

ZHU WEI 朱伟

Works 2024-2025



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Foreword

Linda Ma

MOCA@Singapore | Linda Gallery



The latest series of ink paintings by Zhu Wei can be considered another self-breakthrough of his personal style. One day in 2024, I saw Zhu Wei post a set of portraits and still life works rendered in shades of gray, white, and black, in which an understated ethereal sense flows within the composition, departing from his previous focus on color as the visual core. Those familiar with Zhu Wei's art know that his early pieces were characterized by clear, distinct lines of meticulous brushwork. Starting from the "Derivative from Bada's Deer Painting" series a few years ago, his style gradually shifted toward abstraction and freehand expression. Yet, upon seeing his latest works, I was immediately captivated, experiencing a dreamlike visual sensation that felt both indistinct and compelling, an ambiguity that lingers and invites prolonged contemplation.

As an overseas Chinese who has been deeply involved in the art scenes of China and Southeast Asia for over three decades, I firmly believe that our aesthetic sensibilities are inherently rooted in the influence of ink painting, as it represents our shared cultural memory. While many of us remain drawn to the traditional poetic imagery of ink landscapes, flowers and birds, Zhu Wei has long been a leading voice in the field. He not only continues to innovate classic ink but also consistently reminds us of the mission of the contemporary Chinese ink: How can it connect with our society? How can it engage in expansive global discourses? This is precisely where Zhu Wei and I found our strongest resonance. Through my years of experience and our two decades of unwavering collaboration, I hope to continue unfolding the various possibilities of contemporary ink.

If lines form the "skeleton" of ink painting, then Zhu Wei's latest works demonstrate that ink wash is essential for creating its "flesh and blood". The portraits he depicted are blurred and softened by washes, yet they remain vivid and lifelike, as if challenging our memories of the past. Alongside portraits of globally renowned figures, the new series includes many depictions of unnamed individuals: sometimes a single person, sometimes as families. The experience is akin to flipping through old photograph albums, effortlessly forging a closer connection with viewers and convincing us that each figure comes from a life that was once real.

Zhu Wei has long been a well-established name in the contemporary Chinese art scene, yet he remains restless, never content with his past achievements. For this 2025 New Works Exhibition in Beijing, Zhu Wei has invested immense effort into his creations. The secularized and ironical expressions of early works are weakened, replaced by a deeper artistic exploration of the identities and spirits unique to each era as excavated from history. One thing that endures, however, is his unwavering commitment to reforming Chinese ink. I deeply cherish our close collaboration over the past two decades, and am sincerely grateful for Zhu Wei's trust in me, which has enabled me to share his art across Southeast Asia over the long term. I feel privileged to have been part of this journey, witnessing the evolution of his remarkable artistic style over the years. Publishing this special edition alongside the exhibition, I am delighted to share this important chapter with all art enthusiasts and look forward to furthering the development of contemporary Chinese ink.

序

马梅玲

新加坡当代美术馆 | 林大艺术中心

朱伟这次带来的系列水墨作品可谓是又一次自我风格上的突破。2024 年的一天，我看到朱伟分享了一组以灰、白、黑为基调的人物肖像与静物作品，画面低调淡雅，一改他以往以设色为视觉核心的创作。了解朱伟的朋友都知道，他早期的作品都有着清晰、工整的工笔线条，从几年前的“仿八大画鹿图”系列开始逐渐有了抽象写意的趋势，但在看到这组最新作品后，我还是一下就被吸引住了，随之而来的是一种想要努力看清却又更加模糊的视觉感受，让人想要去细细揣摩。

作为一名在中国和东南亚艺术领域深耕三十多年的海外华人，我深信我们的审美本就根植于水墨的熏陶，因为那是我们共同的文化记忆。当我们都在感叹山水花鸟的意境时，朱伟做了那个给所有人掌灯的人，他不但要对传统水墨进行一次次革新，还要时刻提醒我们当代水墨的使命：如何与社会建立联系？如何与国际自由交流？这也正是我与朱伟一拍即合的点，我也希望通过这些年的从业经历和我们二十年如一日的合作，继续推广当代水墨的种种可能性。

如果说线条造就了水墨画的“骨”，那么这一次朱伟的新作则证明了晕染是铸就水墨“血肉”的必备条件。一张张面孔被晕染、模糊，却又神形兼备，好像在挑战我们对于过去的记忆。除了海内外名人的肖像，新作中还有很多无名者的画像，他们或是一个人，或是一个家庭。这个过程就像是在翻看老照片，自然而然就和观众产生了密切的联系，让我们相信那就是一个个真实存在的个体。

朱伟早就是中国当代画坛里响当当的名头，但他并不安于已有的成就。对于这次 2025 年北京新作展，朱伟投入了大量的心血进行创作，世俗化和戏谑的表达开始逐渐弱化，更多的是一分他在历史中挖掘属于每个时代身份和精神的艺术构想，唯一不变的是对水墨改革的坚持。我很珍惜我们二十年来的密切合作，也由衷感激朱伟对我的信任，让我有机会能长期在东南亚分享他的艺术，也很荣幸可以一路见证他的精彩创作的演变。配合展览出版此画册，与所有热爱艺术的朋友分享这一阶段性的进展，更期待将当代水墨艺术继续发扬光大。

Context and Logic The Art Career of Zhu Wei

He Guiyan

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I

In the field of contemporary Chinese ink painting, Zhu Wei plays an important role with his works involve a in a variety of themes, which not only have a clear developmental trajectory and artistic language, but also reflect the change and breakthrough of contemporary Chinese ink painting and traditional Chinese Gongbi after 1989. For example, his works subverted and deconstructed the painting paradigm and aesthetic taste of traditional ink painting; in the post- 89 art movement and in the 1990s when Chinese contemporary painting were transforming. Zhu Wei's understanding of reality and current affairs and presentation of people's living condition and spiritual life expanded the depth and scope of contemporary Gongbi, and his emphasis of visual effects, aesthetic taste and image narrative brought new possibility to the development of contemporary Gongbi and ink painting. Zhu Wei's dialogue with the tradition, his knowledge of the tradition, and his quest of contemporary transformation of art language can be found in his works created after 2000. In his opinion, Chinese contemporary ink painting and Gongbi should develop in two ways: first, artists should get rid of the influence of Western art and create new and original art language and rhetoric on the basis of tradition and art history; second, artists should concern themselves with reality, culture and aesthetics, and keep up with social changes. In fact, in the past three decades, Zhu Wei, with intervention or alienation, was always thinking about the relationship between history and reality, traditional and contemporary society, system and individual, culture and language. Sometimes he was ambitious, and sometimes he was hesitated and suspicious. Of course, these problems have various facets, but due to the changes of history and social context, these problems cannot be resolved in any singular action by any artist. And these problems enable us to see the painting trajectory and inner logic of the artist.

Zhu Wei began his creation in the middle and late 1980s. At the beginning, he consciously integrated personal creation into the art history where the contemporary ink painting placed itself. Briefly, since the reform and opening-up of China, the development of contemporary ink isn't just an artistic issue, but also a social, cultural and even ideological one. Especially in the early 1980s, under the influence of the reflection of Cultural Revolution, modernized revolution, and Western modern and postmodern culture, contemporary ink painting bore an important cultural mission— to reverse and alienate socialist realism, to reject and deconstruct traditional ink painting, and to accept and absorb Western modern art and post-modern art language. These artistic and cultural demands are not separated but interwoven.

In the early stage of his artistic creation, Zhu Wei faces three transforming forces of contemporary ink painting in the

1980s. The first is to pursue the construction of modernity— the modern transformation of theme, language, aesthetic taste and painting paradigm and then endow them with contemporary cultural connotation. This wave of changes took place in the mid-1980s. The second is subversion and deconstruction. At first sight, this artistic thought was influenced by Dadaism and postmodern deconstructionist thought, but its inner power came from the "anti-traditionalist" trend in the 1980s. In fact, these enlightenment thoughts basically reached a consensus on "anti- traditionalist" in the 1980s. The consensus formed a concerted effort that derived into a distinctive sense of rebellion in the field of ink painting: to completely abandon the painting paradigm and artistic flavour of traditional ink painting and explore its new possibilities with an attitude of experimentation and deconstruction. The third tendency is "new literati painting", which emphasizes personal taste, sense of humor, satire and parody to digest the depth of history and reality, resulting in a strong sense of civility. "New literati painting" neither overcame its own cultural limitations nor developed into a constructive artistic force. But its deliberate gesture, including satire and parody, had an impact on cynical realism in the early 1990s.

In the Imitating Zhu Da series, viewers can unveil Zhu Wei's thoughts and responses on the changes of contemporary ink painting in the 1980s. Although he was a student at the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Academy of Art, he had been thinking about the inevitable fission of traditional ink painting in contemporary cultural context and expressed his ideas in personalized ways. In this series, Zhu Wei gave up the traditional taste and liberated the noumenon, making his works more inclined to a modern expression. His emphasis on the plane means the rejection of the narrative function of traditional ink painting, which paved the way for the change of his paintings in the 1990s. In fact, in Western modern artistic logic or the context of contemporary Chinese painting, one method of the construction of modern art language, is the return to language and plane. Only the liberated and independent language can resist the narrative function undertaken by ink painting in its past traditions and the ideological discourse behind the concrete language system. As can be seen from the works in this period, Zhu Wei was more in favour of the subversion and reconstruction of ink painting. At the same time, those narratives formed by the daily discourse embodied the artist's nonchalance and ridicule attitude rather than consider the visual composition of the painting. Is this a response to "new literati painting"?

After 1990, methodology to reconcile with the relationship between personal painting and tradition from the perspective of language, form and narrative and how to explore the possibility and tension between them formed an important development clue of Zhu Wei's art career. For example, in the different types of works such as Beijing Story Colorful Sketch series (1991), Racing Horse on a Rainy Night series (1997), Great Water (2000) and China Diary series (2001), Zhu Wei not only absorbed elements in traditional Chinese murals and Gongbi paintings, but also drew from the languages and schemas of Han Huang, Guo Xi, Ma Yuan, Zhu Da and many other masters. For these languages and schemas, the purpose of the artist is neither imitating nor borrowing. Instead, these languages and schemas formed a visual representation, or a hint that showed the relationship with the visual mechanism and viewing habit of the traditional painting. In New Positions of the Brocade Battle series (1994), The Story of Sister Zhao (1994) and other works, there was a correlation with the "model play" of the Cultural Revolution in the respect of visual expression,

which formed an intercontextuality to the works. If there was a relationship with the old tradition in Racing Horse on a Rainy Night and Great Water, then what was shown in The Story of Sister Zhao was a "new tradition", that is, the artist deconstructed the "encoded" visual and image resources which have ideological meanings after the founding of new China; he then re-encoded them and presented them in a new structure and narrative discourse. Of course, for Zhu Wei, the ultimate goal of the intersection with the tradition was still the personal expression in the context formed between the ancient and the modern, the tradition and the present, history and reality. From this point of view, Zhu Wei's painting is always narrative. The most representative work is New Pictures of the Strikingly Bizarre series created in 1994. Although the image and schema are born out of the tradition, but the story is about current things related to reality.

II

"I've been working on ink painting for 30 years and my painting techniques and painting materials are closely related to traditional Chinese painting. But my paintings are focusing on contemporary subjects. So I've never thought that traditional painting and contemporary painting can be separated. I pursue the policy of making the past serve the present", Zhu Wei once said in an interview.["Zhu Wei: We Can Only Learn Painting Techniques and the Use of Materials but not Spirit", Song Rui]

Chinese contemporary art, including contemporary ink painting, has been focusing on the transformation of art language since 1980. And many artists have contributed a lot to this attempt. Indeed, artists have different ideas on the formation of art language and inner logic. For that matter, some artists focus on traditional Chinese art; some focus on the inner logic of art history; some focus on Western modern and post-modern art; some focus on the methodology of art creation. Zhu Wei uses traditional ways to construct the inner logic of his art language, even though he is influenced by deconstructing the nature of works. The paradox is that in the value system of Chinese contemporary art, the contemporary construction of language gives way to the narrative of the society. On the one hand, Chinese contemporary art needs to complete the linguistic turn, that is, in the discourse of "aesthetic modernity", form its own idioms and rhetoric to build a language system which is different from that of Europe and the United States. On the other hand, since 1980, the narrative of the society has become the dominant direction in the wave of "reflection of the Cultural Revolution", "emancipating the mind" and "cultural enlightenment". Thus, aesthetic narrative and sociological narrative are always in the state of game and encouragement, which was fully embodied in the seesaw struggle and confrontation between the purification of language and the need of the times for the soul in the mid-1980s. Of course, the inner reason is that Chinese contemporary art lacks a linear and self-disciplined modernist system that relies on the development of language, and it is based on the context of art history. Due to the innate deficiency, it is impossible to complete the construction of contemporary art system relying solely on language changes or "aesthetic avant-garde". In other words, sociological narrative or "cultural avant-garde" still dominated the value appeal of contemporary art. This feature was reflected most vividly by "political pop" and "cynical realism" in the early 1990s.

Zhu Wei starts to intentionally add sociological expressions to his works such as *Comrades Caption* (1993), *The Story of Beijing* (1993) and *Sweet Life* series (1994) in his 1993-1994 compositions. In *Comrades Caption*, the objective presentation of the soldier is completely upended while in *The Story of Beijing* and *Sweet Life*, "contemporary subjects" are closely represented in a calm way. In fact, the changes in social and cultural circumstances and artistic context in the early 1990s also indicated the changes in the creation of Chinese contemporary art. China undoubtedly became the focus of Europe and the United States after experiencing the changes from 1989 to 1992, especially in the context of the fall of Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. In the field of art, the Modern Art Exhibition in 1989 marked the decline of the modern fine arts, because when the early cultural criticism could not find the answer in reality, it naturally meant the decline of the grand and lofty modernist narrative which is full of enlightenment ideas. At that time, it was not by accident that in Zhu Wei's paintings featured soldiers, intellectuals and Chairman Mao, but his creation was always at a certain distance from the wave of "political pop". This sense of distance, on the one hand, was reflected in the expression of the image. "Political pop" mostly used the image processing methods of juxtaposition and borrowing and paid attention to the differences and conflicts between different images in politics, culture, consumption, visual expression and other semantic categories. Zhu Wei would not directly borrow or copy the existing image but would pay more attention to personal and original image expression. On the other hand, it was reflected in the different meaning appeals of the works. "Political Pop" concentrated on Chairman Mao and most involved the figures and various types of images in the period of Cultural Revolution, but Zhu Wei's works involved more intellectuals, soldiers, or ordinary people. For the artist, the image was not the goal since he was more concerned about these people with different classes and identities as well as the change in living conditions or personal values in the rapid social changes in the 1990s. From this perspective, "Political Pop" is closer to the Western post-modern art, such as "New Dada", while Zhu Wei's paintings, despite the humor and satire, diffused a strong taste of realism.

Of course, it was not that Zhu Wei relied on the interpretation of society, but the artist could not avoid social changes and reality in China. For the contemporary art in the 1990s, the criticism of the language alone cannot fully grasp the pulse of the society in that era: it will appear weak in objective reality. In *Descended from the Red Flag* (1994), *Sweet Life* (1994), *The Square* series (1996) and other works, there is no doubt that the images and expressions related to rock and roll, pop culture, and urban consumerism constructed a context of era, but Zhu Wei's expression on the reality was not a "mirror"; on the contrary, in the humorous atmosphere hid a profound and critical perspective. For example, the carnival of rock and roll shows aphasia; the consumer society brings alienation despite the longing of people; the "Square" is lofty but erodes personality. Obviously, Zhu Wei was always a calm observer of the changes the Chinese society. Sometimes, he was also like an "outsider" as he always kept a certain distance from the reality and society and was always vigilant against popular values. In the middle of the 1990s, Zhu Wei finished one of his most important painting—*China•China* (1997). It depicts Deng Xiaoping, the father of the reform and opening-up policy and one of the founders of China's socialist construction, who has an enormous influence on contemporary China. From this work we can see his reflection on Chinese society.

If one should study Zhu Wei's repertoire of works created after the 1990s, one would find that the themes would

naturally converge into a huge contemporary Chinese social landscape. They point to reality and the spirit with grand and fragmented expression. But the main theme is still the representation of the actual and spiritual situation of people. *Utopia* series is Zhu Wei's representative work after 2000. In those paintings, conventioners, though bored, listen respectfully but they have no right to declare their opinions. They are outsiders if they cannot vote. "Utopia" shows a special social class, who are familiar with a political discourse and accustomed to uniform, collective life, and certain rule, but they are categorized and disciplined without personality. If *Utopia* is a miniature of the Chinese people's political life, then in *Box*, *Sweet Life* and other works, audiences saw another secularized survival landscape—micro, daily life which is full of desire. About these works, Zhu Wei said, "I painted my own world and my own experience, and as long as you open your eyes to look at any street in Beijing, read the newspaper, or watch TV, you will find it." In fact, the absurd of the reality and the awkwardness of survival perfectly fit Zhu Wei's painting style which compromises exaggeration, joking and uncoordinated shape.

III

After 2000, in a very natural phenomenon, contemporary art began to bid farewell to the trend and movement; much like the time when an artistic trend followed one another that is observed since the 1980s, forming a linear developmental track in artistic movement. This essentially means that the contemporary art since the 1980s, especially the kind of contemporary art (or modern art) that was grandly narrated and had a prerequisite of language in the period of modern fine arts and the kind of cynicism-appealed contemporary art that satirized politics in the 1990s, gradually lost the dependent cultural context and avant-garde. Especially in the irreversible tide of globalization, with the increase in international art exchange and the gradual maturity of the biennial exhibition mechanism, Chinese artists began to face a new problem, that is, what's the characteristics of rhetoric and expression of Chinese contemporary art compared to Western modern and contemporary art and whether Chinese contemporary art have its own idiom, language and pedigree. In addition to the anxiety from the language, Chinese contemporary art needs to eradicate the creative strategies dominated by western standards and postcolonial taste since 1990 and explore new ways for contemporary art.

After the *Utopia* series, Zhu Wei stops painting for several years. He is, in his own words, very anxious. "I think that ink painting, in its process of development, must stick with tradition, otherwise it will not be ink painting sooner or later", Zhu Wei once said in an interview. In his opinion, "I've been working on ink painting for years and I think I should make some breakthrough. But at last I haven't done anything so meaningful. Then I think there must be some problems with contemporary art—I'm not the only artist who is not creative. Chinese contemporary art is only in the exploration stage. Our main task is to stay active." The work *Curtain* series in 2008 marked an important transformation of Zhu Wei's creation, which on the one hand was the correction of the previous sociological narrative method and on the other hand was the turn of language, that is, return to the tradition, to look for a new personalized expression.

From the perspective of cultural ecology, the tradition should be "four in one", which is reflected in the implements aspect of physical form, body aspect of practice and communication, institutional aspect of ethics and norm, as well as spiritual aspect of aesthetics and temperament. In Zhu Wei's view, the return to the tradition and learning from the tradition means that the artist should really mine the connotation and spirit behind the traditional schema, language, and style, and build new idiom and rhetoric under the guidance of new ideas and methods. The Curtain series reduced the use of ink and more relied on fine brushwork. The so-called turn of language is showed by dispelling the concrete content so as to get rid of the sociological discourse brought by the image, and in the process of the continuous purification of language, form became purer and simpler, relying on the line to intensify the abstract expression. Of course, what Zhu Wei pursued was not the abstraction in the sense of Western modernism. Western painting in the early stage of modernism emphasizes "meaningful form", and in the heyday stresses the personal and original abstract schema full of elite consciousness. That is to say, the abstract schemas are completely selfdisciplined, and they have nothing to do with nature and reality. However, in the Chinese painting world, the abstraction of the form is essentially the process that the creation subjects go toward the nature and understand objects. And different from the west, the subject and the object are not split nor in binary opposition, but on the contrary, they show the cognitive way of subject's pursuit of reason and insight into the nature. Dating back to the tradition, the "investigate things" and "acquire knowledge" in the Northern Song Dynasty deeply reflected the wisdom of such philosophy and art. In Zhu Wei's art career, his dialogue with the tradition, his learning from the tradition, and his seeking of contemporary transformation of language can be found in his earlier works, including Great Water series created in 2000.

His The Ink and Wash Research Lectures series continued the previous creative idea, but he injected image elements. Image is actually an important source of the significance generation of the work. As can be seen, Zhu Wei was still very tangled on form and content, language and meaning. The root of the problem, as previously stated, existed as early as the mid-1980s when "purify language" and "big soul" confronted. In other words, in the Chinese contemporary art pedigree without modernist tradition, only the concept expression of language is unable to complete the construction of the mansion of meaning. So, in The Ink and Wash Research Lectures series, it is not difficult to understand why Zhu Wei tried to seek for a balance between the form and image, language and meaning. In this series, there are three types of images, of which the most clear is the figure and rockery. In Zhu's paintings, the figures are generally dull, at a loss and they are very similar to each other from their faces to their gestures. It is clear that this is a group of people without personality. The source of these figures is not clear, but from their dress and look, they come from a same social class. Zhu Wei did not clearly explain whether they are the intellectuals or belong to the middle-class. For these works, the artist once said, "Over the past two or three decades, Chinese people's living environment has changed a lot. Many people have experienced jazz, bar, loan, mortgage and the like, but in fact, there is no relief in the ambition, and people have become tired, no longer passionate like the past. It seems that we are all enduring this state. So what I painted is just the state of enduring." Rockery in the sense of image will not be accompanied by clear social information, so, compared with the works of figure, it can more highlight the expressive force of language.

Since 2013, "new ink painting" and "new Gongbi" have been the integral part of Chinese contemporary art movement.

But there is no clear definition of "new". However, there must be a frame of reference. It is traditional ink painting and traditional Gongbi. Actually, on mentioning traditional ink painting and traditional Gongbi, we not only refer to art form, art language, but also artistic and cultural system which is already complete after hundreds years' development. From this perspective, "new" things should be considered in the context of art history. How to create "new" art? Whether through language, rhetoric and methodology of art creation or through media, aesthetics and theme? Zhu Wei doesn't care whether his works are "new Gongbi" or "new ink painting". He keeps current art trend at a distance. As for the inner logic of art language, he is seeking for a way to stick with tradition without being fettered by tradition. He wants to make a breakthrough no matter how small it is.

In his work The Ink and Wash Research Lectures, he tried to paint on newspapers but still used the traditional ink-based rendering technique. The newspaper itself carried a variety of information, which was hidden or significant after rendering, so it was integrated into the meaning system of the work. Similarly, rockery can be seen as a symbol of Chinese traditional culture, but in the The Ink and Wash Research Lectures, it is the object of gaze. Rockery, together with the bright red curtain, clearly and directly transmits the unique Chinese visual tastes and cultural characteristics. Because in this series of works, the red curtain, as the carrier of abstract form, is both visual and full of ideology and can also bear the unconscious visual and cultural psychology of contemporary Chinese collective. From this point of view, regardless of figure or rockery, when they appear before the red curtain, the two images and visual meanings are in a state of confrontation. But for Zhu Wei, this image narrative is not important. What is important is that through his paintings people can feel the cultural and aesthetic experience of contemporary Chinese people.

July, 2017

Wangjing Dongyuan

情景与逻辑：朱伟的绘画历程

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I

在中国当代水墨领域，朱伟是一个重要的艺术个案，其作品涉猎多个主题，不仅有清晰的发展脉络与语言轨迹，而且，透过其作品，可以从一个侧面，反映中国当代水墨与工笔绘画，尤其是后 89 之后的变革与突破。譬如，在 1980 年代的水墨变革中，艺术家对传统水墨创作范式与审美趣味的颠覆与解构在当时是令人瞩目的；在后 89 年艺术思潮与 1990 年代，中国当代绘画创作转向的背景下，朱伟对现实的关注，对鲜活的文化现场的把握，以及对当代人生存境遇与精神状态的表现，不仅拓展了当代工笔绘画介入现实的深度与广度，而且，在视觉表达、审美趣味，尤其是对图像叙事的强调，为当代工笔与水墨艺术的发展带来了新的可能性。2000 年以来，朱伟始终坚持与传统对话，以传统为师，在传统中寻求语言的当代转换。在他看来，中国当代水墨与工笔画的出路，一方面，在于尊重传统，重视既有的艺术史上下文，摆脱西方艺术话语带来的影响，建立新的、具有原创性的艺术语汇与修辞方式；另一方面，仍然要重视与现实的关联，要反映和体现当代社会的变迁，及其内在的文化与审美诉求。事实上，在过去三十多年的创作历程中，朱伟始终在历史与现实、传统与当代、系统与个人、文化与语言之间思考，或介入，或疏离，既踌躇满志，也有过彷徨、质疑。当然，这些问题有不同的面向，考虑到历史与社会情景的变迁，对于任何一位艺术家来说，都不是一蹴而就就能解决的。但是，它们的意义，在于形成了一个语境，让我们不仅能看到艺术家个人的绘画线索，而且，发现其内在的艺术逻辑。

朱伟的创作起步于 1980 年代中后期，从一开始，艺术家就有意识的将个人的创作融入当代水墨所置身的艺术史情景中。简要地看，改革开放以来，当代水墨的发展从一开始就不单纯是一个艺术形态问题，而是一个涉及社会学、文化学，甚至是意识形态的问题。尤其是在 1980 年代初反思文革，现代化变革，以及西方现代与后现代文化的冲击下，当代水墨的起步与发展便承担着重要的文化使命——对社会主义现实主义的反拨与疏离，对传统水墨的拒绝与解构，对西方现代艺术和后现代艺术语言的接纳与吸收，而且，这些不同的艺术与文化诉求并不是泾渭分明，反而是始终交织在一起的。

在早期的艺术创作阶段，朱伟就面对 1980 年代三种当代水墨的变革力量。第一种类型是追求“现代性”的建构，在绘画主题、笔墨语言、审美趣味、创作范式等方面予以现代转换，并赋予“当代性”的文化内涵。这股现代水墨的变革浪潮在 1980 年代中期曾掀起过一个高潮。第二种方向是走颠覆与解构的道路。表面看，这种艺术思想受到了西方“达达”，以及后现代解构主义思想的影响，但内在的力量，还源于 1980 年代的“反传统”。在整个 1980 年代的多种启蒙话语中，在“反传统”方面，基本达成了共识。共识形成了一股合力，在水墨领域，同样衍化成一种鲜明的反叛意识，就是彻底抛弃传统水墨的创作程式与艺术趣味，以实验、解构的态度，探索水墨的新的可能性。第三种倾向是“新文人画”。强调个人的笔墨趣味，以幽默、调侃、戏拟的态度去消解历史与文化的深度，有浓郁的市井气息。“新文人画”仍然有自身的文化局限性，并没有发展成一种具有建设性的艺术力量，但那种故作姿态、刻意的，包括调侃与戏拟的态度，对 1990 年代初的“玩世现实主义”却产生了影响。

《仿八大》系列是真正的开始，标识着朱伟对 1980 年代当代水墨变革的诸多问题的回应。虽然当时他还是解放军艺术学院的一名在校学生，但已经以个人化的表达，思考传统水墨在当代文化语境中不可避免的裂变。在这一系列作品中，朱伟对传统笔墨趣味的放弃，从而解放了本体，使其更倾向于一种现代主义意义上的构成。对平面的重视，意味着对传统水墨叙事功能的拒绝，也为 1990 年代个人的绘画创作走向图像的表达铺平了道路。实际上，不管是西方的现代艺术逻辑，还是在中国当代绘画的语境中，语言的现代性建构的一个重要维度，是回归语言，回归平面。只有解放语言，让其保持独立，才能抵御水墨在过去很长一段历史时期里所负载的叙事功能，抛弃具象语言体系背后裹挟的意识形态话语。通过这一时期的作品，可以看到，朱伟内心更为认同的是，颠覆与重建的水墨当代化之路。同时，那些以日常话语所形成的文字叙述，与其说是考虑画面的视觉构成，毋宁说体现的是艺术家的一种虚无与调侃的态度。笔墨的嬉戏，是否又是对“新文人画”的回应？

如何从语言、形式、叙事性等角度，处理个人绘画与传统之间的关系，探索其间的可能与张力，形成了朱伟绘画 1990 年代以来一条重要的发展线索。譬如在《北京故事粉本》系列（1991）、《雨夜跑马图》系列（1997）、《大水》（2000）、《中国日记》系列（2001）等多个类型的作品中，艺术家不仅在中国传统的壁画、工笔重彩中吸取养料，而且在语汇与图式上，可以看到韩滉、郭熙、马远、朱耷等诸多大师的身影。对于这些语言、图式，艺术家的目的既不是模仿，也不是后现代意义上的挪用，相反，它们所形成的是一种视觉表征，抑或说是一种提示，表明与传统绘画的视觉机制与观看习惯之间的联系。在《新编花营锦阵》系列（1994）、《赵姐之故事》（1994）等作品中，作品与文革“样板戏”之间在视觉表达上也有着一种关联，形成了互文性。如果说在《雨夜跑马图》《大水》等作品中，朱伟表现出的是与“老传统”的联系，那么《赵姐之故事》呈现的就是一个“新传统”。亦即是说，艺术家将新中国建立以来，绘画与视觉艺术中那些经过“编码”，赋予了意识形态，并具有中国印记的视觉与图像资源进行拆解，予以重新编码，使其在新的形式结构与叙事话语中呈现出来。当然，就朱伟来说，与传统的交集，最终的目的，仍然是在古与今、传统与当下、历史与现实等形成的情景中进行个人化的表述。从这个角度讲，朱伟的绘画是绕不开叙事性的，最具代表性的作品是 1994 年创作的《新二刻拍案惊奇》系列。虽然图像与图式仍脱胎于传统，但故事的内容却是当下的，与现实相关的。

II

朱伟在一次访谈中，曾这样描述自己的创作理念，“我画水墨快三十年，使用的材料、技法全部从传统来，和传统有密切的联系。我一直没有脱离开传统，但我描绘的是当下发生的人和事，是正在进行时，也就是人们常说的当代题材。所以我一直没觉得传统和当代是隔离的，古为今用是我画水墨画的理念和创作脉络。”^[1]

中国的当代艺术，当然包括当代水墨，从 1980 年代以来就致力于语言的现代转换，而且，许多艺术家在语言的探索方面做了大量的贡献。从语言的生成与内在逻辑考虑，不同艺术家有不同的路径：有的从传统出发，有的重视艺术史自身的内在逻辑，有的在西方现代或后现代艺术中寻找资源，有的则重视创作的方法论。毫无疑问，朱伟是从传统出发去构建语言的内在逻辑的，尽管一开始就充斥着解构意识。但是，悖论在于，在中国当代艺术的价值体系中，语言的当代性建构远远让位于社会学的叙事。一方面，中国当代艺术需要完成语言学的转向，即在“审美现代性”的话语下，形成自身的语汇与修辞，构建一个有别于欧美的语言体系。另一方面，从 1980 年代以来，在“反思文革”“解放思想”“文化启蒙”的浪潮中，社会学的叙事成为了主导性的意义方向。尽管美学叙事与社会学叙事都是当代艺术需要解决的问题，

但二者始终处于博弈、砥砺的状态。这在 1980 年代中期，“纯化语言”与“时代需要大灵魂”的拉锯与对抗中体现得尤其突出。更内在的原因，在于中国当代艺术缺乏一个依托语言的发展，以线性的、自律的、立足于艺术史上下文的现代主义体系。正是先天性的不足，导致仅仅依靠语言的变革，或者“美学前卫”无法完成当代艺术意义系统的建构。换言之，社会学叙事，或者“文化前卫”仍将主导当代艺术的价值诉求。这一特点，在 1990 年代初，以“政治波普”与“玩世现实主义”身上体现得淋漓尽致。

1993 年创作的《上尉同志》《北京故事》，1994 年的《甜蜜生活》系列，标志着朱伟的作品开始有意识地注入社会学话语。《上尉同志》颠覆了主题性绘画中的军人形象，而《北京故事》《甜蜜生活》则以冷静的、近距离的方式表现朱伟所说的“当下发生的人和事”。事实上，1990 年代初，伴随着社会文化情景与艺术语境的转变，也预示着中国当代艺术创作的转向。在经历了 1989-1992 年的变革，尤其是置身于柏林墙的倒塌与苏联解体的国际背景下，中国无疑成为了欧美关注的焦点。就艺术领域而言，1989 年的“现代艺术展”标识着“新潮美术”的式微，因为当早期的文化批判无法在现实中找到答案时，自然也意味着此前那种宏大、崇高、充满启蒙意识的现代主义叙事方式的没落。在那一阶段的作品中，朱伟笔下出现了军人、知识分子、毛主席等形象，这并非偶然，但是，其创作始终与“政治波普”所掀起的浪潮保持着一定的距离。这种距离感，一方面体现在图像的表达上。“政治波普”大多采用并置与挪用的方法，重视不同图像之间，在政治、文化、消费、视觉表达等意义范畴形成的差异与冲突；在朱伟的作品中，艺术家不会直接去挪用、复制既有的图像，反而会更重视个人化的、原创性的图像表达。另一方面体现为作品意义诉求的不同。“政治波普”集中在毛主席身上，所涉猎的也大多是“文革”时期的人物与各类图像，但在朱伟的作品中，表现得比较多的是知识分子、军人、或者普通的大众。对于艺术家来说，图像并不是目的，因为他更关注的是，在 1990 年代急剧的社会变迁中，这些不同阶层、不同身份的人，他们的生存境遇，抑或说个人价值观所发生的变化。从这个角度讲，“政治波普”更接近于西方的“新达达”，而朱伟的绘画，尽管带着幽默与调侃，弥散出的却是浓郁的现实主义意味。

当然，并不是朱伟要倚重社会学的阐释，而是，社会的变迁、鲜活的现实、中国的文化现场令艺术家无法回避。对于 1990 年代的当代艺术创作，倘若仅仅立足于语言的批判，根本无法把握那个时代的脉动，在现实面前，也会显得孱弱无力。在《红旗下的蛋》（1994）、《甜蜜的生活》（1994）、《广场》系列（1996）等作品中，毫无疑问，与摇滚乐、流行文化、都市消费主义相关的图像与表达为画面构筑了一个时代语境，但是，朱伟对现实的表现却不是“镜像”式的，相反，在诙谐、幽默的氛围中，隐藏着一种深邃与批判的视角。譬如，摇滚乐的话语狂欢，流露出的反而是一种失语；消费社会尽管让人向往，但带来的却是异化；“广场”虽然崇高，但吞噬的却是个性。显然，对当时中国社会呈现出的变化，朱伟始终是一个冷静的观察者。有的时候，又像一个“他者”，因为，他与身边的现实、社会总有一定的距离，对流行的价值观始终保持着警醒。1990 年代中期，朱伟有一件重要的作品，名字叫《中国·中国》（1997）。作为中国改革开放的缔造者与新时期社会主义建设的总设计师，邓小平对于当代中国的意义无意是巨大的。这件作品的出现，再一次的反映出，艺术家对当时中国社会境遇的思考。

如果将朱伟 1990 年代以来的作品集结起来，就会发现，其涉猎的多个题材，自然会汇聚成当代中国的一幅巨大的社会图景。它既指向现实，也反映精神；既有宏大叙事，也有微观的、碎片化的表达。但最为核心之处，仍然是对人——对人的现实处境、精神境遇的言说。《乌托邦》系列是朱伟 2000 年以来的代表性作品。画面中的与会者尽管百无聊赖，但又必须洗耳恭听；虽然有举手这个环节，但他们却像是局外人。“乌托邦”表现了一个特殊的社会阶层，他们熟悉特定的政治话语，习惯整齐划一，习惯集体生活，习惯某种规则，但是，他们却是类型化的、无个性的、被规训的。如果

说《乌托邦》表现的是中国人政治生活的一个缩影，那么在《盒子》《甜蜜的生活》等作品中，观众看到的则是另一种世俗化的生存景观——微观的、日常的、欲望化的生活。对于这批作品，朱伟曾谈道，“我画我自己的世界，我自己的经历，你只要睁眼看看北京的任何一条街，看看报纸，看看电视，就会发现我画的全都是那儿的東西。”事实上，现实的荒诞、生存的别扭与朱伟的绘画风格，即那种夸张的形式，戏谑的手法、不协调的形状是完美契合的。

III

2000年以后，一个非常典型的现象是当代艺术开始告别潮流，告别运动，不再像1980年代以来，一个艺术思潮接着另一个思潮，一个现象接着另一个现象，由此形成线性的发展轨迹。这实质也意味着，1980年代以来，尤其是“新潮美术”时期那种宏大叙事的、语言为先决条件的当代艺术（或者说现代艺术），1990年代那种反讽政治，以犬儒主义为诉求的当代艺术，逐渐失去了自身依存的文化语境和前卫性。尤其是在不可扭转的全球化的浪潮中，伴随着国际艺术交流的增多，加之双年展机制的逐渐成熟，中国艺术家开始面对一个新的问题，即中国当代艺术是否有自己的语汇和语言，和西方现当代艺术比较起来，它的修辞和表述又有什么特点？它有自己的发展谱系吗？除了来自语言方面的焦虑，中国当代艺术需要从1990年以来，那种由西方标准和“后殖民”趣味所支配的创作策略中摆脱出来，探索当代艺术新的意义生成方式。

完成《乌托邦》系列之后，朱伟有几年的时间没有创作新的作品，用他自己的话说，处于一种焦虑的状态。在一次访谈中，他谈道，“这些年画画一直在想的一个问题是水墨画一定得照顾中国两千多年来的传统，只是一个劲儿的往前走就不是水墨了。”在他看来，“我一直觉得水墨画是一个课题，这个课题对我来说是这样的：既然画了水墨，就应该有所突破。但是总觉得画了半天没有太令人激动的贡献。所以我经常老是质疑当代艺术，不是我一个人没有新意，中国当代艺术还是应该以探索为主……保持生命力。”2008年的《帷幕系列》标志着朱伟创作一个重要的转变，一方面是对此前的社会学叙事方法的矫正；另一方面是实现语言的转向，即重新回到传统，寻找一种新的个人化的表达方法。

