

袁慧莉  
Yuan Hui-Li  
HIDDEN EMOTION  
IN TEXTURE  
2021/01/06 - 02/08

隱身紋



## 以情補天

### 談袁慧莉的山水重構

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#### 一、以淚作皴

袁慧莉的近作《袁氏皴譜》中有「淚點皴」（圖 1）一目，極引人注目，但也激起不少觀眾的疑問。以淚作皴嗎？這究竟是什麼？「皴」者可說是傳統山水畫的基本元素，原來意指山和石的表面肌理。而為了傳習方便，前人遂將各式各樣的肌理描繪現象歸類，命名如「披麻」、「斧劈」等可與大家生活經驗對應的名稱，但是，無論命名如何變化，不變的是它們都是針對自然中的景物觀察，歸結至於最根本之單元，而其中肌理元素則無異在演示山水畫的首要目標：藝術家代替造化之手，以筆再現天地生命。袁慧莉也作山水，但卻刻意揚棄了山水跟自然天地的關係，她的「淚點皴」就在這裏背離了自然，反而指向無形無體的情緒，或者說是由之所生發的淚水。淚水在作為繪畫基本元素時，被化約成小「點」，有點像前人講范寬《谿山行旅》時所稱的雨點皴，皆以筆鋒從上向下直點，只是到了袁慧莉手上，筆點更為細小而均勻，也解除了墨色的變化，成為她製作形象的抽象元素，只有決定停止時才顯現出它的「造型」，通常是一個外形多變，內部佈滿坑洞的，類似岩石之物體結構。自然界並非無此存在，只是通常以奇幻視之，或作為仙境的元素。袁氏的奇石可能出自她個人遊太湖林屋洞，並不斷憶想元代王蒙《具區林屋》圖軸的奇幻山石結構的結果。然

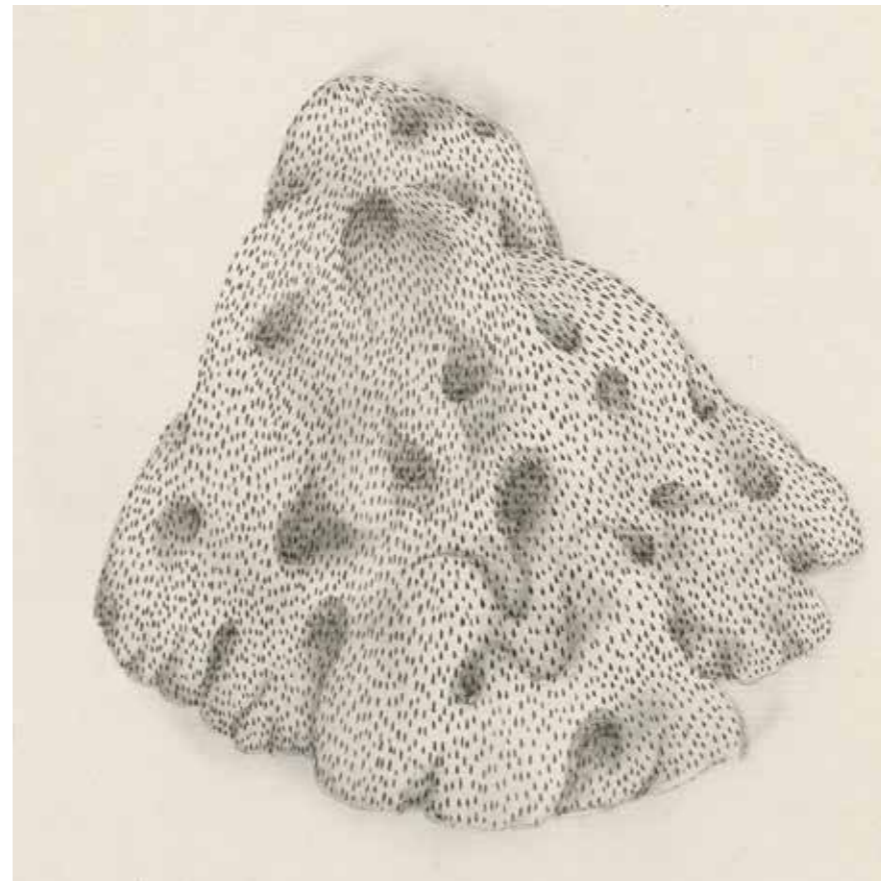


圖 1 | 袁氏皴譜：淚點皴（局部）*Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes: The Teardrop Stroke (detail)* | 2019 | 水墨·楮皮羅紋宣 Ink on Taiwanese handmade paper | 80.4 x 142.7 cm

而，由於淚點的置換，整個林屋仙境的幻覺則開始朝個人情緒化的抒情轉向（圖 2）。

#### 二、向抒情轉化

從奇觀轉成抒情的過程應該相當漫長而曲折，其詳情不能盡知。但至少在 2013 年的《類山水系列》（圖 3）則已可見由淚點充滿的石頭形象，在畫面上作了更多的表現。它們的外形仍如變化不止的變形蟲那種原始生命，飄浮在深藍色的浩瀚宇宙之中。依據她在 2014 年展覽圖錄中的說明，這些石頭是「補天遺石」，這頓時讓那些淚點皴物質得到另一層次的情感內涵。

所謂的「補天遺石」當然是來自於創世女神女媧補天的神話，她補天計劃最後所遺留的一塊石頭就是為了補修「情天」之用，那也就成了後來曹雪芹創作《紅樓夢》（又名《石頭記》）的緣起。曹雪芹小說中不僅是以女性為主角，連賈寶玉的女性化程度亦不容小覷，尤其林黛玉更如淚水化身，形象地提點

了《紅樓夢》的「總是情債，唯有泪堪還」（取自《袁氏皴譜》「淚點皴」說明）情起情滅的故事結構。袁慧莉與《紅樓夢》間的密切關係不禁讓人想起她的性別意識，如此強調「自心而生，從情而起」的「情皴」，也該算是對傳統自然皴法系統的有意識顛覆，而其目標則是如《紅樓夢》那樣，重建一個自己可以認同的有情世界。

### 三、心靈的逃遁

《袁氏皴譜》共記錄了袁慧莉過去多年所作「類山水」上各種皴法，計三十二種。除了「淚點皴」那種以點作主者，尚有依線條為之的一

類。其中「亂煩皴」者比喻世道的煩瑣，「剪不斷，理還亂」，也是充滿情緒的比喻，但線條本身扭動不已且不斷纏繞，剛好是淚點皴簡單分布的相反。這兩者之間不見得存在一個不可逆的方向性，即從煩亂至秩序的發展。但如果參考傳統皴譜的規劃，總要歸結出某種具有條理的「秩序」，以利於學習。袁氏的各種「情皴」，除了為了畫面形象的豐富性需求之外，或許還存有作者心理上的主觀期待。雖說《袁氏皴譜》本身已是發前人所未發，豪氣而義無反顧地向畫壇宣布她和傳統的絕裂，她仍然可以意會到它將面臨的責難。

