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Chinese Painting Comes to America

Zhang Shuqi and the Diplomacy of Art

Gordon H. Chang

Discussions of cultural interactions between Asian countries and the United States often take fixed, unexamined categories, such as "East and West" or "Asian and Euro-American," as their starting point. The categories are sometimes thought of as opposed, with the Asian construed as traditional and unchanging and the Western as modern, dynamic, and international. Recent scholarship and thinking, however, suggests that these concepts and assumptions are problematic in considering artistic interchanges in the early twentieth century, if not earlier. We now understand that artistic exchanges across the Pacific have been more complicated, mutual, and interactive than previously assumed.

Consider the first identified artist of Chinese ancestry who worked in America. Lai Yong came from southern China to California sometime in the mid-nineteenth century. During the 1860 and 1870s, he enjoyed a successful career as a portrait artist and photographer in San Francisco, where leading members of the elite sat for his Western-style oil portraits. Members of the Chinese community also served as subjects of his photographic work, which was both compelling and sensitive in approach. Lai Yong spoke out against anti-Chinese prejudices of the day and was an early proponent of equality and civil rights. But where did he learn the craft of his art, which had no putative Oriental look? Most likely, he received his training from George Chinnery (1774–1852), a noted English artist who had settled in Hong Kong and Macao, or from Chinese artists whom Chinnery had influenced. Examples of Lai Yong's work survive, but the artist himself disappeared from San Francisco and from the historical record after 1882, the year Congress passed what is known as the Chinese Exclusion Act.[1]



1. Li Yishi, *Sketch of Zhang Shuqi*, 1930. Ink on paper, 12 × 8 in. Chang family collection.

This essay focuses on the life and career of Zhang Shuqi (1900–1957), one of the earliest Chinese artists to have had a direct impact on large American audiences and their understanding of Chinese brush painting.[2] Under the auspices of the Chinese government, Zhang traveled to the United States in 1941 to promote Sino-American understanding and friendship. He toured the country extensively over the next five years and held solo exhibitions at major museums, where he conducted public demonstrations of his technique. The popular and art press devoted great attention to these events, which attracted thousands of people. Before his arrival in the country, the Chinese government had presented one of the artist's large compositions to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. That gift also had received extensive media coverage, making it then, and perhaps even today, the most well-known Chinese painting in America.

For most Americans (and many Asians), Zhang's work appeared to be of a traditional Chinese idiom, but his training, technique, and approach to art was fully modern in China. It combined Western and Chinese features, and he thought of himself as both an international and Chinese artist. Though highly successful in China in the 1930s and 1940s, his subtle hybrid style and life overseas have complicated historical evaluation of Zhang (Figure 1) in China. In the United States, Zhang is not considered part of American art history at all. But for many in this country, it was Zhang Shuqi who brought Chinese painting to America. Zhang came to the United States to advance the Chinese government's practice of cultural diplomacy, reaching out to the West after Japan's invasion of China in 1937. I play with the word "diplomacy" to refer not just to the formal interaction of states but also to suggest informal artistic

interpolation and mixing; both definitions are useful to understand Zhang's work and possible influence. But it was also twentieth-century modernity that enabled Chinese painting to reach a mass audience in America. Chinese paintings, like other objects, had long been found in American homes and institutions, and a few Americans had even studied them, but Chinese painting as a process or method as well as something available to wide numbers of people was virtually unknown before the mid-twentieth century. World politics and changing technologies opened new possibilities of learning, influence, and exchange.

