



UNIVERSITY
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MĀNOA

College of Arts & Humanities
Department of Art & Art History
University of Hawai'i Art Gallery

PRESS INFORMATION: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2011

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ART EXHIBITION

The Reformer's Brush: Modernity and Traditional Media in China

The year 2011 marks the hundredth anniversary of the Xinhai Revolution, which saw the abdication of the six-year-old last emperor of the Qing Dynasty and led ultimately to the founding of the Republic of China. This exhibition, which features painting and calligraphy from late nineteenth and early twentieth-century China in the collections of Dr. Ernest and Letah Lee and Dr. Chin-tang Lo, examines the relationship between tradition and modernity in this transitional period. Many of the men at the center of the debates over modernization also cultivated the traditional practices of painting and calligraphy in ways that reflected or were engaged with the very questions of modernization and change that were central to their times. These include Chiang Kai-shek, Mei Lanfang, Liang Qichao, Kang Youwei, Guo Moruo, and many others. ***The Reformer's Brush*** showcases their artworks, their lives, and their ambitions for reform.

LOCATION

University of Hawai'i Art Gallery
Art Building, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

DATES

February 27 – April 8, 2011

SPONSORS

Sponsored by the University of Hawai'i at Manoa's Department of Art and Art History and the College of Arts; anonymous donors; and Manoa Arts & Minds, a partnership that cultivates the mind and spotlights the best of art, music, theater, dance and special performances at UH Mānoa.

http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/chancellor/arts_minds/. Opening reception co-sponsored by the UHM Center for Chinese Studies.



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HOURS & ADMISSION

Monday – Friday 10:30-5:00; Sunday 12:00-5:00.
Closed Saturdays; Spring Break, March 21 – 25.
Admission is free. Donations are appreciated.
Parking fees may apply.

EXHIBITION SUMMARY

The Reformer's Brush, set to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1911 revolution in China, showcases 78 works of Chinese calligraphy and painting from Honolulu collectors Dr. Ernest and Letah Lee and Dr. Chin-tang Lo. This special exhibition is presented in conjunction with the 70th anniversary of The Association for Asian Studies and its special joint conference with the International Convention of Asian Scholars, to be held from March 31 to April 3 at the Hawai'i Convention Center. The selected works illustrate the ways in which those who participated in the various movements to modernize China through the 19th and early 20th centuries made use of these traditional art forms to reflect their ambitions for reform. The artists, who include painters as well as political, military, social, and educational leaders, took part in the reform movements that resulted in the 1911 revolution and the founding and shaping of the new Republic. These include several men with ties to Hawai'i, including Li Hongzhang, who received King Kalākaua and Queen Emma on their 1881 visit to China, and Liang Qichao, who visited Honolulu in 1899 to raise funds for reform. Other featured artists include Chiang Kai-shek, Mei Lanfang, Kang Youwei, Guo Moruo, and many others.

The men whose work is featured in the exhibition did not all agree on the path to reform, but they all engaged in negotiating the balance between China's traditional cultures and technologies and the changes brought about through modernization. Although painting and calligraphy had their roots in the traditional culture such men sought to transform, these art forms never lost their original cultural significance. This explains the continued vitality of painting and calligraphy in the face of radical change. It also explains why so many men at the forefront of modernization continued to practice one or both of the arts of the brush, and ultimately, why their work in such traditional media refused to shy away from the topics of modernization and change.

Kate Lingley, UHM assistant professor of Chinese art history and principal curator of ***The Reformer's Brush***, states, "We are very excited about this exhibition. Besides its exploration of the relationship between tradition and modernity in China's recent history, the exhibition also illustrates the long and close involvement of the Chinese community in Hawai'i with reform and revolution in China. The Hawai'i connections to such an important moment in China's history are brought to life in this exhibition through the collections of two Chinese-American collectors who reside in Honolulu. The collectors themselves, as well as their collections, reflect the history of the Chinese in Hawai'i. They include a Hawai'i-born Chinese-American collector who traveled to Hong Kong and Macau to assemble his collection, and a Chinese-born emeritus professor from the University of Hawai'i, himself a painter and calligrapher, who knew many of these reformers personally and received their works as gifts from one artist to another."

"We are honored that the collectors are willing to present their outstanding collections for this special exhibition," said Lisa Yoshihara, UH Art Gallery director and co-curator. "The styles of calligraphy range from the angular ancient oracle bone script to the more cursive and ornamental scripts. The brushwork can be delicate and graceful, or bold and dynamic. A Chinese scholar's study and other period furniture will be included in the exhibition to create the sense of a typical environment where the artists and leaders worked and lived with their creations. Our free Chinese film series will also help to put the paintings and calligraphy into historical context. We encourage visitors to enjoy the qualities and nuances of the brushwork, and to learn about the fascinating historical figures, their lives, their ambitions for reform, and their works."

SPECIAL EVENTS

All events are free and open to the public. Seating for events and films are on a first-come, first-served basis. The schedule of events may be subject to change. Parking fees may apply.

