

# LIU DAN

*Artist's Statement*

“People have asked me, “What’s the difference between me and the old masters?” I always answer them, “I don’t think there is any difference except that they are dead and I am still alive.” On the other hand, because I’m still alive, they are alive too. I don’t think I’m part of the literati tradition, but I am part of its legacy. I don’t belong to tradition, I don’t belong to anything. I belong to myself, I belong to my art. Being part of a legacy has no limitations.”

## PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST

MICHELLE LIM



**FIGURE 1**  
Liu Dan (b. 1953), *Portrait of a Man*, 2001. Red chalk on ivory antique paper, 15.0 × 12.0 cm. Collection of the artist.

*All art is at once surface and symbol...  
Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril.  
Those who read the symbol do so at their peril.  
It is the spectator, not life, that art really mirrors.*

—Oscar Wilde, Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

It is characteristic of Liu Dan to integrate spectacle and performance into form and exhibition. Uncoiling sixty feet through the gallery, with dramatic cascades of light and shadow, the artist's *Ink Handscroll* (1990; cat. 27) called forth this description by Caron Smith:

*[It] opens with an explosion of cinnabar ink and spills forth ink boulders and mountain ranges in polyphonic harmonies, propelled along a stream of white, left in reserve, in a long dramatic sequence. Mountains, clouds and rivers formed of ink and paper coalesce and dissolve, only to reform with greater stability as the narrative of transformation unfolds!*

Liu Dan's *Preparatory Drawing for "Dictionary"* (ca. 1991; cat. 28), drawn to scale, preceded a finished watercolor painting so large that when the latter was lent to the China Institute for exhibition in 2006 a crane was required to lift it through a midtown Manhattan skyscraper window.<sup>2</sup> Among the artist's many intriguing works—his spectacular *Ink Handscroll*, the small work on paper and the huge painting of *Dictionary*, his historically allusive *Wangchuan Villa* (2000; cat. 30)—is a small monochrome drawing in red chalk on paper called *Portrait of a Man* (2001; fig. 1; cat. 31). The drawing measures only fifteen by twelve centimeters and depicts the head of a handsome man in his maturity, in profile, looking to the viewer's right. With his well-defined facial features and intense eyes, it is impossible to tell that the subject is not a European man. Or that he is a Chinese artist, one who is now New York-based, who goes by the pseudonym "Mu Xin" in his professional life, with a character as ambiguous as his name, and who was already well into his seventies at the time the drawing was made. In fact, the model for this drawing was not the living person but an old photograph taken after the subject had already turned fifty.

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<sup>1</sup> Caron Smith, "Liu Dan's *Ink Handscroll* at the San Diego Museum of Art," *Orientations* 30, no. 2 (February 1999), 56.

<sup>2</sup> Wu Hung, *Shu: Reinventing Books in Chinese Contemporary Art* (New York: China Institute, 2006), 54–55.

In this portrait, Liu Dan has referenced Renaissance red chalk drawings by employing terracotta shades of chalk on old eighteenth/nineteenth-century paper. The surface of the ivory-colored paper is speckled with the long-term effects of mold and mildew age spots, foxing, like that of an old drawing from some forgotten archive; the edges are darkened and frayed, most noticeably along the top edge, as if it survived from a sketchbook. In the lower right corner, Liu Dan has signed and dated his drawing “Liu Dan 2001,” rather than his Chinese signature. What should we make of this seemingly innocuous portrait of a Westernized Chinese man in his maturity, styled as a sanguine chalk drawing from the Italian Renaissance? Through Liu Dan’s calculated use of the language of stereotypes as visual shorthand to cultural perceptions, the *Portrait of a Man* demonstrates the conflation of numerous temporal and spatial displacements in a single portrait drawing. This is, after all, a work by an artist well versed in the traditions of great Chinese paintings, where a landscape is hardly just a landscape and a portrait never a straightforward likeness, devoid of sociopolitical context, even if this drawing appears at first to be anything but traditional or Chinese.

