

二十世紀中國繪畫

傳統與創新

Twentieth Century Chinese Painting
Tradition and Innovation





吳作人 (1908年生)

進發

一九八八年作

李晉先生藏品

Wu Zuoren (b.1908)

Advance

Dated 1988

Collection of Mr Li Shui



理想都市携手創

香港市政局主辦

香港藝術館籌劃

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引言

「二十世紀中國繪畫 — 傳統與創新」展覽之目的是要探討在時代洪流的交替中，傳統中國繪畫的承傳問題，以及它怎樣革新面貌，跨越時代的變遷。

由遠古洞穴及貝殼上的圖象、原始陶器，以至在明清時期發展至最高峰的文人畫，中國繪畫具有秉承了二千年歷史的優越地位。中國繪畫沿用的筆和墨，更經營出其中獨有以線條為主的特色。水墨畫歷盡中國史上各個動盪的時刻，仍然能夠不斷自我革新和改造，充滿活力地與時代並進。

二十世紀的中國繪畫發展可以分為三個時期：第一個時期由1901年至1949年，第二個時期由1949年至1976年，1976年至今是第三個時期，這個時期更可以進一步分成兩個階段，就是1976年至1989年和1989年以後。

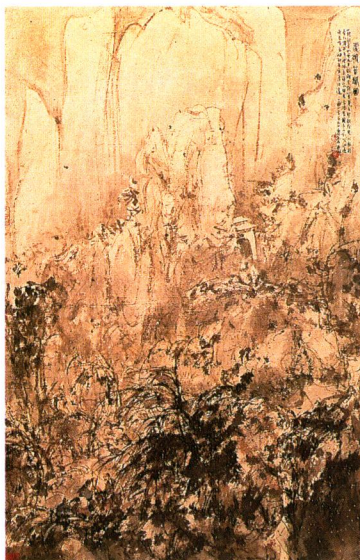
以上按年順的劃分是根據重要歷史事件作界線的。1911年，滿清政府崩潰，中華民國成立。1949年，中華人民共和國成立，把藝術發展推向社會主義道路，至1966年文化大革命把它帶到了高峰。1976年，隨著文化大革命的結束，創作動力愈趨澎湃。1989年天安門事件帶來了一個短時期的倒退，但隨即在1992年鄧小平南巡時宣佈全國經濟開放政策後，藝術的發展又再一次蓬勃起來，呈現百花齊放的局面。

1901-1949

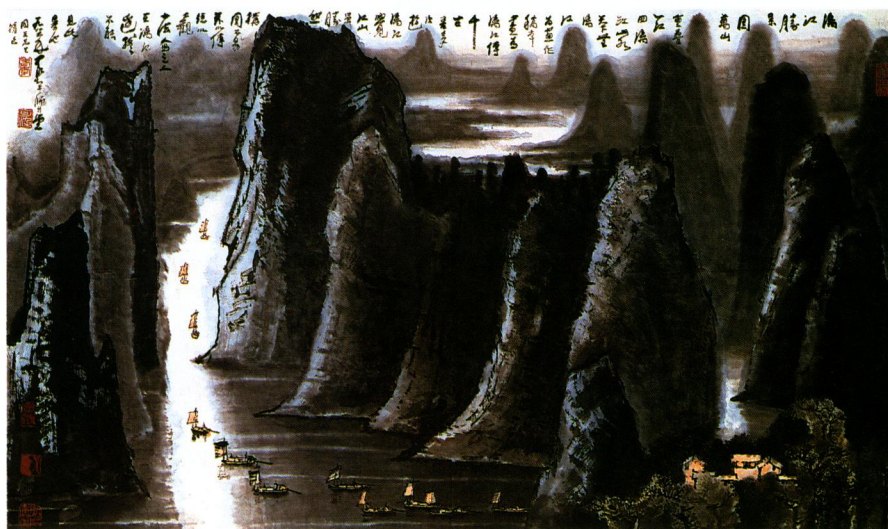
二十世紀初期的中國繪畫，以吳昌碩(1844-1927)、齊白石(1864-1957)及黃賓虹(1865-1955)等畫家為代表。這批畫家承繼了文人畫的傳統，同時亦為金石派的支持者，提倡繪畫的書法性。

