

从叛逆到创造 杨小健的书写历程

From Rebellion to Creation: Yang Xiaojian's Journey in Calligraphy

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中国书法作为中国文明的重要载体和中国文化的重要代表，拥有悠久而不曾间断的历史，也积累为自成严密体系的传统。在所有的传统范畴中，无论用什么语言指称书法传统的强大，似乎都是不过分的。它被认为具有与大自然一样的力量，所谓“禀阴阳而动静，体万物以成形”。（虞世南《笔髓论》）；它也被认为具有支持与巩固社会政治秩序一样的作用，所谓“书之为功，同流天地，翼卫教经”。（项穆《书法雅言》）；它更多将书写者的状态与神启般的际遇连在一起，所谓“情动形言，取会风骚之意；阳舒阴惨，本乎天地之心。”（孙过庭《书谱》）如此等等，都使书法的传统披上神圣的外衣。在理论的经典论述之外，中国书法的传统还贡献了无数书法作品构筑的流派、风格，如高峰壁立，法象森严。而所有这些，对于今天的书法家来说，只有一个字，那就是在书法观念和书写实践超越与突破传统的难。

Chinese calligraphy, one important carrier of Chinese civilization and an essential symbol of Chinese culture, boasts a long history without any interruption and has formed its own highly systematic tradition because of such long-term accumulation. It seems that you can never exaggerate the greatness of calligraphic tradition, no matter what traditional categories you are talking about. It is believed that calligraphy art is as powerful as the Nature, for Yu Shinan stated in his *Discussion of the Essence of Calligraphy*¹ that “Chinese calligraphy performs by following the rule of Yin and Yang to incorporate into the harmony of the world.” It is also believed that calligraphy art may contribute to the consolidating of the social political order, as Xiang Mu stressed in his *The Elegant Words*

¹ *Discussion of the Essence of Calligraphy*, 《笔髓论》, a book about theories on Chinese Calligraphy, written by Yu Shinan (虞世南, 558AD-638AD) in early Tang Dynasty.

on Chinese Calligraphy². What's more, calligraphy is tightly bound with artists' emotional conditions and unexpected enlightenments, just as Sun Guoting has argued in *Shu Pu*³ that "Poetry is nothing but genuine feeling clothed in words, and the mutability of the year proceeds only from the heart of Nature." These theories have enshrined the tradition of calligraphy art. Apart from the classic theories, Chinese calligraphy is about numerous schools and styles of works, dwarfing whoever explores the domain. Yet for today's calligraphers, what they have inherited from the tradition is but one question: how to surpass and make break through, both in terms of concepts and practices?

在1980年代以来至今中国新艺术的发展中，书法领域的观念变革与创新探索是特别值得书写的。由于传统的强大，相比起视觉艺术的其他门类，中国书法界的自觉者和探险者为数不多，尤其处在艰难的个人奋斗之中，杨小健就是其中的代表。作为中国当代书法革命者的一员，他经历了自我蜕变和进取探险的历程，他从书法内部着手的革命不仅使他自己从传统走向书写创造的境界，也给我们思考和认识中国书法与当代艺术的关系提供了难得的范例。

From the 1980s, during the development of China's new art, the conceptual revolution and innovative exploration in the field of calligraphy is remarkable. Intimidated by the power of tradition, the initiators and explorers in the field of calligraphy are fewer than those in the field of visual arts while most struggle and strive, and Yang Xiaojian is one precious representative of them. As a pioneer of this contemporary calligraphy revolution, he has experienced self-transformation and exploration. His innovation beginning from the calligraphy itself enables him to excel from tradition to creation, offering us a wonderful example to contemplate and understand the relationship between Chinese calligraphy and contemporary arts.

² *Elegant Words on Chinese Calligraphy*, 《书法雅言》, a book about theories on Chinese Calligraphy, written by Xiang Mu (项穆, 1552AD-1599AD), presenting a comprehensive understanding of the interweaving of Confucianism and calligraphic ideology. Xiang stressed calligraphy's power and importance in the society by comparing it with the Nature, holding the view that calligraphy is a tool for the maintenance of the code of ethics.

³ *Shu Pu* 《書譜》, also translated as *A Narrative on Calligraphy* or *Treatise on Calligraphy* is a representative Chinese calligraphic work by the Tang Calligrapher Sun Guoting (孙过庭) written in 687AD. The citations below are translated by Sun Dayu (孙大雨), published in 1997 by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press (SFLEP).

