

Aesthetic Study on Layout of Mr. Tian Liming's Ink Portrait Painting

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Abstract—Browsing through master Tian Liming's works, one would be immersed in the ink world built by Mr. Tian through his using of "surrounded inking", "blended tinting" and other drawing techniques. The layouts are graceful rather than lifeless, the coloring fresh but not dignified, the techniques of stroking are audacious instead of being tacky. Viewers could interpret peaceful and tranquil sentiments in his alternating application of light and dark, or faintly discernible ink shades. Sometimes memories are recalled by certain scenery, while private psychology beautifies the scenery in turn. Mr. Tian is skillful in converting diverse landscapes, scenery and characters into elements of his drawings. Furthermore, he conveys the cultural sentiments of traditional Ink and Wash through a visual format that is natural, smooth and possessing aura. It enlightens us to regard ink painting as the carrier of cultural inheritance, which is rather revealing to modern painters.

Keywords—ink painting; layout; coloring; stroking technique; artistic ambience

I. INTRODUCTION

Renowned art critics Mr. Yin Shuangxi regards highly of Mr. Tian, he says it is to nature where Tian returns with tender empathy for all temporal matters and thinks about his own life, and he breathes and grows freely there. It is certain that Mr. Tian maintains his distinctive artistic personality and vitality under the circumstance of blossoming of several schools like Abstract Ink, Academic Ink or Expressional Ink. He conveys an easygoing and detached mindset through unpredictable ink utilizing change. Being reserve with painters portraying hesitation, depression, ugliness and negative themes, he implies the plain and innocent aesthetic ideal that lies in Chinese tradition and culture. It has long been an intensely debated topic that whether painters should concentrating on the content or the form. This article is not intended to discover which is the original and foremost one, but rather attempts to analyze organizational relations of each format elements from the gentle-smiley visual level presented in Mr. Tian's Ink and Water portrait painting, and tries to analyze the shaping process of his artistic style by looking into his indescribably layout form, his simplified coloring, relaxed and carefree stroking techniques and aesthetic ambience embodies sentiments, for the sake of

discovering a breakthrough and foothold point for my own ink creation.

II. INDESCRIBABLY LAYOUT

It is stated that layout is grammar used by artists in expressing their inner world to viewers. Those seen as extraordinarily refined works are composed in outstanding shape of composition. Regardless of reliability of this sentence, as is known to all that Chinese painting especially Ink and Water is the art which reveals painters' capability of drawing and bears profound cultural background. It sprinkles painters' value orientation and aesthetic sentiments undisguised in every inch of the drawing. Hesitation or trance is never allowed for painters due to its feature of rapid infiltrating and enshrouding. Henceforth, painters are supposed to be fulfilled with passion and sentiments and to be ingeniously controlling the whole scale. This requires painters appreciate thousands of views beforehand. Mr. Tian's ink works are free and flexible in layout without deliberately pursue for any certain composing style. They bring out vigorous and natural qualities of daily life. He perfectly applies S-shaped, parallel and full-scale composing layout inadvertently. It is apparently indispensable that he has been through years of exploring and persistent pursuing for ink and water.

Full-scale composing is the layout that frequently used by Mr. Tian. Inking can be discovered from his works, as Autumn Red in 1993, Blue Sky in 1994 and Blue Memory in 2001. Female figures holding fruit baskets or bouquet fills the panorama with background mountains and rocks, clouds, sky lights as well as luxuriantly green trees, and not any redundant blank is in sight. There is simply an elegant young lady loitering around accompanied by nobody, this scene trances viewers into the amiable and innocent world created by Giorgio Morandi in his painting of cups. Although Mr. Tian uses full-scale composition layout, a sense of transparency is reached through luminous spots as they are eliminating light smoke. This is the consequence of the applying of Weimo method, which is created him and employed in lots of his works to depict sunshine. Frankly speaking, full-scale layout is preferred by many modern painters as a result of contemporary replicating style of an industrialized era. Therefore, numerous works are painted to

show the crowded, blocked and stuffy sentiments, which would be the focal in Mr. Tian's works. What makes him outstanding lie in this reason. He leads viewers to a ethereal place that is brimming with freedom and unrestrained sentiments.

For another instance, he still uses full-scale composing in City Diary which he accomplished in 2000. Diverse Characters wandering in an ink land among the subtle alternation of light and shade. Various finely ink patch of pale blue are intertwined with ivory yellow spots. Men and women, old and young are causally distributed in their own spaces lying, sitting or standing, thus no blank is seen in the whole picture. Although he depicts a bustle of a city crowded with people and vehicles, he creates a harmonious world, a heaven of peace and happiness by shading lights on the tranquil and simple manner on characters' expressions. Aside from the fine application of Weimo technique, another crucial point is the unification of light and shade combination of ink. Harmonious tones are Containment to large extent, this contributes to coordinate the various restless elements in this painting. Such tact should be seen as a perfect interpretation for principle of applying alternation and integration in layout of a painting.

