

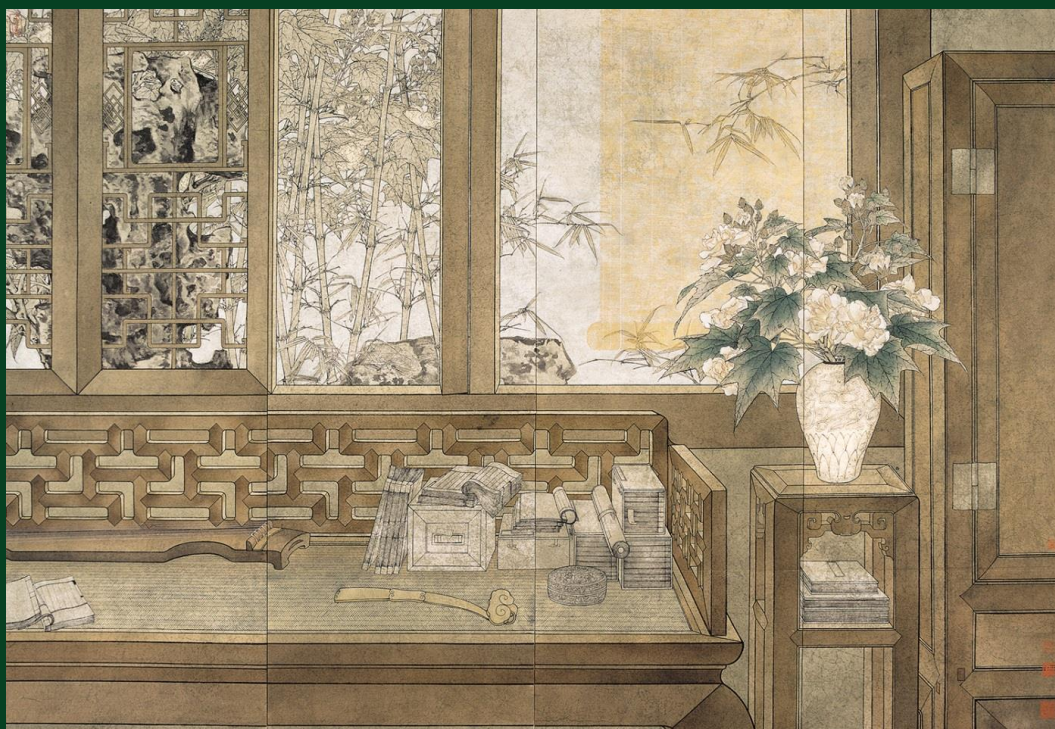
hanart
TZ Gallery
漢雅軒

鄭力
《故園心眼》

ZHENG Li
Reflections of the Classical Garden

藝術家出席酒會 2017年4月21日(週五)下午6到8時
Artist's Reception Friday, 21 April 2017, 6 to 8pm

展期 2017年4月21日至6月3日
Exhibition Period 21 April - 3 June 2017



鄭力 ZHENG Li 《與誰同塵》 *Who is My Life's Companion?*
1999-2002 水墨設色紙本 Ink and Colour on Paper 170 x 248 cm

圖檔由藝術家及漢雅軒提供 Image Courtesy of the Artist and Hanart TZ Gallery

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漢雅軒謹訂於四月為中國畫家鄭力舉辦首次香港個展《故園心眼》。畫展於二零一七年四月二十一日（週五）晚上六至八時在畢打行漢雅軒開幕。（展期至六月三日）。

鄭力先生的作品曾分別入選百年中國畫展，以及第八至第十二屆中國全國美展，每屆獲獎。《故園心眼》是鄭力先生首次在香港的重要個展，全面介紹他歷年的精品。本展覽總共展出作品十八組，其中包括他於二零零四年第十屆全國美展獲得銅獎的名作《晴雪》。

鄭力先生騁筆以縱橫六合，借山水而言志，筆墨秀潤而勁拔雄健，筆筆落在實處。物象與筆墨間發乎實情，卻又活潑靈動，清麗雅正。他的「園林畫」既刻畫出園林這種鬧市山林的精神，同時也創造了個人的圖式。鄭力先生傾力營造門窗楹架，在廊廡中引入了廟宇壁畫的結構。於案几擺設及花草竹石也巧妙隱喻比興。於是鄭力的「園林畫」充盈廟堂的中正大氣。

本展覽亮點是鄭力先生於二零一六年為杭州公望美術館的落成首展所創作的大手卷《順水圖》。該畫長達七米，是鄭力先生「反臨」元代大家黃公望的《富春山居圖》。所謂「反臨」，乃是把《富春山居圖》溯江而上的景色掉轉，改為順流而下的江景。在《順水圖》中，鄭力先生更把被燒缺的《富春山居圖》前段《剩山圖》與後段「無用師卷」承接完整，前後連接無間，可見其情性修養與筆墨功架。