問題可能在於：以情緒為主的物體單元固然可以宣洩她在現實中的

各種委屈，但它們如何承擔畫中世界的構築任務？而不是將大家淹沒在個人的悲情之中？

如與《芥子園》相比，袁氏的皴譜僅有各種皴的圖解，未有物象元素的組構法則的說明。此後者實為傳統畫譜教學上的一大重點。例如對於山峰的組構就有「賓主朝揖法」，或「主山自為環抱法」等等，以創造不同的群山之勢，且揭示山水世界裡的某種「內在秩序」。那麼，袁氏因為認定這個既定山水體系背後的男性主宰，進而一舉迴避這個學習的重點，這是故意的嗎？其實正是。她的這個皴譜意不在爭取教學的權威，而僅僅是為自己的藝術主張發聲。那是她自

認受到壓抑的事實，而背後的真實原因則與女性藝術家在我們文化世界中的劣勢地位脫不了關係。《袁氏皴譜》以及她所有充滿悲情的形象全是為了顛覆那個男性主體的存在。即使是到了二十一世紀的今天，袁慧莉的皴譜提出，仍可算是水墨世界中最具性別意識的行動。

然而，即使刻意忽視傳統山水畫的物象結組之原則，袁慧莉仍然必須面對山水畫面的需求。她創造了「情皴」的新形象，但是那些單位元素要如何組織成一個全新的世界？這個問題即使對一個前衛的女性主義者來說，亦挺為棘手。袁慧莉對這個畫面的根本問題，擬定



圖2 | 金庭太虛長卷 *Hyper Reality of Jingting Scroll* | 2007 | 彩墨泥金·灑金淨皮宣 Color, ink, and golden glue on sprinkle gold-leaf Chinese handmade paper | 50 x 720 cm



圖3 | 類山水 No.38 *Ambiguous World* No. 38 | 2013 | 彩墨·灑金淨皮宣 Color and ink on sprinkle gold-leaf Chinese handmade paper | 48.5 x 228 cm



了一個饒富意味的方案：先不理會傳統既有的有關量體、空間的各種表達方式，再反向最原始的圖式乞靈。她的這個畫面處理可見於近期的《類山水》作品，例如近年向郭熙《早春圖》作的戲仿挑戰就是如此（圖 4）。選擇《早春圖》作為挑戰的對象，確有其理，因為它是山水畫傳統中明白展現自己空間意識的經典之作。如果捨棄大家熟悉的那些圖式，那些山脈、河谷和天地空間又要如何安放？袁慧莉跳過像「三遠」等的古典圖式，也沒有來自西方的空間透視，卻返回了以疊壓表示前後距離的方式，這就是跳過了千年的山水畫史歷程，返回山水畫成立之前的原始圖式。畫面上十分顯眼的條紋式分割山體，也是最素樸的結構，僅見於漢代的壁畫之上。

這便是袁慧莉心靈逃遁的世界。如果比喻為女媧補天之際的外在世界，也可稱合適。

以「情皺」作單元而返歸原始圖式所構成的世界，似乎正回應著她的紅樓夢式的訴求。她自稱近年作品為「類山水」，或者亦可戲呼為「以情補天計劃」？這不知會得到作者怎樣的反應？



圖 4 | 類山水 PS. 早春圖 *Displacement Plan: Displacing Guo Xi's Early Spring in THE Shanshui* | 2015–2021 | 單頻道錄像·投影 Single-channel video, projection | 影像長度 Video: 5'35" | 投影尺寸依現場而定 Dimensions variable



2021 年袁慧莉於耿畫廊舉辦個展「隱身皺」  
Installation view of Yuan Hui-Li's 2021 solo exhibition  
*Hidden Emotion in Texture* at Tina Keng Gallery

## Mending the Heavens With Sentiment—

### On Yuan Hui-Li's Reshaping of Shanshui

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#### I. Texturizing With Tears

In Yuan Hui-Li's recent work, *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes*, there is "The Teardrop Stroke" (Fig. 1, p. 7), which is both compelling and provocative. Is this texturizing stroke created using teardrops? Texturizing strokes, or *cun* (皴), are a foundational element of traditional Chinese *shanshui* painting. Originally referring to the surface textures of mountains and stones, the term was expanded by early artists to facilitate transfer of knowledge, and included categories of strokes that depict various textures, with nomenclature that resonated with daily life experiences, such as "hemp-fiber stroke" or "axe-chisel stroke." However, regardless of how the nomenclature has changed, observations of nature remain a fundamental component. The textural elements within are tantamount to the primary pursuit in *shanshui* painting: The artist takes on the role of the hand of the Creator, using the brush to manifest life on earth. Yuan may make *shanshui* paintings, but she intentionally eschews the relationship between *shanshui* and nature. Her "Teardrop Stroke" pivots away from nature toward a nebulous, intangible emotion, and the tears are thus conjured. As a foundational element of painting, teardrops are reduced to small dots resembling the raindrop stroke in Fan Kuan's *Travelers Among Mountains and Streams*, which have been created with a straight, downward stroke using the tip of the brush. However, in Yuan's hand, the brush point is finer and more uniform, and variations in ink color cease. This becomes an abstract element in her rendering of imagery, where form is only revealed when she decides to stop, and is often a boulder-esque structure with a mutable exterior and a pockmarked interior. This entity does exist in the natural world, but is often considered an

element of fantasy or wonder. Yuan's strange rocks perhaps have emerged from her travels to Linwudong and Taihu Lake in Jiangsu, China, coupled with her recollections of the extraordinary mountains and rocks in Yuan-dynasty painter Wang Meng's *Forest Chamber Grotto at Juqu* scroll. However, the teardrop stroke as a substitute allows for a pivot from the fantasy of a mystical forest toward a personal, sentimental lyricism. (Fig. 2, p. 8)

#### II. Pivoting Toward the Lyrical

Details of the long and tortuous process of pivoting from spectacle to lyricism may be unfathomable. However, rock figurations filled with teardrops appeared as early as in the 2013 *Ambiguous World* series (Fig. 3, p. 9), where they are rendered through varying expressions. Mutable and amorphous on the exterior, these amoebic figurations evoke primitive life forms floating in the deep azure of the vast universe. In *Plural Landscape*, her 2014 exhibition catalogue, she explains that these are "stones to mend the heavens," which immediately bestow these Teardrop Stroke entities with another layer of emotional connotation.

