

Masterworks of Chinese Painting In Pursuit of Mists and Clouds

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Additional information on paintings and collector's comments

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This exhibition was organized and circulated by the Berkeley Art Museum and guest curated by Julia M. White, curator of Asian Art at the Honolulu Academy of Arts. The exhibition is made possible by Dorothy Dunlap Cahill, Hsingyuan Tsao and James Cahill, Nicholas Cahill, and Sarah Cahill, and by an anonymous donor. Major support is provided by United Commercial Bank, the Shenson Foundation, and Jane R. Lurie.

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Elvehjem Museum of Art

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***Masterworks of Chinese Painting
In Pursuit of Mists and Clouds***

“It is like clouds and mists passing before my eyes, or the songs of birds striking my ears. How could I help but derive joy from my contact with these things? But when they are gone, I think no more about them. In this way, these two things [painting and calligraphy] are a constant pleasure to me, but not an affliction.”

**Su Dongpo, eleventh-century statesman, poet, and connoisseur, on collecting.
Translation by James Cahill**

Collecting art is a personal pursuit that requires understanding, knowledge, access, money, and some good luck. It is an occupation driven by numerous factors, among them a desire to learn, a quest for the hidden treasure, an enjoyment of the “game.” The end product, a collection, may be considered an asset or an affliction, depending on the viewpoint of the collector and the importance of the collection. The exhibition ***Masterworks of Chinese Painting*** explores such a pursuit, in which the principal collector, James Cahill, approached the activity with passion and yet understood that the final result would be as “clouds and mists” were to Su Dongpo, pleasurable but passing.

Professor Cahill began collecting Chinese paintings in 1955 while on a Fulbright fellowship in Japan, where he was completing his dissertation on fourteenth-century (Yuan) painting. It was there that a noted Japanese scholar bestowed on him the name Ching Yüan Chai, which roughly translates as “Studio of One Who Is Looking Intently at the Yuan Dynasty.” Throughout his long career James Cahill has used this collection as a means of gaining a better personal understanding of art, an opportunity to explore areas of connoisseurship, and a tool for teaching others these same disciplines.

For Cahill, collecting meaningfully enriched the scope and depth of his comprehension of the intricacies of Chinese painting and culture. Cahill has remarked, “collecting has deepened my understanding of Chinese painting ... forcing me to make judgments of quality and authenticity.”

The Ching Yüan Chai and Cahill family collections consist of works from the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, including major figure paintings and a selection of bird-and-flower subjects. The greatest strength, however, is landscape paintings. Considered the highest category of painting in China, the landscape embodies the ideals of the Confucian scholar. This is the area of Chinese art in which we find the most daring experiments, the greatest developments, and the most intense art historical scrutiny.

Over the years the collection has served students well. In his teaching Professor Cahill used the Ching Yüan Chai collection as a primary resource; he has often said that the paintings themselves are the best teachers. Many of his students have gone on to distinguished careers of their own and have in turn taught and laid groundwork for succeeding generations of scholars.

The collection has allowed for student participation in all facets of connoisseurship, from learning to unroll a handscroll to debating authenticity successfully. In many cases the collection generated significant new scholarship, with Cahill and his students alternately leading the way. Seminars developed in response to new acquisitions, and many a term paper, master's thesis, and even a few doctoral dissertations were the result of working with this remarkable collection.

The texts throughout the exhibition largely carry the familiar "voice" of James Cahill, who has generously commented on the artwork from the perspective of connoisseurship, collecting, and teaching. Additional biographical and art historical comments are presented in order to place the paintings in historical context.

Professor Cahill's emphasis on seeing the whole picture in a painting, not only reading the importance of the brushwork, puts him in contrast to some connoisseurs of Chinese painting. His own education in the arts was much influenced by personal contact with actual works of art, as opposed to the usual means of classroom study, using slides of paintings. Students, too, benefit from first-hand exposure to paintings, learning how to appreciate and understand a work of art with all the senses, not simply the intellect.

Julia M. White

Guest Curator and Curator of Asian Art, Honolulu Academy of Arts

Early Landscape Painting

1

Ma Yuan (Ma Yüan)

Active 1190–1230

Plum Tree and Ducks by a Stream, early 13th century

Hanging scroll: ink and color on silk

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

h: Qinshan

Ma Yuan was from Hezhong, Shanxi province. He was the principal artistic exponent of a school of painting associated with the Southern Song dynasty court; he painted during the Shaoxi era (1190–1194) and was still active in Emperor Lizong's reign (1225–1264). He and Xia Gui lend their names to the most famous school of the Southern Song period, the Ma-Xia school.

This school, working from a basis established in the Northern Song period, depicted a natural and somewhat romanticized landscape. In this painting, like many of his typical compositions, a dense corner composition is incorporated with an open, misty middle ground, with views to the distant hills. Hence the artist's sobriquet "one corner Ma."

The court and the painting academy that Ma served were centered in the beautiful town of Hangzhou, home to the scenic West Lake and long known as a place of culture, art, and poetry. Ma Yuan was firmly associated with the academy, taking his place as the fourth-generation painter in his family to serve the emperor. There are many paintings attributed to this artist but only a very few genuine examples of his work.

"[When I saw this painting] I immediately took it to be a genuine Ma Yuan, [with a] good signature [only trimmed at the bottom], and told [the dealer] so, asking whether the price wasn't too low. He said, 'We'll sell you this cheap this time, and something else expensive next time.' So I bought it. As it happened, I had just finished giving my course on early Chinese painting, through Song, and had shown students how genuine Ma Yuans can be distinguished from imitations and copies: the more fluid drawing of the plum tree [stiff and angular in copies, typically]; the gradual fading and loss of detail in a three-step recession; the way the space funnels back in an S-curve, and so forth."

—*James Cahill*

2

Sun Junze (Sun Chün-tse)

Active early 14th century

Landscape with Buildings, early 14th century

Hanging scroll: ink and color on silk

Lent by Sarah Cahill

Although the major trends in Yuan period painting were taking a radical departure from the academy styles of Hangzhou, a small group of painters continued the elegant and idealized depictions of real nature seen in Southern Song painting. Sun Junze was one who pursued this Ma-Xia tradition, often, as here, on a larger scale. Little is known of his life, only that he was from Hangzhou, which was perhaps the greatest influence in his following the earlier styles from the academy of painting that had been centered there.

