

陈飞：镜花缘

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地址：胶囊上海，上海徐汇区安福路 275 弄 16 号 1 层

在很长一段时间里，从罗德岛艺术与设计学院系统学习绘画开始，陈飞 (Daniel Chen) 都在画具象绘画，他描绘他的家乡阿拉巴马州高饱和度金黄的阳光下的谷物，给予他温暖及归属感的母亲的厨房和作为一个亚裔男性身体的对自己的凝视。他自己谈到那些早期的绘画是他自身生活的治愈——他父辈第一代家族移民经历和自身的成长经验之歌。

胶囊上海荣幸呈现陈飞的首次个展“镜花缘”，展览标题来自于清代李汝珍创作的魔幻志怪小说，小说中描述了主人公乘船在海外游历包括“女儿国”以及女性在朝廷中有所作为的故事。这部小说歌颂女性的才华，挑战当时性别传统的束缚。作为华裔艺术家陈飞，以此作为首次展览的标题，他想挑战抽象绘画的历史传统，同样花这个意象也作为重要的线索贯穿他的创作图景中。于艺术家而言，花象征爱，美与时间：施予与馈赠花是一种爱的表达；“夜来风雨声，花落知多少”¹，花瓣的零落是对韶光易逝的伤感，也是艺术家无数孤独心碎的独处时刻。画中的花瓣的每一笔都是他存在的痕迹，是爱的语言。

陈飞的绘画语言有表现主义的痕迹，他在画布上一层层堆砌、破坏抑或是建立，再重组覆以一层新的构图和形态。于艺术家而言，这些看不见的层次也是时间的痕迹的体现，他将油画颜料视为一种雕塑的材料，经过反复堆砌切割，再次涂抹。他的绘画手感中拿捏着一种童真的乐趣，如孩童玩耍乐高积木的过程，充分发挥想象力运用特定的色彩组合和模块，组合出别样景观。在陈飞这里，积木变成了色彩，你必须充分了解绘画游戏的规则才能呈现属于自己独特的意象。每一块组成的比例是

事先精确计算草稿后再形成的结果，最终的形象合成潜意识心灵中的多层次的风光。如《过桥》(2022) 这张，艺术家将鸟瞰的城市街景和高明亮的霓虹灯光，通过特定的结构比例和他个人的色彩公式，绘制入翻开的书籍形象。又如《无题 (黄山)》(2020) 这张，在他第一次从出生成长在美国回父辈家乡黄山之后，他立刻明白中国山水绘画中的情感、气韵和意境，他联想到了第一次看到热爱的乔治·修拉 (Georges Seurat) 的点绘画的笔触，他用系统训练的绘画经验来实现他心目中的山水。

“镜花缘”是艺术家移居上海后在中国的首次个展，在你了解完陈飞的所有故事之后，再一次看他的绘画你会知道，真正的绘画来自诚恳的面对自我的良心，来自勇敢地面对无数个孤绝时刻。你必须诚实地面对组成自己的过去，现在，才可以诚实地面对自己的未来。艺术家笔下的每一朵花瓣都变成一片爱或者不爱的罪证，你爱或不爱，爱的语言就在那里。

文 / 程敏

2022年12月31日

¹ 《春晓》(唐) 孟浩然

Daniel Chen: Flowers in the Mirror**Dates: 2023.01.10 – 02.25****Address: Capsule Shanghai, 1st Floor, Building 16, Anfu Lu 275 Nong, Xuhui District, Shanghai, China**

Beginning with his academic training in painting at the Rhode Island School of Design, for a long time, Daniel Chen painted figurative images of grain fields under the highly saturated golden sun of his native Alabama; his mother's kitchen that gave him a sense of warmth and belonging; and the gaze directed to his own body as an Asian male. He speaks of those early paintings as a healing process through his personal life — a song that commemorates the sentiments as a child of a first-generation immigrant family.

Capsule Shanghai is pleased to present Daniel Chen's first solo exhibition "Flowers in the Mirror", which takes its title from the Qing-Dynasty supernatural-fantasy (*Mohuan Zhiguai*) novel, in which the main protagonists travel by boat to fantasized lands, including the Women's Kingdom (*Nv'er Guo*) with tales of women making their way in the imperial court. The novel celebrates the talents of female figures and challenges the constraints of gender traditions of the time. Adapting the same title for his debut exhibition, Chen intends to challenge the history of abstraction as a Chinese American painter. Here, the imagery of flowers serves as an essential thread that blooms through his creative landscape. For the artist, flowers symbolize love, beauty and time: offering and gifting flowers can be an expression of love — "Blame it on the wind and rain of last night, that countless flowers dropped off to the ground."² — the scattering petals reflect the sorrow for the time passing, as well as countless moments of heartbreak and solitude. Each stroke of the painted petals is a trace of his presence - a language of love.

Chen's painting language harks back to expressionism; he piles, deconstructs or builds up layers of paint on the canvas, and then reorganizes them into new compositions and forms. For the artist, these buried layers embody the traces of time as he treats oil paint almost like sculptural materials, repeatedly stacking, trimming and reapplying it.

There is childlike joy in his touch, akin to a kid playing with Lego blocks, giving his imagination a playground to use specific color combinations and modules to assemble different compositions. In Chen's case, the building blocks are colors; one must grasp the rules of this painterly game in order to create a unique image of one's own. The proportion of each composition is guided by a precise draft made beforehand, and the final image is assembled to form a manifold landscape of the subconscious mind. In *Cross Bridge* (2022), for example, the artist incorporates an aerial view of the city streets with bright neon lights into the form of an open book with precise structural proportions and his unique formula of colors. After his first trip to Mount Huangshan in his familial hometown Anhui from the United States, where he grew up, he immediately realized the emotions, rhythms and aura in Chinese landscape paintings. He then recalled his first encounter with the dotted brushstrokes of Georges Seurat, an all-time admired painter of Chen's. In *Untitled (Huangshan)* (2020), Chen decides to use his formal training in painting to visualize the landscape that is preserved in his heart.

"Flowers in the Mirror" is the artist's first solo exhibition in his familial homeland China. Upon learning about Chen's story, looking at his works, you are reminded that a genuine work of art comes from an earnest confrontation with oneself and from the courage to embrace solitude. Looking deep into the past and present that make up who you are empowers you to welcome the future with honesty. Each petal grown under the artist's brush is a testament to the existence of love. Whether you are a believer or not, the language of love is written there.

Text by Cheng Min
December 31, 2022

² A *Spring Morning* by Tang Dynasty poet Meng Haoran.