"Stones for mending the heavens" is, of course, an allusion to the legend of Nüwa, the goddess of creation, who mends the heavens with stones, the last of which was intended for patching the heaven of sentiments. This final stone inspires Cao Xueqin's literary classic, *Dream of the Red Chamber* (also known as *The Story of the Stone*), in which not only do women feature as the main characters, but the male protagonist Jia Baoyu is also remarkably feminine, and the female protagonist Lin Daiyu is teardrops incarnate. All of this figures into the emotionally heightened story structure of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, as one of "a

debt of love as vast as mountains and oceans [that] can only be repaid with sobs" (excerpted from the inscription in "The Teardrop Stroke" in *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes*). Yuan's intimate connection to *Dream of the Red Chamber* immediately calls to mind her gender consciousness. This emphasis on the texturizing of heartfelt sentiments is a conscious subversion of the traditional texturization system, through which the artist intends to create a sentient world, like that in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, which would resonate with her.

#### III. Emancipation of the Soul

*Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes* documents 32 different strokes that have appeared in Yuan's *THEY Shanshui* works through the years. In addition to dotted strokes, such as "The Teardrop Stroke," there are also several types of linear strokes, such as "The Vexing Stroke," alluding to the tedium of life that "can be neither severed nor reasoned," a metaphor admittedly charged with sentiment. These lines are contorted and winding, the opposite of the simply distributed Teardrop Stroke. Between the two, there is not necessarily an irreversible trajectory from chaos to order, but in reference to traditional texturizing manuals, a sense of methodical order must be maintained to facilitate study. In addition to invigorating the composition, Yuan's varied texturization of sentiments perhaps entails her own subjective expectations. Although the *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes* has set a precedent, as a righteous declaration to the art world of her resolute break from tradition, she remains mindful of the challenges that await.

The issue here may be: While physical elements based on emotions provide



catharsis for her real-world grievances, how can these elements — rather than mirroring everyone in the artist's personal lamentations — construct a world within the painting?

Unlike the *Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden*, *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes* contains only illustrations of each texturizing stroke without further elucidating the composition rules for each physical element. The elucidation is, in fact, key in traditional painting manuals. For instance, when it comes to the composition of mountain peaks, there is the "host-guest relationship method," or the "main peak in itself a mountain method," both used to create distinctive mountain ranges. These reveal a certain internal order in the world of *shanshui*. Is circumventing this focus of study an intentional gesture extending from Yuan's cognizance of a prevailing male dominance in the established *shanshui* system? Absolutely. She does not intend to vie for pedagogical authority with this manual of texturizing strokes, but simply to voice her own artistic assertions. She recognizes the reality of her own oppression, and the true rationale behind this effort is inextricable from the positions of inferiority to which female artists have been relegated in the cultural world. *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes* and all of her lament-filled figurations aim to subvert male subjectivity. Even now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Yuan's proposal of a manual of texturizing strokes can still be regarded as an exceptional act of gender consciousness in the world of ink painting.

However, even when she intentionally disregards the composition principles for blending elements in traditional *shanshui* painting, Yuan must still confront the requirements of the *shanshui* vista. She has created new figurations with the texturization of sentiments, but how do these individual elements combine to create a brand-new world? This is a thorny challenge even for an

avant-garde feminist. Yuan's response to this fundamental issue is a poignant approach that initially sets aside existing traditional expressions of volume and space, before pivoting toward the most primal of schemas for inspiration. This can be seen in her recent *THEY Shanshui* works, such as her revamped emulation of Guo Xi's *Early Spring* (Fig. 4, p. 10). There is a rationale for choosing *Early Spring* as a challenge, as it is a classical work that plainly showcases one's spatial consciousness within the canon of *shanshui*. When familiar schemas are abandoned, where ought mountain ranges, river valleys, and heaven and earth be placed? Yuan shifts away from the classical "three distances" schemas, and eschews Western spatial perspectives to return to an expression of distance using superimposed layers. In this manner, she shuns millennia of *shanshui* painting history, and returns to a primal schema that preexisted the establishment of *shanshui* painting. Mountains are divided by distinct lines in Yuan's work, the most uncomplicated composition only seen in Han-dynasty murals.

This is the world where Yuan Hui-Li finds her emancipation. It would not be inappropriate to compare this to the world beyond the heavens once mended by Nüwa.

A world comprised of the texturization of sentiments in a return to primal schemas — this seems to resonate with her quest to attain the state in *Dream of the Red Chamber*. She has named her recent works *THEY Shanshui*, but how would the artist respond, I wonder, to a playful reference to these paintings as her project to mend the Heavens with sentiments?



2021 年袁慧莉於歌畫廊舉辦個展「隱身鏡」

Installation view of Yuan Hui-Li's 2021 solo exhibition  
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## 在水·火·山石之間——

### 袁慧莉的後現代水墨

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袁慧莉是戰後台灣現代水墨藝術發展第三代的重要代表之一；也是少數以當代水墨理論研究獲得博士學位的創作者。她以《山·石·物·性——現代之後山水繪畫的轉向》獲得國立台南藝術大學藝術創作理論研究所博士學位，這也是該校創校以來第一位以水墨研究為主題獲得博士學位的研究生。

如果說 1960 年代形成風潮的「現代水墨運動」先驅者，是以 1930 年代生的一批大陸來台水墨青年為代表，稱為第一代，是以水墨暈章、筆觸書寫為主要風格，如：劉國松等人；那麼 1940、50 年代生的另一批跟隨者，則可稱為第二代，他們打破「抽象至上」的水墨書寫，開始加入較為多元的形象組構與筆法開發，如：袁金塔、李振明等人。如此，1960 年代出生的袁慧莉（袁澍、袁漱），就屬於第三代，也是台灣藝術教育，在走出師範體系，正式成立大學層級的藝術學院之後的第一批藝術家。

藝術學院體系出身的背景，讓這些第三代的現代水墨畫家，在傳統水墨的認知及現代創作手法的探討與思維上，均更具紮實且深入的基礎；從相當的層面檢視，他們甚至較之前面兩代，對「水墨」之為「水墨」，有更深切的理解與反省；至少，在他們成長的年代，「水墨」已不再以「國畫」的名稱來拘限它，「傳統」與「現代」，也不再以

「抽象」或「非抽象」來取決、判定。甚至可以說：面對中國山水繪畫的巨大傳統，乃至戰後「抽象式山水」的現代水墨，第三代的水墨畫家都有較之前輩更為全面且體系性的認識、反省與重新出發。

早在 1992 年，從國立藝術學院（今國立台北藝術大學）美術系水墨組第一屆畢業（1987）的袁慧莉，便以作品《得山之心 No. 1》（p. 36）入選台北市立美術館舉辦的「水墨創新展」。此件在 2017 年耿畫廊的個展中再次展出。

