

The Interview of Hi Art on Xiao Jiang's Solo Exhibition in 2012

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Young Man who Chases the Time

It seems that he is always chasing time, but fortunately, with a good state of mind, or as Xiao Jiang himself puts it with self-deprecating humour, "as a thick-skinned person, my heart is always strong enough". And perhaps, it is more important than the ideal is always there. "Mentioning ideal is a little bit exaggerated, however, you need to have an idea to achieve a good accomplishment. Knowing that what you want is still a long way off, no matter the current situation is dire or your financial life is good, the only thing you can do is to move on, which certainly has nothing to do with whether your life is good or bad." Although nobody says that he is not a young man, when Xiao Jiang, who was born in Jiangxi province in 1977, refers to "young", he always adds "at least in his professional experience". Xiao Jiang says that it was in 2001 when he really found his true goal, the direction to move on. Before that time, he kept painting without specific themes and wasting a lot of time to do some meaningless things.

For example, after graduation from a normal university, Xiao Jiang went to work in Jinggangshan Culture Center as an art designer. After six or seven years, unable to give up his passion for China Academy of Art, he gave up the job and went there for further study. During the process studying there, his paintings always got a lot of compliments from others, which, to some extent, satisfied his vanity. However, at the same time, he also accepted some suggestions, that's why, to get better development, he chose to take part in the postgraduate entrance exam. But although he tried his best, he still could not learn English well. "At that time, in order to learn English, I didn't paint a single picture for almost one year. Now when I looked back, I really think it was a waste of time."

Xiao Jiang is a person who knows in his own heart what he wants to do all the time, but always, by accident, finds his direction in other people's "maps". As a result, he fell a little behind his peers. It was not until 2008 that he got a chance for his first exhibition. Although it was not a group exhibition of particular importance, which required self-financing to participate, this exhibition is of great and extraordinary significance to Xiao Jiang. "It is not so important how I got that chance. For me, I used to paint only for myself, which I would not be able to bear no matter how strong nerves I had. But because of that exhibition, my works got the chance to be shown to others, which made me feel that what I had down was very meaningful."

Specifically speaking, the significance of this kind of exhibition is that, on one hand, he could get the chance to understand both himself and his creations from other people's perspectives, and on the other hand, he could gain another exposure opportunity through it. However, in view of Xiao Jiang's subsequent development, he has gained a lot from this exhibition. In 2011, he held his solo exhibition for the first time in Shanghai Vanguard Gallery. Thanks to this exhibition, the opportunity again showed favours to this young man who had been preparing himself for a long time. In December 2012, Platform China launched his solo exhibition named "the Navigation Mark without the River". Xiao Jiang said that the works exhibited in Vanguard Gallery are selected from those

completed creations, which should be regarded as an exhibition for “the past”, while the exhibition on Platform China is appointed in advance, which should be classified as the exhibition belonging to “the future”. Such a process of creating for a specific exhibition once made this young man, who considered himself with little experience, flustered for a long time, and did not know how to paint. “Having a short-term experience of art, I had to go through all these,” said Xiao Jiang with a smile.

Colours filtered from memory

Without a drink, the artist, who considered himself not good at chatting, began to turn emotional as he talked about the memories involved in the images. “When I was a child, the houses in my hometown connected in a row with a passage, so that you could come in from the first house and go outside from the last one. This kind of passage was basically parallel with the road. You could walk on the road or through the houses. It was actually a working place, however, we kids didn’t care that much, and unlike nowadays, we didn’t need to show any papers or other documents...The passageway was always dark, with green walls and floor painted red...”

Based on such a kind of memory, most of Xiao Jiang’s paintings are empty scenes made up of some old metal objects and decayed walls, which seem to be devoid of substance, but always make people unbearable to recall the stories that have happened there through a certain time and space. Of course, rather than really want to tell stories, Xiao Jiang uses scenes to express his subjective feelings. “I have always been interested in the scenes of daily life. After going through the baptism of time, there are always some colours filtered out from it, which touches me a lot.” However, it is not just Xiao Jiang who was moved, I am also really fond of the colours in his paintings.