



不拘一格

——关于任天进艺术的随想

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He Does So Many Different Things

Some Thoughts on TJ Ren's Art

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边界用以界定疆域、事物与人。然而在艺术中，边界亦指向特定形式的创造与鉴赏方式。纵观任天进在十年（2015–2025）间的创作，很难为其赋予单一身份——无论是书法家、油画家、雕塑家，还是实验艺术家。他的书法作品虽深植于传统结构与笔法，却呈现出惊人的“非传统”面貌，融入了现代主义理念与当代视觉语汇。他的创作明显受到日本书家井上有一（Inoue Yūichi, 1916–1985）及其师王冬龄的影响，却不愿囿于其风格范式，而是持续跨越书法与绘画的边界——如《智慧之影》将佛经书写于菩提叶上；亦游走于书写与非书写的界限——如以双影草书写就的《心经》，或将字形解构至不可读状态的《立春》。此类探索使他走上了一条远比前辈们更具实验性与当代性的道路。

天进进一步探索多种媒介，既有布面丙烯创作，亦涉足金属雕塑。然而纵观其作品，观者总能察觉到书法元素的持续在场，以及更深层次的、已提升至历史与哲学维度的汉字精神。对天进而言，东西方艺术的分野首先在于语言的隔阂。与此同时，书法提供了一个关键的相遇点，使中国传统绘画艺术与西方现当代艺术得以在“纯抽象”这一共同概念下进行对话。他的多件作品以画刀、画布仿效宣纸上的软毫笔意，创造出呼应宋元大家的山水意象。这

些构图难以简单归类为东方或西方。正如天进所言：“关于材料选择：若想从书法笔触入手作画，又追求立体效果，便离不开浓稠的颜料。以画刀‘书写’于画布，能使书法的节奏与韵律跃然其上。”

其雕塑作品同样值得关注，例如以不锈钢与镍银制成的“太湖石”，形态既写实又奇幻。通过将“东风”“东园”等汉字融入“赏石”这一独特的东方艺术范畴，天进跨越了二维与三维媒介的界限，从而在传统山水美学与当代空间构成之间建立了联结。这些陈列于旧金山亚洲艺术博物馆与上海博物馆东馆的雕塑，印证了一位艺术家如何将社会与文化意蕴嵌入艺术实践，并对国际观众产生广泛而持久的影响。

我们生活在一个技术空前进步，却又深陷社会、地缘政治与经济裂痕的时代。这样的时代背景，令人不禁想起著名画家石涛的艺术——他的一生，贯穿了十七世纪末至十八世纪初那段风云激荡的岁月。他曾逆当时主流之风，写道：“吾昔日见‘我用我法’四字，喜甚之……及今翻悟之，却又不然。夫茫茫大虚之中只有一法，得此一法则无往而非法，而必拘拘然名之为法……后之论者指而为吾法也可，指而为古人之法也可，即指而为天下之法亦无不可。”

对他而言，“一画之法立而万物著矣”。

天进未来将选择何种道路，尚未可知。然本书适时地对他的艺术实践进行反思，为艺术家与批评家揭示了前方的动态与可能。边界在不断被重新定义，艺术创作必须汲取跨学科、跨文化、跨技术的资源。但无论走向何方，保持自由的精神与开放的心胸，始终是此一进程中不可或缺的根本。

Boundaries serve to define territories, things, and people. In art, however, boundaries also refer to the ways in which particular forms are created and appreciated. Examining TJ Ren's production over a comparatively brief span of eight years (2015–2025), it is difficult to assign him a single identity—whether as a calligrapher, oil painter, sculptor, or experimental artist. His calligraphic works, although deeply rooted in traditional structures and brush techniques, appear strikingly “non-traditional,” infused with modernist concepts and a contemporary visual vocabulary. Clearly influenced by the Japanese calligrapher Inoue Yūichi (井上有一, 1916–1985) and by his own teacher Wang Dongling (王冬龄), TJ nevertheless refuses to remain confined to their stylistic paradigms. Instead, he consistently trespasses boundaries between calligraphy and painting—as in *The Shadow of Wisdom*, where Buddhist texts are written on leaves falling from a Bodhi tree—and between writing and non-writing—as in *The Heart Sutra*, executed in grass script with double shadows, or *Beginning of Spring*, where characters are deconstructed into unreadable forms. Such strategies set him on a path distinctly more experimental and contemporary than that of his predecessors.

TJ further explores diverse media, working with acrylics on canvas and creating metal sculptures. Yet, across his oeuvre, the viewer invariably perceives the persistent presence of calligraphic elements, and more profoundly, the spirit of Chinese writing elevated to both historical and philosophical registers. For TJ, the divergence between Eastern and Western art lies first in a linguistic gap. At the same time, calligraphy provides a crucial point of encounter, allowing Chinese traditional pictorial art and modern and contemporary Western art to communicate within the shared concept of “pure abstraction.” Several of his works employ palette knife and canvas as if they were soft-hair brushes on xuan paper, producing landscapes that echo the Song–Yuan masters. These compositions resist simple classification as either Eastern or Western. As TJ himself notes: “Regarding material selection: if one wishes to begin painting from the calligraphic

brushstroke while achieving a three-dimensional effect, thick-bodied paint is essential. Using a palette knife to ‘write’ with paint on canvas allows the rhythm and cadence of calligraphy to emerge vividly.”

Equally significant are his sculptural works, such as Taihu Rock, executed in stainless steel and nickel silver in naturalistic yet fantastic forms. By incorporating the characters *dong feng* (东风, “east wind”) and *dong yuan* (东园, “east garden”) into the classical category of “scholar’s rocks” or “stones for appreciation”—a distinct form of Eastern art — TJ traverses the boundary between two- and three-dimensional media. In doing so, he forges a link between traditional landscape aesthetics and contemporary spatial configurations. These sculptures, displayed prominently at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco and the Shanghai Museum’s new Pudong campus, testify to how an artist can embed social and cultural meaning into artistic practice and exert a broad, enduring influence on international audiences.

We live in an era of unprecedented technological advancement yet deep social, geopolitical, and economic division. This context recalls the art of the famous painter Shi Tao (石涛), who lived through the turbulence of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Against the mainstreams of his own time, Shi Tao once wrote: “In the past I was satisfied with the saying ‘I use my own method,’ ... but now I realize matters are not so simple. Amidst the great void, there exists but one method; if one can obtain it, then whatever one does follows that method..... In the future, those who speak of method may call it my method, or that of the ancient masters, or even the method of the universe.” For him, “the establishment of the method of one-painting (*yi hua*, 一画) completes the ten thousand things.”

Which path TJ will pursue in the future remains uncertain. Yet this book offers a timely reflection on his practice, illuminating the dynamics and possibilities that lie ahead for both artists and critics. Boundaries are continually being redefined, and artistic creativity must draw upon multidisciplinary, cross-cultural, and

trans-technological resources. Nevertheless, regardless of the trajectory taken, the maintenance of a free spirit and an open mind will remain essential to the process.