

**Redefining Female Talent: Chinese Women Artists in the
National and Global Art Worlds, 1900s - 1970s**

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Abstract

This study examines the art practices of three generations of Chinese women who were active between the 1900s and the 1970s. Its conceptual focus is on the reassessment of female talent and virtue, a moralized dichotomy that had been used to frame women's social practices and cultural production for centuries in China. The study opens in the period when female poetic practice was harshly vilified by reformists of the late Qing era (1890s-1911). It questions why women's art production was not directly condemned and examines how women's increasingly public displays of artistic talent were legitimized through the invocation of long-standing familial norms, the official sanction of new education, and the formulation of various nationalist agendas. Most importantly, this study demonstrates how women artists joined female writers, educators, and political figures in redefining gender possibilities in the early Republican period.

Women artists discussed in this study practiced both Chinese-style and Western-style art. It examines their participation in several different public contexts, including art education, exhibitions, art societies, and philanthropic organizations. Representatives of the first generation, Wu Xingfen (1853-1930) and Jin Taotao (1884-1939), advanced the artistic legacy of their predecessors, the women of the boudoir (*guixiu*), while at the same time expanding the paradigm of traditional women's art practices. In addition to their emerging visibility in the local art world, they also exhibited works in international expositions, engaged with foreign concessions, and traveled abroad. Members of the Chinese Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting (*Zhongguo nüzi shuhuahui*) who represent the second generation, embraced new institutional possibilities by studying, teaching, and forming a collective to reaffirm women's position in the traditional-style art milieu. Pan Yuliang (1895-1977) and her cohort of Western-style artists who formed the third generation, contributed to modern art reform in China in the early twentieth

century. Pan's distinct life trajectory and subsequent career in Paris illuminate the ways race and gender figured in transcultural artistic representations from the 1940s to the 1970s. These artists' public presence in both the national and global art worlds redefined and repurposed female talent as both a patriotic virtue, and new expressions of gender subjectivities.

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Introduction

Ms. Wu Xingfen from Xin'an is the mother of Mr. Tang Jisheng. She is a fine painter. Realizing the calamity of the war in Europe, she painted more than thirty paintings and donated them to the Allied War Relief Society for [the war in] Siberia. Jointly organized by Mr. *Maikela* of the YMCA, Mrs. *Shiwen* of the American Women's Club in Shanghai, and Mrs. [??] of the American Red Cross Society, the paintings were on display two days ago at the Carlton Café on Ningbo Road. The works were shown in two rooms. The outer room exhibited works donated by Ms. Wu, and the inner room contained masterpieces by Ms. Wu that had been reproduced in [her] bilingual red-covered album published in 1915, edited and translated by Chen Guoquan. The album has been sold worldwide since its publication. As a result, a great number of visitors to the exhibition were Europeans and Americans. Wu Hengzhi [H. C. Wolfe] was the facilitator and interpreter at the event. The [guests] all expressed their appreciation. The donated paintings were auctioned off and were all sold within a short time. Some works fetched more than 100 *yuan*. All proceeds [from the sales] will be donated to the War Relief Society for Siberia for charitable purposes.¹

新安吳杏芬女士為唐吉生君之母 素善繪事茲鑒於歐洲戰禍之慘 特繪畫件三十種 捐入西比利亞戰事協濟會 由青年會麥克樂君商諸上海美國女士會史文夫人及美國紅十字會 [??]夫人於前日下午在甯波路卡爾登西飯店開會展覽 分內外兩間陳列 外間陳列吳夫人近日所繪捐助之各畫 內一間則陳列吳夫人生平傑作 即一九一五年陳國權曾譯中西文說明印成紅皮書者 此書發行以來風行各國 故是日會場中歐美士女之蒞會參觀者頗多均由吳衡之為之講解一切 咸表示滿意 所捐助之件 用投標競賣法 頃刻如數售去 每件至多數有售百餘元者 售得之款悉數捐入西比利亞戰事協濟會以襄善舉

This short news article captures a moment in the life of Wu Xingfen 吳杏芬 (Wu Shujuan 吳淑娟, 1853–1930), a well-respected female artist who was already well into her sixties in 1919. A traditional *guixiu* 閨秀 (genteel woman of the boudoir) who did not speak a word of English, Wu was an unlikely protagonist at an event that catered primarily to European and American guests and which involved three American expatriate organizations in Shanghai. While the article

¹ “Nühuajia zanzhu xiejihui” 女畫家贊助協濟會 [Woman artist sponsors relief society], *Shenbao*, January 24, 1919, 10.

focuses on her generous donation to the war relief efforts in Europe, as well as the international nature of the event, Wu is introduced in rather more narrow terms: from the beginning we learn that her native place is Xin'an, and that she is the mother of Tang Jisheng 唐吉生, and finally, that she is a fine artist. The other two men in the story—Chen Guoquan 陳國權, an art dealer and translator, and Wu Hengzhi 吳衡之 (who went by the name H. C. Wolfe in English texts), a scholar who had worked with an art collector to translate Chinese texts into English—both figure prominently in the story.²

Wu is presented here according to a prescribed way of writing about women in historical texts that was common in the late imperial period. The native place was an important marker of a person's origin and lineage—a convention that applied to both men and women. Mentioning a woman in relation to her male relatives and prominent acquaintances was also a routine practice.³ A woman's publicness, if it was mentioned at all, was firmly anchored in her feminine virtues, her domestic roles and relations.

This story underlines the ambiguities that governed women's public display of their talent in the early Republican period. Despite her fame in the art world, Wu still relied on male interlocutors—her son and agents—to ensure her national success and make her art known to a global audience. This story also highlights cultural nationalism by emphasizing a foreign audience's appreciation of Wu's traditionalist art. Her visibility at such a high-profile event also suggests the changing gender roles in modern Chinese society.

² Wu Hengzhi was the translator for the volume by E. A. Strehlneek, *Chinese Pictorial Art* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1914).

³ For example, well-known female painters were identified in art historical writings as daughters, wives, and mothers of male painters. The Ming painter Qiu Ying's 仇英 (ca. 1494–1552) daughter Qiu Zhu 仇珠 (dates unknown), for instance, was often identified simply as Qiu Shi 仇氏 (Ms. Qiu).

The news story's multilayered description reflected new feminine possibilities at the beginning of the twentieth century, a time when women in general, and well-educated women of prominent backgrounds in particular, started to publicly engage in cultural production as a means of answering the call to be valuable citizens (*guomin* 國民).⁴ The “woman question” (*funü wenti* 婦女問題) was one of the most pressing issues of national survival and strengthening in the late Qing and early Republican era as China encountered foreign aggression and internal crises. Women's education—what women should learn and to what ends—was at the crux of these debates. Bracketed by the reassessment of traditional culture and the influx of Western knowledge and thinking, female talent (*niucai* 女才)—a notion that had dominated sociocultural discourse in Chinese society for centuries—was to be redefined, relocated, and repurposed. And women were to be participants in this repurposing in unprecedented ways.

In this dissertation, I examine three generations of women artists who were active between the 1900 and the 1970s. Practicing both Chinese- and Western-style art, these women were known not only in China, but—as suggested by the story about Wu Xingfen—in Europe and the United States as well. Expressing their talent through multifaceted cultural and social practices, they significantly reshaped how female talent was displayed, construed, and applied. Their public presence—both national and global—complicated the reductive connotations of the figure of the *cainü* 才女 (woman of talent) stipulated by the leading late Qing reformist Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929), and instead made a newly configured *cainü* the embodiment of women of cultural refinement.

⁴ For a detailed discussion of the notion of the female citizen, see Joan Judge, “Citizens or Mothers of Citizens? Gender and the Meaning of Modern Chinese Citizenship,” in *Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China*, Merle Goldman and Elizabeth J. Perry, eds. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 23–43.

Female Talent and Virtue Redefined

At the turn of the twentieth century, as meanings of nationalism were being defined, the question of women's participation in the new polity and their familial and social roles were confronted simultaneously.⁵ Liang Qichao linked women's learning to the strength of the nation, arguing that the weakness of the nation had its roots in the lack of education for women. Liang blamed this problem on the traditional thinking that had deprived women of opportunities for learning.⁶ To substantiate his arguments, Liang undermined the achievements of the *cainü* of the past: “what were called talented women in ancient times were those who wrote poems on the wind and the moon, flowers and grass, who were capable of composing ditties on spring and sorrow of separation, who produced several volumes of poems and lyrics. But that was the extent of what they were able to do. This kind of learning cannot be considered to be real learning.” (古之號稱才女者，則批風抹月，拈花弄草，能為傷春惜別之語，成詩詞集數卷，斯為至矣。若此等事，本不能目之為學。)⁷

Liang's argument had its roots in the Confucian talent/virtue (*cai* 才/ *de* 德) dichotomy—a vacillating opposition that had predominated the moral construction of various aspects of women's life for centuries in China.⁸ The term *cainü* was commonly used to refer to learned

⁵ Joan Judge, “Talent, Virtue, and the Nation: Chinese Nationalisms and Female Subjectivities in the Early Twentieth Century,” *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (2001): 766–767.

⁶ Liang Qichao 梁啟超, “Lun nüxue” 論女學 [On women's learning], in *Bianfa tongyi* 變法通議 [General discussion on reforms] (Originally published in 1896), in *Yinbingshi heji* 飲冰室合集 [Collected writings from the Yinbingshi], 1936 (Reprint, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 39.

⁷ *Ibid.* For an analysis Liang's views, see Hu Ying, *Tales of Translation: Composing the New Woman in China, 1899–1918* (Stanford University Press, 2000), 6–8; Joan Judge, *The Precious Raft of History: The Past, the West, and the Woman Question in China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 92–93.

⁸ For the history and analysis of the talent/virtue dichotomy, see Judge, “Talent, Virtue, and the Nation,” 765–803; Judge, *The Precious Raft of History*, 87–90; Kang-i Sun Chang, “Ming-Qing Women Poets and the Notions of ‘Talent’ and ‘Morality,’ ” in *Culture and State in Chinese History: Conventions, Conflicts, and Accommodations*, R. Bin Wong et al., eds. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 236–58.

female poets of gentry families, the *guixiu*. A surge in the visibility of female poets took place from the late Ming (mid-sixteenth century) to the High Qing (eighteenth to early nineteenth century), when female poetry societies were formed and a great number of poetry anthologies were published.⁹ During this period, the figure of the *cainü* had been both praised and condemned. In the late Ming, for example, female poets—both courtesans and genteel women—were celebrated role types of talented women.¹⁰ During the High Qing (1662–1795), however, orthodox Confucianists such as Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (1738–1801) and the female writer and anthologist Wanyan Yunzhu 完顏憚珠 (1771–1833), privileged virtue—as expressed in practical activities such as weaving, sewing, and other household management skills—over creative self-expression. Indeed, Yunzhu championed female poets’ morality as the most important criteria for their inclusion in her poetry anthology.¹¹

The reformists’ need to make a categorical break with the past led to the belittling of gentry women’s literary production, and the *cainü* was vilified by reformists not only as a stand-in for literary women but for poets in general. The grand lyrical tradition was thus gendered, and represented as weak, feminized, and a source of the nation’s emasculation.¹² Elitist high culture was also seen as antithetical to the more generalized education needed for the development of a new citizenry.¹³ Late Qing reformists therefore set up the *cainü* poet as the antithesis of her

⁹ As many as 3,500 female poets had published their works in the Ming-Qing dynasties. See *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Sun Chang, “Ming-Qing Women Poets,” 250.

¹¹ Yunzhu was the editor of the poetry anthology *Guochao guixiu zhengshi ji* 國朝閩秀正始集 [Correct beginnings: women’s poetry of our august dynasty], published in 1831. On Yunzhu and her anthology, see Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China’s Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 94–117.

¹² Hu, *Tales of Translation*, 8.

¹³ Paul J. Bailey, *Gender and Education in China: Gender Discourses and Women’s Schooling in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 28–30.

projected modern counterpart: the new female citizen (*nü guomin* 女國民) who would learn practical skills and make an effective contribution to society.

Women Artists: the other cainü

Women's artistic production was not subject to the same rhetoric as their literary work. The tradition of painting and calligraphy, which was practiced by learned women as part of the cultivation of *guixiu*, as well as by courtesans who sought to enter the world of the male literati, flourished because of its pragmatic nature. Since artwork is both tangible and easily commodified, and its expression relatively comprehensible to a global audience, women's traditional painting and calligraphy practice was not subject to the same debates that accompanied the reform of women's learning at the turn of the twentieth century. Unlike poetry, which was vilified, women's artistic talent was repurposed as a patriotic virtue. The absence of criticism of the visual arts underlines the contentious and often contradictory portrayals of elite educated women in the late Qing and early Republican periods.

Women's relative marginality in traditional Chinese art was one of the reasons. There are far fewer women than men in Chinese art-historical records, and only a handful would make the list of "great masters." The number of artworks by women artists that circulated and survived was also significantly fewer than those by male artists.¹⁴ Compared to collections of women's poetry, which were numerous, only two biographical works on women calligraphers and painters were ever published in premodern China, the *Jade terrace history of calligraphy* (*Yutai shushi* 玉

¹⁴ Masha Weidner, "Women in the History of Chinese Painting," in *Views From Jade Terrace: Chinese Women Artists, 1300–1912*, Marsha Weidner, ed. (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1988), 13.

臺書史) and the *Jade terrace history of painting* (*Yutai huashi* 玉臺畫史).¹⁵ Moreover, if women artists were mentioned in volumes on artists' biographies, or in other types of biographical collections, they were usually relegated to the lowest category or to an appendix. For example, in *The brief catalogue of the calligraphy and painting collection of the Ouboluo Studio* (*Ouboluoshi shuhua guomukao* 甌鉢羅室書畫過目攷), a volume published in 1894 that recorded artists of the Qing dynasty, women artists were placed in the last of the four volumes, together with social outcasts such as Buddhist and Daoist monks.

Such categorization tended to reinforce the obscurity of women's art, which in turn made traditional women's art easy to overlook in turn-of-the-century debates over women's learning. By neglecting women's art practice, reformists could duly reconcile the contradiction between how they evaluated the two integral parts of the *cainü*'s cultural production—poetry, which they deemed frivolous and self-indulgent, and painting and calligraphy, which was encouraged and included in the curriculum of new schools for women.

When public education for women was formally sanctioned by the Qing government in 1907, this tension between talent and virtue continued to be salient. Pedagogical reform mandated a curriculum that would teach women new skills and practical knowledge so that they could become producers for the nation—first as mothers of future citizens, and then, by the 1920s, as career professionals outside the home.¹⁶ Whereas reformists considered poetry a

¹⁵ Li'e 厲鶚, *Yutai shushi* 玉臺書史 [Jade terrace history of calligraphy], first published ca. 1720; 湯漱玉 Tang Shouyu, *Yutai huashi* 玉臺畫史 [Jade terrace history of calligraphy], first published ca. 1821.

¹⁶ One of the paramount goals of the late Qing reformists' promotion of women's education was to equip women for the role of mother to raise children to be new citizens for the nation. See Joan Judge, "Citizens or Mothers of Citizens," 23–43. Women who managed the home and created a stable environment for men to work outside the home free of anxiety were considered "indirect producers" (*jianjie shengli* 間接生利). Bailey, *Gender and Education in China*, 70–71. Women's careers outside the home were promoted in women's magazines, especially in *Funü shibao* (the Women's Eastern Times) and *Funü zazhi* (*Ladies' Journal*). On *Funü shibao*, see Joan Judge,

frivolous expression of women's talent, arts and crafts were promoted as a pragmatic manifestation of female virtue. This thinking was grounded in the continuation of the tradition of women's handiworks (*nügong* 女紅), a broad term that denotes such practices as sewing, weaving, and embroidery practiced by women of all social strata and with varying degrees of refinement. This notion was central to women's household duties and feminine virtues. On the one hand, the inclusion of *nügong* and household work (*jiashi* 家事) in the curriculum was congruent with the initial purpose of providing education for women as managers of the home and educators of children (future citizens).¹⁷ On the other, the promotion of *nügong* in schools for girls and women fulfilled the economic aim of having women act as producers (*shengli* 生利) rather than parasitic consumers.¹⁸ The curriculum was designed to equip women with skills by which they could produce goods and earn extra income for the family (*bibu jiaji* 裨補家計).¹⁹ New-style handiworks such as cotton crafts (*zhaimian* 摘棉) and paper flower-making (*zaohua* 造花) were incorporated into the curriculum, adding a new artistic dimension to the cultivation of traditional skills.²⁰ *Nügong*—which was previously taught and practiced in the home or in

Republican Lens: Gender, Visuality, and Experience in the Early Chinese Periodical Press (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 53–55; on *Funü shibao* and *Funü zazhi*, see Bailey, *Gender and Education in China*, 71–72.

¹⁷ “Xuebu zouding nüzi xiaoxuetang zhangcheng” 學部奏定女子小學堂章程 [The ministry of education's memorial on the regulations for female elementary schools] and “Xuebu zouding nüzi shifan xuetang zhangcheng” 學部奏定女子師範學堂章程 [The ministry of education's memorial on the regulations for women's normal schools] (originally published in 1907), in *Zhongguo jinxindai yishu jiaoyu fagui huibian (1840–1949)* 中國近現代藝術教育法規匯編 (1840–1949) [Compilation of regulations for fine arts education in modern China (1840–1949)], Zhang Xian 章咸 and Zhang Yuan 張援, eds. (Beijing: Jiaoyu kexue chubanshe, 1997), 167–175.

¹⁸ Liang Qichao argues that the whole of the 200 million Chinese women were consumers (*fengli* 分利) who were completely dependent on men and burdening the national economy. Therefore, he proposed that women should bear the responsibility of being the producers. See “Lun nüxue,” 38.

¹⁹ “Xuebu zouding nüzi shifan xuetang zhangcheng,” 168; “Xuebu zouding nüzi xiaoxuetang zhangcheng,” 172.

²⁰ Wu Fang-cheng, “Tuhua yu shougong - Zhongguo jindai yishu jiaoyu de dansheng” 圖畫與手工 - 中國近代藝術教育的誕生 [Drawing and handicrafts—the birth of art education in modern China], in *Shanghai meishu fengyun - 1872-1948 Shenbao yishu ziliao tiaomu suoyin* 上海美術風雲——1872-1949 申報藝術資料條目索引 [Stories of the Shanghai art world - index of art news in Shenbao 1872-1949], Yan Juanying 顏娟英, ed. (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2006), 38–39.

local family workshops—was thus institutionalized and brought into the curriculum for new girls' schools as a component of practical learning.²¹

In addition to *nügong*, drawing (*tuhua* 圖畫) classes were also included in the curriculum for female schools.²² According to the “The ministry of education’s memorial on the regulations for female elementary schools” (Xuebu zouding nüzi xiaoxuetang zhangcheng 學部奏定女子小學堂章程), rubrics for drawing classes state that students should be taught how to observe and to accurately depict objects (*shi jingmi guancha wuti, nengxiao qi xingxiang shenqing* 使精密觀察物體, 能肖其形象神情) seen in daily life.²³ This skill would hence nurture their aesthetic sensibility (*jian yangcheng qi shangmei zhi xinxing* 兼養成其尚美之心性).²⁴

Since handicrafts could serve the purpose of fostering an aesthetic sensibility, its promotion therefore left room for the development of different areas of fine arts. The line between fine arts and applied arts cannot always be easily drawn. In the practice of embroidery, for example, women were known to have used painting as the basis of their textile art.²⁵ Since the Ming, practitioners of *Guxiu* 顧繡 (*Gu*-style embroidery) used literati painting as the basis of their embroidery, further blurring the line between fine art and crafts.²⁶ The close relationship

²¹ Judge argues that not only were practical skills taught by hands-on learning, they were also “textualized, formalized, and scientized,” and therefore institutionalized. See *Republican Lens*, 164.

²² From the 1900s to early 1910s, curricula of schools for males consisted of drawing courses that focused on teaching technical drawings related to knowledge in mathematics, physics, and chemistry, but not image-making in the realm of fine arts. This focus on pragmatism reflected the emphasis on scientific learning in school curricula, as well as the belief that knowledge is embodied in visual reality. Although subjects taught were different in schools for males and females, the mandate to promote practicality was consistent in both types of schools. See Wu Fangcheng, “Tuhua yu shougong,” 24–35.

²³ “Xuebu zouding nüzi xiaoxuetang zhangcheng,” 172.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Weidner, “Women in the History of Chinese Painting,” 21–23.

²⁶ I-Fen Huang, “Gender, Technical Innovation, and Gu Family Embroidery in Late-Ming Shanghai,” *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine*, no. 36 (2012): 77–129.

between women's painting and handicrafts thus provided the space for the development of women's art in the early twentieth century.

As arts and crafts continued to be a crucial component of education for women, drawing and painting in both Chinese and Western mediums were also included in the curriculum of higher-level courses. In "The ministry of education's memorial on the regulations for women's normal schools" (Xuebu zouding nüzi shifan xuetang zhangcheng 學部奏定女子師範學堂章程), schools were mandated to teach techniques of drawing/painting from life (*xiesheng hua* 寫生畫), and copying from exemplary artworks (*linbenhua* 臨本畫). Students were also encouraged to express their ideas in drawing/painting (*yiji yi huazhi* 以己意畫之).²⁷ These mandates further indicate that there was room for the development of fine arts in women's education beyond pragmatic purposes. These schools provided an increasing number of women with the opportunity to learn art at varying skill levels, which equipped them to partake in craft production both at home and as a career. Many of them also became art teachers in schools for women where they continued building the foundation for women to advance their studies in various areas of fine arts.

In addition to the pragmatic view of arts and crafts as an integral part of national strengthening, art was also regarded in the larger cultural climate of the late 1910s as part of a well-rounded education for both men and women. Cai Yuanpei's 蔡元培 (1868–1940) famous 1917 speech "Replacing religions with aesthetic education" (*Yi meiyu dai zongjiao shuo* 以美育代宗教說) summarizes the belief that fine arts education was the most effective and logical way to nurture the emotional side of a person, and that these should replace religious beliefs, which

²⁷ "Xuebu zouding nüzi shifan xuetang zhangcheng," 169.

Cai found to be irrational.²⁸ Cai's linking of art with self-cultivation echoed the time-honoured belief that a person's artwork reflected his or her virtue and personal standing, and it further blurred the boundary between applied arts as pragmatic practice and fine arts (drawing and painting) as subjective expression.

Cai's goal was realized in the curriculum of schools for women, in which art was on the one hand an area of learning that encouraged self-cultivation, and foundational training for practical skills on the other.²⁹ For example, the Chengdong Girls' School (Chengdong nǚxue 城東女學, founded in 1903), which I will discuss in chapter two, established a specialized program for fine arts that comprised subjects in Chinese language, music, and drawing and painting.³⁰

As the curriculum for women's schools changed and developed by the mid-1910s, a number of schools started to open specialized diploma programs to meet demands for advanced art education. In 1918, for example, the National Beijing Higher Level Normal School for Women (Guoli Beijing nǚzi gaodeng shifan xuexiao 國立北京女子高等師範學校) established a three-year diploma program in painting and drawing, with the aim of training art teachers for schools.³¹ Courses at these schools were taught by teachers with advanced art training. The

²⁸ Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, "Yi meiyu dai zongjiao shuo" 以美育代宗教說 [Religions should be replaced by fine arts education], in *Cai Yuanpei jiaoyu mingpian* 蔡元培教育名篇 [Famous writings on education by Cai Yuanpei], Zhang Shenghua 张圣华, ed. (Beijing: Jiaoyu kexue chubanshe, 2007), 57–63. It was a speech given at the Beijing shenzhou xuehui 北京神州學會 (Beijing Shenzhou Society) on April 8, 1917.

²⁹ Yan Juanying 顏娟英 "Buxi de biandong—yi Shanghai meishu xuexiao wei zhongxin de meishu jiaoyu yundong" 不息的變動—以上海美術學校為中心的美術教育運動 [Ceaseless changes—The art education movement centered on the art schools in Shanghai], in *Shanghai meishu fengyun - 1872-1948 Shenbao yishu ziliao tiaomu suoyin* 上海美術風雲—1872-1949 申報藝術資料條目索引 [Stories of the Shanghai art world - index of art news in Shenbao 1872-1949], Yan Juanying, ed. (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2006), 63.

³⁰ For the curriculum of Chengdong, see Yan, "Buxi de biandong," 63. Cai Yuanpei gave a speech at Chengdong in 1913: "Yangcheng youmei gaoshang sixiang" 養成優美高尚思想 [Nurturing graceful and noble thinking] in *Cai Yuanpei jiaoyu mingpian* 蔡元培教育名篇 [Famous writings on education by Cai Yuanpei], Zhang Shenghua 张圣华, ed. (Beijing: Jiaoyu kexue chubanshe, 2007), 19–25.

³¹ Tao Yongbai 陶咏白 and Li Shi 李滢, *Shiluo de lishi: zhongguo nǚxing huihuashi* 失落的历史：中国女性绘画史 [The lost history: a history of Chinese women's art] (Hunan: Hunan Meishu Chubanshe, 2000), 113.

Shanghai Normal School of Fine Arts for Women (Shanghai nūzi yishu shifan xuexiao 上海女子藝術師範學校), for example, offered classes in life drawing taught by the Japanese-educated female artist Li Dianchun 李殿春 (1900–?)—who is discussed in chapter three—as well as calligraphy, taught by the French-educated Li Chaoshi 李超士 (1893–1971) [Figure 0.1].³²

While reformists' pragmatism and the advocacy of aesthetic education fostered the development of women's artistic practices, cultural nationalism was another crucial factor that brought about new feminine possibilities in art. The display of women's art on the global stage was repurposed as a patriotic virtue. In the age of global competition, which began in the mid-nineteenth century, the showcasing of cultural heritage at world's fairs and international expositions was a new way for nations to demonstrate their achievements. The Qing government began to participate in these events in the 1860s.³³ *Guohua* 國畫 (Chinese painting or national painting) was one of the most important components of China's contribution to international exhibitions. *Guohua* was a neologism coined to distinguish traditional art practice from Western-style art. This term is a signifier of an indigenous art form, but it also denotes the revitalization of traditional art as the representative of national essence (*guocui* 國粹).³⁴ As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, women artists' participation in international expositions was central to this nationalistic agenda. *Guohua* by women displayed at these events signalled both cultural

³² "Ms. Li Dianchun 李殿春 teaches life drawing at the Shanghai normal school of fine arts for women," (photo) in *Funü zazhi* 6, no. 9 (September 1920): n.p.

³³ For China's participation in world expositions, see Karl Gerth, *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 218–230.

³⁴ On the term *guohua* and the revitalization of Chinese-style art in the 1930s, see Mayching Kao, "The Beginning of the Western-Style Painting Movement in Relationship to Reforms in Education in Early Twentieth-Century China," *New Asia Academic Bulletin* 4, no. 5 (1983): 373; Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, *The Art of Modern China* (University of California Press, 2012), 93–113.

achievement (national essence) and women as bearers of culture—projecting a progressive image to the world and potentially debunking the image of the cloistered women of China.

In addition to participating in world's fairs, the Qing government also held its own spectacles, such as the 1910 Nanyang Industrial Exposition (Nanyang quanyehui 南洋勸業會) in Nanjing. At this event, fine artworks and handicrafts by established women artists and female students were highlighted at various pavilions.³⁵ These exhibits underscored the benefits of the new public education for women on the one hand, while endorsing the public display of female talent on the other.

Women artists' role as bearers of national achievement was further exemplified by the cultural patriotism embodied in their work. Wu Xingfen's paintings of famous Chinese landscapes, for example, illustrate the artist's pride in depicting the glory of China.³⁶ He Xiangning's 何香凝 (1879–1972) paintings of heroic animals, and Feng Wenfeng's 馮文鳳 (1900–1971) masculine style calligraphy—both of which are discussed in chapter two—fit seamlessly with characteristics of the ideal female citizen—strong, capable, purposeful, and nationalistic.

Praising women's painting and calligraphy for its masculine quality perpetuated the gender-specific approach to art criticism typical of premodern times. The “qualified or backhanded compliment” was a way to praise a female painter's work for not possessing feminine qualities usually associated with women's painting.³⁷ In other words, a female painter's

³⁵ About women's art at Nanyang, see Doris Sung, “Redefining Female Talents: *Funü shibao*, *Funü zazhi*, and the Development of ‘Women's Art’ in China,” in *A Space of Their Own? Women and the Periodical Press in China's Global Twentieth Century*, Joan Judge, Barbara Mittler, and Michel Hockx, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming); Judge, *Republican Lens*, 149, 155–156, 170–171.

³⁶ Wu Xingfen 吳杏芬, *Zhongguo mingsheng tushuo* 中國名勝圖說 [*Eighteen Famous Chinese Landscapes Painted by Madame Wu Hsing-Fên, the Most Distinguished Paintress of Modern China*] (2nd ed. Shanghai, 1926).

³⁷ Weidner, “Women in the History of Chinese Painting,” 26.

work was measured by male standards. Since women's brushwork was typically seen as weak and soft, a female artist's work that did not look like this way was praised as an exceptional display of masculinity—one of the highest compliments a woman artist could receive. As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, this formulaic critical approach was appropriated by early twentieth-century criticism of women's *guohua*, in which notions such as *cangjing* 蒼勁 (vigour) were championed, while traces of perceived frailty (read “femininity”) were shunned. The appropriation of this time-honoured view of women's painting therefore helped to map women's artistic production onto the cultural-nationalistic agenda of the new republic.

While *guohua* underwent reform and saw a resurgence from the late 1920s on, Western-style art was also gaining prominence in China's modern art movement. By the early 1920s, Western-style art (drawing and painting) were routinely offered at all levels of schools for girls and women. As long as they were able to attend schools, female students had as much of a chance to learn Western art as their male counterparts. The establishment of specialized art schools and programs further institutionalized this type of education.

I argue that since Western-style art was new in China, both female and male artists could start with a clean slate, free of preconceived cultural and gendered connotations that prevailed in traditional art practices. Furthermore, in the late 1920s, state-funded overseas study programs enabled a small number of female artists to undertake art study in Europe, significantly increased women's cultural capital and their ability to contribute to the development of Western-style art in China. Pan Yuliang 潘玉良 (1895–1977), the focus of chapter three, was among the first group of women who went to France to study art under government sponsorship.

The professionalization and institutionalization of art practice provided space for the public display of new work. New-style exhibition venues, art societies, art shops, and the

proliferation of art publications shaped the profession for both men and women, providing a platform upon which women artists could build their credentials and establish careers.

Contributions

In tracing the processes by which female artistic talent was redefined and repurposed, this dissertation enriches an existing body of scholarship on women's cultural production in the early twentieth century. It is unprecedented in scope in that it bridges current scholarship in modern Chinese art history, Chinese women's history, and cultural studies. It places equal emphasis on analyzing the artistic production of early twentieth-century Chinese women and exploring their life trajectories in relation to the discourse on women's rights and new feminine possibilities. Through the prism of women's education, art practice, and sociopolitical engagement, this study maps out the changing landscape of the art world, as well as shifts in gender positioning in early twentieth-century China.

This dissertation also thoroughly explores women artists' transcultural activities—their engagement with foreign concessions, overseas exhibitions, and international study and practice. Scrutinizing an extensive body of archival materials, artworks, and publications produced in both China and Europe in the early twentieth century, I examine women artists' global visibility and their connections with the international art world.

The chapters that follow further locate and redeem stories of the complex and elusive female subject—the woman of talent—in the artistic-cultural world of the late Qing and early Republican periods. I place my inquiry in the context of an extensive field of scholarship that provides new paradigms for the study of Chinese women. Dorothy Ko and Susan Mann examine the sociocultural circumstances in which the *cainü* of the late Ming and High Qing lived and

worked.³⁸ Their landmark studies rejected the long-accepted and reductive image of the repressed women of premodern China and reclaimed their positions in the literary and social history of these eras.

Seismic shifts in gender positioning in turn-of-the-twentieth-century China are addressed in the work of Hu Ying and Joan Judge. Examining new public education for women, new-style textbooks, women's writings, biographies, and the impact of Western thinking and knowledge on Chinese society, they revised the derogatory views of learned women perpetuated by late Qing reformists.³⁹

These works offer extensive analysis of the roles of female writers, educators, and political figures in redefining gender possibilities in the late Qing and early Republican eras. The contribution women artists made to these shifts, however, are yet to be explored. This study, therefore, enriches this field of scholarship by bringing to light involvements of women artists.

The lack of critical discussion and surviving examples of women's artwork in premodern China made female artists peripheral figures in narratives of Chinese art history. The exhibition *Views from Jade Terrace*, held at the Indianapolis Museum of Art in 1988, retrieved a rich archive of premodern Chinese women's artworks and provided a forum for scholars to reconsider the historical and cultural circumstances in which women artists lived and worked from the end of the Yuan to the end of Qing. Marsha Weidner and other contributors to the exhibition catalogue helped establish a new field of scholarship on Chinese women artists, who had rarely been mentioned in previous research.⁴⁰ In the past decade, Chinese scholars have also

³⁸ Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994); Susan Mann, *Precious Records*.

³⁹ Hu, *Tales of Translation*; Judge, *The Precious Raft of History*.

⁴⁰ Marsha Weidner, ed., *Views From Jade Terrace: Chinese Women Artists, 1300–1912* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1988)

started to pay attention to premodern women's art. Tao Yongbai, Li Shi, and He Junhong have published on the history of Chinese women's painting, offering valuable surveys of women artists' lives and work, especially those active in the Ming and Qing eras.⁴¹

Compared to the women of the Ming and Qing, however, women artists of the late Qing and early Republican periods have received less scholarly attention. In the last two decades, Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen have uncovered important information about women artists of the period, including the Chinese Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting (Zhongguo nüzi shuhuahui 中國女子書畫會, 1934 –ca.1948; hereafter cited as the "Women's Society"), the focus of chapter two of this study.⁴² My chapter expands on Andrews and Shen's study to offer the much-needed in-depth research on this important women's organization from the Republican art world. A number of master's theses and doctoral dissertations have also touched on individual female artists' contributions to art reform in China.⁴³ However, a comprehensive study that surveys several generations of artists who were active from the late Qing to the early Republican and well into the post-World War II era has not yet been done. This dissertation will be the first such study.

The publicness of women artists is largely manifested through their representations in the popular press. This dissertation is therefore also one of the first to link the history of Chinese

⁴¹ Tao Yongbai and Li Shi, *Shiluo de lishi*. Li Shi 李滢, *Ming Qing guige huihua yanjiu* 明清闺阁绘画研究 [Study of paintings of gentry women in the Ming and Qing] (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2008); He Junhong 赫俊红. *Danqing qipa: Mingmo Qingchu de nüxing huihua* 丹青奇葩：明末清初的女性绘画 [Special talents in painting: women's paintings at the end of the Ming to the beginning of Qing] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008).

⁴² Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, "Traditionalism as a Modern Stance: The Chinese Women's Calligraphy and Painting Society," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 11, no. 1 (April 1, 1999): 1–29.

⁴³ For example, Amanda Sue Wright, "Qiu Ti's Contributions to Juelanshe and the Intersection of Modernist Ideology, Public Receptivity, and Personal Identity for a Woman Oil Painter in Early Twentieth-Century China," (Doctoral diss., University of Kansas, 2011); Elise J. David, "Making Visible Feminine Modernities: The Traditionalist Paintings and Modern Methods of Wu Shujuan," (Master's thesis, The Ohio State University, 2012).

women artists to the new medium of women's journals. It references the methodology of a new field of scholarship which focuses on these journals and the popular press more broadly and which aims to redeem women's lived experience through the multilayered gender representations in these journals. This new research methodology helps to reveal women's subjectivity and agency, which are often subsumed under narratives of political and cultural history.⁴⁴

While there has recently been growing interest in the study of representations of women in popular culture, including cinema, calendar posters, and advertisements, women's role as producers of visual images has not received the same level of scholarly attention.⁴⁵ This study highlights women's role in this regard. It also examines gender subjectivities through detailed analysis of women's artworks.

The women whose artwork I closely examine include Pan Yuliang. The rising interest in Pan's life and works raises questions about her artistic legacy in the national and international art worlds. The large body of research on Pan, however, fails to provide an extensive exploration of her transcultural art practice and identity in the larger context of feminist art production in the twentieth century. Euro-American women artists are beginning to gain scholarly attention in art

⁴⁴ "A New Approach to the Popular Press in China: Gender and Cultural Production, 1904–1937" research project; Judge, *Republican Lens*. Other studies of the popular press include: *Liangyou, Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945*, Paul Pickowicz, et al., eds. (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013).

⁴⁵ Ellen Johnston Laing, *Selling Happiness: Calendar Posters and Visual Culture in Early Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004); Laikwan Pang, *The Distorting Mirror: Visual Modernity in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007); The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, ed., *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2008). On representations of women in cinema, see Michael G. Chang, "The Good, the Bad, and the Beautiful: Movie Actresses and Public Discourse in Shanghai, 1920s–1930s" in *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922–1943*, Yingjin Zhang, ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 128–159; Kristine Harris, "The New Woman Incident: Cinema, Scandal, and Spectacle in 1935 Shanghai," in *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, Sheldon Lu, ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 277–302.

history, however, non-Euro-American artists are rarely discussed.⁴⁶ This study offers an unprecedented study of Pan in the context of global modernism in the twentieth century by situating her in the Parisian art world, paying special attention to her relationship to other women artists in the School of Paris.

The Chapters

Each of the three chapters in this dissertation examines a distinct group of women artists who were active from the late Qing to the early twentieth century. In the late Qing, art was becoming more prominent as a profession, especially in Shanghai, where a new urban culture and a burgeoning merchant class prompted the rise of a commercial interest in art.⁴⁷ Although the line between professional and scholarly practices had long been blurred in Chinese culture, the literati ideal was always privileged. As the Shanghai art world became more market-driven, artists, dealers, and intellectuals aimed to maintain the respectability of literati calligrapher-painters who, ideally, were untouched by commercial interests and professional training.⁴⁸ Writers of late Qing guidebooks and newspapers therefore used a variety of scholarly terms which only subtly suggested these artists' fame and professional status. The existing term *shuhuajia* 書畫家 (calligrapher-painters) was most commonly used to describe those who practiced *shuhua* 書畫 (calligraphy and painting)—the long-standing classification of the two art forms that are inseparable in Chinese visual art. Other variations, such as *shuhua mingjia* 書畫名家 (famous

⁴⁶ The exception would be a recent book in which the author discusses the Indian artist Amrita Sher-Gil, who studied and worked in Paris in the 1920s. Sonal Khullar, *Worldly Affiliations: Artistic Practice, National Identity, and Modernism in India, 1930–1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).

⁴⁷ Roberta Wue suggests that the art world of Shanghai flourished since the Taiping Rebellion, when a large number of artists moved from the crisis-ridden Jiangnan cultural centres to the relatively stable Shanghai. See *Art Worlds: Artists, Images, and Audiences in Late Nineteenth-Century Shanghai* (Hong Kong University Press, 2014), 7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 10–11.

calligrapher-painters), *zhumingzhe* 著名者 (prominent individuals), and *mingshi* 名士 (famous gentlemen), infer artists' celebrity status and the commercial aspect of their practices.⁴⁹ Although these terms are gender neutral, they generally denote male artists.

While these nomenclatures were used to describe the heterogeneous groups of artists working in Shanghai at the time, naming female artists—who were beginning to gain more public visibility—was an even more complex undertaking. Women artists were most often addressed as *nüshi* 女士/女史 (genteel woman/female scholar), an honorific that emphasizes women's scholarliness. It was a designation placed after the personal name of learned women.⁵⁰ The term was the most common one used to address women artists in painting colophons and captions that accompanied reproductions of their calligraphy and paintings. This practice indicates, as in the case of female writers and poets active at the time, that women artists were starting to assert their scholarly identity in the world of art and culture. The term *nüshi*, however, does not distinguish women artists from other learned women. Writers, critics, and art dealers therefore devised compound designations to identify women artists, such as in the cases of Wu Xingfen and Jin Taotao 金陶陶 (Jin Zhang 金章, 1884–1939), also the subject of chapter one.

Wu has been called by her promoters “the most distinguished paintress of modern China” (*Zhongguo jinshi nüjie dahuajia* 中國近世女界大畫) in the titles of her bilingual painting albums.⁵¹ Jin Taotao, who was often known as Taotao nüshi 陶陶女士 (Ms. Taotao) on colophons of her paintings and in print media, has also been called a “female painter of China” (*Zhina nühuashi* 支那女畫師) [Figure 0.2]. These designations, with their multiple inflections,

⁴⁹ Ibid., 9–10.

⁵⁰ This honorific was frequently used to address learned women in the Republican period. See Judge, *Republican Lens*, 51.

⁵¹ Wu Xingfen 吳杏芬, *Zhongguo jinshi nüjie dahuajia Wu Xingfen hua* 中國近世女界大畫家吳杏芬畫 [*Chinese Paintings by Madame Wu Hsing-fên, the Most Distinguished Paintress of Modern China*] (Shanghai, 1915).

illuminate the various identities and experiences—woman, painter, and Chinese—embodied in Wu and Jin’s public art practices. They also reflect the multifaceted processes in which women negotiated their experience of rapid sociopolitical change.

There are no existing categories in the secondary scholarly literature that aptly describe the women artists discussed in chapter one, women whose emerging public visibility and global awareness were unprecedented. They started to showcase their artistic talents through various public channels, published their works in print, and participated in international exhibitions. I refer to this cohort of artists as *nüshi shuhuaajia* 女史書畫家 (female scholar-painters). The term describes both the ontological status of this group of women artists and the nature of their art practices. It also underlines processes in which they actualized both feminine possibilities and professional potential in the reforming art world. Female scholar-painters embodied the erudition of the learned women of the new republic, and also their rising position in the traditional art world.

Wu’s life and art career best exemplified the rapidly changing experience of female scholar-painters. Like generations of *guixiu* painters before her, Wu carried on her family learning during the last decades of the Qing. In her senior years however, her career became highly public and international in nature. Jin Taotao, although almost thirty years Wu’s junior, shared a similar artistic trajectory with Wu. They closely followed and zealously advanced the profound artistic legacy of their predecessors, the *guixiu*. At the same time, they operated outside the paradigm of traditional women’s art practices.

While Wu grew up immersed in family learning, Jin was one of the small number of women who had the opportunity to receive an elite public education in the early 1910s. She attended a prestigious missionary school in Shanghai. While receiving public education, Jin, like

many genteel women of her generation in China's metropolises, also received instruction at home in the classics, poetry, painting, and calligraphy. In addition, she lived abroad on two different occasions. Her global awareness was further exemplified by her knowledge of English and French.

While their distinctive art practices were appreciated and recognized in both domestic and international venues, female scholar-painters' voices were subdued in comparison with women *guohua* artists of later generations. Their visibility was still greatly mediated by their male relatives and acquaintances who were prominent figures in the artistic and cultural realms. This made female scholar-painters a bridge between the cloistered *guixiu* artist and the *xin cainü* 新才女 (new woman of talent), the subject of chapter two. They established the foundation on which later generations of women artists continued to build their art careers and develop the path of professionalization.

These later generations include women who belonged to the Chinese Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting, the focus of chapter two. It was one of the largest art societies and all-women associations in the early Republican era. Members of the society put equal effort into their art practices and social and philanthropic causes. Through the display of their works locally and internationally they repurposed female talent as patriotic virtue. Their social deeds, such as the numerous sales of artworks for war relief efforts, further exemplified this patriotism. They defied the negative image of the talented women prevalent in the reformist writings of the late Qing. I refer to this group of artists as *xin cainü* (new women of talent) to describe their position as the new epitome of women of cultural refinement.

The Women's Society was founded on a collective gender consciousness. Members embraced both the new womanhood and the identity of the artist. The 1920s saw the revival of

guohua in China, and the cultural nationalism of the 1930s gave rise to the practice's golden age. The Women's Society was an organization mandated to reaffirm women's role in the field of *guohua*. The society, through its members' artistic and social engagement, aimed to prove that female artists were as capable and patriotic as their male counterparts.

Members of the Women's Society had surpassed their predecessors, the female scholar-painters, in publicness by making their presence prominent in print media and other public channels. They were also adept at using the media to advertise their exhibitions. Personal photographs of members were frequently seen in various popular magazines as a means of asserting and repurposing female talent and reclaiming the figure of the *cainü*.

Chapter three focuses on Pan Yuliang and her cohort of female artists who practiced Western-style art. While I distinguish this group of artists by their chosen medium, I also recognize that their art education and modes of practice were quite different from Chinese-style artists. Their distinctive characteristics shared traits with the figure of the New Woman (*xinnüxing* 新女性).

During the early 1920s the figure of the New Woman circulated in literature, popular culture, and everyday language to describe women who sought new feminine possibilities and independence. The New Woman, in literary representations in the late 1920s and '30s, was mostly associated with the positive aspects of modernity—progressive, self-expressive, politically engaged, and well in tune with the progress of the nation.⁵² They were also more globally engaged and often studied abroad.

⁵² Sarah E. Stevens, "Figuring Modernity: The New Woman and the Modern Girl in Republican China," *NWSA Journal* 15, no. 3 (2003): 82–103.

Pan Yuliang was one of the most celebrated artists among those who returned to China after their overseas studies. She and the other members of her cohort not only made important moves to advance women's status in the art profession; they also made tremendous contributions to the lively and yet controversial debates over the direction of art in China. These women tried to pursue an artistic language that would represent their feminine voice, even though this voice was often overshadowed by the nationalistic rhetoric of China's new art. Their presence and engagement as artists, educators, and public intellectuals nonetheless gave them agency in asserting gender consciousness in their work and life, however subtly. I call Pan and her cohort of artists the *xin nüxing yishujia* 新女性藝術家 (New Women artists). I thereby reference the nomenclature *yishujia* or *meishujia* 藝術家/美術家 (artists), which started to appear in the 1910s to describe individuals who worked in both Chinese and Western mediums.⁵³ *Yishujia*, when compared to the term *shuhuajia*, further denotes the professionalization of the practice of art.

Chapter three traces the life path of Pan Yuliang, from her early period to her later years in France, and it offers an in-depth analysis of her art practice. At the same time, it tries to debunk some of the myths perpetuated by portrayals of Pan in popular media which often cloud the discussion of the meaning of her work and her position in both the Chinese and Parisian art worlds.

⁵³ The term *meishu* denotes visual art forms, and *yishu* commonly includes other disciplines of fine arts such as music, dance, and theatre. *Yishu*, however, is often used interchangeably with *meishu* to signify visual arts. *Meishu* was coined in Japan and imported into the Chinese language. Japan started using the term *bijutsu* in the 1870s. For the origin of the term and its import into China, see Chen Zhenlian 陈振濂, *Jindai Zhong-Ri Huihua Jiaoliu Shi Bijiao Yanjiu* 近代中日绘画交流史比较研究 [Comparative studies in the history of modern Sino-Japanese relations in painting] (Hefei: Anhui meishu chubanshe, 2000), 62–69. Following Japanese categorizations of art which was borrowed from Western art-historical formulations, *meishu* and later *meishushi* 美術史 (art history) were adopted into China to establish art as a specialized practice and an academic discipline. See Kuiyi Shen, “The Japanese Impact on the Construction of Chinese Art History as a Modern Field: A Case Study of Teng Gu and Fu Baoshi,” in *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, Joshua A Fogel, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 228–229.

Although Pan's story was exceptional, it highlights broader shifts in art and gender discourses in the 1920s and '30s. Her continuing art practice over forty years (1937–1977) in France extends beyond the main periods of this study. My discussion of her life in France is, however, crucial to illuminate the possibilities that existed for the development of modern art in China had it not been interrupted by wars and shaped by the politics of the socialist era. Her art and life in France also tells the story of a Chinese woman artist's transcultural art practice, and suggests the ways race and gender figured in transcultural artistic representations from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Chapter One | Female Scholar-Painters Wu Xingfen and Jin Taotao

Wu Xingfen, the protagonist of the news story mentioned in the introduction, exemplifies the “female scholar-painters” (*niishi shuhuajia* 女史書畫家)—the cohort of women artists who continued and renewed the style of painting and calligraphy practiced by their predecessors, the women of the boudoir (*guixiu* 閨秀). While continuing to use traditional mediums, female scholar-painters helped redefine the notion of female artistic talent in China, and as both artists and educators, they endowed traditional women’s art practices with new relevance and agency. Born in the last half-century of the Qing dynasty (between the 1850s and the early 1900s) these women were active participants in the art world of the late Qing and early Republican periods (or from approximately 1900 to the 1930s). Focusing on the example of Wu Xingfen, as well as Jin Taotao 金陶陶 (Jin Zhang 金章, 1884–1939), I examine how female scholar-painters’ artistic practices helped redefine concepts of female talent and virtue during the early twentieth century.

Public education for women, although not officially sanctioned by the Qing court until 1907, was at the centre of debates about women’s roles in society and their relationship to the declining state of the nation. While these discussions were often contentious, they also afforded opportunities for women to explore the world beyond the boundaries of conventional social and cultural norms. Moreover, through various publications, education, and even travel, female scholar-painters were exposed to new forms of knowledge and political awareness, including the burgeoning discourse of women’s rights.

Though she herself had not set foot in a foreign land, Wu Xingfen enjoyed a successful career in the *guohua* circle, and she gained the opportunity to showcase her work in various international venues. She also had two bilingual (Chinese and English) painting albums

published during her lifetime, and was actively involved as a teacher at various art societies like the Heavenly Horse Society (Tianmahui 天馬會, 1919–1928). Through the advocacy of her son and various agents, Wu also became known in the social circles of Shanghai's foreign concessions. Her status as an important female artist influenced many younger women to continue pursuing careers in art, especially in the field of *guohua*.

Though Wu had been a well-known artist throughout the last decades of the nineteenth century, her publicness and her reputation were most prominent in her sixties, a time when the Shanghai art world was becoming more institutionalized and market-driven. Jin Taotao was twenty-nine years Wu's junior. Despite the age difference, Wu and Jin were active in the same circles, and they exhibited together on many occasions, both locally and internationally. Yet while Wu had never attended a public school or travelled abroad, Jin had been a student at the McTyeire High School for Girls (also known as Zhongxi nüshu 中西女塾), a school established in Shanghai by the American Southern Methodist Board of Foreign Missions.⁵⁴ Jin also had the opportunity to sojourn in London with her brothers, and she lived briefly in Paris, where her husband served as a diplomat at the Chinese embassy. These experiences broadened the scope of Jin's art practice. Jin was also an active member of a number of art societies, and she contributed to educating artists of the next generation. Jin's painting manual, *Haoliang zhileji* 濠梁知樂集 (*Album of the Joy of the Fish*; hereafter cited as *Haoliang*), though originally intended as a

⁵⁴ The school was established in 1892. For the date of Jin Taotao's entrance, see Wang Shixiang, postscript to *Haoliang zhileji* 濠梁知樂集 [Album of the joy of the fish; hereafter cited as *Haoliang*] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, reprint: 1985). About McTyeire, see C. E. Darwent, *Shanghai: a Handbook for Travellers and Residents* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1920), 116.

technical primer, was the only known comprehensive treatise on painting fish—a subject that no surviving Chinese painting manuals have thoroughly discussed.⁵⁵

While Wu and Jin participated in the new artistic and cultural worlds of Shanghai and Beijing, they based their practices in the upholding and renewal of the artistic traditions of the past. The mainstay of Wu's work was emulating the styles of old masters (*fang* 仿)—a practice that was especially revered by the Orthodox School of the early Qing period; for Jin, it was the revival of the styles and theories of the Song-Yuan era. However, while their practices were anchored in the past, it was the publicness of their social engagements and art practices that set them apart from the *guixiu* of past eras; indeed, Wu and Jin transcended the identity of *guixiu* by expressing their talent through the many new roles—artist, educator, and author—that they fully embraced. While recognizing the privileged familial and sociocultural backgrounds that made these new roles possible, I also emphasize these women's perseverance, for in pushing the possibilities of their life and art, Wu and Jin made the most of the privileges that were available to them.

FAMILY, LINEAGE, AND LEARNING

Wu and Jin's individual identities and sociocultural positions were shaped by family learning.

Wu Xingfen was born to a family of scholars in Shexian (歙縣) in Anhui Province. Like generations of genteel women, Wu learned painting and calligraphy from family members from a

⁵⁵ Jin Zhang 金章, *Haoliang*. A limited run of the book was published in 1922 as a teaching manual. Jin's son Wang Shixiang (王世襄) republished it in 1985. However, the original painting samples that accompanied the book were lost. A facsimile of the hand-written copy of *Haoliang* by Wang Shixiang was also reprinted in Wang Shixiang, ed., *Jin Zhang/Jinyu Baiying* 金章 / 金魚百影 [*One Hundred Images of Gold Fish*] (Hong Kong: Hanmoxuan, 1999). I will refer to this reprint copy when discussing *Haoliang*, with the original volume numbers and paginations of the facsimile.

young age. Her father, Wu Zijia 吳子嘉 (Hongxun 鴻勛), was a well-respected painter and man of letters who had also served as the secretary to Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811–1872). Wu Zijia believed that his daughter possessed great talent, and he saw to her artistic education himself.⁵⁶ Yang Yi 楊逸 (Dongshan 東山, 1864–1929), who wrote a biography of Wu Xingfen, notes that the artist was well-versed in “the six canons of painting” (*liufa* 六法) by Xie He 謝赫 (fl. 479–502), an art theorist and painter of the fifth century.⁵⁷ Her father also acknowledged the quality of her work as superior to his own.⁵⁸

Wu Xingfen married a local scholar-official named Tang Kunhua 唐昆華 (Guangzhao 光照), who had served as the prefect of Jiangsu and Jiangning (Nanjing), from which he was later promoted to the rank of *daotai* (道台) of the region. Since the couple shared a tremendous interest in art, Wu was encouraged to continue pursuing her career after marriage—a privileged condition for women at the time.⁵⁹ Despite his successful political career, Tang was said to have left office due to some differences with his colleagues.⁶⁰ After Tang’s retirement from politics, the couple led a secluded life, immersing themselves in literary and artistic pursuits. It was during this time that Tang and Wu developed many of their common interests in books and art. Wu benefitted from the vast collection of old masters’ paintings owned by her husband’s family.

⁵⁶ Yang Yi, “Biography of Madame Wu Hsing-fên,” / Yang Yi 楊逸, “Tang mu Wu taifuren huashi” 唐母吳太夫人畫史” *Chinese Paintings by Madame Wu Hsing-fên, the Most Distinguished Paintress of Modern China* 中國近世女界大畫家吳杏芬畫 (Shanghai: 1915), 1.

⁵⁷ Xie He 謝赫, *Guhua pinlu* 古畫品錄 [Annotated record of ancient paintings], reprinted in Meng Zhaochen 孟兆臣, ed., *Hua pin* 畫品 [Critiques of painting] (Haerbin: Beifang wenyi chubanshe, 2000), 31–39.

⁵⁸ Yang Yi, “Biography of Madame Wu Hsing-fên,” 1.

⁵⁹ Weidner points out that not all women of the gentry class were fortunate enough to learn and practice painting, especially after marriage, when familial duties became the most pressing demands on their time. Few women practiced painting extensively as a result. See *Views From Jade Terrace*, 13.

⁶⁰ Yang Yi, “Biography of Madame Wu Hsing-fên,” 1.

Opportunities to closely scrutinize the works in the collection further helped Wu develop her own works based on the tradition of *fang*.

Wu was also said to be able to distinguish accurately between fake and genuine old masters' works. Her status as a connoisseur of painting carried such authority that when Tang was acquiring new works for his collection, he would completely trust the judgement of his wife—a judgement that deterred art dealers from attempting to cheat the Tangs with forgeries.⁶¹ Wu's ability to identify old masters' works also demonstrated her deep understanding of traditional styles and techniques. Such eclecticism was in turn expressed in her own work.⁶²

Despite their age difference, Jin Taotao, like Wu Xingfen, was educated at home in the classics, traditional painting, and calligraphy. She was also one of the small number of women of her generation who had the opportunity to receive public education.⁶³ The open-mindedness of her family also offered her the opportunity to travel and study (*youxue* 遊學) in London for three years with her three brothers. Moreover, her family connections, and her eventual marriage to a diplomat, made it possible for Jin to traverse the worlds of gentry-class literati, government officials, the foreign concessions, and the global cultural stage.

The Jin family made their fortune through a successful silk business started in Nanxun by Jin Taotao's grandfather, Jin Tong 金桐 (Zhuting 竹庭, 1820–1887).⁶⁴ Jin Tong was popular

⁶¹ Ibid., 2.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Although public education for women was not sanctioned by the Qing government until 1907, schools for girls and women had been operated since the 1850s by missionaries and other private initiatives. See Paul J. Bailey, *Gender and Education in China*, 12–18.

⁶⁴ Nanxun 南潯 is within the city of Huzhou 湖州市 in Zhejiang Province. It was a major silk products trading centre in southern China at the turn of the twentieth century. For a discussion of the Jin family's business enterprise, see Qiu Minfang 邱敏芳, "Minchu beifang huatan lingxiu—Jin Cheng shengping yu yishi" 民初北方畫壇領袖—金城生平與藝事 ["The leader of the Beijing School in the early Republican period—the life and art of Jin Cheng"], *Lishi wenwu yuekan* 歷史文物月刊 [*History and artefact monthly*] 15, no. 3, (2005): 80–89.

among the foreigners who did business with him, many of whom remembered his friendliness and good sense of humour (they endearingly called him “Hail, Smiling Morn”⁶⁵). Jin Taotao’s father, Jin Dao 金燾 (1856–1914), continued the Jin family’s openness to foreigners and worldly knowledge. According to Jin Hongwei, a descendent of the Jin clan, Jin Dao was open-minded about Western learning in particular. In the Jin household, it was not unusual to find new Western inventions such as the microscope, the gramophone, the camera, and even a fully equipped darkroom.⁶⁶ Such openness was not uncommon among families in the city ports who had made their fortune through business. These families were also open to offering their daughters a public education. As a result, Jin Taotao attended the McTyeire—one of the most prestigious missionary schools in Shanghai that offered a “classy” education for merchant families in treaty ports—from 1898 to 1902. After three years at the school, at the age of eighteen, Jin Taotao embarked on the journey to London chaperoned by her eldest brother, and later the renowned Beijing School (Jingpai 京派) painter Jin Cheng 金城 (1878–1926),⁶⁷ and her two other brothers, Jin Shaotang 金紹堂 and Jin Shaoji 金紹基.⁶⁸ The Jin siblings spent three years in London before returning home.

⁶⁵ “The Working of the Chinese Exclusion Act in the U.S.,” *North-China Herald* (Shanghai), July 14, 1905, 71–72.

⁶⁶ Tan Lu 譚璐 “Zifeiyu anhe yu zhile” 子非鱼安和鱼之乐 [“You are not a fish, how do you understand the joy of the fish”], *Beijing Youth Newspaper* 北京青年报, January 14, 2011. Information in this article was provided by Jin Hongwei 金閔伟, the great-grandson of Jin Cheng. Jin Cheng was also a photographer; he was awarded a first prize and made a lifetime member of Wanguo sheying hui 萬國攝影會 (Wanguo Photography Club). See “Jin Gongbei xiansheng shilue” 金拱北先生事略 [Life events of Mr. Jin Gongbei], *Hushe banyuekan* 湖社半月刊 (Lake Society bimonthly), November 15, 1927, 1.

⁶⁷ Jin Cheng’s birth name was Shaocheng 紹城, his style names include Gongbei 鞏北/拱北, Beilou 北樓, and Ouhu 藕湖. Yu Jianhua 俞劍華, ed., *Zhongguo meishujia renming cidian* 中國美術家人名辭典 [Biographical dictionary of Chinese artists] (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981).

⁶⁸ Jin Shaotang, style name Zhong Lian (仲廉), was famous for his bamboo carving. Wang Yichang 王辰昌. *Zhongguo Meishu Nianjian 1947* 中國美術年鑒 1947 [The yearbook of Chinese art, 1947] (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2008), 96.

The reasons behind Jin Dao's decision to send Jin Taotao to McTyeire and then to England with her brothers are untraceable. Yet the circumstances surrounding Jin's family life and educational path help to shed light on gentry families' views on female education and talent at the turn of the twentieth century. Other than Jin Dao's apparent fascination with new (and often Western) knowledge, Jin Taotao's enrollment at McTeiye reflected her father's appreciation of the importance of women's education, even if it was for the purpose of training a modern "lady," as many gentry families who enrolled their daughters at the school intended.⁶⁹ Taotao had three other sisters—Jin Lan 金蘭 (Lansun 蘭蓀), Jin Ce 金策 (Yiyi 怡怡), and Jin Jian 金簡 (Xinxin 欣欣).⁷⁰ However, Taotao was the only one sent abroad—a reflection of Jin Dao's recognition of his daughter's ability, and perhaps even of her adventurous disposition.

An anecdote recounted by Jin Taotao's son, Wang Shixiang 王世襄 (1914–2009)—a famous Chinese antique and furniture connoisseur—helps to illuminate Taotao's character. Like many *guixiu*, Taotao was tutored at home with her siblings in Confucian classics, calligraphy, and painting. One day, Taotao overheard a conversation between her father and the tutor. Jin Dao had told the tutor to be especially attentive to his sons' study, while paying little attention to that of his daughters, since they had to be married off sooner or later; even if they were well-versed in *Sishu* 四書 (The four books of classics), this knowledge would have no real use to them. After

⁶⁹ The first missionary school was founded in Ningbo in 1844. The main objective of missionary schools was to train women and future wives of Chinese missionaries in Bible studies. See Bailey, *Gender and Education in China*, 12. The Chinese gentry class were overly hostile to foreigners and the Christian faith during the nineteenth century. However, in the late 1890s, there was a shift in the attitude towards foreigners among the merchant classes of the coastal regions. Unlike the elite in the hinterland of Beijing and the interior, who remained very hostile towards foreigners in the late nineteenth century, these wealthy merchants of the treaty ports were much more open-minded about Western knowledge and Christianity. As a result, foreign missions rushed to cater to this class of business elite by establishing schools for their daughters that offered English classes and provided a liberal education. McTeiye was one such school. For more on the curriculum and mandates of the school, see Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Missionary in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 232–233.

⁷⁰ Qiu Minfang, "Minchu beifang huatan lingxiu—Jin Cheng shengping yu yishi," 86.

hearing this, Taotao was even more determined to prove to her father that she was able to do as well as her brothers. Her tenacity paid off in the end, when she proved to be the best calligrapher among the siblings. She was asked to copy the inscription on her grandfather's epitaph, an honour typically reserved for a respected male friend or relative of the deceased.⁷¹ This story demonstrates Taotao's assiduousness about her art practice, a trait that would become the driving force in her determination to master her craft. On the one hand, Jin Dao might not think that learning the classics was important for girls; on the other, he might think that pursuing an art career was suitable, and even desirable, for women of the new generation, a belief promoted in the new education for women.⁷²

Both Wu and Jin were well-respected artists in the increasingly institutionalized *guohua* circle. However—and not unlike their predecessors—male relatives and agents still played important roles in setting their life paths and establishing their careers. Wu's professional trajectory was established with the effort of the network of male agents—namely her son, dealers, biographer, and commentators. Following the tradition of publicly venerating their mothers' virtues, the sons of Wu and Jin took on the responsibility of carrying on their respective mothers' artistic legacy.

While Wu gave birth to three sons and a daughter, only the youngest son, Tang Xiong 唐熊 (Jisheng 吉生, 1892–1935), lived to adulthood.⁷³ Tang Xiong continued the scholarly and

⁷¹ Zhang Jianzhi 張建智, *Wenbo wanjia—Wang Shixiang zhuan* 文博玩家—王世襄傳 [The connoisseur of cultural artifacts—biography of Wang Shixiang] (Taipei: Showwe, 2011), 50.

⁷² For a discussion of women's art education, see Yan Juanying 顏娟英 “Buxi de biandong—yi Shanghai meishu xuexiao wei zhongxin de meishu jiaoyu yundong” 不息的變動—以上海美術學校為中心的美術教育運動 [Ceaseless changes—The art education movement centered on the art schools in Shanghai], in *Shanghai meishu fengyun – 1872–1948 Shenbao yishu ziliao tiaomu suoyin* 上海美術風雲—1872-1949 申報藝術資料條目索引 [Stories of the Shanghai art world - index of art news in Shenbao 1872–1949], Yan Juanying, ed. (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2006), 62.

⁷³ Yang Yi, “Biography of Madame Wu Hsing-fên,” 2.

artistic pursuits of his parents, and he had a respectable art career in Shanghai. He also became the most ardent promoter of his mother's art.⁷⁴ If not for the efforts of Jin Taotao's son Wang Shixiang, who preserved her painting manual *Haoliang*, and even republished it in 1985, the volume would have been lost to us.⁷⁵ Although Jin Taotao was a fairly well-known painter during her lifetime, there is little written about her life or art in the current literature on Chinese art. Nor is she widely mentioned in art annuals, art indexes, or compilations of artist biographies. Though obscure, some of her life stories, however, resurfaced after the 1980s by virtue of her son Wang Shixiang's reputation as a connoisseur of furniture and antiques.

Family circumstances also provided mobility for these women. Not unlike generations of female gentry before her, Wu was able to accompany her husband around the country on official assignments and personal pleasure, which gave her the opportunity to see some of the famous landscapes that became the main subject matter of her paintings. While Wu traveled within China, Jin had the opportunity to travel abroad—first, to London with her brothers, and later to Paris, with her husband, Wang Jizeng 王繼曾 (Shuqin 述勤, 1882–1955), whom she married in 1909 at the age of twenty-five. It was here that Jin gave birth to their first son, Wang Shirong 王世容 (1912–1920). During her stay in Paris, Jin also had the chance to advance her study in French and English.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Yang Yi's biography of Wu Xingfen states that it was Tang who commissioned the production of her painting album. He also acted as her agent and representatives in various occasions.

⁷⁵ For details about how *Haoliang* was preserved and reprinted, see Wang Shixiang's afterword in *Jin Zhang/Jinyu baiying*, 112.

⁷⁶ Wang Shixiang asserts that his mother Taotao knew English and French. See Wang Shixiang's afterword in *Jin Zhang/Jinyu baiying*, 112. The editor of *Peking Leader* also states that Jin Taotao was "an artist and a linguist, being well-versed in English, French, as well as her own mother tongue." Madame K. T. Ouang 王金章, "Progress of China's Womanhood." Min-ch'ien T. Z. Tyau, ed., *China in 1918* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1919), 71–73.

Jin's husband also came from a wealthy and reputable family, and he had previously studied in Paris. Although Jin was Wang's second wife, it is possible that Jin Dao approved of the marriage since Wang was of equal social and economic status.⁷⁷ It was also very common for men of esteemed families to marry at a young age a wife chosen by their family, and later a second wife who was worldly and would accompany him in the public realm. Jin Taotao would actually do both—living with Wang as well as accompanying him in public. And the arrangement was equally beneficial, as Wang's connections facilitated opportunities for Jin to engage in various social and cultural activities in expatriate circles in the foreign concessions.⁷⁸

PUBLICNESS

In contrast to most women artists in the past, Wu Xingfen and Jin Taotao's artistic practices were marked by the increased public visibility that was made possible by the changing attitude towards women's participation in the art worlds of early twentieth-century Shanghai and Beijing, especially in the field of *guohua*. Their engagement in art societies, local and international exhibitions, and their presence in print media constituted their public personas.

Wu was a well-known artist in Shanghai. She was known—together with Wu Changshi 吳昌碩 (1844–1927)—as one of the “two Wus.”⁷⁹ Wu Xingfen's work was widely sought-after

⁷⁷ For details about the Wang family, and the life of Wang Jizeng, see Zhang Jianzhi, *Wenbo wanjia—Wang Shixiang zhuan*, 21–37.

⁷⁸ The Wangs returned to Beijing shortly after the establishment of the Republic in 1912. In the same year they also bought Fangjiayuan 芳嘉園—the Wangs' residence in the suburbs of Beijing—where Jin Taotao would spend most of her married life until her death. Many of Jin's works and her painting treatise was produced at Fangjiayuan, which provided much inspiration and stability for her creative works. Wang Shixiang also spent most of his life at Fangjiayuan. See Zhang Jianzhi, *Wenbo wanjia—Wang Shixiang zhuan*, 36.

