

# Yishu

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# Nonexistent Reality

A Discussion between Li Xianting and Ye Yongqing



Ye Yongqing, *Spring Awakening*, 1985, oil on masonite, 71 x 97 cm. Courtesy of ChinaSquare Gallery, New York/Beijing.

**Ye Yongqing:** I don't like to organize documents. My past documents and objects are just piled up in boxes in my Chongqing and Kunming homes. When I was still a student, maybe in 1979 or 1980, you, He Rong, and Xia Hang came to the Sichuan Institute of Fine Arts and published some current things on art, then later there was the edited chronicle of Luo Zhongli's *Father*, and all of it was linked to my work at the time.

I stayed on as faculty in 1982, and later, in 1985, with the '85 New Wave Movement, everyone had to locate their previous works and annotate them with poems and make slides for catalogues and presentations because the conditions didn't exist for exhibiting them earlier.

**Li Xianting:** During this period did you have the same motivations as Zhang Xiaogang and Mao Xuhui?

**Ye Yongqing:** Right. We were all painting Mt. Guishan, a village not far from Kunming.

**Li Xianting:** You all began from rural painting, but you had already started to stray from the rural painting style of Luo Zhongli. All of you shared this difference, although you differed from each other as well.

**Ye Yongqing:** Our biggest sources of reference were the works that criticized realism and rural painting.

**Li Xianting:** I remember feeling that although you were all classmates and all painted in the rural style, the works had a feeling of skepticism to them.



Ye Yongqing, *Horse and Woman*, 1985, acrylic on paper, 60 x 50 cm. Courtesy of ChinaSquare Gallery, New York/Beijing.

Ye Yongqing: Sichuan rural painting was critical on the one hand and also had an aspect of suffering, something that never really interested us.

Li Xianting: Or you could say that the theme was the same, but the starting point was different. As for the countryside experience and the vast difference between the Cultural Revolution and the reform period, you guys did not experience this transition as strongly as people like Luo Zhongli and myself, who are ten years your senior. You guys didn't have that strong feeling of intervening in society.

Ye Yongqing: Right, there weren't the social concerns. Even early on, the stuff we wanted to do and the influences we received were different. This may have had something to do with the books



Ye Yongqing, *Two Men on the Last Green Lawn*, 1985, acrylic on paper, 58 x 48 cm. Courtesy of ChinaSquare Gallery, New York/Beijing.

we were reading or the artists we liked. I liked post-Gauguin modernist artists. So we had to leave rural, ethnically Chinese Sichuan and find a place that was different—to go off to the other regions, like Yunnan. I had two places I liked to go. One was Xishuangbanna, and the other was Mt. Guishan.

Li Xianting: For you guys the stark contrasts between the Cultural Revolution and the period that followed weren't such a heavy blow to your consciousness. When you started making art it was with rural painting, but in your hearts it didn't inspire you. I want to know about this difference, including the artists you liked and your influences, because we older ones, such as Luo Zhongli, He Duoling, and Cheng Zonglin, were all influenced by Russian art and literature.



Ye Yongqing, *A Falling Fairy*, 1986, oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist.

Ye Yongqing: At the time we really wanted to escape from mainstream themes and forms of expression. I was surrounded by some of the hottest artists, and it was their works, concepts, and styles that pushed me, and it made me feel that I'd never catch up. So I enjoyed going to Xishuangbanna, in Yunnan.

I remember there was one year when I went eight times. I had some unrealistic ideas at the time.

I wanted to be an artist in the spirit of Gauguin. My graduate

work was along those lines. Those works are now being bought and sold, back and forth, at auction, and it's like a joke that history has played on the ideas of that time.

Li Xianting: Even Zhang Xiaogang's graduate work is in this state.

Ye Yongqing: The Mt. Guishan paintings were basically influenced by Cezanne and post-Impressionist work. It's also like you were just saying . . . we would all go to the same place but have a different reaction. I always liked light, almost transparent, brushstrokes. In my third year of school I didn't even buy paint. I'd show up to class every day with a bottle of turpentine, then dip my brush here and there in my classmates' paint. It didn't matter how large the painting was, I could always finish it with a minimal amount of colour. I made a habit of making a painting like it was a watercolour, it was like a skill.

