

Synthesis of Traditional Chinese Techniques with Contemporary styles

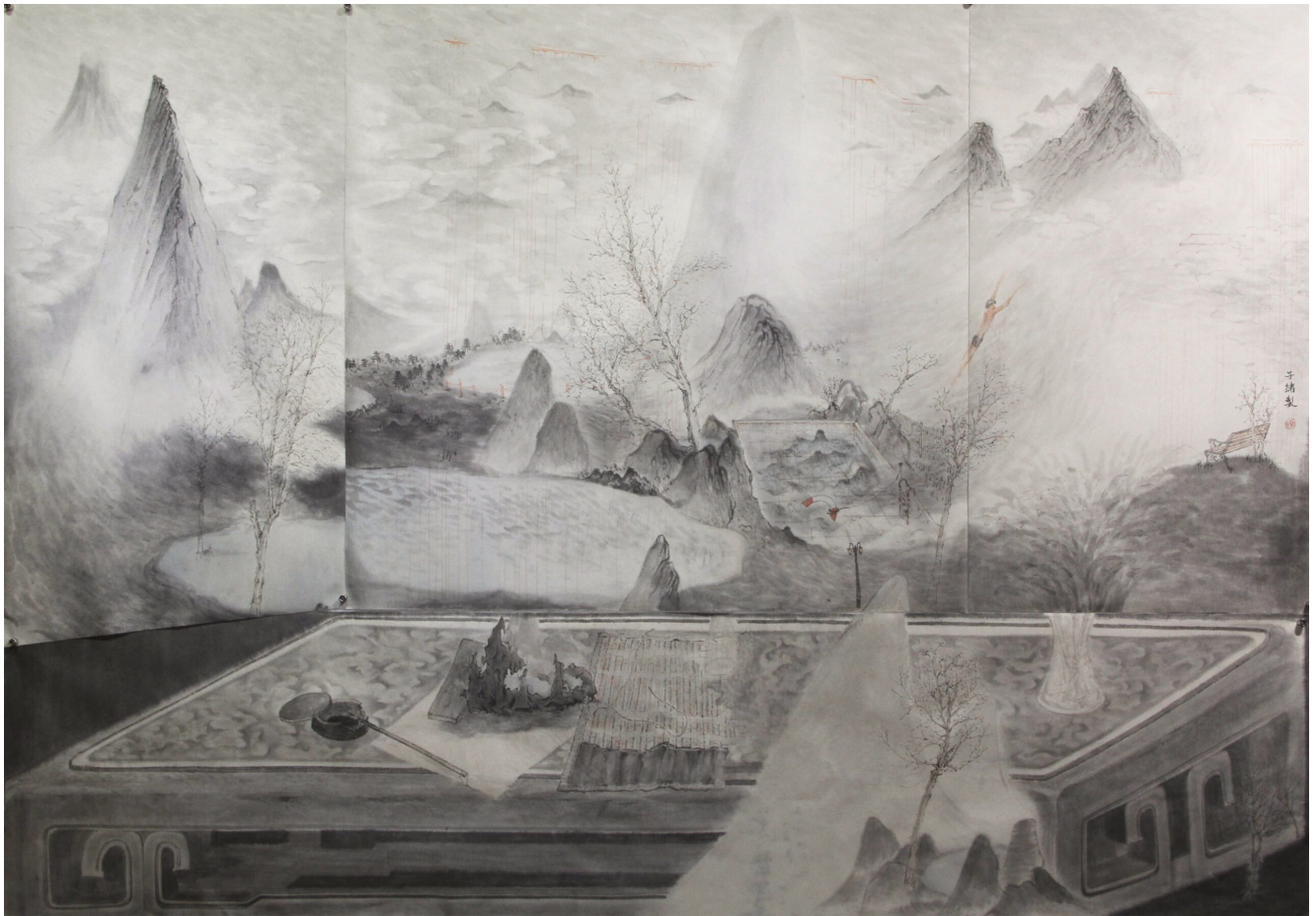
Qian ZHAO & Pengyu ZHU , Zixu CHEN 青青 & 青青, 青青

After experiencing the pandemic, they have changed from focussing on the ideal to reality in their daily lives. In terms of their artworks, they have all changed from reality to the ideal. Qian ZHAO, Pengyu ZHU and Zixu CHEN were from the same Chinese university but majored in completely different fields—landscape architecture and Chinese painting, but their creations during 2020 all tend to combine Chinese Tradition and Contemporary art techniques and ideas.

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Make A Dream 梦作, Qian Zhao 子庚 & Pengyu Zhu 仲年, 2020



子序 116×166cm 纸本，Zixu Chen 画，2020



子序-六 48×15cm×6 纸本，Zixu Chen 画，2020



图1 69×138cm 纸本，Zixu Chen 陈曦，2020



图2 69×138cm 纸本，Zixu Chen 陈曦，2020



子緒的房間 69×138cm 水彩畫, Zixu Chen 子緒, 2020



子緒-子緒 49×74.5 水彩畫, Zixu Chen 子緒, 2020



00-000 48×49.5 纸本墨彩, Zixu Chen 000, 2020



子惜-子惜 97×70cm 纸本水彩, Zixu Chen 子惜, 2020



00-00 82×67cm 0000, Zixu Chen 000, 2020

Biography

Qian ZHAO, Pengyu ZHU: Students of Landscape Architecture at Renmin University of China

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Zixu CHEN: Young Artist – MFA Chinese Painting in Chinese National Academy of Arts

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Interview with Zhao & Zhu

The names would be abbreviated as “Cleo” (Cleo CHEN), “ZHAO” (Qian ZHAO) and “ZHU” (Pengyu ZHU).

