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**Translating Visual Language:  
Artistic Experimentations by European-trained Chinese Artists, 1920s-1950s**

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## **Introduction**

This dissertation addresses the roots of fundamental changes in twentieth-century art in China by addressing how the cultural exchange between Europe and China transformed critical conceptions and artistic practices in the field of art. The translation of German aesthetic theories and the French academic training of Chinese artists engendered the conceptual and technical transformation of Chinese art in the early twentieth century. While the notions of pure nudity, artistic salvation, and archaeology of art were introduced from German philosophy into Chinese art, the traditional ideas of art versus craft and artist as moral exemplars were converted. Chinese intellectuals analogized crisis-ridden China in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to Germany being occupied by the Napoleon army in 1806. They believed that the superior academic culture, instead of its political and military strengths, was the foundation of the unification of Germany in 1871. The doctrines of German scholars were therefore introduced to China through German-trained Chinese intellectuals, aiming at achieving the modern transition of Chinese society. The implementation of aesthetic education based on German philosophical theories endowed modern artists and their works with the social mission to shape the citizens' personalities and improve their tastes to establish a liberal and civilized modern Chinese society. Moreover, due to the establishment of the Institut Franco-Chinois in Lyon, more Chinese art students acquired the opportunity to study in Paris, the most important center for new artistic ideas and practices during the early twentieth century. Thus, the conceptual shift in the field of aesthetics was expressed

through artists with a French academic training background. This study focuses on examining how the translation of German aesthetic doctrines and the introduction of French (sometimes Italian) artistic techniques contributed to the modern transition of Chinese art. How were German aesthetics translated and disseminated to young Chinese artists in the early twentieth century? How were the German scholars' theories appropriated to establish new standards for evaluating artists and their works? What were the mechanisms, obstacles and cultural clashes encountered by European-trained Chinese artists in their training and creation processes? How did European-trained Chinese artists respond to these new modern aesthetic doctrines? Each of the five chapters of my dissertation centers on the introduction or transformation of an artistic concept: art versus craft, pure nudity, artistic salvation, and archaeology of art, discussing how these concepts were theoretically and practically formulated in Chinese art.

The cultural exchange between China and Europe during the early twentieth century brought new theories, media, techniques, and styles to the field of art. The introduction of European techniques and styles is commonly mentioned when discussing modern Chinese art. The schooling experiences of Chinese artists in Europe, more precisely in France, are usually regarded as the determinant of their creations. Such an analysis centering on European academic training inevitably falls into a Eurocentric narrative, in which Chinese artists cannot escape the role of followers of European academism or modernism. Chinese artists of the early 20th century were sensitive to their position as inferior admirers of European art; they struggled for their

autonomy by finding similarities between European modernism and Chinese literati painting and between European naturalism and Song dynasty painting. The discussions on the stylistic similarities across generations and cultures reveal the question of twentieth-century Chinese artists: what is the criterion for judging the avant-garde attributes of art? Some artists attempted to incorporate ancient concepts of Chinese painting and calligraphy into European aesthetics with a view to claiming a place for Chinese art on a global scale.<sup>1</sup> For example, the Chinese painter and calligrapher Jin Shaocheng 金紹城 (1878-1926) paralleled the art theory from the Tang and Song dynasties with the aesthetic principles of ancient Greek sculpture as defined by the German art historian and archaeologist Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768).<sup>2</sup> In this context, a pressing issue facing early-twentieth-century Chinese art was the formation of new art evaluation criteria for Chinese artists so that their works could be acceptable and competitive in a global view.

What is the relationship between establishing the new evaluation norms and building new artist techniques for practice? The trend of Chinese artists studying in Europe is not only about learning the techniques of artistic creation but has a predetermined social mission. Most young Chinese art students who went to Europe to study were neither spontaneous nor self-funded. Instead, study abroad programs of the Republican government encouraged and funded them, including the “work-study in France” program between 1912 and 1927, as well as the establishment of Institut

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<sup>1</sup> Zheng Gong 鄭工, 演進與運動: 中國美術的現代化, 1875-1976 [Evolution and Movement: The Modernization of Chinese Art, 1875-1976] (Nanning: Guangxi Fine Art Press, 2002), 160.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

franco-chinois de Lyon in 1921. The prominence of art in these vital government education programs came mainly from the Education Minister, the German-trained Chinese philosopher and politician Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940). As Cai became the Minister of Education in February 1912, he proposed “aesthetic education” as a critical aspect of national education.<sup>3</sup> He believed in the power of aesthetics in building up the character of the citizen and fostering civic virtue, thereby applying it to the national project of cultural rejuvenation and the formation of modern ethics.<sup>4</sup> This is a project with German aesthetics as its theoretical foundation; he expounded the German origin of his aesthetic education thought in 1930:

In the eighteenth century, aesthetics was established through the research of Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). The function of aesthetic education was discussed in detail by Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805); the sign of aesthetic education thus began to become more evident. (Schiller’s works are primarily poems and plays; his only work on aesthetics is *Briefe Über die Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*.) Our country’s “aesthetic education 美育” is translated from German “Ästhetische Erziehung.”<sup>5</sup>

Regarding the implementation of “aesthetic education,” Cai claimed in 1928 that “aesthetic education is the backbone of modern education. The implementation of aesthetic education should always take art as education, to cultivate the knowledge of creation and connoisseurship in beauty, further to popularize it in the society.”<sup>6</sup> As

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<sup>3</sup> Chen Pingyuan 陳平原, 觸摸歷史與進入五四 [Touches of History: An Entry Into “May Fourth” China] (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2005), 135. Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, “二十五年來中國之美育 [Aesthetic Education over the Last Twenty-Five Years in China],” in 精神與人格: 蔡元培美學文選 [Spirit and Personality: Selected Articles on Aesthetics by Cai Yuanpei] (Hefei: Anhui Literature and Art Press, 2015), 234.

<sup>4</sup> Ban Wang, *Use in Uselessness: How Western Aesthetics Made Chinese Literature More Political*, chap. in *A Companion to Modern Chinese Literature*, ed. Yingjin Zhang (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 283.

<sup>5</sup> Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, 美育 [Aesthetic Education], chap. in 美育與人生 [Aesthetic Education and Life] (Jinan: Shandong Wenyi Press, 2019), 157.

<sup>6</sup> Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, 創辦國立藝術大學之提案 [Proposal for Founding the National University of the Arts], chap. in 精神與人格: 蔡元培美學文選 [Spirit and Personality: Selected Essays on

“Creation and connoisseurship in beauty” are the tasks of artists and art theorists, Cai placed the training of artists and art theorists in a critical position and gave them the task of transforming society. At the same time, when he talked about education, he referred to the entire educational system that runs through a person’s earlier cultivation. He pointed out that all schools, from kindergarten to university, are facilities for aesthetic education.<sup>7</sup> This means that Cai’s German-derived ideas on aesthetic education were passed on to young Chinese art students through their fundamental education in China before they went to France for their schooling in Ecole.

This study mainly focuses on three French-trained Chinese artists Pan Yuliang 潘玉良 (1895-1977), Wang Ziyun 王子雲 (1897-1990), and Chang Shuhong 常書鴻 (1904-1994). In contrast to the more famous masters Xu Beihong 徐悲鴻 (1895-1953) and Lin Fengmian 林風眠 (1900-1991), the creations of Pan, Wang, and Zhang have not been studied in depth. Before going to France, all three artists studied at China’s first modern art school, the Shanghai Fine Arts College 上海美術專科學校, which was founded in 1912 and long directed by one of its founders Liu Haisu 劉海粟 (1896-1994).<sup>8</sup> Cai Yuanpei strongly supported Liu’s school, and Cai’s ideas on aesthetic education canopied his philosophy of running the school. Liu responded to Cai’s ambition to educate the public with beauty in an article written in 1918: “the way to save the nation must be to promote aesthetic education, using it to inspire people’s loftiness and purity of spirit and to comprehend the real beauty of nature.”<sup>9</sup> The

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Aesthetics by Cai Yuanpei] (Hefei: Anhui Wenyi Press, 2015), 145.

<sup>7</sup> Cai Yuanpei, “Aesthetic Education,” chap. in *Aesthetic Education and Life*, 157.

<sup>8</sup> Cheng Li, *Middle Class Shanghai: Reshaping U.S.-China Engagement* (Washington, D. C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2021), 288.

<sup>9</sup> Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, *The Art of Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press,

aesthetic theory was also set as regular curriculums in Liu's school. The teachers of curriculums on aesthetics included art theorists Yu Jifan 俞寄凡 (1891-1968) and Lü Cheng 呂澂 (1896-1989). Yu was fascinated with German aesthetics and repeatedly cited German scholars' theories in an article on the beauty of the human body written in 1933.<sup>10</sup> As regards Lü, he was captivated by the teachings of the German philosopher Theodor Lipps (1851-1914); his book *Introduction to Aesthetics* 美学概论 published in 1923, was entirely based on Lipps's view.<sup>11</sup> Since German aesthetic teachings were conveyed to young Chinese art students through the government-led, top-down program of aesthetic education, how they were employed during the transitioning phase of Chinese art will be explored.

I argue that Chinese intellectuals appropriated German philosophical doctrines to establish new evaluation criteria for modern Chinese artists, which entrusted the mission of educating the people for modern China to artists. Philosophers, art educators, and art theorists dominated the formulation of these new artistic evaluation standards. Although parts of traditional art theories were also revived, their modern legitimacy was usually obtained through the filter of German art theories. In addition to imitating Germany's mode of utilizing art to educate the citizens, the new art evaluation system's appropriation and stress on German teachings imply the ambition for modern Chinese art to be on par with modern European art. Newly developed art evaluation norms took

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2012), 40.

<sup>10</sup> Yu Jifan 俞寄凡, 人體之形式的美與表現的美 [The Beauty of Form and Expression of the Human Body], chap. in 藝術理論基本文獻: 中國近現代卷 [Basic Literature of Art Theory: Modern China Volume], eds. Li Jian 李健 and Zhou Jiwu 周計武 (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2014), 78-84.

<sup>11</sup> Wang Mengran 王夢冉, “呂澂 1917-1925 年間美學思想研究 [Study on Lü Cheng's Aesthetic Thoughts Between 1917 and 1925],” 美術大觀 [Art Panorama], n. 1 (2016): 50.



root in young Chinese art students through all education facilities, including art schools' curriculums and art journals. Their future choices of disciplines in France and creations were aligned with new canons of art evaluation. This study details how each specific art concept was either transformed or introduced into China through the filter of German philosophy in the early twentieth century and how artists responded to these newly established artistic notions through their options.

As the current Chinese government officially began its renewed promotion for “aesthetic education” again from October 2020, it still values the role of art in shaping the character of citizens as much as the Republican government did in the early twentieth century. Its official release declared: “educate people with beauty, change people with beauty, cultivate the fundamental (of people) with beauty, incorporate aesthetic education into the whole process of talent training at all levels and in all types of schools, and throughout all stages of school education.”<sup>12</sup> The concept of shaping the citizens with beauty and its implementation through all levels of education came from Cai Yuanpei's aesthetic education. The current Chinese government believes that Cai's aesthetic education was not accomplished, and its aim of transforming the citizens is feasible.

### **Literature Review: Modern Chinese Art**

Existing studies of modern Chinese art have focused on building art historical

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<sup>12</sup> Liu Yong 劉雍, “論民國小學語文教材中兒童美育思想的審美向度：以開明國語課本，商務國語課本，世界書局國語課本為例 [Study on the Aesthetic Dimension of Children's Aesthetic Education Thoughts in Chinese Textbooks for Primary Schools of Republican China: Taking *Enlightened Mandarin Textbooks*, *Commercial Mandarin Textbooks*, and *World Bookstore Mandarin Textbooks* as Examples],” 齊魯師範學院學報 [Journal of Qilu Normal University], v. 37, n. 2 (2022): 98.

narratives via the sociological interpretation of art, replacing the pre-1990s narrative framework of Michael Sullivan and Kao Mayching on China's passive response to European art.<sup>13</sup> In *The Art of Modern China*, Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen examined 20<sup>th</sup>-century Chinese art in the context of China's social changes and its cultural exchanges with Europe, Japan and Russia.<sup>14</sup> Taking big historical events as turning points, such as the Opium War, the New Culture Movement and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Andrews and Shen outlined the development of modern Chinese art since the late nineteenth century. David Clarke even claims that all of Chinese visual culture in the twentieth century was influenced by broader social transformations. Clarke understands modernity as all the radical socio-economic transformations in the development of capitalism including urbanization and industrialization. He investigates how Chinese art responded to the modern experience.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to these overviews which provide key historical shifts for readers, more detailed and in-depth studies from the transcultural perspective are also worthy of mention. *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art* assembles individual essays discussing Japan's impact on Chinese art from the mid-nineteenth century through the 1930s.<sup>16</sup> Stephanie Su explores the transcultural relationship between China and Japan

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<sup>13</sup> Li Yiqing 李伊晴, “英语世界中的 20 世纪早期中国现代艺术史: 兼论艺术史写作的方法和突破 [Chinese Modern Art History of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in English World: Methods of and Breakthroughs in Art History Writing],” 美术 [Art], n. 9 (2022): 96.

<sup>14</sup> Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, *The Art of Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> David Clarke, *China-Art-Modernity: A Critical Introduction to Chinese Visual Expression from the Beginning of the Twentieth Century to the Present Day* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2019).

<sup>16</sup> Joshua A. Fogel, *The Role of Japan in Modern Chinese Art* (London: University of California Press, 2012).

with a focus on two pioneering artists who venture to practice history painting—Nakamura Fusetsu (1866-1943) and Xu Beihong (1895-1953).<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, Philippe Cinquini investigates French-trained Chinese artists' studies and social activities in France by excavating rich primary materials from archives, in which the artist Xu Beihong is also discussed as the central figure.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, case studies on modern Chinese art involve a wide range of topics, including studies on modern art education, the emergence of female artists, debates on painting mediums and styles, art historical events, art exhibitions and master artists. Jane Zheng explores how education reflects and creates social change by chronicling the development of the famous Shanghai Art College.<sup>19</sup> Doris Sung identifies three types of women artists in *Women of Modern Chinese Art*: the female embroiderer in the late Qing period, the new female scholar-painters trained through family education and the new talented women trained under the modern education system. Amanda Wangwright also investigates the lives and careers of six female Chinese artists, demonstrating how women wielded art as the “golden key” to professional advancement and gender equality.<sup>20</sup> Pedith Pui Chan studies the social history of modern Chinese art from the perspective of the “art world” with a focus on “national painting 国画.”<sup>21</sup> Jonas Gerwing examines socialist realism in modern Chinese art,

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<sup>17</sup> Stephanie Su, *Entangled Modernities: The Representation of China's Past in Early Twentieth Century Chinese and Japanese Painting* (Ph.D., The University of Chicago, 2015).

<sup>18</sup> Philippe Cinquini, Phillippe Cinquini, *Les Artistes Chinois en France et l'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris à L'époque de la Première République de Chine (1912-1949): Pratiques et Enjeux de la Formation Artistique Académique* (Ph.D., Université de Lille, 2017).

<sup>19</sup> Jane Zheng, *The Modernization of Chinese Art: The Shanghai Art College, 1913-1937* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2017).

<sup>20</sup> Amanda Wangwright, *The Golden Key: Modern Women Artists and Gender Negotiations in Republican China (1911-1949)* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

<sup>21</sup> Pedith Pui Chan, *The Making of a Modern Art World: Institutionalisation and Legitimation of*

spanning the period from the demise of the Qing dynasty (1911) to “the Great Leap Forward” (1958-62) in the People’s Republic.<sup>22</sup> Vivian Yan Li explores the government-sponsored Chinese international art exhibitions in the late 1920s and 1930s in Europe.<sup>23</sup> Ralph C. Croizier discusses the interplay between art and politics by exploring a group of regional artists—the Lingnan school of painting 岭南画派.<sup>24</sup> Wang Yiyan attempts to situate art historical events in modern Chinese intellectual history in *Modern Art for a Modern China: The Chinese Intellectual Debate, 1900-1930*. This book centers on the leadership role of Cai Yuanpei in art reforms, artists and art events under Cai’s direction.<sup>25</sup> In terms of studies on master artists, Claire Roberts uses empirical and textual analysis to examine the life and art of Huang Binhong 黄宾虹 (1865-1955).<sup>26</sup> *Chiang Yee and His Circle* is an anthology, which examines the Chinese writer, poet and painter Chiang Yee 蒋彝 (1903-1977)’s creation during his sojourn in London in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>27</sup>

Based on these existing studies, my dissertation focuses on investigating the paradigm shift in art evaluation in the context of early-20<sup>th</sup>-century frequent exchanges between China and other cultures. My interpretation and claims are consistent methodologically with a social history of art. A series of big historical events, including

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*Guohua in Republican Shanghai* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

<sup>22</sup> Jonas Gerwing, *Between Tradition and Modernity: The Influence of Western European and Russian Art on Revolutionary China* (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2014).

<sup>23</sup> Vivian Yan Li, *Art Negotiations: Chinese International Art Exhibitions in the 1930s* (Ph.D., Ohio State University, 2006).

<sup>24</sup> Ralph C. Croizier, *Art and Revolution in Modern China: The Lingnan (Cantonese) School of Painting, 1906-1951* (London: University of California, 1988).

<sup>25</sup> Yiyan Wang, *Modern Art for a Modern China: The Chinese Intellectual Debate, 1900-1930* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

<sup>26</sup> Claire Roberts, *The dark side of the mountain: Huang Binhong (1865-1955) and artistic continuity in twentieth century China* (Ph.D., Australian National University, 2005).

<sup>27</sup> Paul Bevan, Anne Witschard and Da Zheng, eds., *Chiang Yee and His Circle Chinese Artistic and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1930-1950* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2022).

the foundation of Republican China, the New Culture Movement, and the breakout of the Chinese-Japanese War, impacted the training of art students and the creation of artists. Yet the relationship between social events and modern Chinese art is not the focus, which only provides a context for the issue of paradigm shift in my dissertation. Regarding the transcultural context that trained modern Chinese artists, I mine information from extant archives. Although Philippe Cinquini has investigated a large number of French archives, he relies primarily on statistical methods for data analysis. I utilize textual analysis to delve into this under-interpreted material. At the same time, I avoid artists who have already been well researched as case studies, such as Xu Beihong and Lin Fengmian 林风眠 (1900-1991). Instead, I choose three artists who are not researched in depth, Chang Shuhong 常书鸿 (1904-1994), Pan Yuliang 潘玉良 (1895-1977) and Wang Ziyun 王子云 (1897-1990). More importantly, I can present the paradigm shift in the evaluation system of modern Chinese art through the complexities involved in these three artists' art training background, art creation and art historical writing.

### **Literature Review: Introduction of Aesthetic Theories**

Chinese intellectuals' conscious attention to aesthetics began in the late nineteenth century to reshape literature and the arts into effective weapons for transforming the nation.<sup>28</sup> The Chinese politician and intellectual Liang Qichao 梁启超 (1873-1929) identified the role of art education in character building for qualified citizenship and

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<sup>28</sup> Hung-yok Ip, *Intellectuals in Revolutionary China, 1921-1949: Leaders, Heroes and Sophisticates* (London: Routledge, 2009), 98.

made a proposal on “education by taste.”<sup>29</sup> Another important early-twentieth-century scholar who frequently discussed aesthetic matters was Wang Guowei 王国维 (1877-1927). He thought that aesthetics functioned ideologically similar to religion in that art was able to penetrate people’s psychology and cure the emotionally depressed and morally degenerate society.<sup>30</sup> Wang proposed to promote the noble taste and healthy sentiment of people and to develop a new spirit of people through aesthetic education when the country was weak and people’s spirits were empty.<sup>31</sup> Following Wang Guowei, Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940), the reformer, educator and chancellor of Peking University, believed that aesthetic education has the function of suppressing the egoistic aspirations of people.<sup>32</sup> These pioneers of modern Chinese aesthetic education attempted to integrate traditional Chinese aesthetics with modern European aesthetics.<sup>33</sup>

According to Liu Gangji 劉綱紀, the twentieth-century Chinese aesthetic discourse was largely shaped by the reception of German idealism, namely the questions of German philosophy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>34</sup> New standards of beauty were created when modern Chinese intellectuals as a collective defied the formalism and classicism of traditional art, rejected the didactic and

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<sup>29</sup> Keping Wang, *Beauty and Human Existence in Chinese Philosophy* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 270.

<sup>30</sup> Xiaoqing Diana Lin, *Peking University: Chinese Scholarship and Intellectuals, 1898-1937* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 68.

<sup>31</sup> Zhu Zhirong, *Chinese Aesthetics in a Global Context* (Singapore: Springer, 2022), 296.

<sup>32</sup> Nina Y. Borevskaya, *Searching for Individuality: Educational Pursuits in China and Russia*, chap. in *Education, Culture, and Identity in Twentieth-Century China*, edited by Glen Peterson, Ruth Hayhoe and Yongling Lu (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001), 36.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Karl-Heinz Pohl, *Identity and Hybridity: Chinese Culture and Aesthetics in the Age of Globalization*, chap. in *Intercultural Aesthetics: A Worldview Perspective*, edited by Antoon van den Braembussche, Heinz Kimmerle and Nicole Note (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 91-2. Liu Gangji 劉綱紀, *德国美学在中国的传播与影响* [The Spreading and Influence of German Aesthetics in China], chap. in *劉綱紀文集* [Collection of Essays by Liu Gangji] (Wuhan: Wuhan University Press, 2009), 281-335.

moralistic Chinese use of art and identified with popularism, egalitarianism and individualism.<sup>35</sup> Wang Guowei believed “China’s weakness originates from the feebleness of Chinese people’s heart-mind” and training the heart-mind of the individual through aesthetic education is the way to transform China.<sup>36</sup> Wang studied the thought of Kant, Schiller, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche to establish his theory on artistic appreciation.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, the German-trained Cai Yuanpei developed his theory of aesthetic education based on the thorough study on Kant and other German philosophers.<sup>38</sup> Although Wang was impacted by the ideas of Schopenhauer and Cai by Kant, both of them had kept their feet firmly rooted in the Confucian tradition.<sup>39</sup> Wang’s theory incorporated the ideas of European modernist precursors with classical Oriental philosophies, especially Daoist-Buddhist thought.<sup>40</sup> Cai also incorporated Confucian teaching on appreciation of the beauty into his theory.<sup>41</sup>

As Cai Yuanpei was the first to give a course on aesthetics in a Chinese college, his theories on artistic education were closely related to the art students during the early twentieth century.<sup>42</sup> Cai devoted himself to establishing aesthetics as an independent discipline in China. In the context of promoting aesthetic education, Cai believed in the

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<sup>35</sup> Hung-yok Ip, *Intellectuals in Revolutionary China, 1921-1949*, 99.

<sup>36</sup> Hsiao-yen Peng, *Modern Chinese Counter-Enlightenment: Affect, Reason, and the Transcultural Lexicon* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2023), 52.

<sup>37</sup> Jana Rošker, *Searching for the Way: Theory of Knowledge in Pre-modern and Modern China* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2008), 137.

<sup>38</sup> Peng Feng, *On the Modernization of Chinese Aesthetics*, chap. in *Asian Aesthetics*, edited by Ken-ichi Sasaki (Singapore: Nus Press, 2010), 140.

<sup>39</sup> Li Zehou, *The Chinese Aesthetic Tradition*, translated by Maija Bell Samei (Honolulu: University of Hawai’I Press, 2010), 212.

<sup>40</sup> Liu Kang, *Aesthetics, Modernity, and Alternative Modernity: The Case of China*, chap. in *Aesthetics and Marxism: Chinese Aesthetic Marxists and Their Western Contemporaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 25.

<sup>41</sup> Ning Luo and Tao Guan, *Cai Yuanpei’s Vision of Aesthetic Education and His Legacy in China*, chap. in 19.

<sup>42</sup> Peng Feng, *On the Modernization of Chinese Aesthetics*, chap. in *Asian Aesthetics*, edited by Ken-ichi Sasaki (Singapore: Nus Press, 2010), 140.

importance of art and aesthetic education in cultivating the moral individual and erasing the boundaries between people, thereby achieving a utopian, good society.<sup>43</sup> Yet, it is necessary to differentiate the concept of aesthetics and art in the context of the early twentieth century before delving into the transcultural practices of European-trained Chinese artists. According to Peter Zarrow, Cai Yuanpei understood aesthetic education as a concept much broader than art; aesthetic education was supposed to replace religion while art itself was too limited to do any such thing.<sup>44</sup> Art was limited to the visual and auditory senses, which included painting, sculpture and architecture. In contrast, aesthetics involved the other three senses by including parks, landscaping, urban planning, and even individual activities, social organizations, scholarly groups and every kind of social expression.<sup>45</sup>

Although the term “aesthetics” did not refer to the wide scope of the entire social environment in the field of fine art, modern Chinese artists and art critics identified themselves with Cai’s vision.<sup>46</sup> Cai Yuanpei’s concept was conceived as a preeminent discourse of enlightenment and cultural revolution, which provided a distinctly urban and cosmopolitan vision to Chinese modernity.<sup>47</sup> Chinese artists and art critics joined with Cai to promote humanitarianism via aesthetic education, because man’s universal love of beauty was supposed to transcend greed and prejudice, the primary obstacles to

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<sup>43</sup> Peter Zarrow, *Aesthetics and Transcendence: Cai Yuanpei*, chap. in *Abolishing Boundaries: Global Utopias in the Formation of Modern Chinese Political Thought, 1880-1940* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2021), 55; 74.

<sup>44</sup> Peter Zarrow, *Aesthetics and Transcendence*, chap. in *Abolishing Boundaries*, 85.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> William J. Duiker, “The Aesthetics of Ts’ ai Yuan-p’ ei,” *Philosophy East and West*, v. 22, n. 4 (1972): 399.

<sup>47</sup> Liu Kang, *Aesthetics, Modernity, and Alternative Modernity: The Case of China*, chap. in *Aesthetics and Marxism: Chinese Aesthetic Marxists and Their Western Contemporaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 27.



harmony in human society.<sup>48</sup> Ban Wang's research on the interplay between the aesthetic and the political in modern China, which seeks to present how the political masquerades as aesthetic discourse and aesthetic experience, provides a context for the discussion on aesthetics in the field of fine art.<sup>49</sup> I use these studies on the introduction of aesthetic theories in early-twentieth-century China as the context of my study. I do not focus on these pioneers such as Liang Qichao, Wang Guowei and Cai Yuanpei to investigate the modern transition of Chinese art. Instead, I explore how Chinese artists and art critics responded to the new aesthetic theories from Europe, which has not been studied in depth.

### **Methodology**

The question of how European-trained Chinese artists and art critics appropriated European aesthetic theories, especially German philosophers' doctrines, is explored through the textual analysis of art criticism articles and monographs. For example, in discussing aesthetic education, Wang Guowei's language depends heavily on the transcultural lexicon, which originated from Europe and was translated into Japanese, including neologisms such as aestheticism 审美学, arts 美术, science 科学, ethics 道德, ideal 理想 and so on.<sup>50</sup> Beginning with these transcultural lexicons, I locate key aesthetic concepts from writings by Chinese artists and art critics. Meanwhile, when an aesthetic concept was translated into the Chinese context, the original meaning

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<sup>48</sup> William J. Duiker, "Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei and the Confucian Heritage," *Modern Asian Studies*, v. 5, n. 3 (1971): 220.

<sup>49</sup> Ban Wang, *The Sublime Figure of History: Aesthetics and Politics in Twentieth-century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

<sup>50</sup> Hsiao-yen Peng, *Modern Chinese Counter-Enlightenment*, 54.

was very likely to be narrowed or widened.<sup>51</sup> Artists and art critics did not aim to find equivalents for the translated concepts, but provided interpretations with loaded intentions.<sup>52</sup> More importantly, the translated lexicons or terms were gradually invested with multiple meanings in different contexts. In terms of “aesthetic education,” it means “education for feeling beauty.”<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, as an “aesthetic education” was envisaged to be accessible to all levels of the population and to be able to educate all the citizens, “beauty” became a word of loaded meanings. For instance, when the viewer is asked to feel beauty in nude art, “beauty” means that the viewer has to abandon the sexually-charged perspective in gazing at nude human bodies, especially in the case of female nudes. When it comes to the Chinese-Japanese war, “beauty” also means spiritual comfort and salvation for war exiles. Different dimensions of beauty were theoretically elaborated for Chinese audiences through the translation and the appropriation of German aesthetics in diverse publications on art. How specific European aesthetic theories were translated, adapted and integrated into the Chinese context will be explored, thereby presenting the establishment of new art evaluation criteria.

Furthermore, the relationship between the introduction of aesthetic theories and art practices will be investigated. Liu Kang claims that Chinese intellectuals appropriated aesthetics into China as an essential constituent of modernity, which is

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<sup>51</sup> Joachim Kurtz, “Domesticating a Philosophical Fiction: Chinese Translations of Immanuel Kant’s ‘Things in Themselves,’” *Concept and Communication*, n. 7 (2011): 188.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Kang Lee, *The Philosophy of Aesthetic Education in Ch’an Buddhism: A New Interpretation of the Mandala Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch from Dunhuang*, chap. in *The Dunhuang Grottoes and Global Education: Philosophical, Spiritual, Scientific, and Aesthetic Insights*, ed. Xu Di (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 72.

related to the creation of a new language of modernity.<sup>54</sup> The introduction of European art techniques likewise constituted a critical component of Chinese modernity. Based on visual analysis of European-trained Chinese artists' creations, I aim to clarify the discrepancies between aesthetic theories and artistic practices. The introduction of critical European aesthetic concepts, such as the theory of the female nude, provoked active discussions and changes in social perceptions in early-twentieth-century China. Although the practice of depicting the female nude was gradually legitimized, Chinese artists created corresponding problems in their artistic practices because of misunderstandings of European aesthetic concepts and artworks. The issues in the process of both pictorial and textual translations will be discussed.

### **Translation and appropriation of German Philosophy**

Literally, “aesthetic education” means “education for feeling beauty.”<sup>55</sup> As an “aesthetic education” was envisaged to be accessible to all levels of the population and to be able to educate all the citizens, “beauty” became a word of loaded meanings. For instance, when the viewer is asked to feel beauty in nude art, “beauty” means that the viewer has to abandon the sexually-charged perspective in gazing at nude human bodies, especially in the case of female nudes. When it comes to the Chinese-Japanese war, “beauty” also means spiritual comfort and salvation for war exiles. Different dimensions of beauty were theoretically elaborated for Chinese audiences through the

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<sup>54</sup> Liu Kang, *Aesthetics and Chinese Marxism*, chap. in *New Asian Marxisms*, edited by Tani E. Barlow (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 175.

<sup>55</sup> Kang Lee, *The Philosophy of Aesthetic Education in Ch’an Buddhism: A New Interpretation of the Mandala Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch from Dunhuang*, chap. in *The Dunhuang Grottoes and Global Education: Philosophical, Spiritual, Scientific, and Aesthetic Insights*, ed. Xu Di (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 72.

translation and the appropriation of German aesthetics in diverse publications on art.

In terms of introducing German aesthetic doctrines into China to build up new art evaluation canons, this dissertation involves three types of appropriation. The first type is the reductive treatment of the original German scholars' writings. Chapter 1 relates how Cai Yuanpei borrowed the German ethnologist Ernst Carl Gustav Grosse (1862-1927)'s research on Aboriginal arts to coin the concept of "craft art." Chapter 2 concerns Liu Haisu's citation of the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1871)'s notion of "the beauty of nature." Neither indicated the origin of their ideas but selected parts from the original text that were useful to them, sometimes resulting in poorly flowing text or scantily reasoned logic. Although they also chose to coalesce traditional Chinese culture to make the text familiar for their targeted readers, the confusion from translating foreign texts by piecemeal was not greatly alleviated. For example, Liu Haisu incorporated the concept of "Spirit Resonance, which means vitality 氣韻生動," the first principle in *Six Laws* 六法 formulated by the art historian and art critic Xie He 謝赫 (active. c. 500-535) in the discussion on nude models. Nevertheless, the concept of the pure human form was and still is not widely accepted by the Chinese audience. The second type is the application of newly introduced German concepts as common knowledge. Chapter 3 covers the association between art critic Yang Puzhi 楊樸之 (?-1976)'s article and Cai's promotion of Kantian philosophy. In particular, using neologisms such as aesthetics 美感 reveals the foreign source of Yang's ideas. Chang Shuhong likewise utilized foreign doctrines as a common sense, which will be investigated in chapter 4 about his response to the German

philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)'s theories. The third type is Wang Ziyun's borrowing of the German art historian and archaeologist Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768)'s cyclic model to write the Chinese sculpture art history, which will be investigated in chapter 5. Correspondingly, how this newly founded evaluation system steered three artists Pan Yuliang, Wang Ziyun, and Chang Shuhong's choices of studying fields and their creations will be respectively explored in each chapter in detail.

### **Three Artists: Pan Yuliang, Wang Ziyun, and Chang Shuhong**

My dissertation primarily focuses on the artworks, art criticism articles and art historical writings by three European-trained Chinese artists Pan Yuliang 潘玉良 (1895-1977), Wang Ziyun 王子云 (1897-1990) and Chang Shuhong 常书鸿 (1904-1994). The choice of these three artists closely relates to the aesthetic theories that I would like to discuss. Firstly, the theory of unifying art and craft, which changed the longstanding hierarchy of art over craft in Chinese culture, transformed the self-orientation of Chinese artists. Although the introduction of this concept was monumental, a large number of Chinese artists were not well-prepared for renouncing the upper-class status of intellectuals that traditional Chinese society had given them. Modern Chinese artists only changed the traditional conception of craftsmanship as thoughtless mechanical skills and were ready to study craftsmanship. Pan, Wang and Chang were among the few artists who studied both art and craft at the same time. Therefore, I investigate their art training background in Europe and artistic practices to reveal the critical transformations of Chinese art in the early twentieth century.

The three artists in this dissertation were all educated at the *École Nationale*

Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris. Drawing antique sculptures, copying masterpieces from museums, and depicting live models at ateliers were routine training methods. This training mode afforded them with what the feminist art historian Griselda Pollock defined as “the decisive character of avant-gardism: the play of reference, deference and difference.”<sup>56</sup> The artworks by three of them demonstrate their awareness of what was already going on, the latest and most radical developments, as well as their attempts to establish a difference that was both legible and breakthrough.<sup>57</sup> The technical formulation of Chinese artists will also be investigated in this study.

Three artists traveled across metropolitan cities in Europe to seek inspirational sources for their creations. Different art traditions attracted them. Pan Yuliang succeeded in acquiring a place of study in Rome, where the artistic tradition provided a rich stimulus for her creation. Wang Ziyun was attracted by the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British watercolor landscapes; watercolor became his primary medium during the war when the sculpture was challenging to create. Lyon, a city well-known for its textile industry, was essential for Chang Shuhong’s art career. His incorporation of textile decorations in his oil paintings closely related to his training in textile design in Lyon, and the nomination of him as the first director of Dunhuang Art Academy was likely to result from his textile expertise.

Furthermore, three artists held different attitudes towards traditional Chinese art. Pan Yuliang was obsessed with the representation of women. She attempted to subvert

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<sup>56</sup> Griselda Pollock, *Avant-garde Gambits, 1888-1893: Gender and the Color of Art History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1993), 12-4.

<sup>57</sup> Gill Perry, *Exhibiting “les Indépendants”: Gauguin and the Café Volpini Show*, chap. in *The Challenge of the Avant-garde*, ed. Paul Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 167.

the traditional social definition of women by combining the *baimiao* tradition of the Song dynasty with the female nude—the classic painting theme of the European tradition. Chang Shuhong, on the other hand, interprets the encounter between Chinese and European painting from the perspective of cultural competition. He sought to demonstrate that Dunhuang murals inspired European modernism, thus placing himself on an equal footing with European modernist painters. In the paintings by Wang Ziyun, the British watercolor landscape tradition meets with the traditional Chinese handscroll. Wang followed British colorists' accuracy in conveying a location's geographical and historical characteristics. As regards his expertise in sculpture, it was his knowledge of the history of European sculpture, instead of practical carving, that became the focus of his future career. With Winckelmann's archaeological activities and art history writings in mind, he traveled throughout northwest China, conducting archaeological fieldwork and collecting field materials to write the first Chinese sculpture history. Wang discovered a continual history of Chinese sculpture when there was no tradition of writing sculpture in China.

### **Chapter Structure**

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of why three European-trained Chinese artists Pan Yuliang, Wang Ziyun and Chang Shuhong selected to study both fine art and craft art in Europe. The German-trained Chinese philosopher Cai Yuanpei's importation of Grosse's writing on Aboriginal arts theoretically elevated the craft art to a status equal to fine art. Cai took pains to condense and translate Grosse's 1894 publication *Die Anfänge der Kunst* into a single Chinese

article to abolish the long-standing hierarchical distinction between art and craft. The journalistic transmission of this notion of the unity between art and craft decisively steered the choices of Chinese artists trained in Europe. Three young art students Pan, Wang and Chang, who were funded by the Republican government to study in Europe, adapted themselves to this context by respectively studying oil painting and sculpture, fine art sculpture and decorative sculpture, oil painting and textile. The uncertain status of sculpture, which involves both intelligent conception and laborious process, made it a suitable medium for Wang and Pan to define themselves as both artist and artisan. Pan also attempted to rely on the high status of sculpture to avoid gender discrimination against women artists. Since only a very few of Pan's finished sculptures have survived, and Wang shifted his focus from sculpture making to sculpture history writing after completing his studies, the issue of how to respond to the concept of unifying art and craft in artworks will only be examined in detail through Chang's oil paintings.

Chapter 2 discusses how Chinese artists and art critics attempted to introduce the female nude, the classic painting motif in European painting, into Chinese culture and make it acceptable for Chinese audiences. The Chinese art educator Liu Haisu appropriated Hegel's notion of "the beauty of nature" in the masterpiece *Aesthetics* to theoretically teach Chinese audiences the artistic beauty of the human body. The art critic Tang Jun 唐雱 (1896-1954) also used the German philosopher Julius von Kirchmann (1802-1884)'s discussion on nude art and morality to instruct the viewer to improve the aesthetic perception. Based on these theoretical establishments, French-trained male artists emulated their teachers in Paris to record the moment of nude



female models amidst professional teachers and students with photography. Compared with these protagonists taking the role of theoretically and practically educating the audiences, Pan Yuliang as a female artist was thinking about another issue: how far an artist was able to translate the theory of pure human form so that the paintings appear elegantly beautiful and do not irritate the moral discomfort of the viewer. Her training background from Shanghai to Lyon, Paris, and Rome afforded her the techniques to bridge the Jiangnan 江南 painting tradition and the Mediterranean art, properly introducing the subject of the female nude into Chinese painting and redefining the role of modern women.

Chapter 3 shifts the focus to investigate how Pan Yuliang portrayed herself, implicating her struggles as an artist and a woman. The members of the intellectual network with Cai Yuanpei as the central figure appropriated the aesthetic notions of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) to validate the literati painting theory of “the man revealed in the painting” as a paradigm for training modern artists. The paradigms for an outstanding literati painter on the expansive learning, refinement, and noble character are transferred to evaluate modern artists. In contrast, the standard of a moderate degree of acquired technical ability for the literati painter is renounced and replaced by the versatile mastery of European naturalistic representation. How did she respond to this newly-established evaluation canon? She had to meet the standards for an artist in her era while at the same time resisting unjust accusations of her “impure” experience in a brothel as a teenager. Since she hardly published articles or wrote autobiographies to express her thoughts as her contemporaries Wang and Chang did, all

her voices about being an artist and a woman will be mined from her paintings.

Chapter 4 explores how the French-trained Chang Shuhong dealt with the encounter between European and Chinese painting after becoming the Dunhuang Art Academy director in 1943. His pilgrimage journey to Dunhuang from Paris—the center of European modernism—meant he had to confront this issue head-on. Chang did not employ an in-between approach from a technical, material, and stylistic point of view, as did his well-known contemporaries Xu Beihong and Lin Fengmian. Instead, he elaborated on the competition and integration between two artistic traditions from a philosophical perspective. The doctrine of artistic salvation elaborated by Nietzsche (1844-1900) convinced Chang of art's power to save the people suffering from the Chinese-Japanese war in the 1940s. Nietzsche's metaphor of man as a bridge and its artistic transformation by the German Expressionist group *Die Brücke* inspired him to define the artist's role as a bridge. This bridge connects not only the French and the Chinese painting traditions but also the past and the future of Chinese art. A new and hopeful era embedded in his artworks theoretically fulfilled the social vision of artistic redemption for those who suffered during the war.

Chapter 5 investigates how Wang Ziyun's archaeology of art was aligned with the national revival program of the Republican government. Winkelman's writings and doctrines were delivered to Wang through his academic training in Paris. Fluent in French, Wang was well acquainted with Winkelman's archaeological practices in Italy and his writings. He appropriated the cyclical schema of rise and decline that Winckelmann formulated in the masterpiece *The History of Ancient Art* to structure his

writing of *History of Chinese Sculpture Art*. This cyclical perception of Chinese art history defined the Tang dynasty as the golden age in ancient Chinese history, which promised the possibility of Republican China as the next golden age, especially given the long enough period of decline after Tang. His landscape painting and collection of antiquities during his archaeological investigation also responded to this admiration for the Tang dynasty. More importantly, his appropriation of Winkelmann's doctrine fits well with the Republican intellectuals' reverence for Germany's unification in 1871 after the Franco-Prussian war in 1806. Winckelmann's doctrine between the ideal beauty of art and political freedom was apt to convey the artist's desire for a liberal China.

## CHAPTER 1

### **The Hierarchy of Arts and the Media Choices of Artists**

The separation between art and craft, and the devaluation of craft as manual labor, persisted in Chinese culture until the early twentieth century, when calls for the unification of the two began. This appeal was not initiated by an artist based on aesthetic considerations but by the German-trained philosopher and politician Cai Yuanpei for the social ideal of fostering modern Chinese citizenship. How could this new vision of the unification between art and craft be convincing? How did the young generation of artists respond to this top-down promotion of combining art and craft? How did the arts advance the social ideal of cultivating modern citizenship?

I argue that Cai spread the idea of art and craft being originally unified by appropriating nineteenth-century German philosophers' discussions on the origin of art and disclosing the social issues arising from the split between the two, especially in industrial societies. This philosophy guided young European-trained Chinese artists Pan Yuliang, Wang Ziyun, and Chang Shuhong to study two disciplines to balance artistry and craftsmanship. I further demonstrate that the inherently blurred lines between art and craft, the gendered division of art training, and the hierarchical education system all complicated these artists' choices in their studies and creations.

I will first examine how ornament reconciles art and craft and props up the equivalent status between the two. Then I will discuss the craft qualities of sculpture to reveal why both Pan Yuliang and Wang Ziyun chose to learn it as a craft, although gender also played a role in Pan's case. Meanwhile, Chang Shuhong's insistence on

studying textile and his consequent difficulties will be investigated in detail. Only a few sculptures by Pan exist, and Wang turned to write art history after completing his study. In view of this, how the artworks conveyed the concept of educating the public will be explored through Chang's oil paintings incorporating textile decorations.

### **Ornament as the intermediary of art and craft**

The elevation of the craft art to a status equal to that of fine art began with Cai Yuanpei's introduction of German philosophical doctrines in the 1920s, especially his importation of the German ethnologist Ernst Carl Gustav Grosse (1862-1927)'s writing on Aboriginal arts. Cai coined the term “craft art 工藝美術” in the opening part of his article *The Beginnings of Art* 美術的起源 published in 1920.<sup>58</sup> He juxtaposed craft art with two branches of fine art—sculpture and painting to suggest its parity with fine art: “Art has a narrow and a broad sense. In a narrow sense, it specifically refers to architectural statues (carvings), drawings (including patterns), and the craft art (including ornaments).”<sup>59</sup> This seemingly brief definition of art from the narrow sense raises a complex issue: what is the relationship between art, craft, and ornament?

An array of ever-changing terms lies behind the complex tensions between art, craft, and ornament that Cai implied, including these three terms and their derivatives. Before the European Renaissance, there was no distinction between a painter and the person making frames for paintings— “both were artists and craftsmen.”<sup>60</sup> The word

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<sup>58</sup> Zhu Xiaoyue 朱孝岳, 關於“工藝美術”一詞的幾點詮釋 [A Few Comments on the Concept of “Craft Art”], chap. in 裝飾文叢 [Decoration Thesis Collection], ed. Decoration Magazine Editorial Board (Shenyang: Liaoning Fine Art Press, 2017), 47.

<sup>59</sup> Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, “美術的起源 [The Beginnings of Art],” 繪學雜誌 [Painting Scholarship Magazine], n. 1 (1920): 1.

<sup>60</sup> Richard L. Lewis and Susan Lewis, *The Power of Art* (Australia: Cengage, 2019), 192.

“art” denoted any human skill; the opposite of human art was nature instead of craft.<sup>61</sup> However, the Renaissance emphasis on individual genius raised artists working on painting and sculpture above “craftspeople who made furniture, clothing, jewelry, or glassware.”<sup>62</sup> To be specific, the Italian painter and art historian Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) established architecture, sculpture, and painting as “liberal arts” and their practitioners as gentlemen rather than laborers in the “mechanical arts” in his *Lives of the Artists* published in 1550 and 1568.<sup>63</sup> This long-standing distinction is subsequently expressed as “fine art” versus “applied art,” “major arts” versus “minor arts,” or “art” versus “craft.”<sup>64</sup> The omission of the adjective “fine” and the opposition between “art” and “craft” occurred in the nineteenth century.<sup>65</sup> When “art” is used today, it refers to the prestigious category of (fine) art and “has a positive evaluative connotation that ‘craft’ lacks.”<sup>66</sup> Additionally, two alternative terms for “craft”—*applied arts* and *decorative arts* possessed a subtle difference in meaning during the nineteenth century. *Applied arts* refers to “utilitarian objects that have aesthetic elements added to the basic form.” It fell out of favor by the mid-nineteenth century due to its split into two—machine-made items known as production and individually produced works as crafts.<sup>67</sup> *Decorative arts* suggests a combination of skill in

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<sup>61</sup> Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 5.

<sup>62</sup> R. Lewis and S. Lewis, *The Power of Art*, 192.

<sup>63</sup> Timothy Wilson, *Maiolica: Italian Renaissance Ceramics in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2016), 3.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Larry Shiner, *Western and non-Western Concepts of Art*, chap. in *Arguing About Art: Contemporary Philosophical Debates*, eds. Alex Neill and Aaron Ridley (New York: Routledge, 2008), 466.

<sup>66</sup> Sally J. Markowitz, “The Distinction between Art and Craft,” *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, v. 28, n. 1 (1994): 55.

<sup>67</sup> Martha D. Lynn, *From Art Glass to the Studio Movement—Shifting Terminology*, chap. in *American Studio Glass, 1960-1990* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 2004), 5.

expression and execution and a high level of aesthetic sensitivity; its more nuanced meaning includes “its function as decoration for the domestic interior and as a status symbol.”<sup>68</sup> When Cai began his article by explaining that art in a narrow sense includes sculpture, painting, and craft art, he emphasized the definition of art before separating it into two oppositional parts. This unity of art and craft is closely related to the writings of nineteenth-century German philosophers, which constituted Cai’s primary source of inspiration.

In terms of the ornament’s meaning and function, Cai used this term following the German philosophical discussion on the origins of art. Specifically, the German architect and theorist Gottfried Semper (1803-1879) and his followers in the nineteenth century described ornament as “originating in functional forms that had become transformed into aesthetic motifs.”<sup>69</sup> Cai soon introduced the discussion concerning the relationship between ornament and the origins of art in the passage following his brief description of art, which is a translation and adaption of Grosse’s classification of art. In his book *Die Anfänge der Kunst*, published in 1894 and translated into English as *The Beginnings of Art* in 1897, Grosse followed the German philosopher Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801-1887) to divide art into two categories— “the arts of rest and motion.”<sup>70</sup> Cai went into close detail about “the arts of rest” and described “decoration” as the core: “The arts of rest are also commonly defined by the terms of graphic and plastic arts. The origin of the graphic and plastic arts is not independent, but an

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<sup>68</sup> M. Lynn, *From Art Glass to the Studio Movement*, chap. in *American Studio Glass, 1960-1990*, 5-6.

<sup>69</sup> Matthew Rampley, “The Ethnographic Sublime,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, n. 47 (2005): 255.

<sup>70</sup> Ernst Grosse, *The Beginnings of Art* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1897), 51.

ornament; the first is on the body, the second on the utensils; the last is independent images—statues and paintings.”<sup>71</sup> Accordingly, both fine art and craft art are categorized as the arts of rest deriving from decoration, while the arts of motion consisting of dance, poetry, and music are beyond the scope of this chapter.<sup>72</sup> The original text by Grosse reads:

We begin with the arts of rest, which are commonly designated as the plastic and graphic arts. The most original form of representative art is probably not independent sculpture but decoration, and the object to which decoration was earliest applied is the human body. We therefore study first primitive bodily adornment. Even the rudest tribes are, however, not satisfied with decorating their bodies, but also, decorate their implements and weapons. We shall study, secondly, this decoration of implements. In the third place, and finally, we shall contemplate the primitive works of free painting and sculpture, or those paintings and sculptures which did not serve purposes of ornamentation as productions of decorative art, but have an independent significance.<sup>73</sup>

Grosse suggested two critical points: decoration is the origin of art; the study of the origin of art is achieved through primitive tribal art. As he implied in this passage, *The Beginnings of Art*, a 300-plus-page treatise, focuses primarily on the art of the Aboriginal Australians; the art of North Americans, South Africans, Fuegians and Eskimos is also used for comparison.<sup>74</sup> Grosse’s conception of ornament can be deduced to comprise not only surface decoration on the body and utilitarian objects but also non-utilitarian, decorative items, considering his broad discussion points from body tattooing, clothing decoration, tribal symbols, to rock carvings.<sup>75</sup> Cai accurately

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<sup>71</sup> Cai Yuanpei, “The Beginnings of Art,” *Painting Scholarship Magazine*, n. 1 (1920): 1.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ernst Grosse, *The Beginnings of Art*, 51.

<sup>74</sup> Susan Lowish, “Evolutionists and Australian Aboriginal Art: 1885-1915,” *Journal of Art Historiography*, n. 12 (2015): 9.

<sup>75</sup> Priyanka Basu, “Ideal and Material Ornament: Rethinking the ‘Beginnings’ and History of Art,” *Journal of Art Historiography*, n. 9 (2013): 7.



captured Grosse's point that decoration is the origin of the art, while he deliberately omitted the words on primitive art in Grosse's original text. This omission was probably intended to ensure the general applicability of his discussion on the relationship between art and decoration. Cai also agreed with Grosse that the study of primitive art is equivalent to the study of the origins of art, as almost all the following sections of his article are devoted to Aboriginal arts. In actuality, Cai briefly extracted parts of chapters four to eleven of Grosse's book *The Beginnings of Art* and occasionally added his own discussion, thus constituting an independent article introducing the Aboriginal arts.<sup>76</sup> Why did Cai believe studying Aboriginal arts could illuminate the complexities of art, craft, and decoration for Chinese readers?

Grosse's elaboration of the primitive decoration as the beginnings of art is rooted in German aesthetic studies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when ornament was most frequently employed to study the origins of art.<sup>77</sup> During the nineteenth century, the ornament was seen as a cultural fossil that preserved clues to the origins of art-making and a fundamental component of style.<sup>78</sup> In particular, Grosse's approach to the origins of art through the study of primitive tribal ornament established a link with Semper. Semper contended in his major treatise *Der Stil* (1860-63) that painting, sculpture, and architecture, the three summits of the monumental arts,

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<sup>76</sup> Ernst Grosse, *Die Anfänge der Kunst* (Freiburg: J.C.B. Mohr, 1894). Ernst Grosse, *The Beginnings of Art* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1897).

<sup>77</sup> Jean M. Evans, *The Lives of Sumerian Sculpture: An Archaeology of the Early Dynastic Temple* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 56.

<sup>78</sup> Frances S. Connelly, "Primitive" Ornament and the Arabesque: Paul Gauguin's Decorative Art, chap. in *The Sleep of Reason: Primitivism in Modern European Art and Aesthetics, 1725-1907* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 55.

developed out of the crafts by a process of translation.<sup>79</sup> He referenced the biological theories to apply evolutionary terms to artistic development, claiming the existence of *Urformen*, namely primitive forms, from which all artistic creations were derived.<sup>80</sup> In this evolutionary process, the central role of ornament was evidenced by the persistence of “the memory of form-making at more primitive stages and in materials such as textiles, clay or wood” in later metal or stone artistic products.<sup>81</sup> According to Semper, wickerwork formed the basic motif of all architectural forms; sculpture emerged from the decoration of the wickerwork fence; pictures developed from weaving and other textile art products.<sup>82</sup> The continuous existence of past forms of applied arts in present monumental arts means that there is no distinction “between the laws which govern the work of art and those of a product of the crafts.”<sup>83</sup> Semper thus removed the hierarchical division between *Kunst* and *Kunstgewerbe*—high art and applied art, which Vasari established.<sup>84</sup> This removal of the hierarchy between fine art and craft art reverberates in Grosse and Cai (who surely borrowed Grosse’s views)’s articulation on

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<sup>79</sup> Alina Payne, *Beyond Kunstwollen: Alois Riegl and the Baroque*, chap. in *The Origins of Baroque Art in Rome*, ed. and trans. Andrew Hopkins and Arnold Witt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010), 3. Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten, oder, praktische Aesthetik* [Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts, or, Practical Aesthetics], 2 vols. (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1878). Earl of Listowel, *A Critical History of Modern Aesthetics* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1933), 111.

<sup>80</sup> Semper’s attempt to discover *Urformen* (original forms) for architectural styles can be traced back to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)’s morphology and Charles Darwin (1809-1882)’s 1859 publication *Origin of Species*. Mitchell B. Frank, *Recapitulation and Evolutionism in German Art writing*, chap. in *German Art History and Scientific Thought: Beyond Formalism*, eds. Mitchell B. Frank and Daniel Adler (New York: Routledge, 2016), 101. Paul van der Grijp, *Art and Exoticism: An Anthropology of the Yearning for Authenticity* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2009), 54.

<sup>81</sup> Alina Payne, *Beyond Kunstwollen*, chap. in *The Origins of Baroque Art in Rome*, 3.

<sup>82</sup> Moshe Barasch, *The Beginnings of Scholarly Study: Gottfried Semper*, chap. in *Modern Theories of Art: From Impressionism to Kandinsky* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 208.

<sup>83</sup> Joseph Rykwert, *Semper and the Conception of Style*, chap. in *Gottfried Semper und die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1976), 71.

<sup>84</sup> Peta Carlin, *On Surface and Place: Between Architecture, Textiles and Photography* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 7.

the arts of rest.

At the same time, Semper assigned “primitive” cultures a well-defined place as the locus for the origins of art still in his far-reaching book *Der Stil*.<sup>85</sup> He claimed that primary forms originated in an “antediluvian” world—the earliest age in human history while studying modern primitive art is the best way to form an idea of the original creation of man’s earliest stage.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, the original aesthetic impulses were sought from the ornament embellishing the utilitarian objects of modern primitives.<sup>87</sup> The chronological and the cultural attributes of the “primitive” were conflated, making the study of the origins of art primarily the study of the ornament of primitive cultures.<sup>88</sup> Grosse clearly articulated the same view. He pinpointed that “the first and most pressing task of the social science of art” lies in “the study of the primitive art of primitive peoples.”<sup>89</sup> To reach this goal, the study of the science of art should turn to ethnology capable of presenting the entire current series of primitive peoples rather than the fragmentary productions offered by archaeology.<sup>90</sup> Cai integrated the classification—“the arts of rest and motion” to translate Grosse’s view that ethnology was superior to archaeology in studying the origins of art. He claimed: “The materials obtained from ethnology include static, dynamic categories. Archaeology is static, and there are often disconnects; it is not easy to understand without the aid of ethnology.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Jean M. Evans, *The Lives of Sumerian Sculpture*, 57.

<sup>86</sup> Moshe Barasch, *The Beginnings of Scholarly Study*, chap. in *Modern Theories of Art: From Impressionism to Kandinsky*, 205.

<sup>87</sup> J. Evans, *The Lives of Sumerian Sculpture*, 57.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Ernst Grosse, *The Beginnings of Art*, 21.

<sup>90</sup> Ernst Grosse, *The Beginnings of Art*, 21-2.

<sup>91</sup> Cai Yuanpei, “The Beginnings of Art,” 3.

Returning to the hierarchy of art and craft, Grosse elaborated on the equivalence between major and minor arts in detail based on Semper. He arrived at a unified concept of art for the “art of all times” through the suspension of qualitative differences between the higher and lower arts, the difference between which only lies in quantity.<sup>92</sup> As Grosse indicated in conclusion:

Strange and inartistic as the primitive forms of art sometimes appear at first sight, as soon as we examine them more closely, we find that they are formed according to the same laws as govern the highest creations of art. And not only are the great fundamental principles of eurhythm, symmetry, contrast, climax, and harmony practised by the Australians and the Eskimo as they were by the Athenians and the Florentines.....<sup>93</sup>

As with Semper, Grosse claimed that the laws governing primitive art are not different from those of high art, thereby confirming the equal status between major and minor arts. Although Cai omitted a large number of elements in Grosse’s conclusion probably due to space limitations of his article, he retained and accurately translated the critical point that the laws governing primitive art are the same as those that govern the art of civilized societies.<sup>94</sup> Cai’s emphasis on smoothing out the hierarchical differences between high and low arts stemmed from his ideal of transforming society through art. The abolition of the prevailing dichotomy between “high” and “low” art, fine arts and handicrafts served as the prerequisite for achieving Cai’s goal of transforming society through art.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Susanne Leeb, “Primitivism and Humanist Teleology in Art History around 1900,” *Journal of Art Historiography*, n. 12 (2015): <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/leeb.pdf>.