Xiaogang and Big Mao (Mao Xuhui) would go paint at Mt. Guishan, as would Yang Qian. I was perplexed, because my work was light and expressive, but theirs would always be different: Zhang Xiaogang's paintings were sensitive and spasmodic, Big Mao's were clumsy and inhibited, and when Zhou Chunya painted the Tibetan areas, his expression was deep and bright. This had to do with each person's personality and each person's interests. It served as a sort of mirror.

Li Xianting: This was very important. When mainstream art and thinking were still at that return to a "collective aesthetic," you guys started paying attention to the relationship between painting and individual experience. Not to say that the collective aesthetic of painters—like rural and scar painters—lacked individuality. What I mean to say is that during the rural period, the expressive methods of art, or the link between what was being expressed and the actual state of painting, had a lot more elements to them, like political concerns, subject matter, detail, and the completeness of the narrative. The endless rearrangement of the literate and social elements is a mark of modern art. The literate aspect of traditional Chinese painting is something that Western modern art has always sought out. I think that your technique of using thin layers of painting suits your character, including your easygoing quality. These are all personal traits of yours. I once described you as a talented literary painter, expressive and cathartic.

Ye Yongqing: Right. There was a painting of a mountain village from 1983 that looked like a hill. That village was a source for the paintings, life-studies, by a previous generation of Yunnan artists, people like Yao Zhonghua, Jiang Tiefeng, and Sun Jingbo. But later we turned it into an

opportunity to experiment and applied the tenets of the Barbizon painters from France as well as other movements we had read about.

Li Xianting: The tenor of the work and methods were all different. That generation was still painting landscapes, and their differences were stylistic. The difference between you and them was not stylistic, but conceptual. The paintings you guys were making then were the first paintings in China to have a conceptual tendency to them. Is it the portraits that follow the post-rural conceptualization?

Ye Yongqing: Right. This series follows a chronology. One early self-portrait was like Georges Rouault's work. The other was a portrait of Fu Liya. I had a completely different personality back then. I was shy and I didn't get along with the people around me. When I was painting in Xishuangbanna, I just painted freely. *Walking Poet* was actually a self-portrait. That was in 1983, which was when rural painting was at its height. There wasn't much to use as a reference in the Chinese art world back then: Courbet, Millet, and Andrew Wyeth. But I was different. If you look you can see some of Chagall's influence. My work had a lamenting and dejected feeling, and I could almost be considered a literary youth at the time.

*Man Under the Trees*, painted in Xishuangbanna, was a play on Gauguin, but with a totally different style. Doesn't Gauguin have a painting called *Good Morning, Mr. Gauguin*? It depicts him knocking on a wooden door on a crisp morning. Well, I felt that I had just arrived at the door of modern art. It was a self-portrait; I stood under the shade of a tree. It was an allegory about civilization and nature, about reality and escape. I did a lot of sketches for this painting. I was also highly influenced by Picasso and Australian aboriginal art. I loved the expressive power of lines. And I ended up influencing a lot of people in Sichuan. Then I went to Beijing where I painted urban jungles and factories in acrylic. That was 1984, and I was reading some Western books at the time. All of my classmates from the institute had left Chongqing. Xiaogang had gone to Kunming, and Cheng Conglin, Qin Ming, and Gao Xiaohua had gone to Beijing, while Yang Qian and Luo Zhongli left China to go abroad. I had virtually no one around me. I was just drinking all alone at school.

Li Xianting: A sense of those '85 New Wave Movement works started to appear in 1983 and 1984. What I knew of it definitely wasn't from official exhibitions like the Youth Fine Arts Exhibition, but from a gradual wellspring emerging among the artists, like with your self-portraits and Zhang Xiaogang's early sketches for his ghost series. Word of your New Image exhibition was sent to me by Hou Wenyi, a classmate of Huang Yongping. I was at home with nothing to do, and I had been meeting lots of artists who had sought me out. The surrealism and metaphysics of '85 New Wave Movement appeared in artists' works much earlier, even in Feng Guodong's works. Chen Yufei, over in Anhui, sent me some works at the time, some as early as 1983, and they had a similar feel to what you guys were doing. They really had something to them, unlike the overly stylized works in the official exhibitions. Your works at the time had a different mood to them, as though people were in a trance.

