

新现实主义的“居间”与“共融”：孟思特的时间回廊

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一、从古典到当代，新现实主义艺术的“中间性”

中国本土现实主义艺术脉络，根植于古典绘画“状物写心、格物求真”的自律性流变。传统绘画不以机械摹仿物象为准则，始终在对客体的考察与表达主体情志的内在投射之间寻求平衡，使作品既保留客观自然世界的物理实体感，又承载时序变迁、人生境遇与精神追索的进程表现，逐步发展出“物象真实与心性合一”的创作范式，成为现当代现实主义艺术迭代与自我更新的深层文化逻辑。

在中国艺术的现代性转向过程中，现实主义贯穿始终，保持着生命力和延展性，其发展面貌并非仅体现历时性，也表现出观念的适调和对再现边界的不断拓展。从古典绘画寓情于物的审美理念，到现代艺术之于日常现实的视觉回归，再到当代艺术对个体心理、身份认同、时代情绪、内在经验的挖掘，现实主义艺术一直突破着表层摹写的局限，完善着从“物象之真”向“精神之真”的递进。

在全球化兴起后的当代艺术语境下，一些潮流起落迅猛，部分抽象主义短暂流行，这与市场的筛选和艺术界的结构性变局不无关联。反观中国本土的艺术实践，有关历史现实的文化的和社会的命题，及凸显个体生存叙事等话题还未充分展开。现实主义远非早已过时，而是可不停扩展坐标的创作系统。我们逐渐发现，在自身传统（本土）文化与全球化（泛文化）之间还存在着一种指向非两极的、灰色的、“软”的景观正被许多艺术家比如孟思特等所热衷阐释。在这里，我暂且称其为“中间性”的视觉样态。事实上，这种表征正是本土现实主义的延续，它越来越多地展露于当代性的艺术之中，渐渐地从传统绘画、雕塑中脱离出来。不难发现，艺术家对现成材料的攫取促使新型绘画装置等多媒材艺术比传统架上艺术更易具备现实主义的特点。这些艺术类型超越传统写实的再现样式和镜像描摹，在一定程度上也试图摆脱一度在全球范围流行的观念艺术的过度诡辩及轻视个体经验的创作套路，于再现与表现，客观写实与内在意象，日常经验与艺术想象的居间地带，构建起圆融、多维、更能展现当代人主体价值的全新体系。

孟思特的作品以绘画为主体，近年便拓展至绘画装置与综合材料。跨媒介的探索并未割裂其一贯的艺术观点与创作方法，进一步丰盈着现实主义的表达。此次全新个展以“时间的回廊”为主题，从艺术家的个体记忆串联至时代的视觉经验与精神共鸣。孟思特严谨精妙的造型能力，不拘泥于描绘客观世界，以具象为媒穿透常态秩序，在可视与不可视的时间意识、情绪心境之间塑造奇幻的空间张力，传递和连续了中国现实主义的“以物载心、以形传情”的传统，为当代艺术的“新现实主义”理论研究提供了极具价值的语言样式和观念模型。

二、个体与记忆，图像的来源

现实主义始终保有活力，在于创作者表述经验的在场。基于艺术史价值的现实主义创作，是扎根真切、可触、可感的现场与生命流。而个人经验作为表现“时代性”的不可替代的载体，在不同时期的艺术变革中主要彰显为语言方法的差异化，其本质都是对经验维度的多重延拓。毋庸置疑的，具备现实主义特征的中国当代艺术经历了自身的嬗变。从早年被西方话语体系认知的“现实主义”发展至今已呈现出更为多元的面貌。很长一段时间内，艺术与“事件”“主题”的距离很近，但这种状况在1978年的改革开放以后发生了重要转变。艺术家通过考查现实，表达对现实的感受与关注，艺术创作展现出充分的自由，也显现高度的个人化，从宏大叙事的方法定式中解放出来，重新编码片段化的生活场景，诠释微观和末梢神经的感觉。

孟思特的艺术完整地接续了这一推演。与上一辈不同，他所表达的现实背后，隐喻了一种新的态度。他从急速变化的真实中出逃，寻找着一种新的想象世界的再现，这种想象来源于原始的文化符号与超现代科技元素混生的新的日常，这种经验所形成的视觉图景无疑是全球化中的高科技与传统文化里的“低科技”

间的中间性混合体。此外，千禧年以来，“都市化的本土性”作为中国改革开放的显著文化特征，使得人与人之间的情感交流以及个人欲望变为喜剧、电子游戏或是互联网上的象征性图像，因此，新的“中间性现实”还包含了“虚拟现实”“超现实”“奇幻现实”等。显然，在小城市成长，在大都市走向职业生涯发展的孟思特将这些不同文化语境所派生出的城镇都市视觉经验转化为艺术的想象，而这些成果反之也映射了社会现实的复杂性。