<sup>93</sup> Ernst Grosse, *The Beginnings of Art*, 307.

<sup>94</sup> Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, “美術的起源 [The Beginnings of Art],” 繪學雜誌 [Painting Scholarship Magazine], n. 2 (1921): 18.

<sup>95</sup> David J. Diephouse, “Science, Industry and Art: Gottfried Semper’s Search for the *Juste Milieu*,” *Journal of the Rutgers University Libraries*, v. 40, n. 1 (1978): 17.

Cai ended his article with a transparent approach to social improvement via art—the unification of art and craft, especially the integration of art into the craft. He added his discussion beyond his translation and summary of Grosse’s ideas:

The relationship between art and society has been significant regardless of the times. Since Plato put forward aesthetic education, many educators believe art is a tool to improve society. Nevertheless, due to the division of labor in the civilized era, almost all those who are not art experts are not. As a result of the division of labor in the civilized age, there is almost no room for those who are not art experts to engage in art concurrently. The artisans, who worked mechanically day in and day out without any participation of art in their work, found it highly boring; (their work) far less interesting than the work of the primitive people. Recently, Morris, for example, hates the separation of art and craft, advocating artistic labor, which is somewhat similar to the situation of primitive art.<sup>96</sup>

Cai opposed the modern division of labor that confined art to the exclusive domain of artists; he advocated integrating art into the craftsmanship of artisans, given the vital role of art in improving society. The special attention that Cai placed on art education is aligned with Semper’s view again, who argued that art was the proper medium for raising public taste and fostering national loyalty.<sup>97</sup> As early as 1852, when Semper published his pamphlet *Wissenschaft, Industrie und Kunst (Science, Industry and Art)*, he had paid particular attention to the education of the public taste.<sup>98</sup> Semper detected the aesthetic bedlam from the machine and mass production.<sup>99</sup> He argued in this treatise that art education must involve the most practical and widespread education of people’s taste and training artists and artisans to settle the problems of the industrial

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<sup>96</sup> Cai Yuanpei, “The Beginnings of Art,” *Painting Scholarship Magazine*, n. 2 (1921): 19-20.

<sup>97</sup> Jennifer Jenkins, *Provincial Modernity: Local Culture and Liberal Politics in Fin-de-Siècle Hamburg* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 50.

<sup>98</sup> Elena Chestnova, “‘Ornamental design is...a kind of practical science’ Theories of Ornament at the London School of Design and Department of Science and Art,” *The Journal of Art Historiography*, n. 1 (2014): 4. <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/chestnova.pdf>.

<sup>99</sup> D. Diephouse, “Science, Industry and Art,” 16.

world.<sup>100</sup> It is necessary to reunite the arts and crafts to achieve this goal, which has disappeared in the industrial world and has led to the degeneration of crafts.<sup>101</sup> Meanwhile, among all the arts, the applied art are most closely related to the public's daily life. The beautiful, well-designed utilitarian and decorative objects thus undertake the mission of nurturing people's aesthetic sense, which would eventually "lead to a more beautiful, more civilized and happier society."<sup>102</sup>

On the other hand, Cai's conception of transforming society through art also involves another understanding of ornament. Another competing notion of ornament interpreted it "as the expression of a primal instinct," just as Friedrich Schiller argued in *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1794) that "propensity to ornamentation and play" is one of the "visible signs of the savage's entry into humanity."<sup>103</sup> Likewise, Cai, familiar with and inspired by Schiller's thought, assigned a central role to the "decorative instinct" of human beings.<sup>104</sup> As he wrote at the very beginning of his article: "If the animal kingdom had the ability to create art, it would definitely be able to progress from generation to generation, but this is absolutely not the case, so when it comes to art, it must be said that it is exclusively human."<sup>105</sup> In Cai's view, the

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<sup>100</sup> Diephouse, "Science, Industry and Art," 17. Semper's original text reads: "Findet man für nötig, eine mehr systematische Reform der jetzigen Zustände einzuführen, so muss dies durch einen zweckmäßigen und möglichst allgemeinen Volksunterricht des Geschmacks geschehen." Gottfried Semper (1803-1879), *Wissenschaft, Industrie und Kunst: Vorschläge zur Anregung nationalen Kunstgefühles, bei dem Schlusse der Londoner Industrie-Ausstellung* (Braunschweig: F. Vieweg und Sohn, 1852), 62.

<sup>101</sup> James Elkins, *Why Art Cannot Be Taught* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 31.

<sup>102</sup> Sheila D. Muller, ed., *Dutch Art: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 17

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> Walter Lee, *Principles and Laws in World Politics: Classical Chinese Perspectives on Global Conflict* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2022), 362.

<sup>105</sup> Cai Yuanpei, "The Beginnings of Art," 3. To be sure, he once again borrowed Grosse's text to recognize "art or aesthetic sensibility as a human universal, a criterion to distinguish humans from animals." Monica Juneja, 'A Very Civil Idea...' *Art History and World-Making—With and Beyond the Nation*, chap. in *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies*, eds., Laila Abu-Er-Rub, Christiane Brosius, Sebastian Meurer, Diamantis Panagiotopoulos and Susan Richter (New York: Routledge, 2019), 296.

continuous renewal of art, especially the progress of ornament, was not only a sign of the difference between animals and humans but also a criterion to judge the progress of a society. He claimed as early as 1916: “As people’s wisdom progressed, decoration gradually changed its scope. The decoration of the body was popular in the uncivilized era; the city’s decoration could not be noticed in countries with less developed cultures. From near to far, from private to public, the social changes can be observed.”<sup>106</sup>

The unity of art and craft was promoted in 1920s China under Cai Yuanpei’s social ambition—raising people’s aesthetic senses, thus advancing the emergence of modern civilized society. In order to abolish the long-standing hierarchical distinction between art and craft, Cai took pains to condense and translate the 1894 publication *Die Anfänge der Kunst*, a study of Aboriginal arts by German ethnologist Grosse, into a single Chinese article. The crucial status of the primitive tribal arts was established through the interpretation of ornament as primordial forms by the German theorist Semper and his followers, including Grosse. These primitive forms persist from crafts of the earliest age to the high arts of civilized societies, while the origins of art could only be fully comprehended through studying modern primitive ornaments. As such, ornament served as an intermediary to reunite art and craft that have been separated since Renaissance. The unification of art and craft provides the foundation for Cai Yuanpei’s goal of educating public taste and thus promoting the progress of social civilization.

The notion of the unity between art and craft, borrowed by Cai Yuanpei from

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<sup>106</sup> Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, “華工學校講義 [Lecture Notes for the School of Chinese Workers],” 蔡元培美學文選 [An Anthology of Cai Yuanpei’s Writings on Aesthetics] (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1983), 25.

nineteenth-century German aesthetic theories and introduced to China in the 1920s, decisively steered the choices of Chinese artists trained in Europe. Artists Pan Yuliang, Chang Shuhong, and Wang Ziyun coincidentally chose to study both fine art and craft art. Pan studied oil painting and sculpture, Chang oil painting and textile design, Wang independent sculpture as fine art and decorative sculpture as craftsmanship. Although Pan studied independent sculpture which is categorized as fine art in the European context, she most likely studied sculpture out of concern for craftsmanship, given that sculpture was considered to be the work of craftsmen in China. As in Europe, the distinction between the high arts and the arts of craftsmanship has long existed in Chinese artistic tradition.<sup>107</sup> Only calligraphy and painting were considered supreme arts, while all else was traditionally considered artisans' works, including sculpture, jade carving, ceramics, lacquerware, and silk embroidery.<sup>108</sup> What dilemmas did these artists encounter in the European academic system, where art and craft were separated? How is the notion of unifying art and craft revealed in the artworks by these artists?

### **Collision of Traditional and Modern Concepts: Art versus Craft**

The Confucian value system formed a rigid hierarchy of classes, in which the scholar-officials came first, then farmers, craftsmen and artisans, and merchants at the bottom.<sup>109</sup> According to this value system, only gentlemen were considered to be able to produce great works of art; calligraphy and education occupied the status of sole major arts. Correspondingly, craft art and even technically skillful painting were looked

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<sup>107</sup> Stanley Muraschige, *Philosophy of Art*, chap. in *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Antonio S. Cua (New York: Routledge, 2003), 511.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Joseph Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 223.



down upon by Chinese art theorists into artisan's work.<sup>110</sup>

Nevertheless, this traditional concept of valuing art over craft changed in the early twentieth century. In his speech on February 21, 1912, the recently-appointed Minister of Education Cai Yuanpei elevated the status of craft equal to art; he claimed: “craftsmanship, which is utilitarian, can also stimulate aesthetic senses.”<sup>111</sup> Meanwhile, Cai considered the graphic aspect as the core of craft, as he claimed: “In China, around the Tang Dynasty, people attached great importance to craft art. Craft art was very prosperous at that time. This can be said to be the heyday of China's culture. In the original, our painting emphasized the graphic side. Craft art had, thus, great achievements.”<sup>112</sup> Cai established the centrality of motifs in the craft art and promoted the Tang dynasty as the golden age of Chinese culture. His ideas elicited wide responses among contemporaneous artists. The master painter Xu Beihong 徐悲鸿 (1895-1953) not only advocated transforming Chinese art with the naturalistic tradition of the Tang and Song dynasties.<sup>113</sup> Although Xu is an artist trained from a French academic education, he shared Cai's esteem for the practical function of art: “At present, as far as the national strength is concerned, (if you) would like to learn practical skills in art and seek the truth with it, and rely on the promotion of national power, no more than the

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> “手工，实利主义也，亦可以兴美感。” Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培，“对于新教育之意见 [Opinions on the New Education],” chap. in 中国伦理学史 [History of Chinese Ethics] (Taiyuan: Shanxi People's Press, 2020), 143.

<sup>112</sup> Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培，“与时代画报记者谈话 [Talking with a Journalist of *Time Pictorial*],” chap. in 美育人生：蔡元培美学精选集 [Aesthetic Life: Selected Articles on Aesthetics by Cai Yuanpei] (Changchun: Jilin People's Press, 2020), 176.

<sup>113</sup> Zhao Chengqing 赵成清，“蔡元培的工艺美术观 [Cai Yuanpei's Ideas of Arts and Crafts],” 装饰 [Art & Design], n. 10 (2015): 75.

graphic art (should be your choice).”<sup>114</sup> Xu’s statement both affirmed the status of applied art from a painter’s point of view and confirmed the state’s support for craft art in the early twentieth century.

Compared with Cai and Xu, Liu Haisu 刘海粟 (1896-1994), another modern painter and the famous director of the Shanghai Fine Art School 上海美术专科学校, proposed the inclusion of motifs in art education to promote the development of craft art. He claimed:

Motif is an essential category in studying fine art. No matter what kind of craftsmanship is made, it cannot be separated from motifs. Without motifs, the craftsmanship cannot be developed. Nowadays, no matter what kind of school in our country, this subject should be established. If there is no fine art in craftsmanship, it is indeed a shortcoming of the craft art. Recently, it has become a common practice among different countries that one cannot talk about craft without fine art. In our country craft, (we) do not pay attention to motifs. This is because the Chinese people have no artistic ideas about the products, so (they) cannot turn decay into magic.<sup>115</sup>

Both Cai and Xu attributed the motif to craftsmanship, while Liu categorized it as fine art. In other words, the motif was considered an intermediate between fine art and craft art in early twentieth-century China. Furthermore, the assertion of Liu included a tendency to negate all traditions in order to establish new standards. His contemporaries’ research into Chinese folk art and archaeological excavations was a powerful rebuttal to Liu’s assertions. The traditional view of crafts as the product of thoughtless artisans was completely overturned. Chinese intellectuals at the beginning of the twentieth

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<sup>114</sup> “目下就国势国力而言，欲在艺术上学之实用，用求其实，而有赖于国家力量之提倡者，盖无过于图案美术者也。” Zhao Chengqing 赵成清，蔡元培现代艺术思想研究 [Research on Cai Yuanpei’s Modern Art Thought] (Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2019), 94.

<sup>115</sup> Liu Haisu 刘海粟，“参观法总会美术博览会记略 [Record of the Visit to the Exposition in the French Club],” 美术 [Fine Art], n. 2 (1919): 4.

century reassessed and recognized the achievements of China's craft art.

With the political agenda of mobilizing the masses in the 1930s, Chinese intellectuals and artists rediscovered folk art 民间艺术.<sup>116</sup> As early as in 1910s during the New Culture Movement, Chinese intellectuals Lu Xun 鲁迅 (1881-1936), Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885-1967) and others began to appropriate and approve of positive elements in folk culture.<sup>117</sup> The art of folk art was correspondingly rediscovered. As the artistic value of native folk art was propagated, Chinese artists began to incorporate the elements of folk art in their creations. For example, the French-trained Chinese artist Lin Fengmian 林风眠 (1900-1991) began to depict folk opera figures in his paintings. Li Keran 李可染 (1907-1989), who is Lin Fengmian's student, also explored traditional folk motifs such as Guan Yu 关羽, Zhong Kui 钟馗 and Liu Hai 刘海 to develop new pictorial languages.<sup>118</sup> Li's paintings were even published in a 1933 edition of the journal *Art Wind* 艺风 as the illustration for the discussion of "folk art."<sup>119</sup> Nevertheless, the artists' willingness to compare their artworks to folk art did not imply the dissolution of the opposition of *Minjian* to both the elite 精英 and the authoritative 官方. On the one hand, Chinese artists attempted to distinguish themselves from traditional intellectuals by rediscovering the value of folk art, which the scholars in ancient China selected to neglect. This self-affirmation was implicit in

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<sup>116</sup> Chang Tan, *The Minjian Avant-Garde: Art of the Crowd in Contemporary China* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2023), 6.

<sup>117</sup> Wang Guangdong, *The Modern Value of Folklore: Chinese Modern Literature and the Morphology of Folk Culture*, chap. in *On China's Cultural Transformation*, edited by Keping Yu (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 104.

<sup>118</sup> Yan Geng, *Mao's Images: Artists and China's 1949 Transition* (Wiesbaden: J.B. Metzler, 2018), 68-9.

<sup>119</sup> Yan Geng, *Mao's Images*, 68.

Xu Beihong's writings on the Clay Figure Zhang 泥人张, famous folk art in Tianjin 天津, which read: "Unfortunately, it is made of raw clay, traditionally not valued by the literati. Practitioners of this industry also consider themselves the end of the artisan and cannot believe the greatness of their creation."<sup>120</sup> Xu continued to consider the separation of labor and art in Chinese culture as a fundamental mistake.<sup>121</sup> He defined the difference between an artist and a craftsman not according to the thought or the taste, but according to the techniques: "The difference between a craftsman and an artist is not only in the name. The name of the artist is valuable because his/her craft is higher than that of the craftsman. Nowadays, (if your) craft is not as good as the craftsman, and even if the name of the craftsman is given, it is not appropriate."<sup>122</sup> Xu did not intend to elevate the status of craftsmanship equal to that of art. His purpose was to call upon the artist not to despise but to master the artisan's craft.<sup>123</sup>

In addition to folk art, Chinese artists also incorporated the elements from the nationwide archaeological excavations, including the neolithic art and bronze vessels from Anyang Yinxu 安阳殷墟 into their creations in the 1940s. The Republican government supported wide archaeological excavations and expeditions, among which were the first ever state-led archaeological excavations at Anyang since 1928 and

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<sup>120</sup> "惜乎其为生泥所制，既未尝为士大夫所重视，业此者自亦比于工匠之末，罔敢决信其造作之伟大。" Xu Beihong 徐悲鸿，"对泥人感言 [Testimonials to the Clay Figure]," 大陆杂志 [Continent Magazine], v. 1, n. 1 (1932): 2.

<sup>121</sup> Felicity Lufkin, *Folk Art and Modern Culture in Republican China* (London: Lexington Books, 2016), 8.

<sup>122</sup> "匠与艺术家不仅名之别也。艺术家之名贵，以其艺之过乎匠也。今之艺尚不及匠，是予以匠名，且不克当也。" Xu Beihong 徐悲鸿，"对泥人感言 [Testimonials to the Clay Figure]," 大陆杂志 [Continent Magazine], v. 1, n. 1 (1932): 2.

<sup>123</sup> Although Chinese intellectuals vocally appreciated the artistic value of folk art, they also criticized folk art as artistically flawed to assert their leadership in formulating standards. Hung-yok Ip, *Intellectuals in Revolutionary China, 1921-1949: Leaders, Heroes and Sophisticates* (London: Routledge, 2009), 157-58.

ethnographic and anthropological surveys in the frontier zones of the southwest during 1929-1942.<sup>124</sup> The French-trained painter and designer Pang Xunqin 庞薰琹 (1906-1985) appropriated traditional motifs to produce designs for a wide range of crafts since 1940s.<sup>125</sup> He studied newly excavated bronze vessels, lacquerware, textiles and jade articles, transforming traditional craft art into his modern designs.<sup>126</sup> Pang described his enchantment about craft art as such: “What interested me most was the furniture, carpets, curtains and other furnishings in the interior. Their colors were so harmonious and varied, even some of the industry products were equally beautiful. It was then I realized for the first time in my life that art is not only about painting, everything in life needs beauty.”<sup>127</sup> Like his contemporaries, Pang was committed to discovering the value of traditional craftsmanship and believed that modern artists had an obligation to beautify life.

Chinese artists and intellectuals in the early twentieth century recognized the value of craftsmanship and called on artists to master artisans’ techniques. They subverted the traditional notion of belittling craftsmanship and placed new demands on modern artists. However, the hierarchy of art over craft did not dissolve.

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<sup>124</sup> Sarah E. Fraser, “Antiquarianism or Primitivism? The Edge of History in the Modern Chinese Imagination,” chap. in *Reinventing the Past: Antiquarianism in East Asian Art and Visual Culture*, edited by Wu Hung (London: Art Media Resource, 2010), 346. Shu-Li Wang, “Exhibiting the Nation: Cultural Flows, Transnational Exchanges, and the Development of Museums in Japan and China, 1900-1950,” chap. in *Eurasian Encounters Museums, Missions, Modernities*, edited by Carolien Stolte and Yoshiyuki Kikuchi (Leiden: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 66.

<sup>125</sup> Michael Sullivan, *The Arts of China* (London: University of California Press, 1997), 292-93.

<sup>126</sup> Zhao Siyou 赵思有, “论庞薰琹的中国工艺美术教育思想及其绘画艺术 [Pang Xunqin’s Thought on the Education of Chinese Craft Art and His Painting],” chap. in *赵思有艺术文集 [Collection of Articles by Zhao Siyou]* (Lanzhou: Dunhuang Wenyi Press, 2013), 210.

<sup>127</sup> Translation refers to Jenny Lin, *Above Sea: Contemporary Art, Urban Culture, and the Fashioning of Global Shanghai* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 44. Pang Xunqin 庞薰琹, *就是这样走过来的 [That is How We Got Here]* (Beijing: Joint Publishing, 2005), 42-43.

## Sculpture as craft

The hierarchy of art and craft as not only a gendered but also a class division facilitated Pan Yuliang's choice of sculpture in addition to oil painting.<sup>128</sup> Craftmanship should not be attractive to a woman like Pan, who aspired to be an artist despite the promotion of unifying art and craft in 1920s China. Art critics from Vasari in the Renaissance to Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) and others of the nineteenth century insisted on the maleness of genius and considered women inferior to their heroic male counterparts.<sup>129</sup> Vasari's evaluative mode of praising women artists in terms of diligence rather than invention—the locus of the genius, even continued into the early twentieth century when Pan was trained in Europe.<sup>130</sup> Vasari contained at least thirteen female artists in the second version of his well-known *Lives*.<sup>131</sup> Even as he praised these women's diligence, he overtly expressed his concern that women risk appearing “to wrest from us the palm of supremacy” if they are too diligent.<sup>132</sup> As such, women had long been encouraged to engage in crafts that were asserted to require no “manly” genius, including embroidery, weaving and porcelain painting, or in minor branches of fine art, such as flower painting.<sup>133</sup> If Pan had selected a craft skill while studying oil painting, it would have been difficult for her to escape the stereotype of being evaluated

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<sup>128</sup> Sandra Markus, *Craftivism from Philomena to the Pussyhat*, chap. in *Crafting Dissent: Handicraft as Protest from the American Revolution to the Pussyhats*, ed. Hinda Mandell (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 17.

<sup>129</sup> Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*, 200. Anne Langton, *A Gentlewoman in Upper Canada: The Journals, Letters, and Art of Anne Langton* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 16.

<sup>130</sup> Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art and Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 32.

<sup>131</sup> Joanna Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 196.

<sup>132</sup> Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art and Society*, 32.

<sup>133</sup> Siân Reynolds, *Mistress of Creation: Women as Producers and Consumers of Art since 1700*, chap. in *The Routledge History of Women in Europe Since 1700*, ed. Deborah Simonton (New York: Routledge, 2006), 363.

as an industrious worker instead of a genius. Interestingly, when she devoted herself to studying oil painting, she still encountered the “very diligent but not a genius” mode of evaluation. Pan’s teacher at the Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Paris—the French painter Lucien Simon (1861-1945) wrote a letter to the Institut Franco-Chinois, the funder of Pan’s study on August 14, 1925; the letter reads (**fig. 1.1**):

Ms. Pan Yu-Lin is a very diligent and hard-working student for whom I have much sympathy; she has the support you want to give her in every way. Sir, you know how difficult it is to presume anything about the progress a student can be capable of, especially when she is a foreigner. I can only tell you that she is far from having reached the point where all teaching becomes useless. I may add, since I owe you the truth, that I have not yet seen any very personal genius manifested in her.<sup>134</sup>

Simon’s assessment of Pan—very diligent but not a genius—is the same as Vasari’s judgment of female Renaissance artists. It also evokes Schopenhauer’s assertion that “women can have remarkable talent, but not a genius, for they always remain subjective.”<sup>135</sup>

On the other hand, the ambiguous nature of sculpture, somewhere between high art and craft, seems to fit Pan’s demands best—mastering a skill in the craft while not being undervalued for this mastery.<sup>136</sup> Although sculpture is categorized as fine art, the production of sculptures usually involves the collaboration of both sculptors and craftsmen. The form, imaginative content, and expressiveness concern an inventor; the execution of work in a particular technique and material is the task of a craftsman.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Archives of Pan Yuliang, Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, A 6-19.

<sup>135</sup> Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*, 200.

<sup>136</sup> Kate Nichols, *Art and commodity sculpture under glass at the crystal palace*, chap. in *Sculpture and the Vitrine*, ed. John C. Welchman (New York: Routledge, 2016), 37.

<sup>137</sup> Cleo Kultz, ed., *Sculpture Materials, Techniques, Styles, and Practice* (New York: Britannica Educational Publishing in association with Rosen Educational Services, 2017), 58.

Moreover, as an art student who was trained in Lyon and Paris for four years from 1921 to 1925, Pan should be very acquainted with the rise of craft modernism in France. Since the final decade of the nineteenth century, the French government began to promote the works of artisans in the context of deteriorating industrial and technological production.<sup>138</sup> Sculptors were motivated to produce their bronzes by themselves, especially smaller pieces, rather than handing them to foundries to ensure complete control over the entire manufacturing process.<sup>139</sup> Accordingly, the actual position of sculpture in the hierarchy of arts probably fell somewhere between craft and painting for the oil painter Pan, considering the craftsmanship in its manufacturing process and its traditional status in China as a pure craft.<sup>140</sup> After Pan finished her fourth-year painting course in July 1927 at the *Regia Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma*, she applied to be admitted to the sculpture course of the same school on September 26 of the same year (**fig. 1.2**). Her application was approved soon. She enrolled in the sculpture course by October 15, 1927 (**fig. 1.3**). The sculpture course was in charge of the sculptor Pietro Canonica (1869-1959), who was also the president of the *Regia Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma* from 1924 to 1930.<sup>141</sup> Canonica's fame was linked with the orders from the high nobility; he was the portraitist of the European

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<sup>138</sup> Thomas P. Somma, *Sculpture as Craft: Two Female Torsos by Paul Wayland Bartlett*, chap. in *Perspectives on American Sculpture Before 1925*, ed. Thayer Tolles (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 90.

<sup>139</sup> T. Somma, *Sculpture as Craft*, chap. in *Perspectives on American Sculpture Before 1925*, 84.

<sup>140</sup> Dōshin Satō, *Art and Social Class: The Class System in Early Modern Japan and the Formation of "Art"*, chap. in *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State: The Politics of Beauty*, trans. Hiroshi Nara (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2011), 90.

<sup>141</sup> Pietro Roccasacca, *L'Insegnamento Superiore Dell'Arte a Roma 1593-1940: Dall'Accademia del Disegno All'Accademia di Belle Arti*, chap. in *Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma: Centoquaranta anni di istruzione superior dell'arte in Italia*, ed. Pietro Roccasacca (Roma: De Luca Editore d'Arte, 2018), 36.



aristocracy.<sup>142</sup> Coincidentally, Pan's few surviving sculptures are busts, which may indeed be related to her training with Canonica in Rome yet is mainly due to a power structure excluding women from the discipline of sculpture.

The craft properties involved in sculpture constituted one of the primary reasons for excluding women from the discipline of sculpture. The antique myths of Prometheus and Pygmalion, as well as the cliché of Michelangelo (1475-1564) who set the statue free from the marble through hewing and chipping, had long established the masculine identity of sculpture.<sup>143</sup> Even though many nineteenth-century sculptors only made models for statues with soft clay or wax, which craftsmen transformed into stone or bronze in a larger format, the sculpture was still seen as “dirty” and physically demanding work unfitting for women.<sup>144</sup> Due to her slighter physique, a woman is said to be inadequate for a discipline requiring “a firm grip of the tool and the strength of arm and wrist, to ensure good execution.”<sup>145</sup> In contrast to this biased assertion, male sculptors frequently afforded assistants to finish the heavy-duty aspects of their work.<sup>146</sup> It has a long tradition for sculptors to hire craftspeople to transform the idea into a finished object, whose work involves “transposing the *bozzetto* into a *modello*, the *maquette* into the final piece, roughing out or polishing marble, casting bronze, or

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<sup>142</sup> Cristina Beltrami, Dal Zotto, Canonica, Bellotto: La Classe di Scultura E Anatomia All'Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia, chap. in *L'Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia: Il Novecento*, ed. Sileno Salvagnini (Crocetta del Montello: Antiga Edizioni, 2016), 121.

<sup>143</sup> Marjan Sterckx, Inside Out: Sculptures by Women in the Metropolitan Public Space (Paris, London, Brussels, 1750–1950), chap. in *Women & Things, 1750-1950: Gendered Material Strategies*, eds., Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin (New York: Routledge, 2016), 194.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Marjan Sterckx, Women Sculptors and their Male Assistants: A Criticised but Common Practice in France in the long Nineteenth-Century, chap. in *L'Invention Partagée. Elaboration Plurielle dans les Arts Visuels (XIIIe-XXIe Siècle)*, eds. Laurence Riviale and Jean-François Luneau (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2019), 139.

<sup>146</sup> M. Sterckx, Women Sculptors and their Male Assistants, chap. in *L'Invention Partagée*, 140.

applying the *patine*.”<sup>147</sup> Yet, the female sculptors were not permitted to follow this long-standing division of labor between a highly valued sculptor-inventor and low-tier executing artisans.<sup>148</sup> Sculptresses were accused of not producing their own works in case they employed (male) helpers as their male colleagues since at least the eighteenth century.<sup>149</sup> They were also susceptible to copying or plagiarism as they worked with male mentors. All these accusations are based on the preconceived bias that women were less capable than men of enduring the physical demands of the sculpting process, who were perceived as unable to complete their work without assistance.<sup>150</sup> Against such a backdrop, female sculptors were largely obstructed from receiving prestigious public commissions. Sculptresses were rarely commissioned for the grand public sculptures—the equestrian statues and the full-length statues; their objects in the public space usually appeared in the shape of playing putti, children, mythological or allegorical nudes.<sup>151</sup> Compared with monumental public statues, portraits of modest scale, usually no larger than life-size, were considered a genre quite fitting for women.<sup>152</sup> Craft became a malleable catch-all criterion for evaluating female artists, which could be used both to devalue the artwork of women and to exclude them from fine art. Even for portraits, Pan received minimal orders (probably only two or three) as a female artist exiled in France.

Compared with Pan, who studied oil painting and sculpture, Wang Ziyun opted to

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<sup>147</sup> Sterckx, *Women Sculptors and their Male Assistants*, chap. in *L’Invention Partagée*, 126-27.

<sup>148</sup> Sterckx, 128.

<sup>149</sup> Sterckx, 129.

<sup>150</sup> Jennifer Wingate, *Sculpting Doughboys: Memory, Gender, and Taste in America’s World War I Memorials* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 120.

<sup>151</sup> Marjan Sterckx, *Inside Out*, chap. in *Women & Things, 1750-1950*, 201.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

study fine art sculpture and decorative sculpture in Paris. According to the French academic discipline in the nineteenth century, fine art sculptors were “purely occupied with the representation of the human form and perhaps also had a less direct role in the carving and casting of their work.”<sup>153</sup> Decorative sculptors, by contrast, worked on ornamentation and plaster casting for the luxury goods, architectural and building industries.<sup>154</sup> All the same, the borderline between the two is usually ambiguous; multiple elements, including polychromy, the small scale of the statuette, and the integration of diverse materials, can call into question whether an object is a fine art sculpture or decorative art.<sup>155</sup> Wang was trained to be a fine art sculptor at the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris* from 1931 to 1935, firstly with the sculptor Paul Landowski (1875-1961) until June 1933, then with another sculptor Marcel Gaumont (1880-1962) until January 1935.<sup>156</sup> He received his certification from this school on May 21, 1935 (**fig. 1.4**). At the same time, he also studied sculpture at the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Paris* which offered specialized classes in applied arts and design, obtaining his graduation diploma on February 15, 1937 (**fig. 1.5**).<sup>157</sup>

Theoretically, this training background in both a fine art school and an applied art school granted him skills in creating fine art sculptures—independent artistic works of

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<sup>153</sup> Claire Jones, *Sculptors and Industrial Art, 1848-1870*, chap. in *Sculptors and Design Reform in France, 1848-1895: Sculpture and the Decorative Arts* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 19.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> Imogen Hart and Claire Jones, *Sculpture and the Decorative: Towards a More Integrated Mode of Art History Writing*, chap. in *Sculpture and the Decorative in Britain and Europe: Seventeenth Century to Contemporary*, eds. Imogen Hart and Claire Jones (New York: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020), 3.

<sup>156</sup> Phillippe Cinquini, *Les Artistes Chinois en France et l'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris à L'époque de la Première République de Chine (1912-1949): Pratiques et Enjeux de la Formation Artistique Académique* (Ph.D, Université de Lille, 2017), v. 2, 18.

<sup>157</sup> Jared Goss, *French Art Deco* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2014), 4.

a higher degree of autonomy and decorative ones— “economically driven” works for industry.<sup>158</sup> A photograph capturing Wang in his Paris studio in the 1930s presents him as a master and craftsman (**fig. 1.6**). The artist was surrounded by an eclectic range of sculptures, from huge female nudes—typical of fine art to medallions and animal figurines encompassed by applied art. These varied sculptures suggest the diversity of the artist’s skills and resist the traditional hierarchy of privileging the grand monumental sculptures over small ornamental ones.<sup>159</sup> This refusal of the separateness between fine art and decorative sculpture dates back to the mid-nineteenth century when this separateness was visibly unraveling.<sup>160</sup> In the context of nineteenth-century industrial manufacturing and modern production systems, the sculpture was considered an inherent part of the industry, resulting from the mechanical processing of raw materials such as metal, wood, or marble.<sup>161</sup> Sculptors shifted to embrace the physical work in producing a sculpture and to revere decorative art, materials, and making as elementary to their practices.<sup>162</sup> This elevation in the craft of sculpture-making overturned the neoclassical predecessors’ emphasis on the intellectual conception and the detachment from physical labor.<sup>163</sup> Therefore, the European art milieu continued to shape the French-trained Chinese artist Wang’s perception on the unity of art and craft in addition to the propagation of this concept in 1920s China.

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<sup>158</sup> Claire Jones, *Introduction: The False Separation of Fine and Decorative Sculpture: Problems with the Rodin Scholarship for the Study of French Sculpture, 1848-1895*, chap. in *Sculptors and Design Reform in France, 1848-1895: Sculpture and the Decorative Arts* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 5.

<sup>159</sup> Martina Droth, “The Ethics of Making: Craft and English Sculptural Aesthetics c. 1851-1900,” *Journal of Design History*, v. 17, n. 3 (2004): 231.

<sup>160</sup> M. Droth, “The Ethics of Making,” 225.

<sup>161</sup> Droth, “The Ethics of Making,” 226.

<sup>162</sup> Droth, 229-30.

<sup>163</sup> Droth, 224; 230.

Nevertheless, Wang's insistence on the unity of art and craft in the wake of his sculpture training is displayed through his writing on the history of Chinese sculpture and his watercolor landscape paintings rather than sculptural creations. In his fieldwork for writing the history of sculpture, he focused not only on monumental sculptures but also on applied art, such as the brick motifs on residential houses. This inclusive vision stems from his training background in both fine art and decorative art. His draughtsmanship from his training at the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Paris* also contributed to his history writing in terms of drawing maps and example illustrations. Additionally, he attempted to integrate the watercolor drawing skills, which were considered fundamental to the training of artisans and arts workers, with traditional Chinese landscape paintings; the gains and losses of this experimentation will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.<sup>164</sup>

The conceptual imagination and manual labor of sculpting involved in sculpture have formed its ambiguous position between art and craft, which made it a suitable medium for Pan and Wang to define their dual identities as artists and artisans. For Pan Yuliang, the craft of sculpture-making satisfied her demands to master craft skills. Meanwhile, the high status of sculpture as a fine art had the potential of saving her from falling into the traditional stereotypical prejudice against female artists—that women's diligent qualities made them appropriate for the inferior craft art, while they did not possess the genius to engage in high art. For Wang, the craftsmanship side of sculpture was elevated since the mid-nineteenth century in the context of industrial

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<sup>164</sup> Rossella Froissart-Pezzone, "The *École Nationale des Arts Décoratifs* in Paris Adapts to Meet the Twentieth Century," *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, v. 7, n. 1 (1999-2000): 2.

manufacturing, reinforcing the artist's perception on the unity of art and craft. He attempted to integrate drawing skills from his decorative arts training with art history writing and landscape painting from his fine arts training.

### **Textile design versus oil painting**

The artist Chang Shuhong's attempt to study both textile design and oil painting encountered significant obstacles in France, where the hierarchy of fine art over craft art was still deeply entrenched in art education during the late 1920s and 1930s. As a student admitted by the Institut Franco-Chinois de Lyon, Chang arrived in Lyon—the major European textile center, in 1928.<sup>165</sup> It should be noted that Chang was jointly funded by the Institut Franco-Chinois de Lyon and the Zhejiang University; Chang had claimed the stipend for the second half of 1929 in a letter to Zhejiang University from Lyon.<sup>166</sup> Although Chang was assigned to the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Lyon* to study oil painting, his real purpose for coming to this city known for its textile production may have been to study textile design.<sup>167</sup> His certificate issued by ENSBA de Lyon on July 8, 1931, indicates that he attended not only basic classes related to oil painting but also the class of textile decoration; he even acquired prizes in textile decoration both in 1930 and 1931 (**fig. 1.7**).<sup>168</sup> Furthermore, he expressed his

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<sup>165</sup> A critical opportunity for Republican students to study in France was the establishment of the Franco-Chinois Institute in Lyon in 1921. This Institute enrolled 473 Chinese students in total from 1921 until 1946. Zhang Shiwei 張士偉, *近代中法教育交流史* [History of Chinese-French Education Communication in Modern Age] (Tianjin: Nankai University Press, 2014), 149.

<sup>166</sup> Zhang Shiwei, *History of Chinese-French Education Communication in Modern Age*, 126. Chang Shuhong, “海外書鴻 [Overseas Shuhong],” *浙江大學工學院月刊* [Monthly Magazine of Industrial Academy, Zhejiang University], n. 18 (1929), 19.

<sup>167</sup> In the following text, *Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Lyon* will be written in the simplified form—ENSBA de Lyon.

<sup>168</sup> Certificate issued by *École National des Beaux-Arts de Lyon* for Chang Shuhong on July 8, 1931. Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon collection, 239-77.

determination to study textile in this most important European textile center from the 17th to 19th century in a letter written in 1929.<sup>169</sup> Chang sought support from his domestic funder Zhejiang University—where he studied and worked before his departure for France—for his plan to switch from oil painting to textile.<sup>170</sup> In this letter to Li Ximou 李熙謀 (1896-1975), the deputy of the Industrial Academy of the Zhejiang University, Chang wrote:

Considering the stagnant textile industry in Jiangsu and Zhejiang areas, I, your student, really plan to specialize in the textile industry here. I am negotiating with the authorities of the Institut Franco-Chinois recently to get permission to study in the National School of Textile in Lyon after studying for some time in ENSBA de Lyon. I do not know if you think this is a good plan?<sup>171</sup>

The textile school that Chang planned to enter was École Municipale de Tissage de Lyon, according to his file in Lyon.<sup>172</sup> The negotiation process turned out to be time-consuming in that the Institut Franco-Chinois maintained that textile was only an apprenticeship inferior to painting, as the Institute notified Chang on April 23, 1930: “The Institut Franco-Chinois is designed for higher education studies and not for apprenticeships; the principle must be maintained. Yet, this principle can falter for special reasons. We invite you to provide us with these reasons.”<sup>173</sup> The Institut requested explanations not from the student himself but from the domestic sponsor:

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<sup>169</sup> Claudio Zanier, *Pre-Modern European Silk Technology and East Asia: Who Imported What?* chap. in *Textiles in the Pacific, 1500-1900*, ed. Debin Ma (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 118.

<sup>170</sup> Chang Shuhong studied and worked at the *Zhejiang Provincial Jia-Type Industrial School* 浙江甲種工業學校 before he went to France, which became part of the Zhejiang University in 1927. Xie Lubo 謝魯渤, *浙江大學前傳* [Prequel of Zhejiang University] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Press, 2011), 31.

<sup>171</sup> Chang Shuhong, “Overseas Shuhong,” *Monthly Magazine of Industrial Academy, Zhejiang University*, n. 18 (1929), 19.

<sup>172</sup> Archives of Chang Shuhong, collection of Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, 239-15.

<sup>173</sup> Archives of Chang Shuhong, collection of Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, 239-48.

“write to your university and ask it to inform us of its intentions concerning you.”<sup>174</sup>

Why did Chang insist on studying textile in Lyon despite the opposition from his patron?

For what reasons did his patron in Lyon and that in Hangzhou oppose and support his personal preference for textile, respectively? Why was Chang acutely aware of and interested in reversing the declined status of the textile industry in Jiangsu and Zhejiang area, as he mentioned in the letter? These issues were critical because the conflict between apprenticeship and fine art would again impact his academic choice in July 1932.

The dissentient yet negotiable stance of the Institut Franco-Chinois towards Chang’s textile program concerns the distinct Lyon artistic milieu, in which textiles took precedence. On the one hand, its opposition was based on the different division of labor in the field of textile education between two schools—ENSBA de Lyon and École Municipale de Tissage de Lyon. To be precise, it is the separation of the artistic design and the engineering side of the textile industry. On the other hand, the possibility of negotiation resulted from the loosened artistic hierarchy under Lyon’s textile priority. As far as the tradition is concerned, the ENSBA de Lyon was established in 1756 as a school specializing in training students in flower painting to provide professionals for the silk industry of this textile production center.<sup>175</sup> According to the strict hierarchy of the French academy, still-life paintings are relegated to the bottom after history paintings, portraiture and landscapes.<sup>176</sup> As a branch of still-life paintings, the flower

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Elisabeth Hardouin-Fugier and Etienne Grafe, *The Lyon School of Flower Painting* (Leigh-on-Sea: Lewis, 1978), 9.

<sup>176</sup> Véronique Chagnon-Bruke, *A Career True to Woman’s Nature: Constructing the Woman Artists in France’s Midcentury Feminine Press*, chap. in *Women Art Critics in Nineteenth-Century France*, ed.



painting has been further identified by European art historians and theorists as a “lesser” genre, involving less intellectual skill and suitable only for women painters of unintellectual sensitivity.<sup>177</sup> Nevertheless, the flower painting enjoyed a high status in Lyon due to its crucial role in textile design. The flower painting class at the ENSBA de Lyon was only available to male students until the early twentieth century as “textile design was traditionally a male prerogative.”<sup>178</sup> Textile design, as a subdivision of the decorative art discipline, was taught at the ENSBA de Lyon in parallel with painting, sculpture, and architecture, while the latter three were the only disciplines of its counterparts, such as the ENSBA de Paris.<sup>179</sup> The elevation of the textile design to equal status with fine art in Lyon granted the feasibility of Chang’s ambition to balance oil painting and textile.

In contrast, the *École Municipale de Tissage de Lyon* that Chang proposed to attend was founded to provide technical instructions to apprentices and workers of the textile industry.<sup>180</sup> All graduates of this school went into the textile industry as workers, namely weavers, dyers, carders, and card cutters.<sup>181</sup> This technology-focused role led directly to its collaboration with the ENSBA de Lyon: some textile designs developed in the ENSBA de Lyon were materialized by the pupils of the *École Municipale de Tissage de Lyon*.<sup>182</sup> Notwithstanding the cooperation between these two institutions,

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Wendelin Guentner (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2013), 120.

<sup>177</sup> Gill Perry, *Women Artists and the Parisian Avant-garde: Modernism and Feminine Art, 1900 to the Late 1920s* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 52.

<sup>178</sup> Elisabeth Hardouin-Fugier and Etienne Grafe, *The Lyon School of Flower Painting*, 11-2.

<sup>179</sup> Yiyang Wang, *Modern Art for a Modern China: The Chinese Intellectual Debate, 1900–1930* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 122-23.

<sup>180</sup> Charles R. Richards, *Industrial Art Education in Europe*, chap. in *Art in Industry* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), 381.

<sup>181</sup> C. Richards, *Industrial Art Education in Europe*, chap. in *Art in Industry*, 382.

<sup>182</sup> Richards, 379-80.

their hierarchical order remained ingrained. The Institut Franco-Chinois repeatedly questioned the value of the apprenticeship at the École Municipale de Tissage de Lyon compared with the higher education at the ENSBA de Lyon, denying Chang's request to study textile.<sup>183</sup> Yet, this veto was eventually changed by the official support from the Zhejiang University; Chang was finally permitted to join in the courses of the École Municipale de Tissage de Lyon on August 25, 1930.<sup>184</sup> After negotiating for more than one year, he enrolled in this textile school's evening and weekend courses from October 1, 1930.<sup>185</sup> The textile training at the École Municipale de Tissage de Lyon consisted of textile theory, drawing, and practical weaving courses. According to Chang's syllabus, the textile theory course focused on the study of textures, such as taffeta, satin, velvet, and gauze.<sup>186</sup> The factory drawing course focused on the sketching and mapping of silk fabrics based on the theory course, which complemented the textile decoration courses he attended at the ENSBA de Lyon.<sup>187</sup> His textile design *Pattern of Printed Fabric* 印花布圖案 partly exemplifies what he learned in Lyon, which was submitted to the *Second National Exhibition of Chinese Art* 教育部第二次全國美術展覽會 in 1937 (**fig. 1.8**). He chose a flower resembling rose as the main decoration; both the flower petals and leaves were slightly geometrized to add abstract effects for this fabric pattern. He also designed an interior scene with a French window's curtain open at the lower right corner to indicate how this fabric would be used—probably a curtain.

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<sup>183</sup> Chang Shuhong Archives, Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon collection, 239-17; 26; 40; 41; 48.

<sup>184</sup> Chang Shuhong Archives, Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon collection, 239-52.

<sup>185</sup> Chang Shuhong Archives, Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon collection, 239-61.

<sup>186</sup> Chang Shuhong Archives, Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon collection, 239-60, page 4.

<sup>187</sup> Chang Shuhong Archives, Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon collection, 239-60, page 5.

Returning to Chang's efforts to secure a place to study at a textile school, why was Zhejiang University so bent on supporting Chang's plan to study textiles? This support stems from the fact that textiles remained an essential medium for China's self-presentation in the world, yet Chinese textiles were not competitive in the international marketplace of the 1910s. Silk was closely identified with China in the international market during pre-modern history, while this predominant status fell to the bottom at the transitional moment to the modern era. The Chinese textile industry encountered predicaments in domestic and international markets since the late Qing period (1644-1911). The traditional Chinese textile production was destroyed because of the war destruction of the Jiangnan 江南 area from Heavenly Kingdom 太平天国 (1851-1864). On the other hand, the massive imports of European textiles won the domestic Chinese market on the premise of backward techniques of the Chinese textile industry.<sup>188</sup> China's share was gradually encroached on the international market by Japan, whose silk export dramatically increased since the late 1850s.<sup>189</sup> The textile intertwining the past glory and the present crisis continued to be a symbol of the nation during the Republican era. As an advertising illustration posted in *Shenbao* 申報 presents, it used nine domestic industrial products to collage the map of Republican China except the Northeast area occupied by the Japanese army (**fig. 1.9**). Two products of the nine are textile brands. In addition, four silkworms representing the foreign invasion crisis are eating Republican China from four directions.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Yuan Xuanping 袁宣萍 and Xu Zheng 徐錚, 中國近代染織設計 [Textile Design in Modern China] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2017), 53-9.

<sup>189</sup> Hiroko T. McDermott, "Meiji Kyoto Textile and Takashimaya," *Monumenta Nipponica*, v. 65, n. 1 (2010): 37.

<sup>190</sup> Karl Gerth, *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation* (Cambridge & London:

The severe textile industry crisis made it crucial to learn from foreign areas, including Kyoto and Lyon. The Japanese textile industry, especially in the textile center of Kyoto, also encountered challenges from the arrival of Europeans and Americans during the mid-1850s, while Kyoto prefectural officials responded swiftly in terms of expanding foreign markets and technological innovations.<sup>191</sup> Kyoto weavers were sent to Europe, notably Lyon—the center of the European silk industry to learn modern weaving and dyeing skills in 1873; textile studios were also set up to disseminate the new knowledge and skills learned from Europe to trainees from all over Japan.<sup>192</sup> Leading producers of the Kyoto textile industry even employed *nihonga* artists to design “fine art textile (bijutsu senshoku)” in an attempt to establish Kyoto textiles as “fine art” in international expositions.<sup>193</sup> This cross-media invention highlighting the naturalistic representation in the European pictorial tradition did make the most considerable success in the international expositions from the mid-1870s to 1910s.<sup>194</sup> In view of the successful modern transition of the Japanese textile industry, the late Qing government sent textile artisans to Japan for the investigation trip; Chinese art students also went to Japan to learn textile technologies and textile designs from the early Republican period.

The technical modernity in Chinese textile production finally started with the

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Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 16.

<sup>191</sup> Hiroko T. McDermott, “Meiji Kyoto Textile and Takashimaya,” 40-3.

<sup>192</sup> H. McDermott, 43-4.

<sup>193</sup> John E. Vollmer, *Re-envisioning Japan: An Overview*, chap. in *Re-envisioning Japan: Meiji Fine Art Textiles*, ed. John E. Vollmer (Milan: 5 Continents Editions, 2016), 29; 45.

<sup>194</sup> Julia Sapin, *Naturalism Fusing Past and Present: The Reconfiguration of the Kyoto School of Painting and the Revival of the Textile Industry*, chap. in *Kyoto Visual Culture in the Early Edo and Meiji Periods: The Arts of Reinvention*, ed. Morgan Pitelka and Alice Y. Tseng (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 140; 146-7.

return of the Japanese-trained textile professional 許炳堃 (1878-1965), engendering the cross-media collaboration between painters and textile artisans. Xu was trained in mechanical weaving at the *Tokyo Higher School of Technology* (the present Tokyo Institute of Technology) from March 1904 to July 1907; he subsequently worked in a Tokyo spinnery and a Kyoto silk twisting factory until September 1908 when he returned to China.<sup>195</sup> Two years later, he established the *Zhejiang Middle Industrial School* 浙江中等工業學堂—the original name of Chang’s alma mater with the support of the Zhejiang Provincial government, leading the mechanical production and new technologies in Chinese textile industry.<sup>196</sup> It was not until the students of this industrial school graduated and were employed that the Jacquard looms began to spread widely in textile production.<sup>197</sup> The promotion of mechanical production contributed to the renewal of the pictorial textile, which intensified the collaboration between artists and artisans. The first pictorial brocade—*Nine Creeks Eighteen Mountain Streams* 九溪十八澗 was successfully woven on a Jacquard loom by Chang’s friend Du Jingsheng 都錦生 (1897-1943) in March 1921 at the *Zhejiang Provincial Jia-Type Industrial School* 浙江甲種工業學校 (**fig. 1.10**).<sup>198</sup> Before a pictorial brocade is

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<sup>195</sup> Yang Dashou 楊達壽, 浙大的校長們 [Presidents of Zhejiang University] (Beijing: China Economic Press, 2007), 61.

<sup>196</sup> Zhu Liangtian 朱良天, 許炳堃與浙江中等工業學堂 [Xu Bingkun and the Zhejiang Middle Industrial School], chap. in 工大軼事 [Story of the Industrial University], ed. Li Changzu 李昌祖 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang People’s Press, 2013), 6-7.

<sup>197</sup> Xu Bingkun 許炳堃, 浙江省立中等工業學堂創辦經過及其影響 [The Establishment and Impact of Zhejiang Provincial Middle Industrial School], chap. in 從求實書院到新浙大: 記述和回憶 [From Qiushi Academy to New Zhejiang University: Records and Recollections], ed. Xu Gaoyu 許高渝 (Hangzhou: Xiling Seal Engraver’s Society Press, 2017), 124.

<sup>198</sup> The title of the industrial school established by Xu Bingkun was changed to *Zhejiang Provincial Jia-Type Industrial School* in 1913. Yang Dashou 楊達壽, 浙大的校長們 [Presidents of Zhejiang University] (Beijing: China Economic Press, 2007), 63. Yuan Xuanping 袁宣萍, 西湖織錦 [Brocade of West Lake] (Hangzhou: Hangzhou Press, 2005), 43; 45.

weaved, its design based on the photographs needs to be depicted on graph paper with a dot matrix. Then punch cards will be made for the Jacquard loom.<sup>199</sup> This process of designing the under-drawing and imitating the photographic effects requires artists' more intensive engagement. One design template of this industrial school, entitled "West Lake, Bai Causeway 西湖白堤," exemplified the visual effects of the design template (**fig. 1.11**). Considering Chang's seven-year study and work at this industrial school from 1921 to 1928, he was very likely to be inspired by this close cooperation between painters and artisans there and thus decided to study oil painting and textile in Lyon.

Hangzhou's textile industry in transition offered employment possibilities for the young generation, which prompted Hangzhou native Chang Shuhong to study textiles at an industrial school from around 1921.<sup>200</sup> Hangzhou's long-standing reputation as a center of handicraft production, particularly in the silk industry, was maintained even into the early twentieth century despite a tremendous decline at the moment of transition to the modern era.<sup>201</sup> The silk industry of Hangzhou most likely constituted the primary incentive for Chang's choice of the subject of dyeing and weaving at *Zhejiang Provincial Jia-Type Industrial School* 浙江甲種工業學校 (graduation in July

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<sup>199</sup> Hangzhou Brocade Factory 杭州織錦廠, Zhejiang University 浙江大學 and Zhejiang Silk Science Research Institute 浙江絲綢科學研究院, "提花織物紋制工藝自動化: 談談'黑白絲織像景紋制自動化' [Automatization of Making Patterns for Jacquard Fabrics: Talking about Automatization of Making Patterns for Black-and-White Silk Woven Pictures]," 絲綢 [Silk], n. 10 (1979): 1.

<sup>200</sup> Chang Shuhong 常書鴻, 九十春秋: 敦煌五十年 [Ninety Years: Fifty Years at Dunhuang] (Lanzhou: Gansu Wenhua press, 1999), 7.

<sup>201</sup> Liping Wang, *Tourism and Spatial Change in Hangzhou, 1911–1927*, chap. in *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900–1950*, ed. Joseph W. Esherick (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 108.

1923).<sup>202</sup> As Chang wrote in his autobiography that he followed his father's advice of studying in an industrial school to support the family in later days, even though he preferred to attend a painting school.<sup>203</sup> In the textile industry in the 1920s and 1930s, Hangzhou should be able to provide many job positions for people to earn a living; the city had more than 100 silk factories in 1927.<sup>204</sup> This city's geographical proximity to the metropolis Shanghai further promised more opportunities for its textile practitioners. The completion and opening to the public of the railway in September 1909 largely facilitated the population mobility between the two cities.<sup>205</sup> The train journey from Shanghai to Hangzhou needed 5 hours 13 minutes, which was shortened to 4 hours in 1937 before the war broke.<sup>206</sup> Meanwhile, Shanghai made an initial attempt to modernize China's textile industry by pioneering machine production at the Shanghai Cotton Cloth Mill 上海機器織佈局, which was established in 1889 with the support of its actual founder Li Hongzhang (1823-1901) 李鴻章. Coupled with foreign-funded textile factories such as Ewo Cotton Mill 怡和絲廠 in Shanghai that employed native workers, an Hangzhou resident with professional textile skills like Chang should have no trouble securing employment in the textile industry.<sup>207</sup> As such, the promising

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<sup>202</sup> Chang Shuhong's certificate of graduation, preserved in Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, archives of Chang Shuhong, 239-1.

<sup>203</sup> Chang Shuhong, *Ninety Years: Fifty Years at Dunhuang*, 7.

<sup>204</sup> Zhu Xinyu 朱新予, ed., *浙江絲綢史* [Silk History of Hang Zhou] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Press, 1985), 185.

<sup>205</sup> Yue Qintao 岳欽韜, "近代長江三角洲地區的交通發展與人口流動—以鐵路運輸為中心 [The Transportation Development and the Population Movement in the Modern Yangtze Delta—Centering on the Railway Transportation]," *中國經濟史研究* [Research on Chinese Economic History], n. 4 (2014): 158.

<sup>206</sup> Yue Qintao, "The Transportation Development and the Population Movement in the Modern Yangtze Delta: Centering on the Railway Transportation," *Research on Chinese Economic History*, n. 4 (2014): 160.

<sup>207</sup> Zhang Ningsheng 張寧生 and Zhang Xueren 張學仁, eds. and trans., *香港與怡和洋行* [Hongkong and Jardine Matheson] (Wuhan: Wuhan University Press, 1986), 3-6.

economic prospects offered by the textile industry both locally in Hangzhou and nearby Shanghai constituted the primary reason for the young Chang to study dyeing and weaving.

Such employment-based considerations again troubled Chang in his choice of academic directions in 1932; he was reluctant to specialize in fine art. For reasons of employment, he applied to the Institut Franco-Chinois in the Summer of 1932 to specialize in textile in Épinal.<sup>208</sup> He claimed, “painters in China can only make a living with political support.”<sup>209</sup> His application to learn textile was rejected for two reasons: “having already obtained some results in painting, he must persevere in this way,” and “it would be a shame to leave the painting for weaving.”<sup>210</sup> Based on his four-year oil painting learning and the high evaluations from his professor Georges DÉCÔTE (1870-1952), the Institute Franco-Chinois offered to fund him to study only oil painting in Paris.<sup>211</sup> Chang finally accepted this suggestion and went to Paris in November 1932.<sup>212</sup>

The cross-media experimentation in terms of pictorial textiles in Hangzhou established Chang’s initial perception of balancing the dual identities of an oil painter and textile craftsman. Zhejiang University, Chang’s funder in China, fully supported his preference for textile due to the urgency of learning from Kyoto and Lyon for a modern transformation. Despite the suspicion that textile as an apprenticeship was always inferior to oil painting belonging to higher education, the Institut Franco-

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<sup>208</sup> Chang Shuhong Archives, Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, 239-102.

<sup>209</sup> Chang Shuhong Archives, Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, 239-101.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Chang Shuhong Archives, Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon collection, 239-102; 239-106.

<sup>212</sup> Chang Shuhong Archives, Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon collection, 115.



Chinois—his Lyon patron, still permitted and assisted him in studying both oil painting and textile. This Lyon institution admittedly took into account the support from Zhejiang University to grant Chang this permission. More importantly, textile design acquired a status equal to fine art to enter higher academic education in the context of Lyon's textile priority. Indeed, the remaining mechanical aspects of textile production were still low physical labor and classified as apprenticeships in the French education system. The superior status of oil painting vis-à-vis textile determined that Chang could only choose oil painting when it was impossible to consider both.

### **Using textiles to feminize subject matter**

After focusing his expertise entirely on oil painting, Chang persisted in exploring textile modernity through his choice of teachers in Paris and the incorporation of textiles into his compositions. The tapestry design background conferred the paintings by Chang's teacher Paul-Albert Laurens (1870-1934) as well as Laurens's father and brother an interest in decorative patterns, which probably stimulated Chang to pay attention to them. Chang followed their method of integrating decorative patterns into oil painting creation, fittingly uniting his oil painting and textile expertise.

