

沉厚雄健 意趣高格——

尚濤水墨畫意解讀

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自在 Comfort and Ease 121×187cm 2002

不久前，“第二屆全國畫院雙年展”在廣東美術館舉行。參展的約400件作品，是從全國31家省級畫院選送的近600件作品中挑選出來的，最後，又評選出獲“學術獎”的10件精品。這其中，廣東畫院尚濤的《自在》榜上有名。

筆者曾在展廳面對《自在》久久揣摩，對比眾多高品質的畫作，思忖和尋找《自在》獲獎的原因、意義和奧秘所在。並不複雜的豎構圖畫面，一群活潑的遊魚，正悠然地遊弋於崇山峻嶺的河川間。不必蹙腳地去解說畫家向我們傳達了什麼主題——因為不同的觀者站在這幅畫前會有不同的聯想。我對此作有一個強烈的感受，就是這幅畫不署上“尚濤”這名字，許多人也能一眼就認出是尚濤的作品。那充滿象徵意味的紅顏色遊魚；佔據了宣紙上下部位的大面積積墨山崖；中間留白的江水，組成了一個高潔清淨和悠然自得的境界。山的沉厚雄健，魚的憨拙之態，畫面色彩對比的大黑大白，構成鮮明的形式美感，大大豐富了傳統國畫的表現力，增強了作品的意趣。

這是一幅充分體現尚濤風格和尚濤審美意味的作品。尚濤上世紀60年代初畢業於中央美術學院國畫系，吸收了豐厚的美術素養，打下了扎實的造型基礎。在這座中國美術界的最高學府裡，那些一流教師以及濃厚的藝術氛圍，都給了他潛移默化的影響。而李可染的山水、李苦禪的花鳥，對尚濤的教化更大。1964年畢業後，他被分配到廣東省文化館，四清，文革，幹校，“左”的政治折騰，浪費了他許多青春時光。直至1978年調進廣州美院國畫系，才使他真正重新進入了尋求自己的路的藝術新天地。

沉思在尚濤的水墨畫前，我首先會想到其畫作與書法的關聯。書法與國畫是中華傳統藝術中的一對姐妹。不說古人，就近現代的國畫家中，書畫齊頭並進甚至先書後畫的大有人在，如吳昌碩強調以書入畫，徐悲鴻影響最大的何止是雄雞、奔馬，他那奔放雋秀的行書草書，令人“讀來如泣如訴”，連大書法家康有為也收了他為弟子。當代美術家分工的細化和許多畫家書法素養的退化，引來一些人對古人“書畫同源”之說不時提出質疑。當然，我們不能要求每個畫家都必須是書法家——西洋美術技巧的訓練似乎也可以培養出美術人才，但是，以水、墨、毛筆為工具的國畫家如果具有書法的素養，其作品絕對會有不同的面目。著名人物畫家楊之光多次講到，石魯生前不斷呼籲要將書法列為美術教育的必修課，道理就在於此。眼下我們論列的尚濤的藝術實踐，也是有力的說明。尚濤從讀中央美院起，就與書法結下了不解之緣。他臨習的書法遠追漢魏，石門、禮器、張遷、鄭文公、鐘鼎、八大山人……都下過長期

的苦功。書法是幾千年的文化積澱，學書法是對古代美的欣賞。長期的書法課陶冶了尚濤的文化氣質，而這種氣質又潛移默化進入他的畫中。就像蜜蜂採了花，自然會釀成蜜那樣。石鼓文的韻味，漢碑北碑的渾圓沉厚，都成為藝術的纖維，吸收進他畫的經緯中，渾然融合成大氣、高古和充滿意趣的品格。

在尚濤的畫中，他熟悉的線條技巧已常常被推到了次要位置上。他入畫最多的如荷如蘭如芭蕉，大多不依靠線條的勾勒而靠厚重的積墨鋪染而成。他畫幅中的物象變形著——變形中顯出拙味，充滿意趣。拙，是尚濤的天性。尚濤謙稱自己不是一個靈巧的人。尚濤是因拙而好古，還是因為入古而錘煉了拙？我們大可不必去深究——因為這是宛如“先有雞還是先有蛋”這樣緊密相連而又不好回答的問題。

尚濤的作品為什麼能在高手如林的全國許多重大展覽中獲獎？問題似乎已經有了答案：扎實的基本功；傳統文化根源長期的滋養；區別于古人和今人的、能表現自我又有獨特審美意趣的風格。👉

（南方日報主編、藝術評論家）

Firm, Robust, and of Loft Conception: Interpreting the Essence of Shang Tao's Paintings

Mei Yun

Not long ago, the 2nd National Art Academies Biennial was held at the Guangdong Museum of Art. Of the roughly 400 participating works, which were selected from almost 600 works from 31 province-level art institutes, 10 won the Academic Award. Among these 10 were *Comfort and Ease* by Shang Tao of the Guangdong Art Institute.

