

ALBEMARLE GALLERY
LONDON



Dedicated to Gerry Grimstone and Geoff Raby.

Two China Hands who have brought a thousand stories into mine - E. W. P.



3. Peace Series - Couple's Portrait I

平和系列 - 夫妇的肖像之一

Watercolour on Paper 纸上水彩

2013

76 x 33 cm

Collection of Ambassador Geoff Raby, Beijing

芮捷锐大使收藏, 北京

JIANG SHAN CHUN

CHINA'S HISTORY TELLER



ALBEMARLE GALLERY

- in collaboration with -

PEKING ART ASSOCIATES

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4. *Peace Series - Heroic Spirit IV*

平和系列 - 英气之四

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2012

100 x 80 cm

The original photograph (opposite)

照片原图 (对面)

JIANG SHAN CHUN

Yang Feiyun, Artist & President of the Chinese Academy of Oil Painting

LIFE HAS BESTOWED ON JIANG SHAN CHUN peace and satisfaction, and he expresses his gratitude by being stable and fulfilled. Like every young man who has a passion for painting, his eyes are often brimming with enthusiasm, as well as passion... And, as any painter who understands the value of paintings, he never doubts the grandeur of this cause and is able to concentrate and dedicate his life to it. Painters are a group of people who define their core existence by their art. There are far too many different types of emotions and feelings involved, innocent yet complex, direct yet subtle. However, the ultimate question for painters, which takes a lifetime to answer is this: why does one pick up the paint brush and decide to let it define one's very existence?



After years of being a teacher and developing his share of students, Jiang Shan Chun fully understands:- To nurture is to perfect one's self; to educate is to live as an example; to judge is to self reflect; and to act vigorously is to be merciful.

We hope you will enjoy his first thematic body of work, the *Peace* series, and the development of his ongoing series in *Peace Mirrors* and *China Dreaming*.

5. *Peace Series - Reunion II*

平和系列 - 相聚之二

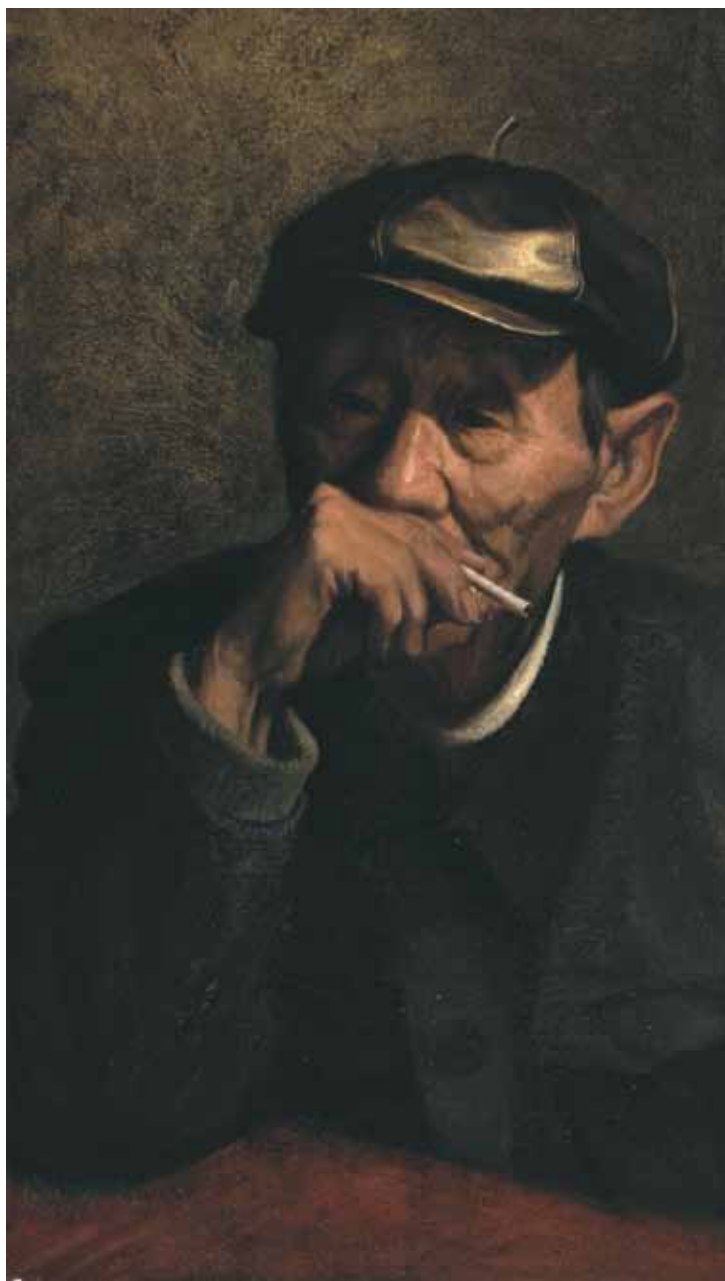
Oil on Canvas 布面油画

2013

92 x 150 cm

Collection of Ambassador Geoff Raby, Beijing

芮捷锐大使收藏, 北京



6. *Reminiscing*

回忆

Oil on Canvas 布面油画

2008

100 x 50 cm

Collection of The National Art Museum of China, Beijing

中国美术馆，北京



7. *Peace Series-Young Friend II*
和平系列- 年轻的朋友之二
Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2011
110 x 85 cm

"You have to paint the times you live in, but in China we are just coming to terms with the times we are creating. There are two speeds, two ideologies and two periods colliding: to understand today you have to understand what my parents and grandparents' generation experienced. By focusing on the theme of old photographs, a retrospective progress of instant cause and effect, I believe it will show what the future looks like..."



8. Peace Series - Family Frames III
平和系列—家庭相框之三
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2011
54.5 x 39.5 cm

...When I paint, regardless of whether figurative or abstract, the purpose of painting is never simulation, but the secrets that lie behind the images. Life itself is a great mystery, if even a causal link existed between the known and the unknown, the mystery would dissolve. The subjects of the Peace series are old photos, and more to the point real people who lived forty, fifty years ago. Looking from the perspective of the present, I always have the feeling of time fleeting, and how many significant changes have occurred in China during this period. However, nostalgia is not enough to support the significance of a painting. What attracts me is capturing the beauty, that is the purity and dignity of the figures at that moment, which is particularly precious now, because contemporary life and societal changes have polished over and even corrupted these traits. The tension between the two periods is where my expansion on portraiture starts."

- Jiang Shan Chun

FOREWORD

Emily de Wolfe Pettit

HIDDEN IN A DESK DRAWER FOR NOW OVER SIXTY YEARS, Jiang Shan Chun's acorn of inspiration in bringing to light periods of history known only by hearsay and legend were fragments of photographic material the artist discovered several years ago on a trip to his Inner Mongolian hometown of Hohhot. Dating from the period shortly after the Founding of the People's Republic of China until the Opening Up Reforms, the faces of great innocence and aspiration have formed Jiang's muses in what is now two refined bodies of work of recent years, the *Peace* and subsequent *China Dreaming* series.



*Tian as a young woman
on the eve of The Cultural Revolution*
照片原图

While the ages and positions of the sitters vary, what is striking is the clarity and calm Jiang preserves, made more extraordinary when contemplating the irreversible life changes his subjects were to encounter in the subsequent quarter century - through familial separation, famine, complete reversals of social structures and widespread Any frame of social reference is as sparse as the era of The Cultural Revolution itself demanded:- in *Young Friend II* (illustrated page 8), the uniform badge bearing the wearer's identity, number and occupation - simply 'farmer' - protrudes from his fur collared jacket, a familiar symbol of those times when everyone wore an insignia of identity according to their given act of labour.

9. *Peace Series - Tian (opposite)*

平和系列 - 恬 (对面)

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2013

100 x 80 cm



A sign of those times, cultural context emerges and wanes as the artist moves forward in time, and it is reinforced inasmuch as it was lost:- in the large portraits *Peace Series - Portrait of Two Families* (back cover, overleaf and page 22), the same once favourite beauty spot adorns the backcloth of the original photograph, in winter (with the artist's father and uncle depicted in thick fur) as in summer, when three young sisters appear in frilled dress. One of the little girls would come to be the artist's mother-in-law decades later in a neat celebration of family unity from a period of division, but the constant mise-en-scène to this photographer's studio in Hohhot of the late 1950's and real-life heritage icon is no more. By the time Jiang reaches the late 70's

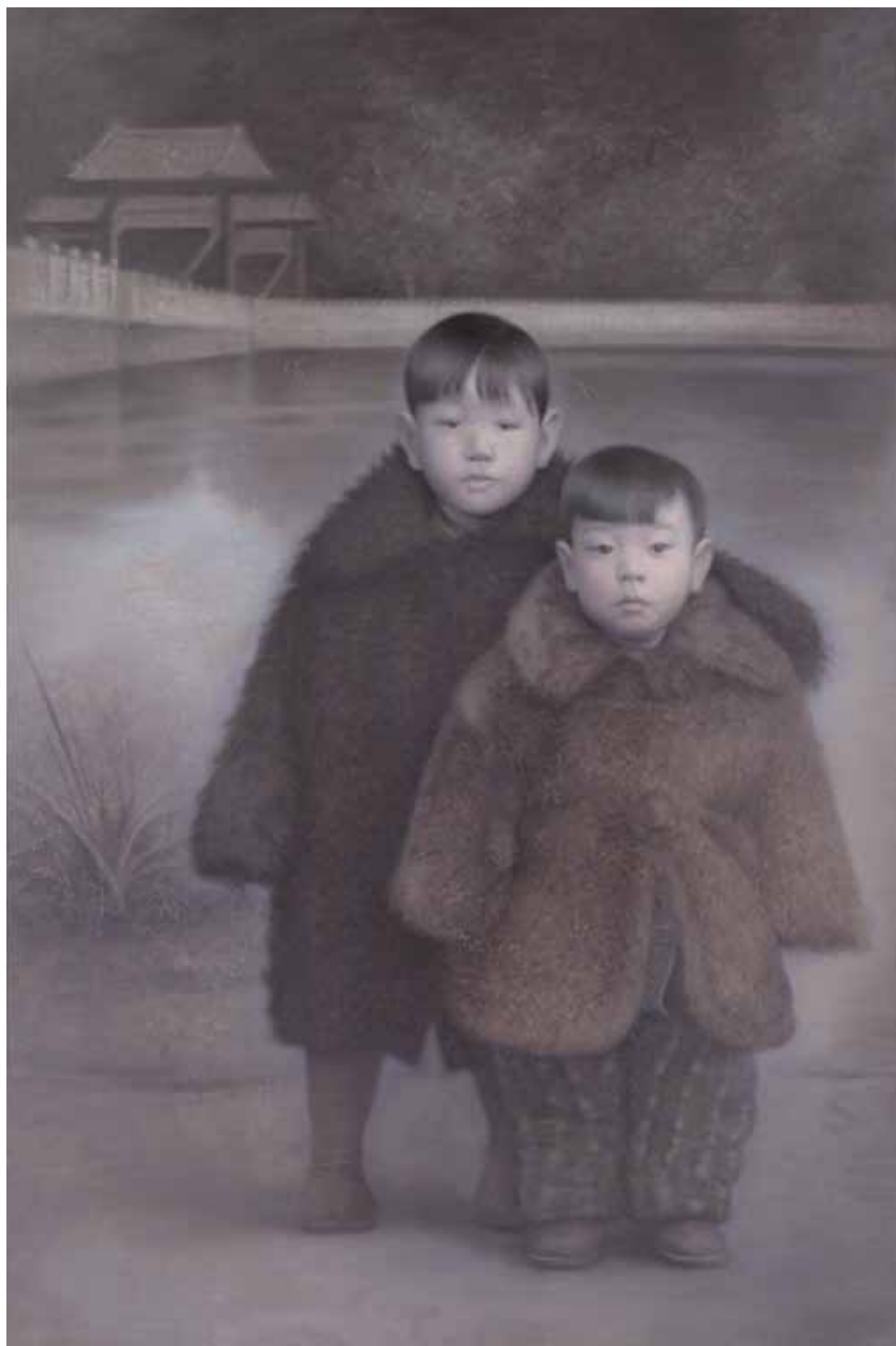
and 80's with the China Dream in full swing, context is very much key and his subjects are now anchored by entrepreneurial purpose for individual and collective ambitions. The notable complexion of the *Peace* series is three colours that dominated over a quarter of a century of Chinese life in dress and tone from the 1950's until after The Cultural Revolution came to an end - green, blue, and grey. In contrast to these sombre hues are glimpses of livelier colours in Jiang's later portraits of children of the early 1950's - hints of the hope that accompanies youth and a period before restlessness overran faith. As the artist approaches the post-1978 Opening Up in his *China Dreaming* series, Jiang's palette becomes almost chimera.

Whilst his principal interest is portraiture, Jiang Shan Chun is also considered a worthy transcriber of Chinese philosophy in still life and abstraction, made practically possible due to his flair for subtle textural rendering in oil and egg tempera. Jiang first presented his genuine versatility through the abstract tempera polyptychs shown in his inaugural solo exhibition *The Refutation of Time*, recently reaching ever grander scale as shown in *Taiji III*, illustrated pages 16 - 17. Based on the concept of the "supreme ultimate", *Taiji* is Taoism's highest conceivable principle, creating *yin* and *yang* from places of stillness and movement respectively. This all-pervasive concept underpins traditional Chinese energy systems



of cosmology and the elements (*Qi*), which are believed to give rise to the seasons and indeed our own human life cycle - a self-perpetuating, eternal sequence of dualities, with reversal being the movement of the Tao. To this vast concept Jiang gives pictorial voice through swathes of intertwined light and shade in mineral hues that are chromatically textured to enact infinite spatial and temporal dimensions, achieving inclines to peaks, and declivities to voids through impressive technical prowess as if sculpting painting, soundlessly and without excess. This simultaneous honing of texture for nuance, along with his consideration of our place in the context of a greater perspective, likely also facilitates Jiang's ambition for his figurative works. His approach to both leads the viewer to contemplate and sensorily engage in a journey that is at once tangible and ephemeral.

