

# Techniques and Principles of Western Art Reflected in Huang Shiling's Paintings and Seal Carvings

Qi Zhu

Nanjing Xiaozhuang University  
Nanjing, China

**Abstract**—In late Qing Dynasty, Western knowledge was gradually introduced to China. Against this historical background, Huang Shiling lived in Guangzhou, a trading port city at that time, in different periods of his life, and absorbed many thoughts of foreign arts. His art of paintings and seal carvings was simultaneously affected by traditional epigraphy and Western photography and techniques and principles of painting and thus presented modern characteristics. The artistic form and spirit of paintings and seal carvings more fits modern aesthetics. It is a manifestation of the integration of personal aesthetics and the trend of the times and is closely related to the spreading of Western science and technology and artistic concepts at that time. Hence, it also has many characteristics similar to Western arts.

**Keywords**—Huang Shiling; painting; seal carving; Western art

## I. INTRODUCTION

Huang Shiling (1849-1909), born in Huangcun Village, Yi County, Anhui Province, had a secondary personal name called Mufu, and alias in his late years successively called Yishansou, Juansou, Juanyouchaozhu, and also has house name called Wozhuanjv, Yanqingfenshi and so on. He was a famous calligraphy and painting and epigraphy masters in the late Qing Dynasty and was also the founder of "Yishan sect" of seal carving. Huang Shiling had the experience of studying and learning epigraphy in The Imperial College, Beijing, for a long time. At the same time, against the background of "gradual introduction of Western knowledge to China" in the late Qing Dynasty, he was not only proficient in Western photography, but also broadened his horizons and absorbed foreign artistic thoughts after repeatedly living in Guangzhou after his middle age. His paintings and seal carvings were simultaneously affected by Chinese traditional epigraphy and Western photography and techniques and principles of painting and thus presented modern characteristics.

## II. THE FORMATION OF HUANG SHILING'S SEAL CARVING STYLE IN GUANGZHOU AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF "GRADUAL INTRODUCTION OF WESTERN KNOWLEDGE TO CHINA"

Huang Shiling's ancestors were good at seal carving and his father Huang Dehua was proficient in the study of "Shuowen Jiezi (An Explication of Written Characters)".

Hence, Huang Shiling had received relevant education from his father and also acquired seal carving skills when he was young. According to his brother Huang Zhizhen's preface and postscript shown on the "collection of seal stamps of The Heart Sutra" carved by Huang Shiling, Huang Shiling was enlightened on seal carving when he was 8 or 9 years old and had already been famous in local area for being good at seal carving before the age of 15. In about 1868, Huang Shiling and his brother Huang Houfu left their hometown and lived in Nanchang, Jiangxi, to keep away from the Taiping Rebellion. At the beginning, Huang Shiling made a living in the "Bo Yue Xuan" photo studio in Baihuazhou, Nanchang, and later engaged in selling calligraphies and seals. Meanwhile, Huang Houfu opened the "Cheng Qiu Xuan" portrait gallery in Dongjiatang Lane, Nanchang. This portrait gallery was very famous at that time. Huang Shiling once lived here.

In 1882, Huang Shiling moved from Nanchang to Guangzhou. In August of 1885, he was recommended by Guangzhou General Changshan and his son Zhirui and went to The Imperial College in Beijing to study epigraphy; he was taught by Sheng Yu, Wang Yirong and Wu Dacheng and graduated in the next year. Over this trip of study, he saw the collections of many famous artists, broadened his horizons and got improved greatly in seal carving. In 1888, he was invited by Wu Dacheng and Zhang Zhidong to assist Liang Dingfen in presiding over the proofreading office of Guangya Bookstore. Guangya Bookstore was one of the five major bookstores in Qing Dynasty, specially engaged in proofreading and carving of classic books. Among the hundreds kinds of books carved by the bookstore, most seal scripts in the title page were carved by Huang Shiling. Huang Shiling once lived in Guangzhou for a long time and got acquainted with many high officials, noble lords and famous literati. This experience played an important role in the propagation of his seal carvings.