Chinese arts and crafts had come early to the attention of Americans. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many Americans, elite and the everyday, filled their homes with Chinese porcelains, decorative ware, furniture and the like. This *chinoiserie* was widely appreciated and admired, but it was not until 1838 that the American public could view Chinese paintings firsthand. In that year, Nathan Dunn, a Philadelphia merchant enriched by the early China trade, opened what became known as the Chinese Museum to the American public. According to one estimate, more than a 100,000 people toured Dunn's collection to view 1,200 objects he had collected when he lived in China. These items ranged from natural history specimens to garments, tools, home wares, and fine paintings. Much impressed the crowds who visited: some paintings were huge, extending nine feet wide by five feet high. But the artwork left Dunn, a Sinophile, somewhat ambivalent. He wrote in the museum catalogue that the several hundred paintings in the show provided clear evidence of Chinese artistic ability, which was even better than many had thought. But though Chinese painters could render images with "great correctness and beauty," Dunn concluded that "shading," a staple of the Western Renaissance, was something "they do not well understand." For his path-breaking efforts, the American Philosophical Society bestowed on Dunn membership in its esteemed ranks.[3]

Dunn's museum remained open for three years in Philadelphia before he moved it to London. A few years later in 1847, John R. Peters, who had been a member of the first official American delegation to China, displayed his own Chinese art collection to the American public. It was even larger than Dunn's, with 500 paintings, including some in oil color depicting everyday life in China. Other paintings presented birds and flowers "exquisitely done." Overall, Peters was more diplomatic than Dunn in his catalogue's evaluation of the artwork. "All the paintings in the Museum," he wrote, "are the work of Chinese artists, and for execution and finish speak for themselves."[4]

By the late nineteenth century, important figures in America developed a critical appreciation of Chinese painting and arts more on their own terms. Wealthy collectors began to amass important holdings of high Chinese artwork—first porcelains

and then classical paintings, though little that was contemporary. Considerations of Chinese and Japanese artworks appeared in the paintings of such artists as John La Farge, James McNeill Whistler, and the European Impressionists. As historian Warren I. Cohen has noted, "East Asian art became intertwined with modernism, with avant-garde Western painting. Each prepared the way for the other."[5]

In China, a few artists from Europe had had a small presence in court arts going back at least to the sixteenth century, but they little influenced the embedded tradition until the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Then the challenge of the West threw everything into chaos in China. Many political reformers came to believe that Westernization, including in the arts, would be critical for China's salvation and future. Art students were sent abroad to Japan and Europe to bring back the new learning. In contrast to Europe, where realism came increasingly under fire, academic realism, Post-Impressionism, and other schools were considered to be modern in China. One of the leading apostles of the new art training in China was Liu Haisu, who styled himself as the Chinese Vincent Van Gogh. Liu founded the Shanghai Art Academy, the first fine arts college of modern China. It taught Western art techniques exclusively; no training in Chinese ink painting was even offered in its first years.[6]

Zhang Shuqi was born into this crucible of political and artistic ferment in 1900, which was also the year of the Boxer anti-foreign uprising. His birthplace in Pujiang County, Zhejiang Province, was near the art centers of Hangzhou and Shanghai. As a precocious youngster, he displayed a creative talent that impressed his artist relatives. But his first formal training came at Liu Haisu's Shanghai academy, which he entered in 1921 as one of its earliest students. His instruction was in Western techniques. "I painted day and night," he recalled, "I learned oil, water color, and charcoal. I got the foundation of painting from that school." Zhang largely trained himself, however, in techniques of Chinese brush painting and the well-established Chinese genre of birds and flowers, for which he later became most well known.[7]

After graduation, Zhang became a practicing artist and instructor, and he taught brush painting at various schools in China, including 10 years beginning in 1930 at the National Central University in Nanjing, then the national capital. The dean of the art department, Li Yishi (1886–1942), a European-trained oil painter, completed a quick sketch of Zhang one day (see Figure 1) that captures the likeness of the young artist. But it also reflects the then-dominant Western-influenced artistic temperament at that important institution through its suggestions of direct observation of the model and use of shading to create an impression of three-dimensionality. (Zhang's inscription on the sketch, added in 1952, reads in part, "In the fall of that year, on a fine day with clear sky and crisp air, Mr. Li invited me to go to Jiming Temple [Cry of



2. Zhang Shuqi, *Messengers of Peace* (also known as *A Hundred Doves*), 1940. Ink and color on silk mounted on paper, 64 × 140 in. Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, NY.

the Cock] for tea and a chat. Mr. Li drew this portrait of me . . . and captured me not only in appearance but also in spirit in just a few minutes.")