In terms of his teacher Paul-Albert Laurens in Paris, Chang admirably highlighted his professionalism through family roots and professional positions:

My teacher is the son of the painter Jean-Paul Laurens (1838-1921), who is very famous in 19<sup>th</sup>-century France. He is also the brother of the recently deceased Jean-Pierre Laurens (1875-1932), whose sketch drawing enjoyed a high reputation in the French painting circle. He has a membership in the Académie des Beaux-Arts of France. He is Professor Paul-Albert Laurens from the oil painting department of the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in

Paris.<sup>213</sup>

Paul-Albert Laurens is indeed a professional in oil painting, who received the 1er second-Prix de Rome in 1895.<sup>214</sup> He worked as the chef d'atelier de Peinture at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts from 1932 to 1934.<sup>215</sup> Nevertheless, the Laurens family's cooperation with the tapestry factory—the Gobelins Manufactory, probably consisted of the primary reason for Chang's choice of Paul-Albert Laurens as his teacher and his knowledge of Paul-Albert Laurens's other two family members. This family's tapestry design background went back to the father—Jean-Paul Laurens, a history painter and a decorative artist for tapestry design who worked for the Gobelins Manufactory from 1879 to 1909.<sup>216</sup> Unlike Chang, who had to change his focus from textile to oil painting in the French education system, Jean-Paul Laurens was trained in oil painting from his entry to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Toulouse in 1854.<sup>217</sup> It was his outstanding experiences as a history painter that led him to the field of tapestry design. The father Laurens started his career in Paris in 1860 when he won his school's Prix de Paris with his history painting *Mort d'Euryale* and was officially admitted into

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<sup>213</sup> Shuhong 書鴻, “巴黎中國畫展與中國畫前途 [Chinese Painting Exhibition in Paris and the Future of Chinese Painting],” 藝風 [Art Wind], v. 1, n. 8 (1933): 9.

<sup>214</sup> Archives de l'Ecole National Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France; Registre des « Grands Prix depuis leur fondation en 1663 » contenant les « noms de MM. les élèves de l'ancienne Ecole académique et de l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts qui ont remporté les Grands Prix de peinture, sculpture, architecture, gravure en taille-douce, gravure en médaille et pierre fine et paysage historique depuis 1663 »; AJ/52/199. Archives Nationales de France. Also see, G. Ruffy, ed., *Qui êtes-vous? Annuaire des Contemporains; Notices Biographiques* (Paris: Maison Ehret, 1924), 447.

<sup>215</sup> Refer to the online resource La Grande Masse des Beaux-Arts, last accessed September 18, 2019, [https://www.grandemasse.org/?c=actu&p=Grand\\_Prix\\_Rome\\_Peinture\\_1864-1968](https://www.grandemasse.org/?c=actu&p=Grand_Prix_Rome_Peinture_1864-1968).

<sup>216</sup> Kimberly A. Jones, “Jean-Paul Laurens, the Gobelins Manufactory, and the Tapestry Revival of the Third Republic,” *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, v. 4, n. 1 (1996-1997): 6; 33.

<sup>217</sup> Samuel H. Howell, *The Dilemma of the French History Painter, 1870-1914: Jean-Paul Laurens, Paul-Albert Besnard, Georges-Antoine Rochegrosse* (Ph.D., The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1994), 36.

the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris on October 9 of this year.<sup>218</sup> Although he failed to distinguish himself in the competitions at Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, his career began to flourish after the establishment of the Third Republic (1870-1940) through his outstanding history paintings at Salon.<sup>219</sup> He was commissioned two important State projects in 1874—his own ceiling for the recently-built Palais de la Légion d'honneur and mural paintings for the nave wall of Panthéon; his painting *l'Excommunication de Robert le Pieux* exhibited in the Salon of 1875 was purchased as the first work by Laurens to go into the Luxembourg Museum.<sup>220</sup> Based on distinguished experiences in history paintings and decorating public spaces, he began to set in the field of tapestry design sponsored by the State-owned organization—Gobelins Manufactory.

Jean-Paul Laurens drew on his experiences in history painting to experiment with tapestry design, which in turn changed his painting style. His tapestry design characterized a stylized character and a flattened form by defining his forms more by line and pattern than by modeling.<sup>221</sup> He contributed to the liberation of tapestry from the position of servitude vis-à-vis painting by virtue of such decorative innovations.<sup>222</sup> These stylistic innovations matched the target of Jules Guiffrey (1840-1918)—the administrator of Gobelins from 1893, to revive the decorative function of tapestry and reassert its distinctiveness as an independent art.<sup>223</sup> Taking the tapestry *A Scene of a*

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<sup>218</sup> Samuel H. Howell, *The Dilemma of the French History Painter, 1870-1914: Jean-Paul Laurens, Paul-Albert Besnard, Georges-Antoine Rochegrosse*, 37.

<sup>219</sup> Samuel H. Howell, 38; 57-62.

<sup>220</sup> Samuel H. Howell, 61; 64-65;

<sup>221</sup> Kimberly A. Jones, "Jean-Paul Laurens, the Gobelins Manufactory, and the Tapestry Revival of the Third Republic," 8.

<sup>222</sup> Kimberly A. Jones, 7.

<sup>223</sup> Kimberly A. Jones, 7-8.

*Tournament from the End of the Fourteenth Century* as an example, Laurens presented his techniques as a history painter to construct a space with perspective, while he employed patterns and colors to create an image far from history paintings (**fig. 1.12**). Stylized trees, plants, columns, and angles with banners constituted a decorative frame to encircle the scene of this tournament. Costumes of figures appear flattened; the textile motifs and colors are highlighted. This emphasis on decorative effects in tapestry design subsequently transformed his oil painting style. His oil painting *La Dame à la Broderie* in the collection of Musée des Augustins, Toulouse presents a special attention on textiles and patterns (**fig. 1.13**). Laurens patiently differentiated the silk dress of the young lady, the velvet tabletop, and the carpet with his delicate brush. The embroidered patterns over the lady's handkerchief, the stylized plant pattern of the tabletop, and the geometric design of the carpet are also vividly represented. The wallpaper in the background with the stylized plants and birds stands out because of the light from the colored glass window in the upper left corner. This decorative feature with an emphasis on patterns was also followed by his two sons, Paul-Albert Laurens and Jean-Pierre Laurens, in their oil paintings,.

It is highly likely that Chang firstly encountered this tapestry-inspired decorative oil painting through the younger brother Jean-Pierre Laurens's works exhibited in Lyon. Chang had the opportunity to see the painting *Le Fils* by Jean-Pierre Laurens, which was exhibited in the Société Lyonnaise des Beaux-Arts—Salon 1932 together with Chang's painting *Le Chant de l'Exil*.<sup>224</sup> Interestingly, this painting *Le Chant de l'Exil*

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<sup>224</sup> Shi Xiaoqing 施小青, 常書鴻早期繪畫研究 [Study on Chang Shuhong's Early Paintings] (Master's thesis, Graduate Institute of Art Studies, National Central University, 2017), 43.

was close to Jean-Pierre Laurens's other painting *Portrait de Jeune Fille* created in 1924 (**fig. 1.14; fig. 1.15**). Jean-Pierre's prominence of flattened motifs in *Portrait de Jeune Fille* suggests an ornamental taste, including the scrolling frills with black trim on the young girl's dress and stylized botanical patterns on the background wallpaper. Chang followed Jean-Pierre to highlight textile and wallpaper motifs, demonstrating a preference for flattened decorations. Jean-Pierre was directed to draw and paint by his father and elder brother from a young age; he was admitted into the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1895 and studied in the atelier of Léon Bonnat (1833-1922).<sup>225</sup> The actual development of his career appeared after he returned to France as a wounded soldier from a German prison camp at the end of 1918.<sup>226</sup> He accepted the position in charge of one atelier at Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1924; he painted in a pure and clear style, paying particular attention to decorative objects and precious accessories such as vases, furniture, jewelry, tapestries, and embroideries.<sup>227</sup> Likewise, Chang displayed this special attention to ornamental objects and accessories in his portrait paintings. It should be reasonable to infer that Chang intended to study with Jean-Pierre until his death from a fatal illness in 1932 when his elder brother Paul-Albert Laurens succeeded him in his atelier at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. On October 26 of the same year, Chang enrolled in the atelier directed by Paul-Albert Laurens.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Jean Guitton, *Jean-Pierre Laurens* (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1957), 29-30.

<sup>226</sup> Jean Guitton, *Jean-Pierre Laurens*, 30-1. Kimberly A. Jones, *Resurrecting History: Jean-Paul Laurens and the Politics of History Painting During the French Third Republic, 1871-1914* (Ph.D., the University of Maryland at College Park, 1996), 772.

<sup>227</sup> Cathérine Join-Diéterle, *Les Diéterle: Une Famille d'Artistes* (Fécamp: Musées Municipaux, 1999), Annexe XI.

<sup>228</sup> Phillippe Cinquini, *Les Artistes Chinois en France et l'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris à L'époque de la Première République de Chine (1912-1949): Pratiques et Enjeux de la Formation Artistique Académique* (Ph.D, Université de Lille, 2017), v. 2, 12.

Paul-Albert Laurens's canvases also displayed a salient preoccupation with a decorative quality through textiles, pure and clear pictorial effects, which coincides with Chang's interest in integrating textiles into oil painting. Chang's painting *Family of Artist* 畫家家庭 created in 1934 in Paris imitated a work of the same title—*Portrait de Famille* by his teacher (**fig. 1.16; fig. 1.17**). He portrayed himself as a painter like his teacher, holding his painting tools and wearing a white shirt as well as a black tie. Meanwhile, both artists highlighted patterns and textures of two ladies' clothes in their compositions to increase the decorative effect. The delicate brushwork and the clean coloring engender a pictorial clarity, which again enhances the decorative quality of the paintings. Such a decorative perspective should be aligned with both artists' experiences of working with textile designs. Paul-Albert Laurens also ventured into tapestry design like his father, as his 1902 work *Modèle de Tapisserie: La Naissance de Vénus* in the collection of Mobilier National of France presented (**fig. 1.18**). The composition of this tapestry design reminds audiences of the *Birth of Venus* by Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510) in around 1485 (**fig. 1.19**). Paul-Albert Laurens was probably inspired by Botticelli's Venus rising over the sea and welcoming by gods, yet his focus was on the decorative effects of waving textiles and surging seaweeds.

Chang's pictorial exploration on textile modernity culminated in his painting *A Sitting Female Nude*, which was created in 1940 in a Chinese village called Anjiang of Kunming, Yunnan province 雲南昆明安江村 (**fig. 1.20**). He depicted a female nude sitting in an interior space filled with nine décors, many of which are textiles. A pair of shoes or sleepers and a folding fan are placed in the foreground. The textile patterns

and the textures are differentiated through his detailed depiction. Why did he depict so many décors surrounding such a Chinese female nude? Why did he create this painting in Kunming when the war isolated this place? Nine décors around the female nude in this painting should directly relate to Chang's textile training experiences.<sup>229</sup> There are two décors with rose patterns, a textile covering the lower part of the female body (Number 1), and a wallpaper (Number 5). Rose was inferior to peony, plum, orchid, and chrysanthemum in ancient China due to its barbed stem; it was usually not used as the decorative theme of textiles.<sup>230</sup> Yet it gradually became a popular design element in the Republican period when European design was introduced to China; it was appropriated as one of the most popular textile patterns (**fig. 1.21**).<sup>231</sup> Both rose patterns in this painting probably came from Chang's learning experiences in Lyon and Paris. As the rose pattern, the stripe pattern (Number 3) was also newly popular in the Republican period, which is used as one side of the duvet in this painting. This textile pattern became so popular in the 1930s that it was used as the fabric pattern of women's popular dress—Qipao (**fig. 1.22**). Two red textiles, another side of the duvet (Number 2) and the curtain (Number 4), are decorated with stylized plant patterns. They are probably from pattern textbooks published to teach people how to transform plants and other things into patterns. For example, *Design Textbook* 圖案教材 by Chen Zhifo 陳之佛 (1896-1962), a former teacher in the *Zhejiang Jia-Type Industrial School* where

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<sup>229</sup> Nine décors have been marked with numbers in fig. 1.20 for the convenient reading.

<sup>230</sup> Wang Shanshan 王珊珊, “玫瑰紋樣的敘事性研究 [Study on the Narrative of the Rose Pattern],” (Master, Nanjing University of the Arts, 2017), 11.

<sup>231</sup> Zhao Feng 趙豐, ed., 中國絲綢通史 [History of Chinese Silk] (Suzhou: Suzhou University Press, 2005), 664.

Chang studied, provides nearly ten methods to pattern plants (**fig. 1.23**).<sup>232</sup> Chang migrated textile patterns from the textbook to his oil painting.

The element at the upper right corner (Number 4), probably wallpaper or a screen, is decorated with rectangular spirals 回紋 at the left border and a simplified drawing of tiny houses in the landscape. This detail looks similar to the background of another painting *Portrait of Shana*, which depicted his 8-year-old daughter in Kunming 昆明 in 1939 (**fig. 1.24**). His daughter, born in Lyon, spoke better French than Chinese in Kunming, who wrote in the book that her father tried to comfort her in the shadow of the Japanese bombing with her favorite French tales and by depicting a portrait with her favorite toys, including the doll, wooden horse and the famous Babar elephant illustrations.<sup>233</sup> The detail in *A Sitting Female Nude* looks the same as the Babar elephant illustration with the urban space in the portrait of Shana, which should also have a European origin in design (**fig. 1.25**).<sup>234</sup> In addition to textile patterns, Chang also presented his interest in texture in this painting. The textile with the ripple effect at the left corner (Number 7) is close in texture to a so-called “exotic satin” produced in Suzhou in the 1930s (**fig. 1.26**). This type of satin is a domestic Chinese taste, but it should be produced with the new machine imported from Europe.

Although the artist’s ambition for modernity is buried in the textiles and other decorative motifs, Chang’s experiments with textiles to frame a female nude still seem

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<sup>232</sup> Chen Zhifo 陳之佛, 植物的模樣化 [How to pattern plants], in 圖案教材 [Design Textbook] (Shanghai: Tianma Bookstore, 1935), 11.

<sup>233</sup> Chang Shana 常沙娜, 黃沙與藍天: 常沙娜人生回憶 [Yellow Sand and Blue Sky: Life Memory of Chang Shana] (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2013), 29.

<sup>234</sup> The Babar elephant illustration refers to Jean de Brunhoff, *Histoire de Babar: le Petit Éléphant* (Paris: Jardin des modes, 1931), 9; 27.



confusing in the warring context. When Chang depicted this painting *A Sitting Female Nude*, the *National Beiping Art Special School* 國立北平藝術專科學校 where he was employed as the teacher of the oil painting department, moved from Beijing to Kunming to escape from the war. After teachers and students gradually arrived in Kunming at the beginning of 1939, the school borrowed a primary school to settle down.<sup>235</sup> As the Japanese army began to bomb the urban area of Kunming, the school was obliged to move to the more remote area—Anjiang village 安江村, which is in the Chenggong district 呈貢區.<sup>236</sup> The school borrowed temples in the Anjiang village as classrooms and managed to cover Buddhist statues with textiles and bamboo planks in order to make a setting proper for depicting human bodies.<sup>237</sup> Another difficulty the school encountered was the employment of models, as depicting human bodies was still regarded as a moral degeneration in this isolated area.<sup>238</sup> A group photograph of students captured the primitive environment of this village; only two female students are visible in this photograph of 10 students (**fig. 1.27**).

The dual in textile and oil painting in Lyon prompted Chang to pay attention to three artists from the Laurens family in Paris, who also specialized in both oil painting and tapestry design. These three artists, including Chang's teacher Paul-Albert Laurens, the father Jean-Paul Laurens and the younger brother Jean-Pierre Laurens introduced

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<sup>235</sup> Gao Xiang 高翔, “國立藝專遷滇時間地點考 [Study on the Time and Place of National Art Special School Moving to Yunnan],” *美與時代* [Beauty and Time], n. 4 (2015): 124.

<sup>236</sup> Min Shuqian 閔叔騫, 一幅風俗畫: 安江村 [A Genre Painting: Anjiang Village], chap. in *烽火藝程: 國立藝術專科學校校友回憶錄* [Art Journey in the War: Alumni Memoir of the National Art Special School], ed. Li Li 黎力 (Hangzhou: China Academy of Art Press, 1998), 127.

<sup>237</sup> Zheng Zhao 鄭朝, *國立藝專往事* [Past Events of National Art Special School] (Hangzhou: China Academy of Art Press, 2013), 127.

<sup>238</sup> Zheng Zhao, *Past Events of National Art Special School*, 127.

the practice of highlighting flattened motifs to enhance the decorative quality of the tapestry design in oil paintings. Chang followed this decorative perspective and developed it to an apex by using textiles to femininize the subject matter, integrating two symbols of modernization in early-twentieth-century China—textile and female nude. An unsolved question from the previous text will be discussed in the following section: Why was representing the nude female critical for the artist Chang when the life model or nudity was a kind of issue in the isolated Southwest area?

### **Bride-to-be**

Chang's interpretation of the female nude, a classical painting subject in the European tradition, is revealed more in another painting from the same period—*La Toilette* 梳妝 created in 1939 in Kunming (**fig. 1.28**). The almost identical countenances and figures of two female nudes in 1939 *La Toilette* and 1940 *A Sitting Female nude* suggest that the artist employed the same model to create two different works. In contrast to *A Sitting Female Nude*, in which the female nude retains the pose of the studio model, Chang conjured up a scene of grooming to transform the studio model into a bride-to-be in *La Toilette*. Why did the artist create two different paintings with the same model within a short period? What did the artist attempt to achieve through his various experimentations?

The distinctive difference between the two paintings firstly lies in the background—motifs-dominated backdrop in 1940 *A Sitting Female nude* versus an imagined interior space constructed with *pavimento* in 1939 *La Toilette*. The artist tried

to use *pavimento*—a standard Renaissance device to fabricate the impression of a room that recedes away from the viewer as the background for the grooming bride-to-be.<sup>239</sup> The straight lines of a paved floor serve as the orthogonal of the linear perspective receding to the single vanishing point.<sup>240</sup> Because the artist set the single vanishing point so high that it extends outside the frame, the dressing scene in the foreground and the maid with the water basin in the background do not appear to be on the same plane. The painter did not take this disjunction on the plane seriously in that the background might not be his focus. The contrast between the detailed, naturalistic portrayal of the foreground grooming scene and the schematic, abbreviated depiction of the background suggests a secondary role for the interior space. Therefore, the female nude in the foreground is the key to establishing a connection between the two paintings.

The 1939 painting *La Toilette* involves the classic subject “A Woman at her Toilette,” which has been very popular since renaissance art.<sup>241</sup> Usually, a young woman is depicted to engage in various actions of the daily toilet, combing her hair, trying on an earring before a mirror, bathing, entering or leaving tubs, being alone, or being attended by a maid.<sup>242</sup> Although the related works were partly based on the custom of a woman’s *lever*, the images were rarely replications of reality but often imbued with a metaphorical dimension such as vanity, pride, prudence, natural fertility,

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<sup>239</sup> Kristina Kleutghen, *Imperial Illusions: Crossing Pictorial Boundaries in the Qing Palaces* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 11.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Marjorie O’Rourke Boyle, *Senses of Touch: Human Dignity and Deformity from Michelangelo to Calvin* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 124.

<sup>242</sup> Jochai Rosen, *Pieter Codde (1599-1678): Catalogue Raisonné* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020), 148. Charles Sterling and Margaretta M Salinger, *French Paintings: A Catalogue of the Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Vol. 3, Nineteenth to twentieth centuries* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1967), 86.

and surely masculine response to the erotic feminine beauty.<sup>243</sup> As a vocabulary appropriate to celebrating female beauty, the pictorial tradition of the Lady at her Toilette continued uninterrupted into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>244</sup> Outstanding examples include *La Toilette* by Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898) in 1883, *Woman Having Her Hair Combed* by Edgar Degas around 1886 to 1888, and *La Coiffure* by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) in 1906.<sup>245</sup> Chang probably transformed the composition from *Bather and Maid (La Toilette de la baigneuse)* by Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) between 1900 and 1901 (**fig. 1.29**). In an article written in 1933, Chang admired Renoir as a great artist who devoted his whole life to challenging the time; the painting *Bather and Maid* was used as one illustration for this article.<sup>246</sup> Renoir portrayed a woman's body as the extension of earth, nature, and pigment, fusing the woman's body with the vegetation surrounding her with the lack of texture differentiation.<sup>247</sup> The voluptuous woman is therefore represented as the symbol of nature and fertility, as Renoir always did.<sup>248</sup> Chang followed Renoir to represent the fecund body of a nude woman as the symbol of fertility, placing her in the foreground to face the audience squarely and portraying her naturalistically. Meanwhile, he replaced Renoir's natural environment with intimate interior space to foreground

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<sup>243</sup> Elise Goodman, *Female Beauty and Adornment*, chap. in *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography: Themes Depicted in Works of Art*, ed. Helene E. Roberts (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998), 323.

<sup>244</sup> Elise Goodman, "Poetic Interpretations of the 'Lady at Her Toilette' Theme in Sixteenth-Century Painting," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, v. 14, n. 4 (1983): 440; 442.

<sup>245</sup> Gary Tinterow and Susan Alyson Stein, eds., *Picasso in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010), 86-7.

<sup>246</sup> Chang Shuhong, "雷奴阿的胜利 [The Victory of Renoir]," *藝風 [Art Wind]*, v. 1, n. 10 (1933): 21-2.

<sup>247</sup> Tamar Garb, "Renoir and the Natural Woman," *Oxford Art Journal*, v. 8, n. 2 (1985): 3; 7.

<sup>248</sup> Robert L. Herbert, *The "Decorative" in Renoir's Paintings*, chap. in *Nature's Workshop: Renoir's Writings on the Decorative Arts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 84.

feminine sexuality.

Chang also attempted to grant this female nude a definitive identity—bride-to-be. The nude woman is sitting at a dressing table with an open jewelry case, a blusher, a towel, and a green cup with orange, yellow and pink carnations. She wears a pair of jade bracelets and an earring which probably have been taken out from the jewelry case; the blusher has been applied to her cheeks and lips. An elder maid is decorating her hair with yellow and orange carnations. As carnation was widely used as the wedding flower during the Republican period, the nude woman is likely to dress for her wedding.<sup>249</sup> A piece of gingham fabric is placed on her legs, covering her private area just right. This fabric is probably not an ordinary textile, but the formal dress to attend her wedding. At the first group wedding celebration in 1935 organized by the Shanghai Municipal Government, all the brides wore the silk Qipao of the pale pink color.<sup>250</sup> But the situation rapidly deteriorated after the breakout of the war; all the brides wore the gingham Qipao in the seventeenth group wedding held in 1942 in the auxiliary capital Chongqing 重慶 (**fig. 1.30**).<sup>251</sup> The photographer Sun Mingjing 孫明經 (1911-1992) captured a group wedding held on July 18, 1937, in the rural countryside of Suiyuan Province 綏遠省; the brides still dressed Qipao and used the pea shoots to replace carnations as the wedding flower.<sup>252</sup> The group wedding ceremonies were occasions

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<sup>249</sup> Refer to the photographs in 健康家庭 [Healthy Family], n. 1 (1937).

<sup>250</sup> “上海市第一次集團結婚寫真 [Photographs of the First Group Wedding in Shanghai],” 良友 [Young Companion], n. 104 (1935): 10.

<sup>251</sup> Refer to the photograph in Pan Jiade 潘家德, 近代四川民俗變化研究 [Research on the Changes of Folk Customs in Sichuan] (Chengdu: Sichuan University Press, 2017), 131.

<sup>252</sup> Sun Jiansan 孫健三, 中國百年影像檔案: 孫明經紀實攝影研究 [Chinese Video Archives in A Hundred Years: Research on Sun Jingming's Documentary Photography] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Photography Press, 2017), 143.

for the Nationalist government to state the state-society relations; the newlyweds were arranged to bow three times to Sun Yatsen's portrait, the party, and national flags.<sup>253</sup> The incorporation of political symbols in the wedding rituals successfully asserted the authority of the Nationalist Party and the Republican government among the participants and the audience of newspapers as well as periodicals.<sup>254</sup> Compared with the mass media's dissemination of the group wedding rituals, Chang's painting highlighted a moment of an individual bride preparing for the wedding. In 1939 when Chang depicted this painting, the war had been going on for two years. The situation had become so complicated that the elegant silk wedding dress of pink color had changed into the low-priced gingham one. The artist intermingled wartime hardships with the joyous moments of a new marriage, employing female sexuality—a sign of vitality and virility to infuse hope into the desperate present.<sup>255</sup>

The interwovenness of the women's body and social issues relates to the early-twentieth-century context of introducing the female nude—the icon of European painting tradition. The representation of the female nude was granted multi-layered missions in enlightening the public from the 1920s. In the discussions on defending nude art, Chinese artists attempted to convince audiences of new standards applicable to modern China in morality and aesthetics. The Japanese-trained artist Ni Yide 倪貽

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<sup>253</sup> Susan L. Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915-1953* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 129.

<sup>254</sup> Kazuhiro Iwama 岩間一弘, 上海大眾的誕生與變貌: 近代新興中產階級的消費, 動員和活動 [Birth and Transformation of Shanghai Public: Consumption, Mobilization and Activities of the Emerging Middle Class in Modern Period], trans. Ge Tao 葛濤 and Gan Huijie 甘慧傑 (Shanghai: Shanghai Dictionary Press, 2016), 200.

<sup>255</sup> Carrie Waara, *The Bare Truth: Nude, Sex, and the Modernization Project in Shanghai Pictorials*, chap. in *Visual Culture in Shanghai 1850s-1930s*, ed. Jason C. Kuo (Washington, D.C.: New Academia Publishing, 2007), 192.

德 (1901-1970) published an article to justify nude art in 1925; he argued that the standard to evaluate nude art is whether it is at odds with the new morality, regardless of the attack from the conventional moralists:

We do not need to dispute with them (the conventional moralists); we just need to see whether the new morality conflicts with nude art. The new morality took root in strong self-expression and aimed at the naked truth. Therefore, nude art is not at odds with the new morality but orients the same spirit as the new morality.<sup>256</sup>

Because the artist's quest for truth was defined as part of the new morality, the female nude as a pictorial subject was rightfully legitimized, becoming a sign of naked truth. Accordingly, social reform and progress ideals were attached to the female nude, overshadowing other related complexities such as eroticism, gender and more.

The nude art as a test site for the new morality was extended to the realm of aesthetics by Zhang Daofan 張道藩 (1897-1968). This European-trained artist delivered a lecture discussing the human body's beauty in Shanghai in 1926. He elucidated the nude in European painting tradition as a theme analogous to such Chinese painting subjects as landscape, chrysanthemums, and horses.<sup>257</sup> Moreover, he transformed the moral debates centering on the female nude into a necessity for audiences to improve their aesthetic accomplishments:

When the audiences specialize in appreciating the beauty of the human body with the aesthetic perception without sexual thought, whether the beauty of the human body is moral or immoral, decent or indecent becomes insignificant. Therefore, in European countries with the most prosperous culture and the best-developed art, a large number of nude sculptures and paintings representing the beauty of the human body are displayed in their avenues, parks, churches,

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<sup>256</sup> Ni Yide 倪怡德, “裸體藝術之真義 [True Meaning of the Nude Art],” 晨報副刊 [Supplement to Morning News], September 19, 1925.

<sup>257</sup> Zhang Daofan 張道藩, “人體美 [Beauty of Human Body],” 晨報副刊 [Morning News Supplement], August 7, 1926

libraries, and museums, expecting that everyone can appreciate this noblest beauty of the human body.<sup>258</sup>

Zhang urged Chinese audiences to learn to appreciate nude art with non-erotic associations and improve their personal aesthetic qualities. Yet he skipped over the fact that nude art was also controversial in European painting tradition, and European artists also needed to use mythology or orientalism to justify their creations. These didactic narratives and deliberate omissions reveal the social ideals of Chinese artists regarding the education of modern Chinese citizenship in the introduction and practice of the subject matter of the female nude. Chang's integration of both textile industrial modernization and warring hardships into the female nude paintings fitted well with such a context of the nude art being a site to educate modern Chinese citizens' new standards in morality and aesthetics.

Chang's paintings intertwine social ideals with the controversial female nudes: he integrated the wartime hardships into an imagined joyous moment of a bride-to-be in 1939 *La Toilette*. The textile modernization is also interwoven with the voluptuous, fertile women body in 1940 *A Sitting Female nude*. Such creations coincide with the female nude as a symbol of dramatic social change in the early 20th century, educating the audiences to adapt themselves to an emergent modern China. Using the female nude as a sign of social change also liberates nude paintings by Chang from the discourse of self-orientalism.

Cai Yuanpei appropriated German ethnologist Grosse's writing on the origin of art

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid.



to promote the concept of unifying art and craft, and further educate the public taste for emergent modern China. According to German theorists Semper and his followers, such as Grosse, primordial forms persist as ornament from crafts of the primitive age to the high arts of civilized society, which made ornament the intermediary to reunite art and craft. The young generation of Chinese artists who were trained in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s, including Pan Yuliang, Wang Ziyun, and Chang Shuhong, coincidentally chose to study two disciplines to adapt themselves to this context. Sculpture's ambiguous status between art—the conceptual imagination and craft—the manual labor of sculpting renders it a proper medium for Pan and Wang to define themselves as both artist and artisan. The high status of sculpture as a fine art also somehow saved Pan from falling into the trap that women were only qualified for the low art of craftsmanship. The elevation of the craftsmanship side of the sculpture in the industrial context further shaped Wang's perception of the equivalence of arts, which underlies his art history writing and watercolor landscape creation.

In contrast to Pan and Wang, Chang Shuhong encountered more intricacies in an attempt to be both an oil painter and a textile craftsman. Lyon, a city known for its textile production, granted Chang the opportunity to study both oil painting and textile, especially as textile design acquired equal status to fine art in this city and entered higher academic education. Nevertheless, the superior status of oil painting vis-à-vis textile meant that Chang had to focus on oil painting when he was not allowed to do both. As a compromise, Chang selected to enroll in the oil painting atelier of Paul-Albert Laurens at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris, whose

family also specialized in both oil painting and tapestry design. Along with his father Jean-Paul Laurens and younger brother Jean-Pierre Laurens, Paul-Albert Laurens introduced flattened motifs in tapestry design to enhance the decorative quality of oil paintings. Chang followed his teacher's decorative perspective to develop it further by using textiles to femininize the subject matter, especially the female nudes. As Chang combined the controversial female nudes with the social change of modern China, including the industrial modernization symbolized by textiles and the warring hardships, his paintings became a site for educating audiences to adapt themselves to a modern China. As such, his female nudes as a sign of social change are free from the restraints of the self-orientalism framework.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Female Nude Becomes the New Monumental Focus in Chinese Painting**

Julia Andrews has elaborately argued that the notorious “nude painting polemics” the painter and art educator Liu Haisu 劉海粟 (1896-1994) exploited to establish his image as a “traitor to art” representing freedom and civilization is a myth-making rather than precision of concrete facts.<sup>259</sup> As a socialite close to Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879-1942), one of the protagonists of the New Culture Movement, Liu made full use of the assertive polemic mode to shape himself into a distinguished “artistic giant” analogous to the “cultural giant” Chen.<sup>260</sup> Such a self-dramatization based on the May-Fourth invented polemic discourse insinuated a radicalized either/or antagonism into most discussions on nude art during the 1920s and 1930s, not merely those by Liu.<sup>261</sup> The radical confrontation between the past morality and the new epoch almost became a fixed pattern to discuss the legitimacy of nude art by different artists and art critics. For example, the Japanese-trained oil painter Ni Yide claimed in 1925: “It is not necessary to start with the relationship between art and morality, but we only need to ask whether the old morality, on which they were based, still has authority in today’s new era.”<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Julia Andrews 安雅蘭, 裸體畫論爭及現代中國美術史的構建 [The Nude Painting Controversy and the Construction of Modern Chinese Art], 海派繪畫研究論文集 [Studies on Shanghai School Painting], ed. 上海書畫出版社 [Shanghai Calligraphy and Painting Press] (Shanghai: Shanghai Calligraphy and Painting Press, 2001), 145.

<sup>260</sup> Rong Hongjun 榮宏君, 徐悲鴻與劉海粟 [Xu Beihong and Liu Haisu] (Shanghai: Shanghai SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2013,) 317-18. Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Incomplete Modernity: Rethinking the May Fourth Intellectual Project*, chap. in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China’s May Fourth Project*, eds. Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and Oldřich Král (London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 44-5.

<sup>261</sup> L. Lee, *Incomplete Modernity*, chap. in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital*, 45.

<sup>262</sup> Ni Yide 倪怡德, “裸體藝術之真義 (下) [True Meaning of the Nude Art, Part 2],” 晨報副刊 [Supplement to Morning News], September 19, 1925.

Ni antagonized “we—the representative of the new era” and “they—the symbol of the dark past” to convey a self-righteousness authority in defending nude art. Likewise, the French-trained painter Wang Yachen 汪亞塵 (1894-1983) utilized the nude painting as a medium to oppose Confucianism. In his article published in 1933, he claimed: “People in China who do not understand the meaning of nudity, often rely on hereditary and habitual concepts and look at nude paintings according to the old Confucian ethical code, it inevitably leads to a cry of fuss.”<sup>263</sup> This self-important, assertive stance drowned out the reasonable, dissenting voices such as oil painters’ exploitation of lower-class women’s bodies, which were usually attacked to be “conventional.”<sup>264</sup> Nevertheless, aesthetic concepts of nude art needed to be established to practically advance art education and art creation beyond these exclusionary, radicalized polemic discourses. The self-incorporation of Chinese artists and art critics into the May-Fourth context was also long entangled with their portrayals of human bodies.

The introduction of European aesthetic interpretations of nude art, primarily German philosophers’ doctrines, provided substantial theoretical underpinnings for Chinese artists’ experimentations in representing human bodies. Modern Chinese artists’ and art critics’ appropriation and reformulation of German artistic discourses are crucial to the importation of the nude as a painting theme, considering the absence of representing the nude of anatomical shapes and surfaces in the Chinese painting

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<sup>263</sup> Wang Yachen 汪亞塵, 為什麼要研究裸體畫 [Why Study Nude Paintings], chap. in 汪亞塵論藝 [Wang Yachen Discusses Art], ed. Wang Zhen 王震 (Shanghai: Shanghai Calligraphy and Painting Press, 2010), 253.

<sup>264</sup> Julia Andrews, “The Nude Painting Controversy and the Construction of Modern Chinese Art,” 127; 132.

tradition.<sup>265</sup> The French-trained translator and art critic Fu Lei 傅雷 (1908-1966) elucidated the philosophical dimension of the controversy surrounding nude art in 1932: “not because nudity is obscene, but because it is ‘vulgar’ in an aesthetic, and especially in a philosophical sense.”<sup>266</sup> As to why nudity is “vulgar” in the Chinese philosophical sense, he further explained:

Chinese thought has never considered a man to be superior to other figures. The man was not created in the image of “God” as in the West, so he is not more complete than the rest of the universe. In this respect, “nature” is ten thousand times more transcendent, sublime, and significant than man. It is more infinite, indeterminate, and likely to lead the mind to transcendence than man—not transcendence above everything, but transcendence beyond everything.<sup>267</sup>

By contrasting Chinese worship for nature with European esteem for man, Fu transformed the dispute surrounding nude art into a reflection on the philosophical foundation of art. What happened when Chinese and European philosophies encountered on the issue of importing nude art? How did Chinese intellectuals reconcile the divergence between the two to highlight the necessity and significance of representing human bodies?

On the other hand, the female nude was framed as a sign of a promising national rebirth in the context of the New Culture Movement, which is also called *The Chinese Renaissance*.<sup>268</sup> Chinese intellectuals in the 1920s imagined China as “an heir to the

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<sup>265</sup> John Hay, *The Body Invisible in Chinese Art?*, chap. in *Body, Subject, and Power in China*, ed. Angela Zito and Tani E. Barlow (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 43.

<sup>266</sup> Fu Lei 傅雷, 現代中國藝術之恐慌 [Panic of Modern Chinese Art], chap. in 傅雷文集: 藝術卷 [Collection of Articles by Fu Lei: Art Volume], ed. Fu Min 傅敏 (Shanghai: Shanghai Far East Press, 2016), 249.

<sup>267</sup> Fu Lei 傅雷, “現代中國藝術之恐慌 [Panic of Modern Chinese Art],” 藝術旬刊 [Art Journal], v. 1, n. 4 (1932): 5.

<sup>268</sup> Barbara Mittler, *Epochal Changes in a Global Context—Toward a History-in-common*, chap. in *Why China Did Not Have a Renaissance—and Why That Matters: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, Thomas Maissen and Barbara Mittler (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2018), 12.

European Renaissance's light, irrespective of the clock;" the European translatability of the Italian Renaissance convinced them of its circulation through China "as a transformative force for modernization."<sup>269</sup> This embrace of the Renaissance's translatability to China was demonstrated through artists' and art critics' attitudes toward the nude. The art critic Ni Yide expressed an ecstasy on the circulation of nude art in the Chinese art field: "Like other new doctrines and new ideas, the trend of nude art has reached our land. This is one sign of the Renaissance, a harbinger of an age of rebirth; Florence's old fragrance and the Rhine's spring scenery are about to reappear in our glorious land. How we should leap for joy at the bright future!"<sup>270</sup> Chinese artists' beginning of portraying the nude was therefore placed in parallel to Italian Renaissance artists' break with the medieval fear of the nude, signaling the bright future of Chinese modernity.<sup>271</sup> While the nude was framed in Chinese "Renaissance" discourse as the pictorial language of the future, how did Chinese artists attempt to normalize it as a new subject in Chinese painting?

I begin with Chinese intellectuals' attempts to translate and transmit European theories of the nude, such as German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831)'s concept of the pure human form, to a Chinese audience. Such a translation often involved the integration of traditional Chinese aesthetic theories to

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<sup>269</sup> Barbara Mittler, *The View from China: r/Renaissances*, chap. in *Why China Did Not Have a Renaissance—and Why That Matters: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, Thomas Maissen and Barbara Mittler (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2018), 109.

<sup>270</sup> Ni Yide 倪怡德, "裸體藝術之真義(上) [True Meaning of the Nude Art, Part 1]." 晨報副刊 [Supplement to Morning News], September 17, 1925. The translation of Ni Yide's text refers to Amanda Wangwright, *The Golden Key: Modern Women Artists and Gender Negotiations in Republican China, 1911-1949* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 61.

<sup>271</sup> Christa Grössinger, *Picturing Women in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 12.

achieve relative domestication. Then I examine the pictorial invention of this notion of pure nudity by Chinese artists, especially those by European-trained painter Pan Yuliang.

### **The theoretical portrayal of the pure human form**

The theoretical establishment of the notion of the pure human form in the 1920s appeared critical for Chinese audiences' reception of nude models in art education and paintings. Artists and art critics consequently took pains to inculcate the conception of pure nudity through European aesthetics and to build an alignment with traditional aesthetic theories. In an article published in July 1922, Liu Haisu claimed that the smooth curves and the flowing colors of the human body render it the prime painting subject:

The significance of painting live models is to express the character "life" in a lively way. Depicting all other things in nature also means representing "life," but there is no such rich and perfect "life" as the human body. Because the subtle curve of the human body can fully express a kind of subordination to the law of "life," the transition is smooth without the slightest unnatural place. The color on the human body can also completely express an endless flow, changing extremely lively, without obstacles. The human body has this smooth and endless flow of life, so it has a high meaning of beauty and the actual value of beauty.<sup>272</sup>

Liu declared the law of "life" as the foremost principle for pictorial representations, applicable to depicting human beings and even all things in the universe. He also alleged that the human body is a preferable painting theme to express the law of "life" in comparison to other subjects. Why did Liu believe in the universal applicability of

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<sup>272</sup> Liu Haisu 劉海粟, 上海美專十年回顧 [A Ten-Year Review of Shanghai Fine Art Academy], chap. in 劉海粟藝術文選 [Selected Articles on Art by Liu Haisu], eds. Zhu Jinlou 朱金樓 and Yuan Zhihuang 袁志煌 (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine Art Press, 1987), 37-8.

the law of “life” in the field of painting? Why did he entrust the law of “life” the persuasive power to convince Chinese audiences to accept nude paintings? What inspired him to make the human body the most important subject matter, given that Chinese culture has never placed it in a leading position?

The law of “life” that Liu emphasized firstly evokes the time-honored concept “Spirit Resonance which means vitality 氣韻生動,” the first principle in *Six Laws* 六法 formulated by the art historian and art critic Xie He 謝赫 (active. C. 500-535).<sup>273</sup> Scholars of Chinese art have struggled to interpret the meaning of the terms articulated in *Six Laws*; Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih’s translation highlighting the “vitality” of the first principle is close to Liu’s comprehension.<sup>274</sup> Liu expounded it in his research published in 1931: “*Qiyun shengdong* is the vitality containing the spirit resonance, namely the vitality is pervaded by the spirit resonance. In this way, vitality is the subject; spirit resonance is a necessary addition to vitality, so it is crowned above vitality.”<sup>275</sup> He cited art criticisms by Ming artist Tang Zhixie 唐志契 (1579-1651) and Qing artist Fang Xun 方薰 (1736-1799) to indicate a traditional origin of his interpretation, rationalizing his esteem for “vitality.” Fang Xun’s criticism is particularly noteworthy in that he was defined by Liu’s contemporary art critic Teng Gu 滕固 (1901-1941) in

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<sup>273</sup> The translation refers to Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 40.

<sup>274</sup> Other translations and discussions include Paul R. Goldin, “Two Notes on Xie He’s 謝赫 ‘Six Criteria’ (*liufa* 六法), Aided by Digital Databases,” *T’oung Pao*, v. 104, fasc. 5-6 (2018): 497. Victor H. Mair, *Xie He’s “Six Laws” of Painting and Their Indian Parallels*, chap. in *Chinese Aesthetics: The Ordering of Literature, the Arts, and the Universe in the Six Dynasties*, ed. Zong-qi Cai (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004), 94-95. Stanley Murashige, *Philosophy of Art*, chap. in *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Antonio S. Cua (New York: Routledge, 2003), 513. James Cahill, “Six Laws and How to Read Them,” *Ars Orientalis*, n. 4(1961): 372.

<sup>275</sup> Liu Haisu 劉海粟, 中國繪畫上的六法論 [The Theory of Six Laws in Chinese Painting], chap. in 劉海粟藝術文選 [Selected Articles on Art by Liu Haisu], eds. Zhu Jinlou 朱金樓 and Yuan Zhihuang 袁志煌 (Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Fine Art Press, 1987), 260.



1926 as a turning point in reading the *qiyun shengdong* concept. Teng claimed that the Tang and Song art historians Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (c. 815-after 875) and Guo Ruoxu 郭若虛 (active c. 1075) viewed the relationship between *qiyun* and *shengdong* as juxtaposed or before/after; the Ming art theorist Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636) even reduced *qiyun shengdong* into *qiyun*.<sup>276</sup> He stated, “it was only after Fang Xun that these four characters became consistent rhetoric and their true meaning began to emerge.”<sup>277</sup> Indeed, Fang remarked this term in his treatise *Comments on Painting in the Shanjing Studio* 山靜居畫論:

*Qiyun shengdong*, (the reader) must apprehend two characters *shengdong*; (if *shengdong* can be genuinely grasped, *qiyun* is naturally in. *Qiyun shengdong* is the first principle; (the creation is therefore) spirit-based. (If) the spirit is flourishing, (the brush) can move freely, ingeniously without obstruction; the rhythm is naturally lively.<sup>278</sup>

Teng incorporated the German philosopher Theodor Lipps (1851-1914)’s theory of empathy (Einfühlungstheorie) to decipher Fang’s interpretation of *qiyun* into “the rhythm of pure sensations.”<sup>279</sup> He rephrased Fang’s observations: “the rhythm of our pure sensations (*qiyun*) is present in the vitality of all things and beings. When the sensations are flourishing and intense, their rhythm is naturally combined with the vitality of the things.”<sup>280</sup> Teng equated things with objects and sensations with

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<sup>276</sup> Teng Gu 滕固, “氣韻生動略辨 [A Brief Analysis on *Qiyun Shengdong*],” 新藝術半月刊 [New Art Semi-Monthly], n. 1 (1926): 26-7.

<sup>277</sup> Teng Gu, “A Brief Analysis on *Qiyun Shengdong*,” 27.

<sup>278</sup> Fang Xun 方薰, 山靜居畫論 [Comments on Painting in the Shanjing Studio], annot. Chen Yongyi 陳永怡 (Hangzhou: Xiling Seal Engraver’s Society Publishing House, 2009), 18-9.

<sup>279</sup> Teng Gu was not the only Chinese art critic to employ Lipps’s theory of empathy to interpret *qiyun shengdong*. Ling-Ting Chiu, “A New Page of Literati Painting from Singapore and Malaysia: A Study of Chen Wen His and Chung Chen Sun,” *Translocal Chinese: East Asian Perspectives*, v. 15, no. 1 (2021): 121.

<sup>280</sup> Teng Gu, “A Brief Analysis on *Qiyun Shengdong*,” 27.

ourselves.<sup>281</sup> Consequently, he invented the consistency between the concept of *qiyun shengdong* and the theory of empathy by Lipps through transferring spirit resonance as human sensations projecting into the vitality of objects.<sup>282</sup> Liu Haisu followed Teng Gu, seeing spirit resonance as an addition projected into vitality. Whether this interpretation is reasonable or not, Teng took pains to translate the ancient Chinese painting theory into contemporaneous German philosophical rhetoric, thus familiarizing foreign philosophical doctrines for Chinese audiences. Liu's reference to Teng reveals his identification with modernizing traditional painting theories and domesticating those foreign ones.

In addition to evoking the first principle of *the Six Laws*, Liu Haisu's conception of representing the "life" of the human body also draws on the theory of the German philosopher Hegel. Hegel pointed out that animal life is the summit of natural beauty, while the beauty of animal life has one chief deficiency: "What is visible to us in the organism is not the soul; what is turned outwards and appears everywhere is not the inner life, but forms drawn from a lower stage than that of life proper."<sup>283</sup> In comparison, the human body stands at a higher stage because man is ensouled and feeling unit; he continued the elaboration:

The skin is not hidden by plant-like unliving coverings; the pulsation of the blood shows itself over the entire surface; the beating heart of life is as if it were present everywhere over the body and comes out into appearance externally as

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<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> According to Lipps, empathy operates through the mechanism of projection. He considered empathy "as a specific type of cognition of the essence of an object or subject;" the subject knows itself and its experiences through projecting its "self" into the content of an object or subject. Larysa Zhuravlova and Oleksiy Chebykin, *The Development of Empathy: Phenomenology, Structure and Human Nature* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 6.

<sup>283</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 132; 145.

the body's own animation, as *turgor vitae*, as this swelling life. Similarly the skin proves to be sensitive everywhere, and displays the *morbidezza* [delicacy], the tints of color in flesh and veins, which are the artist's cross.<sup>284</sup>

Liu appropriated Hegel's affirmation of the beauty of the human body based on its swelling life, which is even presented through external appearances, but omitted his description of the progressive rise from the mineral, plant, and animal to human. The omission of this reasoning progress makes Liu's argumentation on the human body as the perfection of the natural beauty groundless and unimpressive. He also intentionally ignored Hegel's subsequent statement on defects of the human body in order to persuade Chinese audiences to appreciate the nude physical form. This out-of-context exploitation of Hegel's doctrine is not logically convincing to readers, which may be part of the reason for the failure to promote the pure human form in China. As Wu Fangzheng 吳方正 pointed out, China was not freed from debates in the 1920s on the demarcation between art and sexuality, which appears impossible even in the future.<sup>285</sup>

At the same time, Liu continued to translate Hegel's doctrines to teach Chinese viewers to put aside the association between nudity and pornography, and to appreciate the abstract beauty of the human body from its curves and shapes. In another article published in 1925, Liu asserted that beauty constitutes two requirements—form and expression.<sup>286</sup> The beauty of the form of the human body is the focus of his discussion, which was divided into four aspects—unity, variation, regularity, and symmetry.<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, 146.

<sup>285</sup> Wu Fangzheng 吳方正, “裸的理由: 20 世紀初期中國人體寫生問題的討論 [The Reason for the Nude: Questions Concerning Nude Figure Drawing in China at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century],” 藝術學研究 [Chinese Journal of Art Studies], n. 2 (2010): 182.

<sup>286</sup> Liu Haisu 劉海粟, “人體模特兒 [Live Model],” 晨報七週年增刊 [Morning Post Seventh Anniversary Supplement], December 1925: 143.

<sup>287</sup> Liu Haisu, “Live Model,” 144.

Once again, Liu appropriated and reorganized Hegel's discussions on "the external beauty of the abstract form and the abstract unity of the sensuous material" in *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. Hegel pointed out that the form of natural beauty is externally determinate and contains a unity imposed on the external; this form constitutes firstly "regularity and symmetry, then conformity to law, and finally harmony."<sup>288</sup> Liu disrupted Hegel's discursive formation; he paralleled unity with regularity and symmetry, which Hegel discussed as a branch of unity. The content of Hegel's discourse is similarly broken up and adapted. For example, according to Hegel, the oval achieves higher freedom with inner conformity to law.<sup>289</sup> Liu used the oval-shaped face to demonstrate the regularity of the human body.<sup>290</sup> Hegel talked about lines similar to ovals, which conform to law but without regularity, such as the lines of arms waving differently on one side from the other.<sup>291</sup> Liu summarized this discussion on the line of beauty into "variation" to explain the beauty of the changing curves of the human body.<sup>292</sup> Namely, Liu picked out a few keywords from Hegel's *Aesthetics* and grafted them onto the abstract beauty of the human body that he struggled to address. Although such an approach makes his article incoherent and incomprehensible, the abstract beauty of the human form is somehow conveyed to overshadow its dimension in the sexual sensation; the beauty of curved lines once became synonymous with the human body, especially the female body in the 1930s China.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 134.

<sup>289</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 139.

<sup>290</sup> Liu Haisu, "Live Model," 144.

<sup>291</sup> Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 140.

<sup>292</sup> Liu Haisu, "Live Model," 144.

<sup>293</sup> Refer to Jun Lei, "Natural Curves: Breast-Binding and Changing Aesthetics of the Female Body in China of the Early Twentieth Century," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, v. 27, n. 1 (2015): 163-

It appears to be a common practice to appropriate classical German philosophical literature out of context to educate Chinese readers. The French-trained art critic Tang Jun 唐雱 (1896-1954)'s discussion of the relationship between nude art and morality stands out due to his creative appropriation of German philosophy in proving the legitimacy of nude art. In an article written in 1921, Tang briefly mentioned some big names of German philosophers such as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) to demonstrate that the issue between beauty and morality is worldwide, thus suggesting the possibility for China to learn from German doctrines in resolving the conflicts on the nude art. He quoted at length the discussion of the relationship between beauty and morality by the German philosopher Julius von Kirchmann (1802-1884):

To what extent should an artist be allowed to represent immorality? Rather than following the standard of art, it is better to determine the extent to which the viewer is moved. In the past, the Greeks were rather weak about this emotion; this is why their nude art prevailed. The present debates on nude art are diverse. It is due to the differences in the people's education, customs, and temperament, which renders different emotions caused by the nude art amidst audiences. What is objective about nude art is that the line between beauty and non-beauty cannot be drawn. For example, the Italian woman who saw nude art would not cause emotional turmoil, while the English woman would hide her face and did not want to see it. All these differences are not related to the represented subject, but the viewer's feelings produced differences. Despite the slight difference, if it is like the French obscene dramas, poems, and novels in breach of morality without any shame, where full of people, the art will never permit.<sup>294</sup>

Literally, this passage highlights the art's disinterestedness and audiences' diverse cognitive abilities. The task of improving the cognitive abilities is implicitly assigned

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<sup>294</sup> Tang Jun 唐雱, "裸體藝術與道德問題 [Nude Art and Morality]," 美術 [Fine Art], v. 2, n. 4 (1921): 19.

to viewers who feel the moral transgression of the nude art. Artists and art critics played the role of teachers and leaders to educate less enlightened audiences.<sup>295</sup> Although Tang Jun quoted this text as the original theory of Kirchmann, his quotation was actually from the Chinese translation of *Modern Aesthetics* (Kinsei Bigaku) by the Japanese critic Takayama Chogyū (or Rinjirō, 1871-1902) in 1899.<sup>296</sup> Chogyū selectively extracted and creatively adapted Kirchmann's discussion on the relation between beauty and morality in chapter 6 of *Asthetik auf realistischer Grundlage*, making it more accessible to East Asian audiences.

Chogyū's selection of Kirchmann's theory demonstrated his target of educating audiences instead of artists, which coincided with Chinese artists and art critics such as Tang Jun. Kirchmann did claim that due to the different moral sensitivity of individual audiences, an artwork gave rise to different sensual irritability—some viewers can enjoy it purely while others feel the moral transgression.<sup>297</sup> This difference in audiences' responses is partially from the diverse customs and female virtuous standards of various areas and times, while Kirchmann emphasizes the role of education more. He claims that women in the Orient and antiquity inaccessible to education were degraded to be only the object of sexual enjoyment, which made the sexual relations rough and clumsy, the sense of people dull, and the sensibility to the shameful diminish.<sup>298</sup> Under these circumstances, people were able to enjoy ornamentations of

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<sup>295</sup> Joachim Kurtz, *Translating the Vocation of Man: Liang Qichao (1873-1929), J. G. Fichte, and the Body Politic in Early Republican China*, chap. *Why Concepts Matter: Translating Social and Political Thought*, eds. Martin Burke and Melvin Richter (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 167.

<sup>296</sup> Takayama Rinjirō 高山林次郎, *近世美學* [Modern Aesthetics], trans. Liu Renhang 劉仁航 (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1924), 91.

<sup>297</sup> Julius Hermann von Kirchmann, *Asthetik auf realistischer Grundlage* (Springer: Berlin, 1868), 314.

<sup>298</sup> Julius Hermann von Kirchmann, 316.

utensils in a purely ideal, artistic way, even though these ornaments appear to be indecent for modern sensibilities.<sup>299</sup> Chogyū concisely summarized this discussion suggesting the importance of educating the audience. Nevertheless, he completely omitted Kirchmann's description of an artist's essential tactic in endowing and idealizing the physical form for the audience's pure aesthetic pleasure:

Art is also limited by the public's fundamental sense of shame. There is a limit beyond which the audience cannot follow the violation of shame without moral indignation even in the picture. The artist must observe this limit; no other objective law exists here. In the sublime and the idealization of reality, art has previously developed methods to conceal the violation of shame and to restrict morality; the spectator can be drawn away from the moral conception by the sublimity or idealization, and the disturbance of the ideal elevation or pleasure can be averted by concealing the real moral feeling.<sup>300</sup>

Kirchmann required the artist to use certain strategies to divert or distance the moral discomfort of the audience. The mythological veil, such as Venus from the Greek myth, and the orientalism should belong to the traditional means to sublime and idealize the transgressive pictorial themes. It seems that Chogyū regarded artists as the leader in educating the public; he did not see the necessity of introducing Kirchmann's discussion on artists' responsibility in pictorially limiting or diverting the viewer's moral association. Likewise, Chinese artists and art critics also consciously took the role of educating the public and did not consider the artist's method of expression as another crux to demonstrate the pure human body.

Art criticism in 1920s China established a verbal basis for visual representations of the notion of the pure human form, which was swiftly disseminated to the reader

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<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

<sup>300</sup> Julius Hermann von Kirchmann, 317-18.

through booming journalism.<sup>301</sup> Artists and art critics translated and reformulated the theories of German philosophers Hegel and Kischmann to instill in Chinese audiences the human body's pure and abstract beauty irrespective of sexuality or morality. The traditional "movement of life" concept in *Six Laws* was also reinterpreted under the linguistic framework of modern German philosophy, thus modernizing the indigenous aesthetic theories and domesticating foreign philosophical doctrines for broader reception. The visual equivalents of these verbal constructs of the pure and abstract human form will be explored in the following sections primarily through the artworks by the French-trained Chinese artist Pan Yuliang.

### **Translating the pure nude form**

In comparison to the theoretical constitution of the pure physical form, the oil painting *Sitting Nude (Nu Assis)* by Pan Yulaing in 1953 visually achieved the goal of delivering the semi-abstract beauty of the human body to the viewer (**fig. 2.1**). The seated nude figure bends the upper body forward to bury the head between two arms. This compressed position effectively conceals the face and the sex of the nude, blurring the gender of this body. Such a pose maximized the undulating flow of a body's contours from the curved back to the bent legs and stretched arms, pictorially translating "the beauty of the human body's curves" that Chinese art critics sought to preach to the Chinese spectator theoretically. The early-twentieth-century context of new aesthetic education for Chinese audiences nourished Pan's formal strategy for the creative

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<sup>301</sup> On the vital role of the press in art criticism, refer to Michael Shreyach, *The Recovery of Criticism*, chap. in *The State of Art Criticism*, eds., James Elkins and Michael Newman (New York: Routledge, 2008), 5; Dario Gamboni, *The Relative Autonomy of Art Criticism*, chap. in *Art Criticism and Its Institutions in Nineteenth-Century France*, ed. Michael R. Orwicz (New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), 182-90.



expression of corporeal intimacy in this painting.