倘若从文化生态学的角度考虑，传统应是“四位一体”的，它体现在物理形态的器物层面，体现在实践与交往的身体层面，体现在伦理与规范的制度层面，体现在审美与气质的精神层面。在朱伟看来，回归传统，从传统中汲取养料，艺术家应该真正去挖掘传统的图式、语言、风格背后积淀的内涵与精神，在新的观念与方法的指导下，构建新的语汇与修辞。《帷幕系列》减少了水墨的表现性，更多的是倚重工笔重彩的方法。所谓语言的转向，不仅表现为消解了具象性的内容，摆脱了因图像所带来的社会学话语，而且，在不断纯化语言的过程中，形式至纯至减，以线为依托，强化了抽象性的表达。当然，朱伟所追求的，并不是西方现代主义意义上的抽象。西方绘画在早期现代主义阶段，强调的是“有意味的形式”，在鼎盛时期，推崇的是一种个人的、原创的、充满精英意识的抽象图式。亦即是说，抽象的图式完全是自律的，它们与自然、与现实没有任何联系。但是，在中国人的绘画世界里，形式的抽象化，实质是创作主体走向自然、理解客体的过程，与西方不同的是，主体与客体不是分裂的，更不是二元对立，相反，它所体现的是主体追求理性、洞悉自然的本质的一种认知方式。倘若追溯传统，北宋以降，“格物”与“致知”就深切的反映了这种哲学与艺术的智慧。在朱伟个人创作的发展轨迹中，与传统对话，以传统为师，在传统中寻求语言的当代转换，较早的作品也包括2000年创作的《大水》系列。

《水墨研究课徒》系列延续了先前的创作思路，但艺术家又重新为画面注入图像因素。图像实质就是作品意义生成的一个重要来源。看得出，就形式与内容、语言与意义，究竟谁孰轻孰重，朱伟仍然十分纠结。而问题的根源，诚如前文所

言，早在1980年代中期“纯化语言”与“大灵魂”的砥砺与对抗中就始终存在了。换言之，在缺乏一个现代主义传统的中国当代艺术谱系中，仅仅依靠语言的观念表达，是无法完成意义这个大厦的建构的。所以，在《水墨研究课徒》系列中，就不难理解，朱伟为什么要在形式与图像，语言与意义之间寻求平衡。在这批作品中，大致出现过三类图像，其中，最为明确的是人物和假山石。在艺术家的笔下，人物普遍目光呆滞，茫然若失，从神情到姿态，都十分相似，很显然，这是一批没有个性特征的人。虽然我们并不知道，这些人物的图像学来源，但从他们的穿着、神情上看，是属于一个社会阶层的。到底是知识分子，还是中产阶级，朱伟并没有明确的交代。对于这批作品，艺术家曾谈道，“我觉得过去了二三十年，中国人的生存环境有了很大变化，每个人身边都多了点儿爵士乐、酒吧，贷款，按揭什么的，但是其实并没有在抱负里解脱出来，人们都变得疲惫了，不像当年那么有激情，也没有当年的爆发力，似乎大家都在忍受这种状态，所以我画的就是一个忍耐的状态。”因为假山石在图像学的意义上不会附带明确的社会信息，所以，与人类类的作品比较，反而更能凸显语言自身的表现力。

2013年以来，中国艺术界曾掀起一波“新水墨”“新工笔”的浪潮。但是，究竟怎么体现这个“新”，艺术界并没有给予明确的界定。不过，既然谈“新水墨”“新工笔”，话语逻辑的背后，必然存在着一个参照系，即传统水墨、传统工笔。事实上，传统水墨，或传统的工笔，不仅仅包括形式与语言，而且涉及整个艺术生态和文化系统。这个系统经过一千多年的发展，已经十分完备。所以，从这个角度讲，所谓的“新”一定要有艺术史的上下文关系，但“新”到底又以何种方式体现出来呢？是语言、修辞方式之新？创作方法论、媒介观念之新？观看方式、审美趣味之新？或者作品的现实指向与文化内涵之新？朱伟对自己的作品是否是“新工笔”或“新水墨”一点也不在意。对于当下的艺术潮流，他也始终保持一定的距离。不过，就语言的内在逻辑方面，他仍然坚持从传统中去找，但又不能落入传统的窠臼。哪怕仅仅只是从一个微小的地方入手，如渲染、用色、用纸、造型等，他都希望有所突破。譬如在《水墨研究课徒》中，他尝试在报纸上进行创作，但仍然采用传统的以墨色为底的渲染手法。由于报纸自身负载着各种信息，渲染之后，或隐或显，自然将信息融入到作品的意义系统中。同样，假山石既可以看作是中国传统文化的一个符号，但在《水墨研究课徒》中，它却是一个凝视的对象。与大红色的帷幕一道，鲜明而直接地传递出中国独有的视觉经验与文化经验。因为，在这一系列作品中，红色帷幕——既是视觉的，也充斥着意识形态；既是抽象的形式的载体，也可以负载着当代中国集体无意识的视觉文化心理。从这个角度讲，不管是人物，还是假山上，当它们出现在红色帷幕之前，两种图像、两种视觉意义，就处于一种对抗状态。但对于朱伟来说，重要的不是这种图像叙事的方法，而是，通过这一系列作品，能让人感受到属于当代中国人的文化与审美经验。

2017年7月于望京东园

注释：

[1] 《朱伟：精神不能继承，继承的是技法和材料》，载于99艺术网：宋睿采访朱伟。

The Successful Integration Between the Tradition and the Contemporary - an Interpretation of Zhu Wei's Artistic Pursuit

Lu Hong

Art director of Shenzhen Art Museum, famous critic and international curator

We can easily find the contemporary characteristics in Zhu Wei's artworks if we simply adopt the approaches of iconography and sociology, since it's obvious that his works are well related with contemporary life and this can be clearly seen in many series like "The Story of Beijing", "Sweet Life", "The Utopia" and "China Diary". However, such an interpretation will reduce his works to some common concept, or some symbolic allegory. As we know, there are numerous similar articles like that. By not talking about an artwork itself, instead, just imposing some unrelated external standards on it, these articles could hardly find any artistic value in an artwork. However, I would not deny that Zhu Wei was greatly influenced by contemporary life or certain concepts, but I believe they are just raw materials Zhu Wei needs to deal with. He is always facing and solving many form issues, which cannot be solved easily through merely depicting contemporary life or presenting new concepts - if so, many people could become outstanding artists. In fact, I remember some artists could do much better than Zhu Wei in talking about new concepts. An art form, including composition, modeling, brushwork and coloring, is a relatively independent system. It has its own origin, and its own history. Its development depends more on the rules of an internal structure and self-improving system. It's impossible for an artist to be written into the history if he tries to take the shortcut to create some new rules before he masters the existing ones. Therefore, even those most innovative artists in the history could not but chose some pattern or convention as their starting point, and then, they changed and reconstructed the rules. There is no other way. Based on this position, I insist that the key point to understanding Zhu Wei's art is to start from his works, after that we can analyze or study how the contemporary life and certain concepts affect the way he reuses and innovates the art form. As French art historian Henri Focillon proposed in his book *The Life of Forms in Art*, "technique is the most important".^[1] I very much agree to the same principle.

We could see from Zhu Wei's artworks that the main form of his creation undoubtedly came from the great traditional imperial court (Gongbi; fine brush) painting. Here one issue is highlighted: why did not Zhu Wei directly imitate the form of Western modern painting as some other artists did? As theorist Wu Hong pointed out in an article, over the past 30 years the focus of some ink painters is how to make ink painting contemporary and globalized ^[2]. Isn't this a quick way to make the ink art "contemporary" and "globalized"? Moreover, comparing to Xieyi (freehand) painting, it is easier for Gongbi painting to imitate the Western modern style. I guess the reason why Zhu Wei took the opposite direction is firstly related to his academic background; secondly, it relates to his artistic ideal. So, what exactly is his artistic ideal? Obviously, it is the innovation based on tradition, for the pursuit of a contemporary expression that is completely different from the West. In this regard, he once said: "I have been painting ink paintings for nearly three decades, and all the materials and techniques I use are from the tradition or closely linked with the tradition. I've never

avoided the tradition, but what I paint are today's people and things, namely, the contemporary themes. So, I have never felt that the contemporary is isolated from tradition. Applying the past to the present is my concept and context of ink painting."^[3] Of course, this also makes his exploration meaningful during the process of re-localization.^[4]

I noticed that in the process of utilizing and reshaping traditional painting, Zhu Wei has gone through an experimental process of constant trials and errors or constant adjustments. Documents showed that he also had earlier attempts in other ways. Take "Portrait No.2 derivative from Bada's landscape brush style, the embryo of Beijing Story" created in 1988 as an example, it's easy to discover that he then was depicting people and Tian An Men of the Republic of China with a minimalist freehand brush on processed rice paper that emphasizes the sense of oldness and time. Moreover, he also borrowed forms from traditional mural paintings; that is on the deep blue rectangular grounding, he wrote down some characteristics in simplified Chinese in white color. The work did feature Chinese characteristics a lot, yet it is not good enough in the sense of the times. Maybe he sensed the differences between personal intention and form then, he made significant adjustments to his creation. Take his "Beijing Story, Colorful Sketch, No.2" painted in 1991 as an example, though he maintained the approach of using processed rice paper with ancient sense as the grounding of painting, yet he turned to refer to traditional imperial court (refined) painting in creation, which also became his later main way to go. As we see, in this painting depicting the plot of Peking Repartee, he not only made meaningful deformation to figures, but also used the small surface of Cubism in his background. It's precious that he made a wonderful integration of the two. In Zhu Wei's picture, there are the following elements that led to the distortion of figures: firstly, following the modeling form of traditional imperial court (fine brush) figure painting, Zhu Wei's work makes a transformation to cater to contemporary peoples. Moreover, during this process, he successfully created bold soldier, red flags, five pointed stars, lattice windows, banana leaves and other artistic symbols full of personal features based on his special personal experiences, and he successfully transformed these symbols into forms. Actually this is a process that new subjects and new sense, including "socialism experiences", entered traditional conventions and reshaped them;^[5] then in turn the results influenced the overall structure and dealing approaches of the picture naturally; secondly, Zhu Wei's humorous mentality also had certain impact which not only promoted his expression of absurdity in life with wisdom in a mocking way, but also helped him to form a modeling way with personal characteristics - for example, the faces of his figures feature big head, big nose, big mouth and small ears which made people recognize that they are Zhu Wei's artwork at the first glance; thirdly, the flat and decorative characteristics caused by the process and material in traditional fine brush painting called "alum water for 3 layers and dyeing for 9 layers" also played a role. That is to say, he has always been doing a contemporary transformation based on the traditional aesthetic principles of fine brush painting. Having in mind that some fine brush art painters often reform fine brush painting in 3D approaches or western realistic techniques, I could realize the brilliance of Zhu Wei even better. Related with this, Zhu Wei also went further deeply into his creation pursuit; namely, on one hand, he adopted the big-close up approach often used in modern photography into his paintings, for example, this composition is used in "The Story of Beijing, No.3" and his recent works "The Ink and Wash Research Lectures" series; on the other hand, he used surrealist approach through juxtaposing ancient peoples and modern peoples together in picture, which we can see in "My Story No.1" and "New Positions of the Brocade Battle, No.5" which showed the coexistence of modern

soldier and ancient child. Besides, he also utilized "post-modern" approaches like "image appropriation" and "reforming the classics", for example, there are utilization and re-processing of traditional Chinese painting subjects in both "Two Red Flags, No.5" and "China Diary No.54". The former one featured Zhu Wei's reference borrowed from "Cao Buxing's depicting of clothes look like just coming out from water" and described details of red flags which is closely related to the memory of contemporary Chinese; the latter, however, showed Zhu Wei's re-process of the details of "Five Bulls Picture", a masterpiece of Tang Dynasty painter Han Huang. As for the coloring, in my mind, though Zhu Wei added some new approaches based on the lightening of modern life and western modern art, he is still in the traditional painting procedure and is still using colors from Chinese paintings. The sober visual effect with sense of thickness in thin coloring is achieved through his many times dyeing and rendering blending color and ink; it also has a totally different artistic sense from western paintings. Undoubtedly, to a certain extent, the unique style in Zhu Wei's artwork is established upon his alternative utilization of the features stated above. I must emphasize that the "Album of Vernal Equinox", a recent series of Zhu Wei changed the past freehand approach and adopted traditional composition. For example in "Album of Vernal Equinox NO.17", four agrarian peoples are drawn on the widely empty background, which stand there dully like four tumblers. A bunch of blossoming peaches on the mid-left part of the picture is manifesting the coming of spring yet the scene that spring outing peoples who are in isolation from one another seem to be implicating that peoples have a strange mentality that keep looking out one another and emphasize self-protection in the declining era. Yet in his new works "The Ink and Wash Research Lectures series" series, he still adopted his normally used close up composition and red color tone. The background is the red flag symbol he created while in the foreground, it's a Chinese man of strong modeling style of Zhu Wei who is in Chinese tunic suit and looks dull, numb and slow, or with the hair style that the separation line lies in the middle or on one side; or with eyes open or closed. I don't know other people's feel about them; as to me, after viewing these paintings, I sensed the great impact on most Chinese people from a kind of strong invisible power. So in my mind, they seem to be portraits of the era. I believe that all people with the same background could read out some personal thoughts of their own from these works.

Today, people rarely talk about the conventional representation problem in Chinese painting when touching Chinese painting and contemporary ink and wash. Some even think that Chinese art has always emphasized conventional representation; it is like this in painting as in opera. I remember once Mr. Jiang Zhou said in an article that "the integration of the East and the West made Chinese traditional painting gone through an almost damaging development in the 20th century, when many precious excellent elements were lost for that; the lesson we got in it needs to be reflected entering the new century." He also said that "development of Chinese traditional painting is a process solving the relationship between formula and reality, rather than cancelling the basic formula to rely on because of the existence of this relationship. No formula, no Chinese traditional painting."^[6] I agree with him a lot and here I want to supplement something: the artistic representation formula of traditional fine brush painting not only showed a special aesthetic assumption, but also formed a set of special representation principles and thinking logic. Heritage and development could only be gained through good training up to a precise extent. Looking back to those outstanding painting masters in the history of China, all of them had precisely grasped the traditional formulas before they could create their personal ones. With a profound and overall understanding of the art history of China, Zhu Wei of course

knows well about this point. His brilliance lies in that he can on one hand well inherit the representation formula of traditional fine brush painting, while on the other hand well re-construct the new tradition of fine brush painting with new subjects, new ideas and new experiences, which made him feel free to do brand new artistic manifestation. This reminds me of the following words of Ooka Makoto, an artistic critic of Japan:

“All products of human civilization hide in the past time and space, which is unknown world to every one of us. What we need to do, is to start exploring it from now on and take it as something of our own, namely to acquire 'future' again. Based on such a consideration, what I try to discover is a new Du Fu, new Mozart, new Baudelaire, and new Matsuo Basho. For me, they are never people of the 'past', but on the contrary, they are people of 'our future'. When we enter their worlds, we enter the future rather than withdraw to the past. In this sense, I think, one of the greatest powers of culture and art is that they can turn the past into the future.” [7]

I don't know whether Zhu Wei has read these words of Ooka Makoto or not, but I think, he is unanimous with Ooka Makoto mentally. Otherwise he cannot develop the contemporary elements he excavated from the traditional imperial court (fine brush) paintings. And this pursuit which closely connects contemporary art with the traditional context is precisely what we must give full attention to when we do contemporary art creation or participate in international dialogues. My teacher, the famous art historian Ruan Pu once said, “Chinese fine brush painting is a genre with a great future and should be well developed.” Zhu Wei proved the rightness of Professor Ruan Pu's view.

In the new era emphasizing artistic invention and personality expression, Zhu Wei kept good tension between “creation” and “reservation” which well worth learning from for other painters. The inspiration he gives us is: when seeking for the expression of contemporary life, it's important to inherit and develop the traditional expression and make something new and better. Against the background that contemporary art is going on a globalized homogenous development, isn't this pursuit of differentiation expression even more important?

I wish Zhu Wei a greater success!

At Marco Polo Hotel, Hong Kong
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NOTES:

[1] Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art*, Peking University Press, January, 2011.

[2] Wu Hong, *Integration of Chinese Contemporary and Tradition: Re-Outlining*, published on Hong Kong M+ Art Center website.

[3] Zhu Wei: *Techniques and Materials Can Be Inherited, But Not Spirit*, published in Art website www.99ys.com: Song Rui interviewing Zhu Wei.

[4] During the “85 New Wave” period, as a rebellion against the extreme left Cultural Revolutionary creation mode, Chinese new wave artists borrowed ideas and methods more from western modern art; which, though helped surpass Cultural Revolution mode and open multiple patterns, brought about “de-Sinification” problem. From mid-1990s onward, Chinese contemporary art started to make an effort on “re- Sinification”; where the importance of Zhu Wei's pursuit was revealed.

[5] Here the so-called “socialism experience” specifically refers to the collective memory of Chinese people after 1949.

[6] Published in *Wenyi Bao* (Literary Gazette), on May 11st, 2000, edition 4.

[7] See *Core Problems in Modern Art*, by Ooka Makoto, published in *World Literature*, issue 1, 1990.

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传统与当代的成功对接 ——解读朱伟的艺术追求

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如果简单援用图像学和社会学的办法，我们将很容易解读朱伟作品的当代性。因为其作品与当代生活的相关性再明显不过了。而这无论在《北京故事》系列、《甜蜜的生活》系列；还是在《乌托邦》系列、《中国日记》系列中，我们都可以清楚地看到。不过，如此解读只会将朱伟的作品简化为极一般的概念化内容，或者描述为一个个象征性的寓言。大家知道，此类文章在当下是很多的。由于其常常不是在谈论艺术品本身，加上它还要塞给艺术品一些无关的外在标准，于是，由它所获得的关于艺术价值的成果自然微不足道了。我当然不否定当代生活或特定的观念必然会对朱伟产生巨大影响，可我坚信，这一切都只是朱伟处理的材料而已。当他伏案作画时，他总要面对或解决大量的形式问题。但所有这些都是不能单靠表现当代生活与新的观念就可以简单解决的。那样的话，很多人都可成为优秀艺术家。在我的印象中，有些人谈起新观念来，远比朱伟厉害。事实上，艺术的形式——包括构图、造型、用笔或用色是相对独立的系统，既有自己的源头，也有自己的历史。它的组成与发展，更多依赖于自身的内部结构和自我完善的规则。一个艺术家要是不能进入到这些规则之中，进而去创造新的方法或规则，决不可能青史留名。因此，在艺术史上，即使最有创意的艺术家，也不得不从传统中选择若干样式与惯例作为自己在某个阶段的出发点。然后再按照需要予以偏离、重构。除此之外，别无它法。基于这样的立场，我坚持认为，理解朱伟艺术的关键点是要从作品出发，进而分析或研究当代生活和特定观念，究竟如何影响了他对形式的借鉴或创造。法国艺术史家福西永在他的著作《形式的生命》中曾经提出了“技术第一”的原则，^[1]我是非常赞同的。

从朱伟的一系列作品看去，他创作所借鉴的主要形式无疑来源于伟大的传统院体（工笔）画。在这里，一个问题就突显了出来，即朱伟为什么不像一些人那样直接用工笔画的媒材去摹仿西方现代绘画的形式呢？正如理论家巫鸿先生在一篇文章中指出的一样，过去 30 年来，部分水墨画家思考的重点就是怎样把水墨画变得当代与全球化。^[2]而这不是可以很快就让作品达到“当代感”与“全球化”的目的吗？况且，工笔画使用的媒材远比写意画使用的媒材更容易借鉴西方现代绘画。按我的猜想，朱伟之所以要反其道而行之，首先与他的学习背景有关；其次则与他的艺术理想有关。那么，究竟何为他的艺术理想呢？很明显，那就是立足于传统进行再创造，以追求一种完全不同于西方的当代表达。对此他曾说道：“我画水墨快三十年，使用的材料、技法全部从传统来，和传统有密切的联系。我一直没有脱离开传统，但我描绘的是当下发生的人和事，是正在进行时，也就是人们常说的当代题材。所以我一直没觉得传统和当代是隔离的，古为今用是我画水墨画的理念和创作脉络。”^[3]当然，这也使他的探索在中国当代艺术追求“再中国化”的过程中显得特别有意义。^[4]

我注意到，朱伟在借鉴与改造传统绘画的过程中，其实有一个不断试错或不断调整的实验过程。资料显示，他早先也有过其它的尝试。以他在 1988 年所画的《用八大笔法描绘北京故事人物图二号》为例，我们并不难发现，他当时是在已经做旧或强调时间感、间隔效果的宣纸上，以极简的写意笔法描绘民国的人物与天安门。而且，画上还借用了传统壁画的方式，即在深蓝色的长方形底子上，以汉简的风格与白色写下了一些文字。作品的确很有中国特点，但时代感却不太够。也许是感到了个人意图与形式之间尚存着差异，他此后大幅度地调整了创作方案。以他于 1991 年创作的《北京故事粉

本之二》为例，虽然他还是保留了将宣纸做旧为画底的方式，但却改以传统院体（工笔）画传统作为创作的借鉴，这也成为了他今后的主要创作方向。恰如大家所见，在这幅表现讲相声情节的作品中，他既对人物进行了有意味的变形处理，还将立体主义的小面引用到了对背景的处理中。难得他将两者融合得特别的好。分析起来，在朱伟的画面中，人物变形的结果乃是由以下几个方面的因素所决定的：第一，传统院体（工笔）人物画的造型方式在起着前导作用，而他所做的工作就是将其转化，使之符合当下人的感觉。而且，在此过程中，他基于个人的特殊经历，还成功地创造了光头军人、大红旗、五角星、格子窗、芭蕉叶等具有个人特点的艺术符号，并让这些符号成功地转换为形式。应该说，这是新题材与新感受——包括“社会主义经验”进入传统程式，^[5] 继而改造传统程式的过程，其结果又自然的影响了画面大的结构与处理方式；第二，朱伟本人幽默化的心态亦起到了一定的作用，而这不仅十分有利于他以调侃的方式智慧表达生活的荒谬性，也很有利于他形成具有个人特点的造型方式——比如，他的人物脸部造型就具有大头、大鼻、大嘴、小耳的特点，以致让人一看就是朱伟的作品；第三，传统工笔画“三矾九染”的程序与材料自身引发的平面化、装饰化特点所致。也就是说，他一直是在遵从传统工笔画美学原则的基础上进行当代性的变通。联想到一些工笔画家常常借用三维或西方写实的画法改造工笔画，更令我体会到了朱伟的高明所在。与此相关的是，朱伟还进一步深化了他的创作追求，即一方面将现代摄影常用的大特写手法移入了他的画中——如在《北京故事三号》、近作《水墨研究课徒》系列中就运用了这样的构图方式；另一方面还将古人与今人并置的超现实方式置入了他的画中——如在《我的故事一号》、《新编花营绵阵五号》中，就有现代军人与古代小孩共处的处理。此外，他还巧妙地运用了“形象挪用”与“改画经典”的“后现代”方式——如在《两面红旗五号》、《中国日记五十四号》中都有对源自中国传统绘画的题材的借鉴与再处理。在前者，是借鉴“曹衣出水”的手法，描绘了与当代中国人记忆密切有关的红旗局部；后者则对唐代大画家韩干的《五牛图》局部进行了再处理。至于在色彩的运用上，我认为，尽管在现代生活与西方现代艺术的启示下，他也加进了一些新的手法，但他仍然是在传统的作画程序中操作，运用的也主要是中国画颜色。由于他画中的色彩是通过色墨交混的多次渲染而成，所以既具有薄中见厚、深沉耐看的效果，也具有与西画完全不同的艺术感觉。毫无疑问，在很大的程度上，朱伟那独辟蹊径的作品风格就是对以上诸特点加以交错使用才形成的。必须强调的是，朱伟最近的作品《开春图》系列一改了过去的特写方式，采用的是传统构图方式。如在《开春图十七号》中，便在大片留白的背景之上画了四个失重的人，他们都表情木讷的站着，就像四个不倒翁一样。在画幅中间偏左的地方，放有一束开放的桃花以表明春天的到来，可游春人之间互不往来的场面，却似乎暗示了在当今世风日下，人们相互防范与强调自保的奇怪心理。而在新作《水墨研究课徒》系列中，他仍然采用了过去惯用的大特写构图与偏红的色调。背景是他创造的大红旗符号，前景上则是有着强烈朱伟造型特点的中国男性。其身着中山装，显得十分呆滞、麻木、迟钝。或者梳着中分头或侧分头；或者睁着眼与闭着眼。不知他人感受如何，我在看了画后，体会到的是一种强大的无形力量对大多数中国人的巨大影响。故我认为其仿佛是一幅幅关于时代的肖像。相信一切有着相同背景的人都可以从中读出自己的感想来。

现如今，人们在涉及中国画与当代水墨画时，一般很少谈论中国画的程式化表现问题。有些人甚至认为，程式化是中国画走上千篇一律道路的原因。这当然是极大的误解。因为与西方艺术相比，中国艺术一向十分强调程式化的表现。戏剧是这样，绘画也是这样。记得江洲先生在一篇文章中曾经说过：“中西合璧使国画在 20 世纪遭遇到几乎是毁灭性的发展过程，国画因此失去了许多宝贵的优秀成分，其中的教训，在新世纪初需要反思。”他还说道：“国画的发展是解决程式与现实的关系，而不是因为这种关系的存在，而取消基本的赖以生存的程式。国画没有了程式，也就没有了国画。”^[6] 我很同意他的看法，在此想补充一下，即传统工笔画的艺术表现程式不仅体现了特殊的审美假定性，也形成了一套特殊的表现原则与思维逻辑。只有很好地加以训练，并达到精确的地步，才有可能继承与发展。纵观那些中国历史上的优秀绘画大师，无不是精确掌握了传统程式，又创造出个人化程式的人。熟读中国艺术史的朱伟当然知道这一点，他的过人

之处就在于：既很好地继承了传统工笔画的表现程式，又用新的题材、新的观念、新的感受重构了工笔表现的新传统，这就使他能从容自如地进行全新的艺术表现。相信中外观众都会感到他的作品既是传统的，又是当代的；既是中国的，又是世界的。这不禁使我想起了日本文艺评论家大冈信说过的一段话：

“人类文明的产物，一切都隐藏在过去的这个时空中，而这一切对于我们每一个个体来说，都是未知的世界。而我们需要的则是从现在开始发掘它，把它作为我们自己的东西，即重新获取‘未来’。正因为基于这样的考虑，我所试图发现的是新杜甫、新莫扎特、新波特莱尔、新松尾芭蕉们。他们对于我，绝不是‘过去’的人，相反，他们是‘我们未来’的人们。当我们进入他们世界之时，就进入了未来之中，而绝不是退到了过去。在这个定义上，我认为文化艺术最伟大的力量之一，就在于它可以把过去变成未来。”^[7]

我并不知道朱伟看过大冈信的这段话没有，但我认为他与大冈信的心是相通的。要不然他决不可能从传统院体（工笔）画中挖掘出当代因素去发扬光大。而这种将当代艺术与传统文脉保持紧密联系的追求，恰恰是我们从事当代艺术创作或参与国际对话时必须充分注意的。我的老师、著名的美术史家阮璞曾经说过：“中国工笔画是一个很有前途的画种，应该给予发扬光大。”朱伟用他的作品证明了阮璞教授的观点是十分正确的。

在一个强调艺术创新与个性表达的新时代，朱伟在“创”与“守”之间保持了很好的张力，这很值得同道借鉴。他的启示是：在寻求对于当代生活的表达时，重要的是要努力沿续传统的表达方式，并有所创造、有所丰富。而在当代艺术有着全球同质化发展的情况下，这种保持异质化表达的追求不是显得特别重要吗？

祝愿朱伟取得更大的成功！

2012 年 12 月 16 日写于香港马可勃罗酒店

注释：

[1] 福西永，《形式的生命》，北京大学出版社，2011 年 1 月版。

[2] 巫鸿，《中国当代和传统的齿合：重新勾勒》，载于香港 M + 艺术中心网站。

[3] 《朱伟：精神不能继承，继承的是技法和材料》，载于 99 艺术网：宋睿采访朱伟。

[4] 在“85 新潮”时期，为反拨极左的文革创作模式，中国新潮艺术家更多是借鉴西方现代艺术的理念与手法，这虽然对超越文革模式与开创多元化的局面有利，但带来了“去中国化”的问题。从 90 年代中期以后，中国当代艺术开始了“再中国化”的努力。而朱伟追求的重要性在此之中，也显示出来了。

[5] 这里所说的“社会主义经验”特指 1949 年以后中国人的集体记忆。

[6] 载于《文艺报》2000 年 5 月 11 日第 4 版。

[7] 见《现代艺术的中心问题》，大冈信，载于《世界文学》1990 年 1 期）。

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A Day Lasts More Than a Year

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A few years ago, Zhu Wei and I had an in-depth conversation about the phenomena of ink painting and the things behind them. We came to different conclusions, not surprisingly, for we saw it from different perspectives. A while ago, Zhu Wei brought up this matter again, which made me think a lot and dive deeper. The "fever" of ink painting has been going on for a long time, and to all appearances, it has become an unyielding trend. Almost everyone, from artists to critics, from art market to someone outside the circle, are entrapped in it, they enjoying its favor, promoting its bright future, or, following the crowd bewilderedly. In a word, the field of ink painting seems to flourish as spring were here. However, I must emphasize that the blooming flowers in this field are just an illusion, most of which, in fact, are dazzling but lifeless plastic flowers.

In an article I wrote twenty years ago, titled "From Chinese Painting to Ink Painting", I talked about the strategy and logic behind the naming of this art form. Indeed, Chinese painting and ink painting are like two coats of different styles, applying to the same person by different requests at different times. For ease of understanding, here I will state my conclusion first: after more than three decades, all the way from anxiety, tentativeness to stability, the field of ink painting has gradually become an obvious closed loop - compared with the traditional art, it is contemporary, and compared to the Western art, it is indigenous. In such a closed loop, everything is self-circulating, self-arguing, and self-positioning. Tom is the standard of Dick, while Dick is the standard of Harry, and so on. The vertical axis of historical context has disappeared; the horizontal axis of lateral comparison is gone. Everything is its own destiny, and therefore only necessity exists. Where are probabilities and possibilities? Where are inheritance and creation? Where are the artists and works that can be associated with art history? When we talk about ink painting, these unquestionable questions once again become a Hamlet's query.

Everyone knows the metaphor of the elephant in the room. Whether ignoring it deliberately, or accepting it blindly, there is no fundamental difference. As an art form born and brought up in China, ink painting has been questioned and criticized constantly since the beginning of the last century. Many artists and theorists cudged their brains on it, producing all kinds of theories, and based on which, contributing some seemingly valuable and exploratory works. Later, with the reform and opening up, another cycle of samsara has emerged in ink painting, with the basic features of the last cycle, but a larger quantity. The scale is evident, which is reflected on, to name a few, numerous large or small ink painting exhibitions, endless so-called academic seminars, countless self-proclaimed market darlings, and various booming associations, schools, and painting academies. These mirages lead to delusions, and delusions can make people exciting and arrogant, even they will not last. In my experience, many clever people in the ink painting circle

have sensed the emptiness behind the self-entertainment and self-exaltation. Nevertheless, being lack of confidence or strength, they would rather live in the mirages.

Coming back to the topic of Zhu Wei - the label on him is ink painter. There is something magical about labels, which can subtly shape people's thoughts and behaviors. However, some people are peculiar, who can lie down with dogs but get up without fleas. Here I would rather not use the lofty words "come out of the dirty mud unsoiled", for, in this field, Zhu Wei is not a supporter of loftiness. He has always been moderate, modest, keeping a low profile, and of a little bit of perfectionist; he put more efforts in painting rather than words. These are virtues, and they come from his long-standing sense of propriety. I remember once he told me that the key to evaluate something or someone is time. "Three years to five years, eight years to ten years, or fifty years to a hundred years, when the time span is different, the standard is completely different. If the standard is lowered by one inch, there will be a bunch of masters, and if the standard is lowered by one meter, masters will be all over the world." I couldn't help laughing, "for you, a day lasts more than a year." Zhu Wei waved without answering. I always have a feeling that there are two different Zhu Weis coexisting inside him – one is an ink painter, and the other is an artist; one is entirely contemporary, and the other has an obsession for classics. The two Zhu Weis sometimes coexist peacefully, and sometimes conflict. I often felt regret that among so many our artists, writers, directors, and musicians, nobody could see the inner conflict, as well as the ultimate realm stimulated by inner conflict. They live as if life is peaceful, which led to the hollowness and flatness of their works. There is no doubt that the passion and motivation of art creation comes mostly from the inner world of an individual, and it is also where the secret of creation lies in.

As I previously mentioned, the field of ink painting is gradually becoming a closed loop, and here it doesn't matter whether it is a fact or an opinion, for in front of creation, all facts and all opinions are hypotheses. It is said that everyone is a product of the environment. I would say that only trees, flowers and plants are the products of the environment, but not human beings, at least not all of them. As for artists, they have the privilege of surpassing the environment: artists have always been flying in parallel with the environment, far more than just a shadow of it. Throughout the history, there were a lot of examples. Even now, the closed loop in the making is still not so closed. As the well-known saying goes, "there is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in."*** The status quo of ink painting is undoubtedly disappointing, but not hopeless. After all, my opinion was yet an entry-level insight into art. For instance, when Zhu Wei and I discussed about "New Literati Painting", "New Ink Painting", "New Freehand Brushwork", "New Gongbi" and other new trends, in his usual cold and humorous way he said, "there is no easy life. They should be allowed to get some food from their own plots." Sure, the threshold for art is too low, hence ordinary people dare not pretend to be a scientist or a medical professional, while those who call themselves artists are packed. On the other hand, the standard of art is too high, for becoming an artist, who will not eventually be eliminated by time, is as difficult as a camel passing through the eye of a needle. Zhu Wei has fifty years and one hundred years in his mind, and one step at a time, he put it into practice – and he has outstanding works. So, is he standing in or outside the closed loop?

We have to look for the evidence in Zhu Wei's artworks. As I can recall, Zhu Wei was the first person who deliberately introduced ink painting to the door of contemporary art. In other words, when most people were still asleep, he woke up early - and, he was not woken by others, but woke up naturally. People who understand contemporary art know that contemporary art emphasizes concepts over means, where concepts is the core, means (including materials and so forth) is in a subordinate position. The materials of ink painting should not be an obstacle to creation. However, within the closed loop mentioned above, people have adopted an approach of collective unconscious: they made a cocoon around themselves as a cave, a place to avoid the vertical and horizontal comparison, so that they could relieve themselves from the anxiety and pressure when facing such confrontations. Zhu Wei woke up early and naturally, unlike the ones who were woken up by others – as soon as they opened their eyes, and realized that a thousand years outside the cave was as a passing night, they hastily changed their coats and jumped on the bandwagon without thinking. The advantage of waking naturally is that every step of creation, from sowing to harvesting, from flower to fruit, happens by nature, and it all comes from the surging talent and impulse inside.

For years Zhu Wei has created a number of his representative works: "The Story of Beijing", "New Pictures of the Strikingly Bizarre", "Sweet Life", "Descended from the Red Flag", "The Square", "China Diary", "Tightrope", "China China", "Diary of the Sleepwalker", "Utopia", "Curtain Series", "Spring Festival" and so on. Even as of today, these works are important and have a significance of guiding. Zhu Wei has created a unique artistic style - according to my old theory, a unique artistic style, a high degree of difficulty, and a perfect level of implementation are the three elements that accomplish an outstanding artist. For quite a long time, Zhu Wei's works have been labelled and categorized, and since he uses ink brush and xuan paper and other local materials, it is logical for people to label or classify them. I have always opposed to a confusing claiming that contemporary art, on the whole, represents the "advanced knowledge production", because in the field of contemporary art, there are obviously different levels of artworks. Yes, it is correct that contemporary art is the frontier of art in our era - with waves of artists charging into the battle, art will always live prosperously. Even so, advancement is not absolute, but relative, and it will wither once isolated. That is to say, advancement is changing, and as Baudelaire said, things roll forward, one half being eternal and the other being movable. The eternal will last, and the movable is constantly replaced.

There is a contemporary person, with contemporary appearance and contemporary vibe, whilst he also has an obsession with the classics – is there a split in this combination? Zhu Wei is very different. He likes to make friends with all kinds of people; he used to be keen on rock and roll, sports, and other music; he is a person who doesn't resist fun. In the meantime, no matter what he is facing, he is sincere, disciplined, and virtuous, like a really old-fashioned person. I have met a lot of people who are scheming and say one thing while doing another; they are clean on the front and dirty on the backs. Our ancients always said that the writing mirrors the writer, and the painting mirrors the painter, which is convicting, for the saying has proved itself in practice. I appreciate Zhu Wei's obsession with classics. It is obvious that the classics itself has become a thing of the past, and cannot be revived. Then, why do some people cherish the classics? The reason lies in its fascination. When I look at those Western or ancient classical works, words being powerless, the only thing I can do is to take my hat off to them. I still vividly remember the moment I

stood in front of “Wind in Pines Among a Myriad of Valleys” and “Travelers among Mountains and Streams”, I felt so overwhelmed that my eyes became warm. Needless to say, the charm of classics is eternal, and the classics are an eternal standard for art. I can understand that there is no split in Zhu Wei; it is the exterior and interior in the same person. His respect for the classics is revealed in his works bit and bit - eventually, the so-called classic obsession implicates a kind of self-competition. Just like a mirror as well, the great classics is on one side, and the artist is on the other side.

