

# Research on the Connotation of New Era Thematic Creation of Beidahuang Printmaking

Yifeng Qiu

Zhejiang Financial College, Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province 310018

**Abstract:** Beidahuang Printmaking is one of the important schools of Chinese printmaking, rooted in the Heilongjiang region and having gone through several eras. The thematic creation of the Northern Wilderness prints in the new era is based on the insights of printmakers from various parts of Heilongjiang into the natural scenery and social environment, while integrating their understanding of the spirit of the new era, thus presenting a new era style and having richer cultural connotations.

**Keywords:** Beidahuang Printmaking; New Era Art; Artistic Connotation

In the 1960s, the creation of printmaking in Heilongjiang region developed rapidly, exuding vigorous vitality. In 1985, Heilongjiang Fine Arts Publishing House published the art collection "The Prints of the Great Northern Wilderness", since then, the prints from this region have been generally referred to as the prints of the Great Northern Wilderness. The prints of the Great Northern Wilderness have demonstrated unique local customs and features, and have been widely loved by the people. Over the years, the group of printmakers in this region has been continuously expanding. Since the new century, more than ten professional printmaking creation institutions have been established in Heilongjiang, cultivating a large number of outstanding printmakers. Many new forces of the prints of the Great Northern Wilderness have emerged in the new era. Keeping pace with the times in printmaking creation is the direction of the development of the prints of the Great Northern Wilderness in the new era. The prints of the Great Northern Wilderness in the new era have taken over the baton from the three generations of printmakers in the Great Northern Wilderness. On the basis of being rooted in the reality of Heilongjiang and the black soil, each creator has well presented and displayed the development of contemporary China and the wonderful life of the people of Heilongjiang, and well explained the "Great Northern Wilderness Spirit", "Daqing Spirit", "Iron Man Spirit" and "Craftsman Spirit" with the power of printmaking, forming the new era style of the prints of the Great Northern Wilderness. This article analyzes the excellent works of the prints of the Great Northern Wilderness to explore the unique connotation of the theme creation of the prints of the Great Northern Wilderness in the new era.

## 1. The Natural Scenery of the Great Northern Wilderness and Emotional Expression

Many contemporary printmakers of the Great Northern Wilderness continue to inherit the spirit and subject matter of their predecessors, showcasing the unique black soil culture (frozen soil culture) of Northeast China.<sup>[1]</sup> Liu Decai, a young printmaker from Heilongjiang, was born on the land of the Great Northern Wilderness. He loves this fertile land that has given him life and nourishment, and he feels its warmth just as a seed would. In 2014, his illustration work "Engraved on the Land of the Great Northern Wilderness" created in the form of printmaking won the Gold Award of the 12th National Art Exhibition's China Fine Arts Award - Creation Award. The award citation stated, "The artist selects the vast and fertile natural landscapes of the Great Northern Wilderness and the scenes of harvest after reclamation to interpret the poetry. While maintaining the passionate and unrestrained tone of the poem, it fully presents its 'rare beauty on earth and in heaven' and magnificence."<sup>[2]</sup> Standing before this painting, one can feel as if they were there, experiencing the artist's inner monologue when facing nature, involuntarily sensing the silence of nature and listening to its various sounds. This moment of synesthesia is the result of the elegant, gentle, profound, relaxed, quiet, romantic and expansive artistic conception of the work touching the heart. This set of illustrations is not only a true depiction and record of the natural scenery but also expresses the artist's deep love for the black soil through simple and unadorned artistic language. Similarly, young printmaker Song Hongyu is deeply rooted in the northern landscape. In 2019, his printmaking work "Winter in the North" won the Gold Award at the 13th Heilongjiang Provincial Art Exhibition. As he said about his printmaking works, "Printmaking creation should also grasp the pulse of the times, listen to the voice of the times, and undertake the mission of recording, writing, and singing the praises of the new era."<sup>[3]</sup> Using black and white tones throughout, he depicts the coldness and magnificence of the black soil with his own

printmaking language, embodying the unique "cold black soil" style of the Great Northern Wilderness. With the enthusiasm of pioneers, the early Beidahuang printmakers depicted the magnificent scenery of the natural landscape of Beidahuang. The perspective of printmakers in the new era has gradually changed, and they pay more attention to the vastness and quietness of the black land. Generations of printmakers have injected their own perception of this black land, making the art of Beidahuang printmaking passed down from generation to generation.

## 2. New Features of Agricultural Construction in the Great Northern Wilderness

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, through the unremitting efforts of several generations, the former "Great Northern Wilderness" has been transformed into the "Great Northern Granary" of the motherland. In the new era, agricultural construction in Heilongjiang has abandoned traditional farming methods and established a new direction of ecological and smart agriculture, thus achieving a new agricultural construction system that organically combines intelligence, intensification and digitalization. Changes in production technology in the new era have also influenced the current creations of the Great Northern Wilderness printmakers. More and more printmakers are exploring new themes of agricultural prints. The print work "Golden Autumn Era", which won the Gold Award of the "China Fine Arts Award" at the 13th National Art Exhibition, was created against this background. The author, Sha Yonghui, sincerely said, "The changes of the times, the development of history, the glorious journey of socialist construction in the People's Republic of China over the past 70 years, and the bright prospects of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in the new era are all condensed in this golden autumn of the times. Presenting this harvest era to the people of the world is the original intention of creating 'Golden Autumn Era'."<sup>[4]</sup> Shi Sumei's "New Journey" won the Bronze Award at the 13th Heilongjiang Provincial Art Exhibition and was selected for the 13th National Art Exhibition. It shows the scenes of agricultural mechanization at different links in Heilongjiang in the new era, presenting the development of agriculture in this era. Wang Jia-mei's work "Sunrise" selected for the 13th National Art Exhibition mainly depicts a farm hand tractor, showing a moment in the process of agricultural mechanization in the new era and reflecting a moment in the development of agricultural science and technology. The Northeast Old Industrial Base was once the cradle of China's industry and made historic contributions to China's reform and opening up and modernization. In the new era, printmakers from the Great Northern Wilderness have focused their attention on the modernization of agriculture, reflecting the new features of agriculture, just like the "Tillage and Weaving Pictures" of the new era.

