了無盡的能量與氣感。

最後，則是對中國傳統《雪景圖》的繼承，不是直接畫雪，那還是陷入形式了，而是畫出雪白之意！劉國夫的作品上，似乎是對精神激情徹底燃燒而留下的白色灰燼的收集，這些燃燒的餘灰，似乎還有着餘溫，被畫家挽留下來，劉國夫生命中內在的悲情體現在現代性的哀婉氣質之中，色澤上的灰藍是餘灰的形式化，面對枯寒與苦寒而萌發的生命激情，都是讓繪畫回到了它的根本，乃是對物性之燃燒激情的接納，或者哀悼或者守護！

劉國夫作品上涌動着渾厚深沉的大氣之感！這些餘灰被畫面接納之後，宛如漫天大雪，是消失而紛飛的雪片，但被畫家收集起來，尤其是經過龔賢積墨法的洗禮之後，這些灰白的聚集，帶來一種時間的玉質感，一種冷感，冷卻現代性過于革命的激情，是中國文化玉質感生命質地的現代轉化！這種內在的轉化力量，聚集了無盡的自然能量，這也正是精神聚集的品質。

劉國夫的藝術也有着莊子所言的「無用之用」的轉化方式，把看似無用要被塗抹的筆觸一次次餘留下來，把廢棄無用的筆觸轉換為大用，建構起整個畫面，這個既破壞又重建的方式，與賈柯梅迪的作畫方式倒是相似，但劉國夫的筆觸更為柔和，更為自覺利用了「餘化的」原理。

因為現代性藝術，必須面對消散，既是事物的消散，也是藝術本身的不確定性與消散，因此，繪畫藝術最為徹底面對了自身的危機：物象的無法固定以及藝術本身的不確定性。

何謂消散（dissipation）：這是離散（disperse），飄散（drift sway），碎散（fragment），世界都處于不可止息地消逝之中，成為廢墟一般，不斷的彌漫（這也是為何劉國夫也劃出了《彌漫》系列作品（比如《彌漫15》等等）。

為何是消散與彌漫呢？因為現代性個體的覺醒，不再被任何的組織與團體所限制，成為孤獨的唯一者（singularity），此唯一者與其他唯一者的關係不再可能以任何名義重新整合，祇是通過彼此之間離散的間距（distance）來連接，越是接近却越是遠離，不再有任何的結盟，反而要肯定這個消散。本體論上時間的消散成為藝術唯一的主題，不再有完整與整體的世界，也不再對總體性的懷舊，任何的總體性都會導致暴力，而肯定離散，並且把離散與消散，把消逝與破碎，作為藝術唯一的主題，但又并不走向對整體的夢想，這是現代性最為徹底的自我覺悟。

二十世紀的哲學也是對此個體獨一性之絕對消散的肯定：無論是尼采的漫游者，還是本雅明的拾垃圾者與流浪漢，無論是海德格爾的「向死而在」的此在，還是德勒茲的「此一性」，無論是福柯的剩餘生命還是鮑德里亞的命定的物性，無論是巴特的戀人絮語還是德里達的幽靈們，都是對這個必然消散與消失的肯定。因此才有南希與布朗肖對無為非功效的共通體，對不可明

彌漫10 / Pervading No.10

2015
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
120x90cm



彌漫11 / Pervading No.11

2016
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
200x140cm



言的愛者們的共通體的發現。

——在二十世紀的繪畫藝術中，是否對消散有着經驗，是對一個藝術家性情的記錄，是否一致保持消散的絕對肯定，乃是這個藝術家是否誠實的標志！

我們就看到繪畫對此消散的徹底肯定與表現：不再是寫實堅固的綫條與造型，即便塞尚夢想古典或者博物館的堅實性與持久性，但他靜物畫上的形體邊緣綫並不閉合，還是分散的，其後期的筆觸也是出于空氣的震顫之中，正是此震顫（vibration），如同里爾克的哀歌與商籟詩所要傳達的宇宙的節律共感，也是塞尚面對自然的覺察而要在繪畫中實現的，這個消散成爲繪畫的基本語言，在現代性繪畫的筆觸上最爲明確表現出來，徹底擺脫了傳統再現與寫實的塑造方法。在莫奈對樹草無數道筆觸的書寫上，尤其在梵高細小與短促的筆觸上，並不形成整體，肖像畫的筆觸也是離散與斷開的。賈科梅蒂如此切近肖像的對象主體却一筆筆都是離散的，一方面，看似在向着一個明確的對象聚集，要去塑造出其明確的這個形象，甚至我們也確實可以看出畫的對象是誰；但另一方面，每一次的綫條，每一次的塑造，却又在塗抹與消解之前的筆觸；一次次描寫，一次次消解；而一次次消解，却又一次次在重建那個可能的對象，使之更爲堅實。這個反向的重塑，面對消散，肯定消解，但又隱含着，或者內在反向地，指向可能的聚集，但僅僅是可能的聚合，並非形成堅固的形體，有着對堅固性的渴求，却又絕對保持對消散的肯定，依然僅僅處於消散狀態，之間有着無盡的間隙，消散要打開的是平面上的這個間隙，這個無維度的空隙。

即便賈科梅蒂的雕塑，看起來是凝結的，但是在細長與瘦長的內縮中，似乎要拉斷自身，而且那麼多的疙疙瘩瘩，似乎要掉落下來，有時候那麼細長，似乎即刻要折斷，也是對此消散與廢墟的肯定。就如同德里達對自畫像與素描的思考，一開始就是廢墟，就是凝思的消失。

接續波洛克的滴灑巨幅作品上綫條的回旋與離散，在湯伯利的繪畫上對消散的肯定更爲被放大：早期作品上是隨意即興的塗寫，是字形的分解；中期作品則是顏色的暗啞化，是自然景色的離散；晚期巨幅作品上，則是色綫的向下流淌，不可歇止地流淌，盡管有着韻律，但還是流散隨意性與偶發性的肯定。

我們在劉國夫的《彌漫》系列作品上（《彌漫10》與《彌漫11》），看到了一種自然的自然性，自然的枝條在光影中的婆娑搖曳，光綫與枝條幾乎完美的融合，畫家所畫的似乎並非枝條，而是世界之光，是存在的呼吸，是時光交錯中的迷離，又是短暫光影的瞬間凝結，而且，這些枝條還隱含着荊棘的刺痛感，在一片恍惚之中，却還隱含着內在的灼痛，但這灼痛又被藝術家含蓄的隱藏在枝條的生長與整體靈氛的彌漫之中，被一種詩意的幻覺所掩藏或保護起來，因爲畫面滲透了靈暈之氣，生成爲一種詩意的韻律——這些枝條似乎就是一縷縷的旋律——這是存在的歌謠，是藝術家從音樂的傾聽中獲得的靈感，被創造性的轉化爲呼吸的節律與枝條，

這些涌動的枝條也是自然的詩行，它們好像會被折斷，但又如此堅韌，還在含蓄的生長，畫面又被一種黛藍色所籠罩，這是詩意靈暈的撫慰，是來自于自然的詩意拯救！

面對消散，藝術必須形成自己的星叢（constellation）：看似凝結（condense），內縮或者結晶化（crystallization），但其實是消散與閃爍之夢幻般地分節（articulation）。

星叢，看似與消散與眩暈相衝突，因為眩暈與消散，是絕對排斥聚集與結晶化的，但為何還是要形成「星叢」呢？如果我們凝視星空：無數的星星其實是彼此離散的，但似乎在想象力的投射中一次次又構成一個可能的圖像，它們有着閃爍，而且有的如同流星會消失，其實對於它們投射的想象并不固定與明確，如同雲彩一直處於變化之中。但是，這些星星似乎又有着永恒結晶的啓迪。

在哲學上，星叢不同于韋伯的「理想類型」，倒相似于尼采的未來的自由的精神，「星叢」這個詞來自于本雅明對於超現實主義藝術的想象，轉變為圖像之「靜止的辯證法」，星叢乃是概念的星群，即過去與現在的關係乃是瞬間的聚合連接，但這是一個瞬間的閃爍的連接，激活的過去與現在並沒有直接聯系，處於斷開的重新激活之中。而且，還是如同夢幻一般的聚合，并非清醒的理性，或者如同白日夢一般的，處於晃動之中，恍惚變化之中（如同德里達要思考的chora）。

——二十世紀繪畫也試圖賦予此星叢不同的形態。是否能夠重新發現星叢，建構可能的星群，這體現出藝術家們對於未來的想象力。

比如，塞尚作品上的立方體，或者蘋果的形態，一個個堆起來的蘋果就是色彩純粹的「星叢」，似乎還在自然地生長，還在肉感地滾動。莫奈作品上的幹草垛與睡蓮也是如此，它們是消失之前最後的燦爛挽歌與咏嘆。梵高的星空作品與精神病院裏的樹木也是如此。賈科梅蒂雕塑作品上的疙疙瘩瘩也是如此，似乎是有着內在凝結，但其實，這些瘦長或者瘦小幹枯的形體，彼此之間相向行走時，建構一個幽靈或者鬼魂一般的空間，越是細瘦，越是打開了間隙，去除了空間的脂肪。賈科梅蒂的肖像畫也是如此，筆觸越是分解與重復，筆觸越是細碎，却越是向着一個明確具體形象去塑造，使之堅實明確，細看筆觸之間又是分散的，但這個具體形象的內在魂魄却被逼迫出來了，因此星叢的顯現乃是遙遠魂魄的顯臨與切近。賈科梅蒂的素描肖像也是如此，不再是描繪，而是描寫，是寫，一筆筆寫出來的，如同中國人運用毛筆，全然不是畫刀，還反復稀釋顏料，就如同墨汁一般，整個色調也是暗啞的，灰褐色的，就是一種書寫性的新手法，是魂魄的書寫或招魂。

湯伯利的晚期繪畫也是如此，大筆攪轉的色綫是旋轉眩暈的，是玫瑰一般炙熱戀愛的旋轉，全然投身于自身的盛開——擁抱時間的來臨與消逝。那些向下流散與滴灑着的色綫，幾乎垂直的

色綫，則是服從于大地的引力，肯定身軀的短暫與消逝性；那麼，那種攪轉中的內縮，那種幾朵玫瑰之間的呼應，尤其是花蕊在中心的模糊吞吐，就是星叢在離散之際，白日夢一般的傾吐與吟咏！

而在本雅明1930年代思考機械復制的藝術之後，光暈或靈暈（aura）如何來臨一直是一個問題，技術不可能帶來光暈，與之相反的自然可以嗎？本雅明本來思考了自然光暈的可能性，但西方的現代性却一直沒有展開這個思考方向，一旦中國藝術家重新激活自然的自然性，並且以新的視覺與手法來面對如此的自然，是否一種新的光暈會降臨？

光暈或靈暈，需要精神的燃燒，這是來自于自然的靈暈！

精神需要燃燒，它會挑選特殊的材料，能夠經得住它灼熱的考驗；魂魄需要軀體，它的縈繞與糾纏會折磨這個軀體，使之發生質變；藝術的世界與這個世俗的世界祇有一點點的區別，繪畫使這個區別變得可見，燃燒的瞬間被凝固，在二維限定的平面上，精神與魂魄到來并顯現，但依然與我們遙遙相隔，繪畫的魅力也就在其間灼灼閃耀。

由繪畫平面所確立的這個可見性與不可見的區別或「之間」，要求一個藝術家必須發明自己的語法，專屬於他自己的一些小句子，或者音樂一般的小語段，如同普魯斯特《追憶逝水年華》中的小語段，那是記憶閃靈照亮原初場景的時刻。1960年代的趙無極之所以了不起，就是因為把之前畫面上生硬的中國甲骨文符號通過書寫性用筆轉化為繪畫的筆觸，或者有着勾皴的寬闊或者滯澀，或者有着點染的雲烟效果，這些小句法帶來了極為生動的中國水墨味。而在當前，對於酷愛西方古典音樂的中國藝術家劉國夫而言，他也通過自己獨特的筆法發明了專屬於自己的一些小語句（phrase），我們甚至可以說比趙無極的更為自然，更為生動，更為具有內在凝聚的精神性，因為那個平面發出灼熱而凜冽的光芒，一個混沌初生的生命體孕育出來了。

我們就在劉國夫的作品畫面上，看到了那一棵棵的「樹」，比如《敞8》，或一些樹枝，但它們并非樹木與樹林，而是自然的剩餘形象，這是一些還在生長，但也還在內在凝結的生命體，有着火苗一般的藍色，發出迷人的藍光。這是劉國夫自己以獨特筆法塑造的形體。

就技術上而言，劉國夫運用水墨的滲染性和呼吸性原理轉化了油畫的質地，油畫顏料本來是覆蓋與增加性的，但在反復多次水性材質的衝洗下，已有的顏料被抹去，但每一次的筆觸却餘留下來，如同水墨的痕迹，這些餘痕有着量化的呼吸性，一次次的破壞與塗抹，却留下無數的痕迹或餘痕，這是以無用的筆觸建構畫面，對應于莊子「無用之為大用」的原理！畫面形體是由

第 I 遍



第 X 遍



第 III 遍



第XV遍



第IV遍



第XVII遍



第VI遍



第XIX遍



(《敞8》繪畫過程的一些步驟或遍數/process of painting *Open Space No.8* in details)



敞8 / Open Space No.8

2013
布面油彩/oil on canvas
100x80cm



無數道餘痕所建構起來，從細節看，都是無用的筆觸，但從整體看，却有着渾然的餘象。

這些「樹狀」作品，真的是「氣象森然」，這個形容傳統水墨畫的成語的雙重意義都有所體現：一方面畫的似乎是森林，它們被烟雲的氣息籠罩，有着氣象；另一方面則整體上被渾化，無限的潛能似乎還在涌動。

劉國夫轉化出來的這個原理其實與賈科梅蒂的繪畫方式相通，無論是賈科梅蒂的雕塑還是繪畫，祇是賈科梅蒂的形體是破壞或「斫斫」留下的疙瘩殘痕或破碎軀體，主要是分解式的，而劉國夫則是吸納與生長性的，模糊而靈動。這些無數次化解而再凝結起來的樹狀形體，看起來，似乎與賈科梅蒂的作品相似，但是更為結晶，也更為柔和，這是異常奇妙的事情。即一方面如此凝聚如同晶體，但另一方面又如此柔嫩還在虛化，為何會如此？這是因為劉國夫動用了水墨與油畫的雙重效果：油畫是凝聚的，水墨是衝刷的，但在破壞與餘留之中，二者形成了張力，是這個張力在塑造這個形體。

畫面上，宛若燃燒的火焰跳躍着藍色花朵的形狀，灼熱的軀體似乎夢想着永恒不老的冰冷酮體。劉國夫自覺地在極熱與極冷之間保持張力，在可觸與拒絕之間塑造着畫面的深度，這也是「虛筆」生成的感覺深度。因此，它并非賈科梅蒂作品上鬼魂一般的軀體，而是更為富有靈氣的鮮活的生命體，這是樹的精靈，含烟而凝神，是樹的魂魄才徐徐傾吐。

中國當代繪畫在重寫現代性的努力中，試圖從晚期塞尚與莫奈再次開始，在永恒絕對與短暫無常的雙重性中，以「自然」為中介建立二者的聯系，逆轉後來被立體派以及觀念藝術所展開發展的方向，回到自然的自然性，發現自然的元素性，這些樹狀的形體，乃是有着生命氣息、處于復蘇中的生命體，是賈科梅蒂的鬼魂幽靈再次化身為有靈的生命個體。

這些樹狀就看似人性，他就是最初的亞當？那個被吹入靈氣的第一個大地一般的元素性軀體，這是對生命的重新塑造與想象。這是一個極度凝縮的軀體，但是這個軀體還在生長，與其他周圍的軀體一道，或者與整個畫面的氣息氛圍（envelop）之間有着呼應關係，這是塞尚所夢想的包含與融入，這是一個新造的生命體，甚至說，如同佛教的舍利子，是生命氣息的凝結。這是一個精靈一般的生命。

這個結晶的生命，是一個永恒的軀體，如同魯迅在中國現代性的開端上，在《野草》中所夢想的「死火」，這是還在燃燒的死活，是不死的死活的凝結，是永恒的晶體，但又聚集了火焰，是卡爾維諾在《未來千年文學備忘錄》中所言的幾乎不可能結合的兩種文體或形式語言——「晶體」與「火焰」的融合！它一直有着餘溫，能夠把剩餘之物做出不朽的永恒性，這是劉國

夫强大精神性的體現。

這些形體，有的甚至就是從畫面的內部走出，從一個不可測的深度發出光芒，吐着幽蘭之氣，遙遙而來，這難道不就是莊子《逍遙游》中所言的邈姑射之山上那「肌膚若冰雪，綽約如處子」的形象？她冰冷潔淨但又充滿冷誘惑。

如同劉國夫自己所言：「抽象與具象都是限制。完全沒有邊界也限制。似與不似之間的：似象或餘象。」

因此，《敞》系列的作品，並不落入到具象與抽象的區分之中，而是虛化了二者，因為它保持了混沌的生長性，但又生成為「餘象」，因為圖像的辯證法張力，物象保持在混沌與生長之間的狀態，即消散又凝結，其氣化又渾融。這是一種新的靈暈的來臨！



敞4 / Open Space No.4

2013
布面油彩/oil on canvas
130x150cm



弥漫6 / Pervading No.6

2014
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
180x150cm



5. 蘭黛暈色之美 光氣融合的詩意

西方古典繪畫通過透視法與固有色的建築式建構模式，打開了一個象徵空間，接納基督教的聖子的來臨，直到印象派以自然的光照色建構新的可見性，但是如何打開自然的深度或不可見性？這是困擾塞尚的問題，而後來立體派的形式抽取，直到點綫面的純粹幾何抽象，再到抽象表現主義深度情感的抽取和極簡主義的實物化，自然本身的元素性和深度被遺忘了，一直還有待于再次打開這個維度。我們在劉國夫的作品上看到了這個深度的重新來臨。