10. *Peace Mirrors - Sister and Brother*
平和·镜像 - 姐弟
Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2015
50 x 60 cm



11. *Peace Series - Portrait of Two Families I*
平和系列 - 两个家庭的肖像 I

Oil on Canvas
布面油画

2011 - 2012
207 x 135 cm



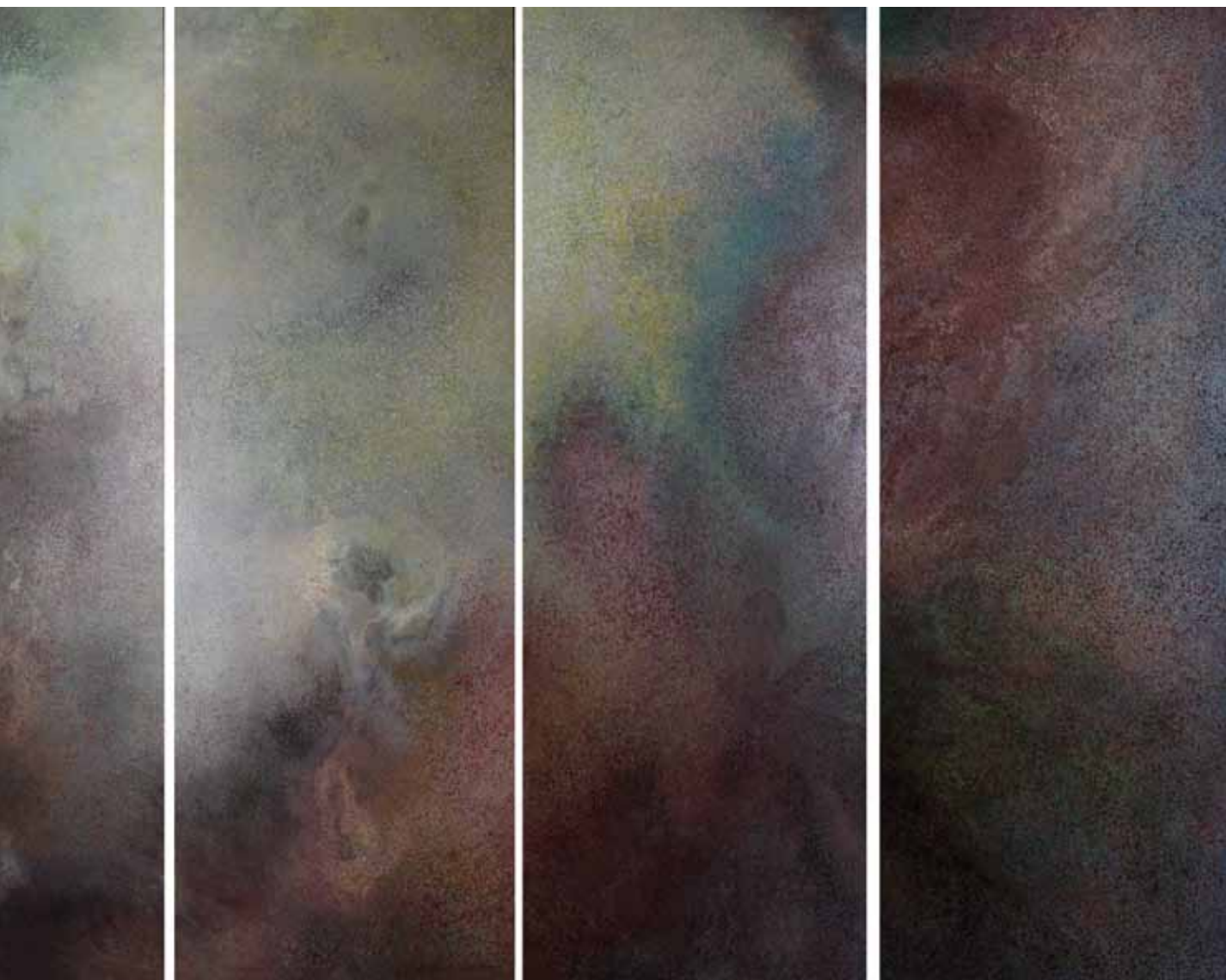
12. *China Dreaming - Young Girl*
中国梦 - 年轻的女孩
Acrylic on Card
卡纸上丙烯酸
2015
100 x 80 cm



13. *China Dreaming - The Student*
中国梦 - 学生
Acrylic on Card
卡纸上丙烯酸
2015
100 x 80 cm



14. *Taiji III*
太极之三
Tempera on Canvas
布面蛋彩
2012 - 2013
210 x 630 cm overall



Himself a professor and now with several solo museum appearances to his name and group exhibitions at the National Art Museum of China, Jiang Shan Chun mastered his fine technique under the tutelage of Yang Feiyun, a Neo-Realist artist widely respected amongst Chinese collectors. *China's History Teller* is Jiang's first solo exhibition spanning all three series of the *Peace* and *China Dreaming* figurative and *Taiji* abstract works, and showcasing all of this painter's technical prowess in oil, watercolour, acrylic and tempera on paper, card and canvas. The artist's original catalyst was the central question of ongoing legacies and moreover, reconciling two histories:- of those who have experienced great upheaval and those who have inherited it. Jiang offers a dignity and propriety to his subjects through his delicate and faithful renderings and a much more intimate and deeper view of real people and stories of a period that is a departure from the bubble-gum, Political Pop works of produced by some artists in China of recent years. In the process, Jiang also provides an insight into himself as a tempered character and a disciplined mind.

As Peking Art Associates continues to initiate and contribute to high quality programming and the appreciation of Chinese contemporary art internationally, we are delighted to collaborate with the Albemarle Gallery London in supporting a talented younger artist and professor who is so dedicated to telling a modulated version of his country's narrative. My thanks to Jiang Shan Chun for his great loyalty and friendship over the years and my thanks to Li Yihui and Michelle Xiao Feng in meeting the task of translating my writing and interview with sensitivity and nuance.



15. *Peace Mirrors - Young Girl II*
平和 镜像—年轻的女孩之二
Watercolour on Paper, Mounted on Card
纸上水彩, 卡纸装裱
2015
52 x 38 cm



16. Peace Series - Couple's Portrait III
平和系列 - 夫妇的肖像之三
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2013
76 x 33 cm

CHINA'S HISTORY TELLER

Emily de Wolfe Pettit

HISTORICALLY, PORTRAITURE IN CHINA HAS HOVERED IN THE SHADOWS OF THE LANDSCAPE AND CALLIGRAPHIC TRADITIONS in a twilight that endured for hundreds of years. It waned with the rise of the towering landscape custom of the Song (960 - 1279) and was then over-shadowed by the scholar-amateur's desire for self-cultivation rather than depictions of physical reality in the successive Yuan. As an artistic genre it only truly came to recognition in the closing chapters of the Ming, moving beyond the largely practical, commemorative practice of ancestral and funerary portraits around the turn of the 17th century with the cult not only of the individual personality of the subject, but also the artist as both professional and the (no less professional and hence commercial) role of the scholar-amateur artist. Commentators of the time marvelled at the fact that the name of the artist could now affect price. They marvelled too at increasingly realistic portraiture created by Chinese artists influenced by the Western images imported by Christian missionaries and its three dimensionality. Yet portraiture's esteem in China has always stood relative to the dominance of calligraphy as an indirect yet more profound means of expressing character, with the writer's script thought to reveal his innermost self. When considering the genre particular to its development in China, it is worth noting that to this artistic tableau stands the backdrop of traditional Confucian philosophy that dictates the nation, the motherland and then the family unit, that is the collective is all esteemed above individualism. Yet portraiture in China, Western influenced from the late Ming as it is to this day, and often associated with the status or commemoration of the individual, has over recent



17. *Peace Series - Red Heart I*
平和系列 - 红心之一

Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2011
50 x 40 cm



18. *Peace Series - Red Heart III*
平和系列 - 红心之三

Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2011
50 x 40 cm



19. *Peace Series - Young Schoolgirls I*

平和系列 - 同学少年之一

Watercolour on Paper

纸上水彩

2011

20 x 46 cm

The Young Schoolgirls as they were (below)

照片原图 (下面)





20. *Peace Series - Portrait of Two Families II*

平和系列 - 两个家庭的肖像 II

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2011 - 2012

207 x 135 cm

The Original Family Photograph (opposite)

照片原图 (对面)

decades gained ever-increasing popularity domestically. Even when artistic voids were left by The Cultural Revolution, it was portraiture in the form of technically involved Neo-Realist imagery in which artists sought a kind of private refuge. Likewise, today many of the most recognised contemporary Chinese oil painters internationally are primarily portraitists - Liu Wei, Liu Xiaodong, Mao Yan, Zeng Fanzhi and Zhang Xiaogang. A younger generation of painters such as Jia Aili, Li Songsong and Qiu Xiaofei often portray sweeping scenes that relay a present and historical tension between the figure and their situation and this dynamic recurs across every possible media from Yun Fei-Ji working in watercolour and ink to Zhang Huan in ash.



While very few contemporary Western portrait painters pay tribute to beauty, most being concerned with a Post-Modern, angst-ridden urban condition, Chinese portraiture has in the past quarter century emerged rich in its diversity and is often keen to distance itself from the real-life disquietude of living memory. It thus diverges from recent developments in Western painting and even its own native painting tradition in which capturing a likeness has never been so important as hinting at the spirit of a subject. First led by the highly academic Neo-Realist movement that celebrates both the beauty of the human form in its most romantic and hyper-realism in depictions of everyday figures, contemporary Chinese portraiture is in many ways backlash to a lack of focus on the plight of the lay person and decades of sugar-coated Socialist-Realist portraiture on a sweeping scale. The Neo-Realist movement has reached milestones over the last thirty years ranging from Luo Zhongli's *Father* (1981) to Leng Jun's so-called *Mona Lisa* (1995); currently there are signs that a younger generation schooled in the rigours that Neo-Realist training brings is moving beyond formalism to seek out more significant messaging that links the historical to the personal whilst underscoring a sense of longed-for dignity, and almost anti-celebrity. Now in his mid-30's, the artist and young professor Jiang Shan Chun has painted celebrated figures, but he too seems to find painting the Everyman and recognising dignity in the face of adversity the most compelling encounter - both for the viewer and for himself as the artist. Through his considerable and growing body of work, the *Peace* series,



21. *Peace Mirrors - Voices from afar*

平和 镜像 - 来自远方的声音

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2015

80 x 160 cm



a multi-generational narrative is emerging that seeks to tell another side to the period founding the People's Republic of China in 1949 leading up to The Cultural Revolution and beyond. At the centre of these works is the ideal of human dignity - without the slightest trace of regret or even wonder at what might have been. The task of creation Jiang has set himself is a utopia of the mind through sympathetic but steely strength of character and in doing so, the artist retreats from the slightest trace of pity resultant of collective pain and suffering. When considering the epoch's tremendous upheaval, even as a relatively distant backdrop to the artist and his subjects' native Inner Mongolia, it is marvel to the viewer that this be the prevailing tone the artist wished to convey.



Breathing life into large chapters of a country's history is no mean ambition and there is no precedent to the task or rather the manner and scale in which Jiang wishes to realise his artistic quest; in the artist's words, there is a long way to go in creating one branch of an historical family tree of a nation. Unlike other notable Chinese artists who have recorded this period of history, for instance Zhang Xiaogang, whose *Bloodline* series is overwhelmingly symbolic, or Jin Shangyi, whose work is descriptive, Jiang Shan Chun's *Peace* and *China Dreaming* series are a careful balance between both the symbolic and the descriptive. His subjects were real people, people he was or is connected to, either family members or friends, and he pays attention to realistic, subtle details to relay this chapter of their life's story. Yet the details are deliberately sparse and the subject is all - any props or contextual devices are of, or literally on, the subject, for instance their medals, identity badges, and their very attire declaring their new role in the labour force of The Cultural Revolution. While the works shown in the artist's 2011 solo exhibition *The Refutation of Time* capture fleeting moments of daily life, the *Peace* series is more concerned with the subject's psychology. There is a density to the best of the works, such as *Heroic Spirit IV* (page 5) and a deep focus on the subject. The context is thereby within the sitter, and by this approach paintings are created that are entirely self-reflecting, if aware the subject is posing for an audience (*Reunion I*, page 51). There is also a remarkably calming, other-worldly quality to the work, which Jiang achieves largely through his subjects' gaze, managing to be wistful and at the same time intensely penetrating, exquisitely captured in *Tian*, page 10, the sailor boy in *Heroic Spirit III*, page 40, and *Heroic Spirit II*, opposite. His work thereby becomes a two-way mirror and ultimately it is mystery as to whether we are the viewer or the viewed. Mystery perpetuated through the devise of the mirror is further seen as a consequence of a different technique in Jiang's *Peace Mirrors*, the evolution of the series in which the artist frames his subjects in smouldering edges of exquisite realistic detail in oil, watercolour and acrylic (pages 12, 18 and 38 - 39), at once giving the appearance of an aged manuscript reflected in a mercury coated mirror.