1992 年是袁慧莉首次脫離學生時代承繼自傳統全景式構圖的山水畫樣貌，以「簡化」的原則，將多餘的物件去除，只剩山石。幾塊山石兀立在全白的畫面中，使得原本作為山體與石塊的大小比例與空間關係徹底瓦解；加上原本作為表現山石表面肌理的皴法也被簡化，山石具有厚度感的存在，變成扁平的圖式。「山 / 石 / 物 / 性」也自此成為袁慧莉思索、探究的重要課題，甚至成為日後博士論文討論的主題。

在 1992 年展開的新水墨探索中，除了主題「山 / 石」的思辨外，更值得注意的是屬於「物 / 性」的媒材、技法的開發。從《得山之心》到 1998 年展開的《居山飲壑》棉麻布系列，乃至 2009 年展開、直

到 2017 年仍在持續的《孤山水》系列，袁慧莉總是透過各種不同的載體，包括：生宣、熟宣、絹、棉麻布等，加上墨、彩，及拼貼、乃至裝置手法的運用，讓「水墨」的「山 / 石 / 物 / 性」展現出多種不同的畫面效果，落實了現代水墨「媒材開發」與「技法實驗」的「形式主義」精神，而「形式」即「內容」，正是現代藝術最重要的主張。

水墨革命是中國魏晉山林思想興起後的一個重要成果，更是一種奇蹟。中國的藝術家，用火燒木成炭，再磨炭成粉、調膠成墨；畫畫時，再調水研墨、以筆沾墨，落紙成痕，筆、墨、紙（絹）間，微妙對話。藝術家不僅意在筆下，更且意出筆外，胸無成墨、隨緣渲染，天人合一，那是一種農業時代文人精神生活的最高境界。袁慧莉正是延續這樣的美麗傳統，在「山 / 石 / 物 / 性」的課題下，不斷深入、不斷思索、不斷超越。

2015 年冬，袁慧莉在北京參加一場藝術交流的學術活動，首度遭遇塵霾紅色警報的巨大震撼。她忽然警覺：傳統水墨繪畫中那可居可遊的優美山水已然消失，當下面對的，是一個全球暖化威脅下的燥熱環境。作為一個長期思索、探討水墨傳統的當代藝術家而言，她將如何忠實面對這樣的處境與挑戰？於是，她在當時的交流展中，首次提出一件以北宋郭熙《早春圖》為模本的「水墨」行為裝置

作品。她以燒灼宣紙的焦燥碳灰重現原本溫潤的經典山水名作，透過儀式性的現場行動，以及祭典式的裝置形式，仿若隱喻當代創作者佇立在古典水墨的勝景灰燼中，面對傳統山水語境與當代氣候變遷衝突下的無奈，生發出深沉的唏噓與哀莫。

2017年7月在台北耿畫廊展出「墨的兩種呼吸方式」個展，提出水墨與水墨的辯證，帶著深沉學術背景，又充滿犀利批判特質的作品，出入於古典與現代之間，穿越霧/霾的消長、潤/燥的美學，在「水墨」與「水墨」的對照、映現中，為當代東方藝術推開另一扇窗。

2021年3月也是在台北耿畫廊的「隱身皴」個展，其中《袁氏皴譜》和《類山水小屏風系列》，顯然成了個展中最主要且引人注目的創作。誠如創作者的自述：「這個展覽是我計劃了十餘年的目標，終於完成了，心中一顆石頭也卸下了。」

或許可以說：「水墨」的創作形式，是作為一個專業藝術家對世情及藝術史發展的深刻檢視與回應；但「水墨」的創作，則是回到一個世間多情女子最深刻的生命歷程的回溯、沉澱，與再生。

此次的《袁氏皴譜》是以放大的古老圖冊形式展出，每面兩式，分別為：淚點皴+淚穴皴、紊心皴+煩亂皴、憤火皴+砍筆皴、亂髮皴+

心律皴、捲髮皴+理絲皴、虛點皴+葉影皴、叨絮皴+皺摺皴、尖棘皴+針頭皴、頓言皴+柔筆皴、流光皴+流水皴、柔虛皴+壓沫皴、舞筆皴+靜絲皴、色空皴+留白皴等32式皴法造型；每個皴法，都各有一段題辭，如〈紊心皴〉：「小姑抖亂麻/爭如心思紊亂/自有一種滄桑/難說從頭」；〈亂髮皴〉作：「心思亂/懶梳頭/一頭亂髮一頭愁」；〈叨絮皴〉作：「叨叨絮絮/喋喋噪噪/終究皴成老皮囊」；〈流光皴〉作：「流影疏疏/微風顛顛/一曳一撥/立成時光」。這些皴名、題辭和皴法，形意一體，頁頁閱讀，恍然一曲生命的告白。

古代中國女性有一種流通於同性之間的專有文字，稱為「女書」，在威權的傳統男性社會之外，進行一些女性間知識、情緒、意見的祕密交流。袁慧莉的《袁氏皴譜》，沒有刻意隱密的企圖，反而是更大膽而直接地將個人、特別是作為一位女性自身的情愛、挫折、孤獨、紊亂等等心理狀態，一一呈現，留下紀錄，化作永恆。那是一種女性的深情，藉由線性、點狀的皴法，成為心痕印記。誠如藝術家的註記：「皴是石頭上的歲月痕跡，但石頭是裝著哀傷的，陪著石頭的是寂寞與等待。石頭愛戀了掉落在身上的花，石成了花的家，花妝扮了石，它們相依不分，直到風帶走了花。石頭思念它難以思念的，追悔它難以追悔的，於是只好以落寞的肌理刻成歲月的痕跡。」



2017年袁慧莉於耿畫廊舉辦個展「墨的兩種呼吸方式」Installation view of Yuan Hui-Li's 2017 solo exhibition *Moist and Burnt: As Ink Breathes* at Tina Keng Gallery

「皴」正是一種生命的印記、歲月的痕跡、歷史的見證。這種以圖（皴譜）、文（題記），自剖、自述，是一種生命的療傷，也是自我的重新面對與再生。《袁氏皴譜》以古畫譜的形式，記個人生命的起伏，也寓人生情愛的真諦；誠如藝術家在最後的〈後記〉所言：「人生有時，石頭壽長；畫石乃是以有限寄託無限，以永恆映照短暫，石頭成為生命一瞬的留影，無情之物或將暫時成了記憶的容器。」

《袁氏皴譜》引自其始作於2007年的《類山水》系列，彼時，正是藝術家面臨人生巨變之時，乃以皴法筆觸線條聊以自慰，排遣愁緒。其間又以將近七年的時間，完成了近400頁的《山石物性》博士論