“The signature, in the lower left corner, deliberately obscured by a brushstroke of ink but readable under strong light, matches those on several works by this artist that were preserved in Japan. This [painting was] misrepresented, the signature painted over and a label saying it’s a Song work, certainly by Ma Yuan (active 1190–1230). It was hanging in our living room in Berkeley when I went off to the Cleveland Museum of Art for a symposium accompanying an exhibition of Yuan period art. I gave a paper in which I argued that Yuan continuations of Song traditions also had to be included in our histories of Yuan painting, showing, for instance, what Yuan paintings in the Ma Yuan style look like. Coming home and looking [again at the painting] I realized that according to my own paper, this must be a Yuan painting; and examining it closely I found the Sun Junze signature. So, suddenly it rose from a painting nobody noticed to a world-class masterpiece, all because of a discovered signature.”

—*James Cahill*

3

Guo Min (Kuo Min)

Active 13th century

Wind and Snow in the Fir-pines, mid to late 13th century

Hanging scroll: ink and color on silk

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible by gifts from Jane Lurie and Nancy Chew, through the donations of Albert A.M. Bender, Mrs. Anson S. Blake, William E. Colby, the Estate of Sallie Frances Devine, Arthur F. Landeson and the proceeds of the 1998 Fumpon and Poster Sale

z: Boda

Guo Min was a late Song, early Yuan painter whose works are quite rare. He was from Qixian in Henan province and was known as a painter of landscapes, figures, flowers, and ink bamboo. He worked in a style and developed compositions that are associated with northern Song painters like Guo Xi and Li Cheng.

Following the Li-Guo style, Guo Min builds up forms to create this composition of towering mountains fraught with looming overhangs. This unstable landscape creates a tension that is further heightened by the bleakness of winter.

The painting is signed between two trees at the bottom right.

4

Unknown

14th century

Landscape with Figures in the Manner of Guo Xi (Kuo Hsi) (ca. 1000–ca. 1090), late 13th to mid-14th century

Hanging scroll: ink on silk

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

The style associated with the Northern Song painter and theoretician Guo Xi (eleventh century) can be seen clearly in this monumental landscape painting. Landscape painting of the Northern Song emphasized the enormity of nature and the smallness of man.

According to writings attributed to Guo Xi, the artist's state of mind played a significant role in his ability to depict truly the essence of the natural world. His son Guo Si wrote of his father's teachings: "[The artist] must do his work with his whole soul; if he does not work with his whole soul, the essential will not be clear. He must be severe and respectful in his work, otherwise it will lack depth of thought. He must apply zeal and reverence to complete it, otherwise the picture will not be properly finished." (Translation from Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles*, 6 vols. New York: Ronald Press, 1956–1958.)

In the Northern Song dynasty style, large symmetrical landscape forms are built up in layers and densely textured with a variety of brush techniques. This Yuan version establishes a greater separation between the viewer and the scene, but closely follows the Northern Song methods of multipoint perspective and the tilting of the far peak, which distorts the central mountain.

5

Attributed to **Ma Wan**

Active 1325–1365

River Landscape, mid to late 14th century

Hanging scroll: ink on silk

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

z: Wenbi

h: Luchun or Ludun

Ma Wan was a follower of Dong Yuan, Mi Fu, and the Yuan master Huang Gongwang. He adopted the philosophy of Huang and other Yuan masters of using landscape painting as a means of self-expression. Although possessing a classical education, as a loyalist he chose to be secluded from society rather than to serve the foreign reign of the Mongols. On their demise in 1368 he returned to civil service under the Hongwu emperor. This loyal and upright attitude pervaded much of Yuan period painting circles.

Ming Landscape Painting

6

Wen Zhengming (Wen Cheng-ming)

1470–1559

The Temple at Mt. Zhiping, 1516

Hanging scroll: ink and color on silk

Lent by the Fei Hung Chai Collection

Original name Bi and *zi* was Zhengming

Later adopted Zhengming and took the *zi* Zhengzhong and the *hao* Hengshan jushi

Wen Zhengming was from a wealthy Suzhou family with ample access to education and literary texts; as such he should have followed a career in civil service. However, he failed in many attempts to pass the second level of examinations and eventually was given an appointment instead. He did not last long in government service and eventually retired from public life.

His failure in government is in stark contrast to his success as a painter. He studied painting with the great early Ming master Shen Zhou (1427–1509) and followed the Yuan masters, particularly in landscape painting, but also in bamboo and paintings of old trees. His use of pale cool and warm colors, an attenuated landscape format, and the complexity of positive and negative shapes are hallmarks of his work. He shaped the Wu school into a virtual dynasty with his son, nephew, and students leading generations of artists through his example. He was much admired during his lifetime and enjoyed the patronage of Wang Shizhen and his brother Wang Shimou, government officials who were noted collectors and connoisseurs.

“The inscription is published in Wen Zhengming’s literary works, but for some reason the painting was not accepted by everybody. It doesn’t look like what you think of when you think of Wen Zhengming. When it came up at auction during the seminar, I had slides of it and we worked through it trying to see whether it was or it wasn’t [Wen Zhengming]. By that time, we had come to some criteria for recognizing the hand of Wen Zhengming: how he puts a painting together, the different motifs, apart from the style he was working in. [We found] the paintings looked superficially different, but fundamentally, structurally the same. We came to the conclusion that it was indeed a real Wen Zhengming, and I proceeded to buy it after the auction was over. It was an example in which we were able to get the painting because of making a decision in the seminar. I’m not saying I wouldn’t have bought it otherwise, but I felt a lot better about it.”

—James Cahill

7

Shen Shi (Shen Shih)

Active mid 16th century

Sunset in an Autumn Valley: Landscape with Man in House, 1544

Hanging scroll: ink on paper

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

Shen Shi was from Suzhou but had also lived in Nanjing. He studied the Song and Yuan masters as well as the professional artists Tang Yin and Qiu Ying and is said to have copied old paintings. Only a few works carry his own signature.

In this autumn landscape we see more of the influence of the Wu school master Wen Zhengming, Shen Shi's light and deft brushwork are reminiscent of other better-known painters like Shen Zhou. The two poetic inscriptions on the top right of this work are by Wen Boren (nephew of Wen Zhengming, whose work is in the exhibition) and another Shen Shi. The artist Shen Shi indicates it was painted for Mr. Zhulin of Nanjing.

8

Wen Zhengming (Wen Cheng-ming)

1470–1559

Trees in a Valley, 1549

Hanging scroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by the Fei Hung Chai Collection

“This painting is one of the fine works of this subject from Wen's late period in which old trees took on a powerful symbolic importance in his works. It was reproduced in [Osvald] Sirén's *Chinese Painting* when it was owned by [an old collector] in Ashiya [Japan], Sirén had visited the old [collector], as I did during my Fulbright year. After his death the collection passed to his older son, who was passionately devoted to racing cars and cared nothing about Chinese paintings. In the 1980s [the son] began releasing them to New York auctions, and this Wen Zhengming appeared in [a] catalogue.