22. *Peace Series - Five Girls*
 平和系列 - 五个女孩
 Watercolour on Paper
 纸上水彩
 2012
 17 x 47 cm
 Private Collection, Hong Kong
 私人收藏, 香港



23. *Peace Series - Heroic Spirit II*
平和系列 - 英气之二
Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2012
100 x 80 cm

The historical document Jiang is building with the *Peace* series in the form of single, family, couple and children's portraits in oil, pencil and watercolour originates from his perspective of an army family, an insider's view of a symbolic structure for maintaining the status quo post-WWII rather than active engagement with politics or combat (with the exception of the Korean War, 1950 - 1953). And the artist is keen to link the private to the collective's shared experience for a deeper connection between the human and the historic. Based on a family archive of photographs, this relationship dwells materially in the relationship between photography and painting. Photography was once predicted to ring the death knell of painting, particularly portraiture, and the dynamic between the two genres is complex. The relationship has been explored by the German artist Gerhard Richter who has also painted portraits of family groups and soldiers who were members of his family. Arguably, Richter wanted to show that even though his work was based on photographs, as is Jiang's work, it was an illusion, and thereby neutralise a charged political chapter in his country and personal



family history. Jiang Shan Chun's work is not so much intent on neutralising politics as it is placing politics firmly to the background of his subject's personal experiences, and creating a private encounter for himself and the viewers of his paintings. There is a stillness and distance for contemplation that both the de-politicising and purely photography-based subjects lend the *Peace* works, versus contact with live models (as shown in Jiang's *Tibetan Portraits*, in which the energy is quite different). As with photography today, one can imagine the *Family Frames* portraits, (illustrated pages 9 and 31) inhabiting a domestic setting. The artist claims he does not wish to create an illusion, but there may be a sub-conscious need to show purity, and to purify. In a sea of Post-Modernism, the apparent innocence of Jiang's subjects is an antidote, not only to past, but also present social change.

Thus there is the possibility for engagement on various levels for the viewer of this series. Firstly, in the vein of the Neo-Realist verisimilitude there is Jiang's captivating faithfulness to his subject's likeness. However portraiture is obviously its most compelling when the painter captures not only the physical resemblance and the temperament - perhaps through the shadow over an eye or frown moving across a mouth - but offers a glimpse of the character and aura of their subject. Exceptionally, this is reflected most accurately in Mandarin, having several words for portraiture including *yin tu* (literally 'shadow picture') and *fu shen* ('depicting the soul'). The viewer can sense the meaning of both *yin tu* and *fu shen* in Jiang's strongest character subjects, for instance the army general in *Heroic Spirit I* (page 45), *Young Friend I* (page 36) and *Young Friend V* (cover), in which the intensity of the subject's gaze is startling. Jiang's almost spiritual deference is tangible through the finesse with which he treats his subjects and the great sensitivity of his coloration, often using a single

24. *Peace Series - Sisters II*

平和系列 - 姐妹之二

Watercolour on Paper

纸上水彩

2012

14.5 x 34 cm

Artist's Collection

艺术家的收藏



25. *Peace Series - Young Soldier I*
平和系列 - 年轻军人之一
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2013
46 x 28 cm

family palette within the same work, for instance, the exquisite watercolour groupings on pages 21 and below. It is as if by perfecting an external reality, an internal search for harmony may be enacted. There is also the demand to engage on a temporal or historical level with the series. What of course does not come across in reproduced images of art works is the delicacy of brushstroke and the deep textural layering, the source of a perceptible sense of a passage of time. The artist's intention in doing so is to replicate his source of a well-worn photograph, one that has been kept for a long time, treasured, and looked at over and over, for instance the *Red Hearts* portraits on the title page and page 20, and captured in an aged mirror that has held countless reflections (pages 49 and 50). In other words, texture is memory in this series. It is also sculpted stillness, if you like - and literal distance for reflection for both artist and viewer.



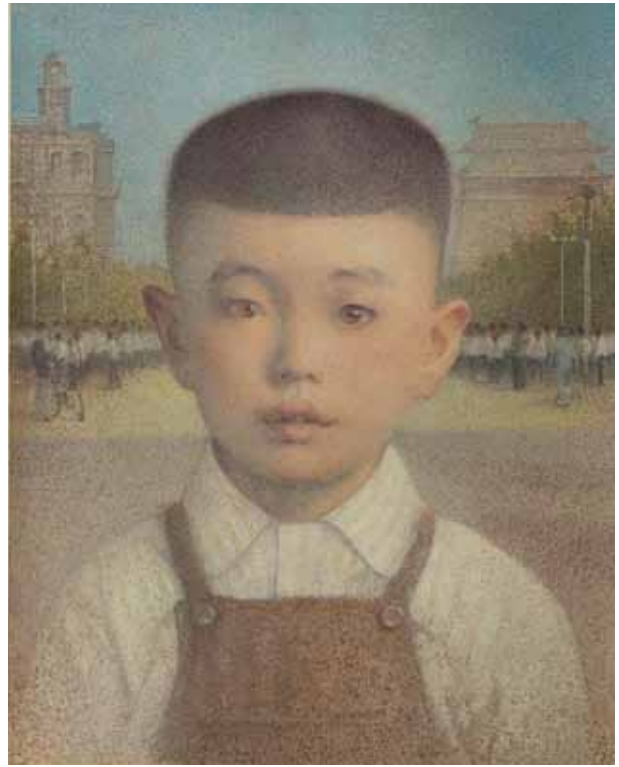
Amongst the artists he admires, Jiang Shan Chun counts his former professor Yang Feiyun, who prizes the sheer beauty of the human form and painstaking reproduction of it. Yang Feiyun's romanticism may have influenced Jiang to idealise his subjects into angelic, stoic figures in the face of an imperfect human memory. Jiang also acknowledges portraitist Mao Yan, whose work he describes as "luxuriously nihilistic", stripping away markers of social identity to focus on the "purity of portraiture". Jiang Shan Chun has said he has decided not to go back to paint his subjects still living to preserve their purity and he may indeed be attracted to the period of history he paints in this series because hierarchical, social identities as they once were simply did not exist for a while. The *Peace* works, Jiang's first thematically worked series, is as much a search for self-identity as it is a nation's identity, where Jiang is once again stopping time to make memory, but now without the weight of history, or at least a more nuanced view of it.

26. *Peace Series - Woman's Portrait*
 平和系列—女像
 Watercolour on Paper
 纸上水彩
 2012
 27 x 20 cm

27. *Peace Series - Youth*
 平和系列—青年
 Watercolour on Paper
 纸上水彩
 2011
 19.5 x 13.5 cm



28. *Peace Series - Family Frames I*
 平和系列—家庭相框之一
 Watercolour on Paper
 纸上水彩
 2011
 54.5 x 39.5 cm



We see this developed further in Jiang's most recent series *China Dreaming*, above and right. Focusing on the post-Mao period and engineering the next chapter of China's history, the artist again treats his subjects in a subtle, highly textural manner, in which he applies fine pointillism over the entirety of his composition to make for a rich effect that really pushes the medium of acrylic on card. Yet these works are lighter in texture than the *Peace* series and this is now combined with a very different, saccharine palette. The artist also now firmly places his subjects in a social context; their backgrounds are the mills, the school yards and the universities of China. The overall effect suggests

that the artist is pointing to dreams, which, important as they may be, are just that; the incandescent, fantastical dimension is laced with the slightest hint of irony. Jiang has spoken highly of the values of solidarity following the Founding of the People's Republic of China. Here he seems to infer a hope that the 'China Dream', transformative as it has been, may be surpassed by a more profound chapter of Chinese history that consolidates traditional values of 'da jia', family, and community with a more mitigated version of Western capitalism. It is a pleasure to contemplate how Jiang Shan Chun will interpret his future subjects in these unprecedented chapters of human history.

29. *China Dreaming - Little Girl*
 中国梦·小女孩
 Acrylic on Card
 卡纸上丙烯酸
 2015
 100 x 80 cm

30. *China Dreaming - Little Boy*
 中国梦·小男孩
 Acrylic on Card
 卡纸上丙烯酸
 2015
 100 x 80 cm



31. *China Dreaming - The Engineer*
中国梦·工程师
Acrylic on Card
卡纸上丙烯酸
2015
100 x 80 cm

FURTHER CATALOGUE OF WORKS





32. *Peace Series - Couple's Portrait II*

平和系列 - 夫妇的肖像之二

Watercolour on Paper

纸上水彩

2013

76 x 33 cm

The original photograph (opposite)

照片原图 (对面)



33. *Peace Series - Young Friend I*

平和系列 - 年轻的朋友之一

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2011

110 x 85 cm

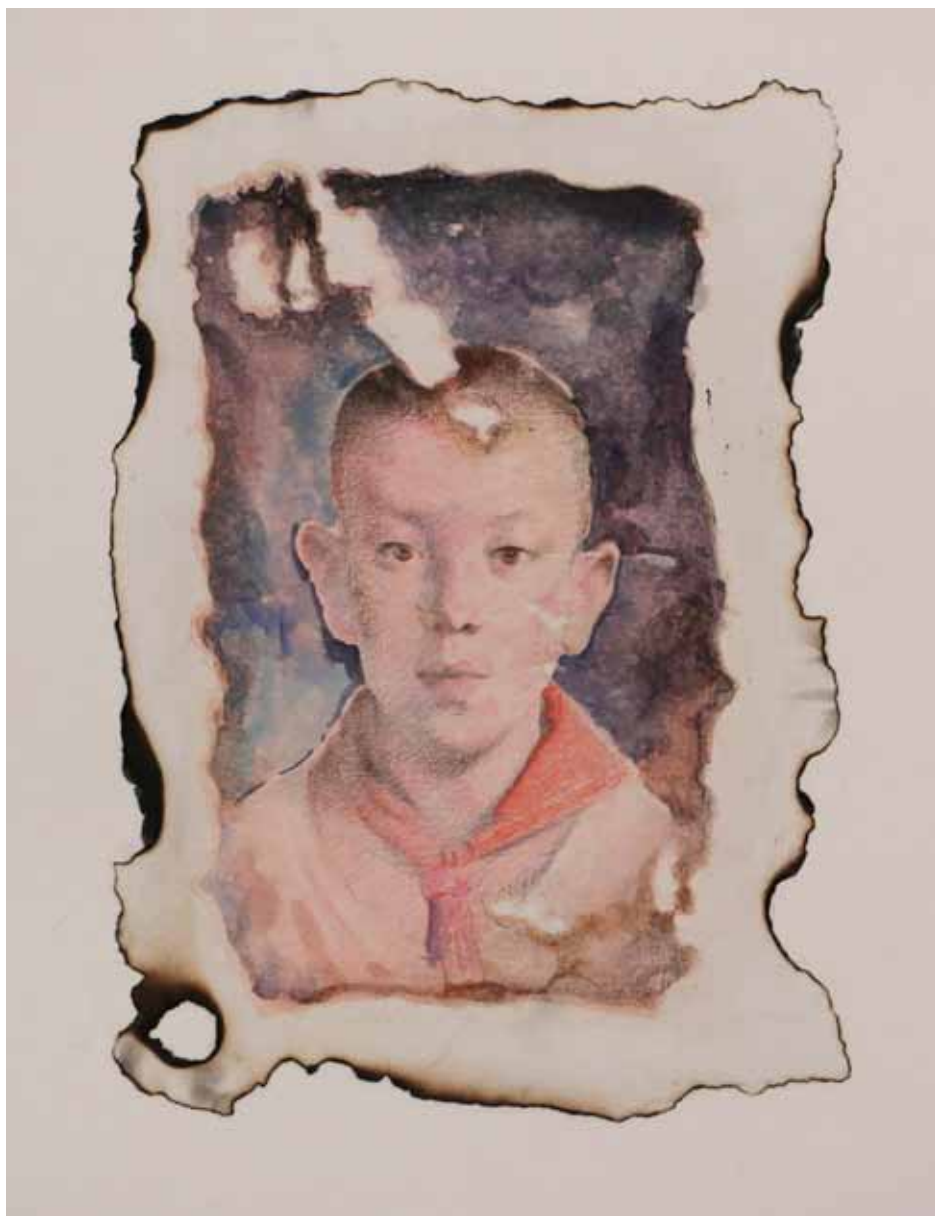
The original photograph (opposite)

照片原图 (对面)





34. *Peace Mirrors - My Mother*
平和 镜像 - 我的妈妈
Watercolour and Acrylic on Paper, Mounted on Card
纸上水彩及丙烯酸，卡纸装裱
2015
52 x 38 cm



35. *Peace Mirrors - My Father*
平和·镜像 - 我的爸爸
Watercolour and Acrylic on Paper, Mounted on Card
纸上水彩及丙烯酸，卡纸装裱
2015
52 x 38 cm



36. *Peace Series - Heroic Spirit III*
平和系列 - 英气之三
Oil on Canvas 布面油画
2013
100 x 80 cm
Photograph of the Sailor (above)
照片原图 (上)



37. *Peace Mirrors - Sisters*
平和·镜像 - 姐妹
Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2015
60 x 50 cm



38. *Peace Mirrors - Little Girl III*
平和 镜像—小女孩之三
Watercolour on Paper, Mounted on Card
纸上水彩，卡纸装裱
2015
52 x 38 cm



39. *Peace Mirrors - Child I*
平和·镜像 - 百岁系列之一
Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2015
60 x 50 cm

40. *Peace Series - Red Scarf I*
 平和系列—红领巾之一
 Watercolour on Paper
 纸上水彩
 2012
 24 x 16.5 cm



41. *Childhood Series 21*
 童年系列之 21
 Watercolour on Paper
 纸上水彩
 2011
 23.5 x 16.5 cm



42. *Peace Series - Heroic Spirit I*

平和系列 - 英气之一

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2012

100 x 80 cm



43. *Peace Series - Children's Portrait VI*

平和系列—儿童人像之六

Watercolour on Paper

纸上水彩

2013

44.5 x 30 cm



44. *Peace Series - Children's Portrait VII*
平和系列—儿童人像之七
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2013
45.5 x 32.5 cm
Collection of Professor Wu Xiaohai, Beijing
吴小海教授收藏, 北京

IN CONVERSATION WITH JIANG SHAN CHUN

Emily de Wolfe Pettit

"I adore the act of painting, it's so extraordinarily subtle, it is something you can never be too skilled at... To paint the expression of a face and to change that expression, from happy to sad by one minuscule change in the shadow of an eye, makes one never want to do anything else" - Artist Glenn Brown, speaking in 2002



Emily de Wolfe Pettit (EP): The artist Peter Doig has described painting as a viewer "absorbed into a place or landscape", in other words an immersive, almost spiritual experience, whereby painting could be seen as a phenomenon. There is a perceptible spiritual deference in your work, achieved through the finesse with which you treat your subjects and the sensitivity of your coloration. You clearly have great empathy for your subjects.

