

Interview: View of Art

Cheng Zuo 程作

Biography

Cheng ZUO, an artist mainly focus on oil painting. He is a member of Henan Artists Association and director of Oil Painting Research Association. He has repeatedly won national oil painting awards.

程作，油画家，中国美术家协会会员，河南省美术家协会理事，河南省油画学会会长，河南省油画研究会会长。曾多次在全国性油画比赛中获奖。

Interview

Jackie GAO: In this talk, we left out the identities of teachers and students. Taking the pandemic as the central topic, we have made a subjective interpretation from the perspective of the artist. Before the conversation started, I prepared a few topics in advance to facilitate the development of the topic:

Art creation transformation, the exploration of the artist's self-positioning, the profound experience during the period, the trend of Art turning to online.

These topics have been already informed to Mr. Cheng ZUO in advance, so the following dialogues were all naturally occurred around these topics.

艺术创作的转型，对艺术家自我定位的探索，疫情期间的深刻体验，艺术转向线上的趋势。

这些话题已经提前告知了程作先生，所以接下来的对话都是围绕这些话题自然发生的。

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The names would be abbreviated as “Jackie” (Jackie GAO), and “ZUO” (Mr. Cheng ZUO)

(“ ” “ ”)

ZUO: Okay, let's start with the first question, the impact of the pandemic on my life and art creation. In fact, the pandemic hasn't affected my life that much. Art creation is a very private thing to me, so I usually stay in the studio alone, regardless of the outbreak. However, some things during this period, such as seeing people wear masks, the temperature checks before entering public places, etc had an impact. These things always reminded me of its cruelty, that is, facing the nature of it, like these sudden public health incidents, human beings are really fragile and insignificant in the grand scheme of things.

Regarding the extraordinary events, it was not only the pandemic that has touched me the most, because, during the SARS period (China once suffered from SARS which was a serious infectious disease in 2003), I was in Beijing at the time, so as a result, I already had experience of facing a sudden emergency. What the pandemic reminded me of is when, a few years ago, I was in Côte d'Ivoire, Africa, there was a military coup d'état, so that we could suddenly hear the gunshots or see the riots in the streets. Every night we dared not even turn on the lights, and then we could see orange-red in the sky, anti-aircraft guns, and the streets were full of light and heavy weapons such as machine guns. All the experiences mentioned above have similarly inspired me, making me feel there it is only a moment between life and death.

too much from other beings, we should always be grateful, and we can't get something for nothing.

The virus is merciless, it treats everyone equally, regardless of whether they are rich or poor. Therefore, I have always hoped that everyone could understand a point, that is, human beings are a community with a shared future on earth, and our destinies are connected together, so no matter what kind of discrimination, it should be cast aside.

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Jackie: Exactly! To be honest, it is very hard for us to achieve the equality of all beings like post-human view. First of all, let alone all the other things that exist on earth, there are still inequalities around race, gender, culture, religion, etc. among us, which we need to overcome.

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ZUO: Yesterday my son talked to me about watching a movie, called the darkness of human nature or something. And I told him that in places where the sun couldn't shine on, that was, dark places. Where we can't see, there is actually a lot of little things and creatures still living, which are also worthy of our serious consideration. I watched a documentary before. It was about the multitude of mice on the earth today than we humans but, we couldn't see them because they are all underground, in dark places. So I suddenly understood a truth, that was when you are standing in the sunshine, in fact, there are many other things that happen in many places you can't see. This is a deep but helpless realisation. For example, during the pandemic, many experts in the medical field were treating patients day and night, but there were still a large number of people who couldn't be treated every day. We have