The period after he returned to Guangzhou from The Imperial College in Beijing in 1888 was the peak period of his creation, and also an important period for him to explore and form his unique seal style. Huang Shiling's seal carving skill was not inherited from any teacher, as shown in the side carving of the seal "Tong Ting Qiu Sheng Guan (同听秋声馆)". In early years, he once simulated the carving skills of Ding Jing, Huang Yi, Deng Shiru, Wu Xizai, Zhao Zhiqian and so on, and acquired the most skills from Wu Rangzhi. The

author once took the seal "Jin Qu Chun Se Ru Hao Duan (尽驱春色入毫端)" created by Huang Shiling in the same year as his representative work and made an analysis on the seal. It was believed that his seal stamp had gradually been apart from the influences of Wu Rangzhi and et al both in the carving methods and knife skills and formed his unique characteristics.<sup>1</sup> In knife skills, he used the long-chiseling method as adopted in seals of Han Dynasty; the lines were clean and straight; the turns and joints of strokes were no longer lightly treated along with the trend, but only preserved and improved Wu Rangzhi's knife skill characteristics at the beginning and ending of the stroke. Han Tianheng once said that: "In Mufu's knife skill, white text is mostly entered from the outside of the line; hence tiny knife mark may be left every time. This method is sourced from Han Xizai and carried forward by Mufu. This practice is done in his age of almost 40s. It is very interesting that although this knife mark is as tiny as not existing, it matches well with the thickness of his strokes".<sup>2</sup>

Since then, Huang Shiling's seal carving had entered the heyday in Guangzhou. After that, he imitated the techniques of imperial seals of Qin and Han dynasties, and extensively acquired the meaning of inscriptions on ancient bronze objects, coins, measures of Qin Dynasty and mirror of Han Dynasty, stele and terra-cotta. His knife style gradually looked round, straight and steep, and blended smooth feature with simple feature. Eventually, he's seal carving became a unique style after declination of the two sects in Anhui and Zhejiang, and hence was called "Yishan sect". However in fact, he stayed in Guangdong for the longest time in his life, and his seal style was actually formed in Guangdong, and was mostly affected by the styles in Guangdong. Later in 1902, he was invited by Duan Fang and went to Wuchang to assist in the compilation of "Tao Zhai Ji Jin Lu (陶斋吉金录)", and then returned to his hometown and never appeared again.

The formation of Huang Shiling's seal style is the creation of his personality and literacy, and is also closely related to the academic background of the times. In the period of Emperors Qianlong and Jiaqing in Qing Dynasty, epigraphy was highly developed and there were rich works and painting collections having academic summary natures; and various newly-found epigraphic words provided scholars and seal carving masters with reference materials. Huang Shiling had been well influenced by his family studies in seal script or calligraphy at early age, which laid a solid foundation for his calligraphy and paleography. The work experience in Proofreading office of Guangya Bookstore enriched his academic accomplishment; During his studying epigraphy in The Imperial College in Beijing, and sorting inscriptions on ancient bronzes and stone tablets in Duan Fang's office, he got the chance to glimpse the collections of the first-class collectors of inscriptions on ancient bronzes and stone tablets at that time and once fully made rubbings

from the collection of seals of "Shi Liu Jin Fu Duan (十六金符斋)". Because he could watch and study a large number of original stone objects and ancient seals for long time, he could deeply understand and acquire the original appearance of inscriptions on ancient bronzes and stone tablets.

On the other hand, from the late Qing Dynasty to the beginning of the Republic of China, Western science and technology, culture and academic thoughts surged into China just like a wave; and the era in which Huang Shiling lived was an important period of "Gradual Introduction of Western Knowledge to China". Liang Qichao once talked about the influence of Western learning at that time: "The world is changing day by day urgently; and the exchanges with the borders of the country have been very open. The world is changing eagerly; it is necessary to strive to seek the cause of the change ... Once exchanges are open up, other social thoughts will be input into and stimulate local social thoughts. Simply, the more than two hundreds of years can be named as 'the era of ancient study renaissance'. Its prosperity is gradually evolved, not at a glance".<sup>3</sup> At that time, Chinese people had been affected by Western studies from many aspects such as thought, politics, society, economy, customs, and even daily life. Under the influence of this trend of thought, Huang Shiling was also bound to be influenced by Western academics and culture. Due to changes in living environment and life, Huang Shiling had engaged in calligraphy and seal carving and become a "skillful person travelling here and there to make for living". The pressure of life urged him to abandon the conservative thoughts of traditional literati, and face and learn new cultural things with Western influence in a positive and open mind. In late Qing Dynasty, the Westernization Movement paid attention to industrial cartography. In manufacturing sector, there were graphics and technology, mapping and other projects-attributable graphics; and new photography, such as "The Wonders of Photography (脱影奇观)", "Rendering of Photography (色相留真)", and "Brief Introduction of Photographic Method (照相略法)" were incorporated into technology.<sup>4</sup> When making a living in Nanchang by taking pictures and portraits together with Huang Houfu, Huang Shiling had been proficient in the treatment of light and shadow, light and dark, in Western photography, known well the laws of realistic and perspective methods in Western paintings and got them applied in his paintings. In Huang Shiling's diary as collected by Rong Geng, there was records about developing and fixing formulas and techniques related to photography. It can be seen that he has the learning spirit of combining and absorbing new things.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Han Tianheng. The Cardamom Seal. Chinese Seal Cutting. No. 4, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> Liang Qichao. The General Development of Chinese Academic Thought; Wu Song, Lu Yunkun, Wang Wenguang, Duan Bingchang. Proofreading of the collected works of Liangqichao. Yunnan Education Publishing House, 2001, p283.

