A journey of Chinese ink through tradition, time and the philosophical spirit.

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As a keen follower of contemporary art developments, the journey of Chinese ink into modern guises has, for years, found me an avid admirer of contemporary ink works. It then seems only natural that I was drawn to the dynamic and vastly innovative works of Qin Feng. Having closely followed his art journey, I found my interests drawn to his reinterpretation of the traditional, and his poetic methods of blending together the creative facets of East and West. On a trip to China, I made the artist’s acquaintance through curator and friend Hoang Tu, where I visited his studio on the outskirts of Beijing. Our conversations left me deeply impressed by the character and philosophy of the artist, and mirrored the reflections of his art. A memorable experience, it was then that Qin Feng and I began our journey of bringing his works to Ode to Art.

I am delighted to present to you the newest works by the iconoclastic and innovative, Qin Feng, and his newest works of ink, depth and philosophy titled ‘Longing Landscapes’.

‘Longing Landscapes’ is a journey through tradition, time and philosophical spirit. Denoted by his characteristic vast expanses that are stained with sweeping strokes of ink, paint, tea and coffee, Qin Feng both pays tribute to his influences, as well as revolutionizes them by presenting the established form of Chinese ink in a postmodern, abstract avatar. Powerful, bold and dramatic, the dark strokes convey unrestrained energy and conflict with their surroundings to imply emotion, and the balance of energies rooted in Chinese culture. The subtleties behind the foreground, however, also carry much meaning and room for interpretation. His art often contains lightly patterned mountains in the background- representations that were always considered marks of the most skilled in ancient Chinese ink tradition; indeed, the entire concept of depicting a landscape from imagination is found to be a hallmark of Chinese ink art. Countering this, however, with his abstract symbolism, Qin Feng brings about further contrast and innovation by using tea and coffee in his works; Showcasing both substances in their symbolism of energy and awakening, he subtly impresses on the viewer the similarity of both that is only differentiated by their significance to two different cultures. The subtleties and philosophies behind his melding of East and West continue to strike me in his art.

The visual vigor and mental intrigue of his art is not only engaging, but almost cathartic in experience. Join us as we traverse through his Longing Landscapes and discover imagery, philosophy and tribute to the Chinese canons, finding both poignancy and rejuvenation in his transformed strokes of the brush.

by Jazz Chong
Director, Ode to Art
Qin Feng's art is related to ink, which reflects on many of his works painted by means of ink. Those paintings in which greasepaint and propene were used are also an embodiment of the spirit of ink painting; there are many ink-related stories behind some devices which is seemingly unrelated to ink paintings. Although ink painting now can not be labeled as a fashionable art in the art circle, Qin Feng can name himself a real ink painting artist irrespective of others' opinions. Certainly, he is neither a pre-modern traditional ink painter nor a modern experimental one but a new postmodern ink painting artist.

In despite of some abstract elements, the ink painting is not a kind of abstract painting for we can still recognize such themes as figure painting, landscape painting and painting of flowers and birds and so on. Meanwhile, as for traditional ink painting painters, painting, like poetry and calligraphy, is an important way of expressing ambitions and achieving self-cultivation, so there is a great difference in spirit in their works. The experimental ink painting, however, differs in many aspects from the traditional one, especially the former has reached a great height in terms of subjects and words. Besides, experimental ink painting is rich in abstract works, images and devices, but it attaches much importance to outward visual effect rather than inner spirit seemingly due to the influence of modernism and formalism. On the surface, Qin Feng's ink painting looks more like experimental painting, even as if it were especially in such aspects as large size, new medium and abstract displays. But as far as spiritual aspect is concerned, Qin Feng's ink painting is totally different from the experimental one, for the latter is craving for the outward appearance advocated by the western modernism whereas Qin Feng makes his art deeply rooted in the tradition of Chinese culture. If we say that experimental ink painting is the outcome of full westernization, we can also say that Qin Feng is the return to tradition. His painting is more of western-style when compared to traditional painting, but more of China-style when compared to experimental painting. In his paintings, China, West, tradition and modern go hand in hand in pairs compatibly for which Qin Feng calls himself a postmodern ink painting artist.

Qin Feng has drawn some sizable paintings with ink, propene and greasepaint. Those paintings are similar to the modern abstract expressionism, but, in fact, paintings by Qin Feng are quite different from the western abstract art masters because the latter do not paint with vigor or life force, which results in their paintings being devoid of splendor or being short of it. Although the action painting by Jackson is related to body movement, the movement has nothing to do with physical strength. Instead, his drop color painting is weak and is of no force for which it can not be regarded as top painting from the standpoint of Chinese aesthetics that advocates Li-TouZhiBe that means painters should paint with full vigor and life force. Even works by Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell and Harttung who were said to be inspired by Chinese calligraphy have just the form rather than the true nature of calligraphy under careful analysis for they also lack in vigor. The works of Qin Feng are saturated with masculinity that could not be matched by any other western abstract art masters. Surely, in the view of Western philosophy, vigor is a pre-modernism concept; vigor art is pre-modernism art; art through vigor is pre-modernism aesthetics. The westerns who are bathed in modernism could hardly accept the pre-modernism of vigor. The value of Qin Feng’s art is that it breaks restriction of Western modernism and boldly connects art with Chinese culture. Someone may think that Qin Feng who lives in multicultural America knows how to distinct his cultural identity through Chinese tradition. But I do not think this is his strategy. Because people who made contact with him would know vigorousness is purely himself. Qin Feng not only successfully embodies his masculinity in his works, but is also good at cultivating his noble spirit in life. Qin Feng’s art is picture of his real life. His pursuit for pre-modernism makes his works more characteristic of postmodernism.

The power of Qin Feng art comes from the thorough communication with rich ancient civilization and from the unrest burst of primitive impulse. If ancient civilization
could blur us in the brightness of the sun, primitive impulse would drench us in the spirits. QinFeng splits his works into Culture and Lust, which are conflict and concession between civilization and lust both existed in mankind. That is, civilization lost impetus without lust, and lust would corrupt if not be ushered by civilization. QinFeng is good at assimilating power of ancient civilization and primitive impulse, thus rendering his works hallucinating.

How do we construe the might of QinFeng’s arts? When we fathom his arts through the illusion of sun and spirits, we would naturally recall Friedrich Nietzsche’s profound understanding of ancient Greek art. It is well known that ancient Greek art reflect its civilized society in the mind of initiation thinkers. Yet they can not explain that tragedy also exists in ancient Greek, in that a civilized society that born refined arts should not have tragedy. Greek art, in which ancient Greek artists created wonderful arts not as a reflection of eudemonia, but as anesthesia of torment. Visual art and tragedy share the same purpose, in which the pain of life is to be released; but via different ways that visual art is through illusion, and tragedy is through intoxication. Hence we fathom QingFeng’s works in two ways, an initiation-thinker way, and a Nietzsche way. In an initiative thinker’s view, the power of QinFeng’s works is the realization of the might of China’s culture and society; in the Friedrich Nietzsche’s way, the power of QinFeng’s works is the call for the might needed by China’s culture and society; both of which are closely connected to China’s culture and society.

Postmodern Ink of Qin Feng
by PengFeng
One important question that has emerged with respect to Chinese contemporary artists who now have access to art theories and practices from across the world is the question of Chineseness, or how their work relates to the past traditions and present developments of Chinese art and culture. If images of fishes, birds, and rocks found in the brush and ink paintings of Qin Feng’s seventeenth century Chinese mentor, Bada Shanren (1626-1705) and other more traditional Chinese painters, are not to be found in the paintings of Qin Feng, and the art does not belong to Chinese Socialist Realism, what then is the key to understanding its link to Chinese traditions in art? Or, how then does a contemporary artist propose to maintain continuity with the artistic traditions represented in the works of Chinese predecessors?

A possible answer for contemporary Chinese artist Qin Feng comes in his discovering the amazing liberties taken by Bada Shanren in his experiments with brush and ink paintings. Bada Shanren’s paintings as illustrated in in Yanjiu’s book, Bada Shanren, and elsewhere stretch the forms of both calligraphy and nature in remarkably innovative directions often toward abstraction. In Qin Feng’s approach to paintings, one finds a kindred spirit to that of his seventeenth century mentor. Qin Feng’s quixotic brush strokes, whether discharged in ink or acrylic, echo a similar spirit of curiosity and adventure, as they inhabit the paper or canvas surface with dynamic visual forms. Whether in single frame images as in the “Desire Series” 2008, or as installations consisting of erect, accordion-like screens extending in actual space, as in “Civilization Landscape” 2006, or in the “Desire Landscapes” of 2011 which take the form of hanging scrolls. In all of these variations, the images convey both symbolic intent and patterns of striking visual energy. If their symbolic meaning invites a search for universal ideas such as harmony that might soften or inform the conflicts and the contradictions of human life, this symbolic intent leaves open possibilities not fully articulated for the viewer to explore and interpret.

