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Sadness at Life Turning Point

Aoubt new artist Zhao Yang's solo exhibition Sad Alerts *Author: Han Xiao-Lu Translator: Tianlan Jiang 2012*

A gray turning is just like a gray wall.

The dawn is sitting at the center of the wound. Gloomy, is sparking in the dark, I consider.

Around three o'clock in the morning, several people with sadness go to the boundary marker. A huge fissure lies from here to there, and from east to west.

The dark sky likes paralytic eggs.

Zhao Yang

Looking back at the past, I have been acquainted with Zhao Yang for 15 years. He, not even 30 back then, was the art editor in the Zhejiang Children Publishing House and I was a sophomore majoring in Chinese.

Because of Zhao Yang's ingenuousness and modesty, only recently have I realized that Zhao Yang is also an avant-garde and excellent painter.

On March 3rd, 2012, Zhao Yang told me via QQ that he would hold a solo exhibition named Sad Alerts in Sanlitun, Beijing. Previously, I did saw some of his paintings featuring the decadence of post-modernism. It wasn't easy for a young painter like Zhao Yang, who has resigned from Zhejiang Children Publishing House just a few years ago, to hold a solo exhibition by virtue of his ability, even though his works have been parts of some big exhibitions for several times.

From an editor to a professional artist and from Hangzhou to Beijing, Zhao Yang managed to make massive progress in both his paintings and life in just a few years. In the first exhibition he attended in Beijing, one bought all his works. Now, the market price of one of Zhao Yang's piece is 50,000-60,000 Yuan and his paintings are sold in the auction houses as well. In this market-oriented economy system, market's acceptance and the price of one's art works are significant indicators of the success of an artist.

Obscurity and gloom is Zhao Yang's approach to express. Startled by his works for the first time, I can hardly imagine someone who has such pleasant personality with a little "nonsense" humor will ever create that kind of paintings. Zhao Yang's answer is he is a Capricorn---cheerful outside but depressed inside. After reading his articles and seeing his works, I perceive his ponder buried behind, a heavy, gloomy and esoteric speculation towards the society and our lives.

One of the pieces named A Gray Turning in that solo exhibition paints an antique blue car from 1960-70s, marching on the seemed rocky, swampy field filled with upright telegraph poles. The red headlights' beams are like the jetting flames, but the weirdest part is that the ends of two beams are plane, forming two corns with structural lines inside. That suddenly blocks viewers' thought.

Following is what Zhao Yang wrote for this painting:

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Not only Zhao Yan is at his gray turning, many others are situated in the era of thorough revolution. When lives and the world around have changed, we need to adjust with them, especially our heart, thought and attitude. Yet, the negative influence brought by the revolution of the society leaves a deep scar in artist's heart. Nonetheless, the dawn is ahead of the scar. Regardless of the boarders, artists following the guide of the dawn are heading to the bright tomorrow. Break the obscurity and gloomy, step toward the future. Even though the canopy of the heaven is dark like paralytic eggs, but it's the sky in the artist's heart.

In his Helplessness (2009), the old car with the same corn shape beam is still there, and two men hold two strong boas up high, letting them fight in the air. Underneath their feet are the debris of a city, logged stumps, round pit well, subsided roofs and other buildings, withered trees and the zigzagging chasm on the road leading into the distance. The scene agitates viewers' sense of wistfulness in a sudden. This is the feature of his early works, dolorous depression with obscure expression. Only emotion matters.

Thanks to this over 10 years' friendship, I am certain that part of Zhao Yang's heart retains the childlike innocence and simplicity and is unguarded for society, as all the true artists are. Therefore all who have been to Zhao Yang's studio were surprised by the toys filling his space: how can one with that kind of obscure painting expression have such a playful child within? Actually, it is that child lives inside the heart that enables him to sense the incitement

which later turns into the repression, puzzlement, hesitation and exclusiveness.

Zhao Yang's recent works have changed and reflected his growth. When an artist only be faithful to his or her own heart in order to echo the feeling, emotion and thinking in every stage of life, that one is successful. Paintings will mature with one's heart. In terms of a painting, it is beautiful as long as it is honest.

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