Q: What are the criteria for your selection? Do you feel it is necessary to have an emotional connection to your subjects? You are also a highly-regarded abstract painter, but you seem to naturally gravitate to portraiture. Are you attracted to the genre because you find it the most immersive experience for the viewer - and for yourself as the artist?

Jiang Shan Chun (JSC): While I paint both the abstract and concrete, the purpose of painting is never a simulation, but the secrets behind the images. Life itself is a great mystery, if even a causal link exists between the known and the unknown, mystery would not exist. The subjects of the *Peace* series are old photos, and moreover real people who lived forty, fifty years ago. Looking from the present perspective, I always have the feeling of time fleeting, and how many significant changes have occurred in China during this period. However, nostalgia is not enough to support the significance of a painting. What attracts me is capturing the beauty, purity and human dignity of the figures at that moment, which is particularly precious now, because life and societal changes have at turns polished, and elsewhere corrupted these traits. The tension between the two periods is where my expansion on portraiture starts.

EP: Historically portraiture has been in the shadow of the calligraphic and landscape traditions in China. Today portraiture is hugely popular in China.

Q: How do you account for the flourishing interest in portraiture in China? Who are the Chinese portrait artists who have influenced you and you admire?

JSC: The value of Chinese traditional culture can not be better carried than by calligraphy and landscape painting. This branch of our culture is introspective, self-cultivated, ethereal, and egoless. Portraiture and historical painting are more concerned with delving into the fabric of society which cannot be representative of Chinese traditional culture. Literati paintings are the opposite. Their trajectory is not anti-society as such, but they are certainly not political in any way. Pure self-cultivated painting is stepping into to a highly specialist area, while paintings geared towards social needs have become mainstream. The flourish of portraiture is wrapped up in this historical and ongoing trend. Based on this kind of



45. *Peace Series - Comrade-in-arms I* (opposite)

平和系列 - 战友之一 (对面)

Watercolour on Paper

纸上水彩

2012

20 x 47 cm

Collection of Mr Michael Charlton, Beijing

Michael Charlton 先生的收藏, 北京

46. *Peace Mirrors - Young Woman*

平和·镜像 - 年轻女子

Watercolour on Paper, Mounted on Card

纸上水彩, 卡纸装裱

2015

52 x 38 cm



47. *Peace Mirrors - Soldier I*
 平和·镜像 - 战士 之一
 Watercolour and Acrylic on Paper,
 Mounted on Card
 纸上水彩及丙烯酸, 卡纸装裱
 2015
 52 x 38 cm

analysis, there are two artists I am interested in. One is Mao Yan, whose works have a kind of luxurious, nihilistic feeling. The luxury is created by the artist's fluidity of brushstroke, while nihilism comes about as he rids his works of all those factors of identity and experience. The essence of Mao Yan's works is literati paintings, and he goes even further. Self-cultivated and egoless are redundant characteristic of his works. The other artist is my former teacher Yang Feiyun, who is representative of Chinese Neo-Realism and well-known for his classic painting style. To my point of view, classical or not is not the question. At the core lies his strong desire to analyse society. Professor Yang's painting style is on the pulse of hyper-realism, the study of colour, perspective, space and so on is very deep. I watched him once sketching an old man in the countryside. Every brushstroke showed his honesty and sensitivity. He told me that he always becomes too excitable to be able to control his emotions when he sketches. He has to calm down first and then start to paint. As for me, exploring questions of society maintains my passion for art, even though this process reminds me of the limitations of human beings.

EP: There is the possibility of engagement on various levels with the *Peace* series. Firstly, there is the faithfulness to your subjects' likeness, but what doesn't come across in reproduced images of your work is the delicacy of brushstroke and richness of texture; texture intended to replicate that of a well-worn photograph, one that has been kept for a long time, treasured, and looked at over and over. In other words, texture is memory in this series. It is also sculpted stillness, if you like - and literal distance for reflection. For the viewer, there is therefore the demand to engage on a temporal / historical level with your work. We see this also through a different technique in *Peace Mirrors*, your evolution of the series in which you convey the passage of time through exquisite rendering in oil and watercolour of burnt edges framing your subjects.

Q: Would you ever go back to paint your subjects still living and would you approach them differently this time round - meaning how would you explore further the temporal element?

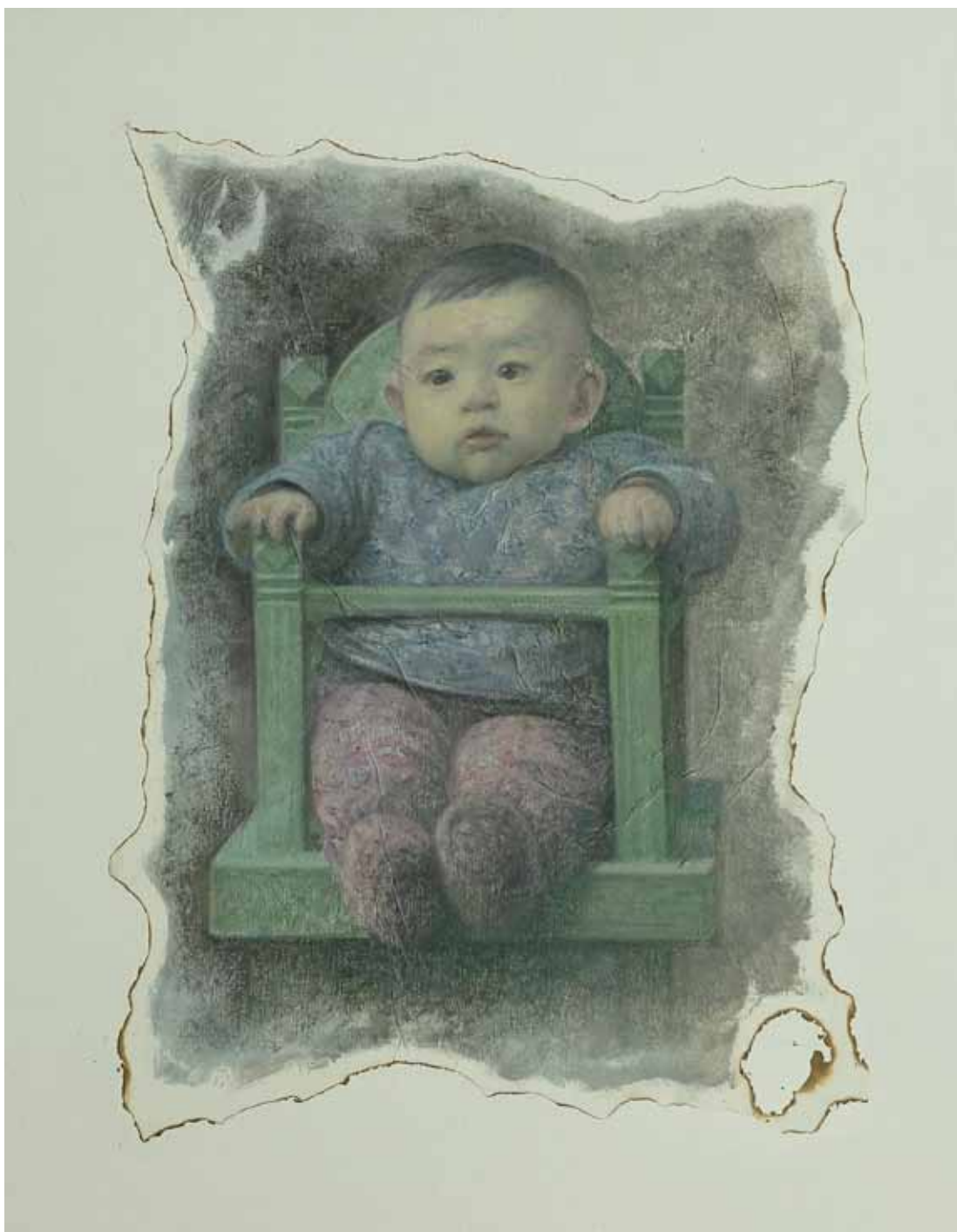
JSC: Yes, part of my original plan was to paint the subjects who are still living today. But in the end I decided it would overshadow the preservation of innocence - and that is my foremost goal. Firstly, placing past and current portraits into a single exhibit is like giving the questions with answers. Secondly, the comparison would be almost ruthless as it emphasises the cruel nature of time passing. My aim is to show the stillness of my subjects, rather than the changes. The temporal element acts as the background, stressing values of the past. And, as a further temporal element, memory filters a kind of reality on the past with distance to the actual events but much closer to the truth of perspective. In the recent series *Peace Mirrors*, I emphasised the tension between object and memory, which is sort of magical. I wanted to express contradictions between nostalgia and disappearance. The trace of a flame is a metaphor, indicating the conflict: the disappearance of the material and conversion into memory. It's a rebirth, nirvana.

Q: So in preferring to capture and preserve your subjects in their moment in time and create perspective rather than reenact actual events, you veil your subjects in mystery. Is this a motive behind the new treatment of your subjects in *Peace Mirrors*, as if the viewer is standing before of an old manuscript that has been worn in time?

JSC: To me, reality is a mystery and I strongly believe it is created by karma. By focusing on the theme of old photographs - a retrospective progress of instant cause and effect - I believe it will show what the future looks like. In the *Peace Mirrors* the surface blurring effect produces a sense of retreat and distance for the viewer; the burned edge symbolises the flame of time and history. Thus it makes the value of those who are about to disappear stronger or a sense of preciousness that we are in time to save the traces of the past. I hope to produce an open question as to China's future. Overall, I am positive and I would love to go back in time through the history of our country. I believe this history of distinctive experiences will have practical significance for the future.



48. *Peace Series - Reunion I*
平和系列 - 相聚之一
Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2013
92 x 150 cm



49. *Peace Mirrors - Child II*

平和·镜像·孩子二

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2015

60 x 50 cm

EP: Unlike other Chinese artists who have recorded this period of history, for instance Zhang Xiaogang, whose *Bloodline* series is overwhelming symbolic, or Jin Shangyi, whose work is descriptive, your work is at once a balance between the symbolic and the descriptive. Your subjects were real people and people you were connected to, either family members or friends - you pay attention to realistic, subtle details that relay their life's journey.

Q: Do you regard it as key to present a multi-generational narrative to express the ongoing repercussions of the period 1949 leading up to the Cultural Revolution and to anchor the private within the context of the public for a deeper connection between the human and the historic?

JSC: These works not only describe a single period, but several periods of history. I didn't distinguish between them intentionally. On the contrary, I wanted to avoid showing any symbol of socio-political events' effects across periods. Social background, individual fates and other factors are important parts in my creation, but cannot be over-emphasised. In my view, the light of humanity is the greatest value, which has universality beyond an age or geographical borders. However, there is a kind of tension when facing country, nation, politics, the helplessness and insignificance of human nature then becomes apparent. There are also the ideals connecting human values; when there is too much focus on physical reality the aesthetics may reach a stumbling block - and the secret of life vanishes. It's difficult to balance between ideals and reality, but I hope I achieve this.

EP: To take this question further, traditional Confucian socio-political thought begins with the nation, the motherland, then family unit, that is the collective, all esteemed above the individual. Yet portraiture is often associated with the status of an individual - as a portrait artist you commemorate your sitter. You have painted famous faces, but you seem to find painting the Everyman and recognising their individual identities the most compelling. There is also a moral dimension to your work. You perceive strength in instilling a sense of self-worth, preserving their dignity, and moreover, reinstating their pre-Revolution purity.

Q: Do you see it your duty to portray a moral dimension in recording this period of history? Is this partly why you focus predominantly on younger subjects?

JSC: No. Life itself brings a kind of pure beauty when it starts, which is identical every time. Purity has nothing to do with morality. For traditional narrative paintings, their function was to state the painter's moral stance. My portraiture works are



50. *Peace Series - Young Soldier IV*
平和系列 - 年轻军人之四
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2013
46 x 28 cm

not narrative, but include ingredients made for narrative - my subject's clothing, tags and so on are connected with their time period. However, it is just a path to reach the subject. The identity icons are reflective of their status and situation at the time, but fate is always transient and unpredictable. The aura of my works is made up of factors beyond those found in the paintings, such as the changing times, evolution of society, the unknown fate of individual... One's own moral compass should be their guide and for my works I want to express what I see without judgement. Their beauty is thought-provoking enough, there is no need for additional comment.