Ye Yongqing: I painted those in Beijing. I remember looking you up, and I remember you saying that it was strange that the Sichuan Institute had produced such an artist, as you hadn't seen this kind of work before. At the time I started wanting to paint the reality around me, but when I did, it was influenced by my past work. I painted the pipes like plants, like the trees of Xishuangbanna. It was like a hybrid of Xishuangbanna and the industrial environment. When I first painted the factories and the city, like the smokestacks of the Hengjiaoping Power Plant, it was all a bit surreal. The title *Two People Men on the Last Green Lawn* represented my thinking at the time. I really



Ye Yongqing, *The Big Poster* (detail), 1992, mixed media on canvas, 200 x 180 cm, Courtesy of ChinaSquare Gallery, New York/Beijing.

relationship was a kind of metaphor for external culture and the situation of the self at the time. It was a contradiction between viewing and being viewed, and it possessed some observations about the current culture, though we couldn't imagine cultural issues in the same way as Shu Qun and Wang Guangyi, in the north. But I still felt that there were external things influencing me, so I wanted to use imitation and metaphor to sketch out my internal understanding and situation. I imitated Picasso's horse; I used it to make a sort of symbol, along with the cistern from the power plant next to the institute. It was all an autobiographical sketch. At the Sichuan Institute I was the only holdout for modern art. No one else was doing modern work. It wasn't until Xiaogang was reassigned there in 1986 that our circle slowly started to form. There was also a painting about the love-hate relationship between two places, like a lonely, helpless, and grieved poem, expressing love. They were all painted in Beijing.

Li Xianting: I've seen all those paintings.

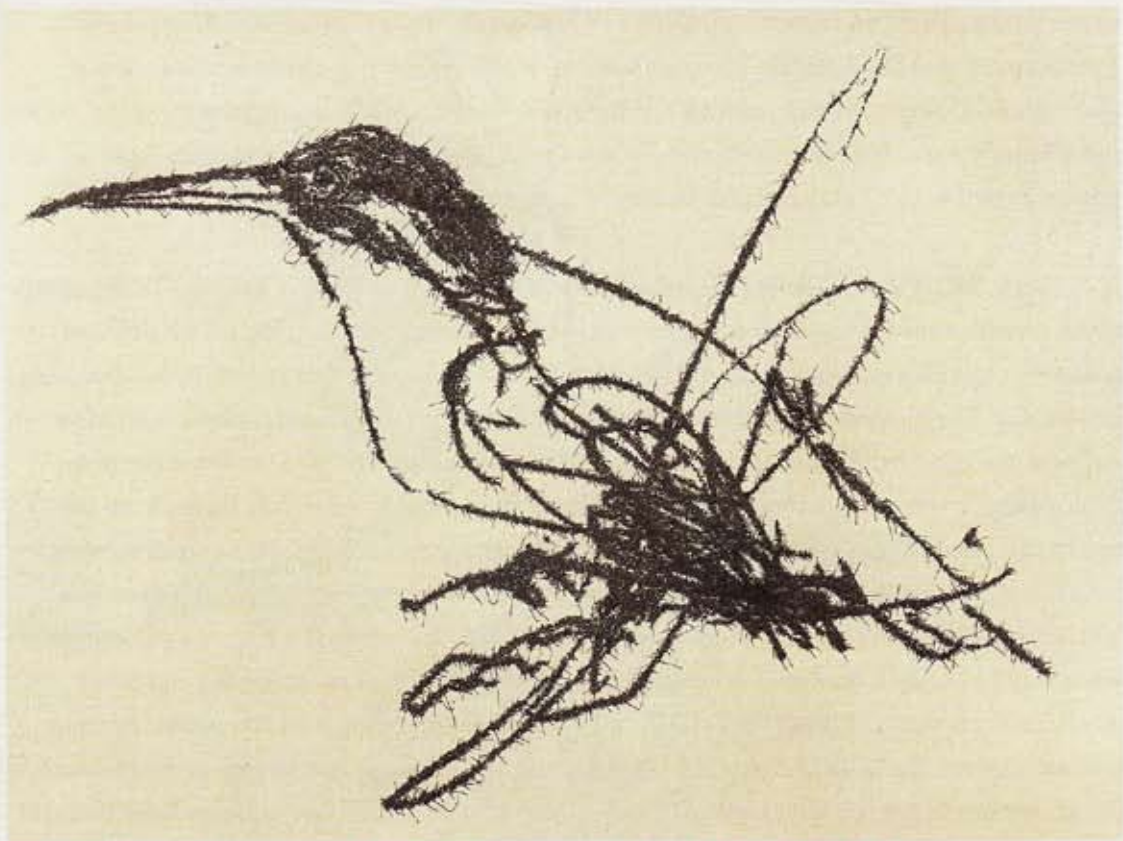
Ye Yongqing: My work was coming back to a previous theme all over again. It was the late eighties by then. I was adding a lot of borders around the edges, which was linked to changes going on in my life; I was endlessly moving back and forth between Yunnan and Chongqing, sometimes coming to Beijing. It was then that I started rushing about, so the image has some montage-like qualities to it.