Some people change, and some stay the same. Some people change because they follow the trend, and some people stay the same because their inner aspirations are more important than any trend. The truth is, one will never catch up with the trends, as a shadow can never fly ahead of a bird. Those who remain unchanged, those who persist, and those who are obsessed, will one day be followed by the crowds. It is such a wonderful world, with unmovable mountains and flowing water. I expect Zhu Wei to be the same as always - of course, whether I expect it or not, he will be. Not long ago, he told me in a solemn tone, “what else would I do, if I didn’t keep right on to the end of the road?” Certainly, in the twinkling of an eye, Zhu Wei has been halfway along the road – by and by, he found that he had left behind the crowds that labelled him, away from the noise, and being alone. Moreover, there is no road ahead of him. Lu Xun once said that actually the earth had no roads to begin with, but when many men pass one way, a road is made. It seems that these words are raising an interesting question here: if an artist is walking his own way alone in a vast land, is this road considered a road?

October 7, 2020

Translator's notes:

* The translation here is derived from a novel by Chinghiz Aitmatov, *The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years*, translated by F. J. French, published by Indiana University Press (1 February 1988). ISBN 978-0-253-20482-0.

** Leonard Cohen, *Selected Poems, 1956-1968*.

一日长于一年

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当代艺术研究所所长

若干年前，我和朱伟做过一次颇为深入的对谈——关于水墨画的诸多现象及现象后面的东西。由于角度不同，结论自然有所出入。前一阵，朱伟又一次提及此事，令我感慨甚多，一些想法也跟着逐渐清晰起来。水墨画“热”已经持续了很长一个阶段，时至今日，俨然成了势不可挡的潮流。艺术家、批评家、艺术市场、圈内圈外，几乎全被裹挟其中，要么乐不可支享受其恩惠，要么不遗余力鼓吹其光明前景，要么糊里糊涂随大流瞎起哄。一言蔽之，水墨画看似迎来了繁花似锦的春天。但是——我想郑重指出，水墨画的繁花似锦只是假象，里面绝大多数只是炫目而无生命的塑料花朵。

二十年前我写过一篇《从中国画到水墨画》的文章，专门讨论了定名背后的策略和根源。是的，中国画和水墨画，不过是两件款式不一样的衣服。不同时期按不同需要套在同一个人身上。为了叙述方便起见，我还是先亮出我的结论：经过了三四十年时间，从焦虑、试探到稳定，水墨画领域逐渐形成了显而易见的闭环——与传统相比，它是当代的，与西方相比，它是本土的。因而，在这样的闭环里，一切都是自我循环、自我论证、自我定位的。张三对照李四，李四对照王五。历史坐标的纵向参照消失了，前后左右的横断面不见了。一切成了宿命，如此一来，唯有必然性像磐石一般存在。或然性和可能性在哪里？传承和开创在哪里？与艺术史对接的画家和作品又在哪里？这些不是问题的问题又一次变为一个水墨画的哈姆雷特之问。

大家知道房间里的大象这个隐喻。人们故意忽视它，或者懵然接受它，性质是没有区别的。水墨画作为土生土长的绘画形式，在上个世纪初起便不断遭受质疑和批评。许许多多画家、理论家为此殚精竭虑，制造出各种各样的说辞，贡献出一些有探索有价值的作品。以改革开放为契机，水墨画出现的又一个轮回实际上衔接了以往的基本盘面，只不过在量的扩张上更具规模——请注意，我所说的量的规模，意思十分明确。无数大大小小的水墨画展览，没完没了的所谓学术研讨，许许多多以水墨画家自谓的市场宠儿，各种协会、院校、画院之类机构的蓬勃兴起，不一而足。海市蜃楼的景观确实令人易于产生幻觉——并且，幻觉确实可以使人兴奋和膨胀，但毕竟是持久不了的。在我的经验中，水墨画圈子里的不少聪明人感受到了那种自娱自乐、热烈自嗨的背后的空虚。他们既无信心，又无底气，今朝有酒今朝醉。

回到朱伟——朱伟身上贴着标签：水墨画家。标签这东西有一种魔力，能够潜移默化塑造人的想法和做法。然而，有的人非常奇特，近墨而不黑，近朱而不赤。这里，我不用“出污泥而不染”的崇高字眼，是因为在这方面，朱伟不宣扬崇高，他向来内敛，不事张扬、低调处世，有那么一点精神洁癖，工夫在画而不在嘴上。这是好的，是他长期以来拿捏准确的分寸感。记得朱伟对我说，看待某个事物，某个人，关键是时间，三年五年？八年十年？五十年一百年？时间不同标准完全不同。标准拉低一寸，大师一箩筐，拉低一米，大师满世界。我不由笑言，对于你，一日长于一年。朱伟挥手而不作答。我总有一种感觉，朱伟内部同时存在着两个不同的朱伟——水墨画家的朱伟，艺术家的朱伟；浑身当代气息的

朱伟，心怀古典执念的朱伟。两个朱伟时而和平共处，时而冲突不断。我常常感叹，那么多艺术家、作家、导演、音乐家们，竟然看不到内在冲突，看不到内在冲突造成的极致境界，如此的岁月静好，导致了人是空心的和平面的，作品也是空心的和平面的。毫无疑问，创作的激情和动力更多地来自个人内部，创作的奥秘终究要在个人内部找到真实的答案。

如前所说，水墨画领域正在逐渐走向闭环，是事实也罢，是判断也罢，其实并不重要。因为一切事实一切判断在创作面前均是假设。书上说，每个人都是环境的产物，我想说，只有树木花草才是环境的产物，人不是，至少不全是，至于艺术家，则具有凌驾环境的特权：艺术家素来与环境并行而飞，绝非仅是环境的影子——追溯历史，这样的事例数不胜数。即便面对现状，形成中的闭环仍然留下缺口。正如那句大家熟知名言：任何事物都有裂缝，那是光照进来的地方。水墨画的现状无疑让人失望，但并非绝望。究其根本，我相信这仍然是一个对艺术的入门级的见解。譬如，朱伟和我谈到“新文人画”、“新水墨”、“新写意”、“新工笔”这些林林总总的招牌时，以他一贯冷幽默的方式说，都不容易，允许每个人在自留地上讨口饭吃——是的，艺术的门槛太低，普通人不敢妄称自己是科学家、医学家，而自谓艺术家的人却是车载船装。反过来，艺术的标准太高了，艺术家在时间坐标上的淘汰率像骆驼穿过针眼一样的难。朱伟脑子里装着五十年一百年的尺度，付诸实践，一步一个脚印，作品响当地摆着。那么，他站在闭环的缺口内？还是缺口外？

所以，得从朱伟作品的内部去寻找依据。在我记忆里，朱伟是最早有意识地把水墨画带到当代艺术门口的人。换句话说，当多数人还在睡梦中，他已早早醒来——而且，他不是被叫醒的，是自然醒。了解当代艺术的人都懂得，当代艺术重观念轻手段，观念才是核心，手段（包括材料之类）处在从属地位。水墨材料按理构不成创作的障碍。我所指闭环实质上是人为的作茧自缚、画地为牢，为了逃避纵向和横向对照，采取了一种集体无意识的策略。拒绝了对照，便缓解对照的焦虑，逃避了对照的压力。朱伟醒得早，而且是自然醒——不像很多被叫醒的人，眼睛一睁，发觉洞中才数月世上已千年，于是急急忙忙改头换面，跟风随大流去了。自然醒的好处是，从耕种到收获，从开花到结果，都拜自然而赐，都出自内里奔涌的才情和冲动。

朱伟很多年前完成了一批代表作：《北京故事》《新二刻拍案惊奇》《甜蜜的生活》《红旗下的蛋》《广场》《中国日记》《走钢丝》《中国，中国》《梦游手记》《乌托邦》《帷幕系列》《开春图》等等。放到当下，作品的沉甸甸的分量感依旧，示范性的意义依旧。他开创了朱伟式的独特的图式——按我的老生常谈，独特的图式，加难度，加完成度，是成就一个优秀艺术家三个要素。在相当长的时间里，朱伟作品是被标签化和类型化的。由于他使用毛笔宣纸，使用本土的原材料，人们以此贴标签，以此归类，是符合常理的。我一直反对笼统地宣称当代艺术代表了“先进知识生产”这种糊涂见识，因为当代艺术中的泥沙俱下景观有目共睹。不错，当代艺术是我们时代的艺术前沿，一波又一波艺术家冲锋陷阵，使得艺术得以生生不息地精彩延续。先进性不是绝对的，是相对的，一旦被孤立，便将迅速地萎缩。换言之，先进性是变化的，依照波德莱尔的定义，事物滚滚向前，其中一半恒定，一半变化。恒定的一半是代表着不变，变化的一半则不断被变化所刷新。

一个看上去浑身散发当代气息的人，一个外表活色生香的当代人，深藏着古典执念的内心，这种矛盾是不是一种撕裂？朱伟走边缘路线，喜欢结交各式人等，曾经热衷摇滚，体育、音乐，该玩的一样不拉下。但他人对人，对艺术对市场，却像一个老派人物，实在、规矩、讲道义。我见多了工于心计、言行不一的家伙，表面光鲜，背地里污。古人老是说，

文如其人，画如其人。这是被无数实践证明的东西，让人不得不服气。我赞赏朱伟内心的古典执念。显然，古典本身已成过去，古典不可复活。那么，为何有的人深怀古典情结？原因不外乎对经典性的迷恋。就我本人而言，面对西方以往诸多经典作品，除了脱帽致敬，所有语言都属多余。回想我面对《万壑松风》和《溪山行旅》，眼眶发烫的场景始终历历在目。无须赘言，经典的魅力是永恒的，经典是艺术高度永远的标尺。可以理解一点，在朱伟这里，不存在撕裂，外在和内在寄居在同一个载体而已。朱伟对经典的敬意是从他创作的点滴中流露而出——惟其如此，所谓的古典执念便蕴含了某种自我较劲，一边是伟大的经典，一边是自我较劲，就如一边是镜子，一边是照镜子的人。

有些人多变，有些人不变。有些人多变是因为赶时髦，有些人不变是因为内心的诉求比时髦重要。要知道，时髦永远赶不完，影子永远不会飞在鸟前面。那些不变的人，坚守的人，心怀执念的人，有一天会被其他人一窝蜂地追赶。这个世界就是这样的奇妙，山不转水转。我期待朱伟一如既往——当然了，我期待与否，他都将一如既往。不久前，他有些沉重地对我说，我不这么埋着头一条道走下去，还能怎么走？是啊，时间不过是打个盹的工夫，朱伟却不知不觉走过了大半个圆圈——走着走着，发觉已经离开了那些为他贴标签的人群和地方，离开了众声喧哗，只剩下孤身一人。而且，他的前面没有了路。鲁迅先生说过，世上本无所谓路，走的人多了，便形成了路。这话拿到这儿来，似乎变成了一个有趣的问题：一个艺术家在茫茫大地孤身一人走一条自己的路，这条路算不算路？

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Using the Past to Serve the Present -Traditional Elements in the Art of Zhu Wei

Alfreda Murck

Alfreda Murck earned a PhD at Princeton University in Chinese art and archaeology with an emphasis on the history of Chinese painting. She worked in the Asian Art Department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, from 1979-1991. Since 2004, she worked as researcher at Beijing Palace Museum's Painting and Calligraphy Research Center.

Zhu Wei is famously a painter of political and social subjects who regularly draws on motifs from traditional Chinese painting. He juxtaposes ancient and unmistakably modern figures to offer reflections on Chinese life and society from the perspective of the era of reform and opening that began in the early 1980s. He also works with traditional media, but evolved his own ways of using them. There are clear connections to the period of the Cultural Revolution and quotations from the art of the imperial past marshaled to tell stories of the more recent past. The mood is gently ironic. Cadres in their Mao jackets and motifs from Song or Yuan dynasty paintings seem equally distant in both being part of history. Zhu Wei's art reflects a culture and society that have changed dramatically, so that the questions of what is enduring, and how we are to understand the recent past come to the fore.

Zhu Wei's most recent work is a series of paintings under the title "Vernal Equinox", which carries his art in a new direction. In "Vernal Equinox No. 3" (Fig. 1) weightless figures levitate against an undefined ground amid flowers and leaves. Their faces are impassive, but variously register glum indifference, distress, surprise, or satisfaction. Hands are tucked into pockets or folded into sleeves recalling the idea of passively "looking on with folded arms". Scale varies, but not consistently enough to indicate recession or space. Hair whooshes up as though the figures are dropping, or blowing in the breeze like seeds of germinating trees. Looking rather like untethered balloons, the figures are unconnected, neither looking at each other nor us.

At the lower left, a branch of peach blossoms in luxuriant bloom is larger than any of the figures and anchors the painting. This is a quotation from an anonymous small round fan of the Southern Song (960-1278), here painted much larger and on paper instead of silk (Fig. 2). On the left and right borders are impressions of large seals, deployed in the manner of collectors' inventory seals, half on the painting and half on a now-missing mounting. One legend is "www," an incomplete website address. In most, we see the characters Zhu Wei, cut in half vertically. These are interspersed with smaller seals, with such legends as "Eight or Nine Out of Ten" (Shi you ba jiu), "Zhu Wei Authentication Seal" (Zhu Wei yin jian), or "www.zhuweiarthen.com". There is a small signature on the right edge in a variant of seal script.

The series title reminds that it is spring and these floating figures may be falling in love. It is the traditional motif of the thickly blossoming peach blossoms that confirms the romantic connection. The poet Tao Qian (365-427) gave peach blossoms a measure of fame when he wrote the "Peach Blossom Spring Preface" about a remote valley far from the strife of a war-torn world. In later centuries peach blossoms were increasingly associated with sensual pleasure

such as in the popular seventeenth century play Peach Blossom Fan.^[1] In Vernal Equinox No. 1, while peach blossoms communicate romance, the individual experience is inequitable. Some figures float in contentment; earth-bound figures are left merely to think about love, to dwell on memories or longings. The “Vernal Equinox” series will have many more images. When it is complete, we will have a better idea of how these individual stories are resolved.

Like many of Zhu Wei’s works in recent years, the “Vernal Equinox” paintings are patinated and the colors are made more nuanced by rinsing and further working the painting surface. How does Zhu Wei achieve this distinctive effect? Early in his painting career, Zhu Wei elected to work in the traditional media of soft-haired brush, ink and paper. He, however, manipulates them in unconventional ways. The mulberry-bark paper, which is made in Anhui province to his specifications, has to be strong and resilient to hold up under the repeated soakings. He antiques the paper by brushing on a mustard-colored wash. The paper being treated lies on a wooden grid or nubby carpet which creates interesting patterns as pigments puddle in the hollows of indentations. Zhu Wei keeps watch as the paper dries, sometimes soaking up or washing off unwanted pigments.

He carefully considers the elements that will best express his thoughts, distilling designs from multiple sketches. For the key persona model sketches (fenben 粉本) are made. The model sketch allows him to shift the figures around, to multiply them (the characters often appear in pairs), and to recombine them in different contexts. With the main elements in place, lines are inked with a traditional brush. In the modern era, because Chinese characters are written with pens, pencils and computers, the soft brush is no longer a necessity of daily life, but an aesthetic exercise. Zhu Wei inks such lines as are needed with a deft and light touch. The forms are primarily formed with color washes in both vivid and muted tones. Before finalizing the eyes and hair, he rinses the paper under the tap, crunching the painting here and there. It is a process that takes finesse, experience and a little courage because, more than once, the paper has given way, spoiling the painting. Despite the risk, it seems worth doing as the results are intriguing: an antiqued surface, mottled and cracked, with a distinctive texture and depth. The relatively slow pace at which he produces art, recalls the Tang dynasty poet Du Fu’s description of a contemporary who simply could not be rushed: “Ten days to paint a pine tree, five days to paint a rock.”^[2] This observation could equally apply to Zhu Wei’s preparation of materials and compositions.

Enhancing the connection with dynastic Chinese painting are the seals mentioned above and Zhu Wei’s calligraphy. He inscribes and signs his paintings in a distinctive hand that is inspired by the clerical script (li shu) of the third to first centuries BCE. When the inscriptions are written in white on vertical black panels, they form strong graphic elements in the composition and resemble the calligraphy on archaeologically-excavated wooden or bamboo slips. At other times the vertical rows seem to float like propaganda slogans that, during Zhu Wei’s youth, hung from balloons at major gatherings.^[3]

Zhu Wei’s art has been shaped by the unique circumstances of his age and life experience. Growing up in an army household, Zhu Wei was an impetuous youth with little inclination to do his parents’ bidding. In 1982 at age sixteen

he enlisted in the People’s Liberation Army. At the time, the status of the army was in momentary decline. During the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, the PLA had enjoyed a high position due to its having preserved China from devolving into a full-fledged civil war in 1967-1968. As the only government organization reliably loyal to the Central Government, the PLA had restored order after the chaos unleashed by the Red Guards. From the summer of 1968, the PLA was directing the Cultural Revolution with Mao’s wife Jiang Qing serving as the PLA’s cultural impresario. The arrest in 1976 of Jiang Qing and the Gang of Four (characters who would later appear in his paintings) and their conviction in 1981 tarnished the military’s heroic reputation. The momentous redirection of government policy to economic reform and engagement with the outside world further diminished the role of the army. Because his father was a soldier, Zhu Wei was aware of this shift in perception, but, given his interest in art, enlisting in the army trumped the alternative of following his mother into medicine.

After three years as a regular enlistee, Zhu was admitted to the PLA Art Academy in the Haidian district of Beijing, and his enthusiasm for all things visual was put to the test. The training was both rigorous and tedious. One exercise was to practice drawing lines and circles with a rolled up paper tube. The tip of the tube had to be inked just so. The arm had to be suspended above the paper; leaning an elbow on the table resulted in an uneven line. Too much pressure and the hollow tube would crunch and bend. Hours of drawing lines and circles with a squishy paper tube drove some young minds to distraction. If one lasted, then the discipline took hold and eventually provided precision, deftness of touch, patience, and a sense of pride.

The study of approved literature and political thought provided another strand for Zhu Wei’s art: the poetry of Mao Zedong (1893-1976), and the recitation of official slogans such as Art must serve the people, The past should serve the present, Hold high the great red banner, Implement the Four Modernizations. At the same time, the restrictive atmosphere of the military encouraged day-dreaming and the creation of an imaginative world. Because of his decade-long association with the PLA, when he began painting, soldiers and officials frequently appear in his works as well as the mind-numbing tedium of meetings. Graduated from the Art Academy in 1989, Zhu drew an assignment that was not to his liking, so he turned to what would become a second major influence in his art, film.

In 1990 he enrolled in the Beijing Film Academy for three years and began to assemble in memory hundreds of classic films. At the end of 1992, in anticipation of completing the course and having to make a living, Zhu Wei began to think about painting as a career. For what he had to say, painting was the language with which he was most competent. The art of film making, however, gave him a unique perspective. The framing of many paintings resonates with a film shot or a full-screen close-up; some compositions bear a resemblance to story boards, or to movie sets. More importantly, film informed the way that Zhu thought about painting as narration. He conceived of his paintings in terms of allegory and story telling. In any given series, the paintings communicate with each other like scenes in a film or like a succession of frames. However striking they are individually, the paintings are more revealing in aggregate. They are less like a traditional narrative handscroll, or a series of album leaves, and closer in mood to a sequence of film clips.

Popular culture contributed further contemporary influences. Elements from novels, plays and rock music appear in his paintings. Zhu Wei was captivated by the immediacy of rock music. Cui Jian, one of the key figures of China's new music scene, wrote lyrics that became Zhu Wei's text, providing inspiration for images and inscriptions. In the regular patterning of bars and bold ink dots in the series "Descended from the Red Flag" or "Story of sister Zhao," one can sense the insistent beat of rock music.

CLASSICAL ALLUSIONS and ILLUSIONS

When Zhu Wei considers pictures of China's rich visual past, he gravitates to the art of the imperial painting academies, especially the idealized realism of Song dynasty painting. His incorporation of traditional motifs from court works, however, does not mean that Zhu Wei could have won a position in an imperial painting academy. In dynastic China, serving as a court artist required not only technical facility, but also a certain disposition, a willingness to paint whatever the court required. Under Emperor Huizong (r. 1100-1125), rigorous examinations were instituted to select painters. In skill and imagination, Zhu Wei would have passed with ease. More difficult would have been the requirement to conform to a style specified by the court. As one mid-twelfth century author wrote:

What was esteemed at that time was formal likeness alone. If anyone had personal attainments and could not avoid being expressive or free, then it would be said that he was not in accordance with the rules or that he did not continue the heritage of a master.^[4]

One suspects that Zhu Wei would not have made the cut, for although he paints with the precision and meticulous techniques of an academy painter, his style is uniquely his own. Zhu Wei is gifted and disciplined but also opinionated. During the reign of Emperor Huizong's father Shenzong (r. 1068-1085), artists were recommended to the court rather than selected by examination and his father was more tolerant. After Emperor Shenzong ascended the throne, a famous painter named Cui Bai (active second half 11th c.) was summoned to court at the beginning of the Xining reign (1068-1077). Biographies relate that although Cui Bai was an exceptional painter, he was said to be overly casual and unable to fulfill his responsibilities. By circumstance and inclination, Zhu Wei has a bit of the independent personality of a Cui Bai.

While Song dynasty court painting has the greatest drawing power for Zhu Wei, his taste is admirably eclectic. He reveres Fan Kuan's monumental landscape of about 1000 CE, *Traveling among Streams and Mountains* (hanging scroll, Taipei Palace Museum) with its breathtaking scale. He esteems the court paintings of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such as *Water Studies* by the court painter Ma Yuan (active ca. 1190-1230, handscroll, Beijing Palace Museum) and the *Flower Basket* by Li Song (active ca. 1190-1230) with its precise brushwork and balanced use of strong colors (Fig. 3). Zhu Wei is a particular fan of the work of the early Qing dynasty (1644-1911) individualists Zhu Da (Bada Shanren, 1626-1705) and Shitao (1642-1707), both of whom were descendents of the Ming dynasty imperial

clan. Their idiosyncratic works defined life-long struggles to create identity and find acceptance under Manchu rule. In the dangerous world of the early Qing dynasty, when Ming loyalist generals were still battling Manchu forces, both Bada Shanren and Shitao hid their imperial lineage and were guarded in making friends. Bada's paintings of birds and fish show a keen awareness of the dangers lurking in relationships. His birds anxiously eye each other, alert to hidden agendas (Fig. 4). This sense of caution informs the cast of characters that people Zhu Wei's paintings and, beyond body language, it is the eyes that communicate emotions. While some appear self-satisfied or tolerant, many are watchful, wary, and still others are resigned, bitter, or vindictive. They all seem to be negotiating their way through social mine fields, careful not to misstep. The series of paintings of children performing on a tightrope is evocative of the paranoia that typified the aftermath of the era of class struggle in 1990s China. The children have the anxious expressions of kids who are accustomed to being punished but are not sure why. Earnestly concentrating on finding the right balance, they strive to please with a good performance.

His well-known series titled "Utopia" features huge heads on sturdy bodies participating in official meetings. In a sequence of as many as fifty paintings, party members listen with respect, with boredom, sometimes dutifully taking notes with stubby fountain pens. Because Zhu Wei has sat through many of these meetings, his portrayals are sympathetic for he knows what it is to struggle to keep attention. Small details are entertaining: a People's Representative has an ear stud suggesting punk leanings; a large worm hole in a robust banana plant hints that it is past its prime. The meetings feature huge red flags and a cheerful floral display of the sort that graces the dais at every formal gathering (Fig. 5).

The basket of flowers adapted from the Li Song album leaf of Figure four, fits well as an emblem of the modern court. The vivid fresh flowers form a contrast with the grizzled, vacuous, or attentive faces listening to the drone of speeches that will reveal the new party line.

Juxtaposition of polychrome realism and artful criticism is not new to the twentieth century. In Chinese painting history, although the writing brush was the implement of choice for scholars wishing to hint at discontent, vivid color was also employed to lodge silent complaints, especially in vegetable and flower paintings.^[5] Here "realism" does not mean fidelity to the phenomenological world but rather to psychological reality, the truth that is found in Zen Buddhist and literati monochrome ink painting.

Mixing ancient and modern elements often results in humorous and ironic pictures. In *The Trials of a Long Journey* No. 2 of 1994, for example, there is a visual quotation from the twelfth century handscroll *The Night Revels of Han Xizai* (Beijing Palace Museum, attributed to Gu Hongzhong of the tenth century). *The Night Revels* was said to have been commissioned to record the rakish Minister Han Xizai's evening soirees. In the Song dynasty handscroll, the women provide the full-range of entertainment from music and dance to sexual favors. In the background of Zhu Wei's painting, one sees a pair of figures from *The Night Revels* composition: a man with his arm around the shoulder of a young girl urges her off to a tryst. The irony (and irreverence) of Zhu Wei's work comes from the series title, "The

Trials of a Long Journey,” or in Chinese “a thousand mountains, ten thousand rivers,” a reference to the Long March.^[6]

Another traditional source tapped by Zhu Wei is the lore of the horse. In dynastic Chinese literature and painting, horses were frequent metaphors for human talent in all its variety. The noble stallion, the lazy mount, the abused steed, and the starving nag all appear in literary allegories and paintings. Horses are depicted responding to their riders in the excitement of the hunt, interacting with their handlers, enjoying or enduring the existence that it is their lot. The intelligence and awareness of such horses, are captured in a well-known wall painting in the tomb of Lou Rui, the prince of Dongan of the Northern Qi (550-575). Among the equestriennes parading on the walls, a few steeds startle us as they look askance or directly out at the viewer.^[7] The wall painter seems to tell us that these hard-working horses know that they are metaphors.

Why are horses wandering through Zhu Wei’s paintings? Often upstaged by foreground heads that partly obscure them, the horses seem to have personal meanings. One source that he has used multiple times is a horse and groom painting that is attributed to the great scholar, painter, and calligrapher Zhao Mengfu (1254-1322). In Training the Horse (Fig. 6), the groom stands in the conventional position to the right of the horses’ head. What is unconventional is the stiff wind that whips the horse’s tail and mane as well as the groom’s sleeves, robe, and whiskers making the title of the painting ironic. How can one train a horse in a gale-force wind that swallows up all sound? Zhu Wei links the image to the military life that he had known for ten years. As in other series, he experimented with the horse and groom, rearranging them, juxtaposing them with other figures. In Racing Horse on a Rainy Night, No. 3, the groom is replaced by a soldier who sits on the ground with a cloth-wrapped bundle of simple victuals next to him (Fig. 7). In the pinched expression on his face we can feel the wind’s cold bite. In another version, Racing Horse on a Rainy Night, No. 5 (1998), the “groom” is a female cadre with her head wrapped in scarf, while the horse’s long tail is blown around her shoulder (Fig. 8). Because Zhu Wei was born in the year of the horse (in the Chinese vernacular, he belongs to horse, is a horse), we cannot discount the possibility that some of these steeds represent the artist himself. This connection is made more likely in Racing Horse on a Rainy Night, No. 5 where the otherwise rarely-seen sprigs of bamboo (zhu 竹) makes a homophonic pun on the artist’s surname. Again, ancient and recent past are deployed to serve the present.

WEIGHT and WEIGHTLESSNESS

The poet Tao Yuanming, who was cited above as the author of Peach Blossom Spring preface, had a lack of patience for the pomposity of rank and class airs. Tao had the talent to serve in a government position and took a post at his wife’s insistent urging. Less than three months into his service, Tao was told that, to receive a visiting official of higher rank, he had to don a particular robe and belt as a sign of respect. To Tao, the arbitrary distinction was cause for resignation just eighty days after taking office. The event made him realize that rural poverty was preferable to the onerous - if well compensated - protocol of bureaucracy. Zhu Wei can identify with this attitude.

Although not trained as a sculptor, Zhu Wei has been inspired by difficulties of expression in his two-dimensional art to create witty and stylish three-dimensional paintings. (If China can have “silent poetry,” then it should be possible to have “three-dimensional painting.”) Zhu Wei’s monumental bronze figures of Party cadres lean forward about to tip over. Their bulky physicality expresses things that could not be easily conveyed on paper. First created in 1999 at the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the People’s Republic of China, the pair of enormous figures in politically-correct Mao jackets stand at attention with shoulders back, arms at their sides, heads raised. They are rooted to the ground even as they eagerly press forward 往前走. The solidity bespeaks unflinching confidence; the uplifted heads suggest respect for higher authority, while the absence of eyes suggests blind, unthinking obedience.

The surface is the most fragile aspect of the sculptures, and a telling feature. The bronze (or in some cases, painted fiberglass) figures have a dusty encrustation created with sandy mud from the banks of the Yangtze River. They look like freshly-excavated objects: they resemble artifacts to be housed in a museum and studied as historical relics as part of China’s cultural heritage. When a pair was shown in the atrium of the IBM Building in New York, the installers did not understand that the patination was part of the sculpture and scrubbed them clean. The earthen patination situates these sculptures with tomb figurines as examples of the ideal servant in the afterlife - silent, loyal, sycophantic. This cynical interpretation does not credit the reality that the CCP has many hardworking members who actively contribute to society. cadres are a weighty presence and wield great power. Like these immobile bronze behemoths, they are impossible to dismiss.

Zhu Wei’s creation of art is an unusual amalgam of past and present. Visually, his paintings are more easily associated with the professional class of painters in dynastic China and yet the messages of empathy and social criticism are very clearly in the tradition of the educated elite. His awareness of the weight that words and images have carried in both traditional and modern China make his art both fascinating and obscure: messages are deeply imbedded in layered allusions and small details. As he enters his forties, Zhu Wei continues his keen observations of self and society, interested in a broad range of cultural issues. His commentaries are tempered with humor, the edginess is softened with humanity. In the best tradition of Chinese expressive art, Zhu Wei’s paintings record quickly changing social norms, human foibles, and political absurdities, in short, the life that he is witnessing and the history that is unfolding before us.

NOTES:

[1] Tao Yuanming (365-427), "The Peach Blossom Spring," James Robert Hightower, translated and annotated, *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), pp. 254-256. Kong Shangren (1648-1718), *The Peach Blossom Fan*, trans. Chen Shih-hsiang and Harold Acton, *The Peach Blossom Fan* by K'ung Shang-jen (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California, 1976).

[2] Zhu Jingxuan (active mid 9th c.), *Tang chao minghua lu* (early 840s), quoting Du Fu's (712-770) appraisal of the painter Wang Zai. 朱景玄《唐朝名画录》妙品上八人，杜甫对王宰的评价：“十日画一松，五日画一石”。

[3] For example Plum Blossoms Ltd., *Zhu Wei Diary* (Hong Kong: Plum Blossoms International, 2000), *New Positions in the Brocade Battle*, no. 3, p. 79, Box No. 3, p. 274.

[4] Deng Chun, *Hua ji*, juan 10 邓椿《画继》卷十：盖一时所尚，专以形似，苟有自得，不免放逸，则谓不合法度，或无师承。

[5] Alfreda Murck, "Paintings of Stem Lettuce, Cabbage, and Weeds: Allusions to Tu Fu's Garden", *Archives of Asian Art* (亚洲艺术档案) 48 (1995), 32-47. 中译：姜斐德《以莴苣、白菜和野草为画——杜甫菜园的隐喻》《清华美术》，2005-12.

[6] 《万水千山二号》，Plum Blossoms Ltd., *Zhu Wei Diary* (Hong Kong: Plum Blossoms International, 2000), p. 47.

[7] Lou Rui tomb wall painting, detail, Northern Qi (550-577), Shanxi Province Cultural Heritage Research Institute. From Bei Qi Dongan wang Lou Rui mu 《北齐东安王娄睿墓》(北京：文物出版社，2006), color plate 32.

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古为今用 ——朱伟作品中的传统元素

姜斐德

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朱伟之所以著名，在于他经常使用源自中国传统绘画的题材来表现政治和社会的主题。他把古代人物和毫无疑义的现代人物的形象进行融合，以反映自改革开放伊始的八十年代初以来的中国社会与生活。朱伟也使用传统的媒介，但他独辟蹊径而自成一体。朱伟的作品和文革有着清晰的联系，同时，他也糅和了帝制中国的艺术形式，以此来叙述发生在最近的故事，笔调有种温和的讽刺意味。身着中山装的干部与宋元的题材一同粉墨登场，似乎它们同为久远历史的一部分。朱伟的艺术反映了翻天覆地变化中的文化与社会，于是我们要问：在中国文化中，什么是持久不变的？如何理解1949年以来的历史？

朱伟最近的作品系列名为《开春图》，这一系列显示了他新的创作方向。《开春图三号》（图1）画的是飘浮在花叶中处于失重状态的人，背景留白。人物似乎面无表情，但又各自有不同意蕴，有的显得阴郁、无动于衷，有的忧伤，有的惊诧，有的则志得意满。他们的手插在衣兜里或藏在袖子里，不禁让人想到“袖手旁观”这个成语。人物形体大小各异，但无定规，不足以说明前后次序或空间感。他们头发炸开，似乎他们正在往下坠落，或者说像微风中随风飘荡的种子，更像是没有拴线的气球。他们彼此没有关联，既不互相瞧着，也不望向我们。画的左下角，一束桃花正灼灼开放，比所有人都大，支撑住了整个画面。此桃花来自南宋（1127-1278）一位匿名画家的小团扇画，然而在朱伟笔下变得更为硕大，并且是画在纸上而不是绢上（图2）。画面左右边界处均有巨大的印章，如藏家收藏章一般，半钤在画上半消失于绫子边缘。其中的一个印章是“www”，一个未完成的网址；在画面的大部分，我们可以看到“朱伟”二字，被垂直地切去了一半。此外，画面上还点缀着其它较小的图章，如“十有八九”、“朱伟印鉴”、“www.zhuweiartden.com”等。画面上有小的画家签名，字体略近魏碑或金农的漆书。

这个系列令人想起这是春天，漂浮的人们或许正坠入爱河。繁盛绽放的桃花是传统绘画的题材，让人产生烂漫的遐想。诗人陶渊明（365-427）在《桃花源记》中，描写了远离战乱世界的遥远山谷桃花源，这使得“桃花”闻名遐尔。而接下来的数个世纪，“桃花”逐渐与感官上的愉悦联系起来，比如在十七世纪广为流传的戏剧《桃花扇》里^[1]。在朱伟的《开春图一号》里，桃花依旧传达出浪漫意味，可个人的体验却大相迥异。漂浮着的一些人心满意足；脱离了大地的人们只能去思考爱，只能去琢磨回忆与渴望。《开春图》这个题目可能会让一些中国人联想到著名歌手董文华的歌曲《1992年，又是一个春天》，这首歌写于邓小平南巡，重新推进改革开放之后。《开春图》这个系列还在延续中，只有在其完成时，我们才能明了这些个人的故事将如何终结。

如朱伟近年来的许多作品一样，《开春图》呈现出古色古香的面貌，对画作表面的水洗以及进一步处理使颜色褪变得更为微妙。他是如何做出这极具个人特色的效果的？在绘画生涯早期，朱伟就选择了以毛笔、墨、纸张等传统媒材来创作，然而，他用非传统的方式使用它们。安徽订制的桑树皮纸必须质地牢固有弹性，经得起反复浸润，因为纸张必须刷上棕黄色颜料来做旧。刷的时候纸张下面垫上有栅格的木板或糙面的地毯，当颜料在凹处沉淀凝结时，纸上便现出有趣的图

案。纸张干燥过程中，朱伟一直在旁守候，不时吸掉或洗掉不想要的颜料。他审慎考虑所有最能表达他想法的元素，从多达数倍的草稿图中提炼出构思。主要的人物角色都有粉本，用粉本的好处是，角色能被挪动、复制（人物通常成对出现）、在不同的背景中组合。主要元素到位后，线条画需用传统毛笔渲染。在如今这个时代，写出中国字的是钢笔、铅笔和电脑，柔软的毛笔不再是日常生活必需品，而演化成为一种美学活动。渲染线条画时，朱伟的笔触必须灵动轻柔，这样，事先做旧的图画就同时具备了鲜活与灰暗的质地。在最后完成眼睛和头发之前，他把画纸放到水龙头下冲洗，揉搓画作的某些部位。这一步骤极需细心、经验和一些勇气，因为不止一次纸张曾被揉碎，整张画于是便被毁损。尽管存在风险，这一步还是值得的，原因就是那及其迷人的最终效果：古董般斑驳破裂的表面，别具一格的皴纹和深度。出于同样的原因，他创作的步调也相当缓慢，令人回想起唐代诗人杜甫的诗句：“十日画一松，五日画一石”^[2]。这句诗同样也能用于朱伟对材料和构图的准备。

朱伟的《无题》

朱伟的书法与上文中提到的印章也加强了其画作同中国古代绘画之间的联系。他在画作上的落款和字体非常独特，灵感来源于公元前三世纪到公元前一世纪的隶书。白色的款识写在竖直黑底色块上，形成强烈的构图效果，类似于考古挖掘出来的木牍或竹简。另外一些时候，竖直的字行犹如漂浮半空的宣传标语，正如朱伟年少时从集会人群头顶的气球垂下的标语一样。^[3]

在独特环境中成长与生活的经历塑造了朱伟的艺术。他出身于军人家庭，在躁动的青年时代，他极少听从父母的命令。1982年，十六岁的朱伟应募加入中国人民解放军。那时军队的地位大幅下降。在伟大的无产阶级文化大革命期间，因为在1967-1968年间阻止中国陷入全面内战，中国人民解放军的地位极其崇高。作为中央政府信任的唯一一个官方机构，中国人民解放军收拾了红卫兵留下的烂摊子，恢复了原有秩序。从1968年夏开始，毛泽东的妻子江青成为中国人民解放军文化掌权者，其后中国人民解放军开始指挥文化大革命。1976年江青和四人帮（这些人物以后将出现在他的作品中）被捕，1981年被宣判有罪，自此以后，军队的辉煌声誉便失去光泽。当政府政策出现了重大转向后，改革开放进一步削弱了军队的重要性。由于父亲是一名军人，朱伟对这一转变有深刻认知，然而，对爱好艺术的朱伟而言，应征入伍总胜于步母亲的后尘进入医药界。