Apart from their philosophical intimations, the images in Qin Feng’s paintings answer to nothing outside the paintings themselves by way of representation, although they on occasion might playfully tease the viewer’s imagination in this direction. Hence, they bear no relation to the Socialist Realist works of mid twentieth century Chinese art that depend on realism. Yet, as the artist states in his own words, “My brush strokes reflect a deep experience of life,” as they are based on lived experience and a deep understanding of human nature. Perhaps the meaning of Qin Feng’s statement here lies in part in his understanding of the link between his own art and traditional Chinese calligraphic/brush and ink paintings also used to express lived experience and human nature.

Throughout his career, Qin Feng’s own variations on Chinese ink painting have remained at the center of his work. Expanding their scale to include large format works, presenting the images in varying shapes and colors other than black ink, and using modern acrylic paints, he pursues relentlessly the endless possibilities of the brush and ink medium. Although the forms continue to undergo significant changes, the references to this tradition continue in the later series of “West Wind-East Water” beginning in 207-2008. Traces of shadowy Chinese landscapes appear in the pictorial spaces of these later works, alongside the familiar black abstract forms. Like the landscapes familiar in traditional Chinese paintings, these images are a product of the artist’s imagination. They are not representations of the external world. The most recent works in the series, “Angry Angels” begun in 2011 offer yet another variation on ink paintings by choosing simplified, vertically oriented forms moving in the direction of a more painterly flatness in their brush work. As a leading contributor of new forms of brush and ink paintings, Qin Feng has been represent-
ed in exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Boston Museum of Fine Art.

**WESTERN INFLUENCES**
The Chinese roots of Qin Feng’s works represent only one aspect of his artistic groundings. Almost from the beginning at Shandong, he had access to the practices of western artists. Although avant-garde in spirit, his work mainly eschews the attractions of early modernist Futurism and Cubism, Dada, Surrealism, and Pop Art. Later on, while living in Germany between mid and late 1990s, Qin Feng felt the influences of the early work and philosophical influences of German Abstract Expressionism. This exposure to the German Abstract Expressionism may have indirectly influenced the direction of some of his work especially during the 1990s. The link to German Abstract Expressionism in part serves as grounding for the expansion of Qin Feng’s art to embrace aspects of the culture of the West while remaining steadfast in the search for ways to connect the Chinese cultural roots of his life and art to the changing contemporary world.

While many western viewers tend to link Qin Feng’s art with the American Abstract Expressionists of the 1950s and 1960s (Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, and perhaps Willem de Kooning, whom he is said to have admired), the artist himself disavows this connection, citing instead his attention to the German Abstract Expressionists. Why then do western interpreters of Qin Feng’s art tend to associate his painting with American Abstract Expressionism? Perhaps it is the influence of Chinese calligraphy and brush and ink paintings in both Qin Feng’s and the American artists’ paintings. Or perhaps it is the shared philosophical roots of Chen Buddhism and Daoism, whose insights supply the philosophical underpinnings of Qin Feng’s work, that are also to some degree a part of the mind set of Abstract Expressionists such as Robert Motherwell and Franz Kline during the Post-World War II era of the 1950s. Although the Americans were not always comfortable acknowledging their debt to the Chinese aesthetic and philosophical traditions, there seems little doubt that such a debt exists as an important factor in the work of the Abstract Expressionists. Despite the artist’s disavowal of influences from the American Abstract Expressionists on his art, it is likely that for western interpreters of his works, this association seems likely to persist.

In Abstract Expressionism, Qin Feng saw “a pure visual language” suitable for portraying human concerns in a simplified medium fitting to the societal conditions of Post World War II in the West. And for a moment at least, Abstract Expressionism took the minds of the artists away from the immediate societal crises that ensued during and following World War II, allowing the artists to concentrate on refocusing the directions of contemporary art. With respect to the aesthetics of painting, Abstract Expressionism, as Qin Feng saw it, offered a means of dissolving the opposite poses of sensibility and abstract rationality. It thus freed painting from any obligation to representation as the dominant element in a pictorial language. Instead, it allowed the artists the freedom to capture the forces of sensation (color and shape) in ways that go beyond the possibilities of western linear perspective and geometric forms. In the words of art theorist Harold Rosenberg, the artist’s canvas is an arena in which to act rather than a space to reproduce, simply design or express. This epithet seems to apply equally to German and American Abstract Expressionists.

**CULTURAL IDENTITY**
Qin Feng’s approach to bridging the cultures of art east and West raises important questions concerning the cultural identity of both the artist and the art in the changing world of art today. His personal migrations between China, Europe, and the United States in the ever-changing artistic climate of today is an attempt to address the bridging of cultures on a personal level. With such efforts to merge the artistic cultures of East and West, the respective roles of national and local identities, and perhaps even the personal stylistic identity of the individual artist, are inevitably challenged. Neither hegemonic colonialism nor hegemonic globalization can provide the answer. Nor is the individual artist entirely free to pursue an individualistic style without taking account of the prevailing artistic currents of both East and West. The challenge is especially poignant for a Chinese artist such as Qin Feng, who desires to retain Chineseness in some meaningful form without submitting to the constraints of national or local cultures. Perhaps it is also time to ask the question, is cultural identity any longer a major concern with respect to the creation of art? Given the direction that Qin Feng is moving, it seems that national and local identities may not be as important as they once were thought to be.

Unlike some earlier Chinese artists of the twentieth century, Qin Feng does not see the solution to art’s role in human experience in the politics of aesthetics where art and politics join forces. Rather, he posits a link between art and philosophy where his art’s focus is on expressing the deeper meanings of human existence, instead of linking art to more immediate political objectives. His reticence to link art and politics extends as well to the politics of globalization. His art can be considered global art in the sense that global art refers to art that is a part of, or participates in worldwide cultural exchange or commerce. On the other hand, he would resist any...
hegemonic aims of globalization that allows for dominant cultures to impose their art or culture on other cultures in a different state of development. Rather, Qin Feng welcomes the contributions of diversity as a means of building new artistic models as well as sustaining the treasures of past cultural achievements. His focus remains on the meaningful role of art as a purveyor of the deeper meanings of human existence.

Currently at age 50, Qin Feng enjoys notable international recognition supported by an impressive record of some 40 solo gallery and museum exhibitions since 1985 in various sites in China, Germany, and the United States. In addition his work has been represented in some 50 group exhibitions, for example, at The Hong Kong Art Centre (2011); The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2010); Singapore National Museum of Art (2009); the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (2008); the Metropolitan Museum of New York (2006, 2007) to mention a few. The momentum that has driven his rise to prominence as a leading contemporary Chinese artist shows no sign of slowing as a review of his plans for upcoming exhibitions in China, the United States and Europe will show.

*by Curtis L. Carter
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对于那些已经具有一定艺术理论并且在世界范围内进行实践的中国当代艺术家来说，其身上的中国性作为一个很重要的问题日益彰显，或者说他们的作品是如何与中国文化艺术的传统以及当代的发展联系起来的。如果说在17世纪八大山人以及更早的中国画家的书法中所发现的鱼石鸟兽，却在深受八大山人影响的秦风的画里不见踪影，且其作品也不属于“中国社会主义现实主义”，那么，什么才是了解其作品与中国传统艺术之间联系的关键呢？或者说，当代艺术家是如何去传承那些中国艺术前辈作品中所表现的艺术传统的呢？

中国当代艺术家秦风在其水墨画实验中所发现的与八大山人所共有的惊人的自由度可算作一种解答。如研究的著作《八大山人》所阐释的，八大山人的作品沿着创新的思路将书法及对自然的表达方式延伸至抽象的范围内。在秦风的作品中，可以很明显的看到他与他的17世纪导师精神上的相似和契合。秦风堂吉诃德式的笔触，无论是用水墨还是丙烯，以在纸和画布上动态的视觉形式，都应和了相似的好奇心和冒险精神。无论是在2008年“欲望”系列中的单张画面，还是在2006年“文明风景”上展出的风琴般延展的装置作品，或者是在2011年的“欲望风景”立轴形式的作品，图像都传达了象征性的意图以及强烈的视觉效果。如果说它们的象征意义是对人类普遍价值的一种探索，比如和谐，它既能传达出人类社会的冲突和矛盾；那么这个象征性意味将留给观众更大的空间和可能来进行探索和解读。

