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National Paths and Prophecies:
Wu Guanzhong, History, and the Global in early 1980s China

“Living among a billion people, the motivating force of creation comes from those people, and the artwork belongs to them. I love my people. I throw my whole life into the turbulence of this love.”

生活在十亿人民之间，创造艺术的动机来自人民，艺术必然回归人民。我爱人民，我的整个生命投进了这爱的漩涡。

“I love the best aspects of the Chinese tradition, but I am not a slave to tradition.”

我爱传统中的精华，但我确乎不是传统的孝子。

--Wu Guanzhong (吴冠中)¹

Introduction

It is impossible to discuss contemporary Chinese art without mentioning Wu Guanzhong (1919-2010), a painter who took it upon himself to innovate a personal style blending Chinese ink painting and Western abstraction, the result of restless tension between his attachment to the two mediums of oil and ink. Syncretic style aside, the myriad subject matter explored in Wu’s gamut of works exhibits a similar, lifelong tension (or cooperation?) between perpetuation of and departure from traditional modes of representation. In order to illuminate the larger implications of this push and pull, this paper is anchored in an in-depth, art historical analysis of two of Wu’s works from the early 1980s, *Jiaohe Gucheng* (Figure 1) and *Chinese Cypress* (Figure 2). The early 1980s are chosen as a temporal framework because of the momentous changes in China during the period, both culturally and politically, that presented challenges for artists like Wu. After the devastation of the Cultural Revolution and the death of Mao, Chinese artists were left with the task of reconstructing Chinese art and developing its future path, not to mention addressing China’s rebirth as a nation-state in the globalized world under the hand of Deng

¹ Wu Guanzhong, “Where is My Destiny?,” in *Vision and Revision: Wu Guanzhong* (Hong Kong: Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1995): 20; 22.

Xiaoping. Wu Guanzhong's thematically bifurcated productions, of the historically rooted *Chinese Cypress* and unprecedented *Jiaohe Gucheng*, construct two alternate narratives for the history of China that address contemporaneous Chinese history and China's nation-building agenda of the early 1980s, both ultimately presenting global conceptions of China as a nexus in the modern world.

Seeking East and West: A Short Biography of Wu Guanzhong, 1940s – 1970s

Born in 1919 in a rural village in Yixing, southern Jiangsu Province, Wu Guanzhong's life began remote from the world of art. Originally on the path to become a schoolteacher like his father, Wu left home to enroll in the electrical engineering program at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, where he hoped to learn a trade that would allow him to serve his country. Yet during his first year in Hangzhou he befriended an art student, Zhu Dequn, and immediately became besotted with art, transferring to the Hangzhou Academy of Art to study oil painting in 1936, despite his father's protests. It was during his studies at Hangzhou Academy, learning Western painting (*xihua*) from Wu Dayu and Chinese painting (*guohua*) from Pan Tianshou (1898-1971), that Wu laid the foundation for the syncretic artistic productions that would emerge in his later years, after spending the thirty years in-between his Hangzhou days and the 1970s "seeking East and West."²

At that time, the Hangzhou Academy, headed by the progressive Lin Fengmian (1900-1991), was the center of the modern art movement in China, far ahead of Xu Beihong's stylistically conservative *beaux arts* education at the National Central University in Nanjing and

² Qtd. in Richard Barnhart, "The Odyssey of Wu Guanzhong," in *Wu Guanzhong: A Contemporary Chinese Artist*, ed. Lucy Lim (San Francisco: The Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco, 1989), 10.

Liu Haisu's Shanghai school.³ In Hangzhou, Wu benefited from Lin's radical decision to merge the *guohua* and *xihua* departments so as to provide each artist with grounding in both traditions before choosing one for specialization. In contrast with Xu's outmoded academy, Lin and his French-trained faculty members enthusiastically promoted French Modernism, encouraged free-expression, and sought to create the art of a new era.⁴ Although as a student Wu had no direct contact with president Lin, nonetheless Wu became enamored with his artistic ideas, which according to Chu-tsing Li, "formed the foundation for his artistic development."⁵ Concerning the fusion of Western and Chinese art, Wu himself stated, "[Lin Fengmian] was the first and only teacher who illustrated this fusion to me,"⁶ a fusion that Lin fashioned in his paintings through a subordination of Western changes in form to the guidance of Chinese rhythm, limpidly evident in Wu's works.⁷ Wu's paintings of birds for example can be classified as artistic riffs on Lin's, while Wu's experimentations with new pictorial subjects benefited from Lin's prior artistic explorations into previously untouched pictorial territory.

While absorbed in Lin's revolutionary ideas, Wu simultaneously developed an interest in the teachings of Pan Tianshou, so much so that at one point he determined to switch his major from oil painting to *guohua*. Although most scholars stress Wu's painting practices as influenced by Lin and his time in France (discussed below), his absorption of Pan's distinctive and extraordinary *guohua* style are as evident in his work. Wu learned traditional painting from Pan in the classic manner, that is through painstakingly copying the works of masters, especially those of the rebellious Shitao (1642-1718) and the eccentric Bada Shanren (1626-1705), from

³ Michael Sullivan, "Art and Reality in Twentieth-Century Chinese Painting," in *Twentieth-Century Chinese Painting*, ed. Mayching Kao (New York, Oxford University Press, 1988), 7.

⁴ Michael Sullivan, *Art and Artists of Twentieth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 49.

⁵ Chu-tsing Li, "Wu Guanzhong's Biography and the Theoretical Foundations of His Art," in *Wu Guanzhong: A Contemporary Chinese Artist*, ed. Lucy Lim (San Francisco: The Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco, 1989), 25.

⁶ Wu, "Where is My Destiny?," 20.

⁷ Li, "Wu Guanzhong's Biography," 25.

whom Wu discovered an appreciation for Chinese painting.⁸ Wu also developed a deep admiration for Pan's own paintings, which according to Wu, illustrated a strong command of structure and form unprecedented in Chinese *guohua* and which Wu found to be in communion with Lin's emphasis on Western formalism. Yet when Wu ventured to share his theories linking Chinese and Western painting with Pan, his teacher retorted, "'at your age and level, you should study more and suggest less.'"⁹ Though probably piqued from such a riposte (which he still recalled decades later), Wu nonetheless worked towards conflating both schools of thought since graduating from the Academy in 1942, ultimately hovering in a liminal space between the two, borrowing Lin's adventurous subject matter and syncretic notions and Pan's brush techniques and modernized Chinese flavor.

After winning a national scholarship the year prior, in 1947 Wu embarked upon a three-year period of study in Paris. While abroad, Wu sedulously examined the works of modern masters such as Gauguin, Matisse, Utrillo, Cézanne, and most of all van Gogh, whose passion Wu found intoxicating. Although he faced a bright future abroad in France, after three years Wu found himself homesick, out of place, and longing for his ailing mother. But more importantly, Wu felt he was under an obligation to return in order to aid in the rebuilding of the nascent country that desperately needed his talents, his patriotism commanding him to return to the only place he could truly flourish as a Chinese artist. In examining his feelings toward his motherland, Wu ultimately realized, "My artistic career was in China—and there was a new China beckoning to me."¹⁰ After much deliberation, Wu decided to return in 1950, full of enthusiasm to share his foreign knowledge of French formalism with his peers and watch it take root, even comparing

⁸ Mayching Kao, "The Art of Wu Guanzhong," in *Wu Guanzhong: A Twentieth-century Chinese painter*, Anne Farrer et al. (London: British Museum Press, 1992), 29.

⁹ Wu, "Where is My Destiny?" 20.

¹⁰ Wu Guanzhong, "My Artistic Career," *Meishujia*, 30, trans. Mayching Kao in *Contemporary Chinese Painting: An Exhibition from the People's Republic of China*, ed. Lucy Lim (San Francisco: The Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco, 1983), 40.

himself to the Tang dynasty itinerant monk Xuanzang, similarly saddled with sacred Indian sutras he brought back to China for translation and subsequent dissemination.¹¹

Unfortunately, Wu encountered resistance to his new ideas and confronted a radically changed China when he returned in 1950. He quickly became a “subject of attack” and opprobrium due to his “bourgeois” artistic views centered on French formalism, which categorically contrasted with the government-sanctioned Soviet-style Socialist Realism practiced by Xu Beihong, among others.¹² The ceaseless censure forced Wu to abnegate figure painting (i.e. his beloved nudes) and turn instead towards the more innocuous landscape painting in which “ideological error was less readily detected”.¹³ Shunned by the academic art world for his poisonous views, Wu held various peripheral teaching jobs, spending much of the 1950s and early 1960s traveling the country with other artists and students to paint the multifarious landscapes of China, ultimately coming to an understanding of the idealized landscape professed by painters of China’s past.¹⁴ The onset of the Cultural Revolution sent Wu to a village in Hebei, where he was forbidden to paint until 1972, when he started to produce intimate oil works evoking the rural life that enveloped him, such as close studies of plants and flowers that serve as critical references perhaps to the work of Van Gogh (Figure 3).

Later that year, Zhou Enlai summoned Wu to Beijing along with a throng of other artists to produce *guohua* works in traditional genres to adorn the hotels, embassies, and public buildings increasingly utilized to house and entertain foreign dignitaries coming to China after the thawing of diplomatic relations.¹⁵ Wu’s participation in this so-called Hotel School of artists

¹¹ Kao, “The Art of Wu Guanzhong,” 26.

¹² Wu, “Where Is my Destiny?,” 20.

¹³ Michael Sullivan, “Introduction,” 3.