⁷⁹ Weidner, *Views From Jade Terrace*, 173; the preface to *Eighteen Landscapes* also states that Wu Xingfen was one of the “four Wus” active in Shanghai at the time. The other three Wus were Wu Changshi, Wu Shixian 吳石僊, and the female artist Wu Zhiying 吳芝瑛.

by local and foreign collectors, which made her an important figure in the highly competitive Shanghai art world. Yet her reputation as an accomplished female painter was not only exemplified by her exhibition records and commercial success; it was also copiously demonstrated by the two bilingual albums of her paintings published in her lifetime—*Chinese Paintings by Madame Wu Hsing-fên, the Most Distinguished Paintress of Modern China* (*Zhongguo jinshi nüjie dahuaia Wu Xingfen hua* 中國近世女界大畫家吳杏芬畫, 1915; hereafter cited as *Chinese Paintings*), and *The Eighteen Famous Chinese Landscapes painted by Madame Wu Hsing-fên, the Most Distinguished Paintress of Modern China* (*Zhongguo mingsheng tushuo* 中國名勝圖說, second edition published in 1926; hereafter cited as *Eighteen Landscapes*). These albums, together with other marketing strategies, reflected the keenness of Wu and her art agents to build a career that was both critically respected and commercially successful—a radically new gender move in early twentieth-century China.

Jin Taotao's artistic career unfolded beyond the space of the local art world and it represented new notions of female talent in the late Qing and early Republican social-cultural contexts. Although Jin was a lesser-known artist than Wu Xingfen, her artistic practice, intellectual pursuits, and public engagement made her an exemplary female scholar-painter. Wu, Jin, and their cohort made significant moves to bring women artists to the forefront of the arts and culture world. Their social activities—including exhibitions, education, publishing, and philanthropy—added currency to the promotion of women's status, agency, and ultimately, women's rights.

Whereas in the past, the celebration of women's artistic achievement was bracketed by the celebration of traditional feminine virtues—this was the case, for example, with the Qing artist Chen Shu 陳書 (Nanlou 南樓, 1660–1736), who will be discussed later in this chapter—

Wu Xingfen's supporters highlighted her talent and many accomplishments as a refreshing and rare aspect in Chinese art history. Inscribed in the titles of her albums *Chinese Paintings* and *Eighteen Landscapes* was the claim that Wu was the "most distinguished paintress of modern China." While placing Wu in the lineage of women painters, editors of her two painting albums also invoked the operative word of contemporaneity: *jinsi* 近世, which can be translated as "modern." By emphasizing the relevance of Wu Xingfen's works, the editors made clear, first that Chinese painting represented a significant contribution to the global visual-arts scene, and second, that Wu was among the best living artists in China, whether male or female.

Even though her role as wife and mother was mentioned in her biography, her promoters further fostered Wu's authenticity, talent, and resourcefulness by making her art practice the prime focus of her public persona. This aspect was tangentially emphasized in the foreword to *Eighteen Landscapes* written by Xu Mozhai 許墨齋 (Xu Jiaying 許家惺, 1873–1925), a well-respected newspaper editor and a compiler of new-style textbooks for women.⁸⁰ While briefly praising the fact that Wu Xingfen's works were admired by foreign collectors, Xu's foreword focuses on the editor H. C. Wolfe's assistance with E. A. Strehlneek's English publication *Chinese Pictorial Art*, which featured Strehlneek's collection of Chinese paintings, which Xu considered to be an authoritative volume on ancient art in China.⁸¹ Xu further expressed that Wolfe, whom he regarded as an important figure in promoting cultural understanding between China and the West, had made yet another great contribution to the art world by producing Wu Xingfen's album. Even though a great part of the foreword is comprised of Xu's praise for

⁸⁰ For a discussion of Xu Jiaying's role in establishing the discourse of female virtue in new-style textbooks at the turn of the twentieth century, see Judge, *The Precious Raft of History*, 51–53.

⁸¹ E. A. Strehlneek, *Chinese Pictorial Art*.

Wolfe, his emphasis on the fact that Wolfe edited Wu's book served also to underline the importance of Wu Xingfen's art, as well as the contribution of other women artists.

In the Popular Press

The burgeoning print culture of the early twentieth century provided a platform for artists to showcase their works. The ways in which women artists were highlighted in the popular press—especially in women's magazines—demonstrated society's fascination with women's achievements and personal success stories. It also provided a platform, as their visibility increased, for women artists to express their personal thoughts and opinions on art and culture. The first three decades of the early twentieth century saw a surge in the number of art journals published in China, these publications, however, rarely discussed women's artworks and art practices.⁸²

Women's magazines inaugurated in the late nineteenth century, the genre proliferated throughout the early twentieth century by showcasing the various aspects of women's lives. Editors of these magazines were committed to promoting women's social and cultural status, and they saw art as a way for women to contribute to national development. Wu and Jin both had extensive representation in women's magazines and other genres of the popular press.

Wu Xingfen's paintings had been used to decorate covers of *Funü zazhi* 婦女雜誌 (1915–1931)—the longest-running Chinese women's magazine of the early twentieth century.⁸³

⁸² From 1911 to 1937, there were more than 200 kinds of art magazines published in China's metropolises. Xu Zhihao 许志浩, *Zhongguo meishu qikan guoyanlu* 中国美术期刊过眼录 [Brief list of art periodicals in China] (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1992).

⁸³ For a discussion of the cover art, see Julia F. Andrews, "Persuading with Pictures: Cover Art and *The Ladies' Journal* (1915-1931)," in *A Space of Their Own? Women and the Periodical Press in China's Global Twentieth Century*, Joan Judge, Barbara Mittler, and Michel Hockx, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

Using artists' work on magazine covers was a relatively recent phenomenon in China. In the early days of publishing, magazine covers were mostly created by illustrators who were trained in the production of commercial artworks.⁸⁴ The first generation of illustrators included Xu Yongqing 徐詠青 (1880–1953), Shen Bochen 沈伯塵 (1889–1920), and Ding Song 丁悚 (1891–1972). These artists represented a new development in the arts, one made possible by the flourishing publishing industry. Xu Yongqing and Shen Bochen had produced illustrations catered to the specific themes of the twenty-one covers of *Funü shibao* 婦女時報 (*The Women's Eastern Times*).⁸⁵ Even though *Funü shibao* frequently featured work by female artists, especially elite women, they did not grace their covers. *Funü zazhi*, on the other hand, had featured both Wu and Jin's works on their covers.

The magazine's cover featured various design schemes over its seventeen years of publication. For the first volume (1915), Xu Yongqing singlehandedly illustrated all twelve covers; each depicted women in their various activities and occupations. As *Funü zazhi* continued to publish, the designs evolved, ranging from commissioned illustrations—often in Western-style watercolour—to a uniform appearance for all twelve issues of an entire volume (volume 7, in 1921). A more common and possibly less time-consuming cover scheme would have been to use existing artists' paintings and juxtapose them with ornamental elements; publishers would thus save the cost of commissioning original artwork, and it would also serve the purpose of highlighting certain artists' works. Employing just such a scheme, editors of *Funü*

⁸⁴ Many of these artists were trained in traditional Chinese-style painting, and then in Western-style art through the various art schools. One of the earliest institutions that provided the training in Western-style art was Tushanwan huaguan 土山灣畫館 (Tushanwan painting studio), established in 1852 in Shanghai by the missionary Joannes Ferrer, where Xu Yongqing learned his craft.

⁸⁵ For an analysis of the cover art of *Funü shibao*, see Judge, *Republican Lens*, 81–90.

zazhi used twelve paintings from Wu Xingfen's *Eighteen Landscapes* for the covers of the twelve consecutive monthly issues of volume 4 (1918) [Figure 1.1].

Throughout *Funü zazhi*'s seventeen-year run, Wu was the only artist whose work adorned the covers of an entire volume. This reflected two things. First, that Wu was a respected artist and an exemplary woman whose accomplishment in art was to be lauded; using her work for the covers was thus an endorsement of her status in both the art world and in the women's world (*nüjie* 女界). And second, that women artists were assuming a prominent position within the *guohua* circle. After all, each cover represented a selection from Wu's *Eighteen Landscapes*. By choosing landscapes, rather than Wu's works in other genres, such as flower-and-bird, the editors reinforced women artists' status within landscape painting, which was still closely linked with male literati in the cultural thinking of the late 1910s.

It could also have been another way to market Wu's work. The existing copy of *Eighteen Landscapes*, at the Shanghai Library, was a revised second edition from 1926. However, the preface of *The Eighteen Landscapes* was written by H. C. Wolfe in 1919. A foreword by the reverend Evan Morgan, and a letter of appreciation from the Allied War Relief Association of Shanghai for Wu's donation of artwork, were also written in the same year. It is highly likely that the first edition was published closer to 1919.⁸⁶ In the preface to the volume, Wolfe mentions that the paintings in *Eighteen Landscapes* had already been exhibited. If the first edition was indeed published around 1919, after the *Funü zazhi* covers were published in 1918, it is very likely that the production of the book was already underway. It might even be possible that the collotype plates produced for the book already existed. The 1918 *Funü zazhi* covers

⁸⁶ Elise David has also pointed out this possibility in "Making Visible Feminine Modernities: The Traditionalist Paintings and Modern Methods of Wu Shujuan." (Master's thesis, The Ohio State University, 2012), 5.

would therefore have been a good way to promote Wu's upcoming publication. It would also have been a cost- and time-saving strategy for the Commercial Press (the publisher of *Funü zazhi*).

Furthermore, even though the publisher for *Eighteen Landscapes* was not indicated in the book, it is not unlikely that H. C. Wolfe would have had connections with editors at the Commercial Press—the largest publisher in Shanghai at the time—or that he proposed Wu's works for the covers; the Commercial Press might even have paid royalty for their use. Networks in the art, culture, and publishing world were crucial in building an artist's career. The use of Wu's paintings on the covers of *Funü zazhi* was a marked example of this.

In addition to the twelve covers, Wu Xingfen was well represented in *Funü zazhi*. Three of her painted fans, and a couple of paintings (printed with the three-colour process) were also published in the same 1918 volume.⁸⁷ Wu's photo-portrait and a short biography appeared in the “society/association's dialogues” (“Sheshuo” 社說) column in the last issue of that volume as well.⁸⁸ [Figure 1.2] This was adapted from Yang Yi's biography of Wu in the *Chinese Paintings* album. An editor at *Funü zazhi* added a note to acknowledge that the paintings adorning the twelve covers of the magazine were by Wu, and it highlighted Wu's accomplishment at the International Exhibition of Art in Rome in 1910 [*sic*],⁸⁹ as well as the fact that her paintings were appreciated by the queen of Italy, who bought them for a considerable sum of money.

⁸⁷ The painted fans were published in *Funü zazhi* 4, no. 8 (August, 1918). The paintings include “Sanseban jingyin Xin'an Wu Shujuan nüshi hua Xunfeng yiqutu” 三色版精印新安吳淑娟女士畫薰風一曲圖 [Three-colour print of Ms. Wu Shujuan's painting of Xunfeng (playing) melody], *Funü zazhi* 4, no. 1 (January 1918); “Xin'an Wu Shujuan nüshi hua chunhuaqifangtu sanseban jingyin” 新安吳淑娟女士畫春花齊放圖三色版精印 [Ms. Wu Shujuan's painting *Spring flowers blooming*, finely printed with three-colour], *Funü zazhi* 4, no. 3 (March 1918).

⁸⁸ “Tangmu Wu taifuren Shujuan nüshi xiaoxiang (fu zhaopian)” 唐母吳太夫人淑娟女士小像(附照片) [A profile of Tang's mother Mrs. Wu Shujuan (with photo)] *Funü zazhi* 4, no. 12 (December 1918): 12.

⁸⁹ The Esposizione internazionale d'arte (International Exhibition of Art) was held in Rome in 1911, not 1910.

The ways in which Wu Xingfen was represented in the 1918 volume of *Funü zazhi* was typical of the role-modeling strategy that the magazine employed. This approach—juxtaposing image, writings, and personal stories—was intended to give readers a multifaceted impression of the women presented.⁹⁰

From the sources I am able to gather, the photograph of Wu published in *Funü zazhi* appears to be the only one ever taken of the artist, or at least the only one ever published. The same photograph, along with the English caption “Madame Wu Hsing-Fen/The most distinguished paintress of modern China,” was included in *Eighteen Landscapes*. [Figure 1.3] It was printed on the page after the table of contents and before the preface.⁹¹ (There was no photo-portrait of Wu in *Chinese Paintings*.) The same photograph also appeared in the art magazine *Meishu* 美術 (Fine arts, 1919), and posthumously in the album *Calligraphy and Painting by the late Xingfen Laoren* (Xingfen Laoren yimo 杏芬老人遺墨).⁹² The fact that the same photograph had been used throughout Wu’s career suggests that while Wu was willing to accept this new form of public appearance, she was likely not too enthusiastic about the practice. Propriety could have been a consideration.⁹³ Perhaps Wu also did not feel the need to have her photographs published extensively in order to promote her works—unlike women of later generations, such as members of the Chinese Women’s Society of Calligraphy and Painting—discussed in chapter

⁹⁰ For a detailed discussion of the “role-modeling” approach of women’s magazines, see Doris Sung, “Redefining Female Talents: Funü shibao, Funü zazhi, and the Development of ‘Women’s Art’ in China,” in *A Space of Their Own? Women and the Periodical Press in China’s Global Twentieth Century*, Joan Judge, Barbara Mittler, and Michel Hockx, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

⁹¹ Wu Xingfen, *Eighteen Landscapes*.

⁹² “Wu Xingfen nüshi xiaoying” 吳杏芬女史小影 [Photo-portrait of Ms. Wu Xingfen], *Meishu* 美術 [Fine arts] 2 (Shanghai: 1919): 1; *Xingfen laoren yimo* 杏芬老人遺墨 [Calligraphy and painting by the late Xingfen Laoren] (Shanghai: 1930).

⁹³ Judge argues that the similar appearance of photographic portraits of upright women and courtesans made genteel women cautious of having their photographs circulating in public. For issues concerning the propriety, reception, and readings of women’s photographic portraits in *Funü shibao*, see Judge, *Republican Lens*, 178–198.

two—who would frequently have their photo-portraits published in order to promote their art careers.

Like Wu Xingfen, Jin Taotao's was also amply represented in the press, especially in women's magazines. Along with highlighting her artistic accomplishments, these representations also revealed Jin's privileged position and elite social status. In the inaugural issue of *Funü shibao*, a cameo-style photograph of Jin Taotao was printed alongside a fan of painted fish [Figure 1.4]. The inscription on the photograph reads:

Visiting Paris at the same time as older brother Gongbo [Jin
Cheng]
For [my brother] to commemorate this happy occasion
The tenth month of the *gengxu* year
Noted by younger sister Zhang
鞏伯大哥同客巴黎 贈此以誌歡聚
庚戌十月
妹章記)⁹⁴

The inscription on the photograph established Jin Taotao's connection to Jin Cheng, and also her ability to travel abroad. Although Jin was an experienced painter and calligrapher in her own right, she was lesser known than her brother and her connection with him would help readers position her in the art world. Her cultural position was further reinforced by the inscription on the painted fan [Figure 1.5]:

⁹⁴ *Funü shibao* 1 (June 11, 1911) image section, n.p. It would be Jin Taotao's second trip to Europe. This time, she traveled as a married woman accompanying her husband on a diplomatic assignment. Her first trip to Europe took place from 1902–1905. At that time, she traveled with Jin Cheng and her two other brothers to England, where she was said to have taken courses in Western painting. Jin Cheng worked as an official in the Department of Justice of the late Qing regime upon his return to China in 1905 and after his study in England. In 1907, he was appointed the justice of the third circuit of the High Court of Justice in Beijing. He was sent to attend the International Prison Congress held in Washington in October 1910. After the congress, Jin Cheng travelled to Europe to survey the prison system there, and it was during this trip that he and Jin Taotao met in Paris. See Yun Xuemei 云雪梅, *Jin Cheng* 金城 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002), 5.

Who would understand the joy of fish? Only Zhuang Zhou would fully grasp it.

In the spring of the year *mushen* [1908]

Painted for the scrutiny of Mr. Chuqing [Di Baoxian]

Jin Zhang

濠梁樂趣誰能識

惟有莊周得會心

戊申春日

畫呈楚青先生法家政之

金章)⁹⁵

The inscription reveals that the fan was a gift to the publisher of *Funü shibao*, Di Baoxian 狄葆賢 (Chuqing 楚青, Pingzi 平子, 1872–1941). Reproduced in the front section of the inaugural issue of *Funü shibao* where monochromatic photographs—produced with the relatively new technology of collotype—which evinced Di’s high regard for her art, and the artistic accomplishment of genteel women in general.⁹⁶

Di’s commitment to promoting and preserving traditional art was also reflected in the editorial direction of *Funü shibao*. Most of the artworks reproduced in the magazine were paintings and calligraphy produced by elite Chinese women who, like Jin Taotao, had been trained to continue the legacy of their talented forebears. Showcasing women’s traditional painting and calligraphy was a way for *Funü shibao* to highlight the cultural erudition and personal merit of well-educated women. At the same time, the journal also reflected the increasing importance of art education in the curriculum of early Republican women’s schools and the rising importance of arts and crafts as a viable livelihood for women in this period. In

⁹⁵ *Funü shibao* 1 (June 11, 1911), image section, n.p.

⁹⁶ Di, whose Youzheng Book Company (Youzheng shuju 有正書局) published a series collotype reproductions of old masters’ paintings titled *Famous Chinese paintings* [*Zhongguo minghua* 中國名畫], demonstrated his commitment to preserve and promote the national art tradition. See Richard Vinograd, “Patrimonies in Press: Art Publishing, Cultural Politics, and Canon Construction in the Career of Di Baoxian (1873-1941)” in Joshua A. Fogel, ed., *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 244–272.

addition to the photo-portrait and painted fan that were prominently featured in the inaugural issue, eight leaves from Jin's flower album were also printed in two other issues of *Funü shibao*, one of which was also given as a gift to Di.⁹⁷ One of Jin Taotao's paintings was also used for a cover of *Funü zazhi*.⁹⁸ The inclusion of female artists in women's magazines was an important marker for the greater public presence of women, especially when complemented by their activities in the increasingly professional art world.

Art Societies, Local and International Exhibitions

Like many artists of the time, Wu and Jin were members of a number of art societies, and both played active educational and administrative roles in these organizations. Wu Xingfen was a well-respected member of The Heavenly Horse Society, an organization initiated by teachers and graduates of the Shanghai Art Academy (Shanghai meishu zhuanmen xuexiao 上海美術專門學校), and one of the largest art societies in 1920s Shanghai. The society had over two hundred members by 1927, and nine annual exhibitions were held throughout its existence.⁹⁹ The organization was mandated to develop modern art in China by integrating Chinese- and Western-style art forms. Varying from exhibition to exhibition, members' works were generally categorized into Chinese painting (*guocuihua* 國粹畫), Western painting (*xiyanghua* 西洋畫), graphic design (*tu'an* 圖案), sculpture (*diaosu* 雕塑), and applied arts (*gonyi meishu* 工藝美

⁹⁷ *Funü shibao* 12 and 13 (January 10 and April 1, 1914), image sections, n.p.

⁹⁸ *Funü zazhi* 2, no. 8 (August 1916).

⁹⁹ Xu Zhihao 许志浩, *Zhongguo meishu shetuan manlu* 中国美术社团漫录 [Records of art societies in China] (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1994), 33–34. For a detailed discussion of the organization, see An Yalan 安雅兰 (Julia F. Andrews), "The Heavenly Horse Society (Tianmahui) and Chinese Landscape Painting," in *Ershi Shiji Shanshui Hua Yanjiu Wenji* 二十世紀山水畫研究文集 [Studies on 20th Century Shanshuihua], ed. Lu Fusheng 卢辅圣 and Tang Zheming 汤哲明 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2006), 556–91.

術).¹⁰⁰ At its inaugural exhibition in 1919, around two hundred works were on display in four different categories: Chinese painting, eclectic (*zhezong* 折衷) painting, graphic design, and Western painting.¹⁰¹ Works were selected by a jury for each respective category. Both members and non-members were invited to submit works, with non-member artists whose work was deemed high quality by the jury having the opportunity to become members. In 1921, Wu Xingfen, together with Wang Yiting 王一新 (Wang Zhen 王震, 1867–1938) and Wu Changshi, were voted by other members to take on the role of jury for the Chinese painting section.¹⁰² To be selected as a jury validated the high esteem in which Wu Xingfen was held by her fellow members, and the Shanghai art scene at large.

In addition to the Heavenly Horse Society, Wu was also a member of a few other art societies, including the Morning Glory Art Society (Chenguang meishuhui 晨光美術會, 1921–1931), and the Shanghai Tingyun Calligraphy and Painting Society (Haishang tingyun shuhuashe 海上停雲書畫社, 1923–1925; 1927–1929), in which she played the role of mentor to multiple generations of women artists.¹⁰³ Her most well-known female student was Li Qiujun 李秋君 (1899–1973), who was one of the founding members of the Chinese Women’s Society of Calligraphy and Painting. Wu and Li were both members of the Heavenly Horse Society and had frequently exhibited together at its annual exhibitions. At the Morning Glory Art Society, Yang Xueyao 楊雪瑤 (1898–1977) and Yang Xuejiu 楊雪玖 (1902–1986), who were also founding

¹⁰⁰ “Shanghai de Tianmahui” 上海的天馬會 [The Heavenly Horse Society of Shanghai], *Meishu* 美術 [Fine arts] 2, no. 1 (1920): 88–89.

¹⁰¹ “Tianmahui huihua zhanlanhui ji” 天馬會繪畫展覽會紀 [Exhibition of the Heavenly Horse Society], *Shenbao*, December 21, 1919, 1.

¹⁰² “Tianmahui xuanju shenchayuan 天馬會選舉審查員 [The Heavenly Horse Society elects selection committee members], *Shenbao*, July 24, 1921, 15; Xu Zhihao, *Zhongguo Meishu Shetuan Manlu*, 36.

¹⁰³ Xu Changming 徐昌酩, ed., *Shanghai meishuzhi* 上海美術志 [Chronicles of art in Shanghai] (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2004), 275.

members of the Chinese Women’s Society of Calligraphy and Painting, had had the opportunity to showcase their works with senior artists such as Wu.¹⁰⁴

While Wu Xingfen was active in Shanghai, Jin Taotao was involved in two important art societies in Beijing—the Chinese Painting Research Society (Zhongguo huaxue yanjiuhui 中國畫學研究會, 1920–1947?), and later, the Lake Society (Hu She 湖社, 1926–1946).¹⁰⁵ Jin was a core member and also took an active teaching role at these organizations. The Chinese Painting Research Society was established in 1920 by Jin Cheng and Zhou Zhaoxiang 周肇祥 (1880–1945) with the mandate to promote and renew traditional Chinese art.¹⁰⁶ While the society’s teaching method was based on the old-style apprentice (*shicheng* 師承) system, students were not limited to one teacher. Instruction was divided by subject matter, and each division was taught by practitioners who specialized in their respective subjects. The organization’s membership consisted of students (known as *yanjiuyuan* 研究員, or researchers), and instructors (known as *pingyi* 評議, or critics). Jin Taotao was one of the most important instructors at the society,¹⁰⁷ and it was her need for a comprehensive teaching manual that prompted her to write *Haoliang*.¹⁰⁸ The structure of the society reflected its aim to provide a systematic course of

¹⁰⁴ “Chenguang meishuhui kai dierci zhanlanhui” 晨光美術會開第二次展覽會 [Morning Glory Art Society to open second exhibition], *Shenbao*, June 15, 1922, 14.

¹⁰⁵ The Lake Society was named in memory of Jin Cheng, after one of his style names Ouhu 藕湖 (Lake of lotus roots). Jin Qian’an took with him to the Lake Society more than two hundred former members of the Chinese Painting Research Society, most of them were former followers of Jin Cheng. Many of the students who had studied with Jin Cheng fashioned their style names with the character “Hu” (湖) as a way to show respect for their former master.

¹⁰⁶ These mandates were “to preserve the national essence and to evolve with time” (Baocun guocui, yu shidai jinhua 保存國粹, 與時代進化), and to “carefully study and learn from ancient methods and broadly attain new knowledge” (Jingyan gufa bocai xinshi 精研古法, 博採新知). See Wang Yichang, ed., *Zhongguo meishu nianjian 1947*, 18.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ For details about the process of writing process of *Haoliang*, see Jin Taotao’s own preface to the volume. *Jin Zhang/Jinyu Baiying*.

learning, not simply by imparting knowledge from teachers to students, but also by encouraging the exchange of ideas between students and instructors—a method that echoed the formal learning at specialized art schools then being established in China’s metropolises.

Jin Cheng and Zhou Zhaoxiang, cofounders of the Chinese Painting Research Society, both held important official posts in the Republican government, and they managed to solicit the financial and political support of the then president Xu Shichang 徐世昌 (1855–1939). With the support of the Beiyang government, the society had tremendous influence in the Beijing art scene. Moreover, with their own artistic connoisseurship, Jin and Zhou took on the role of custodians and promoters of Chinese art, and they exerted a marked influence over the government’s cultural policies.¹⁰⁹

One of the society’s functions was to act as a quasi-official selection agent for the many international art expositions in which China took part. As a result, many of its own members were selected to participate in these exhibitions.¹¹⁰ The six joint Sino-Japanese exhibitions (Zhong-Ri huihua zhanlanhui 中日繪畫展覽會) that took place alternately in Beijing and Tokyo between 1921 and 1931 comprised some of the most important events to which the society devoted its time and energy.¹¹¹ Wu and Jin were both given prominent places in the six exhibitions.¹¹² In its role as the semi-official cultural representative for the Beiyang government,

¹⁰⁹ See Aida Yuen Wong, *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), 100–121.

¹¹⁰ By 1947, the Chinese Painting Research Society had participated in numerous cultural exchange exhibitions with other countries and more than ten international art expositions. Wang Yichang, ed., *Zhongguo meishu nianjian 1947*, 18.

¹¹¹ For a detailed account of the six joint Sino-Japanese exhibitions and the diplomatic role they played between the two countries, see Aida Yuen Wong, *Parting the Mists*, 100–121.

¹¹² On Wu Xingfen’s participation at the exhibitions, see Weidner, *Views from Jade Terrace*, 172–173.

the society made these exhibitions possible.¹¹³ Not only did they reflect the political leaning of the society, but they also served the political purpose of substantiating Xu's policy of "ruling by civilization" (*wenzhi* 文治).¹¹⁴ Wu and Jin's prominence at the exhibitions further helped to establish their careers in elite cultural and political circles.

At the third exhibition, held in Shanghai in April 1924, Jin Taotao had at least four of her paintings and one collaborative work with Jin Cheng showcased; Wu Xingfen, too, had at least three works on prominent display.¹¹⁵ Wu also served as a jury member for the Sino-Japanese Art Association (*Zhong-Ri meishu xiehui* 中日美術協會), which was responsible for selecting works for the exhibitions.¹¹⁶

In September 1926, shortly after the fourth Sino-Japanese Painting Exhibition was held in Tokyo, Jin Cheng fell ill en route to China; he died, at the age of forty-nine, after arriving in Shanghai. His son Jin Qian'an 金潛菴 (Yinhu 蔭湖), dissatisfied with the leadership of Zhou Zhaoxiang, left to establish the Lake Society in 1927. With Jin Cheng's death, Jin Taotao, the sister and long-time student of Jin Cheng, became a key member of the society. Under the stewardship of Jin Qian'an, the Lake Society surpassed the Chinese Painting Research Society in its organizational scope and number of members. In addition to holding regular exhibitions of

¹¹³ "Zhong-Ri meishu xiehui zhi zhanlanhui ji" 中日美術協會之展覽會記 [On the joint Sino-Japanese exhibition], *Shenbao*, February 5, 1923, 17; Aida Yuen, *Parting the Mists*, 111; Song Lu 松廬, "Zhong-Ri huihua zhanlanhui cangan ji" 中日繪畫展覽會參觀記 [Notes on the visit to the Sino-Japanese painting exhibition], *Shenbao*, May 25, 1924, 17.

¹¹⁴ For the relationship between Jin Cheng, Zhou Zhaoxiang, and Xu Shichang, see Mo Ai 莫艾, "Minguo qianqi (1911–1927) Beijing huatan chuantongpai shehui jiaowang guanxi kaocha" 民国前期 (1911–1927) 北京画坛传统派社会交往关系考察 [A study of the social interaction among the traditionalists of the Beijing art scene in the early Republican period (1911–1927)], *Meishu yanjiu* 1 (2011): 52–59.

¹¹⁵ Wang Tao 王濤, "Cangan Zhong-Ri huihua zhanlanhui ji" 參觀中日繪畫展覽會記 [Notes on the visit to the Sino-Japanese painting exhibition]; Song Lu 松廬, "Zhong-Ri huihua zhanlanhui cangan ji" 中日繪畫展覽會參觀記 [Notes on the visit to the Sino-Japanese painting exhibition], *Shenbao*, May 25, 1924, 17.

¹¹⁶ "Zhong-Ri meishu xiehui zhi zhanlanhui ji" 中日美術協會之展覽會記 [On the joint Sino-Japanese exhibition], *Shenbao*, February 5, 1923, 17.

their work, members of the Lake Society were also active participants in other largescale events, such as the two National Art Exhibition of the Ministry of Education (Jiaoyubu quanguo meishu zhanlanhui 教育部全國美術展覽會) in 1929 and 1937.¹¹⁷ Moreover, with a significant number of its members' works chosen to represent China in international art expositions, the Lake Society established itself as one of the most important players in the preservation of *guohua* and its introduction to the global cultural stage.

International Experience

Membership in art societies not only granted opportunities for artists to show their work in local venues; it also increased their chances of participating in international exhibitions. These numerous local and international exhibition opportunities undoubtedly facilitated women's increased presence on the local and global stage.

This global experience was a distinctive characteristic of the new generation of female scholar-painters. Not only did they gain opportunities to show their works abroad, but their connection with a foreign audience in China, especially in the international community of Shanghai, further led to their critical and commercial success. For someone like Jin Taotao, who had the opportunity to travel abroad, the experience had even broadened her artistic direction.

China's participation in international expositions started in the 1860s.¹¹⁸ The works sent to these expositions consisted mostly of handicrafts and paintings in the traditional Chinese

¹¹⁷ The first and second National Art Exhibition of the Ministry of Education (Jiaoyubu quanguo meishu zhanlanhui 教育部全國美術展覽會) were important events in the history of Chinese modern art. They symbolized the effort of the Republican government to emphasize the importance of art production. They were also the two most important modern art exhibitions of the early Republican period.

¹¹⁸ Karl Gerth, *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation*, 220.

medium, the objective being to showcase the national art of China in foreign countries.¹¹⁹ Both Wu and Jin showed their work in many such exhibits, including the 1911 Esposizione internazionale d'arte in Rome, and the 1930 Exposition Internationale de Liège in Belgium. Works sent to the former consisted mostly of Chinese-style paintings, crafts, and a small number of works in the Western medium.¹²⁰ The year before the exhibition, China held the Nanyang Industrial Exposition (Nanyang quanyehui 南洋勸業會) in Nanjing. The event was the Qing government's first attempt to host its own industrial exposition fashioned after those of Japan, Europe, and the United States. Nanyang provided China with the knowledge of how to organize its delegation and what kinds of product to showcase at international events in order to appeal to a "Western audience."¹²¹ This proved useful when China participated in both of the expositions in Italy in 1911, where the works of women artists were widely celebrated. In addition to demonstrating China's artistic and industrial achievements, the Rome and Turin expositions (the Esposizione internazionale d'arte and the Esposizione internazionale dell'industria e del lavoro, respectively) also presented the notion of progress, especially in terms of women's emerging publicness, a concept that was closely tied to the notion of civilization and enlightenment in the sociopolitical thinking of early twentieth-century China.

At Rome, Queen Elena of Montenegro (1873–1952) acquired some of Wu Xingfen's paintings for her collection of Chinese-style art, which she kept in her apartment suite in the

¹¹⁹ See, for example, an exhibition held in France. Li Feng 李風 "Lu Ou Huaren diyici juxing Zhongguo meishu zhanlan dahue zhi shengkuang 旅歐華人第一次舉行中國美術展覽大會之盛況" [The grand occasion of the first exhibition of Chinese art by Chinese artists in Europe], in *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 [*Eastern Miscellany*] 21, no. 16 (August 25, 1924): 30–36.

¹²⁰ "Ji Zhongguo meishu huapin zai Luoma kaimushi" 記中國美術畫品在羅馬開幕事 [The opening of the Chinese art exhibition in Rome], *Shishi xinbao yuekan* 時事新報月刊 1 (1911): 34.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

royal residence of Il Castello di Racconigi, modelled in the style of *chinoiserie*.¹²² This decorative style was associated with femininity and hedonism.¹²³ Works by female artists seemed to fit the taste.¹²⁴ The queen's predilection for women artists, however, was motivated by their new publicness and assertiveness, which seem to have impressed the queen as much as their work did.

In addition to Wu's painting, the queen also had the highest regard for the famed embroiderer Shen Shou 沈壽 (1874–1921) at the Turin exposition, which was held at the same time as the one in Rome.¹²⁵ Shen submitted an embroidered portrait of Queen Elena to the event. The queen was so taken by the portrait she requested that it be given to her as a gift from the Chinese government, and she awarded Shen a golden pocket watch embellished with the insignia of the Italian crown.¹²⁶ With the aim of highlighting female artists' success, *Funi shibao* published the queen's portrait, together with a photo-portrait of Shen in its inaugural issue. Shen's accomplishment was also widely reported in other newspapers and magazines, emphasizing the national pride engendered by the embroiderer's newfound success. The progress

¹²² David, "Making Visible Feminine Modernities," 49.

¹²³ David Beevers, *Chinese Whispers: Chinoiserie in Britain, 1650-1930* (London: Royal Pavilion & Museums, 2008), 19.

¹²⁴ Even though Jin Taotao did not achieve the same level of fame as Wu at the Rome Exposition, her work was also highlighted as among the best at the Chinese Pavilion. "Ji Zhongguo meishu huapin zai Luoma kaimushi" 記中國美術畫品在羅馬開幕事 [The opening of the Chinese art exhibition in Rome], *Shishi xinbao yuekan* 時事新報月刊 1 (1911): 34.

¹²⁵ The Esposizione internazionale d'arte (International Exhibition of Art) was held in Rome in 1911 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the unification of Italy. Another world's fair, the Esposizione internazionale dell'industria e del lavoro (International Exhibition of Industry and Labour), was also held concurrently in Turin. While the Rome exhibition focused on fine arts, the Turin edition centered on industrial products. China sent a large delegation to both.

¹²⁶ The watch is now in the collection of the Nantong Museum. See *Nantong bowuyuan wenwu jinghua* 南通博物苑文物精華 [Selected work in the collection of Nantong Museum] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005), 52.

of Chinese women was also illustrated by a news story involving the Italian royal couple at the exposition in Rome.

Wu Kuangshi 吳匡時 (Yingqian 應乾, 1883–1944), the son of the Chinese ambassador to Italy, Wu Zhonglian 吳宗濂 (1856–1933), had studied in France for years; he was therefore entrusted with the position of commissioner to the Italian exposition, to liaise with the exhibition organizers and recommend the selection of works for the event. Wu Kuangshi had already held a position in the selection committee at the Nanyang exposition the year before. His experience abroad and at Nanyang, as the report suggests, contributed to the success of the Chinese Pavilion in Rome. Moreover, Wu's wife Wu-Zhou Shuxuan 吳周淑軒 played the role of cohost, along with her husband, and, according to the report, presented a bouquet of flowers to the Italian queen at the reception of the Italian royal couple's visit to the Chinese Pavilion. The report explains that while presenting flowers was common etiquette in the West, it was a novel experience for a Chinese audience. The act was also a pleasant surprise for the king and queen, who were impressed with the poise of the Chinese women and delighted to see them engaging socially. The report further emphasizes that when the king met with the new ambassador the day after the visit, he expressed his pleasure in seeing Chinese women's public appearance, which led him to believe that China was on the path to enlightenment (*rijian wenming* 日漸文明). Such praise aligned with the queen's appreciation of Wu Xingfen and Shen Shou's work.

At the 1930 *Liège* International Exposition in Belgium, a number of Jin's paintings were included in the Chinese delegation,¹²⁷ and Jin received an individual silver medal at the event.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ For a detailed account of China's representation and list of awards received, see "Bi bohui jiangping zuo zao shishanghui banfa" 比博會獎憑昨在市商會頒發 [Awards from the Belgium Exposition were given out at the chamber of commerce yesterday], *Shenbao*, November 29, 1931, 14.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

The Lake Society, of which Jin was a prominent member, was highly regarded by the Chinese delegation for the conservative style of its members' work, which the society perceived to be the best embodiment of the national essence. The 1930s saw the pinnacle of the revival of Chinese-style painting in the early Republican period, as artists and scholars strived to promote *guohua* to an international audience.¹²⁹ This cultural nationalism was evident in the works selected to represent China at international art events. The Lake Society was chosen to represent China at the Liège exposition, where it was awarded a gold medal by the organizers [Figure 1.6].¹³⁰ A number of female members, including Jin, also figured prominently as representatives of the society at the event.

Jin Taotao was no stranger to global exposure. As mentioned, she had spent three years in London with her brothers.¹³¹ During her stay, she did not enroll at any educational institutes but was home-tutored in a private family.¹³² Even though it is now difficult to trace what Jin Taotao studied with her tutor(s), Jin Cheng had mentioned that Taotao was learning Western art and that her works had improved tremendously as a result.¹³³ In addition to attending to his studies, Jin

¹²⁹ For the discussion of the revival of Chinese-style painting in the 1930s, see Julia Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 93–109.

¹³⁰ The exposition was one of the two held in Belgium to commemorate the centennial anniversary of its independence from the Netherlands. China had a prominent presence at this exposition, where it showcased its industrial and agricultural products, handicrafts, and fine art. Among all participating countries, China came third place in the number of awards received. For a detailed account of China's representation and list of awards received, see "Bi bohui jiangping zuo zao shishanghui banfa" 比博會獎憑 昨在市商會頒發 [Awards from the Belgium Exposition were given out at the chamber of commerce yesterday], *Shenbao*, November 29, 1931, 14.

¹³¹ In London, Jin Cheng took several courses at King's College in chemistry, English, modern history, philosophy, politics, and economics, but he did not enroll in a particular program of study. Jin Cheng was known as "Kungpah T. King" in London and he used this transliteration as his official English name thereafter. For Jin Cheng's study at King's College, see Qiu Minfang 邱敏芳, *Linglue gufa shengxinqi—Jin Cheng huihua yishu yanjiu* 領略古法生新奇—金城繪畫藝術研究 [Developing new expressions from old methods—a study of the art of Jin Cheng] (Taipei: National Museum of History, 2007), 28.

¹³² Jin Taotao was known as "Miss. T. King" during her stay in London. See "The Working of the Chinese Exclusion Act in the U.S.," *North-China Herald* (Shanghai), July 14, 1905, 71–72.

¹³³ Jin Cheng, preface to *Haoliang*.

Cheng also spent much time visiting museums and galleries to learn about European art. Jin Taotao would have had the opportunity to do the same under the escort of her brothers. While in London, the Jin siblings fully embraced Western culture, and they even wore Western clothing. It was apparent that they were also able to communicate well in English and had made connections with people in power.¹³⁴

Such opportunities were uncommon for Chinese women.¹³⁵ Even if they embarked on European journeys, they were usually chaperoned by male relatives and they often had no purpose other than to accompany fathers or husbands to their places of work or study.¹³⁶ It was not until the 1920s that female students started to travel to Europe to study on their own. Many of these women received public funding through various overseas study programs offered by the Chinese government (one of the most prominent examples of this was Pan Yuliang, who will be discussed in chapter 3). These women would often enroll in a prolonged program of study at institutions of higher education with the goal of receiving a degree or diploma.¹³⁷ Therefore, Jin Taotao was an uncommon example among the first generation of female scholar-painters, as she was sent to Europe to study, but without a specific program of learning.

¹³⁴ Jin Taotao wore Western-style clothing on the return trip to China on board the *Ivernia*. She would wear evening dress to dine with other guests travelling in first class. While in London, the Jins had made connections with people in power, such as the US ambassador to the United Kingdom, Joseph Hodges Choate. See “The Working of the Chinese Exclusion Act in the U.S.,” *North-China Herald* (Shanghai), July 14, 1905, 71–72.

¹³⁵ Although a great number of female students went to Japan to study in the first decade of the twentieth century, it was uncommon for women to travel to Europe until the early 1920s. For a discussion of female students in Japan, see Judge, *The Precious Raft of History*, 190–194; Zhou Yichuan 周一川, *Jindai Zhongguo nüxing Riben liuxueshi (1872-1945)* 近代中国女性日本留学史 (1872-1945) [*The history of Chinese female students in Japan (1872-1945)*] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2007).

¹³⁶ An unusual example of Chinese women travelling abroad and recording the experience was Shan Shili, who had written a travelogue of her European sojourn with her diplomat husband. See Hu Ying, “‘Would That I Were Marco Polo’: The Travel Writing of Shan Shili (1856–1943),” *Journeys* 5, no. 1 (2004): 119–124.

¹³⁷ For a detailed account of female overseas students and their study, see Sun Shiyue 孙石月, *Zhongguo Jindai Nüzi Liuxue Shi* 中国近代女子留学史 [A history of modern Chinese women’s overseas Study]. (Beijing: Zhongguo heping chubanshe, 1996).

Wu, on the other hand, had never travelled abroad, though she was well known in the international societies of Shanghai. Her two bilingual albums, which had hard covers and the most advanced method of printing and binding at the time, fully reflected Wu and her agents' objective to promote her art in front of an international audience [Figure 1.7]. Through her philanthropic activities, Wu Xingfen's social engagement had already gone beyond the Chinese-speaking cultural circles to Shanghai's foreign concessions. As noted in the introduction, in 1919 Wu donated works to a fundraising *thé dansant* and auction organized by the American Women's Club in Shanghai in support of the Allied War Relief Association. Proceeds from the sales of the works amounted to \$1,300.¹³⁸

The event was reported in various local newspapers, including *Shenbao* and the English-language newspaper *North-China Herald*.¹³⁹ To commemorate Wu's generosity, a letter of appreciation from the Allied War Relief Association was printed in *Eighteen Landscapes*.¹⁴⁰ Interestingly, the letter was written in English and was addressed to Wu Xingfen's son Tang Xiong, who was wrongly called "Mr. Wu." Apparently, organizers of the association had made the mistake of assuming that Wu Xingfen had taken the family name of her husband—hence her son would be "Mr. Wu."¹⁴¹ Not only was this error an example of cultural misunderstanding, but it also reflected the fact that Wu was not actively involved in dealing with the organizers of the event, and that Tang Xiong was his mother's representative. It also showed that Tang was not able to communicate well in English, if at all. The incident indicated the precariousness that

¹³⁸ Letter from the Allied War Relief Association, *The Eighteen Landscapes*. "Nühuajia zanzhu xiejihui" 女畫家贊助協濟會 [Woman artist sponsors relief society], *Shenbao*, "Local News," January 24, 1919, 10.

¹³⁹ "Chinese Lady Painter—Interesting Afternoon with American Women's Club," *North-China Herald* (Shanghai), January 29, 1921.

¹⁴⁰ Wu Xingfen, *Eighteen Landscapes*, n.p.

¹⁴¹ Chinese translation of the letter was printed on the page following the original letter. The translator had corrected the mistake by stating that the letter was addressed to Tang Jisheng (Tang Xiong).

circumscribed the communication between the Chinese and foreigners in early twentieth-century Shanghai. It also told the story of how a woman *guohua* artist attempted to expand her market and audience. But despite these cultural and linguistic barriers, Wu Xingfen (and her agents) continued to collaborate with the American Women's Club.

In the early 1920s, the literary department of the Women's Club organized a series of visits to the homes of wealthy and notable (Chinese and foreign) collectors of Chinese art and antiquities in Shanghai, including E. A. Strehlneek, and the then secretary of state Tang Shaoyi 唐紹儀 (1862–1938).¹⁴² Wu Xingfen was one of these well-known collectors. The group visited Wu's home on Avenue Joffre in the French Concession twice, once in 1920 and again in 1921, where they viewed works by Wu, Tang Xiong, and some of the old masters.¹⁴³ An article in *North-China Herald* gives a brief introduction of Wu's life, her accomplishments—including her success at the Rome Exposition in 1910 [*sic*]—and her generosity in donating works to the Allied War Relief Association. The article also highlights some of her works that attracted the interest of the women of the club. A few of these works had already been published in *Chinese Paintings* and *Eighteen Landscapes*, including Wu's "Portrait of Lady Kuan."¹⁴⁴ As the writer explains, Guan was a "famous lady who lived in the Mongol Dynasty."¹⁴⁵ The special attention paid to Wu's painting of Guan Daosheng was a subtle expression of the group's interest in Wu based on their shared gender and enthusiasm for art.

¹⁴² "Survey of the Past Year: Visit to Mr. Strehlneek's Great Chinese Collection," *North-China Herald* (Shanghai), May 28, 1921.

¹⁴³ "Chinese Lady Painter—Interesting Afternoon with American Women's Club," *North-China Herald* (Shanghai), January 29, 1921.

¹⁴⁴ "Lady Kuan" refers to Guan Daosheng 管道昇 (1262–1319), a Chinese female poet, painter and calligrapher of the Yuan dynasty.

¹⁴⁵ "Chinese Lady Painter—Interesting Afternoon with American Women's Club," *North-China Herald* (Shanghai), January 29, 1921.

North-China Herald also reported on another visit made by the group to Wu's home.¹⁴⁶ Tang Xiong was present at this visit, and he was said to have offered his comments and opinions on Chinese art theory and technique, as well as his interest in the movement to blend Chinese and Western art. In the article, the writer again made the mistake of calling Tang "Mr. Wu." But despite the language barrier, ladies of the club praised Wu Xingfen for being a gracious hostess. The visit was facilitated by the interpretation of Chen Guoquan. This fact again demonstrated the importance of Wu's agents—in this case, her son and dealer Chen—in promoting her work to an international audience. Moreover, Wu's connection to the American Women's Club constituted a feminine network that helped promote her works to foreign collectors; in making this connection, Wu fully used the notion of gender to her advantage.¹⁴⁷

Although the two articles in *North-China Herald* highlighted activities of the American Women's Club, they also served as high-profile publicity pieces for Wu, which further helped introduce her to a wider audience in Shanghai's foreign concessions. The vast circulation of these English-language newspapers also meant that the stories about Wu's work could be read by audiences in expatriate circles elsewhere in China, as well as in other English-speaking countries.

Like Wu Xingfen, Jin Taotao was also known in both foreign and political circles.¹⁴⁸ Whereas Wu's engagement outside the Chinese art world had to be facilitated by her son and agents, Jin was able to navigate various social realms on her own. Her education at McTeiryre and later in London had equipped her with a proficiency in the English language, and her stay in

¹⁴⁶ "American Women's Club—Visit to Collection of Paintings," *North-China Herald* (Shanghai), January 3, 1920.

¹⁴⁷ David, "Making Visible Feminine Modernities," 4, 67.

¹⁴⁸ Jin was active in philanthropic causes that involved Chinese and foreign women in the diplomatic and expatriate circles. Madame K. T. Ouang, "Progress of China's Womanhood," 72.

France provided her an opportunity to learn French. A woman with extensive overseas experience, Jin was invited to write an article on the theme of new women of China to be published in the 1918 yearbook of the prominent English-language newspaper *Peking Leader* (known as *Beijing daobao* 北京導報 in Chinese; 1918–1919). The article was also translated into Chinese for another magazine.¹⁴⁹ An important English-language newspaper in the capital, *Peking Leader* used the tagline “a morning daily advocating liberal opinions in China.” M. T. Z. Tyau (Diao Minqian 刁敏謙, Deren 德仁, 1888–1970), a British-educated lawyer, diplomat, and occasional lecturer at Tsinghua University, was its editor. The yearbook aimed to give an overview of the state of affairs of the nation on various fronts.

For the 1918 yearbook, Diao carefully selected contributors whose articles would “testify to the solidity of their knowledge and the wide range of the subjects.”¹⁵⁰ Jin Taotao was one of two women who contributed articles on the status of women in China. The other was Ida Kahn (Kang Aide 康愛德, 1873–1931), one of China’s first female physicians, who had been extolled by Liang Qichao as the exemplary new woman of China.¹⁵¹ The inclusion of Jin’s article alongside Ida Kahn’s spoke to Jin’s reputation as a progressive and learned woman, as well as her pre-eminence in the social and political circles in the capital. It also reflected the fact that, even though Jin has now been mostly forgotten in Chinese art and women’s history, she was by

¹⁴⁹ Madame K. T. Ouang 王金章, “Progress of China’s Womanhood,” 71–73; Madame K. T. Ouang (translated by Hu Zhi 胡致) “Zhongguo nüjie zhi jinbu” 中國女界之進步 [Progress of China’s Womanhood], *Guomin* 國民 [Citizens] 1, no. 4 (1919): 1–5.

¹⁵⁰ “Some Press Comments on the First Edition,” Min-ch’ien T. Z. Tyau, ed., *China in 1918* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1919).

¹⁵¹ Dr. Ida Kahn, “Women in China To-day,” Min-ch’ien T. Z. Tyau, ed., *China in 1918* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1919): 98–103. On Liang Qichao’s views on Ida Kahn, see Hu Ying 胡纓, “Lishi shuxie yu xinnüxing xingxiang de chuli: cong Liang Qichao ‘Ji Jiangxi Kang nüshi’ yiwen tanqi 歷史書寫與新女性形像的初立：從梁啟超《記江西康女士》一文談起 [The New Woman and the writing of history: The case of Kang Aide], *Jindai Zhongguo funüshi yanjiu* 近代中國婦女史研究 [Research on Women in Modern Chinese History] 9 (August 2001): 1–29.

no means an obscure figure at the time, and her article on the subject of women's progress reflected the recognition of her personal experience and advocacy on the issue during her lifetime.

In the article, Jin Taotao expresses her opinions on the issues of foot-binding, women's education, livelihoods, philanthropic work, new fashion and customs, and laws and politics in the new Chinese society. The article expresses the views of an erudite woman whose scope of experience had broadened her understanding of "the woman question." Written in English—and hence reaching a wider audience—the article articulates Jin's sense of mission to shed light on the current state of womanhood in China. Without either glorifying the progress of or underestimating the obstacles faced by Chinese women, Jin articulated her opinions on how they had progressed and she offered her views on how to continue to improve conditions for women. She claimed to be a conservative woman who believed that the pace for women's progress should not be too hasty. Inasmuch as Jin believed that women's education should be universal in China, she was hesitant about a few other issues, such as suffrage and women taking up professions that were traditionally reserved for men, such as politics and law. She also asserted that women should first and foremost cultivate feminine virtues, and that to be a virtuous wife and wise mother would be the most important role a woman should play. On the one hand, the article encapsulated Jin's privileged position, and how a well-rounded education and varied life experience had reshaped the outlook of women in the first decades of the twentieth century. On the other hand, her relatively moderate views on women's public roles were indeed similar to her conservative approach to the development of art in China. Whereas her painting employed the artistic principles of the past, the at times obscure classical language used in her writing also

echoed her preference for the preservation and continuation of the cultures of the past.¹⁵² The juxtaposition of Jin's insistence on safeguarding tradition and her cautious acceptance of new and foreign ideas was typical of the female scholar-painters of her time.

In addition to her own accomplishments—the editor's note pointed out that “Madame Ouang [Jin Taotao] is an artist and a linguist, being well-versed in English and French, as well as her own mother tongue”—her brother and husband's respective positions in the government, and later in foreign companies, would have definitely enhanced Jin's notoriety.¹⁵³ For example, one incident recorded in *North-China Herald* indicated the wealth and power of the Jin family in diplomatic circles.

After their three-year stay in London, the Jin siblings travelled back to China on the ocean liner *Ivernia*. They travelled in first class and were well liked by the other guests on the ship.¹⁵⁴ Like the other first-class passengers, the Jins would wear Western-style clothing, and when it came time to dine, they would don their evening attire. However, their pedigree was not appreciated once they arrived in the United States. At the port of Boston, the Jins were refused entry and were humiliated by the custom officers despite the fact that they had valid passports and even a letter of introduction from the US ambassador to the United Kingdom, Joseph Hodges Choate.¹⁵⁵ *North-China Herald* noted that a number of newspapers in Boston had reported the incident and expressed disgust towards the treatment of the Jins. A friend of theirs, B. Atwood Robinson, who had invited them to travel on *Ivernia*, therefore wrote a letter to President

¹⁵² See Jin's own colophon for her scroll *Jinyu baiying*.

¹⁵³ Madame K. T. Ouang, “Progress of China's Womanhood,” 71.

¹⁵⁴ “The Working of the Chinese Exclusion Act in the U.S.,” *North-China Herald* (Shanghai), July 14, 1905, 71–72.

¹⁵⁵ The Jins were denied entry until they paid for bonds of US\$500 each, and “they were taken off as prisoners to be photographed, and when certificates permitting them to pass through the United States were granted them . . . in these certificates they were described as ‘labourers,’ a class of Chinese who are taboo in the States.” See *Ibid.*, 71.

Roosevelt expressing the fear that diplomatic problems between China and the United States could potentially be triggered by the incident; the letter also pointed out the Jins' diplomatic connections and their influence in political and economic circles in China.¹⁵⁶ The incident, which happened in 1905—even before Jin Cheng was to assume an important post in the government—demonstrated that Jin Cheng already possessed vast international connections. These connections in turn facilitated Jin Taotao's global experience and helped to shape her reputation as a learned (and progressive) woman whose opinions were valued in a wide array of social and political circles.

Jin was known as “Madame K. T. Ouang” in the English-language press after the French transliteration of her husband's name, Wang Jizeng, who adopted the Romanization of his name after he went to France to study in his early twenties.¹⁵⁷ In addition to the article in *Peking Leader*, Jin had also used the name “Madame K. T. Ouang” in other publications. The magazine published by the Lake Society, *Heshe yuekan* 湖社月刊 (*Lake Society Monthly*, 1927–1936), started to include English captions in its bound reprint of twenty issues published in January 1929, and then in its regular issues starting in September 1930.¹⁵⁸ Around this time there was also a notice on its editorial page stating that the magazine was seeking foreign distributors.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ B. Atwood Robinson, “America's Business Opportunity in China,” *The Journal of Race Development* 3, no. 4 (1913): 438–456. Robinson mentions Kungpah T. King in the article.

¹⁵⁷ Wang Jizeng's entry in the *China Year Book 1935*: “Wang Chi-Tseng 王繼曾. Courtesy name: Shu-Ch'in 述勤. Prefers French rendering: K. T. Ouang. Born 1880: native of Foochow, Fukien. 1922–3, minister to Mexico. 1924, chief secretary, cabinet office. Chinese representative in Peiping, British-American Tobacco Co.” See Henry George Wandesforde Woodhead, *The China Year Book 1935* (Shanghai: North China Daily News & Herald, 1936), 410.

¹⁵⁸ Bi-monthly from issues 1 to 20 (November 15, 1927 to September 1, 1928), then monthly from the issue published on October 1, 1928. The monthly issue was called 冊 11 (combining issue 21 and 22). The society also reissued numbers 1 to 20 in a bound volume (called books 1-10). There were two versions of the reissues, one with English captions and one without. Both were issued on January 1, 1929. The regular issues started to include English captions starting from issue 34 (September 1, 1930).

¹⁵⁹ The notice reads, “Foreign Distributors Wanted: For Hu She Art Magazine, a monthly publication of vast circulation. Terms on Application.” See *Hushe yuekan* 33, no. 65–66 (August 1930). On the same page, there is also

The Lake Society's decision to publish English captions reflected its attempt to reach a wider readership, especially beyond China's national borders. This was consistent with the society's goal of consolidating the position of Chinese-style art on the global cultural stage. As most of the works by the artists of the Lake Society—many of whom were females—followed the project of reviving Song-Yuan painting, a magazine with overseas distribution would help to achieve the objective of global dissemination. Jin Taotao's work was frequently featured in *Hushe yuekan*. For example, an album of her flower paintings was reproduced in its entirety in issues 54 to 80. The same album was published as a monograph, edited by her nephew Jin Qian'an (Jin Yinhu), by the Lake Society in 1932—the only such monograph published during her lifetime [Figure 1.8].¹⁶⁰

SELLING ARTWORKS—MARKETING AND PHILANTHROPY

As the domestic and global visibility of women artists continued to increase, their commercial standing in the art world also rose significantly. Accordingly, female scholar-painters expressed their talent through art, but they also helped establish art as a specialized profession. In turn, this exemplified the possibility of women achieving financial independence and agency through work. Women in the past were known to have sold embroidery, painting, and calligraphy to subsidize household income. However, as Susan Mann has illustrated in her study of the women of the Zhang family during the Qing period, there was no mention of monetary transactions in these women's own writing or that of subsequent scholars.¹⁶¹ However, the taboo surrounding

a notice in Chinese stating that the magazine was available at its Canadian distributor located on Columbia Street in Vancouver.

¹⁶⁰ Jin Yinhu 金蔭湖, ed., *Jin Taotao nüshi huace* 金陶陶女士畫冊 [Painting album by Ms. Jin Taotao] (Beijing: Hu She, 1932).

¹⁶¹ Susan Mann, *The Talented Women of the Zhang Family* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 174.

the commercialization of women's art was defied in the early twentieth century when women artists started to publish their price lists (*runli* 潤例) publicly.¹⁶² They also sold works through the numerous art agents—dealers, art societies, fan shops, and art galleries that had proliferated in the booming art market.¹⁶³

Private art dealers were becoming important intermediaries between artists and buyers, and at times, they also scouted antiques and works of old masters for their clients. Dealers Chen Guoquan and H. C. Wolfe made it possible for Wu's works to reach a clientele beyond those in Chinese society in the 1910s.¹⁶⁴ The circumstances of Wu's connection with the American Women's Club and other organizations in the Shanghai expatriate world is not clear. However, I would speculate that Tang Xiong, Wu's son and an ardent promoter of her work, was active in many different circles.¹⁶⁵ His connection to Chen and Wolfe—who had made their way in the arts and culture business in both the Chinese and foreign communities—had extended Wu's already stellar career to new realms. Through Chen Guoquan, Wu's works made it into the collection of James Stewart Lockhart (1858–1937). Lockhart, a British ambassador to Weihaiwei and later a high-ranking officer in the colonial government of Hong Kong, had come

¹⁶² Publishing pricelists was part of a larger social shift in the long-standing literati-amateur painting tradition. Painters did not publicly advertise prices of their works in premodern periods. For a thorough discussion of the premodern art market, see James Cahill, *The Painter's Practice: How Artists Lived and Worked in Traditional China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), especially p. 33-70. A search of *Shenbao* shows that a number of women artists had begun to publish their price lists in 1872, when the newspaper was first published.

¹⁶³ On commercial activities of artists, fan shops, and art societies in Shanghai, see Kuiyi Shen, "Patronage and the Beginning of a Modern Art World in Late Qing Shanghai," in Jason C. Kuo, ed., *Visual Culture in Shanghai 1850s–1930s* (Washington: New Academia, 2007), 13–27.

¹⁶⁴ Chen Guoquan had most likely started promoting Wu's works to foreign collectors in the early 1910s. In James Stewart Lockhart's preface to *Chinese Paintings*, he mentioned that he acquired a painting of chrysanthemums by Wu through Chen, and that he had seen Wu's works before in her albums *Yinhua huagao* 吟花閣畫稿 [Paintings of Yinhua Studio] and *Baihua tuyong* 百花圖詠 [Images and colophons of one hundred flowers]. Lockhart's preface to *Chinese Paintings*, n.p.

¹⁶⁵ Tang's activities included teaching Chinese-style painting at the Shanghai Art Academy. Yan Juanying, ed., *Shanghai meishu fengyun*, 62.

to appreciate Chinese art and culture and had acquired a substantial collection of works with the help of Chen Guoquan, who was also Wu's dealer.

Chen was fluent in both Chinese and English, and he had been the secretary of the "Anglo-Chinese-American Friendly Association."¹⁶⁶ Lockhart had entrusted Chen to scout old masters' works for his collection. Authenticating works of art, especially those of old masters, was a contentious issue at the time. Lockhart had had his share of experience with shady art dealers. The over five hundred paintings which Lockhart acquired through a dealer named Tse Ts'an Tai (Xie Zuantai 謝纘泰, 1872–1939) were mostly fakes.¹⁶⁷ Chen Guoquan, too, had encountered many forgeries in the art market, and he turned this into a marketing strategy for Wu's work. In his introduction to *Chinese Paintings*, Chen emphasized the fact that since Wu was a living artist, the authenticity of her work was assured. This became an important aspect of Wu's sales to Lockhart and other foreigners. Lockhart was very fond of Wu's art and he had written a preface for *Chinese Paintings*. While Chen used the notion of authenticity as a promotional strategy for Wu's work, H. C. Wolfe, by contrast, lured foreign collectors by offering them the chance to preserve authentic Chinese art by purchasing works, including those of Wu Xingfen. Elise David argues that this strategy was Wolfe's way of appealing to foreigners' "colonial-mindset of the 'savior.'"¹⁶⁸ More than anything, Chen and Wolfe's advocacy exemplified the role of art dealers in the making of an artist's career.

¹⁶⁶ Chen was mentioned as a member of the society who helped to negotiate the Boxer Indemnities and was mentioned as the secretary of the Friendly Association. See "Boxer Indemnities," *North-China Herald* (Shanghai), April 25, 1914, 295.

¹⁶⁷ Sonia Lightfoot, *The Chinese Painting Collection and Correspondence of Sir James Stewart Lockhart (1858–1937)* (Wales: Edwin Mellen Press, 1994), 19. See also David's discussion of the authenticity of Lockhart's art collection in "Making Visible Feminine Modernities," 34–36.

¹⁶⁸ David, "Making Visible Feminine Modernities," 36–37.

In addition to private dealers, art societies promoted their artists in significant ways. Art societies were not just the hub at which members could learn, discuss, and exchange artistic ideas; they also served as professional organizations that handled the sale of members' works. The publication of artist price lists in newspapers began in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and became a common practice in the early twentieth century. From around the 1850s on, Shanghai became a nucleus of commercial activity, with many artists from the Jiangnan (Yangtze delta) area relocating to Shanghai in search of commercial opportunities. Many of them tried to make a living by selling their work, especially in the format of the painted fan. In the late Qing and early Republican periods, the painted fan was a fashion accessory and status symbol for the literati, government officials, and businesspeople alike in metropolises such as Shanghai and Beijing, and fans painted by well-known artists were highly sought-after.¹⁶⁹ As a result, stationary and fan shops (*jiانشanzhuang* 箋扇莊) proliferated in Shanghai, and many assumed the role of agent for these artists, negotiating on the behalf of artists on pricing and other details. These fan shops also sold art supplies, as well as painting and calligraphy scrolls by living artists.¹⁷⁰

As art societies started to establish themselves during the early Republican period as professional organizations for artists, they were often listed as *daibanchu* 代辦處 (agents) in many artists' published price lists. Although there was no contract between artist and agent, there were unofficial agreements between artists, art societies, and fan shops that a commission would be granted.¹⁷¹ As the art market became more active, women artists also became more involved

¹⁶⁹ Roberta Wue, *Art Worlds: Artists, Images, and Audiences in Late Nineteenth-Century Shanghai* (Hong Kong University Press, 2014), 25–69.

¹⁷⁰ Artworks by deceased artists were sold by antique shops.

¹⁷¹ See Shen Kuiyi, "Patronage and the Beginning of a Modern Art World in Late Qing Shanghai," 13–27; Wang Zhongxiu 王中秀, "Lishi de shiyi yu shiyi de lishi – runli shi jiedu" 歷史的失憶與失憶的歷史-潤例試解讀 [The

in the commercial aspect of their practices. Price lists were commonly published in newspapers and art magazines, especially those that were backed by certain art societies. *Shenzhou jiguangji* 神州吉光集 (*Auspicious Light of the Divine Continent*)—associated with the Shanghai Calligraphy and Painting Society (Shanghai shuhuahui 上海書畫會)—was one such magazine that regularly published its members' price lists. Many well-known *guohua* artists were among the society's over three hundred members; they included Wu Xingfen, Wu Changshi, and Wang Yiting—a well-respected artist and patron of a number of art organizations. A comparison of the prices of Wu Xingfen's works with those of Wang Yiting and Wu Changshi reflect her high standing in Shanghai's competitive art market.

For landscapes, Wu Xingfen charged 24 *yuan* 元 (silver dollars) for a painting of 4 *chi* 尺¹⁷²; 50 *yuan* for 6 *chi*, and 80 *yuan* for 8 *chi*. For fans, she charged 5 *yuan* each. Prices for Wu's works were even slightly higher than those of Wang Yiting, who charged 30 *yuan* for a 4-*chi* painting, 42 *yuan* for 6 *chi*, 60 *yuan* for 8 *chi*, and 6 *yuan* for fans.¹⁷³

Prices for Wu Xingfen's work were comparable to those set by Wu Changshi, as evinced by their price lists before 1922.¹⁷⁴ However in 1922, Wu Changshi decided to bump up the price of his works, to about 50 percent higher than those of Wu Xingfen. In his price list published in the same 1922 issue of *Shenzhou jiguangji*, Wu Changshi was charging 30 *liang* (equivalent to

amnesia of history and the lost history – an interpretation of price lists of art], in Wang Zhongxiu 王中秀, Mao Ziliang 茅子良, and Chen Hui 陳輝, eds., *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhuaqia runli* 近現代金石書畫家潤例 [Price lists of seal-carvers, calligraphers and painters of modern period] (Shanghai: Shanghai huabao chubanshe, 2004), 1–12.

¹⁷² *Chi* is a traditional Chinese unit for measuring length. One *chi* is equivalent to about 30 centimetres.

¹⁷³ Wu's price list, *Shenzhou jigua ji* 2, 1922, quoted in *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhuaqia runli*, 113; Wang Yiting's price list, *Shenzhou jigua ji* 2, 1922, quoted in *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhuaqia runli*, 107. This is the earliest example of Wu's price list that I am able to find. Wu, however, had been selling her works from at least the early 1900s. The lack of a formal price list earlier might indicate that Wu's fame was enough for collectors to come to her without employing the marketing strategy of publishing price lists. It could also reflect that Wu was slow to embrace this method of advertising.

¹⁷⁴ Wu Changshi's older price list of 1914, quoted in *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhuaqia runli*, 90.

42 *yuan*) for a 4-*chi* painting, while Wu Xingfen's price held consistently at 24 *yuan* for a painting of the same size.¹⁷⁵ The Wu Changshi price list states that the artist was a frail seventy-seven-year-old man who was willing to scribble just to earn drinking money; therefore, he was asking for 50 percent more for his works than the prices set the year before. Perhaps aware of the artist's brashness, the editor attempted to tone down Wu's boorishness by adding a note at the end of the price list to explain that since Wu had just recovered from an illness during the autumn, he was not able to fill as many requests for his works as before, and that even though friends had offered him monetary gifts, Wu was not willing to accept them. As a result, he needed to charge higher prices for the limited number of works that he was able to produce.¹⁷⁶ This almost shameless demand for higher prices showed the eccentricity of Wu Changshi himself, but it also reflected society's tolerance of well-known male artists, who could put such an audacious statement in their publications. It is difficult to imagine that such a request would have been acceptable for a female artist. Nevertheless, the price of Wu Xingfen's work was on par with her better-known contemporaries. Her fame among foreign collectors, and her astute marketing strategy through her two albums and her presence in the press, had definitely helped heighten demand for her work.

Compared to Wu Xingfen, Jin Taotao was more reserved about publicly advertising her work. Rather than publish a price list for commercial purposes, Jin would advertise her work for charitable causes.¹⁷⁷ The precedent of *guohua* artists donating works for philanthropic causes

¹⁷⁵ Wu Changshi's pricing was listed in *liang* 兩 (a *tael* of silver ingot), a currency in use until 1933. The pricelist specifies the exchange rate between *liang* and *yuan* to be 1 *liang* to 1 *yuan* 4 *jiao* (around US\$1.40).

¹⁷⁶ *Shenzhou jiguang ji*, 2, 1922, quoted in *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhua jia runli*, 99.