Zhang and his contemporaries responded to China's political and cultural crisis in different ways. Some, such as Liu Haisu and Li Yishi, embraced Western oil painting; others such as Zhang sought to invigorate traditional Chinese painting and develop an updated, distinctive national style. His friends and associates came to include such leading artists as Fu Baoshi, Xu Beihong, Pan Tianshou, Wu Fuzhi, Zhao Shao'ang, Qi Baishi, Gao Jianfu, and Zhang Daqian. Zhang mastered the use of the Chinese brush but applied its use in compositions that reflected his Western art study. To the eyes of most contemporary observers, his work, employing the so-called boneless style of freehand ink painting technique, fell clearly in the tradition of nineteenth-century Chinese ink painters such as Ren Bonian and Wu Changshuo. At the same time, the influence of his foundation in Western techniques is clearly visible, and Chinese art commentators would sometimes compare Zhang to Van Gogh, Jean Francois Millet, and other European artists.[8]

Zhang's career developed rapidly in the 1930s, with his work included in exhibitions of contemporary Chinese painting that traveled to Paris, Berlin, and Moscow.[9] His painting also came to the attention of Chinese political elites (both Communist and Nationalist), and in 1940 the Ministry of Education asked him to complete a large composition for the occasion of Roosevelt's election to a third presidential term. As Japanese bombs fell on Chongqing, the wartime capital and Zhang's new residence, he completed his monumental *Messengers of Peace*, also known as *A Hundred Doves* (Figure 2). The president of the relocated National Central University, Luo Jialun, and the Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek added inscriptions. A few days before

Christmas 1940, Zhang formally presented the painting to the United States ambassador to China, Nelson T. Johnson, who forwarded it to the White House.

The painting was a good choice: it appeared to be within Chinese tradition but would appeal to American audiences. The rendering of the birds was realistic and lively, the color vibrant, and the brush strokes bold and energetic. The composition contained a Western perspective, which Johnson, a leading China specialist, specifically noted in his cover letter to Roosevelt. Conveying the sentiment as well as the energy of the painting, Johnson reported that the artist "desired to make a picture which would be symbolic of the position which the President of the United States holds in the present world situation and after choosing the dove spent three weeks working out the composition." Johnson explained: "Then in one day he painted the first fifty doves. Later others were added until he had painted 97. The last three added to make up the hundred are the dove at the extreme left, the white one in the center and the one faintly seen at the far distance coming from behind the foliage." For this painting, Zhang used gouache as well as Chinese wet colors, as he regularly did in his work.[10]

Messengers of Peace was said to have graced the White House after its acceptance, and it later was displayed in the exhibition hall of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park, New York, where it is now permanently held. The Ferargil Galleries in New York City exhibited it in 1942. Numerous newspapers, books, and periodicals reproduced the image, which became famous in the United States; to this day it is also celebrated in China.[11]

Zhang followed the painting to the United States, arriving in the fall of 1941. Traveling on a diplomatic passport with Chinese government financial support, he was presented as China's "ambassador of art and goodwill." His mission was to introduce Chinese culture to the American people and promote friendship in what quickly became a common cause after Japan's December 7 attack on Pearl Harbor. Unable to return to China, Zhang spent the next five years in the United States frenetically advancing cultural diplomacy.

