

Interpretation of “Chinese manner” in Chengji’s Watercolor painting

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ABSTRACT. *Chengji is an artist who went to the United States in the last century and wrote and lived in the United States. With the development of watercolor painting in recent years, the value of his Art works has been fully affirmed, which provides a great reference for Chinese painters who survive d in foreign countries. This paper mainly analyzes the process and the characteristics of his painting in painting creation from the aspects of tool media, brush and ink techniques, picture form and art spirit.*

KEYWORDS: *watercolor painting chinese manner painting language art spirit*

1. Introduction

It has been 15 years since the death of Mr Cheng as a painter of watercolor paintings, We can see the expression of his identity on various websites and books. Most of Cheng's academic papers define Cheng's works as watercolor painting. From a certain point of view, the practice of giving Cheng and his works a specific concept of painting will have a great impact on us to judge his value and status, thus causing ideological imprisonment for the contemporary development of our watercolor painting today.

At the beginning of the life of Cheng in America was followed with interest by one person: Pearl Buck, an American woman writer with Chinese emotion, once summed up the symbol of Cheng's challenge as “*Chinese manner*” in her recommendation notes. This is the “Chinese manner” in the eyes of an American who saw the New York's skyscrapers depicted by Cheng. Although she has received classics education, but she has not studied Chinese traditional painting, she is just using the way of literature and her special Chinese emotion to comment on this “Chinese style”. Objectively, Cheng and his work had been successfully accepted in the united states thanks to the only expert who has right of speaking in the united states, and he has made clear direction: to develop the “*Chinese manner*” in the eyes of this authoritative writer as the label of works.

3. Problems in “Chinese Manner”

3.1 The “Chinese Manner” in the Subject

In the first decade in the United States since Cheng arrived, his subject matter is still the people's livelihood, but switched to the people's livelihood of the United States. About the 1950s and 1960s, his strategy for creation were focus on three major categories, the first is the scene, the domestic situation into foreign situation, depicting the streets with star banners of the United States, bustling city, which was directly responsive to the American interest. The second category is human, including the hedonic bourgeoisie and the proletariat laboring masses, as for the subject category, still realism, the exotic experience and domestic experience from Cheng, mixed with his own feelings away from home. The third category is Tao, Deep meditation theme, which has an unpredictable mysterious artistic conception in the perspective of American appreciation, are not necessarily able to explained by Chinese people themselves. Standing in the perspective of American, Cheng outline the idea in their mind, which is, in general: the Chinese traditional line drawing of the line of figure back. “Lao Zi Jing Si” in the Chinese traditional calligraphy tablet writing style, and it is not punctuated in the excerpt. It is more or less elusive for Americans to read with break sentences, what's the mean of it, and so on. He knew that there was no need to extract the full text, as long as such a small paragraph is enough. The faintness of the handwriting, coupled with the silhouette of the figure, can increase the attraction of the work, which is undoubtedly an interesting art form in many European-flavored watercolor paintings. These thoughts of inaction, which have no greed to truly understand the Tao, only the understanding to truly maintain the physical and mental integrity of the thought was what he told to the world, there is a deep image in front of Americans. Don't delve into whether he really wants to tell people what Tao is, just look at what appreciation groups these works faced through which

we can know that his choice is wise.

The first two of these three subjects correspond to the accepted identity that the creative subject presupposes to the audience, the identity of an invisible, low-identity, excluded and alienated by the developed capitalism, the world observed by this perspective has an insurmountable line with the world to which it belongs, and thus the subject still reveals the subjective feelings of concern to the urban civilian and the laboring masses, rather than the developed civilization seen on the surface. The “Chinese manner” in Cheng and his works seems to be quite authentic in Americans.

3.2 The “Chinese Manner” of Pen and Ink Technique

The choice of Cheng in the subject matter does not affect his control of the media. Perhaps, because of the Tao thought in his quotation, he found similar philosophy to his creation, borrowed only a vague concept of “doing nothing is doing”, behind his “doing nothing”, should have long been intended “doing something”. Style is the author's back, can not see themselves. Painting creation may be uncertain in advance, but the strategy of changing style should be planned in advance. Cheng and his strategy to change his style is based on the American Art world.

In his works, where there are lines of the object, enlarge the local or remote view, this part can be visual for the Chinese painting without bone painting, showing the implicit meaning, will carry pen and set color organic fusion, one-step.[1] And this form of pen and ink is precisely the Chinese painting to pay attention to the “epiphany” practice, pay attention to the occasional nature of the ability, this is can not be learned in the short term, only the real Chinese painting professional training personnel have this ability, Cheng used the ink and pen techniques in the works to tell to the American audience, here “Chinese manner” was unique, from the local.

3.3 The “Chinese Manner” of the Spirit

The original western watercolor landscape is exactly real-time painting, Chinese landscape painting is the heart of the landscape, This visual memory of the creation of landscape painting was just the same as it is of Chinese, New York skyscraper is full of prosperity to be seeing by Cheng first to the United States, perspective and height belong to the unremarkable corner of the crowd, as well as a series of landscape paintings only with one person, all of this are the spirit of Chinese painting. By incorporating themselves into the landscape, what they want to convey is the spiritual rather than the physical self.[2] Most of the scenery of this kind of work depicts the snow scene, from the small number of people and the “coolness” of the snow scene, it is the simulation of the Chinese artistic spirit of the “desolate and cold environment, Xiao Shu environment”.[3]

3.4 “Chinese Manner” in the Form of Works

Western traditional watercolor painting is usually only a few forms, and will not be very large, the works of Cheng are always following the composition of Chinese painting, using several basic types such as Doufang, long scroll, banners, fan, poetry, calligraphy and painting printing is complete. The drawing is like normal pen writing, vertical line writing form, the seal just borrowed Shi Tao's (One of the famous artists of Qing Dynasty) “I use my method”, using simplified characters printing, composition is followed by the Chinese painting “white when black”, left white. Chinese aesthetic consciousness based on “taste, touch” reflects that Chinese painting pays attention to the intrinsic aesthetic value. This feature also determines that Chinese watercolor painters in the creation of things integrated, the description of things is the description of the facts of the mind, the externalization of the object is not only related to the visual, but also to the creation of the main body of the mind, life.

4. Conclusion

Some scholars have also paid attention to the change of painting style of Cheng. On the whole, if we consider the Chinese painting art spirit of Cheng and his painting creation as a main line, we will find that all his paintings before and after going to the United States are under the control of the Chinese painting art spirit. The mental factor in Cheng and his paintings is greater than that of the technical medium, which is precisely the “Chinese manner” that Americans can see but can not touch.[4]

Watercolour painters are individuals in a real era, their subjective consciousness should reflect the specific background of the times and cultural background. To realize the concept innovation of watercolor painting can

not be limited to the scope limited by the name of watercolor painting. Cheng's works and his actions and success in foreign countries can show that his innovative thinking is correct, national, also belongs to the world.

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