<sup>5</sup> See Yan Zuozhi's Introduction: "Yao Mingda. The History of Chinese Bibliography. Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 2002, p272.

<sup>1</sup> Dong Jian. Research on Huang Mufu's Father Huang Dehua's "Zhu Ruitang's Poems", and The 2nd "Lonely Mountain Seal", Xiling Yinshe International Typography Summit Proceedings, Xiling Yinshe Publishing House, 2008, p311.

<sup>2</sup> Zhu Qi. Research on the Four Lost Seals of Huang Shiling, Chinese Calligraphy, No. 5, 2009.

### III. HUANG SHILING'S PAINTINGS UNDER THE INTEGRATION OF CHINESE AND WESTERN TECHNIQUES

As one of the earliest trading ports in China, Guangzhou was exposed to Western culture earlier. In the 18th century, painters in Guangzhou had begun to draw oil paintings and various export paintings combined with Chinese and Western painting skills ("Fig. 1"). "They would draw portraits for foreigners, and also draw foreigners' ships, the landscapes of trading company, secular scenes, and other subjects that can attract Western tourists. At the same time, they also used this primitive realism method to depict the portraits of their ancestors".<sup>6</sup> Huang Shiling's paintings either depicting bronze antique picture (a painting drawn on an object to form a decorative art work) decorated with folded flowers, or showing pure flowers and plants, were both obviously influenced by Western paintings. The yin and yang effect in the paintings are very similar to the photographic effects, and are closely related to the folk brush strokes and export paintings popular at that time. The most widely-distributed portrait of Huang Shiling "Small-sized Image of 54-year-old Juanyouchaozhu" (see "Fig. 2") was actually a brush stroke drawn by his brother Huang Houfu. It was so similar that the portrait was once mistaken as a photo. The full-form antique picture of Huang Shiling (see "Fig. 3") is almost a similar "novel art" created by brush from the portrait. Just as Ma Guoquan said, "He uses the familiar photography technique to present an opposite effect of yin and yang; and those ancient objects are drawn in sketching technique and lifelike rendering method and with reference to predecessors' full-form ink rubbing method and are often rendered with golden and green and other colors to show the gloss and spots on antique copper and bronze ware, quaint and rich". Meanwhile, his flower sketches were also different from Ju Chao and Ju Lian's mogu paintings as prevailed in Lingnan area at that time, and catered to the Western tastes. He paid more attention to the approximation of export flower paintings in light and dark perspectives, and this realistic drawing feature was the product of the combination of traditional Chinese meticulous flower painting method and western watercolor painting method ("Fig. 4").<sup>7</sup>



Fig. 1. Temple of the Empress of Heaven, Guangdong Customs and the pier at Five Immortals Gate (Chinese export paintings as collected in British Library).



Fig. 2. Huang Shiling's portrait (brush strokes).

<sup>6</sup> Wu Ying (Editor-in-Chief). The Preface to the Collection of Huang Shiling's Calligraphy and Paintings. Xiling Yinshe, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> [English] Michael Sullivan (author), Chen Weihe, Qian Gangnan (trans). Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China. Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2013, p105-106.



