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In Search of  
Harmony

Ng Woon Lam

# 鸣谢

感谢两位世界顶尖的前辈水彩画家乐亭德拉.达斯 ( Mr.Ratindra Das, NWS, AWS-DF ) 先生及罗伯.维特 ( Mr. Robert A. Wade OAM AWI FRSA AWS MHSMA ) 先生的深入的评述及推荐。

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# 履历

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Biography



## 黄运南

南洋理工大学 艺术, 设计与媒体学院 助理教授  
获颁2011年南洋理工大学杰出青年校友奖  
获颁2013年南洋理工大学(分院)教育奖  
获颁2014年南洋理工大学(学院)教育奖  
纽约艺术学院 (New York Academy of Art),  
硕士研究班毕业 (MFA in Painting)  
美国水彩画会海豚院士 (AWS-DF)  
美国水彩画会署名会员 (AWS)  
美国全国水彩画会署名会员 (NWS)  
新加坡艺术协会永久会员  
新加坡水彩画会会员

作品多次获得国际及国内大赛奖项,  
其中包括 2009 及 2014 年美国水彩画  
会第 142 届及第 147 届国际大展铜奖  
及 2007 与 2013 年新加坡艺术协会  
写实画组首奖。

论文及画作刊登于本地及世界著名艺术期刊; 其中有南洋艺术杂志,  
*The Artist's Magazine*, *Watercolor Artist*, *International Artist Magazine*  
及法国水彩杂志 (*L'Art de L'Aquarelle*, *The Art of Watercolour*).

## Ng Woon Lam

Assistant Professor at School of Art, Design and Media  
Nanyang Technological University

Recipient of Nanyang Outstanding Young Alumni Award 2011  
Recipient of Nanyang Education Award (School) 2013  
Recipient of Nanyang Education Award (College) 2014

Master of Fine Art (MFA) in Painting from New York Academy of Art  
Dolphin Fellow of American Watercolor Society (AWS-DF), USA  
Signature member of American Watercolor Society (AWS), USA  
Signature member of National Watercolor Society (NWS), USA  
Member of Singapore Watercolour Society and Singapore Art Society

Winner of various national and international juried art show awards,  
including 2 AWS Bronze Medals of Honor at the American Watercolor  
Society, 142nd and 147th Annual International Juried Exhibition in  
2009 and 2014 respectively, and 1st Award at the Singapore Art Society  
National Open Juried Exhibition 2007 and 2013  
~ Representational category

Articles and artworks are selected and published in *The Artist's Magazine*,  
*Watercolor Artist*, *International Artist Magazine*, *Nanyang Arts Magazine*  
and French watercolor magazine (*L'Art de L'Aquarelle*, *The Art of Watercolour*).



# 序文

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## Preface

从水彩的区域交流活动中，我结识了许多在各个美术领域工作的画友。从交流中，得知水彩的学习，是各个美术领域里建构良好的美术基础及训练体系中的一个重要环节。我想借此机会将我近期的一些实验成果拿出来与大家分享。

近期在水彩方面，我集中精力在试验色彩与层次变化的内容。由于是试验性的工作，我都采用较小幅的画面，使到工作过程较简单，快速，而且工具也方便携带，尤其益于户外的写生活动。

在此次的工作过程中，我也积极地去验证我心中的一些想法，期望能打破许多水彩画家对水彩透明手法的迷思。我在纽约艺术学院学习古典油画时，发觉油画在技巧上与水彩有许多几乎相同的道理。古典油画，大约在印象派之前，约1850年以前吧，由于当时的颜料科技还不太发达，无法像今天这样，到画店买几条颜色就能到户外去写生了。许多颜料都是石头或是某些植物中提取的成份，画家得在画室中自行加工制成颜料，且多以灰色或褐色为主，高彩度的颜料极其稀有，价钱也都不便宜。在这种条件下，聪明的画家们创造出了我认为非常了不起的色彩应用学问——色彩的光学应用法。

在有限的灰褐色颜料中，画家们以两种最基本的层次来增加光学性的变化。第一种是透明重叠法，这也是水彩最普通的手法；而油画不只用透明法来重叠，也以半透明色（velatura）去重叠，用以形成各种不同的明暗及色彩变化；另一种是干笔重叠法（scumble）；油画家在最上层的重叠时，采用不完全覆盖的干笔法，如此能使底层不相似的颜色与最上一层的颜色形成光学组合，发挥出不同且较丰富的颜色变化；美国怀乡写实大师怀斯（Andrew Wyeth）也常用此法画水彩画。

