

WU GUANZHONG'S LANDSCAPE PAINTING AS A RESPONSE TO THE ART POLICIES OF SOCIALIST CHINA

WENWEN LIU

Victoria University of Wellington

Abstract

Wu Guanzhong 吳冠中 (1919-2010) is a modern Chinese artist best known for his ink painting since the 1980s, whose style can be described as modernist informed by Chinese aesthetics. Wu's trajectory across diverse artistic styles and movements won him a considerable reputation. After returning to China from Paris in 1950, Wu shelved figure painting for landscape painting under the pressure of conforming to the doctrine of socialist realism. Subsequently, he took advantage of the newly launched art policies, such as the Hundred Flower campaign, to practise "drawing from life" (*xiesheng*) around China. Summoned back to Beijing from the countryside during the Cultural Revolution for a painting commission, Wu was influenced by fellow artists to change from oil paint to Chinese ink and finally found his personal artistic style.

This article focuses on how Wu's artistic practice developed and matured in socialist China during the period from the 1950s to the 1970s. Each artistic transition was a response to a significant change in the national art policy or events in the larger political environment. More important, during each transition, Wu learned to inject particular elements of traditional Chinese art into his landscape practice. Wu engaged in a process to synthesise Western modernist vocabulary with Chinese aesthetics, situating his art advocacy within a changeable political and artistic environment. The process reflects the syncretic nature of both his own art and Chinese art on a wider front at that moment, responding to the ambivalent needs of the socialist ideology in the early days of the People's Republic of China.

Introduction

An understanding of Wu Guanzhong should begin with an introduction to his artistic journey in the early period of his career. To a large extent, from 1936 to 1942, the National Hangzhou School of Art (the Hangzhou Academy hereafter) can be seen as the cradle that nurtured his artistic talents and endowed him with a fundamental knowledge of both Western modernist painting and classical Chinese painting. Wu's initial passion about art leaned more towards oil painting in a modernist style. However, thanks to Pan Tianshou's (1897-1971) influence, he became deeply attracted to Chinese ink masters' work, particularly when he found it expressively and emotionally effective. During Wu's study in the Hangzhou School, he conceived the idea of synthesising Chinese painting with Western modernist art styles. This idea was,

in turn, due to his great appreciation of Lin Fengmian's (1900-1991) art principles. Like many other Chinese art students who acquired Western painting techniques and know-how overseas in the first half of the twentieth century, the best way to rejuvenate Chinese painting was always a priority for Wu.

Further education at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where Wu studied in 1947-1950, provided him with the opportunity to explore the modernist art vocabulary. During the process he benefited from Jean Souverbie's (1891-1981) art theories about "beauty" and "prettiness" and the prioritising of formal considerations over detailed delineation. Wu was also deeply influenced by Maurice Utrillo's (1883-1955) cityscape paintings and his darkly sorrowful emotions, expressed through the use of perspective and colour. However, all these experiences could not keep Wu in Paris, but only confirmed his belief that art had to be rooted in the mother culture. In the end, the aspiring young artist decided to return to the newly-founded socialist China, embracing the hope that he could devote his command of Western modernist art to the benefit of his future career under the rule of the socialist ideology.

Socialist Realism as Context

After the founding of the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC), the Chinese Community Party (CCP) needed to establish a new art genre. Due to its ideological similarity with the Soviet Union, the new art of socialist China was to a large extent adopted from Soviet socialist realism. This style has been characterised as "a Russian version of the 19th Century academic painting that was popular in Paris salons." (Cohen 1987:18) The Russian version, which was also called Grand Manner Painting, was famous for depicting heroic figures from history or from Christianity in a style which was technically realist yet classically idealistic in spirit. Soviet socialist realism adopted such principles and techniques, merely replacing biblical subjects with the new heroes that met Socialist values. However, the CCP demanded the establishment of a uniquely Chinese socialist realist art, not just a copycat of the Soviet version. This was reflected in Mao Zedong's (1893-1976) "Speech at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art" (Zai yanan wenyi zuotanhui shang de jianghua) in May 1942. Here Mao specifically referred to the selective importation of realist art: "Internationally, the good experience of foreign countries, especially Soviet experience, can also serve to guide us." However, he warned that "uncritical transplantation or copying from the ancients and foreigners is the most sterile and harmful dogmatism in literature and art." (Denton 1996: 470-471)

Before we discuss Wu Guanzong in detail, it is necessary to set the scene and examine the significant impact of Xu Behong (1895-1953) on Chinese art. During the progress of exploring Chinese socialist realist art, Xu's style proved to be compatible with, and indeed highly influential on, the Party's principles. He advocated art that was academic in style with realistic techniques. Xu's own student experience at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, in the 1920, deeply influenced his advocacy of academism and realism. Learning under Pierre Dagnan-Bouveret (1852-1929, a leading figure of the naturalist school), Xu gained a close understanding of verisimilitude in European academic art, which in turn he constantly emphasised in his own artistic career.

Xu's art was also favoured in socialist China due to his endeavour to apply his academic realist painting technique to appropriate themes from traditional Chinese culture to his academic realist painting. Take Xu's painting *The Foolish Man Moving the Mountain* (Yugong yishan, 1940) for instance. Following a well-known Chinese fable, Xu's *The Foolish Man Moving the Mountain* depicted a group of villagers endeavouring to move a mountain that got in their way under the leadership of "the foolish man". The was interpreted in China as a tribute to someone who could take the lead of his people and overcome the difficulties facing them. Xu's realist style provided a great opportunity to demonstrate his strength at figure painting. The villagers' tense muscles were faithfully depicted to demonstrate a dynamism, showing their hard work in moving the mountain. At the time of the painting, China was at war with Japan. *The Foolish Man Moving the Mountain* conveys a clear propagandising purpose to persuade Chinese people that they were capable of overcoming any obstacles in their way. This familiar and ancient folktale made its positive implications easily understood and the painting was warmly received by Chinese audiences. Indeed, it has been regarded as the model of Chinese socialist realism, its optimistic theme coming from traditional culture and its realist techniques being forceful enough to touch many viewers.

Meanwhile, Xu had always had a low opinion of French avant-garde art. In his 1929 article "Huo" (Perplexed), he made crystal clear his contempt for French modernists, e.g. Edouard Manet, Auguste Renoir, Paul Cézanne and Henri Matisse, who were famous for expressing their free and emotional styles. Xu respectively called their work "mediocre", "vulgar", "superficial", and "inferior". In Xu's opinion, one could finish two paintings like theirs in an hour. (Xu, 1994:93) Since Xu gained the apex of political power as the president of the Chinese Artists' Association in Beijing (CAA) in 1949, and head of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing (CAFA) in 1950, he was able to strongly promote academic realism and correspondingly diminish the influence of avant-garde art. Xu rearranged the training duration and the wider curriculum in the CAFA, requiring all students to study "sketching" (*sumiao*) for the first two years and thus master realist painting techniques, regardless of whether they were majoring in Western or Chinese painting.

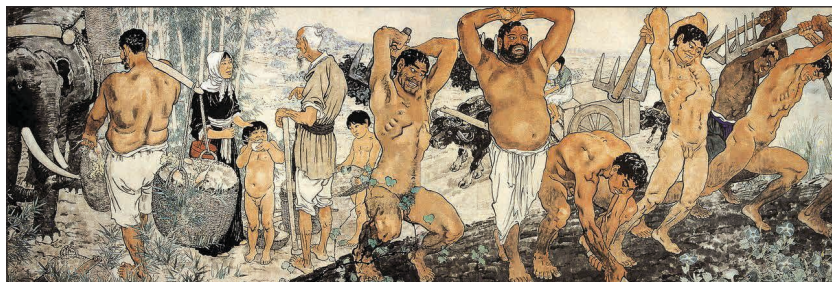


Figure 1: Xu Beihong, *The Foolish Man Moving the Mountain*, 1940, ink on paper. 144cm x 421cm, Xu Beihong Memory Hall, Beijing.