He had brought 400 of his own paintings with him, but also continued to paint actively in America. He sold many of his works and participated in events to raise money for United China Relief, the non-government organization that rallied Americans to support the Chinese people during the war. Zhang participated in group shows of contemporary Chinese painting, such as a 1943 exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. And he held numerous large one-artist shows in museums throughout the country, including several at the de Young in San Francisco, the Seattle Art Museum, the Chicago Art Institute, the Nelson Gallery in Kansas City, Baltimore Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and

the Ontario Museum in Toronto. He exhibited at galleries and gave talks at clubs, civic organizations, and universities from Portland to Chicago to Washington, DC. Museums and collectors, such as Henry Luce, purchased his paintings. The writers Pearl Buck and Lin Yutang, the philosopher Hu Shih, and other specialists in Chinese life and culture in America admired his work. At his shows, his public demonstrations of his painting attracted large audiences of spectators who saw for the first time what Chinese brush painting was all about. Zhang returned to China after the end of World War II and then came back to the United States in 1949. He opened a studio a block away from the California College of Arts and Crafts and resided in the Oakland hills until his early death in 1957.[12]

Space does not allow a full discussion of Zhang Shuqi's work as it evolved in the conditions of life in the United States other than to present a few observations. Zhang was a serious artist who constantly studied both Chinese and Western art texts and paintings. Sometime in the early 1940s when he was in America, for example, he explored using black paper and board, which was highly unusual in the Chinese art tradition. Some of the resulting images seemed to invoke the work of John La Farge from the 1860s. La Farge had completed a composition of a water lily against a dark background after studying Japanese brush painting, and he might have inspired Zhang, who completed a similar composition and then reproduced it as a widely circulated note card in the 1940s. In China, Zhang had also become known for his "whiteism," the liberal use of white pigment, which was untraditional in Chinese painting, and he continued using white ink for his painting and even calligraphy, recalling Mark Tobey's "white writing."[13] One also wonders about possible conversations between the work of Morris Graves and Chinese bird-and-flower artists such as Zhang. In the early 1940s, Zhang exhibited his pictures and performed demonstrations of his technique at the Seattle Art Museum, which purchased his paintings for its collection and where Graves worked for a time.

Zhang never broke with representational painting—he was technically so skillful with the Chinese brush and steeped in Chinese naturalism that Western notions of abstraction never persuaded him to abandon his approach. But his work clearly evolved in the United States, and we can only speculate as to the influences that played on him.

Take, for example, one of his compositions completed on a screen, one of the traditional supports for Chinese painting (Figure 3). Brightly colored sunflowers evoke Van Gogh, of course, but Zhang also employs the vigorous use of black ink calligraphic brush strokes. The rendering of the flowers, in contrast, is accomplished



3. Zhang Shuqi, *Sunflowers*, 1952. Chang family collection.

with thick, layered pigment that may recall the impasto of western oil paints. He completed this in the United States and certainly intended it to stay in America. Other works display what he considered to be the hallmark of Chinese artwork, "rhythmic vitality" or *sheng dong*, but perhaps with even greater force, color, and abstraction than what he completed in China. He experimented with new ways to apply his paints, such as the use of kitchen and natural sponges. He sketched with ink pens and wax crayons. He worked on American watercolor cardboard, cut in dimensions for Western wood framing. He even painted on ceramics, such as tiles and lamp stands. We also see a move toward simplification, an effort to find essential formal elements, and new subject matter from the California natural and physical landscape, which he loved. He added California quail, redwood trees, and Sierra pines (Figure 4), along with Yosemite and Carmel, to his expanding subject repertoire.[14]

Although Zhang considered himself to be in the tradition of Chinese classical masters, he fully embraced modern technologies of reproduction and publicity. In China, he had produced note cards of his work, indicating his appreciation of the commercial potential that machine printing offered. Stranded in the United States during the war, he took the opportunity to start a business on a larger scale. He reproduced his work as fine stationery, lithographs, note cards, Christmas cards, and even as decorative items such as wallpaper, placemats, and tallies for scoring the card game of bridge (which obsessed him), as well as table napkins and paper table cover-



4. Zhang Shuqi, "*Lone Cypress*," ca. 1955. Chang family collection.

ings. These reproductions sold well throughout the country and internationally, in curio stores and in fine homeware emporiums. They were marketed from the 1940s through the 1970s, circulating to tens of thousands of consumers. Zhang also authored a richly illustrated book that offered instruction on Chinese painting and its techniques, including brush use and composition. Viking Press published an English translation of the book in 1960 under the title *Painting in the Chinese Manner*, recognizing that it, with the writings of Chiang Yee, Zhang's good friend, was one of the first treatises on Chinese painting in America by an actual practitioner of the art form.[15]