所以，此次我尽量把各种手法都拿来试一番，以期能让观众见到水彩画的多面性，请大家不吝指正，谢谢。

黄运南  
南洋理工大学，艺术、  
设计与媒体学院，助理教授

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Participating in international watercolor exhibitions has given me great opportunities to meet with many experienced artists. Their diversified fields and knowledge, ranging from fine arts to applied arts, are the most significant contributions they bring to such valuable meetups. It comes as a surprise that watercolor painting serves as a very useful foundation upon which a robust structure of academic art training is built. Therefore, on my part, I would like to contribute to the group as both an artist and an educator by sharing my recent findings in the area of watercolor painting.

Most recently, my experimental focus for watercolor is on the vibrancy of colors and layering approach in relation to the richness of optical results. I choose to work on a small scale for the ease of travelling or working en plein air.

The myth about watercolor lies in its transparency. It is a conventional notion that transparent washes should be used to bring forth freshness and immediacy. However, I believe that the over-emphasis of this technique would, to a certain extent, erode its true capacity in image making. In this show, I am ambitious in using my new artworks to showcase the multifaceted world of watercolor painting.

Back in the days when I was learning the classical oil painting approach in New York Academy of Fine Art, I discovered the similarity in the painting techniques between watercolor and oil painting. This similarity is a result of overcoming limitations.

## **“The myth about watercolor lies in its transparency.”**

Before the turn of the Industrial revolution, manufacturing technology was in its infancy and classical oil painting approach was limited by the availability of pigments. Artists back then were not able to purchase tubes of paint directly from art stores ( a luxury only available much later, thanks to the Industrial Revolution ) to go en plein air painting like we do today. In addition to that, pigments used before the 1850s were generally earth materials or plant extracts, which had to be further blended with oil to form the painting paste used in studios. The colors were either earthy toned (browns) or low in chroma, and materials with greater color intensity were rare and costly to work with. In this restrictive period, old master artists

discovered through practical experience, what I regard to be the most brilliant piece of knowledge in the history of color painting - the optical behaviour of colors. In applying this knowledge, artists invented painting techniques that overcame the limitations of their time. The optical result achieved was one with richer hue variation without actually having to paint more colors.

Limited by available pigments, the old masters relied on two major layering approaches to create optical results on painting surfaces. The first method is transparent glazing, which is commonly used in watercolor. In oil painting, the glazing method is further classified into transparent and semi-transparent (Velatura) layers, both of which fully enriches the spectrum of tonal and hue variations. The second method involves dry brushing a layer or what is termed “scumbling”. The optical interaction between semi-covered paint layers forms hue vibrancy. American master, Andrew Wyeth employed the latter approach in many of his earthy-toned watercolor works.

To present the vibrancy of this optical approach, I employed all possible combination of paint layers. The full spectrum of layers from opaque to transparent layers is evident in this body of experimental watercolor artworks. I sincerely welcome feedback from one and all.

Thank you very much.

**Ng Woon Lam**  
Assistant Professor  
School of Art, Design & Media  
Nanyang Technological University



# 评述

## Reviews

我感到非常兴奋与荣幸能为黄运南画友评述他即将展出的作品。当运南在美国升学时，我们在一次画展中结识。对我而言，画幅的大小不能决定画作的优劣。此次展出的小幅水彩带出了活力与深切的情感，能与任何大作比拟。作品能触及观者的内在情感，我感受到他丰富的想法与工作中的激情，这一切都在他手中灵巧地呈现出来。这一系列的写生作品，带出了许多新思维，超越了多数画展中稍缺新意的市景及街景画作。

运南的画作的表现力来自其内在的能量与及个性化的笔触，空间的表现变化莫测，不受古典透视法的局限。当今已很少画家能呈现优美且个性化的笔触，同时，观者也享受到了隐藏在画作内部的设计。

美国著名画家罗伯·享莱(Robert Henri)曾说：「笔触陈述了画者当时的感动，这包括了：未知的、作者的精神与及其他细微的东西。」以罗伯·享莱(Robert Henri)的说法，我见证了运南笔触的活力。而他在旅途中的画作也呈现了旅者的情感，展现了地域性的精神面貌，让观众接收到了各地的趣味。