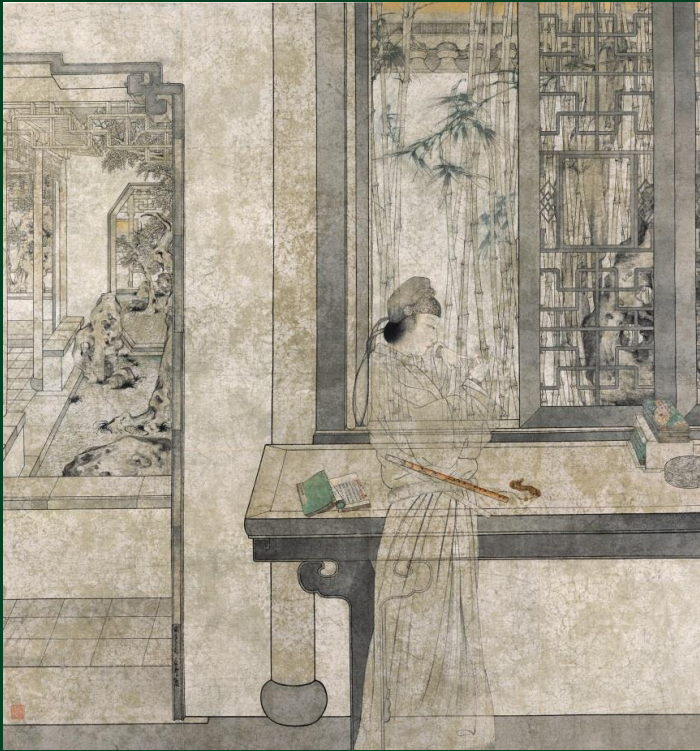
鄭力先生近年喜作金箋園林寫生，筆墨鮮活潑辣，但又呈現一種時光流逝的清靜虛曠。園中的迴廊屋舍，庭間花樹竹石，皆恍惚變幻，難以定格。其婉約微妙處若即若離，有如水中之月、鏡中之花，隨心境起伏而興沒。



[局部 details]

鄭力 ZHENG Li 《萬壑松風圖卷》 *Wind in Pines amid Myriad Valleys'* 2010 水墨紙本 Ink on Paper 36 x 196 cm
第十二屆全國美展獲獎提名獎 Honourable Mention Award, 12th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, China

圖檔由藝術家及漢雅軒提供 Image Courtesy of the Artist and Hanart TZ Gallery



鄭力 ZHENG Li
《遊園驚夢》 *Garden Dream*
2009
水墨設色紙本 Ink and Colour on Paper
210 x 198 cm

第十一屆全國美展銅獎作品
Bronze Award, 11th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, China

圖檔由藝術家及漢雅軒提供
Image Courtesy of the Artist and Hanart TZ Gallery

Hanart TZ Gallery is honoured to present **Zheng Li: Reflections of the Classical Garden**, the first major solo exhibition in Hong Kong of Hangzhou-based ink artist Zheng Li. His works have been shown in major exhibitions in China, including 'One Hundred Years of Chinese Painting' at the National Art Museum of China (Beijing), and the National Exhibitions of Fine Arts where his works have won numerous prizes. His paintings are highly sought after and are in a number of private and museum collections.

The exhibition features 18 important works of Zheng Li's distinctive *shanshui* (landscape) art, which infuses classical *shanshui* painting concepts with the artist's uniquely innovative interpretations of brushplay and scene.

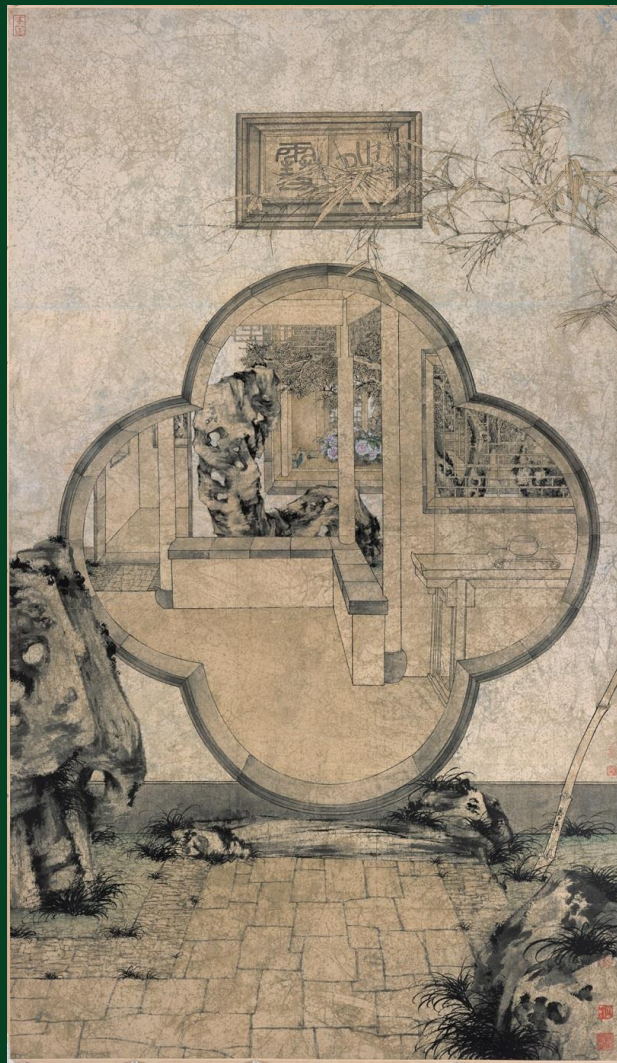
Zheng Li's artistic vision is beautifully articulated through the juxtapositions between the contained beauty of the classical garden and the vastness of nature which they encapsulate. The artist's supremely confident use of inkplay is grounded in a mastery of brushwork, allowing him to create unique innovations within the lineage of the ink-painting language, making his work part of a contemporary evolution of Chinese *shanshui* painting rather than a subversion of it.

The centrepiece of the exhibition is Zheng Li's tour de force, *Downstream*. This 7-metre-long handscroll, created for the 2016 inaugural exhibition of the new Gongwang Art Museum in Hangzhou, is Zheng Li's 'response' to the traditional masterpiece *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* by the famed Yuan-dynasty painter Huang Gongwang (1269–1354). With *Downstream*, Zheng Li has forged a new chapter in the literati tradition of 'copying' or 'interpreting' ancient masters, by painting Huang Gongwang's famous landscape scroll entirely in reverse. While Huang Gongwang's original painting depicts the beautifully detailed landscape as the eye moves upstream along the river, in Zheng Li's scroll we follow the landscape downstream; in a sense a reversal of both perspective and of time. Zheng Li's tour de force also has the distinction of depicting Huang's scroll in its entirety, uniting the two sections of Huang's painting that were famously separated in the 17th century when the work was burnt in half, after which the two sections, known respectively as *The Remaining Mountain* and *The Master Wuyong Scroll*, passed into different collections over the centuries. The supreme technical skill and mastery of brushwork required to both

imitate and reverse Huang Gongwang's work to create *Downstream* is a testament to Zheng Li's painterly skill and innovative daring.