51. *Peace Series - Children's Portrait II*
平和系列—儿童人像之二
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2011
24.5 x 17.5 cm

EP: The Neo-Realist portrait artists, including your former professor Yang Feiyun, often prize photorealism above all else, and the sheer beauty of the human form, especially the female form. Yet portraiture is most compelling when the painter captures not only the physical resemblance, the character, but the aura of their subject.

Q: Do you think it is more important to place idealism over realism in order to achieve this?

JSC: Pure portraiture does need to negotiate the relationship between the ideal and reality. Any portrait painting would be a failure if it had nothing other than just the image and its form. Research and rational judgment behind the image are more important for the viewer and for the artists. Some artists establish the form by removing the image, but I care more about the information the image brings to me, not only giving the individuals I portray independent voices, but also expressing a story that fascinates me — the visual presentation of an individual's fate. On the other hand, the subjects of my *Peace* works date back thirty to fifty years ago. The filter of time also makes the ideal more overt. I still hope to emphasise idealism, because it accommodates and balances better the complexity of human nature. Speaking on a practical level, the so-called ideal and real, concrete and abstract, are integrated and it is hard to balance or distinguish which comes first.

EP: Your work focuses on your subject, the subject is all - any props or contextual devices are of, or literally on, the subject, for instance their medals, their attire, their badges declaring their new occupation under the Cultural Revolution. The context is within the sitter, thereby creating works that are entirely self-reflecting. There is also a remarkably calming, other-worldly quality, which you achieve through your subjects' gaze, which manages to be simultaneously wistful and penetrating.



52. *Battle Companion*
 战友
 Watercolour on Paper
 纸上水彩
 2012
 25 x 36 cm

Q: Could it be said that your work is intended as a two-way mirror - that is, is it deliberately enigmatic as to whether we are the viewer or the viewed?

JSC: Painting itself is an art of contemplation, which is the same to both the artist and the audience. The uniqueness of portraiture lies in the more prominent, sometimes the only, individual image; secondly, if the eye view of the figure is towards the viewer, it inevitably will produce two-way examine effect. I hope viewers could gain such similar experience in the process of reading paintings. In addition, the subjects I depict are concentrated in 1960s. I prefer stronger faces and more representative state in choosing subjects. Overall, the poor in material and the rich in spiritual of that period showed vivid contrast, which I think is a unique phenomenon in Chinese history, or even human being's history. If those figures in the paintings can feel and see the current China, their thoughts must be able to converge into a great book.

EP: Speaking of a great book and current China, your most recent series *China Dreaming* focuses on the post-Mao period and engineering the next chapter of China's history. It is again a highly textural series; your use of fine pointillism over the entirety of your composition makes for a very rich effect that belies the medium of acrylic on card. Yet it is lighter in texture than the *Peace* series and the palette has an almost incandescent effect.

Q: Is there a faint hint of irony in your saccharine treatment of your *China Dreaming* subjects? You have spoken highly of the values of solidarity following the Founding of the People's Republic of China. Do you harbour a wish that the 'China Dream', transformative as it is, is surpassed by a more profound chapter of Chinese history that consolidates traditional Chinese values of 'da jia', family, solidarity and so forth with a more mitigated version of Western consumerism?

JSC: Yes, consumerism stands polar opposite to traditional values - that is the same in China as in the West. A feature of consumerism is to stimulate man's desire for ownership when in fact the result is a false sense of liberty and tangibility; in this way, it creates a machine that self-renews. Thus, ironically, the essence of consumerism is to make us bound to an industrial chain, being a screw to facilitate the big machine if you will. With *China Dreaming* I wanted to hint at a utopian concept of great inclusiveness, that integrates individual values with collective ambition, and implies continuity of past traditions simultaneous to development of contemporary society. It can also be defined from both macro- and microscopic perspectives. I hope this series can convey this rich connotation and complexity. The series depicts figures in the 1980s,

in whom I want to convey their sense of belonging, when the endeavour of individuals was closely connected with construction of the nation. Their image and what they represent is a marvel to me.

EP: Moving to the material inspiration of your work, I believe all of your portraiture to date has been inspired by old photographs. The relationship between photography and painting has been explored extensively by German artist Gerhard Richter, who has also incidentally painted portraits of family groups and soldiers. Richter arguably wanted to show that even though his work was based on photographs, as is yours, it was an illusion and thereby neutralise the charged political context.

Q: While very different stylistically, are you seeking to do the same in your work?

JSC: In my work, I wish to eliminate excessive suggestive and descriptive attributes and instead focusing on subtleties of expression, analysing the figure's character and most importantly, their internal, spiritual state. The cause of this or that kind of temperament and state can be partly traced to political circumstances. But politics is about group values over individualism. I have some plans for group portraits, which will be closer to a more complex presentation of group values in visual form.

EP: The *Peace* works are your first thematically worked series. It seems this series is as much a search for self-identity as it is a nation's identity, and indeed an exploration of your own identity.

Q: What does this series mean to you? What conceptual and/ or stylistic aspects of it would you develop next, or perhaps depart from?

JSC: One's country is like a parent, offering a profound sense of destiny, which is the origin of marrow and blood, the residence of spirit and soul. I am an artist, art creation is my life. Yet all the things I can and cannot create in my life are limited to my painting tools. When it comes to my own identity, I am a soldier, which is the biggest change in recent years. Becoming a soldier from as well as a professional artist appears to be a decisive change for me. The fact that I am a Chinese also lends to a profound sense of identity. I will find my way by coordinating my three identities. The reason why those figures I have depicted in this series have experienced eyes and rich confidence is because of their rich life experiences.

As for my *Peace* series, many people may associate this series with nostalgia because the depicted subjects are very old. In my opinion, classicalism is recalling the past of idealism, realism is recalling the past of post-modern age, being cynical is recalling the past with anarchism. What is new? What is old? This is not my concern. One piece of work is one point of view, ten works is a voice, a hundred works is a silent scream, one thousand pieces of works will be an epic poem. There is still a long way to go.

EP: Photography was once predicted to ring the death knell of painting, particularly portraiture. There is a noticeable difference in the energy of your work that uses photography-based subjects (the *Peace* works) versus live models (for instance in your Tibetan portraits).

Q: Paradoxically, is the distance provided by photography the tool you need to create the stillness and distillation of your work?

JSC: In Western history, the developments in optical instruments and realistic paintings have had widespread repercussions everywhere. The development of technology does not mean the termination of a particular painting style. However, if an art form finally steps into demise, it shows its root vitality has lost its soil. Painting and photography would not mutually end, because their functions and characteristics are not the same. The advantage of painting is that it records the most exquisite emotional traces and clues of inner thoughts of human through handiwork. Looking at paintings are like observing people - details of behaviour show immediately.

Photography has in my opinion borrowed from painting. Such situation remained the same before the birth of photography hundreds of years ago, which is not surprising at all. Both my *Peace Series* and Tibetan children's portraits are actually based on photographs, but the photographs of children in Tibet were taken by myself while those of the *Peace Series* were selected from a personal archive of another era. Stylistic differences originate from the differentiation of themes, and different subjects will have their own ideal performance language, if you will. Of course, I also attach great importance to the sense of distance as an artist engaged in the act of painting. Photography provides quiet meditation and space for contemplation, and also provides distance in time. As for me, subject stability is very important, to suggest the existence of eternity. In relative terms, I can sketch fluently, but the image is constantly in flux, which occasionally makes me feel anxious.

EP: There are very few contemporary portraitists that pay tribute to beauty; most are concerned with a Post-Modern, angst-ridden urban condition. Your work eschews gratuitous attention-seeking imagery for a genuine empathy to your subject.

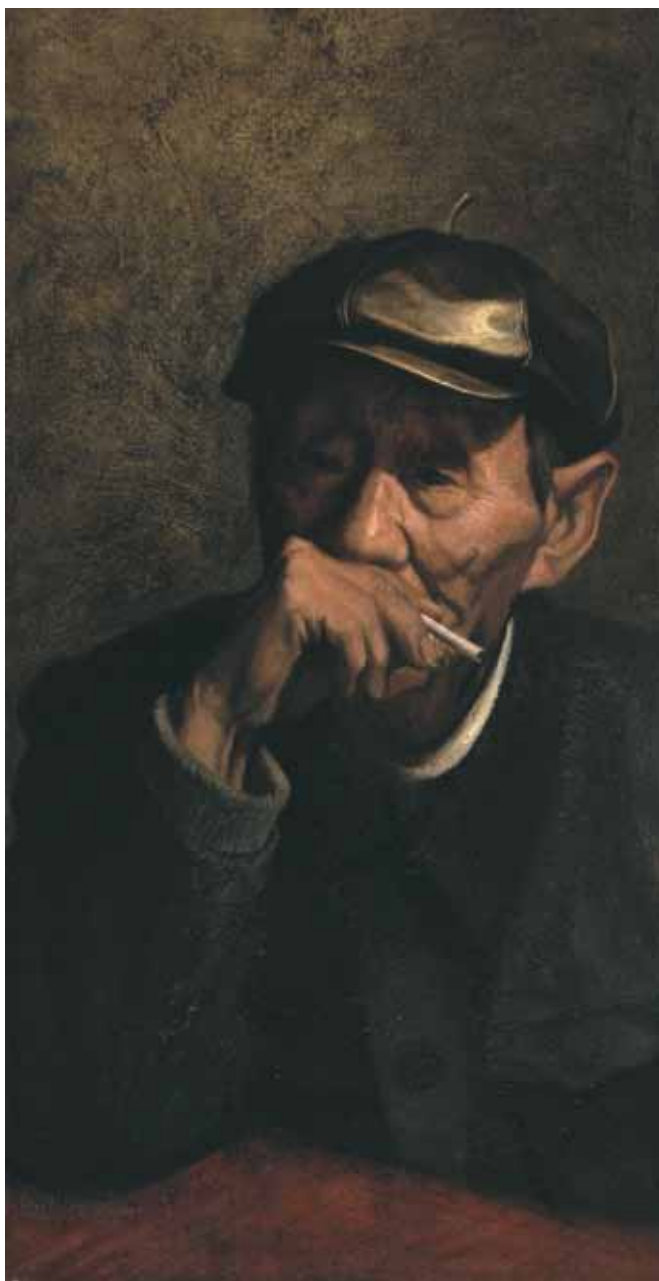
Q: In a sea of Post-Modernism, do you see the innocence of your subjects as an antidote to brash commercialism?

JSC: Commercialisation is the general trend which cannot be defied; artists are brands required to be operated and artworks are goods circulating in a marketplace. According to economic principles, good companies sell goods, better companies sell intellectual property, the best companies set standards. What lies behind the art world is not the wider public audience but the commercial world. In this commercial society, even the purest affection can be consumed, and of course this includes art. When it comes to urban identity and Post-modernism, the core maintains the act of consumption, which has replaced value and is the cause of anxiety. This is why I'm preoccupied with depicting China's pre-consumer society. At that time we were not yet alienated by technology and market rules, and were able to maintain hope and dignity of life with confidence. The irony is that, when we look back, the image is so deep and full, no matter the subjects had no money or material possessions which makes me think what should we rely on to enhance dignity of life and peace of mind. Getting back to paintings, I hope to show the inner light of human nature, let those who have suffered and will suffer from disaster to find peace, put anxiety and struggle to the background in the quiet of their eyes.



53. & 54. *Peace Series - Miniature Portraits V & VI*
平和系列—
小型人像之五、之六
Watercolour on Paper
纸上水彩
2011
22 x 15 cm (L); 26 x 18 cm (R)