透明与不透明水彩的争辩一直存在。一小撮画家强烈地反对应用不透明水彩、蛋彩及相似的不透明颜料来创作水彩，而运南却选择以不透明水彩来为传统透明水彩增加丰富的内容。他为水彩引入了油画手段，使水彩技法同时拥有透明水彩与传统油画技法的优点。其中有几幅作品呈现出半透明的效果，此效果很难使用传统英国透明水彩重叠法达成。他指出了大家对透明水彩的‘迷思’。当浓度高的颜料涂抹在白色水彩纸上时，水彩的透明性质已完全丧失了，被覆盖着的白纸基本上无法透过覆盖的颜料层反射一丝光线，但当我们以不透明颜料皴擦，或半透明地涂抹在其上时，整体的层次呈现了半覆盖的状态，光被各层不同颜色的颜料部份反射，强化了中间色调的变化。这种趣味的变化出现在许多运南的作品中，色彩变得更明快且丰富。我羡慕有机会亲睹此画展的朋友，可惜我在千里外，不能与大家共赏原作，特此祝愿运南展出成功。

乐亭德拉·达斯(Ratindra Das)  
写于 美国 伊利诺州 伟登市  
(Wheaton, Illinois)  
美国水彩画会海豚院士(AWS-DF)  
美国全国水彩画会(NWS)署名会员  
水彩教育工作者



“ Woon Lam has added a new dimension to watercolor painting with gouache . With his experience of painting in oil he has brought to us the best of both worlds. ”

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It's an honor and pleasure for me to write a review of the book for this very special exhibit of small watercolors by Ng Woon Lam. I was privileged to know Woon Lam from his days in the U.S while he was carving out a distinct career as an artist.

In my opinion, size of a painting has very little to do with the merit and quality. The small paintings in this exhibition will bring out as much joy and excitement as any large format painting. Besides, these are more intimate to the viewers. I feel the exuberance and energy that emanated from his masterful hand. The en plein paintings are full of life, vibrancy and anecdotes- unlike the sterile and soulless city and street scenes that are found in too many shows.

Woon Lam's work is characterized by energized and recognizable brushwork. Space in his paintings is created without the vagaries of traditional perspective with convergent lines. It is increasingly getting rare to see work where an artist can be identified by wonderful, unique brushwork. Viewers will be entertained by this important element of design. The great American painter and teacher Robert Henri said, “ The stroke is just like the artist at the time he makes it. All the uncertainties, all the bigness of his spirit and all the littlenesses are in it.” I find the vigor and strength in his brushwork. His travel paintings are more than “travelogues”, common among many watercolorists of our times. He has created the essence of a place, which he generously shares with the viewers.

The debate about transparent and use of opaque medium will go on. A small section of artists will vehemently oppose the use of gouache, casein and similar materials. Woon Lam has added a new dimension to watercolor painting with gouache . With his experience of painting in oil he has brought to us the best of both worlds. A few paintings show a translucency- a difficult effect to obtain with traditional layering method practiced by early English watercolorists. The “transparency” is indeed a myth. When a heavy-bodied paint is applied on paper, it loses the transparency since light is not reflected off the paper. However, when this opaque passage is applied next to a transparent layer of middle value, the middle value colors are enhanced. This enhancement of colors and luminosity is evident in many of this series of paintings. I envy you- the viewers of this show since I will miss the opportunity of being with you. With best wishes.

**Ratindra Das AWS (DF), NWS**  
**Artist and Educator**  
**Wheaton, Illinois**

## 关于黄运南

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放眼世界艺坛，拥有如运南同等艺术资格的画家可算是少数，他重要的资历如下：

美国水彩画会海豚院士( AWS-DF )  
两届美国水彩画会( AWS )大展铜奖  
美国全国水彩画会( NWS )署名会员  
新加坡水彩画会会员及新加坡艺术协会会员  
纽约艺术学院( New York Academy of Art )硕士

我在水彩教学时，有一个基本的艺术创作原则，我对学生说，「请别抄袭他人的风格！您会寻找到您的个人方向，就依着这个方向去吧！您要多磨练您自己的特点，以便能呈现出您独有的视觉思维，那不是别人的作法。」

以运南的画作为例，他的作品同时呈现出变化与激情。它们来自他寻觅到的题材，而内容也表现出了他个人的想像力及视觉观。他的风格是多么的个性化且令人感动，让人一眼就认出他的作品。