繪畫的二維平面有待于更為徹底還原：一方面是讓杜尚放棄繪畫而思考科學的「第四維」如何來到平面上，這是充分讓時間性顯現，而中國水墨材質的呼吸性以及對自然生長性的擬似，使之可能；另一方面，則是打開「無維度」，即那個無底的深淵或混沌，讓時間性一直在渾化中生發，如同黑洞邊緣的事件，或就是「灰洞」的震蕩，僅僅是渾然餘象的涌動，僅僅祇有暗示性的形象。但此餘象還必須具有靈暈之美，幻視之美，虛化之美。

但何謂靈暈（aura）？這是光暈（light aura）與氣暈（qi aura）的結合，這是因為與自然的「反向凝視」相關，書寫還必須回到自然。為何是靈暈？這個來自于格奧爾格神秘團體，與中世紀漫長詩學傳統習慣，被本雅明明確化的概念，這個與波德萊爾與裏爾克詩歌相關的語詞為何如此重要？現代性藝術一開始就面對了自然，自然光影的變化帶來了光暈與色暈的靈暈，這也是與攝影技術相關，但如同本雅明所研究的，西方後來現代性的發展走向了技術復制，電子復制與影像復制，如何還可能有着靈暈？祇是出現了反靈暈，非靈暈與虛假靈暈，即在偶像人物或者政治波普上出現的虛假靈暈，祇有展示價值，或者虛無的陰影及其冷誘惑，其實喪失了真正的靈暈，缺乏永恒性。

為何如此？因為靈暈有着兩種可能性：一種是走向技術復制，在展示價值與象徵符號價值上膨脹，其實導致的是物體系的虛擬與虛幻；一種是走向自然的靈暈，對此自然帶來的靈暈，本雅明指出了，但西方後來繼承者并不多。即這一段：「夏日午後休息，對着天盡頭的山巒或頭頂上播撒樹蔭的枝條凝神追思，直至這個凝思的時刻與之所觀照的事物的物象融為一體——這就可謂吸納了山巒或枝條的光暈。」這種自然的靈暈在哲學中的思考并不充分，盡管海德格爾後期走向對自然的泰然讓之，走向自然的生長性有所展開，走向自然元素性與風景的思考，在梅洛-龐蒂以及巴什拉對自然元素性的思考上才打開這個西方一直被壓抑的維度，如同書寫一般，而祇有把書寫與自然關聯起來，而不是僅僅把書寫與技術聯系——如同德里達所為，也非書寫與身體欲望結合——如同巴特所為，這些都會依然把書寫轉向虛幻與虛無的死亡衝動，波洛克的滴灑就是如此，有着對混沌之眩暈最為徹底的經驗，有着對消散與離散的材質性表現，但最終還是走向了瘋狂，就是因為書寫沒有返回到自然，沒有讓自然來為，讓自然的生長性而非死亡作為意志的方向，還是過于主體欲望表達了。晚期湯伯利就是避開了身體的瘋狂書寫，

而是把書寫向着自然還原，無論是抽象風景還是玫瑰風暴，看似欲望流露，但其實更為傾聽自然的聲音。

以書寫，吸納眩暈-消散-星叢，還能夠重新激活自然的靈暈，這是自從印象派以來所夢想而一直尚未實現的：莫奈有着自然性，但書寫性不够，塞尚有着星叢一般的渾化感，晚期水彩上有着如此自然流動的呼吸感，但並沒有在油畫上徹底實現出來，儘管有些作品上書寫性已經出現，如同晚期沐浴者的小作品上，人物形體純然是素描一般書寫出來的，這也是有待于重新理解的塞尚，這也是我們提出虛薄藝術的原因。梵高更是如此：自我的闖割或者眩暈的吞嚥性，導致了自殺，因為沒有回到書寫與自然的關係，依然無法消解主體的焦慮，因為靈暈來自于自然，是意志之無為，是讓自然來為，是人類主體的退出與退讓，讓自然更為默化的運作。

對靈暈的重新理解，乃是走向更為富有自然元素性活化的「靈氛」（atmosphere aura），除非喚醒中國文化的自然水墨觀，這就有必要重新書寫現代性，回到印象派的開始上，不是印象派對日本浮世繪的簡單接納，而是中國藝術家重新以自然和書寫為主導，重新連接圖像與文字，吸納眩暈-消散-星叢這三重力量，這正是中國未來繪畫的根本任務。

但此靈暈還必須與詩意一道來臨，離開了詩意，如何可能有着現代性的中國審美的話語？如何有着現代性審美的獨特貢獻？

什麼是詩性？而詩性乃是具有詩的內在本性。首先是抒情性，離開了抒情，不會有詩意，但繪畫崇高的抒情與深度情感呢？這是主體的欲望與生命力的爆發，詩意是以韻律來克制，尤其是其中的韻律，主體的克制。我們看到之前劉國夫的《異境》系列作品就具有濃鬱的詩意，在殘荷的衰敗與昂揚之間，悲情與浪漫俱在！其次是爛漫天真，這個天真，乃是自然的詩意，是自然的生長性，不是主體的自我消耗與爆發。詩性乃是人與世界的整體共生感。劉國夫的繪畫一直保持在這個詩意的生長性之中，其三是古雅的意境，是一種在人類之前，一種超越人類欲望，但又可以淨化人心的意境。劉國夫繪畫上的色調就具有此精神指向性。最後，詩性則是一種帶有韻味的記憶，是對記憶的無限信賴，從而忘却生死，是遺忘與記憶的辯證遊戲，讓人回味無窮！劉國夫繪畫筆觸的辯證法，在彌漫或消散與凝結或疊韻之間，形成了餘味無盡的詩意。

當務之急，中國當代藝術就是重建詩性與藝術的內在關係，讓現代的詩性滲透到自己的個體感覺，自己的制作方式以及可能的概念中，讓當代藝術回到它深厚的文人美學的廣大系統中，成為一種新的總體化的詩意藝術，召喚那未來又到來之中的「自然的節慶」！讓自然重新成為藝術的核心，讓詩意主宰藝術，而非個體的欲望與概念！



敞7 / Open Space No.7

2013
布面油彩/oil on canvas
120x300cm



我們已經看到，在劉國夫《敞》的作品上敞開了一個新生命的能量場，一個個氣團似乎也是對中國山水畫米氏雲烟的轉換，這是一種化解形體的感受力，把「氣感」與「光感」融合起來，把水墨的元素性與油畫的元素性不可思議地融合起來了。整個畫面的生命體如同火焰在跳躍，如同丹田在呼吸。

波光在凹陷中蕩漾，光滲透到綿密的樹草之中。如同苞苔或青苔，有着黛色的美韻，也轉換了中國文化天圓地方的空間感，不斷「化圓為方」與「化方為圓」，就是讓氣息流轉，這樣就對繪畫方框的平面有所調整，似乎畫面處於旋轉之中，在凹陷處，光波涌動出來，似乎天機開始顯露端倪，這其實是無維度的打開。這是渾化之光，是光的樹枝，紛披之樹是分形幾何的擬似，是神聖的自然，是把王原祁山水畫上的氣團更為壓縮凝聚起來，把龔賢的積墨法活化為油畫的可生長性，把米氏雲烟的彌漫與蒸發轉化為氣息的涌動，而且在現代性災變的邊緣，找到自己的節奏。因此也轉化了賈柯梅迪的作畫方式，破壞又重建，但却走向柔和的崇高，走向默化的革命。凹陷但又不陷入深度錯覺，其中孕育着生長的契機，畫面召喚我們把自己的感受揉化到光波之中，安息在樹枝的甜蜜睡眠之下，呼吸的陰影起伏着遙遠的夢想，是自然詩意靈暈的來臨。

新的繪畫有待於從印象派重新開始，因為這是西方初次面對活生生的自然，比如柯羅的風景畫在保留着古典透明質地的同時還有着虛薄的呼吸感，但柯羅還是陷入了透視法的視覺束縛，無法打開自然更為內在的深度，那必須去挖掘富有渾化的生命能量，一旦塞尚開始純粹的顏色塑造，如何可能繼續保持此透明的質地？塞尚晚期的水彩畫有着此追求，但如何轉換為油畫的透明虛薄感，還呈現自然的深度？這個油畫虛薄化的方式，對於西方繪畫是異常困難的事情，後來的裏希特也僅僅做到了薄透，但又喪失了自然的深度，過於寫實。

這要求畫家把整個繪畫平面都轉變為一層透明的薄紗，甚至是神秘的七重紗！除非對中國水墨的滲染性與通透性原理有着切身觸感的藝術家才可能完成此任務，繪畫的任務乃是保持平面自身對通透性與透明性的絕對追求，但又不是簡單的單薄平塗的色層，而是一層層的透明疊印，越是反復疊印，還越是保持透明的呼吸，這除非喚醒自然的通透性與生長性。

劉國夫最近幾年的新作《敞》系列回應了上述挑戰。他一直追求古典透明畫法優雅閃光的質地，接續柯羅風景畫薄透的質感，但又融入了中國人對時間包漿玉質感的痴迷，形成了一種新的「渾色」。劉國夫發明了自己的虛薄畫法，即充分利用水墨性的滲透或滲染原理，改造油畫的品性：以層層滲染的手法來多次化解油畫顏料，使之釋放出內在渾然的氣息，繪畫傳達出氣息的生長性，而非顏料自身的重量與飽和度，不再是油畫的堆積與滯重，而是使之薄透、虛

透，充滿迷人的呼吸，反復疊印後，畫面呈現出透明的玉質感或包漿的質感。畫面上萬象森然的林間空地中充溢着無限生機，敞開一個渾然飽滿與玉光充溢的神秘場域。劉國夫的「虛筆」恢復了龔賢「光氣融合」的夢想，畫面洋溢迷人朦朧的詩意光感，但又是水墨性的灰黑與灰藍色，既有着光的白色透明（光暈），又有着水墨氤氳化生的渾化感（氣暈），讓看似兩種根本不可能的原理重新結合（形成新的靈暈或者自然化的色暈），把西方光感透明的白色與東方虛靈通透的黑色結合，而形成了柔美夢幻的「黛色」。

黛色，乃是中國文化最為美麗的顏色，就是因為她積澱了時間的遐思與無奈，這是最為詩意的顏色，吸納了黑暗的能力，但不陷入虛無；有着光明的期待，但不陷入崇高的犧牲衝動；這是一種新的陰陽混溶，是西方的光明與東方的渾化之不可思議的結合。劉國夫的「虛筆」在餘影的婆娑輕微震蕩與朦朧的詩意之間，消解形體却留下筆觸的細節，對應于傳統的烟影之氣息，更為靈動，是自然的色暈與光暈融合的第一次顯臨。

這個新的不可見性的無維度的打開，就需要新的顏色體系了，如同塞尚晚年發現了不同于印象派的互補色或光照色體系，而走向純粹本體色彩的自主建構，消融形體，或者是自然的深度色體系，盡管被後來的抽象畫有所繼承，但在塞尚晚期，這個「深度色」是與自然之元素性的根性相通，但西方後來藝術的發展却取消了這個相關性。現在，在重寫現代性的訴求下，這個深度色有待于再次與自然性重新相關，並得到新的發揚。這是中國色或者新的玉色體系的來臨。

有着幾種的顏色體系：就西方而言，有着傳統素描為主的固有色體系，明暗法的白色也是光感來臨的顯示；印象派的光照色與互補色是面對自然光影變化而發現的；後來的抽象畫則是利用了純粹顏色的幾何學或音樂音調的建構，或者是深度情感的挖掘，走向悲劇性的獻祭，或者走向了黑色繪畫與白色繪畫，以對「不可見」的深入反而最後消解了繪畫本身。那麼，如果還有着繪畫，就必須發現新的「不可見」顯現的色感。西方一直缺乏這個方面的發現，後來的波普藝術以及觀念藝術顯然放棄了這個任務。而另一方面，中國藝術有着兩個顏色體系：一個是與西方固有色相關的礦物質顏料體系，尤其後來明確為青綠與赭石的「設色」體系；一個是水墨畫的「素色」體系，以「墨分五色」的微妙差異體現餘味和無味之味的至味。

那麼，現在如何再次以油畫發現一個新的顏色體系？因為這是自然的不可見性所需要的，現代性讓一切成為可見的，可以技術控制的，但如何還有着不可見之謎的暗示？還有着對未知世界的敞開？在劉國夫的作品上，我們看到了一種新的色感，這是結合了印象派的色差，又有着中國固有色的赭色或青綠感，但并非固有色的單色固定，有着塞尚的深度色，但是却更為渾化，而且融入了中國文化特有的玉質感，因為這玉質感上還積澱着人類的氣息，那是時間的包漿，有着幽光的觸感，更為豐富地融入了時間性的光暈，借助于自然元素性的涌動，新的色暈與光



彌漫2 / Pervading No.2

2013
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
120x90cm

暈，本雅明在機械復制時代所夢想的來自自然性的光暈（aura），也是色暈（這是西方沒有的），終於來臨了。

不同于互補色的色差，劉國夫作品上的赭色或青綠，僅僅是一種基調，看起來是赭色的總體調子，但每一筆，每一色塊，都滲透着其它顏色，是「渾色」，有着混沌背景還在渾化的渾色，并非顏色混合而成的混色！也借用了水墨的「墨分五色」的色感方式，以一個基本色調為主調，但是在展開畫面時，融入不同的顏色，甚至從塞尚晚期的水彩畫上獲得啟發，有藝術史家指出，塞尚的水彩畫似乎更為自然，更為溶合，更為天真，而在一個中國藝術家看來，也許更為具有水墨的味道，一旦融入水墨吸納性的原理，基調的色感被暈散開來，整個畫面在主調的調節下，其它相關的顏色含蓄地滿布其間，就呈現為渾色的色感了。

塞尚曾經對加斯凱說：「所有的色彩相互滲透，所有的色塊緊密嵌合。有一種連續性……最妙的是，這樣一幅巨作浸潤在同樣微弱而炙熱的光亮之中，他給人一種生動的視覺感受，畫裏的人物就像你我一樣真的在呼吸，鍍金般的空氣將他們包圍。說到底，我確信這是底色的功勞，底色的神秘靈魂將一切聯系在一起，讓整幅畫充滿力量，優雅輕盈。」如果塞尚一直懷疑自己是否能夠打開自然空氣的內在神秘性，我現在相信，中國藝術家已經明確打開了這個底色，這個帶有暮色音調的現代性虛無的底色，這也是中國藝術結合蒼勁與秀潤，結合老年智慧與青春愛戀的獨特生命質感。

而自然的不可見性在時間蒼茫的意境中，體現為「暮色」，塞尚在感嘆繪畫的消逝時，說道：「世界的蒼茫暮色開始籠罩着我們。」他說對了，未來的繪畫就是在被這層暮色所籠罩的同時，還有着無限生機在孕育。我們在劉國夫之前2012-2013年那些灰藍與灰青或中國式黛色作品的調子上，已經感受到了這個暮色的來臨，但絕非死氣沉沉，相反，是一種「過渡」時刻的調節，現代性一直處於過渡與調節之中，在永恒與無常之間的來回擺蕩，在蒼茫的淒愴與秀麗的回憶之間調和，讓畫面充滿冰冷與燃燒的張力，而2014年的新作品，則加入了更為富有自然性元素的赭色與青綠，還帶有玉質感，水性反復衝洗之後的油畫顏料發出玉片一般的質感，又含烟帶雨，秀麗雋永，我們甚至說這是一種新的「仿生色」，有着對自然生機的擬似或仿照，重建了中國審美似與不似之間的色感，盡管更為靠近不相似，更為渾化，更為虛薄而透明，有着古意——是自然之前時間性的凝結，因此空寒而蒼茫，是時間的「包漿色」，隱含時間性的透白也是中國山水畫空寒的現代體現。

在《敞》和《彌漫》的系列作品上，一片渾化的氣氛中還有着看似樹叢一般的無數細節，筆觸的反復覆蓋以及彼此的滲透，帶來了水墨一般酣暢淋漓的氣息，每一個局部都是一個世界，有的局部還有着五代時期董元《瀟湘圖》上烟雲掩映樹木的餘味，似乎無數的筆觸都在彼此觸發，一股無盡的潛能蘊含在畫面上，每一筆觸的生長性恰好是自然性之生機的表現。在保持整



敞 33/ Open Space No.33

2014
布面油彩/oil on canvas
100x80cm



敞 31/ Open Space No.31

2014
布面油彩/oil on canvas
120x90cm



野林 / Wildwood

2014
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
50x70cm



影痕 / Shadow

2013
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
120x90cm

體「渾化」的前提下，無數「氣化」的局部綿綿無盡，但整個畫面又聚集在中間敞開如同廣場一般的空間上，以至于這塊中間的空白滲透到了畫面的其它部分，這是「虛白」在彌漫。

在當今，沒有誰比劉國夫如此好地恢復了龔賢「光氣融合」的那個夢想，同是南京人，劉國夫的作品接上了晚明的餘韻，並且經過了現代性的轉換。那些豎行下落的綫條帶來一種墜落之力，但都被白色以及藍灰色的色調所減弱，這種沉着感聚集了激烈的燃燒與冷峻的冥想，帶來視覺上的凜冽大氣，這是經過了現代個體生命激情燃燒之後的靜冷。畫面的空間感也是結合了西方的空間與中國文化的空白，但在虛化之中，又不陷入具象的限制與抽象的空洞，在似與不似之間，更為走向「不似」，却讓筆觸的餘韻得以蔓延，讓虛筆充滿了餘意。

黛藍色，隱含着中國文化最為美妙的「黛色」（比如《敞2》、《敞30》，《彌漫15》），構成了畫面的基調，這種迷人的色澤還在極為虛薄的技術處理之後，畫面光潔，有着玉質之感，召喚我們的觸摸，這種觸感接通了傳統《雪景圖》所必備的「如白玉合成，令人心膽澄徹」，這個玉狀的環帶打開的不僅僅是一個廣場一般開闊的地帶，它還是一個靈魂之眼，這既是從靈魂的高度，因此這高度讓人眩暈，也還似乎是從未來一百年之後的回眸所看到的場景，這是餘像的生成：如同中國文化的凝眸之美都在于離別之際的回眸，是一個亡靈在告別的頻頻回首之中，在對生命的無盡眷戀之中，所看到的那種最後的餘影，那是迷人的眩暈，那也是人世間最美的圖景，那是李商隱詩歌中所寫道的「藍田日暖玉生烟」的詩意！這是時間性沉澱的光暈（aura），帶有時間包漿的玉質感！

