

一个左派

文：付晓东

“一笔一笔地画。”李大方这样表述自己这几年来所做的事情。我们很难从灰色调的画面外表上透视这句话的含义。乡村、城乡结合部、破败的市区这些日常所见的场景，一直是他乐于选取的主题。然而，在画面中，我们并不只是看到急速变化的中国社会中那些衰败、混杂和腐臭，这些象征语言如同路标，却并不指向一个通常意义上的“现实-再现”的符号体系。或者说，他笔下的这些画面不具备直接性，而是发出某种信号，促成与观者交流的可能。解码这个信号，是“读懂”李大方创作（而非仅仅是画面）的关键。

尽管也动手画一些类似照相写实主义的作品，李大方对“再现”的兴趣只不过是他的中国学院绘画背景中自然延伸出的。“一笔一笔地画”所暗示的，并非对现实的精心勾摹。在一次欧洲的旅行中，李大方被乔托的作品打动，原因并不在于乔托作品里那种摄人的揭示性和感召力，而仅仅是他把对象“一件一件地画”。出于职业画家的敏感以及对当代这一情境的体悟，他马上抓住了“绘画”这件事在当代的一种重要内涵或者说可能性，他不断用小笔、不加油的颜料在画面中反复累积笔触和思维的变化，画面的色彩和结构内容既干枯又复杂，充满着回避、暗示、控诉、发问，也正是这一内涵或者可能性驱使下的必然选择。

这种内涵或者可能性，就是李大方所说的“工作”。绘画是一种工作，一个围绕构造意义/消解意义而进行的活儿。李大方的创作早已脱离了所谓“绘画性”的伪问题框架，他对笔触、表现性、画面意义的思考，是以个体的实践为基础演变的。画面本身所能给予的只是一个必备的因素、一个不能提供全部创作血源的系统。“创作着”的“人”，是他全部工作的核心。这项工作的内容不是全由艺术家去任意发明或者指派的，画面中要传达的意识、（非）秩序和思想，并不会脱离绘画这一门类本身所要求的范围。实际上，李大方所做的，是强化这一工作的“功能性”，迫使自己作为画家的表达具备真实的意义。这种真实，既来源于他的创作和生活经历，也来源于他对绘画的历史和当前上下文的观察。在李大方的表达系统里，所有可以促成表达的东西都来自于身在世界中的某种经验，他将这些放置进思考和创作中，持续地进行测绘、试错、检验、精确化，进而将之衍化为实践的内在驱动力。

因此不难理解，他为什么在画框下加上阶梯型的工作台，或者切割画框、重新组合成一种看似没有意义的形状，再或把画布分割成两部分，于画面之外机械地叠加线条，重复这一绘画中最基本的动作：通过这种方式，李大方创造出工作的仪式感和某种“必须的”的工作情境。工作台庄严的形态以及画布的形状让人联想起宗教场所，但这又是一种在形式和内容之间的误会。显然，在当代这件事上，艺术家更关注于自身创作系统的推进，就像李大方的画面内容所传达的，象征性只有在这个意义上才具备在地的资格。这一点也体现在画面上：李大方总是试图去传达一个带有隐喻的情节，比如《妻子》（2016年）中壮硕的裸体女性与蹲踞着的男性形象间的关联；或者通过遮遮掩掩地“叙事”让一个有故事性的元素显得欲盖弥彰，在戏剧性上再加上一层戏剧，正如《潮白河》（2017年）中弧形铁墙前后换衣的人所引起的猜想。

在李大方的画笔下，画面具有很强的“叠加感”。一方面，他的学院绘画背景——以来自苏联的社会主义现实主义绘画技巧为基础，逐渐形成一套程式化的绘画教学体系——作为他进入绘画内部的引子，自然地导致他在创作时在真实/虚构、现实/超现实的对峙间不断调整笔触和构图，绘画在这一层面上是一个角力的过程，一个时间累加下的、画面的重构再现。值得注意的是，尽管（社会主义）现实主义的影响在中国短暂的当代艺术历史中不断弱化和遭到稀释，我们并不能简单判断它已经是遗弃的边角料，或者是艺术家敌视的对象：在李大方这里，这一遗产更像是自然而然的存在，一个开门的钥匙，而不是道德的负担。另一方面，“叠加感”的产生也来自于他对“工作”的崇拜，对时间和体力付出给予最大的尊重，并把它融入在每一笔的动作里。李大方的勤奋甚至可以说是道德意义上的，它出于对创作这一活动的严肃态度，通过笔触，以及创作状态中激发的意识，不断在画面中累积、去除、重组和调配，开辟可能的地域的同时将自己的全部——不可逆转的生命流逝、思维的坐标演变、身体关节的摩擦和运动——全部投入其中，正如他所说的，像是一个工人、“一个左派”。

展览以“一个左派”作为题目，也是李大方构想的长期展览计划中的一部分。实际上，这一有所误导的题目传达的全部歧义都应该围绕“工作”这一在李大方的绘画实践里最重要的特征上展开。因此，当我们说他的工作内容不可避免地来自社会现实时，并没有真正打开画面的表层；当我们说（社会主义）现实主义是他创作的参照系和戏仿的对象时，也没有触及内部的殿堂。事实上，他是凭着左派工人一样的态度，全身心地信仰、投入到绘画之中，在绘画的领域内到处“搞实践”，寻找绘画合理性和合法的动力，并把自己变成了绘画中的一部分。这是他绘画中最大的真实，也是最“现实主义”的地方。

