



苏东平
心象

SU DONG PING
Landscapes of The Heart



Su Dong Ping

Su Dong Ping was born in 1958 in Shenyang, Liaoning province. He taught painting and art history for over 20 years after graduating from the Department of Oil Painting at Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts. His revolt against the traditional education model has led to his deviation as an abstract artist.

Su Dong Ping's father, a devotee of calligraphy, is Su Dong Ping's mentor who has had a great impact on his artistic practice. Through his father, Su Dong Ping learned the concept of 'bu miao', which means not to follow rules docilely when writing calligraphy, but to let the spirit and thought flow on paper spontaneously and decisively. Su Dong Ping's artistic language is based on the principles of calligraphy. He employs the measure and spirituality of calligraphy in his abstract painting. It is casual fortuity and instantaneity that contribute to the ideal state of 'bu miao', which according to the artist is the highest realm of painting.

The restraints from traditional education, family, and his social environment awakened Su Dong Ping's inner impulses and aspirations, which had been repressed for a long time. Su Dong Ping layers his works with thick paint day after day, impregnating them with strong emotional and visual tension while infusing them with his life experience, which reflects his self-sentiments at that very moment. The insight is beyond there and then, beyond the relativity of time, between instantaneity and eternalness, and beyond spatial relativity. His works are cathartic, having escaped from the constraint of time and space, and enter into a state of purity.

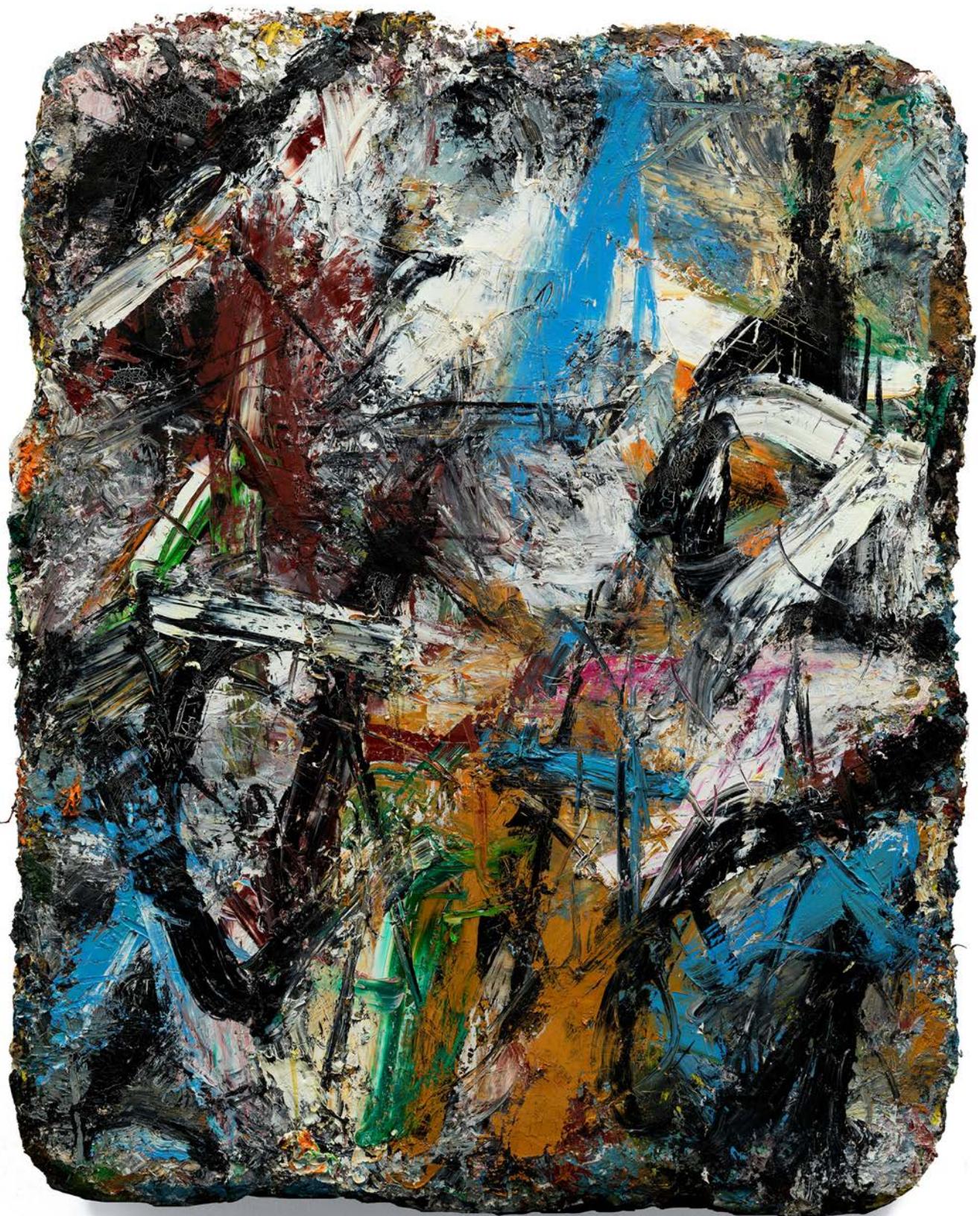
Su Dong Ping recently held his solo exhibition *Instant Measure: Paintings by Su Dongping* (2014) at the Inside-Out Art Museum in Beijing.

苏东平1958年出生于中国辽宁省沈阳市，他于1983年毕业于鲁迅美术学院油画系之后执教绘画及艺术史达二十余年，成长阶段对传统美术教育模式的反叛与悖离，开启了之后苏东平“孤注一掷”的抽象绘画历程。

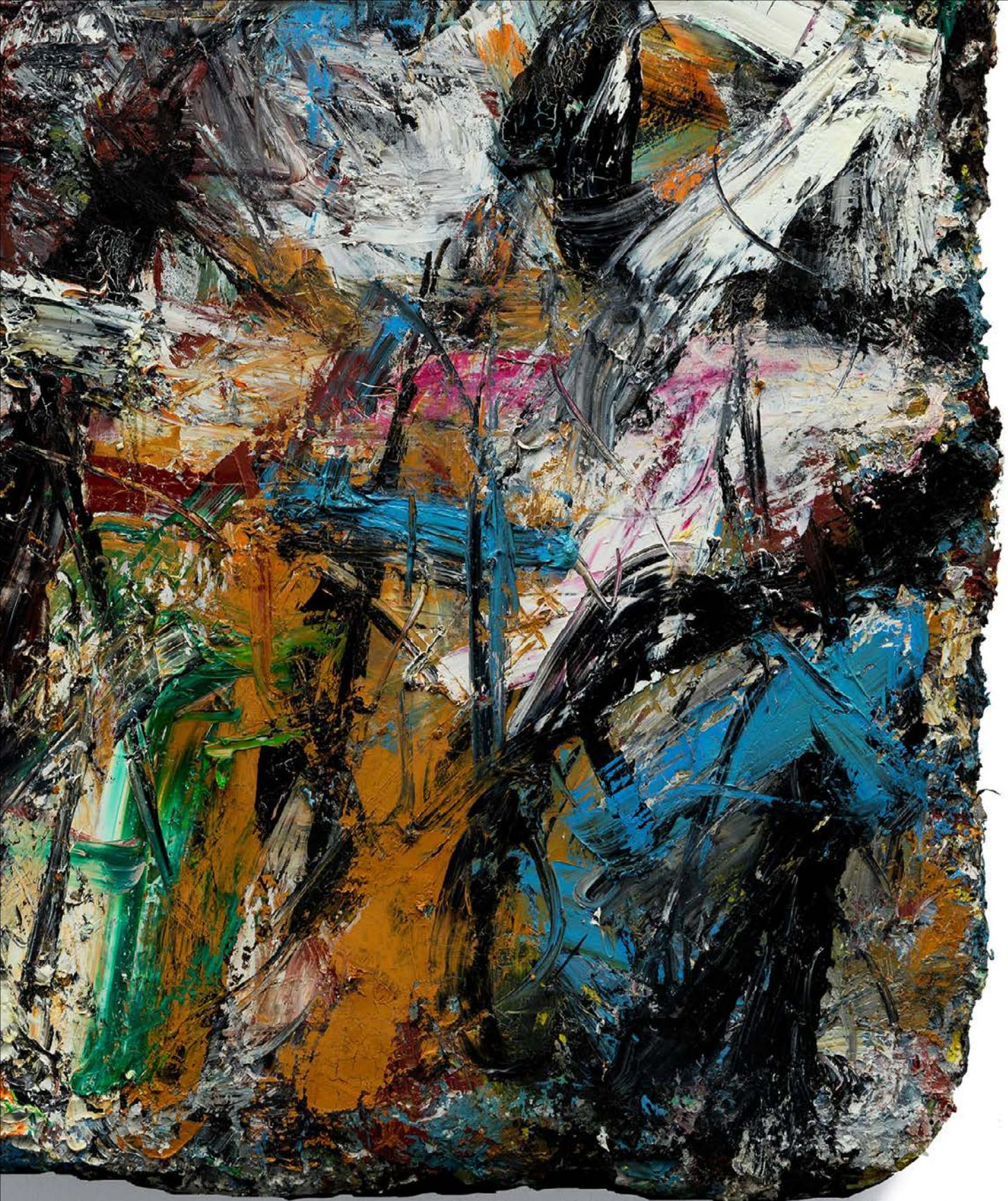
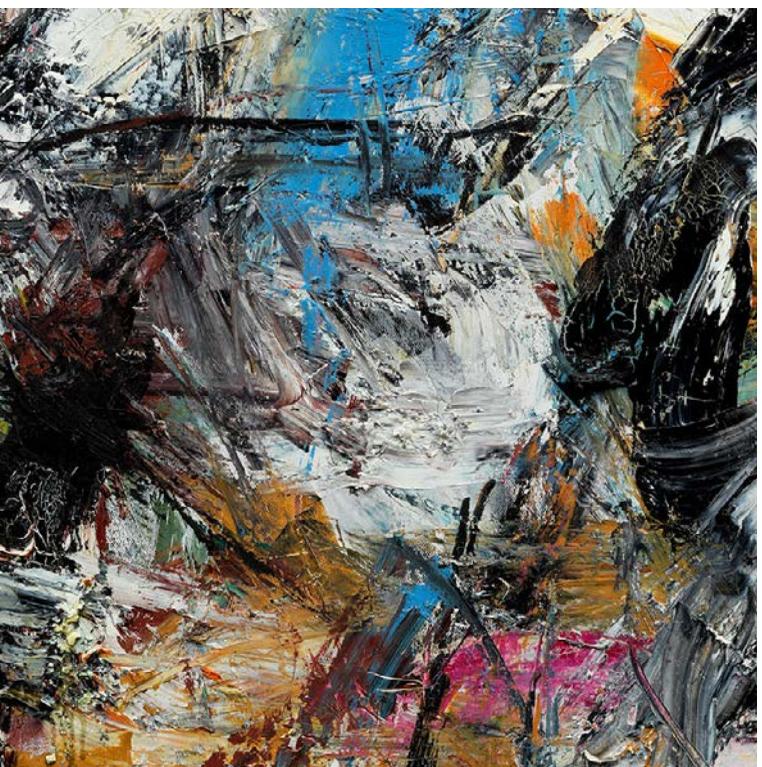
苏东平的艺术启蒙教育来自于其热爱书法的父亲，书法中所承袭的“不描”态度潜移默化地根植在他之后的绘画学习和艺术创作过程中，“不描”在书法中指的是不刻板地遵照规范与法度，让意念在笔下自然而果断地流淌。书法是苏东平的绘画语言，他将书法的法度与精神传承于抽象绘画的实践中，恰恰是脑袋里面最不经意的偶然和瞬间判断才是绘画最高的境界，才是“不描”的真正理想状态。

传统教育、家庭、社会环境的压力限制、激发着苏东平内心抑制已久的冲动与渴望。作品画面浸透着强烈的情绪张力，厚重的油彩通过日复一日的涂抹修改，将艺术家的生命体验注入层层堆叠的画面中，此生命体验是自我当下此在的发现，超越当下与他时，也即瞬间和永恒的时间相对性，超越此在与他在的空间性分别，情感宣泄进入一种不受时空关系制约的纯粹体验中。

苏东平最近参加的展览有：《法度瞬间—苏东平抽象绘画》，中间美术馆，中国北京（2014）。



2013No.9, 2013, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 175 x 145 cm (68 9/10 x 57 1/10 in.)



2013No.9 (detail局部), 2013, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 175 x 145 cm (68 9/10 x 57 1/10 in.)

The Divided Self

Philip Dodd

Philip Dodd is the former Director of London's ICA, a curator, writer and award-winning BBC broadcaster. His writings on art range from essays for Tate to the best-selling book *Relative Values: Art and Value*. *The Guardian* newspaper said he was 'one of the two best analysts of the cultural changes of his generation'. He is chairman of Made in China (<http://www.madeinchinauk.com/>), founder of the much acclaimed Private Museum Forum at Art HK (where he was on the advisory board), and member of the Advisory Board, Art 15 London.

Chinese artists whose art education took place in the 80s were condemned to live through interesting times. Su Dong Ping is one such artist: born in 1958, he lived through the Cultural Revolution as a child and young man, and his art education, like that of so many of his generation, was delayed until the 80s. Yet while this period was in many ways a tragedy in twentieth century Chinese history, out of that convulsive time came some of the most interesting artists that China has produced in the last 40 years. The emergence into the light of Su Dong Ping, whose exhibition history has been modest, is further testimony to my belief that we cannot yet weigh the quality and range of the art produced by artists who came to maturity in the 80s because so much is still to be excavated, not to mention understood.

After the death of Mao Ze Dong in 1976, there was a gradual opening up of China to the rest of the world in the field of culture. Ten times more books were translated in the ten years after Mao's death than in the previous thirty years, and images of Western art began to circulate even if often in black and white (the Shanghai artist Sun Liang once told me that it was not until he represented Venice at the Biennale in '93 that he understood that Francis Bacon painted in colour; the images he had seen in books were black and white only). Yet the art institutions of China were not necessarily subject to an equivalent opening up.

In the Su Dong Ping exhibition at Pearl Lam Galleries, attention is properly focused on his recent work—sophisticated abstract painting, full of rich contradictions and feelings: a form of Chinese 'action painting'. But when I talk with

the artist about the work he made in that most fluid of decades in China, the 80s, he describes an art in certain ways very different from what he makes now. Before he went to art school, the contemporary art he knew was the socialist realism that China had imported from the USSR and grafted on to its own twentieth century realist tradition, and the Western art to which he was exposed at the art school was largely French Impressionism. But beyond the classroom, he was living another life, making art that seemed to find some of its resources from the traditions of German Expressionism: thick impasto paint, raw images, dark muddied colours—an art that seems at once to be figurative and abstract. It might be said that at that time he was living a divided life.