朱伟的《无题》

服役三年之后，朱伟被位于北京海淀区的解放军艺术学院招收入学，从这个时刻开始，他对所有视觉事物的热情将接受检验。学校训练既严苛又乏味。其中一项训练是用尖端蘸上墨水的纸卷画直线和圆圈，手臂必须悬浮在纸上方，手肘稍稍碰一下桌面就有可能画出不匀称的线条。下笔稍重，空心的纸卷就可能被压扁或压弯。用软绵绵的纸管接连画上数个小时的直线和圆圈，要不让年轻人分心非常艰难，可一旦坚持下来，就会掌握住规则，最终收获的将是精细灵动的笔触、耐心、以及自豪感。对官方文学和政治思想的学习是造就朱伟艺术的另一条线：毛泽东（1893-1976）诗词，朗读宣传官方口号如“文艺为人民服务”、“古为今用”、“高举红旗”、“实现四个现代化”。同时，军队里的严厉氛围却引起了白日梦，创造一个幻想世界。当朱伟刚刚开始作画时，数十年与军队的关联使他笔下常常出现军人和官员的形象，时常出现的还有那些令人头昏脑胀的沉闷会议。1989年，朱伟从解放军艺术学院毕业，那年他被指派画他并不所喜好的东西，于是，他转向了第二个将对他的艺术具有重大影响的领域——电影。

朱伟的《无题》

1990年，朱伟被北京电影学院录取，数以百计的经典影片伴随了他三年的学习生涯。1992年末，预计将完成学业去谋生，朱伟开始考虑将绘画作为终生职业。事实上他不得不承认，绘画是他最擅长的语言，而拍电影给他提供了独特的视角。许多朱伟画作的取景让人联想起电影摄影或一个封闭的全屏幕；有些构图则与故事板类似，或像是电影场景。更为重要

的是，电影提供了朱伟把绘画用作叙述的方法。他把绘画当成寓言和故事来讲述，和电影中的连续场景或连续数帧画面类似。在他的任何绘画系列里，前后都有关联，不论每张画多么自成一体，作为一个系列它们还是会透露出更多信息。不同于传统的故事手卷抑或是册页，朱伟的系列作品在状态上更接近于电影剪辑。

朱伟的《无题》

流行文化则带来了更多当代气息。朱伟的画作中出现了从小说、戏剧、音乐中汲取的素材，摇滚乐的震撼使他着迷。崔健是中国新音乐中不可或缺的关键人物之一，他写的歌词成为朱伟的文本，使他获得图像与款识的灵感。看到《红旗下的蛋》和《赵姐的故事》系列中他一贯的栅格图案配上大胆的墨点，人们确乎能感受到摇滚乐的持续冲击。

朱伟的《无题》

古典暗喻及幻像

朱伟的《无题》

当朱伟面对中国过去丰饶的视觉艺术时，他倾心的是来自宫廷画院的艺术，尤其宋代理想的写实主义绘画。朱伟善用宫廷书画的传统题材，但是，这不表明他能够在宫廷画院里谋得一席之地。帝制中国的宫廷画家不仅具备技艺上的能力，还得拥有某种职务，朝廷要什么就得画什么。宋徽宗（1100-1125年在位）曾亲自严格挑选任命每一位画家。就技法 and 想象力而言，朱伟当然能毫不费力地通过甄选，困难之处在于遵照朝廷要求的风格作画。诚如一位十二世纪中叶的邓椿所述：

朱伟的《无题》

盖一时所尚，专以形似，苟有自得，不免放逸，则谓不合法度，或无师承。^[4]

朱伟的《无题》

朱伟使用画院画家的工笔技法作画，这并不能成为怀疑他无法突破传统束缚的理由，实际上他的风格仅仅属于他自己。朱伟有才华，受过良好训练，但也非常有自己的想法。在宋徽宗的父亲神宗（1068-1085年在位）统治期间，画院画家的甄选方式是举荐而非考取，神宗的父亲对此则更为宽松。神宗登基后，著名画家崔白（活跃于11世纪后半叶）于熙宁年间（1068-1077）应召进入画院。据传记记载，崔白画艺超群，却生性疏阔，乃至无法完成他在画院的职责。无论从环境还是个性上来看，朱伟都多少有些崔白的独立个性。

朱伟的《无题》

尽管宋朝画院绘画对朱伟有强烈影响，他的趣味并不拘泥于此。他将范宽那幅创作于公元十一世纪的经典《溪山行旅图》（手卷，台北故宫博物院藏）改成了尺寸惊人的新作。他看重十二、三世纪的宫廷画作，因为它们有细密的笔法和富丽的色彩（图3），譬如宫廷画家马远的《水图》（手卷，北京故宫博物院藏，马远活跃于1190~1230年）和李嵩（活跃于1190~1230年）的《花篮图》。朱伟尤其欣赏明末清初的个人主义者朱耷（八大山人，1626-1705）和石涛（1642-1707），这两人均均为明皇室的后裔。二人奇僻的画风勾勒出他们长达一生的挣扎——那是在满洲统治下不断确认自我、寻求认同的挣扎。清朝前期，社会动荡，明朝遗老遗少仍处在与满清的斗争中，八大山人和石涛不得不隐藏他们的皇族血统，甚至连交友都受监视。八大笔下的鸟和鱼总显示出对周遭环境的敏锐知觉。他的鸟儿紧张地注视彼此，警觉地隐藏起他们的动机（图4）。这种谨小慎微让人想起朱伟笔下的人物，那些人物不是用身体语言，而是他们的眼睛暴露出了他们的感情。尽管这些人中的一些看起来踌躇满志，或是顺从忍耐，有些人则警觉而机敏，但是，其它人还是得听天由命、愁眉苦脸、怨气冲冲。他们似乎都在社会这个地雷阵里踉跄前行，生怕走错一步。《孩子走钢丝》这一系列作品很容易将我们带回阶级斗争之后的九十年代，这些孩子们面上挂着习惯了被莫名惩罚时才有的神情，他们正全神贯注于找到钢丝上的平

衡，竭尽全力用尽善尽美的表演来取悦于人。

著名的“乌托邦”系列刻画了那些顶着大脑袋的强健身躯参加官方会议的情景。这一系列有五十幅左右，会议中党员们百无聊赖，但仍貌似恭敬地听着，还时不时用粗短的钢笔忠诚地记录着什么。因为朱伟曾多次忍受这样的会议，所以他的笔触是具有同情心的——他知道要挣扎着保持注意力到底是什么含义。小细节也很有意思：一位人大代表穿了个耳钉，说明他的朋克倾向；在生机勃勃的芭蕉叶上有一个巨大的虫蚀洞，表明它已经渡过了青春期。巨大的红色旗帜和繁花似锦的讲台摆设是这种正式群众聚会场合不可避免的（图5），从李嵩册页里来的花篮则很好地担任了现代宫廷的象征。台上的演讲正宣扬着党的新路线，而台下那些正在倾听着的苍老空虚的面容却与鲜活的花朵并置在一起，形成一个绝佳的对照。

色彩丰富的现实主义与隐蔽的针砭批判在二十世纪已经不是什么新鲜事。中国绘画史上，尽管文人墨客更爱用笔法来暗示他们的不满，然而鲜明的色彩也被采纳于表达沉默的抗议，在植物花草的绘画中尤为如此^[5]。在这里，“现实主义”不代表同现实世界保持一致，而是同心理现实保持一致。我们可以在禅宗和文人的单色水墨作品中发现这个事实。

将古代和现代元素融合起来，通常导致的结果是幽默与讽刺。如1994年的《万水千山二号》，在视觉形象上援引了十二世纪的手卷《韩熙载夜宴图》摹本（北京故宫博物院藏，原本为公元十世纪的顾闳中所作）。《夜宴图》据说是顾闳中奉命夜至素有放逸之名的大臣韩熙载家，窥视其夜宴的情景而画的。在这幅宋代摹本中，女性提供了从音乐舞蹈到性挑逗的全套娱乐服务。而在朱伟这幅作品的背景中，人们可以看到与《夜宴图》构图相似的一对人物：一个男人正搂着一个女孩的肩，怂恿她同他去幽会。朱伟的嘲讽（和不恭）来自于这个作品系列的名字——《万水千山》，意指长征。^[6]

朱伟接触的另一个传统资源是对马的认知。在中国帝制时期的文学与绘画中，马常常被用来隐喻人在各方面的才华。高贵的种马、慵懒的乘骑、被奴役的战马、饥饿的驽马，无一不出现在文学寓言和绘画里。马的形象是在紧张激烈的狩猎中追随骑手，与骑手合二为一，享受或是忍受它们既定的命运。在著名的北齐东安王娄睿（550-575）的墓室壁画中，马的智慧与洞察力被捕捉得很传神。画中的女仪卫们正列队骑行，而那几匹战马却是人们注意力的中心，它们正白眼斜视或直视着墙外的我们^[7]。壁画作者似乎想告诉我们，这些含辛茹苦的马匹完全明了它们自己所代表的寓意。

为何马匹会在朱伟的画作中游荡？前景中鲜明的人物头像常常使马匹藏于暗处，它们似乎有更个人化的涵义。伟大的文学家、画家、书法家赵孟俯笔下的马匹和马夫被朱伟借用过数次。赵的《调良图》（图6）中，马夫按照传统习惯画到了马头的右方，然而画面中却掀起了一阵并非传统的强风，吹得马尾马鬃、马夫的衣袖长袍乱鬣，无一不在风中翻飞，结果是使这幅画的名称变得极具讽刺意味。人怎么可能在吞噬一切声响的狂风中驯马？朱伟把这个画面同他熟谙的数十年军旅生涯联系起来，在一些系列作品中，他实验性地将马匹和马夫重新构图，并加入了新面孔。《图夜跑马图三号》里，马夫被一名士兵代替，士兵坐在地上，身旁放着一布包裹的粮食（图7）。从士兵紧锁的愁眉中，我们感受到了寒风的凛冽。在另一幅作品《雨夜跑马图五号》（1998）中，“马夫”又变成了个女干部，围巾包住她的头，长长的马尾扫着她的肩（图8）。朱伟在马年出生（按中国属相算，朱伟属马），我们不能排除这些战马中的几匹有代表艺术家本人的可能性。在《雨夜跑马图五号》中这种联系被加强了，画面里罕见地出现竹叶，而中文中的“竹”与艺术家的姓同音，这是再一次的“古为今用”。

重与失重

上文中提到的《桃花源诗并记》的作者，诗人陶渊明，是个难以忍受等级森严的氛围的人。陶渊明有做官的天分，在妻子的督促下，他接受了官府的任命。上任后不到三个月，一次有人告诉陶渊明，某大官要来视察，为了迎接这名大官，陶渊明应当束带迎之，以示尊敬。这种粗暴的尊卑之分导致陶渊明上任仅八十天后遂授印去职。这次事件让他意识到，俭朴的田园生活胜过官僚制度下——即使有所补偿——的繁文缛节。朱伟的态度也是如此。

虽然没有经过雕塑训练，朱伟还是从他在二维艺术中遭遇的困难获得灵感，创作出诙谐而极具个人特色的三维绘画。（如果有“沉默的诗歌”，那么也有可能存在“三维绘画”。）朱伟经典的铜雕塑作品塑造了向前倾斜站立、几近跌倒的党干部。它们那巨大的实体感表达了不容易在纸上表达的东西。第一尊雕塑创作于中华人民共和国成立五十周年的1999年，两个庞大的人身着政治正确的中山装，站姿毕恭毕敬，双肩收紧，双臂贴于身侧，仰着头。他们紧紧扎根于地面，却表达出强烈的向前进的欲望。他们的坚固性表明了无所畏惧的坚强信心；仰起的脑袋暗示着对更高权威的尊敬，而他们眼睛的缺失则暗示着盲目和愚忠。

雕塑的表面是其最脆弱的部分，也是极具特点的部分。铜（在另一版本中为着色的玻璃钢）像表面有一层灰土覆盖物，那是从扬子江岸取来的沙土。它们使得雕塑看上去似乎刚出土：像是作为中国文化遗产一部分被陈列在博物馆里作为历史遗迹来研究的史前古物。雕塑在纽约IBM大厦中庭安装时，安装者不知道这些尘土锈迹是雕塑的一部分，结果把雕塑擦洗得干干净净。尘土锈迹使雕塑具有墓葬雕像的意味。墓葬雕像象征着来世里理想的奴仆——沉默、忠诚、阿谀。对愤世嫉俗的阐释者而言，说中国共产党有许多成员不辞劳苦地积极投身于社会是难以置信的。干部是重量级的群体，手握巨大权力。像这些岿然不动的铜制庞然大物一样，他们不容忽视。

朱伟的艺术创作是过去与现在相融合的非凡合金。视觉上，他的画很容易让人联想到中国帝制时期的职业画家，然而，他的画所透露的社会精英秉承的移情与社会批判的信息也非常清晰。他意识到传统中国和现代中国承载的文字和图像的力量，这让他的艺术既令人着迷又隐密晦涩：讯息被深深地隐藏在多层暗示和微妙的细节里。步入不惑之年，朱伟仍继续他对自我、对社会的敏锐观察。他对广泛的文化问题怀有兴趣，幽默缓和了他的阐释，人性软化了他的锐利。在中国最好的写意传统中，朱伟的绘画记录了正在迅速转变的社会规范、人性的弱点、政治的荒谬，简而言之，他记录了他正在见证的生活，和正在我们面前展开的历史。

注释:

[1] 陶渊明 (365-427), 《桃花源记》, James Robert Hightower 翻译成英文并注释, 选自《陶潜诗作》(The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien) (牛津: Clarendon 出版, 1970), pp. 254-256. 孔尚任 (1648-1718), 《桃花扇》, Chen Shih-hsiang 与 Harold Acton 翻译成英文, 选自《孔尚任的桃花扇》(The Peach Blossom Fan by K'ung Shang-jen) (伯克利与洛杉矶: 加利福尼亚大学出版, 1976)。

[2] 参考朱景玄 (约公元 9 世纪中期) 《唐朝名画录》(9 世纪 40 年代前期) 妙品上八人, 杜甫对王宰的评价: “十日画一松, 五日画一石”。

[3] 例如万玉堂有限公司出版的《朱伟日记》(香港: 万玉堂国际公司出版, 2000), 新编花营锦阵三号, p. 79, 盒子三号, p. 274。

[4] 邓椿《画继》卷十, (收入《画史丛书》第一册, 255 - 356 页), 273 页。

[5] Alfreda Murck, "Paintings of Stem Lettuce, Cabbage, and Weeds: Allusions to Tu Fu's Garden", Archives of Asian Art (亚洲艺术档案)。48 (1995), 32-47. 中译: 姜斐德《以莴苣、白菜和野草为画——杜甫菜园的隐喻》《清华美术》, 2005-12。

[6] 《万水千山二号》, Plum Blossoms Ltd., Zhu Wei Diary (Hong Kong: Plum Blossoms International, 2000), 47 页。

[7] Lou Rui tomb wall painting, detail, Northern Qi (550-577), Shanxi Province Cultural Heritage Research Institute.《北齐东安王娄睿墓》(北京: 文物出版社, 2006), 32 彩色图。

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Eccentric Notes of Dissent: The Art of Zhu Wei

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Most artists in China's so-called avant-garde circle adopt Western media as a form of expression. Zhu Wei does not. Rather, he sees himself as the single artist who pushes the age-old Chinese painting tradition, both in content and style, into the contemporary.

Zhu Wei's images are a mosaic of commentaries based on social and political issues that the artist observes in his daily surroundings. They portray Zhu Wei coming to terms with himself in China's contemporary urban society in general, and the politically laden capital, Beijing, in particular. His images are neither objective nor distanced. The viewer sees the world through Zhu Wei's eyes and thus follows the fantastic roving of his mind where time, place, and space coalesce.

It is Zhu Wei's incisive observations and laconic humour that make his artwork so persuasive. The direct, intense, and sometimes even overbearing visual presence of his compositions, as well as their painterly diction, are rooted in China's propaganda art. However, the technically refined and meticulous brushwork reflects his scrupulous training in traditional Chinese painting techniques.

Zhu Wei was born on the eve of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the son of medical doctors working in the People's liberation Army (PLA). Historical circumstance would make him come of age in a world where individuality was frowned upon and deemed irrelevant. Hong Ying vividly describes this emotional landscape in her novel Summer of Betrayal:

under the brilliant glare of the shining Red Sun we grew up pale and thin, hiding in dark, gray corners. Our youth was spent in the emptiness attendant upon a loss of faith, in ferocious attention in all kinds of hope, but when we wanted to cash in on them we discovered that the world is not built on hope alone. So the first half of our lives has been a series of contradictions. If there's going to be a second half, it can only mean drifting along from day to

day resigned to circumstances, competing to be good at feigning ignorance⁽¹⁾

Yet, Zhu Wei has no intention of feigning ignorance or of succumbing to the various traumas that mark his generation. Despite the turbulent circumstances of his youth, he has developed a distinct -- though often torn -- sense of self. Seeing himself as a chronicler of an era, Zhu Wei stresses: "Unlike other contemporary artists, there is no direct political intention in my art."⁽²⁾ Yet looking at his oeuvre, it is clear that Zhu Wei is deeply critical of China's social and political situation and that his works aim to confront, to startle, and to indict.

Zhu Wei's intense need to seek and reveal the truth behind the facades of everyday life underlies his artistic creations. More often than not, he displays his findings with a prickly dry humor to emphasize the absurdities he finds. Even in real life interactions, Zhu Wei frequently reveals a similar playfulness and disjointedness. For example, he told a reporter interviewing him on a series of paintings with obvious humouristic undertones that he is not a funny person at all and actually often felt gloomy. When the reporter, taking him seriously, probed further, Zhu Wei replied that the only thing that can make him happy is "drinking beer."⁽³⁾

A perfectionist to the core, Zhu Wei appreciates the meticulous labour that goes into the creation of his works. He uses a xuan paper (a special type of paper used in traditional Chinese painting), produced exclusively according to his detailed specifications, and carefully textures the background of each work. Depending on the size of the painting, Zhu Wei applies the first layer of colour either on the incised stone plates in his yard or on the finer rack inside the studio. After drying, the paper is treated once more on a more detailed surface, such as a sisal carpet. The often quite dominant background textures in his works are thus adjusted to the mood he aims to transmit. Depending on the scale --some of Zhu Wei's works are up to three meters in height and two meters in width --the paintings are grafted together from several sheets of paper. When working on large compositions, Zhu Wei uses a small prototype of the image so that the shades and colour gradations of each section fit in with the overall composition and reveal a cohesive whole.

Zhu Wei's hand, his application of Chinese ink and pigments, is unmistakable. During his education at the Art College of the People's Liberation Army, he mastered the fine brush technique. According to his teacher, Liu Tiancheng, Zhu Wei assiduously trained himself in the styles of the famous Tang and Song dynasty masters, as well as the figure painting style of the Five Dynasties. He researched early Buddhist and Daoist mural art and studied the pictorial representations on Han dynasty bronzes. Internalizing these traditional techniques as well as the language of propaganda art, for which he was trained, Zhu Wei developed his particular visual vocabulary.

Zhu Wei vehemently detests any kind of categorization of himself or his art along the assigned lineages of contemporary Chinese art production, such as Political Pop or Cynical Realism. He keeps to himself, both personally and professionally. Similarly, Zhu Wei has seldom shown his works alongside his peers and does not spend evenings

together with them discussing the underpinning of their approaches. Zhu Wei wants us to experience the multi-layered aspects of his works and to see him as an independent voice. Although using some of its visual tools, he clearly counters the homogenous nature of propaganda art.

Zhu Wei works in series. As a result, and despite his reluctance to allow classification, the artist's impressively large oeuvre -close to one thousand recorded pieces - already includes many pre-existing caesuras. Furthermore, a number of thematic continuities can also be identified. Apart from issues relating to the artist's psychology, they include his observations on the political and social fabric of contemporary society. The following selection consists of ten works that Zhu Wei completed between 1994 and 2002. Belonging to several different series, they are analyzed according to two thematic topics.

TOTALITARIAN NOSTALGIA: THE STRIKINGLY BIZARRE

One of the most conspicuous aspects often found in mainland Chinese contemporary art production of the 1980s and 1990s is its propagandistic aura. Although meant in the vein of dissent they all share a common root in the visual diction of Chinese propaganda art of earlier decades. As Geremie Barmé describes in his book on contemporary Chinese culture *In the Red*⁽⁴⁾, dissident groups in mainland China "use the language of their enemies when writing their denunciations and attacking their foes at various forums."⁽⁵⁾

Zhu Wei was trained to produce propaganda images for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) during his education and is thus well versed in its rhetoric or, as Mikhail Epstein, calls it, "ideologemes."⁽⁶⁾ The artist's visual vocabulary follows the same path, although with different intentions from his contemporaries and often with more subtlety. Compared to Wang Guangyi's *Big Criticism* series, for example, the critical articulations of Zhu Wei's works are decidedly more refined both visually and intellectually. Where the artist mixes in a pinch of his laconic humour, the viewer is faced with the strikingly bizarre scenes to which Zhu Wei bears witness.

The ideologemes created by the CCP are grafted together from various visual, literary, social and political sources, including traditional symbols that are deeply engrained in Chinese public memory. The evocation of famous masterpieces of the Chinese art historical canon and their subsequent subversion thus neatly fits into the dissident discourse of China's so called avant-garde art world.⁽⁷⁾ Zhu Wei uses this tactic - down to the application of seals to imitate the traditional practice of identifying authorship and ownership - to lay bare the disconcerting daily realities he encounters. *Comrades* (1995)(fig. 1) and *Pictures of the Strikingly Bizarre: Driving after Drinking* (1994)(fig. 2) are some obvious examples.

The compositional structure as well as the formation and stature of the main figure in *Comrades* is visibly based on the third section of the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD) painting *Ladies Preparing Newly Woven Silk* (eighth century)(fig. 3).

Instead of treating a roll of silk, Zhu Wei's central figure--whose physiognomy bales an uncanny resemblance to Mao Zedong's effeminate features--is in the process of dying red what used to be the British flag and thus patiently brings to life the likeness of the Communist Party flag. The allusion to Hong Kong's return to the Motherland is emphasized by the depiction of bauhinias, the Special Administrative Region's national flower, and the People's Liberation Army soldiers in the background.⁽⁸⁾

The "mood of languor and melancholy typically associated with court ladies"⁽⁹⁾ that is evident in the Tang dynasty painting is coarsely interrupted by Zhu Wei's cartouches in this work. They cite, as the art critic Jia Fangzhou notes,⁽¹⁰⁾ a popular underground poem from the revolutionary period in Russia:

Comrades, Comrades, you are high up and dry, what are
you dragging me into the mud for?
Moreover you spit at me. But, comrades, despite being
covered with mud and saliva I will still firmly stand amidst
your ranks.⁽¹¹⁾

Contrary to the visual allusions, there is nothing docile or relined about the text that accompanies this painting. Rather, Zhu Wei voices China's resolution to walk as equals amongst the ranks of world leaders.⁽¹²⁾ On a deeper level, however, Zhu Wei also addresses the price China's people had to pay for Mao's visions. The Chinese characters for "...you are high up and dry..." [gao yu gan] in the first stanza are uncannily close to those for 'high ranking official' [gao (ji) gan (bu)]. The artists thus suggests, visually supported by the red drops of dye, that those high up rely on the blood of the people to accomplish their plans.

In Pictures of the Strikingly Bizarre: Serving the People,⁽¹³⁾ the compositional arrangement of Mao Zedong in a sedan chair surrounded by his entourage is manifestly based on the corresponding section of another Tang dynasty painting, entitled The Imperial Sedan chair (fig. 4). The Tang work depict Emperor Taizong greeting the Tibetan minister, who came to welcome Princess Wecheng (Taizong's daughter) as the bride-to-be of the Tibetan King.⁽¹⁴⁾ The aura in this work is one of solemnity, poise, and authority.

In Zhu Wei's painting, however, Chairman Mao is stripped of Taizong's implied political superiority and dignity. The disproportionate representation of his body parts, the hot liquid he is being brought in a red cup inscribed with "Café," and the grimacing expressions of his followers all work together in deriding the strikingly comical veneration. Visually, Zhu Wei also plays a pun on the Chinese expression "blow the trumpet and carry someone in a sedan chair (chui laba, tai jiaozhi), meaning to flatter rich and influential people. The irony is pushed further by the evocation of Mao Zedong's famous phrase "Serving the People". The reality is that Mao was undoubtedly separated from the workers and peasants he claimed to serve. Rather, he was revered and waited on like a Chinese emperor by the cadres and the military, which profited from his power.

Zhu Wei is both cynical and disquieted with regard to the nostalgic revivalism of the Mao cult. In China Diary, No.7 (1995)(fig. 5) the viewer is taken into a traditional study room with young boys. A child-like figure bearing a clear resemblance to Mao Zedong and another, in an army uniform, are coaching some youths. The absence of the teacher allows them to fill the heads of the students with "dangerous ideas." What they are reading is a copy of the Records of the Strange, Second Volume,⁽¹⁵⁾ a book that was traditionally blacklisted for youths as it was thought to instill negative tendencies in them. Another boy, probably in reference to the European origin of Marxist thought, is reading a text in Western alphabet.

The huge television in the background with the Great Helmsman --sporting a Red Guard armband --waving to the masses seems to function as an example of what fatal cataclysms Mao Zedong's indoctrination sessions brought about. Alluding to his own experience of daily Mao Zedong Thought study, Zhu Wei puts himself into the painting. Little Zhu sits in the lower right corner but isn't listening. Wearing headphones, he looks up sheepishly from flipping through a copy of his own first catalogue as an artist --identified by the title The Story of Beijing and the insignia of Zhu Wei's sole agent, Plum Blossoms Gallery.

Zhu Wei also addresses the immense commercial value of the Mao cult by identifying the footage as a Channel V music video and by placing the television on a table--next to a bottle of Head and Shoulders shampoo--where one would traditionally expect to see scholar objects. The dream-lick time fractures in the image seem to underline the Mao Cult's severe decontextualization of one of the darkest chapters in the history of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

In another painting, Zhu Wei commemorates--not without a pinch of dry humour--the still visibly decreasing influence of Mao Zedong's ideology on contemporary Chinese life. In China Diary, No.4 (1995)(fig. 6) the viewer sees Mao playing a flute--a pun on the expression "drum-blow" (gu chui) meaning to advocate (revolution) or preach. Zhu Wei depicts Mao in a stage-like setting, but the theatre is closed, as the municipal seal on the door announces. Red flags, paper flowers, and the Gate of Heavenly Peace in the background evoke the ambiance of extravagant Cultural Revolution parades. Zhu Wei's cartouches read:

Saxophone entered China. But actually 'Bailemen'⁽¹⁶⁾
and 'Angle' mounted the stage first. Everyone knows them.
In the short 20s and 30s it already existed in the Western
influenced metropolis.⁽¹⁷⁾
After 1949, it slowly disappeared and during the Cultural
Revolution it was made to disappear even more. As a
representative of rotten art, it suffered doubly.
The 60s are gone. In 1994 Beijing held the first
international jazz festival.⁽¹⁸⁾

The Painting suggests that all of Mao's propaganda tunes cannot stop the appreciation for Western music that had started in China in the early twentieth century. Now the Chairman sits on his stage but there is no one there to listen to him. If the viewer were not to read the cartouches, however, s/he could not have guessed that Zhu Wei is commenting on China's first international jazz festival. He uses the visual vocabulary and iconography of the Cultural Revolution era to record a decidedly different event.

This dialectic relationship between Mao Zedong's era and the contemporary shapes many of Zhu Wei's works. The interlacing of text and image in these works is rooted in propaganda art's didactic architecture. Yet, Zhu Wei undermines the government discourse, lays it bare and ridicules it. These works thus effuse an "ironic nostalgia" that Geremie Barmé situates in the realm of totalitarian nostalgia where the refurbished past is used to begin a new history.⁽¹⁹⁾

OPIATE FOR THE PEOPLE

The rapid changes that Deng Xiaoping's Open Door policy brought about are another important topic in Zhu Wei's art. He poignantly depicts the people's blinded transfixion by commercial prosperity⁽²⁰⁾ and unveils the current government's cunning appropriation of Mao's propaganda machinery. Working at full speed, it now dispenses to the people a new kind of opiate: material wealth.

In *Box*, No.3 (1995)(fig.7) Zhu Wei addresses China's westernizing transformations. He depicts a traditionally dressed intellectual sitting at a bar and drinking Becks beer. He looks up at a parasol that is inscribed with the words "Raffles Hotel."⁽²¹⁾ The West and its colonializing shadow appear to loom over the figure as he --critically eyed by a woman --seemingly proclaims:

Hey, I think the following. That flag wraps a box.
What actually is in the box, no one has ever seen.
Going back, that broken box is thrown away and
that ragged flag is ripped apart.
Tell the victor that he made a mistake. The world
already started to change long before.⁽²²⁾

In these thoughts, Zhu Wei expresses his opposition to the deprecation of all things Western as well as the indiscriminate condemnation of all things traditional during Mao Zedong's era. By including the banner of a pharmacy that claims to join Western and Chinese medicine and to be thus able to "heal the wounded and rescue the dying," Zhu Wei also voices his distrust for the current status quo. The banner seems to allude to the Chinese saying: "What kind of medicine is sold from the calabash?"⁽²³⁾ Zhu Wei thus questions the effect this miracle cure (i.e. westernized modernization) will actually have on Chinese society.

In *Supreme Treatise on Moral Retribution*, No.18 (2000)(fig. 8) Zhu Wei provides the viewer with an answer to the above question: it works like a drug. Zhu Wei most strongly expresses this physiological condition in the eyes of his figures. In their function as windows onto the soul, the eyes--either closed or open--take on the central role of transmitting emotion in Zhu Wei's works and in this thematic context they are particularly dominant. The female figure seems to be in the process of swearing an allegiance, her eyes conveying reverence and submission. Similarly, the eyes of the two men in the background effuse transfixion mixed with a hint fascination and disbelief.

In the Chinese title of this painting, Zhu Wei alludes to Daoist beliefs of immortality. In Daoist lore a person that meets the celestial Laozi, the enigmatic father of Daoism, may be given a capsule imparting him/her with immortality. It is here that Zhu Wei draws the parallel with China's contemporary situation. For the CCP Laozi's capsule of immortality came in the form of economic modernization, giving the government a new lease on life. Moreover, as the figure's expressions suggests, the populace's striving for the material wealth propels an obsession similar to the desperate search for immortality potions by some Daoist adepts.

Zhu Wei pushes the concept of trance-like following to the point of fanaticism in some other works. In *Sunflowers*, No.30 (2000)(fig. 9), the viewer re-encounters the two men from the painting discussed above who are joined by an almost identical third figure. The window, through which the scene is observed, probably refers to Zhu Wei's studio--the turquoise star depicted on the left wall is identical to his own bronze sculpture *China Diary Star* (1999). The viewer thus shares the artist's perspective both visually and psychologically. As the title implies, the figures pass by in a seemingly hypnotic state, transfixed by the object of their avidity. In *Utopia*, No.32 (2002)(fig. 10) the artist portrays two bald-headed men that seem to absurdly cheer on an event beyond the picture plane. Like the figures in the painting above, their state is one of puppets in a carefully orchestrated spectacle. Hence. Both works exude a chilling atmosphere of absurdity and docility.

Interestingly, it seems that in Zhu Wei's world, the people's attitude changes little when the bubble of economic prosperity bursts. His *Festival* (1998) series focuses on the mass lay-offs of employees from China's state-owned enterprises starting in 1998.⁽²⁴⁾ It is the pallid faces of these people that the viewer sees in *Festival*, No.21 (1998) (fig. 11). Although in dire straits, the eyes of the two men effuse the same hypnotic quality as the figures in the works discussed above. The arid landscape and the industrial area in the background, as well as the men's apparent passiveness, strongly evoke the desolate state with which they are faced. Watching the government sponsored firework display in celebration of the Chinese New Year,⁽²⁵⁾ their expression do not reflect the joyousness typically associated with the most important festival of the Chinese lunar calendar. But they also show no sign of rebellion. Deprived of any social insurance system and forced into poverty, they still stand there as onlookers--inert and anesthetized.

What makes them such docile creatures, Zhu Wei seems to imply, is the government's aforementioned propaganda machinery. Despite the superficially increasing freedoms, this behemoth from the Mao era still works today as an alarmingly effective mind-control apparatus. It entertains the masses and promises everyone a better future. The

privations of today, it pledges, will be the prosperity of tomorrow. By adding a dash of national pride⁽²⁶⁾ to the mélange--as Zhu Wei also seems to suggest in his Utopia (2002) series--it has found a new and highly effective opiate for its people.

As can be seen from these works, Zhu Wei's art is inextricably bound to China's present condition--from historical catharsis to social transmutation. The disjunctures that mark contemporary Chinese life are evidenced by the effortless coexistence of different times and events within the same painting. Zhu Wei's keen observations allow him to successfully indict, unmask, and thus rebel against this status quo.

Yet, Zhu Wei has a deep-seated love and reverence for his country and culture. The lyrics for "This Space"⁽²⁷⁾ by the famous Chinese rock-star Cui Jian,⁽²⁸⁾ which Zhu Wei inscribed on Sweet Life, No.38 (1999)(fig. 12), reflects the artist's torn, yet emotional relationship with contemporary China. They read:

I can't open the sky and I can't penetrate the earth.
Anyhow, freedom is not a temporary prison.
You can't leave me and I can't leave you.
No one knows if in fact it's love or dependence.
Money is just money and profit is just profit.
But you and I are not slaves.
You can only serve me and I can only serve you.
Just like pairs of small shrimps.
There is nothing fresh and new in this space
Just like there is no secret in our love.
I looked at you before but could not see into the depths.
Who would have known that only after
many encounters [I] understand that it's a borderless void.
Just like in this space.
All that I've thought I've not said and all that
I've said I've not done.
What makes me happy is playing the guitar and
singing a song for you.
Don't intermittently cry and laugh.
You've already know what kind of a thing I am
for a long time.
Heaven is a pot and the surrounding is a desert.
You are a dried-up well but the deeper the more beautiful.
The fire in this breast, the sweat on this body

That is the real sun, the real spring.
There is nothing fresh and new in this space
Just like there is no secret in our love.
I looked at you before but could not see into the depths.
Who knows that one can only understand after
looking in and out that it's a borderless void.
Just like in this space. ⁽²⁹⁾

Set against the three factions that most strongly shape China's reality: government, army, and the business world--personified by the gluttonous,⁽³⁰⁾ businessmen in the background--Cui Jian's lyrics reflects Zhu Wei's independent spirit and underlines the contradictory structures that mark contemporary Chinese society. Whilst tracing society's ugly face, Zhu Wei is able to pierce through its multi-faceted layering and see the beauty that lies beneath. It's the source from which he derives his inspiration and it's the soil that nurtures his dissent. In the same vein, he takes on the traditional Chinese painting medium only to transform it so that it may express his acute contemporary vision.

NOTES:

[1] Hong Ying, *Summer of Betrayal* (New York: Grove Press, 1997), 132.

[2] Interview with Carma Hinton, 1997. See digital disk *Zhu Wei Diary* (Hong Kong: Plum Blossoms (International) Ltd., 2000).

[3] Sherman Chau, "Reality Checked," in *iConnect* (November 3, 2000).

[4] The cover of the book is in fact a portrait of Deng Xiaoping by Zhu Wei entitled *China China* (1997).

[5] Geremie Barmé, *In the Red* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 333.

[6] *Ibid.*, 326-327.

[7] Examples are Wang Qingsong's *Night Revels of Lao Li* (2000) and Hong Lei's *Imitating Zhao Mengfu's Autumn Colors on the Que and Hua Mountains* (2003).

[8] The preparations for the repatriation of the then British colony, which included the creation of a PLA unit that was dispatched for special training in a Guangdong garrison in 1995, was a central political topic after the turbulent waves created by the Tiananmen incident turned into occasional ripples. At exactly midnight on the eve of the handover of Hong Kong, these PLA soldiers crossed the border in the New Territories in a symbolic act of military conquest.

[9] Xin Yang et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Heaven: Yale University and Foreign Language Press, 1997), 78.

[10] Fangzhou Jia, "Zhu Wei and His Determination," in *Zhu Wei Diary* (Hong Kong: Plum Blossoms (International) Ltd., 2000), 281.

[11] Translation by the author.

[12] This aspiration was most famously encapsulated in Mao Zedong's ringing 1957 proclamation that China will be equal surpass Britain in industrial productivity within fifteen years. See Immanuel Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 655.

[13] *Records of the Strange, Second Volume* is a Ming dynasty collection of short stories. Zhu Wei presents this series as a new edition of that book. Compilations of stories describing strange events have a long history in China. Liao-zhai's *Records of the Strange* by Pu Songling (1640-1715 AD) is one such example. In the same vein as Pu, Zhu Wei here presents himself to us as a historian of the strange. See Judith Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).

[14] Xin Yang et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Heaven: Yale University and Foreign Language Press, 1997), 61.

[15] *Ibid.* See endnote 13.

[16] This word refers to the name of a dancehall in Shanghai that opened in 1932.

[17] This usually refers to pre-liberation Shanghai.

[18] Translation by the author.

[19] Geremie Barmé, *In the Red* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 344.

[20] Similar concerns can also be seen in a number of works by China's youngest generation of contemporary artists.

[21] The Raffles Hotel in Singapore is famed for its "Long Bar." A connection can also be drawn to Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (1781-1826), who was an agent and colonial administrator of the British East India Company. In 1824 he purchased Singapore Island for the British Empire.

[22] Translation by the author.

[23] A bottle gourd is a medicine repository for traveling monks. Their medicine is said to alleviate any illness and sometimes even impart immortality.

[24] Within four years, a total of more than twenty-six million Chinese lost their jobs--out of which ten million remained unemployed by 2002. Already poor areas, such as China's northeastern "rustbelt," were hit particularly hard. See People's Daily website: http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200210/27/eng20021027_105729.shtml.

[25] Not shown in this work but in others that are part of this series.

[26] Most directly apparent since the victorious bid for the 2008 Olympics in 2001.

[27] From Cui Jian's 1991 album *Resolve*.