The smooth and gentle S-shape is also a composing method that is frequently used in Mr. Tian's works. Take East Mountain and Distant River he drew in 2002 as an instance, whirling shadow of tress serving as the background, in where standing a pretty lady who raises her head and peering carefully. This figure is constructed into a fluent space with peaks and stones rising one higher than another. By this means of composing, the painter enlarges the hollowness and profoundness of the drawing and attracts viewer's attentions to remote scenic spots rather than the painting itself. He employs both light and dark shades, cool and warm tones of inks to intersperse his drawing. It brings fanciful imagine to viewers as hearing cheerful singing of spring from the paint from which a gurgling stream comes with twinkling lights. In his work Countryside in May done in 2005 and A Migrant Lady Worker in 2012, he also uses this kind of layout. Lavender ink pieces fills top part of the painting like fantastic clouds that are light and unrestrained. This upper part blends with decayed green trees in central portion. The painter reaches a perfect balance between ink and color, movement and quiescence. Streamline style layout complements with painter's brushing and inking. The overall view resembles a vivacious spring, and it becomes a colorful artistic ambiance world appreciated closely.

Mr. Tian claims that he likes tranquil scenes in which sunshine casts all over. To make a specific summary, layouts utilized are quite straightforward and sometimes far-flung diagonal composing is fused with rational contents, in other circumstances, he uses parallel composing that is relatively more stable and well-balanced, or various other unnamed elements. These contents are seemingly casually arranged while impress the viewers with their elegant feature as a whole that exposes painter's humanistic sentiments underneath. He seeks a spiritual habitat in ink and water rather than deliberately relying on any certain format to compose. I admire Mr. Tian as a veritable ink master for the

gentle attitude he bears in internalizing layout forms to his own tact, and then build up an ink universe overflowed with freedom and vitality by modest and plain painting language.

III. SIMPLIFIED COLORING

As an outstanding representation of Chinese traditional culture, ink painting implies profound humane connotation and cultural heritage. Ink, ordinarily viewed as a simple color, is divided into five categories in this field. Black and white is the color independent of any affection or belongs to achromatic system, yet they are endowed with emotions here. Painters employs different strokes, strong or weak, desiccated or drippy, to convey their understanding or comprehension for life. This is one obvious feature of Mr. Tian's paintings. In his work Pond, Pure, Spring and Lodge painted in 2002, Mr. Tian draws freely without any hesitation that various shades of inks are casually scattered in the pictures. He uses plain water or extremely pale inks to delineate the bright space looks like the pouring light, applies a bit darker ink around these lights afterwards. Different ink patches painted separately apart themselves automatically. In order to deepen the dimension of the whole painting, he breaks the over coordinated coloring by throwing some moderate shade of ink at the central and lower part of the picture. Thus the picture would satisfy aesthetic view of the public visually rather than causing a floating sense due to unduly bright color.

Besides the technique of using different shades and humidity of inks to express painter's encounters and circumstances in his life, the painter is bold in altering traditional coloring perspective and bring green, red, blue and other bright colors into the painting. This features the unique points in his ink works. Ink and color fuses naturally in his paintings to create a tranquil and calmly space, instead of any vulgar combination of bright green and red. For instance, in City Dweller he created in 1998, he introduces an large area light vermilion alternate between light and dark to portray the bright sky, the close streams and various characters, apart from pure ink colored eyes of the girl, her hair or straw hat. Luxuriant life vitality is shown through these vermilion colors accordingly. For his another work The Creek drew in 2007, he uses idealized coloring ambiance to portray the murmuring flow and deep mountains. He mingles azure patches spotted by twinkling bright points with emerald green mixed with fallen leaves properly. Fresh but cold colors are utilized to depict the elegant and introvert quality of the girl holding a lotus leaf. It seems the whole picture is a exquisite poem shrouded in misty frog revealing profound and lasting meaning.

As an indispensable visual elements in painting skills, color convey not only painter's understanding and appreciation for life, but his unique aesthetic ideal. Mr. Tian's coloring skills reach above any level of portraying specific color of existing objects. Concrete traces of inherent color or exact imitation of the environment are hardly found in his works. Hence, inks and colors are internalized into painter's subjective consciousness. Instead of relying on strict rational pounding or rigorous coloring conception, he seizes the extent of using ink and color as a simplified

coloring language, which highlights painter's artistic style of being tranquil and exquisite. This is because that Mr. Tian lives in the suburb of Hefei Province in his early years, childhood memories of playing in the countryside converts to pictures in his mind and awakens his yearning for nature at the bottom of his heart. So pictures in his mind appears as delicate paintings. In an era of industrialization things are being facsimiled again and again. When surrounded by industrialized civilization, people are aroused to ruminate on meaning of life, the life which gradually walking away from the beautiful blue sky and dreamlike red leaves.