As a consequence of Xu's huge, defining impact on official art, Beijing was not Wu Guanzhong's chosen destination when he returned to China in 1950. He planned to teach in the Hangzhou Academy, where he fondly remembered his time there as a student. However, his plans were changed by an encounter in Beijing with Dong Xiwen, his fellow student at Hangzhou. Dong was interested in Wu's Parisian figure paintings and borrowed several, saying that he wanted to "carefully read them". After several days he came back with not only Wu's paintings but also a job offer for his friend as a lecturer in the CAFA. Dong took the paintings he had borrowed from Wu to be examined by the Communist cadres in the CAFA. The committee had approved of them and Wu was therefore employed by the academy. He was understandably touched by Dong's considerate help behind the scene and without his knowledge. After a thorough discussion with Dong, Wu decided to take up the offer and settle down in Beijing. (Wu, 2004:24)

Wu had his reservations about going to work in the CAFA. He was well aware of Xu Beihong's negativity about the French avant-garde and was also worried whether his advocacy of expressive modernist art would be acceptable under Xu's leadership. Dong rapidly dispelled Wu's concern, explaining the authority of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP hereafter) in the academy:

To be honest, Mr. Xu just has his position (as president of the academy) but not the autocratic political power. Nowadays it is the Communist Party that controls both the macro political principles and the micro administrative arrangements. No one is taking autocratic charge anymore. (Wu, 2004:24)

Dong's persuasion indicated that the Party would interfere whenever there were different opinions between individuals. This paradoxically gave Wu the hope that a variety of art philosophies could coexist.

Not surprisingly, however, Wu's art advocacy was soon marginalised under the dominance of socialist realism. Wu was given the task of teaching one of the *sumiao* class in the CAFA, in which he felt dissatisfied with the students' emphasis on realist techniques. In Wu's opinion, these students were "emotionless" (*wuqingwuyi*) when they were drawing life cast busts. In addition, Wu was shocked to realise that none of his students had heard of such widely-known European modernists as Utrillo and Amedeo Modigliani. Meanwhile, Wu found himself ignorant of the Russian realist Ilya Yefimovich Repin (1844-1930), an iconic figure in the Soviet Union. Aspiring to apply what he had acquired in Paris to China, Wu decided to teach the students in a different way. He "evoked their individual sensitivity to art, and encouraged different aesthetic approaches." However, Wu's encouragement of aesthetic exploration and self-expression was rejected by some students. Indeed, his initial efforts to introduce modernist art to Chinese students appeared to have failed. (Wu 2004:27)

Wu's art would have taken a completely different trajectory, had he been able to adjust his artistic outlook like his friend Dong Xiwen. Dong had also studied oil painting at the Hangzhou Academy, but successfully adapted his art to a style that satisfied the Communist cadres (Andrews 1995: 90-94). No example of this is better

than Dong's oil painting *The Founding of the Nation* (Kaiguo dadian, 1952-1953). This depicts the event at which Mao stands in Tiananmen Square, proclaiming the establishment of the PRC. To his left, a group of politically significant figures stand behind him. To his right side is the expansive Tiananmen Square itself, where large, patriotic crowds stand in phalanxes, holding banners and red flags. Dong applied strident colours, e.g. red, yellow and blue to fill the large-scale canvas (230 cm × 400 cm), which would have reminded Chinese audiences of their familiar, colourful folk art, clearly conveying a rejoicing, festival-like atmosphere. As for the composition itself, Mao's position in relation to the perspective of the figures standing behind him is obvious. The vanishing point is the remote Zhengyangmen gate tower in the background to the right of the painting, perpendicular to the line between Mao and his supporters. This kind of pictorial structure is often found in European history painting. (Andrews 1995:81) *The Founding of the Nation* is a good representation of a socialist artist's endeavour to combine Western painting techniques with Chinese aesthetics. It received great praise from Mao himself and subsequently secured its place in the canon of Chinese socialist realism.

Wu himself endeavoured to create paintings which could be compatible with socialist realism and meanwhile embody his artistic style. The only depiction of a figure by Wu that can be traced from the period 1950-1953 is his drawing *Figure (Renti, 1951)*. Here Wu endeavoured to manifest realist techniques that were acceptable to



Figure 2: Dong Xiwen, *The Founding of the Nation*, oil on canvas, 1972. 229cm × 400cm. Museum of Chinese Revolutionary History.¹

1 The illustration used is the newest version of the painting created in 1972 by Zhao Yu and Jin Shangyi, who imitated Dong's work in 1952-1953, considering Dong's original work is unavailable. More information of the various versions of the painting *The Founding of the Nation*, see Andrews, 75-86.



Figure 3: Wu Guanzhong, *Figure*, sketch, 1951, 38 x 59cm, private collection.

socialist ideology. The appropriate body ratio and the shape of the muscles reveal the artist's precise observation of the model, as well as his capability of delineating them on paper. One can also see the lack of enthusiasm through the realist-style depiction. In spite of his endeavours, Wu's art was still criticised as "formalist" (*xingshi zhuyi*) and "smearing the image of peasants, soldiers, and factory workers" (*chouhua gongnongbing*).² His aesthetic outlook was denigrated as "Capitalist art" (*zichanjieji wenyi*). Wu later recalled this isolation, which he likened to being blocked by a "river", with him and his art advocacy on one bank, and the CCP cadres and Chinese people on the other. (Wu 2004:27)

² In the socialist context, the term *xingshizhuyi* was used to malign artistic expression that tended to emphasize form over content or art for art's sake.

A More Relaxed Political Environment and the *Xiesheng*

Apart from Xu Beihong, Jiang Feng (1910-1982) was another figure that played a significant role in constructing Chinese socialist art. As an artist and bureaucrat, Jiang made considerable contribution to the politicisation of art after the founding of the PRC. Initially trained as a woodcut artist, Jiang paid great attention throughout his career to establishing new art genres that particularly suited the Chinese socialist revolution and regime. Jiang firmly believed in Communism and Socialism, and made persistent efforts to create art genres that served these political causes. As Julia Andrews commented, "Jiang Feng was an idealistic, courageous, and hard-working revolutionary. He was a man of great selflessness and personal integrity, committed to improving China and the world. He was largely consistent, even uncompromising, in his beliefs and actions and inevitably found himself in conflict with inconsistent party policies." (Andrews 1995:42) But any evaluation of Jiang's undertaking in the construction of the new Chinese art remains highly controversial. Jiang strongly promoted the subjects, styles and techniques appreciated by "the working masses", and rejected or modified any art genres that did not fit such criteria. French avant-garde art that emphasised self-expression and traditional Chinese painting which was considered as merely serving "the upper class", were condemned and excluded under Jiang's leadership as vice-president of the CAA since 1949. A good number of artists who advocated and practiced such genres, including Wu Guanzhong, were therefore required to reinvent themselves to better meet the need of socialist propaganda.