无论绘画还是装置，孟思特的创作从不依赖于“N”手后的图像拼接、虚拟符号的挪用或先验观念的预设，个人生长痕迹与时代视觉遗存是其唯一的创作材料。他的许多画面中所表现出来的陌生物象与空间关系的交叠都来自于九十年代末至千禧年代初的生活场域的变形与重组，源于艺术家的个人记忆库存。具象写实手法也并非技法展演的工具，是回拨记忆、创建时间回廊的媒介。正如作品《抓住幸福比忍耐痛苦更需要勇气》中所传递的，个体的生存常态在静默的忍耐与持续的平淡、隐忍、往复中构成了时间的底色；而主动的凝望、辨认的判断，又充满着温柔与光亮，在生活的流逝中不断地确认正向的精神趋向，展露出当代现实主义中的珍贵人文底色。

三、超重组，共融性的时间回廊

如果说“居间性”“中间性”是新现实主义的特点，那么如何将毫无关联的零散视觉材料混编，则需要发挥艺术家极其个人化的创作方法机制。孟思特主动拆解物理世界的固态时空壁垒与场景区隔，将现实中无法相遇与共存的异质元素、图像谱系、时间切片等，于作品中实现共生和有机的重组——这种方法几乎贯穿孟思特的全部创作，主导着绘画的构图叙事，支配着装置的空间排布与场域营造。当然，他的绘画也显现出超现实的特质，却与现代主义的超现实艺术存在着根本的不同。经典艺术中超现实主义以潜意识、梦境、非理性的幻想作为主要内容，切断图像与日常经验的现实纽带。孟思特的艺术从现实出发；中途遇到想象与重构；最终回归心理的真实（现实）。在他创作的这三个主要阶段中，视觉材料的选择强调经验的合法性；想象编码是整合多重记忆、描述复杂时间感知的主要方法；而大量的客体形象、情绪面孔、具象写实所构建的共融性时空则所指现实的混杂与重叠。

《抓住幸福比忍耐痛苦更需要勇气》将“共融性”推向高潮。洞窟岩壁、钟乳肌理来自于夸张奇异的地质形态。画面容纳多重图像：希腊神话中的阿特拉斯巨像、悬浮流转的星际天体、现代工业文明的飞行器、分属不同时代的人物形貌等，在同一洞穴中叠合并存。古典艺术的符码、星空图像、近现代历史中的人文形象，被无厘头地排列在画面中，却又在自治秩序里形成层次丰富、逻辑交融的图画。《时间回廊》双联画进一步提炼了这种语言系统。左幅以天使雕塑、新月星云构筑静谧的悠远场景，右幅以现代建筑拱廊、壁灯、电梯空间搭建当下日常景观，白鹿跨越地面。两种绝然不同的时空，被贯通画面的星河介质缝合一体。而绘画下缘的流沙、贝壳、珍奇器皿等如同封存时间记忆的标本，将神话意象、古典造像、现代建筑、自然生态凝固在共同的时间回廊里。

再者，情绪作为现实的棱面，被孟思特反复塑造、表现，在画面中共融互观、对话，也是其打造个人“时间回廊”的重要手段。这些各不相同的情绪形象，体现了孟思特对于中国本土社会文化“断层性”特征的敏锐捕捉。实现经济腾飞后，新文化的进入加剧了社会变化，青年一代越来越远离历史与传统，“回溯本土（传统）”变得十分艰难。被无数次个体化、碎片化、零散化后的文化切片重组集约后的总体文化样态（断裂、异化后的文化），历史性地又成为了年轻一代创作的观念来源与语料素材。因此，对绝对理性（真理、传统）追溯的强烈诉求，与达成期盼所需方法缺失之间的矛盾和心理失衡，被不断编织进人类情绪的箩筐。孟思特知觉了它，通过艺术创作将那些典型的情绪从箩筐中拾出，进而规划至画面，让他（她）们彼此关照与鼓励，反哺现实以温暖的力量，完成了艺术对线性时空的超越。

综上，孟思特积极地增补着现实主义艺术的图谱。他洞察“中间性”的社会现实新特质，以“共融”的创作方法找寻、收纳、改编、超重组个体记忆，勾勒出一个既属于自己又共时于他者的时间回廊（剧场），回应与镜照了真实的当下。

The “In-Between” and “Confluence” of New Realism: Meng Site’s Corridor of Time

Liu Chunfeng

I. From Classical to Contemporary: The “In-Between” of New Realism

The development of realism in China is rooted in the evolution of classical painting, with its emphasis on observing the world, expressing inner feelings, and seeking truth through close examination of things. Traditional Chinese painting does not rely on mechanical imitation. Instead, it seeks a balance between observing the external world and expressing the artist’s inner thoughts and emotions. In this way, a work retains the physical presence of the natural world while also conveying the passage of time, the conditions of human life, and the pursuit of meaning. Over time, this approach has developed into a creative tradition that unites the reality of things with the inner life of the artist. It also provides a deeper cultural foundation for the evolution and renewal of modern and contemporary realism in China.