But this is the case in another sense too. While he and I talk about the expressionist tradition and his interest in it in the 80s, he is equally keen to tell me that his father was a calligrapher in the Chinese tradition. While at that time he had no interest himself in that tradition, even if that was his own first experience of making art, he now acknowledges its importance to his own present practice—again, a divided life, this time between Western and Chinese traditions.

If I seem to labour the division that marks his time as a student—and one might add the division in his own biographical history—growing up in the Cultural Revolution and his life in post Mao China, it is because division and conflict seems to me the signature of his best paintings. This division is something that happens in the painting; it is not some reflection of biography.

*Everybody understands the beautiful to be 'beautiful',
But this only creates the concept of 'ugly';
Everybody understands the good to be 'good',
But this only creates the concept of 'bad'.
There can be no existence without non-existence;
No difficult without easy; No high without low*

— Lao Tze

To look at the paintings of Su Dong Ping across the last thirty-five years is to be struck by one constant: the presence of black, not merely as a presence but often as the armature of a particular artwork. In the West, particularly in the painting of the late nineteenth century, black is a key presence. Auguste Renoir called it 'the queen of colours', and Matisse reported a conversation with the French Impressionist painter Pissarro when he said that Manet 'made light with black'. And to look at the 'action' or 'drip' paintings of Jackson Pollock is to see immediately how central to the paintings is black. In one sense, Su Dong Ping's black has some of its roots in that Western modern tradition (think of the black lines in Van Gogh, or the black crows over the wheatfield in what would turn out to be his last painting), as it has other roots in the tradition of Chinese calligraphy, black ink on white paper.

When I ask Su Dong Ping if he sees as I do that black is central to his work, he assents immediately, but he refers not to the Western tradition, nor even to the tradition of Chinese calligraphy, but to black as the colour of sorrow—something that incarnates parts of his own history (when he speaks to me he mentions the sorrow of the Cultural Revolution). He adds that black is less important now in his paintings, now that sorrow is less part of his life.

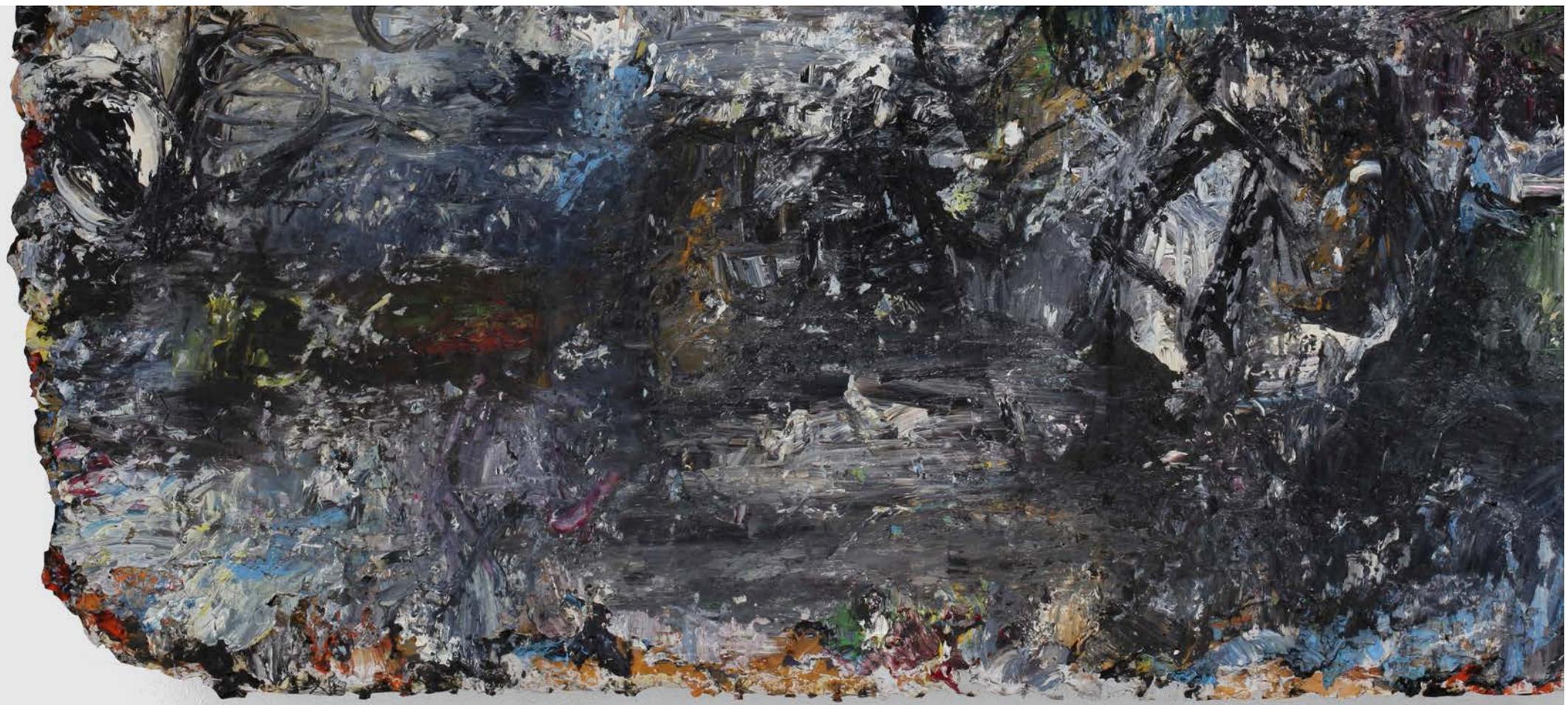
As is clear from Su Dong Ping's paintings, and his words only echo this, tension is at their heart. To quote Lao Tze, 'Everyone understands the beautiful to be "beautiful", / But this only

creates the concept of "ugly"... No difficult without easy.' The recent paintings are largely body-sized and incarnate shifting and contradictory emotions—the energy of these paintings comes out of the tension between these emotions.

Su Dong Ping is keen to stress how important energy and speed are to the paintings, as they are both to Chinese calligraphy and to the action paintings of Western painters such as Franz Kline and Jackson Pollock. In one sense, he is heir to both traditions. Members of the first generation of Abstract Expressionists (such as Robert Motherwell) explicitly acknowledged their debt to Chinese calligraphy and its commitment to speed and energy. Clearly, Su Dong Ping's work seems to belong to the tradition, but it equally renews the tradition of Chinese calligraphy—its use of the gestural brushstroke to carry emotion, its fidelity to energy and speed. There is a saying in the West that to keep things as they are, you have to change things. Su Dong Ping is an admirable example of this adage. Out of his divided life, he has made an art that helps to reconcile the divisions between 'Eastern' and 'Western' art, which remains true to the spirit, if not the appearance, of Chinese calligraphy. Most important, he produces emotionally charged paintings that are landscapes of the shifting contours of the heart, ever more important in a world where only material objects are seen as valuable.

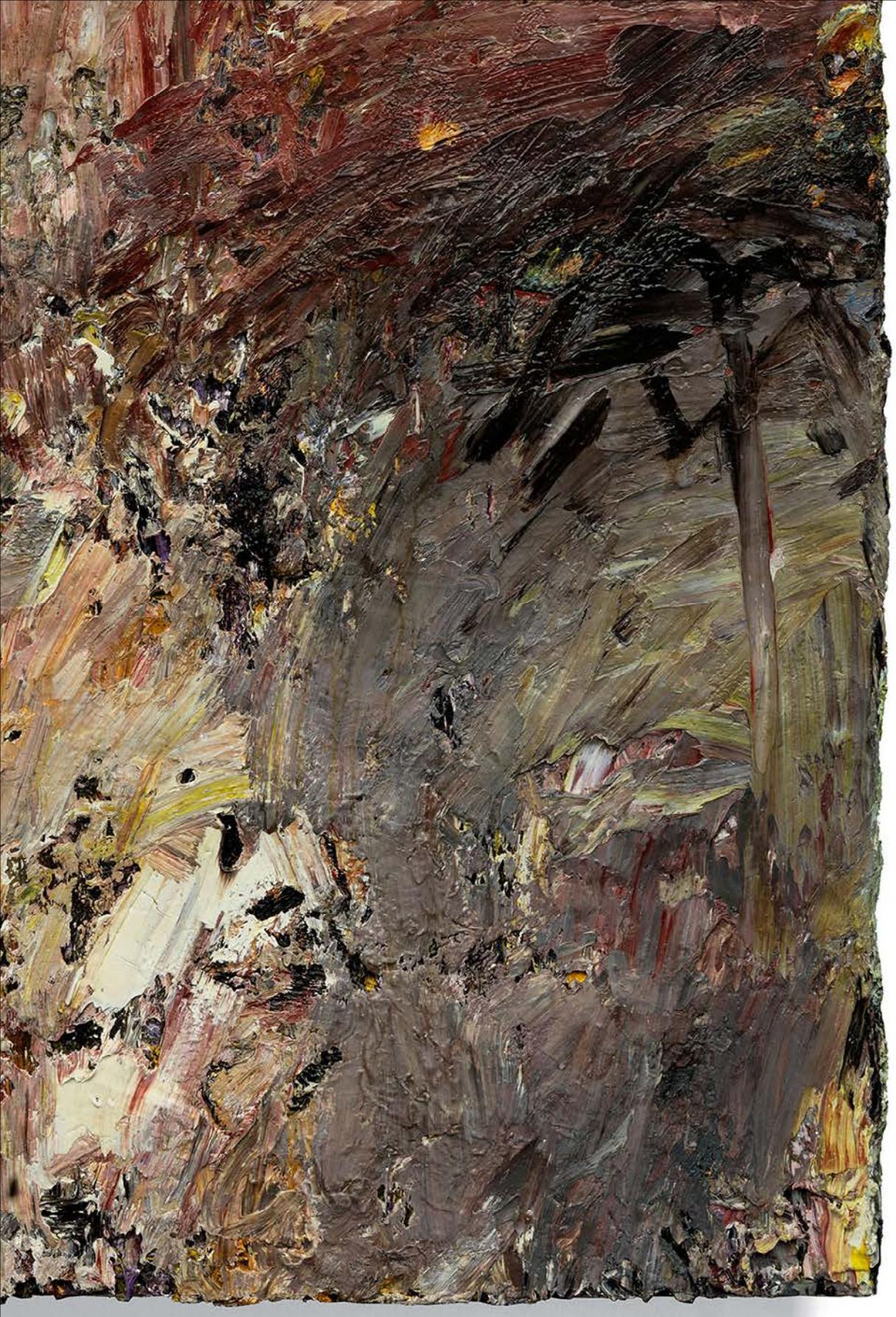
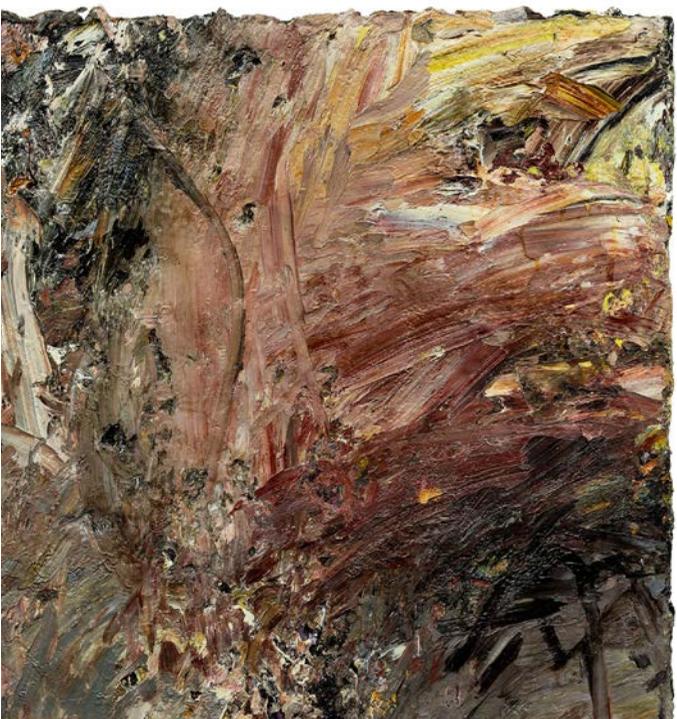


2014No.11, 2014, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 152 x 181 cm (59 9/10 x 71 3/10 in.)





2010N.6, 2010, Oil on canvas 布面油画, 145 x 126 cm (57 1/10 x 49 3/5 in.)



2010No.6 (detail 局部), 2010. Oil on canvas 布面油画, 145 x 126 cm (57 1/10 x 49 3/5 in.)

分裂的自我

菲利普·多德 (Philip Dodd)

菲利普·多德 (Philip Dodd) 曾任伦敦当代艺术学院院长，同时也是策展人、作家和BBC获奖主持人。他不仅为泰特美术馆撰写艺术评论文章，而且出版了艺术类畅销书《Relative Values: Art and Value》。英国卫报将他誉为“最杰出的时代文化变迁的分析家”。目前，他担任英国创意机构“中国制造” (<http://www.madeinchinauk.com/>) 主席，同时，他还是香港国际艺术展“私人博物馆论坛”创建人及香港国际艺术展顾问，并兼任伦敦Art 15顾问委员一职。

于上世纪八十年代接受艺术教育的中国艺术家们注定都曾历经那个荒诞的年代。苏东平就是其中之一——1958年出生的他在文化大革命时期度过了他的青葱岁月。和许多同龄人一样，直到上世纪八十年代他才得以接受系统的艺术教育。虽然那段时期从多方面来看都是二十世纪中国历史中的一幕悲剧，但也正是在那段动荡的岁月里，中国成就了它近40年以来最令人叫绝的一批艺术家。苏东平的展出经历尚浅，但他的崭露更印证了我的一个信念：对这些在上世纪八十年代成才的艺术家们的作品特质及其指涉范围盖棺定论还为时尚早，因为还剩下很多等待着我们去挖掘，更不用说去领悟了。

自1976年毛泽东逝世后，中国的文化发展也逐渐呈现对外开放的格局。在毛逝世后的十年间，被译成外文的书籍数量较那之前的三十年，增长了逾十倍；西方的艺术画册亦开始流入中国，即使当时很多都还只是黑白画本 [上海艺术家孙良曾对我提起，直到1993年他因出席威尼斯双年展才明白原来弗朗西斯·培根 (Francis Bacon) 的画作是彩色的；他先前只在书中见到过作品的黑白图片]。然后在当时的中国，艺术机构还并没有随着改革开放而兴起。

藝術門画廊此番举办的苏东平个展聚焦艺术家的近期作品——精湛的抽象绘画，洋溢着冲突

感，感情充沛；是一种中国式的“行动绘画”。然而，当我与艺术家聊起他在八十年代（即中国最风云变幻的十年）的创作，他所描述的过往与他当下的艺术实践大相径庭。进入美院之前，他所了解的当代艺术就是借鉴苏联社会主义现实主义模式，将其与中国20世纪现实主义传统相结合的产物——而在学校里，他所能接触到的西方艺术多为法国印象派绘画。课堂之余的苏东平过着另外一种生活，他试图从传统的德国表现主义中汲取营养：质感厚重的油彩、不加矫饰的画面、黢黑浑重的色彩——兼具具象与抽象的一种艺术。可以说那时的他过着分裂区隔的生活。