PUBLIC & NOTABLE COLLECTIONS

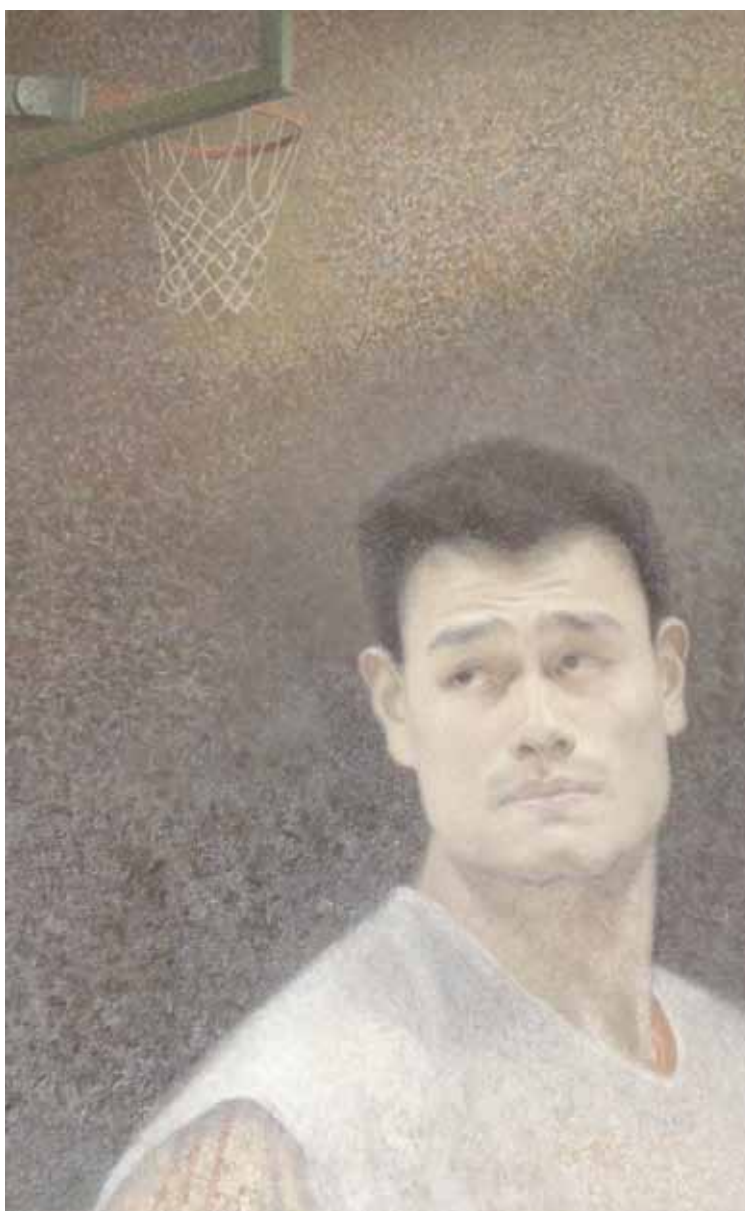


As previously plated: *Reminiscing*
回忆

Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2008

100 x 50 cm

Collection of The National Art Museum of China, Beijing
中国美术馆, 北京



55. Yao Ming

姚明

Oil and Tempera on Canvas

布面油画和蛋彩

2010

100 x 80 cm

Presentation to The China Olympic Museum, Beijing

北京中国奥林匹克委员会订制



56. Zhuang Zi's Butterfly Dream

梦蝶

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2009

180 x 180 cm

Important Private Collection, United Kingdom

重要私人收藏，英国

57. *Time Immutable*
歌声已经远去
Oil On Canvas
布面油画
2010

Chevron Corporate Collection, The Chairman's Office, Beijing
雪佛龙公司藏品，董事长办公室，北京





58. & 59. *China's Temporality - The Present I & II*

此时- 此刻

Oil on Canvas

布面油画

2010

60 x 50 cm each

Standard Chartered Bank Collection, Singapore

新加坡渣打银行收藏



60. *Morning Cooking*

晨炊

Oil On Canvas

布面油画

2009

100 x 100 cm

Silver Prize Winner, Eleventh Asian Arts Festival

Collection of the Asian Arts Festival

第十一届亚洲艺术节银奖

第十一届亚洲艺术节组委会收藏



61. *Taiji - The Supreme Ultimate II*

太极 2

Tempera on Canvas

布面蛋彩

2011

225 x 606 cm overall

Chevron Corporate Collection, China Headquarters, World Trade Centre, Beijing

雪佛龙公司藏品，中国区总部，国贸，北京





62. & 63. *Peace Series - Children's Portraits III & IV*
平和系列—儿童人像之三，之四

Watercolour on Paper

纸上水彩

2011

44 x 24 cm each

Private Collection, Beijing

私人收藏，北京



As previously plated: *Peace Series - Couple's Portrait I*

平和系列 - 夫妇的肖像之一

Watercolour on Paper 纸上水彩

2013

76 x 33 cm

Collection of Ambassador Geoff Raby, Beijing

芮捷锐大使收藏，北京



64. *Taiji - The Supreme Ultimate I*

太极 I

Tempera on Canvas

布面蛋彩

2007

150 x 375 cm overall

Private Collection, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

私人收藏, Abu Dhabi, 阿拉伯联合酋长国





65. *Memory*

记忆

Oil On Canvas

布面油画

2009

100 x 100 cm

Heaven, Earth and Man's Museum, Shandong, China

天地人和美术馆，山东，中国



66. *Portrait of Mr Charles Farmer*

法墨的肖像

Oil and Tempera on Canvas

布面油画和蛋彩

2011

80 x 60 cm

Collection of Mr Charles Farmer, United Kingdom

重要私人收藏，英国

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY



JIANG SHAN CHUN

Born in Inner Mongolia in 1979

Graduated from Oil Department of Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2002.B.F. A. degree

Graduated from Chinese National Academy of Arts in 2009.M.A. degree

Professor, PLA Art Academy, Beijing

Living and Working in Beijing

EXHIBITIONS

2015

Strong UN, Better World, United Nations 70th Anniversary June Group Exhibition, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Nostalgia for the Past, Jiang Shan Chun's Portraits, Solo Exhibition, Sui Xuan Art Centre, Shanghai

Jiang Shan Chun Solo Exhibition, Heaven, Earth and Man's Museum, Weifang, Shandong Province, China

2014

Making Peace with History, Jiang Shan Chun Solo Exhibition, Peking Art Associates, Beijing

The Chinese Dream, Group Exhibition, National Art Museum of China (NAMOC), Beijing

2013

The Plastic Arts, Exhibition of the People's Liberation Army, The Shen Fa Mahogany Museum, Beijing

2012

The Opening Exhibition of the Hong Zheng Art Space, Songzhuang Art Village, Beijing

2011

Exhibition of the Teachers of the PLA Art Academy, National Art Museum of China (NAMOC), Beijing

The Refutation of Time, Jiang Shan Chun Solo Show, Peking Art Associates, Beijing

2010

The Exhibition of the Fangzi Gallery Opening, Weifang, China

Hand in heart to see the glorious world—Dual Exhibition of Liu Yujun & Jiang Shan Chun Charitable Donation Exhibition to the Blind Society of China, Dragon Space, Beijing Hong Kong Jockey Club, Beijing

Tracing Sources and Seeking Law, Ordos, China

Tracing Sources and Seeking Law to the West—Chinese Oil Painting Exhibition, Baotou, China

Teachers and students of the Department of Fine Arts Exhibition — 50th anniversary of PLA Art Academy, PLA Art Academy, Beijing, China

2009

The Fourth A+A, PIFO New ART Gallery, Beijing

Tracing Sources and Seeking Law—Appointment in Fangzi, Weifang, China

The Eleventh Asian Arts Festival—The Ordos International Art Exhibition, Ordos, China

Seeking and Finding, The First Exhibition of Chinese New Oil Painting Artists, Chinese Academy of Oil Painting, Beijing

2008

Tracing Sources and Seeking Law, China Art Gallery, Beijing

Tracing Sources and Seeking Law, Chan Liu Art Museum, Taipei

Wenchuan, The Fine Arts School Attached To The Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing

2007

Power of Realism, Contemporary Realism Art Gallery, Beijing

2005

The Quest for the Origin of Art, China Art Gallery, Beijing

Sketching Works of Tracing Sources, CAFA Gallery, Beijing

2004

Awarded Works of Charles B.Wang Oil Painting Scholarship, CAFA Gallery, Beijing

2002

Graduation Works of Central Academy of Fine Arts ,CAFA Gallery, Beijing

2001

I See the World, Nokia Sponsored Exhibition, Central Academy of Fine Arts, Gallery, Beijing

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Chevron Corporate Collection, Beijing

Heaven, Earth and Man's Museum, Shandong, China

The National Art Museum of China (NAMOC), Beijing

Rosewood Beijing

Standard Chartered Bank, London

Standard Chartered Bank, Singapore

2004 年

" 王嘉廉奖学金获奖作品展 ", 中央美术学院陈列馆 , 北京

2002 年

" 中央美术学院毕业展 ", 中央美术学院陈列馆 , 北京

2001 年

" 诺基亚——我看世界 ", 中央美术学院陈列馆 , 北京

公共收藏

雪佛龙公司收藏, 北京

天地人美术馆, 山东, 中国

中国美术馆 (NAMOC) , 北京

瑰丽酒店, 北京

渣打银行, 伦敦

渣打银行, 新加坡

江山春

传记

1979 年生于内蒙古

2002 毕业于中央美术学院油画系, 获学士学位

2009 毕业于中国艺术研究院, 获硕士学位 现居北京

展览

2015 年

" 强大的联合国 ", 更美好的世界 -- 暨联合国成立 70 周年庆群展, 联合国总部, 纽约

" 江山春怀旧系列作品展 " 随轩艺术中心 上海

" 江山春怀旧系列作品展 " 天地人和画廊 山东潍坊

大型作品 《盲人摸象》等 5 幅作品参加 潍坊国际艺术双年展 山东潍坊

2014 年

个展 *Making Peace with History* 展出作品 " 平和系列 ", 北京艺术联盟, 北京

作品 《中国兵》参加中国梦、强军梦军事题材美术作品展, 获优秀奖 (未设等级奖), 中国美术馆, 北京

2013 年

" 觉醒 2013 一当代油画名家邀请展 " 坊茨美术馆 山东

" 全军美术骨干造型培训班成绩汇报展 " 深发红木艺术馆 北京

2012 年

晶释艺术空间开幕展 北京

2011 年

个展 " 江山春一时的悖论 ", 北京艺术联盟

" 解放军艺术学院美术系师生作品展 " 中国美术馆 北京

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67. 平和系列 - 五十年代
Peace Series - The 50s
纸上水彩
Watercolour on Paper
2012
51 x 36 cm

第五十一页)。他的作品中有不同寻常的恬静,还有似乎是来自另外一个世界的特质,江几乎是通过人物惆怅又极具穿透力的眼神来达到这样的效果,在《恬》(第十页)和《英气之三》(第四十页)中的少年水手,以及《英气之二》(对页)中完美地表现出来。因此他的作品变成了一块双面镜;最终对无论对观者还是被观看的对象来说都有一种神秘感。如同这种神秘穿过镜子渗透在画面,在江近期的作品《平和·镜像》中他使用了不同以往的技术——同时使用油彩、水彩和丙烯酸(分别在第十二、十八和三十八至三十九页)的精致细节的笔触勾勒出边缘带有灼烧痕迹把对象框了起来,瞬间如同水银镜面倒影出来的年代久远的手稿。

在“平和”系列中,江山春使用油彩、铅笔以及水彩等方法来描绘个人、家庭、伴侣以及孩子们的肖像,其所依据的历史资料来自于他军人家庭的视角,作为曾经的内部人员远离真正的政治和战争(除了1950-1953的抗美援朝战争)去观察一个维系二战后现状的象征性的体系。艺术家也竭力将个人经历跟更宏大的,集体的经历联系起来,从而发现人们跟历史更深层次的关联。基于家族照片档案,人们跟历史的关系在形式上投射于摄影跟绘画的关系。摄影曾经被认为是绘画的终结者,尤其是肖像画,两者之间的相互作用是极其复杂的。德国艺术家Gerhard Richter也深入探索过照相和油画的关系,恰巧的是,他也画一些家庭群像和士兵人像。即使跟江山春类似,Richter的作品也是依据照片,但他无疑是想要创造一种幻像去中和他的国家一段政治敏感时期和他的家族历史。而江山春的作品并不想要中和政治而更多地将政治作为环境的因素来呈现人物的个人经历,从而引起他自己和观者的共鸣。“平和”系列中这些去政治化的、单纯从照片上摘取下来的人物给作品增添了一份宁静和距离感以便思考,跟其他与真人模特接触而作的作品形成了鲜明的对比(比如江的西藏人物肖像,其蕴涵的精神是完全不同的)。就如同今天的摄影一样,我们可以想象《家庭相框》(第九、三十一页)的肖像是在一个室内环境下,艺术家并不主张去制造幻像,而可能潜在地去展示纯粹或者去净化。在后现代主义的浪潮里面,江所描绘的人物身上单纯直接的纯真是一剂对过去和现在社会变迁的解毒良方。

这样给观者提供了不同层面上带入感的可能性。在新现实主义的失真的浮夸的映衬下,江忠实地还原人物的本来面貌就显得尤其动人。当然肖像画最迷人之处是当画家不仅仅局限于惟妙惟肖地刻画形态和准确地传达情绪——也许是通过眼周的阴影或者掠过嘴角的一丝不悦——还要描绘出人物的微妙瞬间和主题氛围。肖像画在中文里有多种表达方式,包括“阴图”以及“复身”,更能够精准地反映出江作品里面一些非常刚毅的人物特点,在《英气之一》(第四十五页)、《年轻的朋友之一》(第三十六页)、《年轻的朋友之五》(封面)中他们目光如炬,人们特别能够体会到这两个词的深意。通过对人物的雕琢和色彩的敏感处理他实现了一种精神上的抗争。他通常在一幅画中只使用一组相近的色彩,以这几幅精致的水彩(第二十页和下图)为例,似乎外在被美化之后就能实现内在的和谐。他的画作更要从瞬间和历史的角度的去解读。人们肯定无法在复制图像中领略笔触的微妙和层次感,反之人们才能感知时间的流逝。艺术家试图去还原那些在岁月中老去的照片,反复欣赏揣摩,如同在《红心》(扉页和第二十页)中去捕捉一面曾经留下无数倩影的古老镜子的瞬间(第四十九、五十页)。换句话说,在这个系列里质感寄托了回忆,凝固的时光裹上一层薄纱,留下空间给画家和观者去思考。

谈起他所欣赏的艺术家,他提到了他硕士时期的导师杨飞云教授,他值得崇敬之处是对人类绝对之美的赞颂以及孜孜不倦地耕耘这一主题。杨飞云的浪漫主义,对于那些存在在记忆里面并不完美的但坚忍的人物过度理想化,也许让江产生了诸多疑问。江也很尊敬另一个中国肖像画家毛焰,江形容他的作品是“奢侈的虚无主义”,撕掉了社会身份的标签直达“肖像的纯粹”。江山春谈到为了维护他创作的纯粹性他决定不再回过头去把对象画成依然活着的人物,而他其实特别被这个系列的历史背景所吸引,因为在很长一段时间内阶级的、社会的身份的概念并不存在。“平和”系列是他第一个主题系列,是对他个体身份的探索和对国家身份的探寻的过程,他抛开历史的枷锁或者至少用了一种值得玩味的角度来凝固时间构建回忆。在他第二个也是最新的系列“中国梦”里面他有了更多的发挥。为了勾画后毛泽东时代以及书写中国未来的篇章,艺术家同样将人物刻画得细腻、极富质感。他在整个画面上都使用了点画法使其饱满,超出了卡纸上丙烯酸一般能产生的效果。但是这些作品比“平和”系列更轻质,并结合了不同以往的甜腻的色彩组合。艺术家在此完全将创作对象投放到社会环境中;中国的山峦、操场、大学组成了其背景画面。整体来看,艺术家暗示了梦想也许很重要但也仅仅是梦想;这种梦幻的、热情洋溢的画面暗藏着一丝反讽的意味。江对新中国成立之后集体团结的价值观给予过肯定。这里他似乎在影射他的一种期待:被重新塑造的概念“中国梦”,随着弱化后的西方消费主义的出现,超越了中国历史中更深刻的传统价值——“大家”,包括家庭、团结等等。让我们对江山春未来如何描绘这一段精彩的历史怀抱无比的期待。