或者是一種冷暖交織的褐黃色，比如《敞37》上，紛披的樹脂如同瓊漿洗滌過，光影交織，恍惚一片，畫面被一種流溢着的褐色滲透，讓人迷人又迷醉，放佛觀看不是觀看，而是吸飲一杯成年老黃酒一般，畫面的渾然之光是可以與之一道呼吸的，凝視不是為了觀看，而是讓目光與身心都被這畫面所吸納，被畫面所涵泳、所沐浴。如此的褐黃色乃是時光幻化的投射，一種帶有夢境的迷離，又有着晚歲的回眸，如此「古雅」又如此「翠嫩」，這是中國文化「蒼秀」或「蒼潤」之美的現代體現。

劉國夫的繪畫具有現代性審美的意義還在于，一個真正意義上的中國式繪畫，必須面對三個要素：頹敗——古雅——生長性。

這是一個頹敗與世俗化的時代，沒有一個個體是成功的，失敗與頹廢乃是現代性個體的生存本質。要表現出不可避免與不可消除的頹敗，或者是創傷記憶，或者是頹唐，或者是無可挽回的消逝，或者是為時已晚，或者是不可彌補的為時已晚等等。在西方現代性藝術審美的第一次敘述中，接納了頹敗，這也是波德萊爾《巴黎的憂鬱》等等觸發的頹廢與憂鬱。從塞尚與梵高，

直到超現實主義，再到美國抽象表現主義，無論是紐曼的「拉鏈」，還是羅斯科色塊邊緣的模糊，都有着對個體創傷與失敗的肯定。西方現代性審美的第二次敘述中，則以頹敗為主了，這一方面是反崇高，另一方面則更為自覺從頹敗出發了，從達達主義到新達達主義，到波普藝術，再到早期的湯伯利都是如此。

如果有着新的中國式詩意的繪畫藝術，這是以古雅來平衡頹敗，在世俗化時代，不可能直接走出古代的宗教，也不可能沒有信仰，這就出現了一種詩意的解決方式——「古雅」：遠古與古雅，還并非古典，此大雅并非典雅，但有着經典的訴求，這是一種更為遠古但雅致的經驗，祇有帶有遠古時間性的大雅，才可能抵禦世俗化，但又并非超越世俗化，這是一種新的內在超越，如同劉國夫的繪畫一方面看起來如此雅致，但另一方面却又如此當代，因為這是接納了破碎與消散所指。

而古雅還可能走向技術的操作，就需要自然的生長性來平衡，劉國夫的繪畫又一直深入渾沌，觸發自然的生長性，還是光氣融合的生長性，讓自然從其根性上，從我們的呼吸上，從美好的幻覺或獨特的虛筆上，從我們的神經觸覺上，吸取自然存在的汁液，化解我們日常的欲望與焦慮！

劉國夫的繪畫，以其「虛筆」與「虛色」的反向重構，同時消解與建構、既碎散又凝結，作為中國當代「虛薄藝術」與「虛色美學」的代表人物，與邱世華等人一道，顯示了中國繪畫走向世界、走向絕對的風姿。



敞48 / Open Space No.48

2015
布面油彩/oil on canvas
137x200cm

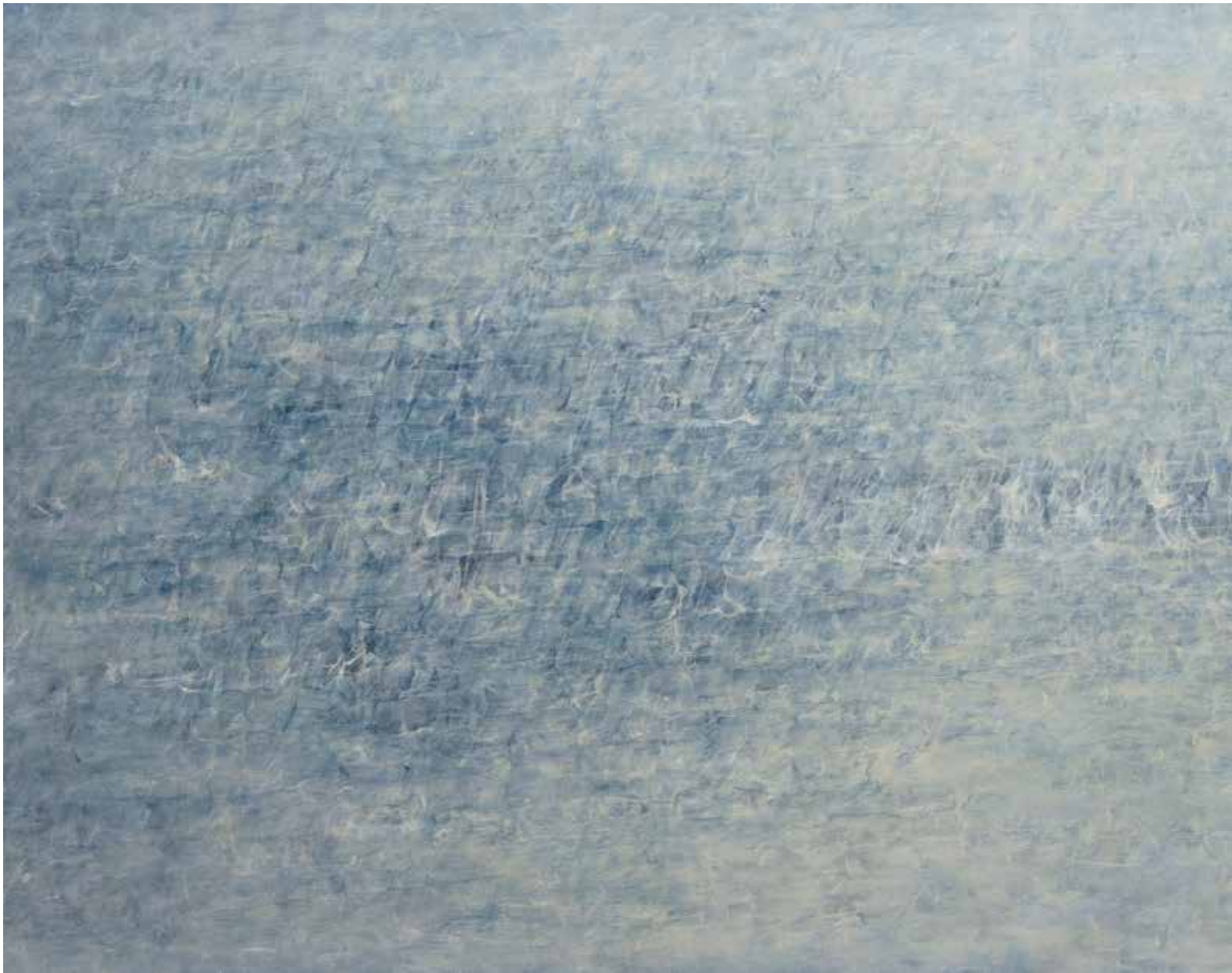


敞43 / Open Space No.43

2015
布面油彩/oil on canvas
150x180cm

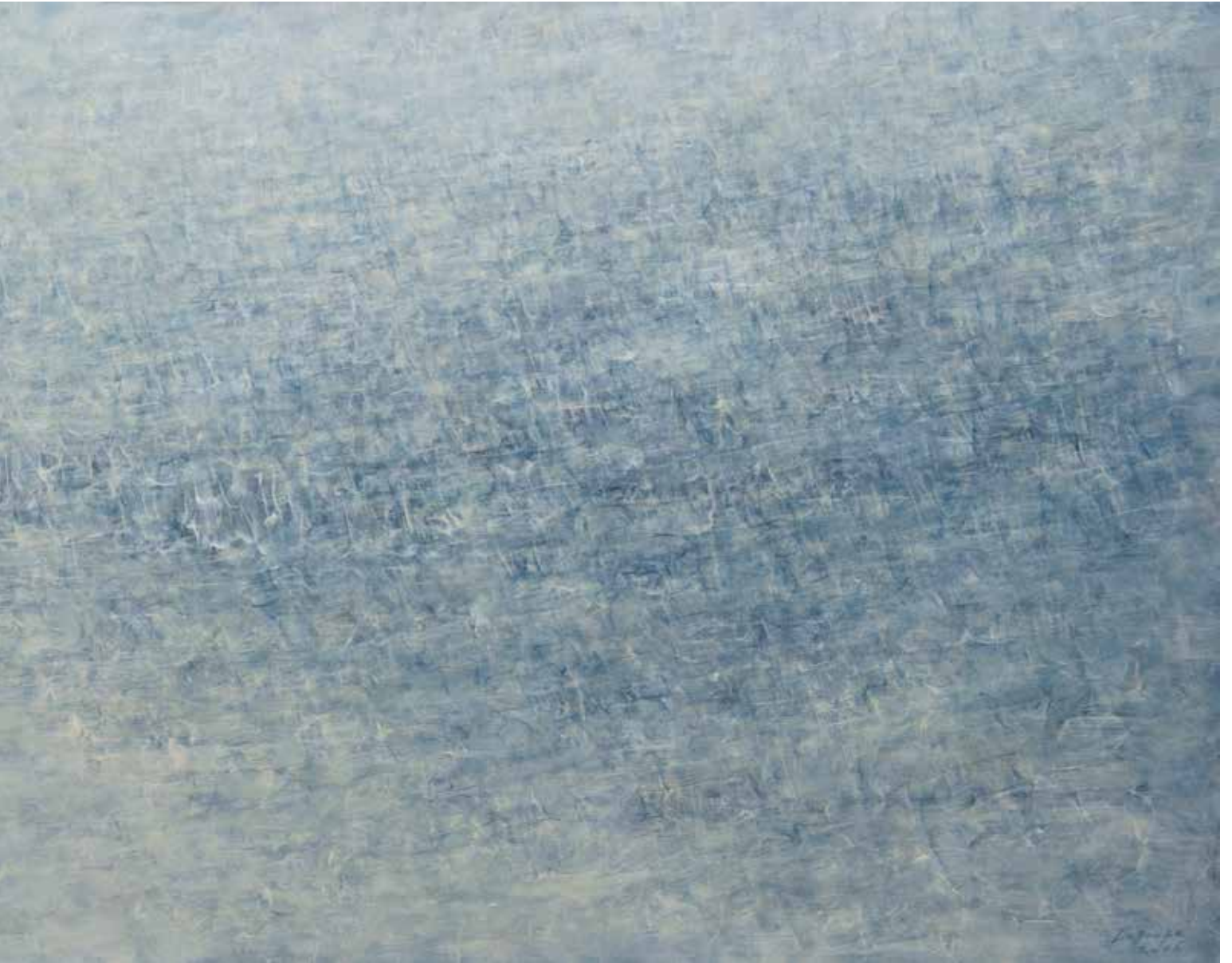






敞50 / Open Space No.50

2015-16
布面油彩/oil on canvas
120x300cm









彌漫12 / Pervading No.12

2016
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
150x180cm







彌漫13 / Pervading No.13

2016
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
180x150cm







彌漫14 / Pervading No.14

2016
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
120x90cm



彌漫16 / Pervading No.16

2016
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
120x90cm







彌漫15 / Pervading No.15

2016
布面油彩 / oil on canvas
130x160cm



**THE AURA OF SHADOW
TRACES
Phantom Brushstrokes of Liu Guofu**

By Xia Kejun

Tran. by Jeff Crosby

Exhibition Foreword

All bets in modern painting have been placed on the leaving of enchanting, breathing brushstrokes. The brushstrokes of paintings are the beautiful gifts an artist leaves to the world. When we see the enchanting, intoxicating brushstrokes of Liu Guofu, we finally gain a true sense of the allure of Chinese painting.

Liu Guofu has continued in the great writing tradition of Chinese culture, from Ni Zan to Gong Xian, while engaging in a dialogue with the great Western masters of Abstract Painting, with the techniques of late Cézanne and Giacometti, forming his own techniques and syntax: distant, stacked traces of shadows, like smoke in jade: like the shadow traces of the phantom brush. Such poetic shadow traces are the remnant traces of existence, as well as the "phantom brushstrokes" of writing: they are like dreams and illusions, like smoke and jade. Each individual brushstroke appears useless, an absentminded flare, but in the end, they come together to create a poetic remnant image. This is the "phantom brush" Liu Guofu has invented. It forms the basic syntax of his painting. It represents an outstanding achievement in contemporary Chinese art, and shows us the true modern qualities and international potential for a "Chinese-style painting."

When we approach Liu Guofu's artworks, whether it is the amazing *Open Space* series or the *Pervading* series, when our gaze falls on the brushstrokes in the paintings, we are drawn deeply within: fissures, shards of ice, fragments, non-action, destruction, devastation, fragility, thinness, it all stacks together to form a unique stacked brushwork that forms an aura-like thickness resembling a moss print or a trace of a shadow. It appears so light and diffuse like smoke, transparent and solid like jade. In these shadow traces of the phantom brush, air, light, water and qi proliferate throughout, dim shadows creating illusions of distancing, of searching in confusion, the secret anguish of disorientation and boundlessness.

Liu Guofu's painting has changed our perspective of observation and our means of perception. Up close, we see that the brushstrokes are all chaotic, fragmented, disordered, restless, ruin-like, disoriented. From a distance, the brushstrokes accumulate to form an empty tranquility that is permeable, poetic, with the feel of jade, breathing in deep concentration. Such a paradoxical tension—a piercing, torn sense of pain and an empty, transparent feel of jade—is generated from a series of destruction and reconstruction, of repeated painting. These works allow us to see the unique contribution of the purely visual side of modern aesthetics. This is the aura of "reverse reconstruction." It is generation in destruction.

These brushstrokes appear empty, but each stroke is actually firm, like blocks of ice,

cold, fragile, fragmentary. This is conceptuality, a conceptuality richly imbued with a vital sense of touch that embodies the tactile nature of life. Or, perhaps it is like ruins, not graphic representation but dialectical brushwork, a deeper spiritual expression of the inner perceptions of life. The color of the paintings emerges as a dark blue, the most alluring hue in Chinese culture. It is the spiritual tone that lies between the fading of time and the yearning to hold on, between the scattering of the winds, and the odes that hold together, between the simplicity of the void and the beauty of transparency, between the pain of tragedy and the passions of courage. It is a Chinese color in the truest sense. It appears abstract and monochrome, but it harbors countless other tones within, all shrouded in this darkness, rich with enchanting poetry.

It is as Liu Guofu has said: "Each person's brushstrokes are the traces they leave in the world. These are spiritual traces. It was so with the great Ni Zan." Of course, it is the same spirit with Liu Guofu.

This is Liu Guofu's first solo exhibition since his major breakthrough in infra-ochrome painting in 2012. His reverse reconstruction in "phantom brushstrokes" and "infra-ochrome" transforms decay into legend, casts off the conventions of art history, dissolves the oil-based properties of paint with the water nature of ink, while finding the eternal generation of nature within dissolution and construction, fragmentation and coalescence, scattering and passage, light and qi. He brings together the two poetic textures of "crystal" and "flame." This beautiful dark blue awakens the aura of nature. This is a work of art that can stand in the world for the infra-ochrome aesthetics of Chinese art.

Prologue

Infra-Stroke—Brushstroke as Syntax

When you stand before a painting, what is it that attracts you? Painting is so simple. It is just paint exposed on the plane. You may be able to read certain phenomena from the paint, but modern painting seems to refuse legible images, revealing only murky traces or "non-images." Thus, everything appears to have become simpler. Painting has been restored to paint, or the movement of paint, certain traces, the touch of the brush, or the brushstroke.

Return to painting, From paint to paint, what has bestowed this material with its energy? When you face these material traces on the canvas, are you drawn in? How can these brushstrokes be no longer subject to image representation and yet more than just the production of texture, so that they can take on the poetry of transparency, the breath of infra-mince, and the enchanting aura? In an era of the reproduction of images, perhaps this is the only task for painting.

The brushstroke is the trace left in the world by the individual. The painted brushstroke is a beautiful trace given to the world by the artist. The breathing brushstroke is a lingering remnant of the world.

Western classical painting does not allow for the exposure of brushstrokes in its pursuit of glossy painted surfaces. It was perhaps not until Rembrandt that we began to be deeply moved by expressive brushstrokes. It is as if we can still sense the images in the painting breathing, and feel the quivering of the brushstrokes. This is not the case with traditional Chinese calligraphy and painting, which seems to reveal each instance of individual writing from the beginning. If we look at what is possibly the earliest calligraphy model, Lu Ji's Letter of Recovery, the slanted, staccato brushstrokes, made with a nearly bare brush and once described as resembling coals dragged across the page, tell us of a heart that cannot return to rest. Each stroke of the brush quivers. In later works, such as Wang Xizhi's Letter Mourning the Death of an Aunt and Note of Distress and Indignation, Yan Zhenqing's Requiem to My Nephew, and Su Shi's Cold Food Observance, it seems that the brushstroke has remained like the glowing embers of a fire that is rekindled in the eyes of the readers from later generations. Later, in painting, from the discovery of the chapped brushstroke in Song dynasty shanshui landscape ink-painting, to the written brushwork and strokes of Yuan dynasty painting, the form has always consisted of mental traces of the Chinese cultural will to write.

Why would the painter want to leave traces of the moment of writing? Is this an inscription of the traces of the individual? Is this in order to make each passing moment shine with radiance? Is it the abyss of absence? Each stroke of the brush, once written, bids farewell. It is the absence of the body. Is the brushstroke thus a testament to the breath or character

of the individual life? Is this perhaps the labor of confronting the void? Is it perhaps even a meaningless labor?