困境中的Z-12

21x27cm

左程 2020.7.17

The Z in trouble-12 Cheng ZUO



困境中的Z-8

21x27cm

左程 2020.7.15

The Z in Trouble Cheng ZU0



困境中的Z-13

21x27cm

左程 2020.7.17

The Z in trouble-13 Cheng ZUO



大地--202019

21x27cm

左程 2020.7.16

The Ground202019 Cheng ZUO



大地--202015

21x27cm

左程 2020.7.12

The Ground 202015 Cheng ZUO



无尽江山--1

21x27cm 左程 2020.7.17

The Endless Landscape Cheng ZUO



Everything about the X
Cheng ZUO

Honestly, the happiness of artists lies in here. During the lockdown, I can integrate myself into my works like an actor,

and I could be in a variety of environments, such as spaces that we couldn't go to, this is interesting. Just like we are reading a novel, 1,000 people have 1,000 Hamlets in their minds. As a result, I hope I could turn thousands of small people into paintings, going to different places and trying different lives instead of only having a single life track stuck in reality.

1000 people have 1000 Hamlets in their minds. I hope I could turn thousands of small people into paintings, going to different places and trying different lives instead of only having a single life track stuck in reality.



白鸟---5

55x55cm

左程 2020.4.27

The White Bird-5 Cheng ZUO

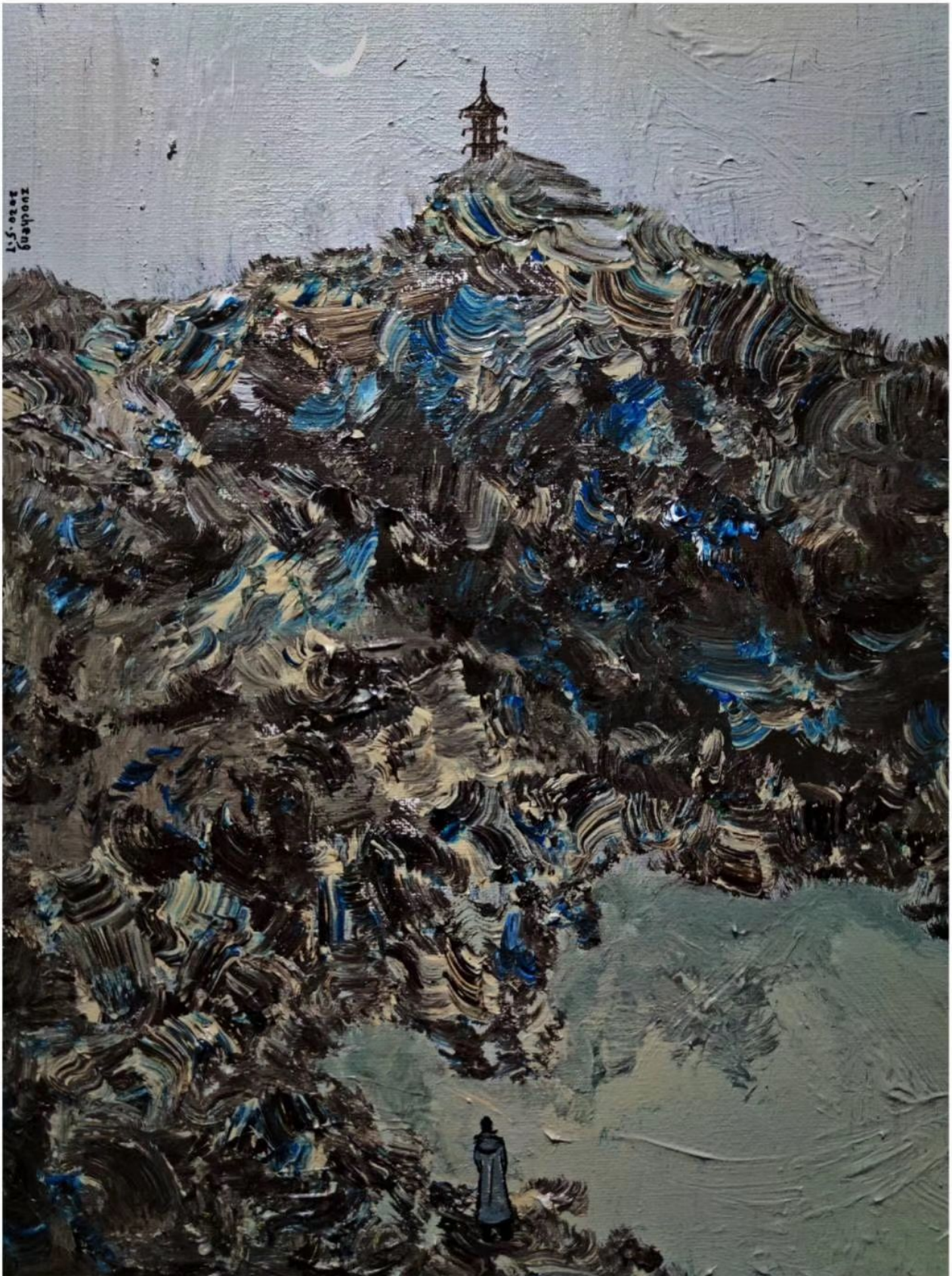


寻塔---5

50x50cm

左程 2020.4.28

Looking for the Tower-5. Cheng ZUO



寻塔--月下

30x40cm

左程 2020.5.7

Looking for the Tower—Under the Moonlight



曾经有一场雪---3 40x60cm 左程 2020.5.5

Here used to be Snowing-3 Cheng ZUO



寻塔---2

55x55cm

左程 2020.4.24

Looking for the Tower-2. Cheng ZUO



童年时光---3

21x27cm

左程 2020.6.17

Childhood-3. Cheng ZUO

As far as I am concerned, the pandemic has brought me both



困境中的Z--16

53x78cm

左程 2020.11.28

The Z in Trouble. Cheng ZUO

Placeholder text consisting of two lines of rectangular blocks.

Jackie: Exactly, this involves the issue of the status quo of the artist, because if some artists do not commercialize their works, they might have no way of sustaining their own lives, so many artists would have a part-time or a side job. This reminds me of a problem, that is, artists have largely deviated from the field of career, and appear more as an identity, that is, taking art as their lifelong goal and pursuit. From the moment you recognize yourself as an artist, many of your perspectives would be changed. You would also stand in the position of an artist to observe your life and the surrounding world in an all-round way, and integrate art into your whole life. I also find that very interesting.