[28] Cui Jian is one of Zhu Wei's closest friends. In the early 1990s he created the stage backdrop that Cui Jian still uses for his performances.

[29] Translation by the author.

[30] Holding one's chopsticks close to the tip is a sign of greed.

异见的异解 —— 朱伟的绘画

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中国大部分在所谓的前卫圈子里的艺术家都承袭了西方的媒介作为表达方式。朱伟没有。反而，他把自己看作是将中国的传统绘画艺术，包括内容和风格，推进到当代的一个艺术家。

朱伟创作的形象建立在这位艺术家对他日常生活中观察到的社会和政治题材的提炼。它们描绘了朱伟在中国当代城市生活中的自己，尤其是首都北京的生活。他的形象既不是反对的，也不是疏远的。观察者通过朱伟的眼睛来看这个世界，因此也看到他眼中的由时间、地点、空间编织而成的奇妙的网络。

朱伟深刻的观察和简洁的幽默使他的作品富有说服力。他直接、强烈、有时甚至是专横的视觉作品与他的艺术措辞一样，根植于中国的宣传艺术。但是，技法上的精炼和绘画上的谨慎都说明他在中国传统绘画技术上经过良好的训练。

1966年，朱伟出生在中国文化大革命前夕。个人主义受到压制和反对的历史大环境使他早熟。虹影在她的小说《背叛之夏》中生动地描述了这个图景：

……在红日升起的耀眼光芒中，我们在灰暗的角落里成长得苍白而瘦弱。我们的青春耗费在信仰丧失的空虚当中，粗暴地想要抓住各种各样的希望，但是当我们想要兑现这些希望时，却又发现世界不仅仅只由希望构成。所以，我们的前半生变成了无休止的愤世嫉俗。如果有后半生的话，那只是一种日复一日的漂浮，顺从命运的安排，看看谁比谁更漠然。^[1]

然而，朱伟无意于漠然面对他们这一代所遭受的各种创伤。除了他青春时代的混乱环境与别人相同，他自身却生长出一种与众不同的——有时甚至是撕裂般的——内省。把自己当作一个时代的编年史，朱伟强调说：“在我的艺术里面没有直接的政治意图。”^[2]然而纵观他的所有作品，就会发现朱伟的艺术并不仅仅是提供愉悦，也不是无所批判的。

朱伟对被日常生活表象所掩盖的真相的热切寻求和揭露，更增添了他作品的艺术创造性。时常，他会用多刺的幽默来展示他的发现，强调了他所发现的荒谬性。甚至在他的日常生活中，朱伟也常常展现出这种顽皮与脱节。例如，面对一系列富有幽默底蕴的他的作品，他告诉一个采访的记者说，他根本就不是一个有趣的人，实际上经常是阴郁的。当这位记者把他的话当真并想要问更多问题的时候，朱伟回答说唯一一件能让他高兴起来的事情就是“去喝个啤酒”。^[3]

作为一个内心是完美主义者的人，朱伟欣赏蕴含在自己作品中的一丝不苟。他用宣纸作画（一种中国传统绘画所使用的特殊的纸），毫无例外用他特殊的要求，给每幅作品仔细地加上背景图纹。根据作品大小的不同，他或者用他院子里的石砖地面、或者用工作室里好一些的板子，给纸张加上第一层颜色。在干燥后，纸张又被用类似剑麻毯子等工具加上一层更细致的颜色。在他的大部分作品中这类的花纹因此有了他所想要表达的情绪。根据作品大小不同——一些朱伟的

作品有三米高两米宽——作品由数量不同的纸张接成。当创作大幅作品时，朱伟先创作一个小一些的草图，以保证每张纸上的颜色和形状最后能成为一个统一协调的整体。

朱伟对中国墨色的运用已臻炉火纯青。在上大学时他就显示出了高超的技法，朱伟一直都以唐、宋和五代时期的绘画风格作为学习对象苦习不休，同时还深入研究佛教和道教的绘画。对传统技法和他所受训的宣传画艺术的兼收并蓄最终使朱伟形成了自己独特的视觉语汇。

朱伟强烈反对把他的艺术或者他自己分类到中国当代艺术的任何一个门类当中，例如政治波普或玩世现实主义等等。他特立独行，既在人格上，也在职业上。比如，朱伟极少同别的画家一起做联展，晚上也不与同行们讨论未来的前途。朱伟希望人们经历他作品当中的多层次感，也希望人们把他当作一个独立的声音。尽管是运用了宣传画的一些视觉工具，他仍然很清晰地反对宣传画的单一性。

朱伟的作品多成系列。所以，尽管他不愿意被分类，从这位艺术家的创作量——几百件作品——仍可看出其中的脉络。此外，一些延续性的主题也可以被确认出来。除了关系到艺术家心理的一些主题，它们还包括他对当代的政治和社会的观察。下面十幅作品包括了朱伟 1994 到 2002 年间完成的一些创作，虽然它们属于不同的系列，我们仍可以将之分析为两大主题。

怀念极权主义：拍案惊奇

1980 年到 1990 年期间中国大陆当代艺术作品的一个显著特征是它们的宣传性气氛。这也意味着他们共同根植于更早时代的宣传艺术的视觉语汇。正如 Geremie Barme 在他的关于中国当代艺术的书《在红色中》^[4]所说的一样，中国大陆持不同政见的一群人“用与他们的敌人一样的语言来进行谴责与攻击”。^[5]

在受教育期间，朱伟曾被训练成一个宣传者，他熟悉宣传画的修辞形式，换种说法，即 Mikhail Epstein 口中的“意识形态”^[6]。艺术家的视觉语汇遵循同一道路，尽管他的当代性赋予了他不同的创作意图，因而也更深奥。举例来说，跟王广义的大批判系列相比，朱伟的作品无论在视觉上还是在思想上都更为精炼。当艺术家把简洁的幽默混合压缩起来的时候，观者就看到了朱伟经历过的惊奇景象。

当权阶层创造出来的意识形态覆盖了方方面面，视觉上、文字上、社会中和政治上，包括那些深深印在中国公共记忆中的传统符号。这些中国艺术史里的经典形象及其后对之的颠覆，恰好适合所谓的中国当代艺术世界来表达他们的异见。^[7] 朱伟运用了这个策略——从用于证明作品的著作权和所有权的印章模仿传统形式开始——到他所遭遇的日常生活的事实。《同志们》（1995）和《二刻拍案惊奇之酒后驾车》（1994）都是此类明显的例子。

从构图到人物设置到尺幅，《同志们》都模仿了唐代（公元 618-907）绘画作品《捣练图》中的第三幅（八世纪）。不同的是，妇女们不在纺织丝绸，朱伟的中心形象——脸上带着离奇的与毛泽东类似的女人气——正在把英国的国旗染成和中国的党旗一样的红色。这种香港回归的暗示被象征特别行政区的紫荆花和背景中的解放军士兵加强了。^[8]

在“原作唐朝绘画中的娇弱无力”^[9] 被朱伟在这幅作品中粗暴的改写了。它们表明，正如艺术评论家贾方舟^[10] 注解的，题款中苏联革命时期的一首广为流传的诗歌：

同志们，同志们，随你们高兴干什么。把我往泥浆里拖，还朝我啐唾沫。可是同志们，尽管粘着泥浆和唾液，我还坚定不移的站在你们的行列。^[11]

除了视觉暗示，没有其他的线索表明这些题款与图画的关系。朱伟还表现了中国的领导人想要成为世界领先国家领导人的想法^[12]。更深一层，朱伟也表明了中国人民为了毛泽东的幻想所支付的代价。

在《二刻拍案惊奇之为人民服务》^[13] 中，构图安排毛泽东坐在中央一个轿子上，周围环绕着他的附庸者，也是模仿了另一幅唐代绘画《步辇图》。唐代的作品描绘了西藏人迎娶文成公主（太宗的女儿）时，唐太宗会见西藏来使的情形^[14]。这幅作品的主题是庄重，平衡和权威。

在朱伟的绘画中，毛主席被去除了唐太宗所暗示的政治优越与尊严。他身体的不成比例，端给他的热乎乎的液体用红杯子盛着上面写着“咖啡馆”，还有他的追随者的怪表情，合在一块嘲笑了这种滑稽的崇拜。视觉上，朱伟也在中国表情上玩起了双关语“吹喇叭抬大轿”意味着奉承有钱有地位的人。这种讽刺被毛泽东的著名言论“为人民服务”更推进了一步。现实是，毫无疑问地从他号称要服务于的工人和农民当中分离出来，被干部和军队像个皇帝一样的敬奉，而这些人从他的权力当中获取利益。

对于毛泽东崇拜热潮的复兴，朱伟感到既愤慨又不安。在《中国日记七号》（1995）里，观者被带到一个男孩子们的传统学堂里。一个男孩子长得很像毛泽东，而另一个，穿着军服，在教导其他的男生。教师的缺席使他们这些学生的脑海中得以充斥“危险的思想”。他们念的书是《二十年目睹之怪现状》^[15]，一本给年轻人看的关于中国传统黑幕的书，用于加深年轻人反叛的思想。另一个小男孩，或许是代表欧洲的马克思主义，正在念西方的字母表。

背景中的巨大电视机，正在播放着伟大舵手的画面——会见红卫兵——在向众人挥手，似乎象征着毛泽东教导带给中国的剧变。影射他自己对毛泽东思想的学习经历，朱伟把他自己也放到了画面中。小朱伟坐在右下角，但没在听课，戴着耳机，他怯生生地往上看着，手里拿着艺术家自己出版的第一本画册《北京日记》，书面上还有朱伟的代理人万玉堂的标志。

用 Channel V 的标志和放置在桌子上的电视机——旁边有一瓶洗发香波——通常传统上会放一个教学用具，在此朱伟也表明也毛泽东崇拜的巨大商业价值。这种画面上时间感的错位像是代表了毛泽东崇拜给中华人民共和国历史上带来的最黑暗的一章和严重的断层。

在另一幅作品里，朱伟在纪念——并非没有幽默感的——至今仍可见的毛泽东意识形态对中国人生活的影响的衰退。在《中国日记四号》（1995）里，观者看到毛泽东在吹长笛——暗示着“鼓吹”的意思。朱伟把毛泽东放在一个舞台样式的地方，但剧院已经关门了，就像在门上的市政封条所显示的一样。背景中的红旗、纸花、天安门唤起了人们对文革的联想。朱伟的题款写道：

萨克斯风进入中国其实不短，二十、三十年已有之，并在百乐门^[16]、安琪尔率先登台，风靡十里洋场^[17]。四九年后逐渐消失，文革时期谓之腐朽艺术之代表，备受责难。六十年过去，时为一九九四年在北京举办了首届国际爵士音乐节。^[18]

这幅作品显示，就算所有宣传工具加起来也抵挡不了人们对西方音乐的喜爱，其实这种喜爱在二十世纪初中国就开始了。现在主席坐在他的舞台上，可没人留意。如果不看题款的话，人们不会联想到朱伟说的其实是中国第一届国际爵士音乐节的事。他用了文革视觉语汇，说的却完全是另一回事。

毛泽东时代和当代中国之间的辩证关系造就了很多朱伟的作品。题款和图画交错也正是根植于宣传画艺术的说教功能。但是，朱伟破坏了官方的演说辞，让它苍白和荒谬。这些作品因此而流露出“反讽性的怀念”，正如 Geremie Barme 在他的《怀念极权主义》中所说，刷新过去，从而创造新历史。^[19]

给人民的鸦片

邓小平的开放政策所带来的快速变化^[20]给朱伟的作品带来了另一个主题。他尖锐地描述了人们被经济繁荣所蒙蔽的情形，以及当前政府对毛时代宣传工具的巧妙运用。全速的发展给人们带来了另一种新的鸦片：物质财富。

在《盒子三号》（1995）中，朱伟描绘了中国的西化改革。他画了一个身着中国传统服装的学者坐在一个酒吧里喝贝克啤酒。画中人向上看着一顶阳伞，阳伞上写着“Raffles Hotel”^[21]。西方化和其殖民地的阴影逼近了，他被一个女人挑剔的眼光盯着，像是在宣布：

嘿，我的理想是那个，那旗子包着的盒子，盒子里装的是什么，人们从来没见过。回去扔了那个破盒子，回去撕了那个破旗子。告诉那个胜利者他弄错了，世界早就开始变化。^[22]

在这些想法里，朱伟表达了他反对对所有西方东西不加选择地接受，正如他反对在毛泽东时代对所有传统不加选择地谴责。画中包括的那幅中西医结合的广告牌和“救死扶伤”的广告语，朱伟也表明他对这种论调的不信任。广告牌像是暗示着中国的一句老话“葫芦里卖的什么药？”^[23]朱伟因此而质疑这种万能药（西化的现代化）是否真能给中国带来什么变化。

在《太上感应十八号》（2000）中，朱伟提供给观者以上问题的答案：这就像是一种毒品。朱伟用他画中人的眼神强调了这种生理反应。眼睛是心灵的窗口——不管是张开的还是闭着的——眼睛在朱伟的作品中都承担了一种传达人物感情的功能，在解读主题中起了主要的作用。妇女的形象像是在流汗和过敏，她的眼睛传达出崇敬和谦卑。类似的，在背景中两个男人的眼神也里流露出痴迷与不信任。

这幅作品的中文题目，朱伟暗示了道教对长生不老的信仰。在道教故事里，一个人遇到了天上的老子，这个谜一般的道教之父，给了他 / 她一个药丸可以使之长生不老。正是在这里朱伟也描绘了中国当代现状。对中国社会主义政党而言，老子的长生不老药丸就是经济的现代化，给了政府一个缓冲的机会。此外，正如画中人形象显示的，平民对经济财富的

追求也就像道教信仰者对长生不老药的追求一样。

朱伟在其他作品里也描绘这种狂热和迷恋。《向日葵三十号》（2000）中，观者看到上述两个男人中间加入了第三个男人。而窗户，景象是透过窗户看出去的，应当是朱伟的工作室——在左边墙上挂着的五角星，是朱伟自己的铜雕塑作品《中国日记·星》（1999）。观者分享了艺术家的欣赏角度，不仅在视觉上，也是在心理上。正如作品名称显示的，经过的画中人处于一种被催眠的状态，以及对某种目标的渴望。在《乌托邦三十二号》（2002）里，艺术家画了两个光头男人，像是在对某样画外的东西热烈欢呼。像上述作品一样，他们的状态就像是被精心编排操纵的傀儡。因此，两幅作品都呈现出荒谬和顺从。

有趣的是，好像在朱伟的世界里，面对经济泡沫的破裂，人们态度几乎没有改变。他的《节日》（1998）系列，关注了从1998年开始下岗的原国有企业的员工^[24]。在《节日二十一号》（1998）里，观者看到他们苍白的脸。尽管处境艰难，这两个人物眼中显露出的被催眠状态和前面提到的人物没有区别。背景中贫瘠的风景和工业区，和人物明显的无助一样，传达出他们所面对的凄凉前景。看到政府赞助的庆祝中国最重要的新年所放的焰火^[25]，他们的表情看不出有任何的喜悦。但是也看不出反抗。被剥夺了所有的社会保险，不得不生活在贫困线上，他们仍然站在那里像一个旁观者——无动于衷且麻木。

什么让这些人如此驯良，朱伟像在暗示的，是上述的政府宣传机器。除了表面的自由增加了，这个毛泽东时代至今的庞大怪物仍然控制着人们的思维。它娱乐大众并且保证给每个人一个美好的未来。今天的贫困，它发誓，就是明天的繁荣。再加上爱国狂热^[26]——如朱伟在他的《乌托邦》系列里要显示的——它发现了一个给它的人民服用的高效鸦片。

如同在这些作品中看到的，朱伟的艺术脱离不开中国的现状——从历史的宣泄到社会的转型。不同时代和事件共存在一幅作品里，这种裂变也标志着中国人的生活。朱伟敏锐的观察让他成功地描绘现状，激发人们去思考。

但是，朱伟也有着对他的国家和文化的深深热爱。中国著名摇滚明星崔健^[27]写的歌《这儿的空间》^[28]就被朱伟写在他的作品《甜蜜的生活三十八号》（1999）里，表达了艺术家所承受的，和当代中国的感情关系。歌词为：

<div><p>打不开天 也穿不过地</p> <p>自由不过不是监狱</p> <p>你离不开我 我也离不开你</p> <p>谁都不知到底是爱还是赖</p></div>
<div><p>钱就是钱 利就是利</p> <p>你我不过不是奴隶</p> <p>你只能为了我 我也只能为了你</p> <p>不过不是一对儿一对儿虾米</p></div>
<div><p>这儿的空间 没什么新鲜</p></div>

就象我对你的爱情里没什么秘密
我看着你 曾经看不到底
谁知进进出出才明白是无边的空虚
就象这儿的空间里

想的都没说 说的也都没做
乐的就是弹吉它为你唱个歌
你别一会儿哭 你也别一会儿笑
我是什么东西你早就知道

天是个锅 周围是沙漠
你是口枯井 可越深越美
这胸中的火 这身上的汗
才是真的太阳 真的泉水

这儿的空间 没什么新鲜
就象我对你的爱情里没什么秘密
我看着你 曾经看不到底
谁知进进出出才明白是无边的空虚
就象这儿的空间里^[29]

列举出三大影响中国现实的成分：政府、军队和商业世界——被这些贪婪的商人形象^[30]人格化了——崔健的歌词正反映了朱伟的独立精神，也强调了当代中国社会的相互矛盾的结构。当面对中国社会的丑恶面孔时，朱伟能够穿过多个表层看到事实的美。这是他获取灵感的来源，也是他反抗的土壤。在同样的血液里，他运用中国传统的技法，只是为了表达他敏锐的当代视角。

注释：

- [1] 虹影《背叛之夏》(纽约：小树林出版社 Grove Press, 1997), 132。
- [2] 与 Carma Hinton 的对话, 1997。参见多媒体 CD《朱伟日记》(香港万玉堂国际有限公司出品, 2000)。
- [3] 出自发表于 iConnect (2000 年 11 月 3 日刊) 的 Sherman Chau 的文章“审视现实”。
- [4] 这本书的封面为朱伟所作的邓小平肖像, 作品名为《中国 中国》(1997)。
- [5] Geremie Barmé 的《在红色中》(纽约哥伦比亚大学出版社, 1999), 333。
- [6] 同上, 326-327。
- [7] 例子为王庆松的《老栗夜宴图》(2000) 和洪磊的《仿赵孟頫鹤华秋色图》(2003)。
- [8] 为准备英国殖民者的撤离, 1995 年从驻广东部队中抽调出人员成立了一支经过特殊训练的部队。在香港回归那一日的零点, 这支队伍越过位于新界的边界, 象征了政权的恢复。
- [9] 出自杨新等著的《中国绘画三千年》。(纽黑文: 耶鲁大学外文出版社, 1997), 78。
- [10] 出自贾方舟在《朱伟日记》里的文章“朱伟和他的决心”(香港万玉堂国际有限公司出品, 2000), 281。
- [11] 作者译。
- [12] 这种想法最著名的体现是, 1957 年毛泽东宣布, 中国要在 15 年内超过英国的工业生产能力。参考徐中约的作品《现代中国的崛起》(纽约牛津大学出版社 1990 年出版), 655。
- [13] 《二刻拍案惊奇》原为明朝的一部短篇小说集, 朱伟这一作品系列采纳了它的名称。怪力乱神的故事在中国有悠久历史, 蒲松龄 (1640 ~ 1715) 的《聊斋志异》即为其中一例。与蒲松龄一脉相承, 朱伟也像一个研究怪力乱神的历史学家。参考 Judith Zeitlin 作品《怪力乱神史》(斯坦福大学出版社 1993 年出版)。
- [14] 参考杨新(音译)作品《三千年中国绘画史》(耶鲁大学外语出版社 1997 年出版), 61。
- [15] 参见注释 13。
- [16] 该名称为上海在 1932 年开张的舞厅名。
- [17] 通常指解放前的上海。
- [18] 作者译。
- [19] Geremie Barmé 的《在红色中》(纽约哥伦比亚大学出版社, 1999), 344。
- [20] 在中国当代年轻艺术家的作品中可以看到类似的关注。
- [21] 新加坡的 Raffles Hotel(莱佛士酒店)由于它的“长酒吧”而闻名。另一个联想是 Thomas Stamford Raffles (1781-1826 AD) 爵士, 他是英国东印度公司的代理人, 也是殖民地的行政长官。1824 年他为大英帝国买下新加坡岛。
- [22] 作者译。
- [23] 葫芦是给云游的僧侣准备的装药的容器。他们的药据说包治百病, 甚至长生不老。
- [24] 在过去四年中, 有超过两千六百万中国人失业——他们之中有一千万人在 2002 年仍没有找到工作。在已经很贫困的地区, 比如中国西北的工业衰退地区, 遭受的损失尤其严重。参见“中国日报”网站 http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200210/27/eng20021027_105729.shtml。
- [25] 出现在本系列其它作品中。
- [26] 在 2001 年中国申请奥运会举办城市成功后尤为明显。
- [27] 崔健是朱伟最亲近的朋友之一。在 90 年代早期, 他为崔健制作的舞台背景图现在仍在使用中。
- [28] 出自崔健 1991 年的专辑“解决”。
- [29] 作者译。
- [30] 手握筷子接近顶端是贪婪的象征。

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Zhu Wei's Recent Work: From Strange and Sardonic to Strange and Bland

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Scholar and curator whose work focuses on contemporary Chinese art
Taught at Stanford University and University of California, Berkeley

Zhu Wei and Chen Hongshou

I have not had the privilege of meeting Zhu Wei, but having seen his paintings and now having read through many of his published essays, I very much look forward to doing so. His writings and imagery both lead me to expect him to be a contemporary version of the late Ming artist Chen Hongshou (陈洪绶, 1599-1652), an extremely talented painter who thrived outside the artistic mainstream. I even am beginning to imagine Zhu looking a bit like the Ming artist in his self-portrait (the scholarly self-portrait, not the drunken and disheveled one), slightly aloof and swathed within a cocoon-like long robe.

Both Zhu Wei and Chen Hongshou came to their profession via a circuitous route, and both have adapted elements of archaic figure painting in order to express their alienation from the mainstream, as well as the value they place on maintaining their integrity as individuals. The archaism hints at a disjuncture with the present, as if the deep past was a purer era. There is the sense that they are out of step with their times, observing and understanding but not participating in contemporary movements.

Chen Hongshou had aspired to follow the family career as a scholar-official, but he failed the provincial examination that would have opened the door to such a position. Instead he became a professional painter, a status beneath that to which he had aspired. He painted figures, and developed a mannered personal style that, at its most extreme, included distorted facial features and body proportions. Zhu Wei avoided the medical career his family urged on him by joining the army, in 1982. A few years later he entered the PLA Art Academy in Beijing, where he received a rigorous and predictably doctrinaire art education (graduated in 1989). Upon completing his stint in the army he studied at the Beijing Film Academy (graduated in 1993), and afterwards finally became an independent artist. Zhu Wei's painted figures are *guai* 怪, or strange, in the extreme. Their grotesquerie would be admired, were they rocks or roots or other such objects treasured and collected by Chinese scholars. Unlike Chen Hongshou, who frequently created complex settings for his figures, Zhu Wei tends to zero in on the figure, and often on the face, rather in the manner of a film close-up. Thus, it is impossible to avoid the distorted, blocky features of Zhu Wei's stocky figures. With their big lips, jowly cheeks, and squared-off foreheads, many of Zhu Wei's figures elicit pity: they seem adrift, disconnected from their environment. His most recent works, the Hills Beyond a River, Ink and Wash Research Lectures, and Study of People series (2005-2012), comprise bust views of single figures. The quality of those figures remains essentially *guai*, while at one point achieving a fascinatingly elusive state of blandness or the Neutral (as Barthes terms it—explained below).

The Hills Beyond a River series

The title of Zhu Wei's ongoing series, Hills Beyond a River, is taken from James Cahill's book, Hills Beyond a River: Chinese Painting of the Yuan Dynasty, 1279-1368. Although Zhu is a figure painter, he is also an adept landscape painter, and long ago had aimed to complete a master's degree in landscape painting.^[1] In the past few years, many high profile figure painters who work in oil or acrylic on canvas have turned their hand to landscape painting. There is a new trend among artists to seek both imagery and inspiration among the major monuments of Chinese art history, most notably the great landscapes of the past. This tendency has been encouraged by a flurry of large exhibitions on the theme of Shanshui (landscape). Although he has the training to create landscapes Zhu Wei has not chosen to participate in this trend, keeping to the genre of figure painting. His nod to historical landscapes is restricted to the title Hills Beyond a River, which he likes because it conveys a sense of alienation. The phrase originated to describe a typical landscape painting composition developed and favored during the Yuan dynasty by such noted artists as Ni Zan 倪瓒 (1306-1374). It featured a foreground land element backed by a wide stretch of water and, in the distance, hills. The two land elements are eternally separated, hence the implied sense of loneliness or alienation. In the case of Ni Zan, the landscape elements became farther apart as he aged.

Paintings in Zhu Wei's Hills Beyond a River series each portrays a single figure from the chest up, against a flat background of patternized water. There is no distant group of hills, and only a few bear any hint of a setting beyond the flat background of flowing water: the figure is completely isolated. One figure has his jacket unbuttoned and holds chopsticks poised, ready for action . . . but we see no dish of food waiting to be savored. Another figure is clearly identifiable: a bust portrait of Joseph Stalin (1879-1953), the Soviet Union dictator responsible for the deaths of ten to twenty million people, is backed by the patternized water familiar from other Hills Beyond a River paintings. His image is as particular as the other figures are nondescript. Stalin's familiar uniform with gold epaulettes seems more solid and lasting than his head, whose features are faded, and eyes closed: the individual fades in history, but the powerful role represented by the uniform endures.

The Ink and Wash Research Lectures series

With tongue in cheek Zhu Wei named his most recent series the Ink and Wash Research Lectures series 水墨研究课徒系列. The title has a scholarly flavor, and there are serious issues behind the series, but they have nothing to do with ink and wash. Instead, the series is concerned with contemporary society in China, and the potential for social instability. China has now experienced three decades of reform and opening-up policies, resulting in a higher standard of living and increased expectations. Thirty years ago everyone held great hope for the future; during the last ten years, however, it has become evident that the rigid power structure remains, corruption has established such deep roots that no-one expects a fair chance at anything, the distance between rich and poor is growing ever wider, and the country's extreme commercialism ensures that no-one is ever satisfied. As Zhu Wei has remarked, "In the past we based our development

on the over consumption of natural resources. In the future, however, there will be no more resources to consume, so our development pattern will transfer into a hundred tricks. With tricks being played, political stability will be very important and the foundation of everything. One of the central aims of the government will be social stability. The aim of the Ink and Wash Research Lectures series is to depict and track the social changes of this period. The figure wearing a microphone is a 'stability maintenance' person such as you can see everywhere in the streets. It is a real portrait of China. Tourists who make a short stay in China won't notice that easily."^[2]

The fact that the title of the Ink and Wash Research Lectures series completely avoids the paintings' subject mirrors the fact that the subject—the widespread unease identified by Zhu Wei—is rarely discussed. So far Zhu Wei has painted only four works in this series, but he sees it as a long-term project. Ink and Wash Research Lectures No. 1 depicts a passive, stolid man with a tiny receiver tucked behind his ear, set against a background of red drapery. The receiver and red background suggest that he is working in the service of government forces, listening dispassionately to comments and instructions relayed to him as a monitor of public safety, or a "stability maintenance" worker. He could, however, be anybody, as almost everybody contributes mindlessly to "stability maintenance" through compliant behavior. People each have a role to play, and they are resigned to accept it even though in doing so they subject themselves to the ongoing and widely shared stress of life without self-determination. The almost identical figure (but with hair parted in a different place) in Ink and Wash Research Lectures No. 2 has his eyes closed, and appears to have reached a state of emotionless calm akin to that of a Buddha. Rather than Buddhist mindfulness, however, it is a state of mindless attentiveness to the instructions issuing from the receiver in his ear. We can read the receiver and its instructions as a metaphor for the unstated rules that govern life in China. Although those rules remain unvoiced, or may be only whispered, they nevertheless carry weighty, oppressive power.

The Study of People series

If we compare the passive, emotionless, unattractive, lumpen protagonist of the Ink and Wash Research Lectures series with similar precursors, we see that although he looks much the same as the key figure in other series, he appears older and tired, he sports the tidily combed hair style typical of Chinese authority figures, and he is garbed in power red, with a red backdrop—a refrain of the red drapery isolated in the Red Flags series (2008-2010)—rather than the indigo or PLA green of, for example, the figures in the Hills Beyond a River and Study of People series. Study of People, painted during roughly the same years as the Ink and Wash Research Lectures and Hills Beyond a River series, is a study of a single person painted in the identical three quarters view against a white ground, the only change between images other than clothing being a slight indication of aging: the lines from beside the nose to the corners of the mouth become more pronounced. We can trace this passive, emotionless bald male figure (The artist? Maybe yes, maybe no.) back through Zhu Wei's oeuvre, to slightly different manifestations as early as 1998 Sweet Life No. 21. In 1998 Sweet Life No. 21 the protagonist looks slightly bemused: by 2012 he is utterly still. We can consider the rendering of the subject in the Study of People series as the epitome of blandness in figural painting.

Blandness

It is ironic that a painter with such a talent for satire should arrive at a superlative visual representation of the bland, dan 淡, an achievement generally reserved for scholarly landscape painters. In Chinese figure painting, such extreme blandness was only common in posthumous ancestor portraits. This is because the latter paintings were executed by a lower class of painters who had never seen their subjects, with the solemn function of commemorating the deceased. By contrast, according to the Yuan scholar-painter par excellence Zhao Mengfu 赵孟頫 (1254-1322), “In painting human figures, excellence lies in capturing character (xing 性) and emotion (qing 情).”^[3] Regarding character, however, blandness was considered an ideal: “When a man’s character is plain and bland and does not exhibit any particular proclivities, then he is master of all his abilities and uses them most effectively: he adapts himself to all changes and never encounters an obstacle.”^[4]

In his book *In Praise of Blandness: Proceeding from Chinese Thought and Aesthetics*, the French Sinologist Francois Jullien (b. 1951) has noted that not only does the concept of blandness underlie multiple branches of Chinese philosophy; it also was a desirable quality in the music, poetry, and painting of various periods.^[5] Throughout his career Zhu Wei has demonstrated a strong interest in painting of the Yuan dynasty, the era during which blandness came to represent the pinnacle of artistic achievement. Yuan scholar-painter Ni Zan’s landscapes epitomize the concept of blandness in painting, stripped bare of any hint of excess, with little variation in ink tone, no dramatic brushstrokes, and calm minimalistic and repetitive compositions. The value of blandness or, as French philosopher Roland Barthes (1915-1980) terms it, the Neutral, lies in the state of the Neutral as poised on the brink of becoming. It could become one thing or another: the vast potential vanishes the moment the Neutral commits to a defined state. Referring to the work of Swiss semiotician Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), Barthes has stated, “the paradigm is the wellspring of meaning; where there is meaning, there is paradigm, and where there is paradigm (opposition), there is meaning è elliptically put: meaning rests on conflict (the choice of one term against another), and all conflict is generative of meaning: to choose one and refuse the other is always a sacrifice made to meaning, to produce meaning, to offer it to be consumed.”^[6] The neutral is “everything that outplays {d  joue} the paradigm” or “baffles the paradigm.”^[7]

Contemporary Figure Painting and Blandness

Blandness is anathema to contemporary art, where superlatives are common and artists pursue the shocking so as to capture the attention of jaded viewers. And it is not just that viewers are jaded: attention spans seem to shorten as the volume of visual cues skyrockets due to the ubiquity of online culture and the saturation of the city environment with signage. Figure painting in particular eschews the bland. In China this is largely because contemporary Chinese figure painting is the descendent of nineteenth century European academic realism on the one hand, and that same academic realism altered to be an effective propaganda tool in the form of socialist realism. As a result of the May Fourth Movement, early twentieth century art students traveled to Europe for an education. Upon their return to China

some sought to meld academic realism with Chinese ink painting. Zhu Wei rues this “reform” or bastardization of ink painting, writing, “I do not think we should be grateful to the ‘returnee artists’ who were devoted to reforming the ink painting tradition. I wish they had never returned. If only they had built the courage to reform western oil painting . . . even if Picasso and Matisse might have kicked them out of the country.”^[8] In the mid-twentieth century, the promulgation of socialist realism distorted realism via the addition of dramatic modeling and lighting as well as other tools for emotional manipulation: the same look and feel were deliberately—as a matter of policy—imported into figure painting with the Chinese brush in ink and color on paper. For Zhu Wei to move decisively away from verisimilitude and emotional drama in pursuit of the Neutral is a major step. A few figures approaching this neutral state appear in Fang Lijun’s 方力钧 (b. 1963) paintings from around 1990, but Zhu Wei’s push toward absolute blandness in figure painting is unique. If it was difficult for landscape painters to achieve blandness in the fourteenth century when they shared their values with a small coterie of like-minded individuals, how much more difficult it must be for a twenty-first century figure painter to do so. This is both because we live in a time when there is a widespread yen for stimulation and sensationalism, and because the painter must be more personally invested in the subject, a human being, either like or unlike himself.

Zhu Wei and Early Chinese Painting

Zhu Wei’s approach to the Neutral in recent years is made more interesting by a consideration of his preceding works. From 1988, when he quoted Bada Shanren’s 八大山人 (1626-1705) brushwork in the lead up to his first major series, *Beijing Story*, he has consistently referenced widely recognized artists and paintings of the past, most often to sardonic effect. His *Racing Horse on a Rainy Night*, No. 2 and No. 3 (1997), for example, are postmodern pastiches directly quoting the horse and groom in Zhao Mengfu’s album leaf *Training a Horse*, and incorporating elements of contemporary culture such as bicycle and inscribed lyrics from the rock star Cui Jian’s 崔健 (b. 1961) “Opportunist” 投机分子 (Touji fenzi). A variant on the Emperor Huizong’s 徽宗 (1082-1135) painting of a parrot wears a protective mask in Zhu’s SARS-era painting, *The Heavenly Maiden* No. 27 (2003)—the intrusion of a deadly modern disease into the emperor’s vision of a perfect natural world. Court painter Li Song’s 李嵩 (active 1190-1230) resplendent and meticulously rendered *Flower Basket* makes an appearance in several of Zhu’s *Utopia* (2001-2005) series paintings where they contrast with such disappointingly prosaic symbols of contemporary post “communist utopian” society as red flags, mandatory meetings, and red neck scarves. Everything from Tang court ladies (*Comrades*, 1995) to Bada’s fish (*Diary of the Sleepwalker* No. 24, 1998; *South Sea* No. 1, 2000) to communist martyrs and political figures (*Deng Xiaoping in China China*, 1997) are fodder for Zhu Wei’s art, where ironic juxtaposition plays a major role.

Social Commentary

In the early 1990s Zhu’s many humorously disrespectful images of Mao Zedong, PLA soldiers, communist martyrs,

and the like brought him close to the widely promoted Cynical Realism and Political Pop movements, but he remained outside. Perhaps his touch was too light, perhaps it was that no ink painters found their way into those movements, or perhaps it was a matter of social circles: as a PLA trained artist Zhu Wei was not well acquainted with artists who had undergone a more mainstream education, for example at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, and he chose to remain outside of Beijing's art circles. In later years he continued to make social-political statements, for example depicting Tiananmen Square as a turbulent ocean stage for dramatic political events (The Square series, 1995-1996). In his paintings and essays, he frequently employs metaphor to make a point, drawing on common experiences such as the appreciation of varieties of cabbage, or fond memories of films seen decades in the past.

The Study of People series presents an exceedingly powerful metaphor. To represent China's Everyman as existing in a bland state, in the Neutral, implies that Chinese society is at a point where it could be tipped in any direction. Until the future direction is determined there is unlimited potential. All that is needed to commit that society to move in a particular direction, however, is just a very tiny push, and it will be irrevocably set on a new course. Who can say whether that will be for the good or bad of future generations? The Ink and Wash Research Lectures series highlights the unspoken dread people feel about the future: they instinctively sense the negative potential of the moment. Juxtaposed, these two series magnify one another's power. In the end it appears that referring to an attitude of past painting masters—the Yuan ideal of blandness—can carry even more meaning than the quotation of imagery or brush manner. Transplanting Yuan austerity into the raucous contemporary era requires great perspicacity. This is in accord with a Yuan ideal of purpose in art, as stated by the scholar Tang Hou 汤后 (active early 14th century), who noted, "When the ancients painted, they all had profound concepts. As they nurtured their ideas and manipulated their brushes, there was not one who did not have a purpose."^[9]

NOTES:

[1] 22 December 2012 email from Zhu Wei to the author.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1985), p. 271.

[4] Liu Shao 刘邵 (3rd c.), "Jiu zheng" 九徵 (Nine traits), in *Renwuzhi* 人物志 (The treatise on human abilities), 1.1b, commentary by Liu Bing 刘昉 (fl. 386). Quoted in Francois Jullien, *In Praise of Blandness: Proceeding from Chinese Thought and Aesthetics*, translated by Paula M. Varsano (New York: Zone Books, 2004), p. 60.

[5] Jullien, *ibid.*

[6] Roland Barthes, *The Neutral: Lecture Course at the College de France (1977-1978)* (New York: Columbia Press, 2007), p. 7.

[7] Barthes, *ibid.*, p. 6.

[8] Zhu Wei, 野火烧不尽, 春风吹不活 "Wildfire Will Not Extinguish It, the Spring Breeze Will Not Revive It . . .," 《HI 艺术》 HIART (May 2008).

[9] Tang Hou 汤后, *Hua lun* 画论, translated in Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1985), p. 258.

