

## 自由落体——黎旭的绘画

王春辰

黎旭是中国七十年代出生的那批人中具有代表性的艺术家。作为一个从传统学院中走出来的画家，黎旭走过从传统的写实绘画到现在的表现性绘画的过程，这其中出现了巨大的转变和自我推进。以他的创作而论，他体现了中国的当代艺术家在艺术追求上所遭遇的冲击和苦闷。他的作品让我们强烈地感受到艺术家对世界的思考超出了画框本身，具有强烈的震撼力，能够直指人心。他把自己思考的视角，从画室、从周边的个体经验、从日常体验，走向一种具有普世关怀、悲天悯人的境地。黎旭所选取的题材以及所进行的绘画的构想，都是指向一种世界性的普适问题。这样的视觉和取材创作是当下艺术家们不得不为、却又应该有所为的一种表现。我们也知道，在整个的当代艺术里，绘画依然表现出它巨大的创作力和表现能力，但是，也并非所有的绘画能够传达今天世界的状态、困境、矛盾和冲突等等。作为绘画，它的功能究竟应该是什么？这个问题非常纠结，众说纷纭，让人难以释怀。但是，黎旭从传统的学院派，从一个封闭的自我欣赏的系统当中，转向自觉地表现这个世界的创作。这样的转变应该说是非常艰难，甚至是痛苦的。在他的画面中，能够感受到艺术家对人的观察，对周遭世界的那种敏锐感知力。而这也深深地打动着观众，影响着今天的我们。

黎旭之前生活在中国，经历了许多城市的迁徙，他的学习经历以及之前的创作作品都值得被深入挖掘。特别是他之前遭遇了人生的重创，大批优秀的作品在一次不幸的雨季当中被水浸泡损毁了。即使只有作品的照片，我们也可以从中看到黎旭绘画的功底和能力，以及在表现对象的深刻准确度，包括表达的意味。如果说他不转向现在的普世表现风格，以他这些已经毁掉的作品而论，都是非常优秀的艺术家作品。但黎旭并不满足于这种创作格局，而是将自己的思考转向更大的场域。这种更大的表达可以说是当今世界性的问题，也是当今世界上优秀艺术家所共同具有的一种特质——不仅仅是围绕个人兴味作“小趣味”的表现。从这个角度看，黎旭传递出了一种强烈的信号，也只有如此，才能够使得一个画家的创作达到一个互通的领域。我们对绘画的期待并不等于画面，我们希望通过画面的表达感受到这个世界的复杂性和背后的困惑纠结。

我们这个世界是一个充满碎片的世界，我们每天的遭遇并不能因为物质的富裕而获得满足陶醉。所谓物质的幸福，往往让人不能真实地认识世界，或者说并不能够发现这个世界另一种真实的存在。纵观全球的当代绘画，凡是那些能引起大家关注，值得获得大家认同的绘画，无不是对世界性的人类存在的状况作出了反应的绘画。虽然也有描绘风光风景，以个体审美作为诉求的作品大量存在，但是这些作品的存在也仅仅是满足人们的一个日常的审美需求，而非进入到绘画表达人的存在状态的高度。我们希望看到的绘画是这样一种绘画，就像托伊曼斯、杜马斯等等，这样的画家，他们紧紧围绕着当代社会中人的新境遇，同时在绘画语言上，不再拘泥于传统的具象、抽象或表现，它是一种杂糅的绘画语言，是一种松弛有张的表现。它的表现性又超越于以往审美的表现性而进入到思想观念的表现，进入到以绘画作为思考工具的表现。黎旭经历了他在中国和美国两种截然不同的生活，通过在纽约的四年时间，切身感受到了与中国完全不同的政治体系和一种比较式的文化感受，这多多少少都对他的创作产生了影响，并且也使得他有了更强烈的自我反思。包括这个世界上不同人的境遇和困惑，这种困惑不仅来自于文化的困惑，也来自于对社会制度的困惑，世界格局的地缘冲突的困惑等等。这些困惑让他在创作时能够更加契合地选取那些传递这个世界正在发生的矛盾和危机的题材。当我们看他的绘画，也的确可以感受到中国的艺术家并非只是将目光停留在局限的周边环境和个人小情趣上。

个体经验是在绘画上经常讨论的一个话题，甚至认为是画家进行创作，表现个体价值的判断的维度。但是凡事过犹不及，当很多个体经验的表现变得愈来愈无趣的时候，这种绘画就失去了它本身的生命力。在绘画的历史上，表现神话、宗教、历史的重大事件都成为了过去宏大叙事的重要题材，而这种方式在今天转化为个体的艺术家如何以绘画来展开对普适性的人的存在问题的思考。用视觉的语言，以画笔作为探索工具，表达我们今天这个世界状态的方式，使得绘画拥有了不同以往的一种功能。黎旭虽然离开了中国，但他的绘画表达和他的自我身份认同，通过画面的展示，依然能强烈地感受到与中国密切的关联，以及内心不可遏制的一种驱动力。黎旭因为这些年生活在美国，可能不太为中国观众所熟悉，其作品的深度和意义也在一定程度上有所被忽视，但他绘画的力度，具有强烈的这个时代的特征。他身处不同于中国的文化环境里，内心具有巨大的冲突和不适，而这种感受实际上是画家根本的属性和特点，反映在其作品上。凡是那些敏锐的，甚至是纠结的，感应世界的画家，往往能创作出流传百世的作品。作为一个画家，有不同的类型，我们欣赏的是这种怀抱天下、思考人的境遇的绘画。

