

Postmodern Ink of Qin Feng

By/ Peng Feng

Qin Feng's art is related to ink, which is reflected in many of his works painted by means of ink. Those paintings in which greasepaint and propene were used are also an embodiment of the spirit of ink painting; there are many ink-related stories behind some devices seemingly unrelated to ink paintings. Although ink painting can not be labeled now as a fashionable art in the art circle, Qin Feng can dub himself as a real ink painting artist irrespective of others' opinions. Certainly, he is neither a pre-modern traditional ink painter nor a modern experimental one but a new postmodern ink painting artist.

In spite of some abstract elements, the ink painting is not abstract painting for we can still recognize such concrete themes as figure painting, landscape painting and painting of flowers and birds and so on. Meanwhile, as for traditional ink painting painters, painting, like poetry and calligraphy, is an important way of expressing their ambitions and nurturing their temperament, so there is a great difference in spirit in their works. The experimental ink painting, however, differs in many aspects from the traditional one, especially the former has reached great height in terms of subjects and expressions. Besides, experimental ink painting is rich in abstract works, images and installations, but it attaches much importance to outward visual effect rather than inner spirit seemingly as a result of the influence of modernism and formalism. On the surface, Qin Feng's ink painting looks more like experimental painting, even as if it were especially in such aspects as large size, new medium and abstract displays. But as far as spiritual aspect is concerned, Qin Feng's ink painting is totally different from the experimental one, for the latter is carved for the outward appearance advocated by the western modernism whereas Qin Feng makes his art deeply rooted in the tradition of Chinese culture. If we say that experimental ink painting is the outcome of full westernization, we can also say that Qin Feng resorts back to tradition. His painting is more of western-style when compared to traditional painting, but more of China-style when compared to experimental painting. In his paintings, China and West, tradition and modern go hand in hand compatibly and that is why Qin Feng calls himself a postmodern ink painting artist.

Qin Feng has drawn some sizable paintings with ink, propene and greasepaint. Those paintings are similar to the modern abstract expressionism, but, in fact, paintings by Qin Feng are quite different from the western abstract art masters because the latter do not paint with vigor or force of life, which results in the lack or the shortage of splendor in their paintings. Although the action painting by Jackson Pollock is related to body movement, the movement has nothing to do with physical strength. Instead, his drop color painting is weak and is of no force for which it can not be regarded as top painting from the standpoint of Chinese aesthetics that advocates power, which means the artists should paint with full vigor and life force. Even works by Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell and Hans Hartung who were said to be inspired by Chinese calligraphy have just the form rather than the true nature of calligraphy under careful analysis for they also lack in vigor. The works of Qin Feng are saturated with masculinity that could not be matched by any other western abstract art masters. Surely, in the view of Western philosophy, vigor is a pre-modernism concept; the art of vigor is pre-modernism art; art through vigor is pre-modernism aesthetics. The westerners who are bathed in modernism could hardly accept the pre-modernism of vigor. The value of Qin Feng's art is that it breaks restriction of Western modernism and boldly connects art with Chinese culture. Someone may think that Qin Feng who lives in multicultural America knows how to distinct his cultural identity through Chinese tradition. But I do not think this is his strategy. Because people who made contact with him would know vigorousness is purely himself. Qin Feng not only successfully embodies his masculinity in his works, but is also good at cultivating his noble spirit in life. Qin Feng's art is picture of his real life. His pursuit for pre-modernism makes his works more characteristic of postmodernism.

欲舞風景之054 / 亞麻紙 / 丙烯

Desire Scenery No.054 / Acrylic on Silkcoction Paper / 163x187cm / 2014