杨小健书法历程的第一阶段是他走出传统的探索。对于他来说，走出传统首先是与自己的书法学识与经验所进行的一次博弈。他本来就具有良好的书法传统修养，早在年轻时代就能写出具有传统韵味的行草，其风格兼容了“北派”碑体的刚健与苍劲，又富有“南派”帖学的率意与抒情，尤其在表达自我情感方面能够体现书写的无意识状态，在笔线风格上已具有相当的个人面貌。但是，他并不故意停留在书法自身的传统范畴中，而是积极地把眼光放到艺术发展新的时代文化情境之中，比如说，他首先思考了将西方表现主义艺术风格与中国书写经验的结合。在中国新艺术的变革中，打破自身原有封闭格局的动力之一是西方现代艺术。中国改革开放以后，在艺术上对中国艺术家特别是年轻一代艺术家最有影响的是表现主义，在中国艺术家的理解中，表现主义不仅仅指的是西方一种现代流派，而更是它所倡导的自由意志与自我表现精神。他们以表现主义为新的心理诉求，由此使自己的艺术创造状态能够走出传统。杨小健在这个过程中，一方面吸收表现主义的思想观念，另一方面，他从书法传统中找到了“解衣磅礴”、“书以歌之”的传统，这个传统是中国自身的表现主义，由此，他的书写发生了根本的变化，在创作中更讲究用笔的酣畅、恣肆，在全幅结构上有即兴的变化，内容也开始从具体的词章向无意识发展，特别是把日常书写和作品的结构作为主要的探索目标，从而使自己的书风从传统蜕变为现代。

The first phase of Yang's calligraphic journey is to explore the way to go beyond the tradition. As to him, it is a game between his own calligraphic learning and experience. Having outstanding mastery of Chinese calligraphic, he could create cursive script with traditional charm early in his youth, of which the style merges the sturdiness and vigorousness in the northern stone inscription style with the freedom and lyricalness in southern hardwood calligraphy style. When expressing his own emotion, Yang has revealed a unique personal style with his brush strokes which showed his awareness of creation. Yet he never intentionally rested on the tradition of calligraphy. Instead, he actively turned his eyes to new cultural situation. For instance, he was the first one who attempted to combine western Expressionism with Chinese calligraphy. Western contemporary art served as a major inspiration for China's new art revolution. After China's reform and opening up, a younger generation of Chinese artists have been greatly influenced by the expressionism. In their minds, expressionism not only refers to a modern

western school, but also the spirits it advocates: free will and self-expression. They tended to take expressionism as a psychological appeal, so that their artistic creation can break beyond the heaviness of tradition. Being one of this younger generation, Yang absorbed the ideas of expressionism while also cherish the calligraphy tradition—"writing is singing", this is China's expressionism. As a result, his works have undergone fundamental changes. He paid more attention to forceful and unstrained use of the pen. Impromptu changes in the whole structure occurs. What he wrote also transformed from specific diction to unconsciousness contents. Focusing on daily writing and the rearrangement of overall structure of the work, Yang's creations turned from traditional to modern.

当杨小健站在中国现代书法的队伍中的时候，他的个性已经相当明显，他对传统的叛逆精神不仅体现在他的书法实践中，甚至还体现在他的生活方式中。长期以来，他始终使自己处在一种漂泊漫游的精神状态中，既与社会生活的主流保持距离，也与时尚的、大众的、流行的文化思潮保持距离，可以说更多地向内心走去，在一种孤独与发奋交织的过程中磨练自己的思想锋芒。如果说杨小健在他早期的书法中解决的是从传统走向现代的话，那么从上世纪90年代到跨向21世纪的过程中，他的着力点在解决从书写到书象的建构，这个时期，他开始更加注重书法的纯粹化问题。在纯粹化这个命题中包含了两个方面的探索：一方面是他要继续通过书写来表达自己的情感、情绪和情怀，使书写的笔线仍然具有相当的表情性和表现性，甚至是一种内心力量的显现，另一方面，他着重考虑作品在视觉上的结构样式，把书法的传统布局改变为以视觉冲击力为目的的结构。中国书法传统中关于结构的遗产只能支持传统的书法形态，而杨小健要用现代视觉审美的经验来丰富这个形态，由此，他在宏观上注重书写作品的整体布局，把书写的感觉与绘画的感觉结合起来，甚至在某种程度上朝着绘画性的构成方式发展。通过他的努力，他的作品出现了一种由书写所支持的书象，其中的“象”基本上脱胎了传统书法甚至现代书法的寓意，以强烈的图像形态成为一种新的书写景观。他的作品就像建筑、雕塑和装置的意象一样，具有强烈的视觉张力。