北京艺术联盟(Peking Art Associates)一直以来在世界范围内积极发起和促进高品质的艺术项目以及推广中国当代艺术。我们很荣幸与伦敦Albemarle Gallery一起支持才华横溢的青年艺术家、教授,他不断贡献去娓娓讲述那些关于他的国家的往事。感谢江山春多年以来的忠诚和友谊,同样对李一卉和冯潇谨慎细致地完成我的访谈和文章的翻译工作表示感谢。

中国历史的叙述者

江山春作品

作者：EMILY DE WOLFE PETTIT 艾美丽

历史上，肖像画在中国一直被山水画和书法传统的光芒所掩盖，千百年以来蛰伏于艺术的暮光之中。它在宋朝（960-1279）随着山水画巅峰的到来而逐渐式微。继而在之后的元朝，肖像画由于士大夫文人注重修身养性超过对追求物质世界形态的价值观倾向而脱离了主流。接近十七世纪尾声，随着对肖像人物的个体独立性还有对画家的专业性和文人画家（并非技术上不专业）的商业性的强烈关注，直到明末它才从基本只为特定功能、纪念性的家族祖先和葬礼肖像绘画发展成一个艺术流派，从而真正得到世人的关注。当时的评论家肯定惊叹于现在画家的名声对于价格的巨大影响。他们也会惊讶于基督教传教士将西方的图像传入中国之后，后世的中国画家的创作受其影像而逐渐写实立体。但是肖像画在中国始终相对处于书法所统治的艺术体系之下。书法所作为一种含蓄但更为深刻的方式来表达个性，被看作是释放书法家内心自我的极致手法。将肖像画的发展放在中国的环境下，有必要指出的是这个艺术现象是植根于儒家传统中家、国、天下的统一的集体价值优先于个人价值的观念。然而在西画从明末以来直到今日的影响下，肖像画在中国总是与人物的地位和纪念意义息息相关。在近几十年来，在中国国内受到越来越多的重视。甚至在文化大革命期间艺术一片空白的情况下，肖像画技术化地依托了新写实主义的形式充当了艺术家的避难所。同样地，今天很多蜚声国际的中国当代油画家也基本以画肖像为主——刘炜、刘小东、毛焰、曾梵志还有张晓刚。青年艺术家里面如贾蔼力、李松松和仇晓飞都刻画了广泛的题材反映当代以及历史人物和环境的激烈碰撞，并且在各种媒介上尝试进行创作：从季云飞的水粉到张洹的香灰。

当代的西方很少肖像画家会去歌颂美，大部分都投身于后现代的、焦虑环绕的都市状态；而中国肖像画在过去的四分之一世纪里呈现了丰富的多样性，并且尽量远离那些记忆犹新的现实中的痛楚。这样一来它的发展偏离了近年西方绘画的轨道，甚至区别于中国绘画轻写实重写意的传统。在学术上受政治化的新写实主义的影响，主张最为浪漫化地勾勒人物以及对高度写实地呈现普通人。中国肖像画家用各种方式来对抗多年以来泛滥的糖衣包装下的社会主义现实主义肖像画中缺乏对人物困境的关注。新现实主义运动在过去的三十年里涌现出了一系列里程碑式的作品，从罗中立的《父亲》（1981）到冷军的《蒙娜丽莎》（1995）；如今可以看出一些端倪，新一代的艺术家已经开始从严苛的新写实主义绘画训练的形式主义教条中挣脱出来去探寻更深远的意义，将历史与个人联系起来，同时也凸显了其纯粹性、对人的尊严的渴望和几乎是反名人话题性。现在在他的三十岁中旬，艺术家、教授江山春也画过名人，但是他更倾向于关注普通人和挖掘那些历经苦难的面庞上透露的尊严，是对观者和艺术家本人最强烈的震撼。在他相对数量庞大和不断增长的作品群当中，“平和”系列的背后浮现出一个关于几代人的故事，展现了从1949年新中国成立到文革以及之后这段时间历史的另一个侧面。这些作品的核心思想是对人的尊严的理想化——不带有丝毫迟疑和疑问曾经可能发生过什么。江山春怀着同情又同时坚强地给自己设计了一个精神的乌托邦。以此，他在精神上规避了来自于集体伤痛的那一丝丝遗憾。另外考虑到时代巨变对于艺术家本人以及他所刻画内蒙古当地人而言都是相对脱离的，观者会被他希望传达的这样的基调所打动。

将生活嵌入一个国家的大时代背景并非艺术家的野心，还没有一个先例完成了这个使命，甚至构建了这样的范式或者能被划入这个范围，而这正是江山春所努力的艺术追求；用艺术家自己的话，构建一个国家的脉络的一个分支都还有很长的路要走。区别于其他纪录这个时期的声名显赫的中国艺术家，如张晓刚，其“血缘”系列过度地标签化，或者靳尚谊，其作品又极其地描述化；而江山春的“平和”系列则在审慎之后在这两者中找到了平衡。江山春的创作对象是现实中的人，那些跟他曾经或者现在紧密相关的人，家人或者朋友。他通过那些真实的，微妙的细节传递着他们的人生故事，即使这些细节被有意地简化。他2011年的个展“时间的驳斥”展示的作品捕捉了那些日常生活中稍纵即逝的瞬间，而他这次的“平和”系列则更多地专注了人物的心理层面。这个系列集中了一些他最好的作品，如《平和系列——英气之四》（第五页），对创作对象也有一个深度的探索——创作对象包括了人物的全部——任何道具或者背景相关都或多或少地构成了创作对象，比如他们的奖牌，徽章，以及他们的衣着都显示出了他们在文革中作为劳动者的新身份。如果知道画中人是为了观者摆好姿势的情况下，通过这样的呈现方式我们可以发现时代背景深植于这些人物的内心，而他们是高度自省的（《平和系列——相聚之一》，

68. 平和系列 - 伉俪
Peace Series - Couple
布面油画
Oil on Canvas
2013
100 x 80 cm each
照片原图 (下面)
The original photograph (below)



艾美丽：德国艺术家 **Gerhard Richter** 也深入探索过照相和油画的关系，他也画一些家庭群像和战士人像。**Richter** 想表现的是，尽管他的作品是基于照片的，和你一样，有一种错觉，是要中和激烈的政治局势。

问：尽管风格大不一样，请问你也在你的作品中有类似寻求吗？

江山春：在我的作品中，剔除了过分有提示作用和说明性的环境。我将注意力集中在形象的表现上，分析形象的气质，更重要的是内在的精神状态，这种气质与状态的成因，可以追溯到政治上，但政治是群体价值，个体无法从中凸显。我还有一些群像的计划，在视觉规模上会更接近群体价值。

艾美丽：平和系列是你真正主题性绘画的第一个作品系列。看起来像是对自我定位的找寻，因为是国家的象征，也是对自己的身份的探索。

问：这个系列对你而言意味着什么？你接下来有什么理念上或者体裁上的是你想要深入发展的，或者是要摒弃的？

江山春：国家如同父母，是最深刻的缘份，是骨髓与血脉的根源，是精神与灵魂的居所。我是一个艺术家，艺术创作是我立命安身之所在，此生所能为与不能为的大限都在这些笔墨纸砚上。从自我身份而言，我是一名军人，这是近年来最大的一个变化，从一个职业艺术家转变为一个军人，对我是一种决定性的转变。我是一个中国人，这是我近十年来越来越深刻的体会和认同的一个事实，将这三个身份协调起来，我会找到自己的路。如同我描绘的那些五十年前的形象，之所以目光炯炯，自信满满，源自于他们丰富的人生阅历。关于我的平和系列，很多人看后会归纳为怀旧，这也没有办法，因为我的描绘对象本身就旧。在我看来，古典主义是怀理想的旧，乡土写实是怀前现代的旧，泼皮玩世是怀无政府主义的旧……何谓新？何谓旧？这不是我在意的。一幅作品是一个观点，十幅作品是一个声音，百幅作品是沉默的呐喊，千幅作品将是一部史诗，要走的路还很长。

艾美丽：摄影一度被预测会终结绘画，尤其是终结肖像画。在你选择基于照片的绘画对象（平和系列）与真实模特（比如你的西藏人像系列）的作品中，能看出有明显的差异。

问：神奇的是，摄影照片中产生的距离感会不会是你在作品中创造沉静与升华的工具？

江山春：从西方历史上看，光学仪器的研究与写实绘画的发展无论何地都一直是相呼应的，终结绘画的担心只是由于产生了便捷快速的影像固定方式。话说回来，如果一种艺术形式最终走向消亡，那说明它的根生命力失去了适合的土壤。绘画与摄影不会相互终结，是因为它们的功能与特点各不相同。绘画的优势在于，它可以将人类最精妙的情感痕迹与思想线索以手工劳作的方式记录下来，观画如观人，举手投足，纤毫毕现。

绘画对摄影有广泛的使用与借鉴，在摄影术诞生前的几百年间一直是这样的状况，不足为奇。我的平和系列与西藏小孩也都是基于图像，只不过西藏小孩的图像是自己拍的，平和系列是从一个时代的个人影像记录中挑选出来的；表现的差异主要源于主题的差异，不同的主题会有最佳的表现语言。当然，作为从事绘画行为的艺术家，距离感也是我非常重视的，艺术家摄影提供了可供从容沉思和体验的空间，也在时间上拉开了距离。对我来说，对象的稳定是很重要的，它可以暗示永恒的存在。相对而言，尽管我能流畅地写生，但图像却随时处于变动之中，这令我感到焦虑。

艾美丽：很少有当代肖像画家对美感兴趣，大多数都集中在后现代，焦虑缠身的城市环境。你的作品回避了使用吸引注意的意象来引起共鸣。

问：在后现代化主义的汪洋大海之中，你觉得你的作品对象的单纯会不会是洗去商业化的一种手段？

江山春：商业化是大趋势，违抗不得；艺术家是品牌，也要经营；艺术品是商品，流通在市场。按照经济规律，三流企业出产品，二流企业出专利，一流企业定标准。艺术界的背后不是更广大的人民群众，而是商界。在商业社会，再纯朴的情感也能够被消费，何况艺术。谈到城市身份与后现代，核心还是消费，消费置换了价值，是焦虑的原因。这也是我为什么痴迷于描绘中国的前消费社会的原因。那个时候人的欲望还没有被科学技术和市场规则异化，人还能够靠着信心保持生活的希望与尊严。反讽的是，当我们回看的时候，这些贫瘠的形象却是那么的深邃与饱满，无论我的作品对象贫穷或是不曾拥有物质财产，都让我反思，人应当靠什么来获得生活的尊严与内心的平静。回到作品上，我还是希望展现形象内在的人性光芒，让那些已经遭受的和将要遭受的灾难归于平和，让所有的焦虑与挣扎平复在沉静的目光的背景里。

艾美丽：将这个问题延伸一下，传统的孔家社会政治思想谈国家，谈家乡，再谈家庭，那是因为集体高于个人。而肖像画常常和个人处境密切相关。作为一名肖像画家，你为之纪念的是你画的人。你画过很多名人面孔，但你似乎发现画普通人和识别他们的个人身份才是最有意思的地方。但你的作品里也体现着一种道德维度。你尽力灌输自我价值感，维护他们的尊严，而且，恢复他们革命前的单纯。

问：就这段历史而言，你是否觉得描绘道德维度也是你的责任？这也是你主要专注在年轻对象上的部分原因吗？

江山春：不是的。生命在刚刚展开的时候本身就带有一种单纯的美，这在任何时候都是一样的，单纯恰恰是由于和道德无关。用绘画来申明道德立场是传统的叙事性绘画的功能。我的这些肖像画不是叙事的，但又包含有叙事的成份，他们的穿着、衣帽、身上的标签无不有时代的铭印，但这只是切入主题的途经，这些身份标识与他们的形象与状态融为一体，暗示着命运的多舛与不可预知，这些作品的背景恰恰是由一些画面描绘以外的因素组成的，时代的变迁、社会的变革、个体命运的吉凶未卜……道德往往会有劝诫的意图，而我希望的只是看到，不做评判。他们的美足以发人深省，何必多言？

艾美丽：新现实主义画家们，包括你之前的老师杨飞云教授，时常推崇照相写实主义，以及人物的纯粹之美，尤其是女性人物形象。不过肖像画是最引人注目的，因为画家所捕捉的不仅仅是人物的形象，还有绘画对象的深层魅力。

问：你认为为了达到这一点，是不是更应该把理想主义排在写实主义之前呢？

江山春：纯粹的肖像绘画确实需要协调理想与现实的关系，任何一张肖像画，如果在形象与形式之外别无他物，那一定是失败的作品。对形象背后的内容挖掘与理性判断对观众和艺术家更为重要。有些画家会抽离形象以建立形式，而我会更在意形象带给我的信息，这样不仅会赋予个体的独立声音，而且也能符合我所迷恋的主题表达——一个个体命运的形象化。另一方面，我的平和系列描绘对象在时间上是前推了三十至五十年的，时间的过滤功能本身也令理想的成份更突出。我还是希望更强调理想主义的，因为它可以更好的容纳和平衡人性的复杂。不过从操作层面上讲，所谓的理想与写实、具象与抽象都是一体的，不但不好权衡轻重，甚至也无法区分先后。