With their eyes obsessively turned toward the West, contemporary Chinese artists have often been found looking toward the likes of Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) and Andy Warhol (1928–1987) for inspiration, as if modern art history had come to a standstill by the third quarter of the twentieth century. Liu Dan, however, looks both back in time and across space. *Portrait of a Man* is simultaneously an incisive commentary on the state of Chinese contemporary art of the last century and an homage to Liu Dan’s artistic influences, especially the Renaissance masters whom he admires so much. An art history aficionado, he owns more books on the Renaissance than any other artistic period. Nevertheless, the *Portrait of a Man* is not just about the Renaissance, it is also the continuation of the conversation begun on modernism in painting in the early 1860s, “in which painting’s relationship to its art-historical precedents was made shamelessly obvious,” when Édouard Manet (1832–1883) used the *Venus of Urbino* (1538) by Titian (1485–1576) as the prototype for his *Olympia* (1865).<sup>3</sup> Liu Dan’s *Portrait of a Man*, like Manet’s painting, can thus be seen as a work which exists “in a self-conscious relationship to earlier painting or texts—or rather to the aspect in painting or writing that remains indefinitely open.”<sup>4</sup>

Style in Liu Dan’s drawing acts as a retroactive device to trigger a conscious temporal illusion: the drawing becomes a lens by which the viewer is made conscious of the passage of time by the contrast in drawings made at different historical moments. The stroke plays as important a role in the



FIGURE 2  
Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), *Self-Portrait* (*L'Autoportrait de Turin*), ca. 1515. Red chalk on paper, 33.4 × 21.4 cm. Biblioteca Reale, Turin, Italy.

3 Douglas Crimp, “On the Museum’s Ruins,” in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 45–47. Crimp extends Foucault’s analysis of the modern institutions of confinement to museum and art history, seeing in it the “preconditions for the discourse we know as modern art.”

4 Michel Foucault, “Fantasia of the Library,” in Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 92. Of such works, Foucault has written, “They erect their art within the archive. They were not meant to foster the lamentations—the lost youth, the absence of



**FIGURE 3**  
Artist unknown, *Portrait of a Man*.  
Red chalk on paper, 27.5 × 19.0 cm.  
The Royal Collection, Windsor, UK.

chalk lines of old master drawings as in the ink brushstrokes of Chinese landscape paintings, in terms of establishing the artistic identity of the painter and the authenticity of the work. In a red-chalk-on-paper self-portrait by Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519; fig. 2), the chalk lines are sure and smooth, the tapering curves of swiftly executed strokes and monochromatic color gradations bear witness to the Renaissance master’s facility with the medium. Compared with Leonardo’s drawing, Liu Dan’s *Portrait of a Man* clearly belongs to its own art-historical moment, with the most obvious signs found in its sense of current trends, in its use of stylistic appropriation as strategy and in its consciousness of the spectator’s presence.

There was another portrait drawing of Leonardo, of which only a later copy that was made in the late Renaissance remains (fig. 3). This later drawing shows the Italian artist in profile, looking in the opposite direction as Mu Xin in Liu Dan’s drawing. The entry in Kenneth Clark’s catalogue of the British royal collection that includes this later work notes that “the rather timid handling shows that this is not an original drawing by Leonardo but the turbulent lines of the hair and beard suggest that it is a copy of a lost original.”<sup>5</sup> By comparing this anonymous rendering of Leonardo with the *Portrait of a Man*, the authenticity of Liu Dan’s original style is further underscored by the contrast in technique and confidence. The *Portrait of a Man* is no mere copy, whether of Renaissance drawing or modern photograph, and Liu Dan’s strokes are not timid in the least. The majority of his strokes are short and quick, with some longer lines used for the outline of the clothes. Shadows have been achieved through rubbing in this homage, as opposed to the denser patterning of occasionally crosshatched chalk lines in Renaissance drawings. There is a sense of deliberation in the markings that is at odds with the relaxed hand of a casual sketch, giving it instead a certain self-consciousness that indicates the artist’s awareness of the audience’s presence while executing this homage. The balanced composition of the head against generous amounts of white space further emphasizes the artist’s sensitivity to its eventual public exhibition. In contrast to the drawings of Leonardo where the subject’s head takes up most of the paper and there is no clothing to distract from the face, Liu Dan has outlined Mu Xin’s overcoat collar and the folds of his scarf to serve as a visual pedestal for his head. This presentation conveys a certain detachment; the subject’s likeness here is rendered as a still-life object, an appropriate choice given the use of a photograph as the artist’s “model” instead of the man himself.