“This was too late a purchase to figure in my Wen Zhengming seminar, in which old trees, especially cypresses, were a major theme—I organized a weekend trip to Point Lobos near Carmel to see the famous old cypresses there; we stayed overnight at Zhang Daqian's [a contemporary Chinese painter] place at Pebble Beach [his daughter Sing was in the seminar].”

—James Cahill

9

Wen Chia (Wen Jia)

1501–1583

Buildings on Immortal Mountains, 1555

Hanging scroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by Sarah Cahill

z: Xiucheng

h: Wenshui

Wen Jia was the second son of Wen Zhengming and painted in the style of his father. He was influenced by Ni Zan and Wang Meng, two of the “Four Great Masters” of the Yuan period.

10

Song Xu (Sung Hsü)

1525-ca. 1607

Waterfall in Winter, 1589

Hanging scroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by Sarah Cahill

z: Chuyang and Shimen

Song Xu was from Chongde, near Jiaxing, Zhejiang province but lived and worked much of his life around Songjiang. He was much admired during his life, both for his ability as a painter and his spiritual understanding. He lived in a Daoist temple and had studied Chan Buddhism, although he never actually became a monk. His paintings from the 1580s, like this tall, attenuated landscape, are independent and individualistic, although it is possible to see the influence of Shen Zhou in the development of the brushwork in the mountain forms. The dramatic appeal of this painting is in the compressed composition. His influence extended into the next generation of painters as the teacher of Zhao Zuo and Song Moujin.

11

Dai Jin (Tai Chin)

1388–1462

Summer Trees Casting Shade, 15th century

Hanging scroll: ink on silk

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through gifts from an anonymous donor, Robert Bloch, the Warren King Family, Jane Lurie, Kirsten and Terry Michelsen, and other Friends of the Asian Gallery

z: Wenjin

h: Jing'an

Dai Jin was from Qiantang, Zhejiang province and eventually settled in Hangzhou. His talent as a painter was recognized early in his life, but through what appears to have been considerable envy from powerful adversaries, he was unable to sustain a position at court. Around 1425, he was summoned to court, but soon returned to his home province. His landscapes are in the styles of Ma Yuan and Xia Gui, but show greater complexity of depth and composition. He is regarded as the principal master of the Zhe School.

This large scroll, originally badly mounted, was discovered by Cahill in an auction in which one would not expect to find major works by major artists. After identifying the genuine Dai Jin seal, which had been covered by brocade, Cahill began working more carefully on the authenticity of the painting.

“Indeed it was a Dai Jin seal, corresponding to one on a famous painting in Shanghai. Then I began working on style. I didn’t believe that it could be Dai Jin for a time, but the more I looked, the better it was.” Cahill had the painting remounted and during this time discovered, with the help of the well-known dealer and connoisseur Zheng Ji, that the painting had a title in the upper right consistent with a known painting in the famous sixteenth-century collection of the wicked Prime Minister Yan Song. Zheng Ji theorized that the owner’s seal had been cut off when the official was overthrown for political reasons. “In any case, it is a major Dai Jin and I realized later when looking at it that it corresponds very nicely with a [noted] painting in Shanghai. It has become one of the masterworks of the artist partly because of the large size and the very impressive composition based loosely on the Guo Xi painting *Early Spring* (1072).” —*James Cahill*

12

Unknown

15th century

Old Trees and Landscape, mid 15th century

Hanging scroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

A tradition of painting old, gnarled trees began as early as the Northern Song period and extended throughout Chinese painting history. Li Cheng (919–967) was one of the most famous artists known for depictions of rough old trees in landscape. The Ming artist Wen Zhengming continued the tradition that allowed for great expression to be lent to a simple twisting of trunks.

13

Xie Shichen (Hsieh Shih-ch'en)

1488-after 1567

Old Tree and Bamboo in the Manner of Wu Zhen (1280–1354), 1559

Hanging scroll: ink on paper

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

z: Sizhong

h: Chuxian

Xie Shichen was from Suzhou and spent most of his life painting there. His family was wealthy, yet he appears to have become a professional painter in a town that was just beginning to gain prominence for both amateur and professional painters. It is recorded that he followed Shen Zhou's style adding bits of his own and other professional painters' ideas to the mix. He is best known as a landscape painter with a very deft and versatile brush.

14

Shen Shichong (Shen Shih-ch'ung)

Active 1611–1640

Man and Servant Beneath Trees, 1616

Album leaf: ink and color on paper

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from Jane Lurie

z: Ziju

Shen Shichong was from Huating, Jiangsu province, a pupil first of Song Moujin and later Zhao Zuo, who became one of the most famous Yunjian school artists. The artists of this tradition painted landscapes with an atmospheric quality and frequently their paintings take on a slightly hazy look.

This school's first master was Song Xu, whose work is also shown here. Historically the Yunjian (the old name of the region of Songjiang) school was held in contrast to the Huating (named for the county and city) school, whose major exponent was the theoretician and painter Dong Qichang. Shen displays the typical Yunjian school flare for beautiful and expert brushwork, particularly in the handling of the autumn trees and densely textured rocks.

15

Chen Hongshou (Ch'en Hung-shou)

1598–1652

Autumn Trees by the River, 17th century

Folding fan: ink and color on gold paper

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

16

Fu Shan

1607–1684

Landscape, 17th century

Hanging scroll: ink on silk

Lent by the Fei Hung Chai Collection

z: Qingzhu

h: Zhenshan, Selu, Gong zhita, Renzhong, Liuchi, Suili

Fu Shan, a noted calligrapher as well as a painter and physician from Shanxi, lived through the tumultuous period between the Ming and Qing dynasties. He fought the Qing and became known as a Ming loyalist.

“Fu Shan is better known as a calligrapher, and his landscape paintings are relatively rare. This is one of his best. I don't usually go for the facile equations of painting and calligraphy—they are profoundly different arts. But here, because of the highly formalized character of the painting, one could make formal connections with his calligraphy.”

—*James Cahill*

17

Hongren (Hung-jen)

1610–1664

Landscape after Lu Guang (active ca. 1325–1359), 1658

Hanging scroll: ink on paper

Lent by Sarah Cahill

z: Jianjiang

h: Meihua Guna, Yunyin

Hongren was born in Jiang Dao in Shexian, Anhui province. He reportedly lived in poverty, yet he managed to obtain an education and an official degree, which would have allowed him to work in the civil service. However, with the fall of the Ming in 1644, he, like many other painters, chose to remain loyal to the Ming and thus became a *yimin* or “leftover subject.” He became a Buddhist monk, took the name Hongren, and went to work in the deep mountains of Anhui. He reportedly seldom left his home on Mt. Huang other than to visit friends in Hangzhou, Yangzhou, and Nanjing.

