

**SHANG YANG:  
BETWEEN DECONSTRUCTION & CONSTRUCTION**

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Contemporary art is shifting from the realm of control to the realm of process. If the world of control means an expression of the accuracy of an object, or transit between the aptotic attributes of objects, then the world of process is an expression of the indeterminacy of the object. It is difficult for us to manage to fix them but try to understand how they move and to deduce the trend of their movement. In other words, the world of control is described through its meaning, while the world of process is formed in the recombination of the reality. In this world, the artists always put their own feeling into a flowing process. They are expressing their own emotions rather than describing the state of matters, especially when combining the state of matter and the subjectivity into a mixed object so as to produce a certain visible image. It is rather difficult to give a precise definition of these images from the inherent meaning of the images but vaguely capture certain concern, interest and sensibility from the elements that form the images.

When facing Shang Yang's artistic works, our first impression is the dislocation of time and space. Hills and clouds are unconsolidated. It is shaping the body of the nature by transplanting, juxtaposing, splicing and composing the segments of the nature rather than describing natural landscape. On the one hand, he uses traditional canvas and oil painting; on the other hand, he creates the combination of pictures in virtue of digital images. In the process of the artistic creation, he is, as it were, not only joining the ancient pictures with contemporary optical images, but also linking traditional technique to contemporary anti-technique. It is just by such a mixed expression that Shang Yang creates a visual prospect overstepped from visible objects. When these prospects turn into sequential pictures or giant paintings, they intensively show a kind of trueness in the illusion.

When depicting the nature, the ancient Chinese painters also emphasized their own inner world instead of the true natural view. Accordingly, the images drawn by Shang Yang are the nature in his ideal. However, seen from his expression language, his works are not illation of the ancient conception of painting, instead, they subvert the traditional method by means of contemporary graphic language. In view of this, Shang Yang's paintings, either conceptually or graphically, lie in dual sides of deconstruction and construction of the traditional concept.

As an artist rising from Chinese new art movement in the 1980s, Shang Yang is always exploring a road deviating from the norm while stressing self-construction. For a long time, he keeps painting a batch of "landscapes" with something like free sketch traditional Chinese painting. Obviously, these landscapes are never representations of the nature. Instead, the artist regards the nature as a living body of the life, and tries to present a certain functional feature which reflects the rapport between these landscapes and his mental activity as well as psychological reaction, or even to express the cultural concern by means of the modality of natural lives. What he paints is breath and expression of the lives, which expresses his inspiration of life and cultural cognition. In recent years, he has been immersed in the rapport between the soul and the world, the nature and culture all the more, paying attention to the accidental connectivity in the process of artistic creation and thus creating formative impressionism.

Shang Yang's works are certain recomposed reality. He unseals the combination of new mediators with his sensitivity to the contemporary image world. Besides the traditional painting technique, he utilizes a large number of digital images to create blend image. This kind of language will change flexibly between emotion and symbol, disposition and concept. He has the talent to seize the homophily of iconic signs, viewing both the traditional and contemporary images as a kind of eco-system and interpret it in the process of chemical combination and transformation, and thus put an end to the difference between traditional graphic forms and contemporary iconic signs, which forms poetic connection between physical state and subjective state in this combination. In this regard, he has become from a traditional painter into a contemporary one.

Shang Yang's works are full of spirit of life. In other words, what he wishes to express is the live configuration of natural lives. He used to portray a number of slices of body in his early works, analyzing organizational structure and conformation of body, just like a scientist conducting pathology experiment in the lab. In his recent works, a blend of body is embodied into his drawings, in which the natural image looks like organic formed. This is used as the first mediator to approach the world, and further expresses the relevance between the corporality and cultural property. This concept not only inherits the Chinese traditional painting in terms of expression of vitality of life, but also reflects the contemporaries' experiences in the natural life. The language feature in his works is specific. He uses unintentionally ambulatory lines, dissolved tinct, especially loose brushwork and moderate colour to deliver a sense isomorphic with the breath of life, which makes the work brimming with the motion of life.

Meaningfully, Shang Yang refers the most important series of works as the "Dong Qichang Project", which more or less indicates that his conceptual motive is derived from the inspiration of Chinese traditional painting. In the history of Chinese painting, Dong Qichang may claim to a "cultural deconstructionist" in the changes of ages. As an art historian, he reinterpreted the Chinese painting system that was already quite mature, dividing the originally integrated painting system into two genres, the south and the north. He especially appreciated the group of painters who showed the refine interest of the literary figures, including them into "the Southernism" (the Southern Sect) in theory. Meanwhile, his works reflected his art style of using few strokes and stressing the charm of black ink, presenting vivid pictures with graceful clouds, enveloped fog and flow of water, full of both spirit and vigor. Actually, Dong Qichang's artistic values opposed gradual consciousness featured by sense-dominated art creation while advocated insight, or immediate consciousness of the truth by breaking away from all sorts of norms. This kind of insight can produce mysterious experience at the moment when the soul and the world quietly syncretize, and will further obtain the great pleasure from expression. During these years, Shang Yang is experiencing such kind of "insight". When creating works of art by dint of various mediators, and when expressing fluently the will from inside him, he presents and defines the world. There is no doubt that his exploration of localizing experimental art provides fresh experiences for the contemporary art to cast off conceptual worship of the West and expression models of the West.