The *Portrait of a Man* is not content to restrict itself to a single sheet of ivory-colored paper; it has co-opted other versions and forms of its own

vigor, and the decline of inventiveness — through which we reproach our Alexandrian age, but to unearth an essential aspect of our culture: every painting now belongs within the squared and massive surface of painting and all literary works are confined to the indefinite murmur of writing.”

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth Clark, *Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci in the Collection of her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle*, vol. I (London: Phaidon, 1968), 185, no. 12726.

likeness, as a drawing of a man's head, into its existence as a work of art. In doing so, it tables the issues of authenticity and artistic essence and provokes inquiry as to how these are affected by changes in material form. What does it mean when Liu Dan chooses to use an old photograph as a model instead of the man himself, or that he made the drawing specifically to be reproduced in a catalogue of another artist's work?<sup>6</sup>

Liu Dan's process of multiple filtering, by using a photograph as the model instead of a real person, reverses not only the hierarchical order of duplication, where art is made into photograph, but also re-orders a new cycle of replication, as Mu Xin's likeness moves from drawing to printed illustration. By transforming the likeness from photograph to sketch, the drawing has become an abstraction of the photograph, instead of the more conventional relationship where the photograph limits itself to a traditional handmaiden's role as the artist's visual notepad for an eventual painting. And as an illustration in an exhibition catalogue, the mass medium properties of a photograph are now made available to the drawing; its likeness is no longer restricted to a unique pencil-on-paper work but becomes one that doubles and redoubles itself through the printed page. In setting in motion this processing of Mu Xin's likeness, from photograph to drawing to book, Liu Dan has set the likeness free from that specific and localized photographic moment, the instant when the button on the camera was pressed to capture a fifty-year-old Chinese man in profile. Reproduced and redistributed, Mu Xin's likeness is now a literal "fragment," circulating in multiples, recontextualized and seen in a different light by each reader.<sup>7</sup> Just as Liu Dan's drawing had subverted the original likeness in the photograph by re-presenting it as a pseudo-Renaissance drawing, the printed page now confronts the drawing with a new, alternative version—the likeness of itself as a printed illustration. Turning from one to the other, we no longer know which is real and which is fiction. The *Portrait of a Man* has become the inspiration for multiple Scheherazades, one for every member of the audience. No longer belonging solely to artist or subject, the very image of Liu Dan's drawing has entered the public domain through the performance that is its exhibition and via the printed pages of catalogues. The audience thus becomes coproprietor of Mu Xin's likeness and is free to invent any story it wishes for the *Portrait of a Man*; the visual fiction can be retold as a fresh story each time, to new effect with each viewing. And with each telling, new relations are feigned, fictive ones are induced, and new beliefs take root in our minds, thanks to our imagination and experiences with the world at large.<sup>8</sup>

Through its "oscillation between the art object and human subject, presented so personally," the *Portrait of a Man* is simultaneously an insightful



**FIGURE 4**  
Liu Dan (b. 1953), *Ink Handscroll* (detail), 1990.  
Handscroll; ink and color on paper, 95.6 cm × 17.8 m.  
San Diego Museum of Art (Museum purchase).

<sup>6</sup> *The Art of Mu Xin: Landscape Paintings and Prison Notes*, by Alexandra Munroe, Richard Barnhart, Jonathan Hay, and Wu Hung (New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery, 2001), back page.

<sup>7</sup> Susan Sontag, "Melancholy Objects," in Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978), 71. Sontag observed that "Rehabilitating old photographs, by finding new con-

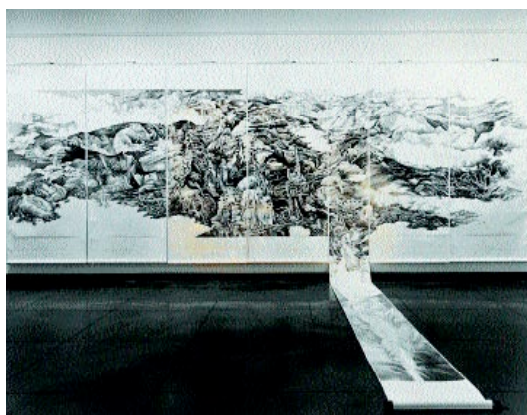
texts for them, has become a major book industry. A photograph is only a fragment, and with the passage of time its moorings come unstuck. It drifts away into a soft abstract pastness, open to any kind of reading."