文，探究「現代之後山水繪畫的轉向」。如今得見此皴譜的發表，始知在其縝密知性思維背後，仍有如此感性抒發的巨大創作能量，積蓄待解。

山石本無情，但經藝術家之筆，寄之以情，山石生深情，藝乃永恆、情乃不凋，只是隱身於皴，謂之「隱身皴」。

從「水墨」、「水墨」，及「山石」、「物性」的深沉思考中，「傳統」不再是「現代」的障礙，反而成為「當代」再出發的重要起點。袁慧莉的水墨創作也正式邁入「後現代」的領域。



## In Between Water, Fire, and Rock—

### Postmodern Ink Art of Yuan Hui-Li

#### Hsiao Chong-Ray

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Yuan Hui-Li is representative of the third generation of artists in the development of Taiwan's postwar modern ink art, and is one of the few artists with a doctorate specializing in the research of contemporary ink theory. She received her doctoral degree in art creation and theory from the Tainan National University of the Arts with her dissertation "Thingness of Rocks: The Transition After Modern Ink Landscape Painting." She also became the first postgraduate to receive her doctorate with a specialized focus on ink art since the school was founded.

If the group of Chinese émigrés born in the 1930s who pioneered the modernist ink movement in 1960s Taiwan can be regarded as the first generation — with styles characterized by rendered ink wash, brushstroke, and calligraphy as exemplified by artist Liu Kuo-Sung, then the group of artists born in the 1940s and '50s that followed, can be considered the second generation. They broke away from the tenet of "abstraction above all" in the canon of ink painting, which they conflated with diversified shapes and forms, and evolving brushstroke styles, as represented by the work of Yuan Chin-Taa and Lee Cheng-Ming, among others. In this same vein, artists born in the 1960s, such as Yuan Hui-Li (also known as Yuan Shu; born in 1963) belong to the third generation who were the first group of artists to emerge from officially established university-level arts institutions that were set apart from the teacher-training college system.

A specialized art education background underpins the practice of this third

generation of modern ink artists whose understanding of traditional ink painting, as well as their exploration and contemplation of contemporary creative approach, have been fundamentally reinforced. On a certain level, their knowledge of and reflection on what defines ink painting are more critical than that of the two generations that preceded them. At least, during their time, ink painting is no longer pigeonholed by the label of "Chinese painting," and the traditional or the modern evades the definition of what is abstract or nonabstract. One might even say that, in confronting the grand narrative of Chinese *shanshui* painting, or even the postwar modern abstract *shanshui* painting — the conception, reflection, and point of departure among this third generation of ink artists proves to be more holistic and systematic when compared to their predecessors.

As a member of the inaugural graduating class (1987) of the National Academy of Arts (now the National Taipei University of the Arts), Yuan's work *In Tune With the Heart of the Mountains No. 1* was selected for the *Innovations in Brush and Ink* exhibition at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum as early as 1992. This piece was also on view in her 2017 solo exhibition at the Tina Keng Gallery.

The year 1992 marks Yuan's departure from the legacy inherited during her student era: the traditional panoramic composition of *shanshui*. Under a principle of simplification, superfluous elements are removed to leave behind only mountains and boulders. A few mountains and rocks are set starkly against

a plain white canvas: The scale and the spatial relationship between them completely collapse. The texturizing method that originally delineates the surface of mountains and rocks has also been simplified. The thickness present in the boulders is entirely flattened. Ever since, mountain/rock/object/character has become an important subject that Yuan contemplates and investigates, subsequently serving as the topic explored in her doctoral dissertation.

In addition to contemplating the subject of mountain/rock, her exploration of a new narrative in ink art first initiated in 1992 is notable in its probe into media and techniques pertaining to object/character. From *In Tune With the Heart of the Mountains* to the *Dwell Amidst the Mountain and Inbale From the Valley* series that began in 1998, until the *Discrete Islands* series initiated in 2009 and continuing through 2017 — Yuan has unveiled a variety of visual effects for mountain/rock/object/character in ink. Through her techniques in the application of ink, color, in collage, or through installation on a variety of media, including raw rice paper, smooth rice paper, silk, and linen cotton, the spirit of formalism is realized through her explorations of media and experiments with techniques. And "form is content" is a fundamental proposition in modern art.

Nothing short of miraculous, the ink revolution was an important achievement that followed the rise of the mountain-woods philosophy in the Wei and Jin dynasties. Chinese artists used fire to turn wood into charcoal, and then ground the charcoal into powder to mix with glue, which they shaped into ink sticks.

In order to paint, they moistened the stick to grind it into ink, then dipped the brush in ink — leaving traces while creating a subtle dialog between the brush, ink, and paper (or silk). Artists not only set their intention with the brush, but produce meaning beyond the brush. Ink is rendered according to chance, without preconceptions; nature and humanity become as one. This is the sublime state of spirituality for the literati during the agricultural era. Yuan continues in this beautiful tradition by ceaselessly contemplating and transcending in her exploration of mountain/rock/object/character.

While attending an academic conference for painting and calligraphy in Beijing in the winter of 2015, Yuan was stunned when she experienced a red alert for smog for the first time. She suddenly realized that the beautiful, inhabitable scenery depicted in traditional ink painting has long vanished, and what she faces now is an overheated environment under the threat of global warming. As a contemporary artist who has been devoted to interrogating the traditions of ink art, how can she confront this situation with authenticity? And so, she proposed a “fiery ink” performance and installation work for the exchange exhibition, based on *Early Spring* by Northern Song artist Guo Xi. She uses the charred ashes of burnt rice paper to reproduce what had originally been an idyllic and moist classical *shanshui* painting. The ritualistic on-site performance, coupled with a ceremonial installation approach, paints a bleak picture where a contemporary artist sighs in lamentation amidst ashes of the grand vistas of

classical ink painting, rendered helpless in the collision of traditional *shanshui* and today’s climate change.

*Moist and Burnt: As Ink Breathes*, Yuan’s July 2017 exhibition at the Tina Keng Gallery, was a dialectic of fiery ink and traditional ink. Informed by her formal academic background and an instinct for salient critique, Yuan is able to move between the classical and the modern, to navigate the ebb and flow of fog/smog, as well as the aesthetics of moist/burnt, as she opens a new window into contemporary Asian art in the contrasts between and reflections of traditional ink and fiery ink.

In *Hidden Emotion in Texture*, another solo exhibition that took place at the Tina Keng Gallery in March 2021, *Manual of Yuan’s Texturizing Strokes* and *THEY Shanshui Small Screens* stood prominently as two primary and compelling series of works. Just as the artist wrote in her artist statement, “This exhibition had been a decade in the making. I feel a sense of long overdue relief now that it’s finally finished.”

