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Chinese artist: Eastern strokes on Western folks

By Lin Xu | 2008-12-26 |  NEWSPAPER EDITION



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"Stroll"

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A unicorn, the Eiffel Tower and a Caucasian woman are painted in colorful inks on rice paper in what appears to be an oil painting by Zhou Gang.

 EMAIL STORY

This painting and others combining Western content and traditional Chinese techniques and materials are on display at the "Rhyme of Paris" exhibition at the Levant Art Gallery.

Zhou, 50, who lives in Paris, studied Chinese traditional ink painting since childhood. He obtained a master's degree in art at the University of Tokyo and a doctoral degree at the University of Paris.

With systematic observation and research in both Chinese and Western arts, Zhou came up with what he calls "melange," using Chinese techniques to express Western content.

"Everything in the universe is a mixture of elements, and human beings are by nature pursuing beauty though some argue beauty only belongs to the art in the 19th century," states Zhou. "These are laws of nature that no one can change. My paintings are just obeying the universal rules."

One of Zhou's favorite painting, "Vin Rouge et Femme Verte" ("Red Wine and Green Lady") is placed on a couch. It reflects Zhou's general impression of France - in the subtle background is a winery; an elegant woman's figure is delineated with a few thick and thin lines with misty effect. The effect only can be created by a soft brush on absorbent rice paper.

Regarded as an explorer in art, Zhou says, "Art serves communication. In fact, a painting is a good when it can trigger certain resonance in the heart of an appreciator. Otherwise, it loses its value because there is a blockage in appreciative communication."

Zhou paints spontaneously, not commercially, the moment something touches his heart, such as a piece of classical music, a party, a fantasy, a dream.

"So many things are precious at those exact moments and yet so transitory," remarks Zhou. "I am desperate to record them so I can recall them every time I look at the paintings."

Though art collectors would commission his works, Zhou prefers his current approach of painting spontaneously and sharing his feelings.

"To share those moments that once deeply touched me with sincere appreciators is the best experience in an exhibition," says Zhou.

Nowadays, Zhou exhibits in well-known galleries in France, Japan, Singapore and other countries.

Zhou calls himself an artist who demonstrates Chinese art through a special channel of "melange" ink paintings. He says the spirit of the art will be widely accepted once it is properly cultivated and promoted.

"Its visual effect is irreplaceably beautiful. If ink paintings have long been accepted by people in Asia, who represent one-fourth of the world population, why can't the rest of the world appreciate their unique beauty?" Zhou asks.

Date: through January 19, 10am-6pm

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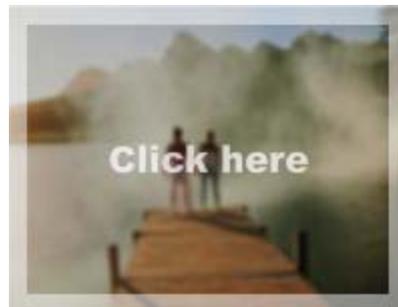
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