Hongren is regarded as the leading artist in the Anhui school, a loosely defined group that used the distinctive landscape of the Anhui area for creative inspiration. He was considered one of the “Four Masters of Anhui.”

In this, one of his late masterpieces, he follows the Yuan dynasty painter Lu Guang, whom he mentions in the inscription. He uses the same compositional types as Lu Guang, in particular the building up of forms to create substance and depth. Hongren is known to have been especially concerned with adhering to Yuan dynasty models and is credited with having brought the Yuan master Ni Zan’s style back into favor.

“[This painting] isn’t the more favored kind of Hongren with angular, geometric forms, but it is still genuine and fine, from late in his life.”

—*James Cahill*

18

Dai Benxiao (Tai Pen-hsiao)

1621–1693

Landscape, 1664

Hanging scroll: ink on paper

Lent by Sarah Cahill

z: Wenjin

h: Jing'an

Inscription by the artist: “Deep green gives rise to shadows, trees coalesce as curtains,/ Agitated clouds float whitely, water gives birth to waves./ Thus I know the world’s mundane affairs/ Will not reach this short bamboo fence in the mountains./ A solitary pine takes hold of the pond, the halcyon shadow is long./ On the whole road, mountain flowers send [their fragrance] far./ There is also a clear spring contributing to listening quietly./ It is as if I were at Wangchun village. The first day of the eighth month of *jiachen* [1664]. The old woodcutter of Ying’a Mountain, Benxiao.” Translation by Haruki Yoshida

Dai Benxiao was from Anhui province, the son of a Ming loyalist who moved his family several times to avoid the chaos of the late Ming period. This undoubtedly affected Dai’s own choice to remain outside the court and to seek seclusion in the mountains of Anhui. His painting style is extremely linear; in this he resembles another Anhui artist, Hongren. Dai also followed the Yuan masters, painting the same kind of spare landscapes as Ni Zan.

19

Gong Xian (Kung Hsien)

1618–1689

The Willow Dwelling, 17th century

Hanging scroll: ink on paper

Lent by Sarah Cahill

20

Fan Qi (Fan Ch'i)

1616-after 1694

Evening Landscape, 17th century

Album leaf mounted as hanging scroll: ink on paper

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

z: Huigong and Qiagong

Fan Qi was from Jiangning in Jiangsu province. He was known as one of the Eight Masters of Nanjing, a circle of great artists working in that city at the end of the Ming dynasty. He was also well regarded as a poet. This album leaf, mounted as a hanging scroll, displays a crisp and clear environment, meticulously painted in a style that has roots in the great traditions of the Song masters. His work also reflects knowledge of Western perspective, which was gaining favor among the artists in Nanjing. The connoisseur and collector Zhou Liangong acted as a patron to Fan Qi.

21

Gong Xian (Kung Hsien)

1618-1689

Landscape with Houses on a Mountainside (Waterfall on Mt. Guanglu),

17th century

Hanging scroll: ink on paper

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

22

Gong Xian (Kung Hsien)

1618–1689

Landscape with Trees, painted for Wang Shizhen, 17th century

Hanging scroll: ink on satin

Lent by Nicholas Cahill

z: Qixian

h: Banqian, Banmu, Chaizhangren, Yeyi

Born in Kunshan, Jiangsu Province, Gong Xian eventually became the leading *yimin* (“leftover subject”) painter in Nanjing. He died in poverty, never caring to promote himself or his paintings, and yet is considered to be the most famous of the Individualist group of “Eight Masters from Nanjing.” He is admired for closely following the Song masters, yet creating exciting new pictorial expressions through innovative brushwork. His works are hauntingly beautiful renditions of a shadowy world.

The brilliant and influential connoisseur and collector Zhou Lianggong (1612–1672) wrote in his famous treatise on paintings of this period, the *Du Hua Lu*, “Gong Xian was of an eccentric nature and found it difficult to associate with other people. As a painter he swept away the common mannerism (trodden path) and produced very deep and original works.” He said of himself, “there has been nobody before me and there will be nobody after me.” (Translation from Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles*, 6 vols. New York: Ronald Press, 1956–1958.)

“In an article I wrote on Gong Xian I trace his style using various methods [all that was available to me then] showing how he begins with a linear manner adopted from Anhui and other masters of that time, then, affected by foreign pictures, adds light-and-shadow stippling or shading, so as to render volumetric masses. This painting must be from [his early period] around 1666–1667. Then [he goes into] his great middle period and a late period in which he produces more, and more quickly, dropping the careful stippling for the most part and working in fast-running line and dotting. The Gong Xian handscroll [also in this exhibition], which has only a simple signature, must be late [in his work]. *The Willow Dwelling* [hanging immediately to the left of this scroll] with calligraphy is probably also fairly late. All the way through he avoids the proper brushwork of the Orthodox masters and uses brush techniques that get him condemned for “bad brushwork” . . . And his high reputation now is a modern thing, same as Shitao and others.” —James Cahill

23

Gong Xian (Kung Hsien)

1618–1689

Landscape, 17th century

Handscroll: ink on paper

Lent by the Ching Yüan Chai Collection

24

Fa Ruozhen (Fa Jo-chen)

1613–1696

Landscape, 1681

Handscroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

z: Hanru

h: Huangshi

Fa Ruozhen was a native of Jiaozhou, Shandong province, but he lived at various times in Fujian, Zhejiang, and in Anhui. He is usually associated with the Anhui school, a loosely identified group that used Mt. Huang as their subject matter and frequently followed the Yuan master Ni Zan in depicting landscapes devoid of people.

The long handscroll depicting a turbulent, slanting view of a mountainous area is similar to other works by the artist in his later years. His brushwork of lightly flying strokes is unmistakable and unique. He folds the composition in and over itself, time and again, in a slightly dizzying manner, creating a continuous, undulating landscape.

Orthodox vs. Individualist

25

Wang Yuanqi (Wang Yüan-ch'i)

1642–1715

Landscape, 1705

Hanging scroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by the Fei Hung Chai Collection

z: Maojing

h: Lutai, Xilu houren, Shishi daoren

From Taicang, Jiangsu

Wang Yuanqi was the grandson of Wang Shimin, and thus had the same interest in following the orthodox tradition as espoused by the critic and painter Dong Qichang. The youngest of the “Four Wangs,” he was in a different political situation from the others because distance from the Ming and acceptance of the Qing permitted Wang Yuanqi to accept a government position after obtaining his *jinshi* degree in 1670. He was appointed to the Hanlin Academy in 1700. He was also a member of the board for compilation of the

Peiwen zhai shuhua pu (encyclopedia of calligraphy and painting commissioned by the Kangxi emperor). In his painting he followed the Yuan master Huang Gongwang.

