

## On Ji Xin's Painting

By Li Guohua

In the logic of art history since Duchamp, painting has been put in deeper and deeper “embarrassment”, because more and more materials and approaches have been introduced, and painting, as a commodity, can now be easily purchased and resold, symbolizing its loss of the front in avant-garde ideology. But, anyway and undoubtedly, painting is still an artist's most effective way of examining himself and expressing feelings, as one can find here both people's experiences in daily life and the different values, worldviews and tastes that every artist's endowed with in different civilizations and times. Apparently in artist Ji Xin's painting, we can also feel that he's been influenced by the classical tastes of China and the West and by the unnamable sense of “bewilderment” and “solitude” brought to young men by this new millennium.

A graduate from the Oil Painting Department of China Academy of Art, Ji Xin is certainly and tremendously attracted by European paintings of the classical period. Lin Fengmian's emphasis on “blending Chinese and Western styles”, instead of Pan Tianshou's viewing of Chinese and Western paintings as two incomparable peaks, is getting closer and closer to the current reality; especially with the rise of economic globalization and an Internet world, opinions on the cultural opposition between China and the West are rapidly disappearing from the world of young artists like Ji Xin. In the meantime, more attention is paid to the questions of forms and techniques that are raised from the need to express emotions and ideas, but not to the cultural sources of painting motifs or elements. In this sense, Ji Xin's painting shows more freedom. Such “freedom” is certainly not the ultimate goal but the artist's “approach” to his inner world and to the manifestation of daily life.

So when we see that Ji Xin's trying to show a heterogeneous world to the audience – a child with lotus coming out of mouth, a teen with a foot on a ball, human figures and animals in some dramatic scenario, we still know that, as matter of fact, he's focusing more on the expression of his inner world. These scenes may seem full of childish fun, humor and even of some absurdity, but one can always feel from deep within an indistinct sense of “solitude” and “unease”. Not all lives in this once-shut-away country show due adaptation to the tangible advent of globalization, consumerism and multiculturalism. The past fields and gardens have been replaced by reinforced concrete, and the leisurely rural life also broken by intense and anxious urbanization; Internet may have brought us unprecedentedly abundant information, but it's also chopping our life into pieces continuously. It's under such a background, just like abstract art rose as a reflection on the infinite duplication of the industrialization time, it's in this period that how painting can help find peace in this bustling world gets to be many artists' choice. So Ji Xin's painting of those dramatic scenes is also his unique way to confront reality and keep his inner world independent and peaceful. Such peace may not be what modern art historians have been expecting or contribute in any substantial way to the progress of art history, but undeniably, descriptions like this are a real kind of depiction of many mentalities today.

Painting is valuable for its permanent and important role of helping artists introspect and deny or fight against reality. And its tenacity is maintained by respecting the truth of every individual soul and thus helping artists realize the freedom of life. Therefore, Ji Xin's painting may be only a tiny

little case of many struggling for the freedom of life in this vast world, but he shows us that what makes a good painting is not the great times or event it mirrors but its capability of respecting one's own unique experience and cultural background and blending them into its exclusive uniqueness in painting in the end.