<sup>8</sup> Gilles Deleuze, "Hume," in Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence*, translated by Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 42.

portrait and a revealing self-portrait that presents us with an intriguing case of a work deliberately situated in “the interface between art and social life” by an artist who had initially sought to shape the perceptions of the audience through strategic visual presentation, only to have the work take on a life of its own.<sup>9</sup> In Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Basil Hallward, painter of the original Dorian Gray, comments that “every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the colored canvas, reveals himself.”<sup>10</sup> But it is not just the artist who is implicated in the *Portrait of a Man*; as viewers, we might also take heed of the sly observation that Wilde embedded in the preface to his own novel, that “it is the spectator, not life, that art really mirrors.”<sup>11</sup>

Since much has already been made of Liu Dan’s rejuvenation of traditional Chinese art forms in works like the *Wangchuan Villa*, let us turn now to a discussion of other influences that surface in his works, namely graphic techniques and the legacy of Surrealism.<sup>12</sup> Liu Dan’s extensive range of pencil-on-paper drawings, with subjects ranging from Chinese landscapes to flowers, from life drawings to printed pages, is unusually varied for a contemporary artist.

As much as it is a contemporary update of the Chinese ink painting tradition, Liu Dan’s *Ink Handscroll* is, at the same time, a work whose imagery is comfortably at home with the graphic arts. The opening section of the *Ink Handscroll* is painted with red cinnabar which, according to Liu Dan, represents the fiery origins of the universe (fig. 4; cat. 27).<sup>13</sup> Cloud and mountain formations spiral around the horizontal axis of the painting, and it could well be a greatly enlarged freeze frame from a Japanese science fiction anime, as fiery trails stream in the wake of a nuclear rocket taking off into space. The *Ink Handscroll* is the culmination of a process that began with Liu Dan’s first large-scale work, *Acelandama* (1987; fig. 5), an installation of hanging scrolls, landscapes in ink, where the central scrolls spill off of the wall and across the floor. Alexandra Munroe described *Acelandama*, writing: “The unworldly crescendo of ground and space, fire and mountains, bodies of water and clouds make *Acelandama* a vision that the modern mind can recognize as a real or imagined apocalypse. Chinese in style and technique, Liu Dan’s first major painting is shockingly contemporary in spirit.”<sup>14</sup> However, in the discussion of Liu Dan’s process that follows, Munroe proceeds to describe a procedure that is difficult to perceive as distinctively Chinese in style and technique. Neither does it seem a stranger to Western tradition, with its similarities to Western mural- and fresco-painting techniques. According to Munroe, Liu Dan’s



**FIGURE 5**  
Liu Dan, *Acelandama*, 1987. Hanging scrolls; ink on paper, 243.8 × 655.3 cm overall, length of descending handscroll 396.2 cm.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), quotes from 7, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (New York: Random House, 1998), 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface, unpaginated.

<sup>12</sup> Richard A. Pegg, “Wang River Villa Again,” in *Orientalisms* 37, no. 4 (May 2006), 68–73.

<sup>13</sup> Conversation between Liu Dan and Jerome Silbergeld, August 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Alexandra Munroe, *Liu Dan: Alternative Visions* (New York: The Gallery at Takashimaya, 1993), 12.

first step in preparing the large-scale paintings presented in this exhibition is to draw a detailed pencil study. The refinement of Liu's preparatory drawings reveals his foundation in classical Western art, his mastery of chiaroscuro, and his dependence on graphite to develop his initial idea. Liu then grids the drawing and transfers these marks onto a sheet of paper attached to a wall. He sketches the outlines in charcoal and, consulting his pencil study often, gradually begins to fill the surface with ink.<sup>15</sup>