除了哲学暗示之外，秦风的作品中的象征没有试图解读任何外在于画面本身所表达的意义，尽管它们有时有意无意地激起观众在此方面的想象力。因此，他的作品几乎与20世纪中后期建立在现实主义基础上的中国社会主义现实主义艺术没有有什么联系。然而，如秦风自己所言，“我的笔触是用来反映对生活的新奇体验。”这些作品都是来至生活经历和对人性深刻理解的基础上。传统中国书法绘画可用来表达人性和生活经验，而秦风的作品也是如此。在他在艺术创作生涯中，对中国水墨画进行多种形式的尝试仍然是秦风的工作重心。加大作品的幅面，尝试除水墨以外的其他颜色作画，甚至使用现代的丙烯颜料，他不断探索笔墨语言的无限可能性。虽然创作形式不断地在变化，秦风在2007-2008年的作品系列“西风东水”中还是延续了一定的传统。沿袭着人们熟知的黑色的抽象形式，在此系列中又出现了朦胧的中国山水画的痕迹。与中国传统绘画中的山水一样，这些意象是艺术家想象力的产物，而不是对外在世界的直接描绘。2011年，该系列的最新作品“愤怒的天使”又为大家提供了一种新的形式：其运用简化，垂直方向的形式，用笔更为开放和扁平。作为笔墨画形式的开拓者，秦风的作品已经在纽约大都会博物馆，波士顿美术博物馆展出。

西方的影响

秦风作品中的中国元素只是其艺术根源的一个方面。从最早在山东的时候，他就开始接受来自西方的艺术家作品的影响。尽管思想先锋，但他的作品却尽量避开了早期现代主义立体主义，达达主义，超现实主义以及波普艺术的影响。90年代中期在德国生活的秦风受到了德国抽象表现主义影响，且间接改变了其作品的发展方向，尤其是他在90年代的作品。德国抽象表现主义的影响在一定程度上代表了秦风对西方文化的接受。与此同时，秦风也正在坚定地探索如何把其生活和艺术作品中的中国文化根基与不断变化的世界相融合。

尽管很多西方评论家倾向于把秦风的作品与美国50和60年代的抽象表现主义相联系（例如他所尊敬的弗朗茨·克莱恩、罗伯特·马瑟韦尔、马克·罗斯科，以及威廉·德库宁），然而秦风本人却援引其对德国抽象表现主义者的关注来否认此种联系。之所以西方评论家会把秦风和美国抽象表现主义相联系，恐怕是由于在秦风和美国艺术家作品中所突显的中国书法和笔墨画的影响，亦或是两者所共有的人乘佛教和道教的哲学本源，为秦风作品提供了哲学基础。在一定意义上，由于在秦风和美国艺术家作品中所突显的中国书法和笔墨画的影响，亦或是两者所共有的人乘佛教和道教的哲学本源，为秦风作品提供了哲学基础，同时在一定意义上，由于在秦风和美国艺术家作品中所突显的中国书法和笔墨画的影响，亦或是两者所共有的人乘佛教和道教的哲学本源，为秦风作品提供了哲学基础。
媒介当中来表现战后西方社会的人文精神。在一定的时期内，抽象表现主义帮助艺术家暂时脱离对战时和战后社会危机的关注，并把焦点放在重铸当代艺术的方向上来。如同秦风所发现的，抽象表现主义借助绘画美学提供了种种方法以消解感性和抽象理性之间的对立。因此，在图像语言中，绘画从单一再现事物的功能中解放出来，从而给艺术家们留下更大的自由空间来捕捉人类情感的力量（通过颜色和形状），完成了对西方单一透视和几何形式的超越。用艺术理论家哈罗德·罗森博格的话来说，艺术家的画布是用作演员的舞台，而不是对事物进行简单复制的场所。无论对于德国还是美国的抽象表现主义，此观点同样适用。

文化认同

秦风对于连结东西方文化艺术的探索引起了一些列关于在当今不断变化的艺术领域里艺术家和艺术本身的文化认同问题。当今在不断变化的艺术氛围中，秦风在中国，欧洲和美国之间的游走不失为其在个人领域对文化连结的一种尝试。对于东西方艺术融合的种种努力，无论是在国家还是在地方层面的认同，甚至艺术家个人的风格认同都无法避免地受到挑战。霸权殖民主义和霸权全球化都无法对此进行解答。艺术家们也无法摆脱东西方文化中主导艺术的影响来进行个人艺术风格的塑造。此种挑战对于类似秦风的中国艺术家们尤为重要，他们渴望在保留中国性的同时能够逃避国家和地方文化的种种限制。有了秦风发展道路的借鉴，似乎国家和地方层面的身份认同已经不再像以前所认为的那样重要。也许现在是时候发出这样的疑问，对于艺术创作来说，文化身份认同是否还是一个中重要的关注点呢？

不同于20世纪早期的艺术家，秦风没有在艺术和政治交汇的政治美学中寻求对于艺术在人类经验中所扮演角色的解答。他拒绝将艺术与短期的政治目标相结合，而是在连结艺术和哲学的过程中把焦点放在对于人类存在的深层次的表达。他对于艺术与政治结合的失语延伸到了全球化的话语语中。世界艺术作为参与到世界范围内的艺术交流和贸易过程中的艺术形式，在此定义下，秦风的艺术可被看做是世界艺术。然而另一方面，秦风拒绝任何全球化当中的霸权主义目的，反对强势文化将自己的艺术强加在其他发展层面上的文化身上。相反，他倡导对于文化多样性的贡献，建立新式的艺术类型，保护传统文化的积淀。秦风依旧专注于把艺术作为阐释人类存在的深层意义的传播者这一重要角色。


秦风：艺术东/西之我见
Curtis L. Carter, 2012年4月
秦风的水墨

传统水墨画尽管有抽象因素，但并不是抽象绘画。我们于其中仍然可以辨认出人物、山水、花鸟等主题。同时，传统水墨画家在作品中所寄托的精神也和现代水墨画师的思想非常不同。绘画像诗歌和书法一样，是他们言志和涵养性情的重要方式。实验水墨在许多方面与传统水墨不同，尤其是在题材和语言上有了极大的推进。实验水墨中不乏抽象作品，也不乏装置和影像作品。但是，传统水墨似乎更多地受到现代主义和形式主义的影响。如果仔细分析就会发现，他们的作品徒有书法之形而无书法之质，因为他们的作品中没有气势。秦风的水墨在精神诉求上与实验水墨完全不同。实验水墨热衷于追求西方现代主义艺术的外观效果，秦风则非常坚定地将自己的艺术扎根在中国文化的传统之中。如果说传统水墨是全盘西化的产物，那么秦风的水墨可以说是重返传统的表现。与传统水墨相比，秦风的水墨更西方。与实验水墨相比，秦风的水墨更中国。在传统水墨中，中国与西方、传统与现代并行不悖。正是在这种意义上，秦风称自己是后现代水墨艺术家。
Chinese art has maintained certain traditional approaches to painting for hundreds of years. Painting has long been associated with brush and ink, calligraphy, and fluid markings to describe a lyrical landscape and the harmony of the universe sung by philosophers and poets. Scrolls to illustrate ancient texts soon gave way to more prosaic images, their subjects defined by dynasties, politics and socio-cultural pressures. Today, the world of Chinese art is more familiar as the multifold phenomenon of Chinese culture has entered into popular discourse and artists determine to create work that is appreciative of past traditions while looking to the global future.

Qin Feng was born in Xinjiang in the far reaches of China’s northwest territory where the intersection of the Silk Roads brought many cultures together and would influence his art for years to come, despite travels that introduced him to the styles of Europe and the United States. It is the subject of cultural differences that weaves its way through his work as he constantly explores how symbols and language can be used by artists to communicate universal ideas. “Since the 1980s, he has been continually researching and experimenting with new ink painting and contemporary ink painting. His creative method and expression utilize primarily the language of ink and brush... Even with oil painting, acrylic painting and Western painting, he still uses Eastern elements to show off the expression of ink painting.” With Chinese calligraphy and ink brush traditions at its core, Qin Feng’s works meet the modern Western stylistic category of Abstract Expressionism. Both depend on the almost ritualistic process of applying paint/ink to the surface to express and reflect the experiences of life. For Qin Feng, whose family was constantly subjected to the atrocities of the Cultural Revolution, life’s experiences bring a wide range of emotions to his paintings. For the Abstract Expressionists, many of them exiled from or affected by the events of war-torn Europe, the action of painting was key to their own mode of personal expression. Abstraction, by definition the simplification or reduction of forms into images that do not realistically represent recognizable objects, has been used to describe many kinds of art produced over the centuries, and can be applied to Chinese brush and ink painting, especially to Western eyes that may not recognize its literary, traditional, or calligraphic sources. Sweeps of black ink and delicate linear details are applied by the brush of experts who have perfected their craft after many years of dedicated study. Ink brush artists are among the most revered in China. Chinese paintings were done in albums, scrolls, silk banners, and on paper and, most recently, canvas. Each brush stroke was given a name and combined in almost innumerable ways to make up the structure of the picture. Most strokes are associated with nature (birds, trees, leaves, blossoms, rocks, mountains, etc.). The Chinese love of classification continues in the description of a number of basic classes of subjects: landscapes, portraiture, figure, genre, birds and animals, flowers. The techniques also have classifications ranging from meticulous brushwork to outlines, splashed or spilled ink, sparingly dry ink applications. For Qin Feng, a student of Chinese traditional painting, bringing these processes into the modern world led him to be associated with Western art, in particu-
particular, the Abstract Expressionists, perhaps the closest proponents of complex painterly processes.