Li Xianting: Paintings with borders. I think that was during your third transition, from Guishan—a lonely and inhibited self-portrait—to *Scenery with Grey Border*. But ever since the borders began appearing in the paintings, you took on distinctive language traits. On the one hand, you were handling all kinds of conceptual imagery in a formal manner, and on the other you were using a lot of scattered compositions that were disruptive in terms of time and space, they had an air of philosophical prose poetry. This had a lot to do with your situation of moving back and forth between Chongqing, Kunming, and Beijing, and of course it had a lot to do with your personality and character—you were at once inhibited, poetically or literarily, and you liked pondering—

enjoyed works by de Chirico and Picasso who both liked spatial relationships. I really wanted to use a horse to represent the West. I was reading a lot of books and foreign magazines every day. The many thoughts and conflicts arising from those books caused me to do a lot of pondering.

Li Xianting: A lot of painting titles at the time seemed like titles for philosophical essays, like *Self Portrait with a Window* (Gu Wenda), *Mankind and Their Clock* (Zhang Jianjun), and *Mysticism on the Staircase* (Chai Xiaogang). It came from all those books. Art was to a certain extent following a spirit that can be found in Western modern philosophy. I remember you had a painting called. . . .

Ye Yongqing: *Horse and Woman*. The horse was looking at the woman and the woman was looking at us. It was like there was a titmouse in the back. This spatial-temporal



Ye Yongqing, *Bird*, 2006, acrylic on canvas, 150 x 200 cm. Courtesy of ChinaSquare Gallery, New York/Beijing.

pondering about art history and trying to understand a lot about international post-modern art trends. You wanted to bring your various qualities and contradictions together as one. It's very contemporary, very conceptual, but it retained an approach that was still decidedly about painting. And after that it was the big character poster series, right?

Ye Yongqing: That was in 1989, after June 4. I was depressed and full of dread. I used paper and oil. I was living at your house at the time and we were always together, the two of us, you sitting there in the daytime smoking cigarettes, waiting in the evening for Fang Lijun and Liu Wei to come over for a drink. That was at 28 North Palace Alley, with me sleeping on one couch and old Fang Lijun on another. No one knew what to do back then. Later on I went back to Chongqing and started painting with brush and ink. In 1991, I remember I was painting on a calendar, and I started playing with water-ink and calligraphy stuff, which grew into the *Big Poster* project.

Li Xianting: That was when Pop started to appear in China. I remember it was 1991. You painted *Big Poster*, bringing all kinds of current and popular Chinese symbols together in the same space through the methods of big character posters and announcement boards, but all of the symbols still retained your normal painting style.

