

莊喆

CHUANG Che

1934–

回溯莊喆從1950年代末加入五月畫會開始，為思考繪畫本質，在畫面構成與材料技法上進行革命的歷程，〈戰役〉這件作品反映了藝術家早期風格的建立，也暗示了接下來的創作發展。

創作與論述皆長的莊喆，在1966年出版了《現代繪畫散論》，蒐錄他先前發表過的理論文章，階段性地梳理其對於現代繪畫的思考，並論辯如何從自身的文化定位，體現中國畫的世界性和現代性。同年，莊喆獲得洛克斐勒三世基金會的支持，赴美考察現代藝術，隨後至歐洲遊歷半年，直至1968年返國。另一方面，就臺灣1960年代中後期藝文發展的進程來看，此時期積極推動臺灣現代繪畫發展的五月畫會，漸漸由集體行動走向個別發展，臺灣亦出現複合藝術風潮，更激烈地破除傳統繪畫的形制，擴大或跨越各領域藝術的面貌。這些個人事件與大環境的轉折，即是創作〈戰役〉之時的背景。

莊喆以各種實驗，探求如何讓質地厚重的油彩與顯現乾溼濃淡的水墨之間形成平衡，也用毛筆、刷子或可見的任何物件創造粗筆書寫的線條，推敲中國書法與西方繪畫間的抽象特質有哪些對話的可能。1963年他開始運用拼貼，除了成為油、水、墨、紙、布之間的中介，亦在留下的墨痕和皺褶裡，顯現不同材質間磨合的過程，從中增添畫面的層次及量體感。自美返國後的莊喆在構圖上益發積極地往「面」發展，〈戰役〉中以血紅與土黃的拼貼紙塊，無論是橫向延展，或是採過往較少見的菱形，在色彩與結構上明確地定義畫面中不安的動勢。相較於早先文字或詩詞入畫，〈戰役〉中的文字則愈加脫離指涉意涵的功能，讓有時渾融、有時頓滯、有時紊亂，有時則如劃破長空般闖進畫面的筆觸，交錯穿梭在塊面中，直觀地表現戰亂的動蕩。

值得一提的是，60年代初期莊喆的創作多以92 x 60公分至92 x 120公分大小不等的單幅作品為主，〈戰役〉則是莊喆早期少數的大型雙聯屏作品，並以如此的尺幅，令其一路以來簡筆繪畫、紙張拼貼、延展式構圖到加入文字的創作特色，有了更從容的伸展空間。

莊喆在臺灣藝術界對於「中國現代畫」和「現代中國畫」的爭論中，獨樹一格地讓中西媒材相交、相應、相融，開創一種嶄新的現代繪畫。然而，莊喆的繪畫並非單純解決視覺形式的問題，如何傳達「精神」或許是更深切的關懷。〈戰役〉一作具體地闡釋藝術家如何思索「抽象」的意義：並非與具象二元對立，而是一種精神探險的藝術，具有動感，滿足他對外界的反應與感受。¹ 〈戰役〉中的血色大地，呈現了莊喆所謂「詩的」抽象畫內涵，自然地流入生命中的感受與記憶，無論是幼年時輾轉遷徙至臺灣的戰亂經驗，或創作此作時美國參與越戰的擾攘，透過圖像與心象的動態平衡，流露藝術家對人世熱情的關切，甚至不分時地、具有普世性地，觸及觀者的心緒，令人聯想當代人類面對戰役同樣承受的種種無助、驚懼與苦難。（陳慧盈）

1 葉維廉，〈恍惚見形象，縱橫是天機——與莊喆談畫象之生成〉，《與當代藝術家的對話：中國畫的生成》（臺北：東大圖書公司，1987），頁197-198。

Starting in the late 1950s, when he joined the Fifth Moon Group, Chuang Che embarked on a journey of revolutionizing composition and materials to consider the essence of painting. His work *The Battle* reflects the establishment of his early style while also hinting at later artistic developments.

Skilled at both art theory and practice, Chuang published his *An Essay on Modern Painting* in 1966, an anthology of his previously published theoretical writings, in which he organized his thinking about modern painting in a step-by-step fashion and discussed the universality and modernity of Chinese painting from his own cultural perspective. In the same year, Chuang received support from the John D. Rockefeller 3rd Fund and traveled to the United States to observe and study modern art and then to Europe for six months, returning to Taiwan in 1968. Arts and cultural development in Taiwan in the late 1960s was advanced by the Fifth Moon Group's active promotion of modern painting, and their collective actions gradually gave way to more individual pursuits. Taiwan also saw the emergence of complex art trends, a more aggressive break with traditional painting conventions, and the expansion and blending of various art forms. Chuang's individual experiences of this period, as well as changes in the larger environment, served as the background for the creation of *The Battle*.

Chuang conducted several experiments in search of a balance between the rich and heavy texture of oil paint and the dynamism created by the varying amount of water and ink in ink painting. He also investigated the use of different brushes and other objects to create roughly drawn, dynamic lines, weighing possible correlations between abstract qualities in Chinese calligraphy and Western painting. In 1963, he started employing collage, which not only became an intermediary between oil, water, ink, paper, and canvas, but also left ink traces and folds that revealed the process of integrating these different materials, as well as added layers and a sense of mass to his paintings. After returning from America, Chuang started to actively develop his focus on the picture plane, and in *The Battle*, we see pieces of blood red and ocher paper collaged on the surface, which clearly defined an uneasy momentum in the painting in terms of color and composition with their horizontal extensions and rarely heretofore seen rhombus shapes. In contrast to earlier paintings, which included words or even verse, *The Battle* contains words that are more detached from their usual function of referring to meaning. He also intuitively let brushstrokes, some fluid and harmonious, others discordant, chaotic, and bursting into the painting like a sword lacerating the sky, crisscross and shuttle across the picture plane to express the chaos of war.

It is worth mentioning that the dimensions of most of Chuang's canvases from the early 1960s varied from 92 x 60 cm to 92 x 120 cm, but *The Battle* is a rare example of one of the artist's early large-scale double-paneled works. The dimensions of the painting allowed elements often seen in Chuang's paintings, such as simple brushwork, paper collage, horizontal composition, and the addition of words, more space to expand.

Amid the controversy over “Chinese modern painting or modern Chinese painting” in the Taiwanese art world, Chuang Che is unique for creating a new kind of modern painting where Chinese and Western art media intersect, correspond, and blend. However, his paintings do not just solve the problems of visual form, as he cares more deeply about how to convey his spirit. With *The Battle*, the artist specifically expounds on the significance of abstraction—not through binary opposition with representational painting—but rather by presenting an art of spiritual exploration that is dynamic and satisfies his desire to feel and respond to the external world.¹ The blood red area in *The Battle*, presents what the artist calls poetic abstract painting, which arises from the feelings and memories that have flowed naturally into his life, whether they be from his childhood in war-torn China when he migrated to Taiwan, or his time when making this work in the United States during the tumultuous Vietnam War era. Irrespective of time or place, the dynamic equilibrium between image and imagery in the work reveals the artist's passionate concern for our world and universally impacts viewers' affective states even today, reminding them of the helplessness, suffering, and terror experienced in the face of war. (Chen Hui-Ying)

1 Yip, Wai-lim, “Faint Image and Divine Messages—A Conversation with Chuang Che on His Creation,” *Dialogues with Contemporary Chinese Painters* (Taipei: The Grand East Book Company, 1987), pp. 197-198.

