

空谷长钟——当代水墨之李纲个案

(艺术的意象之美 宏意微澜)

艺术家李纲的艺术生涯颇有一些传奇色彩。试想，如果有这样一个人，从懵懂初开之时，便承袭家学而开始学习用毛笔、宣纸、水、墨作画，精学传统写意花鸟的真髓。成年之后，又进入效仿西方现代教育模式的而设立的专业艺术学院，学习西方绘画的各种专业技法，经历 85 新潮等中国现当代艺术思潮的洗礼，进而尽弃传统而研习西方绘画的各种风格样式。再后来，进入官办美术馆的高雅艺术殿堂，从事当代艺术展览的策划与推广，并时时反思历史文脉，处处静观当代风云，穷其所学所思而在传统水墨与当代艺术之间寻找某种新的创作契机，历二十年风霜磨砺而独树一帜，筚路蓝缕为“当代水墨”的创作另开一条蹊径。这样的艺术家，如果将其嵌入近 30 年的中国当代艺术史，我们是否可以看到一个既与昔人之故史前后呼应，又与近时之思潮左右相闻，更为将来之艺术别开风气的子然身影呢？

“当代水墨”是当代艺术的一种，既不能脱离当代，也不能回避水墨。前者是它的文化属性，而后者则以媒材为基点，为自由无拘的当代艺术创作提供了一种方式上的可能。不仅如此，相对于美术史上水墨艺术的美学准则和当下水墨创作的常规面貌而言，“当代水墨”更为重要的特征是——具有某种难以准确描述的“未来合理性”。因而，在视觉层面上，它总是与水墨艺术的未来样式相合，而与其过去样式相左，并在美学追求上永不终歇地开拓着全新的理想境界。

当代水墨可以是实验、抽象的、表现的、观念化的，但这里的水墨必然从属于“当代”这个文化概念。作为当代艺术的一种可能形态，当代水墨虽然并不拘泥于表

现层面的技巧选择，但不论选择哪种表现技巧，呈现何种具体形态，只有当创作本身能够对当代艺术中更广泛的问题做出回应、或是对水墨自身的历史脉络有所延展时，才有可能真正进入当代水墨的论域。若非如此，而只是借用某些技巧来玩弄水墨媒材，便既与当代艺术无关利害，亦与当代水墨相去甚远。

由于概念自身的语焉不详，将李纲的水墨创作归入“当代水墨”的框架之下，或许是一庄极具学理风险的痴言妄行。虽则如此，既然没有最佳的称谓，便可以权当为探讨的深入开一道“方便法门”而姑妄称之。

李纲的水墨创作大约可以算作“观念水墨”的尝试，创作的重点不在于技巧的演习，而在于观念的探讨，广涉当代艺术观念、当代文化思想、以及水墨当代性的宏观问题等。样式上，有时以抽象为主、有时以表现为主、有时又显得中规中矩。虽然李纲的作品为评论者提供了许多不同的关注角度，但“微妙的节奏秩序”却是本次展览关注的重点。在李纲的作品中，他似乎并不强调水墨领域惯于标榜的所谓“笔墨”、所谓“功力”，并拒绝了一般的水墨审美，也拒绝其评判标准。而努力通过折纸、泼彩、拓印等多元的技法，用不尽规则方格、墨点、色斑，在方与圆、全与残、立与破之间·方圆，规矩，无秩序中寻找某种微妙的秩序。

他舍弃笔，杂糅墨，看似山穷水尽处，却是柳暗花明时。

经咒、音律感，微妙的节奏变化，宏大的整体气势，产生空谷宏钟般的震慑人心的力量。

A Bell Ringing in the silent Sky: Li Gang's contemporary Ink Paintings

The artistic life of Li Gang looks like a legend. Following his father path he started to learn painting with brushes, Xuan paper, water and ink. During his childhood he mastered the essence of drawing traditional paintings of flowers and birds.

After growing up, he entered a professional art college established to simulate contemporary education modes in western countries by teaching various professional skills used in western paintings. This college was baptized by the new artistic thoughts in China prevailing at this time, including the new trend: to give up all traditions and learn various styles of western paintings (circa 1985).

Later, he moved in the elegant hall of government-funded gallery where, while engaged in planning and promoting contemporary art exhibitions, he frequently observed the historical and cultural context. He also looked around the world how creation came from traditional ink paintings and contemporary trends.

He spend his next 20 years to develop his unique style, establishing a new way for "ink painting" representations.

If we put such an artist into contemporary Chinese history, the last thirty years we see a unique individual who while echoing perfectly ancient artists and traditions brings forcefully contemporary thoughts. He introduces a new style which is a great opening for the future of the art world.

This could be expanded by the use of water and ink, a media from the ancient times, while inspiration and forms are strictly contemporary. Opening the door to a complete new universe of communication with the freedom of creation in contemporary art.

This application of ink painting tradition to this contemporary universe opens up an unlimited future that is by nature impossible to describe in advance. Visually it is the future style of "ink painting", conflicting with the past styles and opening up fresh visions in aesthetics.

"Contemporary ink painting" can be experimental, abstract, demonstrative or conceptual. For our purpose ink painting here must belong to the cultural concept of "contemporary times". To be a possible form of contemporary arts, "contemporary ink painting" cannot be confined to selecting the skills in terms of representation, but must respond to widespread issues in contemporary arts or be a direct extension of the historic track of ink painting itself.

If Ink painting only plays with the materials, it is unrelated to contemporary arts and is far away from "contemporary ink painting" as a form of Art.

Li Gang's creation can be regarded as an attempt of "conceptual ink painting", focusing on conceptual exploration, involving macro issues such as contemporary cultural artistic ideas and thoughts around contemporary ink paintings. In form, it is mainly abstract, representative... Although Li Gang's works present various perspectives of attention to commentators, "**rhythmic order**" is the focus of this exhibition. Among his creations, he gives less attention to so-called "ink" and "skills" and

The way he organizes the ink painting area rejects general pattern of organization. By doing so he refuses the actual standard of judgment and he highlights specific points.

By means of various skills, including paper folding, color pouring and rubbing, he is using irregular squares, ink points and color spots to seek some subtle order among rules and disorders. His order is between square and round, entirety and incompleteness, traditional and non-traditional shapes.

He gives up the brush, mixing ink in a way looking like a dead end which turns out to be a new start.

Buddhist chanting, rhythm, fine pace of change and overall magnificence combine to produce an amazing power like a bell ringing in the silent sky.