Realism has remained vital throughout China’s transition to modernity. Its development is not simply a matter of historical change, but also involves adapting ideas and continually expanding the boundaries of representation. From the expression of emotion through objects in classical painting, to modern art’s renewed attention to everyday life, and then to contemporary art’s exploration of individual psychology, identity, social sentiment, and inner experience, realism has consistently moved beyond surface appearances. It has gradually shifted from the truth of visible things toward a deeper understanding of psychological and spiritual truth.

In the contemporary art world shaped by globalization, artistic trends have risen and fallen rapidly, and abstraction has gained popularity at certain moments. These changes are closely related to market forces and structural shifts within the art world. Meanwhile, in China, cultural and social questions surrounding historical reality, as well as individual experiences of everyday life, remain far from fully explored. Realism is by no means outdated. Rather, it remains an open system whose boundaries can continue to expand.

We are beginning to recognize a visual landscape that is neither entirely rooted in local traditions nor fully absorbed into global culture. This landscape is subtle, ambiguous, and often understated. Many artists, including Meng Site, are exploring it. I refer to this visual approach as the “in-between.” In fact, it continues the tradition of local realism and has become increasingly visible in contemporary art, gradually moving beyond traditional painting and sculpture.

The use of found objects and everyday materials has also enabled new forms of painting installation and mixed-media art to express reality in ways that differ from conventional easel painting. These practices move beyond traditional realistic representation and, to some extent, resist the excessive conceptual argument and neglect of individual experience that have characterized certain strands of conceptual art. Operating between representation and expression, objective observation and inner imagery, everyday experience and artistic imagination, they establish a more integrated and multidimensional approach that places greater emphasis on the value of the individual in contemporary life.

Meng Site’s practice is primarily based on painting, but in recent years it has expanded into painting installations and mixed media. This exploration of different media has not interrupted the continuity of his artistic ideas or methods. Instead, it has enriched his expression of realism.

His new solo exhibition, Corridor of Time, connects personal memory with the visual experiences and shared emotions of an era. Meng Site’s precise and sophisticated handling of form goes beyond the depiction of the objective world. Using figurative imagery as a starting point, he moves beyond familiar orders and creates a sense of spatial tension between visible and invisible dimensions of time, emotion, and state of mind. His work carries forward the Chinese realist tradition of expressing inner feelings through material forms and visible images. It also offers valuable artistic approaches and conceptual models for the study of “New Realism” in contemporary art.

II. The Individual and Memory: The Sources of Images

Realism remains vital because it allows artists to express lived experience. Historically significant realist art is grounded in tangible situations and the realities of life. Personal experience, as an irreplaceable means of expressing the spirit of an era, takes different forms as artistic language evolves. At its core, however, this process continually expands the dimensions of experience.

Chinese contemporary art with realist characteristics has undergone significant changes. Once understood largely through Western definitions of realism, it has developed into a much more diverse field. For a long time, art remained closely tied to events and prescribed themes. This began to change significantly after China’s reform and opening-up in 1978. Artists increasingly examined reality through their own observations, feelings, and concerns. Artistic practice gained greater freedom and became more personal. Freed from established forms of grand narrative, artists began to reassemble fragments of everyday life and explore subtle, often overlooked aspects of human perception.

Meng Site’s practice continues this development. Yet, compared with earlier generations, his work expresses a different attitude toward reality. He steps away from the rapidly changing world in search of new ways to imagine and represent it. This imagined world emerges from the coexistence of ancient cultural symbols and elements of advanced technology in contemporary life. The resulting visual language forms an in-between space where global high technology meets the “low technology” of traditional culture.

Since the turn of the millennium, the distinctly local character of urbanization has become an important feature of Chinese culture shaped by reform and opening-up. Emotional relationships and personal desires are increasingly expressed through symbolic images drawn from comedy, video games, and the internet. As a result, this new “in-between reality” also encompasses virtual reality, surrealism, and fantasy.

Having grown up in a small city and developed his professional career in a major metropolis, Meng Site transforms visual experiences from different urban and cultural environments into artistic imagination. His work, in turn, reflects the complexity of contemporary social reality.

