

A Study of Chen Yuming's *the Frame of History*

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Abstract:

Chen Yuming's painting the Frame of History gets well known in art area, which is closely related to his personal experience and art training. Since childhood, art found him and followed him all the way: when he joined the army; he met the traditional painter Li Boan and Zhou Sicong; he entered Tianjing Academy of Fine Arts; he studied in Liu Guohui's excellence class. All those rich experiences inspired him to find his own style. The Frame of History was born at that moment. It shows vivid individuals with different personalities that reveal the sorrow of this painful history.

Keywords:

Chen Yuming, Freehand Figure Painting, Ink Painting Characteristics

1. Historical problems and creative origins

Does the creation of contemporary Chinese figure painting have more possibilities besides inheriting traditional Chinese painting? This problem is not only related to the innovation of form and technique, but also related to the overall fate of contemporary Chinese painting. After thousands of years of experience, Chinese painting is facing the crisis of losing touch with reality and indulging in the old cliché.

In terms of the history of Chinese painting, figure painting originated earlier than other type, ink figure and mature arises at the historic moment along with the development of the fine brushwork figure painting, figure painting in the song dynasty period to a new height, the Yuan dynasty because of foreign ruling, the development of the whole figure painting has significantly slowed down, ink figure painting in Ming dynasty had certain development, the figure painting in the Qing dynasty on the whole. Most of the painters were addicted to making a living from the ancient sketch books, and the painting pattern became increasingly weak. The overall figure painting lacks the description of people's environment and attention to people's social life. Later, in the late 19th century and early 20th century, with the rise of the new culture movement, there were calls in the art field to advocate Western realism to reform Chinese painting. From the 1920s to the 1940s, the traditional literati painting, realism and Lin Fengmian's modernism formed a pluralistic pattern of natural differentiation. In the 1940s, with the deepening of the War of Resistance against Japan, the status of realism increased by day. In the 1950s, realism became the mainstream of painting,

and the aim of Chinese art was to serve politics and socialism. Before the 1970s, realism had always been the mainstream of painting. After the 1980s, with the advent of reform and opening up, Chinese and Western cultures collided and merged, and ink painting underwent significant changes in form and concept. After that, due to the influence of the Cultural Revolution, personal spirit became the focus of painting, and works gradually began to show personal feelings. From the 1990s to now, there have appeared in the ink painting field such as new literati painting, conceptual ink painting, abstract ink painting, experimental ink painting, urban ink painting and other schools, which have explored the new path of contemporary figure painting from different angles.

Before Chen Yuming created the *Frame of History*, the growth period of his Chinese painting can be roughly divided into three stages: the transition stage (1987), the learning stage (1984-1992), and the integration stage (1992-1993). The main representative work of the transition stage is *Frost Moon*, which marks Chen Yuming's transition from printmaking to Chinese painting. In the learning stage, I mainly studied Chinese painting in Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts and explored myself after graduation. In this stage, the works that can represent his standard are the *Ninety-Nine Turns of the Yellow River Under Heaven* and the unfinished military themed work "Going Out to War". The works of this period are mainly portrait style, with the combination of hook and dye, which is a very traditional freehand style. The background is mostly embellished, and the characters and environment do not achieve organic integration. From the human body sketching works of Chen Yuming in 1984-1985, it can be seen that on the basis of receiving sketch and sketch, his character modeling has a certain traditional basis, such as the sense of rhythm and rhythm of lines and ink. Digest more will transition stage and learning phase acquisition techniques and thinking in writing, this stage Chen Yuming has entered the China academy of fine arts of Chinese figure painting research class for high valuable experience, which has a very important phase in the back will be detailed here. At the same time, this stage for the frame of history of representative works.