However, from the early 1950s, this strict 'party line' art policy changed, and was marked in a 1953 speech by Zhou Yang (1907-1989), the then vice-minister of the Propaganda Department, on developing the essence of Chinese cultural heritage. Zhou argued that there was inadequate emphasis and systematic study of Chinese national literary and artistic heritage since the May Fourth Movement in 1919. Arguing against negative opinions on Chinese traditional culture and arts, Zhou pointed out "this kind of attitude, when joined with a blind reverence for culture of the Western capitalist class, was a harmful influence on the subsequent development of new literature and art." Instead, Zhou suggested:

Organizing and researching the national artistic legacies should become focal points for the teaching and research of arts schools... first we must take the democratic and progressive aspects of our heritage and distinguish them from the feudal and backward parts, take the realistic parts and distinguish them from antirealistic parts... In national painting, for example, that which does not stress description of real life... must be opposed.³

Zhou's emphasis on the national literary and artistic heritage indicated a subtle turn in the CCP's art policy. Although his overall speech still followed the principle of

3 Zhou Yang, "Zai zhongguo wenxue yishu gongzuozhe dierci daibiaodahui shang de baogao" (Report on the second conference of representatives for Chinese workers of literature and art), September 24, 1953. See English translation in Andrews 1995: 120.

Jiang Feng's insistence on the politicisation of art, Zhou's call for more research on the "democratic and progressive" aspects of national culture heritage signified a relatively loosened environment in which certain art genres embodying Chinese artistic heritage might be accepted.

The Hundred Flowers Campaign (Shuangbai yundong, 1956) loosened up Jiang's art policy to a new level. The name of the campaign came from Mao's concluding remarks in a conference: "let a hundred flowers blossom, a hundred schools of thought contend". Subsequently Mao's words were developed to an official speech by Lu Dingyi (1906-1996, then president of the Propaganda Department). Lu embellished Mao's words into a new arts policy, which officially declared that socialist realism was not "the only method" for writers and artists to adopt:

Socialist realism, in our view, is the most fruitful creative method, but it is not the only method. Provided he sets out to meet the needs of the workers, peasants and soldiers, the writer can choose whatever method he thinks will best enable him to write well, and he can vie with others. As to subject matters, the Party has never set limit to this. It is not right to lay down such dicta as: write only about workers, peasants and soldiers, it stands to reason that we must praise the new society and positive people... So the choice of subject-matter in literature is extremely wide... As for questions relating to the specific characteristics of art and literature, the creation of the typical, and so on, they must be the subject of free discussion among writers and artists, letting them freely hammer out different opinions till they gradually reach agreement.⁴

Published in *The People's Daily* (Renmin ribao, the CCP's official newspaper) a few days later, Lu's speech based on Mao's words officially became a new art policy, the Hundred Flower campaign, as applied to the fields of art and literature. It declared the Party's encouragement of free creativity and meaningful discussion by intellectuals, writers and artists. Lu's speech was consistent with Zhou's talk given three years earlier, since they both referred to the significance of Chinese artistic heritage. But the Hundred Flowers campaign took a further step to reduce the artistic dependence on the Soviet socialist realism. As Ellen Johnson Laing stated, "Lu played down the socialist realism, spoke out strongly in favour of indigenous and national art forms, and warned against overreliance on the Soviet Union." (Laing 1989: 23) Under the circumstances, the art genres "indigenous" were not just tolerated but also functioned to counterbalance the influence from Soviet socialist realism. It is worth noting that the Hundred Flowers campaign was launched as Mao's intention to inject a certain level of freedom in the implementations of the Party's policies in the fields of literature and arts. However, it soon developed into the Anti-Rightist campaign for navigating and attacking enemies among the cadres. (Andrews 1995: 179-200)

4 Lu Dingyi, "Baihua qifang, baijia zhengming" (A hundred flowers blossom, a hundred schools of thought contend). Online source: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64186/66662/4493084.html>. Last access on 17 Jan 2019. See English translation in Laing, 1989: 23-24.

One response in art circles to the relaxed policy was the emergence of an outdoor practice of landscape painting – *xiesheng* (drawing from life). In the first half of 1954, a small group of artists in the CAFA, including Li Keran (1907-1989) and Zhang Ding (1917-2010), went out of their studios and travelled to Jiangnan area to paint the landscape. The intention of the *xiesheng* journey, as Li Keran and Zhang Ding proposed to the academy, was to follow Zhou Yang's 1953 speech and reform traditional Chinese landscape painting to make it more socialist and progressive. They aimed to reject "the uncritical continuation of traditional techniques" and "to improve Chinese landscape painting by synthesizing Western techniques with native ones." (Andrews 1995: 69-70) The *xiesheng* squad returned to Beijing five months later, and their products turned out to be a great success. The "reformed" landscape paintings were even favoured by some headstrong Party cadres such as Jiang Feng, who did not believe in the progressive aspect of Chinese ink painting in the first place.

One product is Zhang Ding's ink painting *Fuyang village* (Fuyang cuntu). The traditional houses, bush and willows indicate the artist's adoption of Chinese ink painting techniques. Meanwhile, one reads the painting from the fixed-point perspective, with the river in the foreground, the largest-scaled house in the middleground, and the row houses in the background accordingly. The fixed-point perspective testifies to the artist's borrowing from Western realism. Injecting realist techniques into the painting rejuvenates the image of an ordinary Jiangnan village. It fills the painting with such vitality that one could almost breathe the air and imagine oneself living there. The Chinese subject matter and the ink painting skills retain the Chinese aesthetics of the work, while Western painting techniques achieve a lifelike effect which makes audiences emotionally involved.



Figure 4: Zhang Ding, *Fuyang Village*, ink on paper, 1954. 34cm x 46cm. Private collection.

Xiesheng subsequently became popular in Chinese art circles, since it successfully implemented Zhou Yang's call for the conservation and development of national artistic heritage. Nowadays, *Xiesheng* is a term that is commonly used by Chinese landscape artists, but its connection with this is a relatively new construct. In classical Chinese, *Xiesheng* originally referred to flower-and-bird painting; here *sheng* means "living creatures in nature", rather than still-life or landscape painting. (Ho 2014: 27) The changed meaning occurred, as Yi Gu stated, when the term was adopted in Japanese art circles in the Edo period (1603-1867). In this context, *xiesheng* (pronounced *shasei* in Japanese) now conveyed the "vital force of an object, and sometimes even the practice of sketching of life." With Meiji modernisation (1868-1912), *shasei* took on a new layer of meaning, referring to the "drawing or sketching from life from real objects from Western languages into Japanese". (Gu 2009: 60) As Gu noted, the original connection of the term *xiesheng* with flower-and-bird painting had been neglected in the course of its assimilation into the Japanese art world. The phrase had been understood as representing the capture of the "force" of the painting object. Subsequently, as a consequence of Japanese intellectuals aiming to modernise their art, *xiesheng*, a term borrowed from classical Chinese art, was now used to mean an advanced painting technique which entailed the spirit of drawing from "real objects". In 1903, *xiesheng* as a modern painting concept was introduced to Chinese schools to train art teachers, with an emphasis on the faithful depiction of painting objects. As Gu pointed out, "In the 1910s, *xiesheng* as 'drawing from nature' became one of the most prominent art terms in the Republican China." (Gu 2009: 61) As such, the term *xiesheng* shifted its original definition from the flower-and-bird painting genre to a Western modern painting technique which emphasised faithful depiction of reality. The term indeed originated in classical Chinese art, but it became a modern neologism when it was resurrected in the Republican era.