无独有偶，当我和他谈到表现主义的传统及在八十年代他对表现主义的兴趣时，他还特别提及他的父亲，一位传统的中国书法家。当时苏东平对传统书法兴味索然，即使对他来说这是他第一次接触艺术。他如今笃信书法的长期浸润对他现今的艺术创作起到了至关重要的作用——这又是一种分裂的人生，在中西方的传统间游离徘徊着。

如果谈及他求学时期的分裂人生，他的生平已经给出了明确的答复——成长于文化大革命时期却又生活在后毛泽东时代，分裂与内心的纠结是他这些精彩画作的注脚。就是这种分裂被置于层层覆盖的画面中，而这种表露却绝不是传记式的缩影。

天下皆知美之为美，斯恶已
皆知善之为善，斯不善已
故有无相生，难易相成
长短相形，高下相倾

——老子

纵观苏东平过去三十五年的作品，我们不难发现这些作品中有一个显见的因素：黑色。黑色不仅是形式语言的呈现，它更是作品的神髓。在西方，特别是十九世纪后期的绘画，黑色的存在和表现不可或缺。奥古斯特·雷诺阿 (Auguste Renoir) 称其为“色彩之王”，马蒂斯 (Matisse) 曾在与法国印象派画家毕沙罗 (Pissarro) 的一次交谈中提及马奈 (Manet) 用黑色制造了光影。观看杰克逊·波洛克 (Jackson Pollock) 的“行动绘画”或者“滴画”，观众会立即感受到黑色对于他的作品是多么重要。从某种意义上来说，苏东平画作中的黑色确实受到西方现代艺术传统的影响（试着回想梵高的黑色笔触，或者在他最后一幅画中飞翔在麦田上空的乌鸦），同时也扎根于以白纸黑墨书写的中国书法传统。

当我问及他是否和我一样，认为黑色在他的作品中有着举足轻重的分量时，他迅即表示赞同。但他并不是参照西方艺术或中国书法的传统，而是将黑色作为一种颓废、悲伤的颜色释放在画面里——将个人经历（当我和他交谈时，他谈到文化大革命的悲剧性）赋予其中。同时，苏东平提到如今他生活中这样的基调正在慢慢消解，所以黑色运用也在逐渐弱化。

正如我们所见，张力的表现在苏东平的作品中是最核心的部分，艺术家也反复强调这点。引用老

子的话来说，即“天下皆知美之为美，斯恶已… 难易相成”。这些体量巨大的新作无不坦露苏东平内心变幻和冲突的情感，作品由内而外散发的能量便来自这些情感之间巨大的张力。

在谈到创作过程时，苏东平着重阐述了精神投入和把握速度的重要性，这两点对于中国书法以及西方行动绘画派艺术家 [如弗朗兹·克兰 (Franz Kline) 和杰克逊·波洛克 (Jackson Pollock)] 具有相似的重要性。可以说，苏东平承袭并兼具了这两种传统。第一代的抽象主义画家 (如罗伯特·马瑟韦尔 [Robert Motherwell]) 坦言他们的创作受到中国书法的启发，在创作时对每一个笔触的速度把握和精神注入都有所坚持。

显而易见的是，苏东平的绘画似乎来自于中国书法传统，但同时他更新了这一传统：以身体性的笔触书写着彼时彼刻的情绪，饱满的画面流淌着对精神和法度的坚持。西方有句谚语这样说到：想要保持就必须改变。用这句话来形容苏东平的创作再合适不过了。在这种分裂的人生之下，他已经找寻到属于他自己的一种艺术，它是对“东方”“西方”艺术的一种弥合，对中国书法精神的一份坚守。

更为重要的是，苏东平饱含情感的绘画正是艺术家心象变幻的真实写照，在现如今物欲横流的社会中更显的难能可贵。



2010No.20, 2010, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 154 x 138 cm (60 3/5 x 54 3/10 in.)



2010No.20 (detail 局部), 2010, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 154 x 138 cm (60 3/5 x 54 3/10 in.)

Being and Somethingness

—The raw abstraction of Su Dong Ping

Katie Hill

Abstraction

Lying somewhere between gestural abstraction and action painting, Su Dong Ping's is a hybrid form of abstraction that has its roots in Northeast China, in his home city of Shenyang. Su's raw and restless brand of abstract painting is a tour de force of individualistic expression. Its restless moodiness conveys physical action and psychological turmoil; its palette is often muddy and slightly jarring. It is by no means simply easy on the eye. The powerful paintings lurch from a more gestural energy with speedy, expressive brushstrokes to layered and dense structures of thick woven threads of paint, creating a textured spew of competing sprawls. Colours are an unexpected mishmash of sombre tones of greys, browns and dinginess, occasionally lit up with sudden bursts of bright blue or yellow, perhaps signifying some sort of momentary hope or enlightenment. A powerful visual experience, these paintings elicit a heady range of human emotions, set against the highly paradoxical vast confusion of contemporary China. They draw you in to ask questions of the world and the specific world from which they emerged. Their point of origin can perhaps be traced to the cultural movements of the mid-1980s in China, even though this series was

produced almost two decades after that, coinciding with an emergent Chinese art world that has rapidly gained ground in the past ten years.

Following his graduation from the Lu Xun Academy in 1983, Su, strongly versed in figurative Socialist Realism, started playing with form, making vigorous expressionist paintings of looming creatures and animals in the 1980s, in line with a strong movement of humanism and self-expression, 'zi wo biao xian', that swept across artistic and literary production in that decade. Su had worked in a factory during the Cultural Revolution. Even before all the more recent industrialisation and vast urban development, Shenyang was already a highly industrial city, full of factories, filth and the grime of chimneys spewing black smoke and coal-based smog. When he entered the academy at the turn of the Deng Xiaoping era, he was told that he was 'not allowed his own thoughts'. The legacy of a highly political history of this particular academy was firmly in place, and the loyalties of the oil painting department teaching were to the Soviet link from the Yan'an years some forty years on. Politics and industry are absorbed, submerged and regurgitated in these canvases and plastic works, in which materiality of the modernising force of an ongoing industrialising

society is integral to its cultural environment, where artists commonly use factories to manufacture their works. Factory spaces are also integral to the cultural environment with their lineage in Soviet or East German industrial collaboration, such as the first art district of 798 in the electronics district of Beijing, where factories, studios and galleries are interspersed. At a later stage, following a long spell as a teacher in the academy, withdrawal became a reality for Su, as he spent more than ten years painting in isolation, outside of any artistic circles, in a singular and personal pursuit, at odds with the world outside, where there was 'no interest or market for abstract'. This prolonged retreat enabled these powerful works to come into being; as Su puts it: 'like a mother giving birth to a baby'.

The background of Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts is part and parcel of the history of art in the People's Republic of China since its early development. Founded at the Communist base in Yan'an in Shaanxi province in the late 1930s, a decade of strong political divisions and the rise of Japan's military invasion of China, the school came about with fervent socialist aims and was moved to Shenyang in 1940. Later, teachers were brought there to be trained in Soviet-style socialist realism, and special training was given to Chinese

Dr. Katie Hill has extensive experience in the field of contemporary Chinese art, and has been involved in exhibitions as a curator and researcher. She is the Programme Leader of Art of Asia and their Markets at Sotheby's Institute of Art, London, as well as Deputy Principal Editor of the *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art (JCAA)*. Her recent work includes *In Conversation with Ai Weiwei*, Tate Modern; selector panel/author, *Art of Change, New Directions from China*, Hayward Gallery, London, and specialist advisor/author for *The Chinese Art Book* (Phaidon, 2013). Hill is Director of OCCA, Office of Contemporary Chinese Art, an art consultancy promoting Chinese artists in the UK.

painters in the 1950s in special master-classes from Moscow led by the painter Konstantin Maximov. Su Dong Ping's teacher was trained by Maximov himself and the academy is known for its vigorous brand of painting with heavy, dynamic brushstrokes, one of its artistic trademarks.

From a contemporary perspective, the lineage of Chinese abstract art is not out of line with other movements of artistic modernity worldwide. Maria Lind points out the driving force of abstraction whereby 'self-reflexiveness creates a withdrawn space for visual art, resistant to narrative and to contamination by the legacies of war and fascism, or the emergent culture industry of late capitalism'. Substituting 'fascism' for 'communism', then these issues are as pertinent in China as anywhere else. Abstraction has been central to the expression of a global circulation of modernity for more than a hundred years, stemming from a metropolitan avant-garde of active artistic communities in cities such as Paris, New York, Shanghai and Tokyo. Modern artists in China dabbled in it during the 1920s, with nods to abstraction appearing in artists' paintings following their responses to fauvism or expressionism. Abstraction in Shanghai was perhaps more evident

in print culture, in the experiments with form on book and magazine covers, in a design movement that is distinctly Chinese and modern up to the 1930s. Painterly abstraction did not have time to develop and was pushed out in the mid-twentieth century. It reappeared elsewhere in post-49 Hong Kong ink painting, the Fifth Moon group in Taiwan, and in the transnational circulation of painting via artists such as Zhao Wuji and Zhang Daqian. From the 1940s to the 1970s, abstraction was persona non grata in a political structure where a constructed representation was necessary to the formation of the new nation. Chinese abstraction in modern art has a chequered history but needs much fuller attention to be acknowledged and understood within its own cultural context.

No calligraphy, no face

When Su Dong Ping was a child, a large table occupied the main room in the small family house for the purpose of practising calligraphy. His father was a calligrapher who practised strictly on a daily basis and expected the same of his son, warning him that 'if you cannot do calligraphy, you have no face'. Calligraphy, in other words, gave one one's identity; it completed who you were and this kind of rigorous form of expression in Chinese culture has been deeply embedded as a cultural form for centuries. (Ironically, his father was perhaps equally rebellious in pursuing calligraphy, when at this time, such literati culture in China was under attack from the authorities, unless adapted to a highly ideological context.) Preceding painting as the supreme art form in Chinese culture, calligraphy is not just a skill: it is an extended embodiment of the self, an essential means to self-discovery for the educated class. Calligraphy is also an activity that requires sitting still, something that did not come easily to Su, who recalls being physically restless as a child and turning to sport to channel his energy. Part of Su's turn towards abstraction is almost certainly a turn away

from such a pedagogical imperative in a filial context, even though calligraphy itself, as a harnessing of Qi or life-force, if mastered, leads to the ultimate freedom of expression. Sadly, after Su had developed his own individual style of painting, his father never accepted the value of his work as an artist. A mutual, perhaps inevitable, misunderstanding when each generation has its way of responding to the political and cultural imperative of the time points to one of the tragedies of modern China in which generations have been known to repeatedly cut off from each other, in parallel with stories of separation and loss.

Looking at the purely abstract work of an artist from Northeast China, who emerged from the academy alongside numerous other artists in the decade of Cultural Fever in the 1980s, themes of withdrawal, resistance and self-reflexivity are still relevant and open up ways of tracing its specific lineage in the context of 'new China' following its economic and urban rise in the 1990s. If ideologies are closely linked with their representational structures, then perhaps the unifying factor in the choice of abstraction is precisely as a mode of resistance to descriptive narrative or market-led art trends demanded of artists in political and commercial contexts in which autonomous creativity was compromised. The additional layer of late capitalist consumerism in recent years, brashly accompanying the still-in-place communist superstructure of a rigidly controlled State, further complicates the picture. For artists born in the 1950s, a continual whirlwind of change has been thrown in, with the physical, technological and economic environment transforming continually in a spin of disorientation, where one's own language and points of reference become ever less recognisable. This sense of disorientation is perhaps present in Su's works as well. Movement and speed lend an immediacy, a real sense of emancipation from skill and conformity through displays of artistic prowess that are often prominent in Chinese oil painting.

Shenyang

Su Dong Ping grew up in the northern city of Shenyang and has always lived there, marking him out from the numerous artists from China who have lived abroad, whether for a few months or many years. So how did this very distinct, heady brand of energetic abstraction come about? How can this be made sense of as 'Chinese' in any way? Su's path as an artist moves from his early calligraphic instruction at home through to factory work during the Cultural Revolution, art college training in socialist realism, teaching as a professor at the academy and then later turning to commercial work to earn a living. The works he has produced in the last fifteen years are testament to a singular pursuit of painting as expression, away from and often against all the forces he has been subjected to in society, including family, politics and the academy.

Su's muddy palette might owe something to this direct lineage with Soviet painting, yet his influences are certainly more complex than this and the layers of different elements in the paintings might echo those of his life in Shenyang. His early experience of factory life and the murky chaos of China's largest industrial city with its many sites of demolition, machinery, industrial waste and cast-off materials in the form of plastics, metals, chemicals and so on, seem to seep into his works and replicate themselves in a grimy and unfathomable messy force. Some of them have figurative elements in which forms seem to condense in space and cluster into a concentrated mass. Others evoke the pure abstract painter Zhao Wuji, who left China in the late 1940s and stayed in Paris until his recent death. With calligraphic elements, there is a sense of an underlying connection with Chinese tradition, but this is by no means stable or certain and cannot be disentangled from their complex layers of colour, form and movement from other sources already mentioned. Nevertheless, Su's paintings contain visible calligraphic expression and the freedom of his speedy, assertive brushstrokes comes out of a state of meditation that is part of the harnessing

of the Qi, whereby body and mind are unified. The mastery of such apparent spontaneity comes from the controlled discipline of calligraphic skill that once mastered can be released onto the canvas in an emancipatory act, following traditions in Chinese ink painting that are here transferred to oils.

Abstraction has more recently taken off in different directions in the cultural scene in China, with a new vibrancy from some of the younger generation. Despite this, it is still a relatively recent phenomenon, and has yet to be fully accepted in the mainstream of Chinese society, despite almost three decades of development in the contemporary period. Su's works incorporate painterly expressionism, dynamic calligraphic brushstrokes and an almost industrial physicality in his treatment of paint itself. There is a sense of freedom, rebellion and an assertive thrust in this work, which makes it exciting and enjoyable as an aesthetic experience. The bold and spirited force resonates with painters such as De Kooning and Pollock as muscular figures of modernity. In conversation, Su stresses his rejection of the 'cold, intellectual approach' of the academy mindset, and perhaps it is the strong impetus of his rebellion against this that gives his work such a fierce individualism and verve. Paradoxically, this freedom of expression is also at the heart of older Chinese painting traditions that are currently being actively revived after many years left in the cold.

ⁱ Conversations with the artist, February, 2015.

ⁱⁱ The Soviet painter Konstantin Maximov gave workshops in oil painting to Chinese painters in the 1950s and Su Dong Ping's own teacher was one of his pupils.