Zheng Li also has an uncanny understanding and affinity for the aesthetics and spirit of the classical Chinese garden. He not only is able to capture the spiritual ambience of the scholar's garden, he is also able to fashion uniquely imaginative garden compositions based on his own taste and sensibilities. At first the eye is captivated by the harmonious forms and placement of his doorways and windows, furnishings and decorative objects, bamboo and rocks, walls and pavilions; and then one slowly discovers that the overall compositional effect is like that of a mural painting on a temple wall, infusing Zheng Li's garden paintings with the pure atmosphere of a sacred place. His works conjure a sense of intriguing duality, of both reality and illusion, like the reflection of the moon in water or a flower glowing in a distant garden, bringing into being an atmospheric world where the viewer's own mood and sensibility become part of the setting.

The opening reception in the presence of the artist will take place on Friday, 21 April 2017, from 6-8pm at the gallery. (Exhibition until 3rd June).



鄭力 ZHENG Li
《晴雪》 *Pure as Snow*
2002

水墨 設色 紙本 Ink and Colour on Paper
233 x 135 cm

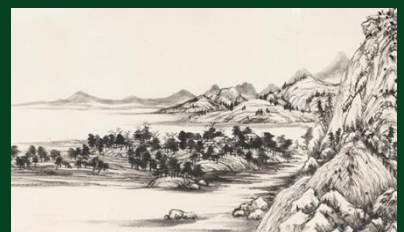
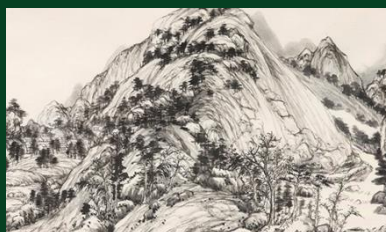
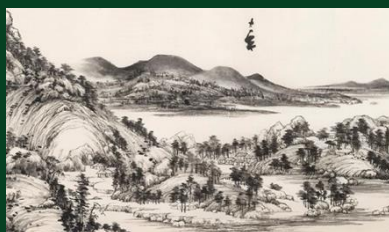
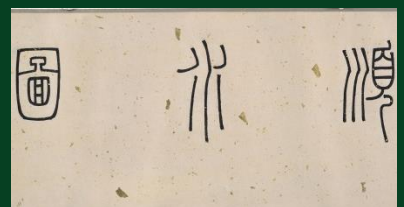
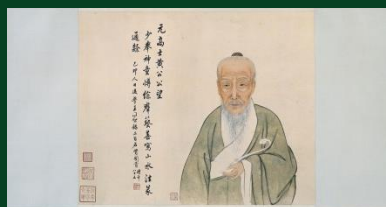
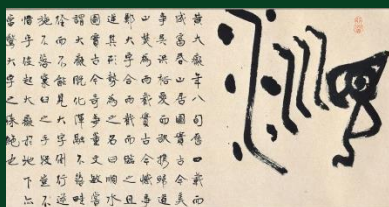
第十屆全國美展銅獎作品
Bronze Award, 10th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, China

圖檔由藝術家及漢雅軒提供
Image Courtesy of the Artist and Hanart TZ Gallery

《畫家的筆墨心結》

但凡認識我和鄭力的人，都知道我們之間是毫不掩飾的惺惺相惜。在近二十年的交往中，在畫事上，在私人空間中，都是近乎赤裸地坦誠相對。我們可以毫無保留地談論對山水的心得和對生命的態度。鄭力對筆墨的領悟，是當世山水畫家中之罕見的，但我倆的個性又幾乎是南轅北轍，最大的公約數就是對山水的信仰。鄭力是得道的美食家，每次在他的撩撥下記掛杭州的美食，特別是錢塘江旁的那家路邊店。他總是開懷大笑。交往日久，我們兩人成了君子之交，兩家也成了通家之好。

有了這層便利和信任，由其人其事再到其畫，反而容易一窺鄭力創作的旨趣。因為太了解，寫得太正經了，倒顯得生分。況且繪畫這事兒，要一本正經起來，就容易多了空話套話和肉麻話，反而拂了鄭力請我寫這篇文章的原意，倒不如從說說鄭力這個人來得乾淨利落。「乾淨」是我對鄭力整體上的認識：為人處事，行文作畫，落款蓋印，煮水沏茶，無不令人爽利；既深思熟慮認真周到，又落落大方恰到好處。在內心角落處又有幾分君子的矜持，認真地拒人千里之外，嚴肅地保有一份自然與獨立，也可以說傲驕，嚴格地來說是個不算合群的人，甚至可以說是個執拗的人。



[局部 details]

鄭力 ZHENG Li 《順水圖》 Downstream 2016 水墨 古紙本 Ink on Antique Paper 35 x 696 cm

吳湖帆家藏咸豐五年制古墨。

陸儼少自用古澄泥硯。
中古富陽竹漿紙。

Painted using ink stick with maker's mark and dated 1855, originally in the collection of Master Wu Hufan.
Antique ink stone originally owned by Master Lu Yanshao.
Antique Fuyang bamboo paper.