西方列強的侵略，刺激這個時期的知識分子檢視自身文化傳統。隨之而來的是學習西方文化的熱潮，國人嘗試藉此與洋人並駕齊驅。

十九世紀末開始的自強運動發展成為1919年的五四運動，很多知識分子，包括畫家在內，都肩負起以藝術救國的使命。藝術家到歐洲和日本留學的大不乏人。高劍父(1879-1951)於1906年赴日習畫。1908年返國後，在《真相畫報》上鼓吹「新國畫」，提倡在傳



傅抱石 (1904-1965)
雪擁藍關圖
一九四五年作
私人藏品
Fu Baoshi (1904-1965)
Snowscape
Dated 1945
Private collection



李可染 (1907-1989)
濶江勝景圖
一九八六年作
呂國文先生藏品
Li Keran (1907-1989)
Scenery by the Li River
Dated 1986
Collection of Mr K. M. Lui

統國畫的基礎上，活用西方透視和明暗的寫實處理手法，貫徹了革命家張之洞(1837-1909)所提出的「中學為體，西學為用」的主張。

徐悲鴻(1895-1953)於1919年到巴黎，進修於巴黎國立高等美術學院。返國後以西洋畫的寫實技法和精神，融入中國畫的紙筆墨彩及中國的歷史題材，開中國波瀾壯闊史詩式繪畫創作的先河。林風眠(1900-1991)於1920年抵法，深受印象主義的吸引，對馬蒂斯和畢加索尤為推崇。劉海粟(1896-1994)則因在1915年在藝術學院首創裸體模特兒寫生班，被指為「藝術的叛徒」，在當時頗惹起了一場激烈的風波。劉氏曾數次赴歐訪問，受西方藝術裡表現主義的影響。他的水墨畫便明顯帶有他豪雄奔放的油畫之風。

蔡元培(1868-1940)留學德國，1911年肄業歸國，翌年任教育部長，對藝術的革新不遺餘力，在學校推行現代化的美術教育。1917年，蔡氏在他的《以美術代宗教說》文中發表了美術教育的理想。美學既能成為道德人倫之器，這種思維後來也成為共產主義的宣傳思想一部份。

1949-1976

1949年中華人民共和國成立，大力推行社會主義，藝術背負起史無前例的教育任務。隨著毛澤東主席1942年在延安談及文藝時提出「所有文學藝術都應為群眾服務，就是為工、農、兵服務」後，藝術家遂以普及藝術

為己任。要達到這個目的其中一個方法，就是把藝術與大眾文化連合起來。由此，傳統文人繪畫中嚴格遵守的美學要求漸漸淡化，取而代之的是民間藝術如木刻版畫、紡織、刺繡、剪紙及其他少數民族工藝中常用的艷麗色彩、率樸構圖等元素。

雖然如此，傳統繪畫並未完全被摒棄。齊白石、徐悲鴻以及其他在革命以前已有成就的藝術家，只要能與反動思想劃清界線，都仍繼續受到推崇。西方的寫實主義傳入中國後，亦成為蘇聯社會寫實主義的重要成份。因此，新社會鼓吹的繪畫風格，乃混合了舊有傳統風格技巧，與傳統以外的元素而組成的。

在新的政制下，人物畫大受重視，究其原因，乃由於它是歌頌工、農、兵的最合適題材。此外，為配合新中國的口號，頌揚民族和諧也成為了人物畫重要的題材。與此同時，讚美祖國的偉大成為了山水畫的主要任務。然而，在山水之中寄托愛國情懷，並非這個時期衍生的。山、河自古已被用作國家、民族的同義詞，而山水作為國家的表徵，更是很自然地成為這個題材不可或缺的



徐悲鴻 (1895-1953)
花開
一九三六年作
私人藏品
Xu Beihong (1895-1953)
Blossoming
Dated 1936
Private collection



一部份。因此，不難發現在很多山水畫裡，實際都帶有歌頌國家、頌揚建設祖國的含義。

在這個時期享負盛名的畫家包括潘天壽(1897-1971)、傅抱石(1904-1965)、李可染(1907-1989)、錢松壘(1898-1985)、宋文治(1919年生)、賀天健(1891-1977)、陸儼少(1909-1993)、關山月(1912年生)、黎雄才(1918年生)、程十髮(1921年生)、葉淺予(1907-1995)及吳作人(1908年生)等。

