

# 夏陽

## HSIA Yan

1932-

夏陽，本名夏祖湘，出生於湖南湘鄉的書香門第，父母早逝，由祖母撫養成長，在南京就讀中學期間，以線條畫人頭踏入藝術之境。1949年隨軍隊與國民政府撤退來臺，後轉調臺北空軍總部擔任文書上士。1956年，與同在鼓勵學生自由探索的李仲生畫室學習之蕭勤、吳昊、霍剛等八人籌組東方畫會，3年後從軍中退伍。

夏陽的生命歷程始終處於跨文化的流動之中。自巴黎、紐約、臺北和上海，長期遷徙拓展了他的視野，使其創作持續在東方傳統文化價值與現代藝術前衛實驗之間往返探尋。於此脈絡下，他以「人的形象」追問「人的原型」，尤關注異鄉人的存在處境。然而，這種「異鄉感」並非僅侷限於題材、場景的設定，亦非單純的地理或身分指涉，而是深植於「線條」這一東方藝術核心語彙的延展及變化之中，藉此揭示漂泊、疏離與無所歸屬的離散心境。

〈36人像聯作〉完成於2002年，正值夏陽遷居上海之際。此作在其創作譜系中頗具特殊性，不再呈現慣常的整體人像，而以半身肖像為核心，結合壓克力與拼貼手法，描繪出36張自具象雛形漸趨抽象的臉孔。筆觸或疾速奔放、或游移恍惚，間或曲折堅韌，並在單純的底色或跌宕的背景中浮現，使敘事性淡化，視覺焦點遂凝聚於線條的流動與張力，進而指向「人」的本質。夏陽曾於接受謝里法訪談時指出，東方語境中的線條不同於西方繪畫中劃分空間的功能；它自具變化與運動性，亦承載精神的凝聚力。〈36人像聯作〉正藉此特質界定人物輪廓，卻不囿於傳統肖像的辨識或再現，而讓形象遊走於清晰／模糊之間，承載心理、情感和存在的多重意涵，形塑出既難辨卻深刻的人性群像。

此組作品與1994至1996年間的〈百顏聯作〉相互呼應，卻展現不同趣味。〈百顏聯作〉以纏繞漂浮的多彩線條塑造肖像，為萌發於1960年代旅居巴黎時期「毛毛人」風格的高度體現；〈36人像聯作〉則傾向單色處理，以黑、白、灰的交錯映現，使線條與塊面更顯銳利颯爽，視覺張力尤為強烈。這一轉折呼應夏陽自1999年起將「毛毛人」語彙延伸為單色金屬雕塑的實踐，使此作亦呈現近乎雕塑化的質感與觸覺張力。同時，夏陽亦持續引用中國傳統藝術元素，在此階段將民間剪紙的拼貼技法融入畫面，為作品增添層次與結構，使毛毛語彙在材質與表現上更趨多元並蓄。

值得注意的是，夏陽亦賦予〈36人像聯作〉高度的展示自由。無論是人像間的距離、排列順序，或畫框的選擇，都能依不同情境重新配置，為策展實踐提供更大的彈性與詮釋空間。這種開放性既體現藝術家自如的創作態度，亦映照其長年輾轉於異鄉的經驗，對藝術語言自由性與延展性的深刻體認。作品因而能在不同展示語境下不斷生成新的對話與意義，彰顯夏陽藝術實踐的流動本質。（陳慧盈）

Born Hsia Zuxiang into a literary family in Xiangxiang, Hunan Province, Hsia Yan was raised by his paternal grandmother after the untimely death of both his parents. His interest in art began with portrait sketches as a middle and high school student in Nanjing. In 1949, he retreated with the Nationalist government and military to Taiwan, where he served as a sergeant in an administrative role at the Air Force Command Headquarters in Taipei. In 1956, while studying at the painting studio of Lee Chun-Shan, where students were encouraged to explore freely, he co-founded the Ton Fan Group with seven of his classmates, including Hsiao Chin, Wu Hao, and Ho Kan. Three years later, he was discharged from the military.

Hsia Yan has lived a life shaped by cross-cultural movement. From Paris and New York to Taipei and Shanghai, Hsia traveled and resided abroad, expanding his vision and continually exploring traditional Eastern values and avant-garde experimentation with his artwork. Within this context, he has employed figurative images to interrogate human archetypes, paying special attention to the existential conditions of the displaced. However, this sense of foreignness has not been confined to subject matter or setting, nor solely to locale or identity, but rather is deeply rooted in the extension and evolution of line—the core of Eastern art's visual language. In this way, he has evoked a diasporic sensibility of wandering, alienation, and rootlessness.

Completed in 2002 when Hsia Yan had just moved to Shanghai, *Thirty-Six Portraits* is distinctive within the artist's creative trajectory. Departing from his customary full-body portraits, the work adopts half-length figures, combines collage and acrylic paint, and centers on thirty-six faces that progress from figurative prototypes to abstraction. The brushwork is by turns swift and unrestrained, wavering and trance-like, or firm and sinuous, and is set against backgrounds that alternate between plain and undulating. This serves to de-emphasize narrative content and shift the visual focus onto the flow and tension of his lines, ultimately indicating the essence of humanity. In an interview with artist and art historian Hsieh Li-Fa, Hsia Yan noted that line in the Eastern context differs from that in Western painting, where it serves to divide space; instead, it embodies change and movement while carrying spiritual cohesion. In *Thirty-Six Portraits*, Hsia employs these properties to delineate his figures, yet resists the constraints of identifying with traditional portraiture or representation. He allows the images to vacillate between clarity and obscurity while conveying psychological, emotional, and existential implications and forming an indistinct yet profound portrait of humanity.

*Thirty-Six Portraits* echoes his *One-Hundred Faces*, made from 1994 to 1996, although the two works differ in sensibility. In *One-Hundred Faces*, vividly colored lines that intertwine and float through the work construct faces, representing a mature expression of his *Fuzzy People* style, which first emerged during Hsia's Paris period in the 1960s. In contrast, in *Thirty-Six Portraits*, the choice of black, white, and gray renders interwoven lines and shapes even sharper and more spirited while intensifying visual tension. This shift parallels Hsia's practice since 1999 of extending the visual language of *Fuzzy People* into monochromatic metal sculpture, thus endowing this two-dimensional expression with sculptural texture and tactile tension. At the same time, Hsia Yan continued to reference traditional Chinese art by introducing collage techniques from the folk art of paper-cutting into his works. Such additions enriched the structural layering of his compositions and made his *Fuzzy People* vocabulary increasingly diverse in both material and expression.

Notably, Hsia Yan granted a high degree of flexibility for the display of *Thirty-Six Portraits*—allowing adjustment in the spacing between portraits, their order, and framing. As such, the work can be reconfigured according to circumstances, giving curators greater flexibility and interpretive freedom. This openness reflects the artist's relaxed and natural attitude toward creation, his long experience of living in and passing through countries, and deep understanding of the expansiveness and freedom of artistic language. As a result, this artwork can continually engender new dialogues and meanings in different exhibition contexts, manifesting the fluid nature of Hsia Yan's artistic practice. (Chen Hui-Ying)

36 人像聯作 Thirty-Six Portraits

2002

壓克力顏料、拼貼、畫布 Acrylic and collage on canvas

45.5 x 38 cm (x36)

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