Ye Yongqing: Then I started making installations for a few years, later incorporating silk, hanging it up, and then making some installations in the style of the *Ma Wang Dui* artefacts at the China Experience Exhibition. Those works had just come back from France, and when they were shown in China some of the cultural officials were angry because the *Ma Wang Dui* and *Big Poster* work touched on some of Mao's writings. They requested that the works be covered up during the exhibition so that no one would see them. The installation was made of Plexiglas, silk, and lights, expressing two sides of my interests, one of which was work from the West. At the same time I also did some work along ancient scholarly lines like Jin Nong. I think that these aspects of my work started to gain subconscious links that have continued to this day. Five thousand years in

China have nurtured and formed a tradition of “calligraphy and painting,” including poetry and literature, and this tradition is unparalleled in its refinement. But it’s not totally an artistic tradition, and calligraphy and painting are impossible to bring into dialogue with the world, so it’s just a misunderstanding. But I’m the type who’s always doing futile things, straddling borders, and putting myself in one tight spot after another.

Li Xianting: You’ve always wanted to find a link between them. I remember writing, “Ye Yongqing’s works on silk are in his typical philosophical-poetic style; he has put fragments of his different spatio-temporal life experiences together on a single surface, evoking that state between dreaming and waking. The symbols are like forms that come together in a dream; the strokes are emotive, and even the aging methods of the silk evoke sadness. It is like his life.” You wrote a letter to me then, saying, “My life is often rendered fractured and aimless by my migratory flights from city to city. My paintings and writings also move around with each shot. My painting style, working habits, and even my painting tools and materials are quite ‘amateur,’ and in this profession as a ‘painter,’ my choices are growing increasingly marginalized. In the past few years my interests have become increasingly fragmented. Sometimes I have this vision that I am gathering and piling up all these fragments of images upon silk, and when I raise my hand, it all flies up like so many chicken feathers, like none of it ever existed. Such things, Chinese or not, foreign or not, current or not, ancient or not, are the unbearable and helpless aspects of life.” You’ve always been trying to bring together the ancient and modern, like the literary aspects of Chinese scholarly painting, the feel of oil paint strokes, the printed feel of woodblocks, and the serendipity of scribbling together on one surface. With this, you want to transcend the limitations of cultural ethnicity, identity, and regionalism in your choice of symbols, techniques, and materials, to try to find a world of harmonious coexistence within the various historical, spatial, and temporal elements.

Ye Yongqing: I always wanted to find a link, I was always looking for something like that, maybe because of my character. I felt that using the images of Beuys and Jin Nong was like erecting a memorial, a new *Ma Wang Dui*. As I said, I did installations for a while, including nine birdcages at the Shanghai Biennial. Everything was on silk. My paintings changed in the 1990s to more of a graffiti style, a jotting-down of my feelings, kind of like blogs these days. I had wanted to distance myself from the current Chinese ideological styles and trends and search for a free form of expression that was transcendent of regionalism. I was spending most of my time drifting around places like Germany and New York at the time.

Li Xianting: The feeling in your work was a bit like Jean-Michel Basquiat.

Ye Yongqing: Yes. I was living in Dali in the late nineties. In 1999 I started some works that I’ve been continuing on to this day. Before that I was living in England, and I was still painting the graffiti stuff, but the longer I was in that environment, the more I felt that my earlier work lacked power. I felt that it was too close to what Basquiat was doing or what some other people were doing. I started calling that kind of painting monkey painting, because I only had that creative motivation when I was hurting or happy. But that kind of work is everywhere, and it’s all the same. Like I just said, I’ve always had a scheming heart, because I really love work from the Song dynasty. But that stuff can’t touch contemporary culture and life. So I tried to find a way to bring them together, but I didn’t know how to do it at the time. In London, my landlord was a woman artist and a vegetarian. I hadn’t had this experience before, living with a woman for such a long time for whom I had no affections. We lived together for six months, one of us eating vegetarian and the other eating meat every day. There were conflicts on a daily basis. Not just the kind of cultural conflicts people write about. My piss stank more than hers. The people around me were



Ye Yongqing, *Fly*, 2007, acrylic on canvas, 200 x 200 cm. Courtesy of ChinaSquare Gallery, New York/Beijing.

all designers and furniture artists. I started to understand a bit about British art. I feel that British art has an obsession with cleanliness, and is at once the most conservative and the craziest, the most elegant and the coolest all in one. What comes out in the end is artwork that is bipolar: one side is minimalist, exquisite, and clean, and the other is dirty and violent, like someone who is both obsessed with sensory cleanliness and has an anal fetish. I went to see a Chuck Close exhibition—the American realist master—that showed the contrast between his early and late periods. His early periods were meticulous photo-like reproductions. In the late period, maybe his eyes and hands were giving out, and he started making each part of the magnification abstract, but the whole would still look like a photograph. This gave me a lot of inspiration. I figured that the logic of an artist is truly different from that of a mathematician or philosopher. An artist can start from his own point and go on to the flipside of logic. He uses his hands, not his mind, to guide his thinking.