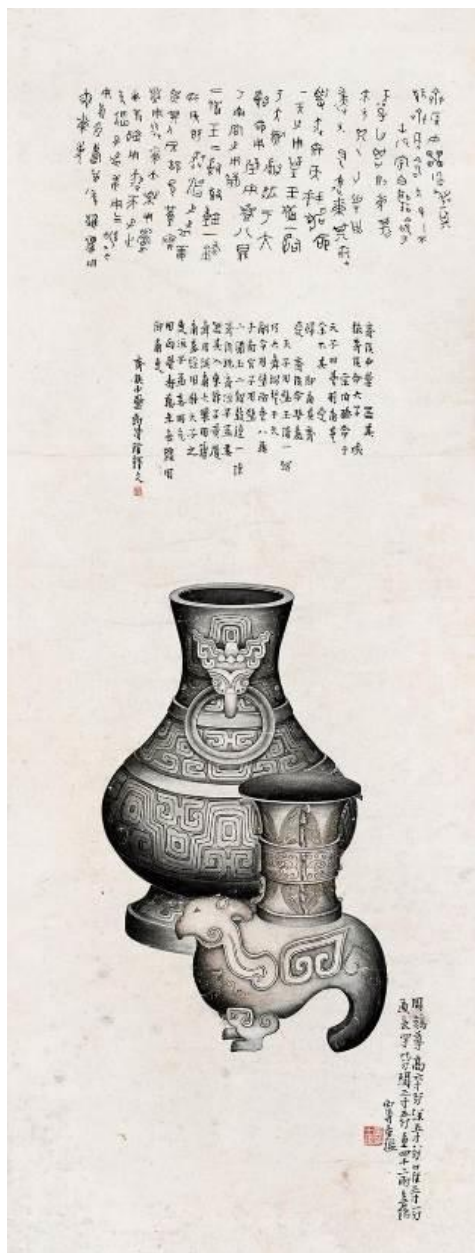


Fig. 3. Ancient objects painted by Huang Shiling.

During the period of emperors Qianlong and Jiaqing in Qing Dynasty, Hu Jing once explained the theory of Western painting: "Western painting technique is good at depicting light and shadow, analyzing the details, measuring the yin and yang, facing and opposite and tilting and straight, long and short parameters of a picture, and arranging colors according to their reflections to distinguish thick and thin, light and dark colors". Huang Shiling once wrote preface and postscript as shown in his student Yi Tingxuan's "antique picture roller" ("Fig. 5"): "Chinese painting pursued free sketch, while Western painting pursued techniques and principles. Ancient Chinese people pursued the philosophical connotations, while modern Chinese people pursued expressing artistic conception. Techniques and principles can be acquired by learning, while expressing artistic conception

cannot be realized by force; if free sketch and techniques are both obtained, the artistic conception will be able to be reflected on the painting naturally". Here, the so-called "techniques" refers to the realistic painting skills established on the basis of Western perspective science, geometry, and anatomy principles. He believed that painting should start with "techniques" and then seek for "expressing the artistic conception".

Huang Shiling's this opinion was very consistent with the later enlightenment thinker Kang Youwei's opinion of comparing Western realistic painting to Chinese "portrait paintings in Song and Yuan Dynasties" and holding it in esteem and censuring free sketches in modern China. This may be because Huang Shiling was influenced by the Western painting artistic theory as advocate by Kang Youwei. Kang Youwei traveled overseas after the failure of the reform, studied Western paintings, and thought a lot about Chinese art. He believed that Chinese painting should absorb the spirit of Western realism. Opposite to literati free sketch paintings with a strong morale, he held that the realistic imperial-court decorative painting in Tang and Song Dynasties should be regarded as the model. "Painting should mainly focus on depicting the form and appearance other than expressing the artistic conception, and take the colored ruler painting as the official model and the rough and simple wash painting as the non-official model; it is surely valuable if a painting has some scholar-official taste; but imperial-court decorative painting should be regarded as the official model of painting. In this way, the bias and mistakes in Chinese painting theory in the past 500 years can be corrected, and Chinese painting can be rescued and make some progress."<sup>8</sup> Hence, it can be seen that Huang Shiling is actually one of the pioneers in the 19th century to develop and integrate Chinese and Western painting techniques." Mr. Pan Gongkai thought that "Gradual Introduction of Western Knowledge to China" as a phenomenon having lasted for a hundred years, had a significance of conveying in modern times from the perspective of macroscopic modernization process; and the new artistic achievements of the 20th century was precisely begun from this point.

<sup>8</sup> Mo Wu. Huang Shiling's Paintings Integrated Chinese and Western Painting Skills. Collection · Auction. No. 5, 2007.



Fig. 4. Antique flower paintings drawn by Huang Shiling.



Fig. 5. Antique paintings drawn by Huang Shiling.