¹⁴ Anne Farrer, “Biography of Wu Guanzhong,” in *Wu Guanzhong: A Twentieth-century Chinese painter*, Anne Farrer et al. (London: British Museum Press, 1992), 29.

¹⁵ Ellen Johnston Laing, *The Winking Owl: Art in the People’s Republic of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 85.

marks an important turn in his artistic practice and views on painting that influenced his production leading up to the period of the early 1980s that this paper seeks to closely examine.

Foremost, upon returning to Beijing in 1972, Wu discovered that almost all of the other artists were working in Chinese ink on paper and not with oils, and so he too began to work in the traditional style as well.¹⁶ After many years away from *guohua*, Wu naturally took on a bifurcated mode of artistic production, his experimentations with ink concomitant with continued work in oils. From 1974 through 1977, Wu painted dual images using the same basic composition first in oils and then in ink, illustrative of his attempt to work out the means by which he could fuse the two techniques and styles into one cohesive vision.¹⁷ Additionally, the Hotel School artists were directed to produce traditional *guohua* pieces that would “represent China on the international scene,” this so-called outer art explicitly produced as emblems of China for foreign visual consumption.¹⁸ In this way, Wu’s participation in the Hotel School not only motivated him to begin painting in ink, but also encouraged him to consider painting with a broader, international audience in mind. At the same time, his experience creating images that spoke to ideas of traditional Chineseness for this global audience undoubtedly altered the way in which he viewed painting as a form of cultural and national representation. The subjects he depicted were incapable of being divorced from their functions as symbols of China in the eyes of their primary foreign-born viewers, but more on this later.

Resurgence: Artists & Politics in the Early 1980s

The artistic milieu in which Wu Guanzhong painted *Jiaohe* and *Cypress* in the early 1980s can be defined as both a period of anxiety and liberation. Artists were, on the one hand,

¹⁶ Farrer, “Biography,” 44.

¹⁷ Barnhart, “The Odyssey,” 13.

¹⁸ Laing, *The Winking Owl*, 85.

riddled with uncertainties on account of the Party's unpredictable, unstable artistic and social liberalization policies, and on the other, brimming with excitement and hope for the future due to the newfound creative freedom unseen since the decades before 1949. At the Fourth Congress of Writers and Artists held in the early summer of 1978, Deng Xiaoping announced his support for increased creative freedom, galvanizing writers and artists to “adapt to the changing times...[and] plough new ground” with their artworks.¹⁹ Movements such as Scar Art (伤痕艺术) followed this relaxation of artistic constraints, but artists soon discovered the specious nature of Deng's exhortations.²⁰ Deng's early leadership was marked by what Richard Baum observes as an oscillating pattern of reforms, as Party policy fluctuated between periods of liberalization and tightened control, ultimately creating an environment of uncertainty among artists who feared a renaissance of Cultural Revolution suppression and calumny.²¹

Although there were sundry campaigns to expel bourgeois influences, constant reversals of reforms, and criticisms of certain politically disruptive artists throughout the early years of the 1980s,²² on the whole, as Meisner argues, there was a general “liberalization of cultural and intellectual life” and depoliticization of the social sphere.²³ The early 1980s witnessed a true cultural renaissance as artists returned to their work after decades of silence, reinvigorated by the inundation of previously banned foreign books, plays, and Western art exhibitions.²⁴ Old art organizations reestablished themselves alongside a burgeoning multitude of spontaneously

¹⁹ Maria Galikowski, *Art and Politics in China: 1949 – 1984* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1998), 189.

²⁰ For more on these movements see Galikowski, *Art and Politics*, 195-201; also Zou Yuejin, *Xin Zhongguo meishu shi, 1949-2000* (Changsha shi: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 2002), 159; and also Chapter Two in He Yuhuai, *Cycles of Repression and Relaxation: Politico-Literary Events in China, 1976-1989* (Bochum: Brockmeyer, 1992).

²¹ Richard Baum, *Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 5-8.

²² The criticism of playwright Bai Hua's *Unrequited Love* in 1981 as well as Deng's various campaigns against bourgeois liberalism in the early 1980s are meticulously outlined in Baum, *Burying Mao*, 127-143 and He, *Cycles*, Chapter Four.

²³ Maurice Meisner, *The Deng Xiaoping Era: An Inquiry into the Fate of Chinese Socialism, 1978 – 1994* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), 127.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

organized private groups that began to coordinate exhibitions, the most politically daring and notorious of which stemmed from the Stars Group (*Xingxing*) in Beijing.²⁵

Needless to say, the Beijing Spring was buzzing, yet Wu Guanzhong kept a physical distance from political imbroglios like the Democracy Wall and the Stars exhibitions, embroiled instead in an intellectual battle regarding his controversial theories on artistic formalism published in *Meishu*, which were highly politicized nonetheless. In his article “On Abstract Beauty,” Wu argues for the inherent presence of abstract beauty in everyday life—emphasizing especially Chinese sources of abstract beauty like Suzhou garden fixtures, bronzes, and so forth—all in an effort to convince his colleagues that abstract beauty is not an importation from the West that should be feared, but rather lies at the heart of formal beauty and therefore Chinese art.²⁶ Wu’s opinions incited a heated debate in the Chinese art world because his position as a formalist was in direct contradiction with the coveted Socialist Realist idea that content determined form, and thus his writings were viewed as attacks on the larger Chinese political and social system. So although Michael Sullivan writes that Wu Guanzhong, like his master Lin Fengmian, was “never in the vanguard of democratic protest,”²⁷ Wu’s conscious retreat into the realm of “non-political” art and his concentration on artistic formalism can actually be interpreted as a distinctly political maneuver. Wu’s ‘art for art’s sake’ productions (e.g. landscapes), coupled with his stance as a so-called “third category” artist consciously detached from the political movements of his time, would have been considered politically radical, for, as

²⁵ Joan Lebold Cohen, *The New Chinese Painting: 1949-1986* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987), 50. For more on the Stars (*Xingxing*) Group, see Sullivan, *Art and Artistis*, 221-4.

²⁶ Wu Guanzhong, “Guanyu chouxiang mei,” (On Abstract Beauty) *Meishu* (1980) in Wu Guanzhong et al., *Wofu danqing* (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 2004), 251-6 and Li, “Wu Guanzhong’s Biography,” 34-5.

²⁷ Sullivan, “Chinese Art in the Twentieth Century,” 23.

Kirk A. Denton observes, “to assert oneself as apolitical is to oppose the revolutionary cause.”²⁸ Moreover, art historian Lü Peng argues that Wu’s participation in ivory tower debates on artistic formalism were part of the “spirit of sweeping critique of cultural authoritarianism” and frankly not about art or theory at all.²⁹ Therefore Wu’s emphatic embrace of ‘art for art’s sake’ signals the artist’s turn away from conservative principles surrounding art still prevalent in the early years of the Deng Era, and his mission to carve out a new artistic path unfettered by Socialist doctrines and more global in scope. However, at the same time, his purely artistic aims were deeply involved in the presentation of images that spoke directly to the promotion of China’s modern nation-state and Wu’s personal love for the Chinese people.

In fact, Wu exhibits an intense preoccupation with the identification of his artistic productions as undeniably Chinese, provocative for an artist working during a time when China’s status as a nation-state was in the process of redefinition and reshaping. As Richard Barnhart succinctly declares, “China and [Wu’s] identity as a Chinese artist are central to his art,” and such a notion was none the more relevant than during the early 1980s, when Wu was charged with the task of reconstituting and modernizing China’s art concomitant with Deng’s modernization and global outreach strategies.³⁰ When Michael Sullivan asked Wu whether he considered oils or *guohua* a truer expression of himself as Chinese, Wu lucidly replied, “I am Chinese. When I pick up the brush to paint, I paint a Chinese picture.”³¹ So although some scholars argue against defining contemporary artists by their nationalities in an increasingly

²⁸ Kirk A. Denton, ed., *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 360. See also Lu Xun’s essay, “On the ‘Third Category’ in Denton, in which he argues that no ‘Third Category’ of writers could exist, for producing art for art’s sake is “sheer fantasy” as writers cannot “overstep class” (385).

²⁹ Lü Peng, *A History of Art in 20th Century China*, trans. Bruce Gordon Doar (New York: Charta Books, 2010), 770.

³⁰ Barnhart, “The Odyssey,” 14.

³¹ Sullivan, “Chinese Art in Twentieth Century,” 23.

internationalized contemporary art scene,³² when it comes to Wu Guanzhong's art, it is nearly impossible to ignore Wu's Chinese identity. Moreover, Wu even harbors tendencies towards Mao's "Yan'an Talks" exhortations for artists to create art to serve the people.³³ In fact, Wu states that the "motivating force of creation" comes from the Chinese people, whom he loves deeply and cannot forget.³⁴ In short, Wu's pieces asked to be read as symbols of China's living history, his job as an artist transforming into an "interpreter of Chinese national experience and...the contemporary social scene."³⁵

With Chinese art "'on the verge of bankruptcy'"³⁶ after the cataclysmic destruction of the Cultural Revolution, Wu was charged with the task of stitching together China's history after the intolerant and restrictive Socialist period. Wu's artworks became integral to the nation's search for an appropriate, modernized identity after the disasters of recent history. Already firm in his syncretic style of painting by the early 1980s, it behooves us to consider Wu's subject matter rather than his painterly style as indicators of his thinking in terms of China's historical state, other scholars having already exhausted the latter. In the 1980s, Wu oscillates between long-standing, culturally loaded motifs and subjects that were heretofore absent in the Chinese painting repertoire. Was the answer to China's modernization problem bounded to tradition, or largely unfettered by it? Was the best path forward in Chinese painting based in referential continuity or willful divergence? An analysis of two of Wu's works, *Chinese Cypress* and *Jiaohe Gucheng*, serves the important task of illustrating the bifurcated production characterizing the

³² See Arnold Chang, "Tradition in Transition: Ink Landscapes from the Chu-Tsing Li Collection" in *Modern and Contemporary Chinese Ink Paintings from the Chu-tsing Li Collection, 1950-2000*, ed. Robert D. Mowry (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007)

³³ See Bonnie S. McDougall, *Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art": A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1980).