¹⁷⁷ "Jin Taotao nüshi shouhua zhuzhen runli" 金陶陶女士售畫助賑潤例 [Price list for Ms. Jin Taotao's sale of paintings for aid relief], *Shibao* 時報 [*Eastern Times*], June 20, 1907, quoted in *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhua jia runli*, 82.

began in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The first organization that was established specifically for this purpose was the Yuyuan Painting and Calligraphy Society for Philanthropy (Yuyuan shuhua shanhui 豫園書畫善會). Founded in Shanghai in 1909, Yuyuan was a very active organization with over two hundred members. Among the founders were Qian Hui'an 錢慧安 (1833–1911), Wang Yiting, Huang Binhong 黃賓虹 (1865–1955), Wu Changshi, Yang Yi, and Jin Cheng. Since Jin Cheng was an active member, Jin Taotao would also have participated in the events of Yuyuan. Wu Xingfen had close links in the society as well, as evinced by her son Tang Xiong's membership in the group.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, Qian Hui'an—who had a great influence on Wu's works—would have made Wu's involvement in the society's activities more likely.¹⁷⁹ Yuyuan was formed on the model of old-style elegant gatherings of literati (*wenren yaji* 文人雅集) for artists to socialize and casually produce individual or collaborative works. However, in addition to these functions, it put in place a system of acquiring and selling the work of its members. It was mandatory for members to donate half the proceeds from the sale of their works to be deposited at a *qianzhuang* 錢莊 (or Chinese-style bank), and interest earned from the premium would be earmarked for charity donation.¹⁸⁰

Jin was a woman of ample means who did not have to rely on selling her work to make a living. It also seems that she was not focused on using her art to pursue fame. To describe Jin's business objective as simply a means for philanthropy would not be too far from the truth. Her philanthropic efforts, in addition to donating her works for charity art sales, also involved

¹⁷⁸ “Xiejuan” 謝券 [Complimentary tickets], *Shenbao*, March 25, 1918, 11.

¹⁷⁹ Some of the figure paintings by Wu Xingfen had striking similarities to those by Qian Hui'an. Furthermore, Wu's son Tang Xiong's *hao* 号 (sobriquet) “Jisheng” (吉生) was the same as Qian's. On Qian's influence on works and the close bond of the two artists, see Weidner, *Views from Jade Terrace*, 173.

¹⁸⁰ Shen Kuiyi, “Patronage and the Beginning of a Modern Art World in Late Qing Shanghai,” 22; also see Xu Zhihao, *Zhongguo meishu shetuan manlu*, 13–16.

founding charity organizations with women in diplomatic and expatriate circles.¹⁸¹ Since Jin was a renowned artist in her own right, her social status would have also garnered her work much attention at charity auctions and events.

Jin's price list of 1907 states that a 5-*chi* painting would cost 10 *yuan*, and 3 *yuan* per *chi* if the painting was larger than six *chi*, while fans cost 2 *yuan* each.¹⁸² Although this price list was published fifteen years before Wu Xingfen's price list,¹⁸³ Jin's asking price of 2 *yuan* per *chi* of her work was significantly less than that of Wu's at 6 *yuan* per *chi*. The differences could reflect Wu's prominence as an artist at the time, and also that Wu had more business experience. Even though Jin's prices were not as high as Wu's, her status in the art world was nonetheless reflected in the price of her work, which was on par with other established artists at the time, such as Ni Mogeng 倪墨耕 (1855–1919), a well-known figure in the Shanghai School. Ni charged the same price as Jin: 10 *yuan* for a 5-*chi* painting, fans for 2 *yuan* each, and 16 *yuan* for a 6-*chi* work.¹⁸⁴

Artists' price lists were often endorsed by notable cultural celebrities, and sometimes even by political figures. Jin Taotao's price list was endorsed by Tao Junxuan 陶濬宣 (1846–1912), a well-known calligrapher, late-Qing official, and a supporter of the revolution. Tao's endorsement of Jin's price list reflected her connections in both art and political realms, which would have helped her establish her status, even though she was not keen on using her art practice as a source of personal financial gain. Jin's 1907 price list was set with the aim to raise funds for the disaster relief effort in the Huai'an and Xuzhou (淮徐) areas of the Jiangsu

¹⁸¹ Madame K. T. Ouang, "Progress of China's Womanhood," 72.

¹⁸² Quoted in *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhuaqia runli*, 82.

¹⁸³ Jin did not seem to have published price lists regularly. Her 1907 list was the only one I am able to find.

¹⁸⁴ Quoted in *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhuaqia runli*, 86.

Province. The price list stated that Jin had been to Europe with her brother Jin Cheng to study, and that her global travel experience and knowledge was extensive. The list also specified that she would only paint whenever she was inspired and that therefore her clients should not expect that the request would be filled on a specific date. She would only keep this offer to sell her work for six months, after which she would refuse further requests. Details of this price list clearly indicated that Jin did not intend to market her art in any systematic way, but rather to sell it for charitable purposes.

While Wu and Jin's works fetched prices that were comparable to prominent male artists at the time, many women artists of the late 1910s were still hesitant about publicly publishing their price lists. Even though they had sporadically published their price lists for charitable causes during the last decades of the nineteenth century, few women artists had explicitly announced the sale of their works for the purpose of financial gain.¹⁸⁵ Compared to women artists of later decades (from the 1920s onwards), female scholar-painters were still stymied by the taboo that surrounded the selling of one's art; those who did were the ones who were better known both in the art world and in various social circles. Like Wu and Jin, they had the confidence to set prices that would reflect their stature, not to mention their parity with male artists. In later decades, however, women artists became more comfortable with publishing their price lists, as the art market also grew to be more diverse and inclusive.

ART PRACTICES

Female scholar-painters strived to redefine female artistic agency by negotiating possibilities in the new artistic movements and institutional structures. Stylistically, Wu Xingfen and Jin

¹⁸⁵ Roberta Wue, *Art Worlds*, 90, 96.

Taotao's art could be branded as "traditional"; they closely followed the project of preserving and reviving the national essence, while embracing this approach as the way in which to position themselves in the rapidly transforming world of modern art. In very subtle ways, Wu and Jin also absorbed new elements into their work, as the following analysis will show.

Wu Xingfen

Wu Xingfen produced most of her works in the styles of past masters. However, Wu's relatively conservative approach to her art was precisely her way of embracing modernity. After all, here was a woman artist who had made a name in a male-dominated tradition, and who was able to travel freely—a privilege that was characteristically associated with male literati.¹⁸⁶ However, she was also actively engaged in publishing, commerce, mixed-gender, and cross-cultural social events—opportunities that were unique to the experience of a modern artist. These possibilities allowed Wu to assume a persona that was rare among women of the past. In this sense, Wu built an art practice that was at once conventional and progressive.¹⁸⁷

As we see from the works published in her two bilingual albums, Wu mostly adopted the approaches of *fang* 仿 (emulation), and *lin* 臨 (copy). The former refers to the method of painting in the style of a certain artist or period, while the latter refers to the close copying of an existing work, usually that of a well-known master. Both methods were considered essential for learning and emulating the technique and spirit of master painters in the Chinese tradition.

During the late Ming, Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636) theorized the practice of *fang* as a way

¹⁸⁶ David, "Making Visible Feminine Modernities," 12.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

to create paintings by combining formal aspects of old masters' works and the spirit of nature.¹⁸⁸ This approach reached its climax in the art of the four Wangs in the high Qing—Wang Shimin 王時敏 (1592–1680), Wang Jian 王翬 (1598–1677), Wang Hui 王翬 (1632–1717), and Wang Yuanqi 王原祁 (1642–1715). During this period, artists routinely put colophons on their works stating that they were copies or imitations of certain old masters. Wu Xingfen's practice closely followed this tradition. This was a way for women artists to be recognized in the predominantly male art world. Woman artists who had followed this convention often gained recognition, as in the case of the Qing artist Chen Shu. Like Chen Shu, emulating the orthodox painting styles—especially in the genre of landscape painting—had positioned Wu Xingfen in the grand literati tradition.¹⁸⁹

A comparison of Wu and Chen Shu gives us insights into how Wu's art career both mirrored and redefined women's art practices of the past. Both Chen and Wu were acclaimed artists of their time. Even though the substance of their achievements were different, Wu and Chen's practices shared two distinct similarities. First, both artists' work was characterized by the orthodoxy of the *fang* tradition. Second, both artists' careers were buttressed by male agents. Chen Shu's landscape painting followed the practice of masters such as Wang Shimin and her contemporary Wang Hui.¹⁹⁰ Chen Shu also favoured the style of Yuan master Wang Meng 王蒙 (1308–1385) and had produced a number of pieces based on Wang's work. Marsha Weidner has pointed out that Chen Shu had also had personal interactions with some of the painters of the

¹⁸⁸ For a thorough discussion of Dong Qichang's theories and practice of *fang*, see James Cahill, *Distant Mountains: Chinese Painting Of The Late Ming Dynasty, 1570-1644* (New York: Weatherhill, 1982), 120-126.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Marsha Weidner, "The Conventional Success of Ch'en Shu," in Marsha Weidner, ed., *Flowering in the Shadows: Women in the History of Chinese and Japanese Painting* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 132.

high Qing orthodox circle, such as Wang Hui.¹⁹¹ This fact outlines Chen Shu's privileged position in the world of elite culture. While Chen Shu was well established among the literati circle, her fame in the court came posthumously through the laudatory accounts of her life by her son Qian Chenqun 錢陳群 (1686–1774), a high-ranking official in the Yongzheng and Qianlong courts.

Qian wrote a biography of his mother chronicling her life in terms of her virtues as a wife, daughter-in-law, and mother, but it made only a brief mention of her paintings.¹⁹² Through his incessant advocacy, Qian secured a posthumous title for his mother, and Chen Shu came to be honoured as a *taishuren* 太淑人 (lady of great virtue).¹⁹³ Qian also made numerous presentations of Chen's works to the Qianlong Emperor, which made it possible for many of Chen's works to become part of the imperial collection (many of which are now housed in the National Palace Museum) and hence increased Chen's prominence in art-historical records.

The similarities between Wu and Chen Shu's achievements, life paths, and artistic styles prompted Wu's interlocutors to compare the two women. For example, Marshal Wu Peifu 吳佩孚 (1874–1939) and the well-respected artist Huang Binhong did so in their forewords to Wu Xingfen's *Eighteen Landscapes*.¹⁹⁴ Wu Peifu also stated that Wu Xingfen's landscapes were of superb quality and they possessed a sophisticated sense of antiquity, and that they do not look like the work of a woman.¹⁹⁵ Wu Peifu went on to say that Wu's depiction of the famous regions of East Asia were as good as the works of Nanlou (“yi Nanlou zhimo miaoxie DongYa zhi mingqu” 以南樓之墨妙寫東亞之名區). Wu Peifu invoked the conventional method of gauging

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid., 124, 129–130; Weidner, *Views from Jade Terrace*, 25.

¹⁹³ Weidner, “The Conventional Success of Ch'en Shu,” 128.

¹⁹⁴ “Foreword by Marshal Wu Pei-fu,” *Eighteen Landscapes*, n.p.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

a woman artist's achievement according to male artists' standards, but he also attempted to put Wu on a different plateau than women artists in the past. He referred to the scenery depicted in Wu's paintings by the geopolitical term "East Asia," despite the fact that each of the eighteen scenes came from within China itself. By viewing the sites in an expanded geopolitical context, Wu Peifu was inferring that the famous landscapes of China were representative of the natural scenery of East Asia. Wu Peifu's grandiloquence could very well have been informed by the tensions that were prevalent in international relations in the early twentieth century.¹⁹⁶ By the same token, she was one of the best artists in the region, one who was capable of such a task as capturing the essence of China's scenery, and whose work would therefore be worth placing on the international cultural stage. In other words, Wu's supporters placed her on the same level as other contemporary artists—whether male or female—who were bringing Chinese art to the awareness of the wider world. In this sense, Wu's achievement could indeed surpass what women artists in the past were able to achieve.

Huang Binhong's praise of Wu Xingfen in his foreword came after the description of his friendship with H. C. Wolfe and the praise of Wolfe's extraordinary knowledge of both Chinese and Western culture. Without even commenting on Wu Xingfen's work, Huang simply compared her reputation to that of Nanlou Laoren 南樓老人—the *wanhao* 晚號 (style name in senior years) of Chen Shu. By comparing her to Chen Shu, Wu Peifu and Huang Binhong positioned Wu Xingfen in the lineage of great female artists in Chinese history. However, while celebration of Chen Shu's 陳書 (Nanlou 南樓, 1660–1736) traditional feminine virtues was

¹⁹⁶ On the tension between nations in the global competition for cultural superiority, see Cheng-hua Wang, "Rediscovering Song Painting for the Nation: Artistic Discursive Practices in Early Twentieth-Century China," *Artibus Asiae* 71, no. 2 (December 2011): 229.

common in the chronicles of her art and life, little was mentioned of the work itself.¹⁹⁷ For Wu, by contrast, both artistic accomplishment and feminine virtue were made the focus of her painting albums.

Thirty of the forty-one works included in *Chinese Paintings* were either *fang* or *lin* of old masters from the Tang to the Qing periods. Yang Yi, in his biography of Wu, states that she learned mostly from the style of Yun Shouping 惲壽平 (Nantian 南田, 1633–1690).¹⁹⁸ Yun was one of the most well-known artists of the Qing Orthodox School—together with the four Wangs and Wu Li 吳歷 (Mojing 墨井, 1632–1718), he was referred to as one of the six painters of Qing—and he was well known for his flowers and birds in the *xiasheng* 寫生 (painting or drawing from life) style. Wu Xingfen's long scroll, *One Hundred Flowers* (*Baihuatu* 百花圖, 1880–1882), was inspired by the works of Yun.¹⁹⁹ In *Chinese Paintings*, there are ten sets of the works reproduced that did not reference a specific style or artist. However, it does not mean that they were completely free of the influence of the old masters. Perhaps these ten sets of works, including a group of folded fans and a group of round fans, were painted with the eclectic manner in which Wu was known for—a synthesis of the multiple styles at which she was adept. Unlike in *Chinese Paintings*, however, each work in *Eighteen Landscapes* was meant to refer to an old master from the Tang to the Qing, though it must be said her work did not always resemble the styles that she claimed to emulate.

David argues that although Wu had access to a vast collection of old masters' work, her understanding of the historical styles could still be incomplete; her attempts at mimicry were

¹⁹⁷ Weidner “The Conventional Success of Ch'en Shu”; Weidner, *Views from Jade Terrace*, 25.

¹⁹⁸ Yang Yi, “Biography of Madame Wu Hsing-fên,” 2.

¹⁹⁹ Wu Xingfen, *Chinese Paintings*, plate no. 29.

inaccurate due to her lack of grounding in art history.²⁰⁰ It was common in the early Republican period to try to place the arts of past eras on par with Western art.²⁰¹ On the other hand, it could be Wu's expression of her unique style, often demonstrated by the slight off-centred, naïvely unbalanced, and awkward diagonal lines.²⁰² Artists were expected to adapt the styles and spirit of past works to their own interpretation, not merely copy. However, the Orthodox School had been more rigid about closely following the styles of past masters. The eclectic nature of Wu Xingfen's work reflected her desire for self-expression that still echoed the orthodox lineage of literati painting.

Wu's *Waterfalls of Mount Lu* (*Lushan feipu* 廬山飛瀑), from her *Eighteen Landscapes*, was one such painting [Figure 1.9]. The hanging scroll depicts a monumental scene of waterfalls in Mount Lu, in which water flows from the top of the mountain to the rapids at the bottom. The curves of the different levels of the tumbling waterfalls formed a zig-zag line—a composition commonly used in the tradition of monumental landscape painting since the Northern Song, exemplified, for example, by Guo Xi's 郭熙 (ca.1000–ca.1090) *Early Spring* (*Zaochun tu* 早春圖, 1072) [Figure 1.10]. The cascading streams, pathways, trees, and small architectural elements nestled between mountain ranges lead the viewer's eye back and forth to create a sense of depth and distance. Guo Xi had outlined his theories of distance in landscape painting in the treatise *The lofty Truth of Forests and Streams* (*Linquan gaozhi* 林泉高致), compiled and edited by his

²⁰⁰ David, "Making Visible Feminine Modernities," 24–25.

²⁰¹ Wang, "Rediscovering Song Painting for the Nation," 225–227.

²⁰² David, "Making Visible Feminine Modernities," 24–25.

son Guo Si 郭思.²⁰³ The technique of “the three distances” (三遠 *sanyuan*) create atmospheric perspectives by varying light and dark renderings achieved by ink wash and blending.²⁰⁴

Wu’s *Waterfalls of Mount Lu* was said to be an emulation of the style of Tang Yin 唐寅 (Bohu 伯虎, 1470–1524), a famous painter of the Ming dynasty. One of the most celebrated painters of his time, Tang Yin’s work was highly influenced by Li Tang 李唐 (1066–1150), one of the four masters of the Southern Song who had upheld the tradition of monumental landscape painting. A comparison of Wu’s *Waterfalls of Mount Lu* with a work by Tang will demonstrate the literati lineage that was upheld in the latter’s practice. Tang’s *Watching the Spring and Listening to the Wind* (*Kanquan tingfeng tu* 看泉聽風圖) [Figure 1.11] depicts a steep misty mountain surging upwards in the distance in the top half of the pictorial space. From a hanging boulder in the midsection of the painting emerges a small waterfall leading down to a series of brooks. On the lower left section of the painting is a group of boulders embellished with pine trees, from which pathways emerge. Two scholars sit near the waterfall to listen to the sound of the streams. Tang Yin, following the tradition of Song landscape painting, created a zig-zag line with the placements of the boulders and streams, while a sense of the mountain’s distance is formed through the light ink wash that depicts the mist between the peaks.

Wu’s *Waterfalls of Mount Lu* is similar in composition to *Watching the Spring*, with waterfalls flowing between rocks. However Wu’s painting emphasizes the monumentality of the landscape by depicting the waterfalls on three levels, from the relatively flat rapids near the top of the mountain, to the increasingly steeper torrents in the middle section, to the plummeting

²⁰³ “Mountains have three distances: Looking up to the mountain’s peak from its base is called ‘high distance.’ From in front of the mountain, spying past it to what is behind is called ‘deep distance.’ Gazing from a nearby mountain at those distant is called ‘level distance.’ ” Quoted in Stanley Murashige, “Rhythm, Order, Change, and Nature in Guo Xi’s Early Spring,” *Monumenta Serica* 43 (1995): 342.

²⁰⁴ For a thorough discussion of Guo Xi’s painting theories and *Early Spring*, see *Ibid.*, 337–364.

waterfalls. Unlike Tang's peaks, which are wreathed in mist to form a sense of distance, the rocks in Wu's painting are clearly defined with crisp contours of light and dark. Wu had apparently emulated Tang's method of describing the boulders with sharp edges and the mountains with texture strokes (*cun* 皴), however, Wu seemed to have abandoned the misty appearance that was a signature of Song landscape painting—a technique that was revered and followed by literati painters for generations. Compared to the tranquility of Tang's painting, Wu's treatment of the waterfalls—with clearly defined levels and the tumbling of water off the steep cliffs—produced a dramatic effect and highlighted the force of nature. I would also argue that the dramatic perspective could have been an influence of Western linear perspective, a technique that had slowly made its way into Wu's visual vocabulary due to the prevalence of Western influences in Chinese visual culture at the time.

Waterfalls of Mount Lu is only one example of Wu's ability to integrate characteristics of various lineages of literati painting. She had also produced paintings of various subject matter, from female beauties (*shinü* 仕女) to flowers and birds, each one emulating the style of a different master from the Tang to the Qing periods. Indeed, as her promoters stated, not only was Wu a female artist, which was a rarity in itself; she was also able to excel in a number of styles and subject matters as few others could.²⁰⁵

Wu positioned herself in the grand tradition of the (male) literati culture while marketing her achievement as a female artist in the context of the modern art world, where novelty was a constant draw. The innovative moves in Wu's career can also be seen in her publications. Wu Xingfen and her agents had used print media extensively for the promotion of her career. As early as 1879, Wu and her husband, Tang Kunhua, published a volume of their works entitled

²⁰⁵ "Introduction," *Chinese Paintings*, n.p.

Album of the Art Collection of Autumn Butterfly Studio (Hudie qiuzhai cangce 蝴蝶秋齋藏冊)

[Figure 1.12].²⁰⁶ Moreover, her albums *Chinese Paintings* and *Eighteen Landscapes* fully illuminated Wu's versatility of styles and diversity of subject matter. Given the fact that she was already well into her senior years when these albums were published, they also show Wu's unusual ability to adapt to modern ways of promoting an art career. Her engagement with the foreign concessions further highlighted Wu's openness to new experience. Even though Wu did not include any of her own writing in the albums, her experience as a celebrated artist and philanthropist was exemplified by the biography, forewords, and letters of appreciation written by well-known figures in the cultural and political realms.

Jin Taotao

Jin Taotao's art also followed the project of reviving and preserving ancient artistic styles. Not only did she and her brother Jin Cheng practise their stylistic preference of the Song-Yuan era, they also wrote treatises to impart the historical foundations and methodologies of their artistic stance. But while Jin Taotao embraced the Chinese pictorial art tradition and followed the footsteps of the practice of painting manual writing, her modern education and life experience created a new kind of talented woman—one whose artistic production, scholarship, and social engagements crossed into various cultural and social milieus. Although Jin did not actively promote her art practice or emphasize her gender as a marketing strategy, like Wu Xingfen, her oeuvre was that of a scholar-painter of the past who would write prose and poetry, study art theory, and, at times, publish scholarly works.

²⁰⁶ Yang Yi, "Biography of Madame Wu Hsing-fên," 2.

In this sense, Jin Taotao positioned her art in the grand traditions of the past. However, unlike Wu, who focused on the method of emulating past masters, especially those of the early and high Qing periods, Jin attempted to revive the notion of *zhen* 真 (naturalism or formal likeness) from the Song-Yuan era. Evidently, Jin was greatly influenced by the methods and theories of her brother and mentor, Jin Cheng. Both attempted to revive the kind of “realism” that they believed were prevalent in the Song dynasty and were carried on in the Yuan—a trend embraced by the Beijing School, to which Jin Cheng was an important contributor. However, Jin’s practice and methods had diverged from those of her brother, especially when it came to their views on the role of Western visual elements in the development of Chinese art.

Although Jin Cheng spent three years in England, where he absorbed Western art through his frequent visits to art galleries and museums, this experience and knowledge did not seem to have any effect on his artistic direction once he returned to China in 1905. Jin did not yield to the pressure of absorbing Western visual language; indeed, he became even more determined in his mission to preserve and revive the art of old masters (*guren* 古人).²⁰⁷ He believed firmly that the expression of *zhen*, as embodied in the painting of the Song dynasty, would rejuvenate the declining art scene in China. Jin Cheng’s passion for reviving ancient Chinese art techniques and methods epitomized the strong sense of “Sino-centrism” that characterized the art of the Beijing School from the 1900s to the 1920s.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Jin Cheng, *Huaxue jiangyi* 畫學講義 [Teaching notes on painting], 1921, reprinted in Yu Anlan 于安瀾, ed., *Hualun congkan* 畫論叢刊 [Series on painting theories] (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 698–747.

²⁰⁸ During the late Qing and early Republican periods, there were three dominant schools of painting in China: the Beijing School, the Shanghai School (Haipai 海派) and the Lingnan School (Lingnan pai 嶺南派). Artists of the Beijing School were not limited to those who resided in Beijing. However, the name denotes those who had a close relationship to art societies like the Zhongguo huaxue yanjiu hui, Xuannan huahui 宣南畫會, and Hu She. These artists had at one point lived in Beijing and were influenced by the artistic direction of these societies that were founded in Beijing. These societies upheld the objective of preserving the national essence in art. See Zhu

With strong calls for the reform of Chinese painting, artists of the Beijing School felt the need to join forces in order to preserve Chinese artistic traditions. In response to the criticism by artists such as Jin Cheng concerning the lack of realism in Chinese art, these traditionalists revisited notions such as *zhen* and *xiasheng*, both of which were crucial elements in academic-style painting, exemplified by Song painting. Their thinking reflected the need to address the issue of verisimilitude in Chinese traditional art.

The Beijing School's appreciation of the art of ancient masters was partly enabled by the accessibility of the large collection of painting, calligraphy, and other artifacts gathered after the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911. During this period, artistic treasures that had previously been in the possession of the imperial family were smuggled out of the palace compound, and many fell into the hands of traders on the black market. Jin suggested to the minister of internal affairs (*neiwubu* 內務部), Zhu Qiqian 朱啟鈞 (1872–1964), that a venue be set up for the proper storage and display of these works, which led to the founding of the Galleries of Antiquities (*Guwu chenliesuo* 古物陳列所) in 1914.²⁰⁹ Given the task of overseeing the planning and building of the galleries, Jin made arrangements for artworks in the imperial collection at the former palaces in Mukden (Shenyang) and Jehol to be brought to Beijing.²¹⁰ The galleries served the purpose of preservation and education. With works in the imperial collection opened to the

Qingsheng 朱青生, "Jingpai huihua siti" 京派绘画四题 [Four topics about the painting of Beijing School], *Meishu* 美术 (August, 2005): 98–103.

²⁰⁹ The institution was later merged into the Gugong bowuyuan 故宫博物院 (Palace Museum, established in 1925) in 1947. For Jin Cheng's role in the establishment of the Guwu chenliesuo, see Qiu Minfang, *Linglue gufa sheng xinqi*, 32–35.

²¹⁰ During his study in England, and his subsequent research trip to eighteen European countries for the Department of Justice in 1910, Jin Cheng visited numerous museums and accumulated a considerable amount of information about the organization and operation of these institutions. This knowledge and his enthusiasm for the preservation of national treasure helped Jin Cheng envision the Galleries of Antiquities. He recorded his travel experience in Europe in *Shibaguo youli riji / Oulu shicao* 十八國遊歷日記/ 藕廬詩草 [Travel diary to eighteen countries/ Poetry of Oulu] (Reprint: Wenhai chubanshe, 1975).

public for the first time, artists now had the opportunity to scrutinize and learn from the large collection of ancient artworks. This had an undeniable influence on Jin Cheng's work, since not only did he administer the operation of the institution, but he also took the opportunity to copy old masters' paintings from the collection on a daily basis.²¹¹

The availability of works from the imperial collection also helped Jin Taotao learn about methods of Song-Yuan masters. In 1914, the year the Galleries of Antiquities was established, Jin Taotao and her young family were in Beijing while Wang Jizeng served as the General Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Waijiaobu zhengwusi sizhang 外交部政務司司長). This gave Jin Taotao the opportunity to study the works in the former imperial collection. One of the most important surviving examples of fish painting from the Song era, *A Shoal of Fish Frolicking Amid Nymphoides* (*Qunyu xixing tujian* 群魚戲荇圖卷), by the painter Liu Cai 劉棗 (fl. 1070s–1080s) was then being kept in the Galleries of Antiquities [Figure 1.13].²¹² *A Shoal of Fish* was documented in the “Discussion on dragon and fish” (Longyu xulun 龍魚敘論) section of *Catalogue of Paintings in the Xuanhe Collection* (*Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜, preface dated 1120)—the most important record of paintings in the imperial collection compiled at the order of Song Huizong 宋徽宗. In *Xuanhe huapu*, the author writes, “painters often painted fish that appeared as though they were on the kitchen table and did not look like they were swimming amid wind and waves. [I am] afraid that [these works] would be harshly criticized” (*erhuazhe duozuo paozhong jishangwu, fu suoyiwei chengfeng polang zhishi, ci weimian guafu shiyiye* 而

²¹¹ “Jin Gongbei xiansheng shilue,” *Hu She banyuekan*, November 15, 1927, 1; Jin Cheng made about three hundred copies of old masters' paintings during his time at the Galleries of Antiquities. See Yue Xuemei 云雪梅, “Jin Cheng yu Beijing huatan” 金城与北京画坛 [Jin Cheng and the Beijing art scene], *Meishu* (July 2005): 70–73.

²¹² *Neiwubu guwu chenliesuo shuhua mulu* 內務部古物陳列所書畫目錄 [Catalogue of calligraphy and painting in Galleries of Antiquities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs] (Beijing: Jinghua yinshuju, 1925), 5, bk. 4: 6. The painting is now in the collection of the National Palace Museum in Taipei.

畫者多作庖中几上物，乏所以爲乘風破浪之勢，此未免絀乎世議也。²¹³ Liu's perfection of the techniques of painting fish in their natural habitat was one of the great achievements of Song paintings, embodying the notion *zhen*.

Jin Taotao's admiration for Liu Cai's works was evident in one of her colophons recorded in *Haoliang*, in which she reflected on the difficulty of capturing the spirit of Liu's work when she tried to paint in the style of Liu. The colophon states "[I] was not able to achieve the subtle, hazy appearance of the fins and barbels of the fish in water, and that Liu Cai really lived up to his reputation" (*menglong qilie huanancheng, Liu Cai yuanfei langdeming* 朦朧鬚鬣畫難成，劉棗原非浪得名).²¹⁴ Jin's appreciation of Liu's work was further demonstrated by her quoting this paragraph from *Xuanhe huapu* in chapter two of *Haoliang*:

[Liu Cai] fully grasps the [impression of fish] drifting between waves, and enjoying themselves in rivers and lakes. Most painters would depict the fins, barbels, scales and spines of fish with equally fine details, how could they make the fish look like it was swimming naturally in water? The fish definitely would not look like it was in the water when depicted as such. Cai's ways of painting fish, however, were able to grasp [that spirit of liveliness]. Others painters' fish all appeared to be existing outside of water, [these paintings] were not to be treasured. [Liu Cai] specializes [in painting fish in their natural habitat], and he was highly praised by many.

善畫魚，深得戲廣浮沈，相忘於江湖之意。蓋畫魚者鬚鬣鱗刺分明，則非水中魚矣，安得有涵泳自然之態？若在水中，則無由顯露。棗之作魚，有得於此。他人作魚，皆出水之鱗，蓋不足貴也。由是專門，頗爲士人所推譽。

²¹³ "Discussion on dragon and fish" (Longyu xulun 龍魚敘論), *Catalogue of paintings in the Xuanhe collection*, vol. 9 (*Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜, preface dated 1120).

²¹⁴ Jin Taotao, *Haoliang*, 4: 5.

In this way Jin recognizes the significance of Liu's place in *Xuanhe huapu*, and hence in Chinese art history. Jin also quoted another biographical entry about Liu Cai from *Criticism of Past and Present Painting* (*Gujin huajian* 古今畫鑑, ca. 1328–1348; hereafter cited as *Huajian*), an important treatise published under the Yuan dynasty.²¹⁵ Similar to the evaluation of Liu in *Xuanhe huapu*, the author of *Huajian*, Tang Hou 湯垕 (fl. 1320–1348), also considered Liu Cai the first artist who was able to paint fish in their natural habitat—underwater. Tang Hou mentions the handscroll attributed to Lui Cai, *Fish Swimming Amid Falling Flowers* (*Luohua youyu tu* 落花游魚圖, ca. 1075), which is now housed at the St. Louis Art Museum. Given the acclaim historically accorded Liu's works, it would be natural for Jin to uphold them as the standard of the genre, and learning from one of Liu's surviving works—which were rare in number—would have given Jin a good understanding of the essence of Song painting, especially when it came to the concept of *zhen*.

Artists who chose fish as their subject matter often referenced the story of fish in the “Qiushui” 秋水 (Autumn flood) chapter of *Zhuangzi* 莊子. Jin Taotao even alluded to this story in the title of her painting treatise *Haoliang*. As Richard Barnhart makes clear, there was no visual representation of the *Zhuangzi* story before Liu Cai.²¹⁶ Fish as a subject matter in painting only started in the late Northern Song, around the time *Xuanhe huapu* was published.²¹⁷ In *Haoliang*, Jin expresses her appreciation for the quiet atmosphere that characterized Song

²¹⁵ Tang Hou 湯垕 (fl. 1320–1330), *Gujin huajian* 古今畫鑑 [Criticism of past and present painting, prefaced 1328]; Jin Taotao, *Haoliang*, 2: 6–7.

²¹⁶ Richard M. Barnhart, ed., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting: the Culture & Civilization of China* (New Haven: Yale University Press; Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1997), 118.

²¹⁷ In his discussion of Liu's *Fish Swimming amid Falling Flowers*, Barnhart attributes the liveliness of the painting to the painter's ability to capture the various movements of the fish. Barnhart describes the painting as a “quiet symphony of rhythm and movement.” See *Ibid.*

paintings.²¹⁸ For while Liu's painting is full of lively energy, it also conveys a sense of tranquility through the placement and interaction of the fish as they drift and dart.²¹⁹

Explaining this spirit of liveliness in Liu Cai's paintings, Jin elaborated on the methods of the old masters in volume three "Painting methods" (*Zuofa* 作法) of *Haoliang*. Among the many compositional strategies Jin describes, the first rule of composing a painting of fish is to "determine the water level" (*xianding shuiwei* 先定水位).²²⁰ Jin argues that since water is hard to depict, it needs to be defined by objects in and around it. Hence, "depicting fish is to depict water, [and] as a result, water is there even without painting it" (*huayu jishi huashui, yushi buhuashui er shuiyizai* 畫魚即是畫水，於是不畫水而水已在).²²¹ In her hanging scroll *Goldfish and Lotus* (*Hehua jinyu zhou* 荷花金魚軸, 1920) [Figure 1.14], seven gold fish in varying sizes are shown swimming amidst the seaweeds below a group of large lotus leaves and flowers. Even though the water level is not clearly depicted in the painting, it is implied by the positions of the fish, especially the two fish on the right that form a horizontal line parallel to the water. Moreover, the floating nymphoides also suggest the surface of the water. As explained in *Haoliang*, and demonstrated on the scroll, determining the water level serves to help the painter keep the fish in water.

Jin argues that even though Song paintings were colourful and lively, they all possess a sense of graceful serenity. One way to achieve this balance, according to Jin, is to leave enough space on the painting; in Jin's words, "it is preferable to have the painting appear emptier than packed" (*dafanhua yikong buyiman* 大凡畫宜空不宜滿).²²² The fish and water only occupies

²¹⁸ Jin Taotao, *Haoliang*, 3: 2.

²¹⁹ Richard M. Barnhart, *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, 118.

²²⁰ Jin Taotao, *Haoliang*, 3: 4.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

²²² *Ibid.*, 4.

about the bottom third of the pictorial space in *Goldfish and Lotus*, which leaves room for the lively movement of the fish, while the lotus communicates a sense of stillness.

To achieve such a balance between liveliness and serenity, Jin further argues, one must focus on one's brush methods (*bifa* 筆法). Each brushstroke on a painting has to be purposeful and steady in order to depict the appearance of different parts of the fish in relation to its movements.²²³ While the lotus leaves in *Goldfish and Lotus* were painted with broad strokes and a wet brush, the fish were painted in great detail, with each stroke clearly drawn to describe the postures, anatomical details, and movements of the fish.

By way of explaining the importance of precise brushstrokes in rendering the posture and movement of fish, Jin criticizes the techniques of certain Japanese artists. For example, she disapproves of Japanese painters' undue focus on creating the atmospheric effect of water by excessively laying down colour wash on the paper or silk. She also disapproves of the method of painting details of the fish using a wet brush but without defining the contour; too often the fins and scales become murky, and in Jin's opinion, the fish appear to lack poise.²²⁴

Jin Taotao based her methods and theories on the classic principles of Chinese art—the “the six canons of painting” (*liufa* 六法) by Xie He. The six canons has been a central theory of Chinese art, and reinterpretations by painters and theorists throughout the centuries have reinforced its importance in the history of Chinese painting.²²⁵ Similarly, Jin Taotao and Jin Cheng both reinterpreted these principles in their writings to substantiate their belief in the

²²³ Ibid., 2.

²²⁴ Ibid., 3.

²²⁵ For a detailed discussion of how the “Six canons” were reinterpreted in art historical and theoretical writings, see Susan Bush and Hsiao-yen Shih, comp. and eds., *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 10–17.

method of *xiesheng*.²²⁶ In volume three of *Haoliang*, Jin Taotao cited two important rules of “the six canons”: “fidelity to the natural form of objects” (*yingwu xiangxing* 應物象形), and “conforming to the kind of subject matter when applying colours” (*suilei fucai* 隨類賦彩).²²⁷ Jin explains in detail the importance of following these rules to achieve the essence of *zhen* in painting. She also advises students to carefully observe and learn from nature (*shifa ziran* 師法自然).²²⁸ Jin’s meticulous description of how to observe fish, which even includes detailed instructions on how to build a glass aquarium, reflected her devotion to achieve verisimilitude in painting while capturing the natural movement and posture (*zhitai* 姿態) of her subject matter, which was the essence of *zhen* expressed through the method of *xiesheng*.

Jin Cheng was also a zealous advocate of *xiesheng* as the essential method of learning Chinese painting. Jin Cheng’s artistic beliefs are fully elaborated in his “Teaching notes on painting” (*Huaxue jiangyi* 畫學講義, 1921), to which Jin Taotao referred in her discussion of techniques in *Haoliang*.²²⁹ Jin Cheng asserts that all the basic techniques of Chinese painting originated from meticulous brushwork (*gongbi* 工筆), which he conflates with the method of *xiesheng*.²³⁰ He urged his students to learn how to paint in *gongbi* style to gain a solid foundation in painting before attempting to paint in *xieyi* 寫意 (or expressive) style.²³¹

Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858–1927) was one of the first to promulgate Song painting as the pinnacle of the development of Chinese, and even international, art.²³² This notion was

²²⁶ Jin Taotao, *Haoliang*, 3: 6–8.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1, 19.

²²⁹ Jin Cheng, *Huaxue jiangyi*, 698–747; Jin Taotao, *Haoliang*, 3: 3.

²³⁰ Jin Cheng, *Huaxue jiangyi*, 701.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 705.

²³² Kang Youwei 康有為, “Wanmu Caotang Canghua Mu” 萬木草堂藏畫目 [Bibliography of the Painting Collection in Ten Thousand Tree Studio], in *Eeshi Shiji Zhongguo Meishu Wenxuan* 二十世纪中国美术文选

further argued by artists and scholars who insisted that the formal likeness expressed in Song painting was the solution to the listless development of Chinese-style art since the Qing. The original notion of *xiesheng* in Song painting, however, denotes the method of observing objects in real life to create “an atmosphere of naturalistic vividness.” The early twentieth-century revival of Song painting, however, adapted the notion of *xiesheng* to denote the techniques of creating verisimilitude along the lines of Western realism.²³³

In the climate of global competition for cultural superiority in the early twentieth century, the primacy of Song painting became a political rather than a narrowly aesthetic concern.²³⁴ Kang and other revivalists believed that Song painting—with its emphasis on formal likeness and traditional style—represented the high point of Chinese civilization.²³⁵ *Xiesheng* was also viewed in contrast to *xieyi*, the quintessential style of literati painting since the Ming dynasty. The dichotomy between *xiesheng* and *xieyi*, as Cheng-hua Wang argues, was institutionalized early in the twentieth century, and was informed by nationalism and global competition.²³⁶

Indeed, Jin Taotao’s artistic beliefs were also partly driven by the cultural nationalism of the early twentieth century. However, she was able to free herself from the mission to preserve the national essence and engage in the scholarship of ancient art with an open and inquisitive approach, which was expressed in *Haoliang* and demonstrated in some of her surviving works. Jin Taotao’s openness to new knowledge in her work and writing led her to a different path than her brother.

[Selected works on twentieth-century Chinese art], Lang Shaojun 郎绍君 and Shui Zhongtian 水中天, eds., (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1999), 1: 21–25; Wang, “Rediscovering Song Painting for the Nation,” 226.

²³³ Ibid., 236–237.

²³⁴ Ibid., 229.

²³⁵ Ibid., 229–231.

²³⁶ Ibid., 236.

Although Jin Cheng appreciated the profundity of Western culture, he did not think that its precepts could apply to Chinese art. In order to prove this to his readers, Jin Cheng even went as far as to say that the novelty of Western art had passed after an initial craze for it in the early Republican period, and that artists were now starting to abandon Western art in favour of Chinese painting.²³⁷ While this was not an accurate description of the cultural scenes of Shanghai or Beijing at the time, it did reflect Jin Cheng's conservatism and Sino-centrism. While focusing on the teachings of the old masters, as well as her own in-depth knowledge and experience of the subject, Jin's discourse was not antithetical to Western art, nor did it explicitly express the need to compete with other civilizations. Moreover, Jin Taotao—unlike her brother—did not maintain a demarcation between *gu* 古 (ancient) and *jin* 今 (contemporary) art forms—a theme that runs through Jin Cheng's "Teaching notes on painting."

In his treatise, Jin Cheng praises the works of *guren* and criticizes those of *jinren* 今人 (artists of the present) without specifying the temporal division between the two. Works by *guren*, it seems, included those by painters from as early as the sixth century to as recent as the late Qing. Therefore, in his temporal conception, Jin Cheng believed that all excellent works of art had to be attributed to a temporal period that he called "ancient" (*gu*). But this glorious period of Chinese art became unattainable when artists of the present started to abandon its greatness and move towards "the new." Such general temporal demarcations were reflective of many artists' lack of understanding of Chinese art history, and their acceptance of early twentieth-century intellectuals' attempt to promulgate ancient Song painting as the pinnacle of Chinese art.²³⁸ Likewise, Jin Cheng emphasized the importance of conveying "the taste of the ancient" in

²³⁷ Jin Cheng, *Huaxue jiangyi*, 742.

²³⁸ See Wang, "Rediscovering Song Painting for the Nation," 226.

his works—an insistence that perhaps led to what many of his contemporaries disapproved of as the sense of rigidity in his works. For example, Chen Shizeng 陳師曾 (1876–1923) commented on the stiffness of Jin Cheng’s paintings at a gathering hosted by artist and writer Ling Shuhua 凌叔華 (1900–1990). Chen is said to have claimed that Jin’s work was a bit too *tianshou* 甜熟 (sweet and sleek), and though Chen thought that this kind of painting was satisfactory, they could not be considered great works. Chen also believed that Jin’s work was overrated by his many students, and that his connection to the Beiyang government also contributed to his high acclaim in the art world.²³⁹

It is possible that Chen was thinking of a painting like *Peonies* (*Mudan* 牡丹, 1922) [Figure 1.15], in which Jin depicted three peonies of different colours. The flowers occupied almost all of the pictorial space, and a poem about peonies took up the whole of the top third of the painting. The large red peony was painted in vibrant red and yellow, and the whole painting was packed with vivid colours. In contrast to Jin Taotao’s quest for a sense of the tranquility (*jing* 靜) of Song painting, Jin Cheng’s work was more flamboyant, and, at least in Chen Shizeng’s mind, too “sweet and sleek.”

Despite being influenced by Jin Cheng’s traditionalism, Jin Taotao did not completely repudiate Western art techniques. At various places in *Haoliang*, she conveys her awareness, and even approval, of Western elements in art. For example, Jin mentions that she has experimented with the technique of watercolour to depict water, but that the effect was not as effective as the

²³⁹ This anecdote was recounted by Ling Shuhua, who hosted an artists’ gathering in the early 1920s. Ling Shuhua 凌叔華, “Huiyi yige huahui ji jige lao huajia” 回憶一個畫會及幾個老畫家 [Remembering an artists’ gathering and a few senior artists], *Shiyuchao wenyi* 時與潮文藝 1, no. 3 (1942): 23–27. The gathering was also noted by Mary Augusta Mullikin (Mu Mali 穆瑪利, as she was known in China; 1874–1964), an American painter who spent almost thirty years in China from the 1920s to the end of World War Two. See Mary Augusta Mullikin, “An Artists’ Party in China,” *The Studio* 110, no. 512 (November 1935).

Chinese technique.²⁴⁰ She also employs the notions of scale (*bili* 比例) and perspective (*toushi* 透視)—Western art terms that were newly introduced to China—to discuss composition.²⁴¹

One Hundred Images of Goldfish (*Jinyu baiying* 金魚百影) is a long scroll that depicts a hundred goldfish of different sizes, colours, and movements. In the details of the scroll [Figure 1.16], we can see that Jin employed the method of varying the fish's size to convey a sense of depth and distance—smaller fish signify those that appear to be farther away from the viewer while larger ones indicate that they are nearer in distance. Jin states that this method had already been established by Song-Yuan masters, even though they had yet to understand the (modern) rules of scale and perspective.²⁴² Her techniques and theories of painting fish are articulated in *Haoliang*.

The Joy of Fish

In 1921, at the request of her brother Jin Cheng and her female students at the Chinese Painting Research Society—who had developed an affinity for painting fish—Jin Taotao penned *Haoliang*, finishing it within two months.²⁴³ The treatise shows her extensive knowledge of Chinese art history, theory, and literary talent. *Haoliang* was an unusual accomplishment for a female artist as the writing of painting treatises had been the exclusive domain of male artists and scholars in the past. Indeed, *Haoliang* is the only known painting treatise by a female author since the short *Treatise of Ink Bamboo* (*Mozhu pu* 墨竹譜) was attributed to the Yuan artist

²⁴⁰ Jin Taotao, *Haoliang*, 3: 15.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ Jin Taotao, preface to *Haoliang*.

Guan Daosheng 管道昇 (1262–1319). *Haoliang* demonstrated yet another new possibility for learned women in the early twentieth century.

Haoliang illustrates Jin’s expertise in painting fish—a subject matter on which no other surviving treatise had focused. She presented readers with a scholarly analysis of the historical, cultural, and artistic discourse of painting fish. Jin claimed that the treatise was based on the format of *Records of Rouge* (*Yanzhilu* 胭脂錄, Qing dynasty), a manual on painting peonies and the *Collection of Plum Blossoms of the Nostalgic Farm Hut* (*Huaigu tianshe meitong* 懷古田舍梅統, ca. 1855).²⁴⁴

Haoliang was organized into four volumes: 1. “Anthology of treatises” (*Pulu* 譜錄); 2. “Biographies” (*Shizhuan* 史傳); 3. “Painting Methods” (*Zuofa* 作法); and 4. “Colophons for Paintings” (*Tiyong* 題詠). In each volume, Jin shared her experience in painting fish, and she also meticulously analyzed the art and writing of previous masters who specialized in the same subject.

In the first volume, “Anthology of treatises,” Jin outlines the importance of understanding the proper inner workings and descriptions of things, and she includes excerpts of reference texts on fish. Jin argues that even though fish belonged to the classification of dragon and water, a somewhat insignificant subject in traditional Chinese painting, one still needs to have a correct understanding of the animal in order to produce good works.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ *Yanzhilu* was compiled by Hong Pu 洪璞 (Qing, specific date unknown). *Huaigu tianshe meitong* was compiled by Xu Rong 徐榮, 12 volumes, 1855.

²⁴⁵ Jin was following the classification in *Xuanhe huapu*, in which fish were categorized with dragon in the section “Discussion on dragon and fish.” She quoted excerpts from seven books: Yue Ke 岳珂 (1183–ca. 1142), *Tingshi* 程史 [*History on the nightstand*]; Tu Long 屠隆, *Kaopan yushi* 考槃餘事 [Desultory remarks on furnishing the abode of the retired scholar, 1606]; Zhang Qiande 張謙德 (1577–1643), *Zhusha yupu* 硃砂魚譜 [*Book of vermilion fish*, 1596]; *Qiantang xianzhi* 錢塘縣志 [Gazettes of Qiantang County]; *Renhe xianzhi* 仁和縣志 [Gazettes of Renhe County]; *Jifu tongzhi* 畿輔通志 [General guide to the capital]; Zheng Ji 鄭績 (1813–?) *Menghuanju huaxue jianmian* 夢幻居畫學簡明 [The concise study of painting at the Dreamy and Illusory Dwelling, 1866].

In addition to quoting from seven books on the subject, Jin also jotted down her observations on fish in a short essay titled “Chunming evaluation of fish” (*Chunming pinyulu* 春明品魚錄) in which she accounted in detail for the various types and colours of fish that she had seen and raised since she was a child. The detailed information and careful treatment of the subject in the first volume demonstrate Jin’s full immersion in what would be akin to the method of *gezhi* 格致 (the study of the nature of things) in the Neo-Confucian tradition. The first chapter set the approach of the treatise, which attempted to achieve *zhen* in the subject through learning from the past and observation from one’s own experience. This theme was close to the Chinese Painting Research Society’s motto “carefully study and learn from ancient methods and absorb new knowledge” (*jingyan gufa bocai xinzhi* 精研古法, 博採新知).

In volume two of *Haoliang*, Jin lists painters who were known to have painted fish, and she includes biographical excerpts from various painting treatises on the subject that she was able to gather. Although Jin had stated that *Haoliang* was based on the formats of *Records of Rouge* and *Collection of Plum Blossoms of the Nostalgic Farm Hut*, she did not follow their classification of artists, which in the case of *Records of Rouge*, was “emperors and kings” (*diwang* 帝王), “literati” (*shifu* 士夫), “ordinary people” (*zaren* 雜人), “gentry women” (*guige* 閨閣), “foreigners” (*fangwai* 方外), and “barbarians” (*siyi* 四夷). Without placing the artists in a hierarchy, Jin simply followed the chronological order of dynasties and the order in which the biographies appear in the volumes from which she quoted. This indiscriminate way of classifying artists demonstrates Jin’s impartial approach to the production of knowledge.

The comprehensiveness of the painting methods and historical records in *Haoliang* also underline Jin’s erudition as an artist and scholar. While continuing the legacy of past female scholar-painters, who painted and composed poetry and colophons for their works, Jin further

asserted her position as a specialist in her chosen subject matter through the writing of a treatise. Similar to the Republican women who took on different (and often new) occupations, Jin took on a task that was traditionally reserved for men. In this sense, she was imbuing tradition with a sense of modernity.

LEGACY

In this chapter, I have discussed two exemplary female scholar-painters whose life experience and careers embodied the new feminine possibilities of the early Republican period. While Wu and Jin crossed paths in a number of social circles, art societies, local and international art events, and philanthropic functions, their age difference and family backgrounds provided them with different educational opportunities and levels of mobility. These differences underscore the wide range of art practices and public engagements available during this time of great change in women's rights and everyday experience. They also demonstrate the increasingly broad scope of artistic production in the vibrant Shanghai and Beijing art worlds of the late Qing and early Republican periods.

While Wu Xingfen followed the conventional path of the Qing Orthodox School as a gateway to success—not unlike the Qing *guixiu* Chen Shu—her art career crossed various social and cultural divides thanks to her perseverance and the promotion of her son and male agents. As her biographer Yang Yi has claimed, Wu was the best among her female contemporaries, and she was only matched by a few other women artists in all of Chinese history. Indeed, Yang positioned Wu in the lineage of great Chinese women artists, placing her in the ranks of those who had been recorded in the only collection of female artists' biographies, the *Jade Terrace*

History of Painting (Yutai huashi 玉台畫史)—an assessment that was indeed unmatched by other female artists of her time.²⁴⁶

Though Jin Taotao drew on artistic theories of old masters, she trod many new paths by expanding the visual language and expressing her artistic belief by synthesizing elements of various traditions in a systematic study of her chosen subject matter. Even though Jin, unlike Wu, did not overtly emphasize her gender as a focal point of her art career, she paid homage to the long tradition of female artists by mentioning *Yutai huashi* in her colophon for her long scroll *One Hundred Images of Goldfish* [Figure 1.17]. And although she humbly admitted that she was not good enough to be included in the lineage of women painters, she recognized the gender sensibility of the works of her predecessors.

Wu Xingfen never travelled abroad, and yet her reputation among the foreign concessions circles and in international art events was comparable to, if not greater than, many male artists at the time, and she was one of the most well-known female artists in China. Jin, while having chances to live and travel abroad, did not gain the same notoriety as Wu in either a critical or commercial sense. As Hu Ying suggests, women travellers since the late Qing were “distinguished not so much by their *mobility* as by their increasing *visibility* on the national and international scene.”²⁴⁷ Their diverse and divergent experience testifies to how public visibility and global connections were shaped by shifts in cultural thinking and institutional development. I would also argue that, in the case of Wu and Jin, their personalities also contributed greatly to ways in which they conducted their careers.

²⁴⁶ Yang Yi “Tang mu Wu taifuren huashi,” 3. *Yutai huashi* 玉臺畫史 [Jade terrace history of painting] was compiled by Tang Shuyu 湯漱玉, first published ca. 1820s, (Reprint, Beijing: Zhouyi shuzhai, 2006).

²⁴⁷ Hu Ying, “‘Would That I Were Marco Polo,’ ” 120.

During the early period of major reform in the Chinese art world, from 1900 to early 1920s, the number of women artists was still relatively small.²⁴⁸ However, of the few who were actively involved, some were able to attain a certain level of critical and commercial success. Wu and Jin, along with their cohorts such as Ren Xia 任霞 (1876–1920), and He Xiangning, laid the foundation on which the next generation of women artists would further assert themselves and their work.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ On the Shanghai art world of the late Qing period, see Roberta Wue, *Art Worlds*.

²⁴⁹ Ren Xia was the daughter of Ren Bonian 任伯年 (1840–1895). She followed the style of her father and carried on the family's legacy. Ren Xia was recognized during her lifetime as one of the Four Rens—the other three were brothers Ren Xiong 任熊 (1820–1857) and Ren Xun 任薰 (1835–1893), and the latter's son, Ren Yu 任預 (1853–1910). For the life and work of Ren Xia, see Weidner, *Views From Jade Terrace*, 167. He Xiangning will be discussed in chapter 2.

Chapter Two | New Talented Women of the Chinese Women’s Society of Calligraphy and Painting

The Chinese Women’s Society of Calligraphy and Painting (1934–ca.1948; hereafter cited as the “Women’s Society”) was established by and for women artists primarily engaged in the practice of *guohua*. It was the only all-women organization among the numerous traditional and Western-style art societies of the early Republican period. It was founded by a group of well-established female artists in the *guohua* circle who believed that the founding of such an organization represented a pivotal step in the affirmation of women artists’ competence and contributions to the art world, as well as to society at large.²⁵⁰

With over two hundred members, the Women’s Society was a very large cultural organization by the standards of the time, and its founding marked a critical moment in the ongoing process of women taking up professional roles in the field of arts and crafts. Functioning as an agent and channel for the dissemination of women artists’ work, the Women’s Society also facilitated the emergence of public roles for women—an increasingly important aspect of women’s life in the Republican society. But this group of women not only aimed to make women’s art practice more visible; they also aspired to take their profession beyond the cultural-artistic realm and make their practices relevant to the needs of society. Although this was not clearly stated at the time, I would argue, based on the group’s activities, that the establishment of the Women’s Society was driven in part by a patriotic concern for national survival. The

²⁵⁰ “Nüzi shuhuahui chengli dahui” 女子書畫會成立大會 [The inaugural meeting of the Women’s Society of Calligraphy and Painting], *Shenbao*, April, 30, 1934, 11.

society's multifaceted social and cultural activities included charity sales and disaster- and war-relief efforts during a time when China faced imminent war with Japan. At a time of national peril, these activities further underlined the status of women artists as valuable female citizens.²⁵¹

Art societies played an important role in spearheading the development of modern art in early twentieth-century China. These societies' artistic direction was closely tied to practices of their founding members and hence reflected the mandates and trends of the art world at the time. Some of them were also affiliated with certain art schools with very well-defined goals. These associations were divided into three general categories: Western-oriented, integrated, and *guohua*-oriented. While those of the first category, such as Yiyuan Institute for the Research of Painting (Yiyuan huihua yanjiusuo 藝苑繪畫研究所; 1929–1932), whose members were mostly teachers at the Shanghai Academy of Art, were mandated to promote Western-style art in China, integrated art societies like the Heavenly Horse Society (1919–1928) consisted of a mix of artists working in both Western- and Chinese-style art. The *guohua*-oriented associations, such as the Yuyuan Painting and Calligraphy Society for Philanthropy, the Society of the Friends of Cold Weather (Hanzhiyou jishe 寒之友集社, 1928), the Chinese Painting Research Society, the Lake Society, and the Chinese Painting Society (Zhongguo huahui 中國畫會, 1931–1948)—strived to bring *guohua* practice to the forefront of the Chinese art world in an attempt to make it a “national art.” They also aimed to bring this art form to a global audience, most notably through their participation in international expositions and bilingual art magazines, such as *Hushe yuekan*, which focused on *guohua*. The Women's Society was part of the *guohua* reform and professionalization project. As Andrews and Shen maintain, the Women's Society—in addition

²⁵¹ On the mobilization of women for the war efforts of the 1930s, see Louise Edwards, *Gender, Politics, and Democracy: Women's Suffrage in China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 204–207.

to its primary mission to unite women artists and promote their works—was part of the effort to reform and professionalize the practice of *guohua*, and used its traditionalism as a way to participate in the modern art world.²⁵²

In this chapter, I examine the contribution of members of the Women’s Society to the development of *guohua*. I also survey the collective and individual activities of the members to continue the discussion of women artists’ practices in the rapidly reforming art world of early twentieth-century China. Furthermore, I discuss how—as a collective whose activities were many and diverse—the Women’s Society helped consolidate the public presence of women artists as intellectuals, educators, social philanthropists, nationalists, and celebrities who were notable role models for the new generation of female citizens. These processes reflected how women artists continued to view, make use of, and redefine the notion of female talent in the cultural arena of the 1920s and ‘30s. I call these women the new talented women (*xin cainü*) to denote how they relocated their talents for both nationalistic causes and personal success, thus reclaiming the vilified notion of the *cainü* construed by reformists at the turn of the twentieth century.

While referencing the lives and artistic practices of the members of the Women’s Society as a whole, I will pay particular attention to three of its founding members: Li Qiujun 李秋君 (1899–1973), Feng Wenfeng 馮文鳳 (1900–1971), and Yang Xuejiu 楊雪玖 (1902–1986). In addition to contributing greatly to the promotion of women’s art practice, these members’ social deeds also exemplified the society’s other main areas of commitment, including education, philanthropy, and public intellectualism. I also closely examine the activities of He Xiangning 何香凝 (1879–1972), a senior revolutionary and artist who joined the Women’s Society a year after

²⁵² See Andrews and Shen, “Traditionalism as a Modern Stance,” 1–29.

it was founded. Although He did not play an active administrative role in the society, her presence and participation helped advance its social agenda.

By 1934, the year the Women's Society was established, the number of female art practitioners had increased significantly in both Chinese- and Western-style art forms. During the early, relatively stable years of the Nanjing decade (1927–1937), more women had the opportunity to receive formal training in arts and crafts at women's schools, specialized art schools, and overseas.²⁵³ Upon graduation, these women artists continued to build careers in the arts and crafts. They exhibited in various group exhibitions, held solo exhibitions, and also actively engaged with activities of burgeoning art societies. These conditions made the establishment and continuation of an all-women art organization possible.

Through their collective endeavours, the Women's Society made two important contributions to the positioning of women artists in the China of the 1930s. First, it helped consolidate the process of professionalization of women artists in the *guohua* field. Second, it further increased the public visibility and agency of women artists in society. While making advancements in their individual careers, founding members of the Women's Society also recognized the importance of creating a collective force to strengthen the process of professionalization. At the same time, they also emphasized the significance of putting their artistic talent to good use through social philanthropy. Many of the core members of the Women's Society—such as He Xiangning, Li Qiujun, and Feng Wenfeng—were already actively engaged in social and political causes before the group's establishment. Continuing their ongoing efforts, these members strived to mobilize other female artists to participate in social

²⁵³ For a discussion of the development of art during the Nanjing decade, see Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 93.

and nationalistic causes as responsible and valuable female citizens. I would argue that their effort in these areas was as significant as their aim of making women's art practice more visible.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND EXHIBITIONS

The Women's Society was founded in Shanghai on April 29, 1934. It was the first organization devoted to the fellowship of women painters and calligraphers, and it aimed to provide a forum for female artists to exchange ideas, hold group exhibitions, publish exhibition catalogues, and handle sales of their work. It also ran an educational program which offered correspondence courses on Chinese-style painting, calligraphy, poetry, and epigraphy, and oil painting.²⁵⁴ The Women's Society also offered a poetry forum.²⁵⁵ More than thirty female artists attended the group's inaugural meeting at the home of Feng Wenfeng, who was elected the interim chair of the organization.²⁵⁶ Feng—together with Yang Xuejiu and Li Qiujun—also formed the core working group (*changwu weiyuan* 常務委員) within the society's executive committee (*zhixing weiyuan* 執行委員).²⁵⁷

At the meeting, it was decided that an inaugural exhibition would be held on June 2, 1934 at the Ningbo Native-place Association (Ningbo tongxianghui 寧波同鄉會), a prestigious and much-coveted Shanghai venue for both Chinese- and Western-style art exhibitions in the 1920s

²⁵⁴ “Nüzi shuhuahui she hanshouke” 女子書畫會設函授科 [The Women's Calligraphy and Painting Society offers correspondence courses], *Shenbao*, June 12, 1934, 10.

²⁵⁵ The existence of a poetry forum was mentioned in Wang Yichang 王辰昌, *Zhongguo meishu nianjian 1947*, 11.

²⁵⁶ “Nüzi shuhuahui chengli dahui” 女子書畫會成立大會 [The inaugural meeting of the Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting], *Shenbao*, April, 30, 1934, 11. The address listed as the location of the organization was indeed the home address of Feng Wenfeng listed in the first exhibition catalogue of the society. It reflected the fact that the organization did not have a permanent meeting place. The society's business was conducted in the homes of founding members.

²⁵⁷ “Nüzi shuhuahui chengli dahui” 女子書畫會成立大會 [The inaugural meeting of the Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting], *Shenbao*, April 30, 1934, 11.

and '30s.²⁵⁸ Although it was unclear whether there was an open call for submissions for the inaugural exhibition, more than one thousand pieces by female artists were submitted in the span of a month, and in the end, about five hundred works were selected.²⁵⁹ The high number of submissions reflected the founding members' vast network of connections in the Shanghai art world.²⁶⁰ With more than ten thousand visitors, the three-day exhibition was very well attended.²⁶¹ It was also widely advertised and reported in various newspapers and popular journals. Alongside reports before, during, and after the event in the daily Shanghai newspaper *Shenbao*, numerous write-ups about the group and its exhibition were published in various journals. On the opening day of the exhibition, the entertainment magazine *Saturday* (*Libailiu* 禮拜六) devoted a full page to the artworks and photographs of the artists of the Women's Society [Figure 2.1].²⁶²

On the top left of the page was a double portrait of the society's chair, Feng Wenfeng, with another woman [Figure 2.2]. In it Feng poses elegantly behind a desk hovering over one half of a calligraphy couplet, while her unidentified friend—most likely another member of the

²⁵⁸ The Ningbo Native-place Association was founded by Yu Qiaqing 虞洽卿 in 1911. Yu was a prominent industrialist in Shanghai whose native place was Zhenhai, Zhejiang—hence the name of the club. The club became one of the most prestigious and coveted venues for art exhibitions. Shi Li suggests that artists holding exhibitions at the club would help to boost their fame and sales. See Shi Li 石莉, “Qingmo Minchu Shanghai shangren jiecheng de yishu zanzhu” 清末民初上海商人阶层的艺术赞助 [Art patronage and sponsorship of the Shanghai merchant class in the late Qing and early Republican period], *Meishu* 3 (2007): 121–123. Since one of the founding members of the Women's Society, Yu Danhan 虞淡涵, was the daughter of Yu Qiaqing, it was natural for the Women's Society to hold its inaugural exhibition at this prestigious venue.

²⁵⁹ “Nüzi shuhua zhan jinri kaimu” 女子書畫展今日開幕 [The exhibition of women's calligraphy and painting opens today], *Shenbao*, June 2, 1934, 16.

²⁶⁰ It was very common for artists to have multiple entries for a given exhibition, and the inaugural show would most likely be populated by works of core members. However, with more than five hundred works on display, the exhibition was a very large-scale event in comparison to most art exhibitions held at the time.

²⁶¹ “Nüzi shuhua zhan zuori bimu” 女子書畫展昨日閉幕 [The exhibition of women's calligraphy and painting closed yesterday], *Shenbao*, June 5, 1934, 12.

²⁶² “Nüzi shuhua” 女子書畫 [Calligraphy and painting by women], *Saturday* 556 (June 2, 1934), 22.

Women's Society who was dressed almost identically to Feng—stands in front of the desk helping Feng hold up the paper. Feng's body is positioned diagonally towards her friend, who occupies the left side of the photographic frame. The two figures—together with the long piece of paper—form a triangular composition with Feng as its focus. The placement of figures and objects in the fore-, middle-, and background show a depth of field in which is shown a study, filled with various tasteful modern décor, including a Western-style wooden desk, a lamp, and a Chinese vase with a single branch of what looks like plum blossoms. The room was evidently a scholar's study decorated with both Chinese- and Western-style motifs. This is not a simple snapshot, but a well-composed double portraiture that reflects the photographer's intention of creating a pictorial space with multiple foci, the effect of which leads the viewer into a world of cultural sophistication and elegance.

Next to this photograph was a portrait of core members Gu Qingyao 顧青瑤 (1896–1978), and a double portrait of Chen Xiaocui 陳小翠 (1907–1968) and Zhou Lianxia 周鍊霞 (1908–2000) taken outside of a Western-style building. Although the main purpose of the full-page report seemed to be to advertise the Women's Society's inaugural exhibition, the juxtaposition of the photo-portraits—especially of Feng and her friend—with the artists' works serves to emphasize the Women's Society's sociocultural pedigree.

In each of the pictures the women are wearing a *qipao* 旗袍 (a type of Chinese dress) developed in the 1920s and widely popularized in the 1930s, but which members of the Women's Society would only wear for their group or individual press photos. I would argue that that this represented a conscious decision to create an image for the organization, one that reflected the traditional style of art at which they excelled. The long, one-piece, form-fitting dress, which was commonly made with silk or light cotton fabric, was a new sartorial choice for

urban women, though the style of garment was appropriated from the robes of Qing-dynasty women. It also incorporated various elements from Western-style dress that was fashionable in Europe at the time.²⁶³ The *qipao* thus embodied both Chinese and Western styles, and it projected a distinctive sense of modernity. As Antonia Finnane suggests, women who wore the *qipao* were from “an emerging middle class, who lived in or were susceptible to the effects of life in the modernizing cities—Shanghai, Tianjin, Hankou, and Guangzhou.”²⁶⁴ Especially in Shanghai, the *qipao* conveyed the ethos of the Haipai 海派 (or Shanghai School), which during the 1930s and ‘40s was characterized by an urban, commercialized, and modern aesthetic in both art and literature.²⁶⁵ The sartorial choice made by members of the Women’s Society, I would argue, reflected the organization’s self-image; it reinvented tradition while taking up a modern approach to art practice.

The same page also includes two pairs of calligraphy couplets and a Chinese-style painting by Feng Wenfeng. Viewing the page as a whole, the reproduction of the couplets serves to lead the reader back to the photograph of Feng and her friend. Further scrutiny of the photograph shows the viewer that, although the caption says that Feng was writing a couplet, she was indeed holding a folded fan and not a writing brush. This detail could very well be unintentional. However, the painted fan was a popular form that had become immensely popular in Shanghai in the early 1900s. A fan by a well-known artist would represent the cultural sophistication, aesthetic taste, and financial wealth of its owner.²⁶⁶ Producing such fans therefore

²⁶³ Antonia Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China: Fashion, History, Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 141, 150.

²⁶⁴ Antonia Finnane, “What Should Chinese Women Wear?: A National Problem,” *Modern China* 22, no. 2 (April 1, 1996): 111.

²⁶⁵ Bao Mingxin 包铭新, “Ershi shiji shangbanye de Haipai qipao” 20 世纪上半叶的海派旗袍 [Shanghai-style *qipao* in the first half of the twentieth century], *Yishu sheji shuangyuekan* 97 (May 2000): 11–12.

²⁶⁶ Wang Zhongxiu et al., eds, *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhuaqia runli*, 4.

became a significant part of *guohua* artists' commercial activity.²⁶⁷ For Feng to be holding a fan in the photograph, instead of a brush, might well be her intention to advertise the commercial aspect of her own art practice as well as the types of work that were on display at the inaugural show of the Women's Society. In the exhibition, a number of fans, painted collaboratively by members of the society, were for sale by lottery. For 2 *yuan* each, interested buyers could purchase numbered tickets that corresponded to each fan. Since these fans were made collaboratively (and quickly) with the intention of whetting the interest of potential buyers, they were sold at a low price, and the sales provided both advertising and operating funds.²⁶⁸

With the well-established fame of the society's core members, their works naturally attracted the most interest from patrons at the exhibition. A number of Feng Wenfeng's calligraphic works were sold in the first day, and paintings by other founding members, such as Li Qiujun, Chen Xiaocui, Gu Qingyao, Zhou Lianxia, Xie Yingxin 謝應新 (ca. 1900–?), Jiang Yanan 江亞南 (1917–1936), and Xie Yuewei 謝月眉 (1906–1998), were also very popular. While reports in *Shenbao* emphasized the exhibition's commercial success and high attendance numbers, its novelty—it was the first exhibition of its kind—was also emphasized.

A congratulatory essay written by the well-respected male *guohua* artist Huang Binhong was printed in *Shenbao* as well.²⁶⁹ It, too, emphasized the novelty of the occasion. Huang compared the female artists to their accomplished predecessors in Chinese art history, such as Guan Daosheng and Wen Shu 文俶 (1595–1634), thus establishing the lineage that the Women's Society was following. Huang attributed the establishment of such an organization to the

²⁶⁷ Roberta Wue, *Art Worlds*, 25–69.