The issue of how to represent the nude penetrated all aspects of Pan's training, teaching, and creation. Although Pan, as a female artist, never participated in the literal discussions on depicting the live model, she should be very familiar with Liu's efforts in incorporating nude models in the educational system of his Shanghai Fine Art Academy. She was admitted to the Shanghai Fine Art Academy under the direction of Liu on September 7, 1920, to study European painting, and was one of the first twelve female students admitted to this art school.<sup>302</sup> She soon dropped out of this school in July 1921 and went to Lyon to enroll in the Institut Franco-Chinois, yet Liu employed her as the director of the European painting department upon her return to China in July 1928.<sup>303</sup> A photograph taken by the research studio of the Shanghai Fine Art Academy captured Pan sitting with her students to depict a nude female model (**fig. 2.2**).<sup>304</sup> The stamp on the back of this photo, "Photo by Zhang Jiehua 張接華攝," indicates not only that Zhang Jiehua, a student at the school, is the photographer but also that the photo may have been distributed among students.<sup>305</sup> Although Pan and her students were drawing the front of the model, the back of the model shown in this photo of the anatomical verisimilitude would probably be used by the student photographer or other students to study an alternative perspective of the model's body. This practice involves

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<sup>302</sup> Dong Song 董松, 潘玉良藝術年譜 [Chronological Biography of Artist Pan Yuliang] (Hefei: Anhui Fine Art Press, 2013), 13.

<sup>303</sup> Dong Song, *Chronological Biography of Artist Pan Yuliang*, 42.

<sup>304</sup> Gu Zheng 顧錚, "當年的上海美專如何影響了中國攝影的發展 [How the Shanghai Fine Art Academy Impacted the Development of Chinese Photography Back Then]," 澎湃 [The Paper], March 30, 2022, [http://m.thepaper.cn/renmin\\_prom.jsp?contid=16879003&from=renmin](http://m.thepaper.cn/renmin_prom.jsp?contid=16879003&from=renmin) (Accessed on April 11, 2022).

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

a Parisian tradition of producing academic photographs as *aide-mémoire* from the mid-nineteenth century. A number of prominent French artists, including Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863), Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) and Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904), had commissioned photographers to produce nude photographs during 1850s and 1860s.<sup>306</sup> Courbet probably worked from photographs to finish nudes in his masterpieces *The Bathers* and *The Painter's Studio*; Gérôme completed *Phryne before the Areopagus* with the aid of a nude photograph by Nadar (1820-1910).<sup>307</sup> The impressionist Edgar Degas (1834-1917) also used photography to aid painting, such as capturing an instant of movement; he experimented with translating the light effects of photography into his paintings.<sup>308</sup> These photographic “académies” superseded the traditional lithographic nude studies as *aide-mémoire* for artists’ compositions and models for drawing the figure.<sup>309</sup> Art practitioners in 1930s Shanghai, including Pan, followed the Parisian tradition since the mid-nineteenth century of using photography’s mimetic capacity as a teaching aid and memory aid for creation.

A more widely circulated photo of this school exemplifies how Chinese artists used academic photographs to frame the human body into an abstract form (**fig. 2.3**).

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<sup>306</sup> Raisa A. Rexer, *Art, Obscenity, and Censorship: 1839-1870*, chap. in *The Fallen Veil: A Literary and Cultural History of the Photographic Nude in Nineteenth-Century France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021), 10-11.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Sylvie Aubenas, “Eugène Delacroix’s Albums of Photographic Nudes,” *Yale French Studies: Photography and the Body in Nineteenth-Century*, n. 139 (2021): 9. Sam Rohdie, *Promised Lands: Cinema, Geography, Modernism* (London: Sam Rohdie, 2001), 140.

<sup>309</sup> Steve Edwards, *Photography and Modernity in Nineteenth-Century France*, chap. in *The Challenge of the Avant-garde*, ed. Paul Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 88. The term *académie* traditionally referred to a public school or atelier, also designated a sketch of a particular pose or the pose itself in the Beaux-Arts section; it expanded to include photographic nudes during the nineteenth century. Marie Lathers, *Studies after Nature: The Photographic Model at the Turn of the Century*, chap. in *Bodies of Art: French Literary Realism and the Artist’s Model* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 225. Chris Forster, *Filthy Material: Modernism and the Media of Obscenity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 44.

This famous photo, taken in the winter of 1935, captured a nude female model among teachers and students of the European painting class. This practice of taking a group photo with the live model, students, and teachers also emulates French art training classes. It appears to be a time-honored tradition at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-arts de Paris, as a nineteenth-century photograph *Group of Men, Nude Model and Skeleton in an Atelier* from the Ecole reveals (**fig. 2.4**). In the Shanghai photo, no skeleton appears behind the nude model to suggest the scientific way of seeing as in the Paris atelier. Nevertheless, three French-trained Chinese teachers—Zhang Xian 張弦 (1893-1936), Wang Yuanbo 王遠勃 (1905-1957), and Liu Kang 劉抗 (1911-2004) dressed formally to indicate the same professional identity as their Paris teachers. In particular, the skeleton behind the nude model in the Paris photo reminds the viewer of the anatomy classes prominent at the Ecole and renders the model a morbid object which will become alive through the artist's brush.<sup>310</sup> Being trained at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-arts de Paris for two years from 1924 to 1925, Pan should share her Chinese contemporaries' perceptions of the art training, including the anatomy classes in Paris.

The capacity of photography to display the human body from diverse angles facilitated art students' comprehension of the human body in an anatomical sense. As Pan was trained at the Ecole, Paul Richer (1849-1933) served as the anatomy professor, who stayed in this position for thirty-one years from 1903 to 1933.<sup>311</sup> Richer took up

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<sup>310</sup> Marie Lathers, *Paris Qui Pose: The Female Model in Nineteenth-Century France*, chap. in *Bodies of Art: French Literary Realism and the Artist's Model* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 45.

<sup>311</sup> Anthea Callen, "The Body and Difference: Anatomy Training at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in the Later Nineteenth Century," *Art History*, v. 20, n.1 (1997): 24.

photography to study the effects of movement on human morphology, thus providing accurate anatomy data on bodily movement for fine artists.<sup>312</sup> His photographs of both male and female models usually start with three standing poses—front, back, and side, then continue to show the positions entailing the use of different muscle groups: standing with hands crossed above the head, kneeling, four varied sitting positions, bending forward, bending back, and twisting (**fig. 2.5**).<sup>313</sup> A group of seated positions in Richer's photograph is closely related to the composition of the *Sitting Nude* by Pan. Richer explored the morphologic changes by comparing different physical actions with nuanced variations in strengths: limbs loosely bending together and stretching forward, the upper body prone forward, and the whole body tightly curled up. Pan Yuliang's *Sitting Nude* with the upper body vigorously prone forward fits well with Richer's set of sitting positions. As Richer used to project his stop-motion photographs in lectures at the Ecole as analytic and demonstrative materials for students, Pan was likely to formulate her composition in light of Richer's photographic study on the body in movement.<sup>314</sup>

Additionally, the interaction between modernist photography and painting in the representation of the human body provides clues for interpreting Pan's painting *Sitting Nude*. Academic photographs of the Shanghai Fine Art Academy were published in journalism to educate the public to appreciate the abstract beauty of the nude human

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<sup>312</sup> Anthea Callen, "Masculinity and Muscularity: Dr. Paul Richer and Modern Manhood," *Paragraph*, v. 26, n. 1 (2003): 26; 20.

<sup>313</sup> Anthea Callen, "Masculinity and Muscularity," 26.

<sup>314</sup> Jonathan Marshall, "The Theatre of the Athletic Nude: The Teaching and Study of Anatomy at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1873-1940," *Being There: After—Proceedings of the 2006 Conference of the Australasian Association for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies* (June 2008): 12. [http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/2511/1/ADSA2006\\_Marshall.pdf](http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/2511/1/ADSA2006_Marshall.pdf).

forms and modernist photographs. One photograph capturing the life drawing class was published as an illustration for an article by Liu Haisu introducing his practice of using life models in 1936 (**fig. 2.6**).<sup>315</sup> This photo foregrounds the curve of the nude model's back and places students working at the easels in the background, avoiding the provocative sensuality. As with these academic photographs, modernist photographers' shots of nudes also represent human bodies as aesthetic objects for journal readers. Chinese photographers were obsessed with capturing the contours of the nude bodies, often with the faces averted or entirely omitted. For instance, the photograph *Nude* 人體 by Liu Xucang 劉旭滄 (1913-1966), published in *Young Companion* 良友 in 1940, employed a colorless gradation of light and dark to define the undulating, changing forms of a female nude (**fig. 2.7**). Her hands are clasped to cover her upturned face to protect her from recognition and to suggest a sexual enticement with a seemingly corporeal ecstasy.<sup>316</sup> Such photographic representations of the nude body from an aesthetic angle were aligned with modernist photography's experimentations on a global scale. Extreme formal close-ups of the nude, especially the unclothed female, are the primary invention of modernist photography, which began at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>317</sup> Modernist photographers sought to transform photography, an inherently popular medium, into a high-culture art form in the first decades of the twentieth century by using a sexually-charged language to turn their subject matter into

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<sup>315</sup> Liu Haisu 劉海粟, "我國有人體模特兒的第一天 [The First Day to Have Nude Models in China]," 健美生活 [Fitness Life], n. 1 (1936): 3.

<sup>316</sup> Anne McCauley, *Rethinking Woman in the Age of Psychoanalysis: Alfred Stieglitz's Photographs of the Female Nude*, chap. in *American Photography: Local and Global Contexts*, eds. Bettina Glockel and Patrizia Munforte (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012), 73.

<sup>317</sup> Maggie Humm, *Photography*, chap. in *A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture*, eds. David Bradshaw and Kevin J. H. Dettmar (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 280.

art images.<sup>318</sup> The female body, a common subject matter, was framed as representing neither itself nor a metaphorical, sentimental, or pornographic emblem, but rather as a form for its own sake under the camera's experiments with shape, light, and angle.<sup>319</sup> The nude female figure hence became a motif on its own merits in aesthetic photography after its long history of masquerading as a goddess or enslaved person.<sup>320</sup> The American photographer Edward Weston (1886-1958) 's *Nude 1936* epitomized the continuation of the contour of a woman's body refraining from allegorical narratives (**fig. 2.8**). Modernist photographs broke away from their imitation of painting and its inferior status of subordination to painting with its invention of representing the nude body as a form, entering the domain of the fine art.<sup>321</sup>

Pan Yuliang's oil painting *Sitting Nude* in 1953 pictorially translates the notion of "the beauty of the pure human form," which was appropriated from German philosophical doctrines by Chinese art critics from the 1920s and disseminated to the Chinese public through journalism. Both the theoretical rhetoric and the painting experimentation aimed to effectively reconcile the moral debates surrounding nude art in Chinese society by highlighting the abstract form of the human body, especially its contours. The intervention of photography in modern painting as *aide-mémoire* and teaching aids in the art training system, as well as the invention of aesthetic photography

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<sup>318</sup> Nancy Armstrong, "Modernism's Iconophobia and What it Did to Gender," *Modernism/Modernity*, v. 5, n. 2 (1998): 48; 52.

<sup>319</sup> Nancy Armstrong, "Modernism's Iconophobia and What it Did to Gender," 54.

<sup>320</sup> Naomi Rosenblum, *A World History Photography* (New York: Abbeville Publishing, 1997), 300.

<sup>321</sup> The photographic focus on the continuation of contours and the subsequent semi-abstraction of the body was also related to the inspiration of modernist artists, including Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) and Henri Matisse (1869-1954). Richard D. Zakia, "Photography and Visual Perceptions," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, v. 27, n. 4 (1993): 73. Kathleen Pyne, Embodied Intelligence in the Stieglitz Circle, chap. in *Shared Intelligence: American Painting and the Photograph*, eds. Barbara Buhler Lynes and Jonathan Weinberg (Santa Fe: University of California Press, 2011), 66.

in both Paris and Shanghai, continued to shape the European-trained Chinese artist Pan's formal strategy in representing a nude human in a continuation of contours in her 1953 painting. Moreover, Pan's oil painting *Sitting Nude* displays another dimension in depicting the female nude through her engagement with modern classicism in Europe, which will be explored in the subsequent section.

### **Mediterranean Inspiration**

While Liu Haisu claimed the philosophical congruence between Xie He and Hegel through the law of life in aesthetic theory, Pan Yuliang also attempted to bridge the European and Chinese pictorial languages through the theme of the subject of the female nude. This experimentation can be examined through diverse variants of her paintings representing nude figures as forms, especially *Crouching Woman* depicted in 1952 (**fig. 2.9**). The crouching pose of the female nude in this painting evokes the classical iconography of the crouching Venus in the European tradition. *Crouching Venus* as a Greek Hellenistic type is well-known in numerous Roman variations; the goddess is shown to crouch down with her arms gracefully, embracing her nude body as if being intruded on during her bath (**fig. 2.10**).<sup>322</sup> This motif of the third century B.C. and its variants were ubiquitous not only in antiquity, but also in early twentieth-century art.<sup>323</sup> French masters such as sculptors Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), Aristide

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<sup>322</sup> Nancy T. de Grummond, *Encyclopedia of the History of Classical Archaeology* (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), 338.

<sup>323</sup> Jens M. Daehner, *Antiquities Made Modern: Double Takes at Ancient Art*, chap. in *Modern Antiquity: Picasso, De Chirico, Léger, Picabia*, eds. Christopher Green and Jens M. Daehner (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011), 49. According to Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, the prototype of "Crouching Venus" is usually assigned to Doidalsas of Bithynia and dated around 250 B.C. based on a misunderstanding of Plinian passage; it should be dated no earlier than the mid-second century B. C. Brunilde S. Ridgway, *Hellenistic Sculpture III: The styles of ca. 100-31 B.C.* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 116.

Maillol (1861-1944), and painters Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), Francis Picabia (1879-1953) all used this motif. The reference to the classical iconographical motif guarantees the legibility of Pan's painting in the framework of contemporaneous European aesthetics, while the key to interpreting Pan's painting does not lie in the Greek prototype considering numerous variants of her era.<sup>324</sup>

*La Méditerranée* by Maillol, a modern variation of the ancient Greek model "Crouching Venus," is critical to interpreting Pan's painting (**fig. 2.11**). Due to its "absence of subject," the début of this lifesize plaster in the 1905 Salon d'Automne surprised the audiences who were habituated to mythological and symbolist representations of female nudes.<sup>325</sup> During this first display, it was simply titled *Woman*; the new title *The Mediterranean* was given in the early 1920s to highlight a connection with the classical Greek tradition.<sup>326</sup> This title establishes the literal link to its iconographic origin—the classical Greek sculpture of the crouching Venus, which was born from the foam in the Aegean Sea according to the Greek myth.<sup>327</sup> More importantly, the Mediterranean was discovered by numerous artists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the critical place for creation, which changed the prevalent notion of the impressionist era that painting was reserved in northern countries.<sup>328</sup> Generations of Artists were attracted to the South of France with bright

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<sup>324</sup> Griselda Pollock, *Avant-Garde Gambits, 1888-1893: Gender and the Color of Art History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1993), 14.

<sup>325</sup> Marianne Wheeldon, *Debussy's Legacy and the Construction of Reputation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 152.

<sup>326</sup> Christopher Green, *Modernism and the Re-invention of Tradition, 1900-18*, chap. in *Art in France 1900-1940* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 190.

<sup>327</sup> Nora Clark, *Aphrodite and Venus in Myth and Mimesis* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 15.

<sup>328</sup> Alica Suárez and Mercè Vidal, *Catalan Noucentisme, the Mediterranean, and Tradition*, chap. in *Barcelona and Modernity: Picasso, Gaudí, Miró, Dalí*, ed. Cleveland Museum of Art (New Haven: Yale



colors from the golden sun of the Mediterranean world, such as Vincent van Gogh (1853-1880), Pierre Auguste Renoir (1841-1919), and Henri Matisse (1869-1954).<sup>329</sup> Maillol was born in Banyuls-sur-Mer on the French Mediterranean coast, an area colonized by Greeks and Romans.<sup>330</sup> Due to a Eurocentric vision celebrating the Mediterranean as the Greek and Roman source of the European civilization, Mediterranean classicism was reshaped as a modern visual language in European art from the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>331</sup> Maillol's classicizing female nudes are tinged with a regionalist revival by highlighting the Greek roots of the French south.<sup>332</sup> The semi-abstract form of a crouching female nude appeared many times throughout Maillol's career, which acquired the prestige as a "classical primitivism" of simplicity in form and serenity in a pose during interwar France.<sup>333</sup>

For the exilic artist Pan Yuliang who had long suffered from the war and thus emigrated to France again in 1937, the distinctive harmony of Maillol's sculptural bodies should have appealed to her as much as they did to post-war French audiences. Maillol's sculptures satisfied the state's demand for recuperative representation of the injured body after the First World War, which gave rise to the popularity of his sculptural crouching women.<sup>334</sup> After the four-year turmoil, the French government

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University Press, 2006), 229.

<sup>329</sup> Vojtěch Jirat-Wasiutyński, Van Gogh in the South: Antimodernism and Exoticism in the Arlesian Paintings, chap. in *Antimodernism and Artistic Experience: Policing the Boundaries of Modernity*, ed. Lynda Jessup (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 177.

<sup>330</sup> Ihor Junyk, *Foreign Modernism: Cosmopolitanism, Identity, and Style in Paris* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 43.

<sup>331</sup> Vojtěch Jirat-Wasiutyński, Modern Art and the New Mediterranean Space, chap. in *Modern Art and the Idea of the Mediterranean*, ed. Vojtěch Jirat-Wasiutyński (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 10-11.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>333</sup> Sebastian Zeidler, *Form as Revolt: Carl Einstein and the Ground of Modern Art* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2015), 60.

<sup>334</sup> Tom Slevin, *Visions of the Human: Art, World War I and the Modernist Subject* (London: I.B. Tauris

launched the post-war movement “call to order (rappel à l’ordre)” to restore rationality to society. Although this movement was implemented by a series of social and economic programs, many artists interpreted the “call to order” as a suspension of experimental avant-garde and a resumption of monumental classicism.<sup>335</sup> In this atmosphere of repressing the war memory, the age-old trope of the female figure symbolizing fertility and nature was retrieved to rehabilitate the traumatic landscape of mutilated survivors.<sup>336</sup> Even Picasso produced a series of neoclassical works in the 1920s. He visited Rome and Naples in 1917 to see the remarkable frescos of the High Renaissance and those from Herculaneum and Pompeii in the Naples Museum.<sup>337</sup> The classical elements in his works are closely related to this trip. *Three Women at the Spring* by Picasso in 1921 evokes the Mediterranean tradition with the heroic size, the sculptural features of the body, and the serenity of the nude (**fig. 2.12**). The heavy-limbed quality of female bodies in this painting is consistent with that of *The Mediterranean* by Maillol.<sup>338</sup> More specifically, the antique allusion is indicated through the nose bridge leading straight into the forehead and the simplified modeling of cheeks which are common in Roman paintings.<sup>339</sup> The draperies of three women being formed like the fluting of a classical column are taken either from ancient

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& Co Ltd, 2015), 178-79.

<sup>335</sup> Pam Meecham and Julie Sheldon, *Modern Art: A Critical Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 111.

<sup>336</sup> Romy Golan, *France Revisited: Landscape as Lieu de Mémoire*, chap. in *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France Between the Wars* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 18.

<sup>337</sup> Anthony Blunt, “Picasso’s Classical Period (1917-25),” *The Burlington Magazine*, v. 110, n. 781 (1968): 187.

<sup>338</sup> John Davis and Jaroslaw Leshko, *The Smith College Museum of Art: European and American Painting and Sculpture, 1760-1960* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 2000), 98.

<sup>339</sup> Anthony Blunt, “Picasso’s Classical Period (1917-25),” 188.

architecture or archaic statues such as the Hera of Samos in the Louvre.<sup>340</sup>

Pan Yuliang was likely to see herself as an heir to the Mediterranean tradition because of her two-year training background in Rome. On November 14, 1925, the embassy of Republican China in Rome wrote to the Fine Art Academy of Rome (Accademia di belle arti di Roma) to ask for permission for Pan to visit this academy (**fig. 2.13**). This application should have been swiftly approved because she applied to enroll in the third-year painting class of this academy on November 23, 1925 (**fig. 2.14**). Her two-year training in Rome probably afforded her the same possibility as Picasso to visit numerous artworks of the High Renaissance in Rome and the archaeological discoveries in the Herculaneum and Pompeii. Moreover, the distinct Roman training conception constructed her obsession with representing female bodies. In addition to her official enrollment in the regular painting classes guided by Professor Umberto Coromaldi (1870-1948), the *La Scuola del Nudo* (Free School of the Nude) should make a notable difference in training Pan's eye on nudes. In contrast to the Paris training method of instructing students to start with painting antiques in the galleries, the *Free School of the Nude* at the *Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma* provides art students the opportunity to depict free live models both in school and in the open air from the very beginning of the training.<sup>341</sup> Notably, as the Italian Ministry of Education established the *Free School of the Nude* as a school affiliated with the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in 1881, it also granted access to women (**fig. 2.15**).<sup>342</sup> This was the first time that

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<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> Anna M. Damigella, *Testimonianze sulla "Scuola Libera del nudo dal modello vivente" annessa all'Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma*, chap. in *Segno, Vetro e Colore: Maria Letizia e Laura Giuliani*, ed. Romina Impera and Anna M. Petrosino (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2007), 31.

<sup>342</sup> Tiziana Musi, *Storie di Artiste in Accademia, 1900-1960*, chap. in *Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma:*

European women were given the possibility to attend free courses in a public art academy.<sup>343</sup> This extra organization for drawing nudes grants students the high autonomy to do personal research and expression beyond the regular painting classes; they are not obligated to submit drawings to teachers supervising the school.<sup>344</sup> This training background in Rome underlies Pan's persistent and obsessed representations of female nudes in her subsequent art career.

Pan's affinity for the art of antiquity was also established through her training in Rome. Her knowledge of and preoccupation with classical antiquities is revealed in a class group photograph at the *Accademia di belle arti di Roma*, in which she personified herself as *Pictura*—the goddess of painting (**fig. 2.16**).<sup>345</sup> She looks more prominent in this group photo of fourteen members even than the formally dressed teacher to her left and the male nude model standing last but at the top. Her prominence is admittedly due to her central position in the foreground, but more so to her deliberately designed pose with a sense of solemn ritual. The brush she holds in her right hand stands vertically above her right leg as if the extension of her right arm, evoking allegorical figures holding legible attributes up in paintings and public sculptures, such as the sacred figures allegorizing arts in *The Sacred Grove Dear to the Arts and Muses* by Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898).<sup>346</sup> The palette in her left hand resting flat on her left

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*Centoquaranta anni di istruzione superior dell'arte in Italia*, ed. Petro Roccasecca (Roma: De Luca Editore d'Arte, 2018), 115.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> A. Damigella, *Testimonianze sulla "Scuola Libera del nudo dal modello vivente"*, chap. in *Segno, Vetro e Colore*, 31.

<sup>345</sup> Lisa Rosenthal, *Painted Allegory's Fortunes in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp*, chap. in *Allegory Studies: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Vladimir Brljak (New York: Routledge, 2022), 88-108.

<sup>346</sup> Jennifer L. Shaw, *Dream States: Puvis de Chavannes, Modernism, and the Fantasy of France* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 45-8.

knee further reinforces the spectator's association of her pose with a static goddess sculpture while acting as the attribute of the painter. In actuality, the pictorial fusion of the image of the god or goddess with that of the painting is very common in European art history. Mercury, one patron of the liberal arts, was represented as a painter with a palette and brushes.<sup>347</sup> The Leiden artist and theorist Philips Angel (c. 1618-after 1664) also represented a maiden combining armored Minerva—the other patron of the arts and the allegorical figure *Pictura* via her palette and brushes to glorify the modern Dutch tradition as equaling the renowned art of antiquity.<sup>348</sup> Pan's self-image in this photograph calls to mind both the goddess Minerva and the goddess *Pictura*, suggesting her maturity as a professional artist and situating her creations within the art tradition of classical antiquity.

Such a preoccupation with the art of antiquity eventually led to her later fascination with Maillol's classical primitivism. The pose of *The Crouching Woman* by Pan in 1952 is based directly on the Greek Hellenistic statue *Crouching Venus*, while its inspiration can be traced “from classical antiquity through Michelangelo's *Night* and the canvases of Puvis de Chavannes right up to the graphic and sculpted works of Maillol.”<sup>349</sup> Pan followed Maillol to seek beauty and harmony of the mass by eliminating distracting particulars, exhibiting the delicacy, chaste and quiet strength of a female body.<sup>350</sup> The

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<sup>347</sup> Eric J. Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 88. Christine Göttler, “Tales of Transformation: Hendrick Goltzius's *Allegory of the (Alchemical) Arts* in the Kunstmuseum Basel,” *21: Inquiries into Art, History, and the Visual—Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte und visuellen Kultur*, n. 2 (2020): 440.

<sup>348</sup> Martha M. Peacock, *Heroines, Harpies, and Housewives: Imaging Women of Consequence in the Dutch Golden Age* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 102.

<sup>349</sup> William Rubin and Matthew Armstrong, *The William S. Paley Collection: A Taste for Modernism* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1992), 72.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*

Greco-Roman ideals of stability and poised beauty developed by Maillol in his sculptures of the female nude were translated into paintings by Pan's brush. The balance between quietude and muscular self-assertion in female nudes by both Maillol and Pan is "antithetical to the idiosyncratic tensions and personal qualities" of figurative representations by Rodin and his followers expressing pathos, outrage, and grief.<sup>351</sup> Pan's fascination with the Mediterranean art tradition continued during her second sojourn in Europe from 1937. One photograph captured Pan wandering in the street of the Spanish town Salardú, located in the Catalonia region (**fig. 2.17**). Her trip away from Paris to the Catalonia area should have intensified her positive interpretation of Maillol's modern classicism, given Maillol's high prestige among Catalan artists. Maillol's work became the new archetype for Catalan sculptors to synthesize natural forms, especially the forms of the human body, in the early twentieth century.<sup>352</sup> They adopted Maillol's canon that "placed the architecture of the human body in relief" by subordinating details to the harmony of the whole.<sup>353</sup> Meanwhile, Mediterranean classicists viewed Catalonia through an Acadian glass, searching for modern forms which would return society to that paradise in the Edenic authenticity of Catalonia's coasts and the mountain villages.<sup>354</sup> Modern classicists' quest for order and their yearning for a utopian paradise ultimately attracted the long-exiled Chinese artist Pan.

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<sup>351</sup> William Rubin and Matthew Armstrong, *The William S. Paley Collection: A Taste for Modernism*, 75.

<sup>352</sup> Merce Donate, *The Mediterranean Roots of Noucentista Sculpture*, chap. in *Barcelona and Modernity: Picasso, Gaudí, Miró, Dalí*, eds. William H. Robinson, Jordi Falgàs, Carmen B. Lord (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 267.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>354</sup> Narcís Comadira, *The Forms of Paradise: Noucentista Painting and Sculpture*, chap. in *Barcelona and Modernity: Picasso, Gaudí, Miró, Dalí*, eds. William H. Robinson, Jordi Falgàs, Carmen B. Lord (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 251.

Pan's pictorial response to Maillol's classical mode in sculptures evokes the tradition of the *paragone* debate. The *paragone*, or rivalry of two arts, flourished during the Italian Renaissance and continued to be the center of debates down the centuries.<sup>355</sup> The distinction between the two sister arts, painting and sculpture, was articulated by the French theorist Roger de Piles (1635-1709) in the seventeenth century, which dominated the *paragone* until the twentieth century.<sup>356</sup> He assigned color as the principle component of painting while associated drawing with sculpture.<sup>357</sup> For de Piles, a sculptor could perceive the forms of the sculpted object with the touch of hands to reproduce contour, mass, texture, and volume in the dark without seeing them.<sup>358</sup> The drawing was likewise the art of contours that imitated the exterior form of objects.<sup>359</sup> In contrast, the painting was an art of sight with color as its soul.<sup>360</sup> De Piles also attempted to liberate painters from the burden of ancient art by claiming that painters were not necessary to follow antiques as strictly as sculptors to avoid statuesque, motionless figures.<sup>361</sup> As such, the theory of de Piles established an alliance between sculpture, touch, line, and antiquity on the one hand and painting, sight, color,

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<sup>355</sup> Sarah J. Lippert, *An Introduction to the Paragone*, chap. in *The Paragone in Nineteenth-Century Art* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 1. Jacqueline Lichtenstein, *The Blind Spot: An Essay on the Relations Between Painting and Sculpture in the Modern Age*, trans. Chris Miller (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008), 4.

<sup>356</sup> Mark Crosby, "The Sculptor Silent Stands before His Forming Image:" *Blake and Contemporary Sculpture*, chap. in *Blake 2.0: William Blake in Twentieth-Century Art, Music and Culture*, eds. Steve Clark, Tristanne Connolly and Jason Whittaker (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 121.

<sup>357</sup> James Hall, *Desire and Disgust: Touching Artworks from 1500-1800*, chap. in *Presence: The Inherence of the Prototype within Images and Other Objects*, ed. Robert Maniura (New York: Routledge, 2016), 151.

<sup>358</sup> Jacqueline Lichtenstein, *The Blind Spot: An Essay on the Relations Between Painting and Sculpture in the Modern Age*, 70.

<sup>359</sup> James Hall, *Desire and Disgust: Touching Artworks from 1500-1800*, chap. in *Presence: The Inherence of the Prototype within Images and Other Objects*, 151.

<sup>360</sup> Jacqueline Lichtenstein, *The Blind Spot*, 7.

<sup>361</sup> Anne B. Weinshenker, *A God or a Bench: Sculpture as a Problematic Art During the Ancien Régime* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008), 116.

and the moderns on the other.<sup>362</sup> The painting *Crouching Woman* by Pan in 1952 features fluid lines, antique inspirations, and minimal use of color, seemingly intent on collapsing the competition between painting and sculpture that has dominated for centuries. She did not intend to create a new hierarchy between painting and sculpture but to assert equality between different mediums. Proficient and engaged in at least three mediums—painting, sculpture, and printmaking, Pan probably attempted to seek methods to fuse different art mediums.

In actuality, modern artists sought to bring two arts together—not in creating a *Gesamtkunstwerk* but in fusing aspects from one with another during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>363</sup> Modern artists working in multiple mediums, such as Henri Matisse (1869-1954), who utilized mediums of painting, sculpture, printmaking, and cut paper collage, sought to achieve the equation of one medium to another.<sup>364</sup> Matisse’s expression of an ultimate synthesis culminated in his cut-paper collage of blue nudes from 1952, such as *Blue Nude II* (**fig. 2.18**).<sup>365</sup> He believed that he had discovered a method to reconcile the conflict between line and color in a single work of art by using paper cutouts as a pictorial medium in their own right and cutting out the painting surface directly.<sup>366</sup> Drawing outlines with a particular color may “influence the appearance of nearby colors either through color assimilation” or by color contrast, which may darken the

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<sup>362</sup> Jacqueline Lichtenstein, 8.

<sup>363</sup> Lynne Cooke, *Paragone Rediscovered: The Painter-Sculptor in the Twentieth Century*, chap. in *In Tandem: The Painter-Sculptor in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Nicholas Serota and Rachel Kirby (London: Trustees of the Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1986), 12.

<sup>364</sup> Jay M. Fisher, *Drawing is Sculpture is Drawing*, chap. in *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor*, eds. Dorothy Kosinski, Jay McKean Fisher and Steven Nash (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 27.

<sup>365</sup> Jay M. Fisher, *Drawing is Sculpture is Drawing*, chap. in *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor*, 28.

<sup>366</sup> John Klein, *The External Conflict of Representation and Expression*, chap. in *Matisse Portraits* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 17. Alex Hughes and Keith Reader, eds., *Encyclopedia of Contemporary French Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 363.



nearby colors.<sup>367</sup> Paper cutouts allowed him to “draw” directly in color with scissors, “instead of drawing an outline and filling in the color.”<sup>368</sup> Meanwhile, Matisse believed that drawing, painting, and sculpture were fused into a whole in his cutouts, in which he wielded his large scissors to carve human figures and other shapes just like a chisel carving into stone and a pencil cutting into paper.<sup>369</sup>

Two years of training in oil painting and sculpture in Rome imprinted Chinese artist Pan Yuliang’s work with the classical artistic traditions of the Mediterranean region, making her nude representations a perfect match for the classical primitivism that flourished during interwar Europe. A wealth of learning in the art of antiquity established a rapport between Pan and French sculptor Maillol’s classist sculptures, primarily *The Mediterranean* created in 1905. Her long-time wartime ordeals further reinforced her identification with the simple forms and the serene poses of Maillol’s sculptural female nudes, which contented French audiences’ demands of rehabilitation from the trauma of the First World War. Pan’s transformation of the taste for antiquity and the flowing linearity that characterized Maillol’s sculptures into her paintings collapsed the *paragone* debate, asserting an equal commensurability between painting and sculpture vocabularies.

### **Return to the Jiangnan 江南 Tradition, Redefine the Role of Women**

Pan Yuliang defined a finished art form with the pure linear drawing in *Crouching*

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<sup>367</sup> Stephen Grossberg, *The Visual World as Illusion: The Ones We Know and the Ones We Don’t*, chap. in *The Oxford Compendium of Visual Illusions*, eds. Arthur Gilman Shapiro and Dejan Todorović (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 102.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>369</sup> Laura McPhee, *A Journey into Matisse's South of France* (California: Roaring Forties Press, 2006), 183.

*Female Nude*, which evokes the line drawing 白描 tradition maturing in the Song dynasty 宋 (960-1279). Line drawing refers to the painting using only ink lines to delineate an object.<sup>370</sup> It was still understood as an unfinished painting in Dunhuang murals of the Tang dynasty (618-907), while it was developed into a style in its own right in the Song Dynasty, especially by the well-known painter Li Gonglin 李公麟 (1049-1106).<sup>371</sup> Since Li was a native of Tongcheng, Anhui province 安徽桐城, which is also Pan's hometown after her marriage, her return to Li's *baimiao* implies a connection to tradition and an exploration of the self.

Pan's tremendous mobility from Shanghai, Lyon, and Paris to Rome raised the issue of how to reconcile the meaning of local traditions with participation in a global dialogue about art for her creation.<sup>372</sup> Her classmate in her teacher Professor Umberto Coromaldi's painting atelier in Rome, the Egyptian artist Mohamed Hassan (1892-1961), represents the international training environment of this atelier in a caricature depicted in 1926 (**fig. 2.19**). Pan was portrayed to be a modern artist holding a huge traditional Chinese painting brush to immerse herself in the creation, which denotes the cultural origin of this Chinese artist. Corresponding with her Egyptian colleague's caricature, Pan's synthesis of the Song-dynasty *baimiao* technique and the European painting theme—the female nude demonstrates the artist's attempt to bring the past into the modern dialogue. Furthermore, the invocation of this Song-dynasty tradition also

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<sup>370</sup> Maria Cheng, Tang Wai Hung, and Eric Choy, *Essential Terms of Chinese Painting* (Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press, 2017), 14.

<sup>371</sup> Sarah E. Fraser, *The Influence of the Dunhuang Sketches: Fenben and Monochrome Drawing*, chap. in *Performing the Visual: The Practice of Buddhist Wall Painting in China and Central Asia, 618-960* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 127; 129.

<sup>372</sup> Martha Buskirk, *Creative Enterprise: Contemporary Art Between Museum and Marketplace* (New York: Continuum, 2012), 65.

related to the early-20<sup>th</sup>-century context of linking art to the national spirit and civilization in the world competition.<sup>373</sup> Chinese intellectuals compared the naturalistic techniques of the Song painting with European Renaissance art during the late 1910s, demonstrating the supremacy of the ancient Chinese tradition. On the other hand, Chinese painters began to claim a similarity between traditional Chinese painting and European modernism since the 1920s. This trend of valorizing the Chinese painting tradition of the modern meaning continued until the late 1940s. Even Huang Binhong 黃賓虹 (1865-1955) expressed his idea that the fauvists attempted to transition their art through the appropriation of ancient Chinese painting in a letter to his friend in 1948.<sup>374</sup> Pan's experiments in representing the human body with the traditional techniques in the 1950s in Paris thus fitted well with this context of the revival of Chinese painting to meet the global challenge. How did Pan position her work at this moment of Chinese intellectuals attempting to interpret Chinese art from the global view? How did she employ the exquisite and decent *baimiao* technique familiar to Chinese audiences to incorporate the female nude into Chinese painting?

The context of shaping the modern supremacy of traditional Chinese painting in the 1920s and 1930s was central to Chinese oil painters' turn to the tradition. Chinese artists compared traditional Chinese painting and European modernism, discovered their consistency, and further proved the legitimacy of returning to the Chinese tradition.<sup>375</sup> For example, Liu Haisu contrasted the paintings by the Ming loyalist

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<sup>373</sup> Cheng-Hua Wang, "Rediscovering Song Painting for the Nation: Artistic Discursive Practices in Early Twentieth-Century China," *Artibus Asiae*, v. LXXI, n. 2 (2011): 222.

<sup>374</sup> Jason C. Kuo, *Transforming Traditions in Modern Chinese Painting: Huang Pin-hung's Late Work* (New York, Peter Lang Publishing, 2004), 55.

<sup>375</sup> According to Nishimaki Isamu 西槇偉, Chinese artists' turn to traditional painting from the late

painter 石濤 (1642-1707) with the post-impressionist paintings, claiming that Shi Tao's paintings and his fundamental thoughts are the same as those of the post-impressionists in subjective expression, synthesis, and permanency.<sup>376</sup> Whether this comparison is valid or not, it demonstrates Chinese artists' ambition of creating modern Chinese art comparable to European modernism through the turn to traditional Chinese painting. European- or Japanese-trained Chinese oil painters shared a consistent career development model: studying abroad, returning to China, and turning to Chinese painting.<sup>377</sup> British-trained oil painter Li Yishi 李毅士 (1886-1942) used the Chinese painting format to create oil paintings such as *Portrait of Chen Shizeng* 陳師曾像; Japanese-trained oil painter Ding Yanyong 丁衍庸 (1902-1978) announced to give up oil painting in 1933 and focused on depicting characters in Peking Opera with ink and color.<sup>378</sup> Likewise, French- and Italian-trained Pan Yuliang also found her method of responding to the Chinese tradition—*baimiao*.

Her choice of employing the style of *baimiao* relates to the canonization of Song painting during the New Culture Movement.<sup>379</sup> Chen Duxiu, the key protagonist of the

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1920s related to Japanese research on Chinese painting and Japanese promotion of Oriental paintings in opposition to European ones. Nishimaki Isamu 西槇偉, 豐子愷的中國美術優位論與日本: 民國時期對西洋美術的接受 [Feng Zikai's Theory on the Superiority of Chinese Art and Japan: The Reception of Western Art in the Republican Period], chap. in 新藝術的發軔: 日本學者論李叔同與豐子愷 [Commencing a New Art: Japanese Scholars' Reviews of Li Shutong and Feng Zikai], trans. Cao Bula 曹布拉 (Hangzhou: Xiling Seal Engraving Society, 2000), 90-110.

<sup>376</sup> Liu Haisu 劉海粟, 石濤與後期印象派 [Shi Tao and Post-Impressionists], chap. in 劉海粟藝術文選 [Selected Articles on Art by Liu Haisu], eds. Zhu Jinlou 朱金樓 and Yuan Zhihuang 袁志煌 (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine Art Press, 1987), 69.

<sup>377</sup> Kohara Hironobu 古原宏伸, 抄襲的邏輯: 國畫改良運動始末 [The Logic of Plagiarism: A History of the Chinese Painting Improvement Movement], chap. in 國畫復活運動與廣東中國畫國際學術研討會論文集 [Guangdong Chinese Painting in the Resurrection Movement of Chinese Painting: International Scholarship Seminar Thesis Anthology (II)], ed. Memorial Hall of Lingnan School of Painting 嶺南畫派紀念館 (Guangzhou: Lingnan Fine Art Press, 2017), v. 2: 28.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>379</sup> Cheng-Hua Wang, *In the Name of the Nation: Song Painting and Artistic Discourse in Early Twentieth-Century China*, chap. in *A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture*, eds. Rebecca M. Brown

New Culture Movement, inscribed her female nude painting in 1937, establishing the link between her painting and the traditional *baimiao*: “implanting the spirit of European oil painting and sculpture into Chinese *baimiao*, I call it *new baimiao*. Yuliang, (do you) agree with me? Duxiu in the early summer of the (Republican) twenty-sixth year (1937) (fig. 2.20).”<sup>380</sup> Chen, also a native of Tongcheng, Anhui Province, intended to foreshadow the possibility of modernity on the basis of Chinese tradition by combing Pan’s paintings with the local cultural celebrity Li Gonglin and his prominent *baimiao* technique. Other than this hometown bond, Chen’s inscription evokes this political and cultural reformer’s radical article *Art Revolution* 美術革命 in 1918, which reveals the aesthetic underpinnings of Chen’s appreciation of Pan’s creation. In *Art Revolution*, Chen claimed that the naturalistic spirit of European painting had to be adopted to reform Chinese painting.<sup>381</sup> He further explained that “Chinese painting in the Song and early Yuan dynasties, the techniques in describing and portraying human beings, birds, animals, buildings, flowers, and trees was still somewhat close to naturalism.”<sup>382</sup> In contrast to his admiration for the Song-dynasty painting, he radically criticized the training process of the Qing Orthodox school of painting—copying works of old masters. Grown up in a family admiring and imitating the painting by the Qing landscape painter Wang Hui 王翬 (1632-1717), Chen as an amateur connoisseur was

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and Deborah S. Hutton (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 538.

<sup>380</sup> Dong Song 董松, “高山流水: 陳獨秀為潘玉良做的三次題跋 [High Mountains and Flowing Waters: Chen Duxiu’s Three Inscriptions for Pan Yuliang],” 書與畫 [Calligraphy and Painting], n. 3 (2018): 28.

<sup>381</sup> Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, “美術革命 [Art Revolution],” 二十世紀中國美術文選 [Selected Articles on Chinese Art of the Twentieth Century], eds. Lang Shaojun 郎紹君 and Shui Tianzhong 水天中 (Shanghai: Shanghai Pictorial Press, 1996), 29.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid.

very familiar with the style of Wang Hui, which was also the style he spared no effort to oppose in *Art Revolution*.<sup>383</sup> He stated, “my family collected and viewed more than two hundred paintings by Wang Hui, less than one-tenth of which have titles. Most of them are depicted with four skills—copy, duplicate, imitate, and model—to reproduce ancient paintings; practically none of them are originally created.”<sup>384</sup>

This dichotomy between Song and Qing paintings was formulated in contrast to European Renaissance painting to promote the modernization of Chinese art and further China’s integration into a world civilization.<sup>385</sup> It was a dominating discourse on Chinese painting during the late 1910s; other principal intellectuals, including Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927), Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940), and Xu Beihong 徐悲鴻 (1895-1953) made the same statement.<sup>386</sup> This binary opposition established a national cultural pride by invoking the fact that the mastery of the illusionistic effects in Song painting predated the European Renaissance. It also attributed the root cause of the cultural decline of current China to the corruption of Qing corruption. The revival of the ancient tradition and the rejection of the recent one was thus shaped as the feasible approach for future Chinese art development. Pan’s hybrid compositions, prominently featuring the formal likeness of the human body and the fluid lines of the Song paintings, put into practice this theoretical vision of transforming Chinese painting.

Pan invoked the austere quality of the Song-dynasty *baimiao* to demonstrate an

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<sup>383</sup> Yu Yang 於洋, “衰敗想象與革命意志: 從陳獨秀 ‘美術革命’ 論看 20 世紀中國畫革新思想的起源 [Decaying Imagination and Revolutionary Will: Origin of the Innovative Ideology of 20th Century Chinese Painting from the Theory of 'Art Revolution' by Chen Duxiu],” 文藝研究 [Literature & Art Studies], n. 3 (2010): 111.

<sup>384</sup> Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, “美術革命 [Art Revolution],” 30.

<sup>385</sup> Cheng-Hua Wang, *In the Name of the Nation*, 537; 539.

<sup>386</sup> Cheng-Hua Wang, 541-42.

undertone of propriety in *Crouching Female nude*. Her brush moved slowly, sensitively to define the female form; the prudent, neat, and strong black lines emanate enormous power and control, flowing with the curves of the nude body. In the *baimiao* tradition of the Song and Yuan dynasties, the master Li Gonglin and his follower Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254-1322) focused on using clear, stark lines to highlight the elegant, poised temperament of the figures in their paintings.<sup>387</sup> Moreover, Li Gonglin's *baimiao* painting asserted both technical and aesthetic perfection. Since nothing could be covered up, more excellent skill was required to accomplish the supreme line drawing.<sup>388</sup> It was also about the philosophy and aesthetics of the scholar, which proclaimed the scholar-bureaucrats superiority over mere professionalism (**fig. 2.21**).<sup>389</sup> Pan employed this tradition to invite the viewer to scrutinize her skills and to examine her work with the traditional aesthetic criteria. The viewer's attention is shifted to refined, sober, and controlled lines, converting the sensual sensations that the nude may evoke.

Despite her focus on highlighting the abstract beauty of the body curves, she did not eschew the sexual appeal of a female nude. The female figure is enhanced with light color; the faint pink on the female nude's fingernails and nipple vaguely titillates the viewer's sexual passion. As the word "color 色" is strongly associated with sexual desirability in Chinese culture, she appears to discuss how sexuality is interpreted in

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<sup>387</sup> Shih Shou-Chien 石守謙, "浪蕩之風：明代中期南京的白描人物畫 [The Dissipated Manner: Figure Painting in the Pai-miao Style in Mid-Ming Nanking]," 國立臺灣大學美術史研究集刊 [Taida Journal of Art History], n. 1 (1994): 44.

<sup>388</sup> Richard M. Barnhart, *Li Kung-lin and the Art of Painting*, chap. in *Li Kung-Lin's Classic of Filial Piety* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), 19.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*

Chinese tradition.<sup>390</sup> At the same time, the image of a female nude half-kneeling on a mat reminds the viewer of the erotic novel *The Carnal Prayer Mat* 肉蒲團 by the famous playwright and novelist Li Yu 李漁 (1611-1680). It seems to be a direct translation of the novel's title (**fig. 2.22**). This notorious novel, written in 1657 and clad in Buddhist morality, plots the amorous adventures of the protagonist Weiyang Sheng 未央生 who unrestrainedly sought sexual gratification.<sup>391</sup> It belongs to the stereotyped formula of the Chinese erotic novel: the libertine hero indulges himself in sexual excess and is finally punished for it.<sup>392</sup> After experiencing the karmic retribution, the protagonist chooses to become an ascetic Buddhist and execute self-castration in order to defend against his sexual desire.<sup>393</sup> Pan's allusion to *The Carnal Prayer Mat* reveals the continual fear of sexual power in the Chinese culture, implying an analogy between Weiyang Sheng's self-castration and modern Chinese viewer's prudery in nude art. If the figure painting in the style of Li Gonglin's *baimiao* symbolizes one extreme of the body writing and body representation in the Chinese tradition—portraying the hairstyle, makeup, and clothing instead of the physical body, the erotic novels such as *The Carnal Prayer Mat* stands for the other.<sup>394</sup> In this novel, the erotic, naked body was literally described and pictorially represented in woodblock prints to provide pornographic consumption for the audience. Pan reconciled both extremes to

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<sup>390</sup> Lara C. W. Blanchard, *Song Dynasty Figures of Longing and Desire: Gender and Interiority in Chinese Painting and Poetry* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2018), 32.

<sup>391</sup> Sandra A. Wawrytko, Prudery, and Prurience: Historical Roots of the Confucian Conundrum Concerning Women Sexuality and Power, chap. in *The Sage and the Second Sex: Confucianism, Ethics, and Gender*, ed. Chenyang Li (Chicago: Open Court, 2000), 183.

<sup>392</sup> Patrick Hanan, *The Invention of Li Yu* (London: Harvard University Press, 1988), 124.

<sup>393</sup> Liangyan Ge, *The Scholar and the State: Fiction as Political Discourse in Late Imperial China* (London: University of Washington Press, 2015), 94.

<sup>394</sup> Guohua Zhu and Wei Feng, "The Invention of Body Representation in Modern China: Case Study of Liu Haisu and the 'Model Event,'" *Comparative Literature Studies*, v. 56, n. 3 (2019): 590; 599.



moderately represent sexuality by portraying the women's body with the elegant *baimiao* technique, rendering the nude body a decent theme in modern Chinese painting.

The reference to Li Gonglin's *biaomiao* technique and Li Yu's discussion on sexual indulgence stems from Pan's intimate connection with the Jiangnan 江南 area. Her early life in China connects important places in the Jiangnan region: born in Yangzhou 揚州 in 1895, married in Wuhu, Anhui province 安徽蕪湖 in 1913, studied in Shanghai 上海 between 1920 and 1921, and worked in Shanghai and Nanjing 南京 from 1928 to 1937. Literally, Jiangnan refers to the south of the Yangtze River and usually denotes the area, which usually mean parts of Anhui, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang.<sup>395</sup> Nevertheless, it is still hard to clearly define the boundaries of Jiangnan, as Jiangnan is less a geographical region than a cultural one.<sup>396</sup> When Pan shifted to dialogue with the Chinese tradition, the land of Jiangnan, distinctive for its rich literati art and culture, became her source of inspiration. As one of the iconic figures of Song literati paintings, Li Gonglin's *baimiao* technique was constantly passed down and innovated in the Jiangnan area, primarily through the prominent woodblock prints in his hometown Anhui 安徽.<sup>397</sup> The monochrome *baimiao* technique was well-suited to woodblock-printed pictures.<sup>398</sup> Active in his home province of Zhejiang, Li Yu's literary works

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<sup>395</sup> Mia Yinxing Liu, *The Phantom Landscape of Jiangnan: The Politics of Topography in Stage Sisters*, chap. in *Literati Lenses: Wenren Landscape in Chinese Cinema of the Mao Era* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), 74.

<sup>396</sup> The ambiguity of the "Jiangnan" concept is presented in the case of Yangzhou, a city physically located north of the river. It was considered part of Jiangnan in the 17th century while relegated to Jiangbei 江北 in the 19th century. Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 20-1.

<sup>397</sup> Julia K. Murray, *Mirror of Morality: Chinese Narrative Illustration and Confucian Ideology* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 73.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*

even enjoyed great popularity throughout the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).<sup>399</sup> As an artist who lived and was active in the Jiangnan region for a long time, Pan was well versed in both the cultural traditions of Li Gonglin and Li Yu.

A female artist's response to the Jiangnan area's cultural tradition also redefined women's role in this region. Her native place Yangzhou nurtured "eight eccentrics of Yangzhou 揚州八怪"—a group of artists active in this city, while it was also known for raising "thin horses of Yangzhou 揚州瘦馬." The custom of raising *Thin horses* means that young daughters of low-income families were adopted since childhood and trained in entertainment skills to be sold as ideal concubines at high prices.<sup>400</sup> On account of its control of most of the empire's salt trade, Yangzhou developed into a thriving economic and cultural center in the 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>401</sup> The salt merchants patronized artists congregating in this city to seek chances and income.<sup>402</sup> As the transportation and trade center with numerous salt merchants, Yangzhou also had the biggest market for transacting women as commodities.<sup>403</sup> Considering that Pan grew up in the last sixteen years of the Qing dynasty, the anecdote about her early experiences of being sold from Yangzhou to Anhui as a brothel prostitute epitomizes the stereotyped image of women's mobility in the Jiangnan area during the imperial era. As a European-trained professional painter, she reflects as a female artist on the male-

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<sup>399</sup> David E. Pollard, *The Chinese Essay* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), 93.

<sup>400</sup> Wai-Yee Li 李惠儀, "性別與清初歷史記憶: 從揚州女子談起 [Gender and Early Qing Historical Memory: The Case of Yangzhou Women]," *台灣東亞文明研究學刊* [Taiwan Journal of East Asian Studies], v. 7, n. 2 (2010): 300.

<sup>401</sup> Zhuang Sue, *The Study of Forgeries of Paintings by the Yangzhou Eccentrics*, chap. in *Lifestyle and Entertainment in Yangzhou*, eds. Lucie B. Olivová and Vibeke Børdahl (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2009), 317.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>403</sup> Hsieh Bao Hua, *Concubinage and Servitude in Late Imperial China* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 15-6.

dominated tradition of art and cultural production in the Jiangnan region during the pre-modern period. She symbolized a shift away from the tradition of women being circulated as commodities and joined in the cultural production as a female artist.

Out of a local affinity and the reverence for naturalism in Song dynasty paintings of her time, Pan Yuliang returned to the *baimiao* tradition of Li Gonglin. Pan, of the same hometown as Li Gonglin—Tongcheng, Anhui Province—not only geographically belongs to the broader Jiangnan region but also was culturally imbued with Jiangnan traditions. She combined the elegant, poised traits of *baimiao* in representing human figures with the obsession and fear of the sexuality in traditional Chinese culture, especially in Jiangnan erotic novels. Thus, her creation successfully introduces the theme of the nude human into Chinese painting within the bounds of propriety while disclosing the cultural roots of modern Chinese audiences' prudery in nude art. More significantly, her art creation as a transcultural artist changed the stereotype of women as commodities in the pre-modern Jiangnan region, especially her birthplace Yangzhou, redefining women as active cultural producers.

The aesthetic conception of the pure human form was implanted into modern Chinese culture through the selective dissemination of German philosophical doctrines and pictorial translations. The artist Liu Haisu introduced the abstract beauty of the human body by Hegel to educate Chinese readers to appreciate nude physical forms. At the same time, the art critic Tang Jun appropriated the notion of disinterested art from Kirchmann to urge the viewers to remove a moral evaluation standard by improving

their cognitive capacities. Whereas these introductions of German aesthetic theories were usually fragmentary, incoherent in content, and arbitrarily blended with traditional aesthetics, they still took root in modern Chinese culture through art education imitating the European academic mode and their dissemination in booming journalism since the 1920s. Pan Yuliang's oil and ink paintings pictorially translated this borrowed notion of the pure human form. The polemics on nude art in journalism and the conflicts on live models in art education conferred her an acute awareness of not only the dilemma of modern Chinese art but also the predicament of Chinese women. She bridged the French classical primitivism inspired by the Mediterranean art in antiquity with the cultural tradition of her hometown—a culturally-defined Jiangnan area, thereby introducing the subject of the female nude into Chinese painting and transforming women's role from commodities into culture producers.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Why artist Pan Yuliang is the exemplary woman of modern China?**

The legendary myth of Pan Yuliang 潘玉良 (1895-1977)'s transformation from a lowly concubine redeemed from a brothel by her future husband to a cosmopolitan, professional artist has attracted writers, directors, and contemporary artists who continue to portray her in fiction, film and installation art. And yet, even if the story of her early sale into a brothel were true, it only happened after she lost her widowed mother at the age of eight and before she reached adulthood at eighteen in 1913. For the rest of her life from 1918 when she acquired the opportunity to be trained in art, she had to contend with rumors of her early "impure" experiences while attempting to establish her professional career as an artist. How did Pan want to be viewed ideally?

Pan was never given the opportunity to talk, although she was quite possibly the most outstanding Chinese artist in the early twentieth century. Given that she has no writings of her own, I assess her voice through her artistic practices, using her works as analysis materials to recast a modern Chinese figure. More specifically, I examine how Pan used certain aspects of the European scholarly model to construct a new Chinese women's identity in her self-portraits.

In this chapter, I argue that Pan's self-portraits successfully present her as the exemplary woman of modern China. She followed the new standard of her era that artists should act as moral exemplars to raise the morality of the audiences, which was formulated through the combination of the Kantian philosophy and traditional literati painting theory. At the same time, she selected to emphasize her illness and aging to

demonstrate her physical vulnerability and intellectual wisdom as a human being and to weaken the traditionally decorative function of women in the painting. I also present that she exhibited the divine and pure origin of her versatile techniques as an artist to resist the rumors surrounding her early background discreetly.

The self-portrait bust of Pan will be analyzed to demonstrate how the artist represented herself—a sculptor as a moral exemplar by demonstrating her vast learning in European sculpture tradition and her personal qualities. Then how Chinese intellectuals, with the philosopher Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940) as the center, appropriated Kantian aesthetics to justify and revive part of the literati painting theory and further formulate the moral and social duties of modern artists will be explored. Finally, one of her self-portraits with oils will be introduced to discuss how Pan defined her gender.

### **Representing a sculptor as a moral exemplar**

The squared-off shoulders and the exposed chest of this bronze *Autoportrait* by Pan Yuliang in 1951 evoke the herm form of antiquity (**fig. 3.1**).<sup>404</sup> The herm sculpture—squared pillars topped by portrait heads—was employed to represent deities from Archaic Greece, especially Hermes, who is hence the origin of the name.<sup>405</sup> Pan was obsessed with this format; she employed it to represent not only herself but also the sculpted portraits of the French historian René Grousset (1885-1952), the Italian physician and educator Maria Montessori (1870-1952), and her friend, the well-known

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<sup>404</sup> Anne-Brigitte Fonsmark, *Catalogue French Sculpture: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek* (Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptothk, 1999), 80.