³⁴ Wu, "Where is My Destiny?," 22.

³⁵ Waldemar A. Nielsen, "New Art from the New China," in *Beyond the Open Door: Contemporary Paintings from the People's Republic of China*, ed. Richard E. Strassberg (Pasadena, CA: Pacific Asia Museum, 1987), 23.

³⁶ This phrase is from a speech by Anhui Artists Branch member Zhang Fagen at the Fourth Congress of Artists and Writers in 1978, qtd. in Galikowski, *Art and Politics*, 191.

artist's oeuvre in the early 1980s, both paths presenting alternative, though also intermingling, histories and futures of China responsive to the protean times.

Preserving a Lineage: *Chinese Cypress* (1983)

One solution to Wu's quest for a path forward during the *tabula rasa* period of the 1980s consisted of looking backwards to traditional subjects of Chinese painting and modernizing them with his unique artistic style in order to address contemporary contexts. In this way, Wu took a cue from his teacher Pan Tianshou, who possessed a strong confidence in Chinese culture and the capacity of *guohua* to develop and modernize based on its own individual achievements and distinguishing features not found in the West.³⁷ Therefore we find Wu's oeuvre full of traditional Chinese subjects, most notably his romanticized views of Jiangnan villages and streets (Figure 4), monumental mountain landscapes (Figure 5), lotus ponds, and most important for us, his portrait-like depictions of a variety of trees (Figure 6). All of these leitmotifs are suffused with centuries of accumulated meanings that, when painted by Wu in the early 1980s, would surely speak to the robust nature of Chinese tradition that withstood the conflagration of the Cultural Revolution. For a closer look at Wu's process of plumbing the depths of the Chinese painting past in his search for a stable future, we will examine his *Chinese Cypress* painted in 1983, a work representative of a subject firmly situated in China's past, but possessing meaning for the future.

In *Chinese Cypress*, Wu depicts four of the remaining Seven Stars, the seven cypresses originally planted by a Daoist priest on the grounds of the Youshan temple, north of Suzhou, in 500 CE.³⁸ These ancient trees became tourist attractions in later dynasties, as well as subjects of

³⁷ Xiaoneng Yang, ed., *Tracing the Past Drawing the Future: Master Ink Painters in Twentieth-Century China* (Milan: 5 Continents Editions, 2010), 341.

³⁸ James Cahill, *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty, 1368-1580* (New York: Weatherhill, 1978), 95.

countless poems and commentaries, including those of the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1735-1799), who Wu notes as responsible for naming the four cypresses Pure, Strange, Ancient and Odd (清, 奇, 古, 怪).³⁹ More importantly, many artists painted the trees over the centuries, including Shen Zhou (1427-1509) and his disciple, Wen Zhengming (1470-1559).⁴⁰ Like artists before him, Wu visited and painted these cypresses many times (though he says his 1983 work is his best), moved by the way in which, after struck by lightning, they were reborn again, stronger than before.⁴¹ In painting his version of the trees, Wu enters into a dialogue with history, attaching himself to an artistic lineage and therefore signaling the survival of traditional *guohua* in the modern era. The depiction of this venerable, traditional subject, not to mention old trees, highlights Wu's desire to demonstrate the resiliency of traditional Chinese culture and his wish to establish historical continuity. Chinese culture, having weathered the maelstrom of the Cultural Revolution, has now remerged, bursting with life.

Wu's monumental *Chinese Cypress* (4.8 x 11.9 feet!) explodes onto the paper with unbridled energy and force, a world away from Wu's placid, nostalgic village scenes of Jiangnan more concerned with white voids and economical painting. Writhing, animalistic tree forms erupt from the ground in a farrago of twisting branches and frenetic, water-seeking roots, resembling at once spewing flames and storm-tossed ocean waves. Thick, saturated brush-lines of black ink animate the abstracted tree forms, weaving swiftly and sinuously through the composition, creating a violent, vertiginous rhythm with their irregular, bulbous widths of ink left to bleed and blossom on the paper. In Wu's composition, there is no fixity of space, no grounding of forms, but rather constant motion and rapid change, the visual residue of Wu's

³⁹ See Wu Guanzhong, *Huazuo dansheng ji* (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 2008), 139.

⁴⁰ Tseng Yu-ho, "The Seven Junipers of Wen Cheng-Ming," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 8 (1954): 22, <http://www.jstor.org>.

⁴¹ Wu, *Vision and Revision*, 72.

action-packed brushwork readily apparent on the paper. The lumpy, black lines constituting the main trunks and branches are overwritten and loosely echoed by slightly thinner, feathery graphite-colored lines weltering across the pictorial space like wisps of ephemeral smoke. Forms cannot be visually parsed out, but join together in an interconnected series of veins and capillaries, pulsating with a fecund, feral lifeblood.

The sparse leaves adorning the tops of the aged trees are rendered as clouds of blotchy, splashed ink spreading into the paper, echoing both Pan Tianshou (Figure 7) and Bada Shanren. The cloud-like leaves seem to buzz with an electric energy that spurts from the gnarled branches, infusing the space around them with the same vibrancy of life, also at work more visibly in Wu's *Morning Bell* (Figure 8). The same splashed-ink and dotting techniques used for the leaves, à la Shitao's *Ten Thousand Ugly Ink Dots*, are used to treat the rest of the pictorial space, which resembles that of a petri dish wherein bacterial colonies have run rampant.⁴² What is produced is a sense of atmospheric moisture, the thick Jiangnan air quivering with Technicolor life: red, green, blue, pink, and yellow. The whole scene evokes cacophony and entanglement, prosperity and vigor, the composition poised on the brink of chaos and non-representation yet anchored in certain tangible visual details like Wu's central tree form—a technique inspired perhaps by Song dynasty Chan painters like Yu-jian.⁴³ Despite his techniques of abstraction, Wu's cypresses maintain their readability to the viewer, the tie to traditional tree painting still explicit and crucial to understanding the work, though not as important or obvious as Wu's earlier portraits of trees that are less abstract.

⁴² For a discussion of Shitao's *Ten Thousand Ugly Inkdots* see Jonathan Hay, *Shitao: Painting and Modernity in Early Qing China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 250-3.

⁴³ See Yu-jian's (mid-13th c.) *Mountain Village in Clearing Mist* in Sherman E. Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art*, 5 ed., ed. Naomi Noble Richard (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1994), 382.

Although Wu's *Cypress* appears thoroughly modern, his work evinces the presence of historical masters that painted the same trees before him, the artist engaging in an art historical discourse that situates the piece within boundaries defined by the past. Shen Zhou's handscroll *Three Juniper Trees* (Figure 9), painted in 1484, depicts the three oldest of the Seven Stars in a markedly tidier composition that depends more on "real aspects of the trees" rather than imaginative responses.⁴⁴ Wu retains Shen's link to the real, rather tenuous though it may be, yet blatantly privileges the spiritual over the profane, this attention to the "secondary narrative" and extraction of the tree's soul a hallmark of Wu's tree paintings, according to Christina Chu.⁴⁵ Wu's work finds more similarities with Wen Zhengming's *Seven Junipers* painted in 1532 (Figure 10), itself an active response to Shen Zhou's earlier and more prosaic work, as Wen distances himself a bit from scientific observation and impinges upon Wu's more expressive territory with his "wild, romantic flair" and decorative stylization.⁴⁶ Here in Wen's work, branches have ossified into contorted, jagged forms evocative of talons and claws, the trees appearing aggressive, even threatening. Such stylization is fitting considering Wen's inscription on his work that connects the trees to birds and beasts, branches appearing to Wen as "split horns and blunted claws," dragons, tigers, whales, and birds of prey swooping downwards.⁴⁷ A few centuries later, Wu takes his place in line, preserving the latent power of Shen Zhou's *Junipers* and the expressivity of Wen Zhengming, but moving the work into a further visually unsettled, oscillating atmosphere as he retraces the contours of the trees over and over.

Wu seeks refuge in a lineage of painters and also in his rehearsal of the longstanding practice of *xieyi* (写意), the sketching out of ideas and lodging of feelings into the pictorial space,

⁴⁴ Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, 95.

⁴⁵ Chu, Christina. "From Dissolution to Resolution: Wu Guanzhong's Treescapes" in *Vision and Revision: Wu Guanzhong* (Hong Kong: Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1995), 51.

⁴⁶ Anne De Coursey Clapp, *Wen Cheng-Ming: The Ming Artist and Antiquity*, *Artibus Asiae, Supplementum* 34 (1975): 71, <http://www.jstor.org>.