²⁶⁸ “Nüzi shuhuazhan jinri kaimu” 女子書畫展今日開幕 [The exhibition of women's calligraphy and painting opens today], *Shenbao*, June 2, 1934, 16.

²⁶⁹ “Nüzi shuhuazhan kaimu zhisheng” 女子書畫展開幕誌盛 [The grand opening of the exhibition of women's calligraphy and painting], *Shenbao*, June 3, 1934, 14.

increased availability of art education for women. He also recognized that changes were needed in the *guohua* circle if it was to shift the old habits that led to the stagnation of the form. Huang argued that the Women's Society would provide a new path to change through the interaction between artists that the organization fostered.

To accompany the exhibit, a catalogue, edited by Li Qiujuan and Chen Xiaocui, was published. It was sold for 1 *yuan* at the exhibition itself, but it could also be ordered by writing to the society's headquarter, which was based out of Feng Wenfeng's home.²⁷⁰ The exhibition catalogue was printed with collotype on a heavy stock, and it contained reproductions of about fifty photo-portraits and works by members and non-members. The quick turnaround—the rather sophisticated catalogue was produced within a month—attested to the competence of the society's core members.

After its first exhibition in 1934 the Women's Society organized annual exhibitions in all but one year up to 1947. Who were these women who had the network and organizational capability to effectively mobilize women artists to create such a critical force in the Chinese art and culture world?

Membership

With a few exceptions, the core members of the Women's Society were born in the first and second decades of the twentieth century. They came of age at a time when public education for women was becoming increasingly commonplace in China's metropolises and county seats, with their newly established schools for women. In these schools, many women were exposed to both

²⁷⁰ “Nüzi shuhuaazhan jinri kaimu” 女子書畫展今日開幕 [The exhibition of women's calligraphy and painting opens today], *Shenbao*, June 2, 1934, 16.

Chinese- and Western-style art; moreover, like many gentry women before them, they often deepened their learning of Chinese-style art through relatives or private teachers. And in addition to art, these women were able to acquire a wide range of knowledge while growing up in households that were generally open to new ideas and knowledge. At its inauguration in 1934, the society had fifty-two members, fourteen of which served on the executive committee.²⁷¹ A look at the makeup of this committee provides an insight into the sociocultural pedigree of the Women's Society's members.

Feng Wenfeng (also known as Flora Fong) was an important driving force behind the establishment of the Women's Society, and was credited with being the main initiator and sponsor of the organization.²⁷² Although Feng was born and raised in the British colony of Hong Kong, her upbringing and art education was similar to that of many girls in gentry families of China's metropolises at the time. Feng was taught calligraphy by her father, Feng Shihan 馮師韓 (1875–1950), an expert on epigraphy and a translation officer in the Hong Kong government.²⁷³ Feng started learning calligraphy from her father at about age seven, and through relentless effort, Feng quickly became adept at different calligraphic styles.²⁷⁴ At the tender age of thirteen,

²⁷¹ Chen Xiaocui 陳小翠 and Li Qiuqun 李秋君, eds., *Zhongguo nüzi shuhua zhanlanhui tekan* 中國女子書畫展覽會特刊 [Catalogue for the exhibition of Chinese Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting] (Shanghai: Zhongguo nüzi shuhuahui, 1934).

²⁷² A poem about Feng Wenfeng by her fellow artist Chen Xiaocui states that she was the person who suggested the establishment of the Women's Society. Quoted in Lu Danlin 陸丹林, "Jieshao jiwei nü shuhuajia" 介紹幾位女書畫家 [Introducing a few women calligraphers and painters], *Yijing* 逸經 33 (1937): 35; Chen Xiaocui 陳小翠, *Cuilou yincao* 翠樓吟草 [Poetry from the Green Pavilion] (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, reprint, 2010), 131. Andrews and Shen also suggest that the exhibitions were almost entirely funded by Feng Wenfeng. See "Traditionalism as a Modern Stance," 9.

²⁷³ Yu Jianhua, *Zhongguo meishujia renming cidian* 中國美術家人名詞典 [Biographical dictionary of Chinese artists].

²⁷⁴ Feng Wenfeng 馮文鳳 "Cong xuexi shuhua tandao funü yanjiu yishu" 從學習書畫談到婦女研究藝術 [From learning calligraphy and painting to studying art for women], *Dangdai Funü* 當代婦女 (October 1936): 170–175. She also learned painting from Wang Shizi 王師子 (1885–1950) while in Shanghai. See Yun Ruxin 惲茹辛, *Minguo*

she was invited to participate in an art sale in Hong Kong to raise money for disaster relief. At the event, she made a number of calligraphy scrolls on site and sold them for more than six hundred Hong Kong dollars. Feng said that this event was the beginning of her lifelong commitment to public service using her artistic talent.²⁷⁵ In addition to learning Chinese painting and calligraphy, Feng's family resources also allowed her to pursue other interests, such as embroidery, Western-style painting, photography, and even horseback riding.²⁷⁶ Feng Shihan believed that his daughter possessed great artistic talent that was worth nurturing.²⁷⁷

Feng was said to have studied oil painting in Italy.²⁷⁸ Yet while she had produced some works in that medium, the majority of Feng's existing works—those for which she is most known—are in Chinese-style painting and calligraphy.²⁷⁹ The decision to leave behind Western art and refocus her practice on Chinese mediums had taken root during Feng's years in Hong Kong, where the segregation between Chinese and foreigners was pronounced. Other than the commercial artists who painted export paintings and artwork for calendar posters, Western-style art was mostly taken up as a hobby by foreign women who accompanied their male relatives to official posts in the colony.²⁸⁰ As a young Chinese woman, Feng would not have been able to

shuhua jia huizhuan 民國書畫家彙傳 [Biographies of calligraphers and painters in the Republican period] (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1991), 251.

²⁷⁵ Feng Wenfeng 馮文鳳 “Cong xuexi shuhua tandao funü yanjiu yishu” 從學習書畫談到婦女研究藝術, 173.

²⁷⁶ Huang Jiping 黃寄萍, *Zhongguo xinnüxing* 中國新女性 [New women of China] (Shanghai: Diqu chubanshe, n.d.), 116.

²⁷⁷ Feng Wenfeng 馮文鳳 “Cong xuexi shuhua tandao funü yanjiu yishu” 從學習書畫談到婦女研究藝術, 173; Lu Danlin, “Jieshao jiwei nü shuhua jia,” 25.

²⁷⁸ Zizai 自在, “Nü shujia Feng Wenfeng” 女書家馮文鳳 [Female calligrapher Feng Wenfeng], *Libailiu* 禮拜六 (Saturday) 565 (1934), n.p.

²⁷⁹ One of Feng's known oil paintings depicts the great fire of February 1918 at the Happy Valley Racecourse in Hong Kong, from which Feng and her mother escaped. Feng painted the painting to commemorate the event. The work was then exhibited at the office of the Ministry of Chinese Affairs. Zhu Qi 朱琦, *Xianggang meishu shi* 香港美術史 [Art history of Hong Kong] (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 2005), 33.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 32-34.

position herself in the expatriate circle of oil and watercolour painters. Moreover, her decision to focus on Chinese painting and calligraphy was also very likely influenced by the cultural patriotism that was prevalent in the art worlds of Guangdong, Shanghai, and Beijing during this period.

Feng's dedication to Chinese-style art and women's learning had already developed while she was in Hong Kong. Although she had taught at an Italian school for girls in the colony, Feng was most known for her teaching of Chinese painting, calligraphy, and embroidery at her own art school, the Hong Kong School of Calligraphy and Painting for Women (Xianggang nüzi shuhua xuexiao 香港女子書畫學校) which she founded in 1915 at age fifteen.²⁸¹ In addition to painting and calligraphy, Feng also taught embroidery at the school for five years. The school was legally registered as an educational institution with the British Hong Kong government.²⁸² Feng recounted that many of her students eventually became school teachers, and many also continued their art education in higher institutions. Feng later reopened the school in Shanghai when she moved there in 1925.²⁸³

It is unclear why Feng moved away from Hong Kong. I would speculate, however, that Feng was probably attracted to the vibrant art scene in Shanghai in the 1920s. As a colony, Hong Kong lagged behind the flourishing art scene and publishing industry of Shanghai and Guangdong. In Hong Kong, the clear segregation between the expatriate and Chinese art communities would have limited the advancement of Feng's art career.²⁸⁴ For native Chinese in

²⁸¹ Feng Wenfeng, "Cong xuexi shuhua tandao funü yanjiu yishu," 173. It was possible that Feng was teaching at the Italian Convent School, founded in Hong Kong in 1860 by the Canossian Sisters of Charity. It is now known as the Sacred Heart Canossian College.

²⁸² "Yiyuan qingyin" 藝苑清音 [The clear sound of the art world], *Shenbao*, August 18, 1924, 20.

²⁸³ "Yiyuan qingyin" 藝苑清音 [The clear sound of the art world], *Shenbao*, March 14, 1925, 19; Wang Yichang, *Zhongguo meishu nianjian 1947*, 143.

²⁸⁴ Zhu Qi, *Xianggang meishu shi*, 29–33.

Hong Kong, the art circle was small and activities were rather limited when compared to Shanghai. Indeed, the inactivity and lack of institutional structure was indicated by the fact that Feng's School of Calligraphy and Painting for Women was the only such institution established in the colony in the first two decades of the twentieth century.²⁸⁵

Feng's reputation preceded her move to the mainland. In October 1920, Feng organized a women's art exhibition in Hong Kong.²⁸⁶ The first of its kind, the high-profile exhibition attracted over six thousand visitors and raised more than 2,000 *yuan* in sales, which were donated to charity.²⁸⁷ The success of the exhibition garnered Feng a short biography in an important art journal of the period, the *Huixue zazhi* 繪學雜誌 (*Magazine for the Study of Painting*, 1920–1921). The journal was published by the Society for the Research of Painting at Peking University (Beijing daxue huafa yanjiu hui 北京大學畫法研究會), an art institute established by Cai Yuanpei.²⁸⁸

When she moved to Shanghai, Feng was therefore able to join the art scene rather seamlessly through her already well-established network in the city. Feng was already selling her work there through her agent Lu Danlin 陸丹林 (1897–?)—an artist and one of the founders of the Chinese Painting Society. Lu was also an arts and culture critic and an editor of numerous magazines, including *Yijing* 逸經 (1936–1937), an important bimonthly on culture and history.²⁸⁹ Lu was enthusiastic about promoting women's art practice, and he wrote many articles about the

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

²⁸⁶ The exhibition was held at Tai Pak Lau (Taibai lou 太白樓) in Hong Kong. This was an arts, culture, and entertainment centre in Hong Kong that was in use from the 1910s to the late 1930s.

²⁸⁷ The art magazine *Meishu* reported that the exhibition mainly consisted of works by Feng and her students. *Meishu* 2, no. 4 (1920): 89.

²⁸⁸ Lai Jigeng 來季賡, "Xianggang huajia Feng Wenfeng nüshi xiaozhuan" 香港畫家馮文鳳女士小傳 [A short biography of Hong Kong artist Ms. Feng Wenfeng], *Huixue zazhi* 繪學雜誌 2, no. 3 (January 1921): 3.

²⁸⁹ Lu Danlin handled the sales of Feng's work: "Yiyuan qingyin" 藝苑清音 [The clear sound of the art world], *Shenbao*, August 18, 1924, 20.

Women's Society. His working relationship with Feng was an important driving force for the promotion of the society in Shanghai's print media.

Another important initiator of the Women's Society, Li Qiujun, shared a similar background with Feng, and her family also recognized the artistic talent of their daughter.²⁹⁰ Like many gentry women of her generation, Li received a public education and she was a graduate of the prestigious girls' school Wuben Girls' School (Wuben nüshu 務本女塾).²⁹¹ For her art training, Li first received private tutoring from her brother Li Zuhan 李祖韓 (1891–?) and then from other painters in Shanghai, including Wu Xingfen. An illness provided Li with an opportunity to deepen her painting skills when she was a teenager: at the age of sixteen she contracted tuberculosis, and she therefore needed to be quarantined at home for long stretches of time. At the suggestion of her brother Zuhan, Li resorted to painting during these idle times. Like generations of women from gentry families, including her teacher, Wu Xingfen, Li had the opportunity to copy works from her family's collection of old masters' painting and calligraphy, which helped her to improve her skills.²⁹²

The Li family's connections in the world of art and culture, as well as their wealth, played a major role in establishing Li Qiujun's art career at an early age. Her older brother Li Zuhan was an accomplished and well-respected painter and businessman, and he was a core member of various art organizations, including the quintessential *guohua* society of the period, the Chinese Painting Society. Li Zuhan was also an organizer and one of the four editors of

²⁹⁰ Li Qiujun was also named Zhuyun 祖雲, and her sobriquet was Ouxiang guanzhu 歐湘館主.

²⁹¹ Wuben nüshu was renamed 上海縣立第一女子高等小學 (Shanghai Number 1 Higher-level Primary School) in 1913: *Shenbao*, July 6, 1914, 10; for more on the Wuben Girls' School, see Paul J. Bailey, *Gender and Education in China*, 24–25.

²⁹² Wen Yang 文央, "Shuhuaia Li Qiujun nüshi fangwenji" (書畫家李秋君女士訪問記) [Interview with painter and calligrapher Ms. Li Qiujun], *Funiü shenghuo* 婦女生活 5, issue 4 (1937): 34.

Meizhan 美展 (Art exhibition)—an important periodical published once every three days during the First National Art Exhibition of the Ministry of Education, which was held in Shanghai in 1929.²⁹³ In addition to her own accomplishments, it is safe to say that these connections helped Li Qiujun secure a position in the organizing committees and jury for the First and Second National Art Exhibitions in 1929 and 1937, respectively.²⁹⁴

Among members of the Women's Society, Li Qiujun's artistic achievement was one of the most renowned and celebrated.²⁹⁵ In addition to studying with Wu Xingfen, Li later became a sworn disciple and alleged lover of Zhang Daqian 張大千 (1899–1983). She was also an enthusiastic and tireless philanthropist who had facilitated the organization of various events for the Women's Society, and she volunteered her home for the organizational headquarters of the society after Feng Wenfeng temporarily returned to Hong Kong in 1935.²⁹⁶ Submissions to the society's annual exhibitions would be sent to Li's house, which also served as the depository for the items collected for disaster relief and the war effort.²⁹⁷

Li Qiujun and Feng Wenfeng worked closely with Yang Xuejiu in establishing the Women's Society. Even though Yang Xuejiu also came from a reputable scholar's family, the Yang family was not as well off as those of Feng and Li, but while Yang might not have

²⁹³ *Meizhan* 美展 [The art exhibition] was published once every three days during the First National Art Exhibition period from April 10 to May 10, 1929. A total of ten issues were published.

²⁹⁴ Wang Yichang, *Zhongguo meishu nianjian 1947*, 82.

²⁹⁵ Li's fame in the art world continued after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Li was a member of Wenshiguan 文史館 (Research institute of culture and history) and continued to produce works that reflect the spirit of the new China.

²⁹⁶ Bao Mingxin 包铭新 and Li Meng 李薨, "Zhongguo nüzi shuhua hui shishikao" 中国女子书画会史实考 [Historical facts about the Chinese Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting], *Minguo dang'an* 民国档案 2 (2006): 135.

²⁹⁷ Wen Yang, "Shuhua jia Li Qiujun nüshi fangwenji," 33.

contributed financially to the society's inauguration, like Feng and Li, her position as an educator of women enabled her to bring many core members into the Women's Society.

A photograph published in a 1928 issue of the magazine *Jindai funü* 今代婦女 (*Women today*) shows a bespectacled Yang Xuejiu sporting a stylish bob, as well as a chic fur muffler [Figure 2.3].²⁹⁸ The photograph was accompanied by a short biography informing readers that Yang Xuejiu was the third of six daughters born to Yang Bomin 楊白民 (1874–1924), an educator who founded the Chengdong Girls' School in 1903.²⁹⁹ Yang Xuejiu had taken up the role of the principal of Chengdong in 1924 after her father passed away. Xuejiu was only twenty-two years of age when she decided to continue the important work of women's education started by her father.

Yang Bomin was a renowned proponent of female education, as well as an art enthusiast who believed in the benefits of educating women in the arts, and he offered an extensive program in arts and crafts at Chengdong.³⁰⁰ Yang Bomin's own training started at an early age, when he learned painting from his maternal grandfather, the famous Qing painter Zhu Cheng 朱僮 (1826–1900).³⁰¹ He later went on to study at Waseda University in Tokyo. Having opened one of the first private schools for women operated by a Chinese person—rather than a foreign missionary—before the Qing dynasty's official sanctioning of public education for women in

²⁹⁸ This same photograph and an almost identical short biography were reprinted in *Funü zazhi* 15, no. 7 (July 1929), 11.

²⁹⁹ For details on the founding of Chengdong, see Chen Xing 陈星, *Youyi: Yang Bomin, Chengdong nüxue yu Li Shutong* 游艺: 杨白民、城东女学及李叔同 [Journeying in the arts: Yang Bomin, Chengdong Girls' School and Li Shutong] (Shanghai: Sanlian shudian, 2013), 14–15.

³⁰⁰ Yan Juanying “Buxi de biandong—yi Shanghai meishu xuexiao wei zhongxin de meishu jiaoyu yundong,” 62.

³⁰¹ Yang Yi 楊逸, *Haishang molin* 海上墨林 [Ink forest of Shanghai], 643.

1907, Yang became a spokesperson for the importance of a well-rounded education for women.³⁰²

In addition to formal education—which they received at Chengdong—Yang Xuejiu and her sisters Yang Xueyao 楊雪瑤 (1898–1977) and Yang Xuezhen 楊雪珍 (真), like many of their contemporaries, also received private tutoring in painting and calligraphy. Their teacher was the well-known Shanghai painter, industrialist, and philanthropist Wang Yiting.³⁰³ In terms of their achievement in the arts, Xuejiu was the most renowned among the sisters. The recognition she received for continuing her father’s legacy was illustrated in Yang Bomin’s biographical entry in *Ink Forest of Shanghai* (*Haishang molin* 海上墨林)—an important compilation of traditionalist painters and calligraphers in Shanghai from the late Qing to the early Republican period. In the entry, Xuejiu is mentioned as the principal of Chengdong, which established her as the heir to her family’s legacy. Moreover, since it was included in an important compilation of painters and calligraphers, the reference also recognized Xuejiu’s own artistic achievement.³⁰⁴ Indeed, not only did Xuejiu carry on her father’s legacy by continuing to implement art programs for women at Chengdong; her artistic achievement and her involvement at the Women’s Society also made her another exemplary figure, one who made use of her privileged familial and social connections to advance women’s position in the artistic-cultural world of Shanghai.

Aside from Feng, Li, and Yang, the other members of the Women’s Society executive committee also came from families with privileged sociocultural and economic backgrounds.

³⁰² For an anecdotal account of life at Chengdong, see Bao Tianxiao 包天笑, *Chuanying lou huiyilu* 鈞影樓回憶錄 [Reminiscences of the Chuanying Chamber] (Hong Kong: Daihua chubanshe, 1971), 334–339.

³⁰³ For discussions of the life and art of Wang Yiting, see Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 52–55; Walter B. Davis, “Welcoming the Japanese Art World: Wang Yiting’s Social and Artistic Exchanges with Japanese Sinophiles and Artists,” in *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art*, Joshua Fogel, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 84–112.

³⁰⁴ Yang Yi, *Haishang molin*, 643.

They included Tang Guanyu 唐冠玉 (ca. 1890s–?), the wife of the well-known *guohua* artist Pan Gongzhan 潘公展 (1895–1975), and student of artist Feng Chaoran 馮超然 (1882-1954),³⁰⁵ Yu Danhan 虞澹涵 (ca. 1890s–?), the daughter of the financier Yu Qiaqing 虞洽卿 (1867–1945); and Chen Xiaocu, the daughter of well-known writer and industrialist Chen Diexian 陳蝶仙 (1879–1940) and the younger sister of Chen Dingshan 陳定山 (Chen Xiaodie 陳小蝶, 1897–1987). Chen Dingshan was a notable personality in the art and culture scene of the early Republican era, and among his many roles—author, painter, and calligrapher—he served as an executive member of the planning committee for the First National Art Exhibition (1929). In addition to her calligraphy and painting, Chen Xiaocui was an accomplished poet who had published a thirteen-volume album titled *Poetry from the Green Pavilion* (*Cuilun yincao* 翠樓吟草), a collection of her work from 1915 to 1957.³⁰⁶

Along with their own artistic merits and remarkable networking and organizational skills, the core members' social status definitely played an important role in the success of the Women's Society. Yet despite this elite social background, the Women's Society had attempted to open up the close-knit *guohua* circle and welcome participation from female artists of all levels of skill and social class. Even though there was a selection process put in place to deal with submissions for the inaugural exhibition, the committee did not turn anyone away from becoming a member. They also included non-members' works in the exhibition. Editors of the first exhibition catalogue made a conscious decision to place non-members' work in the first section, followed by members' work, and the founding members' works last. The aim of this

³⁰⁵ Bao Mingxin, *Haishang guixiu* 海上閩秀 [Women Artists in Old Shanghai] (Shanghai: Donghua daxue chubanshe, 2006), 157

³⁰⁶ Chen Xiao Cui, *Cuilun yincao*.

arrangement, according to editors Li Qiujun and Chen Xiaocui, was to express the society's humility and intention to eliminate the notion of hierarchy.³⁰⁷

The attempt at inclusiveness was also reflected in the society's relatively low membership fees and its open call for membership. According to Li Qiujun, the Women's Society offered two levels of membership, with special members (*tebie huiyuan* 特別會員) paying an annual due of 5 *yuan*, while regular members (*putong huiyua* 普通會員) paid only 2 *yuan*.³⁰⁸ Joining the organization was therefore relatively affordable for many women.³⁰⁹

In its second year (1935), the Women's Society expanded its call for membership by advertising in *Shenbao*;³¹⁰ by its fourth year of operation (1937), membership in the society was said to have grown from the original fifty-four to more than two hundred.³¹¹ In addition to enjoying a rapid growth in membership, compared to other art organizations of the same period, the Women's Society also, due to the backing of core members and the commercial success of its exhibitions, maintained a healthy financial position. Other than membership dues, artists also had

³⁰⁷ "Bianzhe xiaoya" 編者小言 [Words from the editors], in *Zhongguo nüzi shuhua zhanlanhui tekan* 中國女子書畫展覽會特刊 [Catalogue for the exhibition of Chinese Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting], Chen Xiaocui 陳小翠 and Li Qiujun 李秋君, eds. (Shanghai: Zhongguo nüzi shuhuahui, 1934).

³⁰⁸ It was not clear what the difference between the two levels of membership were. However, the discrepancy between the number of members given by Li Qiujun and the actual number of names recorded in the fourth exhibition catalogue, I suggest, was perhaps a result of the fact that regular members were mostly inactive and did not have the privilege of having their contact information printed in the exhibition catalogues.

³⁰⁹ According to the monthly household budget of a manager at a foreign firm in Shanghai in 1934, his salary was 91 *yuan*, which would provide him and his family with upper-middle-class lifestyle. His monthly transportation expense was about 4 *yuan*. See *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhuaajia runli*, 9. An annual subscription of the women's magazine *Funü zazhi* was 2 *yuan*, 4 *jiao* in 1931. The membership fee, therefore, was equal to about two magazine subscriptions. The membership fee for the Women's Society—in relation to these price references—was relatively affordable for women of the middle class.

³¹⁰ "Nüzi shuhuahui jinxin" 女子書畫會近訊 [Recent news about the Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting], *Shenbao*, March 16, 1935, 17.

³¹¹ Although the fourth exhibition catalogue published by the society recorded names of only 140 members, we know, based on a few other sources published at the time, that the society had more than 200 members. Wen Yang, "Shuhuaajia Li Qiujun nüshi fangwenji," 34; "Nüzi shuhuahui disijie huazhan daimu" 女子書畫會四屆畫展開幕 [The fourth exhibition of the Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting opens], *Shenbao*, May 11, 1937, 16.

to contribute 20 percent of the proceeds from the sale of their work to the society's operating budget. But since many members came from well-to-do families, and thus did not rely on their art to make a living, they would often donate the entire amount. This was done, for example, by Tang Guanyu.³¹² Tang and another core member, Bao Yahui 鮑亞暉 (1895–1982), also donated 200 *yuan* each for the production of the catalogue of the third annual exhibition.³¹³ With the generous support of its members the society had accumulated 700 *yuan* by 1937.³¹⁴ At that year's exhibition, the total sales of members' artworks reached 1,800 *yuan*.³¹⁵

The rapid growth of the society's membership also demonstrated that its relatively lenient membership policy had attracted a great number of women *guohua* artists of all skill levels. While obtaining membership in other art societies still depended on one's connections in the world of elite culture, the Women's Society was open to any woman artist who was willing to pay the annual membership fee. This inclusive approach was articulated by Feng Wenfeng in her vision for the Women's Society.³¹⁶ Feng believed that in order to further develop women's interests in artistic practice, the society should organize art classes and facilitate forums for the exchange of ideas, and it should welcome members from all regions and skill levels. She also believed that holding annual exhibitions and publishing exhibition catalogues were important aspects of promoting the development of women's art practice.³¹⁷

³¹²“Nüzi shuhua zhan kaimu zhisheng” 女子書畫展開幕誌盛 [The grand opening of the exhibition of women's calligraphy and painting], *Shenbao*, June 3, 1934, 14.

³¹³ “Nüzi shuhua hui zuori bimu” 女子書畫會昨日閉幕 [The exhibition of women's calligraphy and painting closed yesterday], *Shenbao*, June 1, 1936, 18.

³¹⁴ Wen Yang, “Shuhua jia Li Qiujun nüshi fangwenji,” 33.

³¹⁵ “Zhongguo nüzi shuhua hui zuo bimu” 中國女子書畫會昨日閉幕 [The exhibition of Chinese women's calligraphy and painting closed yesterday], *Shenbao*, May 16, 1937, 15.

³¹⁶ Feng Wenfeng 馮文鳳 “Cong xuexi shuhua tandao funü yanjiu yishu” 從學習書畫談到婦女研究藝術, 174.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Exhibitions

As the name of the organization suggests, the Women's Society had chosen to represent female artists who worked in the *guohua* stream. Although the artistic direction of the Women's Society was a de facto choice corresponding to the majority of the founding members' own practices, it was also influenced by the sociocultural circumstances of the organization's establishment.³¹⁸ In the early twentieth century, as traditional painting and calligraphy faced denigration from cultural reformers—especially those of the New Culture Movement (Xinwenhua yundong 新文化運動)—*guohua* artists became aware of the need to instigate changes in their practice.³¹⁹ Other than the art form itself, they understood that the mode of production, commercial practices, methods of exhibition and publicity needed to be reformed in order to make their practice relevant to the needs of a modern society. In a word, they needed to make *guohua* practice more professional. A significant part of this process was reflected in the institutional structure of the burgeoning art societies—a trend that had started in the late 1890s but which had come to flourish by the late 1920s and '30s.³²⁰ These art societies were similar to business guilds, and they helped pave the way for the evolution of *guohua* artists' professional organization. Since the 1920s, the idea of the artist (*meishujia/yishujia*) as a professional had become more widely established in Chinese society thanks to foreign-trained Western-style artists holding exhibitions and gaining media and public attention.

³¹⁸ Andrews and Shen, "Traditionalism as a Modern Stance," 1.

³¹⁹ The New Culture Movement took place during the mid-1910s and '20s. Intellectuals such as Chen Duxiu, Lu Xun, Cai Yuanpei, and Hu Shi called for the reevaluation of traditional Chinese culture, and proposed the development of a new culture based on Western knowledge and ideologies, especially democracy and science.

³²⁰ Andrews and Shen remark that there were at least eighty-five major Chinese painting societies established in the 1920s and '30s, the majority of which were active in Shanghai and Beijing. See *Art of Modern China*, 51; see also Xu Zhihao 许志浩, *Zhongguo meishu shetuan manlu* 中国美术社团漫录 [A general record of art associations in China] (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1994).

At the same time, *guohua* artists also adopted a new way of exhibiting, promoting, and selling their works. As the Chinese art world became more methodical in adapting to the increasingly commercialized urban centres—especially Shanghai—arts and culture magazines, modern exhibition venues, art agents, painting and fan shops, and art societies also proliferated. Through these mechanisms, the modes through which artists conducted their business also shifted.

In previous eras, the sale of art was often done through interpersonal networks of artists and patrons. As the Chinese art world became more commercialized, however, artists started to sell their work either directly at exhibitions, via art agents, or at painting and fan shops. As mentioned in the previous chapter, artists also gained publicity and critical recognition through the publication of their price lists, photographic reproductions of their works, photo-portraits, and exhibition write-ups in print media.³²¹ The use of these new sales and marketing strategies constitute what I consider the process of “professionalization.” In this sense, women artists employed the same kinds of strategies as their male counterparts. Yet, even though both male and female artists had displayed a commercial awareness since the late Ming period, the public exhibition of *guohua* artists, and the publication of their price lists in popular print media, was not widely practiced until in the late 1910s.³²² These practices became even more commonplace in the 1920s and ‘30s.

³²¹ Artists were given space to write about their practices and to publish photographs of work in popular magazines such as *Liangyou*. See Tongyun Yin, “From Painter to Artist: Representing *Guohua* Paintings, and Painters in *Liangyou*, 1926–1938,” in *Liangyou: Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945*, ed. Paul G. Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang, eds. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 227–247.

³²² *Guohua* artists started to exhibit and sell their works in restaurants in the early 1910s. These events still followed the format of *wenren yaji* 文人雅集 (elegant gatherings). However, the publicness and commercial aspect of these exhibitions represented a departure from the format of elegant gatherings, and they started to resemble modern exhibitions. One such examples would be Wenmeihui 文美會, organized by Wenmeishe 文美社, an art society initiated by Li Shutong. See Liu Ruikuan 劉瑞寬, *Zhongguo meishu de xiandaihua: meishu qikan yu meizhan*

While female artists were present and active in many *guohua* societies at the time, they played—with few exceptions—a lesser role in the administrative and decision-making processes of these societies. For example, the board of the Chinese Painting Society—the largest and longest-running *guohua* society of the Republican period, to which many core members of the Women’s Society also belonged—consisted of mostly male artists.³²³ Though female artists with the right connections in the art world could showcase their works at the exhibitions of various art societies, it was rare for women to occupy leadership roles in *guohua* societies. And it was difficult for women artists from lower socioeconomic strata, or who did not live in Shanghai, to maintain a connection to these societies. Many of these women came from the younger generation of artists who had received their training through the newly established schools for women yet did not have access to a larger art community. Moreover, membership in an organization devoted solely to female artists—especially in the *guohua* circle, which had traditionally been dominated by male practitioners—was less intimidating for some women.

The goal of forming a collective that might affirm women’s contribution to the *guohua* world was articulated by Li Qiujun in the introduction of catalogue that accompanied the society’s first annual exhibition:

Mencius said, “[Emperor] Shun was a person; I am also a person, why should I be afraid of him?” [Inspired by Mencius’s saying], I, Qiujun, and a few others decided to stop doubting ourselves. We gathered together those who have similar interests to hold an exhibition of the Chinese Women’s Society of Calligraphy and Painting . [We] cast a vast net to call for the submission of recent work by well-known [female] literati and

huodong de fenxi (1911–1937), 中国美术的现代化：美术期刊与美展活动的分析 (1911–1937) [The modernization of Chinese art: an analysis of art periodicals and art exhibitions (1911–1937)] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2008), 182–183.

³²³ Xu Zhihao, *Zhongguo meishu shetuan manlu*, 118.

artists with the objective to exchange ideas and share experience through this occasion. [We] also published a catalogue for the exhibition in the hope that the works could be shared and enjoyed by many. [Our] mandate is to improve the arts, enhance both the teaching and learning aspects [of art], as well as to carry on the achievement of our predecessors to the best of our ability.

孟子曰：“舜，人也。余亦人也，吾何畏彼哉？”秋君等竊不自揣，爰集同好，特開女子書畫展覽會，廣徵文壇名宿、藝林碩望最近作品，以相觀摩。並發行女子書畫展覽會特刊，以為流傳。志在於提高藝術，教學相長，以幾作者，以紹前徽。³²⁴

In her introduction, Li adapted the dialogue between Mencius and Duke Wen of Teng,³²⁵ which conveys the idea that, if a person is willing to try, their achievement could be as great as those of the Emperor Shun. In this way Li made clear that the Women’s Society—a group of fearless women who were willing to try—had no need for self-doubt or the fear of being judged. Although not blatantly expressed, Li also implied that women were capable, and that they had the ability to produce excellent works of art and showcase them professionally in a well-organized exhibition.

By adapting the teachings of a sage, Li made clear that the society represented a group of women with artistic and professional aspirations as legitimate as their male counterparts, if not more so. Moreover, Li expressed the society’s aim of continuing the achievements of its predecessors by proclaiming women artists’ position in the preservation and renewal of the

³²⁴ “Zhongguo nüzi shuhuahui diyijie zhanlanhui tekan bianyan” 中國女子書畫會第一屆展覽會特刊弁言 [Preface to the catalogue of the first exhibition of the Chinese Women’s Society of Calligraphy and Painting], quoted in Bao Mingxin 包銘新, *Haishang guixiu* 海上閨秀, 59.

³²⁵ “Mengzi Tengwengong shang” 孟子滕文公上 [Teng Wen Gong Part 1 in Mencius], <http://ctext.org/mengzi/teng-wen-gong-i>. (Accessed March 31, 2016.)

Chinese art tradition—a claim reinforced by the many art events, charity activities, and high-profile public appearances by members of the society.

The Women’s Society’s open and inclusive mandate and its distinctive institutional structure made it an agent of change in women’s art practice. The society’s first four annual exhibitions—which took place between 1934 and 1937—were its largest and most well-received.³²⁶ For these exhibitions, core members had adopted the modern practice of commissioning an art agent—Lili Art and Culture Company (Lili wenyi gongsi 利利文藝公司)—to serve as organizer.³²⁷ Shortly after its inaugural exhibition, in June 1934, members immediately organized another exhibition of painted fans to be shown at the Lili Company that July. The short time between the two exhibitions reflected the ambition and enthusiasm of the society’s members; they wanted to take advantage of the success of the inaugural show by continuing to promote the Women’s Society through another smaller-scale exhibition.³²⁸

At the second annual exhibition, in May of 1935, more than six hundred works were on display—about 20 percent more than the inaugural show. There was also an increase in the number of participating artists from outside of Shanghai, including Beijing, Hangzhou, Tianjin, Nanjing, and as far as Guangzhou and Hong Kong.³²⁹ In order to attract further interest from patrons, artists produced a number of hanging scroll paintings of a standard size, mounting, and

³²⁶ Exhibition catalogues were published for these four annual exhibitions, and it was believed that only four such catalogues were published over the course of the society’s existence. See Bao Mingxin, *Haishang guixiu*, 60.

³²⁷ The Lili Company was located on Qipanjie 棋盤街 (Chessboard Street). The street was a busy commercial area in Shanghai in the early twentieth century. Many art stores and fan shops were located in this area at the time. See “Shanghai difangzhi” 上海地方誌 [Shanghai Gazettes], <http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node71994/node71995/node72000/node72014/userobject1ai77388.html>. (Accessed January 4, 2015.)

³²⁸ “Nüzi shuhua shanzhan kaimu” 女子書畫扇展開幕 [The exhibition of women’s painted fans opens], *Shenbao*, July 8, 1934, 14.

³²⁹ “Nüzi shuhua hui jinri kaimu” 女子書畫會今日開幕 [The exhibition of women’s calligraphy and painting opens today], *Shenbao*, May 10, 1935, 14.

framing style. Patrons could therefore mix and match groups of four or eight works to form a *tang* 堂 (grouping).³³⁰ By adopting this sales strategy, artists would give up control over how their works were displayed as well as the meanings produced when various works were put together. The decision was left to the taste and interest of patrons. On the one hand, this practice reflected the increasingly market-driven logic of the art world in Shanghai at the time, which catered primarily to the needs of patrons; on the other hand, it also showed the diversity of styles, subject matter, and skill displayed by the artists of the Women's Society.³³¹ Although it was common practice for *guohua* artists to work collaboratively, the exhibition's marked emphasis on collaboration reflected the aim of the Women's Society to promote the collective accomplishments of its members.

At the rate of almost once a year, the Women's Society held thirteen exhibitions between 1934 and 1947.³³² Given the tumultuous nature of the period in question, this was impressive. It reflected the resourcefulness of the society's core members and the support of its large membership—an advantage that many other art societies at the time did not enjoy. For example, Yiyuan folded in 1934 due to political instability and lack of funding. I would argue that the sustainability of the Women's Society could be partly attributed to the philanthropic intention that became an essential part of its activities, especially in the late 1930s and '40s (and which will be discussed later in this chapter).

³³⁰ Ibid. A *tang* usually refers to a group of hanging scrolls—usually in multiples of four—of painting and calligraphy.

³³¹ Andrews and Shen discuss in detail an existing set of four hanging scrolls by Chen Xiaocui, Gu Qingyao, Zhou Lianxia, and Lu Xiaoman that were of different styles and subject matter. The grouping was most likely the result of the standardized format of the paintings at the exhibitions. See Andrews and Shen, "Traditionalism as a Modern Stance," 2–6.

³³² Bao Mingxin and Li Meng, "Zhongguo nüzi shuhuahui shishikao," 136.

Other than these large group exhibitions, a small number of members also held joint exhibitions. For example, on at least three occasions in the 1940s, Feng Wenfeng, Chen Xiaocui, Gu Fei 顧飛 (Gu Mofei 顧墨飛, 1907–?), and Xie Yuewei 謝月眉 (1906–1998) joined together to hold a four-women exhibition.³³³ Other than individual works, which amounted to about three hundred pieces at each of the exhibitions, the artists also produced groups of four hanging scrolls. The spirit of collaboration exemplified by the Women's Society was echoed in these smaller group exhibitions.

Numerous solo exhibitions were also held by individual artists, such as Gu Fei, who exhibited her work at the Women's Bank (Nüzi yinhang 女子銀行) in 1942 (a choice of venue that further emphasized women's participation in various facets of society). Bao Yahui also held a solo exhibition at the Chinese Art Garden (Zhongguo huayuan 中國畫苑) in 1946, and Feng Wenfeng held one at the Ningbo Native-place Association in 1943. These shows received various levels of media attention, and many were held at popular venues, such as the Ningbo Native-place Association, Daxin Department Store (Daxin Gongsi 大新公司, located on Nanjing Road, in Shanghai's commercial centre), and they attracted large audiences.

GLOBAL PRESENCE: FROM SHANGHAI TO THE WORLD

The core members of the Women's Society had extensive experience participating in domestic and international events, and some of them had also studied abroad. They were travelers whose mobility was made possible by their family resources, as well as the Chinese population's desire to be seen on the international stage. Cultural nationalism prompted the Republican government to actively promote Chinese art to the outside world in the late 1920s and '30s through

³³³ The group exhibitions had been reported in *Shenbao*: May 27, 1940, 8; May 26, 1941, 8; July 2, 1943, 3.

international expositions and overseas exhibitions of Chinese art and artifacts. Given the nature of international expositions—which aimed to showcase the best cultural and industrial products of each nation—China tended to submit works that would reflect the national essence. Therefore, handicrafts and *guohua* were among the most common objects to be showcased in these exhibitions.

Many of the core members of the Women's Society were frequent participants in these international events. Although submission guidelines were developed by the relevant government departments, the selection process would have been a trying task for event organizers, given the intricate personal networks in which governed the Chinese art world. Balancing the demands of various groups and schools was quite the challenge. To solve this issue, organizers would often consult with art societies, who would then recommend members for consideration. Membership in an important art society was therefore unquestionably beneficial, as it would often lead to more opportunities for international exposure. For example, as discussed in chapter one, works by members of the Lake Society and the Chinese Painting Society were often selected for international exhibitions, and these societies would also participate in international expositions as a group.

Among core members of the Women's Society, Li Qiujuan was the most active participant in international exhibitions. Not only were her works selected for these events, but she herself also served on the organizing and selection committees of several of them, including A Century of Progress International Exposition in Chicago (1933–1934), and the Exposition d'art chinois contemporain held at the Musée du Jeu de Paume in Paris (1933).³³⁴ Her own work also received

³³⁴ Wang Yichang, *Zhongguo meishu nianjian 1947*, 82.

international recognition, such as a gold medal at the Exposition Internationale de Liège.³³⁵ Li was one of the artists whose work was chosen to be exhibited at the Ausstellung Chinesische Malerei der Gegenwart (Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Painting) in Berlin in 1934. It was an important exhibition showcasing contemporary art from China, with 274 works on display by 164 artists. Li Qiujun and Yang Xuejiu were exhibited alongside those by well-respected artists such as Wu Xingfen, Zhang Daqian, Qi Baishi 齊白石 (1864–1957), Lin Fengmian 林風眠 (1900–1991), Liu Haisu 劉海粟 (1896–1994), Gao Jianfu 高劍父 (1879–1951), and Gao Qifeng 高奇峰 (1889–1933).

A German-language catalogue of the exhibition was published with an essay and complete list of pieces on display. It also included black-and-white reproductions of thirty-two works from the show, all of which were by male artists, including four works by Liu Haisu, three by Gao Qifeng, and one by the past president of the Republic, Xu Shichang 徐世昌 (1855–1939).³³⁶ Although none of the works included in the catalogue were by female artists, this omission was as much a generational consideration as a gendered one, as Li Qiujun and Yang Xuejiu were much younger than most of the artists selected for the exhibition. Though the Berlin exhibition was held in January 1934, just a few months before the Women's Society was to be founded, the presence of two future members signaled the growing recognition of female *guohua* artists on the international stage.

The Berlin exhibition was one of the largest of Chinese-style painting by living artists to be held in Europe in the 1930s, organized by the Chinese Republican government. A few other

³³⁵ Bao Mingxin, *Haishang guixiu*, 100; “Bibohui jiangping zuozai shishanghui banfa” 比博會獎憑昨在市商會頒發 [Awards for the Belgium exposition were given out yesterday at the chamber of commerce], *Shenbao*, November 29, 1931, 14.

³³⁶ Ausstellung Chinesische Malerei der Gegenwart [Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Painting] (Berlin, 1934).

large-scale exhibitions were also held in European cities, such as the aforementioned 1933 exhibition in Paris and the International Exhibition of Chinese Art held at the Burlington House in London (1935–1936). Unlike other large art organizations, which would often exhibit as a group, members of the Women’s Society frequently participated on an individual basis. As a women’s art group, it seemed that the Women’s Society was yet to gain the same prestige as other non-gender based art organizations. However, core members of the society were able to navigate the art world through their well-established networks of contacts. I would also argue that the Women’s Society—as a group that had itself frequently put on exhibitions—helped raise the profile of many of its artists; these professional affiliations helped some women artists cast a wider net in the art world. Even though many core members had already built their names elsewhere, their involvement in the Women’s Society raised their overall reputation. In turn, members of lesser status would benefit from their affiliation with core members.

The Women’s Society also tried to establish its global presence by flaunting its name at overseas events. In 1936, several artists from the Women’s Society—Yang Lingfu 楊令蕓 (1887–1978), Yu Jingzhi 余靜芝 (1890–?), and Jin Ming 金明 (Jin Qiusheng 金秋生, ca. 1910–?)—participated in the Exhibition of Chinese Art and Culture (Zhongguo wenhua yishu zhanlanhui 中國文化藝術展覽會) in Vancouver.³³⁷ Since this was not Yang Lingfu’s first experience at an international art exhibition—in 1926 Yang, who was fluent in English, had been China’s sole representative at the The Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition in

³³⁷ “Yang Yu liang nüshi canjia Kannada yizhan” 楊余兩女士參加坎拿大藝展 (Ms. Yang and Ms. Yu participate in an art exhibition in Canada), *Funü yuebao* 婦女月報 [Women’s monthly] 2, no. 6 (1936): 23–24; Bao Mingxin, *Haishang guixiu*, 154.

Philadelphia³³⁸—she was able to answer queries from visitors all by herself. Her evident talent and erudition was a source of national pride.

The presence of Chinese women at international exhibitions was as significant as the art itself. Women's personal achievements in the field of arts and crafts helped China present the changing status of women at home—a much-desired image of progress for the Republican government to display on the world stage. The conjuncture of female agency and the presentation of *guohua* on an international scale contributed to the image of China as a progressive society that valued women's contributions. This image was a key aspect of the Republican government's modern nation-building efforts, as it projected the notion of women as upholders of the nation's cultural heritage.

Both collectively and individually, members of the Women's Society helped to make women's art practice visible and relevant at home, which in turn created opportunities for women artists to participate in overseas events. Critical acclaim in the local art world and on the global stage also led to commercial success, which was an essential part of the process of professionalization. The Women's Society facilitated this process for its members through exhibitions, publications, and other events.

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

Like most of the other art societies at the time, the Women's Society did not explicitly focus on advancing its members' commercial success. However, its collective activities certainly helped women artists attain commercial and critical success in the Shanghai art world of the 1930s.

³³⁸ The exposition was held from June 1 to December 1, 1926.

Women artists' commercial activities represented an area of career advancement for the new talented women thus enhancing their agency.

With artists' addresses and price lists appearing in newspapers and magazines, patrons could now deal directly with the producers. Setting one's prices was therefore a delicate matter, one that often involved leveraging one's artistic network and lineage. Advancement in the field of *guohua* still relied heavily on an artist's provenance, which could be seen in the ways price lists were written and set up. Basing price lists on one's teachers or other notable persons in the cultural world was a regular practice. As female artists' visibility increased in the art world, they also relied on this subtle marketing strategy to advance their careers. A close look at the pricing and promotional strategies used by a few Women's Society members will shed light on the socioeconomic reality for women artists of the period.

Members of the Women's Society often solicited senior artists or notable cultural figures to set their price lists. While this was not an uncommon practice among *guohua* artists in general, female artists were especially reliant on the endorsement of prominent figures to advertise their works. Wang Yiting was one such figure. Not only was Wang a well-known painter, industrialist, and philanthropist; he was also a godfather-like figure in the Republican art world who was instrumental in facilitating and financing the activities of the numerous art societies in which he was involved. And his stature and influence helped establish many artists' careers—including a number of members of the Women's Society—by setting and endorsing their price lists.

Wang Yiting was teacher to the Yang sisters Xuejiu, Xueyao, and Xuezhen. Indeed, the Yang sisters' combined price list, published in 1924, states first and foremost that they were all students of Wang—a piece of information that helped to raise the sisters' position in the art

world.³³⁹ The price list also included each of the sisters' specialties—for example, that Xueyao was good at painting flowers, that Xuezhen was famous for her figures, and that Xuejiu was adept at painting landscapes. The sisters' cultural pedigree was further conveyed by the fact that they were the daughters of Yang Bomin. At the end of the price list, it was also customary to list the people who had set the prices. This practice was particularly important for younger and emerging artists, since it helped them build confidence amongst potential patrons.

Comparing a 1922 price list by Xueyao and Xuejiu to a 1924 price list for the three sisters shows that, though the two lists reflect slightly different measurements, the price range remained the same.³⁴⁰ The difference, rather, lays in the purposes for which the respective artists sold their work. The 1922 list announces only that Xuejiu and Xueyao's works are for sale, along with a description of their artistic specialties. The 1924 list, by contrast, includes a short paragraph mentioning that the Chengdong Girls' School, which had been established by the Yang sisters' father, Yang Bomin, was in need of funding and that the sisters were selling their works to raise funds for the school. It was published in the same year that Yang Bomin died.

The Yang sisters' 1924 price list was set by Cai Yuanpei, Huang Yanpei 黄炎培 (1878–1965), Tang Xiong, and Wang Kun 汪琨 (Wang Zhongshan 汪仲山, 1877–1946)—each a well-known figure in the field of *guohua* and art education. Cai Yuanpei and Huang Yanpei were advocates for women's education.³⁴¹ Their names on the sisters' price list simultaneously added

³³⁹ “Yang Xueyao Yang Xuejiu Yang Xuezhen sannüshi yuhua” 楊雪瑤楊雪玖楊雪珍三女史鬻畫 [Yang Xueyao, Yang Xuejiu, Yang Xuezhen selling paintings], *Shenbao*, February 9, 1924, quoted in *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhuaiji runli*, 141.

³⁴⁰ “Yang Xueyao Yang Xuejiu nüshi runli,” 楊雪瑤雪玖女史潤例 [Price list of Ms. Yang Xueyao and Yang Xuejiu] *Shengzhou jiguangji* 1 (1922), 6 (1923) / “Yang Xueyao Yang Xuejiu Yang Xuezhen sannüshi yuhua”, *Shenbao*, February 9, 1924, quoted in *Ibid.*, 113, 141.

³⁴¹ Huang Yanpei was a student of Cai Yuanpei, and he was also an avid promoter of enlightenment education. He organized the *Huxuehui* 滬學會 (Shanghai Learning Society) with Li Shutong, who was also a student of Cai. See Yan Juanying, “Buxi de biandong,” 52. For Huang's role in female education, see Judge, *Republican Lens*, 165.

prestige to the cause and served the purpose of endorsing their work. Moreover, the endorsement of Tang Xiong, whose mother was Wu Xingfen, also helped to situate the Yang sisters' work in the lineage of female artists. The price list could also convey crucial information about the artist's social status and financial situation. Compared to other core members of the Women's Society, as mentioned, Yang Xuejiu came from a well-connected scholar's family but was apparently not as well off as other members such as Li Qiujuan and Feng Wenfeng, who lived in the more affluent foreign concessions.³⁴² Therefore, selling her work with her sisters helped secure Xang's financial independence in addition to funding her father's school.

In the catalogue of the Women's Society's fourth exhibition (1937), Yang Xuejiu had a price list published on her own (it had been previously revised in April 1931).³⁴³ When we compare this price list to the 1924 price list published jointly with her sisters, we see that Xuejiu had raised her prices by about 300 to 400 percent. These changes reflected inflation, but they also showed that Xuejiu's works were becoming more sought-after. The main purpose of the 1924 price list was to raise funds for the Chengdong school—a joint effort between sisters whose works were likely to be inconsistent in quality. As a result, the joint list was more reasonably priced than the individual list put out by Xuejiu a few years later. While Yang and her sisters needed simply to subsidize their income through the sale of their art, Li Qiujuan's commercial development told a different story.

³⁴² Feng lived in Haining Road and Li resided at Carter Road (卡德路), both in the International Settlement. Chengdong was located at Huayi Street 花衣街 in the older part of Shanghai. Andrews and Shen also point out that the Yang family opened the school in old Shanghai, but not in the more modern and prosperous foreign concessions. See "Traditionalism as a Modern Stance," 18.

³⁴³ "Yang Xuejiu shuhua runli ershinian siyue chongding" 楊雪玖書畫潤例二十年四月重訂 [Price list of painting and calligraphy of Yang Xuejiu, revised in April of 1931], in *Zhongguo nüzi shuhuahui disijie tekan* 中國女子書畫會第四屆特刊 [Catalogue for the fourth exhibition of the Chinese Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting] (Shanghai: Zhongguo nüzi shuhuahui, 1937).

Coming from a very wealthy merchant family, Li did not have to rely on selling her works for financial gain. Instead, most were sold for disaster relief or other philanthropic causes. Li's first price list, established in 1928, informs readers that since there was a high demand for her works, she had had a hard time fulfilling requests. Therefore, she set a price list in order to curb the constant requests from enthusiasts. Apparently, this was a humble and subtle way to announce that she was now selling her works for money; it also reflected the fact that Li's works were now in high demand. The price list was set by her teacher Wu Xingfen, displaying the lineage that aided in the artist's growing status and reputation.³⁴⁴ The way Li's price list was written was relatively simple. At the time, the common format for price lists usually consisted of detailed pricing for different subject matters and sizes. By contrast, Li's list states that she would charge 10 *yuan* per *chi*, regardless of the painting's subject matter. The simplicity of such a scheme suggested that Li was not in the least concerned about making money through the sale of her work, but rather that the purpose of setting a price list in the first place was to deter the demand for too many paintings. However, her higher price range—which was greater even than her teacher, Wu Xingfen, whose prices were set in 1922—reflected Li's status in the art world.³⁴⁵

Prices for Li's works were leaps and bounds above her female contemporaries. While Li was charging 10 *yuan* per *chi* for all subject matter, prices for Gu Qingyao's works ranged from 3 to 8 *yuan* in 1926.³⁴⁶ Yang Xuejiu charged 5 *yuan* per *chi* for her landscape ink paintings in

³⁴⁴ “Shuhuaxun: huajia Qiujuun nüshi yuhua” 書畫訊: 畫家秋君女士鬻畫 [Art news: Ms. Qiujuun is selling her painting] *Shenbao*, April 5, 1928, 26; “Li Qiujuun nüshi huali” 李秋君女士畫例 [Price list of painting by Ms. Li Qiujuun], *Shenbao*, March 14, 1928, quoted in *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhuaqia runli*, 219.

³⁴⁵ Wu's paintings ranged from 6 to 10 *yuan* per *chi*, and 5 *yuan* per fan. Li was also charging 5 *yuan* for fans. “Wu Shujuan runli” 吳淑娟潤例 [Price list of Wu Shujuan], 神州吉光集第二期 (1922) quoted in *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhuaqia runli*, 113.

³⁴⁶ “Gu Qingyao nüshi qishi” 顧青瑤女士啓事 [Announcement from Ms. Gu Qingyao], *Shenbao*, September 4, 1926, quoted in *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhuaqia runli*, 192.

1931, or about half of what Li was charging in 1928.³⁴⁷ Like many other core members of the Women's Society, Li had no pressing need to make a living through her art.

Feng Wenfeng, who seemed comfortable in the media limelight, had an even more unique way of promoting her works. Feng did not appear to have her price list published in print media, but rather promoted her work in short write-ups in newspapers. These short articles, written by various authors, would tell readers about Feng's activities and her reputation as a celebrated calligrapher. They also listed the names of those who set the prices for her works—including Wang Yiting and the well-known artist, collector, and politician Ye Gongchuo 葉恭綽 (1881–1968). Interested patrons could contact the fan shops or art stores that carried her work, or else write directly to her residence to inquire about the pricing of her works.³⁴⁸ This kind of promotional strategy was more akin to the practice of Western-style artists at the time, most of whom did not directly publish prices of their works in the media. Feng also did not have the pressing need to make a living through her art, though her slightly different marketing strategy demonstrated her mercantile prowess as well as her skill in maneuvering various social networks.

Even though the majority of the members of the Women's Society did not have to rely on their art practice to make a living, there were exceptions. Such was the case for Wu Qingxia, one of the core members of the Women's Society. Coming from a different social background than most of the other core members, Wu was taught painting by her father in a “local professional style,” which was generally looked down upon by other amateur literati painters, even though

³⁴⁷ “Yang Xuejiu shuhua runli ershinian siyue chongding” 楊雪玖書畫潤例二十年四月重訂 [Price list of painting and calligraphy of Yang Xuejiu, revised in April of 1931], in *Zhongguo nüzi shuhuahui disijie tekan* 中國女子書畫會第四屆特刊 [Catalogue for the fourth exhibition of the Chinese Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting] (Shanghai: Zhongguo nüzi shuhuahui, 1937).

³⁴⁸ “Nüshujia Feng Wenfeng maizi” 女書家馮文鳳賣字 [Female calligrapher Feng Wenfeng is selling her calligraphy], *Shenbao*, November 27, 1933, 10; “Feng Wenfeng shufa ciyu Haishang” 馮文鳳書法馳譽海上 [Calligraphy by Feng Wenfeng is well known in Shanghai], *Shenbao*, December 16, 1933, 12.

most *guohua* artists at the time were already actively involved in commercial activities.³⁴⁹

Andrews and Shen contend that it was Wu's participation in various art societies, and the Women's Society in particular, that helped put Wu on an equal footing with other artists of privileged social and economic backgrounds.³⁵⁰ Undoubtedly, Shanghai's booming art trade, a product of the city's open commercial market, also made her success possible.

Wu's price list, when compared to other core members, especially Li Qiujun, was profoundly different in terms of how it was written. In addition to listing in great detail the precise breakdown of prices for works of various dimensions, subject matters, formats, and styles, Wu's price list also informed clients that copying old masters' work was one of her services and that the prices for these copies would be determined by negotiating with the artist.³⁵¹ Although copying old masters' works was a common, even a venerated way of studying painting, the sale of these works was generally looked down upon by artists who prided themselves on their place within the amateur literati tradition. For Wu to offer this service shows that it was necessary for her to engage in alternative ways of making a living through her art.

In the case of He Xiangning, the business side of her art practice represented yet another way in which women made a contribution to society. As a well-respected revolutionary, and the widow of the martyr Liao Zhongkai 廖仲愷 (1877–1925), He was entitled to receive financial support from the government. However, as He conveyed in an interview, since she was able to make a living through the sale of her artwork, she did not have to rely on government support.³⁵² He's artistic talent further facilitated her independence and her ability to devote her life to

³⁴⁹ Andrews and Shen, "Traditionalism as a Modern Stance," 15–18.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

³⁵¹ The price list was printed in the third and fourth exhibition catalogues of the Women's Society (1936 and 1937). Also in *Guohua yuekan* 國畫月刊 1, no. 4 (February 1935), quoted in *Jinxiandai jinshi shuhuaqia runli*, 291.

³⁵² Huang Jiping, *Zhongguo xinnüxing*, 6.

nationalistic causes. In this way, He was a model of the patriotic Republican woman who, by establishing a career, redefined the notion of female talent in the service of the nation.

For these women artists, commercial success ensured high prices for their works at charity sales. At such events, patrons would have already been familiar with certain artists' works. Fame and commercial success therefore became important elements in asserting these women artists' roles in society.

WOMEN'S ART EDUCATION

The Women's Society facilitated educational initiatives and accommodated the convergence of artists of various skill levels and artistic beliefs. As an organization mandated to promote women in art, the society placed extra emphasis on art education for women, which, in Chinese society, was already one of the areas in which women's education was encouraged. Indeed, before the founding of the organization, many of its core members—such as Li Qiujun, Feng Wenfeng, Yang Xuejiu, Chen Xiaocui, and Wu Qingxia—were already engaged in women's education and art training. Their presence in the group would mean that the Women's Society represented a strong voice—even an authoritative one—in women's art education.

Unlike other, larger art societies, the Women's Society did not have a permanent location at which to hold classes. Instead, it offered correspondence courses developed by core members. Yet other than the practical issue of lacking a permanent space, I would argue that offering correspondence courses was also a response to the makeup and needs of the membership. As most core members came from well-to-do families, and thus grew up with the opportunity to learn art, many of them were already students of well-known painters, both male and female. Therefore, there was not a pressing need for the society to hold classes for core members. Yet

because of its mandate to make art education available to a broader demographic, the Women's Society offered correspondence courses to women of all backgrounds and skill levels. Courses offered included calligraphy, poetry, epigraphy, oil painting, and Chinese-style painting. Tuition for each course was relatively inexpensive at 5 *yuan*, and the courses were also divided into three different skill levels to suit the needs of students of various abilities.³⁵³

We do not have records of how well students learned from these courses, or how many students actually enrolled in them. However, the intention of these courses was to provide emerging and younger female artists an opportunity to receive art training without having to enroll in art academies or other formal art programs, which would have imposed a greater financial and time commitment. Moreover, as the society's membership consisted of a great number of women who resided outside of Shanghai—especially as more and more women joined in later years—correspondence courses made it possible for these members to learn from their more experienced peers.

The Women's Society—unlike the Yiyuan Institute, the Chinese Painting Society, or the Lake Society, which functioned almost like a formal art institute—was closer in nature to a social club for female artists, one that stressed the collectivity of its membership. Members exhibited works together, participated in philanthropic causes, and held social events in the name of their shared interest in art. With a membership that was comprised of artists of different experiences and skill levels, mentorship would be a more important component of education than

³⁵³ Correspondence courses offered by the Women's Society included calligraphy (taught by Feng Wenfeng), poetry (Chen Xiaocui), epigraphy (Gu Qingyao), oil painting (Feng Wenfeng), and Chinese-style painting (landscape by Gu Fei and Bao Yahui; flowers by Ding Junbi 丁筠碧 and Zhang Youfen 張又芬; figures by Wu Qingxia; and female beauties (*shinü*) by Zhou Lianxia and Yu Jingzhi). See Nüzi shuhuahui she hanshouke" 女子書畫會設函授科 [The Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting offers correspondence courses], *Shenbao*, June 12, 1934, 10.

formal teaching. Moreover, since many of the core members already had prior teaching experience, whether in a private- or in art-school setting, they probably did not feel a pressing need to hold separate classes once the organization was founded. Instead, they welcomed a number of their students into the society, thus helping to usher in a new generation of female artists.

The three founding members on whom I have been focusing my discussion were all experienced educators. As the principal of Chengdong, Yang Xuejiu not only shouldered the responsibility of continuing the legacy of her father, Yang Bomin, but also, through her association with various art societies—the Women’s Society in particular—the importance of art education for women. Yang Bomin had established one of the first certificate programs in art, as well as teacher-training courses for women artists.³⁵⁴ Yang’s belief in the importance of art education for women was echoed by other reform-minded educators like Li Shutong 李叔同 (1880–1942) and Cai Yuanpei. Li was one of the first Chinese students to travel to Japan to study Western-style art,³⁵⁵ and after returning to China he taught oil painting and music at Chengdong. Their father’s connections helped Yang Xuejiu and her sisters pursue a career in art, and made possible the building of a network of associates and students at Chengdong, many of whom later became core supporters of the Women’s Society. Indeed, several members, such as Bao Yahui and Gu Fei, had been students at Chengdong. Gu entered the school in 1926, when Yang Xuejiu,

³⁵⁴ About the art programs at Chengdong, see “Chengdong nüxue zhuyi shifan” 城東女學注意師範 [Chengdong Girls’ School pays attention to teacher’s training], *Shenbao*, February 10, 1914, 10; Bao Tianxiao, *Chuanying lou huiyilu*, 334–339.

³⁵⁵ Li Shutong studied under Kuroda Seiki 黒田清輝 (1866–1924) from 1905 to 1907 at the Western art department of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts—the first formal Western art program in East Asia.

a central figure in asserting the educational mandate of the Women's Society, was its principal.³⁵⁶

Li Qiujun had been an active art educator who would only teach female students. A few of these pupils eventually became members of the Women's Society, where they exhibited alongside their teacher. These students include Jin Ming, Huang Quanhui 黃荃徽 (ca. 1910–?), and Yao Xinhua 姚新華 (ca. 1910–?).³⁵⁷ As mentioned, Li was a woman with ample financial resources; she therefore did not charge tuition for the lessons held at home, further indication of Li's devotion to the art education for female students.³⁵⁸

Wu Zhangzhu 吳掌珠 (ca. 1910–?), an artist who joined the Women's Society in 1935, was introduced to Feng Wenfeng by another member, Jiang Ya'nán 江亞南 (1917–1936), from whom she started learning calligraphy, after the inaugural exhibition in 1934.³⁵⁹ Feng recalled that Wu was able to quickly master various calligraphic styles with ease. Feng was also instrumental in bringing Wu into the society. Chen Xiaocui was another educator who devoted her efforts to teaching only female students. Chen's seven most prominent students included her daughter, Tang Cuichu 湯翠雛, as well as Ye Shifang 葉世芳 and Zhang Tongzhen 張彤箴, both of whom became members of the Women's Society.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁶ Bao Mingxin, *Haishang guixiu*, 166.

³⁵⁷ “Jin Ming nüshi tashi yiwei nühuajia Li Zhuhan Li Qiujun liang xiansheng shi tade laoshi” 金明女士她是一位女畫家李祖韓李秋君兩先生是她的老師 [Ms. Jin Ming is a female artist, Li Zhuhan and Li Qiujun are her teachers], *Xuexiao shenghuo* 學校生活 [School life] 5 (1930): 4; Bao Mingxin 包銘新, *Haishang guixiu* 海上閩秀, 154; “Nüzi shuhuaazhan zhi shengkuang” 女子書畫展之盛況 [The grand occasion of the exhibition of calligraphy and painting by women artists], *Funü yuebao* 婦女月報 [Women's monthly] 1, no. 5 (1935): 26–27.

³⁵⁸ Wen Yang, “Shuhuaajia Li Qiujun nüshi fangwenji,” 35.

³⁵⁹ Feng Wenfeng 馮文鳳, “Huainian Jiang Yanan huayou” 懷念江亞南畫友 [Remembering fellow artist Jiang Yanan], *Zhongguo nüzi shuhuahui disijie tekan* 中國女子書畫會第四屆特刊 [Catalogue for the fourth exhibition of the Chinese Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting] (1937): n.p.

³⁶⁰ Wang Yichang, *Zhongguo meishu nianjian 1947*, 51.

Wu Qingxia did not come from the same social or economic backgrounds as most of the other core members. However, her eventual success in the Shanghai art world gave her a strong foothold in the realms of both art sale and education. Interestingly, even though Wu taught many students, none of her twelve most prominent female students became members of the Women's Society.³⁶¹ This begs the question of whether Wu's lineage was stigmatized despite her own success and the mandate of the Women's Society to be inclusive of women artists of all classes and backgrounds. Did Wu feel that there was still unease about her background, or that her somewhat market-oriented practice was not appreciated among the economically privileged ladies of the Women's Society? It was very possible that some of her students, such as Wu herself, did not come from the same privileged backgrounds as most of the core members, and were, therefore, neither encouraged by their teacher nor made to feel at ease by other members of the organization. A few others, such as Wang Xuejiao 王雪蕉 (1929–?) did not become Wu's students until 1946, by which time the Women's Society had become less active.³⁶² Wang, who belonged to a new generation, was also much younger than most members of the society, which could be another reason why she did not join the society. While students of Li Qiujiu, Feng Wenfeng, and Yang Xuejiu did become members after gaining a certain recognition through the fame of their teachers, Wu's students remain largely obscure to scholars today. Perhaps they operated in a different circle from most other members of the society—which could be evinced

³⁶¹ There were twelve students listed in “Zhuanxiangge tongmenlu” 篆香閣同門錄 [Classmates of the Hall of Fragrant Seal Script]: Lou Yongfen 婁詠芬, Qu Youlin 屈幼霖, Wang Tingna 王亭納, Wang Aizhen 王愛珍, Zhu Shimin 朱時敏, Wen Yimei 文依梅, Ni Pei 倪培, Xu Bixia 徐碧霞, Li Guoxian 李颯賢, Wang Xuejiao 王雪蕉, Deng Xunlie 鄧舜烈, and Chen Xiaxian 陳霞仙. Zhuanxiangge was the studio name of Wu Qingxia. See Wang Yichang, *Zhongguo meishu nianjian 1947*, 51.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 63.

by the fact that two of Wu's students, Wang Tingna 王亭納 and Li Guoxian 李愷賢, eventually went to the United States to continue their studies.³⁶³

In sum, although the Women's Society did not focus on promoting women's art education through formal teaching, its role in advocating the importance of education for women had been accomplished through the social network that it created. It also relied heavily on the reputation of its core members as art educators, and the subsequent mentorship that became a strong component of its educational mandate. As famed artists and educators, the intellectual presence of members of the Women's Society was further embodied in their publicness.

PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS

The Women's Society not only promoted professionalism in women's art practice; it also brought forth the notion of women artists as intellectuals through the representation of its core members in print media. In addition to their own published writings, individual members were the subject of various interviews and exhibition reviews in newspapers and magazines. These members became celebrities and public intellectuals, and they represented the Women's Society as such. They also served as models of the quintessential female *guohua* artist, one who, in addition to being skilled at her art, was also an erudite scholar adept at using popular print media—including the burgeoning field of art magazines, women's journals, and popular miscellanies—as a platform to articulate their wide range of knowledge and artistic experience.

³⁶³ Wang Tingna went to the United States to continue her art studies. See Yun Ruxin, *Minguo shuhua jia huizhuan*, 22 and Wang Yichang, *Zhongguo meishu nianjian 1947*, 63. Xu Bixia and Li Guoxian also went to the United States. See Tao and Li, *Shiluo de lishi*, 183. Li Guoxian started learning painting from Wu Qingxia in 1945. See her biographical entries in Yun Ruxin, *Minguo shuhua jia huizhuan*, 89, and Wang Yichang, *Zhongguo meishu nianjian 1947*, 85.