<sup>405</sup> Jane Fejfer, *Roman Portraits in Context* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 228. Adrian Stähli, Roman Bronze Statuettes: Copies of Greek Sculpture?, chap. in *Ancient Bronzes through a Modern Lens*, ed. Susanne Ebbinghaus (London: Yale University Press, 2014), 138-39.

Chinese artist Zhang Daqian 張大千 (1899-1983). Why did Pan repeatedly use an antique formula to portray distinguished intellectuals from different cultural fields? The artist's obsession with the herm-like portrait is closely related to this formula's symbolic signification from the Greek tradition and its promotion for portraits in Roman art. Hermes was one of the gods of the Greek gymnasium—the usual site of philosophical education in Athens and presided over eloquence.<sup>406</sup> As a god representing athletics' dimension as a medium of communication and initiation to adulthood, Hermes is “crucial in the narrowly conceived rhetorical and philosophical education of the gymnasium.”<sup>407</sup> Using the herm for portraits was a Roman invention that valued its symbolic and sacred association with the Greek gymnasium and philosophical education.<sup>408</sup> The Roman busts of Greek intellectuals “usually comprised a life-size hollow-cast head and neck, and sometimes a draped bust, which was mounted for display on a marble or wooden pillar.”<sup>409</sup> Pan Yuliang's self-portrait—consisting of the bronze bust mounted on a wood pillar—evokes this Roman tradition of representing Greek intellectuals. Her multiple applications of the truncated sculptural form with archaic roots also reveal the value she placed on the intellectual erudition it honors.

Pan's obsession with the abbreviated bust portrait constitutes a facet of archaism in the early twentieth century when European artists such as the French sculptor Antoine Bourdelle (1861-1929) searched for a “primitive” resource in “early” art, especially the

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<sup>406</sup> Sheila Dillon, *Ancient Greek Portrait Sculpture: Contexts, Subjects, and Styles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31.

<sup>407</sup> Thomas F. Scanlon, *Eros & Greek Athletics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5-6. Michael Gagarin and Elaine Fantham, eds., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 451.

<sup>408</sup> S.Dillon, *Ancient Greek Portrait Sculpture: Contexts, Subjects, and Styles*, 30-1.

<sup>409</sup> Dillon, 32.

archaic Greek sculpture.<sup>410</sup> An “age of the great excavations” between 1870 and 1914 occasioned increased knowledge in the form of figurative sculpture; Bourdelle collected finds from the Cycladic, Minoan, and Mycenaean excavations.<sup>411</sup> This fascination with archaic Greek art promoted Bourdelle to revive the herm form in the early 1900s.<sup>412</sup> His gilt bronze bust of the French engineer Gustave Eiffel (1832-1923) is an extant example, which was one of Bourdelle’s last works and was placed beneath the Eiffel Tower in 1929 (**fig. 3.2**).<sup>413</sup> The conspicuous juxtaposition between the lifelike head and the artificial body of trimmed shoulders most likely attracted Bourdelle and also Pan.<sup>414</sup> It was his admiration for the classical Greek sculpture that promoted Bourdelle to move into abstraction and simplification of form, which set him apart from the naturalism of his teacher Auguste Rodin (1840-1917).<sup>415</sup> The practice of gilding a bronze bust can also be traced back to ancient Rome. Gold was a treasured material for portraiture due to its brilliance, intrinsic value, and connotations of immortality.<sup>416</sup> Roman emperors accepted the erection of their images in gold only cautiously because gold symbolized divine honors.<sup>417</sup> Meanwhile, gilded bronze was the most desired material for honorific statues of deserving citizens in Roman

<sup>410</sup> Hilton Kramer, *The Age of the Avant-Garde* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 192-93.

<sup>411</sup> Penelope Curtis, *Sculpture 1900-1945: After Rodin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 219.

<sup>412</sup> Claire Bullus, *The Statues of London* (London: Merrell, 2009), 138.

<sup>413</sup> Mary McAuliffe, *Dawn of the Belle Epoque: The Paris of Monet, Zola, Bernhardt, Eiffel, Debussy, Clemenceau, and Their Friends* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 331.

<sup>414</sup> Nikolaus Dietrich, *Framing Archaic Greek Sculpture: Figure, Ornament and Script*, chap. in *The Frame in Classical Art: A Cultural History*, eds. Verity Platt and Michael Squire (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 285. Nevertheless, the unnaturalness of the blocklike, abstract herm form makes the independent herm bust not favorable in Baroque portraiture. Peggy Fogelman, “S’eri tu in viso qual ti feo Canova’: Canova’s Herm of a Vestal Virgin,” *The J. Paul Getty Museum Journal*, v. 22 (1994): 50.

<sup>415</sup> Angela Gregory and Nancy L. Penrose, *A Dream and a Chisel: Louisiana Sculptor Angela Gregory in Paris, 1925-1928* (South Carolina: The University of South Carolina Press, 2019), 6.

<sup>416</sup> Jane Fejfer, *Roman Portraits in Context* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 166.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*



municipalities.<sup>418</sup> Bourdelle employed the gilt bronze to honor the civil engineer Eiffel, while the post-mortem rigidity in the facial expression increased the commemorative attribute. In contrast, Pan used partial gilding and a contemplative expression as if examining the work to portray a venerable and living artist. She seemed to be inspired by the classical modernity of Bourdelle. Although Bourdelle did not directly teach Pan, he was one of the teachers of many Chinese artists, such as Li Jinfa 李金髮 (1900-1976) and Wu Dayu 吳大羽 (1903-1984).<sup>419</sup>

Rodin's other student, the American sculptor Malvina Hoffman (1885-1966), well-known for her life-size bronze sculptures of the human racial types, also preferred to draw inspiration from ancient Greek sculpture.<sup>420</sup> She portrayed herself with not only blocklike shoulders but also "classically styled hair in an idealized profile reminiscent of Greco-Roman portraiture" in her *Self-Portrait* in plaster created in 1929 (**fig. 3.3**).<sup>421</sup> Hoffman and Pan coincided in their use of the classical model to depict themselves as scholars. Although Pan did not employ a hairstyle of the Greek goddess type, the thick bangs in front of her forehead still related to Hoffman. In *Chinese Woman, Scholar Type* from *The Races of Mankind*, Hoffman represented her model Madame Huang Shu-Chiung 黃淑瓊 (?-1937) as a bobbed-hair New Woman in cheongsam (**fig. 3.4**).<sup>422</sup> Madame Huang was a writer who published books in English, such as *The Most*

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<sup>418</sup> J. Fejfer, *Roman Portraits in Context*, 167.

<sup>419</sup> Cao Qinghui 曹慶暉, "中國留學生和法國雕塑大師布德爾 [Chinese Students and French Sculptor Bourdelle]," *中國美術* [Chinese Fine Art], n. 1 (2019): 17-34.

<sup>420</sup> Tracy Teslow, *Constructing Race: The Science of Bodies and Cultures in American Anthropology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 74.

<sup>421</sup> Refer to the introduction on the New York historical society museum & library website, last accessed on August 4, 2022. <https://emuseum.nyhistory.org/objects/318/selfportrait>

<sup>422</sup> Linda Kim, *Race Experts: Sculpture, Anthropology, and the American Public in Malvina Hoffman's Races of Mankind* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 103. Rebecca Peabody, "Race and Literary Sculpture in Malvina Hoffman's 'Heads and Tales,'" *Getty Research Journal*, n. 5 (2013): 122.

*Famous Beauty of China: Yang Kuei-Fei*. Hoffman likewise used simplified shoulders to emphasize that Madame Huang is a scholar. Additionally, her bangs over the forehead are similar to that of Pan, which appears to be a symbol of modern Chinese women in the early twentieth century.

Although this blocklike, abstract bust is used to represent intellectuals from the Greek tradition to its modern invention, Pan's contemporary audiences seem to have preferred to interpret her bust from the perspective of representing femininity. The photograph by the French photographer Marc Vaux (1895-1971) captured how this self-portrait bust was displayed in an exhibition of the Grand Palais (**fig. 3.5**).<sup>423</sup> The artist Pan is shown to stand against the sculpted head she made for her friend Wang Shouyi 王守義 (1898-1981), gazing upward at the tall female nude statue in front of her. Her bust is displayed on the other side of this female nude statue. Both the standing female nude and the self-portrait have the head turning toward their left and downcast eyes. This formal likeness seems to be the reason for juxtaposing them together. Such an apposition of the nude bust with a female nude statue seems to orient a focus on the ethnic significance and feminine virtue. The face of this female nude is idealized to be youthful with a smooth face, yet she still appears to be individualized with the facial features close to Pan. An ethnic distinction is stressed more clearly via its comparison with a European woman's bust behind her. At the same time, the body language of this female nude evokes the classical type of the Aphrodite of Knidos, standing on her right

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<sup>423</sup> Eric Lefebvre, *From Self-Portrait to Group Portrait, Pan Yu-lin and Her Artist's Image*, chap. in *春之歌：潘玉良在巴黎* [Song of Spring: Pan Yu-Lin in Paris], ed. Eric Lefebvre (Hong Kong: Asia Society Hong Kong Center), 34.

leg and bending the left slightly. This stance is a consistent feature of the Knidian Aphrodite—“the weight is supported by one leg and the other is relaxed and free.”<sup>424</sup> The appropriation of the nude body of Venus as a prop for a more or less naturalistic head is a practice that can be traced back to the Roman tradition, which permits “the association of a particular person with a highly symbolic, universalized body.”<sup>425</sup> This mixture of a secular and a sacred is transferred to represent an Asian woman whose nudity is ethically not permitted, using Venus’s mythological conceit and conventions to produce a legitimate nude body.<sup>426</sup> The costume of the divine body seems to be transmitted to Pan’s nude bust to some extent through its collocation with this Venus of the Asian version. More precisely, it recalls the divinity contained in the herm form itself.

The curtailed bust of a female artist is more convincingly connected with the Greek goddess Athena than the god Hermes—the origin of the herm form. As the goddess of wisdom, science, and crafts, it was a cliché for later Romans that a library was only complete with an image of Minerva (the Roman counterpart of Athena) to preside over it (**fig. 3.6**).<sup>427</sup> Meanwhile, Athena and Hermes sometimes share or double each other’s functions in early Greek poetry; some of their powers are alternate and related versions

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<sup>424</sup> Christine M. Havelock, *The Aphrodite of Knidos and Her Successors: A Historical Review of the Female Nude in Greek Art* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2007), 12.

<sup>425</sup> Peter Stewart, *Statues in Roman Society: Representation and Response* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 51-2.

<sup>426</sup> Eve D’Ambra, *The Calculus of Venus: Nude Portraits of Roman Matrons*, chap. in *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy*, ed. Natalie Boymel Kampen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 219; 221.

<sup>427</sup> Christopher H. Hallett, *Sculpture: Statues, Busts, and Other Villa Furnishings of Bronze and of Marble*, chap. in *Buried by Vesuvius: The Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum*, ed. Kenneth Lapatin (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2019), 77.

of the same quality, for instance, their role as the embodiment of clever intelligence.<sup>428</sup> The goddess Athena was even associated with Hermes to form a Hermathena due to the overlapping functions of the two deities, who appear as “a single bust of Athena topping off a herm or a double bust of Hermes and Athena put back to back on a pillar.”<sup>429</sup> Pan was elevating herself with an association with the Greek goddess: she invoked Hermathena’s symbolic significance for knowledge to proclaim the divine origin of her virtuosity as an artist.

The nude chest also aligns Pan’s self-portrait bust with the eighteenth-century representations of the French enlightenment philosophers in the form of *à l’antique*. The classically draped or bare-chested busts *à l’antique* is opposed to the formula *à la française*, namely “a portrait bust in which the sitter wears contemporary French dress.”<sup>430</sup> In contrast to the contemporaneous clothes which usually evoke the importance of the moment, reality, and simplicity, the portrait bust with the bare chest *à l’antique* evokes the historical role of the sitter and alludes to eternal life.<sup>431</sup> Meanwhile, the bare chest motif was employed to visually bespeak the eighteenth-century cultural ideal in celebrating the self-exploration and self-exposure of Enlightenment philosophers, including Voltaire (1694-1778) and Denis Diderot (1713-

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<sup>428</sup> Joseph Russo, *Athena and Hermes in Early Greek Poetry: Doubling and Complementarity*, chap. in *Poesia e religione in Grecia: Studi in onore di G. Aurelio Privitera*, eds. G. Aurelio Privitera, Simonetta Grandolini and Maria Cannata Fera (Napoli: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 2000), 597.

<sup>429</sup> Anne Rolet, *The Taming of the Lion: Passions, Power and Religion in Achille Bocchi’s Symbolicae Quaestiones (Bologna, 1555)*, chap. in *Emblems and the Natural World*, eds. Karl A.E. Enekel and Paul J. Smith (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 481. Also refer to John Barrell, *The Birth of Pandora: and the Division of Knowledge* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 176.

<sup>430</sup> James D. Draper and Guilhem Scherf, *Augustin Pajou: Royal Sculptor, 1730-1809* (New York: Abrams, 1998), 222. Anne L. Poulet, ed., *Jean-Antoine Houdon: Sculptor of the Enlightenment* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2003), 12.

<sup>431</sup> Ronit Milano, “He is a Philosopher”: *Individual versus Collective Identity*, chap. in *The Portrait Bust and French Cultural Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 28.

1784).<sup>432</sup> Beyond the timeless traits, Pan also appeared to employ physical exposure in her self-portrait bust to endow the sitter—herself with the ideals of subjectivity and self-exposure. An air of scholarly seriousness is again stressed through a frank, naturalistic portrayal of the facial characteristics.<sup>433</sup> Her saggy eyes, deep wrinkles, and rugged skins render her an older woman to eulogize her wisdom; her contemplative expression and left-turning body language suggest a scholar’s earnestness.

Two traditionally classicizing motifs—the herm form and the bare chest are counterbalanced by the dynamic portrayal of her face sharply inclining downward to the left. The qualities of the movement being achieved by the sitter’s downward gaze and the asymmetry of the composition from the twisted neck call up the notion of “living” sculpture. The idea that sculpture might appear to live and breathe can be traced back to the Baroque and Rococo sculptural traditions.<sup>434</sup> Another adaption of the Baroque theatre appeared in the 1760s with the promotion of the Enlightenment trope of “living” marble.<sup>435</sup> The Enlightenment thinkers believed that “the origins of thought and consciousness lay in the physical sensations experienced by the body,” and the sculpture was supposed to convey a sense of psychological “movement” or inner life.<sup>436</sup> The quest for a “vivifying naturalism” therefore pervaded eighteenth-century portrait busts and statues by artists such as Jean-Antoine Houdon (1741–1828), who embraced

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<sup>432</sup> R. Milano, “He is a Philosopher,” chap. in *The Portrait Bust and French Cultural Politics in the Eighteenth Century*, 46.

<sup>433</sup> Milano, 46; 50.

<sup>434</sup> Linda Walsh, “The ‘Hard Form’ of Sculpture: Marble Matter and Spirit in European Sculpture from the Enlightenment through Romanticism,” *Modern Intellectual History*, v. 5, n. 3 (2008): 457.

<sup>435</sup> Linda Walsh, “The ‘Hard Form’ of Sculpture,” 458; 460.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*

both the surface effects of the human body and the transitory human emotion.<sup>437</sup> For instance, Houdou's bust for Diderot skillfully represents the philosopher's emotion and character through the naturalistic portrayal of lively eyes, wrinkles, open mouth, tilted head and neck (**fig. 3.7**). Pan followed this credo of naturalism in utilizing the surface signs of the body to achieve the expression of emotion and character in her self-portrait. Her tilted head and neck, downcast eyes, wrinkles, and tightly-closed lips create a meditative impression on the viewer and communicate the persevering personality of this female artist.

At the same time, both the marble with hard, resistant qualities and the bronze with the uniform sheen were generally acknowledged as mediums having limitations in capturing more detailed surface effects of the physical body.<sup>438</sup> In contrast, the clay models were capable of capturing the wrinkles, unevenness of the flesh, and the fine details of the facial characteristics.<sup>439</sup> The animated effects of Diderot's bust by Houdon discussed above also derive from its medium—terracotta. Pan was aware of the diverse capacities of different materials in representing facial details. The rugged surface of her bronze self-portrait appears to be from the preliminary clay model. A photograph of Pan working on producing the clay model for the marble portrait of Maria Montessori captured similar pitted surface effects (**fig. 3.8**). The artist also partially gilded the head part of her bust, especially her face, to highlight the roughness and the vivacity of her face as the gold glitters and the uncovered bronze shimmers in

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<sup>437</sup> Linda Walsh, "The 'Hard Form' of Sculpture," 460; 462.

<sup>438</sup> L. Walsh, 463-64.

<sup>439</sup> Walsh, 464.

the light. Additionally, some modern sculptors presented final works with the expressive pitted surface in contrast to the shiny finish of neoclassical sculptures.<sup>440</sup> This practice derived from the sculptors' attempts to work as "classically" as possible, sensitively and suggestively replicating the technical precondition of Classical Greek sculpture—"the hammered work with the pitted surface before pumicing and painting."<sup>441</sup> This imitation of the classical formal language corresponds with and intensifies the thematic expression of this self-portrait in the naturalistic portrayal of an aging woman's vicissitudinous wisdom.

The naturalistic portrayal of the aging face and the contemplative body language picture an intelligent and persistent female scholar, which appears to be a broader role than a sculptor. Pan's extension of her role from a sculptor to a scholar closely relates to the positioning of the artist as the moral exemplar in early-20<sup>th</sup>-century China. For example, in a book to introduce the French sculptor François Pompon (1855-1933)'s sculptures to Chinese audiences, two editors—Pan's teacher Wang Jiyuan 王濟遠 (1893-1975) and the French-trained artist Zhang Chengjiang 張澄江 (1911-1940) chose to start with rendering Pompon's high morality:

It is a nice story to tell about the career of Pompon, who was taking sturdy lines and composing them (his career) in a very even method. Like all the stories in the textbooks, some can be models for the youth, and some teach patience with works full of painstaking efforts. All of them can reveal the high morality in the art.<sup>442</sup>

Pompon's career is likened to an artwork made of even lines, thus suggesting the artist's

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<sup>440</sup> Whitney Davis, *Did Modernism Redefine Classicism? The Ancient Modernity of Classical Greek Art*, chap. in *A Companion to Modern Art*, ed. Pam Meecham (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 78.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>442</sup> Wang Jiyuan 王濟遠 and Zhang Chengjiang 張澄江, eds., *蓬蓬雕刻集* [Collection of Sculptures by François Pompon] (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1933), 1.

persistent quality in art creation. Along with subsequent statements on his exemplary role for the youth and on his assiduous attributes, Pompon was described as a human being of multiple moral virtues. These moral virtues are related to the laws of human nature instead of the criteria of artistic representation.<sup>443</sup> In the following text, this moral criterion is further elevated to a philosophical one: “He had the cultivation of hard work in his youth, did not look for unnecessary explanations in life, and was able to accept the conditions of being a human being, therefore his view of life was so wise and philosophical.”<sup>444</sup> This didactic discourse casts the sculptor in a role of a philosopher, being an exemplar for educating the readers.

Therefore, Pan selected to represent herself as a persistent, earnest, and intelligent scholar in her self-portrait bust, brilliantly playing the role of a philosophical paragon in accordance with the demands of early-twentieth-century China in developing a new generation with high morals. She firstly joined multiple European sculptural traditions together in her self-portrait bust to verify her erudite qualities as a sculptor, including the classic herm form and the pitted surface from ancient Greek, the French practice of dressing the Enlightenment philosophers *à l'antique* in the eighteenth century, the Baroque qualities of movement as well as her knowledge on diverse sculptural materials. This, in turn, echoes the depth of knowledge symbolized by the ancient herm form. In addition to all these messages to highlight a savvy sculptor, the artist suggests her perseverance, dedication, and seriousness to her career and life through the

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<sup>443</sup> Jacqueline Lichtenstein, *The Blind Spot: An Essay on the Relations between Painting and Sculpture in the Modern Age* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008), 83.

<sup>444</sup> Wang Jiyuan and Zhang Chengjiang, eds., *Collection of Sculptures by François Pompon*, 2.



naturalistic depiction of a middle-aged woman's weathered countenance and an uncomfortable body language of turning her head forcibly to the left. These moral virtues are precisely the disciplines that the early-20<sup>th</sup>-century Chinese artists were expected to accomplish to be the moral exemplar for the new generation.

### **New criteria for artists through Kantian aesthetics**

Pan Yuliang's emphasis on her comprehensive learning of European sculptural tradition and her noble personal qualities as a scholar raises the issue of what new criteria for evaluating artists were established in the Republican period. The latest standards for assessing modern artists emerged from a series of art movements in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, following the establishment of Republican China in 1911.<sup>445</sup> Chinese thinkers and philosophers centered on Cai Yuanpei, rather than artists, formulated new standards for appraising artistic activity.<sup>446</sup> Cai derived from the philosophy of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) his belief that aesthetic experience generates pure moral insight.<sup>447</sup> He formulated his well-known theory of "let aesthetic education take the place of the religion," endowing modern art and artists with the mission of elevating morality. What are the new criteria for evaluating artists in a context premised on fine art's moral and social functions, and how did they emerge? Cai's articulation of a moral and social function for the fine arts inspired a series of didactic discussions on Chinese art and artists, in which the new criteria are embedded.

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<sup>445</sup> Gao Minglu, *Total Modernity and the Avant-Garde in Twentieth-Century Chinese Art* (London: China Art Foundation, 2011), 36.

<sup>446</sup> Gao Minglu, *Total Modernity and the Avant-Garde in Twentieth-Century Chinese Art*, 36.

<sup>447</sup> Walter B. Davis, *Art, Aesthetics, and Religion in Modern China*, chap. in *Modern Chinese Religion II, 1850-2015*, eds., Vincent Goossaert Jan Kiely and John Lagerwey (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 209-10.

How part of the literati painting theory was revived through the mirror of the Kantian philosophy as the standards for assessing modern artists will be explored, beginning with the article *The Training of Artists* 藝術家之修養 by the art critic Yang Puzhi 楊樸之 (?-1976) published in *Painting Scholarship Magazine* 繪學雜誌 in 1921. The *Painting Scholarship Magazine* emerged in the context of Cai's promotion of aesthetic education at Peking University, in which his ideas were vividly presented.<sup>448</sup> Yang's article demonstrates a close connection to Cai's promotion of Kantian philosophy:

Nowadays, art is one of the school subjects, but is its purpose only to learn artistic skills? This is actually because only art has the function of fostering moral education. Because aesthetics 美感 is a priori, if one appreciates art or entertains oneself with artistic techniques, it not only enhances the noble taste but is also a mysterious way of developing morality. If art is viewed only from a technical aspect, it does not serve the purpose of education. How then can it be classified as an educational discipline? As art is the only discipline that fosters morality, it occupies a prime position in education. Because art has this function, special attention should be given to the training of artists.<sup>449</sup>

The foreign term “aesthetics 美感” tinges this discourse on the relationship between art and moral education with the undertone of German philosophy. The modern use of the term “aesthetics” traces back to the German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762), who defined aesthetics as an inquiry into the nature of taste—the sense of beauty in his treatise *Aesthetica* published in 1750.<sup>450</sup> It was introduced into Chinese during the 1910s through the translation and application of the historian

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<sup>448</sup> Luan Kaiyin 樂開印, “美育實踐與美術期刊: 蔡元培與繪學雜誌研究 [Aesthetic Education Practice and Art Journals: Cai Yuanpei and *Painting Scholarship Magazine*],” 榮寶齋 [Rong Bao Zhai], n. 4 (2021): 158-59.

<sup>449</sup> Yang Puzhi 楊樸之, “藝術家之修養 [The Training of Artists],” 繪學雜誌 [Painting Scholarship Magazine], n. 3 (1921): 31.

<sup>450</sup> Mark Johnson, *The Aesthetics of Meaning and Thought: The Bodily Roots of Philosophy, Science, Morality, and Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), 7.

Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927) and Cai Yuanpei.<sup>451</sup> At the same time, Yang's claim that aesthetics is a priori should be from the philosophy of Kant, who insisted on the a priori principle of aesthetic judgment.<sup>452</sup> The function of aesthetics in enhancing morality that Yang declared likewise invoked Kant's one way to connect aesthetics to morality.<sup>453</sup> In the First Part of *Critique of Judgement*, section 59, Kant asserts that "the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good, and only in this light...does it give us pleasure with an attendant claim to the agreement of everyone else, whereupon the mind becomes conscious of a certain ennoblement and elevation above mere sensibility to pleasure from impressions of the senses..."<sup>454</sup> Through the analogy between beauty and morally good, Kant proclaims that judgments of taste contribute to the cultivation of morality and thus a gradual transition from aesthetic judgments to moral judgments.<sup>455</sup> It seems that Yang appropriated Kant's notion of beauty as the symbol of morality to give significance to fine art.

In the following text, Yang proposed three criteria for becoming a competent artist, given the critical function of art in improving morality. The first criterion reads: "To develop artistic skills, artists have to make special efforts in training scholarship and morality."<sup>456</sup> The emphasis of this standard on moral training is once again linked to Kant, who further asserts that our faculty of moral judgment is "the only stable and

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<sup>451</sup> Lai Qinfang 賴勤芳, "'美感'一詞及其中國現代美育發生 [The Term 'Aesthetics' and the Emergence of Modern Chinese Aesthetic Education]," 美育學刊 [Journal of Aesthetic Education], n. 3 (2017): 38-9.

<sup>452</sup> T. K. Seung, *Kant: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 147.

<sup>453</sup> Kenneth F. Rogerson, "Kant on Beauty and Morality," *Kant-Studien*, v. 95, n. 3 (2004): 339.

<sup>454</sup> Michael Friedmann, *The Kantian Bridge between Nature and Freedom*, chap. in *Natur und Freiheit: Akten des XII. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses*, eds. Violetta L. Waibel, Margit Ruffing and David Wagner (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), v. 1: 121-22.

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>456</sup> Yang Puzhi, "The Training of Artists," *Painting Scholarship Magazine*, n. 3 (1921): 31.

determinate ground for the claim to universal validity that we rightly make for our judgments of taste.”<sup>457</sup> As Kant puts it: “it is evident that the true propaedeutic for the grounding of taste is the development of moral ideas and the cultivation of the moral feeling; for only when sensibility is brought into accord with this can genuine taste assume a determinate, unalterable form.”<sup>458</sup>

Nevertheless, the scholarship and the morality that Yang stressed are standard Confucian literati ideals.<sup>459</sup> Four artists that Yang cited as ideal examples also appear to suggest the traditional origin of his artistic position, including two calligraphers Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303 AD-361AD) and Yan Zhenqin 顏真卿 (709-786) as well as two painters Wu Daozi 吳道子 (685-758) and Wang Shimin 王時敏 (1592-1680).<sup>460</sup> Yang asserted:

Wang Youjun’s calligraphy is vigorous and luxuriant as his character is handsome and elegant. Yan Lugong’s calligraphy is neat and firm as his character is loyal and strict...Wu Daozi’s temperament is superb, so the figures he painted are exquisite and refreshing. Wang Yanke is more placid and refined, so his paintings of landscapes, flowers, and trees are rich and delicate, gorgeous and prosperous.<sup>461</sup>

In this statement, the connection of calligraphy and paintings to artists’ character, temperament, and cultural refinement recalls the literati painting theory established by the Northern Song 北宋 (960-1127) artists. The members of a coterie of artists and critics, with Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101) as the central figure, formulated the literati

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<sup>457</sup> Michael Friedmann, *The Kantian Bridge between Nature and Freedom*, chap. in *Natur und Freiheit*, v. 1: 122.

<sup>458</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 230.

<sup>459</sup> Aida Yuen Wong, *Literati Painting as the “Oriental Modern,”* chap. in *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China* (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies, 2006), 66.

<sup>460</sup> Yang Puzhi, “The Training of Artists,” 31.

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*

painting theory.<sup>462</sup> The fundamental contention of this theory is that “a painting is (or at least should be) a revelation of the nature of the man who paint it, and of his mood and feelings at the moment he painted it.”<sup>463</sup> Yang demonstrated a closer affinity with the literati painting theory in the following criterion: “The artist who is committed to fine art cannot expect to exchange thousands of dollars with one painting, cannot cater to the mundane in order to win reputation. Only the scene in the painting can please my mood and express my will.”<sup>464</sup> This conception that art is for self-expression rather than for profit is very close to the assertion of literati painters, who claimed to paint for lodging the mind instead of serving the less noble forces of the market and economic necessity.<sup>465</sup> Consequently, Yang combines Kant’s notion of “beauty as the symbol of morality” with the traditional literati painting theory of “the man revealed in the painting” to formulate his artistic conception. How did the ambiguity between Kant’s thought and the theory of literati painting in Yang’s article arise? If Yang borrowed the literati painting theory, why did he still opt to follow it after the fierce criticism of literati painting during the New Culture Movement 新文化運動 (the 1910s-1920s)?

Certain resonances between Kant and Confucius in elucidating the relationship between beauty and morality may have prompted 1920s Chinese intellectuals to weave them together. According to Kant, both beauty and morality are based on acts of reflection, abstracting from personal considerations with the prerequisite that we take

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<sup>462</sup> James Cahill, *Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting*, chap. in *The Confucian Persuasion*, ed. Arthur F. Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), 129.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>464</sup> Yang Puzhi, 32.

<sup>465</sup> Ping Foong, *The Efficacious Landscape: On the Authorities of Painting at the Northern Song Court* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), 188.

ourselves as subjects in general.<sup>466</sup> Christian Helmut Wenzel points out that although Confucius does not talk about “acts of reflection” as Kant, the similarity between aesthetic and moral acts of reflection from Kantian philosophy can be imagined to underlie some of Confucius’ intuitions.<sup>467</sup> Confucius analogizes the beautifully painted countenance against the white background to ritual 禮 being performed with the right attitude, reminding the reader of humanness 仁 as a prerequisite for ritual and its beauty.<sup>468</sup> This aesthetic analogy demonstrates that “beauty serves morality by being a visible symbol for it,” which fits the Kantian conception of “beauty being the symbol for morality.”<sup>469</sup> The literati painting theory of “the man revealed in the painting” is based on and fully consistent with the Confucian ideals of the arts “as communication, or as a revelation of the nature of the artist.”<sup>470</sup> As a member of the intellectual network centered on Cai Yuanpei, Yang Puzhi selected to keep his artistic conceptions firmly rooted in the literati painting theory—a part of the Confucian aesthetic tradition when he appropriated Kantian philosophy. This position corresponds to Cai’s approach in promoting his injunction to “let aesthetic education take the place of the religion.”<sup>471</sup> Although Kant considerably inspired him, Cai’s argument of using aesthetics to replace religion was still based on traditional Confucianism.<sup>472</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> Christian H. Wenzel, *Aesthetics and Morality in Kant and Confucius: A Second Step*, chap. in *Cultivating Personhood: Kant and Asian Philosophy*, ed. Stephen R. Palmquist (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 323.

<sup>467</sup> Christian Wenzel, *Aesthetics and Morality in Kant and Confucius*, chap. in *Cultivating Personhood: Kant and Asian Philosophy*, 323-24.

<sup>468</sup> C. Wenzel, 323.

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>470</sup> James Cahill, *Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting*, chap. in *The Confucian Persuasion*, 123; 130.

<sup>471</sup> Li Zehou, *The Chinese Aesthetic Tradition*, trans. Maija Bell Samei (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 212.

<sup>472</sup> Li Zehou, *The Chinese Aesthetic Tradition*, trans. M. Samei, 212-23.

Yang's emphasis on the scholarship and morality of the artists probably referred to the painter Chen Shizeng 陳師曾 (1876-1923)'s discussion on literati painting. Chen championed the value of the literati painting in an article, which was also published in *Painting Scholarship Magazine* but in an earlier issue: "I say that although painting is a minor art, firstly it requires character, secondly learning, thirdly talent, and fourthly artistic techniques. Therefore, these four elements are necessary for literati painting to be outstanding."<sup>473</sup> Born in a quintessential literati family with both his father and grandfather being learned scholar-officials, Chen developed a firm attachment to traditional cultural values.<sup>474</sup> Interestingly, not only did Yang identify with Chen's admiration for the literati painters in terms of their character and scholarship, but Chen also adopted Yang's approach of using Kantian aesthetics as a mirror to authenticate the literati painting. In 1932, Chen wrote an article again to defend the value of the literati painting, refining his views:

The elements of literati painting are the first character, the second scholarship, the third talent, and the fourth thought. With these four elements, the painting can be perfected. Art is a thing that touches human beings with human qualities and corresponds to their spirit. With this feeling and this spirit, one will be able to touch people and oneself. This is what is known in modern aesthetics as *Einfühlungstheorie*.<sup>475</sup>

In mentioning *Einfühlungstheorie*, Chen referred to the aesthetic thought of Kant to call for the refinement of popular tastes on the basis of the elite intellectual tradition.<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>473</sup> Chen Hengke 陳衡恪, "文人畫的價值 [The Value of the Literati Painting]," 繪學雜誌 [Painting Scholarship Magazine], n. 2 (1921): 6.

<sup>474</sup> Aida Yuen Wong, *Literati Painting as the "Oriental Modern,"* chap. in *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China*, 66.

<sup>475</sup> Chen Hengke 陳衡恪, 文人畫之價值 [The Value of the Literati Painting], chap. in 二十世紀中國美術文選 [Selected Articles on Chinese Art of the Twentieth Century], eds., Lang Shaojun 郎紹君 and Shui Tianzhong 水天中 (Shanghai: Shanghai Pictorial Press, 1999), 72.

<sup>476</sup> Geremie Barmé, *An Artistic Exile: A life of Feng Zikai (1898-1975)* (London: University of California

Through this reference, he situated his promotion of the literati art “in a particularly Chinese new Enlightenment narrative that sought to equate high tradition with European cultural achievement.”<sup>477</sup>

Another seemingly opposite position towards literati art during the same period is the discussion about the “art revolution” during the same period. The revolutionary socialist Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879-1942) asserted to remove the tradition of the literati art in a correspondence published in 1919 to the Buddhist scholar Lü Cheng 呂澂 (1896-1989) on the “art revolution,” especially the painting of *Three Wangs*.<sup>478</sup> He claimed: “To improve Chinese painting, one has to revolutionize the life of paintings by three Wangs. Because one has to adopt the naturalistic spirit of European painting to improve Chinese painting.”<sup>479</sup> Chen’s radical idea of abolishing the Wang School’s painting tradition seems to contradict Yang Puzhi’s esteem for Wang Shimin’s paintings. The difference in their perspectives makes their views not contradictory in that Yang’s admiration was for Wang Shimin’s scholarship and moral cultivation, which he had deliberately selected for modern painters to imitate. In contrast, Chen opposed the paintings by the Wang School from the angle of artistic techniques, as he said:

There are no fewer than two hundred paintings by the Wang School that I have collected and seen in my family. Less than one-tenth of them have painting

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Press, 2002), 118-19.

<sup>477</sup> Geremie Barmé, *An Artistic Exile: A life of Feng Zikai (1898-1975)*, 119.

<sup>478</sup> Three celebrated artists of the Qing dynasty with the same surname Wang: Wang Shimin 王時敏 (1592-1680), Wang Jian 王鑾 (1598-1677), and Wang Hui 王翬 (1632-1717). Firstly Wang Shimin and Wang Jian were the two great painters known as The Two Wangs 二王; The Three Wangs 三王 appeared with the advent of Wang Hui despite his much younger age and lower social status. Arthur W. Hummel Sr., ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Qing Period* (Great Barrington: Berkshire Publishing Group, 2018), 624.

<sup>479</sup> Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, “美術革命 [Art Revolution],” *新青年* [New Youth], v. 6, n. 1 (1919): 86. David Wang also translated “王畫” into “the style sanctioned by Wang Shigu (Wang Hui).” David Wang, *In the Name of the Real*, chap. in *Chinese Art Modern Expressions*, eds. Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 40.



subjects. Probably all of them use the four skills of copying, imitating, duplicating, and simulating to reproduce ancient paintings; there are almost no creations of their own. This is the biggest evil influence of the Wang School in the painting world.<sup>480</sup>

As such, Chen's approach to introducing naturalistic techniques in European painting was compatible with and complementary to Yang's adoption of the requirements of literati painting for the intellectual and moral cultivation of the artist. To be sure, Kant's notion of "beauty as the symbol of morality" was a critical condition as a sign of modernity for Yang to revive part of the literati painting theory.

The members of the intellectual network with Cai Yuanpei as the central figure, including Yang Puzhi and Chen Shizeng, appropriated the aesthetic notions of the German philosopher Kant to validate the literati painting theory of "the man revealed in the painting" as a paradigm for training modern artists. The paradigms for an outstanding literati painter on the expansive learning, refinement, and noble character are transferred to evaluate modern artists. In contrast, the standard on a moderate degree of acquired technical ability for the literati painter is renounced and replaced by the versatile mastery of European naturalistic representation. Pan Yuliang identified herself with this evaluation canon, emphasizing her vast learning and noble character as a scholar in her self-portrait bust.

On the other hand, as such an evaluation system is applied to general artists, Pan also suffered from the dilemma of being a female artist. As Shih Shou-Chien 石守謙 points out, the transient prosperity of East Asian women artists' attempts at professionalism in the 1930s was because their modern transformation was sheltered

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<sup>480</sup> Chen Duxiu, "Art Revolution," *New Youth*, v. 6, n. 1 (1919): 86.

by the traditional concept of “talented women 才女.”<sup>481</sup> After the war, there seemed to be no alternative for East Asian female artists but to return to the accomplished women in the guise of older constructs.<sup>482</sup> Even in the relatively tolerant 1930s when the notion of “talented women sheltered women artists,” Pan Yulaing was mired in media ridicule of her early humble origins, forcing her to abandon her professional career in China and move to France in 1937.<sup>483</sup> How did Pan respond to her dilemma as a female artist of humble origins in her self-portrait?

### **A divine window**

Oil painting is an alternative medium for Pan Yuliang to represent her professionalism beyond sculpture. As with her sculptural self-portrait, she conveyed her proficiency in the European oil painting tradition through her elaborately-devised pictorial formation. The typical configuration of self-portraits focuses on depicting the artist’s hands. The artist’s one hand is usually portrayed to hold the attributes of the art to indicate the tools of the trade, and the other hand posing the rhetorical gestures to refer to the artist’s mind and reasoning.<sup>484</sup> Pan seldom employed this type of pictorial convention in her self-portraits to explicitly declare the depicted figure as a painter. How did she convince the viewer of the presence of the artist? At the same time, female artists’ self-portrayals involve the dimension of how to elaborate the conception of

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<sup>481</sup> Shih Shou-Chien 石守謙, “才女的現代轉化：二十世紀初期東亞女性畫家的專業路 [Modern Transformation of Talented Women: East Asian Female Painters’ Road to Professionalism in the Early Twentieth Century], 國立臺灣大學美術史研究集刊 [Taida Journal of Art History], n. 47 (2019): 185.

<sup>482</sup> Ibid.

<sup>483</sup> Shih Shou-Chien 石守謙, 167.

<sup>484</sup> Mary D. Sheriff, *The Portrait of the Artist*, chap. in *The Exceptional Woman: Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 206.

femininity beyond the depiction of “the artist.”<sup>485</sup> How did Pan Yuliang deal with the seeming opposition between representing femininity and representing the artist in her self-portraits?

The narcissistic self-representation of female artists can be read positively. Sarah Kofman’s re-reading of Freud’s *On Narcissism* defined the narcissistic woman as Freud’s only example of the self-sufficient woman, who is “not dependent on male desire, since she desires and values herself.”<sup>486</sup> The art historian Mary Sheriff categorized the late eighteenth-century French female artist Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun (1755-1842) into this type of narcissistic woman: “insofar as she takes herself as an object of desire, creating, idealizing, celebrating, and re-producing herself.”<sup>487</sup> Vigée Le Brun represented herself as a proficient artist playing the role of a beautiful woman in her *Self-Portrait in a Straw Hat* (**fig. 3.9**).<sup>488</sup> She displayed her painting tools in her left hand and the right-hand gesture signifying reasoning to show herself as an intellectual painter. Meanwhile, she regularized her features to convey her sensual beauty through her sensuous paint handling and harmonious coloring, which referred to Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640).<sup>489</sup> Pan selected to renounce all these conventions employed by Vigée Le Brun in her twenties; she neither indicated the painter’s professional identity with symbols nor highlighted the feminine beauty in the *Self-*

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<sup>485</sup> Mary D. Sheriff, *The Portrait of the Artist*, chap. in *The Exceptional Woman*, 198; 203.

<sup>486</sup> Mary D. Sheriff, *The Mother’s Imagination and the Fathers’ Tradition*, chap. in *The Exceptional Woman: Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 50.

<sup>487</sup> Mary D. Sheriff, *The Mother’s Imagination and the Fathers’ Tradition*, chap. in *The Exceptional Woman*, 51.

<sup>488</sup> M. Sheriff, 199.

<sup>489</sup> Sheriff, 198-99.

*Portrait* depicted in 1945 (**fig. 3.10**).

Pan focused on representing the self-sufficiency of a woman by faithfully reproducing the frail physical condition of the artist at her fifty years old. When she created her 1945 self-portrait, she was obliged to move from Paris to the countryside for around three months to recuperate from her multiple sinusitis surgeries.<sup>490</sup> The rough brushstrokes of her uneven-skinned face and her out-of-focus eyes convey the torment and exhaustion she suffered from her illness and surgeries. The weird light red paint on the left side of her nose near her eye seems to imply her nasal problem; the abrupt white scrapes ranging from her face to her neck appear to carve her physical sufferings. This self-sufficiency of not being afraid of demonstrating physical flaws fits well with Kofman's elaboration on the narcissistic woman. Kofman writes:

What is frightening is a woman's indifference to a man's desire, her self-sufficiency (even if it is based on a fantasy, which is not the same thing as a strategy or a lie): whether this self-sufficiency is real or only supposed to be real, it is what makes woman enigmatic, inaccessible, impenetrable. Especially since she neither simulates nor dissimulates anything, she exhibits her platitude, or rather the beauty of her breasts.<sup>491</sup>

In Kofman's discussion, a narcissistic woman is self-contained whether she exhibits mediocrity or seductive beauty. Pan also explored the essence of feminine beauty while showing her asthenia from nasal surgeries.

Meanwhile, Pan juxtaposed the fading flowers in the vase with the sick woman (herself), revealing the fleeting nature of the beauty of the flowers and women. The

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<sup>490</sup> Dong Song 董松, 潘玉良藝術年譜 [Chronological Biography of Artist Pan Yuliang] (Hefei: Anhui Fine Art Press, 2013), 214. Wu Gang 吳鋼, 朱德群 [Zhu Dequn] (Shijiazhuang: Hebei Education Press, 2009), 79.

<sup>491</sup> Sarah Kaufman, *The Enigma of Woman* (London: Cornell University Press, 1985), 61-2.

association of flowers with women and art ranges from Renaissance to the late nineteenth century; flowers are the cultural embodiment of feminine virtues in patriarchal myths of fertility, innocence, and sexual purity, innocence, and fertility.<sup>492</sup> The flower as a symbol of feminine youth and beauty can be traced back to the seventeenth-century Dutch still-life flower painting.<sup>493</sup> This flower-woman metaphor was invoked in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries when the so-called “woman question” emerged in social and political fields.<sup>494</sup> Transforming women into flowers or floral motifs framed women’s passive and ornamental social roles, given the principal decorative function of flowers.<sup>495</sup> The floral-feminine equation thus afforded an efficient strategy to dismantle women’s growing interest and power in the public field.<sup>496</sup> In contrast, Pan replaced the exaltation of beauty with the ephemeral nature of the beauty in the floral-feminine painting, changing the foundation of the flower-woman metaphor and abolishing women’s passive and ornamental role.

The combination of a woman pairing off with the flower still life in Pan’s self-representation evokes the tradition of representing the theme of *vanitas* popular in the seventeenth-century Dutch still-life paintings, which stresses her denial of the ornamental femininity further. Deriving from Latin, *vanitas* alludes to the biblical warning “all is vanity;” the *vanitas* theme in art often employs specific iconographic

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<sup>492</sup> Judith Rugg, *Fear and Flowers in Anya Gallaccio’s Forest Floor, Keep off the Grass, Glaschu and Repens*, chap. in *Culture, Creativity, and Environment: New Environmentalist Criticism*, eds. Fiona Becket and Terry Gifford (New York: Rodopi, 2007), 64.

<sup>493</sup> Asnnette Stott, “Floral Femininity: A Pictorial Definition,” *American Art*, v. 6, n. 2 (1992): 68.

<sup>494</sup> A. Stott, “Floral Femininity: A Pictorial Definition,” 72-3.

<sup>495</sup> Stott, 62.

<sup>496</sup> Stott, 74.

motifs to disclose the fleeting nature, temporality, and fragility of all things.<sup>497</sup> Such objects as jewels, books, and flowers were initially deployed to convey vanity in art.<sup>498</sup> Pan employed the drooping roses in the vase to reveal the ephemeral nature of life, especially when the dead twig is deliberately placed next to the vase, foreshadowing the inevitable fading end of these luscious roses. Meanwhile, the wilting roses parallel the 50-year-old artist's self-reflection to remind the viewer of the transience of human existence and their mortality as flowers.<sup>499</sup> The bold and rough brushstrokes also convey a *vanitas* idea. The presence of paint and the visible movement of the brush call the spectator's attention to the medium to expose the deceptiveness of the sight.<sup>500</sup> The naturalistic and super-smooth surface of a seemingly celadon vase that emerges from the bold grey white brushstrokes reveals her virtuosity in the naturalistic likeness, but the artist selected to highlight the paint throughout the whole painting surface, including her face and her hands. The legibility of gesture and movement from the rough paint and the bold strokes record the ongoing, creative process, which is juxtaposed with the temporary existence of the corporal body to reveal the illusion of the immortal life.<sup>501</sup> More importantly, the looseness of her brushstrokes proclaims the prominent presence of the artist and her knowledge of the impressionist style. The openly displayed

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<sup>497</sup> Nathan Carlin and Thomas Cole, *Maldynia as Muse: A Recent Experiment in the Visual Arts and Medical Humanities*, chap. in *Maldynia: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on the Illness of Chronic Pain*, ed. James Giordano (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 117.

<sup>498</sup> Liana De Girolami Cheney, *Vanity/Vanitas*, chap. in *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography: Themes Depicted in Works of Art*, ed. Helene E. Roberts (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998), 883.

<sup>499</sup> Hans Maes, 'And Time will Have His Fancy...': On Being Moved by Portraits of Unknown People, chap. in *Portraits and Philosophy*, ed. Hans Maes (New York: Routledge, 2020), 200.

<sup>500</sup> Thijs Weststeijn, *Painting as a Mirror of Nature*, chap. in *The Visible World: Samuel van Hoogstraten's Art Theory and the Legitimation of Painting in the Dutch Golden Age*, trans. Beverley Jackson and Lynne Richards (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 319.

<sup>501</sup> Joanna Woodall, "Every Painter Paints Himself": Self-Portraiture and Creativity, chap. in *Self Portrait: Renaissance to Contemporary* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2005), 23.

brushwork of the impressionist paintings usually produces a particularly vibrant surface to refer to the vibrant nature of the visual experience.<sup>502</sup> Pan contrasted the sickly woman and the wilting flowers in her hand with the vigorous pictorial surface through visible brushstrokes such as those on the right windowpane, which elevates the artist's presence while suppressing the sensual beauty. In addition, the nineteenth-century impressionists were the natural heirs to such forerunners as Titian (c. 1488/90-1576), Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), and Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), who featured the freedom of the paintwork.<sup>503</sup> Thus, Pan Yuliang's self-portrait is again aligned with the early modern tradition besides her appropriation of the seventeenth-century *vanitas* theme.

A more prominent connection to the early modern painting tradition lies in Pan's emphasis on perspectival depth. In the *Self-Portrait* depicted in 1945, the formal affinity to the fifteenth-century Italian Renaissance portraits of women is revealed in the artist's method of framing the figure. The display of the figure against a window frame opening onto the distant blue sky evokes the portraiture compositions by the Italian painter of the early Renaissance Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510), as his painting *Portrait of a Lady known as Smeralda Bandinelli* was created between 1470-1480 presents (**fig. 3.11**).<sup>504</sup> Botticelli situated the demure woman in an interior of marked porosity: the warm, golden light comes through a *before* window bisected by a column

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<sup>502</sup> Moshe Barasch, *Impressionism: Reflections on Style*, chap. in *Modern Theories of Art: From Impressionism to Kandinsky* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 65.

<sup>503</sup> Roy Bolton, *Impressionism to Post-Impressionism: Monet to Cézanne*, chap. in *A Brief History of Painting: 2000 BC to AD2000* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2004), 195.

<sup>504</sup> Lorne Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits: European Portrait-Painting in the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (London: Yale University Press, 1990), 115.

to her right, and an open door behind her displays the blue sky outside.<sup>505</sup> Pan seemed to follow Botticelli's approach of establishing the illusionistic depth with the apertures of the building. The apparent difference is that Pan omits the other window frame, which runs parallel with the painting frame. The lady Smeralda places her right hand on this window frame, which separates the viewer from the picture space.<sup>506</sup>

The window frame in the near foreground of Botticelli's portrait was likely to be the artist's pictorial translation of the Italian architect Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472)'s metaphor of the window.<sup>507</sup> Alberti conceived a picture plane to a window; he confided: "I will say what I myself do when I paint. First I trace as large a quadrangle as I wish, with right angles, on the surface to be painted; in this place, it [the rectangular quadrangle] certainly functions for me as an open window through which the *historia* is observed."<sup>508</sup> Alberti referred to the subject matter of the painting as the Latin word *historia*, which was intended to summon up the noble men and heroic deeds of classical antiquity to impress and improve the present age.<sup>509</sup> This window reference metaphorically equates the painting with the idea of "framing;" the artist sees an artifice suggesting a meaning through his/her framing window instead of the untrimmed nature.<sup>510</sup>

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<sup>505</sup> Adrian W. B. Randolph, *Renaissance Genderscapes*, chap. in *Structures and Subjectivities: Attending to Early Modern Women*, eds. Joan E. Hartman and Adele Seeff (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 38.

<sup>506</sup> Keith Christiansen and Stefan Weppelmann, eds., *The Renaissance Portrait: From Donatello to Bellini* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 112; 114.

<sup>507</sup> David Alan Brown, *Virtue and Beauty: Leonardo's Ginevra de'Benci and Renaissance Portraits of Women* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 172.

<sup>508</sup> Rocco Sinigalli, ed. and trans., *Leon Battista Alberti: On Painting* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 39.

<sup>509</sup> Samuel Y. Edgerton, *Alberti's Window*, chap. in *The Mirror, The Window and the Telescope: How Renaissance Linear Perspective Changed our Vision of the Universe* (London: Cornell University Press, 2009), 129.

<sup>510</sup> Charles H. Carman, *Disclosing Metaphors 2: The Window, The Flower, and The Map*, chap. in *Leon*



At the technical level, the Albertian window involves “an open frame gridded by perpendicular threads through which the artist should view the scene to be painted, and then transfer the coordinate details onto his [her] similarly gridded picture.”<sup>511</sup> Alberti directed the painter to interpose a transparent veil between the world and the eye to realize the illusionistic depth and represent the scene through the window.<sup>512</sup> He revealed:

Let it, therefore, be that one takes care in the drawing of profiles; for the attainment of which in the best way, I think, one cannot find anything more convenient than that veil, that I myself, among my friends, usually call cut, whose use I now discovered for the first time. It is of this kind: a veil woven of very thin threads and loosely intertwined, dyed with any color, subdivided with thicker threads according to parallel partitions, in as many squares as you like, and held stretched by a frame; which [veil] I place, indeed, between the object to be represented and the eye, so that the visual pyramid penetrates through the thinness of the veil.<sup>513</sup>

The intervention of a “veil” provided a grid of the vertical and horizontal coordinates for Alberti’s window. As a German woodcut produced in 1531 indicates, such a gridded “window” allows the artist to directly copy the subject, literally map a portion of the visual world, and align the details according to the vertical and horizontal coordinates (**fig. 3.12**).<sup>514</sup> Pan mastered this technique of using the gridded window to assist her naturalistic representations of the physical world. The coordinates of her gridded picture plane are visible if the vertical lines in her portrait are extended to the borders

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*Battista Alberti and Nicholas Cusanus: Towards an Epistemology of Vision for Italian Renaissance Art and Culture* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 137.

<sup>511</sup> Samuel Edgerton, “Brunelleschi’s Mirror, Alberti’s Window, and Galileo’s ‘Perspective Tube,’” *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos*, v. 13 (2006): 161.

<sup>512</sup> Jean-Louis Comolli, *Cinema against Spectacle: Technique and Ideology Revisited*, trans. and ed. Daniel Fairfax (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 63.

<sup>513</sup> Rocco Sinisgalli, ed. and trans., *Leon Battista Alberti: On Painting*, 50-1.

<sup>514</sup> Samuel Y. Edgerton, *Alberti’s Window*, chap. in *The Mirror, the Window and the Telescope: How Renaissance Linear Perspective Changed Our Vision of the Universe*, 127.

of the canvas, including the border lines of the left and right windows, the transition line of the exterior building, and the curtain lines faintly peeking through the window panes on the right (**fig. 3.13**). Besides, a portion of two black orthogonal is visible at the lower left corner of the composition where the paint is thin. The artist probably left this seemingly unfinished corner on purpose to alert the audience to her mastery of perspective techniques.

Although Alberti's gridded "window" or veil had nothing to do with the perspective construction *per se*, the artist was expected to know how to use Alberti's perspective to compose a picture.<sup>515</sup> The rules of the linear perspective were devised by the Florentine architect and painter Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446) and were formalized by Alberti.<sup>516</sup> It involves "specifying a station point, picture plane, ground plane, and vanishing point" to enable pictorial realism.<sup>517</sup> Alberti outlined a formula of how to use the human figure as a determinant of the "centric point" and the station point before his introduction on the metaphor of the veil.<sup>518</sup> As he elucidated in the well-known *On Painting*:

I place only one point inside the [rectangular] quadrangle. In that place let there be the [point of] sight; for me, that point, as it occupies the place itself toward which the centric ray strikes, let it, therefore, be called the centric point. The appropriate position of this centric point is not to be higher from the base line than the height of that man to be painted. On this condition, in fact, both the observers and the painted things appear to be on a uniform plane.<sup>519</sup>

This account explicates how to deal with the complexities between the vanishing point,

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid.

<sup>516</sup> Nicholas Wade, *Art, and Illusionists* (London: Springer, 2016), 7.

<sup>517</sup> N. Wade, *Art and Illusionists*, 8.

<sup>518</sup> Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (London: The MIT Press, 2009), 27.

<sup>519</sup> R. Sinisgalli, ed. and trans., *Alberti: On Painting*, 39.

the painted human figure, and the viewer. The spatial recession established by Pan in the background of the *Self-Portrait* reveals her knowledge of perspectival geometry, particularly the placement of the vanishing point at the point where the roofs and the chimney meet the blue sky. Additionally, through the theory of frame-as window and the science of perspective, Alberti aimed at providing a formula for painters “to make a pictorial space according to the harmonic laws of geometry and mathematics—a metaphor for the world of order fashioned by God.”<sup>520</sup> Whether Pan identified with the divine power that Alberti conferred to the naturalistic painting when she determined to display her mimetic virtuosity in producing an image of remarkable verisimilitude?

Beyond Alberti’s metaphor of frame-as-window, the combination of windows and women in European art usually possesses symbolic references rooted in Christianity.<sup>521</sup> From early Christian times, various architectural forms, including doors, gates, and windows, were employed to represent the Virgin Mary.<sup>522</sup> As the Mother of Christ who could intercede for man, the Virgin Mary “symbolized the window of heaven through which shone the divine light of the Savoir.”<sup>523</sup> Therefore, the window as a pictorial and symbolic device in the representations of the Virgin Mary flourished especially in the Netherlands during the Renaissance period, such as the *Mérode Altarpiece* by the Netherlandish artist Robert Campin (1375-1444)’s workshop between 1427 and

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<sup>520</sup> Ronald Schenk, *The Soul of Beauty: A Psychological Investigation of Appearance* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1992), 95.

<sup>521</sup> Irene Cieraad, *Dutch Windows: Female Virtue and Female Vice*, chap. in *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*, ed. Irene Cieraad (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 31; 40.

<sup>522</sup> Shirley Blum, *The Open Window: A Renaissance View*, chap. in *The Window in Twentieth-Century Art*, ed. Suzanne Delehanty (New York: Neuberger Museum and State University of New York at Purchase, 1986), 10.

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.*

1432.<sup>524</sup> Indeed, window images were freed from the hallowed conventions of perspective and recurred in late nineteenth- and twentieth centuries artists' compositions.<sup>525</sup> The window played the role of mediation between the openly acknowledged fiction of the flat canvas and the unsettling overthrow of perspective for the pioneers of modernism.<sup>526</sup> For example, Henri Matisse employed the window's geometry to engender new pictorial order to mediate between abstraction and figuration in his 1905 painting *The Open Window*.<sup>527</sup> Nevertheless, most Chinese artists trained in the early twentieth century in Europe had no interest in bringing down perspective as European modernist artists. On the contrary, they regarded the science of perspective as a universal rule, taking pains to promote naturalistic painting.

