

CHINESE-AMERICAN ARTISTS

Artistry in the Land of Opportunity

Two of the master artists at the Plein Air Convention & Expo will demonstrate the varied styles of painting employed by highly trained Chinese artists who immigrated to America in the 1980s.

By Molly Siple

The hallmark of Chinese artists, above all else, is their technical proficiency. They are expert draftsmen, masters of value and color, and skilled craftspeople, thanks to the high quality and demanding standards of their art education in China. Their styles have roots in two strains of traditional Chinese brush painting that date back more than 6,000 years, as well as the influence of the European methods of painting that came through the Russian academies. At this year's Plein Air Convention & Expo, to be held in Monterey, California, from April 10-14, Timothy Tien will join Zhaoming Wu for a live demonstration of their landscape painting techniques.

By the early 20th century, Chinese art schools were teaching European painting methods with a lineage reaching back to the Paris art academies of the mid-19th century. Such teaching made its way from France to Czarist Russia, which held French culture in high esteem, and, in turn, Chinese artists traveled to Russia to learn how to paint representationally in the European style. They then returned to China to teach others. A case in point: Mian Situ, Huihan Liu, Shugiao Zhou, and Ruo Li took instruction from Shaogang Guo, who studied at the Repin Institute in St. Petersburg.

Social Realism In China

Representational art gained even more support with the advent of Communism. In Russia, traditional representational art had evolved into Social Realism, the government-approved style for Communist posters and murals. Subsequently, Social Realism also became the official style in China. By the 1970s, art students in China were required to have academic training to prepare them for creating realistic works in support of the



Overlooking the City Lights

Zhaoming Wu

2011, 12 x 12 in.

Courtesy Astoria Fine Art Gallery, Jackson, WY

Plein air