A Leftist

By Su Wei

In the past few years, Li Dafang expressed his creation as “painting in strokes, bit by bit.” It’s hard for us to have a sound grasp of these words from the cloudy appearances of the pictures. The rural area, the urban fringe, and the desolate urban streets, all of these daily scenes have been his favorite subject. In the picture, however, what we see is more than the declination, the disorder, and the putrid throughout the rapidly changing Chinese society; but those symbolic languages, as guideposts, do not point in the direction of a general symbolic system of “reality-representation.” In other words, the pictures he created do not have immediacy but send out a kind of signal to facilitate the communication with the audience. Decoding this signal is the key to “read” his creations (not just those pictures).

Although he has created some photograph-like works in the spirit of realism, his interest in “representation” is merely a natural extension of his Chinese college painting background. What “painting in strokes, bit by bit” implies is not an elaborate imitation of reality. In a European trip, Li was moved by Giotto’s works, not by the revealing and inspiring power of the latter’s works, but simply by painting the objects bit by bit; For the insights of being a professional painter and the deep appreciation for the contemporary situation, he immediately caught the connotation, or the possibility, of the matter of painting in present days; with oil-free pigment, in slight strokes he repeatedly combine the variations in strokes and thoughts, in which the color and the structural content of the picture are exhausted and complex, being full of avoidance, suggestion, complaint, and question; it is an inevitable choice driven by the connotation or possibility.

This connotation or possibility is what Li Dafang called “job”. Painting is a job, a job that revolves around the construction and deconstruction of meaning. Li’s creation has long been detached from the framework of the pseudo-question of the so-called “painterliness”; his consideration of stroke, performance, and the meaning of picture evolved on the basis of individual’s practice, whereas what the picture itself can bring out is no more than an essential factor, a system that cannot provide all the creation blood. The conception of “the man being creating” is the core of all his work. Although the content of this work is not entirely invented or assigned by the artist, the consciousness, order, and thought conveyed in the picture will not go beyond the scope of the painting itself. What he did, in fact, was to strengthen the “functionality” of this work and forced him, as a painter, to obtain the real meaning of the expression. This authenticity derives from his creation and life experiences, as well as from his observation of the history of painting and the current context. In his expression system, all things that can contribute to the expression sprang from a personal experience of being-in-the-world; he placed them in thinking and creation, and by continuously mapping, testing, examining, and making precise, he converted them into an internal driving force of practice.

Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why he set a ladder-type worktop under the easel, or cut the frame and re-assembled into a seemingly meaningless shape, or divided the canvas into two parts, on one of which he mechanically and cumulatively drawn lines, the basic action of painting: in this way, Li created a sense of ritual and a “must-done” work situation. The solemn form of the worktop, as well as the shape of the canvas, are reminiscent of a place of worship, but this, again, is a misunderstanding between form and content. Obviously, when it comes to the contemporary era, the artist is more concerned with the progress of his own creative system; as conveyed by Li’s pictures, symbols only qualified for an acquaintance in this sense. This is also reflected in the picture: Li always attempted to convey a metaphorical plot, for example, the association between a squatting man and a naked strong woman in *Wife* (2016); or by a secretive “narrative” he made a narrative element more exposed, covering a layer of drama on the drama, as the conjecture caused by those who are changing clothes inside and outside a curved iron wall in *The Chaobai River* (2017).

In his works, the picture has a strong sense of superposition. On the one hand, his academic background, which based on the Soviet Socialist Realism painting skills, and gradually formed a stylized painting teaching system, and which introduced him into the inner of the painting, naturally led him to adjust his brushwork and composition repeatedly in the confrontation between authenticity and fiction, realism and surrealism, in the creation; in this level, the painting is a process of struggle, a diachronic reconstructive representation. It is worth noting that despite the influence of realism (socialism) is weakened and diluted in Chinese short history of contemporary art, we can not simply consider it as an abandoned scrap, or as an object that the artists are hostile towards. For Li Dafang, this heritage is more like a natural existence, a key, rather than moral burden. On the other hand, “the sense of superposition” comes from his worship of vocation, the greatest respect for time and physical exertion. His industry, so to speak, was the moral one. It was a serious attitude towards the creation; in strokes, as well as in the consciousness inspired by the creation state, he constantly reorganized, deployed, and opened up possible areas, in which, meanwhile, the irreversible passing of life, the evolution of thought’s coordinate, the friction and motion of joints, all of these involved, as he said, “like a worker, a leftist.”

The exhibition is entitled *A Leftist*, which is part of the long-term exhibition plan of Li’s formulation. In fact, all the ambiguities conveyed by this somewhat misguided title should be understood in the light of the most important feature of Li’s painting practice, i.e., “job”. Therefore, when we say that his work is inevitably inspired by the social reality, we do not really uncover the surface of the picture; when we say realism (socialism) is the reference to his creation and hence the object of parody, we do not touch the inner. With the same attitude as the leftist workers’, he wholeheartedly adhered to a belief in painting, and thrown himself in painting; in the field he “practiced” everywhere, looking for the motivation for the rationality and legality of painting, and put himself into a part of the painting. This is the biggest authenticity in his paintings, also the most realistic place.