I stood for a long time in front of the exhibit of *Comfort and Ease*, comparing it to the numerous high-quality paintings around it to figure out why it was awarded. In its uncomplicated vertical design, a school of lively fish are merrily swimming in a mountain river. I didn't need to awkwardly interpret what the painter was trying to convey, for different people standing before this painting would have different associations. I felt strongly about this work that, if Shang Tao had not signed it, many would still recognize at a glance that it is his. The symbolic red fish, the great swathe of ink comprising the mountain, and the river left white in the middle give rise to a level of cleanliness, serenity, and merriment. The firmness and robustness of the mountain, the unadorned poses of the fish, and the clear contrast of black and white constitute a striking formal beauty that greatly enhances the expressivity of traditional ink wash painting and that augments the essence of the work.

This is a work that fully manifests the style and aesthetics of Shang Tao. Shang Tao graduated in the early 1960s from the School of Chinese Painting, Central Academy of Fine Arts, having absorbed abundant artistic nutrition and laid a solid stylistic foundation. At the highest place of artistic learning in China, the first-rate teachers and artistic atmosphere influenced him deeply, especially the mountains and rivers of Li Keran and the flowers and birds of Li Kuchen. After graduating in 1964, he was assigned to the Guangdong Cultural Centre, where the Socialist Education Movement, Cultural Revolution, May 7th Cadre Schools [labor camps], and abuses stemming from political “leftism” wasted the prime of his life. Only when he was reassigned to the School of Chinese Painting, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, in 1978 did he enter a new artistic period in which he could walk his own path.

Meditating in front of a Shang Tao painting, I first think of its connection to calligraphy. Calligraphy and ink wash painting are the sisters of traditional Chinese art. To speak not of the ancients but merely us moderns, there are many painters who are equally proficient, if not more so, in calligraphy, such as Wu Changshuo and his proposition that we enter painting through calligraphy, and Xu Beihong, whose legacy resides in not only his roosters and galloping horses but also his free and graceful cursive, which “reads like a tearful supplication” and led calligraphy master Kang Youwei to take him on as a disciple. The ever-specializing division of labor among contemporary artists and their degenerating calligraphic training has occasionally brought criticism to bear on the ancient saying, “calligraphy and painting of one origin.” Of course, we cannot ask all painters to be calligraphers- training in Western artistic techniques seems to also be able to form artistic talent- but if calligraphic training is acquired by a traditional Chinese painter, who has ink, wash, and brush as tools, the painter's work would look different. This is why renowned portraitist Yang Zhiguang often mentions the fact that Shi Lu, when he was alive, continually called for calligraphy to be a required course in artistic education. The artistic practice of Shang Tao, whom we are currently discussing, is also a powerful illustration. From his time at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, he has always had a connection to calligraphy. The styles he emulates range from the Han dynasty and Wei period to *Ode to Shimen*, ceremonial objects, the *Epitaph for Zhang Qian*, the *Stele of Zheng Wengong*, ancient bronze inscriptions, the works of Bada Shanren ..., all done with studious practice. Calligraphy is the sedimentation of thousands of years of culture; to study it is to appreciate ancient beauty. Long hours of calligraphy cultivated Shang Tao, and this cultivation has influenced his paintings, just as bees that seek nectar naturally make honey. The flavor of stone

engravings and the integrity and firmness of Han dynasty and Northern period steles have all become artistic fibers woven into his paintings and holistically combine into his magnanimous, lofty, and marvelous character.

In Shang Tao's paintings, the line techniques with which he is familiar are often relegated to secondary importance. His most frequent subjects, such as the lotus, orchid, and Japanese banana, depend for their articulation less on lines than on thick inkwork. The objects in his painting transform, and in their transformations reveal a wondrous unadornedness. Unadornedness is in Shang Tao's nature. He humbly claims that he is not a skillful person, nor a free-spirited one. Is Shang Tao traditional because he is unadorned, or has his unadornedness been perfected from his pursuit of traditions? We need not go deeper, for this is as intractable a problem as the chicken-and-egg question.

How have Shang Tao's paintings won awards at so many important exhibitions nationwide in competition with so many other master painters? The answer seems clear: A solid foundation, traditional culture as artistic nutrition, and a style that distinguishes the ancient from the modern and that can express himself through his unique aesthetic.

I congratulate Shang Tao today, and believe with good reason, as a matter of course, that he will achieve more in the future. 🍵

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