Beyond the numerous profiles of individual members found in newspapers and magazines, the collective voice of the Women's Society was presented in catalogues published to accompany its first four annual exhibitions (1934–1937). These four catalogues not only served to promote the society and document the work of its artists, but also showcased the members' literary talent. In the inaugural catalogue included a column titled “Collected poetry on painting” (*huazhong shiji* 畫中詩集)—a compilation of poems written by the artists to adorn their artworks and a sign that some members had continued the genteel tradition of poetry-writing. In this context, their literary skills were as valuable as their artistic accomplishments.

Aside from poetry, they also wrote in other genres typically associated with learned women of the past. For example, the 1937 catalogue included elegies in commemoration of Jiang Ya'nan, a member who died at the age of nineteen. The elegies included a sixty-four line *wuyanshi* 五言詩 (five-word poem) by Li Qiuju full of literary allusion—further expression of Li's knowledge of the classics.³⁶⁴

In addition to elegies written in the classical Chinese by members like Gu Qingyao, Chen Xiaocui and Bao Yahui, an essay written in the vernacular by Feng Wenfeng recalled her encounter with Jiang Yanan.³⁶⁵ Such vernacular writing added another dimension to the commemoration as it differed from the genre of classical elegy that was commonly used for such occasions. Moreover, Feng's essay included personal stories about Jiang Ya'nan that would have been difficult to express in the concise classical language of a traditional elegy. Feng closed the

³⁶⁴ Li Qiuju 李秋君, “Wan Jiang Yanan nüshi” 輓江亞南女士 [Lamenting Ms. Jiang Ya'nan], in *Zhongguo nüzi shuhuahui disijie tekan* 中國女子書畫會第四屆特刊 [Special publication for the fourth exhibition of the Chinese Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting] (1937): n.p.

³⁶⁵ Feng Wenfeng 馮文鳳, “Huainian Jiang Yanan huayou” 懷念江亞南畫友, in *Zhongguo nüzi shuhuahui disijie tekan* 中國女子書畫會第四屆特刊 [Special publication for the fourth exhibition of the Chinese Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting] (1937): n.p.

essay with a vernacular poem by Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978), which expressed her sadness at the death of a friend. The poem comes from Guo’s lyrical drama (*shiju* 詩劇) *Xianglei* 湘累. Written in 1920, the poem was adapted into a song and used in the 1934 film *The Classic for Girls* (*Nüerjing* 女兒經), starring the famous actress Hu Die 胡蝶 (Butterfly Wu, 1908–1989).³⁶⁶ Though the title of the film alludes to a classical didactic text for women, it tells stories of a few “new women” against the backdrop of “women’s liberation” (*funü jiefang* 婦女解放) and Shanghai’s New Life Movement (*xin shenghuo yundong* 新生活運動). Feng’s inclusion of a song from a popular film about women, I would argue, represented her tribute to the Women’s Society’s embrace of the identity of the new women of China. Although Feng’s art practice—especially her calligraphy—was based on classical theories and teachings, her essay, with its use of and appreciation for vernacular language and popular culture, demonstrated an openness to new modes of expression.

In the exhibition catalogues and elsewhere, members of the Women’s Society wrote about their art practices, expressing their knowledge not only of the art-making process, but also of art history and theory. Art-manual writing had not been a forte of female artists in the premodern era. Since the Ming period, a few women had written manuals on embroidery—a practice that was intimately linked to women’s daily life but which had not been covered by technical treatises. Grace Fong argues that the embroidery manuals written by Zhang Shuying 張淑英 (the Ming period or earlier), Ding Pei 丁佩 (fl. first half of the nineteenth century), and Shen Shou 沈壽 (1872–1921), indicate important moments of knowledge-production and self-

³⁶⁶ *Nüerjing* 女兒經 [The classic for girls] (1934), dir. Zhang Shichuan 張石川, Cheng Bugao 程步高, and Li Pingqian 李萍倩.

perception for women.³⁶⁷ As mentioned in the last chapter, *Treatise of Ink Bamboo (Mozhu pu)*, by the Yuan artist Guan Daosheng, was the only painting treatise attributed to a woman, though such publications by women artists started to surface in the early twentieth century, such as the one by Jin Taotao (also discussed in chapter one). For artists of the Women's Society, such projects took on a passionate and often personal tenor, as they often conveyed great detail about the authors' creative process, learning experience, and passion for art.

For example, an article by Feng Wenfeng in *Dangdai Funü* 當代婦女 (*Contemporary women*), described her experience learning calligraphy from her father; accordingly, it articulated not only her passion for the art form but her relationship with her parents as well.³⁶⁸ In the article, Feng also expresses her depth of knowledge in the theory of calligraphy, thus communicating to readers her expertise in the practice. Feng also promotes the mandate of the Women's Society—the formation of a collective for women artists regardless of social class. Feng asserted that art was not only for the privileged few but was rather a practice of self-cultivation available to everyone, especially women whose temperament was suitable for practicing art.³⁶⁹ Since the article was written in a passionate personal voice, it both conveyed its author's enthusiasm for the arts and served the purpose of rousing interest in women readers to practice art. As an artist and educator whose interest and knowledge of art was profound and diverse, Feng fully understood the ability of popular print media to impart knowledge and influence readers' thinking.

³⁶⁷ Grace S. Fong, "Female Hands: Embroidery as a Knowledge Field in Women's Everyday Life in Late Imperial and Early Republican China," *Late Imperial China* 25, no. 1 (2004): 5.

³⁶⁸ Feng Wenfeng "Cong xuexi shuhua tandao funü yanjiu yishu," 171–175.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Feng had been writing and publishing articles on art from a young age. In 1920, when she was still in Hong Kong, she published an article titled “The colour box of watercolour artists” (*Shuicaijia zhi yansexiang* 水彩家之顏色箱).³⁷⁰ It was Feng’s translation of a chapter from the book *Water Colour Painting*, by the English watercolourist Alfred W. Rich.³⁷¹ In the article, Feng mentions that she had also translated another book on watercolour landscape painting in its entirety. However, instead of publishing an entire volume, she found that Rich’s discussion of colour in his book was very concise, and would thus be easily understood by beginners. She therefore chose a single chapter and translated it into Chinese for all to share.³⁷² The article not only demonstrated Feng’s ability to translate English texts into Chinese, but also her elite education in Hong Kong and her training in both Chinese- and Western-style art. She was most likely educated in one of the many English schools established by missionary institutions in Hong Kong. Her multiple interests, including Chinese calligraphy, epigraphy, and new art forms such as photography, were greatly influenced by her father’s interests in the arts, and Feng’s fluency in both Chinese and English. Her father’s connection to the elite governing circle would also have helped her gain a certain status amongst the cultural elite of Hong Kong, and eventually of Shanghai. These privileges were fully conveyed by Feng’s representation in numerous newspapers and popular magazines. Feng was able to express herself not only through her art, but also in the various articles she wrote for the press.

Other than writing and publishing their own articles, members of the Women’s Society were themselves frequently featured in popular magazines. Lu Danlin wrote a lengthy profile of

³⁷⁰ Feng Wenfeng, “Shuicaijia zhi yansexiang” 水彩家之顏色箱 [The colour box of watercolour artists], *Xuesheng zazhi* 學生雜誌 [Students’ miscellany], 7, no. 8 (1920): 27–30.

³⁷¹ Alfred W. Rich, *Water Colour Painting* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1918).

³⁷² Feng translated chapter two of the book, which was titled “The Colour Box, and Materials Generally.”

six Women's Society members—Feng Wenfeng, Chen Xiaocui, He Xiangning, Wu Qingxia, Gu Qingyao, and Zhou Lianxia—in *Yijing*.³⁷³ In the article, Lu discusses each of the artists' works and offers his criticism, and he also discusses in great detail each of the artist's upbringing and their other talents. The article thus delineates a picture of the members as accomplished artists, intellectuals, and celebrities, not to mention role models for other women.

Extensive interviews of members of the Women's Society were also frequently published in various magazines and newspapers. These interviews give readers an impression of the artists' practice as well as personal details. In the late 1930s, the journalist Huang Jiping 黃寄萍 (1905–1955), an editor of the supplement of *Shenbao*, published a compilation of interviews of female celebrities. (Many of these interviews had been previously published in *Shenbao* and were later compiled in a book titled *Zhongguo xinnüxing* 中國新女性; *New Women of China*).³⁷⁴ This book was anchored in a centuries-old tradition that used the biographies of exemplary women to impart moral teachings, a famous example of which is the widely disseminated canonical text *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 (*Arrayed traditions of women's lives*).³⁷⁵ Joan Judge has pointed out that narratives and interpretations of ancient biographical accounts had never been static. Indeed, the meanings of these canonical texts were transformed by the introduction of “parabiographical” elements in subsequent editions to suit the sociopolitical thinking and ethical leanings of the time. This practice of “overwriting” was even more intensified by the turn of the twentieth century, as compilers and authors expanded the purpose of these exemplary stories to advance women's education and the goal of national progress.³⁷⁶ The long tradition of using stories of

³⁷³ Lu Danlin, “Jieshao jiwei nü shuhuaia,” 35–40.

³⁷⁴ Huang Jiping 黃寄萍. *Zhongguo Xinnüxing* 中國新女性 [New women of China] (Shanghai: Diqui chubanshe, n.d.)

³⁷⁵ *Lienü zhaun* 列女傳 [Arrayed traditions of women's lives], 34 BCE, compiled by Liu Xiang 劉向 (79–8 BCE).

³⁷⁶ Judge, *The Precious Rafts of History*, 11–12.

exemplary women for female education continued in the early twentieth century with the expansion of ancient texts and the advent of new-style textbooks for female students, and it also made its way into popular journals and newspapers.³⁷⁷ At this time, however, the purpose and function of these biographies evolved from the traditional idea of emulating women's self-sacrifice in the past to the idea of a "self-constituting subject of the future."³⁷⁸

The idea of women's self-creation and the embracing of novel experiences and new possibilities were reflected in Huang's interviews (*fangwenji* 訪問記), a new genre of writing that gave voice to the interviewees. The forty-three women included in *New Women of China* came from different walks of life, and ranged from artists, educators, and social activists, to administrators for charity organizations, aviators, and even a bank teller. Seven members of the Women's Society—He Xiangning, Tang Guanyu, Feng Wenfeng, Bao Yahui, and the sisters Xiong Bishuang (熊璧雙), Xiong Yaoshuang (熊耀雙), and Xiong Peishuang (熊佩雙)—were among the forty-three interviewees. The Western-style artist Pan Yuliang was also included. The relatively high number of artists in the volume reflected the fact that they were one of the most prominent groups to embody the spirit of the "New Woman." And since Huang conducted the interviews based on the women's occupations, artists were therefore among the most prominent female professions at the time, according to Huang. Although the interviews were all written by Huang Jiping, who inevitably would have added his own interpretation, the fact that these women had the opportunity to be directly involved in the process of telling their own stories was an important moment in the expression of female subjectivity, and this constituted a significant departure from the biographies of passive women penned mostly by male authors and compilers

³⁷⁷ For a discussion of functions and interpretations of women's biographies in early twentieth-century texts, see Judge, *The Precious Rafts of History*, 12–27.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

in the past. Artists of the Women's Society—as exemplified in *New Women of China*—further established their position as intellectuals, public figures, and well-regarded role models for the new generation of women. This position was further emphasized in the way they discussed their art practices.

THE CRITICAL APPROACH TO “WOMEN’S ART”

Even before the founding of the Women's Society, a number of its core members had well-established practices facilitated by the new institutional and economic structures of the art world. During the relatively peaceful time of the Nanjing decade, the Ministry of Education held the First National Art Exhibition in 1929, the first large-scale national art event in China organized by the Republican government. Its auxiliary publication, *Meizhan* 美展 (Art exhibition), published once every three days during the exhibition period, provided a forum for critical discussion and heated debates on various topics related to the development of art in China. *Meizhan's* ten issues fueled the art world during, and even long after, the exhibition period. The exhibition and the publication provided opportunities for the development of a critical language for the discussion of both *guohua* and Western-style art. Chen Xiaodie, brother of Chen Xiaocui, and one of the editors of *Meizhan*, wrote about the different schools in contemporary *guohua* practice and focused on discussing the work of individual artists and the schools that they developed or associated with.³⁷⁹

Discussion of individual artists' works seemed to have flourished for a period. Other than *Meizhan*, the special issue of *Funii zazhi* provided another important critical forum for the First

³⁷⁹ Chen Xiaodie 陳小蝶, “Chong meizhan zuopin ganjuedao xiandai guohua huapai” 從美展作品感覺到現代國畫畫派 [Recognizing the different schools in modern Chinese-style painting from the work in the national art exhibition], *Meizhan* 4 (April 19, 1929): 1.

National Art Exhibition; indeed, it was the most comprehensive coverage of women artists' participation at the event.³⁸⁰ The attention paid to the discussion of women artists' work in this special issue of *Funü zazhi* was unique among art and culture publications of the early Republican period. Since many members of the Women's Society participated in the First National Art Exhibition, such high-profile coverage in the popular press contributed greatly to the establishment of an all-women art organization a few years later.

A close reading of the critical approach conveyed in the special issue of *Funü zazhi* sheds light on how women artists' works were received and perceived in the Chinese art world of the late 1920s. The special issue included four reviews by the artist and critic Li Yuyi 李寓一, which covered each of the sections at the National Exhibition: calligraphy and painting (*shuhua* 書畫); Western-style painting (*xihua* 西畫); works by foreigners (*waiguo zuopin* 外國作品); architecture (*jianzhu* 建築); applied arts (*gongyi meishu* 工藝美術); and photography (*sheying* 攝影). In his reviews, Li meticulously described the general impression he had had of each section of the exhibition. He also critiqued specific works by a number of artists, providing a much-needed critical discussion of individual artists' work from the period. Moreover, Li placed special emphasis on the discussion of the work by women artists.

In her discussion of the critical reception of women's paintings in the premodern era, Marsha Weidner outlines two common, gender-based approaches to the criticism of women artists' work. The first one developed from the belief, inherited from the literati tradition, that artists' personal standing could be revealed in their art. Accordingly, comments about women artists' works were often fused with notions of chastity, femininity, purity, refinement, and

³⁸⁰ *Funü zazhi* 婦女雜誌 [The Ladies' Journal] 15, no. 7 (July 1929).

modesty.³⁸¹ As mentioned in the introduction, another approach employed “the qualified or backhanded compliment,” by which critics would commend a female artist’s work as having avoided the flaws typically associated with women’s painting. In other words, these women artists were judged according to the standards and styles associated with male artists’ works.³⁸²

These two approaches were still prevalent in the reviews by Li Yuyi and other critics in the late 1920s. However, while these critics used the same approach as their predecessors, their assessments were nonetheless infused with the belief that women *guohua* artists—together with their male counterparts—were upholding the nation’s artistic and cultural heritage.

Five paintings by Yang Xuejiu were selected for the First National Art Exhibition—more than the average number by individual artists at the exhibition. Overall, more than 3,000 works were submitted to the jury. The final number of works selected for the Chinese painting and calligraphy section was 1,227, chosen from about 450 different artists.³⁸³ Of all the works at the exhibition, 190 were selected for *The National Fine Arts Exhibition of 1929* (*Meizhan tekan* 美展特刊)—a commemorative two-volume catalogue published after the exhibition.³⁸⁴ Yang Xuejiu’s painting *Memories of the Great Wall* (*Wanli changcheng jinian tu* 萬里長城紀念圖) [Figure 2.4] was printed in this catalogue. Having a work included in the volume revealed that Yang was recognized by her peers as one of the best *guohua* artists at the time.

Memories of the Great Wall depicts sections of the Great Wall between the cascading rocks of a mountain. The walls form a zig-zag pattern, inviting the viewer’s eyes to travel upwards to the top of the painting, the centre of which is occupied by a peak. At the bottom right

³⁸¹ Marsha Weidner, “Women in the History of Chinese Painting,” 26.

³⁸² *Ibid.*

³⁸³ Li Yuyi 李寓一, “Jiaoyubu quanguo meishu zhanlanhui canguanji (yi)” 教育部全國美術展覽會參觀記 (一) [Review of the National Art Exhibition of the Ministry of Education—part 1], *Funü zazhi* 15, 7 (July 1929): 5.

³⁸⁴ *Meizhan tekan* 美展特刊 [*The National Fine Arts Exhibition of 1929*] (Shanghai: Zhengyishe 正藝社, 1929).

corner, below the towering mountain, is a gate that signifies the entrance to the Great Wall. Two men wearing robes and straw hats and riding on donkeys are about to enter through the gate to climb the wall. A colophon describing the painting, written by Yang Yi, states that it was a commemoration of Xuejiu's visit to Beijing with her father, and the scene depicts the Jurong Pass (Jurongguan 居庸關) that Xuejiu observed from afar. Yet instead of simply depicting the scenery as described in the colophon, Yang employed the motif of the donkey rider, which, since the Song dynasty, was commonly used in literati painting to symbolize scholar-officials in exile.³⁸⁵ Yang's use of this symbolic motif in conjunction with the Great Wall—the symbol of the new nation—was perhaps her way of commenting on the instability of the new republic. The painting, as Yang Yi remarks in the colophon, was done in 1923, a time when China was still experiencing political turmoil. Juxtaposing the Great Wall with one of the age-old motifs of literati painting, Yang Xuejiu also projected the timelessness of the landmark, further instating its value as a symbol of the new nation.³⁸⁶ Landscape as a symbol of cultural nationalism was another common motif in the revival of *guohua* in the 1920s and '30s.³⁸⁷ Female artists frequently employed this subject matter to project patriotism in their works, as evinced by the high number of landscape paintings by women artists at the First National Art Exhibition.

Li Yuyi's reviews of Yang's works seem to be in accordance with this tenor. Li describes in detail Yang's use of *bimo* 筆墨 (brush techniques and ink tone). In a very technical manner, Li states that Yang preferred to begin her brushstrokes in the *zhongfeng* 中鋒 (mid-section of the brush)—a technique that Li considered to have created the painting's unique effect. Li writes that

³⁸⁵ Peter C. Sturman, "The Donkey Rider as Icon: Li Cheng and Early Chinese Landscape Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 55, no. 1–2 (1995): 43–97.

³⁸⁶ Sun Yat-sen was the first to use the Great Wall to symbolize Chinese nationalism in the 1910s. See Louise Chipley Slavicek, *The Great Wall of China* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2009), 95.

³⁸⁷ Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 103–105.

the *Great Wall* possesses “an air of intricacy and expansiveness” (cuozong hengfang zhi qi 錯綜橫放之氣) created by the composition of the painting, in which sections of the Great Wall are interlaced with layers of mountains.

In addition to *Memories of the Great Wall*, Li discusses another of Yang’s paintings, *Hiking in the Maple Forest* (*Fenglin cezhang* 楓林策杖).³⁸⁸ This painting depicts an old man walking in the forest with the help of his cane. In his review of the painting, Li praises Yang’s ability to avoid the sense of gaudiness (*su* 俗) so commonly found in paintings depicting maple trees. To avoid this problem, Yang painted the maple in a deep red and the landscape in monochromatic ink tones. The effect, according to Li, creates “a feeling of tranquility amidst the depth of tonal variation achieved by multiple colours” (*bianneng yu fuse chenhou zhong de youjing* 便能於複色沉厚中得幽靜). According to Li Yuyi, one can find “a sense of vigour within elegance” (*xiuli zhizhong fu cangjing zhiyi* 秀麗之中，富蒼勁之意).³⁸⁹

Twenty-four short biographies of women artists accompanied by their photo-portraits were printed in another column of this special issue.³⁹⁰ In the short biography of Yang, the reader is informed that she had learned painting from Wang Yiting, which is why her painting showed a loftiness that was not often expressed in the soft and gentle themes of many women artists’ work. Li’s reviews were invaluable in assessing individual artists’ works at the time, and this was especially true in the case of women artists, who had received less attention from art journals at the time. However, this is not to say that female artists’ works were not evaluated—they were.

³⁸⁸ According to *Meizhan tekan* (volume 2, p. 20), Yang had five paintings in the exhibition, the titles of which are: *Wan song ling* 萬松嶺 [Mountain of ten thousand pines], *Lin Shi Tao heng pi* 臨石濤橫披 [Horizontal scroll in the style of Shi Tao], *Hongye* 紅葉 [Red leaves], *Guanpu* 觀瀑 [Looking at the waterfall], and *Wanli changcheng jinian tu* 萬里長城紀念圖 [Memories of the Great Wall]. *Fenglin cezhang* 楓林策杖 [Hiking in the maple forest] could possibly be an alternate title of “Red leaves,” judging from the description of the painting in Li’s review.

³⁸⁹ Li Yuyi, “Review-part 1,” *Funü zazhi* 15, no. 7 (July 1929): 5.

³⁹⁰ “Nüqingnian yishujia” 女青年藝術家 [Young women artists] *Funü zazhi* 15, no. 7 (July 1929).

Yet women artists' work was still viewed through the age-old lens of masculinity, and these artists' competence was measured against it. Indeed, just like in the past, this was the highest compliment a woman artist could attain at the time.

Li Yuyi also discussed Li Qiujun's work *Old Trees with Bamboos and Rocks* (*Gumu zhushi* 古木竹石) [Figure 2.5], which was reproduced in the front section of the special issue.³⁹¹ Li Yuyi endorses the styles of Yang Xuejiu and Li Qiujun, stating that the two artists managed to stay away from the style of the four Wangs—the orthodox tradition of literati landscape painting popular during the high Qing. In contrast to her teacher Wu Xingfen's work, which was praised for her use of *fang* (emulation), Li Qiujun and her cohorts were lauded for the free spirit projected in their works, which Li Yuyi believed was learned from the Qing monks Shi Tao 石濤 (1642–1781), Bada Shanren 八大山人 (1626–1705), and Shixi 石溪 (Kun Can 髡殘, 1612–1692), whose works represented freedom and a subtle resistance to authority. Once again, Li Yuyi concluded the review by commending the work of Yang Xuejiu and Li Qiujun, which he claims are of superb quality, since they were able to “defy the feeling of frailness and weakness often related to women's art in the past” (*kewei wangzhe nüzi qianruo zhixi tuqi* 可為往者女子纖弱之習吐氣).³⁹²

By describing these women artists' work as “defying the sense of frailness and weakness,” Li Yuyi was subtly expressing the project of calling on women to become new citizens and to contribute to the nation. The notion that artists' works revealed their personal standing still held true in the *guohua* world of the Republican period. Therefore, the idea that

³⁹¹ Image sections in the magazines produced in the Republican period were often printed separately on special paper stock. They were often printed with photolithography or collotype, therefore, the image quality is better than images reproduced on regular stock in the text section. Because of the better quality, images that were printed in the front section were usually of importance.

³⁹² Li Yuyi, “Review-part 1,” *Funü zazhi* 15, no. 7 (July 1929): 5.

women artists should be praised for their ability to eliminate the sense of feminine weakness from their work implicitly demonstrated these female artists' strong and upright personal characters. They attempted to shake off the specter of the self-indulgent *cainü* of the past, while making the tradition of women's art—and the *guohua* tradition in general—relevant to the modern nation—a stance strongly reflected in the work of He Xiangning.

He Xiangning had two paintings on display at the National Exhibition—a landscape, and a painting of a tiger. A well-respected revolutionary, He was famous for her paintings of tigers and lions, which were painted with the aim of boosting the spirit of the nation. Li Yuyi, in his review of He's works, claimed that her painting *Tiger* (*Hu* 虎 [Figure 2.6]—included in the exhibition—was an excellent emulation of Gao Qifeng 高奇峰 (1889–1933), He's teacher in the eclectic style of the Lingnan School (*Lingnan zhezhong pai* 嶺南折衷派).³⁹³ Gao, too, was famous for his paintings of heroic animals, and he also had a painting of a tiger at the exhibition [Figure 2.7].

He Xiangning's *Tiger* depicts the fierce animal resting among a bamboo forest, which is suggested with a few bamboo branches and leaves. Devoid of a defined background and sense of space, the composition emphasizes the tiger, which looks contemplative and focused, as if it is measuring its next move. He's personality was greatly reflected in her art practice, and especially in her portrait of the tiger, which was seen as reflection of He's gallant patriotism.

Li also praises He's painting *Snow on the Lofty Mountains* (*Chongshan jixue* 崇山積雪) [Figure 2.8],³⁹⁴ a long hanging scroll that depicts a cascading mountain. Three mountain peaks occupy the central axis of the painting, forming an ascending line that leads to the tallest peak.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

The balanced composition and the emphasis of a central axis stressed the loftiness symbolized by the cascading mountain. This is another work that illuminates the loftiness of the artist.

Undoubtedly, Li Yuyi embraced whole-heartedly the achievement of women artists at the First National Art Exhibition, and in his reviews he used every effort to ensure their success. However, a sense of the author's uneasiness was also expressed between the lines. It is as if Li had no other tricks in his bag with which to judge women artists' works other than adopting the age-old habit of comparing women's art to that of their male counterparts. As Li writes,

In the past, people expected women to be beautiful and elegant. However, with changing circumstances of today's world, these expectations have also changed. In the past, women's art was thought to be inferior to men's, however, these views are no longer factual nowadays.³⁹⁵

昔人之所期，期於女子之娟秀者，今則以環境需要之不同，既截然不同；以往昔之觀察，謂女性之作品終遜於男性者，至今亦非為事實矣。

While on the one hand Li's comments endorsed the progress made by women's art practice, they also reasserted the importance of women stepping up to the plate to shoulder the responsibilities of preserving China's national art tradition. According to Li, they needed to change their practice in order to repurpose their talents for the nation.

Other critics of the period asserted a similarly critical viewpoint when analyzing women artists' work. In his article about the Women's Society, Lu Danlin suggests that He Xiangning's landscape painting projected "an air of fierceness and expansiveness, which [as a result] does not look like a work from a woman's hands" (*yizhong pola zhongheng zhiqi, shi buxing chuyu nüxing deshouxia* 一種潑辣縱橫之氣，是不像出於女性的手下).³⁹⁶ This statement once again

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 6.

³⁹⁶ Lu Danlin, "Jieshao jiwei nü shuhua," 37.

reinforced the habit of judging women artists' works against those of male artists. This perspective also underscored the nationalistic overtone of venerating strong women as pillars of the nation, which in this case meant the expression of "fierceness" (read "masculinity") in art.

In the same article, Lu Danlin also wrote about the artist Feng Wenfeng, of whom he was a good friend and supporter. Lu wrote favourably about Feng's calligraphy [Figure 2.9], noting the fact that she was adept at various styles and scripts, especially that of *Lishu* 隸書 (clerical scripts), which was displayed in her exemplary work featured in the 1934 issue of *Saturday* [Figure 2.1]. The clerical scripts features straight and clear brushstrokes. Feng's preference for this style fit Lu's description of her calligraphy: "simple, robust, and without any trace of frailness" (*cangpumao, xionghou mianmi, meiyou yixie ruozitai* 蒼樸茂，雄厚綿密，沒有一些弱姿態).³⁹⁷ Lu also highlighted Feng's personality, conveying the fact that she had a very pleasant personality and was always willing to lend a helping hand to friends. She was also very enthusiastic about public service. Lu characterized these qualities as typical of the virtues of women from Hua'nán 華南 (southern China).³⁹⁸

Among members of the Women's Society, Li Qiujun's artistic achievement was one of the most renowned and celebrated in the art world.³⁹⁹ By the existing examples of Li's work from the 1930s, we can see that her style was heavily influenced by Zhang. In Yu Jianhua's artists' dictionary, Li was described as skillful at *gongbi* 工筆 (meticulous brushstroke)

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 36.

³⁹⁹ This fame continued after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Li was a member of Wenshiguan 文史館 (Research institute of culture and history) and continued to produce works that reflected the new China.

landscape and *guzhuang shinü* 古裝仕女 (female beauties in ancient-style dress).⁴⁰⁰ Indeed, Li completed many works in the *shinü* genre.⁴⁰¹ [Figure 2.10].

Li's work was influenced by the use of colour, and the ethos of *guyi* 古意 (ancientness) found in Zhang's work. Li exhibited mostly landscape paintings in the 1930s, the Women's Society's most active period. In the 1940s, she started to produce more works in the *shinü* genre, and the influence of Zhang Daqian, was most visible in these paintings. Zhang was a historically minded artist who was looking for inspiration from the trove of ancient art beyond the conventional collections of ink painting and calligraphy found in Beijing, Shanghai, and other Chinese metropolises. In 1941, he led a group of artists and assistants on a trip to Dunhuang, where the entourage stayed for two and a half years and copied more than 276 Buddhist murals.⁴⁰² The rediscovery of the lost art of the Northern Wei, Tang, and Xi Xia eras not only created a revival of the appreciation of the vividly colourful work of the time, but also changed Zhang's own work [Figure 2.11]. His figure paintings from the 1940s reflected the vivid colours and mannerism of the figures depicted in the frescoes of the grottos of Dunhuang. Zhang Daqian's influence on Li's figure painting was apparent in her works in this genre.

Li Qiuju's work was rarely critiqued, even though she was a high-profile member of the art world. Indeed, the coverage of Li Qiuju and her activities focused mainly on her philanthropic involvement, and less on her art practice. Undoubtedly, Li was a competent artist who was widely recognized by her peers, however, the lack of critical engagement with her work seemed to be the result of her eminence in various social and humanitarian causes; it was as if

⁴⁰⁰ Yu Jianhua, *Zhongguo meishujia renming cidian*.

⁴⁰¹ Many of Li's works are believed to be collected in private collections. An internet search yields many works in the *shinü* genre, however, only a few of her works are located in museum collections.

⁴⁰² Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 124.

her apparently upright personality spoke for the quality of her work. Wang Ren suggests that Li's success and the high prices she was fetching for her work were the result of the art-world connections she made through her brother, Li Zuhan, as well as her love affair with Zhang Daqian.⁴⁰³ While these factors undoubtedly bolstered Li's reputation, that they sometimes overshadowed her artistic achievement was typical of how women artists' were discussed and examined—then and now.

PHILANTHROPY AND NATIONALISTIC CAUSES

The Women's Society's principal mandate was to advocate women's artistic practices, create a forum for the exchange of ideas, and hold exhibitions. Many core members were enthusiastically involved in charitable and nationalistic causes—such that the society's charitable efforts eventually became one of its defining characteristics. The Women's Society was established at the beginning of Japanese military aggression in China in the early 1930s, and, as one of the largest women's organizations in Shanghai at the time, its members not only donated artworks to charity sales; they also actively procured provisions for soldiers, as well as civilians who suffered as a result of the war. He Xiangning played an exemplary role in mobilizing women on the domestic front.⁴⁰⁴ After joining the Women's Society in 1935, He continued her war efforts and encouraged women at the society to get involved in war-relief efforts. Li Qiujun, who worked closely with He, was another pivotal figure in this aspect.

⁴⁰³ Wang Ren 王韧, "Lun Haipai nü shuhuajia runge de chengyin" 论海派女书画家润格的成因 [Discussion of the factors affecting the pricing of works by women artists of the Shanghai School], *Meishu daguan* (November, 2007), 17.

⁴⁰⁴ Huang Jiping 黄寄萍, "He Xiangning nüshi zhishi funü jiuguo zhilu" 何香凝女士指示婦女救國之路 [Ms. He Xiangning comments on how women could save the nation], in *Zhongguo xinnüxing* 中國新女性 [*New women of China*] (Shanghai: Diqu chubanshe, n.d.), 5–7.

Charitable art sales had become regular occurrences in Shanghai in the first few decades of the twentieth century. One of the first artist collectives to be formed with this mandate in mind was the Yunyuan Painting and Calligraphy Society for Philanthropy (discussed in chapter one). Painting and calligraphy had already become very popular gifts among Shanghai's merchant class, but at charity sales, the commodification of art served a loftier function. With the high demand for artworks, donating to charitable sales was another form of advertising for artists. This is not to say that altruism was not the reason for these artists' donations—but it was natural that these events would also serve the function of advertising for artists and organizations. By the 1930s, charity art sales were an almost daily occurrence in Shanghai, causing Lu Danlin to criticize some artists for supposedly profiteering in the name of charity.⁴⁰⁵

The Women's Society was one of the powerhouses of charity art sales in the 1930s, and its members frequently joined forces with other art societies and women's organizations to hold charity events. This philanthropic drive came mainly from those core members who had been involved in charitable causes long before the establishment of the Women's Society.

As early as 1931, He Xiangning was at the forefront of mobilizing artists to raise funds in preparation for the imminent war with Japan. He was the initiator of the "Painting and calligraphy exhibition for the relief of national calamity under the direction of He Xiangning" (*He Xiangning zhuban jiuji guonan shuhua zhanlanhui* 何香凝主辦救濟國難書畫展覽會).⁴⁰⁶ The event was organized in just a few weeks' time, and it was well supported by notable figures in the arts and culture world. A committee, formed by artists Liu Haisu, He Tianjian 賀天健

⁴⁰⁵ Lu Danlin, "Zaitan yixie yishujia" 再談一些藝術家 [More discussion about some artists], *Dafeng* 大風 54 (1938).

⁴⁰⁶ "He Xiangning zhuban jiuji guonan shuhua zhanlanhui" 何香凝主辦救濟國難書畫展覽會 [Painting and Calligraphy Exhibition for the Relief of National Calamity under the direction of He Xiangning], *Shenbao*, December 8, 1931, 11.

(1891–1977), Li Zuhan, and Cai Yuanpei, and chaired by the journalist and politician Zhu Shaoping 朱少屏 (1882–1942), handled the donation of artworks, ticket sales, publicity, and general affairs.⁴⁰⁷ Within three weeks, He Xiangning and the organizers managed to gather five hundred donated works. As was popular at the time, five hundred lottery tickets were sold to patrons who would get a piece of work with each ticket through a draw. Each of the tickets was sold at the price of 30 *yuan*.⁴⁰⁸ From the format of the exhibition, we can see that the scale of the event would have garnered much media attention. Moreover, as the exhibition’s marketing strategy suggests, He did not shy away from including her name in the title of the event: she was well aware that she was a highly respected figure in both the political and cultural realms; using her name would therefore serve to assert the urgency of the cause and guarantee the notability of the artists involved.

He’s public presence as a female revolutionary, politician, and artist was exemplary of the kind of “willow catkin feminists” who were socio-politically conscious, patriotic, articulate, and multitalented.⁴⁰⁹ In the case of He, like many of her fellow revolutionaries including Tang Qunying 唐群英 (1871–1937) and Qiu Jin 秋瑾 (1875–1907), using public forums and the print media to promulgate their beliefs and promote political causes was a way to contribute to the nation. He’s continued role in support of the war efforts of the 1930s—especially her work on behalf of the Women’s Society—helped to assert women artists’ role in the national narrative.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Jun Qiang 君强, “He Xiangning kangRi zhi weiyu choumou” 何香凝抗日之未雨綢繆 [He Xiangning prepares for the rainy days for the anti-Japanese (war)], *Shenbao*, December 12, 1931, 17.

⁴⁰⁹ David Strand, *An Unfinished Republic: Leading by Word and Deed in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 97.

These charity events demonstrated that purchasing art was a relatively ubiquitous and affordable activity for Shanghai's upper-middle class.⁴¹⁰ This kind of charity sale was becoming very common in the 1930s, when artists—especially those working in the Chinese medium—assumed the responsibility of helping the nation at a time when foreign invasion loomed. It was also another way to assure *guohua*'s position in the patriotic national narrative. It was even more crucial for women—who would become the backbone of society during wartime—to participate in these efforts and to contribute to the nation to the best of their ability.

The sense of national duty would become the Women's Society's most pressing mandate as the war drew closer. This perhaps explains why the society stopped publishing its annual exhibition catalogue after 1937. Indeed, for the fifth annual exhibition, in 1938, the Women's Society had earmarked its proceeds—which normally would have been used in the production of a catalogue—for the purchase of winter clothing for children suffering from the effects of war.⁴¹¹

Li Qiujun was as equally active in her philanthropic initiatives as He Xiangning, if not more so. Not only did she participate in charity art sales, but she was also enthusiastically involved in other charitable activities as well. Along with He Xiangning, she was a member of the Shanghai chapter of the Association for the Consolation of Soldiers (Weilao fenhui 慰勞分會).⁴¹² An interview with Li thoroughly outlined her philanthropic efforts.⁴¹³ Li worked tirelessly to secure resources for war relief, and she utilized her vast social network and interpersonal skills

⁴¹⁰ See the discussion of pricing of artworks see Wang Zhongxiu, "Lishi de shiyi yu shiyi de lishi – runli shi jiedu," 4.

⁴¹¹ "Nüzi shuhuahui wujie zuopin zhanlan" 女子書畫會五屆作品展覽 [The fifth exhibition of the Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting], *Shenbao*, November 26, 1938, 12.

⁴¹² Weilao fenhui 慰勞分會 was the short form of Zhongguo funü weilao ziwei kangzhan jiangshihui Shanghai fenhui 中國婦女慰勞自衛抗戰將士會上海分會 (The Shanghai chapter of the Chinese Women's Association for the Consolation of Soldiers of Self-defence and Resistance).

⁴¹³ Wen Yang, "Shuhua jia Li Qiujun nüshi fangwenji," 33–35.

to secure donations of provisions for soldiers at the front, as well as refugees in various war zones. As the interview makes clear, Li was tireless, persistent, resourceful, assertive, and capable.⁴¹⁴

Li also continued to participate and organize charity art sales, including one of the largest to occur after the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, the “Painting and calligraphy exhibition for the consolation of soldiers” (Weilao jiangshi shuhua zhanlanhui 慰勞將士書畫展覽會), which was held at the Daxin Department Store in late October 1937. Artist Wang Yachen 汪亞塵 (1894–1983), of the Chinese Painting Society, was the principal organizer of the exhibition, while the Women’s Society was a collaborator of this event. With just under three weeks of preparation, the exhibition attracted high attendance and many bids for artworks. Lottery tickets for the works were sold for 10 *yuan* each. It was said that Li Qiuju had personally secured many artwork donations from well-known artists for the exhibition. She also sold more than one hundred lottery tickets. At the closing of the exhibition, more than 10,000 *yuan* was raised.

Beyond art sales, the Women’s Society also participated in various charity and philanthropic initiatives. For example, the society was one of the numerous women’s organizations to donate money to the “Women’s donation campaign” (Funü xianjin yundong 婦女獻金運動). He Xiangning and Li Qiuju also made an individual contribution to the campaign in the form of donations of gold.⁴¹⁵

The Women’s Society, as an all-women art organization, put the focus on utilizing members’ talent to serve a higher purpose—which was to support and contribute to a nation in need. Even though many Western-style artists, *guohua* artists, cartoonists, and illustrators had

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ “funü xianjin yundong chengji jijia jinri sici xianjin” 婦女獻金運動成績極佳今日四次獻金 [The Women’s donation campaign sees great results, today marks the fourth pledging], *Shenbao*, September 29, 1937, 6.

started to create works thematically related to the war, the artistic direction of most artists of the Women's Society did not change during this period. Instead, they persisted in producing works that gave them a strong foothold in the *guohua* circle of the late 1920s and '30s, during which time the revival of *guohua* and the cultural patriotism that related to the practice was at its peak. It was during this period that a new generation of women artists started making their mark on the art world.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

As a collective, the Women's Society was tireless in its efforts to educate about and advocate for women's position in the *guohua* circle. Core members also understood that in order to gain respect from society at large, they would have to be active beyond their elite artistic milieu. After all, these members were, in their own right, accomplished in many other aspects of their lives. They had the capability and resources to contribute to their artistic practices as well as various social causes.

When compared to their female counterparts who practiced Western-style art, women *guohua* artists in the modern era had to use different strategies to battle against the currents of patriarchal and institutional bias. Nonetheless, while other art societies were relatively short-lived, the Women's Society was able to work towards a common goal for more than fourteen years of war and national crisis. Their attempt at making women's artistic practice relevant to a society in need also coincided with the traditionalists' agenda to preserve and promote *guohua* practice as a nationalistic project.

Although most members of the Women's Society had received public education, their art practice relied on a close-knit network of elite cultural practitioners; as with their male

counterparts, learning and practicing Chinese-style art was still very much a mentorship-oriented practice. While the women artists discussed in this chapter followed this model in establishing their own careers, one of the Women's Society's most important achievements had to do with opening up opportunities for other women who were interested in practicing art but did not have the same sociocultural privileges as its core members.

Moreover, the ways in which members of the Women's Society engaged with the public were different from their mentors and predecessors. They advertised their works extensively in print media with photo-portraits and biographies. They wrote articles—a good many in the vernacular—to articulate their thoughts on art and other social and cultural issues. They also took on the tasks of organizing their own exhibitions and events. In sum, they exhibited a publicness that was unprecedented for female artists, especially those in the *guohua* circle.

The Women's Society nonetheless represented one end of a wide spectrum of art produced by women artists in the 1930s. Its large membership, its commercial success, and its patriotic tenor granted women artists a significant collective voice in the art world. Together with women artists who practiced Western-style art, the Women's Society helped write a crucial chapter in the establishment of women's position in the development of Chinese art. They reclaimed the reductive notion of female talent and prided themselves on being the newly defined talented women of China.

Chapter Three | New Woman Artist Pan Yuliang and Western-Style Art

Throughout the 1920s and '30s, Pan Yuliang was one of the most prominent Western-style artists in China; she was prolific as well, producing more than four thousand works in her lifetime.⁴¹⁶ In this way she rose from humble beginnings to become a renowned artist in her native country as well as a recognized figure in the Parisian art world. Yet while Pan embodied typical characteristics of the New Woman, on the one hand, her experience was nonetheless exceptional for learned women of her generation. Her life stories epitomized the range of possibilities for Chinese women, and her art practice reflected shifts in the development of art in the early Republican era.

Pan's early life experience illuminates how women of less-privileged backgrounds gained upward mobility through various social and cultural changes, especially access to education. Through the new public education for women, they were immersed in the discourse of women's rights, which in turn offered opportunities to explore various feminine possibilities in their life and work. In addition to the domestic access to a public education, however, Pan was one of the few female art students who benefited from an education abroad after the Republican government began to implement overseas study programs in the early 1920s. After returning to China later in the decade, these women artists, together with their male colleagues, actively engaged in the production of Western-style art. Overseas education enabled them to gain cultural capital and advance their career prospects in both the Chinese and global art worlds. Indeed, they dared to depict new subject matter, devise new artistic styles, and confidently assert their position as pioneers in the development of Western-style art in China.

⁴¹⁶ Records of the Anhui Provincial Museum, provided by the museum's staff.

Compared to most women artists of her generation, Pan had an unusual personal trajectory; most notably, she spent more than forty years of her life in Paris. Her story, therefore, not only highlights how women artists fared in the heyday of the development of modern art in China, but also underlines conditions of cross-cultural artistic production, as well as understandings of race and gender in the post–World War II era. Current research on Pan Yuliang has mostly focused on her early life, and the ten years in China after she returned from her study in Europe. However, the last forty years of her life, which she was in Paris (1937–1977)—during which her work underwent various stylistic transformations as she engaged with the art world of Montparnasse—have not been thoroughly studied.⁴¹⁷ In this chapter, I look at how Pan negotiated between Eastern and Western art and identity. How did notions of race and gender influence the reception and reading of her works in the vibrant yet highly competitive Parisian art world? And how did images of the female nude—a subject that Pan dealt with extensively—reflect the representation of gender consciousness in her and other women artists’ works in both Chinese and French contexts?

While the women discussed in the previous two chapters—Wu Xingfen, Jin Taotao, and members of the Chinese Women’s Society of Calligraphy and Painting—paved the way for women to build professional careers in art, and made great advances in the centuries-old, male-dominated tradition of literati painting, Pan Yuliang and the cohort of New Women artists went a step further by introducing and experimenting with a visual language and lexicon of subjects that were new in Chinese art.

⁴¹⁷ Pan’s life and work in Paris had been briefly discussed and showcased in recent exhibitions on Chinese expatriate artists, such as “Artistes chinois à Paris de Lin Fengmian à Zao Wou-ki” (Musée Cernuschi, 9 Septembre–31 Décembre 2011), and “Paris—Chinese Painting, Legacy of the Twentieth Century Chinese Masters” (Hong Kong Museum of Art, June 20–September 21, 2014), however, extensive research on the work Pan produced in France is still lacking.

In asserting that New Women artists were trailblazers in the reform of Chinese art, I am not suggesting that artists who produced works in the Chinese medium were less expressive. However, since the *guohua* form was laden with historical significance and gendered connotations, its female practitioners generally faced more challenges than those who practiced Western-style art. Although Chinese-style art did break some new ground during this period, it was the language of Western-style art that enabled female artists to create radically different paths for artistic self-expression. This new visual vocabulary was a tool of empowerment for women both in terms of artistic expression and social engagement. Moreover, I argue that the new possibilities presented by Western-style art offered women artists a clean slate free of the cultural and gendered connotations that prevailed in traditional Chinese art practice. Since Western-style art was quite new in China, female artists enjoyed a comparatively equal footing with their male counterparts when it came to experimenting with the new visual language and their participation in the art world more generally. As New Women artists became more assertive in their identity as art practitioners, they also assumed the role of public intellectuals who contributed tremendously to social and cultural development during the Republican era.

The heyday of the development of modern art in China came to a halt as the Second Sino-Japanese War approached in 1937, a time when artists started to take on subject matter that reflected the realities of war. Pan left for Paris again in 1937, never to return to China. After the tumultuous years of the World War II and the Chinese Civil War, the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and the social, cultural, and political upheavals of the socialist era, Pan was mostly forgotten by her fellow citizens. However, Pan was able to continue exploring the theme she had first worked on in China—individual expressions of gender subjectivity—in

the liberal atmosphere of Paris, something that would have been impossible in the political and cultural climate of post-civil war China.

In 1982, Shi Nan 石楠 (b. 1938), a librarian from Anqing, Anhui, published a biographical novel about Pan.⁴¹⁸ Pan was subsequently “rediscovered,” with the book inspiring numerous portrayals of Pan in opera, film, television, and documentaries. Pan’s life has since been viewed as an intriguing story of her humble beginnings and rise to fame. Pan’s legendary status continues to be perpetuated by this sensationalized depiction of her in popular media. Attempts to reconstruct a more accurate picture of her life have been made by art historians, former acquaintances, and family members who never saw Pan again after she left China in 1937. These were based mostly on hearsays, personal recollection, correspondence, and press coverage from Chinese sources. Many of these narratives relayed unsubstantiated or fictional information about Pan’s life as fact, and it is not uncommon for researchers to copy information from one another without further verification. As a result, the line between the real and fictional Pan became blurred, which only added to the artist’s elusiveness. Even though more vigilant research has surfaced in the past few years, these myths still prevail in the study of her art.

This chapter aims to demystify Pan and to offer an analysis of her life and art practice within the contexts of art development and gender positioning in both China and France. While this study aims to focus on Pan’s art career, it recognizes the importance of the role of popular

⁴¹⁸ Shi Nan’s *Huahun—Zhang Yuliang zhuan* 画魂-张玉良传 [Soul of a painter—the biography of Zhang Yuliang], was first serialized in the literary journal *Qingming* 清明 in 1982. It was later published as a novel and retitled *Huahun—Pan Yuliang zhuan* 画魂-潘玉良传 [Soul of a painter—the biography of Pan Yuliang] (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1983). Shi Nan came to know about Pan’s story through a man named Li Qunfan, who claimed he had met Pan when she was in Wuhu as a young woman. Most of the biographical material about Pan’s early life in the biography was based on Li’s recollection. Qian Yusui 钱玉岁, “Shi Nan shi zhenyang xie Zhang Yuliang zhuan de” 石楠是怎样写《张玉良传》的 [How did Shi Nan write the biography of Zhang Yuliang] *Xin GuanCha* 新观察 [New observation] 4 (1983): 24–25; Doris Sung in discussion with Shi Nan, April 5, 2009.

culture in creating her persona and the later rediscovery of her artistic legacy. In the economic and social reforms of the early 1980s, Pan's allure reflected the public's fascination with the lives of extraordinary women during the early Republican period that signified the emergence of women's rights and agency.⁴¹⁹ Pan's fabled stature also contributed to the growing demand for her work, which in turn triggered an avalanche of discussion and research into her life and art.⁴²⁰

THE LIFE OF PAN YULIANG

Pan Yuliang was allegedly a prostitute-turned-concubine-turned-artist and art professor. Born in Yangzhou in 1895, her father died when she was only a year old, and her mother also passed away a few years later, leaving Pan an orphan at the age of eight.⁴²¹ She was then sent to live with her uncle in Tongcheng, Anhui. According to legend, in 1909, when Pan was fourteen, her uncle sold her to a brothel in Wuhu, Anhui, where she would live for the next four years. One

⁴¹⁹ The China Central Television produced a twenty-episode documentary series in 2010 entitled *Ershi shiji Zhongguo nüxingshi* 二十世纪中国女性史 [History of Chinese women in the twentieth century]. Topics in the series ranges from the anti-foot-binding movement to contemporary China, the series documents notable women in various historical junctures in the twentieth century.

⁴²⁰ Her works fetched high prices at auctions in Hong Kong and Taiwan in the 1990s. Pan was a prolific artist, most of her works have been repatriated and are housed at the Anhui Provincial Museum. Only about one hundred works are available on the art market, which also contributed to their high prices. See “Pan Yuliang huazuo shida paimai chengjiao jilu” 潘玉良畫作十大拍賣成交紀錄 [Auction records of the ten most expensive works by Pan Yuliang] in *Pan Yu-Lin* 潘玉良 *Overseas Fine Arts Series III*, Christophe Comentale (Ke'mengde 柯孟德), and Defang 賈德芳 Jia, eds. (Taipei: Yishujia chubanshe, 2007), 190–191.

⁴²¹ Pan Yuliang's birth name was Chen Xiuqing 陳秀清. She was renamed Zhang Yuliang 張玉良 by her uncle after her parents died. There were two different versions of her birth date. In the chronology put together by Pan Yuliang's step-grandson, Xu Yongsheng 徐永昇, Pan's birth date was 1895. See “Pan Yuliang shengping ji shidai dashi nianbiao” 潘玉良生平及時代大事年表 [Chronology of Pan Yuliang] in *Pan Yu-lin, Overseas Fine Arts Series III*, 194–201. However, according to her school admission documents in France, which are now archived at the Lyon Municipal Library, her birth date was 1899. The date 1899 is also used on her tombstone. I believe that the year 1895 is more accurate. In an interview, Pan said that she was married at the age of nineteen. Pan Yuliang and Pan Zanhua met in 1913, when she was eighteen, therefore, her birth date should be 1895. See Ji Ping 寄萍, “Xiyang huajia Pan yuliang nüshi fangwenji” 西洋畫家潘玉良訪問記 [An interview with Pan Yuliang—an artist of Western painting], *Shenbao*, May 30, 1936.

day in 1913, a provincial customs officer named Pan Zanhua 潘贊化 (1885–1959) was invited by the local magistrates to the brothel where Pan allegedly worked.⁴²² Pan Zanhua, who empathized with her situation, paid a ransom to release her from the brothel and took her on as a servant. She later became Pan's second wife and the couple moved to Shanghai. Pan Yuliang had used various names during her lifetime. After she was adopted by her uncle, her name was changed to Zhang Yuliang 張玉良; after marrying Pan Zanhua, she took her husband's surname and has since known as Pan Yuliang.⁴²³

Pan Yuliang was alleged to be illiterate, having learned to read and write from Pan Zanhua only after moving to Shanghai.⁴²⁴ According to Pan's own account, she attended a girls' school.⁴²⁵ While there, Pan became very interested in embroidery, but realized that she would first have to learn how to draw.⁴²⁶ Therefore, she started learning drawing and painting from Hong Ye 洪野 (ca. 1886–1932), who was an artist and teacher at the Shanghai Art Academy.⁴²⁷ Pan was formally admitted to the school in 1918, and it was there that she received training in drawing and painting from Wang Jiyuan 王濟遠 (1893–1975), Zhu Qizhan 朱屺瞻 (1892–1996), and Liu Haisu 劉海粟 (1896–1994). In 1921, through a new initiative under the Work-

⁴²² There was no proof that she was sold to the brothel and worked as a prostitute. A close artist friend of Pan's, Lin Ai, asserts that Pan was sold to a brothel to work as a *binü* 婢女 (servant girl), however, it had been misunderstood that she was a *jinü* 妓女 (prostitute). Lin Ai 林霽 (Lam Oi), "Chongman Chuanqi de Kuming Huajia – Wosuo zhidao de Pan Yuliang" 充滿傳奇的苦命畫家- 我所知道的潘玉良 [A Legendary Artist Who Had Had a Hard Life – the Pan Yuliang I Know] *Mingbao Yuekan* 28, no. 329 (1993): 81–85. Facts about Pan's childhood and teenage years still need further verification.

⁴²³ On Pan's various names, see Dong Song 董松, "Pan Yuliang xingming kao 潘玉良姓名考 [Research on the various names of Pan Yuliang], Anhui sheng wenwuju 安徽省文物局 [Anhui Provincial Bureau of Cultural Relics], <http://www.ahww.gov.cn/a/201405/3520.html> (Accessed September 21, 2015.)

⁴²⁴ Shi Nan, *Huahun – Pan Yuliang zhuan*.

⁴²⁵ Pan Yuliang 潘玉良, "Wode yishu shenghuo guan" 我的藝術生活觀 [Views on my artistic life], in *Dangdai funü* 當代婦女 [Contemporary women] (Shanghai: Fangzhong shudian, October, 1936), 177–179.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 178.

⁴²⁷ In *Huahun*, Hong Ye was portrayed as the neighbour of the Pans. Upon seeing Hong's works, Pan started getting interested in painting.

Study Program in France (Liu Fa qingong jianxue yundong 留法勤工儉學運動), she received a scholarship to study at the Institut franco-chinois de Lyon (Zhong Fa daxue 中法大學). She also audited courses at the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts from 1924 to 1925.

Despite poverty and hardship, Pan worked very hard and made tremendous improvements in her technical skills and her knowledge of Western art.⁴²⁸ In 1926, she went to Rome to study at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma under the tutelage of Umberto Coromaldi (1870–1948).⁴²⁹ She was the first Asian woman to be accepted by the school.⁴³⁰ It was in Rome that Pan started to learn sculpting. In 1926, she participated in a national art exhibition in Rome, where she won a gold medal and a prize of 5,000 Italian lire. It was the first of many awards she would receive in her lifetime.⁴³¹ After eight years of sojourning in France and Italy, Pan returned to Shanghai in 1928.

Pan Yuliang had an active and vibrant career in the art world during her next ten years in China. In 1937, Pan decided to return to France for two years to visit the Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne (1937) as well as a few other European countries with the aim of advancing her art.⁴³² But she never returned to her native land, and instead lived in France for the next forty years, until her death in 1977. During her lifetime, her works were collected by numerous French galleries, museums, and government institutions, including the Musée Cernuschi, the Paris Municipal Fund for Contemporary Art (Le

⁴²⁸ The Work-Study Program faced serious financial problem since its inception. Students often did not receive their stipends on time, which led to various student protests. Pan had discussed the difficulty she faced in an interview. See Ji Ping, “Xiyang huajia Pan yuliang nüshi fangwenji.”

⁴²⁹ A letter of request from Pan to the Institut franco-chinois (#A6-18) to study in Rome, dated January 7, 1926.

⁴³⁰ Ji Ping, “Xiyang huajia Pan yuliang nüshi fangwenji.”

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² “Pan Yuliang chuguo kaocha meishu bing cangan Bali Bolanhui” 潘玉良出國考察美術並參觀巴黎博覽會 [Pan Yuliang will soon go aboard to research art and to attend the exposition in Paris], *Zhongyang ribao* 中央日報 [Central Daily News] (Nanjing), July 27, 1937, 1.

Fonds municipal d'art contemporain de la Ville de Paris), the Museum of Modern Art of Paris (Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris), and the National Fund for Contemporary Art (Le Fonds national d'art contemporain). Despite these achievements, she remained a minor artist in the competitive Parisian art world. The lack of commercial interest in her works also left Pan impoverished in her old age.

The opportunity to escape her humble origins and pursue a career in art would not have been possible without government programs to send students abroad, which were mandated to offer equal opportunities to both male and female students.⁴³³ In the following pages, I will discuss the impacts of an overseas art education on women's abilities to assert their roles as artists and public intellectuals during this period.

WOMEN STUDYING ABROAD—A NEW CHAPTER IN CHINESE WOMEN'S ART

Pan left Shanghai in 1921 to attend the Institut franco-chinois in Lyon. She was among the first group of students accepted to the school.⁴³⁴ In the 1920s, most female students with access to an overseas education came from privileged backgrounds. Pan Yuliang, however, was an exception, as a comparison of the lives and works of Pan and her contemporaries, such as the female artist Fang Junbi 方君璧 (1898–1986), will show.

While Pan was, as we have seen, an orphan from a small village in Yangzhou, Fang came from an elite merchant family, and she benefitted from its cultural, economic, and political

⁴³³ For example, see the admission criteria for the Institut franco-chinois in Chen Sanjing 陳三井, *Lü Ou jiaoyu yundong: monchu ronghe shijie xueshu de lixiang* 旅歐教育運動: 民初融合世界學術的理想 [Study program in Europe: the ideal of merging with global academia], 107–109.

⁴³⁴ For details about female students at the Institut franco-chinois, see Sun Shiyue 孫石月, *Zhongguo jindai nüzi liuxue shi* 中國近代女子留學史 [The history of Chinese female overseas study] (Beijing: Zhongguo heping chubanshe, 1995), 202–210.

connections. Yet while they had very different class backgrounds, Pan and Fang were both celebrated in the art world of Republican China, and both gained a certain recognition in France. Their rising role in the art world, along with that of other women artists, was made possible not only by the many art programs in the China's public education system, but also by the opportunity to study abroad. Many New Woman artists pursued intensive art training abroad, which also meant a prolonged period of exposure to foreign culture. This experience helped them develop a new perspective from which they contemplated notions of culture, nationhood, and female identity, and it propelled them to develop their own unique artistic styles and visual vocabulary. Their pursuit of new forms of self-expression and engagement with the dialogues over women's position in art further redefined meanings of female talent and virtue.

Japan

In previous chapters, I have discussed how access to art education helped women artists establish careers in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Before such education became commonplace in China, however, some Chinese students learned Western-style art from programs offered at art academies in Japan. Indeed, Western art, like many other branches of Western knowledge, was first introduced to China via Japan. Since the Meiji Restoration (1868), Japan had established a number of modern art institutions that offered programs in Western art. The Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō 東京美術学校), established in 1889, was the premier Japanese art school. Its *yōga* 洋画 (Western-style painting) program was opened by the French-trained Kuroda Seiki 黒田清輝 (1866–1924) after he returned to Japan in 1896.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁵ Emiko Yamanashi, "Japanese Encounter with Western Painting in the Meiji and Taisho Eras," in *Japan and Paris: Impressionism, Postimpressionism, and the Modern Era* (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 2004), 32–33.

Not only was the school an incubator for modern art in Japan; it was also an important institution for educating Chinese artists at a time when proper Western art education was not readily available in their country.⁴³⁶ The school attracted as many as 90 Chinese students in the first half of the twentieth century and about 70 percent of the students were enrolled in the Western-style painting program. Li Shutong 李叔同 (1880–1942), one of the first students to graduate from the school in 1911, spent five years in the program, and he was instrumental in bringing the hybrid Academic-Impressionistic style introduced to Japan by Kuroda back to China.⁴³⁷

After China's defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), the Qing government accepted Zhang Zhidong's 張之洞 (1837–1909) proposal to send students to Japan to study Western knowledge and technology.⁴³⁸ The first big wave of Chinese students went to Japan between 1905 and 1907; in 1906, twelve thousands of them were studying in the country.⁴³⁹ Among this first wave of students, a mere 1 percent were female. Most of these women had accompanied their fathers, husbands, or brothers for their work assignments or study.⁴⁴⁰

Lacking a specific purpose, many of these women were enrolled in the short programs offered at the Private School of Fine Arts for Women (Shiritsu joshi bijutsu gakkō 私立女子美術学校) in Tokyo.⁴⁴¹ The most popular areas of study among these students were embroidery

⁴³⁶ Western-style art training was first available at the Tushanwan painting studios (Tushanwan huaguan 土山灣畫館) and programs by Zhou Xiang's 周湘 (1871–1933) at the Shanghai Academy of Oil Painting (Shanghai youhua yuan 上海油畫院). These programs were mostly offered in an apprentice style, but not as formal courses.

⁴³⁷ Aida Yuen Wong, *Parting the Mists*, 9–12.

⁴³⁸ Zhang believed that since Japan had proven to be technologically advanced and it was geographically and linguistically close to China, it would therefore be the best place for students to acquire Western knowledge. Zhou Yichuan 周一川, *Jindai Zhongguo nüxing Riben liuxueshi 1872–1945 nian* 近代中国女性日本留学史 1872–1945年 [Modern history of Chinese women's overseas studies in Japan 1872–1945] (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2007), 4.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 3

⁴⁴¹ The school was well known in China and had been widely promoted as an ideal school for women to study art. A detailed introduction, with enrolment data, was printed in *Meishu* 美术 (1, no. 2 [April 1919]), a publication of the

and flower-making (*zaohua* 造花). These subjects were popular among Chinese students for two reasons. First, many of the women were already quite adept at these skills. Second, they did not have to take entrance exams in order to enter the foundation courses in embroidery and crafts, an advantage for many women who often did not have the proper language skills to enroll in other courses of study.⁴⁴² The school was also popular because it offered shorter semesters—a flexibility that might appeal to female students who needed to accommodate their male relatives' schedules.⁴⁴³

From 1903 to 1939, a total of 267 Chinese female students studied at the school. Most of them took courses in embroidery, flower-making, and tailoring.⁴⁴⁴ Other than courses in crafts, the school also offered programs in Japanese-style painting (*nihonga* 日本画). Only a handful of Chinese students specialized in that discipline, but among them was He Xiangning, who was at the school from 1910 to 1911, after graduating from the education program at the Women's University of Japan (*Nihon joshi daigaku* 日本女子大学).⁴⁴⁵

Although a number of Chinese students at the Private School of Fine Arts for Women were enrolled in the *yōga* program in the first two decades of the twentieth century, the graduation rate was much lower than that of other programs.⁴⁴⁶ This reflected a shift in the Republican government's policy on foreign study: in place of Japan, the government began to send more students to study in Europe. The European Study Movement (*Lü Ou jiaoyu yundong*

Shanghai Art Academy. The school was established in 1900 with the name *Shiritsu joshi bijutsu gakkō* 私立女子美術学. It was renamed *Joshi bijutsu gakkō* 女子美術学校 in 1919 and *Joshi bijutsu senmon gakkō* 女子美術専門学校 in 1929, and has been known as *Joshi bijutsu daigaku* 女子美術大学 (*Joshi University of Art and Design*) since 1949.

⁴⁴² Zhou Yichuan, *Jindai Zhongguo nüxing Riben liuxueshi*, 179.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 177.

旅歐教育運動) was initiated in 1919 by the French-educated Wu Zihui 吳稚暉 (1865–1953), the reform-minded Li Shizeng 李石曾 (1881–1973), and Cai Yuanpei. They felt that there were too many students studying in Japan and America—a trend the group sought to balance by sending students to Europe. Work-Study Programs in France and Belgium were henceforth established.⁴⁴⁷

From the early 1920s, the number of Chinese students enrolled in the *yōga* program at the Private School of Fine Arts for Women had decreased significantly while the number of students in the embroidery, crafts, and tailoring programs did not. The drop in enrollment also reflected female students' changing attitudes toward art education. As formal and systematic training in Western-style art was already quite sophisticated in China, with courses offered not only in art academies, but also in various high schools and normal schools for women, many female students chose to enrol in specialized art schools in Europe—especially Paris, which was considered the centre of the international art world at the time. Since the curriculum of the Private School of Fine Arts for Women emphasized women's crafts, which it viewed as a vehicle for the cultivation of good temperament and feminine virtue, students who sought higher levels of training in Western-style visual arts were no longer satisfied with the school's offerings.⁴⁴⁸

Students who chose to study in Japan tended to opt for specialized coed art institutions. One such student was Guan Zilan 關紫蘭 (Violet Kwan, 1903–1986), who, after graduating from the China Fine Arts Institute (Zhonghua yishu daxue 中華藝術大學), enrolled in the Academy of Culture (Bunka Gaku-in 文化學院), a coeducational institute of higher learner

⁴⁴⁷ On the establishment of the programs, see Chen Sanjing, *Lü Ou jiaoyu yundong*, 9–13.

⁴⁴⁸ “Dongjing sili nüzi meishu xuexiao gaikuang” 東京私立女子美術學校概況 [An overview of the Private School of Fine Arts for Women] states that the mandate of the school was to cultivate women's “virtues and graceful temperament” through art (yiyang dexing yu yimei qingcao 涵養德性與懿美情操), *Meishu* 1, no. 2 (April 1919): 1–5.

established in Tokyo in 1921. At the behest of her teacher, Chen Baoyi 陳抱一 (1893–1945)—who had himself studied in Japan—Guan was enrolled in the school’s fine arts program from 1927 to 1930.

France

Thanks to the Republican government’s study-abroad programs, the early 1920s saw a surge in the number of Chinese students—male and female—who went to Europe to study. The Work-Study Program in France aimed to open a tertiary educational institution in France for Chinese students.⁴⁴⁹ After Wu Zhihui and Li Shizeng proposed the establishment of such an institution to the Société franco-chinoise d’éducation (Hua-Fa jiaoyuhui 華法教育會), the organization that managed the Work-Study Program, Paul Joubin, the president of the Université de Lyon, suggested that the institution be established in Lyon. To this end, an abandoned army base, the Fort St. Iréné, was renovated and the Institut franco-chinois de Lyon was founded there.⁴⁵⁰

The school was affiliated with a number of institutions of higher learning in France to facilitate transfers to other programs. The first entrance exams for the Institut franco-chinois were held in Shanghai on July 14, 1921, and those who had been accepted were to depart for France on August 1.⁴⁵¹ Pan was one of 13 women among the first group of 127 students who arrived from China in 1921.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁹ For a detailed discussion about the Work-Study Program in France, see Chen Sanjing, *Lü Ou jiaoyu yundong*, 51–69.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 115–120.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁴⁵² According to online archive of the Institut franco-chinois, there were 127 students arrived from China, among them 13 females. There were also 15 students who were recruited from those who were already in France. From 1921–1946, the total number of female students was 51, about 10.8 % of all students attended the school. “Institut Franco-Chinois.” <http://www.institut-franco-chinois-lyon.com/#!/origine-de-lifcl-1921-1950>. (Accessed November

The admission process was problematic due to the lack of consistent assessment standards. Students did not need to have any French-language ability—a requirement that was added in subsequent years.⁴⁵³ In addition to lacking the necessary language skills, many successful candidates' prior education did not meet the standards set out in the requirements.⁴⁵⁴ The written entrance exams were divided into three parts—Chinese language, English language, and mathematics.⁴⁵⁵ Although Pan was already a student at the Shanghai Art Academy at the time it was unlikely, given that she had little formal education in the past, that she would be able to meet the standards of the exams. The hasty assessment process and lack of transparency also made it possible for officials offering personal favours to get students into the program.⁴⁵⁶ For example, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Pan got into the program as a result of Pan Zanhua's connection in the government. Regardless of how she got into the program, she seized the opportunity and made a daring move to alter her life path—a quality that would continue to guide many of her future decisions.

30, 2015.) See also, “Li’ang haiwai daxue youyi xiaoxi” 里昂海外大學又一消息 [Another news about the overseas university in Lyon], *Shenbao*, August 5, 1928.

⁴⁵³ Chen Sanjing, *Lü Ou jiaoyu yundong*, 114.

⁴⁵⁴ Shang Liwen 商立文, a student at the Nanjing Advanced Normal School (Nanjing gaodeng shifan 南京高等師) and one of the first group of students who was accepted to the Institut franco-chinois, recounted how impromptu the admission process felt and how unprepared he was due to the short notice of the entrance exams. Indeed, Shang and his three classmates who also took the exams were surprised that they were all accepted. Shang believed that the small number of candidates who took the exams—about one hundred—was one of the reasons why he and his classmates were able to get in with such ease. Shang Liwen 商立文, “Sui Wu Zhihui xiansheng tongchuan fu Fa” 隨吳稚暉先生同船赴法 [Traveling to France on the same boat with Mr. Wu Zhihui], in *Minchu lü Ou jiaoyu yundong shiliao xuanbian* 民初旅歐教育運動史料選編 [Selected historical material on European Study Movements in the early Republican period] Chen Sanjing 陳三井, ed. (Taipei: Xiuwei chubanshe, 2014), 303.

⁴⁵⁵ Chen Sanjing, *Lü Ou jiaoyu yundong*, 109, 111.