#### IV. THE INFLUENCE OF TECHNIQUES AND PRINCIPLES OF WESTERN ART ON HUANG SHILING'S PAINTINGS AND SEAL CARVINGS

As stated in Huang Shaomu's preface and postscript shown on Huang Shiling's flower painting draft, "When my father was in his middle age, he often faced a flower and draw it in spare time of seal carving as Lingnan region had a plenty of exotic flowers and rare herbs that cannot be found in Jiangnan area. Hence, many of such paintings were left. He studied the painting methods of Song and Yuan Dynasties and referenced the Western painting techniques, hence produced vivid and colorful painting shapes. At that time, the Western realistic paintings with accurate surveying and mapping techniques had not yet been widespread, so they appeared special among painters and the seekers were very ..." <sup>9</sup> "Taixi (泰西)" was the old name of Western countries. Hence, it can be seen that the painting method mixed Chinese method with Western method had caused controversy at that time. However, Huang Shiling was not

<sup>9</sup> Hu Jing. Guo Chao Yuan Hua Lu (Record of Imperial-court Decorative Paintings in Qing Dynasty); Lu Fusheng. A Complete Set of Chinese Paintings and Calligraphies, Vol.11, Shanghai Painting and Calligraphy Publishing House, 2000, p24.

afraid of criticism. His character has both the rigor of scholars and the courage of artists. Just as the words used in his seal carved, he was also unconventional. He said in the side carving of the seal "Jia Zi (甲子)" ("Fig. 6"): "Jia (甲)" was written like '+' in inscriptions on ancient bronzes; it inevitably seems shocking; but if it is written as 'Jia (甲)' in official script or regular script, it may be laughed by people with knowledge; so I would rather be shocking than be laughed". It was right because Huang Shiling had such knowledge and courage that he became extremely prominent in modern seal carving circle and became a generation of master in the field.

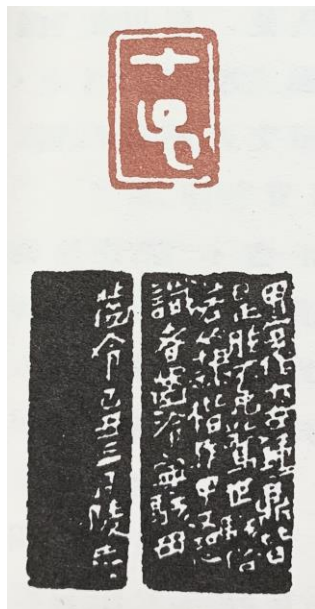


Fig. 6. Seal "Jia Zi (甲子)" carved by Huang Shiling (attached with the side carving).



Fig. 7. Seal "Ji Du Chang Nian (季度长年)" carved by Huang Shiling (attached with the side carving).

Huang Shiling's creation concept of seal carvings and seal style are also deeply influenced by the spirit of Western painting realism, emphasizing authenticity and reductibility which are embodied in the carving method and knife skills of seals. From the artistic experience of Huang Shiling mentioned above, it can be seen that he had a very deep study on "Shuowen Jiezi" and the study of Shuo Wen and inscriptions on ancient bronzes and stone tablets in the past dynasties. Therefore, he not only emphasized that there must be some principle both in writing skill and carving skill but

also could flexibly use various fonts. This point can be seen from a large number of research notes on the seal carving words retained in his seals:

In Xu Shen's "Shuwen Jiezi", the word "Shao (绍)" is written as "邵" in accordance with the ancient script as the inscriptions on the ancient pottery is written like this. (Seal "Shao Xian (绍宪)")

With respect to the fourth stone drum of the "Shi Gu Wen (石鼓文, inscriptions on stone drums)", Pan Tianshou explained it as follows: As for the carriage taken by the king, the parts of two ends of stiff-bits extended out of the mouths of four horses are hanged with small bells which sounds like phoenix birds (luan, 鸾) are singing. In "The Book of Songs" and "The Commentary of Zuo", luan is mostly written as "鸾", while in Shi Gu Wen, luan is written as "𪛗". Therefore in ancient times, the two words "鸾" and "𪛗" are interchangeable. (Seal "Bai Luan (白鸾)")

The character pattern of "West (Xi, 西)" looks like a bird perched on a nest. In Xu Shen's explanation, the sun is in the west and the bird is resting on a nest, hence this character pattern is used to express the "west (Xi, 西) in direction". Nowadays, "Xi (西)" is specially used for expressing a direction and its meaning of "栖 (bird is resting on a nest)" has become rarely known by people. ("Xi Feng Qi Ke (西凤栖客)")