Li Xianting: Your “birds,” which you are continuing on today, look like graffiti, but are actually a model of countless details from graffiti, and they are also a search for a link between painting and concepts. I saw Glenn Brown’s paintings in England in 1998. They had very expressive strokes and were modelled in a similar fashion, using paint strokes to construct an objective thing. Where do the two of you differ?

Ye Yongqing: There are lots of people like this in England, using handiwork instead of computers, using their hands to make very difficult, even impossible, things that are a breeze to do with computers. This hand-crafted aspect, in its contrast to new technology and media, has created a feeling for the absurdity of the day. At the time I felt that this unreasonableness was interesting, although I had my doubts. I got tired of it and came to oppose it. Maybe this had something to do with my time making installations, but it was mostly linked to my personality; whenever something gains attention in someone else's eyes, I drop it right away. I usually walk away when everyone else starts doing it. This is an old habit of mine, and it's been like this with every phase of my life, especially with art. I'd rather do something challenging. At the time I was following my own disposition to paint something clean.

Li Xianting: What's the specific method?

Ye Yongqing: First I put a picture together in pencil and scan it into my computer. Then I project it onto a canvas and copy it. That's a very subjective method that I've worked out over time. Of course anyone can trace, even an elderly woman with her embroidery, but she'll trace around it and I'll purposefully exaggerate it, making it all chopped up. This is actually totally different from the way other people trace. It's also very complex. I want this effect where normal people see a child's drawing, but the more they look at it the more it seems wrong. Then they realize that it is they who were wrong in the first place. It's like a joke.

Li Xianting: What looks to be cobbled together is actually meticulously crafted.

Ye Yongqing: I feel it contains that poetic element that I like, like the elegance of ancient painting. Elegance has been discarded by contemporary culture. But I want to make use of this absurdity. People are always asking me why I paint so many birds. What is that all about? There's really nothing to the idea of painting birds. Bird is a difficult word to translate in Chinese. It has two meanings: to paint a bird is a very elegant statement, but, on the other hand, it's also rather filthy because it equally says to "to paint a turd." In Chinese, to say "paint a bird" is cursing or mocking someone.

I'm not really painting anything at all. I think that this working method suits my life. My life is the same, all fragmented in different cities and getting into all sorts of odd situations. With the painting method I use now, I can start and stop whenever I want. I can paint when I only have twenty minutes. I have one easel set up in Beijing, one in Chongqing, one in Kunming, and one in Dali. I don't need to have any drive to paint. My art has reached a state of consistency and lack of enthusiasm.

In a way, my methodology has dispelled ideas and concepts. I don't have any ideas behind painting birds; I'm just scribbling them out. But a lot of people have a lot of ideas when they look at them, and that's their business. As for me, it's just the same as painting anything else. Liu Zuhui can say, "The Bodhi tree is not a tree; a mirror is not a platform." Things appear real and are not at the same time. For me, working is a bit like reading sutras and meditation. It is a basic thing, and I can basically paint. This is linked to a very long experience. After I had done a lot of things, I started to feel that I wasn't so sure that I wanted to be a painter.

Li Xianting: I've been meaning to ask you about this. Your later role is a lot like my own now. I do almost no critiques anymore. I'm developing another area of art, and I'm a lot like the

country gentleman of the past, meeting with local officials and architects to develop this liberal experimental field, a cultural, artistic, architectural, and way-of-life proposition. Traditional Chinese scholarly types didn't paint as professionals. They were officials and soldiers. Chinese scholars chased after success all their lives. In failure, in the shady depths of officialdom and the travails of the heart, they used their free time to find rectitude through music, chess, calligraphy, and painting. What they expressed was the emotion of life.