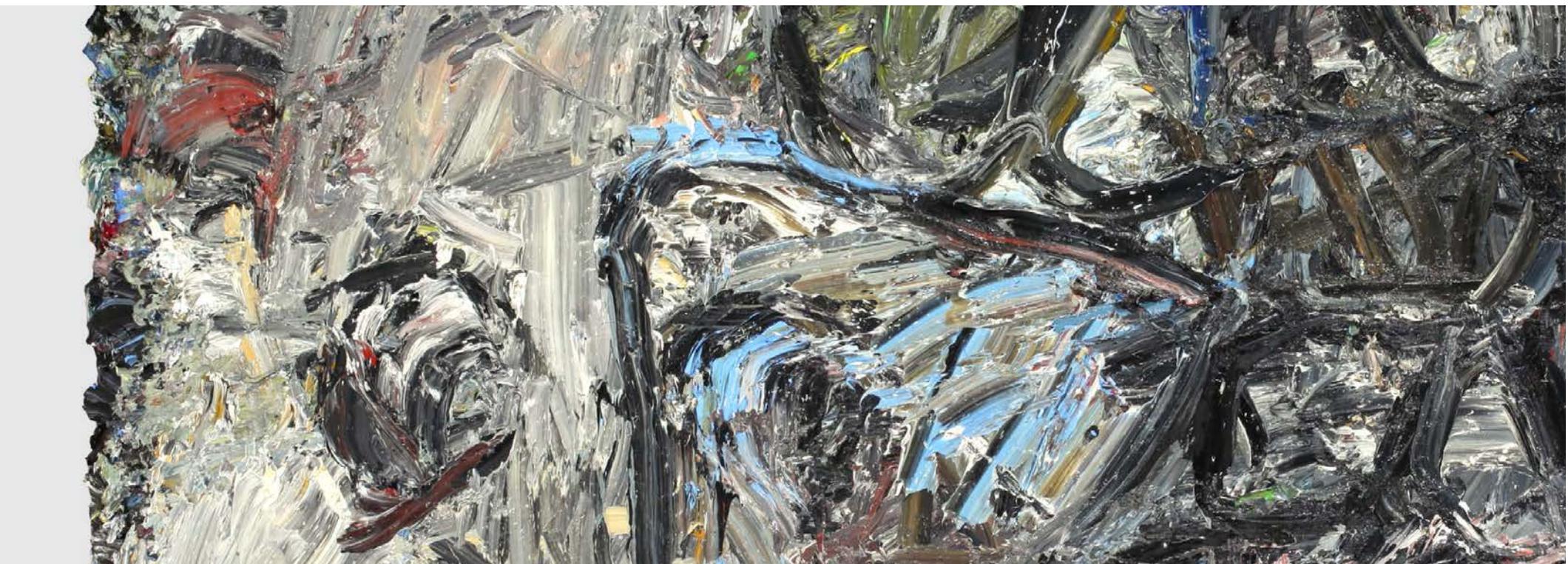
ⁱⁱⁱ Conversations with the artist, paraphrase.

^{iv} Maria Lind, in Maria Lind, ed. *Abstraction*, Documents of Contemporary Art, Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2013, 'Introduction', p. 10.

^v Conversations with the artist, February, 2015.



2014No.13, 2014, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 152 x 183 cm (59 4/5 x 72 in.)





2014No.15, 2014, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 151 x 136 cm (59 2/5 x 53 1/2 in.)

存在与真实：苏东平的纯粹抽象

何凯特 (Katie Hill)

抽象

苏东平的艺术创作栖居于姿态抽象与抽象绘画之间，他的作品是抽象艺术一种糅合，而这种糅合根植于生养他的这片热土——东北沈阳。他不加雕琢的抽象作品翻涌着躁动与不安，是他个人主义表现手法下的精心之作。画面中涌动的暗流表露出绘画时的体态动作和内心骚动；而色调往往浑重且带有微微的不协调感。他的绘画决不在视觉上取悦观众。这些富有力量感的画作时而因其疾速而饱含张力的笔触而充满流动性，时而又因其层层叠加覆盖，厚重且纵横交织的颜料运用而凸显结构性，迸射出了因抵触而蔓延开的肌理。颜色方面则是出乎意料的灰、棕、污黑等昏暗阴郁色调的混搭，偶尔被突来的一抹蔚蓝或明黄色而点亮，似乎象征着某种瞬时的希望与幡然醒悟。这些画作是一场饕餮的视觉盛宴，并以当代中国所面临的深度矛盾及巨大惶惑为背景，展现了一系列复杂的人性情感。它们促使你对世界，特别是孕育这些作品的背景环境心生疑惑。近十年，中国当代艺术崛起并高速发展，虽然这些作品创作于近期，但它们的原点或许能追溯至中国上世纪八十年代中期的文化运动。

1983年从鲁迅美术学院毕业之后，苏东平对具象性社会主义写实主义纯熟精通，绘画创作开始不拘泥于形式。上世纪八零年代一股人性主义以及“自我表现”的风潮席卷了艺术以及文学界。与此同时，苏东平创

作了一系列以蜃景般的生物或动物为主题的，极具表现主义色彩的画作。文革期间，苏东平曾在一家工厂工作。早在近期工业化以及大规模城市化进程开始之前，沈阳就早已是一座重工业城市，伴随着密布的工厂而来的是不断吐出阵阵黑烟和煤雾的烟囱，污秽不堪。苏东平在邓小平当政之际入读鲁美，但旋即被告知“不得有个人之见”。¹这个学院历史悠久的浓厚政治传统丝毫没有减退，而它油画系四十多年来仍旧秉持遵循延安时代传递下来的苏联思想。²这些布面以及塑料板上的作品吸收着、浸没着、反刍着各种政治以及工业化的元素。在这个不断前进的工业化社会中，现代化进程的物质性与创作背景下的文化环境息息相关——艺术家们常常需要这些工厂来生产他们的作品。来自中俄，中德（东德）工业合作项目留存下来的厂区空间也构成了文化环境的一部分，例如在北京电子工业区中的第一个艺术区798里，工厂、画室和画廊散布在一起的。在其后经历了多年学院教师生涯后，苏东平毅然辞职，并于此后的十余年在孤立的环境下独自创作，将自身抽离于任何形式的艺术圈子，凭着个人的追求，与“对抽象毫无兴趣、无市场可言”³的外界社会相对峙。就是这段冗长的隐退过程给予这一系列震撼人心的作品以诞生的契机，用苏东平本人的话来形容：“就像母亲十月怀胎，孕育生命的过程”。

鲁迅美术学院的背景在自新中国初始以来的艺术史中便占据着一个重要的篇章。上世纪三十年代，中国国内政治分歧严重、日本开始对华实行军事侵略，鲁迅美术学院就在此时于陕西延安共产主义基地成立。学院自诞生起便秉承鲜明的社会主义信仰，并于1940年迁至沈阳。之后，大批教师被送往鲁美，接受苏联式社会主义写实主义的培训，1950年代的中国画家还在由苏联画家马科斯莫夫（Konstantin Maximov）领导下的来自莫斯科的大师班里受到了特别培训。苏东平的老师就是马科斯莫夫的门徒之一，而学院也因其强势的绘画派别而闻名，厚重而极具流动性的笔触是鲁美人绘画风格的烙印。

从当代性角度来看，中国抽象艺术的脉络并非与世界上其他现代艺术流派窘然不合。玛丽亚·林德 (Maria Lind) 指出抽象的驱动力，即“自省力为视觉艺术开辟了一个独立的空间，它不受叙述形式的干扰，也扛得住战争及法西斯主义的荼毒、或后资本主义后期发展起来的文化产业的浸染”。⁴若把引文中的“法西斯主义”一词换作“共产主义”，那么这个论断也同适用于中国的国情。一百多年前，抽象主义源自于在巴黎、纽约、上海、东京等地活跃艺术群体中诞生的都市先锋派，在现代性的全球传播表现中占据主要地位。上世纪二十年代，中国现代艺术家们曾对其浅尝涉猎，在他们的作品中，抽象主义作为一种对于野

何凯特 (Katie Hill) 博士在中国当代艺术领域耕耘多年，她曾以策展人及研究者的身份策划筹办过众多展览。目前她不仅是伦敦苏富比学院亚洲艺术及市场的课程主管，还兼任《当代中国艺术杂志》（Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art）副主编一职。近期，她在英国泰特现代艺术馆（Tate Modern）与艾未未进行现场对话，担任伦敦海沃德画廊（Hayward Gallery）《变化的艺术：中国艺术新方向》（Art of Change: New Directions from China）展览甄选委员会成员兼作者，并任菲登（Phaidon）出版社 2013 年出版的《中国艺术》（The Chinese Art Book）特别顾问兼作者。她同时也身兼中国当代艺术办公室（OCCA）主任，该机构是一家致力于在英国推广和展示中国艺术家的艺术咨询公司。

兽派和表现主义的回应而出现。上海的抽象艺术可能在印刷文化中更为明显，书本和报刊封面出现了各种对于形式的试验，直到三十年代，这一设计创新运动都极富有中国以及现代特色。绘画形式的抽象还没有来得及发展起来，就在二十世纪中期就被排挤出了中国。直到1949年后的香港水墨画，台湾的五月画会的确立，以及由赵无极和张大千等艺术家掀起的跨国绘画传播运动中得以再现。从二十世纪四十年代至七十年代，在新中国为政权巩固而必须实施的高压政治体系下，抽象主义被视为异端。现代艺术中的中国抽象艺术有着一段坎坷的历史发展，若是要在其自身的文化语境下去认识和理解它，我们必须对于更加全面的审视中国抽象。

不练书法，就没有颜面

在苏东平幼时的居所内，硕大的桌子被置放在逼仄的居室中，用来练习书法。他的父亲是一位书法家，日复一日地严格坚持书法练习，并对苏东平的书法发展寄予厚望。他曾告诫苏东平，“你若是书法练不成器，你就没有颜面了。”⁵换句话说，书法成为了衡量人身份的一项标准；它使你成为完整的一个人。中国文化中这种严于律己的部分已历经多个世纪的沉积，成为了一种根深蒂固的文化形态。（讽刺的是，他父

亲对于书法的追求同样也是十分叛逆的，在当时，如此的文人文化若未被改编入较高意识形态下的语境中，是会受到当局打击的。）书法可不只是一门技巧，在中国文化里，它被视为一种更胜于绘画的艺术形式：它是个人的自我延展，是知识分子找寻自我的必需途径。书法的创作还要求长时间的静坐，这对于当时的苏东平很难，当时的他活泼好动，常常通过体育锻炼来消耗他过剩的精力。尽管书法是作为气或者力一种训练，若是完全驾驭了，能指向表现力最根本的自由，苏东平向抽象的转型恐怕或多或少也是一种从中国以孝为先的大环境中，从其父强迫性的教学方式中的抽离。可惜的是，在苏东平把绘画炼就的自成一派后，他的父亲始终不愿接受他作为一个艺术家的价值。这样一个两代之间相互的，且恐怕也是不可避免的误解因双方对于政治及文化统治的不同态度而生，这般误解揭示了现代中国的悲剧之一，几代人之间相互断绝往来的现象比比皆是，家庭离散的故事屡见不鲜。

在二十世纪八十年代掀起的文化热潮中，苏东平与许多其他同样从学院中走出的艺术家相继崛起。细看这位中国东北艺术家的纯抽象作品，抽离、抵抗和自省这些主题于当今社会仍有重大关联。同时，九十年代以来在经济与城市崛起的“新中国”大环境中，这些主题也为理解梳理苏东平抽象绘画的脉络提供了契机。如果意识形态与表现性结构之间确有紧密的联系，那么也许导致艺术家选择抽象形式作画的统一性

因素，便是当自主创造力被迫向政治以及商业环境折衷让步之际，与描述性叙述以及市场驱动下的艺术潮流进行抗争。在严格的政府监管下，既有的共产主义上层建筑携裹着近年来兴起的后资本主义消费主义，使眼前的局面更加地复杂化。对于上世纪五十年代出生的艺术家们来说，一场疾风骤雨般的突变仍在持续，席卷了物质、科技以及经济环境，在这令人迷失方向的漩涡中不断地变形，个人话语和参考价值也随之越来越难以辨认。这种不定向性也多少映射在苏东平的作品中。动作姿态与速度引发了一种即时性，这种中国油画中重要的艺术性表露，使绘画达到了真正意义上远离技巧和成规旧俗的彻底解放。

沈阳

苏东平在沈阳北部城区长大，至今仍居住于此，这使得他与其他无数在国外生活过不论几个月亦或是数年的中国画家形成鲜明对比。那么他那风格独特，热烈且充满活力的抽象风格是如何形成的呢？这个风格又如何被视作含有中国特色的？苏东平的从艺的道路经历了幼时的家传书法训练，之后于文革时期在工厂劳作，在美术学院接受社会主义现实主义的训练后成为学院教师，再后来他辗转商业化工作维持生计。他过去十五年来创作品是对他决心脱离各种他曾隶属的

社会力量，包括家庭、政治及学院体系，以绘画作为表现自己纯粹追求的强力证辞。

苏东平作品中浑厚的色调还存留着早期苏联式绘画训练的影响，然而他所经受的远远复杂于此，他作品中多层面的不同元素反映着他在沈阳的生活。他早期在工厂劳作的经历，以及这座全中国最大工业城市里的各种拆迁、机械工程、工业污染、以塑料、金属、化学物品等废弃物的堆积，种种乱象翻搅着渗入了他的作品中，并凭着它那污浊混乱且深不可测的力量一遍遍地复制着本身。有些作品含有具象性元素，各种形状似乎在空间中浓缩并堆积成一团。还有一些令人联想到在四十年代后期，离开中国并定居于巴黎直至近日逝世的纯粹抽象派画家赵无极。作品因其所含的书法元素，似乎与中国传统有潜在根基性的联系，但这样的联系并不恒定，或者说不明确，也不能从作品繁复错杂的色彩、形式，以及前面谈到的姿态动作中抽离出来。尽管如此，苏东平的作品仍包含着明显的书法式表现手段，他疾转而具有侵略性的自由笔触在冥想状态下得以书写，这样的冥想状态是通过运气使人神形合一的一部分。这种瞬时性的把握正是基于对书法技艺的精通，正是这种醇熟的技艺使得画面恣意而流畅，只不过在这个语境下，油彩替代了传统中国水墨绘画中的水墨。

近年来，抽象主义在中国艺术界已开始向不同的方向

发展，一批新生代的艺术家为此流派带来了新鲜血液。尽管如此，它依旧是一个相对来说较为新近的风潮，即使经历近三十多年的发展，却仍未被中国主流社会所完全接纳。苏东平的作品将绘画的表现主义特色，落笔如行云的书法笔触，以及一个近乎工业化的体格特征融合进了他的绘画中。他的作品中有着自由，反叛的意味，并充满坚韧而自信的推动力，引领观众进入一场令人激动又倍感愉悦的审美体验。画面中无畏而灵动的力量与德库宁(De Kooning)、波洛克(Pollock)等现代艺术大家的作品遥相呼应。谈话之间，苏东平屡屡强调他对于学院派思维里“缺乏人情味的纯理性要求”的抵触，也许正是他激进的反叛寄予了他的作品强势的个人主义与神韵。矛盾的是，这样的自由表现手法也正是那些在经受多年冷落后复兴的中国传统绘画的核心元素。

-
1. 摘自与苏东平于2015年2月间的谈话。
 2. 前苏联画家马科斯莫夫曾于1950年间为中国画家开设讲习班传授油画。
 3. 来自与苏东平的谈话。此处乃解述
 4. MariaLind,inMariaLind,ed.Abstraction,Documents of Contemporary Art, Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2013,'Introduction',p.10.
 5. 摘自与苏东平于2015年2月间的谈话。



2013No.11, 2013, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 162 x 201 cm (63 4/5 x 79 1/10 in.)