Pan appropriated the windows to create a formal affinity between her self-portrait and the early modern representations of the Virgin Mary. In her 1945 *Self-Portrait*, she opens the window to let in the light and air from heaven and to display the outside building's windows. The building outside her window is intriguingly set up with four openings, including two opaque ones with shutters closed, a small closed window with light green glass, and a rectangular window that seems to open to the blue sky. The artist seemed to represent herself as the secularized Madonna by evoking the Virgin Mary with those symbolic windows. The formal parallels between paintings of the Virgin Mary and portraits of women were prosperous during the Renaissance period since the Mother of God was considered the ideal model for every venerable woman to

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<sup>524</sup> Blum, *The Open Window* chap. in *The Window*, 10.

<sup>525</sup> Suzanne Delehanty, *The Artist's Window*, chap. in *The Window in Twentieth-Century Art*, 18.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>527</sup> S. Delehanty, *The Artist's Window*, chap. in *The Window in Twentieth-Century Art*.

emulate.<sup>528</sup> At the same time, women artists since the sixteenth century began to pictorially conjure the commonality between the female painter and the Virgin Mary, thereby representing a divinely inspired artist.<sup>529</sup> The divine origin of painting involves a story of Saint Luke painting the Virgin, in which the Virgin gazed upon three icons of the Theotokos by Saint Luke from life and exclaimed: “May the grace of him whom I bore and of myself be forever with these holy icons.”<sup>530</sup> The allusion to this myth necessarily contributes to conveying this European-trained Chinese artist’s extraordinary technical dexterity in accurately representing the physical world. As such, the power of the feminine creative forms is asserted through these multiple associations with Virgin Mary.

In the 1945 *Self-Portrait*, Pan Yuliang appropriated the early modern European art tradition to represent herself as a secularized Madonna to proclaim the power of the feminine creation. She first presented herself as an ordinary woman by removing the painting tools from her hands in the mirror. Meanwhile, she referred to the *vanitas* tradition to disclose the transience of the youth and the feminine beauty, abolishing the sexual gaze upon the female portraiture. On the other hand, she employed the windowed perspective and the vigorous touches of the brush to stand out her expertise, further achieving the ubiquitous presence of the artist in this painting. Alberti’s

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<sup>528</sup> Frank Zöllner, *Leonardo Da Vinci’s Portraits: Ginevra de’Benci, Cecilia Gallerani, La Belle Ferroniere, and Mona Lisa*, chap. in *Rafael i jego spadkobiercy: Portret klasyczny w sztuce nowożytnej Europy*, Materiały sesji naukowej, 24 - 25 X 2002 [Raphael and his heirs: Classical Portraiture in the Art of Modern Europe, Proceedings of a Scientific Session, 24 - 25 October 2002], ed. Sebastian Dudzik (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2003), 178.

<sup>529</sup> Joanna Woodall, “Every Painter Paints Himself”: *Self-Portraiture and Creativity*, chap. in *Self-Portrait: Renaissance to Contemporary*, ed. Anthony Bond and Joanna Woodall (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2005), 26.

<sup>530</sup> Elizabeth Zelensky and Lela Gilbert, *Windows to Heaven: Introducing Icons to Protestants and Catholics* (Michigan: Brazos Press, 2005), 61.

metaphor of the window with the divine implications is combined with the window as the symbol of the Virgin Mary to posit the divine origin of a female artist's creative power.

Although Pan Yuliang lived in France for the rest of her life from 1937 onwards, her self-portrayals kept responding to the criteria for evaluating modern artists, which were established in the context of the New Culture Movement of the 1920s, and to the dilemmas encountered by Chinese female artists. Her early training in art from Lyon, Paris to Rome established her extensive learning of European sculpture and painting traditions and her public image as an intellectual artist. This coincides with the traditional literati painting theory's demand for artists' erudite, cultural refinement, and noble character. Such a past criterion was justified and transformed through Kant's philosophy in the 1920s to evaluate modern artists. In addition to meeting the basic standards of an artist, she resisted unjust accusations of her "impure" experience in a brothel as a teenager by demonstrating the sacred and pure origins of her art.

## CHAPTER 4

### **Pilgrimage to Dunhuang: The Realist Turn of Chang Shuhong's Oil Painting**

French-trained Chinese artist Chang Shuhong discussed with his teacher Paul-Albert Laurens in Paris in 1933 the fusion of Chinese and European painting by Xu Beihong 徐悲鴻 (1895-1953), an authority on Chinese painting at the time. Laurens was outspoken in warning Chang of the peril of this “Entre les Deux” artistic practice: “there is no soul in the world between the dead and the living! Art is a relative metaphysical representation of the national spirit of an era, never the execution of the principles of Chinese painting with the techniques of Western painting.”<sup>531</sup> Since this in-between artistic practice is dangerous and unfeasible, how did Chang, an artist trained in European oil painting, deal with the relationship between these two painting traditions, primarily after he worked as the director of the Dunhuang Art Academy in 1943?

I argue that Chang took the German philosopher and cultural critic Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)'s doctrine of “art as the salvation of life” as the primary principle guiding his creation during the Dunhuang period; the cultural competition, exchange, and assimilation between Chinese and European painting traditions came second. His pictorial experimentations at Dunhuang fit well with the theoretical background of introducing German philosophy to enlighten the Chinese public through the program of “aesthetic education” at the beginning of the twentieth century. He

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<sup>531</sup> Shuhong 書鴻, “巴黎中國畫展與中國畫前途 [Chinese Painting Exhibition in Paris and the Future of Chinese Painting],” 藝風 [Art Wind], v. 1, n. 8 (1933): 14.

borrowed Nietzsche's metaphor of "man as a bridge" to interpret the artist's role into a bridge, connecting European painting techniques he mastered during his eight-year training in France and his inherent Chinese painting tradition. More importantly, the artist as a bridge sets up the link between the glorious Dunhuang painting—a tradition of the past and modern Chinese painting, promising to create a new era that can rival European modernism.

As a generation of "new youth" growing up in the New Culture Movement, practicing art's religious-like mission of cultivating citizens and improving society permeated Chang's artistic career from Paris to Dunhuang. How he experimented with following the French realism to represent the ordinary people will be explored as a premise for his visual manifestations of the social vision in Dunhuang. His 1947 oil painting *Inside a Kazakh Yurt* will be presented as an epitome of his Dunhuang creations, in which he realized the dual goals of representing social truthfulness and establishing his avant-garde status as a local-based artist. Meanwhile, Chang's attempt to base his modernist practice on the local Dunhuang tradition runs the risk of branding Dunhuang art as "primitive" within a Eurocentric modernist narrative framework. Therefore, how Chang attempted to present and address the modernist obsessions faced by Chinese artists will subsequently be investigated. The final section will focus on Chang's pictorial transfiguration of Nietzsche's philosophical theories, "art as redemption" and "man as a bridge" at Dunhuang, thereby striving for a new horizon of aesthetic salvation for modern China.



## Ordinary people became the focus of the painting

Which path should young Chinese painters take? With this issue in mind, the 29-year-old Chinese painter Chang Shuhong invited his French teacher Paul Albert Laurens to visit the *Chinese Painting Exhibition (Exposition de la peinture chinoise)* on display at the Musée du Jeu de Paume in Paris from May to June 1933.<sup>532</sup> Laurens contended that Qi Baishi 齐白石 (1864-1957)'s withered lotus and Zhang Daqian 张大千 (1898-1983)'s landscape are all very picturesque, yet this little bit of picturesque lacking grandeur, magnitude (ampleur) and dignity (dignité) is not enough for the artist to dedicate the whole life.<sup>533</sup> He further explained how a painting should achieve grandeur, magnitude, and dignity: "What I mean is that (we should) work more on the scène of human events, such as the paintings of drinking and hunting in the ancient painting showroom which is more composé."<sup>534</sup> Accordingly, this French teacher encouraged his Chinese student to focus on genre painting which is characterized by the depiction of ordinary people engaged in everyday life.<sup>535</sup> Why did Laurens direct Chang to center on genre painting which was conventionally considered of secondary importance in contrast to history painting?

The reverence for genre painting of Chang's French teacher stemmed from the rejection and transformation in the accepted convention of ranking history painting first since the mid-nineteenth century. Genre painting gained increasing prominence along

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<sup>532</sup> Shuhong, "Chinese Painting Exhibition in Paris and the Future of Chinese Painting," 9; 12.

<sup>533</sup> Shuhong, "Chinese Painting Exhibition in Paris and the Future of Chinese Painting," 13.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid.

<sup>535</sup> Lisa J. DeBoder, *A Comic Vision? Northern Renaissance Art and the Human Figure*, chap. in *A Broken Beauty*, ed. Theodore L. Prescott (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 49.

with landscape painting after the French revolution of 1848 as testified by the realist art of the Barbizon school and Gustave Courbet (1819-1977).<sup>536</sup> The realist painters insisted on the power of nature and the objective reality; genre and landscape subjects were the focus of the realist painting, which was opposed to the significant genres of history painting and the painting of ideas.<sup>537</sup> Jean-François Millet (1814-1875), one of the founders of the Barbizon school, called for “painting directly from nature *en plein air* with local subjects in real-life situations.”<sup>538</sup> Likewise, Courbet defined Realism as the artist painting in real time what is perceived instead of imagined scenes of the Beaux-arts tradition, which meant “both looking life-like and revealing the truth beneath the surface.”<sup>539</sup> He placed the contemporary genre and landscape painting at the center of his realist project.<sup>540</sup> A highly personal and contemporary subject with the artist depicting a landscape at the center of his giant canvas *The Painter’s Studio* in 1855 allegorically attests to the rise of the genre and landscape scenes.<sup>541</sup>

A more theoretical criterion that Laurens put forward for Chang was sincerity (sincérité), which forged another link to Realism. In response to Chang’s question about what is the right way to create for an artist caught between the Chinese and European

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<sup>536</sup> Gillian B. Pierce, *Baudelaire’s Parisian Cityscape: Charles Meryon and Le Spleen de Paris*, chap. in *Scapeland: Writing the Landscape from Diderot’s Salons to the Postmodern Museum* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), 116-17.

<sup>537</sup> François Cachin, *The Painter’s Landscape*, chap. in *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire, Volume 2, Space*, trans. Mark Hutchinson, ed. Pierre Nora (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2006), 331.

<sup>538</sup> Phyllis Marie Jensen, *Art, Religion, Philosophy*, chap. in *Artist Emily Carr and the Spirit of the Land: A Jungian Portrait* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 194.

<sup>539</sup> Ibid. Josie Bland, *The Academy & The Avant-Garde*, chap. in *Investigating Modern Art*, eds. Liz Dawtrey, Toby Jackson, Mary Masterton, Pam Meecham and Paul Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 41.

<sup>540</sup> Daniel R. Guernsey, *Rousseau’s Emile and Social Palingenesis in Gustave Courbet’s The Painter’s Studio, 1855*, chap. in *The Artist and the State, 1777-1855: The Politics of Universal History in British and French Painting* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 209.

<sup>541</sup> Gillian B. Pierce, *Baudelaire’s Parisian Cityscape: Charles Meryon and Le Spleen de Paris*, chap. in *Scapeland*, 116-17.

traditions, Laurens answered: “In short, whether it is Chinese painting, Japanese painting, or Western painting if a painter lacks sincerity (sincérité), (he or she) is not an artist.”<sup>542</sup> Laurens’s emphasis on sincerity calls forth Courbet’s well-known motto “sincerity in art,” which he repeatedly used to replace the “realist” label formally attached to his works in exchanges with the theorists of realism such as Jules Champfleury (1821-1889).<sup>543</sup> As Courbet’s great defender, Champfleury praised his Realism as sincerity in art, which required telling the truth no matter how unpleasant it might be through portraying the populace.<sup>544</sup> Courbet satisfied the demand for artistic truth with his insistence on objective, unbiased description, and analysis in depicting folk imagery.<sup>545</sup> In actuality, a desire to represent the actual life of ordinary people with close observation and detailed description was among the most critical characteristics of Realism.<sup>546</sup> The peasant family origin draws the leader of realist painters Courbet to depict common people in outdoor settings.<sup>547</sup> He depicted daily activities of such ordinary characters as workers, peasants, and rural bourgeois with a monumental scope previously confined to history painting, supplanting the sacred subjects of the old and entrusting ordinary events a dignity.<sup>548</sup>

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<sup>542</sup> Shuhong, “Chinese Painting Exhibition in Paris and the Future of Chinese Painting,” 14.

<sup>543</sup> Dirk Göttsche, Ann Caesar, Anne Duprat, Rae Greiner, Anne Lounsbery and Stephen Roberts, *Routes into Realism: Multiple Beginnings, Shared Catalysts, Transformative Dynamics*, chap. in *Landscapes of Realism: Rethinking Literary Realism in Comparative Perspectives, Volume I, Mapping Realism*, eds. Dirk Göttsche, Rosa Mucignat and Robert Weninger (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2021), 114.

<sup>544</sup> Therese Dolan, *Realism and Music: Champfleury, Courbet, Wagner and Manet*, chap. in *Manet, Wagner, and the Musical Culture of Their Time* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 124.

<sup>545</sup> Linda Nochlin, *Realism: Style and Civilization* (London: Penguin Books, 1981), 35-6.

<sup>546</sup> William J. Duiker and Jackson J. Spielvogel, *The Americas and Society and Culture in the West*, chap. in *World History, Volume II: Since 1500* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 593.

<sup>547</sup> Heather Bailey, *What Is Truth? Renan and Russian Realism in the Visual Arts*, chap. in *Orthodoxy, Modernity, and Authenticity: The Reception of Ernest Renan's Life of Jesus in Russia* (New Castle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 118.

<sup>548</sup> Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 432.

The stress of realist artists such as Courbet on representing contemporary truthfulness by depicting the daily lives of ordinary people was the focus of Chang's creation after his return to China from Paris in 1937. Chang agreed with Courbet's belief in representing the artist's epoch truthfully; he claimed in an article published in 1934: "The modern artist should represent the emotions that arise from the human intelligence in the world, which is seen through the self or the eyes."<sup>549</sup> The self-affirmation of the artist's subjectivity in perceiving his time in this statement appears to be a rehash of Courbet's manifesto that gives realism its name: "depicting the manners, ideas, and appearances of my time as I see it."<sup>550</sup> The artist is supposed to take the pulse of the present through a synthetic, expressive, interior vision of the social dimension rather than merely mimetic reproduction of observed reality.<sup>551</sup> This quest for truthfulness through an authentic portrayal of the artist's epoch makes the present and the everyday as valuable and essential as significant events in history.<sup>552</sup>

Chang's socially charged oil paintings began after his return to China. He returned to China from Paris in late 1936 and was employed as the Professor of oil painting at the *National Beiping Art Special School* 國立北平藝術專科學校, which provided him with a new environment to create. This is the same school where Lin Fengmian 林風眠 (1890-1991) organized the *Peking Fine Art Exhibition* 北京藝術大會 in May

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<sup>549</sup> Chang Shuhong 常書鴻, "現代繪畫上的題材問題 [The Theme Problem on the Modern Painting]," 藝風 [Art Wind], v. 2, n. 8 (1934): 46-7.

<sup>550</sup> Amanda Claybaugh, *The Novel of Purpose and Anglo-American Realism*, chap. in *The Novel of Purpose: Literature and Social Reform in the Anglo-American World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 40.

<sup>551</sup> Suzanne Singletary, *The Artist's Studio: Courbet and Whistler*, chap. in James McNeill Whistler and France: A Dialogue in Paint, Poetry, and Music (New York: Routledge, 2017), 39.

<sup>552</sup> Josie Bland, *The Academy & The Avant-Garde*, chap. in *Investigating Modern Art*, 42.

1927, aiming at promoting art to the populace.<sup>553</sup> Chang and his students were captured sitting on the doorsteps of a traditional Chinese building in the photograph of an outing for outdoor sketching (**fig. 4.1**). The foreground incense burner suggests that the site is a temple. Despite the coexistence of both imperial buildings from old China and the newly-established European buildings in the embassy row, Chang did not represent these landmark architectural structures in Beiping; what interested him was the villagers and their living spaces.

*Young Girl in the Street* 街頭幼女 created in 1936 in Beiping exemplified Chang's early experimentation in representing local villagers and their living landscape in Beiping (**fig. 4.2**). This painting represents a sitting teenage girl with a basket beside her. Behind her is a village space in Winter: a man with a basin and a water bucket is walking back home, and a horse cart is passing by a row of houses. The girl moves forward in this composition through the photographic depiction of her in contrast to the sketchily-depicted background landscape with houses and figures. Her face and her hand on the basket were meticulously depicted to present the artist's technical virtuosity. Her glittering eyes, flushed cheeks, and the white highlights in her hair seemed to be telling the chill of the Winter; she echoes with the small leafless tree behind her, which was also striving to survive the Winter. Her pullover was painted quickly and roughly to convey the knitted texture and the outworn status, especially the vague sleeves and the ruffled belly part, which seemed insufficient to shield the winter wind. In 1936 in

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<sup>553</sup> Peng Fei 彭飛, 林風眠與北京藝術大會 [Lin Fengmian and the Peking Fine Art Exhibition], chap. in 林風眠誕辰 110 週年紀念國際學術研討會論文集 [Proceedings of the International Symposium Commemorating Lin Fengmian's 110th Anniversary], eds., Xu Jiang 許江 and Yang Hualin 楊樺林 (Hangzhou: China Academy of Art Press, 2010), 138.

Beiping, Chang's brushstrokes grasped the shadow of the imminent war and the average people suffering from economic difficulty. The portrait of this young girl is close to Chang's other painting—*Portrait of Shana* created in 1935 in Paris (**fig. 4.3**).<sup>554</sup> In this painting, his four-year-old daughter Chang Shana 常沙娜, born in 1931 in Lyon, was depicted in a similar style—her face was meticulously painted and her coat was sketchily rendered. Shana wore thin, light blue clothes which are covered with a grid of black lines. Likewise, the brown pullover of the unidentified young girl was also covered with a grid of white lines. This young girl in Beiping probably reminded the artist of his little daughter, who stayed in Paris with her mother Chen Zhixiu in 1936. Chang interweaved his separation from his family into a painting representing the average people's suffering at the moment of the impending war crisis.

Although Chang attempted to represent the scene of the teenage girl sitting in the street, the disparity between the teenage girl's space and the village space reveals it as a studio fabrication. It seems that a young girl posed for the artist in the studio and a landscape painting hanging on the wall served as the background just right. The village space in *Young Girl in the Street* looks very close to a photograph *Chinesen-Kinder in Bade* taken by two German officers in 1902 in Beijing (**fig. 4.4**).<sup>555</sup> The same kind of villages being laggard in the process of modernization should be very common in and around Beiping in the 1930s, which became a legal ground to concern rural areas and the villagers there from a realist perspective. Nevertheless, this image, which reveals

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<sup>554</sup> Eric Lefebvre, ed., *Artistes Chinois à Paris* (Paris: Musée Cernuschi, 2011), 85.

<sup>555</sup> Dr. Luidwig Wang and Leutenant Freiherr von Meerscheidt-Hüllessem, eds., *In und um Peking: Während der Kriegswirren 1900-1901* (Berlin: Meisenbach Riffarth & Co., 1902), 32.

more of the artist's studio instead of an everyday street scene, does not achieve his goal of sublimating reality through the artist's eyes to achieve a social concern. Chang's interest in representing rural street subjects during his time in Beiping is also documented by a photograph (**fig. 4.5**). This photograph was taken in 1937 and captured Chang painting another street scene of rural space in his studio in Beiping. Why was Chang so obsessed with representing street subjects when he first returned to Beiping?

Chang's training in Paris certainly established his identification with French realist art, but focusing on reality and thus enlightening the public as a requirement of Chinese art criticism for artists in the 1930s appears even more critical. His selection of villagers as the painting theme is reminiscent of Lin Fengmian's paintings in the late 1920s. In 1926, Lin created the oil painting *Street of Beijing* 北京街頭 (another title *Folk* 民間; **fig. 4.6**).<sup>556</sup> This painting represents farmers and other average people in the street stall of Beijing, who bared their upper torsos and feet, waiting for their products to be sold out.<sup>557</sup> Chang selected to represent the same theme as Lin—the average people in the rural street fair when he worked at the *National Beiping Art Special School*, where Lin served as the director from 1925 to 1927 with the recommendation of Education Minister Cai Yuanpei. This was a deliberate response to Lin's promotion of “art for life's sake” in Beiping, which corresponded with Cai Yuanpei's theory of “aesthetic education.” Lin claimed in *Letter to the Art Circle of the Whole Nation* 致全國藝術界

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<sup>556</sup> 晨報星期畫報 [The Morning Post Sunday Picture Section], May 22, 1927.

<sup>557</sup> Lang Shaojun 郎紹君, 林風眠早期的繪畫 [Early Paintings by Lin Fengmian], chap. in 重建美術學: 中國藝術研究院美術研究所 2002 年度論文精粹 [Reconstruction of Art History: 2002 Annual Selection of Essays in Chinese National Academy of Arts, Fine Art Research Institute], ed. Long Rui 龍瑞 (Chang Chun: Jilin Fine Art Press, 2002), 135.

書 that the national crisis of China lies in the absence of both religion and art—“China had neither religion nor art to replace the role of religion in maintaining the emotional balance (of citizens).”<sup>558</sup> This is an exact reassertion of Cai Yuanpei’s notion of replacing religion with aesthetic education, who believed that the “exposure to the beauty and solemnity of the fine arts” was powerful enough to cultivate a high-quality populace and to improve the moral character of the Chinese society.<sup>559</sup>

Chang had identified himself with this mission of Chinese intellectuals in cultivating the populace and improving society before he went to France. In 1922, the eighteen-year-old Chang published an article on “new youth 新青年” to respond to the New Culture Movement 新文化運動. He claimed that the new youth should do more practical things and less empty talk in order to make himself a prominent example for people from the old society.<sup>560</sup> The new youth should break the traditional hierarchy between intellectuals and laborers to promote the notion of “sacred, the laborers 勞工神聖.”<sup>561</sup> Chang’s representations of laborers in the street related to this notion of “sacredness of labor.” During the New Culture Movement, the idea of the sacredness of laborers was spread and laborers were encouraged to unite in the service of the nation regardless of the class difference.<sup>562</sup> The key leader of this movement, Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879-1942), even claimed to turn the Confucian hierarchy of people working

<sup>558</sup> Lin Fengmian 林風眠, “致全國藝術界書 [Letter to Nationwide Art World],” 貢獻 [Contribution], n. 5 (1928): 12.

<sup>559</sup> Walter B. Davis, *Art, Aesthetics, and Religion in Modern China*, chap. in *Modern Chinese Religion II (1850-2015)*, ed. Stephen F. Teiser (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 197.

<sup>560</sup> Chang Shuhong 常書鴻 (1904-1994), “我對於新青年的忠告 [My Advice to New Youth],” 浙江公立工業專門學校學生自治會刊 [Journal of Student Council in Zhejiang Public Industrial Special School], n. 1 (1922): 14-5.

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>562</sup> S. A. Smith, *Like Cattle and Horses: Nationalism and Labor in Shanghai, 1895-1927* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), 124.



with brains over manual laborers upside down.<sup>563</sup> He asserted that: “we are anxiously expecting those who are not engaged in physical labor to admit their useless inferiority, while those physical laborers realize their value and dignity.”<sup>564</sup> French paintings that celebrated the unvarnished nature and dignity of laborers, such as *Stone Breakers* by Courbet in 1849 and *The Gleaners* by Millet in 1857, set examples for French-trained Chinese artists of how to represent contemporary rural laborers.<sup>565</sup> Although Chang attempted to inform the viewer of physical laborers’ nobility as Courbet and Millet, he did not achieve this goal in his Beijing experimentations such as *Young Girl in the Street*. Nor did he address the question he once posed to his teacher in Paris—caught between Chinese and European artistic traditions, which path should a European-trained Chinese artist take? His goals in terms of the social utility of art and the avant-garde status of his painting were not realized until he reached Dunhuang.

#### *Inside a Kazakh Yurt*

The oil painting *Inside a Kazakh Yurt* by Chang in 1947 in Dunhuang 敦煌 epitomizes the social concerns of this follower of French Realism (fig. 4.7). This painting portrays a seemingly quotidian moment of a Kazakh family enjoying hot tea around the fire. When Chang created this painting in 1947 and modified it in 1954, he served as the Dunhuang Academy’s director. His physical visit to the Kazakh habitation—Aksay 阿克塞 in Winter 1947 and his drawings of Kazakh herders

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<sup>563</sup> Yinghong Cheng, *Creating the New Man: From Enlightenment Ideals to Socialist Realities* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009), 116.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>565</sup> Linda Nochlin, *Il faut être de son temps: Realism and the Demand for Contemporaneity*, chap. in *Realism* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1971), 112-13.

underlay this huge painting *Inside a Kazakh Yurt*.<sup>566</sup> His sketch of a Kazakh family inside a yurt was likely to be the prototype of his finished oil painting (**fig. 4.8**). This drawing shows a Kazakh family warming up around the fire; a teakettle is set on top of the fire to provide warm water. Two women facing the audience stand out due to their white headscarves. An elderly bearded male and a teenage boy sat on their right and left. This pictorial representation is also consistent with Kazakh custom: to the right of the male host usually sits the eldership and the honored guests; to his left is the hostess responsible for pouring tea, and further to the left are the juniors.<sup>567</sup> A photograph taken between 1911-1913 by the Russian photographer Sergei Ivanovich Borisov (1859-1935) also corroborates the Kazakh family order centered on the male host (**fig. 4.9**). During his photographic expedition to the Altai, Borisov captured a traditional Kazakh wedding; a bride wearing a rich wedding dress and a very high headdress sits between women in white headscarves.<sup>568</sup> In this photograph, the male host with the milk tea ladle sits at the center. The older men to his right hold milk teas, but the women to his left do not have milk tea. The domestic hierarchy is displayed through the milk teas: the elder and honorable males received the milk tea first.<sup>569</sup>

Chang was aware of this hierarchical order in the Kazakh family, yet he did not select to pictorially represent the male host's central position even in this drawing.

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<sup>566</sup> Chang Shana 常沙娜, “塵封不住的回憶：重讀父親的畫作 [Unsealed Memories: Rereading My Father's Paintings],” 美術 [Art Magazine], n. 12 (2004): 95.

<sup>567</sup> Pa Timan 帕提曼, ed., 哈薩克族民俗文化：暨哈薩克族研究資料索引, 1879-2005 [Kazakh Folk Culture: Index of Kazakh Research Materials, 1879-2005] (Beijing: The Ethnic Publishing House, 2005), 27.

<sup>568</sup> Irina Oktyabrskaya, “The Open Letters of Sergei Borisov: From the History of Photography in the Altai,” *Archaeology, Ethnology & Anthropology of Eurasia*, v. 38, n. 4 (2010): 121.

<sup>569</sup> *Ibid.*

Instead, he placed the female hostess in the center of the picture in the final oil painting. The feminine characteristics of the women hostess are conveyed through the long hair dispersed over her forehead and her red bead necklace. Chang combined the gesture of the woman drinking the milk tea and the face of the other woman to her right in his original drawing to create this central woman. The young man to her left is depicted on the basis of the junior in the drawing. Chang eliminated other family members to present a female-centered Kazakh family of three gathering around the fireplace to keep warm. Chang's transformation of an effectively male-centric family structure into a pictorially female-centric one involves a shift in representing the ethnic figures at the frontier. Women in ethnic costumes was the pictorial theme of most artists migrating to northwest China during the late 1930s and 1940s, including Chang's colleagues in Dunhuang. According to Wang Mingke 王明珂, modern China's stereotypical imagination of ethnic minorities in frontier regions transformed from fierce-faced, physically strong male representatives to attractive women in ethnic dress.<sup>570</sup>

Chang chose to describe a moment when ordinary people's daily lives were framed by chance, which is a tribute to Courbet's realism, such as the painting *After Dinner at Ornans* (fig. 4.10). As with Courbet, Chang deliberately suspended the movements of figures at a random moment and obscured their facial features with the roughness of his paint surface to prohibit a narrative reading of the image.<sup>571</sup> The depicted picture rests

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<sup>570</sup> Wang Mingke 王明珂, “後現代的民族文物展示: 史語所文物陳列館西南少數民族文物展示說明 [Exhibition of Post-Modern Ethnic Relics: Annotation for the Exhibition of the Relics of the Ethnic Minorities in the Southwest in the Display Room of Academia Sinica],” 古今論衡 [Discourse on the Ancient and the Present], n. 3 (1999): 61.

<sup>571</sup> Emilie Sitzia, *Realism: Literature, Art and Society*, chap. in *Art in Literature, Literature in Art in 19th Century France* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 116.

resolutely on a moment of a casual glance at daily life, offering the viewer a halted and fragmented instant of ordinary life.<sup>572</sup> Three main characters in the foreground are immersed in their silent inner contemplation, not noticing the presence of the viewer or the painter. The sense of actuality is therefore enhanced as the viewer is accommodated in this contemplative, intimate moment. Behind this seemingly tranquil daily life is the heavy pain of the Kazakhs being forced into exile. This contrast is the key for Chang to convey the dignity and force of the subjects.

Chang's configuration closely relates to the context of Kazakh's exodus from Xinjiang to Gansu. In the 1930s, the Japanese-trained Chinese warlord Sheng Shicai 盛世才 (1897-1970) ruled Xinjiang with the support of the Soviet troops. Sheng adopted the "Soviet-style purges of dissidents as Stalin was removing Central Asian pan-Turkish and nationalists as enemies of the people."<sup>573</sup> This warlord carried out a reign of terror among the Kazakh population; the military garrison began to promote the land reclamation work in northern Xinjiang.<sup>574</sup> Around three thousand Kazakh families (approximately twenty thousand people) were forced to flee from Xinjiang to Gansu between 1936 and 1939; part of them arrived in South of Jiuquan 酒泉 in Gansu and the others went to Qinghai 青海.<sup>575</sup> In the second year of Chang's arrival in Dunhuang 敦煌, the Republican government had stationed seven Kazakh tribes of

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<sup>572</sup> Ibid.

<sup>573</sup> David Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia, and Mongolia, Volume II: Inner Eurasia from the Mongol Empire to Today, 1260-2000* (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 431.

<sup>574</sup> Debasish Chaudhuri, *China's Policy in Xinjiang, 1948-78*, chap. in *Xinjiang—China's Northwest Frontier*, ed. K. Warikoo (New York: Routledge, 2016), 59.

<sup>575</sup> Compilation Team 編寫組, ed., *新疆哈薩克族遷徙史* [The Migration History of Kazakhs in Xinjiang] (Urumqi: Xinjiang University Press, 1993), 79.

more than 9,900 people in the area of Dunhuang Nanshan Mountain 敦煌南山.<sup>576</sup> Dunhuang Nanshan Mountain refers to the area ranging from the Three Perils Mountain 三危山, the Singing Sand Mountain 鳴沙山 to the west Qilian Mountains 祁連山 and the Altun Mountains 阿爾金山.<sup>577</sup> The landscape outside the yurt in the painting suggests the location of the new habitat of this Kazakh family. The open door behind the scene of the family drinking milk tea around a fireplace directs the viewer's attention to the landscape outside the yurt. In this outdoor view, pedestrians leading camels walk past two yurts, indicating the herding life of Kazakh. More prominently, the distant mountain range resembling the Singing Sand Mountain, which establishes a link between this new Kazakh settlement and Mogao Caves located on the eastern cliffs of the Singing Sand Mountain (**fig. 4.11**). Chang's residence in Dunhuang facilitated his observation and representation on these recently-relocated Kazakhs. His suffering from the warring migration also corresponded with the same displacement of Kazakhs who were forced to flee Gansu because of Sheng Shicai's brutal rule. Chang started his exodus from Beijing to Yunnan 雲南 in 1937, then to Chongqing 重慶 and finally arrived at Dunhuang in 1943. The desire for peace and stability buried deep in his mind during the war probably prompted him to revise this painting in 1954 as a celebration of the final arrival of tranquility, especially for Kazakhs. The establishment of the Aksay Kazakh Autonomous County 阿克塞哈薩克族自治縣 in 1954 demonstrates the artist a glimpse of a bright future for Kazakhs to end the strife and live in peace. The trauma

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<sup>576</sup> Compilation Team, ed., *The Migration History of Kazakhs in Xinjiang*, 91.

<sup>577</sup> Li Maojin 李茂錦, 美麗的敦煌南山 [The Beautiful Dunhuang Nanshan Mountain], chap. in 鐵血敦煌 [Iron Blood Dunhuang] (Beijing: Modern Press, 2017), 118.

of war and the anticipation of peace are intertwined in this painting, giving monumental meaning to an ordinary moment of a Kazakh family drinking tea and warming themselves in a yurt.

The pictorial vocabulary Chang utilized in this painting served to localize his creation. The colors and brushstrokes of *Inside a Kazakh Yurt* align it with his copy of *A corner of Northern Wei Cave 251 of Dunhuang* in 1943 (**fig. 4.12**). Chang adopted the objective style 客觀臨摹 to copy part of the *Buddha Preaching the Law* 說法圖 of the cave 251 (**fig. 4.13**).<sup>578</sup> His text on painting procedures in the Northern Wei period shows his analysis of the murals in the process of copying:

The production procedure of Northern Wei murals was to draw the rough contour with vermilion at first, then add the outline of the fine line after applying the white powder. Nevertheless, most white walls and fine lines on the outer edges of surviving murals of Six Dynasties 六朝 (222-589) have peeled away; the exposed vermilion has turned grey black, presenting an unusually stern and robust expression.<sup>579</sup>

He continued to describe the colors of the Northern Wei murals in the same article: “In terms of colors, the only surviving ones are grey (a discoloration of vermilion after oxidation), black, red, white, cyan and blue.”<sup>580</sup> These are the dominant colors in his oil painting *Inside a Kazakh Yurt*. He most likely designed the color scheme for this painting following the colors he used while copying the murals of Cave 251. Besides, Chang recorded the experience of making pigments with the local Dunhuang soil for copying murals: “(we) made red pigment by rinsing red clay with water and adding

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<sup>578</sup> On different types of copying, refers to Sarah E. Fraser, *Buddhist Archaeology in Republican China: A New Relationship to the Past*, chap. in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, n. 167 (2011): 185.

<sup>579</sup> Chang Shuhong 常書鴻, “敦煌藝術與今後中國文化建設 [Dunhuang Art and the Future of Chinese Culture],” *新思潮 [New Thoughts]*, v. 1, n. 2 (1946): 37.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.*

glue, yellow clay for making yellow pigment, and finding substitutes for others as well.”<sup>581</sup> This imitation of the coloring for Cave 251 and the practice of making pigments from Dunhuang soil contributed to his experimentation in rooting his work in the local Dunhuang area.

Chang also transferred the pictorial composition and the iconographic meaning of *Buddha Preaching the Law* at Cave 251 into *Inside a Kazakh Yurt*, thereby granting his painting a dimension of secular redemption. A prominent feature of Chang’s copy of Cave 251 lies in its rather odd composition: he only copied the upper half of the Buddha and two attending bodhisattvas, seemingly to avoid the broken area in the lower right corner of the original. This composition also shows his attention to the facial characteristics of the Buddha and two attendants, rather than to the integrity of the pictorial structure. More importantly, he transferred this regular Buddhist composition of the central Buddha attended by a bodhisattva on each side into his secular representation of *Inside a Kazakh Yurt*. In *Inside a Kazakh Yurt*, the central woman faces the audience, and two men on each side seem to play the role of her attendants in the image, although not in actual life. This Kazakh family’s reserved, calm facial expressions seem to come directly from the image he copied. This conversion of a classic religious composition into a secular one seems to present Chang’s observation on the human suffering during the war—the displacement of people including the Kazakhs and the intellectuals like himself. This pain of uprooting from home evokes Buddha’s teachings implicit in his copy *Buddha Preaching the Law* at Cave 251.

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<sup>581</sup> Chang Shuhong 常書鴻, 九十春秋: 敦煌五十年 [Ninety Years: Fifty Years at Dunhuang] (Lanzhou: Gansu Wenhua press, 1999), 64.

Buddha taught Four Noble truths during his first sermon: “the world is full of suffering, suffering is caused by human desire, renouncing desire will lead to salvation, and salvation can be achieved through the eightfold path.”<sup>582</sup> Chang pins the salvation promised by Buddha on a quotidian moment of a displaced yet tranquil Kazakh family of three drinking milk tea calmly.<sup>583</sup>

Paintings representing Kazakhs by other painters working together with Chang at Dunhuang provide a powerful contrast for *Inside a Kazakh Yurt* by Chang, such as those by Guan Shanyue 關山月 (1912-2000) and Dong Xiwen 董希文 (1914-1973). According to Chang, he received the couple Guan Shangyue and the couple Zhao Wangyun 趙望雲 (1906-1977) at Dunhuang in Winter 1943.<sup>584</sup> His conversations with these friends focused on how to use the Dunhuang mural tradition to invent modern Chinese painting. He recalled, “when I met my two old painting friends Shanyue and Wangyun beyond the Great Wall, we focused on talking about how to learn from the achievements of Dunhuang art at all stages of its evolution from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries and on playing a role in bringing forth the new art for modern China.”<sup>585</sup> Their paintings demonstrate their attempts to develop modern

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<sup>582</sup> Florin Curta and Andrew Holt, eds., *Great Events in Religion: An Encyclopedia of Pivotal Events in Religious History* (Denver: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2017), 178. The Eightfold path consists of the right views, right intentions, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Kenneth Kuan Sheng Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 6.

<sup>583</sup> In a lecture on Zhang Daqian's Buddhist paintings, Prof. Fraser posed the question of why there were so many Buddhist paintings in China in the 1940s. Prof. Fraser's answer was that in the context of war, people might seek a comfort from Buddhist paintings. This idea inspired me to think about what Buddhist teachings meant to Chang Shuhong.

<sup>584</sup> Chang Shuhong 常書鴻, 敦煌壁畫與野獸派繪畫: 關山月敦煌壁畫臨摹工作贊 [Dunhuang Murals and Fauvist Painting: Guan Shanyue's Copy of Dunhuang Murals], chap. in 常書鴻文集 [Collection of Articles by Chang Shuhong], ed. Dunhuang Academy 敦煌研究院 (Lanzhou: Gansu Minzu Press, 2003), 234.

<sup>585</sup> Chang Shuhong, “Dunhuang Murals and Fauvist Painting,” 235.



Chinese painting by borrowing from the Dunhuang murals. In terms of the composition by Guan, his painting *Kazakh Women* 哈薩克婦女 created in 1943, seems to record three Kazakh women drinking and talking around the fire, while their untouched, focused eyes shape a special moment that required concentration and breathlessness (**fig. 4.14**). In effect, three women's sitting postures, relative positions, and silent and contemplative expressions are closely aligned with his copy of *Dunhuang Cave 11, Late Tang Dynasty* 第十一窟, 晚唐 (**fig. 4.15**).<sup>586</sup> His copy roughly distills the outlines of the figures to present three women playing music, entirely omitting the original religious ambiance of the picture. Guan draws on the line, composition, and spirit of music in the Dunhuang murals and grafts them onto local Dunhuang figures, thus completing a modern innovation of the Dunhuang tradition. In addition, the traditional Chinese painting medium he uses grants this innovation a sense of continuity.

In contrast to Guan's focus on the continuation of traditional Chinese painting, Dong Xiwen explored the possibility of incorporating techniques from Dunhuang murals into oil paintings. As he created the oil painting *Kazakh Shepherdess* 哈薩克牧羊女 in 1948, he worked at the Dunhuang Academy directed by Chang (**fig. 4.16**). Dong participated in painting activities organized by Chang in their spare time, such as drawing during the night at the Middle Temple 中寺 and sketching in the Aksay region in Winter.<sup>587</sup> Like *Inside a Kazakh Yurt* by Chang, Guan created the *Kazakh*

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<sup>586</sup> Wang Jia 王嘉 claimed that the woman at the lower right corner in the 1943 painting *Kazakh Women* resembles Guan's Dunhuang copy of No. 82. Wang Jia 王嘉, 模仿與創作的雙重文本: 關山月臨摹敦煌壁畫新讀 [The Double Text of Imitation and Creation: A New Interpretation on Guan Shan Yue's Copy of Dunhuang Murals], chap. in 時代經典: 關山月與 20 世紀中國美術研究文集 [Icon of Era: Study on Guan Shanyue and Chinese Art in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century], ed. Guan Shanyue Museum 關山月美術館 (Nanning: Guangxi Fine Art Press, 2009), 154.

<sup>587</sup> Chang Shana 常沙娜, 黃沙與藍天: 常沙娜人生回憶 [Yellow Sand and Blue Sky: Memories of

*Shepherdess* with inspiration from his physical visit to the Aksay Kazakh habitation.<sup>588</sup> Dong draws on the techniques of the Northern Zhou 北周 (557-581) murals at Dunhuang, using flowing lines and colors to present a decorative pictorial effect. In particular, the undulating triangular hill at the top of the painting seems to be a direct imitation of the triangular shape of the hill in the *Jātaka of Prince Mahasattva* 薩埵太子捨身飼虎圖本生 of Cave 428 at Dunhuang (fig. 4.17).<sup>589</sup> This mural representation depicts Prince Mahasattva sacrificing his own body to feed starving tigers in the wilderness of mountains and forests in the composition of three “S” shaped registers.<sup>590</sup> The zigzag presentation leads the viewer’s eye to move horizontally across the whole mural. Dong followed this zigzag approach to guide the viewer’s entry into the depth of the painting. The Kazakh shepherdess in the left foreground is the focus of this painting, occupying the most significant space in the frame. Her white headscarf fluttering to the right leads the viewer to two women milking goats among a goat flock on the right and transitions to the scene of milking a camel in the middle ground. The zigzag continues deeper into the yurts and their parallel scene of horseback riding and finally to the rolling hills bordering the blue sky. Dong borrowed the style of the mural in Dunhuang Cave 428 but did not attempt to establish a thematic connection to this tradition. As a previous incarnation of Sakyamuni Buddha, the self-sacrifice of Prince Mahasattva demonstrates the purely-motivated generosity of the holy personage in

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Chang Shana's Life] (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2013), 60.

<sup>588</sup> Qin Chuan 秦川 and An Qiu 安秋, 敦煌畫派 [Dunhuang School of Painting] (Lanzhou: Gansu Education Press, 2018), 332.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid.

<sup>590</sup> Alexander P. Bell, *Didactic Narration: Jataka Iconography in Dunhuang with a Catalogue of Jataka Representations in China* (Münster: Lit, 2000), 87.

dedicating himself to the salvation of all beings at the cost of extreme personal suffering.<sup>591</sup> Dong did not address the issue of religious salvation at all, instead presented a pastoral landscape untouched by war. Herds of livestock, including goats, camels, and horses, support the lives of Kazakhs. The lamb in the Kazakh shepherdess's arms and the milking of goats and camels symbolize the everlasting life of this land. Guan and Dong borrowed Dunhuang mural techniques to create modernism grounded in Chinese tradition while choosing not to respond to the religious connotations of these murals. They pictorially presented the land of Dunhuang as a paradise free from war through the depiction of self-contained Kazakh women.

In his painting *Inside a Kazakh Yurt*, Chang achieved his goal of representing the social truthfulness of his epoch and established the avant-garde status of his creation as independent of European modernism and responsive to the tradition of Chinese painting. The artist designed a stark contrast between the inside and outside the yurt: inside the yurt, an ordinary moment of a Kazakh family gathering around the fire to warm up and drink tea is framed to convey peaceful tranquility; outside the yurt, the rolling Singing Sand Mountain suggests the painful exile of the Kazakhs who were forced to move from Xinjiang to Dunhuang due to the persecution of the warlords. This marked contrast effectively conveys the struggles, strengths, and dignity of ordinary subjects, giving a painting portraying the present an epic significance close to that of a history painting. The iconographic transfer of the mural *Buddha Preaching the Law* at Dunhuang cave 251 into the figures of *Inside a Kazakh Yurt* intensified this contrast

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<sup>591</sup> Vanessa R. Sasson, *Little Buddhas: Children and Childhoods in Buddhist Texts and Traditions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 160.

through the corresponding relation between Buddha's teachings and Kazakhs' sufferings. This mural's pictorial language and coloring worked together with Chang's self-made pigments from Dunhuang clay to localize Chang's painting in the Dunhuang area, situating his creation as a continuation of Dunhuang art tradition.

### **Primitivism and the trouble with modernism**

The Dunhuang mural tradition proffered Chang the confidence to compete with European modernism. The dynamic colors, bold brushstrokes, and the semi-abstract human forms in *Inside a Kazakh Yurt* departed from Chang's previous paintings emphasizing optical naturalism, demonstrating an affinity to the avant-garde modernist paintings. Chang was among Chinese oil painters traveling to west China in the 1940s, where the grand tradition of Chinese painting resides; they began to modify the earlier prominent European naturalism.<sup>592</sup> How did this shift occur? Why did Chang and his contemporaries focus on the outdated naturalism of Europe prior to their exposure to Dunhuang art but turn to join in modernist explorations afterward?

The impetus for this shift was an attempt to establish modern Chinese art as an avant-garde on an equal footing with its European counterpart, changing the possible discourse of subordination. In the early twentieth century, when most Chinese oil painters were trained in Europe, artists' achievements were usually classified in collective avant-garde groups such as Fauvism, Cubism, Surrealism, or Abstract

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<sup>592</sup> Fan Di'an 範迪安, "走向西部: 從 40 年代的油畫看中國美術內在的現代性 [Going West: The Inner Modernity of Chinese Art from the 1940s Oil Paintings]," 中國油畫五百年 [500 Years of Chinese Oil Painting], eds. Zhao Li 趙力 and Yu Ding 余丁 (Changsha: Hunan Fine Art Press, 2014), v. 2: 1083.

Expressionism, to which art historical accounts of modernism refer.<sup>593</sup> If Chinese artists accepted the conception of Europe as the original center of modernism that impelled their migration to Paris, their creations would be “looked upon as derivative versions of an original model,” and the artists would perpetually fall into “a temporal moment of catching up.”<sup>594</sup> Chinese artists chose to confront this “belatedness” via the cross-time comparison between Chinese tradition and European modernism. Chang compared the Dunhuang murals of the Northern Wei 北魏 (386-534) with the painting by the French religious artist Georges Rouault (1871-1958); he claimed:

The character of the Northern Wei people was a mixture of ruggedness and delicacy and this character is well displayed in the Dunhuang paintings of the Northern Wei period. This character is demonstrated in the works, some of which are bold in technique, while others are exquisitely drawn. The initial brushstrokes are bold, but the finished work is surprisingly slender. Such works cannot be found in the Tang dynasty (618-907) 唐代 wall paintings. Therefore, the early wall paintings are in the painting style of Rouault.<sup>595</sup>

This cross-generational comparison between Chinese and European cultures based on similarities in pictorial style cancels out the temporal leadership of European modernism. Such a narrative renders Chang’s painting not necessarily an imitation of European modernists such as Rouault but more importantly an evolution of Chinese tradition. Although Chang caught on the damage of the Northern Wei murals, such as discoloration and flaking in the process of research and copy, he still admired its accompanying roughness and exuberance, which he claimed could only be matched by

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<sup>593</sup> Monica Juneja, *Alternative, Peripheral or Cosmopolitan? Modernism as a Global Process*, chap. in *Global Art History: Transkulturelle Verortungen von Kunst and Kunstwissenschaft*, eds. Julia Allerstorfer and Monika Leisch-Kiesl (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2017), 93.

<sup>594</sup> Monica Juneja, *Alternative, Peripheral or Cosmopolitan?*, chap. in *Global Art History*, 81; 89

<sup>595</sup> Gao Yi 高屹 and Zhao Tongdao 張同道, eds., 敦煌的光彩: 池田大作與常書鴻對談, 書信錄 [The Brilliance of Dunhuang: Conversations and Letters between Daisaku Ikeda and Chang Shuhong] (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1991), 102.

“the French Fauvist painter Rouault’s paintings.”<sup>596</sup> Dunhuang murals provided an indigenous source for Chang’s modernist experiments, which fueled his ambition to compete with and surpass European modernism. Paintings by Rouault as his denominator also changed from a strong competitor to the second best. He wrote with great pride, “my copies of the Northern Wei murals with clay pigments are so grand in momentum and bold in line that works by the French Fauvist painter Rouault can never prevail.”<sup>597</sup> Implicit behind the name of Dunhuang murals is Chang’s affirmation of his locally-rooted works, such as *Inside a Kazakh Yurt*. An extraordinary quality of his paintings emerges from his attempts to perpetuate Dunhuang art in terms of techniques and spiritual connotations.

Despite Chang’s insistence on referring to Rouault as a Fauvist, the darker and more tragic vision of Rouault conflicts with the hedonistic ethos of Fauvism.<sup>598</sup> Indeed, Rouault had an intimate connection with Fauvism: he exhibited at the Salon d’Automne in 1905, which was labeled *fauvist*; he and Henri Matisse (1869-1954) were fellow students of Gustave Moreau (1826-1898), and they spoke highly of each other’s work in the 1905 exhibition.<sup>599</sup> Nevertheless, his extreme sensitivity to human suffering was incompatible with Matisse’s celebration of secular gaiety, such as in the painting *Joy of Life*.<sup>600</sup> Rouault distinguished himself as a religious artist in the twentieth century when most painters avoided formal religion; he incorporated a devout Catholicism into

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<sup>596</sup> Chang Shuhong, “Dunhuang Art and the Future of Chinese Culture,” 37.

<sup>597</sup> Chang Shuhong, *Ninety Years: Fifty Years at Dunhuang*, 64.

<sup>598</sup> Claude Cernuschi, *Rouault and Expressionism*, chap. in *Mystic Masque: Semblance and Reality in Georges Rouault, 1871-1958*, ed. Stephen Schloesser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 216.

<sup>599</sup> Claude Cernuschi, “Georges Rouault and the Rhetoric of Expressionism,” *Religion and the Arts*, n. 12 (2008): 481.

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.*

everything he created.<sup>601</sup> His paintings represent human misery: prostitutes are not romantic or erotic but figure being abused by life; clowns whose masks and makeup cannot hide their wrinkles and sadness; judges and the old King who were burdened by the weight of their positions.<sup>602</sup> As a devout Catholic, he believed that “behind the eyes of the most hostile, or impure being dwells Jesus.”<sup>603</sup> The religious attributes of Rouault’s work are not from any overt theological symbols, but from his integration of religious moralism and his uncompromising protest against human suffering.<sup>604</sup> His 1939 painting *The Wounded Clown* exemplifies the intertexture of human suffering and the salvation of Christ (**fig. 4.18**). Rouault endowed the tragic clown with a quasi-sacred status by referring to the stained glass to portray the figure hieratically.<sup>605</sup> He invoked the medieval color scheme found in European stained glass— “red for divinity, blue for humanity.” The clown in red and the two men in blue supporting the clown evoke a parallel between the wounded clown and Christ.<sup>606</sup> The red cloak worn by Christ comes not from scripture but Catholic ritual practice, “signifying blood, suffering, and sacrifice.”<sup>607</sup> The parallel between the Buddha attended by two Bodhisattvas and a Kazakh family of three that Chang established by borrowing coloring, brushstrokes, and the iconographic schema of the Buddhist mural echoes Rouault’s integration of a wounded clown and the Christ. Suffering humans can expect to acquire salvation

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<sup>601</sup> William Rubin and Matthew Armstrong, *The William S. Paley Collection: A Taste for Modernism* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1992), 120.

<sup>602</sup> Richard Harries, *The Image of Christ in Modern Art* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 23-4.

<sup>603</sup> Richard Harries, *The Image of Christ in Modern Art*, 23.

<sup>604</sup> William Rubin and Matthew Armstrong, *The William S. Paley Collection*, 118.

<sup>605</sup> Stephen Schlosser, *1929-1939: Mystic Masque, Hieratic Harmony*, chap. in *Mystic Masque: Semblance and Reality in Georges Rouault, 1871-1958*, ed. Stephen Schloesser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 288.

<sup>606</sup> Stephen Schlosser, *1929-1939: Mystic Masque, Hieratic Harmony*, chap. in *Mystic Masque*, 288; 302.

<sup>607</sup> Stephen Schlosser, *1929-1939: Mystic Masque, Hieratic Harmony*, 297.

through Christ in Rouault's painting and through Buddha in Chang's composition.

More importantly, Rouault was a true modern "primitive;" his primitivism characterized the expressionistic rework of traditional imagery from medieval art to Rembrandt.<sup>608</sup> "Primitivism" was first used in France in the nineteenth century when primitivist painters appreciated pre-Renaissance European styles for their "simplicity," "sincerity," vigor, and expressive power.<sup>609</sup> These artists were attentively committed to moving away from the Greco-Roman line of European realism. They valued the simple, naïve, and even rude and raw styles; the connotations of "primitive" soon expanded to include "not only the Romanesque and Byzantine but a host of non-Western arts ranging from the Peruvian to the Javanese."<sup>610</sup> To be sure, the meaning and the scope of "primitive art" gradually changed to equate with tribal objects in the twentieth century with modernist artists' discovery of African and Oceanic masks and figure sculptures between 1906 and 1907.<sup>611</sup> Nevertheless, Rouault insisted on and continued the nineteenth-century definition of "primitivism;" he returned to medieval stained-glass paintings for inspiration. His early experience of working as an apprentice to stained-glass makers from 1885 to 1890 shaped his distinctive "bright colors framed within heavy black outlines."<sup>612</sup> Furthermore, the library and portfolios of his teacher Gustave Moreau (1826-1898) were stuffed with books, photographs, and sketches of many

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<sup>608</sup> William Rubin and Matthew Armstrong, 120.

<sup>609</sup> William Rubin, *Modernist Primitivism: An Introduction*, chap. in *The Anthropology of Art: A Reader*, eds., Howard Morphy and Morgan Perkins (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 130.

<sup>610</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>611</sup> William Rubin, *Modernist Primitivism: An Introduction*, 131.

<sup>612</sup> Stephen Schloesser, *Georges Rouault: Masked Redemption*, chap. in *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 214.



cultures ranging from medieval Europe to Asian and Middle Eastern cultures.<sup>613</sup> He learned from his teacher, whom he admired so much about “braiding old with new, ancient with modern.”<sup>614</sup> The recurring theme in Rouault’s work, “La Sainte Face (Holy Face),” marked his typical “modernist” move—the discovery of “primitivism,” as the painting created in 1933 that appropriated Byzantine-medieval iconography to represent the frontal portrait of Christ (**fig. 4.19**).<sup>615</sup> In this regard, Chang’s weaving of techniques from Dunhuang murals of the Northern Wei period into his paintings is an intentional response to Rouault’s discovery of medieval primitivism. Chang contrasted his reinvention of Dunhuang Buddhist murals from around the fourth century with Rouault’s modern paintings inspired by medieval European Christian paintings. This contrast seems to present a parallel between their respective traditions and modern creations but displays a competition between different cultures.

Chang’s awareness of cultural competition from the 1940s finally evolved into his conviction that Rouault imitated Dunhuang. In an article published in 1984, he elaborated on the nexus between Rouault and Dunhuang:

For a long time, I viewed Dunhuang paintings of the early Northern Wei period in conjunction with the paintings by the French Fauvist Rouault. Indeed (as evidenced by the painting, see the accompanying illustrations) I suspected that the brushwork and composition of the painting *Christ Mocked by Soldiers* by Rouault in 1932 bore a strong resemblance to the *King Bhilanjili Jataka* in Dunhuang cave 275 by the Northern Liang 北涼 (397-439) people. In fact, there is a 1500-year difference between these two paintings. I reckoned that the Dunhuang mural painting of Northern Liang—*King Bhilanjili Jataka* was

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<sup>613</sup> Virginia Reinburg, *Erasing Time and Place: Rouault and “Medieval Art,”* chap. in *Mystic Masque: Semblance and Reality in Georges Rouault, 1871-1958*, ed. Stephen Schloesser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 65.

<sup>614</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>615</sup> Stephen Schloesser, *1902-1920: The Hard Metier of Unmasking*, chap. in *Mystic Masque: Semblance and Reality in Georges Rouault, 1871-1958*, ed. Stephen Schloesser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 87.

copied into *Christ Mocked by Soldiers* in 1932. This is also a testament to the power of Dunhuang murals. This query had existed in my mind for more than 30 years. During my recent trip to Japan and Western Europe, I confirmed that *Christ Mocked by Soldiers* was indeed impacted by *King Bhilanjili Jataka* of the Dunhuang Cave 275 created in the Northern Liang (apparently, it was brought to France through the publication of *The Cave-temples of Tun-Huang* in 1925 by Pelliot).<sup>616</sup> This illustrates the fact that the powerful momentum of Northern-Liang Dunhuang murals, whose achievements were more vigorous than the Gothic art in West Europe, was transmitted to modernist paintings of Paris in the 1930s.<sup>617</sup>

Chang outlined an informative route of cultural circulation in which the iconography of Dunhuang cave 275 spread from China to France via Paul Pelliot (1878-1945) and was appropriated by the French modernist painter Rouault. Pelliot numbered Dunhuang cave 275 into 118m, yet he thought there was nothing of value in this cave.<sup>618</sup> Consequently, no photographs of cave 275 were published in his six-volume catalog *The Cave-temples of Tun-Huang*.<sup>619</sup> No direct evidence supporting Rouault's imitation of Dunhuang murals renders Chang's conviction of the link between the two more intriguing. In addition to the similarities in brushwork and composition mentioned by Chang, the two paintings share the theme of suffering and incarnation. *King Bhilanjili Jataka* of cave 275 shows the moment of Raudraksha raising the hammer to drive the thousand iron nails into King Bhilanjili's body, which was the condition for the King to pursue knowledge and wisdom (**fig. 4.20**).<sup>620</sup> The stoic expression and position of the

<sup>616</sup> Paul Pelliot (1878-1945) published *Les Grottes de Touen-houang* between 1920 and 1924.