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朱伟近作： 从怪诞讥讽到怪异淡然

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朱伟与陈洪绶

早先我并未有幸亲见朱伟，但看过他的绘画，读了这许多他发表的文章之后，我真是不胜期许与他一见。他的文字与画面都让我觉得，他就是中国当代的陈洪绶（1599-1652年）——那位天赋极高、在艺术主流之外独树一帜的中国晚明杰出画家。我甚至想象朱伟看上去都有些像他自画像中的明代画家（我说的是那幅学者气息的自画像，而不是酒醉不整的那幅），微有超然的神色，紧裹在蚕茧般的长袍里面。

朱伟和陈洪绶走上艺术之路都经历了曲折的过程，他们都为表达对主流的疏远和对保持个人完善的重视而运用了古代人物画的元素。古意暗示着与当下的分离，好似遥远的过去是个更为素净的时代一般。他们给人一种与其所处时代步伐不一的感觉，对当代的运动，他们观察，领悟，但不参与。

陈洪绶曾经渴望继承祖业，成为一名士大夫，可惜他乡试落榜，于是通往这一地位的大门向他关闭了，他成为一名专职画家，身份低于他曾期待的士大夫之位。他画人物，创造出一种矫饰风格的个人特点，最显著的特征就是变形的脸部特征与身体比例。而朱伟，为了逃避家庭对他成为医生的期待，1982年参了军。几年之后他进入北京解放军艺术学院，在那里接受了极为严格且果然相当教条的艺术教育（毕业于1989年）。完成兵役之后，他进入北京电影学院学习（毕业于1993年），之后成为一名独立艺术家。可以说，朱伟画中人物显著的特点就是“怪”。这种怪诞颇受人喜爱，就好像中国文人以珍爱和收藏怪石、老根及其他物件为乐趣一样。与经常为自己的任务设定和绘制复杂背景的陈洪绶不同的是，朱伟倾向于在人物本身，甚至常常在人物面部归零，这种方式很像电影的特写镜头。所以，朱伟敦实的人物形象就难免表现出变形的块状特点。朱伟画中的人物嘴唇肥大，下颚宽厚，额头方正，足以引起观者的怜悯之情：他们看上去茫然若失，同其所处环境没什么关系。他的最新系列画作《隔江山色》《水墨研究课徒》《人物研究》都是单人半身像。这些人物的特点本质上仍然保持着“怪”的特征，却达到淡然的状态，极具吸引力又难以捉摸，又可以称为“中性”（这是罗兰·巴特的一个名词——我在下文中做了解释）。

《隔江山色》系列

朱伟正在创作的系列作品题为《隔江山色》，出自高居翰的著作《隔江山色：元代绘画（1279-1368年）》。朱伟虽是人物画家，却也擅长山水画，先前还曾计划攻读山水画硕士学位^[1]。近几年，很多之前以布面油画或丙烯为材料的高调人物画家，转手画起了山水。艺术家们新近流行从中国艺术史上具有纪念碑式的意义的作品中，尤其是在古代的山水名画中寻找意象和灵感。以山水为主题规模巨大的展览风潮更是促进了这一流行。朱伟曾受过山水画的训练，他却不随波

《人物研究》系列

《水墨研究课徒》系列的主人公消极、漠然、毫无吸引力、一副破落户的样子，若与早先的作品中类似的主角加以对比，我们会发现，或许前者看上去与其他系列的主要人物相差无几，但显得更年长、更疲惫一些，他整齐地梳着典型的中国政治家发型，穿着象征红色权力的衣服，置身红色背景之前——重复着《红旗》系列（2008-2010年）中孤立的红色帷帐——而非《隔江山色》和《人物研究》系列中靛蓝色或军绿的背景。《人物研究》系列与《水墨研究课徒》和《隔江山色》两个系列大致创作于同一年，它研究的是单一人物，统一都是置于白色的背景前的四分之三侧面人物，除了服装的变化之外，唯一区别是对年龄增长的轻微暗示：人物鼻翼到嘴角的两条法令纹一个比一个更明显。回溯朱伟的全部作品，会发现这种消极漠然的秃头男性人物（作者自己？也许是，也许不是）自早在1998年创作的《甜蜜之生活第21号》中出现以来，只增添了些微差异。《甜蜜的生活21号》的主人公看上去有一点茫然：到了2012年，他进入了彻底寂静的状态。我们可以将《人物研究》系列中对主题的渲染看作是人物画中“淡然”的典型。

淡然

如此具有讽刺天赋的画家达到了“淡然”这样一种最高级的视觉表现境界，本身就有嘲弄的意味——“淡然”一般是用于描述学院派山水画家的境界的。在中国人物画中，这种极致的淡然仅仅常见于死后先祖的画像。因为这些画是由从未见过画面主角的社会低层画家所做，有纪念死者的庄严功能。与此相反，元代最卓越的士大夫画家赵孟頫（1254—1322年）认为，“画人物以得其性情为妙”^[3]至于性格特征，淡然是最为理想的：“凡人之质量，中和最贵矣。中和之质，必平淡无味；故能调成五材，变化应节。”^[4]

汉学家弗朗索瓦·于连在其著作《平淡颂：从中国思想和美学出发》中提到，淡的观念不仅成为多个中国哲学分支的基础，它同时也是在不同时期，音乐、诗歌和绘画所要求的品质。^[5]朱伟的绘画生涯体现出他对元代绘画的浓厚兴趣，在那个朝代，淡然意味着最高的艺术成就。元代院体派画家倪瓒的山水画，是绘画中淡的概念典型的表现——画家摒弃了任何多余的暗示，墨色变动极少，没有夸张的笔触，集平静的极简主义与重复式构图于一体。淡然，或如法国哲学家罗兰·巴特（1915-1980年）所说的“中性”，其价值存在于一种随时转换的中性状态之中。它可以变成这个东西也可以变成那个东西：一旦“中性”明确地倒向了确定的某种状态时，巨大的潜力也就消失殆尽了。谈及瑞士符号语言学家费尔迪南·索绪尔（1857-1913年）的著作，罗兰·巴特认为：“范式是意义的源泉，哪里有意义哪里就有范式，哪里有范式（反之）哪里就有意义，简言之：意义依赖冲突（两个名词中要选定一个），所有的冲突都会生成意义：选择一个而否定另一个，是为有意义、为制造意义并供人使用而做的牺牲。”^[6]“中性”是全部“击败范式”或“困扰范式”的东西。^[7]

当代人物画与淡然

当代艺术厌恶淡然，它普遍使用最强烈的语言，艺术家们追求震撼效果，以期引厌倦了的观者注意。其实不仅观者厌倦了：由于网络文化普及以及城市环境的标识饱和，视觉因素在激增，人们对事物的关注时间似乎在随之缩短。特别是人物画，尤其要避免平淡。在中国，这种现象多因为，一方面当代中国人物画延续了19世纪欧洲学院派现实主义人物画传统，

逐流，而坚守了人物画的创作。他对传统山水画的肯定仅限于为自己的系列作品选择《隔江山色》这一标题，而之所以喜欢这一标题，是因为它传达了一种疏离感。人们创造这个词汇，描述的是由元代著名艺术家如倪瓒（1306—1374年）等人兴起并发扬光大的一种经典山水画构图。这种构图的特点是，前景是大地元素，后面是广阔的水域，再远处则是山。两块土地永远两相分离，意味着孤独、疏离之感。至于倪瓒，他山水画里各种不同的元素则随着他年龄的增长，而愈加疏离。

《隔江山色》系列画作都是胸部以上的单人画像，平平的背景是图式化了的水域。没有远处的群山，只在平平的流水的背景后面，有寥寥几笔稍加暗示着环境：人物是完全孤立的。一个人物外套的扣子未系，敞着怀，手握筷子摆好要开吃的姿势……但他面前并没有可吃的食物。另一个人物一眼就能看出来是谁：这是那位要对一两千万人的死负责的前苏联独裁者约瑟夫·斯大林（1879-1953年）的半身像，背景正是其他“隔江山色”式绘画中我们熟悉的那种图式化水域。他的形象如此特别，有如其他人毫无特点的程度。挂着金色肩章的熟悉的斯大林军服看似比他容貌褪色眼睛紧闭的头部还要结实耐久：人物在历史长河中消逝，而军服代表的强权角色却可长存。

《水墨研究课徒》系列

朱伟将最新画作系列命名为《水墨研究课徒》系列有些言不由衷。这个标题颇有一番学术意味，系列作品背后隐含着严肃的问题，但这些问题与水墨本身并无关系。实际上，它关心的是中国当代社会状态和社会动荡潜在的可能性。中国搞了近三十年改革开放，人民生活水平提升不少，对未来的预期也逐渐提高。三十年前人人都对未来充满希望，然而在过去的十年里，权力结构依然僵化、腐败根深蒂固、不公平现象随处可见、贫富差距日益加大、国家奉行的极端商业主义注定让人永无满足之日等状况变得昭然若揭。朱伟曾说：“过去我们依靠过度消耗自然资源谋求发展。但以后没有更多资源让我们去消耗，于是我们的发展模式将依靠大量谋略。谋略的时代里，政治稳定将变得极其重要，成为一切的基础。政府将来主要目标之一就是社会稳定。《水墨研究课徒》系列作品就是要描绘和记录这个时期的社会变化。这是对中国的真实刻画。而游客来中国只做短期停留，是很难轻易察觉到的。”^[2]

《水墨研究课徒》系列的标题完全避开了画的主题，这反映出一个事实——朱伟所表现的社会普遍的不安感，是很少有人论及的。目前，这一系列的作品朱伟只画了4幅，但他是要把这个系列作为一项长期创作项目来做的。《水墨研究课徒1号》刻画了一个消极迟钝的男人，耳后藏着接收器，背景是红色的帷幔。接收器和红帷幔暗示着他为政府部门工作，他作为一位公共安全工作者，漠然地聆听着传递到他耳中的评论和指令。然而他也可能是任何人，因为几乎所有的人都通过顺从的行为而有意无意地为“稳定”做出了贡献。每个人都有角色要扮演，他们认命地接受自己的角色，即使如此一来，他们只能毫无自我决定权地向当前多数人都在承受着的生活压力妥协。《水墨研究课徒2号》中的人物几乎与前一幅中的完全相同（只有发线的位置不同），他眼睛阖着，看上去好像已经达到了如佛教徒一般无情无欲的平静境界。与佛教徒的专注不同，他只是无需动脑地专注于耳朵里接收器收到的指令。接收器与它发出的指令，可以解读成对统治中国生活不明说的规则的隐喻。虽然没人讲出来，或者只是小声耳语，但它们却具有沉重、压迫的力量。

而这种学院派的现实主义在社会主义现实下沦为有效的政治宣传工具。20 世纪早期五四新文化运动之后，艺术学生去欧洲接受教育。回到中国后，其中一些人寻求学院派现实主义与中国水墨画的结合。朱伟对这种“改革”现象悲叹道，“我不知道该不该感谢那些“海归”回来口口声声要改变水墨画的那些哥们，我甚至祷告他们当年别回来，有种的就他妈去改变西方的油画，……我想这帮丫的不敢，照毕加索、马蒂斯的脾气早把他们大嘴巴抽回来了”。^[8]20 世纪中叶，社会写实主义的普及以夸张造型、用光和其他操纵情感的手段扭曲了现实主义：使用中国的毛笔和纸上水墨为媒介，相同的样子和感觉被故意地——作为一种政策——灌输到了人物画中。对于朱伟来说，毅然远离仿真感和情感剧而追求“中性”，确实是迈出了一大步。从大约 1990 开始，方力钧的一些画作中出现了接近这种“中性”状态的人物，但是朱伟在把人物画推向绝对淡然状态的方面是独一无二的。如果那些与志趣相投的小圈子里的人共享价值观的 14 世纪山水画家都很难达到淡然的境界，那么对于 21 世纪的人物画家来说，无疑难度大多了。这不仅因为我们生活在一个普遍对刺激和轰动效应上瘾了的年代，还因为，画家必须从他的主题——一个像或不像自己的人物中——获得更多人们对自己的投资。

朱伟与早期中国画

考察朱伟早期作品，我们会发现近年来他对中性的靠近更加有趣。自 1988 年援用八大山人（1626-1705 年）的笔法，创作早期主要作品《北京故事》系列以来，他持续广泛借鉴古代著名画家和画作，多追求讽刺效果。例如他的《雨夜跑马图 2 号》和《雨夜跑马图 3 号》（1997 年），就是直接引用赵孟頫的《调良图》册页中的马和马夫，并融合自行车和摇滚明星崔健（生于 1961 年）歌曲《投机分子》的歌词等当代文化元素，创作的一支后现代主义混成曲。宋徽宗皇帝（1082-1135 年）画的一只鸚鵡的变体戴着保护面具，出现在朱伟 SARS 时期作品《天女散花 27 号》中（2003 年）——致命的现代疾病闯入了皇帝欣赏自然美景的视野。朱伟在他一些《乌托邦》系列作品（2001-2005 年）中，引用了宫廷画家李嵩（活动于 1190-1230 年之间）华丽精美的设色“花篮”，这些花篮与当代“后共产主义乌托邦”社会那些让人失望的乏味象征符号——如红旗、强制性会议和红领巾等——形成了鲜明对比。从唐朝宫廷仕女（《同志们》，1995 年）到八大山人的鱼（《梦游手记 24 号》，1998 年；《南海 1 号》，2000 年），再到共产主义烈士和政治人物（《中国中国》里的邓小平，1997 年），都是朱伟以反讽性并置为主体的艺术创作的养料。

社会评论

上世纪 90 年代早期，朱伟对毛泽东、解放军战士、共产主义烈士及类似人物颇为不敬的幽默演绎，拉近了他与当时广泛流行的玩世现实主义和政治波普运动的距离，但他却一直置身于这些运动的外面。也许因为他涉入太浅，也许因为水墨画家无人能参加这些运动，又或者这是社交圈子的原因：朱伟作为解放军艺术院校毕业的艺术家，不怎么熟悉那些受过更主流教育的，比如中央美术学院的画家；而且，他自己也选择了在北京艺术圈之外发展。随后几年，他继续着自己对社会——政治的表达，比如他把天安门广场作为戏剧性政治事件波涛汹涌的海洋舞台（《广场》，1995—1996 年）来描绘。在他的画作和散文里，常吸收日常经验，以隐喻立意，如对大白菜品种的评价，或对几十年前看过的老电影的美好回忆。

《人物研究》系列表现了一个极有力量的隐喻。对中国普通人淡然中性的生存状态的表现，暗示了中国社会正处在一个

结点上，可以被引向任何方向。在确定未来方向之前，它有着无限的潜力。让社会转向一个特定方向所需要的，仅只是轻轻地一推，而这一推将会开启一段无法回头的新征程。谁能说那对未来子孙后代是好还是坏？《水墨研究课徒》系列突出了人们对未来不言而喻的恐惧感：他们本能地感知到了时下消极的潜在可能性。将这两个系列并置，它们能有互相赞美对方的力量。最后我们会发现，对古代绘画大师这样一种态度的借鉴——即元代追求淡然的理想——比对图像或笔法本身的引用更有意义。将元代的朴素植入喧嚣的当代需要极大的智慧。学者汤后（活动于 14 世纪早期）认为，这与元代理想中的艺术追求是一致的，他说“古人作画，皆有深意，运思落笔，莫不各有所主。”^[9]

注释：

[1] 朱伟 2012 年 11 月 22 日发送给作者的电子邮件。

[2] 同上。

[3] 见卜寿珊与时学颜：《中国早期画论》（剑桥：哈佛燕京学社，1985 年），第 271 页。

[4] 见刘邵（公元三世纪）《人物志》（这是一篇关于人类能力的论文）中的“九徵”，刘昞注释。

[5] 引自弗朗索瓦·于连《平淡颂：从中国思想和美学出发》，保拉·瓦尔萨诺译（纽约：ZoneBooks 出版社，2004 年），第 60 页。

[6] 罗兰·巴特《“中性”：法国大学的演讲》（1988—1978 年）（纽约：哥伦比亚出版社，2007 年），第 7 页。

[7] 罗兰·巴特，同上，第 6 页。

[8] 见朱伟：《野火烧不尽，春风吹不活》，发表于《HI 艺术》（2008 年 5 月刊）。

[9] 汤后：《画论》，卜寿珊、时学颜译，《早期中国画论》（剑桥：哈佛燕京学社，1985 年），第 258 页。

（首次刊发于《朱伟作品 1988-2012》，中国今日美术馆出版社 2013 年 1 月出版，24 页）

朱伟作品

ZHU WEI'S ART WORKS

建筑物 / Building
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024





建筑物 2 / Building 2
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



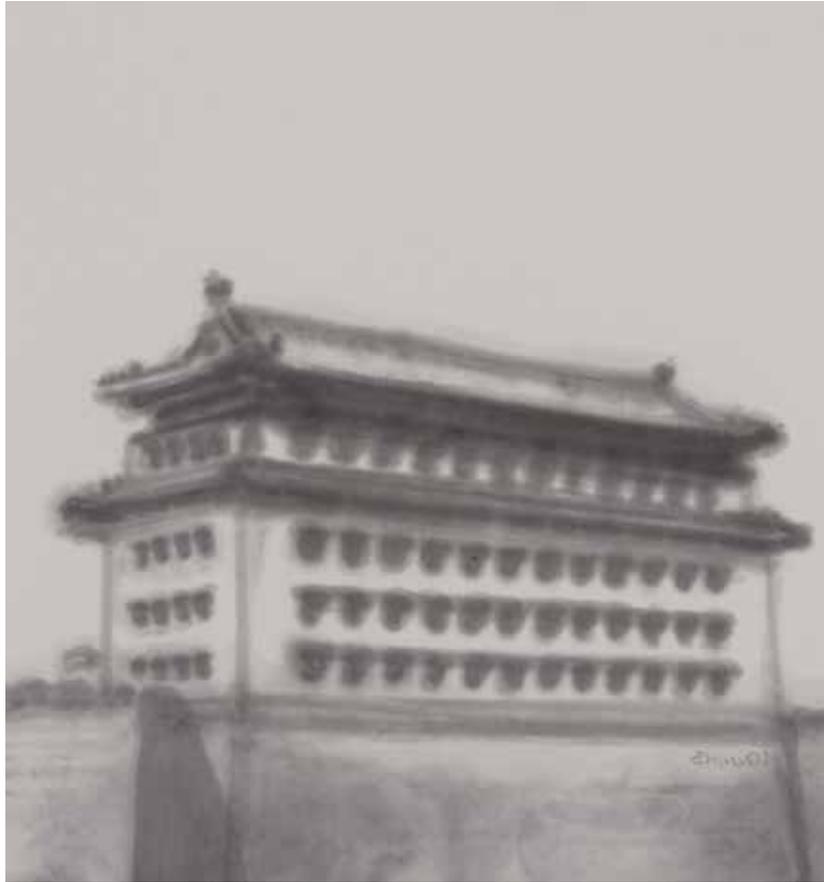
建筑物 3 / Building 3
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人民大会堂 / Great Hall of the People
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



国家计划经济委员会三里河办公大楼 / State Planning Commission Sanlihe Office Building
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



东直门 / Dongzhimen
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



箭楼 / Zhengyangmen Archery Tower
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

军事博物馆 / Military Museum of the Chinese People's Revolution
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025





北京展览馆 / Beijing Exhibition Center
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



农展馆 / National Agricultural Exhibition Center
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

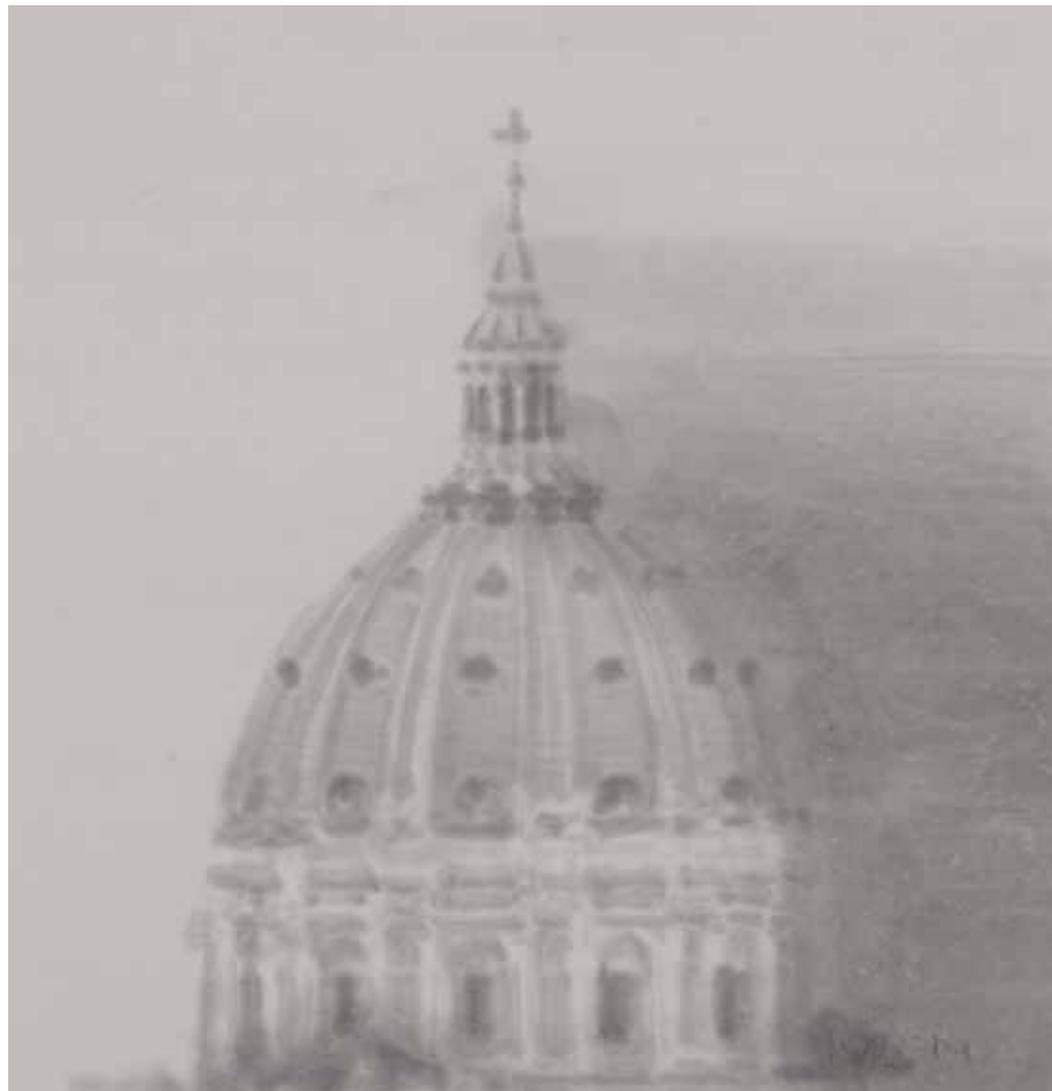


王府井百货大楼 / Wangfujing Department Store
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



北京火车站 / Beijing Railway Station
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

哥本哈根腓特烈教堂 / Frederik's Church, Copenhagen
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025





伦敦圣保罗主教座堂 / St Paul's Cathedral, London
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



梵蒂冈圣彼得大教堂 / St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

营房 / Barracks
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



山 / Mountains
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024





山 2 / Mountains 2
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



山 3 / Mountains 3
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



山 4 / Mountains 4
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



山 5 / Mountains 5
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



山 6 / Mountains 6
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



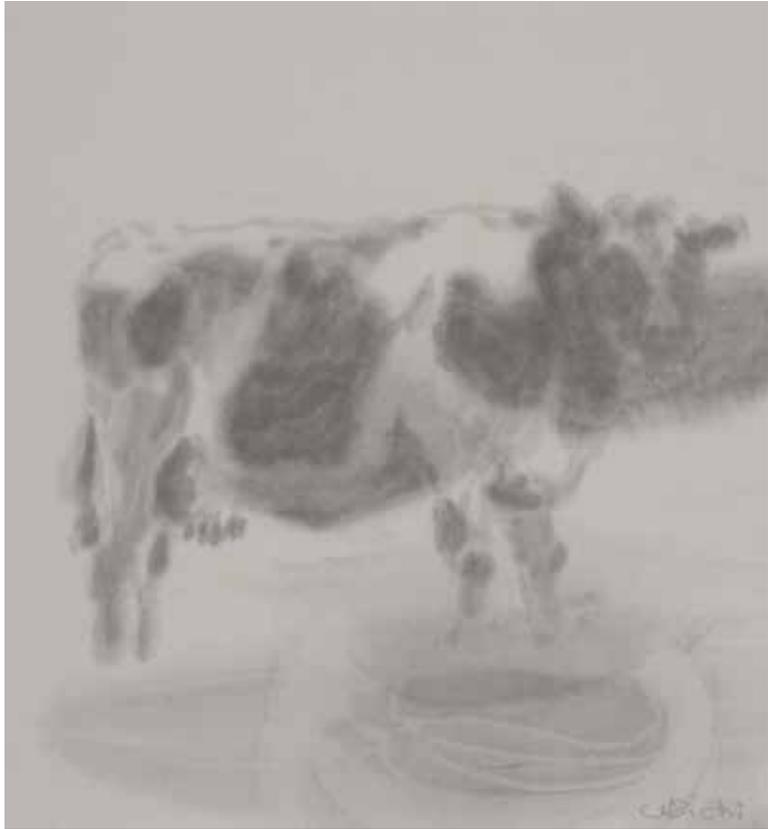
山 7 / Mountains 7
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024

动物 / Animal
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



动物 3 / Animal 3
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024





动物 4 / Animal 4
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



动物 2 / Animal 2
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024

公共汽车 / Bus
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025





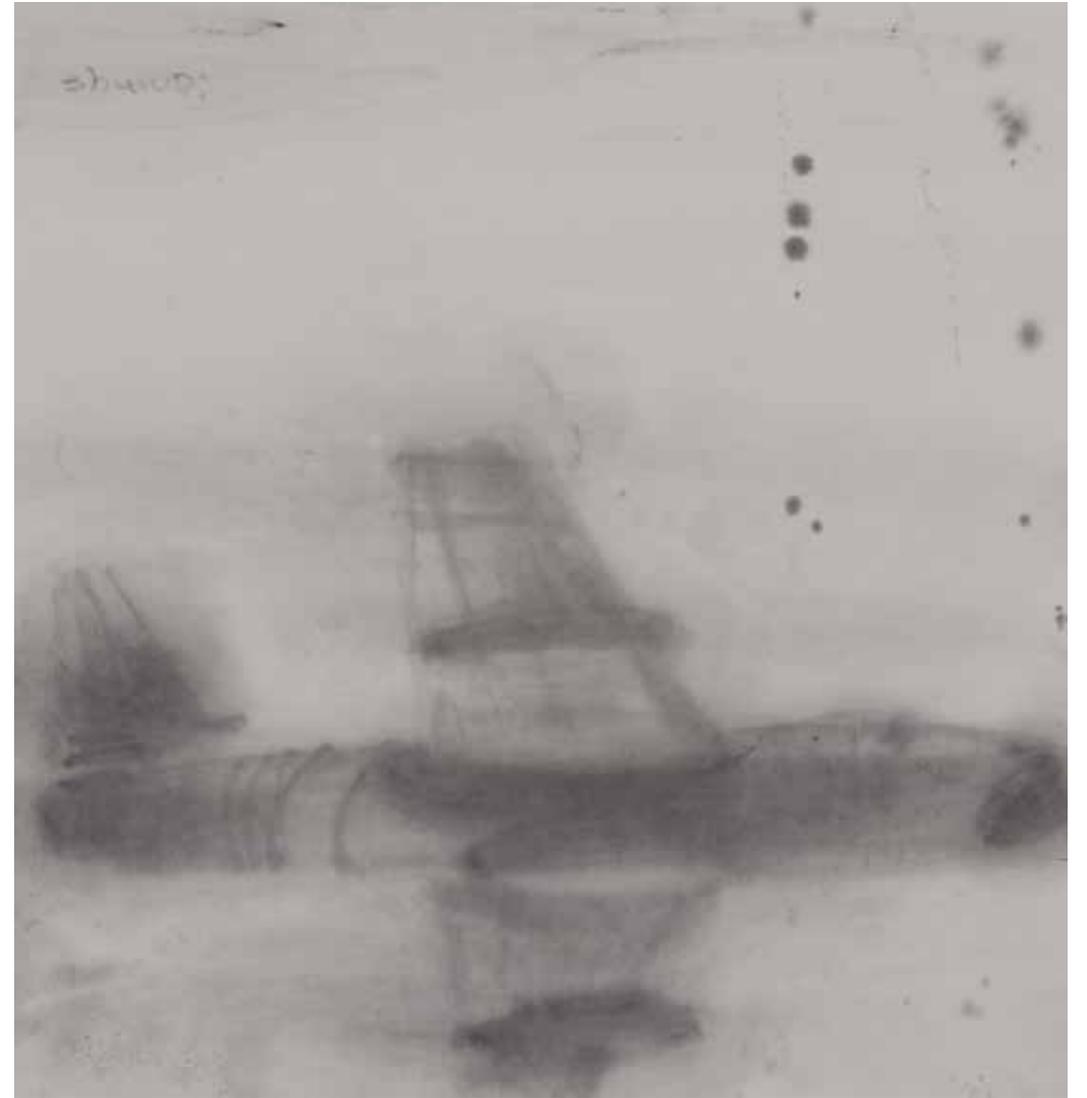
公共汽车 3 / Bus 3
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



公共汽车 2 / Bus 2
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



飞行器 2 / Aircraft 2
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



飞行器 / Aircraft
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



飞行器 3 / Aircraft 3
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



飞行器 4 / Aircraft 4
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



飞行器 5 / Aircraft 5
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



飞行器 6 / Aircraft 6
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



飞行器 7 / Aircraft 7
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



飞行器 8 / Aircraft 8
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



飞行器 10 / Aircraft 10
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



飞行器 11 / Aircraft 11
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

飞行器 9 / Aircraft 9
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025





潛水艇 / Submarine
水墨紙本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



潛水艇 2 / Submarine 2
水墨紙本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

静物 / Still Life
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024

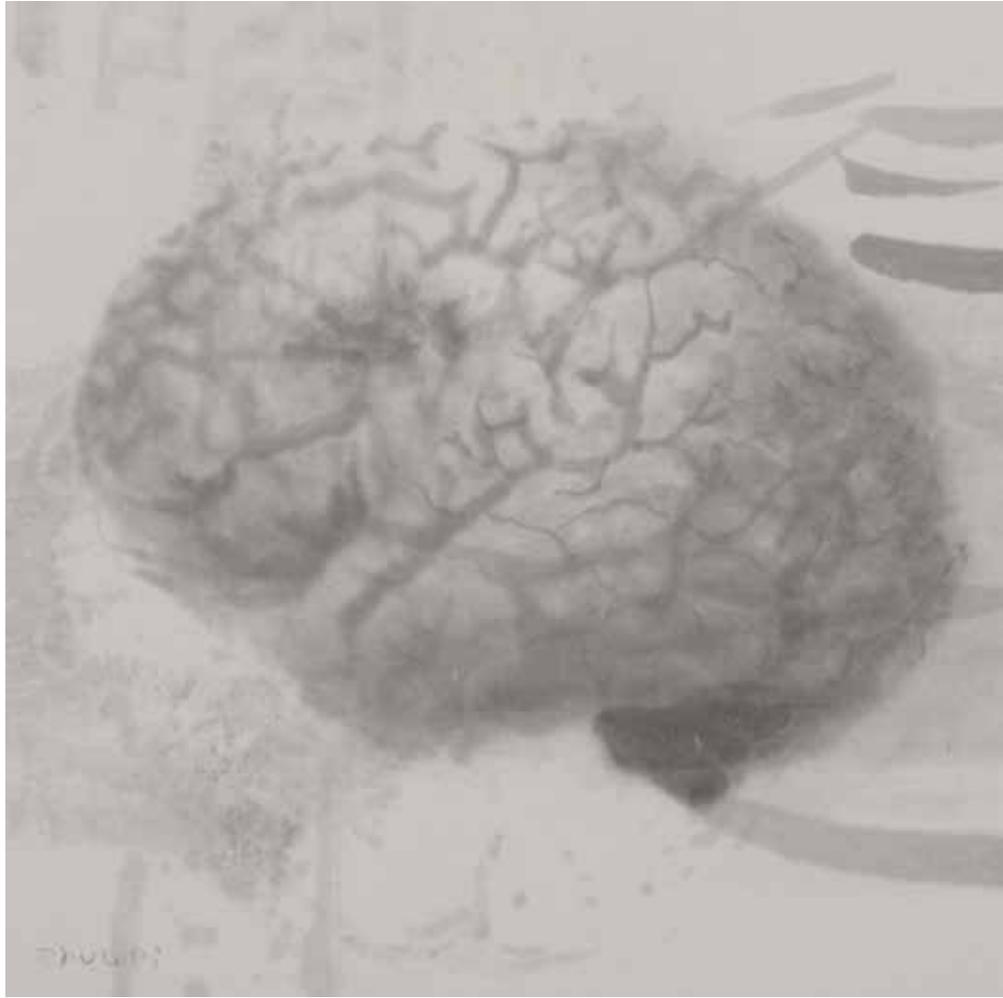




静物 2 / Still Life 2
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
29 cm × 24 cm, 2024



静物 3 / Still Life 3
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



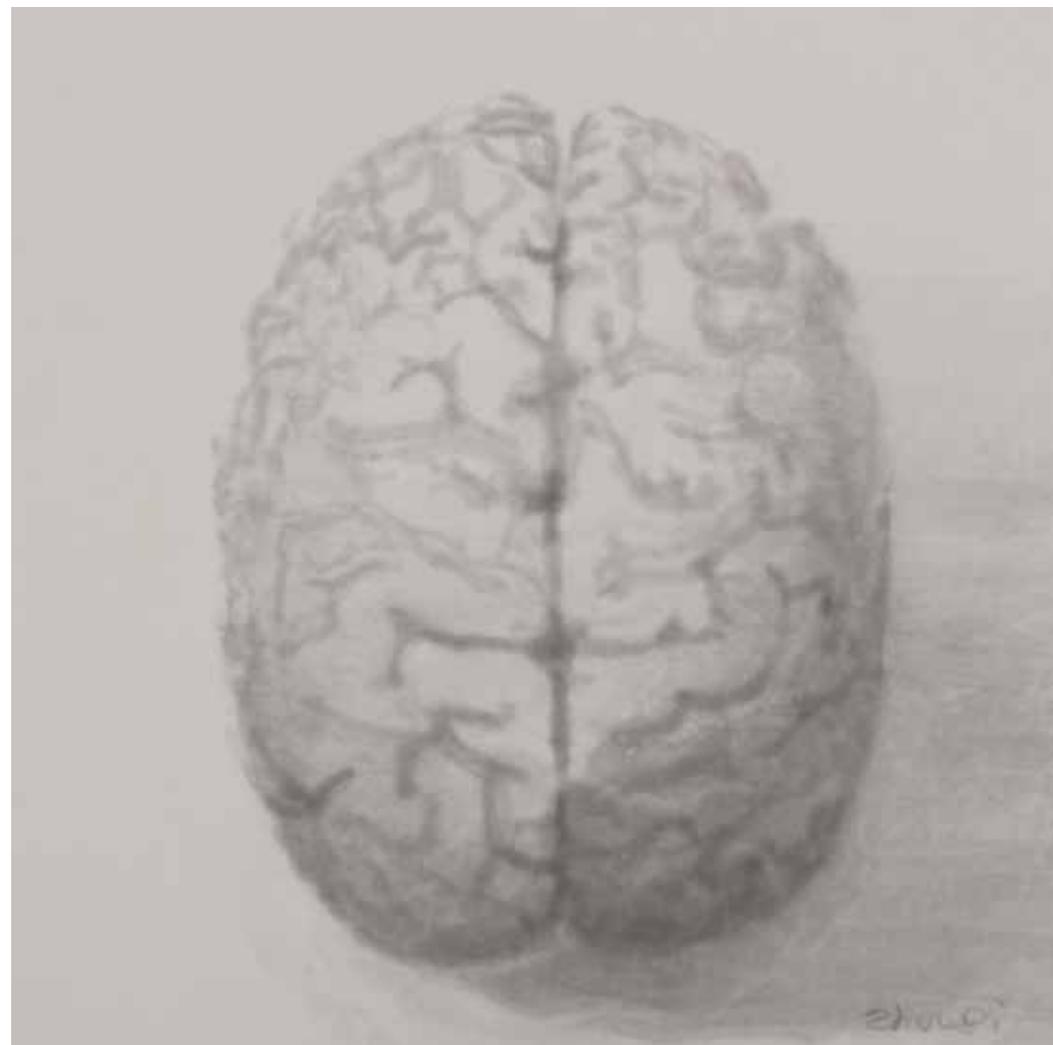
静物 7 / Still Life 7
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