⁴⁷ qtd. in Tseng, "The Seven Junipers," 28.

alongside his exercise of *xiesheng* (写生). Old trees, especially pines, junipers, and cypresses, have long been symbols of the resilience of the human spirit in its desire to persevere through life's vicissitudes, images of which became mirrors of the minds of the artists that painted them, pictorial devices serving as spaces to lodge feelings about historical, political, and personal sentiments. On the one hand, Wu's *Cypress* echoes the sentiments and formal concerns in Wen Zhengming's *Cypress and Rock* (Figure 11), which depicts a twisted, primeval-looking cypress alongside an equally ancient, eroded rock. A talismanic picture painted to wish a friend suffering from an illness a speedy recovery,⁴⁸ Wen's cypress is produced not only from keen observation, but also from the artist's own psychic energies, thus falling into the category of *xieyi*. Wu explicitly engages in *xieyi* painting in his famous *Pine Spirit* (Figure 12), seeking to capture an approximation of the pine's essence in ink; and in *Cypress*, Wu similarly practices *xieyi*, particularly when considering the way he writes so powerfully and poetically about the feelings produced in him upon looking at the trees.⁴⁹ Wu's muscular movements of the brush in *Cypress* also channel the highly lauded muscular strength of Wen Zhengming's right arm, the two artists linked both physically and spiritually in Wu's process of depicting the same subject. It is suitable then to consider Wu's *Cypress* a hybrid exercise in traditional modes of personal expression regarding *xieyi* and the tree as a subject, an exploration into the complex mental landscape of the individual artist that was so coveted by amateur or literati painters like Wen. Perhaps Wu felt safety and comfort not only by spiritually and corporeally communing with his predecessors, but also in the interpretational fragility of *xieyi* as a safer method of criticizing the Socialist regime.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Craig Clunas, *Empire of Great Brightness: Visual and Material Cultures of Ming China, 1368-1644* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 200.

⁴⁹ Wu, *Huazuo dansheng ji*, 139.

⁵⁰ This implementation of *xieyi* can be compared to the contemporaneous writers of so-called Misty Poetry (朦胧诗) who were criticized by Party hardliners for their deeply psychological, lyrical poems about individuals questioning the status quo and searching for China's new future, seen as too obscure to be understood by the common people. In this way, Wu's *xieyi* style would have also been seen as a potentially dangerous or suspicious due to its departure from realism, the abstraction unstable in

More obvious in Wu's *Cypress* however, is the way in which it connects to trees in traditional Chinese painting as mute witnesses of history, sentient reservoirs for the accumulation of time and memory, yet ultimately possessing no inherent ambition to alter history's course.⁵¹ Li Cheng's (919-967) *Reading the Stele* illustrates this idea (Figure 13), depicting Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty reading a Three Kingdoms stele proclaiming Cao E's imperial pretensions to reunify China, a moment of dramatic irony for the viewer who already knows the fate of this last emperor of the Sui: a political failure whom reigned over his dynasty's bitter end.⁵² What interests us most here is the omniscient, aged pine standing sentinel behind, the lone witness to the ineluctable rise and fall of dynasties, expressing perfect disinterestedness and inaction. Like Li Cheng's *Reading the Stele*, Wu's *Chinese Cypress* addresses political concerns in a conservative manner, the stalwart cypresses harboring memories of the catastrophes of the Cultural Revolution, silent monuments to the deaths of many but also the resilience of those, like Wu, who survived. The turbulence of the historical events of the 20th century are thus inscribed upon the cypresses, which appear mangled by the Cultural Revolution, but vibrantly alive.

Experimentation at the Margins: *Jiaohe Gucheng* (1981)

Adhering to traditional subject matter as a way of bridging the gap between the early 1980s and the rich cultural past largely neglected and even effaced during the Socialist era provided one path forward for Wu. However, Wu also experimented with the introduction of new pictorial subjects in his works, subjects outside the traditional purview of Chinese painting,

its invitation for a multiplicity of meanings, and thus "along a direction the Party could not control." See He, *Cycles*, Chapter Seven.

⁵¹ With this reading, Wu seems not to be challenging the status quo like the Misty poets, but rather taking a more conservative approach, perhaps even showing a level of support for the Communist regime despite its prior failures. In any case, Wu's uncertainties about the political scene are apparent as he seems both critical and supportive during this time.

⁵² I am indebted to Patricia Berger for bringing this painting to my attention and elucidating its meanings in her lecture on March 17, 2011 at the University of California, Berkeley.

not easily categorized as landscape or bird-and-flower, and furthermore, unequipped with representational guidelines set by a host of masters in the centuries beforehand. Now, more like his master Lin Fengmian than Pan Tianshou, Wu worked at describing novel subjects using the vocabulary of *guohua*, subjects like the Great Wall (Figure 14)—written about in Chinese history but never once depicted before the 20th century—and skyscrapers (Figure 15). Many of these unprecedented subjects emerged from Wu’s travels, to Africa, for example, but also to China’s domestic yet never pictorialized regions such as Xinjiang, where Wu depicted the ruins of Jiaohe in *Jiaohe Gucheng*, a provocative and radical choice for a Chinese *guohua* artist at the beginning of the 1980s.⁵³

As stated above, many of Wu’s subjects are derived from his journeys into different parts of China, the artist often spending as many as six months away from home each year traveling the country’s diverse landscape, sketching from life (*xiesheng*).⁵⁴ Wu’s excursions took him back to his beloved Jiangnan to paint its gardens and whitewashed homes, but also to places outside of China’s heartland, such as Hong Kong, Tibet, and Xinjiang, where new visions of the Chinese nation and Wu’s motherland appeared before him. Wu’s lifelong friend Xiong Bingming writes that Wu’s beloved China, in addition to Jiangnan, consists of “everywhere across the vast expanse of the country,” its disparate regions coalescing into a unified whole in his mind.⁵⁵ Such thinking reflects Wu’s pre-Cultural Revolution days when groups of artists traveled together to paint China’s scenery, noting how the myriad cultures and topographies were united under a single nation based in Beijing.

⁵³ Wu wrote much about his travels, including his trip to Africa. See 看非洲 in Wu Guanzhong, *Bairi tan* (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 2009), 153-155.

⁵⁴ Kao, “The Art of Wu Guanzhong,” 25.

⁵⁵ Xiong Bingming, “Foreword,” trans Lucy Lim, in *Wu Guanzhong: A Contemporary Chinese Artist*, ed. Lucy Lim (San Francisco: The Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco, 1989), xi.

In 1981, when Wu traveled to Xinjiang to teach classes, he made a side trip to Turfan in order to paint the ancient ruins of Jiaohe and Gaochang (Figure 16), producing two images, *Jiaohe Gucheng* and *Gaochang Yizhi* (Figure 17). Wu recalls how he went to Jiaohe on a sweltering day, the temperature over 40 degrees centigrade (hence the area is called the “Oasis of Fire”), rushing about the dilapidated city frantically sketching. Dripping with sweat, Wu eventually decided after an hour that it was best to retreat indoors to escape the heat, finishing the composition from memory. Wu writes that with his sister paintings of the cracked ruins of Jiaohe and Gaochang, he pries into the time of Xuanzang, when Gaochang was a flourishing state, the artist seeking to identify in the ruins a trace of Gaochang’s halcyon past, the scar left as a reminder of its eradication and absence.⁵⁶

Jiaohe at one time had a glorious past indeed, existing before but achieving prominence during the Han and especially Tang dynasties, when it served as a garrison town along the Silk Road, the fertile, low-lying Turfan basin a longstanding oasis for weary travelers, merchants, and pilgrims. The city’s name (literally river intersection) derives from its placement atop a high plateau overlooking the confluence of two rivers, the city itself rationally planned in a zoned layout purportedly modeled after Han cities.⁵⁷ In 640 Jiaohe was conquered and annexed as part of China, becoming a protectorate occupied by both civil and military Han administrations,⁵⁸ its population a diverse and cosmopolitan 37,000 of many nationalities and ethnic groups.⁵⁹ The city was also a center of Buddhism, many Buddhist monuments from as early as the Eastern Han still

⁵⁶ Here the term *henji* (痕迹) offers two different translations, the positive or neutral ‘trace’ or the more negative ‘scar,’ see Wu, *Huazuo dansheng ji*, 53.

⁵⁷ Susan N. Erickson, Yi Song-mi and Michael Nylan, “The archaeology of the outlying lands,” in *China’s Early Empires: A Reappraisal*, ed. by Michael Nylan and Michael Loewe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 148.

⁵⁸ Howard J. Wechsler, “T’sai-tsung (reign 626-49) the consolidator,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 3 ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 225-6.

⁵⁹ Documents have been found there written in Chinese, Kharosthi, Kuchean, Sogdian, Tibetan, Uighur, and Kharakhanid. See Jonathan Tucker, *The Silk Road: Art and History* (Chicago: Art Media Resources, 2003), 141-2.

extant today, including a large Buddhist temple and stupa-pillar.⁶⁰ Much of Jiaohe's appeal in fact derives from the awesome way the desert's aridity has preserved the city over the centuries, the ruins inspiring many an artist to imagine the "restless activities and vigors of China's ancestors".⁶¹

Like Wu's *Chinese Cypress, Jiaohe Gucheng* immediately confronts the viewer with an electric energy. Employing Chinese ink, felt-tip pen, and gouache, Wu brilliantly mixes all three mediums in an elaborate ink-play to animate the desiccated, crumbling remains, his varied and vigorous uses of the brush adding a mesmerizing dynamism to the work. Varied thicknesses of pen lines sketchily outline the misshapen remains, which fit together like a jumbled, jostling jigsaw puzzle, the various forms simultaneously pushing away from and melting into each other, recalling Shitao's famous leaf from the album for the Daoist Yu (Figure 18).⁶² Wu's contending horizontal, vertical, and rounded brushstrokes and lines recall the trembling of dueling architectonic plates. Wu toys with our visual perception of the varied forms, which seem at once fixed and mobile, recessing backwards and yet flattened upon the picture plane, producing a dizzying effect whereby the viewer can find no rest for his or her eye. Instead, we are forced perpetually to wander aimlessly through the ruins, abortively searching for a point of entry into the chaotic composition that provides no such accessibility promised by classic Chinese landscape painting. Rather, the subject exists a priori, existing before our arrival, extending

⁶⁰ See Gilles Béguin, *Buddhist Art: An Historical and Cultural Journey*, trans. Narisa Chakrabongse (Bangkok: River Books, 2009), 238-9 and Annette L. Juliano and Judith A. Lerner, *Monks and Merchants: Silk Road Treasures from Northwest China* (New York: Harry N. Abrams & the Asia Society, 2001), 32-3.