## 3. Creation on the Theme of the Great Northern Wilderness and the Spirit of the Times

The creation of Great Northern Wilderness prints cannot be separated from the expression of the spirit of the times. Heilongjiang Province is the birthplace of the Great Northern Wilderness spirit. The older generation of Great Northern Wilderness people not only created material wealth but also created valuable spiritual wealth. Under the new historical background, it is necessary to pass on the Great Northern Wilderness spirit of "hard work, pioneering, considering the overall situation, and selfless dedication" from generation to generation. The new generation of Great Northern Wilderness printmakers continue the Great Northern Wilderness spirit and continue to create a large number of prints that conform to the Great Northern Wilderness spirit. Zhang Cunjie's print "The Mark of the Original Heart" was approved as an entry work for the 23rd National Print Exhibition. The main creative idea is to revitalize the old industrial base in Northeast China and inherit the Great Northern Wilderness spirit of hard work. It focuses on depicting the relationship between "workshops" and "workers" in the old industrial base in Northeast China. The print mainly uses old workers' gloves, tools that have gone through the vicissitudes of time, repetitive and tireless labor, and scenes of hard work as the main elements of the picture. It highlights the "craftsman spirit" of the workers, calling on the youth of Heilongjiang to deeply understand the connotation of the "craftsman spirit", take the revitalization of Northeast China as their responsibility, and contribute to the take-off of Heilongjiang's industry. At the same time, it also implies the unremitting efforts of several generations of Heilongjiang people to turn the ancient wilderness into a granary, an industrial city, and a space city, creating this magical place.

Secondly, the new generation of Great Northern Wilderness printmakers do not limit themselves to the Great Northern Wilderness spirit. They broaden their horizons and pursue the spirit of the times reflected on this land of Heilongjiang, reflecting the spiritual connotation of the new era through printmaking. The National Art Fund's Young Art Creation Talent Support Print Project "Building Dreams" was selected for the 12th China Art Festival National Excellent Art Works Exhibition and the 23rd National Print Exhibition. The work closely revolves around the theme of realizing the "Chinese Dream" of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It is conceived and completed with the creative idea of the "China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor" "Heilongjiang Silk Road Economic Belt" and the revitalization of the old industrial base in Northeast China. It mainly grasps the narrative thread of the 70 years of Heilongjiang people's reclamation, construction, and reform, and uses the techniques of "telling stories" and "analyzing matters" to reproduce the historical and current value of the old industrial base in Northeast China and the granary in Northeast China. It promotes the Great Northern Wilderness spirit and the Daqing spirit, calling on the youth of Heilongjiang to deeply understand the connotation of the Heilongjiang spirit, be brave in hard work and innovation, and be the con-

temporary "pioneers". It profoundly shows the path of "seeking dreams, pursuing dreams, building dreams, and realizing dreams". The work is completed using the traditional oil printing and color woodcut technique of Great Northern Wilderness prints. It mainly uses "ribbons" as the creative subject and uses the form of a triptych to form a complete picture. The vertical arrangement of silk in the three series of pictures forms a stable sense of balance. The broken silk can extend a sense of change and beauty, expressing the vicissitudes and long history of the Silk Road. In the center of each picture, the elements of large agricultural machinery, oil pumps, and construction workers are used as the role of looms and integrated into the "ribbons", symbolizing that the people of Heilongjiang are weaving the new "Heilongjiang Silk Road Economic Belt" of the new era, which is the transformation of the spirit of the times into an image style. Similarly, Jin Xin's "North-New Industrial Impression No. 1" was selected for the 13th National Art Exhibition and won the bronze award of the Heilongjiang Province Art Works Exhibition. The work embodies the Daqing spirit and the craftsman spirit. In the picture, various agricultural machinery parts are combined and superimposed, complex yet full of tension, injecting a personalized expression into the new development process of the new era.

The new generation of Great Northern Wilderness printmakers use the language of printmaking to express the spiritual outlook of the new era, presenting the Great Northern Wilderness they see and think in their hearts on the canvas, allowing Great Northern Wilderness prints to shine with new brilliance in the new era.

#### 4. Summary

The black soil has nourished the creation of the Heilongjiang Beidahuang Printmaking, while the times have bestowed upon the creators of Heilongjiang Beidahuang prints a sacred mission. This land has cultivated countless art workers. In the new era, Heilongjiang Beidahuang printmakers, relying on the achievements of the three generations of Beidahuang printmakers, have created works that conform to the spiritual connotations of the current times. The main artistic connotations are reflected in three aspects: first, the printmakers further depict the natural scenery of the new era Beidahuang; second, the new features of agricultural construction in the new era Beidahuang are reflected in the works; third, a large number of works deeply explore the spirit of Beidahuang and the times, embodying the spiritual outlook of the new era. The creative path of Heilongjiang printmakers is long and arduous. They must take the vivid life of the present as the background source, adhere to the creative orientation of "art originates from life" in their creation, contribute unique artistic patterns to the development of new era printmaking and cultural prosperity, and strive to be the inheritors of the new era Beidahuang spirit and the practitioners of excellent traditional culture.

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**About the author:** Yifeng Qiu (born in June 1982), male, Han nationality, Laizhou City, Shandong Province, Associate professor, Master's degree, Zhejiang Financial College, research interests: Printmaking, Arts and Crafts