Xiesheng was adopted at this time by art theorists who were both in favour of Western modernism and who advocated Chinese traditionalism. The Shanghai Academy of Art, for instance, used the term to broadcast its status as the artistic authority to impart authentic Western painting skills to China. It stressed how "drawing is the essence of Western style painting and *xiesheng* is the essence of drawing." (Gu 2009: 70) However, *xiesheng* referred more to the faithful perception of reality. It went hand in hand with the principle of the New Culture Movement, in which the scientific visualisation of the world was highly praised. (Gu 2009: 78-79) In other words, Chinese westernisers who advocated *xiesheng* as an advanced Western painting technique disseminated its meaning more as a counterpart of "realism" than anything close to expressive or experimental styles of art.

It was art theorists who interpreted *xiesheng* from the perspective of traditional Chinese painting that connected the term with the artist's expressiveness. Hu Peiheng (1892-1962) was one of the leading theorists who laid the foundation of theoretical connections between classical ink painting and the neologism *xiesheng*. In his 1921 treatise "Zhongguo shanshuihua xiesheng de wenti" (Issue of *xiesheng* in Chinese landscape painting), Hu argued that Chinese landscape painting in the Tang and Song

Dynasties already applied the *xiesheng* approach. He claimed that ancient painters, e.g. Wu Daozi (c. 685-758) and Fan Kuan (c. 950-1032) were actually at the vanguard of *xiesheng* due to their travels to the countryside and their endeavours to memorise the views they saw. (Hu 2017: 149-153) This is when, as Gu Yi noted, that *xiesheng* was discussed for the first time in terms of “painting by memory”, which is almost the opposite of “drawing from nature” as claimed by Chinese westernisers. (Gu 2009: 88)

Xiesheng as “painting landscapes by memory” long prevailed in Chinese art world, thanks to Yu Jianhua (1895-1979), another important modern theorist. In his 1935 treatise “Zhongguo shanshuihua zhi xiesheng” (*Xiesheng* in Chinese landscape painting), Yu seconded Hu’s standpoint that *xiesheng* had been applied to Chinese landscape painting since the Tang and Song Dynasties. But Yu went one step further in analysing the difference between *xiesheng* in the Western painting context and *xiesheng* in the traditional Chinese style. He noted that Western-style *xiesheng* rested in its fixed-point perspective, whereas traditional-Chinese-style *xiesheng* did not need to be restricted by this principle:

There is no fixed-point in the Chinese-style *xiesheng*. There is even no horizon in the Chinese-style landscape painting!... [Painters] memorised the view after travelling through the whole mountain... Then they reorganised the structure of the picture, so that the mountain they depicted looked like that mountain at a glance, but if examined carefully... it was not ‘that’ specific mountain. This *xiesheng* approach... hence is superior over the Western fixed-point approach. (Yu 2009: 57-58)

As such, Hu and Yu endeavoured to make a connection between the neologism of *xiesheng* and the “painting by memory” approach, applied by ancient Chinese ink painters. During the process, a significant transformation occurred in the connotation of *xiesheng*: it shifted from meaning “drawing from nature” to “painting by memory”. In other words, it radically changed from the merely faithful representation of reality to the artist’s expression of his subjective perception of that reality. Because of Yu’s prominent status as an art theorist in the PRC, the new meaning of *xiesheng* continued to spread through socialist art circles, and finally prevailed in the *xiesheng* campaign in the mid-to-late 1950s. The reformed landscape painting with Western techniques that became the new norm celebrated the scenic beauty of mountains, lakes and villages of China with the aim of stimulating people’s imagination about such places. More importantly, pride in their motherland was evoked by the lifelike offerings of artists. With the dominance of socialist realism, *xiesheng* proved to be a bright path that landscape artists could follow. Its upholders were not only accepted as creative landscape painters, but also expected to be praised by the Party. The new directions that were now permissible and the bright future ahead were vital for artists such as Wu Guanzhong, whose aesthetic had been marginalised under socialist realism.

Multiple Perspectives and Wu's *Xiesheng* Practice

Because of his incompatibility with socialist realism, Wu was transferred from the CAFA to Tsinghua University in 1953. Unlike its high reputation in the Chinese art world nowadays, Tsinghua was a university which paid little attention to the arts in those days. Wu was hired there to teach sketching and watercolour painting to architecture students. Such a transfer seemed to reflect Wu's official exclusion from Chinese art circles, but it turned out to be a blessing in disguise for his career. He was allowed to discuss in class what had previously been condemned by the CAFA as "formalism", since "architecture design requires the study of art form". Although his new job did not promise a brighter future at that moment, it was encouraging enough for Wu, certainly compared with the marginalisation he had previously experienced as a result of his modernist painting. (Wu 2004: 29-30)

Wu's subsequent transfer to Beijing Normal University in 1956 marked a new chapter in his career, since he was able to devote more time to purely artistic pursuits. Soon after his transfer, the art school was separated from the university and was renamed Beijing Fine Arts College. Due to the establishment of the new college and its less important status in Chinese art circles, it provided a relatively free environment for teaching and research. Wu displayed great enthusiasm in his new capacity, where his art advocacy was valued by college head Wei Tianlin (1898-1977). Wu was able to teach figure painting and discuss art in the way he wished, encouraging his students to analyse the ancient ink works of Bada shanren (1626-1705) and Shitao (1642-1707) from Western painting perspectives. Wu was soon promoted to director of the Painting Department, which brought him administrative authority, as well as attracting attention to his art and teaching alike.

As discussed above, landscape became an accepted art genre in socialist China following Zhou Yang's 1953 speech. And with the *xiesheng* movement subsequently prevailing in the art world, Wu could take advantage of this and practise landscapes during his tenure at the college. The ideological nature of *xiesheng* prompted artists to choose scenery that reminded the Chinese of the grandeur of their motherland, hence evoking patriotism. Wu therefore selected destinations and themes that were associated with patriotic sentiment, such as the Jinggang Mountains (Jinggangshan), with their sacred status as the base of the Red Army:

I love lofty mountains, steep hills and flourishing woods anyway. But because Jinggang Mountain is the sacred place of the CCP's revolution, it became the most appropriate place for artists to go for *xiesheng*. (Wu 2004: 33)

Wu completed three oil paintings of Jinggangshan Mountains, all illustrative of his exploration of landscape painting in the late 1950s. *Ciping Town in the Jinggangshan Mountains* provides a panoramic view of this location. The terrace field and village dominate the foreground, while the mountains embrace the town in the background. The depiction of the terrace field reveals Wu's iconic brushwork style, which sweeps across the canvas in a deceptively easygoing manner. We see similar brushwork in Wu's much later ink painting of *Loess Plateau* (Huangtu gaoyuan, 1987). He used the ink

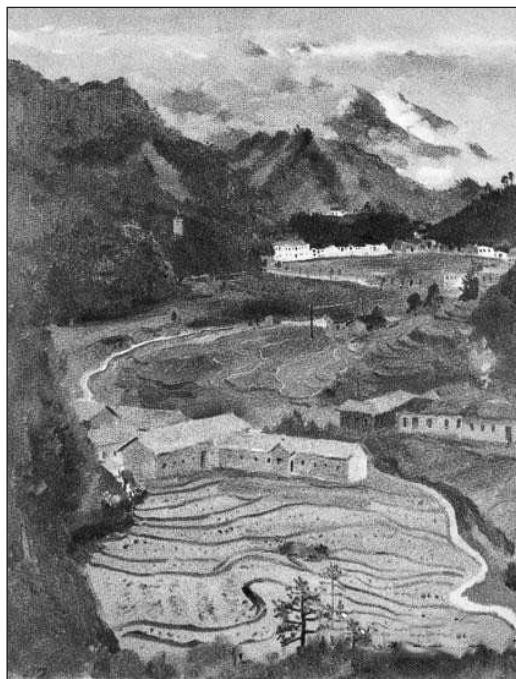


Figure 5: Wu Guanzhong, *Ciping Town in the Jinggangshan Mountains*, 1959, oil painting on board, 1959. 61cm x 46cm. Private collection.