⁶¹ Zhao Yixiong, "Painting the Silk Roads: A Meditation on the past," *Leonardo* 24, no. 4 (1991): 400, <http://www.jstor.org>.

⁶² See Hay, *Shitao*, 251-4.

horizontally into an imaginary space beyond the pictorial edges, the living and breathing ruins multiplying before us.⁶³

Short moments of visual focus, such as the economic, yet effective rendering of the brick-walled turret at the top of the picture bring temporary stability and reality, but such comfort quickly dissipates. The rest of the work's abstractness is left to our imaginations to discover countless hidden "giants and mythical beasts" lurking in the rocks.⁶⁴ Wu leaves only a small crack of blue sky on the top of the picture to orient the eye, yet even fills this space with the turbulent motion of a flock of black crows, hovering over the buzzing ruins.⁶⁵ Uneven applications of black ink wash suggest shadows dancing upon the baked remains, which are brilliantly rendered in nuanced, earthy-tone gouache washes of beiges, peaches, and ambers, with the occasional, surprising burst of scarlet. Erratic, seemingly accidental splashes and dots of ink emphasize the instability and ineluctable erosion of the mud brick ruins, while also acting to capture the dusty environment of the desert site, which appears as a transient mirage before our eyes, a historical moment trapped under layers upon layers of accreted time.

In spite of Jiaohe's (and Xinjiang's) long historical connection with Han China, Wu's work exemplifies a major departure from the Chinese painting tradition, as both pictures of ruins and pictures of Xinjiang (e.g. Silk Road sites) had been conspicuously absent from the repertoire of *guohua* until the latter 20th century. In his chapter on ruins in contemporary Chinese art, Wu Hung argues that preserving and depicting ruins was considered taboo before the contemporary era, images of which were deemed unsuitable due to their implications of inauspiciousness and

⁶³ Here I use *a priori* as employed by Svetlana Alpers in her discussion of Vermeer and Dutch art. See Svetlana Alpers, "The Example of Dutch Art" in *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982): 183-200.

⁶⁴ Wu writes about *Gaochang yizhi* (The Ruins of Gaochang): 《人们并可在其中发现潜藏着的巨人和怪兽》, see Wu Guanzhong, *Huayan: Wu Guanzhong zhu* (Shanghai: wenhui chubanshe, 2010), 46.

⁶⁵ To notice the effect more fully, compare it with Hua Yan's (1682 – 1756) work highlighting silence and desolation with a lone wild goose flying overhead as a peripatetic merchant and his camel look skywards. Reproduced in Richard Barnhart, et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 282.

danger.⁶⁶ The historical and present-day region of Xinjiang was also beyond the realm of accepted pictorial subjects, most likely due to China's entrenched philosophy of inner (Han) and outer (non-Han) as disparate and unequal spaces (i.e. Civilization and the Void).⁶⁷ In fact, Xinjiang was a place of banishment for criminals and effete officials during the Qing Dynasty,⁶⁸ the connotation of Xinjiang as a barren wasteland continuing into the 1950s, when PLA soldiers sent to serve and later settle the area felt they too were being banished to a place anything but Chinese.⁶⁹

Yet during Wu's visit to paint *Jiaohe* in the early 1980s, the Chinese government was already actively engaged in a decades long project (still continuing today) to strengthen the integration of Xinjiang through economic development in order to take advantage of Xinjiang's natural resources and geopolitically strategic location in Central Asia.⁷⁰ As a result, spontaneous in-migration to Xinjiang expanded rapidly during the 1980s,⁷¹ with Han Chinese flocking to Xinjiang to pursue economic goals and opportunities.⁷² Soon Xinjiang became an alluring subject for artists, the region roughly equivalent to America's West, an unsullied and untapped wilderness that was "not only beautiful, but vast, majestic, wild, and somewhat mysterious," a new frontier promising adventure and wealth.⁷³ In this way, Xinjiang became again a land of

⁶⁶ Wu Hung, *Making History: Wu Hung on Contemporary Art* (Hong Kong: Timezone 8, 2008): 4.

⁶⁷ Francois Thierry, "Empire and Minority in China," in *Minority Peoples in the Age of Nation States*, ed. Gérard Chaliand, trans. Tony Berrett. (London: Pluto Press, 1989): 78.

⁶⁸ For more on this, see Joanna Waley-Cohen, *Exile in Mid-Qing China: banishment to Xinjiang, 1758-1820* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

⁶⁹ Amy Kardos, "A Rock and a Hard Place: Chinese Soldiers in Xinjiang Caught between Center and Periphery after 1949," in *China on the Margins*, ed. Sherman Cochran and Paul G. Pickowicz (Ithaca, NY: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 2010): 135 – 157.

⁷⁰ Michael E. Clarke, *Xinjiang and China's Rise in Central Asia—A History* (New York: Routledge, 2011): 12.

⁷¹ Robyn Iredale, Naran Bilik, and Wang Su, *Contemporary Minority Migration, Education and Ethnicity in China* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing: 2001), 175.

⁷² Ren Qiang and Yuan Xin, "Impacts of Migration to Xinjiang since the 1950s," in *China's Minorities on the Move: Selected Case Studies*, ed. Robyn Iredale, Naran Bilik, and Fei Guo (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2003): 100.

⁷³ Lin Xiaoping, "Sinkiang: A Profound Inspiration to Chinese Artists," *Leonardo* 16, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 53, <http://www.jstor.org>.

opportunity and also a part of China, as Jiaohe had been so many centuries ago at the height of the Silk Road trade during the Tang.

Dialogues with History: Aging, Death and Rebirth

Wu Guanzhong's bifurcated production in the early 1980s, here symbolized by the traditional *Chinese Cypress* and unprecedented *Jiaohe Gucheng*, tells multiple narratives of China's historical past and its relationship to the present, history on the one hand glorified and aggrandized for its strength and stability, and on the other, deeply distrusted, due to the inevitable and irreparable erosion of materiality and memory.

The two works, however different they may be, both engage in dialogues that highlight veneration for the ancient and historical, exhibiting a deep-seated commitment to upholding memories of an historical China, weathered and changed, but nonetheless one that has remained mostly intact from its inception to the modern day.⁷⁴ As we saw earlier with *Cypress*, establishing himself within a lineage and depicting a memory-laden subject allowed Wu to bridge the gap between China's art historical past and its present and future artistic paths. In this conception, history advances into the future in a continual accumulation of social and artistic memory, becoming more and more solidified with each generation's acceptance of set modes of viewing the world. This is best exemplified in Wu's statement about *Cypress*, that as each generation has looked towards the trees, each has been filled with the same deep respect for them.⁷⁵ It is a process in which the past is actively sought after in order to serve as bedrock for the future, an active and politically-charged turning away from the recent past to mine strength in

⁷⁴ This idea can be compared to other Chinese contemporary artists (e.g. Gu Wenda and Xu Bing) appropriating the Chinese writing system to comment on cultural continuity, yet also to question this continuity in the presence of globalization and modernization. See Wu, *Making History*.

⁷⁵ The Chinese reads: 《今每一代子孙望之肃然起敬》, Wu, *huazuo dansheng ji*, 139.

the more ancient. And so Wu's work celebrates China's long past, acting as a testimony to the resilience of its culture that, like Wu's rendering of tangled branches and interwoven roots has become richer and more complex throughout time, growing more entrenched and rooted in its alluvial bed. Additionally, with his rehearsal of this important subject using the *xieyi* methodology, Wu asserts his communion with the minds of the ancients, asserting a perfect transfer of knowledge (and therefore history), much like that of Chan Buddhist monks and their lineages.⁷⁶ By returning to the *xieyi* roots, Wu seeks to offer up this notion of the spiritual lotus emerging pure from the mud of modern history, the radiant memory of history blooming in the present.

Comparing Jewish and Chinese ideologies concerning collective memory, Vera Schwarcz writes that, although the Chinese may possess the wish to forget the past, "Chinese culture demands the transmission of memory no less forcefully than the Jewish one."⁷⁷ The intention here is that nothing is lost with this conception of history, which attempts to preserve memory as a way to achieve spiritual continuity and overcome catastrophe. China's collective memory can be seen as physically materialized in Wu's cypresses, recalling Pierre Nora's notion of *lieux de mémoire*, especially in regards to the idea of trees in the Chinese imagination as longstanding sites invested with communal history, physical spaces where collective memory can adhere and accrete.⁷⁸ Wu's knotted cypresses are thus immutable in their possession of historical memory, affirming that certain traditions can be preserved and could not be effectively deracinated by the Cultural Revolution. This view is echoed in Wen Zhengming's inscription for *Seven Junipers*, writing, "Ten thousand oxens [*sic*] will not pull out the spreading roots, anchored in primeval

⁷⁶ Shui Tianzhong, "Wu Guanzhong and his Water and Ink Painting," in *Vision and Revision: Wu Guanzhong* (Hong Kong: Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1995): 30.