張大千 (1899-1983)
秋曦圖
一九七八年作
呂國文先生藏品
Zhang Daqian (1899-1983)
Autumn morning
Dated 1978
Collection of Mr K. M. Lui

百花齊放運動在1957年被壓抑後，藝術發展緊貼黨的路線。1966年，歷時十年的文化大革命開始，這個傾向更趨白熱化，幾乎所有的藝術家都被下放勞動，藝術學院全面停止收生，藝術創作的內容及主題都成了大量生產的樣版宣傳畫，其唯一目的就是作為散播政治思想的手段。文化大革命期間，漫畫、連環圖和插圖書亦十分流行，這些大眾文化的藝術形式在1949年前後都廣泛地被用作宣傳的工具。

1976-1989

文化大革命以後，不少漫畫家重歸藝術學院，接受正式的藝術訓練。這批畫家在經年的漫畫創作過程中所培養出熟練的技巧和生動的表现能力，在接受學院的訓練後得以進一步提昇，而塑造出一種以大眾文化為根據、視覺效果吸引的普及藝術形式。文化大革命後，藝術家都紛紛重整自己的語言、尋找出路。

可惜，已經造成的創傷，並未有奇蹟地得到治癒。文化大革命完結後的初期，盧新華的小說《傷痕》以及大批文藝作品，都記錄

了文化大革命的經歷。但從另一角度來看，文化大革命時期的產物，對其後去確定藝術真正價值的課題上，起了很大的作用。

1979年三月，第二十三屆中國美術家協會常務理事會會議中正式宣佈，在文化大革命期間停止活動的中國美術家協會恢復運作。較為開放的氣候刺激了藝術創作，不同的風格、藝術團體和展覽如星星畫會展覽等相繼出現。此外，藝術家就創作問題，也進行了連場激烈的辯論。

部份藝術家回歸到傳統裡去推敲，探索靈感；部份則繼續在西方藝術的風格和技巧上鑽研，嘗試另闢蹊徑。這個時期的畫家，在作品中以精鍊的藝術語言反映他們對藝術敏銳的觸角。他們的創作，不但以歷史為依據，更重要的，是他們都紮根於深厚的民族情操上。

重新定位的藝術觀點，發掘出一些在過去被忽略的藝術家，如石魯(1919-1982)、黃秋園(1914-1975)及陳子莊(1913-1976)等。這些畫家重新被肯定為推動革新的創作力量，以及在傳統體系上建立新里程碑的重要人物。

文化大革命的結束，亦造就了不少中年的藝術家；很多如周思聰(1939年生)和賈又福(1942年生)等的畫家，在藝術學院執起教鞭，把他們的藝術傳授給學生，由此，他們化解了文化大革命前後兩代之間的洪溝；他們其中有些更於後89時期，作出了大膽和具實驗性的藝術嘗試。

1989以後

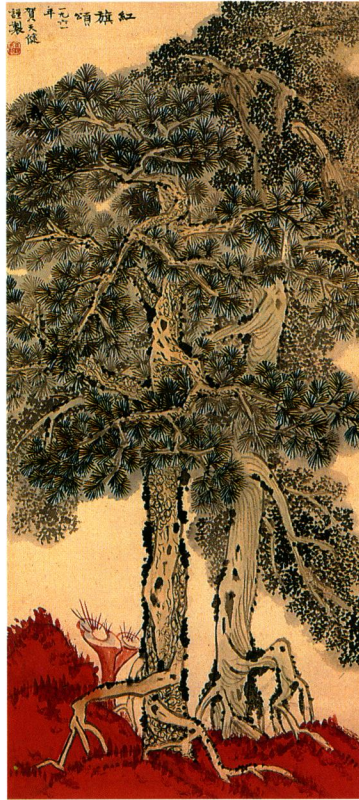
中國在過去十年裡，文藝創作活動甚為興旺。在這期間，受過學院訓練的藝術家，不但思辯能力敏銳，而且擁有精湛的技巧。革新和復興中國繪畫成為了一個重要的課題，亦普遍恢復了藝術家對傳統中國繪畫的興趣。