静物 8 / Still Life 8
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



静物 10 / Still Life 10
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



静物 9 / Still Life 9
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



静物 4 / Still Life 4
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



静物 11 / Still Life 11
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024

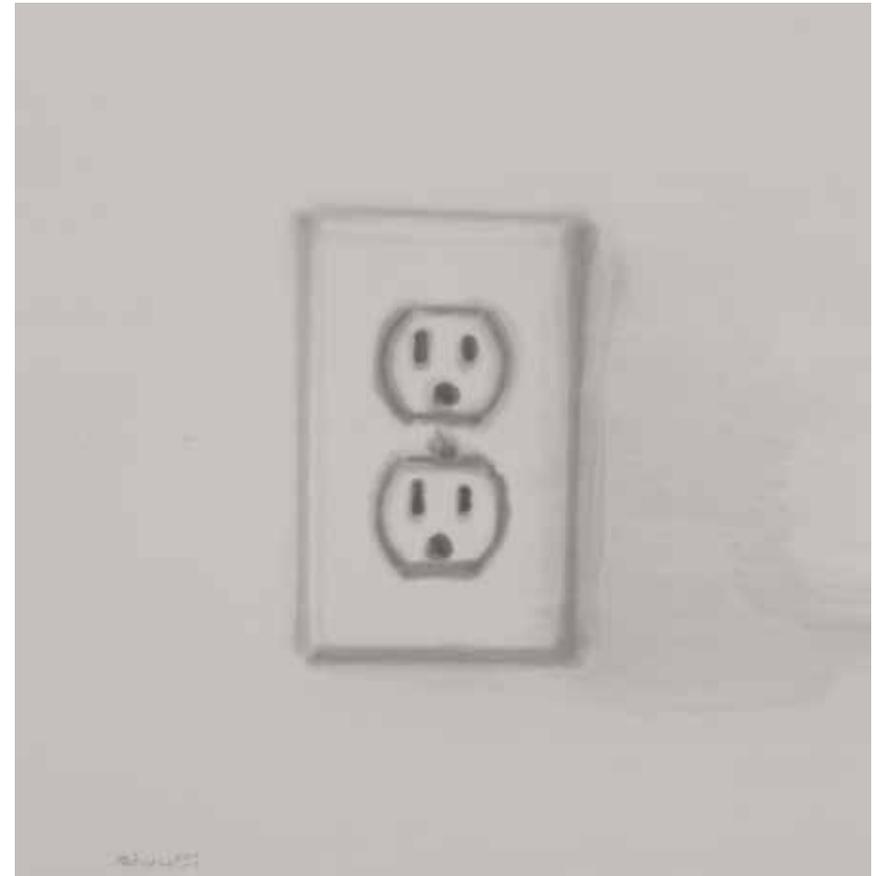


静物 5 / Still Life 5
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



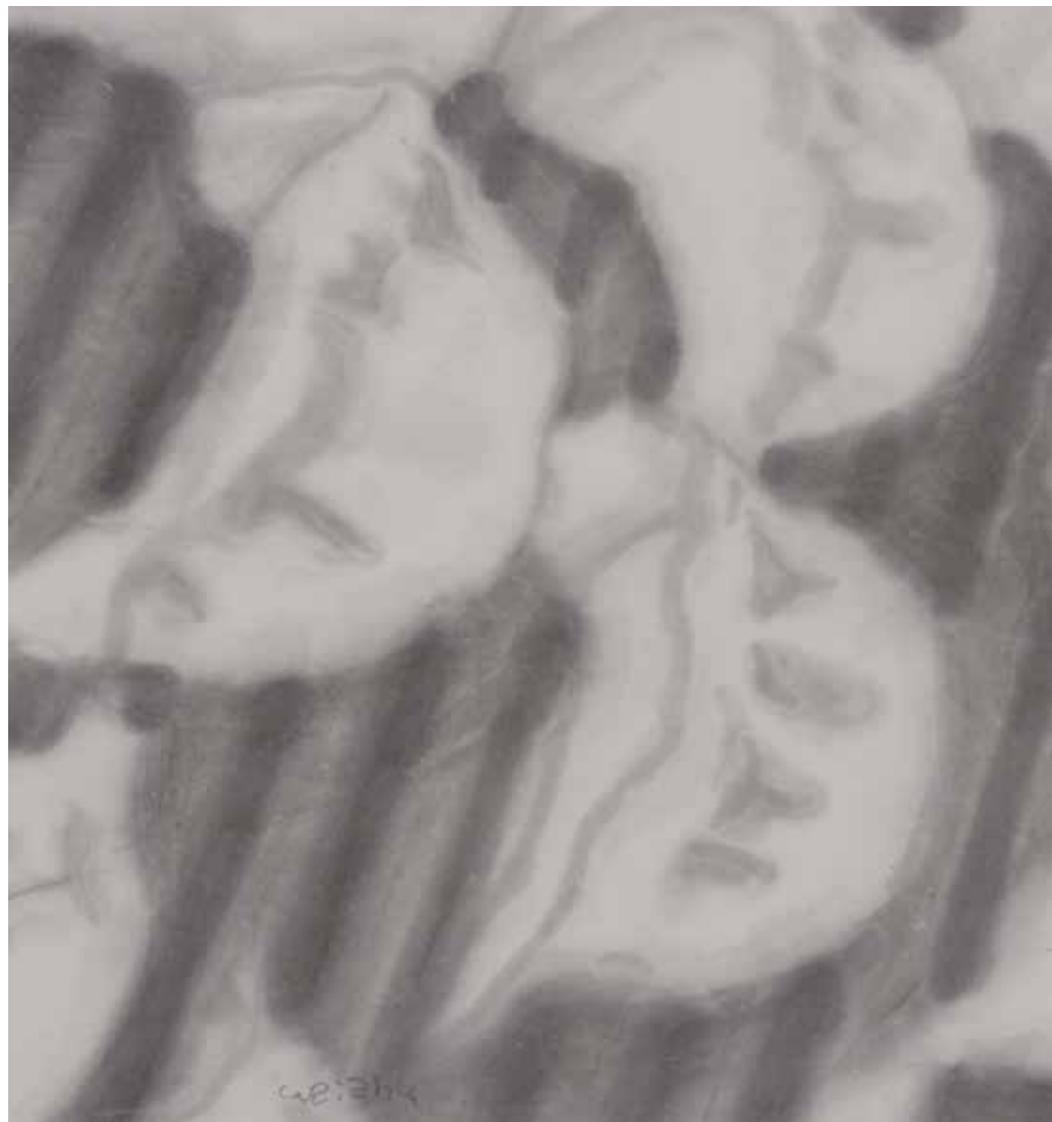
静物 6 / Still Life 6
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

静物 17 / Still Life 17
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025





月饼 / Moon Cake
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



饺子 / Dumplings
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



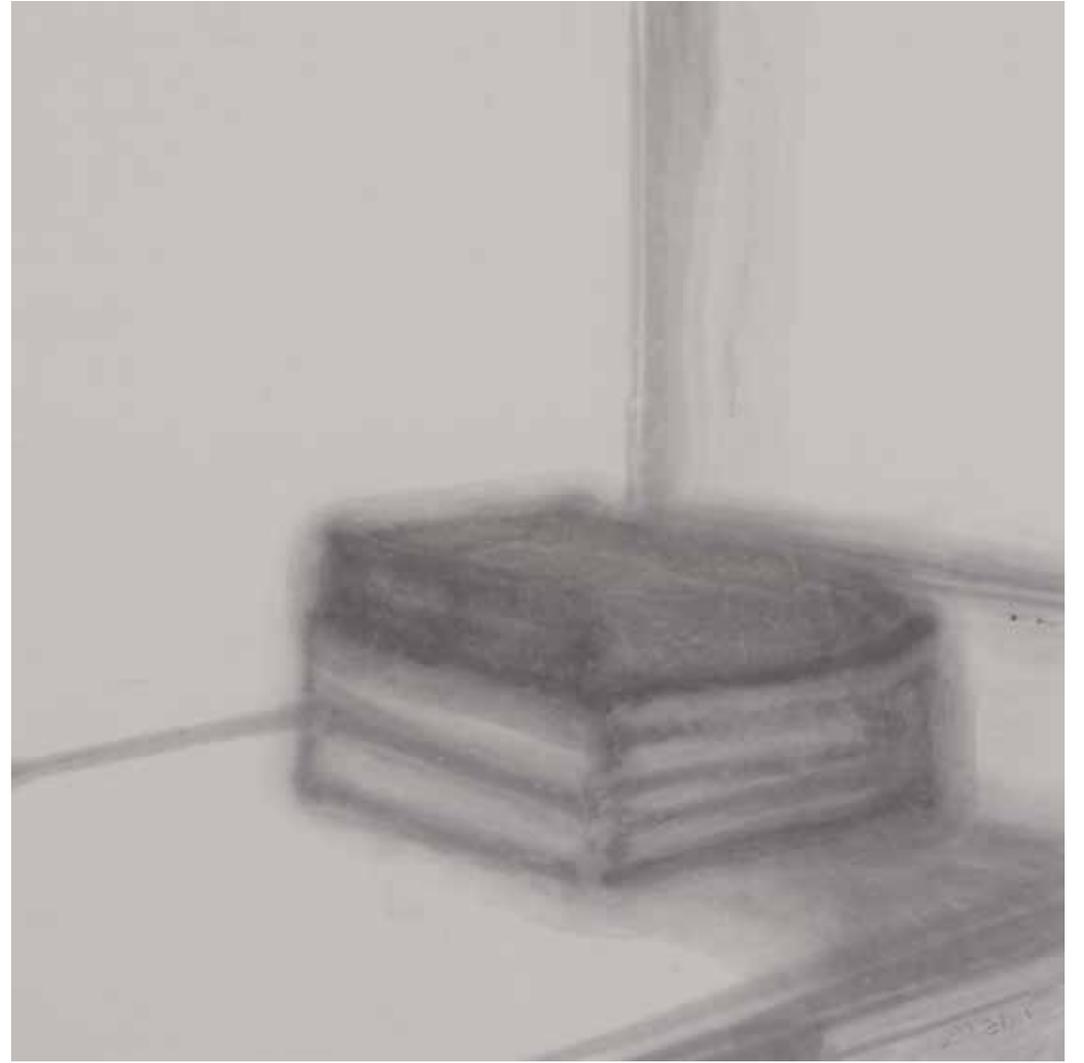
静物 14 / Still Life 14
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



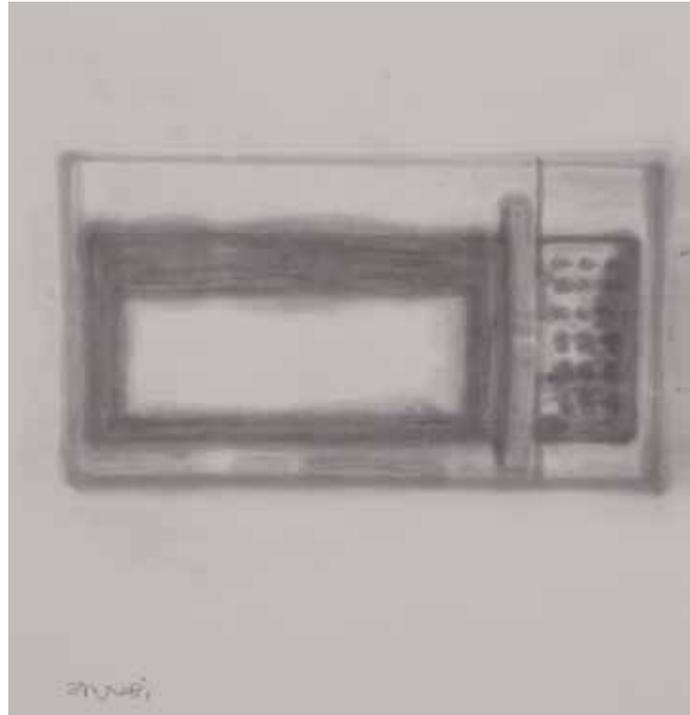
静物 15 / Still Life 15
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



静物 12 / Still Life 12
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



静物 13 / Still Life 13
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



静物 16 / Still Life 16
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



工作室 / Studio
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

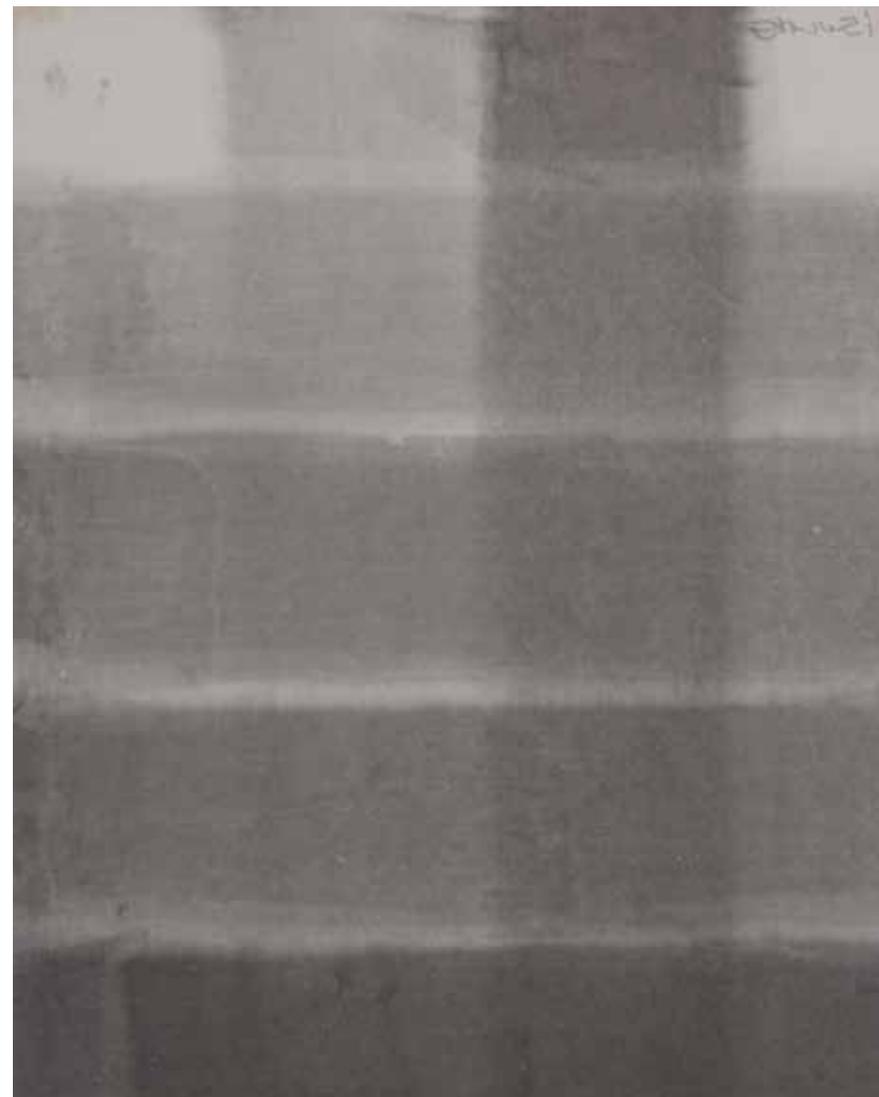


行云流水描 / Flowing Clouds and Flowing Water Drawing
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
29 cm × 24 cm, 2025



高古游丝描 / High Antiquity Silk Line Drawing
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

墨分五色 / The Five Tones of Ink
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
29 cm × 23 cm, 2024



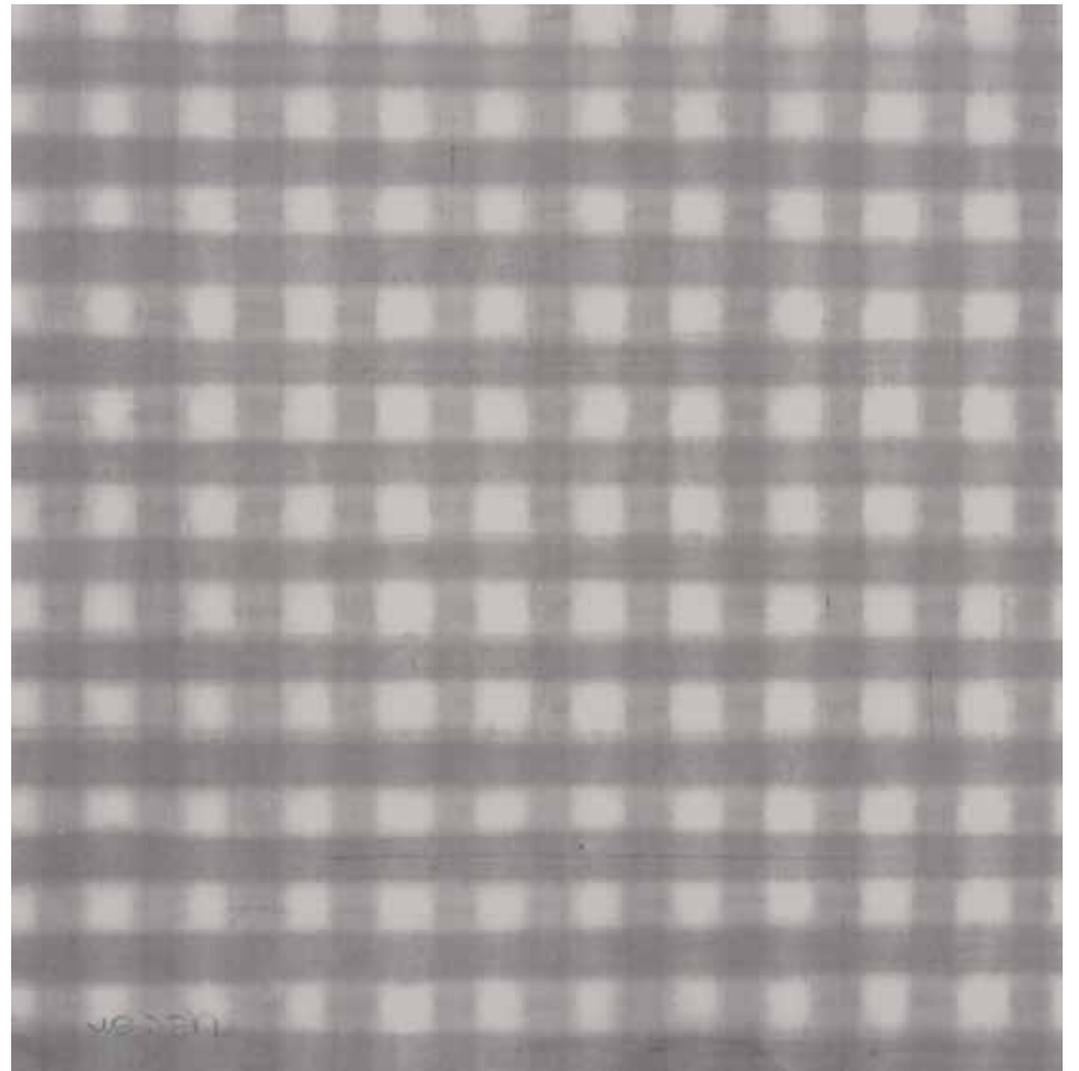


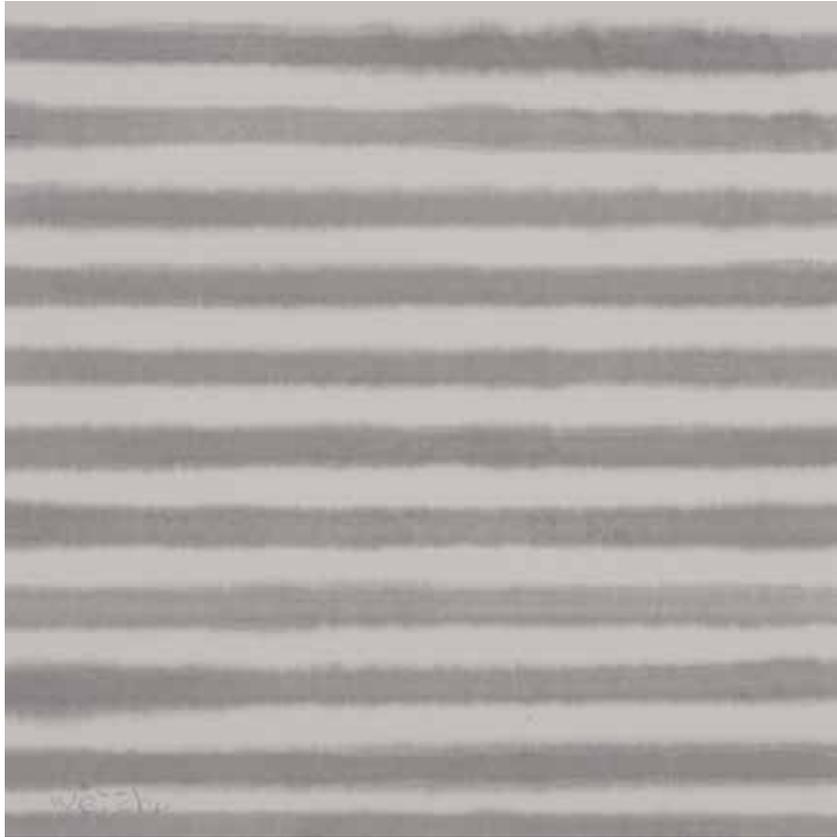
墨分五色 2 / The Five Tones of Ink 2
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



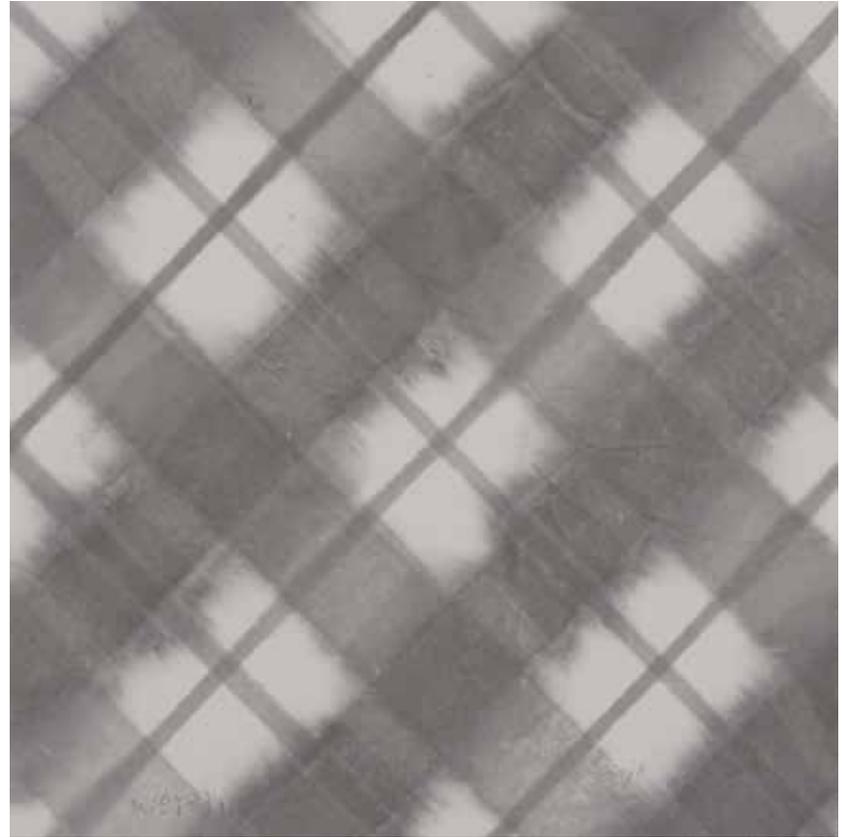
墨分五色 5 / The Five Tones of Ink 5
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024

墨分五色 4 / The Five Tones of Ink 4
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



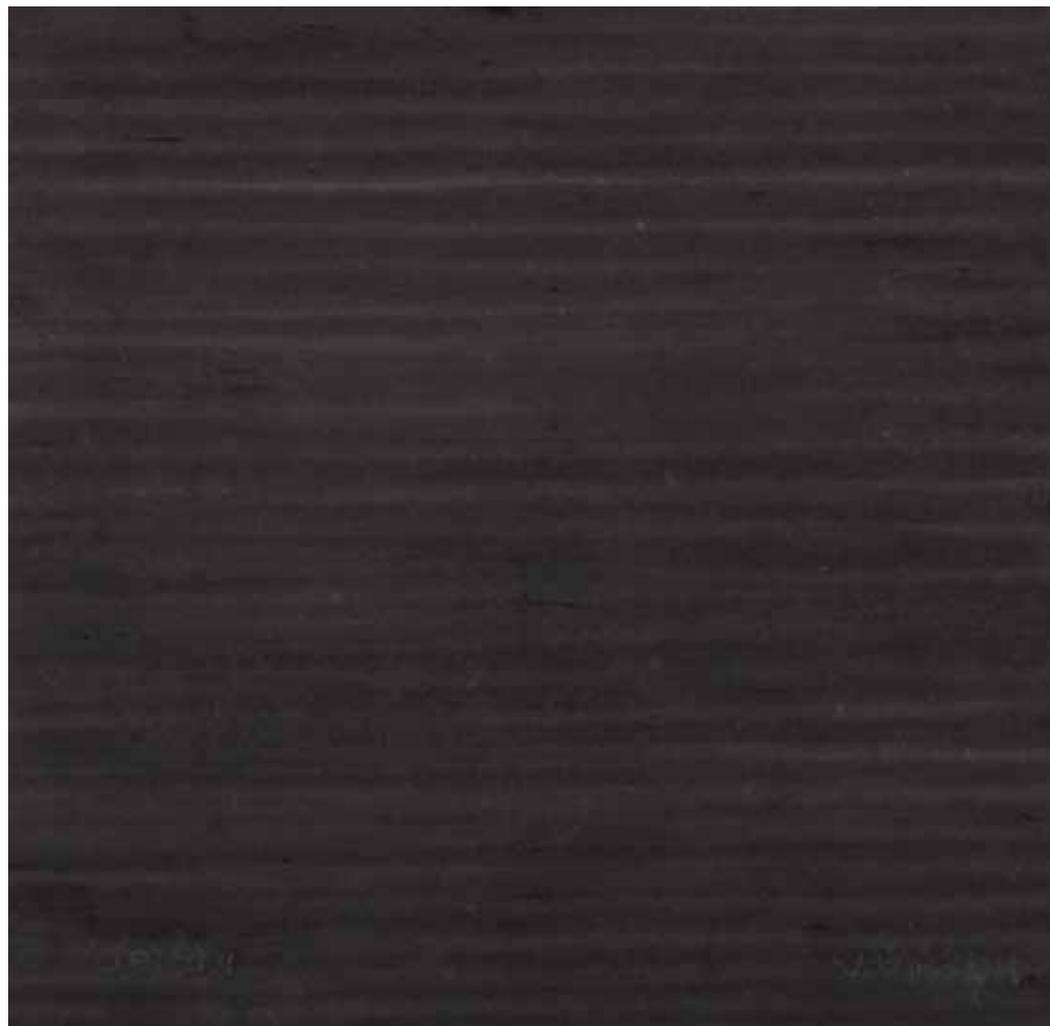


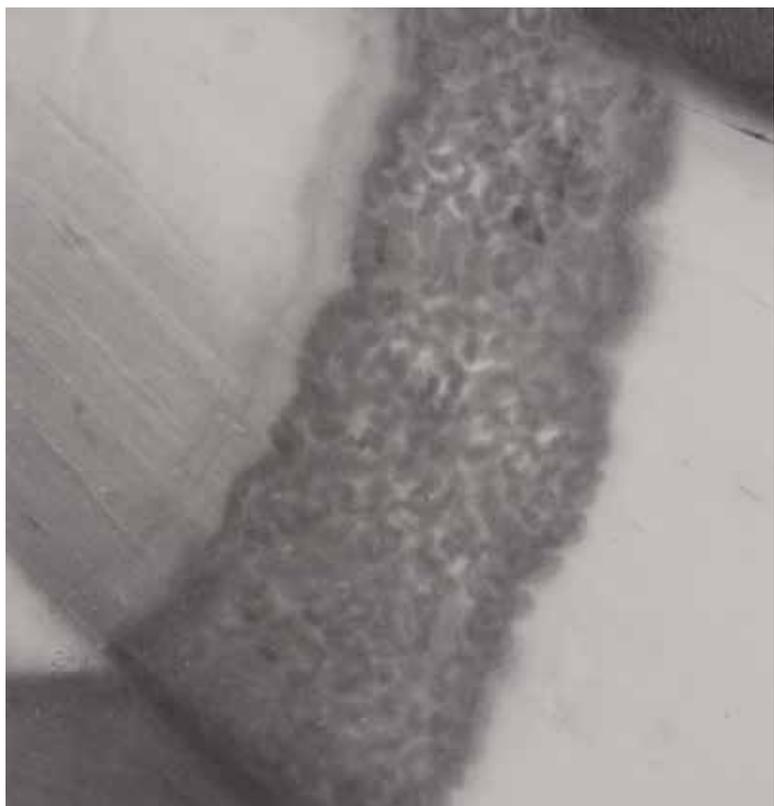
墨分五色 3 / The Five Tones of Ink 3
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



墨分五色 6 / The Five Tones of Ink 6
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024

墨分五色 7 / The Five Tones of Ink 7
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025





墨分五色 8 / The Five Tones of Ink 8
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



墨分五色 10 / The Five Tones of Ink 10
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

墨分五色 9 / The Five Tones of Ink 9
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025





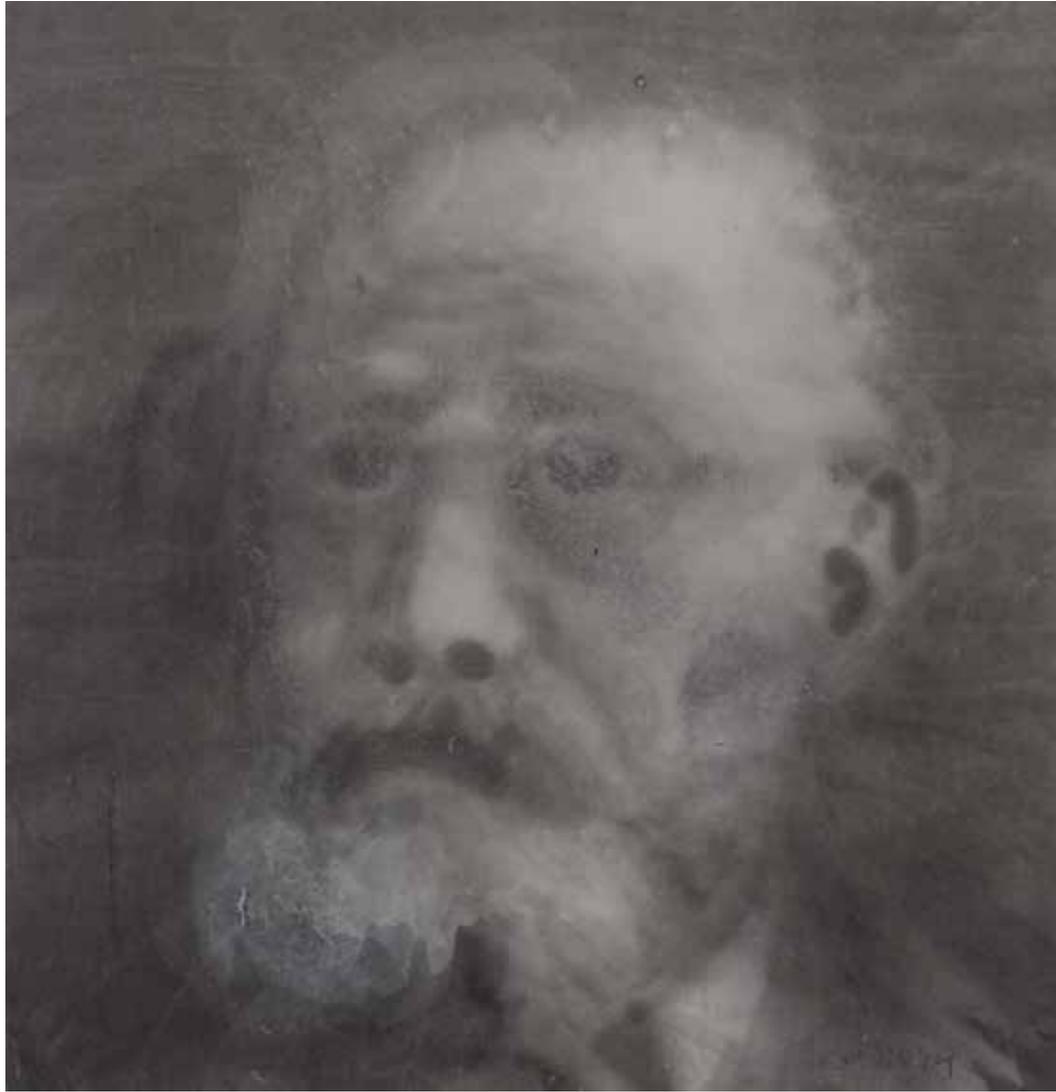
人物 / Figure
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
29 cm × 24 cm, 2024



人物 2 / Figure 2
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
29 cm × 24 cm, 2024

人物 3 / Figure 3
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 24 cm, 2024





人物 4 / Figure 4
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



人物 5 / Figure 5
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



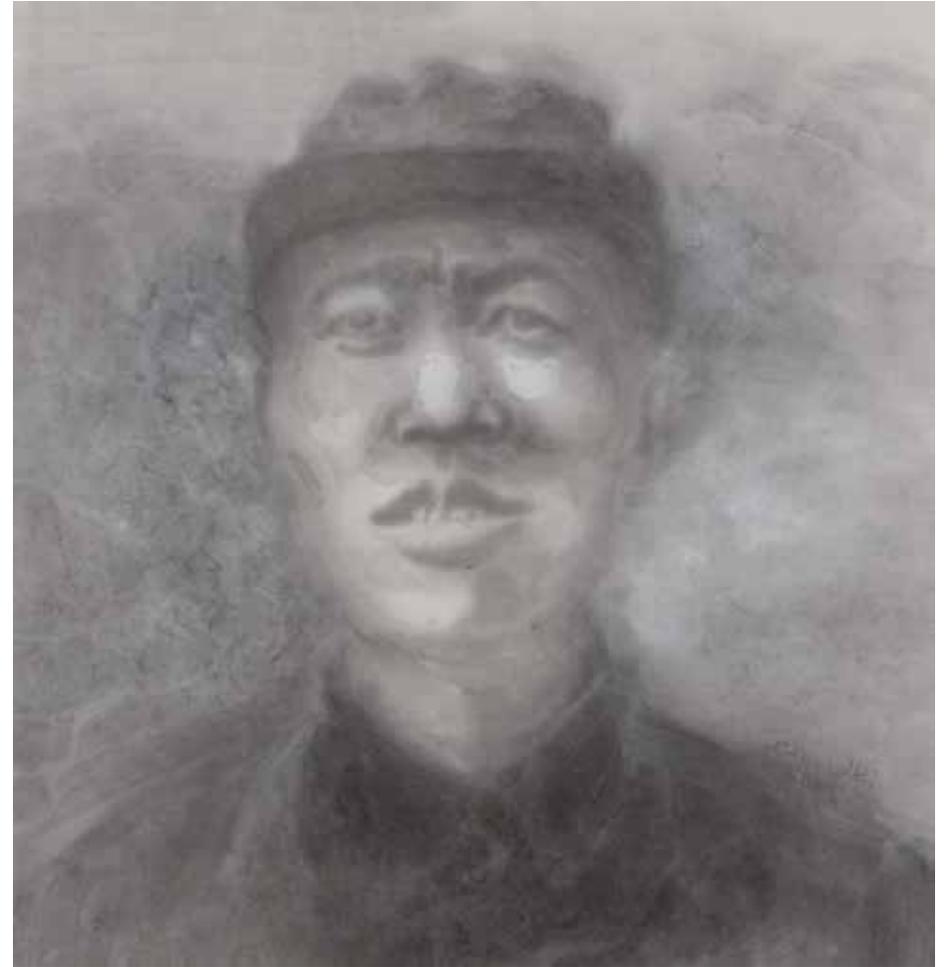
人物 6 / Figure 6
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
29 cm × 24 cm, 2024



人物 7 / Figure 7
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



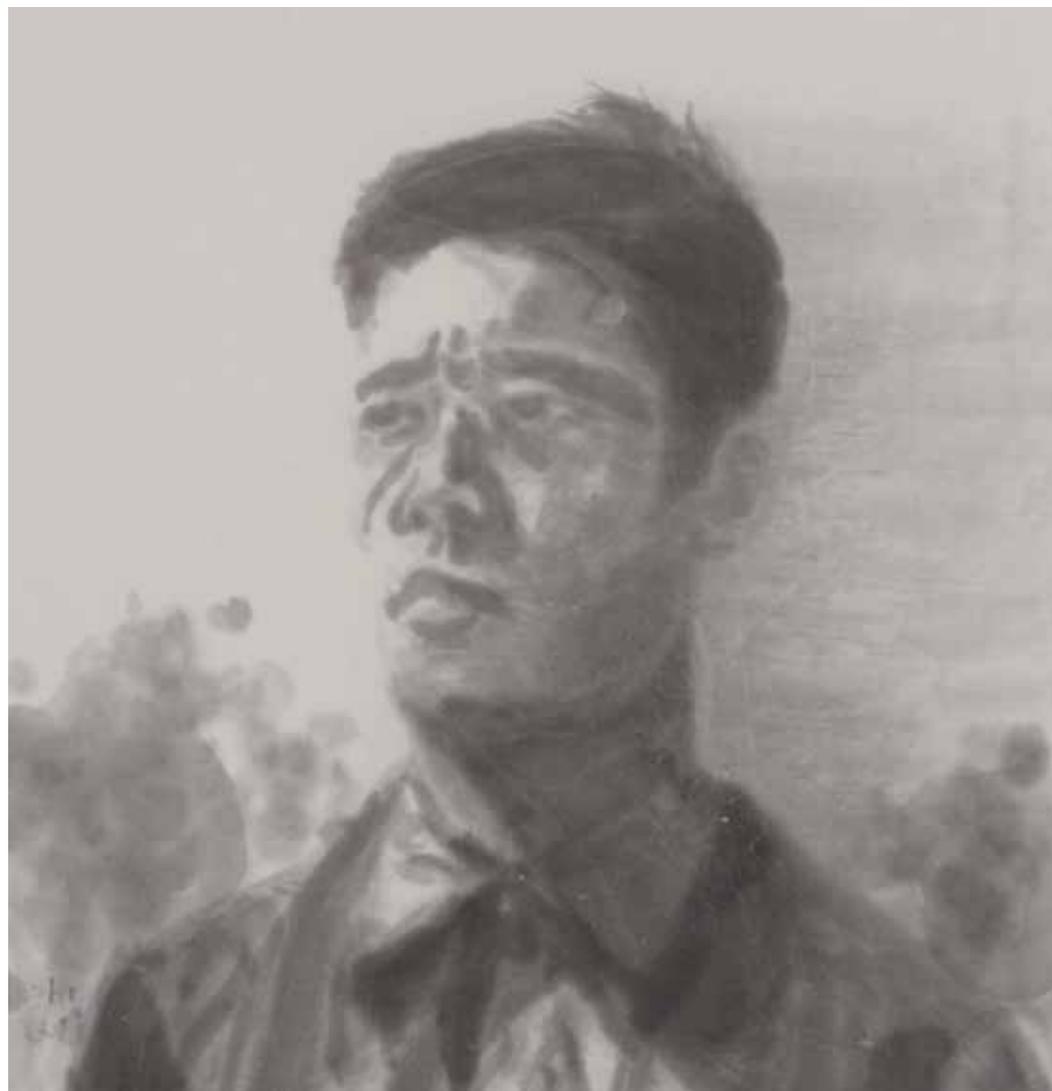
人物 8 / Figure 8
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