⁴⁵⁶ For example, one of the female students accepted into the program was Wu Zhihui's grand-niece, Wu Xuxin 吳續新. See *Ibid.*, 113.

Due to the hasty and not very well-planned admission process, the first group of students was much smaller than anticipated.⁴⁵⁷ Moreover, Wu Zihui's initial plan to enrol students into other French institutions shortly after they arrived was not realized. Since most students did not have adequate French language skills, they had to take an intensive two-year language-training course and attend other preparatory classes held at the institute or elsewhere before they could continue their studies at the Université de Lyon or other establishments affiliated with the institute.⁴⁵⁸

Pan, one of the students who went to Lyon with a partial scholarship (*gongfei sheng* 公費生), was entitled to free tuition and subsidies for room and board. Another group of students, those with special status (*tedai sheng* 特待生), went to France with full scholarships.⁴⁵⁹ Lin Baoquan 林寶權 (1903–1985), who later gained a doctoral degree from the Université de Paris, was one of four female students in this category.

A 1922 photograph of female students at the Institut franco-chinois gives a glimpse of the makeup of the female student body in the early years of the institute [Figure 3.1].⁴⁶⁰ Among the twelve female students in the photograph, Pan Yuliang, Su Mei 蘇梅 (also known as Su Xuelin 蘇雪林, 1897–1999), Fang Yun 方蘊, and Wang Jingyuan 王靜遠 would later specialize in visual arts. Fang Junbi, although not a student at the school, was also present in the photograph.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ For reasons that are unclear, only students from the Guangdong area were entitled to privileged status (See Ibid., 108–109). Lin Baoquan completed her doctoral thesis in 1926. Her thesis was titled “L’Instruction féminine en Chine (après la révolution de 1911).” See “Liste de Thèses Des Étudiants de l’IFCL,” Lyon Municipal Library, <https://www.bm-lyon.fr/nos-blogs/le-fonds-chinois/documents-et-ressources/article/liste-de-theses-des-etudiants-de-l?lang=fr>. (Accessed November 30, 2015.)

⁴⁶⁰ *Funü zazhi*, 8, no. 7 (July, 1922), n.p.

Fang Junbi came from a wealthy family of tea merchants in Fuzhou. She went to France in 1912 at the age of fourteen; she was escorted there by her older sister, Fang Junying 方君瑛 (1884–1923).⁴⁶¹ After studying at the private atelier Académie Julian, and the Académie des beaux-arts de Bordeaux, in 1920, Fang was accepted into the prestigious École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts—the first Asian student ever to be admitted to the school.⁴⁶² According to Su Xuelin’s recollection, since Fang had been living in France for many years, she was asked to help students settle in at the institute.⁴⁶³ As is evident in this photograph, memoirs, and other documents, female students at the institute formed a close-knit group who supported each other during their time abroad.⁴⁶⁴

Throughout its existence the Institut franco-chinois provided a foothold for many Chinese students studying in France. After arriving in Lyon, Pan received her French language training there, and she also took courses at the École nationale des beaux-arts de Lyon. Without these programs, Pan would not have been able to take advantage of the life-altering opportunity to study abroad. However, her authority-defying personality made her relationship with the school

⁴⁶¹ Fang Junying was a member of Revolutionary Alliance (Tongmenghui 同盟會). She was the head planner for assassinations in the organization. Among the eleven siblings of the Fang family, six of them were members of Tongmenghui, including Fang Shengdong 方聲洞 (1886-1911), who was one of the seventy-two “revolutionary martyrs of Wanghuagang.” About the Fang family, see Ambroise Fontanet, Chunglu Tsen, and Sophie Wirth Brentini, *Le pavillon de l'harmonie conjugale: peintures et calligraphies chinoises entre tradition et modernité* (Genève: Baur, 2002), 11–15. On Fang Junying, see Judge, *The Precious Raft of History*, 201–202, 209.

⁴⁶² Ambroise Fontanet, Chunglu Tsen, and Sophie Wirth Brentini, *Le pavillon de l'harmonie conjugale*, 20.

⁴⁶³ Su Xuelin 苏雪林, *Huadu manshi 花都漫拾* [Rambling in Paris] (Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe, 1999), 167.

⁴⁶⁴ Su Xuelin became a well-known writer. She published several essay collections and often mentioned her times at the institute and her friendship with Pan Yuliang and other female students. Lin Baoquan’s friendship with Pan continued beyond their time at the institute. Lin wrote an article about Pan’s art, scheduled to be published in a special magazine issue on women artists and writers, however it got lost in the mail from France and therefore was never published. See *Zhenmeishan nüzuojia hao 真美善女作家號* [Zhenmeishan special issue on women artists and writers] Shanghai: Zhenmeishan shudian (January 1, 1929): 7.

precarious. Her risk-taking temperament also took her on a different path from most other students who went on to study in other institutions of higher learning in France.

A letter dated October 17, 1923, shows that Pan left Lyon for an entire semester without notifying the school.⁴⁶⁵ The letter also indicates that Pan did not reside in Lyon, but rather lived—or at least used—an address at Fontenay-aux-Roses, a township in the southwestern suburbs of Paris. The school sent a letter to this address reminding her of her obligation to reside on campus; it included the warning that she would have her student status revoked if this obligation was not met. It was unclear what kind of connection and resources enabled her to stay in Paris during this period.⁴⁶⁶ But the incident paints a vivid picture of Pan as an audacious woman who was consistently seeking opportunities and who would defy authorities in order to achieve her goals.

In 1924, she was admitted to the *École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts* in Paris where she studied under Lucien J. Simon (1861–1945), a master in the French academic tradition. An enrolment document indicates that Pan was admitted on the basis that she would audit courses and use the atelier and library temporarily during regular hours. The offer was valid until May 22, 1932.⁴⁶⁷

The Institut franco-chinois kept track of the progress of the students while they were still in France, and even when they were no longer studying at the school, they were still registered as

⁴⁶⁵ “Pan Yuliang,” letter #A6-8, Le fonds de l’Institut franco-chinois de Lyon (1921-1946), Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon.

⁴⁶⁶ It was generally believed that Pan met Xu Beihong in Paris and it was Xu who introduced her to Lucien Simon and made it possible for Pan to study at the *École des beaux-arts*. However, this information has not been verified. See Dong Song 董松, ed., *Pan Yuliang Yishu Nianpu* 潘玉良艺术年谱 [Chronology of Pan Yuliang’s Art] (Hefei: Anhui meishu chubanshe, 2013).

⁴⁶⁷ “Pan Yuliang,” letter #A6-13, Le fonds de l’Institut franco-chinois de Lyon (1921–1946), Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon.

students there and their affairs handled by the institute.⁴⁶⁸ Judging from the existing school archives, Pan did not seem to have sent regular updates about her progress back to the institution. Little is known about her study in Paris or later in Rome. And it is even harder to gauge how she fared at the École des beaux-arts in Paris, since almost all of the works she produced during this time were destroyed in a fire.⁴⁶⁹ The little we do know about her situation at the school can be gleaned from a report by her professor, Lucien Simon, in a letter to the Institut franco-chinois. Written in response to a request by the director of the institute for information about Pan's progress,⁴⁷⁰ Simon wrote in a roughly scribbled letter [Figure 3.2]:

August 14, 1925
Dear Sir,

Mrs. Pan Yu-ling is a very hardworking and industrious student for whom I have much sympathy. She has since received every effort to provide the support you wish to give her.

You know, sir, how hard it is to presume in any manner the progress of which a student could be capable especially when it is a question of a foreigner. I can only tell you that she is far from reaching the point where any education would become very useful. I will add, because I owe you the truth, that I have not yet seen in her any special talents.

Please believe in my [??]
Distinguished consideration,

⁴⁶⁸ Records of each student are now kept in Le fonds de l'Institut franco-chinois de Lyon (1921–1946), Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon.

⁴⁶⁹ Pan Yulaing 潘玉良, "Wo xi fenbi hua de jingguo tan" [My experience of learning how to draw with pastels] 我習粉筆畫的經過談, *Funi zazhi* 15, no. 7 (July 1929), 51.

Ms. Yu Caizi 俞采子女士, "Ji Pan Yuliang huiguo jinian zhanlanhui" 紀潘玉良回國紀念展覽會 [An exhibition to commemorate Pan Yuliang's return to China], *Shenbao*, December 1, 1928, 19.

⁴⁷⁰ "Pan Yuliang", letter #A6-17, Le fonds de l'Institut franco-chinois de Lyon (1921-1946), Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon. Letter dated August 11, 1925.

Lucien Simon⁴⁷¹

Contrary to the Chinese media's usually euphoric praise of Pan's study in France, the condescending tone of Simon's letter makes us question how Pan actually fared at the *École des beaux-arts*. Pan was not a diploma student at the school, most likely because her French was not adequate. It is also difficult to gauge whether her work was considered good enough for her to be admitted as a regular student. At any rate, Pan would likely have had a difficult time adjusting to the school's formal program.

Simon's letter of assessment was written in August 1925, at which time Pan had been his student for one year. Given that she was an auditing student with limited language skills, it would have been difficult for her to communicate with Simon. It was also quite possible that Simon would have paid little attention to such a student—a foreigner, and woman, no less. Whether the letter was based on Simon's actual assessment of Pan's work, or cultural misunderstanding, or even gender or racial bias, remains unknown. As Simon noted, it was difficult for him to assess the progress of a foreigner. However, he did not stop at this evaluation. He plainly asserted that although Pan was an industrious student, she had no talent and that any further education would be a waste of time.

Remarkably, however, in January 1926, four months after the unfavourable letter was written, Pan wrote a letter to the director of the *Institut franco-chinois* requesting permission to study in Rome without revoking her student status at the institute.⁴⁷² In the letter, Pan made her case for studying in Italy, where she could study original works by old masters and historical

⁴⁷¹ "Pan Yuliang", letter #A6-19, Le fonds de l'Institut franco-chinois de Lyon (1921-1946), Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon.

⁴⁷² "Pan Yuliang", letter #A6-18, Le fonds de l'Institut franco-chinois de Lyon (1921-1946), Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon.

artefacts, which were only available in France by reproduction. The institute granted her request less than two weeks later.⁴⁷³ The letter did not mention details about the conditions of her admission to the prestigious Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma. And yet, despite her limited stipend, in early 1926, Pan went to Rome to study at the academy under the tutelage of Umberto Coromaldi. She received a diploma from the academy in 1928.

It appears that Pan benefitted more from her artistic training in Italy than in France. Judging from Simon's evaluation of Pan, it is possible that she was not satisfied with the teaching at the *École des beaux-arts* and that her talent was not appreciated by the teachers there. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why she decided to take the risk of going to yet another foreign place in pursuit of an art education.

Pan's story is one of many that reflected the struggles of overseas students. Not only did they face language barriers, but they also frequently encountered bias as a result of cultural difference. It is also very likely that gender bias influenced female students' experience. Despite such hardship, these female students strived to make the best of their overseas experience to equip themselves as representatives of China's New Women.

PAN YULIANG AND MODERN ART REFORM

Pan returned to China in early 1928. It was the beginning of the relatively stable Nanjing decade (1927–1937). During this period, the Nationalist government encouraged the development of art and culture for the betterment of the nation. Pan was urged to hold a solo exhibition soon after her return. She was initially reluctant, but was encouraged by friends and colleagues. She also

⁴⁷³ Letter of permission from the institute (#A6-18a), dated January 18, 1926. "Pan Yuliang", *Le fonds de l'Institut franco-chinois de Lyon (1921-1946)*, Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon.

received help from cultural reformists and politicians such as Cai Yuanpei, and Bo Wenwei 柏文蔚, a member of the Central Executive Committee (*zhongyang zhixing weiyuan* 中央執行委員). The exhibition was held in November 1928.⁴⁷⁴ Pan exhibited eighty works including landscapes, nude studies, still lifes, and a few largescale oil portraits.⁴⁷⁵ Only one work from her time in Paris was exhibited, since, according to Pan, almost all others from this period were destroyed in a fire. Furthermore, even though she produced a large body of work while in Rome, as well as during her travels around other parts of Italy, Pan said that she was only able to bring a small number of these works back to China.⁴⁷⁶

The exhibition was widely reported in newspapers and magazines in Shanghai. It was emphasized time and again in various news reports that artists, intellectuals, and the public alike were eager to see what Pan had learned during her time in France and Italy. Like most other exhibitions at the time, Pan's show was on for just five days. For about a ten-day period, both during and after the exhibition, however, a series of write-ups about the show appeared every other day in *Shenbao*.⁴⁷⁷ Most of these relayed anecdotes from the exhibition venue praising Pan's achievement.

⁴⁷⁴ The exhibition was held at Ningbo tongxianghui 寧波同鄉會 (Ningbo Native-place Association). "Pan Yuliang nüshi zhi huihua zhanlanhui" 潘玉良女士之繪畫展覽會 [The painting exhibition of Ms. Pan Yuliang], *Shanghai Manhua* 上海漫畫 33 (December 1, 1928): 6–7.

⁴⁷⁵ A total of 80 works were shown at the exhibition—68 were produced while Pan was traveling in Italy, but only one work was from Paris. 6 works were painted in Shanghai. There were also 5 works from her study in Rome, and among them 4 had been exhibited in the national exhibition in Rome. Ms. Yu Caizi 俞采子女士, "Ji Pan Yuliang huiguo jinian zhanlanhui" 紀潘玉良回國紀念展覽會 [An exhibition to commemorate Pan Yuliang's return to China], *Shenbao*, December 1, 1928, 19.

⁴⁷⁶ "Pan Yuliang nüshi zhi huihua zhanlanhui" 潘玉良女士之繪畫展覽會 [The painting exhibition of Ms. Pan Yuliang], *Shanghai Manhua* 上海漫畫 33 (December 1, 1928): 6–7. Pan's own article "Cungan" 寸感 [Some thoughts] was quoted in this write-up.

⁴⁷⁷ The exhibition was held from November 28 to December 2, 1928.

These accounts give a glimpse of the circumstances surrounding Western-style art exhibitions in China at the time. They also paint a vivid picture of Pan's personality. One states that, beside a Chinese audience, a great number of European and Japanese visitors attended the exhibition as well. One of the Japanese visitors was so enthralled by the painting *Old Man* (*Laoren* 老人, later retitled *The Drunkard* [*Jiutu* 酒徒]) [Figure 3.3] that they were willing to pay 800 *yuan* to buy it.⁴⁷⁸ Pan refused to part with the painting, however, since she believed that the offered price was a mere one-fifth of what it was worth. She also felt that since she did not have many works left from her years in Europe, it was best to keep them all.⁴⁷⁹

Another report states that Lin Shen 林森, a member of the Central Executive Committee, tried to persuade Pan to have her work shown in the capital, Nanjing. He also suggested that, as a way to promote art in China, the government would purchase some of her works as part of the permanent collection of the national museum. Pan refused all of these offers, however; once again, she was unwilling to part with works that represented her eight years of study in Europe. At the end of the article, the reporter describes Pan's determination as evidence of her heroic spirit (*yinxiong qigai* 英雄氣概).⁴⁸⁰

The attention paid to Pan's exhibition by politicians, artists, intellectuals, and the general public demonstrated that even though many exhibitions of Western-style art had been mounted in China in previous years, Pan's—with more than one thousand visitors per day—was unique in

⁴⁷⁸ According to Su Xuelin, *Laoren* was the same painting as *The Drunkard Jiutu* (酒徒), which was later exhibited at the National Art Exhibition in 1929. Su states that since Pan was afraid of the negative connotation of drinking that could be associated with the painting, she decided to change its title for her first solo exhibition in China. See Su Xuelin 蘇雪林, *Qingniao ji* 青鳥集 [Indigo bird collection of essays] (Shanghai: Shangwu inshuguan, 1938).

⁴⁷⁹ “Pan Yuliang nüshi huazhanhui xuzhi” 潘玉良女士畫展會續誌 [A continuous report of Ms. Pan Yuliang's exhibition], *Shenbao*, December 1, 1928, 15–16. The painting was later exhibited at the National Art Exhibition in 1929, and it was priced at 2,000 *yuan* (*Jiaoyubu diyici quanguo meishu zhanlanhui chupin mulu*, n.p.).

⁴⁸⁰ “Pan Yuliang nüshi zhanlanhui zuoxin” 潘玉良女士畫展會昨訊 [A report (after seeing) Ms. Pan Yuliang's painting exhibition yesterday], *Shenbao*, December 3, 1928, 15.

scale. But the exhibition was not just seen as a personal success for the artist; it was also portrayed as a triumph of the government's policy of sending students abroad. Indeed, the event carried so much importance for the government that even Bo Wenwei, a member of the Central Executive Committee, remained at the venue to oversee its operation.⁴⁸¹

The news reports presented a vivid picture of a well-attended exhibition mounted with a sophisticated exhibition apparatus. In the photographs of the show published in *Shanghai manhua* 上海漫畫 (*Shanghai Sketch*) [Figure 3.4], one could see that the paintings were hung from the mouldings on the wall with wire, a mechanism commonly used in European art galleries and museums. The paintings were also accompanied by labels on which titles of the works and other related information were written.⁴⁸² One article states that the show was modelled after contemporary art exhibitions in Paris and Tokyo, and had therefore attracted both local and foreign visitors.⁴⁸³ In the manner of a professionally organized exhibition, pamphlets were printed and given out to visitors. Initially giving away free, copies ran out quickly with the overwhelming number of visitors. To offset this situation, the organizers decided to price the pamphlets at 2 *wen* each.⁴⁸⁴

Many of the media reports focused on Pan's perseverance. It was repeatedly emphasized that Pan was one of the few Chinese women who had gone abroad to study art for such a prolonged period of time. Her perseverance was unusual even for male artists, and it exemplified the possibilities for women in the new era. Since her return to China, Pan had shown tremendous

⁴⁸¹ "Pan Yuliang nüshi huazhanhui xuzhi."

⁴⁸² Photographs of Pan Yuliang at the exhibition venue, and one of her large-scale oil portraits (presumably the one titled *Nü yinyuejia xiang* 女音樂家像 [Portrait of a female musician] mentioned in Ni Yide's review) were printed in *Shanghai Manhua* 34 (December 8, 1928): 3.

⁴⁸³ "Pan Yuliang nüshi yanghuazhan shikuang" 潘玉良女士洋畫展實況 [A report at the venue of Ms. Pan Yuliang's Western painting exhibition], *Shenbao*, November 30, 1928, 15.

⁴⁸⁴ "Pan Yuliang nüshi huazhanhui xuzhi."

interest in the genre of the nude, and she continued to hone her skills in drawing and painting from life models. How is this work positioned in the overall development of Western-style art in China, especially in the subject matter of the nude?

Women Artists and the Nude in China

A Young French woman (Faguo shaonü 法國少女, 1926) [Figure 3.5] was one of the largescale oil paintings included in Pan's first solo exhibition. The painting depicts a female nude in contrapposto against a studio backdrop. Placed next to her is a vase, giving the painting another focal point. This nude study was completed at the atelier of the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome. Showing this painting and other nude studies at her first exhibition, Pan demonstrated the academic training she received in Europe, of which working from nude models was an important component.

By the time Pan had returned to China, the use of life models, which had at one point been controversial, was now a common practice among those who taught and learned Western-style art. As one of the most prolific Western-style artists in China, Pan excelled in the genre of the female nude, and she was the only woman artist to exhibit this subject matter extensively at the time.⁴⁸⁵ Pan's credentials not only helped to establish her as a representative of European academic art in China, but to further legitimize and endorse the use of life models in China's new

⁴⁸⁵ Male artists, including Chen Xiaojiang 陳曉江, Li Yishi 李毅士, Xu Yongqing 徐詠青, Liang Dingming 梁鼎銘, Xie Zhiguang 謝之光, and Pang Yipeng 龐亦鵬, published an album of paintings and drawings of the nude, titled *Rentimei* (The beauty of the human body) in 1925. See Liying Sun 孫麗瑩, "1920 niandai Shanghai de huajia, zhishi fenzi yu luoti shijue wenhua--yi Zhang Jingsheng 'Luoti yanjiu' wei zhongxin" 1920 年代上海的畫家、知識份子與裸體視覺文化—以張競生〈裸體研究〉為中心 [Artists, Intellectuals, and the Visual Culture of Unclothed Bodies in 1920s Shanghai: Zhang Jingsheng's "A Study of Unclothed Bodies"], *Tsinghua Journal of Chinese Literature* 10 (December 2013): 311–312. Other female artists, including Fang Junbi, Tang Yunyu, and Wang Jingyuan, had presented works in the genre. However, it was Pan Yuliang who had been most prolific in producing nudes.

art. The acceptance of Pan's nude paintings and drawings illuminates the position of female artists in this traditional genre of Western-style art.⁴⁸⁶

In the debate over the use of life models and the nude as a subject matter in art, there seemed to be little concern about the gender of the artist who engaged in this genre. Yet despite this view, which was commonly accepted by the 1920s, the path to establishing the use of nude life models as a *sine qua non* and morally acceptable learning method had not been a smooth one.

Li Shutong was credited as the first artist to introduce the use of life models in art classes at the Zhejiang Combined Teachers' College (Zhejiang liangji shifan xuetao 浙江兩級師範學堂) in the mid-1910s after returning from his study at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts.⁴⁸⁷ However, it was Liu Haisu and his colleagues—advocating from the perspective of fine arts and aesthetics—who made the practice commonplace by implementing the method at the Shanghai Art Academy in 1918. It was also during this time that Pan Yuliang began her study at the school.

As studies of the Shanghai Art Academy indicate, students started drawing from plaster models of the human figure in 1918, and then, starting in late 1919, from male nude models. It was not until 1923 that female models were regularly used in the classrooms of the school.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁶ Women artists in the West had long been denied participation in producing images of the nude. I will discuss this further in a later section of this chapter.

⁴⁸⁷ Zheng Wenbin 鄭吻尖, *Renti mei* 人體美 [The beauty of the human body] (Shanghai: Guanghai shuju, 1927), 55. Quoted in Liying Sun, "Body Un/Dis-Covered: *Luoti*, Editorial Agency and Transcultural Production in Chinese Pictorials (1925–1933)," (Doctoral Diss., University of Heidelberg, 2014), 49, note 93. See also An Yalan 安雅蘭 (Julia F. Andrews), "Luotihua lunzheng ji xiandai Zhongguo meishu shi de jiangou," 裸體畫論爭及現代中國美術史的建構 [The nude painting controversy and the construction of modern Chinese art history], in *Haipai huihua yanjiu wenji* 海派繪畫研究文集 [Collected essays on the research of the Shanghai School of painting] (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2001), 117–150.

⁴⁸⁸ Yan Juanying, "Bushu de biandong," 76–78.

The long and contested process of legitimizing the use of nude models as a formal part of art learning indicated the public's ambivalence towards the appropriation of a foreign cultural practice in China.⁴⁸⁹ Since Pan was studying at the school during this period, the promotion of the practice would have had an impact on the direction of her art.

As the publishing industry flourished in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the commercial demand for novel visual experience gave rise to a surge of images from foreign sources in newspapers, magazines, postcards, and other printed material, including a plethora of images of the naked and half-naked body. The influx of these images of unclothed bodies (*luoti* 裸體)—which in traditional Chinese visual culture had long been considered licentious—thus further complicated the discourse on the representation of the human body in art.

Images of the naked body had always been relegated to the genre of *chungonghua* 春宮畫 (spring palace or pornographic paintings). These paintings, since they were considered lewd (*yinhua* 淫畫), had been prohibited for sale since the late nineteenth century.⁴⁹⁰ Many images from Western sources were also categorized as lewd pictures, along with traditional *chungonghua*.⁴⁹¹ Since sanctioned pictorial conventions for representing the nude in Chinese visual culture were nonexistent, both commercial publishers and artists needed to disassociate the images they produced—either as commercial reproductions or as artworks—from the notion of lewdness in order to legitimize their existence. Changing how authorities and the public viewed images of the nude was therefore paramount.

⁴⁸⁹ On the tension over the propriety (or lack thereof) of the practice, see Wu Fang-cheng 吳方正, “Luode liyou - ershi shiji chuqi Zhongguo renti xiasheng wenti de taolun” 裸的理由—二十世紀初期中國人體寫生問題的討論 [Reasons for the nude—on the question of life drawing and painting of the nude figure in the early 20th century China], *Xin shixue* 新史學 [New Studies in History] 15, no. 2 (2004): 56–60.

⁴⁹⁰ For example, an article “Buzhun zaishou luoti meiren huapian” 不准再售裸體美人畫片 [Banning the sale of female nude pictures] appears in *Shenbao*, February 19, 1914, 10.

⁴⁹¹ Wu Fang-cheng, “Luode liyou,” 60–63.

For artists and art educators, this process of legitimization involved changing the preconceptions surrounding the unclothed body by promoting images of the nude as the core theme of Western art since the Renaissance.⁴⁹² It also recognized the practice of painting and drawing from nude models as a quintessential part of learning how to depict objects with realism. Since formal likeness was lauded as the most important element of Western art that might revitalize Chinese art in the 1910s, the emphasis on realism in the European academic art tradition was thus promoted as Western artistic orthodoxy.⁴⁹³ The championing of realism in visual representation consequently led to the promotion of *xiesheng* 寫生 (painting or drawing from life), and eventually 人體寫生 *renti xiesheng* (painting or drawing from life models) in China.⁴⁹⁴

To formalize the use of nude models in art education, Liu Haisu and others at the Shanghai Art Academy endorsed it through a process of “intellectualization”; in other words, they argued that the practice was a quintessential part of the curriculum of art academies in the West, and therefore, it should be sanctioned in China as well.⁴⁹⁵ By 1923, Liu was able to consolidate the practice as the core of learning drawing and painting at his school, making a clear distinction between representations of the body in fine art and erotic images of a merely commercial nature. However, with the recognition of *renti xiesheng* as an accepted way of representing the body in art, commercial publishers also took advantage of this new view to

⁴⁹² The dichotomy of naked/nakedness vs. nude/nudity has been an important discourse in Western art history—devised by art historians such as Kenneth Clark and John Berger—to denote the distinction between the representation of a non-mediated unclothed body in the former and artistic representation of the body in the latter. The semantic construction of the term *luoti* in the context of the early twentieth-century Chinese, however, was much more nuanced than the dichotomized distinction in Western art history put forward by Clark and Berger. See Sun, *Body Un/Dis-Covered*, 17–21.

⁴⁹³ Wu Fang-cheng, “Luode liyou,” 81.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 70–87.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 79–81.

publish a great number of books promoting images representing *rentimei* 人體美 (beauty of the human body) in the name of art.⁴⁹⁶ The term *rentimei* had frequently been used by artists, art critics, and magazine editors since the mid-1920s.⁴⁹⁷ With its proliferation, the distinction between artistic and non-artistic representations of the body once again became blurred.⁴⁹⁸ Controversy resurfaced with the so-called “model controversy” (*mote'er shijian* 模特兒事件) of 1924–1926. During this period, the Shanghai Art Academy needed to stop—officially at least—the practice of using nude models in order to avoid further legal issues.⁴⁹⁹

In addition to issues of propriety, meanings of the image of the nude were informed by concepts of health, the beauty of the human body, and nudism—Western concepts that were circulating in China in the 1920s. The French-educated intellectual Zhang Jingsheng 張競生 (1888–1970) enthusiastically introduced new concepts of unclothed bodies to China.⁵⁰⁰ He approached the subject of the nude from theories of aesthetics, health, sexuality, and eugenics.⁵⁰¹ Nudism (*luoti zhuyi* 裸體主義) was promoted in relation to the notions of natural living and the

⁴⁹⁶ See the discussion of these compilations in *Ibid.*, 84–87.

⁴⁹⁷ Liying Sun, *Body Un/Dis-Covered*, 90.

⁴⁹⁸ Wu Fang-cheng, “Luode liyou,” 84–87.

⁴⁹⁹ On the controversy, see *Ibid.*, 87–99; An Yalan, “Luotihua lunzheng.” See also the English version of An Yalan (Julia F. Andrews)’s article, “Art and the Cosmopolitan Culture of 1920s Shanghai: Liu Haisu and the Nude Model Controversy,” *Chungkuksa Yongu-- Journal of Chinese Historical Researches* (The Korean Society for Chinese History), Special issue, *Chinese History through Art*, no. 35 (April 2005): 323–72. Since there was no precedent for painting and drawing from life models in Chinese visual art practice at the turn of the twentieth century, learning Western art techniques were mainly limited to copying from reproductions of Western painting, drawing, photographs, and instruction books. Such was the practice at Tushanwan huaguan 土山灣畫館 (Tushanwan painting studios) and the Shanghai youhua yuan 上海油畫院 (Shanghai academy of oil painting), with courses in backdrop paintings offered by Zhou Xiang 周湘 (1871–1933). Therefore, Liu’s proposed method of painting from life models not only became the target of attack from morally conservative officials, but also from other art educators—Liu’s competitors who were still using the method of copying. See Yan Juanying’s discussion of the rift between Zhou Xiang and Liu Haisu, “Bushu de biandong,” 69–72.

⁵⁰⁰ On Zhang Jingsheng’s education, see Sun, “1920 niandai Shanghai de huajia, zhishi fenzi yu luoti shijue wenhua,” 299–300.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 295–303.

healthy body.⁵⁰² This practice, which originated in Germany, was supported by the ideology of living naturally to attain healthy and beautiful bodies. It encouraged natural living through exposing one's naked body outdoors.⁵⁰³ Zhang's introduction of this ideology into Chinese intellectual discourse corresponded to the promotion of medical science and the healthy body from the 1910s onwards.

Women's possession of a healthy and beautiful body was an idea frequently endorsed at the time. The use of scientific knowledge and physical education to promote healthy female bodies was widely disseminated in popular publications, especially women's magazines.⁵⁰⁴ For example, an article entitled "Beauty of the human body" in *Funü shibao* explored concepts of aesthetics, proportion, the function of clothing, and gravity in relation to a healthy body.⁵⁰⁵ As Liying Sun argues, the promotion of images of women's bodies in magazines, such as *Linglong* 玲瓏 (*Elegance*, 1931-1937), was meant to encourage a shift from the negative preconceptions about the naked body to the "sophisticated aesthetic value" it was said to possess.⁵⁰⁶

Imbued in such ideologies was women artists' embrace of the subjective position of producers of nude images. In her essay "Beauty of well-developed women's bodies and methods of drawing the human body" ("Nüzi fayumei yu renti huafa" 女子發育美與人體畫法), the artist Tao Cuiying 陶粹英 (ca. 1900-?) linked the aesthetic value of female bodies to their artistic representations.⁵⁰⁷ According to Tao, Chinese women never pay attention to the wholesome development of the body. Since they do not like to do physical exercise (*yundong* 運動), their

⁵⁰² Liying Sun, *Body Un/Dis-Covered*, 91–107.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, 93–96.

⁵⁰⁴ On women's self-care in *Funü shibao*, see Judge, *Republican Lens*, 141–148.

⁵⁰⁵ Wuling 嫵靈, "Rentime" 人體美 [Beauty of the human body], *Funü shibao* 2 (July 26, 1911): 7–11.

⁵⁰⁶ Sun, "1920 niandai Shanghai de huajia, zhishi fenzi yu luoti shijue wenhua," 264–276.

⁵⁰⁷ Tao Cuiying 陶粹英, "Nüzi fayumei yu renti huafa" 女子發育美與人體畫法 [Beauty of well-developed women's bodies and methods of drawing the human body], *Funü zazhi* 15, no. 7 (July 1929): 33–39.

figures are ill-proportioned. Their range of motion is also limited, which therefore restricts the means of self-expression through bodily movement. All these factors make Chinese women appear sickly (*bingtai* 病態), Tao claimed.⁵⁰⁸

In addition to imparting knowledge about the correct ways for women to take care of their health, the second part of Tao's essay conveys detailed instructions on how to draw the human body, complete with eleven drawings illustrating proper human proportions and how to draw certain body parts. Tao asserts that since most Chinese women look sickly, it is difficult for artists to find ideal female models for their drawings or paintings. Most female models have short lower limbs, which makes them look rather ugly, she claimed. Their skin also looks greyish-yellow or purplish-grey. Without a decent model, Tao argues, even artists with superb "skills in realistic depiction" (*xieshi de gongfu* 寫實的功夫) will not be able to make their works look beautiful.⁵⁰⁹

Tao was a Western-style artist. She was also responsible for the artistic component of the popular education (*tongsu jiaoyu* 通俗教育) program of the district near the Central University in Nanjing.⁵¹⁰ One of the principal mandates of the Republican government's popular-education program was to clamp down on behaviours and cultural practices that were considered "backward."⁵¹¹ Tao's essay imparted both health knowledge and artistic instruction, which reinforced her dual authority as an educator and an artist. Her argument was based on the belief that the healthy and robust female body was a valued form of beauty. Her article was published in *Funü zazhi*'s special issue on the First National Art Exhibition. A number of essays included

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 34.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 34–35.

⁵¹⁰ For the biography of Tao Cuiying, see "Nü qingnian yishujia." *Funü zazhi* 15, no. 7 (July 1929): 17.

⁵¹¹ On mandates and implementation of popular education, see Bailey, *Gender and Education in China*, 92–93.

in the issue aimed to encourage women to engage in various practices in the arts and crafts. The inclusion of Tao's essay therefore implied that it was proper for women artists to produce images of the female nude—a position further sanctioned by Tao's position as an artist and art educator.

Jin Qijing 金啓靜 (1902–1982), an artist and art educator who avidly promoted women's art, further endorsed women artists' right to depict nudes. In her review of Pan's first solo exhibition, Jin praises Pan's tremendous skills in this regard.⁵¹² She calls Pan an exemplary woman whose achievement prove that art was one of the most suitable occupations for women since women possess great emotional sensitivity. She urges women to view Pan as an inspiration, since her success meant that the unfavourable social conditions of the past—conditions that deterred women from expressing their artistic talents—had now passed.

In addition to her review of Pan's exhibition, Jin penned another article in the special issue of *Funü zazhi* discussing the close relationship between women and art.⁵¹³ In it, she reiterates her belief that women are innately suited to the arts because of their intense emotion—an invaluable trait of artistic expression. Moreover, Jin links women to the notion of natural beauty, writing that “women are the beloved of the God of beauty. They are gifted with a special natural ability for art. If we are to say that ‘women always love nature,’ it could be said that ‘loving beauty is always natural [for women].’”⁵¹⁴ Jin argues, moreover, that the sincerity and purity of women's hearts would form the most perfect “attitude to beauty” (*meide taidu* 美的態度).⁵¹⁵ By thus establishing the link between women, natural beauty, and women's innate ability

⁵¹² For the biography of Jin Qijing, see “Nü qingnian yishujia,” *Funü zazhi* 15, no. 7 (July 1929): 13; Jin Qijing 金啓靜, “Canguan Pan Yuliang nüshi huazhan hou zhi ganxiang” 參觀潘玉良女士畫展後之感想 [Some thoughts after seeing Pan Yuliang's painting exhibition], *Shenbao*, December 6, 1928, 12.

⁵¹³ Jin Qijing 金啓靜, “Nüxing yu meishu” 女性與美術 [Women and art], *Funü zazhi* 15, no. 7 (July 1929): 33.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*

to practice art, Jin further establishes the notion that women (and women's bodies) are the most admired subject matter in art, and that therefore women should be the producers of such beautiful images.

In the popular press, Pan was presented time and again as a positive role model for women. Even though her works were associated with the highly contested notion of the nude, this had not been an issue in all of the discussions, reviews, and anecdotal reports on her art. On the contrary, photographs of Pan posing with models were seen repeatedly in print media with little controversy. A photograph of Pan and her male model for *The Drunkard* (or *Old Man*) gives a rare glimpse of Pan's student days in Rome [Figure 3.6].⁵¹⁶ The photograph, printed in a women's magazine's special issue on women artists and writers, reaffirmed the importance of using life models. It also further endorsed the place of figure painting in the hierarchy of Western-style art in China and women's contribution to this practice.

Another photograph shows instructors and members of the Yiyuan Institute for the Research of Painting posing with a nude female model. In the picture, Pan puts her right arm around the shoulders of the model, who has turned her face away from the camera [Figure 3.7]. Wu Fang-cheng suggests this was Pan's sign of empathy towards the model, with whom she shared a similar fate (read "selling their bodies").⁵¹⁷ Wu's reading of this photo, I would argue, provides an example of a scholar that has been tainted by the portrayal of Pan in popular culture. By contrast, I interpret the gesture as a sign of the comfortable working relationship Pan enjoyed with nude models, who were an integral part of her art-making process. It was also her way of showing respect for this particular model, reaffirming the legitimacy of her use of such a method.

⁵¹⁶ *Zhenmeishan nüzuojia hao*, n.p. According to Su Xuelin, *Laoren* was the same painting as *Jiutu* 酒徒 (*The Drunkard*), see note 63.

⁵¹⁷ Wu Fang-cheng, "Luode liyou," 107.

Moreover, the presence of women artists in the photograph is keenly felt, a reflection of the fact that women artists were accepted as producers of nude images as much as male artists. This unequivocal acceptance further placed female and male artists on the same footing in the development of Western-style art in China.

Debates about Modern Art in China

The National Art Exhibition of 1929 was a pivotal moment in the Nationalist government's effort to promote culture as the backbone of a stable nation.⁵¹⁸ Women artists' large presence at the event was an important indication of the overall progress of women's education and career development. Pan's high-profile education in both France and Italy not only represented her own success, but that of the Republican government's overseas studies program as well; this was especially true for women, who only gained access to a public education for the first time a little more than two decades before.

Naturally, Pan was a shining star at the event. As such she was frequently featured in *Meizhan* 美展 (The art exhibition)—a special pamphlet issued once every three days during the First National Art Exhibition.⁵¹⁹ Besides her own painting *Looking at a Reflection* (*Guying* 顧影), which was printed in the first issue of *Meizhan*, a portrait of Pan by her Italian teacher Coromaldi was reproduced in the third issue.⁵²⁰ If *Meizhan* was a forum for the showcasing of Chinese artists' achievement, then a portrait by Pan's teacher might seem out of place. Even

⁵¹⁸ For the goals of the exhibition, see Cai Yuanpei's forewords to the 1929 National Art Exhibition in *Meizhan tekan* 美展特刊 [*The National Fine Arts Exhibition of 1929*] (Shanghai: Zhengyishe 正藝社, 1929), n.p.

⁵¹⁹ *Meizhan* was published once every three days from April 10 to May 7, 1929, during the National Art Exhibition. A total of ten issues were published. Twenty-one artists and cultural critics contributed articles to the issues. The chief editors were Xu Zhimo 徐志摩, Chen Xiaodie 陳小蝶, Yang Qingqing 楊清磬, and Li Zuhan 李祖韓.

⁵²⁰ "Pan Yuliang nüshi xiang" 潘玉良女士像 [Portrait of Ms. Pan Yuliang] by Coromaldi, *Meizhan* 3 (1929): 5.

though a few paintings by Japanese artists were reproduced in the publication, these works were physically present at the National Art Exhibition in the section “foreign works” (*waiguo zuopin* 外國作品). However, Coromaldi’s portrait was not shown at the exhibition. Its inclusion in the magazine, it seems, was meant not only to show a fine painting of a European master, but also to emphasize Pan’s fine pedigree in the lineage of European academic tradition.

The 1929 National Exhibition was a battleground between the two different ends of the spectrum of Western-style art in China at the time. The famous debate between the “two Xus,” which took place in the pages of *Meizhan*, demonstrated the rift between these two camps. At the one end was Xu Beihong 徐悲鴻 (1895–1953), a relentless promoter of the European academic tradition as the noblest—and hence the only—style from which Chinese artists should learn.⁵²¹ On the other end was Xu Zhimo 徐志摩 (1897–1931), who encouraged artists to experiment and learn from the European avant-garde.⁵²² Xu Beihong argued that the genres of academic realism and historical painting, such as those produced by his teacher, Pascal Dagnan-Bouveret (1852–1929), were the highest achievement of Western art,⁵²³ and he was critical of the European modern art that came after Manet. According to Xu Beihong, it was precisely the works that he

⁵²¹ In protest of the inclusion of numerous works that he considered “shameful,” Xu Beihong boycotted the exhibition and did not show any of his work. See David Der-wei Wang, “In the Name of the Real,” in *Chinese Art: Modern Expressions*, Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith, eds. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 29–59.

⁵²² The debates appeared in several issues of *Meizhan*: Xu Beihong, “Huo” 惑 [Perplexed]; Xu Zhimo, “Woye ‘huo’” 我也惑 [I Too Am “Perplexed”], *Meizhan* 5 (1929); and Xu Zhimo, “Woye ‘huo’ (xu)” 我也惑 (續) [I Too Am “Perplexed” (continued)], *Meizhan* 6 (1929). For an insightful discussion of the rift between the two Xus, see David Der-wei Wang, “In the Name of the Real,” 29–59.

⁵²³ The interview was conducted in 1926; see Wan Ye 萬葉, “Liu Fa yishu zhuanjia Xu Beihong jun fangwenji” 留法藝術專家徐悲鴻君訪問記 [Interview of the French-educated artist Mr. Xu Beihong], quoted in Wang Zhen 王震, ed., *Xu Beihong wenji* 徐悲鴻文集 [Collected writings on Xu Beihong] (Shanghai: Shanghai huabao chubanshe, 2005), 10–11.

deemed most shameful (*wuchi zhizuo* 無恥之作), such as those by Cézanne, Matisse, and Bonnard, that Xu Zhimo was promoting.⁵²⁴

Reviews of Pan's first solo exhibition already revealed that her work was being evaluated according to the notion of realism. In addition to the numerous congratulatory pieces, Ni Yide 倪貽德 (1901–1970)—Pan's former classmate at the Shanghai Art Academy—gave an unusually candid review.⁵²⁵ Ni praises Pan's extraordinary skills in capturing the human form, which were demonstrated by the harmonious colour palette and realistic details in the largescale paintings of figures and nudes. Yet while these large paintings captured his attention, Ni felt that Pan's still life, landscape, and other smaller work was not as impressive. Ni further states that the quality of some of the works Pan produced after she returned to China was not on par with those produced while she was in Rome. He suggested that perhaps this was the result of Pan's recent return to China and that she had not yet settled in. He believed that Pan would produce better works after this initial period; he hoped that Pan would not be blinded by her success and would continue to pursue works that reflect the spirit of the time. Ni's opinions reveal that competent painting and drawing of the human figure was still relatively rare in China. They also show that Pan's ability to render the human form in a lifelike way represented a great achievement, one celebrated by artists, intellectuals, and even the general public. In another review, a certain Ms. Yu Caizi 俞采子女士 also endorsed the fine rendering of muscle in Pan's female and male nudes. She also praises Pan's well-balanced colours and her excellent use of the technique of *chiaroscuro* to render forms.⁵²⁶

⁵²⁴ Xu Beihong, "Huo," n.p.

⁵²⁵ 倪貽德 Ni Yide, "Pan Yuliang nüshi liu Ou gezhan" 潘玉良女士留歐個展 [Solo exhibition of Pan Yuliang's works during her study in Europe] *Shenbao*, December 5, 1928, supplement p. 5.

⁵²⁶ Ms. Yu Caizi 俞采子女士, "Ji Pan Yuliang huiguo jinian zhanlanhui" 紀潘玉良回國紀念展覽會 [An exhibition to commemorate Pan Yuliang's return to China], *Shenbao*, December 1, 1928, 19.

Pan's skill in depicting the human figure was further exemplified by the five paintings she exhibited at the National Art Exhibition: *The Drunkard* (*Jiutu* 酒徒) [Figure 3.3], *A Black Woman* (*Heinü* 黑女), *Reclining Male Nude under the Light* (*Dengxia wonan* 燈下臥男), *Looking at a Reflection* (*Guying* 顧影), and *After a Singing Performance* (*Geba* 歌罷) [Figures 3.8 to 3.11] The first three were produced during her time in Rome, while the latter two were painted after she returned to China. Each reflected Pan's skills in the academic style, with their proper use of chiaroscuro, foreshortening, and the rendering of mass. These five oil paintings and pastel drawings were all portraits, nudes, and semi-nudes.

Pan's pastel painting, *Looking at a Reflection*, was included in the special issue of *Funü zazhi*, on the first page of the colour plate section. The image is followed by a one-page comment by an author named Song 頌. The author has high praise for Pan's works, claiming that she was the best among all the artists in the exhibition who excelled at "realistic" painting.⁵²⁷ Li Yuyi, the artist and writer who authored the four reviews of each section at the National Art Exhibition that appeared in the *Funü zazhi* mentioned earlier, also praised Pan's exceptional sense of depth. Indeed, Li even compared *Looking at a Reflection* to the *Mona Lisa*. Furthermore, Li asserted that Pan's perseverance during her difficult years as an art student in France and Italy combined with her international success made her a rare treasure in the bleak environment of the Chinese art world.⁵²⁸

Despite positioning her work in the highly respected realm of Western realism, Pan had started to deviate from the highly polished manner of the academic style with the loose

⁵²⁷ This short article is printed on translucent paper and functions as a separator between the colour plate section and the black and white image section that follows. See *Funü zazhi* 15, no. 7 (July 1929).

⁵²⁸ Li Yuyi 李寓一, "Jiaoyubu quanquo meishu zhanlanhui canguanji er: xihuabu zhi gaikuang" 教育部全國美術展覽會參觀記二 [Reports on the visit to the National Art Exhibition of the Ministry of Education part two: an overview of the section of Western-style painting], *Funü zazhi* 15, no. 7 (1929): 1–2.

brushstrokes and bright palette of primary colours displayed in *Glory (Rong 榮)* [Figure 3.12]. Without indicating a specific date, the painting was reproduced in 1929 by *Wenhua* 文華 (*Culture Arts Reviews*), a popular magazine of art and culture.⁵²⁹

Glory depicts a group of female nudes dancing and singing in a forest. At the centre of the painting is a circle formed by five women, seemingly dancing while a woman sitting under a tree, on the right side of the painting, plays guitar. The left side is occupied by two women, one of whom is putting a wreath of flowers on the other. The background consists of a forest painted with bold brushstrokes in a warm pink palette. A basket of bright red and orange fruits occupies the bottom-right foreground of the painting.

The painting is an unmistakable indication that Pan was well aware of the Fauvist style practiced by Henri Matisse. She was clearly attracted to Matisse's use of colour and dynamic composition, techniques which propelled her to imitate his famous painting *Le bonheur de vivre* (1905–1906) [Figure 3.13]. The motif of women dancing in a circle appeared frequently in Matisse's works. Pan's basket of fruits was perhaps an homage to Cézanne's still lifes. However, unlike Matisse's less visible brushstrokes and his use of flat colours in *Le bonheur*, Pan's brushstrokes are akin to those of post-Impressionist artists such as Vincent Van Gogh (1853–1890) or Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947). Moreover, Pan's title, *Glory*, also echoes the sentiment expressed in the title of Matisse's work.

Glory was reprinted in black and white in Pan's painting monograph of 1934. In the volume, the title of the work was changed to *Spring (Chun 春)*, and the date to 1930, even though the work had already been published in 1929 [Figure 3.14]. The caption accompanying

⁵²⁹ This painting was first reproduced in *Wenhua* 文華 [*Culture Arts Reviews*] 3 (October 1929). There is no date noted on the painting or the caption.

the painting mentions that it was a depiction of Pan's "ideal" scene (*lixiang hua* 理想畫) and an experimental work from her imagination (*huanxiang de shiyan zhizuo* 幻想的實驗之作).⁵³⁰ It further states that the work was painted after Pan returned to China and that it had been shown in an exhibition in Tokyo.⁵³¹ Pan was apparently quite satisfied with this painting since it had been reproduced twice and shown in an exhibition overseas.

Compared to her other works produced between 1928 and 1937, the painting was unusual in terms of style and subject matter. *Glory* depicts a group of female nudes set in an imaginative landscape, unlike her other nude paintings from this period, which were mostly portraits or nude figures of a single person. Her fondness for the composition was further demonstrated by another version of the painting that she showed at the Second National Art Exhibition in 1937. This version has almost exactly the same composition as the first, except that a few details were omitted. Pan also titled this painting *Spring* [Figure 3.15].⁵³²

Glory/Spring was perhaps Pan's way to present to a Chinese audience another aspect of her learning and her knowledge of the European avant-garde. The obvious tribute to Matisse, Cézanne, and Bonnard in these two paintings was perhaps her "rebellious" way showing her desire to expand the narrow definition of Western-style art practiced by Xu Beihong and his followers. Interestingly, however, the later version of *Spring* is more similar to the pointillist style of the post-Impressionist Georges Seurat (1859–1891), the figures on Pan's painting also

⁵³⁰ *Pan Yuliang youhuaqi* 潘玉良油畫集 [Oil paintings of Pan Yuliang] (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1934), plate #8.

⁵³¹ She had a two-person exhibition with an artist named Wang Huahe 王化和 in Tokyo in 1930. See "Pan Yuliang shengping ji shidai dashi nianbiao," 196.

⁵³² *Jiaoyubu dierci quanguo meishu zhanlanhui zhuanji* 教育部第二次全國美術展覽會專集 [A special collection of the second National Exhibition of Chinese Art under the auspices of the Ministry of Education] (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937), n.p.

have more detailed and defined forms.⁵³³ This transition from Fauvist to Pointillist influence, I would argue, was Pan's "return" to a style that was less radical and more acceptable to a Chinese audience.⁵³⁴ This "return" perhaps signified the tension in Pan's work, between wanting to create more experimental works and wanting to be accepted by the Chinese public. In the end, she chose—as we see in the later version of *Spring*—a compromise between the two.

The first version of *Glory/Spring* was shown to the public after the closing of the First National Art Exhibition in 1929. Pan might still have been feeling the heat of the debates between academic and avant-garde styles in the aftermath of the event, and showing *Glory/Spring* may have been an attempt to make waves. However, her iconic status as the representative of a successful European academic art training might have deterred her from experimenting more in her work. Furthermore, her position as a teacher in the art department of the National Central University (Guoli Zhongyang daxue 國立中央大學), where Xu Beihong was program director, would also require her to follow a more orthodox academic tradition.

Women Art Educators

Since the establishment of public education for women in 1907, female students were encouraged to study art, a discipline that was considered suitable for women. Teaching art was also a preferred career for women. And yet even though there were a number of female art teachers in primary, secondary, and normal schools for women before the late 1920s, few held

⁵³³ Unfortunately, the reproduction of *Spring* is in black and white and we therefore cannot judge how similar its palette is to *Glory*.

⁵³⁴ As early as 1911, when Li Shutong returned to China from his study at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, he was already painting in the pointillist style—an indication of the influence of Japanese training that integrated elements of French academicism, Impressionism, and Post-Impressionism. See Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 31–32.

teaching positions in institutions of higher education or specialized art schools. This situation started to change as women artists returned from overseas study in the late 1920s, and many found teaching posts in prestigious art schools. Among this first wave of female artists returning from Japan was Li Dianchun 李殿春 (1900–?), one of the few Chinese students to graduate from the *yōga* program at the School of Fine Arts for Women (Joshi bijutu gakkō 女子美術学校) in Tokyo.⁵³⁵ Upon her return, in 1918, Li took a position at the Shanghai Normal School of Fine Arts for Women (Shanghai nüzi yishu shifan xuexiao 上海女子藝術師範學校).⁵³⁶

At the invitation of Liu Haisu, Pan Yuliang taught at her alma mater, the Shanghai Art Academy. In 1931, she was also invited by Xu Beihong, a fellow artist and former classmate in Paris, to teach at the Central University in Nanjing. The Western-painting program at the Central University was a hub for fostering Cai Yuanpei's vision of aesthetic education in China, and Cai appointed Xu to be department head in an attempt to develop Western academic-style painting in China.

While Xu appreciated Pan's skills and invited her to become a faculty member at the Central University, she was ultimately overshadowed by Xu's reputation, as students were more eager to learn from Xu than from Pan. Indeed, a student of Pan's, Yu Feng 郁風 (1916–2007), recounted that when students were free to choose their teachers, most chose Xu, and as a result, his classroom was always full. In 1934, when Yu entered the Western-art program at the university, she realized that Xu's classroom was too crowded, so she decided to attend Pan's class. Since Pan had only two students in her class, Yu benefitted from her frequent hands-on

⁵³⁵ Li studied at the school from 1915–1918. Zhou Yichuan *Jindai Zhongguo nüxing Riben liuxueshi*, 143.

⁵³⁶ “Ms. Li Dianchun 李殿春 teaches life drawing at the Shanghai normal school of fine arts for women,” (photo) in *Funü zazhi* 6, no. 9 (September, 1920).

demonstrations.⁵³⁷ Pan seemed to enjoy a higher status at the Shanghai Art Academy, where she was the only female teacher in the department and where she was made the director of the painting institute in 1936.⁵³⁸

In Shi Nan's portrayal of Pan in *Huahun*, she was consistently mocked by her colleagues for her past as a prostitute.⁵³⁹ Although there is no evidence of this, it is possible that the gossip surrounding Pan's humble past and her status as Pan Zanhua's second wife would have tainted her reputation at the school. It is also likely that the stigma around successful women—no doubt motivated by jealousy—would lessen Pan's status at these schools.

Despite these biases, female artists continued to educate the next generation of Chinese artists. Although it is difficult to gauge how much influence they had on the design of curriculum and the direction taken by their respective institutions compared to their male colleagues, the very presence of female faculty members signalled an important step in the professional development of women artists. Pan Yuliang was an important presence among them.

As more students returned to China after their overseas studies in the late 1920s, the number of female faculty members at higher-level art institutions also started to increase. In 1930 Guan Zilan joined the faculty of her alma mater, the China Fine Arts Institute, after studying in Japan.⁵⁴⁰ Cai Weilian 蔡威廉 (1904–1940), who since 1914 had traveled to Europe

⁵³⁷ Yu Feng's letter to Ralph Croizier, dated October 21, 1992.

⁵³⁸ Other faculty members in the Department of Western Art included male artists Wang Yachen, Liu Haisu, Li Yishi, and Wang Jiyan. Wang Yuanbo 王遠勃, Ni Yide, Zhang Xian 張弦, Liu Kang 劉抗. See Chen Ruilin 陈瑞林, *Ershi shiji Zhongguo meishu jiaoyushi yanjiu* 20 世纪中国美术教育历史研究 [*Research on the history of the twentieth-century art education in China*], 85; "Shanghai meizhanxiao pin Pan Yuliang wei yanjiusuo zhuren" 上海美專校聘潘玉良為研究所主任 [Shanghai Art Academy appoints Pan Yuliang to be the director of the (painting) institute], *Zhongyang ribao* 中央日報 [Central Daily News] (Nanjing), January 31, 1936.

⁵³⁹ Shi Nan, *Huahun*.

⁵⁴⁰ Xu Changming 徐昌酩, ed., *Shanghai meishuzhi* 上海美术志 [Chronicles of art in Shanghai] (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2004), 452.

three times with her father Cai Yuanpei, received Western-style art training at the Académie royale des beaux-arts de Bruxelles, and the École nationale des beaux-arts de Lyon. Upon returning to China in 1928, Cai, at the invitation of Lin Fengmian 林風眠 (1900–1991), joined the faculty at the National West Lake Art Academy (Xihu guoli yishuyuan 西湖國立藝術院), later renamed the National Hangzhou Art Academy (Guoli Hangzhou yishu zhuanmen xuexiao 國立杭州藝術專科學校).⁵⁴¹ Established during the Nanjing decade, the academy was founded under Cai Yuanpei's direction. Cai recruited Lin Fengmian to head the institute. In addition to the Western-art program at the Central University, which was headed by Xu Beihong and aimed to nurture academic-style art, the National West Lake Art Academy was the foremost institution for Western-style modern art in China at the time. Both institutions were mandated to realize Cai's vision of "social aesthetic education" (*shehui meiyu* 社會美育).⁵⁴² While most foreign-trained women artists took up teaching posts in Shanghai and Hangzhou, Fang Junbi returned to her hometown of Guangdong in 1924 to begin teaching at Guangzhou University (Guangzhou daxue 廣州大學) and Zhixin School (Zhixin xuexiao 執信學校).⁵⁴³

Female art students at the Institut franco-chinois finished their studies and returned to China around 1928. Fang Yun 方勻, who specialized in textile design and ceramic painting during her studies at the École des beaux-arts de Lyon, taught at the National West Lake Art Academy, the Central University, and the Suzhou Vocational School (Suzhou zhiye xuexiao 蘇州職業學校).⁵⁴⁴ Wang Jingyuan, one of the few Chinese students who studied sculpture—an

⁵⁴¹ On Cai Weilian, see Tao Yongbai and Li Shi, *Shiluo de lishi*, 202–205; "Nü qingnian yishujia," *Funü zazhi* 15, no. 7 (July 1929): 9.

⁵⁴² The school is now called the China Academy of Art (Zhongguo meishu xueyuan 中国美术学院). For more on the National Hangzhou Art Academy, see Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 62–63.

⁵⁴³ *Zhongguo meishu nianjian 1947*, 58.

⁵⁴⁴ "Nü qingnian yishujia," *Funü zazhi* 15, no. 7 (July 1929): 26.

uncommon specialization, especially for a woman—returned in 1928, bringing with her large-scale marble sculptures, including a bust relief of Sun Yat-sen.⁵⁴⁵ Upon her return, Wang was appointed Professor of Sculpture in the Department of Fine Arts at Peking University.⁵⁴⁶

Women artists' achievements in both teaching and art practice were highlighted extensively in print media, but women who had traveled and studied abroad saw their public personas enhanced even further by their overseas experience. In women's magazines, specifically, they were portrayed as worldly individuals who had traveled the globe in search of opportunity and self-realization.

PUBLIC PERSONAS

In Print Media

A photo-portrait of Pan Yuliang was published in *Tuhua shibao* 圖畫時報 (The Eastern Times Photo Supplement) in August 1927 [Figure 3.16].⁵⁴⁷ A Chinese caption states that Pan was one of the few female artists who had traveled to Europe. The accompanying English caption, however, was slightly different; it referred to its subject as “Famous Chinese painter in Europe—Miss Pan Yuen-liang [*sic*].” The difference was perhaps meant to elevate her status among English-speaking readers. The accompanying headshot of Pan portrays a young woman with a stylish bob and sporting a low-necked top or dress, together with a simple necklace. This kind of headshot, often accompanied by a simple caption or short paragraph indicating the subject's social role, was not uncommon among photographs of women published in the popular press at

⁵⁴⁵ Photo of Sun Yat-sen's bust in *Ibid.*, 64. Photos of her sculptures are also preserved at Le fonds de l'Institut franco-chinois de Lyon (1921-1946), Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon.

⁵⁴⁶ *Huanan wenyi* 華南文藝 [*South China Literature and Art*], September 1932.

⁵⁴⁷ “Pan Yuliang nüshi wei lu Ou youshu zhi nühuajia” 潘玉良女士為旅歐有數之女畫家, *Tuhua shibao* 圖畫時報 [The Eastern Times photo supplement], August 24, 1927 (No. 388).

the time, and it was a prominent feature of the commercial women's magazines that began to appear in Shanghai in the early 1910s.

When the photograph was published, Pan was still studying in Rome, but she would have been familiar with this practice before she left for France in 1921. The picture could have been solicited by the editor and sent to Shanghai by Pan, or submitted by Pan in response to the call for photo submissions—a practice widely used by the popular press to solicit images at the time.⁵⁴⁸ At any rate, the photograph served to introduce Pan to the Chinese public a year before her return.

Chinese citizens' travels abroad were commonly featured in the popular press at the time, especially in pictorials and entertainment magazines. These reports were met with enthusiasm by the public, who were curious about those individuals who were fortunate enough to visit, study, or work in novel and unfamiliar lands.⁵⁴⁹ In the case of women artists studying in foreign cities, it was not just their achievements that aroused admiration; their appearance—hairstyle, clothing, and mannerisms—were also a source of public fascination. Their representations in the popular media thus heightened these women's celebrity status, but they also served the purpose of role modelling, a practice that was especially prevalent in women's magazines.

By the late 1920s, art was increasingly considered an acceptable occupation for women. The portrayal of women artists was therefore becoming a frequent feature of women's magazines. In the special issue of *Funü zazhi* on the First National Art Exhibition, for example, there is a column titled “Young women artists” (*Nü qingnian yishujia* 女青年藝術家). It consists

⁵⁴⁸ For example, *Funü shibao* solicited photographs of women to accompany their submitted literary and artistic works. See Judge, *Republican Lens*, 94–95.

⁵⁴⁹ For example, a woman named Wang Maoyi 王茂漪 was studying at George Washington University. She took a series of photographs of landmarks of Washington D.C. and wrote captions and poems to accompany them. They were published in *Funü shibao* 19 (August 1916) and 20 (November 1916).

of twenty-four photographs of women artists and their short biographies, each occupying an entire page. Among them are painters, calligraphers, sculptors, and photographers. In the biographies, the editors repeatedly emphasize the achievement and international visibility of these women artists, thus affirming their position in the local art community as well as presenting them as trailblazers who crossed national boundaries and gained artistic recognition on the international stage. Pan Yuliang, who was mentioned frequently in the various reviews, articles, and images in the issue, occupies the first page of the column. Along with Cai Weilian, Fang Junbi, and Fang Yun, they represented women artists who had studied in France. Headshots of Pan, Cai, and Fang Junbi show the young women sporting the fashionable bobbed hair; Fang Yun, who was equally stylish, was portrayed with a pencil drawing, apparently done by a fellow artist. The artists' fashion sense projected an image of progressiveness.⁵⁵⁰

In addition to presenting the artists as role models of style and modern womanhood, women's magazines also provided a much-needed discursive space for women artists to express their views on art. The two-part column "Art-makers' experience" (zuojiā jīngyān tán 作家經驗談) in *Funiū zazhi* was comprised of women artists' first-hand accounts of learning art—both Western and Chinese styles—as well as their art-making processes. The first article, by Pan Yuliang, was titled "My experience of learning how to draw with pastels."⁵⁵¹ In it, Pan elaborates on her preference for pastels, and she encourages other female artists to use the medium since, in her opinion, it is easier to learn, and more convenient than, oil painting.

In addition to writing about art, Pan was able to use print media to rewrite her biography. She presents herself as having had a relatively normal upbringing in a city, with an education

⁵⁵⁰ Antonia Finnane mentions that the short bob was favoured by progressive women in the late 1920s, then became more popular in the 1930s. See Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China*, 157–160.

⁵⁵¹ Pan Yuliang, "Woxi fenbihua de jingguo tan," 51.

that was commonly available to girls and women of middle-class families.⁵⁵² She also demonstrates her knowledge of the classics in an attempt to identify with artists of privileged backgrounds who had been immersed in poetry and classical language from a young age.⁵⁵³ In this way, print media functioned as a liberating discursive platform for the expression women's newfound subjectivity and agency. In public forums like this, many women were not afraid to voice their opinions about art and other cultural issues. They wrote about their art practices, their life stories, and even their social and political views using everyday vernacular language.

Public Engagements

A group of Chinese students who had recently returned from Europe organized an event to celebrate International Labour Day on May 1, 1928.⁵⁵⁴ Lin Baoquan, the chair of the event, gave a speech informing the Chinese public about the meanings and importance of Labour Day. The students, having learned about labour movements in Europe and America, wanted to use this opportunity to call on Chinese citizens to recognize the importance of the working class and to improve working conditions for Chinese labourers in order to liberate them from exploitation and aggression. Besides Lin, a few other former female students of the Institut franco-chinois were also at the event, including Pan Yuliang, Su Mei, and Fang Yun. Su Mei gave a speech on the history of Labour Day, and Pan and Fang joined the educator Ai Yuhua 艾毓華 in performing a few Chinese and Western songs.⁵⁵⁵ This event was just one of the many examples

⁵⁵² Pan Yuliang, "Wode yishu shenghuo guan," 177–179.

⁵⁵³ In her article "Wode yishu shenghuoguan," Pan explains the meaning of the word *yi* 藝 (arts) by explaining the origin of the word in oracle bones and by citing several examples in classical texts. See 177.

⁵⁵⁴ "Zuori 'wuyi' laodong jinian xiangqing" 昨日“五一”勞働紀念詳情 [A detailed report of yesterday's celebration of the "May First" labour day], *Shenbao*, May 2, 1928, 13–14.

⁵⁵⁵ Pan Yuliang stated that she was very interested in music since she was a young girl. While studying in Paris, she also took some courses in music. See "Wode yishu shenghuo guan."

of female artists and intellectuals openly engaging with the public in an attempt to inform and educate. As beneficiaries of a government-sponsored overseas education, they felt that they had the obligation to go beyond their professional fields to contribute to the betterment of society more generally.

In addition to social engagement, women artists were actively involved in professional organizations as well. In the late 1920s and '30s, art societies had become an important way of institutionalizing art practice and consolidating the idea of art as a profession. The societies established by artists who had studied abroad also served as pillars of the modern art scene in China, and some even functioned as promoters of Chinese art overseas. Although the number of women artists was still significantly smaller than males, they started to play central roles in these organizations, evinced by their active involvement as core members and organizers of local and overseas art events.

While still studying in France, Chinese artists had already organized various societies aimed at encouraging comradeship among compatriots and promoting Chinese art abroad. The Phoebus Society (Huopusi hui 霍普斯會, also known as the Overseas Art Movements Society; Haiwai yishu yundong she 海外藝術運動社) was founded in Paris in 1924 by the artists Lin Fengmian, Lin Wenzheng 林文錚 (1903–1990) and Wu Dayu 吳大羽 (1903–1988), among others.⁵⁵⁶ The Phoebus Society joined forces with a similar organization, the Work-Study Art Society (Meishu gongxue she 美術工學社)—also formed in Paris in 1924—to hold an exhibition of Chinese art at Strasbourg in the same year.⁵⁵⁷ It was the first largescale exhibition of Chinese art in Europe.

⁵⁵⁶ Xu Zhihao, *Zhongguo meishu shetuan manlu*, 67–68, 89–92.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

Fang Junbi was both a core member of Phoebus and a main organizer of the Strasbourg exhibition.⁵⁵⁸ She was also one of the only three artists at the exhibition whose work could be identified as “Western”—meaning a medium other than ink on paper—providing a glimpse of a new direction in art in China.⁵⁵⁹ Just before her return to China, Fang also helped found the Association of Chinese Art in France (Zhonghua liu Fa yishu xiehui 中華留法藝術協會) in 1929. (The association folded in 1930 after its core members, including Fang, Liu Haisu, and Wang Yachen 汪亞塵 (1894–1983), started returning to China.) These artists’ enthusiasm for forming art organizations would continue once they returned to their home soil.

One of the most influential of these organizations was the Art Movements Society (Yishu yundong she 藝術運動社). Headed by Lin Fengmian and established in Hangzhou in 1928, the Art Movements Society included a number of the original members of the Phoebus Society who had become faculty members at the National Hangzhou Art Academy, including Cai Weilian and Wang Jingyuan.⁵⁶⁰ The organization not only held its own exhibitions in Shanghai, Nanjing, and Japan, but it was also one of the institutional sponsors of the First National Art Exhibition and the art pavilion of the West Lake Exposition (Xihu bolanhui 西湖博覽會), both held in 1929.⁵⁶¹ As part of the planning committee, Pan Yuliang participated in the submission and curating process for the exposition.⁵⁶²

⁵⁵⁸ Li Feng 李風, “Lu Ou Huaren diyici juxing Zhongguo meishu zhanlan dahue zhi shengkuang 旅歐華人第一次舉行中國美術展覽大會之盛況” [The grand occasion of the first exhibition of Chinese art by Chinese artists in Europe], in *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 [Eastern Miscellany] 21, no. 16 (August 25, 1924): 30–36.

⁵⁵⁹ Craig Clunas, “Chinese Art and Chinese Artists in France (1924–1925),” *Arts Asiatiques* 44 (1989): 102.

⁵⁶⁰ Xu Zhihao, *Zhongguo meishu shetuan manlu*, 89.

⁵⁶¹ The West Lake Exposition was held in Hangzhou by the Republican government after the reunification to boost economic and industrial developments. It was the second large-scale exposition held in China, after the Nanyang Industrial Exposition held in 1910 by the Qing government. See Xu Zhihao, *Zhongguo meishu shetuan manlu*, 89–92.

⁵⁶² Jiyuan 濟遠, “Quanguo meizhan yu Xihu bolanhui de yishuguan” 全國美展與西湖博覽會的藝術館 [The National Art Exhibition and the Art Pavilion of the West Lake Exposition], *Meizhan* 美展 5 (1929): 5.