事實上，1989以後的復興情緒，可說是人們從早前盲目崇拜西方中覺醒過來所產生的。西方傳入的繪畫風格、技巧和題材，並未能滿足中國藝術家追求內涵和意境的慾望。

在復興傳統的過程中，新文人畫和新學院派等的運動，重新燃點起中國繪畫傳統的更新力量。

除此以外，在過去十年裡誕生的藝術家與早一輩所經歷的，可謂截然不同。這個時期的藝術家，是一個遠較上一代為複雜的個體，他不但要擁有完善的技巧，而且需具備全面的思維，要能以不同的角度、不論中西，去瞭解自己和自己的藝術；並且要能站在不同的位置上，同時以評論家、理論家、歷史家和藝術家的身分去審察和分析自己的創作活動。

吳冠中(1919年生)是成功地把抽象概念灌注入傳統的中國體裁裡的表表者之一。他的藝術見解，具透徹的思辯和剖析能力。吳氏不落俗套的處理手法，使點線成為率放自然的有機體；他的作品更是具象和抽象的結晶。



賀天健 (1891-1977)
紅旗頌
一九六一年作
私人藏品

He Tianjian (1891-1977)
Celebration of the red flag
Dated 1961
Private collection



趙無極 (1921年生)
無題
一九七二年作
查劉璧如女士藏品

Zhao Wuji (b.1921)
Untitled
Dated 1972
Collection of Mrs Cha Liu Bie Ju

其他藝術家如楊剛(1946年生)、石虎(1946年生)和谷文達(1955年生)，從原始圖像符號出發，試驗出嶄新的風格和形象，跳離以往的創作框框。他們更在古代原形上鑽研，嘗試找出中國文字與圖象的關係。藝術家如曾宓(1935年生)則詳細分析傳統的藝術概念和工具，利用水墨創作出外觀現代而內蘊濃厚傳統氣息的作品。

二十世紀中國政治上的動盪，可說是史無前例的。政局的顛簸造成國民流散海外。在中國領土以外的地方，中國繪畫經驗了巨大的轉變。在香港，呂壽琨(1919-1975)開始了一個新的水墨繪畫運動，嘗試以傳統繪畫中的純藝術元素，融合西方藝術的抽象概念入畫。在台灣，劉國松(1932年生)在增強畫面的質感上造功夫，創作出意境深邃的山水畫幅。在亞洲以外，王季遷(1907年生)、曾佑和(1925年生)和趙無極(1921年生)則分別於紐約、夏威夷和巴黎，為中國繪畫的發展進程拓立新的里程碑。

結語

二十世紀初期，高劍父、徐悲鴻、林風眠和劉海粟試圖把西方寫實主義融入中國繪畫。隨著時間的遞進，在歐美出現過的重要藝術潮流和創作模式，不難在中國藝術家的作品中找到它們的痕跡。可惜的是，當中國藝術家興高彩烈地埋首於他們的這些新發現時，在這些潮流和運動誕生的地方，它們都早過時了。

缺乏理性的盲目崇洋造成了大批膚淺、平庸、甚至毫無藝術價值的劣質作品的出現。到了二十世紀的末期，中國畫家逐漸覺醒到向西方取經，並未能真正為他們找到解決問題的良方。經歷了一個世紀的朝西望之後，這可能是他們得出最發人深省的啟示了。到了今天，中國畫家轉而宏觀地出發，深入地重新探視他們自身傳統體系的價值。

二十世紀的中國繪畫是豐富多姿的。新的、舊的；傳統的、現代的；時空交錯，編織成一幅形象斑斕、色彩繽紛的圖畫。

Introduction



The exhibition “ Twentieth Century Chinese Painting: Tradition and Innovation” examines the survival of traditional elements in Chinese painting and the transformations which steer Chinese painting forward in time to ride the waves of change.

From the appearance of pictographs on the surface of caves, shells and primitive pottery to literati painting that reached its zenith in the Ming and Qing dynasties, Chinese painting claims a proud heritage of over two thousand years. The traditional instruments of brush and ink used in Chinese painting are responsible for the emergence of the uniquely graphic and line-oriented quality in Chinese painting. Through tumultuous events that shaped the development of Chinese history, ink painting has always been able to revitalize itself and surge forward in history in renewed vitality.

The development of Chinese painting in the 20th century can be divided into three periods. The first period is from 1901 to 1949, the second period from 1949 to 1976, and the third from 1976 to the present. Some further divide the third period into two sub-periods, that is, 1976 to 1989 and post 1989.