The Abstract Expressionists of the New York School apply their paint with either spontaneous aggression (Action Painters) or with sublime attention to color (Color Field), in very large format works that invite the viewer inside the many layers of pigment. An artist like Franz Kline, known for his large black and white abstractions, also used brush and ink with some tempera, often on newspaper, to achieve a style of painting reminiscent of Oriental ideographic writing but with dramatic intensity and energy. Although the modern Abstract Expressionists of New York may appear to be of an entirely different temperament than the Chinese traditionalists, it is the similarity that Qin Feng ascribes to as he brings both together – a meeting of East and West.

Qin Feng embraces the black and white of Chinese ink painting and calligraphy, ancient art forms whose graceful, liquid lines flow gently over a pale and passive support implying infinite depth. As he enlarges the strokes and the material upon which it is placed, whether canvas, paper, or books, positive and negative join together as uneasy coefficients. A new variety emerges on the uniformly activated field as large, simple shapes juggle with abrupt shifts in the velocity, direction and texture of the strokes that give them life. Working on hand-made paper, canvas, books and fans with traditional inks, acrylics, and mixed media that is referential to his subject, Qin Feng has vastly expanded the repertoire of Chinese art. His numerous Landscape series (Desire Landscape, Civilization Landscape Book, West Wind East Water) have afforded him the opportunity to incorporate influences from different cultures, including ancient Mayan, Babylonian, Egyptian and Chinese, all of which developed a form of script/glyph writing system. Between the symbolism and the simple beauty of the scripts, images emerge that are international. Perhaps out of their original context, these images and painted objects begin anew culture’s quest for a means of communication, now complicated by the spectacle of our vast global environment and the new societies that have emerged in the twenty-first century.

by Carol Damian
Director and Chief Curator
The Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum
Florida International University
中国艺术保留着千年的艺术传统。中国画，长久以来与笔、墨及流动的线条结缘，文人以此方式来描述抒情自然与社会景观以及和谐的宇宙。这些平淡无奇的图象，拟影着时代、政治和社会文化的状态。今天，全球关注东方文化及艺术家在尊重传统的同时，也关注着世界。生长在中国西北，丝绸之路的秦风，虽然以后周游欧美，他的艺术深深受到家乡地域与文化影响。他不断地尝试用符号和文字来表达人类共同的“艺术语言”，由此看出“文化差异”与融合是他创作的主体与线路。 1980年来，他不断地实验新的水墨画法。他的作品以笔墨为主角，即使是油彩、丙烯，他还是以东方元素表现和彰显水墨精神。”以书写式和中国语境为核心。秦风的作品也具有西方抽象表现主义的形式与形式魅力。藉此来表达生命的体验。秦风的家族也同那些时代一样难逃动荡数百春秋。这样生命经历带给他作品大幅度的情感空间。许多西方抽象表现主义艺术家，遭遇欧洲战乱，艺术，都是他们表达个人情感的工具。抽象的定义是经过除去或是简化的过程，图案不再切实地呈现可辨物体。这种表现方式应用到许多艺术行为上面，也很合适欣赏中国的绘画，尤其是当西方人无法辨识它的文字背景之时。国画家，经过长期研修，挥毫着装饰的与自然与人与社会的感悟与表现黑墨，又加上精致的内部精神与人文细节。在中，这些是最受尊重的画家。中国画以册页、卷轴、丝、纸形式为媒介与载体，近年来也有在画布上。每一笔细节都有它的象征意味和情景互映之喻，再以无数的组合方式形成独特形式与语境。高度抽象符号形式与自然结缘－鸟，树，叶，花，石，山，大自然一体。藉以表现艺术家对人、社会、自然的理解与表达。中国人喜好分类的习惯继续描述着以下的分类：山水，肖像，静物，花鸟，动物。技法上也分为工笔、写意、大泼墨、干笔等。对秦风而言，这些传统与当代艺术的结合的作品代入西方世界并导引融合西方当代艺术，尤其是东方的抽象表现主义，可能是最接近现代艺术与表现的倡议者。纽约抽象派画家行为艺术或表现主义运动，以大幅或简单色彩作品而著称，吸引观众观察到画中的层次，从而顿足留步慢慢在画。比如，以黑白抽象画家的Frank Klein在墨中加彩画漆，画在报纸上，以此达到东方画表意的效果但加上了强烈的对比力量。也许纽约抽象表现主义者与中国传统画的精神性格文化、社会背景完全异同，秦风的作品却是使完全不同的文化与艺术类型恰到的融入，结合并体现于思想与创作之中。秦风沉迷遨游于他的黑白世界，高雅的水纹在淡淡的背景上流动，平和与深奥。当他把线条和尺幅放大的作品，阴阳对比构成了激动不安的无限空间和欲望语境。巨大而简单的形式符号与在速度、方向、材质上多变的线条形成了新的气象。以亚麻纸、画布、册页、墨、丙烯，等等为媒材，中国艺术的剧目由秦风的作品而拉开序幕。古玛雅文明，巴比伦文明，埃及文明，华夏文明是中国文明之先驱，并创立伟大的文字体系。他的欲望风景，文明景观，西风东水之系列使几处古老文明的融合与共荣，重新再现了几大古老文明的伟大与恢宏。符号与文字的交融交接产生了一个全新的国际性语言和人类共同的文明景观。这也许与原来的文字意思有差距，但是却有着新的文化使命，传递着21世纪信息的讯息。这或许就是地域性差异和古人的意愿，秦风赋予它新的文明使命，以他的“文明景观”传达未来世界的国际化的文明讯息。
INTRODUCTION

In preparation for writing this catalogue essay, I visited Qin Feng’s Beijing studio to talk with him about his new works, and then followed up with a list of questions that addressed issues I hoped to understand better. Over the years I have visited his studios in Beijing and Boston and enjoyed many fascinating discussions with him about art and life. In the past, when writing about Qin Feng’s oeuvre I have set a dispassionate scholarly tone. But this time I feel happily compelled to begin with a few personal observations. They have helped me to make sense of the power and complexity of Qin Feng’s work.

While Qin Feng’s studio in Boston is huge by local standards, his work area in Song Zhuang, on the outskirts of Beijing, is enormous. He needs the space, for many of his large paintings are done on the floor, and the installations he produces—for example, the installation he created for the Fresh Ink exhibition at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts—can occupy a considerable area. Using an enormous brush to deploy buckets of paint or ink onto canvas or paper laid on the floor requires tremendous strength. Were he not in top physical condition, Qin Feng would be unable to produce brushstrokes humming with such life. The raw power of his brushwork can be almost overwhelming, and at times I struggle with accepting it. In terms of traditional standards of Chinese painting, such an overt display of strength would be considered vulgar, but Qin’s paintings are not intended to be viewed from such a point of view. The size, strength, and energy of his paintings all are a reflection of the artist himself. Born in the steppes of Xinjiang in China’s far northwest, a place where the horizons stretch to infinity, he radiates a sense of expansiveness himself, as if it would be impossible to contain him, his energy and imagination, within a smaller space than that he now occupies.