Being a modern calligrapher, Yang formed and revealed his personal style pretty early. His rebellion against tradition is not only embodied in his calligraphic practice but also in his life style. For a long period of time, he forced himself to be a spiritual wanderer. He kept distance from both the mainstream social life and fashionable and popular cultural trends. We can say he cares more about his own inner world and tempers his mind in solitude and persistence. If what Yang Xiaojian had focused on in his early calligraphy works was his changing from the traditional to the modern, then in the process from the 1990s to the 21st century, his focus was on the transformation from writing the Chinese ideographs (as signifier) to writing the images (as signified itself). In this phase, he began to pay more attention to the purity of calligraphy which involves two aspects. On the one hand, he continued to express his emotions and feelings using traditional calligraphic methods with his strokes expressive, or even a representative of his inner strength. On the other hand, he stressed visual structural pattern of his works by changing traditional calligraphic layout in to a new one, aiming at achieving intense visual impact. The strength legacy in China's calligraphic traditions can only serve the purpose of supporting traditional calligraphic modality. Yang decided to enrich this modality by means of contemporary visual aesthetic experience. Therefore, at macro level he stressed the overall layout of his works, integrated the feeling of calligraphy with that of painting, and to some extent imitated the structural pattern of painting. Through his efforts, under the support of calligraphy, a kind of written image was presented in his works, of which the "image" was remolded from the traditional calligraphy or even modern calligraphy, and became new calligraphic scenery with its intense picture modality. His works has strong visual impacts, just like architectures, sculptures and installations.

在杨小健的书法作品已经可以作为中国当代书法的成功实践的时候，他对自己提出了更新的要求，着手解决了书法与当代艺术之间的关系。在我看来，这个过程是杨小健书法历程中最重要的和更高层次的探索，也是他以一位书法家的身份为中国当代艺术做出的贡献。在杨小健近几年的作品中，他的书写方式和书写结构都发生了更为彻底的变革，当许多书法家都苦苦思考如何能使书写的内容更具有当下和当代的意义时，当许多书法家停留在书法意象的解放而难以进入用书写反映当下感

受的时候，杨小健在这个课题上找到了解决的方法，那就是他把他对当代社会的观察、感受、体验和认知转化成为书写的形象。这些年，他行旅各地，从都市到乡村，从中国到外国，所到之处他都能把对生活现实的感受及时地转化为书写的意象，一片老墙，一片光影，一座工厂，一座桥梁，一片社区，一个城市，甚至一个社会事件，一则世界新闻，都会在他眼前都幻化为书写的对象。由此，他从具体的形象中抽离出高度的抽象形式，为现实的世界做出了书写的塑造。在这个意义上，杨小健是真正超越了传统，因为传统书法所追求的是与第一自然相关的意境，而杨小健解决了书法与第二自然也就是当下的现实相关的意境。现代书法只停留在用新的字形和书法符号来表达书写者的感受，而杨小健则能够将自己的心理状态与现实的世界直接接通，不需要通过符号的转换而达到直接的书写，如此一来，他就在直接性与现实性、表现性与表意性、具象性与抽象性等这些关系中找到了最为通畅的连接，我认为，这在书法学理上具有历史性的价值。