圖檔由藝術家及漢雅軒提供 Image Courtesy of the Artist and Hanart TZ Gallery

因執拗而成的《順水圖》

去年杭州美術界的一件大事，是建築師王澍設計的富陽公望美術館的落成，而大事中的大事是高士明主策劃的美術館落成展「山水宣言」，看展題就知道士明對二十一世紀山水畫的抱負和期待。在我看來，此次大展中鄭力的《順水圖》，又是其中最是可咀嚼的可傳世作品。自黃公望的《富春山居圖》問世，明清二代至民國，從沈周到四王至中國山水畫正脈最後的殿軍吳湖帆，無不順著富春山居圖的線路：或以拙擬意（沈周），或以荒率窺趣（王時敏），或以筆力解讀（王原祁），至吳湖帆則直接以摹擬為能事而名噪畫壇。唯獨鄭力兄倒行逆施，以「順水」為名，腳踏實地考據而後，倒撫一過《富春山居圖》，把逆流的富春江景色掉轉過來，改畫成順流下行的景象。

說實話，作為一個山水畫家，一開始我對鄭力的計劃有點不以為然的。如此折騰的意義在那裡？我心中犯著嘀咕。記得在展覽數月前，作客鄭力畫室，人看見半成品的《順水圖》釘在牆上，鄭力正在對高士明解說討論《富春山居圖》精妙之處，還不時回頭問我：「老徐，你說這一段是不是這樣去看更妙些？」而我正滿屋子找酒呢，找到半瓶剩酒時，鄭力又插上一句：「那是你二年前喝剩下的。」回頭繼續他的話題。

手握酒杯豎著耳朵聽他倆胡說八道，邊聽邊喝邊看細細體會這牆上的《順水圖》，漸漸地人也落入了鄭力彀中。都是畫山水的，對黃公望這一畫史名作當然是了然於胸，這老爺子近杖朝之年花了數年的心血鑄成《富春山居圖》，自是非同凡響，遂成百代宗師；而鄭力在這指東劃西把近七百年前的歷史名篇倒過來，一招一式的拆解，個中得失滋味唯鄭力兄自己體會。

我想，鄭力之所以這麼做，其實已經不滿足於作歷史的回應。他對自己筆墨上的把控能力是很自信的，一般意義上的見招拆招，已經不能夠刺激到他，畫史上能入鄭力法眼者我心裡大概能有個數。這次高士明主策「山水宣言」，給鄭力提供了一次與富春山居圖隔空對決際遇，才真正挑起了鄭力的精神。

對畫史上歷代大家的風格和筆墨技法尋根探源，是中國繪畫史上歷朝歷代畫家幾乎共同遵循的傳統。打開一部山水畫史，在各時代畫家的作品中，總是能看到擬、仿、撫、摹某某筆意等等，初時頗不以為然，認為是今不如古的崇古心結。其實不然，我自己也正是在對歷史的文脈再三撫觸後，才領悟到中華文明演進本身就是一部脈絡學。如果不能把握到歷史文脈的根源，是永遠抵達不了新的緯度，也獲得不了根源性文明的支持，終究成為無本之木。與古為新，蟬蛻龍變，才是正兒八經事。中國繪畫在歷史的進程中，不斷作出對過往繪畫史的回應和對決，「關公戰秦瓊」初看似笑話，仔細琢磨卻深有意義。隔山打牛雖難，畢竟在同一時空中。秦瓊挑戰關公卻是跨時空對決，難上加難，卻將關公也再次激活了。鄭力挑的就是這難事兒。

廟堂中正的園林畫

中國的園林文明是獨幟於世界的偉大的創造，它的歷史沿革變化不在本文討論範圍，然而它的主體元素的構成卻反映出每個園林主的個性和修養。園林或大或小，基本由五大元素構成，庭，廊，齋，亭，橋。掇山流水是文人對高山流水的隱喻，是見微知著的集中體現，其中的形態變化隨主人的情趣而其妙莫測。園林是中國文人生命過程中的社會性與精神上的終極追求的交融，無論是觸境興懷還是觸事興懷，文與圖會以至天人交會，娛人娛己盡在其中。

中國的園林是一種全感官審美，創造了一種獨特的場域，既可供雄心馳騁，又可作退守精神安寧之淨土。歷史上著名的王維《輞川圖》，可以說全方位地映射出中國士夫階層的精神關注。這樣一幅全境山水園林圖，究竟是否出自於文人的標本型人物王維之手，其實並不重要，但它確是全面解述了中國從士夫直到晚清文人的終極情懷。

鄭力應該是時常感嘆余生晚矣的新員外，他對園林是情有獨鍾的。從他創作的《書香門第》，到《游園驚夢》，再到近期完成的《蘇東坡》，無不折射出他的內心獨白。他的確畫出了園林的精神層面的東西，同時也創造出了屬於他的園林圖式，表面上看傾向於門窗形態和案幾的擺設及樹木花草竹石院牆的繁簡比興，廊廡中介入了廟宇壁畫中的結構框架，使得鄭力的園林畫自有一種廟堂的中正大氣。



鄭力 ZHENG Li
《我亦有亭深竹里，也思歸去聽秋聲》 *I have a pavilion deep in the bamboo forest, where I long to listen to the autumn wind'*
2015
水墨 設色 紙本 Ink and Colour on Paper
184 x 372 cm

圖檔由藝術家及漢雅軒提供 Image Courtesy of the Artist and Hanart TZ Gallery

由鄭力的筆墨情結尋覓中國水墨的心理脈象

執筆墨而縱橫，借山水而言志。前者更接近於莫可名狀的潛意識的心理衝動，後者則是理性的價值觀訴求。元人方方壺的《高高亭》，筆墨縱橫捭闔一片狼藉近似於塗鴉，筆墨的自由意志達到了酣暢淋漓的極致，壁立千仞的崖頂上，一亭傲然天下，一氣呵成極其簡約，將道家的「開張天岸馬，奇逸人中龍」的精神圖像得以完整的釋放呈現，縱使華山道祖陳搏老人見之亦當拍案而絕倒。