艾美丽：你的作品关注点在你的绘画主体，主体便是一切——任何道具或者环境的设置都可以由绘画主体表现出来，例如他们的奖牌，他们的衣服，他们的徽章，体现出了他们在文革之后的新地位。这些内容都是在你所绘之人身上，通过画作创造并完全自我体现出来。你在端详绘画对象的时候达到了一种非常镇静和超脱世俗的水平，也同时充满着沉思和敏锐的洞察力。

问：可以说你的作品是一座双向镜吗——就是说，在我们是欣赏者还是被欣赏者的问题上故意保持着神秘？

江山春：绘画本身就是沉思的艺术，对画家和受众都是一样的。肖像画的独特性首先在于个体是更为突出的，有时是唯一的；其次如果形象的眼睛目视观者，那必然会产生双向的审视效果，我希望观者在读画的过程中能有这种体验。另外，我所描绘的对象集中在六十年代前后，在形象的选择上，我也会偏好于更有力度的面孔和更有代表性的状态。整体而言，那个时期物质上的贫乏与精神上的饱满呈现出鲜明的对照，我认为在中国的历史上甚至在人类的历史上都是很独特的现象。如果画中人 有知，看到当下的中国，所思所想一定能写一部大书。

谈及当下的中国，您最新的“中国梦”系列关注后毛泽东时代，从而构建中国历史的下一个篇章。这也是一个充满纹理质感的系列，你在整个画面上运用了十分精致的点画法来创造一个很厚实的感觉，从而使人不易察觉这是卡上丙烯酸的材料。但是这个比“平和”系列质轻，而色彩有一种白织灯的效果。

问：在你的作品中对“中国梦”的甜腻的处理手法是否具有一丝反讽意味？你对新中国成立之后团结凝聚的价值观表达过肯定。你是否寄许了这样的期望：被重塑的概念“中国梦”，随着削弱了的西方消费主义，被中国历史中更具深意的传统价值“大家”所压制了，包括家庭、团结等等。

江山春：你说得对。消费主义是反传统价值的，这在中国和西方都一样。消费主义试图通过构建一个有自我更新能力的机制，精巧的刺激占有欲，从而使人获得自由的氛围和存在的真实感，但其本质却是把人紧紧的束缚在产业的链条上，成为机制运转的构成要素，这里反人性的。中国的问题要更复杂，改良版本的消费主义依然会使社会矛盾重重。但“中国梦”却是一个极具容量的概念，它整合了个体存在发展与集体利益诉求；暗含着中国传统与中国当代的延续和发展；同时也可以从微观层面和宏观层面进行内涵的界定。我画的《中国梦》系列，也希望有这样的涵量和复杂性，这几张画的是上世纪八十年代，形象中都有一种沉静的热情，是将个人的奋斗与国家的建设紧密联系在一起的归属感。我对这样的形象很着迷。

所以你将对象在他们所处的时代捕捉、保留下来，创造视角而非在现在的情景下从重现，从而他们被笼罩在迷雾之中。这是否是你的动机，让观者犹如欣赏一张随着时间褪去的旧手稿。

对于我而言，现实如同一团迷雾，我相信是因果关系的结果。通过老照片这个主题——一个即时的因果关系——我相信它展示了未来的样貌。在“平和·镜像”系列中，表面模糊的效果对观者来讲产生了一种距离感，灼烧的效果代表了时间和历史如同火一般掠过记忆。如此我们还可以在那些即将消逝的事物中找到往昔的痕迹。我希望能给中国的未来提出一个开放式的问题。总之，我是积极的，也愿意去回顾我们这个国家的历史。我相信这一段特殊的经历是未来可贵的经验。



艾美丽：不像那些纪录这段历史的中国艺术家们，比如张晓刚，他的“血缘”系列十分有象征性，或者靳尚宜，他的作品很有描述性，而你的作品中象征性和描述性同时存在。你的作品对象是真实存在的人们，以及和你密切相关的，家人或者朋友——你关注着他们人生路上真实的微妙的细节。

问：在你看来，想要体现 1949 年至文革期间的持续影响，以及通过社会背景关注到个人以探寻人和历史的深层关联，在作品中表现多年代叙述手法是至关重要的吗？

江山春：这些作品描绘的并不是一个时间段，而是好几个。我并没有刻意区分他们，相反我避免出现过于有社会政治事件跨时代影响的标识。社会背景、个体命运等因素在我的创作中都是很重要的部分，但不能把他们过分强调。在我看来，人性的光芒是最大的价值，它具有超越特定时代与地理边界的普遍性。但这里存在着另一种张力，即人性面对国家、民族、政治宏大事物时所体现出的无力与渺小逐渐明显，同时也存在着联结人性的价值的理想。倘若过多集中于物质实在感，审美出现障碍——还有生命奥秘的消失。把握这个理想与现实的尺度很难，但愿我能做到。



69. 平和系列 - 年轻的朋友之三

Peace Series - Young Friend III

布面油画

Oil on Canvas

2011

110 x 85 cm

照片原图 (对面)

The original photograph (opposite)

访谈

江山春 和 EMILY DE WOLFE PETTIT 艾美丽

“我爱绘画，它是如此地精妙，人们永远都无法到达它的彼岸……通过稍稍改变眼睛里的倒影，绘画就可以将一幅画作的面容表情由欢喜转至悲伤，让人心无旁骛别无他求。”

——格伦·布朗，2002

艾美丽：艺术家彼得·多伊格 (Peter Doig) 曾把绘画描述成是能够把观者“带入到某个地方或者场景”，换句话说，是一种十分迷人，几乎精神上的体验，绘画是一种奇迹。你的作品中流露出一种精神上的敬意，这来自于你绘画对象时的技巧和着色的敏感。对于你的绘画对象，你有很深的共鸣。

问：在绘画对象的选择中，你有什么标准？与绘画对象之间一定要有情感上的联系吗？你也是一位备受重视的抽象派画家，但你似乎自然而然地就被肖像画吸引了。你爱上肖像画是因为你觉得那对于观者和艺术家而言，都能获得最身临其境的体验吗？

江山春：绘画的目的从来不是模拟，而是物象背后的秘密。生活本身就是个巨大的谜团，如果已知和未知的事情有因果的联系，那么奥秘就不存在了。平和系列的描绘对象都是老照片，是四十、五十年前的人，从现在的角度看过去，总会有时光荏苒、沧海桑田的感慨，但怀旧的情感还不足以支撑绘画的意义，吸引我的，是那些形象在彼时彼刻呈现出的美，单纯和人性的尊严，这种状态在当下尤其显得珍贵，因为它们随着时间的推移被打磨、消蚀、不见了。此时与彼时之间的张力，是我的肖像画展开意义的地方。

艾美丽：历史上来看，在中国，肖像画被书法和山水画的光芒所掩盖。而现在，肖像画在中国很受欢迎。

问：你是如何看待中国兴起的肖像画潮呢？哪些中国肖像画家影响了你？或者是很崇拜的？

江山春：中国传统文化的价值可以更好的由书法和山水画来承载，这种文化是内省的，自修的，空灵的，无我的。肖像画和 历史画之所以不能作为中国传统文化的代表，是由于它们更多体现了入世的精神。文人画传统与此相反，它的出世虽然不反社会，但绝对是无政府的。纯粹自修的绘画进入到了高度专业的领域，应社会性需求的绘画逐渐成为一条主线。肖像画的兴起正是伴随着这一历史性与进行中的潮流。从这种分析来看，有两个画家是我很感兴趣的：一个是毛焰，他的作品有一种华丽的虚无感。这种华丽是由技巧的挥洒造就的，而虚无则因为他抽离了所有身份与经验的因素。毛焰的作品骨子里是文人画的，甚至走得更远，对于他来讲，自修、无我都是多余的。另一个画家是我的老师杨飞云，他是中国新写实主义的代表人物，以古典画风闻名于世。但在我看来，古典与否并不是关键，核心在于强大的入世精神。杨老师的绘画技巧是超现实主义油画正脉，色彩、体积、空间学养深厚，我曾经看他在农家写生一个老大爷，笔笔浑朴，动情酣畅。他曾对我说，写生时常常心情激动不能自己，以至于需要反复平覆方能动笔。对于我来说，对入世的探索可以令我保持从艺的温度，出世的精神可以提醒我人力的局限。

艾美丽：这次的作品系列能够接触到许多不同的层面。第一，对绘画对象的样貌要有正确认识，而在你的作品的图片里看不出的圆滑的笔触和丰富的纹理；纹理仿制旧照片被长久珍藏并反复看过多次的样子。换言之，这个系列中，纹理正是回忆。也是一种刻画出的宁静和反映出的距离。因此对观者而言，对你的作品也有接触到时间的 / 历史的层面的需求。

问：你是否在之后回去给依然在世的绘画对象们画过肖像呢？如果有，你这次的过程有什么不一样 - 你是如何深入探索时间的元素？

江山春：有啊，最早这也是创作计划的组成部分，但是我发现这样做在作品呈现上会导致对保持纯真（那是我最重要的目的）的误读：首先，将过去与现在的肖像同时陈列，就像把问题与答案同时展现一样；其次，这样的对比是残酷的，这会过于强调时间的无情和光阴的流逝，我的目的不在于告诉大家他们与过去是怎样的不同，而是把彼时彼刻的沉静展现出来，让时间的元素成为背景，凸显彼时的珍贵。回忆本身作为时间的另一个层次会让彼时呈现出一种被过滤的真实感，与现实有距离，但更贴近真实视角。



70. 平和系列—儿童人像之一
Peace Series - Children's Portrait I
 纸上水彩
 Watercolour on Paper
 2011
 24.5 x 15.5 cm



71. *Peace Series - Big Eyes*
 平和系列—大眼睛
 Watercolour on Paper
 纸上水彩
 2012
 18 x 26 cm



72. *Peace Series - Colourful Jacket*
 平和系列—花棉袄
 Watercolour on Paper
 纸上水彩
 2012
 21 x 24 cm



73. 平和系列 - 少年之二
Peace Series - Youth II
布面油画
Oil on Canvas
2012
100 x 80 cm

江山春

杨飞云老师

为师久了，会积淀下许多滋味，伴随着记忆中一张张鲜活青涩的脸孔慢慢品咂。如同侍弄着一组又一组盆景，顺着各自不同的品性，循着旺盛杂乱的生机，修剪灌溉、梳理清洁，有些模样就罢手放开，顺其自然。以至于淡忘生疏，不经意间再看去，竟需在头脑里搜寻调动，把着些许痕迹以资确认，直至确凿。那滋味仿佛翻出一张尘封的旧画，明知出自己手，却被糅杂着陈旧的新鲜、混合着熟悉的生分搅乱，平复了诸般杂陈，总会分明的冒出这样的慨叹：真是久了。

江山春有着寻常人的生命轨迹，考试、择校、读研读硕、结婚生子、以教授学生和出售作品为生，生活赋予他平淡和圆满，也令他平稳而充实。像每一个热爱绘画的青年一样，他的眼中会有热切的光彩，会有因此而激发出来的热情与困惑；像每一个认同绘画的存在价值的画家一样，他不会怀疑绘画这项事业的庄严与伟大，并能持久而专注的投入。画家是一群专以绘画为其生命内核的人，这里凝结了太多的单纯而又复杂、直白而又微妙的情感，但是究竟为什么必须要拿起画笔，以此作为其存在的方式，竟是每一个画家要用尽一生来回答的问题。

如今早已不是仅靠一腔子热情就能为此行为提供充足支撑的年代，绘画背负了太多的负担：说不出道不明的理由，说得出道得明的藉口，乱糟糟纷至沓来，半推半就，欲罢还休，捆绑着绘画裹挟着画家四处涌动。年青画家之幸运与不幸，都在于此。同样的问题也摆在江山春面前。这些年他有着很多的尝试，一度放弃油画画起了水墨，又曾回避具象进入抽象，在一大段自我封闭式投入之后，他又重新回到了起点，弯路即是必经之路，成败得失、个中滋味自有切身所感，旁人不得而知。然而此番波折想必会让他对绘画的价值与作为画家的个体命运更有所悟：绘画所需要的技巧与才情，生活所给予的体悟与感知，生命所赋予的际遇与契机……对这些问题的持续梳理和自省，将会使他逐渐走向成熟，建立起属于自己的绘画生命。生命自有其独特的轨迹，如今江山春也为人师久了，侍弄着自己那片盆景，亦会有如下所感：育人实为自修，立人须先自立，观人岂非观己，健行既是慈悲。愿你们喜爱他的首次主题作品集，平和系列。



74. 芳龄
A Beautiful Age
纸上水彩
Watercolour on Paper
2012
13.5 x 34 cm
艺术家的收藏
Artist's Collection



75. 军人系列之二
Young Soldier II
纸上水彩
Watercolour on Paper
2013
46 x 28 cm

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76. Fei
平和系列 - 绯
Oil on Canvas
布面油画
2013
100 x 80 cm
照片原图 (上面)
The original photograph (above)



77. 平和系列 - 少年之一 (下页)
Peace Series - Teenager I (overleaf)
布面油画
Oil on Canvas
2012
100 x 80 cm
私人收藏, 上海
Private Collection, Shanghai

江山春

- 中国历史的叙述者 -



Albemarle Gallery

伦敦

与北京艺术联盟共同精彩呈现

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