⁷⁷ Vera Schwarcz, "No Solace from Lethe: History, Memory, and Cultural Identity in Twentieth-Century China," *Daedalus* 120, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 90, <http://www.jstor.org>.

⁷⁸ See Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989): 7-24, <http://www.jstor.org>.

soil,” an image of tradition as both secure (anchored) and continually disseminated collectively among the people (spreading).⁷⁹ In fact, the cypresses are even seen as immortal, these “magic witnesses of days gone by,” indifferent to war and peace, their immortality the desideratum of the artist.⁸⁰ But immortality aside, the wish to embody the principles of the tree translates to historical consciousness but also to a passive, reticent view of history, whereby the artist asserts himself as helpless in the face of historical progress. Something then of Wu’s wish to cast himself in the role of an observer emerges, the uncertainty of the 1980s cultivating a cautious attitude toward—to borrow T.S. Eliot’s famous phrase—disturbing the universe. It is this fatalism that perhaps is a result of the feelings of powerlessness inculcated in him during the repressive Maoist years when Wu’s creative choices and even his capacity to paint were not of his own accord, these memories accumulating within him as a paralyzing force.

Ruins might also hold positive evocations confirming the continuity of Chinese tradition throughout the centuries, symbolizing the residue of history that remains in the modern period, even after so much time has passed. Yet, with no grounding or access point within the pictorial space, Wu’s *Jiaohe* denies the viewer an opportunity to imaginatively traverse the landscape. Instead, like the foreboding and overwhelming rock face of Fan Kuan’s *Travelers Among Streams and Mountains*, Wu’s ruins present an impermeable barrier, an explicit break with the continuity of history; revealing, in Nora’s words, a “sense that memory has been torn.”⁸¹ They seem to signal what has been lost from and fragmented by the Socialist era, living proof of China’s dark ages caused by “internal turmoil, political repression...[and] destruction of massive, historic proportions”.⁸² And in direct contrast to the *Cypress* that stands stoically throughout time,

⁷⁹ Tseng, “The Seven Junipers,” 27.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁸¹ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 7.

⁸² Wu, *Making History*, 5.

perhaps battered yet nonetheless life affirming in its persistent growth, ruins signify a constant and implacable decline, perfect only during the moment of construction, otherwise on the slow path of decay. In this vein, the work seems a plaintive cry for a halcyon past now unreachable and beyond the foothold of memory, the artist's task of depicting the waves of history solidified in rock an extremely melancholy one.⁸³ In contrast with the stable knowledge harbored within the cypress' thick trunk, knowledge about Jiaohe gradually evaporates with the desert heat, the dust carried off in gusts, until the artifacts confronted can only proffer parboiled answers to historical inquiry. The black apertures—appearing like windows into the past—invite imaginative exploration into hidden passageways, yet also deny entrance, illumined with preternatural, foreboding red that warns to keep out.

Much of *Jiaohe* in fact speaks to the uncertainty of the 1980s, evoking a deep distrust of history and memory as stable, reliable entities. The sense of motion and tension produced by the juxtaposition of jagged, irregular forms stresses this uneasiness about the loss of tradition, culture, and history, and at the same time, uncertainty about the present unfolding of the 1980s. Wu's work begs comparison with Wu Shanzhuan's *Red Humor*, an installation stressing the disorientation of the 1980s, parallel to the meaningless noise of Big Character Posters, and thus using the ruins of the past to make commentary on the present.⁸⁴ A similar uncertainty is derived from the fact that Jiaohe and Gaochang are both stuck in the heat of the desert, sharing a liminal existence between life and death.⁸⁵ So, where Wu's *Cypress* resolutely declares itself as a living entity, the ruins are more ambiguous in their assertion of either life or death,⁸⁶ the broad, dry brushstrokes and blotches of wet paint attesting to the materiality of the image itself, these marks

⁸³ 感伤, see Wu, *huazuo dansheng ji*, 53.

⁸⁴ Wu, *Making History*, 6.

⁸⁵ Wu, *huazuo dansheng ji*, 53.

⁸⁶ This idea of a hovering between life and death for historical sites like Jiaohe is echoed by Nora when he states that *lieux de mémoires* are "moments of history, torn away from the moment of history, then returned; no longer life, not yet death." See Nora, *Between History and Memory*, 12.

seemingly able to be peeled off.⁸⁷ The cypress, as a tree, embodies the cyclical aspect of life and history, that through the turbulence of dynastic changes, the Han Chinese people maintain cohesion and cultural strength. Thus, attempts to deracinate Chinese culture such as the Cultural Revolution are proven futile, the lightning searing and splitting the trunk not enough to snuff out its light. But the ruins on the other hand, they present the potential for the recurrence of destruction, in fact, one may argue, they signal the ineluctable recurrence of destructive forces as natural in the progress of history, and so tell a foreboding tale for the future.

On the one hand ruins are by nature deteriorating objects, bound temporally to eventual disintegration, yet Wu's *Jiaohe* seems also to struggle against death, evoking Wang Meng's surging and battling mountain forms created during a similar time of dynastic upheaval, internecine warfare, and personal tragedy.⁸⁸ In this way, Wu attempts to breath life into a deadened history, resurrecting *Jiaohe* and its glorious past through the action of painting it. It behooves us to mention Stars' member Huang Rui's *Testament* (遗嘱) here (Figure 19), a work that movingly depicts the "Little Versailles" columns of the ruined Summer Palace in an abstract, anthropomorphic embrace.⁸⁹ As Cohen notes, Huang's work serves to address the "renaissance of the Chinese spirit as it rises from the ashes of the Cultural Revolution," a time to mourn irretrievable losses, but also a time of swelling hope.⁹⁰ Both Huang and Wu's works embody the conflicting duality of life and death, evoking uncertainties about the future and the ever-present possibility for destruction. However, both also possess the hope that history can be revived, that

⁸⁷ Barnhart writes that Wu possesses a disdain for materials, believing that once his pigments have made their mark, they have "no other significance." Much to the dismay of his admirers, Wu's pigments often crack and fall off, echoing this idea of material ephemerality and temporal erosion in the actual painting practice. See Barnhart, "The Odyssey," 15.

⁸⁸ See Richard Vinograd, "Family Properties: Personal Context and Cultural Pattern in Wang Meng's 'Pien Mountains' of 1366," *Ars Orientalis* 13 (1982): 1-29, <http://www.jstor.org>.

⁸⁹ This work is actually part of a set of works depicting the ruins of the Summer Palace or Yuanmingyuan, *Testament* accompanied by a darker and more foreboding *Funeral* and a brighter *New Life* depicting the ruins at dawn. See Lü, *A History of Art in 20th Century China*, 779.

⁹⁰ Cohen, *The New Chinese Painting*, 61.

Chinese culture has the potential to be reborn after Mao, and that ruins are effective subjects for the expression of these sentiments.

Wu's *Cypress* more readily depicts a scene of rebirth to signify the zeitgeist of the early 1980s, a period of freedom and cultural production unseen in decades. Wu, suddenly released from decades of restraint and silence, burst onto the art scene with energy and vitality uncharacteristic of his old age, becoming fast a "symbol of the rejuvenation of the spirit of modern China."⁹¹ And so, his depiction of weather-beaten cypresses mimics his own biography, the seemingly paralytic force of the Cultural Revolution's strike of lightning not enough to stamp out his zest for life, and more importantly, his faith in China's future. The old trees continue to push out new shoots, presented here as stronger and more full of life than ever before, again the subject becoming the place in which the artist lodges his personal feelings of self-renewal. In his early sixties at the time, Wu possessed an inherent connection to the aged cypress, both still enchanted by the promises of life. Xiong writes that at this time both he and Wu were "on the one hand, old men, yet on the other, rejuvenated, reborn," just like the cypresses.⁹² *Jiaohe* then can be seen also to buzz and tremble with vigorous life, centuries of its human history percolating through the baked mud bricks, which seem to be undergoing a metamorphosis of sorts, not so unlike Guo Xi's *Early Spring*. Wu thus paints a moment of magical realism, an impossible transformation in the inert and soporific desert, the action-packed brushwork seeking to resuscitate the chapped ruins, now imbued with a radiant glow, dust dancing upon their bizarre forms. But in the end, the ominous crows swarming overhead, threatening to blacken the azure sky, remind us of the anxieties of death and loss and the uncertainty with which Wu confronts the future, resituating *Jiaohe* as a more rueful image about loss and death. Yet *Jiaohe*, in its

⁹¹ Kao, "The Art of Wu Guanzhong," 24.

⁹² Xiong, "Foreward," ix.

depiction of a culture and place lost to history, encourages the construction of new *lieux de mémoire*, leaving hope for the future, however uncertain it may be. Cypress is more confident in its presentation of the possibility of renaissance, charged with vivid, panting life that points to China's similar awakening in the early 1980s, and carries multiple implications for the direction this awakening could go.

Towards the Global: Visions and Prophecies for the Motherland

Wu's images speak to more than just a triumphant survival of Han Chinese culture or a longing for the Chinese past, but rather they argue for a new conception of China that mirrors and bolsters the growing international consciousness of the Reform Era, seeking to answer questions about China's place as a nation within the world community of nation-states. Instead of producing images intended to somehow preserve the essence of Chinese culture, Wu conveys the strength of Chineseness in the modern world through images of China that incorporate and welcome cosmopolitan ideas rooted in the historical and present that do not infringe upon, but rather enhance, China's distinct identity in the world. Wu's *Jiaohe Gucheng* channels the internationalism and exoticism of the Tang dynasty Silk Road, presenting a China that embraces cosmopolitanism and derives strength from its associations with non-Han nations and peoples around the world.