二零一三年在美國納爾遜·阿特金斯博物館見到許道寧《漁父圖》的原作時，思想一時為之窒息。那種時空、景色構成的筆墨關係，已然與宇宙結為一體，用渾然天成去描述它都覺得是多餘的。如若去掉前景舟楫漁父因漁獲而把酒相慶的時代場景，完全就是筆墨的能量，一種無古無新、與天地星河同壽的存在感，達到了澹泊天崖，粉碎虛空的境界。

回頭看黃公望的《富春山居圖》。用黃公望自己的話來說：「皮袋中置描筆在內，或於好景處，見樹有怪異，便當模寫之。」董其昌贊譽：「其神韻超逸，體備眾法，脫化渾融，不落畦徑。」總體來看完全是一片江南丘陵的寫真圖像，以波形的長披麻皴等諸多筆法來描繪植被山水，將峰巒疊翠，雲山煙樹，沙汀村舍，疏密有致地把浩渺連綿的江南山水表現得淋漓盡致。賓虹老人評「山川渾厚，草木華滋」，頗是中肯的。

綜觀三大宗師的筆墨心象，方方壺、許道寧幾乎是無跡可尋，似神仙中人，神跡渺渺，只可意會。而大痴道人一脈則開啟明清二代山水畫筆墨和現實世界的情景交融。其中筆墨心象的精神訴求自此分道揚鑣，前者隱逸於筆墨的煙波浩瀚，後者至今餘音繞梁而尾大不掉。

筆墨山水的創作，歷史以來就有著幾條不同的路徑，時而交叉，時而分離。在時代的變動中，藝術的形態不可避免會產生更新後的新形式，石濤「筆墨當隨時代」論深刻的影響了後世，但對筆墨和時代的關係問題，我也一直沒有放棄雙向思考。藝術是一門創造學，這當然是沒有異議，但藝術家是否可以一意孤行？歷史上的經典名畫每讀每新，猶如明月照古亦照今。在中國繪畫自成體系的筆墨關係中，那無窮變幻總能緊緊攫住中國人審美上的心脈。這種審美上的心理定勢應該是千百年以來形成的觀念性審視。打破觀念不一定是唯一可取的途徑，更何況外部的顛覆力量往往破壞性高於建設性。所謂「不破不立」，時常也會誤導人，「立」才是破之根本，立足於根源文明的源頭，借西風而鳳凰涅槃。

由於我們正處在被現代化的歷史階段，缺乏對自身文明的過去、當下、未來的自由鏈接，各種已經發生和將會發生的和自身根源性文明之間的不諧調的種種，讓我們在新與舊的問題上陷入過時性和未來性的理解誤區。在科學昌明的今天，我們一方面獲得了對未來更多的信心，而另一方面科技層面升級換代推陳出新的思維被格式化後，漸漸也影響到我們回望歷史經典的能力。

石濤的「筆墨當隨時代」論，毫無疑問代表了新時代領風氣之先的社會訴求，也自然是一時之顯學，它引領和滿足了時代潮流。藝術的形式和觀念一經突破，肯定會有其應運而生別開新局的偉大作品的誕生，成為新時代的新標識。與此同時，總是另有一種對基本圖式和筆墨糾纏的堅持和堅決。在過去一元文化時代沒有如此之大的差異性，從王原祁到石濤作為同時代的山水畫代表人物，他們之間的差異性最終還是歸於同一性。在今天，變與不變卻被突顯了出來。

記得高士明前年和我談到印度藝術和伊朗細密畫時說：「老徐啊，今天你到伊朗去看細密畫只有到博物館去看了，在民間這條繪畫的線索已經不存在了，而恰恰中國山水畫，不論你滿意與否，依然堅持著它的基本法則，它證明了什麼呢？證明它已經完全溶入到了民族的根性中，意味著一種等待!!!」原話大概如此吧。士明的此番議論似乎想告訴我什麼，也讓我幾年來更注意排除成見去看待當今山水畫的現象，其中最心儀的無疑是鄭力的作品，前文已經談及的鄭力對決黃公望《富春山居圖》而作的《順水圖》，的確也在某個層面上回應了高士明的談話。

徐龍森
二零一七年立春寫於東海堂寓中



鄭力 ZHENG Li
《東園》 East Garden (Dong Yuan)
2012
水墨 金箋 Ink on Gold Paper
31.5 x 40.5 cm

圖檔由藝術家及漢雅軒提供
Image Courtesy of the Artist and Hanart TZ Gallery

An Artist's Obsession with the Aesthetics of Brush and Ink

Anyone who knows both me and Zheng Li is aware that we are unabashed admirers of each other's work. Over the more than 20 years of our acquaintance, during our frequent visits to one another's studios, we have always been open and honest in our discussions, whether it comes to our views on *shanshui* painting, or our attitudes towards art and life in general. Zheng Li's deep understanding of the artistic language of *bimo* (brush and ink) is rare among contemporary ink painters, and thus we easily connect on an artistic level: in many other ways, however, our personalities are poles apart. Perhaps the thing we most have in common is our faith in *shanshui* painting.

Another striking thing about Zheng Li is how much he loves to eat; he is a true gourmand. He especially likes to extoll the merits of Hangzhou cuisine, and in particular those roadside restaurants that dot the shoreline along Qiantang Lake. He also loves a joke, and is completely unselfconscious about breaking out into loud peals of laughter. Over the course of our long friendship, we have become true friends as well as artistic compatriots; our families have become close as well, and our homes are always open to each other.

With this level of ease and trust, it is easy to grasp the intention that lies at the heart of Zheng Li's creative work, and this is especially true since Zheng Li's paintings so clearly reflect his inner cultivation and his life values. When an artist paints too self-consciously, too rigorously in accord with a set of prescriptions or rules, then his work can easily become separated from life. If one is too earnest, too sedulous in the act of painting, the result is a painting that becomes devoid of any real heart, and descends into the realm of the cliché.