Over time Qin Feng’s paintings have become more layered and more generally complex, in terms both of structure and of meaning. Having lived and worked in Germany as well as Boston and Beijing, the bank of knowledge and experience upon which he draws for ideas and inspiration is vast. This complexity is a part of him, not limited to painting, as I discovered upon reading the answers he composed to the questions I had emailed him. Although I had considered my questions to be reasonably concrete, the replies they elicited were more difficult for me to comprehend than Chinese classical poetry. To express himself satisfactorily, I found Qin Feng had switched between classical Chinese and everyday modern Chinese in a way that must feel quite natural to him, permeated with metaphors and allusions, and rapidly veering toward the abstract. To read his paintings can be a similar experience: beginning as something that supports reasoned analysis, but then arriving at a point where only a wild leap of faith can bring meaning into focus. While it is wonderful to realize he thinks my Chinese is good enough that he need not simplify
his writing style, of course I worry I may have missed some special nuances of his thinking. Then again, I am most concerned with his self-expression via the visual arts, and I rely upon his art to communicate directly, to express meanings that cannot be conveyed through words: in that sense, conversations and texts (including this essay) merely indicate a direction and provide hints for understanding.

The paintings in Qin Feng’s current exhibition display the qualities of layering mentioned above: layering of media (ink, acrylic paint, coffee, tea), of eras (the present, the Qing dynasty), of dimensionality (three dimensions atop two dimensions), cultures (Chinese and Western). Coffee stains the background in Civilization Landscape No. 009, acting as a reference to Western tastes while serving as a marker of unconventionality in terms of the artist’s willingness to paint with coffee. Segments of Qing dynasty wooden furniture and architectural elements are affixed to the surface of a group of paintings: they simultaneously bring the work of art farther into the viewer’s space, while also containing the explosiveness of the brushwork they cover. Shiny clear acrylic dots on Angry Angels 5 denote the surface layer of the painting, again exerting a containment function, but here referring to the bosses on traditional Chinese doors that mark entrance as tightly controlled: they are like an invisible door preventing outsiders from accessing the culture represented behind them.

Noting it as the most consistent aspect of Qin Feng’s oeuvre’s current trajectory, I asked him about his works’ increasing complexity.

INTERVIEW

BE: May 2012, marks the fifth anniversary of the opening of the Museum of Contemporary Art Beijing (BJMOCA), a large space which you established in Song Zhuang for exhibiting art. Running the space no doubt takes a lot of your time and energy. Furthermore, you live on its grounds whenever you are in Beijing. Do you feel this has been positive for your work as an artist? Or is it mainly something you do to support the art world? I can imagine that it might energize you and involve you in productive dialog with other artists as well as curators and critics. But I can also imagine it being a drag on your energy.

QF: To run a museum is the expression of a certain kind of attitude toward society. Each person (particularly in China) has a different way of expressing his or her understanding of the relationship between individuals, and between an individual and society, as well as a different idea of how to contribute to society. The museum, along with my teaching at the Central Academy of Fine Arts and affiliation with Harvard’s [Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies], is a small way in which I am able to contribute to society. As an artist, this attitude also has a major influence on my values and creativity.

BE: Several years ago you were passionately involved in a project of creating work inspired by Bada Shanren (Zhu Da; 1626-1705), in commemoration of the 300th anniversary of his death. How is that inspiration reflected in your current works?

QF: The exhibition Qin Feng Arising from Bada Shanren, of four years ago, was a way of correcting an attitude toward history. I also have carried out a comprehensive comparison of Bada’s life and times, his artistic style, thinking, and language and form of expression, with Asian modern art. Three hundred years ago he already had set forth very clearly the concept and form of “abstract expressionism.” It doesn’t matter if we are talking in terms of social background, lifestyle, social latitude, or expression, he established for us an ironic double-sided mirror. Despite the real and insurmountable time difference, and given my twenty years of working and studying in the West, I can identify with Bada. I am deeply and naturally moved by his life and work, and will always be true to that influence.

BE: One interesting facet of your work is your combination of ink painting aesthetics with non-ink media. Do you still paint in ink sometimes? Do you use ink and non-ink to express different things?

QF: Material is just a medium, in a sense it’s just a reaction to generate the basic element. Of course, sometimes the author or the reader will deliberately give it a supposed meaning or form of language and imagery. Ink is only one of the materials— it’s the concept of language and a form of extending unlimited space, and media sense...it’s just a carrier.

BE: Some of your early works consist mainly of ink gestures, often circles or lines. Then you added landscape elements, as another visual and conceptual layer. Now you have also added antique wooden architectural elements. You seem to be building more complex meanings for your compositions in this way. Is that your intention?

[To me, Qin Feng’s reply suggests that as life becomes more complex, so does artistic form in a literal sense.]

QF: Sometimes the establishment of creative concepts can make you enter a kind of situation where there is no turning back, and occasionally can pull you to a fresh attitude toward life, and sometimes it is even more impossible to extricate oneself from plunging into the bottomless abyss, panicked and empty. This is the state of a thinker and a creator, to have the emotional and rational experience and thought woven together—a deeply felt fear and confusion and anxiety, loneliness and anger may all be revealed. It can happen that the entirety of this is expressed in one single stroke, at which point even to add a signature would be to the painting’s detriment. Left to falter in an ambiguous context, there seems an echo of soul, body, and spirit.

BE: BE: Another function of the added landscape elements and architectural frag-
ments seems to be to dampen down the explosive power of your brush gestures. Without them, the central brush strokes would not feel so contained within the composition. Is this deliberate?

QF: I care more about chance, trusting in the heavens—as the moon waxes and wanes, so people experience the vicissitudes of life. I could never imagine [having a calculated strategy] with a smile on my face, for decades painting donkeys yet not daring to paint a horse, painting shrimp but not venturing to paint cabbage [i.e., always painting the thing for which one is known and not daring to alienate one’s audience by trying something new], happy in the morning, worried in the afternoon, and sorrowful in the evening, with flowers in the autumn and frost appearing. How is it possible to be unique? To continue without any changes is the way to ensure continued appreciation, to be part of the world. To leave that world [i.e., to eschew the pragmatic route of co-modification] one enters a state of nothingness, of unattachment.

Although Qin Feng may rely on instinct when forging new directions artistically, in other aspects of life he is highly aware and intellectually involved.

BE: One of your great strengths as an artist is your confidence in your own vision. If you had lacked this strength, you would not have made it through high school, let alone through the conservative art academy you attended, the Shandong Art Institute. Can you comment on this?

QF: The art institute provided me with a ladder [from which to better observe my situation]. When you [can thus] view the deserts and grasslands of your childhood, and the hopelessness you felt when you were old enough to understand [the situation], then the wise [thing to do is to grow] wings of courage, and rush into the tide of society and urban civilization.

BE: I greatly appreciate the fact that you are comfortable talking about Western influences on your work. Some Chinese artists, particularly ink painters, insist that their painting is purely Chinese. There is the sense that they wish to keep ink painting as something that non-Chinese cannot understand. To me this feels defensive. With you I sense the possibility for an international art. What are your thoughts on this?

QF: Just as the monsoon affects the earth’s ecology and natural phenomena, one’s living environment will certainly affect the flavor of one’s life; civilization is like this too. Does the compass [first invented by the Chinese] influence the impact of the missile? . . . There are only distinctions of deep and shallow, dense and light. The differences arise from cultural habits: the benevolent perceive benevolence, the wise see wisdom—each sees his/her own strength. The forms into which Eastern and Western civilization have developed each have shortcomings—there is nothing definitive. Regarding personal preference—“post modern ink painting”—for almost three decades line has been the latitude and longitude of my concerns and interests. In terms of East and West, this sword dance dances out its own piece of the heavens, realm, and ultimate goal. [Paraphrasing and clarifying Qin Feng: Missiles are sometimes used against the inventors of the compass, an offensive invention against a non-offensive. Only the wise understand this irony. Policies are determined at the national level, and definitions are made based on cultural and habitual differences. It is the same with art. Whoever has the right to speak gets to define art.]

PAINTINGS IN THE EXHIBITION
Abstract discussions are all very well, but it is important also to consider concrete aspects of individual works of art. Qin Feng began a major new series of works titled Angry Angels in 2011. All are large canvases, round or rectangular, dominated by a single horizontal brushstroke falling from the heavens, trailing—perhaps burning—a fading dark path. Circles and lines have been important to Qin Feng’s oeuvre for almost three decades line has been the latitude and longitude of my concerns and interests. In some, icy blue grounds feature swirling waters, but the blue is distant from our present world as the pink or brown grounds of other works. Qin Feng employs coffee or tea as media for painting or for creating brown-washed backgrounds. He also freely mixes materials—layering linen paper on linen canvas, layering ink and acrylic, choosing whatever material can produce the desired effect, disregarding standard practice.