Figure 6: Wu Guanzhong, *Loess Plateau*, 1987, ink and color on paper, 98 x 180cm. Private collection.



Figure 7: Wu Guanzhong, *The Wumachaotian Ridge of the Jinggang*, 1959, oil painting on board, 61 x 46cm. Private collection.

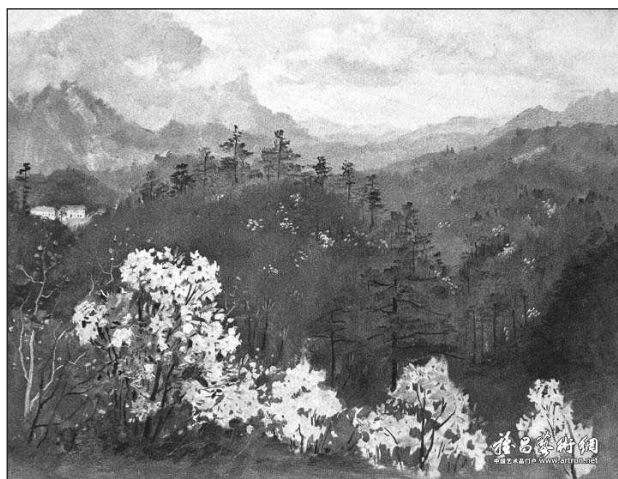


Figure 8: Wu Guanzhong, *Azaleas in the Jinggang*, 1959, oil painting on board, 46 x 61cm. Private collection.

brush to roughly outline the dry soil layers, bringing dynamism to the paper surfaces. He framed each layer by flicking his brush over the paper and making improvised curves. Wu injected a vitality and fluency into the painting, the effect of which could only be achieved with such spontaneous brushwork. This style became a trademark of Wu's landscapes, making its debut in *Ciping Town in the Jinggangshan Mountains*.

Two further oil paintings, *Azaleas in the Jinggang Mountains* (Jinggangshan dujuanhua) and *The Wumachaotian Ridge of the Jinggang Mountains* (Jinggangshan wumachaotian) reveal less of the artist's panoramic style, but more of the influence of Impressionism. Wu's varied palette reveals his perception of the mountains' vast realm of colour and luminosity. His delicate observation and powers of illustration are matched by a careful study of Impressionist painting technique, reminiscent of Claude Monet's *Impression, Sunrise* (1872). All three paintings show that Wu was then still in the process of exploring which technique or style worked best for him. The panoramic view and the techniques learnt from Impressionism revealed his uncertainty about which direction to go. He had not yet found his own artistic vocabulary.

Comparing these earlier works with other famous depictions of the Jinggangshan Mountains, we can see why Wu had yet to find his art style. Take for example Luo Gongliu's (1916-2004) oil painting *The Jinggang Mountains* (Jinggangshan, 1960). Created in the same period as Wu's works, Luo's oil painting depicts the revolutionary base of the Red Army, yet it does so in a fairly traditional Chinese way. The painting imitates the form of a wall scroll, enabling audiences to appreciate the magnificent scale of the mountain. Instead of painting the entire shape of the range, Luo only highlights

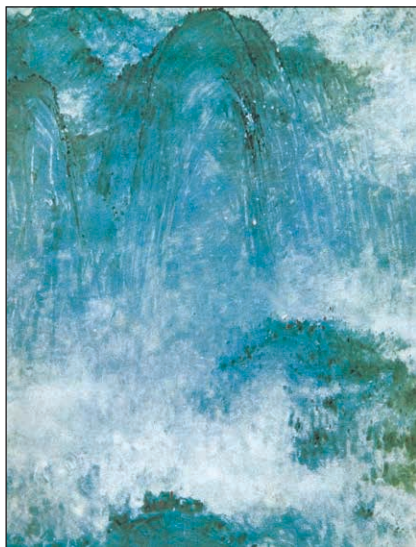


Figure 9: Luo Gongliu, *The Jinggang Mountains*, 1960, oil on canvas, 223 x 284cm, National Art Museum of China.

the tops of the hills, layers of boulders and steep cliffs. He left the main body of the mountains in the mist, which was depicted in a lighting style, giving dynamism to the canvas. This oil painting created in a traditional ink painting style successfully showcased the grandeur of the mountainscape, using familiar Chinese aesthetics and enhanced Luo's already considerable reputation at the time. In comparison, Wu's painting was less complete, due to the mismatch between its theme and the art vocabulary utilised.

Another destination that Wu chose for his *xiesheng* practice was Tibet. Wu went there as a participant in a *xiesheng* trip organised by the CAA to celebrate the People's Liberation Army's suppression of the Tibetan uprising in 1959. He returned to Beijing with an oil painting *The Monastery of Zhashilunbu* (Zhashilunbu si). Multiple objects are depicted – mountain, monastery, trees and lamas – in a panorama on canvas. The mountain in the background occupies the largest portion of the picture. As the middle ground subject, the monastery is depicted in zinc white and reddish brown, in contrast to the dusty copper-coloured mountain embracing it. In the foreground stands a straight line of trees, the sharp black and white trunks of which are emphasised to set off the cloud-like chunks of the leaves. Last but not least, a row of stick-like lamas are depicted in front of the trees, as if they are heading from the right to the left side of the picture, bringing dynamism to the canvas. The heavy brushstrokes used for the mountain and the monastery, as well as the lamas depicted in a highly expressive, notational style, all reveal the influence of Impressionism.

Wu applied multiple perspectives for the composition of *The Monastery of Zhashilunbu*. The actual appearance and geography of the mountain, the monastery, the trees and indeed the lamas differ markedly from how they are all depicted in his painting. The artist took different views of the objects and presented them from favoured angles, instead of using a fixed viewpoint for the entire painting:

I (then) constantly applied such multiple perspectives to graft different views for painting... *The Monastery of Zhashilunbu* was in this case. I largely adjusted the geographical distance among the mountain, the monastery, the trees and the lamas when organizing them in my painting. I paid a lot of attention to the composition, meanwhile endeavored to bring up a lifelike effect on canvas. Therefore, the way that I usually applied in landscape painting is called 'sketch in motion'. (Wu 2004:36)

This "sketch in motion" nicely describes Wu's multiple perspectives, which proved a highly suitable approach for presenting such a scenic panorama. In his article, he discussed the adoption of such an approach due to his dissatisfaction with fixed-point perspective:

I was so excited that I wanted to sit down and started immediately. But I felt that none of the perspectives alone was enough for me to fully express my feeling... It is hence acceptable and reasonable for a landscape painting to be organized from various angles and directions. (Wu 1962:27)

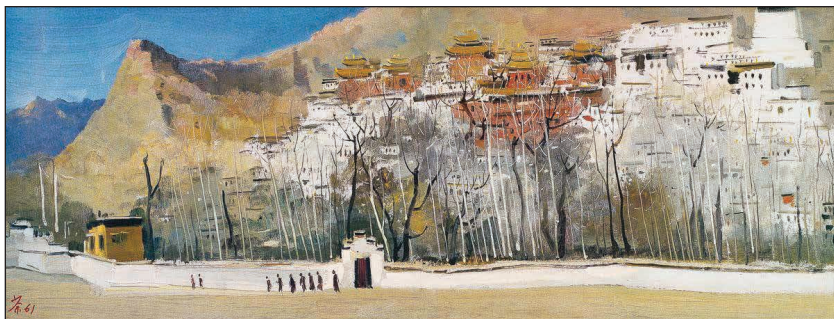


Figure 10: Wu Guanzhong, *The Monastery of Zhashilunbu*, 1961, oil on canvas, 46 x 126cm. Hong Kong Museum of Art.