Painting began its entry into modernity with the Impressionists. Whether or not it was inspired by the writerly nature of Eastern art, the brushstroke began to emerge, a simulation of visual appearance. This can be seen in Monet's Impression, Sunrise, and all the way to late period Cézanne. Van Gogh invented his own short, twirling brushstrokes—his own "syntax," like the most enchanting musical phrase from a great composer that repeats in endless variations in his other works to form a basic mental language. Western Expressionism was not the only form to leave brushstrokes. Theirs were at the service of the emotional expressiveness of form. Later, abstract painting would do so as well, though it did so in the service of conceptuality or production, in order to leave a sense of texture, as done by such painters as Auerbach and G.Richter. As for Twombly, whether it was his early smear painting and painting of numbers and letters, or the large, twirling brushstrokes or large dripping traces of paint in his later work, all of these brushstrokes served as testaments to the modern, individual sense of existence.

To recognize a brushstroke is to recognize the singular existence of a painter in this world. It is an affirmation of its irreproducible singularity. This is perhaps painting's last strike against the age of the reproduction of images.

In modern Chinese painting, this is why Huang Binhong (1865-1955) moved in his later years from the "ancient line technique" to a virtually "blind" written line. This allowed the properties of brush and ink to differ from one instance of writing to the next, and left blank spaces in the gaps between lines, creating a rhythmic contrast between black and white. The effect was that the overall painting contained the feel of shanshui landscape painting, but the details of the brushstrokes appeared as if abstract, bestowing modernity to Chinese brush and ink. This is also why Zao Wou-ki (Chinese/French, 1921-2013) used Chinese shanshui brushing techniques in the 1960s to paint abstract landscapes filled with hints of natural appearances, but, through the undulating brushstrokes, formed compositions filled with vigorous energy that fused light and qi. These works affirmed the basic trajectory of motion in Chinese painting, and brought the properties of water and abstraction to oil painting, while maintaining the generative properties of nature. Zao Wou-ki shifted to color field abstraction in the 1980s, and discarded the creation of natural conceptual imagery, but when later artists returned to these more profound relationships between brushstrokes and imagery, Chinese painting would go farther, because the questions of how to confront the broken individual and redeem it with a more ancient and refined temporality, and how to transform classic conceptual imagery, remained unanswered.

It would not be until Liu Guofu and his oil brushstrokes that we would see truly modern

properties in "Chinese painting." When we approach Liu Guofu's artworks, when our gaze falls on these brushstrokes, we are drawn deeply within: fissures, shards of ice, fragments, non-action, destruction, devastation, fragility, thinness, it all stacks together to form a unique stacked brushstroke that forms an aura-like thickness resembling a moss print or a trace of a shadow. In these shadow traces, air, light, water and qi proliferate throughout, dim shadows creating illusions of distancing, of searching in confusion, the secret anguish of disorientation and boundlessness.

It is as Liu Guofu has said,

"Each person's brushstrokes are the traces they leave in the world. These are spiritual traces. It was so with the great Ni Zan (1301–1374, great painter in Yuan Dynasty)."

Liu Guofu has continued in the great writing tradition of Chinese culture, from Ni Zan to Gong Xian, while engaging in a dialogue with the great Western masters of Abstract Painting, with the techniques of late Cézanne and Giacometti, forming his own techniques and syntax: distant, stacked traces of shadows, like smoke from jade: the shadows of illusion. Such poetic shadows are written "phantom strokes": dreamlike, cloudy like jade, each stroke seemingly useless, just an indistinct trace, but they generate a poetic image. This is Liu Guofu's invention, the "phantom brush." It forms the basic syntax of his painting, and represents an outstanding achievement in contemporary Chinese infra-mince art.

1. The Useless Brushstroke: Shadow Traces Generated in Destruction

As Charles Baudelaire states in *The Painter of Modern Life*, modern aesthetics differ from classical aesthetics in that they find the eternity in the fleeting, the ephemeral. If a work of modern painting does not sufficiently affirm and convey the fragmentary and fleeting, and thus bestow it with a sense of the timeless, then it is not modern. Whether it is Cézanne's late period brushstrokes, resembling flames on a tapestry or mosaic, or Cy Twombly's dazzling, diffuse late period brushwork, the modern aesthetic demands we affirm the limitedness of life and the eternity of nature. Chinese contemporary painting must allow for the generation of this timelessness or eternity, while also maintaining the fragmentary feel of the individual, and bestowing this fragmentary feel with new spirit. This is the painting of Liu Guofu.

Liu Guofu's works allow us to see the unique contribution of the purely visual side of modern aesthetics. This is the aura of "reverse reconstruction." It is generation in destruction. Up close, all of the brushstrokes are chaotic, fragmentary, disorderly, random, ruined, disoriented. But from a distance, the brushstrokes stack together to create an empty tranquility, permeable, poetic, with the texture of jade and concentrated breathing. How does such paradoxical tension—between cold, tearing pain and the empty, transparent texture of jade—take shape?

These brushstrokes are so magical, but how do they come into being? On one hand, he bestows oil paint with the principles of ink, while also infusing Western oil painting. It recalls Camille Corot's experiments in his small landscape paintings at the beginning of modern painting, where he seems to have used watercolor techniques, seeping brushstrokes and a humid atmosphere to blur his trees. These works highly resemble ink painting. Of course, J.M.W. Turner in his late years also painted the moisture in the air and began to alter the texture of oil painting, but Turner mainly focused on the expression of the sense of light. Their work, however, was too complete, too comprehensive. It did not incorporate a sense of fragmentation, and it lacked the thin, breathable sense of growth. Liu Guofu's works have thoroughly absorbed time and the unknown, preserving the infinite natural growth of the brushstroke. On the other hand is the dialogue between Giacometti and Gong Xian (1618–1689, in Nanjin, also the city of Liu Guofu). The former generated a spirit in the dissolution of the brushstroke. The latter brought out a pure white light through thick accumulation of ink. Liu Guofu's shadow-trace or illusory brush appears destructive, but each stroke left on the painting creates a harmonic beauty, a beauty of slightly dislocated chords. This is the poetry of the "phantom brush."

These brushstrokes appear empty, but each stroke is actually firm, like blocks of ice, cold, fragile, fragmentary. This is conceptuality, a conceptuality richly imbued with a vital sense of touch that embodies the tactile nature of life. Or, perhaps it is like ruins, not graphic representation but a decoupling from reality, an awakening of a deeper spiritual perception.

For Liu Guofu, the value of art is not in its conventions and customs. Each time the brush is laid to the painting, it leaves a stroke that was never left by any other before. It is unknown. Many try to cast off the conventions of the history of painting and form their own stylistic language that differs from others. These people always tend to construct, repeatedly constructing over and over again. Liu Guofu's approach, however, is destruction and reconstruction. The two are carried out simultaneously: the more destruction, the more deconstruction. What appear to be ruins are actually growth. This is the projection of the inner spirit. It is like Yuan dynasty painter Ni Zan: his brushstrokes, a combination of a turn and a chapped stroke, appear to be short and staccato, but they are full of infinite growth. This technique of simultaneous destruction and reconstruction, or deconstruction and reconstruction, is immensely important. On one hand, it confronts the destruction and fragmentation of modernity, yet it also constructs. On the other hand, it avoids the decadence of nihilism, while also avoiding the pure construction of classicism. Instead, it reveals both simultaneously. One aspect does not exclude the other. Only modern people can affirm their own dualist existence to such an extent: at once so limited and mortal (the human body and desires), and yet so infinite and eternal (the concealed growth and energy of nature). The two cannot be separated. They must be revealed simultaneously. This is the modern aesthetic in the truest sense. It was there with late-period Cézanne, with late period Giacometti, and with late period Twombly. It is just that it is more total in the painting of Liu Guofu: each brush, each countless stroke of the brush, is fragmentary, but it lingers there, and we can see it, we can grasp it. It has moved towards light and growth. These remnant strokes of the brush are breathing transparently, colliding, and catalyzing each other. Giacometti disintegrated shapes, but he did not turn to the growth of nature. His efforts were still tied to a certain visual construction. Richter's landscapes were too graphically realistic. They created illusions, but those illusions were insufficiently fantastical. They lacked poetic flow, and were insufficiently "emptied," too realistic. Twombly's flowing and crystallized forms were too exaggerated, too cathartic. Perhaps they possess the "purification" qualities of the Western modern aesthetic, but in the eyes of the Chinese, they are not soft enough, not inspired enough, not subtle enough.

What appears to be destructive is actually non-action and aimless. What appears to be an expanse of ruins is actually vitality filling the painting. Those indistinct appearances, those tree branches and tree trunks, are all still growing. This differs from Walter Benjamin's thoughts on Paul Klee's *Novus Angelus* laid out in *Theses on the Philosophy of History*. Benjamin believed that the angel was watching the ruins of eras rise towards the sky, corpses piling in a continuous disaster. The angel would like to awaken the dead and make whole what has been smashed, but as the ruins continue to pile upwards, the angel is lifted by a storm blowing in from Paradise that forces him into the air. This is the progress of history.

For Liu Guofu's painting, however, ruins are ruins, but ruins can also grow. How do the ruins of disastrous change gain the ability to grow? How do we turn around when confronting the ruins? How do we give them growth? How do we transform decay into magic?

The growth properties in natural scenery are the secret code to salvation. This is something Theodor Adorno discovered in *Aesthetic Theory*, but was unable to clearly elucidate. Only Chinese art has preserved this code of nature, the ability to touch off vitality in the face of impermanence and change, to maintain vigorous vitality in the face of the shifting clouds. The concept of vivid spiritual resonance is true vivacity that blooms in the face of fragmentation.

In Liu Guofu's studio hang the cloudy paintings of Mi Fu (1052–1107) and Mi Youren (1074–1151), particularly Mi Youren's long scroll *Spectacular Views of Xiaoxiang*, which he gazes at every day. Liu believes that the Mi-style expression of clouds is what allowed Song dynasty painting to overcome its excess realism and find the most ample expression of the vigor of life. The mountains appear hazy and the vegetation sparse, but the bony structure and bearing of the mountain ridges are at once majestic and soft. It is a dialectic brushwork of "stone rolling like clouds" and "clouds rooted like stone," a brushwork of poetic growth, and Liu Guofu has unlocked it. He has realized it in oil painting, something never achieved before.

And it is lofty magic that has emerged from decay and decline. Chinese modern painting since 1985 has mainly transformed magic into decay, or followed an anti-sublime aesthetic. This is a trend taken on from American Pop art. Certain landscape paintings with modernist leanings mainly express the morphology of corruption and decay. They are shrouded in a nihilist atmosphere of rot and corruption. Even though some artists have attempted to return to the natural emptiness of traditional Chinese *Shanshui* landscape ink-painting, their efforts have been too simplistic and powerless. In Liu Guofu's works, we have seen work in the opposite direction, to turn decay into magic. His works depict decay and waste, but they also convey a noble and invincible beauty.

When all of painting has returned to brushstrokes, how can brushstrokes be used to think? Brushstrokes are seeking, brushstrokes are breathing, brushstrokes are the root of life, brushstrokes are the traces of life. The unknown quantities of the brushstroke must be preserved, but not as a philosophical projection, because these are broken brushstrokes. Liu Guofu considers his paintings to be highly abstract. That is because at the beginning, these brushstrokes have no aim, and are not constructive, much like the painting approach of abstract painting. But he cannot move to Western-style abstraction, because that would drag him down into convention. And yet, magically, these seemingly meaningless brushstrokes, after dozens of stacked instances of writing, present a different image. It gradually floats to the surface, and though it does not construct a concrete image, there is in the end, the

generation of visual form. This is what makes it magical: what it produces is merely a "remnant image," at once both abstract and concrete. If the abstract brushstrokes merely accumulated into an abstract form, it would be too conventional.

For Liu Guofu, it is sufficient for an artist to merely make a small contribution that differs from art history, for creative artist, everything is cliché, as Francis Bacon said. Gilles Deleuze also repeatedly emphasizes in *The Logic of Sense* that the only duty of art is to not be ordinary. In other words, don't be cliché. As soon as it sinks to convention, art loses its serendipity and generativeness, thus becoming a reproducible object. But there is nothing more difficult than this. For painting, an art form with nearly a thousand years of history, and for a painter who paints every day, to lift the brush is itself convention. How does an artist distinguish himself from others? Liu Guofu's contribution to artistic language, and his distinction from others, is that he uses seemingly abstract, null brushstrokes to construct an infinitely growing remnant image.

These brushstrokes remain as vague allusions. They possess secret pains of life, an inner sense of rupture, of fragmentation, but they are also at once exposed and concealed. Everything has taken on a veil-like hazy poetry. Painting must have illusion. If there is no illusion, there is no art. This, however, is not artificial hallucination or illusion, such as the illusion of depth in classical painting, or the 2 1/2 dimensions of Cubism, nor is it the pure plane of Abstract Expressionism. It possesses depth, but it has been ever-so-lightly covered, an imprint of a transparent veil on top of the plane, which still preserves the flatness of the plane. Liu Guofu's illusory phantom brush is filled with poetic, illusory brushstrokes.

Liu Guofu's works, in their stacked printing of visual impressions, and overlapping of countless brushstrokes, have brought the subtle breathing of traditional ink painting, as well as the temporal traces of fragmentary visual shadows. Richter's painting is overly realistic and concrete, but in the between the whirling shadows and hazy poetry of Liu Guofu's works, we see diffusion forming into silk, and clouds expanding to become a veil. The dissolution of forms while preserving the details of the brushstrokes corresponds to the hazy atmosphere of traditional painting, but it is more vivid. It is the arrival of the diffuse colors and aura of light from nature.

—As Liu Guofu says, *"It is the art leading you along. One brushstroke gives rise to another, not the other way around."*

Let us follow these brushstrokes, breathing with them, growing with them, and resonating with the myriad things of the world

2. Syncope Writing and the Arrival of *Open Space*: the Emergence of Modern Aesthetics

Modern art began with the confrontation of the abyss, and once it confronted the abyss, it could not possibly obtain form from it, only the sense of syncope in the face of the endless depths. Syncope is the dizziness or vertigo felt when facing chaos. When we face the syncope state, if we can still obtain a kind of form, a formless form, and bestow the abyss with form, this is the beginning of art.

Syncope is an elemental phenomenon of life that classical painting generally did not confront or express, whether it was the noble, pure and serene greatness of ancient Greece or Rome, or the perspective and lighting of Renaissance painting, it all tended towards the stable and solid, and corresponded to narrative, just as traditional metaphysics sought verifiable truth. But after Romanticism, art entered into modernity. With the death or retreat of God, and the loss of the omnipotent perspective, there still remained the Foucaultian panoptical political control, but art stood as a force of resistance against this political power. That is because artists most keenly perceived that the world had entered into night, and a new chaos had opened. The ungrounded (Ungrund) state of the world was exposed, and artists were the first to confront this infinite abyss. This, however, could only lead to syncope, to endless clamor and restlessness. It could not root out the syncope that arose from the chaos.

Twentieth century philosophy was the discovery and pondering of the chaos, or the pondering of the impossibility of the chaos. Thinking had lost the roots of its own legitimacy, and so it could no longer be like the rational ontological theology of the classical era. Thought itself was lost and confused, constantly confronting in the chaos its own uncertainty and indecisiveness, confronting the abyss and "untruth" of thought itself. It discovered "untruth," but it could not allow itself to slip into nihilism. This was a test of thought itself.

Of course, it was Friedrich Nietzsche who first opened the gates of the abyss and nihilism. Martin Heidegger opened up the abyss of death, Gilles Deleuze discovered the undetectable realm of the chaos, Karl Barth was obsessed with narcissism, and Jacques Derrida discovered the undefinable chora.

But modern art experienced, to a more total extent than philosophy, this impasse (aporia) or absurdity (Witz). This is why the connection between twentieth century philosophy and art was expressed as philosophers having no choice but to ponder painting. Rainer Maria Rilke's poetry, in its contemplation of Cézanne's painting in 1907, was the first to open up that invisible world of the soul. The Duino Elegies were simply the syncope from facing the fearsome angels and the valley of death. Philosophers of course confronted a series of "unthinkable thoughts." If they were to avoid falling into the predicament of no thought, they could only turn to art as a medium. For the possibility of impossible thoughts, Heidegger contemplated the land in Van Gogh's works. For the visibility of the invisible, Maurice

Merleau-Ponty and Michel Henry pondered Cézanne's depth and Wassily Kandinsky's colors. For the expression of the inexpressible, Jean-François Lyotard pondered the discourse of unconscious desire, and the sublime in the art of Barnett Newman. For the untouchable touch, Jean-Luc Nancy and Jacques Derrida pondered the sense of touch. For the writing of the unwriteable, Derrida pondered the spectralization of writing and the blind vision of drawing. For the undesirable desire, Roland Barthes pondered the impossibility of Twombly's narcissistic writing. As for the passage of the impassible, that is the predicament of Chinese art which this author intends to open.

The absurdity and paradox of art is that it confronts the unthinkable and inexpressible, and goes out to express it, to ponder it through painting, and to maintain the enigma of the impossibility of expression in expression. Art also strives to bestow the syncope of the abyss with form, an act which is sure to change all existing forms. Thus, we saw the emergence of the frenzied, agitated brushstroke, the new techniques of dripping and coating.

In paintings, the presentation of syncope, and the experience of syncope, is the only mark of genius.

In Cézanne's late-period landscapes, the entire painting is like flame, a scorching atmosphere. The brushstrokes grow increasingly indistinct and fleeting, as if they are ceaselessly flowing towards Mont Sainte-Victoire. Monet's late-period lilies also melted into the flames, their shapes virtually invisible. The brushstrokes in the background of Van Gogh's self portrait are also whirling, as if ready to swallow this self. Van Gogh's sunflowers also appear to be offerings to this whirling inferno. These are all passive experiences of syncope. Van Gogh's frenzy was followed by Antonin Artaud's drawings and self-portraits. After this, even when Kandinsky was on the verge of entering into abstraction, the lines of the painting began to be syncopatic. Only syncope could root out existing images and appearances and bring a shift towards abstraction. As we reach the paintings and sculptures of Giacometti, the portrait formed by the countless tiny brushstrokes on the painting appears to be swallowed by the dark background. The darkness grows and approaches an epiphany of the soul. The faces stacked upon Bacon's paintings are twisting and tangling. It was still like this when we arrive at Twombly. Whether it was his early smear painting, or his late-period untitled and rose series. The whirling large brush lines of the roses convey an embrace of the frenzy of the chaos, just as the rose is torn between lingering and inevitable passing as it decays and transforms into illusions of dreams.