26

Wang Jian (Wang Chien)

1598–1677

Landscapes in Old Styles, 1666

Album (6 of 12 leaves): ink on paper

Lent by the ChingYüan Chai Collection

z: Yuanzhao

h: Xiangbi, Lianzhou, Ranxiang anzhu

From Taicang, Jiangsu

The second of the “Four Wangs” and one of the “Nine Friends in Painting,” Wang Jian came from a family dedicated to learning and painting. He was a follower of Dong Qichang and copied from the Yuan masters, developing a conservative approach to landscape composition. He was for a time governor of Lianzhou, Guangdong province but was more interested in painting than politics and retired from public life.

27

Lan Ying

1585-ca. 1664

Scenery of Nanping Shan (South Screen Mountain), 1627

Handscroll: ink and color on silk

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

z: Tianshu

h: Xihuwaishi, Diesou, Shitoutuo

Lan Ying was born in Zhejiang province and lived most of his life in Hangzhou. He is often regarded as the last great painter of the *Zhe* school, a school founded by Dai Jin (1388–1462) and associated with a decorative and academic style.

Although Lan Ying began his career as a professional painter, a somewhat derogatory appellation in light of the higher status of the scholar/ gentry/ amateur painter, his surviving works demonstrate why he is considered one of the greatest artists of his period. His studies of early masters, coupled with his precise brushwork, drew praise for him from the powerful Songjiang art circles of the early Qing period. He was a teacher of Chen Hongshou and of Liu Du, another late Ming artist.

28

Zhang Jisu (Chang Chi-su)

Active 1660–1670s

The Wangchuan Villa after Wang Wei (699–759), 17th century

Handscroll: ink and color on silk

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

Zhang Jisu worked outside of the mainstream of seventeenth-century painting and was less susceptible to the critical currents of the Songjiang area. He was from Puzhou, present-day Yongji in Shanxi province. Zhang's work carries the flavor of the Nanjing school painters like Wu Bin. In this handscroll we also see some signs of Western influences in his style.

“Zhang Jisu apparently at some point in his career had been able to see and study what he took to be the original of Wang Wei's famous scroll of the Wangchuan Villa. Wang Wei was an eighth-century poet-painter, later hailed as the forefather of literati amateur/ scholar painters. Wang Wei [in his famous scroll] had painted the surroundings of his villa, the Wangchuan River. Originally on the walls of his villa, the composition came down through the centuries in various ways. A version of it surfaced in the late Ming and was taken by some people to be the original—it was engraved in stone and so forth. So Zhang Jisu was able to see this and he did various versions of it. I think five of them exist, four plus this one.”

—*James Cahill*

29

Wang Hui, 1632–1717

Yun Shouping (Yun Shou-p'ing), 1633–1690

River Landscape with Fisherman in Boat, 1662

Handscroll: ink on paper

Lent by the Ching Yuan Chai Collection

z: Shigu

h: Gengyan sanren, Qinghui zhuren, Jianmen qiaoke, Niaomu shanren

Wang Hui was from a family of professional painters from Changshu, Jiangsu province. He was the third of the “Four Wangs” (Wang Shimin, Wang Jian, Wang Hui, and Wang Yuanqi) and one of the “Six Great Masters of the Qing” (with the Four Wangs, Yun Shouping, and Wu Li). Often referred to as members of the orthodox tradition, these artists followed the great critic and painter Dong Qichang in his reliance on the great past masters. They are typically placed in contrast to painters who were more independent and thus known as the Individualists.

Wang Hui’s talent was recognized early, and he was brought into an important circle of painters, connoisseurs, and collectors by Wang Jian and Wang Shimin. Through these associations he was able to see many fine painting collections and in some instances was able to copy masterpieces, one of the major tools for learning the works of the masters. He became one of the most prolific of the early Qing painters.

Known as the greatest flower painter of his time, Yun Shouping was from Wujin, Jiangsu province. He was a contemporary of Wang Hui and Wang Yuanqi, two of the greatest landscape painters of the time (the three are among the “Six Great Masters of the Qing”). His family situation was similar to theirs in that he was the son of a Ming loyalist and so did not choose to serve as an official under the Qing dynasty. Instead he studied painting with his uncle and made his living as a painter.

Figure Painting

30

Cui Zizhong (Ts'ui Tzu-chung)

d.1644

The Gathering in the Apricot Garden, 1638

Hanging scroll: ink and color on silk

Lent by Nicholas Cahill

t: Daomu

h: Beihai and Qingyin

From Laiyang, Shandong province, Cui Zizhong lived in Beijing. A major force in figure painting, he was known for not accepting payment for his paintings. He is often compared to Chen Hongshou, considered Cui's counterpart in southern China. Cui was a staunch Ming loyalist who starved to death when the dynasty was overthrown.

“When, in the 1970s, Judy Andrews (former student, now professor of art history at Ohio State University) did research toward her dissertation on Cui Zizhong, she discovered a passage in the writing of a later Ming scholar that recounted the story behind this painting. Cui was the guest of a patron in Beijing who, when he was leaving on an official trip, asked Cui to do a painting for him. Cui procrastinated, until the man finally sent a servant back to induce Cui to finish it and bring the painting to him. Cui finally did it, representing the two of them drinking a farewell tea together in the man's Apricot Garden. This is the very painting the story is about. An interesting feature is the detailed depiction of the apparatus for grinding tea, to make a powdered form that was drunk as in the Japanese tea ceremony.”

—*James Cahill*

31

Chen Hongshou (Ch'en Hung-shou)

1598–1652

Su Wu and Li Ling, with Attendants (Farewell of Su Wu and Li Ling), 17th century

Hanging scroll: ink and color on silk

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

z: Zhanghou

h: Laolian, Fuchi

After 1645 monastic name *h*: Laochi, Huichi

Chen Hongshou was born in Zhuji, Zhejiang to a wealthy family and showed early promise as an artist. He is best known as a figure painter and was often compared to Cui Zizhong, hence the phrase “*Nan Chen bei Cui*” (Chen in the South, Cui in the North). His paintings of historical characters always carry a feeling of the antique and often harbor a sense of estrangement.