From 1992 to 1993, Chen Yuming was elected to the advanced research class of Chinese figure Painting at the China Academy of Art. At that time, Liu Guohui, the tutor of the advanced research class, faced with the marketization of art and the invasion of Western art concepts, let these students enter the research state and launched a number of works with personality and big themes, which caused a lot of waves in the art circle. It was in this environment that Chen's *Frame of History* was born. When creating this painting, Chen could only refer to Jiang Zhaohe's "The Migrants", Zhou Sicong's "Mining Drawings" and Toshiko Akamatsu's *Nanjing Massacre*. Among them, Zhou Sicong's "Mining Drawings" had a very great influence on Chen Yuming. From Zhou Sicong's "Mining Drawings", Chen Yuming came to the conclusion that the characters need to be combined with the environment, and the natural environment and characters are fused together to achieve the Chinese philosophy of "the unity of nature and man". At the same time, this work is also Chen Yu-ming's representative work in the way of Chinese painting after integrating Keller Huizhi's print and Freud's shape. After that, his painting style changed again, and the painting began to emphasize composition. Line was no longer a simple outline, but one of the elements of composition. In terms of artistic thought, this masterpiece not only criticized and accused the inhuman behavior of fascists, but also expressed the unyielding spirit of the Chinese nation through the simple modeling of the characters. In this period, Liu Guohui had already jumped out of the "Xu Jiang system", which

emphasized the shape shaping, paid attention to the expression of light and volume and ignored the expression of Chinese painting language, and turned to emphasize the integration of accurate modeling and traditional ink language. Chen Yuming's painting style changed again under the influence of Liu Guohui and Zhou Sicong.

In modern times, various Western cultures were introduced into China, among which realism, after the introduction and integration into realism, dominated the painting circle for a long time and made significant contributions to the national political propaganda. The etchings of Kathy Klehuizi were introduced into China as early as Lu Xun's time. Later, realism became the mainstream and was gradually valued by the painting circle. Chen Yuming accepted and absorbed the composition of his paintings and the perspective of looking directly at the people. Cassie Klewitt lived through two world wars, and her paintings focus on themes such as death, war and maternal love. His work has social criticism and underlying concern, both of which are essential for realistic painting. Lucian Freud was noticed and imitated by Chinese realistic oil painters in the 1980s and 1990s, and was the Western painter who had the greatest influence on Chinese oil painting during this period. Chen Yuming chose his modeling style and internalized it into a unique modeling way in the process of long-term training and creation. Although it has been internalized as a unique style of modeling, a trace of Lucian Freud can be found in the portrait carefully. For example, the texture treatment of the face shows that Lucian Freud's portrait and self-portrait are chosen.

2. Chen Yuming and *the Frame of History*

Chen Yuming was born in 1958, luoyang, Henan province. In 1970, 12-year-old Chen Yuming learned from Li Boan. Then a lot of drawing and sketching practice established the foundation of his art career. in 1976 troops, experience the Yellow River next to the local customs and army life, at the same time to participate in art class forces, I got to know Mr. Guan Weixing. From 1977 to 1978, he went to Beijing to attend the art creation course held by the Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense. From 1979 to 1980, he took part in the art creation study course held by the Commission of Science and Technology for National Defense in Nanning, Guangxi. In 1981, he took part in the art creation course held by the Commission of Science and Technology for National Defense. In 1982, Chen's engraving "Journey" took part in the seventh National Print Exhibition and the Army Art Exhibition in Beijing. In 1983, he first walked along the Yellow River with his friends to sketch, and then attended a learning class held by the Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense, where Zhou Sicong and other teachers were invited to give lectures. In 1984, he was admitted to the painting Department of Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts, and laid the foundation of sketching and sketching. I studied the sketches of Menzel and Fishin, and the sketches of Degas and Hogarth. In 1985 following Bai Gengyan shanxi Yellow River sketch, the teacher in the same year also follows He Jiaying jia, MiZhi sketch, the teacher in 1986 following the army ChuangZuoYuan to sketch, guangxi nanning the front 1987 Chen Yuming alone along the Yellow River to the shenmu, fort gaos thought, ephedra beam, cliff painting flowers, in the meantime the frost monthly paintings such as joined the army art - Beijing. While reading the tianjin academy of that time will be the sketch and sketch to lay a solid foundation, gantry atzel, FeiXin, degas, hogarth learning make Chen Yuming master the line with the modelling of sketches, drawings, but he is not the acquisition of things perfectly integrated into the traditional Chinese