Even when struck with syncope from facing the chaos, modern painting manages to convey a "formal" language of this syncope state. This is the heart of its absurdity. It is expressed as follows: the world is an ungrounded abyss, but in staring into this abyss, it must maintain the focus on this abyss, lest it become swallowed by it, and must also bestow it with a "form of no form." This is the allure of art, and the highest challenge for the artist: Cézanne was filled

with doubt, Monet's gaze was clouded, Van Gogh severed his ear and committed suicide, Jackson Pollock dripped paint and drank profusely, Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman committed suicide... It was only Twombly who, by returning to the free writing of nature, seems to have avoided the destructive impulse of the abyss. How to face the abyss without falling into destruction and insanity is perhaps extraordinarily difficult for Western artists.

In Liu Guofu's early Tibet-themed Enigmatic Wall series, the image of the monk with his back to us, running off into the distance, is being drawn away by a mysterious aural light, the body being led away by a storm-like spirit. He cannot control himself. It is as if he has fallen into a state of spiritual confusion, and yearns to penetrate the high wall that shields the enigma. In the 2006 Alien Realm series, the tree branches are stirred by a fleeting aura. The scenes are always wrapped in a melancholy air. It is this atmosphere that stops the viewer from fixing their gaze and brings about a blurry, perplexing poetic beauty.

In 2012, Liu Guofu began painting the new *Open Space* series. It was at this point when a more certain abyss, a more magical syncope began to emerge. In a 2012 work titled *Open Space No. 2*, we can see a looping open area at the center, a seemingly collapsed depression, a mysterious field of motion. An abyss of flowing air has been opened, as if a cosmic energy has been discovered. Everything will fall into it, and everything can flow out of it. It is perhaps like a black hole, or perhaps a gray hole. Incidents are about to unfold around it. It tilts in the center of the painting, almost as if it can still rotate. Its instability leads to syncope. Here, painting is returning to the chaos. The artist has discovered his own "variety of chaos," as Deleuze discussed in the conclusion to his book *What is Philosophy?* It maintains the flow of the chaos, but also generates new possible morphologies. This revolving loop appears as if an oath, a looped ring, preserving the brushstrokes in a state of tension between the ceaseless flow and the possible morphologies: it must at once continue to flow and crystallize; it must have pillars of light as well as the turbulence of qi. This is a new beginning for painting.

This has formed a "field" of energy, and "opened" a visual field. The Chinese language provides marvelous echoes to this. It is the discovery of that original, intuitive "chaosmos," that undetectable realm which Deleuze and Heidegger attempted to open: life must return to this source, vision must sprout anew, from the invisible to the visible, from the imperceptible to the perceptible, forms of possibility flowing out from non-objectivity. This is the opening of the painted plane itself. It is a suspended non-dimensionality. It is not the illusion of the two-dimensional plane and three dimensions, but something that possesses the temporal generation of the fourth dimension. Yet, returning to that primal flow of nature, that chaos that precedes dimensions, everything flows out from there. Everything maintains the original light waves of this chaotic flow. The forms of the myriad things in the painting are not concrete images but "light waves," temporary concentrations in the echoes, whirling and

diffusion. It is a gentle circle dance. It is the wedding dance that Heidegger anticipated in his pondering of Friedrich Hölderlin's poetry and his interpretation Hölderlin's Earth and Sky, a gentle celebration. This ring of light softly dances in a circle on the painting, amidst the breathing and vividness of the brushstrokes, like a thin layer of smoke, like a fluttering veil. This is the poetic openness Rilke praised in his late-period works *Duino Elegies* and *Sonnets to Orpheus*. For Liu Guofu, it stems from the poetic generation of nature.

This ringed area is like a spiritual halo, or a mysterious jade necklace, a jade necklace polished by thousands of years of time. An infra-ponce jade texture has touched off a new sense of touch. This jade ring has been faintly visible and opening throughout Liu Guofu's works (such as the works *Open Space* No. 2, No. 15, No. 16, *Pervading* No. 5, No. 7), always the center of gravity of a world of painting. In this center of gravity, there flows qi and rings of light. The entire painting is filled with a roiling, flowing atmosphere. From the depression in the center there flows a current of warmth like waves of light, as if the fountain of life has been unearthed.

The color of the paintings emerges as a dark blue, the most alluring hue in Chinese culture. It is the spiritual tone that lies between the fading of time and the yearning to hold on, between the scattering of the winds, and the odes that hold together, between the simplicity of the void and the beauty of transparency, between the pain of tragedy and the passions of courage. This tone is Chinese color in the truest sense. It appears abstract and monochrome, but it harbors countless other tones within, umber and gray, blue and green, but they are all shrouded in this darkness, rich with enchanting poetry.

Here, Liu Guofu has discovered the energy field of life. A series of concentrations of qi appear to be a transformation of the Mi-style clouds of Chinese shanshui landscape painting. This is a dissolution of the ability to perceive shapes, a fusion of the "sense of qi" and "sense of light," an unimaginable union of the elemental natures of ink and oil. The living presence across the entire painting is leaping like flames, the breathing of the chakras.

"Art is repeated searching. It uses images, the energy of the earth, the spirit. It must always break convention. Art is creation."

— — These are the words of Liu Guofu. And that is how his art developed over multiple stages.

3. The Transformation of Touch: from Waterness to Oilness

How are these brushstrokes of Liu Guofu generated? Previously, his painting went through three stages.

First was the individualistic image of the Lama in the Tibet-themed series *Enigmatic Wall*, which he began in 2001. This emerged from the painstaking quest for the light of the Buddha or the light of holiness in the exotic land of Tibet. This individual is lost, with no path before him, yet he still doggedly moves forward, a drifter, a superfluous person, but since he aspires to the holy spiritual light, he is wholly and fully drawn forward by a sharp halo, thus opening up an inner spiritual space of illumination within the painting. From the beginning, Liu Guofu has been extraordinarily sensitive towards light. In this period, he mainly sought out the light of the unknown from images, from memories of youth. The painting presents a very complex, very cinematic infra-image, and a texture of fogged glass, as if distant memories have been cut off by time, but art will penetrate it.

In the next period, from 2004-2006, this image of the individual began to recede from the scene, and that spiritual space was swept by that light of the Buddha. This light, however, fused with natural light. In the soft, hazy light of dawn or dusk, the remnant light of the natural world is able to linger. In this period, Liu Guofu clearly had a bit of that nostalgic, cinematic light of Gerhard Richter, but the infra-mince sense of light had taken on more purity.

In the third stage, from 2007 to 2011, he surpassed the Tibet series to open up a broader natural scene. In this period, he painted such series as *Monologue* and *Alien Realm*, returning to that moment of struggle between decline and flourishing in nature, into an atmosphere where the two are virtually indistinguishable. He emphasized the expressiveness of the language of oil painting, highlighting the textural details and written nature of the brushstroke, and fusing light and qi. An inner monologue and an exotic landscape come together in the brushstrokes of writing. This is a more expressive and more alive enhancement of Zao Wou-ki's painting from the 1970s. The paintings, whether filled with complex passions, or strident in the face of desperation, capture that moment of a thing's passing, or depict the tension of a withering life that continues to burn bright.

This intermediate phase mainly unfolded in brushwork, in the cathartic traditions of Chinese culture, in the literati aesthetic, and in the construction of overall atmosphere.

After this was the entry into lyrical infra-mince painting, begun in 2012. The entry into a new phase in painting was a spiritual entry into the abyss, deeper and more internal, the experience of a hidden pain. This was not only a new phase for Liu Guofu. He utilized the penetrating or seeping properties of ink to change the character of oil paint. The artist returned to the bleak, simple conceptual realm of Song dynasty painting, and brought the layered permeation properties of Chinese ink painting into oil to produce paintings with a

transparent texture of jade or the color tone of patina. Following in the footsteps of late Ming dynasty painter Gong Xian, from Jinling (modern-day Nanjing), Liu Guofu created the *Open Space* series and *Pervading* series, in which small clearings in a dense forest possess the infinite vitality of qi, and the brushstrokes continue to grow. Meanwhile, a ringed form opens up a mysterious field of total saturation overflowing with a jade-like light.

To push painting a step, or even half a step forward is extraordinarily difficult. Facing so many masterpieces and masters, and this so called mature language, where does one find possibility? This is why the West basically discarded painting and turned to conceptual art in the latter half of the twentieth century. Richter integrated photography and painting, thereby bringing a new form of vision to painting and heightening its expressiveness. Twombly used the fervor of his poetic individualized writing to simplify the poetic tradition into twirling lines and colors, and to bring the colors of oil painting to new extremes.

What about for a Chinese artist? Oil painting is not just the perceptivity of material and the power of image, nor is it just contrasts of colors and tensions between perceptions. It is a game between the visible and invisible, between the penetrable and the untouchable, the ultimate strengthening or weakening of material. Liu Guofu faced this challenge. The language of oil painting is accumulative. Each trace of the brush will be covered by the brushstrokes that follow, revealing the thickness and weight of the paint, as in the highly expressive practices of Chaim Soutine and Frank Auerbach. If this is the case, then what if it were employed in "reverse"? What if it were only created in flat brushstrokes? If that were the case, painting would be unable to avoid becoming pure schemas, lacking in the texture and flavor of oil paint. In maintaining this "reverse" operation, the more times the canvas is painted over, the "thinner" it becomes, but it gives an extraordinary sense of "infra-thickness." What unique path of painting gives rise to this method of simultaneous addition and abstraction, of the constant twisting and reconstruction of perceptual tension? What kind of formal artistic language does it bring about? Liu Guofu's *Open Space* series, which he has been painting since 2012, can give us insight into the importance of this "reverse-reconstruction" artistic method.

The aim is to have the flavor and properties of oil paint, but in a way that is entirely different from Western painting, whether it is the smoothness of realism, or the brushstrokes of Abstract Expressionism, whether it is the thickness of accumulated paint, or the flatness of flat brushstrokes. We must be able to smell the aroma of oil painting, but it must also have the empty agility of water from Chinese culture. How can this be possible? Liu Guofu has achieved this, making infra-thinness painting a possibility.

Modern Chinese painting, particularly oil painting, has long been tangled in the struggle over the so called localization and Chineseness of oil painting. For Chinese art to open up

a new realm of perception, it must face the textural perceptions of oil paint, the release of living energy through oil painting, and the challenge of inventing formal language. It must set out from the sense of touch, to transform a deeper energy of the material itself, making this material for the reception of light to also take in qi, and to make this viscous oil take on the permeative properties of water, so that concrete or abstract forms can be kept in a state of transitive growth marked by poetic poise.

Liu Guofu's painting has altered the essence of oil painting, imbuing it with an Eastern sense of beauty. Layers of transparent accumulation have left the marks of once opaque oil brushstrokes in the diluting properties of water. All of the brushstrokes are on the canvas, accumulating in transparency. Each instance is there, each stroke affirmed. But they do not cover over the strokes that come before them. Owing to their infra-thin transparency, after repeated applications, all of the previous brushstrokes remain. They stake but do not cover. When most painters apply a brushstroke, the ones that preceded them are rigidly concealed. Some people paint quite thinly, but this is only simple thinness. The accumulation of many layers to create a sense of thickness that is still infra-thin is an entirely new skill. That is because each stroke of the brush is applied in very thin oil. There is a clear delineation between layers. It appears casual, but it is actually quite calculated. The brushstrokes interact with one another, pushing out a white edge. These are not painted lines; they are imprints. The different levels of force in each brushstroke create imprints with richly varied bearing and atmosphere. The brush is never washed, and never carelessly swept across the canvas. The countless brushstrokes create possibilities of form, their generation guided by floating, drifting growth.

Next is the dissolution of paint and color for a total alteration of the properties of oil.

The relationship between the properties of oil and water is an issue Cézanne contemplated late in life. At the turn of the twentieth century, Cézanne, having confronted nature for many years, began to use watercolor to capture the vividness of nature. His many watercolor landscapes and still lifes are, as described in Meyer Schapiro's breathless assessment, natural, poetic and expressive, the revelation of a true natural talent. Cézanne always hoped to convey this vividness of nature from watercolor in oil paint, but he did not have enough time. How does one paint the infra-thin, transparent feel of watercolor in oil? Should *The Bathers* not be bathing in the water and light of nature? Should they not be more transparent and infra-thin? We have seen Cézanne's efforts in related paintings, but the results have never been clear enough, and their influence not strong enough. Though Cézanne was a father of Western modern art, it seems that since Cubism, much of modern art's focus was on the extraction of form, for example cylinders and cubes. The naturalization and infra-thinning of materials themselves was forgotten in the West. Later developments in Western painting were excessively influenced by several factors. First was technologization of imaging.

Georges Seurat's pointillism had already begun, and though his drawings were strongly infra-mince, and Richter's cinematic paintings were also quite transparent and penetrable, they were too realistic. The key to the problem lies in flat oil painting. The atmosphere of the oil painting was at the service of the transparent texture. The next factor was the shift towards abstract formal language. This was the case from Pablo Picasso to Expressionism. Nature was countered with abstraction, and that of course led to the loss of natural elemental shifts and diffuse atmosphere. Another factor was the shift towards conceptual art. The instantaneous ideas or social criticisms of conceptual art forgot about the emotional attachment to the human heart and nature, and forgot the primal connection between the body and nature. If there is a Chinese painting, and if there is to be a return of painting, it will be in the confrontation of the issue Cézanne faced: how to more naturally convey the naturalness of nature. One possibility is the return of oil to water, an alteration of the tactility of life.

Second is transparent accumulation. Oil paint is opaque, and brushstrokes cover those laid before them. In general, the traces of the original brushstrokes cannot be preserved. Liu Guofu's brushstrokes, however, are preserved. All of the brushstrokes are still there. With this method of transparent stacking, each instance is present. Each brushstroke is covered, but after repeated instances, they all remain. The painting is at once layered yet thin, and transparent yet thick. These multiple layers are like stacked transparent veils. Some artists attain emptiness, but it is simple emptiness. The true skill is to make something that is so "thick," yet so "thin." There is great skill to infra-mince painting. It requires the reverse application of techniques, and the discovery of new techniques for everything from texture to brushwork.

Third is the layering of colors. When a color is applied, it contrasts with the lower layers, but it is also transparent, creating a space of transparent depth. This space is not the space and illusion in the Western sense. There is illusion and dislocation, but it is not created through assemblage. Instead, the repeated layering of the oil creates many transparent, breathing layers of space. It is like the Tang dynasty idea of seeing scenes through many layers of transparent cloth, or the concept of "diffusion forming into silk, and clouds expanding to become a veil." It is so superficial, yet so rich, drifting yet timeless. It has the poetry of the southern moon glowing through the window screen, or the haze surrounding a cherished face in memories or dreams. Classic poetry reemerges in a dismembered, fragmented way. This is the moving power within.

Of course, these brushstrokes are created using writing methods drawn from the cursive calligraphy of Chinese culture. The painting not only contains growing tree branches, but also water weeds pulsing with mist. The elementality of the cursive writing and the vegetation become one and the same. In some of Liu Guofu's works, such as *Pervading No. 3*, each brushstroke appears to be calligraphic writing. It is because of what Ni Zan called "quick, lighthearted brushwork" that the painting maintains its vividness. Meanwhile, the

painting possesses a furry texture, in accord with Wang Yuanqi (1642-1715) 's appeal to fur in shanshui landscape painting. The "fur" here is a natural, vivid texture in which the brushstrokes continue to grow. The brushstrokes seem as if you can reach out and touch them. This tactile allure is what makes painting so enchanting. This stems from the growth and allure of nature, rather than from human desire. This vivid poetry of nature possesses modern significance. It dispels our everyday desires, bringing us back to the growth of nature and preserving the vitality of desire without falling into reckless abandon. This growth aspect of writing differs from the "chaotic brush" of such artists as Zeng Fanzhi. That is merely the repetitive use of a particular brushstroke, or excessively broad shapes. That is still a Western approach to brushwork. It lacks the subtlety and minute growth of the brushstroke from Chinese culture. It still burns with desire. Liu Guofu's brushstrokes, on the other hand, stand between chaotic cursive and withered vegetation. They appear broken and bleak, but they possess an unstoppable propensity for growth within. There is a temporal sense of desolate cold, the sense of ruin from withered grass, but because of the brushstrokes, these ruins have absorbed the energy of chaos, and maintain their own growth.

Lastly, these brushstrokes also possess the rhythm of Johann Sebastian Bach. A great lover of music, Liu Guofu spends his days in the studio accompanied by classical music. Whether it is Bach or Beethoven, the music has been transformed into the brushstrokes. Perhaps the rhythm and contrapuntal structure of Bach's fugues and canons find a natural, beautiful fusion with cursive calligraphy. If we look closely, or listen closely, the tree trunks fixed to the painting are like sound bridges, and the branches sway in the wind to musical rhythm. There can be no art without rhythm. The artist, who must sit still for long periods of time, can engage with great spirits in their solitude by listening to classical music.

The narrative of painting erects a secret relationship with music, This secret relationship comes from rhythm. Liu Guofu feels that music is very abstract, but for highly intelligent people, it is also very concrete, because it encompasses universal living emotions. It is akin to expressing concrete living power in abstract form. The brushstrokes on the canvas appear chaotic and random, but it is only a partial disorder between semblance and non-semblance. Each brushstroke is actually clear and distinct, firm brushstrokes molding a soft, indistinct thinking.