Huang Shiling's seal carving was learnt from inscriptions on ancient bronzes and stone tablets, but never imitated the "epigraphy taste" appearance spotted and broken, and also emphasized to restore the "truth" of casting and chiseling skills shown in the inscriptions on ancient copper and bronze ware in knife skills. In knife skills and full-form seal carving, he appreciated Zhao Zhiqian's saying "natural charm is naturally revealed, but does not appear dull" (seal "Yang Hu Xu Yong (阳湖许鏞)"). Huang Shiling used knife in clean and smooth way, and its essence was precisely a reflection of drawing from the "physical form" of ancient seals. His seal was carved by punching knife, adopted full-form seal style giving a concise and tidy, steep and straight appearance, and maximally restored the original appearance of imperial seals in Qin and Han Dynasties before being disclosed. Hence, he acquired the essence of ancient seals. He once said: "The seals of Han Dynasty contain all kinds of beauty, and even cooper rust cannot cover up its beauty; but the charm of seals of Han Dynasty cannot be acquired if one only pursues a destroyed appearance of the seal" (side carving of "Seal of Chen Guang (臣光印)"); "The rust and peeling on seals of Han Dynasty was caused over a long time. Just like Xi Shi looks beautiful when she frowns because she is sick; but one imitating her gesture of holding her chest may not be thought beautiful" (side carving of seal "Ji Du Chang Nian (季度长年)", as shown in "Fig. 7"). However, the seal carved by Huang Shiling actually pays great attention to the "epigraphy taste", but merely he emphasizes to restore to the original appearance of inscriptions on ancient bronzes and stone tablets before being eroded, just as his student Li Yinsang said, "The inscriptions on ancient copper and bronze ware are all originally bright and lovely. The rust and peeling shown on it is just caused by the corrosive environment for



reason of being buried in soil all the year round". (Seal of "Yi Zhonglu (易忠錄)"). This way grasps the "epigraphy taste" from the roots. It is much more difficult and advanced than mechanically imitating and making the so-called aesthetic appearance of "epigraphy taste".



Fig. 8. "Shi Liu Jin Fu Duan (十六金符齋)" carved by Huang Shiling.



Fig. 9. "Seal of Shao Xian (紹先之章)" carved by Huang Shiling.



Fig. 10. "Ji Shou (稽首)" carved by Huang Shiling.



Fig. 11. "Qi Fu (器父)" carved by Huang Shiling.

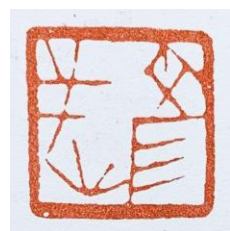


Fig. 12. "Yan Wu (彦武)" carved by Huang Shiling.

The seal surface carved by Huang Shiling has many characteristics of Western art, such as "Shi Liu Jin Fu Duan (十六金符齋)" ("Fig. 8"), "Seal of Shao Xian (紹先之章)" ("Fig. 9"), "Ji Shou (稽首)" ("Fig. 10"), and "Qi Fu (器父)" ("Fig.

11"), "Yan Wu (彦武)" ("Fig. 12") and so on. His seals emphasize the accuracy and vividness in character pattern, and pay attention to the composition of planar form the seal, so as to highlight the sense of harmony and order protruded out of the seal surface. He often said that "If there are many words to be shown in a seal, it is most difficult to design the layout; in this case, it may look dull if the words are distributed evenly; only if the words are naturally distributed in accordance with the quantity of strokes of each word can the layout appear natural".<sup>10</sup> Deng Erya praised that: "He is especially good at layout; both square and round forms are used; yin and yang are interlinked, and well arranged, with endless changes". He was very good at getting inscriptions on bronze sacrificial vessels carved on seals, with character layout partially out of shape and exaggerated; he was also good at using geometric elements to form a unique rhythm and rules in the seal surface; so Luo Dunhuan said that: "His seal surface looks sometimes as solemn as the gods, square and dignified, with wonderful variation and sometimes free and lovely, and upright from skew shape. The seal surface changes with the situation, and the layout is naturally formed into a variety of gestures"<sup>11</sup>.