The chronological divisions are marked with momentous historical events. In 1911, the Manchu empire collapsed to make way for the establishment of the Republic of China. In 1949, the establishment of the People's Republic of China steered artistic development in a social direction that reached its height in the Great Cultural Revolution in 1966. The end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 was followed by an outpour of creative energy. The temporary interlude of restraint brought about by the turn of events at the Tian'anmen of 1989 bursted into full blossoming after Deng Xiaoping took a journey to the south in 1992 to

陸儼少 (1909-1993)

巴筏出峽圖卷

一九五七年作

王世濤先生藏品

Lu Yanshao (1909-1993)

Rafting in the gorge

Dated 1957

Collection of Mr Stewart S. T. Wong

promulgate a national programme of liberal economic policy.

1901-1949

The first period of development was distinguished by artists like Wu Changshuo (1844-1927), Qi Baishi (1864-1957) and Huang Binhong (1865-1955). These artists upheld the literati tradition and they were supporters of the *Jinshi* (Steles) School that emphasized the calligraphic quality of painting.

The increasing encroachment of western powers during this period spurred the Chinese intellectuals onto an examination of the validity of their own culture. There followed a nationwide attempt to learn from the west in order to achieve parity with the west.

The self-strengthening reform movements which started in the late nineteenth century culminated in the May Fourth Movement of 1919. Many intellectuals including painters took up the mission to save the country through art. Artists went to Europe and Japan to study. Gao Jianfu (1879-1951) went to Japan to study art in 1906. Upon his return to China in 1908, he embarked on the promotion of a New Chinese Painting (*xin guobua*) which would incorporate the western realist techniques of perspective and shading. This was in line with the Chinese idea of “drawing utilitarianism (*yong*) from the west and retaining the essence (*ti*) of Chinese culture”, an idea propounded by one of the earliest visionaries of reform Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909).

Xu Beihong (1895-1953) went to Paris in 1919 to learn the techniques of the French Academy. When Xu returned to China, he adopted western realism in depicting grandiose epics of Chinese historical themes with Chinese brush, ink and colour on paper. Lin Fengmian (1900-1991),



呂壽琨 (1919-1975)

莊子自在

一九七四年作

香港藝術館藏品

Lü Shoukun (1919-1975)

Zen painting

Dated 1974

Collection of Hong Kong Museum of Art

who went to France in 1920, was attracted to Impressionism and Post-Impressionism; he was particularly fascinated with the art of Matisse and Picasso. Liu Haisu (1896-1994) caused great havoc in his contemporary art circle and was dubbed "a rebel in art" for introducing nude models in an art class in 1915. Initially a student of western painting, he made brief visits to Europe and was impressed with Expressionism. His ink painting is influenced by his oil painting executed in a broad and spontaneous manner.

The reform in art gained further support when Cai Yuanpei (1868-1940) became Minister of Education in 1912 after his return from studying in Germany. He vigorously implemented a curriculum of modern art education in the schools. In 1917, Cai Yuanpei published his article "On Replacing Religion with Art" ("Yi meishu dai zongjiao shuo") in which he infused art education with an ideological overtone. When issues of aesthetics became issues of ethics, art could, and became a useful propaganda tool. This was borne out after 1949 when developments in art became intertwined with political events.

1949-1976

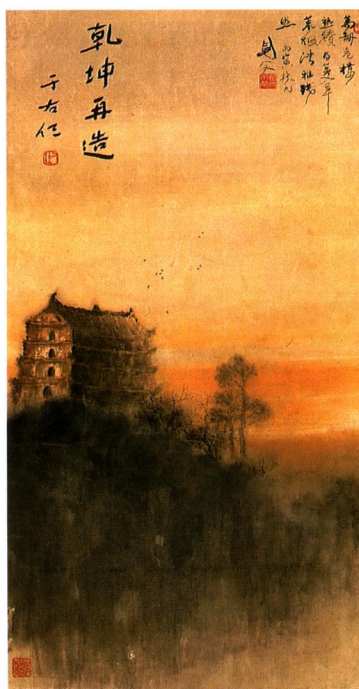
When socialism became the state ideology in the newly founded People's Republic of China in 1949, the didactic function of art was exploited to an unprecedented scale. Following Chairman Mao Zedong's proclamation at the 1942 Yan'an forum that: "All our literature and art are for the masses - for workers, peasants, and soldiers (*gong, nong, bing*)", artists set about to make art accessible to more people. One thing to do was to connect art with popular culture. From then on, the stringent aesthetics of the traditional literati mode of art became diluted with characteristic folk elements of bright colours, naive composition engendered in traditional wood block prints, textile, embroidery, papercut and other ethnographic artifacts.