What is it that bestows these brushstrokes with rhythm? This includes agility, change, growth, imagination, the confrontation of the unfamiliarity or abstraction of reality, and finally, a return to the individual insights into life. Notes on their own are meaningless. The sense of meaning is gained from the musician's arrangement of them. Through a magical power of reality, it produces a state of difference, with implications that differ from reality. It is the same with Liu Guofu's brushstrokes. Just as music dissolves sound, painting is about releasing the energy of paint. These free and disordered brushstrokes create scattered

forms but not scattered spirit. They are maintained in an uncontrollable state, but still retain their agility and are rich with change. It is painted dozens of times, and each time is different, the differences resonating as they accumulate. The growth is maintained, and the painting is constantly in an atmosphere of permeation and extension, between the scattering and concentration of the brushstrokes, and marked by living emotion. The details of the brushstrokes appear abstract, but the whole alludes to a propensity for natural growth.

"Those artists are merely using abstract means to make abstract things, or concrete means to make concrete things. They have not provided a differential logic of self-construction. It is just monolithic historical experience. There is no experience of future growth." — These are the words of Liu Guofu.

4. Between Dissipation and Coalescence: or Between Giacometti and Gong Xian

The brushstroke is none other than life. The brushstroke is none other than intelligence. The brushstroke is none other than the most delicate revelation of the secret existence of painting. What principles underlie the arrival of this type of brushstroke, of Liu Guofu's unique technique?

First, it utilizes the Daoist principle of "less and less." This is the principle of "the Dao in opposites moves, and weakness is its manner." He is constantly applying paint, but inserting water-based additives to make it appear increasingly "thin" and "transparent," to weaken the paint itself. The painter must wait enough time for the paint to dry, but must also prepare for the next layer. Each layer is left there, like countless transparent veils wrapping the canvas, but the perception is always of a reduction or thinning.

Next is the transformation of the perceptual methods of traditional ink painting. In the accumulation of layers of oil paint, that infra-milky atmosphere is ubiquitous. The brushstrokes diffuse and scatter, filling every stroke of the brush with a sense of qi. Liu Guofu has transformed the "interval transparency" of the roiling fog and mist in the "Mi-style clouds" of Song dynasty painting. The rocks and mountaintops seem to be permeated by the spreading clouds and thus separated. This is the result of Mi-style brush technique of using a low angle, sideways brush, which results in moist, supple brushstrokes (*Open Space No.8 No.30, Pervading series No.7, No.15*), Because of the gaps between, it seems as if the entire mountain is leaping, allowing for full revelation of the vitality of nature. Each stroke of the brush possesses growth. This is a method that Chinese artists have learned, which differs from the Western methods, which emerged after Zao Wou-ki transformed the Western language of oil painting. It preserves the potential for generation in the brushstrokes, as if the painting could not possibly be completed. Those shapes, reminiscent of vegetation, of atmospheric clouds, continue to expand, to grow. The preservation of the freshness and growth of the brushstroke is the imitation of nature. This is the fundamental trait of the new Chinese contemporary painting.

Next is the transformation of traditional ink painting techniques. While constantly thickening the layers of paint, Liu Guofu also studied Gong Xian's ink accumulation technique. Gong Xian was a leading figure of the late Ming dynasty Jinling School of painting. In his late years, he developed a style known as "white Gong," which entailed layers of accumulated ink. This accumulation, however, produced two contrasting effects: the areas covered in ink appeared bleak and gloomy, but the unpainted areas around it emerged in the contrast as a sense of light with a texture of pure jade (see *Pervading series No. 2*). The ink landscape tradition generally placed no importance on lighting. It seems only Gong Xian did so. This lighting was achieved through the use of the unpainted areas of raw scroll paper, and was of course brought into being through the contrast with the thickly accumulated ink. Some have

even conjectured that Gong Xian was influenced by the lighting in Christian lithographs. Liu Guofu has transformed Gong Xian's technique. He also uses layers of accumulated paint, but the use of thinning agents diminishes the oil property of the paint. The retention of the blankness on the bottom level of the painting, its contrast with the surrounding grays and blues, and the heightened sense of lighting through white tones, fill the painting with a ubiquitous white jade texture. Liu Guofu perhaps also borrowed from Wang Yuanqi's formal accumulation of concentrations of qi. These concentrations possess the growth of atmosphere, owing to the sense of light inherent in oil paint, but because of the generative properties of water and the brushstrokes, this sense of light has been infused with a sense of qi. Meanwhile, the addition of a sense of twists and turns to a scraped brushing technique creates a series of turning waves that unfold like waves of light and ripples in water. They are able to produce a contrast with the central jade loop, like infinite energy and qi radiating from the center of some chaos.

Finally is his transmission of the snowscape painting tradition. In this tradition, the snow is not directly painted. That would be nothing more than formalism. Instead, the artist paints the idea of snowy white. Liu Guofu's works seem to collect the white ashes of the burning of spiritual passions. The artist has kept these ashes, which seem to still be warm. Liu Guofu's inner sadness is expressed through the elegiac character of modernity. The blue gray tones are the formalization of these remnant ashes. This passion which blooms in the face of bitter cold and suffering brings painting back to its fundamental root, the mournful or protective acceptance of the burning passions of materiality.

Liu Guofu's works flow with a great air of simplicity and gravity. After these ashes have been received by the painting, it is like a snow-filled sky, like disappearing and fluttering flakes of snow, but they have been collected by the artist, and after their baptism in Gong Xian's accumulated ink technique, these gray-white concentrations bring a sense of the temporal texture of jade, a sense of coldness. The cooling of the overheated revolutionary passions of modernity is the modern transformation of the jade texture of life from Chinese culture. This inner transformative power has collected infinite natural energy, and has the properties of the concentration of spirit.

Liu Guofu's art also possesses Zhuangzi's transformative method of the "usefulness of uselessness." It takes seemingly useless, obliterated brushstrokes and retains them, transforming discarded, useless brushstrokes into great usefulness to construct the entire painting. This method of destruction and reconstruction resembles Giacometti's painting method, but Liu Guofu's brushstrokes are softer. He has more consciously utilized the principles of "remnantization."

Modern art must face dissipation, the dissipation of things, as well as the uncertainty and dissipation of art itself. Thus, the art of painting has faced, in the most total way, its own

crisis: the impossibility of fixing the appearance, and the uncertainty of art itself.

Dissipation is dispersal, drifting away, fragmentation. The world is in an unstoppable state of passing away, turning into ruins, constantly dispersing (this is also why Liu Guofu painted the *Pervading* series, such as No.15).

But why dissipation and dispersal? It is because the awakened modern individual can no longer be controlled by any organization or group. The modern individual becomes a singularity, and the relationship between one singularity and the next can no longer be rearranged for any cause. They can only be connected by the distance of their dispersal. The closer they are, the farther they become. There are no more alliances of any form, except to affirm this dissipation. Ontological temporal dissipation has become the only theme for art. There is no longer a whole, unified world, no more nostalgia for unity. Any unity will lead to violence, and certainly to dissolution. The turning of this dissolution and dispersal, this passing and fragmentation, into the only theme in art, without drifting into dreams of unity, is the most total self-awakening of art.

Twentieth century philosophy is also an affirmation of this absolute dissipation of the singular individual. Whether it is Nietzsche's wanderer, Benjamin's scavenger or vagabond, whether it is Heidegger's "being towards death," or Deleuze's haecceity, whether it is Foucault's surplus of life, or Jean Baudrillard's predestined materiality, whether it is Barth's lovers' chatter or Derrida's phantoms, all are affirmations of this inevitable dissipation and loss. It was because of this that Jean-Luc Nancy and Maurice Blanchot discovered the non-acting, inoperative community, the community of indescribable lovers.

In the painting art of the twentieth century, whether an artist's work possess experience of dispersal, whether it is a documentation of the artist's disposition, and whether it consistently and absolutely affirms dispersal are the markers of an artist's sincerity.

We see the total affirmation and expression of this dispersal: the once realistic and solid lines and forms are no more. Even though Cézanne dreamed of the solidity and timelessness of the classics or museums, the edges of the forms in his still lifes are not closed, but scattered. His late-period brushstrokes vibrate in the empty air. This vibration is precisely the cosmic resonance Rilke expressed in his elegies and sonnets. It is also the observation of nature Cézanne wished to realize in painting. This dissipation has become the basic language of painting, most clearly expressed in the brushstrokes of modern painting. It has completely discarded the representation and realistic modeling of tradition. In Monet's writing of vegetation in countless brushstrokes, and particularly in Van Gogh's thin, staccato brushstrokes, the strokes do not form a whole. Van Gogh's portrait brushstrokes are particularly scattered and broken. Giacometti cut so close to his portrait subjects, but his individual strokes are dispersed. On one hand, it seems as if he is clarifying the focus, and aiming to clearly shape it. We can even identify the subject. On the other hand, however, each line, each shape, is made from brushstrokes before they have been smudged and dissolved,

one instance of depiction after another, one instance of dissolution after another, each act of dissolution reconstructing the possible subject, giving it more solidity. This reverse reshaping confronts dispersal and affirms dissolution, but it also encapsulates, or internally reverses, the possible focus of direction. This is only a potential concentration. It does not form into a fixed shape. There is yearning for solidity, but it preserves an absolute affirmation of dissipation. It still remains in a state of dissolution, with many intervals within. The dissipation is for opening up these intervals in the plane, these non-dimensional intervals.

Even Giacometti's sculpture appears coalescent, but in the inner contraction of thinness and length, it seems to be pulling itself apart. The many bumps and ridges appear as if they are about to fall off. Sometimes the sculpture is so thin it appears ready to snap at any moment. This is also an affirmation of dissipation and ruin. It is like Derrida's thinking on self-portraiture and drawing. It begins with ruin. It is the concentration and disappearance of thought.

After the whirling and scattering of lines on Pollock's giant drip paintings, Twombly's painting further magnified the affirmation of dissipation. His early works were extemporaneous smears and disintegrations of words. His middle-period works were the darkening and dampening of color, the scattering of natural scenes. His large late-period works were the downward trickling of color lines, an irrepressible downwards flow. There was rhythm, but it was an affirmation of randomness and serendipity.

In Liu Guofu's *Pervading* series (*Pervading* series No. 10 and *Pervading* series No.11), we see a naturalness of nature, the swaying of natural branches in the light. The lines of light and branches are almost perfectly fused. It seems as if the painter is not actually painting branches, but is instead painting the light of the world, the breathing of existence, the scattering within the overlap of times. It is the coalescence of the fleeting moment, and the branches contain the piercing pain of thorns. It is in a field of distraction, but it encompasses an inner burning sensation. The artist has humbly concealed it in the growth of the branches and the dissipation of the overall atmosphere. It has been concealed or protected within a poetic illusion. As the painting is permeated by an air of spiritual aura, it generates a poetic melody—these branches are like movements of the melody. This is an ode to existence, the inspiration the artist has found in close listening to music, which he has transformed into breathing rhythms, melodies and branches. These surging branches are also lines of natural poetry. They seem as if prone to snapping, but they are so firm and tenacious, while also growing in a reserved fashion. The painting is also shrouded in a dark blue, the poetic caress of the spirit aura, poetic redemption from nature.

In confronting dissipation, the artist must form his own constellation: it appears condensed, contracted or crystallized, but they are actually dreamily articulated between dissipation and shimmering.

The constellation appears to be in conflict with dissipation and syncope, because syncope and dissipation absolutely exclude any concentration or crystallization. If that is the case, why must the artist form a "constellation"? Let us gaze at the starry sky. The countless stars are so distant from each other, but through the projection of the imagination, they construct a series of possible images. They glimmer, and some, like shooting stars, disappear. The imagination projected on them is neither clear nor fixed. It is always in a state of change, like the rolling clouds. But these stars also contain inspiration on eternal crystallization.

In philosophy, the constellation differs from Max Weber's "ideal type." It somewhat resembles Nietzsche's free spirits of the future. The term "constellation" comes from Benjamin's imaginings of Surrealist art, and was transformed into the "dialectic of the static image." The constellation is a cluster of stars of ideas, in that the relationship between past and present is merely a momentary coalescence, but this momentary flicker of a connection reactivates a broken link between past and present, which were never directly connected in the first place. This coalescence is dreamlike. It is not clear rationality. Or perhaps it is like a daydream, always in a swaying state, constantly shifting (like the chora as considered by Derrida).

Twentieth century painting also attempted to bestow this constellation with different morphologies. Whether or not we can rediscover the constellation, and construct possible star clusters, will be manifest in artists' abilities to imagine the future.

Take, for instance, the cube shapes or apple forms in Cézanne's works. Those stacked apples are a "constellation" of pure color. They seem to still be naturally growing, still rolling with a sense of flesh. The haystacks and water lilies in Monet's works are the last brilliant elegies and chants before disappearance. This is also the case with Van Gogh's starry skies and sanatorium trees. It is also the case with the lumps on Giacometti's sculptures. They appear to be internally condensed, but actually, when these long, thin or diminutive withering forms begin to walk towards one another, they create a phantasmic space. The thinner they become, the more intervals are opened, removing the fat of space. It is the same with Giacometti's portraits. The more disintegrated and repeated the brushstrokes, the more thin and fragmentary, the more it shapes a clear, concrete shape and bestows it with solidity and certainty. If we look closely at the brushstrokes, we find they are scattered, but they force out the inner spirit of the concrete image. Thus, the emergence of the constellation reveals and draws the distant soul closer. We see this in Giacometti's drawings as well. They are not depiction but description, writing carried out one stroke at a time, evoking the Chinese use of the brush. This is certainly not the palette knife. There is also the repeated dilution of the paint, just like ink. The overall tone is dark, with gray and umber tones. It is a new writerly technique, the writing or summoning of the soul.

It is also the case with Twombly's late-period paintings, where great swirling strokes of the brush create whirlpools of love that shimmer like roses, pouring everything into their own blooming—embracing the coming and passage of time. Those color lines that dissipate and

drip downwards, those nearly vertical color lines, are subject to the earth's gravity in an affirmation of the ephemerality of the body. That turbulent, whirling inward contraction, the interaction between the flowers, and the blur swallowing the flowers from the central stamen, are a daydream cathartic release and chant at the moment before the constellation scatters.

After Benjamin contemplated art in the age of mechanical reproduction in the 1930s, there has always been a question of how to bring about the halo or aura. Technology cannot bring about the aura. What about its opposite, nature? Benjamin did contemplate the possibility of the natural aura, but Western modernity has never fully engaged this line of thinking. When Chinese artists reactivate the naturalness of nature, and use new vision and techniques to face nature, what kind of new aura will descend?

The halo or aura require the burning of the spirit. This is the aura from nature.

The spirit needs to burn. It will select a special material that can stand the test of its scorching flames. The soul needs a body. It will entangle, temper and torment this body, making it change. The world of art and this mortal world are only different in small ways. Painting makes this difference visible. The moment of burning is fixed on a limited, two-dimensional plane. The spirit and soul are revealed here, but they are still distant from us. The allure of painting lies in this distant shimmer.

This difference, or "interval," established between the visible and invisible by the painted plane, requires the artist to invent his own grammar, a syntax that belongs to the artist alone, a musical phrase, like the phrasing in Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*. That is the moment a glimmer of memory illuminates the original scene. The reason Zao Wou-ki was remarkable in the 1960s is that he took the once rigid oracle bone characters from ancient China and transformed them through writing into painted brushstrokes, sometimes with the broadness and astringency of chapped brushwork, sometimes with a cloudy effect. This syntax produced an extremely vivid flavor of Chinese ink painting. Today, Liu Guofu, a Chinese artist with a great love of Western classical music, is using his own unique brushwork to create a phrasing that is his alone. We could even venture that it is even more natural than Zao Wou-ki's, possessing more concentrated spirituality, because that painted plane emits a scorching yet cold halo, nurturing life from the beginning of the chaos.

In Liu Guofu's paintings, we have seen many "trees," as in *Open Space No. 8*, or tree branches, but they are not actually trees or branches. They are remnant images of nature. These are living forms that are still growing, but also internally coalescing. They have a blue of flame, and radiate an enchanting blue light. These are creations of Liu Guofu's unique brushwork.

On the level of technique, Liu Guofu employs the permeative and absorptive properties of ink to transform the properties of oil paint. Oil paint is by nature covering and additive, but after

being repeatedly washed with the properties of water, the original paint has been wiped away, but each brushstroke still remains, like the traces of ink painting. These remnant traces have the breath of diffusion. A series of acts of destruction and erasure leaves behind countless remnant traces. This is the construction of the painted plane through useless brushstrokes, Zhuangzi's principle of the "great usefulness of uselessness." The shapes in the painting are constructed through countless remnant traces. On the detail level, they are all useless brushstrokes, but as a whole, they possess an indivisible remnant image.

These "tree-shaped" artworks are truly dense forests of atmosphere. This term from traditional Chinese painting finds embodiment for both layers of its meaning here. On one hand, it resembles a forest covered in fog, giving it atmosphere. On the other, the whole has been diffused. Infinite possibility appears to flow through it.

Liu Guofu's transformation of this principle is actually along the same lines as the painting and sculpting methods of Giacometti. The difference is that Giacometti's forms are mottled or damaged bodies created by destruction or "chopping." The technique is primarily disintegrative, while Liu Guofu's is absorptive and growing, indistinct and agile. These infinitely disintegrated and reconstituted tree forms appear similar to Giacometti's works, but they are more crystallized, and yet softer as well. This is quite magical. On one hand, they are condensed into crystalline form, but on the other hand, they are so soft, and continuing to thin out and empty themselves. How can this be? This is due to Liu Guofu's use of the dual effects of ink and oil painting: oil painting coalesces, while ink washes and dilutes. Between destruction and retention, the two form a tension, and it is this tension that shapes these forms.

The painting is filled with forms like flowers of dancing blue flame. The scorching body seems to be dreaming of an eternal, ageless cold shell. Here, Liu Guofu is consciously maintaining tension between extreme hot and cold, creating depth in the painting between the tangible and its rejection. This is the perceptual depth generated by the "phantom brush." Thus, it is not the spectral body of Giacometti's works. Instead, it is a more richly spiritual and vivid being. It is a tree sprite, smoky yet concentrated, the soul of the trees calmly expressing.