What I most want most to emphasize here in terms of Zheng Li's work is the incredible quality of pure, elegant ease with which he paints. And at the same time, in some corner of his heart, one can also sense the scholar-gentleman's inner composure and confidence, which can be described as an ability to hold one's ground even if it means standing apart from the crowd. Zheng Li is very serious about maintaining the qualities of artistic freedom and independence of thought—one could even say he has a kind of arrogance or willful determination.



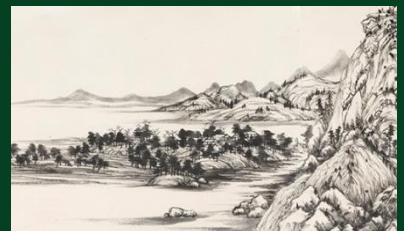
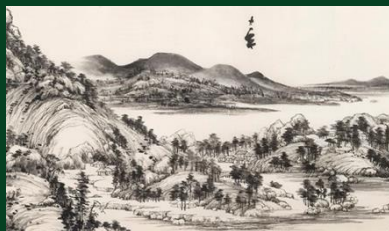
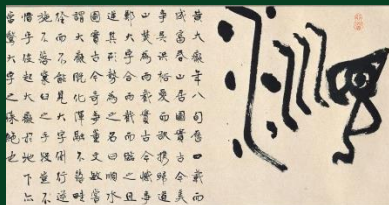
鄭力 ZHENG Li 《瀟灑出塵》 *Soaring above the World*
2013 水墨紙本 Ink on Paper 41 x 172.5 cm

圖檔由藝術家及漢雅軒提供 Image Courtesy of the Artist and Hanart TZ Gallery

Downstream: A Painting Born of Willful Determination

One of the major events in Hangzhou's art world last year was the completion of the new Gongwang Art Museum in Fuyang district, designed by the famous architect Wang Shu. And one of the most important events that occurred in tandem with the museum's completion was its opening exhibition, *Shanshui Manifesta*, curated by Gao Shiming. The exhibition title is an indication of the kind of ambition and expectation that Gao Shiming holds for *shanshui* painting in the 21st century. And in my view, of all the works in the show, Zheng Li's handscroll *Downstream* was one of the most ambitious and thought-provoking, both in terms of its connectivity to the *shanshui* tradition and its ability to push the tradition to a new level.

Huang Gongwang completed his masterpiece *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* in the year 1354, and over the next six hundred years, from the Ming dynasty to the Republican period, painters have created their own versions of the work, bringing various personal qualities to their interpretations, whether conscious awkwardness (Shen Zhou), kinetic undulations (Wang Shimin), or the decoding of Huang Gongwang's expressive brushwork (Wang Yuanqi); not to mention Wu Hufan's own virtuosic copy of the scroll that caused a sensation in art circles. Yet all of these artists still practiced within the fundamental precepts of the orthodox tradition. Only Zheng Li has gone against this tide, as he indicates in the title of his work, *Downstream*. Keeping his feet firmly planted on the ground, and undertaking his own critical analysis, Zheng Li has created a completely new version of *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, by painting the entire composition in reverse.



[局部 details]

鄭力 ZHENG Li 《順水圖》 *Downstream* 2016 水墨 古紙本 Ink on Antique Paper 35 x 696 cm

吳湖帆家藏咸豐五年制古墨。

Painted with ink stick with maker's mark and dated 1855, originally in the collection of Master Wu Hufan.

陸儼少自用古澄泥硯。
中古富陽竹漿紙。

Antique ink stone originally owned by Master Lu Yanshao.
Antique Fuyang bamboo paper.

圖檔由藝術家及漢雅軒提供 Image Courtesy of the Artist and Hanart TZ Gallery

To be honest, as a *shanshui* painter, when I first heard about Zheng Li's concept I thought it was over the top and I had a hard time accepting it. But then, a few months before the exhibition, I was visiting Zheng Li at his studio and I saw the half-finished landscape scroll pinned to the wall. At the time, Zheng Li was deep in conversation with Gao Shiming, analyzing the unique elements of *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*. Suddenly he turned to me and said: 'Hey Xu, don't you think I've just opened up a whole new way of looking at this painting?' I had at that moment been hunting all over the studio for something to drink, and when I finally found a half-empty bottle of wine, Zheng Li added: 'Actually you drank half of that same bottle of wine two years ago!' Then he turned back to Gao Shiming and continued his conversation.

Holding a glass in my hand, I split my concentration between drinking wine, listening to the two of them yakking away, and scrutinizing Zheng Li's *Downstream* painting, where it was hanging on the wall. Gradually, I fell completely under the painting's spell. Every *shanshui* artist knows the history of Huang Gongwang's *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*: how as an old man this great artist and scholar spent years of his life, and his blood sweat and tears, to create this masterpiece; and how he subsequently has been honoured for generations for his accomplishment. Now Zheng Li was taking this great work, whose influence and renown has spread far and wide for over seven centuries, and turning it on its head, attempting to deconstruct each of its devices and patterns. But I realized then that in the mission of painting it in reverse, Zheng Li had undertaken a very thorough analysis of the painting, and in so doing had truly been able to discern and capture its essence, its perfections and its flaws, and its inimitable spirit.

I believe that the reason Zheng Li took such an approach was because he was not satisfied by only responding to history. He is very confident in his facility with brush and ink, and the usual bag of tricks cannot excite him. With his discerning eye, Zheng Li examined the history of *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, and in Gao Shiming's show he saw an opportunity not so much for a response, but for a confrontation: this was the only thing that could really arouse Zheng Li's spirit and captivate his interest.