<sup>617</sup> Chang Shuhong, "Dunhuang Murals and Fauvist Painting: Guan Shanyue's Copy of Dunhuang Murals," 235.

<sup>618</sup> Cai Weitang 蔡偉堂, "重訂莫高窟各家編號對照表說明: 兼談莫高窟各家編號及其對照表 [Description On the Table of Serial Numbers of Mogao Caves: A discussion of Cross-References of Mogao Caves and the Comparison Table]," 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research], n. 6 (2005): 15. Paul Pelliot, 伯希和敦煌石窟筆記 [Grottes de Touen-Houang Carnet de Notes de Paul Pelliot], trans. Geng Sheng 耿昇 (Lanzhou: Gansu People's Press, 2007), 218.

<sup>619</sup> Paul Pelliot, *Les Grottes de Touen-Houang* (Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1920-1924).

<sup>620</sup> Hu Tongqing 衛衛慶 and Wang Yizhi 王義芝, 第 275 窟本生故事畫中的外道人物及其歷史背景 [Heretics and the Historical Background of the Jataka Story in Cave 275], chap. in 敦煌佛影: 敦

King reveal his steadfast conviction and desire of the King in searching for wisdom.<sup>621</sup> Similarly, *Christ Mocked by Soldiers* by Rouault represents Christ in a self-possessed posture to bear the pain and torment inflicted by the cruel soldiers (**fig. 4.21**).<sup>622</sup> Chang utilized his discovery of the pictorial and religious resonances between *King Bhilanjili Jataka* of cave 275 and *Christ Mocked by Soldiers* by Rouault to deduce a Chinese origin of European modernism. This Chinese source of European modernism, albeit implausible, demonstrates to his Chinese readers the legitimacy of his application of European-trained oil painting techniques to reinvent the Dunhuang art tradition. Therefore, Chinese modern art is defined as independent of European modernism rather than inferior to it.

Chang was also alert to the crisis of his contrast—the risk of trapping Dunhuang art in the interpretive framework of primitive art. In an article published in 1952, he claimed that “Dunhuang cave art had already reached a high-level technology since its inception during the Northern Wei period, and it is not the primitive art that grew out of the Dunhuang caves.”<sup>623</sup> This deliberate clarification reveals Chang’s knowledge of the cultural prejudices inherent in the concept of “primitive.” Despite modernist artists’ positive evaluation of the aesthetic qualities of primitive art, the word “primitive” was usually employed to refer to the products, including artifacts of a recently colonized

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煌北朝佛教藝術面面觀 [Shadow of Buddha at Dunhuang: Buddhist Art from the Northern Dynasties at Dunhuang] (Lanzhou: Gansu People’s Fine Art Press, 2016), 172.

<sup>621</sup> Alexander Peter Bell, *Didactic Narration: Jataka Iconography in Dunhuang with a Catalogue of Jataka Representations in China* (Münster; Hamburg: Lit, 2000), 71.

<sup>622</sup> “Christ mocked” is a recurrent theme of Rouault’s paintings. More information refers to Jean-Marie Teze, S.J., *Georges Rouault: Action Painter*, chap. in *Mystic Masque: Semblance and Reality in Georges Rouault, 1871-1958*, ed. Stephen Schloesser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 106-7.

<sup>623</sup> Chang Shuhong 常書鴻, 敦煌藝術的源流與內容 [The Origin and Content of Dunhuang Art], chap. in 浙江大學美術文集 [Fine Art Anthology of Zhejiang University], ed. Chen Zhenlian 陳振濂 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2007), 211.

country, evidencing the barbaric, uncivilized nature of colonized peoples and their lack of cultural process around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>624</sup> Considering his training background in art from 1932 to the end of 1936 in Paris, Chang should be very familiar with the French Far Eastern collections being displayed as ethnographic specimens, including those collected by Musée du Louvre and Musée Guimet. Throughout the whole nineteenth century, the Louvre was confused about whether its collection of Chinese and Japanese objects was in the realm of art or ethnography.<sup>625</sup> Not until 1893 when a few dozen ceramics, cloisonné enamels, and Chinese bronzes were transferred to the newly-established Far Eastern section in the Department of Objets d'art of the Louvre, while many objects from China remain in the ethnographic rooms of the Musée de la Marine on the second floor of the Louvre.<sup>626</sup> The transformation of the most comprehensive French collection of Asian art from ethnographic specimens to works of art at Musée Guimet occurred mainly after the War in 1945 through the muséographie of white-cube.<sup>627</sup> This colonial framework in displaying Far Eastern objects as ethnographic specimens cautioned Chang that Dunhuang art, including those transported to Paris by Pelliot, was at risk of being interpreted as products of a backward, barbaric, and uncivilized Asian area. Thus, Chang paralleled his reinvention of

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<sup>624</sup> Gill Perry, Primitivism and the "Modern," chap. in *Modern Art Practices and Debates: Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction*, Charles Harrison, Francis Frascina and Gill Perry (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, in association with the Open University, 1993), 4-5.

<sup>625</sup> Geneviève Lacambre, Art or Ethnography: The Histories of Some Far-Eastern Objects from the Louvre, Now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Brest, chap. in *Twenty-first-century Perspectives on Nineteenth-century Art: Essays in Honor of Gabriel P. Weisberg*, eds. Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Laurinda S. Dixon (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 171.

<sup>626</sup> Geneviève Lacambre, Art or Ethnography, chap. in *Twenty-first-century Perspectives on Nineteenth-century Art*, 177.

<sup>627</sup> Shuchen Wang, "Museum Coloniality: Displaying Asian Art in the Whitened Context," *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, v. 27, n. 6 (2021): 2; 7.

Dunhuang art to Rouault's borrowing of middle-age Christian art, not only putting modern Chinese art on par with European modernism but also confirming Dunhuang murals from the worldwide view as a civilized art, not an ethnographic product.

European-trained Chinese artists, including Chang Shuhong, faced the challenge of developing a modern Chinese art equal to and independent of European modernism, resisting the possibility of being positioned as derivative and late followers within the Eurocentric narrative framework. Chang's focus on studying and exploring optical naturalism obsolete in the European art circle in the early twentieth century was an attempt to remedy traditional Chinese painting's ignorance of naturalistic representation after the Song dynasty. In contrast, his turn to abstractness with the support of Dunhuang art was a more aggressive move to compete with the European avant-garde art. Chang crafted and articulated a congruence between Rouault's translation of medieval Christian art into modern art and his appropriation of Buddhist mural techniques from around the 5th century. He established a cultural parallel between Europe and China by juxtaposing medieval Christian art with Dunhuang art and Rouault with himself, which affirms his pioneering status and declares cultural equality. Furthermore, Rouault's secular transformation of Christian artworks for modern audiences evokes the theory of replacing religion with aesthetic education that Cai Yuanpei had strongly advocated since the late 1910s. Chang was likely to position his innovations based on Dunhuang Buddhist art as a practical translation of this prominent theory, as will be discussed in the next section. Additionally, as the medieval religious paintings recede to a background, the artist pictorially highlighted the pre-

eminence of his realist modernism over sacred images and history painting.

### **Art as redemption, man as a bridge**

Audiences encounter a secularization that subordinates or masks the religiousness in Rouault's and Chang Shuhong's oil paintings representing ordinary subjects of everyday life. Although both artists selected to represent seemingly insignificant themes—"subjects without obvious sacred meaning, objects of everyday life," they did not forgo the religious implications.<sup>628</sup> Instead, they placed their trust in the hope of salvation and resurrection in spite of the pervasive despair of war.<sup>629</sup> Compared to Rouault, a fervent catholic, who intended to affirm the core principles of the Christian faith, Chang transformed the Buddhist teachings into a foil for aesthetic redemption.<sup>630</sup> This pictorial shift from the religious to the aesthetic salvation evokes the theoretical discourse on aesthetic education in replacement of religion by Cai Yuanpei. Cai claimed in 1917 that religion had become an issue of the past in Europe as a result of the replacement of religion with science in explaining cognitive and moral problems and the art's departure from religion and towards humanism after the Renaissance.<sup>631</sup> Considering that only the sense of beauty can transcend the particularity of individual interests and have the universality of human beings, Cai advocated the promotion of pure aesthetic education.<sup>632</sup> While Cai's notion of the disinterested sense of beauty

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<sup>628</sup> Clark Butler, *History as the Story of Freedom: Philosophy in Intercultural Context* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997), 8.

<sup>629</sup> Jay Winter, *The Apocalyptic Imagination in Art: From Anticipation to Allegory*, chap. in *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 171.

<sup>630</sup> Jay Winter, 171-72.

<sup>631</sup> Cai Jiemin 蔡子民, "以美育代宗教說 [Replacing Religion with Aesthetic Education]," *新青年* [New Youth], v. 3, n. 6 (1917): 1-3.

<sup>632</sup> Cai Jiemin, "Replacing Religion with Aesthetic Education," 4-5.

came from Kant, the concept that aesthetic education should fill the spiritual void created by the absence of religion came from Nietzsche.<sup>633</sup> Nietzsche described the problem of the modern world through the famous proclamation that “God is dead” in 1882 in his book *The Gay Science*.<sup>634</sup> He rejected the idea of God as the absolute truth, claiming that God is an abiding lie against life and that the death of God matters for the improvement of life.<sup>635</sup> This bold assertion on the death of God triggered the philosophical genesis of modern art.<sup>636</sup> The system of values, which with the death of God became social and moral conventions formulated by human beings, is no longer divine commands; Nietzsche claimed that art “offers the only possible redemption to the man of knowledge, the man of action and sufferer.”<sup>637</sup> While Cai’s rejection of religion and valorization of art act as literal paraphrases and exegesis of Nietzsche’s doctrine, European-trained Chinese artists such as Chang consciously practiced the concept of art’s role in saving and edifying the masses in a modern society where religion had failed.

Nietzsche’s philosophical doctrine dominates Chang’s perception of the role of a modern Chinese artist. In an article published in 1934, Chang expounded the function of Chinese artists:

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<sup>633</sup> Zhang Longxi 張隆溪, *闡釋學與跨文化研究* [Hermeneutics and Cross-Cultural Studies] (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2014), 95.

<sup>634</sup> Dwight David Allman, *History as Psychology/Morality as Pathology: Nietzsche and the Ethical Tradition*, chap. in *Instilling Ethics*, ed. Norma Thompson (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 103.

<sup>635</sup> Ralph N. McMichael, Jr., *Walter Kasper’s Response to Modern Atheism: Confessing the Trinity* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 44.

<sup>636</sup> Cameron J. Anderson, *Introduction: Being Modern*, chap. in *God in the Modern Wing: Viewing Art with Eyes of Faith*, eds. Cameron J. Anderson and G. Walter Hansen (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 2.

<sup>637</sup> Andreas Andreopoulos, *Art as Theology: From the Postmodern to the Medieval* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 138.

Above, I assumed the original purpose of our forerunners was to promote the new art movement. The purpose of moving into plaster models, still life, the human body, and disciplines were to inspire Chinese painters to eliminate the attitude of indifference to nature and to pursue the inner life from the appearance of nature, from the outline of the existent beings. The artist's personhood is a bridge to extricate decadent Chinese art to a new field.<sup>638</sup>

Chang's discourse that art should pursue reality beyond the appearance of existent beings is loaded with abstract philosophical terms, which bear shades of Nietzsche's famous contrast between Apollo and Dionysus. Nietzsche articulated a version of Schopenhauer's distinction between appearance and reality in *The Birth of Tragedy*—Apollo is the divinity of appearances; Dionysus represents the ability to puncture mere appearance and lead to communion with ultimate reality.<sup>639</sup> Chang's discourse on the division between appearance and reality discursively situates his perception of an artist's role within Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian. Meanwhile, his assertion to seek inner life from appearance suggests an opposition between the external surface and the deeper truth. This discourse of seeking profound origin through the superficial exterior is tinged with the genetic model implicit in Nietzsche's accounts of the Apollo-Dionysus relationship.<sup>640</sup> Nietzsche used to situate the Dionysian as temporally before its offspring, the Apollonian, citing the Greek insight into their Dionysian impulses as the origin for the production of Apollonian artworks.<sup>641</sup> As he wrote in Section 3 of *The Birth of Tragedy*: “out of the original Titan thearchy of terror the Olympian

<sup>638</sup> Chang Shuhong 常書鴻, “中國新藝術運動過去的錯誤與今後的展望 [Past Mistakes and Future Prospects of China's New Art Movement],” 藝風 [Art Wind], v. 2, n. 8 (1934): 35.

<sup>639</sup> Giles Fraser, *Redeeming Nietzsche: On the Piety of Unbelief* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 53.

<sup>640</sup> Thomas Albrecht, A “Monstrous” Opposition: The Double Dionysus and the Double Apollo in Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy, chap. in *The Medusa Effect: Representations and Epistemology in Victorian Aesthetics* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2009), 54.

<sup>641</sup> Thomas Albrecht, A “Monstrous” Opposition, chap. in *The Medusa Effect*, 53.



thearchy of joy gradually evolved through the Apollonian impulse towards beauty, just as roses bud from thorny bushes.”<sup>642</sup> The genealogical description of preceding bushes engendering roses articulates the ontological hierarchy between Dionysus and Apollo—the father preceding and over the son.<sup>643</sup> When Chang enunciated the artist’s priority as the quest for the inner truth, he was tantamount to agreeing with Nietzsche’s Dionysian precedence.

In spite of the genealogical superiority of Dionysus over Apollo, Nietzsche also presents a mutually dependent relationship between them. He maintains that the Apollonian and Dionysian principles always coexist and complement each other in varying degrees in any work of art.<sup>644</sup> Raphael’s *Transfiguration* was interpreted in *The Birth of Tragedy* as a monogram of the Dionysian and Apollonian forms of art with its two distinct halves (**fig. 4.22.**).<sup>645</sup> The figures in the lower half of this painting, full of helplessness, pain, and despair, are described by Nietzsche as assuming the burden of truth and reality, while the transcending Christ in the upper half acts as an antithetical image “to everything else in the existential landscape of the painting.”<sup>646</sup> The interrelation between the two halves of this painting fittingly represents the interdependence between Apollo and Dionysus. Dionysus makes the Apollonian realm necessary, being the precondition for Apollo; Apollo constitutes “the necessary

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<sup>642</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Clifton P. Fadiman (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995), 9.

<sup>643</sup> Thomas Albrecht, 53-4.

<sup>644</sup> Thomas Albrecht, 54.

<sup>645</sup> Galen A. Johnson, *The Retrieval of the Beautiful: Thinking Through Merleau-Ponty’s Aesthetics* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 206.

<sup>646</sup> Frank Lentricchia, *Versions of Existentialism*, chap. in *After the New Criticism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 43-4. Gary Shapiro, “This Is Not a Christ”: Nietzsche, Foucault, and the Genealogy of Vision, chap. in *Why Nietzsche Still? Reflections on Drama, Culture, and Politics*, ed. Alan D. Schrift (London: University of California Press, 2000), 85.

fulfillment and transfiguration of the Dionysian horror.”<sup>647</sup> As Nietzsche’s commentary demonstrates: “Here we have presented, in the most sublime artistic symbolism, that Apollonian world of beauty and its substratum, the terrible wisdom of Silenus; and intuitively we comprehend their necessary interdependence.”<sup>648</sup> Nietzsche analytically separates Apollo and Dionysus while also displaying them to be inextricable.<sup>649</sup> This indissolubility of Apollo and Dionysus not only shaped Chang’s oil painting creations during the Dunhuang period but also dominated his exploration of the relationship between realist painting and history painting, between modernity and tradition.

The oil painting *The Beginning of the Copy Work* 臨摹工作的開始, created in 1944 in Dunhuang, exemplifies the artist’s comprehension of the contradictory yet interdependent relationship between Apollonian and Dionysian art (**fig. 4.23**). This painting portrays two young women reading a portrait of a Buddha or an eminent monk in red robe printed on the cover of a book, against a corner of a Dunhuang Sutra representation. The background copy of the sectioned Sutra mural takes up half of the entire painting, producing a stark contrast to the foreground reading scene in terms of age and the painting techniques. The tension between the two parts is further revealed through the difference between reality and illusion that the artist intended to convey. Two women reading the book are the artist’s 13-year-old daughter Chang Shana 常沙

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<sup>647</sup> Richard John White, *Nietzsche and the Problem of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 60.

<sup>648</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Clifton P. Fadiman, 11.

<sup>649</sup> Nik Farrell Fox, *Nietzsche and Sartre: Twin Philosophers of Paradox*, chap. in *Nietzsche und der französische Existenzialismus*, eds. Alfred Betschart, Andreas Urs Sommer and Paul Stephan (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 12.

娜 (1931-) in a hand-knitted blue sweater by her mother and a newlywed.<sup>650</sup> Although this reading scene does not directly refer to the artist himself, the red-robed monk in his daughter's hands evokes his self-imagery as an ascetic monk in his autobiography. He described his trip to Dunhuang as an ascetic pilgrimage:

One early morning in February of 1943, our advance team of six people preparing for the establishment of "Dunhuang Art Academy" resembled medieval ascetic monks, clad in old sheepskin coats, braving the biting cold winds of northwest China along the famous Silk Road in ancient times; (we) began the last section of the most arduous journey to Dunhuang.<sup>651</sup>

The hardships of the journey to Dunhuang due to poor transportation were only the beginning of Chang's years of hard work at Dunhuang. In his memoir, Chang took great pains to describe the difficulties at Dunhuang in the 1940s, such as the rampant sand, the lack of information, the shortage of funds, food, and painting tools.<sup>652</sup> Most seriously, there was only an ox cart for them to get into the city, which posed a threat to the lives of people working in Dunhuang: "it is impossible to rely on this old ox cart for first aid if running into an acute infectious disease, then it would be difficult to escape the fate of dying in the dunes."<sup>653</sup> Yet, Chang declared that all these hardships did not make him, such a determined ascetic, waver.<sup>654</sup>

In contrast to the suffering reality of copying Dunhuang murals, the background focuses on the festive music scene. Two celestial musicians are prominent in the upper

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<sup>650</sup> Chang Shana 常沙娜, 塵封不住的回憶: 重讀父親的畫作 [Unforgettable Memories: Rereading Father's Paintings], chap. in 常沙娜文集 [Collection of Chang Shana's Articles], eds. Gao Lu 高璐 and Cui Yan 崔岩 (Jinan: Shandong Fine Art Press, 2011), 67.

<sup>651</sup> Chang Shuhong 常書鴻, 莫高窟檐角的鐵馬響叮噹: 我在敦煌四十年 [Voices of Iron Horse in the Gables of Mogao Caves: My Forty Years at Dunhuang], chap. in 莫高窟記憶 [Memory of Mogao Caves], eds. Jiang Dezhi 姜德治 and Song Tao 宋濤 (Lanzhou: Gansu People's Press, 2009), 31.

<sup>652</sup> Chang Shuhong, *Ninety Years: Fifty Years at Dunhuang*, 57-66.

<sup>653</sup> Chang Shuhong, *Ninety Years*, 66.

<sup>654</sup> *Ibid.*

left corner of the composition; one is playing the harp 箏篪, which is the quintessential Buddhist instrument of China.<sup>655</sup> The blue-green palette and the palatial architecture suggest an affinity with Amitābha’s Paradise of Cave 148 in Dunhuang. Amitābha’s Pure Land is known as “Utmost Bliss” of only great joy.<sup>656</sup> It is a paradise where all the faithful could rest in the afterlife to practice Buddhism until the attainment of *nirvana*.<sup>657</sup> Pure Land *sutras* described this heavenly realm as a pleasant and beautiful place free from all pain and suffering of the earthly world.<sup>658</sup> As a realm of perfection and beatitude, it is replete with jewels, music, colors, and fragrances.<sup>659</sup> The harp was probably the most characteristic Buddhist instrument; Buddha was described to be an accomplished harp player in his early life and some Mahāyāna sutras placed harps prominently in the Pure Lands.<sup>660</sup> Chang deliberately highlighted a harp player to indicate the blissful Amitābha’s Paradise. As such, the artist established a contradictory contrast between the foreground suffering reality and the background blissful illusion in this painting, which fittingly responds to Nietzsche’s Apollo-Dionysius duality.

This response to Nietzsche’s Apollo-Dionysius dialectic also implicates a practical claim—art’s redemption of life. Nietzsche views the world to be a “primal unity” filled

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<sup>655</sup> Bo Lawergren, *Harps on the Ancient Silk Road*, chap. in *Conservation of Ancient Sites on the Silk Road: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the Conservation of Grotto Sites, Mogao Grottes, Dunhuang, People’s Republic of China, June 28-July 3, 2004*, ed. Neville Agnew (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2010), 120.

<sup>656</sup> Charles B. Jones, *Pure Land: History, Tradition, and Practice* (Colorado: Shambhala Publications, 2021), 8.

<sup>657</sup> John M. Thompson, *Awakening to Mortality: Buddhist Views of Death and Dying*, chap. in *Ultimate Journey: Death and Dying in the World’s Major Religions*, ed. Steven J. Rosen (London: Praeger Publishers, 2008), 99.

<sup>658</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>659</sup> John Paraskevopoulos, *The Absolute in the Mahayana and the Pure Land Way*, chap. *Light from the East: Eastern Wisdom for the Modern West*, ed. Harry Oldmeadow (Indiana: World Wisdom, 2007), 181.

<sup>660</sup> B. Lawergren, *Music in the Buddhist and Pre-Buddhist Worlds*, chap. in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia—Volume IV: The Age of Achievement, A.D. 750 to the End of the Fifteenth Century*, eds. C. E. Bosworth and M. S. Asimov (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2000), 587.

with eternal pain and contradiction.<sup>661</sup> He attributes salvation from the existentially painful reality of human life to art throughout his career.<sup>662</sup> He elaborated Apollonian art and Dionysian art as two different redemptive strategies.<sup>663</sup> Apollonian art makes life seem worth living by veiling the reality of the empirical existence with beauty, while Dionysian art executes redemption through bypassing the empirical world altogether (as in music) or destroying individuals (as in tragedy).<sup>664</sup> To be sure, these two artistic drives are symbiotic; Nietzsche maintains the necessity of “balancing the Dionysian insight with the Apollonian world of harmony and illusions.”<sup>665</sup> The agony of the Dionysian world compels the individual to generate a vision of release and redemption in the Apollonian world and then to get lost in contemplating that vision.<sup>666</sup> This redemptory alliance convinced Chang of art’s significance in soothing the audiences during the warring years. The artist spoke of his expectations for art’s value in redeeming the public and even the nation: “in recent years, with internal and external troubles, Chinese people have reached a point of extreme suffering and desolation; the oppressed Chinese nation should place its trust in the art to make a spiritual call.”<sup>667</sup> Parallel to the Chinese public’s demand for artistic redemption against the horrors of war is the issue of how the early-twentieth-century Chinese artists should undertake

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<sup>661</sup> Ivan Soll, *Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and the Redemption of Life through Art*, chap. in *Willing and Nothingness: Schopenhauer as Nietzsche’s Educator*, ed. Christopher Janaway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 103.

<sup>662</sup> Giles Fraser, *Redeeming Nietzsche: On the Piety of Unbelief*, 67.

<sup>663</sup> Maudemarie Clark, *Language, and Deconstruction: Nietzsche, de Man, and Postmodernism*, chap. in *Nietzsche as Postmodernist: Essays Pro and Contra*, ed. Clayton Koelb (Albany: State University of New York, 1990), 76.

<sup>664</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>665</sup> Sylvie Magerstädt, *Philosophy, Myth and Epic Cinema: Beyond Mere Illusions* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 12.

<sup>666</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>667</sup> Chang Shuhong 常書鴻, “中國新藝術運動過去的錯誤與今後的展望 [Past Mistakes and Future Prospects of China’s New Art Movement],” *藝風 [Art Wind]*, v. 2, n. 8 (1934): 37.

this mission. In this regard, Chang once again turns to Nietzsche.

Chang positioned the artist as a bridge to a new era, which was inspired by Nietzsche and German Expressionism. His statement—the artist’s personhood is a bridge to extricate decadent Chinese art to a new field—establishes another connection with Nietzsche. This bridge metaphor involves the first crucial German artist group associated with Expressionism, *Die Brücke* (The Bridge). *Die Brücke* as an artist group was founded in 1905 in Dresden and its name derived from a line in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* by Nietzsche: “Man is a rope, fastened between animal and superman—a rope over an abyss. A dangerous wayfaring, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous shuddering, and staying-still. What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal.”<sup>668</sup> The touchstone Brücke artist Erich Heckel (1883-1970) recalled Zarathustra as a seer, a purpose, a creator, a future, and a cripple on the bridge, just as Nietzsche wrote.<sup>669</sup> This sense of being a cripple on the bridge and being unable to get across it underpinned the creative superiority of Brücke art, namely “the superiority of being an artist, of being a bridge to the future, of being a visionary seer and even savior of mankind.”<sup>670</sup> The group members worked to interpret and make Nietzsche’s ideas viable in the visual field.<sup>671</sup> In terms of the pictorial language, the concept of bridge

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<sup>668</sup> Stephen Eric Bronner, *Modernism at the Barricades: Aesthetics, Politics, Utopia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 39. Shearer West, *Rural and Urban: Seeking the Heimat*, chap. in *The Visual Arts in Germany, 1890-1937: Utopia and Despair* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 50.

<sup>669</sup> Donald Kuspit, *Intersubjectivity and Selfhood in the Brücke: A Kohutian Perspective*, chap. in *New Perspectives on Brücke Expressionism: Bridging History*, ed. Christian Weikop (New York: Routledge, 2016), 178. James Martel, *What Kind of Love is Nietzsche’s Amor fati?*, chap. in *The Radicalism of Romantic Love: Critical Perspectives*, eds. Renata Grossi and David West (New York: Routledge, 2017), 150.

<sup>670</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>671</sup> Amanda du Preez, *Art, the Sublime, and Movement: Spaced Out* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 21.

symbolized the Brücke group's intention of asserting a connection between the future and the traditional visual culture of Germany; they privileged the medium of the long-neglected German late medieval and early Renaissance woodcut.<sup>672</sup> For example, the most prominent member of Die Brücke, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880–1938), translated the German Renaissance painter and printmaker Lucas Cranach (1472–1553)'s renditions of *Venus* and *The Judgement of Paris* into a modern woman in his woodcut *Nude Woman with a Black Hat*.<sup>673</sup> Meanwhile, Kirchner employed tribal wood carvings to design the backdrop for this woman, thereby merging his Germanic artistic heritage with primitivism—one of the central tenets of the avant-garde.<sup>674</sup> Brücke's recovery of the medieval woodcut fit well with the cultural nationalism of the 1880s onwards when the medieval German woodblock printing was interpreted as a visual icon of Germanness.<sup>675</sup> This medium was established as the German contribution to the history of art with its emotive and imaginative quality of the line and drawing in contrast to neighboring France's "preference for pleinairism and illusionism of color."<sup>676</sup> Brücke artists such as Kirchner played their professed role as a bridge by reinventing the medieval German applied art of woodblock printing into a modern fine art form, connecting the old age and the new for a perfect era.<sup>677</sup>

In agreement with Brücke artists in acting as a bridge between the old and the new

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<sup>672</sup> Gillian McIver, *Art History for Filmmakers: The Art of Visual Storytelling* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 201.

<sup>673</sup> Robin Reisenfeld, "Cultural Nationalism, Brücke and the German Woodcut: The Formation of a Collective Identity," *Art History*, v. 20, n. 2 (1997): 305.

<sup>674</sup> Robin Reisenfeld, "Cultural Nationalism, Brücke and the German Woodcut," 305-7.

<sup>675</sup> R. Reisenfeld, 291.

<sup>676</sup> Reisenfeld, 297-99.

<sup>677</sup> Fred S. Kleiner, *Modernism in Europe and America, 1900-1945*, chap. in *Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Concise Global History* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2017), 380.

eras, Chang selected to integrate the Dunhuang art tradition with modernism. His oil paintings during the Dunhuang period are distinguished by his knowledge of European avant-garde art and the pictorial signifier of the Chineseness embedded in the Dunhuang painting vocabulary. This experimental approach is directly presented in his oil painting *The Beginning of the Copy Work*. A vase with sweet iris flowers, which are common in Dunhuang due to their ability to grow in arid environments, sits on the table at the lower right corner of the painting.<sup>678</sup> The petals of the sweet iris seem to meander onto the table to become the vibrant floral designs of the tablecloth. The brilliant celebration of pattern and decoration evokes *Red Room: Harmony in Red* by Henri Matisse in 1908, which characterizes pictorial ambiguities through flattening the still-lives on the table against the pattern of flower baskets extending from the table to the wall (**fig. 4.24**).<sup>679</sup> This Matisse-style flat decorative corner was deliberately designed to contrast with the flatly colored Dunhuang mural in the background, paralleling an inherently Chinese aesthetic expression with modern European art. As such, Chang bridges painting techniques from medieval Asia and modern Europe.

The redemptory alliance of Apollonian and Dionysian art that Nietzsche established convinced Chang of the power of his paintings to soothe war-torn migrants, including the displaced Kazakhs and the ascetic-like himself who held fast to the materially deprived Dunhuang. Chang defined himself as a bridge with the inspiration from Nietzsche's metaphor of man as a bridge and its artistic transformation by the

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<sup>678</sup> Chang Shana, "Unforgettable Memories: Rereading Father's Paintings," 67.

<sup>679</sup> H. H. Arnason, *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003), 121.



German Expressionist group *Die Brücke*. This bridge connects not only the European and Chinese painting traditions but also a glorious past of Dunhuang art and a promising future of Chinese modernism. His professional oil painting training in France granted him the insight to examine the situation of ordinary people from the perspective of social Realism and the dilemma of Chinese art in the international arena. In turn, a new era of hopeful Chinese art reinforces the social vision of artistic redemption for the suffered people that Chang aimed to achieve.

## CHAPTER 5

### Wang Ziyun (1897-1990)'s Archaeology of Art

#### via Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768)

Emperors' mausoleums of the Tang Dynasty 唐代 (618-907) in Shaanxi 陝西 were central to Wang Ziyun 王子雲 (1897-1990)'s archaeological investigation project. In an four-year archaeological investigation from June 1940 to late 1944 funded by the Education Ministry 教育部 of the Republican government, Wang spent more than four months investigating Tang Emperors' mausoleums.<sup>680</sup> Cameras were available to record cultural sites from a relatively objective perspective. Nevertheless, Wang created the landscape painting *Panoramic View of Five Mausoleums of Tang Dynasty* 唐五陵全景圖 in 1943 to represent the land on which the mausoleums of Tang emperors were located (**fig. 5.1**). Disturbing the burial sites of the dead is usually considered inauspicious in Chinese culture, so why did Wang still decide to represent the landscape of tombs?<sup>681</sup> Why did the artist believe such a landscape painting depicting graves would resonate with Chinese audiences in the 1940s? Meanwhile, Wang's archaeological investigation aimed to construct a larger continuum of Chinese sculpture history, while the creation of in-situ landscape paintings consists of materials to support his writing.<sup>682</sup> His pictorial valorization of the land with the Tang

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<sup>680</sup> Xu Wei 徐偉, 絲路無疆: 西北藝術文物考察團研究 [The Silk Road Without Borders: Study on the Northwest Art and Relics Team] (Xi'an: Xi'an Jiaotong University Press, 2015), 47; 59.

<sup>681</sup> Shu-Li Wang and Michael Rowlands, *Making and Unmaking Heritage Value in China*, chap. in *The Routledge Companion to Cultural Property*, eds. Jane Anderson and Haidy Geismar (New York: Routledge, 2017), 269.

<sup>682</sup> Sarah E. Fraser, "Buddhist Archaeology in Republican China: A New Relationship to the Past," Elsley Zeitlyn Lecture on Chinese Archaeology and Culture, London, October 28, 2008, in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, no. 167 (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 164.

mausoleums matched up his interpretation of the Tang dynasty as the golden age of Chinese sculpture history. How and why he adopted the German art historian and archaeologist Winckelmann's cyclical pattern of cultural development to narrate the Han and Tang dynasties as the golden age of Chinese sculpture history will also be explored.

I argue that three main components of Wang's archaeology of art—painting, collecting antiquities, and writing art history—were consistently in line with the national revival program of the Republican government, which was the patron of his four-year archaeological work. The Republican government's campaign of rediscovering the northwest area as the homeland of the Chinese nation inspired him to adopt the Tang tombs in Shaanxi as the subject of his painting. His appropriation of Winckelmann's theory in collecting and writing Chinese sculpture history also responded to Republican intellectuals' promotion of the German concept of *Wissenschaft* as a foundation of Chinese nation-building. The painting *Panoramic View of Five Mausoleums of the Tang Dynasty* will be explored at first to present how a local landscape was transformed into a national one. Then the Republican government's campaign of returning to the homeland—the northwest area of China will be discussed to elaborate on why a local Shaanxi landscape is acceptable for the wartime Chinese audiences. How Wang applied Winckelmann's doctrine and why he was so attracted to Winckelmann's writing will be discussed in the third section. The last section focuses on how Wang's archaeology of art was affiliated with the Republican government's national revival program that drew on the German rejuvenation model.

## Rediscovering the oblivious past

The theme of the retrieval of the past is central to *the Panoramic View of Five Mausoleums of Tang Dynasty* 唐五陵全景圖 by Wang Ziyun. This painting, which was produced in 1943, was designed in the handscroll format of traditional Chinese painting and depicts the land containing the Emperors' mausoleums of the Tang Dynasty 唐朝 (618-907). A handscroll is viewed from right to left. Only about an arm's length of the painting is viewed at a time while the rest of the painting is rolled and unrolled as necessary.<sup>683</sup> The way of viewing the painting creates a sense of space and time during this visual journey.<sup>684</sup> As this handscroll is unrolled from the right, the appearance of a pair of stone horses suggests the Spirit Road 神道 of ancient mausoleums to the audience (**fig. 5.2**). The elimination of other possible sculptures at the same site guides the viewer to reconstruct the structure of a quintessential Spirit Road in the imagination. The imagined extension of a processional way is pictorially replaced by a serpentine river zigzagging over a sweeping plain and vanishing into the distant mountains. A sense of the vast space is presented from the hills with the standing horses to the plains with mountains in the distance, while the interpretation of this landscape requires more background information on the land where Tang Emperors' mausoleums are located. Why did Wang Ziyun choose to depict the five Tang mausoleums in Fuping County of Shaanxi Province 陝西省富平縣? In actuality, *Autumn Colors of Five Mausoleums* 五陵秋色 was a traditional landscape, being one

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<sup>683</sup> Wu Hung, *The 'Night Entertainment of Han Xizai,'* chap. in *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), 57-8.

<sup>684</sup> *Ibid.*

of the “Eight Views of Fuping 富平八景.” In the *Fuping Gazetteer* 富平縣誌 compiled by the governor Qiao Lüxin 喬履信 (1709-1768) in 1740, there is an illustration of “Eight Views: Autumn Colors of Five Mausoleums (fig. 5.3).” Wang appeared to invent this traditional painting theme.

As a traditional landscape, *Autumn Colors of Five Mausoleums* was a source of an intellectual identity for the local scholars. The local literati Chai Zehao 柴澤灝 inscribed at the end of the Gazetteer print:

The former Ming Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 (1568-1610) from Gong’an county visited five mausoleums of the Han dynasty; (he) had the peculiar, exquisite phrase “Spring running like autumn.” Thinking over the present and recalling the past; short words express implicit meanings. Now at the Tang five mausoleums, stone horses neigh in the wind, forest birds cry under the moon; the nostalgia for the past deepens more than ten times among red maples and white grasses! Qinghe Chai Zehao.<sup>685</sup>

Chai Zehao mentioned that the Ming literati Yuan Hongdao visited the Five Tombs of Han. In fact, Yuan traveled to the Six Tombs of the Southern Song Dynasty in Shaoxing 紹興. The phrase “spring travels like autumn, day travels like night 春行如秋, 晝行如夜” is from Yuan’s prose travelogue “Six Tombs 六陵” written in 1597. This line described the tragic pain of the fall of the Southern Song Dynasty: “it was a spring day when everything was renewed and thriving, but the poet felt the depression of autumn when the leaves fell and everything withered; it was a bright day, yet the poet felt the darkness of night.”<sup>686</sup> The extreme grief did not only stem from the weakness of the

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<sup>685</sup> The original Chinese text reads: 前明公安袁二中郎游漢五陵有「春行如秋」語，奇特精妙。撫今吊古，片語曲傳。茲唐五陵，石馬嘶風，林鳥號月，楓丹草白中，懷古情深，奚啻增以十倍！清河柴澤灝。Qiao Lüxin 喬履信，清乾隆五年富平縣誌校注 [Annotated Fuping County Gazetteer of Qing Qianlong Fifth Year], eds. Xu Pengbiao 徐朋彪 and Xu Guojuan 徐國娟 (Xi’an: Northwest University Press, 2016), 15.

<sup>686</sup> Feng Junhao 馮君豪，袁宏道遊記箋評 [Comments and Evaluations on Yuan Hongdao’s Travelogue] (Hong Kong: Jiangshu Press, 2016), 183.

Southern Song court, but also the humiliation suffered by the six imperial tombs after the fall of the Southern Song Dynasty. The Yuan monk Yang Lianzhenjia 楊璉真迦 (fl. 1277-1292) excavated the six tombs of the Southern Song Dynasty twice in 1285 and humiliated the remains of the deceased emperors.<sup>687</sup> These remains were recovered for burial until 1369, when the founding emperor of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (r. 1368-1398), issued an edict to repair the six tombs of the Song Dynasty.<sup>688</sup> The wartime crisis in the 1940s made the painter Wang Ziyun find resonance with the nostalgia for the past that was passed down from Yuan to Chai. Thus, *Autumn Colors of Five Mausoleums* provided both a pictorial origin for Wang's landscape painting and a historical framing for expressing sorrowful attitudes towards the national crisis. The difference is that Wang Ziyun is also committed to highlighting the splendor of the Tang Dynasty and showing a pictorial narrative of national spirit that inspired the war.

Despite the tragedy the war, the artist's focus was to highlight the glory of the Tang dynasty in his landscape painting. The background knowledge of Xi'an 西安 as an ancient capital of China is crucial to read this painting.<sup>689</sup> Chang'an (former name of Xi'an, which means Forever Peace) was first established by the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) as the eastern terminus of the Silk Road, and it grew to be the largest and most

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<sup>687</sup> Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道, *袁宏道散文注評* [Commentary on Proses by Yuan Hongdao], annot. Sun Hong 孫虹 and Tan Xuechun 譚學純 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Press, 2016), 72.

<sup>688</sup> Ibid.

<sup>689</sup> It was the capital of the so-called thirteen dynasties, including Zhou 周 (1046 BC-256 BC), Qin 秦 (221 BC-207 BC), Western Han 西漢 (202 BC-8 AD), Xin 新 (9-23 AD), Eastern Han 東漢 (25-220 AD), Western Jin 西晉 (266-316 AD), Early Zhao 前趙 (304-329 AD), Early Qin 前秦 (350-394 AD), Late Qin 後秦 (384-417 AD), Western Wei 西魏 (535-557 AD), Northern Zhou 北周 (557-581), Sui 隋 (581-619) and Tang (618-907). This is a general conception of the Xi'an area as Haojing 鎬京 and Xianyang 咸陽—the capital of the Zhou Dynasty and Qin Dynasty, are neighboring cities. Leah Cheung Ah Li, *Where the Past Meets the Future: The Politics of Heritage in Xi'an* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2019), 84.

cosmopolitan city in the world during the Tang empire.<sup>690</sup> This city attracted traders, scholars, and pilgrims from Asia and housed around a million residents in 750.<sup>691</sup> The historical Tang Chang'an was so large that the modern Xi'an has only recently begun to expand the boundaries of the city of the Tang dynasty.<sup>692</sup> The imperial tombs scattered over this land show the prominence of the Tang empire. Eighteen tombs of Tang Emperors are located on the northern edge of the Guanzhong Plain (**fig. 5.4**).<sup>693</sup> This choice of geographical locations is related to a new form of building the emperor's tomb that started with the burial of Zhaoling 昭陵. This technique used a mountain or a hill as a tumulus, replacing "the usual rammed earth pyramidal tomb mound."<sup>694</sup> Building tombs into the sides of the mountains became a practice to express the dynastic continuity and the Tang power by establishing a parallel to the Han emperors' tombs.<sup>695</sup> Wang noticed this parallel. He claimed in his travelogue that the West Han emperors' tombs occupy the best geomantic location in the Guanzhong plain, forcing Tang emperors into the use of sub-optimal locations.<sup>696</sup> Consequently, Tang emperors selected the mountains of diverse sizes on the northern edge of the Guanzhong plain as the burial locations.<sup>697</sup> Therefore, the rolling mountains in Wang Ziyun's landscape

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<sup>690</sup> Francis D. K. Ching, Mark M. Jarzombek and Vikramaditya Prakash, *A Global History of Architecture* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2011), 286.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid.

<sup>692</sup> Valerie Hansen, *The Cosmopolitan Terminus of the Silk Road: Historic Chang'an, Modern-day Xi'an*, chap. in *The Silk Road: A New History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 141.

<sup>693</sup> Shi Nianhai 史念海, ed., *西安歷史地圖集 [The Historical Atlas of Xi'an]* (Xi'an: Xi'an Map Press, 1996), 102-3.

<sup>694</sup> Tonia Eckfeld, *Imperial Tombs in Tang China, 618-907: The Politics of Paradise* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 17.

<sup>695</sup> Tonia Eckfeld, *Imperial Tombs in Tang China, 618-907*, 16.

<sup>696</sup> Wang Ziyun 王子雲, *從長安到雅典：中外美術考古遊記 [From Chang'an to Athens: Travelogue on Archaeology of Art in China and Foreign Countries]* (Changsha: Yuelu Publishing House, 2005), 1: 22.

<sup>697</sup> Ibid.

painting suggest the conception that “mountains are tombs.”

The national prominence of Xi’an irreversibly declined since the end of the tenth century when the economic and cultural center gradually moved southwards to the Yangtze River region; the ruling class largely forgot Xi’an as a local city since then.<sup>698</sup> This amnesia is visually substantialized through the difficulty for the viewer to locate five mausoleums the first time to read this handscroll. The identification of each mausoleum’s specific location has to rely on the final colophon, which prompts the audience to return to the beginning to learn the detail of this landscape. Wang introduced the composition in the colophon:

The Tang Emperors’ mausoleums were mostly built alongside mountains, locating in the northern mountain area to the north of Wei River 渭水; looking down from a height and acquiring a magnificent spectacle. This painting shows five mausoleums of the Tang Dynasty in Fuping Prefecture 富平縣. Looking south from the highest peak of Zijin Mountain 紫金山, where the Jian Mausoleum 簡陵 of Emperor Yizong 唐懿宗 (r. 859-873) is located, from right to left are Tanshan 檀山 with the Yuan Mausoleum 元陵 of Emperor Daizong 唐代宗 (r. 762-779), Tianru Mountain 天乳山 with the Zhang Mausoleum 章陵 of Emperor Wenzong 唐文宗 (r. 827-840), and the Phoenix Mountain 鳳凰山 with the Ding Mausoleum 定陵 of Emperor Zhongzong 唐中宗 (r. 705-710), and Jinweng Mountain 金甕山 with the Feng Mausoleum 丰陵 of Emperor Shunzong 唐順宗 (r. 805). Looking down at the Guanzhong Plain 關中平原 from these mausoleums, the fertile fields expand thousands of miles away. Across the Wei River, look at the distant Zhongnan Mountains where mountains and rivers wrap around each other. It is full of the highest magnificence and majesty, fully expressing the great spirit of the Tang Dynasty. In the late autumn of the thirty-second year of Republican China, I visited the Tang Mausoleums and set off Fuping for the first time. I stayed in Jianling for a week during the rainy days and depicted this painting to emulate the spectacle of Tang Mausoleums.

This specific inscription leads the viewers back to the beginning of the scroll. The

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<sup>698</sup> Linda Wang, *Characteristics of Xi’an’s Emerging Private Consumer Market*, chap. in *Urbanization and Party Survival in China: People vs. Power*, ed. Xiaobing Li and Xiansheng Tian (London: Lexington Books, 2017), 19.



audience is guided to imagine that they are standing on the Zijin Mountain, looking south, extending the sight from the undulating imperial tombs (hills) nearby to the distant Guanzhong Plain, the Wei River, and the Zhongnan Mountains. The contrast between the detailed textual description and the vague image representation promotes the spectator to recollect and retrieve the remote past.

Although the painting was depicted on site according to the introduction in the colophon, the artist did not faithfully represent the ruined conditions he saw. Both stone horses at the beginning of the painting are painted according to the stone horses of Jian Mausoleum. Wang and his archaeological team captured them with the camera and also made the “rubbing of a complete shape 全形拓” during his investigation (**fig. 5.5; fig. 5.6**). He Zhenghuang 何正璜 (1914-1994), the wife of Wang Ziyun, described the status of these stone horses. According to her diary, there were a pair of stone tigers, three pairs of stone horses and one pair of stone lions within the gate of Jian mausoleum; both tigers and lions are positioned to face the outside, while the horses face each other in pairs. The horses on the right had two standing and one falling; all three on the left had fallen.<sup>699</sup> Wang pictorially restored the condition of two horses facing each other, attempting to rehabilitate the splendor of the Tang Dynasty in painting. In the preparation sketch *Viewing the Ding Mausoleum from in the Distance* 定陵遠望, Wang precisely captured the ruined status of the Ding mausoleum: the collapsed stone sculpture is placed in the foreground to suggest a ruined site (**fig. 5.7**). He depicted this

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<sup>699</sup> He Zhenghuang 何正璜 and Wang Ziyun 王子雲, 唐陵考察日記 [Diary on Investigating Tang Mausoleums], chap. in 何正璜考古遊記 [Archaeological Travelogue of He Zhenghuang] (Beijing: People's Fine Art Press, 2010), 161.

preparation sketch for his forthcoming monumental handscroll. At the same time, he decided to eliminate all the dilapidated traces to emphasize the glory of this land.

A similar composition highlighting a pair of stone animals on the Spirit Road of ancient Chinese imperial tombs appears in a photograph by the French explorer Jean Lartigue (1886-1940) in 1923 (**fig. 5.8**). As a naval officer, Lartigue participated in Victor Segalen (1878-1919)'s archaeological survey team for northern China as early as 1914 and spent two weeks in Xi'an.<sup>700</sup> This photograph represents a pair of stone unicorns—tianlu 天祿 of Shun mausoleum, which belongs to Madam Yang (579-670), the mother of the female Emperor Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690-705).<sup>701</sup> As other stone sculptures along the Spirit Road were damaged or unpaired at a distance, this pair of stone unicorns appear to be tiny and desolate over boundless farmland. This is the exotic sensation that Lartigue and his colleague Segalen were looking for in China's archaeological past: in the least accessible regions of West and South-West China, present China had the least leverage on the survival of the past.<sup>702</sup> This forgotten and deserted landscape with the Chinese past presents a defunct old China. As Wang investigated imperial tombs in 1943 in Shaanxi Province, he should be familiar with French explorers' archaeological explorations since the 1910s in Shaanxi, including Édouard Émmannuel Chavannes (1865-1918) and his student Segalen. The

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<sup>700</sup> Xu Jian, *Imperial Archaeology or Archaeology of Exoticism? Victor Segalen's Expeditions in Early Twentieth-Century China*, chap. in *Unmasking Ideology in Imperial and Colonial Archaeology*, eds. Bonnie Effros and Guolong Lai (Los Angeles: The Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, UCLA, 2018), 280.

<sup>701</sup> Provincial Archaeology Research Institute 陝西省考古研究院 and Shun Mausoleum Cultural Relics Management Office 順陵文物管理所, eds., *唐順陵 [Shun Mausoleum of Tang Dynasty]* (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 2015), 1.

<sup>702</sup> Marie-Paule Ha, *Figuring the East: Segalen, Malraux, Duras, and Barthes* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 28.

archaeological report by Gilbert de Voisins, Jean Lartigue, and Victor Segalen was translated and published in Shanghai in 1930—*First Report on the Archaeological Findings in Western China* 中國西部考古記.<sup>703</sup> In comparison, Wang attempted to claim an ancestral lineage between the Chinese people and this soil by retrieving the national memory of the glorious Tang Dynasty.

*Autumn Colors of Five Mausoleums*, a famous local landscape of Fuping County, contained historical memories of the Tang Dynasty. Its related literary narrative extended to the disgrace of the fall of the Southern Song Dynasty. The grief on the fall of a dynasty corresponded to the national crisis during the Chinese-Japanese war, while the glory of a mighty past was essential for invigorating national survival. Therefore, Wang invented this traditional landscape to represent the spectacle of Tang mausoleums watching over the Guanzhong plain, attempting to awaken the viewer's memory of the glorious Tang and defend the land the Chinese people have inherited for generations.

### **Shaanxi: A space for rediscovering the national memory**

The representation of mausoleums by Wang Ziyun fits perfectly with the context of the Republican government's rediscovery of national memory through inventing the sacrificial tradition. The newly-established Sun Yat-sen mausoleum was the binding site for the Republican government to intensify the public perception of the state authority. The Republican government formulated the Sun Yat-sen mausoleum as a

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<sup>703</sup> Bai Yunfei, "The Reception of Victor Segalen in China: Between Literature and Ideology," trans. Jonathan Hall, *China Perspectives*, n. 1 (2016): 59. Victor Segalen 色伽蘭, 中國西域考古記 [First Report on the Archaeological Findings in Western China], trans. Feng Chengjun 馮承均 (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1932).

memorial site to promote Sun's public image as the Father of the Nation.<sup>704</sup> At the same time, it was also conceived as a sightseeing spectacle for the populace, further creating a Chinese symbol of the modern era.<sup>705</sup> In addition to the everyday opening of the Sun Yat-sen Sacrificial Hall to the public, the Republican government held significant ceremonial rituals on regulated memorial days, including New Year's day (January 1), the anniversary of the death of Sun Yat-sen (March 12), the anniversary of a grand burial ceremony for Sun Yat-sen (July 1), the National day (October 10) and Sun Yat-sen's birthday (November 12).<sup>706</sup> As the photograph of Sun Yat-sen's death anniversary on March 12, 1936 presents, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (1887-1975) and the first lady Soong Mei-ling 宋美齡 (1898-2003) attended the memorial ceremony at the Sun Yat-sen mausoleum (**fig. 5.9**). The military cadets were lining up in front of the sacrificial hall in preparation for the inspection of the Head Couple at the upper right corner of this photograph.<sup>707</sup> The burial chamber only opened on these special memorial days provided another stimulant to motivate the public to participate in these national memorial rituals.<sup>708</sup> In the Chinese tradition, the focal sacrificial rites for the Chinese were ancestor worship; every home in China set an ancestral altar in the principal room with the family spirit tablets arranged in hierarchical order.<sup>709</sup> A moral agency of cultivating filial piety, loyalty, and faithfulness

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<sup>704</sup> Li Gongzhong 李恭忠, "孫中山崇拜與民國政治文化 [The Cult of Sun Yat-sen and the Political Culture of the Republic of China]," 二十一世紀 [Twenty-First Century], n. 86 (2004): 101.

<sup>705</sup> Ibid.

<sup>706</sup> Li Gongzhong 李恭忠, "開放的紀念性: 中山陵建築精神的表達與實踐 [The Open Monumentality: The Presentation and Realization of the Architectural Spirit of Sun Yat-sen's Mausoleum]," 南京大學學報 [Journal of Nanjing University], n. 3 (2004): 94.

<sup>707</sup> "三月紀念 [The Memorial Days in March]," 良友 [Young Companion], n. 115 (1936): 3.

<sup>708</sup> Li Gongzhong, "The Open Monumentality," *Journal of Nanjing University*, n. 3 (2004): 94.

<sup>709</sup> Richard J. Smith, *The Qing Dynasty and Traditional Chinese Culture* (London: Rowman & Littlefield,

was believed to be achieved through this ancestor worship, further strengthening the family solidarity and the social order.<sup>710</sup> This patriarchal family system resulted in Chinese people's focus on ethical relations while lacking interest in social concern and public affairs.<sup>711</sup> The Republican government framed Sun Yat-sen's mausoleum as a visiting space for the public, transferring the domestic ancestor worship to a national commemoration.

This invention of the sacrificial tradition was promoted much further in the national worship for the Yellow Emperor 黃帝 (2717-2599 BC), the legendary first ancestor of the Chinese nation. In 1935, the Republican government redefined the traditional *Qingming Festival* 清明節 into the *National Tomb-Sweeping Festival* 民族掃墓節. According to *China's Northwest, A Pictorial Survey* 西北攬勝, the Republican government initiated the *National Tomb-Sweeping Festival* to sacrifice the imperial tombs in Shaanxi in 1935:

To revere ancient sages and great thinkers and to improve the national consciousness, the Central government set the rule that the National Tomb-Sweeping ceremony is held every year during the Qingming festival. This has been an initiative since the establishment of Republican China; its leverage on citizens' spirit is huge. The festival of the twentieth-fourth year (1935) is the first national tomb-sweeping ceremony.....As Yellow Emperor is the first ancestor of the Chinese nation, it should be sacrificed at first. The dynasties of Zhou, Qin, Han, and Tang carved out the territory, expanded the domain, and enhanced the national prestige, achieving monumental feats which should be highly esteemed, emulated, and treated preferentially by descendants.<sup>712</sup>

*Qingming* is a festival to visit ancestral tombs—usually the most recently deceased

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2015), 267; 269.

<sup>710</sup> Richard J. Smith, *The Qing Dynasty and Traditional Chinese Culture*, 268-69.

<sup>711</sup> Zhou Xiaohong, *Social Mentality and Contemporary Changes*, chap. in *Chinese Society—Change and Transformation*, ed. Li Peilin (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 110.

<sup>712</sup> Shao Yuanchong 邵元衝, ed., *西北攬勝* [China's Northwest, A Pictorial Survey] (Nanjing: Zhengzhong Book Company, 1936), 2.

ones—to clean them up and decorate them with new paper ornaments.<sup>713</sup> The Republican government’s reformulation transferred a traditional festival for worshipping the family ancestors to the one for celebrating the collective remote ancestors of the “Chinese nation 中華民族.” Most of the citizens were unable to physically witness the official sacrifices due to the relatively remote localities of these mausoleums and the limited transportation. Nevertheless, magazines’ coverage permitted audiences to visually and intellectually join in the national sacrifices. On April 16, 1935, the magazine *Young Companion* 良友 reported the first official ritual at the Yellow Emperor’s mausoleum with two photographs (**fig. 5.10**). One photograph presents the officials standing in front of a makeshift altar with sacrificial offerings, including flowers. The other one captures the characters on two stelae—the stele “Mount Qiaoshan Dragon Carriage 橋山龍馭” inscribed by the Ming scholar-official 唐錡 (1493-1559) in 1536 and the “Qiao Tomb of Ancient Xuanyuan Yellow Emperor 古軒轅黃帝橋陵” by the Qing scholar Bi Yuan 畢沅 (1730-1797) in 1776.<sup>714</sup> The official sacrifice of the Republican government juxtaposes with the Ming and Qing stelae; this image visualizes a continual tradition in offering sacrifices to the ancient ancestor Yellow Emperor. The photograph of the ritual at the Zhao Mausoleum 昭陵 reveals more about how this sacrificial tradition was practiced in 1935. A provisional platform is hastily built up for the ritualists in long robes bowing to the altar; the epitaphs are

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<sup>713</sup> Andrea L. Stanton, ed., *Cultural Sociology of the Middle East Asia & Africa: An Encyclopedia* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2012), 1: 97.

<sup>714</sup> Xu Weimin 徐衛民, chief ed., *陝西帝王陵墓誌 [Tombs of Emperors in Shaanxi]* (Xi’an: Sanqin Press, 2017), 25. Ren Changtai 任常泰, *中國陵寢史 [History of Chinese Tombs]* (Beijing: Wenjin Press, 1995), 3.

spread over and in front of the platform (**fig. 5.11**). This photograph published in the journal *Current Events Nanking China* 實事月報 focused on representing the ritualists and the epitaphs, suggesting the locality as Zhao Mausoleum through a brief text introduction to the right of the image.<sup>715</sup> The Republican government's image as the inheritor and protector of traditional China is hence established and promoted with the assistance of photojournalism during the National Tomb-Sweeping Festival.