IV. RELAXED AND CAREFREE STROKING TECHNIQUE

To draw a traditional ink and water painting, painters needs to acquire comprehensive brushing skills. Great painter Zhang Yanyuan in Tang Dynasty once proposed his insights into painting as painters build a conception in the mind and draws accordingly, while tangible appearance is decided by brushing skills. What he implies is that painters are supposed to concentrate and focus their energy on brushing skills to ensure the strength of profile in drawings. Furthermore, he considers means of using brush would reveal the intention of a work for each painter has his distinctive mastery, temperate and thinking patterns, their brushing ways are accordingly disparate. Extent of strength exerted in brushing brings diverse painting styles, and ways of drawing are also branded with the trace of times. For instance, Zheng Banqiao living in Qing Dynasty draws with firm and upright lines, while master Li Keran as a modern artist paint in bold and vigorous strokes. Yet Mr. Tian tends to apply casual and carefree lines to portray in easy mood. He illustrates traditional painting means "turning", "shifting", "lifting" and "pushing" in a relaxed gesture, which coincidentally corresponds the remark of Shi Tao, an artist in Qing Dynasty, that variations of drawing techniques accompanied with change of time. Freehand brushwork, as a traditional Chinese painting technical, is merely being used in Mr. Tian's painting to depict branches or aquatic plants as decorative elements. Besides, most images are drew in Mogu method, which is a skill of cutting the intricate and obscure substances out of view and coalescing objects and images together into the inclusive ink brushes. He uses his painting brush in a way that is relaxed and refined, tactical and gentle, a way avoids any strained or unnatural feeling even appreciated closely. He makes a relaxed mode of deduction to ancient Mogu method. This attempt is more than a historical inheritance to humanism spirit embraced in traditional Chinese ink and water, it also reveals the painter's exploration for the combination of modern themes with traditional ink painting. It is obvious that Mr. Tian treasures pursuit for human spiritual civilization. Main characters in his works are always a single or several unadorned while typical figures. While "depicting a stone from various angles" to paint like taking a photo is quite another thing. Instead of photoing the curve of body shape and size through sketching lightly, he draws pale chalk to outline their shapes roughly. Then he applies colors like light red or dark blue to tint necessary parts, and in some circumstances he leaves certain blanks letting the character bathing in charming sunshine. Moreover, in portraying background objects like

rocks, clouds, tree crowns or fruit baskets, he completely breaks away from the restrictions of any brushing lines. Just by using highly saturated ink color mixed with painting alum and glue mixture, he dyes the blank spaces softly. The he utilizes relatively lower saturated ink color to brush the picture during the process of drying. In order to reach a balance between gathering and separating, he employs Jimo method in the final phase to adjust images like running stream. To reveal the stack effect of mountain rocks or water wave, he uses leftover ink from the last day to paint their structures one brush after another. He renders lines of brushes so exquisite that mountains and rivers are true to nature. I feel the purest artistic pursuit of an artist in his free and tranquil manner of brushing.

V. ARTISTIC AMBIANCE EMBODIES SENTIMENT'S

Mr. Tian is lucky to be tutored by notable Chinese painting master Mr. Lu Chen, who advocates aesthetic philosophy of "everything is a poem". Mr. Lu's paintings are endowed with profound meaning despite the concise strokes and sparked with delights. Comments have made on him as Lu Chen's success lies in his concern over life and society from his authentic ego, and his interpretation for numerous aspects of human community through sincere art. This comment is similarity suitable for Mr. Tian. Prof. Lu leads his disciple to an explicit art direction with his own artistic attainment and pursuit. Mr. Tian voluntarily tracks down on footsteps of his tutor, thus he surpasses the criterion for simply enhancing technical level. No trace of emotionless brushes or exact imitation for figures in portrait can be found. Blended ink and color patches, as exquisite as they could be, communicate a fresh and vigorous artistic ambiance.

VI. CONCLUSION

Pursing for artistic ambiance is the essence of Chinese traditional aesthetics and the soul of Ink paintings. Tao Zongyi, a Chinese artist in Ming Dynasty, once put forward in Chuogeng Transcript, Paintings that flavor and tones are concealed in nature, people who discovers and depicts its exquisiteness achieves masterpiece. Accordingly, he deems flavor and tone expressed by a painting the most significant factor in appraising art works. Mr. Tian applies indescribably layout form, simplified coloring, relaxed and carefree lining to create a tranquil flavor and tones. This is a painter's reflection and perception toward this blatant era, his individual circumstances, nature and the universe.

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