To seek out the roots and origins of the styles and techniques of brushwork has been the orthodox practice of Chinese painters throughout history. Open up a book on the history of Chinese painting and you will see how across dynasties and periods painters have emulated, imitated, and copied works and stylistic elements of the great masters. At first I took this state of affairs for granted, revering the past and dismissing the contemporary world as inferior to it. It was only after I really spent some time connecting deeply with the pulse of our cultural history that I understood that the evolution of Chinese culture is an evolving network of connectivity. It is only by understanding and grasping the root sources of that history that one is able to achieve new latitudes of creativity, and thus make work that is in turn supported by that history. In other words, it is only by bringing forth the new from the roots of the old that true innovation and transformation are possible.

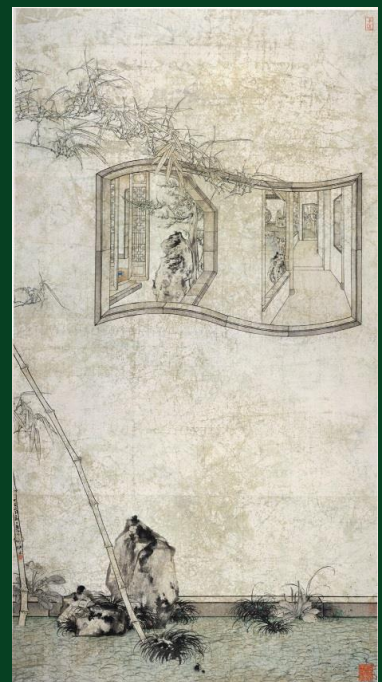
Over the millennia, the evolution of Chinese painting has been characterized by both responses to and confrontations with its own history. An apt metaphor here is the famous comic dialogue 'Guan Gong vs. Qin Qiong'. At first this story seems merely a farce, but if you ponder it more deeply you will find that it has another layer of meaning. Qin Qiong and Guan Gong were famous generals from two different dynastic periods, and in order for Qin Qiong to confront and do battle with Guan Gong, he had to travel across time: this was no easy feat, because it meant that Qin Qiong had to be brought to life again in order to travel through history. In a way, Zheng Li set himself an equally difficult challenge.

The garden painting in the temple

The Chinese garden is one of the greatest cultural creations in the world. Although its evolution is beyond the scope of this essay, it is important to note that the composition of its key elements varies according to the cultivation, tastes and sensibilities of its creator. Whether large or small in scale, every garden is composed of five main elements: courtyards, walkways, studios, pavilions and bridges. The 'gathered mountains and flowing water' of the garden are a symbol of the high mountain peaks and rushing rivers beyond its walls. The garden is a concentrated metaphor, a microcosm of the grand natural landscape. The possible forms and transformations, twists and turns of a garden are marvelous and endless in their permutations, much to the delight of its creator.

The Chinese garden constitutes a multi-sensory experience within a completely unique domain. The famous garden of Wangchuan Villa attributed to the Tang-dynasty poet-painter Wang Wei can be described as a wonderful reflection of the spirit and tastes of the Chinese scholar-artist class. Whether or not the original scroll painting depicting the Wangchuan Villa garden actually came from Wang Wei's hand is unimportant: what is important is that this representation of the garden encapsulates the ultimate spirit and sensibility of the Chinese scholar-artist, from Wang Wei's time all the way through to that of the late Qing literati.

Zheng Li must often experience a sense of regret that he was born too late, in a time outside of literati history. Yet he has an uncanny understanding and affinity for the aesthetics and spirit of the Chinese garden, as is reflected in both his earlier works such as *Aura of the Literati (Shuxiang mendì)* and *Garden Dream (Youyuan jingmeng)* to his more recent *Su Dongpo*. All are eloquent articulations of his inner ode to the garden. Zheng Li not only is able to capture the spiritual ambience of the scholar's garden, he is also able to create unique garden compositions based on his own taste and sensibilities. At first the eye is captivated by the harmonious forms and placement of his doorways and windows, furnishings and decorative objects, bamboo and rocks, walls and pavilions; and then one finds that the overall compositional effect is like that of a mural painting on a temple wall, infusing Zheng Li's garden paintings with the pure atmosphere of a sacred place.



鄭力 ZHENG Li

《故園心眼》

Reflections of the Classical Garden

2017

水墨設色紙本

Ink and Colour on Paper

240 x 128 cm

圖檔由藝術家及漢雅軒提供

Image Courtesy of the Artist and Hanart TZ Gallery



鄭力 ZHENG LI 《書香門第》 *Aura of the Literati* 1999 水墨設色紙本 Ink and Colour on Paper 169 x 248 cm
第九屆全國美展金獎作品 Gold Award, 9th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, China

圖檔由藝術家及漢雅軒提供 Image Courtesy of the Artist and Hanart TZ Gallery

From Zheng Li's obsession to the creative pulse of Chinese *bimo* painting

On a trip to the United States in 2013 I visited the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art I saw the scroll *Fisherman's Evening Song* by Northern Song painter Xu Daoning. The painting completely took my breath away. The artist's brilliant interplay of ink and brush to construct time, space, and landscape created a sense of integrated wholeness that seemed already part of the cosmic order: words are superfluous to try and describe this effect. If one were to take away the painting's foreground scene of fishermen drinking wine to celebrate the day's catch, then what would be left would be only pure and timeless brush play, transcending both the ancient and the new, and a timeless existence like that of the sky, the water and the stars. It would be as though Xu Daoning had created a realm that came forth from the cosmic void.

Huang Gongwang once wrote: 'Always carry your brush inside your leather pouch; then when you encounter a beautiful scene in the landscape, or a tree with a particularly strange and intriguing form, you can immediately paint it and capture its likeness.' Dong Qichang praised Huang Gongwang's 'transcendent spirit' as one that is 'so well equipped with every technical expertise that it manages to rid itself of all mundane trappings, and to forge its own path.' Taken as a whole, Huang Gongwang's *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* faithfully captures the essence and features of the mountainous Jiangnan landscape. Using a number of different brushwork techniques such as long, undulating hemp texture strokes, Huang articulates the layered peaks and valleys, the mountains and forests cloaked in mist, the small village houses along the sandy banks, brilliantly capturing both near views and far distances, and articulating both the density and the vastness of the Jiangnan landscape. Huang Binhong's comment that Huang Gongwang had captured the 'pure majesty of the mountains and the lushness of the vegetation' is absolutely right.