Comparing the blue Desire Scenery paintings rendered in ink and color on made-to-order silk-cotton paper with those painted in acrylic on canvas, one can readily appreciate the difference in effect between the media. The relationship between ink and paper is a key to ink painting: the paper “observes” the ink with great sensitivity. Acrylic, on the other hand, sits atop the canvas; shades are fewer, but there is a subtle three-dimensionality to the paint. While the acrylic form seems to come out from the canvas to meet the viewer, the ink form sets into a space behind the picture plane. Dots flying from the ink spray are finer than splashed acrylic dots. Overall, the ink and paper effect is subtler.
Following creation, eventually civilization arises. The small, abbreviated lines in West Wind East Water suggest the emergence of writing: they could be the beginnings of Chinese or Arabic. Similar lines show up in Desire Landscape (2007), accompanied by characteristic outlines of classical Chinese landscape paintings, another indicator of civilization's birth. The symbols of proto-writing join together with Qin Feng's characteristic lines and broken circle to create a majestic composition in Civilization Landscape No. 009.

Whether monumental in scale or (relatively) small, whether compositionally complex or simple, and whether physically built from layers or layered in more subtle ways, Qin Feng's paintings remain satisfying because they support two levels of scrutiny. With their raw power, they bear an initial strong impact. Subsequently, they reveal layers of meaning and maintain continued visual interest over long-term repeated viewing. His career follows a similar path, each step enriching our understanding of that which preceded it.

Note: Many thanks for Shujen Wang for help with understanding Qin Feng's remarks.

by Britta Erickson
BE: 今年是BJMOCA成立5周年，经营美术馆是件费时费力的事，你在北京时也住在馆附近，经营美术馆对您的创作有正面的影响吗？还是这只是对支持艺术界的贡献？我能想像从中这样的一个角度能让你和画家、策展人有建设性的对话是件能激励你的经验，但我也觉得这也是一件可能会耗费精力的事情。

Q.F: 经营艺术馆是对社会的一种态度，每个人与人与社会的理解与付出都有他们不同的表达方式(尤其在中国)这也是我对社会唯一能尽的微薄之力。如哈佛、中央美院任教以及一些社会活动。就与我本身作为一个艺术家对自身的价值观和创作影响也是很大。

BE: 数年前你非常有热情的做了纪念八大山人300年诞辰，并有针对性地创作，对现在的创作有别的影响吗?

Q.F: 四年前“秦风致八大山人”是对历史的一种纠正态度。另本人对他的身世与时代以及作品的风格思想和表现形式、语言与亚洲现当代艺术做了全面的比较。“抽象表现主义”的概念与形式三百年前他已阐述的很清晰到位，无论从社会背景、生活形态、社会纬度和表现深度均给我们树起一面很有讽刺意味的双面镜子。真实而无法穿越的时差，加之我西方近20年生涯与学习，感动当之无愧，影响自然情理之中。

BE: 最早你的作品是抽象墨，后来你加入了山水，让创作概念复杂化与多层次化，后来你又加了古典的门窗，这是你把你的创作复杂化的意图吗?

Q.F: 创作概念的确立有时会让你进入一种一无反顾的境地，偶尔便会拉曲鲜活的生活情态，有时更无法自拔的坠入无度之深渊，恐慌而空空如也……，这就是一个思想者和一个创作者的状态，故将感性与理性经验和思考交织一起，有时一触即发，有时会将经验与思想的诸多元素于概念并同去结构或重新解构，在模糊的语境中弥留，似是灵魂与肉体与精神的呼应。

BE: 对我来说，加上这些山水和门窗及建筑片段的东西控制与局限了你自己抽象及具爆发性的符号，这是有意的吗?

Q.F: 创作概念实际上是一个在自己的艺术作品中拒绝把战略思考当成实力的宣言。艺术家不走世俗的寻常道路，从而达到一种物的状态是一种充满正能量的状态。]

BE: 你创作有一个很有意思的特点就是你混合使用墨与非墨的材质，你还创作纯粹是墨的作品吗？墨与非墨的材质有什么不同的表现?

Q.F: 材料只是一种媒介，从某种意义上它只是一种生成反应的基本元素，当然有时作者或读者会刻意赋予它假想的有意味的语言与形式或意象。墨，它也只是一种材料而已，它的概念语言和表现形式有无限的延申空间，媒介从某种意义上它只是一种载体……。

BE: 你创作一个很重要的特点就是你混合使用墨与非墨的材质，你还创作纯粹是墨的作品吗？墨与非墨的材质有什么不同的表现？
膀勇往直前，冲进人群和社会文明之潮流。

BE：我特别欣赏你能够坦然地讨论西方艺术对你创作的影响，有很多中国画家，特别是水墨画家，通常坚持他们的创作完全没有受到西方影响而纯粹是中国的，让人觉得西方人永远无法了解水墨，这点让我觉得这些画家太过于自我辩护，而你让我觉得创作国际艺术还是有可能的。你对这个的看法是什么？

QF：如同季风影响地球生态及自然现象，生命生存环境当然会影响它的故有品格，文明也如此。指南针是否能影响导弹的意志难分高下，文明成果、知性者文明也。只是深浅、浓淡之分。区别于文化习性，仁者见仁，智者见智，各取所好。文明“海绵体”东西方发育成型各有缺憾，尚不可盖棺定论。就个人取向—“后现代水墨”线是我近三十年关注与兴趣的脉络与经纬。接东西方这把剑舞，舞出自己的一片天空和境界及终极目标。

展出作品

抽象的讨论固然必要，但艺术作品具体的内容同样不可小觑。秦风自2011年开始着手一个名为《愤怒的天使》的系列作品。巨大的画布，圆形的、长方形的，横来一笔从天而降，沿着一条斑驳褪色的黑色小路伸展……抑或是燃烧。多年来，秦风的作品中圈和线的运用非常之多，象征着宇宙的生发力量。在这里，这些圈圈线线依旧是一种广义的象征性视觉力量，但宇宙中自然的生命过程总是一个走向衰落的进程：从出生开始，万事万物都在一步步接近死亡。自然中的事物，比如落叶，总是很直观地延续着这样一条道路，而其他的人和事也在隐晦地亦步亦趋其后。他的《欲望风景》和《文明景观》系列作品中遍布的黑色形体也在走向毁灭。这两部作品都安排了更为具体的景观，或者以水作为背景，而《愤怒的天使》则更多表现为一种虚无，形式也更为复杂，似乎在塞的同时正在碎裂成片。这是创作的原始画面，我们的世界原本就诞生于一个无形无际的延续。有几幅作品，布满冰凌的黑色土地上有打翻滚的水泽，但这种蓝距离我们的现实世界却是如此遥远，就像其他几部作品中那些粉色或褐色的土地一样遥远。秦风用咖啡或茶作画，描绘着褐色的泼墨背景。他随地地混合各种材料，于亚麻画布上堆积亚麻布纸，把墨和丙烯颜料层层叠加，任意选择材料创作出理想的效果，完全无视标准和常规的操作。

和其他用丙烯颜料在画布上中规中矩描绘的作品相比，在恰到好处的丝绵纸上用墨和颜料完成的蓝色《欲望风景》，显然能让我们领略到不同媒介的不同效果。墨与纸的关系是水墨画的灵魂所在：纸异常敏锐地“感知”墨。而丙烯只能浮在画布表面：阴影少了，但却给作品带来一种微妙的三维效果。丙烯颜料塑造的形体似乎从画布上跃然而出，面对面直视着观者，而水墨塑造的形体总能走入画面背后的深度空间。泼洒开去的墨点相比丙烯酸溅出的痕迹。似乎更为生动。一言即可论定，墨与纸的效果更加精妙难言。

创作之后，终要归结到文明。《西风东水》中简短的小线条象征着文字的起源：这就是最初的汉文或阿拉伯文。《欲望景观》（2007）中也出现了类似的线条，伴随着中国古典风景画具有代表性的轮廓，再次暗示了文明的诞生。原始文字符号和秦风特色的线条和不完整圆圈一起构成了《文明景观009》的宏大结构。

里程碑作品无论规模大（相对）小，无论结构简繁，无论层次分明或含糊，秦风的作品总能让人称心满意，因为它们经得起双重考验。那种原始的力量赋予其一望而知的强烈冲击力；多层次的含义让人久看而不厌，他的创作生涯也是如此，每一个台阶都能丰富我们的理解和体验。

（*特别感谢王淑真对我正确理解秦风谈话的帮助。）
In a sense, it is not easy to understand works of an artist. Different people always have different views, but it's difficult to determine whether they have thoroughly understood persistent and painstaking efforts of the artist. I may not say I have deep understanding of Qin Feng's works, but for Mr. Pen Feng, the host of this academic exhibition, has made an incisive interpretation of them and I don't need to gild the lily. Therefore, here I just talk about my views on Qin Feng from the perspective of a planner.