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黎旭在经历了如此跨国文化冲击之后再去表现自己的绘画，已经步入了更加关注人的普适性境遇的创作中。这是世界性的绘画在兴起的趋势，我们面对复杂的全球未来，我们只好用绘画来寄托希望。

2020年10月，北京

**Free Fall**  
**Li Xu's Paintings**  
by  
Wang Chunchen

Li Xu is a representative artist among those born in China in the 1970s. As a painter who came from a traditional academy, Li Xu transitioned from traditional realistic painting to the present expressive painting, through tremendous personal changes and self-motivation. Li's works embody the impact and suffering of Chinese contemporary artists in their pursuit of art. His work makes us feel intensely that the artist's world view goes beyond the frame itself, has strong impact, and points directly to the heart. He directs his own thinking perspective, from the studio, from the surrounding individual experience, from the daily experience, toward universal care and compassion for the human condition. Li Xu's selection of subject matter and the concept of his paintings both point to a universal problem. This kind of visual and material creation is simultaneously, not only an expression of what contemporary artists are obliged to do, but also an expression of what they feel compelled to do. We know that in the modern contemporary art, painting still shows great creative and expressive power, but not all the paintings convey the state, dilemmas, contradictions, and conflicts of today's world. What is the function of a painting? What should it do? This question is very tangled and different critics hold different opinions, hard to resolve. However, Li Xu turns himself outward from the confines of appreciation of self to a creation that consciously expresses the world. Such a shift should be said to be very difficult, even painful. We can feel the artist's observation of people and the world through this exquisitely refined perception. And, this also deeply touches audiences and affects us today.

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Li Xu previously lived in China and experienced the migration of many cities. His learning experience and previous creative works are worthy of being explored. In particular, he had suffered heavy losses in his life many years ago and a large number of excellent works were damaged by flood during a rainy season. Even if there are only photos of those works, we can still see the painting skills and abilities of Li Xu, as well as the profound accuracy in expressing the objects and their meaning. Even if he does not embrace the current universal style of expression, the record of those excellent works that have been destroyed speaks to his tremendous abilities as an established artist. However, Li Xu is not satisfied with this creative pattern. He extends his thinking to a larger field. This larger field is the expression of the problems of today's world, not just a dalliance around his personal tastes. In this, Li Xu shares a trait in common with outstanding artists in the world today. From this perspective, Li Xu sends a strong signal. Only in this way can a painter's creation reach an interconnected realm. Our expectation of a painting is not the same as a picture. We crave to feel the complexity of the world and, through the expression of the picture, the perplexity and struggle behind it.

Our world is world of a various fragments, and our daily experiences cannot be satisfied or enchanted by material affluence. So called material happiness often prevents people from really knowing the world or from discovering the real meaning of existence in the world. Throughout the world of contemporary painting, what really arouse people's attention and gain their recognition are paintings that respond to the universal condition of human existence. There are abundant works depicting landscapes and appealing to individual aesthetics, but the existence of these works is merely to satisfy people's daily aesthetic need, rather than to enter the height of paintings, to express the state of human existence. The kind of paintings we would like to see are like those of Luc Tuymans, Marlene Dumas, et cetera. Painters like that closely focus on the new situations of people in contemporary society.

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Simultaneously, their language of painting is no longer confined to the traditional figuration, abstraction, or expression. It is a hybrid language, expressing a good balance of contraction and relaxation. Its expression, in turn, goes beyond the previous aesthetic expression to the expression of ideas, to the use of painting as a tool for thinking. Li Xu experienced two very different lives in China and in the United States. Through the recent four years in New York, Li Xu has personally experienced a completely different political system and a comparative cultural experience from China, which, more and less, influenced his creation and led him to have a strong self-reflection. This includes the situation and confusion of different people in this world, which not only comes from the cultural confusion, but also from the confusion about social systems, geo-conflicts of the world pattern and so on. This *mélange* of confusions allows him to appropriately select themes that convey the contradictions and crises happening in the world. When we look at Li Xu's paintings, we can indeed feel that Chinese artists do not just concentrate on the limited surrounding environment and personal aesthetic interests.

Individual experience is a commonly discussed topic in the field of painting, considered to be in the realm of artist's judgment to create and express individual values. But, going too far is as bad as not going far enough. When the expression of many individual experiences becomes more and more boring, this kind of painting loses its own vitality. In the history of painting, major events representing mythology, religion, and history have all become important themes for the grand narrative of the past. This approach translates into how individual artists use painting to expand on the thinking of commonality of human existence. Utilizing visual language and the brush as an explorational tool to indicate the state of our world today gives painting a different function than it had in the past. Although Li Xu has left China, his painting expression and his self-identity, through the display of his images,

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still firmly have a close connection with China, and an irresistible inner drive. Li Xu is in a cultural environment different from China, causing huge conflicts and discomfort in his heart. This heartache is actually the fundamental attribute and characteristic of this painter, reflected in his works. Those painters, who are keen, even tangled, and perceive the world, can often create works that have been passed down for generations. As for painters, there are different types of painters. What we admire most are those who embrace the world and contemplate the human condition.

After experiencing such a transnational cultural shock, Li Xu has returned to displaying his paintings, and has already stepped into the creation that pays more attention to the common human condition. This represents an emerging trend of worldwide painting. In the face of a complex global future, we have to use painting on which to pin our hopes.

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