Over time, *shanshui* painting has developed over different creative paths; sometimes these paths intersect, sometimes they diverge. As the times change, artistic practice unavoidably gives rise to new forms of innovation. Shitao's statement that 'ink painting should change with the times' had a deep influence on later generations, but I have always had conflicting feelings about this relationship. There is no doubt that art is a process of creativity, but can an artist really just insist on following his own path? The great masterpieces of history are able to illuminate both the past and the present. Chinese ink painting has developed its own unique system based on the interplay of brush and ink, and the endless variations possible within this system are in close syncopation with the pulse of Chinese aesthetic sensibility. This aesthetic is reflective of a conceptual framework for understanding the world that has been developing over thousands of years. The ideology that espouses the breakdown or subversion of the past as the only path to innovation in fact leads to a situation where destructiveness prevails over constructiveness. The notion that 'without destruction there can be no construction' leads people into a wrong way of thinking. In fact, true breakthrough stands on the foundation of cultural and civilizational roots.

As we are still in the historical phase of modernization, we continue to lack a sense of continuity between our civilizational past, our present and our future. Many things have happened, and will continue to happen, that cause a disjuncture between us and our source culture, and we fall into a trap of misinterpreting the old and the new, as a dynamic of the past and the future. In an age dominated by science and technology, we have faith in the future, but at the same time the belief that we must discard the old to bring in the new has become systemic, and is gradually eroding our ability to connect with the great masterworks of our history.

Certainly there will always be stylistic and conceptual breakthroughs in art that give rise to the masterworks of a new age. Running parallel to this is a desire to maintain a determined connection with the fundamental compositional principles and brush techniques of the past. The aesthetic ethos of the past was not marked by the kind of major differences in practice and attitudes that we see today: despite their stylistic differences, both Wang Yuanqi and Shitao are considered representative *shanshui* artists of their time: in fact the differences between them ultimately are evidence of their artistic consonance.

Several years ago Gao Shiming and I were talking about the tradition of Indian and Iranian miniature painting, and Gao Shiming said to me: 'If you were to go to Iran today to look at miniature paintings, the only place you would be able to find them is in the museum, because almost all traces of this artistic tradition have disappeared from among the people. But the situation with Chinese *shanshui* painting is very different: no matter whether you are satisfied with current practices or not, its fundamental methods and principles are still active. And isn't this proof of something? I believe that it is proof that *shanshui* painting has already become a part of our fundamental cultural identity, and so we can still have expectations for its future!' Over the past few years I've pondered the implications of Gao Shiming's comment, with the effect that it has made me much less judgmental and more open to contemporary *shanshui* art. And of all the contemporary work I've encountered, it is Zheng Li's art that I admire most. On another level, I am also very aware that my discussion of Zheng Li's painting *Downstream* as a confrontation with Huang Gongwang's *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, is also my response to Gao Shiming's observation.

Xu Longsen

Written at Donghai Hall, early spring 2017

(Translation by Valerie C. Doran)



鄭力 ZHENG LI 《鶴鳴九臯，聲聞於天》 *The crane cries in the ninth pool of the marsh, and her cries are heard in the sky*
2006 水墨紙本 Ink on Paper 44 x 69 cm



鄭力 ZHENG LI 《獅子林寫生》 *Views of Lion Grove Garden (Shizi lin)*
2011 水墨金箋 Ink on Gold Paper 31.5 x 82 cm

圖檔由藝術家及漢雅軒提供 Image Courtesy of the Artist and Hanart TZ Gallery



鄭力 ZHENG Li

圖檔由藝術家提供
Image Courtesy of the Artist

簡歷

鄭力（一九六四年生，寧波鎮海）

鄭力，字大字。一九六四年出生於中國寧波鎮海。一九八八年畢業於中國美術學院中國畫系（原浙江美術學院）山水專業。同年留校任教至今。現為中國美術學院副教授，碩士研究生導師，中國藝術研究院中國畫院研究員。鄭力為中國美術家協會會員、浙江美協理事。他的作品曾分別入選百年中國畫展，以及第八至第十二屆中國全國美展，屢獲殊榮。一九九九年，憑作品《書香門第》獲第九屆全國美展金獎，讓當年僅三十六歲的鄭力先生備受關注。



一九九九年，第九屆全國美術作品展上，鄭力的《書香門第》獲金獎，吳冠中先生頒獎。
9th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, ZHENG Li's *Aura of the Literati* was awarded Gold medal,
which was presented by the celebrated painter WU Guanzhong, 1999.

圖檔由藝術家提供 Image Courtesy of the Artist

Artist Biography

ZHENG Li (b.1964, Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, China)

Zheng Li, courtesy name Da Yu, was born in 1964 in the city of Ningbo in Zhejiang province. Zheng Li received both his BA (1988) and his MA (2004) from the Chinese Painting Department of the China Academy of Art (formerly the Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts), with a specialization in *shanshui* (Chinese landscape painting). Since 1994 he has been teaching in the Chinese Painting Department at CAA, where he is currently Assistant Professor as well as supervising professor for the graduate course in Chinese landscape painting. He is member of the China Artists Association, and on the council of the Zhejiang Art Association. His works have been shown in major exhibitions in China, including 'One Hundred Years of Chinese Painting' at the National Art Museum of China (Beijing), and the National Exhibitions of Fine Arts where his works have won numerous prizes. His paintings are highly sought after and are in a number of private and museum collections.