While it is unusual for a Chinese ink painter to make preparatory sketches in pencil, this certainly helps explain why *Ink Handscroll* not only makes dialogue possible with works by Chinese painters like Gong Xian (ca. 1618–1689) and Guo Xi (ca. 1020–ca. 1090) but also can engage in an interesting exchange with the graphic works of Dutch artist M. C. Escher (1898–1972).<sup>16</sup> Every medium has its own particular influence on the artist's expression, and graphite tools are no different. While it is eminently controllable and extremely conducive for quick, precise renderings in exquisite detail, pencil on paper requires a highly disciplined yet imaginative mind to push it beyond its preparatory role. The molten flows of rock that shape the mountains and rivers in *Ink Handscroll* are remarkably evocative of the extravagantly sensual folds of clouds and mountains in Escher's early lithographs of the Italian landscape, for example *Castrovalva* (1930; fig. 6). However, where Escher's Italian landscape prints have the dreamy quality of a European fairytale, Liu Dan presents fantastic views of a "nature" that can only derive from the human imagination. The tranquil lakes and mountains of a Chinese literati landscape painting are absent in Liu Dan's handscroll. Instead, the graphic impulse plays out through rounded forms with defined edges, powdery shades of gray, and sharp plays of light and shadow, that combust into fierce maelstroms and fiery flows of lava.

While graphic work is primarily seen these days as a tool of the design arts, the separation between craft and the fine arts is less marked in Chinese art history, where craft traditions have always formed a basis for its arts, even if literati scholars often pretended otherwise. Perhaps the ancestral origins of Liu Dan's ink painting are more aptly located in the dramatic cloud swirls that cover the surface of the intricately designed Chu lacquer coffins and silks of the Western Han (fig. 7) than in Northern Song paintings of misty mountains and tranquil lakes. The surrealism that Susan Sontag defined as "the very creation of a duplicate world, of a reality in the second degree, narrower but more dramatic than the one perceived by natural vision," had already existed in the ancient Chu imagination millennia ago.<sup>17</sup> Liu Dan's *Ink Handscroll* would not be out of place as a background for the fantastic figures and beasts from ancient Chu mythology. For the Chu



FIGURE 6  
M. C. Escher (1898–1972), *Castrovalva* (Abruzzi, Italy), 1930. Lithograph on paper, 53.0 × 42.1 cm.



FIGURE 7  
Lacquer coffin, detail of painted designs on black base, China, Western Han period, late 5th century. Excavated from Tomb No. 1, Mawangdui, Changsha, Hunan. Hunan Provincial Museum, China.

15 Ibid., 12.

16 Ibid., 14.

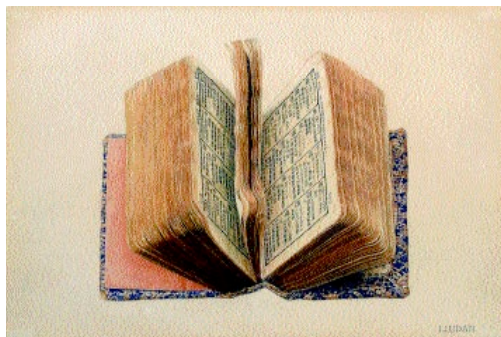
17 Sontag, "Melancholy Objects," 52–53.

18 See the Liu Dan biographical essay in this volume.

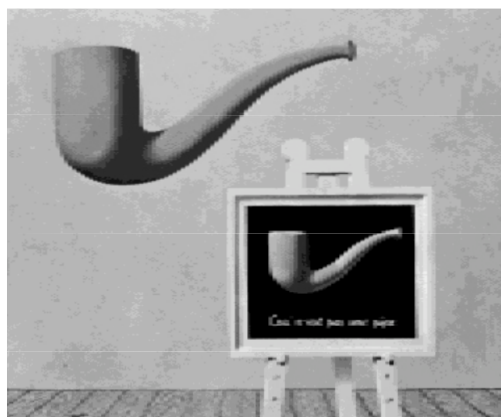
19 According to Liu Dan there is no specific reason for his choice of text.

20 Michel Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 28–29.

**FIGURE 8**  
Liu Dan (b. 1953), *Preparatory Drawing for "Dictionary,"*  
ca. 1991. Ink and color on paper, 14.5 × 22.5 cm.  
Debby and Marcus Flacks Collection, London, UK.



**FIGURE 9**  
René Magritte (1898–1967), *The Two Mysteries*  
(*Les deux mystères*), 1966. Oil on canvas, 65.0 × 80.0 cm.  
Private collection, London, UK.



people, there was no separation between real world, myth-world, or after-world. Heaven, earth, and hell were simultaneously present in the topography of that ancient Chu imagination; in Liu Dan's handscroll, that same ambiguity of time and place exists.