I have never doubted about the master magnetism of Qin Feng's works and his unique style as an artist. Qin Feng likes creating huge paintings and he is experienced in creating a work that is dozens of meters long. Firstly, “Giant” is an important character of Qin Feng and it not just refers to his tall and strong physique for his height of more than 1.8 meters. In my opinion, Qin Feng has inherited an intangible flavor of Chinese ancient people in his heart. In his “West Wind East Water”, Qin Feng has promoted Chinese traditional artistic conception of simplicity and loftiness to a new height by using an acquit modality of painting in western countries for reference. Thus, under a strong visual impact, we also feel his works have a freely flowing style without a sense of stagnating. Materials of his works are ridiculous and resort to extreme measures. It has showed his superior courage and insight as a modern artistic master from a big switch blade in Qing dynasty to tree branches hung upside down from the roof and standing giant album of paintings. He has even broken his cloth into pieces to mix in producing a special Chinese art paper.

Most of Qin Feng's works have a metaphorical mystery character. However, no matter how implicit his works is, all his endless creation inspirations have pointed to his inner heart. Although he has received training of traditional ink painting skills so as to lay a solid foundation for realistic painting, but he has been greatly influenced by abstract expressionism in western countries. At last, he has given up the tradition of painting a shaped article in China and we could hardly see any concrete character, river and mountain or city charm in his works, which just implied a theory of Chan Buddhism-Directly point to the heart upon enlightenment. It is said in “Diamond Sutra” that: “Once possesses, all is fabricated”. All things arise out of and extinguish from many causes. “Appearance” is an external presentation whose existence and disappearance is illusory. If we are too persistent in “appearance”, what we get is only illusory one and we can not find a real world. From this aspect, there is no doubt that Qin Feng is a master of modern semiolegy. He has subtly found the secret hidden behind the “circle” after detaching concrete presentations. In his eyes, all things become “empty”. But the line of a “circle” is always from the original point to terminal point and goes round and round. So he abstractly treated the universe as a symbolized “circle”. Sometimes, a “circle” implies a fetus in a woman's abdomen waiting for birth; sometimes it will be dissimilated to the pupil confronting an unknown world or converted to the rabid sun with solar wind whistling.

Qin Feng is greatly apart from many modern artists for his noteworthy conduct and independent character as well as distinguished talents on arts. When many artists are still constantly repeating and consuming their talents in an inherent symbol, Qin Feng is valiantly exploring his own road of arts even though he has been a worldwide famous master of art. However, he is not a misty nihilist or a passive recluse, and he has the spirit of practical care for he wants to perceive the world and influence the society with his articles. Therefore, when he worked out unexpected but meaningful works with dignified brush held in his hand and ink points are radiated on the paper in a high speed, we can deeply feel his implicit anger mood expressed in an artist's paintings. For example, in the series of “Scenery of Desire”, the dumb-founded pupil let us feel the artist's pity for the current materialistic society. In the series of “Angry Angel”, observers feel suffocated by the heavy depression implied in visual thick lines. But it seems that the artist himself is staring at observers behind the paintings, which let us associate him with the subjective monks in Tang dynasty. Qin Feng was born in Gobi desert and grew up in Shandong Province and then he has lived in overseas for many years. Dissimilation of oriental and western cultures doesn’t occur on him. He has still kept characters of a Chinese traditional scholar-bureaucrat and is not contaminated by hypocritical bad habits. He always talks about the arts with friends sincerely and freely. In my opinion, he is an artist living in a world created by himself and also a pure rationalistic artist.

by Li Daoliu
LONGING LANDSCAPES

QIN FENG

Kong's
"Longoing Landscapes"
从某种意义上讲，解读艺术家的作品不是一件轻松的事情。每个观者总会有自己的理解，但要理解艺术家的苦心孤诣，那就要见仁见智。我不敢说自己对秦风的作品有多深刻的理解，但本次展览学术主持彭锋先生已经对秦风的作品进行了精辟的阐释，无需本人画蛇添足。这里我只以策划人的角度谈谈我对秦风的一些看法。

我丝毫不怀疑秦风作品的大师气场，艺术家本人的大家风范。秦风喜欢创作巨幅的作品，几十米的作品对于他来说是驾轻就熟。这不仅仅是指秦风一米八几定海神针般高大魁梧的身板。在我看来，骨子里秦风仍旧流淌着中国古人的空灵气息。他“西风东水”借鉴西方的绘画表现形式，把中国传统的简约高远意境推向了一个新的高度。所以我们看到，强烈的视觉冲击力下，其大体量的架上绘画作品仍觉得行云流水毫无凝滞之感。其作品材料更是天马行空，顺手拈来无所不用其极。从清代的大闸刀，到从屋顶吊下来的树枝，站立起来的巨型册页，甚至把自己的旧衣服打碎参杂到制作特种宣纸中等等，都展现出来作为一个当代艺术大家的大胆识和大气魄。

秦风的作品大多带有一些隐喻性的神秘色彩，但无论多隐晦，他层出不穷的创作灵感无一不指向内心。尽管他早年大学读书时曾接受过传统的水墨技法训练，掌握扎实的写实绘画功底，但他影响更多的则是西方抽象表现主义的思维。后来他放弃了中国写形状物的传统方式，其作品中几乎看不到任何具象的人物、山水和都市风情等，而这正好暗合了禅宗的理论——直指人心，见性成佛。

《金刚经》云：“凡所有相，皆是虚妄。”任何万物，都是由因缘而生，因缘而灭，因此，“相”是幻生幻灭的一个外在表象，如果我们过于执着于“相”，得到的只是虚假的幻相，而无法找到真实的世界。

从这方面讲，秦风无疑是当代符号学的大师。他在抽离了具象的表象后，敏锐地发现了“圆”背后隐藏的秘密。在他眼里，一切万物都变成了“空”。而“圆”的线条总是从原点回到终点，然后周而复始。这样，他把宇宙世界抽象成符号化的“圈”。于是，“圆”时而隐喻着即将出生的胎儿从腹中等待呱呱坠地，时而异化为瞳孔面对着未知的大千世界，时而转换为施虐的太阳裹挟着太阳风呼啸而来……

在艺术上的特立独行和卓尔不群，使得秦风跟同时代的很多艺术家远远地拉开了距离。当很多成名艺术家仍旧在固有的符号下不断重复和消费自己时，已经是具有国际声誉的艺术家秦风仍然在勇猛地探索自己的艺术道路。但他绝不是缥缈的虚无主义者，也不是消极的遁世者，他有很强烈的入世精神希望以手中的笔墨感知世界、影响社会，因此，当他高大的身躯拖曳着手中沉重的如椽大笔，奋臂四溅出去的墨点呈高速放射状，创作出一幅幅出乎意料但又意味深长的作品时，我们可以深刻感受到艺术家对当下或者愤怒或者悲伤的情绪表达。例如《欲望风景》系列中，睁目结舌的瞳孔让人感受到艺术家对当代物欲横流的悲天悯人。例如《愤怒的天使》系列中，扑面而来的粗线条如同当头棒喝，沉重的压抑感让人感到窒息。而艺术家本人似乎则隐在画面后颔首注视着观者，让人联想到呵佛骂祖的唐代禅师。

秦风出生于西域戈壁，成长于齐鲁大地，而后海外生活多年。多重的西方文明在秦风身上并未得到异化，他依旧保持者中国传统文人士大夫的一面，没有沾染虚情假意的江湖习气，总是真诚地与朋友直言不讳畅谈艺术。在我看来，秦风是一个生活在自己营造的精神世界里的艺术家，一个理性主义的纯粹的艺术家。

李道柳
2012年11月 北京
*West Wind and East Water*
Oil on canvas, 2012
400 x 1200 cm
015 Series Desire 20 Scenery
ink tea coffee on ceramic paper
190 x 85cm
QIN FENG

088 Serie Desire Scenery NO.088
Ink and Acrylic on silkcotton paper, 2011
285 x 150cm
Four Seasons
acrylic tea and coffee on ceramic paper
81 x 298cm x 4
Longing Landscapes Series No. 060
Mixed media on canvas, 2007
210 x 150cm
Longing Landscapes Series no 5427
acrylic tea and coffee on ceramic paper, 2013
166 x 77cm

OPPOSITE
Longing Landscapes Series no 5428
acrylic tea and coffee on ceramic paper, 2013
166 x 77cm

Longing Landscapes Series no 5430
acrylic tea and coffee on ceramic paper, 2013
166 x 77cm
Longing Landscapes Series No. 15
acrylic tea and coffee on ceramic paper, 2013
190 x 85cm

Longing Landscapes Series No. 16
acrylic tea and coffee on ceramic paper, 2013
190 x 85cm
QIN FENG

