



Fable and the Prophet Draft 1, Oil on Canvas
传说与先知 画稿1, 布面油画

Fable and the Prophet

A few years ago, I met Xiaolu for the first time at an exhibition in R Space – an art venue in Vancouver. I was told that he was a favoured student of Oleg Yermeyev, the former Dean of Repin St. Petersburg Academy Institute of Fine Arts. I immediately felt a connection with him. Generations of Chinese art students grew up under the influence of Russian art and socialist realism during the twentieth century, and the Repin Academy was considered by many to be the temple of art that's hard to enter.

There are many features in learning art from other countries. Besides the techniques, the artistic style, form and content should not be adopted blindly. The overall "Westernization" or "Sovietization" has misguided the development of Chinese art in the past. What should be studied are the conceptual ideas and cultural connotations, as these are the true objectives worthy a long journey. In Xiaolu's paintings, one may not see the resemblance of the colour or brushwork of Russian painting but will certainly recognize the philosophical underpinnings of suffering and compassion conveyed in Russian culture.

The "Fable and the Prophet" series depicts a landmark that we are seemingly familiar with but, yet completely unacquainted. The calm open lake and the infinite lurid sky become no more than the backdrop of a series of dramatic fables and memories. Xiaolu says "a short narrative won't be enough to describe my reflection on this sensitive space." The space that his paintbrush made is disturbing. Nature is full of repressive and sinister prophecies as tensions shroud over it.

We live in a city with a picturesque scenery and pleasant weather. We also live in a world of epidemic and death, violence and killing, greed and fraud, and lies and demagoguery. A peaceful day is never peaceful. Everyday reality looks more and more surreal. Created in Vancouver, Xiaolu's "Fable and the Prophet" series is an honest narrative of his intimate emotions in here and now. It will inevitably resonate with the audience living in this world full of uncertainty.

Zheng Shengtian
Summer 2020 in Vancouver

传说与先知

几年前我在本地融空间的展览上第一次见到晓鲁。听说他是圣彼得堡列宾美术学院院长的高足，顿时就觉得有了沟通。上世纪几代美术学生都是在苏俄艺术的熏陶下成长的。列宾美院是大家心目中的殿堂，可望而不可及。

我觉得学习他国艺术有许多层面，除了技术以外，艺术的风格、内容、形式其实都只看而不可学。以往“全盘西化”或“全盘苏化”对中国艺术家的发展曾起过不少误导作用。最值得学习和借鉴的是艺术的精神和文化内涵。这才是千里跋涉求取的真经。在晓鲁的绘画中并没有表面色彩笔法的相似，但能看到俄罗斯文化的哲思与忧悃。

《传说与先知》系列描述的是我们似曾相识、却又无限陌生的一个地标。看来波澜不惊的大片湖水、云舒霞卷的万里长空，只是一连串戏剧性记忆和寓言的背景而已。晓鲁说：“短叙很难囊括和描述我对这片敏感空间的思绪”。他笔下的空间令人不安，大自然在不同张力的笼罩下充满了压抑而险恶的预示。

我们居住在一个山清水秀、风和日丽的城市，我们也居住在一个每天都充斥着瘟疫与死亡、暴力和虐杀、贪婪与欺诈、谎言和蛊惑的世界。平静的日子从来不平静。现实的景象看上去更超现实。晓鲁在温哥华创作的《传说与先知》系列，是艺术家此时此地真情的叙述。也必然会与生活在这个不测世界的观众们产生共鸣。

郑胜天

2020年夏于温哥华