Whether working in painting or installation, Meng Site does not rely on layers of image collage, the appropriation of virtual symbols, or predetermined concepts. His personal memories and the visual traces of his time serve as his primary creative materials. The unfamiliar objects and overlapping spatial relationships found in many of his works emerge from the transformation and reconstruction of everyday environments from the late 1990s to the early 2000s. They come from the artist's own reservoir of memories.

Figurative realism is not simply a demonstration of technical skill. It is a means of revisiting memory and constructing a Corridor of Time.

As suggested by his work *It Takes More Courage to Embrace Happiness Than to Endure Pain*, everyday existence is shaped by silent endurance, prolonged monotony, restraint, and repetition. Yet the conscious act of looking closely and making distinctions also carries tenderness and light. Amid the passing of everyday life, the work continually reaffirms a positive spiritual orientation, revealing a deeply human quality within contemporary realism.

III. Recombination and Confluence: The Corridor of Time

If the “in-between” is a defining feature of New Realism, then bringing together seemingly unrelated visual materials requires a highly personal creative method. Meng Site actively dismantles the fixed boundaries of physical space and time, as well as the divisions between different settings. In his works, disparate elements, visual references, and fragments of different historical periods—things that could never coexist in reality—are brought together and organically recombined.

This method runs through almost his entire practice, shaping the narrative composition of his paintings and the spatial arrangement and atmosphere of his installations.

His paintings also possess surreal qualities, but they differ fundamentally from Surrealism in modern art. Classical Surrealism draws primarily on the subconscious, dreams, and irrational fantasy, often severing the connection between images and everyday experience. Meng Site, by contrast, begins with reality, moves through imagination and reconstruction, and ultimately returns to psychological truth—a deeper form of reality.

These three stages define his creative process. The selection of visual materials is grounded in lived experience. Imaginative reconstruction becomes the primary means of bringing together multiple memories and expressing complex perceptions of time. Meanwhile, the combination of objects, expressive faces, and figurative realism creates a shared space in which different realities overlap and coexist.

It Takes More Courage to Embrace Happiness Than to Endure Pain brings this idea of confluence to its fullest expression. The cave walls and stalactite-like textures derive from exaggerated and unusual geological forms. Within this setting, multiple images coexist: Atlas from Greek mythology, celestial bodies floating through space, aircraft from modern industrial civilization, and human figures from different historical periods.

Classical artistic symbols, images of the cosmos, and human figures from modern history appear together in seemingly absurd arrangements. Yet within the painting's own visual order, they form a richly layered and interconnected whole.

The diptych *Corridor of Time* further refines this visual language. The left panel creates a quiet, distant atmosphere through angelic sculptures and a crescent-shaped nebula. The right panel presents a contemporary everyday setting through architectural arcades, wall lamps, and an elevator space. A white deer moves across the ground between them.

Two entirely different spaces and periods are joined by a band of stars stretching across the composition. Along the lower edge of the painting, shifting sand, shells, and unusual vessels resemble specimens preserving fragments of time. Mythological imagery, classical sculpture, modern architecture, and natural forms are thus brought together within a shared Corridor of Time.

Emotion is another facet of reality that Meng Site repeatedly explores. Different emotional figures appear together in his paintings, observing and responding to one another. This is another important means through which he constructs his personal Corridor of Time.

These varied expressions of emotion reflect his sensitivity to the cultural and social fractures of contemporary Chinese society. Following rapid economic growth, the introduction of new cultural influences has accelerated social change. Younger generations have increasingly distanced themselves from history and tradition, making a return to local cultural roots more difficult.

As cultural fragments become increasingly individualized, fragmented, and dispersed, they are reassembled into a broader cultural landscape marked by rupture and alienation. In a historical paradox, this fragmented culture has itself become an important source of ideas and visual material for younger artists.

The strong desire to recover absolute reason, truth, and tradition thus conflicts with the lack of clear methods for achieving that recovery. This tension and psychological imbalance become woven into the complex fabric of human emotion.

Meng Site recognizes this condition. Through his art, he draws these characteristic emotional expressions out of that fabric and places them within his compositions, where they encounter, support, and encourage one another. In doing so, his work offers warmth and strength to contemporary life and moves beyond the limits of linear time.

In conclusion, Meng Site actively expands the landscape of realism. By observing the new social realities of the “in-between,” he employs a method of confluence to discover, collect, transform, and recombine personal memories. Through this process, he constructs Corridors of Time that belong both to himself and to others who share the same historical moment. These spaces function like stages on which personal experience and collective reality meet, reflecting and responding to the world we inhabit today.