

Reading *Being Defeated*

I read it by my heart

I touch it with my eyes

My instinct told me the *Being Defeated* is actually a cluster of articles by braille alphabet

The *Being Defeated* series of pottery works made by professor and artist Peisheng Zhao remind me of the spirit of Zen from the famous Buddha chant in *Diamond Sutra*: 'Persisting for nothing, then you will get everything.' The wild outline of his pottery indicates the collapse and disintegration of current times, closely resembling the Chinese verse: 'After the illness of one tree, there will hopefully come out the spring of ten thousand trees.' It is not only the masterpiece of our age but also the happy song of the previous life.

The shape and meaning of his pottery series are much like the moving interception picture that gave an epiphany to Hui Neng, sixth patriarch of the Zen. Zhao's works compose a beginning point like a "Single Point" which indicates a new start at the end of an old era. "Single Point" is thought to exist in the cosmos by Steven Hawking (A famous English theoretical physicist). In the process of expansion, swelling, and life increasing, it is known that the past is inverted. The beauty of Zhao's works exactly catches the images of this moving process. It expresses the shrinking dark space, but meanwhile reflects reversed extension. The movements like estrait, retreat, connotation, collapse, decrease and retrogression bring people wonderful feeling after enjoying seeming-wrecked works, which indicates the antinomy of ungainliness.

Generally pottery works are embodied by the occupation of individual spaces, in which Yang effect of works is based on Yin space. And works form the beauty of objects by exchanging Yin and Yang with its external space. It's almost extending all the time to

magnify the main subject of work in order to achieve the biggest occupancy ratio of visual spaces.

The Xu and Shi (Reality and Fantasy) of a space is infinite. But when it comes to specific work, the relationship of Xu and Shi is finite. Just as the artist Peisheng Zhao himself says:

'Abandoning shape but keeping meaning is the inner core of my works. I remove image from my works to overshadow the concept of dimension and size. I think it's significant to break the barrier of scale concept and works seem to be tremendous in a space without any reference substance. Therefore, my works tend to exist between abstraction and concretization. Because there is no clear concrete image in extension and external space of *Being Defeated*, I think it's an indescribable in-between virtual image. But it's exactly what I want.'

The pottery works of Zhao are combinations of introspectiveness, restraint and connotation. The 'virtual image' that containing all images makes his works equipped with great artistic appeal in terms of size aspect. It's a progressive system, in which we search and rescue our souls while fumbling forward.

Let's have a look into his previous works: *Budding* series in 2001 kept a perfect balance of proper size and extension, *Infinity* series in 2004 sought a feeling of vast and *Stones of Lake Tai* series in 2011 and 2012 bedimmed the fetters of concrete image such as tighting, leaking, crinkling, penetrating and uglifying and used his own language of points, lines and surfaces to structure works.

Mr. Zhao have been exploring hard on the artistry road through those works mentioned above and finally made the *Being Defeated* series in 2013 in a triple-jump way, which meant the rebirth for him. It's an important new beginning. It seems that a virtual hole appears on the surface of pottery clay and restricts entities fall into fantastic imaginations behind the edge of collapse. The great infinity of art image has been accomplished here.

Zhao's works embody collapsing which is the slide movement of opening new life and the defeat of regular life cycle. Mr. Zhao is so ambitious that he chooses such a wild idea. Different from the works of Giacometti (1901-1966, Swiss sculptor, artist), Zhao's pieces imply multistep increasing or decreasing. Zhao's contribution is to reveal certain transient moment of life through reducing movements. In his works, solidification is just on the behalf of progressive decrease. As for size, *Being Defeated* series are distinct from the pieces of Aristide (1861-1944, French sculptor, artist). They focus on dilating space so as to gain the effect of exchanging air and balancing space.

The *Being Defeated* series deny the present reality without prejudice, but they also deny defeats themselves too. Mr. Zhao refuses using the scratches and dents as language sign, which are symbols of Fontana (1899-1968, Italian sculptor and ceramist). Instead, he converts blade point into folds, making the edge of black hole collapse under stern space squeezing.

The *Being Defeated* series give the viewers three important lessons: everything is going away, everything is destined to be past and everything is the infinity of 'virtual image'. They are also the core of western Modernism: denial and affirmation exist at the same time and affirmation is just denial. Picasso once said, 'Modern Art is the integration of unceasing destroy. 'The series are powerful interrogatories towards Nietzsche (1844-1900, German philosopher)'s words 'God is dead' and echoed 'art is also buried with the death of God', from the perspective of time lapse and movement change.

As a professor, Peisheng Zhao create positive and inspiring works. He conveys a message of seeing hope in depressing defeat and seeking the beautiful dreams to set hearts free.

In daily life, however, Mr. Zhao, a man from Shandong Province modestly calling himself "Lu Ding" in the virtual web space, faces everything with tolerance, sincerity and gentleness. But we're still able to find his inner intention, a mixture of wilful acuteness

and tonic wildness. He's always bravely confronting with the merciless nature, the fickle reality and cold human world and fearlessly fighting with them by hope and dreams in his visual works.

Thus, through the new *Being Defeated* series, I realise that Peisheng Zhao shows his respect towards wise men of the past but finds his own way of art. I see the holes on the decadent wreckages, on which a marvellous rebirth represented by *Being Defeated* arises on the base of his own 'virtual image' theory of art.

professor Shanxun Xu

at the site of the old Hujiang University

19th August, 2013