Another modern dimension of the presentation of his art was the live demonstration. It is unclear when Chinese painters began to offer these performances, which became more common in the latter half of the twentieth century, but we know that Liu Haisu gave public demonstrations when he toured Europe in the 1930s.[16] Within China, there was no tradition of painting in public. Live demonstrations were completely unknown, though when artists socialized they could paint with one another in friendship, often collaborating on compositions over wine or a repast. Zhang himself did so in his own homes. But in the United States, Zhang quickly added personal appearances and painting demonstrations to his exhibitions. Widely advertised, these events attracted great crowds who watched in rapt and astonished attention as he produced complicated compositions within a matter of minutes.



ART

CHINESE PAINTING

Professor Chang shows how he does it in eight minutes flat

The pictures on these pages were posed specially for LIFE by one of China's greatest painters, Professor Chang Shu-Chi of the National Central University of Chungking. Here he shows how he turns out one of his Chinese masterpieces in exactly eight minutes. In picture below he starts the painting at 3:30. At right he holds finished painting at 3:38.

Speed is only part of Artist Chang's technique. It took him 31 years to perfect his art to the point where every brush stroke is a vitally important step toward building a finished painting. Because these pictures are painted on silk with watercolor and lines cannot be erased, the greatest problem is to see that every minute stroke is done just right. If one little brush line goes wrong the whole picture is ruined and must be begun all over again.

Chang Shu-Chi is now in the U.S. to raise money with his pictures for China Relief. To date he has sold more than $15,000 worth of paintings like the one on this page, at prices ranging from $25 to $500.

START Exactly at 3:30 (*note clock*) artist wets brush with right amount of water, begins painting.

Finished picture of birds on a branch of wisteria is shown completed by Professor Chang Shu-Chi exactly eight minutes after he began it. Chang first started painting at age of 9. Now at 40 he is one of China's most honored artists.

1 MINUTE With movements so fast camera does not clearly show hand, birds begin to appear.

2 MINUTES The birds now are all done and the artist begins swift painting of wisteria.

3 MINUTES Artist picks up fresh brush to paint green leaves to contrast with blossoms.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE 65

Chinese Painting (continued)

4 MINUTES Still another brush is used to paint branches beneath the birds. Claws of birds have already been drawn to clutch the branch.

5 MINUTES Deep tones are added to blossoms to give them variety of color and feeling of sunlight. The cups hold water to moisten brushes.

FINISH In the last three minutes Artist Chang adds a few final strokes, then takes up a heavier brush to write his signature in Chinese characters.

5. "Chinese Painting: Professor Chang shows how he does it in eight minutes flat," *Life* magazine, 15 March 1943, 65–66.

They were performances in every sense of the word with expectant and hushed audiences, a stage (the painting table), a charismatic figure who spoke in English with an unfamiliar inflection, and action that could not be recaptured. Art became a moment and movement, not just an object. Zhang became known for his extraordinary technical skill and speed, which *Life* magazine featured in a 1943 article about him (Figure 5), complete with photos of his minute-by-minute progress on a painting as a clock indicated the passing time. As the title of the *Life* photo spread declared, "Chinese Painting: Professor Chang shows how he does it in eight minutes flat." Technical speed impressed the magazine's editors, in good American style, but they were oblivious to the creative and expressive possibilities of the rapid strokes that many traditionally appreciated in Chinese painting.[17]

Many things intrigued his American audiences at the demonstrations, including his unusual handling of materials, especially the brush, the application of paints, and his composition. Zhang's rendering of simple scenes of natural beauty captivated; his birds and flowers created an "alternative reality" to the stresses of war and

of daily life.[18] But there was something more, which critical observers at the time noted, implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, contrasting his work with traditional Western approaches to painting. This was the ability of the art to capture expressive gesture resulting from the interplay of trained, physical effort and contingency. Here is what Alfred Frankenstein, the well-known art critic of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, wrote in 1943 after attending one of these demonstrations:

> *Watching Chang at work is like hearing [Jascha] Heifetz play the fiddle; i.e., the results of the virtuosity are directly and immediately apparent as they seldom are in watching a Western painter at his easel. The parallel goes further in that, with Chang, one has a sense of manual dexterity trained to the last degree of subtle muscular control. He has a spiccato and a legato, he has mastered harmonics in double stops, and the right and left hand pizzicato as well. Furthermore a painting by Chang is and has to be a one-sitting performance. He can no more stop and knock off and come back than Heifetz can stop and knock off while playing the Brahms concerto in public. He works very wet, and he works entirely without model, drawing a vast stock of motifs out of memorized observation and tradition. And until you see him you do not know what a subtle, plastic and varied instrument a Chinese brush can be.*[19]

Other writers also spoke of Zhang's performances as magical and full of spirit, spontaneity, and quiet emotion. The San Francisco artist and writer John Garth witnessed Zhang at the de Young Museum and emphasized the fluid physicality of his act of painting: "The way in which Professor Chang moves his brush through its series of graceful curves, swirls and touches as the painting steadily evolves beneath his handsome hand reminds the watcher, oddly enough, of the apparent free but exactly controlled execution of a difficult dance routine by some master or mistress of the classic ballet." In a dig at some of his fellow American artists, Garth also complimented Zhang for his "calm grace of execution unknown to the western modern, who nowadays appears always to have tortured the paint on to his canvas in a frantic agony of spiritual doubt and indecision."[20]

As the *Life* photo-essay suggests, there is another technology of dissemination that we need to consider: the technology of filmic production—that is, still and moving photography. Zhang was keen on both. In China, he used photos to record his work for his own reference and for publicity. He had individual pieces photographed, as well as his exhibitions and even his gifting of *Messengers of Peace*. He understood the power of promotion and employed professional photographers to record his time in the United States and create portfolios of himself and his performances



6. Zhang Shuqi presents a live demonstration of his painting technique in Chicago, 1943. Zhang Shuqi Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, California.

(Figure 6). In these portraits, he could be the gowned master draped in the silk of a Chinese scholar with brush in hand, or the modern international celebrity sporting a sharp, tailored wool suit, with tie, wingtips, and a casually held cigarette.

In the 1940s his work became the subject of motion picture documentaries, early examples of films showing an artist at work. His unfamiliar style, still exotic for American audiences, and his ability to paint in an energetic and intriguing way were perfect for the motion picture. Through these captivating documentaries, we can still see Zhang at work today, somewhat as his museum demonstration audiences did more than 60 years ago.

One of these films was made in 1943, a joint production of the Harmon Foundation, which is best known for supporting African American artists, and the China Institute in America, an organization that promoted the understanding of Chinese culture. American philosopher-educator John Dewey and Hu Shih, the famous Chinese intellectual, helped found the Institute in New York in 1926. The film's producer was Wango Weng, an art scholar and connoisseur who also narrated the documentary.[21] Several things about the film stand out. One is its use of Zhang's art as a way of introducing Chinese painting to an uninitiated, general American audience. In attempting to instruct, it focuses on matters that were unusual to audiences at the time: the rhythmic power of Chinese brush strokes, the effort to present nature

from the mind and not from an established model, the rigorous training, and the idea of temporality in the act of painting. The film, which shows Zhang painting and completing compositions, introduces the viewer to central elements of Chinese artistic production: the sequence of brush strokes, their irretrievability, their interconnectedness and contingency, and the stylized representation of an identifiable subject. Within minutes, Zhang transforms a blank void into what a virtual reality of flowers, leaves, birds, insects, and colors, visualizing a moment in imagined time. The narrator has to remind an incredulous viewer that the act of creation was occurring in "real time," not edited or mechanically quickened visually.[22]