For the latest information and more details go to <http://www.hawaii.edu/artgallery/> or call 808-956-6888.

OPENING PROGRAM

Sunday, February 27, from 2:00–3:00

UHM Art Auditorium, Room 132

Do Great Political Thinkers Make Great Artists? Visual Culture as a Medium for Reform in Turn-of-the-Century China

Keynote speaker: **Shana J. Brown**, Assistant Professor,
Department of History, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Brown is a graduate of Amherst College and the University of California, Berkeley. She has studied, worked, and traveled extensively in China and Asia. Her area of expertise is modern Chinese intellectual and cultural history, with a special focus on visual culture in its global context.

OPENING RECEPTION

Sunday, February 27, from 3:00–5:00 p.m.

The public is invited.

GALLERY TOURS

Sundays, March 6 – April 3, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

March 6 & March 27: Kate Lingley, UHM assistant professor of Chinese art history, principal curator of the exhibition, and author of the catalogue essay.

April 3: Dr. Ernest Lee presents a collector's tour

March 13 & 20: to be announced; www.hawaii.edu/artgallery/

EDUCATIONAL CHINESE FILM SERIES

Sundays beginning March 6 at 3:30 p.m.

UHM Art Building, Room 101

A selection of films that complement ***The Reformer's Brush*** exhibition will provide important insight into the history, culture, and lives of people around the time of the Xinhai Revolution in China. Each film is preceded by a short educational presentation.

Sunday, March 6, 3:30 p.m.

China in Revolution: 1911–1949, directed by Sue Williams (1989, not rated, 120 minutes).

In English.

First installment of a three-part documentary first aired by WGBH Boston and the BBC, entitled *China: A Century of Revolution*. This powerful program takes a remarkable first-hand look at China's tumultuous history, examining its social, political and cultural upheaval through eyewitness accounts, rare archival film footage and insightful commentary.

Sunday, March 13, 3:30 p.m.

The Last Emperor, directed by Bernardo Bertolucci (1987, rated PG-13, 167 minutes).

In English.

A dramatic history of Puyi, the last of the emperors of China, from his lofty birth and brief reign in the Forbidden City, the object of worship by half a billion people; through his abdication, his decline and dissolute lifestyle; his exploitation by the invading Japanese, and finally to his obscure existence as just another peasant worker in the People's Republic.

Sunday, March 20, 3:30 p.m.

A Spray of Plum Blossoms, directed by Bu Wancang (1931, not rated, 100 minutes). Silent.

Adapted from Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, this film is set in the changing society of 1920s China. Hu Luting and Bai Lede are both graduates from the Shanghai Military Academy. Hu is sent to Canton under General Shi's command. Shi Luohua, the general's daughter, falls in love with Hu. Later, Bai joins his friend in Canton and feels attracted by Miss Shi. From then on, two young men become rivals.

Sunday, March 27, 3:30 p.m.

Rickshaw Boy, directed by Ling Zifeng (1982, not rated, 123 minutes), based on Lao She's 1937 novel. In Chinese with English subtitles.

The story was meant by Lao She as a commentary on what he saw as the tradition-bound society in which he lived. In the 1920s, a young, hardworking peasant arrives in Beijing to become a rickshaw boy at a time when the city is torn by dueling warlords. His fortunes rise and fall but he is destined to suffer because he is always at the mercy of his environment.

Sunday, April 3, 3:30 p.m.

King of Masks, directed by Wu Tianming (2000, not rated, 91 minutes). In Chinese with English subtitles.

Wang is an aging street performer known as the King of Masks for his mastery of the rare and dying art of Sichuan mask-changing, but he lacks a son to pass his skills on to. Then, one night after a performance, he is sold a young boy by a slave trader posing as the boy's parent. "Grandpa" finds new joy in life as he plans to teach "Doggie" his art. All is well until Doggie is found out to really be a girl.

PUBLICATION

The 128-page full color catalogue for ***The Reformer's Brush: Modernity and Traditional Media in China*** features an essay by Dr. Kate Lingley, assistant professor of Chinese art history at the Department of Art and Art History, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and co-curator of the exhibition, that discusses the important men and their many contributions to politics, society, culture, art, and education at a pivotal point in Chinese history. The catalogue includes many color illustrations of their works of calligraphy and painting that were selected for the exhibition. It will be available for the special price of \$28.00 at the University of Hawai'i Art Gallery through April 8.

PUBLICITY PHOTOS

High-resolution digital images are available upon request.

WEBSITE

Please visit the University of Hawai'i Art Gallery website <http://www.hawaii.edu/artgallery> for more information.

University of Hawai'i System

Established in 1907 and fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the University of Hawai'i is the state's sole public system of higher education. The UH System provides an array of undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees and community programs on 10 campuses and through educational, training, and research centers across the state. UH enrolls more than 50,000 students from Hawai'i, the U.S. mainland, and around the world. For more information visit www.hawaii.edu.

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