“This painting is from Chen’s middle period, the 1630s, when his paintings often seem heavy-handed and unsubtle [he was keeping up a copious commercial output to support himself, with studio assistants]. But this one, the more you look at it, turns out to be full of subtleties and intricacies, and is really quite moving in the end.” —*James Cahill*

32

Huang Shen

1687–after 1768

Landscape with Scholar and Servant, 18th century

Hanging scroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

“The size and shape suggests that [this scroll] might have been mounted as a screen. This may account for the fact that it’s rather beat up, as if exposed a lot, but still strong . . . Huang Shen often did big pictures, but they tended to be of large, sometimes rather gross figures. This one is better than most, although also, no doubt, done rather quickly . . . he was prolific, [and] adopted a style that would permit him to be.” —*James Cahill*

33

Chen Quan (Ch'en Ch'üan)

Active 17th century

Scholars Gazing at the Moon and Reflections of It in the Water, 17th century

Hanging scroll: ink and color on silk

Lent by Nicholas Cahill

Inscription by artist: Verse couplet. "I have depicted: 'All the moons in the water are held by a single moon; One single moon can thus hold all the lakes and rivers'—an allusion to the Chan Buddhist poem: "The moon imprints itself on a thousand rivers,/ and yet, in reality, is a single moon." *Translation by Patricia Berger*

"[In this painting] scholars here and there throughout the picture are all looking at reflections of the moon. There are scholars on the bridge looking at one reflection of the moon and there are people in the foreground looking at another. Then there's the real moon up in the sky. It's quite a wonderful conception . . . What the picture really is showing is a Chan or Zen Buddhist idea [with] the inscription meaning something like, 'all phenomena and things go back to one cause and are infinitely manifested on earth.' The idea is that everybody sees a different reflection of the moon, but they all go back to one real moon. The picture was done for a Zen monk, it turns out." —*James Cahill*

This is the only known work by the unrecorded artist Chen Quan, whose influences—notably the use of lush washes of ink and vivid brushwork—appear to have come from Zhe school adherents in the Hangzhou area.

34

Ren Yi (Jen I)

1840–1895

Landscape with Scholar and Servant, 19th century

Hanging scroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by the Ching Yüan Chai Collection

"This is a painting that is tumultuous and powerful on one level and that also has subtleties. There is a figure of a man walking up the mountain path with a servant over in the middle right, sort of hidden away, and then trees that skewer the whole landscape, so to speak, holding it all together. Ren Yi uses just little areas of color to tie things together. Green is repeated up above so you can see where the path goes, how you climb up it. It looks like it has been done very casually, spontaneously, and probably was, and at the same time it's very solidly put together by this great master." —*James Cahill*

35

Yuan Jiang (Yüan Chiang)

Active ca. 1680–1730

The Garden of the Secluded Villa, 1706

Folding fan: ink and color on paper

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from Jane Lurie

z: Wentao

Yuan Jiang was from Jiangdu in Jiangsu province, an area that had produced a number of painters. He was a court painter in the Yongzheng period (1723–1735). He was known for large, decorative paintings in the spirit of the Northern Song masters, but here in this small fan format he captures an intimate moment in time with a scholar seated at his lakeside pavilion. He exploits the rounded fan shape by echoing it in rocks, bridges, and water.

36

Huang Shen

1687–after 1768

Beggars and Street Entertainers, 1730

Album (4 of 12 leaves): ink and color on paper

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

z: Gongmao

h: Yingpiaozi

Huang Shen was from Fujian province, but after establishing himself as a professional painter with a following there, he traveled widely and then established himself in the larger painting center of Yangzhou, Jiangsu province. Eventually he moved back to Fujian and continued to sell his paintings. His works reflect his interests in poetry and calligraphy.

These lowly “street people” are an unusual subject matter for Chinese painting, as former Cahill student Ken Brown, now a professor of Asian art history at California State University, Long Beach, comments:

“My very first graduate seminar paper was on the depiction of social outcasts in Chinese painting. Because published works on the topic were rare, I was delighted to use several relevant paintings in the Ching Yüan Chai collection, including Huang Shen’s *Beggars* album. Because of direct access to works like these, the study of art became immediate and visceral—the examination of tangible, living works rather than of dry, ghostly photos. Moreover, behind every painting was a story of its acquisition in which the tastes and habits of noted collectors, dealers, and scholars became as familiar as pictorial subjects and styles or artists’ biographies. In this way, the social world of art history also came alive.”

37

Ren Xiong (Jen Hsiung)

1823–1857

Figures in Landscape Settings, 19th century

Album (7 of 12 leaves + 1 calligraphy page): ink and color on paper

Lent by the Ching Yüan Chai Collection

38

Ren Yi (Jen I)

1840–1895

Figures in Landscapes, 19th century

Album (2 leaves): ink and color on paper

Lent by the Ching Yüan Chai Collection

z: Xiaolou

Ren Yi (also known as Ren Bonian) was a native of Shaoxing, Zhejiang province, but worked in Suzhou and finally settled in Shanghai, where he became one of the major figures in the *Haibai*, the Shanghai School of Painting. He was an extremely versatile artist who mastered portraiture and bird-and-flower painting as well as landscapes. He studied painting with the famous Ren Xun, a brother to Ren Xiong (together the artists make up three of the famous “Four Rens”). He followed Chen Hongshou’s example in figure painting.

“Ren Yi is an interesting case. He is the great figure master working in Shanghai in the 1880s. He died fairly young, [but] was extremely prolific. He was one of those painters who could never do anything without making it his own, without being original. There was a constant creative energy and refusal to just repeat old patterns. He was a brilliant artist, a little facile sometimes, but many of his works are absolutely wonderful.” —*James Cahill*

39

Wang Zhen (Wang Chen)

1867–1938

Figures and Landscapes, 1914

Album (4 of 10 leaves): ink and color on paper

Lent by the Ching Yüan Chai Collection

z: Yiting

h: Bailong shanren, Meihua guanzhu, Jueqi

Wang Zhen was closely tied to the school of Shanghai artists active in the early part of the twentieth century and studied with Ren Yi, whose works can be seen elsewhere in the exhibition. Wang's paintings reflect this influence, particularly in being highly calligraphic. He was a devout Buddhist, a revolutionary, and a businessman in a period of great turmoil in China.