Ye Yongqing: This kind of identity allows you the time and the distance to provide some ideas or other possibilities for reality. It was just this kind of experimentation, multi-disciplined experience, and wandering around the world that allowed me to relax. Time is broad and the world is vast. No one is mandating that we can only be artists, but what does art imply? Right now, art is like a bottom line. If I have twenty minutes or a few hours in a day to think about something and do it, I'll do it, regardless of whether or not it will be a success. It becomes meditative, and you attain peace and calm right away, although it becomes less and less connected to what others are doing. If one day even art doesn't bring you this, then you might as well go and play chess like Marcel Duchamp did or do something else.

Li Xianting: I'm neither a craftsman nor an artist. I am a person first, and art is but a means of expression. I once said that it wasn't the art that is important. Many years later I suddenly realized it's just like the ancients saying the power is outside of the poem. Art cannot express the feeling of life.

Ye Yongqing: I thought of leaving Chongqing in 1997. I had undergone surgery, and you came to see me. Sitting on that sickbed, I felt so weak. It took me two months to heal from a one-hour operation. I had lived in Chongqing for twenty years, and still I had no connection to it whatsoever. I felt so defeated. So I went back to Yunnan. Yunnan is heaven for the defeated. All kinds of failures go there to find a new way of life.

Li Xianting: Just like the plants that thrive in that moist, sunny environment.

Ye Yongqing: I returned to Yunnan, my old home. But my life had changed, and I was frightened by the tranquility of Yunnan. I started doing all kinds of random things and accumulating multiple identities. In the early days I was just expressing myself, and my works seemed autobiographical. You asked about how I differ from Xiaogang and Big Mao. I think that we're alike in that to some degree we're all autobiographical artists. But I have a sort of bystander mentality towards things. I don't get involved, though I'm curious about everything. Xiaogang is full of vigour. He starts out lukewarm, but he goes deeper and deeper in search of the essence of things. Big Mao is a natural revolutionary, very sensitive to the times. He's great at expressing his enthusiasm in words, and painting is just another outlet. I've gone from being one who expresses to being a hawker. What am I selling? A way of life? I've been very enthusiastic about opening a club, the Loft, eating with people and talking. I'm trying to influence reality and change life, so I play the roles of hawker and promoter. I've done quite well in this. I've been elected spokesman of Yunnan by the masses—not by the government or the art crowd, but by the old folks in the street!

Li Xianting: How big are your recent paintings?

Ye Yongqing: They're all pretty big—three metres, the largest one is six. Sometimes it takes over a month to paint one. I paint slowly. There is one called *Joy*. It's just five or six metres of



Ye Yongqing, *Scar*, 2007, acrylic on canvas, 200 x 200 cm. Courtesy of ChinaSquare Gallery, New York/Beijing.

random scribbles. This work isn't taxing on the brain, but it's a lot of work. It's a peaceful painting process. You can do it in any state of mind.

Li Xianting: And you can stop any time.

Ye Yongqing: I can stop any time. I wrote to you before, saying that I was becoming more and more of an amateur, even my tools are those of a child. I have a tube of ink and a small "eyebrow brush." I use this little brush for even the biggest paintings. I dip it in water and I can carry it on the plane. I think that it suits me.

Li Xianting: And you work in acrylic?

Ye Yongqing: Acrylic and water. This is a little bird with a rock. After over thirty years, I am a survivor and witness to the changes of the art trends. I've travelled so many roads and seen so many sights. As students early on we accepted and studied foreign cultural influences, and later we came to recognize our own traditions. Accepting and recognizing weren't our goals. What was important was a return to life. Today, I no longer want to go and be a mood-swinging modernist expressive monkey, nor will I ever go back to being a kaleidoscope chasing after trends and conceptual shifts. Art is just an attitude, and a person's character and personality are revealed within it. I envy artists like Huang Binhong and Lin Fengmian to whom forty years is as a day. Through a long and repetitive social and artistic history, I've come to understand that I can only strive to be a single point in time. My highest motivation is the Buddhist "permanence, personality, pleasure, and purity." We're talking about self-cultivation, but that doesn't necessarily have to be any different from artistic attitude.