In Wu's opinion, since one's perception of the view changed along with his movement, there should be multiple angles from which to organise the painting, in order to best present the beauty of the scenery. At the same time, Wu expressed dissatisfaction with the fixed-point perspective applied to Western landscapes, despite his passion for their modernism:

Usually Western oil painters select one fixed perspective to depict the scenery, which is called 'view-finding'. Such a method is too restricted... Impressionism was creative in using colors. But it was exactly Impressionism that restricted landscape painting to a narrow corner. (Wu 1962:27-28)

Thus while Wu admired the Impressionists' creativity in colour, he found their perspective too limited and therefore not worth promoting. At the same time, he expressed his admiration for the ancient Chinese landscape painters and their application of multiple perspectives:

Chinese landscape artists usually started painting by walking through the whole mountain and taking notes of their travel, and then organized the picture by recalling images from memory. I do think such an approach is the treasure of traditional Chinese painting. (Wu 1962:27)

Multiple perspectives are traditionally applied by Chinese artists to create ink landscape paintings. These fundamentally differ from their Western counterparts, since the Chinese approach incorporates both the pictorial presentation of the scenery and the artist's understanding of it. Youn-Jeong Chae discussed such differences in his thesis on Chinese visual traditions:

The multiple perspective system is distinguished from Western perspective not just because it is multiple but because the former attempts to bring out the landscape as a whole by combining the various angles in harmony as

well as the painter's knowledge and understanding of nature in order to represent both spirit and form. (Chae 1997: 85)

We can see how Wu's understanding and practice of multiple perspectives corresponded with Hu Peiheng and Yu Jianhua's *xiesheng* theory, which organically combined the traditional Chinese landscape painting approaches with Western painting techniques. Wu's great appreciation of multiple perspectives came from his strong belief that these was the best outlet for the artist's emotional expression. Following Lin Fengmian's theory involving artists' emotions, Wu believed in the importance of expression in his landscapes. Quoting Wang Guowei's (1877-1927) words, "every description of [a] scenic view comes from emotion" (*Yiqie jingyu jie qingyu*), he argued that:

Emotional expression should be an important standard for landscape painting. If it is only the pictorial presentation of objects and natural views, no matter how realist and pretty, the painting could merely be entertaining but never overwhelming. (Wu 1962:27)

Wu further argued that some of the most extraordinary Western artists expressed their emotions through landscapes:

Western landscapes focus on depicting the scenic beauty. However, the most extraordinary masterpieces are those attaching the artists' emotions. For instance, Van Gogh's landscapes are the ones that were so humanized, which read as if they were his self-portraits. Similarly, the Parisian cityscapes on Utrillo's canvas appear to be... melancholic poetry. (Wu 1980:131)

Hence for Wu, multiple perspectives were necessary to create landscapes, because this was the most suitable way to express the artist's perceptions of and emotion towards the scenery. Technically, Wu showed his wholehearted admiration of Western modernist art; whereas compositionally, he stuck steadily to the ground of traditional Chinese painting with its multiple-perspective approach. In Wu's syncretism, different approaches served the same purpose – that of expressing the artist's emotion.

Wu's paintings and writings were barely published in *Meishu* until *The Monastery of Zhashilunbu*, which was reproduced in the February 1962 issue, along with his article discussing it. In it, he claimed that his frequent job transfers did not terminate his art career, but instead enabled him to forge a new path. Wu took a good advantage of the Hundred Flowers campaign to engage in *xiesheng* practice as much as possible. As well as the Jinggang Mountains and Tibet, Wu also went to Hainan and Shaoxing in the 1950s-1960s. It was during the *xiesheng* journeys that he developed his theory of multiple perspectives and created paintings that began to reveal his personal style. On these same journeys, Wu rekindled his appreciation of the ancient landscape paintings that he studied much earlier under the influence of Pan Tianshou. At the same time, he began to critically analyse Western modernist art which he had unreservedly admired previously. It was at this moment that Wu began to construct his art theory which synthesised Western modernist painting techniques and classical Chinese painting perspectives. His new path proved acceptable in Chinese art circles.

Wu suffered from all the political turbulence that the Chinese art world experienced during the 1960s. He was transferred to the Central Institute of Arts and Crafts (CIAC) in Beijing after the closure of the Beijing Art Academy in 1964. A second disruption took place when artists were compelled to “go to the farms, factories, and army units to be with peasants, workers, and soldiers, and to participate to a certain extent in labour” (Laing, 1989: 49). This event took effect through the Socialist Education Movement. Wu was consequently sent to an extremely impoverished village in Hebei Province to perform physical labour. He was at the same time diagnosed with chronic hepatitis, which was lethal at the time. After treatment failed, Wu almost lost his will to live: “I would have committed suicide to end the agony, had it not been for my family.” (Wu 2004:43) In short, the Cultural Revolution was continuous torture for Wu. He was fortunate not to be assaulted by the Red Guards, probably because he had taught in in his new workplace for too short a time to make enemies. However, he was compelled to destroy all the paintings that he had made in Paris to survive from the criticism, indeed denunciation, of the Red Guards. Wu was soon forced to go to another village in Hebei Province to do another course of hard physical labour, in which he was completely forbidden to paint for the first two years. In the meantime, Wu continued to suffer from hepatitis as well as proctoptosis, which deepened his gloom. The political turmoil brought tremendous agony for Wu, especially when he was cut off from painting.

The tide again began to turn in the Chinese art world from the early 1970s. Premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) summoned more than forty artists back to Beijing and other major cities since 1971, to create paintings for decorating the buildings where foreign political dignitaries were based during their stay in China. Zhou indicated that certain art genres, e.g. birds-and-flowers, and landscapes, which represented Chinese national styles should be displayed there: “Any subject was acceptable as long as it was not anti-Communist, feudalistic, superstitious, or erotic.” (Laing 1989:85) Zhou believed that this would help improve Chinese reputation in the international community following the CCP’s negative image ever since the Cultural Revolution. Such a policy served as a form of rehabilitation for artists who suffered from the unfairness and disgrace in the earlier political attacks on them, not least Wu himself.

In 1971, Wu was called back to Beijing to participate in the creation of the painting *Ten Thousand Miles of the Yangzi River* (Changjiang wanli tu) for the Beijing Hotel. He co-worked with artists Xi Xiaopeng (1924-1995), Yuan Yunfu (b. 1933), Zhu Danian (1916-1995), and Huang Yongyu (b. 1924). Although the *xiusheng* journey they took for the painting was initially filled them with inspiration, the commission had to be cancelled due to the outburst of the Black Painting Movement (*pi heihua yundong*) in the following year, 1972.⁵

However, Xi Xiaopeng preserved the sketch of *Ten Thousand Miles of the Yangzi River* and made it public in the 1990s. As illustrated here, the sketch was cut into three

5 In the early 1970s, Zhou Enlai summoned a number of artists back to Beijing and other major cities to create paintings, for the urge of improving the PRC’s image in international society. However, this artistic activity conflicted with the authority of the Gang of Four in art world hence faced attack. As a result, an exhibition about “black paintings” *heihua* was organised in major cities to expose the “anti-socialist” nature of their work. More information of the Black Painting Movement, see Andrews, pp. 368-376.