2013No.10, 2013, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 161 x 199 cm (63 2/5 x 78 3/10 in.)



The Expression of Volition

—On Su Dong Ping's art practice

Wang Chunchen

Dr. Wang Chunchen is the Head of the Department of Curatorial Research at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing, as well as Adjunct Curator at the Broad Art Museum of Michigan State University in the USA. In 2013, Dr. Wang was appointed as the Curator for the Pavilion of China at the 55th Venice Biennale, and Deputy Principal Editor for the *Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art* in the UK. Wang Chunchen is also editor-in-chief of *The Chinese Contemporary Art Series* published by Springer-Verlag, Germany.

I was not aware of who Su Dong Ping was when I first heard his name mentioned; after seeing his artworks, however, I immediately knew that he was a man of deep thoughts. His art is very deliberate, with no hint of carelessness; more importantly, this collection of his abstract paintings has assured me that there is greatness in contemporary Chinese art, and given me a new perspective on the idea that the change in contemporary painting is not merely a regional Chinese issue, but an all-encompassing, global phenomenon.

After engaging in an in-depth conversation with Su Dong Ping, my thoughts on his style of abstract art have become very clear, and will lead to more extensive discussions and analyses. I am confident in saying that contemporary Chinese abstract paintings have always been looked upon with much misapprehension and hostility. Some call them derivative of Western abstract art—crafted through mere imitation, and therefore lacking in creativity. Others argue that only artists with inadequate technical skills would choose to paint in an abstract manner; there are even many painters who frown upon the school of abstract art, not to mention that average audiences tend to find them either incomprehensible or messy. In any case, abstract art has trouble finding a place in any fine arts curriculum. The difficulties facing abstract art in China, and its marginality, are unfathomable; yet, it is precisely out of this context that the immeasurable significance and indisputable uniqueness of abstract painting arises.

Su Dong Ping's familiarity and fascination with abstract painting began with his childhood study of calligraphy. Although he jokingly says that he's not calligrapher material, the feeling and aura of calligraphy nurtured his temperament from early on. This reaction to structure and shape is only natural; it reinterprets organic forms as the breath of the heart. For Su Dong Ping, painting is not practising calligraphy; he only borrows the spirit of the latter: have the meaning in mind before you write, then write as if led by God; care less about form than about verve. The aforementioned is merely the first step of this process, of course; the influence of calligraphy does not guarantee a turning towards abstract painting—it may even hinder such a development. Yet, no matter how many times he switched jobs, or resigned from a position to devote more time to painting—there was even a time when he worked as an interior designer—he always aspired to abstract painting as his life's project. Su Dong Ping's decision to devote all his time and energy to abstract painting reflects a significant change in contemporary attitudes towards art.

The few artists who practised abstract painting in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution all benefited from the reforms of that era; even though not much information regarding contemporary art was available to begin with, it was enough to drive those who were sensitive to art into ecstasy. As for Su Dong Ping, he enrolled in the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts in 1979—a school known for its heavily political atmosphere and for a painting

programme with a strict focus on Socialist Realism. Nevertheless, young students like Su gained access to books of modern art that the academy had recently acquired: though still unfamiliar with this trend, the new generation of art students was shocked by its novel graphic presentations and haunting painting languages. Some people are endowed, by nature, with a thirst for novelty and new forms of expression; they are easily bored by and resentful of conventions, or of anything that restrains their freedom and spirit. Su Dong Ping has always firmly abided by his grandmother's preaching, which said, "When you write, never repeat a stroke; when you shit, don't let anybody see (写字怕描、拉屎怕瞧)." He has no will to be loaded down with trivial details, and finds the realist style of painting, which requires repeated revision and excessive polish, rather repulsive; all he desires is an unforced revelation of nature and his inner heart.

Su Dong Ping first encountered contemporary abstract painting in Western art books, and was immediately captivated. He knew that this style of painting corresponded perfectly with his innermost being, but he was not content with applying its languages mechanically, or unsure whether such languages suited him. Besides, he knew that if he pursued abstract painting wholeheartedly, as he wished, he might be risking excoriation. Within the educational system, and at institutions by which he was later employed, he could not lay bare his desire to vigorously explore abstract styles, or even put this desire to use; in a repressed mental state, all he could do was

make small attempts at it. This repression stirred up panic, restlessness, and even despair. He could only struggle to carry on with the external world, suppressing and accumulating his inner strength, until one day he eventually liberated himself—he thoroughly disentangled himself from the system, entering his own world to explore abstract painting independently. This act, though not world-shaking, was nevertheless a solemn decision—like that of a martyr. Beginning in 2000, Su Dong Ping devoted himself to contemplating and conceptualising abstract paintings that had come to him in his studio. Disciplined, day after day, he would bring his own sparse meals to his studio in the morning, and would not return home until sunset—like a Taoist ascetic, or a dedicated Buddhist mountain hermit. Rid of confrontational exchanges with and obtrusive interference from the outside world, he merged utterly with the spirit of painting in a state of meditation. Su Dong Ping's works appear to be abstract paintings in the eyes of outsiders, and he also sees them so, judging from his practice; however, gazing upon his inner self, he realised that these were not abstract paintings in an ordinary sense, and could not be easily defined.

If we trace the trajectory of contemporary abstract painting, it seems to fundamentally involve an attention to colour variance, or geometric relations; sometimes it explores psychological reactions, sometimes the communication of concepts, and other times it extends further into the philosophical plane of

metaphysics. These unique characteristics form the edifice and structure of contemporary abstract painting, each defining its own category, pertaining to a specific school. However, applying these pre-established glossaries of abstract painting to Su Dong Ping seems inadequate, as his paintings involve various disparate elements, rather than a singular essence. He never sets out to achieve any one of the aforementioned effects. Thus, when analysing Su Dong Ping's paintings from a solely formal perspective, one tends to apply the terms "structural" and "non-figurative"; on the other hand, when regarding the artist's growth and development of personality, it is obvious that he is a product of Northeastern China and that he has experienced the ups and downs of Chinese society in the past thirty years. What interests him is a severe dissociation between social and cultural prospects, and what he is caught up in is not a mere imitation of a historical image of disintegration, but the unrelenting plea and yearning at the bottom of his heart: how to open one's arms wildly, and render perceptible the sound of history's solitary footsteps?

The abstract movement in Western painting represents a revival of the spiritual in the face of a resurgent impasse. Formal reduction and liberation is a method with which Su Dong Ping clears away the rust and dust of the spirit: the reason he fled the institutions and superficial artifice of realism was his weariness with moralistic preaching and political uproar. What he desires is not to

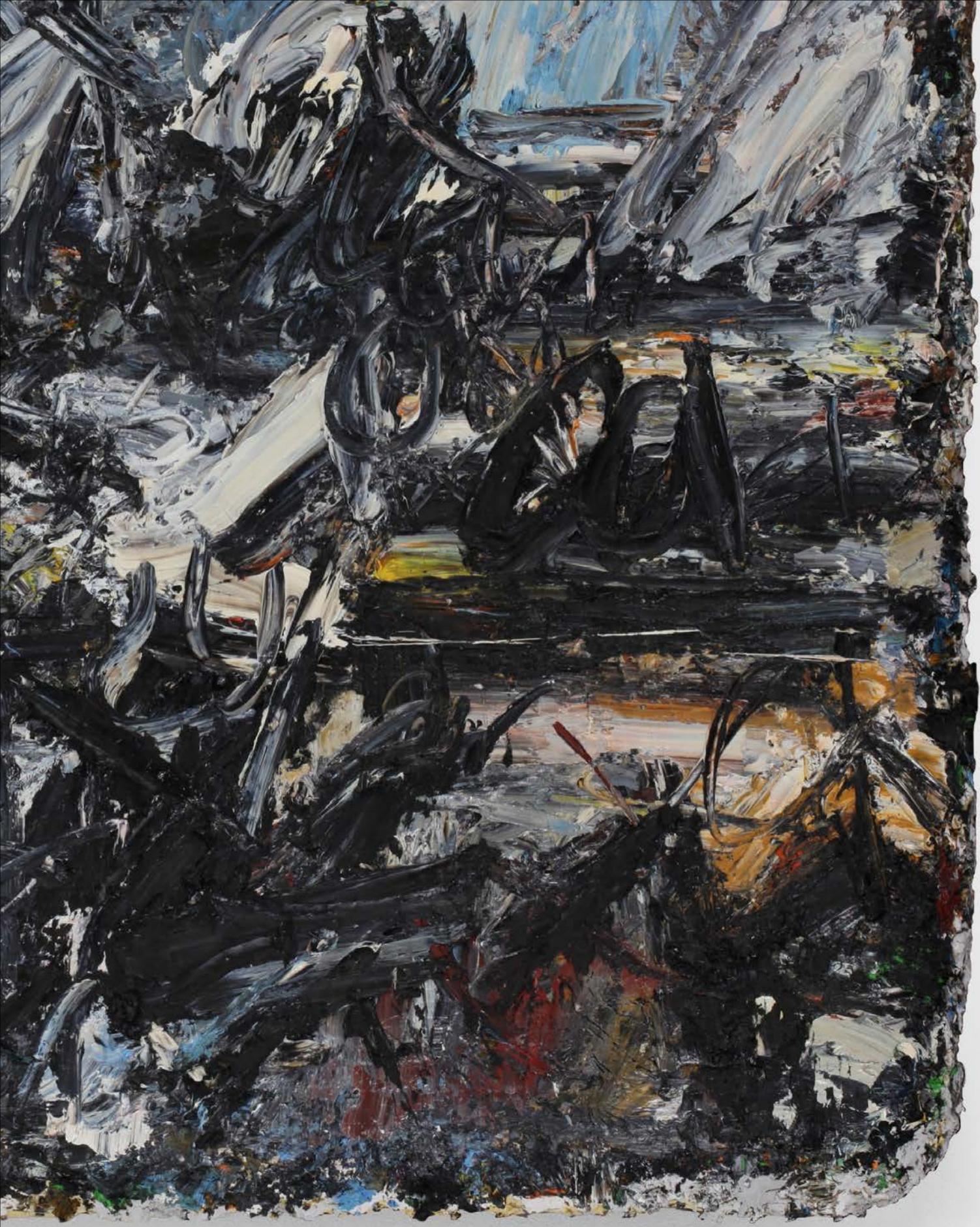
imitate the image of the material world, but to sublimate the freedom of his heart. As he faces the canvas, year after year, he is not only painting, but contemplating his individuality as a human being; he seeks to break away from the chains of obsolete convention, in order to attain the most sublime freedom at will. After more than a decade of pondering, the canvas before him has materialised into a pure representation of this free spirit. He incorporates many relationships in life into his painting language: medical gauze, rags torn from uniforms, rusted nails, the process of decorative craftsmanship, etc... These tools and procedures all become embellishments in his paintings; he fears nothing, and he is free from the shackles of tradition.

The rise to prominence of abstract art does not result from its simplicity; it results, rather, from its reflection of modern anxiety and the ensuing need to break through to a more meaningful volition. Abstract art can be utterly solemn, flawless—a yearning for calmness of spirit. It can be purely formal—a striving for perfection in a universal structure. It can be a riot of colour—not mere extravagance of ornamentation, but a wildness of freedom, a return to human nature. The poetic beauty of today is not feigned joy, but that which nurtures our souls, to relieve our weariness, and provide us with spiritual sustenance. Su Dong Ping's art—an elegy to China—gently eases the suffering of our hearts. In the light of his paintings, we feel joined with the selfless oneness of the collective unconscious.

Let all things be wild and free.



2014No.03, 2014, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 161 x 197 cm (63 2/5 x 77 3/5 in.)



2014No.03 (detail 局部), 2014, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 161 x 197 cm (63 2/5 x 77 3/5 in.)



2014No.19, 2014, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 154 x 138 cm (60 3/5 x 54 3/10 in.)



2014No.19 (detail 局部), 2014, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 154 x 138 cm (60 3/5 x 54 3/10 in.)