The influence of the official Surrealist movement of the 1920s, and its obsession with psychology and all things Freudian, can also be found in some of Liu Dan's other still-life drawings and paintings. His painting of a Chinese dictionary has been read as a visual metaphor for a more intimate subject.<sup>18</sup> The ink-and-color preparatory version in this exhibition (fig. 8; cat. 28) is a miniature of the larger watercolor made later. In both, we see a dictionary that cannot be described as either open or closed; it is in between, its pages in the midst of falling open. A few pages in the middle of the book are clumped together and they stand upright in the center, as if undecided which way to fall. Meanwhile, the edges of the gold floral-patterned and dark blue cloth dustcover are wrapped around the sides of the covers, and paper of a deep blush color visible inside the front cover. There are two openings where one can see the Chinese characters neatly organized in gridded columns. But the words themselves offer no clue as to any meaning or reason as to why these specific pages have been chosen for view. Here is text that claims to hold only visual purpose.<sup>19</sup> It is presented, but semiotically it is without substance. If these characters frustrate the reader who cannot read Chinese, it can only be doubly frustrating for the reader who can, especially when the characters appear in a book which purportedly exists to provide lexical meaning to visual markings. Liu Dan's *Dictionary* thus presents a philosophical conundrum in the vein of the René Magritte (1898–1967) painting *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (1928/29), where a pipe is depicted along with a short statement of denial, "This is not a pipe." In fact, Magritte, too, painted a sequel to his first work—*Les deux mystères* (1966; fig. 9)—a Surrealistic variation that compounds the visual irony of his earlier painting. Michel Foucault's analysis of Magritte's *Les deux mystères* is humorous:

*Magritte reopened the trap the calligram had sprung on the thing it described. But in the act, the object itself escaped.... The "pipe" that was at one with both the statement naming it and the drawing representing it—this shadow pipe knitting the lineaments of form with the fiber of words—has utterly vanished.... In vain the now solitary drawing imitates as closely as possible the shape ordinarily designated by the word pipe; in vain the text unfurls below the drawing with all the attentive fidelity of a label in a scholarly book.... Nowhere is there a pipe.<sup>20</sup>*

Neither can one find a real dictionary in Liu Dan's small drawing—nor in the greatly magnified painting that followed. Instead, the viewer and those



would-be readers of Chinese characters are left with a mystery. This, too, is characteristic of Liu Dan: to let the audience make what they will of his works once they have been completed.

A man of studied elegance and a master of detail, it would seem that Liu Dan belongs to the same club as Wilde and Charles Baudelaire in his ability to elicit the characterization of dandyism, as an aesthetic practice (in)famously espoused by these iconic nineteenth-century figures. He has been described as possibly “the most paradoxical figure in Chinese art today” and one for whom “the practice of tradition became a form of dandyism.”<sup>21</sup> Dandyism has been found in his works as “a personal form of originality, within the external limits of social convention,” as demonstrated by his “overwhelming attention to details.”<sup>22</sup> While the crafted surfaces of Liu Dan’s paintings should not be mistaken for mere surface sheen, nevertheless their depth lies less in the spirituality Baudelaire laid claim to than in the historical substance underlying his multiple affiliations to East and West. His painted poppies exemplify this. *All Ready* (1999) is a diagonal composition of four long-stemmed poppy flowers: two red, one white, and a fourth, seen from its underside, is rendered only in ink, the shade of its petals tantalizingly left to the imagination (fig. 10; cat. 29). In the delicate edges of their petals and fur-shadowed stems, Liu Dan’s poppies recall the beauty of Northern Song bird-and-flower court paintings in all their exquisite detail<sup>23</sup> (fig. 11). Their striking crimson and stark white hues, however, contravene traditional Chinese flower painting’s classical preference for soft pink peonies and snowy plum blossoms. Liu Dan has made several paintings of poppies, and at first glance they appear quite similar. In fact, each poppy flower is unique. It is only when these painted *flower arrangements* are placed beside each other that one can see the fragile difference between one flower and another. These wildflowers have a charm of their own, and against the sand-colored paper their luminosity catches and holds the eye.

