



The Influence of Shanshui Painting in "Asia Store" by Olivier Catté

Shanshui Painting: An Ancestral Art

Shanshui painting, literally "mountain-water", is a genre of traditional Chinese painting that depicts natural landscapes. Characterized by the use of ink on rice paper, this art form seeks to capture the essence and harmony of landscapes rather than faithfully reproducing them. Shanshui paintings often use fluid perspective and poetic composition to evoke a sense of tranquility and spiritual depth.

Features of Shanshui Painting

1. **Perspective and Scale:** Unlike Western linear perspective, Shanshui painting uses multiple viewpoints and flexible scale to depict landscape elements. This makes it possible to show majestic mountains, winding rivers and ancient trees in a harmonious, continuous composition.
2. **Symbolism and philosophy:** The natural elements in Shanshui paintings are often charged with symbolism, reflecting Taoist and Buddhist philosophical concepts. Mountains symbolize stability and longevity, while water represents movement and flexibility.
3. **Wash technique:** Artists use ink washes of varying intensity to create subtle gradients, giving an impression of depth and texture. Varied brushstrokes bring dynamism and life to the composition.

Integration into Olivier Catté's work

In his "Asia Store" series, Olivier Catté draws inspiration from Shanshui painting to enrich his artistic approach. Although he uses contemporary materials such as cardboard, his works incorporate elements of the Shanshui tradition in several ways:

1. **Multiple perspectives and flexible scale:** Like Shanshui paintings, Catté's compositions use multiple perspectives and flexible scale. This makes it possible to depict complex urban scenes and market landscapes with a depth and continuity reminiscent of natural panoramas.
2. **Cultural Symbolism:** By incorporating Asian motifs and symbols, Catté evokes not only scenes from everyday life, but also deeper concepts of harmony and interconnection. Markets and stores become metaphors for cultural diversity and rich traditions.
3. **Texture and depth techniques:** Although he uses cardboard, Catté manages to create wash and texture effects similar to those of ink paintings. The

Variations in cut-outs and cardboard engravings mimic ink gradients, adding a visual dimension reminiscent of Shanshui landscapes.

The relationship between Shanshui painting and Catté's work

The connection between Shanshui painting and Olivier Catté's work in "Asia Store" manifests itself in several ways:

1. **Vision Poétique:** Like the Shanshui artists, Catté adopts a poetic, contemplative vision in her work. Each urban scene is more than a simple representation; it is an invitation to meditation and inner exploration.
2. **Harmonic composition:** Catté's compositions, although focused on urban environments, seek to create visual and emotional harmony. The elements of his works are arranged to guide the eye and offer an immersive experience, similar to that provided by a Shanshui landscape.
3. **Dialogue between Tradition and Modernity:** By integrating traditional elements of Shanshui painting into a contemporary urban context, Catté establishes a dialogue between past and present. This underlines the continuity and evolution of artistic practices across time and cultures.

Conclusion

With his "Asia Store" series, Olivier Catté pays tribute to the tradition of Shanshui painting while reinventing its principles in a modern urban setting. By appropriating the multiple perspectives, symbolism and textural techniques of Shanshui painting, Catté creates works that capture the essence of contemporary Asian landscapes. Her creations, while rooted in the present, resonate with the depth and spirituality of ancient Shanshui paintings, offering a new way of seeing and understanding the interconnection between cultures and eras.

Charles Freck 2023