

郭維國

KUO Wei-Kuo

1960–

1990年代伊始，波灣戰爭爆發、兩德統一、蘇聯解體、日本泡沫經濟破裂，臺灣彼時中正紀念堂發生三月學運，金馬國際影展推出同志單元，為臺灣性別議題開啟一扇門扉。在國際與本土重大事件猝不及防地催促人們逼視驟變之際，郭維國1994年的〈新樂園〉，是他因生活青黃不濟停筆三年於建築事務所繪製透視圖，直至1992年重拾藝術創作的作品。

畫面中央，郭維國描繪女性陰唇的形象，它包裹在蓬盛如牡丹花瓣，又似海洋軟體動物的柔媚肢體之中。可懼的是，這含苞欲張的女性外生殖器，借來植物界獵食者捕蠅草葉片邊緣上的刺毛，它充滿誘惑力卻帶刺而難以親暱，一如捕蠅草英文名稱「Venus flytrap」——維納斯的捕蠅陷阱，一旦誤觸機關，就會陷入溶骨蝕肉的魔境。

郭維國〈新樂園〉的天堂沒有女神，只有充填一時慾望溝壑的神女。他的畫題說明了這不是魔境，是樂園；令人玩味的是，「新樂園」也是臺灣菸酒公賣局自1948年販售至今，價格最親民、氣味最嗆辣的同名香菸。〈新樂園〉是他親手創造，能飄飄然超脫現實的新天堂。天堂背景是超新星大爆炸在宇宙留下的星雲遺跡，鞏固著歡愉靈動的內核，原來是層層看似堅不可摧但明顯漏洞百出的黑銀色建築鋼構。郭維國將堅實的油畫技法揮灑成冷硬無機的秩序感，企圖壓抑看似無害的金色祥雲，又爆裂又節制地為豔彩的極樂慾望喝采。

身處風起雲湧的90年代初的臺灣，郭維國一度欲放棄創作向現實妥協，後獲同輩藝術家鼓勵潛心探索自我。名之為〈新樂園〉的早期油畫，是他面對80年代多媒體勃發，頑強拮抗電腦繪圖暢旺的藝術創作形式，他堅扛手繪大旗，據守工筆寫實硬派一隅，透過構築虛擬的樂園堡壘，面對內心世界一次又一次的碎炸與重生。作為半生持續創作的藝術家，郭維國創造的樂園是1990年代臺灣眾生相的縮影，關於情慾、政治、金權的掙脫或糾結，藉看似冷靜的筆觸探問交會現實與理想的天堂是否真然存在？慾望之花於星斗的簇擁之中無聲綻放，〈新樂園〉揮灑出藝術家而立之年的摸索與無處宣洩的量能，在不斷膨脹的宇宙追尋永恆的燦爛。（吳思瑩）

In 1990, the Gulf War broke out, East and West Germany were unified, The Soviet Union dissolved, the bubble in the Japanese economy burst, the Wild Lily student movement occupied Taipei's Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, the Golden Horse International Film Festival launched a section for LGBTQ films, and a new field of inquiry regarding gender in Taiwanese society was opened. At this time of abrupt changes in international and local events, people were struck by certain topics, and Kuo Wei-Kuo painted *New Paradise*. This followed a three-year gap in his creative work caused by financial problems that forced him to take a job at an architectural firm. Nonetheless, he took up his brush again in 1992 and finished this painting in 1994.

In the center of this painting, Kuo painted an abstracted vagina bordered with labia that appear to be wrapped in the petals of a peony or the gentle limbs of a mollusk. However, Kuo added a terrifying element to his depiction of budding female genitalia—an insect eating plant, the Venus flytrap, thus making this image filled with allure impossible to approach. As the name for the plant suggests, once it is touched, the vagina would immediately snap shut, then demonically devour meat and dissolve bone.

We are not looking at a goddess in the heaven of Kuo's *New Paradise*, but a symbol for the longing for the momentary satisfaction of desire. The title does not indicate demons, but rather paradise, and "new paradise" is apropos because it is also the brand name of a cheap cigarette known for its sharp flavor and sold by the Taiwan Tobacco and Liquor Corporation since 1948. Kuo's *New Paradise* is the artist's smug attempt to transcend reality by creating his own new heaven, which we see in the painting's background filled with the remnants of the Big Bang. The nebula produced by this supernova-like event seems to be fortifying the painting's joyful and vivacious center with an indestructible black and silver steel structure obviously riddled with holes. Here, Kuo used a substantial oil painting technique in an unrestrained way to create a cold, rigid and inorganic sense of order, that he intended to suppress his seemingly harmless and auspicious golden clouds. The result is restraint alternating with bursts of celebratory and colorful blissful desire.

In the heady atmosphere of early 1990s Taiwan, Kuo wanted to abandon art for a period of time in favor of a more realistic pursuit, but later was encouraged by his peers to undertake some serious self reflection. One of his earlier paintings, *New Paradise* was Kuo's answer to, and stubborn resistance against, the flourishing multimedia and computer graphics trends of the 1980s, as he steadfastly hoisted the banner of hand-made painting. He was a hardcore supporter of realism and traditional rendering techniques, and through the construction of a fortress housing a virtual paradise, he faced his inner world, which was torn down and rebuilt again and again. As an artist whose career had been underway for half a lifetime, Kuo created a paradise that epitomized life in 1990s Taiwan, which was marked by struggles with lust, politics, and money. With seemingly calm brushstrokes, he asked whether a paradise where reality and ideals meet can really exist. For Kuo, the flower of desire blossoms silently in a cluster of stars, and in his *New Paradise*, he releases energy that had been building over a 30 year exploration and had nowhere else to go but into the pursuit of eternal splendor in an ever-expanding universe. (Seeing Wu)

新樂園 New Paradise

1994

油彩、畫布 Oil on canvas

259 x 390 cm

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