In Chinese contemporary painting's efforts to rewrite modernity, it has attempted to begin again from late-period Cézanne and Monet, to erect a connection between the absolute eternal and fleeting impermanence with "nature" as the medium, and to turn back the direction that was followed by Cubism and conceptual art to return to nature, to discover the elementality of nature. These tree-like forms possess the atmosphere of life, of living things in the midst of revival. They are Giacometti's phantoms reincarnated as living individuals with souls.

These tree shapes seem almost human. Is this the original Adam? It is that first elemental

body into which life was breathed. This is the reshaping and reimagining of life. This is a highly condensed body, but this body is still growing, interacting with the bodies around it or with the atmosphere that envelopes the entire painting. This is the encapsulation and fusion of which Cézanne dreamed. This is a newly created life form. It is even a Śarīra from Buddhism, a crystallization of the air of life. This is a sprite-like life form.

This crystallized life is an eternal body, like the "death fire" Lu Xun envisioned at the beginning of Chinese modernity in *Wild Grass*. This is a death fire that still burns, an undying concentration of life and death, a crystallization of eternity. But it also concentrates the flames. It is the fusion of the two formal languages of literature that Italo Calvino found irreconcilable in *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*—crystal and fire. It continually retains residual heat, and can turn remnant things into ageless eternity. This is the embodiment of Liu Guofu's powerful spirituality.

Some of these shapes even come out from within the painting, radiating light from immeasurable depths, exhaling the breath of dark orchids, coming from the great distance. Could this be the image of the "ice-skinned woman of virgin grace" from Mount Guye that Zhuangzi described in *Carefree Wandering*? She is cold and pure yet full of allure.

It is as Liu Guofu has said, "Abstract and concrete are both limitations. Having no boundaries whatsoever is also limitation. Between semblance and non-semblance: the semblant or remnant image."

Thus, the *Open Space* series and *Pervading series* does not fall into the distinction between concrete and abstract. Instead, it empties the two. That is because it maintains the growth of the chaos, and generates it as a "remnant image." Due to the dialectical tension in the image, the appearances are in a state between chaos and growth, at once dissipating and coalescing, vaporous yet fused. This is the arrival of a new aura.

5. The Beauty of Dark Blue: the Poetic Fusion of Light and Qi

Western classical painting used architectural compositional modes of perspective and fixed colors to open up a symbolic space to take in the presence of the Christian holy spirit. This continued until the Impressionists used natural light to open up new possibilities. But how to open the depth or invisibility of nature? This was the problem that plagued Cézanne. This was followed by the extraction of forms by the Cubists, which evolved into the pure geometric abstraction of points, lines and planes, then by the extraction of deep emotion by Abstract Expressionism and the substantiation of Minimalism. Throughout this progression, the elementality and depth of nature were forgotten. This dimension still awaits reopening. We have seen the return of this depth in the works of Liu Guofu.

The two-dimensional plane of painting still awaits a more total restoration. First is the question of how to bring the "fourth dimension" from science, which Marcel Duchamp contemplated when he abandoned painting, back to the plane. This amounts to the full revelation of temporality. The absorptivity of Chinese ink painting and the simulation of the growth of nature make this possible. Second is the opening of "non-dimensionality," that bottomless abyss or chaos, which keeps temporality in a state of diffuse generation, like an event on the horizon of a black hole, or the tremors of a "gray hole." It is just the flow of diffuse remnant images, mere hints at form. But this remnant image must possess the beauty of aura, the beauty of illusion, the beauty of emptiness.

What is this "aura"? It is the integration of the light aura and qi aura, and since it is connected to the "reverse gaze" of nature, writing must return to nature. Why aura? This term, which comes from the mysterious George Circle, and from long poetic traditions tracing back to the Middle Ages, which was clarified into concept by Walter Benjamin, and is connected to the poetry of Baudelaire and Rilke, why is it so important? At its beginning, modern art confronted nature. The shifts in natural light brought an aura of light and color. This is connected to photographic technology. But as Benjamin's research showed, Western modernity then shifted towards technological reproduction, digital reproduction and cinematic reproduction. How can that possess an aura. There then emerged an anti-aura, a non-aura and a false-aura. The false aura that emerged in idol figures and Political Pop possessed only display value, empty shadows and their cold allure. They had lost the true aura, that of eternity.

Why is this so? It is because there are two possibilities for the aura. One is to move towards technological reproduction, growing in symbolic and semiotic value. This led to the simulation and illusion of the system of things. The other possibility is to move towards the aura of nature, the aura brought by nature. Benjamin pointed this out, but few in the West followed in his footsteps. It is in this passage: "*If, while resting on a summer afternoon, you*

follow with your eyes a mountain range on the horizon or a branch which casts its shadow over you, you experience the aura of those mountains, of that branch." This aura of nature has not been thoroughly pondered in philosophy. Heidegger in his later years shifted towards natural "releasement" (Gelassenheit), opening up to the growth of nature, towards thinking on the elementality and scenes of nature. Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Gaston Bachelard's thinking on the elementality of nature opened up a dimension that had long been suppressed in the West, a dimension like writing. Writing must be linked to nature, rather than just connected to technology—as it was with Derrida—or just connected to the desires of the body—as it was with Barth. Otherwise, it will lead only to an illusory, nihilist impulse towards death. This was the case with Pollock's drip painting, which possessed the most thorough experience of the syncope of chaos, and a material expression of dissipation and dispersal, but in the end, it led to a frenzy, and that is because the writing was not brought back to nature. It did not allow for the agency of nature. It did not allow for natural growth, rather than death, as the direction of the will, and was thus too much of an expression of the subject's desire. Twombly in his later years was able to avoid the frenzied writing of the body, and restored writing to nature. Whether it was the abstract landscapes or the rose storms, these works appear to be torrents of desire, but they listen the most closely to nature. The use of writing to absorb syncope, dissipation and constellation, and to be able to reactivate the aura of nature, this has been the unfulfilled dream since Impressionism. Monet possessed properties of nature, but the written aspect was insufficient. Cézanne had a constellation sense of diffusion, and his late-period watercolors had a naturally flowing sense of breath, but he never realized it as fully in his oil painting. The character of writing began to emerge in some of his works, such as his small paintings of bathers, where the figures were written like sketches. This is an aspect of Cézanne that requires greater understanding, and is why we are proposing an infra-mince art. It was even more so with Van Gogh. Self-emasculation or being engulfed in syncope led to suicide. Since he did not return to the connection between writing and nature, he was unable to dispel the anxiety of the subject. The aura comes from nature. It is the non-action of the will. Nature must be allowed agency. The human subject retreats and yields, allowing a silencing operation of nature. A new understanding of the spirit entails moving towards to an activated "atmosphere aura" of natural elementality. Aside from awakening the natural ink view on nature from Chinese culture, this also requires a rewriting of history, a return to Impressionism to begin again. This is not a return to Impressionism's simple reception of Japanese Ukiyo-e art. Instead, it is Chinese artists returning to nature and writing to forge a new link between image and text, to absorb the three forces of syncope, dissipation and constellation. This is the fundamental task for future Chinese painting.

But this aura must come hand in hand with poetry. Without poetry, how can it possess the discourse of modern Chinese aesthetics? How can it make a unique contribution to modern

aesthetics?

What is poetics? Poetics is an inner poetic essence. First, it is expressive. Without this expressive nature, there can be no poetry. But what about the lofty expression and deep emotion of painting? This is an explosion of the subject's desire and vitality. Poetry is contained by verse, especially the verse within, the constraint of the subject. In Liu Guofu's earlier series, *Alien Realm*, we see thick poetry. In the decline and dignity of the withering willow, both sadness and romanticism are present. Second is naive innocence. This innocence is the poetry of nature, the growth of nature, rather than the self-consumption and explosion of the subject. Poetics is the sense of overarching coexistence between man and the world. Liu Guofu's painting stays always within poetic growth. Third is the realm of ancient elegance, a realm from before humanity that transcends human desire but can purify the human heart. This is the spiritual direction of the color tones in Liu Guofu's painting. Finally, poetics is charmed memory, the infinite dependence on memory that forgets death. It is a thought-provoking dialectic game between oblivion and memory. The dialectics of Liu Guofu's brushstrokes forms an endlessly engrossing poetry between dissipation and coalescence.

The most important task facing Chinese contemporary art at present is the reconstruction of the inner relationship between poetics and art. Artists must allow modern poetics to permeate their individual senses, production methods and notions of the possible, so that contemporary art may return to its deep, broad system of literati aesthetics and emerge as a new, comprehensive poetic art, and summon that coming and arriving "celebration of nature." Let nature once again become the core of art. Let poetry rule art, rather than the desires and concepts of the individual.

We have seen, in *Open Space*, that Liu Guofu has opened the energy field of life. A series of concentrations of qi appear to be a transformation of the Mi-style clouds of Chinese shanshui landscape painting. This is a dissolution of the ability to perceive shapes, a fusion of the "sense of qi" and "sense of light," an unimaginable union of the elemental natures of ink and oil. The living presence across the entire painting is leaping like flames, the breathing of the chakras.

Waves of light ripple in the depression, and the light permeates the densely woven vegetation. Like moss or lichen, it has a dark blue beauty to it. It is also a transformation of the Chinese cultural view of the cosmos, with a round vault over a square earth. It constantly squares the round and rounds the square, a flow of atmosphere and qi. This adjusts the square plane of painting, making it as if the painting is revolving. From within the depression, light waves flow forth, the mysteries of nature beginning to reveal themselves. This is the

opening of non-dimensionality. This is a diffuse light, tree-branches of light (Pervading series). The spreading branches simulate fractal geometry. This is sacred nature. It is a further concentration of the concentrations of qi in Wang Yuanqi's shanshui landscape painting, an activation of Gong Xian's ink accumulation into potential growth in oil painting, a transformation of the permeation and boiling of Mi-style clouds into flows of qi, and it has found its own rhythm on the edge of the destructive change of modernity. Thus, it also transforms Giacometti's painting methods, but it pushes them towards the soft and sublime, towards the silencing revolution. There is a depression in the plane, but it does not fall into the illusion of depth. It nurtures the juncture of growth. The painting calls on us to soften and meld our own perceptions into the light waves, to find sweet sleep in the branches. The breathing shadows stir distant dreams. This is the arrival of the aura of natural poetry.

The new painting still must begin again from Impressionism, because that was the first time the West confronted vivid, living nature. For instance, Camille Corot's landscape paintings preserved the transparent qualities of classical art while also possessing an infra-mince sense of breath, but Corot still fell into the visual shackles of perspective, and was unable to open up the depth more internal to nature. For that, one must uncover a richly diffuse energy of life. Once Cézanne began modeling in pure color, how would he continue to maintain this transparent quality? We see this aspiration in Cézanne's late-period paintings, but how can that be transformed into the transparent infra-mince feel in oil painting, while also presenting the depth of nature? This method of infra-mincing oil painting is extraordinarily difficult for Western painting. Later on, Gerhard Richter was only able to achieve transparency and openness, but he lost the depth of nature in the process, with works that were too realistic. This requires that the artist transforms the entire painted plane into a transparent veil, or even a mysterious seven-layer veil. Only an artist deeply steeped in the principles of permeation and permeability of Chinese ink painting can complete this task. The task of painting is to preserve its pursuit of permeability and transparency on the plane, but not just through thin, flat layers of color. It must be layers of stacked transparency, the more layers stacked, the more it breathes in transparency. This can only be done by awakening the permeability and growth of nature.

Liu Guofu's recent Open Space series has responded to this challenge. He has always pursued the radiant, elegant textures of classical transparent painting techniques, and incorporated the thin, permeable textures of Corot's landscapes, but also infused it with the Chinese obsession with the patina of time and the texture of jade, to produce a new "diffuse color." Liu Guofu has invented his own infra-mince painting technique, one that makes ample use of the permeative principles of ink to alter the qualities of oil paint: many layers seeping over each other serve to dissolve the oil paint multiple times, allowing it to release its internal diffuse atmosphere. In this way, the painting conveys the growth of atmosphere, rather than

the mass and saturation of paint itself. It is no longer the piling and weight of oil paint, but the thin, permeable and enchanting breath. After multiple imprints, the painting presents the transparent texture of jade or the texture of patina. The small clearings in the dense forest are overflowing with infinite vitality, opening up a diffuse, saturated and mysterious field brimming with jade-like light. Liu Guofu's "phantom brush" has restored Gong Xian's dream of a fusion between light and qi, and it is a sense of light that is alluringly foggy. It is also the gray and gray-blue of ink. It at once possesses the white transparency of light (light aura) and the dense diffusion of ink (qi aura). He has re-incorporated two seemingly irreconcilable principles (forming a new aura or naturalized color tone), incorporated the transparent white of the Western sense of light with the empty, spiritual and permeable black of the East to form the dreamlike, soft beauty of "dark blue."

Dark blue is the most beautiful hue of Chinese culture, because she has accumulated the contemplation and helplessness of time. This is the most poetic color. It has absorbed the energy of black, but does not fall into the void. It has anticipation of light, but does not fall into the impulse of sacrifice for the sublime. This is a new fusion of yin and yang, an unimaginable integration of Western light and Eastern diffusion. Liu Guofu's "phantom brush," between the lightly whirling vibrations or remnant shadows and hazy poetry, dissolves forms while preserving the details of the brushstrokes, corresponds to the hazy atmosphere of traditional painting, but it is more vivid. It is the first revelation of the fusion between of the diffuse colors and aura of nature.

The opening of this new non-dimensionality of the invisible requires a new system of color, like the color system that Cézanne discovered in his late years, which diverged from the system of supplementary color or illumination used by the Impressionists, and shifted towards the autonomous construction of pure ontological color and melted shapes, or a color system of the depth of nature. Though it was later carried on by abstract painting, in Cézanne's late years, this "depth color" was fundamentally connected with the elementality of nature. Later developments in Western art canceled this connection. Now, in the appeal to a rewriting of modernity, this depth color awaits reconnection to nature, and to be spread once again. This is the coming of Chinese color or a new system of jade color.

There are multiple systems of color. For the West, there is the traditional system of fixed color, where white presages the arrival of the sense of light. The prismatic and complementary colors of the Impressionists were discovered by facing the shifts of light in nature. Later, abstract painting utilized geometric or musical constructs of pure color, or the unearthing of deep emotions, to move towards either tragic sacrifice, pure monochromatic painting, or so deep into the "invisible" as to cancel out painting itself. If there is still to be painting, then it must discover a new sense of color to reveal the "invisible." The West has always lacked discoveries in this regard, and the later Pop art and conceptual art seem to have

abandoned the task altogether. On the other hand, Chinese art possesses two color systems. One is a system of mineral pigments related to Western fixed color, which later settled on the "colored painting" system of blue, green and umber. The other color system was the "plain color" system of ink painting, in which black ink is subtly differentiated into five different shades for a prosaic, bland, yet elegant feel.

How, then, can we discover a new color system in oil painting? This is necessary for the invisibility of nature. Modernity has made everything visible, controllable by technology, but how can allusions be made to the invisible? How can it open to the world of the unknown? In Liu Guofu's works, we have seen a new sense of color, one that possesses the color contrasts of Impressionism, as well as the sense of umber, green and blue from the Chinese fixed colors. But this is not the fixing of uniform colors. It also possesses the depth colors of Cézanne, but here they are more diffuse, melded with the jade texture that is unique to Chinese culture. This jade texture is an accumulation of human atmosphere. It is the patina of time, and it possesses a texture of gloomy light. It more richly incorporates the temporal light aura. Drawing from the flows of natural elementality, this new aura of color and light is the natural aura Walter Benjamin dreamed of in the age of technical reproduction, and a color aura which the West always lacked.

Unlike the color contrasts of the complementary color system, the umber or blue-green in Liu Guofu's works is just a tone. The overall tone appears to be umber, but each stroke of the brush, each color field, is infused with other colors. This is "diffuse color," a diffuse color with primal chaos as the background, which continues to diffuse. This is more than just the mixing of color. It also draws from the ink painting technique of coaxing multiple shades from a single ink. There is one overarching base tone, but as the painting unfolds, it is infused with other colors. It even draws inspiration from Cézanne's late-period watercolors. Art historians have noted that Cézanne's watercolors appear more natural, more blended, more innocent. For Chinese artists, they perhaps appear to have more of an ink painting flavor. The infusion of the absorptivity of ink painting brings diffusion to the sense of color. The entire painting is adjusted by the overall tone, as other related colors quietly fill the canvas, presenting a diffuse sense of color.

Cézanne once said to Joachim Gasquet, *"All the tones blend into each other, all of the volumes interlock. There is a continuity... What is magnificent is to bathe a whole infinite, immense composition like this one in the same muted, warm brightness, to give the eye the lively impression that all these chests really breathe like you and me, breathing in the golden atmosphere that saturates them. I'm sure that basically it's the underpainting, the hidden soul of the underpainting, which links everything together and gives this strength and lightness to the whole ensemble."* If Cézanne always doubted his ability to open up the inner mystery in nature, I firmly believe that Chinese artists have already clearly opened up this base tone, this underpainting in sunset tones marked by the void of modernity. This is the unique texture of

life Chinese artists have found through the incorporation of bleakness and suppleness, of old wisdom and youthful love.

The invisibility of nature, in the bleak realm of time, emerges as the "color of dusk." In lamenting the passing of painting, Cézanne remarked that we have all been shrouded in the color of dusk. He was right. The future painting is shrouded in this color of dusk, while also nourishing infinite vitality. In the gray-blue, gray-green or Chinese dark blue tones of Liu Guofu's previous works from 2012-2013, we have already sensed the arrival of this color of dusk, but it is not a morbid gravity. To the contrary, it is the adjustment at the moment of "transition." Modernity is always in a state of transition and adjustment, pacing between timelessness and impermanence, adjusting between desolation and brilliant recollection, filling the painting with the tension between biting cold and scorching heat. He has infused his more recent works since 2014 with umber, green and blue more richly imbued with natural elementality, as well as mist and rain, beautiful and thought-provoking. We could even say this is a new "biomimetic color," containing synthesis or mimesis of the vitality of nature. It has reconstructed the Chinese aesthetic sense of color between semblance and non-semblance, though it is closer to non-semblance, more diffuse, more infra-mince and transparent. It has a sense of ancientness. It is a condensation of the temporality that precedes nature. Thus it is cold and bleak. It is the "patina color" of time. This encapsulation of the transparent white of time is a modern embodiment of the coldness in Chinese shanshui landscape painting.