What sets Liu Dan apart is not so much his drawing of inspiration from East and West, nor his intriguing innovation with traditional techniques—there are others walking that path too. Rather, it is his evocation of a distinctly modern Chinese sensibility, one inherited from the days of newly modern China at the turn of the twentieth century, a time of romance and revolution. Liu Dan’s cosmopolitan polish brings to mind the sophisticated southern Chinese cities in the 1920s and ’30s. A gentleman painter at heart, Liu Dan’s attention to the finer details—in both life and art—tells of this old-world charm. And in a Chinese contemporary art scene dominated by sound, speed, and spectacle, his works stand apart by leaving the viewer with a sense of beautiful nostalgia that subtly lingers on.



FIGURE 10

Liu Dan (b. 1953), *All Ready*, 1999. Ink and color on paper, 35.6 × 40.6 cm. Collection of Murray and Suzanne Valenstein.

FIGURE 11

Emperor Huizong (Zhao Ji) (1082–1135; r. 1101–25), *Flowering Peach and Dove* (*Tao jiu tu*), inscribed 1107. Album leaf mounted as a hanging scroll; ink and color on silk, 29.0 × 26.0 cm. Setsu Gatōdō Collection, Tokyo.

21 Ackbar Abbas, “Liu Dan’s Art of the Decept: Some Notes on ‘12 Views of Little Openwork,’” lecture presented at Das Haus der Kultur der Welt, Berlin, 2005.

22 Ibid.

23 Maggie Bickford, “Huizong’s Paintings,” in *Emperor Huizong and the Late Northern Song China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center,

2006), 471. Bickford’s careful description of Huizong’s treatment of the peach blossom in the Northern Song album painting *Flowering Peach and Dove* (see fig. 8) might well describe Liu Dan’s *Poppies*: “he firmly outlined branches, leaves, buds, and blossoms, neatly partitioned their interior structures, and colored between these lines with opaque pigment.”

## ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

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**CHINESE ART, MADE-IN-AMERICA** 1 From Ai Weiwei, *Illumination* (New York: Mary Boone Gallery, 2008), 16; 2 Courtesy of the artist; 3-4 Bruce M. White; 5 From Sotheby's, New York, *Contemporary Art Asia: China, Korea, Japan*, 17 March 2008, no. 183; 6 Bruce M. White; 7 From Gao Minglu ed., *Inside Out: New Chinese Art* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; New York: Asia Society Galleries; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 28; 8 Bruce M. White; 9 From *Art at Auction: The Year at Sotheby's, 1981-82* (London: Sotheby's, 1982), 35; 10 Courtesy of the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; 11 From Gao Minglu, *Inside Out: New Chinese Art*, pl. 35; 12 From Wang Fangyu, *Dancing Ink: Pictorial Calligraphy and Calligraphic Painting* (Short Hills, NJ: Privately published, 1984), 15; 14 From Hugh Moss, *The Experience of Art: Twentieth-Century Chinese Paintings from the Shuisongshi Shanfang Collection* (Hong Kong: Andamans East International, 1983), 16; 15 From *Dsui Paintings (Dsui hua) by Tseng Yuho: A Retrospective Exhibition* (Hong Kong: Hanart TZ Gallery, 1992), pl. 53; 16 From Julia F. Andrews and Kuyi Shen, *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1998), pl. 173; 17 From *Fang Zhaoling Portfolio* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1983), pl. 57; 18 Bruce M. White; 19 From *Chan Is Missing*, 1981. Distributed by New Yorker Films, 1989; 20 Jesse Bravo; 21 Courtesy of the artist; 22 Courtesy of Robert Rosenkranz and Alexandra Munroe; 23-24 Bruce M. White; 25 Courtesy of the artist

**IN THE MISCHIEVOUS ROLE OF NATURALIST** 1 From F. Clark Howell, *Early Man* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1970), 41-45; 2 From Charles Darwin, *The Origins of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859; reprint, New York: Barnes and Noble Classic, 2004), 102-3; 3-4A Bruce M. White; 4B Courtesy of the National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China; 5 Bruce M. White; 6 From Sotheby's, Hong Kong, *The Estella Collection*, 9 April 2008, no. 1142; 7-8A Bruce M. White; 8B Courtesy of the artist; 9A-B Bruce M. White

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