In addition to her formal experience as a teacher and event organizer, Pan tried to bring her experience of art organizations in Europe to bear on the art scene in China. Modeled after the private ateliers of Europe, such as the Académie Julian in Paris, Pan, together with French-educated Jiang Xiaojian 江小鶻 (1894–1939) and a number of other artists, established the Yiyuan Institute for the Research of Painting in Shanghai. Yiyuan provided studio space, art training, and exhibition opportunities for artists and students alike.

A JOURNEY OF NO RETURN

Pan was a prolific artist and art educator during the ten years after returning from Europe, but she felt that she had learned nothing much during this period. She therefore planned a trip to visit various European countries in the hope of inspiring her art. One of her main destinations was the Exposition internationale des arts et techniques dans la vie moderne, which took place in Paris in 1937. She intended to bring along a number of works produced during her time in China for friends and former mentors in Europe to see and critique. According to Pan, she was only planning to stay for two years.⁵⁶³

According to a widely circulated story, an incident at her 1936 solo exhibition drove Pan to leave China and never return. At the exhibition, Pan showed a painting titled *A Strong Man* (*Renli zhuangshi* 人力壯士), which depicted a male nude trying to lift a boulder off some delicate flowers.⁵⁶⁴ One night after the exhibition opening, the painting was vandalized by a

⁵⁶³ “Pan Yuliang chuguo kaocha meishu bing cangan Bali Bolanhui” 潘玉良出國考察美術並參觀巴黎博覽會 [Pan Yuliang will soon go aboard to research art and to attend the exposition in Paris], *Zhongyang ribao* 中央日報 [Central Daily News] (Nanjing), July 27, 1937.

⁵⁶⁴ In *Huahun*, where the story first appears, the exhibition was said to be Pan’s fifth solo exhibition in China, however, the location of where it was held was not mentioned. Pan indeed had a solo exhibition from June 2 to 8 in 1936 at the China Art Society (Zhonghua xueyi she 中華學藝社) in Shanghai. However, it was in fact her fourth solo exhibition after returning to China.

hooligan who left a note calling the painting “a prostitute’s praise to her customer” (*jinü dui piaoke de songge* 妓女對嫖客的頌歌).⁵⁶⁵ After the incident Pan felt despondent, and in 1937 she decided to leave China for France. Before she left, however, Pan held yet another solo exhibition in Nanjing with the aim of selling her works at lower prices in order to raise funds for the trip.⁵⁶⁶

Despite all the material I have gathered, I am unable to substantiate this story. Regardless of whether Pan ever produced such a painting, or whether the vandalism actually occurred, the story built upon, and indeed perpetuated, the sensationalism to which Pan’s life story was often subject. It portrayed her as a woman who, despite her accomplishments and success, was unable to escape the conservatism of Chinese society due to her early life experience. After 1937, Pan Yuliang never returned to China, and she lived in Paris until her death forty years later.

IN THE PARISIAN ART WORLD

By the eve of World War II Paris’s usually rowdy art scene had slowed down; Pan was also trying to settle into the city. From 1940 to 1943, while the city was under German occupation, she lived in the outer suburbs. Pan managed to enter a few salon exhibitions during her first few years back, including the Salon d’Automne at the Palais Chaillot and the Paris Salon at the Jardin

⁵⁶⁵ This story first appears in Shi Nan’s novel *Huahun*. The story has since been used repeatedly in articles and write-ups about Pan’s life. Among these recitations, the story was repeated almost verbatim from Shi Nan’s novel in the frequently referenced art history text: Zhu Boxiong 朱伯雄, and Chen Ruilin 陈瑞林. *Zhongguo xihua wushinian, 1898-1949* 中国西画五十年, 1898-1949 [Fifty years of Western art in China, 1898-1949] (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1989), 356; and in “Pan Yuliang shengping ji shidai dashi nianbiao,” 197.

⁵⁶⁶ Zhang Daofan 張道藩, “Jieshao Pan Yuliang huazhan” 介紹潘玉良畫展 [Introducing Pan Yuliang’s painting exhibition], *Zhongyang ribao* 中央日報 [Central Daily News] (Nanjing), June 11, 1937.

des Tuileries in 1938, the Paris Salon at the Grand Palais in 1939, and the Salon National indépendant, Exposition de l'Art Français held at the Palais de Chaillot in 1940.⁵⁶⁷

After the city was liberated in 1944, Pan returned to Paris and resumed active art production and continued entering various salon exhibitions. With artists returning along with a new wave of immigrant artists, the city's art scene was revitalized after World War II. Even though many artists had left the war-torn France for the United States, Paris was still considered an important art centre and streams of young artists came from around the world. Like artists before the war, many of these people gathered in the relatively inexpensive live-in studio complexes of Montparnasse or the Quartier Latin.⁵⁶⁸ Although she was not a complete stranger to Paris, Pan was among these international newcomers trying to survive and establish a career in the city.

The atmosphere of the Parisian art world after the war was simultaneously liberating and competitive. In Montparnasse, where members of the so-called “School of Paris” congregated, artists had to constantly reinvent themselves to gain recognition. The School of Paris, of which Pan was considered a member, generally refers to the group of artists who came from various—mostly European—countries shortly before World War I in pursuit of new artistic direction. In comparison to the conservative academic style of the *École des beaux-arts*, these artists brought with them new ideas, some of which were influenced by the cultural heritage of their native countries. Moreover, they also learned from and continued the experimentation of the post-Impressionists, early Expressionists, and Symbolists, such as Edvard Munch (1863–1944).

⁵⁶⁷ Dong Song, *Pan Yuliang Yishu Nianpu*, 188–200.

⁵⁶⁸ In the 1944 exhibition catalogue of the Union des Femmes Peintres et Sculpteurs, Pan's address was listed as 3 Rue Vercingétorix, in the heart of the Montparnasse. The street Vercingetorix was associated with the intense artistic life of Montparnasse. No. 3 had been a studio complex since the 1890s. Many other artists, such as Zao Wou-ki, had their studios in the famous *La Ruche* (the Beehive) nearby.

Among the better-known members of the School of Paris were Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), Chaim Soutine (1894–1943), and Marc Chagall (1887–1985). Although there is no distinct, single style that would exemplify these artists’ works, their subject matter was mostly representational and figurative. Their work was also characterized by distortion of figures and unnatural colour palettes.

After World War II, the number of artists who took residence in the city increased significantly. By the 1960s, there were around 40,000 amateur and professional artists living in Paris, and about 150,000 works were shown at salons and other exhibitions every year.⁵⁶⁹ The School of Paris remained an eclectic assemblage of styles, subject matter, and artists of different nationalities.⁵⁷⁰

While Chinese art students who studied in France were immersed in the academic tradition, many were also exposed to the works of the School of Paris, and one of the two main trends in Western-style art in China in the early twentieth century was influenced by the group.⁵⁷¹ Lin Fengmian, for example, went to France in 1919 and enrolled at the *École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts*. During his study, Lin was exposed to the works of the Fauvists and Expressionists and he attempted to bring these avant-garde trends back to China.⁵⁷² Lin’s ideas of modernist experimentation contrast greatly with Xu’s academic conservatism. Lin’s students,

⁵⁶⁹ Raymond Nacenta, *School of Paris: The Painters and the Artistic Climate of Paris since 1910* (London: Oldbourne Press, 1960), 59.

⁵⁷⁰ For details about the School of Paris after WWI, see *Ibid.*, 59–64.

⁵⁷¹ Li Chu-tsing 李鑄晉, “Bali yu chuqi Zhongguo xiyanghua de fazhan” 巴黎與初期中國西洋畫的發展 [Paris and the early development of Western-style art in China], in *Zhongguo – Bali; zaoqi li Fa huajia huiguzhan* 中國- 巴黎：早期旅法畫家回顧展 [*China-Paris: Seven Chinese Painters who Studied in France, 1918-1960*] (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 1988), 8.

⁵⁷² In 1925, Lin was invited by Cai Yuanpei to teach at the Beiping yishu zhuanmen xuexiao 北平藝術專門學校 (Beiping School of Fine Arts), where he was a colleague of Xu Beihong. However, Lin’s artistic direction was not welcomed at the school. Cai, who understood Lin’s vision, thus invited him to establish the new National West Lake Art Academy (Xihu guoli yishuyuan 西湖國立藝術院) in 1928.

including Zhao Wuji 趙無極 (Zao Wou-ki, 1921–2013)⁵⁷³ and Zhu Dechun 朱德群 (Teh Chun Chu, 1920–2014), both of whom had successful careers in France after immigrating there in the late 1940s and 1950s, had been exposed to the European avant-garde early in their art study in Hangzhou.

Since her return to Paris, Pan had frequently entered salon exhibitions. In addition to formal exhibitions at commercial galleries, such events were an essential channel for artists to show their work, as art dealers often looked for new talent at the salons.⁵⁷⁴ Since the mid-1920s, Chinese artists had had some success entering salon exhibitions. One such artist was Fang Junbi, whose works were selected to enter the Salon de Paris in 1924. She was said to be the first Asian artist who had ever exhibited at the Salon.⁵⁷⁵ Other artists' works were even acquired by museums in France.⁵⁷⁶

Some of the salons, such as the Indépendants and Automne, were founded in opposition to the conservative Salon des artistes français, and as such, they became recognized forums for new, avant-garde ideas in art. For example, the Société des Artistes Indépendants, formed in 1884, had launched the careers of many of the post-Impressionists and the Fauvists.⁵⁷⁷ By the 1950s, these salons had become well-established incubators of modern art in France—which

⁵⁷³ I will be using “Zao Wou-ki” hereafter since it is the most commonly known transliteration of the artist’s name internationally.

⁵⁷⁴ Gill Perry, *Women Artists and the Parisian Avant-garde: Modernism and “Feminine” Art, 1900 to the late 1920* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 41.

⁵⁷⁵ Fang’s *La joueuse de flute* (*The Flute Player*) and *Portrait de Mlle. H.* (*Portrait of Miss H.*) were selected for the Salon de Paris in 1924. Frank Dunand et al., *Le pavillon de l’harmonie conjugale: peintures et calligraphies chinoises entre tradition et modernité* (Genève: Collections Baur, 2002), 23. A report about Fang’s achievement and the two paintings were printed in *Funü zazhi* 10, no. 9 (September 1924), n.p.

⁵⁷⁶ In the 1930s, works by Liu Haisu and Chang Shuhong (常書鴻 1904–1994) were acquired by the Musée du Jeu de Paume and the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon, respectively. See Éric Lefebvre, “Équivoque exotisme: les artistes chinois face au public parisien (1925-1946),” in *Artistes chinois à Paris* (Paris: Musée Cernuschi, 2011), 48.

⁵⁷⁷ Nacenta, *School of Paris*, 48.

meant, however, that their anti-establishment spirit had been diluted as well. The Indépendants, for example, with nearly 3,000 members by 1960, had to continuously strive to prove the value of its existence with its annual salons.⁵⁷⁸ Nevertheless, to be chosen to exhibit at these salons was an important step for any emerging artist, and their participation ensured their professional status in the Parisian art world, which in turn, made for a highly competitive environment.

Although in her earlier work Pan had shown signs of wanting to break away from the academic style in which she was trained, she did not seem to have made much progress in this direction while in China. Once Pan returned to France, however, she was more at liberty to explore new ideas. These new works granted her some recognition at the salons. Pan had two entries at the Salon National indépendant, and the Exposition de l'Art Français held at the Palais de Chaillot in 1940—*The Nude*, priced at 3,000 francs, and *Portraits of Young Women*, priced at 2,200 francs.⁵⁷⁹ It was unclear whether the works were sold. However, her colourful painting of the nude captured the attention of an art critic and was commended in a general review of the exhibition in *Le Temps* in which the author states, “one could hardly find more joy of colour to this degree as in her refined nude to dismiss [the work of] a Chinese artist, on which I thought I read the signature: Pan Yu Lin.”⁵⁸⁰ Apparently, based on the way she was introduced by the critic, Pan was still very much an unknown figure in the Parisian art circle. However, a mention in a key newspaper could be considered no small achievement for a new artist in Paris.

Not much is known about the commercial side of Pan’s practice while she was in France, but she did not appear to be represented by any gallery. An unverified saying was widely

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ Dong Song, *Pan Yuliang yishu nianpu*, 198.

⁵⁸⁰ “Cette joie des couleurs on ne la trouve guère à ce degré que dans le nu raffiné et contourné d'un artiste chinois où j'ai cru lire la signature: Pan Yu Lin.” René-Jean, “La peinture au palais de Chaillot,” *Le Temps* (Paris), May 10, 1940, 5.

circulated in art historical texts, news articles, and various works of fiction claiming that Pan, in order to maintain her artistic freedom and independence, never wanted to be represented by a gallery.⁵⁸¹

For artists of the School of Paris, entering the salons was still one of the most important ways to land a private gallery representation. Artists of the School of Paris were generally more commercially successful than their more radical avant-garde contemporaries.⁵⁸² Gallery representation was an integral part of building an artists' career, and gallery owners thus had tremendous power, both critically and commercially. Relationships between art dealers and artists had always been precarious.⁵⁸³

Whether Pan intentionally turned down, or was one of the hundreds of artists in Paris who were unable to land, a gallery representation remains unknown. What we do know is that Pan had only two solo exhibitions, and that she did not seem to be in any group exhibitions at commercial galleries in the forty years she spent in Paris. This suggests that her work did not attract much attention from art dealers. Furthermore, her two solo exhibitions were held at Galerie d'Orsay in 1953 and 1957.⁵⁸⁴ The Galerie d'Orsay was owned by Chou Ling 周麟 (Zhou Lin), a compatriot whom Pan had met in China. Chou came to France in the 1940s, obtained a doctoral degree at the Institut franco-chinois and later worked at the UNESCO offices

⁵⁸¹ The saying first appeared in Shi Nan's *Huahun*, then it was recited in various literatures on Pan in Chinese publications, including Wang Yuli 王玉立, "Pan Yuliang" 潘玉良, *Yishujia* 藝術家 [Artists] 245 (October 1995): 218, and Li, *Zhongguo – Bali; zaoqi li Fa huajia huiguzhan*, 98.

⁵⁸² Perry, *Women Artists and the Parisian Avant-garde*, 95.

⁵⁸³ Léonard Tsuguharu Foujita (藤田嗣治 Fujita Tsuguharu, 1886–1968) was a well-known Japanese artist living in Paris since 1913. Even though Foujita apparently had disdain for the operation of Parisian art dealers, he became very successful locally and internationally under their representation. See Gu Yue 顾跃, *Chang Yu* 常玉 [Sanyu] (Shijiazhuang: Heibei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2007), 59–60.

⁵⁸⁴ The two exhibitions held at the gallery were: *Orient-Occident* (May 21–June 10, 1953), and *Pan Yu Lin: œuvres récentes* (May 22–June 15, 1957).

in Paris.⁵⁸⁵ An art lover, Chou opened the Galerie d'Orsay, where he also operated a publishing house named Éditions Euros, which issued several monographs on Chinese artists, including one of Zhang Daqian's works.⁵⁸⁶ Even though Pan's two exhibitions were held at the Galerie d'Orsay, they did not seem to command enough interest to have an exhibition catalogue produced by its publishing house. Indeed, the only monograph of Pan's works that was ever produced during her life time was the one published in Shanghai in 1934.

Although Pan was not known to have been commercially successful, she gained certain critical recognition on the salon circuit and also at public museums. Pan was mentioned on a few occasions in the French press and a few of her works were reproduced as well. In 1939, shortly after she returned to Paris from China, Pan's *Self-portrait (with a Book)* [Figure 3.17] was selected to be exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants. The painting was printed on the first page of the art newspaper *Beaux-arts: Chronique des arts et de la curiosité*, chosen by the well-known Polish-French critic Waldemar George, who helped build the career of Chaim Soutine—one of the most well-known artists of the School of Paris.⁵⁸⁷ Two months later, her *Self-portrait with a*

⁵⁸⁵ Chou Ling's doctoral thesis, finished in 1941, was titled "Thomas Blanchet: sa vie, ses oeuvres et son art." See "Liste des thèses soutenues par les étudiants de l'Institut franco-chinois de Lyon," http://www.bm-lyon.adeli.biz/trouver/Fonds_chinois/ressources/IFCL-Theses-etudiants.pdf. (Accessed January 14, 2016). It was unclear what Chou's position was at UNESCO. A document reveals that he was working in the area of cross-cultural education. He directed a "UNESCO Seminar on Education for International Understanding" in 1947 in Paris: see UNESDOC Database, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/Ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=155820&set=005698223F_0_452&database=ged&gp=0&mode=e&lin=1&ll=1. (Accessed October 28, 2015). Zhou was also a core member of the International Association of Arts Critics, an NGO recognized by the UNESCO. See http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3364&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html. (Accessed October 28, 2015).

⁵⁸⁶ Fang Zhaolin, 方召麟, "Jiantan zai Ouzhou de yixie Zhongguo huajia" 簡談在歐洲的一些中國畫家 [A brief discussion about a few Chinese artists living in Europe], in *Dong Haoyun de shijie* 董浩雲的世界 [The world of Dong Haoyun], Jin Dong Jianping 金董建平 and Zheng Huixin 鄭會欣, eds. (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2004), 110. For Zhang Daqian's work, see *Tchang Ta-Ts'ien: peintre chinois* (Paris: Musée d'art moderne, Éditions Euros, 1957).

⁵⁸⁷ "Le Salon des Indépendants," *Beaux-arts: Chronique des arts et de la curiosité* (Paris), March 17, 1939.

Fan [Figure 3.18] appeared in the same paper in a review of the Salon de Paris.⁵⁸⁸ In a weekly gazette published in 1944 by the city of Paris, Pan was mentioned among the long list of artists whose works had been selected at the Salon des Indépendants. The announcement read: “Self-portrait by the young Chinese artist Pan Yu-lin.”⁵⁸⁹ In 1947, a portrait of a woman by Pan was also printed in *Le courrier des arts et des lettres* [Figure 3.19].⁵⁹⁰ Such press might appear to have helped Pan establish a footing in the Parisian art world, but the reality was that a mention here and there among the long lists of artists’ names did not amount to much in terms of either fame or commercial success.

In France, Pan’s works were most valued by the Musée Cernuschi, where she had been included in various group exhibitions of works by Chinese artists. The Musée Cernuschi was an institution dedicated to collecting art and artifacts from East Asia, and as such it had played a significant role in launching the careers of a few Chinese artists who took up residence in France. Its chief curator, René Grousset (1885–1952), a French scholar of East Asian culture, along with his successor, Vadime Elisseeff (1918–2002), were instrumental in recognizing Chinese artists’ contributions to the increasingly international Paris art scene after World War II. The first such efforts came in 1946 with the Exposition de peintures chinoises contemporaines.

Cernuschi’s long-term commitment to showcasing living Chinese artists started in 1944 when Vadime Elisseeff went to China and worked as a cultural attaché for the French Embassy. During the war years, Elisseeff met many Chinese artists and intellectuals in Chengdu and Chongqing.⁵⁹¹ It was there that he had the chance to make the acquaintance of artist Zao Wou-ki,

⁵⁸⁸ “Le Salon des Indépendants,” *Beaux-arts: Chronique des arts et de la curiosité* (Paris), May 5, 1939.

⁵⁸⁹ *Paris-Municipal Judiciaire and Financier: Feuille officielle d’annonces legales* (Paris), Sunday, April 16, 1944.

⁵⁹⁰ “Le Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-arts,” *Le courrier des arts et des lettres* (Paris), May 15, 1947.

⁵⁹¹ After the war, Elisseeff served as an envoy to Shanghai and Beijing for the provisional government of Charles de Gaulle from 1945 to 1946. After his sojourn in China, Elisseeff returned to Paris to assume the position of assistant

who later came to France in 1948.⁵⁹² Elisseeff also met Kuo Yu-shou 郭有守 (Guo Youshou, 1901–1977), then the Minister of Education of Sichuan Province. Kuo was studying in France in the 1920s and obtained a doctoral degree at the University of Paris (Sorbonne). He was appointed senior counselor in charge of planning the UNESCO education program in 1946 and took up permanent residency in France thereafter.⁵⁹³ Kuo was a cousin of artist Zhang Daqian and an avid collector of works by Zhang and his contemporaries. Kuo donated a number of ink paintings in his collection to Cernuschi in 1953, which became the core of the museum's contemporary Chinese art collection.⁵⁹⁴

The Exposition de peintures chinoises contemporaines was an unprecedented event in France. The exhibition consisted of one hundred and twenty paintings and sculptures of various styles and mediums by thirty-two living Chinese artists.⁵⁹⁵ Veterans such as Pan Yuliang, Xu Beihong, Zhang Daqian, Lin Fengmian, and Fu Baoshi were among the participants. However, it was the newcomer Zao Wou-ki who had the most works at the exhibition—indeed, they filled an entire room.⁵⁹⁶ The event was commissioned and fully supported by René Grousset.⁵⁹⁷ In the exhibition catalogue, Grousset praises Pan's talent.⁵⁹⁸ The show was a joint project of Cernuschi,

curator at the Musée Cernuschi in 1946. Upon his return, he immediately organized the Exposition de peintures chinoises contemporaines.

⁵⁹² Marie-Thérèse Bobot, "In Memoriam: Vadime Elisseeff (1918-2002)," *Arts asiatiques*, 57 (2002): 229–231.

⁵⁹³ See the biography of Guo on UNESCO's website: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/about-us/who-we-are/history/assistant-directors-general/kuo-yu-shou/>. (Accessed June 15, 2012.)

⁵⁹⁴ Bobot, "In Memoriam: Vadime Elisseeff (1918–2002)," 229.

⁵⁹⁵ See Éric Lefebvre, "Équivoque exotisme," 51.

⁵⁹⁶ Zao had ten paintings and seven drawings at the exhibition while Pan had four works on display. See the catalogue of the exhibition, *Exposition peintures chinoises contemporaines*, (Paris: Musée Cernuschi, 1946), 45; Bobot, "In Memoriam: Vadime Elisseeff (1918–2002)," 229.

⁵⁹⁷ Grousset's appreciation of Pan's art is reflected in a bronze bust of him by Pan, commissioned by the Musée Cernuschi in 1954. The work is now housed at the museum.

⁵⁹⁸ Quoted in Vadime Elisseeff, "Avant-propos," *Quatre artistes chinoises contemporaines: Pan Yu-Lin, Lam Oi, Ou Seu-Tan, Shing Wai* (Paris: Musée Cernuschi, 1977).

under the direction of the young associate director Elisseeff, the Association des artistes chinois en France (Zhongguo liu Fa yishu xuehui 中國留法藝術學會), for which Chou Ling was the general secretary at the time, and Kuo Yu-shou, whose collection was scheduled to show at the British Council.⁵⁹⁹

Before World War II, there were two largescale exhibitions of Chinese art held in France—the 1924 Exposition chinoise d'art ancien et moderne at the Palais du Rhin in Strasbourg, and the 1933 Exposition de peinture chinoise modern at the prestigious Musée du Jeu de Paume in Paris. However, these exhibitions took a different direction than the 1946 Cernuschi exhibition. Western-style art had, since the early twentieth century, become a prominent part of the Chinese art world. By contrast, works executed in mediums other than ink on paper were generally not accepted by a Western audience as “Chinese art.” Even though there was an effort on the part of the organizers to showcase the diverse styles of Chinese artists living in Paris, especially at the Strasbourg exhibition, the works in both exhibitions consisted mainly of craft objects and paintings of ink on paper.⁶⁰⁰

The scale of the Jeu de Paume exhibition was even larger than the one in Strasbourg. It consisted of 86 paintings by Chinese old masters’ gathered from various museums and private collections in France, and 191 contemporary paintings brought to France by the chief organizer Xu Beihong.⁶⁰¹ Seventy-one living artists participated in the exhibition, and many of them worked in both Chinese and Western mediums. All of the paintings shown, however, were works of ink on paper. Despite the fact that many of these contemporary works were innovative,

⁵⁹⁹ Éric Lefebvre, “Équivoque exotisme,” 51.

⁶⁰⁰ Craig Clunas, “Chinese Art and Chinese Artists in France (1924-1925),” 100–106.

⁶⁰¹ Xu Beihong 徐悲鴻, “Bali Zhongguo meizhan kaimu qian – zhi guonei chupin zhe [1933]” 巴黎中國美展開幕前—致國內出品者 [Before the opening of exhibition of Chinese art in Paris—to the artists], in *Xu Beihong wenji*, 58–62

reflecting a progressive vision of reformed *guohua*, such narrow-mindedness was intended to cater to the vision of André Dezarrois, the director of Jeu de Paume at the time, of what Chinese art should be.⁶⁰² Dezarrois would not accept works created in mediums other than ink and brush as “Chinese art.”

In contrast to the Jeu de Paume’s conservative curatorial approach, the postwar Cernuschi show was a reflection of the museum’s openness to a variety of works by Chinese artists. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the museum’s acquisition policy, which departed from an emphasis on ink paintings to include a variety of subject matter and mediums by Chinese artists. This was a ground-breaking step, one that presented to the French public a diversified definition of art from the “Orient” and recognized that there were other modalities of art production in China. Indeed, Zao Wou-ki’s abstract works had apparently won the approval of Elisseeff, who personally brought seventeen of Zao’s works back to France for the exhibition.⁶⁰³

Nonetheless, Pan Yuliang, who had successfully entered various salons and received some awards, continued to be included in group exhibitions that had no clear curatorial themes besides the common ethnicity of the exhibiting artists. While these kinds of exhibitions gained Pan some exposure, they continued to pigeonhole her and her work in the realm of “foreign” or “exotic” non-European art.

In 1948, Pan participated in the group exhibition *Quatre Peintres Chinois en France* (Four Chinese Painters in France), which also featured Zao Wou-ki, Sanyu 常玉 (Chang Yu,

⁶⁰² Éric Lefebvre, “Équivoque exotisme,” 50.

⁶⁰³ The exhibition happened two years before Zao arrived in France. Elisseeff brought with him from China seventeen of Zao’s works. See Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 205.

1901–1966), and Siao Ling-Cho 蕭林召 (Xiao Linzhao, ca. 1910s-?).⁶⁰⁴ The exhibition was held shortly after Zao arrived in France and it officially launched his very successful career on the country's international art markets. Zao's abstract style combined the sense of naivety found in the works of Paul Klee with the essence of Chinese *pomo* 潑墨 (flung ink)—a technique that became popular as abstraction caught on in France in the 1950s.⁶⁰⁵

Sanyu, with his combination of Matisse-like heavy brushstrokes and the poetic sensibility of Chinese literati painting, had already gained some fame in the Paris art scene of the 1930s.⁶⁰⁶ As his paintings and prints became popular, Sanyu was included in Édouard Joseph's *Dictionnaire biographique des artistes contemporains 1910–1930* (*Biographical dictionary of contemporary artists*), a rare achievement for an expatriate artist.⁶⁰⁷ Other than the few mentions of her salon entries in the French art press, however, Pan never achieved the same level of commercial success or critical recognition as Zao Wou-ki or Sanyu.

In addition to her two solo exhibitions at the Galerie d'Orsay in 1953 and 1957, in the 1960s, Pan had had several exhibitions outside of France, including the United Kingdom and the United States. However, these exhibitions were held at the invitation of the Chinese community

⁶⁰⁴ “*Quatre Peintres Chinois en France*” was organized by the Office d'Information du Gouvernement Chinois (Zhongguo zhengfu xinwen bangongshi Bali banshichu 中國政府新聞辦公室巴黎辦事處), October 1948.

⁶⁰⁵ On the rise of abstraction in the Paris art scene in the 1950s, including Zao Wou-ki's position in the movement, see Étienne Fouilloux, “Peintures en France 1945–1960,” *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 6 (April–June 1985): 67–74.

⁶⁰⁶ Sanyu was invited to produce three copper plate etchings for the illustration of the album *Les Poemes de T'ao Ts'ien* [*Poems by Tao Qian*] in 1930, which marked his entry into the mainstream cultural scene (Éditions Lemargat, 930), French translation by Liang Tsong Tai, preface by Paul Valléry limited edition number of 290; total editions of 306 including special editions each with a stamp seal of the artist, 'Yu' in Chinese.

⁶⁰⁷ Sanyu was listed in vol. 3 of the dictionary. Édouard Joseph, ed., *Dictionnaire biographique des artistes contemporains* (Paris: Librairie Grund, 1934), 4 vols.

in London and San Francisco and they did not seem to attract much critical attention other than some reports in local Chinese-language newspapers.⁶⁰⁸

By the late 1940s, Pan had mostly forgotten by the Chinese art world, and the only remaining connection she had with that scene was her role in helping to raise funds for wartime relief in the Chinese community in France.⁶⁰⁹ Although her most productive years were spent in Paris, few art historians or critics have considered her activities or positioned them in the French art world of the 1950s and 1960s. As a Chinese woman living in Paris, Pan was forced not only to negotiate her role as an expatriate, but also as a female artist who was working in the culturally loaded genre of the female nude in the Western art tradition. Her oeuvre during this period probed complex questions of race, womanhood, and self-expression. The sociocultural conditions of the Parisian art world and her personal circumstances shaped her artistic paths and influenced how her works were read and received.

Women Artists, the Nude, and the French Art World

Pan Yuliang's first encounter with the Parisian art world dated back to her training at the *École des beaux-arts* in the early 1920s. However, it was only two decades before that French women

⁶⁰⁸ Artist Lam Oi organized an exhibition for her in Hawai'i and San Francisco in 1963. Lin Ai (Lam Oi), "Chongman chuanqi de kuming huajia," 81–85. An introduction of Pan was printed in a Chinese-language newspaper published in New York, *Ye Saifu* 葉賽夫 (Vadime Elisseeff) "Wo suo renshi de huajia: Pan-Zhang Yuliang furen." 我所認識的潘玉良夫人 [The Mrs. Pan Yuliang that I know], *Huamei ribao* 華美日報 [*China tribune*], May 6, 1963, 8.

⁶⁰⁹ Pan was instrumental in the effort to help raise funds for war relief in China, through various art auctions organized by the Association des artistes chinois en France, for which she was an important member. See *Zhongguo liu Fa yishu xuehui diliujie gongzuo baogao (Minguo ershiqi nian ba yue)—zhuan guanyu kangzhan jiuguo fangmian* 中國留法藝術學會第六屆工作報告 (民國二十七年八月)—專關於抗戰救國方面 [Report of the sixth year of the Association of Chinese Artists in France (August 1938)—special topic on the effort to contribute to the anti-(Japanese) war], at Le fonds de l'Institut franco-chinois de Lyon (1921-1946), Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon.

themselves were allowed to enroll at national art institutions.⁶¹⁰ At the turn of the twentieth century, although the French art world was beginning to be more receptive to the idea of women artists entering the profession—as exemplified by Impressionists like Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt—the visual language and the mechanism of selection and dissemination were still very patriarchal. It was therefore difficult for most women to enter the profession.

The Union des Femmes Peintres et Sculpteurs (hereafter “the Union”) was founded in 1881 to provide women with opportunities to exhibit their works, and it began holding annual exhibitions in 1882. Pan Yuliang participated in several of these exhibitions in the 1940s.⁶¹¹ In addition to fighting for women’s right to enter the art profession, the Union also fought to gain access for women at publicly funded art institutions, which resulted in women’s partial enrolment at the state-funded *École* in 1897.⁶¹² By 1903, the Union had secured women’s full entrance to the *École* and, in the same year, their right to compete for the prestigious Prix de Rome—a prize highly sought-after by students at the *École* since its recipients were virtually guaranteed a successful art career.⁶¹³

Despite the success of the Union des Femmes Peintres et Sculpteurs in gaining access to both art education and women artists’ professional status, it remained a conservative group that continued the academic tradition of creating a particular kind of feminine art.⁶¹⁴ In the late 1920s, a host of women who were seeking a new vocabulary to liberate their art from the

⁶¹⁰ Some women, mostly with social and economic advantages, could afford to enroll in private art academies. See Perry, *Women Artists and the Parisian Avant-garde*, 16–17.

⁶¹¹ Pan participated in the Union’s annual exhibitions in 1944, 1946, 1947, and 1962.

⁶¹² For conditions of women’s enrolment at the *école*, see Tamar Garb, *Sisters of the Brush: Women’s Artistic Culture in Late Nineteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 102.

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*, 70. In 1925, Prix de Rome was awarded for the first time to a woman artist, Odette Marie Pauvert. See government archives of French culture and communication, <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/ENSBA/artistes.html>. (Accessed June 12, 2012.)

⁶¹⁴ Paula J. Birnbaum, *Women Artists in Interwar France: Framing Femininities* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 4.

bourgeois femininity represented by the Union, joined forces to establish a new organization. Founded in 1930, the Société des Femmes Artistes Modernes (FAM) held annual exhibitions from 1931 to 1938 which included works by female artists in a variety of artistic styles.⁶¹⁵ By diversifying its artistic direction, FAM increased women artists' professional exposure, and they were also instrumental in giving women the opportunity to move away from conventional codes of representation, especially in the genre of the female nude.

The female nude had been seen as the embodiment of values of the Western high-art tradition, especially within the academy. In the nineteenth century, women had little or no access to antique sculptures or life models, both of which were crucial for the depiction of largescale historical, mythological, or biblical narrative paintings.⁶¹⁶ Generally known as *l'art pompier*, this genre of painting was considered the most ambitious in the hierarchy of the academic painting tradition. Women's limited access to the standard methods of learning thus restricted their chances of becoming successful in the genre. Access to training for the École's female students meant that the academic tradition was passed on and its codes of representation legitimized for women artists.⁶¹⁷ In order to validate this newly gained opportunity, many of these women's works represented the idealized female nude according to historical or mythological themes in the styles of academic realism, including French Neo-classicism and naturalism.⁶¹⁸ Therefore, these paintings often adhered to the historical convention of representing the female body for the benefit of the male gaze.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., 162.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid., 163.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid., 4.

While many women painters adopted the genre as a way to participate in the academic tradition, others saw their nudes as an expression of resistance to dominant representations of female sexuality.⁶¹⁹ Such representations of the female body challenged what Paula Birnbaum describes as “the sexual politics of spectatorship.”⁶²⁰

Suzanne Valadon (1865–1938) and Emilie Charmy (1878–1974) were two distinguished FAM’s members who were committed to liberating their paintings of the female nude from conventional codes. Valadon and Charmy were already active members of the School of Paris by the 1920s when Pan was a student at the *École des beaux-arts*. It is difficult to gauge how much Pan was aware of these female artists’ work. The handful of articles written by Pan published in the Chinese press, as well as the numerous news reports about her, made no mention of European artists. However, I would argue that even if she was not cognizant of their works the first time she was in France, she would have knowledge of these artists after her return, when she took up residence in Montparnasse—the epicentre of avant-garde art in Paris at the time. A close reading of a few of Pan’s oil paintings from the 1940s would also show that she had referenced the work of some French women artists who had tackled the nude. Moreover, in the 1930s, a number of Chinese students, artists, and intellectuals traveling between China and Europe were certainly aware of current developments in European art, especially in Paris.

In 1936, the art magazine *Yifeng* 藝風 (Art trends, 1933–1936) published a special issue on contemporary European art, which was edited by members of the Association des artistes chinois en France and published by the Art Trends Society (Yifeng she 藝風社). Founded in 1933 in Hangzhou, and presided over by the Lyon-trained artist and writer Sun Fuxi 孫福熙

⁶¹⁹ Perry, *Women Artists and the Parisian Avant-garde*, 123.

⁶²⁰ Birnbaum, *Women Artists in Interwar France*, 164.

(1898–1962), the society consisted of artists who had studied in France, including Xu Beihong, and Fang Junbi. The special issue consists of articles and translated texts on topics related to the most current developments in contemporary European art—especially France—including an essay on women’s art in France. The essay “La peinture féminine,” by the French art historian Louis Chéronnet (1899–1950), was translated by the female artist Ma Jiyu 馬霽玉 (fl. 1930s)—one of thirty original members of the Association des artistes chinois en France.⁶²¹ Chéronnet’s essay was originally published in the famous modern art magazine *L'Amour de l'art*.⁶²² In addition to Chéronnet’s encouraging assessment of the development of women’s art in France, the essay includes a detailed discussion of the works of fourteen French female artists active at the time, including Suzanne Valadon and Emilie Charmy. The inclusion of the translation of such an article in *Yifeng* demonstrated the fact that Chinese artists were keeping abreast of current developments within the French avant-garde.

Pan, who was in China when the issue of *Yifeng* was published, would undoubtedly have had access to it. This kind of information about avant-garde art would have inspired Pan to further explore new approaches to her work, which otherwise seemed to be limited in China. Indeed, the nude images Pan produced in China did not deviate too far from what had been traditionally accepted in the 1930s. It was not until Pan returned to Paris that she adopted a new approach to the female nude. Unlike the idealized female bodies portrayed in most of her earlier works, those of the 1940s bore exaggerated proportions, bold primary colours, and heavy

⁶²¹ Ma Jiyu 馬霽玉 (trans.), “Xiandai nüzi huihua” 現代女子繪畫 [Contemporary women’s painting], *Yifeng* 4, nos. 7, 8, 9 (December 1, 1936): 143–148.

⁶²² Louis Chéronnet, “La peinture féminine,” *L'Amour de l'art* 8 (October 1933): 203–208. Reprinted in René Huyghe, and Germain Bazin, eds., *Histoire de l'art contemporain: la peinture* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1935), 203–208. About the role of *L'Amour de l'art* in the development of modernist art criticism, see Christopher Green, *Art in France, 1900-1940* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 52.

impasto. Undoubtedly, these characteristics can be found in the works of the Fauvists and Expressionists that Pan had alluded to in her earlier works. However, due to these stylistic influences, the meanings of Pan's female nudes could only be fathomed by contextualizing her work in terms of other French women artists, such as Valadon and Charmy, who had made daring moves in this genre. A close look at Valadon and Charmy's oeuvre is thus necessary for a contextual reading of Pan's paintings in the 1940s.

Valadon's *Catherine Reclining Nude on a Panther Skin* from 1923 [Figure 3.20] and Pan's *Reclining Nude in front of the Window* from the 1940s [Figure 3.21] share striking similarities in their composition, vibrant colour, and sumptuous patterns. Valadon's *Catherine* depicts a woman in the familiar "odalisque" motif—a reclining nude in a pose that signals sexual availability. However, unlike the conventional odalisque, in which the body is usually shown from the side in order to emphasize the elongated figure [Figure 3.22], Catherine's body is depicted from the front and in an exaggerated, foreshortened perspective.

The stocky appearance of the figure deviates from the idealized female body that had prevailed in images of the female nude since the mid-nineteenth century.⁶²³ Catherine lies on what appears to be an animal fur, which is placed on top of a colourfully patterned Persian rug. While the animal fur is positioned at an angle that echoes the shape of the body, the rug is set diagonally to the vertical alignment of the body and occupies almost the whole pictorial frame, thus eliminating the illusion of space. A blue vase with red flowers fills the space to the right of the body, adding a contrast of cool colour to the painting's primarily warm palette. The exuberant patterns, colours, and visible brushstrokes create a visually captivating background from which the body—even with the thick black contours—could not quite stand out. The

⁶²³ Birnbaum, *Women Artists in Interwar France*, 196.

overall visual strategy deemphasizes the body and renders it less a sexual object than the conventional odalisque. Furthermore, Catherine's legs are angled away from her body, which blocks the view of her pubic area.⁶²⁴ This position further downplays the sexual availability of the figure.

The deemphasizing of sexuality is seen in some of Pan's nude paintings from the 1940s. It would suggest that Pan was aware of the works of Valadon and possibly other members of FAM, such as Emilie Charmy and Tamara de Lempicka (1898–1980), who recognized that their engagement with the genre of the nude would be lauded in the mainstream art world, while the subject matter would also allow them the freedom to explore expressions of female desire, gender, and identity.⁶²⁵

Pan's *Reclining Nude in front of the Window* depicts a woman sleeping on a blue Persian rug while resting her head and shoulders against a group of colourful pillows. Unlike Valadon's *Catherine*, which gives no suggestion of space, Pan's *Reclining Nude* is set in a room with a window, giving the viewer a spatial clue. Pan also depicts a blue vase placed on a side table, which further suggests some sense of space. Although not as dominant as Valadon's, Pan's nude shares striking similarities with *Catherine* in the way that the body is depicted: a foreshortened perspective with the figure's legs angled away from her body, denying the view of the pubic area. The similarity of the figures' pose aside, Pan's *Reclining Nude* also uses a palette of primary colours and a variety of patterns that fill the pictorial space. However, unlike Valadon's more defined facial features and more detailed light and dark rendering of the figure, the face of Pan's nude is painted red with only the crude suggestions of facial features. Interestingly, any

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ About Valadon and de Lempicka's challenge of conventions of the representation of female nude, see Ibid., 168–181.

hint of a nose is omitted in Pan's figure—a characteristic that would reoccur in her depiction of women who appeared to be ethnically Chinese, especially in her works produced since the 1950s. Outlined in thick contours and with a distorted proportion, Pan's nude is also far from idealized. The sexual availability of the figure, like in Valadon's *Catherine*, is deemphasized.

If the odalisque is culturally coded to emphasize the sexual allure of the female body for male spectators, then the downplaying of the sexual availability of both Valadon and Pan's works projects a sense of ambiguity in positioning the "gaze"—for whom were these works painted? For this question, we will now turn to another FAM member, Emilie Charmy, whose works challenge even more explicitly the established pictorial codes of the genre, and most importantly, the propriety of female visual representation.

Charmy's *Sleeping Nude* [Figure 3.23] depicts a woman lying on a red sofa, the close-up view—only her upper body and head are visible against a simple red background—denying all illusion of space, making the figure the most prominent element of the pictorial space. The heavy layers of impasto and crudely painted facial features echo the works of the Fauvists, the group with which Charmy was associated. Charmy was thought to be bisexual, which has led Gill Perry to suggest that the *Sleeping Nude*—in which the female model was seemingly absorbed in an act of masturbation—was painted for a private audience, a legion of women who were attracted to the notion of self-pleasure or same-sex desire.⁶²⁶ However, the painting has undeniably led to ambiguous readings—on the one hand, the voyeuristic vantage point of the painting conforms to the objectification of the female body informed by the pictorial conventions of the genre; on the other, the model's self-absorption could also be a projection of the desire to pursue sexual freedom by taking control of one's own body.

⁶²⁶ Perry, *Women Artists and the Parisian Avant-Garde*, 130–132.

While Charmy's *Sleeping Nude* projects the notion of sexual ambiguity, the exaggerated proportion and the crudely painted face of the woman in Pan's *Reclining Nude in front of the Window* carries a strong sense of vulgarity—a sensibility that was far removed from her earlier depictions of the graceful and delicate female, such as the one in *Looking at a Reflection* [Figure 3.10]. The ways in which the female body is represented in *Reclining Nude* demonstrates Pan's attempt to free herself from the expectation and constraints of her classical art training.

Valadon and Charmy's ways of engaging the genre of the female nude, it seems, influenced Pan's stylistic changes in the 1940s. Despite the similarities in composition, style, and pictorial strategy, Valadon, like Pan, also came from a humble background. She was brought up by a single mother in working-class Paris, grew up poor, and started working as a nude model for artists from the age of fifteen until her mid-thirties. She had posed for and befriended many famous artists during this period, such as Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec, Puvis de Chavannes, and Degas.⁶²⁷ Valadon did not have any formal art training; she learned how to paint through her experience of working as an artist's model, and did not become a recognized artist until she was in her forties. Patricia Mathews suggests that Valadon's realistic, un-idealized depiction of the body of her working-class female models was her way to both participate in and challenge the notion of beauty in the conventional pictorial representation of the female nude.⁶²⁸ In France in the nineteenth century, women of lower class and of colour were often represented as sexually available. Therefore, Valadon's "middle-class aesthetic" transgresses not only the canons of female beauty, but also the prescribed notion of femininity defined by class.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁷ Patricia Mathews, "Returning the Gaze: Diverse Representations of the Nude in the Art of Suzanne Valadon," *The Art Bulletin* 73, no. 3 (September 1991): 418.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, 425.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, 416.

Perhaps Valadon's experience and approach to the female nude resonated with Pan, who not only tried to break away from her classical training and explore new artistic schema, but who also had to confront racial differences to make her art relevant to a foreign audience. The empathy with women of lower social strata conveyed in Valadon's works could also have had an impact on Pan—whose own humble beginnings could have informed her approach to this age-old genre.

Charmy had also used the nude as a way to express female sexuality in an audacious way, while conducting a successful career with works that convey shifting sexual positioning. Perhaps Charmy's oeuvre would also have inspired Pan to abandon the depiction of idealized female bodies in the manner with which she was previously comfortable, and to take the bold step of engaging with notions of sexuality, gender, and race. Tracing this lineage, the stylistic shift in Pan's work of the 1940s suggests that she was seeking an artistic strategy that might put her in the league with the women artists who were audaciously challenging the conventional representation of the female nude. Pan made an attempt at a visual vocabulary that would best articulate her feelings towards the intimate subject of female sexuality from her own subjective position of a foreign woman.

Ironically, Pan's effort at tackling the genre of the female nude did not seem to attract much attention from critics. Of the French-language press coverage on Pan that I have gathered thus far—dealing with the years 1939 to 1944—only two publications printed her self-portraits [Figure 3.18], while one reproduced her portrait of the opera singer Zhou Xiaoyan 周小燕 [Figure 3.24].⁶³⁰ These paintings undoubtedly reflected Pan's tremendous facility with oil paints

⁶³⁰ *Le courrier des arts et des lettres* (Paris), May 15, 1947. The painting was shown again thirty years later, in the exhibition "Quatre artistes chinoises contemporaines: Pan Yu-Lin, Lam Oi, Ou Seu-Tan, Shing Wai" (Musée Cernuschi, March 26 – April 30, 1977).

and the well-composed narratives that they delineated. However, I wonder if it was these women's "exotic" Chinese faces that attracted the critics' attention more than these paintings' merits. Although these works were printed in the papers, the critics did not discuss or even mention Pan's work in the adjacent articles about the respective salon exhibitions.

A New Direction: Revising the Tradition of Chinese Art

As she continued to pursue her passion for the genre of the female nude in the late 1940s, Pan decided to overhaul her artistic style. It is difficult to know the motivations behind this change in artistic direction since she did not write about her creative process. I would suggest, however, that Pan was likely beginning to realize that in order to set herself apart in the competitive Parisian art world, she would need to develop a style that would reflect her personality and cultural heritage. This was perhaps inspired by the success of her compatriots Sanyu and Zao and many other expatriates in the School of Paris. Likewise, she might have felt that even though oil and its visual vocabulary was a skill and language she had learned and perfected, it was still perceived, in the Parisian context, as a "foreign" medium for a Chinese woman artist.

In the 1940s, Pan started a series of nude line drawings with Chinese ink and brush in the manner of *baimiao* 白描 (ink contour), a Chinese painting technique. *Baimiao* has been used extensively in figure painting and *tupu* 圖譜 (diagram) and it has long been favoured by artists to depict details of their subject. *Baimiao* was therefore closely linked to the concept of verisimilitude, but with a spontaneity akin to calligraphy. These drawings, with their simple and precise contours, fully demonstrate Pan's tremendous skill in rendering the human body with economy of line and accuracy [Figure 3.25]. Her training in the academic tradition, together with her learning of Chinese ink painting, had undoubtedly sharpened her skills of observation and

precision. These drawings served as the precursor to her later works on paper, which combined the technique of *baimiao* and the colours applied in pointillist and dry-brush manners.

As mentioned, Paris in the 1950s was a melting pot of artists from around the world. But in order to develop a unique style that would set them apart, many relied on their cultural heritage. Expatriate artists' awareness of their native culture was also heightened due to displacement, which helped them rediscover their own artistic roots. Pan's "relearning" of the Chinese medium was reflective of this awareness. In such an environment, revisiting the Chinese art tradition would be a logical next step on Pan's artistic path.

Furthermore, Pan's trajectory was uncommon among her Chinese contemporaries of the Republican period as well. Unlike many Chinese artists of her generation, many of whom were educated at home in traditional painting and calligraphy before they started learning Western-style art, Pan dove right into drawing and painting in Western mediums. Before leaving China for France the second time, she had learned Chinese painting and calligraphy from Huang Binhong and Zhang Daqian.⁶³¹ Although Pan had done some *baimiao* studies of the nude before, she did not use ink extensively until the mid-1940s. Although the definition of "Chinese art" had expanded in the eyes of the French audience after World War II, it was still a common practice of art critics, museum curators, dealers, and collectors to look for "Chineseness" in a Chinese artist's works—perhaps another factor that propelled her to adopt this new direction.

In the 1950s, Pan depicted nude models in various poses with simple backgrounds that were made up of random colour dots and strokes. Unlike her oil paintings, which were more carefully crafted, these ink paintings have a sense of spontaneity that is closely linked to Chinese

⁶³¹ Wei Hongwei 魏宏偉, "Chen Duxiu yu Pan Yuliang" 陳獨秀與潘玉良 [Chen Duxiu and Pan Yuliang], *Dangshi zonglan* 党史縱覽 (2008): 46.

calligraphy. A stylistic change in her oil painting in the 1940s foreshadowed her interest in the later adoption of the *baimiao* techniques on *xuan* paper. In her oil painting *Woman with a Fan*, (*Zhishan nünanang* 執扇女郎, 1940) [Figure 3.26], Pan depicted a seated female nude carrying a butterfly-shaped fan while leaning against a side table on which is a vase with tulips. Pan outlined the figure with fine contours and rendered the body with flat areas of light and dark tones. As in her other drawings of the nude done in ink and colour on paper, the pattern of the decorative fabric in *Woman with a Fan* was drawn with swift and fluid lines. Not only was this stylistic quality similar to *baimiao*, it also reflected a characteristic of the Fauvists, especially the work of Matisse on which decorative patterns were often painted with simple and rapid lines and dots [Figure 3.27].

As demonstrated in her works of the late 1920s and '30s (discussed earlier), Pan was apparently influenced by the work of Matisse as she experimented with avant-garde styles. But compared to Matisse and the Fauvists' impasto brushstrokes, which were often uniform in thickness, Pan's meandering lines were finer and included variations in width in each line. This stylistic feature resembled the *baimiao* technique: not only was the contour of the body executed in rapid and fluid movements, but the use of colour on these paintings was also more spontaneous than those in her oil paintings. A strong *xieyi* 寫意 (expressive sketch) sensibility resonates in these paintings, and I find that the free brushwork enabled Pan to express the body and gender consciousness more effectively and affectively.

Pan, who had a solid academic foundation, was highly adept at depicting the human figure with precision. In addition to her classical training, contact with modern art, such as Fauvism and German Expressionism, helped to broaden her colour palette and expand her compositional strategy. Her works from the 1950s and '60s, executed in ink and colour on paper,

represent a synthesis of her training, modernist influence, and her “return” to Chinese ink painting. As such, it serves as a precursor to her full engagement with the medium of ink and colour on paper.

From the mid-1950s, Pan began to tell stories in her paintings of female nudes which, along with half-nudes donning colourful robes, comprised the majority of her work during this period. Eventually, these narratives became ever more elaborate, as she often depicted women and sing-song girls engaging in performances of traditional Chinese dance in costumes that alluded to Chinese women’s sartorial choices at the turn of the twentieth century. (See for example *Dancing women with masks*, 1953 [Figure 3.28]). Interestingly, Pan omitted certain facial features—often the nose—that could be considered ethnically Chinese. This was a characteristic that did not appear in her depiction of women of other ethnicities. Moreover, in this group of works, Pan never portrayed her subjects with a direct gaze. Perhaps in Pan’s mind, this would fit with popular Western portrayals of Chinese women in the 1950s?

In *A Girl Playing Cards* [Figure 3.29], Pan depicted a young woman seated cross legged on the floor with a deck of poker cards laid out in front of her. The girl is attentively scrutinizing a hand of cards with her downcast eyes. Although the title of the painting does not make this explicit, she is, based on the formation of cards, very likely doing a session of fortune-telling.⁶³² Like many of her figure paintings in ink and colour on paper, the figures are mostly women wearing blouses and trousers—a common sartorial style for women in the 1920s.⁶³³ A young girl in Chinese attire stands in contrast to the activity of fortune-telling—an unlikely combination.

⁶³² It is important to note that Pan did not give titles to most of her work; the majority of the titles were given by curators at the Anhui Provincial Museum—to which most of her works were repatriated—for easy identification. Therefore, the titles do not necessarily reflect Pan’s intended stories in the works. Doris Sung in discussion with the deputy director of the Anhui Provincial Museum, April, 2009.

⁶³³ Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China*, 157–160.

Two different visual tropes are at work in this painting. One is Pan's nostalgia for the past, or more likely, her submission to the Western stereotype of Chinese women of a remote past. The other is the female fortune-teller—a commonly portrayed in Western visual culture as a gypsy or a thief.⁶³⁴ In the bohemian world of Montparnasse, Pan would have been well aware of both the practice and the motif. In Pan's case a girl dressing in the clothes of 1920s China trying to see her future could even be considered autobiographical, for here was a woman whose artistic and personal trajectories were an unlikely outcome of a series of extraordinary events.

A 1912 painting by Valadon reveals what could perhaps be a precedent for Pan's engagement with the theme of fortune-telling. In *The Future Unveiled, or The Fortune-teller* [Figure 3.30], Valadon depicted a white nude female in the pose of the odalisque with her dark-skinned servant, most likely a gypsy.⁶³⁵ Patricia Mathews suggests that the contrast in class and race between the nude and the servant was an old convention that aimed to heighten the sexual appeal of the nude. The arrangement of the cards, with the four kings and the queen of diamonds held in the servant's hand, evokes the notion of a courtesan or prostitute, thus further suggesting the sexual connotation of the painting.⁶³⁶ Although Pan's *A Girl Playing Cards* was a very different composition in which the figure is clothed, the shared symbolism is hard to ignore. The arrangement of cards consists of a queen and a king with the girl holding an ace of hearts in her hand, which suggests the notion of love and intimacy. It is not possible to trace whether Pan had referenced Valadon's works, but her work shared Valadon's strategy of using symbolism to evoke an unusual story. This strategy is further expressed in her largescale horizontal scrolls.

⁶³⁴ Mathews, *Returning the Gaze*, 420.

⁶³⁵ Ibid.

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

In *Dancing amidst the Wind* (*Fenghu wuxi* 風乎舞雩, 1956) [Figure 3.31], Pan depicted a group of women performing the fan dance in a forest setting. The painting is bordered by two rows of trees on both edges of the pictorial frame, while seven women occupy the centre of the painting. On the right, another smaller group of women play music to accompany the dance, and another smaller group of three sit leisurely on the ground, chatting and watching the dance. In the farther distance, two women chat with one another while the nanny is pulled by a young girl, seemingly wanting to play with her. Most interestingly, a lone young male leans against his horse while observing the dance.

The painting's composition would not have been unfamiliar to anyone versed in the French modernist tradition from the 1850s on. Starting with Édouard Manet's (1832–1883) *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, from 1863 [Figure 3.32], the depiction of middle-class leisure, especially in a garden or natural setting, has appeared frequently in the works of Impressionists like Monet and Renoir. In Pan's painting, this motif picked up and set it in an imaginary space devoid of any geographical references but replete with cultural markers such as clothing. The viewer is thus invited to enter a remote place and time—the Orient of a past era. The male spectator in the painting, who wears a robe that does not reflect the usual sartorial choice of men in the same period as the dancing women, becomes the observer of the dance. This also adds theatricality and a touch of anachronism to the painting. The girls dancing in a circle once again calls to mind Matisse's *Le bonheur de vivre*, to which Pan had already alluded in two of her earlier paintings. It is difficult to determine what kind of story Pan wanted to convey in this painting—the enjoyment of music and dance in a timeless utopia? A familiar scene of the artist's earlier life, when, allegedly, she was training to be a prostitute or sing-song girl? Regardless of the painting's intended narrative, Pan employed a number of motifs and compositional strategies

borrowed from the French avant-garde. She was eager to add such elements to these works that speak to her cultural heritage in order to make her works more relevant and decipherable.

However, these efforts do not seem to have attracted any critical attention in Paris.

Unlike Pan's earlier work, the exoticism in the paintings of dancing women seemed to lose its ability to assert a sense of control and agency on the part of their subjects. In *Drunk* (Zui 醉, ca. 1950s) [Figure 3.33], Pan depicted a drunk woman with a bare breast supported by her male companion. The couple was attended to by three servant girls. The image suggests the scene of a brothel in the China of a distant past. As such, it exemplifies the exoticism projected by Pan's work from this period. By presenting ethnic Chinese women drinking and dancing in turn-of-the-twentieth-century attire, Pan subjects Chinese women to the "orientalist gaze"—the fantasy of exotic dancing girls from the Far East, similar to the original meaning of the odalisque, of a concubine in a harem.

One could interpret this as Pan's way of expressing nostalgia for the cultural environment of her youth; it might also reflect her interest in music, especially traditional Chinese operatic numbers that she had once performed.⁶³⁷ However, I cannot help but see this compulsion to "self-orientalize"—to cater to a market that she thought might warm to her "exotic" depiction of Chinese women—as disconcerting. It is impossible to gauge how much her choice of subject matter and medium was an attempt to make her work relevant to the Parisian art world. However, I would argue that it was as important a factor as any attempt to revisit her past.

⁶³⁷ Fu Weixin, an acquaintance of Pan's, recalled that she was good at singing Beijing opera. Fu believed that her skills were learned when she lived with her uncle. See Fu Weixin 傅維新, "Pan Yuliang zai yishu shangde chengjiu" 潘玉良在藝術上的成就 [The artistic achievement of Pan Yuliang], *Yishujia* 藝術家 [Artists] 358 (March 2005): 218

Perhaps, as Griselda Pollock has argued, the visual language employed in Pan's works was still indecipherable to a French audience who simply rendered her invisible as a foreigner.⁶³⁸

Pan's Last Journey

In March 1977, the Musée Cernuschi mounted an exhibition of works by Pan Yu-lin, Shing Wai, Lam Oi, and Ou Seu-tan—four Chinese women artists who were either living or had lived in Paris. The show opened just four months before the death of the eighty-two-year-old Pan. In the exhibition catalogue, Vadime Elisseeff writes:

These Chinese women painters, regardless of whether they were close to or far away from home, demonstrate an enduring taste for the quality of lines. Their palette is of secondary colours with a classical taste. However, more than any other elements, their lines and contours could best reflect the sensitivity of the artists. The works are full of strong but delicate emotions, reserved but honest, and possess a sense of balance that was *typical* of Chinese femininity [my emphasis]. The works were also free of overt sentimentality and blandness. Through their great works, our visitors would be witnessing the great virtue of a civilization that is known both to perpetuate and renew.⁶³⁹

The Parisian art world's seemingly inclusive attitude had in the end pigeonholed Pan by placing her in the category of foreign artists whose work embodied the delicate taste of their mother cultures. The works were at best lauded for successfully combining techniques of East and West. Without considering the gendered subjectivity in these voluptuous, candid, and at times sexualized, female nudes, curators would simply label these works as "Chinese art."

⁶³⁸ Griselda Pollock. *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, Space and the Archive* (London: Routledge, 2007), 111.

⁶³⁹ Vadime Elisseeff, "Avant-propos," *Quatre artistes chinoises contemporaines: Pan Yu-Lin, Lam Oi, Ou Seu-Tan, Shing Wai* (Paris: Musée Cernuschi, 1977).

Compared to male artists from Asia, such as Léonard Tsuguharu Foujita (藤田嗣治 Fujita Tsuguharu, 1886–1968) and Zao Wouki, Pan had a much more difficult time securing recognition.⁶⁴⁰ Unlike Foujita and Zao, who were able to tap into the mainstream gallery representation and were successful on both the commercial and the critical fronts, Pan’s career remained confined to the salon circuit. As a woman artist, it seemed that Pan—unlike Foujita or Zao—had a harder time projecting a unique persona in Paris’s bohemian cultural scene. According to Sisley Huddleston, an American living in Paris in the 1920s, “Foujia was a lank-haired Japanese with gold-rimmed glasses. He brought an exotic note to the Quarter, and a whole school of Foujitas, their black-hair carefully brushed smooth over their foreheads to their eyes, made their appearance.”⁶⁴¹

As for Zao, other than the merits of his works, his success had much to do with his personality: he immediately made acquaintances not only in the Chinese artists’ community, but also with well-known Parisian artists such as Leger, Soulages, Giacometti, Hans Hartung, Nicolas de Staël, and the American expatriate Sam Francis, among others.⁶⁴² These connections contributed tremendously to Zao’s local and international success. The rise of Abstract Expressionism in the 1950s, a trend with which Zao’s work would fit well, would have also contributed to his success. Zao was one of the most recognized artists of the School of Paris in

⁶⁴⁰ Foujita returned to Japan from Paris in 1933 and became one of the founding members of the new Army Art Association. Artists of the organization produced works that supported and glorified Japan’s military expansion. Foujita returned to France again in April 1939. His role as a patriotic war artist was criticized after the war. See Mark H. Sandler, “A Painter of the ‘Holy War’: Fujita Tsuguji and the Japanese Military,” in *War, Occupation, and Creativity: Japan and East Asia, 1920-1960*, ed. Marlene J. Mayo, J. Thomas Rimer, and H. Eleanor Kerkham (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 188–211.

⁶⁴¹ Sisley Huddleston, *Bohemian Literary and Social Life in Paris: Salons, Cafés, Studios* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1928), 158.

⁶⁴² Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China*, 205.

the 1950s. His works were included in an exhibition of the School of Paris at the Walker Art Centre.⁶⁴³

At best, Pan was portrayed in the French media as one of the hundreds of bohemian artists, artisans, and writers who lived in Paris's multicultural Montparnasse neighbourhood. The documentary film *Chez ceux du Montparnasse* (dir. Jean-Claude Bernard, 1957) showcased the vibrant, bohemian life of Montparnasse. The film features more than twenty artists and artisans who lived in the district; Pan and Foujita serve as the two representative Asian artists. In the film, Pan wears a *qipao* and paints a Chinese female model who also wears one. The narrator introduces Pan as an artist who loves to paint young Chinese women. The clip is accompanied by “Chinese-style” music with Pan obviously “acting” for the camera with awkward facial expressions [Figures 3.34 and 3.35]. Following the 30-second segment on Pan, the film cuts to Foujita's, where his wife stands beside him in a kimono while he draws. The narrator mentions that Foujita was deeply involved in Paris's bohemian life. Foujita's famed portrait of Kiki—the famous actress, socialite, and lover of Man Ray—is shown hanging on the wall of his studio [Figure 3.36]. The filmmaker portrays Pan as a Chinese woman who “loved to paint other Chinese women,” while Foujita was one of the “boys” who frequented Montparnasse's bars and salons.

PAN'S AFTERLIFE

Upon her death in 1977, Pan bequeathed all her works to the Chinese government. In the early 1980s, about 4,000 of her works were repatriated with the help of a Chinese delegation comprised of fellow artists and Pan's former student, Yu Feng. The sudden re-emergence of

⁶⁴³ “School of Paris: the Internationals” (exhibition, Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis, April 5–May 17, 1959).

Pan's story and a new awareness of her work brought attention to a name that had been long forgotten in the Chinese cultural world. In 1982, the publication of Shi Nan's *Huahun* engendered heated debate about its accuracy. Despite these debates, however, many people were fascinated by Pan's story. Shi Nan's biography has been adapted into different genres of theatre, including a *huangmei* opera 黃梅戲 (regional opera of Anhui) in 1985.⁶⁴⁴ In 1993, director Huang Shuqin 黃蜀芹 made a biopic entitled *Huahun* 畫魂 (*Soul of the Painter*) based on Shi Nan's biography. The film, in which Pan is played by the famous actress Gong Li 鞏俐 (b. 1965) focuses on her legendary trajectory from a prostitute to a concubine to a renowned Chinese artist in Europe. A television drama series of the same title (dir. Stanley Kwan, 2004) further focuses on Pan's love life, though without paying much attention to her art practice. These productions not only played an important role in perpetuating Pan's legend, but also contributed to the increased interest in her work on the Chinese art market. In 1995, a largescale exhibition of works by Pan Yuliang and Sanyu was held at the National Museum of History in Taipei.⁶⁴⁵ The limited number of works in the hands of private collectors have also fetched good prices at high-profile auctions.⁶⁴⁶ Beyond the Chinese media, a popular English-language novel was published in 2008, followed by a French-language biography in 2010.⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁴ The famous *huangmei* opera actress Ma Lan (马兰) was cast as Pan in the piece entitled *Fengchen nü huajia* 風塵女畫家 [The drifting female artist]. See *Anhui wenhua zhoubao* 安徽文化周报 [Anhui cultural weekly], March 10, 1985.

⁶⁴⁵ “Shuangyu jiaohui—Chang Yu yu Pan Yuliang zuopinzhān” 雙玉交輝——常玉與潘玉良作品展 [The shining pair of jade—the art of Chang Yu and Pan Yuliang] (National History Museum, Taipei, October 14–November 26, 1995).

⁶⁴⁶ See “Pan Yuliang huazuo shida paimai chengjiao jilu,” 190–191.

⁶⁴⁷ Jennifer Cody Epstein, *The Painter from Shanghai* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008); Marie-Laure de Shazer, *Pan Yu Liang, la Manet chinoise: la femme peintre qui savait unir l'Orient et l'Occident* (Paris: Edilivre, 2010).

Pan was an extraordinary woman artist of the early twentieth century who attempted to rewrite her story and redefine gender possibilities. However, as a Chinese woman, she struggled to position herself culturally and artistically in a foreign land. At the same time, she was forgotten in China for decades due to the changing political and cultural climate. Upon her recent “rediscovery,” Pan’s story was refashioned to convey a sense of patriotism and to reclaim a lost episode of the history of modern art in China, where her “international fame” has been somewhat exaggerated. Ironically, while her works were now fetching high prices at auctions in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, she remains a mostly forgotten artist in France.

In the various ways in which her story is repeatedly told, Pan has been pictured as a woman who struggled through life and upheld her devotion to her country, her husband, and her art. The film and the television series play up the romantic aspects of her relationship with Pan Zanhua, and the tension of having to choose between love and a devotion to her art. Her purported patriotism is portrayed in Shi Nan’s novel *Huahun*, in which Pan attempted to return to China a number of times in the face of difficulties that prevented her from succeeding. These difficulties are often circumstantial, and it is never a lack of enthusiasm that prevents Pan from returning. For example, she was said to have received a letter from Liu Haisu telling her with intense passion about the great opportunities the Chinese communist government has offered to artists who wanted to contribute to the building of a new nation. Pan decides, however, that she will not return until one of her works is collected by the French national art museum.⁶⁴⁸ After making this decision, Pan works hard to realize her dream of bringing pride to China, and her delayed return is therefore explained as an act of patriotism and devotion to her art. In truth, Pan

⁶⁴⁸ In the story, Shi Nan uses the term “Faguo guojia meishuguan” 法国国家美术馆, however, there is no further specification of which one she is referring to.

had stated in the late 1940s that she was settled in Paris and that she decided not to return to China.⁶⁴⁹ Although she had sent letters to her family over the years expressing a desire to return, especially in her senior years, the portrayal of her apparent longing to return, in *Huahun* and elsewhere, I would argue, elevated an expatriate's occasional homesickness to the level of fervent patriotism.

In addition to her supposed yearning to return, a number of writings on Pan have seized on her choice of outfit for her own funeral as a demonstration of patriotism. It appears that Pan frequently wore the *qipao* throughout her life, as shown in various photographs. Before her death, she requested to be buried in a *qipao*. The wish was repeatedly interpreted as a testimony to her patriotism and her pride at being a Chinese woman. Indeed, it was further construed by the director of the Anhui Provincial Museum as an act of demonstrating the lofty spirit of a Chinese intellectual (*Zhonghua minzu zhishi fenzi de gaoshang jiecao* 中華民族知識分子的高尚節操).⁶⁵⁰

A widely circulated but unverified saying states that there were three things that Pan refused to do in her forty years in France: obtain French citizenship, sign a contract with a commercial gallery, and seek a new lover.⁶⁵¹ This kind of sentimentalism is perpetuated by scholars and museum curators alike in order to justify the value of her work. While her posthumous notoriety has made her a legend, the late-twentieth-century promotion of patriotism

⁶⁴⁹ “Wenhua jie xiao xinwen” 文化界小新聞 [News from the cultural world], *Shenbao* (March 21, 1948): 4

⁶⁵⁰ Zhu Shili 朱世力, “Hunji Guli, Qianggu Liufang: Jinian Huajia Pan Yuliang Nüshi” 魂繫故里, 千古流芳: 紀念潘玉良女士 [A Soul tied to the homeland, a name to be remembered through the ages: remembering Ms. Pan Yuliang], *Diancang zazhi* 典藏雜誌 [Collection], May 1993, 101.