Perhaps another way to look at it is that the approach of fiery ink instantiates a professional artist’s scrutiny of and response to the state of the world and to art history, while her traditional ink practice allows her to trace the vicissitudes of her life in her arduous journey to rebirth.

*Manual of Yuan’s Texturizing Strokes* was on view as pages from enlarged ancient handbooks, with two styles illustrated on a single page: The Teardrop Stroke

and the Hole-of-Tears Stroke, the Tangled-Heart Stroke and the Fretful Stroke, the Fiery Stroke and the Chop-Brush Stroke, the Chaos Stroke and the Heart-Rhythm Stroke, the Sorrowful Stroke and the Calm Heart Stroke, the Void-Spot Stroke and the Leaves-Shadow Stroke, the Nagging Stroke and the Wrinkles Stroke, the Thorny Stroke and the Nail Tip Stroke, the Stuttering Stroke and the Soft Brush Stroke, the Flowing-Light Stroke and the Flowing-Water Stroke, the Light-Sigh Stroke and the Remnant-Froth Stroke, the Dancing-Brush Stroke and the Silent-Thread Stroke, the Color Void Stroke and the Empty Stroke, among others. Each of the 32 styles comes with an inscription, such as the Tangled-Heart Stroke: “The modest lady wrestles with clumps of hemp / Tangled like her turbulent feelings / Alone in her melancholy / She cannot put it into words.” Or the Chaos Stroke: “Feelings in disarray / Hair left uncombed / A mind burdened with sorrow.” Or the Nagging Stroke: “Nagging and pestering / Muttering and murmuring / The woman finds herself old and weary.” Or the Flowing-Light Stroke: “Sparse shadows flow / A gentle breeze quivers / A drag and a push / Time thus emerges.” These titles, inscriptions, and texturizing styles entwine as undercurrents permeating form and meaning in Yuan’s brushwork, and are ultimately orchestrated into a stirring song of the artist’s life.

There was a script used exclusively among women in ancient China, called Nūshu, which allowed women to exchange clandestine knowledge, feelings, and opinions within the confines of the authoritarian, patriarchal society. No

intention to hide is to be found in *Manual of Yuan’s Texturizing Strokes*; instead, Yuan audaciously divulges personal affection, frustration, loneliness, and her emotional maelstrom as a woman, limned earnestly as a permanent manifesto. It tells the profound love of a woman, embodied in texturized lines and dots that coalesce into lingering traces of the heart. Much like what the artist writes in the afterword of the Manual:

Time etches textures onto rocks,  
But rocks contain sorrow,  
with solitude and waiting as companion.  
In love with blooms that tumble onto its body,  
the rock provides sanctuary for the flower,  
and the flower adorns the rock.  
Devoted and inseparable  
until the wind carries away the flower.  
The rock longs an arduous longing  
Regrets an arduous regret  
And so resigns itself  
to cleave traces of the passing days in lonely textures.

Texturizing attests to memories etched on the mind, to remnants of years past, and to vestiges of history. To analyze herself, to narrate her life’s story through the juxtaposition of image (illustrations) and text (inscriptions) becomes a

form of catharsis, where she faces herself again in an act of rebirth. Emulating the form of an ancient painting manual, *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes* documents the vicissitudes of her life, while pondering the truths of love. Just as what the artist writes in the afterword of the Manual:

Human lives are ephemeral; while rocks are eternal.  
Painted rocks contain the infinite within the finite  
and reflect the fleeting within the eternal;  
these rocks become a snapshot of a moment.  
Emotionless object  
perhaps transforms for a temporary moment  
into a vessel for memories.

*Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes* was inspired by the *Ambiguous World* series, which began in 2007. It was a year when the artist was faced with tremendous turmoil in her life, and exploring texturizing styles and brushstrokes became a salve to her aching heart. She then spent almost seven years completing her doctoral dissertation "Thingness of Rocks" of almost 400 pages to investigate the "transition after modern ink landscape painting." The debut of her Manual reveals an immense power of sensibility behind the artist's rigorous intellect that welters with yearning for emancipation.

Though mountains and rocks are insensate, the artist breathes life into them through her paintbrush, and watches these mountains and rocks transmute

into sentient beings as her art — as well as her love — finds a perpetual abode in their existence, dwelling in each texturizing stroke, hence a constant state of hidden emotion in texture.

In Yuan Hui-Li's contemplation of traditional ink, fiery ink, mountain and rock, character and object, tradition no longer hinders modernity. Instead, the former has become an important re-starting point for the latter. The artist's ink painting practice has thereupon entered the realm of post-modernity.



2021 年袁慧莉於耿畫廊舉辦個展「隱身紋」  
Installation view of Yuan Hui-Li's 2021 solo exhibition  
*Hidden Emotion in Texture* at Tina Keng Gallery



## 《袁氏皴譜》與她的書寫

吳超然

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前言

袁慧莉 1987 年畢業於國立藝術學院（現國立台北藝術大學），之後她畢業於北藝的研究所，並於 2016 年取得國立台南藝術大學藝術創作理論的博士學位。大學與研究所時代的兩位水墨老師——何懷碩與李義弘，一位強調「苦澀的美感與造境」，另一位則強調「筆精墨妙與造型」，想必在袁慧莉的水墨基礎上打下了重要的根基。

2002 年，由於我當時正在撰寫《台灣當代美術大系——媒材篇：水墨與書法》，曾經幾次拜訪過她位於金山的工作室。我發現，雖然她是一位水墨創作者，但對於藝術史與藝術理論的研究卻相當的投入。回顧她一路走來的足跡，特別是 2010 年之後，「陰性山水——袁慧莉筆墨個展」、「複數世界——袁慧莉 2014 個展」、「墨的兩種呼吸方式：袁慧莉個展」等展覽，都顯現出她企圖以藝術史和理論來拓展她的水墨創作。也因此，袁慧莉的創作傾向，明顯的偏向於學院式的理性辯證與分析。

身為一位女性創作者，又曾歷經婚變並需要獨立撫養小孩，袁慧莉坦承在 2009 年，為了「重新整理自己、跳脫憂傷」，於是遠赴台南就讀南藝創作理論的博士班。相較於台灣北海岸冬天的濕冷海風，南部的陽光，以及空間的轉換，應該有助於她情緒上的自我療癒。同

時，就讀博士班的理論閱讀要求，也讓她得以用更有系統的方法去分析處理自己在創作上的問題。在此，我們可以提問：藝術理論，在她近 30 年來的創作上究竟扮演著推力，還是牽絆制約的角色？