他重大的艺术成就来自他在水彩世界里寻找到的个人方向，以及他作为画家对色彩和构图的深入理解。您如有幸收藏到他的画作，您将感受到其作品的内在新意，每当您再一次细微地观察那些作品时，您又会产生一些新的体验。并且，画作所呈现出的感情是如此的强烈，画家在创作时的内在激情，又即刻涌现到您的眼前。

他是如此的幸运，拥有这了不起的艺术天赋，愿他能不断地展出新作，让观众大抱眼福。我向您大力推荐他的画作，它们必能使您的家居或工作场所增光不少。

罗伯·韦特( Robert A. Wade )  
澳大利亚功绩勋章( OWA )  
澳大利亚水彩画会永久会员( AWI (LM) )  
维多利亚艺术协会院士( FVAS )  
英国皇家艺术协会院士( FRSA )  
伦敦纯水彩画会会员( PWS (London) )  
美国水彩画会署名会员( AWS )

# 探索

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## Exploring Options

为了使初学者更有信心地放下透明水彩的包袱，我想在此简述两个要点：

- (一) 古典绘画所使用的白色为铅白或锌白，铅白的不透明性(覆盖能力)比锌白略优，但仍逊于现今工业科技生产的钛白。钛白为颗粒非常均匀的二氧化钛粒子，拥有绝佳的覆盖能力，其不透明性可达百份之百；几乎能还原纸张的白色反光度，也方便与各种色彩相混，调成不透明或半透明色，也可用以修改画得过暗的区域。
- (二) 非所有的水彩颜料皆透明，也有半透明和不透明的颜料，而这些不透明颜料的效果与应用方式，正和用白色或混白色法相似。另外，有些不透明色，如镉元素的红、橙与黄皆极不透明，覆盖力强，且彩度极高，我常如油画画法般，在最后才涂上这些高彩度色，轻易地盖过暗色，保持百份之百的红橙黄明彩度。

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To relieve beginners the burden of maintaining the perfect transparent painting technique, I would like to share two tips :

- I. Before the advancement of manufacturing technology, there were two major types of white paint pigments, namely Zinc white and Lead white, with the latter being slightly more opaque. However, none can be compared to the Titanium white manufactured today. Titanium white pigment is made up of evenly distributed particles. This means close to 100% opacity coverage, which can be used to recover the white of the watercolor paper. It can also be conveniently used with other paints to form opaque or semi-opaque paint mixture for correction of an overly toned (too dark) region.
- II. Not all watercolor pigments give transparent layers. There are those that give washes that are semi-opaque or opaque. The ones that give opaque layers can be applied the same way as Titanium white. Cadmium pigments, red orange and yellow are some of my favorites. I apply them as I would in traditional oil painting technique, purely as an opaque layer to cover any underlayers. In addition to their high opacity, they have extremely high color intensity, which allows me to regain color vibrancy while recovering the lighter tones.



**Top Left : Chinatown, En Plein Air II**  
13 x 19 cm  
Watercolor on Paper

**Bottom left :**  
**Chinatown, En Plein Air III**  
13 x 19 cm  
Watercolor and Gouache on Paper

**Top Right : Design I**  
28 x 19 cm  
Watercolor on Paper

**Bottom Right :**  
**Campbell St. Impressions,**  
**Little India**  
28 x 38 cm  
Watercolor on Paper





**Untitled**  
28 x 38 cm  
Watercolor and Gouache on Paper





Untitled  
38 x 28 cm  
Watercolor and Gouache on Paper





“ Once the line between watercolor and oil painting blurs, I start to see the true power of watermedia. ”

**Left : Untitled**

28 × 19 cm  
Watercolor and Gouache  
on Paper

**Top Right : Untitled**

28 × 38 cm  
Watercolor and Gouache  
on Paper

**Bottom Right : Untitled**

22 × 30 cm  
Watercolor and Gouache  
on Paper





Untitled  
38 x 28 cm  
Watercolor and Gouache on Paper





**Untitled**  
25 x 38 cm  
Watercolor; Ink and Gouache on Paper

## 杂记

Others

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Ling Nan Coffeeshop, Paloh  
19 x 28 cm  
Watercolor on Paper



SCHOOL OF ART,  
DESIGN AND MEDIA