Like the puzzle-piece arrangement of Jiaohe's remains in Wu's work, China must work toward placing itself again into the international system, Wu's ruin image functioning as an auspicious, even talismanic representation that presages and confirms a reawakening of China's flourishing Tang days. In direct contrast to ruins as a pictorial subject heralding inauspicious events in the pre-modern, Wu's subject, with its mirage-like, magical atmosphere of

metamorphosis and resurrection portends an auspicious transformation of China's place in the world, recalling an ancient tradition of auspicious images signaling dynastic soundness. Peter Sturman's enchanting investigation of a compendium of auspicious *ruiying* images meticulously documented and pictorialized for the Song Emperor Huizong emperor illustrates how images were used to legitimize the ruler's benevolent and prosperous rule.⁹³ The famous *Qingming Shanghe tu*, an image of the idealized, flourishing capital Kaifeng of the Northern Song, scholars argue, was produced in an effort to influence reality, advancing ideas of prosperity during a period of decline.⁹⁴ Although certainly not produced under the same circumstances, the thaumaturgic quality of Wu's *Jiaohe* cannot be ignored, the ruins pictured in a state of flux, unimaginably animated in such a way that hints at a spiritual presence much like that of Wu's *Pine Spirit*, which deeply touched the artist in a profound and magical way. Additionally, Wu's own commentary about his desire to somehow peel away the layers of history to reengage with the Tang past echoes this idea of an image as an act of conjuring auspiciousness and channeling spiritual presences for positive implementation in the present.

In depicting the Silk Road ruins of *Jiaohe*, Wu encourages a revitalization of Jiaohe's (and the rest of China's) Tang dynasty cosmopolitanism and economic prosperity, the Silk Road site a fitting symbol of an open and international China that Deng's reform policies sought to restore. Han aside, the Tang dynasty occupies the most venerated place among China's many dynasties in the latter twentieth- and twenty-first-century Chinese imagination. This is largely because the Tang was the "most open and cosmopolitan period of Chinese history," an empire that both expanded outward and drew foreigners inward, its capital at Chang'an becoming a true

⁹³ Peter C. Sturman, "Cranes above Kaifeng: The Auspicious Image at the Court of Huizong," *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 33-68, <http://www.jstor.org>.

⁹⁴ Julia K. Murray, "Water Under the Bridge: Further Thoughts on the Qingming Scroll," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 27 (1997): 98-106.

global metropolis and center of the world.⁹⁵ The employment of the ancient Silk Road city of Jiaohe as a pictorial subject recalls this golden age of Chinese history as reborn in the Deng era, with its Special Economic Zones and focused attention on the development of export oriented foreign trade.

The pictorial subject also suggests a growing fascination and identification with the exotic and an awareness of the necessity to paint for a global audience. In a period known in art history as the ‘Second Western Tide,’ China’s art scene in the early 1980s welcomed the whole spectrum of world art while simultaneously pushing Chinese art onto the international art scene through publications, exhibitions, and the like, fostering an international artistic exchange.⁹⁶ Artists were increasingly feeling part of the stream of international art, the need to attract foreign viewers all the more pressing.⁹⁷ Wu’s experiences in France, coupled with his time painting emblematic Chinese images for Western viewers during with the Hotel School in the early 1970s, seem to have kept the importance of foreign viewers at the fore. Wu explicitly stated that he paints out of his love for the Chinese people, their understanding of his works central to his mission as an artist. However, as Lang Shajun states, “Wu has striven to make his works of art appeal to and be understood by not only other Chinese but foreigners,” who find traditional *guohua* dense and enigmatic.⁹⁸ Though Wu may claim he was surprised that his images of Jiaohe and Gaochang garnered so much international praise, becoming the darlings of auction houses and subsequently selling for exorbitant prices,⁹⁹ it seems foolish to believe that Wu’s paintings were not in the least motivated by this movement of internationalism, Wu himself an

⁹⁵ Mark Edward Lewis, *China’s Cosmopolitan Empire: The Tang Dynasty* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 145.

⁹⁶ Kao, “The Art of Wu Guanzhong,” 24.

⁹⁷ Sullivan, *Art and Artists*, 231.

⁹⁸ Lang Shajun, “Traditional Chinese Painting in the Twentieth Century,” in Barnhart, Richard M., et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 353.

⁹⁹ Wu, *Huazuo dansheng ji*, 53.

international artist in his own right who understood the need to appeal to a Western eye and the immense monetary gain it would deliver.

Xinjiang, especially Jiaohe, a felicitous choice for Wu Guanzhong as a subject, indicates this break from the rigidity of Han Chinese traditional modes and the search for new conceptions of China to appeal to an international audience. The depiction of ruins, a theme harboring more meaning for Westerners—who have glorified, preserved, and discussed ruins for centuries—than Chinese, exhibits Wu’s willingness to subordinate Chinese thinking to address his Western audience, much like Lin Fengmian’s still-lives and fairy-like female figures. Wu also seems to act within the same vein as painters such as Cheng Shifa and Huang Zhou, who capitalized on oftentimes saccharine and feminizing depictions of minority peoples and lifestyles in order to cater to a Western Orientalizing audience composed mostly of tourists and collectors. Wu’s ruins may seem incomparable with the bucolic pictures of minority girls alongside donkeys or dancers in polychromatic costumes, but both speak to an idyllic and exotic China, far away in the West, that tourists and even most Chinese could only dream of seeing with their own eyes. This “oriental orientalism” serves to elucidate the way in which Wu presents an alternate image of China that indirectly highlights the diverse regions and therefore cosmopolitanism of the Chinese nation.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, Xinjiang appealed to artists like Wu because of its status as a “peripheral culture which embodies common intellectual achievements of various nationalities in the world,” the region becoming a platform in which China could declare its long international history, an appealing idea to Westerners and the modernizing Chinese alike.¹⁰¹

As much as Wu’s works may cater toward international sentiments, they still remain part of China’s nation-building process, indeed solidifying China’s role in the international spectrum,

¹⁰⁰ The term “oriental orientalism” is borrowed from Gladney. See, Dru C. Gladney, “Nationality in China: Refiguring Majority/Minority Identities,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53, no. 1 (Feb. 1994): 92 – 123, <http://www.jstor.org>.

¹⁰¹ Lin, “Sinkiang,” 55

but making sure to declare the centrality of this role. Since Mao's "Yan'an Talks on Art and Literature," the CCP has effectively used art as a tool for inculcating the masses with the socialist agenda, artists playing an integral role in creating images that speak directly to CCP ideas of nationhood and history.¹⁰² Although Wu's works of the 1980s were released from the shackles of Socialist Realism and CCP exigencies after the death of Mao, they still must be read as part and parcel of China's nation-building agenda. Much of this is because of Wu's personal sentiments about his homeland (where every region he loved) as well as the Party's political (and economic) goal of incorporating previously marginalized regions (e.g. Xinjiang) into the larger Han Chinese narrative (what Steven Harrell calls China's civilizing projects) happening concurrently in the 1980s.¹⁰³ In this way, Wu's depiction of *Jiaohe*, a historical site in Xinjiang, holds much meaning for both traditional and modern Chinese history, and even more so during the 1980s, when Xinjiang was actively and aggressively being opened up. As Millward writes about the twenty-first century tourist industry in Xinjiang, the Silk Road has been mobilized to serve the ideologies and nation-building strategies of the Chinese state, the CCP stressing a more "parochial and nationalistic" Silk Road in which the rising China again plays a "major role on the world stage" as it did during the openness of the Tang.¹⁰⁴ According to Millward, portrayals of the Silk Road evince that once again the world is on a path towards China's (once again) open door, the Silk Road becoming "nationalized as China's doorstep," rather than defined as a transnational space.¹⁰⁵ In this way, *Jiaohe* signals once again a powerful Tang China that is the crucial nexus in the world's economic, cultural, and political exchanges. It is a profound and

¹⁰² See McDougall.

¹⁰³ Stevan Harrell, "Introduction: Civilizing Projects and Reactions to Them," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Steven Harrell (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995).

¹⁰⁴ James A. Millward, "Positioning Xinjiang in Eurasian and Chinese History: Differing visions of the 'Silk Road,'" in *China, Xinjiang, and Central Asia: History, transition, and crossborder interaction into the 21st century*, ed. Colin Mackerras and Michael Clarke (New York: Routledge, 2009), 55.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 65-6.

unconventional image of romantic patriotism produced by an internationally aware, yet China-centered, artist.

Then what about Wu's *Cypress*? Can such ideas of internationalism and the centrality of China in the new international order emerge only from non-traditional pictorial subjects? I would argue that Wu's *Cypress* actually takes this idea of the international one step further, in its connection to Chinese cosmological thinking, ultimately placing the Chinese nation, its culture and history at the center of not only the world, but also the universe.¹⁰⁶ The cypress trees that Wu depicts were indeed called the Seven Stars, a reference to the Seven Stars of the Great Bear constellation.¹⁰⁷ In the inscription to his work, Wen Zhengming invests them with this divine power, writing that they are as "celestial as the constellation of the Seven Stars...hallowing the Palace of the Stars, attending Heaven's majesty."¹⁰⁸ Though Wu certainly does not share Wen's Ming dynasty conceptions of the universe, his depiction of these same trees (over and over again) and his knowledge of their history (such as Qianlong's writings about them) exhibit his understanding about the possibility of their divine and cosmological valences. Such celestial implications find common ground with Wu's metamorphosis of Jiaohe, these visions of China attesting to its cultural and spiritual witness as a land of wonders. Additionally, the connection to the cosmological attests to China's rightful position and evolution during the 1980s, as if China's transformation coincides with the fate as designed by the heavens. Not only that, but China's rightful place is directly under the heavens, the Middle Kingdom after all, aligned with the cosmos at the center of the universe. In all these senses however, China is placed beyond the realm of the profane and into the sacred, Wu's image of primeval cypresses, miraculously

¹⁰⁶ I am indebted to Patricia Berger for bringing the notion of the cosmological and its ties to the cypresses to my attention.