Nonetheless, traditional art was not entirely repudiated. Qi Baishi, Xu Beihong and other artists, who had established themselves in the pre-revolution days, continued to be honoured as long as they disengage themselves from the values of its "reactionary origin". Western realism was also imported into China as an integral ingredient of Russian social realism. Thus, the painting styles encouraged in the new state built on old styles and techniques and incorporate non-traditional elements.

In the new regime, figure painting rose in importance as a genre that glorifies workers, farmers and soldiers. Figure painting also extols ethnic harmony, a theme that gained increasing importance in new China. At the same time, the glorification of the beautiful motherland became the *raison d'être* of landscape painting. Investing landscape (*shanshui*, mountain and water) with



谷文達 (1955年生)
靜觀的世界
無年款 (約一九八五年作)
香港藝術館藏品
Gu Wenda (b.1955)
World of meditation
Not dated (ca.1985)
Collection of Hong Kong Museum of Art



高劍父 (1879-1951)
五層樓
一九二六年作
香港藝術館藏品
Gao Jianfu (1879-1951)
The five-storeyed pavilion
Dated 1926
Collection of Hong Kong Museum of Art

nationalistic overtones is not a recent development in China. The compound *beshan* (river-and-mountain) has long been a synonym of country or nation. Landscape as the symbol of the nation is part and partial of the genre. Many landscape paintings appeared to glorify the beauty of the motherland and celebrate the reconstruction of the nation.

During this period, artists who rose to fame include Pan Tianshou (1897-1971), Fu Baoshi (1904-1965), Li Keran (1907-1989), Qian Songyan (1898-1985), Song Wenzhi (b.1919), He Tianjian (1891-1977), Lu Yanshao (1909-1993), Guan Shanyue (b.1912), Li Xiongcai (b.1918), Cheng Shifa (b.1921), Ye Qianyu (1907-1995) and Wu Zuoren (b.1908), etc.

The urge for a cultural orthodoxy in art was stressed after Mao repudiated the Hundred Flowers Movement in 1957. The trend was further intensified in 1966 when the ten-year long Great Cultural Revolution started. Nearly all the artists were sent to the country to labour in the fields. Art academies suspended recruitment. Contents and themes of art then produced were all designated prototypes (*yangban*) massively produced in the form of broadsheets (*xuanchuan bua*) to serve as political propaganda. Cartoon (*manhua*) and linked pictures (*lianbuan bua*) or illustrated books also prospered during the Cultural Revolution. These popular art forms had been extensively used as propaganda tools both before and after 1949.

1976-1989

After the Cultural Revolution, many cartoon artists went back to the art academies to acquire formal training. These artists' technical proficiency and their power of expression in the cartoonist background refined by academic training combined to produce a genre of popular art assured of an extensive basis of popular support due to visual attractiveness. Some artists tried to reconstruct their own order of art after the Cultural Revolution.

Unfortunately, there was no miracle recovery of inflicted injuries. In the first few years after the Cultural Revolution, Lu Xinhua's novel *Scar (Shanghen)* and a mass of creative material in the literary and visual arts appeared as sad reminders of the experience of the Cultural Revolution. On the other hand, the kitsch produced during the Cultural Revolution later serve to establish the true value of art.

In March, 1979, the Twenty-third extended meeting of the Executive Committee of the Association of Chinese Artists (Zhongguo Meishujia Xiehui Changwu Lishihui) officially declared that the work of the Association of Chinese Artists (Zhongguo Meishujia Xiehui) which was suspended during the Cultural Revolution could then begin again. The relatively liberal atmosphere encouraged artistic expressions. Many styles, artist societies and art exhibitions such as the Star Star exhibi-

tion appeared. Moreover, issues related to art were discussed with vigour.

Some artists returned to the tradition with greater scrutiny in search of inspiration. Others again turned to western styles and techniques in quest for their future. The works of many contemporary Chinese painters expressed the acute awareness of art in its purest form in the context of historical circumstance and most important of all in the context of deeply rooted nationalism.