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Cleo: Can you tell us how you organised your life and work during this time? What has been changed?

ZHAO: Before the pandemic, we were in the same class and dormitory at school, so it was easy for us to communicate with each other. The outbreak occurred during our winter vacation, so we could only talk online and at home. My schedule was mostly involved writing papers or graduation projects during the day and then busying myself with other things at night.

ZHU: At that time, the pandemic was serious and the virus was spreading, so I tried not to go outside, and I also felt a little panicky. I seemed to repeat the same routine every day—like searching for materials or creating my artworks at home. The most significant change in this time that I noticed was that everyone around me was now wearing masks.

ZHAO: Now our vaccine programme has been administered widely, and with this, our life has basically returned to normal. Except for we need to report upon entering or leaving our school but there are really not too many restrictions at all.

ZHU: Our lives had returned to normal last summer, but it resurged again last winter.

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Cleo: Do you think art would tend to be more online in the future? What might be the relationship between technology and Art in your opinion?

ZHU: Only part of it will go online. It is still the most intuitive way for art to be appreciated physically and, because of this art is something that cannot be copied. Although art can be shared more quickly online, physical exhibitions will still remain mainstream, I think.

Their relationship to me is that art inspires technological development, whether it is through its human application or its design but, in turn, technology will support the innovation of artistic methods for creating and performing.

ZHAO: My ideas are kind of similar to Pengyu ZHU. Like paintings or sculptures, it is very difficult to transfer them online. For example, there may be colour deviations or picture distortions that would be very different to the physical appearance and experience. However, landscape architecture might pivot online.

As for the relationship between technology and art, I think they are complementary to each other. In China, VR, modelling software, virtual exhibiting space and exhibition halls are all being developed in tandem. One day, there might be new art forms along these lines introduced in the future.

ZHU: Being physical and up close to art is still the best way of immersing ourselves in art and feeling its charm.

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Interview with Chen

The names would be abbreviated as “Cleo” (Cleo CHEN) and “CHEN” (Zixu CHEN).

([Placeholder text])

Cleo: How did you do with your life and work during the pandemic? What was changed from before?

CHEN: The outbreak happened during my senior year of college, and I was preparing for my graduation and the preliminary examination for postgraduate. According to the pandemic, the examination was delayed to be held in May or June. Simultaneously, Heilongjiang which is the city I located in was always on lockdown, so as a result of all things mentioned above, I was very depressed those days, the only thing I could do was keep studying.

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Cleo: Could you talk about the changes you’ve found or experienced during this period? What’s your Pivot like?

CHEN: My normal life has changed a lot. My high school was in Beijing so I seldom wanted to go back because I was used to living independently. However, I became accustomed to staying

at home which caused by the pandemic this year. As for my Art creating, I've changed my material from colourful ink to wash painting. I have experienced a hard time doing this because my colourful ink paintings were based on sketching, so I could only create wash paintings due to there was no way for me to sketch with the condition of lockdown. I was used to painting with colourful ink, so at first, I felt particularly dull when painting washes painting which only had one colour of black, which actually just in line with my mood at the time. As a result, my later paintings had some elements of the swimming person or lifebuoys.

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Cleo: When did you start to conceive the work of *Settled to Look on the Emerging Clouds*□□□□□□, *Growing Freely-Mountains and Seas* □□□□ - □□□, and the *Scenic Spot* series artwork□□□□?

CHEN: The “Growing Freely” series artworks have started long before, I think it has represented the status of my art creation—some of my paintings were conceived previously while some totally weren’t. I always painted by following my vague feeling, I’d like to pile up elements in my mind, so each element was like a USB flash drive of my memory. “Growing Freely” means that I would start with a tree or a mountain, and then gradually growing out of them with significance.

Settled to Look On the Emerging Clouds was the work I created after graduating. Chinese ancient painting was very different from the West which emphasized forms and colours of paintings. Chinese painting focused on the vivid quality flowing inside the painting. Talking about this, I’d like to emphasize the feature of “vivid quality flowing inside”. Aiming of performing that, I try the painting technique of arranging

various elements of different painting techniques or languages making it more complete. Whereas now, my favourite is the **Viewing Platform**, and later, I would like to keep adding the element of the small person depicted in the painting. In terms of inspiration, I admire the brushstrokes of Western oil paintings. I also like Baroque and Impressionist paintings, so later I may enrich my paintings with these sorts of references.

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Cleo: I found that these works were very different from the previous sketches, so do you want to go into the field of contemporary art later? If so, which sort of art theme do you want to focus on?

CHEN: I am longing to go into contemporary art. Chinese landscape paintings mainly emphasising the looks of paintings, sometimes I get tired of this aesthetic, so I want to make my pictures look like works that focus on our contemporary world and which cares more about the different meanings of our lives.

European artists such as Gerhard Richter and Anselm Kiefer both suffered a lot during childhood, so their artworks can be viewed as giving us a sense of reflection, guilt, or anger, which are really powerful ideas to convey. However, I am living a normal life, so I often feel that my paintings are too mediocre. I tried living in an intense and extreme manner, but I found it hard for me to use painting to record my reality and ideas. As a result, I may still focus on the expression in the picture itself at the moment.

At present, I still want to imitate more iconic paintings and many contemporary paintings are inspired by ancient themes. Like Lei XU, an artist who aims to promote the spatial