painting, then in Chen Dongzhi teacher professor with brush painting the body's way to make a new understanding of Chen Yuming. In 1987, he created his first early transformation work, Frost Moon, which transformed from sketch and print to ink figure painting. In 1988, he returned to his old army area near the garrison of Marshal He Long's troops, and his folktales led him to go there from time to time to collect materials and paint them, which was one of his early historical works. After being transferred to the Luoyang base of the Second Artillery Corps, Chen Yuming went to Xining and Ta'ersi in Qinghai Province to sketch. After being transferred to the Propaganda Office of a department of the Second Artillery Corps, Chen Yuming served as a cultural officer of the Cultural workstation. After being transferred to Beijing in 1989, Chen Yuming continued painting in the original mode, but found it easy to conceptualize. During this period, "Ridge on the Family" was selected in the seventh national Art Exhibition - Beijing, and in this period, with Zhang Wanchen, Jingjunshan to Wubao, ZaoLinping sketching. In 1992-1993, he was selected to the advanced study class of Chinese figure painting at the China Academy of Art, whose teacher happened to be Liu Guohui. One of Chen's original paintings, The Ninety-Nine Turns of the Yellow River Under the World, was asked to be repainted by Liu because it was too conceptual. Liu asked Chen to remove the conceptual elements. Later, Chen could refer to the works of Jiang Zhaohe, Zhou Sicong's Mining Drawings and Toshiko Akamatsu's Nanjing Massacre, which gave Chen another turn. His representative work is the Frame of History.

In 1980s, the Fine Arts education still followed the training of sketching. During this period, students of academy systems all turned to ink painting. Chen's paintings from 1984 to 1988 show obvious traces of transformation. In the two paintings of human body sketching in 1984, we can see the application and transformation of sketching skills in ink-and-wash character sketching. At this time, the shape is still westernized, but the lines are very accurate and have a certain sense of simplicity. It can be seen that the personal style has begun to change in the human body sketching in the brush painting class in 1985 (Figure 3, Figure 4), the portraits with hands by pen sketching (Figure 5), the Tibetans (Figure 6), the elderly people in northern Shaanxi (Figure 7), and the people in northern Shaanxi (Figure 8), but we can still see the volumetric lighting in them. The brush sketches during this period reveal the early form of Chen Yuming's theories such as "density", "addition", "subtraction" and "imperfection". In this period, his works like figures sketching (Figure 9) and ink and wash figures (Figure 10), are very traditional and academic school, but the modeling of each part of the figure has begun to integrate sketching techniques into Chinese painting. Through the works such sketch of characters with brush in 1986 (Figure 11) and the sketch of Yellow River Boatman's brush and pen (Figure 12) (Figure 13), we can see the transition of this unique method from pen sketching to writing brush sketching.

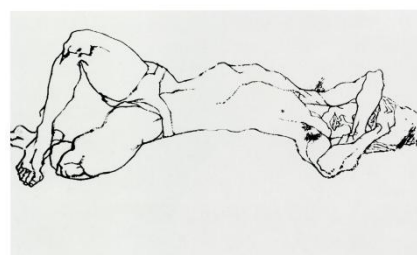
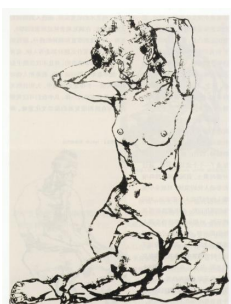


Figure 1. Chen Yuming, Ink figure sketch -1984- brush.



Figure 2. Chen Yuming, Ink figure drawing -1984- brush.



Figure 3. Chen Yuming, Figure Drawing -1985- brush.



Figure 4. Chen Yuming, Figure Drawing -1985- brush.



Figure 5. Chen Yuming, Characters-1985-pen.



Figure 6. Chen Yuming, Tibetan -1985- brush.



Figure 7. Chen Yuming, An Old Man from Shaanxi -1985- brush.



Figure 8. Chen Yuming, Shaanxi people -1985- brush.

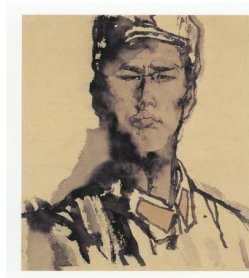


Figure 9. Chen Yuming, Ink Figure Drawing -1985- Ink painting.



Figure 10. Chen Yuming, Ink-Portraits Painting -1985- brush.



Figure 11. Chen Yuming, Portraits Painting -1986- Ink painting.



Figure 12. Chen Yuming, The Yellow River Boatmen -1986-brush.



Figure 13. Chen Yuming, The Yellow River Boatmen -1986-pen.



In 1987, Chen created Frost Moon (Figure 14), which can be seen in Chen's early printmaking skills before entering the academy of Fine Arts, and this painting also marks Chen's transition period.