意志力的表现 ——论苏东平的绘画

王春辰

王春辰博士现为中央美术学院美术馆学术部部长，密歇根州立大学Broad美术馆特约策展人。2013年他被任命为第55届威尼斯双年展中国馆策展人。目前他同时担任英国学刊《当代中国艺术杂志》（Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art）副主编及担任德国斯普林格（Springer-Verlag）出版社《中国当代艺术丛书》主编。

当第一次听说苏东平这个名字时，并不了解他，看了他的作品，就马上确认他是有想法的人，他的作品不是随随便便出来的，最主要的是这一批抽象绘画让我确信了当代的中国画家的能力，也从另一个角度促使我去思考当代的绘画之变是一个全局性的、全球性的，不唯独是中国的局部问题。

当我与苏东平进行了深入的交谈和对话后，我对他从事抽象艺术就有了更加明确的思考和判断，甚至由此我们可以展开更广泛的讨论和辨析。可以这样讲，抽象绘画在当代中国一直受到种种的误解和敌意，要么认为它是西方抽象绘画的一种舶来品，纯属模仿、毫无新创，要么就是不会画画的人才去乱搞抽象；而对于多数从事绘画的人又多不以抽象为然，普通观众更视之为不懂或乱七八糟，即便在美术学院的艺术教育里也没有抽象绘画的一席之地。可以说，抽象艺术在中国之难度和小众，是难以想象的，但恰恰是因为这样的语境，才有了不一样的抽象绘画的意义和特殊性。

苏东平对抽象绘画的亲近或着迷，是源自他自小有的书法学习，虽然他戏称自己不是写书法的材料，但书法的那种素养和气息早已浸透在他的心脉里，这是对于形制和形式的一种自然反应，它将有机的形式感化作了心的气息，对于苏东平，这不是在写书法，他取法于书法的神髓——意在笔先、下笔若有神、不拘泥于形而追神韵。至此，这也仅仅是第一步的过程，有书法并不能保证它必然导向抽象绘画，甚至是羁绊。事实上，无论中间换过几次工作或离职从事专业绘画，甚至中间做过多一段室内装潢，他都是以追求抽象绘画为志业的，苏东平之所以投注了他全部的时间和精力于抽象绘画，主要是他是在现代人的艺术追求之路上迈步的。

或者说，文革之后在中国为数不多从事抽象绘画的人，都是得益于那个时代的开放，尽管关于现代艺术的信息和资讯不是特别多和充足，但已经让那些内心跳动着艺术敏感细胞的人兴奋不已。对于苏东平，他是1979年入学鲁美的，尽管这个美院有着强烈的政治传统和苛刻的现实主义绘画体系，年轻的学生还是读到了学院新购置的现代主义画册，尽管一知半解、对于整个现代主义

艺术的脉络不甚了了，但新颖的图示、惊悚的绘画语言已经让新一代的学子们震撼了。有的人天性里就有一股追求新事物、新表现的禀赋，对于陈规、对于束缚自由天性的东西生来就厌倦。苏东平自小深得祖母的一句话教诲：写字怕描、拉屎怕瞧，他不愿意做那种扣扣索索的事情，不喜欢那种改来改去、过度修整的写实画法，他要的是纯任自然和心性的表露。

他从为数不多的几本西方画册里看到了现代抽象绘画，他的心灵一下子被击中了。他知道这是最与他的内心契合的绘画，但不无法满足于套用那些语言，甚至他不认为那样的语言适合他。而且他知道心性倾向的抽象绘画如果他大众旗鼓地去创作，是冒着被批判的风险的，在那样的教学制度里以及之后的工作机构里，他都无法坦露或施展自己对抽象绘画进行大力探索的心愿，他只有一点点在被压抑的心理状态下做些探索和尝试。他对此感到了深深的恐慌和不安，乃至绝望。对于外部世界，他只能虚与委蛇，只能将天性压抑着，积聚着，终于有一天，他释放了自己——他彻底离开体制的束缚，他完全走进自己独立探索抽象绘画的个人天地中。这一举动，虽非惊天动地，但也是一种很悲壮、很有殉道意味的决定，他从2000年开始，就一门心思在画室里沉思、构想、心动他的抽象绘画，日复一日，

每天都很有规律地准备好干粮，来到画室，一呆就是一天，至天黑返回家中。如同面壁修道，如同孤山参禅。他与外界没有喧哗的交流，也没有外界对他自以为是的干扰，他完全与一种绘画的灵修在一起。在外人看来，这是抽象绘画，从实践的行为上，苏东平也是把这些绘画看作抽象绘画，但真正在内心的对视中，他知道、他体认了这不是一般意义的抽象绘画，甚至都不需要以绘画的方式去判断它们。

因为从现代抽象绘画的线索去看，抽象绘画的根基有的讲究色彩之变，有的关注几何关系，有的探索心理反应，有的注重观念的传递，甚至有的引申到形而上的哲学层面。这几种特质构成了现代抽象绘画的大厦和结构，分门别类，各有所属，但对于苏东平而言，如果套用这些现成的抽

象绘画术语似乎是不确当的，因为他的绘画包容了这些诸多的要素，而不是单一的一种，也不是为了这些的某一种而创作。如果仅仅从形式上分析苏东平的绘画，很容易用结构和非具象来套用，但是从画家的生长和个性来看，他显然是始终寄居在中国东北的这片黑土地上，他感受的是中国社会在迄今三十多年来的变化故事，他面对的是更大的一种社会与文化图景的分离，他纠结的不是去描摹这种历史分离的图像，而是在内心里始终荡漾着一种吁求：如何张开双臂、抒发出历史的踉踉脚步之音？

西方的抽象绘画是面对再现困境之后的一次精神世界的苏醒，而对于苏东平感受的，则是僵硬的现实绘画之后人性的复归。形式的消解与释放是他纾解精神上的淤积块垒，他之所以一次又一次逃离机构和浮泛的艺术写实，是因为他知道他厌倦了道德说教和政治喧嚣，他要的不是“描摹”一个沉沦的世界物象，而是要高扬内心的伟岸和自由。他成年累月地面对画布，不是画画，而是思悟自己作为人的价值：他要挣脱的是那些既定的陈规绳索，而达到纯化的随性自由中。他面对画布，经过十几年的厮磨，越来越成为他自由的精神象征和物化。他把生活里的多种关系置入绘画语言中，医用的砂布、工装的衣服碎片、铁锈的钉子、装潢工艺的过程等等都可以成为画面的道具和程序，他没有任何的介意，没有任何的陈规障碍。

如果说抽象绘画为什么变得重要，不是因为它简单，而是因为体现了现代人的紧张、它要冲破重重阻碍，让更强大的意志里得以表现。它可以完全地静穆，不留瑕疵，那是渴望心灵的安宁；它可以是形式的纯粹，那是力求世界结构的完美；它可以五彩斑斓，但那绝不是矫饰，而是自由的奔放和人性的复归。今天的诗性之美，不是伪饰的愉悦，而是让沉重的心灵得以寄寓憩息。苏东平的绘画，姑且称之“中国人的安魂曲”，慢慢地修复内心的冲突和创伤，在如此的画面感染下进入忘我的神通中。

让一切都得以自由。



2014No.16, 2014, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 151 x 135 cm (59 2/5 x 53 1/10 in.)



2014No.10, 2014, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 152 x 181 cm (59 9/10 x 71 3/10 in.)



David Chan in Conversation with Su Dong Ping

David Chan as 'C', Su Dong Ping as 'S' below

David Ho Yeung Chan is a curator based in Hong Kong and Shanghai. With Pearl Lam Galleries, Chan has curated *Lei Hong: Non-Geometric Study* (2012), *Tsang Kin-Wah: Ecce Homo Trilogy I* (2012), *Fictional Recoveries* (2012), *Su Xiaobai* (2013), *Déjà Disparu* (2013), *After Time* (2014), *Embodied* (2014), and *Ren Ri: Yuansu Projects* (2015). He holds an MA from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, New York, USA.

C: How did you first become interested in art?

S: It's a long story. To begin with, I inherited it from my family. My father is a calligraphist, and my mother is a high school art teacher. They were the first two people who fostered my interest in art, calligraphy, and aesthetics. My earliest interest in art must have arisen under my parents' guidance.

C: With your background in academic education, what is your current view on Socialist Realism? And what, from your perspective, is its contribution to contemporary art in China?

S: This is a major issue. When I first began painting, everything I learned about art involved this theme. When we had just begun to study art, we had to draw in this way. Regardless of whether or not artists knew what art was, we all knew that Socialist Realism was the prevailing trend in China at the time. So as far as that is concerned, my artistic career has been one of perpetual self-improvement. I gradually walked away from Socialist Realism, and turned to other genres of art in which I had more interest; eventually, I abandoned the former once and for all.

When I first began to study art, everyone was working within the school of Socialist Realism. We were all made to study Mao Ze Dong's speech at Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art,

where the message was that art must serve the people, art must serve society, and, frankly speaking, art must serve the political regime. If you desired to become part of the art industry, you had to lend yourself to this form of artistic creation. If you did not succumb to it, perhaps you would not have any opportunities to exhibit your work, or even to receive higher education.

However, as my knowledge of art and my personal aspirations developed, I began, little by little, to step out of the academic framework. It was an excruciating process for me at the time. Unlike foreign artists, we were not aware that any other ways of practising art existed. It was not until the end of the 80s and through the 90s that the Chinese public started to free itself from conventional ideas. With my self-understanding as an artist and a whit of burgeoning artistic aspiration, I felt an awakening, and I decided to start drawing things that I liked, things that were personal and idiosyncratic, and utterly different from Socialist Realism or even against it. This change solely depended on being able to depart from that.

Without a break from Socialist Realism, it would be impossible to speak an authentic language through art—that was the realisation I came to. In my personal case, the process of rupture took too long. It hinged upon my determination to completely abandon what I had learned and what was not really to my liking. This experience

contrasts sharply with those of today's youth. The education we received as young adults was far too limited. These days, the general environment has evolved drastically; you can have an exhibition like this one, and you can attract attention from art critics or have art collectors interested in your artwork. There can be nothing sweeter than this for artists of my generation. This would not have even been imaginable back in those days.

C: In what year did you paint the artwork that was later selected for display at the National Fine Arts Exhibition?

S: It was 1993.

C: How do you regard that painting now?

S: As I see it, this painting represents a period—a foundational one—in my career as an artist. Being not really clear-minded back then, I was creating artworks solely according to personal interests and intuition, which I believe is the right approach. But I was rather hesitant with it, so my paintings waddled, reflecting my lack of focus and instability.

C: Please tell us about the context in which you created this piece.

S: At the time, I was coming from the expressionist movement; instead of so-called realism or romanticism, I was a big fan of expressionist

art. However, if I were to follow the procedure of Western artists in pursuing expressionism, I knew I wouldn't get anywhere. You could only enter that circle if your works had a particular style, expressive use of colour, and certain themes.

C: I find that painting especially significant in your career. Would you please tell us more about it?

S: It was created some time after I first encountered the works of Joseph Beuys. Thus, I subtitled it *The ones who follow Beuys* (oil on canvas, 195 x 396 cm, 1993). I can only vaguely recall the title of the work; it seems to have been three words: one is "confusion", and the last one is "envy". There was one more word in between. This piece symbolised my conformity, as well as confusion regarding modern art. As for the process of creation, I see it as reflecting my blindly accepting mental attitude during a long period of work. I was not sure how far this piece could evolve; virtually the entire painting process was one of blind conformity and contradiction.

C: I saw a series of artwork from the 80s and 90s in your studio; they all consist of certain figures, with some hinting at a scene, but the creative style is very expressive.

S: That is correct, they have some expressive components; however, I still believe that I was not quite certain of my path at the time, because I was still teaching at a university. There was

plenty of pettiness, and sometimes I would be either out of colours, or out of time. I truly feel blessed these days for having abundant time and a lot of colours, and for creating art for art's sake, not for a living.

C: However, taking a closer look at your works from the 80s and 90s, there seems to be a gradual divergence from the standard academic approach. When did you realise that your art was becoming less and less figurative? When did you realise this issue?

S: To be rid of figure is what I wanted from the very beginning; to create non-figurative art is my highest aspiration. I have never been that fond of objects that have figures, but there was still a fair amount of compromise in my creative process during that period. At heart, I am not quite satisfied with my works from that time; they were products of experiments, or, in a word, of resignation. There was no other way except to paint what I was interested in half the time, while keeping an eye to exhibitions. I remember that this person from Hong Kong, who was one of the earliest gallery owners from that region, came to visit me in 1993.

C: Zhang Song Ren.

S: That was him. He came to my studio to have a look at my art. Then he said, "Your paintings are very interesting, but you ought to be bolder." He was interested in acquiring *Green Dog*—that painting mounted on the wall in my studio.

C: Looking back at your career, it seems you began with the creation of small-scale paintings, then, in a subsequent series of works, came an explosion of colours. Was this a matter of

circumstances, so that as soon as you were free of pressure, you began to produce large-scale works following only your heart-felt emotions?

S: Yes, that's me!

C: Was that your earliest series of non-figurative artworks?

S: I had done that kind of work before, but this time I did as I pleased. I became independent after I resigned from my position at the academy in 1998, but I didn't acquire my own professional studio until 2000. Being able to paint uncompromisingly in my own way brought me incredible joy. The period during which I painted on a small scale prepared me for the large-scale work that came later.

C: Wasn't the largest-scale piece you completed during that period a quadruple painting from 2009? This artwork is also included in your solo exhibition in Shanghai.

S: That work is indeed the largest one in scale of all my abstract paintings.

C: You had completely broken free from the academic system by then.

S: That is correct. In fact, it took me nine years to complete that painting. It was truly a long process of exploration.

C: Since 2001, you have truly refined your current artistic language, including a breakthrough in choice of materials and the marginality of your paintings. Is that a sound statement?

S: That's right. This exhibition includes several paintings I began during the early stages of this

period. I only painted the surrounding borders at the time; the texture further developed later on, and has now come to its present form.

C: What does painting mean to you?

S: Painting is my way of living; painting is my life. Nowadays, my daily life is centred around my practice of painting. Besides playing basketball and exercising, I don't have any special hobbies. Basically, every day in my life revolves around it; painting has become part of my life.

C: For you, painting is a way of life, a way in which you choose to live on the brink.

S: I always consciously marginalise myself. As I see it, artistic creation is fundamentally a process in which the artist battles against oneself. When one glances here and there, or even without any understanding of oneself, in the face of all the petty business of society, it is impossible for one to paint great art.

C: Can you tell us about the connection between calligraphy and painting, in terms of the thinking process and the process of making the artwork?

S: I see calligraphy as the path that led me to abstract art in the first place. This is because calligraphy is extremely abstract at its core. Looking at my abstract paintings, I know that they are not completely abstract; of course, this may be an understanding from the artist's own point of view; what the audience sees appears entirely abstract. I find my paintings have bones and meat; the bones in my painting stem from the influence of calligraphy. My understanding of calligraphy informs the formal structure of my works.

C: What is 法度 (*Fa Du*), and how does it relate to your practice of art?

S: As I see it, the thinking that underlies abstract painting is boundless; there is enormous creative potential, although I believe that you must follow a certain rule of creation, and that is the discipline of art—or, as I call it, 法度 (*Fa Du*). With regards to the specific nature of this discipline, each individual has his or her own interpretation. This *Fa Du* can entail certain conventions; for me, these come from the soulful aspects of calligraphy. To summarise, I interpret *Fa Du* as a particular artistic discipline one must follow throughout a working process. You can see in every one of my paintings an emphasis on the wholeness and power of the frame. This is as much as I can explain with language.

C: How do you work on a painting?

S: When I first face a frame, I see only nothingness—a blank canvas. At this point, I must open up my mind; I must stay fearless without setting any limitations on myself. I draw as I wish, completely at my pleasure. As I see it, the valuable qualities of abstract art are produced throughout a number of occasions. However, some conclusion must be deduced from all these occasions in the end. I am always very relaxed at the beginning of my painting process; I search for colour relations, or the soul of the whole frame, etc, as I wish. Moments of chance occur during this search, just as in works of *da xie yi* (freehand brushwork painting) in traditional Chinese painting, such as that of Bada Shanren, Xu Wei, Liang Kai, etc. For these grandmasters, who produced the foundational works of Chinese Art, the drawing pen had to be set loose to a certain extent, then summed up.

First, seek the occasions, and then synthesise all these contingent variables and transform them into a product of inevitability.