In the works from the Pervading series, we see countless details like branches amidst a diffuse atmosphere. The repeated covering of brushstrokes and the seeping between them brings a fluid atmosphere akin to ink painting. Each detail is its own world. Some details even evoke Dong Yuan's Images of Xiaoxiang from the Five Dynasties period, with that remnant flavor of mist over the vegetation. These countless brushstrokes seem to be sparking each other. An infinite potential is contained within the painting. The growth of the brushstrokes is an expression of the vitality of nature. Under the condition that the overall "diffusion" of the painting is maintained, countless "vaporous" details unfold, but the overall painting still concentrates on an open, plaza-like space in the center, to the point that the blankness in this area seeps out into other parts of the painting. This is the permeation of "infra-white."

Today, no one has restored Gong Xian's dream of fusion between light and qi to the extent of Liu Guofu. Another Nanjing native, Liu Guofu has carried on the remnant tones of the late Ming dynasty in his work, and taken them through a modern transformation. The vertical lines have a descending force, but it has been muted by the white and blue-gray tones. This sinking feeling concentrates the burning of passion and cold contemplation, bringing a powerful visual chill. This is the tranquility that follows the burning of modern individual passions. The sense of space in the painting also incorporates Western space with the blankness of Chinese color. In the process of emptiness, it avoids the limitations of the concrete, as well as the vapidness of abstraction. Between semblance and non-semblance, it

veers closer to "non-semblance," and yet it allows the echoes of the brushstrokes to expand, filling the phantom brush with remnant meaning.

Dark blue encompasses the most magnificent "color of darkness" from Chinese culture (as in *Open Space No. 2, No. 30 and Pervading series No. 15*), forming the base tone of the painting. This enchanting tone, after highly infra-mince technical rendering, gives a smooth, clean finish to the painting, a sense of jade texture, calling us to touch it. This sense of touch echoes the essential properties of the traditional snowscape painting, "as if made from white jade, bringing clarity to the soul." This jade ring opens up more than a plaza-like open space. It is the eye of the soul. It comes from the heights of the soul, and these great heights induce syncope, a feeling of looking back on this scene from a century into the future. It is that last remnant image seen by a departing soul looking back one last time with infinite longing for life. It is the enchanting syncope. It is the most beautiful sight in the mortal world. It is the poetry of Li Shangyin's verse, "*The warmth of the sun coaxes jade mist from the blue fields.*" This is the aura of temporal accumulation, marked by the jade texture of the patina of time. Or perhaps it is a brownish yellow, the intersection of warm and cool, as in *Open Space No. 37*, the spreading tree branches as if washed in a syrup of jade, the lights and shadows blending together to bring a haze down over the entire scene. The painting is permeated by an umber flow, enchanting and intoxicating, as if seeing is not seeing but is instead sipping a fine wine, and we can breathe together with the diffuse light in the painting. Gazing is not viewing, but instead allowing the gaze, the body and the mind to be absorbed by the painting, enveloped by it, bathed by it. This brownish yellow is an illusory projection of time, a dream-like scattering that also contains the backwards gaze of advanced age. It at once possesses "ancient elegance" and the "emerald hue of youth." This is the modern manifestation of the "bleak resplendence" of Chinese culture.

Another aspect in which Liu Guofu's painting possesses modern aesthetic significance is that it is Chinese painting in the truest sense. It must confront three elements: decadence, ancient elegance and growth.

This is a decadent, vulgar era. No individual is a success. Defeat and decline are the essence of existence for the modern individual. The artist must express unavoidable, ineradicable decadence or traumatic memories, dejection or irretrievable loss, the lateness of the hour or the incontrovertible fact that the hour has long passed. In the West's first narrative of modern artistic aesthetics, it received this decadence. This is the decadence and dejection captured by such works as Baudelaire's *Le Spleen de Paris*. From Cézanne and Van Gogh, on to Surrealism and then to American Abstract Expressionism, whether it is Newman's "zips" or the blurring of the boundaries of Rothko's color fields, all are affirmations of individual trauma and defeat. The West's second narrative of modern artistic aesthetics was dominated

by decadence. It was, on the one hand, anti-sublime, setting out more consciously from the decadence. This was the case from Dada to Neo-Dada, on to Pop, and then to Twombly.

If there is a new Chinese poetic painting, it is that which uses ancient elegance as a balance against the decadence. In this vulgar era, it cannot entirely set out from ancient religion, but it cannot be entirely without faith, either. Here there emerges a poetic solution—"ancient elegance." It is distantly ancient and elegant, but not classical. It is not the classical elegance, but it makes classical appeals. This is a more remotely ancient yet refined experience. Only by encompassing the great elegance of remotely ancient temporality can it resist against the vulgar tide. But it does not transcend the vulgarization. This is a new, inner transcendence, just as Liu Guofu's painting appears so refined, but is at the same time also so contemporary, as it has taken in the references to fragmentation and dispersal.

Ancient elegance can also move towards technical operation. It just needs the balance of natural growth. Liu Guofu's painting has continually ventured deeper into the abyss to touch of natural growth and the growth of the fusion between light and qi, so that nature can absorb the fluids of natural existence from its roots, from our breath, from the illusion of beauty or the unique phantom brush, and from our very nerve endings, to dissolve our desires and anxieties.

Liu Guofu's painting, with its reverse reconstruction of the "phantom brush" and "infra-color," simultaneously dissolves and constructs, fragments and condenses, makes him a leading figure of of Chinese contemporary "infra-mince art" and the "aesthetics of infra-mince color." Together with Qiu Shihua and others, he has revealed how Chinese painting will move out into the world, into an absolute bearing.





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個展

- 2016 《虛筆——劉國夫個展》，3812畫廊，香港
- 2011 《「昇景」——劉國夫個人作品展》，江蘇省美術館，南京；今日美術館，北京；上海美術館，上海，中國

群展

- 2016 《夏季展覽2016》，藝術家聯展，3812畫廊，香港
- 《抽象中國2016》，上海明園美術館
- 《印象莫奈——走進當代》，南京國際美展
- 2015 《劉國夫繪畫沙龍》，3812當代藝術項目，香港
- 《目光所及——後金融危機時代的中國新繪畫》，泰勒基金會，巴黎，法國，意大利
- 《「放大」後金融危機時代的中國新繪畫》，重慶長江當代美術館，重慶，中國
- 《虛薄：自然的靈暈》，Tabula Rasa，北京，中國。
- 《中國色》，亞洲藝術中心，北京，中國。
- 《虛色美學》，築中美術館，北京，中國。
- 《空間之奧》，藝術家聯展，3812畫廊，香港
- 《劉國夫繪畫沙龍》，3812畫廊，香港
- 《3812藝術家聯展》，《典亞藝博2015》，香港會議展覽中心，香港
- 《心·景2》，藝術家聯展，3812畫廊，香港
- 2014 《社會風景——中國當代繪畫中的風景敘事》，成都，中國
- 《沉實的足跡——南京國際美術展特邀展》，南京國際展覽中心，南京，中國
- 《對話 5:5》中德藝術家聯展，德國波恩當代藝術館，波恩，德國
- 《空寒-自然的虛托邦》，索卡藝術中心，北京，中國
- 《共振計劃——瑞士2014，無形之形：中國當代抽象藝術展》，聖烏爾班當代藝術博物館，瑞士
- 2013 《心·景》，藝術家聯展，3812當代藝術項目，香港
- 《3812藝術家聯展》，《典亞藝博2013》，香港會議展覽中心，香港
- 《倫敦大師傑作展2013 — 香港館》，倫敦，英國
- 《應無所住·江蘇當代藝術研究展》，浙江美術館，杭州，中國
- 《逾越》，張江美術館，上海，中國
- 《中德文化年「無形之形」——中國當代藝術展》，湖北美術館，武漢，中國
- 《逾越——中國繪畫2013》，夏宮，愛丁堡，英國
- 《對白——虛薄藝術第二回展》，索卡藝術中心，北京，中國
- 《中德文化年「無形之形」——中國當代藝術展》，寺上美術館，北京，中國
- 2012 《虛薄：杜尚與莊子》，元典美術館，北京，中國
- 《中式表現——2012油畫邀請展》，鳳凰藝都美術館，無錫，中國
- 《心性自然——朝向未來的中國繪畫》，今日美術館，北京，中國
- 《無形之形——中國當代藝術邀請展》，德國
- 《第四屆廣州三年展：去魅中國想像》，廣東省美術館，廣州，中國

- 2011 《中國意志——中國當代邀請展》，北京當代美術館，北京，中國
《相遇與鄉愁——南京、杭州、成都、重慶四地巡回展》，中國
《南京當代藝術年度展》，尚東藝術中心，南京，中國
《第54屆威尼斯雙年展·平行展——破碎的文化=今天的人？》，威尼斯，意大利
- 2010 《你西我東》，深圳美術館，深圳；武漢美術館，武漢；西安美術館，西安，中國
《南京當代藝術年度展》，尚東藝術中心，南京，中國
- 2009 《文脉精神·中國版本》，南京，北京，中國
《「溢出東方」四人作品展》，安·布萊恩物藝術館，倫敦，英國；伊麗莎白港、那斯納、威靈頓，南非2008
《對應——南京·成都2008青和當代美術館學術交流展》，青和當代美術館，南京；空港十號藝術中心，
成都，中國2007
《超越圖像——中國新繪畫2007《藝術當代》架上藝術學術提名展》，上海美術館，上海，中國
《自轉——南京青和當代美術館開館展》，青和當代美術館，南京，中國
- 2006 《變異的圖像——中國當代油畫邀請展》，上海美術館，上海，中國
《中國油畫名家精品展》，江蘇省美術館，南京，中國 《南北油畫家邀請展》，中國美術館，北京，中國
- 2004 《中國當代藝術邀請展》，南京博物院，南京，中國 《中國當代油畫邀請展》，劉海粟美術館，深圳，中國

LIU GUOFU

Born 1964 in Nanjing. Graduated from oil painting department of Nanjing Institute of Art in 1985. Currently lives and works in Nanjing.

Solo Exhibitions

- 2016 Phantom Brushstrokes: Liu Guofu Solo Exhibition, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2011 fantastic scenery-Jiangsu Provincial Art Museum, Beijing Today Art Museum, Shanghai Museum of Art, China

Group Exhibitions

- 2016 Abstraction China 2016, Shanghai Mingyuan Museum
- Summer Show 2016, Artists Group Exhibition, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2015 Painting Salon of Liu Guofu, 3812 Contemporary Art Projects, Hong Kong
- Within sight-Chinese new painting at post financial crisis era, Taylor Art Foundation, Paris, France
- Zoom In- Chinese new painting at post financial crisis era, Chongqing Changjiang Contemporary Art Museum, Chongqing, China
- Inframince: Aura of Nature, Tabula Rasa, Beijing, China.
- China Color, Asia Art Centre, Beijing, China,
- Chinese Infra-Color Esthetics, Zhuzhong Museum, Beijing, China
- Space Matter, Artists Group Exhibition, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong
- Painting Salon of Liu Guofu, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong
- 3812 Artists Group Exhibition, Fine Art Asia 2015, HKCEC, Hong Kong
- Mind-Scape 2 Artists Group Exhibition, 3812 Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2014 Social Landscape, Chengdu, China
- The heavy footprints --- The invited exhibition of Nanjing International Art Festival, Nanjing, China
- Dialogue 5:5, Kunstraum Villa Friede, Bonn, Germany
- Empty Cold--- Infra-mince of Snow-scape, SOKA Art Center, Beijing, China
- vibrARTion Switzerland 2014-Forms of the Formless: Exhibition of Chinese Abstract Art, art-st-urban Museum for Contemporary Art, Switzerland
- 2013 3812 Artists Group Exhibition, Fine Art Asia 2013, HKCEC, Hong Kong
- Hong Kong Pavilion at Masterpiece London, London, England
- Mind-Scape Artists Group Exhibition, 3812 Contemporary Art Projects, Hong Kong
- YWSZ: the Jiangsu contemporary art study exhibition, Zhejiang Art Museum, Hangzhou, China
- Moving Beyond, Zhangjiang Art Museum, Shanghai, China
- Forms of the Formless---- Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Art, Hubei Art Museum, Wuhan, China
- Moving Beyond: Painting In China, 2013, Summerhall, Edinburgh, UK
- Blank to Blank--- Inframince Exhibition II, Soka Art Center, Beijing, China

- Mind-landscape, 3812 Contemporary Art Space, Hong Kong, China
Forms of the Formless--Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Art,
Sishang Art Museum, Beijing, China
- 2012 Infra-Mince: Duchamp and Chuang Tzu, Yuandian Museum, Beijing, China
The 4th Guangzhou Triennial: De-Chinese imagination,
The Exhibition of Contemporary Chinese Art, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China
Ink-Boundary, Dadetang Art, Huaifu Art, M50 Art District, Shanghai, China 2011
The Will of china--China Contemporary Art Invitation Exhibition,
Museum of contemporary art, Beijing, China
Meeting with Nostalgia, tour exhibitions of contemporary art in Nanjing,
Hangzhou, Chengdu and Chongqing, China
Nanjing Contemporary Art Annual Exhibition, Centre of Contemporary Art Shandong, China
Parallel Exhibition of the 54th Venice Biennale--Cracked Culture?, Venice, Italy
- 2010 You West, I East, Shenzhen Art Museum, Wuhan Art Museum, Xi'an Art Museum, China
Nanjing Contemporary Art Annual Exhibition, Centre of Contemporary Art Shandong, China
- 2009 Spirit of Cultural Tradition- China Version, Nanjing-Beijing, China
Spillover the East Four People Artwork Exhibition, Ann-Brian Art Museum,
Port Elizabeth and Wellington of South Africa
- 2008 Corresponding Nanjing & Chengdu, 2008 Qinghe Contemporary Art Exchange Exhibition,
Nanjing Qinghe Current Art Center, Chengdu No. 10 Gallery, China 2007
China's Neo Painting, A Triumph Over Images
- 2007 Art China Painting Nomination Exhibition, Shanghai Museum of Art, China
Autorotation-Nanjing Qinghe Current Art Center Open Exhibition,
Nanjing Qinghe Current Art Center, Nanjing, China
- 2006 Varied Images--China Contemporary Oil Painting Invitation Exhibition,
Shanghai Museum of Art, China
Selected Chinese Canvas Works Exhibition, Jiangsu Provincial Art Museum, Nanjing, China
South & North-China Oil Painting Exhibition, National Art Museum of China, Nanjing, China
- 2005 Land Rich in Beauty Oil Painting Exhibition, Jiangsu Provincial Art Museum, Nanjing, China
- 2004 China Contemporary Art Invitation Exhibition, Nanjing Museum, Nanjing, China
China Contemporary Oil Painting Invitation Exhibition, Liu Haisu Art Museum, Shenzhen, China

虛筆

劉國夫 個展

10.20-11.19.2016

策展人：夏可君 博士
Curator: Dr. Xia Kejun

3812 gallery

開放時間 / Opening Hours: 星期一至五 / Monday to Friday 10:30 am - 7:30 pm 星期六 / Saturday 11:00 am - 5:00 pm

電話 / Telephone: +852 2153 3812

地址 / Address: 香港西營盤皇后大道西118號地下 / G.F, 118 Queen's Road West, Sai Ying Pun, Hong Kong

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/3812gallery

微信號 / WeChat ID: cap3812

雅昌畫廊專頁 / Artron Page: shop.artron.net/8516

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關於3812畫廊

3812畫廊樓高三層，座落於香港西營盤皇后大道西的雀仔橋上，乃香港少數同時擁有獨立花園、露臺和私人沙龍，而且主要展覽空間樓底高逾四米的畫廊。除了藝術展覽，我們亦會舉辦文化活動及收藏家聚會。

3812畫廊主要展示20至21世紀的現當代藝術、設計、收藏品，尤其注重水墨藝術的收藏及發展。

我們的故事

3812畫廊由Mark Peaker先生及許劍龍先生於2010年創立，被譽為香港具有影響力的亞洲當代藝術畫廊之一。

3812的由來

一群友人抵達了法國莎慕尼(Chamonix)，站在海拔3812米高的白色山谷(Vallée Blanche)上，俯瞰著陡斜的雪山，欣賞著白朗峰(Mont Blanc)的壯麗景致。在這巍峨雪嶺上滑雪，彷彿置身於美麗的油畫中；滑雪者在白愷愷的雪地上遊轉，就像藝術家利那的筆觸，用色彩在畫布上留痕。頃刻之間，3812的意念由是誕生，以之紀念阿爾卑斯山上難忘的一天。

ABOUT 3812 GALLERY

3812 Gallery is an ultra-contemporary art space located in a traditional neighbourhood in Sai Ying Pun, Queen's Road West, on a slope that was once called "Squirrel Bridge" or 雀仔橋 in Chinese. 3812 Gallery is unique in Hong Kong, with its own garden, terrace, a private salon and a dedicated exhibition space with a ceiling height of more than 4 meters. Aside from gallery exhibitions, we offer a diverse range of cultural programmes and collector's events.

3812 exhibits artworks, design pieces and collectibles from both the 20th and 21st century, our interest spans from that of modern to contemporary periods with a specific focus on ink art.

OUR STORY

Founded in 2010 by Mr. Calvin Hui and Mr. Mark Peaker, 3812 Gallery is recognised as one of Hong Kong's leading contemporary Asian art galleries.

THE NAME

So what's with the numerical composition of 3812 I heard you asked: The name was chosen after a group of friends completed the Vallée Blanche in Chamonix, France. The starting point to this off-piste run is a long, precarious ridge, 3812 meters above sea-level. As we descended in the shadow of Mont Blanc, crafting our paths admits the powder snow as though an artist's brush travelling across the canvas. That moment, the inspiration for 3812 was born and the name is an homage to that memorable day in the French Alps.

3812 gallery

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