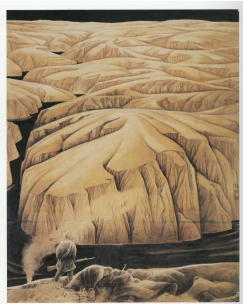


Figure 14. Chen Yuming, Frost Moon -1987.



Figure 15. Chen Yuming, Mountain Carriers-1988- Ink painting.



Figure 16. Chen Yuming, Families Living in Long Mountain-1988- Ink painting.

We see the typical composition factors are in the “Mountain Carriers” (Figure 15) and “Families Living in Long Mountain” (Figure 16) in 1988, both of which have inverted triangle composition.

During the four-year study in Tianjin university, Chen Yuming completely transformed to traditional Chinese painting (landscape painting, flowers and birds painting), by removing the interference of sketching elements of light, shade and volume. Because of the experience before Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts, he is sensitive to the composition of black and white drawing. The influence of Western painting allowed him to develop his own styles in the academy of Fine Arts.

3. The Creation of *the Frame of History*

The Frame of History is 190cm*1500cm in size. It reveals the brutal crime committed by the Japanese Army to Chinese people through a series of pictures. This long scroll adopted scatter perspective. Starting from the Japanese officer on the far left of the picture, the black shadow of his face deeply expresses his indifference and ruthlessness. Their military dog even sticks out its tongue happily. (Figure 17)



Figure 17. Chen Yuming, the Frame of history - Part 1.

The disregard and trampling of life is expressed incisively and vividly. The head of the corpse in the background of the Japanese Army and the body of some women in the picture show the faces of the victims. The person who was hanged on a stake is painted with ash to highlight the visual center of the blank part. There is a falling child in the center of the blank part (Figure 18).



Figure 18. *Chen Yuming, the Frame of history - Part 2.*

The dead bodies on the right corner of the picture are condemning the cruel slaughter. There is a great contrast between the blank part and the crying children as well as the baby sucking the breast milk of his dead mother (Figure 19).



Figure 19. *Chen Yuming, the Frame of history - Part 3.*

The viewers cannot help recalling the cruelty and ruthlessness of the Japanese “Nanjing Massacre” of the real tragedy. In the back the Japanese dogs are biting the bodies (Figure 20).



Figure 20. *Chen Yuming, the Frame of history - Part 4.*

The heavy ink technique of the dead bodies expresses the cold and cruel death. The picture continues to extend to the right. Half naked survivors with messy hair were praying and bowing to the dead. Behind them some naked children look terrified, and their eyes are full of despair and sorrow. The scene continues, then we see two expressionless Japanese soldiers, a pile of bodies and scattered survivors (Figure 21).



Figure 21. *Chen Yuming, the Frame of history - Part 5.*



Figure 22. *Chen Yuming, the Frame of history - Part 6.*

All the survivors, without exception, are looking at the dead. The faces of the dead, no matter adults or children, show despair, sadness and fear, which allow the viewers to further understand the people's despair in the massacre. A Chinese soldier was tied up, but facing the death bravely, which shows a great contrast to the indifference of the Japanese (Figure 23).



Figure 23. *Chen Yuming, the Frame of history - Part 7.*

The picture sets off the depressed atmosphere vividly by plenty of black, brown and gray in a large surface, in order to express its grief and indignation. For the victims, Chen used a rough brush to show their facial expressions, and the body and clothes were greatly ruffled by the brush to show the characters' inner grief. The Japanese army was more like a killing machine, without much depiction. Chen Yuming used the heavy ink method of mountains and rivers to express the sense of death and pressure. The thick ink outline is like an engraving on paper, the Japanese crimes will be the horrible shame forever in history.

4. Conclusions

Chen Yuming's exploration and achievement of personal ink and brushwork in the Frame of History are due to his solid learning of traditional Chinese painting and printmaking. The Frame of History deserves its name as a turning point in his traditional Chinese painting. Influenced by the academic style, he completed his transformation of printmaking and sketching. Through the Frame of History, viewers can clearly see the despair and sorrow of Massacre victims, and at the same time feel the rage of the painter. The combination analysis of Chen Yuming's early paintings and his life and the analysis of his representative works allow us to more intuitively see the general trend of Chinese freehand figure painting. This trend is convenient for painters who are new to freehand brushwork to find their own artistic language.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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