Longing Landscapes Series No. 18
acrylic tea and coffee on ceramic paper, 2013
190 x 85cm

Longing Landscapes Series No. 19
acrylic tea and coffee on ceramic paper, 2013
190 x 85cm
**Longing Landscapes Series No. 8787**
Ink and Acrylic on silkcotton paper, 2012
160 x 300cm

**OPPOSITE**
*Longing Landscapes Series No. 8787*
Ink and Acrylic on silkcotton paper, 2012
280 x 156cm

*Longing Landscapes Series No. 8790*
Ink and Acrylic on silkcotton paper, 2012
280 x 156cm
QIN FENG
Angry Angels 4
Acrylic on canvas, 2011
200 x 200cm
Untitled

[please insert info]
Civilization landscape No.0363
Coffee Tea and Ink On Special Paper
125 x 100cm
Civilization landscape No.0370
Coffee Tea and Ink On Special Paper, 2012
125 x 100cm
Longing Landscapes Series No. 8789
Ink and Acrylic on silkcotton paper, 2012
280 x 156cm

OPPOSITE
Longing Landscapes Series No. A32
acrylic coffee tea on canvas, 2013
220 x 140cm
Longing Landscapes Series No. 0036
Coffee Tea and Ink On Special Paper, 2011
125 x 100cm
Longing Landscapes Series
Ink and coffee on ceramic paper, 2010
Image: 298 x 84 cm
Paper: 363 x 89 cm
Run Yue No. 23
ink tea and coffee on ceramic paper
170 x 85cm
Run Yue No. 16
ink tea and coffee on ceramic paper
170 x 85cm
BIOGRAPHY

1961  Born in Xinjiang, China
1985  Graduated from the Shandong Art Institute, Shandong, China
1996  Moved to Berlin, Germany and taught at Berlin University of Art, HDK
1997  Invited by the City of Berlin to serve as the Curator for Sino-German Cultural Exchange
1999  Moved to the United States
2006  Began teaching and serving as graduate advisor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing
2007  Founded the Beijing Museum of Contemporary Art
2008  Nominated and selected as research associate in the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University

SELECTED ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2014  ArtStage, Singapore, ODE TO ART
2013  Goedhuis Contemporary Art Museum London
      Ethan Cohen Art Gallery New York
      Crow Collection of Asian Art Museum, Dallas
2012  Raab Gallery, Berlin
      The Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Miami
      Shang-Shang International Art Museum, Beijing
2011  Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, New York
      The Opposite House, Beijing
2009  Pace Prints Gallery, New York
2008  Shang Shang International Art Museum, Beijing
      Asia Center, Harvard University
      Goedhuis Museum of Contemporary Art, China
      Goedhuis Contemporary, New York and London
2007  Raab Gallery, Berlin
      Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, New York
      Art Beatus Gallery, Hong Kong
      798 Gallery, New York
2006  Goedhuis Contemporary, New York and London
      Modern Art Museum, Beijing, China
      Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
2005  Toll Collect, Berlin, Germany
      Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, New York
2004  Raab Gallery, Berlin, Germany
      Art Beatus Gallery, Hong Kong
2003  HaiShangShan International Art Center, Shanghai, China
      Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, New York
2002  HaiShangShan International Art Center, Shanghai, China
      Tao Water Gallery, Cape Cod, Massachusetts
2001  MacDowell Colony, New Hampshire, U.S
       Revolving Museum, Boston, Massachusetts
       Asian Cultural Center, New York, New York
       Federal Foreign Office, Berlin, Germany
2000  Tremont Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.
1999  Raab Gallery, Berlin, Germany
1997  Leucorea, Martin Luther University, Halle/Wittenberg, Germany
1996  Kunsthaus Tacheles, Berlin, Germany
1995  Benario Gallery, Berlin, Germany Center of Contemporary Arts,
       Amsterdam, the Netherlands New China Center, Hague, the Netherlands
1994  Ammonal Gallery, Beijing, China

SELECTED JOINT EXHIBITIONS

2013  The Museum of Modern Art, New York ;Ink-The Art of China ;New York and
       Hongkong” The World——Chinese Contemporary Ink Painting Artists
       Invitation Exhibition”100 Art Salon, Hongkong; “A brush with the
       Future”, Hongkong word art gallery
2012  Saatchi Gallery, London, UK
       Raab Gallery, Berlin
2011  Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, New York
       Cross-Strait Contemporary Art Exhibition (Taipei)
       Beijing, Shanghai International Art Fair (special invitations)
2010  Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
       Beijing Museum of Contemporary Art, China
       Goedhuis Contemporary, London, UK
       Raab Gallery, Berlin, Germany
2009  Singapore National Museum of Art, Singapore
       Raab Gallery, Berlin, Germany
       Asia Center, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts
       Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, New York
2008  Beijing Museum of Contemporary Art, China
       The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel
       Imperial City Art Museum, Beijing, China
       Art Complex Museum, Massachusetts
       Amy Simon Fine Arts, Westport, Connecticut
       Shang-Shang International Art Museum, Beijing, China
2007  The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
       Museum of Contemporary Art, Genoa, Italy
       Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark
       Moscow Biennale, Moscow, Russia
       Beijing Museum of Contemporary Art, Beijing, China
       Chengdu Biennale, Chengdu, China
2006  The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
       CAS Gallery, Kean University, New Jersey
2005  Goedhuis Contemporary, New York
       Art Beatus Gallery, Vancouver, Canada
2004  Art Beatus Gallery, Vancouver, Canada
2003  
Radical Line, Bowling Green State University Museum, Ohio
Asia Pacific Museum, Pasadena, California
Millennium Building, Beijing, China

2002  
Art Beatus Gallery, Vancouver, Canada
Plum Blossoms Gallery, New York

2001  
Contemporary Asian Art Exhibition, Boston Center for the Arts, Boston
Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, New York
Beijing Literary Center, Beijing

2000  
South Boston Art Center, Boston, Massachusetts

1999  
International Art Exhibition, Köln, Germany
Asian Modern Paintings Auction, Christie’s, London, U.K.

1998  
New Art from China, Enpassant Gallery, Hamburg, Germany

1994  
New Trends—Art Hong Kong and Avant-Garde Chinese Art Exhibition, Hong Kong

1987  
International Art Exhibition, Lucia Art Gallery, New York, New York

1985  
Third Annual China Art Exhibition, Beijing, China

1984  
China Anonymous Artist Association Exhibition, Chongqing, Sichuan

SELECTED CURATED (AND PARTICIPATED) EXHIBITIONS

2002  
Start Over Exhibition, Wulumuqi, Xinjiang, China

1999  
Chinese Face Exhibition, The Capital Center, Hamburg, Germany

1998  
Thirteen Chinese, Kunsthau Tacheles, Berlin, Germany

1997  
Chinese Art in Berlin, in cooperation with the German Humanities Association, Berlin, Germany
Poets in the Sunlight, Kulturbrauerei Berlin, Sponsored by the City of Berlin, Germany

1995  
Second Annual Joint Exhibition of Chinese Professional Art, Ammonal Gallery, Beijing, China

1994  
Chinese Professional Painters’ Works, Winter Exhibition, Shenzhen, China
Avant-Garde Chinese Art Exhibition, Hong Kong Art Center, Hong Kong

1993  
Founded Ammonal Gallery, Beijing, China
First Joint Exhibition of Chinese Professional Art, Beijing, China

1986  
Founded the Artist Circle BLUE
The First 12-Artist Joint Exhibition, Wulumuqi, Xinjiang, China

SELECTED AWARDS, LECTURES, AND PERFORMANCE

2008  
Nominated and selected as Research Associate, Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, Harvard University

2007  
Sotheby’s, Christie’s, and Poly auctions (from the mid-90s to present)

2005  
Syndicat National des Antiquaires at Le Louvre, Paris, and many other international art fairs 1992 to present.

2003  
Zero Space Ink Performance, Asia Society and Museum, New York

2001  
Fellowship and Residency, MacDowell Colony, New Hampshire

2000  
Award from the Vermont Art Center

1998  
Art Award from the City of Berlin
Invited lectures at Harvard University, the Leucorea, Martin Luther University, Halle/ Wittenberg; Berlin Art University HDK; International Society—Boston; Tufts University, Massachusetts; Emerson College, Boston; and Mobius Gallery, Boston

COLLECTIONS

Works collected by The British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Fogg Art Museum Harvard University, Yale University Art Gallery, Smith College Museum of Art, the Ford Foundation, the MacDowell Colony, the Annie Wong Foundation, the National Arts Foundation (France), the U.S. State Department (“Art in Embassies”)
QIN FENG
LONGING LANDSCAPES

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