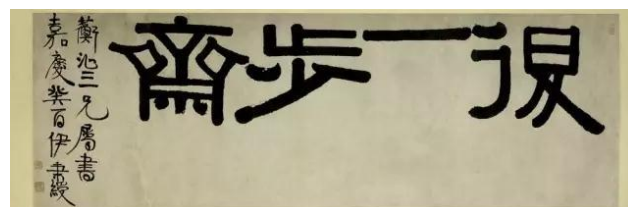


Fig. 13. Yi Bingshou's seal "Tui Yi Bu Zhai (退一步齋)" collected by Shanghai Museum.



Fig. 14. Paintings of Joan Miró.

<sup>10</sup> Kang Youwei. Collected Chinese Paintings in Wanmu Caotang; Jiang Yihua, Zhang Ronghua. The Complete Works of Kang Youwei. Vol.10. China Renmin University Press, 2006, p441.

<sup>11</sup> Huang Shaomu's preface and postscript as shown in "Tong Yanfang. Jinshi Qishou. Shanghai: SDX Joint Publishing Company. 2016".

Huang Shiling once said that "Yi Bingshou's official script looks neat and clean, and still contains the artistic conception of ancients, so it is particularly highly antique" (see the seal of "Shu Ming (叔铭)"); Huang Shiling's seal may be compared with Yi Bingshou's official script (1754-1815) ("Fig. 13"); they both have the characteristics of exaggerated composition, smooth lines and also containing antique taste. The emphasis on geometric composition in the seal surface is also similar to the modern Western cubist and abstract paintings. Works of Василий Кандинский (1866-1944), and Joan Miró (1893-1983, see "Fig.4") are good examples. Especially for the "Human Body (Ren Ti, 人体)" created by Miró in Chinese ink painting skill, its style in geometrical structure is amazingly similar with the style of inscriptions used in seal carved by Huang Shiling. Li Gangtian once highly affirmed Huang Shiling's seal carving that "Although the seal carved by Huang Shiling also shows another literary taste of elegance and beautiful, its beauty in form of strengthening contrast and seal surface impact effect is closer to the nature of fine art. This nature of fine art is opposite to the harmonious flow beauty of literati. His creation concept is closer to the contemporary times; or it can be said that his creation concept has some enlightenment effect on contemporary seal carving".<sup>12</sup>

## V. CONCLUSION

When talking about the course of modern art, scholars believe that "within the range of artistic ontology, Western modernity and Chinese tradition are the two major sources of value for the modern transformation and future reconstruction of Chinese art".<sup>13</sup> On this basis, Huang Shiling's paintings and seal carvings also followed the following two ways: evolving the traditional self-discipline feature and referring to foreign aesthetic forms to make development, and always maintaining a dynamic balance between closed evolution and open absorption. It should be pointed out that this self-discipline evolution itself can lead the intrinsic development and modern transformation of seal carving art. Of course, the influence of Western culture since the late Qing Dynasty is also a considerable but secondary external factor. As Mr. Wan Qingli said, "The 'theory of stele study' in calligraphy, the 'epigraphy taste' in painting, and the various sects of seal carving art are the derivatives of Sinology and textual research achievements on Qing Dynasty. It is one of the important achievements in the history of modern Chinese art. This achievement is spontaneously produced in China rather than being produced under the 'Western cultural impact'; perhaps it is for this reason that this important achievement in Chinese art history lasted to the 20th century has not been fully evaluated up to now".<sup>14</sup> Therefore, even having undergone the decline of

national strength and national peril, traditional Chinese art system has not declined, and but is still renewing itself under its self-discipline evolution. Compared with previous literati paintings, in Qing Dynasty, the stele study thoughts in calligraphy and epigraphy taste in painting had made new development both in major spirit and form, and also had very high breakthrough in aesthetic taste, formation and language and ideas. It is an important reform in the development of art in Qing Dynasty.

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<sup>12</sup> See the side carving "光绪乙酉续修鉴志洗拓凡完字及半勒字可辨识者尚存三百三十餘字别有释国子监祭酒宗室盛昱学录蔡廉年谨次" carved by Huang Shiling.

<sup>13</sup> Luo Dunhuan. Inscriptions on the Seals of Huang Shiling Preserved (Photocopy). Shanghai Xiling Yinshe. 1935.

<sup>14</sup> Li Gangtian. Engraving Art and Sect of Huang Shiling. Published on "Shu Yin Wen Cong (Collection of Paintings and Seals)", Henan Fine Arts Publishing House, 2004, p76.