When Yang Xiaojian's calligraphy works can be regarded as the successful practice of Chinese contemporary calligraphy, Yang put new task on himself: how to form a connection between traditional calligraphy and contemporary art. It seems to me that this process is Yang's foremost exploration in his calligraphic practice at a much higher level than his previous efforts, and within the phase, he made contributions to Chinese modern art as a calligrapher. In Yang's works created in recent years, his calligraphic method and structure have undergone radical changes. When many calligraphers prioritized over the meaning in content borne by the calligraphic works, stopped at the revolution of calligraphic imago and found it difficult to express their feelings with calligraphy, Yang found the solution, that is, transforming his observations, feelings, experiences and cognitions of the society into written images. In the past years, he has traveled a lot, from the city to the countryside, from China to overseas countries. Wherever he goes, he can transform his real feeling towards life into written images. An old wall, a shimmering light, a factory, a bridge, a community, a city or even a social issue, a piece of world news, all of which can be turned into the objects of calligraphy. In this sense, Yang has completed the creation of a new artistic conception connected with calligraphy and the second nature, namely, the current reality of human society, while the traditional calligraphy pursues the artistic conception related to the first nature. The innovation of modern calligraphy stops

at expressing the calligraphers' feelings through new fonts and calligraphic signs. On the contrary, Yang connects his own psychological world with the real world directly, achieving direct writing without the transformation of signs. Consequently, among directness and reality, expressionism and ideography, concreteness and abstractness and other relationships he found the easiest connection, which, in my opinion, has historic value in calligraphy.

许多年来，解决中国书法的当代观赏问题已经成为书法界的共识，从传统向当代发展的书法，不仅需要风格的变化，也需要形制、尺寸的变化，由此使书法作品能够进入现代生活空间和文化环境之中。杨小健的书写作品一方面在内容上联系着当代生活，使人们在他的作品面前能够获得当代人所感受到的外部现实的一种共鸣，尤其通过他作品中新颖和强烈的黑、白、灰结构与当代社会现实形成视觉上的通感，让人体会到这些作品既具有传统书法的基本精神，又有现代书法的形式感受，更有当代书法的文化姿态；另一方面，随着主题和内容的突破，杨小健的作品在视觉上与当代文化的视觉需求形成了联系，他的作品在当代艺术范畴的各类展览和展示中，能够以艺术的当代语言方式讲述一位书法家的心理体验和现实感怀，使书法这一古老的样式进入当代文化的整体格局之中，来体现自己造型与文化的力量。

For many years how to appreciate Chinese calligraphy works has been the focus of all calligraphers. Calligraphy which is experiencing the transformation from traditional style to modern style does not only need change in style but also in shape and size. Only in this way can calligraphy move into modern life space and cultural setting. Yang's calligraphic works are closely related with modern life in terms of its theme allowing people to experience the sympathetic response between contemporary people and external reality in front of his works, especially through the visual synesthesia between his works' novel and intense black-white-grey configuration and contemporary social reality, we can feel that these works are endowed with both the basic spirit of traditional calligraphy and formal experience of modern calligraphy. What's more, they have culture posture of contemporary calligraphy. On the other hand, as he makes some breakthrough in the theme and content, Yang's works satisfy the visual needs of contemporary culture. Within all contemporary artistic categories in all kinds of exhibitions and shows his works successfully tells us the

psychological experience and real emotions of a calligrapher in the language of contemporary art. All this made calligraphy, and old culture pattern, enter the whole pattern of contemporary culture embodying the power of his pattern and culture.

也许杨小健还会继续做他的精神孤旅，他也还会继续感受这个世界许多新的事物和景象，当别的书法家为世界的变化而困惑的时候，杨小健却能够从容而轻松地迎向，因为他从传统中走出来的叛逆精神已经转化为一种充满激情和智慧的创造。他仍然可以书写得淋漓酣畅，但重要的是，他能够把看到的现实和感受到的社会作为不断书写的内容。他的书写作品也超越了文化的界线，成为不同文化背景下的观众都能够接受理解的艺术样式，从而使中国书法与当代世界范围内视觉艺术的探索形成关联，由此让我们相信中国书法语言是能够通向未来的。

Maybe Yang will go on his spiritual journey, and he will continue taking in new things and visions in the world. When other traditional calligraphers are not yet ready to accept the changes of the world, Yang can face them with ease, for his rebellious spirit has been transformed into a power to create with passion and wisdom. He can still write vividly and soundly, taking the reality he sees and the society he feels as the content of his continuous writing. His works also transcended the cultural boundary and become an art style that can be accepted and understood by audiences with different cultural backgrounds, so that Chinese calligraphy could thus found its link to contemporary visual art worldwide. Thanks to him, we can expect to see that Chinese calligraphy is bound to have a bright future.

撰文/范迪安（中国美术馆馆长）

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