

The Love Symphony

I have known Cai Zhuomin for more than half a year. The first time I met her, though I found her as a female artist lacking some degree of fluency in Putonghua, I was overwhelmed by her passion for her artistic creation and how she viewed her artwork as her life. I was strongly moved by the purity and beauty of her work.

Though Cai Zhuomin lives in the United States, teaching in the academia there, she has a deep understanding of the principles of Chinese classical painting tradition. As a visiting scholar arriving in Beijing, and who furthered her artistic discipline at the Academy of Art and Designs Tsinghua University, she learned from master teachers there. This academic environment extended her artistic front and enabled her, through the ways of classical landscape paintings, to draw nutrients through literati brushstrokes. She has composed paintings with profound suggestiveness and atmospheric strengths. As I read her work, I seem to listen to a symphony. The exposition is steady and graceful, the recapitulation is reaching a climax while the coda returns to a soothing tempo. Her viewers are drawn into her work as if overpowered by wine. Her work also appears like modern poetry, with her content that unfolds different moods. Her visual narratives are touching. The peonies she paints are flowers that bloom one after another, with the white in purity, red in great passion, and pink in soft charm. She generously shares her love for peonies and manipulates the pictorial shifts to depict her forms. Her petals delineate landscapes of mountains and rivers, with rhythmic intensity as she demonstrates her empowering forces but also the gentility of her female voice. She shows the visual effects of spatial grandeur.

Contemporary female painters show great concerns of humanistic issues and integrate their emotions with the objective world of matters. They produce works that match with the contemporary social context. Cai Zhuomin has zeroed into her peonies, a topic most centered on traditional artistic presentations. Yet she has drawn her line to distinguish from them through her new artistic ideal. Amidst the art market of banal and commercialized behaviors, she has persevered and journeyed into her world of peonies. As she strolls along the peony bushes, she may portray in great details, or examine in pathos, but she is always in search of her creation in the "Peonyland."

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