Zhang could be presented as the prototypical Chinese artist carrying on some timeless tradition, but his actual work was a subtle interpolation within strongly held cultural assumptions. His own identity when he was alive was elusive and not transparent. Today it is still a challenge to attempt to interpret his life and work. Zhang helped to bring Chinese painting to America. He brought not just paintings as objects—which museums had long held, elite patrons admired, and scholars had studied. Under the exigencies of global conflict, he brought Chinese painting as event, as activity, and as something accessible to a broad spectrum of Americans. Technologies, market conditions, and international politics created the occasion. Artistic currents in America soon came to embrace their own versions of the gesture, the spontaneous, and the display of psychic energy. Zhang's personal style of art fit the times and opportunities.

Zhang was unique, but he was also representative. As with many of his Chinese contemporaries, he sought to reinvigorate Chinese painting while also wanting to make an impact on America and advance the internationalization of art. In China, the line between the intellectual and artistic world, on the one hand, and the political world, on the other, has been more permeable than in the West. Zhang's career was similar: his art and activity in America complemented political diplomacy to be sure, but he also helped to negotiate new, more porous boundaries between art in China and America. His was also a "diplomacy of art."

In international relations, "diplomacy" broadly refers to the formal interaction of states, while the term "art of diplomacy" honors the creative effort required to move beyond established positions and to forge new relationships. And so it is with the "diplomacy of art." Within the world of art, references are made to media, to various ways to present and articulate. But art is itself a medium, a platform that can serve to advance dialogue across various sorts of boundaries rooted in traditions, beliefs, social practices, geographies, times, and values. Art is an avenue of cultural exchange and interaction. And specific works of art can themselves embody those very conversations, with the creation of the new, unexpected, and arresting.

Zhang hoped to see the end of the East–West artistic divide, a trope that dominated the world he inhabited, and he was encouraged by the warm reception he received here and the art that he saw in America. Artists from Asia were learning from the West, he observed in the 1940s, and "occidental artists are beginning to pay attention to design by the mind much more than before"—something he believed Chinese artists had done all along. All this inspired him to "foretell a union between the East and the West." He took pride in his contributions to East–West artistic interaction and the diplomacy of art.[23]

Notes

1. For new perspectives on East–West artistic interaction, see Gordon H. Chang, Mark Dean Johnson, and Paul J. Karlstrom, eds., *Asian American Art: A History, 1850–1970* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008); Alexandra Munroe, *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2009); and Jeffrey Wechsler, ed., *Asian Traditions/Modern Expressions: Asian American Artists and Abstraction, 1945–1970* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997). On Lai Yong, see Chang, et al., *Asian American Art*, 469–79.

2. The author of this essay is the son of the artist and draws from personal papers in the family collection for some of the source material. Zhang Shuqi's name is also rendered as Shu-chi Chang, which is how he was commonly known in America during his lifetime. The Hoover Institution Archives holds the Zhang Shuqi papers.

3. See Warren I. Cohen, *East Asian Art and American Culture: A Study in International Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 1–11, 30–32; Nathan Dunn, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Collection in Philadelphia: With Miscellaneous Remarks Upon the Manners, Customs, Trade, and Government of the Celestial Empire* (Philadelphia, 1839), 77; and Jonathan Goldstein, *Philadelphia and the China Trade, 1682–1846: Commercial, Cultural, and Attitudinal Effects* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978), 74, 77–79. In 1832, Dunn also constructed a manor on his New Jersey estate with Chinese architectural motifs, a practice common among the elite in these years. The structure still stands in Mt. Holly.

4. John R. Peters Jr., *Miscellaneous Remarks upon the Government, History, Religions, Literature, Agriculture, Arts, Trades, Manners, and Customs of the Chinese: As suggested by an examination of the articles comprising the Chinese Museum* (Philadelphia: G. B. Zieber & Co., 1847), quotes at 192–93.

5. Cohen, *East Asian Art*, 31.

6. Most scholarship on Liu Haisu is unavailable in English, but images and basic biographies may be found online. In Shanghai, the Liu Haisu Art Museum was opened in 1995 to house works he donated and to display modern Chinese art.