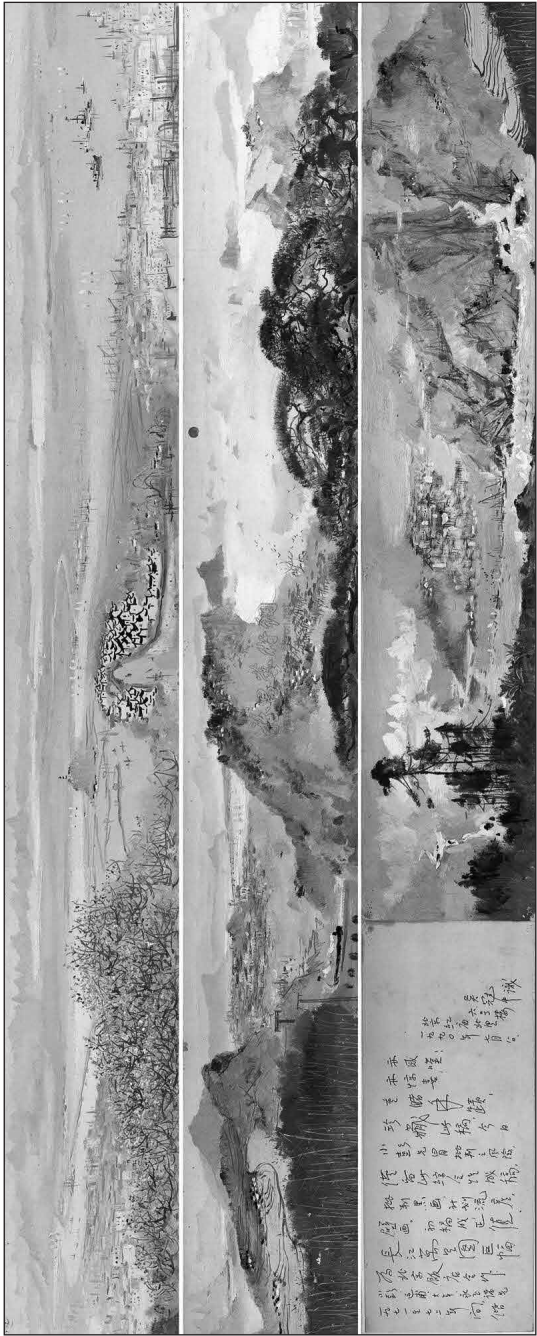


Figure 11: Wu Guanzhong, Huang Yongyu, Xi Xiaopeng, Zhu Danian, *Ten Thousand Miles of the Yangzi River*, 1971, sketch, 22.5 x 509cm. Private collection.

sections and was later framed as one piece. It should be read from the section on top to the one at the bottom, from right to left. We see various objects depicted on the canvas, which represent the bounty of Chinese landscape, e.g. lofty mountains and steep cliffs, rapid river currents, terraced fields in the midst of hills, tranquil harbours and villages. Due to the collective nature of the commission, there is no official record to indicate which parts were undertaken by Wu. However, certain aspects of the painting strongly suggest his authorship. For example, the harbour, the heavy machinery and the ships painted at the upper right corner suggest influences from Impressionism. The zinc white buildings by the harbour with the roofs in yellowish brown are more evocative of a European port city than of anywhere in China. Considering Wu was the only artist in the group who had studied in Europe and, knowing his favourable disposition towards Impressionism, it is reasonable to attribute the harbour image to him.

The terraced field which was cut in half in the middle section and the scenes in the bottom section also reveal Wu's style. The layers of the terraced field are roughly sketched with just a few brushstrokes. As far as is known, Wu was the only artist, especially at that moment, who painted the layers of the mountain in this way. We can see the resemblance to *Ciping Town in the Jinggangshan Mountains* (1959), as well as *The Loess Plateau* (1987).

Ten Thousand Miles of the Yangzi River can be considered a Western-style oil painting created in the form of traditional Chinese ink painting. The five-meter plus length of the work makes it reminiscent of a handscroll, a format which was often adopted by traditional Chinese ink artists for landscape painting. The handscroll should be unrolled bit by bit, giving viewers time to appreciate the variety of the scenery, as if they were travelling through it in person. Such a form lends itself perfectly to multiple-perspective techniques. This applies particularly to Wu's changed scenery leading from the harbour to the terraced field, which emphasises the grandeur of the Chinese landscape. At the time of the commission, Wu had already been exploring similar techniques for conveying panoramic effects; *Ten Thousand Miles of the Yangzi River* successfully showcased this. Also significant is the fact that the work presented the scenic grandeur of China to foreign audiences. Such a painting, which incorporated both Western and Chinese aesthetics, seemed highly appropriate here. The endeavour was groundbreaking not only from an aesthetic perspective; it promised a bright future for such a stylistic synthesis as the perfect vehicle to present Chinese cultural heritage to the world in a way that incorporated Western modernism.

The Change to Ink

The move from oil to ink was the most important transformation in Wu's career. It happened after he was summoned back to Beijing in 1971 and could reconnect with other Chinese artists. Wu's medium transition has been interpreted as showing the influence of these others around him: "He found that almost all the other painters were working on Chinese ink on paper, and he too began to work in the traditional style he had first studied under Pan Tianshou while at the Hangzhou Academy." ("Biography of Wu Guanzhong," 1992:44) Wu recognised that his preference for ink on paper started from the middle 1970s. But he did not mention any direct influences on his change of

medium. However, all the other artists in his team specialised in art genres relating more closely to traditional Chinese style than to Western modernism. For instance, Zhu Danian had studied Chinese painting in the Hangzhou Academy and ceramic art in Japan, and Huang Yongyu was already famous for ink painting in the 1970s.⁶ We certainly cannot discount these highly probable influences.

From the early 1970s, Wu paid more attention to the artistic effects of ink, and flexibility had always stood at the centre of his landscape creation. Consistent with this, he had favoured multiple perspectives instead of fixed-point perspective. His thoughts then moved to the question of the appropriate medium. Wu began to be dissatisfied with the heavy quality of oil paint, which, in his opinion, restricted the free effect in the process of line drawing. He asked:

How can the sticky oil paint convey the unrestrained quality of lines? It cannot be conducted as free as ink... Painting in ink is like calligraphing. It feels like you could wield the brush as freely as you want. (Wu 2004:288)

Wu hence believed the artistic effect he pursued was better conveyed by ink than oil paint:

My oil painting emphasised more and more on the artistic effect of purity, which was close to the effect that was presented in ink painting. I therefore started using ink. I already conducted ink paintings in the middle 1970s... Till the 1980s, it became the major medium I used. (Wu 2004:39)

I disagree with the aforementioned opinion that Wu changed to “the traditional style he had first studied under Pan Tianshou”. (“Biography of Wu Guanzhong,” 1992:44) As Wu’s Chinese painting teacher, Pan indeed followed the traditional style, which required students to spend many hours imitating it. But as I previously argued, Wu was never a “good” student who obediently conformed to such a traditional teaching method. He was passionate about ink painting through his admiration of several artists’ distinctive styles, such as Shitao, Bada and indeed Pan as well. Pan had gained his reputation in Chinese art world as a traditionalist, an ink master with a remarkable grasp of traditional painting techniques. His style indeed embodied creativity, not least his finger painting skills. But it was essentially based on conformity with tradition (Kim, 2016). This represents the divergence between Pan and Wu; Wu’s transition to ink had occurred when he realised how the medium better conveyed his feelings about painting objects. If anything, Wu leaned more towards Lin Fengmian’s style of syncretising Chinese painting with Western art vocabulary, than to Pan’s traditionalism.

