

ASIAN ART MUSEUM
Chong-Moon Lee Center
for Asian Art & Culture

200 Larkin Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
T 415.581.3500

NEWS



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PRESS CONTACT:

Zac T. Rose

415.581.3560

zrose@asianart.org

Asian Art Museum Presents Chang Dai-chien's Legendary Paintings

Discover the California connections of Chang Dai-chien, one of the most celebrated Chinese painter of the last hundred years

San Francisco, September 16, 2020
— On view at the Asian Art Museum from Nov. 26, 2019 – Apr. 26, 2020, *Chang Dai-chien: Painting From Heart to Hand* reintroduces San Francisco audiences to one of the 20th century's most intriguing, prolific and versatile artists, Chang Dai-chien (1899–1983).



“Chang Dai-chien’s sublime paintings resonate with us because they expertly blend convention and innovation,” says Dr. Jay Xu, director and CEO of the Asian Art Museum. “This exhibition illuminates how even the most significant artists of today continue to find rich seams of inspiration in the past, and we are excited to explore how our own local landscapes fueled Chang’s boundary-pushing work.”

Featuring 18 works from the museum’s holdings, as well as 16 loans from private collections and museums, the exhibition showcases Chang’s early genius in replicating ancient styles alongside his later accomplishment in expanding the possibilities of traditional ink art. It was during Chang’s years living in Northern California in the 1960s and 70s that his distinctly original style matured. His paintings from this period synthesized a deep understanding of China’s classical past with a keen observation of the natural world.

Mountain in Summer Clouds, 1970, by Chang Dai-chien (Zhang Daqian; Chinese, 1899–1983). Framed panel; ink on paper. *Asian Art Museum, Gift of the artist*, B73D3. Photograph © Asian Art Museum.

“Although he is best known as a virtuoso of traditional Chinese art, Chang’s vibrant splashed-color landscapes drew inspiration from modern cultural and artistic influences — especially during his extensive sojourns in the Americas, and California in particular,” says exhibition organizer and Asian Art Museum Barbara and Gerson Bakar Curator of Chinese art, Dr. Fan Jeremy Zhang. “Chang’s paintings deftly fuse classical and modern elements and bridge Eastern and Western aesthetics, generating a unique expressionism that speaks to an international audience.”

The Asian Art Museum has long had a close connection with the artist, partially through the museum’s former director René-Yvon d’Argencé, who not only helped Chang present his first solo show in Paris in 1956 but also organized his first retrospective in San Francisco in 1972. Chang’s retrospective was the Asian Art Museum’s first ever exhibition of work by a living artist, one who happened to be residing at the time in nearby Pebble Beach. Works by the artist were also included in the foundational gift to the museum by Avery Brundage in the 1960s; three of these will be featured in the exhibition.

The exhibition is broadly organized into three themes that touch on Chang’s “pursuit of the past,” his “learning from nature,” and his finding “inspiration from within.” Highlights include: *Landscape of Waterfalls and Overlapping Peaks* (1951), which features dense brushwork echoing the styles of Song and Yuan masters and a special inscription marking the artist’s post-1949 self-exile overseas; *White Lotus* (1948), a playful, close-up depiction of a lusty bloom associated more with spirituality than the carnal desire alluded to by the colophon, which describes its color as bright as a woman’s red makeup; and one of Chang’s most abstract works, *Mountains in Summer Clouds* (1970), which demonstrates his absolute mastery of splashed-ink and wash techniques, harnessed here to evoke celestial mountains that reflect the artist’s own inner vitality.

Chang Dai-chien: Painting from Heart to Hand is organized in conjunction with Professor Mark Dean Johnson of San Francisco State University to mark the 120th anniversary of the artist’s birth. It will feature both a screening of a new film about the artist by Weimin Zhang on Mar. 5 and a symposium on Mar. 6, 2020. Panel topics will range from Chinese painting connoisseurship to the connections between the Bay Area and 1960s avant-garde Chinese art.

Please check websites for details about times, tickets and guest speakers.

Exhibition Organization

Chang Dai-chien: Painting from Heart to Hand is organized by the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. Presentation is made possible by The Tan Family Education Foundation and an anonymous donor in honor of Jay Xu. Additional support is provided by Kathy and Paul Bissinger, Chip and Juliet Bergh, Martha Sam Hertelendy, Angela and Gwong-Yih Lee, Bing Shen and Terry Yip, and Paul and Kathy Yih.

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About the Asian Art Museum

The Asian Art Museum—Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture is one of San Francisco's premier arts institutions and home to a world-renowned collection of more than 18,000 Asian art treasures from throughout Asia spanning 6,000 years of history. Through rich art experiences, centered on historic and contemporary artworks, the Asian Art Museum unlocks the past for visitors, bringing it to life while serving as a catalyst for new art, new creativity and new thinking.

Information: 415.581.3500 or www.asianart.org

Location: 200 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

Hours: The museum is open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10 AM to 5 PM. Hours are extended on Thursdays until 9 PM February through September. Closed Mondays, as well as New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

Museum Admission: FREE for museum members and children (12 & under). \$25 for adults and \$20 for seniors (65 & over), youth (13–17) and college students (with ID). On Target First Free Sundays and on Thursday evenings, 5-9 PM, admission to the museum is \$10. Please check website for updates.

Access: The Asian Art Museum is wheelchair accessible. For more information regarding access: 415.581.3598; TDD: 415.861.2035.

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