Placeholder text consisting of four lines of rectangular blocks.

ZUO: So I said an artist should come to be a person firstly, and real artists wouldn't worry about their identity. If you could still use your artistic potential as you are in a normal living and working environment, this is admirable, due to you have to live a life firstly, I think these two were not contradicted with each other.

Placeholder text consisting of two lines of rectangular blocks.

Jackie: Right, an artist seems to be in a lifelong pursuit. I think this is great. He has a perspective and a positioning, a lifelong aspiration, which is beyond the scope of many careers, and it's closely related to life.

Placeholder text consisting of two lines of rectangular blocks.

As when we were talking before, our identities were not particularly clear. It may be due to our teacher-student relationship or the chat environment. Our discussions were always mixed with many identities. However, today our conversation is completely about an interviewee and an interviewer, and we are developing around your identity as an artist. I think this becomes more interesting and gives me more in terms of the art of refining space.

This interview has benefited me a lot, thank you, teacher.

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Cheng Zuo is a great mentor and my helpful friend. He has not only brought me artistic enlightenment but also helped me to resolve the confusion and difficulties in my life. Everyone has a "mentor" in your life. He/she may be your friend, you parents or families, they could always clarify the difficulties for you and resolve your confusion.

This period has brought us a lot of negativity and anxiety. Therefore, maybe it's time for you to have in-depth communication with your mentor based on art, in order to find yourself a bright light and dispel the haze.

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Please share your experience of conversation on the comment section below! We'd like to hear from you!

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