Wu’s ink landscapes brought him a considerable reputation from the 1980s onwards. His first solo exhibition was held in the CIAC in 1979. From 1981, Wu led

6 Huang’s ink painting *The Winking Owl* (Maotouying) accepted the heaviest criticism during the Black Painting movement, because it was interpreted by the Gang of Four as scoffing at socialism. See more information in Laing, p. 86.

delegations at art exhibitions in Hong Kong, India and Nigeria. His ink works were selected for solo shows in the West, making him a star in the international art world. Furthermore, from the 1980s to the present, Wu's ink paintings have been highly favored in the art markets of mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Europe and America. This artistic success also led to his institutional authority. He was selected as a member of the CAA in 1979, and as a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in 1985.

Conclusion

Wu Guanzhong had to overcome many obstacles to pave his path in art. Initially inspired by Western modernist art, Wu finally found his niche as a landscape artist who preferred to use ink and colour. It is significant that every transformation in Wu's pursuit of his ideal art style occurred as an active response to the changed art policies and larger political circumstances of socialist China, when the Party wanted art styles to be altered for propagandist purposes. Wu's artistic exploration came to fruition when China had recovered from its decades-long political turmoil and was eager to learn from the West for its "Modernization" (*xiandaihua*) under Deng Xiaoping's (1904-1997) leadership. The syncretism of Chinese ink and Western modernist style functioned to showcase Chinese aesthetics in modernist vocabulary. It was appreciated by Western audiences, as well as Chinese viewers who yearned to find their position with relation to the West. And through his long, fascinating and sometimes turbulent career, Wu Guanzong played a unique part in bringing this about.

Glossary

Baihua qifang, baijia zhengming	百花齐放，百家争鸣
Changjiang wanli tu	长江万里图
chouhua gongnongbing	丑化工农兵
Deng Xiaoping	邓小平
Fan Kuan	范宽
Fuyang cuntou	富阳村头
heihua	黑画
Hu Peiheng	胡佩衡
Huang Yongyu	黄永玉
Huangtu gaoyuan	黄土高原
Huo	惑
Jiang Feng	江丰
Jinggangshan dujuanhua	井冈山杜鹃花
Jinggangshan wumachaotian	井冈山五马朝天

Jinggangshan	井冈山
Kaiguo dadian	开国大典
Li Keran	李可染
Lin Fengmian	林风眠
Lu Dingyi	陆定一
Luo Gongliu	罗工柳
Mao Zedong	毛泽东
Maotouying	猫头鹰
Pan Tianshou	潘天寿
pi heihua yundong	批黑画运动
Renmin ribao	人民日报
Renti	人体
Shuangbai yundong	双百运动
sumiao	素描
Wang Guowei	王国维
Wei Tianlin	卫天霖
Wu Daozi	吴道子
Wu Guanzhong	吴冠中
wuqing wuyi	无情无意
Xi Xiaopeng	奚小彭
xiandaihua	现代化
xiesheng	写生
xingshizhuyi	形式主义
Xu Behong	徐悲鸿
Yiqie jingyu jie qingyu	一切景语皆情语
Yu Jianhua	俞剑华
Yuan Yunfu	袁运甫
Yugong yishan	愚公移山
Zai yanan wenyi zuotanhui shang de jianghua	在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话
Zai zhongguo wenxue yishu gongzuozhe dierci daibiaodahui shang de baogao	在中国文学艺术工作者第二次代表大会上的报告
Zhang Ding	张仃
Zhashilunbu si	扎什伦布寺

Zhongguo shanshuihua xiesheng de wenti	中国山水画写生的问题
Zhongguo shanshuihua	
zhi xiesheng	中国山水画之写生
Zhou Enlai	周恩来
Zhou Yang	周扬
Zhu Danian	祝大年
zichanjieji wenyi	资产阶级文艺

References

- Andrews, Julia F., 1995. *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1979*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- "Bibliography of Wu Guanzhong." In Anne Farrer (ed.), *Wu Guanzhong, A Twenty-century Chinese Painter*. London: British Museum Press, 38–45.
- Chae, Youn-Jeong, 1997. "Film Space and the Chinese Visual Tradition". PhD Diss., New York University.
- Cohen, Joan Lebold, 1987. *The New Chinese Painting 1949-1986*. New York: Harry N Abrams.
- Denton, Kirk A. (ed.), 1996. *Modern Chinese Literary Thoughts: writings on Literature, 1893-1945*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Gu, Yi, 2009. "Scientizing Vision in China: Photography, Outdoor Sketching, and the Reinvention of Landscape Perception". PhD Diss., Brown University.
- Ho, Christine I., 2014. "Drawing from Life: Mass Sketching and the Formation of Socialist Guohua in the Early People's Republic of China (1949-1965)". PhD Diss., Stanford University.
- Hu Peiheng 胡佩衡, 2017. "Zhongguo shanshuihua xiesheng de wenti" 中国山水画写生的问题 (Issues of *xiesheng* in Chinese landscape painting.) In Hu Peiheng, *Wo zenyang hua shanshuihua* 我怎样画山水画 (On how I paint landscapes). Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin meishu chubanshe, 149–153.
- Kao, Mayching, 1992. "The Art of Wu Guanzhong." In Anne Farrer, ed., *Wu Guanzhong, A Twenty-century Chinese Painter*. London: British Museum Press, 24–37.
- Kim, Mina, 2016. "Pan Tianshou (1897-1971): Rediscovering Traditional Chinese Painting in the Twentieth Century". PhD Diss., Ohio State University.
- Laing, Ellen Johnson, 1989. *The Winking Owl: Art in the People's Republic of China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Wu Guanzhong 吴冠中, 2004. *Wo fu danqing* 我负丹青 (The autobiography of Wu Guanzhong). Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe.
- 1962. "Tan fengjinghua" 谈风景画 (On landscape painting). *Meishu*, no. 2: 27.
- 1980. "Tutuyangyang yangyangtutu: youhua minzuhua zatan" 土土洋洋 洋洋土土: 油画民族化杂谈 (Native and Western: random talk on the nationalisation of oil painting). *Wenyi yanjiu*, no. 1: 129–133

- Xu Beihong 徐悲鸿, 1994. *Xu Beihong wenji* 徐悲鸿文集 (Collected works of Xu Beihong), Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe.
- Yu Jianhua 俞剑华, 2009. “Zhongguo shanshuihua zhi xiesheng” 中国山水画之写生 (Xiesheng in Chinese landscape painting). In *Yu Jianhua meishushi lunji* 俞剑华美术论集 (Yu Jianhua’s artistic theory), Dongnan daxue chubanshe, 57–58.

Biographical Note

Wenwen Liu is a PhD candidate in Chinese at Victoria University of Wellington. Her research interests span the subjects of Chinese socialist realist art, and the reception of Chinese ink painting in socialist China. Before she engaged on her doctoral project, Wenwen was editor of *Art and Design Magazine* in Beijing.