“Wang Zhen is an artist who has only recently begun to be taken seriously. He was overshadowed by Wu Changshuo, for whom he sometimes ghost-painted, and also suffered from having painted too much, often repetitively. He did hundreds of pictures for Japanese friends and visitors to Shanghai—he was a comprador for a Japanese company—and his works could be found in Japan at the Yûshima Seidô [the Confucian temple in Tokyo] in some number and very cheap. But this album, a relatively early work, is special. The pictures of beggars, in particular, are sensitive and moving and in the tradition of the great Zhou Chen series. (The Huang Shen *Beggars and Street Entertainers* in this exhibition, fine as they are in their way, are comparatively soft, and have less impact.) Wang's paintings of such subjects, not many, relate to his prominence as a philanthropist and organizer of relief funds in Shanghai.”

—James Cahill

40

Attributed to Zhang Lu (Chang Lu)

1464–1538

Su Dongpo Returning to the Hanlin Academy, 15th to early 16th century

Handscroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by Sarah Cahill

z: Tianchi

h: Pingshan jingzhu

Zhang Lu was from Kaifeng in Henan province and later moved to Nanjing. Zhang was a follower of Wu Wei, but had neither the poor temperament nor the addictions to drink and gambling that plagued the older artist. He was a popular painter who, like Wu, had not completed his education and so had no official status in society: thus, he frequently was subject to the whims of high-ranking officials.

This painting depicts a well-known story about the Song scholar, poet, and statesman Su Dongpo, who was banished from the capital but who returned to the Hanlin Academy absolved and triumphant after a meeting with the empress dowager.

Bird-and-Flower Painting

41

Wu Changshuo (Wu Ch'ang-shuo)

1844–1927

Wisteria, late 19th century

Album leaf: ink and color on paper

Lent by the Ching Yüan Chai Collection

42

Chen Hongshou (Ch'en Hung-shou)

1598–1652

Birds, Flowers, and Landscapes, 17th century

Album (6 of 12 leaves): ink and color on silk

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, gift of James Cahill

As a young boy Chen studied with the great professional landscapist Lan Ying and was a star pupil. His landscape paintings often show a strong decorative quality that demonstrates his ability to go beyond his teachers' example. Chen attempted the civil service examinations three times; after his third failure he turned his attention permanently to painting and began designing woodblocks. He also gained a reputation as a drinker and lover of women and other amusements.

“This [work by Chen Hongshou] is a small, almost pocket album. It's painted in a stiff style, almost like designs for lacquer, or something decorative . . . Mostly Chen Hongshou is [regarded as] a figure master, very refined. [However], before he became a really refined painter he started out rather deliberately emphasizing his craft origin. So, that this could be a genuine Chen Hongshou was something I didn't originally believe, but came around to it as everyone did, and now everybody recognizes it for the real thing.” —*James Cahill*

43

Yun Shouping (Yun Shou-p'ing)

1633–1690

Flowers and Landscapes, 1676

Album (4 of 10 leaves): ink and color on paper

Lent by the Fei Hung Chai Collection

z: Zhengshu

h: Nantian, Yunshi waishi, Baiyun waishi, Dongyuan caoyi

In this album Yun uses a technique known as “boneless” (*mogu*) to depict the flowers, leaves, and stalks. This method uses shading and ink and color gradations to describe the plant without outline. It was a technique that can trace its roots to the eleventh-century painter Xu Chongsi. Other artists of the early Ming were also using this technique, but in Yun's hands it creates an extremely airy and light appearance, almost as if the plants were floating in space.

44

Li Fangying (Li Fang-ying)

1695–1755

Blossoming Plum, 1748

Album (6 of 12 leaves): ink on paper

Leaves 2, 3, 6, 9, 11, 12

Lent by the Ching Yüan Chai Collection

45

Unknown, tradition of Miu Fu (15th century)

Fish and Water Plants, 15th century

Hanging scroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

This large decorative hanging scroll of a fish amidst water plants is painted in the style of court painting from the fifteenth century. Miu Fu was a fifteenth-century artist who specialized in large-scale paintings of fish and other decorative subject matter. During the early Ming this type of painting would have been created to hang in a palace or court setting. Often the leaping fish is seen as symbolic of success in passing examinations and thus is used as a congratulatory presentation piece.

46

Unknown, old attribution to Xu Xi (Hsü Hsi) (d. before 975)

Flowers and Butterfly, 12th century

Album leaf mounted as hanging scroll: ink and color on silk

Lent by Nicholas Cahill

This painting is an exceptional example of the Southern Song Academy style of bird-and-flower painting, which takes an almost scientific approach to describing nature. The delicate turn of the leaf and the immediacy of the approaching butterfly crystallize a moment in time.

47

Wen Riguan (Wen Jih-kuan)

d. ca. 1295

Grapes, 13th century

Handscroll mounted as hanging scroll: ink on paper

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, purchase made possible through a gift from an anonymous donor

48

Chen Kuan (Ch'en Kuan)

Active 1610–1640

Landscape with Cranes, 1638

Hanging scroll: ink and color on silk

Lent by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, museum purchase

z: Mengxian

h: Xing'an

Inscription by the artist: “Cranes nesting in the pine trees everywhere, people visiting the wicker gate are few. On an auspicious day in the first month of the *mouyin* [1638] Chen Kuan painted this as a present for Mr. Mingdai.”—*Translation by Marsha Smith Weidner*

Chen Kuan was a noted painter, calligrapher, and poet from Suzhou in Zhejiang province. Here Chen pays homage to the early Ming master Wen Zhengming, using that artist's cool-warm coloration, tall stately pines, and well-defined layered mountains.

This landscape painting is actually a “birthday painting,” or a work commissioned as a present for a friend. From the artist's inscription it is clear that this painting was presented to a Mr. Mingdai in this way.

49

Hua Yan (Hua Yen)

1682–1756

Brush Fire with Animals Fleeing, 18th century

Album leaf mounted as hanging scroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by Nicholas Cahill

z: Qiuyue

h: Xinluo Shanren

Hua Yan was born in Linting, Fujian province, but moved to Hangzhou and then Yangzhou, both major painting centers in the early eighteenth century. He was very active with a group of artists who had been involved in various ways with the late seventeenth-century painter Daoji (Tao Chi). By the 1730s, Hua Yan's compositions follow those of that master of the spontaneous and unexpected.

“Hua Yan is a major, very versatile artist of the first half of the eighteenth-century . . . and very famous now. Quite a lot of his work is around, but this is a very special subject. [When I bought this work] it looked kind of coarse, with a five-character title, plus the seal of Hua Yan, but no signature. And it was not published. [However] the animals are very sensitively painted. You can see through the smoke and fire and see the line of red fire going across. [There is] wonderful use of ink, a highly unconventional painting. In this period, in Yangzhou, and in eighteenth-century painting generally, something gives way in the restrictions on subject matter and suddenly they could do things with sort of ominous or painful overtones. This has become a favorite painting, partly because it breaks the rules. Over the years, as I have said to many people now, I have come to value more the odd corners, the dissidents, the unorthodox. I mean people who really break the rules. There are lots of painters in Yangzhou who are eccentric, but [I mean] painters who really break new ground, like this one.”