The reverence of the Yellow Emperor as the first ancestor of the Chinese nation was a critical strategy for the Republican government to cope with the growing ethnic crises during the warring background. In the 1930s, the colonial military powers, including Japan, Russia, and Britain, manipulated the ethnic diversities in Chinese frontiers to partition the frontier areas out of Republican China.<sup>716</sup> The Republican government retrieved Yellow Emperor—the first Chinese sovereign recorded in *Historical Records* 史記 by Si Maqian 司馬遷 (145 BC-around 86 BC), to unite multi-ethnic Chinese citizens with the shared descent from a common primogenitor.<sup>717</sup> He Zhenghuang identified with this notion of a single, homogeneous, and united Chinese nation with blood kinship. She elaborated on Yellow Emperor's critical role as the first ancestor of the Chinese in an article she wrote in 1946 after she and Wang Ziyun attended the official sacrifice to the Yellow Emperor's mausoleum:

In recent years, the people doubting antiquity are so brave, not believing that the Yellow Emperor ever existed in the world and thinking that everything is a myth.....The first ancestor of our nation, his sacred deeds, civil and military

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<sup>715</sup> “民族掃墓節 [National Tomb-Sweeping Festival],” 時事月報 [Current Events Nanking China], v. 12, n. 5 (1935): 3.

<sup>716</sup> James Leibold, *From the Yellow Emperor to Peking Man: The Nationalists and the Construction of Zhonghua minzu*, chap. in *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and its Indigenous Became Chinese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 120-22.

<sup>717</sup> Ibid.

stratagems, knowledge, and achievements, were passed down through the ages. How can we deny our national ancestor, whom we should spare no effort to respect and support in the present context of seeking unification? In order to promote the Yamato soul and consolidate its nation, Japan has gone so far as to create an extraordinarily brave emperor. We have a true primogenitor but refuse to accept him; it makes no sense to classify ourselves as the son of a hollow mulberry tree.<sup>718</sup>

The focus of He's criticism is on the academic claims of Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893-1980)—the representative of the Doubting Antiquity School 古史辨派. Gu put up forward the idea that “the ancient Chinese history was fabricated and accumulated in layers 層累地造成的中國古史” in a public letter to another doubter of Antiquity—Qian Xuantong 錢玄同 (1887-1939) in 1923.<sup>719</sup> He questioned the reliability of ancient history and claimed: “The later the era, the longer the legendary ancient history. Zhou dynasty documents Yu the Great as the most ancient ruler; in the era of Confucius (the Chunqiu period), Yu's predecessors Yao and Shun appear; in the Warring States, there are the much earlier Yellow Emperor and Shennong; only in the Qin, the Three Sovereigns are mentioned; while Pangu does not enter before the Han.”<sup>720</sup> This assertion resulted from Gu Jiegang's earlier objective and scientific historiography. Even as he shifted to deal with the ethnic crisis from the Japanese incursion and national fragmentation, he still did not resort to the bloodline. He defined the Chinese nation as an open-ended and emergent entity with people living as co-equals under a single

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<sup>718</sup> He Zhenghuang 何正璜, “中華民族始祖黃帝陵的展祭 [Sacrificial Ceremony for the Mausoleum of the Yellow Emperor, the First Ancestor of the Chinese Nation],” 旅行雜誌 [Travel Magazine], v. 20, n. 9 (1946): 31.

<sup>719</sup> Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, “與錢玄同先生論古史書 [A Letter Discussing Ancient History Books with Qian Xuantong],” 讀書雜誌 [Reading Magazine], n. 9 (1923): 2.

<sup>720</sup> Gu Jiegang, “A Letter Discussing Ancient History Books with Qian Xuantong,” Reading Magazine, n. 9 (1923): 2. The English translation refers to Ursula Richter, “Historical Skepticism in the New Culture Era: Gu Jiegang and the Debate on Ancient History,” 中央研究院近代史研究所集刊 [Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History Academia Sinica], n. 23 (1994): 368-9.



government in his notorious article “the Chinese nation is one 中華民族是一個” published in 1939.<sup>721</sup> Nevertheless, offering sacrifices to Yellow Emperor on the National Tomb-Sweeping Day extended as an invented tradition in Republican China. It became a symbol to reiterate the blood kinship of an integrated Chinese nation annually.

Moreover, the Republican government implemented a more ambitious project to frame Shaanxi as a physical space to rediscover the national memory of the Chinese nation. Japan’s military attack on Shanghai in January 1932 revealed Nanjing’s vulnerability as the principal capital, when the National Government temporarily moved to Luoyang 洛陽 and officially moved back to Nanjing on December 1 of the same year.<sup>722</sup> Considering Nanjing’s vulnerability and the impending war with Japan, the relocated government in Luoyang decided to set Xi’an as the auxiliary capital 陪都 and rename it Xijing 西京 in preparation for a more extensive project of developing Northwest China.<sup>723</sup> In terms of the precise scope of the northwest area, it generally refers to six provinces of Republican China: Shaanxi, Gansu 甘肅, Suiyuan 綏遠, Ningxia 寧夏, Qinghai 青海, and Xinjiang 新疆.<sup>724</sup> Among them, Shaanxi and Gansu appear to be especially significant due to “the status as the birthplace of the Chinese civilization and as the political, economic as well as cultural center during the

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<sup>721</sup> Keigh K. Jenco, “Can the Chinese Nation Be One? Gu Jiegang, Chinese Muslims, and the Reworking of Culturalism,” *Modern China*, v. 45, n. 6 (2019): 12; 23.

<sup>722</sup> Charles D. Musgrove, *China’s Contested Capital: Architecture, Ritual, and Response in Nanjing* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 248.

<sup>723</sup> Lu Liu, *A Whole Nation Walking: The “Great Retreat” in the War of Resistance, 1937-1945* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2002), 73-4.

<sup>724</sup> Shen Sung-Chiao 沈松橋, “江山如此多嬌：1930年代的西北旅行書寫與國族想象 [Travel Writing and the Imagination of Chinese Nationhood during the 1930s: A Case Study on the Northwestern Region],” *台大歷史學報* [Historical Inquiry of National Taiwan University], n. 37 (2006): 154.

golden ages of Han and Tang dynasties.”<sup>725</sup> As Chiang Ching-kuo 蔣經國 (1910-1988) explored Northwest China from Luoyang 洛陽 to Dunhuang 敦煌 in April 1942; he described this territory as the deserted homeland of the Chinese nation, which demanded contemporary descendants to return to this land:

Northwest, you, the ancient homeland of the Chinese nation, graves of our ancestors, the brilliant culture and heritage left by our ancestors are contained over there. Nevertheless, it has been a long time since the last meeting; the descendants of the Chinese nation have not met with their ancestors' hometown for a long time, have forgotten our inexhaustible cultural treasures, and even more, have forgotten the small number of compatriots who remained in Northwest.<sup>726</sup>

As a metaphorical extension of the sense of territory, the homeland is not only a physical space but a place of origin and integrity where all its members are imagined to share this home.<sup>727</sup> Jiang Jingguo described Northwest China as an ancestral homeland of the Chinese nation: many generations of Chinese people have been living and dying on this soil; the cultural sites created during the remote past in this terrain establish Chinese people's deep primordial attachment to the Northwest area. The remote, desolate and forgotten Northwest area became the place of hope for the national revival as Northeast China fell into the Japanese occupation and affluent South China became the target of the Japanese attack.

Xijing was the center of gravity for the campaign to develop Northwest China due to its geographical gateway to Northwest China and its glorious past.<sup>728</sup> The Xijing

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<sup>725</sup> Ibid.

<sup>726</sup> Jiang Jingguo 蔣經國, 偉大的西北 [The Great Northwest] (Chongqing: Tiandi Press, 1943), 54.

<sup>727</sup> Philip L. Kohl, *Homelands in the Present and in the Past: Political Implications of a Dangerous Concept*, chap. in *The Archaeology of Power and Politics in Eurasia: Regimes and Revolutionaries*, eds. Charles W. Hartley, G. Bike Yazicioglu and Adam T. Smith (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 148.

<sup>728</sup> Ni Xiying 倪錫英, 西京 [Xijing] (Shanghai: Zhonghua Book Company, 1936), 13; 21.

Planning Committee 西京籌備委員會 was set up in June 1932 to be responsible for building up this additional capital, which existed until 1945.<sup>729</sup> The promotion of urban modernization and the preservation of cultural sites were concurrently advanced under the charge of this planning committee.<sup>730</sup> The multi-published *Brief Map of Historical Sites and Famous Places in Xijing* 西京古蹟名勝略圖 suggests the Republican government's objective in representing its capability of modernizing this long-forgotten ancient city (**fig. 5.12**). When this map was completed in September 1932, the Longhai railway 隴海鐵路 had not reached Xijing, which is therefore absent in this earliest version.<sup>731</sup> The urban structure of Xijing dominates the defining feature of this map, including the impressive city wall, the city moat, and the urn city 甕城 outside each city gate in four directions.<sup>732</sup> As this map was published in the book *Travel Guide of Xijing* 西京導遊 in 1936, the red Longhai railway line and station just north of the city wall immediately catch the viewer's attention. The Longhai Railroad finally extended to Xi'an in December 1934, which was a real breakthrough for the formerly far-away and inaccessible Xi'an to establish a connection with modernity.<sup>733</sup> Additionally, around thirty historical sites and famous spots stand out with red

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<sup>729</sup> Pierre-Etienne Will, *Xi'an, 1900-1940: From Isolated Backwater to Resistance Center*, chap. in *New Narratives of Urban Space in Republican Chinese Cities: Emerging Social, Legal and Governance Orders*, ed. Billy K. L. So and Madeleine Zelin (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2013), 228.

<sup>730</sup> Wu Hongqi 吳宏岐, "抗戰時期的西京籌備委員會及其對西安城市建設的貢獻 [Xijing Planning Committee during the War of Resistance and its Contribution to the Urban Construction of Xi'an]," *中國歷史地理論叢* [Collections of Essays on Chinese Historical Geography], v. 16, n. 4 (2001): 50-6.

<sup>731</sup> Yang Bo 楊博, *長安道上: 民國陝西遊記* [On the Way to Chang'an: Shaanxi Travelogue in Republican China] (Nanjing: Nanjing Teacher's University Press, 2016), 32-3.

<sup>732</sup> The presently surviving Xi'an city wall was initiated by Zhu Yuanzhang, the first emperor of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) when Xi'an was selected as the provincial capital. Stephen W. Bushell, *Chinese Art* (New York: Parkstone Press, 2010), 33.

<sup>733</sup> Pierre-Etienne Will, *Xi'an, 1900-1940*, chap. in *New Narratives of Urban Space in Republican Chinese Cities*, 223; 246.

characters to highlight their importance, such as Bell Tower 鐘樓, Drum Tower 鼓樓, and Stele Forest 碑林 in the South. This map is an invention from an original *Map of Xi'an 城關圖* being depicted during the Guangxu period 光緒 (1875-1908) under the supervision of the official Tao Mo 陶模 (1835-1902) (**fig. 5.13**).<sup>734</sup> The general structure of both maps remains similar, while newly-defined zones inside the city and the transportation networks outside the city wall demonstrate the modern transformation of Xi'an in the 1930s. For example, the walled Eight Banners drilling ground 八旗校場 visible in the *Map of Xi'an* has been repartitioned into three parallel sections during the Republican period.<sup>735</sup> New City 新城 occupies the prominent middle part; to its north, there are Small Stele Forest 小碑林 and Fei Stone of Tang Dynasty 唐肺石; the old city of Qin Princely Palace 秦藩舊城 of Ming Dynasty is in the South of the New City.<sup>736</sup> Compared with the pictorial obliteration of Tang and Ming traces from the area of the Eight Banners drilling ground in the Qing map, the Republican government investigated the historical sites and juxtaposed them with the New City.

The Republican government invented the tradition of ancestor worship in China in the 1930s, promoting the citizens to participate in the public ceremony for the Father of Nation Sun Yat-sen, redefining the Qingming Festival into the National Tomb-Sweeping Festival, and rediscovering the historical sites in Shaanxi Province. A homogeneous national identity of multi-ethnic citizens was promoted and transmitted

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<sup>734</sup> Song Liankui 宋聯奎, ed., 咸寧長安兩縣續志 [Continued Compilation of Gazetteer for Two Counties Xianning and Changan] v. 1 (1936): 3-4.

<sup>735</sup> Pierre-Etienne Will, *Xi'an, 1900-1940*, 241.

<sup>736</sup> *Ibid.*

through the public sacrificial rituals for the first ancestor of the Chinese nation—the Yellow Emperor. The rediscovery of the glorious Chinese past inhabiting Shaanxi Province and other Northwest areas defended the historical continuity of the Chinese nation and further legitimated the political authority of Republican China. At the same time, the public promotion of returning to the homeland—Northwest China, where the ancestors of the Chinese nation created the brilliant medieval Chinese civilization, justified the political campaign of shifting to the under-developed Northwest area on the eve of the war. This historical context provided the premise for the audience during the war period to read *Panoramic View of Five Mausoleums of Tang Dynasty* by Wang Ziyun. In this landscape painting, Wang established a connection to the National Tomb-Sweeping Festival through five mausoleums while also representing the land of the vast northwest as the homeland of the Chinese nation by tracing the cultural heritage of a traditional painting theme.

### **A Cult of Tang Dynasty**

Corresponding to his landscape painting which valorizes the Tang dynasty, Wang also defined the Tang dynasty as the most prominent phase in the history of Chinese sculpture. He divided the development of ancient Chinese sculpture into four stages: the primitive newborn stage, the stage of growth, the stage of maturity and splendor, and the declining stage, resembling a complete cycle of an organism.<sup>737</sup> The theoretical framework that Wang appropriated to write the continuum of ancient Chinese sculpture history is a cyclical pattern of rise and decline. Sui and Tang dynasties emerge to be

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<sup>737</sup> Wang Ziyun 王子雲, 中國古代雕塑百圖 [One Hundred Images of Ancient Chinese Sculpture] (Beijing: People's Fine Art Press, 1981), 概說 [Introduction]: 5.

critical as being defined to be the stage of maturity and splendor.<sup>738</sup> Why did Wang select the cyclic framework to formulate the history of Chinese sculpture? Why did he describe Sui and Tang Dynasties as the golden age of Chinese sculpture?

The cyclical schema of rise and decline was surely not Wang's initiative to write the ancient art history but an appropriation from the German art historian and archaeologist Winckelmann. Winckelmann conceived art history as a cyclical rather than a progressive evolution; cultures emerge as isolated, autonomous organisms that undergo successive stages of birth, growth, flowering, and decline.<sup>739</sup> Winckelmann elaborated on this system of approaching art history in his masterpiece *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (History of the Art of Antiquity) published in 1764.<sup>740</sup> He claimed:

From a simplicity of shape the artist next proceeded to examine proportions; this inquiry taught exactness; the exactness hereby acquired gave confidence, and afterwards success, to his endeavors after grandeur, and at last gradually raised art among the Greeks to the highest beauty. After all the parts constituting grandeur and beauty were united, the artist, in seeking to embellish them, fell into the error of profuseness; art consequently lost its grandeur; and the loss was finally followed by its utter downfall.<sup>741</sup>

The description of the development of art from simplicity, maturity to grandeur and decline made the cyclic pattern of rise and decline applicable to all artistic traditions.

In addition to the idea of a historical process from rise to decline, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* is informed by another critical notion—a theory of artistic style

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<sup>738</sup> Ibid.

<sup>739</sup> Suzanne L. Marchand, *The Making of a Cultural Obsession*, chap. in *Down from Olympus* (Princeton and New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 10.

<sup>740</sup> Frederick C. Beiser, *Winckelmann and Neo-classicism*, chap. in *Diotimas Children: German Aesthetic Rationalism from Leibniz to Lessing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 161

<sup>741</sup> Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *The History of Ancient Art*, trans. G. Henry Lodge (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1880), v. 1: 134.

embedded in a specific historical context.<sup>742</sup> Likewise, Wang followed Winckelmann to highlight the description of a historical context for each phase in his cyclic system. The description of a historical context always plays the role of opening a new chapter; the idea of an artistic style suggesting a specific political reality penetrates the whole text of his writing as well.<sup>743</sup>

Wang's familiarity and fascination with Winckelmann's doctrines should start with his sculpture training at the Ecole des Beaux-arts de Paris. He was trained in the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris from 1931 to 1937 with the sculptor Paul Landowski (1875-1961), who recently finished the commission of the *Sun Yat-sen Seated Portrait* in 1930 for his mausoleum in Nanjing.<sup>744</sup> The training at the Ecole des Beaux-arts acquainted him with the classical doctrine of Winckelmann as the theoretical foundation of academic training; he narrated in his travelogue:

The discovery of Pompeii and the excavation of the old city of Rome are directly related to the development of classical art that emerged in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and to the emergence of academic art. After the mid-eighteenth century, the German archaeologist of art Winkelmann began to conduct archaeological excavations throughout Italy and wrote *The History of Ancient Art*. This book was soon published in French in Paris and became a sensation throughout Europe. This led to a climax in studying Greek and Roman art, which led to a reverence for Greece and Rome, namely, to a longing for ancient art and the emergence of the Classical school.<sup>745</sup>

As Wang pointed out, Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, which was

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<sup>742</sup> Monica Juneja, *The Making of New Delhi*, chap. in *Modernity's Classics*, eds. Sarah C. Humphreys and Rudolf G. Wagner (Heidelberg: Springer, 2013), 29.

<sup>743</sup> Wang Ziyun 王子雲, *中國雕塑藝術史* [History of Chinese Sculptural Art] (Beijing: People's Fine Art Press, 2011).

<sup>744</sup> Rudolf G. Wagner, *Ritual, Architecture, Politics, and Publicity during the Republic: Enshrining Sun Yat-sen*, chap. in *Chinese Architecture and the Beaux-Arts*, eds. Jeffrey W. Cody, Nancy S. Steinhardt and Tony Atkin (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 252.

<sup>745</sup> Wang Ziyun 王子雲, *從長安到雅典: 中外美術考古遊記* [From Chang'an to Athens: Travelogue on Archaeology of Art in China and Foreign Countries] (Changsha: Yuelu Publishing House, 2005), 3: 583-84.

published in 1764 in Dresden, quickly became a classic and laid the foundations for modern art history.<sup>746</sup> Considering his fluent French, Wang probably read the French version of Winckelmann's work. He seems intent on drawing parallels between his archaeology of art in northwest China and Winkelmann's archaeological excavations in Italy and following the disciplines established by Winkelmann to write Chinese art history. The widespread reception of Winkelmann's writing in France and its practice in French academic art education was likely key to Wang's enthusiasm for Winckelmann's method of writing ancient art history.

Winckelmann was widely received in France, especially for his brilliant theory on the intimate connection between purified classical aesthetics and liberal politics, which enjoyed an unprecedented vogue in France in the years after 1789.<sup>747</sup> The Louvre was reconfigured as the center to the fulfillment of France as patron and protector of the arts.<sup>748</sup> When the Louvre became a national museum after the French Revolution and Napoleon, Winckelmann's doctrines underpinned its treatment of past material culture.<sup>749</sup> Artifacts from different times and lands were taken out of their initial contexts and presented in chronological order, reinforcing and constructing the French holistic view of civilization by equating national cultural heritage with world cultural heritage.<sup>750</sup> This chronological display from ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, and Rome

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<sup>746</sup> H. B. Nisbet, *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism: Winckelmann, Lessing, Hamann, Herder, Schiller, Goethe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 31.

<sup>747</sup> Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 225.

<sup>748</sup> John Pemble, *The Rome We Have Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 26.

<sup>749</sup> Krysti Damilati and Giorgos Vavouranakis, *What Future for Archaeology's Past?*, chap. in *Far from Equilibrium: An Archaeology of Energy, Life and Humanity*, eds. Michael J. Boyd and Roger C. P. Doonan (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2021), 118.

<sup>750</sup> *Ibid.*



to masterpieces of the Renaissance, and finally to France's artistic achievements were based on Winckelmann's association between liberty and art and mirrored France's self-orientation.<sup>751</sup> French politicians of the 1790s adopted Winckelmann's thesis that art migrated with liberty from Egypt to Greece, then from Greece to Rome.<sup>752</sup> They argued Paris must be "the new homeland of the muses and school of the universe" considering the migration of freedom from Rome to Paris.<sup>753</sup> As such, the Louvre classifies art history by epochs to define evolutionary progress with a seemingly neutral depiction, by which nineteenth-century France is framed as the pinnacle of artistic achievements.<sup>754</sup> Despite the incorporation of new acquisitions from excavations to expand the museum, the Napoleonic project was not questioned and the concept of exhibiting artifacts in the Louvre remained more or less the same from 1802 to the early 1930s.<sup>755</sup>

The Louvre's display narratives with Winckelmann's writings as the theoretical underpinnings shaped the French-trained sculptor Wang's view of art history. Visiting sculptures in the collection of different museums in Paris was part and parcel of his artistic training during Wang's training period in Paris, especially the Louvre collection. A central part of the Ecole's curriculum was the copy from the antique in the galleries of the Louvre.<sup>756</sup> Wang's copy of the famous Greek statuette *Apollo of Piombino* collected in Louvre epitomized this training method.<sup>757</sup> Such an experience of copying

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<sup>751</sup> Ibid.

<sup>752</sup> John Pemble, *The Rome We Have Lost*, 22.

<sup>753</sup> Ibid.

<sup>754</sup> Mike Crang, *On Display: The Poetics, Politics and Interpretation of Exhibitions*, chap. in *Cultural Geography in Practice*, eds. Alison Blunt, Pyrs Gruffudd, Jon May, Miles Ogborn and David Pinder (New York: Routledge, 2014), 261.

<sup>755</sup> Delia Tzortzaki, *Myth and the Ideal in 20th c. Exhibitions of Classical Art*, chap. in *A Companion to Greek Art*, eds. Tyler Jo Smith and Dimitris Plantzos (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 671.

<sup>756</sup> Sue Roe, *The Private Lives of the Impressionists* (London: Vintage Books, 2007), 8.

<sup>757</sup> Wang Ziyun 王子雲, 從長安到雅典: 中外美術考古遊記 [From Chang'an to Athens: Travelogue

at the Louvre shaped his perception of the sculpture's history in addition to training him to be a professional sculptor. He gathered together eight ancient sculptures produced in the ancient era in different areas of the world while in the French collection in 1930 to display a “comparison of sculptural forms of various ethnicities in the world 世界各民族雕刻形体之对照” to Chinese audiences (**fig. 5.14**). These include the *Apollo of Piombino* from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, which he copied at the Ecole, another masterpiece in the Louvre collection—the *Venus de Milo*, and a Chinese Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara from Song 宋 (960-1279) or Jin 金 (1115-1234) dynasties in the collection of the Musée Guimet (**fig. 5.15; fig. 5.16**). Based on eight photographs of ancient sculptures, he further put forward the idea that these ancient sculptures from all over the world collected in Paris are the starting point of the modern emerging sculpture of Europe. Displaying sculptures from diverse areas of the world as the foundation of modern European sculpture implies the supremacy of Europe as the apogee of modern civilization. This narrative should stem from the Louvre's presentation of France as the culmination of the world's artistic development.

By the same token, Wang's exaltation of ancient sculpture related to the widespread acceptance of Winckelmann's writings in France. The Roman classicism of French art and architecture gave way to neoclassicism with the publication of Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, which cited Winckelmann's reconstruction of ancient Greece as a source of inspiration.<sup>758</sup> The re-

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on Archaeology of Art in China and Foreign Countries] (Changsha: Yuelu Publishing House, 2005), 3: 442.

<sup>758</sup> John Pemble, *The Rome We Have Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 22.

institutionalization of artistic education was promoted during the same period.<sup>759</sup> In actuality, the reputation of the Paris ateliers as centers of art education originated in the 1790s from the atelier of the prominent Neoclassical painter Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825).<sup>760</sup> David's aesthetic introduced a new idea to the academic art training that art should be founded upon ancient statuary and architecture, which was likewise an archaeological concept derived from Winckelmann's writings.<sup>761</sup> Winckelmann associated the ideal beauty of antique art with the political freedom of ancient Greek and called for "a renewal of artistic culture through a return to the true values of ancient Greek art."<sup>762</sup> David and the artists around him sought to foster this connection between classical aesthetics and liberal politics in the years after 1789.<sup>763</sup> As an artist devoting himself to teaching and pedagogical theory and practice, David contributed to the abolishment of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture and its more democratic reconfiguration, the future Ecole des Beaux-Arts.<sup>764</sup> Using classical Greek and Roman art and architecture to teach was a formalized model of learning in the Beaux-Arts instruction system until the early 1900s.<sup>765</sup> The study at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris built up Wang's classical taste based on Winckelmann's writings.

In particular, the academic training at the Ecole transferred Winckelmann's

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<sup>759</sup> Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History*, 226.

<sup>760</sup> Stuart Macdonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2004), 286.

<sup>761</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>762</sup> Alex Potts, "Beautiful Bodies and Dying Heroes: Images of Ideal Manhood in the French Revolution," *History Workshop Journal*, v. 30, n. 1 (1990): 2.

<sup>763</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>764</sup> Dorothy Johnson, *Jacques-Louis David, Artist, and Teacher: An Introduction*, chap. in *Jacques-Louis David: New Perspectives*, ed. Dorothy Johnson (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), 35.

<sup>765</sup> Christine Morano Magee and Carol A. Kochhar-Bryant, *The Studio: An Environment for the Development of Social Justice in Teaching and Learning*, chap. in *Culturally Relevant Arts Education for Social Justice: A Way Out of No Way*, eds. Mary Stone Hanley, George W. Noblit, Gilda L. Sheppard and Thom Barone (New York: Routledge, 2013), 206.

doctrine of imitation to Wang, which further built up his admiration for the antique. Winckelmann's doctrine of imitation suggests that artists copy ancient works of art on canvas or in stone; art academies throughout Europe began to educate their students by having them reproduce antique models since Winckelmann's day.<sup>766</sup> More importantly, Winckelmann claimed that the method of the Greek masters was to collect perfect features from many similar particulars in nature and weld them into a single ideal of perfection. Therefore, modern artists' imitation of ancient models is, in essence, a process of mastering the ancient methods.<sup>767</sup> Wang practiced this doctrine of imitation as he was trained to be a sculptor at the Ecole des Beaux-arts. His maiden work "Nightingale 夜鶯" in Paris, which was published in *Beiyang Pictorial* 北洋畫報 in 1931, demonstrates his training in imitation (**fig. 5.17**). In European literature, the nightingale is often identified with Virgin Mary to represent the chaste, virtuous and aristocratic femininity.<sup>768</sup> Wang named his maiden work "Nightingale" obviously following this traditional connection between the nightingale and Virgin Mary. The features of this sculpted woman also established its link to the ancient sculpture in terms of the drapery, part of her mantel covering her head and her right hand pulling the end of her mantel over her left shoulder, as its comparison with the *Large Herculaneum Woman* in the Dresden collection indicates (**fig. 5.18**). Around 1711, three marble statues of draped female figures were discovered in a well under the petrified volcanic mud covering the ancient site of Herculaneum, including the left one in this slide;

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<sup>766</sup> Frederick C. Beiser, *Winckelmann and Neo-classicism*, chap. in *Diotimas Children*, 165

<sup>767</sup> Frederick C. Beiser, 166.

<sup>768</sup> Jeni Williams, *Interpreting Nightingales: Gender, Class and Histories* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 92.

Frederick Augustus II, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, bought three of them from Vienna in 1736.<sup>769</sup> Winckelmann saw them in Dresden in 1754 and referred to them as Vestal Virgins; he highly praised the “grand manner” in which they were carved, and they became models for artists to reproduce.<sup>770</sup> Thus, the title “Nightingale” is probably derived from the text in which Winkelmann identified the *Herculaneum Woman* as the Vestal Virgin.

Although Wang’s debut “Nightingale” is close in shape to the *Large Herculaneum Woman* in the Dresden collection, the lines and angles of this female figure’s drapery folds evoke the Gothic style as exemplified by the exterior sculptures of the Reims Cathedral. The teachers of the Sculpture Atelier at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Paris did take students on field trips beyond Paris. The existent photograph demonstrates that the sculptor Henri Bouchard (1875-1960) used to take his students to visit the Reims Cathedral, in which a Chinese student and the later famous sculptor Wang Linyi 王臨乙 (1908-1997) is present (**fig. 5.19**). They decided to take a photo at the West Portal below the group statues *Annunciation and Visitation*. Such photos would likely become reference material for their creations after the fieldwork. Wang Linyi enrolled in the atelier of Bouchard at the Ecole in 1931, the same year when Wang Ziyun enrolled in the atelier of Landowski. Wang Ziyun should have had a similar fieldwork experience. He created “Nightingale” by combining the classical *Large Herculaneum Woman* that Winkelmann appreciated with the information he obtained during his fieldwork.

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<sup>769</sup> Jennifer Trimble, *Women and Visual Replication in Roman Imperial Art and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 18-9.

<sup>770</sup> Jennifer Trimble, *Women and Visual Replication in Roman Imperial Art and Culture*, 21.

After students mastered ideal beauty standards from antique models, they advanced to represent life models based on the ideal standards they acquired. The life model is commonly posed to recall a specific classical sculpture, such as the sculpture of Apollo in the Louvre collection.<sup>771</sup> The photograph capturing Wang Ziyun in his teacher Landowski's sculpture class illustrates this training discipline (**fig. 5.20**). The model's pose is presented through the visible exercise works, which recalls the pose of the ephebe statue discovered in Pompeii (**fig. 5.21**). The model in Wang's class appears to imitate the pose of this ephebe. He looks down in the general direction of his raised hand, which is in the pose of holding probably a stick, and another hand is lowered; his feet are naturally apart with one in front of the other. Additionally, the students were expected to alternate between copying life models and replicating antiques in order to ascertain the antique ideal.<sup>772</sup> Therefore, Winckelmann's doctrine of imitating the antique aesthetic beauty was conveyed to the Chinese artist Wang Ziyun through academic sculpture training in Paris, which impacted his future archaeology of art in China and his perception of ancient Chinese sculpture.

According to Wang's framework, the mature and splendid Sui and Tang period art is the golden age modern China should promote. This perception could be compared with Teng Gu 滕固 (1901-1941)'s well-known work *A Short History of Chinese Art* 中國美術小史, published in 1926. Teng referred to the evolutionary theory to divide the history of Chinese art also into four stages: growth, mixture, prosperity, and

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<sup>771</sup> Andrew Graciano, *Introduction: Models and Modeling in Art, Anatomy, and Medicine*, chap. in *Visualizing the Body in Art, Anatomy, and Medicine Since 1800*, ed. Andrews Graciano (New York: Routledge, 2019), 5-6.

<sup>772</sup> Susan Waller, "Professional Poseurs: The Male Model in the Ecole des Beaux-arts and the Popular Imagination," *Oxford Art Journal*, v. 25, n. 2 (2002): 46

stagnancy. His definition of the Era of Mixture and the Era of Prosperity is of particular interest. Teng claimed that the most glorious era in history is the Era of Mixture as the combination of foreign culture and the local, national spirit can give birth to a developed and upward culture, just like the mixed-race children are the best according to eugenics.<sup>773</sup> Due to the introduction of Buddhist culture, the Wei-Jin and North-South Dynasties 魏晉南北朝 (220-589) were classified as the Era of Mixture.<sup>774</sup> Teng proclaimed that this hybrid art was gradually transformed into a unique national art from the Sui 隋 (581-618), Tang 唐 (618-907), and Five Dynasties 五代 (907-906) to the Song Dynasty 宋; he, therefore, categorized this period as the golden age of Chinese art history.<sup>775</sup> Wang Ziyun also classified the Sui and Tang dynasties as “the stage of maturity and splendor” of Chinese sculpture, yet he failed to expound the specific reasons for such a classification.<sup>776</sup> Although the prosperous era that Teng defined is much longer, both Teng and Wang claimed Sui and Tang dynasties as the golden age of Chinese art history. At the same time, Teng directly put forward the ambition of the revival or renaissance of national art, which is implied in Wang’s writings while he did not clearly articulate. Teng claims:

In this period of stagnation, the unique spirit of our nation has been lost. In recent years, the trend of European learning in the East has been increasing day by day; the arts have also begun to accommodate foreign ideas and foreign sentiments; considering the principles of history, there should be a turnaround. Nevertheless, if the national spirit is not developed, foreign ideas will not help. The national spirit is flesh and blood of the national art; foreign ideas are the tonic of the national art. In vain to wait for the tonic without the own exercise,

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<sup>773</sup> Teng Gu 滕固, 中國美術小史 [A Short History of Chinese Art] (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1926), 15.

<sup>774</sup> Ibid.

<sup>775</sup> Teng Gu, *A Short History of Chinese Art* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1926), 26.

<sup>776</sup> Wang Ziyun 王子雲, 中國古代雕塑百圖 [One Hundred Images of Ancient Chinese Sculpture] (Beijing: People’s Fine Art Press, 1981), 概說 [Introduction]: 5.

to seek development, this is impossible! Therefore, the opportunity to turn history around and open up a new situation for Chinese art depends on the revival movement of national art.<sup>777</sup>

According to Teng, European culture had spread in Republican China for more than a decade in 1926 when he published this book, which perfectly fits his definition of the Era of Mixture. He tried to prove that the present was the right time to create another Era of Prosperity in Chinese history. Both Wang and Teng anticipated a future Republican China to restore the glory of the Sui and Tang eras in their writings; the art of this period thus became the paradigm that the modern Chinese renaissance movement was supposed to promote.

As Wang Ziyun was investigating and writing the history of Chinese sculpture, he attempted to highlight some sculptural monuments in the Tang dynasty to substantiate his golden age. The monumental stone lion in front of the Shun Mausoleum 順陵 is likely to be one of the ancient Chinese cultural symbols Wang Ziyun sought during his archeological investigation. The walking stone lion outside the South Gate of the mausoleum is enormous in size, 3.55 meters in height.<sup>778</sup> Wang claimed that the female monarch Wu Zetian (r. 690-705) established this tomb for her mother as ostentation of the sovereign authority; the stone lions of the Shun mausoleum can rival *Dying Slave* by the Italian sculptor Michelangelo (1475-1564) in the impressive visual impacts.<sup>779</sup> The lion stands out in a group photograph with Wang and his students visiting the lion in the Shun mausoleum in the 1950s when it was still positioned at its original location

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<sup>777</sup> Teng Gu, *A Short History of Chinese Art*, 51.

<sup>778</sup> Wang Ziyun 王子雲, *中國雕塑藝術史* [History of Chinese Sculpture Art] (Beijing: People's Fine Art Press, 1988), 272.

<sup>779</sup> Wang Ziyun, *History of Chinese Sculpture Art*, 272-73.



of spreading farmland (**fig. 5.22**). It has been moved into the Shaanxi History Museum 陝西歷史博物館, established in June 1991, and reframed as the symbol of local culture. It is placed at the center of the central lobby; a huge photograph representing the rushing Yellow River and the sprawling Loess Plateau is set behind as its background (**fig. 5.23**).<sup>780</sup> As an auspicious symbol capable of expelling evil forces in China, stone lions are usually placed in front of traditional Chinese buildings, including palaces and government offices.<sup>781</sup> The tradition of lions as the symbol of status and power is reframed to guard the local culture in Shaanxi province as the lion was moved from the Shun mausoleum to the Shaanxi History Province.

The method of highlighting the ancient Chinese monuments mirrors Wang's ambition to establish a chronological Chinese tradition that can compete with the European civilization.<sup>782</sup> The absence of monumental sculptures in Chinese public spaces was the main reason for his selection of studying sculpture in Paris rather than painting; he talked about this critical turn in his travelogue:

I studied oil painting in China. When I came to Paris, I saw that most of the large buildings and public squares in this metropolis were decorated with various sculptures. I realized that the art of sculpture played a much more important role in embellishing our lives and building our cities than painting. As art should serve human society, I decided to study sculpture.<sup>783</sup>

Wang was well aware of the connection between cultural prosperity and national power

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<sup>780</sup> Wang Zhiyan 王志艷, ed., 尋找絲綢之路的起點: 走進陝西文明 [Searching for the Beginning of the Silk Road: Going Inside the Shaanxi Civilization] (Harbin: Heilongjiang People's Press, 2006), 80.

<sup>781</sup> Jiang Chun and Fan Yu, "Cultural Metaphors in China: A Visual Experience of Hierarchy and Status Symbols," *Intercultural Communication Studies*, v. XVII, n. 1 (2008): 76.

<sup>782</sup> Sarah E. Fraser, *Buddhist Archaeology in Republican China: A New Relationship to the Past*, chap. in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, n. 167 (2011): 164; 190.

<sup>783</sup> Wang Ziyun 王子雲, 從長安到雅典: 中外美術考古遊記 [From Chang'an to Athens: Travelogue on Archaeology of Art in China and Foreign Countries] (Changsha: Yuelu Publishing House, 2005), 3: 417.

from his training background in Paris. He highlighted the Tang Dynasty sculpture to visualize this medieval golden age in Chinese history, employing ancient glory to promise a bright future.

### **Present by showing the past**

Wang's appropriation of Winckelmann's theoretical framework and his promotion of the Sui and Tang dynasties as the golden age involved a more complicated context of learning from Germany to realize the national revival. During the May Fourth New Culture Movement, Chinese intellectuals put forward the critical question: whether China, the old and weak nation, would be able to revive?<sup>784</sup> The notion of reviving the Chinese nation became prominent after Japan occupied the Northeast area in 1931. Chinese intellectuals found a resemblance between 1930s China and fragmented Germany after French forces under Napoleon occupied Prussia in 1806. The unification of Germany in 1871 provided a substantive example for the future national revival of present crisis-ridden China.<sup>785</sup> The German-trained politician Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (1887-1969) claimed: "What was the situation in Germany at that time? In our country, Manchuria is independent; Mongolia demands autonomy; Xinjiang also begins to stir up; as for Tibet, it has long been under the British wing. All these situations are the same with Germany of a hundred years ago."<sup>786</sup> Based on the claim that there are

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<sup>784</sup> Yu Zuhua 俞祖華 and Zhao Hui Feng 趙慧峰, "近代中華民族復興觀念的生成及其衍化 [Construction and Derivation of the Concept of Chinese National Revival in Modern Era]," 天津社會科學 [Tianjin Social Sciences], n. 3 (2014): 135

<sup>785</sup> Wang Yi 王毅, "再生"雜誌的民族復興思想研究 [Research on the National Revival Ideology of Magazine *Renaissance*] (Nanning: Guangxi People's Press, 2012), 61.

<sup>786</sup> Zhang Junmai 張君勱 addressed, Yang Zupei 楊祖培 recorded, "十九世紀德意志民族之復興: 在廣州南海中學演講 [The National Revival of Germany in the Nineteenth Century: Lecture at Nanhai High School, Guangzhou]," 再生 [Renaissance], v. 3, n. 1 (1935): 2.

similarities between the present China and Germany after the Franco-Prussian War of 1806, Zhang introduced the social cycle theory to validate the possibility of China's national revival; he declared:

The German revival after 1807 came as a result of foreign coercion. The Chinese nation had its first fluorescence at the end of the Zhou dynasty 周 (ca. 1100 BC-256 BC); after the *Upheaval of China by the Five Barbarians* 五胡亂華 (304-316 AD), it declined dramatically and then had its second fluorescence in the Tang Dynasty 唐 (618-907). In my opinion, China is the only nation in the world that has existed the longest and has not yet died, and there will definitely be a third fluorescence in the future.<sup>787</sup>

Zhang drew an analogy between the *Franco-Prussian War* and the *Upheaval of China by Five Barbarians*, while the unification of Germany and the rise of the Tang dynasty followed the plight of their respective foreign subjugation. The successful renewal of both Germany and past China from foreign oppression theoretically validates the possibility of Republican China's rise under similar external pressures. More importantly, this mode of discourse implies that the borrowing of the German revival experience and the invention of the Chinese past are equally critical to the enterprise of rejuvenating China. When it comes to learning from Germany, the superior academic culture of Germany, instead of its political and military strengths, was regarded as the foundation for Germany's unification in 1871 and its swift recovery after the first world war.<sup>788</sup> The German-trained philosopher He Lin 賀麟 claimed in 1938: "The first-class countries with academic culture will eventually recover despite occasional

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<sup>787</sup> Zhang Junmai 張君勱 addressed, Wang Shixian 王世憲 recorded, "民族復興運動: 定州平民教育會演講 [National Revival Movement: Lecture at Dingzhou Civilian Education Association]," 再生 [Renaissance], v. 1, n. 10 (1933): 7-8.

<sup>788</sup> He Lin 賀麟, 抗戰建國與學術建國 [Building the Nation via Antiwar and Scholarship], chap. 文化與人生: 賀麟全集 [Culture and Life: Complete Works of He Lin] (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 2011), 26.

political and military setbacks. For example, Germany's political and military power fell to the ground after the European War, but its academic culture still ranks as a first-class country, so it will eventually recover as a first-class power."<sup>789</sup> The concept of *Kulturnation* was appropriated from Germany in China; *Wissenschaft*, namely scholarship, was regarded to underlie the Chinese nation-building.<sup>790</sup> This reverence for German academic culture in the 1930s nurtured the artist Wang Ziyun. When he adopted Winckelmann's cyclical pattern to write Chinese sculpture history with Tang Dynasty as its golden age, he was involved in the rejuvenation project of Republican China.

Inventing the past to frame a present powerful nation is parallel to the nineteenth-century German approach. The revival of ancient Greek culture shaped the cultural imagination of Germany, and German intellectuals in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century believed that ancient Greece achieved the pinnacle of artistic beauty and individual morality.<sup>791</sup> This alternative of reviving the ancient Greek culture positioned Germany as an evenly-matched rival to the Roman-inspired classicism of France.<sup>792</sup> In the context of promoting the identity of *the Kulturnation* of Germany, art museums with educational and didactical missions were erected with an inimitable impetus in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, including the Glyptothek in Munich in 1816 and the Altes Museum in Berlin in 1830.<sup>793</sup> The transformation of Munich into an art city during the reign of

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<sup>789</sup> Ibid.

<sup>790</sup> He Lin, "Building the Nation via Antiwar and Scholarship," 28.

<sup>791</sup> Jason Geary, *Ancient Greece, and the German Cultural Imagination*, chap. in *The Politics of Appropriation: German Romantic Music and the Ancient Greek Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 10.

<sup>792</sup> Ibid.

<sup>793</sup> Kathleen James-Chakraborty, *An Architecture of Fragmentation and Absence: West German*

King Ludwig I is a significant demonstration of Germany's pursuit of *Kultur*. Due to his ardent passion for ancient Greek culture, King Ludwig patronized the erection of neoclassical buildings and the collection of Greek antiquities in Munich during his 23-year reign.<sup>794</sup> The Neoclassical building Glyptothek was established in 1830 to display the King's collection of pedimental sculptures from the Temple of Aphaia at Aegina (**fig. 5.24**).<sup>795</sup> A photograph in 1910 records how these ancient Greek sculptures were exhibited from 1830 in the Äginetensaal of the Glyptothek (**fig. 5.25**). The floors and walls of this hall were covered with rich, colored marbles; the lunettes and the vaults had painted stucco decoration to enhance the Greek Sculptures.<sup>796</sup> The sumptuous setting around the mutilated monuments of antiquity conveys its royal founder's veneration and educational intent.<sup>797</sup> A physical space that symbolizes the distinctive "German nation" as the *Kulturstaat* is established through the neo-classical building and ancient Greek collections.

Wang knew well about Germany's appropriation of Greek culture to construct the national identity during the nineteenth century. He pointed out that the archaeology of art in Germany preceded other European countries; their explorations of ancient Greek art promoted the development of German art.<sup>798</sup> He traveled around Germany and

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Museums, chap. in *Modernism as Memory: Building Identity in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 84.

<sup>794</sup> Professor E. P. Evans, "Artists and Art Life in Munich," *The Cosmopolitan*, v. IX, n. 1 (1890): 3.

<sup>795</sup> Astrid Fendt, The Sculptures of the Temple of Aphaia on Aegina in their Contemporary Context, chap. in *From Hippias to Kallias: Greek Art in Athens and Beyond 527-449 BC*, eds., Olga Palagia and Elisavet. P. Sioumpara (Athens: Acropolis Museum Editions, 2019), 193.

<sup>796</sup> William J. Diebold, "The Politics of Derestoration: The Aegina Pediments and the German Confrontation with the Past," *Art Journal*, v. 54, n. 2 (1995): 61.

<sup>797</sup> Dieter Ohly, *The Munich Glyptothek: Greek and Roman Sculpture* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2002), 156.

<sup>798</sup> Wang Ziyun, *From Chang'an to Athens: Travelogue on Archaeology of Art in China and Foreign Countries*, 539

visited monumental museums in Berlin and Munich (**fig. 5.26**). His learning and traveling in Europe convinced him of the museums' critical role in building up a modern ethnic nation. He advised the Republican government to establish a national museum with a traditional Chinese and European art collection. He claimed:

The function of the museum (includes two aspects). On the one hand, to glorify the cultural achievements of the inherited culture. On the other hand, to seek the opportunity of learning from (foreign cultures) further to enhance the development of modern civilization. As a nation established in the twentieth century, we cannot talk about development and progress unless we first have global knowledge.<sup>799</sup>

Wang viewed the museum as a fundamental institution for promoting national culture and international cultural exchange. His collections during the trip for the archaeology of art prepared for the construction of a museum. As the photograph of his research workroom presents, there are potteries, tomb figurines, eaves tiles, tomb relief rubbings, and Dunhuang Wall paintings (**fig. 5.27**).<sup>800</sup> The display of collections in this quasi-museum is consistent with his esteem for Han and Tang in art history writing. The *Copy of Illustration of Zhang Yichao on the March of Mogao Caves* 臨敦煌莫高窟張議潮出行圖 in cave 156 by Lu Shanqun 盧善群 (1918-1992) is displayed on the top of the right wall above windows; the *Copy of the Donor's Portrait—Tang Princess of Huihu* 臨敦煌莫高窟唐回鶻天公主供養人像 by He Zhenghuang 何正璜 (1914-1994) is hanged on the frontal wall on the left (**fig. 5.28**; **fig. 5.29**). These two copies of Tang Dynasty murals on the wall, together with the rubbings of Han tomb stone

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<sup>799</sup> Wang Ziyun 王子雲, “對於國家美術博物館設施之建議 [Suggestions for the facilities of the National Museum of Fine Arts],” 政問週刊 [Politics Weekly], n. 72 (1937): 10.

<sup>800</sup> Sarah E. Fraser, “Buddhist Archaeology in Republican China: A New Relationship to the Past,” 164; 166.

reliefs, demonstrate a space dominated by Han and Tang images.

Furthermore, Wang's reverence for the past is always future-oriented. He proposed to appropriate the national tradition and antiquity to promote the future Chinese cultural prosperity in his book on Chinese applied art:

Northwest China is the birthplace of Chinese culture, especially the Guanzhong area in Shaanxi Province, where the capitals of the Zhou, Qin, Han, and Tang dynasties were located; each brick and every stone is a beautiful legacy of the previous generations, representing the wisdom and spirit of the nation. If we can make good use of this precious heritage in conjunction with modern science to beautify social life and raise national consciousness, further promote the development and progress of industry and commerce, the future cultural prosperity of the new China will depend on it.<sup>801</sup>

Following the Republican government's program of returning to the homeland of the Chinese nation, Wang stressed the northwest area as the birthplace of the Chinese culture, granting his archaeological activities in the northwest the significance of excavating the glorious ancient tradition. His idea that the past heritage can be widely used in modern society to facilitate national cultural prosperity was also fully consistent with the national government's strategy toward tradition. The establishment of museums and collections is part and parcel of the Republican government to imagine a modern worldwide capital analogous to the splendid age of the ancient Chang'an, which was the most cosmopolitan city in the world. The *National Gallery of Fine arts* 國立美術陳列館 is the first national museum established by the Republican government in 1937 (**fig. 5.30**). The German-trained Chinese architect Xi Fuquan 奚福泉 (1903-1983) combined modern European architecture with the traditional Chinese

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<sup>801</sup> Wang Ziyun 王子雲, 中國歷代應用藝術圖綱 [Outline of Chinese applied art through the ages] (Xi'an: Taibai Wenyi Press, 2007), 1-2.

architectural decorations in this building. Xi was trained with the famous German architect and sinologist Ernst Boerschmann (1873-1949) in the Technische Hochschule zu Charlottenburg (the present *Technische Universität Berlin*) from 1927 to 1929.<sup>802</sup> The exterior structure of the gallery followed the traditional *Bazi yingbi* 八字影壁, which consists of three walls with its plan shaping like the Chinese character “eight 八.”<sup>803</sup> The frame structure of the gallery continues to remind of the traditional Chinese architectural elements, including the *Dougong* 斗拱 structure decorating the top, the Sumeru pedestal 須彌座 at the bottom, and the vermilion muntin on the front of the building. This design of the framework structure calls up Xi’s teacher Boerschmann’s research on ancient Chinese sculpture. Boerschmann’s sectional drawing of the Fayu Temple 法雨禪寺 in Mount Putuo 普陀山 also emphasizes the *Dougong* structure at the top of the building and the Sumeru pedestal at the bottom, although the Sumeru pedestal belongs to the Buddhist statues in this drawing (**fig. 5.31**). Xi followed his German teacher’s perspective in observing a Chinese temple of Buddha to design a modern “temple” of art.

Wang Ziyun appropriated Winckelmann’s cyclical schema of rise and decline to define the Tang dynasty as the golden age of the art, thereby promising the possibility of the Republican period as China’s next florescence. He reiterated this admiration for the Tang dynasty through his painting, collection of antiquities, and art history writing. At the same time, the French revolutionary cult of the antique with Winckelmann’s

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<sup>802</sup> Liu Kan 劉刊, “儋石之儲: 中國第一代建築師奚福泉 [A Rare Gem: Fohzien Godfrey Ede of the First Generation of Chinese Architects],” *時代建築* [Time Architecture], n. 4 (2019): 156-57.

<sup>803</sup> Wang Bin 王彬, *衛衛九章* [Nine Chapters of Hutong] (Beijing: Dongfang Press, 2007), 254.



writings as the foundation was transferred to the Chinese art historian Wang Ziyun through his six-year sculpture training in Paris. In particular, Winckelmann's association between the ideal beauty of art and political freedom, which persisted in the Louvre's chronological display of artworks and the Ecole's training of artists with antique art as the paradigm, took root in Wang's interpretation of Chinese art history. On the other hand, his appropriation of Winckelmann's doctrine in elucidating the ancient Chinese heritage corresponds with Republican intellectuals' admiration for the German paradigm in the 1930s, who saw the hope for the Chinese renaissance from the German Unification in 1871. Chinese intellectuals believed that Germany's superior academic culture underlay its emergence from decline to unity. The Chinese government imitated the establishment of museums and the display of archaeological objects as part of academic Germany to build national prestige. The painting, collecting, and art history writing of Wang Ziyun was affiliated with the Republican government's national revival project, conveying the aspirations for a liberal China.

## Conclusion

Chinese intellectuals, with the German-trained philosopher and politician Cai Yuanpei at their core, entrusted the mission of educating the people for civil society to art from the very beginning of Republican China. They borrowed this notion of using art for pedagogical purposes from the German philosopher Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), whose *Aesthetic Letters* reasons aesthetic education as the only approach to train a new generation of citizens capable of forming their own judgments.<sup>804</sup> Philosophers, art educators, and art theorists translated and interpreted German aesthetic teachings, which were disseminated to the young generation through art journals, aesthetic monographs, and, more importantly, art schools' curricula. The theoretically established function of aesthetics in fostering a competent citizenry of rational, harmonious personalities was consequently transferred to young art students, who were supposed to fulfill this mission through their future artworks. Under the overarching mission of creating new citizens, German aesthetic writings continued to be appropriated to formulate specific criteria for evaluating artists and their works. Chinese artists were very likely to participate as art critics in founding new standards of art evaluation which were benchmarked to social responsibility, but more primarily to accommodate this new evaluation system through their choices of art disciplines and artworks. Thus, the translation and introduction of German philosophers' teachings into China theoretically underpinned the modern transition of Chinese art.

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<sup>804</sup> Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 45-6. Richard Siegesmund, *Aesthetic Education*, chap. in *Encyclopedia of Educational Theory and Philosophy*, D. C. Phillips (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2014), 26.

Aesthetics as an umbrella term encompassed multiple dimensions in early-twentieth-century China, the most crucial of which was the concept of unifying art and craft that guided Chinese artists' disciplinary choices. On account of his highly reductive translation of the German ethnologist Grosse's writing on the origin of art, Cai Yuanpei coined the notion of "craft art" to elevate the status of art equal to that of art. Cai envisioned giving aesthetic qualities to articles of everyday use through the unification of art and craft, thus educating the public taste of a civilized society. Accordingly, all three Chinese artists Pan Yuliang, Wang Ziyun, and Chang Shuhong selected to study two disciplines in Europe, rendering themselves both artists and artisans to meet the need for improving daily necessities. Pan chose both oil painting and sculpture, where the blurred status of sculpture between craft and art prompted Pan to study it as craftsmanship and helped her resist the gendered division of labor in the art that women could only make crafts. Wang studied fine art sculpture and decorative sculpture. His training in a decorative sculpture built up his draughtsmanship and his perspective emphasizing decoration, which constituted critical techniques for his future archaeology of art. Chang sought to achieve the integration of painting and textile decoration from his training in Lyon and Paris to his work in Dunhuang. He made textile design a sign of modernity in his oil painting, which even outlasted the theme of the female nude—another essential mark of his avant-garde experimentation.

The notion of pure nude art sits at the center of the controversy over the introduction of foreign aesthetics. The art educator Liu Haisu appropriated the German philosopher Hegel's theory on the abstract beauty of the human body to teach Chinese

audiences to view nude art from an aesthetic perspective. The art critic Tang Jun also introduced the idea of disinterested art from Kirchmann to require the viewer to improve their cognitive abilities and to refrain from the moral restraints in viewing nude art. Nevertheless, their attempts to reshape Chinese citizens' perceptions of nude physical forms cannot be considered a success considering Chinese audiences' limited reception of nude art to date. Their reduced translations and the consequently inconsistent texts should be partially responsible. As a student of Liu Haisu, Pan Yuliang persistently explored the pictorial translations of pure nude art. She combined the French classical primitivism inspired by the Mediterranean sculpture and the Chinese *baimiao* tradition in the Song dynasty to represent female nudes of naturalistic physical anatomy and abstract linearity. Her experiments with the female nude not only asserted an equal commensurability between painting and sculpture vocabularies but subverted traditional Chinese culture's image of women as commodities through her identity as a cultural producer.

In contrast to specific criteria of art practices—unity of art and craft, as well as the pure human form, new norms for evaluating artists went beyond the aesthetic and into the philosophical scope. The art critic Yang Puzhi and the artist Chen Shizeng who were close to Cai Yuanpei, borrowed Kant's theory of “beauty as the symbol of morality” to invent the traditional literati painting theory of “the man revealed in the painting” as a modern standard to evaluate artists. Artists were required to be moral exemplars for the new generation. Pan Yuliang stressed her extensive learning in European art tradition and her persistence and earnestness in her art career in her oil and sculpture self-

portraits, tallying herself with the moral virtues that early-twentieth-century artists were expected to achieve. Her alignment with the general standard of “artists as moral exemplars” also acted as an effective rebellion against undue allegations of her “impure” background in a brothel as a teenager. Likewise, Chang Shuhong agreed with the artist’s role as a moral example, but he did so from the perspective of art as the savior of the suffering. Nietzsche’s redemptory alliance of Apollonian and Dionysian art convinced Chang that his paintings possessed the power to pacify immigrants suffering hardship as a result of war. He utilized Nietzsche’s metaphor of man as a bridge to define himself as a channel bridging not only European and Chinese traditions but also the glorious past of Dunhuang art and a promising future of Chinese modernism. In turn, a new era of hopeful Chinese art reinforces the social vision of artistic redemption that Chang aimed to achieve.

Wang Ziyun’s archaeology of art related to his training in sculpture and the Republican government’s project of the national revival. There was no tradition of writing about sculpture due to the longstanding menial status of the craft in China. Wang was inspired by Winckelmann’s archaeology of art and cyclic formula of rise and decline to conduct field archaeological investigations and to write the first history of Chinese sculpture with the Tang dynasty as a golden age. The sculpture training in France informed Wang of the French revolutionary cult of the antique with Winckelmann’s writing as the foundation, especially Winckelmann’s association between the ideal beauty of art and political freedom. As Wang borrowed Winckelmann’s cyclic pattern of rise and decline to exalt the glory of the Tang Dynasty,

the Republican period as China's next fluorescence was suggested. His employment of Winckelmann's doctrine also coincided with Republican intellectuals' esteem for Germany's superior academic culture, which was considered the key to German Unification in 1871 and Germany's rapid recovery after the first world war.

To conclude, German aesthetic teachings permeated the development of early-twentieth-century Chinese art from artist training, art creation to art application, providing theoretical underpinnings for the modern transition of Chinese art. Chinese intellectuals ranging from philosophers, art educators, and art theorists employed German aesthetic theories to formulate standards to evaluate the role of the artist and the function of artworks. On the one hand, German scholars' writings on aesthetic education promised them the possibility to realize civil society by cultivating the aesthetic personalities of the citizenry. The increasing power of Germany from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century also confirmed the validity of the German academic path for Chinese intellectuals seeking national renewal. On the other hand, using German aesthetics to set norms for art evaluation is also a move to win a place for Chinese modern art in a global context. Within the framework of the French-defined avant-gardism, the European-trained Chinese artist encountered a dilemma between global modernity and ethnic signification. When the need to establish new criteria for evaluating Chinese art arose, eminent German philosophers' international standing was employed to endow modern Chinese art subject to this evaluative system with the prospect of international recognition.

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