7. Zhang Shuqi, "The Story of My Painting Life," unpublished manuscript, ca. 1944, Chang Family collection.

8. See *Yifeng* (Art Wind) 3, no. 11 (1935): the entire issue is devoted to Zhang's work.

9. Julie F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, eds. *Chinese Painting on the Eve of the Communist Revolution: Chang Shu-chi and his Collection* (Stanford, CA: Cantor Center for Visual Arts, Stanford University, 2006), 5–6.

10. The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum holds documentation related to the gifting of the painting and some of its subsequent history in the Roosevelt administration. See Wendell A. Parks to Gordon H. Chang, November 13, 1997. Johnson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 24 December 1940. Chang Family collection.

11. See, for example, *Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe* [Shanghai People's Fine Art Publishing House], *Zhang Shuqi baigetu* ['Zhang Shuqi's One Hundred doves'] (Shanghai, 1997); and Hong Tuan, *Zhang Shuqi* (Hubei: Hubei meishu chubanshe [Hubei Fine Arts Publishing House], 2005).

12. *An Exhibition of Modern Chinese Paintings* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1943), with introductions by Hu Shih, Kinn-Wei Shaw, Lin Yutang, and Alan Priest.

13. The La Farge painting is *The Last Waterlilies*, an 1862 oil in the collection of the Colby College Museum of Art. In 1932, Zhang and four Chinese artist friends founded the *Baishe* (White Society), which explored the use of white in painting.

14. Zhang also became active in American professional circles, including the Western Society of Artists. In 1956, he won the top award in its annual competition. He was a member of the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley.

15. Shu-chi Chang, *Painting in the Chinese Manner* (New York: Viking Press, 1960). In the book, Zhang devotes most attention to what can be called the techniques and formal qualities of Chinese painting rather than its philosophy and aesthetics. He wrote the book in Chinese, with the Chinese title "Shuqi's painting method." It was translated by his wife, who provided the English title. The Harvard University Press published a third revised edition of Chiang Yee's *Chinese calligraphy: An Introduction to its Aesthetic and Technique* (first published in London) in 1973.

16. *The Studio*, vol. 109 (1935): 50, includes a photograph of Liu Haisu painting in public at the New Burlington Galleries in London. It accompanies an article by him entitled "Aims of the Chinese Painters."

17. "Chinese Painting: Professor Chang shows how he does it in eight minutes flat," *Life*, 15 March 1943, 65–66. The ideal of speed in Chinese painting is discussed in James Cahill, "Quickness and Spontaneity in Chinese Painting: The Ups and Downs of an Ideal," in his *Three Alternative Histories of Chinese Painting* (Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, 1988), 70–99.

18. On "alternative realities," see Richard Vinograd, "Temporalities in Early Twentieth Century Chinese Painting," in Andrews and Shen, eds., *Chinese Painting*, 1–2.

19. Alfred Frankenstein "The Chinese Send Us Chang Shu-chi," *San Francisco Chronicle,* November 14, 1943, "This World," 12.

20. John Garth, "The Art World," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 November 1943. Among the other Asia-trained artists who came to the United States in the first half of the twentieth century are Chiura Obata, Chiang Yee, Dong Kingman, and Paul Horiuchi. Zhang was especially close to Chiang Yee, another pioneer in introducing Chinese arts to America.

21. In 2007, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston presented an exhibition of the Weng family's painting collection, *Through Six Generations: The Weng Collection of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy*. At least one other film showing Zhang painting was made, "A Chinese Artist: The Method and Technique of Chang Shu-chi"; it was produced by Leslie P. Thatcher for the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology in 1942.

22. A portion of this 10-minute-long film may be found at www.americanart.si.edu/research/symposia/2009/webcast/.

23. Zhang Shuqi, "On Occidental and Oriental Painting," unpublished manuscript, ca. 1943, Chang Family collection.