—*James Cahill*

50

Ren Yi (Jen I)

1840–1895

Bird on Stalk of Bamboo, 1880

Hanging scroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by the Ching Yüan Chai Collection

51

Wu Changshuo (Wu Ch'ang-shuo)

1844–1927

Branch of Blossoming Plum, 1892

Hanging scroll: ink on paper

Lent by the Ching Yuan Chai Collection

Original name: Junqing

z: Laofo, Fulu

h: Pohelaofou, Cangshi

Wu Changshuo was from an area in the northwestern part of Zhejiang and lived most of his life in Suzhou and Shanghai. His circumstances were rather humble, yet he was able to pass the first level exams and spent time studying the classics. He was a talented seal carver and calligrapher as well as painter. He was well connected and had a large circle of artist friends in the Shanghai area, knowing the Rens and many other Shanghai school painters. He was a founding member of the Yuyuan Shuhua Shanhui (The Yu Garden Charitable Association of Calligraphers and Painters) and a member of a number of other calligraphy and painting associations. His work found its way to Japan, where he became very popular.

52

Ren Xiong (Jen Hsiung)

1823–1857

Pheasants on a Rock, 19th century

Hanging scroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by the Ching Yuan Chai Collection

z: Weichang

Ren Xiong was the leader of the dominant Shanghai School that arose in the mid-nineteenth century. From Xiaoshan, Zhejiang he worked for a time in Hangzhou, living with the collector Zhou Xian (1820–1875) and copying works from his collection. He later moved to Shanghai where he became established as the first of the four famous Rens. He was an extremely versatile artist, capable of painting figures, landscapes, and bird and flowers with equal skill and creativity.

“This painting is remarkable for the way Ren Xiong runs together the ink and colors on the birds' plumage without letting them really mix in a messy way. Somehow the pigments are made opaque, mixed with some filler, and kept from flowing together freely. I've asked artists how this is done and gotten various answers; nobody is quite sure. It begins in eighteenth-century Yangzhou painting, especially in Li Shan's works, and is taken up by later flower painters, notably Zhao Zhiqian. It allows the artist to place areas of heavy color together, contiguously, as couldn't be done before. The effect may be in part inspired by European paintings they saw. Anyway, Ren Xiong, always an innovator, uses it here for a heavy, somber effect which Tsuruta [Takeyoshi Tsuruta, a noted Japanese authority on nineteenth-century Chinese painting], writing about this and similar paintings, saw as an expression of the dark, somber mood of the mid nineteenth century.” —*James Cahill*

53

Wu Changshuo (Wu Ch'ang-shuo)

1844–1927

Orchids and Rock, 1913

Hanging scroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by the Ching Yüan Chai Collection

54

Wang Jiqian (Wang Chi-ch'ien)

1907–2003

River Landscape, 1966

Hanging scroll: ink and color on paper

Lent by the Ching Yüan Chai Collection

Wang Jiqian was born in Wuxian in Jiangsu province and emigrated to the United States in 1949, settling in New York City. He has been a major force in contemporary art circles and has taken part in numerous exhibitions at museums and galleries. He trained as an artist in China with the famous Suzhou painter Gu Linshi (1865–1933) and later, in the 1930s, with the painter and collector Wu Hufan (1894–1968). His training with these artists set the stage for him to be a traditional literati artist in the late Qing style. His paintings do use the principles of the past—disciplined brushwork, a reliance on past masters, layering of composition—but in Wang's hands they transcend the ordinary and become innovations of modern art. His use of strong, nontraditional colors is only one of the many contributions that Wang has made to the growth of contemporary Chinese painting.

Along with being an exceptional painter Wang is a collector and connoisseur of Chinese painting. He is also the coauthor of a standard reference text on Chinese painters, has served as an advisor for numerous institutions, and is frequently called upon by colleagues to authenticate works of art. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of Chinese paintings and has traveled extensively to look at paintings. He and Professor James Cahill are lifelong friends and often exchange opinions and paintings.

“I had the good fortune in my early career, while I was working on my dissertation, to look at a lot of paintings in the company of some really great teachers. I put it that way rather than simply learning from the teachers—they are talking to me; I am standing there with them, looking at a painting and seeing what they say about it. I was in New York, at the Metropolitan Museum on a fellowship, 1953 to 1954, before I moved to Japan. I got to know C. C. Wang [as he was known to friends] and spent a lot of time with him, looking at paintings. [He] represents that absolute, top level of Chinese connoisseurship.

“I have said this is the basis of Chinese connoisseurship—being able to recognize a good Orthodox school painting and being able to imitate it in your own painting like Wang Jiqian can or Wu Hufan (1894–1968), who was Wang's teacher, or Xu Bangda [a well-known Chinese connoisseur at the Palace Museum] in Beijing.” —*James Cahill*

55

Wang Jiqian (Wang Chi-ch'ien)

1907–2003

Apples, 1960

Ink and color on paper

Lent by the Ching Yüan Chai Collection

“This painting hung for some time in the back room of the Mi Chou Gallery on Madison Avenue in New York City—I would visit on every trip to New York [frequently, during my years in Washington at the Freer Gallery of Art]. Anyway, every time I would go there I would admire this [painting], and in between I would worry over whether someone else would buy it. Finally I conquered my reluctance—understand that one could buy a pretty good old painting in Japan for around the same price—and bought it myself. I've never regretted it; it's hung on several walls of places I've lived. It exemplifies what Wang himself says about strong but supple brushwork in praising Bada Shanren and others, and is also very original compositionally. Was his style affected in this period by his study [at Cooper Union in New York City] of Western-style painting, was it Cézanne, or someone else? If you could combine Bada Shanren and Cézanne, this is what you would get.”

—*James Cahill*

56

Xu Gu (Hsü Ku)

1824–1896

Fish and Fruit, 1856

Album (4 of 8 leaves): ink and color on paper

Lent by the Fei Hung Chai Collection

Original name: Zhu Huairan

z: Xubai

h: Zuyang Shanmin

Xu Gu was from Shexian in Anhui province but worked in Yangzhou, Suzhou, and Shanghai. He served for a time in the military as his family background dictated. His military service did not last long and he turned to Buddhism, becoming a monk.

He is best known as a painter of birds and flowers but was also accomplished in architectural drawings and portraits. He was closely involved with the prominent Shanghai School artists and is known to have collaborated with Ren Yi.