The reoriented insight helped to recover some previously neglected artists such as Shi Lu (1919-1982), Huang Qiuyuan (1914-1975) and Chen Zizhuang (1913-1976). These artists gained renewed respect as instigators of vital new energy and setting new milestones in traditional forms. Jia Youfu's (b.1942) modern monumental landscapes harking back to Northern Song. Shi Lu's tortured images created with individualist brush technique is couched in a traditional lexicon.

After the Cultural Revolution, middle-aged artists rose to fame. Many artists, including Zhou Sicong (b.1939) and Jia Youfu, taught in the art academies to pass on their art to students. They bridged the gap between the pre and post-Cultural Revolution generation of artists. Some of them evolved into the post-1989 era with bold experiments.

Post-1989

Immense artistic activities have taken place in China in the last decade. Many academy-trained artists of the period are intellectually alert and technically accomplished. A renewed interest in traditional modes of Chinese painting is part of the serious attempts at revival and renewal.

The revivalist mood in the post-1989 period was attributable to an awakening from the compulsive borrowing from the west. Introduction of styles, techniques and subjects from the west has failed many Chinese artists in their search for satisfying content or spirit.

In the renewed exaltation of tradition, movements such as New Literati Painting (*xin wenrenhua*) and New Academy School (*xin xueyuanpai*) appeared to reassert the regenerative power of the Chinese painting tradition.

Moreover, the experience of artists in the last ten years differed substantially from that of their predecessors. An artist is a far more complicated entity than his predecessors. He not only wields his tools to execute and create. He seeks to understand himself and his art from a wide range of perspectives, spanning the east and the west, and aspires to analyse his activities as a critic, a theorist, a historian as well as an artist.

Wu Guanzhong (b.1919) is one of the most important artists who incorporated abstract concepts of western art into an indisputably Chinese



石鲁 (1919-1982)
黄河两岸
一九七二年作
梁羲先生藏品
Shi Lu (1919-1982)
Yellow River gorges
Dated 1972
Collection of Mr Leung Yee



余承尧 (1898-1993)
山水
無年款
私人藏品
Yu Chengyao (1898-1993)
Landscape
Not dated
Private collection

format. He is very intellectual and analytical about the artistic statements that he makes. Wu's unconventional lines and dots are organic and free. His individual statements are combinations of the figurative and the abstract.

Artists like Yang Gang (b. 1946), Shi Hu (b.1946), Gu Wenda (b.1955) emerged from their past with changed styles and images by experimenting with pictographic signs. They explored primitive forms and tried to establish the relationship between the Chinese written language and pictorial forms. Others like Zeng Mi (b.1935) dissected traditional concepts and tools and manipulated ink to execute works of modern outlook with traditional sentiments.

The political changes in China in the twentieth century, possibly more cataclysmic than in any period throughout her history, have brought a dispersal of her people on a colossal scale. Beyond the national boundary of China, Chinese painting underwent exciting changes. In Hong Kong, Lü Shoukun (1919-1975) started a new movement in Chinese painting by manipulating purely artistic elements and incorporating concepts of abstract art from the west. In Taiwan, Liu Guosong (b.1932) explored texture and created his imaginary landscapes. Further afield in New York, Honolulu and Paris, Wang Jiqian (b.1907), Zeng Youhe (b.1925) and Zhao Wuji (b.1921) respectively made their mark in the charting of new courses in the development of Chinese painting.

Conclusion

In the early part of the twentieth century, Gao Jianfu, Xu Beihong, Lin Fengmian and Liu Haisu attempted to incorporate western realism into Chinese painting. As time progresses, every significant movement and mode of art that appeared in Europe and America were not without imitators in China. However, it is also unfortunate that by the time Chinese artists caught up with each of these movements, they would have already gone out of fashion in their land of origin.

Indiscriminate borrowing from the west have led to the production of a mass of mediocre works and kitsch of little or no artistic merit. As we reach the end of the twentieth century, Chinese artists have come to the realization that the west has no wondrous solution to the problems of Chinese artists. This is perhaps the most inspiring lesson learn from a century of borrowing from the west. Now Chinese artists have embarked on intensive reassessment of their own tradition in a global context.

The state of painting in China in the twentieth century is rich and diverse. The old and the new, the conventional and the unorthodox, time and space is woven together in a rich tapestry of forms and colours.