《類山水》系列中的陰性主體

從 2007 年左右，袁慧莉開始發展她的《類山水》系列直到 2019 年的《袁氏皴譜》完成之後才算告一個段落。在《袁氏皴譜·跋》中，她提到「《類山水》以陰性主體話語，重新詮釋皴之形意語法，乃涉及文化，反思主體身分認同所進行之差異性建構」。上述的「陰性主體話語」，應該是袁慧莉注意到從北宋以來，中國的山畫，無論是北宋式的巨碑式山水（monumental landscape），或是 20 世紀以來的現代水墨發展，幾乎都是建立在雄性主體的風格之上：構圖講求宏偉、線條強調勁道。於是，她在線條的表現上，以柔軟做為訴求；在構圖上，特別是 2015 年的作品，常出現口袋型空間的畫面（圖 1）。口袋型空間，或稱之為細胞形空間的構圖，盛行於中國魏晉到隋唐之際的山畫，主要的人物或建築，會被群山或樹林所包圍。但在此，袁慧莉應該是把口袋型空間作為一種「容器」，類似子宮之於女性的隱喻。雖然，她在被採訪時，也指出她在金山的工

作室剛好被包覆在一個類似山谷的空間裡。事實上，袁慧莉的創作不太直接處理現實的場景，而且這種口袋型空間，不僅反覆出現在她的作品中，也符合她訴求「陰性主體話語」的論述。

《袁氏皴譜》的拆解與重構

《袁氏皴譜》的製作，在形式上是仿效 17 世紀時所刊行的《芥子園畫傳》中的〈山石譜〉。典型的《芥子園畫傳》之〈山石譜〉的格式如下：在〈山石譜〉的「王叔明石法」條目下，除了附上石頭的畫法插圖之外，旁邊註解「此批麻帶解索皴也。獨黃雀山樵畫之。山樵為松



圖 1 | 類山水系列 No. 47 *THEY Shanshui No. 47* | 2015 | 彩墨·灑金淨皮宣 Color and ink on sprinkle gold-leaf Chinese handmade paper | 66 x 132 cm

雪甥。畫乃追蹤松雪，而石有出藍之譽。」《袁氏皴譜》則是在〈一筆皴〉的條目下，註解了「不必多言。無需贅言。繁語錦話，比不過一句入心」。《芥子園畫傳》從清代初期發行之後，歷經多次版本的修訂。雖然，許多藝術史學者認為這本書造成了中國繪畫發展的模式與套路化，但也有不少畫家，如齊白石（1864–1957）等均受益於《芥子園畫傳》的啟發。

從另一個角度來看，在藝術教育尚未普及的時代，《芥子園畫傳》確實帶給廣大的群眾一個學習中國繪畫的自學機會——從局部的模仿著手，然後慢慢地自行拼組成為一件完整的作品。

但，對於袁慧莉的《袁氏皴譜》與《類山水》系列而言，這剛好是一個相反的拆解過程：她從早期的山水畫中的石頭與皴法的造型中，重新整理出 32 種皴法（部分是新增的），並且賦予了這些皴法新的名稱與意義，例如「留白皴」、「色空皴」、「針頭皴」、「亂髮皴」……。這些皴法的命名，一方面指涉到作者個人的情路歷程，另一方面則是回應《紅樓夢》第一回裡所言說的「滿紙荒唐言，一把辛酸淚，都云作者痴，誰解其中味。」在《袁氏皴譜》32 種皴法中，袁慧莉往往流露出一些非常私人的情感註解。例如，在「斫筆皴」條目下，註記了「欲斫煩事，誰知越斫越繁」；在「憤火皴」的條目下，註



圖 2 | 袁氏皴譜：憤火皴+斫筆皴 *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes: The Fiery Stroke and the Chop-Brush Stroke* | 2019 | 水墨·楮皮羅紋宣 Ink on Taiwanese handmade paper | 80.4 x 142.7 cm

記了「世情野火燒不盡，外燄燎石萬事摧，癡情總被絕情焚，心火煨盡容顏衰。」（圖 2）從文字內容來說，《袁氏皴譜》的 32 種皴法解說，無疑的是充滿情緒與怨尤；但是，如果就皴法的造型與線條來分析，則又是奠基於 30 年的筆墨涵養。這之間的拉扯與矛盾，恰好成為《袁氏皴譜》在文字與圖像之間閱讀的張力。

從另一個角度來分析，《袁氏皴譜》從早期的《類山水》系列所拆解出來的各式皴法，實際上類似德國學者雷德侯（Lothar Ledderose）

在《萬物》（Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art）一書中，對於中國藝術裡的兵馬俑製作、木結構建築裡的斗拱、青銅器的饕餮圖案、外貿瓷器的大量生產、活版印刷的漢字偏旁、與《芥子園畫傳》的山水組件分析有極其密切的關係。雷德侯在研究秦代兵馬俑的製作過程中，發現兵馬俑的製作並非「一體成形」，而是透過工作坊的分工，從頭部、身體、腿部與手部的分別製造，最後組裝而成。雷德侯也進一步觀察到，中國的藝術與工藝，許多地方都仰賴著這種「模組化」的生產與製作，因而能夠在前工業時代，實現大規模生產的能力。

袁慧莉在南藝的博班時期，也讀過雷德侯的文章。但是，雷德侯的提問在於，他企圖要去回答何以中國在西方工業革命之前，就能夠出現大規模的制式化生產，而袁慧莉則是試圖去回應自己在遭逢情感變故之際，如何能夠重組那些灑落一地的生命碎片。於是，《袁氏皴譜》在這層意義之下，就凸顯了「拆解是為了重構」的深刻意義。一位創作者，有沒有必要花那麼大的力氣，去建構一套自己的創作理論？從袁慧莉過去近 30 年的探索，我想，答案應該是肯定的。不同類型、氣質的水墨創作者，必然有他／她們的回應，但是她以驚人的意志與勤奮，完成了這一批在理論與實踐上兼具的作品。



2017 年袁慧莉於耿畫廊「墨的兩種呼吸方式」個展現場完成《火墨·郭熙《早春圖》No. 2》  
Yuan Hui-Li completed *Fiery Ink, Displacing Guo Xi's Early Spring No. 2* on site at the 2017 solo exhibition *Moist and Burnt: As Ink Breathes* at Tina Keng Gallery

## Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes and Her Writings

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### Foreword

Yuan Hui-Li graduated from the National Institute of the Arts (now the Taipei National University of the Arts, TNUA) in 1987, and subsequently attended graduate school at the TNUA before completing her doctorate in art creation and theory at the Tainan National University of the Arts (TNNUA) in 2016. During her time at university and at graduate school, she studied under ink artists Ho Huai-Shuo and Lee Yi-Hong. Whereas one stressed “an ascetic aesthetic and artistic conception,” the other emphasized “precise brush, dexterous ink, and stylization;” both had a hand in forging an important foundation for Yuan’s ink painting.

