

CHAZEN MUSEUM OF ART
University of Wisconsin–Madison
800 University Avenue
Madison, WI 53706

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 7, 2007

Contact: Susan Day
Tel: 608.263.2068
E-mail: sday@chazen.wisc.edu
Web site: www.chazen.wisc.edu

Digital images of previous exhibitions can be found at
http://www.chazen.wisc.edu/pr_pictures.asp

Chazen Will Exhibit Chinese Art from a Major Gift
On view July 7–August 26, 2007, Mayer Gallery
Reception Friday, July 13, 6–7:30 p.m.

This summer, the exhibition *The Hall of Self-Reliance: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy from the Simon and Rosemary Chen Collection* (July 7–August 26, 2007, in the Mayer Gallery) will feature about thirty works from the recently donated collection, ranging in style from expressionist ink painting to colorful landscapes, flowers, and animals to calligraphy inscriptions. The selections show how Chinese artists have adapted traditional techniques to modern contexts.

The exhibition derives its name—*The Hall of Self-Reliance* (Qiu Ji Tang)—from the two large characters in an inscription by the famous calligrapher and painter Zhao Zhiqian. The inscription quotes and explains a well-known teaching of Confucius on the virtue of self-reliance.

The Chazen Museum of Art's permanent collection of Chinese art has been greatly expanded thanks to the generosity of Simon K. Chen and Rosemary Ho Chen. The gift of more than 100 works includes Chinese calligraphy, painting, woodblock prints, and rubbings, dating from 1692 to 1996. The family collection was started by Simon Chen's parents, Hoshien Tchen and Linsie Chao. Hoshien Tchen lived in France while studying political science at the University of Paris. He became interested in art and frequented museums and galleries, where he met Chinese and European artists. When Tchen returned to China he served in provincial government under the Chinese Republic and later worked for the World Cultural Association, where his responsibilities included acquiring artworks for international exhibitions.

After the 1949 Chinese Revolution, Tchen immigrated with his family to the United States, eventually settling in Chicago. The Tchens were forced to leave most of their artworks behind in China, but gradually rebuilt the collection with paintings and calligraphy acquired on periodic visits to Taiwan. Simon Chen left China before his

father, in 1948, and met Rosemary Ho while traveling to the United States. They started out in Chicago but eventually moved to Wisconsin, where they have built strong ties in the business community and at the UW–Madison.

After the United States recognized the People's Republic of China in 1979, Simon and Rosemary added paintings and calligraphy by old masters and modern contemporary artists to their holdings of works by well-known artists active in Taiwan. Many paintings by Szechuan artists were collected by Rosemary's father, and woodblock prints by Simon's father.

Simon Chen received his Ph.D. from UW–Madison, and Rosemary worked at McArdle Laboratory for Cancer Research. Several of Hoshien Tchen's grandchildren also attended the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and it was his wish that the collection come to the university museum, to promote greater appreciation for Chinese art and culture in Wisconsin. Simon and Rosemary Chen have enhanced the gift by also donating to the Kohler Art Library their books on Chinese art, some of which are rare or even unavailable in other university libraries. These resources create a strong foundation for the study of twentieth-century Chinese art at the University of Wisconsin.

Julia K. Murray, Professor of Art History, East Asian Studies, and Religious Studies at UW–Madison, has worked with the Chens and museum staff to present *The Hall of Self-Reliance*. In curating this inaugural exhibition of the Chen collection, Professor Murray gave her students in two upper-level art history courses the opportunity to examine original artworks while they learned about the complex and fascinating history of recent Chinese art.

The public is invited to a free reception on Friday, July 13, 2007, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., with music by Kathy Taylor and Alexis Carreon, string duo, as well as refreshments and a cash bar.

Generous funding for this exhibition has been provided by the Chazen Museum of Art Council, the Hildale Fund, and Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin.

#

The Chazen Museum of Art is open Tuesdays-Fridays 9 a.m.–5 p.m.; Saturdays and Sundays 11 a.m.–5 p.m.; closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission to galleries and educational events is free. The museum is located on the campus of the University of Wisconsin–Madison and is accessible to wheelchairs from the Murray Street (north) entrance. Parking is available at the city of Madison's Lake Street and Frances Street ramps. Evening and weekend parking is also available under Grainger Hall with entrance on Brooks Street between University Avenue and Johnson streets. The Chazen will provide sign language interpreters for associated programs by three-week advance request to Anne Lambert, Curator of Education, weekdays, 608 263-4421 (voice). Information is also available by visiting our Web site at www.chazen.wisc.edu