人物 9 / Figure 9
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人物 10 / Figure 10
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人物 11 / Figure 11
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人物 12 / Figure 12
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人物 13 / Figure 13
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人物 14 / Figure 14
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人物 15 / Figure 15
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人物 16 / Figure 16
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人物 17 / Figure 17
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人物 18 / Figure 18
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人物 19 / Figure 19
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人物 20 / Figure 20
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人物 21 / Figure 21
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人物 22 / Figure 22
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



人物 23 / Figure 23
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

马丁·路德·金 / Martin Luther King Jr.
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025





德沃夏克 / Dvorak
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



德彪西 / Debussy
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



肖斯塔科维奇 / Shostakovich
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



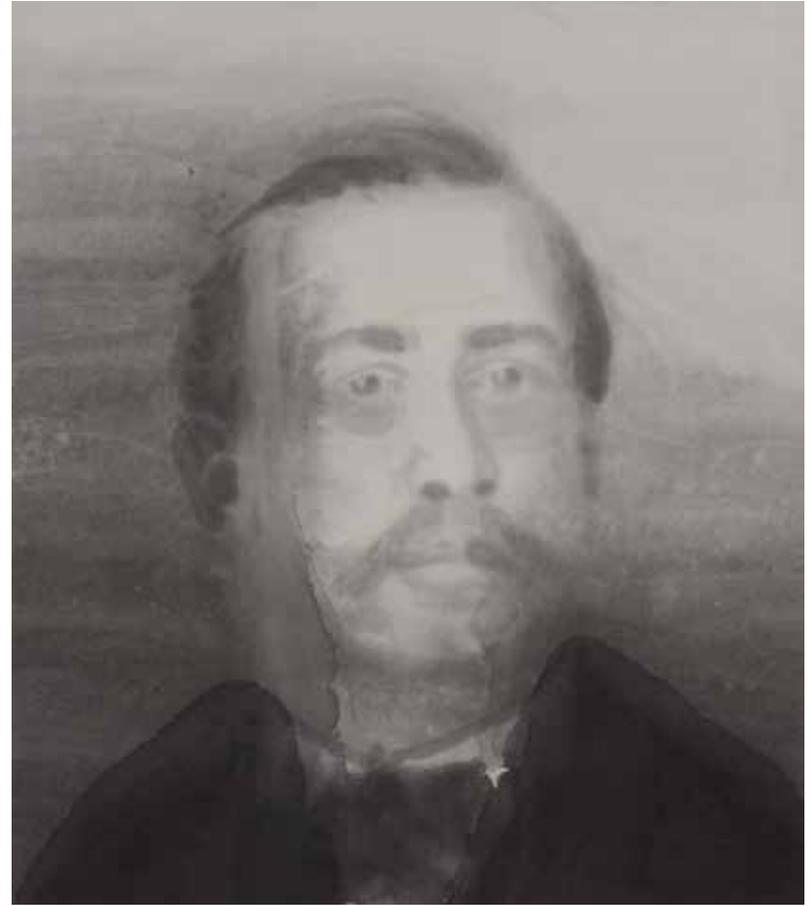
戈尔巴乔夫 / Gorbachev
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024

雍正 / Yongzheng Emperor
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024





达尔文 / Darwin
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



鲍罗丁 / Borodin
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024

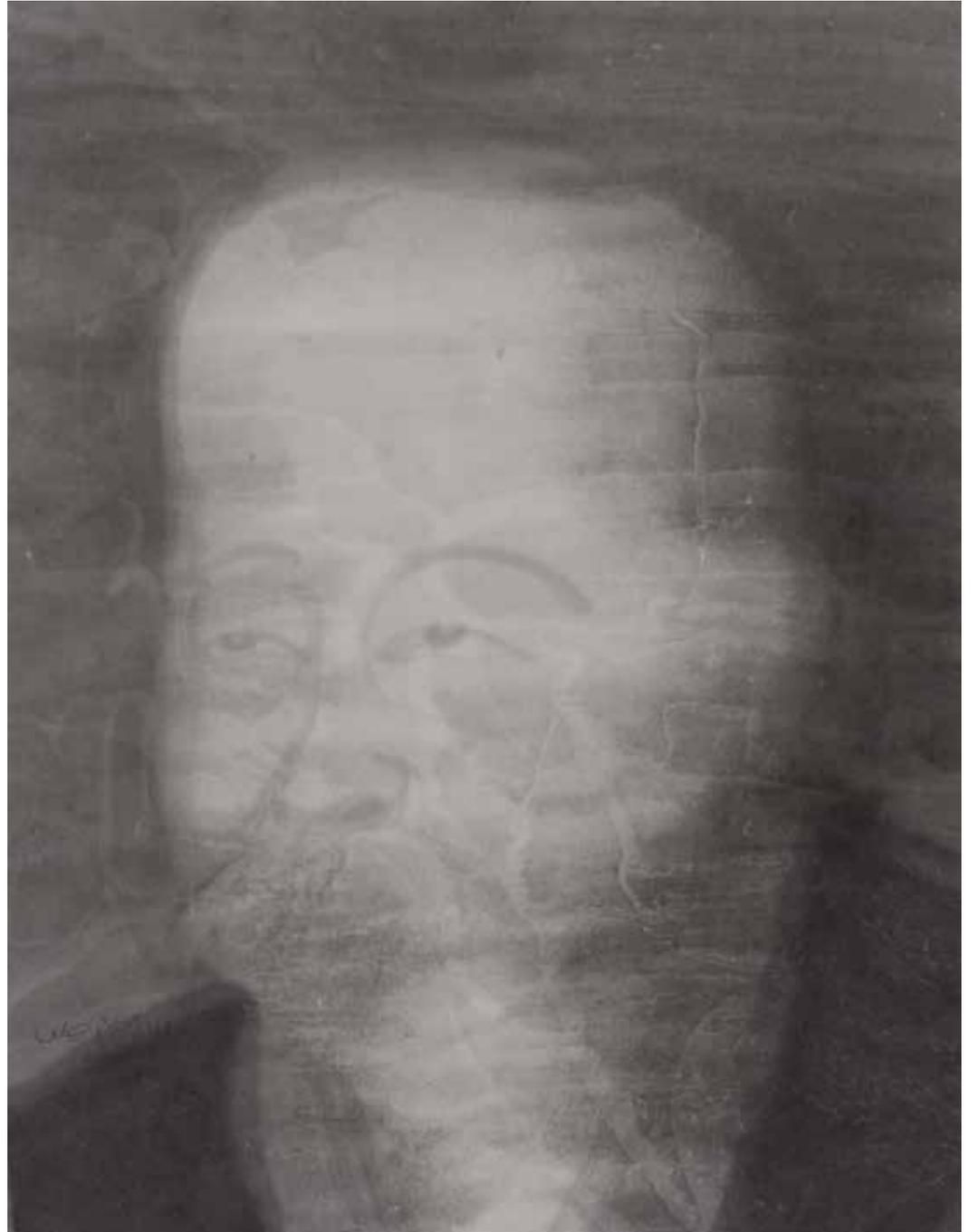


斯科里亚宾 / Scriabin
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024



比才 / Bizet
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2024

艺术家 / An Artist
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
29 cm × 24 cm, 2025





朱可夫元帅 / Marshal Zhukov
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



林彪元帅 / Marshal Lin Biao
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



胡适 / Hu Shi
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



邓小平 / Deng Xiaoping
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



老舍 / Lao She
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



老舍 2 / Lao She 2
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



马勒 / Mahler
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



华盛顿 / Washington
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



托马斯·莫里斯·切斯特 / Thomas Morris Chester
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



阿姆斯特朗 / Armstrong
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



高尔基 / Gorky
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



赛珍珠 / Pearl S. Buck
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



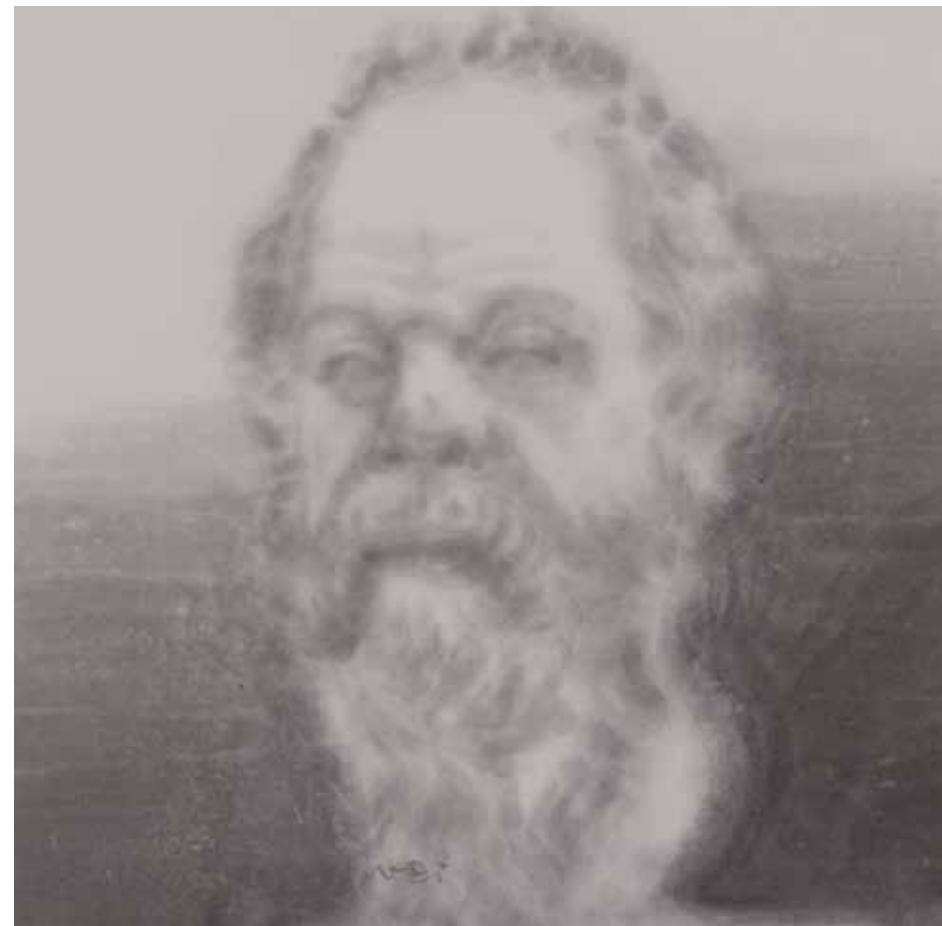
柴可夫斯基 / Tchaikovsky
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



梅兰芳 / Mei Lanfang
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



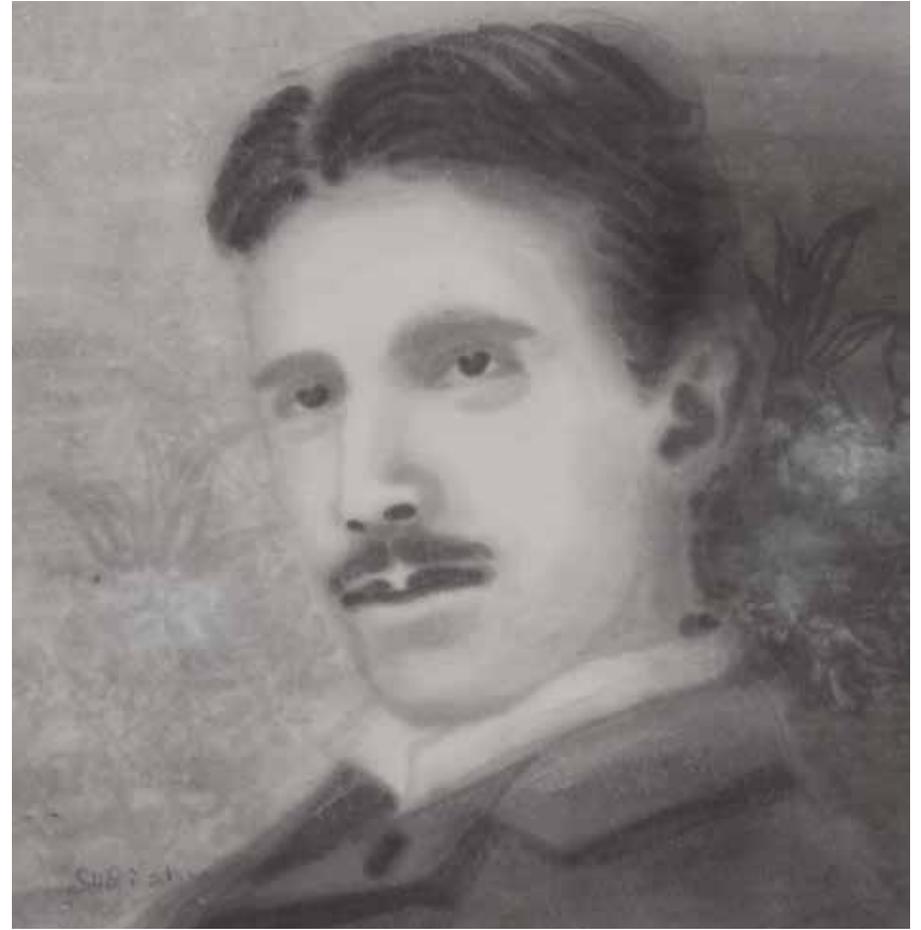
维特根斯坦 / Wittgenstein
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



苏格拉底 / Socrates
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



梭罗 / Thoreau
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



特斯拉 / Nikola Tesla
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



西尔维娅·伊丽莎白·马西斯 / Sylvia Elizabeth Mathis
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



艾森豪威尔 / Eisenhower
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



科萨科夫 / Korsakov
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



亚里士多德 / Aristotle
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

收藏家 / Collectors
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025





家人 / Familie
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



家人 2 / Familie 2
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



家人 3 / Familie 3
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



家人 4 / Familie 4
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



家人 5 / Familie 5
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



家人 6 / Familie 6
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



家人7 / Familie 7
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



家人8 / Familie 8
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



家人9 / Familie 9
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



家人10 / Familie 10
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



家人 11 / Familie 11
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



家人 12 / Familie 12
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

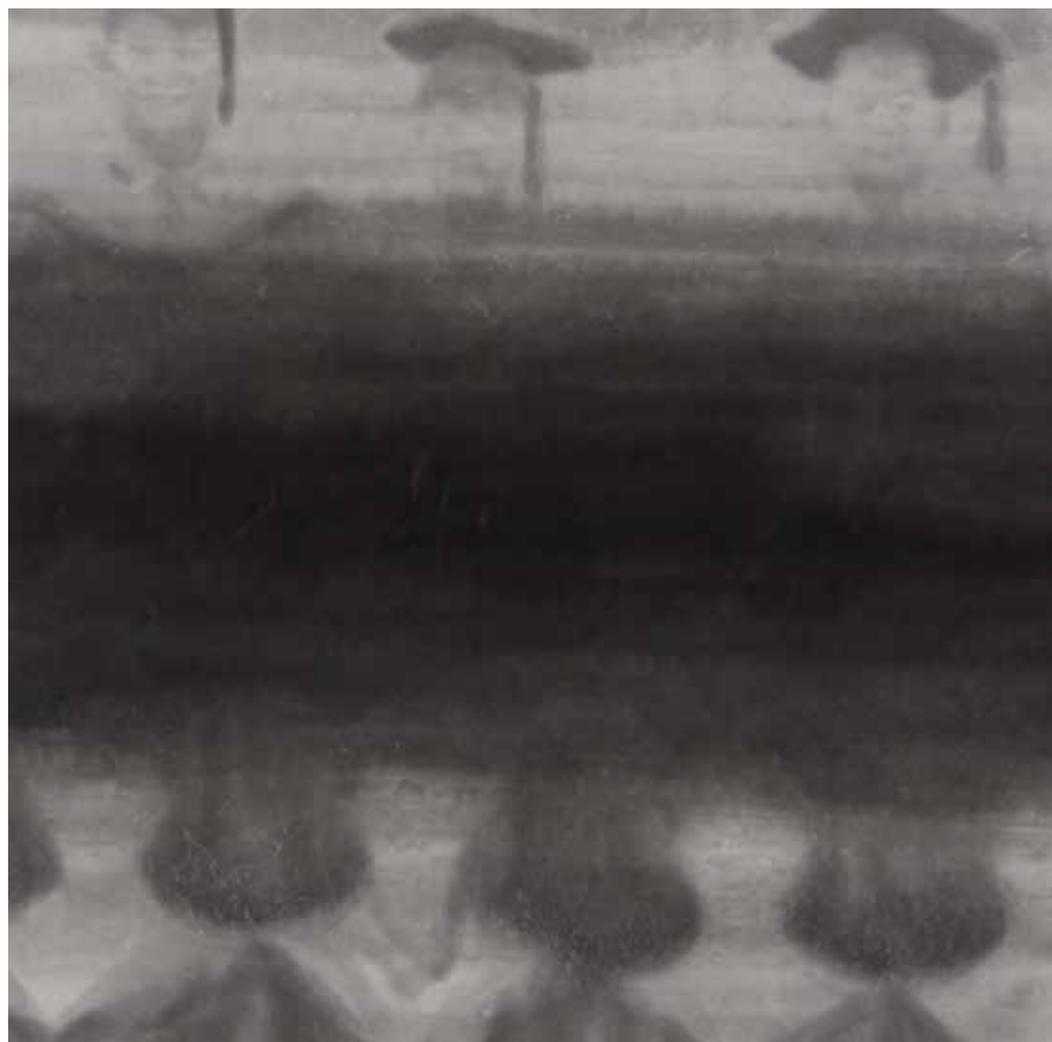


家人 13 - 杨振宁、李政道夫妇 / Familie 13 - Drs. C. N. Yang and T. D. Lee and their wives
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



家人 14 / Familie 14
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

家人 15 / Familie 15
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025





家人 16 / Familie 16
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



葬礼 / Funeral
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025

自画像 / Self-Portrait
水墨纸本 / Ink on paper
25 cm × 23 cm, 2025



艺术家简历
RESUME

朱伟

Zhu Wei



Born in 1966, Beijing, is the pioneer and representative of Chinese contemporary ink and wash. He is the most internationally influential contemporary ink and wash artist and the first artist to introduce meticulous painting techniques into the field of contemporary Chinese art. Since the early 1990s, his ink paintings have been exhibited in more than 300 large-scale exhibitions all over the world, and in different languages 30 retrospective albums of his works have been published. There are forty-three art museums at home and abroad who have collected more than 70 of his artworks.

EXHIBITIONS

2025 Silent Illumination, Chinese Modern and Contemporary Still Life Research Exhibition Haanmo's Gallery, Beijing, China
Classical Charm of the Immortal Garden, Linda Gallery, Singapore

2024 Exhibition of Permanent Collection, Wrightwood 659, Chicago, USA
Beather, Howland Cultural Center, New York, USA
Zhuwei 2019-2023 works, MOCA, Linda Gallery, Singapore

2023 "M+ Sigg Collection: Another Story", M+ Museum, Hong Kong
"The Axis – The Artistic Revolution from the Millennium",
Shanxi Contemporary Art Museum, Taiyuan

2022 Exhibition of Permanent Collection, Wrightwood 659, Chicago, USA
"Re-Jiangnan Homage the Golden Age Never Gone",
Art Museum of Nanjing University of Fine Arts, Nanjing
"Being", Zhi Art Museum, Chengdu

2021 "Scent of Ink", WESTRED Art Museum, Haibin,
"New Art | New Year 2021", Tobin Ohashi Gallery, Okinawa, Japan

2020 "Martha Bloom Studio Exhibition", Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery,
New York, USA
"Ink Painting on Going: 2000-2019", Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou
"The Revival of Tradition – Another Approach to Chinese Contemporary Art",
Song Art Museum, Beijing
"Art Aid Japan", Tobin Ohashi Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2019 "Martha Bloom Studio Exhibition", Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery,
New York, USA
Taipei Dangdai - Art & Ideas, Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center, Taipei, Taiwan

- “Black and White Exhibition”, Tobin Ohashi Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
 “Contemporary Asian & European Art”, Galerie Belvedere, Singapore
- 2018 “New Ink Art In China 1978 -2018”, MinSheng Art Museum, Beijing
 “Ink Mutation” Invitational Exhibition of Experimental Ink Art,
 Art Museum of Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing
 “Spearhead: New Image of Ink Painting – Invitation Exhibition of Chinese Ink
 Wash”, Shanghai Ming Yuan Art Museum, Shanghai
 “Virtual Focus”, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London, UK
- 2017 “Virtual Focus: ZHU WEI works 1987-2017”, National Museum of Indonesia,
 Jakarta, In-donesia
 “Crossing – AMNUA 5th Anniversary Exhibition”,
 Art Museum of Nanjing University of the Art, Nanjing
 “Everything Exists Now”, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London, UK
- 2016 “Zhu Wei”, Asia Art Center, Taipei, Taiwan
 “Annual Review Exhibition of China Contemporary Ink Painting 2015-2016”,
 Today Art Museum, Beijing
 “Bing and Inking - Documenting Contemporary Ink Art 2001-2016”,
 Redtory Museum of Contemporary Art (RMCA), Guangzhou, China
 The 9th International Ink Art Biennale of Shenzhen,
 Guanshanyue Art Museum, Shenzhen, China
- 2015 “CHINA 8 – CONTEMPORARY ART FROM CHINA AT RHINE & RUHR” -
 “Tradition Today – Ink Painting and Calligraphy”,
 Kunstmuseum Gelsenkirchen, Germany
 “Face + Figure Show”, Tobin Ohashi Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
 “Past Present East West: Highlights from the Permanent Collection”,
 The Kruienza Art Mu-seum at Hope College, Holland, Michigan, USA
 “A New Fine Line: Contemporary Ink Painting from China”, Metropolitan State
 University Center for the Visual Arts, Denver, Colorado, USA
 “Cabinet De Sérénité”, J. Bastien Art, Brussels, Belgium
- 2014 “Zhu Wei’s Exhibition 2014 - 2015”, Art Museum of Nanjing University of the Art,
 Nanjing
 “New Cultural Identity – China Contemporary Art”, China Culture Center,
 Sidney, Australia
 “Rendering The Future - Chinese Contemporary Ink Painting”,
 Asia Art Center, Beijing
- “A New Account of Meticulous Paintings – 2014 New Gongbi Invitation
 Exhibition”, Jiang-su Art Museum, Nanjing
 “Reshaping Shuimo – The New Conception of History”,
 Jinling Art Museum, Nanjing
- 2013 “Re: Portrait”, Hubei Museum of Art, Wuhan, Hubei province
 “Zhu Wei”, Today Art Museum, Beijing
 “Zhu Wei Works”, Singapore Museum of Contemporary Arts, Singapore
 “Still Water Runs Deep – Six Masters of Chinese Contemporary Meticulous
 Painting”, Shen-zhen Art Museum, Shenzhen
 “Beijing-Belgrade”, Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade, Serbia
 “China-Eastern Europe: New Sights in Chinese Contemporary Art”,
 Contemporary Art Mu-seum of Macedonia, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia
 “Peking-Praha”, Castle Gallery, Prague, Czech
 “Philosophical Interpretations of Painting - Present Expression of Chinese Paint”,
 The Na-tional Art Museum of China, Beijing
 “China-Eastern Europe: New Sights in Chinese Contemporary Art”, Palatul
 Parlamentului National Contemporary Museum of Romania, Bucharest, Romania
- 2012 “RE-INK: Invitational Exhibition of Contemporary Ink and Wash Painting 2000-
 2012”, Hu-bei Museum of Art, Wuhan, China
 “Instinct & Instant Chinois”, J. Bastien Art, Brussels, Belgium
- 2011 “Zhu Wei”, Simyo Gallery, Seoul, Korea
 “Zhu Wei Exhibition”, Tobin Ohashi Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
 “FACE TO FACE”, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel
- 2010 “RESHAPING HISTORY Chinart from 2000 to 2009”,
 China National Convention Center, Beijing
 “Roundabout”, City Gallery Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand
 “Tradition and Transition: Recent Chinese Art from the Collection”,
 Williams College Muse-um of Art, Massachusetts, USA
- 2009 “Beijing - Havana: New Contemporary Chinese Art Revolution”,
 Cuba Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes Street Trocadero e/ Aulueta y
 Monserrate Old Havana, Ciudad de La Habana, Cuba
 “The Academic Exhibition of Chinese Fine Arts Paintings”,
 Art Gallery of China National Academy of Painting, Beijing
 “BROADSHEET NOTATIONS”, Tang Contemporary Art, Hong Kong
 “Water and Color - Contemporary Ink Art Show”, Today Art Museum, Beijing

- 2008 ARCO, Madrid, Spain
 “Zhu Wei’s Album of Ink Paintings”, Xin Dong Cheng Space for Contemporary Art,
 798 Art District, Beijing
 SCOPE London Art Fair, London, UK
 “Today’s China”, BELvue Museum, Brussels, Belgium
 “Beijing-Athens Contemporary Art from China”, National Contemporary Art
 Center of Greece, Athens, Greece
 “China – Beyond Socialist Realism”, Chosun ilbo Museum, Seoul, Korea
- 2007 “Chinese Contemporary Sotsart”, the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia
 “Zhu Wei Works”, J. BASTIEN ART Gallery, Brussels, Belgium
 Art Basel Miami Beach, Miami, USA
 “Zhu Wei Show”, Plum Blossoms Gallery, Hong Kong
 “Zhu Wei Solo Show”, Art Seasons Gallery, Jakarta, Indonesia
 Art International Zürich 2007, Zürich, Switzerland
 “Zhu Wei Solo Show”, Art Seasons Gallery, Singapore
 ANTIQUAIRS 2007, Brussels, Belgium
- 2006 “Chinese Ink Painting Document Exhibition (1976-2006)”,
 Nanjing Museum, Nanjing
 “Curators’ Choice”, Art Complex Museum, Massachusetts, USA
 “Sights Unseen: Recent Acquisitions”, Tateuchi Thematic Gallery of Asian Art
 Museum, San Francisco, USA
 “Zhu Wei, Xu Lei, Peng Wei - Three Artists’ Exhibition”,
 Art Seasons Gallery, Beijing, China
- 2005 “New Pictures of The Strikingly Bizarre”,
 Singapore Tyler Print Institute, Singapore
 “World Rock n’ Roll 50 Years Visual Arts Exhibition”,
 Rome Art Museum, Rome, Italy
 Lineart 2005, Ghent, Belgium
 “New Pictures Of The Strikingly Bizarre”, Plum Blossoms Gallery Hong Kong
- 2004 “Zhu Wei – Another Perspective”, Plum Blossoms Gallery, Hong Kong
 “Food For Thought”, Islip Art Museum, New York, USA
 The International Asian Art Fair, The Seventh Regiment Armory, New York, USA
- 2003 “Zhu Wei – Another Perspective”, Plum Blossoms Gallery, New York, USA
 Asian Contemporary Art Week, New York, USA
- 2002 The First Triennial of Chinese Arts, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou
 “Paris-Pekin”, Espace Cardin, Paris, France
- 2001 “Zhu Wei Diary”, Plum Blossoms Gallery, New York, USA
 “Artist’s Recent Works”, Plum Blossoms Gallery, Hong Kong
- 2000 “Zhu Wei Diary”, Plum Blossoms Gallery, Hong Kong and Singapore
 The International Asian Art Fair, The Seventh Regiment Armory, New York, USA
- 1999 The International Asian Art Fair, The Seventh Regiment Armory, New York, USA
 The Beverly Hills International Art Fair, Beverly Hills, California, USA
- 1998 “Diary of the Sleepwalker”, Plum Blossoms Gallery, Hong Kong and Singapore
- 1997 The International Asian Art Fair, The Seventh Regiment Armory, New York, USA
- 1996 “Modern Chinese Paintings from the Reyes Collection”, Ashmolean Museum of Art
 and Archaeology, London, UK
 The Taipei International Art Fair, Taipei
- 1995 Art Trends, Hong Kong
 Art Asia '95, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center, Hong Kong
- 1994 “The Story of Beijing”, Plum Blossoms Gallery, Hong Kong
 Treasures - International Fine Art and Antiques Fair for Asia,
 World Trade Center, Singapore
 Art Asia '94, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center, Hong Kong
 New Trends, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center, Hong Kong
- 1993 Zhu Wei New Paintings '93, Duo Yun Xuan, Gallery, Shanghai
- 1991 “New Army Art Club”, Duo Yun Xuan, Gallery, Shanghai
 Group Exhibition, “New Army Art Club”, Duo Yun Xuan Gallery, Shanghai, China

1966年生，北京人。先后就学于解放军艺术学院，中国艺术研究院，纽约艺术学生联盟。当代水墨的先行者和代表人物，是最具国际影响力的当代水墨艺术家，也是第一位将工笔画手法引进中国当代艺术领域的艺术家。自上世纪九十年代初开始以水墨画在国际大型展览亮相，在世界各地举办超过300多次大型展览，先后出版三十部不同文字的绘画专集、回顾专集。国内外有四十三家美术馆、博物馆收藏了其超过七十余件作品。

2025 “以静观之”中国现当代静物研究展，Hanmo's 画廊，北京
“园林典韵”林大艺术中心，新加坡

2024 Wrightwood 659 艺术中心藏品展，Wrightwood 659 艺术中心，芝加哥，美国
“朱伟 2019-2023 作品”新加坡当代美术馆、林大艺术中心，新加坡
“气息”HONLAND 文化中心，纽约，美国

2023 “M+ 希克藏品展：别传”M+ 美术馆，香港
“坐标：2000 年以来的中国绘画之变”山西省当代美术馆，太原

2022 Wrightwood 659 藏品展，Wrightwood 659，芝加哥，美国
“江南再造首展：致意——从未消逝的黄金时代”南京艺术学院美术馆，南京
“幻·季”知美术馆，成都

2021 “2021 新年·新艺术”Tobin Ohashi 画廊，冲绳，日本
“在地·个体：水墨绘画艺术研究展”红场美术馆，哈尔滨

2020 “Martha Bloom 工作室作品展”，Phyllis Harriman Mason 画廊，纽约，美国
“水墨进行时：2000-2019”，广东美术馆，广州
“传统的复活”，松美术馆，北京
“日本艺术援助会展”，Tobin Ohashi 画廊，东京，日本

2019 “Martha Bloom 工作室作品展”Phyllis Harriman Mason 画廊，纽约，美国
台北当代艺术博览会，台北
“黑白版画展”，Tobin Ohashi 画廊，东京，日本
“当代亚洲和欧洲艺术展”，Galerie Belvedere，新加坡

2018 “中国新水墨作品展 1978-2018”，北京民生现代美术馆，北京
“墨变”实验水墨艺术邀请展，南京师范大学美术馆，南京
“锋向 - 水墨新表现 -2018 中国当代水墨邀请展”，明圆美术馆，上海
“朱伟作品展”，Kristin Hjellegjerde 画廊，伦敦，英国

2017 “虚拟的焦点——朱伟 1987-2017”，印尼国家博物馆，雅加达，印度尼西亚

“交织、撞击与建构——南京艺术学院美术馆 5 周年特展”，南京艺术学院美术馆，南京
“万物的存在”，Kristin Hjellegjerde 画廊，伦敦，英国

2016 “朱伟”，台北亚洲艺术中心，台北
“中国当代水墨年鉴展 2015-2016”，今日美术馆，北京
“天下·往来”当代水墨文献展（2001-2016），红专厂当代艺术馆 RMCA，广州
“第九届深圳国际水墨双年展”，关山月美术馆，深圳美术馆，深圳画院美术馆，深圳

2015 “中国 8—德国莱茵鲁尔中国当代艺术展”，盖尔森基兴艺术博物馆，盖尔森基兴，德国
“肖像 + 人物展”，Tobin Ohashi 画廊，东京，日本
“Kruizenga 美术馆开幕展”古今东西：永久馆藏精品展”，霍普大学 Kruizenga 美术馆，密歇根，美国
“新工笔：中国当代水墨”，科罗拉多州立大学视觉艺术中心，丹佛，科罗拉多，美国
“隐秘的宁静”，J. Bastien Art，布鲁塞尔，比利时

2014 “朱伟 2014-2015 跨年展”，南京艺术学院美术馆，南京
“新文化身份—中国当代艺术”中国文化中心，悉尼，澳大利亚
“释放未来——中国当代水墨邀请展”，亚洲艺术中心，北京
“工笔新境——2014 新工笔邀请展”，江苏美术馆，南京
“改造水墨——新的历史观”，金陵美术馆，南京

2013 “再肖像”，湖北美术馆，武汉
“朱伟”，今日美术馆，北京
“朱伟作品展”，新加坡 MOCA，新加坡
“宁静致远—中国当代工笔六人展”，深圳美术馆，深圳
“北京 - 贝尔格莱德”，南斯拉夫历史博物馆，贝尔格莱德，塞尔维亚
“中国当代艺术新景象”，马其顿国家当代美术馆，斯科普里，马其顿共和国
“北京 - 布拉格”，皇家御马厩美术馆，布拉格，捷克
“格物致知—中国工笔画的当代表述”国家画院美术馆，北京
“中国当代艺术新景象”，罗马尼亚国家当代美术馆，布加勒斯特，罗马尼亚

2012 “再水墨：2000-2012 中国当代水墨邀请展”，湖北美术馆，武汉
“本能与瞬间”，J. BASTIEN ART 画廊，布鲁塞尔，比利时

2011 “朱伟作品展”，Simyo 画廊，首尔，韩国

“朱伟”，Tobin Ohashi 画廊，东京，日本
“面对面”，特拉维夫美术馆，特拉维夫，以色列

2010 “改造历史，2000—2009 年的中国新艺术” 国家会议中心，北京
“Roundabout”，新西兰惠灵顿市立美术馆，惠灵顿，新西兰
“传统与转型：近期馆藏中国艺术品展”，威廉姆斯大学美术馆，马萨诸塞，美国

2009 “中国当代艺术展”，古巴国家美术馆，哈瓦那，古巴
“中国工笔画学术邀请展” 国家画院美术馆，北京
“纸符—媒介的延伸”，当代唐人艺术中心，香港
“水色”，今日美术馆，北京

2008 “拱之大展” 国际当代艺术博览会，马德里，西班牙
“朱伟水墨册页展”，798 程昕东国际艺术空间，北京
伦敦 SCOPE 艺术博览会，伦敦，英国
“今天的中国”，比利时皇家博物馆，布鲁塞尔，比利时
“来自中国的当代艺术”，希腊国家艺术中心，雅典，希腊
“中国，超越社会主义下的现实主义”，朝鲜日报美术馆，首尔，韩国

2007 “中国当代社会艺术展”，俄罗斯特列恰可夫国家美术馆，莫斯科，俄罗斯
“朱伟作品展”，J.BASTIEN ART 画廊，布鲁塞尔，比利时
巴塞尔迈阿密艺术博览会，迈阿密，美国
“朱伟作品展”，Plum Blossoms 画廊，香港
“朱伟作品展”，季节画廊，雅加达，印尼
苏黎世国际艺术展，苏黎世，瑞士
“朱伟作品展”，季节画廊，新加坡
ANTIQUAIRS2007，布鲁塞尔，比利时

2006 “中国水墨文献展（1976-2006）”，南京博物院，南京
“评论家的抉择”，ART Complex 博物馆，马萨诸塞，美国
“看不见的风景” 近期馆藏展，旧金山亚洲艺术博物馆，美国
“朱伟徐累彭薇三人展”，季节画廊，北京

2005 “朱伟版画展”，新加坡泰勒版画研究院，新加坡，新加坡
“世界摇滚乐五十周年视觉艺术展”，罗马美术馆，罗马，意大利
根特国际现代艺术博览会，根特，比利时
“朱伟版画展”，Plum Blossoms 画廊，香港

2004 “朱伟版画展”，Plum Blossoms 画廊，香港

“思考的粮食” 艺术展，Islip 美术馆，纽约，美国
亚洲国际艺术博览会，纽约第七军械库，纽约，美国

2003 “朱伟作品展”，纽约 Plum Blossoms 画廊，纽约，美国
亚洲国际艺术博览会 纽约第七军械库，纽约，美国

2002 中国艺术三年展，广东美术馆，广州
中国当代艺术展，皮尔·卡丹艺术中心，巴黎，法国

2001 “朱伟作品展”，纽约 Plum Blossoms 画廊，纽约，美国
“艺术家近作展”，Plum Blossoms 画廊，香港

2000 “朱伟作品展”，Plum Blossoms 画廊，香港与新加坡
亚洲国际艺术博览会，曼哈顿第七军械库，纽约，美国

1999 纽约亚洲国际艺术博览会，曼哈顿第七军械库，纽约，美国
比华利山国际艺术展，洛杉矶，美国

1998 “朱伟作品展”，Plum Blossoms 画廊，香港与新加坡

1997 纽约亚洲国际艺术博览会，曼哈顿第七军械库，纽约，美国

1996 “Reyes 现代中国画藏品展”，英国阿什莫林艺术与考古博物馆，伦敦，英国
台北国际艺术博览会，台北

1995 香港亚洲艺术博览会，香港会议展览中心，香港
香港亚太艺术博览会，香港

1994 “朱伟水墨作品展”，Plum Blossoms 画廊，香港
新加坡宝藏展国际艺术博览会，新加坡
香港亚洲艺术博览会，香港
香港国际新兴艺术博览会，香港

1993 “朱伟作品展”，朵云轩画廊，上海

1991 “新军旅画会” 作品展，朵云轩画廊，上海

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