This is the rule I have found in my years of experience. However, I must also work against this rule. Picasso once said, “Destroy the thing, do it over several times.” I must also destroy the thing. When my artwork starts to look overly canonical, I warn myself that sometimes becoming a classic means perishing. Then, the work transforms and becomes a new stereotype, so that I must destroy it at once, and reconstruct it once again. Thus, my artworks go through many processes of construction, and many accidents are incorporated into each round of creation. No doubt, any art practice requires discipline, but you must also destroy and rebuild; many things can be discovered throughout these repeated iterations. On the other hand, artists must have memory, that is, a painting memory. Once it is rooted in your mind, your faculty of judgment improves. This is to say that intuitive judgments are essential throughout the creative process, which determines the extent to which I paint and the direction in which I must proceed to create a significant work.

C: It seems that you are highly attentive to procedures during your working process; certain colours appear again and again in the pictures, and are then overlaid.

S: The repeated overlaying of colours during the process is very interesting, as it produces many instances of value. As the work deepens, many techniques that are not technical at all come to mind. I believe artists ought not to define any particular methods or techniques. It is murderous to turn painting into a mere technical procedure.

C: Have you ever considered working with materials other than oil paint?

S: I certainly work with mixed media in some of my works, incorporating plaster, wire nails, etc. However, at the moment, I am still determined to see oil paint out; I’m afraid that this feature of my work in this period will last for a while longer. There is an experimental aspect to my recent paintings on a smaller scale. I don’t currently feel like making many changes to the style of my large-scale paintings.

C: What are the characteristics inherent to your art? Or, in other words, what is your painting language?

S: To find simplicity in the complex, and to convey a large quantity of information to the audience in a manner of simplicity. I believe that is the language I speak in my efforts at abstract painting. My attention to colour is relatively milder, and I tend to obscure it; it is possible that I might desire more elements of colour after a while. This changes throughout my experiences of painting; it is quite uncertain. I find this uncertainty of painting a true form of language.

C: You mentioned the overall environment of Shenyang, one of the largest industrialised cities in China, and you also mentioned its influence on the black tone in your paintings. Can you elaborate on the connection between your environment and the rich colours in your art, or the way context informs these characteristics of your work?

S: I believe it developed entirely unnoticed, because I am this person who grew up in this kind of environment. Having lived in a city that was horribly polluted by industrialisation, I have faced more depressing and darker things than many others. Consequently, decadence becomes a prominent subject of my paintings,

which is only natural. This is closely related to the environment in which I grew up.

C: Your artworks are not merely two-dimensional; in fact, they represent three-dimensional spaces that encompass their supporting structures and frames. Knowing the environment in which you grew up, and then looking at your choices of material for painting, was there any influence from the urban development of Shenyang?

S: All these things share some connection. With the past 20 to 30 years of urban construction, I can no longer see any old buildings from my studio on the 28th floor with a view that extends a few kilometres to the north. Now, it is all new buildings constructed in the last twenty years. I often see ruined and broken-down structures from my window, steel bars and concrete bare on the ground—all of this may have influenced my frame of mind during creation. I am not always satisfied with two-dimensional spatial limitations during my painting process, because I often extend outside the frame at a certain point in my work. The force of the image springs out of the frame—that’s why my paintings gradually become three-dimensional.

C: Elsewhere you have mentioned the importance of following your inner heart, the logic of our emotions, and also what comes as a consequence of our emotions. Can you elaborate on these issues?

S: I find personal emotions to be the most crucial element of all. Whose emotions should an artist attempt to convey, other than one’s own? In the past, we were taught that art must serve the goals of socialism, art must reflect society—we were each painting the others. This already perplexed me back then: why should we paint others? Deep in my heart, I believe that artists ought to paint about themselves, to seek themselves, to

paint objects they are fond of—only in this way can one create decent contemporary art. Artists must look for the simplest, purest elements in their inner beings, then express them; the extent to which these inner emotions are conveyed is a matter of individual competence.

C: This exhibition is titled *Landscapes of the Heart*. Can you explain this title?

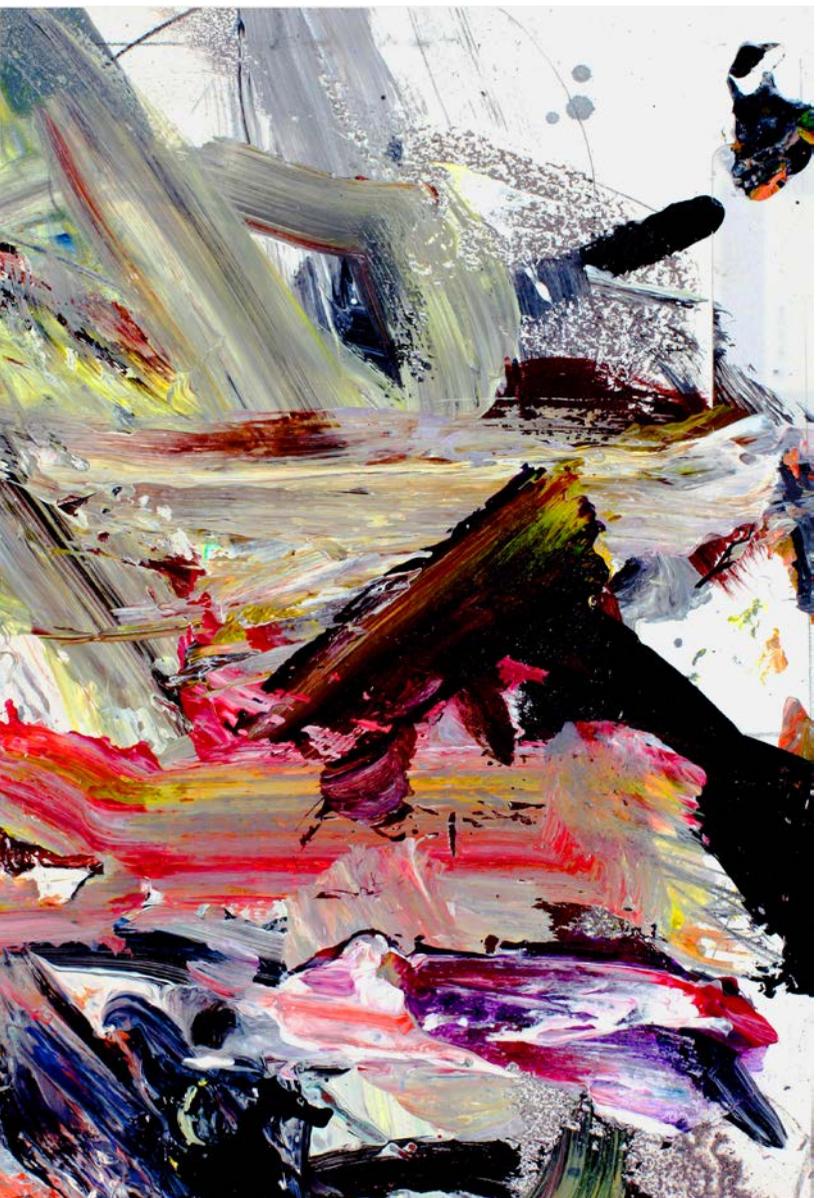
S: Its meaning is in fact quite similar to Taoist thinking. I would say that the process I’ve undergone to arrive at my understanding of art is one of devout discipline. Once you have extracted a frame of mind, the image must be conveyed intrepidly with a kind of unconsciousness. It requires a great deal of courage during the process of artistic creation to purify your state of mind; instead of dabbling around or worrying about what the painting is for, you mustn’t pay any attention to distracting thoughts. The process of becoming an artist is one of devotion and discipline.

C: There is an echo of the breath and aura of traditional Chinese landscape painting in your exhibition title, *Landscapes of the Heart*. What are your thoughts on this?

S: I must explain something about this issue. While I acknowledge the power and spirit of traditional Chinese art, I must stress that one should not attempt to understand my paintings in the same way as traditional Chinese abstract landscape paintings. I like to place heavier emphases on the pictorial language and contingency of the picture, a particular line in my creative process, a certain colour. These inspire me to create, so, in comparison, this body of work has a more abstract aesthetic, which has no relation to any concrete form.



2014No.24, 2014, Acrylic on plastic board 塑料板丙烯, 13.5 x 20 cm (5 3/10 x 7 9/10 in.)



2014No.22, 2014, Acrylic on plastic board 塑料板丙烯, 20 x 13.5 cm (7 9/10 x 5 3/10 in.)



Top 顶部: **2014No.29**, 2014, Acrylic on plastic board 塑料板丙烯, 30 x 39.5 cm (11 4/5 x 15 3/5 in.)

Bottom 底部: **2014No.28**, 2014, Acrylic on plastic board 塑料板丙烯, 36 x 26.5 cm (14 1/5 x 10 2/5 in.)



2009No.15, 2009, Oil and mixed media on canvas 布面油画及综合材料, 195 x 145 cm x 4 (59 1/10 x 53 9/10 in. x 4)

陈浩扬对话苏东平

陈浩扬以下简称“陈” 苏东平以下简称“苏”

陈： 请问你是怎么对艺术产生兴趣的？

苏： 这个真是说来话长。最开始算是家学吧。我父亲是书法家，母亲是中学的美术老师，他们最早引导我对艺术感兴趣、对书法感兴趣、对美术感兴趣，我对艺术最早的兴趣起源，一定是家人的引导。

陈： 因为你是学院教育的背景，请问你对社会主义现实主义有什么看法，以及你觉得它对当代艺术的贡献何在？

苏： 这个问题很大。我最开始学画画时，对于美术的了解和认识，完全都在你说的这个大问题里面。我们最开始了解和认识美术，大家都这样画，也一定要这样画。好像大家可能不知道什么是艺术，但是我们都知道，现实主义社会主义的美术，这是当时国内的潮流。我的从艺过程，事实上就是不断地在矫正自己，逐渐从中走出来，去画自己感兴趣的东西，把它扬弃了。

最开始我学画，都是在画社会主义现实主义的美术，因为那时我们要学习毛泽东的延安文艺座谈会议的讲话（笑），艺术要为人民服务，艺术要为社会服务，说白了艺术要为政治服务。当时如果你想进入到绘画行业的话，一定要屈从于这种模式。你要不屈从于这种模式，恐怕所有的展览机会啊，甚至进阶的教育，都是不可能。

但是随着我对美术的认识，和我个人理想的逐步形成，就开始一点一点地扬弃学院的框架。当时看这是一个很痛苦的过程。因为当时我们不像国外艺术家，我们不知道除此之外还有别的方式去从事艺术。但到了上世纪八零年代末、九零年代的时候，随着人们的思想解放，加之艺术家对自我的认识，对自己从艺的一点点的理想，有了启蒙，然后就开始画自己喜欢的东西。你个人喜欢的、有个性的东西，是完全和社会主义现实主义相背的，或者说

是相抵触的。这就看你能不能走出来。

你不和它决裂的话，你的艺术的语言就不可能那么纯粹，就是这样。这个决裂的过程，在时间上是相对而言的，对于我个人而言，还是长了点。这个就看你有没有勇气把原来学到的东西和你心里头真正不喜欢的东西给它割掉，都扬弃。这个和现在的年轻人真是天壤之别。我们青少年时期受到的教育太局限了。现在整个大环境有很大改变，你可以搞这样的画展了，你可以有批评家关注或有收藏家来收藏，对我们这一茬儿人那真是太美妙的事情了。当时真是不可想像。

陈： 您那幅获得全国美展的作品是哪一年的创作呢？

苏： 那是九三年。

陈： 你现在怎么看待那一幅画呢？

苏： 我觉得这是我从艺的一个阶段，一个基础。当时头脑里不是很清晰，只是凭个人的爱好和感觉去做艺术。我认为这样认识是对的。但当时想的不太清晰，所以画得就不是那么坚定，摇摇摆摆。

陈： 介绍一下你创作这幅作品的语境。

苏： 当时我的绘画是从表现派来的，当时我喜欢表现主义的东西。我并不喜欢什么所谓的现实主义、浪漫主义。但是学习表现派，如果完全按国外人的那些东西走，那是行不通的。那时必须要有一定的造型，有一定的表现的色彩，还要有一定的主题，你才能够去进入到当时那个圈子。

陈： 我觉得那幅画很重要，不如我们再谈一谈那幅画。

苏： 因为当时看到了博伊斯（Joseph Beuys)的作品，所以那幅画的副标题叫《关注博伊斯的人们》（布面油画，195 x 396 cm，1993年），主标题我记不大清楚了，好像是三个词，一个是“迷茫”，最后

一个是“嫉妒”，中间还有一个词。反映了当时我对现代美术的一种盲从，然后又很困惑。关于整个创作的过程，我觉得只是我在长时间作画时的一种很盲从的心态，当时并不知道这幅画能够发展到什么程度，实际上整个作画的过程都是很盲从、很矛盾的。

陈： 我在您的小画室看到八零年代和九零年代的一批作品，作品都是有一些人物形象，或者一些风景的暗示，但创作的方法是很表现的。

苏： 对，有一定的表现性。但是我觉得还是走的不是很坚定。因为那个时间段，我还是在大学里教书，有很多杂事，而且有时不是今天缺颜色，就是明天缺时间。我现在太幸福了，有大量的时间，有很多的颜色，不被生活所迫而做艺术创作。

陈： 但是看您八零年代、九零年代的作品呢，相对于学院派的教育来说，是慢慢在那个标准上偏离，你是到哪个时间段突然发现自己的作品越画就越没有形象了呢？你是什么时候意识到这个问题的？

苏： 我从最开始就想要没有形象。我最大的理想就是没有形象，我不喜欢有形象的东西，但是那一阶段实际上也是一个折衷。当时你要参加展览，而你的画完全抽象的话，你是连最低层面的展览都没有机会参加。当时在北京还有一个小圈子，小的沙龙，还有几个外国人能买你的画。但在沈阳这是不可能的事情。所以这实际上也是我的折衷，我对那一阶段的作品，从内心里头说，都不是很满意，只是一种实验，或者说是一种无奈。就是说我没有办法，我只能一半画自己感兴趣的，一半还要照顾到展览。我记得是九三年来了一个香港人，他是最早办画廊的一个香港人。

陈： 张颂仁。

苏： 对，是这个人。他还到我的工作室看我的画。他当

陈浩扬是活跃于香港及上海的策展人。他与藝術門合作策划了《霓虹个展：非几何研究》（2012）、《曾建华 Ecce Homo Trilogy I特定空间个展》（2012）、《虚构的复得》（2012）、《苏笑柏个展》（2013）、《Déjà Disparu》（2013）以及《时后》（2014）。陈浩扬拥有美国纽约巴德学院（Bard College）策展研究中心硕士学位。

时说：“你的画很有意思，但是你应该再大胆一些。”他当时想要收藏的就是我的小画室墙里面镶的那一幅画，叫《绿色的狗》。

陈： 现在回过头来看，你从二零零一年开始画小画，这批创作中完全是你对色彩的释放。是不是还是因为条件的限制，等后来没有压力的时候，就开始创作大尺幅的作品，完全追寻内心的感受来画画呢？