¹⁰⁷ Tseng, "The Seven Junipers," 30.

¹⁰⁸ Qtd. in *Ibid.*, 27.

surviving the tempestuous centuries proving China's destiny as a universal leader and international cornerstone in the coming decades.

In addition to the Silk Road and cosmological metaphors that reference the global, the overall lucidity of Wu's two works, particularly *Chinese Cypress*, point towards developing a demotic vernacular for the international comprehension of Chinese painting. James Cahill points out that Wu's works are not especially difficult to understand, making them appealing for all audiences, both in China and around the globe. He goes on to assert that Wu exhibits, to a certain degree, something of the "commonplace," characteristic of master Qi Baishi who excelled at "combining literati taste with common or plebian taste."¹⁰⁹ Wu's *Cypress* would be popular among Chinese viewers, who would immediately identify it within a uniquely Chinese symbolic and historical framework, but also would attract an international audience, trees functioning as common, almost universal, symbols of life. The international readability of Wu's *Cypress* then lends itself to an acknowledgement of the usefulness and resonance of the tree as a subject of painting, not to mention ancient trees, which, found all over the world, seem to inspire and fascinate everyone who confronts them.

The depiction of Jiaohe can also be read as a common symbol that could be marketed and understood internationally, the antediluvian facades of desert ruins illuminating the unified origins of human civilization. Furthermore, when *Jiaohe* is juxtaposed with Wu's images of cityscapes, more notions of the universal are apparent. National boundaries and distinctions are erased through Wu's architectonic, patternized renderings of cities and towns that focus more formal concerns of repetition and less on identification of place. *Jiaohe* shares in this regularization of the composition, the ruins conflated with the modern cityscapes and therefore

¹⁰⁹ James Cahill with Taso Hsingyuan, "Styles and Methods in the Painting of Wu Guanzhong," in *Wu Guanzhong: A Contemporary Chinese Artist*, ed. Lucy Lim (San Francisco: The Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco, 1989), 22.

ushered into the present, appearing not as historical or Chinese, but more as signifiers of an established and organized human existence. Here then is something of the desire to compress the chaos and vagaries of the world into cellularized visions of, dare I say, generic, urban landscapes evoking the global city and global civilization of the latter twentieth century.

Yet for all of these efforts at internationalization and universal comprehension, at what point do Wu's works begin to lose their crucial sense of Chineseness? And furthermore, with Wu's paintings becoming increasingly abstract in the later years of his life, some bordering on total abstraction and illegibility, to what extent does Wu's commitment to a distinctly Chinese representation disappear altogether, his works truly becoming international, even cosmic, in character? These questions are better left for another paper, but help to elucidate the later evolution of the artist and the temporal sensitivity of this paper's argument about Chineseness, China, and the global in Wu Guanzhong's artworks during the early 1980s.

Conclusions

The polarities present in Wu Guanzhong's artwork during the early 1980s indicate a longstanding dilemma for the *guohua* artist, the Chinese ink medium demanding recognition of traditional precedent, yet also inherently flexible in its implementation and therefore encouraging experimentation. Wu's experimentation with *guohua* has taken him deep into the dense forest of abstraction, where personal expression and the lodging of feelings have become tantamount. Yet during the early 1980s, Wu still clung to notions of the nation and its traditions, struggling with how to identify himself and his country, and ultimately used his art to take a global political stance. Growing older, however, he ostracized himself further into the realm of the spiritual, abstraction becoming a tool for the further investigation of memory and history.

Figures



Figure 1. *Jiaohe Gucheng* (交河故城), Wu Guanzhong, 1981, ink, felt-tip pen and gouache on paper (*Huazuo danshengji* 51)



Figure 2. *Chinese Cypress* (汉柏), Wu Guanzhong, 1983, ink and colors on paper, (*Vision and Revision* 73)



Figure 3. *Wild Chrysanthemums* (野菊),
Wu Guanzhong, 1972, oils (Lim 131)



Figure 4. *Jiangnan Household* (江南人家), Wu
Guanzhong, 1987, ink on paper (*Huayan* 55)

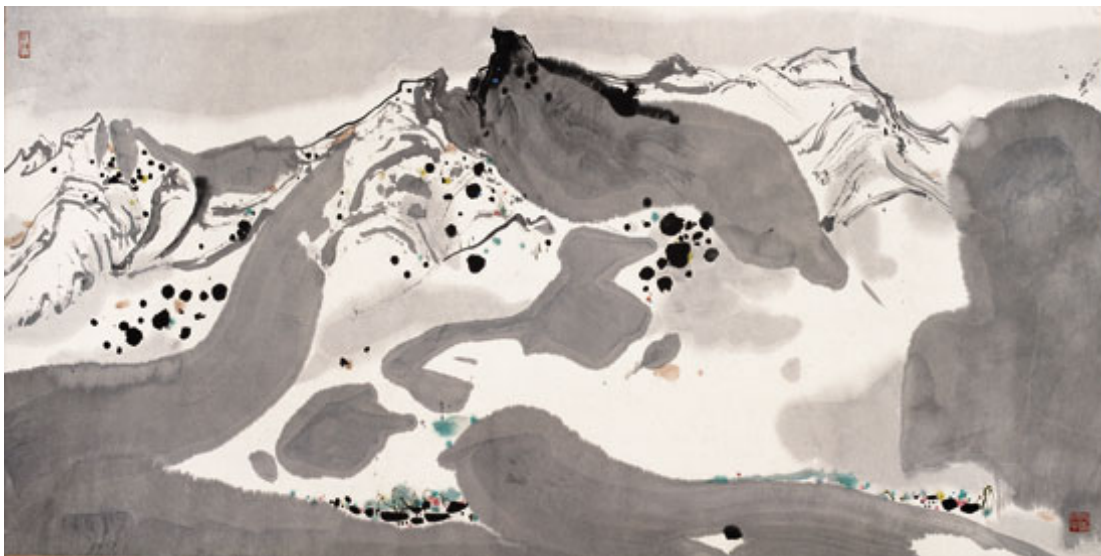


Figure 5. *Spring Snow* (春雪), Wu Guanzhong, 1983, ink and colors on paper (*Huayan* 145)



Figure 6. *Pine Forest* (松林), Wu Guanzhong, 1987, ink and colors on paper (Lim 99)



Figure 7. *Water Buffalo in a Summer Pond*, Pan Tianshou, ca. 1962 (Yang 388)



Figure 8. *Morning Bell*, Wu Guanzhong, 1986, ink and colors on paper (*Vision and Revision* 85)



Figure 9. *Three Juniper Trees*, Shen Zhou, 1484, section of ink monochrome handscroll, Nanjing Museum (Artstor.org.)



Figure 10. *Seven Junipers*, Wen Zhengming, section of ink monochrome handscroll, Honolulu Museum of Art (Artstor.org)



Figure 11. *Old Cypress and Rock*, Wen Zhengming, 1550, ink on paper handscroll, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (Artstor.org)



Figure 12. *Pine Spirit* (松鬼), Wu Guanzhong, 1984, ink and colors on paper (*Huazuo* 70)



Figure 13. *Reading the Stele*, Li Cheng, 10th c., ink on silk hanging scroll (Artsor.org)



Figure 14. *The Great Wall* (长城), Wu Guanzhong, 1986, ink and colors on paper (Lim 79)

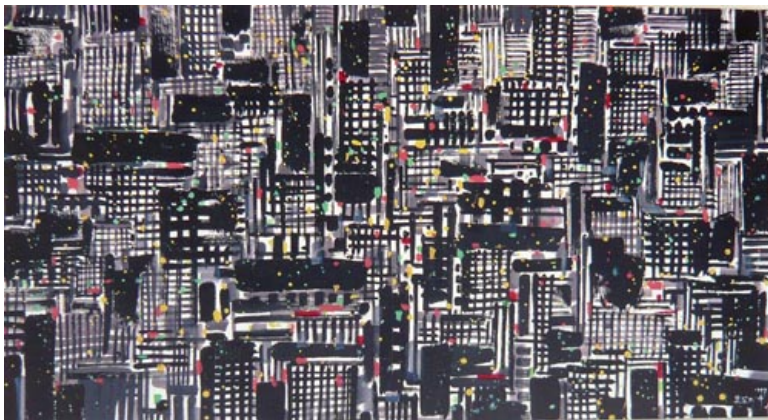


Figure 15. *Night City* (都市之夜), Wu Guanzhong, 1997, Hong Kong Art Museum (*Hua yan* 59)



Figure 16. Jiaohe Ruins, Xinjiang, China, 2001, photograph (courtesy of Aida Yuen Wong)



Figure 17. *Ruins of Gaochang* (高昌遗址), Wu Guanzhong, 1981, ink and colors (*Vision 63*)



Figure 18. Shitao, “A Mountain Pavilion,” *Landscapes for Yu Daoren*, 18th c., ink and color on paper album leaf (Artstor.org)



Figure 19. *Testament* (遗址), Huang Rui, 1979, oils on canvas, French Private Collection (Courtesy www.bampfa.org)

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