

Western oil painting with a Chinese essence

The origin of China's oil painting history can be traced back to the 17th century, when Western missionaries brought religions as well as oil paintings to China. From that time on, Chinese people have been aware of this different painting style and started to learn this art. Since the late 19th century after Zhou Xiang, a native of Huangdu Town in Jiading District, traveled around the Western countries and established some oil painting schools in China, art education in China has stepped into a new age.

Many famous Chinese artists such as Liu Haisu and Xu Beihong in their early times studied at these schools, which helped turn the Chinese painting circle into a thriving field. Nowadays, there are still many Jiading people who are keen on oil paintings, but their subject matter and skills have already varied a lot. They have views without borders and create spaces without bounds. They combine Western skills and Chinese elements perfectly into their delicate works. They display their moods through the most beautiful colors.



"Where I Used to Live" by Le Xiuyu

Making art from oil paint and toothpaste

LE Xiuyu, who graduated with a major in oil painting from Nanjing Academy of Fine Arts in the 1960s, now lives in Zhenxin Community of Jiading District. He used to work as an art designer for Shanghai Toothpaste Factory and has earned much acclaim for his design work. The then Ministry of Light Industry honored his design for the exported Spearmint Toothpaste as excellent work in the Industrial Art Design Contest. Another of his designs, the packaging of Maxam Toothpaste series was also honored at the East China Package Design Contest. Le always remained true to his roots and never ceased creating oil paintings. In 2008, his painting, "Where I Used to Live," won the third prize for oil paintings at the Shanghai International Arts Festival.

Yao Dongqing



"Shanghai Lane" by Yao Dongqing



"A Picture of Wild Pool" by Yang Huan

Seeing the fantastic in the nature

YANG Huan, a native of Jiading District born in 1981, graduated in 2009 with a major in oil painting from Ukraine National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture. During her post-graduate studies in this academy, Yang's tutor was Mykhailo Guida — a painter who was honored as "the People's Top Artist." Yang now works in Lu Yanshao Art Gallery in Jiading District.



"Returning Home" by Wu Jian

Turning reality into art

WU Jian, a native of Jiading District born in 1974, graduated from Shanghai Xingzhi Art Normal School in 1993. He joined the Shanghai Artist Association in 2010 and now works at Jiading District Culture Center. His work, "Watertown Series," received an award of excellence at the 12th Spring of Jiangnan Painting Exhibition; his "Lotus" won the award of excellence at the Knowledge and Innovation Art Exhibition of the 8th Shanghai International Arts Festival; his "Expo Structure" claimed first prize at the Shanghai Public Art Display which celebrated the 60th anniversary of the foundation of People's Republic of China; and his work "Returning Home" came second at the 15th Spring of Jiangnan Painting Exhibition.

Zhou Xiang



"Watercolor Paintings of the Twenty-four Filial Exemplars" by Zhou Xiang

The grand old master of Chinese oil painting

When talking about China's oil painting history, we can never omit Zhou Xiang (1871-1933), the founder of Shanghai Oil Painting Institute. Born in Huangdu Town in Jiading District, Zhou won the appreciation of Emperor Guangxu of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) with his paintings. Through his art works, he also became friends of some reformers such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao and participated in drafting some proclamations at that time. After the Hundred Days' Reform failed, Zhou moved to Japan and started his 10 years of overseas traveling to study painting. At first he made a living in Tokyo and Nagasaki by seal cutting. Later he traveled around Western countries, getting to know some Spanish and German painters and saw a lot of original painting masterpieces. Zhou and his wife Sun Jing'an tried to promote oil painting skills through art education after they returned to their homeland. From 1907 to 1918, they established four art schools to train high-end talents of art, including the Scenery Painting Institute, Chinese and Western Painting Correspondence School, China Art Painting College and Shanghai Oil Painting Institute. He also published "Art Education," the first magazine on art education issues of China with famous artists Feng Zikai and Ouyang Yuqian. Many famous Chinese oil painters



such as Liu Haisu, Xu Beihong, Ding Song and Chen Baoyi used to study in Zhou's schools. Zhou devoted all his life to art education. As one of the explorers of art education in early Shanghai, he not only trained a lot of talented artists but also created many artworks. It's such a pity that most of his works have been lost. Among the few works of Zhou that are still preserved, the "Watercolor Paintings of the Twenty-four Filial Exemplars" is outstanding, although the painting was originally printed as a calendar at that time. Commonly, calendar paintings would first be drawn with pencils to create a rough profile. Then it would be filled with watercolors to make it look more realistic. However, Zhou's work was much more like those paintings of the Bible and religious paintings during the Renaissance.

"The Illustration on the Watercolor Paintings of the Twenty-four Filial Exemplars" was published by Shanghai Civilization Publishing House in 1918 with good printing quality. With textual descriptions added to the paintings in both Chinese and English, the book was a rarity at the time. A man named Moore Y. Jones, who was probably an expat teacher from Zhou's China Art Painting College, wrote an English prologue for the book, as he called Zhou "one of the best artists" at that time.



"Zhouqiao Old Street" by Ye Maozhen

Capturing an ancient essence

YE Maozhen, a native of Rui'an in Zhejiang Province, graduated from Jiangsu University with the major of fine arts. He is now a teacher at Huangdu Middle School in Jiading District. In the 15th and 16th Spring of Jiangnan Painting Exhibition, his works, "Zhouqiao Old Street" and "Changing City," won the third prize and the award of excellence respectively.



Ye Maozhen

Zhang Zhiqi



"Fish in the Air" by Zhang Zhiqi

Seeing the earth from a new perspective

ZHANG Zhiqi, a native of Jiading District born in 1975, graduated from the Art College of Shanghai Normal University majoring oil painting in 1998. He now works as a tutor of art design and public art at Jiading District Culture Center. His works were displayed in the Shanghai Youth Art Exhibition in 1999, 2001 and 2003, as well as the Spring of Jiangnan Painting Exhibition. He also received a third prize at the Shanghai Citizen Art Exhibition in 2010.



Le Xiuyu

Finding beauty among old lanes

YAO Dongqing, a Jiading native born in 1976, graduated from the Art Design College of the University of Shanghai for Science and Technology in 1999. In 2001 he studied in the Art College of Shanghai Normal University, majoring in oil painting. His work, "Series of Life," was published in the books of "Shanghai Artist Studio" and "Young Chinese Excellent Art Collection." His work "Asking the Infinite" claimed a silver prize at the first Shanghai May 1 Culture Festival.



Yang Huan

Wu Jian