苏： 对啊，这就是我嘛。

陈： 那是最早的一批没有形象的画作吗？

苏： 之前也画过，但都是随便画的。九八年从学校辞职后，我就独立了。两千年的时候，我有了自己的画室，开始做职业画家，可以完全按照自己的想法去画画，这真是太开心了。那个时期画小画也是为了画大画做一些准备的工作。

陈： 那个时期最大的一幅画是不是您零九年创作的那件四联画？这件作品也会展出在你上海的个展之中。

苏： 那一张是我抽象绘画里最大的一张。

陈： 这个阶段你与学院体系完全脱离开来了。

苏： 对，画那张画实际上等于画了九年。那真的是一个探索的过程。

陈： 那你真正地建立现在的艺术语言，包括对材料的突破，这种画作边缘的出现，是从二零一零年开始的，是吗？

苏： 对，一零年。这次展览有这个阶段最开始的那张，那时只是把外框画一画，一点点延伸出来肌理，然后发展成现在这个面貌。

陈： 绘画对你意味着什么？

苏： 那就是生活，就是我的生命。我现在的的生活就是围绕着绘画这个事。除了打打篮球锻炼身体我没有别

的什么特殊爱好。基本每一天就是围绕着它，绘画变成了生活的一部分。

陈：绘画对于您来说就是一种生活的状态，一个自甘边缘的生活状态。

苏：我有意识地把自已边缘化一些。我觉得艺术创作实际上是画家自己和自己在较劲。如果东看看，西瞅瞅，还没有个人的理解，又面临很多社会上杂七杂八的事情，那是画不好画的。

陈：告诉我们关于书法和绘画之间的连接？谈谈它在你的思维和创作过程中的关系。

苏：我认为它应该是最早把我带到抽象美术里来的一条路，因为书法其实非常抽象。你看我的抽象画，但我自己知道它并不是完全的抽象。当然这也只是艺术家自己的理解，观众看到的完全是抽象的。我认为我的画有骨有肉，我画面中的骨头，我认为还是书法的那部分。我对书法的一个理解支撑着成为一个基本的骨架。

陈：什么是“法度”以及它与你艺术世界的关系？

苏：我认为抽象艺术创作的思维是漫无边际的，有很大的创造性，但是我认为必须遵循一定的创作规律，也就是艺术的规律，我称之为“法度”。那艺术规律是什么，个人有个人的讲法和理解。这个法度可能是传统的东西，对我来说是书法里一些灵魂的东西。总而言之，我理解法度就是在创作的过程当中要遵循一定的艺术规律。你看我的每一幅画都是在强调画面的整体性，画面的力量。这个我只能用语言解释到这。

陈：你是如何去创作一幅画？

苏：我开始面对画面的时候，当然是一片空白，一块白布。这个时候我一定要将思绪打开，一定要很无

畏，不要限制自己，怎么想就怎么画，很随意。我认为，抽象艺术里头的好东西，一定是有很多的偶然。但是这种偶然最后一定要归纳成一个必然。我在最开始画的时候很放松，很随意的找色彩关系，或是画面整体的生命等。那么这个找寻的过程中就会出现很多契机，就像国画中的大写意，如八大、徐渭、梁楷等，这些在中国艺术上起支撑作用的顶级大家们，他们一定要把画笔放纵到一定的程度，然后再归纳。在找到那种偶然后再进行归纳，把偶然变成一种必然。

这是我自己这么多年总结的一套规律。但有的时候，我还要反这个规律。毕加索也说过，你一定要破坏破坏再破坏，我也要再打破它。可能有的时候画得已经很经典的时候，我就告诫自己变成经典是很要命的，那个时候就变成了一种新的模式、新八股，所以这个时候我就要破坏掉，然后再重新地建立。所以我的画都是一遍一遍创作的，都是很多遍的偶然。当然艺术创作要有法度，但是还要有破坏，再建立，然后通过几遍的建立，就会发现很多的偶然性。

陈：所以你的创作其实是非常强调过程性的，颜料会一遍一遍在画面中出现，又被覆盖。

苏：颜色一遍遍覆盖的过程很有意思，因为它出现了很多的偶然。随着创作的深入，有很多不是技巧的技巧也产生了。我一直认为画家不应该去总结一个技巧。如果将画画变成了一个小的技巧，那才是最要命的。但是画家一定要有记忆，就是绘画的记忆，它在脑子里生了根以后，就会有好的判断力。也就是说我画到什么程度，往哪个方向走，能出现一个大作品，这个过程一直需要预判。

陈：除了使用油彩，你有没有考虑使用其他材料来创作呢？

苏：我的创作当然有综合材料在里面，比如石膏、铁钉

等，但是我现在还是想要把它进行到底，现阶段这个面貌恐怕还要持续一段。我的小画里面目前有一些实验性的东西。大画近期还没想要有太多变化。

陈：什么是您艺术创作的固有特性，或者说你的绘画的语言？

苏：在繁杂当中看到单纯，在单纯当中又给观者更多的信息。我认为这是追求抽象绘画的一种语言。我在绘画当中对色彩的追求相对来讲少一点，我让它隐去一点；也有可能过一段呢，我想要色彩的东西多一些。这个随着我绘画的整个经历而变化，很不确定。我认为绘画的这种不确定性倒是一种真正的语言。

陈：您之前提到过沈阳的大环境，它是中国最大的重工业化城市之一，你也提到过这种环境对你画面中的黑色调形成的影响，它与画面浓郁色彩的关联，可不可以综合谈谈支撑你绘画特质的整个语境呢？

苏：我认为这是不自觉的，因为我就是在这样的一个环境里成长起来的一个人，五十多年都在这个被工业化极度污染的城市里面生活着，我对压抑的和不好的东西看到得更多，所以不自觉地就画得相对颓废一些，这是自然的。这和我成长环境都是有很大的关系。

陈：你的作品其实不只是一个二维的，其实是包括整个底架画框的三维空间，从你成长的环境来看你对绘画材料的选择，是不是也有一些沈阳城市发展拆迁的影响？

苏：这都有一定关系。随着这二三十多年城市的建设，从我二十八楼画室往南面看到有几公里的地方，基本看不到任何老旧的东西了，全都是二十年来的新建筑。我时常看到拆迁而形成的残垣断壁，很多的钢筋水泥都露在外面，也有可能这个东西搅动了我的创作的某种心境吧。我在作画的过程当中也不满足

于二维的空间，因为我画到一定的程度的时候画面就延伸出去了，画面的力量要冲出画面去。所以画作就一点一点地变成三维的了。

陈：你曾提到内心情绪和情感逻辑的重要性，你可以阐释一下这方面的问题吗？

苏：个人的情感我认为是最重要的。艺术家不画个人的情感画谁的情感呢？我们以前的教育是艺术为社会主义服务，要反映社会，画的是别人。那时我就很困惑为什么要画别人呢。我从骨子里认为画家应该画自己，找到自己，画自己喜欢的东西，这才是真正的好的现代艺术。艺术家要找到内心的那种最单纯的，最纯粹的东西，然后把它表现出来，至于表现多少，那是艺术家个人能力的问题。

陈：这个展览的题目叫“心象”，你可不可以解释一下这个题目呢？

苏：这和道家的东西实际上是很相似的。就是说，我认识艺术的整个过程就是一种修炼。我认为只有把心境修炼出来，这幅画面当中呈现的一定是无畏，一种不自觉。艺术创作的过程需要很大的勇气，去把自己的心境变成单纯，纯粹，而不是左顾右盼，不是顾虑为什么去画，不理睬杂念。成为艺术家的整个过程真正是一种修炼。

陈：刚才我们谈到“心象”，这个题目让人联想到中国传统山水艺术精神中的气韵流转，你怎么看待呢？

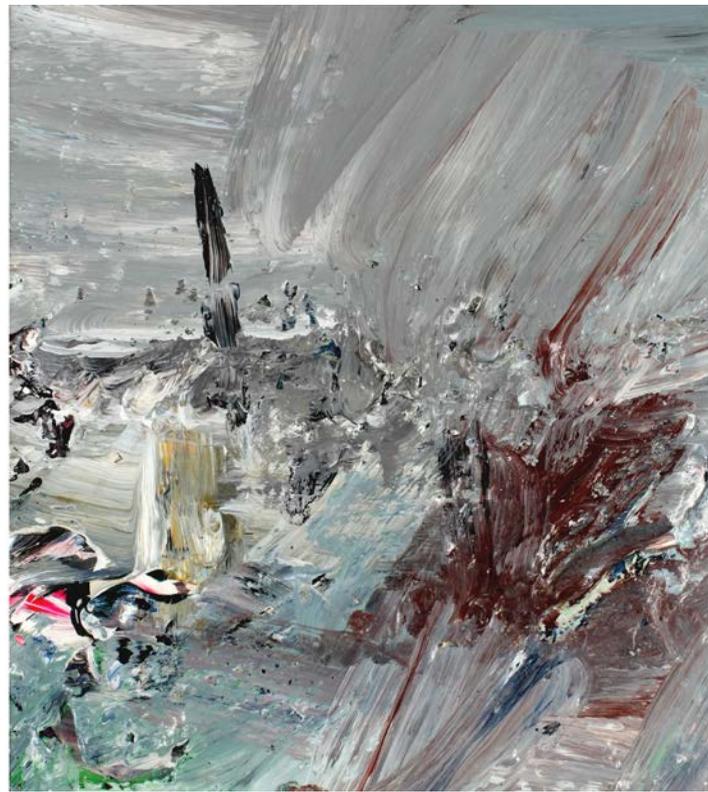
苏：这个我一定要解释一下，传统艺术精神的内在功力我是承认的，但是一定不要用抽象山水的概念去理解我的绘画。我更喜欢强调画面的语言，画面的偶然性，创作过程中的某一个线条，某一个颜色，它激发我在这里创作，所以这个东西相对来说是更大的抽象美，和真正的形象没有关系。



R: 2014No.32. 2014, Acrylic on plastic board 塑料板丙烯, 15 x 16.5 cm (5 9/10 x 6 1/2 in.)
L: 2014No.32 (detail 局部)



2014No.30 (1), 2014
Acrylic on plastic board
塑料板丙烯
13.5 x 20 cm (5 3/10 x 7 9/10 in.)



2014No.30 (2), 2014
Acrylic on plastic board
塑料板丙烯
14.5 x 16 cm (5 7/10 x 6 3/10 in.)



2014No.30 (3), 2014
Acrylic on plastic board
塑料板丙烯
13.5 x 20 cm (5 3/10 x 7 9/10 in.)



2014No.30 (4), 2014
Acrylic on plastic board
塑料板丙烯
13.5 x 20 cm (5 3/10 x 7 9/10 in.)



R: 2014No.23 (detail 局部)
L: 2014No.23, 2014, Acrylic on plastic board 塑料板丙烯, 15 x 16.5 cm (5 9/10 x 6 1/2 in.)

SU DONG PING

1958 Born in Shenyang, Liaoning, China
1983 Graduated from Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts, Shenyang, China
Present Lives and works in Shenyang, Liaoning, China

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2015 *Landscapes of the Heart—The Abstract Art of Su Dong Ping*, Pearl Lam Galleries, Shanghai, China
2013 *Instant Measure: Paintings by Su Dongping*, Inside-Out Art Museum, Beijing, China

Selected Group Exhibitions

2015 Pearl Lam Galleries at Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China
1996 Liaoning Oil Painter's Association Exhibition, Shenyang, China
1995 Chinese Oil Painting Exhibition, Beijing, China
1994 Joint exhibition with Jalaiyyih Quinn, Beijing Oriental Modern Art Gallery, Beijing, China
1993 Chinese Oil Painting Exhibition, National Art Museum of China, Beijing, China
1992 Contemporary Paintings from Su Dongping and Jalaiyyih Quinn, Consulate General of the United States, Shenyang, China
1988 Oil Painting Exhibition, Liaoning History Museum, Shenyang, China
1987 Oil Painters of Liaoning, Liaoning Exhibition Hall, Shenyang, China
1983 Oil Painting Exhibition, Liaoning Exhibition Hall, Shenyang, China
1982 Oil Painting Exhibition, Shenyang Fine Art Exhibition Hall, Shenyang, China
1981 Oil Painting Exhibition, Liaoning Exhibition Hall, Shenyang, China
1980 Oil Painting Exhibition, Liaoning Exhibition Hall, Shenyang, China

Selected Awards

1995 Chinese Oil Painting Exhibition, National Art Museum of China, Bronze Medal Award, Beijing, China
1993 Northeastern China Modern Oil Painting Exhibition, Gold Award, Shenyang, China
1982 Oil Painting Exhibition, Shenyang Fine Art Exhibition Hall, Landscape Exhibition Award Winner, Shenyang, China

苏东平

1958 出生于中国辽宁沈阳
1983 毕业于鲁迅美术学院油画系
现今 生活和工作于沈阳

主要个展

2015 《心象——苏东平抽象艺术》藝術門，中国 上海
2013 《法度瞬间——苏东平抽象绘画展》，中间美术馆，中国 北京

主要群展

2015 《香港巴塞尔艺术博览会》，藝術門，中国 香港
1996 《辽宁油画家协会作品展》，中国 沈阳
1995 《中国油画展》，中国 北京
1994 《苏东平与哲劳(Jalaliyyih Quinn)作品联展》，北京东艺术厅，中国 北京
1993 《中国油画展》，中国国家美术馆，中国 北京
1992 《苏东平与哲劳(Jalaliyyih Quinn)现代绘画展》，沈阳美国领事馆，中国 沈阳
1988 《油画作品展》，辽宁历史博物馆，中国 沈阳
1987 《辽宁油画家作品展》，辽宁展览馆，中国 沈阳
1983 《油画作品展》，辽宁展览馆，中国 沈阳
1982 《油画作品展》，沈阳美术展览馆，中国 沈阳
1981 《油画作品展》，辽宁展览馆，中国 沈阳
1980 《油画作品展》，辽宁展览馆，中国 沈阳

主要奖项

1995 中国油画展铜奖，中国 北京
1993 中国东北现代油画作品展金奖，中国 沈阳
1992 油画作品展，沈阳美术展览馆，风景类作品优胜奖，中国 沈阳



2014No.30 (detail局部), 2014, Acrylic on plastic board 塑料板丙烯, 13.5 x 20 cm (5 3/10 x 7 9/10 in.)

PearlLam Galleries

Pearl Lam Galleries 藝術門

Hong Kong 香港 601-605, 6/F, Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Central, Hong Kong, tel (852) 2522 1428 香港中環畢打街12號畢打行6樓601-605室
HK SOHO 香港蘇豪 Shop No. 1, G/F & 1/F, SOHO 189, 189 Queen's Road West, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong, tel (852) 2857 1328 香港上環皇后大道西189號西浦189地下及一樓一號舖
Shanghai 上海 181 Middle Jiangxi Road, G/F, Shanghai, China 200002, tel (8621) 6323 1989 中國上海市江西中路181號 郵編200002
Singapore 新加坡 9 Lock Road, #03-22, Gillman Barracks, Singapore 108937, tel (65) 6570 2284