I visited Yuan’s Jinshan studio in New Taipei City a number of times while working on the *Taiwan Contemporary Art Series — Materials of Art: Ink Painting and Calligraphy* (台灣當代美術大系 — 媒材篇：水墨與書法) in 2002. As an ink artist, Yuan is especially devoted to the research of art history and art theory. A look back on her creative path to date, specifically since 2010, her exhibitions — including *Maternal Landscape* (2011), *Plural Landscape* (2014), *Moist and Burnt: As Ink Breathes* (2017) — all reveal an attempt to expand ink painting through art history and theory. Yuan’s artistry has a distinctive leaning toward academic rational dialectics and analysis.

As a female artist who has experienced divorce and is raising her children on her own, Yuan has acknowledged that she began her doctoral program in art creation and theory at the TNNUA in 2009 in an effort to “reorganize the self and move beyond sorrow.” Compared to the damp cold sea air of Taiwan’s northern shores, the southern Taiwan sun and the change of surroundings must

have been a salve for self-healing. At the same time, the requisite theoretical readings for her doctorate have enabled her to systematically analyze and organize her own creative practice. Here, we may query whether art theory has played a propelling or fettering role in her creativity over the past three decades.

### The feminine subject in the THEY Shanshui series

Yuan began developing the *THEY Shanshui* series in 2007, culminating in the *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes* in 2019. In the epilogue for *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes*, she wrote: “*THEY (Ambiguous World)* is a new interpretation of the formal vocabulary of wrinkle texturization through a discourse of feminine subjectivity. It involves a cultural reflection on the differential constructs of subject identity.” The discourse of feminine subjectivity mentioned above highlights Yuan’s observation that, whether in the monumental landscape of the Northern Song dynasty (AD 960–1127) or in the modernist ink development of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Chinese *shanshui* painting since the Northern Song dynasty has almost always been based on a style of masculine subjectivity with an emphasis on grandeur in composition and on rigor in line. In response, she aspires toward a malleable softness in line, and often creates pocket-like spaces in her composition, notably in her 2015 works. (Fig. 1, p. 27). Similar pocket-like or cell-like spaces can often be seen in *shanshui* paintings from the Wei and Jin dynasties (AD 266–589) to the Sui and Tang dynasties (AD 581–907), where main figures or architectural elements would be enveloped by mountain ranges or forests, but here, Yuan has created pocket spaces that serve as a vessel, a metaphor for the womb. During our interview she

points out that her studio in Jinshan is also located within a valley-like space. That being said, Yuan’s work does not directly deal with real-world landscapes, and these pockets of space not only recur in her work, but also conform to her argument for a feminine subjective discourse.

### Deconstruction and reconstruction in the Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes

In form, the *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes* emulates the “Manual on Rocks” from the 17<sup>th</sup>-century publication *Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden*. A typical entry in the “Manual on Rocks” in the *Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden* includes an inscription explaining illustrations of stones. An example is the entry on “Wang Meng’s rock techniques”: “The raveling rope texturizing is unique to Wang Meng. Wang Meng is the nephew of Zhao Mengfu. This painting emulates the style of Zhao Mengfu, but the depiction of stones far surpasses that of the original.” Similarly, in the entry on the “Single Stroke” in the *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes*, the inscription reads, “Spare the unnecessary words, save the redundant phrases: No flowery language, but a single truthful sentence.” There have been many revised editions of the *Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden* since it was first published during the early Qing dynasty. Though many art historians believe this book has contributed to the stylization and standardization of Chinese painting, many painters, such as Qi Baishi (1864–1957), also benefited from the inspiration of the *Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden*.

From another perspective, in an era when art education was not accessible to the masses, the *Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden* provided an opportunity for the



self-study of Chinese painting — to begin by imitating partial elements, then gradually collaging these into a complete work.

In contrast, the process of the *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes* and *THEY Shanshui* series is one of dismantling. She has identified and compiled some 32 texturizing strokes (with some additions) from the styles of stone and texturizing techniques in her early *shanshui* paintings, and provided names and meanings for these texturizing strokes. For instance, the Empty Stroke, the Color-Void Stroke, the Nail-Tip Stroke, the Chaos Stroke, among others. On one hand, the nomenclature of these texturizing techniques references the artist's own sentimental journey; on the other, it is a response to a line from the first chapter of *Dream of the Red Chamber*: "Pages full of silly litter / tears a handful sour and bitter; all a fool the author hold / but their zest who can unfold?" Yuan pairs a number of the 32 strokes listed in the *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes* with private sentimental annotations. For instance, the entry for the Chop-Brush Stroke notes, "Attempting to sever entanglements, only multiplies them all the more." The notation for the Fiery Stroke reads, "The wildfires of emotions burn without end, reducing all erstwhile certainties to ashes. Passion has been smothered by apathy time and again. The inner flame is extinguished, the face aged." (Fig 2, p. 28) In terms of text, these interpretations of the 32 styles in the *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes* are inarguably full of emotion and resentment. But an analysis of the forms and lines reveals a foundation based on 30 years of ink practice. The draw and contradiction herein create a perfect tension between the text and imagery in the *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes*.

Analyzed from a different angle, the various texturizing strokes compiled from the early *THEY Shanshui* series, which comprise the *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing*

*Strokes*, are inextricably related to the analysis of Chinese art by German scholar Lothar Ledderose in his book *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art*. Specifically, the parallel between the component analysis in the *Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden* and the production of the terracotta soldiers, the dougong in wooden architecture, the Taotie pattern on bronzeware, the mass production of export porcelain, as well as the character radicals in Chinese movable type. Ledderose's research on the production process of the terracotta soldiers during the Qin dynasty, reveals that these were not produced as an integrated single form. Rather, the head, body, legs, and arms were created as parts in different workshops for final assembly. Ledderose also notes that many Chinese arts and crafts rely on this type of modular production, which enabled large-scale production long before the age of industrialization.

Yuan encountered Ledderose's work during her doctoral studies at the TNNUA. While Ledderose intends to answer how systematized mass production appeared in China before the industrial revolution in the West, Yuan grapples with the challenge of piecing back the scattered fragments of life in the aftermath of emotional upheaval. In this sense, the *Manual of Yuan's Texturizing Strokes* highlights the profound act of dismantling for the purpose of reconstruction. Is it necessary for an artist to make such an effort to construct her own creative theory? Judging from Yuan's explorations over the past three decades, I think the answer is a resounding yes. Ink painting artists of various styles and characteristics certainly have their own artistic response, but Yuan Hui-Li has completed a body of work that satisfies both theory and practice through her astounding will and diligence.

2021年袁慧莉於歌畫廊舉辦個展「隱身紋」

Installation view of Yuan Hui-Li's 2021 solo exhibition  
*Hidden Emotion in Texture* at Tina Keng Gallery