⁶⁵¹ Li Chu-tsing, “Bali yu chuqi Zhongguo xiyanghua de fazhan”, 98; Wang Mi 王米, “Ligang jishi zhier—xiezi Lü Xianguang xiesheng hui Bali zhihou” 离岗纪事之二—写在吕霞光先生回巴黎之后 [Some recollections after retirement part two—written after Mr. Lü Xianguang's return to Paris], *Meishujia tongxun* 美术家通讯 10 (1991): 19. Wang Mi was the director for the art department of the ministry of culture in the 1980s.

and women's progress brought her back to China as an enduring, patriotic, and chaste woman—a lost daughter of the nation from a bygone era.

Conclusion: Three Moments of *nüxing yishu* (women’s art) in China after 1949

This conclusion examines three moments in the development of women’s artistic practices under the socialist regime, and in the post-Mao era. They illuminate how the advances made by women artists discussed in previous chapters continue to evolve in the sociocultural contexts of subsequent eras.

First Moment: the Female Worker

In September 1958, Li Qiujun painted a *guohua* entitled *Female Worker* (*Nügong* 女工) [Figure 4.1]. It portrays a female factory worker fiddling with a machine at the Dada Machinery Factory (Dada dianjichang 大达电机厂). According to the painting’s inscription, Li created the work on location. It was produced just a few months after the beginning of the Great Leap Forward (*Dajuejin* 大跃进, 1958–1961).⁶⁵² The veneration of industrial development, in which women were included as crucial contributors, was apparent in this painting.

As much as Li wanted to capture a woman “in actual life” working hard at a factory, her limited knowledge of human anatomy and linear perspective prevented her from doing so.⁶⁵³ The worker in the painting is wearing a white shirt, blue trousers with a red belt, and a blue cap. She is leaning over the machine and stretching her left arm to reach the front of it. Her arm is too

⁶⁵² The campaign aimed to rapidly transform China’s agrarian economy into a socialist society through industrialization and collectivization.

⁶⁵³ Between 1949 and 1966, *guohua* underwent major reform in terms of both style and form. Art was mandated to accommodate the new ideology to reflect thoughts of the new era and serve the masses. Therefore, traditional figure painting could no longer serve that purpose. The new-style figure painting is characterized by heavy ink outline and light ink wash. Western art techniques of light and dark rendering and perspective were employed in these works. These techniques were taught to *guohua* students in art academies. To create realistic depictions, artists were urged to work in both studios, and “in actual life” during field trips to the countryside and factories to work along workers and peasants. For a thorough discussion of these changes, see Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 162–169.

long and out of proportion to the rest of her body. The elbow and forearm, outlined in black ink and lacking any anatomical details, form an awkward angle. Indeed, the figure demonstrates Li's lack of knowledge of foreshortening and proportion. Unlike her previous paintings of female beauties (*shinü* 仕女) [Figure 4.2], in which anatomical details of the body can be concealed by folds of a long robe, Li apparently lacked the proper skill to render these details in the new-style figure painting. The woman in *Female Worker* also has delicate facial features, with long eyebrows and elongated eyes that echo those of Li's previous paintings of women that emulate old masters' work (*fanggu* 仿古). These facial features seem quite unsuitable for the female worker, who is supposed to be robust and strong—a new image of womanhood in the new China.

The rest of the painting also fails to accurately depict a “true-to-life” picture of the factory. It is difficult to identify the function of the machine from Li's depiction. It is equipped with what looks like an ordinary household desk lamp and a couple of cranks that seem too small and flimsy for such a heavy machine. One of the two cables hanging from it appears as if it was cut off at the end with the filament exposed and not connected to a power source. Li attempted to illustrate the weightiness of the machine by using a ruler to outline its body in straight lines and render it with a dark ink wash. Without proper techniques of linear perspective, however, Li failed to render the machine's three-dimensionality. Overall, Li was not able to convincingly present the keen spirit of a woman hard at work in an actual factory environment.

This painting is nonetheless indicative of Li's effort to adopt new subject matter in her paintings after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. As discussed in chapter two, Li was actively involved in war relief efforts and she promoted women's position in the art world and in society during the 1930s and '40s. Her patriotism and enthusiasm for women's rights continued after the founding of the PRC. She became an executive member of

the Shanghai chapter of the All-China Women's Federation (Zhonghua quanguo funü lianhehui 中华全国妇女联合会, commonly known as *Fulian* 妇联, founded in 1949). *Female Worker* was Li's apparent attempt to transition from the familiar subject matter of female beauties to one of the new roles for women—that of the worker, peasant, and soldier. However, she never received the training that would have enabled her to render figures realistically, and which was crucial for producing the new style of art—socialist realism.

Among Li's works produced since the 1950s, *Female Worker* was a rare example of figure painting—perhaps an indication of her awareness of her limitations in depicting such subject matter. Instead of focusing on the human figure, like some artists of her generation who had been active during the Chinese modern art movement of the 1920s and '30s, such as Li Fengmian, Fu Baoshi 傅抱石 (1904–1964), and Li Keran 李可染 (1907–1989), Li continued to produce landscapes, a genre which also underwent modifications to reflect the new direction in art, though not as radical as in the field of figure painting.⁶⁵⁴ The new-style landscape painting featured a sense of euphoria about the new regime.

Ten Thousand Mountains Bathed in Red (*Wanshan hongbian* 万山红遍, 1964) [Figure 4.3] was one of Li's works in this style. The painting depicts barges travelling on a busy waterway between mountain ranges dotted with red trees. It is a literal interpretation of four lines from Mao Zedong's poem "Changsha" 长沙 (1927): "I see a thousand hills crimsoned through / By their serried woods deep-dyed / Over crystal blue waters / And a hundred barges vying" (看萬山紅遍, 層林盡染, 漫江碧透, 百舸爭流).⁶⁵⁵ In the same year, Li Keran painted the same subject matter [Figure 4.4]. Li Keran's work, however, only deals with the first two of the four

⁶⁵⁴ For details about changes to the landscape genre, see *Ibid.*, 169–180.

⁶⁵⁵ The translation is quoted from Mao Tsetung, *Mao Tsetung Poems* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1976), 3.

lines of the poem. The artist elaborated on the intensity of redness described in the poem and covered the towering peak with a deep crimson. This type of landscape painting epitomizes cultural nationalism during a time when *guohua* was revived with the intention of preserving national heritage and creating works that symbolized the great new nation under the leadership of Mao.⁶⁵⁶ Li Keran's painting became one of the most celebrated examples of this new-style *guohua*. By contrast, Li Qiujun's *Female Worker*, along with her many other landscapes in the new style, did not capture much attention.

Li Qiujun, despite her limitations, was open-minded about adapting to the newly sanctioned style. However, the change proved to be difficult for many *guohua* artists of the older generation. Among artists of the Chinese Women's Society of Calligraphy and Painting, only Li Qiujun and Wu Qingxia adjusted to the new *guohua* style and remained actively engaged in art production.⁶⁵⁷ A newer generation of female artists, such as Jiang Yan 姜燕 (1919–1958) and Wen Bao 温葆 (b. 1938), who were trained in the new art academies, aimed to represent women's experience in their art. Both of them created celebrated works about this theme [Figures 4.5 and 4.6]. These works, however, were often subsumed under the national agenda and overpowered by male artists, who outnumbered their female counterparts by a wide margin. Li Qiujun and the Women's Society's efforts to advance women's position in the art world in the 1930s seemed to have come to a halt in the post-1949 era. While representations of women in propaganda posters have been getting scholarly attention, women artists' role in socialist realist art production remains an under-researched area.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁶ Andrews and Shen, *The Art of Modern China*, 169–180; on Li Keran's painting, 172.

⁶⁵⁷ Li Qiujun and Wu Qingxia were among the twenty artists who travelled to farms and factories in the Wusong (吴淞) area to "learn from the masses" in 1958 (Bao Mingxin, *Haishang guixiu*, 171). Li's *Female Worker* was most likely created during this trip.

⁶⁵⁸ For example, Harriet Evans and Stephanie Donald, eds. *Picturing Power in the People's Republic of China: Posters of the Cultural Revolution* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).

Second Moment: Century.Woman

In the late 1970s, a new Chinese cultural scene started to emerge. With the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and the beginning of Deng Xiaoping’s Open Door Policy in 1978, artists began to explore new and experimental artistic languages, spearheading the so-called “avant-garde” movement. Yet despite these artists’ attempts to examine issues of personhood and identity, the notion of gender subjectivity was never at the forefront of their experimentation. While terms such as “women’s art” (*nüxing yishu* 女性艺术) and “feminist art” (*nüxing zhuyi yishu* 女性主义艺术) started to surface in the late 1980s, these categories remained obscure and were often (and still are) stigmatized in Chinese art circles. In the early 1990s, when Chinese contemporary art started to be promoted locally as well as internationally, male artists substantially outnumbered female artists in large-scale group exhibitions. The absence of substantive participation by women artists in China signaled a gender imbalance and an overall lack of awareness—both on the part of the public and on the part of some artists themselves—of women’s position and gender consciousness in art practices.

It was not until the exhibition and symposium *Century.Woman* (*Shiji nüxing yishuzhan* 世纪.女性艺术展), curated by Jia Fangzhou 贾方舟 (b. 1940) and Tao Yongbai 陶咏白 (b. 1937) in 1998, that feminist women’s art received truly serious attention in the Chinese art world. Held at the National Art Museum of China (*Zhongguo meishuguan* 中国美术馆) and various other satellite venues, *Century.Woman* surveyed art production by Chinese women from the early twentieth century to the 1990s. The exhibition was a ground-breaking event. Along with showcasing works by contemporary women artists, it also included an exhibit of documents and photographs related to women’s art production in China since the early twentieth century, and it included women discussed in this dissertation.

Century.Woman provided an unprecedented opportunity for the discussion of gender positioning and feminism in Chinese art. The curators Jia and Tao did not, however, seem to be able to move away from a formulaic view of women's art practices. Their conceptualization of women's art reverted back to the age-old predicaments often associated with women's art. In his curatorial essay for *Century.Woman*, Jia lists what he believes to be the defining characteristics of women's art: that 1) it is concerned with personal feelings and little else beyond the private world of the artist; 2) it expresses personal feelings intuitively and rarely in a rational manner; and 3) it lacks an interest in broader themes of politics, history, and philosophy.⁶⁵⁹ Therefore, despite the inclusion of works in a wide variety of media and subject matter, the curatorial approach towards this exhibition was still anchored in the rhetorical divide between "men and women," "rational and irrational," and "public and private." The advance of women's position in art made during the 1920s and '30s seems to have regressed in the late 1990s.

At present, as a great number of Chinese women artists are gaining critical and financial success locally and internationally, the art world, however, still views the subject of gender somewhat suspiciously. Due to the persistent stigmatization of this issue, many female artists continue to purposefully avoid discussion of gender in their works; many refuse even to be recognized as a "women artist."

Third Moment: Women and the Nation (The Great Wall)

Yang Xuejiu's *Memories of the Great Wall* (1923) [Figure 2.4], which appropriated the wall as a symbol of the great Chinese nation, demonstrated the artist's patriotism and hope and dreams for

⁶⁵⁹ Jia Fangzhou 贾方舟, Introduction to *Shiji nüxing yishuzhan* 世纪女性艺术展 [Selected works from the exhibition *Century.Woman*] (Beijing: Shijie huaren yishu chubanshe 1998), 9.

the new republic.⁶⁶⁰ Women continued to insert themselves into the grand narrative of this national symbol in the early twenty-first century. He Chengyao's 何成瑶 (b. 1964) performance *Opening the Great Wall* (2001) [Figure 4.7] cunningly addresses notions of the emancipation of the body and female sacrifice. The performance was staged by He at the Jinshanling 金山岭 section of the Great Wall in the midst of an installation created there by the German artist HA Schult. Schult is famous for his life-size figures made of trash, which he places in historically and culturally symbolic locales around the world, such as the Amphitheatre of Xanten and Red Square in Moscow. In 2001, Schult installed over one thousand trash figures in the Jinshanling section of the Great Wall. Busloads of artists went to the site on the opening day. Without much preconceived knowledge about Schult and his work, He boarded one of the buses and arrived at the site. As soon as she saw the trash figures lined up on the Great Wall, the idea of Emperor Qin's terracotta warriors immediately came to her mind. Moved by the massive scale and impact of Schult's work, He decided to take off her top and walk in front of the crowd. According to He it was a spontaneous act without premeditation.⁶⁶¹ It was also her first performance.

Since Schult is a world-renowned artist, his Great Wall installation generated a lot of media attention; He's performance, too, attracted a great deal of media interest. But in the criticism that followed He's performance, critics, fellow artists, and authors of numerous anonymous postings on the Internet criticized her for her immoral deed and, for her supposed intention of profiteering.⁶⁶² In response, He pointed out that criticism of her performance was

⁶⁶⁰ Sun Yat-sen was the first to use the Great Wall to symbolize Chinese nationalism in the 1910s. Louise Chipley Slavicek, *The Great Wall of China*, 95.

⁶⁶¹ Doris Sung in discussion with He Chengyao, July 10, 2009, Beijing.

⁶⁶² Sasha Su-Ling Welland, "'Kaifang Changcheng' 开放长城 [Opening the Great Wall]," in *Xinling zhitong: He Chengyao de xingwei yishu yu yingxiang 心灵之痛：何成瑶的行为艺术及影像 [Pain in Soul: Performance Art and Video Works by He Chengyao]*, trans. Mao Weidong (Shanghai: Shanghai Zendai Museum of Modern Art, 2007), 59.

based on gender bias. As she sees it, she was singled out unfairly as a woman who used nudity as a quick way to gain fame. Such unjust treatment of her work overlooked the fact that many male artists, such as Zhang Huan 张洵 (b. 1965) and Ma Liuming 马六明 (b. 1969), had used their naked bodies in performances, many of which had been performed at the Great Wall. These male artists had not been subjected to the same kind of criticism.⁶⁶³

The context in which He's performance was executed and viewed creates layers of meaning. As a celebrated male artist from Europe, Schult has the power and prestige to stage a work on a monumental scale at a historically significant site in China. This contrasts greatly with the action of a Chinese female artist. In the case of He, accusations of profiteering thus add precisely and perhaps even ironically to the meaning of the work. By disrobing in public, He challenged the patriarchal power of the Great Wall, both in the past and the present. In doing so, she blasphemed against a cultural relic that celebrates the great Chinese nation, but which thus far only been the site of interventions by males, including male artists.

The Great Wall has always been associated with war, politics, brutality, and male heroism. The only traditional story about the Great Wall that is related to a female character is the myth of Meng Jiangnü (孟姜女). Meng was a chaste wife who went to find her husband who, having been consigned to hard manual labor, was building the Great Wall. When Meng Jiangnü arrived and found out that her husband was dead, she started to cry. Her devotion to her husband moved the divinity above to open the wall and reveal her husband's body.

While the tale of Meng Jiangnü is often thought to focus on the cruelty of forced labor and its role in the building the Great Wall, it is also about chastity and wifely devotion. In staging her performance at the Great Wall, He appears to have questioned whether this great

⁶⁶³ He Chengyao: "Lift the Cover from Your Head", trans. Sasha Welland, *Yishu* 2, no. 3 (2003): 20–22.

emblem of Chinese culture is simply an overrated symbol of cruelty in the guise of national pride. She also questioned the notion of chastity as a great womanly virtue. As such, *Opening the Great Wall* is as much a commentary on women's roles in society as on woman's control over her body in twenty-first-century China. The contrast between the celebrated chastity of Meng Jiangnü and He's disrobing on the Great Wall highlights the latter's challenge to the Great Wall's (and by extension the Chinese nation's) status as a symbol of patriarchal power, one where a woman's body, naked or otherwise, does not belong.

To be continued . . .

He Chengyao's provocative performance represents just one end of the wide spectrum of women's current art practice in China. In November 2015, the Zhongguo nüzi shuhuahui 中国女子书画会 (China Women's Painting and Calligraphy Association) was reinstated as an organization registered with the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.⁶⁶⁴ Aiming to reinvigorate the spirit and legacy of their predecessors, a group of Chinese women artists in Shanghai decided to continue the task of mobilizing female *guohua* artists. The group's mandate is "to carry on the essence of the splendid art of Chinese calligraphy and painting, and to serve women artists of Chinese descents around the globe" (传承中华优秀书画艺术名粹，服务全球华裔女性书画精英). The group plans to have an inaugural exhibition sometime in 2016. An art gallery for showcasing works of original and current members is also in the works in Shanghai.

⁶⁶⁴ China Women's Painting and Calligraphy Association is the current English name of the organization. The association's website: <http://cwcpa.org/plus/list.php?tid=1> (Accessed May 4, 2016).

While the organization aims to form a collective of Chinese women artists from around the globe from various sociocultural and economic backgrounds, its leaders seem to be projecting an image of a certain type of women. Writers of articles on current members' exhibitions, which are posted on the organization's website, describe these women artists in terms that echo those used in the early twentieth century, such as "genteel woman of Shanghai" (*Haishang mingyuan* 海上名媛).⁶⁶⁵ The majority of the artwork posted on the website seems to be in the flower-and-bird genre, together with some landscapes. Even though these works tend to be rather conservative, it is possible that, like their predecessors, the society's current members aim to use traditionalism as a way to participate in China's vibrant contemporary art scene.

In the early twentieth century, this art scene was divided into Chinese- and Western-style art. In the early twentieth-first century, the demarcation is between *guohua* and so-called "contemporary art" (*dangdai yishu* 当代艺术). Women artists in the latter stream have made great progress nationally and internationally in recent years, gaining both fame and commercial success. However, with a few exceptions, most still refrain from asserting their gender identity or addressing feminist issues in their works for fear of being outcast again by art critics and dealers in China.⁶⁶⁶ In the meantime, the China Women's Painting and Calligraphy Association has created a collective force to showcase women's artistic talent. The story of Chinese women artists is to be continued.

⁶⁶⁵ "Haishang mingyuan—Lu Zengxian Zhongguohua zuopinzhān" 海上名媛-卢增贤中国画作品展 [A genteel woman of Shanghai—exhibition of Chinese painting by Lu Zengxian], <http://cwcpa.org/a/shuxiedongtai/zhanshikuaixun/2016/0110/232.html#>. (Accessed May 4, 2016).

⁶⁶⁶ An exception, for example, was an exhibition entitled *WOMEN* 我們 [we/us] (note: "wo'men" is also the *pinyin* phonetic inscription for the Chinese term "we/us") held in Shanghai in 2011 and at the San Francisco Chinese Cultural Center in 2012. The exhibitions consist of works from more than twenty Chinese women artists which address issues such as sexuality, gender identity, and body in their works.

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Dacheng Old Periodicals Fulltext Database (大成老舊期刊全文數據庫) via CrossAsia

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Figures

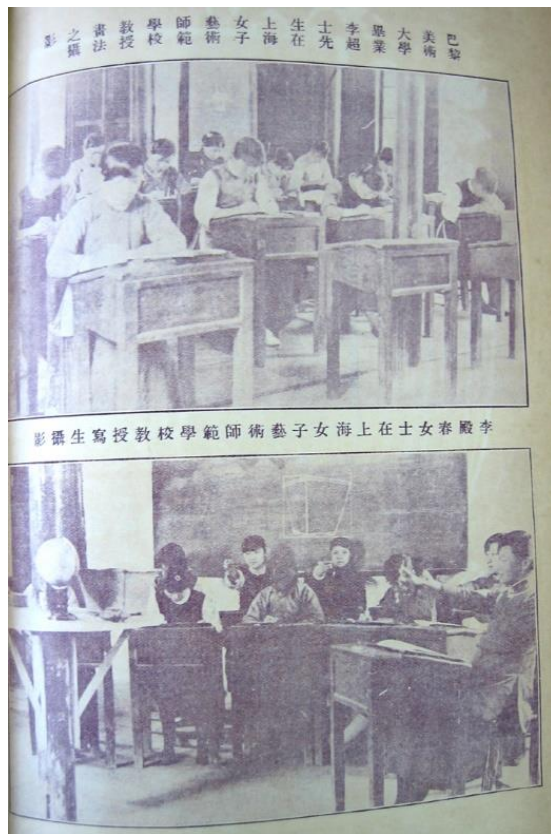


Figure 0.1

Top: “Mr. Li Chaoshi, a graduate of an art academy in Paris, teaches calligraphy at the Shanghai Normal School of Fine Arts for Women”

Bottom: “Ms. Li Dianchun teaches life drawing at the Shanghai Normal School of Fine Arts for Women”
Funii zazhi vol. 6, issue 9 (September, 1920)

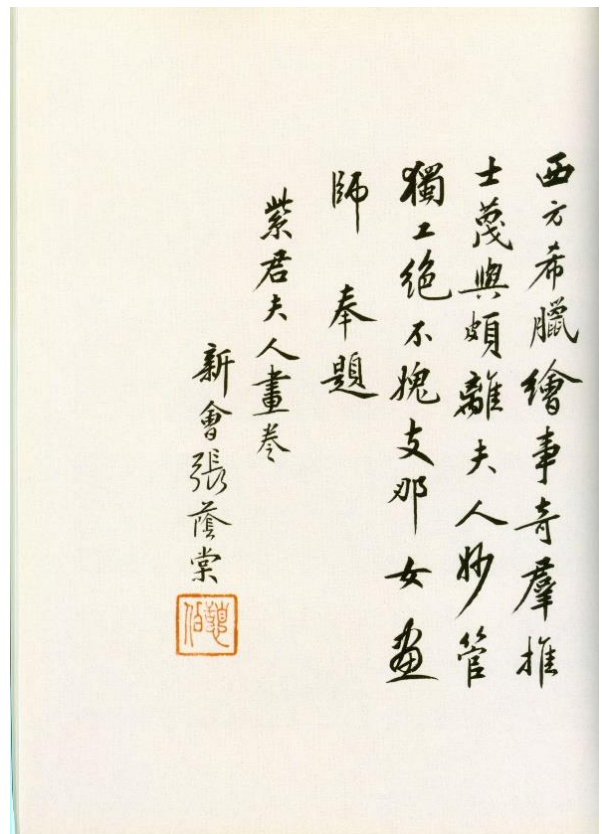


Figure 0.2

Colophon by Zhang Yintang for Jin Taotao’s painting scroll *One Hundred Images of Goldfish* (details), 1909. Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 1.1
Wu Xingfen's painting on the cover of *Funü zazhi*, vol. 4, issue 7 (July 1918)



Figure 1.2
Wu Xingfen's photo-portrait and biography in *Funü zazhi*, vol. 4, issue 12 (December 1918).



Figure 1.3
Portrait of Wu Xingfen in *The Eighteen Famous Chinese Landscapes* painted by Madame Wu Hsing-fên



Figure 1.4
Portrait of Jin Taotao in *Funü shibao*1 (June 11, 1911)

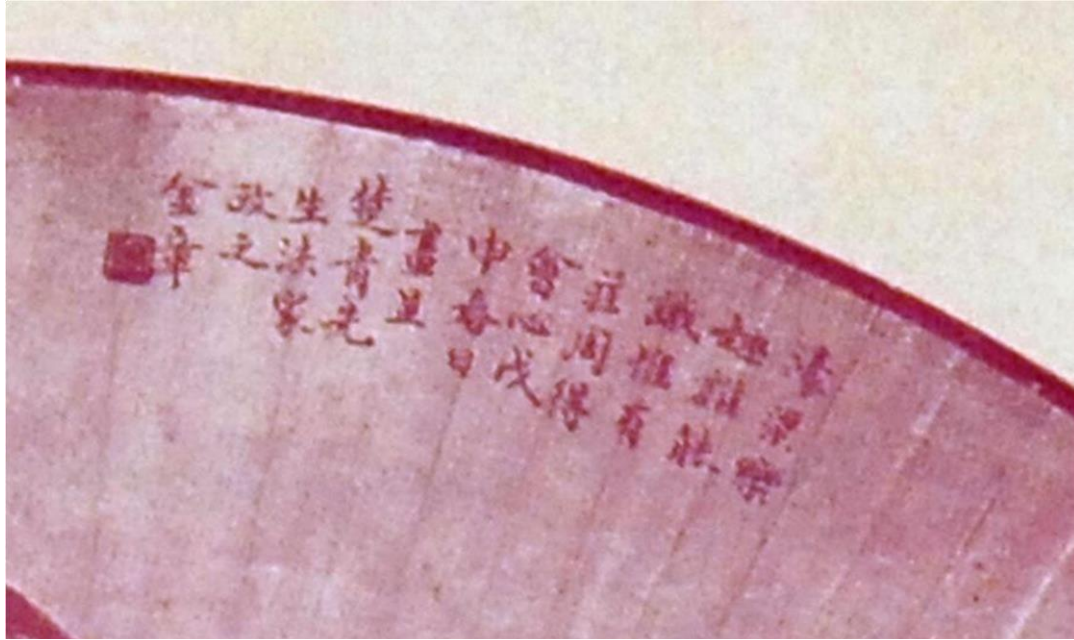


Figure 1.5

Inscription on the painted fan by JinTaotao in *Funii shibao1* (June 11, 1911)

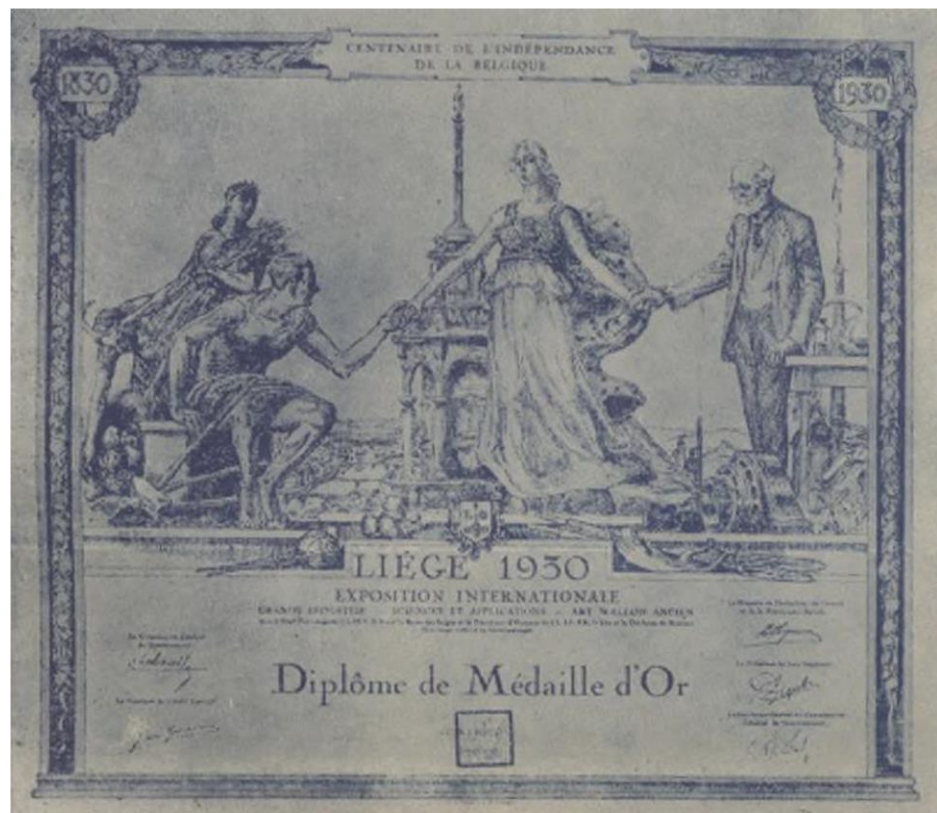


Figure 1.6

Gold award for the Lake Society at the 1930 Liege Exposition, *Hushe yuekan* 53 (1932), 9

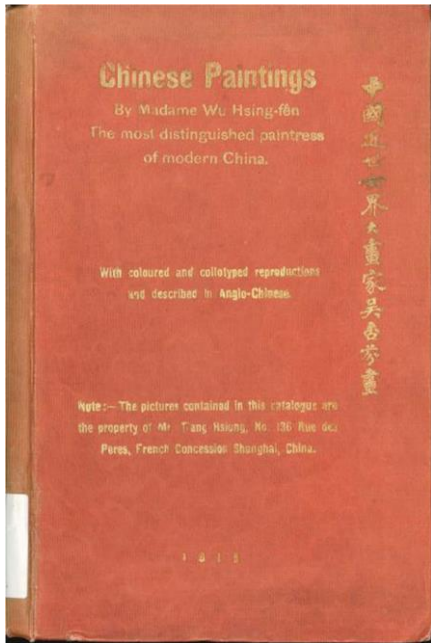


Figure 1.7

Cover of *Chinese Paintings* by Madame Wu Hsing-fên, the Most Distinguished Paintress of Modern China (1915)

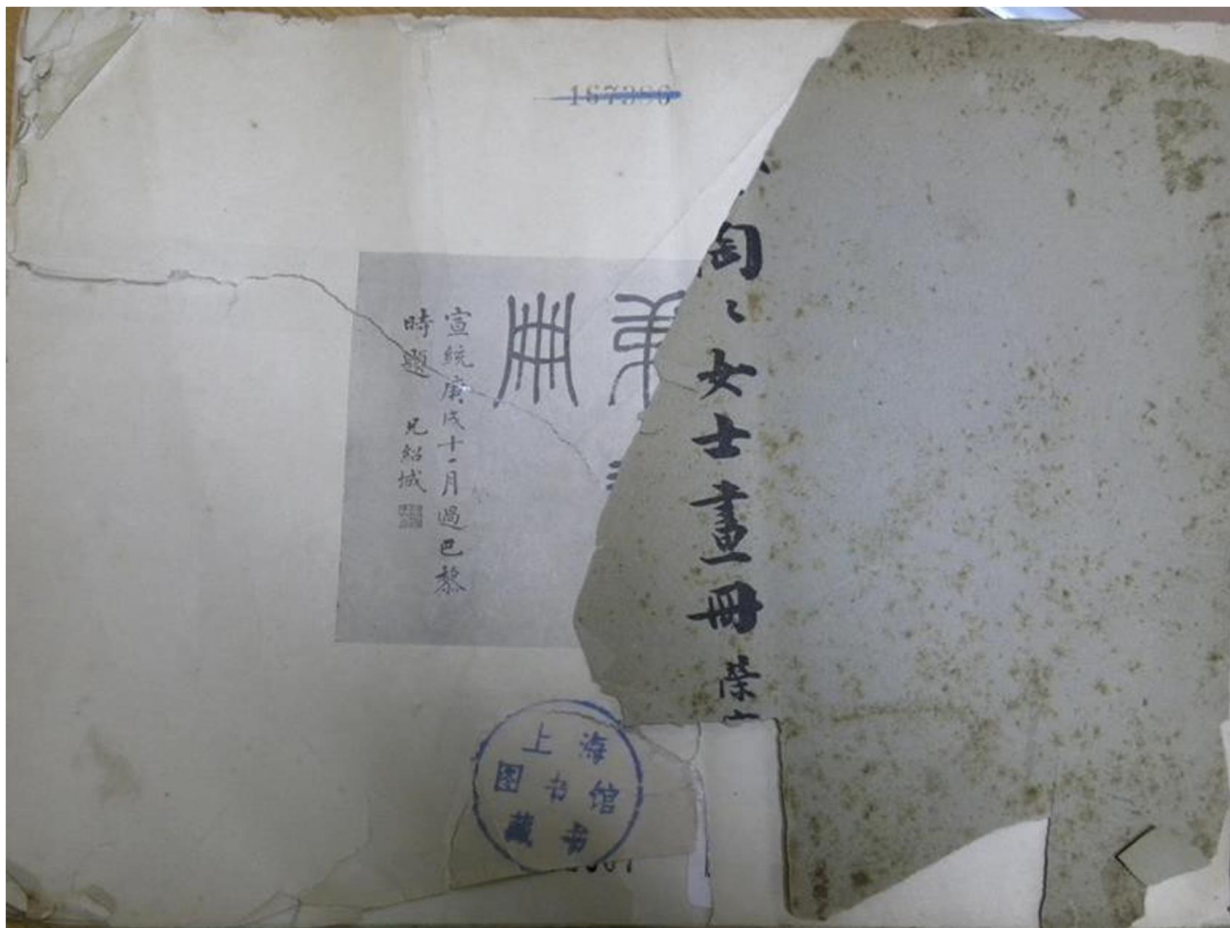


Figure 1.8

Painting album by Jin Taotao, published by the Lake Society, 1932

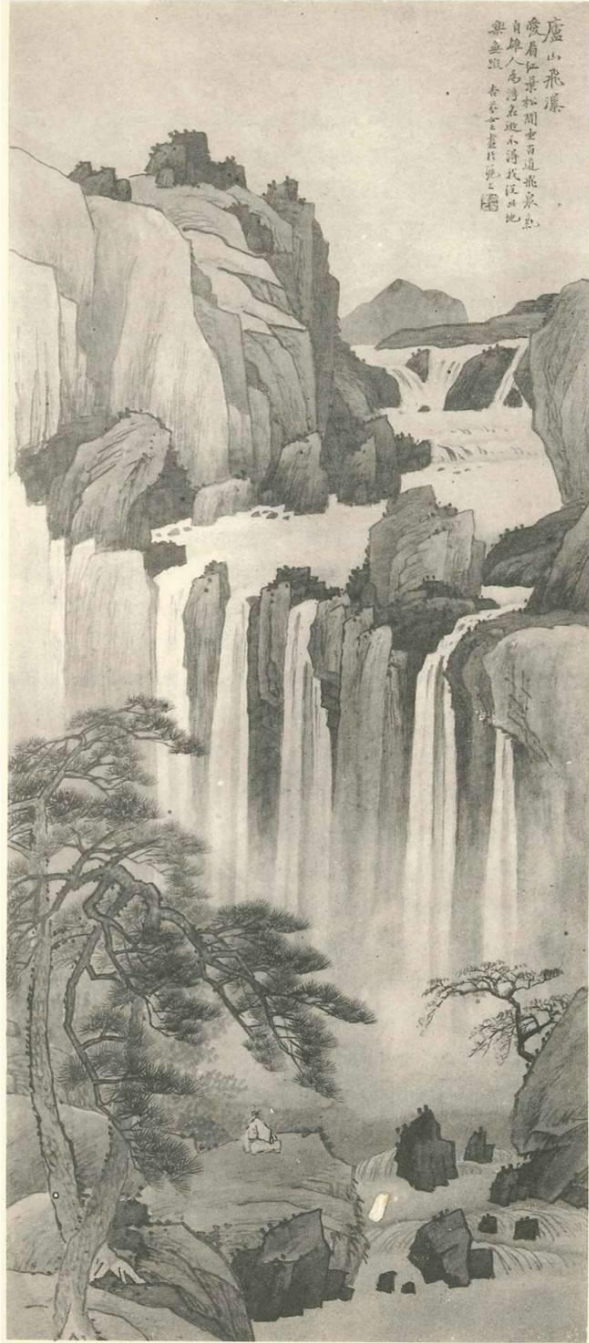


Figure 1.9

Wu Xingfen, *Waterfalls of Mount Lu in The Eighteen Famous Chinese Landscapes*

Image omitted due to Copyright restrictions

Figure 1.11

Tang Yin, *Watching the spring and listening to the wind*, hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk. Nanjing Museum

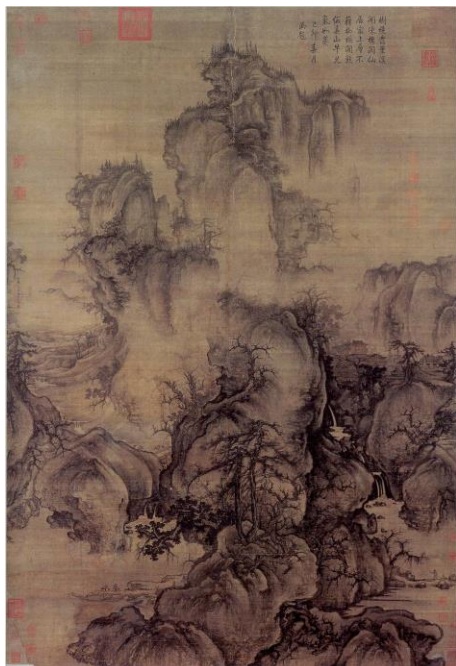


Figure 1.10

Guo Xi, *Early Spring*, 1072, hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk. National Palace Museum, Taipei



Figure 1.12

Wu Xingfen & Tang Kunhua, *Album of the Art Collection of Autumn Butterfly Studio*, 1879



Figure 1.13

Liu Cai, *A Shoal of Fish Frolicking Amid Nymphoides* (details), c. 11th century. National Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 1.14

Jin Taotao, *Goldfish and lotus*, 1920, hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper. Palace Museum, Beijing



Figure 1.15

Jin Cheng, *Peonies*, 1922, ink and colour on paper



Figure 1.16

Jin Taotao, *One Hundred Images of Goldfish* (details), 1909, ink and colour on paper. Palace Museum, Beijing.

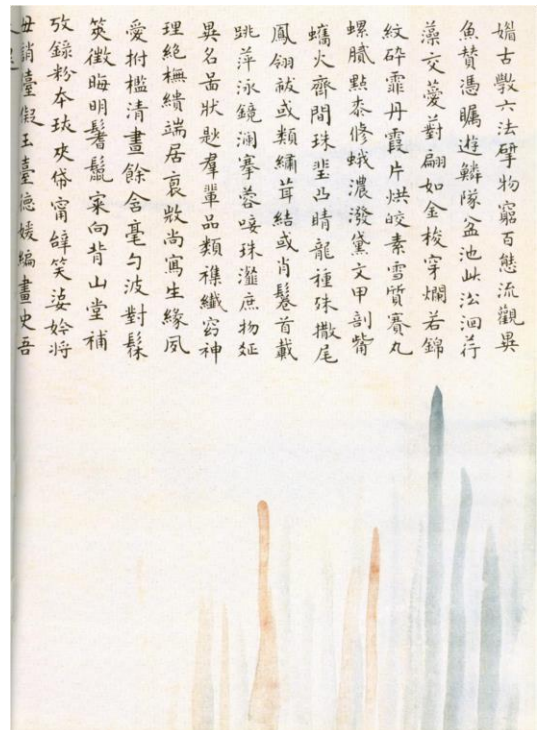


Figure 1.17

Jin Taotao's colophon for *One Hundred Images of Goldfish* (details), 1909



Figure 2.1
 “Nüzi shuhua” (Calligraphy and painting by women), *Libailiu* 556 (June 2, 1934), 22



Figure 2.2
 “Nüzi shuhua” (details)



Figure 2.3
 “Yang Xuejiu nüshi” (Ms. Yang Xuejiu), *Jindai funü* 1 (June 1, 1928), 9



Figure 2.4
 Yang Xuejiu, *Memories of the Great Wall*, 1923. *Meizhan tekan* (1929)

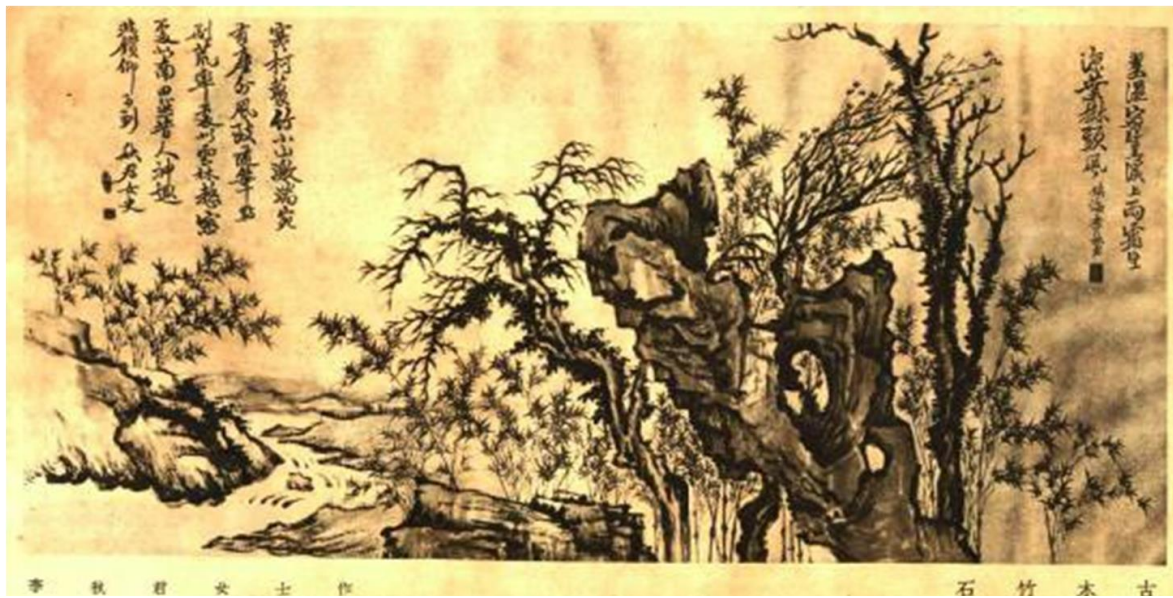


Figure 2.5
 Li Qiujun, *Old Trees with Bamboos and Rocks*. *Funü zazhi*, vol. 15, issue 7 (July 1929)



何香凝女士繪

虎

Figure 2.6

He Xiangning, *Tiger*. *Funü zazhi*, vol. 15, issue 7 (July 1929)



高奇峯筆

Figure 2.7

Gao Qifeng, *Tiger*.
Meizhan tekan (1929)



Figure 2.8

He Xiangning, *Snow on the Lofty Mountains*.
Meizhan tekan (1929)

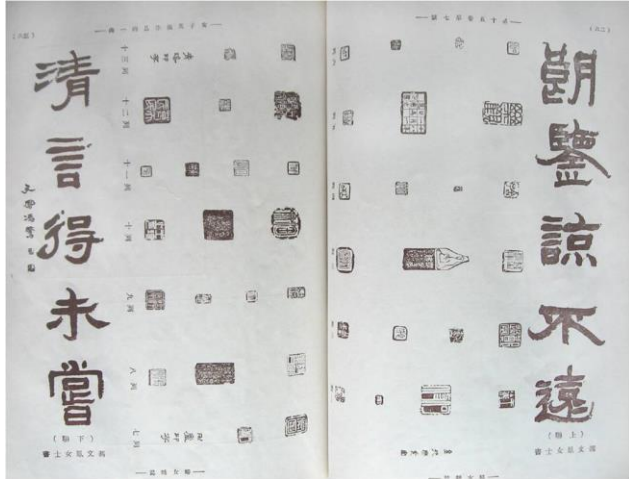


Figure 2.9
Calligraphy by Feng Wenfeng. *Funü zazhi*, vol. 15,
issue 7 (July 1929)

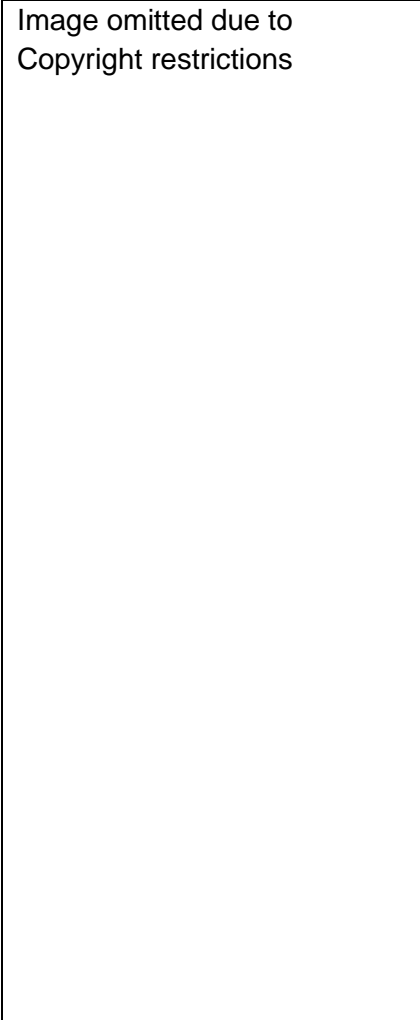
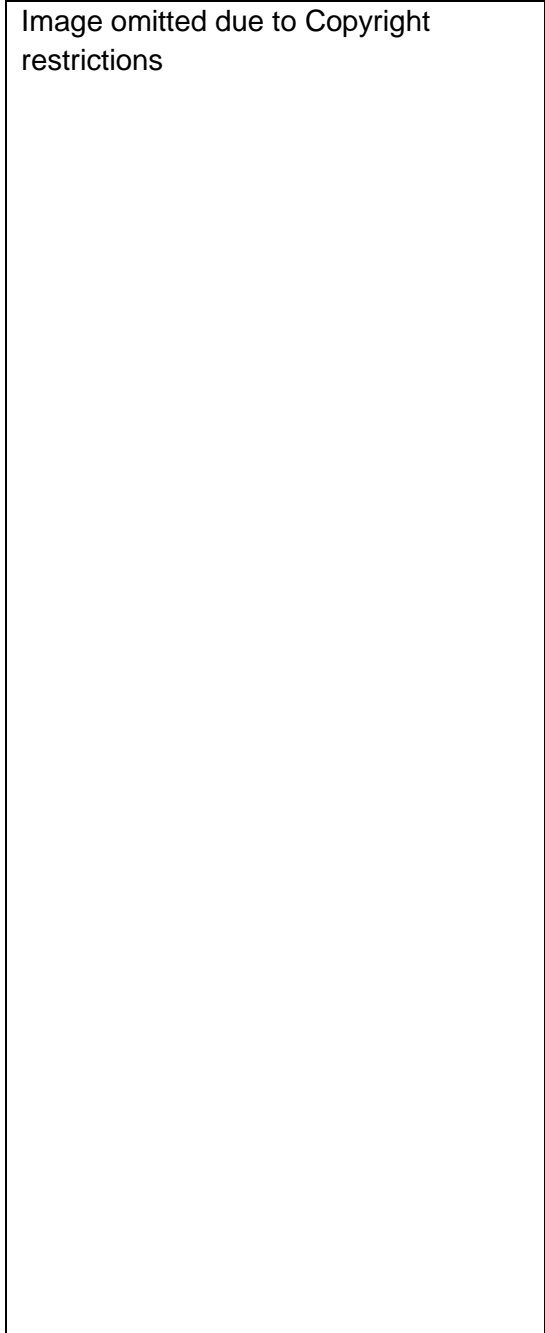


Figure 2.11
Zhang Daqian, *Self-pity*, 1934,
hanging scroll, ink and color on
paper. Palace Museum, Beijing

Figure 2.10
Li Qiuju, *Female Beauty*, 1936,
hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper.
Private collection.



Figure 3.1

Photo of female students at the Institut franco-chinois de Lyon. *Funü zazhi*, vol. 8, issue 7 (July, 1922)

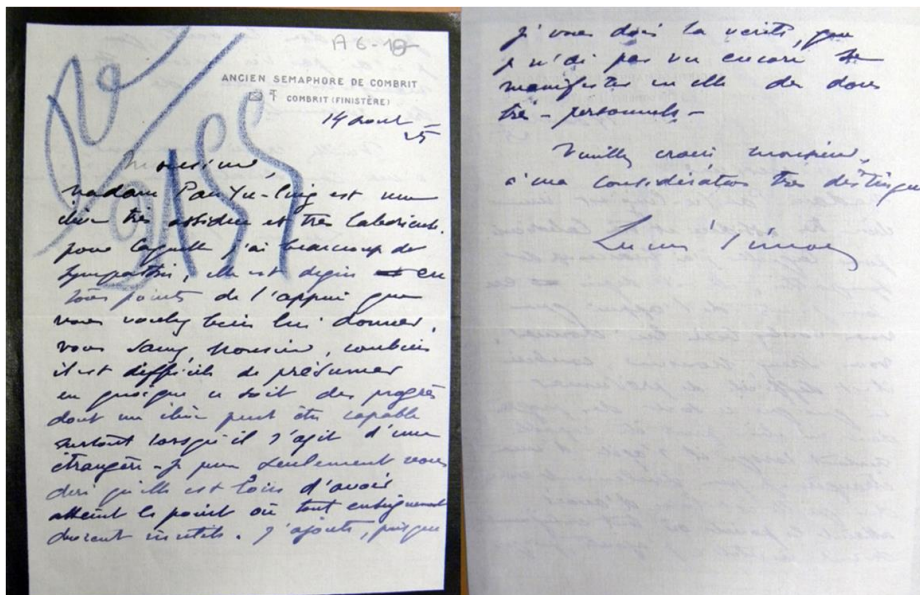


Figure 3.2.

Lucien Simon's letter to the Institut franco-chinois reporting Pan's progress, dated August 14, 1925

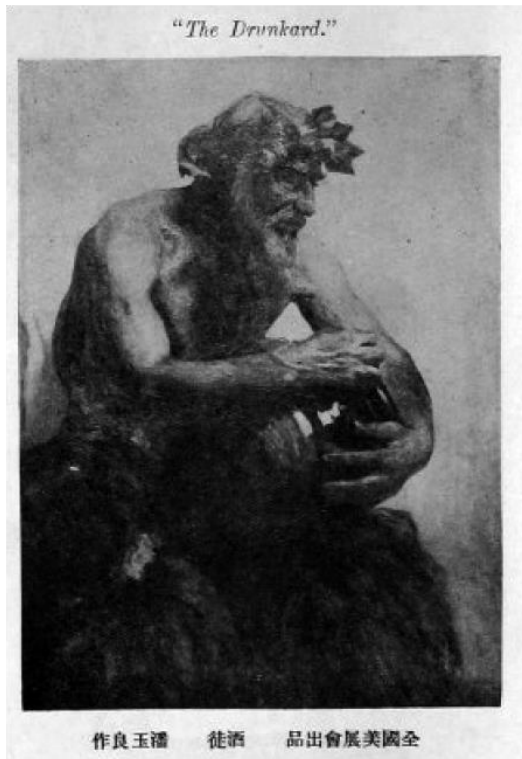


Figure 3.3

Pan Yuliang, *The Drunkard* (or *Old Man*), oil on canvas. *Wenhua1* (August 1929). The painting was shown at the First National Art Exhibition (1929), priced at 2,000 *yuan*



Figure 3.4

Photographs of Pan Yuliang at her solo exhibition with one of her oil paintings. *Shanghai manhua* 34 (December 8, 1928)



法國少女
 一九二六年，繪於羅馬皇家畫院，少女裸體至肩，面容
 憔悴，身體多形類體態，作者慎重而之，察驗筆線，配合傳
 宣。為上海個展中油畫之一。

Figure 3.5
 Pan Yuliang, *A Young French Woman*, 1926. Oil paintings
 by Pan Yuliang (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1934), plate #1



潘玉良女士，上海美術專門學校畢業，十年赴歐，在法國
 里昂巴黎等國立美術學校習畫，十四年在意大利羅馬皇家
 美術學院從 Comandi 為師。曾出品羅馬展覽會。現在
 上海美術專門學校西畫系主任。去年十一月間在上海舉行
 留歐回國紀念繪畫展覽會。像中老人為其油畫之入型。

Figure 3.6
 Photograph of Pan Yuliang and her
 male model for *The Drunkard* (or
Old Man). *Zhenmeishan*
nüzuojiachao (January 1, 1929)

即士列人影之右
 唐，之即，指圖
 繇左右王前導乃
 玉角為濟列與藝
 女之潘遠之研苑
 士第玉氏中究研
 。二良，間員究
 人女後一合所



Figure 3.7
 Instructors and members of the Yiyuan Institute for the Research of Painting posing with a nude female model. *Shanghai manhua* (March 23, 1929)

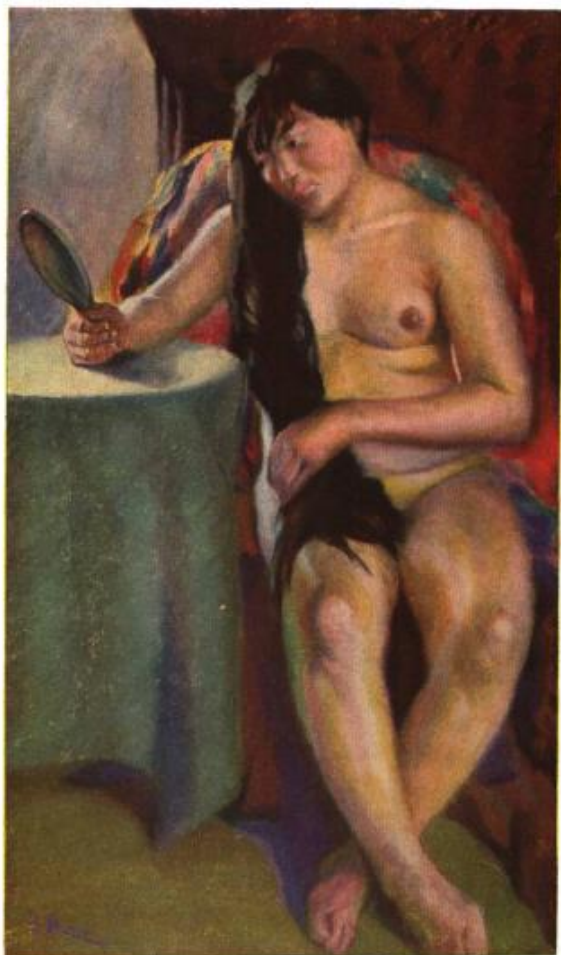


作良玉潘 女黑

Figure 3.8
 Pan Yuliang, *A Black Woman*. *Zhenmeishan nüzuojiahao* (January 1, 1929). This painting was shown at the first National Art Exhibition. The painting was shown at the First National Art Exhibition (1929), priced at 600 yuan



Figure 3.9
 Pan Yuliang, *Reclining Male Nude under the Light*. *Funü zazhi*, vol. 15, issue 7 (July 1929). The painting was shown at the First National Art Exhibition (1929), priced at 600 yuan



潘玉良女土画

影 照

Figure 3.10

Pan Yuliang, *Looking at a Reflection*. *Funü zazhi*, vol. 15, issue 7 (July 1929). The painting was shown at the First National Art Exhibition (1929), priced at 1,000 *yuan*



潘玉良作 (畫粉) 歌 罷

Figure 3.11

Pan Yuliang, *After a Singing Performance*. *Shanghai manhua* 51 (April 13, 1929). The painting was shown at the First National Art Exhibition (1929), priced at 600 *yuan*

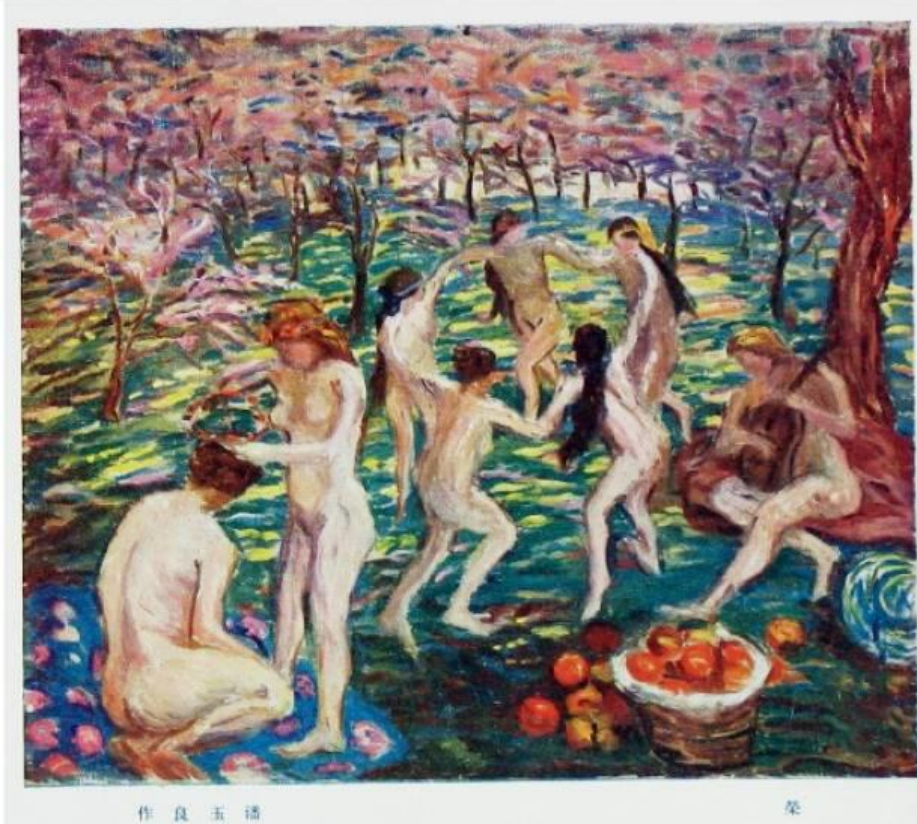


Figure 3.12
Pan Yuliang, *Glory*, oil
on canvas. *Wenhua* 3
(October 1929)

Figure 3.13
Henri Matisse, *Le bonheur
de vivre*, 1905-06, oil on
canvas. Barnes Foundation

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Figure 3.14
Pan Yuliang, *Spring*,
1930. *Oil paintings by*
Pan Yuliang (Shanghai:
Zhonghua shuju, 1934),
pla #8

Figure 3.15
Pan Yuliang, *Spring*,
ca. 1930. *A special*
collection of the
second National
Exhibition of Chinese
Art under the auspices
of the Ministry of
Education (Shanghai:
Commercial Press,
1937)

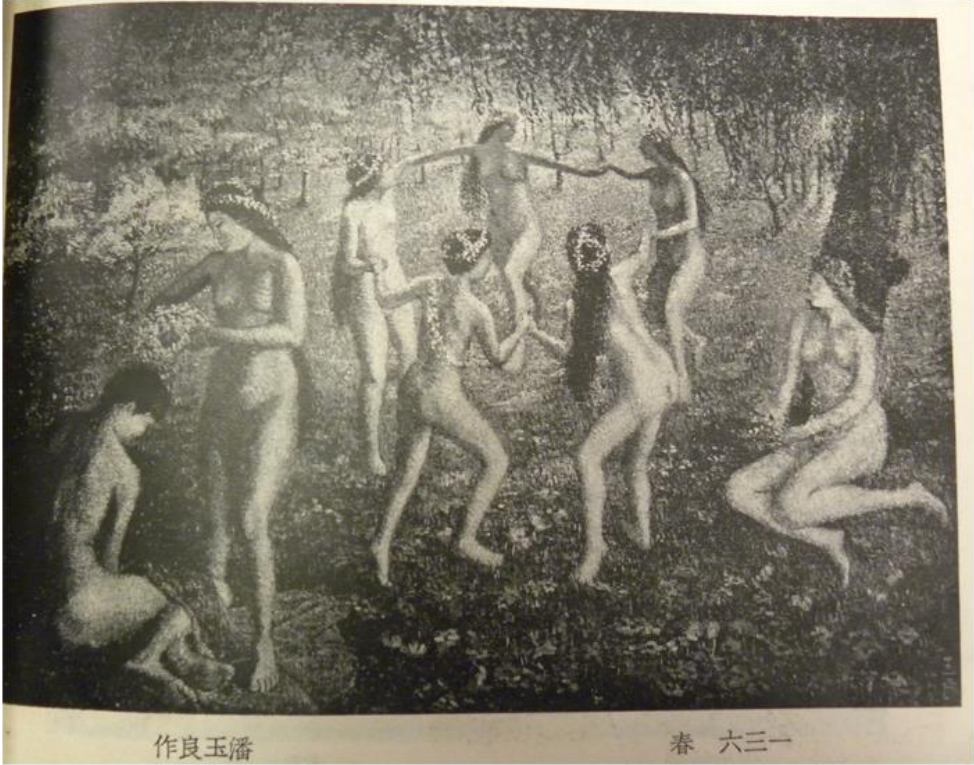




Figure 3.16
 “Famous Chinese painter in Europe—Miss Pan Yuen-liang” *Tuhua shibao* (The Eastern Times Photo Supplement) 388 (August 24, 1927)

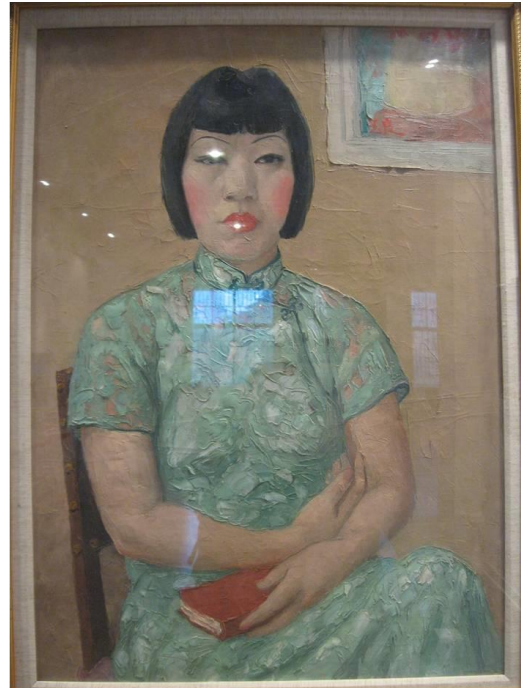


Figure 3.17
 Pan Yuliang, *Self-portrait (with a book)*, 1939, oil on canvas. Anhui Provincial Museum



Figure 3.18
 “Le Salon des Indépendants,” *Beaux-Arts: Chronique des Arts et de la Curiosité* (May 5, 1939)



Figure 3.19
 “Le Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-arts,” *Le courrier des arts et des lettres* (May 15, 1947)

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Figure 3.20

Suzanne Valadon, *Catherine Reclining Nude on a Panther Skin*, 1923, oil on canvas, 65 x 92 cm.
Private collection

Figure 3.21

Pan Yuliang, *Reclining Nude in front of the Window*. 1940, oil on canvas, 33 x 24 cm.
National Art Museum of China, Beijing



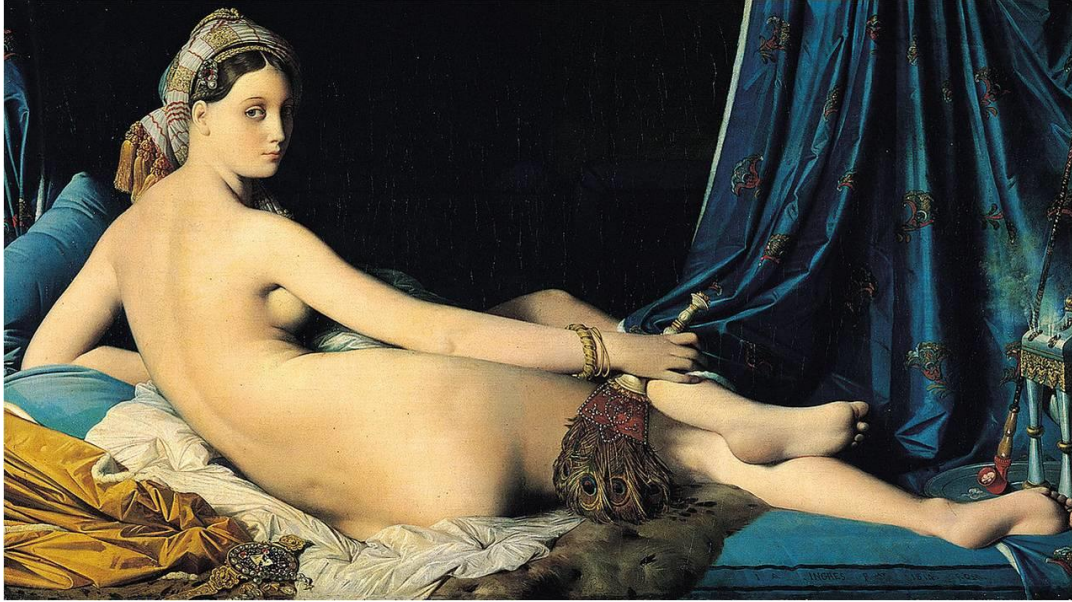


Figure 3.22

Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814, oil on canvas, 91 × 162 cm.
Musée du Louvre.

Figure 3.23

Émilie Charmy,
Sleeping Nude,
c.1925, oil on
canvas, 65 x 80
cm. Private
collection

Image omitted due to Copyright restrictions

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Image omitted due to Copyright restrictions

Figure 3.24

Pan Yuliang, *Portrait of Zhou Xiaoyan*,
1947, oil on canvas, 60 x 91 cm.

National Art Museum of China, Beijing



Figure 3.25

Pan Yuliang, *Nude*, 1946, ink
and colour on paper, 27 x 42
cm. Anhui Provincial
Museum



Figure 3.26

Pan Yuliang, *Woman with a Fan*, 1940, oil on canvas, 90x 59 cm. Anhui Provincial Museum

Image omitted due to Copyright restrictions

Figure 3.27

Henri Matisse, *Interior with a Violin Case*, 1918-1919, oil on canvas. Museum of Modern Art, New York



Figure 3.28

Pan Yuliang, *Dancing Women with Masks*, 1953, ink and colour on paper. Anhui Provincial Museum

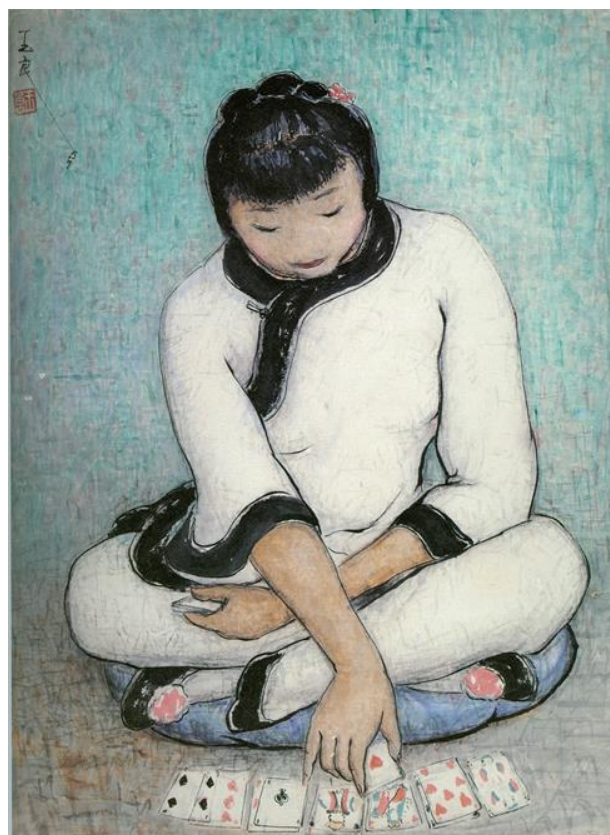


Figure 3.29

Pan Yuliang, *A Girl Playing Cards*, 1957, ink and colour on paper, 68 x 53 cm. Anhui Provincial Museum

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Figure 3.30

Suzanne Valadon, *The Future Unveiled, or The Fortune-teller*, 1912, oil on canvas.
Musée Petit Palais, Geneva



Figure 3.31

Pan Yuliang, *Dancing amidst the Wind*, 1956, ink and colour on paper, 66 x 134 cm.
Anhui Provincial Museum



Figure 3.32

Édouard Manet, *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863, oil on canvas, 208 × 264 cm.

Musee d'Orsay



Figure 3.33

Pan Yuliang, *Drunk*, ca. 1950s, ink and colour on paper, 95 x 180 cm. Anhui

Provincial Museum



Figure 3.34

Pan Yuliang in *Chez ceux du Montparnasse* (dir. Jean-Claude Bernard, 1957), film still



Figure 3.35

Pan Yuliang and model in *Chez ceux du Montparnasse* (dir. Jean-Claude Bernard, 1957), film still



Figure 3.36

Léonard Tsugouharu Foujita and his wife in *Chez ceux du Montparnasse* (dir. Jean-Claude Bernard, 1957), film still

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Figure 4.1

Li Qiujuun, *Female Worker*, 1958, ink and colour on paper, 107×61cm. Private collection

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Figure 4.2

Li Qiujuun, *Appreciating the plum trees*, ca. late 1940s, ink and colour on paper, 98×47cm. Private collection

Image omitted due to Copyright restrictions

Figure 4.3

Li Qiujun, *Ten thousand mountains bathed in red*, 1964, ink and colour on paper. Private collection

Image omitted due to Copyright restrictions

Figure 4.4

Li Keran, *Ten thousand mountains bathed in red*, 1964, ink and colour on paper. 79.5 x 49 cm. Private collection

Image omitted due to Copyright restrictions

Figure 4.5

Jiang Yan, *Quizzing Mama (Kaokao mama)*, 1953, ink and colour on paper, 114×65 cm. National Art Museum of China, Beijing

Figure 4.6

Wen Bao, *Four Girls*, 1962. Oil on canvas, 110 x 202cm. National Art Museum of China, Beijing

Image omitted due to Copyright restrictions



Figure 4.7

He Chengyao, *Opening the Great Wall*, 2002, performance photograph